



Trade Show Report Go West Summit – Reno, NV February 19 - 24, 2017

Montana Representation:

- Glacier Country – Debbie Picard
- MTOT – Marlee Iverson
- TownHouse Inns of MT – Paula Ruark
- Billings CVB – Stefan Cattarin
- 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.
- 540 attended Go West Summit. 200 buyers from 24 countries.
- Glacier Country was matched with 27 buyers for 12 minute appointments.
- Increased our database with 10 first time appointments.
- Next Go West Summit: Salt Lake City – January 15-18, 2018.

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.
- While I used to hear about tier one cities, most tour operators are now asking for authentic experiences for their clients.
- International visitors are attracted to Montana for our wildlife viewing, wide open spaces, soft adventure, our unique culture that includes cowboys and American Indians.

Recommendations for 2017 and beyond:

- 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.
- We have a plan to 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.