



Trade Show Report

ABA Marketplace – Philadelphia, PA

February 1 – 4, 2025

Montana Representation:

- Western Montana's Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- Destination Missoula – Kara Bartlett
- Visit Billings – Polly Mulvaney
- Great Falls – Kali Jean Tuckerman

Overview:

- The American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace took place in Philadelphia, PA, where 2,880 attendees gathered for the packaged travel event.
- 1,033 motorcoach and tour operator companies were in attendance.
- Western Montana's Glacier Country was matched with 22 tour operators for pre-scheduled 7-minute appointments during our DMO appointment sessions.
- Next ABA Marketplace: Reno, January 10 – 13, 2026

Trends:

- While at ABA, President Trump announced his plan to put tariffs on Canada, which made for uncomfortable appointments with Canadian tour operators.
- Tour operators are still seeing a strong desire to travel to national parks and rural areas. However, all the major cities are back up and seeing increases too.
- Many operators asked for our suggested itineraries. The most popular were the Canadian Rockies/Glacier National Park and Idaho tour itineraries.
- Many operators asked about the timing to visit and are open to visiting the park in September as long as the weather is still good.
- Difficulty with accommodation in and around the park was an issue with some.

Recommendations for 2026 and beyond:

- Tour operators are still looking for unique Western Montana experiences to offer their clients that they couldn't get if traveling on their own. Find creative niche tour ideas to sell to tour operators. They need to be hands-on, innovative, specialty, experiential, and behind the scenes.
- Our focus and push to shoulder seasons, especially September, for any group tours. More active, talked about spring biking the GTSR.
- It is vital to tie in how easy it is to include us on a larger itinerary, and we shared our newest MT/ID itinerary along with the Canadian Rockies, Yellowstone, Seattle, and Washington wine country.