



Trade Show Report

IPW – Los Angeles, CA

May 4 - 8, 2024

Montana Representation:

- Western Montana's Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- Destination MT – Kim Birrell
- Destination MT – Rachel Lepley
- West Yellowstone – Katrina Wiese
- Visit Big Sky – Emele Hibdon – PR Firm
- Visit Billings – Aly Eggart
- Visit Bozeman – Daryl Schliem
- Visit Bozeman – Briana Wolfe
- Sage Lodge – Elle Limesand
- Columbia Hospitality – Crystal Brubaker
- Yellowstone Safaris – Ash Tallmadge

Overview:

- More than 5,700 delegates attended IPW, including 2,000 international buyers from more than 70+ countries a 20% increase from 2023. IPW is expected to drive over 5.5 billion in future travel to the U.S.
- We had a significant increase in participation at IPW this year. Destination MT purchased three booth spaces and the Montana delegates shared in approximately 120 appointments with international tour operators and additional meetings with journalists for 20-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 why Montana dropped out of the GAW consortium. The tour operators sell it as a region and couldn't imagine MT going it alone. While we tried to answer the questions, I asked Kim or Rachel to talk to the tour operators who wanted to discuss this topic. Cost was another topic. 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 less expensive countries this year and will look at the US again once prices come down, hopefully. Operators from the traditional markets



(Europe and Australia) are very familiar with Montana and were either offering products or looking for more information to add products to their current inventory. Most of our new operators were from emerging markets such as Brazil, Japan and India and were looking for regional information. Montana is considered a unique destination for most international travelers, and the mystery and national parks intrigue them. 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 are paired with the Canadian Rockies and Seattle more than the Dakotas. Yellowstone TV series has a worldwide appeal and attracts international visitors to see the breathtaking landscapes in the show.

- The Great American West delegation hosted an evening “Buckle Club” party and invited those operators who had been to International Roundup in the past and had received a buckle and a cowboy name. All booth participants were able to attend. We had an incredible turnout. 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.
- Several other networking lunches and evening events provided opportunities to meet and discuss Montana's attributes with international tour operators.
- There is no other travel trade show that can connect Western Montana’s Glacier Country to the reach of international travelers as IPW does. I highly recommend we keep this show in our budget for 2025 and beyond.
- The next IPW is scheduled for June 14 – 18, 2025, in Chicago, IL.