

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



ANGELA McLEAN
LT. GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2014

CONTACTS

Mike Wessler, Deputy Communications Director, Governor's Office, 444-9725
Daniel Iverson, Public Information Officer, Montana Office of Tourism, 841-2893

Montana Communities Receive Grants for Special Events that Draw Tourists to the State

HELENA – Governor Steve Bullock and Montana Department of Commerce Director Meg O'Leary today announced the award of \$150,000 in funding for events across the state that help support Montana's vibrant tourism industry as it continues to bring new revenue into the economy. The funding is being made available through the Montana Office of Tourism's Special Events Grant Program (SEGP).

"From fishing derbies to bicycle tours and rodeos, authentic Montana events serve as important catalysts for bringing people into our downtowns and Main Streets," said Bullock. "And in turn, Montana's small businesses in these communities have the opportunity to capture a portion of the \$3.6 billion being spent annually by our 11 million visitors."

The Montana communities receiving SEGP grants this year are Bozeman, Ekalaka, Glasgow, Hamilton, Kalispell, Missoula, Seeley Lake, Stevensville, West Yellowstone, White Sulphur Springs, and Wolf Point. Grant funds are available for event marketing and promotion outside a 100-mile radius of the event.

"Montana's special events are both culturally rich and economically important," said Director O'Leary. "These grants are investments into community efforts enjoyed by residents and travelers alike."

Bullock has identified "Marketing Montana" as a key pillar of his Main Street Montana Project. Through the project, he is working to strengthen and expand efforts to promote Montana as a tourist destination to support economic growth.

To be eligible for an SEGP grant, the applicant must be a Montana non-profit entity, city, county, or tribal government. The event must align with the Montana Tourism & Recreation Strategic Plan and the Montana Brand platform. The event must also be annual and reoccurring, and of interest to the general traveling public.

"The support from the State to help us put together this event has been invaluable," said Gita Saedi Kiely with the Big Sky Film Institute, which organizes the annual Big Sky Documentary Film Festival. "For a non-profit grassroots organization, grants like this one allow us to increase our marketing to gain fans and contestants in new areas, and has given us the ability to grow our event to new levels."

Communities receiving 2014 – 2015 SEGP awards are:

- **Bozeman – Cycle Greater Yellowstone;** \$18,250; Sponsor: Greater Yellowstone Coalition

- **Ekalaka – Ekalaka Shindig**; \$7,350; Sponsor: Carter County Museum
- **Glasgow – 28th Annual Montana Governor’s Cup Walleye Tournament**; \$12,000; Sponsor: Glasgow Area Chamber of Commerce
- **Hamilton – McIntosh Apple Day & Liquid Apple Night**; \$8,760; Sponsor: Ravalli County Museum & Historical Society
- **Kalispell – Kalispell Pond Hockey Classic**; \$8,760; Sponsor: Kalispell CVB
- **Missoula – Big Sky Documentary Film Festival**; \$23,178; Sponsor: Big Sky Film Institute
- **Seeley Lake – In the Footsteps of Norman Maclean Festival**; \$20,701; Sponsor: Alpine Artisans, Inc.
- **Stevensville: Western Heritage Days & Chuck Wagon Cook-off**; \$6,351; Sponsor: Stevensville Main Street Association
- **West Yellowstone – Kids ‘n Snow Weekend Event Series**; \$4,380; Sponsor: West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
- **White Sulphur Springs – Red Ants Pants Music Festival**; \$30,271; Sponsor: Red Ants Pants Foundation
- **Wolf Point – Wolf Point Wild Horse Stampede**; \$10,000; Sponsor: Wolf Point Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture

The SEGP was developed in 2002 to assist communities with economic development through the creation and/or enhancement of annual, on-going events. The SEGP grants are approved following recommendations from Montana Department of Commerce staff, Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) members and representatives of Montana’s public and private businesses. To date, the SEGP has provided over \$1 million in grant funding to 129 events in various Montana communities.

For more information about the Special Events Grant Program, contact the Montana Office of Tourism staff at (406) 841-2870.

###