

VOICES OF MONTANA TOURISM LOOKS FORWARD TO 2019

by Dax Schieffer, Director of Voices of Montana Tourism

At the new year, it's a good time to reflect on how the past year went and look ahead to future opportunities. It's also a time to give appreciation, particularly for our partners who make our work possible.

The Montana Lodging & Hospitality Association provides the foundational support for Voices of Montana Tourism which is leveraged with 33 other sponsors. As a team, we provide education and outreach on the value of tourism across all of Montana. Thank you.

In 2018 we presented to 31 different audiences reaching over 1500 people. We traveled to every corner of the state and shared the economic impact data that encourages continued sound policies on supporting promotions, awareness and encouragement to choose Montana for future travel.

We were able to share the message in the spring with a state-wide op ed before the summer rush, across many newspapers, on why we Montanans should appreciate the visitor. It is the visitor and the dollars they bring that supports memorable events, additional flights and quality restaurants that we all get to enjoy.

The Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research released the 2018 preliminary economic impact report counting 12.2 million nonresident visitors arriving in 2018 spending \$3.7 billion. While the number of travelers slightly decreased from 2017, those who did travel spent more, with around a 10% increase in overall spending.

Another metric that gives a snapshot on the lodging industry are the bed tax collections. At this time the public reporting only covers the first three quarters, but between January to September, collections are up 5% from the year before, which was a record.

With a 4th year of steady growth of 5-6 percent increases in state-wide bed tax collections, there are concerning trends when viewing the results by different regions. Generally, the western part of Montana has been increasing collections faster than areas in the eastern part of the state.

There will be focused efforts to address new opportunities to improve the lodging climate and visitor economy for eastern Montana in 2019, Voices will be a proud sponsor of those efforts.

In closing, join me in thanking tireless volunteers who serve on the steering committee for Voices and are members of MLHA. Thank you to Matt Sease, Steve Wahrlich and Stuart Doggett for your leadership on the Voices of Montana Tourism committee.

Here's to a successful 2019 for all of Montana!

Dax Schieffer is the director for Voices of Montana Tourism. Voices' mission is to provide education and outreach on the value of tourism for Montana. Schieffer has been director since 2015 and with the help of partners has grown its program year after year.

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MONTANA LODGING AND HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION 2018 / 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

Matt Sease, Chair – Term expires 2019

Hampton Inn and Suites
6340 Hwy 93 South matt@lamberthotels.com
Whitefish, MT 59937 406-581-8798

Karen Baker, Vice-Chair – Term expires 2019

Grouse Mountain Lodge
2 Fairway Drive kbaker@grousemountainlodge.com
Whitefish, MT 59937 406-863-4716

Tim Giesler, Treasurer – Term expires 2019

Ruby's Inn & Convention Center
4825 N Reserve St. tim.giesler@erckhotels.com
Missoula, MT 59808 406-721-0990

Steve Wahrlich, Past Chair – Term expires 2019

Best Western Plus ClockTower Inn
2511 1st Avenue North sw@bwclocktowerinn.com
Billings, MT 59101 406-325-1732

Directors

Bryce Baker – Term expires 2020

Best Western Golden Prairie Inn & Suites
820 S. Central Ave. goldenprairieinn@midrivers.com
Sidney, MT 59270 406-433-4560

Shelli Mann – Term expires 2019

Boothill Inn & Suites
242 E Airport Rd. shellimann@boothillinn.com
Billings, MT 59105 406-245-2000

Valerie Edwards – Term expires 2019

Springhill Suites by Marriott Bozeman
1601 Baxter Ln valerie.edwards@springhillsuitesbozeman.com
Bozeman, MT 59715 406-586-5200

David O'Connor – Term expires 2019

Buck's T-4 Lodge
PO Box 160279 doconnor@buckst4.com
Big Sky, MT 59716 406-993-5325

Becky Henne – Term expires 2020

Baymont by Wyndham Helena
750 N Fee Street becky@lamberthotels.com
Helena, MT 59601 406-443-1000

Jim Tucker – Term expires 2019

Comfort Suites of Helena
3180 N Washington jimt@townpump.biz
Helena, MT 59601 406-495-0505

Ryan Kunz – Term expires 2020

Lone Mountain Ranch
PO Box 160069 rkunz@lonemountainranch.com
Big Sky, MT 59716 406-995-4644

Joe Wilson – Term expires 2020

Magnuson Hotels Sundowner Inn
PO Box 1080 jgw@rangeweb.net
Forsyth, MT 59327 406-346-2115

Sales & Marketing Council

Erica Kimble, President – Term expires 2020

Hilton Garden Inn – Billings
2465 Grant Rd. erica.kimble2@hilton.com
Billings, MT 59102 406-655-8800

Tina Wiser – Term expires 2019

Hilton Garden Inn – Billings
2465 Grant Rd. tina.wiser@hilton.com
Billings, MT 59102 406-281-9625

Allied Directors

Barbara Moran – Term expires 2020

InnSpace
165 Commons Loop, Suite D barbara.moran@inn-space.com
Kalispell, MT 59901 406-756-9499

Blair Hope (Alternate Allied Director) – Term expires 2020

Procter & Gamble
914 W 420 S hope.b@pg.com
Toole, UT 84074 801-554-0527

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Charlotte Lauerman – Association Coordinator MLHA

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Ad Hoc

Dax Schieffer – Director

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Helena, MT 59624 406-539-1026

THREE DISTINGUISHED MLHA MEMBERS SELECTED FOR AWARDS

2018 MLHA FALL TOURISM CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW AT THE CLARION INN COPPER KING HOTEL & CONVENTION CENTER BUTTE



Matt Sease, General Manager of the Hampton Inn & Suites in Whitefish was selected to receive the prestigious **“Lodging Person of the Year”** award during the association’s Awards Banquet on October 23rd at our annual conference.

Presenting the award to Matt was MLHA board director, Jim Tucker of the Comfort Suites Helena. He detailed Matt’s extensive record of achievements and read portions of his award nomination letter that stated, “Matt is not only the Chair of the MLHA, but he has been a dedicated and effective supporter of this organization for a long time. As a leader of the association, Matt has done a great job of representing the lodging industry both in Montana and at the national level. As well, he is someone that takes the time to share his expertise and mentor others who are new to the business. Thank you, Matt, we appreciate your dedication to your award-winning hotel and to MLHA.”



Matt Sease

market and is now sharing her talents with the Sales and Marketing Council as their incoming Chair. Erica was awarded the 40 under 40 achievers for the Billings Chamber of Commerce in recognition of her achievements at the Hilton Garden Inn. She has grown in her role as the Director of Sales for the Hilton Garden Inn of Billings and strives to bring a high level of excellence to her work each day.”

We wish to congratulate Erica as the recipient of the 2018 “Sales and Marketing Person of the Year” award and for all she has done to advance the Montana lodging and tourism industry.



Erica Kimble

Rounding out the esteemed awards given at MLHA’s award banquet was Dax Schieffer with Voices of Montana Tourism receiving the **“Tourism Friend of the Year”** award. Dax was nominated because of his effective leadership and dedication to educating Montanans about the value of tourism in our state.

Special notes:

- Matt and the Whitefish Hampton Inn & Suites are part of Lambert Hotels based in Missoula, Montana;
- Under Matt’s leadership, the Whitefish Hampton Inn & Suites was a winner of Hilton’s Lighthouse Award in 2017.

From the MLHA Sales & Marketing Council, Erica Kimble of the Hilton Garden Inn in Billings was selected to receive the distinguished **“Sales & Marketing Council Person of the Year”** award at the same Awards Banquet.



Dax Schieffer

Steve Wahrlich, a Voices of Montana Tourism Board Member presented the award to Dax and stated, “Under Dax’s tenure he has taken Voices of Montana Tourism to new levels. Because of Dax the organization is considered an educational leader in providing objective information about tourism values in Montana.” He added, “Dax’s work ethic is commendable. Through his effort he has helped MLHA in our goal to educate Montanans about the immense value a sustainably-grown tourism industry provides for our state.”

Presenting the award to Erica was outgoing MLHA Sales and Marketing Council Chair, Valerie Edwards of SpringHill Suites Bozeman. She had this to offer from those who nominated Erica for the award: “Erica is an enthusiastic representative of the lodging industry and shares her passion daily. She has worked on the success not only of the Hilton Garden Inn, but also the Billings

In his concluding remarks Wahrlich noted, “Dax Schieffer has been a friend to many in the tourism industry and he is someone we are fortunate to have leading us as the Director of Voices of Montana Tourism. Thank you, Dax, and congratulations on being named MLHA’s 2018 Tourism Friend of the Year.”

SALES & MARKETING COUNCIL UPDATE



In October, the Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association concluded the 2018 conference at the Copper King in Butte, MT. During the conference, the MLHA Sales and Marketing Council kicked off the conference with a council meeting where the 2019 June Retreat and the new Vice President were voted on and Erica Kimble from the Hilton Garden Inn Billings was introduced to the council as the new President for a two year term. The final vote for the new Vice President was Melissa Sigmundstad from the Cottonwood Suites in Glasgow, MT. Melissa will move into the role of council president in October 2020. The 2019 June Sales and Marketing Retreat will be at the Cottonwood Inn and Suites in Glasgow, MT on June 2-4.

During the conference, there was an interactive Best Practice Panel by Phil Quigley. This sales break out meeting included a collaboration of teams to use creative thinking for presentations on how to wow decision makers over when going up against competitors. This was a great meeting to share marketing and presentation ideas with other MLHA members.

The MLHA Sales and Marketing Council membership is sitting at 35 active members, with 8 new members.

The council would like to give a warm welcome to our new members: Katie Vaughn; Northern Hotel Billings, Christine Maragos; Northern Hotel Billings, Emily Schroeder; Hilton Garden Inn Kalispell, Heather Ready; Lone Mountain Ranch, Heidi Gilmond; Red Lion Hotel Kalispell, Holly Lucara; Rock Creek Resort, Tyler Uhlenbrauck; Gouse Mountain Lodge, and Quincey Walker; Hilton Garden Inn Missoula. If your property has a sales associate that you would like to become a member of the Sales and Marketing Council, please contact Erica for information on how to register.

Be sure to join the Sales and Marketing Council members for the June retreat with a trip to “the middle of nowhere” in Glasgow, MT. Please look forward to receiving emails with information on how to register for the retreat and vote on the presenters and activities that will be included. If you are not following the MLHA Sales and Marketing Council Facebook Page, please contact Erica or Melissa to receive an invite and to stay up to date with other members and MLHA.

Erica Kimble, President: Erica.Kimble2@hilton.com

Melissa Sigmundstad, Vice President: Melissa@cwimt.net

WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS!

Lodging

- Bob’s Bar, Dining and Motel – Neihart
- Hotel Finlan – Butte
- Residence Inn by Marriot – Billings
- Residence Inn – Missoula
- Roosevelt Hotel Yellowstone – Gardiner
- RSVP Motel – Bozeman
- Sleep Inn / Mainstay Suites – Great Falls
- Staybridge Suites – Missoula
- The Bonanza Inn – Virginia City
- Travelodge by Wyndham – Livingston

Sales & Marketing

- Delta Colonial Hotel – Chantelle McDuffie
- Grouse Mountain Lodge – Tyler Uhlenbrauk

- Hilton Garden Inn Kalispell – Emily Schroeder
- Hilton Garden Inn Missoula – Quincey Walker
- Lone Mountain Ranch – Heather Ready
- Northern Hotel – Katie Vaughn
- Rainbow Ranch Lodge – Kelli Kunz
- Red Lion Hotel Kalispell – Heidi Gilmond
- Rock Creek Resort – Holly Lucera
- TownePlace Suites by Marriot Billings – Becky Meidinger

Allied

- A&E Architechts
- Aire-Master
- Blueprint Managed Business Solutions by TCT
- Chase Merchant Services

MLHA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT RED LION INN & SUITES • POLSON, MONTANA



The Red Lion Inn & Suites in Polson, Montana overlooks Polson and beautiful Flathead Lake, giving our guests unlimited breathtaking views. With 80 standard rooms and suites we are well appointed to provide every guest with a room or combination of rooms to exceed their expectations. Check-in and start your relaxing night by sitting in front of the fireplace while enjoying a glass of wine or cold beer served in our lobby. Finish off the night with the on-site restaurant or one of the many local restaurants within just a few minutes' drive. Following a restful night our Red Lion signature breakfast buffet will start your morning out right as you begin to explore the majestic West.

Our central location between Kalispell and Missoula makes us an ideal spot for meetings, events and weddings. Our diverse Montana event venues are flexible and spacious for any occasion, whether you're hosting a meeting for 5 people or a conference/reception for several hundred. The ballroom can host events up to 200 people comfortably and if you're in town for business travel, our boardroom is a perfect fit for smaller groups up to 12 people. Our meeting and event staff are experienced in providing every item necessary to host an excellent event. We are also happy to facilitate catering for all groups that choose our location.

Minutes from your room you can explore our charming and friendly town. Polson's downtown has many local art studios and excellent shopping opportunities including the local Farmer's Market which is held every Friday from 10am to 1pm, May through September. Stop off at Glacier Brewing for a craft beer before golfing a round at Polson Bay Golf Course. Whether swimming

and fishing on Flathead Lake or browsing through the downtown stores, one afternoon won't be enough in Polson.

Venturing further out on a day trip is a necessity when coming to the Flathead valley. Some of the most beautiful scenery in the continental United States is directly out your window. Flathead Lake is the largest natural lake in the Western U.S. and is almost 30 miles



long, fed by both the Swan and Flathead rivers. With 160 miles of shoreline this area is a photographer's dream. Only an hour away you can experience Glacier National Park's pristine forests, alpine meadows, rugged mountains and spectacular lakes. Boasting over 700 miles of trails, Glacier is a hiker's paradise for adventurous visitors seeking wilderness and solitude. Relive the days of old through historic chalets, lodges, transportation, and stories of Indigenous Culture. On the way back from Glacier National Park or Flathead Lake activities, make sure you inquire with our team members about the local cherry orchards. Flathead Lake is the hidden home of many quality cherry orchards. Visiting one of our many local orchards provides you the opportunity to savor tasty cherries straight off the cherry tree. Don't forget to check out the Polson Main Street Cherry Festival, a celebration for the best-tasting cherries in the West.

From our stunning views and excellent amenities to our fantastic team members helping you plan your excursions, your time with us will be exceptional throughout your stay. We look forward to being your "home" in the Flathead Lake area!

AHLA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF CHIP ROGERS AS PRESIDENT & CEO

AAHOA LEADER BRINGS MORE THAN TWO DECADES OF EXPERIENCE



The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) announced today that William “Chip” Rogers will succeed Katherine Lugar as president and CEO, effective in the new year. Rogers comes to AHLA with more than 20 years of experience and a proven track record of success.

Rogers has served as the president and CEO of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA), the largest U.S. hotel owners association, since 2014. In this role, he led a team of more than 30 staff members with an annual budget of \$15 million, bringing an unprecedented amount of success to the organization. Under his leadership, the AAHOA has grown overall membership by 30 percent and revenue by 62 percent.

In addition to leading the AAHOA, Rogers sits on the board of directors for the United States Travel Association, Community Leaders of America and the California Hotel & Lodging Association. Prior to joining AAHOA, Rogers served in the Georgia General Assembly for 10 years and was unanimously elected as Senate majority leader in 2008 and 2010.

“I am truly grateful for my time at AAHOA and working with the great people who make up the association. I could not be more excited to work with the talented team and outstanding members of the American Hotel & Lodging Association,” said Rogers. “It is a special opportunity to join this industry leading organization. Katherine has established great momentum with a superb team. The recent victories with passage of short-term rental regulations in markets across the country are milestones. With the foundation of success established, I am confident that the AHLA will continue to grow in impact and engagement.”

“We are extremely excited for Chip to join and lead this dynamic organization,” said AHLA Chair Mark Carrier, president of B.F. Saul Company Hospitality Group. “Chip has done an outstanding job at AAHOA, this success is recognized by our stakeholders; brands, owners, management companies, state associations



Chip Rogers


and independents. I have confidence that he will build on that success at AHLA. Under Chip’s leadership, we are well positioned for the future.”

Incoming Chairman Geoff Ballotti, president and chief executive officer of Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, added, “AHLA is in a great position of stability and strength. Our members are engaged, our advocacy efforts are succeeding and –most importantly–we have a talented and dedicated team in place. With nearly two decades of experience

advocating for the hotel industry, Chip will be a fantastic leader and build on our current momentum.”

Rogers was selected after a thorough and comprehensive search conducted over the last several months. An AHLA Search Advisory Group, comprised of the leading CEOs and executives of the major brands, owners and management companies representing a cross-range of the association’s members, conducted numerous in-depth interviews of each candidate. Ultimately, Rogers’ appointment was unanimously approved by the Nominating Committee and Board of Directors.

Coming from AAHOA, Rogers is no stranger to AHLA, as the two organizations have worked hand in glove for many years advocating on behalf of the entire hotel and lodging industry. Both organizations have held joint advocacy days each year for the past several years, and AAHOA’s incoming chairwoman currently sits on AHLA’s board.

Rogers will join an existing AHLA team with a wealth of experience, including Kevin Carey, executive vice president and chief operating officer; Brian Crawford, executive vice president of government affairs; and Rosanna Maietta, president of the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation (AHELFF), and executive vice president of communications and public relations. The appointment of Crawford and Maietta to EVP was announced earlier this week. 

SMITH TRAVEL REPORT



You have probably noticed the Smith Travel Reports look different in recent months. We have a new agreement with STR and although the current report data we provide isn't as detailed, you can still obtain more specific area data.

Through our partnership with STR, you can provide them with your property data and in return receive more detailed information - all completely free. The link to sign up is below.

<https://surveys.str.com/s3/Hotel-Enrollment-Form>



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Smith Travel Research Report for Montana Lodging & Hospitality Association - November 2017 vs November 2018

Month to Month			
Occupancy Percent			
Segment	2018	2017	% Chg
United States	61.7	61.5	0.4
Mountain	59.7	57.1	4.7
Montana	47.4	42.9	10.6

Year to Date			
Occupancy Percent			
Segment	2018	2017	% Chg
United States	67.3	67.0	0.5
Mountain	67.5	67.3	0.3
Montana	60.3	59.9	0.6

Average Room Rate			
Segment	2018	2017	% Chg
United States	124.22	122.79	1.2
Mountain	106.85	105.90	0.9
Montana	85.82	86.70	-1.0

Average Room Rate			
Segment	2018	2017	% Chg
United States	130.23	127.11	2.5
Mountain	119.44	118.47	0.8
Montana	106.67	105.63	1.0

RevPAR			
Segment	2018	2017	% Chg
United States	76.69	75.48	1.6
Mountain	63.83	60.42	5.6
Montana	40.69	37.18	9.4

RevPAR			
Segment	2018	2017	% Chg
United States	87.71	85.17	3.0
Mountain	80.59	79.69	1.1
Montana	64.29	63.25	1.6

Segment	Rev	Avail	Sold
	% Chg	% Chg	% Chg
United States	3.7	2.0	2.5
Mountain	6.7	1.0	5.8
Montana	11.0	1.4	12.1

Segment	Rev	Avail	Sold
	% Chg	% Chg	% Chg
United States	5.0	2.0	2.5
Mountain	2.6	1.5	1.8
Montana	2.7	1.0	1.7

Participation for Statistics

Segment	Properties		Rooms	
	Census	Sample	Census	Sample
United States	54633	33765	5219740	3928257
Mountain	5462	3053	607641	346202
Montana	444	226	29227	19486

Source: Smith Travel Research

HOSPITALITY WILL ENJOY GROWTH IN 2019 BUT SUFFER FROM LABOR ISSUES

by Bambi Majumdar

(This article originally appeared on MultiBriefs.com)



2019 will be a strong year of growth for the hospitality industry. CBRE's 2018 edition of "Hotel Horizons" projects that companies of all sizes will perform well.

Occupancy, which has seen an increase to 66.2 percent in 2018, will receive a further boost from an anticipated 2.1 percent rise in demand. A combination of factors like capital spending, tax-law changes and improved wage growth have affected the industry for the better.

2019 will be the 10th consecutive year of growth. What's not so great is the fact that, despite the robust figures, the industry will experience some major labor challenges. The tight labor market has put a lot of pressure on the owners who express alarm at the lack of labor available.

While the situation is worse in the suburbs than the cities, finding the right talent or retaining has become harder in all markets.

One would imagine that steady growth would result in significant employment figures. What it has done instead is increase the competition for business owners. There are now more jobs than there are people to fill them.

The industry is facing challenges in areas like gender equity, insurance requirements, and controversial political considerations, all of which have affected talent attraction. The strong growth and secure jobs market have made it a challenge to fill entry-level and even mid-level positions right now.

Hotel employees are taking advantage of this unemployment rate to demand changes like increased wages and benefits, job security and better healthcare. They want more job satisfaction since hotels have long been known to be underpaying employers. According to the American Hotel and Lodging Association, hotel owners are trying to change that tone and make paychecks more attractive to their employees.

There is a talent shortage for all levels, but is more so for lower-paying jobs like dishwashers, line cooks and wait staff. Crackdowns on illegal immigrants, many of whom have filled these positions for decades, are also

affecting business.

There is now a concerted effort by the industry stalwarts to pave the way for a temporary visa program for low-skilled, essential workers who hail from the nation's immigrant workforce. They feel that if these temporary visas are granted, it will go a long way to addressing our hiring and retention issue.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are many open jobs, but only 5.3 percent of those are filled. This is the highest level since 2000 and shows how hard it is for hospitality managers to find qualified employees.

There is increasing complexity in hiring and retention, which have added to the pressure. Leading hotels are adding a slew of ancillary positions that focus on improving employee commitment and retention.

Balancing the flexibility that the new generation of workers wants with the traditional needs of the industry is tricky. Human resources leaders who can create and implement flexible and employee-centric scheduling protocols are in demand.

Even in a relatively healthy marketplace, many hotel owners are worried about the inevitable downturn. There has been some discussion about a slowdown in demand, but it hasn't happened yet.

The CBRE report does not forecast a hospitality industry recession through 2022 but does show that the current spate of growth will slow down after 2019. Risk factors like higher interest rates, credit-market problems, equity market corrections, and shrinkage in employment will affect the industry, but experts predict that the economic slowdown will be mild and short.

About the Author: Bambi Majumdar has over 18 years of industry experience in journalism, PR, and marketing communications. She is passionate about bridging the gap between the audience and brands via meaningful content. She has contributed articles to The Economic Times, the leading financial daily of India, among others. She is also active on the board for several business organizations that focus on helping small business owners and women achieve more in their respective fields.

The ROARING 20's

MLHA Fall Tourism
Conference & Tradeshow



WHEN

October 21-23, 2019

WHERE

Hilton Garden Inn Missoula

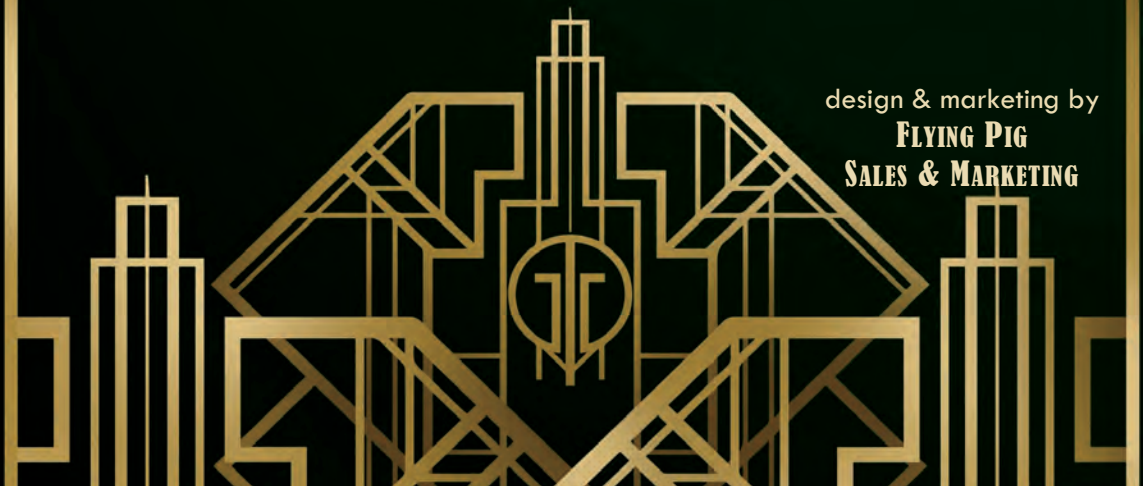
MORE DETAILS

Dust off your flapper dresses, fedoras, and feathers;
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This year's conference features award-winning national speaker Randy Dean, industry-specific training for sales and operations, over 35 vendors, and numerous networking opportunities with all the guys & dolls.

Follow us on our Facebook page for the latest news, speaker bios, videos, and tips for vendors and attendees to get the most out of this educational opportunity.

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Events



FEBRUARY 4, 2019

TAC Meeting in Helena – Delta Hotels
Helena Colonial

OCTOBER 21-23, 2019

MLHA Fall Tourism Conference & Trade
Show – Hilton Garden Inn Missoula

APRIL 14-16, 2019

Governor's Conference on Tourism &
Recreation – Clarion Inn Copper King Hotel
and Convention Center in Butte



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