

2024 Summer Grant Report

Introduction: Visit Helena worked to advertise and connect with organizations to better explain our grant opportunities. We worked with sports organizations to media agencies from across the United States, there is some deep interest in the funding mechanisms. Overall, we received 11 applications totaling \$102,500 for summer 2024. Currently, TBID has \$25,000 worth of funding to give the programs.

Myrna Loy – String & Shadow Puppet Show

Date: August 2024

Total Attendance: 600

Hotels: 30

Grant Dollar Request: \$2,500

Details: An outdoor puppet performance in Anchor Park by acclaimed puppet theater: String and Shadow. String and Shadow is a performance company based out of Olympia, Washington. Using paper mache, cardboard, bamboo, and cloth (among many other found and recycled materials) String and Shadow creates incredible giant puppets and masks and weaves them into spectacle performances for all ages. We held a similar outdoor puppet show at Anchor Park in the summer of 2023 which was attended by over 700 people. We hope to use this event and smaller puppet shows throughout the year to help create interest in an annual "puppet festival" which will become part of our permanent programming in the future.

Point S Tire & Auto – Septemberfest Soapbox Derby

Date: September 2024

Total Attendance: 3500

Hotels: 400

Grant Dollar Request: \$5,000

Details: In 2023, an estimated 3,000 - 4,000 people attended the event over the course of the 2 days. This is a massive amount of people not only enjoying the event but also spending money at downtown Helena businesses. The 2024 event is projected to be even bigger. This is a free, family-friendly event that gets families downtown enjoying the heart of Helena. With the increased marketing in 2024, area hotels will also see the benefit of this event. We have interest from a soapbox derby club in Billings to attend participate, Point S vendors from outside the state have contacted Vanessa to learn how they can be involved/attend, and Red Bull has verbally committed to sending a group of their Wings Ambassadors to the event to provide crowd entertainment. Each year, more and more entities want to get involved with the event because they see the value that it brings to downtown Helena.

QuantumPoint.org LLC – Body Mind & Spirit Health Expo

Date: October 2024

Total Attendance: 2000

Hotels: 50

Grant Dollar Request: \$10,000

Details: The Body Mind Spirit Health and Wellness Expo delivers tangible economic gains for Helena by drawing attendees from across the Northern Rockies and beyond. Based on the

success of similar events, we conservatively estimate over 2,000 participants in this one-day event, with 25% traveling from outside Montana. With the average visitor spending \$180 per day, this influx may inject \$90,000 into the local economy. Hotels, restaurants, retail stores, and attractions directly gain this revenue from lodging, dining, shopping, and entertainment. Indirect benefits also accrue to gas stations and other supply chain partners. Furthermore, the Expo's thought leaders on physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing educate residents on maintaining lifestyles that reduce public health costs. By boosting wellness tourism and preventative care knowledge, the Expo delivers economic diversification, and potentially lower healthcare burdens—all advancing Helena's economy and quality of life. We welcome the chance to discuss further details on the positive impacts.

Grandstreet Theatre – October Shows

Date: October 2024

Total Attendance: 2880

Hotels: 150

Grant Dollar Request: \$10,000

Details: In keeping with the seasonal spirit, Grandstreet has staged a mystery/thriller/ghost story in the October spot over the last few years (Misery in 2023, The Mousetrap in 2022, Murder on the Orient Express in 2019). These shows are very well received and draw audiences from across the state of Montana. With two shows instead of one, there is an even bigger impetus to plan a fall weekend getaway to Helena. Out-of-town visitors can take advantage of our downtown dining and drinking establishments before/after the shows and spend the weekend at a partner hotel. To this end, Grandstreet is planning to market and promote a "Weekend Getaway" package that includes dinner at a local restaurant, tickets to an evening performance, hotel accommodations, and tickets to the matinee performance of the other show the following afternoon.

The Foundation for Montana History – History Tours

Date: May – October 2024

Total Attendance: 3,150

Hotels: 300

Grant Dollar Request: \$15,000

Details: Helena History Tours is designed to promote active heritage tourism through the exploration of the town's urban environment and its storied past. Direct beneficiaries include Helena residents and visitors, with the broader economy of Helena serving as a secondary beneficiary.

We recognized that while Helena is marketed as a historic town, no direct combination of these subjects is offered as a direct, guided experience. Our program fills this void by offering residents and visitors the opportunity to explore and engage with Helena's historical landscape and vibrant urban past.

Our partnership with private bus tour companies expanded significantly in 2023. We led 21 bus tours and dropped off 652 bus tour participants in downtown Helena to shop and eat for roughly 2 hours. We estimate each person spent roughly \$50 per visit which equals roughly \$32,600 for the Helena downtown economy from bus tour participants. We plan to continue engaging travel companies in 2024 to ensure that this part of our program continues to grow.

Holter Museum – Secrets of the Vault

Date: June – August 2024

Total Attendance: 200

Hotels: 40

Grant Dollar Request: \$11,000

Details: The Holter Museum of Art is an economic engine in downtown, Helena. With 17,000 square feet of exhibit, education, and research space, the Holter hosts 25 exhibits a year in our five galleries. The Permanent Collection is an important research and academic resource in Helena and is a historic repository of the legacy of art, art history, and cultural history of Montana with over 1700 art objects. The Secrets of the Vault will provide a fun and educational platform to share the treasures within our vault. We are partnering with Ten Mile Creek Brewery to provide specially selected beer that connects with the art that will be showcased. Annually, we have 12,000 visitors to the museum, and we engage 5,000 children and adults in our innovative education programs. We aim to build Secrets of the Vault as our summer speaker series to draw tourists and members alike to our museum and our downtown neighbors. The events will take place from 6 to 7 pm on Saturdays with the hope that our participants patronize our neighboring bars and restaurants before or after the events.

Montana Learning Center – Beyond the Big Sky

Date: June – August 2024

Total Attendance: 600

Hotels: 325

Grant Dollar Request: \$10,000

Details: Since the events will end between midnight and 1 am, out-of-area attendees will need lodging and meals in the Helena area, increasing revenue for Helena-area lodging providers and restaurants. If MLC receives this grant, its webpage about the event will include a link to the Visit Helena website with surrounding text encouraging potential attendees to go to that website to explore what else Helena has to offer, leading to additional spending on recreational, cultural and similar activities in the Helena area, as well as retail purchases from Helena businesses. MLC expects that some attendees coming from outside of Helena for the events will choose to come in early (i.e., Friday night or Saturday morning) and/or leave Sunday afternoon or evening (rather than Sunday morning), further increasing new lodging and restaurant revenues in the Helena area and possibly increasing other business revenues in Helena, such as for retail purchases, gas and other Helena-area tourist attractions. For families attending with children, their attendance at the event may spur an interest in having the children attend one or more of MLC's summer camps, thereby increasing camp attendance and MLC's revenue.

Montana Ambassadors – Montana Anniversary Ball

Date: October 2024

Total Attendance: 500

Hotels: 225

Grant Dollar Request: \$15,000

Details: The Inaugural Montana Ambassadors Sapphire Ball and become part of the grand celebration of 135 years of Montana. Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of this momentous occasion, enjoying live music that resonates with the spirit of the state. Mingle

with fellow attendees, indulge in a variety of locally made appetizers and libations, and experience the diverse highlights from across the state. Creating memories that will last a lifetime. Join us for an unforgettable evening of festivities, camaraderie, and the unique charm of Montana's heritage at the Sapphire Ball. Showcasing our local downtown corridor, businesses, and entertainment should drive solid visitation and provide economic benefits - especially from out-of-town guests.

Montana Discovery Foundation – 75th Anniversary Mann Gulch Celebration

Date: August 2024

Total Attendance: 300

Hotels: 3

Grant Dollar Request: \$15,000

Details: This event will serve as a memorial and tribute to the Mann Gulch Smokejumpers on the 75th Anniversary of the Mann Gulch Tragedy. The event will take place over three days from August 4th to August 6th and will include a movie night, a commemorative beer launch by Ten Mile Brewery--with live music and interactive educational activities taking place in downtown Helena—and a memorial service at the Montana Capitol building with a keynote address by author John Maclean and a flyover by the historic Miss Montana plane. The three-day event will provide the public an opportunity to learn about the events of Mann Gulch, engage in the history of wildland firefighting during the past 75 years, mourn the victims of the tragedy, and become better acquainted with their public lands and those who risk their lives to serve them.

Treasure State Runners – Run for the Helena of It

Date: October 2024

Total Attendance: 800

Hotels: 100

Grant Dollar Request: \$5,000

Details: TSR envisions Just for the Helena of It as an annual event for the Helena community, as well as a destination race that is sought out by runners from across the nation. We were strongly supported both nationally and locally in 2022 and 2023. With 350 registered runners from 13 states, our 2022 event raised \$17,000 for The Friendship Center (TFC). The 2nd Just for the Helena of It event in 2023 brought 550 registered runners from 17 states and raised \$24,000 for TFC. We are proud to announce that in 2024 Girls Thrive will be joining TFC as a second beneficiary of this event. We know we can count on support from returning runners, sponsors, and volunteers. We are excited to see Just for the Helena of It bring more people to our incredible town as it grows and scope. Just for the Helena, It will benefit the local community and economy in several ways. First, as this event continues to grow and become popular, more out-of-town participants will travel to Helena to attend. The purpose of this certification is to promote this event nationally as a legitimate and professional race. “For any road running performance to be accepted as a record or be nationally ranked, it must be run on a USATF-certified course.” As a certified course, we hope to draw more out-of-town racers to our event.

Last Chance Curling Club – Creepy Sweepy Bone Spiel

Date: October 2024

Total Attendance: 150

Hotels: 30

Grant Dollar Request: \$2,500

Details: The Last Chance Curling Club will host its 4th annual Creepy Sweepy Bone-Spiel Oct. 25-27, 2024. * The bonspiel is a three-day curling tournament that attracts teams from Helena to compete against teams that travel from around the state, region, and Canada. In addition to the curling matches the event includes an opening ceremony, a costume contest, and a banquet. Spectators can attend the event for free.