Montana Grants and Loans

Grant Details

95522 - FY21 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

101299 - FY21 Yellowstone Country Marketing Plan
DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title:	FY21 Yellowstone Country Marketing Plan
Grant Number:	21-51-010
Grant Status:	Underway
Comments:	
Applicant Organization:	Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc.
Grantee Contact:	Robin Hoover
Award Year:	FY21
Program Area:	DOC Office of Tourism
Amounts:	

Contract Dates:	Contract Sent		Contract Received		Contract Executed
Project Dates:	06/15/2020	07/01/2020		06/30/2021	
	Proposal Date	Project Start		Project End	

Grant Administrator:	Barb Sanem
Contract Number	21-51-010
Award Year	FY21
Contract	
Dates	

Contract Sent   Contract Received   Contract Executed   Contract Legal

Project Dates	07/01/2020	
	06/30/2021	
	Project Start	Project End

Comments
Amendment Comments

Community & Brand Support

Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why would they come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges. How does your destination align with Montana's brand pillars?

COVID-19 STATEMENT

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Yellowstone Country is prepared to face severe budget reductions for FY 21 (and possibly beyond). It is our intention to make strategic changes as needed based on a number of factors: amount of funds available (cashflow), which marketing endeavors we feel are of highest value (ROI), the flexibility of the marketing method, and the actual required reductions based on collections.

Please see attached alternate budget scenarios at a 25% and 35% decrease; these budget show where we would make the reductions as warrented. NOTE: Yellowstone Country is prepared to decrease the budget at even greater percentages; in the event of a 40% or greater budget cut, we would substantially reduce and/or eliminate Print Advertising, Photo/VIDEO Library, Website Updates & Developments, our Cultural Tourism grant program, Press Promotions/Media Outreach and Press/Influencer trips.

As we begin the recovery phase, we will be prioritizing regional & drive market promotion, as well as in-state travel from one region to another. As travel increases, we would look to shift some focus to the remaining geographic, psychographic, demographic & niche markets. It is likely we would "pause" our planned promotion for New & Emerging Markets until deemed appropriate-based on budget, data, etc.

In the unlikely event YC has more marketing funds available than expected, we have identified Digital and Social Media Advertising as the budgets we would increase. In the event we have to reduce the FY 21 budget, we would reduce/eliminate Print Advertising because of the cost factor and inability to track performance in an up-to-the-minute capacity. Additionally, if necessary, we would reduce our Social Media Influencer/Press trip and Media Outreach budgets for the same reasons.

PURPOSE: The sole purpose of Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc. (YC, YCMI) is to promote the five-county region (Gallatin, Park, Sweet Grass, Stillwater & Carbon) of Montana as a year-round destination for leisure & business travelers.

Yellowstone Country Differentiator: The " **Beyond Yellowstone**" experience that can be found throughout the YC region; the primary reason people come to Montana is to visit Yellowstone National Park; however, once (or in addition to) they experience the park, the region offers the opportunity to "get away from your getaway by heading north of the park". Visiting the world's most famous national park is a must for many people, but Yellowstone Country's purpose & mission is to broaden the experience to encompass what can be found in Montana's south-central region bordering the park.

STRENGTHS

Yellowstone Country's core strengths include its main scenic attractions—Yellowstone National Park and the Beartooth All-American Road—as well as countless cultural and recreational opportunities.

• **Yellowstone National Park** and its **Gateway Communities**: Three of the five entrances to YNP are located in YC, including the only year-round entrance at Gardiner, the northeast entrance at Cooke City/Silver Gate and the most-accessed entrance at West Yellowstone.

• **Scenic Drives**: Paradise Valley (Livingston to Gardiner), the **Beartooth All-American Road** (Red Lodge to Cooke City), Gallatin Canyon (Bozeman to Big Sky), Lake Loop (Bozeman to Norris), Absarokee Loop (Absarokee to Nye to Fishtail and back to Absarokee), and many, many other routes through Yellowstone National Park.

• **Alpine Ski Resorts**: Bridger Bowl, Big Sky and Red Lodge Mountain are three of the top ski resorts in the state.

• **World-Renowned Snowmobile Areas**: Cooke City, West Yellowstone, Crazy Mountains area, Gallatin River Corridor.

• **Nordic Skiing**: Nordic Centers and many miles of groomed trails throughout the region.

• **Culture and History**: From Native Americans and dinosaurs to mining, ranching and mountain men, the region offers a very interesting and unique blend of history and culture. The **Lewis & Clark Trail** runs through the region from Three Forks to Park City, and the historically siognificant **Bozeman Trail** covered much of the area.. Yellowstone Country is a partner in the statewide **Montana Dinosaur Trail**, with **Museum of the Rockies** being an anchor facility. **Tippet Rise** is a world-class sculpture & music venue. **Lifestyle Culture:** Western way of life that includes rodeos, working & guest ranch experiences. Foodies and brewery/distillery afficionados will find the area a "hot bed" of great venues to satisfy them. Although the YC region does not have a reservation, many of the Native American tribes were in the area, with the original Crow Agency site, Madsion Buffalo Jump & Headeaters of the Missouri all holding significant cultural & historical value for Indian Country.

• **Annual Events**: Local festivals & events such as the uniquely *Montana Reed Point Sheep Drive* abound; farmers markets, fairs, community rodeos, Independence Day celebrations and countless other events, including long-running events. For winter enthusiasts, there are several unique winter events such as KidsnSnow, ski-joring & winter carnivals.

• **Outdoor Recreation**: The region abounds with outdoor recreation opportunities—Alpine & Nordic skiing, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing (in and around Yellowstone National Park), water recreation (fishing, boating, rafting, kayaking, swimming), ice climbing, hiking, snowshoeing & soaking in one of the region's hot springs.

• **Destination Lodging and Meeting Facilities**: Several communities in the region have properties and facilities that can accommodate small to mid-size meetings and conventions. Bozeman and Big Sky also have full-service entities with the capacity to host larger groups.

• **Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport**: As the busiest airport in the state, BZN offers the most direct flights and easy access to the entire region.

• **Open Lands**: Yellowstone Country features public access to BLM lands, Forest Service land and national parks, all just a short distance from any point in the region.

• **Four Montana State Parks**-provides recreation and culture/history: *Cooney Reservoir* is a premier outdoor/water recreation venue, and *Missouri River Headwaters* and *Madison Buffalo Jump* state parks are well known for both outdoor recreation and culture/history. *Greycliff Prairie Dog Town State Park* is unique and fun for family recreation. There are also camping and RV options located at or nearby the parks.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

• Inclement Weather Conditions/Natural Disasters: Fire, floods, etc.

• Climate Change: Changes in climate affect recreational opportunities (such as fishing), the economy (tourism and related jobs) and our environment (wildlife and plant populations).

• Transportation Issues: Public transportation, seasonality of service.

• Economic Climate: Budget cuts.

• Infrastructure: As the number of visitors increases, infrastructure issues are a concern

• Crowding/Overuse in YNP: Real or perceived.

• Seasonality: Weather, amenities/service availability and staffing all have an impact on the potential growth of shoulder seasons.

• Opportunity to market shoulder season activities to Montana residents, empty-nesters and singles.

• Ability to entice a younger demographic with endless recreation and rich culture.

• Increased air service opens new markets.

• Increasing diversity and frequency of international visitors who may not be familiar with the outdoors or related challenges such as weather, distance and access. Additionally, there may be language and currency barriers.

• Large scale disease outbreaks, including the **coronavirus**

MONTANA BRAND PILLARS

YC aligns effortlessly with Montana's Brand Pillars. There is an abundance of spectacular, unspoiled nature. Given the multitude of recreational options, the region certainly meets the definition of offering breathtaking experiences. As with the majority of Montana, our communities are known for having friendly, hospitable people who work hard to help make a visitor's experience one to remember.

• **SPECTACULAR, UNSPOILED NATURE** Yellowstone Country is anchored by two major iconic destinations: **Yellowstone National Park** and the **Beartooth All-American Road (BAAR)**. **Custer Gallatin National Forest, Absaroka-Beartooth** and **Lee Metcalf** wilderness areas, **BLM** areas and city/county trail systems are all within a short distance from population centers, so, one can be in any community in the region and truthfully say they are "surrounded by spectacular, unspoiled nature." YC is one region in the state that presents visitors both spectacular mountain vistas with panoramic valleys and sweeping, wide open plains just a short distance apart.

• **BREATHTAKING EXPERIENCES BY DAY, RELAXING HOSPITALITY AT NIGHT** As the Montana region that borders Yellowstone—America's first national park—there's something for both the adventurous and those who prefer the quiet side of the outdoors. Whether that includes hitting the ski slopes and trails, soaking in natural hot springs, camping in any season (and in any style of lodging), or exploring the great outdoors by hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling or even dog-sledding, Yellowstone Country has it all.

The region has a multitude of art galleries, nature centers, museums and historical sites. Local attractions, festivals and events offer fun opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in community culture, whether it's attending a rodeo, taking in a lively music festival, participating in and/or watching an exciting winter ski or snowmobile event or just spending time taking in the surroundings.

• **VIBRANT, CHARMING SMALL TOWNS THAT SERVE AS GATEWAYS** Showcasing the region's diverse, welcoming communities is an integral part of YC's marketing strategy. Each place has a unique local culture that makes it stand apart from neighboring towns. Explore Gardiner, Red Lodge, Cooke City, Livingston, Bozeman, Big Sky, West Yellowstone and every town in between. There are hidden (and not-so-hidden) gems for experiencing local community hospitality. Better yet, these communities are the gateways to whatever and wherever a visitor wants to experience.

Yellowstone Country Differentiator: The " **Beyond Yellowstone**" experience that can be found throughout the YC region; the primary reason people come to Montana is to visit Yellowstone National Park; however, once (or in addition to) they experience the park, the region offers the opportunity to "get away from your getaway by heading north of the park". Visiting the world's most famous national park is a must for many people, but Yellowstone Country's purpose & mission is to broaden the experience to encompass what can be found in Montana's south-central region bordering the park.

Describe your destination.

Direct marketing campaigns and each of the associated marketing tools/resources (website, social media platforms, travel planner and scenic map, etc.) are all highly integrated, providing the right information at the right time during the inspiration, orientation and facilitation phases of trip planning.

<u>INSPIRATION</u>

Marketing Campaign messaging and imagery are specifically designed to address the Inspiration phase to targeted audience segments. This messaging inspires visitors and potential visitors to view themselves, and their destination, through the lens of Montana's brand…free-spirited, adventurous, genuine and captivating.

YC will leverage its hashtags/taglines to embody the spirit of visitors:
#BoldlyGoMT
#BeyondYellowstone
The Yellowstone you haven't seen yet
Winter is waiting

Local events throughout the region also provide ample opportunities for creative, inspirational marketing. Yellowstone Country partners with a number of these events through our grant programs, assisting with marketing & promotion and support activities that help existing events to grow and new events to be implemented.

Email communication to targeted audiences promotes specific opportunities at critical points throughout the year, allowing for relevant communication to reach the right people. In FY21, we plan to further refine our communication, with timely and relevant storytelling through email marketing. Our list of 31,700 subscribers who have opted to receive regular notifications is a ripe opportunity for more in-depth communication. Through audience segmentation by self-selected interests, we are creating a series of interactions from a first-person perspective, designed to build a deeper rapport with our community. Social media audience segmentation will play a key role in supporting these efforts.

Social Media supports the Inspiration and Orientation phases, as we consistently engage consumers throughout a season or in relation to a specific community, event, attraction or activity. The ITRR 2019 Non-resident Visitor Information study reports 100% of visitors used social media in planning and while on their trip to the Yellowstone Country region. Significant trends indicate audiences want more meaningful connections; authenticity is essential. Social media wellness is becoming more critical than ever, with followers wanting quality versus quantity. Yellowstone Country provides an engaging way to escape into something positive and inspiring.

We will continue to curate consistent **blog** posts to tell the stories of our culture, recreation, people and events and are seeing terrific engagement. Utilizing User Generated Content (UGC), generated through the CrowdRiff platform in stories, videos, and posts, we can show a broad spectrum of landscapes, activities, attractions, and events from the visitor's perspective, giving followers an authentic feel for our area.

Working with our local CVB's, Chambers of Commerce, and board members, we have cultivated a content calendar for our blog that tells the stories of the culture, people, places, and events of each unique community. We partner with communities and CVBs to develop a comprehensive social media plan, lining up internal and external resources to create efficiencies and ROI.

HubSpot predicts that video will comprise 82% of all internet traffic in 2020. We will continue to utilize short-form videos from UGC, board members, and employees to tell the story of the Yellowstone Country experience. The popularity of ephemeral content is increasing, and video gets excellent engagement on both Instagram and Facebook stories.

Potential Social Media opportunities under consideration for FY 21 include: *increased social video content; Instagram takeovers, stories and video; Pinterest pins; and Facebook Live videos*. Finally, we'll continue to use unique hashtags (#beyondyellowstone and #BoldlyGoMT) to encourage organic discussions specific to the YC brand.

<u>ORIENTATION AND FACILITATION</u>

The Yellowstone Country website, call center, travel guide and scenic road map are the primary resources for helping travelers with the orientation and facilitation phases, although all have functions during the inspiration phase as well. These innovative resources are designed to make the travel planning process as easy and efficient as possible.

The website creates a seamless experience for visitors, providing an itinerary builder to facilitate planning while simultaneously gathering information to help target future communications to users' interests.

The call center provides personalized assistance to people interested in (or currently visiting) Yellowstone Country. It also provides the opportunity to gather data about visitors and prospective visitors, which informs future planning.

The travel guide provides in-depth information on the entire region, spanning seasons, activities and events.

The scenic road map helps draw people from Yellowstone National Park into the surrounding areas, offering many possibilities for scenic drives in the region.

In addition, Yellowstone Country participates in national press events in key markets, providing a unique opportunity for orientation and facilitation. Targeted marketing campaigns in these markets, aligning with press events, encourage additional and continued conversation. Branded promotional items provide an opportunity to keep top-of-mind presence with attendees. Following press events, custom itineraries are crafted for select media members to visit the region and provide targeted coverage to their respective audiences.

Finally, YC funds 10 Visitor Information Centers throughout the region. VICs provide an opportunity for staff, who are ostensibly local brand ambassadors, to engage visitors during all three phases, helping to create positive visitor experiences.

Optional: Include attachments here   Budget FY21 25 35 % decrease scenarios 4-20.xlsx

a. Define your target markets (demographic, geopgraphic and psychographic).

YC identified a core group of target audiences in FY 17 and have continued marketing to them in subsequent years, while also adding in new markets identified through evaluation of research data, campaign tracking, social media analysis, locations where there's new/increased air service to MT & media outreach.

a. Define your target markets (demographic, geographic and psychographic).
<u>TARGET MARKETS</u>

In FY 21, primary geographic markets include:

Pennsylvania (*Philadelphia)
California (Los Angeles, *San Diego, *San Francisco, Orange County)
Illinois (*Chicago)
Oregon (*Portland)
Colorado (Denver)
Texas (*Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston)
Georgia (*Atlanta)
Minnesota (Minneapolis/St. Paul)
Washington (Seattle)
Utah (Salt Lake City)
Massachusetts (Boston)
New York (New York)

Tennessee (*Nashville)–identified in our FY 20 plan; on hold for FY 21 due to COVID-19

These markets were identified based on FY20 inquiries (including website inquiries, live chats and incoming calls) as well as VisaVue data.

*Asterisk locations represent press event focus areas in FY17, FY18, FY19, FY20.

In FY 21, secondary geographic markets include:

Saskatchewan, Canada
Alberta, Canada
British Columbia, Canada

These markets were identified based on FY20 inquiries (including website inquiries, live chats and incoming calls) as well as VisaVue data.

*Due to COVID, our focus will be domestic travel, so we would only implement advertising in the secondary markets if the budget did not have the expected decreases.

Key Demographic Markets for Yellowstone Country:

City dwellers (i.e., not rural, not suburban)
Affluent with a household income over $80k
Well-educated
Married with children

These characteristics were identified based on Destination Analysts reporting.

Key Psychographic Markets for Yellowstone Country:

Social Class - middle to upper class (in terms of disposable income)
Lifestyle - active, outdoor-recreation oriented, frequent travelers
Opinions - interested, but primarily influenced by desire to experience things for themselves
Activities and Interests - outdoor activities, history and culture, foodies
Attitudes and Beliefs - environmentally conscious, adventurous spirits, like nature
Technology-savvy - using mobile devices in all stages of planning and travel
Families – Family travel

These characteristics were identified based on Destination Analysts reporting.

b. What are your emerging markets?

NICHE MARKETS

In-State Residents
If budget allows, we will create in-state 'staycation' campaigns for Montanans, promoting the spring and fall shoulder seasons. Messaging will encourage locals to take advantage of Montana's beauty and adventure, all while escaping the crowds of peak seasons. FY19 and FY20 included specific digital advertising campaigns for in-state travelers. Should budget allow, we will look at including continued in-state traveler outreach in FY21.

Due to COVID-19, marketing to our in-state travelers will take on a higher priority than in years past. Top industry research companies such as Destination Analysts, Adara and the US Travel Association are all pointing to drive markets as being the travel segment that is most likely to return first. In the weekly research summary the week of May 10, DA showed that research respondents indicated they would take a driving trip for 3-5 days & would travels distances of up to 400 miles. This points to Montana residents as being a key target market for us in the wake of COVID-19, since travelers coming from other regions of MT to Yellowstone Country would likely be traveling within that distance parameter.

The focus of our marketing efforts to both in state and regional drive markets (WY, the Dakotas, UT, ID, WA, etc.) will be to promote outdoor recreation in conjunction with the hospitality component; there is a significant opportunity to push the message that we have uncrowded (i.e. relatively SAFE) places to recreate and expereince what the region has to offer.

A subset of the in-state audience is visiting friends and family members. This group is less likely to require the full spectrum of tourist services (i.e., hotels and restaurants), but very likely to show interest in experiencing Yellowstone Country. Family members visiting students at MSU and UM are a special segment to consider in this group.

Western Ski Audiences
Direct marketing to skiers who frequent western ski resorts (i.e., Colorado and Utah), in addition to a continued presence in Dallas, Chicago, Atlanta and San Diego, promoting YC's accessibility and adventure. FY17, FY18, FY19 and FY20 all included heavy print, digital, social media and video campaigns aimed at western ski audiences. FY21 will include that as well, including more video creation and itinerary building on the Yellowstone Country website.

History Audiences
Travelers are often natural history lovers, with a yearning to learn about the world, it's people, places, and cultures. History ties so much together, and with a guide along the way to help make connections, historical facts and stories have a greater emotional impact. **According to ITRR 2018 non-resident data, 17% of visitors to the region are visiting museums and 20% are visiting other historical sites. This represents a significant increase over previous years; this is an emerging and/or growing market for us.** FY20 addressed this audience in the Glaciers to Geysers joint venture with Glacier Country. Should budget allow, FY21 would include continued promotion of this project with the possibility of added partners and projects.

Motorcyclists

Motorcyclists are a growing niche market who provide ample opportunities for targeted messaging within the region, and potentially in partnerships with neighboring regions. Opportunities include itineraries and maps featuring unique and appealing roadways, targeted media buys and a combination of in-state (drive) and out-of-state (fly-ride) messages. FY19 included the creation of motorcycle-specific targeting with the Glaciers to Geysers joint venture with Glacier Country. FY20 included videography and photography specific to motorcycling to be used in future campaigns, while the Glaciers to Geysers project included continued promotion to this audience.

Snowmobilers

Snowmobiling continues to expand in popularity and attract new audiences. Between guided trips and the option to go sled on your own, there's something for everyone. Snowmobile campaigns could be focused within the region, or potentially in partnership with other regions. Similar to the motorcycle audience, snowmobile campaigns could include itineraries, maps, targeted media buys and a combination of in-state (drive) and out-of-state (fly-ride) messages. FY19 included the creation of snowmobile-specific targeting with the Glaciers to Geysers joint venture with Glacier Country. FY20 included videography and photography specific to snowmobiling to be used in future campaigns, while the Glaciers to Geysers project included continued promotion to this audience.

Birding Enthusiasts

Birding has become a valuable niche activity, and there are plenty of locations within the region, and in neighboring regions, that continue to draw this group. One potential way to capture this audience would be to create a map of birding locations, such as the Missouri Headwaters State Park) and events such as Bridger Bowl's Raptor Festival in October. Detailed information could be provided by break-out maps of specific locations within the larger map. This could be accomplished within region, or with partner regions, ideally expanding to a state-wide birding map over time. FY20 included the updating of our birding-specific information on our website. Should budget allow, FY21 would llnclude looking at other options for promotion to this audience.

Military Families

Military families and bases present a unique niche marketing opportunity as well. Due to the nature of their work, military families often travel at various times throughout the year (not necessarily restricted to standard summer and winter trips), and tend to take longer vacations in comparison to citizen families. In addition, bases often provide news and communication outlets unique to bases, providing targeted channels to reach this group. There is an opportunity to test this niche marketing with an in-state audience at the Malmstrom Base. Again, this could be a project within the region or with partnering regions. FY20 included the partnership of Megan Wristen, an influencer and travel writer that has a big following with military families. She spent four days on a familiarization trip in September of 2019 in the Yellowstone Country region. Should budget allow, we would look at additional ways to target this audience in FY21.

Craft Beverage Enthusiasts

Craft beverage venues (breweries, distilleries, wineries, cideries) have a growing following, and are found frequently throughout Montana. A targeted campaign could be considered for a craft tour, for instance. FY19 included the partnership of Reed Ramsay, an influencer and travel writer that has a big following with craft beer enthusiasts. He spent a week on a familiarization trip in October of 2018 in the Yellowstone Country region. Should budget allow, we would look at additional ways to target this audience in FY21.

EMERGING MARKETS

Foodies

Promoting the region's best restaurants to travelers who are interested in fine dining, unique dining experiences and Montana's hospitality. Should budget allow, we would look at ways to target this audience in FY21.

Entertainment Seekers

If budget allows, we will capitalize on visitors who are coming to Montana for entertainment purposes (i.e., concerts, festivals, rodeos, etc.), encouraging them to extend their visit to include time exploring Yellowstone Country. As new venues, such as Bozeman's historic Rialto Theatre, continue to sprout up, additional audiences will be drawn to Yellowstone Country for entertainment. A new music venue, The Elm, is set to debut in Bozeman in December 2020. Should budget allow, we would look at ways to target this audience in FY21.

Western Culture Seekers

With a wide variety of ranch-style accommodations spanning from working dude ranches to five-star venues, there are ranches to suit every visitor's idea of the perfect western vacation. Similarly, outfitters provide hands on, genuine experiences in Yellowstone Country. With many visitors drawn to an authentic Montana experience, ranches and outfitters provide another means to reach a niche audience. Plans have already been discussed to include additional videography and photography for rodeos in FY21 and should budget allow, we would look at additional ways to target this audience in FY21.

International Visitors

Downloadable PDFs of brochures, travel guides, unique landing pages, etc.

Urban Areas

Marketing campaigns aligning with press events. Selecting urban areas of focus in relation to identified key markets. At a state level, anticipated markets include return trips to additional urban areas in California and Texas, in addition to new markets in New York, Pennsylvania and Minnesota.

Direct Flight Markets

Planning for the impact of COVID-19 in our marekting efforts will be the most difficult in the fly markets. At the time of this submission, the BZN airport is operating at approximately 5% of normal traffic, and all indicators are that air travel will be slower to return. However, since there are some indications that consumers are ready to book air travel, we intend to continue our digital & programmatic outreach in our identified fly markets. The segment of air/fly promotion we will be decreasing significantly in regards to COVID is our travel media & influence outreach program. In the past few years, YC has hosted in-market media outreach events and trips for qualifies/vetted travel journalists & media influencers who have the reach to our traget audiences; our efforts in FY 21 will concentrate more on digital & social media components that help keep the region as a top-of-mind destination.

Create awareness around direct flights and entice travelers to consider Yellowstone Country as their next destination.

The Bozeman Air Transportation Committee continues to work on bringing new and increased air service to the region through planning and marketing efforts. The committee is a public/private partnership between Yellowstone Country, Bozeman CVB, Big Sky CVB, Big Sky Resort, Yellowstone Club, Lone Mountain Land Companies and the Gallatin Yellowstone International Airport.

Current Direct Market Flights include:

- Atlanta
- Boston
- Chicago
- Dallas/Fort Worth
- Denver
- Detroit
- Houston
- Las Vegas
- Los Angeles
- Minneapolis/St. Paul
- New York (La Guardia & JFK)
- Nashville
- Newark
- Philadelphia
- Phoenix
- Portland
- Salt Lake City
- San Francisco
- Seattle/Tacoma
- Long Beach

Optional: Include attachments here.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

Destination Analysts, Inc. found the following in its 2016 Montana Brand Exploration Research:

"Montana is an aspirational destination, and effectively converting this aspiration to visitation should well benefit the state's tourism industry. When asked which of seventeen tested destinations they were likely to visit in the next five years, over one-in-five surveyed travelers selected Montana (21.0%). This level of interest in visiting Montana is notably greater than the rate of past visitation (21.0% vs. 13.8%), suggesting there exists considerable untapped demand."

"Of all American destination types, international travelers have the most enthusiasm for U.S. National Parks, presenting Montana's great potential for attracting international visitors."

"Family travelers are a natural fit with Montana's travel product, including that available in the eastern portion of the state. They are a large and lucrative segment. In the Montana Brand Exploration Survey, approximately one-third, 32.0 percent, of travelers reported having children under the age of 18 in their homes. Like high potential visitors, family travelers index high on outdoor psychographics, have high incomes and would expect to spend more and stay longer in the state than other travelers."

"History buffs are also clearly a high-value audience that fits Montana perfectly. They represent over one-third, 34.7 percent, of the overall population of the state's key target markets. History buffs score higher on the outdoor psychographic index, have higher incomes and would spend more and stay longer in Montana compared to travelers who are not history buffs. Again, this is a large and lucrative niche segment."

"Although retirees are an important current audience for Montana, they are a smaller, lower-value segment. This group represents approximately 15 percent of the overall population of the state's key target markets (14.7%). In an environment where limited funds are available to address marketing segments, retirees do not appear to represent a high-value segment. Using all of the data points used to evaluate the other niche segments, retirees are problematic. In short, they are less interested in outdoor experiences while traveling, less excited about Montana, have lower incomes and when reporting about their ideal trip to the state, appear to be less likely to be big spenders."

"The three core elements…from an analysis of the data collected in this research are (1) unique natural encounters without giving up modern comforts, (2) comfortable isolation that attracts free-spirited adventurers, (3) a place for entirely new experiences and a place for new ways of experiencing the familiar."

"Montana's beauty is seen as different from that of its competitors. Its landscapes were described as feeling bigger and more open. As product differentiation is central to developing an effective brand platform, this should be considered a central element of how travelers perceive the state."

ITRR 2019 non-resident study data shows the average length of stay for non-resident visitors to MT was 5.45 nights, with 71% of those in Yellowstone Country. 17% of groups included first-time visitors to the state, and 67% were repeat visitors. 69% of non-residents said their primary reason for visiting was vacation/recreation/pleasure.

According to ITRR's **Focus on Activities** report, visitors are interested in the very activities Yellowstone Country is promoting:

• Removing the typical "mass" tourism activities for each quarter (scenic driving, recreational shopping, attending a family event), niche activities emerged as a favorite and meaningful experience during travelers' Montana trips for each quarter. Day hiking, watching wildlife and nature photography were universal favorites for all four quarters. Additional niche activities per quarter were:

Q1: skiing/snowboarding (62%), visiting breweries ($25%), snowmobiling (17%), cross-country skiing (11%) and visiting museums (10%)

Q2: Car/RV camping (26%), visiting museums (22%), visiting other historical sites (18%), visiting breweries (16%), fishing/fly-fishing (11%) and birding (10%)

Q3: Car/RV camping (35%), visiting historic sites (21%), visiting museums (19%), visiting breweries (19%), fishing/fly-fishing (17%)

Q4: Visiting breweries (23%), visiting historic sites (19%), Car/RV camping (14%), skiing/snowboarding (13%), visiting museums (11%)

The following 2019 ITRR data shows those activities visitors were participating in while in the Yellowstone Country region:

62% Scenic driving

50% Day hiking

47% Wildlife watching

38% Nature photography

29% Recreational shopping

27% Car / RV camping

19% Visit local brewery

18% Visiting historical sites

18% Visiting museums

11% Fishing / fly fishing

9% Visiting Lewis & Clark sites

9% Skiing/snowboarding

7% Attending festivals or events

7% Birding

7% Viewing art exhibits

6% Visit farmers market

5% River rafting / floating

4% Visit Indian reservations, horseback riding, dinosaur attractions, golfing

3% Visit local distillery, canoeing / kayaking, snowmobiling, rockhounding, cross-country skiing

The **BZN airport** provided the following 2019 data (January 08, 2020):

Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (BZN) handled 1,573,860 passengers during 2019. This is an increase of 231,570 passengers (17.3%) compared to 2018 and is the 10th consecutive year of record-breaking passenger traffic. Annual passenger traffic has more than doubled over the past 10 years and accounts for one third of all airline passengers traveling to and from Montana.

Passenger totals in and out by airline brand in 2019 were:

· Delta Air Lines – 545,668

· United Airlines – 538,984

· Alaska Airlines – 186,386

· American Airlines – 149,753

· Allegiant Air – 73,187

· Frontier Airlines – 57,849

· JetBlue – 15,415

· Chartered Airline Flights – 6,618

Yellowstone Country provides staff funding for 10 VICs located throughout the region for the warm season Memorial Day – September. As a requirement of the funding, **VICs compile statistical information** including where visitors are from, how many in the party, primary/secondary reasons for travel to the area, types of activities they participate in, and events they plan to attend. Information provided by our VIC's continues to be a strong resource for identifying new geographic, demographic & psychographic target markets and crafting marketing strategy.

GOALS

1. Increase YC BRAND Recognition: Continue to raise awareness and build excitement about the "Yellowstone experience beyond the park" concept across all seasons.
2. Increase recognition of regional communities as unique destinations by working with partner DMO's & community organizations & leaders.
3. Increase awareness of Yellowstone Country's natural, cultural, heritage and recreational assets by implementing strategic marketing campaigns & continuing promotion of events.
4. Increase Montana's tourism economy by quality of visitor & not just quantity--target low impact, high value visitors.

PRIMARY GOAL

YC's primary goal is to raise brand awareness of this region as a premier travel destination.

Objectives for meeting this goal:

- Implement strategic media campaigns that reach our targeted audience(s)
- Implement supporting resources for managing & tracking marketing & promotion campaigns
- Encouraging visitation to authentic cultural & heritage assets
- Sharing the "local flavor" through promotion of festivals & events throughout the region
- Highlighting the abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities

a. In what types of co-ops with MTOT would you like to participate?

YC is looking for additional opportunities to create co-ops impacting direct flight markets across the state. Yellowstone Country continues to work in cooperation with the BZN Air Transportation Committee (comprised of airport representatives, local partners and MTOTBD) to implement marketing campaigns in targeted markets to increase air service, but seeks opportunities to work with MOTBD and other regions to implement airline marketing that benefits the entire state.

It is likely that for FY 21, we are considering the following MOTBD Advertising Joint Ventures:

- Sojern
- Trip Advisor
- VisaVue
- Possibly Parents Magazine

If MOTBD offers specific winter and shoulder season campaigns that fit our target markets, those would be strongly considered.

YC would participate in Joint Ventures with MOTBD, the Regions & CVBs to promote Native American culture, history and visitation. The JVs could take the form of traditional advertising and/or partnering to host travel media & influencers.

YC will continue to partner with MOTBD and other Regions/CVBs on an ongoing basis for:

v Montana Dinosaur Trial (brochures, website, marketing campaigns)

v Greater Yellowstone Region Mapguide brochure

Optional: Include attachment here.

b. In what other types of co-ops would you like to participate? (Regions/CVBs, etc.)

YC will continue to foster partnerships with CVBs and other regions to allow for a greater impact of marketing efforts through social media, press trips, digital and print advertising and consumer collateral to promote tourism. In FY 20, YC partnered with Glacier Country, Southeast Montana and Destination Missoula, as well as a number of in-region CVBs. We look forward to identifying additional opportunities inside—and outside—of our region in the future. For FY21, our focus will be to partner with other regions to promote common emerging and niche markets identified in this plan. In FY 21, YC will participate in a joint venture for On The Snow with to promote our ski areas since one will not be offered again by MOTBD.

For FY 21, we are considering these Joint Ventures with other Regions/CVBs:

- Glacier Country (Print & Digital)
  - Continuation of Glaciers to Geysers, a separate project
  - Destination Missoula (Print & Digital)
  - Southeast Montana (Print & Digital)
  - Possibly other CVBs in Region

Building partnerships with organizations and businesses throughout the region will also continue to be a major focus for Yellowstone Country. We expect to have many opportunities to combine marketing efforts to help leverage branding and budgets, within both the public and private sectors. One opportunity would be to provide cost sharing for smaller communities to access data and conduct surveys through ITRR.

Due to scales of economy, many of the seven regional CVBs wouldn't be able to participate in large-scale efforts without YC's partnership. Therefore, it is a primary goal to continue offering creative marketing partnerships with feasible costs to our regional CVBs.

Additionally, YC will continue to vet opportunities to partner with Montana State Parks to promote the four state parks in the region as both stand-alone destinations and as part of the "bigger" experience. Comparing the average state park visitor demographic profile to the YC visitor profile shows there is a strong similarity in these audiences.

YC would participate in Joint Ventures with MOTBD, the Regions & CVBs to promote Native American culture, history and visitation. The JVs could take the form of traditional advertising and/or partnering to host travel media & influencers.

c. What types of co-ops have you done in the past? Were they successful - why or why not?

YC offers co-op opportunities for regional CVBs and businesses. We work to provide a greater impact and opportunity for underfunded entities to advertise nationally. This year, we offered annual, winter specific, and warm season specific co-ops, with great participation.

YC region co-ops that have been the most successful have been those that help communities raise awareness and/or promote local events. YC has also partnered with CVBs and businesses for several press trips and video shoots throughout the region.

Trip Advisor, Network Programmatic banner and video, in-state digital and national print co-operatives have given the entire region a presence, with the intention of continued growth and development of future options. In this model, YC has been able to offer digital and print packages to in-region partners at a fraction of the cost of the overall placements.

Optional: Include attachments here.

Optional: Include attachment here.

Optional: Include attachment here:

Marketing Segment, Method & Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Describe your method.	Provide supporting research/statistics.	How do you plan to measure success?	Provide a brief rationale for this method.	Estimated budget for method.	Marketing Method Evaluation	Add'l Attchmnt
							a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c). Yes, we will use this method in the future.	

Consumer	Print Advertising	The strategy for print advertising is to place highly targeted advertorial and/or display content in key publications that reach a specific audience. Examples: Skiing, snowmobiling, lifestyle publications. *Advantages of print media advertising:* *Specific Target Audience:* In print media, the advantage of catering to specific target audience opens up countless opportunities for reaching the audience. There is a greater efficiency in resources, as ads reach the target audience. *Loyal Readerships:* In the print media industry, readership is mostly longstanding and loyal. *Special Ad Positioning:* A major advantage in magazine advertising is that an advertiser can request special ad positioning, bringing greater visibility to the brand. *Credibility:* Over a period of years, magazines create a vast pool of loyal readers who feel safe in its very credible environment. *Long Life Span:* Compared to websites or national newspapers, magazines enjoy the longest life span. Some magazines (Nat Geo) are treasured across decades. *High Reach Prospective:* Another advantage is that magazines have a high reach prospective. Magazines pass from family, friends, colleagues, etc. *Glossy Ads:* These are usually trend setting and eye catching. Maximum visibility is reiterated through magazine advertising. *Complementary & Encouragement of Digital Ads:* Print ads will complement YC's digital campaigns already in play and entice readers to interact with YC's brand in a digital space.	Print advertising is an especially viable method when there is advertorial content that provides the opportunity for either in-depth messaging tailored for a niche audience, or more generalized messaging for mass media. http://www.contentmanagementsoftwares.net/Benefits_of_advertising_through_print_media.htm http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2014/24084/print-marketing-will-thrive-in-2014-and-beyond https://medium.com/@dobbs1518/interesting-print-advertising-statistics-fd3db7bdb880 https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2018/03/02/does-print-still-have-a-place-in-the-future-of-advertising-10-experts-weigh-in/#4ad83f2e5fc6 https://cash4toners.com/info/2019/02/10/why-print-matters/ https://cmasolutions.com/blog/advantages-of-combining-print-and-digital-advertising/	The primary objective for print advertising is to raise brand awareness. To measure success, we will be looking at overall metrics such as website visitation, social media engagement, call center activity and requests for additional information. To specifically measure these metrics, YC will use the following benchmarks to measure success: **Website Visitation:** • Increase of 10.5% of unique visitors to the website from FY20 final total (in progress). **Social Media Engagement:** • Increase website visits from social media by 25% to 53,500. • Increase engagement by 10% to 635,000. • Increase link clicks by 10% to 110,000. **Call Center Requests:** • Increase travel guide requests by 10% off final total from FY20 final total (in progress).	Print advertising provides an opportunity to really "showcase" brand/destination awareness. 1. Making an "active" brand introduction to potential first-time visitors to the region and/or state. 2. Reinforcing the brand message by "reconnecting" with return visitors to show that there are always more, or different, experiences to be found on return visits. Our focus will be on the primary, secondary & emerging/new target markets identified in the plan narrative.	$60,000.00	We placed ads in the following outlets: Bird Watcher's Digest, with an estimated circulation number of 25,000. All other print publications were placed as part of the Yellowstone Country Cares Grant program or the Joint Venture program. **Website Visitation:** • Increase of 10.5% of unique visitors to the website from FY20 final total. • This was successful. The FY20 final website total was 575,441 unique visitors. An increase of 10.5 percent put a goal for Yellowstone Country at 635,863 unique visitors. Yellowstone Country finished FY21 with 851,459 unique visitors. **Social Media Engagement:** • Increase website visits from social media by 25% to 53,500. - YC increased website visits from social media to 47,793, up from 42,800 in FY20, but short of our goal of a 25% increase. Our FY21 increase was 12%. • Increase engagement by 10% to 635,000 - YC increased engagement to 623,919, or a 9.1% increase. We fell 0.9% short of our goal. • Increase link clicks by 10% to 110,000 - Social media link clicks increased to 123,423, which exceeds our goal of 110,000. **Call Center Requests:** • Increase travel guide requests by 10% off final total from FY20 final total. • An increase of 10% above the FY20 total of 3,344 requests set a goal of 3,679 request for FY21. In FY21, Yellowstone Country fulfilled 4,341 travel guide requests to surpass the goal. Yellowstone Country's only Consumer Advertising - Print placement can be found in the folder attached below, which also contains additional print placements that will be referenced in the Jont Ventures evaluation Additional print placements were completed as part of the Yellowstone Country Cares Grant program.	
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	The strategy for digital (and all media placement) is the following: 1. Setting a Goal - determining who we are targeting & the desired outcome 2. Creating an Effective Message - awareness, interest, desire, and action 3. Call to Action - drive traffic to the website, social media channels, etc. 4. Monitor & Measure - analysis of the placement's effectiveness Digital advertising promotes awareness of outdoor recreation, spectacular nature and charming small towns in Montana's Yellowstone Country region. The primary seasonal focus is winter, followed by warm & shoulder seasons. This campaign includes a national focus, as well as placement in regional drive markets to push seasonal travel and metro areas with direct flights.	https://www.tkg.com/insights/learn/benefits-of-digital-advertising https://www.advertisemint.com/top-6-benefits-of-digital-advertising/ https://prowly.com/magazine/advantages-of-digital-marketing-over-traditional-marketing/ https://cmasolutions.com/blog/advantages-of-combining-print-and-digital-advertising/ https://www.webfx.com/blog/marketing/benefits-of-digital-marketing/ **According to researchers at Marketing Land (marketingland.com), these are the key reasons for why DMOs should invest in digital advertising:** 1. Digital Advertising Drives ROI 2. Digital Advertising Enhances The Effectiveness Of Non-Digital Media Channels 3. Digital Advertising Is Effective Across The Entire Customer Journey 4. Digital Advertising Drives Word-Of-Mouth At Scale 5. Digital Creative Drives Interaction & Lifts Brands 6. Digital Advertising Is More Efficient Than Traditional Media 7. Digital Advertising Is Essential To Reaching An Audience 8. Digital Advertising Is Even More Effective Than We Know	For all marketing efforts, the entire "journey" through the visitation phases will be analyzed: acquisition (what are we doing to attract the visitor - advertising message), behavior (what direction does the messaging take them) and outcomes (what was the impact to the region). Since the main call to action will be to drive audiences to the website, we will use the following metrics for digital campaigns: **1. Estimated Impressions v. Actual Impressions** - keep actual impressions 20% higher than estimated impressions **2. Clicks** - increase total clicks by 5% **3. Click Through Rate (CTR)** - keep a click through rate above 25% **4. Cost Per 1,000 Impressions (CPM)** - CPM is dependent on markets and target audiences. Goal as always is to find best placements to keep costs down. By measuring goals with other metrics we will be able to determine whether that buy and strategy is successful. **5. Cost Per Click (CPC)** - Total CPC goal of under $4.00 for digital placements and under $1.50 for social placements. *** Because Yellowstone Country's FY21 funding is somewhat in flux due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a decrease in total media buys which will surely lead to a decrease in total clicks.**	Digital marketing not only has the ability to produce a high ROI, it helps enhance other forms or marketing. Studies have found that digital advertising helps drive perceptions, raises brand awareness and can have as narrow/wide a reach as marketers want. For YC, our digital marketing strategy is to reach a very targeted audience based on a specific activity, and then executed in conjunction with social media, print and broadcast media efforts. Our focus will be on the primary, secondary & emerging/new target markets identified in the plan narrative.	$480,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c). Yes, we will use this method in the future. **1. Estimated Impressions v. Actual Impressions** FY21 saw Yellowstone Country's digital performance register 71,664,195 impressions. With an estimated 57,982,507 impressions for those media buys, YC exceeded its goal of 20% with a 23% increase of actual imprssions over estimated impressions. *** 2. Clicks** FY20 saw Yellowstone Country register 313,490 clicks during its digital campaign. The FY21 campaign registered 388,465 clicks for an increase of clicks by 23% which well exceeds our goal of a 5% increase. **3. Click Through Rate (CTR)** The FY21 campaign registered a .54% click through rate, which more than doubles our goal of .25%. **4. Cost Per 1,000 Impressions (CPM)** With an overall CPM of $9.78, YC's digital campaign was well within the industry average, which varies by type of placement. With YC's varied mix of placements, a typical CPM would be in the $10-15 range. **5. Cost Per Click (CPC)** Yellowstone Country's FY21 campaign registered a $3.25 total CPC which is well under our goal of $4.00 total CPC for digital placements and our social CPC was $0.49 which is substantially under our goal of $1.50. Digital performance report can be located attached to the Webpage Marketing/SEM/SEO marketing segment. Scanned placement screenshots attached here.	Digital Binder FY21 Completion Reports.pdf
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	Using visual content across marketing methods provides an opportunity to help visitors conceptualize the type of experience they can have, and help them differentiate Yellowstone Country from other DMOs. Great imagery and video content help to build brand awareness, as people are more apt to share information that includes these elements. The FY18 and FY19 emphasised obtaining imagery/video to enhance media campaigns through an integrated approach. Our strategy is to use the following guidelines for all visual content: 1. High quality beauty images & videos that depict what makes the region so spectacular 2. Engaging imagery that shows the audience possible experiences: dining, recreation, arts & culture, etc. 3. Leveraging visual content for SEO purposes	http://www.steamfeed.com/visual-content-will-rule-digital-marketing-2014/ http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/articles/youtube-insights-stats-data-trends-vol10.html http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33423/19-Reasons-You-Should-Include-Visual-Content-in-Your-Marketing.aspx https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/visual-content-marketing-strategy https://www.mdgadvertising.com/marketing-insights/infographics/its-all-about-the-images-infographic/ https://www.markdelong.com/blog/power-of-advertising-photography	1. Reduction in leased, limited usage fees. 2. Increase in YC "stock" videos & images that can be used broadly for both advertising and marketing. 3. Specific imagery targeted towards niche audiences and targeted demographics.	We continue to build our image and video library as we integrate our website content with our print and digital marketing. Owning these assets is a less expensive option than limited usage contracts and allows for more flexibility in how the assets are used. Our focus will be on the primary, secondary & emerging/new target markets identified in the plan narrative.	$70,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c). Yes, we will use this method in the future. 1. We only purchased photos and videos with an unlimited timeline so we can use these assets in all applications and along all timeframes. Purchases were made with: Andy Austin - Rodeo Wiley Miller - Backcountry Skiing Caden Crawford - Star Gazing, Fall Color Colton Stiffler - Beaten Path (5-year license) - would not do a license in perpetuity. Jeff Engebretson - Skiing Ken Takata - Snowmobiling & Fishing Sarah Hubbart - RVing Kurtis Minster - Fishing * All photos aside from Colton Stiffler's image gives us rights to use in perpetuity and under any circumstances. 2. We included a photo/video shoot to increase our stock rodeo images and scenery as well as making a purchase of backcountry skiing footage. The photos we purchased were to build up our library for certain activities. 3. The images and videos purchased were to increase areas that were needing some updates to target niche markets, such as RVing, backcountry skiing, rodeos, star gazing and fall color.	
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	This segment encompasses multiple components of website work. 1. **Continued development of features and offerings.** The primary objective in FY19 was the continual development of a relatively new website. This included new updates in interactive messaging, blog curation, social media add-ons, pre-planned itineraries and access to past earned media, among others. 2. **Content strategy.** An ongoing focus is to continuously build content to give visitors a reason to return. This content will live on the website as well as being pushed through paid and earned channels. 3. **Site management & maintenance.** Website management and maintenance includes electronic database creation and maintenance, regular photo/video updating, website performance tools & reports, adding to media & content libraries, link review & changes, testing & troubleshooting, training & technology assistance, and interfacing with MTOT and other tourism related organizations. 4. **Future planning.** Develop plans for future website components / functionality to ensure the website provides value to users over time.	https://www.theedigital.com/blog/update-your-website-regularly https://www.nextflywebdesign.com/update-website-content/ https://seositecheckup.com/articles/5-reasons-why-fresh-content-is-critical-for-your-website-and-seo https://www.intechnic.com/blog/why-content-is-the-most-important-thing-on-your-website/	1. Constituent feedback regarding website experience. 2. Increase of unique visitors by 10% from FY20 total (TBD). 3. Increased guestbook sign-ins and travel guide requests by 10% from FY20 total (TBD).	Our primary goal is to expand our branded web presence that compliments and strengthens the efforts in all Yellowstone Country marketing channels. The website serves as a resource/planning tool for both first-time and return visitors, so keeping content updated and 'fresh' is a key component. The FY21 focus will be continuously increasing the amount of engaging content while researching updated best practices for SEO.	$50,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c). Yes, we will use this method in the future. **1. Constituent feedback regarding website experience.** • The attached .excel document includes user data from Hotjar that includes the read out of recorded user sessions. This will track a number of things, including: • New vs returing user • Country of origin • Action County • Page Count • Duration (Seconds) • Type of device • Device screen size • Browser used • Operation system used • Referrer URL • Landing page • Exit page • Rage clicks • U-turns All of these are also recorded on the platform to watch their actions. An example of this recording can be found here: https://insights.hotjar.com/r?site=2557028recording=46387245468startTime=1000&token=81f5d91eec164b3caf0ac2fd7ab934a3 **2. Increase of unique visitors by 10% from FY20 total (TBD).** • This was successful. The FY20 final website total was 575,441 unique visitors. An increase of 10.5 percent put a goal for Yellowstone Country at 635,863 unique visitors. Yellowstone Country finished FY21 with 851,459 unique visitors. **3. Increased guestbook sign-ins and travel guide requests by 10% from FY20 total (TBD).** • An increase of 10% above the FY20 total of 3,344 requests set a goal of 3,679 request for FY21. In FY21, Yellowstone Country fulfilled 4,341 travel guide requests to surpass the goal.	Website Task List User Data.xlsx
							a.) Yes, we met our objective in regards to the SEM placements. We did not allocate any additional funding to SEO other than what is part of our website retainer funds. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c). Yes, we will use this method (SEM) and SEO in the future. SEM was be tracked similar to digital placements with a higher focus on bringing down the cost per click: 1. Cost Per Click (CPC) • The FY21 SEM campaign registered a $1.66 CPC. The digital-only placements in FY21 registered a $3.25 cost per click.	

Consumer	Webpage Marketing/SEO/SEM	Both tools listed -- Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) are paramount to the continued success of a working website.
		
		Both tools increase the amount of website visitors by getting the site to appear high on results returned by a search engine. **SEM** is considered internet marketing that increases a site's visibility through organic search engines results and advertising. **SEM** includes **SEO** as well as other search marketing tactics.
			https://www.crazyegg.com/blog/seo/benefits/
			
			https://berytech.com/top-10-benefits-of-search-engine-marketing-sem/
			
			https://monitorbacklinks.com/blog/seo/measure-seo-performance
			
			https://www.directivegroup.com/ideas/tools/news/blog/3-benefits-of-having-both-an-sem-and-seo-campaign-at-the-same-time/
			
			https://www.marketingeye.com/blog/marketing/the-benefits-of-sem.html
				SEM will be tracked similar to digital placements with a higher focus on bringing down the cost per click compared to overall digital placements:
				
				1. Cost Per Click (CPC)
				
				2. Conversions to the Yellowstone Country website
				
				3. Estimated Impressions v. Actual Impressions
				
				4. Clicks
				
				5. Click Through Rate (CTR)
				
				6. Cost Per 1,000 Impressions (CPM)
				
				SEO will be tracked by:
				
				1. Increase unique visitors by 10%
				
				2. Increase SEO Originated Traffic by 10%
				
				3. Increase time on site by 5%
				
				3. Decrease Bounce rate by 5%
				
				4. Increase Mobile Traffic by 10%
				
				5. Increase Click-Through Rate (CTR) by 5%
				
				6. Increase Return visitors by 5%
					Today, SEO is a staple of any marketing strategy. Improving SEO is a top priority of most companies for their websites. A strong SEO & SEM strategy will allow more visitors to reach your content and gives a better chance of turning those website visitors into actual visitors to the region. SEM and SEO will help YC stay in the forefront of the competitive internet searches.	$55,000.00	2. Conversions to the Yellowstone Country website
							
							   • The FY21 SEM campaign drove 3,937 conversions/leads through the YC website.
							
							3. Estimated Impressions v. Actual Impressions
							
							   • The FY21 SEM campaign registered 4,303,941 impressions, which more than doubles the 2,000,000 estimated impressions for this placement.
							
							4. Clicks
							
							   • The FY21 SEM campaign registred 35,496 clicks to the YC website.
							
							5. Click Through Rate (CTR)
							
							   • The FY21 SEM campaign registred a 0.82% CTR.
							
							6. Cost Per 1,000 Impressions (CPM)
							
							   • The FY21 SEM campaign registered a $13.67 CPM. The CPM is higher for this placement because the focus of the cmapaign is driving clicks and reducing the cost per click.
							
							SEO will be tracked by:
							
							1. Increase unique visitors by 10%
							
							   • The FY20 final website total was 575,441 unique visitors. An increase of 10.5 percent put a goal for Yellowstone Country at 635,863 unique visitors. Yellowstone Country finished FY21 with 851,459 unique visitors.
							
							2. Increase SEO Originated Traffic by 10%
							
							   • SEO originated website traffic increased by 30% from FY20 to FY21
							
							3. Increase time on site by 5%
							
							   • Time on site increased from :47 seconds to 1:55 from FY20 to FY21, of 144%
							
							3. Decrease Bounce rate by 5%
							
							   • Bounce rate decreased by 33% from FY20 to FY21
							
							4. Increase Mobile Traffic by 10%
							
							   • Mobile traffic increased by 27% from FY20 to FY21
							
							5. Increase Click-Through Rate (CTR) by 5%
							
							   • Average CTR increased by 19.4% from FY20 to FY21
							
							6. Increase Return visitors by 5%
							
							   • Repeat visitation increased 8.8% from FY20 to FY21
								YCMI FY21 Performance Report.pdf

Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	Direct marketing campaigns will be highly targeted and integrated. Email marketing will allow YC to build relationships by providing the right information at the right time directly to people who already have made a connection to the region. We will use informative content & great imagery for inspiration - and to depict an experience.	https://blog.bufferapp.com/8-effective-email-strategies-backed-by-research https://www.forbes.com/sites/steveolenski/2014/09/26/email-marketing-most-effective-mobile-marketing-most-difficult/#23249ecd3e28 https://www.inc.com/peter-roesler/study-shows-email-marketing-still-popular-and-effective-with-millennials.html https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/email-marketing-new-rules/	YC will use one/more of the following KPIs to analyze & measure the success of direct email campaigns: 1. Click Rate of 0.4% 2. Conversion Rate of 0.4% 3. Unique Open Rate at or better than 12% 4. Unsubscribe Rate at less than 0.5% 5. Bounces at less than 0.5% 6. Site Traffic increase of 10.5% from FY20 total	Email is effective because its permission based. The people on our email list have opted in to receive messages. Email marketing makes sense because it's usable on multiple devices and we can include social media, online video and other marketing elements all within one content-rich marketing message. Our focus will be on the primary, secondary & emerging/new target markets identified in the plan narrative.	$21,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below in some areas and unsuccessful in others c). Yes, we will use this method in the future. **1. Click Rate of 0.4%** - YC had a click rate of 0.33%, which missed our goal of 0.4 percent. **2. Conversion Rate of 0.4%** - YC had a conversion rate of 0.34%, which missed our goal of 0.4 percent. **3. Unique Open Rate at or better than 12%** - YC had a unique open rate of 15.12%, beating the goal by 3.12%. **4. Unsubscribe Rate at less than 0.5%** - YC had an unsubscribe rate of 0.23%, which is within our goal range. **5. Bounces at less than 0.5%** - YC had a bounce rate of 0.28%, which is within our goal range. **6. Site Traffic increase of 10.5% from FY20 total** - The FY20 final website total was 575,441 unique visitors. An increase of 10.5 percent put a goal for Yellowstone Country at 635,863 unique visitors. Yellowstone Country finished FY21 with 851,459 unique visitors.	

Consumer	Joint Ventures	Joint Venture marketing projects will be identified & implemented for specific target geographic & demographic markets and may include any/all of the following: television, video, print, Internet, radio and display advertising. This would include cooperative advertising programs with MTOTBD & other Region/CVBs as applicable and/or as funds allow. We will also partner with the Bozeman CVB to do airline marketing specific to the objective of increasing air service and/ or awareness of flights (to help maintain seat capcity) to Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport. As with all YC marketing, the Joint Venture projects YC participates in will be specific to promoting outdoor activities/recreational experiences.	See additional supporting research in digital and print advertising sections above.
			
			https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/033115/what-are-primary-advantages-forming-joint-venture.asp
			
			https://www.forbes.com/sites/lbsbusinessstrategyreview/2013/11/26/making-joint-ventures-a-strategic-success/#3ac3e3d37d9a
				Planned JVs for FY 21 include the West Yellowstone Travel Guide, VisaVue Spending Data, Red Lodge Travel Guide, Bozeman Airport Support, Montana Dinosaur Trail Support and Glaciers to Geysers warm season.
				
				Yellowstone Country can measure success (from a top-level view) by taking into account the additional marketing reach for the region due to the investment of Joint Venture dollars.
				
				In addition, each Joint Venture can be tracked and monitored with media performance reports, making it easy to identify direct impact.
				
				For digital placements, JV programs will be tracked and mesured by:
				
				1. Estimated Impressions v. Actual Impressions
				
				- keep actual impressions 20% higher than estimated impressions
				
				2. Click Through Rate (CTR)
				
				- keep a click through rate above 0.25%
				
				3. Cost Per 1,000 Impressions (CPM) less than $10.
				
				- CPM is dependent on markets and target audiences. Goal as always is to find best placements to keep costs down. Goal in FY21 will be a CPM less than $10.
				
				4. Cost Per Click (CPC)
				
				- Total CPC goal of under $4.00 for digital placements and under $1.50 for social placements.
				
				* Because Yellowstone Country's FY21 funding is somewhat in flux due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a decrease in total media buys which will surely lead to a decrease in total clicks.
				
				For print placements, we will use the following measurements of success:
				
				Website Visitation:
				
				- Increase of 10.5% of unique visitors to the website from FY20 final total (in progress).
				
				Social Media Engagement:
				
				- Increase website visits from social media by 25% to 53,500.
				- Increase engagement by 10% to 635,000.
				- Increase link clicks by 10% to 110,000.
				
				Call Center Requests:
				
				- Increase travel guide requests by 10% of final total from FY20 final total (in progress).
				
				For the YC-Bozeman CVB airline markeitng JV with the Bozeman CVB, we will track success using
					As with all advertising, Joint Ventures can be evaluated based on performance reports.
					
					Our focus will be on the primary, secondary & emerging/new target markets identified in the plan narrative.
					
					Planned JVs for FY 21 include (but not limited to):
					
					   ◦ MOTBD JV opportunities
					   ◦ YC/CVB regional winter & warm season media placements, publicity events, social media partnerships
					   ◦ Partnerships with other Regions/CVBs--could include Dark Skies/Astro-tourism, BMW Rally, YC-GC Glaciers to Geysers promotions and any that were planned for FY 20 & moved to FY 21 due to Covid-19.
					   ◦ Bozeman CVB Airline Marketing Partnership
						$550,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c). Yes, we will use this method in the future.
							
							Of the planned JV's for FY 21, the only completed ones were the West Yellowstone Travel Guide, VisaVue Spending Data, Red Lodge Travel Guide, Bozeman Airport Support, Montana Dinosaur Trail Support and Glaciers to Geysers warm season. Additional Joint Ventures were incorporated into the Cares Grant program campaign.
							
							Digital:
							
							The Glaciers to Geysers campaign was the only digital component, which returend the following statistics:
							
							1. Estimated Impressions v. Actual Impressions
							
							   • This campaign recorded7,143,563 impressions vs. 6,049,521 estimated impressions. Our rate in FY21 was 18% when our goal was 20%. We will reach this goal with additional digital JV placements.
							
							2. Click Through Rate (CTR)
							
							   • This campaign recorded a 1.30% CTR, which is better than our goal of 0.25%.
							
							3. Cost Per 1,000 Impressions (CPM)
							
							   • This campaign recorded a $5.29 CPM, which is better than our goal of $10 CPM.
							
							4. Cost Per Click (CPC)
							
							   • This campaign recorded a 0.41% CPC, which is better than our goal of $1.50 for this type of placement.
							
							   Based on our digital campaign goals, this campaign performed better than most digital placements.
							
							Print:
							
							Website Visitation:
							
							The FY20 final website total was 575,441 unique visitors. An increase of 10.5 percent put a goal for Yellowstone Country at 635,863 unique visitors. Yellowstone Country finished FY21 with 851,459 unique visitors.
							
							Social Media Engagement:
							
							   • **Increase website visits from social media by 25% to 53,500.**
							
							- YC increased website visits from social media to 47,793, up from 42,800 in FY20, but short of our goal of a 25% increase. Our FY21 increase was 12%.
							
							   • **Increase engagement by 10% to 635,000**
							
							- YC increased engagement to 623,919, or a 9.1% increase. We fell 0.9% short of our goal.
							
							   • **Increase link clicks by 10% to 110,000**
							
							- YC increased social media link clicks increased to 123,423, which exceeds our goal of 110,000.
							
							   • **Call Center Requests:**
							
							An increase of 10% above the FY20 total of 3,344 requests set a goal of 3,679 request for FY21. In FY21, Yellowstone Country fulfilled 4,341 travel guide requests to surpase the goal.
							
							Bozeman CVB JV-Air Transportation Marketing:
							
							Through our partnership with the Bozeman CVB and the Airline Marketing Group, we have had a very successful year in attracting new flights and filling those flights with visitors. With the addition of Southwest Airlines and numerous added flights from existing carriers, FY21 was a great year for airline marketing. Due to the great success of this public/private partnership, we feel its a good strategy, and a great use of JV dollars. With Southwest Airlines coming into the market, that helped raise the # of direct flights, and therefore the # of passengers. It's hard to deny the impact those funds have had on growing our airport traffic and out of state visitation. BZN continues to be the leading airpot in the state, and the #'s are significantly higher than the national averages.
							
							Re the airline marketing, we will continue to use this method, but since we have successfully attracted all of the major airlines to Bozeman, we will now shift the strategy somewhat to use the marketing dollars to help maintain our market share; i.e. maintaining awareness of certain routes or looking for ways to fill seats on existing airlines. The approach will evolve but the use of JV funds for airline marketing will remain.
							
							From BZN:
							
							Here are the October 2021 statistics for BZN. Passenger traffic for October 2021 was up 50.1% from the record level set in October 2019. Nationally, October passenger traffic was down approximately 20.7% compared to October 2019. BZN has now handled more passengers in the first 10 months of 2021 (1,657,407) than the entire previous record year in 2019 (1,573,860). We have also set month over month records for the past seven consecutive months.
							
							BZN total passengers for 2021 compared to 2020 and 2019
								FY21 Print Placements.pdf

Total Revenue Passengers

	2021	2020	2019	% Chg 2020	% Chg 2019
January	86,606	137,154	119,620	-36.9%	-27.6%
February	99,083	142,969	120,180	-30.7%	-17.6%
March	133,705	89,352	146,301	49.6%	-8.6%
April	98,434	2,932	89,992	3257.2%	9.4%
May	131,968	12,262	111,271	976.2%	18.6%

	June	223,827	37,057	164,211	504.0%	36.3%
	July	277,355	86,750	191,282	219.7%	45.0%
	August	254,975	96,276	176,745	164.8%	44.3%
	September	195,262	86,592	132,348	125.5%	47.5%
	October	156,192	69,913	104,028	123.4%	50.1%
	November		50,199	81,971		
	December		78,319	135,911		
	YTD	1,657,407	761,257	1,355,978	117.7%	22.2%
	Total		889,775	1,573,860		

one/more of these metrics;

* passenger deplanements
* # of new flights added during the year and/or increase in seat capacity on exigtish flights.

For Data Sharing JV options, including VisaVue, we will track by the following:
- Purchase of the data

Data Sharing:
- YC purchased the VisaVue data for $5,952.94.

Consumer — Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast — $3,000.00

In FY21, Yellowstone Country plans to implement a targeted email marketing strategy to increase engagement and website visitation among our current email subscribers.

After narrowing down our target groups, we will conduct a survey asking subscribers to select the topics they find most interesting. We will then target those segments with a specific communication strategy based on connecting with recipients through their stated interests.

Initial email streams to break down as follows:

Email Marketing Groups

Audience 1 Gen X and Older Millennials	Audience 2 Baby Boomer and Older Gen X
Cycling	Day hiking
Kayaking	Birding
Canoeing	Motorcycle touring
Hiking/Backpacking	Golfing
Horseback riding	Nature photography
Trailrunning	Wildlife watching
Float trips/river rafting	Float trips/river rafting
Attending Festivals/performing arts	Attending festivals/performing arts
Farmers Markets	Viewing art exhibits
Visit breweries & distilleries	Museums & historical/LC sites
Car / RV camping	Visit breweries & distilleries
	RV camping

Three Digital Marketing Trends to Focus on in 2020
https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2019/12/27/three-digital-marketing-trends-to-focus-on-in-2020/#77ae6d8f5873

2020 Trends in Digital Marketing
https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2020/02/03/2020-trends-in-digital-marketing/#dc10b0e2f035

Digital Marketing Trends
https://www.theedigital.com/blog/digital-marketing-trends

Metrics Email Marketers Should Be Tracking
https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/metrics-email-marketers-should-be-tracking

Success will be measured with an increased Open Rate, Click Through Rates, Total Opens, Unsubscribe Rate and Bounce Rate. Since this is a new program, this year will be a benchmark. For our initial email, we are hoping for a 25% open rate.

Litmus Marketing recently released a report titled, Email Marketing 2020: 20 Experts Share their Visions of the Future of the Channel, (attached.)

Top Experts Agree:
- Email is the dominant digital identity and the channel consumers prefer when receiving communication from brands.
- In the next 5 years, email marketing will remain the top performing messaging channel, with Millennials believing email marketing is here to stay.
- Email marketing is advantageous because it is permission-based, and provides robust, first-party data.

Other research has found:
- Email list segmentation and creating campaigns that connect with the recipient's interests results in increased open rates, greater relevance and lower unsubscribe rates.
(https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/9-email-marketing-best-practices-for-2020/567464/)

Studies continue to show that email marketing has a strong ROI, averaging between $38-$52 ROI for every dollar spent. Yellowstone County currently has a subscriber list of over 32,000 people. Through segmentation and carefully planned communication, we can nourish these leads with relevant and timely information based on their specific interests.

a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below in most instances. c.) Yes, we will use this method in the future.

1. Open Rate of 25%
- YC had an open rate of 15.16% which did not meet our goal, but is an increase over FY20's 14.5 percent.

2. Click Through Rate
- YC had a click through rate of 33% which was a slight increase over 0.3% in FY20.

3. Total Opens
- YC had 195,712 total opens, which is an increase from 100,862 in FY20.

4. Unsubscribe Rate
- YC had an unsubscribe rate of 0.23%, which is an improvement from the mark of 0.29% in FY20 and 0.38% in FY19.

5. Bounce Rate
- YC had a bounce rate of 0.28% which was a significant improvement from the 0.49% rate in FY20 and a 1.47% rate in FY19.

Email Completion Reports.xlsx

Marketing Support — Administration — $210,000.00

The objective for use of this budget is to use the allowable 20% of the overall budget as efficiently & effectively as possible, yet still maintain a quality operation. The strategy to achieve the objective is to minimize fixed costs, utilize "best buys" when acquiring necessary assets and to prioritize costs based on a "need" versus "wants" basis.

https://smallbusiness.chron.com/examples-budget-justifications-26023.html
https://doresearch.stanford.edu/training/cardinal-curriculum-level-2/proposal-and-budget-preparation-ora-1120/proposal-and-budget-preparation-create-budget/budget-justification

YC strives to use less than the allowable 20% for Administration, thereby allocating more funds to the marketing endeavors, and less to operations management. Success will be measured by evaluating our ability to minimize operation costs enough that we don't use the full 20%.

The Administrative budget is the operations budget that allows us to pay wages, operate an office, buy equipment & conduct business as an organization.

Yes, we met our objective. Yes, the strategy & method were successful. Yes, we plan to use this method again.

Yellowstone Country set our strategy to keep as low an administrative operating budget as possible so as tollow more funds to be used for marketing purposes. We met our objective in that we used only 9% of our overall budget, remmaining well under the allowable 20%.

Marketing Support — Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center — $100,000.00

This budget supports distribution of YC's printed materials to both resident and non-resident visitors, shipping, postage and the call center. As the primary means of distribution to both regional outlets and identified out-of-state hubs, YC contracts with Certified Folder Services and CTM to distribute travel planners and scenic maps. These facilities store the YC travel planners & fulfill bulk order requests, and stock the planners in eligible rest areas and brochure racks.

In relation, Montana Office of Tourism in past research reporting of its own showed as high as 30% increase in visitation from travelers able to make contact with the call center or visitor information resources live or via live chat. The call center provides a time-tested resource to receive inquiries and visitor/campaign results opportunities and manage that information into global campaign research on effectiveness but also future adjustments to the brand, marketing campaigns, advertising creative, public relations, and much more.

The call center is an integral service piece to the overall marketing program YCMI and has allowed for significant improvement in reporting, fulfillment processing time, and capturing visitor data essential to helping build a successful marketing strategy for the region.

https://www.travelweekly.com/Travel-News/Tour-Operators/Print-lives
http://www.mediaspacesolutions.com/blog/6-advantages-of-print-advertising
https://www.cheapoair.com/miles-away/why-call-centers-are-still-important-in-todays-online-world/

Distribution of the travel planner and map are tracked & analyzed. This includes distribution to out-of-state locations on Certified Folder routes and CTM routes, in-state rest areas, Yellowstone, the 10 regional VICs, local Chambers and as a fulfillment piece for direct inquiries to the call center, guest book sign-ups on the website and consumer advertising campaigns.

YC will continue to use Certified Folder and CTM routes to have available in transportation hubs, but success will be tracked by an increase in bulk & direct mail requests of travel planner by 10% in FY21 from FY20 numbers.

Fulfillment is a necessary support function for all the marketing programs. Printed materials distribution, call center functionality, shipping and postage are all integral parts of running the business.

a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c.) Yes, we will use this method in the future.

1. Success will be tracked by an increase in bulk & direct mail requests of travel planner by 10% in FY21 from FY20 numbers.
- An increase of 10% above the FY20 total of 3,344 requests set a goal of 3,679 request for FY21. In FY21, Yellowstone Country fulfilled 4,341 travel guide requests to surpass the goal.

Marketing Support — Opportunity Marketing — $1,000.00

OPPORTUNITY marketing projects will be identified & implemented for specific target psychographic, geographic & demographic markets. This would include cooperative marketing ventures with private and/or public partners that meet the overall goals, objectives & strategies identified in YC's marketing plan.

Good information exists that supports a business maintain an Opportunity and/or Crisis Fund budget—being prepared for the unexpected makes good business sense.
https://www.quora.com/How-do-opportunity-costs-affect-the-capital-budgeting-decision-making-process
https://finance.yahoo.com/news/why-opportunity-fund-141838751.html

All YC's Opportunity projects will be evaluated against the following statements:
1. **Plan for the unexpected.** An Opportunity project will be exactly that—unexpected, new, unforeseen at the beginning of the year.
2. **Viable projects.** Opportunity projects must support the marketing goals & objectives and must support & integrate with all our marketing efforts.
3. **Prove the value.** Each Opportunity project will have specific measurable objectives to measure against.

Reasons for setting aside Opportunity funds for a business are pretty much the same as one does it for personal finance—to have the capital to invest in something unforeseen that helps achieve goals & objectives. YC's OPPORTUNITY budget is intended to be a reserve of funds so as to be able to take advantage of opportunities & ideas that come up during the course of the year. YC does not wish to tie up a large sum of money at the beginning of the year for the "unknown", so we allocate a small budget, then look to increase this budget should viable projects present themselves. Our focus will be on the primary, secondary & emerging/new target markets identified in the plan narrative.

a.) No, we did not meet our objective because we didn't identify any opportunities for use of this method. b.) Our strategy is sound, but we evaluated opportunities as they came up and did not find any that necessitated using this method. c.) Yes, we will use this method in the future.

Marketing Support — Crisis Management — $197.00

The Crisis Management method will be used to address unexpected & unforseen issues & situations as they arise. These would be things that could potentially impact the visitor experience, including (but not limited to): fires, consctuction/road closures, pandemics, blizzards, etc.

https://www.publicrelationstoday.com/advertising/crisis-management/
https://www.cmswire.com/digital-marketing/marketing-in-a-time-of-crisis/
https://standingpartnership.com/5-critical-elements-crisis-management-plan/

We would measure success by being able to ascertain that our efforts:
1. Keep the public informed of current information.
2. Mitigate the negative perceptions travelers may have.
3. Move people to areas of the region that are not impacted.

Every year there is a potential impact to visitors during the fire seasons. Additionally, closures to main highway arteries can also be impactful. As we've learned in 2020, a pandemic such as COVID-19 can have catastrophic outcomes to visitation to the area, so having funds to be able to implement awareness measures such as PR, PSAs, and promotion campaigns.

No, we did not meet our objective. The strategy was sound, but we did not need to use this method becuse we were able to disseminate information through other budgets/channels without having to use these allocated funds. Yes, we plan to use this method in FY 22.

Marketing Support — VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage — $120,000.00

The strategy for funding VIC staffing includes utilizing local knowledge to help improve the visitor experience and having staff help increase awareness of the local community, region and state. The regional VICs are a vital component of YC's efforts to entice travelers to visit, stay longer and do more while in Montana. Although use of the Internet for trip planning is increasing, once on the ground, travelers want to have local knowledge and interaction to help them have the best experience possible. Funding VICs is a good investment since it allows us to provide a tangible benefit for visitors, as well as giving YCMI an opportunity to leverage partnerships with the local chambers/communities. Having on-site, trained travel counselors is a vital support service, working in conjunction with our marketing campaigns to help showcase the multitude of unique attractions, scenery, events and properties in the regional communities.

What Visitor Information Centers Can Provide:
- Personal interaction and engagement with visitors
- Display Brochures, rack cards, guidebooks & other printed material
- Offer a Taste Community -What better way to sell your destination than one-on-one interaction with the traveler.
- Dining & Lodging Information for visitors
- Crucial travel information such as road closures, fires, floods, etc.

The total # of visitors assisted during the FY 19 funding period (Memorial Day Weekend-Labor Day) increased slightly over the same timeframe the previous year, serving 463,000+ visitors in 9 regional VICs. Seven VICs reported visitor increases, while three reported a decrease. The largest increases reported were at the Bozeman Airport, West Yellowstone & Gardiner VICs.

ITRR 2019 Non-resident data shows that 12% of survey respondents who answered questions about using a VIC as an information resource said they called a VIC for information & 55% of respondents said they utilized a VIC during their trip.

https://stampdestinations.com/insights/visitor-center-relevance
https://www.trafsys.com/four-reasons-why-people-counting-is-critical-for-visitor-centers/
https://skift.com/2015/03/23/rethinking-the-visitor-center-in-the-age-of-connected-travelers/

Visitor numbers and satisfaction are key performance/success metrics in helping determine each year if funding the VICs are a viable use of marketing dollars to determine target geographic demographic markets. Primary objective for this program is to provide information services to the visitors both before and after arrival. VIC's are a key component for all three phases of trip planning, especially the orientation & facilitation phases. A secondary objective is to obtain as much visitor information as possible for use in monitoring trends & changes in demographic/geographic/psychographic travel profiles that can be used to help guide marketing efforts.

The VIC program is an integral part of YC's overall marketing effort & continues to be very successful. Visitor Information Centers are one of the most important communication channels with which to attract and educate travelers about the benefits of visiting the state. VIC's provide key support for visitors to the region by offering a variety of services in the planning phases of travel and after they arrive at a destination. In addition to be an information source, travel counselors are essentially an influencer—they can have an impact of travel plans from the beginning through to the actual trip experience.

Yes, we met our objective. Yes, the strategy & method were successful. Yes, we plan to use this method again.

The primary objective for this program is to have travel coundelors be available for visitors before and/or during their travel to the region (oreintarion, facilitation) at the eligible locations. Yellowstone Country saw a significant return/recovery for #'s of visitors to the funded regional VICs for this funding period (Memorial Day weekend-Sept 30th) over the same period in 2020. Note—the continuing effects of the pandemic did have some consequences—due to workforce shortages, the Belgrade/Bozeman VIC at the Bozeman airport was unable to maintain necessary staff to operate the VIC, However, most of the participating VICs all reported increased visitor #'s, and for thsoe who had a decrease, it was minimal, or was skewed becaus of cahnges in how they tracked visitors. Example: In 2020 Cooke City VIC had a defective door counter (not discovered until well into teh season), so their toal visitation was an estimate. A new tracker was installed for 2021.

# Visitors assisted during grant period	
	2020/2021
Big Sky	2857 (did not open in 2020)-new location in 2021
Bozeman/Belgrade (airport inbound)	*Did not participate in 2020 (covid) or 2021(staffing issues)
Cooke City	18,079/10,799 (-)
Gardiner	36,880/83,991 (+)
Livingston	2225/2950 (+)
Red Lodge	4538/7406 (+)
Stillwater	206/208 (+)
Sweet Grass	1407/2211 (+)
Three Forks	822/793 (-)
West Yellowstone	55,469/133,542 (+)

VIC Completion Top 15 states Summary FY 21.doc

| | | | | | Totals | 118,219/241,900 | |

Our secondary objective was to obtain relevant data from the visitor groups to help guide marketing decisions. This is very successful for us for both planning, and for year-end analysis. Our anlaysis of the data provided by the VICs shows a slight 'shifting' of top markets and peak visitation periods--this information will be useful for future promotion planning.

Marketing Support	Cultural Tourism	Given the Covid-19 situation, it is our belief that festivals, events & happenings will be crucial part of the recovery process. Research has shown that cultural tourists "tend to be older, better educated and earn more money than the travelling public as a whole" and "generally spend more money on holiday, stay longer in a particular area and participate in more activities than other tourists." As part of our commitment to partners, YC's strategy for the Cultural Tourism grant program is to provide regional communities with financial & marketing support for culinary, sporting, musical, & heritage activities, and/or lifestyle culture the community is promoting. The strategy is to work with these partners to develop & promote more "product" in communities that helps increase visitation, but also raises awareness of communities and/or events as a destination within the region & state.	http://culturaltourism.thegossagency.com/cultural-tourism-whitepaper/ According to the Travel Industry Association of America, roughly eighty percent of the 150,000,000+ adults who travel more than fifty percent from their homes can be considered "cultural tourists." Thirty percent of adults state that specific arts or a cultural or heritage event influenced their choice of destination on their last trip. Cultural tourism and the interest in culture among travelers—particularly affluent, active, and frequent travelers— is on the rise. Re ITTR 2019 data for the YC region, attending festivals & events, visiting farmer's markets, attending art/performing art shows were in the Top 10 list of activities visitors partake in while in the area. In FY 19, YC provided grants for eight community events and/or cultural happenings/projects in the region. Each of the funded events reported increased attendance from the previous year and/or that they were able to grow the event by increasing attendance capacity, entertainment options, vendors, etc. https://www.gounesco.com/cultural-tourism-sustainable-development/ https://ntaonline.com/education/travel-market-guides/arts-culture-entertainment-travel-market/	• Increase in attendance over previous year for each event • Expansion of the product/offerings–events continue to grow and have more to offer visitors • Increase social media engagement for the event, community and region; thereby helping to raise awareness	Cultural Tourism is one form of tourism that allows tourists be immersed in local cultural related activities such as rituals and festivities. It leads the destination in providing opportunity for authentic cultural exchange between locals and visitors. For destinations, it encourages local communities to embrace their culture and boost economic growth, developing culturally geared tourism programs; encourages destinations to celebrate and promote what distinguishes their communities for an authentic exchange between locals and visitors. Linking tourism with heritage and culture can do more for local economies than promoting them separately. That's the core idea in cultural heritage tourism: save your heritage and your culture, share it with visitors, and reap the economic benefits of tourism. Additionally, promoting cultural assets in conjunction with outdoor recreation opportunities shows potential visitors the wide spectrum of activities in the region, thereby encouraging doing more and staying longer. **Economic benefits** – Cultural Tourism can provide direct benefit to the business community, such as lodging, dining, shopping, etc. Visitors' expenditure generates income for the local community. **Social benefits** – Cultural Tourism can bring about a real sense of pride and identity to communities by showcasing distinct characteristics of ways of life, history and culture in an area.	$50,000.00	Yes, we met our objective, and our strategy and method was successful. Yes, we plan to use this method again. NOTE: Although YC was able to provide grants for 5 events, some had to make adjustments due to pandemic restrictions. Objectives: • Increase in attendance over previous year for each event • Expansion of the product/offerings–events continue to grow and have more to offer visitors • Increase social media engagement for the event, community and region; thereby helping to raise awarenes 4/5 of the events reported increased attendance over 2019 (none of the events took place in 2020 due to COVID). All funded events added expanded offerings for attendees. YC wrote blogs for each of the events to help promote engagement and increase awareness. Grants: • **Big Sky-Music in the Mountains**--Due to unforeseen construction issues, event location had to be changed to a smaller venue, which resulted in 20% less attendance than in 2019. For 2021, kids art activities were added. • **Absarokee-Montana BBQ Cook-off**--The event received Kansas City BBQ sanctioning in 2021, which helps to gain recognition and bring thousands to the community for the event. This year the advertising budget was increased to help promote the event to MT residents. The event went from a one-day event to two, and they were also able to pull in more vendors, and added kid activities & games and a beer garden. • **Absarokee-Stillwater Run & Ride**-The event added food vendors and a kids' obstacle course for this year, with the intention of increasing visitation, which saw a 10% increase over 2019 attendance. • **West Yellowstone-Music in the Park**-Local businesses provided sponsorships & agreed to help promote the event through their own social media channels and advertising efforts, thereby increasing awareness. They added more vendors and bands this year. • **Red Lodge Songwriters Festival**-The event increased from 2 days to 3 this year, which meant more overnight lodging stays. They increased the # of participants in the "sonwriter showcase" from 16 to 20, and coordinators feel it is becoming recognizable as a signature MT event, such as Bozeman Sweet Pea Festival or Red Ants Pants Festival.	
Marketing Support	Promotional Items	YC will produce promotional items & materials to be used in conjunction with hosted press trips and media outreach/events. We want to make sure that the cost of producing the right promotional product will achieve levels of recall that isn't always doable with general media advertising. Out of sight, out of mind — leaving event attendees with not only our advertising message, but good promotional products can effectively spearhead the follow to follow up and build a relationship with us. Using promotional items at media events & press trips will add personal value to YC's general marketing message.	**Create lasting awareness** Research from the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) in the USA shows that 62% of people remember the name and details associated with a specific promotional product. "A good promotional item should become an ongoing reminder of your brand, every day that it is used. Brand awareness & loyalty can result from the use of a promotional items, creating an immediate appreciation and gratitude that forges a positive link. By including your contact details on a product, new customers are also more likely to call you as you are at such easy reach. It's a great long-term business card!" **Five bits of wisdom for tradeshow and/or event promotional items/giveaway:** 1. "Make sure your giveaway makes sense to your brand and isn't overused as a giveaway."— *Jennifer Seyler* 2. "Give them something YOU-branded that they will use after the show is over."— *Paula Ledbetter Sellergren* 3. "Smart, engaging, creative choices that engage the audience's imagination, trigger a memory your brand promise, that are practical and useful within your industry are the best bets for effective giveaways." —*Dave Poulos* 4. "Choose something useful or practical that has the potential to be put into everyday use." — *Jay Veltz* 5. "Be sure that what you select has a long shelf life and the quality is there, even if it means paying a little more." —*Barbara Sanner* *https://blog.epromos.com/trade-show-event-attraction-promos/guide-to-custom-trade-show-giveaways/* *https://www.qualitylogoproducts.com/blog/21-promotional-products-posts/*	The strategy used for deciding what and/or how much will be based on the following criteria for these items: 1. Are they a good fit for the YC brand? 2. Are they functional? 3. Do they provide a "splash" factor? Additionally, YC may produce event support materials such a signage, table covers, banners, etc. as needed.	Out of sight, out of mind — leaving event attendees with not only our advertising message, but good promotional products can effectively spearhead them to follow up and build a relationship with us. Using promotional items at media events & press trips will add personal value to YC's general marketing message.	$10,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c.) Yes, we will use this method in the future. 1. Are they a good fit for the YC brand? We purchased the following items to replenish our existing supply: Carabiner Mugs Business Cards Notebooks Tote Bags Stickers Luggage Tags We added the following items for FY21: Cable Organizers Picnic Blankets Sunglasses Bucket Hats Ceramic Mugs 2. Are they functional? All of these are functional for YC promotional items. 3. Do they provide a "splash" factor? Yes, we received many compliments from people that have received them on how good they look.	Promotional Items.pdf
Publicity	Social Media	In FY20, our focus was to build engagement through rich content, (including blogs and emails,) increase User Generated Content, curate Facebook and Instagram stories, increase our videos and maximize our preferred content through boosted paid posts. Fiscal year to date, our website traffic from social media has increased by 66% to 33,884 from 20,404 during the same period the prior year. Traffic from Facebook alone has almost doubled, at 95.4% over the previous year. Organic traffic, which builds from our content, has increased 35.59% FYTD, to 31,953 visitors, up from 23,556. This analysis tells us that our current strategy is working. In FY21, we will continue to build on this foundation but will dial in our content strategy to become even more focused. Michael Williams, Senior Social Media Manager for Jellyfish, a marketing and advertising agency in London says, "When it comes to creating content, brands need to counteract the social media noise, think 'less is more,' and create messaging that actually resonates with their key audience(s)," Williams said. Our additional focuses will be to: **Use audience segmentation to support our email marketing and expand our engagement.** We will be adding another layer of email marketing in FY21 and concurrently building social media posts around this content. We can then segment these posts and promote them via paid social. **Experiment with more Facebook Groups and Twitter Lists.** Based on subscriber interest in email content, build another Facebook Group to engage more deeply around the most sought-after content. **Increase our use of Instagram and Facebook stories, as well as videos.** In FY20, we began building Instagram Highlights around each of our communities. We will continue to build engagement by posting more frequent and varied stories. **Spend more time engaging with our followers in a meaningful manner.** Not only is this important to the user, but social networks recognize engaging pages and give them a lift in reach. **Increase our use of Pinterest.** Continue to add our content to Pinterest, which serves as a search engine to reach new visitors. **Continue to mine UGC via CrowdRiff.** Not only does this generate content for our social media channels, it increases our exposure to new visitors when we engage with them.	12 Social Media Trends to Watch in 2020 https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/343863 10 Important 2020 Social Media Trends You Need to Know https://www.searchenginejournal.com/2020-social-media-trends/342851/#close Social Media Trends for 2020 https://influencermarketinghub.com/SmallereBook2_trends_2020.pdf Top Marketing Trends for 2020 https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2019/10/03/top-marketing-trends-for-2020/#4bd0dbeb13d5 The Biggest Social Media Trends for 2020 According to 23 Experts https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media-trends-2020/?utm_source=ebook&utm_medium=announcement-post&utm_campaign=in-post-cta-2	As Instagram experiments with the removal of "likes," having quality engagement becomes even more critical in gauging the success of our efforts. In FY21, we will measure our social media success as follows: • Increase website visits from social media by 25% to 53,500. • Increase engagement by 10% to 635,000. • Increase link clicks by 10% to 110,000. For paid social media placements, like all digital marketing efforts, the main call to action will be to drive audiences to the website, so YC will use the following metrics for paid social media campaigns: **1. Estimated Impressions v. Actual Impressions** - keep actual impressions 20% higher than estimated impressions *** 2. Clicks** - increase total clicks by 5% **3. Click Through Rate (CTR)** - keep a click through rate above 0.25% **4. Cost Per 1,000 Impressions (CPM)** - CPM is dependent on markets and target audiences. Goal as always is to find best placements to keep costs down. By measuring goals with other metrics we will be able to determine whether that buy and strategy is successful. **5. Cost Per Click (CPC)** - Total CPC goal of under $4.00 for digital placements and under $1.50 for social placements. *** Because Yellowstone Country's FY21 funding is somewhat in flux due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a decrease in total media buys which will surely lead to a decrease in total clicks.**	3.2 billion people worldwide are active on social media daily, including 90% of millennials. Social media gives us the opportunity for a broad, inexpensive reach. Still, even more so, it allows us to connect directly with our visitors and engage with them in a meaningful, relevant way. Lisa Buyer, CEO and Social PR Consultant for The Buyer Group says, "The relationship we build with our customers is more important than the products and services we sell them." ITRR Non-resident Visitor Information study, 2019, found 13% of all visitors to Yellowstone Country used social media to plan their trip, and 6% used social media while on the trip. Social media also supports our local stakeholders by sharing their content with our broad audience.	$60,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c.) Yes, we will use this method in the future. **Organic Social Media** **Increase website visits from social media by 25% to 53,500.** - YC increased website visits from social media to 47,793, up from 42,800 in FY20, but short of our goal of a 25% increase. Our FY21 increase was 12%. **Increase engagement by 10% to 635,000** - YC increased engagement to 623,919, or a 9.1% increase. We fell 0.9% short of our goal. **Increase link clicks by 10% to 110,000** - Social media link clicks increased to 123,423, which exceeds our goal of 110,000. For paid social media placements, like all digital marketing efforts, the main call to action will be to drive audiences to the website, so YC will use the following metrics for paid social media campaigns: **1. Estimated Impressions v. Actual Impressions** - YC received 8,805,914 impressions above an estimated 8,000,000 impressions, or a 10% increase. Falling short of our goal of 20%. *** 2. Clicks** - FY20 included 95,981 clicks in paid social ads. FY21 included 172,461 total clicks which is an increase of 79.6%, well above our goal of 5%. **3. Click Through Rate (CTR)** - FY21 included a CTR of 1.51%, significantly outperforming our goal of 0.25%. **4. Cost Per 1,000 Impressions (CPM)** - FY21 included a $4.80 CPM which is significantly lower than our $9.54 CPM of FY20. **5. Cost Per Click (CPC)** - FY21 social media CPC stood at $0.49, which is significantly lower than our goal of $1.50 CPC>	Social Engagement.xlsx
Publicity	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	Media Outreach & Press Events in key markets provide YC an opportunity to compliment paid media campaigns in the same markets simultaneously. The strategy behind our press events is to engage directly with targeted press to inform them about what the region has to offer by interacting in a conversational way. We will also use promotional giveaways to help keep brand awareness forefront following the event and encourage social media interaction during the actual events.	Hosting media events is a relatively new endeavor for YC, and to date we've held events in Dallas, Chicago, San Diego, Atlanta, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Portland. The positive effect of media events has included an increased interest in our region from travel writers, an increase in inbound press trips, and an increase in social media and traditional media coverage. These events also help us in identifying potential familiarization visitors from our event attendees. Paired with advertising campaigns in these targeted areas, press events have proven effective in broadening key markets. https://www.newswire.com/blog/the-importance-of-media-outreach https://powerdigitalmarketing.com/blog/what-do-i-invest-in-media-or-influencer-outreach/#gref https://www.certain.com/blog/proactive-social-media-outreach/	By tracking media coverage following events, in addition to monitoring changes in web and call center inquiries following events (and associated media placements), YC can capture the sound effect of having a strong physical presence in key markets. Success will be measured by quality of media personnel at events and corresponding media coverage.	Given the press coverage to date paired with ongoing media relationships, YC feels media events are a sound investment to raise brand awareness, promote direct visitors (and simple connecting flights) into the region, and partner with regional businesses & CVBs to promote specific activities and communities.	$50,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful in Nashville but not successful in Las Vegas c.) Yes, we will use this method in the future. Our Nashville event had 14 attendees and included 7 people that we are currently working on plans for an inbound trip to Yellowstone Country. One of those has already happened, and it is a partnership with Bozeman-raised country music artist, Stephanie Quayle, who currently resides in Nashville. We also met a local media outlet that is very prevalent in Nashville that we placed an advertising buy with. Our Las Vegas event had 8 attendees and the quality of attendee was lacking compared to our Nashville event. We are still planning on working with two attendees from that event.	MOE 21.pdf

Publicity	Press Trips	Following each outbound press event, YC evaluates attendees and reaches out to a select group to explore the region. Travel writers and social influencers are hosted on a variety of trips - spanning from individual trips to group trips - with custom itineraries and activities depending on each unique audience.	From our outbound press trips, we have hosted inbound journalists with arrangements, complimentary services & goods and regional guides, at little to no cost to the region. These journalists were on assignment or freelancing stories regarding outdoor recreation activities, which is the primary focus of YC marketing campaigns. These included: whitewater rafting, golfing, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, camping, bird watching, Nordic & alpine skiing, snowboarding, ice climbing, snowmobiling and wildlife viewing in Yellowstone National Park.	The objective is to increase brand awareness through storytelling. We can measure success through publicity values, but also through the following: • Did we reach the target audience? • Did it build awareness of our destination and/or specific activity? • Reach & social engagement • Lead generation by content, channel, and initiative. • Quantity & quality of coverage • # of articles produced	Working with the media is an important way for Yellowstone County to tell our story; it helps personalize the experience for visitors and supports consumer advertising campaigns. This is part of the inspiration phase, but also serves a purpose as part of the orientation phase.	$50,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful. c). Yes, we will use this method in the future. YC was able to reach its target audience despite limited use of in-region press trips. We partnered with a blogger that was already planning on coming to the region, Nicole Rosania, for our one in-bound press trip. YC has made a priority to work with media personalities that use instagram as one of their main channels. With this hosted trip, we were also able to get 10 images and a number of social stories and a blog on Nicole's site.	FY21 IPPR.pdf
Research	Survey/Data Collection	YC's research strategy is geared toward 'getting to know' the visitor; drilling down to find out more about who is coming, why, when, where and what they are doing while they are here. The results of these measures will help YC to market itself better to visitors. Research projects will be focused on these outcomes: • Define the people who are the region's visitors • Help define how best to advertise to the target market • Help define our competitive edge	https://medium.com/@BizzBeeSolution/5-reasons-why-market-research-is-crucial-for-your-business-a27b77fa8264 https://business.tutsplus.com/articles/why-is-marketing-research-important--cms-31593 https://www.business.com/articles/research-important-for-marketing-professionals/ https://blog.marketresearch.com/why-market-research-is-important-for-strategic-decision-making	Success will be measured by having useful, relevant data for developing and/or revising both short-term & long-term marketing strategies.	Research is powerful business tool to understand people's behaviors and the cause and effect those behaviors have on travel decisions. Research brings another voice to the conversation—the target audience's—that is objective, free of organizational bias and can be used for planning and for evaluating purposes.	$20,000.00	a.) Yes, we met our objective. b.) Our strategy was successful based on the metrics below c). Yes, we will use this method in the future. •Windfall Visitor Sentiment Conversion Study: •339 Completed Surveys •100 Phone •121 Email •118 Website Research focused on COVID-19 travel sentiments, past visits & future visitation plans to Yellowstone Country, among others. This report will give us a snapshot into the current thinking of consumers as they consider traveling to Yellowstone Country. The second part of the research included attempting to understand "digital tribes" and best ways to market to those audiences. Full research report attached.	Research.pdf
						$1,960,197.00		

Markething Method Evaluation Attachments

Attachment 1	FY 21 YC B2A FINAL 12-21.xlsx
Attachment 2	
Attachment 3	
Attachment 4	
Attachment 5	
Attachment 6	
Attachment 7	
Attachment 8	
Attachment 9	
Attachment 10	

Marketing Method Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget	Non bed tax funded budget (optional)
Consumer	Print Advertising	$68,000.00	$0.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	$480,000.00	$0.00
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	$80,000.00	$0.00
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	$50,000.00	$0.00
Consumer	Webpage Marketing/SEO/SEM	$55,000.00	$0.00
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	$24,000.00	$0.00
Consumer	Joint Ventures	$420,538.00	$0.00
		$1,177,538.00	$0.00
Marketing Support	Administration	$212,000.00	$0.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	$100,000.00	$0.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	$1,000.00	$0.00
Marketing Support	Crisis Management	$197.00	$0.00
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	$120,000.00	$0.00
Marketing Support	Cultural Tourism	$50,000.00	$0.00
Marketing Support	Promotional Items	$10,000.00	$0.00
		$493,197.00	$0.00
Publicity	Social Media	$75,000.00	$0.00
Publicity	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	$25,000.00	$0.00
Publicity	Press Trips	$25,000.00	$0.00
		$125,000.00	$0.00
Research	Survey/Data Collection	$20,000.00	$0.00
		$20,000.00	$0.00
			$0.00
		$1,815,735.00	$0.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
FY 21 BUDGET BY SEGMENT PIE CHART	FY 21 BUDGET PIE CHART-SEGMENTS PDF.pdf	127 KB
FY 21 BUDGET BY SEGMENT PIE CHART	FY 21 BUDGET PIE CHART-SEGMENTS PDF.pdf	127 KB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
Required Signed Documents	FY 21 signed docs.docx	94 KB