

Glacier Country Trade Show Report

By Jan Watkins

Rocky Mountain International Roundup – Buffalo, WY

April 29 – May 1, 2012

Suppliers: 19 Montana suppliers, including three from our region: Glacier Country (Jan Watkins), Best Western KwaTaqNuk Resort (Louis Cross) and Kandahar Lodge (Jennifer Fisher).

Overview: pre-scheduled 10 minute appointments with 35 European tour operators, US receptive tour operators, and RMI reps from France, Italy, UK, Germany, Benelux region, and Australia.

Updates:

- Benelux Update (Mr. Arjan Helle) - 2/3 of the Dutch book travel online, either through tour operator sites or direct. Many Dutch tour operators are extending Canadian holidays to include the RMI region. The Dutch take 3-5 week holidays.
- France Update (Mr. Herve Duxin) - 35 French tour operators are bringing clients to the RMI region, most are working with Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours as a receptive operator. Herve says France is the #1 market for the RMI region, up 38% from 2000-2010. The French get 5-7 weeks paid vacation. Even though the euro economy has been in crisis, travel remains strong for the upper end, and the RMI region is trendy.
- Italy Update (Ms. Olga Mazzoni) - even with the cost of living up, recession, and higher taxes the Italians have increased visits to the USA by 6%, it's their #1 destination. The Italians aren't as adventurous as the Germans or Norwegians. They love to eat! A trip to the RMI region is a very sophisticated trip that is hard to book directly -- they need receptive tour operators to arrange. It's the more "mature" Italian traveler who comes to our region, maybe their 3rd-4th visit, and they are looking for a more authentic experience. Fly/drives, motorcycle tours, 3-4 ranch stays are popular
- UK Update (Mr. Martin Roberts) - Martin reports that even with the UK economy "bumping along the bottom" and with higher tourism taxes, the USA remains a strong destination. He predicts that with the London Olympics and the Queen's 60th Anniversary UK people will stay at home this summer. Martin noted that the London/Calgary direct flight has been around a long time and can be the most affordable into the RMI region.
- Germany Update (Ms. Rita Hille) - Rita has been the German rep for RMI since the company began over 20 years ago. Her account manager, Carola

Kolmann, who came to Glacier Country on the RMI Mega-Fam last September, recently left and Janine Wolski has been hired to replace her. Rita said the Germans are traveling, many are return visitors, and travel to the RMI region is strong.

- Scandinavia Update (Ms. Barbara Stanford) – the economy is good in Scandinavia, as it is not part of the eurozone. They are #4 in European visitors to the US. Norwegians especially love our region. There is a new direct flight from Iceland to Denver which should encourage tourism to the US.
- Australia Update (Ms. Carolyn Davidson) – the Australian economy is stronger than ever. They get 4 weeks paid vacation and, Carolyn says, visiting the RMI region is in vogue. The Aussies love authentic travel experiences, national parks, and are quite active.