

Tourism Grant Program Final Project Report

Tourism Grant Program recipients must complete the Final Project Report to describe the accomplishments of the project as described in the Tourism Grant Program contract [Exhibit A] signed between the grantee and the Department of Commerce within 1 year of project completion date. The Final Project Report must be signed by the Tourism Grant Program recipient's Chief Elected Official or Executive Officer.

I. Final Project Report

Name of Grantee: Red Lodge Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB

Grant Contract Number: 19-51-093

Specific:

Describe how the project has specifically increased non-resident visitation and expenditures since completion.

The primary method for measuring the effectiveness of the construction and installation of the Red Lodge Downtown Wayfinding Signs identified in the Tourism Grant Program application is the number of visitors requesting information from the Chamber of Commerce on a quarterly basis. Most of the 24 wayfinding signs were installed during the summer of 2020, predominantly in June, thus the time frame to effectuate impact is limited.

The following is the number of visitors requesting information at the Chamber of Commerce between select periods in 2019 and 2020.

The number of visitors in July-September 2020 was 3,038, while for the same period in 2019 it was 3,034. That the numbers were this close during the Covid period is testimony to the hard work of the Chamber who advertised regionally while coordinating multiple local events that met Covid guidelines. This included the closing of Broadway Avenue on July 4th.

For the October-November period, the 2020 visitation was 294, while in 2019 it was 167, a 76% increase.

The following pictures depict three of the signs directing motorists to the Visitors Center. There are five signs that include wording for the Visitor Center.



Measures:

Identify the measure(s) and/or metric(s) utilized to track progress, such as targets or milestones, of increased non-resident visitation and expenditures due to the completion of the project.

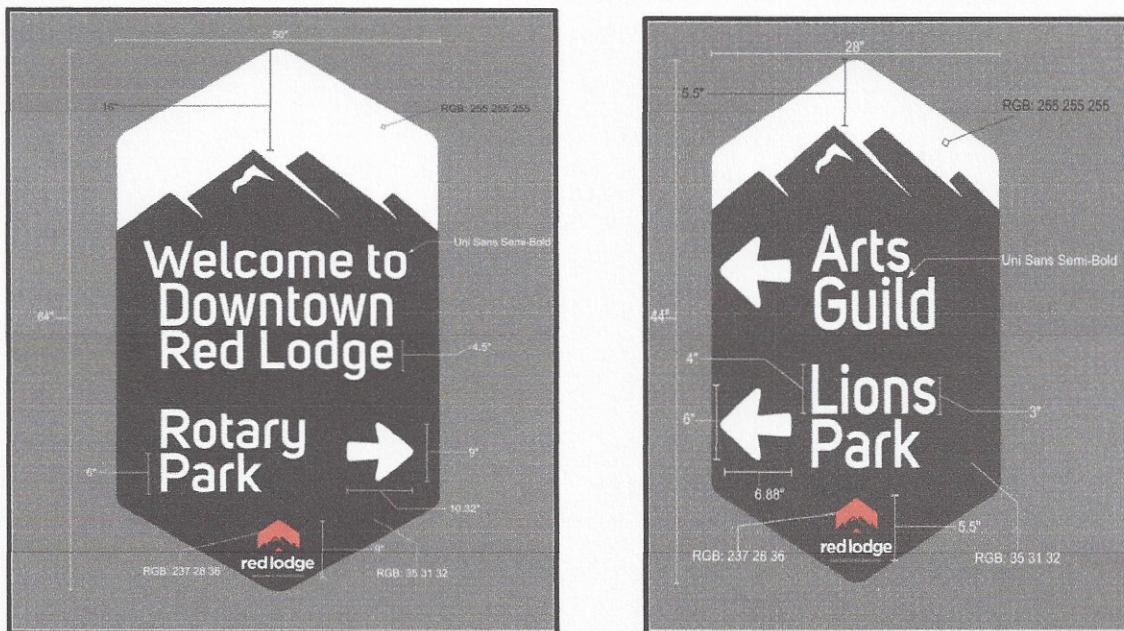
A second measure for the effectiveness of the construction and installation of the Red Lodge Downtown Wayfinding Signs identified in the Tourism Grant Program application is the trend in resort tax collections. Red Lodge is designated as a resort community by the Montana Department of Commerce under MCA 7-6-15. In general, luxuries sold to the public or tourists are taxed in order to help address the infrastructure demands of the high numbers of visitors.

Motel, food, liquor and retail have historically been the categories of collection at 3% ,with an extra 1% starting July 2020 for storm water infrastructure. Total collections for the July-September 2020 period were \$483,621, while collections for the same period in 2019 were \$363,765. Prorated per \$.01 collected, 2019 = \$121,255 and 2020 = \$120,941. Again, this is testimony to the Red Lodge Chamber and local businesses that collections in 2020 are comparable to 2019 given Covid impacts on tourism and travel.

Achieved:

Describe in quantifiable terms how the project has achieved the goals, objectives, or outcomes, since completion of the project to date.

One of the most important revitalization goals of the Red Lodge Main Street Partnership under the Montana Mainstreet Program is to “attract more visitors through promotion of a common vision”. A first achievement is the wayfinding sign project capitalized on our community branding efforts, “Base Camp to the Beartooths”, used in local, regional and multi-state marketing efforts. The logo and branding were used in the wayfinding sign design, creating a common marketing theme. The following signs depicts these elements:



A second achievement has been to establish signage on Broadway Avenue to direct traffic one block to large lot, open parking at the Civic Center, also signed. This achievement meets the goal of the 2015 Red Lodge Growth Policy that identifies a strategy to provide visitors with information about parking options.

The following are two pictures denoting signage on Broadway Avenue and at the Civic Center.



A third achievement is that by completing this initial wayfinding sign project, we now have the organizational, design, fabrication and installation knowledge to conduct a second phase in the future to meet the goal for development of attractive entryways to Red Lodge that create a positive first impression. The goal for more defined entryways is identified in the Wayfinding Plan adopted by the City Council and in the 2006 Downtown Red Lodge Assessment and Action Plan.

Relevant:

Detail how relevant the completed project is to the community, the tourism partnerships, and how the completed project is being promoted to the community, and by the community. Include a specific success story about the project from an individual or community partner.

The wayfinding signs are relevant to the community in that much needed signage to destinations, primarily from Broadway Avenue, has been established. As noted in the Achievements section, directions to public parking is now highlighted on signs on Broadway Avenue, both north and south. A 'tourism partnership' exists with the Red Lodge Business Alliance, the group of merchants and lodging organizations organized by the Chamber of Commerce, for multiple activities including public parking.

There is no requirement for promotion of the wayfinding signs as they provide directions to the destinations being promoted by the Chamber. As noted previously, the branding in the

marketing used by the Chamber, “Basecamp to the Bearooths”, has been incorporated in the design of the wayfinding signs.

A community success story with the wayfinding signs and a ‘tourism partnership’ is the coordination with the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary to provide signage on Highway 212 and on 2nd Street indicating the direction to their facility blocks off Highway 212. The Sanctuary was the first in Montana to be accredited by the American Sanctuary Association and provides greater Yellowstone ecosystem wildlife lifelong sanctuary. Three signs include wording for the ‘Wildlife Sanctuary’. A support letter documenting the importance of the wayfinding signs is included as an attachment.

The following photos depict two of the wayfinding signs for the Wildlife Sanctuary.



Another community success story with the wayfinding signs and a ‘tourism partnership’ is with the Beartooth Recreational Trails Association (BRTA) in which wayfinding sign directions are provided to multiple recreation sites. These include two signs for the Red Lodge Nordic Center, one sign for Coal Miners Park (depicted above with the Wildlife Sanctuary sign) that includes mountain bike trails among the many activities, and two signs for West Fork (Rd) Trails. In addition, the BRTA included the branding for the wayfinding signs in their smaller trail head signs as a result of the coordination between the Chamber of Commerce and the BRTA Summer Trails Committee.

The Red Lodge Nordic Center, operated by the BRTA, is a National Ski School Program facility that includes the only groomed operations within a 100+-mile radius. The West Fork

Trails lead to a vast network of hiking, skiing, mountain biking and equestrian trails in the Beartooths. A support letter documenting the importance of the signage is included as an attachment.

The following three photos depict wayfinding signage for recreational destination sites:



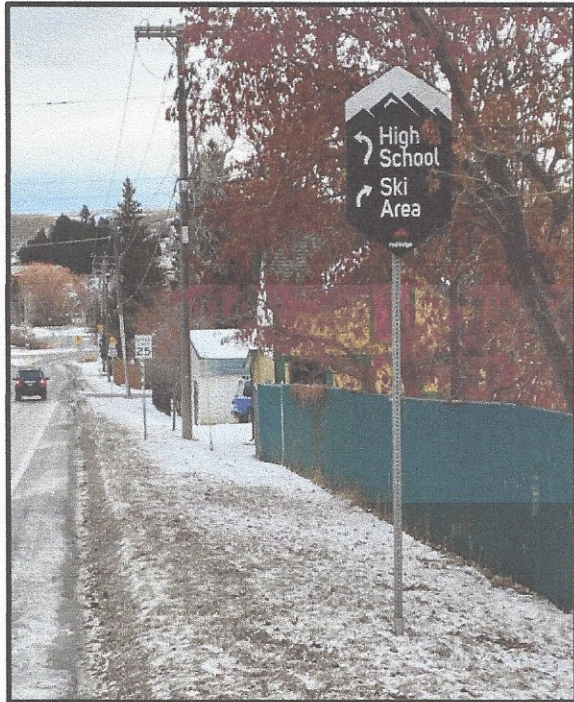
Trace:

Trace the achievement of the project by providing photos of a construction project, screenshots of a website or media project, or statistical graphics of increased traffic/expenditures as a result of a completed project.

Additional major destinations not previously referenced include the Red Lodge Mountain Ski Resort and the Red Lodge High School. There are four signs for each of these destinations. Out of town visitors frequent both these facilities and the High School is particularly difficult to find located multiple blocks from Highway 212 on a side street.

The electrical vehicle charging stations located at the public restroom are important for visitors as they provide a missing link in the Yellowstone system of charging stations given the relatively short distances provided by a charge. There are two wayfinding signs for the electric vehicle stations.

The following are photos depicting one of the high school/ski area signs and the electric vehicle charging stations.



Also attached is an article on the wayfinding sign system that appeared in the Carbon County News.

II. Certification of Grantee

It is hereby certified that all activities under taken by the Tourism Grant Program recipient with funds provided under contract 19-51-093 have been carried out in accordance with said contract; and that

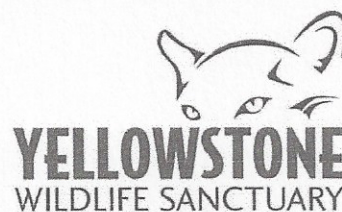
- A. Statements and information contained in this Final Project Report are true and correct;
- B. There are no unpaid costs, liens, or third-party claims remaining against the Tourism Grant Program project;
- C. It is hereby acknowledged that any remaining unexpended balance of Tourism Grant Program funds for the Tourism Grant Program project under this contract have been retained or recovered by the Department; and
- D. All records related to grant activities are available on request and will be kept by the Tourism Grant Program recipient for three years after the date of the submission of the Final Project Report.

Sherry Weamer, Director, Red
Lodge Area Chamber of
Commerce/Visitors Convention
Bureau

(typed Name and Title of Authorized Signatory)

(Signature of Authorized Signatory)

(Date)



December 18, 2020

Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development
Tourism Grant Program Manager
P.O. Box 20053
Helena, MT 59620-0533

To Whom It May Concern:

As a part of the Red Lodge Wayfinding plan, three signs were installed than helped to direct people to the Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary, a nonprofit that gets approximately 12,000 visitors per year. Two of the signs are on Highway 212 (one northbound and one southbound) at the north end of town, and the third is on 2nd Street.

These signs have made a big difference for people — especially tourists from out of the area — that are looking for our Sanctuary. They are clear and easy to read, the design fits well with the City's branding, and they have all but eliminated phone calls from people who couldn't find our facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Robson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gary Robson
Executive Director, Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary



Beartooth Recreational Trails Association
P.O. Box 1872
Red Lodge, MT 59068

info@beartoothtrails.org
<https://www.beartoothtrails.org/>

December 21, 2020

Sherry Weamer
Director
Red Lodge Area Chamber of Commerce/Convention Visitors Bureau
P.O. Box 988
Red Lodge, MT 59068

The Beartooth Recreational Trails Association (BRTA) is documenting its partnership with the Red Lodge Chamber in the development of wayfinding signs that provide tourists with visual assistance to area recreational facilities, to be used in a State Tourism grant report.

The BRTA contributed financially to the development of the Red Lodge Wayfinding Plan for the purpose of highlighting the location of recreational facilities consistent with our mission of promoting non-motorized recreation activities. The installed wayfinding signage includes:

- (1) Two signs for the Nordic Center, operated by the BRTA and the only certified groomed Nordic facility within over a 100-mile radius.
- (2) Two signs for West Fork (Rd.) Trails, a major destination for hiking, mountain biking, Nordic and backcountry skiing, and equestrian activities in the Beartooths. West Fork Road is also groomed by the BRTA for Nordic skiing and other uses.
- (3) One sign for Coal Miner's Park, a multi-use complex that includes mountain bike trails built and maintained by BRTA and affiliates.
- (4) Multiple smaller trailhead signs designed with the branding used for the larger street wayfinding signs as a result of the coordination between the Chamber of Commerce and the BRTA Summer Trails Committee.

Again, the BRTA appreciates its partnership with the Chamber.

Sincerely,

Terry Jones, President

to promote non-motorized trails along the Beartooth Front

Wayfinding Project up and running in Red Lodge

By Alastair Baker News Editor

Thursday, July 2, 2020



Photos by K. Kasten

(Above) A Wayfinding sign that directs visitors to Public and RV Parking by the Civic Center. Instrumental in helping get the Wayfinding signs to Red Lodge are (Left to right) Bill Larson (Red Lodge Mayor), Tim Weamer (Chamber Volunteer), James Caniglia (Red Lodge Community Development Director), Bill Foisy (Red Lodge Area Community Foundation), Sherry Weamer (Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce Executive Director), and Mick Thompson (Back Alley Metals.)



A further example of the Wayfinding signage in Red Lodge.

After three years of diligent work on the Wayfinding Project, the Phase 1 signs have been installed throughout Red Lodge.

Sherry Weamer, Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, said she was "giddy" at the thought of the project finally coming together.

"I'm just giddy over it. It's finally happened. It was such a big project and it's surreal we made it," said Weamer. "It shouldn't have been that hard but there were so many components to get there. If it hadn't been for a team coming together I don't think we would have made it to the finish line."

The Wayfinding Project arose from the Active Transportation Plan and will help make Red Lodge more walk-able and bike-able for both locals and visitors by providing signage to help people find places of interest, activities, and amenities.

"It will give the town an identity and show that we care about the community in addition to dressing Red Lodge up in a cohesive way," said Weamer.

"People were worried there would be too much signage but it's spread out, it worked beautifully on all ends, especially when people ask where they can hike. Now there is one sign that directs them to the West Fork," said Weamer. "It's a nice cohesive look. We look like a real mountain town now, that feel. And it's helping visitors to navigate the areas and maybe stay longer."

"It gives our town that branding," she said.

Phase one cost \$52,000 and includes 10 big signs and 14 smaller signs. The poles that hold the signs are designed to withstand harsh winter weather and high winds.

The Chamber received a \$35,000 from the Montana Department of Commerce Tourism Grant Program and with local support secured enough funding. Contributors include Red Lodge Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB \$7,500; The Red Lodge Area Community Foundation \$1,000; The Red Lodge Business Alliance \$1,000; Red Lodge Proud and Beautiful \$500; Village Shoppe \$200; TBID/Lodging Association \$2,500; Back Alley Metals; NorthWestern Energy, and the City of Red Lodge \$5,000.

"I would also like to recognize the following individuals who worked tirelessly to ensure the Wayfinding Project happened: Bill Foisy, Tim Weamer, James Caniglia, Bill Larson, Jim Bushnell, and Mick Thompson," said Weamer.

The Montana Department of Transportation approved the placement of each sign around Red Lodge. The material on the signs is reflective as well.

"Back Alley Metals did the metalwork and powder coated it," said Weamer, "Dan Roller did the sticker work for us and Tim Weamer resized everything to make it work with the brand."

Category: Community **Red Lodge**