



**KALISPELL CONVENTION AND VISITOR BUREAU**  
**15 DEPOT PARK, KALISPELL, MT 59901**  
**FY 12 MARKETING PLAN**  
July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

**PURPOSE**

The Kalispell CVB is dedicated to enhancing the economic vitality of our community by promoting Kalispell as a year-round leisure travel and meeting and convention destination by efficiently marketing our attributes and amenities while encouraging continued respect for our outstanding natural environment and quality of life. The KCVB marketing plan identifies a mix of advertising, sales and service programs to reach our identified target markets through an efficient allocation of bed tax and TBID revenues.

**IDENTITY**

Kalispell's brand aligns with the Montana Brand Platform, offering a cohesive voice when marketing our state:

- More spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48.
  - Kalispell is located in the center of the Flathead Valley and surrounded by Montana's iconic natural wonders of Glacier National Park and Flathead Lake.
- Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders.
  - Kalispell offers a balance of city and outdoor adventure with its historic downtown, museums, shopping, dining, community and cultural events.
- Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night.
  - Kalispell's proximity to area attractions offers non-stop discovery in every direction and a variety of national brand and boutique hotels at the end of the day.

**Strengths**

Kalispell is:

- In the middle of it all – surrounded by the area's natural wonders of Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake and a variety of natural resources and activities
- A genuine and welcoming real Montana community supported by local color, events, and residents
- Access to culture and entertainment offering museums, arts, community and regional events
- Variety of options and price ranges in lodging, shopping, and dining including national brand hotels and chain stores
- A charming downtown with historic architecture and museums – the place to learn about the history of the Flathead Valley and Glacier Park
- The place for larger meeting and convention space and event facilities and more guest rooms than other locals in the Valley
- The regional trade center for retail, health care, business and education
- A cooperation of numerous associations and organizations all with the common goal of improving our economy and creating a vibrant community
- A travel destination for southern Alberta and eastern British Columbia, Canada
- Accessed by Glacier Park Int'l Airport and Amtrak's Empire Builder

**Challenges**

- Perception that Kalispell is a place to pass through on the way to somewhere else - a supply station, not a destination
- Seasonality of Kalispell tourism is heavily weighted to the summer months due to weather and Glacier National Park, but also the number of events currently held in July and August

- Lack of events during the shoulder seasons
- Ability to handle large tournaments or conventions in one location
- Need for ground transportation options to ski areas, Glacier National Park, the airport and Amtrak
- Glacier National Park road construction closures and late opening in the spring
- Transportation Costs
  - Air service availability & pricing
  - Gas prices
- Unpredictability of Weather/Climate
  - Glacier National Park: emergency road repairs & melting glaciers
  - Local forest fires and other natural disasters in the United States impacting our visitor's ability and willingness to travel
  - Variable snow levels year over year impacting raft season & ski season
- Recovery of U.S. Economy

## **GOALS**

### Primary Market – Leisure Travel

- a. Increase awareness of Kalispell as a travel destination
- b. Grow inquiries and increase visitations during shoulder seasons and winter months
- c. Create incentives to increase the number of visits and length of stay
- d. Provide effective tourism resources, services and training

### Primary Market – Groups and Meetings

- a. Generate qualified meeting and convention leads
- b. Recruit meetings, conventions & sports tournaments

### Secondary Market - Events

- a. Secure a long-term calendar of events during shoulder and winter seasons

## **HOW THE MARKETING PLAN SUPPORTS THE 5-YEAR STATEWIDE TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN**

The KCVB marketing plan supports the following strategic plan objectives:

Goal 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.

- 1.1 Implement highly targeted consumer advertising/promotion campaigns
  - 1.1.a Expand partnerships with tourism businesses/attractions as co-op partners
  - 1.1.b Continue winter marketing, promoting Montana as a superb winter destination
  - 1.1.c Attend consumer travel shows targeting high value, low impact visitors
  - 1.1.d Continue marketing to international travelers
  - 1.1.e Enhance tracking/reporting and ROI from state, regional, and CVB advertising
- 1.2 Promote Montana to target groups/events, emphasizing off-peak season activities
  - 1.2.a Amplify targeted marketing to attract groups, meetings, and conferences
  - 1.2.b Work with local sports groups to attract sport events in off-peak season
  - 1.2.d Target travel media to increase visibility of MT as leisure travel destination
  - 1.2.e Continue to target tour operators to bring tours/packaged vacations to MT
- 1.3 Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts
  - 1.3.a Host an annual marketing plan meeting to coordinate the marketing planning process
  - 1.3.b Implement the new Montana tourism brand
  - 1.3.c Conduct educational tourism workshops, presentations, and webinars
  - 1.3.d Create cooperative marketing campaigns between agriculture and tourism

- 1.4 Improve Montana’s Visitor Information System to extend visitor stays and spending
  - 1.4.a Create a database inventory of Visitor Information System elements statewide
  - 1.4.b Establish criteria for “officially-designated” visitor information sites and services, and foster more collaboration between agency and private visitor services
  - 1.4.c Provide advanced training for all VICs, including regional familiarization tours
  - 1.4.d. Use technology to enhance Montana visitor information and marketing efforts
  - 1.4.e. Expand displays of Montana destinations and products at State rest areas, airports, train stations and visitor centers

Goal 2: Attain public policy and citizen support for sustainable tourism and recreation.

- 2.1 Build awareness about new Montana Tourism Charter, Geotourism, & tourism benefits
- 2.2 Give effective presentations to policy makers about Montana tourism issues/benefits

Goal 3: Address management and access issues for sustainable recreation on private, state, and federal lands.

- 3.1 Educate visitors, suppliers, residents about ethics and responsibilities on public/private lands
- 3.2 Coordinate statewide tourism marketing efforts to ensure consistency with land management

Goal 4: Enhance and preserve Montana’s culture and history (historic sites, museums, art, music, etc.).

- 4.1 Promote existing historic/cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors
  - 4.1.a Use historic/cultural attractions as venues for conferences, events, and seminars
  - 4.1.d Revitalize Montana’s historic downtowns as vibrant destinations for travelers
  - 4.1.e Plan and promote commemorations of historic events in Montana

Goal 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services for target customer markets.

- 5.1 Cultivate opportunities to leverage private/public funds to create tourism products
  - 5.1.a Create vacation packages/itineraries for off-peak season niche markets
  - 5.1.b Expand winter tourism products/activities (spas, arts/culture, tribal events, etc.)
  - 5.1.c Encourage use of Made/Grown-in-MT products by restaurants, markets, retailers, etc.
- 5.2 Provide information about technical/financial assistance available to tourism businesses
  - 5.2.a Distribute assistance information via tourism meetings, web sites, newsletters, etc.

Goal 6: Address tourism and recreation professional development, workforce availability, training, and affordable housing issues.

- 6.1 Enhance professional development opportunities/requirements for tourism organizations
  - 6.1.a Encourage all MT CVBs to join DMAI or WACVB trade associations, adopt standards

Goal 7: Improve Montana’s transportation system for both residents and visitors.

- 7.1 Increase air service capacity to and from Montana cities.

Goal 9: Increase funding to maintain sustainable tourism and recreation.

- 9.1 Seek increases in state funding for targeted tourism marketing/programs/facilities
- 9.2 Foster opportunities to pool public and private marketing dollars
- 9.3 Enhance funding for region and CVB marketing efforts

Goal 10: Build an effective “team” to implement the Strategic Plan, and report results.

- 10.1 Recognize Travel Montana as ‘team captain’ to communicate/coordinate regularly with partners
- 10.2 Create public/private/tribal partnerships for cooperative project implementation
- 10.3 Implement Strategic Plan discussion/reporting to align activities with goals and actions
  - 10.3.c Submit updates on Strategic Plan implementation for Annual Report to TAC, etc.
- 10.4 Streamline reporting process of marketing plans/expenditures to TAC/TM by regions & CVBs

- 10.5 Obtain strategic research to inform tourism marketing, development, and policy decisions
  - 10.5.a Continue to conduct research about resident/nonresident travelers in Montana
  - 10.5.c Continue regular monitoring of Montanans' opinions about tourism and recreation
  - 10.5.d Disseminate tourism research reports to partners statewide

## **MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

### Primary Market – Leisure Travel

- a. Create a Kalispell opt-in subscriber base of 1,000 individuals from key markets
- b. Implement DiscoverKalispell.com and grow unique visitors month over month
- c. Generate publicity placement in target markets
- d. Enhance visitor resources through staffing of VIC, promotion of valley-wide calendar of events and improved wayfinding and information signage

### Primary Market – Groups, Meetings, Tournaments

- a. Generate 100 qualified meeting planner leads
- b. Generate 6,700 room night bookings through groups, meetings and tournaments

### Secondary Market – Events

- a. Identify 20 events to be brought to Kalispell, make 6 presentations

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

U.S. Travel predicts that domestic leisure travel will increase during 2011 as compared to 2010 and be above peak 2007 levels. Consumer confidence is highest it's been in 3 years but still not to a "healthy" level. Traveler sentiment related to perceived "affordability of travel" has improved over 2010 but it is feared to be short-lived due to rising gas prices and airfares. Traveler sentiment related to perceived "money available for travel" shows an increase year over year and is at its highest point since February 2008. Traveler sentiment index shows "interest in travel" and "time for travel" are up slightly. Not surprisingly the financial factor most likely to influence future leisure travel is the price of gasoline and air travel. Travel is still viewed as a right although trips may be closer to home and frugality and value continue to reign. U.S. Travel Association/David Sheatsley

Through ITRR, MARS Stout and the Kalispell VIC we know that visitors interested in Kalispell and our region primarily come from: Alberta, WA, CA, British Columbia, TX, OR, FL, CO, AZ, and IL. Based on travel predictions and probability of increased fuel prices, the KCVB will narrow that focus to the neighboring Canadian provinces and shorter drive, Amtrak and direct fly markets. Additionally we'll leverage MTOT and Glacier Country's marketing to target visitors already interested in a Montana vacation enticing them to select Kalispell as the destination.

### Target Geographic Markets:

- a. Leisure travel: Southern Alberta and Southeastern B.C. Canada, Eastern Washington and Seattle-Puget Sound area, Idaho, Oregon and Montana.
- b. Group: Based on data from local area lodging partners and business travel patterns, regional groups and meetings target markets will be reflective of leisure travel.

### Target Demographic Markets:

- a. Leisure travel:
  - i. Individuals or couples ages 35+ and families that seek a memorable experience that offers a balance of city amenities and outdoor adventure. First time visitor or repeat visitor visiting friends and family.
  - ii. Geotravelers - leverage Montana Office of Tourism's focus to attract this high-value, low impact visitor that appreciates local culture, heritage and landmarks.

- b. Group: Associations or corporate groups of 300 or less who travel to destination, resort communities for their meetings or retreats, and regional sports tournaments.

## MARKETING METHODS

During 2010-2011 we completed initiatives to lay the foundation for Kalispell's tourism marketing. This included the creation of the Kalispell TBID and CVB, a strategic planning session with 25 key community stakeholders, selection of a creative agency, discovery of the Kalispell Brand, production of a visitor guide, remodel of the Kalispell VIC, launch of a website and numerous public relation efforts positioning Kalispell as a destination marketing organization. Through a combination of public and private funds the marketing strategies in 2011-2012 will build upon that foundation to further the awareness of Kalispell as a travel destination to our target markets, provide effective training and resources to the local community to create brand advocates and improve the visitor experience, and continue the cooperative efforts with other local agencies and organizations to grow Kalispell's vitality.

The key strategies and tactics include:

- a. Web Site: Following the initial launch of DiscoverKalispell.com in June, 2011 the KCVB will continue to enhance and refine the website to create an exceptional planning tool for visitors. This will include inclusion of a Kalispell area video, valley-wide calendar of events, itinerary shopping cart and mobile site.
- b. Advertising and Social Media: To maximize the efficiency of KCVB's marketing budget our media strategy will focus on increasing visitations between October and May through media that builds word of mouth awareness for Kalispell through highly trackable media. Primary media will be online marketing through Trip Advisor, Google Grants, banner ads, and Facebook and other cross promotions. We'll work towards increasing compatibility of our marketing and travel tools with mobile devices and the trend of flexible and last minute travel planning. We will participate in applicable print and broadcast opportunities in the identified target markets for both the leisure travel and group segments. The KCVB is planning strong participation in cooperative marketing opportunities in both online and print with MTOT, Glacier Country and other CVB's.
- c. Direct Marketing: To support our efforts of direct marketing in leisure and group there will be a strong emphasis on growing our database. As we build the database we'll also begin to segment to enable us to send subject-specific communications. Methods used to increase the KCVB database include trade shows (both as the KCVB and through cooperative efforts with MTOT and Glacier Country), increasing opt-in subscribers through online and social media advertising, and the purchase of leads from MTOT and Glacier Country.

Through a consistent and strategically planned schedule of direct communications we will use e-marketing to complement our social media efforts and promote events and packages and increase group sales.

- d. Public Relations/Publicity: The KCVB will invest in publicity efforts to position Kalispell as a travel destination. Media coverage and endorsement of Kalispell will continue to drive discovery of our destination to an audience that we could not afford to reach with traditional advertising. This will be achieved through efforts such as group and leisure fams, press releases, travel writer recruitment and press trips.
- e. Tourism resources and education: The KCVB seeks to create brand ambassadors and enrich the visitor experience through Super Host and other hospitality training. The KCVB will leverage off the recent expansion and remodel of the Kalispell VIC to create an improved welcome center experience through the staffing of a full time travel counselor, enhanced visitor resources offered and wayfinding and visitor information signage. The KCVB will continue to work cooperatively with other local CVB's and tourism

related organizations to educate the area on the value of tourism and Geotourism to our local economy and cooperative methods of increasing out of area visitation, particularly from the Canadian market.

Marketing plan goals will be supported by the following strategies:

Goals	Marketing Strategies	TBID	Bed Tax
<b>LEISURE TRAVEL</b>			
Increase awareness of Kalispell as a travel destination	Website maintenance/enhancement	X	
	Produce Kalispell promotional video	X	X
	Visitor guide - production & printing, creation of digital guide	X	
	Visitor guide distribution		X
	Grow the shoulder season advertising campaign through media that provides trackable ROI (media creative, production and placement)		
	E-newsletters, e-blasts	X	X
	Social media	X	
	Print, radio or broadcast advertising	X	
	Online advertising (banner ads, SEO/SEM, Trip Advisor, Google Grants)	X	X
	Advertise in Glacier Country travel guide		X
	Print and online Coop programs with MTOT & Glacier Country		X
	Public Relations - host travel writers, fam trip, press releases to submit to media and bloggers in target markets.	X	X
Increase database of qualified leads	Lead development – e-newsletter subscriptions through e-marketing and social media and purchase of MTOT and Glacier Country leads.		X
	Attend consumer travel shows within identified target markets including coop with MTOT & Glacier Country.	X	X
Create incentives to increase number of visits and length of stay	Develop lodging/activity packages to promote during shoulder seasons in all media.	X	
	Event development - incentives and sponsorships	X	
	Identify events that could be held in Kalispell, facilitate conceptualization and coordination by local groups and provide underwriting funds.	X	
Provide tourism resources, services and training	Staff year-round Visitor Information Center with full time travel counselor and seasonal staff to cover weekend and holiday hours.		X
	Stock Visitor Information Center at Glacier Park International Airport	X	
	Improve welcome and wayfinding signage in Kalispell		X
	Create brand ambassadors with local businesses through informational sessions and Kalispell branded materials. Host hospitality training for front-line employees improving the visitor experience.	X	X

Goals	Marketing Strategies	TBID	Bed Tax
<b>GROUP TRAVEL - MEETINGS, CONVENTION and SPORTS RECRUITMENT</b>			
Generate qualified meeting and convention leads	Trade show attendance including coop with MTOT & Glacier Country	X	X
	Public Relations/Publicity – host meeting planner fams, press releases	X	
	Acquisition of full time Sales Manager	X	
	Develop insight into appropriate convention and meeting target markets through research.	X	
	Sales trips	X	
	Develop program to encourage local representatives of associations/trade groups to provide leads for regional meetings.	X	
Recruit meetings, conventions & sport tournaments	Online advertising	X	X
	Produce meetings & convention promotional brochure to use as lead follow-up to provide comprehensive overview of Kalispell and its meeting facilities, convention/event services and lodging properties.	X	
	Produce and distribute sports promotional brochure to planners, coaches, athletic directors and state and regional conference executives.	X	
	Create meeting planner incentive program to reward a planner or group for choosing Kalispell.	X	
	Attract and sponsor sports tournaments	X	
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE/RESEARCH</b>			
	Photography – development of Kalispell photo library	X	X
	Online photo library storage		X
	Smith Travel Reports	X	



**TBID Marketing Plan Budget FY'12**

TBID Projected Revenue	\$	267,000
Rollover from FY'11	\$	70,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>337,000</b>

<b>Program Description</b>	<b>Program Total</b>	<b>% of Total Budget</b>
<b>Staffing - wages and benefits</b> CVB Director, Sales Manager	\$ 123,200	37%
<b>Operations</b> Rent, phone, office supplies, postage & copies Tech support, equipment/software Bookkeeping, tax prep, audit City of Kalispell Assessment Fee Travel expenses	\$ 26,750	8%
<b>Research &amp; Education</b> Smith Travel Reports, DMAI membership, training & education	\$ 5,050	1%
<b>Website</b> Maintenance and enhancements, SEO & SEM	\$ 12,000	4%
<b>Publications</b> Visitor guide, other publications	\$ 15,000	
<b>Consumer Marketing</b> Kalispell promotional video, e-marketing, social media, online advertising Other Media TBD, airport display Travel show attendance, trade show booth	\$ 55,000	16%
<b>Event Marketing</b> Event & sports tournament expenses, promotions, sponsorships	\$ 50,000	15%
<b>Group Marketing</b> Trade shows, sales calls, M&C marketing/promotions/collateral, DMAI EMint	\$ 50,000	15%
<b>Public Relations/Publicity</b> Public Relations, publicity, photography, branded merchandise	\$ 15,000	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 337,000</b>	