

Approved Audits/Applications Committee 5/25/09

Organization Name: WEST YELLOWSTONE MONTANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Project Name: OPPORTUNITY / TIME SENSITIVE MARKETING: 2009
DEVELOPING LOCAL DESTINATION EXPERTS

Application Completed by: MARYSUE COSTELLO & JAN STODDARD

Approval requested

_____ Final

_____ Preliminary

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.

This summer we are all going to be challenged in maintaining a strong tourism season with current economic conditions as they stand. West Yellowstone is going to be further challenged because of road construction in Yellowstone (including the complete closure of the road between Madison Junction and Norris Junction beginning on August 17 and continuing through the remainder of the summer season) and on US 191 between Bozeman and West Yellowstone. Keeping visitors here longer will be very critical. Equally vital is that WYM maintain West Yellowstone as a destination base for Yellowstone National Park. Due to the Madison to Norris construction project web chatter through travel blogs and posting to sites such as Travel Advisory is already impacting visitor plans especially after August 17. Cancellations and reduced nights of stay are occurring. The purposes of this campaign are to:

- Reduce the likelihood of cancellations or changed plans because of the road construction
- Create a cadre of knowledgeable front line staff
- Show that businesses that have developed “local destination experts” have a better retention of employees and guests.
- Build a desire in our visitors (both potential and existing) to spend additional time in West Yellowstone

One of the major challenges we have repeatedly acknowledged in our annual marketing plan is the fact that WYM relies heavily on seasonal employees. Many have never lived in the area and many have never lived in the US. We want to be able to help them be the most effective “salesmen” for our community that we can. WYM has consistently relied on the private sector to address this need and while all businesses acknowledge it is important, it receives limited attention. We believe this project has the real potential to create a good sales force and thus, create greater demand for WYM.

What we propose is information and “scripting” for frontline employees. We intend to create a three-ring binder for frontline staff to use. Divided into several categories, it will enable these employees to become local experts. Information will be accurate (avoiding the rumor mill) and will give the frontline staff suggestions to keep visitors longer. The binder will include, though not limited to such sections as:

- Tools and resources to be found on the web, especially pushing our web site as the place to find information on things to do in a day, calendar of events, breaking news and so forth.
- There will be a section on the road construction. In addition to promoting the delays as “photographic opportunities”, we will help them help the guests to plan an enjoyable Yellowstone experience from West Yellowstone despite the road closure.

- Another section will focus on families. Once the frontline employee realizes they are speaking to someone with a family, he can flip to that section and there will be a multitude of activities to suggest to the visitor.

In time, there won't be the need to rely on the "scripts."

To begin with, our primary targets will be gas stations, restaurants, hotels/motels and campgrounds. Initially we will call on the business owner or general manager to demonstrate how the binder can help their employees and asking them to strongly encourage the use of them by their employees. Obviously this tool will not just help our visitors, it will help the bottom line of every business.

The three-ring binder allows for future additions changes and updates.

Another element of the project is that those businesses who participate will be awarded a poster to display in their business touting that they have: *Local Destination Experts*.

Objectives

Include the objectives from the narrative portion of your marketing plan that support this project.

1. resort tax collections, in percentage terms, remain on par with gate figures.
2. Ratio of blogs encouraging "avoid West Yellowstone after August 17", to positive reasons to select West Yellowstone despite the construction become at least 1:1.
3. at least ten additional businesses inquire about becoming part of the Local Destination Expert program.
4. increase length of stay measured by those who register at the Visitors Center by one hours over 2008/2009 figures.
5. Begin using a new quantifiable metric for measuring visitor impact and use this metric (metric sewer flow) in a year-over-year comparison.
6. private sector participation in at least two of the projects

Refer to the portions of your marketing plan, which support this project.

- Attract visitors to West Yellowstone by communicating an image that is consistent with our long-term vision of West Yellowstone as a vacation destination.
- Continue to target our market as accurately as possible, to assure funding is used to reach an audience that asks for information, travels to West and spends significant dollars
- Address the challenge of a seasonal workforce .
- Continue to expand our marketing potential by participating in partnerships with other tourism organizations.

How does this project support the Strategic Plan?

WYM believes that this position actually has the potential to support all aspects of the strategic plan. Though specifically we would say:

Goal 1.1 a: Expand partnerships with tourism businesses/attractions as co-op partners

Goal 1.1.b: Continue winter marketing, promoting Montana as a superb winter destination

Goal 1.3: Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts

Goal 2.1 Attain public policy and citizen support for sustainable tourism and recreation.

Detail pages attached **Yes** **No**

Organization Name: WEST YELLOWSTONE MONTANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Project Name: TIME SENSITIVE MARKETING: 2009
WINTER IN YELLOWSTONE

Application Completed by: MARYSUE COSTELLO & JAN STODDARD

DETAIL PAGE

We anticipate these actions at this time; however, additional items we have not thought of may develop as the project progresses.

- Prepare 20 three-ring, 1.5 inch, tabbed binder with spine and front cover clear pockets to insert identification information and front cover
- Prepare scripting/information for the following tabs, in order:
 - Page for important tools/resources that are readily available on line at our web site, such as our *Just for Today*, *Calendar of Events*, *Breaking News*, and so fourth.
 - Important local numbers
 - Yellowstone area road construction information with suggested routes and activities to maximize West Yellowstone as the preferred Yellowstone destination.
 - Family section with all the family activities
 - Winter in Yellowstone and West Yellowstone
 - Fly Fishing
- Scripting will be copied locally on 8.5x11, 20# paper stock, blank ink. Colors of paper will vary.
- Prepare 20 laminated posters to identify the business as “A place with the answers.”
- Arrange appointments with the first twenty businesses that respond to an offer to “train staff on site.”
- Spend 1.5 hours of time at each establishment reviewing the binder with the owner or manager (and other of their staff if they desire to have them present), answering questions and leave a copy of the binder.
- Spend an additional 1.0 hours per business distributing additional scripting and answering additional questions.
- Highlight these businesses in local press releases touting them as “A place with the answers”
- Providing a poster for their windows that also identifies them as “a place with the answers”.

**West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
Opportunity / Time Sensitive 2009
Developing Local Destination Experts**

	State Tourism Funds		Other Funds		Total
PROFESSIONALSERVICES:					
copy writing/editing of 45 pages @ \$40.00 per page	\$1,800	+	\$0	=	\$1,800
Design of covers & spine label	\$80	+	\$0	=	\$80
Design posters for businesses who participate in the training	\$40	+	\$0	=	\$40
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TOTAL	\$1,920		\$0		\$1,920
MARKETING/ADVERTISING:					
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TOTAL	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TRAVEL:					
Personal Car	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
Commercial Transportation	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
Meals	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
Lodging	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
Vehicle Rental	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TOTAL	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
OTHER:					
Staff time to schedule appointments and present to 20 businesses	\$900	+	\$0	=	\$900
20 three-ring binders with spine and front pockets for lables and tabbed separator pages@ \$6.50 each	\$130	+	\$0	=	\$130
staff time to assemble binders	\$225	+	\$0	=	\$225
Printing	\$150	+	\$0	=	\$150
	\$0	+	\$0	=	\$0
TOTAL	\$1,405		\$0		\$1,405

OPPORTUNITY & TIME				
SENSITIVE: DEVELOPING				
LOCAL DESTINATION	\$3,325	+	\$0	=
EXPERTS				\$3,325