



VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY
Quarterly Report ~ April – June 2018

Submitted to Mendocino County Tourism Commission, Inc. & County of Mendocino
August 11, 2018



VMC Quarterly Activities Report: April – June 2018

Executive Summary

The final quarter of FY 2017/18 once again challenged Visit Mendocino County with more organizational change and in June, a new Executive Director. A physical move of the main VMC office is planned for the first quarter of FY 2018/19. This move to the county seat will allow the organization to grow its presence in the inland region of Mendocino County.

The Marketing team saw the new website through its launch in June and an extensive branding campaign to support the site and brand awareness is set to launch mid-July 2018 throughout the greater San Francisco Bay Area, which is focused on the organization's target audience of Millennials, Gen-Xers and Gen-Yers.

Efforts to rebrand the "Wine, Beer & Mushroom" Festival continued, and new naming options presented to the Marketing and Festival committees. The final selection was "Feast Mendocino." The rebrand of the festival has given the opportunity for more partners to participate in creating events, including a new inland-focused anchor event ("Savour Mendocino") at the newly renamed Eco Terra (formerly Solar Living Center) in Hopland.

Sales can account for four travel trade contracts: one with Noyo Harbor Inn and three with Mendocino Grove. The creation of two new regional itineraries for NCTC have had interest. A beginning attempt has been made to attract LGBTQ travelers. NCTC has a new website featuring enhanced listings, and their Facebook page is seeing more followers and continues to recruit new members.

The entire staff continued to work on the Hotel Adoption Program and results are documented in the internal Filemaker database. The opportunities provided by these visits continue to create and strengthen our relationships with stakeholders.

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 viewed [here](#).) This report, unlike previous quarterly reports, will directly relate the VMC, Marketing, PR, sales, and other VMC staff activities during the quarter directly to the Imperatives, Objectives, and Initiatives contained in the Strategic Plan. As staff undertook an analysis of their activities and the objectives of the Plan, they noted areas of the Plan where refinements are recommended. Those are noted herein.

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

OBJECTIVES

- Bid assessment growth at 5% over average of top 3 competitors

The [2018 California Travel Impacts](#) report (Dean Runyan), which is an annual report commissioned by Visit California and undertaken by Dean Runyan Associates, is the reference used for data reported by Mendocino and competitor counties.

A review of Northern California counties reporting data to Dean Runyan reveals that Mendocino County's top three competitors in terms of travel spending, tax revenue, and TOT receipts are: Humboldt, Shasta and Yolo Counties. Data reflecting County TOT receipts and travel-related spending are shown in the tables that follow.

California Transient Occupancy Tax by County (Amount in \$000s)								
County	2014	2015	2016	2017	Avg Growth YOY	%Gain/Loss		
Mendocino	\$6,748	\$7,907	\$8,215	\$8,627	8.69%	17.17%	3.89%	5.01%
Humboldt	\$5,625	\$6,183	\$6,930	\$6,800	6.68%	9.92%	12.00%	-1.87%
Shasta	\$5,384	\$5,714	\$6,010	\$6,230	4.99%	6.12%	5.18%	3.66%
Yolo	\$2,737	\$4,330	\$4,961	\$5,301	26.54%	58.20%	14.57%	6.85%

Travel-related Spending, Tax Revenue, Employment									
County	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%
Yolo	\$319.7M	\$385.9M	20.70%	\$25.7M	\$31.4M	22.17%	3.99K	4.8K	20.30%

As indicated, Mendocino County outstrips Humboldt and Shasta (the most comparable counties) in terms of tourism revenue growth, tax revenue growth, and the number of people employed directly and indirectly by the tourism industry. The next nearest Northern California competitor, Yolo County, shows remarkable growth of more than 20% in all three areas, due to a realignment of TOT and BID collection in the county.

In terms of BID growth, it should be noted that Mendocino has a BID assessment of one percent (1%) while Humboldt and Yolo Counties' assessment is two percent (2%). This means that a straight across comparison is impossible to make. Shasta County does not have a BID but the City of Redding does. At time of writing, it is unknown what impact this may or may not have on revenue to Shasta County.

Shown below are BID collection data over time for Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. At this time, VMC is unable to discern the reason for the 45% increase in Humboldt County's BID revenue for FY 2016. Anecdotally, it may be due to increased vigilance in collections on VRBO-type rentals and/or adjustments in tardy payments.

BID Collections by County YOY								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	Avg Growth YOY	%Gain/Loss		
Mendocino	\$695,092	\$769,383	\$817,772	\$880,238	8.20%	10.68%	6.28%	7.63%
Humboldt	\$1,287,917	\$1,139,397	\$1,660,572	\$1,561,388	17.10%	11.53%	45.74%	-5.97%

Dividing Humboldt's collection number in half (to represent a 1% collection rate) shows the two counties track closely to 2017, when Mendocino shows a healthy increase and Humboldt an almost 6% decrease in collections.

- 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.

Tax Receipts Generated by Travel Spending (\$Million)								
	2000	2005	2007	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017
Local Tax Receipts	9.9	11.3	13.6	12.8	16.2	17.5	18.6	19.5
Loc. Visitor	6.9	7.8	8.9	8.4	10.6	11.7	12.2	13.0
Loc. Business or Emp.	2.9	3.6	4.7	4.4	5.7	5.8	6.4	6.5
State Tax Receipts	13.7	16.6	17.9	17.6	19.5	19.7	20.5	20.7
St. Visitor	10.1	12.3	13.4	13.4	13.7	13.7	14.1	14.3
St. Business or Emp.	3.5	4.3	4.5	4.2	5.8	6.0	6.4	6.3
Local & State Tax Receipts	23.5	28.0	31.5	30.3	35.7	37.2	39.0	40.1

- Year-over-year increase in stakeholder survey response rate

Luz Harvey: Current stakeholder surveys are limited to event participants for Mushroom, Crab, and Almost Fringe Festivals. The Event Coordinator will review Survey Monkey results from 2014 – 2017 to determine trends. There has been no action on this item during Q4.

VMC staff recommends amending this Objective to include post-consumer trade show surveys that measure potential visitation to the County.

INITIATIVE 1: Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan.

During the quarter, the Director of Marketing & Media (DMM) worked with the marketing and PR agencies of record – TheorySF and KOLI Communications, respectively – to create the portions of the [2018/19 Marketing Plan](#) that relate directly to their contributions to VMC’s success.

During the fiscal year, TheorySF will work closely with the DMM to raise brand awareness in the target audiences of Millennials and Gen-Xers in VMC’s top target markets of the greater Bay Area and Sacramento/ Central Valley. Consistent monitoring of the demographics and psychographics of the website will result in adjustments to content and messaging.

As noted elsewhere in this report, in Q4 the DMM worked with TSF to launch the website, develop a reporting plan for stakeholders, develop a brand launch campaign, produce a series of nine videos for dissemination on social media, and worked with the Social Media Coordinator on strategic postings.

In Q4, the DMM worked with the public relations agency of record, KOLI Communications, to develop a PR plan for the fiscal year that will work to expand VMC’s branding and media messaging using key “passion points” to identify and secure coverage. The DMM tracked media placements, wrote media itineraries, responded to fact checks for articles, maintained the image/video library, and worked on the refocus of the Mushroom and Crab festivals.

The DMM will continue to monitor the success of marketing programs (measured in terms of website traffic increase, click-through rates) and PR initiatives (measured in terms of number of impressions and ad equivalency). YOY results are referred to elsewhere in this report.

The sales plan developed by Richard Strom, Director of Tourism Development, is Appendix 1; it is not an integrated part of the Marketing Plan referenced above.

INITIATIVE 2: Improve data-driven decision making through increased participation & “buy in” from all of our partners.

When determining the elements of the website build, the marketing team (TSF and DMM) concluded that a reporting mechanism for stakeholders would be essential for building VMC’s awareness of the impact of the site on stakeholders’ businesses. The team continues to finesse a monthly report to stakeholders for whom VMC has an email address that will inform them of:

1. The total number of visitors to the VMC website
2. The number of referrals from the VMC site to the stakeholder’s website
3. The number of click-throughs made from the VMC site to the stakeholder’s site\

This reporting will provide VMC with solid metrics and a basis to develop an educational forum for stakeholders to educate about how to improve their site visitation, referral traffic, and brand messaging.

The PR team (Koleen Hamblin and DMM) continues to communicate with stakeholders on a monthly basis informing them of high profile media stories. The PR team also offers stakeholders the opportunity to submit content and information for Visit California’s dissemination. A recent example of this type of collaboration was a story published in TravelPulse.com (distribution 698,359 UMV) featuring Ukiah’s Germain-Robin Distillery among *25 Top Distilleries to Try in California*.

In an effort to inform partners and stakeholders about ways in which they can work with VMC, the DMM developed a “stakeholder one-sheet” (see Appendix 2) to act as a talking point when visiting new and existing partners. The VMC team uses the one-sheet on Hotel Adoption Program visits.

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. Recent examples include the newly opened Poleeko Roadhouse in Philo, Bee Hunter Wines in Boonville, Mendo Vino in Mendocino, among others. Each of these businesses (and others) are now aware of VMC and VMC’s website team has ensured the businesses are listed on the website. 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. The team is developing a close relationship with Eco Terra in Hopland on the development of an inland anchor event for the newly named and refocused Feast Mendocino (formerly the Mushroom, Wine & Beer Festival).

As VMC's stakeholders see concrete 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, and more.

Luz Harvey: As part of outreach for VMC's three umbrella festivals, VMC's Event Coordinator is frequently interacting with business owners and explaining how VMC's efforts benefit them and their communities. These interactions are great for having stakeholders 'buy in' to what VMC does. A recent example: Almost Fringe Festival in Point Arena. That community has been estranged from VMC since pulling out of the BID, but by being included in the festival, they saw firsthand what VMC does to promote communities in the county. As a result of this, former detractors there now appear to be inclined to rejoin the BID. One such person is Julie Brodandsky from Wharf Master. At first a skeptic, she is now having her Fort Bragg property participate in VMC's umbrella festivals and according to Point Arena insiders, may be prepared lead the way for lodging in that town to rejoin the BID. Treating VMC's detractors with respect and having an open door policy is just one way to increase stakeholder 'buy-in', but it's an important one.

Richard Strom: Four new hotels have been brought into the travel trade fold. The Noyo Harbor Inn has entered into contracts with at least one receptive to market the inn internationally. Mendocino Grove has had even more success, entering into three contracts and already receiving reservations. They are also being featured in both the internal and external newsletters prepared by the French office of Visit CA as well as receiving a visit from a Belgium [sic] tour operator. I am meeting with the Harbor House today [date?] to expose them to various travel trade opportunities. The Inn at Newport Ranch likewise is now dealing with some receptives.

INITIATIVE 3: Develop a data sharing process that offers context and insights for partners

An essential element of VMC's success is educating and informing partners (stakeholders) of VMC's functions and benefits. Due to turnover in the quarter, VMC was unable to hold educational "town hall" meetings but, with the implementation of the website stakeholder reporting process, the Marketing team sees an opportunity to bring partners together for a series of sessions that will assist stakeholders in understanding the reports and give them information and tools that will help them to upgrade their web presence and create more conversions from VMC site referrals. VMC staff will also be able to provide and discuss individual property reports on future HAP visits.

Vanlee Waters: In Q4 VMC's staff visited 40 of our lodging stakeholders at locations throughout the county in an effort to continue to create and strengthen our on-going relationships with lodging stakeholders. Specific areas covered by the HAP during Q4 included properties in downtown Ukiah, Hopland, Anderson Valley and the South Coast. The HAP visits delivered several successful interactions w/ our stakeholders during the quarter, ranging from a simple introduction of VMC and dropping off VMC collateral, to being invited to sit down at the owner's dining room table for some real interpersonal communication. The HAP allows VMC to actively cultivate relationships with core stakeholders on a regular basis. The HAP adds additional ROI by providing VMC staff with the most recent contacts/data allowing VMC to maintain their proprietary Filemaker database and the VMC website with the most current information.

Moving forward, the VMC Executive Director will produce a bi-monthly stakeholder newsletter that reports on VMC activities, opportunities for stakeholders to participate in trade shows, festival activities, developments, and more.

IMPERATIVE 2: Cultivate VMC's relationships & collaborations

OBJECTIVES:

- YOY increase in number of events launched and reaching self sufficiency

At time of writing this report, there is no response to this Objective, however, VMC staff recommends that this Objective be reworded to focus on the quality of events.

VMC actively supports the launch of new events by the County's "Visit" organizations, Chambers of Commerce, wine associations by the dissemination of monies to support new visitor-facing events as well as in-kind publicity, inclusion in press releases when appropriate, and volunteering at events.

- 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 seat openings are posted, among other notices. The VMC ED will ensure that stakeholders are made aware of the page in the bi-monthly report to stakeholders, which will be implemented in the fall of 2018. Going forward, staff will monitor page visitation with Google Analytics; add opportunities such as calls for festival events; trade show opportunities; and more; and also use the page as a talking point during HAP visits.

- YOY increase in new applicants for BID and MCTC Board positions and committee membership

In the current fiscal year, three Board of Directors' seats will be vacated. The VMC ED and DMM are actively collaborating on gathering names of potential applicants and initiating invitations to join the Board. The ED and DMM are working with the County Tax Collector's office on an insertion letter to be sent with the TOT/BID collection form sent to property renters (under 30 days) every quarter. The letter, which will be inserted in the collection form for the July – September 2018 time period, will announce open seats and request interested parties submit an application for consideration.

VMC staff recommends this Objective be reworded to change "YOY increase" verbiage to "Solicit new applicants...."

INITIATIVE 4: Foster collaboration and county-wide alignment by creating and developing the "go to" website for all tourism stakeholders.

The Marketing team announced the launch of the new VMC website on June 7, 2018.

During the quarter, the DMM worked closely with TSF's technical team to:

- alpha/beta test the site
- curate images and apply to listings and site pages
- add and update business listings

- review formatting for consistency
- roll blog posts into MendoMoments
- curate social media posts for the home page
- create sharable social media videos, which are also posted on the home page.

The Marketing team is closely monitoring website performance and adjusting home page content to reflect seasonality and trends. The Marketing team has established a benchmark set of analytic goals to assess site performance, demographics, and psychographics of users. Metrics from these analytics will be reported in future quarterly reports. As referenced under Initiative 2, the team is finalizing the stakeholder report, which VMC will use to assess site effectiveness, traffic flow, and outbound referrals to stakeholders.

INITIATIVE 5: Strengthen regional tourism relationships to leverage broader marketing opportunities

On a regular basis, the PR team develops and submits content on a variety of topics to Visit California as part of Visit California's Media Relations program. Content submissions fall under a diverse array of subjects: unusual ice cream, top selfie stops, clear night skies, and more as appropriate. This is an ongoing project.

Richard Strom: The North Coast Tourism is one of the 8 rural regions created by Visit CA. It is fully funded by Visit CA and regional matches. Mendocino County contributes \$11,000 out of a budget of \$135,000 or about 12% of the budget. For that investment Mendocino County gets extensive international marketing and literally hundreds of leads for Mendocino County. Since the Visit Mendocino County Director of Tourism Development is the sole sales person for the North Coast, Mendocino County receives a presence far in excess of its investment. Visit CA has a budget of over \$150 Million and has as its primary mission marketing to the international visitor. They have offices in 14 countries.

Create regional itineraries: Two regional itineraries are currently on the North Coast web site, visitnorthcoastca.com. One is a beercation and the other is a one or two night excursion from Oakland to Mendocino. Additionally a new package was just developed due to a personal visit to a German tour operator. https://www.usareisen.de/angebote/tour_leistungen.html?i=180

The report of the recent European sales mission with Explore Marketing:

Richard Strom, representing both the North Coast Tourism Council and the Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association, participated in a sales mission to Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany with Explore Marketing last month [NB: month unknown].

This was a small group designed to maximize interaction with important tour operators. Participants besides me included San Mateo County, the Red and White Fleet in SF, Hornblower Cruises, the SF Academy of Science, Monterey Bay Aquarium, South Lake Tahoe, Leisure Pass and Incredible Adventures based in SF.

As with virtually all tour operators, they primarily use receptives to book travel. It is therefore critical that the hotel and attraction products have contracts with receptives. The alternative for tour operators is using OTAs and direct interfaces with hotel chains. But introducing yourself to the tour operators is an essential first step. I can provide contact information for most receptives upon request.

The North Coast has just [NB: date unknown] signed a contract with Horizon, a Canadian publication, with 100,000 distributed in 5 Canadian cities and as an insert in the two Canadian national newspapers. There will be an ad and advertorial as well as extensive digital presence. Additionally, a North Coast promo will be shown on 10 mega screens in downtown Toronto 10,600 times and on the ABC jumbotron in Times Square in NY for a two week period.

The North Coast has a new website with enhanced listings. The facebook [sic] followers are nearing 6000. Pintrest [sic] is also beginning.

A monthly newsletter have [sic] begun. The first featured one brewery from each of the four counties. The next will feature the five associate members. More associate members are being recruited. A regular blog has begun. All four counties are being contacted regularly to furnish added content.

Develop [Strategic Plan for North Coast Tourism Council](#).

Outreach has occurred with San Mateo County, SLO, South Lake Tahoe, Los Angeles CVB, Oakland, The Academy of Sciences in SF, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Hornblower Cruises, Leisure Pass, Incredible Adventures and more.

Attended the first LGBTQ networking event with Visit SF in an attempt to enhance visits by that segment.

INITIATIVE 6: 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. In Q4, the PR team sent three PR updates. The DMM uses the VMC Partners at Work Facebook group to also share media stories and other items of general interest. In addition, the DMM ensures stakeholders receive any articles that result from media FAM visits.

VMC staff has identified meeting schedules for other tourism-facing agencies and organizations in the county: "Visit" organizations and Chambers of Commerce. Staff attends the Ukiah Chamber of Commerce meetings.

IMPERATIVE 3: Raise awareness of the Mendocino County experience

OBJECTIVES:

- Year-over-year increase Mendocino County awareness score

In 2017, research was undertaken by TSF 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 information is documented in prior reports.

Following the launch of the website in June 2018, and the offline and online brand launch campaign in July 2018, TSF will again undertake a research initiative to measure awareness against the baseline. Results will be reported to the Marketing Committee and Board of Directors.

Social media also plays an important role in creating and raising brand awareness. The figure below indicates a rise in engagement per post on Facebook over Q4 and an impressive 250+% increase in Likes and Likes per Post on Instagram. Each of these metrics are impactful measurements of VMC’s continued success in the employment of social media to raise brand awareness.

Social Media Results YOY FY 2016 v. FY 2017 Q4					
	FACEBOOK			INSTAGRAM	
	FY 2016	FY 2017		FY 2016	FY 2017
Impressions	605,378	492,021	Followers	Not tracked	10,663
Engagement	22,869	23,588	Comments	67	205
Link Clicks	Not tracked	1,724	Likes	3,906	13,834
Posts	65	30	Avg Likes/Post	130	477
Impressions/Post	9,319	16,400			
Engagements/Post	351	786			
Fan Base	56,185	57,157			

During Q4, the Marketing team worked on a series of videos to be deployed on social media channels. The videos’ common theme is “This is How You Mendo” and highlight iconic Mendocino County experiences: driving through a tree, riding a horse on the beach, kissing a giraffe, and more. The videos may be viewed at [this link](#).

- Year-over-year increases in impressions and ad equivalency

For the quarter, metrics show increases in both impressions and ad equivalency.

YOY PR Results for Q4										
Year	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2016	FY 2017
	Hits		Ad Equivalency		Impressions		Releases		FAM Visits	
April	23	29	\$1,222,893.90	\$1,800,200.82	9,401,711	16,873,039	1	2	6	3
May	67	37	\$3,012,267.60	\$3,772,533.51	38,388,624	25,532,076	1	1	7	3
June	78	70	\$2,643,635.23	\$7,923,520.13	159,535,266	364,331,898	1	1	3	8
YOY Total	168	136	\$6,878,796.73	\$13,496,254.46	207,325,601	406,737,013	3	4	16	14

The figure below indicates the picture for the entire fiscal year and showing a substantial increase in all PR-related areas for which goals were delineated.

PR Results YOY FY 2016 v. FY 2017					
	FY 2016 Goals	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Goals	FY 2017 Actual	YOY % Gain/Loss
Press releases	11	11	11	17	54%
Impressions	110 million	592.4 million	150 million	1,401 billion	136%
Ad Equivalency	\$4.6 million	\$47.2 million	\$6.6 million	\$77.1 million	63%
FAM Programs	18	31	18	62	200%
Trade Shows	2	2	2	3	150%
Media Missions	2	1	0	0	-100%

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

At time of writing, the Marketing team has not had sufficient time or data-gathering with the new branding to conduct surveys. As part of marketing initiatives for the 2018/19 fiscal year, the Marketing Team will conduct research to determine awareness and perception of Mendocino County.

Staff recommends amending the Objective to add prospective visitors (consumer show attendees) as well as in-market visitors.

INITIATIVE 7: Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception

The Marketing team, working with the Marketing Committee, produced a set of brand standards and guidelines that have been instituted across visitor-, stakeholder-, and internal-facing collateral, trade and consumer show displays, and communications. As new collateral is developed, for example an updated visitor guide, the brand standards will be applied.

During the quarter, the Marketing team worked on a brand launch campaign kick-off in July 2018 around the greater SF Bay Area. Creative includes:

- strategic placement of branding on ten electronic billboards from Vallejo to San Jose
- bus wraps deployed on three SF Muni bus routes: along the Embarcadero to the Fisherman’s Wharf area; the 1 California line that runs from downtown through the city to the ocean; and a line on Market Street to the Upper Haight

- taxi toppers on vehicles that traverse the city and beyond (e.g., SFO)
- bus “kings” on the sides of SF Muni buses
- a robust online campaign designed to drive traffic to the website.



In August 2018, the Marketing team and committee will determine marketing programs for the 2018/19 fiscal year. These will include online and offline (billboards, print advertising, and others) campaigns; marketing initiatives for Feast Mendocino to include website splash page, online campaign, rebranding; promotional campaigns; pop-up events; and other creative marketing outlets, all designed to raise brand awareness.

Working with the Director of Tourism Development, the DMM initiated the purchase of a variety of swag items for media giveaways in order to increase brand awareness among influencers (media). These include logoed key fobs, Chico™ bags, shot glasses, wine stoppers, pens, cosmetic bags, and license plate holders. Under consideration is a move to replace the green bags given out at consumer and trade shows to a branded orange bag. The Director of Tourism Development ordered branded displays, pull-ups, and other trade/consumer show items.

INITIATIVE 8: Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events

In Q4, the MCTC Board of Directors approved a change in the funding of events within the county. The budget of \$71,400 for funding requests for events and programs in FY 2018/19 will be allocated to visitor-serving organizations in the county that include the “Visit” organizations, the Mendocino Arts Council, the Redwood Coast and Mendocino Coast Chambers, and the three wine organizations: Mendocino Winegrowers Inc., Anderson Valley Wine Growers Association, and Destination Hopland.

This revision replaces the small grant program by making partnership grants to the tourism promotion and visitor serving organizations within VMC's service area designated for the purpose of attracting and/or serving visitors to the county at a more local level.

Luz Harvey: The Event Coordinator and Festival Committee will review events taking place in Mendocino County to determine event producers to approach about building a VMC presence on their website with the goal of creating awareness of VMC among event-goers. The Event Coordinator will work with Festival Committee to create a standardized post-event reporting method. Given VMC's funding comes from lodging, the report should focus on how many heads in beds generated while also getting feedback from participants on their experiences. The challenge is getting lodging properties to share quantifiable numbers since this is what's needed for this type of report to provide meaningful results. Staff will work on building trust with lodging owners/managers during HAP visits as well as educating lodging stakeholders how this numbers based information helps VMC adjust our events to attract more overnight stays.

The Event Coordinator will also create a 'one sheet' for event- and festival-holders to describe how VMC can support their efforts.

NB: At time of writing, the single action item implemented under Initiative 8 has been the grant program.

INITIATIVE 9: 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 should, therefore, be considered complete.

Appendix 1

SUMMARY SALES PLAN FOR FY 18/19

JULY 2018 – CA State Fair.

The theme was Seabiscuit/Ridgewood Ranch/inland Mendocino. The Mendocino County booth was awarded both a gold medal and a special award for best consumer experience. An estimated 7000 – 10,000 people visited our booth.

AUGUST 2018– Visit CA sales mission to New Zealand and Australia.

Visits to tour operators, travel agents and travel influencers in three cities. The Mendocino County Director of Tourism Development will represent the North Coast Tourism Council which is composed on the four northern counties, Mendocino, Humboldt, Lake and Del Norte Counties. Leads obtained will be pursued.

SEPTEMBER 2018- PET EXPO

An event in Santa Clara which will focus on our pet friendliness.

SEPTEMBER 2018 – Ghirardelli Square Chocolate Festival

A two -day event focusing on high income residents of San Francisco and tourists.

SEPEEMBER 2018 – VANCOUVER TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE SHOW

Visit Mendocino is sharing a booth with Shasta. This will be the first consumer facing event ever done in BC. Canada is by far our number one international destination.

NOVEMBER 2018 – NATIONAL TOUR ASSOCIATION

This is another North Coast Tourism Council paid for event designed to influence more group business to the region and Mendocino County.

JANUARY 2019 – SPORTSMEN SHOW IN SACRAMENTO

This four- day event at Cal Expo is a partnership with Humboldt County. It attracts consumers who are interested in the outdoor experiences we offer.

JANUARY 2019 – AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION

The second trade show to encourage bus and group tours to Mendocino County. This is also a North Coast Tourism paid for event.

JANUARY 2019 – MID-ATLANTIC SUMMIT

An opportunity to meet with international tour operators who usually do not come to the US. The North Coast pays for this opportunity.

FEBRUARY 2019 – OUTLOOK FORUM

This Visit CA event enables interaction with Visit CA as well as representatives of their 14 international offices. The Director of Tourism Development attends on behalf of the North Coast Tourism Council.

FEBRUARY 2019 – RTO LOS ANGELES

Appendix 2

VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY

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



What VMC Does

- Promotes and markets Mendocino County to potential visitors
- Gets the word out via Public Relations and media visits
- Partners with trade organizations to build strength in numbers
- Brands Mendocino County as a destination

Just the Facts

- In 2017, visitors to Mendocino County generated \$441.7 million in travel spending
- In Mendocino County, tourism generated \$40.1 million in local and state tax receipts
- Tourism is Mendocino County's number one employer providing more than 7,000 jobs in 2017

Be Our Partner

- Take advantage of VMC's advertising opportunities
- Host visiting media so they can experience Mendocino County first-hand
- Take part in our annual festivals and join us at trade shows

Tell the World

- More than 13,500 subscribers read our newsletter each month
- Spread your news to our growing audience of Facebook fans and Instagram followers
- Keep us up to date with events, photos and news about changes in your business

