



2024 TOURISM YEAR IN REVIEW

**JOHNSON
COUNTY** 
Tourism Association

 **BUFFALO**  **KAYCEE**

Mission Statement:
Develop initiatives that increase and sustain year-round tourism revenue to improve the quality of life for our community.

Vision Statement:
To inspire diverse visitors to view Buffalo and Kaycee as the travel destination by creating authentic unique experiences in the West.

2024 JCTA Board Members:

Jody Sauers	Anita Peoples	Laurel Foster
Brian Whitlock	Katy Giles	Adam Todd
Jennifer Johnson	Mike Callan	Clay Miller
Candice Christensen		Natausha Arno

2025 JCTA Board Members:

Anita Peoples	Laurel Foster	Brian Whitlock
Katy Giles	Mike Callan	Clay Miller
Candice Christensen		Curtis Figler

JCTA Staff:	Toby Carrig	Kristin de Galard
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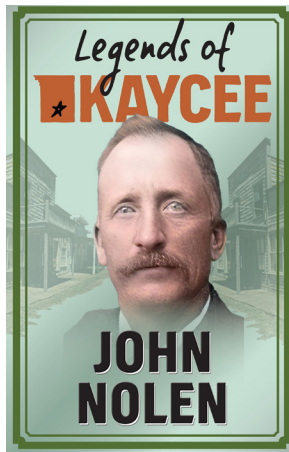
PARTNERSHIPS

The Johnson County Tourism Association worked with various entities in the county and throughout Wyoming to increase awareness of the county as a destination.

TOWN OF KAYCEE

JCTA purchased 19 banners for Kaycee's main thoroughfare that feature legends and icons from the early days of southern Johnson County.

A related poster with a QR code was made available, taking visitors to a page on our website with information about the people featured on the banners.



BUFFALO TRAILS

The JCTA provided funding to the Buffalo Trails Board for the purchase and installation of a bike repair station, which was located last year along the Clear Creek Trail System along Highway 16 at the trailhead for the Old Power Plant Loop.

We continue to coordinate with the board to enhance this attraction for tourists.



WORTH HOSPITALITY TRAINING

To help meet the goal of workforce development, the JCTA partnered with the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation, Tourism & Hospitality (WORTH) Initiative to conduct two training sessions for local workers and prospective employees in the hospitality industry. Twenty people attended the training at the Johnson County Library. It was one of the first such training workshops offered by WORTH.

GOOGLE BUSINESS LISTINGS

JCTA works with businesses throughout the county to enhance and improve their listings on Google in order for those businesses to be easier to find for our visitors.

CITY OF BUFFALO

To highlight recreational opportunities in the Buffalo area, the JCTA purchased 25 banners for the city's Main Street that feature natural areas in northern Johnson County. In addition to beautifying downtown, the banners are meant to encourage visitors to stay longer and explore the area.



CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Visitors centers operated by the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce and the Kaycee Chamber of Commerce are supported by JCTA funds.

The JCTA in 2024 allocated \$15,000 to the Buffalo Chamber and \$5,000 to the Kaycee Chamber to help support staffing those centers through the summer months.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

The JCTA awarded \$30,000 in tourism promotion grants to community organizations with the intent of helping them market events or programs of interest to potential visitors outside the immediate area. The goal for the program is to encourage overnight stays.

Award recipients in 2024 were:

- Big Horn Bluegrass Camp: Songs & Sonnets
- Big Horn Bluegrass Camp: Kids Camp
- Big Horn Bluegrass Camp: January Jam
- Buffalo HS Trapshoot Club: Buffalo Stampede
- Johnson Co. Arts & Humanities: Art & Music Fest
- Lobban Street Music: Saturdays in the Square
- Longmire Foundation: Longmire Days
- Powder Pass Nordic Club: Pole Creek Challenge
- TA Ranch: Fire & Ice Festival
- TA Ranch: Living History Days
- Fort Phil Kearny/Bozeman Trail Association
- Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum

PARTNERSHIPS

WYOMING OFFICE OF TOURISM

With Johnson County’s increased efforts to promote tourism in this region, the Wyoming Office of Tourism (WOT) has been a partner in amplifying those efforts.

WOT’s Destination Development Program helped provide initial funding that allowed the JCTA to hire full-time staff. It also provided the initial funding for the street pole banners, the bike repair station, new brochures that promote Buffalo as well as other initiatives currently being pursued.

In addition, WOT sent its creative team to Kaycee for its video series “I Know A Spot.” In a 90-second video released late in 2024, Laurel Foster leads a brief tour out to Outlaw Canyon.



WOT has other video projects in production as well that feature Johnson County.

Lastly, WOT has been a partner in directing FAM trips of international tour operators our way. Two small groups affiliated with European tour agencies – Voyageurs du Monde and Evasions USA – visited Buffalo last fall to collect content for their own promotional materials and research the area for itinerary creation.

GREAT AMERICAN WEST

The Johnson County Tourism Association and the Wyoming Office of Tourism are partners within the Great American West program, which promotes four states (Wyoming, Idaho, South Dakota and North Dakota) to international travelers.

Last May, the JCTA attended the International Roundup trade show in Casper, Wyoming to meet with 40 tour operators. Seventeen visited Buffalo for a few hours on a post-FAM trip to visit the Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum, the Historic Occidental Hotel & Saloon and downtown.

LODGING TAX

5.29 PERCENT GROWTH IN 2024

Lodging Tax receipts reached a high point in Fiscal Year 2021-22 for Johnson County. They have fallen back 9.9 percent from that high to Fiscal Year 2023-24, but they have stabilized and maintained a level higher than pre-pandemic receipts.

Fiscal Year	Revenue	Vs. Previous
2015-16	\$205,792.99	.NA
2016-17	\$189,697.52	↓ 7.82
2017-18	\$184,077.79	↓ 2.96
2018-19	\$197,977.50	↑ 7.55
2019-20	\$185,553.39	↓ 6.28
2020-21	\$176,798.27	↓ 4.72
2021-22	\$270,020.03	↑ 52.73
2022-23	\$248,419.59	↓ 8.00
2023-24	\$243,154.54	↓ 2.12
2024-25	\$203,081.83	.NA

If the remaining months of this fiscal year equal last fiscal year, we would exceed \$250,000 in tax revenue even based on the previous tax rate.

With the implementation of the voter-approved increased rate, the Lodging Tax collections for the Fiscal Year should end up around \$270,000 to \$280,000.

Calendar Year	Revenue	Vs. Previous
2016	\$192,410.28	.NA
2017	\$192,111.20	↓ 0.16
2018	\$184,455.00	↓ 3.99
2019	\$197,770.98	↑ 7.22
2020	\$161,663.99	↓ 18.26
2021	\$268,799.29	↑ 66.25
2022	\$246,224.13	↓ 8.39
2023	\$238,373.47	↓ 3.19
2024	\$250,990.92	↑ 5.29

The calendar year 2024 showed a 5.29-percent increase in lodging tax revenue compared to 2023.

Data from JCTA financial reports provided by bookkeeper Chanda Rule based on monthly deposits of Lodging Tax receipts.

STRATEGY | PAID MEDIA

Johnson County offers tourists a diverse experience with Western culture and incredible outdoor recreation opportunities mixed with unique history, museums and historic sites, arts and culture, shopping and dining. For visitors to Buffalo and Kaycee, recreation is accessible and convenient from one of the many hotels, RV parks, campgrounds or guest ranches.

RADIO

Four radio campaigns were utilized to feature Johnson County as a visitors destination.

JCTA continued long-term campaigns with Wyoming Public Media, South Dakota Public Broadcasting and added Yellowstone (Montana) Public Radio.

In addition, we added a campaign through Broadcast House Media in Nebraska for advertising in the pre-game and post-game on the flagship FM station for Nebraska football this past fall. Nebraska's major cities of Omaha and Lincoln are traditionally among our top markets for website traffic. Omaha ranked 12th among our cities for web traffic from April 25 to August 31 with an average engagement time of 30 seconds. While its ranking was largely unchanged through the fall, engagement time doubled to 58 seconds. In September it was among the top non-local markets for engagement time with 1 minute, 55 seconds. Among web visitors in Lincoln, Nebraska, engagement time was 2:38 in September and October compared to 50 seconds in the 2-month period prior.

DIGITAL

The largest portion of the Advertising Budget (\$80,000 of \$220,000) was allocated for digital advertising in the 2024-25 budget.

The centerpiece of that was utilizing Wyoming Office of Tourism co-ops as much as possible within our plans.

JCTA and WOT split the costs on the following programs: Search

Engine Optimization, \$16,000; Search Engine Marketing, \$25,000; Meta Prospecting, \$16,000; Meta Remarketing, \$16,000; and Google Prospecting, \$16,000. In those programs, JCTA spends \$44,500 to achieve \$89,000 in value that increases traffic to the VisitBuffaloWY.com website and brand awareness among those using Google search, Facebook, and Instagram.

We also have scheduled a program with Madden Media for promotion of a forthcoming documentary we are producing about Red Wall Country, the Hole in the Wall, and Outlaw Canyon.

Additional programs include working with Miles Partnership, another WOT partner, for banner ads on the Travel Wyoming website, a monthly advertisement in the Travel Wyoming e-newsletter, and a leads campaign using requests for the Wyoming Travel Guide to grow a subscription list for our own newsletter through Constant Contact.

The leads program has generated 662 contacts since launching on December 27.

BILLBOARDS

The JCTA owns four billboards along Interstate 90 with current messaging for the Buffalo Murals and Longmire country.

In addition, we rent two billboards from Yesco (Douglas, promoting Chris LeDoux Park and Kaycee; and Beulah) and five with Lamar (two in Gillette, one in Spearfish, one in Greybull and one in Cody).



STRATEGY | PAID & EARNED MEDIA

PRINT/HYBRID

JCTA's approach to print advertising in 2024 was to utilize print in conjunction with digital advertising whenever possible.

JCTA has utilized a full page ad in the Wyoming Travel Guide, and has received a prominent placement in the early pages of the magazine.

JCTA also supports the Buffalo Bulletin with a full-page ad in the Vista magazine distributed throughout the region.

Another full-page advertisement is placed in Yellowstone National Park Journal, which also includes a one-page editorial to accompany the ad. That program was renewed in 2025 along with a leads program that has generated 840 e-mail addresses since launching in September. E-newsletters have been sent to those subscribers on a monthly basis.

JCTA has been a long-time advertiser with True West magazine and has switched the campaign this year to utilize social media and the website as well as the print magazine.

JCTA published advertisements in each of the four editions of Iowa Snowmobiler magazine this winter, which proved to be one of the most scanned QR codes among our printed magazine ads (with 17).

As part of the campaign for international tourists, the JCTA advertises in the annual Great American West Guide with a full-page of advertorial that is published in French, German, and Italian as well as English. Also, JCTA utilizes the quarterly America Journal to reach travelers in European markets. The magazine's most recent edition featured a short item on visiting Kaycee.

RV DESTINATIONS

Seeking to grow awareness among the RV travelers, the JCTA made a partnership with RV Destinations magazine, a fairly new publication with a reach of 28,000 subscribers in the print and digital.

For \$7,469, our program was to include a full-page advertisement in each of the four quarterly publications, plus some social media and e-newsletter presence.

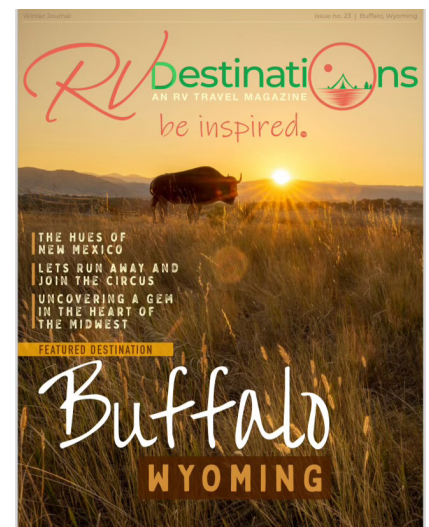
RV Destinations sent a staffer who visited for multiple days, staying at the Big Horn View RV Park. She produced a two-page spread for their fall edition and also shared multiple photos that we are able to use in our campaigns.

They sent the husband-and-wife editor and owner for a week-long stay at Buffalo KOA Journey and Indian Campground. They produced a 10-page spread on Buffalo, which was featured on the cover of the winter edition.

They also recorded a 90-minute podcast that also appears on YouTube and has more than 6,300 views. As this is a new channel, they boosted our video in an attempt to grow their audience.

In addition, they produced a short video featuring area attractions that has more than 1,700 views on YouTube.

They have produced a top 10 list of things to do for their website and a seven-day itinerary for Johnson County that also will have a dedicated space on their website.



EARNED MEDIA PLACEMENTS

The Wyoming Office of Tourism and its public relations office, Percepture, showcased multiple examples of coverage that Johnson County received in 2024, including:

– A feature piece in the Matador Network, June 24, by writer Cheri Alguire, who had attended the Society of American Travel Writers Western Chapter meeting in Cody. (JCTA was a sponsor of that event, which enabled us to put information into the writers' packets. Estimated value: \$5,077.

– A story in Epoch Times on guest ranches, focusing on Paradise Guest Ranch and a family that has gathered there 13 times over 30 years. It was published July 18 with a circulation of more than 6 million people. Estimated value: \$57,462.

STRATEGY | OWNED MEDIA

As changes take place in the world of social media, owned media is more important than ever. Instead of relying on platforms where your message is one of many fighting through the algorithm, brands are striving to build engaged communities who revisit and interact with content we create and control. JCTA is making strides in that area with a new website and other materials being used to promote the region to prospective visitors.

VISITBUFFALOWY.COM WEBSITE

The cornerstone of our owned media is our website, which was rebranded as VisitBuffaloWY.com in 2023 and relaunched with a new look in 2024.

While the previous website had about 30 different pages of content, the new website is much more extensive, more informational, and more engaging. Video and dominant images allow the JCTA to showcase the beauty of Johnson County. Twenty-eight restaurants, 31 lodging establishments and 27 local retailers have their own pages in addition to directories that include photos, addresses, phone and website links.

An events section offering much more detail and organization than the previous website ranks among the top five pages on the site and has a high engagement rate of 44 seconds per user.

The website continues to grow with content. A section has been added for information about having meetings and events in Buffalo and Kaycee. A page featuring stories and videos about Buffalo produced by other media also has been added.

Between the promotional efforts and the increased content, the website has had record traffic, surpassing more than 100,000 visitors in 2024.

After the launch of the new site in late April of 2024, the month of May saw the most page views for the website with 30,035, showing greater engagement among visitors.

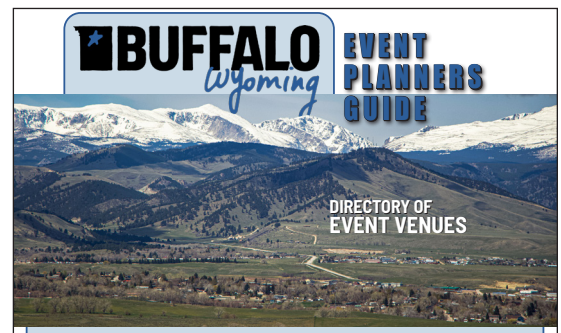
WEBSITE VISITORS						
JCTA Website/VisitBuffaloWY.com						
MONTH	Google Analytics				Google A4	Google A4
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
January	-	3,321	254	213	-	7,976
February	-	1,165	999	239	-	16,358
March	-	1,217	3,144	2,516	-	1,224
April	-	352	4,243	6,303	-	3,804
May	-	295	3,466	7,499	-	12,465
June	-	1,306	352	8,452	-	9,171
July	-	1,245	461	9,866	-	9,681
August	-	1,616	297	10,266	9,124	7,781
September	-	1,112	246	5,243	5,011	4,943
October	-	117	198	181	479	9,954
November	-	92	160	0	423	9,157
December	20,110	116	222	0	541	9,669
TOTAL	20,110	11,954	14,042	50,778	15,578	102,183

EVENT PLANNERS GUIDE

Produced for a specific audience, the JCTA's Event Planners Guide is targeted to organizations in the state of Wyoming who may wish to consider Johnson County as the location for a meeting, a workshop, a training session, etc. An accompanying letter to about 50 organizations in the state made the pitch for Buffalo as a destination meeting place for groups up to 150 or so people with a list of venues, caterers, hotel options, etc.

With the location along I-90, I-25, and Highway 16, Buffalo is one of the most driveable locations in the state and has ample facilities for small to mid-size meetings.

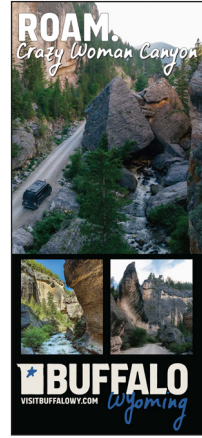
We have heard from organizations considering Buffalo and those that used the publication to identify catering services.



STRATEGY | OWNED MEDIA

RACK CARDS

One of JCTA's first projects of 2024 was the printing of four different rack cards ahead of the Governor's Hospitality and Tourism Convention. The cards featured Kaycee, Clear Creek Trail, Crazy Woman Canyon, and Buffalo's cowboy culture. They were distributed to various Welcome Centers in the state and through limited Certified Folder distribution racks at no cost.



QR CODE POSTERS

With JoCo First discontinuing its event calendar, QR code signs that were located throughout the city were no longer active.

JCTA produced new posters that linked directly to four areas of our website: Events, Dining, Lodging, and Retail.

We can track each of the codes to see how much they are used by people in the market.

This summer will be the first that the signs are present in many Buffalo locations.



ADVENTURE GUIDE BROCHURES

Meeting another long-time need, JCTA produced a print brochure promoting Johnson County.

The brochure is a 20-page booklet that folds down to 4 inches by 9 inches, which is the preferred rack card size.

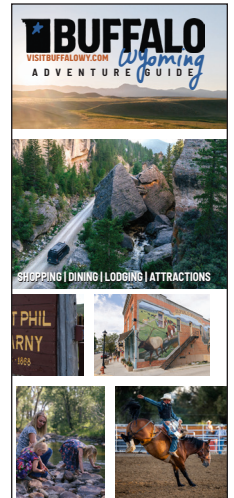
The cover features multiple images from around the county, promoting the Occidental Hotel, Outlaw Canyon, Crazy Woman Canyon, Clear Creek Trail, Fort Phil Kearny, Chris LeDoux Park, and downtown Buffalo.

The themes in the book are year-round outdoor recreation, Western culture and American history, and the conveniences of shopping, dining and lodging.

Following a print run of 20,000 books, about half were distributed to Certified Folder for placement on racks in northern Colorado and Rapid City. More than 2,000 were given to Wyoming Welcome Centers for initial placement. Others will be given to Sheridan's Welcome Centers, and to local hotels and attractions.

The books are also being used to respond to visitor requests. The JCTA website and e-newsletters are being used to solicit those requests.

In 2024, materials were sent to handle 12 requests through the Chamber of Commerce and 11 leads through our office. So far in 2025, more than 50 requests have been made through our website, one by mail, and one by phone.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

How did we do in 2024? With the JCTA board's aggressiveness in promoting the county as a tourism destination in recent years, the effort paid off with more visitors than ever to the website and an increase in Lodging Tax revenue.

WEBSITE

Pre-launch: January through April 2024 (4 months)
 Post-launch: May 1 through December 2024 (8 months)
 [User acquisition: First primary user channel]

Category	Pre-Launch	Post-Launch
Total website users	36,120	79,289
Total users per month	9,030.0	9,911.1
Returning users	1,213	6,288
Returning users per month	303.3	786.0
Average engagement time	0:13	0:33
Engaged sessions per user	0.23	0.43
Page views	52,878	146,914
Page views per month	13,219.5	18,364.3
Paid Search	18,544	29,917
Paid Social	7,225	15,789
Display	4,998	4,579
Organic Social	2,255	10,693
Direct	2,006	5,447
Organic Search	1,182	10,499
Email	263	474
Referral	202	160
Unassigned/Other	51	1,786
Paid Video	0	41

Data from Google Analytics 4 for VisitBuffaloWY.com.

FULFILLMENT

Materials sent out to prospective visitors.

Acquisition	All of 2024	Jan.-Feb. 2025
Chamber/JCTA/JGMM	14	2
Website sign-up	11	53
Total	25	55
Newsletter subscribers	All of 2024	Jan.-Feb. 2025
Website	0	2
Yellowstone NP Journal Leads	618	222
Miles Partnership Leads	34	628

All five newsletters sent have open rates exceeding 44 percent (industry standard, 40 percent); the Miles program was 58 percent with a 10 percent click rate.

VISITORS (INTERNATIONAL)

The Great American West, a four-state partnership coordinated by Rocky Mountain International Agency, tracks the itineraries of partner **tour operators** and reports on estimated nights booked and visitor spending. With the year ending in June:

Statistic	2021	2022	2023	2024
Operators offering overnights	85	82	90	102
Overnights offered	259	247	287	299
Estimated room nights booked	—	—	2,282	2,180
Estimated visitor spending	—	—	\$1.08	\$1.21

VISITORS (DOMESTIC)

We wanted to get a baseline on how many people visit Johnson County and where they come from:

Statistic	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total people from 100+ miles	1,268,787	1,451,207	1,030,189	1,005,264	1,376,290	1,092,569
Total Trips from 100+ miles	185,132	198,837	191,393	209,518	213,219	264,896
Visitor Days average stay	1.7	1.6	2.1	2.6	1.5	1.9
July (peak month) Visitors	29,863	34,229	36,023	37,844	45,205	47,939

LEISURE & HOSPITALITY TAX CODES

The Wyoming Office of Tourism dashboard offers the following county-specific information on tax revenue from six areas: drinking places/alcoholic beverages, full-service restaurants, limited-service eating places, RV parks and recreational camps, special food services, and traveler accommodation:

Year	Total	Accommodations
2021	\$2,438,283	\$1,089,946
2022	\$2,440,637	\$1,044,320
2023	\$2,509,245	\$1,108,204
2024	\$2,545,574	\$1,174,491