



Grant Details

Grant: 23-51-042 - FY23 Visit Big Sky DMO Plan - FY23

Status:	Underway
Program Area:	DOC Office of Tourism
Grantee Organization:	Visit Big Sky
Program Officer:	Barb Sanem
Awarded Amount:	\$1,144,292.00

Narrative Evaluation

Visit Big Sky continues to make inroads into being a leader in marketing efforts for our partners and establish a healthy visitor economy in Big Sky. Year over year Visit Big Sky tries to meet the needs of our stakeholders and we've accomplished that in three defined categories:

1) Relevant On-Target Data: Our investment in research is timely and state of the art. Big Sky launched a direct source data system that gives us daily lodging data for over 1400 rooms on a nightly basis. We can look ahead and see into the future regarding booking demand and pricing. Our lodging partners bring this data to support our industry and support our restaurant and retail industry to plan accordingly. We see this as part of our trust with the community to support the tourism industry in Big Sky. Without visitors we don't have an economy and we do everything we can to support the partners to be successful.

2) Targeted marketing efforts to bring the right visitor to Big Sky: In today's tourism economics we're able to use pin-point advertising delivery to visitors where they live and where they've visited in the past. The days of buying a magazine ad and hoping it get's in front of the right eyeballs is no more. As an example we're doing campaigns directed to a group of skiers in the Bay area that frequent Lake Tahoe skiing but also have traveled to Colorado is our target audience. With our increased flight lift into Bozeman/Yellowstone Airport we're able to make our marketing effective by going after that visitor who get's on a plane and willing to fly to a destination. More so we're able to target a skier who has the IKON pass that is accepted in Big Sky and hundreds of other resorts around the world. We play on the fact that "Big Sky" is easy to get to, and we have one of the best ski areas in the country.

Our internal efforts have grown and the investment in additional staffing to support our efforts as well as be a convener with our partners in Big Sky is key to our role in the community. When you have big partners like Big Sky Resort, The Montage and national property managers our job is to support them in their efforts to make everyone's marketing dollars go farther.

Our media/public relations contractor is amazing and we're finding our investment in media has a longer and better impact than our marketing efforts. Big Sky is the shiny new penny in the skiing marketplace and we find ourselves being compared to Aspen, Vail, Whistler Blackcomb and Park City. Our large hotel investments is putting us in the space as a luxury destination and our efforts to wrangle parnters and makes sure we're delivering the expectation that our visitors expect.

3) Destination Strategy: Destination Management is a priority for our office and our community. Due to Covid we saw all the ill earned gains of "over-tourism" and the community is pushing back regarding our tourism economy. Visit Big Sky like many destinations is now working to get in front of this and lead a meaningful conversation about our future in tourism and how we find a compromise between residents and the visitors. We started late in FY23 due to our contractor not having the bandwidth but we're now moving forward and it's been worth the wait. The community wants to be a part of our long term planning and we've had very good attendance and great diversity of stakeholders.

Our efforts over the last year with public bathrooms, updated wayfinding and our efforts for wildfire education are just small pieces to our overall destination management efforts.

Visit Big Sky thanks the Tourism Advisory Council for their ongoing support.