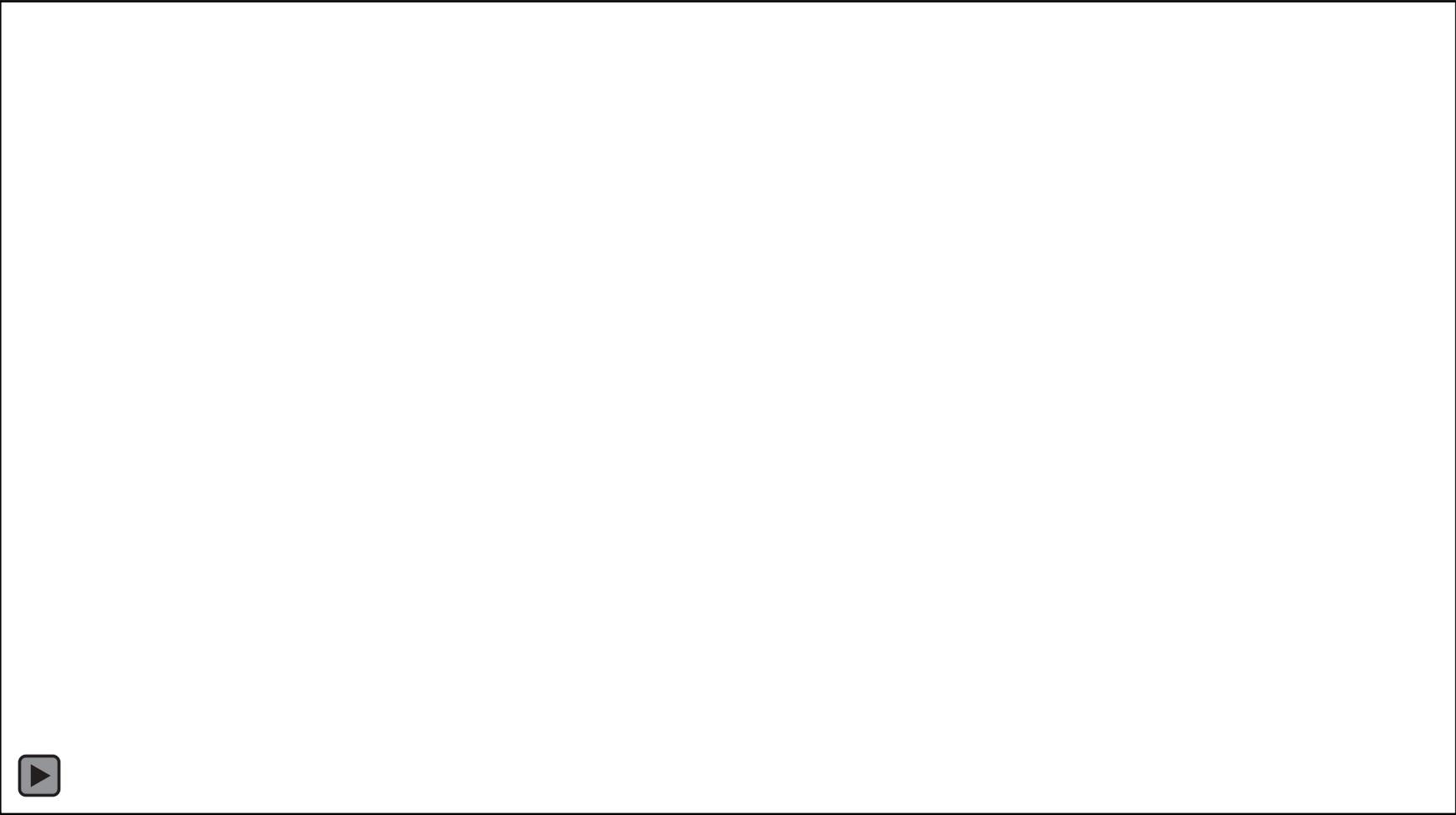




Wrap-up Report

Luz Harvey
Vanlee Waters



Performance Against Goals



🌀 **Goal:** Create a countywide festival for the month of April to replace “Party for the Planet”.

🌀 **Metric:** The ultimate festival goal is to attract out-of-county visitors for overnight stays, but prior to this taking place stakeholder buy-in/participation is necessary.

🌀 **Actual:** what really happened in relationship to goals?

🌀 Stakeholder buy-in was moderate to high with significant differences among the regions, so the ultimate goal of ‘heads in beds’ county-wide wasn’t achieved, with the exception of the South Coast



Performance Against Schedule



- ❧ **Plan Genesis: October 2016** Festival Committee greenlights the Almost Fringe Festival. 'Call for Participation' is created which sketches timeline.
- ❧ **Actual:** 'Call' sent out Dec. 2016; Entries commence Jan. 2017 and continued throughout mid-April 2017.
- ❧ **Results:** Responses to 'the Call' started coming in later than expected; Didn't have a cut-off date for entries in order to build a more varied/robust festival.



Performance Against Budget



- ☞ AFF budget was limited to the remaining *festival event guide printing budget* of ~ \$3.5K
- ☞ Actual costs were limited to printing of rack cards and yard signs which came in under \$1K, excluding graphic designer's fees, and marketing costs.



Post-Mortem



Almost Fringe Festival:

Planning, Management, Marketing, Learning, Mistakes, Festival Facts

Almost Fringe Festival Planning

How Was the Almost Fringe Festival Planned?



- ❧ **Who was responsible for original plans?** Festival resulted from former ED's suggestion to FC and their acceptance of the concept. Implementation of festival was by event coordinator (EC).
- ❧ **Was Almost Fringe Festival well defined from beginning?**
 - ❧ *Was there an actual written plan?* Aside from the initial 'call for participation' no written plan. Festival developed organically based on EC's experience w/ previous festivals & art shows.
 - ❧ *How was Almost Fringe Festival plan communicated?* Email outreach, word of mouth, and event coordinator outreach via cold calls and in person pitches.
 - ❧ *How well did that work?* Mixed results. Some participants jumped on board upon receiving initial pitch and others lagged behind and required consistent prompting. Future festival outreach should include more site visits/direct presentations to potential participants.





Call for Venues & Artists

Visit Mendocino County, Inc. (VMC) invites artists, businesses, and arts organizations of Mendocino County to partner with us as we create the first annual

ALMOST-FRINGE FESTIVAL-APRIL 2017

Description:

Loosely based on the international Fringe Art movement, this month-long festival will celebrate all the arts happening in April 2017 within the main travel corridors of Mendocino County. We encourage venues of all sizes to partner with performing and visual artists, and arts organizations, in innovative and unexpected ways to create site-specific art "happenings" that are FUN, EXCITING and/or DARING... From traditional to cutting-edge, Almost Fringe welcomes your participation!

Dates:

The festival will last the entire month of April 2017. Any event happening within the month would be eligible for inclusion in this inaugural festival and would benefit from VMC's marketing efforts. Additionally, we would like to emphasize each region of the county one weekend per month. Currently, our tentative weekends are lining up as follows:

April 7, 8, 9	<u>North Coast:</u>	Albion, Little River, Mendocino, Caspar, Fort Bragg, Westport
April 14, 15, 16	<u>101 Corridor:</u>	Hopland, Ukiah, Calpella, Willits, Laytonville, Leggett
April 21, 22, 23	<u>128 Corridor:</u>	Navarro, Philo, Boonville, Yorkville
April 28, 29, 30	<u>South Coast:</u>	Gualala, Point Arena, Manchester, Elk

During each of these weekends, one particular region will have many events happening so as to provide convenient packages for out-of-town visitors, offering a variety of options they can enjoy within a single area.

To Participate:

Participation in this event is free! All you need to do is complete the [online registration form](#) by no later than January 20th. Applications can also be accessed by going to www.mendocinotourism.org/opps. Be sure to include the name of your event, participating entities, date and time of event or performance, and venue's physical address. If tickets are to be sold, include the price of the event and contact information. We will work with the Arts Council of Mendocino County, which has volunteered its online ticket-sales platform at ArtsMendocino.org to facilitate purchases of ticket packages. Please note, any ticket processing fee will be paid directly by venue/artist. VMC will also reach out to lodging providers in order to have lodging specials created. **Deadline for entries is January 20, 2017.**

Questions:

Please contact Luz Harvey at Luz@VisitMendocino.com or (707) 409-9660 x 102.

"Call for Participation"

792 Mailchimp recipients (25% open rate)

What Works?

- Describes the event origin and current goals
- Lays out the designated weekend schedule
- Provides participation criteria
- Provides contact info

What doesn't work?

- Lacks mention of Grant Fund Program

Almost Fringe Festival Planning Was the Plan the Right One?



Was the plan a good one?

- What was good?* Dedicated weekends countywide; Variety of events; Grant Fund Program
- What was missing?* Cohesive community involvement; Standardized communication/distribution structure; wide participant knowledge of Grant Fund Program

Was the plan realistic? Overall yes. County has a lot of creativity to capitalize on and having one 'point person' to liaison with participants is the most efficient way to funnel information from outside in and vice versa.

How did the plan evolve over time? Given this was the first year, planning has yet to 'evolve'.

Key areas for improvement:

- To build event:* targeted outreach earlier to Civic groups, Organizations & Individuals; Advertise Grant Fund Program
- To market the event:* Consider paid ads in neighboring counties to bring people in



Almost Fringe Festival Management

How Was the Almost Fringe Festival Managed?



- ☞ Meetings: who/when/how often. Attended stakeholder meetings when invited. These were infrequent, but productive; Festival committee monthly; Staff weekly
- ☞ Communication: who/when/how often. Happened daily on a 'on demand' basis, mostly via email and phone between participants and EC.
 - ☞ How well did this work? Very well, issues/concerns communicated/addressed in real time/personalized manner.
- ☞ Changes: how tracked, communicated. Communicated verbally or via email among staff
 - ☞ How well did this work? Given the small number of staff, it worked fine.
- ☞ Other methods: e-mail, schedules, databases, reports, etc.

Emails, schedules, and databases were all part of the festival development. These were mostly by VMC internal staff. Reports were used infrequently during the festival development stages.



Marketing



- ❧ What we did– PSAs, website- custom landing pages & individual events on calendar, email (direct-Mailchimp; indirect -reciprocal e-blasts), rack cards, yard signs, Press Releases, local print media, WOM (Word-of-Mouth)
- ❧ Was event launch effective and successful? Event launch the first weekend of April was weak. Momentum built-up as event month progressed
- ❧ Did event results meet marketing goals? Only on the South Coast



Marketing

What do we do – web, email, brochures?



- ☞ Developed Integrated Digital and ‘Ground’ Marketing Campaigns
 - ☞ Solicited “Lodging Specials” from stakeholders: Procured 6 total
 - ☞ Developed custom landing page for the event: www.visitmendocino.com/fringe
 - ☞ **Developed regional ‘events’ pages by geographic location:**
 - **101 Corridor:** Hopland, Ukiah, Calpella, Willits, Laytonville, Leggett
 - **North Coast:** Albion, Little River, Mendocino, Caspar, Fort Bragg, Westport
 - **128 Corridor:** Navarro, Philo, Boonville, Yorkville
 - **South Coast:** Gualala, Point Arena, Manchester, Elk



Marketing

Was marketing Appropriate? Effective?



- Marketing activities focused on spotlighting 'regional cluster' with
 - Digital Delivery (email, online, FB social media, Weekend Ticket Packages)
 - 'Ground' Component (rack cards, yard signs, local media articles, PSAs on radio).



Marketing

Was event launch effective and successful?



☞ Were marketing programs effectively implemented?

- Press Release garnered only one pick-up by Press Democrat; perhaps rethink this strategy
- Local Print Media did provide front-page coverage; perhaps expand local print media usage to include recruitment phase of festival
- Targeted Email Campaigns using A/B Split Testing garnered higher click-thru rates

A/B Split Testing – “It’s all about the SUBJ: Line”

A/B Split Testing Email Subject Lines:	Open Rate	Increase
You are not alone. Make your Almost Fringe Festival plans today!	12.00%	-8%
Where weird is WOW	14.00%	7%
put the FUN back in your FUNky	21.00%	38%
Fringe FINAL List ALL		
put the FUN back in your FUNky	18.01%	28%
AVG Consumer OPEN RATE	13%	



Marketing

Was event launch effective and successful?



☞ Were marketing programs effectively implemented? (continued)

-Social media Results

Almost Fringe Facebook Posts/Buys

Name	Date	Type	Reac	Engagements	Clicks	Shares	Cost
Almost Fringe Redwood Coast	3/27/17	Slide Show	6440	393	253	10	\$40.00
Almost Fringe lodging guide	3/29/17	Link/Image	3414	717	17	2	\$40.00
Almost Fringe Announce	4/3/17	Slide Show	4989	295	303	19	\$40.00
Artists Cooperative	4/7/17	Link/Image	1256		13	2	
Bewildered Pig Video (Shared)	4/12/17	Video	2447		133		
Almost Fringe in Anderson	4/17/17	Video	8768	5795	22	6	\$40.00
Last Weekend of Almost Fringe	4/28/17	Slide Show	690	3	3	2	\$0.00
							\$160.00



Marketing

Was event launch effective and successful?



Increased Website Traffic & Lodging Revenue

	Mo.	Visitors	Mo. Avg Change		Increase of New Visitors in April	Avg. Roomnights generated per 1,000 real new users.	Incremental Room- Nights Generated		Total Revenue
New Visitor	Feb	13526		New Visitors					
New Visitor	Mar	15539	15%	Feb & Mar Avg.				ADR	
New Visitor	April	17588	13%	14532.5	3055.5	64.1	192.3	\$223	\$42,882.90
					3055	Ttl. Economic Impact per 1,000 real new users =		\$34.46	\$105,275.30
								TOTAL AFF REVENUE	\$148,158.20



Marketing

Were marketing programs effectively implemented?



☞ Did event results meet marketing goals?

Overall, yes. The event's success increased as momentum built up while the festival progressed. The one exception was the Weekend Ticket Package which had no takers.

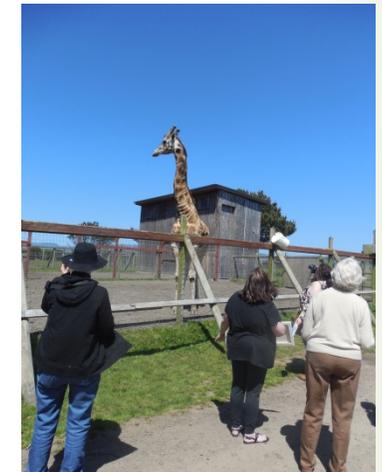




Key Lessons



2017 Almost Fringe Festival



What Worked



Some specific things that worked well...

- Interest & Participation generated county-wide
- PSAs & Local Media raised local's awareness of the festival
- Almost Fringe has a universally inclusive theme
- Grant Fund Program available for creation of events
- South Coast example proves that cohesive commercial district involvement/interest equals success**



What didn't Work



Things that didn't go so well...

- ❧ Back-end website work caused inability to create Google maps for each weekend and also necessitated multiple entries of event listings due to system reverting to previous versions while work was done. Team response to map issue was to create weekend programs listing happenings in text form
- ❧ Lack of key community agencies/organizations 'buy-in' during initial planning phases
- ❧ Initial outreach not received by the key person(s)
- ❧ Stakeholders not promoting themselves/their events



Testimonials – Feedback from those with ‘skin in the game’



- ☞ **Outreach has been done county-wide for feedback. Following are some excerpts from some key players in this year’s AFF. (Comprehensive responses rec’d to date in this meeting’s packet)**
- ☞ *From Danna Hall, Exhibitions Director, Mendocino Art Center: “...even though it wasn’t a financial success for the Art Center, the feedback from attendees was remarkable. It was a very well received project. Next year I think we will need a lot more time to prepare our project so we can include more art events ...”*
- ☞ *From Laura Cover, President of Pt Arena Merchant’s Association: “...We have had a lot of good feedback from folks re the festival...here are some of the things they have said: Bird Café’ & Supper Club (Nicole Ponsler): ‘I want to extend our heartfelt appreciation for all those involved in making the 1st annual almost fringe festival such a major success! We at Bird Café’ got to pay some bills after this super busy weekend!...’ ; Wharf Master’s Inn (Deborah Hausen): ‘Wharf Master’s Inn was booked solid for three nights. Whooo Hooo!....’; Unbeaten Path Tours (Margaret Lindgren): “...Unbeaten Path was booked solid – and our tours were all over, not just in the PA Stornetta Lands.’; and there’s more from Laura in her email!*
- ☞ *From Holly Newstead, co-organizer of the Dystopian Ball: “If VMC could get some venues and hotels on board with this festival, it would greatly expand the pool of participants. The reality of organizing and producing one’s own event is timely and costly. If venues donate their spaces for the festival and lodging was provided to out-of-town performers and artists, I think the festival could really take off and become a huge draw for out-of-town guests. I hope to see it grow into a sustainable and successful event in Mendocino County!”*

VMC's April 'Umbrella' Festival: Refine *or* Recreate?



Do we want to do AFF in 2018 refining what we've learned OR create a new theme?

PROS	CONS
1) Many keen to participate next year (See testimonials)	1) AFF currently lacking standardized implementation formula
2) Model for successful event has be found & is customizable	2) Areas tending to have more consistent tourist patronage may not 'buy-in'
3) AFF insulated from macro events (i.e. crab/mushroom availability)	3) AFF planning overlaps tail end of CWB Festival
4) Theme of <u>creativity</u> resonates w/ county's sensibilities (i.e. artsy to agrarian covers a lot!)	4) Ditching AFF now negates all the work & enthusiasm that's been garnered to-date

Additional considerations: Should festival run the entire month?; Is April the best time of year (due to weather, etc)?; What should the budget be (considering out-of-county ads/promo)?; How can we increase media interest/coverage?

Questions, Comments & Critiques

