



Marketing Plan

July 2026 to June 2027

Executive Summary

The Mendocino County Lodging BID enters its TWENTY-FIRST year marketing the County of Mendocino. Over the past 20 years, we have seen different DMOs come and go. First it was the Mendocino County Lodging Association and the Mendocino County Promotional Alliance – a combined 36 Board Members guiding the efforts. In 2009, Visit Mendocino County was formed as a way to streamline efforts, programs, oversight and effectiveness of the BID’s marketing initiatives. In 2016, the county formed what we now know as the Mendocino County Tourism Commission.

Having had two decades of experience, MCTC proposes a significant shift in how we market the county, informed by years of accumulated brand research, website and booking data, as well as direct feedback from our lodging operators and other stakeholders.

At its core is a change in how we measure success: every dollar we spend, every campaign we run, every media visit we host, and every event we support will be evaluated against overnight visitation. Impressions, reach, and advertising equivalency remain useful internal gauges, but they are no longer the headline metrics. Any activity that can’t be connected in a meaningful way to bookings gets deprioritized.

To make this work we’re restructuring our approach along two parallel tracks. The coastal region from Gualala to the Lost Coast, together with Anderson Valley, will be marketed primarily to individual leisure travelers who are already predisposed to seek out a remote, wild coastline experience. The inland corridor along Highway 101 will be marketed to drive-through travelers, small groups, and conferences, where its accessibility and infrastructure are genuine competitive advantages. Our brand research has consistently told us that trying to compete for leisure travelers inland at the same level as the coast is not a battle we can win. This plan stops trying to fight it.

Alongside these shifts, we are bringing public relations in-house. After many productive years partnering with an outside PR agency, the time is right to build this capacity internally, both to tighten the connection between PR activity and lodging outcomes and to ensure our PR impact reporting reflects meaningful numbers and metrics. The enormous impression metric (in the billions) has the counter-intuitive effect of watering down perceived impact, and we want to shift our focus towards targeted placements over impressions. This transition will be managed carefully through the fiscal year.

We are also leaning harder into generative engine optimization and AI search visibility, video-first content, and co-op partnerships with individual visitor-serving businesses throughout the county. We are going to stop selling “Mendocino County” as a broad idea and start selling the specific reason a traveler should book in specific regions during specific seasons.

VMC remains committed to stewarding and amplifying the total Mendocino County experience. The plan below describes how we intend to do that in a way that is more accountable to our lodging operators, more honest about where we compete effectively, and more adaptive to the way travelers actually plan trips today.

With excitement and optimism,
Scott Schneider
Interim Executive Director

Strategic Plan

This Marketing Plan adheres to the initiatives outlined in our strategic plan, adopted at the organization's May 2021 Board of Directors meeting and put into action at the start of the 2021/2022 fiscal year. The strategic plan remains the anchor for our work. The pivots described here represent a refinement of how we execute, not a departure from the core direction. (The Strategic Plan is attached as Appendix 1)

Vision

A diversified and thriving economy supported by our community, offering enriching experiences for our guests.

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

Position

To support our stakeholders, generate economic activity for county residents through tourism, and inspire our visitors, Visit Mendocino County:

- Markets the Mendocino County experience to key regional and domestic markets, differentiated by region;
- Creates, develops, and manages brand awareness for the county, leading with categories where we hold genuine unprompted mindshare;
- Connects people and organizations to opportunities, including direct co-investment with lodging partners;
- Provides tourism resources and information to in-county partners;
- Optimizes return on investment through responsible fiscal management, measured primarily through overnight visitation

Guiding Principles for FY 2026/2027

Before describing the specific work streams, we want to take a moment to be very clear about the principles driving this year's plan. They aren't simply aspirational; they are filters through which every tactical decision in the following sections has been made, in an attempt to align our tactics more closely to the outcomes we're trying to achieve.

1. Overnight visitation is the single primary metric.

All other indicators are secondary. VMC will build out a network of representative lodging properties, with at least one from each major category (resort, inn, B&B, motel, vacation rental) in each area of the county, who are willing to share monthly or quarterly occupancy data and ADR when possible. Historically we have been limited by the data we have access to, especially compared to other regions in our competitive set where the majority of lodging regularly reports to STAR; we need to stop accepting this limitation, and put together our own dataset with a subset of partners. We believe we are finally at a place as a county where this is an achievable goal. This will give us a genuine model of month-to-month and year-over-year performance, and a way to evaluate whether marketing activity is actually moving the needle for our operators.

2. Two regions, two strategies.

The coastal region and Anderson Valley will be marketed to individual leisure travelers, leaning into the wild coastline positioning that our brand research has confirmed as our strongest unprompted category. The inland corridor will be marketed primarily to drive-through travelers on Highway 101 and to small groups and conferences, where the Ukiah Conference Center and other inland assets give us a real competitive position. One voice, two conversations.

3. Proportional investment.

Historically, roughly 80% of BID collections comes from the coast and Anderson Valley and 20% from along the 101 corridor. While every region will continue to be marketed and supported, the broad distribution of marketing investment should reflect where the revenue is generated, both because it is equitable and because it produces better overall BID returns.

4. Lead with what travelers already associate with us.

Coastal beauty, wine, and cannabis are the three categories where travelers think of Mendocino unprompted. Outdoor and nature score well when prompted, but we will never out-shout Yosemite or Tahoe. Of the three unprompted categories, the coastal pillar is the easiest lift: strongest mindshare, cleanest advertising environment, and a California coastal travel sector that is currently on the rise. The plan leans there.

5. Specificity over generality.

Travelers do not book "Mendocino County." They book a specific room at a specific property for a specific reason on a specific weekend. Every piece of content we produce should be one click from a booking. Every media visit should be paired with a lodging partner doing something genuinely worth covering. Every shoulder season week should have a bookable reason attached to it.

6. Video-first, authentic-first content.

We begin the shift toward video as our primary content format across social, web, and paid. High-impact imagery still has a role, particularly for direct-engagement moments on social, but the organizing logic is video. Alongside this, we are investing in ongoing content creator relationships that produces authentic, in-the-moment content rather than periodic planned shoots

Action Plans

Marketing & Advertising

VMC's marketing and advertising work for FY 2026/2027 reorganizes around the two-track regional approach. The objective is to direct our spend and our creative in ways that match the actual decisions travelers are making about each part of the county, not to dilute our overall brand story.

Coastal Track: Individual Leisure Travel

The coastal region, from Gualala to the Lost Coast, plus Anderson Valley, will be marketed to individual leisure travelers. These are travelers with some explorer or adventurer psychographic tendency, including those staying in Fort Bragg or at established major properties. The drive filters them. Our marketing should not try to undo that filter; it should reward it.

- We lead with coastal beauty, with wine as a supporting pillar, and cannabis as a shading when viable;
- We feature pillar lodging properties in paid and organic content, tied to specific offerings, vibe-centric experiences, seasonal packages, and specific 'adventures' rather than generic destination imagery;
- We position our coastal content against the broader momentum in California coastal travel, a segment currently growing;
- We retire the one-size-fits-all approach to the Skunk Train, Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, Point Arena Lighthouse, and similar iconic attractions, digging deeper into these stories, pairing them with lodging content, and reinvigorating the energy around them;

Inland Track: Drive-Through, Groups, and Conferences

The inland corridor along Highway 101 will be marketed for its access advantages to Bay Area and Sacramento travelers, both those passing through on their way further north or south, and those coming specifically for small group and conference business. This is a market inland can win. It does not require inland to compete with the coast for the same traveler.

- Reposition inland advertising and content around ease of access from Bay Area and Sacramento;
- Build a dedicated small-group and conference marketing stream around the Ukiah Conference Center and complementary lodging;
- Develop drive-through itineraries that position inland stops as the right break or overnight between larger trips;
- Coordinate inland messaging with Anderson Valley wine and food partners where the traveler decision overlaps;

Shared Marketing Infrastructure

- Continue to leverage the Magic is Real brand while adapting creative treatments to each regional track;
- Dovetail where appropriate with Visit California's Ultimate Playground campaign, particularly around coastal and outdoor pillars;
- Maintain and continue to improve VisitMendocino.com as the central conversion point for all campaigns, with clear regional landing pages for coastal and inland audiences;
- Produce targeted landing pages for specific campaigns, festivals, and co-op promotions;

- Continue developing engaging creative assets: photography, video, graphics, brochures, county maps, and the visitor guide;

Paid Media Concentration

Paid media will be concentrated where our data says we convert, not where we have simply always advertised.

- Sacramento: primary paid market. Our strongest conversion data, repeatedly confirmed across campaigns;
- Bay Area: secondary paid market. Reachable, with meaningful growth potential;
- Southern Oregon: tertiary paid market. Small but high-affinity, strong fit for our positioning;
- Los Angeles: receives PR and influencer investment for long-term awareness, with no paid conversion campaigns until awareness catches up to a level where conversion spend is justified;

Campaign Priorities for FY 2026/2027

- Coastal pillar campaign, running year-round with seasonal creative refreshes;
- Shoulder season “reason to book” calendar, with one specific bookable reason per week October through May outside holiday periods;
- Inland drive-through and small-group campaign, ramping through the year as the positioning takes hold;
- Co-op campaigns with individual lodging partners, major stakeholders and regional organizations (described in the Partnerships section);
- Holiday and festival campaigns tied to Seafood & Sips Mendocino and Harvest Festival Mendocino, with refreshed lodging tie-ins;

Website Maintenance & Upgrades

VMC staff and our web contractor will maintain and extend VisitMendocino.com with an emphasis on conversion to lodging partners.

- Expand the website framework as new technologies and best practices become available;
- Continue updating and evolving AI integration on the website as the underlying technology shifts;
- Maintain Bookdirect.net integration and continue onboarding partners to the booking link;
- Perform regular usability audits for mobile and desktop browsing;
- Develop cleaner, deeper regional landing architecture to support the two-track marketing approach;
- Refine analytics for programmatic tracking of conversion events, not just page views;
- Provide ongoing staff training on website best practices;

Brand Management

- Manage the Visit Mendocino County brand and keep messaging aligned across regions;
- Develop regional creative sub-treatments that remain consistent with the master brand;
- Explore new brand partnerships that reinforce our pillar categories;
- Support partners and stakeholders in effective use of the brand style guide;

Creative Development

- Website content and landing pages;
- Short-form vertical video for Instagram Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts;
- Longer-form video for YouTube and site embeds;
- Online and offline advertising creative, built video-first;
- Retargeting campaigns;
- Organic social content, leaning on roving content creators;
- Festival creative and accompanying landing pages;
- Print opportunities where ROI is defensible;
- County maps and the visitor guide;

Research

- Occupancy and ADR data-sharing network with representative lodging partners in each region and category;
- Ongoing secondary research via Visit California and industry sources;
- Periodic primary research (focus groups, intercepts) as specific questions require;
- Brand awareness tracking over time;
- Creative testing on major campaigns before broad deployment;

Overall Marketing Plan Goal

Drive overnight visitation to Mendocino County, measured through the representative lodging panel's occupancy and ADR data, with secondary reporting on website traffic, booking link click-throughs, and engagement.

Matrixes will be used to analyze program effectiveness as it relates to direct results of overnight visitation. Every campaign, event, PR effort, and co-op promotion will have, if possible, a direct booking path, trackable links, lodging partner participation, and include a simple post-campaign report. Participation from lodging partners, event partners and others working with VMC and its campaigns is vital to obtaining proper data and determining ROI effectiveness and success.

Public Relations

Public relations for FY 2026/2027 will be managed internally for the first time in VMC's history. After many years of productive partnership with an outside agency, the decision has been made to bring PR in-house, aligned with two goals: tightening the connection between PR activity and lodging outcomes, and producing impact reporting that is realistic and defensible. VMC will recruit and hire a dedicated PR professional, supported by existing marketing and communications staff.

Transition Plan

- Finalize the internal PR role description, compensation band, and reporting structure in the first quarter of the fiscal year;
- Conduct a structured handoff from the current outside agency, including active media relationships, ongoing pitches, and subscription transitions;
- Review and retain the subscription tools that continue to make sense (e.g., media tracking, media database, distribution platform) under direct VMC contract;

- Rebuild the PR impact reporting methodology with conservative, industry-standard measurement, including a 1:1 AVE (advertising value equivalency) ratio and genuine placement verification;

Program Objectives

Drive overnight visitation throughout Mendocino County through:

- Promotion of a clarified, sustainable brand as a premier California coastal destination, with differentiated inland positioning where relevant;
- Stimulating demand during critical shoulder seasons;
- Building awareness among key market niches and lifestyle segments to support off-season revenue and ADR;
- Sustaining collaborative relationships with Visit California, California Travel Association, North Coast Tourism Council, and other industry partners to stretch our PR reach;

Strategies

- Pitch deep, not wide. Match writers to their genuine interests and pair each visit with one or two lodging partners doing something worth covering;
- Proactive media relations tied to specific debuts, seasonal moments, events, and partner stories, rather than generic destination pitches;
- Convert California getaway-predisposed travelers by foregrounding distinct, specific benefits over broad destination framing;
- Influencer partnerships selected for audience fit and demonstrated ability to drive consideration, not follower count alone;

Targets

Demographics:

- Primary: Millennial, Gen Z, Gen X
- Secondary: Baby Boomers and the time-affluent market
- HHI: \$120k+

Geographic:

- Primary: State of California (approximately 80% of U.S. market)
- Secondary: Key fly/drive markets including Oregon, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado
- Tertiary: Select international and Western Canada opportunities via Visit California cooperative programming

Core Program

- Development of the FY 2026/2027 Communications Platform, aligned to the two-track regional approach
- Proactive media relations campaign tied to timely themes, events, debuts, seasons, and trends
- Target: approximately 8 to 10 releases over the fiscal year, prioritizing quality of pickup over volume

Media Missions and In-Market Editorial Appointments

- One to two in-market editorial missions, prioritized by Visit California cooperative availability and by markets where we have genuine story opportunities

- Los Angeles prioritized for long-term awareness building, paired with influencer cultivation

Media Familiarization and Influencer Program

- Shift from broad three-day group tours to depth-focused individual and small-group visits
- Match each writer or influencer to their specific area of interest (food, wine, outdoors, event specific, etc.)
- Pair each visit with one or two lodging partners doing something genuinely interesting, letting the writer go deep rather than sampling six properties
- Target: approximately 18 to 24 individual media and influencer visits across the fiscal year
- Continue vetting and managing all media requests, with tighter evaluation of lodging-outcome potential

Trade Shows

- Society of American Travel Writers Annual Conference
- Visit California cooperative opportunities as available (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Media Bootcamp, in-market missions)
- Target attendance: 2 to 3, evaluated for return on participation

Community and Stakeholder Relations

- Distribute stakeholder PR highlights on a monthly basis
- Maintain visibility in the local media landscape
- Support stakeholder property openings, renovations, and new offerings with targeted pitching

Digital Footprint and Social Media Coordination

- Coordinate PR efforts closely with owned social and content streams
- Expand and maintain the media and influencer relationship database

Crisis Communications

- Maintain crisis communications readiness for fires, pandemics, earthquakes, social unrest, tourist incidents, drought, and similar events
- Coordinate tourism partner outreach, draft key messaging and releases, and conduct media outreach as needed

PR Toolkit

- Media tracking service (under direct VMC contract going forward)
- Media database subscription (under direct VMC contract)
- PR reporting and distribution subscriptions as needed
- Society of American Travel Writers membership

Programming

- Execute the annual Public Relations Workplan and Timeline
- Draft and distribute monthly PR and Media Impact Reports, using conservative and verified measurement
- Participate in client and VMC Board and marketing committee meetings as needed
- Participate in site visits for new hotel properties and attractions

Key Performance Indicators

KPIs for FY 2026/2027 are intentionally reset to reflect the in-house transition, more conservative measurement methodology, and a focus on placement quality tied to lodging outcomes. At the same time, we will continue reporting on legacy KPIs (such as high-number impressions for PR and effective paid value) for continuity. Year-over-year comparisons to previous cycles should account for the methodology change.

- Qualified media placements: target range to be finalized with the new PR hire in place, with emphasis on placements that drive traffic to specific lodging partners or bookable experiences;
- Advertising equivalency reported at a strict 1:1 ratio, with no multiplier;
- Potential reach reported conservatively based on verified circulation figures;
- Placement-to-booking attribution where technically feasible through URL tracking, partner feedback, and website referral data;

Content, Social Media & Generative Search

VisitMendocino.com remains our calling card, and our social channels are now where many travelers first encounter the destination. For FY 2026/2027, this work stream expands in two directions: a commitment to video-first content production, and a dedicated investment in generative engine optimization and AI-powered search visibility.

Video-First Content Strategy

- Video is the primary production format across paid, owned, and earned channels
- Short-form vertical video for TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, produced in volume
- Longer-form video for YouTube and the website, particularly for pillar lodging property stories, festival coverage, and multi-day itineraries
- High-impact still imagery retained as a complement, particularly where beauty drives direct engagement on social
- Every lodging partner story, every festival, and every shoulder season “reason to book” has a video lead asset

Roving Content Creator(s)

A portion of content budget will fund a freelance creator on ongoing retainer, working in tandem with the marketing team. The goal is not scheduled shoots. The goal is a constant pipeline of authentic content capturing what is actually happening in the county: a brewery on a Tuesday, the coast when the whales show up, a small property doing something interesting that cannot necessarily generate its own content. This gives us a steady flow of real, textured material rather than periodic planned productions.

Social Media Programming

- Work with local photographers and videographers to boost organic social
- Integrate specific, bookable calls to action into social posts where appropriate
- Grow engagement on all channels year-over-year
- Expand leveraging user-generated photos and video (with an emphasis on lodging partnerships) with appropriate permissions

Generative Engine Optimization and AI Search

Travelers increasingly plan trips through AI-generated answers and conversational search interfaces. Traditional search engine rankings still matter, but a growing share of early-funnel research happens

inside systems like ChatGPT, Google's AI Overviews, Perplexity, and others. This shift is already underway, and it is accelerating. VMC has begun building in this direction through website schema work and an on-site AI chatbot. For FY 2026/2027, this becomes a deliberate, ongoing effort.

- Continue structuring website content, lodging partner information, and experience descriptions to surface well in AI-generated search results
- Maintain clean, well-structured schema across the site
- Expand the AI chatbot's capabilities and the underlying content it can draw from
- Monitor AI search visibility for Mendocino County and key partner properties, and adjust content strategy as needed
- Share learnings with lodging partners so they can improve their own AI discoverability

Website Goals

- Monitor, measure, and analyze website traffic with a focus on conversion to the booking link and outbound partner referrals
- Increase engagement and reduce bounce rate on regional landing pages
- Improve AI search visibility for priority pillar terms and partner pages

Social Media Goals

- Grow engagement on all channels year-over-year
- Expand video library across all priority formats
- Increase direct click-throughs from social to bookable offerings

Sales

Sales remain a focused part of VMC's promotional effort, emphasizing our proximity to major markets and supporting group, tour operator, and receptive business. For FY 2026/2027, sales activity will tilt toward supporting the inland track's group and conference positioning, while continuing to generate leads and contracts for coastal properties through established channels.

Program Focus

Consumer trade shows (contingent on trade show availability)

In-person engagement at consumer travel shows continues to be one an efficient way to reach thousands of travelers at once. We will continue to look at opportunities to participate through the North Coast Tourism Council regional booth.

Regional partnership development

Travelers routinely explore the county as part of a broader regional trip. VMC continues to collaborate with destination marketing organizations in Lake, Humboldt, Del Norte, Sonoma, Marin, Yolo, and Napa counties, and maintains its relationship with Visit Oakland. These partnerships produce curated multi-jurisdiction itineraries and shared promotional opportunities.

Group, conference, and small-meeting sales

This is the expanded focus area for the year. VMC will develop and promote a clearer group and conference proposition centered on the Ukiah Conference Center and complementary inland lodging. Sales efforts will include targeted outreach to corporate planners, association meetings, and small-group organizers from the Bay Area and Sacramento.

FAM tours for media, tour operators, and receptives

We continue to bring travel professionals into the county on the premise that a firsthand experience is the strongest driver of recommendation. FAM participants are domestic and international, many recruited through Visit California. Participants build itineraries that can include Mendocino County in broader packages.

North Coast Tourism Council management

Mendocino County benefits from its role administering the NCTC, one of eight rural regions designated by Visit California. Participating counties fund the budget, with Visit California providing matching funds up to \$60,000. VMC continues to hold a Treasurer role on the NCTC, enhancing the county's influence and visibility through the regional program.

Tour operator and hotel contracts

The end goal of domestic and international sales effort is signed contracts between tour operators and local hotels. We support this by identifying leads, facilitating introductions, and following through to contract. These relationships, once established, produce recurring business.

Sales Goals

- Consumer Shows: Attend one consumer trade show and generate 500 new leads for the database
- Group/Conference: Develop and launch inland group-and-meeting marketing stream; secure five qualified group leads
- FAMs: Participate in two Visit California-sponsored FAMs
- Hotel Contracts: Facilitate the signing of five new contracts
- Sales Missions: Attend one sales mission in partnership with Visit California

Visitor Services & Events

Unique and interesting events continue to be a meaningful reason travelers choose Mendocino County. The county's flagship VMC-sponsored events, Seafood & Sips Mendocino in January/February and Harvest Festival Mendocino in October/November, both anchor shoulder-season visitation. Both continue in FY 2026/2027 with strengthened lodging tie-ins and more rigorous evaluation.

The Overnight Test

Every event VMC invests in going forward must demonstrate that it generates overnight stays, not just day-trip or local-foot traffic. For Seafood & Sips and Harvest Festival, this means deeper lodging partner integration, more specific package promotions, and genuine tracking of event-related bookings. For any other events VMC is asked to support, the overnight test is the filter.

FY 2026/2027 Goals

- Strengthen Seafood & Sips Mendocino and Harvest Festival Mendocino with deeper lodging tie-ins and bookable packages for each event weekend
- Build a shoulder-season "reason to book" calendar covering October through May outside holiday periods, with one specific bookable anchor per week
- Encourage event organizers to collaborate with "visit" organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Destination Hopland, AVWA, MWI, PAMA, Visit Ukiah and other promotional groups
- Apply the overnight test to all event co-investment decisions

Visitor Services Support

- Support chambers and visitor centers with collateral including wine maps, mini-guides, visitor guides, event guides, beer trail maps, and tear-off maps
- Continue distribution of the Visitor Guide, updated to reflect current brand
- Continue distribution of tear-off maps for North Coast, South Coast, Willits, and Ukiah
- Distribute the Redwood Highway Map produced and funded by NCTC
- Distribute Visit 128 brochures as part of the four-county Highway 128 promotion
- Install gateway signs with Paramount Signs across priority county entry points
- Distribute VMC-branded bags to expand brand reach

Partnerships

Partnerships have always been central to VMC's work. For FY 2026/2027, we are adding a specific mechanism: structured co-op advertising that lets individual lodging partners, regional organizations, municipalities, hospitality businesses, and non-profits share investment with VMC on promoting their specific story. VMC provides distribution (social, email, web, paid); the partner provides the story and shares the cost. This produces more specific content, shared expense, and direct partner investment in outcomes.

Co-Op Advertising Framework

- Develop clear tiers and participation levels for partner co-investment
- Build content production support so partners of any size can participate, not only those with their own creative resources
- Distribute co-op content through VMC's social, email, and paid channels, with partner attribution and direct booking links
- Report outcomes (reach, engagement, click-through to partner) back to participating partners quarterly

Ongoing Partnership Goals for FY 2026/2027

- Continue Hospitality Outreach Program (HOP) visits to properties and stakeholders, with updates to VMC's internal database
- Perform a needs assessment of stakeholders and partners to refine the portfolio of offerings
- Work with partners to develop, promote, and strengthen beneficial tourism activities and events
- Promote the VMC Partners at Work Facebook page
- Attend Chambers of Commerce meetings, city promotional meetings, and community events
- Partner with other business sectors in Mendocino County to support broad community development and overall economic development.
- Advocate for pro-business and pro-tourism county regulations with an eye on sustainability
- Advocate for county investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure
- Host biannual Meet & Greet throughout the county
- Expand partnerships with other DMOs in the region to maximize efforts and efficiencies and to take advantage of their larger, better funded initiatives and programs. This includes, but is not limited to, San Francisco Travel, Sonoma County Tourism Bureau, Visit Napa Valley, LA Tourism

- Explore partnerships to increase exposure of Mendocino County to a broader audience visiting California including, but not limited to, the Sonoma County Airport, Alaska Airlines, Southwest Airlines, LA Tourism and the 2028 Olympic Committee

Personnel, Operations & Administration

- Recruit, onboard, and integrate the new in-house Public Relations hire
- Ongoing staff training on website usage, stakeholder communications, database usage, and office procedures
- Ongoing team and Board development
- Review new technologies specifically designed for destination marketing
- Attendance at key travel industry conferences for best-practice exposure
- Create and distribute quarterly and annual reports
- Create and distribute VMC's annual Marketing Plan
- Executive Director to work with the BID Advisory Board on the annual BID report for the County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors' approval
- Keep MendocinoTourism.org updated with Board and Committee agendas, packets, and minutes
- Attend Board and BID Advisory meetings
- Attend County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors meetings as warranted
- Continue forward movement on BID law conversion from 1989 to 1994 and corresponding assessment changes

Staffing

- Interim Executive Director: Scott Schneider
- Director of Operations: Ramon Jimenez
- Partner Relations & Communications Manager: Jamie Peters
- Marketing & Communications Coordinator: Mckenzie Spears
- Festival Coordinator: Janis MacDonald
- Executive Support Specialist: Kathy Janes
- Director of Public Relations: Melodie Hilton
- Social Media & Website: Brendan McGuigan, Agency Xi
- Accounting: Shannon Wells, GFT Financials

Board of Directors

The Board consists of eleven voting Directors. Directors are elected or appointed in accordance with Section 5.3 of the MCTC Bylaws. Officer positions (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary) are confirmed by the Board annually.

- Julie Golden; Food & Beverage
- Christopher "Cab" Boettcher; Large Lodging Operator, Coastal
- Roxanne Perkins; Arts Organization and Attractions
- Jitu Ishwar; Large Lodging Operator, Inland
- Jon Glidewell; Large Lodging Operator, At Large

- Ian Roth; Medium Lodging Operator, Coastal
- Alina Reyes; Small Lodging Operator
- Tawny MacMillan; Regional Promotional, Coastal
- Kasie Gray; Regional Promotional, Inland
- Vacant Seat; Winery/Winegrowers
- Vacant; At Large

Appendices

Glossary

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 benefit from brief explanation.

Advertising Equivalency	The dollar figure representing the cost to purchase an equivalent amount of advertising space in a publication or digital equivalent. VMC's PR reporting uses a strict 1:1 ratio, rather than the inflated multipliers common in the industry.
ADR	Average Daily Rate. The average revenue earned per occupied room per night, used as a proxy for pricing power and demand strength.
AVE	Advertising Value Equivalency
AI Search / Generative Search	Travel research conducted through AI-powered interfaces such as ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, Perplexity, and similar systems, which increasingly return synthesized answers rather than traditional link lists.
BID	Business Improvement District. The assessment mechanism through which Mendocino County lodging operators fund VMC's work.
Co-Op Advertising	A shared-investment model in which VMC and a partner (lodging property, municipality, organization) jointly fund promotion of a specific partner story, combining VMC distribution with partner content and budget.
FAM	Familiarization tour or trip. Media FAMs involve vetted members of the press; sales FAMs involve tour operators evaluating Mendocino for inclusion in packages.
GEO	Generative Engine Optimization. The discipline of structuring content, data, and website architecture to surface well in AI-generated search results, analogous to traditional SEO.
Google Analytics	A reporting tool provided by Google used to analyze traffic, campaigns, demographics, and conversion events on VisitMendocino.com.
HOP	Hospitality Outreach Program. VMC's ongoing in-person visit program to lodging properties and stakeholders across the county.
Media Mission	A trip by VMC's PR function to a particular market (e.g., Los Angeles, Denver) to meet local journalists and writers and inspire coverage of Mendocino County.
Media Placement	A story, print or digital, about an aspect of Mendocino County that results from PR efforts.
NCTC	North Coast Tourism Council, one of eight rural Visit California regions. VMC administers NCTC on behalf of participating counties.

Overnight Test	VMC's evaluation criterion for event and campaign investment: the activity must demonstrate that it generates overnight stays, not only day-trip or local-first traffic.
Receptives	Intermediaries between tour operators and lodging owners, chiefly in overseas markets, who secure hotel contracts and offer packages to tour operators.
Releases	Either a press release or a "hot sheet" distributed to the press, highlighting new and upcoming businesses and openings in the county.
Shoulder Season	The periods between peak travel seasons (traditionally October through May outside major holidays) where VMC focuses substantial effort to smooth annual visitation.
Gen Z	The generation born between 1997 and 2012, following Millennials.
Millennials	The segment of the population born between the early-to-mid 1980s and mid-to-late 1990s.
Gen X	The population segment born between the mid-1960s and early 1980s.
Baby Boomers	Those born between the mid-1940s and approximately 1964.