

20th AVA Biennial Convention in Billings
By Sherry Sayers

Planning is underway for the AVA's 20th Biennial Convention in Billings, Montana, June 7-9, 2017. We have planned two pre-convention walks, three convention walks in Billings, and two post-convention walks, plus a swim and bike event that will be available anytime.

The convention hotel is the Billings Hotel and Convention Center located at 1223 Muldowney Lane, exit 446 off I-90. The hotel is locally owned and presents a great feel of being in Montana, with overstuffed leather armchairs, wonderful art and down-home friendliness.

We have opened it up for reservations using the **Special Code AVA617**. Nights are available from Tuesday through Friday, June 6-9, 2017. The room rate is \$89 + room taxes (no sales tax in Montana, but you know government!). There are only 200 rooms for our group available on Wednesday and Thursday, and 100 on Tuesday and Friday. The hotel is pet friendly (\$25), but has no elevator. They have waterslides in the pool (will that count as distance for the swim event?), a lounge and a cafe.



Go to www.billingshotel.net for more information on the amenities available during our stay and to make your reservation. You can also call them, 406-248-7151 or 1-800-537-7286. Note, breakfast is not included, but they have a wonderful cafe available.

There are numerous other lodging alternatives in Billings, as well as an abundance of restaurants, coffee shops, Rimrock Mall, Cabela's, museums, ZooMontana and 36 miles of hiking trails, which include the Yellowstone River, Swords Rimrock Trail high above the city on the bluffs and many other points of interest. There are three campgrounds available. Check out Billings at VisitBillings.com.

Billings' elevation is 3,567 feet. The average temperature is 32 degrees in January and 86 degrees in July. Average snowfall is 56 inches. Locals joke that "you can ski, golf and fish all in the same day." Surrounding Billings are three refineries that produce 180,000 barrels of oil a day that is distributed to nine western states. Agriculture is the #1 industry in Montana, with wheat, corn, barley and sugar beets the main crops raised.

Even though Billings is the largest city in Montana, it is a small town (104,000), but has all the amenities to host our convention. Billings is served by Allegiant, Alaska Air, Delta, United and Cape Air Airlines. Go to flybillings.com to make your arrangements. If you are driving, we are recommending you start your journey at Crazy Horse the first weekend in June, then head over to Buffalo, Wyoming for the first pre-convention walk on Monday, June 5.

Stay tuned for more information in *The American Wanderer* and on our web site, <http://2017AVAConvention.org> for updates as they become available or send an email to info@2017AVAConvention.org.

Hope to see you there!