

BID Year 3, Quarter 2

Autumn 2008

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# Mendocino County Lodging's Quarterly Update

## Informing Lodging on BID Has Been's & Have To Be's

### MCLA Board of Directors

#### North Coast:

- \* Chris Knoerdel (Atrium B&B, Fort Bragg)
- \* Pamela Amante (Beachcomber Motel, Fort Bragg)
- \* Jeff Stanford (Stanford Inn, Mendocino)
- \* Richard Strom (Whitegate Inn, Mendocino)
- \* Jo Bradley (Dennen's Victorian Farmhouse, Little River)
- \* Cally Dym (Little River Inn, Little River)
- \* Steven Musser (Albion Cottages, Albion)
- \* Christina Affinito (North Cliff Hotel, At Large)
- \* Josie Perla (Coast Getaways, At Large)

#### South Coast:

- \* Kevin Gallagher (Coast Guard House, Point Arena)
- \* Renata Dorn (Mar Vista Cottages, At-Large)
- \* Phil Walker (North Coast Country Inn, At-Large)

#### Inland Corridor:

- \* Stuart Marcus (Shambhala Ranch, At-Large)
- \* Deny Shah (Super 8 Willits, At-Large)
- \* Jitu Ishwar (Holiday Inn, Ukiah)
- \* Raakesh Patel (Super 8, Ukiah)
- \* Jan Rodriguez (Baechtel Creek Inn, Willits)

#### Open Board Seats:

- \* Elk (1); Gualala (1)

### MCLA Advisory Board

#### Coastal

- \* Jim Hurst, Fort Bragg
- \* Printha Worthen, Little River

#### Inland

- \* Anil Bhula, Ukiah
- \* Kurt Fleichtmeier, Yorkville

#### MCLA

- \* Jo Bradley, Little River

### MCLA Executive Director

- \* Scott Schneider

## They Love You Just The Way You Are

### Our 6 month long marketing study is complete!

Of the more than 400 people interviewed, the response was overwhelming—visitors do not want us to change. They love our lodging, our food, our wine, our shopping, our nature, our culture. This is great news for all of those out there who do not want our community and our County to change. Our visitors do not want it to change either.

Different areas of the report will be highlighted throughout this newsletter with an emphasis on recommended strategies.

The study confirmed what most of us already know. Our visitors are mostly from the Bay Area and Sacramento. Secondary markets are along the I-5 corridor, Oregon and International. In the following pages you will find a chart with more specifics on who our visitors are. The study also confirmed what visitors love to do while they are here and there are, again, no surprises: beaches, wine, nature, local foods, shopping.

Finally, the study contains many recommendations on how to enhance our marketing efforts including streamlining MCLA & MCPA, focusing our efforts on the Bay Area & Sacramento especially during these crazy economic times, hiring more staff to accomplish these tasks and adopting a version of the following position statement:

**“Coastal villages, hand crafted wines and giant redwoods”**

*Mendocino County, where Pacific coastal villages, the great redwood forest and America's greenest wine region beckon you to come escape to a slower pace.*

*Come sit by the fire, savor a delicious Mendocino vintage, stare up into a mighty Redwood tree or watch a whale breach from the porch of one of our unique Inns. Mendocino County is just a couple hours north of San Francisco where you'll feel so far away from it all.”*

This wording is to be used on the cover of a new visitor guide, on gomendo.com, in advertising, and in all other tourism marketing efforts and materials.

The report's executive summary is available at [www.gomendo.org](http://www.gomendo.org). It has significant statistics, information and recommendations regarding the study. Again, many of those details will be in the following pages.

The study was presented in Mendocino and Ukiah as well as to the Board of Supervisors. In addition, a workshop was held for the Boards of MCLA, MCPA and the Mendocino Winegrape and Wine Commission.

**We are excited about the study and the future of promotion in Mendocino County. Needless to say, there is much work to be done in the months and years ahead!**



*New Advertisement placed in San Francisco's 2009 LGBT Mapguide*

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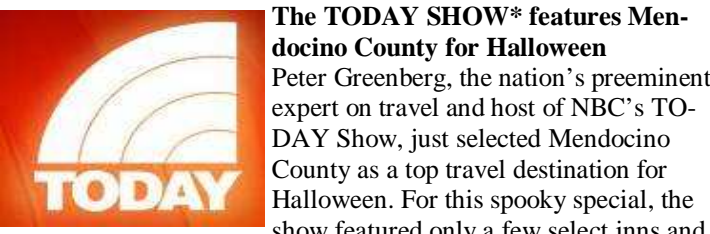
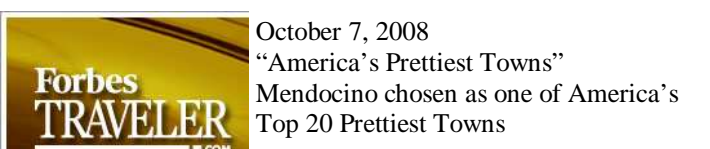
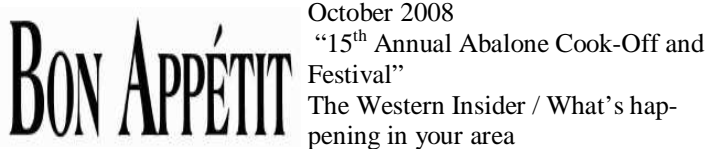
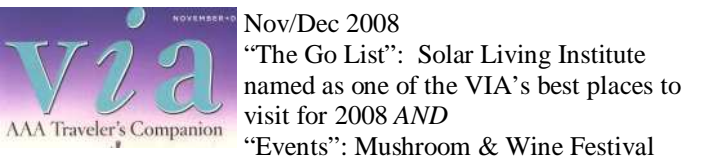
## Public Relations Keeps on Rollin' - Mendocino County In The News!

### Mushrooms in the Media!

In July of this year, we sent out a press release regarding the Mendocino County Mushroom Festival, and our release was picked up by the Associated Press! As some of you may already know, the Associated Press is an international news organization offering news, photos, graphics, audio and video for 1,700 U.S. newspapers and 6,000 broadcast outlets around the world. There are bureaus worldwide representing over one hundred countries. As a result of the AP pick-up, the Mendocino County Mushroom Festival was featured in the following outlets (and more!):



**Mendocino County has also been featured in some very high-profile publications recently. These include:**



Peter Greenberg, the nation's preeminent expert on travel and host of NBC's TODAY Show, just selected Mendocino County as a top travel destination for Halloween. For this spooky special, the show featured only a few select inns and bed & breakfasts—and one of the locations chosen was Mendocino County, and particularly Mendocino Hotel, as the 'go to' for some Halloween fun. You can see the show here: <http://www.petergreenberg.com/2008/10/30/haunted-hotels-the-spookiest-stays-in-america/>  
 "Immediately after the show, we had several calls," said Jamie Buckner, Manager for The Mendocino Hotel and Hill House Inn. "One woman called and booked a room because she was reminded of her last stay with us—more than 20 years ago!"  
 \*2nd time we have been featured on the Today Show in past few months. Peter Greenberg also did his weekly radio show from Mendocino County in September.

**ARE YOU BENEFITING ALL YOU CAN FROM THE LODGING BID????**  
 IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY RECEIVING REGULAR E-MAILS FROM THE MCLA, LET SCOTT KNOW.

- TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VISITING TRAVEL WRITERS
- LEARN ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND THE COUNTY
- BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF WHAT IS GOING ON!!!

PLEASE E-MAIL OR CALL SCOTT SCHNEIDER TO JOIN OUR LIST  
 SERVE—964-9010 OR ADMIN@MCLA.INFO

**New Coordinator Chosen For Nature Tourism Coalition**

**INTRODUCING....** Karen Bowers

I am so pleased to be on board with the Nature Tourism Coalition (NTC). Thank you for giving me this opportunity to introduce myself.

You might say I am the perfect "return customer." Labor Day Weekend, 1969, I saw Mendocino for the first time and vowed to live here. For the next 25 years, we rented rooms in inns, motels, and houses. We camped. We came in all seasons and travelled up and down the coast and inland to find the perfect place to live.



In 1994, my husband (now a retired Civil Engineer) and I bought a house on Navarro Ridge. In January 1998, we permanently moved in. During this time, we have witnessed many changes in the County, particularly to the fishing and timber industry. However, the cultural offerings and conservation efforts grew.

In 1980, I took my first painting workshop at Mendocino Art Center (MAC). I started as a plain air painter (a kind of nature tourist). Painting is now a serious pursuit, both outdoors and in my studio. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "Birds have the largest following of all wildlife in the United States." I hope you all have lots of birders lodging with you in December. Second Saturday, December 13 please send them by my gallery, the Artists Cooperative of Mendocino, upstairs at the north end of Main Street. We are celebrating a 20 year anniversary with a Chamber Ribbon Cutting. From 5-8 pm, we will have champagne and more! Our theme is "Birds!"

Besides my artist's stake in promoting nature tourism, here's a bit about my related professional experience.

I taught American political thought at UC Berkeley, worked in the Bay Area and Sacramento as a political consultant, campaign manager, and then legislative aide in the California State Senate. I served as Government/Community Relations Director for East Bay Regional Park District. I worked on regional issues for a County Supervisor. For eight years, I worked as a land use and environmental policy analyst for an international law firm.

Locally, I have been active on the Boards of Symphony of the Redwoods, Mendocino Land Trust and Mendocino Art Center. Currently, I am on the Advisory Council of California Wildlife Foundation.

Now, I look forward to working with you. Specifically, let me know what NTC can do to help you build your customer base... more events, promotional materials, assistance with nature tourism packages? Get in touch through Scott....Many thanks.

**Marketing Study Reports ROI of 17:1**

**MCLA/MCPA Return-on-Investment**

According to their findings, Randall Travel Marketing determined that Mendocino County receives \$17.00 of tourism revenue for every \$1.00 it spends on promotion. These funds received are directly related to the promotional efforts and does not include visitors that go through the website only.

*"This is truly a remarkable return on your investment. With your current multi-organizational structure and limited staffing, you normally cannot expect a return this high"* says Berkeley Young of Randall Travel Marketing.

<b>MCLA/MCPA Inquiry ROI</b>	<b>2007/08</b>
Phone	817
Mail Fulfillment	16,940
Website Inquiries	2,651
<b>Total Traditional Inquiries</b>	<b>20,408</b>
<b>Internet (website unique visits)</b>	<b>155,556</b>
<b>Total Overall Inquiries &amp; Web Sessions</b>	<b>175,964</b>
<b>Media Placement &amp; PR Expense</b>	\$320,000
<b>Net cost per inquiry</b>	\$1.82
Conversion rate of mail inquiries (RTM Survey)	63.5%
Inquiries converted to travel parties (RTM Survey)	12,959
Average length of stay (RTM Survey)	2.7 nights
Average Daily expenditures per party (RTM Survey)	\$491.28
Average overall Trip Expense (RTM Survey)	\$1,311.72
<b>Impact from MCLA / MCPA Inquiry Fulfillment</b>	
<b>ROI =17 to 1    12,959 travel parties X \$1,311.72</b>	<b>\$16,998,</b>
<b>=</b>	<b>579</b>

*\*Based on combine MCPA & MCLA budget of approximately \$930,000*

**Marketing Study Reports Vital Tax Relief For Locals**

Promotional Effort also provide tax relief of \$571.15 per household in Mendocino County. These are taxes the local population would have to pay if travel and tourism did not play such an important role in our County economics.

**Mendocino County (2006 economic Impact)**

**Travel Spending - \$316,000,000**  
**Employment – 5,330 jobs**  
**Travel Generated Taxes**

Local	\$7,300,000
State	<u>\$11,700,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,000,000</b>

<u>County</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Tax relief</u>
<b>Sonoma</b>	<b>172,403</b>	<b>\$ 436.19</b>
<b>Napa</b>	<b>45,402</b>	<b>\$1,303.91</b>
<b>Mendocino</b>	<b>33,266</b>	<b>\$ 571.15</b>
<b>Humboldt</b>	<b>51,238</b>	<b>\$ 316.17</b>
<b>Lake</b>	<b>23,974</b>	<b>\$ 337.87</b>

## Recommended Strategies from the Marketing Study—A Sampling of What To Do Now

### 1. **Acknowledge Your Successes! MCLA, MCPA & MWWC have established a good foundation/partnership and the time is right for strategic tourism growth going forward.**

Specifically, the MCLA/MCPA marketing and fulfillment program is working and you have made good progress. It earns good results for the community's investment.

RTM was impressed to see the level of support that community leaders have committed to the development of the local travel industry. An accomplished tourism marketing agency, leadership and a willing community is a recipe for success.

Mendocino County is an amazing destination with a huge variety of appealing options for travelers. It's a travel writers dream! Huge PR potential and you have been wise to go after press.

The research confirms over and over again that you have been targeting the right markets: The Bay area, Sacramento and California in general.

### 2. **Establish a policy that going forward you will be research-based marketing organization(s).**

Embrace this research as statistical confirmation of the potential target audiences that you must go after to increase visitation. Make all future plans and decisions based on research. This will stream-line future decision making.

### 3. **Tracking and increasing the per-visitor expenditures and tax relief is the primary objective of the overall marketing effort.**

Community leaders must understand that it is growth in per-visitor expenditures, as well as recruiting additional visitors that creates success.

### 4. **Refine/streamline the successful marketing partnership between MCLA & MCPA.**

The research conducted in this study confirmed that your marketing and fulfillment program has been successful and is ready to move to the next level to drive increased return on investment. To accomplish this you will need to re-align staffing and streamline the organizational structure so that work assignments and goals are clearly defined and aggressive deadlines are met. The staffing structure must be addressed to improve efficiency and communication.

A joint committee of the two organizations to create a new working structure for the staff. Consider creating a DBA through which all MCLA & MCPA marketing occurs: Visit Mendocino\*

### 5. **Stay focused on your primary markets and demographics**



Berkeley Young of Randall Travel Marketing presents the marketing study in Ukiah on 10/28

We are in a challenging economy, but there are people traveling. You must make research based planning decisions and then work the plan. Stay focused on a plan.

*\*Please note: Strategy #4 recommends the formation of a "Visit Mendocino" committee. This committee was approved by the MCLA Board of Directors, which must also approve a marketing Plan to be executed by Visit Mendocino. Once the new committee is approved by the MCPA' Board, approximately 95% of BID funds and 100% of MCPA's funds will go to the committee to oversee and streamline our promotional efforts to drive more business to all of us! Randall Travel Marketing recommends the Executive Committees from both MCLA & MCPA comprise the Visit Mendocino committee (5 from each organization). One staff structure would result.*

### 6. **You have a limited amount of funds in a very competitive marketplace. Marketing/promotion priorities for MCLA/MCPA:**

- Internet website ([www.gomendo.com](http://www.gomendo.com)) – update;
- E-marketing – SEO, SEM, Database marketing, social media
- Inquiry Fulfillment Planning Guide
- Print and online advertising focused on the CA drive market
- Public relations efforts critical to success – Mendocino is PR heaven! Focus on Bay area, California and then national travel media (SATW) and work the (trade publications, newspapers, magazines, TV), FAM tours.
- Leisure sales – trade/consumer shows, AAA Blitzes, packaging, events
- Tracking of all advertising and communications

### 7. **Local and Regional Partnerships are critical to success. Destination marketing is a multi-level team effort :**

- In-county partnerships – MCLA, MCPA, MWWC, Arts Council, Chambers of Commerce, lodging, dining, retail, museums, attractions, etc.
- Regional partnerships – North Coast Tourism Council – build awareness of Northern California region with Mendocino County as the center piece
- State Partnerships – California Travel and Tourism Commission spends tens of millions annually bringing travelers to California. You must be at the table partnering to reap the most rewards. Tailgate on their efforts where possible.

### 8. **Focus on outreach and converting inquiries to visitors. Support local organizations in providing improved trip facilitation for travelers once they have arrived.**

MCLA/MCPA have limited budgets and can't be aggressive at outreach to lure visitors to Mendocino and also provide effective trip facilitation once they arrived. Therefore, focus on bringing more travelers to Mendocino County and then coordinate the efforts of local agencies and travel businesses to provide improved trip facilitation.

- **Travelers need better maps, guides, signage and visitor centers** to help them find places to spend money in Mendocino County. The five Chambers should serve on a committee tasked to create and distribute consistent maps and guides.
- **Gateways are needed at county and town boundaries** to welcome visitors, provide a sense of place for the destination, and direct arriving travelers to visitor information.
- **Front-line training** – develop a basic training program that will teach the front-line how to be a stand-alone visitor center to assist travelers and help plan their time in our County.

### 9. **Encourage the development of new products and the redevelopment and marketing of existing products identified by visitors as highly desired.**

### 10. **Monitor & track results - conduct on-going travel research.**

## Annual Meeting A Wonderful Success

### Members Learn How To "Save Green By Being Green"

September 24 was a beautiful day in the Anderson Valley. Goldeneye Winery graciously hosted us for our annual meeting. The day was packed with information starting out with an update on BID activities by Scott Schneider as well as an update on MCPA activities by their General Manager, Alydia Atkins. Mark from HypeHouse gave a presentation about current public relations efforts as well as explained the process getting Mendocino County in print.

Seven leaders of Mendocino County's "Green" activities explained how they play their part in helping the environment and provided tips on how we could, as lodging operators, save money by helping the environment. A couple of our speakers provide updates below:

#### From the Mendocino County Water Agency:

It is amazing that over a month has past since I met so many MCLA members at Goldeneye Winery. My plans to perform water audits at the request of several Innkeepers has been delayed due to a shift in project priorities. Happily, I will be able to schedule site visits after November 12 and will begin calling from the list soon thereafter.

As I mentioned at the annual meeting, the final exam for the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) was coming up and I was studying hard for it. The results are in. I passed the exam, passed the class, and am now awaiting the official certificate from the US EPA. We now have the tools in the office for internal/external audits and can proceed once my November deadline passes. The first two on my list to visit are Elaine in Elk and Jan in Willits. If you would like me to visit your site to perform an internal/external water audit, just give me a call and we will set up an appointment.

Joe Scriven, MCWA Water Resources Specialist, 463-4589,

[scrivenj@co.mendocino.ca.us](mailto:scrivenj@co.mendocino.ca.us)

#### From Ukiah Paper Supply:

Our company has been stocking "GREEN" for over ten years, Even before "GREEN" was in vogue. As the need and interest has increased, we have expanded our line to include the following products: recycled bath tissue, facial tissue, towels, green cleaning products, equipment, recycling containers, food packaging, bags, amenities, hand soaps and much more. Most products are biodegradable, compostable, recyclable or manufactured within greener standards.

Those of you who purchase these "Green Products" have control over how fast and green we become as a community, city, town, county and country. We at Ukiah Paper Supply Inc. can provide you with the products, knowledge and training to serve your needs in becoming a "Green" facility.

#### **Green Tip Of The Month:**

**More is not always better with your cleaning chemicals ! Dilute your cleaning chemicals according to the manufactures directions. It's less exposure of the chemicals for the user, less toxic for the customer and less impact on our environment.**



## 2008-2009 BID Work Plan Released

Each year, the BID Ordinance requires a Work Plan be submitted to the MCLA Advisory Board in preparation of the next year's annual report. The work plan summarizes accomplishments of the previous year as well as gives a summary of the current year's activities including a budget. Here are some highlights:

MCLA's main function will continue to be marketing Mendocino County to outside visitors which will be accomplished through the following 3 mediums:

#### Advertising:

- We will continue to advertise at the Sonoma County Airport, the CA Visitor's Guide and "Road Trips", VIA Magazine, Sunset Magazine, Sacramento & San Francisco Magazines and others.

#### Public Relations:

- HypeHouse will assist the MCLA with bringing media to Mendocino County, getting articles printed in local, regional, national and international publications.

#### Sales:

- HypeHouse Communications will assist the MCLA in providing sales efforts and materials to potential visitors. They will attend with the MCLA three consumer trade shows in Santa Clara, CA, Seattle WA and Long Beach, CA. Materials will be developed specifically for these shows including a video portraying all aspects and areas of Mendocino County.
- The MCLA working with the Joint Marketing Committee will develop fulfillment pieces to be dispersed to potential visitors outside of Mendocino County.
- We will continue to work on [www.gomendo.com](http://www.gomendo.com) as the primary fulfillment piece for Mendocino County.
- MCLA will work through the Joint Marketing Committee to help fund a joint event coordinator to assist in not only the Crab & Mushroom Festivals, but also be a resource for others doing more small scale events and festivals.

### OTHER MEDIUMS TO SUCCESSFUL MARKET:

#### Partnerships:

- MCLA will continue its on-going partnerships with the Arts Council and the Nature Tourism Coalition.
- MCLA has taken over the administrative contract for the North Coast Tourism Council. In doing so, we are at the "heart" of the organization and will be the key player in all marketing activities with the group. The main function of this group is to take advantage of the State's \$50 Million budget. Through the Council, we will be able to attend TIA's International POW-WOW, have a presence in visitor guides in Germany & the UK, host media familiarization tours sponsored by the State, etc.
- We will continue to provide partnership funds to County-wide efforts and regional efforts (up to \$1000) as requested.

#### Administration:

Consists of 13% of our budget. Does not include time the contracted administrator spends on marketing & partnerships.

#### Contingencies:

Goal was to have \$100,000 in contingencies. Goal has been reached. \$36,000 currently budgeted in case of budget shortfall.

**Mendocino County Lodging—An Overview (from the Marketing Study)**

Mendocino County has approximately 466 total lodging/rental properties, consisting of 160 hotel/motel/B&B lodging properties with 3,161 lodging rooms and 306 lodging units available as vacation rental properties.

Mendocino County lodging room inventory by lodging type is as follows:

Hotel/motel 46.9%, Bed and Breakfast/inns/lodges (10+ rooms) 35.6%, Vacation rental units 8.8%, and Bed and Breakfast/inns/lodges (1-9 rooms) 8.6%.

Mendocino County hotel/motel/B&B lodging room inventory (not including rental properties) is as follows:

Hotel/motel lodging rooms account for 51.5% of room inventory while Bed and Breakfast/inns/lodges account for 48.5%.

**Geographic Segmentation – All Lodging Properties / Percentage by Area**

Geographic Segment	Hotel/Motel	Inns (10+)	Vacation Rentals	B&B Inns(<10)	Total Rooms by Area	Total % County by Area
North Coast	654 / 36.0%	876 / 48.2%	136 / 7.5%	151 / 8.3%	1,817	52.4%
Inland	920 / 76.5%	243 / 20.2%	*na	40 / 3.3%	1,203	34.7%
South Coast	36 / 10.2%	81 / 23.0%	170 / 48.3%	65 / 18.5%	352	10.2%
Anderson Valley	0 / 0.0%	20 / 31.7%	*na	43 / 68.3%	64	1.8%
North Country*	17 / 54.8%	14 / 45.2%	*na	0 / 0.0%	31	0.9%
<b>Total Inventory</b>	<b>1,627</b>	<b>1,234</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>3,467</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**2007 Annual Overall Lodging Market Mix\***

2007	Category
47.0%	<b>TOTAL LODGING RESPONSE RATE (by room count)</b>
91.3%	<b>Individual Travel Parties:</b>
48.3%	Leisure - Tourists visiting the wineries, coast, attractions, shopping, etc.
16.2%	Individual business travelers (including laborers)
14.0%	Pass-through / part of a longer trip
12.8%	Leisure – visiting friends & relatives (weddings, reunions, etc.)
8.7%	<b>Group Travel:</b>
3.3%	Sports groups
2.5%	Group tour / motorcoach
2.2%	Conferences & meetings
0.7%	Other (specify):

*\*Thank you to all the properties which responded to the survey. Your information is invaluable!*

**MCLA Budget—This is our budget for the current and past year. For more details, email [mcla@mcn.org](mailto:mcla@mcn.org).**

**MCLA 2008/09 Income - \$621,500 (B.I.D. District Assessment, estimated gross/lodging)**

According to Destination Marketing Association International, a successful DMO’s (destination marketing organization) budget allocations for staff should fall in approximately the 25% to 40% range of total budget. Similarly, DMAI has established 10% to 15% as the appropriate range for overhead costs, and 40% to 50% as the appropriate range for marketing outreach.

MCLA Expense Category	2007/08	%	2008/09	%
Contracted Staffing (Labor)	\$60,696	10.4%	\$97,000	15.6%
Office/overhead Expenses	\$17,839	3.1%	23,500	3.8%
Outreach (ads, sales, PR, web)	504,686	86.5%	\$500,650	80.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$583,221</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$621,150</b>	<b>100%</b>

**More News in the PR World**

**Regional Showcases with HypeHouse**

On October 14, MCLA held a regional outreach meeting at the Ukiah Chamber of Commerce. More than a dozen business and organization leaders and artists gathered to share the inside scoop on activities that cater to visitors. This ultimately helps HypeHouse share the story with journalists, visitors and travel VIPs. Thanks to Bert Mosier from the Ukiah Chamber for providing the venue! **Be sure to mark your calendar for the next meeting in Fort Bragg on December 16!**



*Artist Elizabeth Raybee at the Ukiah Hypehouse Showcase Oct. 14th*

**Seattle Showtime**

In September, the MCLA team headed North to Seattle for the fantastic Travel Adventure Show. Scott Schneider, Mark (from HypeHouse) and Richard Strom (MCPA) kicked off the show by hitting the road for local media interviews with editors from AAA Western Journey Magazine, Paddler (the nation's top kayak magazine) and the official Horizon Air in-flight magazine. Then, it was off to the Convention Center where the team set up the booth and said hello to more than 1,500 people, handing out visitors guides, information & of course the ultra popular Green bags.



*Scott Schneider hands out bags and collects names for future promotions at the Seattle Times Travel*

**2009 Show Plans**

Busy Busy! 2009 is right around the corner, and MCLA is prepping for fantastic exposure to consumers & media including:  
 January 24 & 25, 2009. Bay Area Travel Show in Santa Clara.  
 February 3, 2009. CTTC Media Event, New York City.  
 February 14, 2009. Los Angeles Times Travel Adventure Show.  
**All of these shows will drive visitors & media to the County!**

Editors Love Mendocino County in Autumn

Fall brings beautiful change to the County and editors love the off season when they can get up close and personal with a destination and really get to know the locals. Editors have been calling us since the weather turned chillier, asking us for help in designing Mendocino itineraries that will reveal things about the County that their readers didn't know about.

Recent trips that have come out of those conversations include an inland odyssey by a writer whose work appears frequently in the travel section of the San Francisco Chronicle and the New York Times, plus visits from, among others, a senior editor at a national lifestyle magazine, the head editor for the both of the nation's most prominent gay/lesbian/b/t publications, two bloggers who are also guidebook editors (which means their rave reviews of us appear both instantly and later in guidebooks with a long shelf life), and an extensive tour by the Editor in Chief of Solano Magazine, a beautiful glossy that is read by much of the Bay Area and beyond.

**Upcoming News –Get Involved in our PR Efforts**

Ever wonder how we decide what to write press releases about and how we determine when to send them out so you can be prepared in advance with information for us? Here's all you need to know:

**Long lead vs. short lead**

You've heard us mention the terms "long lead" and "short lead" in listserv messages before. It simply means that some publications go to press many months in advance (long leads) and some publications -- mostly newspapers -- only need a few weeks to gather their information (short leads). This means that you have two chances to get us the information we ask for so never, ever be shy about sending a special or package you are running, even if it's too late to get into a magazine.

**Who Decides What to Write About?**

You have lots of power to determine what we write about. If you have something exciting coming up -- anything from an event or an anniversary or a remodel or anything else -- please let us know. We might already be talking to an editor who is looking for that bit of information or we might decide it needs to be included in a release right away.

Beyond that, certain releases can be counted on to always go out at the same time of year. Some examples include Thanksgiving menu round ups, Halloween events, December shopping specials, Valentine's/Romance specials, Mother's Day packages, Fourth of July Activities, Whale Festival/Whale Watching information, and Earth Day happenings. Watch the listserv for updates or just send in your news when you have it, but remember if you want to be included in articles and calendars for most magazines, you may have to have exact pricing and other details organized as much as nine months in advance.

**Speaking of pricing...**

More and more, we are asking you for exact pricing well in advance. It's very difficult to determine what you will want to charge many months beforehand so I always suggest picking a price you can live with, even if someone calls to take advantage of the offer many months hence. Discounts are nice, but bear in mind that Mendocino County lodging is so much more affordable than most comparable destinations that there's no reason to sell yourself short. Occasionally, a newspaper will ask us for certain types of pricing -- i.e., rooms under \$100 a night -- but those deals are always going to have very firm expiration dates and typically will run in an article in the next week or so. Prices we quote are double occupancy and do not include taxes or gratuities. And it's always OK to include your reservation policies. Please add the room price into the package for me. You can quote the price of the lowest priced room or do a range. If the cheapest room is sold out when they call, just let them know that and offer them what you do have. In our opinion pricing isn't what sells your place anyway, as much as the uniquely appealing things you have to offer, such as fireplaces in every room of a suite, a hot tub in the woods, access to a secret beach, special art, wine, horseback riding or shopping expeditions, etc.

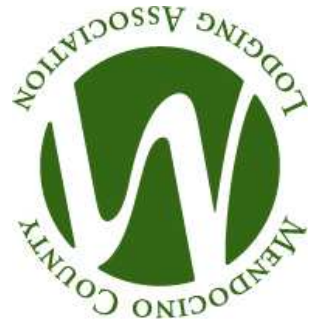
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### Our President Speaks—Message from Jan Rodriguez

So much has happened since our last newsletter and lots of great things on the horizon!

The much anticipated Randall Marketing Report was revealed and many of you may have attended the meetings on the coast and in Ukiah. The great news is we have been on the right track with our marketing efforts! As most of you are aware, when the BID first passed, we had to hit the ground running and we began a marketing campaign without a real marketing report. The great news is now with this detailed report, we can improve our efforts to market to the Bay Area and Sacramento, which were identified as our target audiences.

The really exciting news that came out of this report is that since our target audience is the Bay Area and Sacramento, this makes it easier for us in this bad economy to get those visitors to come to our county because it is just a few hours away and our prices are much more competitive than Napa, Carmel & Lake Tahoe. So the advice from the Randall Group was NOT to lower our rates!!! We are much more affordable than our competitors! They feel these factors will contribute to an estimated 2% growth in Mendocino County next year. While this may sound small, keep in mind that lodging nationwide is expected to have a decrease of 5-10% in 2009.

The Randall Report also included recommended strategies which we are already working on. One of the recommended strategies

was to change the staff structure of MCLA and MCPA to improve overall communication between staff and members of the local travel industry as well as improve the efficiency of the three organizations charged with marketing Mendocino County. This will help to create a lean aggressive marketing organization. You will be pleased to know that MCLA has approved this strategy and will be working towards the recommendations.

Please feel free to call Scott Schneider, our executive director, or myself if you have any questions about the report. As always, our monthly meetings are always open to any lodging member. We generally meet the first Wednesday of the month and our location rotates around the county. We also have conference calling access so you can stay put and call in! We look forward to moving forward with the suggestions from the report and making Mendocino County the place to visit!

Sincerely,  
Jan Rodriguez  
President MCLA

Please keep in mind that our board meetings are open to the lodging membership and they are held around the county. Normally they are scheduled for the first Wednesday of every month. You can find the information at [www.mcla.info](http://www.mcla.info). We would love to see you there!

Here's to a successful third year of our BID!