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VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY  
Quarterly Report ~ January - March 2019

Submitted to Mendocino County Tourism Commission & County of Mendocino  
May 14, 2019



# VMC Quarterly Activities Report: January – March 2019

## Executive Summary

- The Director of Marketing & Media (DMM) worked closely with marketing consultants, TheorySF (TSF) and Media Matters WorldWide (MMWW) on a series of robust digital campaigns to target markets and audiences using programmatic advertising.
- VMC initiated a collaborative effort with the West Business Development Center to create a new series of hospitality-oriented workshops for partners and stakeholders. Three topics were taught both on the coast and inland. The instructors were both affiliated with VMC with one being a former long-standing board member. The other is a contractor who has been on the VMC team since shortly after its inception. These workshops had a strong showing of participation with interest for future topics.
- The Partner Relations Manager (PRM) visited 30 properties in this quarter. Other VMC team members also made site visits.
- In January, the MCTC Board held its first meeting of the calendar year, seating four new board members. Following the meeting, VMC's contractors (TSF, MMWW, KOLI Communications) gave a series of presentations that were supplemented by presentations from VMC staff on their individual areas of responsibility.
- The DMM and Executive Director worked with the BID Advisory Board to finalize the annual report, which was approved at their last meeting on April 2. The report process was completed in a record three meetings. The draft report will be posted to the BOS website prior to its hearing on the matter in May 2019.
- VMC staff continued to track their work as relating to the Strategic Plan.
- Public relations saw spectacular results in top-level publications with coverage in the “big books” and critical regional publications: National Geographic Traveller, AFAR, Travel + Leisure, Sunset, Food & Wine, Eating Well, to name a few.
- Sales activities for the quarter were robust with four consumer trade shows and attendance at five sales events sponsored by NCTC: GoWest Summit, Mid-Atlantic Summit, Visit CA Denmark, American Bus Association, and Receptive Trade Organization.

## Strategic Plan

The activities in this report relate to the initiatives set forth in the three-year Visit Mendocino County (VMC) Strategic Plan that was put into action in 2017. The purpose of the plan was to realign the core strategies of the organization. (The Strategic Plan may be viewed at <http://mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Visit-Mendocino-County-Strategic-Plan-Rev-20181011.pdf>) This report directly relates the VMC Marketing, PR, sales, and other VMC staff activities during the quarter to the Imperatives, Objectives, and Initiatives contained in the Strategic Plan.

## Vision:

Enriching experiences for our guests, enhanced lifestyle for our residents, and stability and diversity for our economy

## Mission:

Visit Mendocino County stewards and amplifies the total Mendocino County experience.

## Values:

- 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.

## IMPERATIVE: Demonstrate and strengthen VMC's contribution to county economic and community vitality

- **OBJECTIVE: BID assessment growth at 5% over average of top 3 competitors**

In October 2018, the Mendocino County Treasurer-Tax Collector's office published their annual TOT/BID collections report. The report shows that county revenue from lodging businesses increased to \$5.4 million, a 5.47% increase over the prior year. Business Improvement District assessment collections grew by 5.94% to \$942,497.

(Data as of October 1, 2018)

### 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
2010-11	\$ 1,159,942.85	\$ 738,735.49	\$ 509,240.81	\$ 870,484.86	\$ 3,278,404.01
2011-12	\$ 1,257,508.60	\$ 783,853.43	\$ 604,215.73	\$ 926,583.93	\$ 3,572,161.69
2012-13	\$ 1,295,039.41	\$ 785,129.26	\$ 614,742.03	\$ 983,244.99	\$ 3,678,155.69
2013-14	\$ 1,376,597.06	\$ 892,555.35	\$ 676,844.41	\$ 1,070,965.43	\$ 4,016,962.25
2014-15	\$ 1,483,327.89	\$ 994,114.03	\$ 779,025.16	\$ 1,193,169.69	\$ 4,449,636.77
2015-16	\$ 1,642,672.96	\$ 1,068,246.06	\$ 835,092.28	\$ 1,298,919.93	\$ 4,844,931.23
2016-17	\$ 1,772,670.46	\$ 1,139,814.79	\$ 817,935.39	\$ 1,440,859.85	\$ 5,171,280.49
2017-18	\$ 1,977,835.77	\$ 1,199,984.34	\$ 999,813.69	\$ 1,271,160.32	\$ 5,448,794.12

### 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
2010-11	\$ 200,677.35	\$ 120,225.57	\$ 88,797.28	\$ 146,920.70	\$ 556,620.90
2011-12	\$ 214,391.01	\$ 127,956.29	\$ 103,057.37	\$ 158,788.23	\$ 604,192.90
2012-13	\$ 228,091.30	\$ 155,087.30	\$ 107,899.38	\$ 171,379.31	\$ 662,457.29
2013-14	\$ 243,710.03	\$ 149,754.73	\$ 116,839.01	\$ 185,778.08	\$ 696,081.85
2014-15	\$ 259,245.43	\$ 167,619.79	\$ 139,751.12	\$ 204,189.06	\$ 770,805.40
2015-16	\$ 272,665.42	\$ 178,249.54	\$ 147,381.64	\$ 222,042.78	\$ 820,339.38
2016-17	\$ 305,263.55	\$ 189,103.05	\$ 147,942.27	\$ 247,303.83	\$ 889,612.70
2017-18	\$ 331,506.59	\$ 210,674.84	\$ 168,499.04	\$ 231,816.38	\$ 942,496.85

To address the objective that Mendocino County should sustain “BID assessment growth at 5% over average of top 3 competitors,” VMC staff took a new look at our competing destinations. While Sonoma and Napa counties are definitiely “competitors” in the realm of tourist draw, i.e., encouraging visitation from our target markets in the greater Bay Area, in terms of actual visitor travel spending, tax revenue, and TOT receipts, Mendocino County’s top three rural competitors are currently Humboldt, Shasta, and Nevada counties. However, at time of writing, Humboldt County is undergoing a transition, the results of which are unknown. The DMM and ED will bring the issue of competitive counties to the Board for discussion. The data in the chart below is from the [2018 California Travel Impacts](#) report (Dean Runyan), which is an annual report commissioned by Visit California and undertaken by Dean Runyan Associates. The figure below is self-explanatory.

	TRAVEL RELATED SPENDING		% INCREASE / DECREASE YOY	TAX REVENUE		% INCREASE / DECREASE YOY	EMPLOYMENT (TRAVEL SECTOR)		% INCREASE / DECREASE YOY
	2016	2017		2016	2017		2016	2017	
Mendocino	\$386.1M	\$456.0M	18.00%	\$34.7M	\$39.9M	14.98%	6.16K	7.1K	15.25%
Humboldt	\$415.5M	\$448.2M	7.87%	\$32.6M	\$36.6M	12.26%	5.27K	5.5K	4.36%
Shasta	\$422.2M	\$462.8M	9.61%	\$32.8M	\$35.9M	9.45%	4.53K	4.8K	5.96%
Nevada	\$318.2M	\$358.8M	12.60%	\$25.4M	\$28.8M	13.30%	3.2K	3.7K	15.60%

- OBJECTIVE: Year-over-year increase of sales tax receipts in Mendocino County**

The Dean Runyan report shows a positive YOY trend in sales tax receipts for the county. New sales tax figures will be available upon publication of the next California Travel Impacts report in May 2019.

- OBJECTIVE: Year-over-year increase in stakeholder and partner survey response rate**

VMC sent a survey to partners and stakeholders at the conclusion of Fall Feast Mendocino but the response rate continues to be under par and disappointing. For the Crab Feast Mendocino survey (2019), staff conducted an anonymous approach, meaning that responders were not required to reveal their identity, which elicited an 80% increase in responses. YOY responses are shown below:

Year	# of Surveys Completed
2014	18
2015	20
2016	16
2017	0
2018	5
2019	9

**INITIATIVE: Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan.**

Activities during the quarter were based on: 1) the annual Marketing Plan ([http://mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Marketing-Plan\\_Final\\_2018-19.pdf](http://mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Marketing-Plan_Final_2018-19.pdf)); and 2) the three-year Strategic Plan.

The DMM worked closely with the Public Relations agency of record, KOLI Communications, marketing consultant, TheorySF, and media buyers, Media Matters WorldWide, to achieve the goals described in the Marketing Plan.

A review of the digital campaigns from inception to the end of March reveals:

- The Visit Mendocino digital campaign continues to grow awareness and visit intent for Mendocino County by engaging audiences across platforms.
- Media has helped create a 105% larger user base for VisitMendocino.com vs the same time last year with 110k total users throughout the flight so far. The growth in new users has been even more substantial as shown by a 110% YOY increase.
- Engagement from media audiences has been steadily building throughout the campaign with Activity Rates improving by 90% from December to March thanks to various optimizations across programmatic, social and audio media. CP Content View has improved by 48% over the same timeframe.
- In both media and on-site, audiences have responded strongly to destination-focused Skunk Train and Rail Bikes content, the #1 and #2 most viewed pages besides the home page.
- Taste Mendocino creative is achieving an above average click-through rate on Facebook yet is not scaling due to Skunk Train and Rail Bikes having such an outstanding response. To ensure that Taste Mendocino gets proper support, the MMWW team will launch a dedicated event campaign to help drive ticket sales.
- VisitMendocino paid Facebook has driven a 10.3ppt lift in Awareness, 3X the Travel Norm of 2.9ppt. Users exposed to paid Facebook also showed a 8.2ppt lift in Visit Intent - over 3X the Travel Norm of 1.9ppt

Landing pages were driven by marketing efforts with the VisitMendocino.com home page leading the pack, followed by the Skunk Train, Rail Bikes, Whale Festivals, and lodging special offers. Campaigns for the quarter included Crab Feast Mendocino; Whale Festivals; Taste Mendocino.

An overview of the digital campaigns for the quarter is shown in the figure on the following page.



## Visit Mendocino Campaign Overview

Campaign Launched 12/10



### KPI Overview

Publisher	Pandora PMP	Spotify PMP	AXM	Facebook	Total
<a href="#">Media Cost</a>	\$4,370	\$34,610	\$49,137	\$33,320	\$121,437
<a href="#">Impressions</a>	90,816	672,146	9,305,06...	6,164,30...	16,232,3...
<a href="#">Clicks</a>	473	2,942	15,881	68,943	88,239
<a href="#">CTR</a>	0.52 %	0.44 %	0.17 %	1.12 %	0.54 %
<a href="#">CPC</a>	\$9.24	\$11.76	\$3.09	\$0.48	\$1.38
<a href="#">Social Actions</a>	0	0	0	17,566	17,566
<a href="#">Content Views</a>	73	4,449	28,338	84,379	117,239
<a href="#">Activity Rate</a>	0.08 %	0.66 %	0.30 %	1.37 %	0.72 %
<a href="#">CP Content View</a>	\$59.86	\$7.78	\$1.73	\$0.39	\$1.04
<a href="#">Outgoing Link</a>	0	26	1,188	5,002	6,216
<a href="#">Email Signup</a>	0	0	37	87	124
<a href="#">Visitor Guide Signup</a>	0	0	28	0	28
<a href="#">Video Plays</a>	80,569	672,146	1,225,32...	660,606	2,638,645
<a href="#">Video Compl Rate (VCR)</a>	78 %	98 %	58 %	5 %	56 %

1 - 14 of 14 items

### Campaign Milestones

12/10: Campaign launched

The creative performance of the campaigns is indicated in the figure below.

Widget Name:	Creative Performance
Widget Date Range:	01-01-2019 31-03-2019

Publisher	Creative Concept	Ad Format	Media Cost	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	CPC	Video Plays	VCR	Content Views	CP Content View	Outgoing Link	Email Signup	Visitor Guide Signup
Spotify PMP	Horse Riding	Video	\$17,332	336,545	1,500	0.45 %	\$11.55	336,545	98 %	180	\$96.29	2	0	0
Spotify PMP	TreeHuggers	Video	\$17,279	335,601	1,442	0.43 %	\$11.98	335,601	98 %	137	\$126.12	0	0	0
Facebook	Skunktrain	Static	\$9,119	2,007,875	21,029	1.05 %	\$0.43	0	NaN	28,119	\$0.32	617	31	0
AXM	Horse Riding	Video	\$9,039	618,363	3,049	0.49 %	\$2.96	614,720	58 %	3,684	\$2.45	96	4	6
AXM	TreeHuggers	Video	\$8,979	614,394	3,032	0.49 %	\$2.96	610,603	58 %	3,467	\$2.59	92	1	2
AXM	Kayak	HTML5	\$8,169	2,566,538	2,625	0.10 %	\$3.11	0	NaN	6,150	\$1.33	223	9	5
AXM	Horse Riding	HTML5	\$8,156	2,564,529	2,627	0.10 %	\$3.10	0	NaN	5,515	\$1.48	243	6	3
AXM	BounceX	High Impact	\$5,255	224,034	1,303	0.58 %	\$4.03	0	NaN	1,497	\$3.51	64	5	3
Facebook	Crab	Static	\$5,179	1,179,770	11,970	1.01 %	\$0.43	0	NaN	18,292	\$0.28	3,616	8	0
Facebook	48s Railbikes	Video	\$4,370	524,274	10,317	1.97 %	\$0.42	172,583	5 %	10,429	\$0.42	95	3	0
Facebook	Generic	Carousel	\$4,305	1,056,077	8,330	0.79 %	\$0.52	0	NaN	10,937	\$0.39	331	29	0
Facebook	15s Horses	Video	\$3,879	440,114	7,255	1.65 %	\$0.53	242,288	4 %	5,545	\$0.70	53	7	0
Facebook	15s Tree Hug	Video	\$3,768	403,932	5,994	1.48 %	\$0.63	245,735	5 %	5,418	\$0.70	46	2	0
AXM	Crab	HTML5	\$3,015	946,307	1,065	0.11 %	\$2.83	0	NaN	3,265	\$0.92	324	3	3
AXM	Whales Breach	HTML5	\$3,010	857,745	931	0.11 %	\$3.23	0	NaN	2,340	\$1.29	93	2	4
AXM	Whales Tail	HTML5	\$3,006	858,499	1,028	0.12 %	\$2.92	0	NaN	2,309	\$1.30	49	7	2
Pandora PMP	TreeHuggers	Video	\$1,952	40,503	247	0.61 %	\$7.90	40,418	78 %	0	NaN	0	0	0
Pandora PMP	Horse Riding	Video	\$1,939	40,243	200	0.50 %	\$9.69	40,151	78 %	0	NaN	0	0	0
Facebook	Whales Breach	Static	\$1,786	371,651	2,615	0.70 %	\$0.68	0	NaN	3,799	\$0.47	161	5	0
AXM	SublimeSkinz	High Impact	\$327	22,580	210	0.93 %	\$1.56	0	NaN	57	\$5.74	0	0	0
Facebook	Pet Friendly-Stitch	Static	\$300	50,899	396	0.78 %	\$0.76	0	NaN	461	\$0.65	10	1	0
Facebook	Horse Riding	Static	\$243	72,084	413	0.57 %	\$0.59	0	NaN	618	\$0.39	21	1	0
AXM	TasteofMendo	html5	\$181	32,074	11	0.03 %	\$16.50	0	NaN	54	\$3.36	4	0	0
Facebook	TasteofMendoGrapes	Static	\$141	20,278	280	1.38 %	\$0.50	0	NaN	212	\$0.66	15	0	0
Facebook	TasteofMendoVineyard	Static	\$113	14,396	162	1.13 %	\$0.69	0	NaN	176	\$0.64	21	0	0
Facebook	TasteofMendoRedwoods	Static	\$72	9,894	87	0.88 %	\$0.82	0	NaN	89	\$0.80	11	0	0
Facebook	Kayak	Static	\$47	13,057	95	0.73 %	\$0.49	0	NaN	189	\$0.25	4	0	0
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$120,958</b>	<b>16,222,256</b>	<b>88,213</b>	<b>0.54 %</b>	<b>\$1.37</b>	<b>2,638,644</b>	<b>56 %</b>	<b>112,939</b>	<b>\$1.07</b>	<b>6,191</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>28</b>

As noted in the Q2 report, VMC staff has observed an uptick in mailing list sign-ups and Visitor Guide requests. Results are shown in the Campaign Overview and in the chart above.

Due to higher demand in monthly visitor guide requests, in January 2019 we started the application process to receive marketing bulk mailing rates from the United States Postal Service. In early March 2019 our application was accepted, reducing our bulk mailing rates to less than 35% of their previous cost.

Crab Feast Mendocino was a huge success garnering the following proceeds: \$172,000 gross sales netting \$115,000, the highest figure since the Cook-off began. The Cioppino Feeds sold 485 tickets and for the Crab Cake Cook-off there 554 paying attendees.

The Whale Festivals are held annually on the first three weekends of March, with the Mendocino and Fort Bragg festivals organized by the Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce. The PRM seized an opportunity to add two events to the Whale Festivals (at the head and the tail of the festivals): winemaker dinners at the Heritage House Resort and Cultivo in Ukiah both with Seebass Wines. The figure to the right indicates a 10% lift in revenue for the Whale Festivals.

The lift in both festivals can be attributed, at least in part, to the robust marketing efforts put forth prior to each festival.

### 2019 Fort Bragg Whale Festival

	2019	2018	Difference	%
BPT- Wine	\$6055	\$5530	\$525	9%
BPT- Chowder	\$2010	\$2590	-\$580	-22%
BPT- Beer	\$750	\$740	\$10	1%
Chamber- Wine	\$840	\$210	\$630	300%
Chamber- Chowder	\$730	\$150	\$580	387%
Chamber-Beer	\$125	\$10	\$115	1150%
Masonic Hall-Chowder	\$2815	\$2430	\$385	16%
Masonic Hall- Beer	\$645	\$150	\$495	330%
Masonic Hall - Wine (cash)	\$2155	\$2145	\$10	0%
Masonic Hall- Wine (Square)	\$1050	\$1722	-\$672	-39%
Water	\$59	\$34	\$25	74%
Wine Yokes	\$100	\$10	\$90	900%
Wine Glasses	\$15	\$1	\$14	1400%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17275</b>	<b>\$15687</b>	<b>\$1588</b>	<b>10%</b>

In January 2019, VMC launched two digital billboards, at the Bay Bridge and on Highway 80 at Roseville. Messaging on these assets is changed in conjunction with the implementation of digital campaigns. The wrapped light rail train cars are currently running on two lines in Sacramento's heart and beyond. These two campaigns will run until the end of the fiscal year.

VMC continues to run radio spots with KOZT that reach not only a local audience but listeners in the Bay Area and Sacramento areas.

As a result of a North Coast Tourism Council (NCTC)-sponsored trip to Australia with Visit California in fall 2018, eight group contracts have been signed with both the Beachcomber and the Little River Inn. This means that eight separate groups will generate 98 room nights (14 per group) in 2020. A continued relationship between NCTC/VMC and SunFun Tours (BC, Canada) has also generated 40 room nights for the Beachcomber for fall 2020. Sales also closed a contract (Significant Living Tours) for another 40 room nights, also for the Beachcomber. The strategy for Sales is to reach out to multiple lodging properties that fit the group's criteria.

Visit Mendocino County is part of the North Coast Tourism Council, one of the 12 regions designated by Visit California. NCTC's marketing efforts have a direct correlation to Mendocino County as the county realizes approximately 40% of tourism revenue from the four-county (Mendocino, Humboldt, Lake, and Del Norte) rural region. Another tourism partnership is with Shasta Cascade, also a rural region designated by Visit CA. This quarter we partnered with Shasta Cascade at Go West, and Shasta Cascade contributed 40% of the registration fees for travel events in Denmark and at the Mid-Atlantic Summit. The two regions will also partner at IPW in Anaheim in June.

During the quarter, NCTC issued a revised Redwood Highway map, which was distributed to all four counties, and to consumers at each of the four consumer shows (Sacramento, Los Angeles, Denver and Santa Clara) attended. The map was also distributed to attendees at travel trade events, such as Go West, and to international trade missions and at Visit CA events.

A major challenge for group travel to the county is transportation. NCTC has initiated a partnership with Incredible Adventures in San Francisco to provide van and bus travel solutions. We will report on this relationship in future reports.

NCTC now posts the VMC website's MendoMoments, written by the DMM, to the North Coast web site and social media.

### **INITIATIVE: Improve data-driven decision making through increased participation & "buy in" from all of our partners.**

At its March 2019 City Council meeting, the City of Point Arena adopted the following: "Resolution 2019-09 Supporting City of Point Arena Lodging Establishments Participating in the Countywide Business Improvement District for Tourism Promotion." The resolution was developed with the cooperation of the Point Arena lodging owners. Upon completion of the reinstatement process, the city's lodging properties will rejoin the BID at the beginning of the new fiscal year.



The website hit report to stakeholders continues to go out each month to each website listing for which there is an associated email address. The following table shows the top ten outbound referrals from the VMC website for January through March. It's easy to see the impact of direct marketing in these results.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS: VMC SITE TOP TEN OUTBOUND REFERRALS Q3 2018/19					
January		February		March	
Property	Opens	Property	Opens	Property	Opens
Gualala Hotel	364	Skunk Train FB	5,574	Skunk Train FB	17,231
Skunk Train FB	318	Gualala Hotel	226	Stanford Inn	300
Little River Inn	308	Stanford Inn	169	Gualala Hotel	287
Montgomery Woods	197	Montgomery Woods	168	Montgomery Woods	217
Stanford Inn	189	Little River Inn	163	Little River Inn	166
Chandelier Drive-Thru Tree	171	Chandelier Drive-Thru Tree	147	Orr Hot Spring	155
The Pier Chowder House	158	City of 10,000 Buddhas	138	Lord's Land Ministries	144
Glass Beach	150	Glass Beach	126	Vichy Springs	130
Pennyroyal Farm	133	B. Bryan Preserve	124	Brewery Gulch Inn	130
City of 10,000 Buddhas	131	Vichy Springs	95	Bowling Ball Beach	126

VMC staff is continuing to identify additional partners (vacation rentals are top priority), create a website listing for each of them, and bring them into the reporting fold.

The PR team (Koleen Hamblin and DMM) communicates with partners and stakeholders on a monthly basis informing them of high profile media stories. The PR team also affords stakeholders and partners the opportunity to submit content and information to VMC for Visit California's dissemination. An example of a pitch made during the quarter and published on the VCA site that features the Skunk Train: [Say "I Do!" to the Ultimate California Wedding and Honeymoon.](#)

The VMC team actively identifies new businesses opening in the county making a point to visit properties, meet the owners, and record the information in the team's FileMaker database and MailChimp email resource. The PR team also tracks new and noteworthy openings/upgrades to disseminate twice per year to domestic and international media with the goal of gaining exposure and media visitation.

As VMC's stakeholders see positive results from VMC's efforts to raise awareness of the County, the team anticipates a greater "buy-in" in terms of increased trust in VMC and participation in festivals, trade shows, content submissions, etc. For example, in the quarter six stakeholders and partners provided items for giveaways for consumer show drawings. Two partners attended two different consumer shows to assist highlighting the county and their own businesses.

In the quarter, six new sales contracts were entered into between international tour operators and the Elk Cove Inn and Mendocino Grove. And, as a result of contacts made by the DTD, tour operator Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours has signed a contract with the Skunk Train to buy tickets for their international clients.

Since Q1 2017, VMC has subscribed to Visa Vue, a service offered through Visit California at a discount for DMOs. Visa Vue provides an analysis of international visitor spending patterns in the county on a calendar year quarterly basis. VMC staff has undertaken a thorough analysis of the YOY data, which is shown on the chart on the following page. It should be noted that Visa claims to represent approximately 44% of credit card sales (not just in Mendocino County); the remaining percentage are sales made with Mastercard, American Express, Discover, and other credit cards. VMC does not have access to this data set but one can extrapolate from the data we do have. Another note is that apart from the total dollar amount, spending levels are given in \$100,000 increments so a more granular analysis is impossible to make.

It is clear from the data that visitation peaks in the third quarter of the calendar year. Some key international highlights for the quarter:

- 4,339 cardholders (4,231 consumer; 108 commercial) with a total spend of \$569,738 vs third quarter: 8,885/\$1,026,130; a decline of 51% and 44%, respectively
- 9,288 transactions at an average of \$61.34 per ticket
- Canada easily remains the top originating country for both the number of cardholders and the spend amount: 150,000 and \$200,000 respectively
- Lodging is the top market segment by spend amount at \$200,000 for the quarter
- The top three YOY market segments by spend growth are fuel, retail goods, and restaurants
- Countries which showed the most growth were Canada (+9.8%), the UK (+12.3%), Australia (+10.4%), Mexico (+14.2%) and Switzerland (+18.5%). Countries showing decreased spending were Germany (-11.4%), France (-29.1%), Spain (-16.0%) and China (-11.2%). Denmark was flat. Note that quarterly variations are expected due to vacation schedules and other local factors.

#### **INITIATIVE: Develop a data sharing process that offers context and insights for partners**

The DMM and Executive Director worked with the BID Advisory Board to update BID assessment and TOT returns. These updates were included in the BID Advisory Report, as an actionable recommendation for the Mendocino County Treasurer-Tax Collector's office.

#### **IMPERATIVE: Cultivate VMC's relationships & collaborations**

VMC staff continues to work closely with Mendocino Winegrowers Inc. on the revised vision for Taste Mendocino.

The PRM was seated as a board member of the Willits Chamber of Commerce and as a board member for Destination Hopland. MCTC Board members have taken an active interest in collaborating with the PRM on Hotel Adoption Program visits. For example, in March the PRM and Sharon Davis (Mendocino Coast Chamber) visited a Fort Bragg property together and plan to take on future visits together.

- **OBJECTIVE: YOY increase in partner participation in festivals**

**INTERNATIONAL VISITATION TO MENDOCINO COUNTY EXPRESSED VIA DATA FROM VISA VUE (BY CALENDAR YEAR)**

**CALENDAR YEAR DATA**

	Q1 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2017	Q2 2018	Q3 2017	Q3 2018	Q4 2017	Q4 2018
Total dollar amount charged	\$365,750	\$449,251	\$679,059	\$707,677	\$1,137,250	\$1,026,130	\$540,821	\$569,738
Y/Y increase/decrease *	13.00%	22.80%	9.50%	4.20%	10.30%	-9.70%	-6.30%	5.30%
How the money is spent **								
Lodging	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$400,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Restaurants	below \$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Other ***	below \$100,000	\$100,000+	\$200,000 +	\$300,000+	\$300,000+	\$300,000+	\$200,000+	\$200,000+
Ranking by country								
1	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada
2	UK	China	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	UK	UK
3	China	UK	UK	UK	UK	UK	France	Germany
4	Australia	Germany	Australia	France	France	France	Germany	France
5	Germany	Italy	Italy	Australia	Australia	Australia	Spain	Spain
Other top 10 countries	France	France	France	China	Switzerland	Switzerland	Australia	Australia
	Taiwan	Australia	China	Denmark	Italy	Denmark	China	Mexico
	Singapore	Taiwan	Switzerland	Switzerland	China	Italy	Mexico	China
	Japan	Malaysia	Japan	Puerto Rico	Denmark	Mexico	Italy	Switzerland
	Switzerland	Singapore	Denmark	Italy	Spain	China	Denmark	Denmark

\* YOY 2017 / 2016 figures are unavailable for verification purposes

\*\* Numbers beyond the total, lodging, restaurants etc., are given in increments rather than exact amounts

\*\*\* "Other" includes Fuel, Food and Grocery, Retail, Discount stores, Home Improvement and Apparel;

\*\*\* Visa reports approximately 44% of credit card charges. Other credit card data is unavailable.

\*\*\*\* Total Direct Visitor Spending for 2018 will be available in the May 2018 Dean Runyan report.

Total International Visa Visitor Spending 2017***	Total International Visa Visitor Spending	Total Direct Visitor Spending 2017	International Spending with Visa as % of Total
\$2,722,880	\$2,752,796	\$456,000,000	0.60%

YOY increase is 1.1%

In the final quarter of this fiscal year, the PRM will begin outreach to stakeholders and partners for their participation in Mushroom Feast Mendocino.

- **OBJECTIVE: YOY increase in “opportunities” page visitation on VMC website**

MCTC’s internal website, MendocinoTourism.org, is the repository for information, agendas, minutes, reports, plans, and research relating to the Mendocino County Tourism Commission. One of the site pages is “Opportunities,” where notifications about MCTC Board of Directors and BID Advisory Board seats, trade show and educational opportunities, among other notices. Trade show and educational opportunities continue to be posted. The team is investigating ways to prompt engagement with the page by stakeholders.

- **OBJECTIVE: Solicit new applicants for BID and MCTC Board positions and committee membership**

Currently the MCTC Board is fully seated. Solicitations will begin for the two upcoming vacant seats in the summer. The BID Advisory Board will have vacant seat in the upcoming term and the ED will work to fill that seat.

**INITIATIVE: Foster collaboration and countywide alignment by creating and developing the “go to” website for all tourism stakeholders.**

A round-up of Q3 website analytics reveals<sup>1</sup>:

- Top line traffic has risen significantly since introduction of campaign
- Q3 2019 visitors are up over 104% from Q3 2018 (92,336 vs. 45,572)
- Most traffic is from Northern California San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento. International traffic is increasing as well.
- Business listings have received 43,387 views in Q3
- Demographics are shifting to targets 25–44 years old
- Highest interest — traveler, parenting and food & drink

Website traffic is being driven by the robust digital ad campaigns running on Facebook, Instagram, Spotify, and the programmatic targeting and retargeting buys, and outdoor advertising.

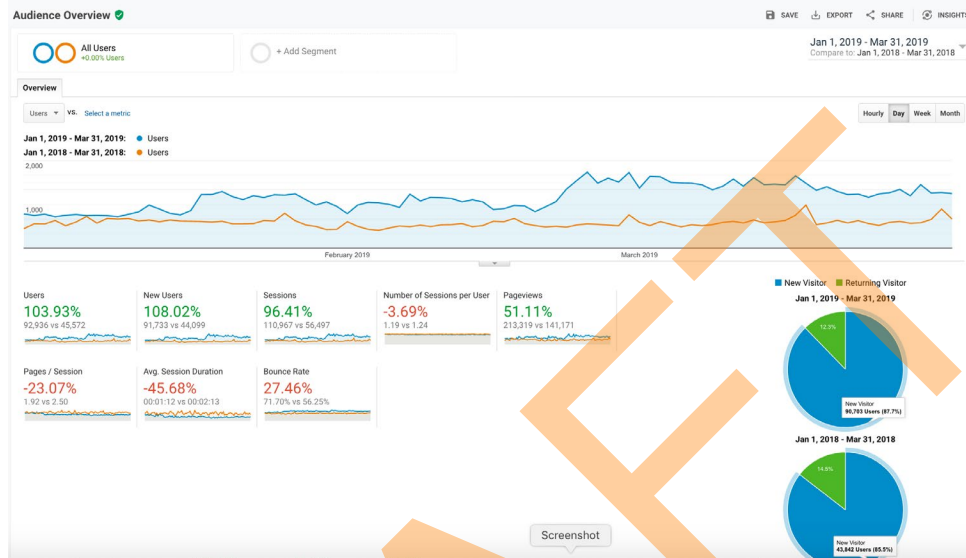
Top website channels have changed quite radically YOY with organic searches dipping to 27% (2018: 72.3%) but a huge increase in directed traffic generated via digital marketing efforts: 320,105.88%; 54,435 users vs 17! Of these, the majority of traffic is generated by Facebook (78.76%), followed by programmatic advertising (17.81%).

A review of user demographics reveals a 3.58% YOY increase in the Millennial audience. Mobile device users have an overwhelming preference for Apple products, taking nine of the ten top spots among users on the move.

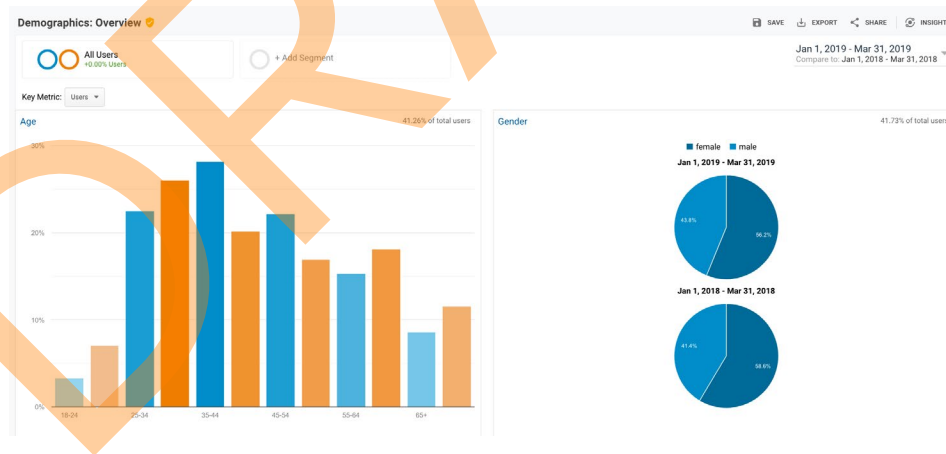
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<sup>1</sup> The full quarterly Analytics Report may be viewed at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/y70710yufbp2mqv/VMC%20Q1%20%2719%20Analytics%20.pdf?dl=0>

## Traffic levels rising significantly from new campaign



## Traffic Hitting Millennial and Gen X sweet spot.



An analysis of website visitors demonstrates that they are value-conscious, cooking enthusiasts who own pets, and love the outdoors. The website is also seeing a rise in international visitation with a YOY 16.6% increase in visitors from the UK and 46.4% increase in Australians reading about Mendocino County.

Our targeted geo-focused campaigns are delivering big increases, with San Francisco showing a YOY increase of 143.54%, Sacramento an impressive 371.48%, and San Jose at 280.12%.

For the Whale Festivals, the DMM created a landing page for the festivals' anchor events, which can be viewed at <https://visitmendocino.com/meet-local-celebrities> and the marketing team launched a robust digital campaign to solicit ticket buyers for the anchor events. For Taste Mendocino, the DMM created an event landing page: <https://visitmendocino.com/taste-mendocino-2019>, and the marketing team is in the throes of a digital campaign to promote that event.

### **INITIATIVE: Strengthen regional tourism relationships to leverage broader marketing opportunities**

The DMM submits media content to Visit California that highlights unique aspects of Mendocino County. This is an ongoing project.

The ED continues to work with the Lake County Tourism Improvement District Steering Committee to implement the structure of their organization. The DTD plans a FAM visit to Lake County in May 2019.

Sonoma County Airport provided swag for the Denver Travel and Adventure Show in February to help promote the new United Airlines service from Santa Rosa to Denver.

The team has created a replacement for the consumer and trade “green bags”, which are now orange and highlight the County Chamber and “Visit” organizations.

For the year, the Sales goal is promote Mendocino County to 150 tour operators. Outreach is done via trade events and sales missions. During the quarter, the DTD made 109 contacts pursuant to this goal.

To date, one coastal hotel has signed up with GuestBook.com, an affinity program for smaller unaffiliated hotels.

### **INITIATIVE: Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders**

As noted elsewhere in this report the PR team regularly communicates with tourism stakeholders sharing media coverage of the county and in Q2, the PR team sent three updates to stakeholders and partners. The DMM also shared PR hits and other news on the VMC Partners at Work Facebook group. In addition, the DMM ensures stakeholders receive any articles that result from media FAM visits.

MCTC partnered with the West Business Development Center to introduce and execute the first in an educational series of stakeholder and partner hospitality workshops. Workshops in the quarter were held both inland and on the coast, and included the following topics:

- Innkeeping 101
- Social Media
- Your Website is Your Brand

Attendance at these workshops was strong and they were enthusiastically received. The PRM is seeking input from stakeholders as to topics for future workshops.

VMC continues to partner with KOZT on radio spots that target stakeholders and raise their awareness of opportunities available for their participation.

VMC staff has initiated a regular series of inland and coastal stakeholder meet-and-greet mixers to introduce each team member to attendees and to provide information and resources for stakeholder business development.

## IMPERATIVE: Raise awareness of the Mendocino County experience

- OBJECTIVE: Year-over-year increase in Mendocino County awareness score**

Social media also plays a critical role in creating and raising brand awareness as evidenced by the figures shown in the Campaign Overview.. The figure below shows the YOY metrics for the quarter. The Total number includes Paid impressions., which we've broken out into Paid Impressions and Organic+Viral Impressions. Impressions/Post are based on the latter number to avoid skewing the figures. For this report, and going forward, we will track Hashtags / Mentions as a metric for Instagram.

Social Media Results YOY FY 2017 v. FY 2018 Q3					
	FACEBOOK			INSTAGRAM	
	FY 2017 Q3	FY 2018 Q3		FY 2017 Q3	FY 2018 Q3
<b>Impressions</b>	248,498	6,858,962 Total (6,280,547 Paid / 578,415 Organic+Viral)	<b>Likes Received</b>	13,892	14,300
<b>Engagement</b>	15,136	24,428	<b>Comments</b>	249	176
<b>Link Clicks</b>	372	69,977	<b>Hashtags / Mentions</b>		697
<b>Posts</b>	23	26	<b>Posts</b>	26	27
<b>Impressions/Post</b>	10,804	22,246	<b>Likes/Post</b>	534	530
<b>Engagements/Post</b>	658	940	<b>Comments/Post</b>	9.6	6
<b>Fan Base</b>	57,082	58,116	<b>Followers</b>	10,020	12,906

VMC hosted a social media influencer trip in January 2019. The four travellers from the Outbound Collective began their three-night stay in Ukiah ending at Pennyroyal Farm in Boonville, with plenty of stops elsewhere in the county. Their entire adventure, which played well on Facebook, may be viewed here: <https://www.theoutbound.com/benjamin-canevari/mendocino-magic-72-hours-of-northern-california-adventure>.

Upon completion of the fiscal year, VMC will receive the results of a six-month Nielsen study undertaken as part of the contract with MMWW. This important piece of research will be critical to the development of VMC's marketing efforts in the next fiscal year.

- OBJECTIVE: Year-over-year increases in impressions and ad equivalency**

The PR team was pleased to announce a series of A-list features that hit in February and March 2019 in such worthy publications as Travel + Leisure, Sunset, Outside magazine, AFAR, Eating Well, National Geographic Traveller, and more. Often, articles take a long time to hatch.... from the initial outreach to interested media, finding mutually agreeable dates, arranging an engaging itinerary, and conducting follow-up post-visit to publication.

YOY PR Results for Q3										
Year	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2017	FY 2018
	Hits		Ad Equivalency		Impressions		Releases		FAM Visits	
January	61	54	\$6,319,924.37	\$1,978,988.23	74,035,151	112,189,665	2	1	8	4
February	49	32	\$1,258,711.72	\$11,071,731.00	30,097,088	63,748,065	2	1	2	4
March	54	83	\$8,546,804.00	\$3,937,477.70	97,296,511	67,558,336	1	0	2	1
YOY Total	164		\$16,125,440.09		201,428,750		5		12	
YTD		567		\$51,154,585.03		1,262,973,472		12		34
2018 Goals		300		\$6.6 million		150 million		11		18

- OBJECTIVE: Year-over-year increase in experience perception score on in-market visitor survey**

At its next meeting, the Visitor Services Committee will make a motion to approve and move forward with the proposed in-market survey.

The DMM is working with TheorySF on the redesign of the Visitor Guide. We anticipate having a final design by the end of April 2019.

**INITIATIVE: Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception**

As noted earlier in this report, the Marketing team is working hard to raise awareness of the Mendocino County brand with a full-on digital marketing campaign, social media advertising, and outdoor advertising that began in January 2019. This campaign will continue until the end of the current fiscal year with rollouts for Taste Mendocino (in San Francisco on April 27), the Anderson Valley Pinot Festival (May 17–19), and July 4 around the county.

Following the DTD's international sales missions to Denmark and Iceland, the DTD sent approximately 100 leads to county stakeholders for their follow-up.



The DTD continues to solicit partners and stakeholders for giveaway donations and their participation at trade shows.

**INITIATIVE: Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events**

VMC staff are eagerly anticipating their attendance at Taste Mendocino on April 27 at San Francisco's Fort Mason. The ED is working with wine guru Ziggy Eschliman to develop a new concept for the events surrounding Winesong (September 6 & 7, 2019).

**INITIATIVE: Explore our options to influence & shape potential cannabis tourism**

In December 2017, responsibility for cannabis initiatives were transferred to the Mendocino County Promotional Alliance. This Initiative is therefore complete.

DRAFT

# Appendix

## Glossary of Terms

This glossary is included to explain terms used in this plan and in other reports and documents issued by Visit Mendocino County. While staff and contractors are familiar with the terminology, some of the terms need a brief explanation.

<b>Advertising equivalency</b>	This dollar figure represents the amount of money it would take to purchase the equivalent in advertising space in a print publication or digital equivalent. The VMC PR team uses a 1:1 ratio unlike many PR firms who use a multiplier to boost numbers.
<b>Impressions</b>	The number of views a print or digital article is estimated to reach based on circulation and subscription data.
<b>Media Placement</b>	A story (print or digital) about an aspect of Mendocino County that arises from PR efforts.
<b>Media Mission</b>	A trip by the PR team to a particular market, e.g., Vancouver BC, to meet local journalists and writers and inspire visitation to and coverage of Mendocino County.
<b>Releases</b>	This can either refer to a press release or a “hot sheet,” which is distributed to the press and highlights new and upcoming businesses and openings in the county.
<b>FAM</b>	Familiarization tour or trip. Media FAMs involve members of the media who are vetted by the PR team prior to a visit. Sales FAMs apply to tour group operators who are visiting the county with the aim of including Mendocino in tour packages.
<b>Millennials</b>	The segment of the population born between the early and the mid-1990s to early 2000s. Also known as Generation Y, they are the children of baby boomers and older Gen Xers.
<b>Gen-Xers</b>	The population segment born between the early-to-mid 1960s and ending birth years ranging from the late 1970s to early 1980s. Children of the Baby Boomers.
<b>Baby Boomers</b>	Those born between the early-to-mid 1940s up to about 1964.
<b>Content marketing</b>	Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.
<b>Google Analytics</b>	A reporting tool provided by Google that can be used to analyze traffic, ad words, digital marketing campaigns, demographics, etc. for VisitMendocino.com.
<b>Facebook Insights</b>	A reporting tool for analyzing traffic, advertising campaigns, and other activities on Facebook.
<b>Activity Provider</b>	A person located in a tourist destination who provides a unique, local activity for a visitor to do while on vacation. Examples of such activities include kayaking, bike riding or arts and crafts, among others.
<b>Free Independent Traveler (FIT)</b>	A person or a couple that is not traveling with a group; usually references foreign travelers out on their own (Foreign Independent Traveler).

<b>Inbound Tour Operator</b>	Someone specializing in providing tours to overseas travelers to a destination, either operating the tour themselves or working through established partnerships with local suppliers.
<b>Receptives</b>	In effect, “middle men” between tour operators and hotel/lodging owners, chiefly in overseas markets. Receptives obtain contracts with hotels for booking arrangements and offer these to tour operators looking to satisfy tourist demand.
<b>Search Engine Marketing</b>	A marketing tactic using paid advertising services so that interested clients and customers can reach a business quicker and easier while searching online.
<b>Block</b>	A number of rooms, seats, or spaces reserved in advance, usually by wholesalers, tour operators, or receptive operators who intend to sell them as components of tour packages.
<b>Conversion</b>	Getting “heads in beds” or otherwise closing the sale. Differs from “hospitality.” Hospitality is being warm, friendly and helpful. Conversion is active selling.
<b>Demand generators</b>	Strategies and programs developed by DMOs and suppliers to generate destination demand. Examples include festivals, events, cultural tours, and consumer promotion.
<b>Engagement</b>	On Facebook (and other social media platforms), engagement is when people perform actions on your Page. They may like a post, click on a link, or comment on an image for example. With Facebook Insights, engagement is measured as the number of times a post is clicked, liked, shared, or commented on.
<b>Reach</b>	A measure of the range of influence of any content; it is the measurement of how content is spread across various social media channels. Think of it as the number of eyeballs a piece of content is getting. On Facebook, for example, “total reach” is the number of people that have seen a particular post.
<b>Selected Key Industry Associations</b>	
<b>DMA West</b>	Destination Marketing Associations West, a membership organization of visitor bureaus throughout the western United States.
<b>Visit California</b>	The tourism marketing agency for the state.
<b>California Travel Association</b>	Membership organization offering education and advocacy for state tourism operators.
<b>U.S. Travel Association</b>	National, non-profit organization representing and advocating for all components of the travel industry.
<b>Destination International</b>	Global association of travel industry agencies and groups, offering education and advocacy for members. Visit Mendocino holds a certification from the globally recognized Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP); this serves as a visible industry distinction that defines quality and performance standards in destination marketing and management.
<b>Brand USA</b>	Agency chiefly responsible for marketing the USA as a destination to the rest of the world.
<b>North Coast Tourism Council</b>	One of eight rural regions designated by Visit CA to encourage international tourism beyond the gateways. Mendocino County is one of the four counties in the Council.