



A DESTINATION MARKETING & STEWARDSHIP ORGANIZATION

Message from Discover Kalispell and the Tourism Business Improvement District

We want to take a moment and say thank you for your ongoing collaboration and support, and for providing a memorable experience for Kalispell's visitors and residents. At Discover Kalispell, we're grateful to work alongside you, our partners in hospitality, tourism, outdoor recreation, arts and culture and events. Your passion and hard work have been instrumental in our collective success. As we reflect on the milestones achieved, we eagerly anticipate the opportunities the coming year holds.

Tourism plays an integral role in Kalispell's diverse economy, creating jobs and economic vitality. In 2023, Discover Kalispell implemented a multi-touch approach to marketing that expanded our brand reach and relevance, while also creating increased visitations and economic impact outside the peak summer months. We invite you to learn more by reviewing this report.

As community members we recognize the importance of managing peak season travel and visitor expectations, all while supporting businesses, activity providers and land managers. We remain focused on our strategic priorities, which are to increase year-round occupancy and revenue, be an active steward of our natural resources and community priorities, and to be a strong advocate for the state tourism industry.

Thank you to each and every one of you who share the passion for this amazing community. We'd also like to offer a special acknowledgement to our Board of Directors, member businesses, City of Kalispell, and our team of professionals at Discover Kalispell and the Discover Kalispell Chamber.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Medler".

Diane Medler
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryce Baker".

Bryce Baker
TBID Chair of the Board

Annual Report
2023



DISCOVER KALISPELL

2023 HIGHLIGHTS:

1

Multi-touch marketing strategy to promote **year-round travel**, emphasizing winter travel to Kalispell which includes skiing at Blacktail Mountain, Glacier National Park as a year-round destination, and **Go-with-a-Guide** to responsibly experience the magic of northwest Montana.

2

2.4% increase in winter quarter occupancy. ADR remains strong, producing a **9.7% increase** in RevPAR during 2023.

3

49% increase in **tour group bookings** and 28% **increase** in group event inquiries.

4

Launched tools to enhance the visitor experience and drive business to **local business** and points of interest. – Town & Trails Pass and Wander, Kalispell's map app.

5

Introduced a **new vacation-generating event** to Kalispell - Highlander Kalispell.

Impact of Visitor Spending:

12.5 million visitors spent **\$5.82 billion** and an average of **5 nights** in Montana in 2022. (ITRR)

Nonresident visitors spent **\$818 million** in Flathead County. (avg. 2021-2022, ITRR)

Kalispell welcomed an estimated **2,044,000 visitors** in 2022 (ITRR)

Domestic visitors have spent **\$172 million on Visa cards** while in Kalispell during the first 9 months of 2023. 4.0% decrease over 2022. (Visa Destination Insights)

International visitors have spent over **\$12 million** in Kalispell through September 2023. 24% increase over 2022. (Visa Destination Insights)

Impact of Visitor Spending on Kalispell Businesses:



43% of spending at restaurants is by visitors



23% of spending at retail is by visitors



87% of spending at accommodations is by visitors



45% of spending at attractions is by visitors

(Zartico)



In Montana the outdoor recreation and tourism industries are integral to the state's economy and residents' quality of life.



Montana's outdoor recreation economy grew 14% in 2022 and accounts for 4.3% of the state GDP.



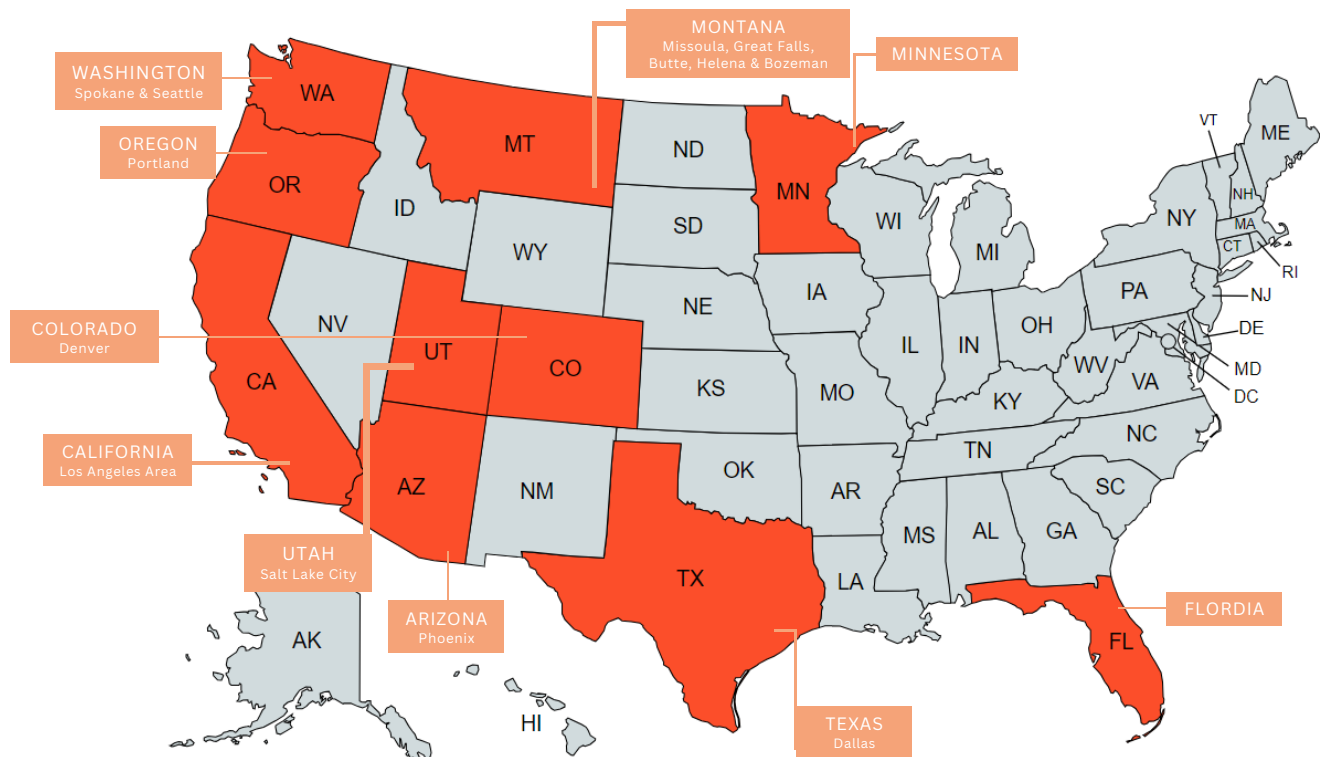
Outdoor Recreation generated \$2.9 billion in economic output and 29,450 jobs across Montana.

(Bureau of Economic Analysis)



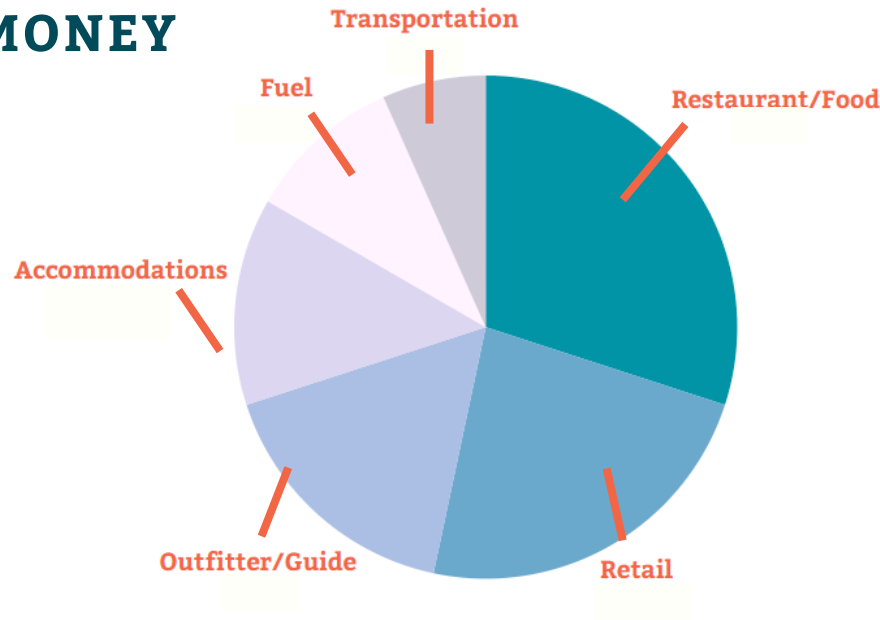
Tourism, an Economic Driver

Top domestic markets for visitations to Kalispell



(ITRR, Zartico)

WHERE VISITORS ARE SPENDING MONEY



(2022-2023 - Visa Destination Insights)

Top domestic markets for spending in Kalispell

Missoula, Seattle, LA area, SLC, Phoenix, Bozeman, Portland, Helena, Great Falls, Spokane.

Lodging Report - City of Kalispell



Hotel Performance:

2022 - **1.6% increase** in average **annual occupancy**; **8% increase** in **RevPAR** (revenue per available room); **7% decrease in demand**.

2023 - **0.08% decrease** in average **annual occupancy**; **9.7% increase** in **RevPAR**; **4.5% decrease in demand**.

Summer is the driving quarter for revenue to tourism businesses due to Glacier National Park. Increases in average occupancy in the other quarters reflect Discover Kalispell's focus to increase brand awareness and available amenities for year-round travel to take some pressure off summer.

Winter quarter occupancy has **increased 7.6%** since 2021
Summer quarter occupancy has **increased 5.2%** since 2021

(Smith Travel Research)



Short Term Rental Performance:

Steady rise in short term rental supply (Airbnb, VRBO) continues to **drive down occupancy and rate**, however demand and total revenue remain **significantly above** 2022.

The number of available short term rental listings has **increased 50.8%** (last 12 months Oct 2022-Oct 2023). That increase includes an increase of 1-bedroom units of which hotel properties selling inventory on Airbnb is a contributor.

(AirDNA)

Destination Marketing & Management

Integrated approach to paid, earned and owned media to promote year-round travel, emphasizing winter, unique Kalispell experiences and local businesses, and Go-With-A-Guide to assure responsible recreation.

1

2

3

A promotion strategy that is aligned with a traveler's journey

AWARENESS

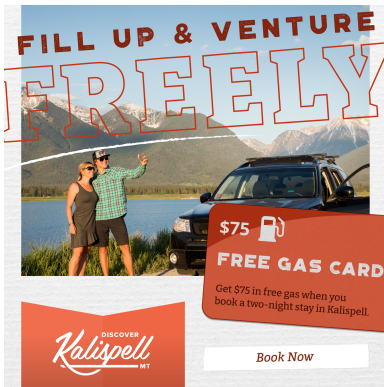
Paid and Earned Media, Social Media, Website, Tourism Sales

INSPIRATION

Visitor Guide, Newsletters, Blogs

FACILITATION

Event calendars, Town & Trails Pass, Wander Map, Visitor Information Services



Successful Campaign with 904 check-ins at 21 different local businesses

Paid Media: Seasonal Evergreen & Niche Campaigns

SEM:

12,126 clicks;
293,144 impressions;
avg CTR 14.8%

Display:

27,568 clicks;
12,222,814 impressions;
avg CTR 2.30%

Meta:

39,846 clicks;
7,203,452 impressions;
avg CTR 0.56%

(Jan-Dec 2023)

Public Relations - Earned Media

Hosted press trips highlighted winter activities, museums, culinary assets, and Glacier Park International Airport to promote visitations and ease of access to Kalispell.

Highlights include:

- ★ 303 Magazine – *Denver to Montana Getaway*
- ★ VIA/AAA Magazine – *Spring Mountain Getaway in Kalispell Montana*
- ★ Travel Awaits – *7 Delicious Restaurants to Experience in Beautiful Kalispell Montana*
- ★ Redbook – *The Best Winter Sports Destinations in the US*
- ★ USA Today, Outdoors Wire – *23 of the Best Places to See Cherry Blossom Trees Bloom in the US*
- ★ The Epoch Times – *Kalispell, Montana: Winter's Jumping off Point*
- ★ Calgary Herald – *Discovering a Culinary Wonderland in Wintery Kalispell, Montana*
- ★ AARP – *5 North American Ski Towns for an Affordable Stay*

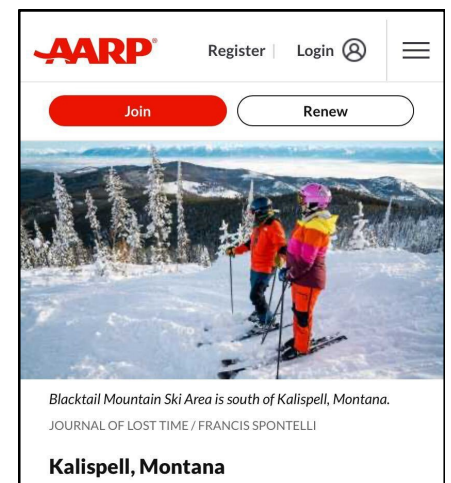
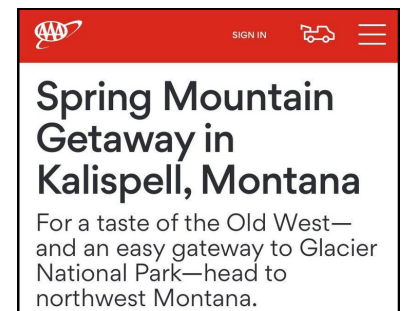
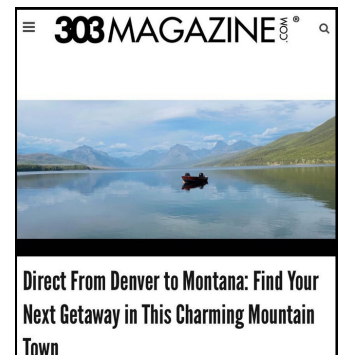
Articles generated
a total reach of
over 60 million.

“

Discover Kalispell's beautifully designed and user-friendly website is an easy place for out-of-state visitors to find local business to support. We especially appreciate their online calendar where you can list special events that they then highlight on a monthly basis. Their partnerships with international groups/events such as the Highlander event this past summer, brought hundreds of individuals to town and we were honored to host the after party in our taproom which brought over 100 people through our doors that weekend. Between their website, numerous print publications, and professionally created video content highlighting small local businesses, Discover Kalispell has played an absolutely integral part in the promotion of downtown Kalispell and we are super grateful for their presence and the work they do in this community.

Liz Leary, Bias Brewing

”



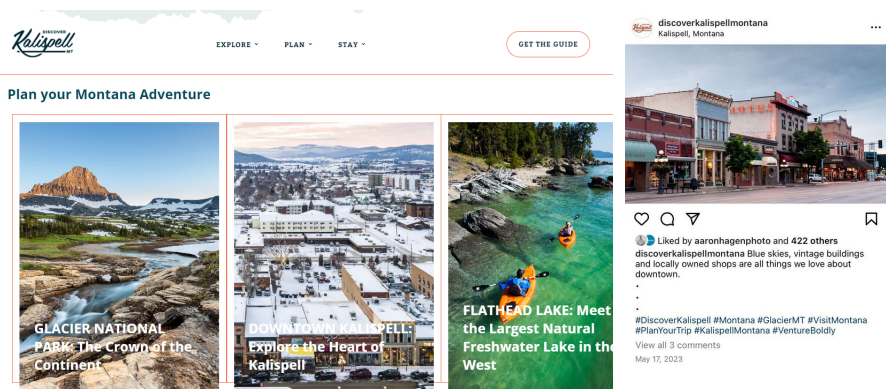
Owned Media



YOUR GUIDE TO MONTANA'S TRIBAL NATIONS

November is Native American History Month, a month that celebrates the stories of our country's First Nations. The theme this year – Celebrating Tribal Sovereignty and Identity. While our modern-day history in Montana dates back to 1889, the stories of this place span thousands of years and include Indigenous tribes who traveled through and lived in the area's mountains, valleys and plains. Western Montana was home to numerous tribes, including the Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille and Salish, while the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre were on the east side of the Rocky Mountains. Today, Kalispell is within easy reach of two reservations: the Blackfeet Nation and the Flathead Indian Reservation. [Learn more](#) and honor tribal nations and Indigenous people by visiting one of the reservations, touring the [Northwest Montana History Museum](#) in Kalispell or attending a powwow.

Opt-in database of 27,000 interested travelers. Newsletters receive an average open rate of 42.5%.



Website, Blogs, Social Media

YouTube Shorts



True Water Fly Shop Kalispell Montana #fishing #shoploc...



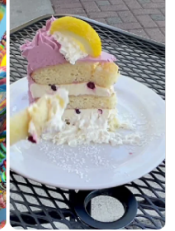
The Dusty Star Saloon Smokehouse Kalispell...



The Rancher's Daughter Kalispell Montana



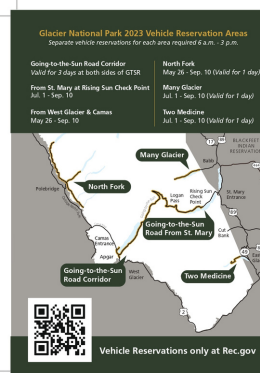
Norm's Soda Fountain Downtown Kalispell Montana



Bonelli's Bistro Downtown Kalispell Montana

Visitor Management

Communications to visitors during trip planning and when they are in market to educate on responsible recreation, community events, local businesses and travel tips.



Tourism Sales

Kalispell, a Canvas for the Perfect Group Gathering

Group sales initiatives generated increased recognition for Kalispell as a group event market demonstrated by a 49% increase in tour group bookings and 28% increase in group event inquiries.

- Hosted FAM (familiarization trip) for 22 U.S. tour operators in April 2023, resulting in four RFP's from key industry partners.
- Increased efforts to position Kalispell as a sports destination by attending Montana Coaches Clinic and one-on-one meetings with local organizers.
- Facilitated recruitment of the Montana Showcase Soccer Tournament by collaborating with hotels for competitive rates.
- Increased number of Association RFP's through strategic exposure in quarterly e-news and industry publications.



Day 1 - The Heart of Kalispell

Downtown History Tour

Look into the past at one of our museums – or visit all three if time allows – and learn about Kalispell's unique history. Visit the Conrad Mansion Museum, home of Kalispell's founder, Charles E. Conrad and his family, on a docent-led tour. Explore the valley's arts and culture scene at the Hockaday Museum of Art and soak up regional history at the Northwest Montana History Museum, located in the first school in Kalispell. Discover Kalispell is here to provide the resources to customize your historical tour.

Shop Kalispell

Enjoy free time shopping in downtown boutiques, shops and stores that offer a mix of locally made products, as well as antiques, cowboy hats, jewelry, clothing, soaps and more. Be sure to swing into Montana Coffee Traders or Ceres Bakery for an afternoon pick-me-up. While shopping, make sure to visit The Toggery, Western Outdoor, Sage and Cedar, Honey Home and Design and Sassafra.

Western-Themed Evening Entertainment Ideas

Experience a chuckwagon dinner with all the trimmings. With hundreds of acres of timberland and trails for horseback riding and hiking, Artemis Acres provides a western experience that you are sure to remember.

Guests can enjoy a tractor-pulled wagon – or for more adventurous types, a horseback ride – that leads to a gorgeous field with a campfire, cowboy entertainment and a western meal. If you are lucky, you might even have a horse come over to check out what you're having for dinner.

Every Thursday in the summer, Brash Rodeo celebrates Montana's cowboy culture. Events include bull riding, saddle bronc, team roping, barrel racing and more. Enjoy a summer evening with Western Montana's longest-running rodeo in nearby Columbia Falls behind the world-famous Blue Moon.

Day 1 – Group Details	
Conrad Mansion Museum	406.755.2166
Northwest Montana History Museum	406.756.8381
Hockaday Museum of Art	406.755.5268
Artemis Acres	406.755.3723
Brash Rodeo	406.250.5110

“ In a town that was near sold out during peak season, Dawn swiftly transformed into my greatest ally.... This project evolved into a resounding triumph, and Dawn played an integral part in that success. I can't wait to bring another group to Kalispell, Montana - a newfound gem in my list of favorite destinations!

Jen Hernandez
Event Professional
The Roomeaze

Destination Events

Discover Kalispell's partnerships with local and global partners has been instrumental in attracting destination events to our area.

2023 Montana Spartan Race: Final Year of a Decade-Long Relationship

7,356 registered racers

67% of racers were from 80+ miles from Kalispell

Estimated spending by out-of-area attendees: **\$1,020,247**



Introduced a New Global Destination Event: HIGHLANDER Kalispell.

A backpacking adventure where organizers provide camping spots, food rations and other logistics assuring leave no trace. Routes included Pegasus (60-miles) and Hercules (30-miles). The **170 nonresident** hikers collected and **removed 1,200 pounds of trash** from trails on Flathead National Forest, DNRC and private land during the event.



Community Stewardship

Discover Kalispell encourages community stewardship by providing resources on how to get involved, including volunteering in Kalispell, practicing responsible recreation and promoting local small businesses.



TREAT IT LIKE GRANDMA'S HOUSE VIDEO SERIES

Welcome to "Treat It Like Grandma's House - Grandma & Montana Both Hate a Messy Home," a captivating YouTube series dedicated to promoting responsible recreation in Kalispell.

[WATCH NOW](#)



HOW TO RECREATE RESPONSIBLY IN WINTER

As seasons change, so do our recreational activities. To stay safe and help protect the places we play during winter, there are six rules to help you recreate responsibly and stay safe.

[LEARN MORE](#)



VOLUNTEER IN KALISPELL

Volunteering is a great way to experience the local culture and give back to a community, all while having a transformative experience that fosters personal growth, development and new connections.

[READ MORE](#)



The Discover Kalispell and Chamber team are proud to participate in the annual Flathead Water's Cleanup.

Grant Funding Provided to Support Local Events and Projects:

Event Grants:

Frosty The Brewfest
Big Sky Reining Classic
State Western B Basketball finals
Downtown Art Challenge

Community Project Grants:

Downtown holiday decorations
Flathead Valley trail map
Kalispell three museum brochure and video

Regional Conference Incentives:

2023 Handbell Festival
2023 NMCB 58 Association
2023 NW Rental Conference

Key Strategies 2024:

1

Increase visitations in fall, winter and spring to provide a robust year-round economy in Kalispell.

2

Attract new sports and events that generate economic impact to Kalispell, prioritizing the off-peak seasons.

3

Expand the group sales markets to include the military reunion segment and actively recruit larger, national conferences.

4

Present visitors with the right options to minimize their travel footprint on the natural resources.

5

Advocate for the tourism and hospitality industry through workforce training and legislative advocacy.

6

Provide tools and resources to drive visitors, meetings and groups to Kalispell's local businesses, art and cultural assets, unique attractions and events.

Discover Kalispell Team:



Diane Medler

Executive Director



Dawn Jackson

Group Sales
Manager



Marisa Mikonis

Marketing &
Communications
Manager



Meche Ek

Visitor Services
Manager

TBID Board of Directors:

Bryce Baker, *Chair*, My Place Kalispell
Robert Hall, *Vice Chair*, Holiday Inn Express
Zac Ford, *Treasurer*, Hampton Inn Kalispell
Britta Joy, Marriott Springhill Suites
Skyler Rieke, Best Western Flathead Lake Inn & Suites
Steve Blazer, Hilton Garden Inn

Partners:

Discover Kalispell Chamber Team
The Abbi Agency
Lightning Bug Public Relations

