



## MARKETING KALISPELL

*Tourism is an important part of the Flathead Valley economy.*

Non-resident travel accounts for 20 percent of basic labor income in the county, a higher percentage than for other counties in our state. It is vital to our continued economic growth so we need to work to create a sustainable year-round tourism industry.

With the creation of the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), to complement the annual bed tax revenue, the Kalispell Convention & Visitor Bureau has the resources to create a distinctive brand and position Kalispell as a destination. During the next 5 years, we anticipate that the Kalispell CVB will invest approximately \$2.5 million in an effort to reach that goal.

In spite of a slow economy, signs for our industry are good. Last year visitors spent approximately \$232 million in Flathead County. Many of these visitors came to visit Glacier National Park. Others came to Kalispell because we are a regional hub for retail, financial, educational, and medical services. Visitors from Canada continue to provide a significant share of the market throughout the year. Kalispell hotels showed a 4.3% increase in occupancy in 2010. During the last four months, October – January, the hotels saw an average of 24% increase in occupancy over the same months in the previous year (STR Reports, reporting Kalispell hotels).

As with any destination marketing, we must determine what sets Kalispell apart from other travel destinations and even from other communities here in the Flathead Valley. To answer that question, the KCVB conducted a strategic planning session that included a wide representation of community organizations and businesses. After a great deal of discussion, the answer was found in one word: **Location**.

- ▶ Kalispell is centrally located between our two natural icons: Glacier National Park and Flathead Lake and the launch point for numerous outdoor recreational activities and cultural opportunities found throughout the valley.
- ▶ It offers a charming downtown with historic architecture and museums – the perfect place to learn about the history of the Flathead Valley and Glacier Park.
- ▶ Kalispell offers more options for lodging, restaurants and shopping at a variety of price points.

The KCVB, utilizing the services of Partners Creative, is currently developing the brand and messages that will differentiate Kalispell from other travel destinations. A great deal of tourism marketing centers on consumer travel. In this regard, our marketing efforts will leverage off of those of the State of Montana and Glacier Country Regional Tourism Office. We will use our marketing resources to target those who have already made the decision to travel to Montana and increase awareness of Kalispell as a destination for their next Montana vacation. The marketing strategy will continue with the focus taken during the past six months targeting the Canadian traveler, as well as short drive and direct-fly markets such as Idaho, Eastern Washington, Seattle, Denver, and Salt Lake City.

A visitor-centered website and printed travel guide will offer interactive support for travel planners. Both will feature sample itineraries, packages and information about upcoming events and activities. We will also develop initiatives that will encourage our visitors to stay longer, spend more money and return more often. Key elements in this arena will be the development of events in the spring, fall and winter and improved ground transportation options to provide connections from Kalispell to the airport, Glacier Park and our ski areas.

Last year, more than 12,000 potential visitors connected with the Kalispell Visitor Information Center (VIC). A renovation and expansion of the VIC has begun that will double the size of the existing area while providing an improved visitor experience.

In order to build a year-round destination, we are also developing the meetings market to garner increased regional conventions and sporting events. The City of Kalispell features 16 hotels with over 1,600 rooms and 43,000 square feet of convention/meeting space. In addition to facilities, meeting planners also look for a location that offers activities and options that will enhance their meetings. Again, Kalispell provides the perfect location along with a host of recreational and cultural opportunities.

Members of the community and the Kalispell Chamber are being asked to become ambassadors for Kalispell. As members of state, regional or national organizations, your referral is the first step toward bringing your next meeting home to Kalispell.



## FAST FACTS

### Montana's Tourism & Recreation Industry

#### Tourism Means Business

- ▶ Nonresident travel accounts for 20 percent of basic labor income in Flathead County.
- ▶ 10.5 million visitors traveled to Montana in 2010. This means 11 new customers per Montana resident for Main Street businesses.

#### Tourism Means "New" Money

- ▶ During 2010 nonresident visitors injected \$232 million dollars into the Flathead County economy (preliminary ITRR data).
- ▶ Visitors to Montana in 2009 spent \$2.3 billion which is new money for Montana's economy.
- ▶ Visitor spending generated \$153 million in state and local tax revenue in 2009.
- ▶ Every dollar spent on advertising yields \$104 in visitor spending in Montana.
- ▶ For every bed tax dollar invested in advertising, \$4.53 is returned directly to the state's general fund.

#### Tourism Means Jobs

- ▶ Tourism and recreation businesses support 25,000 Montana jobs.
- ▶ Visitor spending provided \$661 million in worker salaries. On average, every dollar spent by nonresident travelers in Montana generates 30 cents in wage and salary income for Montana residents. This is 13% higher than the national average.
- ▶ Some of our Partners in the Tourism industry include:
  - Hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts and guest ranches
  - Restaurants and bars
  - Outfitters and guides
  - Ski areas and private travel attractions
  - Museums and cultural facilities
  - Private and public campgrounds
  - Farmers and ranchers
  - Gas station and convenience store owners
  - Transportation companies
  - Retail shops
  - State parks

#### Montana Brand

The Montana brand unites the efforts of the various entities marketing Montana with a more cohesive voice. Through focus groups in key markets the Office of Tourism identified that many of our visitors come to Montana for the same reason we choose to live here: the mountains, the clean air and water, beautiful scenery, wildlife and the wild and scenic areas that surround us. The Montana Brand message includes:

*More spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48*

*Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders*

*Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night*

Fast Facts are provided by the  
Montana Department of Commerce  
Office of Tourism & ITRR.  
<http://montanaturismnews.org>  
<http://travelmontana.mt.gov>  
[www.visitmt.com](http://www.visitmt.com)  
[www.itrr.umt.edu](http://www.itrr.umt.edu)

## Members

### Kalispell Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID)

Aero Inn  
America's Best Value Inn  
Blue & White Motel  
Comfort Inn

Econo Lodge  
Glacier Ridge Suites  
Hampton Inn  
Hilltop Inn

Hilton Garden Inn  
Holiday Inn Express  
Kalispell Grand Hotel  
Motel 6

Outlaw Inn  
Red Lion Hotel  
Super 8 Motel  
Travelodge