

GARDINER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB ANNUAL REPORT

'20

2020 Financial Report
CVB Marketing Update
Success & Next Steps





GARDINER CHAMBER OF **COMMERCE & CVB**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Message from **The Executive Director**
Member Benefits

MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board of **Directors**
Gardiner Chamber **Staff**

OVERVIEW

Company **Vision & Mission**

FINANCIAL REPORT

Year End **Snapshot**

MARKETING REPORT

CVB Marketing **Overview**
Financial Report **Breakdown**

SUCCESS AND NEXT STEPS

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

♦
Terese Petcoff

Dear Members:

It is an understatement to say the 2020 served us with challenges and changes that nobody could have predicted. As I reflect upon the past year, I am nothing but thankful and humbled by your support. Now, as we head into a new year, I would like to share with you some highlights from this historic time.

The start of 2020 brought the COVID19 pandemic. While ever challenging we continued to adapt and provide support to our community and members. We worked hard on keeping you informed with the most up-to-date information on the State of Montana's opening plan, grant opportunities, community resources, and providing much needed PPE to our visitors and locals alike.

As the year continued on, our prediction of a low visitation season was proven wrong time and time again. At our Visitor Information Center, we saw over 36,000 visitors from May – September, a 9.3% increase from the summer of 2019.

With this increased travel we worked hard on keeping travelers informed through our digital avenues. On www.VisitGardinerMT.com we kept our "Keeping the Community Informed on COVID19" landing page consistently updated with the changing guidelines. Through our social media platforms, we continued to post messaging centered around what to expect when visiting Gardiner during this evolving time. These marketing efforts proved useful as we saw a 16% increase in website traffic, a 34% increase in Instagram followers, and a 16% increase in Facebook followers.

On July 14th, the Gardiner community suffered a historic blow as an accidental fire permanently altered the landscape of our community. Through our Community Newsletter and social outlets we were able to direct individuals wanting to provide monetary relief to appropriate donation channels. We helped the Yellowstone Community Fund, one of many nonprofits assisting in fire relief, in collecting donations. We were humbled to see the support from individuals in twenty different states and over fifteen different businesses locally and throughout the US.

When reflecting on 2020 we move forward with optimism into 2021. We will continue to adapt our marketing efforts to not only showcase what makes Gardiner unique, but provide key tools on what to expect while visiting during this ever-changing landscape. It is our goal to teach every visitor how to recreate responsibly while being kind to our hardworking business community, in order to preserve Gardiner and keep it the special place we all know and love.

However challenging 2020 proved, it was the support from our members and volunteer Board of Directors that guided our staff and volunteers through. We cannot say thank you enough and we look forward to providing you with new opportunities in 2021. We encourage you to reach out in the coming year with your feedback and ideas on how we can best serve you.

With gratitude,
Terese Petcoff
Executive Director

MEMBER BENEFITS

Chamber Website Listing

Each member receives a complimentary custom listing on VisitGardinerMT.com, our new consumer facing website, utilizing the Gardiner brand. Google Analytics tracking, SEO and digital marketing through the Gardiner Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) pushes the potential visitor to explore VisitGardinerMT.com and see all we have to offer. Thousands of people navigate the Chamber's website each month in search of relocation, tourism, and community information.

Marketing Opportunities

As a Chamber Member you automatically reap the benefits of the Gardiner CVB. The goal of the CVB is to market Gardiner as a year round destination in itself. By marketing the Gardiner area, your business receives collateral publicity as Gardiner continues to gain recognition as a desired travel destination. Members have full access to all marketing materials created with CVB funds — including videos, photos, and web content — and are included in any publications that are funded through the CVB. We have worked hard to expand advertising opportunities this year to include web banner ads, a Gardiner Travel Guide, a walking map, and as always the Gardiner Community Newsletter.

Voting Rights

Each Chamber Membership gets one vote in official Gardiner Chamber of Commerce election of Board of Directors seats and proposed changes to the Articles of Incorporation. Members must be present at the Annual Members Meeting to vote on Board of Directors seats.

Referrals

The Gardiner Visitor Center is open year round, with over 30,000 visitors coming through our doors this past summer alone. In person, on the phone, and via email the Chamber receives thousands of requests for recommendations on goods, services and lodging. As a Chamber Member your business is referred to the visiting public. We provide in depth information on tourism, relocation, and trip planning.

You're Invited

In 2021 we hope to offer more networking opportunities for members to meet mingle and share best practices as well as continue to build a series of business development workshops. Each January we hold the Annual Meeting of the Members. One of our favorite events of the year, this is your opportunity to participate in the election of new Board members and make your voice heard. We also encourage everyone to attend our monthly board meetings, generally held on the 3rd Thursday of every month, to let us know how we can better serve you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

JEFF GUENGERICH (OUTGOING)

President

Jeff feels privileged to call Gardiner, MT his home for the last 20 years where he has enjoyed raising his two sons. In the business sector, he owns Yellowstone Dino Lube & Repair along with being a partner in Yellowstone Park Service Stations. He enjoys actively participating on other numerous committees and enjoying the outdoor recreation in this diverse backyard.

TRINA SMITH (OUTGOING)

Vice President

Originally from Mississippi, Trina came to Yellowstone National Park in the summer of 1998 to complete her college internship. From then on she never looked back and feels fortunate to call this special place home. Trina now oversees the guest operations at B Bar Ranch, an organic cattle ranch just north of Gardiner. Trina is passionate about sharing her love of the great outdoors and the abundant wildlife.

MIKE KELLER

Treasurer

Mike Keller is the General Manager for Xanterra Parks and Resorts in Yellowstone National Park, WY. He has lived and worked in Yellowstone for over 30 years, starting as a volunteer at Norris Geyser Basin in the summer of 1984. Mike began his career with the Park concessioner in the winter of 1987-1988 as a room attendant. He currently lives in Mammoth Hot Springs with his wife and two children.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KELLY BURNS

Board Member

Kelly Burns is the Recruitment Marketing Specialist for Yellowstone National Park Lodges. She first came to Yellowstone in 2009 as a tourist. Nine years later, she has returned as a full-time employee residing in Mammoth Hot Springs.. Her favorite thing to do on the weekends is getting out and exploring. She is passionate about the National Parks and has a goal to visit all 400+ units managed by the National Park Service. Currently, she is two-thirds of the way there.



LESLIE EVERETT (RESIGNED)

Board Member

Leslie joined Yellowstone Forever after a 21 year career at Bank of America as an Administrative Support Associate/ Marketing Officer supporting executive level leadership in the Global Wealth and Investment Management Division. She fell in love with Yellowstone during her first visit in the winter of 2012. Leslie was inspired by Yellowstone's iconic landscape and delicate ecosystem and decided that she wanted to move west and develop a new career helping to preserve and protect Yellowstone National Park for future generations.



EDWIN JOHNSON (OUTGOING)

Board Member

Edwin, and his wife Ronalee, have been greeting guests since their 1981 arrival in Yellowstone Country. After years of guiding experience, Edwin became a licensed Montana Outfitter in 1985. He is a life member of Safari Club International, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the North American Hunting Club.

SARA ONDRUS

Board Member

With over twenty years of tourism industry experience Sara enjoys co-owning & operating Paradise Adventure Company and Yellowstone Rafting Company alongside her husband Patrick. She first came to Yellowstone in 2000 and spent four summers working at the Roosevelt Corrals and Lodge. Since then, she met her husband, started a family, and made Gardiner her year-round home. She is thankful to serve our vibrant community and embrace its tourism industry.

ALEX ROBERTS

Board Member

Alex was born and raised in Gardiner. GO BRUINS! Upon moving to California for college she quickly realized that Gardiner was her true home. Since her return she has had the pleasure of managing the Raven Grille, Iron Horse, and served as a previous co-owner of the Grizzly Grille. She is currently a Food and Beverage Manager for Delaware North at the Yellowstone Mine. Alex enjoys Gardiner's eclectic community and all it has to provide for its travelers.

MIKE SKELTON

Board Member

Mike and his wife Ann and have been full time Gardiner residents since 2015 after relocating here from the Dallas, TX area. He established Yellowstone Wonders LLC, based here in Gardiner, in 2018 to offer private tours of Yellowstone National Park. Mike was the President and CEO of a privately held corporation involved in the office equipment business in the Dallas area from 1994-2018.

CHAMBER STAFF

Terese Petcoff, Executive Director
Sara Fleming, Office Manager
Zondra Skertich, Newsletter Coordinator

COMPANY
**VISION &
MISSION**

•

Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

MISSION

The Gardiner Chamber of Commerce serves our community through developing local tourism while endorsing the stewardship of the Yellowstone Ecosystem.

VISION

Gardiner, Montana is a year-round gateway community.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2023

Strategy 1:

Expand board recruitment and develop an organizational succession plan.

- * Set expectation of all board members to attend all meetings.
- * Develop a Gardiner School Student Board Representative to encourage youth involvement and further engage the community

Strategy 2:

Establish Gardiner as a year-round destination through innovative marketing campaigns to grow a more sustainable economy.

- *Increase visitation 10% in the shoulder and winter seasons (October-April), using 2018 as a baseline year for visitation
- *Collaborate with CVB to create annual Marketing Plan

Strategy 3:

Exercise stewardship of Gardiner/Chamber properties for community benefit.

- *Establish a utilization plan for the Rodeo Grounds facility.

Strategy 4:

Enhance our value to chamber members.

- * Develop website to integrate billing and account services for members
- * Encourage membership engagement through the development of awards programs, business development workshops, and increased emphasis on face to face interactions with staff.
- * Maintain current membership with an annual retention rate of 90%

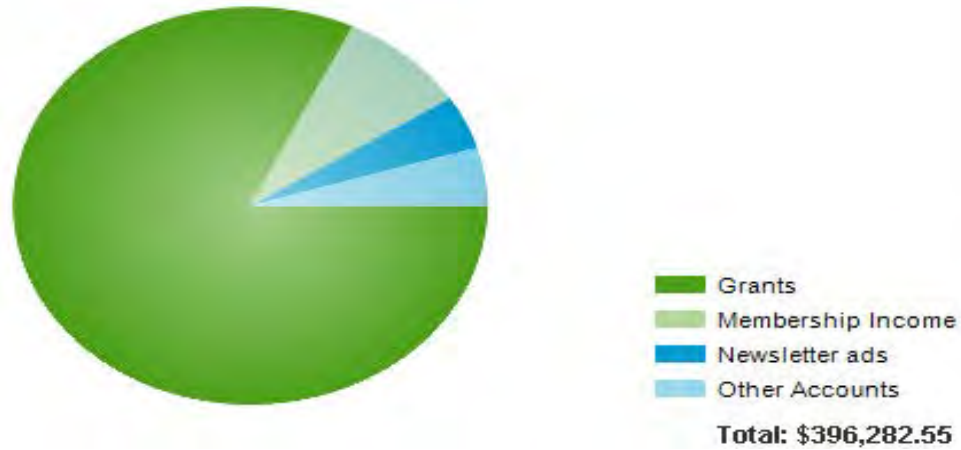
Strategy 5:

Leverage local events to promote year-round visitation to Gardiner.

- *Focus effort to prepare for and capitalize on the 2022 Yellowstone National Park Sesquicentennial

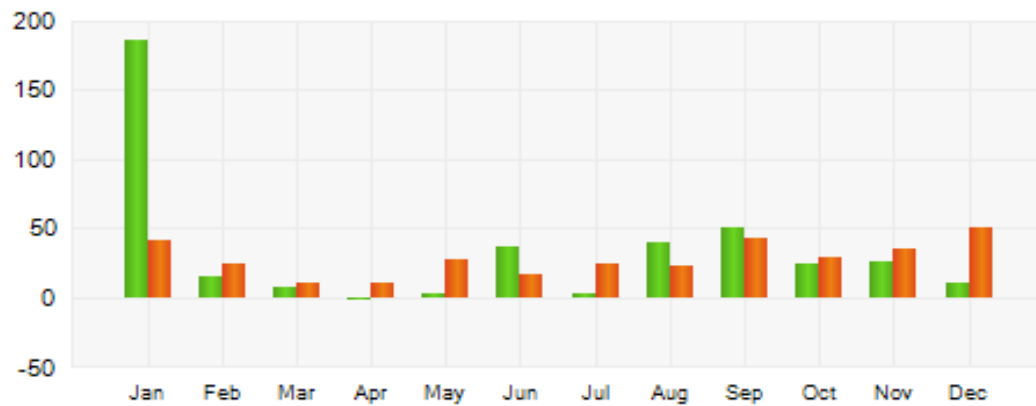
YEAR END FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

FY20 Income Breakdown

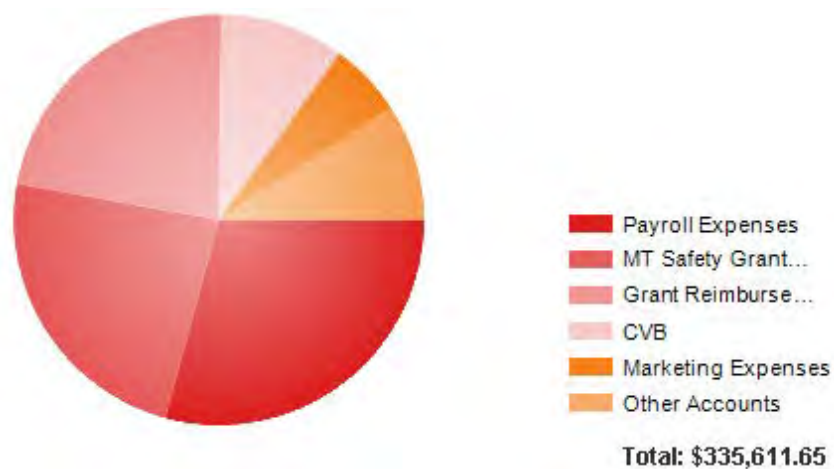


FY20 Income and Expense Breakdown

\$ in 1000s

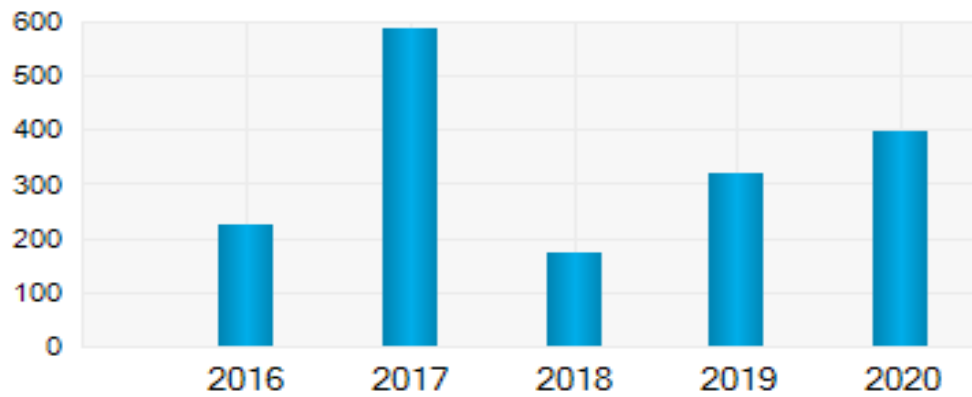


FY20 Expense Trend



Previous Year Income Comparison

\$ in 1000s



Previous Year Expense Comparison

\$ in 1000s

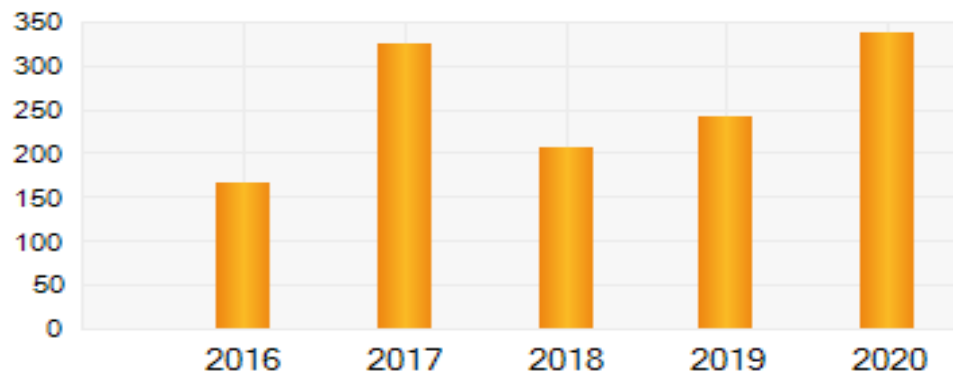
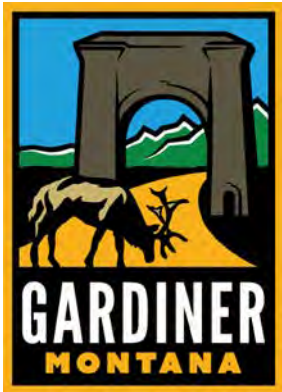


Chart of Accounts

Capital Grant.....	\$183,748.17
Main Checking.....	\$115,414.92
CVB.....	\$50,461.33
Savings.....	\$7,284.61
Gardiner Gateway.....	\$117.03

Total Revenue 2020: \$60,670.90

Notes: CVB funding is mandated by state lodging tax and runs on different fiscal year than the Chamber. Financial snapshot shows funding as of December 31, 2020 on the fiscal year Jan-Dec.



CVB MARKETING AT A GLANCE

Please note that the following represents data on Fiscal Year 2020, which runs running from July 2019 - June 2020 for the Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The small hamlet of Gardiner is located in southwest Montana at the North Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. Nestled between the Absaroka-Beartooth and the Gallatin Mountain Ranges, Gardiner lays claim to approximately 10 million acres of public lands. The community also enjoys Montana's Yellowstone River—the longest free flowing river in the lower 48 states. In the early 1880's, Gardiner's northern boundary was Yellowstone concessionaire James McCartney. Since then, Gardiner has served as the original entrance to Yellowstone and is graced by the historic Roosevelt Arch, dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903.

Our community's small-town Montana charm, natural splendor, and abundant wildlife truly make it a unique "home on the range" for our nearly 900 residents. Year-round access to Yellowstone's Northern Range, known as the Serengeti of North America,

Our five overall goals are: Increase bed tax collections (October-May); Increase time spent in Gardiner (June-Sept); Increase resort tax collections (June-Sept); Increase return visitation to the State particularly during the shoulder and winter seasons; Increase our digital presence including social media reach/engagement and website traffic

truly differentiates Gardiner from other Yellowstone gateway communities. The community also enjoys a rich history as the original entrance to Yellowstone National Park, which has left a flavor of Old West heritage evidenced by historic buildings and the Roosevelt Arch.

Strengths: Our charming small town offers relaxing hospitality while providing full service amenities. Many Gardiner restaurants offer local and sustainability grown produce and Montana raised beef. A diverse selection of accommodations including modern hotels and inns, rustic cabins, quaint cottages, relaxing B&B's, and vacation rentals. Our all-inclusive guest ranches give the visitors horseback riding and fishing by day, cowboy cookouts and campfires by night.

Year-round access to Yellowstone National Park and easy access to Forest Service and BLM lands provide visitors with an array of recreation opportunities. These include whitewater rafting, ziplining, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, photography, wildlife watching, hiking, fishing, and soaking in hot springs.

Gardiner is currently enjoying the successful completion of Phase I of a \$24-million-dollar infrastructure improvement as part of the nationally recognized Gardiner Gateway Project (www.gardinergatewayproject.org). The project's completion now provides visitors with vital amenities such as walkways, safer traffic routes, a Gardiner Welcome Center and 24-hour public restrooms, and the Roosevelt Stage in Arch Park.

Challenges: Challenges include residential housing shortages, public/private wildlife controversies, and lack of year-round staffing. In the winter and shoulder seasons, the lack of year-round staffing and a much lower visitation rate make it difficult for businesses to remain open—resulting in a shortage of accessible visitor amenities. Gardiner's remote location also presents issues for visitor access and awareness. When all park roads are open, some visitors may choose to bypass Gardiner on their way to Yellowstone National Park.

Opportunities: The largest opportunity for tourism growth in Gardiner is in the winter and shoulder seasons. According to National Park Service gate counts, October through May only contribute to approximately 30% of total North Entrance visitation. The primary goal of our long-term marketing efforts continues to be focused on attracting more visitors during that time through a comprehensive marketing plan.

Brand Pillars: Gardiner aligns perfectly with the state's brand pillars. Located at the heart of the Greater

Yellowstone Ecosystem, Gardiner is surrounded by unspoiled nature with beautiful vistas and landscapes home to some of the most abundant and diverse wildlife in Montana. Gardiner prides itself as the historic gateway to Montana's natural wonders. Our messaging focuses on the area's abundant wildlife, authentic and local hospitality, and year-round recreational activities as the only year-round entrance to Yellowstone National Park.

CVB MARKETING SEGMENTS

From Year 2020

Photo & Video Library: By the end of FY20 we successfully purchased a high-resolution photo for the cover of our 2020-2021 Gardiner Travel Guide. This distinct photo of the Roosevelt Arch and lone wandering elk showcase Gardiner's unique wildlife, setting us apart from neighboring entrances.

Joint Ventures: In collaboration with the Cooke City Chamber, Livingston CVB, and Yellowstone Country Tourism, we participated in several joint ventures including the maintenance of our TripAdvisor page, a fall press trip, and several print and digital advertisements.

Gardiner Visitor Guide: Although we were successful in meeting our objective to create a travel guide and have it available for distribution through VICs and to mail out and download, no bed tax funds were used for this project. Advertising revenue exceeded cost of producing that would have been charged to the bed tax budget. Although no funds were spent in FY20, future use of the method will be considered and the future budget will be adjusted accordingly.

Website Support: Using our media agency TDG, we responded to routine maintenance needs and updated some stylistic features throughout the website to www.visitgardinermt.com.

Social Media: As part of our goal to increase Visit Gardiner's online presence and therefore expand our audience, funds were set aside for Facebook ads, boosted posts, and paid "likes" campaigns. Our Facebook following increased by 16% to reach a total following of 39,139 followers and a 33% increase in Instagram followers for a total following of 4,403.

Online Digital Advertising: In order to further establish Gardiner as a year-round destination, funds were used for three campaigns highlighting the wildlife and activities of the shoulder seasons of Fall, Winter, and Spring. These campaigns utilized the Google ads network to serve our target audience, and a combination of advertising tactics, including remarketing to individuals who are compelled to visit www.VisitGardinerMT.com. As our inaugural year we were extremely happy with the results of the campaigns, as each one served more impressions and click throughs than the previous one.

Gardiner Rack Cards, Post Cards & Stickers: To help promote brand and destination awareness, funds were allocated to print Gardiner rack cards, post cards, and stickers, which were distributed for free of charge to visitors in the Gardiner Welcome Center.

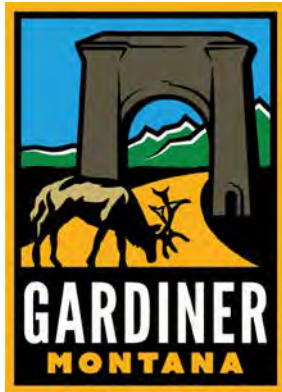
Print Advertising: A limited amount of funding was allocated to participate in regional print advertising opportunities including the West Yellowstone Visitor Guide, Explore Yellowstone, the *Livingston Enterprise*, and *Outside Bozeman*.

Administration: This included salary for staff who worked on CVB projects as well as postage to send Gardiner travel packs.

Opportunity Marketing: Funds were reserved for opportunities that rose unexpectedly throughout the year such as joining Voices of Montana Tourism, (VOT). VOT distributes messaging via its monthly e-newsletter that has a distribution of 450+ (legislatures, local policy-makers, tourism partners and the general public). As a VOT partner, the Gardiner CVB receives a presence and directory link on the voicesoftourism.com website which has been online since 2011 and has a robust following.

Fulfillment: Funds were set aside in order to send our comprehensive travel guide to various locations directly from the printer rather than our physical location. With this funding we were able to drop ship 154 boxes, 12,480 guides, to 57 different locations in the states of Montana, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, and North Dakota.



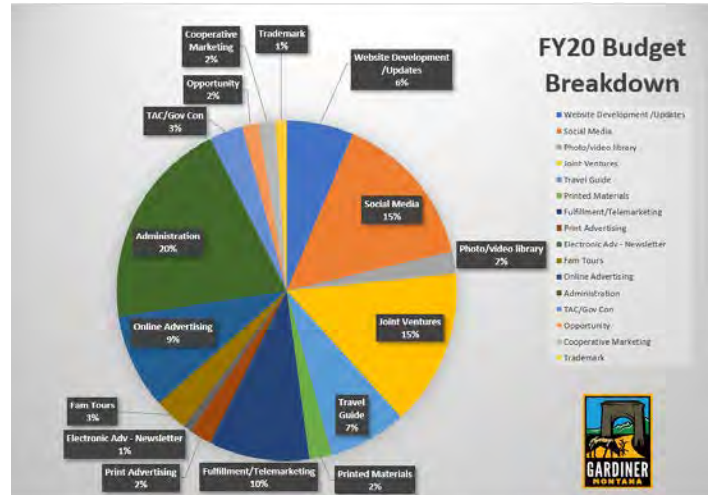


CVB MARKETING BUDGET

From Year 2020

Allocation of Funding

Project	2019 Bed Tax Funded Budget	2020 Bed Tax Funded Budget
Website Development	\$8,119.36	\$4,000.00
Social Media	\$4,500.00	\$13,000.00
Photo/Video Library	\$3,880.64	\$2,000.00
Joint Ventures	\$9,050.00	\$12,000.00
Travel Guide	\$4,000.00	\$3,500.00
Brochure Stocking	\$3,000.00	-
Print Advertising	-	\$2,000.00
Radio Advertising	\$500.00	-
Administration	\$9,031.00	\$10,800.00
Conferences	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Opportunity Marketing	\$600.00	\$3,139.00
Marketing Personnel	\$4,515.00	-
Engage Strategies Consulting	\$6,000.00	-
Fulfillment	-	\$10,500.00
Cooperative Marketing	\$750.00	\$750.00
Printed Materials	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Electronic Adv. - E Newsletter	-	\$375.00
Press Trips	-	\$4,000.00
Online Advertising	-	\$9,250.00
	\$68,161.00	\$78,814.00





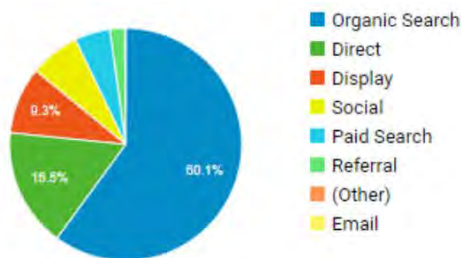
Gardiner Chamber/CVB FY20 Digital Communications Report

Change in Website Traffic July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

FY20 Website Users (+16%)



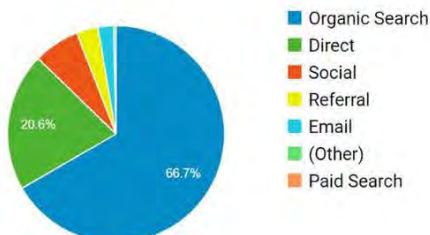
FY20 Web Traffic Acquisition



FY19 Website Users



FY19 Web Traffic Acquisition



Source: Google Analytics

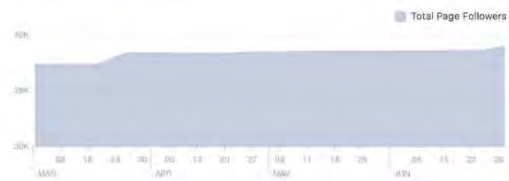
Social Media Change in Page Likes July 1, 2019- June 30, 2020

Facebook: 33,737 to 39,139 (+16%)

Total Page Followers as of Today: 33,737

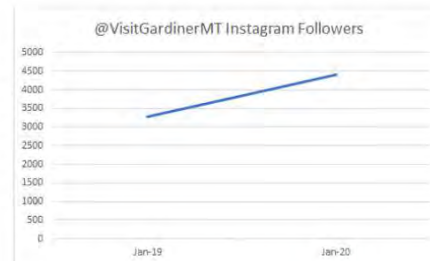


Total Page Followers: 39,139



Source: Facebook Insights

Instagram: 3,287 to 4,403 (33%)



Key Take-Aways

- While our growth of Facebook followers have continued to level off with a 16% growth in FY20 compared to a 25% growth in FY19
- Following rapid growth in FY19 of 167% Instagram followers tapered off in FY20 with a 33% increase. This growth is still a major achievement and showcases that this channel will be key to our social presence.
- Website traffic continues to show positive growth with a 16% increase in traffic compared to FY19. Session duration decreased compared to FY19.
- Overall we were pleased with our digital report for FY20 and hope to continue this momentum for a similar increase in our online audience in FY21.



2020 SUCCESSES

ENHANCE VALUE

COVID19

2020 held many challenges but throughout the COVID19 pandemic we continued to adjust and stay open. Between partnering with community organizations and using funds granted through the CAREs Act we were able to send out a resource mailer, provide PPE, hand sanitizing stations, safety messaging, and more to support to our members, community, and travelers alike.

YEAR ROUND DESTINATION

Sustaining the Future

Since the adoption the Gardiner CVB in 2016, we've made significant strides to increase destination awareness and shoulder season visitation. In 2020, we saw a 16% increase in website traffic and 30% increase across our social media channels. Members can highlight their business in any one of our marketing pieces: the Gardiner visitor guide, walking map, website, newsletter, and—new to 2021—print ads in our public restrooms.

ORGANIZATIONAL

Team of Experts

Upon the departure of former Executive Director, Neala Seigle, former Office Manager, Terese Petcoff, was selected to step into the roll. As in 2019 the Chamber consists of a full time Executive Director, full-time Office Manager, and part-time Newsletter Coordinator. In April of 2020 we welcomed Office Manager, Sara Fleming, as an integral part of our team.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Property & Facility Upgrades

In backing our strategic priority of utilizing the Rodeo Grounds we were able to remove unauthorized vehicles and install a security gate and chain at the ground's entrances. In response to mitigating COVID19 and possible safety issues we installed an automatic lock to our public restroom facilities for closure in the late PM/early AM hours. These valuable updates will help protect our staff for years to come.





2021 STRATEGY

Looking Forward

In 2021 we will continue to build upon our marketing efforts of the past and move toward our ultimate goal of establishing Gardiner as a year-round destination. We are excited to offer our membership new advertising opportunities and connecting you with the proper tools to navigate an evolving traveler and travel industry. We look forward to diving deeper into our strategic plan and further solidifying the long-term visions for our organization. All in all, we are eager to start the new year and serve the community and membership we are so happy to be a part of!

20

**GARDINER
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

216 Park Street
PO Box 81
Gardiner, MT 59030

Phone
406.848.7971
www.VisitGardinerMT.com