



Trade Show Report

Connect PNW – Seattle, WA
November 30 – December 1, 2017

Montana Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- Discover Kalispell – Dawn Jackson
- Destination Missoula – Mimi Gustafson
- Grouse Mountain Lodge – Corrina Ceballos
- Big Sky Resort – Mike Pederson
- Billings CVB – Stefan Cattarin
- Great Falls CVB – Jake Bash
- Helena Best Western Great Northern – Cindee Bianchini

Overview:

- Connect PNW is a hosted buyer, appointment-only, reverse trade show. They worked to bring in the most active PNW association and corporate planners, suppliers and experts in the meetings industry. A total of 40 planners were there.
- Glacier Country Tourism was matched with 17 buyers for 6 minute appointments which wasn't nearly enough time to learn about what they needed and tell them about Glacier Country. More of a meet/greet and follow up later type of trade show.
- There were additional times in the 2 days to network and speak to planners you connected with and meet some of those you weren't matched with.
- We increased our database with 40 meeting planners.
- Next Connect PNW will be held in Seattle location TBD in early December.

Appointments and projected ROI:

It was wonderful to have such a large Montana presence at this show. I think we were able to put Montana on the map for these meeting planners. I connected with them on their corporate incentive needs with our luxury guest ranches, while Kalispell and Missoula connected for more association business. Several appointments had meetings in the 200 people range which is perfect for most of our convention hotels in our three hub cities. Several were looking for retreat locations as well. I did not leave with any RFP's but received one upon my return. I have followed up with all of the planners via email and will have to see about ROI.

Recommendations for 2018:

- It takes consistency and continued exposure to build relationships with meeting planners. Connect has a massive marketplace but this show was the second time they had done a regional approach. It gives Western Montana great exposure to quality meeting planners in the Pacific Northwest. Our direct flights from Seattle and Portland were well received. Incentive planners do frequent the show which is good for our higher-end resorts and guest ranches, there are plenty of corporate and association planners as well. I recommend we attend again next year to build on the relationships developed this year and meet new planners.