



Trade Show Report

IPW – San Antonio, TX

May 21 – 24, 2023

Montana Representation:

- Glacier Country Tourism – Debbie Picard
- Brand MT – Kim Birrell
- West Yellowstone – Katrina Wiese
- Visit Big Sky – Emele Hibdon – PR Firm
- Visit Billings – Aly Eggart

Overview:

- More than 5,000 delegates attended IPW including buyers from more than 60+ countries and 200+ journalists. IPW is expected to generate more than 10 million in future travelers to the US.
- We had a reduction in participation at IPW again this year. Brand MT purchased 2 booth spaces and the Montana delegates shared in approximately 80 appointments with international tour operators and additional meetings with journalists for 10-minute appointments over 3 days.
- The Montana booth was very busy again this year with back-to-back appointments throughout the 3 days. International travel to the US is desired and requests are up, but so are prices to travel to the Great American West region.
- The biggest discussion was the cost to travel to the US, and especially to the GAW. While some visitors are coming to visit no matter the cost, others are choosing to put the US on the back burner and visit other countries that are less expensive this year and will look at the US again in the future once prices come down, hopefully. Operators from the traditional markets (European and Australia) are very familiar with Montana and were either offering product or looking for more information to add product to their current inventory. Most of our new operators were from emerging markets such as Brazil, Japan and India and they were looking for information on the region. Montana is becoming more recognizable as a stand-alone destination along with the Great American West Region. It is considered a unique destination for most international travelers and the mystery intrigues them as well as the National Parks. It offers an authentic experience that travelers are looking for. Yellowstone National Park continues to be more well-known than Glacier National Park. However, US national parks are a desirable destination for the international traveler. The Utah parks are very popular. Glacier National Park and Western Montana is paired with the Canadian Rockies and Seattle more than the Dakotas. The show Yellowstone has world-



wide appeal and is attracting international visitors to see the landscapes that are so breathtaking in the show.

- The Great American West delegation hosted an evening “Buckle Club” party and invited those operators that had been to International Roundup in the past and had received a buckle and a cowboy name. All booth participants were able to attend, which is usually reserved for marketing partners. We had an incredible turn out. While other destinations GO BIG, people like our authentic friendships, and relaxed feel. This is always a great opportunity to get to know them better and see them in a more casual setting.
- There were several other networking lunches and evening events that provided opportunities to meet and discuss Montana attributes to international tour operators as well.
- There is no other travel trade show that can connect Glacier Country to the reach of international travelers like IPW does. I highly recommend we keep this show in our budget for 2024 and beyond.
- The next IPW is scheduled to take place in Los Angeles, May 2 – 7, 2024.