

Strategic Plan

Brand MT

July 2023

Brand MT

Mission - To preserve and promote the genuine character of Montana while partnering to achieve a sustainable economic future for all

Vision - Residents and visitors enjoying Montana at its best

Values – Collaboration, Integrity, Accountability, Sustainability, Objectivity, Excellence and innovation, Resiliency, Love for Montana

Goal 1: Rural Tourism Development

Objective:

- Provide structure for partnerships to work together to stabilize economies through diversification.

Strategies:

1. Use resiliency plans as a tool to prioritize this work
2. Increase tourism to existing (film included) assets
3. Identify pilot communities and reservations to develop infrastructure for future tourism and business growth including:
 - a. services (restaurants & lodging)
 - b. water/sewer infrastructure
 - c. transportation options (air travel, train, car rental, bus)
 - d. recreation assets
 - i. trails
 - ii. campgrounds
4. Support unstable economies with emergency response funds for fires, floods and other natural/uncontrollable events.
5. Foster internal and external relationships through engagement with Tourism Regions and DMOs (includes travel)
6. Support asset identification, tourism readiness, and development

Goal 1: General Workplan

| Task | Description | Lead |
|---|---|------|
| Main Street Integration | Integrate Main St as a qualifier for community readiness for Pilot Community Program. Focus on engaging communities within next tier of readiness to join Main St program. | OOT |
| Resiliency Grants | Integrate \$1.5 million in federal dollars available into funding of Pilot Community Program for FY24 to invest in overlapping priorities. | OOT |
| Emergency Grants | Develop a multi-function program that reserves budget to respond to natural disasters between July and Dec each year, and a secondary grant launched after Dec for emergency services support (fire, police, etc) with any unused natural disaster funds. | OOT |
| Economic Impact Event Grants | A limited funding opportunity for a maximum of \$25,000 for event-based activities to create economic impact in rural communities, tribal communities, and for communities in the shoulder-seasons of the year. Tiers off level of funding. Intent is for event to become resilient/self-sustaining (example \$25K year 1; \$12,500 year 2, etc.) | OOT |
| Agritourism Grants | Agricultural Events (up to \$15,000): Support a new (less than 5 years in existence) agricultural event that highlights a Montana agricultural product and results in an economic impact to the tourism region of the state. Grants would be reduced annually to promote sustainability of the event. | OOT |
| Pilot Community Investment Program | Apply criteria to identify up to 7 communities (1 per tourism region; 1 tribal entity eligible) to align destination and community development through investment in place-based expansion of tourism assets and products that diversify and stabilize local economies | OOT |

Goal 2:
**Dispersal of
Visitors to
Rural Areas**

Objective:

- Get people out of most populated areas for visitation and relocation

Strategies:

1. In-state movement
2. Film
3. Tribal
4. Out of state marketing

Goal 2: General Workplan

| Task | Description | Lead |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Optimize partnerships | Diversify partnerships, especially in pilot communities. Strengthen and integrate relationship with MT Indigenous Tourism Alliance. | OOT |
| Rural Film Development | Target support for rural story lines. Scout and prioritize rural film locations. Weight scoring for rural film grant applications. | MFO |
| Rural Marketing | Focus marketing strategies (in-state, out of state, tribal and international) on rural areas. | Marketing |
| Tourism Asset Analysis | Through resiliency plan and supplemental means, identify asset gaps and strengths. | Marketing/OOT |
| Made in Montana | Leverage product familiarity and popularity to drive awareness of visitation to rural locations. Integrate and coordinate media buys with larger marketing campaign. | Made in Montana |
| Optimize marketing support services to the benefit of rural Montana | Select and train vendors who have expertise and reach to best benefit rural areas and strategies, including: content gathering/storage/sharing (WebDam); Contact Center; Agency of Record and marketing services contractors; subscriptions and marketing tools, Research and branding; Web development and administration; publications. | Marketing |
| Optimize planning timelines and approvals internally and with DMOs | Coordinate timing of DMO and state marketing planning so that we are leveraging themes and cobranding toward common goals. Will require marketing planning 12 months in advance. Additionally, work with TAC to adjust timing of DMO plan review and approvals to align with DOC and end of fiscal year timelines for contract renewals. | Brand MT Leadership |

Goal 3: **Create
and Enhance
Rural
Awareness/
Promotion**

Objective:

- Get people to know and stop

Strategies:

1. Made-in-Montana promotions
2. Film development and features
3. Tribal tourism development and promotion

Goal 3: General Workplan

| Task | Description | Lead |
|---|--|----------------------|
| Wayfinding grant | Per statute, funding is designated for wayfinding grants. Awards for wayfinding projects will need to be tied to grants associated with Main Street program or another community plan. | OOT and Community MT |
| Rural Content Development | Identify and initiate cooperative and efficient means to rapidly procure content to promote rural Montana. This includes content needed to build out web presence for rural MT (visitmt.com, etc.) | Marketing |
| Rural Marketing | Supplement/support strategies within Goal 2; rural specific publications. | Marketing |
| Transportation Awareness Plan | Create awareness of existing transportation options to and around rural MT. Additionally, develop improved transportation options, in coordination with pilot community program. | Marketing and OOT |
| Regional Development/Technical Assistance Conference(s) | Host series of regional conferences to educate and engage diverse stakeholders on rural tourism development. | OOT |

Goal 4: **Create a sustainable media manufacturing industry in Montana**

Objective:

- Create sustainability in film industry year-round.

Strategies:

1. Big Sky Film Grants
2. More in-state workforce with focus on rural and tribal
3. More high dollar projects
4. Promote and certify MEDIA Tax credit.
5. Promote Montana as a year-round location.
6. Legitimize Montana's level of professionalism in the industry.

| Goal 4: General Workplan | | |
|---|--|------|
| Task | Description | Lead |
| Workforce Development | Development of Native Americans and veterans (SB 14). Support workforce pipeline/apprentice programs | MFO |
| Outreach, partnerships and sponsorships | Outreach on MEDIA tax credit; Film Festival sponsorships; participate with partner organizations (Director's Guild, AFCI, etc); advocacy encouraging rural filmmaker applications to the grant program | MFO |
| Scout and promote for rural productions | Target seasonal and rural storylines/commercials; promote value of landscape (ads, out of state festivals) | MFO |
| Relaunch of Big Sky Film Grant | Grant Application bonus for rural locations; Grant Application and award geography tracking | MFO |

Goal 5: Make Brand MT programs more efficient

Objective:

- Promote responsible management of public funds and processes.

Strategies:

1. Streamline operations
2. Improve internal communications to be able to foster more collaboration within the division
3. Understanding the strengths of staff and direct those talents to meet the overall division goals while also seeking to minimize areas of weakness.
4. Provide accurate and timely information
5. Transparency
6. Improve budget procedures and how staff interacts with budget

Goal 5: General Workplan

| Task | Description | Lead |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Standard Operating Procedures | Programs lead on developing operating procedures (i.e checklists) to ensure all contracts, letters, all other documents representing the agency, and internal accounting documents are in final format, with no errors and in correct templates, to lessen the work and time that is needed for approvals. Additionally, supervisors will work with staff to develop SOPs for each position and/or program. Restructure and align positions with goals, strengths, and functions as needed. | Brand MT leadership |
| Budgeting and metrics management | Fully utilize all budgets as approved by each program and collate the identified metrics for that usage. Manage and correct any budgeting issues on a minimum monthly basis. | Brand MT leadership |
| Tracking and transparency | Adopt project management and budgeting tool for marketing (possibly for OOT as well). Single metric tracking tool (i.e. Salesforce) used uniformly across all programs and updated monthly at minimum. | Brand MT leadership |
| Cross integration and team growth | Provide accurate and timely information internally via: Weekly Office of Tourism Meetings to discuss updates and strategy; Bi-weekly joint meetings with OTT and Marketing to collaborate. Provide structure for cross planning and execution between the Office of Tourism and Marketing. Provide needed staff training. | Brand MT leadership |
| Customer Service and communication | Provide accurate and timely information externally via: Monthly TAC and Commerce leadership meetings; Monthly Brand MT meetings for updates; Friday Flash; Tourism Partner Call – 6 times per year; Made in Montana monthly e-blast. Connect citizens and visitors with the subject matter experts that can most effectively respond to the inquiry. | Brand MT leadership |

Appendix A

Purposeful Strategic Planning for Community Implementation of Rural Development Pilot Project:

Ideally, elements of this will already exist and be available to partners to review and utilize to maximize the investment of funds, human capital, time and other resources. Regional Resiliency Plan, MEDA Assessments, Capital Improvement Plan, Growth Policies, etc. should be used. Technical assistance and tools will be provided by state partners to ensure success.

1. Define the Vision: Clearly articulate the desired outcome of the project in alignment with the community's needs and aspirations. Engage stakeholders to establish a shared vision for the project.
2. Stakeholder Analysis: Identify and engage key stakeholders, including community members, local government representatives, businesses, and relevant organizations. Understand their perspectives, needs, and concerns regarding the project.
3. Assess Community Needs and Gaps: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the community's current infrastructure needs and identify any existing gaps or deficiencies. This assessment should encompass transportation, utilities, public spaces, communication networks, and other relevant areas.
4. SMART Goals Development: Formulate Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals that address the identified community needs and gaps. Each goal should be clear, quantifiable, realistic, and time-bound.

Appendix A - continued

Examples of SMART Goals:

- a. Increase public transportation accessibility by implementing a new bus route that connects underserved/under visited neighborhoods/sites within two years, resulting in a 20% increase in ridership.
- b. Improve water and sanitation infrastructure by upgrading aging pipes and expanding sewage treatment capacity, reducing water leakages by 30% within three years.
- c. Enhance digital connectivity by providing high-speed internet access to 95% of businesses in the community within five years.
- d. Create safe and inclusive public spaces by constructing three new parks equipped with recreational facilities and ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities within five years.

5. Resource Assessment and Allocation: Identify the necessary resources (financial, human, technical) to implement the project. Evaluate the availability of resources within the community and explore potential partnerships or funding sources to fill any gaps.
6. Risk Assessment and Mitigation: Identify potential risks and challenges that may hinder the successful implementation of the project. Develop strategies to mitigate these risks, such as contingency plans, alternative approaches, or stakeholder engagement initiatives.
7. Implementation Plan: Create a detailed plan outlining the steps, timeline, responsible parties, and monitoring mechanisms for executing the project. Ensure that the plan reflects the SMART goals, addresses community needs, and integrates feedback from stakeholders.
8. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms to monitor the progress of the project and evaluate its impact on the community. Regularly collect data, measure key performance indicators, and seek feedback from stakeholders to track progress and make necessary adjustments.
9. Communication and Engagement Strategy: Develop a comprehensive communication plan to keep the community informed about the project's progress, milestones, and benefits. Foster meaningful engagement with stakeholders through regular updates, public consultations, and opportunities for input and collaboration.
10. Sustainability and Long-term Maintenance: Consider the long-term sustainability of the infrastructure project by identifying strategies for ongoing maintenance, operation, and funding. Explore options for community involvement and ownership to ensure the project's longevity.

By following these steps and incorporating SMART goals into the strategic planning process, the community can effectively implement a project that addresses their needs and contributes to their overall well-being, asset development and return on investment.

