



January 2018

This past year Tuolumne County's tourism industry saw another year of record-breaking growth. Travel spending and tourism tax revenues exceeded expectations. The Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau is proud to be the voice and marketing arm for the tourism industry, a vital economic powerhouse for Tuolumne County. This past year the TCVB has worked on building stronger relationships with our tourism partners. In addition to marketing, we are creating more ways for the tourism industry to network, grow and learn through regular marketing meetings, workshops and more opportunities for affordable promotion than ever before.

Strategic marketing tools that have been implemented are showing remarkable success. An example is the on-line booking system implemented in early 2017 to encourage website visitors to book before they leave the site. The investment made in this system paid for itself in just a few months while adding revenue to our partners' bottom lines and more transient occupancy tax dollars for the County and the City of Sonora. Additionally, the TCVB is becoming more immersed into key industry associations such as Destinations International (DI). DI offers a wide range of strategic planning tools and courses including offering destination and employee accreditation and best practices resources.

The TCVB thanks the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors and the Sonora City Council for continuing to reinvest a percentage of the transient occupancy tax back into tourism marketing so that we may continue to grow this incredible industry that provides such a huge benefit to our community. We also want to thank our Partners and the TCVB Board of Directors who fully believe in what we do and support our efforts. We are pleased to present to you the 2016-2017 Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau Annual Report.

Respectfully,

Lisa Mayo
Executive Director
Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau



Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau Annual Report July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017

What Our Partners are Saying About the TCVB

"Refreshing! New blood understanding how the lodging/tourism industry has transpired in the last few years. The Visitors Bureau is very cognizant of a small-town market and personalities. Staff is ALWAYS reachable and helpful. I appreciate the Real World understanding on budgets and getting the best bang for our buck."

-Dave Kalash, Owner, Aladdin Inn

"Ever since we opened our business in 2013, the Tuolumne County Visitor's Bureau has been super supportive and cheering us on every step of the way! They are so great about referring customers to us as members, which I hear frequently from other members as well! As a customized transportation business, we rely very much on the tourism in our community and surrounding communities, and TCVB does an amazing job at promoting our beautiful Sierra Foothill Region, locally, internationally, throughout California, and other states as well! Kudo's TCVB, we're proud to be members!!"

-Scott and Kelly Smith, Owners, Mother Lode Adventures Charter Services, LLC

It's been amazing to watch Lisa Mayo and team evolve the Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau into an economic engine for the county. It's not enough to work hard when competing directly with destinations that have exponentially larger budgets; Lisa and team have worked smart to leverage industry programs that stretch our dollars and attract the sort of business we need to grow a healthy economy county-wide. Looking ahead, we're excited to see TCVB build on the momentum they have created as they develop more channels of travel with international visitors who stay longer and spend more, and off-peak travelers who will support our local economy during the time when we have the most opportunity and need to grow.

-Lee Zimmerman and Brian Anderluh, Owners, Evergreen Lodge and Rush Creek Lodge

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

3rd Annual Tuolumne County Tourism Summit held during California Tourism Month featured topics including social media marketing, working with partners, how to catch media attention and updates on local trail activities. There were 45 attendees.

Community Sponsorships Thru June 30, 2017

- 2017 Columbia Father's Day Fly-In
- All Hallows Fantasy Faire
- California State Railroad Museum

- Groveland Trailheads Research Project
- Groveland Trailheads Trail Development
- ITSA Film Festival
- Jamestown Promotion Club/Sonora Area Foundation - Rocca Park Blacksmith Shop
- Sonora Celtic Faire
- Tri-County Golf Tournament
- Tuolumne County Arts Alliance In-Focus Photography Show
- Tuolumne County Business Council Meeting/Luncheon Sponsorship at Rush Creek
- Tuolumne County Historical Society Chamber Mixer
- Tuolumne County Historical Society Geocaching Event
- Tuolumne County Search and Rescue Race to the Ribs
- Tuolumne County Sheriff's Posse 2017 Mother Lode Rounds Up
- Tri-County Chamber Golf Tournament
- Twain Harte Area Chamber of Commerce Summer Concert Series
- Yosemite Gateways Partners Directors Luncheon at Pine Mountain Lake and Welcome Reception at Indigeny Reserve

Community In-Kind Sponsorships

- Columbia Chamber of Commerce
- Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority
- Tuolumne County Trails
- Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce

Additional Community Support

- The TCVB donates countless auction items and gift baskets to support various fundraisers throughout the County. We also donate to some organizations beyond Tuolumne County as appropriate. A good example is the RCRC basket that we put together every year.
- Sell event tickets for all kinds of Tuolumne County Events
- Community events are further promoted through Tuolumne County Vacation Planner, VisitTuolumne.com, through social media channels and additional opportunities such as television and radio spots.

Community Involvement

- Executive Director serves on the following Boards: Tuolumne County Historical Society Board, Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce Board, Sonora Adventist Health Advisory Board, Cal Poly Experience Industry Management Advisory Board
- Marketing Manager serves on Leadership Tuolumne County Board (graduated from LTC in June 2017)
- Office/Membership Manager is currently going through Leadership Tuolumne County
- The TCVB has a Gold Rush Charter School intern

VISITOR CENTER RELOCATION

To have a more visible and up-to-date location, the TCVB relocated the Tuolumne County Visitors Center to downtown Sonora. The Visitor Center also houses TCVB offices and now has an onsite meeting room for Board Meetings that is being used for Board meetings and educational workshops. There has been a significant increase in foot traffic that includes visitors and residents.

PUBLIC RELATIONS – Susan Wilson, Publicist

Regional and State

- Hosted a variety of journalists in the County, many with dedicated itinerary arrangements; Emma Barnett/UK, Anna Bailey/UK, Kate Bennett/UK, ThisCanLeadToAnywhere.com, Karen D’Souza, Bay Area News Service, Candy Harrington, Wheelers and Slow Walkers, Travel with Bender, Epoch Times US/China plus international fams (see below)
- Gold Country Visitors Association partnerships
- YARTS transportation in all communication tools
- California Media Crises Workshop
- Provided story ideas to Gold Country for attendance at LA Media Marketplace

Amplified Marketing Efforts with San Francisco Travel Association

- Content and direction for development of three microsites, U.S., UK and China with emphasis on proximity to the San Francisco Bay Area and best route to visit Yosemite National Park
- Visitor Center training in San Francisco to help visitors travel to Yosemite resulting in in-person training session, use of TC video and revision of materials showcased
- Hosted San Francisco Travel’s Chinese Digital Agency, Hylink, for immersive County fam and social media content, with live streams from Columbia State Historic Park and Rush Creek, Groveland, resulting in more than 100,000 live viewers in China for each stream video (four times the amount who watched previous stream from Napa, California)
 - Highlights include: reaching 580,000 on SF Travel Facebook page and 200,000 followers on Twitter page, 96,000 readers on SF Travel consumer newsletter, Beyond San Francisco article on web had 28,444 page views, and published numerous articles on the site with Historic California holding the most interest at 4:12 minutes
- Tuolumne County Representation on the Tourism Council of the San Francisco Travel Association and have been reappointed for this fiscal year
- Ongoing Tourism Trade, Marketing and Public Relations outreach to remind Association about Tuolumne County

National and International Efforts

- Attended TravMedia Intl Media Marketplace in New York with 25+ appointments
- IPW Washington D.C.: Met with 50+ journalists for discussions on the California Gold Rush area and region, most direct route to Yosemite from the San Francisco Bay Area and story ideas
- Hosted Visit California Canada for Outdoor journalists covering Pinecrest, Fly Fishing, Columbia State Historic Park, Groveland, Stargazing, Yosemite touring
- Hosted Visit California India for Culinary and Outdoor writers in Groveland, Yosemite tour, winetasting dinner and American S’mores tradition
- Assisted with Visit California France Trade Fam to Groveland, Yosemite and Columbia State Historic Park
- Managed Visit California India CNN Documentary on Movie Locations – covered Columbia State Historic Park and Railtown 1897
- Tuolumne County was represented in Australia/New Zealand California Fam with High Sierra
- Represented Tuolumne County at the U.S. Travel Association’s Communications Committee

Press Releases

- *11 Groovy Reasons to Visit*
- *A quick trip to Yosemite National Park like President Obama and family? We have tips for getting the most out of your visit, even if your stay is as brief as his.*
- *Ten Things to do in Northern California's Tuolumne County to Stay Dry During Winter's Wacky Weather*
- *Highway 120 Reopens in time for Summer*
- *Tuolumne County is Hollywood's Back lot – revised for India and China*
- *Step Back in Time to Northern California's Gold Rush of 1850s in Columbia Historic State Park this Holiday Season*
- *Yosemite? Yes. Crowds? Not here. Northern California's Yosemite Gold Country has Uncrowded Adventures in Groveland, the gateway to the Park*
- *Rush Creek Lodge Opens*

Unique Pitches to Media

Ancient, Giant Juniper Tree Has its own Caretaker

Witness the Power of San Francisco's Drinking Water -- Rancheria Falls, Northern California's Tuolumne County

Hidden, Unexpected Luxury – Stargazing Tour of Yosemite National Park's Night Sky

Trains and Locomotives – Railtown 1897 State Historic Park and Sierra No. 3

Holiday – Fairs and Festivals, Lottery for Candy Cane Making Classes

Gateway to Yosemite, Generational Travel to Evergreen Lodge

Tuolumne Grove of giant sequoia less crowded

Winter in Tuolumne County, Dodge Ridge

America on Display

Coverage Examples

Blog, This Can Lead to Anywhere, Columbia State Historic Park

<http://www.thiscouldleadtoanywhere.com/2016/11/27/columbia-state-park-visittuolumnecounty/>

San Jose Mercury News, National Hotel, Jamestown

<http://www.mercurynews.com/2016/07/27/jamestown-hotel-evokes-gold-rush-history-plus-pomegranate-margaritas/>

Travels with Bender, Columbia Diggins

<http://travelwithbender.com/travel-blog/pacific-north-west/columbia-diggins/>

Epoch Times: A Foodies Guide to America's National Parks (link removed)

Great Destination Radio Show, UK (70 stations) Columbia State Historic Park "Strike Gold On a Visit"
<http://greatdestinationsradioshow.com/2017/06/19/strike-gold-on-a-visit-to-tuolumne-county-in-california/>

Los Angeles Times, Pinecrest (assist only in ongoing pitches to the LA Times including "Bucket List"
<http://www.latimes.com/travel/deals/la-tr-escape-pinecrest-lake-20170803-story.html>

Away in Style, Asia, Visiting Yosemite

<http://www.awayinstyle.com/a-quick-trip-to-yosemite-national-park-like-president-obama-and-family/>

Visit California Canada Outdoor Journalist Fam Trip

<https://www.facebook.com/VisitCaliforniaCanada/videos/680226322185280/> plus numerous articles in print and photographs for the TCVB to use

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Gold Country Visitors Association (GCVA) and **High Sierra Visitors Council (HSVC)** – Both the GCVA and HSVC are California regions defined by Visit California. Tuolumne County falls under both and is therefore a member of both. TCVB Executive Director is President of the GCVA. The focus of GCVA is on media, itineraries and developing a strong brand that links the nine counties that make up California's Gold Country. The HSVC has a more international focus. HSVC has representation in France for travel trade and media. HSVC was also represented at Visit California Sales and Media Missions in Mexico and Australia.

Yosemite Gateways – This is the informal name for a five-member, four-county (Tuolumne, Mono, Madera and Mariposa) marketing group that works together to promote YARTS and alternate transportation into Yosemite National Park to help with traffic congestion. Additional messaging includes what can be done on all the gateways outside of just going to Yosemite. Yosemite National Park provides funds for marketing transportation alternatives. The "Think Outside the Park" message is being promoted through www.yosemitgateway.com, storytelling, video, table top banners and brochures highlighting each county's destination highlights.

MARKETING – Jen Lopez, Marketing Manager

It was a very busy year and we worked diligently to strategically diversify our marketing efforts throughout California, the United States and in international markets. The marketing efforts stretch over strategic partnerships, print advertising in popular travel-related magazines and newspapers sections, digital advertising in key markets, social media, promotions on radio and TV and more.

Highlights of 2016-2017

- Launch of new TCVB website with online booking capabilities
- Two section takeovers of Eat Drink Play in Bay Area News Group newspapers featuring over 20 unique articles about Tuolumne County and partner advertisements
- Studio 40 Live segments on Fox 40, Sacramento

- Expanded viewing area for TCVB commercial
- Added a part-time Digital Content Coordinator to staff
- New video assets through Brand USA partnership

Strategic Partnerships

- Brand USA Partnership: Visit California Outdoor Pillars Program (Total online impressions: 10+ million!)
 - 2-minute and 30-second video creation and distribution; featuring Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, Pinecrest Lake and Columbia State Historic Park
 - Content creation for Outdoor+California Takeover Month on VisittheUSA.com
 - National Geographic California Road Trip Co-Op
 - National Geographic/Expedia Strategy Promotion, Social, Display Ads
- SF Travel Association:
 - International Marketing (China and UK Markets)
 - Vacation planner distribution in SF Travel visitors centers
 - Social media posts
 - E-newsletter inclusions
 - Member partner webpage
- KGO on the Go
 - On-air live interview, October 2016
 - Ad on back cover of KGO on the Go Magazine (annual)
 - TCVB Logo on front cover of KGO on the Go Magazine
 - Feature article on Tuolumne County

Tuolumne County Vacation Planner

In this time of technology and digital distribution, recent studies have shown that visitors still want a physical, printed Visitors Guide. With that in mind, the TCVB printed 100,000 guides in. 60,000 were distributed to a Bay Area distribution company where they are taken to high-traffic areas such as coffee houses, BART stations and high-end communities. 5000 were sent to Yosemite Journal The cover of this year's guide featured an incredible photo of upper Highway 108. The photo was curated from a social media contributor. The guide was a complete redesign and has once again proven to be a very popular piece for in market and out of market visitors.

Print and Digital Advertising

- Oh, Ranger! Yosemite National Park Guide (first time)
- Yosemite Journal
 - Full-page ad
 - Multiple Tuolumne County inclusive articles
 - Digital ads on MyYosemitePark.com and in e-newsletters
- California Visitors Guide
 - Half-page ad in cooperation with O.A.R.S and Rush Creek and Evergreen Lodges
 - Cooperative ad with Gold Country Visitors Association
- Sunset Magazine (includes Northern and Southern California editions)
 - July, August, October and November 2016
 - March, April and May 2017
 - Digital ads during fall 2016

- San Francisco Travel Planner (annual publication)
- Adventure Outdoors
 - Fall and Spring 2016
- Sierra Living
 - Full-page in partnership with TCEDA
- Digital Advertising of Columbia and Pine Mountain Lake Airports – Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) aopa.com

Regional Advertising

- Friends and Neighbors Magazine
- Pine Mountain Lake Activities Guide
- Sonora Chamber Magazine
- Columbia Firemen’s Muster program
- Sierra Repertory Theatre newsletters
- Mother Lode Round-Up Parade and Rodeo newspaper insert
- Columbia Father’s Day Fly-In newspaper insert
- MyMotherLode.com (digital and radio spots)
- Tuolumne County Transit bus

Television

- Updated TCVB TV commercial
- Expanded the viewer market to include not only Sacramento but also the Tri-Valley (Pleasanton, Dublin, Livermore)
- Secured 6, 4-minute segments to air on Studio 40 Live on Fox 40
 - 3 segments filmed on location: Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, Dragoon Gulch Trail, Columbia State Historic Park
 - 3 segments filmed in studio (2 live): Hwy 108 highlights, Hwy 120 highlights (aired right after Big Oak Flat Rd. reopening) and Local Wineries and Indigeny
- KOFY
- CNN India

Travel Show Presence

- California State Fair, July 2016
- International Sportsmen’s Expo – Sacramento, January 2017
- Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show, February 2017
- San Diego travel and Adventure Show, March 2017
- Sunset Celebration Weekend, May 2017
- Go West Summit (Travel Trade) – February 2017
- International Pow Wow (Travel Trade) – June 2017

Other Show Presence

- Sonora Home and Garden Show in cooperation with Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce, April 2017

CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR – Anna Davies, Special Projects Coordinator

The Tuolumne County exhibit at the 2017 California State Fair in Sacramento brought home a Gold Ribbon and won the award for Best Marketing Presentation. The theme was “Post Card Perfect Memories in the Making.” The interactive exhibit showcased the many amazing attributes that make Tuolumne County the perfect memory making vacation destination.

The exhibit featured giant postcards, a postcard coloring station, beautifully displayed local products and whimsical animated characters. For more than 20 years, the TCVB has supported and coordinated the design, development and volunteer staffing of the exhibit providing us the opportunity to reach out to thousands of potential visitors each year.

SOCIAL MEDIA – Mackenzie Rodgers, Digital Content Coordinator

By utilizing the grand content generated by consumers, TCVB has been able to greatly increase the social platforms with an authentic audience and engaged following. The efforts of TCVB, for this fiscal year, is showcased in our many social media posts for our partners and followers to see. Social media has given us another place to refer partners, give reliable real-time updates, and showcase the beauty of Tuolumne County.

Facebook: 11.8% increase in Facebook Fans. 21,800+

Instagram: 168.3% increase in Instagram Fans. 2,688+

Twitter: 43% increase in Twitter Fans. 1,068+

Top 3 Performing Facebook Posts:

July 1, 2017: *“Sonora made the list for ‘The 10 Most Charming Cities in America.’”*

Type: Shared Article **Reach:** 19,275 **Reactions, Comments, Shares:** 1,584



April 24, 2017: *“Chinese Camp...Tuolumne County’s Ghost Town!”*

Type: Shared Article **Reach:** 11,890 **Reactions, Comments, Shares:** 471

Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
 Posted by Mackenzie Rodgers
 April 24 · 🌐

Chinese Camp...Tuolumne County's Ghost Town!
<http://www.onlyinyourstate.com/northern-california/abandoned-neighborhood-norcal/>



This Entire Neighborhood Near Northern California Was Mysteriously Abandoned And N...
 onlyinyourstate.com

👍❤️👤 165 7 Comments 101 Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

11,890 people reached > **Boost Post**

June 21, 2017: “Sonora Pass is open and featured in Sunset Magazine...”

Type: Shared Article Reach: 9,949 Reactions, Comments, Shares: 586

Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau
 Posted by Mackenzie Rodgers
 June 21 · 🌐

Sonora Pass is open and Featured in Sunset Magazine for being in the Top 21 Wonders of the Sierra Nevada!
http://www.sunset.com/travel/california/sierras/sierras_16



Top 21 wonders of the Sierra Nevada
 Many of the mountains' best sights—unlikely as it seem...
 sunset.com

👍❤️👤 223 4 Comments 113 Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

9,949 people reached > **Boost Post**

FILM COMMISSION – Bethany Wilkinson, Film Liaison

In Spring 2017, the Tuolumne County Film Commission joined Instagram to connect with other film commissions as well as location managers and scouts, and push forward a presence online. In May, the Commission was represented at the Film in California Conference in Studio City at CBS Studios. The Commission had a booth with brochures about the area and networked with location managers and scouts to encourage more filming in the county. Throughout the summer and presently, the Commission has compiled updated photos and videos of the various towns and landscapes in the county to post to

social media and the website. Recently, the Commission filmed and edited a video for the Tuolumne County Historic Society that explored the Sonora Museum and the history of the county. As of now, the Film Commission is redoing its website to be more accessible to everyone plus include more information about the various locations and local talent that may be used by studios that come to film in the area. There are also four major projects in which the Commission is working to secure for filming in the area - 3 feature films and one television show. Each would film in 2018 if successfully secured. On Nov 4th of this year the Film Commission sponsored a screening of "The Other Kids," a locally made feature length film starring Tuolumne County's very own students, at Summerville High School that benefited the Tuolumne County Arts Alliance and YES Partnership.

Upcoming and Current Marketing and Programs

Virtual Reality 360 Video and Virtual Tours

New Video Assets

Brand USA Partnership, Visit California Road Trips Pillar

Thomas Cook "California Everywhere," Visit California Co-Op – UK focus

Sacramento Airport Marketing (LED screens at baggage claim)

Black Diamond Travel Trade and Media Representation in the UK

Visiting Friends and Relatives Program

Off-Peak and Midweek Meetings and Conferences Program

Sponsor of Wild West Bass Trail Fishing Tournament (March 2-4, 2018)

Additional Eat Drink Play Takeovers

Additional Studio 40 Live and Recorded Segments

DestinationNEXT Community Assessment for a Strategic Roadmap (March 2018)

Condensed Vacation Planners in Four Languages: French, Spanish, German, Mandarin

RESULTS

2016 Tuolumne County Overall Tourism Stats

The preliminary 2016 Travel Impact Report by Dean Runyan Associates is produced annually for Visit California. In 2016 Tuolumne County saw an increase in visitor spending of 6.5% over the previous year. California's state average was 3.4%. This is a great indicator of increased visitation to Tuolumne County.

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|--|--|
| Total Direct Travel Spending: | \$230.1 million/4% increase over previous year |
| Tourism Industry Employment: | 2340 |
| <i>Government Revenue Generated by Tourism</i> | |
| Local Sales Tax Receipts: | \$7.6 million |
| State Sales Tax Receipts: | \$9.9 million |

**These statistics do not include spending or job generation by either Black Oak Casino Resort or by Chicken Ranch Casino as they fall under Government.*

Thank you!

