



CHANDELIER  
TREE

**2011-2012 Annual Report  
2012-2013 Marketing Plan**

## board of directors

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**Vice Chairman**  
Robert Pinoli

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Cally Dym  
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Pauline Zamboni

## staff

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**Director of Tourism Development**  
Richard Strom

**Director of Marketing**  
Betsy Wildberger

**Operations Manager**  
Erin Placido

**Director of Interactive Media**  
Brendan McGuigan

**Event Coordinator**  
Alison de Grassi

**Administrative Assistant**  
Susan Peakall

**Sales Associate**  
Colby Bowans

**Public Relations**  
HypeHouse Communications

### Mission

Market Mendocino County to potential visitors in order to increase the economic impact of the travel and tourism industry throughout Mendocino County using recommendations from the 2008 Mendocino County Travel Research Study as well as successes from the 2010-2011 Marketing Plan.

### Goals

- Increase overall visitation to Mendocino County, specifically in the shoulder seasons of Spring and Fall
- Increase length of stay per visitation
- Increase overnight visitor spending per day
- We've created a Partner Information Packet or PIP that outlines the Visit Mendocino organization. Please call 707.964.9010 to schedule a PIP meeting to learn more

*There are so many ways to get involved...*

### Sales

- Volunteer at one or more of the trade and consumer shows throughout the year
- Produce specials and packages to be sold to tour operators, media and travel agents

### Public Relations

- Respond to our multiple queries regarding specials, unique opportunities and more to be included in press releases and media pitches

### Advertising

Participate in one of our many co-operative opportunities - whether it's in VIA, Sunset, [www.visitmendocino.com](http://www.visitmendocino.com), or our annual visitor guide. We offer opportunities which cost less and provide more exposure than you can obtain on your own.

## letter from the president



What you see in this annual report is truly remarkable. Not just for the amount of planning, hard work, and occasional heart-break it took to surmount what the Visit Mendocino County team accomplished. It is remarkable because of the commitment, partnerships and support from everyone in the County. Partnerships and support from innkeepers, business owners, wineries, governmental leaders and travel/tourism organizations. 2012 marked Visit Mendocino County's third official year, but our foundation goes back many years. This particular annual report is dedicated to everyone who has supported our goals, and helped to guide our evolution. We are truly grateful!

Inside, you will find highlights from the year. From a new branding campaign, to major news features in worldwide media, to strong sales, social media, events and alliances, we all continue to make our overall actions more efficient... and more powerful. More than ever, we are hosting visitors, journalists and groups from throughout the Bay Area, California, the US and the world - a trend we expect to continue.

VMC exists to increase visitors and sales—and the numbers are growing. They're up five percent over last year and we can attribute this in part to the sales, events, marketing and public relations campaigns we all work together on. This helps our local economy by creating jobs and increasing fiscal resources for local government and private industry.

With your support, we've excelled. This is good for local business, the County, and our overall travel industry. In fact, Visit California was so impressed with our public relations and marketing efforts that they awarded our campaign with top honors – both as a finalist for public relations campaign and winner (for the 2nd year in a row) of “Best Why Tourism Matters Campaign”. What you won't see in the report is the emotion, energy and vision it took to get here. We want to send a huge thank you to everyone who has helped support this united campaign to attract more visitors to our County, and look forward to raising the bar yet again for another successful year.

With Kindest Regards and Deep Gratitude,

Scott Schneider  
President and CEO  
Visit Mendocino County

# annual report

## Public and Media Relations

✦ Placed more than **100 Mendocino County stories** in print, broadcast and internet media, resulting in nearly **\$10 million dollars** in comparable advertising value and more than **220 million** consumer impressions (**180% of goal**)

✦ Directly recruited **50 members of the media** to visit Mendocino County and distributed **25 press releases** to local, national and international press, resulting in dozens of media placements

✦ Conducted a highly successful media tour of New York City, where we met with editors and producers from *Travel + Leisure*, *Saveur*, CBS This Morning, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Food Network*, *Martha Stewart Everyday Food*, *Every Day with Rachael Ray* and *O, The Oprah Magazine*

✦ Recruited a group of high-profile members of the media to serve on the judging panel at the 2011 Wine & Mushroom Festival. Judges included editors from *Sunset*, *Edible Marin & Wine Country*, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, *Taste of Home* (a Reader's Digest Association publication), *Vegetarian Times* and *Popular Plates*

✦ Coordinated extensive media coverage around Festive Fortnight Festival and Earth IS First Festival

✦ Recruited a group of high-profile members of the media to serve on the judging panel at the 2012 Crab & Wine Festival. Judges included editors from *Martha Stewart Everyday Food*, *Every Day with Rachael Ray*, *AFAR Magazine*, *Gentry*, *Wine Country This Week* and the *San Jose Mercury News*

✦ Initiated revamp of all existing Press Kit documents

✦ Attended Visit California Media Receptions in Los Angeles and New York City, resulting in valuable face-to-face time with top-tier media and feature stories

✦ Generated awareness in the media and coordinated press attendance and media coverage for the second annual "Taste of Mendocino" event in San Francisco. The event was attended by more than 80 Bay Area media, such as Michael Bauer, Executive Food & Wine Editor at the *San Francisco Chronicle* and editors from *Alameda Magazine* and *Oakland Magazine*, *7x7 Magazine*, *CHOW*, *Planet Grape*, *NPR* and more

✦ Coordinated multiple television and radio segments, including Sacramento & Company on ABC News10 KXTV, CBS This Morning with Peter Greenberg, Environmental Directions Radio and NBC's The Today Show

✦ Pitched and placed multiple local, regional, national and international news features in media outlets such as About.com, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Fido Friendly*, *Food & Wine*, *FoxNews.com*, *Kia Ora* (Air New Zealand in-flight), *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Marin Independent Journal*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *NBC Bay Area*, *New York Daily News*, *New Zealand Herald*, *Press Democrat*, *Redbook*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Sacramento Magazine*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Smart Meetings, Spa, Sunset*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Travel + Leisure*, *United Hemispheres*, *Vegetarian Times*, *VIA*, *Virgin Airlines Australia* (in-flight video), *Yahoo! Voices* and more

## Visitor Services

✦ Provided funding to assist in keeping South Coast visitor center open

✦ Distributed close to 100,000 tear off maps countywide

✦ Continued work on gateway signage and informational kiosks throughout the county

## Sales

✦ In partnership with the North Coast Tourism Council, attended GoWest, POW WOW and NTA; met with international and domestic tour operators

✦ Secured groups and placements in tour books which resulted in several hundred room nights booked in Mendocino County

✦ Obtained several new international tour book placements for local hotels

✦ Attended consumer trade shows such as Sunset Celebration Weekend, Bay Area Travel Show and Sportsmen Show in Sacramento.

✦ Secured local businesses to offer specials, packages & discounts to targeted groups ensuring increased spending

✦ Provided training to local businesses on working with receptive agents and tour operators

## Events

✦ Coordinated inaugural "Earth is First" Festival – a 10-day festival in April honoring the earth and Mendocino County's commitment to it

✦ Coordinated inaugural "Festive Fortnight" Festival – a 14 days celebration of the holiday season highlighting specials, packages & events to inspire visitation for shopping, eating & celebrating

✦ Grew the Mushroom & Wine Festival to its biggest year ever

✦ Grew the Crab & Wine Festival to its biggest year ever

✦ Worked with the Film Festival, Mendocino Music Festival, Alsace Festival and many others to grow attendance and overnight stays

## Advertising

✦ Close to 14,000 direct advertising leads (186% of our goal) received this year and counting (leads will continue to trickle in as some publications are still relevant)

✦ Launched new branding and advertising campaign featuring new photography and tagline, 'Mendocino County... what you've been missing'

✦ Promoted first annual Festive Fortnight festival featuring countywide retail and lodging specials and event details to push visitation and economy during a typically slow tourism month

✦ Developed bi-monthly event calendars for internal distribution so that all tourism related businesses would have a quick reference for things to do now when visitors inquire

## Social Media & Website

✦ Over 14,000 Facebook fans thanks to a steady campaign and engaged audience. We also launched Facebook ads that widened our reach and exposure

✦ Almost 22,000 subscribers to our email database. They receive monthly emails highlighting county-wide events, hot topics, exciting opportunities, and much more

✦ Launched successful 'Mendocino Moments' video campaign featuring unique personalities and characters throughout the county and sharing their stories through YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook and Twitter

# Operations

- Distributed 75,000 2011–2012 Visitor Guides to visitor centers throughout N. California as well as potential visitors throughout the US
- VMC became the Official Destination Marketing Organization of Mendocino County as voted on by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
- Board of Supervisors unanimously approved 2012-2013 BID annual report committing to another year of investment into countywide marketing – this is about an 8% re-investment of Bed Tax funds. For the 6th year in a row, the BID renewal receive zero opposition
- Continued to administer the Mendocino County Lodging Association, Mendocino County Promotional Alliance and the North Coast Tourism Council
- Continued working with partners to enhance measuring return on investment such as Smith Travel Research and Jack Rabbit (direct booking on visitmendocino.com)
- Continued partner information meetings totaling over 200 businesses throughout the county
- Worked with over 300 county businesses and organizations to increase visitation and stays
- Winner of the Southeast Tourism Society's Forty Tourism Professionals for the Future award (congratulations Scott!)

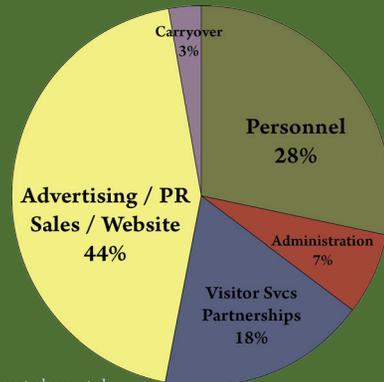
# The Big Picture

A few more facts on the state of our industry\*

- Promotional efforts serve hundreds of businesses throughout the County employing over **4,900 people** with total earnings of **\$116 million**
- General County Fund is approx. **\$58 million**; Tax revenues from Tourism are **\$6.9 million**
- Tourism revenue brings in approximately **\$561.47** of tax relief per household
- Annual Countywide travel spending is **\$299 million**
- DMOs spend almost half (47%) of their budget on sales and marketing efforts, with media advertising the top activity (18% of total expenses). The remainder is spent on personnel (41%) and administration (12%)†
- The vast majority (89%) receive hotel tax funding, averaging 79% of all revenue. In terms of private funding, 42% receive membership dues†
- DMO budgets have stabilized this year with a median average of **\$2.8 million**, but have yet to recover from their peak in 2008†

## VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY

Personnel	\$275,772.92
Administration	\$ 67,302.47
Visitor Services /Partnership	\$172,356.91
Advertising / PR / Sales / Website	\$427,252.85
Carryover to 2012/2013	\$ 25,000.00
<b>Total 2011 - 2012 Profit/Loss</b>	<b>\$968,325.40</b>



\*Information provided by Dean Runyan Association & US Census Bureau. Information from 201 except where noted.  
 † Represented by a sample of 195 DMOs that participated in DMAT's 2011 DMO Organizational & Financial Profile Study

# And a Look at the Goals for 2012-2013

- **Paid Advertising** Initiate approximately **40,000,000** impressions in our target areas producing **10,000 leads** through reader response, website hits, phone calls, email, etc
- **Social Media** Track campaign success through page views, fans, telephone inquiries and Google Analytics receiving **1,500 direct inquiries** and over **20,000 fans and followers**
- **Email Marketing** Increase **subscriptions to 30,000**
- **Website Development** Bring unique visitors to **200,000 annually**; Initiate a website redesign to maximize time-on-site
- **Public and Media Relations** Initiate **\$5 million in ad equivalency** through PR coverage, reaching **120,840,000** impressions
- **Leisure Sales** Obtain **7,000 direct consumer leads**
- **Group Sales** Generate **10 new contracts** between local hotels and domestic tour operators
- **Visitor Center and Signage** Install one gateway sign, two informational kiosks;
- **Affiliation Program** Generate income from partnerships, co-ops, and other opportunities
- **Visitor Guide and Fulfillment** Distribute the 2012-2013 Official Visitor's Guide, annual events calendar and tear off maps to enhance visitor experience
- **Partnerships** Continue to grow partnerships with county businesses, organizations and government. Enhance relationships with SF Travel, Sacramento CVB, Visit California & the newly formed Brand USA

**“As a hotel owner, business leader, passionate environmentalist and busy father, my job is to be efficient and connected,”** said Raakesh Patel, Super 8 Ukiah. **“We support and appreciate Visit Mendocino County’s programs and outreach because they partner with us to share our story, and ultimately attract visitors to the County and to my business. We won the Wyndham Green Award, the Spirit of Super 8 Award and achieved national EPA attention. VMC has been able to capitalize on these awards through their programs bringing more visitors to my property, to Ukiah and, ultimately, the county.”**

*–Raakesh Patel  
 Super 8 Ukiah*

# **VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY, INC.**

345 North Franklin Street  
Fort Bragg, California 95437

Place  
Stamp  
Here

