



2012-2013 ANNUAL REPORT



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



What a year it's been! Visit Mendocino County continues to work hard to bring more visitors to our spectacular county. We can only be successful with your participation and partnership with our programs and initiatives. Thank you!

Travel and tourism continues to be one of the most significant industries for our destination. Close to 5,000 people are employed at a visitor serving business. Visitors pay over \$20 Million annually in taxes to help our community thrive, spending over \$300 Million while they are here. It is our mission to work with you, our partners, to continually increase these numbers year over year.

In the following pages, you will get a glimpse of the many activities VMC has undertaken to put "heads in beds". Our team is dedicated to increasing our effectiveness and efficiencies with everything we do. Our success is largely due to your successes within your own businesses and organizations. We are so appreciative of all that you do to make Mendocino County a premier destination and one that brings visitors back year after year. What you do matters.

Our doors are always open. There are so many ways you can get involved in what we do to inspire visitors to come to our destination. From attending trade shows, to informing us of specials, events, packages and promotions to sharing the latest news from your business – your participation, the experience you offer, is what makes Mendocino County such a special place to visit.

New this year is an integrated marketing calendar. Copies are available either online, in either of our two offices in Fort Bragg and Ukiah or we can mail one directly to your home or business. This calendar is a great way to know what we are up to on a monthly basis so your promotional efforts can benefit from our promotional efforts.

Should you have questions, suggestions or feedback for any on our team, please let us know. We look forward to being your "Inspiration Highway" for years to come and are so grateful for the opportunity.

With much gratitude and warmest regards,

Scott Schneider

President & CEO, Visit Mendocino County, Inc.

ADVERTISING

- Nearly 45 million (11% over goal) advertising impressions from placement in print, radio, outdoor and online vehicles.
- Reached 12,277 leads, 20% above goal.
- Promoted the Visit Mendocino County brand and events through ads in *Sunset Magazine*, Visit California's Visitors Guide, *San Francisco Travel's* Visitors Guide, San Francisco Bay Area outdoor billboards and radio (KGO and KCBS), online banners, and a Facebook campaign. A number of these ads were opened up to partners as co-operative opportunities.
- Ran radio advertising campaigns in support of key events and promotions during the fall and spring. Two months of radio advertising on KGO and KCBS garnered 4,755,000 impressions, reaching 26% of the market with frequency. In addition, VMC messaging was included in station fan newsletters, in streaming spots, in contest promotions and in online advertising. Baechtel Creek Inn, The Beachcomber, Little River Inn and Stanford Inn each made additional investments in the radio program that increased the impressions for the overall destination campaigns.
- Participated in *Sunset* Sweepstakes, generating 3,496 leads.
- Launched a month long "31 Days of Giveaways" promotion, creating a daily Mendocino County prize package giveaway targeted at San Francisco Bay Area consumers and supported by radio and online advertising, and VMC social media outlets. Resulted in almost 900 new email leads, over 10,000 website visits, 500 new Facebook fans, and over 124,000 Facebook impressions.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE

- Reached 20,000 Fans on Facebook, engagement rates continue to grow.
- Completed content project, gathering information and photographs for more than 800 visitor-facing businesses
- Consumer mailing list passed 25,000 subscribers.
- Launched iPhone app in tandem with Trazzler/OpenPlac.es, populating with more than 600 visitor-facing businesses.
- Website had 139,257 unique visitors; the five top keywords were Mendocino, Mendocino CA, Mendocino County, Mendocino California, and Visit Mendocino; our top traffic sources are: Google (55%), direct type-ins (18%), and Yahoo (3%); our top pages are: front page (15%), Festivals & Events (5%), Lodging (2.5%). The 31 Days of Giveaways received 10,636 unique pageviews alone.
- The new website project is underway with an expected launch in January 2014. Keep posted for more information.

VISITOR SERVICES

- Provided funding to assist in keeping South Coast visitor center open.
- Distributed over 100,000 county materials including tear off maps, wine maps, event calendars, pet-friendly guides, meeting guides countywide.
- Informational kiosks established at Noyo Harbor, Fort Bragg and Solar Living Institute (Real Goods), Hopland.
- Set up informational kiosk at County offices in Ukiah.
- Installed second gateway sign on Highway 20, visitor kiosk operating in Boonville.
- Hosted inland and coastal Customer Service workshops with about 40 businesses and organizations attending from wineries, lodging, retail, finance, and transportation.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Placed more than 100 Mendocino County stories in print, broadcast and internet media, resulting in \$10 million dollars in comparable advertising value 250 million consumer impressions (200% of goal).
- Directly recruited 50 members of the media (editors, producers, bloggers and freelancers) to visit Mendocino County and distributed 36 press releases on various topics to local, regional, national, and international press, resulting in dozens of media placements.
- Recruited a group of high-profile members of the media to serve on the judging panel at the 2012 Beer, Wine & Mushroom Festival. Judges included representatives from *Saveur*, *Weekly Pint*, *Practical Winery & Vineyard Journal*, *Far West Fungi* and *DRAFT Magazine*.
- Recruited high-profile members of the media to serve on the judging panel at the 2013 Crab, Wine & Beer Festival. Judges included representatives from *Every Day with Rachael Ray*, *Wine & Spirits Magazine*, *San Francisco*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *All About Beer* and *Wine Enthusiast*.
- Coordinated a highly successful media deskside tour in New York, and hosted our first-ever Mendocino County winemaker dinner. Met with

editors and producers from *Travel + Leisure*, *Coastal Living*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Food & Wine*, *Elite Traveler*, *Wine Spectator*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Every Day with Rachael Ray*, *Bon Appétit*, *Facilities & Destinations*, *Wine & Spirits*, *BRIDES*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The New Yorker*, and *TODAY*.

- Attended the Visit California San Francisco Media Reception, the Bay Area Travel Show, the NCAA Concierge event, a National Geographic sponsored media event in San Francisco and the Cuisine Noir Summer 2013 Launch Party, and hosted a booth at the Chocolate Festival in Ghirardelli Square.
- Mailed the Visit Mendocino County calendar, along with a personalized letter, to over 300 local, regional, and national media contacts.
- Wrote and submitted comprehensive Magellan award entry for VMC (category: In-Destination Visitor Information Program); Wrote and submitted entry for Nat Geo Traveler Best of 2014 Nominations (going for one of 20 chosen destinations); Assisted in submitting both Skunk Train and Chandelier Tree as contenders for Virtual Tourist's "8th Wonder of the World" contest.
- Generated media awareness and coordinated press attendance and media coverage for the third annual





"Taste of Mendocino" event in San Francisco. The event was attended by more than 70 prominent Bay Area media, such as Anneli Ruffus from *Huffington Post*, Terry Adams from KGO-AM, Mark Hertsgaard, writer for NPR, *Time & Vanity Fair*, Aidin Vaziri from *San Francisco Chronicle* and Linda Zavoral from *San Jose Mercury News*.

- Coordinated multiple television and radio segments, including *Good Day Sacramento* on CBS-owned KMAX-TV, *CBS This Morning Saturday* with Peter Greenberg, Globo TV (the equivalent of CNN in Brazil) and *On the Go* with John Hamilton on KGO-AM.
- Pitched and placed multiple local, regional, national, and international news features in media outlets such as *Wine Enthusiast*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, NBC Bay Area, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, *Travel + Leisure*, *DRAFT Magazine*, *AFAR.com*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Sunset*, *Bottlenotes* "The Daily Sip", AirTran's *GO Magazine*, *California Home & Design*, *Northbay Biz*, *Sonoma Family Life*, *MSN.com*, *Sacramento*, *Wine Spectator*, *CBS This Morning Saturday*, *On the Go* with John Hamilton, *enRoute* (in-flight magazine for Air Canada), *San Francisco*, *Marina Times*, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, *Fodors.com*, *VIA*, *Coastal Living*, *7x7*.

Travel and Tourism is a key industry throughout Mendocino County. In today's economic climate, we all have to do whatever we can to keep this industry strong. Here is some information to help showcase this important industry and the role VMC plays in keeping it strong:

- Promotional efforts serve several hundreds of businesses throughout the County employing close to 5,000 people with total earnings of \$118 million annually.
- General County Fund is approx. \$58 million; Tax revenues from Tourism are \$7.2 million – a 5% increase over 2010.
- Tourism revenue brings in approximately \$561.47 of tax relief per household.
- Annual Countywide travel spending is \$314 million – a 5% increase over 2010.
- VMC received the following awards in 2012:
 - North American Travel Journalist Association Silver award for our visitor guide
 - Travel Weekly Silver Magellan Award for the Crab, Beer & Wine Festival
 - Southeastern Tourism Society "Forty for the Future"

SALES

- Successful in booking over 1,000 room nights by groups and individuals at numerous county hotels.
- Facilitated numerous contracts between county hotels and tour operators to bring future groups and individual travelers to the county.
- In partnership with NCTC attended International PowWow, GoWest, and National Tour Association meeting with international and domestic tour operators.
- In partnership with Visit California, participated in sales missions to Canada and Los Angeles.
- Hosted a booth at consumer trade shows; Bay Area Travel Show; Sunset Celebration Weekend; and Los Angeles Adventure Expo serving close to 10,000 potential visitors.
- Received Gold medal for booth at California State Fair.
- Working with many tour operators and receptives interested in creating packages and tours to Mendocino County in 2014.
- Hosted French FAM tours; participated in reception for Chinese tour operators.



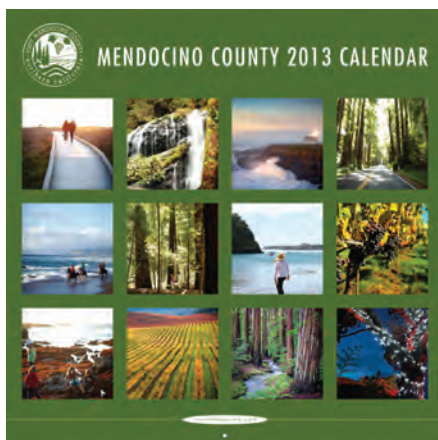
EVENTS

- Collaborated with numerous businesses and organizations, including Mendocino Film Festival and Mendocino Music Festival, to conceptualize and promote events countywide.
- Increased events and passport participation at both the Crab, Wine & Beer Festival and Mushroom, Wine & Beer Festival by double digit percentages.
- Held 2nd Annual Where the Earth is First Festival and worked with olive oil producers to plan olive oil event for 2014 festival.
- Worked with Mendocino County Museum to conceptualize the Willits Kinetic Carnivale.
- Worked with Fort Bragg non-profit to produce Bison, Beer & Bluegrass Festival in October 2013.
- Continued collaboration with the Mendocino County Museum on their sponsorship of the Mushroom, Wine & Beer Train.
- Provided content for Visit California website; sent out bi-monthly calendars; kept VMC event and festival listings up to date; submitted events to VIA magazine and other regional publications and websites.



OPERATIONS

- Visitor Guide received a Silver award from the North American Travel Journalists Association.
- Distributed 50,000 2012–2013 Visitor Guides to visitor centers throughout N. California as well as potential visitors throughout the US.
- Board of Supervisors unanimously approved 2013–2014 BID annual report committing to another year of investment into countywide marketing – this is about an 8% re-investment of unincorporated Bed Tax funds. For the 7th year in a row, the BID renewal received zero opposition.
- Continued to administer the Mendocino County Lodging Association, Mendocino County Promotional Alliance and the North Coast Tourism Council (NCTC).
- Moved the office into a larger, more visible space in downtown Fort Bragg. This new space allows for more concierge-type guest services and also provides space for retail opportunities and featured local artists and vendors.
- Developed and distributed the first annual 2013 Mendocino County wall calendar and distributed to media and trade worldwide.
- Launched Jack Rabbit online booking system.
- Hosted monthly First Friday events featuring local artists and wineries with about 200 people attending each event.
- Initiated Destination Management Executive and organization accreditation through Destination Marketing Association International.



PARTNERSHIPS (Community Relations)

- Partnered with San Francisco Travel, Visit California, Shasta Cascade, North Coast Tourism Council (NCTC), and numerous other county DMOs on highlighting Mendocino County as a national and international destination.
- Continued to collaborate with hundreds of businesses and organizations throughout the county to increase the effectiveness of marketing.
- Attended business showcases in Fort Bragg and Ukiah as well as various Chamber mixers.
- Partnered with Mendocino Winegrowers Inc. to coordinate Taste of Mendocino in San Francisco.



Taste of Mendocino, June 2013



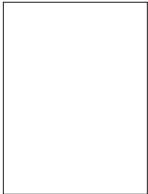


WE ARE...

THE INSPIRATION HIGHWAY



VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY, Inc.
345 N. FRANKLIN STREET
FORT BRAGG, CA 95437



THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO GET INVOLVED...

SALES & VISITOR SERVICES *Contact Richard Strom richard@visitmendocino.com*

- Volunteer at one or more of the trade and consumer shows throughout the year.

- Produce specials and packages to be sold o tour operators, media and travel agents.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS *Contact Jen Filice jen@visitmendocino.com*

- Respond to our promotional, cooperative advertising, and annual opportunities including print and online advertising,

seasonal and specific promotions, and the VMC Visitor Guide.

- Provide timely information on events, openings and new developments to be included in press releases and media pitches.

EVENTS & FESTIVALS *Contact Alison de Grassi alison@visitmendocino.com*

- Participate in our Countywide Festivals. There are many opportunities to take part! We can help with

planning a festival or event.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA *Contact Brendan McGuigan brendan@visitmendocino.com*

- List your business on our website and let us know about your news so we can spread the word.

EVERYTHING ELSE *Contact Scott Schneider scott@visitmendocino.com*

- We want to hear from you, so don't hesitate to contact us.

Visit www.visitmendocino.com or email info@visitmendocino.com
for news, events, information, and much more!

1.866.466.3636

WWW.VISITMENDOCINO.COM

