

NEWS RELEASE

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Promotion Boosts Restaurant Beef Sales and Staff Spirits

Promotional partnership grew beef demand and goodwill for Montana restaurants during COVID-19 by bringing comfort food to the family dinner table

BILLINGS, MONTANA – The Montana Beef Council (MBC) executed a promotional partnership that allowed many restaurants to boost sales while customers enjoyed discounted beef menu items during the statewide lockdown. During a two-week promotion, nearly 20 restaurants from all across Montana participated in the “half-off beef promotion” that allowed them to discount their beef menu items for one day only, and the MBC picked up the tab for the other half of all the beef sales.

“After the mandated social distancing guidelines, my mother-in-law, Valerie, and I felt disheartened about the future in food service, said Liz Carr, owner and operator of Tall Boys Tavern in Hobson. “While we put together various promotions to bring in customers, the Montana Beef Council’s partnership drew the most patrons we had seen in the two weeks since COVID-19 precautions closed our dining room! What a gift to participate with the Montana Beef Council.”

In one of their response efforts to the COVID-19 crisis, the MBC Board of Directors committed a limited amount of funding towards the partnership and the promotion filled up quickly. For each beef meal that was purchased, the MBC reimbursed the restaurant for half of the price and the customer enjoyed the meal at half of the cost. The partnership generated 2,400 pounds of beef sales and stimulated community restaurants beyond their expectations.

The phone did not stop ringing for the participating restaurants, and some had to take the phone off the hook or pause online ordering just to catch up with their orders. One customer reported that their phone log showed they tried calling their favorite restaurant 100 times trying to place an order. Another restaurant was only open from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and they sold 226 pounds of beef. The flurry of activity in one community even caused local law enforcement to check in on the situation.

“As I monitored the progress of each restaurant’s event, the response was incredible and heartwarming,” said Chaley Harney, Montana Beef Council executive director. “Many restaurants had such an overwhelming response that they sold out of beef, some in a matter of hours. It was incredible to see the response in each of the communities and the ripple effect of support during these challenging times.”

The participating restaurants reported a boost in employee morale and enjoyed the opportunity to be busy. This was a welcome stress compared to the worries brought on by COVID-19 closures which resulted in some restaurants closing operations altogether. Restaurant patrons safely filled curbsides, sidewalks and waiting areas to support the promotion that ran from April 10-25.

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Montana Beef Council is organized to protect and increase demand for beef and beef products through state, national and international consumer marketing programs thereby enhancing profit opportunities for Montana beef producers.