

All Systems Go with VISITS

Dear Tourism Partners,

After several years of preparatory work and nine months of intensive development, Travel Montana's new contact center software, VISITS (Visitor Information Systems in the Treasure State) is live!! VISITS will enable Travel Montana to market the state more effectively, provide timely trip-planning assistance to potential visitors, and more efficiently deliver visitor guides and literature to prospective visitors.

While the previous call center software had served Travel Montana's needs for a number of years, we recognized the need for a state-of-the-art, consolidated system to address changes in the way people respond to marketing, such as increased e-mail and web inquiries and decreased call volume, as well as advances in technology over the past ten years.

VISITS will assist in managing several key programs designed to promote tourism and attract visitors. It will enable our marketing team to manage, track, and report the success of marketing campaigns. Furthermore, it will help us design future marketing initiatives based on the results of these tracking tools.

The VISITS software ties in seamlessly with Travel Montana's visitor information database, allowing the travel counselors the ability to provide timely and extensive information to potential visitors making inquiries over the phone, and eventually, allow visitors on our website to chat online in real time with travel counselors. Being equipped with software that provides the opportunity to be as successful as possible in tracking customer interests provides Travel Montana and our tourism partners a vehicle to do targeted follow-up with our customers, tailoring messages to their specific interest areas. By

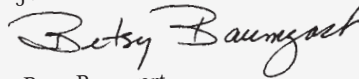
having the ability to be more customized in the messaging and more comprehensive in fulfillment, Travel Montana hopes to exceed the expectations of our customers, thus laying the critical first step of converting our inquiries into actual visitors to our state.

This new system also provides Travel Montana with the opportunity to share leads with various tourism partners throughout the state. These partners are integral in reinforcing the messages Travel Montana strives to execute in our marketing of Montana. Having a reliable and efficient product, which allows us to extract leads based on selected criteria for use by our partners, will be a true advantage to all the marketing initiatives throughout Montana.

In addition, VISITS will streamline order fulfillment and inventory management for Travel Montana's various promotional literature.

An enormous amount of energy and commitment went into this project and I would like to thank the following Travel Montana staff and contractors for their dedicated effort in this deployment: Anna Marie Moe, Corrie Hahn, Thurston Elfstrom, Brian Pierce, Dan Bethke and Rogie King as well as Project Manager Derek Scoble, Public Knowledge's Mike McMahon, our Missoula-based MARS Stout contact center and the contracted company responsible for the overall deployment, Tier1 Innovation.

Job well done,



Betsy Baumgart
Administrator,
Montana Promotion Division

Glacier Country Wins 2005 National Tourism Award

The Glacier Country Regional Tourism Commission guided by the efforts of Executive Director Linda Anderson was the winner of a 2005 Destiny Award for its "Winter Blast-Glacier Country Winter Sweepstakes" marketing campaign. The Destiny Awards are awarded by the National Council of Destination Organizations (NCDO), an industry council of the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA).



Anderson says that the Glacier Country marketing committee is always looking for new and unique ways to promote all four seasons and the sweepstakes fit the bill for a winter promotion. "When our advertising agency, Partners Creative, presented the sweepstakes project, we knew it would be a great way to highlight the many winter activities available to our visitors. It also included all eight counties—something that really resonated with members," states Anderson. As part of the campaign, each county provided a gift basket made up of goods from their area. "This was a wonderfully collaborative project," says Anderson. "The award was certainly the icing on the cake."

In addition, Travel Montana was recognized as a finalist for the Mercury Award in the Co-operative Marketing category for their Montana Ski Free for Life winter promotional partnership campaign with MacKenzie River Pizza Company. The Mercury Awards recognize state and territory tourism offices for excellence and creative accomplishment in travel marketing and promotion.

New Faces on the Council

There will be a number of new faces around the table at this October's Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) meeting in Livingston. Governor Brian Schweitzer has appointed ten new members to the Council. The role of the TAC is to advise the governor on tourism matters, make recommendations to Travel Montana and oversee distribution of funds to our tourism regions and CVBs as well as the tourism research projects of the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research. In addition to the eight incumbent council members, Travel Montana looks forward to working with: Dyani Bingham of the Montana Tribal Tourism Alliance; retired travel agency owner Virginia Court from Billings; Ed DesRosier from Sun Tours out of East Glacier; Rhonda Fitzgerald, owner of the Whitefish Garden Wall Inn; Vicki Hucke of Helena, serving as the TAC representative to the Montana Heritage Commission; Stan Ozark, President of the Glasgow Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture; Dolores Plumage, Blaine County Commissioner from Chinook; Jonathan Stoltz, owner of the Teton Pass Ski Area; MacKenzie River Pizza Company President and CEO, Steve Shuel; and Dan Vermillion, a fishing outfitter and Vice President and co-owner of Sweetwater Travel Company out of Livingston. Travel Montana would also like to thank our departing council members for the dedication and commitment they have provided to the tourism industry of Montana: Scott Asche, Maureen Averill, Kathy Brown, Kim Champney, Sharon Rau, Jay Robson, Michele Reese, Carolyn Valacich and George Willett.

Montana Helps in Katrina Efforts

Montana tourism is doing its part to assist in recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast area by teaming with Popular Photography and American Photo Magazines to offer an exclusive one-on-one photography trek to Montana with professional photographer Reed Hoffman. The trek is being auctioned off on eBay with a portion of the proceeds going to the Global Giving Charity, which assists with long-term rebuilding projects of those affected by the Hurricane. Bidding for the trip will be from October 21-31, 2005 at www.ebay.com/americanphoto.

Any lodging facility willing to help host in either the West Yellowstone or Glacier Park area, please contact Donnie Sexton: dsexton@mt.gov.

Sneak Preview

The Montana Film Office, Department of Commerce co-sponsored a sneak preview screening of the soon to be released Miramax film, "An Unfinished Life" starring Robert Redford, Jennifer Lopez and Morgan Freeman in Red Lodge on August 26th. The screening was a benefit for the Domestic and Sexual Violence Services of Carbon County. The screenwriters of the film, Mark and Virginia Spragg, live in Red Lodge and were one of the primary organizers of the event. As part of their sponsorship, the Montana Film Office helped to bring Academy Award winning Production Designer David Gropman and Art Director

Karen Schulz Gropman to the event as featured speakers. The Film Office was able to give the Gropmans a familiarization tour of southcentral Montana. "They were very impressed with Montana's filming incentive package, locations, crew and production services," reports Montana Film Office Manager Sten Iversen, "and in turn they will work to bring more feature projects to Montana." Department of Commerce staff present were Director Tony Preite, Montana Promotion Division Administrator Betsy Baumgart and Film Office staff John Ansotegui and Bill Kuney.



Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

October

- 4-9 HatcH Audiovisual Arts Festival—Bozeman, MT
- 10 Columbus Day—office closed
- 15-16 Montana Winter Roadshow with REI—Bloomington, MN
- 26-28 TIA Marketing Outlook Forum—Seattle, WA

November

- 4-8 National Tour Association Convention—Detroit, MI
- 14-17 World Travel Market trade show—UK

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to:
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Travel Montana • Montana Film Office
Montana Department of Commerce

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