

A Wild and Woolly Welcome to the Convention Kick-Off Event in Buffalo, WY

Dust off your cowboy boots, polish your spurs, don your Stetson, and break out the fiddle too! Then sign up for the opening event of the 20th Biennial AVA Convention taking place in Buffalo, WY – a walk along beautiful Clear Creek on the Mentock Trail. The trail system in and around Buffalo is one of the local treasures, and the western experience and hospitality of Buffalo itself is another.

While Buffalo features all the conveniences of a modern city, it maintains the feel of a true old western town. Studded with historical landmarks dating back to the 1800s, the Occidental Hotel sets the tone for Main Street. Walking through the door, visitors feel as if they have stepped into the 1800s, and evidence of all the legendary Old West characters who stayed at the Occidental over the years - Calamity Jane, Ernest Hemingway, Teddy Roosevelt and President Herbert Hoover, to name a few - is chronicled on the hotel walls in photos and historical letters.

The Occidental is as lively today as it was in the past, and its owner, Dave Stewart, is offering a special Sunday edition of its very popular Thursday night jam on Sunday, June 4th, especially for the AVAers who will be in town. An accomplished singer, songwriter, and musician himself, Dave brings strummers, crooners, and fiddlers together for lively entertainment - and you're invited to join in the fun. Even on Sunday night, great food and a wide range of beverages are on tap at the hotel and at other Buffalo restaurants including Pie Zanos (authentic Italian cuisine), Clear Creek Cantina (a taste of Mexico), and the Bozeman Steakhouse. So mosey into town hungry!

Western history buffs won't want to miss the Jim Gatchell Museum (located right downtown) which is offering free tours to AVA visitors on Sunday and Monday (June 4th and 5th). The museum houses a wide variety of Indian artifacts, pioneer and battlefield history of the area, and even (some would say) a ghost from days of yore. Also well documented at the museum is the colorful history of the Basque people who came to this area as sheep herders and have added much to the cultural diversity of this part of the west.

Since Buffalo has three AVA sanctioned trails within the city limits, try to fit in two other scenic and historically relevant volksmarches during your stay. On the Heritage Park Trail, you can follow the "Bloody Bozeman", the route pioneers and gold seekers traveled to seek their fortunes, many meeting their maker along the way. A visit to Willow Grove Cemetery, where gravestones mark the resting place of famous local heroes and villains, is also part of the Heritage Park Trail experience. On the Clear Creek Trail you'll learn about railroad history and Fort McKinney, but also be introduced to town features such as the free community pool, the public skate board park and more.

Although Longmire Days, a celebration of Craig Johnson's Longmire series of novels and the hit TV show the books inspired, isn't until the first weekend in July, Longmire fans will enjoy walking down the streets of the fictionalized town of Durant, WY. And bring your Longmire books along as Craig Johnson lives only 14 miles away and might be on hand right here in "Durant" to autograph them for you.

A wide variety of comfortable lodging options are available in town, so make reservations today. Western hospitality abounds in Buffalo and this kick-off event will be the perfect start to the 20th AVA Biennial Convention.