

Trade Show Report

Go West Summit – Anchorage, AK

February 21 - 26, 2016

Montana Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- GPI (Brewster) – Julie Wang
- Missoula CVB – Mary Holmes
- MTOT – Marlee Iverson
- TownHouse Inns of MT – Paula Ruark
- Red Lion – Chuck Carter

Overview:

- Go West Summit gathers international and receptive tour operators and travel agencies that focus on offering tours to the 13 western states in the United States. These tour operators specialize in group travel, FIT, and fly/drive programs.
- 600 attended Go West Summit. Over 60 Chinese and Korean tour operators.
- Glacier Country was matched with 39 buyers for 12 minute appointments.
- Increased our database with 16 first time appointments. 11 appointments were with Chinese operators.
- Next Go West Summit: Reno, NV – February 20 - 24, 2017.

Trends:

- First time international travelers are drawn to the well-known places: New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Disneyland. National Parks are considered for a second or third visits so we are considered a 2nd or 3rd tier destination. 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 cowboys and American Indians.
- Go West was heavily attended by Chinese and South Korea tour operators this year and that appears to be the trend.

Recommendations for 2016:

- We are making headway with our B2B workshops. We are providing education to our member partners on international tourism and how to work with U.S. receptive tour operators. We are making them aware of cultural difference and customs before hosting an international group.
- Develop welcome pages on our website for our key international markets
- Develop a one sheet in German, French and Chinese
- Recognize the developing need for multi-lingual step on guides.
- Work with the state office on multi-lingual promotional materials.