

Mendocino County Lodging Business Improvement District 2024-2025 Annual Report

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SUBMITTED TO THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
APRIL 4, 2024

Executive Summary from the BID Advisory Board Chair:

This report is generated annually by the BID Advisory Board (a five-member board of lodging owners/operators) as part of the renewal process and contains info regarding the past, present and future of our Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) known as Visit Mendocino County (VMC), and related governing bodies. Listed are accomplishments, metrics, and plans for improvement. As one of the many checks & balances, this report provides a source for stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of our DMO in order to draw the best direct line between the actions of the DMO and how it benefits our economy, businesses, and livelihoods.

In addition to the measured accomplishments of the past fiscal years and current year, this report provides future goals and an operational budget for the upcoming fiscal year (FY). The budget listed is an estimate of the expected BID funds collected by the lodging owners. Quarterly those funds are provided to the County who then in turn passes them through to VMC.

It's crucial to highlight that, unlike previous years, the County of Mendocino will not provide any match or financial contribution. In 2022, during contract hearings, Mendocino County discussed the funding allocated to Visit Mendocino County (VMC), as the General Fund/County budget could not sustain the organization's growth. The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors informed VMC in 2023 that they would not have any funds available to support tourism marketing.

To tackle this challenge, VMC is collaborating with Civitas Advisors to establish a new "tourism marketing district" (TMD) under the 1994 law. This would provide a 5-year contract with the county, although the new TMD would still not receive any financial support from Mendocino County. However, if successfully passed, the TMD could serve as a self-sustaining vehicle by increasing the lodging assessment from 1% to 2%, with a potential automatic increase in year 3. Additionally, it may include assessments on attractions and winery direct-to-consumer sales to diversify funding sources.

Lastly, this report contains recommendations actionable by both MCTC and the County of Mendocino. For this upcoming FY the BID Advisory Board lists only two recommendations, both of which the County of Mendocino and VMC are working on.

By working together, we can raise visitation numbers, add to economic development, and improve the lives of our residents. The VMC team is committed to attracting visitors to experience the magical beauty of our extensive coastlines, explore old-growth redwoods, and immerse themselves in the lush inland valleys, alongside our unique attractions, local artisans, and the warm hospitality that Mendocino County is known for.

Best regards,

Jon Glidewell
Beachcomber Hotel Group
Chair, BID Advisory Board

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I. OVERVIEW

Chapter 5.140.210 to Title 5 of the Mendocino County Code requires that an Annual Report of the Mendocino County Business Improvement District (BID) be prepared and presented to the Board of Supervisors by the BID Advisory Board approximately ninety (90) days before the start of each new fiscal year (FY) in which assessments will be collected. This FY 2023-2024 BID Annual Report conforms to the requirements outlined in Section 5.140.220 of the County Code and provides the following:

- An introduction to the role of lodging and tourism in Mendocino County.
- An update to the overview of the BID oversight and accomplishments as detailed in the FY 2022-2023 Annual Report.
- A proposed FY 2024-2025 MCTC Budget
- A review of the BID Advisory Board's recommendations to Mendocino County Tourism Commission (MCTC) for FY 2023-2024 and recommendations to the County of Mendocino (COM) for consideration and approval by the Board of Supervisors (BoS).
- Recommendations to MCTC and the COM for FY 2024-2025

II. INTRODUCTION AND UPDATE OF BID HISTORY

a. Impact of BID on the Lodging and Tourism Industry

Lodging and tourism promotion is vital to Mendocino County's economy because of the impacts of visitor spending on taxpayers, businesses, and employees.

- In 2022, the most recent year for which complete baseline information is available, total direct travel spending in the county decreased 3.89% to \$ 468.9 million dollars. There was a strong increase of 14 % in tourism related employment. Tourism remains a notable employer within the county with the industry supporting 5,700 jobs and generating earnings of more than \$230.8 million dollars.

Mendocino County, its incorporated cities and taxpayers have a direct interest in the optimal investment of BID funds to promote countywide tourism and related industries. Building and maintaining awareness of the county as a viable and vital tourism destination continues to be top of mind for marketing efforts in 2024-2025. It is clear now more than ever that enhancing this essential segment of the county's economy is essential in the economic development of Mendocino County. The California tourism market is more competitive than ever, with regions competing for the "road-trip" segment of Californians and surrounding state residents. One measure of the impact of the BID funds is the amount of transient occupancy tax (TOT) that is collected. The County Treasurer-Tax Collector's January 2024 Transient Occupancy Tax Report for FY 2022-2023 shows that revenue from lodging businesses in unincorporated areas of the county decreased to \$8.36 million, a slight decrease of 0.99% over the prior year. This decrease is inconsistent with the increase in BID collections, which increased by 34%. Historically TOT/BID collections are consistent in increasing and decreasing collections. The Treasurer-Tax Collector reported that the countywide 1% BID assessment generated \$1,782,991.50 earning a flat-rate match to MCTC of \$150,000 leading to a total of \$1,932,991.50 in funds for marketing and promotion of Mendocino County tourism. (For planning purposes, MCTC revenue projections are based on actual assessment receipts as reported by the Treasurer-Tax Collector for the last completed fiscal year (FY 2022-2023).

b. Establishment and Requirements of the Lodging BID

The Mendocino County lodging industry and the County of Mendocino collaborated to establish the Lodging Business Improvement District (District) in the spring of 2006. Ordinance 4170 added the terms of the BID to the Mendocino County Code as Chapter 5.140 to Title 5. It created an assessment equal to one percent (1%) of rents paid for transient occupancy, to be collected by lodging for the purpose of countywide promotion. The Ordinance also created a county match of 50% of the total BID assessment.

Pursuant to Section 5.140.210 to Title 5 of the Mendocino County Code, and as required by the "Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989," the BoS established a five-member BID Advisory Board responsible for preparing a BID Annual Report for each fiscal year. This report is presented to the BoS for approval approximately 90 days before the start of each fiscal year. The BoS appoints Advisory Board members based on nominations from the MCTC Board, pursuant to its contract with the county. This contract requires MCTC staff and board to assist in preparing the Report.

Section 5.140.220 outlines specific information to be included in the BID Annual Report:

- A. The report may propose changes, including, but not limited to, the boundaries of the parking and business improvement area or any benefit zones within the area, the basis and method of levying the assessments, and any changes in the classification of businesses, if a classification is used.
- B. The report shall be filed with the clerk and shall refer to the parking and business improvement area by name, specify the fiscal year to which the report applies, and, with respect to that fiscal year, shall contain all of the following:
 1. Any proposed changes in the boundaries of the parking and business improvement area or in any benefit zones within the area.
 2. The improvements and activities to be provided for that fiscal year.
 3. An estimate of the cost of providing the improvements and the activities for that fiscal year.
 4. The method and basis of levying the assessment in sufficient detail to allow each business owner to estimate the amount of the assessment to be levied against his or her business for that fiscal year.
 5. The amount of any surplus or deficit revenues to be carried over from a previous fiscal year.
 6. The amount of any contributions to be made from sources other than assessments levied pursuant to this part.

The BID Annual Report advises the BoS on the state of the BID and the proposed Annual Marketing Plan and budget for the upcoming fiscal year. State law requires that this report be prepared and adopted by the BoS annually in order for the BID to be renewed. Once adopted by the BoS, it dictates how BID funds, and the Mendocino County match are to be spent and provides a road map for implementation by the designated contractor. The report ensures transparency by communicating to stakeholders how BID and county funds are being invested and how impacts on visitor spending are being evaluated.

Section 5.140.245 requires that: The Board of Supervisors shall designate a contractor that shall be responsible for the administration of the Business Improvement District (BID) including hiring and oversight of the individual or entity charged with implementation of the Annual Marketing Plan that is annually approved by the Board of Supervisors. Since January 2016, the county has met this requirement by contracting with the Mendocino County Tourism Commission to fulfill these functions.

c. Historical Overview of the Implementation and Oversight of the BID

BID Annual Reports comprise the official record of program implementation, oversight and outcomes funded through the BID assessment and county matching funds. They may be accessed on the county website. The following timeline summarizes the history of BID oversight:

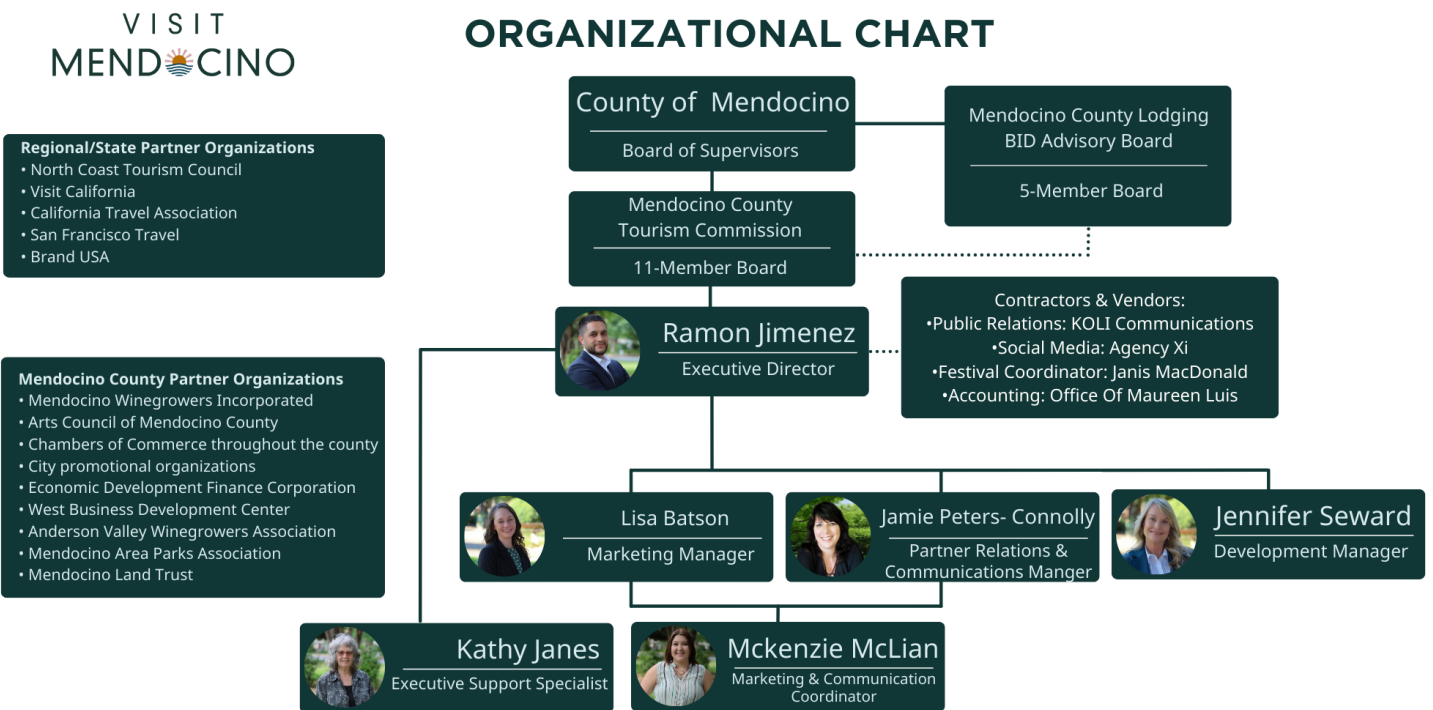
- 2006: Business Improvement District established by vote of Mendocino County lodging owners and operators.
- 2006-2015: Pursuant to annual contracts with the County of Mendocino, funds from 1% BID assessment were overseen and invested in countywide promotion by Mendocino County Lodging Association (MCLA). The 50% county match was overseen and invested in countywide promotion by Mendocino County Promotional Alliance (MCPA).
- 2009: MCLA and MCPA collaborated to establish VMC as a 501 (c)(6) organization and contracted with VMC to prepare and implement an annual Marketing Plan and budget prior to the start of each fiscal year.
- 2012: VMC earned accreditation by the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) and was designated by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) as the official destination marketing organization of Mendocino County.
- 2013-2014: MCLA and MCPA jointly funded in-depth marketing and organizational management studies with the goals of addressing internal issues, simplifying the organizational structure, strengthening promotional programs, and building capacity for accountability.
- 2014-2015: The Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Committee, comprised of supervisors and stakeholders, formulated a plan for restructuring to replace Mendocino County Lodging Association and Mendocino County Promotional Alliance with a single oversight organization with designated seats on the board of directors for representatives of lodging and other tourism-related economic sectors. This restructuring was subsequently approved by the two organizations. Ordinance changes were adopted to reflect the revised structure.

- 2016-2017: The Mendocino County Tourism Commission (MCTC) held its first meeting on January 12, 2016 and contracted with the County of Mendocino as the sole contractor responsible for BID oversight and implementation. The legal transition was completed, and remaining funds were transferred from MCLA and MCPA to MCTC. Further Ordinance amendments were adopted on September 12, 2017 to align the Ordinance with the new structure.
- 2017: MCTC undertook a strategic planning process with leadership by the Coraggio Group. The process engaged stakeholders to revisit MCTC's vision, mission, values, reputation and market position, and identify imperatives, objectives, and initiatives to guide the work from FY 2017-2018 through FY 2019-2020.
- 2018: MCTC continued to work toward the organizational goals as set out in the Strategic Plan.
- 2019: Staff continued work set forth in the strategic plan. The ED closed the non-functioning sales portion of the team and worked to redistribute these functions throughout the organization, to streamline operations and pave the way for clearer communication between partners, stakeholders and VMC.
- 2020: MCTC continued to achieve great success in its digital and social marketing campaigns, achieving larger than ever success with marketing of the annual Crab FEAST and Whale Festivals. The City of Point Arena was returned to the BID District at the BoS meeting on December 8, 2020. With the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic under the direction of the MCTC BoD, the Executive Director executed significant organizational changes designed to allow MCTC to reemerge from the Pandemic in a viable state to begin the process of marketing and welcoming tourism back to Mendocino County, safely. The organization worked side-by-side with other community partners to develop and deploy safety campaigns surrounding the Pandemic.
- 2021: The organization, under direction of the MCTC BoD, continued brand awareness campaigns to keep Mendocino County top-of-mind to potential road trippers. The tourism rebound quickly became apparent to not only tourism-facing businesses but the community-at-large, along with a need for in-county partnerships and programs to manage the number of visitors and their waste. MCTC worked in collaboration with local chambers and Mendocino Area Parks Association to address issues surrounding visitor waste. It also became necessary for lodging properties to work in collaboration to address supply chain, legal and human resources. MCLA reemerged as an anchor organization for collaboration and information sharing, with Visit Mendocino County working side-by-side with proprietors in navigating the tourism industry during these unprecedented times. In summer and fall the water shortage became critical and VMC worked to design and distribute water saving window clings to all tourism facing business to keep water saving and reduction in view for our visitors. The organization began work with Coraggio Group to aid in the development of a new three-year strategic plan and the staff began working under the direction of this plan at the beginning of FY 2021-2022 (Appendix 6). MCTC began to restaff bringing on a new Partner Relations and Communications Manager, Jamie Peters-Connolly and returning its Marketing & Sales Coordinator, Ramon Jimenez to full-time with a promotion to Marketing & Sales Manager. The organization also began the search to fill the position of Marketing & Sales Coordinator. In late 2021, the BoD directed the E.D. to augment the budget to bring organizational spending in-line with its income. The Marketing Committee directed staff to begin working with Agency Xi, website, social media, and media purchasing agency to rebrand the organization and buildout a new website. This work was slated to begin in the winter of 2022 in-house.
- 2022: At the BoS hearing in May of 2022 members of the BoS brought forward concerns with the amount of matching funds being contributed on behalf of the incorporated areas of Mendocino County. Due to the fact that the incorporated areas of the county maintain the collected TOT funds, the county sees no direct return on the matching dollars it contributes on behalf of the incorporated areas. The BoS directed county staff to form an Ad-hoc committee to investigate options for and potentially reducing the amount of financial support from the County of Mendocino to the Mendocino County Tourism Commission. In June of 2022 by a 3/2 vote, the BoS approved the annual contract to MCTC. Following the approval of the 2022/2023 contract the MCTC BoD instructed the E.D. to begin conversations with Civitas Advisors to research and understand alternate funding options to keep the organization revenue at its current level. The MCTC BoD approved a retainer agreement with Civitas Advisors to research the potential of increasing the BID assessment on lodging businesses and the potential of assessing other tourism facing business sectors. The E.D. and Civitas Advisors Project Manager Emily Brown worked with county staff to request sales tax data for lodging properties, restaurants, wine tasting room direct sales, brewery direct sales and attractions. However, an official request to the BoS was required for Civitas Advisors to access the requested data and this request of the BoS was not given priority and finally an appointment on the BoS calendar was ultimately granted in November of 2022. The Resolution and NDA agreement between the County of Mendocino and Civitas Advisors was granted by a 3/2 vote of the BoS. In late December of 2022, the E.D. was invited to a meeting with Planning & Building Services and County Counsel where the E.D. was made aware that the county was not comfortable with the Resolution for the NDA, contracting with Civitas and the use of funding by MCTC to contract with Civitas Advisors, thereby putting the research and future funding for the organization in great jeopardy. During meetings with the county's Ad-hoc committee, it was made clear that a "ROI Study" be conducted. In August of 2022 the BoD of MCTC directed the E.D. to engage with Travel Analytics Group led by Carl Ribaldo to conduct a "MCTC Influence and Website ROI" study. The preliminary results of the study were delivered to the MCTC BoD at its annual meeting in January of 2023. This study shows that MCTC's ROI is \$86 for

every \$1 invested in its marketing programs. The organization continued its Brand Awareness marketing initiatives, launched TV & Radio commercials in Mendocino County feeder markets, launched a video podcast series hosted by Bay Area TV personality Roberta Gonzales, relaunched its annual “shoulder season” festivals, and moved forward with rebranding and the build out of a new website, set to launch in Spring 2023. The organization developed a three-county Leave No Trace campaign at the request of supervisors. It also researched and developed and incorporated cannabis business into its marketing assets.

- 2023: Under the direction of the Business Improvement District Steering Committee comprised of Partners and Stakeholders from each region of the county, members of the BoS and tourism business leaders the E.D./CEO continued to push forward with the BID conversion from the '89 to '94 laws. As with past years, there were great delays in working in collaboration with the County of Mendocino in obtaining data and attention to the conversion. With very slow progress and continued delays in information delivery on behalf of CoM the Steering Committee was able to push forward in creation of a draft Management District Plan (MDP), the document that guides the initiatives, budget outlines and overall marketing requirements of the new district. At the time of writing the steering committee and Civitas Advisors are waiting for county counsel to review and return their comments and suggested updates to the draft MDP. The steering committee will continue to guide the E.D. in gaining Partner and Stakeholder buy-in of the new district. The team moved forward with the development of the new website and brand for the organization. The new brand and website launched in July of 2023 to better-than-anticipated analytics. The brand launch campaign extended further than the organization had ever marketed, reaching to the Oregon border and Eastern California Foothills. Consumer media was purchased on TV, a takeover of the Charles Schultz, Sonoma County airport, coupled with Visit Mendocino County wrapped Uber and Lyft cars strategically placed in key Bay Area markets. After 5 ½ years the CEO, Travis Scott resigned from the organization to further his career in larger markets. The BoD of VMC quickly promoted Ramon Jimenez to replace Scott as Executive Director. Ramon has worked for the organization for 4 years and having worked side-by-side with the former CEO he was the clear choice to continue to lead the organization in success.

Below is the current organizational chart:



III. MCTC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

a. Overall Goal and Strategic Objectives

VMC's overall goal in FY 2023-2024 remained to: Increase overall demand for overnight leisure visitation during key times of the year in an effort to increase revenues, employment and taxes in Mendocino County..

Strategic objectives include:

1. Continue to effectively position Mendocino County as one of California's premier vacation destinations.
2. Educate consumers on the different coastal and inland experiences that can be found within the county.
3. Maintain marketing focus on key lifestyle and passion segments including outdoor/recreation, wine, beer & spirits, food, and romance.
4. Maintain the role of technology and digital marketing efforts in order to broaden the reach and increase effectiveness.

b. Tactical Goals Related to Strategic Initiatives

Fiscal year 2023-2024 tactical goals remained closely aligned with the strategic objectives. Impact was tracked and measured against established goals in six key performance areas:

- Public Relations
- Advertising and Paid Media
- Website and Social Media
- Visitor Services
- Sales
- Administration and Operations

c. Accomplishments for FY 2023-2024

As noted above, BID assessment increased significantly over prior year performance and occupancy levels hovered all year at record highs. The organization records this as a direct accomplishment. The Mendocino County brand has gained traction in recent years with current brand awareness efforts as a driving force of the organization. With the COVID-19 pandemic well behind us, Mendocino County continued to show itself as a leading destination for our target market segment(s) in the California road trip market.

MCTC's strong marketing and public relations programs hit new milestones with increased website traffic, decreased bounce rate, and massive engagement on social media. We saw new heights in numbers of favorable articles in national and international travel publications and glossy magazines. These developments demonstrate the organization working towards one of its strongest years.

With the launch of a new brand, the organization ramped up operations, with a fully funded budget (deficit from reserves) while continuing to work in partnership with the local Chambers of Commerce, MCLA, wine associations and other business leaders to further the growth of tourism in Mendocino County.

As part of the FY 2013-2014 DMAI accreditation process, VMC adopted standardized budget categories to permit it to benchmark against organizations of comparable size. The graphs below compare actual VMC spending in FY 2022-2023 to industry averages for each budget category. The figures for DMO industry averages come from Destinations International Organization Performance's Reporting portal; this analysis is completed by each accredited DMO annually. For a copy of the full report, please contact the MCTC office.

Categories defined as follows:

- **General Expenses:** office supplies, computer expenses, rent/utilities, interest, etc.
- **Personnel:** salaries & wages, payroll taxes, and employee benefits
- **Program Expenses:** Advertising, Public Affairs, Marketing, Promotions, Sales, Partnerships

As shown in the chart below, MCTC has again outperformed the average of DMO's, spending significantly more in the Programming Expense category.

DESTINATION ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE REPORTING




For FY 2022 - 2023, VMC set goals for each area of responsibility and outcomes and KPIs were recorded for each goal. Results in each key area are discussed in detail in the Visit Mendocino County FY 2022-2023 Annual Report, which is available online at: <https://www.mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/VMC-2022-23-Annual-Report-Final.pdf>

- PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Generate \$10 million in measured advertising equivalency; reach an estimated audience of 250 million; achieve 500 placements in key media outlets; attract 20 writers to visit the destination; attend two trade shows; and support VMC marketing and promotional objectives. The results of PR efforts for the year are set out in the table below. As noted in the table below, the PR team achieved results well beyond their goals.

	FY 2023/23 Goals	FY 2023/23 Actual	% Gain/Loss
Hits	500	908	81.60%
Press releases	11	13	18.18%
Impressions	250 Million	2.42 Billion	867.87%
Ad Equivalency	\$10 Million	\$422.52 Million	4125.28%
FAM Programs	18	26	44.44%
Trade Shows	2	3	50.00%
Media Missions	1	0	N/A

- ADVERTISING AND MARKETING:** Increase unaided awareness of Mendocino County in a comparative study. Since 2017, research was undertaken by TheorySF (then marketing and advertising consultant) to establish a baseline for awareness of the county as a tourism destination. Research revealed that awareness of the county was very low among target audience and location. This result drives current marketing and promotional efforts, all of which are focused on raising awareness of the county as a tourist destination. In FY 2024-2025, MCTC will undertake a research initiative to measure awareness against the baseline in partnership with Agency Xi.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Total Facebook Fan Base: 61,000; Total Instagram Followers: 29,600. These goals were revisited over the course of the year to focus less on raising “likes” and “followers” than to increase engagement and awareness among VMC’s target audiences. The chart below indicates the success of these revised goals over the previous year.

Social Media Results YOY 2021/22 vs FY 2022/23					
FACEBOOK			INSTAGRAM		
	2021/22	2022/23		2021/22	2022/23
Impressions	33,538,268	24,879,903	Impressions	4,944,443	4,915,705
	(32,691,066	(23,582,749			
	Paid / 857,202	Paid / 1,297,154			
	Organic+Viral)	Organic+Viral)			
Engagement	337,271	341,498	Likes Received	58,451	42,521
Link Clicks	266,207	283,158	Comments	763	411
Posts	106	95	Posts	110	134
Impressions/Post	316,399	261,894	Likes/Post	531	317
Engagement/Post	3,182	3,595	Comments/Post	7	3
Fan Base	61,008	62,051	Followers	25,353	33,037

- **SALES:** Sales is an important piece of the VMC promotional efforts plan. Much of sales is inspirational, reminding potential visitors how close geographically we are to our main markets of the SF Bay area and the Sacramento/Central Valley; informing them how easily they can get here; and getting them excited about what they can do once here. This messaging became more paramount in tourism recovery post COVID-19. Our key sales activities annually are based on the research generated by Visit California (VCA); it also adds economic feasibility to participate in VCA’s already arranged sales efforts. Through the North Coast Tourism Council (NCTC), the team presents Mendocino County at various Travel & Adventure shows.
- **VISITOR AND CONSTITUENT SERVICES:** MCTC supports the various Chambers and Visitor Centers and the California Welcome Center in the county by making sure they have collateral such as Mendocino County Explorers Guides, wine maps, event guides and tear off maps. The VS committee continued working toward new Mendocino County Gateway signs to include replacement of existing signs and the expansion of the gateway sign program to all road entry points in the county.
- **OPERATIONS AND STAFFING:** In the CEO’s sixth year of leadership, the organization hired former MCTC Director Jennifer Seward to rebuild the VMC sales department, with first focus on bringing small group and wedding venues to the event marketplace. The CEO continued to push forward with the conversion from the ’89 to ’94 BID law with an increased business improvement district assessment totaling 2%.

d. Year to Date Progress for FY 2023-2024

Marketing Plan outcomes are tracking exceptionally high. We track these in our Quarterly and Annual Reports against our strategic plan and its outlined imperatives, objectives, and initiatives.

- **PUBLIC RELATIONS** is on course to exceed all goals in terms of ad equivalency, FAM visits, media hits, impressions, etc. The chart that follows shows FY goals and successes to January 31, 2024.

MENDOCINO COUNTY TOURISM COMMISSION 2023-2024 Projections							
MONTH	HITS	AD. EQUIV	IMPRESSIONS	RELEASES	FAM VISITS	TRADE SHOWS	NOTES/MISC.
July	37	\$9,399,713.00	36,321,693	1	2		
Aug	55	\$5,534,896.00	46,061,350	2	1		
September	39	\$4,050,637.00	45,526,886	1	0	1	Society of American Travel Writers
October	47	\$722,999.00	18,692,326	1	3		
November	37	\$1,177,876.00	16,971,829	0	7		
December	31	\$675,021.00	14,338,917	1	0		
January	41	\$1,626,152.00	29,996,663	2	3		
February							
March							
April							
May							
June							
TOTAL	287	\$23,187,294.00	207,909,664	9	20	1	
GOAL	550	\$12 Million	350 Million	11	18	3	

- **ADVERTISING AND MARKETING:** The VMC Strategic Plan defines certain initiatives that correlate with the organization’s marketing goals for the fiscal year. They include:
 - ↳ Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan.
 - ↳ Foster collaboration and countywide alignment by creating and developing the “go to” website for all tourism stakeholders.
 - ↳ Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception.
 - ↳ Develop a data-sharing process that offers context and insights for partners.

Staff worked with the Festival & Marketing committees to develop a marketing plan and execute new campaigns that highlight the natural assets and events of Mendocino County. The organization continued managing all marketing duties in-house and management of all campaign development and execution with the oversight of the MCTC committees. This plan can be viewed here: <https://www.mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/VMC-Marketing-Plan-2024-2025.pdf>

The team developed and launched MCTC’s Magic is Real campaign, which was released in July 2023, to large potential visitor attention. As of writing, this campaign is active and continues to gain attention of potential visitors and national and international media. The team has executed the fall Harvest Festival which launched to greater than anticipated attendees and is prepared to activate this winter’s Seafood & Sips which is tracking on-target for ticket sales.

The PR team continues to communicate with partners and stakeholders on a monthly basis informing them of high-profile media stories. The VMC team actively identifies new businesses opening in Mendocino County and new management of existing businesses and schedules visits to meet the owners/managers and record the information in the team’s internal database and MailChimp email resource.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Social media also plays an important role in creating and raising brand awareness. The figure below shows the YOY metrics for the fiscal year to date.

Social Media Results FY 2023 Q1 & Q2			
FACEBOOK		INSTAGRAM	
Impressions	13,094,812	Likes Received	23,221
Engagement	196,262	Comments	304
Link Clicks	162,248	Impressions	971,733
Posts	53	Posts	98
Impressions/Post	247,072	Likes/Post	236.9489796
Engagements/Post	3,703	Comments/Post	3
Fan Base	63,750		36,146

- **PARTNERSHIPS:** The E.D. and staff maintain close ties with partner organizations throughout the county. Staff represents Visit Mendocino County on the boards or committees of Destination Hopland, Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association, Visit Fort Bragg, Point Arena Merchants Association, Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, and Mendocino County Museum. Staff continues visits to stakeholder properties (a program known as the Hospitality Appreciation Program) to further their knowledge as to the offerings of stakeholders and partners.
- **SALES:** Goals and ROI are undetermined at this time. This will remain an undeterminable set of metrics until Budget/BID restrictions have been alleviated. However, the VMC Development Manager, Jennifer Seward, has undertaken a small group & wedding program to be launched in Fall/Winter 2024 to promote Mendocino County gathering spaces and retreat-style lodging properties. The program will also point the spotlight on the many wedding venues and event spaces available to potential group and meeting planners.
- **VISITOR SERVICES:** The Visitor Services committee is currently working on options for updated Gateway signs at the entrances to Mendocino County and continual disbursement of the Mendocino County Visitor Guide.

IV. BASIS FOR PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR FY 2024-2025

a. District Boundaries and Assessment

Pursuant to Section 5.140.060 each hotel or lodging business that collects rent and benefits from overnight guests and operates in the District will be assessed a share of the costs of the services, activities and programs, according to the rent revenues and the benefits to be received; with the assessment levied as one percent (1%) on gross rent. This assessment is calculated on a daily basis from gross rent revenues collected by each lodging establishment.

b. Allowable Services, Activities and Programs

The services, activities and programs to be provided through the BID in FY 2023–2024 are defined by Section 5.140.050 of the Mendocino County Code for the purpose of benefiting lodging by promoting tourism in the District. Those services, activities and programs, which are to be accomplished through implementation of the approved Annual Marketing Plan and Budget by MCTC, are as follows:

- A. The general promotion of hotels operating within the District;
- B. The marketing of products and events that have a connection with the hotel industry operating in the District;
- C. The marketing of the District to the media and travel industry in order to benefit local tourism and the hotels in the District.
- D. Any activities permitted under the Parking and Business Improvement Law of 1989 that are included as costs as specified in the annual report to be prepared by the advisory board and adopted annually by the Board of Supervisors. Activities means, but is not limited to, all the following:
 - ↳ Promotion of public events which benefit businesses in the area and which take place on or in public places within the area
 - ↳ Furnishing of music in any public place in the area
 - ↳ Promotion of tourism within the area
 - ↳ Activities that benefit businesses located and operating in the area

V. PRELIMINARY PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

a. Strategic Direction

The current three-year strategic plan developed with the Coraggio Group identifies nine initiatives for MCTC to work towards. This section will briefly outline the FY 2024-2025 organizational goals as they relate to those initiatives..

1. Create a campaign to promote the value of VMC in driving positive results to local businesses.

The ED and Development Manager have worked to meet with stakeholders, business, community, and jurisdictional leaders to gather information and understand the perceived functionality of VMC and its staff. These meetings continue through the next fiscal year. The organization has found that direct meetings with Stakeholders is a stronger approach that deploying electronic surveys, etc. This program directly addresses the value of tourism as an economic driver in Mendocino County and how the dollars generated by tourism impacts each household in the county.

2. Perform a needs assessment of our stakeholders and partners.

Engaging with lodging stakeholders and partners is an ongoing effort for the MCTC team. One of the goals for FY 2024-2025 is to continue to curate our current relationships with stakeholders and partners while building relationships with new partners in our community. We do this by making in-person visits to local businesses, introducing VMC as an organization and resource to tourism facing businesses. A key conversation during these visits is focused on how owners and managers believe that we can further support their business. This information can be aggregated and presented to the ED and appropriate committees for discussion, and creation of a preliminary plan to bolster our internal offerings to partners and stakeholders.

3. Enhance VMC’s portfolio of stakeholder offerings and resources.

Following the needs assessment referred to above, the team will have the information necessary to create the necessary plans and build out offerings and resources that are requested from our partners and stakeholders.

4. Evaluate and diversify visitor target market segments and competitive set.

In January 2023, the delivery of Travel Analytics Group Visitor and Resident Perspective Study outlined several key West Coast markets that are currently under-advertised by destinations. This research allowed the team to expand the VMC marketing reach with the launch of the new VMC brand, Visit Mendocino – Magic is Real. The competitive set has been agreed upon by the MCTC Board of Directors and is being reported against in quarterly and annual reports to the Mendocino County BoS, Partners & Stakeholders and the community at-large.

5. Refresh our brand identity to align with target segments and competitive advantage.

In July 2023, the organization launched the new Visit Mendocino County brand sporting the tagline “Magic is Real”. The new branding allows the organization to lean into the natural assets of Mendocino County in a more cohesive manner. This new brand has allowed the VMC team to expand on the successful “Room to Roam” branding that the organization had been promoting. The brand launch included a newly crafted website that optimizes the user experience to extend the length of time spent on the site. This brand platform relies heavily on photo and video assets.

6. Create process and framework for the evaluation and investment in event promotion with an emphasis on shoulder seasons.

Visit Mendocino County has undergone a rebranding and expanded involvement in the Harvest Mendocino and Seafood & Sips Mendocino festivals, aiming to draw both new and repeat visitors in our off-peak seasons. Working alongside community groups, we’ve revitalized and contributed to the planning of festival events and have also supported through promotional efforts, particularly in the shoulder season.

7. Advocate for the development of pro-business county regulations.

As the needs assessment of partners and stakeholders is completed, it will become clearer to the BoD as to the direction of the organization under this initiative. Once we understand where the advocacy of the organization is best utilized with the county, the BoD will direct staff in its efforts toward accomplishing this goal..

8. Advocate for County investment and development of sustainable tourism infrastructure.

The organization will work hand-in-hand with the BID Advisory Board toward identification of infrastructure projects and place those recommendations in this report moving forward. This will allow the BoS to review and understand the long-term sustainability goals and needs of the tourism community and visitors to Mendocino County.

9. Align destination development activities to Visit California’s Stewardship Objectives.

As the organization moves forward with marketing the brand of Mendocino County, it remains top-of-mind with staff, committees, and the BoD through our strategic plan to embrace and practice Visit California’s Destination Stewardship and Sustainable Travel Plan. This plan identifies 5 key points that should be addressed in all VMC programs. Those points are:

- i. Expand: Sustainable Practices Through the Mendocino County Tourism Industry
- ii. Encourage: Responsible Tourism
- iii. Develop: Approaches to Shape Visitation Patterns
- iv. Infuse: the Mendocino County brand with Stewardship Ethics
- v. Amplify: the sense of pride Mendocino County residents have in their county

b. Estimated BID Assessment Revenue for FY 2024-2025

Pursuant to Section 5.140.245 of the Mendocino County Code, the County of Mendocino has entered into an agreement with MCTC as its contractor to provide promotional services, activities and improvements for the District. The balance sheet and profit and loss statements regarding budget vs. actual reports are to be provided to the county on a quarterly basis.

In FY 2022-2023 the Mendocino County Tax Collector recorded total BID assessments in the amount of \$1,782,991.50 to provide services, activities and programs on behalf of the District.

The Budget contained in this BID Annual Report is based on actual FY 2022-2023 BID assessments. There will be no matching funds provided by the County of Mendocino for tourism promotion.

c. Proposed Budget for FY 2024-2025

The total budgeted cost of services, activities, and programs for the District in FY 2024-2025 is \$1,757,027.57. This number follows a decision by the MCTC Finance Committee and Board of Directors to write a budget that is below the past year’s BID collections by 15.87%, as the current fiscal year is tracking less than our highest BID collection year to date. It is also based on the fact that the Mendocino County BoS decided to cease funding for tourism promotion and marketing.

Pursuant to Section 5.140.240 the County of Mendocino is entitled to charge an amount equal to its actual costs for the collection of assessments and administration. The cap on this fee is three percent (3%) of the total countywide BID assessments. This fee is collected when the books are closed, approximately two months after the end of each fiscal year. Section 5.140.260 of the Mendocino County Code excludes enforcement costs from the cap on administration fees. The Budget shows the administrative fee as a reduction in income.

The \$175,702.75 Contingency Fund proposed in the Annual Marketing Plan and Budget for FY 2024-2025 fulfills the BOS approved recommendation of the BID Advisory Board that the Reserve Fund be equal to \$100,000 or ten percent (10%) of the annual expenses, whichever is greater. This sum is to be held in an interest-bearing account for the purpose of providing funds that can be accessed to address shortfalls in revenue projections or unexpected expenses consistent with applicable laws and the annual contract between the County of Mendocino and MCTC. Allowable uses might include promotional expenditures required to assist the District’s recovery from a natural disaster or other adverse circumstances in which inadequate funding could pose a threat to the local tourism economy. Expenditures from the Contingency Fund must be authorized by a vote of the MCTC Board of Directors.

Proposed Budget for FY 2024-2025 Annual Budget Including BID assessments, Mendocino County Matching Funds and Miscellaneous Income

INCOME	
MCTC BID Assessment	\$1,500,000.00
County of Mendocino Matching Funds	\$ 0.00
County Administrative Fee	(\$ 45,000.00)
Event Brochure Ads	\$0.00
Interest	\$0.00
Total	\$1,455,000.00
EXPENSES	
Advertising/Media	\$360,000.00
Marketing/Public Relations	\$177,700.00
Website Maintenance & Development	\$55,200.00
Leisure & Group Sales	\$20,790.00
Partnerships	\$74,892.00
Visitor Services	\$199,000.00
Administrative Expenses	\$211,211.00
Personnel	\$658,234.57
Total	\$1,757,027.57
Portion From Unrestricted Reserve	-\$302,027.57
BOTTOM LINE	-\$302,027.57

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS (TO MCTC AND COUNTY OF MENDOCINO) AND ACTIONS TAKEN PREVIOUS TO 2022-2023 FY:

1. County Planning and Building Services staff work with the Clerk of the Board to schedule quarterly reviews by the Board of Supervisors of the recommendations actionable by the County of Mendocino that are listed in this report for official adoption and provide progress updates to the BID Advisory Board.
 - STATUS UPDATE: No Action taken due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the limited space on the BoS agenda(s).

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS ACTIONABLE BY THE MENDOCINO COUNTY TOURISM COMMISSION 2021-2022

1. Originally recommended in the 2019-2020 report: With the passing of the Ordinance Amending Chapter 5.20 of the Mendocino County Tax Code – Tax Imposed on Transients, MCTC staff will work with County staff to incorporate the verbiage “private campgrounds” in the current BID Chapter 5.140. In March 2020, a proposed ordinance # 19-1082, Ordinance Amending Chapter 5.20 of the Mendocino County Tax Code – Tax Imposed on Transients, went before County voters to provide for the collection of Transient Occupancy Tax on short-term visitor accommodations in private campgrounds. This process would be done simultaneously as the reintroduction of Pt. Arena into the BID.
 - STATUS UPDATE: Point Arena rejoined the Business Improvement District on December 8, 2020.
 - STATUS UPDATE: On May 25, 2021, County PBS and County Council put forward the above requested amendment to chapter 5.20 of the Mendocino County Tax code – Tax Imposed on Transients. Upon proper notice of the amendment, MCTC’s ED received communication from CAL CAMP NOW, a business advocacy organization for private campgrounds. The communication informed MCTC that the amendment to the ordinance could be voted against and would not pass without further discussion and planning with those stakeholders. Upon writing the MCTC ED and the ED of CAL CAMP NOW are working on the outline of a program to be presented to private campground stakeholders to show them the value of the BID contribution by them to the organization. Once it is deemed that there is buy-in from these partners, MCTC will work with county PBS and County Council to forward this initiative.
 - STATUS UPDATE: With the threat of the BoS removing matching funding to MCTC and the subsequent action of the BID Advisory Board and MCTC BoD, this recommendation is no longer valid. With the potential of a new BID ordinance increasing BID assessment, private campgrounds would be brought into the BID at that time.
2. As previously recommended in the 2020-2021 report: the BID Advisory Board recommends that when appropriate - MCTC staff and Board of Directors will work with Civitas Advisors, or comparable BID consultants, to explore and evaluate the possibility of an organizational transition from operating under the 1989 BID Law to doing so in accordance with the Property & Business Improvement District Law of 1994, Streets & Highways Code §36600 et seq.
 - STATUS UPDATE: No Action: This recommendation is acknowledged by the MCTC BoD who finds that at this time it is not appropriate for the organization to act on this recommendation.
 - STATUS UPDATE: In August 2022, the BoD directed the E.D. to engage with Civitas Advisors to explore the expansion of the BID to potentially include other tourism facing business sectors and the percentage assessed on transient occupancy and private campgrounds. The E.D. and Civitas Project Manager, Emily Brown went before the BoS in November 2022 to request sales tax data for other business sectors under an NDA between Civitas Advisors and the County of Mendocino. MCTC is still waiting for this information to be provided to Civitas from the County of Mendocino. The E.D. met with county CEO Antle to discuss hold ups with information delivery and she has agreed to lean into the departmental areas that are not responding to the requests for information.
 - STATUS UPDATE: March 2024 – The County of Mendocino is under contract with Civitas Advisors and close to finalizing the Management District Plan.

3. MCTC should work with stakeholders (and possibly Corragio Group) to select the most appropriate competitive set or sets as a means of evaluating its market positioning and performance. MCTC can then adjust marketing strategies relative to its competitive set, in order to establish benchmarking metrics and capture greater shares of its primary visitor segments.
 - STATUS UPDATE: No action was taken during the fiscal year on this recommendation. However, the E.D. will recommend to the MCTC BoD that the organization engage with SMG Consulting to further explore its competitive set(s) as requested above.
 - STATUS UPDATE: March 2024 – MCTC is working with SMG Consulting to create a new strategic plan with economic modeling.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS ACTIONABLE BY THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO 2021-2022

1. As previously recommended in the FY 2019-2020 and FY 2020-2021 BID Advisory Reports, the Advisory Board asks that the BOS direct the County Treasurer Tax-Collector to a) revise TOT/BID collection forms and that as of First Quarter FY 2021-2022, it begin collecting information on: i) Average Daily Occupancy (ADO); and ii) Average Daily Rate (ADR).
 - STATUS UPDATE: The Tax Collector is working toward bringing TOT/BID and TOT Camp online to Tax Collector Public Access page so operators can report and pay online. Bringing this process live will take approximately 6 months as they work through each stage from legacy conversion of accounts into Aumentum, development of Public Access and testing, and interfacing with the new online payment provider. They are hoping for it to roll out for the Q1 FY 22-23, reporting period of July -September 2022, due on October 31, 2022. Before bringing the reporting online we will send a notice to lodging operators announcing the new site and provide instructions for how to create an account, report, and pay online.
 - STATUS UPDATE: March 2024 - The County of Mendocino has contracted with Host Compliance and is in the beginning stages of transitioning to their online collections. This will take some time to complete, but is in the works. Reporting will be affected positively as a result.
2. With the knowledge that there is a new software solution being implemented, we recommend that the Treasurer-Tax Collector work with the MCTC Executive Director to analyze what data is available in that new system and how that information can be shared anonymously with MCTC.
 - STATUS UPDATE: The MCTC ED has shared with the Treasurer-Tax Collectors office what data would be beneficial to the organization. It is not guaranteed that those data points will be available. However, the goal is to capture the most important: Average Daily Rate and Average Daily Occupancy (ADR, ADO).

FY 2022-2023 BID ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS ACTIONABLE BY MENDOCINO COUNTY TOURISM COMMISSION 2023-2024

1. MCTC acts as the official coordinator of the below proposed BID ordinance change, update, and assessment increase as outlined. This also includes funding the proposed changes to the below referenced ordinance.
 - a) Under the advisement and direction of Civitas Advisors, MCTC move forward with the process of updating Mendocino County BID ordinance 5.140 from operating under the 1989 BID Law to doing so in accordance with the Property & Business Improvement District Law of 1994, Streets & Highways Code §36600 et seq.
 - STATUS UPDATE: MCTC and The County of Mendocino are under contract with Civitas Advisors to complete this project.
 - b) In moving to the Property & Business Improvement District Law of 1994, Streets & Highways Code §36600 et seq. MCTC will update the BID assessment amount from 1% on Transient Lodging properties (including private campgrounds) to 2% transient paid assessment. It is further recommended that the organization lobby “tourism facing” businesses to join the BID at 1%. With NO DATA having been provided by the County of Mendocino on tax revenues of the other “tourism facing” industries, we feel that those businesses should include: wine tasting rooms (walk in sales only) and local attractions (Skunk Train, Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, sporting equipment rentals and tours and animal preserve ticket sales).
 - STATUS UPDATE: MCTC and The County of Mendocino are under contract with Civitas Advisors to complete this project. MCTC has begun discussions with attractions regarding a voluntary assessment.

- c) With the passing of the Ordinance Amending Chapter 5.20 of the Mendocino County Tax Code – Tax Imposed on Transients, MCTC staff will work with County staff to incorporate the verbiage “private campgrounds” in the current BID Chapter 5.140. In March 2020, a proposed ordinance # 19-1082, Ordinance Amending Chapter 5.20 of the Mendocino County Tax Code – Tax Imposed on Transients, went before County voters to provide for the collection of Transient Occupancy Tax on short-term visitor accommodations in private campgrounds.
- STATUS UPDATE: This recommendation should be considered only in the event that the new Marketing District Plan does not succeed.

2. Recommendations Actionable by the County of Mendocino 2023-2024

- a) The County of Mendocino and its departments comply with all requests of Civitas Advisors in a timely manner to aid MCTC’s facilitation of updating the BID in a time-efficient manner.
- STATUS UPDATE: The County of Mendocino is under contract with Civitas Advisors and close to finalizing the Management District Plan.
- b) The Treasurer-Tax Collectors office work with the MCTC E.D. to coordinate elections of new lodging officers to the MCTC Board of Directors with the organizational calendar and fiscal year. This would allow new BoD members to be seated in July of each year more closely matching MCTC elections with the MCTC organizational calendar.
- STATUS UPDATE: The County of Mendocino is under contract with Civitas Advisors and close to finalizing the Management District Plan. This recommendation can be postponed until the new BID process is completed.

APPENDIX 1: TOT/BID COLLECTIONS

**TREASURER - TAX COLLECTOR
COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
(Data as of 1/30/2024)**

Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Collections by Calendar Quarter						
Fiscal Year	1st Quarter (July-Sept.)	2nd Quarter (Oct.-Dec.)	3rd Quarter (Jan.-March)	4th Quarter (April-June)	Fiscal Year Collections	
2015-16	\$ 1,651,009.69	\$ 1,074,781.45	\$ 835,844.53	\$ 1,299,992.81	\$ 4,861,628.48	
2016-17	\$ 1,780,216.37	\$ 1,167,144.03	\$ 829,814.09	\$ 1,468,462.17	\$ 5,245,636.66	
2017-18	\$ 2,019,644.14	\$ 1,227,713.38	\$ 1,026,731.35	\$ 1,463,623.39	\$ 5,737,712.26	
2018-19	\$ 1,977,385.88	\$ 1,280,880.02	\$ 961,022.83	\$ 1,575,991.66	\$ 5,795,280.39	
2019-20	\$ 2,147,423.50	\$ 1,384,005.43	\$ 802,609.14	\$ 316,554.17	\$ 4,650,592.24	
2020-21	\$ 2,024,631.64	\$ 1,665,875.86	\$ 1,305,497.08	\$ 2,265,156.69	\$ 7,261,161.27	
2021-22	\$ 2,888,831.93	\$ 1,925,364.42	\$ 1,457,063.23	\$ 2,175,686.89	\$ 8,446,946.47	
2022-23	\$ 3,129,958.41	\$ 1,804,616.58	\$ 1,237,715.34	\$ 2,190,545.22	\$ 8,362,835.55	

Business Improvement District (BID) Assessment Collections by Calendar Quarter						
Fiscal Year	1st Quarter (July-Sept.)	2nd Quarter (Oct.-Dec.)	3rd Quarter (Jan.-March)	4th Quarter (April-June)	Fiscal Year Collections	
2015-16	\$ 273,600.95	\$ 178,894.32	\$ 147,456.87	\$ 222,164.94	\$ 822,117.08	
2016-17	\$ 306,111.45	\$ 192,168.41	\$ 149,161.15	\$ 249,550.90	\$ 896,991.91	
2017-18	\$ 336,333.39	\$ 214,398.57	\$ 172,188.75	\$ 252,939.31	\$ 975,860.02	
2018-19	\$ 345,414.74	\$ 208,182.17	\$ 169,013.36	\$ 266,870.80	\$ 989,481.07	
2019-20	\$ 356,681.19	\$ 228,223.25	\$ 151,009.41	\$ 79,074.22	\$ 814,988.07	
2020-21	\$ 345,912.88	\$ 258,702.54	\$ 215,421.63	\$ 367,722.16	\$ 1,187,759.21	
2021-22	\$ 455,894.60	\$ 297,723.80	\$ 228,586.87	\$ 344,553.64	\$ 1,326,758.91	
2022-23	\$ 716,817.62	\$ 274,547.16	\$ 217,310.82	\$ 574,315.90	\$ 1,782,991.50	

PLEASE NOTE: The collections reflected above represent the actual quarters in which the lodging establishments collected the taxes and assessments. If applicable, penalties and interest collected by the County are also included in the above totals.

APPENDIX 2: MCTC BOARD ROSTER

- Julie Golden
Winery/Winegrowers
Term expires: Feb 01, 2025
- Brett Schlesinger
Food & Beverage | Midterm Delegate
Term expires: Oct 2, 2025
- Christopher “Cab” Boettcher
Large Lodging Operator: Coastal
Second term expires: Dec 31, 2025
- Elizabeth Cameron
Arts Organization/Attractions Term
expires: July 1, 2024
- Raakesh Patel
Large Lodging Operator: Inland Term
expires: Dec 31, 2023
- Katrina Kessen
At Large
Term expires: Jan 01, 2025
- Open Seat
At Large – Large Lodging Operator:
Term expires:
- Alina Reyes
Small Lodging Operator:
Initial term: December 01, 2024
- Ian Roth
Medium Lodging Operator: Coastal
Term expires: Dec 31, 2026
- Tawny MacMillan
Regional Promotional: Coastal
Term expires: Dec 01, 2025
- Kasie Gray
Regional Promotional: Inland
Term expires: May 01, 2026

APPENDIX 3: BID ADVISORY BOARD ROSTER

- Cindi Wagner, Lord’s Land Retreat Center
At Large
Term expires: November 1, 2024
- Jon Glidewell, Chair, Beachcomber Hotel Group
Coast Region
Term expires: February 1, 2025
- Cally Dym, Vice Chair, Little River Inn
Coast Region
Term expires: May 1, 2024
- Marcus Magdaleno, The Boonville Hotel
Inland Region
Term expires: May 1, 2024
- Jitu Ishwar, A.J. P.J., LLC.
Inland Region
Term expires: September 1, 2024

APPENDIX 4: MCTC BOARD SELECTION

QUALIFICATIONS:

All current and applicant Board members must meet the following requirement to be considered for a seat on the Board of Directors – whether appointed by the Board of Supervisors or placed on a lodging industry ballot:

- Be 21 years or older
- Have a strong belief in and commitment to enhanced development, growth and future capacity of tourism as an important economic driver throughout Mendocino County
- Be a resident of the County and/or have evident business or community interest in the tourism industry of the County
- Be prepared to function as a Board of Director member at both a strategic level and related to operational oversight of the organization
- Be willing to operate within a policy-oriented governance model
- Be prepared to fulfill the Director's role as a volunteer with no compensation
- Have the ability to contribute the time necessary to fulfill the Director's role, as well as other committee, and tourism industry related roles that may emerge from the organization's strategic plan, annual marketing plans, initiatives, etc
- Be prepared to represent the organization, both within and outside the county, at various forums, events and/or special functions
- Accept the governing by-laws of the organization and the policy of the Board of Directors, and apply appropriately to the decision-making process
- Have commitment to fulfill a minimum three-year term of office as a Board of Director member (unless otherwise stipulated)
- Have the capacity and potential interest to hold Board Leadership positions in the future, ranging from committee chairs to Board of Directors Chair
- Have the ability to work in a team-oriented environment that builds on consensus and represents a diverse industry with a multitude of interests and needs
- Indicate interest in participating in industry professional development and governance training opportunities as needed and/or required
- Ability and commitment to follow the Ralph M. Brown Act

Selection Criteria:

Prior to being considered by the Board of Supervisors for appointment or being considered on a lodging industry ballot, individuals must demonstrate the following criteria to, at least, a satisfactory level:

- Competency and experience as a board member
- Proven track record of creating value for stakeholders
- Ability to apply strategic thought to key issues
- Willingness to understand and commit to the highest standards of governance
- Ability to take a countywide view
- Proven leadership qualities
- Ability to develop a clear vision for the industry and monitor its implementation
- Proven skills in at least one of the following:

- ↳ Marketing
- ↳ Tourism
- ↳ Legal
- ↳ Financial Management
- ↳ Strategic Planning and Development
- Company, industry or organization which is directly impacted by the tourism industry and the work of the Bureau
- Proven interest in serving on behalf of the entire county and the entire tourism industry, not just a special interest, nor any single socioeconomic or geographic sector. (organization's purposes and interests above their own)
- Professional experience, skill sets, and education required to lead an innovative and successful tourism bureau
- Willingness, the necessary time and enthusiasm to serve on the board
- Committed to the mission and philosophy of the organization

Questionnaire:

Aside from basic information (such as name, business, title, etc.), the following should be included in a questionnaire to all prospective board members – whether by appointment or election:

- What overall qualities will you bring to the Board of Directors?
- What is your current or previous involvement with Mendocino County destination marketing?
- What do you see as the organization's major priority and/or opportunity and how do you see addressing it?
- What do you see as the organization's major challenge and how do you see addressing it?
- What leadership experience would you bring to the Board of Directors?
- Where do you see the organization in 3-5 years?
- Why do you want to serve on the Board of Directors?
- How long have you owned your business and/or been in a leadership role with your organization in Mendocino County?
- Is your business for sale?
- Please provide up to three professional references related to prior service related to a Board of Director.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Board of Directors is responsible for the development of tourism throughout Mendocino County. Some functions of the Board may be delegated to Board committees and the Executive Director. However, the Board has final responsibility for the successful operation of the organization.

Key roles of Board members include, but are not limited to:

- Setting of major goals and strategic direction for the Bureau
- Approval of all major plans
- Determine all policies governing the Board
- Establishing and determining the duties of Board committees
- Approving the annual budget and all major items of capital expenditure as defined by written expenditure protocols

- Ensuring compliance with legal and ethical requirements
- Monitoring the implementation of strategic plans
- Commitment to the mission and philosophy of the organization
- Place the organization's purposes and interests above their own professional and personal interests when making decisions
- Ensure the long-range image of the organization is a positive one
- Follow the Ralph M. Brown Act
- Attending 10-12 Board meetings annually of approximately two hours duration
- Attending 1-2 potential special meetings per year of under two hours duration
- Attending at a minimum of one, and potentially two planning, strategy, orientation sessions per year ranging from three to six hours in duration
- Participating in at least one Board committee and possible additional special task groups or ad hoc committees
- Undertaking of adequate preparation for all Board meetings and events
- Participating actively and fully at Board meetings in order to advance agenda discussion, reach consensus and provide strategic direction and operational oversight to the organization
- Being an advocate for the organization taking an active role in industry partner relations
- Keeping confidential information confidential
- Participating annually in a Board self-assessment and board training workshop

APPENDIX 5: MCTC BALANCE SHEET AT OF 12/31/2022

Mendocino County Tourism Commission

Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2022

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1005 SBMC Checking	555,857.15
1010 SBMC Contingency/Savings	966,292.31
1015 MLCU Checking	0.00
1020 MLCU Savings	0.00
1030 Cash drawer	100.00
Total Bank Accounts	\$1,522,249.46
Accounts Receivable	\$302,553.45
Other Current Assets	
1230 Prepaid Expenses	39,509.60
1250 Refundable Deposits	1,800.00
1270 Receivable Other	-7,147.53
1290 Loan to Employee	1,800.00
Undeposited Funds	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$35,962.07
Total Current Assets	\$1,860,764.98
Fixed Assets	
1510 Furniture and Equipment	41,311.75
1600 Accumulated Depreciation	-18,819.00
Total Fixed Assets	\$22,492.75
Other Assets	\$0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,883,257.73
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 Accounts Payable	19,010.10
Total Accounts Payable	\$19,010.10
Other Current Liabilities	\$41,480.73
Total Current Liabilities	\$60,490.83
Total Liabilities	\$60,490.83
Equity	
3100 Contingency-Restricted	187,622.35
3900 Unrestricted Net Assets (RE)	2,042,725.51
Opening Bal Equity	0.00
Net Income	-407,580.96
Total Equity	\$1,822,766.90
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$1,883,257.73

Visit Mendocino County

2021–2023 Strategic Plan



<p>Vision</p> <p>A diversified and thriving economy supported by our community, offering enriching experiences for our guests.</p>	<p>Mission</p> <p>Visit Mendocino County stewards and amplifies the total Mendocino County experience</p>	<p>Position</p> <p>In order to support our stakeholders, generate economic activity for county residents through tourism, and inspire our visitors, Visit Mendocino County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets the Mendocino County experience to key regional and domestic markets Creates, develops, and manages brand awareness for the county. Connects people and organizations to opportunities. Provides tourism resources and information to in-county partners. Optimizes return on investment through responsible fiscal management 	<p>Values</p> <p>Transparency: We foster trust through openness and integrity. Accountability: We are outcome-oriented and professional. Partnership: We create alignment through inclusive and meaningful relationships. Community: We contribute to the fabric of Mendocino County. Innovation: Our creativity reflects the uniqueness of our cultures and landscapes.</p>
<p>Imperatives</p> <p>Optimize and demonstrate our impact through relationships and collaborations</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Participation Rate in VMC Programs Increase VMC Communication Engagement Rate Boost Community's Support of the Tourism Industry 	<p>Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a campaign to promote the value of VMC in driving positive results to local businesses Perform a needs assessment of our stakeholders and partners Enhance VMC's portfolio of stakeholder offerings and resources 	<p>Reputation</p> <p>Leader: We motivate and facilitate the tourism community. Accessible: We welcome—and are responsive to—input from community members and stakeholders Collaborative: We actively seek engagement and collaboration with our stakeholders and partners. Bold: We deliver on smart, effective, and forward-thinking ideas.</p>
<p>Raise visitor awareness of Mendocino County and strengthen tourism's contribution to County vitality</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Website Traffic Grow the BID Fund 5% Over 3 Years Increase Shoulder Season Visitation Rates 	<p>Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and diversify visitor target market segments and competitive set Refresh our brand identity to align with target segments and competitive advantage Create process and framework for the evaluation and investment in event promotion with an emphasis on shoulder seasons 	<p>Reputation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the development of pro-business county regulations Advocate for County investment and development of sustainable tourism infrastructure Align destination development activities to Visit California's Stewardship Objectives
<p>Steward and Advocate for the Mendocino County Experience</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase County Investment in Tourism Products and Infrastructure Increase Mendocino County Sales Tax Receipts Over 3 Years 		