

ORGANIZATION NAME: RUSSELL COUNTRY

PROJECT NAME:

FY11 Cooperative Marketing – Montana Bale Trail: What the Hay

APPLICATION COMPLETED BY: Gayle Fisher

Please explain the need for this project as well as a clear overview of the concept of the project. Narrative must provide enough details that those reviewing the application can comprehend or visualize the full scope of the project. Narrative should be a full overview, yet explicit and to the point.

The Montana Bale Trail: What the Hay, is a 21 year old event that has historically drawn a crowd of 5000+ people to the Utica/Hobson/Windham area. The event is held annually the first Sunday after Labor Day, in conjunction with the Utica Craft Fair and the Lewistown Chokecherry Festival. Over the past several years attendance and participation in the event have dropped off. A comprehensive revitalization plan is being undertaken to rejuvenate the event through the use of web marketing, TV advertising, event partnerships, brochures, highway signage and more. The event is managed by the Friends of the Hobson Library and Museum, (known as FOHL)

1. Highway Signage –Temporary sign (permitted by the state) to announce the entrance to the Montana Bale Trail. The sign will be up in advance of the event and for three months following the event. This sign will be stored to use in subsequent years.
2. Production and airing of a TV commercial to promote the event. In partnership with Pepsi and KRTV (Great Falls based, covers northcentral MT) we will have 6 TV interviews and 64 commercials airing on KRTV in the 5:30 a.m. to midnight time slots in the weeks preceding the event. Commercials will also air on KXLH-TV covering the Helena market. Accompanying “free” commercials will air on prime time on KRTV.
3. Enhancements to existing website to coordinate a comprehensive plan to utilize electronic media and social networking. Plans include utilizing our professionally designed web site, Facebook page, Twitter and a You-tube channel to air professional video footage. Specifically, we are planning the production and posting of four additional professional videos. Videos will include:
 - a. A segment on creation of hay art with behind the scenes footage of what goes into making the hay art
 - b. Segment devoted to tourism information for the area – additional things to do while in the area for What the Hay
 - c. A segment on the general area recreational activities
 - d. A segment revealing the current year’s entries and winners. This will be posted after the 2010 event with the goal of encouraging people to make plans to attend the event in subsequent years

Develop Objectives: The FOHL seeks to attract visitors traveling along HWY 87 to stop and spend some time in Central Montana. It is also our intent to encourage visitors to spend additional time in Central Montana by holding our day long event in conjunction with other area events promoting an entire weekend of family activities in Central Montana. The ultimate goal is to increase overnight visitation by increasing awareness of both What the Hay and other activities in Central Montana.

The Montana Bale Trail: What the Hay plays to the strengths of Russell Country. The event is held in an area known to have been a haunt of Charlie Russell, the diversely beautiful landscape, as well as the rich heritage of the agricultural life and the vast availability of recreational opportunities.

The number of ballots handed out at the two entrances to the event will give an attendance count. Webstats will provide data relating to social marketing efforts.

Portions of Marketing Plan supporting this project:

Goal#2 – Leveraging our authentic Montana lifestyle and sense of place

Goal #3 – Expand our marketing potential by participating in joint ventures with other Montana tourism organizations and businesses.

Goal #4 – Grow the visitor experience and opportunities by building relationships with the agriculture industry, and add to and build on our Agri –Tourism presence

Does this project support the Strategic Plan? **Yes**

This project supports the following Strategic Plan Goal(s):

#4 - Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history – promote existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

#7 - Build an effective tourism and recreation "team" to facilitate partnerships, share information and leverage funding/technical resources in order to realize the vision outlined in the 2008 – 2012 Strategic Plan.

This project supports the following Strategic Plan Market Opportunities:

- Showcase Montana's heritage/culture
- Target mature travelers
- Encourage Extended Stays

PROJECT BUDGET

FY 11 Cooperative Marketing – Montana Bale Trail: What the Hay Publicity
Russell Country

	Russell Country State Tourism Funds	Other Organizational Funds	Total
Highway Signage- temporary, Permitted with the state (see attached paperwork). Will be stored and used again as temporary signage in subsequent years. (Wood’s Metal Art)	487.50	487.50	975.00
TV Ad Production KRTV	100.00	100.00	200.00
TV ad air time 64 spots running from 5:30 a.m. to 12 midnight on KXLH-TV (KRTV partner will add additional prime time commercials as a partnership contribution)	400.00	400.00	800.00
Web Development, 4 Video Clips @\$500/clip Planning, production, rendering and posting to the Website, and other social media (Elfin Enterprises of Montana, Inc)	1000.00	1000.00	2000.00
Project Total	1987.50	1987.50	3975.00