

The logo features the words "JOHNSON COUNTY" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. To the right of "COUNTY" is an orange square containing two white stars, one above the other.

JOHNSON COUNTY

Tourism Association

The background of the entire page is a scenic photograph of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, there are green, rolling hills with scattered trees and a small town or village. In the middle ground, there are more hills and a winding road. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with significant snow cover under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Johnson County Tourism Association

Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030

Destination, Mission and Vision

Johnson County truly is the heart of the Wyoming West, where the rolling Great Plains transition seamlessly into the majestic Bighorn Mountains. The historic towns of Buffalo and Kaycee are nestled amidst stunning natural beauty, providing authentic lodging, dining, and shopping. Visitors and residents enjoy the county's Western way of life and abundant outdoor recreation options.

In 2024, an estimated 193,000 visitors spent \$65.3 million in Johnson County, ranking 14th among Wyoming's 23 counties. Travel and tourism accounted for 620 jobs and \$19.3 million in employee earnings. Visitors contributed \$3.4 million in state and local taxes, providing each \$876 in tax relief per Johnson County household.

The Johnson County Tourism Association (JCTA), a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), is responsible for investing lodging tax revenues to develop the county's travel industry for the benefit of county residents.

The JCTA is a joint powers board with appointments from the County Commission and the communities of Buffalo and Kaycee. The organization is funded by a combination of 1) a portion of the statewide lodging tax (equal to a 2% lodging tax) and 2) a 2% local option county lodging tax which is voted on by county residents every four years. Combined, these two revenue sources equal a 4% tax rate applied to the cost of a lodging stay. Johnson County voters successfully passed the 2% local option in November 2024.

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

JCTA Vision: To inspire diverse visitors to view Buffalo and Kaycee as first-rate western destinations by creating and promoting our authentic unique experiences.



Overall Johnson County Direction and Organization Structure

The Johnson County Tourism Association is committed to promoting Johnson County as a leisure and group destination with the highest-caliber staff, providing leadership and innovation for the county’s hospitality industry.

The JCTA provides leadership to the travel industry to sustain a year-round visitor destination that benefits local citizens with jobs and tax revenues. At the same time, the JCTA respects and protects the natural environment, business infrastructure and resident quality of life.

JCTA Board and Staff Focus

The JCTA Board of Directors will be engaged in two primary functions:

1. Provide proper oversight for the function and ROI of the staff’s research-based marketing of Johnson County. Work to maintain DMO best practice budget standards: 50% outreach, 35% staffing, 15% overhead.
2. Fulfill JCTA’s Vision for 2030 in partnership with local governments and economic development groups. The JCTA will foster, facilitate and encourage the growth and development of the destination.

Staff Focus

1. Market Johnson County to visitors.
2. Coordinate the implementation of the Board Vision for the destination.

REPORTING STRUCTURE



The following Strategic plan is a research-based plan based on input from the Johnson County Tourism Association Board of Directors in a planning workshop that took place on October 21, 2025. It was facilitated by Young Strategies and Rudloff Solutions, in partnership with staff from the Wyoming Office of Tourism.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

This Strategic Plan is a road-map that the Johnson County Tourism Association (JCTA) and staff will follow to grow the local travel economy for the benefit of residents and visitors.

The plan demonstrates that the organization has carefully considered its options and established conscious priorities for moving Buffalo, Kaycee and Johnson County forward as a travel destination. Using this Strategic Plan as a guide, Johnson County Tourism Association will develop annual marketing/business plans that describes in tactical detail the actions needed to implement the Strategic Plan's initiatives and how they will be measured.

Market the Destination

The JCTA will continue to aggressively market Johnson County with a brand that celebrates the county's scenic beauty, abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, and western/outlaw history.

A First-Class Destination Marketing Organization

The JCTA strives to be a financially solid, cutting-edge tourism marketing and management organization recognized as an influential county economic development leader.

Visitor Experience Development

The Johnson County tourism brand is built upon the beautiful Bighorn Mountains, exciting western history, and an active, outdoor lifestyle. The JCTA strives to maintain and enhance this natural advantage with its partners.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Annual reviews of this five-year strategic plan will take place in lieu of annual retreats. The annual review takes place with key staff and Board leadership. There is no need for a retreat if the plan implementation is on track, and there are no external factors that change overall strategies and goals. If significant changes are needed, the Board/staff may schedule a retreat to adjust the plan. The JCTA will invest in market research to guide future sales and marketing efforts.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1 Market the Destination

JCTA will continue to aggressively market Johnson County with a brand that celebrates the county’s scenic beauty, abundant outdoor recreation opportunities and Western/outlaw history.

- a) **Implement a new Johnson County brand and advertising** via digital, social, traditional marketing efforts.
- b) **Increase advertising as the budget grows.** Maintain outreach (advertising, marketing, public relations, sales) at 50% or more of JCTA’s total budget.
- c) **Create and follow an annual marketing plan supported by the market research** and by the local travel industry. JCTA will market to markets that match its local attractions, seasonal capacity and partner support.
- d) **Conduct annual market and accountability research** to direct and measure marketing efforts. JCTA will monitor the seasonality of the county’s business and adjust marketing efforts accordingly.
- e) **Deliver on the Johnson outdoor adventure / history brand promise** – a promise that invites visitors to enjoy the uniqueness that makes Johnson County the essence of the Wyoming West.
- f) **Continue to partner with the WY Office of Tourism** and neighboring counties on marketing/PR efforts to reach broader audiences.
- g) **Develop and promote travel during non-summer periods to help keep** businesses and employees active throughout the year.
- h) **Refine marketing grant programs** to further focus on Return on Investment and the times when the County needs additional business.

Measurable Success:

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|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| *Annual marketing plan with trackable ROI | *Advertising/social media metric growth | *Increased visitor spending |
| *Revised marketing grant program | *Increased off-season visitation | * Growth in lodging room demand & ADR |

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Strategic Partnerships and Organizational Excellence

- 2** The JCTA strives to be a financially solid, cutting-edge tourism marketing and management organization recognized as an influential county economic development leader.
- a) **Increase professional** staffing as needed and as revenues grow.
 - b) **Change the Marketing Director’s title to CEO/President** to elevate the position’s stature.
 - c) **Modify JCTA’s name** to remove “association” which connotes a membership organization. Consider using a DBA (“doing business as”) designation such as Explore Johnson County or Johnson County Tourism.
 - d) **Meet the highest standards of financial and ethical accountability.**
 - e) **Maintain/update “best practices” board procedures** (conflict of interest policy, board member training / job descriptions, reserve policy, etc.).
 - f) **Provide off-season training and education for partners** on vital issues affecting the Johnson County hospitality industry (marketing, workforce, etc.).
 - g) **Be the voice of the hospitality industry on the workforce challenges.** Support the efforts of partners addressing this vital issue.
 - h) **Host an annual celebratory meeting** for the hospitality industry to recap the prior year’s accomplishment and prepare for the new year. Provide industry awards to businesses and workers.
 - i) **Continue to communicate updates on JCTA’s activities and accomplishments** to elected officials and residents through presentations to stakeholder groups and other methods. Continue producing the excellent JCTA Annual Report.
 - j) **Advertise within Johnson County** so residents are aware of local attractions and JCTA efforts. The goal is to create local pride and awareness so residents can become community ambassadors in helping to promote the area.

Measurable Success:

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|---|---|----------------------|
| *Successful approval of the 2028 lodging tax election | *Op-Eds in local media about JCTA efforts | *Clean annual audits |
| *Annual report produced and distributed | *Staff retention | |
| *Presentations to elected bodies /civic groups | *Industry training sessions | |

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

3 Visitor Experience Development

The Johnson County tourism brand is built upon the beautiful Bighorn Mountains, exciting Western history, and an active, outdoor lifestyle. The JCTA strives to maintain and enhance this natural advantage with its partners.

- a) **Support new dining and evening entertainment** through JCTA promotions, advocacy, and training efforts.
- b) **Improve & expand history itineraries** that deliver on the brand.
- c) **Determine how to best provide access to scenic and historic attractions** on private land through scheduled tours, visitation times, road turnouts, signage, etc. Work with private landowners, local governments and other partners.
- d) **Create memorable “photo stops”** that allow visitors to easily capture photos to share their Johnson County experiences.
- e) **Constantly review methods for welcoming and providing info to arriving visitors** to encourage longer stays and increased spending. Determine the highest ROI methods going forward (visitor centers, digital tools, etc.) and implement the best options.
- f) **Develop close relationships with the county’s economic development organizations** to increase efficiency, reduce duplications, and work together on problems and opportunities.
- g) **Prioritize the education of visitors on available cellular phone and wi-fi accessibility in rural areas**, and work with economic development and government partners on the importance of improved systems for visitor experience and safety.
- h) **Investigate and encourage new attraction and amenity development** using the Wyoming Office of Tourism’s Destination Development Program and other tools. (Example: targeted wayfinding and informational signs for historic and recreational attractions in rural areas of the county)
- i) **Market and support existing outdoor recreation service and equipment providers** (and encourage new ones) to enhance access to equipment and guide services so visitors can enjoy local recreation options.
- j) **Consider development of a destination master plan.**

Measurable Success:

*Increased dining options
*New tours/visitation options available

*Improved Wi-Fi/Cell Service
*Photo Stops developed

*Dest. Dev. Projects completed
*Destination Master Plan developed

JCTA Strategic Plan Implementation (sample)



**"If you build a place people want to visit,
you build a place where people want to live.
"If you build a place where people want to live,
you'll build a place where people want to work.
"If you build a place where people want to work,
you'll build a place where business has to be.
"And if you build a place where business has to be,
you'll build a place where people have to visit."
—Maura Gast, Irving, TX, CVB and DMAI Chair, July 2009.**