

From: karen@montanabunkhouses.com
Date: March 12, 2020 at 12:10:23 PM MDT
To: John Hahn <hahnsupply@mt.net>
Subject: RE: Ways to Connect

Yes John, Montana lawmakers have taken some important steps to protect ranchers: <https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/27/1/27-1-726.htm>

The 1993 Montana Equine Law equine activity liability act provides that it is the policy of the state of Montana that a person is not liable for damages sustained by another solely as a result of risks inherent in equine activities if those risks are or should be reasonably obvious, expected, or necessary to persons engaged in equine activities. Of course, liability is not limited by this statute if the owner/operator is not taking steps to make sure tack, facilities, grounds are safe from obvious hazards.

The bigger impact for Broadwater County will likely be the 2015 Sports/Recreation law:
<https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2015/billpdf/HB0204.pdf>

A person who participates in any sport or recreational opportunity assumes the inherent risks in that sport or recreational opportunity, whether those risks are known or unknown, and is legally responsible for all injury or death to the person and for all damage to the person's property that result from the inherent risks in that sport or recreational opportunity.

Before Montana's encompassing recreation law, you had to tip toe around by calling the waiver an "acknowledgement of risks" and now you can flat out call it a "release" and it carries the weight of a release.

As I mentioned on the phone, I'm not in a position to give legal advice but I can tell you what I know and you can take this information to the decision makers (owner and his or her lawyer) who will be developing the release form. One thing that often gets overlooked and will serve as a safety net is the agreement to **local venue** should a dispute arise... just tack this onto forms:

- "In the event of any lawsuit or action arising from or related to my stay at the (name) Ranch, I acknowledge and agree that venue for such action shall be in Broadwater County, Montana."

Because once the guest goes home to New York City (or where ever,) they could start thinking about this or that and come up with creative ways to try to start a case that would clobber the rancher in travel fees if nothing else. If the guest has to come back to Townsend to present his or her case to a local judge with common sense, you are on good footing.

Sounds like you have a seasoned crew on deck with BCDC...a lot of shared history over decades. That is great because now you can develop a sense of urgency and build on what you already have. Please, just take my conversation of name-changes with a grain of salt. However, if you had ask for my advice I would have said try to work the word "Montana" into your name. The Montana Office of Tourism has done an excellent job of branding the word Montana ... you want to hitchhike on that. And so if you can work the name Montana into your name, that would be really beneficial. Not Missouri. Work Montana into the name or tag line. That will be the job of your marketing person ... maybe "Broadwater County ... where Montanans come to relax" ... OK, so that did not really do it ... but you get my drift. Work Montana into the name and marketing materials.

We can continue to visit in regards how much you'd like me to be involved. I'm sure willing to talk to you folks to brainstorm on what that would look like down the road. (As you said, after you gain consensus.) For now, I'll just offer suggestions from the sidelines and you see how the ranch end of things take shape.

Onward and upward,
Karen

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From: John Hahn [<mailto:hahnsupply@mt.net>]
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 9:13 AM
To: karen@montanabunkhouses.com
Subject: Re: Ways to Connect

Karen,
Thanks so much for all your input!
You have provided so much more than I anticipated which is a very good thing.
As for the Governor's tourism conference, I'm sure we have had board members attend though I have not. We have been involved with tourism in a big way over the past years as BCDC has been in existence since '80's or '90's. We have looked at Philipsburg a few times as a model, again some members have been there but not me. I'm not a big traveler. We have done quite a bit to improve the looks of Townsend and have more to do.

You have provided much to think about and I found out today that I have a meeting today where we will be discussing these thoughts and ideas. I texted with the chairman of the group Missouri Valley Marketing, and he indicated that they will be discussing my ideas on the Co-op. I'll call it that until we decide on something different. I was calling it Missouri Valley Adventures Co-op.

Hypothetically thinking, if we get to the point of getting something like this going in Broadwater County, would you be interested in being part of it? Maybe in the capacity of managing the ranch end of it? Again we would be a ways out on getting past the initial logistics of all of this and depending on general consensus.

Also your information on the Montana Equine Law and Sports and Activities liability issues is huge for me. To me, the insurance liability was a major stumbling block in the implementation of an undertaking of this magnitude. Thank you so much for this.

John
Sent from John Hahn

On Mar 11, 2020, at 1:50 PM, karen@montanabunkhouses.com wrote:

Hi John,

We covered a lot of ground on the phone and I've been thinking more about considerations that might be helpful.

1. Here is the link to the Governor's Tourism Conference in Billings next month. If your group is not already well-represented at this meeting, you should be.
2. Phillipsburg. Talk about a small town that has put itself on the map! There are a few movers and shakers in that town and if you have not talked to them, you'll want to.
3. AirBnB booking site. I know I spoke disparagingly about AirBnB ... and if all you want to do is have a few home owners rent out a room or a guest house, they are definitely an option. I should have clarified a little more why I'm not a fan of AirBnB for hosts:
 - a. As I said, for guests, they are great ... for example in today's Corona scare they will refund 100%, no questions.
 - b. For hosts, you give away your control. You can't have a policy for deposits being transferrable but not refundable. You have to follow AirBnB policies. You can't talk directly with your guests before they book ... to see if what you offer is a good fit.
4. Story. To develop the kind of marketing that will do the amazing community of Townsend justice ... you want to tell your story. The experience that they never knew they always wanted to do? Townsend, Montana! That story barely makes it into the fine print on AirBnB.
5. Farm Stay USA. <https://farmstayus.com/> We've been going 10 years. I'll attach mission/vision and 2019 strategic planning. The difference is **we are a referral platform tailored to agri-tourism** ... not a booking site. So you don't have to pay a percentage.
 - a. I mentioned that we are holding a retreat in Oregon this coming weekend. We are talking about the possibility of collaboration with YONDER ... the newest outfit on the horizon. Maybe they will be a good fit...I'll have a better idea after this weekend. Personally (as representative for Montana Bunkhouses Working Ranch Vacations) I am not interested in any marketing or booking platform that does not let me talk to the guests before they book. I want to build the relationship and shape expectations.

OK ... that's what's on my mind today.

And I'll have Townsend on my mind this weekend at the meeting.

If you think it might be helpful, I could ask the Executive Director and the other board members if we could extend a substantial first-year membership discount to individual members of Broadwater County Development Initiative. (I'm not stuck on Cooperative with a big-C ... The LLC is easier to set up and easier to dissolve it the time comes. but I'm big on cooperative with a little-c and so I took the liberty of renaming for the sake of discussion.) Anyway, you can think about that and let me know if it is worth pursuing.

Kind regards,
Karen

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From: Montana Tourism Conference [<mailto:tourismconference@announcements.mt.gov>]

Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 10:05 AM

To: karen@montanabunkhouses.com

Subject: Ways to Connect at the Governor's Conference



Ways to Connect at the Governor's Conference

Meals & Breaks

This year's conference meals and breaks provide plenty of opportunity to meet, mingle and munch. Stretch your legs between breakout sessions and mealtimes as the conference agenda is split between two downtown Billings locations – each within walking distance from the other.

Exhibitors | DoubleTree Third Floor

Connect with this year's exhibitors during conference breaks. Meet representatives from various sectors that provide services, products and support to the tourism and recreation industries.

Tourism Award Dinner | Northern Hotel Grand Ballroom

The annual Montana Tourism Awards recognize the outstanding accomplishments of the people, businesses, organizations and communities that strengthen Montana's tourism and recreation industries and thereby contribute to maximizing its economic impact for Montana residents.

Join us for the Monday night dinner for some great networking.

Network Industry Breakouts | Tuesday Morning

These popular breakout sessions bring together partners in various sectors of the tourism and recreation industries to connect and discuss timely topics, concerns, challenges and opportunities in an interactive and informal round table format. Beyond the traditional industry breakouts, this year two more have been added to discuss specific topics. If there are multiple attendees from the same business or organization, feel free to attend different sessions.

See the full conference agenda on our website.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Register for the Conference

Join us for the Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation in Billings, Montana on April 26-28, 2020.

Bringing together tourism and recreation leaders from every corner of the state continues to elevate these industries by **inspiring** innovation, **educating** through on-the-ground insights, **connecting** partners across the state, and **experiencing** all that the host city has to offer.

Register now for the special price of \$229. Prices increase on April 1, 2020.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Lodging

Limited rooms are available at the host sites: the [Northern Hotel](#) | 406.867.6767 and the [DoubleTree by Hilton Billings](#) | 406.252.7400. Please call hotels directly for assistance and be sure to identify yourself as a conference attendee when making reservations.

Other hotels in the area:

Best Western Plus Clocktower Inn | 406.259.5511

Best Western Plus Kelly Inn & Suites | 406.256.9400

Home2Suites by Hilton Billings | 406.252.2255

Homewood Suites by Hilton Billings | 406.656.0525



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