

Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

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

Meeting date: **Thursday, December 20th, 2018 from 12:00PM to 1:00PM**

Location: Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Agenda:

12:02pm

1. Chamber Business

1.1. Roll Call & Introductions

Jeff Guengerich, Trina Smith, Anna Holloway, Edwin Johnson, Mike Keller, Neli Karamfilova

Absent: Sabina Strauss, Jim Stark

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

5 mins

Minutes from November 2018

Motion by Mike second by Trina, no discussion. Minutes approved

2. MSU Bookstore Summer Internships

20 mins

Chad Schreier, MSU Bookstore

MSU Bookstore is a 501©3, that uses profits to help reduce costs of course materials for students at the University. The past year they have been developing an internship program and looking to partner with communities and specifically gateway communities around the State to give students real world work exposure as well as a chance to explore MT beyond Bozeman. The original idea was to operate some type of mobile marketplace that sells custom MSU apparel but have been reworking idea to leverage graphic design skills of students. Board discussed with Chris the possibility of students to work with our local small businesses to create logo design and merchandise. Would like to start this partnership as soon as possible before the summer season begins to ramp up. Chad said students may be able to make a few trips down to meet with members and Chamber offered to arrange excursions to get students out and exploring the community while they are here. General sentiment is that this would be a great opportunity to offer to members, Loren will follow up with Chad and arrange date and time for workshop.

3. Committee Updates

10 min

3.1 Yellowstone National Park

Mary Wilson- *North District Ranger*

Park visitation overall has been up 2.5%, with an overall November increase in November of 32.2%. The North Entrance saw an increase of 18% in November. Snow has been very thin so far this year, ski trails are groomed in the Park but are not ideal yet. Steamboat geyser has broken the record for most eruptions in a year and has now gone off 31 times. The impending government shutdown would mean the closure of the Park visitor center, the restrooms, and emergency services will not be operating. As in previous years Xanterra will likely step in to maintain roads and keep gates open- so park will be open for recreation. Will be briefed when time comes.

3.2 US Forest Service

Mike Thom- District Ranger Forest Service

Forest Service will begin attending meetings again to provide updates on what is happening with resources in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest. Mike will bring us the annual recap on the Gardiner District. Grooming has begun up at Bear Creek, the gate is still open but most all gates will close Jan 2. Recruiting 15 members for a resource advisory committee- members will help to approve projects such as secure real schools. Loren will send out press release to membership in January members update.

3.3 Membership

Recruiting New Board Members

Mike Skelton and Leslie Everett present, will both be running for the two open board seats. Both gave a brief introduction and bio on why they are interested in joining the board. Still need a candidate for the Treasurer position.

3.4 Properties and Facilities

No updates.

4. Annual Report

20 min

4.1 Chamber and CVB Update

See attached report

4.2 Approval of FY19 Annual Operating Budget

See attached report

4. Public Comment

5 mins

Chamber would like to create some sort of memorial for Joe Gross whether it is a community clean up day, picnic tables down at Arch Park, or a bench- something to commemorate his service and commitment to this community. Loren will solicit ideas and contributions from members.

6. Date of Next Meeting

January 17th, 2018, 6pm-8pm Annual Meeting of the Members

GARDINER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB ANNUAL REPORT

'18





YELLOWSTONE
NATIONAL
PARK

CREATED BY
ACT OF CONGRESS
MARCH 3, 1872



GARDINER CHAMBER OF **COMMERCE & CVB**

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SUCCESS AND NEXT STEPS

COMPANY NAME

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Loren Barrett



Dear Members:

We have had a big year here at the Chamber of Commerce and we wanted to take advantage of the new year to reach out and thank you for your continued support of our mission.

The year kicked off with a rededication to enhance our value to members by launching our first spring series of business development workshops. Park visitation numbers were varied this year but our visitor center saw a 2% increase in traffic between May and September. Year round we have

worked hard to expand member advertising

We have worked hard to expand advertising opportunities this year to include web banner ads, a travel guide, a walking map, and as always the community newsletter.

opportunities to

include web banner ads, a travel guide, a walking map, and as always the community newsletter. We've also continued to build brand awareness and essential marketing assets for the Chamber and our members. In 2019 we look forward to producing our first Travel Guide, expanding the winter season, and creating more networking and workshop opportunities to connect members and share best practices.

It has been a pleasure getting to know you and your business this past year and I look forward to another year of building your business and our community. We could not operate without the support and input of our members and the generous time volunteered by our board and committee members. Please never hesitate to stop in, send a message, or a give us call to let us know how we can best serve you.

Loren Barrett

LOREN BARRETT

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 Business 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 CVBW. 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 20,000 visitors coming through our doors this 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 2019 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 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.

SABINA STRAUSS

Vice President- Outgoing

Sabina, and her husband Greg, moved to Gardiner in 2004, when they purchased the Yellowstone Basin Inn. Sabina enjoys showing visitors all the wonders of Montana and Yellowstone. Living in the Yellowstone Ecosystem and being part of the Gardiner Business Community have been wonderful experiences. Sabina likes helping Gardiner put its best foot forward in welcoming visitors and creating a successful community.

TRINA SMITH

Treasurer

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.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ANNA HOLLOWAY

Director

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.



EDWIN JOHNSON

Director

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

Director

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. The Corral is part of the WSE farm-to-restaurant program.



MIKE KELLER

Director

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 worked at Old Faithful Inn during the fires of 1988 and spent the following 19 years building his Concessions career at Old Faithful. In 2016 he moved to the Grand Canyon South Rim and was the General Manager for Delaware North Companies before returning to Yellowstone in April of 2017. Mike served as a volunteer for 20 years in Yellowstone in thermal cleaning and monitoring and was President of the Geyser Observation and Study Association from 2010 – 2014. He currently lives in Mammoth Hot Springs with his wife and two children.

JIM STARK

Director

Jim and his wife Bonnie moved to Gardiner in August of 2016. Having moved here from Nebraska City, NE, a small historic community in Southeastern NE where he served the community in various capacities, from City Council Commissioner to member on several community boards. He is now employed as the Director of Engineering for Yellowstone National Park Lodges. Jim is looking forward to getting connected to all that Gardiner and Yellowstone have to offer as the seasons change. Jim is hoping to perfect several new outdoor hobbies.

CHAMBER STAFF

Loren Barrett, Executive Director
Neala Fugere, Director of Marketing
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%

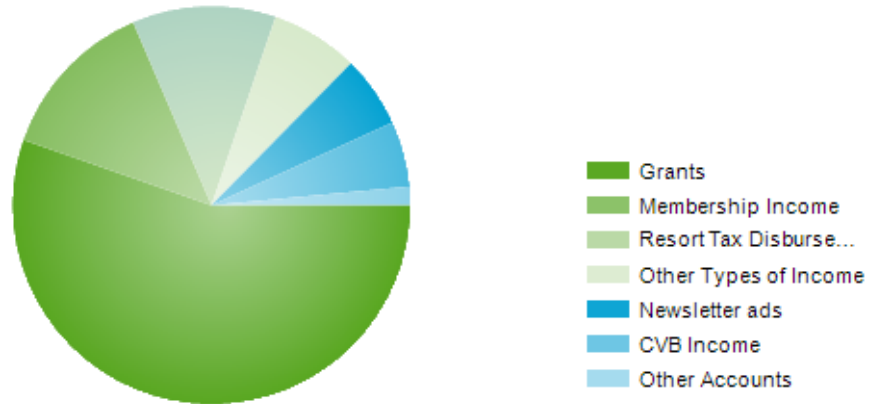
Strategy 5:

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

- *Focus effort to prepare for and capitalize on the 2020 Yellowstone National Park Sesquicentennial

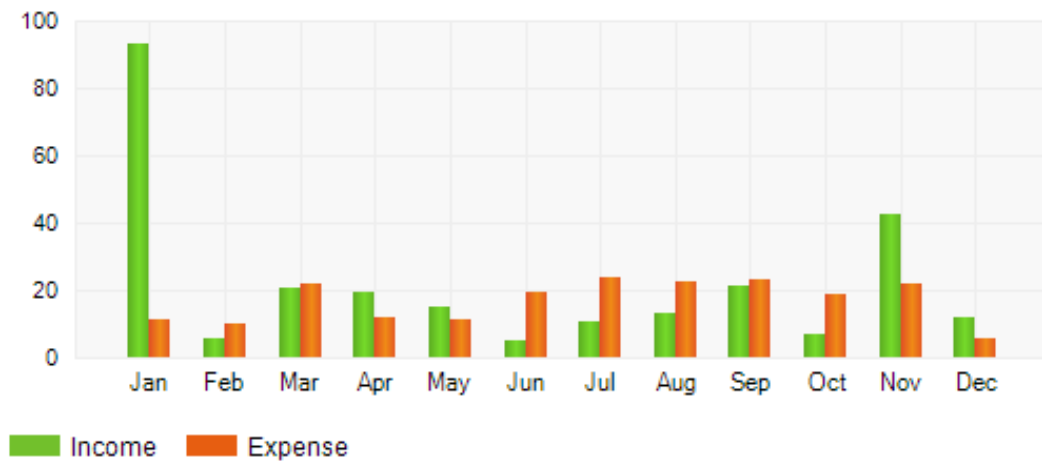
YEAR END FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

FY18 Income Breakdown

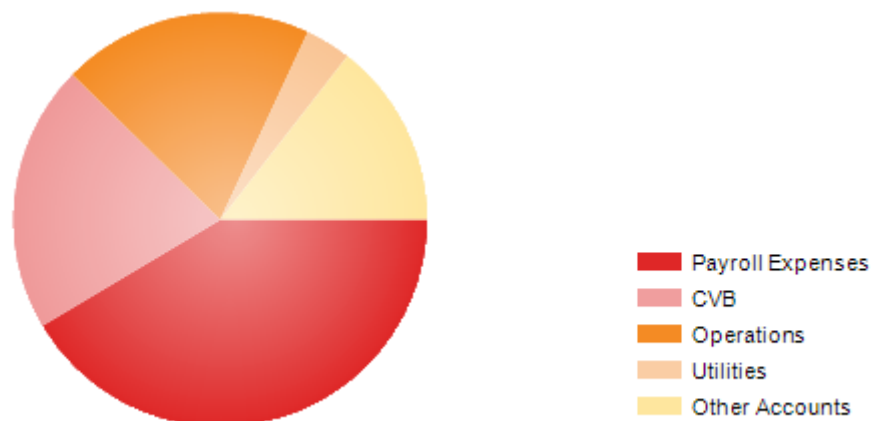


Total: \$263,968.93

FY18 Income and Expense Breakdown



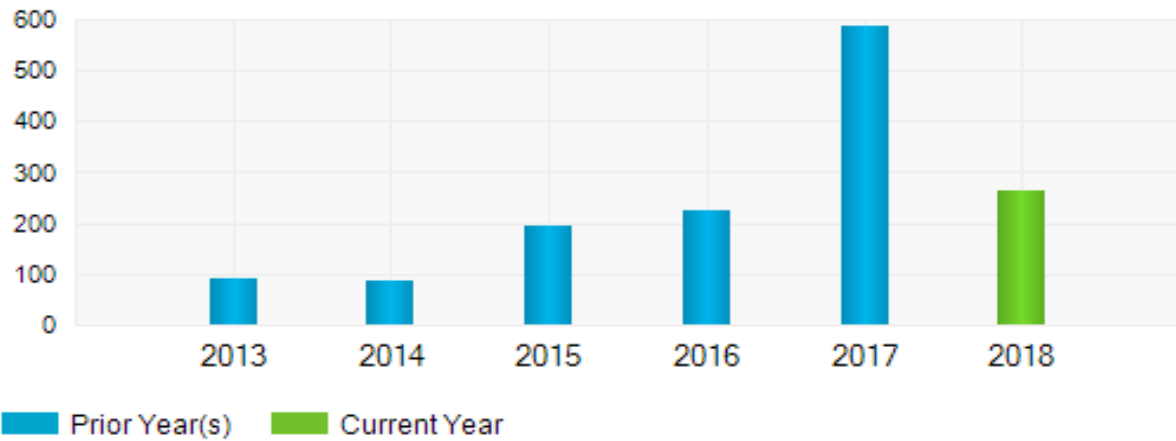
FY18 Expense Trend



Total: \$199,970.93

Previous Year Income Comparison

\$ in 1000s



Previous Year Expense Comparison

\$ in 1000s

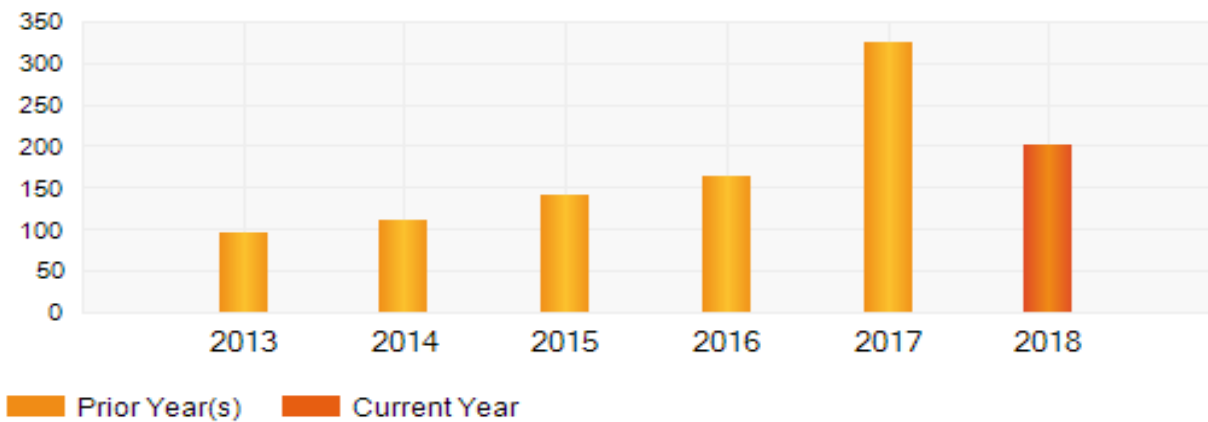


Chart of Accounts

Capital Grant.....	\$120,284.69
Main Checking.....	\$120,160.63
CVB.....	\$42,418.61
Savings.....	\$5007.88
Gardiner Gateway.....	\$2291.68

Total Revenue 2018:\$63, 998.00

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 19th, 2018 on the fiscal year Jan-Dec.



CVB MARKETING AT A GLANCE

From Year 2018

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 sustainably 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 lack of year-round staffing and 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 2018

Extend Engage Strategies: The consulting services of Mike Bento and his team 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 FY18.

TDG/Website Support: With a newly updated, consumer-facing website, this part of our budget was significantly smaller than in FY18 as we did not require website construction. We experienced marked growth in website usage and significant staff time was spent performing routine updates like swapping out photos, resuming the blog, integrating social media platforms, resuming banner ads, and adding a search bar to the homepage.

Administrative Costs: This included salary for paid staff who worked on CVB projects.

Funding for TAC and Governor's Conference: The Executive Director and Marketing Manager attended these conferences to present marketing plans and stay current on Montana tourism trends and updates.

Stocking Chamber Brochures/Rack Cards: Funds were allocated to support printed materials offered in the Visitor Center, which have been well-received by visitors and move quickly. This also included the distribution of the new Visit Gardiner Montana rack card.

Trademark of the Gardiner, Montana Brand: Per best business practice we set aside funds to protect our intellectual property from infringement lawsuit by copywriting.

Gardiner promotional video: We hired videographer in FY18 to produce a series of three 45-second stand alone videos - one for each shoulder season. The purpose of the videos were to showcase the beauty and opportunities for activities during the shoulder seasons as part of our overall marketing goals. Filming was partially completed in FY18 to the satisfaction of CVB staff and volunteers.

Social media paid likes, ads, and boosts: 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." Our Facebook following more than doubled to reach a total of over 25,000 fans this past fiscal year; Instagram showed even steeper growth with a following increase of 128% (see attached digital communications report).

Hashtag Campaign: To further enhance our digital engagement strategy, funds were allocated to promote the #VisitGardinerMT on social media and through printed materials including vinyl clings and stickers.

YC Tripadvisor Cooperative: Gardiner was offered the opportunity to own our page on TripAdvisor through a cooperative with Yellowstone Country. The sponsorship of the landing page included content, photo library, events, direct links, and fixed banner ads. The campaign over-performed with more impressions than estimated.

Influencer writing trip: Part of our joint venture with Yellowstone Country, funds were set aside to bring "influencers," or photographer/travel writers with a significant following on social media. The venture was intended to increase exposure and brand awareness for Gardiner, Montana, as a desirable year-round travel destination. Gardiner was able to participate in host two influencer trips in this fiscal year.

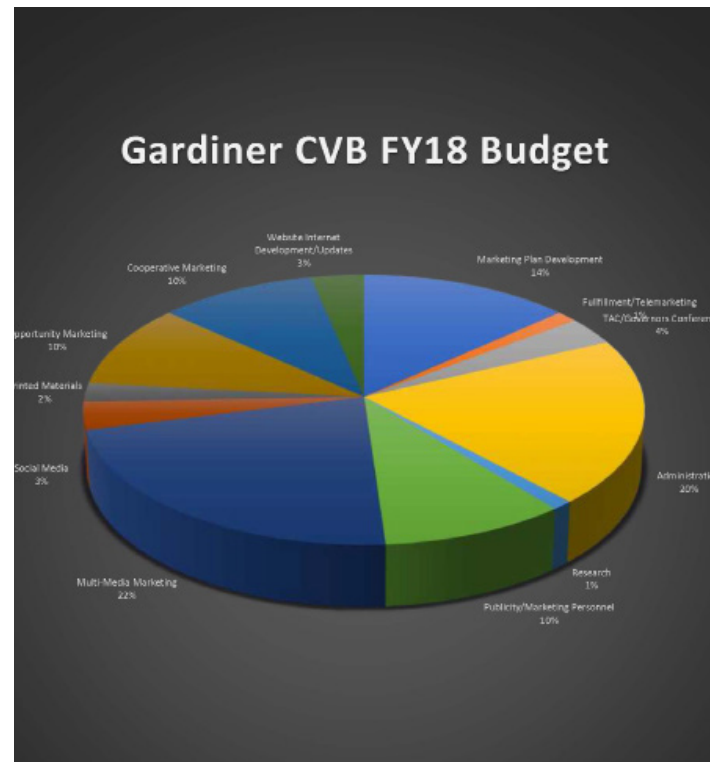
Opportunity marketing: Funds were reserved for opportunities that rose unexpectedly throughout the year such as print media and online advertising.





CVB MARKETING BUDGET

From Year 2018



Allocation of Funding

Project	Previous Year	2018
Engagement Strategies Consulting	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Stocking Brochures	\$600.00	\$500.00
Conferences	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Administration	\$6,400.00	\$11,196.40
Maintain Trademark	\$700.00	\$500.00
Marketing Manager Pay	-	\$4,400.00
Promotional Video	-	\$17,903.60
Social media post boosts	\$1,500.00	\$4,500.00
Window Clings, Stickers/Postcards, Hashtag Campaign	-	\$2,000.00
Joint ventures	\$3,000.00	\$8,500.00
Opportunity Marketing	-	\$6,500.00
Website Updates and Maintenance	\$9,600.00	\$4,500.00
		Total to Allocate \$67,000

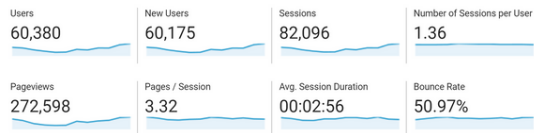


Gardiner Chamber/CVB FY18 Digital Communications Report

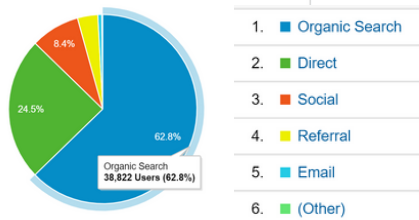


Change in Website Traffic July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

FY18 Website Users (+110%)*



Web Traffic Acquisition FY18



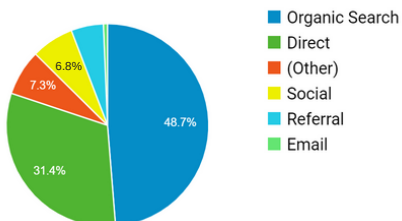
Source: Google Analytics

FY17 Website Users



Source: Google Analytics *

Web Traffic Acquisition FY17



Source: Google Analytics *

*Website analytics did not begin to track until November, 2016

Social Media Change in Page Likes July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

Facebook: 12,528 to 25,374 (103%)

Total Page Likes as of Today: 25,374



Source: Facebook Insights

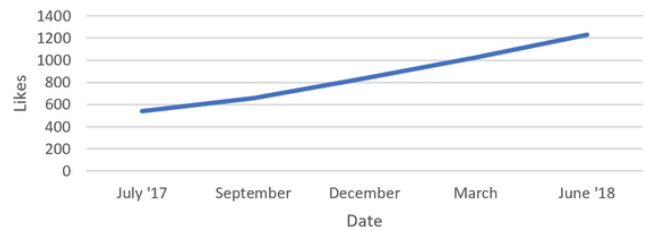
Total Page Followers as of Today: 25,359



Source: Facebook Insights

Instagram: 539 to 1,230 (128%)

@VisitGardinerMT FY18 Instagram Likes



Source: Instagram/monthly CVB reporting

Key Take-Aways

- Social media pages likes and website traffic have increased by more than 100% over the past year, with Instagram showing the most drastic growth.
- Website user acquisition due to social media increased from 6.8% to 8.4% in FY18 as compared to FY17.
- Due to a website revamp, no website analytics are available July 1 - October 31, 2016.
- Though results from Google Analytics show a definitive increase in website traffic, better reporting practices implemented in FY18 will allow for more comparative reporting in FY19.



2018 SUCCESSES

ENHANCE VALUE

Workshop Series

In 2018 we hosted our first series of business development workshops. In the spring we hosted three workshops; employee engagement, digital recruiting and hiring strategies, and a Yellowstone 101 introduction to Gardiner for new employees. These workshops were the first step in meeting our strategy of adding value to membership by providing opportunities to network and share best practices

ORGANIZATIONAL

Team of Experts

The Chamber has always run on a bare bones team but with the adoption of the CVB in 2016 a great need was felt to provide additional support to better utilize state dollars. In 2018 we hired Neala Fugere as the first full time Director of Marketing.

YEAR ROUND DESTINATION

Protect the Future

We have made huge strides in our efforts to bring brand awareness to Gardiner- increasing our social media and website traffic over 100%. We have also been able to bring back and create new opportunities for member marketing including the walking map, three seasonal promotional videos, banner ads, and soon our first every travel guide.

COMMUNITY

Infrastructure

The Chamber completed three infrastructure projects this fiscal year with the help of the resort tax. We completed renovations on the Visitor Center with the addition of new carpeting. We installed an additional bear safe can on Park Street and wrapped existing cans to provide public art. Finally we worked with GGCC to bring electricity to the Arch Park Stage.





2019 STRATEGY

Looking Forward

2019 we hope to dive deeper into our strategic goals to further enhance value to members, continue to develop the Gardiner brand, establish a utilization plan for the Rodeo Grounds, and continue to build on a solid organizational succession plan. As we start 2019 we are putting the finishing touches on Gardiner's first comprehensive travel guide, we have launched an updated newsletter format, and are working on planning networking and workshops for the Spring. We look forward to another exciting year of serving our members and our community!



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**GARDINER
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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