

GARDINER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB ANNUAL REPORT

'19



2019 Financial Report
CVB Marketing Update
Successes & Next Steps



GARDNER
PHARMACY
R MEDICINE
ELECTRONICS
ICE CREAM
ESPRESSO

ESPRESSO

MEDICINE & ICE CREAM





GARDINER CHAMBER OF **COMMERCE & CVB**

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SUCCESS AND NEXT STEPS

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

♦
Neala Siegle

Dear Members:

As we dive into a new decade, we'd like to thank you for your continued support and share some highlights from the past year.

We kicked off 2019 by finalizing and printing Gardiner's first-ever, full-color visitor guide. We've worked hard over the last year to place these guides in strategic locations throughout the region, from the Bozeman and Jackson Hole airports to visitor centers across the intermountain west.

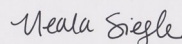
Our shoulder season marketing efforts were a primary focus in 2019. Traffic to the official Visit Gardiner website continues to climb each year, with a 59% increase from 2018 for a total of over 114,000 users. We saw significant growth in our social media following, produced a number of print ads in strategic publications, and added several digital marketing campaigns to our mix.

Last April, we received the 2019 Marketing Campaign of the Year Award on behalf of the Gardiner CVB at the 2019 Governor's Conference on Tourism. Not only was this an honor for our staff and committee volunteers, it gave our community significant exposure in front of hundreds of regional tourism professionals.

In the coming year, we look forward to keeping the momentum going on our shoulder season marketing campaigns, upgrading the corrals at the Gardiner rodeo grounds thanks to funding from the Gardiner Resort Tax and labor donated by the Rodeo Club, and highlighting annual Gardiner events that bring business to our town and make it a special place to call home.

Our staff and volunteers look forward to providing the best value possible for your membership in 2020. Please don't hesitate to stop in, send a message, or give us a call to let us know how we can best serve you.

With gratitude,



Neala Siegle
Executive Director

MEMBER BENEFITS

Chamber Website Listing

Each member receives a complimentary customizable listing on VisitGardinerMT.com, our new consumer facing website, utilizing the Gardiner brand. Google Analytics tracking, SEO, and digital marketing through the 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 Convention and Visitors Bureau (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 community newsletter.

Voting Rights

Each Chamber Membership gets one vote in official Gardiner Chamber of Commerce directional membership polls, election of Board of Directors seats, and proposed changes to the Policies and Procedures manual, Articles of Incorporation and Constitution and Bylaws. Polls are sent electronically, but members must be present at meeting to vote.

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 2020 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

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 and his wife Katy own 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

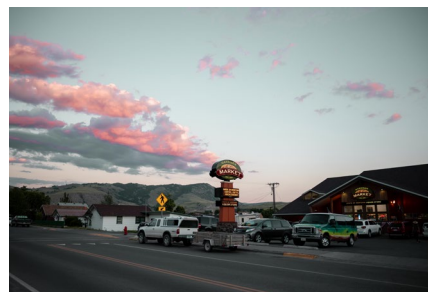
Vice President

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.



EDWIN JOHNSON

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.

NELI KARAMFILOVA (OUTGOING)

Board Member

Born and raised in Bulgaria, Neli first ventured to Gardiner in 2006. She's been in Montana ever since, working in the summers and going back to school in the winters. Neli loves everything about living here—the big sky, the wildlife, the kind and caring community, the cowboys and the horses. And, of course, the best beef in the world! She has a passion for Montana-made and Montana-grown products. Neli and Dimitar started running The Corral, a small burger place, in 2015. She enjoys finding local, organic, sustainable products and working with small vendors, ranchers and producers.

LESLIE EVERETT

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.



ANNA HOLLOWAY (OUTGOING)

Board Member

Anna is the owner and operator of the Tumbleweed Bookstore and Cafe. Nestled in the heart of Gardiner, MT this little shop provides a little bit of everything. Stop in for a book, a fresh cup of coffee and fill your belly with homemade baked goods, soups, sandwiches and more.

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

Neala Siegle, Executive Director
Terese Petcoff, 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%

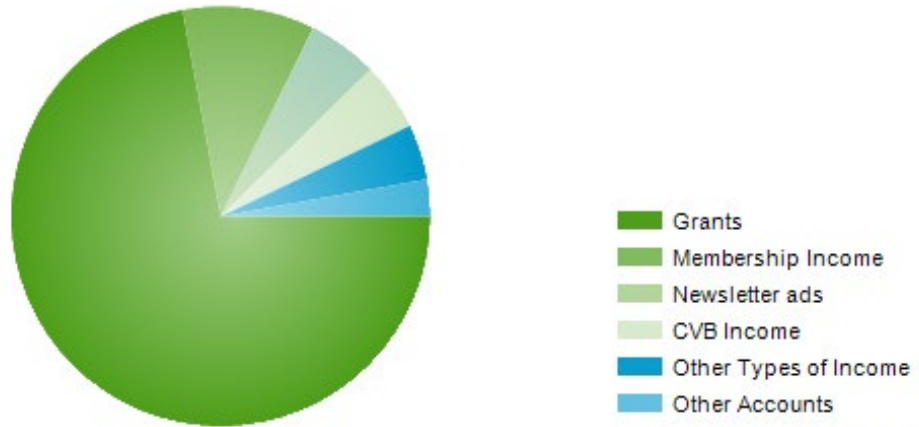
Strategy 5:

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

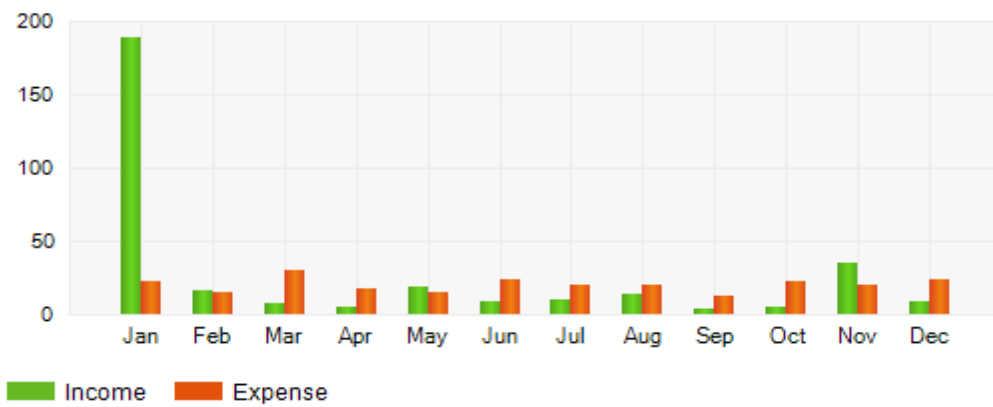
FY19 Income Breakdown



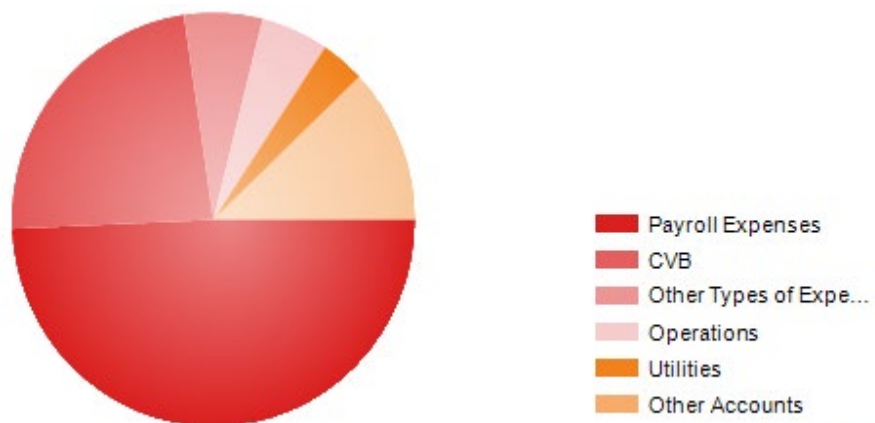
Total: \$318,382.69

FY9 Income and Expense Breakdown

\$ in 1000s

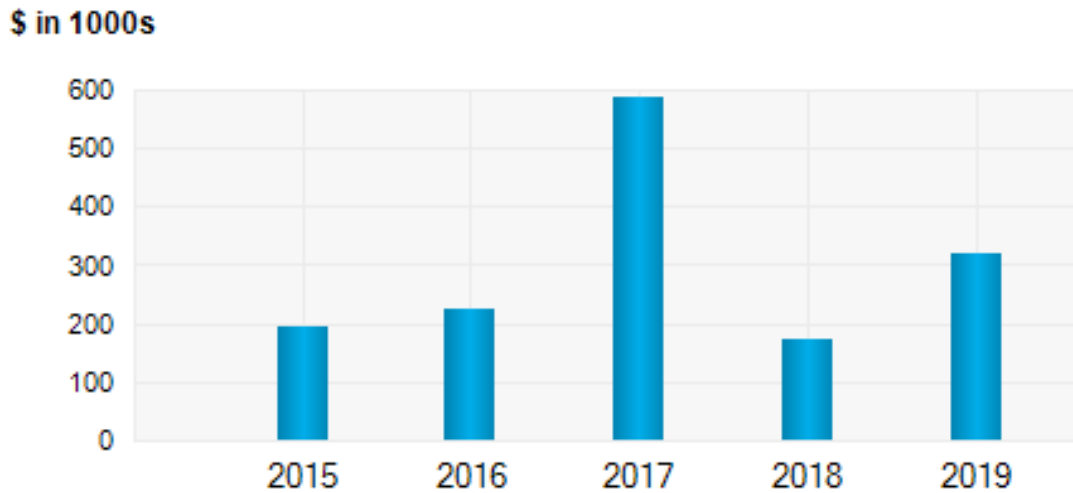


FY19 Expense Trend



Total: \$241,574.92

Previous Year Income Comparison



Previous Year Expense Comparison

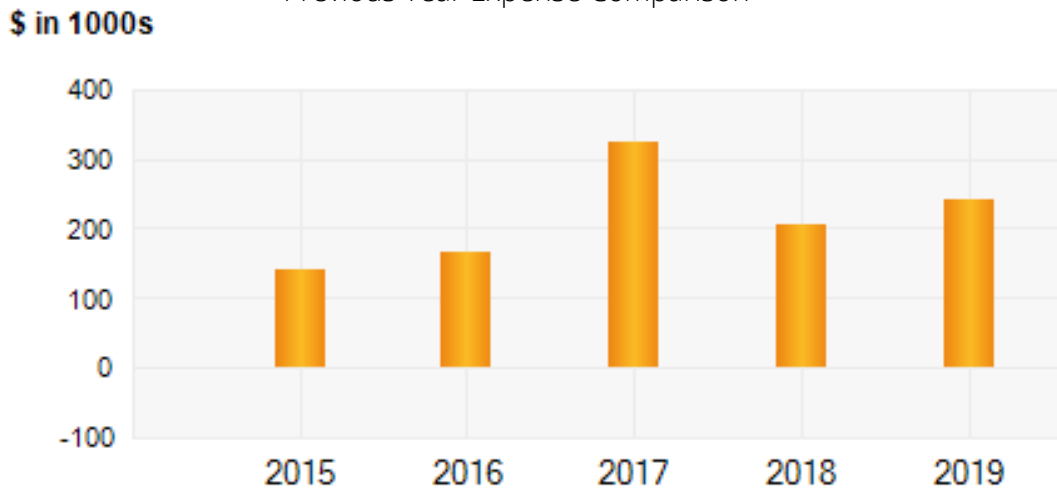
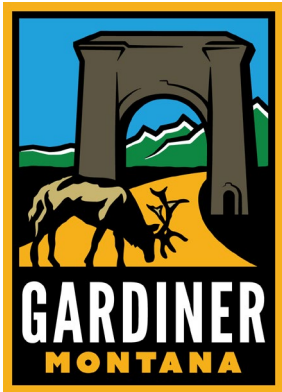


Chart of Accounts

Capital Grant.....	\$153,329.49
Main Checking.....	\$100,351.42
CVB.....	\$26,635.76
Savings.....	\$5,039.96
Gardiner Gateway.....	\$2,232.65

Total Revenue 2019: \$76,807.77

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, 2019 on the fiscal year Jan-Dec.



CVB MARKETING AT A GLANCE

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 controversy, and lack of year-round staffing. In the winter and shoulder seasons a much lower visitation rate make it difficult for businesses to remain open—resulting in a lack of accessible visitor amenities. Gardiner's remote location also presents issues for visitor access and awareness. In addition, 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 2019

Photo & Video Library: With the continued development of our website and increased activity on our social media platforms, the time came to purchase a small collection of photographs for our marketing toolbox. By the end of FY19 we successfully purchased over 100 high resolution images of Gardiner in all 4 seasons utilizing the talents of local photographers.

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 summer press trip, and several print and digital advertisements.

Gardiner Visitor Guide: We planned, wrote, and designed a 40-page full color magazine-style visitor guide in-house. We printed 30,000 copies and distributed them to Gardiner businesses as well as regional Visitor Centers and airports. An electronic version is also available for download on our website at VisitGardinerMT.com.

Website Support: Using our media agency TDG, we completed a comprehensive winter website in the fall of 2018 (www.visitgardinermt.com/winter-in-wonderland) as well as responded to routine maintenance needs and updated some stylistic features throughout the website.

Radio Advertising: We took out a radio ad in Q4 of FY19 that ran for one week on Yellowstone Public Radio. The ad was written to promote Gardiner as a late spring/early summer destination with a variety of music and cultural events such as the Gardiner Rodeo and Gardiner Brewfest. It reached an estimated 40,000 - 50,000 listeners.

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 30% to reach a total following of 33,394 followers and a 100% increase in Instagram followers for a total following of 3,287.

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, the *Livingston Enterprise*, and *Outside Bozeman*.

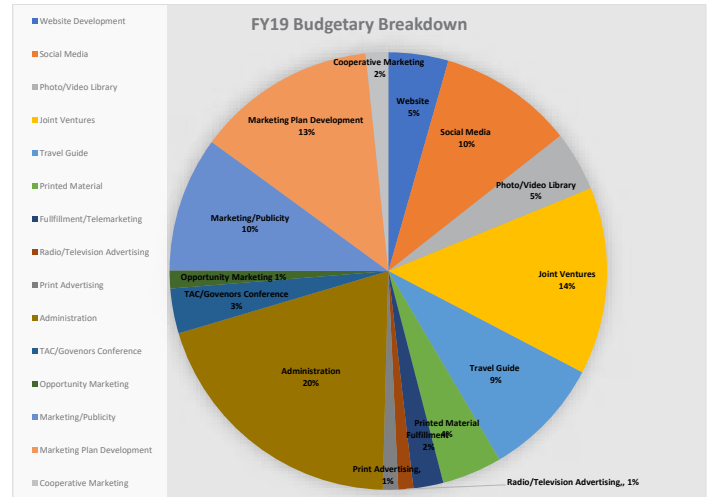
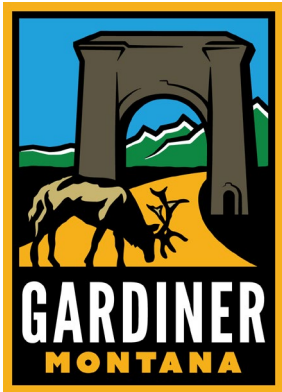
Administration: This included salary for staff who worked on CVB projects as well as postage to send Gardiner travel packs.

Opportunity Marketing: Funds were reserved for opportunities that rose unexpectedly throughout the year such as print media and online advertising.

Marketing Personnel: Funds were set aside to employ a full-time director of marketing to manage and implement CVB priority projects.

Engage Strategies: The consulting services of Mike Bento and his team at Engage Strategies have been very helpful with respect to establishing our brand strategy. With limited staff and resources we continued to leverage his service to achieve our goals in FY19.



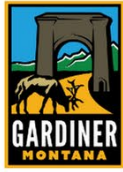


CVB MARKETING BUDGET

From Year 2019

Allocation of Funding

Project	2018 Bed Tax Funded Budget	2019 Bed Tax Funded Budget	2019 Non Bed Tax Funded budget
Website Development	\$4,500.00	\$8,119.36	
Social Media	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	
Photo/Video Library	-	\$3,880.64	
Joint Ventures	\$8,500.00	\$9,050.00	
Travel Guide	-	\$4,000.00	\$13,000.00
Brochure Stocking	\$500.00	\$3,000.00	
Radio Advertising	-	\$500.00	
Administration	\$11,196.40	\$9,031.00	
Conferences	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	
Opportunity Marketing	\$6,500.00	\$600.00	
Marketing Personnel	\$4,400.00	\$4,515.00	\$26,000.00
Engage Strategies Consulting	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	
Cooperative Marketing	-	\$750.00	
Printed Materials	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00	
Trademark	\$500.00	-	
Promotional Videos	\$17,903.60	-	
	\$67,000.00	\$68,161.00	\$39,000.00



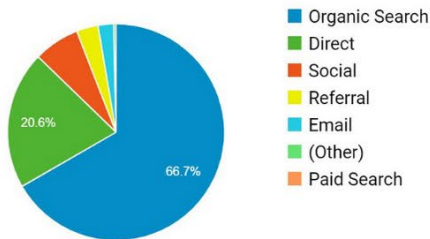
Gardiner Chamber/CVB FY19 Digital Communications Report

Change in Website Traffic July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

FY19 Website Users (+59%)



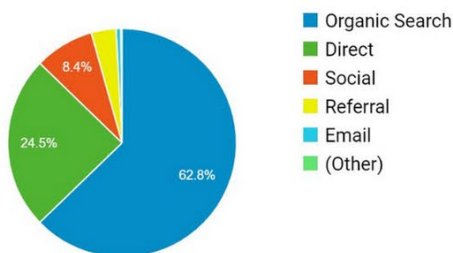
FY19 Web Traffic Acquisition



FY18 Website Users



FY18 Web Traffic Acquisition



Source: Google Analytics

Social Media Change in Page Likes July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

Facebook: 25,374 to 33,694 (+25%)

Total Page Likes as of Today: 33,694

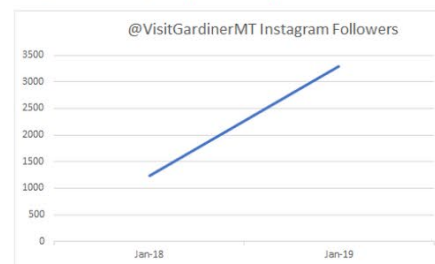


Total Page Followers as of Today: 33,737



Source: Facebook Insights

Instagram: 1,230 to 3,287 (+167%)



Key Take-Aways

- Following rapid growth in FY18, Facebook likes have begun to level off for a total increase of 25% in FY19.
- Instagram continues to show rapid growth with a 167% increase in followers, indicating a high potential to connect with younger audiences.
- Website traffic continues to show positive growth with a 59% increase in traffic compared to FY18. Session duration decreased compared to FY18.
- Overall we were pleased with our digital report for FY19 and hope to continue this momentum for a similar increase in our online audience in FY20.



2019 SUCCESSES

ENHANCE VALUE

Open Houses

To meet our strategic priority of providing opportunities for business networking, we hosted two open houses at the start and end of our peak summer season. The open houses offered an opportunity for members to network with one another and gave us a chance to connect with our members and share updates on marketing efforts and other Chamber priorities.

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 2019, we saw an increase in digital traffic and were honored with a statewide marketing award. Members can highlight their business in any one of our marketing pieces: the Gardiner visitor guide, walking map, website, and the Gardiner community newsletter.

ORGANIZATIONAL

Team of Experts

With the departure of former Executive Director Loren Barrett in March 2019, we took the opportunity to restructure Chamber staffing. Our staff now consists of a full-time executive director, a full-time office manager, and a part-time newsletter coordinator. We welcomed Office Manager Terese Petcoff to the team in May 2019.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Visitor Center Upgrades

To keep our visitor center functional and welcoming, we completed repairs to our interior track lights, outdoor flagpoles, and the siding on the front of our building. We installed two door counters to ensure accurate visitation tracking 24 hours day, 7 days a week. In collaboration with the Rodeo Club, we also secured Gardiner Resort Tax funding to complete safety upgrades to the Gardiner Rodeo Grounds in 2020.





2020 STRATEGY

Looking Forward

In 2020 we will continue to utilize the marketing tools we completed in the last three years to further establish Gardiner as a year-round tourist destination and elevate destination awareness. In addition to the infrastructure upgrades that will begin in the spring, we hope to continue to develop a long-term vision for the Gardiner Rodeo Grounds. We also look forward to elevating our local events—including the annual Horse Drive, Gardiner Rodeo, Brewfest, and Christmas Stroll—to promote year-round visitation to Gardiner and provide additional business opportunities for our members.



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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
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