



## **VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY**

Quarterly Report ~ October – December 2018

Submitted to Mendocino County Tourism Commission & County of Mendocino

January 17, 2018



# VMC Quarterly Activities Report: October – December 2018

## Executive Summary

- The Executive Director conducted a successful search to fill the position of Partner Relations Manager, hiring Katrina Kessen, formerly of BARRA of Mendocino and the Solar Living Center.
- The Director of Marketing & Media (DMM) worked closely with marketing consultants, TheorySF and Media Matters WorldWide to launch an aggressive digital campaign to target markets and audiences using programmatic advertising.
- By the end of October 2018 we completed the redevelopment of our Fort Bragg office including the closure of the visitor center.
- Our shared office in Fort Bragg with the West Business Development Center has brought about a new collaboration and networking opportunity.
- Hotel Adoption Program visits were on hold for the quarter.
- The Executive Director finalized candidates for the MCTC Board of Directors and filled seats on the BID Advisory Board. The new MCTC Board will be seated on January 17, 2019 at the first Board meeting of the year.
- The ED and Executive Director of Mendocino Winegrowers Inc. completed the disbursement of partnership funds for visitor-facing events.
- VMC staff continued to track their work as relating to the Strategic Plan and proposed some updates for consideration by the Board of Directors.
- The DTD hosted a Visit CA Mexico FAM. There were no travel trade, consumer shows, international sales missions in the quarter.

## 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 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 definitely “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. 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**

Upon recommendation from VMC staff, this objective was reworded in September 2018 to “Year-over-year increase in stakeholder and partner survey response rate.” A survey was sent to partners and stakeholders at the conclusion of Fall Feast Mendocino but the response rate continues to be under par and disappointing. Staff is considering an anonymous approach to the next survey that will be issued following Crab Feast Mendocino.

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

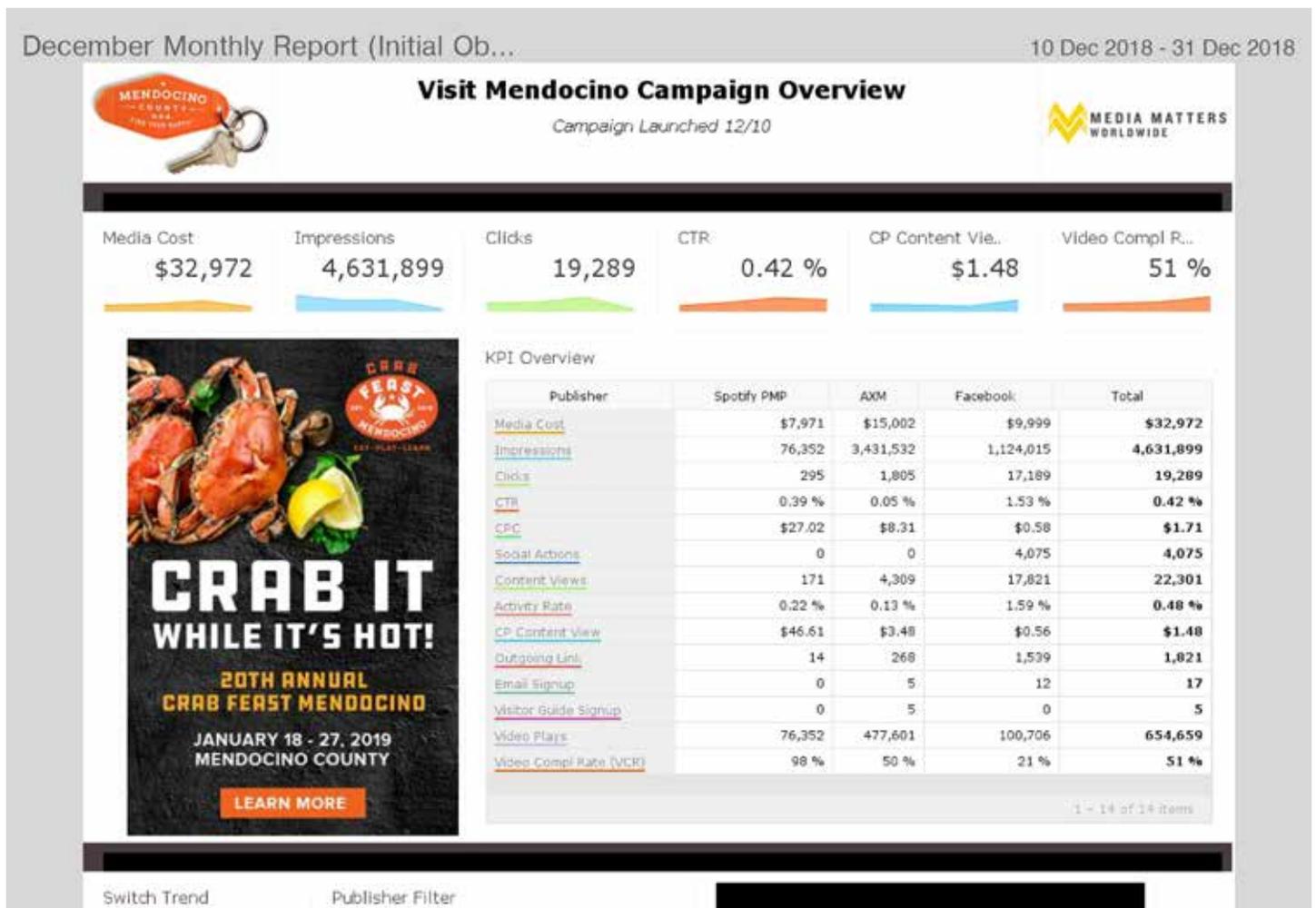
Activities during the quarter were based on: 1) the annual Marketing Plan ([http://mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Marketing-Plan\\_Final\\_2018-19.pdf](http://mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Marketing-Plan_Final_2018-19.pdf)); and 2) the three-year Strategic Plan.

The Director of Marketing & Media (DMM) worked closely with the Public Relations agency of record, KOLI Communications, and marketing consultant, TheorySF to achieve the goals described in the Marketing Plan.

The second quarter saw the launch of Fall Feast Mendocino, a rebranding and reworking of the Mushroom, Wine & Beer Festival. Feedback from participants and festival-goers indicated that the lack of a food focus in the festival name was a detriment to its success. Following the festival in early November, the Marketing and Festival committees renamed both annual festivals: Mushroom Feast Mendocino and Crab Feast Mendocino.

The Crab Feast Mendocino (January 2019) brochure was printed and distributed both inside and outside the county.

The DMM, ED and Marketing Committee worked with TSF on developing the marketing plan for the last half of the fiscal year. TSF recommended retaining Media Matters WorldWide (MMWW) to implement an aggressive digital marketing campaign targeting a variety of audiences (green, culinary, moms, travel-oriented, etc.) with the goal of raising awareness of the Mendocino brand. The campaign launched on December 10. It comprises programmatic advertising, static and video ad buys on Facebook and Instagram, and a Spotify campaign. MMWW has supplied VMC with a dashboard to see results in real time. A screenshot of the dashboard (as of January 4) is below. Results to date show a strong increase in website visitation and engagement with the collateral. Please see the following report from the MMWW dashboard, which shows an overview of the spend, impressions, clicks, etc. Further down the report is a detailed accounting of the results from each type of media buy: programmatic (AXM), Facebook, and Spotify. The ED and DMM have a weekly call with MMWW and TSF to discuss results, manage current ads, change audiences as necessary.



Day Week Month AXM Facebook Spotify PMP

Impression Trend

Media Cost Impressions CTR



Content View Trend

Media Cost Content Views CP Content View



Web Analytics:

YoY (12.10 through 12.31 YoY), VisitMendocino.com has doubled its user base, increased sessions by almost 2x and new users have increased 2.4x. MoM (Nov to Dec), both visits and new visitors have almost doubled.

Media Performance:

AXM, Facebook and Spotify are contributing to VisitMendocino.com (VM) site engagements and increased brand awareness with the following data points in mind:

- Engagement: AXM and Facebook have contributed 2.5K content views on the VM site. AXM has improved its cost per content (CPCV) view by more than 2x, from around \$8 to under \$3, while Facebook continued to deliver a sub \$1 cost per content view (and sub \$0.30 since end of Dec).
- Brand Awareness: Although AXM's CPCV is higher than Facebook, AXM is driving an increase in brand awareness, where 93% of visitors stemming from AXM are new, and contributing \$15K video plays. Facebook is also driving awareness with 101K video plays and engaging social carousel units (0.60%). MMWW is waiting to hear back from Spotify re: video completion data.

Creative:

With both AXM and Facebook, within Retargeting, video is driving a higher CTR than the non video units.

The Crab creative continues to drive the highest (non video) CTR on AXM within Prospecting and Retargeting, however within Retargeting, Horseback Riding is driving the highest activity rate on the Mendocino site. This is likely due to how the Horseback Riding creative lands on the homepage and it requires the user to search for horseback riding information (thus more activity).

Within Facebook, very little budget has delivered across the non video creative units, therefore insights will be shared once more conclusive results are

Publisher Performance

Publisher	Media O...	Media C...	Impress...	Clicks	CTR	CPC	Video P...	VCR	Content...	CP
AXM		\$15,002	3,431,532	1,805	0.05 %	\$8.31	477,601	50 %	4,309	
	Prospecting	\$11,789	3,373,423	1,726	0.05 %	\$6.83	445,145	50 %	3,128	
	Retargeting	\$3,213	58,109	79	0.14 %	\$40.67	32,456	50 %	1,181	
Facebook		\$9,999	1,124,015	17,189	1.53 %	\$0.58	100,706	21 %	17,821	
	Prospecting	\$8,816	1,013,695	15,187	1.50 %	\$0.58	91,060	20 %	15,044	
	Retargeting	\$1,183	110,320	2,002	1.81 %	\$0.59	9,646	24 %	2,777	
Spotify P...		\$7,971	76,352	295	0.39 %	\$27.02	76,352	98 %	171	
	Retargeting	\$7,971	76,352	295	0.39 %	\$27.02	76,352	98 %	171	
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$32,972</b>	<b>4,631,899</b>	<b>19,289</b>	<b>0.42 %</b>	<b>\$1.71</b>	<b>654,659</b>	<b>51 %</b>	<b>22,301</b>	

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Creative Performance

Publisher	Ad Form.	Creative	Media C.	Impress.	Clicks	CTR	CPC	Video P.	VCR	Cor
▼ AXM			\$15,002	3,431,532	1,805	0.05 %	\$8.31	477,601	50 %	
	▼ HTML5		\$10,876	2,952,780	1,651	0.06 %	\$6.59	0	NaN	
		Crab	\$4,490	1,144,951	995	0.09 %	\$4.51	0	NaN	
		Kayak	\$3,197	903,270	320	0.04 %	\$9.99	0	NaN	
		Horse Riding	\$3,190	904,559	336	0.04 %	\$9.49	0	NaN	
	▼ Video		\$4,126	478,752	154	0.03 %	\$26.79	477,601	50 %	
		Horse Riding	\$2,076	240,608	80	0.03 %	\$25.95	240,044	50 %	
		TreeHuggers	\$2,050	238,144	74	0.03 %	\$27.70	237,557	50 %	
▼ Facebook			\$9,999	1,124,015	17,189	1.53 %	\$0.58	100,706	21 %	
	▼ Video		\$7,030	565,307	10,800	1.91 %	\$0.65	100,706	21 %	
		15s Tree Hug	\$3,607	258,869	5,123	1.98 %	\$0.70	52,727	22 %	
		15s Horses	\$3,422	306,438	5,677	1.85 %	\$0.60	47,979	20 %	
	▼ Static		\$2,128	387,838	4,908	1.27 %	\$0.43	0	NaN	
		Crab	\$1,663	301,025	4,334	1.44 %	\$0.38	0	NaN	
		Horse Riding	\$308	69,660	427	0.61 %	\$0.72	0	NaN	
		Kayak	\$158	17,153	147	0.86 %	\$1.08	0	NaN	

December Monthly Report (Initial Ob...

10 Dec 2018 - 31 Dec 2018

▼ Carousel		\$841	170,870	1,481	0.87 %	\$0.57	0	NaN
	Generic	\$841	170,870	1,481	0.87 %	\$0.57	0	NaN
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$32,972</b>	<b>4,631,899</b>	<b>19,289</b>	<b>0.42 %</b>	<b>\$1.71</b>	<b>654,659</b>	<b>51 %</b>

1 - 22 of 22 items

In conjunction with the MMWW ad campaign, VMC will also undertake a Nielsen Study to determine the baseline for unaided awareness of the county among our target audience. This brand study will run through the remainder of the current campaign (i.e. June 30, 2019). The study will start to see stabilized results in January and at that time, VMC will be able to start to draw insights on the effectiveness of the marketing efforts.

An interesting outcome of the digital campaign is a definite uptick in mailing list sign-ups and Visitor Guide requests. The Administrative Services Manager reviewed requests received 20 days prior to the campaign launch (December 10) and 20 days following; as well as a YOY review. The results are noted in the two tables below.

20* Days Before VS. 20* Days Following	Type of Request	Count
20* Days Before 11/20/18 to 12/9/18	Subscribed to Emails	39
	Visitor Guide Request	29
	<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>
20* Days Following 12/11/2018 to 12/29/2018	Subscribed to Emails	44
	Visitor Guide Request	53
	<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Total Increase in Interest 20* Days Before VS. 20* Days Following</b>	<b>Subscribed to Emails</b>	<b>5 12.8%</b>
	<b>Visitor Guide Request</b>	<b>24 82.8%</b>
	<b>Total Increase</b>	<b>29 42.6%</b>

\* not including launch date, launch date numbers listed but excluded from count

(12/11-29) 2017 VS. 2018	Type of Request	Count
12/11/17 to 12/29/17 Request Counts	Subscribed to Emails	34
	Visitor Guide Request	11
	<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Total Increase in Interest (12/11-29) 2017 VS. (12/11-29) 2018</b>	<b>Subscribed to Emails</b>	<b>10 29.4%</b>
	<b>Visitor Guide Request</b>	<b>42 381.8%</b>
	<b>Total Increase</b>	<b>52 115.6%</b>

The DMM is in discussion with Ionic Media to purchase outdoor advertising—e-billboards—at the Bay Bridge and on Highway 80 at Roseville—and light rail train car wraps to run on two lines in Sacramento’s heart and beyond. These two campaigns will run for 26 weeks beginning in January 2019.



The final marketing strategy for the quarter was a contract between VMC and KOZT-FM (“The Coast”) to run a series of radio and online advertisements. The purpose of this particular campaign is to highlight services and opportunities VMC provides to its stakeholders and partners, for example, reminding businesses to have a listing on the VMC website, informational pieces about our workshop collaboration with West Business Development Center (March–May 2019), and more to be determined.

There were no additions to the sales plan this quarter with the exception that Humboldt County will participate in the Denver Travel and Adventure Show in February. Once the Visitor Services Committee is seated, various sales plan amendments will be considered.

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

The website hit report to stakeholders continues to go out each month. The following table shows the top ten outbound referrals from the VMC website for September through December.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS: VMC SITE TOP TEN OUTBOUND REFERRALS 1Q 2018/19 (plus Sept)							
September		October		November		December	
Property	Opens	Property	Opens	Property	Opens	Property	Opens
Skunk Train FB	184	Gualala Hotel	189	Gualala Hotel	311	Gualala Hotel	371
Gualala Hotel	167	Skunk Train FB	151	Skunk Train FB	132	Skunk Train FB	171
B. Bryan Preserve	133	Stanford Inn	143	Stanford Inn	127	Montgomery Woods	168
Stanford Inn	126	Chandelier Drive-Thru Tr	123	Glass Beach	89	Stanford Inn	155
Glass Beach	125	B. Bryan Preserve	105	Little River Inn	80	Little River Inn	153
Montgomery Woods	117	Montgomery Woods	90	Chandelier Drive-Thru Tr	80	Chandelier Drive-Thru	147
Philo Apple Farm	115	Vichy Springs	86	Montgomery Woods	75	Vichy Springs	123
Catch A Canoe	110	EcoTerra	83	Confusion Hill	73	Orr Hot Springs	105
Bowling Ball Beach	104	Little River Inn	80	Vichy Springs	72	City of 10,000 Buddhas	103
Chandelier Drive-Thru Tr	99	The Madrones	80	Botanical Gardens	69	Glass Beach	95

A project that VMC will undertake in the upcoming months is 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) continues to communicate 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.

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, and more.

One of the major ways VMC gets buy in from partners around the county is their participation in our festivals. For January’s Crab Feast Mendocino, the event coordinator reached out to businesses and organizations countywide to participate by providing events and listings for the festival’s categories (‘eat’, ‘play’, ‘learn’, ‘sip’ and ‘stay’) with the following results:

- ‘Eat’ category: 20 culinary events at restaurants offering special fare throughout the 10 days of the festival
- ‘Play’ category: 20 fun events
- ‘Learn’ category: 6 events
- ‘Sip’ category: 5 beer listings and 31 winery listings
- ‘Stay’ category: 36 lodging establishments countywide

For specifics on who these were and what they offered, please refer to the online 2019 Feast Mendocino brochure, [https://visitmendocino.com/app/uploads/2018/11/VMC2019\\_FeastMendo\\_FINALcomp.pdf](https://visitmendocino.com/app/uploads/2018/11/VMC2019_FeastMendo_FINALcomp.pdf).

In October, two new sales contracts were entered into between Tourmappers, an inbound tour operator based in Boston, and the Elk Cove Inn and Mendocino Grove. In the quarter, seven domestic and international tour operator leads were furnished to the Elk Cove Inn.

Conversations are ongoing with the Mayor and City Manager of Point Arena with the goal of bringing them back into the BID.

Since Q1 2017, VMC has subscribed to Visa Vue, a service offered through Visit California that provides an analysis of international visitor spending patterns in the county on a calendar year quarterly basis. For the first time, VMC staff have 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.

Some key international highlights for the the quarter:

- 8,885 cardholders (8,668 consumer; 217 commercial) with a total spend of \$1,026,130
- 16,388 transactions at an average of \$62.61 per ticket
- Canada is the top originating country for both the number of cardholders and the spend amount: 300,000 and \$300,000 respectively
- Lodging is the top market segment by spend amount at \$400,000 for the quarter
- The top three YOY market segments by spend growth are fuel, retail goods, and restaurants
- In the same category, lodging shows a decrease of 17.96% YOY

**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	4Q 2017	Q4 2018
Total dollar amount charged	\$365,750	\$449,251	\$679,059	\$707,677	\$1,137,250	\$1,026,130	\$540,821	
Y/Y increase/decrease *	13.00%	22.80%	9.50%	4.20%	10.30%	-9.70%	-6.30%	
How the money is spent **								
Lodging	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$400,000	\$200,000	
Restaurants	below \$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$100,000	
Other ***	below \$100,000	\$100,000+	\$200,000 +	\$300,000+	\$300,000+	\$300,000+	\$200,000+	
Ranking by country								
1	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	
2	UK	China	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	UK	
3	China	UK	UK	UK	UK	UK	France	
4	Australia	Germany	Australia	France	France	France	Germany	
5	Germany	Italy	Italy	Australia	Australia	Australia	Spain	

\* YOY 2017 / 2016 figures are unavailable for verification purposes All expenses related to international sales and marketing are paid for by the NCTC, which is in turn a creature of Visit CA.

\*\* 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.

<b>Total International Visa Visitor Spending 2017***</b>	<b>Total Direct Visitor Spending 2017</b>	<b>International Spending with Visa as % of Total</b>
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\$2,722,880

\$456,000,000

0.60%

Total Direct Visitor Spending is from the 2018 California Travel Impacts Report, which breaks down spending categories into similar "buckets" as Visa Vue: Lodging, Restaurants, Travel, etc.

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

In the upcoming quarter, the ED and John Kelleher from Community Benchmark will meet with the Treasurer-Tax Collector to discuss implementation of an electronic TOT/BID submission system.

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

VMC staff is working closely with Mendocino Winegrowers Inc. on the revised vision for Taste [of] Mendocino. More information is detailed later in this report.

The ED has been elected to the Board of Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association and the Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce. He continues to work with the City of Ukiah and the Ukiah Chamber of Commerce.

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

At its September 2018 meeting, the Board approved a recommendation to change this objective to: YOY increase in partner participation in festivals, reflecting its new strategy for implementing this Imperative. The Partner Relations Manager is responsible for the implementation of this objective.

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

MCTC's internal website, [MendocinoTourism.org](http://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 were posted in December. The VMC ED continues to ensure that stakeholders are made aware of the page in the bi-monthly report to stakeholders.

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

In September 2018, the VMC Board approved the VMC staff recommendation to reword this Objective to change "YOY increase" verbiage to "Solicit new applicants...."

The Executive Director was successful in recruiting four new MCTC Directors who will be seated at the January 2019 Board meeting. At that same meeting, the Board will approve committee chairs.

For the BID Advisory Board, the ED successfully recruited a coastal representative from the Beachcomber properties and is currently recruiting for the vacant seat. The ED and DMM are working on the first draft of the BID Advisory Report. The BID Board's first meeting in December was cancelled due to lack of a quorum.

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

The Marketing team continues to closely monitor website performance and adjust home page content to reflect seasonality and trends. The Marketing team has established a benchmark set of analytics to assess site

performance, demographics, and psychographics of users, and is using Q, the Quantcast Intelligence Cloud, suite of audience insights, targeting and measurement solutions that are designed to understand, influence, convert and measure the consumer journey.

The latest Analytics Report reveals that:

- Top line traffic has risen significantly since the introduction of the campaign
- Users are up over 95% from November, to 20,185
- Most traffic is from Northern California: San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento
- Business listings have received 5,441 views. A 12% increase over November
- Demographics are shifting to targets 25—44 years old
- Highest interest is from consumers interested in traveling, parenting and food & drink

The full report is available for review: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/pq59d3xe3htljva/VMC%20December%20%2718%20%20Analytics%20.pdf?dl=0>

For Crab FEAST MENDOCINO, the Marketing team created a landing page for the festival's anchor events, which can be viewed at <https://ilovecrab.visitmendocino.com> and launched a robust digital campaign to solicit ticket buyers for the anchor events.

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

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

The ED worked with the Lake County Tourism Improvement District (TID) Steering Committee to organize and gain approval for their new assessment.

In October, a Japanese tour group inquired about coming to Mendocino County but was referred to Sonoma County due to there being no suitable facilities in Mendocino County. Following the DTD's visit to Australia in August, helloworld (a tour operator) began offering packages to the North Coast, including Mendocino County. To date, nine packages have been sold.

Sonoma County Airport has agreed to provide swag for the upcoming Denver Travel and Adventure Show to help promote the new United Airlines service from Santa Rosa to Denver beginning in March.

Approximately 30 Mendocino County group leads, mostly for inland Mendocino County, were generated by the DTD's attendance at the National Tour Association event in Milwaukee in November. The DTD attended under the auspices of the North Coast Tourism Council. The DTD has followed up on all the leads.

The DTD has offered [GuestBook.com](http://GuestBook.com), an affinity program for smaller unaffiliated hotels, to hotels in the four North Coast counties. The DTD is following up.

### **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.

The ED, DMM, and Partner Relations Manager are working with the West Business Development Center on a series of workshops designed to appeal to our partners and stakeholders. Topics include Innkeeping 101, Social Media Marketing, Understanding Google Analytics, Your Website IS Your Brand, Effective Rural Tourism Marketing, and Customer Service: The Heart of Your Brand. We will encourage our partners and stakeholders to take advantage of this opportunity to refresh their industry knowledge.

Our Mendocino County regional partners—Visit Ukiah, Visit Willits, Visit Fort Bragg, Coast Chamber of Commerce, Redwood Coast Chamber, Destination Hopland, Mendocino Arts Council, Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association, Mendocino Wine Inc.—received their final partnership funding checks. We look forward to inviting each group to present to our Board of Directors at an upcoming meeting.

Staff represents Visit Mendocino County at Destination Hopland, AVWA, MWI, Coast Chamber of Commerce, Visit Fort Bragg, Visit Ukiah, and Visit Willits.

### **IMPERATIVE: Raise awareness of the Mendocino County experience**

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

As noted earlier in this report, the Marketing team will undertake another Nielsen awareness study once the website and marketing programs have been active for six months.

Social media also plays an important role in creating and raising brand awareness. The figure below shows the YOY metrics for the quarter. As the figure indicates, Facebook received a more than 350% increase in impressions year-over-year. We can attribute this to careful curation of images and messaging that appeal to our target audiences. Instagram is also on an upward trend. We will be closely monitoring these numbers as the digital ad campaign progresses. In December, we hosted a social media influencer in the county. The outcome of this visit will be shared on social media and other outlets in January 2019.

Social Media Results YOY FY 2017 v. FY 2018 Q2					
	FACEBOOK			INSTAGRAM	
	FY 2017 Q2	FY 2018 Q2		FY 2017 Q2	FY 2018 Q2
Impressions	316,800	1,438,202	Likes Received	7,263	11,776
Engagement	10,800	19,885	Comments	100	182
Link Clicks	561	15,042	Impressions	73,733	155,170
Posts	27	32	Posts	21	25
Impressions/Post	11,733	44,944	Likes/Post	345	471
Engagements/Post	400	621	Comments/Post	4.8	7.28
Fan Base	56,839	57,420			

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

Due to the abundance of coverage of the October 2017 wildfires, the hits for October and November 2017 are skewed.

YOY PR Results for Q2										
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	
October	341*	50	\$15,167,184.20	\$6,664,980.11	180,157,739	497,767,275	3	0	8	1
November	165*	40	\$6,610,297.00	\$2,668,294.55	51,658,232	44,028,890	1	2	2	3
December	33	40	\$6,319,924.37	\$484,476.72	74,035,151	17,694,454	1	1	7	1
YOY Total	539	130	\$30,323,780.86	\$3,152,771.27	444,664,021	554,862,791	6	3	17	5
YTD Goals		567		\$34,166,388.10		1,019,477,406		10		23
2018 Goals		300		\$6.6 million		150 million		11		18

\* These numbers are attributed to the enormous amount of press coverage from the October 2017 wildfires.

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

At the time of creating the Strategic Plan, the determination was made that an in-market survey would be conducted every other year and is due to take place during the current fiscal year. This item is separate from prospective visitor and awareness surveys undertaken by the Marketing team and falls under the purview of the Visitor Services Committee.

The DMM revised the annual Calendar of Events to correct errors and omissions and it is currently being printed. The guide will be distributed throughout the county and at trade shows.

Staff worked on the revision of the Visitor Guide. This new guide will be smaller than the current version and will contain high-impact imagery to entice prospective visitors. Exposure to the new branding is continuing with new logo wear and tablecloths for trade shows.

The two existing gateway signs (Highways 101 and 20) are being repainted. The timeline is weather-dependent. The DTD has placed an order to purchase new logoed orange giveaway bags to replace the green ones. Three partners are helping to defray the production cost.

Since the visitor center at the VMC office in Fort Bragg is now closed, the vast majority of print collateral has been transferred to the Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce for distribution to coastal businesses and tourists. The Mendocino Coast Chamber has taken over the storage and distribution of the Mendocino County North Coast tear-off maps.

The Partner Relations Manager has worked diligently during her short tenure on updating the internal Filemaker contact database.

#### **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 kicking into gear in January 2019. The rest of the fiscal year promises to be busy for the Marketing team as they adjust the campaign to new audiences and add in new elements, for example, the Whale Festivals in March and Taste Mendocino in April. The DMM is excited to have the opportunity to work with a great team of marketing professionals.

Following the DTD's Visit California Australia sales mission in August, the DTD sent leads to eight county stakeholders for their follow-up.

We completed an international one sheet to be distributed during Hotel Adoption Program visits. The DTD has solicited partners and stakeholders for giveaway donations and their participation at winter trade shows.

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

VMC staff are working with Mendocino Winegrowers Inc. to raise the bar for the event formerly known as "Taste of Mendocino." In keeping with "Feast Mendocino," the Festival Committee approved a name change to drop the "of" and redub the event "Taste Mendocino." The event will be held at San Francisco's Fort Mason on Saturday April 27. The major difference this year is that VMC/MWI will hold an A-list media reception in the penthouse of the Battery Club in downtown San Francisco that will serve to highlight the extraordinary culinary and viticultural offerings from the county.

#### **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.

# Appendix 1

## VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY International Marketing

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



### What VMC Does

- Promotes Mendocino County through the North Coast Tourism Council
- Gets the word out via international sales missions and events
- Partners with organizations such as Visit California and Shasta Cascade
- Brands Mendocino County and the North Coast as destinations
- Facilitates contracts between international tour operators and Mendocino County hotels



### Just the Facts

- Calendar year 2018 international travel to Mendocino County increased 13%
- Visit California reports 38.3% of international visitors to the four-county NCTC region come to Mendocino County.
- Most international visitors to Mendocino County come from Canada, the UK, Germany, Australia, Mexico and Western Europe



### Be Our Partner

- Donate giveaways for various international sales missions
- Host tour operators so they can experience Mendocino County first-hand
- Enter into contracts with international operators to share in this lucrative business



### Tell the World

- Sign up for the NCTC newsletter at [www.northcoastca.com](http://www.northcoastca.com)
- Friend the NCTC Facebook page at [explorenorthcoast](https://www.facebook.com/explorenorthcoast)
- Keep us up to date with events, what's new in your business, and photos and videos with appeal to the international visitor



# Appendix 2

## 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.