



Conference Report

Northstar's Small & Boutique Meetings – Tucson, AZ

November 7 – 9, 2023

Montana Representation:

- Western Montana's Glacier Country – Debbie Picard

Overview:

- Small & Boutique Meetings is a hosted buyer, appointment-only, reverse trade show hosted by Northstar Meetings Group. This was my second Northstar show. They worked hard and vetted planners who held meetings of less than 200 people. Every planner I met with had an event that would fit in Western Montana.
- Glacier Country Tourism was matched with 20 meeting planners for 13-minute appointments, which was a nice amount of time to listen to their needs and give them information about Western Montana and our meeting facilities that could meet their needs.
- There were additional networking times in the two days to have a meal or casually chat and connect with those you met with and some of those you weren't matched with.
- I did meet with a few of these planners at last year's Northstar event, Destination West, in Tucson but was able to increase our database with 13 new meeting planners and build on the relationships I made with the others last year.
- I will look for future Northstar events and decide if it's a good fit.

Appointments and projected ROI:

Most of the planners were looking for smaller corporate incentives or retreat locations. I connected with them on their corporate incentive needs with our luxury guest ranches and explained about our convention hotel properties for association business. Several appointments had regional meetings in the 50-100 people range, which is perfect for most of our convention hotels in our three hub cities. This show has great networking outside of the appointments. I have followed up with all the planners via email and will have to see about ROI.

Recommendations for 2024:

- I will continue to attend different meetings shows to see which one produced the best ROI. I liked this show and the quality of the planners that attended. It takes consistency and continued exposure to build relationships with meeting planners; I feel this happened at this show. It gave Western Montana great exposure to quality meeting planners who are looking for our unique properties.