

Trade Show Report

Rocky Mountain International, Roundup – Missoula, Montana

April 28-May 2, 2014

Glacier Country Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- Hilton Garden Inn Missoula – Regina Rhodes
- Holiday Inn Missoula – Jennifer Warren
- Kandahar Lodge – Jennifer Fisher
- TBID Missoula – Mary Holmes
- Lodge at Whitefish Lake – Dawn Jackson
- Glacier Park Inc. – Jason St. Clair
- Rich's Montana Guest Ranch – Belinda and Jack Rich
- Red Night Adventures – Shannon Buhr
- Red Lion – Chuck Carter

Montana Representation:

- MTOT – Marlee Iverson
- TownHouse Inns of MT – Paula Ruark
- Butte CVB – Maria Pochervina
- Big Sky Resort – Katie Grice
- Virginia City Chamber of Commerce – John Hamilton
- BW Helena Great Northern – Carol Eichler
- Parade Rest Ranch – Marge Wanner
- Bar N Ranch – Jonna Ledyard
- 320 Ranch and Resort – John Richardson
- Helena TBID – Heidi O'Brien
- Visit Southwest Montana – Nick Mann
- Pierce RV – Tom Zeilstra
- Wild in the Pryors – Sandra Elmore
- Southwest MT – Sarah Bannon

Overview:

As a new Marketing Partner with RMI, Glacier Country was able to attend the Summit Meeting on April 29th and listen to the proposals presented by each RMI overseas representative. Discussions included MegaFAM dates and structure, dates for next year's Roundup and RMI overseas tradeshow participation.

- 29 European tour operators, 4 US receptive tour operators, and 7 RMI reps from France, Italy, UK, Germany, Nordic, Benelux region, and Australia. These tour operators specialize in group travel, FIT, and fly/drive programs.
- Glacier Country Tourism met with all of the tour operators and reps for 10 minute appointments.

- Next RMI Roundup is scheduled to take place in South Dakota in April (dates have not been set yet.)

European Travel Updates:

- Benelux Update (Mrs. Marjolein Fraanje) – The economy is slowly starting to recover and no European issues arose during the year. People of Benelux receive 30 days of vacation each year and usually take 14 days per vacation. They utilize the internet for inspiration then call on either a tour operator or travel agent to book their travel. They are looking for unique experiences (something different than all their friends are doing, for bragging rights) They are going to smaller tour operators to get that unique experience instead of the larger cookie cutter vacations. Many Dutch tour operators are extending Canadian holidays to include the RMI region. Florida, NY and the west coast continue to be the most popular.
- France Update (Mr. Herve Duxin) – The economic crisis is slow to leave France. Since the election of the Socialist President, taxes have significantly increased. French people are booking more on their own to easy destinations like NY, Orlando but still utilize a tour operator for our region. He said that most of the French tour operators are utilizing Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours as a receptive operator. The French people get 5 to 6 weeks of paid vacation. Even though the euro economy has been in crisis, travel remains strong for the upper end, and the RMI region is trendy. The French are looking for niche and tailor-made trips to our region.
- Italy Update (Ms. Annalisa Mereghetti) – European economic growth remains sluggish with a forecasted growth of 1%. The Italians love to travel and they love to eat! The Italians get about 10 days of vacation per year. A trip to the USA is preferred destination and a trip to the RMI region is a very sophisticated trip. It's the more "mature" Italian traveler who comes to our region, maybe their 3-4th visit to the US, and they are looking for a more authentic experience. Motorcycle tours and (Sturgis is well known in Italy) and honeymoon destinations are very popular.
- UK Update (Ms. Lisa Cooper) – The UK economy is showing signs of recovery. The outlook for travel to the US is positive, especially for the 55+ market (nifty fifty like adventure). They get 4 weeks of paid vacation per year. They are spending 36 million overseas on travel each year. Most use tour operators for booking their travel needs. Value is very important so including things like breakfast is nice. Luxury market is very strong, and they feel that a great Holiday is a RIGHT for them.
- Germany/Austria/Switzerland Update (Ms. Rita Hille) - Germany forecast is for an increase in future travel. Austria outbound increase by 4.6% and Swiss travel to the US grew by 23%. Germans get 30 days of paid vacation a year and feel that travel is a RIGHT. There are far more FIT travelers and small escorted bus tours. Many Germans have been to the US and the RMI region is a return trip.
- Nordic Update (Ms. Tarja Koivisto) (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Iceland) have 5 to 6 weeks of vacation each year and 11 days of paid national holidays. They are looking for cultural experiences that are personalized. They want to experience the locals and meet and talk to local people. They like the “off the beaten path” things to do. US was voted the #1 premier destination.

- Australia Update (Ms. Caroline Davidson) – Australia's economy continues to be one of the strongest in the world. In 2013 a Liberal government was voted in (=US Republican) after 8 years of Labor. Visitation to the US is up 6% with record numbers with over 1.19 million travelers, which is 1 in every 21 people. They are looking for active vacations with authentic experiences. Products that interest Australian tourists are National Parks, cowboy and Native Indian heritage and events, museums about history, ranch experiences, ski resorts and winter experiences, adventure activities, shopping and the RV and motorcycle rentals. High end corporate is also drawn to the RMI region. The most popular months are May-October and December.