



Trade Show Report International Roundup – Kalispell, MT April 9 – 11, 2018

Glacier Country Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- TBID Missoula – Mimi Gustafson/Kara Bartlett
- Kalispell CVB – Dawn Jackson
- Whitefish CVB – Dan Hansen
- Sun Tours – Ed DesRosier
- Blackfeet Nation – Stephanie Vielle
- Glacier Peaks Hotel/Blackfeet Heritage Center – Zola Sellars
- Glacier Guides & Montana Raft Co. – Courtney Stone
- Red Lion Hotel Kalispell – Heidi Gilmond

Overview:

As a Marketing Partner of RMI, Glacier Country attended the Summit Meeting on April 8th and listen to the proposals presented by each RMI overseas representative. Discussions included MegaFAM dates and structure and RMI overseas tradeshow participation.

- 28 European tour operators, 3 US receptive tour operators, and 6 RMI reps from France, Italy, UK, Germany, 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. 7 new tour operators were added to our database.
- Next IRU will take place in Spearfish, SD April 28 – May 2, 2019

European Travel Updates

- Benelux Update (Marjolein Fraanje) – This has been an interesting year for their countries following the terrorist attacks. People of Benelux receive 30 days of vacation each year and usually take 14 days per vacation. The last year saw them staying closer to home, but with desire to visit the US. 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. There doesn't seem to be any Trump Effect on their choices to travel to the US. At least not to our region.
- France Update (Emmanuelle Blondin) – The economy is getting stronger in France. There are 65 million French. French people are booking more on their own to easy destinations like NY, Orlando but still utilize a tour operator for more unknown areas like 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 and will use 2 weeks of it when traveling to the US. Travel to the US is up 8% with it being the #1 long haul destination. Travel remains strong for the higher end, and the RMI region is trendy. The French are looking for niche and tailor-made trips to our region.

- Italy Update (Olga Mazzoni) –The Italians love to travel and they love to eat! While they don't have as many travel days as other European countries their average spend on a holiday is the highest. The US is the #1 long haul destination for Italians. The Italians get about 12 to 15 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 and experiential experiences. Motorcycle tours and honeymoon destinations are very popular. They recommend we promote the Amtrak service more due to the Italians love of train travel.
- UK Update (Jenni Bridgman) – The UK economy took a nose-dive after BREXIT. However the outlook for travel to the US is positive, especially for the over 50 market (nifty fifty like adventure) 2017 is the year for Canada and we may see some drop-down from them. 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. They like to watch videos when researching on where to go for vacation. She thinks we need to play up the safety of our destination in lieu of all the terrorist attacks in the world.
- Germany/Austria/Switzerland Update (Susanne Schmidt) –There are 80 million people in Germany and the Germany forecast is for an increase in future travel. They have the strongest economy in Europe. 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 3rd or 4th trip to the US. She thinks we need to promote the safety factor when visiting our region.
- Nordic Update They are currently looking for a new rep in the Nordic region.
- Australia Update (Caroline Davidson) – Australia's #1 long haul destination is the US. 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. She thinks our niche should be winter activities. We participated in a Brand USA multi-channel campaign based on her suggestions. She also thinks we should host more media from Australia.