

VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY, INC.



**2010 – 2011  
RESEARCH  
BASED  
STRATEGIC  
MARKETING  
PLAN**

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## MISSION

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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 2009-2010 Marketing Plan

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## GOALS

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- ❖ 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

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# OBJECTIVES

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- ❖ Place the Mendocino County brand and message at least 150,000,000 times in front of potential visitors through paid and unpaid advertising, articles, and direct sales – mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento Valley
- ❖ Continuously improve a dynamic social media campaign encouraging local business to partner with our efforts
- ❖ Continue publication of a high quality visitor guide, website and other necessary materials providing the visitor with the necessary tools needed in planning a multi-day stay in Mendocino County
- ❖ Assist community organizations with the promotion of the many events and festivals held throughout Mendocino County
- ❖ Assist local visitor centers, as appropriate, with information, and other necessary support to encourage the customer to extend their stay by at least one day and to have a more fulfilling visit
- ❖ Provide training to local visitor related businesses and organizations helping to improve overall customer satisfaction
- ❖ Continue strong partnerships with surrounding Counties, various initiatives such as Geotourism and the National Heritage Area and the State of California
- ❖ Evaluate and measure return on investment

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# OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

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The travel and tourism industry is vital to Mendocino County's economic stability. Particularly during these strenuous economic times, Mendocino County needs to have its message disseminated.

- ❖ As of 2007, Tourism efforts generate over \$592 in tax relief per household – a 4% increase over 2006
- ❖ Currently \$326M in Travel spending generated within Mendocino County – a 3% increase over 2006
- ❖ Represents .38% of all travel spending in California
- ❖ 5,290 jobs generated by Mendocino's travel industry with \$120M in earnings
- ❖ Represents 10% of total County Employment
- ❖ Represents 7.2% of total County Earnings
- ❖ \$7.6m in local taxes (T.O.T. and Sales tax) generated within Mendocino County
- ❖ 38.8% of total local taxes generated

Over the past few years, both the Mendocino County Lodging Association (MCLA) and the Mendocino County Promotional Alliance (MCPA) have worked hard marketing Mendocino County regionally, nationally and internationally. With our combined efforts, we have successfully been able to measure a 17:1 return on investment. However, there is much more to be done to create a more positive impact on our economic engine.

In early 2008, the Joint Marketing Committee consisting of MCLA, MCPA, and the Winegrape and Wine Commission (MWWC), retained Randall Travel Marketing to conduct a comprehensive travel research study for Mendocino County. Randall Travel Marketing is nationally recognized for their research and strategic planning for destinations. Research was conducted during the five-month period from June 2008 through October 2008. The results and recommendations of the County-wide marketing study were published in October 2008. Randall submitted a detailed Mendocino County Travel Research Study ("Study") outlining recommended strategic initiatives for the short term (two years) and long term (five years). The plan includes tracking and return-on-investment benchmarks to measure success.

The Study concluded that MCLA, MCPA and MWWC "have established a good foundation/partnership and the time is right for strategic tourism growth going forward." Among the ten (10) "Strategic Direction" recommendations was the need to "Refine/streamline the successful marketing partnership between MCLA and MCPA". The Study confirmed the "marketing and fulfillment program has been successful and is ready to move to the next level to drive increased return on investment." While the current Board structure and funding of the two organizations was considered adequate, specifically the Study recommended:

- ❖ Realignment of staff and streamlining the organizational structure so that work assignments and goals are clearly defined and aggressive deadlines are met
- ❖ Improve staff efficiency and communication

- ❖ Replace the Joint Marketing Committee with a new organization titled “Visit Mendocino County, Inc.”

The Study contains detailed recommendations on how to market Mendocino County.

The establishment of Visit Mendocino County, Inc. (VMC) beginning July 1, 2009 has enabled MCLA and MCPA to as a single entity creating a structure where one group is responsible for all aspects of marketing the County. Combining staff and other resources enables those making day-to-day decisions to become more efficient in their activities; decrease duplication of effort; and create a comprehensive approach to achieve key programs and activities for promoting the County.

The primary function of Visit Mendocino County, Inc. is to prepare and carry out the annual Marketing Plan as approved by the MCLA and MCPA Board of Directors. Visit Mendocino County, Inc. and its staff will be responsible for implementing that plan. The annual marketing plan will include a budget allocating funds to specific activities. A quarterly review of the plan will take place to ensure its relevancy and effectiveness.

Visit Mendocino County, Inc. consists of ten (10) individuals – five 5 from the MCLA Board and five 5 from the MCPA Board. Members of MCLA’s Executive Committee will serve on the Board as well as one other appointed Board Member. MCPA will have two 2 members representing the wine industry, one representing the art industry, one representing the Chambers, and one member-at-large to be appointed by the MCPA Board. The membership will result in experienced individuals, who are knowledgeable in the Promotion of our County properly directing and overseeing the mission and vision of both the organization as well as this Plan.

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# OVERALL STRATEGY

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- ❖ Implement the recommended positioning statement promoting our:
  - Coastal Villages and Quaint Towns
  - Unique and Intimate Wineries
  - Towering Redwood Forests
- ❖ Stay focused on our target audience in our target areas. This includes travelers in the 35-60 age groups in the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento Valley
- ❖ Explore niche markets such as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual Transgender (LGBT), nature lovers, pet friendly travel, wedding and reunion travel
- ❖ Continue to develop small group and meetings market
- ❖ Extend our reach nationally and internationally through public relations/partnerships
- ❖ Continue our leadership role in the North Coast Tourism Council
- ❖ Facilitate contracts between tour operators, both domestic and international, and local businesses to increase visitation
- ❖ Continue to establish a hospitality and customer service training program for businesses throughout the County
- ❖ Improve way finding and signage by assisting in placements of informational kiosks and signage including gateway signs
- ❖ Attend trade and consumer shows selling our product directly to potential visitors
- ❖ Continue to master e-marketing and social networking media offering basic training to local visitor related businesses overall enhancing social media efforts
- ❖ Provide tools to assist County travel related businesses share VMC's brand and message with their direct publics further enhancing visitation
- ❖ Maintain and continually develop visitmendocino.com making it an essential "cruise ship on land" for planning and informational purposes
- ❖ Maintain a year round public relations effort aimed at gaining media coverage in the primary target market areas, California and beyond
- ❖ Advertise using radio, online and print media primarily in our target market areas maintaining a diverse media plan to create awareness in the leisure travel market
- ❖ Create 2<sup>nd</sup> annual County-wide visitor guide to assist with travel planning trips and encourage multiple day visits. Distribute 75,000 copies to advertising leads, regional and local visitor centers, in-room copies for local hotels, California Welcome Centers, AAA offices, sales and media kits, informational kits, trade shows and community events. Create a downloadable PDF version for website
- ❖ Encourage businesses to establish "outstanding specials and /or packages" to be promoted through promotional e-mails and on websites
- ❖ Encourage businesses to participate in co-operative advertising, participate in trade shows, VMC sponsored publications, website publications, etc.
- ❖ Track inquiries to determine which marketing avenues are most effective

- ❖ Meet with local partners and industry specialists to develop promotional opportunities such as co-op promotions, event sponsorships, collateral sponsorships, etc.
- ❖ Maintain a leadership role in the California travel & tourism industry making Mendocino County “top of mind” as a leading sustainable and leisure destination

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# ADVERTISING & MEDIA

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Objective:

- ❖ Develop a media plan which will generate consumer requests, leads, visitation to website and drive an increase in room nights booked throughout Mendocino County

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## *ADVERTISEMENT - KEY PLACEMENT SCHEDULE*

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<b><u>GREATER CALIFORNIA</u></b>
2010 CA Visitor Guide & 2010 CA Road Trips– ½ page
2010 AAA TourBook – ½ page
VIA Magazine – Bi-Monthly – 3 Co-Ops and 2 paid ads Fall through Spring
Sunset Magazine – 2 Co-Ops and 3 paid ads in assorted issues September - May
California Travel & Tourism Co-Operatives (Budget Travel, Coastal Living, etc) – Fall & Spring
Fido Friendly Magazine – Fall & Spring
<b><u>SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA</u></b>
Pet friendly - opportunistic
San Francisco CVB – Official Visitor Guide and other consumer publications
San Francisco In-Room City Guide - Annual
LGBT - opportunistic
ON Magazine – Fall & Spring
Kidaround Magazine – Fall & Spring
Diablo Magazine – October travel issue
<b><u>SACRAMENTO VALLEY</u></b>
Sacramento CVB – Official Visitor Guide
SacTown Magazine – ads in travel issues (Fall & Spring)
Sacramento Bride Magazine – Dec 2010 – June 2011 (one issue)
<b><u>ON-LINE ADVERTISING</u></b>
sunsetgetaways.com – added value
Localgetaways.com - opportunistic
viamagazine.com/info – added value
Inroomcityguide.com – added value
KGORadio.com – added value
<b><u>E-MAIL BLASTS</u></b>
Opportunistic – strategize specific email lists throughout year targeting specific areas and times
Diablo E-Newsletter – added value
<b>RADIO – KGO interactive campaign – 6 weeks in Fall; 6 weeks in Spring</b>
<b><u>RADIO Opportunistic with KCBS</u></b>

Goal:

- ❖ Initiate approximately 30,000,000 impressions in our target areas
- ❖ Produce 7,500 leads through reader response, website hits, phone calls, email, etc.

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## ***SOCIAL MEDIA***

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Objective:

- ❖ Use the latest in social media platforms to market and brand Mendocino County as a unique leisure destination; with the goal of increasing web traffic to VisitMendocino.com ultimately leading to increased visitation
- ❖ Generate and create a consistent image/message within the social media platform that appeals to our broad target audiences. This includes travelers in the 25-60 age groups primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento Valley

Strategy:

- ❖ Visit Mendocino County, Inc. will continue to research, develop and implement a strategy for engaging in Social Media platforms that target our ideal customer profile effectively creating a ‘buzz’ by introducing consumer generated content to our website, such as uploading photos, enhanced blog RSS feeds and overall monitoring of conversation regarding Mendocino County

Tactics:

- ❖ Continue to develop and improve Visit Mendocino County, Inc. profiles on Facebook.com, Twitter.com, Utube.com, Flickr.com
- ❖ Update the Visit Mendocino County, Inc. blog on a bi-weekly basis. Partner with other Mendocino County bloggers to generate area and interest based content which will be aggregated into the Visit Mendocino County blog
- ❖ Implement a “Positive Feedback” campaign encouraging lodging and restaurants to ask visitors/customers to share their positive experiences online at sites such as Tripadvisor.com and Yelp.com in an effort to populate social media sites with positive Mendocino County content

- ❖ Continue to develop a “Mendo Moments” YouTube campaign promoting Mendocino County. Video content to be created by staff, community members and visitors.
- ❖ Link all social media campaigns to VisitMendocino.com to encourage conversions, contact development and membership on social media sites
- ❖ Make a consistent effort to highlight upcoming events and specials on social media websites
- ❖ Initiate contests and other engaging activities throughout the social media platform encouraging an increase in followers and fans driving visitation to Mendocino County

Goal:

- ❖ Visit Mendocino County, Inc. will track campaign success through page views, fans, followers, telephone inquiries and Google Analytics
- ❖ Receive 500 direct inquiries with a total of 5,000 fans and followers as a result of Social Media efforts

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## ***EMAIL MARKETING***

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Objective:

- ❖ Drive traffic to VisitMendocino.com through the use of visitor e-newsletters promoting county events, activities, special interest stories, specials and packages

Strategy:

- ❖ Visit Mendocino County, Inc. staff will continue to capture email addresses at tradeshow, festivals and events, via the VisitMendocino.com website, social media platforms and 1-800 numbers. Contacts to be loaded into email marketing program for monthly email promotions and analysis

Tactics:

- ❖ Distribute scheduled e-blast promotions promoting festivals, events and specials a month in advance to allow potential visitors time for travel planning
- ❖ Propose 2010-2011 schedule of e-blasts and corresponding promotional banners on VisitMendocino.com:
  - ❖ July - Pet-Friendly and family Travel in Mendocino County
  - ❖ August – Wine Events and Overall Winery Promotion
  - ❖ September – Day of the Dead and other Halloween Events
  - ❖ October – Wine & Mushroom Festival

- ❖ November – Thanksgiving & Christmas in Mendocino County
- ❖ December – Crab & Wine Days
- ❖ January – Valentine’s Day & Romance Packages; Alsace Festival
- ❖ February – Whale Migration & Festivals
- ❖ March – Earth Day – Kids & Nature Promotion - Wildflowers in Mendocino County
- ❖ April – Festival Spotlight – Beer Fest, Pinot Noir Festival, Film Festival
- ❖ May – Getting Married in Mendocino – Renewing Romance
- ❖ June – July 4<sup>th</sup> events in Mendocino County, Frontier Days, Music Festival
- ❖ Maintain up to date contact lists by performing monthly email database “cleaning” to remove emails that are undeliverable
- ❖ Encourage development of “outstanding specials and packages” with County businesses to increase visitation and length of stay to include in Email marketing
- ❖ Link email campaigns to other social media platforms to increase overall social media efforts: “Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, etc.”

Goal:

- ❖ Produce 3,000 additional leads through generation of emails. Email campaign open rates and click thru rates will be evaluated to gauge monthly promotional email content and success
- ❖ Produce emails with an open rate of 20% and above with a click thru rate of 10% and above
- ❖ Limit opt-out rate to between 5-10% per email sent
- ❖ Increase subscriptions from 5400 (February 2010) to 7500 in June 2011

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***WEBSITE ADVERTISING***

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Objective:

- ❖ Have [www.VisitMendocino.com](http://www.VisitMendocino.com) appear at the top of search engine results, both organic search and paid search, on key search engines such as Google, Yahoo, etc.

Tactics:

- ❖ SEM (Search Engine Marketing) – Secure independent contractor(s) to maintain an aggressive 12-month pay per click campaign
- ❖ SEO (Search Engine Optimization) – Secure independent contractor(s) to perform search engine optimization based on the redesigned website

Goal:

- ❖ Produce 10,000,000 impressions through Search Engine Marketing
- ❖ Produce 25,000 leads to [www.VisitMendocino.com](http://www.VisitMendocino.com) through SEM
- ❖ Produce 35,000 leads to [www.VisitMendocino.com](http://www.VisitMendocino.com) through SEO

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***WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE***

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Objective:

- ❖ Continue to develop [www.VisitMendocino.com](http://www.VisitMendocino.com) with rich and dynamic content, business and event listings.
- ❖ Encourage increase length of stay through website banner campaigns, social media and content

Strategy:

- ❖ Staff will work with the VMC Media Committee to maintain and improve the VisitMendocino.com website
- ❖ Explore the development of a mobile phone application featuring County visitor servicing businesses, drive times, stories, events, etc

Tactics:

- ❖ All marketing efforts will encourage visitation to [www.VisitMendocino.com](http://www.VisitMendocino.com) .
- ❖ Develop additional website features, as appropriate, to enhance website visitor experience
- ❖ Work with local visitor related businesses on enhancing their listings, linking to the website and other actions which will help both the individual businesses' website as well as [www.VisitMendocino.com](http://www.VisitMendocino.com)
- ❖ Enhance VisitMendocino.com mobile site as appropriate

Goal:

- ❖ Maintain a bounce rate of below 20%
- ❖ Increase the current unique visitors up to 200,000 from its current 155, 000 annually
- ❖ Develop and launch a mobile phone application for all major mobile phone platforms

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# PUBLIC & MEDIA RELATIONS

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## Objective:

- ❖ Build the overall Mendocino County message in key target areas, including:
  - ❖ Media, (includes editors and producers in print and broadcast)
  - ❖ Key VIP travel opinion leaders
  - ❖ Internet media, including bloggers and industry buzz makers
  - ❖ Key government leaders
  - ❖ Internal audiences, including board members and County leaders/decision makers
  - ❖ By reaching these publics, this campaign will ultimately reach and motivate consumer audiences to County businesses—increasing the overall economic impact created by the travel and tourism industry

## Strategy:

- ❖ Recruit editors and media leaders to include coverage of Mendocino County's lodging, events, attractions, latest news and stories in articles, news stories, broadcast news shows and Internet communications
- ❖ Use media relations, public relations and marketing tactics to recruit consumers to book rooms and attend Mendocino County activities, attractions and events
- ❖ Build partnerships and alliances to achieve these goals

## Tactics:

- ❖ External Key Actions
  - ❖ HypeHouse, Inc. will plan, direct and execute a complete media relations and public relations campaign designed to achieve the goals and objectives of VMC
  - ❖ Conduct verbal and written pitches to editors and industry leaders (based on custom calendar)
  - ❖ Research, write and distribute at least two press releases per month
  - ❖ Provide assistance with MCLA's annual meeting as it relates to marketing and Public Relations ( PR) and any other VMC. sponsored promotional events
  - ❖ Provide copy for MCLA's quarterly newsletter and other relevant internal communication pieces informing members and the community of the public relations efforts and successes
  - ❖ Assist with monthly consumer e-newsletters
  - ❖ Assist with overall social media campaign
  - ❖ Provide PR media training as directed by the CEO/President

- ❖ Coordinate and execute quarterly County business showcases in different areas of the County to enhance communication and knowledge between HypeHouse and County businesses
- ❖ Provide advance press kits and follow up information , as appropriate, to businesses who host journalists
- ❖ Assist with consumer trade shows focusing primarily on the media component in:
  - ❖ SF Bay Area (includes Bay Area Travel Show, Bridal Show and Sunset Celebration Days)
  - ❖ Sacramento, including Sportsman Show
  - ❖ Research other show markets
  - ❖ Support all shows with marketing and event management planning
- ❖ Set up media “desk sides” in:
  - ❖ New York City
  - ❖ SF Bay Area
  - ❖ Sacramento
  - ❖ Los Angeles
  - ❖ And other key cities as opportunities, time and budget permit
- ❖ Attend California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC) Media events in New York and Los Angeles
- ❖ Plan and coordinate a special Mendocino County showcase event in the Bay Area to be attended by editors, producers, travel VIPs and industry opinion leaders
- ❖ Assist VMC with developing its International tour business
- ❖ Assist VMC with appropriate public relations aspects for regional marketing co-op programs
- ❖ Develop a relationship campaign with key political leaders throughout California
  
- ❖ Internal Key Actions
  - ❖ Build and update the overall activity and launch calendar
  - ❖ Write and coordinate all components necessary to pitch editor and media targets. Includes releases, fact sheets, media lists and more. Update the official press kit and support materials. Outline new online press room for [www.visitmendocino.com](http://www.visitmendocino.com). Maintain site as key journalist resource
  - ❖ The HypeHouse team will participate in a weekly conference call with staff to review actions, timelines and campaign details—and will provide monthly written updates
  - ❖ Assist, as appropriate, marketing elements and marketing actions
  - ❖ HypeHouse will provide a compilation of all articles, press releases and any other relevant data/documents resulting from the campaign, including a chart with all media who has visited, where they stayed, what they did, etc. Quarterly reports will be developed and this information will be included in a “PR bible” for the contracted year
  - ❖ HypeHouse will provide a comprehensive clipping service for all Mendocino County articles relative to promotion

Goal:

- ❖ Increase overall impressions by approximately 20 percent – an estimated \$4.2 Million and 120,000,000 impressions in ad equivalency and public relations coverage

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# SALES – GROUP & LEISURE

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## *Leisure Sales:*

### Objective:

- ❖ Drive visitors to Mendocino County by direct promotion to leisure travel decision makers

### Strategy:

- ❖ Direct face to face contacts with travel professionals and consumers in a position to recommend leisure travel destinations. The Study indicates that in excess of 90 % of Mendocino visitors are not affiliated with groups
- ❖ Sell Mendocino County directly to our target audience at consumer travel shows in our target markets

### Tactics:

- ❖ Leverage memberships with Sacramento and San Francisco CVBs to increase individual and group leisure travel
- ❖ Attend consumer shows include Bay Area Adventure & Travel Expo, Sacramento Sportsman Show, Bay Area Bridal Show(s) and Sunset Celebration Days
- ❖ Research and identify other trade show opportunities with significant return on investment possibilities. These include niche travel and trade shows such as pets, LGBT, wine, nature, “green”, etc.
- ❖ Develop pay-to-play opportunities at consumer shows with County businesses to increase overall impact
- ❖ Encourage development of “outstanding specials and packages” with County businesses to increase visitation and length of stay when selling Mendocino County
- ❖ Evaluate each show attended and provide recommendations for subsequent years based on return on investment
- ❖ Host booth at State Fair in Sacramento in July featuring unique aspects of County. Partner with local organizations and businesses to man booth at least each weekend of Fair

### Goal:

- ❖ Obtain 7,000 direct consumer leads

## ***Group Sales:***

### Objective:

- ❖ Increase small group business to Mendocino County by creating a small group infrastructure and establishing an awareness of options among those who provide group business

### Strategy:

- ❖ Pursue dual strategy of contacting convention and meeting event planners and CVBs to encourage group business in connection with target area conventions. In addition, attend trade shows where event and meeting planners are exposed to potential destinations

### Tactics:

- ❖ Continue to develop relationships with all major CVBs in our target areas. Continue active membership with the San Francisco and Sacramento CVBs
- ❖ Attend, with key tourism players on a pay to play basis, conventions where event and meeting planners meet to explore destinations specifically the Meeting Planners International Convention and Trade Show in San Francisco
- ❖ Attend seminars with San Francisco and Sacramento CVBs, as appropriate to be trained in the most effective way to market to groups
- ❖ Develop group packages for spousal side trips, business meetings, Board of Director/executive meetings and retreats; packages which can be sold to planners and convention logistic specialists
- ❖ Continue to develop and distribute a Countywide meetings and small group guide
- ❖ Personally contact identified event planners for conventions in target areas

### Goal:

- ❖ Obtain up to 100 small group leads

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# VISITOR SERVICES & FULFILLMENT

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## *VISITOR CENTERS & SIGNAGE*

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### Objective:

- ❖ Make it seamlessly easy for visitors to find tourist information when traveling to or within the County

### Strategy:

- ❖ Pursue a two prong strategy of enhancing existing visitor centers and establishing informational kiosks and signage at County gateways and high traffic areas

### Tactics:

- ❖ Meet with existing visitor centers in Fort Bragg, Mendocino, Ukiah, Willits, Anderson Valley and the Redwood Coast to ascertain their needs and the extent to which we can assist in fulfilling those needs.
- ❖ Conduct an RFP process for possible funding opportunities to in-County visitor centers. Examples include extending hours, providing bathroom facilities, signage, assisting with visitor initiatives, etc.
- ❖ Establish permanent attractive County gateway signage on Highway 1 in the Gualala area
- ❖ Establish new gateway kiosks in both Boonville and Hopland. Assist in their creation and augmentation
- ❖ Continue work on planning for Confusion Hill visitor services including signage
- ❖ Develop consistent visitor information signage which will lead travelers to visitor centers
- ❖ Plan for unmanned kiosks for both in County and out of County locations. Develop prototypes and do preliminary location planning
- ❖ Explore consistent way finding signage working with CalTrans helping to direct visitors to major attractions and locations throughout the County

### Goal:

- ❖ Installation of one gateway sign and three informational kiosks throughout the County
- ❖ Assist local visitor centers in enhancing visitor experience through increased hours and services

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## ***REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS***

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### Objective:

- ❖ To maximize and leverage our resources and reach in the promotion of Mendocino County through the involvement and leadership in regional and statewide organizations, partnerships and initiatives

### Strategy and Tactics:

- ❖ Chair and administer the North Coast Tourism Council, including collaboration and strategizing with neighboring Counties
- ❖ Continue to be a member of the California Travel Industry Association Board of Directors (CalTIA)
- ❖ Be a regional Ambassador of CalTIA
- ❖ Chair the California Travel & Tourism Commission's (CTTC) Rural Advisory Committee – effective January 2011
- ❖ Sponsor CTTC's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Sustainable Tourism Symposium and serve on its planning committee
- ❖ Continue to be a leader in the North Coast Geotourism Initiative. Attempt to maximize Mendocino County exposure to project:
  - ❖ Serve as Mendocino County gatekeeper for [www.visitredwoodcoast.com](http://www.visitredwoodcoast.com)
  - ❖ Work with partners on website development and enhancement
- ❖ Continue to be a leader in the Redwood Coast National Heritage Area:
  - ❖ Project completion scheduled for 2011
  - ❖ Seek grant funds, when appropriate, capitalizing on designation
  - ❖ Actively lobby with local, regional, state and national officials
  - ❖ Prepare necessary documentation to prepare for implementation of Heritage Area
- ❖ Assist in the establishment and development of the Preserve America program:
  - ❖ Offer assistance to Fort Bragg and any other city interesting in becoming a “Preserve America” community
  - ❖ Assist in seeking matching fund grants to capitalize on Mendocino designation
- ❖ Assist in the development and coordination of the “Confusion Hill” visitor center/kiosk:
  - ❖ Work with consultant in developing a plan for a gateway visitor center, scenic vista, County Park and/or interpretive trails at Confusion Hill
- ❖ Distribute Countywide nature tourism guides and other VMC sponsored promotional materials
- ❖ Administer the Mendocino County Promotional Foundation and its committees
  - ❖ Apply for grants on behalf of the Foundation for educational and promotional activities to further the goals of the Foundation and to assist other Mendocino County non-profits working to increase visitation to Mendocino County
- ❖ Maintain and oversee content on websites such as [www.gozaic.com](http://www.gozaic.com), [www.visitcalifornia.com](http://www.visitcalifornia.com) and other relevant travel industry related websites

- ❖ Explore unknown and yet to be determined local, regional, state and national partnerships with the mission of enhancing the Mendocino County visitor experience (i.e. “questing”)
- ❖ Continue membership in Destination Marketing Association International with the goal of making VMC a leader among destination marketing organizations in the US & abroad

Goal:

- ❖ Leverage our promotional funds to create a Northern California travel destination which is nationally known and respected

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## *COMMUNITY RELATIONS*

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Objective:

- ❖ Continue to work with organizations, businesses and individuals involved in the travel industry throughout Mendocino County in order to maximize efforts and resources
- ❖ Work with others to better promote all Mendocino County has to offer with the understanding that partnerships and cooperation increase effectiveness

Strategy:

- ❖ Continue to work with Mendocino County promotional businesses & organizations, local government, Chambers of Commerce and others in further enhancing promotional efforts of Mendocino County
- ❖ Continue to establish VMC as the leading organization of County promotion

Tactics:

Promotional Organization Relations

- ❖ Communicate to other County promotional organizations the information contained in this Marketing Plan as well as all other activities and efforts performed by VMC
- ❖ Attend one regional Chamber mixer per quarter to promote VisitMendocino.com business and event listings as well as VMC. initiatives
- ❖ Continue to partner closely with the Arts Council of Mendocino County in making the arts a compelling reason for a multiple day stay
  - Continue to develop and distribute a Countywide arts brochure in conjunction with the Arts Council
- ❖ Continue to partner closely with the MWWC in promoting the uniqueness and “greenness” of Mendocino County’s wine country

### Hospitality and Customer Service Training

- ❖ Develop, support and partner to produce community trainings, and/or seminars that benefit economic development and tourism through enhanced visitor experiences
- ❖ Begin development of a County-wide hospitality customer service program training individuals working directly with visitors on proper customer service as well as the many assets of Mendocino County
  - Work with Mendocino County Office of Education, Mendocino College and College of the Redwoods to market and host Countywide classes and seminars

### Community Showcases

- ❖ Host quarterly meetings with HypeHouse to showcase businesses in all regions of the County. This event gives HypeHouse the opportunity to learn in more detail about each community and its businesses. It also provides the opportunity for the community to learn about Visit Mendocino County, Inc. marketing efforts and how they can benefit and partner to promote their area/business

### Event Partnership & Coordination

- ❖ Contract with a part-time year-round event coordinator to assist with the coordination, promotion and participation of the Crab & Wine and Mushroom & Wine festivals and other approved County-wide festivals
- ❖ Encourage businesses to offer event-related specials and packages to increase the viability of events and visitor opportunities and encourage an increase in length of stay
- ❖ Manage the design, printing and distribution of promotional materials for the festivals
- ❖ Assist other events and festivals as appropriate with the goal of improving promotion and attendance of out-of-County visitors in the Spring and Fall seasons
- ❖ Collaborate with event planners to establish new event opportunities and partnerships
- ❖ Maintain communications with other agencies to distribute event announcements to member mailing lists
- ❖ Coordinate County-wide bi-annual event calendar promotional piece of major events/festivals in County.
- ❖ Coordinate annual Mendocino County wall calendar depicting major events in County showcasing the County through photography and sponsorships
- ❖ Continue to work in making VisitMendocino.com the go-to event calendar for Mendocino County
- ❖ List events on relevant regional, state and national web-based calendars
- ❖ Attend County festivals and events as a representative of Visit Mendocino County, Inc.

### Goal:

- ❖ Continue development of relations with other promotional groups within Mendocino County
- ❖ Increase visitation to festivals by increasing number of events and improving promotion of events
- ❖ Establish VMC as the leading promotional organization in Mendocino County

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## ***VISITOR GUIDE & FULFILLMENT***

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### Objective:

- ❖ To provide the visitor with high-quality, easy to use visitor information and travel planning guides to be distributed in our target areas

### Strategy:

- ❖ VMC and VisitMendocino.com will be the centralized source for Mendocino County visitor information
- ❖ Produce collateral materials with a consistent, uniform look that reflects the VMC brand providing up to date, accurate information to potential visitors

### Tactics:

#### *Tear Off Maps*

- ❖ Research and develop an inexpensive tear off county map to help with visitor way finding and promotion. Maps will be regional with the intention of producing two to three the first year
- ❖ Map design will be similar to other County promotional materials
- ❖ Finished map pads will be distributed to hotels, attractions, restaurants, etc. in appropriate region(s)

#### *Official Visitors Guide*

- ❖ Produce the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Official Mendocino County Visitors Guide, improving upon the first edition. Guide to be completed by June 2010
- ❖ Distribute approximately 67,000 guides to regional visitor centers, California Welcome Centers, CVBs, AAA offices, consumer and trade shows, media requests, consumer inquiries, local and regional events and other travel outlets
- ❖ Distribute approximately 5,000 guides to local lodging establishments providing “in room” copies for current visitors with the goal of increasing length of stay and overall visitor spending
- ❖ Distribute approximately 3,000 guides to local visitor centers

#### *Other Promotional Materials*

- ❖ Produce a semi-annual events guide promoting the multitude of events throughout Mendocino County
- ❖ Produce a 2011 wall calendar showcasing Mendocino County photography, history, facts as well as festivals and events occurring throughout the year. Encourage businesses to sponsor months within the calendar showcasing local businesses

- ❖ Encourage specific industries to produce County-wide maps highlighting their industry. Examples are: Art, Culture and Gallery, Nature Tourism, Wine

#### Photo Library

- ❖ Maintain and add to the VMC. digital photo and video library of Mendocino County attractions, events, landscapes, etc. This will include the organization of a photo/model release database and photographer contracts
- ❖ Continue to photograph events and activities for use in promotional efforts
- ❖ A master database of photos will be maintained and made available to staff and contractors for use in County promotional efforts

#### Fulfillment Services & Inquiry Database

- ❖ Coordinate the Official Mendocino County Visitor Information fulfillment program through the use of existing 1-800 numbers, VisitMendocino.com, and all other promotional efforts as outlined in this Plan
- ❖ Maintain an in-house, query based database to house all of the visitor inquiries and leads we receive. Visitor inquiries and leads will be organized to provide inquiry statistics by ad type, inquiry location, date, source, etc. The information gathered in this database will be used to generate query reports to continuously enhance advertising and marketing efforts

#### Goal:

- ❖ Produce and distribute 2010-2011 Official Visitor's Guide, annual events calendar and tear off maps to enhance visitor experience
- ❖ Assist in development, production and distribution of other Countywide promotional materials
- ❖ Develop and maintain inquiry database to be used for measuring return on investment (ROI) and planning future marketing activities

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# STAFFING

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## Objective:

- ❖ Create and sustain a staffing structure which will be an efficient and effective marketing agency for the promotion of Mendocino County
- ❖ Procure motivated, experienced individuals to successfully and efficiently implement this Plan

## Strategy:

- ❖ Visit Mendocino County, Inc. staff will work with a VMC Board appointed committee to implement and maintain the following structure and individuals for staffing:
- ❖ President/CEO, Scott Schneider
  - ❖ Reports to VMC. Board of Directors as well as other contracted organizations (MCLA & MCPA)
  - ❖ Specific Duties:
    - ❖ Media Planning and Oversight
    - ❖ Direct PR Efforts
    - ❖ Regional and State Partnerships
    - ❖ Research Comparability with State of California
    - ❖ Executive Management and Leadership for all VMC activities
    - ❖ Administrative Services to the MCLA and MCPA Boards
    - ❖ Attends all boards and committee meetings, as appropriate
    - ❖ Marketing Plan Development
    - ❖ Annual Budget Development
    - ❖ Quarterly and Annual Reports to County MCLA & MCPA, as appropriate
    - ❖ Community Relations
    - ❖ NCTC leadership
    - ❖ Liaison to other regional and State travel related organizations
- ❖ Visitor Services Coordinator, IT Specialist, Robert Brothers
  - ❖ Reports to President/CEO
  - ❖ Specific Duties:
    - ❖ Inquiry Fulfillment, Database Management and Tracking of Inquiry Records

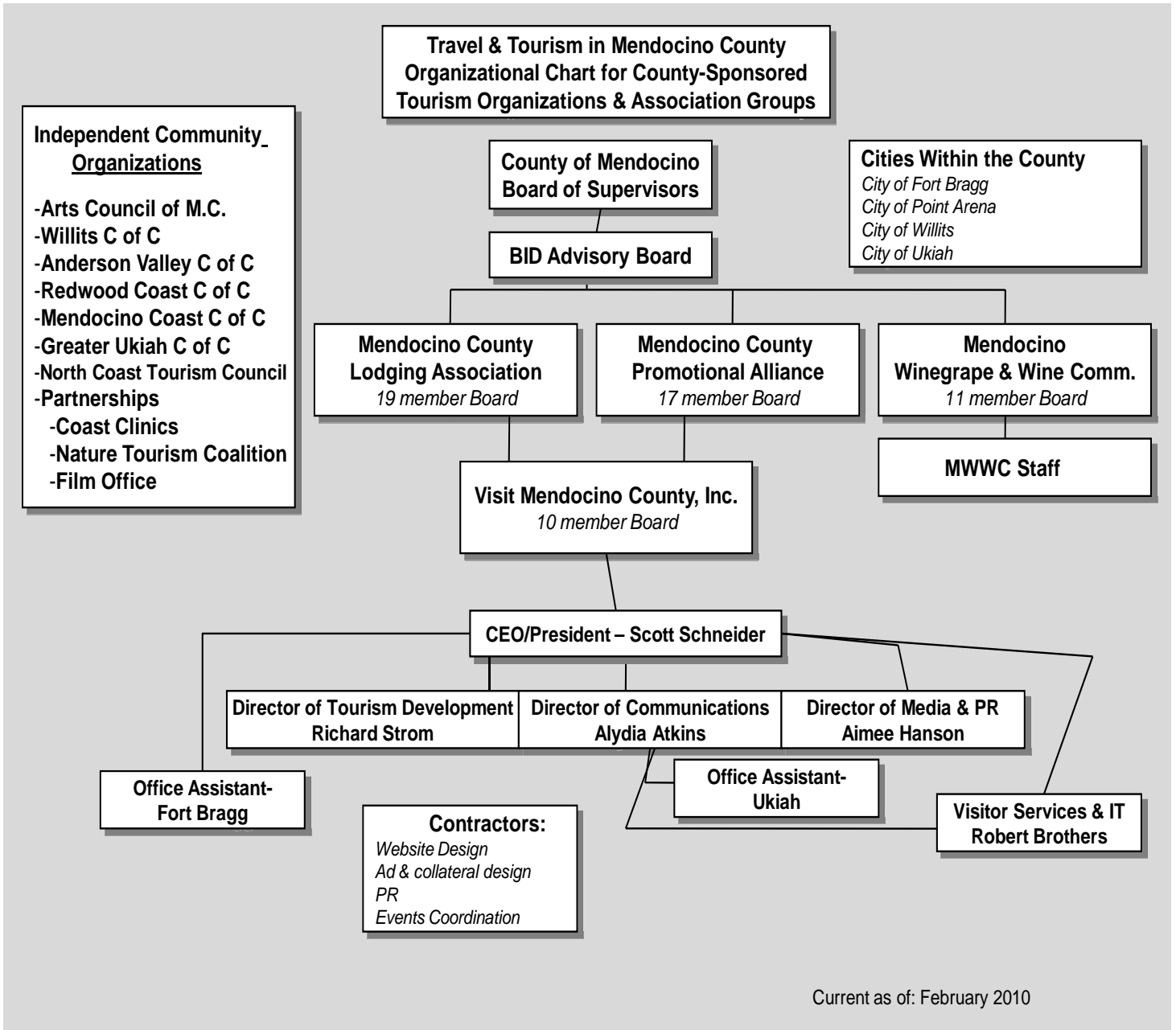
- ❖ VisitMendocino.com maintenance
- ❖ Website Research Form Analysis
- ❖ Ongoing Visitor Research
  
- ❖ Director of Communications and MCPA Administrator, Alydia Atkins
  - ❖ Reports to the President/CEO
  
  - ❖ Specific Duties:
    - ❖ Email Database for Future Marketing
    - ❖ VisitMendocino.com
    - ❖ E-Marketing
    - ❖ Social Networking Media
    - ❖ Inquiry Database
    - ❖ Annual Evaluation Point of Origin
    - ❖ MCPA Office Manager/Administrator
    - ❖ Assist CEO : Inland Chamber Relations
    - ❖ Assist CEO : MCPA Member Relations
    - ❖ Tourism Education, Festivals, State Fair, Capitol Display
  
- ❖ Director of Tourism Development, Richard Strom
  - ❖ Reports to the President/CEO
  
  - ❖ Specific Duties:
    - ❖ Co-Op Marketing
    - ❖ Leisure Tourism Sales
    - ❖ Group Sales
    - ❖ Consumer and Trade Shows
    - ❖ Visitor Information Kiosks
    - ❖ Gateways, Visitor Centers, Way finding, and Signage
    - ❖ Partner Project Coordination: National Heritage Area, Geo-Tourism, Preserve America
    - ❖ Mendocino County Promotional Foundation
    - ❖ Grants
    - ❖ Other special projects, as assigned
  
- ❖ Public Relations Coordinator and Director of Media, Aimee Hanson
  - ❖ Reports to the President/CEO
  
  - ❖ Specific Duties:
    - ❖ Visitor Guide
    - ❖ Media Plan Execution/Ad Design Assistant
    - ❖ Media Plan, Report, Media Tours, etc.
    - ❖ Tear-Off Maps
    - ❖ Annual Lodging Survey

- ❖ Hospitality Training
  - ❖ MCLA Administrator
  - ❖ NCTC Administrator and Event Planner
  - ❖ Assist CEO : Coast Chamber Relations
  - ❖ Assist CEO : MCLA Member Relations
  - ❖ Assists the President/CEO in the completion of assignments
  - ❖ Social Networking
- 
- ❖ Office Assistant, Ukiah Office
    - ❖ Reports to the Director of Communications and MCPA Administrator
    - ❖ Specific Duties:
      - ❖ Assists with general office tasks – mailings, data entry
      - ❖ Assists with website review and editing
      - ❖ Performs other office related tasks as directed
  - ❖ Office Assistant, Fort Bragg Office
    - ❖ Reports to the President/CEO
    - ❖ Specific Duties:
      - ❖ Assists with general office tasks
      - ❖ Assists with projects managed out of Fort Bragg office
      - ❖ Performs other office related tasks as directed

Goal:

- ❖ Visit Mendocino County, Inc. staff will perform as a single cohesive team responsible for the development and implementation of the Marketing Plan

# TRAVEL & TOURISM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



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# ADMINISTRATION

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## Objective:

- ❖ Maintain functionality of organizations while keeping costs at a minimum

## Strategy and Tactics:

### Visit Mendocino County, Inc. Administration:

- ❖ Office Location and Hours:
  - ❖ Because of the size of Mendocino County as well as the location of existing offices, staff will conduct business from two locations. Offices will be located in downtown Fort Bragg downtown Ukiah
    - ❖ Inland Office – 525 S. Main Street; Phone: (707) 462-7417
    - ❖ Coastal Office – 120 S. Franklin Street; Phone: (707) 964-9010
  - ❖ Staff will be on duty Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm
  - ❖ Usage of a new updated phone system linking the two offices and providing ready access to callers seeking county information
- ❖ Perform all tasks as directed by the Visit Mendocino County, Inc. Board of Directors, Committees and contracted entities including the implementation of this Plan

### MCLA Administration:

- ❖ Provide Contracted Administrative Services to MCLA
  - ❖ Staff will perform administrative tasks as directed by the MCLA Board as well as tasks as outlined in MCLA's contract with the County and the BID Ordinance

### MCPA Administration:

- ❖ Provide Contracted Administrative Services to MCPA
  - ❖ Staff will perform administrative tasks as directed by the MCPA Board as well as tasks as outlined in MCPA's contract with the County
  - ❖ Tasks to include meeting preparation, member communication, accounting/bookkeeping, website maintenance, reporting minutes, and others as requested
  - ❖ Provide contracted administrative services to the MCPF

## Goal:

- ❖ Perform all administrative tasks ensuring all organizations perform optimally in their fulfillment of the specific missions following all By-Laws, policies, plans and procedures

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# RETURN ON INVESTMENT/ MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

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## Objective:

- ❖ Measure success of programs and initiatives, including implementation, to ensure significant return on investment for resources provided

### Strategy & Tactics

- ❖ Annual Lodging Market Mix Survey
  - ❖ Annual tracking of lodging market mix to be completed by March 2010. Results will ONLY be shared with those lodging properties who participate
- ❖ Annual Update to Performance Review
  - ❖ An annual update will be performed in Summer 2011 and will include:
    - ❖ Increases/decreases in occupancy tax collections
    - ❖ Number of inquiries generated by outreach efforts
    - ❖ Changes in tourism product infrastructure (number of lodging properties and room counts, new attractions, etc.)
    - ❖ Attendance at attractions
    - ❖ Advertising, promotion and marketing budget for Mendocino County compared to standards established by Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI)
- ❖ Research Comparability with the State of California
  - ❖ Maintain regular contact with the state tourism division and compare current research findings to those available from the state
- ❖ Annual Evaluation point of origin
  - ❖ To better focus marketing dollars, Staff will perform an annual point of origin evaluation of our inquiry database by zip code. This data will help us determine where best to place our marketing and advertising dollars for the next fiscal year
- ❖ Leads Analysis
  - ❖ Analyze leads from advertising to measure return on investment. This includes specific Website URL's for all print ads, reader response card requests, banner ad click through rates, general inquiries. This data will help determine the effectiveness of the many different media where advertisements are placed and will assist in future planning

Goal:

- ❖ Obtain the required information to be able to measure success as well as to assist in the planning and development of the following year's Marketing Plan
- ❖ Obtain the necessary information in order to continue to be a research based marketing destination organization

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# INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

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The following charts provide breakdowns of where monies are to be spent in the general categories as outlined in this plan.

Chart #1: Breakdown of Media, Visitor Services & Administration by percentage. This includes staffing and resources involved with respective categories (i.e. staff time spent on media is included in the media %)  
**TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$858,500 (100%)**

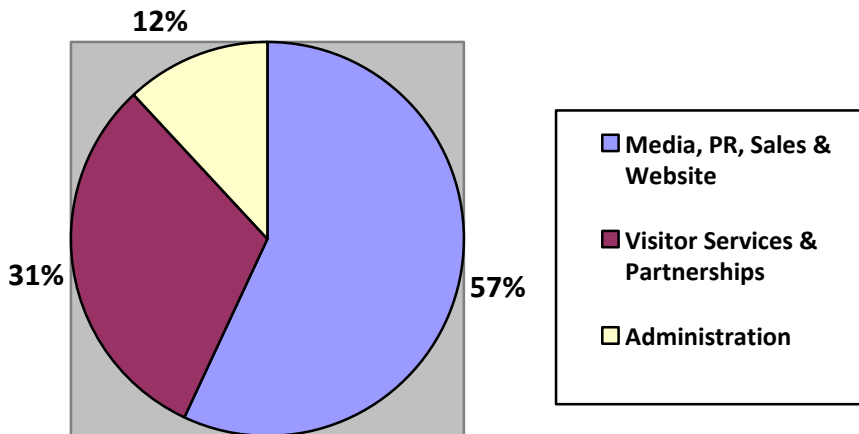


Chart #2: Breakdown of Staffing by percentage. This explains how much time all staff devotes to Media/PR, Visitor Services/Partnership & Administration. This includes all personnel related expenses (taxes, insurance, etc.)  
**TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$302,500 (35%)**

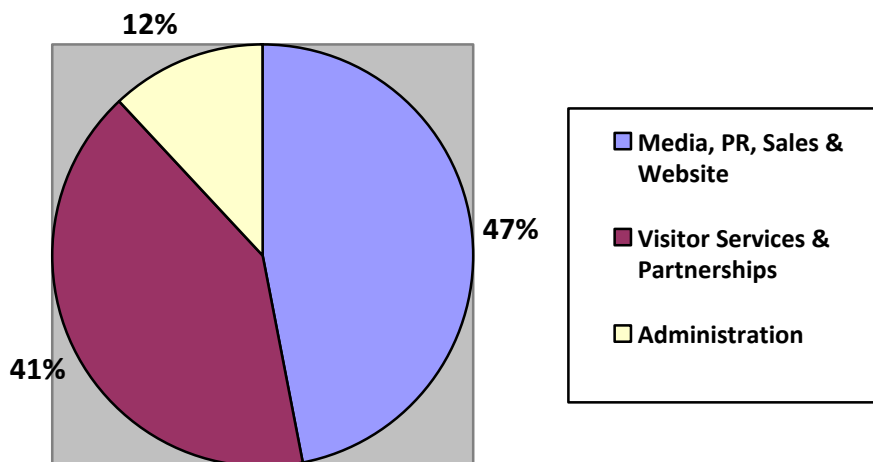


Chart #3: Breakdown of Marketing Activities by percentage. This explains actual costs spent on media, PR, Website, Sales, Visitor Services, and Partnerships and does not include staff time.  
**TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$483,000 (56%)**

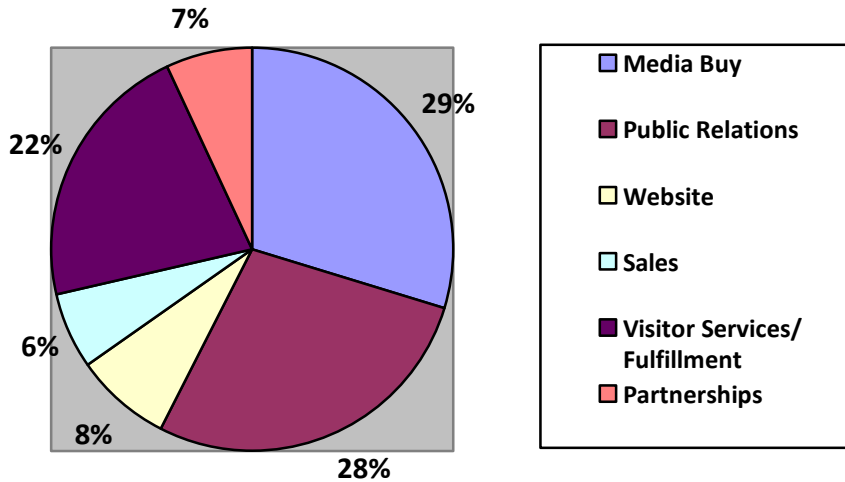
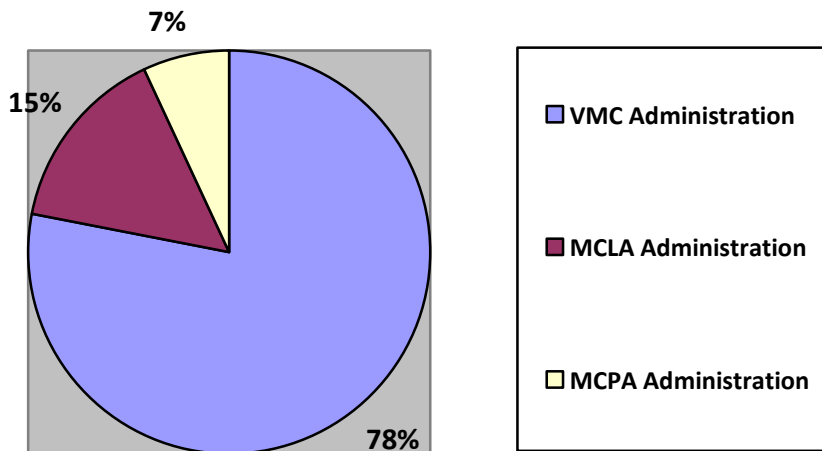


Chart #4: Breakdown of Administration Activities by percentage. This explains actual costs spent on MCLA, MCPA and Visit Mendocino County, Inc. Administration (rent, supplies, postage, insurance etc.). This **does** include staff time devoted to all administration.  
**TOTAL INVESTMENT = \$104,900 (12%)**



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## GOALS – A SUMMARY

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- ❖ **Paid Advertising** - Initiate approximately 30,000,000 impressions in our target areas producing 7,500 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 500 direct inquiries as a result of Social Media Efforts with over 5,000 fans & followers
- ❖ **Email Marketing** - Produce 3,000 leads with an open rate of 20% and click thru rate of 5%; and increase subscriptions 7500
- ❖ **Website Advertising** - Produce 20,000,000 impressions with 60,000 direct leads using both Search Engine Marketing and Search Engine Optimization
- ❖ **Website Development** - Maintain bounce rate below 20%; and increase unique visitors to 200,000 annually
- ❖ **Public and Media Relations** – Initiate \$4.2 Million in ad equivalency PR coverage
- ❖ **Group and Leisure Sales** – Obtain 6,000 direct consumer leads and up to 100 small group leads
- ❖ **Visitor Center and Signage** - Install one gateway sign and three to five informational kiosks
- ❖ **Regional Partnerships** - Leverage our promotional funds to create a travel destination which is nationally known and respected
- ❖ **Community Relations** - Continue development of relations with other promotional groups within Mendocino County; and increase visitation to festivals by increasing number of events and improving promotion of events
- ❖ **Visitor Guide and Fulfillment** - Produce 2010-2011 Official Visitor’s Guide, annual events calendar and tear off maps to enhance visitor experience; develop and maintain inquiry database to be used for measuring ROI and planning future marketing activities
- ❖ **Staffing** - Staff will perform as a single cohesive team responsible for the development and implementation of the approved marketing plan
- ❖ **Administration** - Perform all administrative tasks ensuring all organizations perform optimally fulfilling their specific missions following all By-Laws, policies, plans and procedures
- ❖ **Return on Investment Measurement** - Obtain the required information to be able to measure success as well as to assist in the planning and development of the following fiscal year’s Marketing Plan; and have the necessary information in order to continue to be a research based marketing destination organization

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# CONCLUSION

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Visit Mendocino County, Inc. takes pride in the role it plays in the prosperity, health and vitality of the County. The destination attitude fostered by Visit Mendocino County, Inc. serves as the catalyst to the travel industry within Mendocino County and as a magnet for visitors. Along with its hospitality industry partners, Visit Mendocino County, Inc. strives to provide consistently excellent services for the visitor. Our strategic goals reflect this commitment to excellence as well as provide the framework for assuring Visit Mendocino County, Inc. will continue to be a worthy and effective steward of public funding and trust. Visit Mendocino County, Inc. is the point of convergence and principle source of information for visitors and residents seeking information about Mendocino County's tourism attractions and activities.

Visit Mendocino County, Inc has already proven its effectiveness and importance in the vitality of Mendocino County. While the average decrease of tourism revenue in the State of California is 19%, Mendocino County has only, as of Dec 2009, a 2% decrease in tourism revenue.

Visit Mendocino County, Inc. is more determined than ever to help maintain travel and tourism as a pillar for Mendocino County's economic vitality.

