



Trade Show Report Go West Summit – Tacoma, WA February 24-26, 2014

Montana Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- MTOT – Marlee Iverson
- TownHouse Inns of MT – Paula Ruark
- Butte CVB – Maria Pochervina
- Red Lion – Chuck Carter

Overview:

- Go West Summit gathers international and receptive tour operators and travel agencies that focus on offering tours to the American West made up of a 13 state region to international clients. These tour operators specialize in group travel, FIT, and fly/drive programs.
- Nearly 600 attended Go West Summit. 14% increase over last year.
- Glacier Country was matched with 22 buyers for 12 minute appointments.
- 175 tour operators/travel agencies/receptive operators attended.
- Increased our database with 12 first time appointments.
- Next Go West Summit: Colorado Springs, CO – February 10-13, 2015.

Trends:

- Most first time international travelers are drawn to the well-known places: New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Disneyland.
- On their second and third visits they are showing strong interest in the National Parks. Yellowstone is the most well known as their concessionaire has been selling internationally for years.
- International visitors are attracted to Montana for our wildlife viewing, wide open spaces, soft adventure, our unique culture that includes lodging and activities.
- Go West was heavily attended by Chinese and South Korea tour operators this year. Delta has a direct flight from Seattle to Beijing and GWS was held in Seattle/Tacoma this year which might have influenced attendance.
- Younger customers (20-40 years) are coming to tour operators asking for adventure, more independence (don't make everyone do the same thing at the same time).

Recommendations for 2014:

- Educate our member partners on international tourism, and make them aware of cultural customs that they should be aware of before hosting an international group. Their customs have tended to offend other guests so knowing that in advance or placing them in appropriate space and time will be advantageous to all visitors.
- Recognize the developing need for multi-lingual step on guides.
- Work with the state office on multi-lingual promotional materials.