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or  
*Live*  
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*Dream!*

**M**ontana has magnetism, an attraction for none and all, whether you dream of vast acreages with herds of cattle or crystal-clear streams and spectacular mountains.

Because of the state's size and cultural and geographic diversity, there is no dream that cannot be realized in Montana. The best of all worlds is centered in South Central Montana—the Yellowstone River Valley.

South Central Montana is the northern gateway to Yellowstone National Park and the corridor that links the prairie to the east to the Rocky Mountain Range. The northern entrance to Yellowstone, the only entrance open year round to vehicular traffic, is the original entrance to the park and is commemorated by the stone Teddy Roosevelt Arch in the town of Gardiner. In its earliest days, Yellowstone National Park and guest ranches in surrounding areas quickly became vacation destinations for travelers from the east, and the tradition of western hospitality was born. The Yellowstone River itself blazes the trail from the mountains to the prairie and together with its many tributaries draws anglers from around the world. The 671-mile-long river is trout-choked and is the longest undammed river in the lower 48 states.





History, recent and ancient, abounds here. This is the territory of explorers Lewis and Clark, mountain men Jim Bridger and Jeremiah “Liver-Eating” Johnson, westward migration trailblazer John Bozeman and the great Crow Indian nation. Here, you can explore museums, dig for pre-historic dinosaurs, minerals and gems and explore the pioneer settlements and culture of a century ago.

Nestled under the watchful gaze of the Crazy Mountains to the northwest and the Absaroka Mountains to the south is the well-located, sophisticated, yet ranch-oriented town of Big Timber. From here, one can travel into such diversity as national parks and forests, streams and rivers, mountain ranges and ski resorts, ghost towns, historic mines and mining towns, and yet still be home for dinner. Nowhere





is there a more inviting, multi-dimensional place than Big Timber, Sweet Grass County, Montana. And how could the name of a place possibly be more inviting? Big Timber, named after the giant cottonwood trees that line the Yellowstone River, noted by William Clark, and Sweet Grass, a spicy vanilla-smelling grass that permeates the area.

Rooted in cattle, sheep and wool, mining, guest ranching, proximity to the Yellowstone River and as a stop on the then-expanding Northern Pacific railroad, Big Timber teems with Old West character. Still a successful agricultural community today, Big Timber once exported more wool than any other city in the United States. In addition, the most incredible hunting and fishing abound in this area. The pursuit of all that nature and Montana have to offer is centralized in this turn-of-the-century town.

For almost a century and a half, pioneers have settled here, while others have passed through on their way to the pursuit of other dreams farther west. Rumbling across the plains in modern-day covered wagons, people today come to South Central Montana and other western destinations following the pioneer trails of yesterday. Some

of these trails, such as the Bozeman Trail, are on the National Register of Historic Places. With a population of 3,609 in the county and 1,650 in town (2000 census), there is room to breathe in Big Timber and Sweet Grass County. 1,862 square miles of scenic terrain in the county yield only 1.95 people per square mile. By comparison, New York City has 26,403 people per square mile (2000 census).

Only in South Central Montana can you be “way far out” and yet be so well located to major airports, sophistication in many forms and the values and benefits that go hand in hand with the small town lifestyle found in Big Timber. Pleasant one-hour journeys can place you in a variety of locations, including: Yellowstone National Park; any one of three ski resorts; universities in Bozeman or Billings; Metra Park in Billings, host of major rodeo events and other expositions; diverse big game hunting, wing-shooting and blue ribbon fishing; many “dude” ranches, guest cabins, resorts and genuine working ranches; and any one of over 20 golf courses.

Nowhere has one place been so generously endowed with such variety, beauty and down-to-earth America as Big Timber. Big Timber is

blessed with a peaceful, but dynamic lifestyle, business opportunities and the gifts of nature. Western hospitality is still at large in the Big Timber area. Old traditions blend with new comers and new activities. As many others do, Crow Chief Arapooish in 1825 considered the region “exactly the right place.” “While you are in it, you fare well; whenever you go out of it, whichever way you may travel, you fare worse.” What more needs to be said? There is no need for a catchy slogan or overused cliché. Big Timber is real—honest. If you want to be a part of tradition and heritage, just be left alone, be a preservationist or conservationist, this could be your place. ❖



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