



Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau Business & Marketing Plan

Approvals

Marketing Committee: 10/10/18

Executive Committee: 10/17/18

Board of Directors: 10/24/18



EHVB Business & Marketing Plan

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Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau

Business & Marketing Plan

Introduction

The Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau Business & Marketing plan is the organization's roadmap, guiding the work and investments that will be executed on an ongoing basis. Each fiscal year, the plan will be updated to reflect changing market conditions, new opportunities and destination marketing innovations. Appended to the plan are the budget and goals for the current fiscal year., The plan outlines ways that the Bureau will continue to grow into an organization that is well equipped to execute a comprehensive, multi-channel marketing strategy that targets regional, national and international markets, and which provides destination marketing leadership to the many local organizations with which we partner.

As the only agency that provides a countywide platform for promoting all of Humboldt County, the Bureau targets domestic and international markets to position our destination as a premier travel brand to prospective visitors. Marketing the Humboldt-California's Redwood Coast brand is essential to ensuring that travel, tourism and hospitality continue to provide economic value to the bottom line of businesses and governments across Humboldt County.

Tourism is a significant economic engine for Humboldt County. According to the California state tourism office, in calendar year 2017 the industry was responsible for \$416 million in visitor spending and \$37 million in state and local tax revenues in Humboldt County. That influx of dollars supported jobs for more than 5,300 Humboldt County residents. Humboldt tourism has consistently outpaced surrounding destinations and has been one of the top California counties in tourism growth for years.

The Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau serves the county by growing inbound travel to increase visitor spending and tax revenues, while raising the overall profile of Eureka and Humboldt County around the world. Boosting tourism also encourages critical infrastructure improvements and attracts strategic investment and economic development in the county, while contributing to our enviable quality of life.

This document is an open atlas to our public-private partnership, whose shared goal is to build the Humboldt County tourism economy. It is a living, breathing plan that can always be improved upon. Constructive suggestions and creative ideas are always welcome.

Tony Smithers, Executive Director

Richard Stenger, Media & Marketing Director

Marc Rowley, Board President
EHVB Business & Marketing Plan

Aaron Ostrom, Marketing Chair

I. Executive Summary

The Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau is a 501c6 California nonprofit corporation formed in 1976 to market Humboldt County as a desirable tourism destination. We work closely with local governments, chambers, visitor centers and tourism businesses to drive visitation by leisure and business travelers. The Bureau's budget is primarily funded by the City of Eureka and County of Humboldt, matched by private investments from the lodging and visitor industries. For more information about the EHVB, go online at www.VisitRedwoods.com.

The Eureka-Humboldt Visitor Bureau marketing plan outlines key programs, audience outreach initiatives and tactical campaigns. New program elements are being activated to address new market segments and to expand global reach in key industry pillars such as outdoor, arts and culinary tourists. The need for collaboration with local and regional partners will increase as the Bureau broadens its content programming across regional and international markets.

EHVB Mission

The Bureau will develop and maintain marketing programs that keep Eureka-Humboldt top-of-mind as a premier travel destination, encouraging overnight stays, longer trips and repeat visits. The goal is to help the tourism industry, working with stakeholders and partners, grow to provide more jobs, economic activity and entrepreneurial opportunities for Humboldt County residents.

EHVB Vision

The Bureau will be the recognized source for Humboldt County destination marketing planning and implementation, while providing information and support to the travel and tourism industry, thereby maintaining Eureka-Humboldt's position as one of the world's preeminent travel and tourism destinations.

Objectives

With the primary objective of all destination marketing being "heads in beds," the Bureau will

strive to maintain and increase non-resident travel and spending in Eureka-Humboldt, especially during the shoulder seasons. The Bureau serves as the industry marketing leader for local businesses, chambers, visitor centers and governments that rely substantially on visitor spending. Working in collaboration with these and other partners, the Bureau will continue to provide a countywide platform with scalable marketing programs and unified messaging that each organization can leverage to broaden our overall reach to consumers. The following principles guide the program of work:

1. Utilize our expertise, budget and relationships to do what the industry cannot do for itself.
2. Deliver value to and collaborate with tourism-related businesses and organizations.
3. Support local communities in their efforts to improve the visitor experience and to promote their own special places in the Humboldt County narrative.
4. Build awareness and preference for the Eureka-Humboldt brand to stimulate travel across all market segments.
5. Leverage all assets and alliances to the benefit of Eureka-Humboldt travel and tourism.
6. Use key metrics and ROI to inform the strategic direction of the program of work.



II. Background Analysis

1. Destination Performance

In FY17, Bureau marketing generated more than **100 million marketing impressions**, helping the Humboldt tourism economy reach the following benchmarks:

- Total visitor spending in Humboldt was a record **\$416 million**, a 5 percent increase over CY16
- Countywide bed tax collection grew to **over \$6.8 million**
- The City of Eureka’s bed tax collections reached **over \$2.8 million**
- Unincorporated Humboldt bed tax collections were **more than \$1.7 million**
- Travel spending generated almost **\$37 million** in local and state tax receipts
- Tourism supported **5,300 jobs**, a 3 percent increase over cy16
- Our average annual room occupancy was **67 percent** (up 15% over 10 years)
- Our **average room rate of \$103** was a jump of nearly 5% over CY16
- **RevPAR** (Revenue per available room) of **\$69** was a 5 percent increase over CY16

Sources: Dean Runyan & Associates, Smith Travel Research, local municipal governments.

One of the benchmarks to compare Humboldt with our regional competitors is transient occupancy tax trends. In that regard, Humboldt stands out as a regional leader. In 2017, the county and its municipalities collected \$6.8M, an increase of 55 percent over the past decade. In contrast, respectively, Del Norte was up 48 percent, Mendocino 33 percent and Mariposa -- a destination with similar attributes as Humboldt -- 44 percent. *Source: Dean Runyan & Associates.*

2. Market Reach

Bureau marketing program measurement and performance results can be daunting. But closer examination using a broader audience construct — consumers, media and travel trade — brings our market reach into focus. A

broad range of global marketing activity across paid, owned, earned and trade initiatives delivered strong results in CY17, fueling inspiration and desire for the Redwood Coast/Humboldt as brand and travel experience. Here is the verifiable tracking. The actual numbers are likely much higher as much of the marketing footprint, e.g., earned online media, is difficult to quantify.

Print ad impressions:	22.7M
Online ad impressions:	25.3M
Direct to consumer: .	.73M
Bureau publications:	.35M
Earned media reach:	49M
Social media reach:	3.2M
Website visits:	2.0M
Total Market Reach:	103 Million

3. Media Matters

To maximize travel press coverage of the Redwood Coast/Humboldt, the Bureau hosted more than 50 travel journalists in CY2017, including writers, editors, photographers, videographers, bloggers and other digital influencers, with representatives from the following cities, states and countries: Oakland, Los Angeles, Oregon, New York, Texas, Missouri, Mexico, Australia, Austria, Japan, South Korea, United Kingdom. The conservative media reach of 49 million impressions has an advertising value of \$1.3M, that is, the cost to purchase the equivalent amount of editorial space.

4. More FY2017-2018 Highlights

In addition to the above destination performance metrics, we offer some major achievements of our marketing program this year:

Lonely Planet selects Redwood Coast top US destination

The Bureau worked extensively with Lonely Planet to prepare for the 2018 announcement. It assisted with research before the final selection, provided promotional Humboldt images and video,

coordinated an advance media trip for Lonely Planet staff, and organized the grand prize sweepstakes (see below). To help local businesses take advantage of the news, it provided promotional Lonely Planet's Best US Destination window decals and shared social media content. Moreover, the Bureau ensured that the content was primarily about Humboldt County.

Two Major Trip Sweepstakes generate leads

With Lonely Planet and the Save the Redwoods League, the Bureau co-sponsored an international and international contest to showcase Humboldt as a tourism destination, which results in direct communications with tens of thousands who signed up for the two promotions.

Eight full pages in the San Francisco Chronicle

This unprecedented amount of media placement in the Chron's travel section began years ago with a single pitch to the lead writer. It paid off with a destination visit this year, arranged by the Bureau and FlyHumboldt, to a secret location hidden in the forest; additional coverage and guidance provided by the Bureau, including a byline in the paper by staff, highlighting the county's oyster industry; and more.

Bigfoot App Creates Hairy Sensation

The Bureau partnered with Laan Labs, one of the top iPhone apps, to create a Face Swap Live option for the Patterson-Gimlin Bigfoot. The result? A \$4,000 investment generated tens of thousands of clicks to the Bureau's website.

III. EHVB Stakeholders, Funding and Priorities

As a destination marketing organization representing all of Humboldt County, the Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau's first mission is to influence travel intentions and to place Humboldt County at the top of the prospective visitor's set of destinations under consideration. For decades, the Bureau has worked hard to provide fair and balanced representation for all parts of the county, and this will continue to be our organization's ideal to be worked toward. However, political and economic realities have led us inexorably to prioritizing some stakeholders over others.

More than any other tourism stakeholder, this is true of the City of Eureka which has been the Bureau's most important supporter and funder for many years. Eureka is investing more than any other city to create a welcome, attractive and interesting destination experience, and we have put more resources into marketing Eureka than into all the other cities combined.

Similarly, the County of Humboldt has long provided strong financial support to the Bureau, and as a result our marketing program has included content and messages that will help fill lodgings in the County unincorporated areas. In addition, we provide special services to the County, including coordinating the Humboldt exhibit at the State Fair and managing pass-through funding to "gateway" communities. This funding, provided by the County to support the important role these gateways play in creating a welcoming first impression to Humboldt visitors—as well as orientation to all the experiences and attractions Humboldt has to offer—is passed through the Bureau budget and the Bureau provides a level of support and coordination to them.

At the instigation of these two main supporters of the Bureau, without whose funding we would cease to exist, we have taken the extraordinary measure of removing website hotel listings that are in cities which do not contribute to our destination marketing partnership. The Transient Occupancy

Tax is an important source of general fund revenues for local government, and it is not surprising that the County or a city which invests in the Bureau to grow tourism should not want to fund marketing which competes with its hotels and bed tax.

Bureau staff and board members are committed to restoration of our countywide ideal. We will continue to work toward having nonparticipating cities rejoin the destination marketing partnership by demonstrating the value of our marketing platform.

1. Member Businesses

Bureau members are, collectively, a critical stakeholder that not only provide a private match to our public funding, but which comprise an essential part of the visitor experience. The redwoods, however impressive, will not be remembered kindly if accommodations, dining and other attractions are not up to par. Beyond their role in the Humboldt tourism product, our members are also our marketing partners—providing content to populate our marketing messages, helping to host travel influencers, and directly investing in marketing elements such as publications, trade shows and cooperative ads. The Bureau values our members and will continue striving to provide value to them:

- Continually work to increase Bureau membership among all tourism and hospitality businesses.
- Develop more marketing partnership opportunities for Bureau members.
- Communicate with members about Bureau programs, successes and opportunities.
- Solicit input from members on Bureau programs and policies.
- Represent Bureau members across our platform as integral to the Humboldt visitor experience.
- Host an Annual Mixer of members and tourism stakeholders, at which the industry's accomplishments will be celebrated while staff and partner expertise will be shared.

To achieve the goals of marketing partnership opportunities, member communications and better destination management, the Bureau will change its format for partner communications from a quarterly newsletter to a MONTHLY bulletin containing news of interest to all tourism stakeholders. This will include bureau marketing activities and metrics, information about new businesses and attractions, and other items of interest to the industry.

In addition, the Bureau will communicate to its partners the entire year's schedule of marketing outreach at which they are invited to participate. When capacity for a particular event is limited, the spaces will be filled on a first-come basis.

And finally, the Bureau will take extra steps to communicate to all members the benefits they are receiving or are eligible for as a dues-paying Bureau member. This information will be included in the monthly bulletin as appropriate, and in all face-to-face meetings with bureau members.

To best serve the Bureau membership, staff will implement an annual schedule of one-on-one appointments with key member businesses to acquaint them with new programs and opportunities, and to gather input on the needs of the tourism & hospitality industries.

2. Humboldt Lodging Alliance

The relationship between the Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau and the Humboldt Lodging Alliance is threefold: first of all it is a contractual relationship in which the Visitors Bureau provides administrative services to HLA, including board governance, meeting and committee organization, corporate management, grant administration and oversight of the Misfit Agency, the marketing agency of record which created and continues to coordinate the “Follow the Magic” campaign. Secondly, it is a marketing partnership in which each organization’s activities are carefully coordinated—specifically, target markets, marketing channels and messaging are all designed to complement one another and contribute to a unified destination marketing program. And finally, the HLA has provided funding for special projects including Concierge Training and the Humboldt Adventure Guides.

This relationship will continue, with particular attention paid to:

- The Bureau will manage the updating of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance bylaws and/or the Management District Plan, coordinating the input of Civitas, Inc., the HLA Executive Committee, the HLA Board of Directors, and the approval vote by the HLA assessed businesses.
- The Bureau will expand our successful collaboration with the Misfit Agency for advertising on social media channels, in which the Bureau provided user profile data for its Facebook audience of nearly 50,000 followers, and access to its social media platforms.
- The Community Tourism grant program requires special attention, with \$1.7 million in grants awarded to Sequoia Park & Zoo for the Redwood Canopy Tour. This grant administration requires monitoring of the project, progress payments, and ongoing communication. Other committees/ jurisdictions of the HLA continue with their

grant programs for which the Bureau provides consultation and administration.

- A special emphasis has been placed on destination events by the HLA Board of Directors. These may include music festivals, sporting events or just about any event with the potential to attract out of town visitors in the shoulder and off seasons. The Bureau will assist in identifying event organizers who can be tapped to produce new events, in negotiating agreements with them, liaising between event organizers and the HLA board, providing technical assistance as needed, and coordinating event promotion between organizers, the Misfit Agency, and the Bureau.
- More than ever, the efforts of the Bureau and the Misfit Agency need to be closely coordinated to ensure there is no duplication of effort, and to achieve maximum leverage between the various campaign elements. The use of common branding has done much to harmonize the different programs; we will collaborate even more closely on campaign themes, messaging, imagery, media and target markets.
- At the specific request of Supervisor Bohn and with the agreement of the HLA Executive Committee, the HLA will likely be funding a new County presentation at the State Capital Building. The bureau will provide creativity, coordination, supervision and administration for this project.

3. Destination Management

As many destination marketing organizations are finding, the role of the DMO is expanding beyond its own marketing mission to concern itself with the coordination of destination marketing being carried out by other entities; with the development of new attractions and experiences in the destination, and with the full spectrum of the visitor experience, touching on concierge training, customer service and strategies to inform in-destination visitors about what to see and do (and how to get there). In the full sense of the word, marketing includes the processes of product development and delivery.

The Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau has of a certainly found its role expanding and fully qualifies for the title DMMO—destination marketing **and management** organization.

The Bureau is a member of a destination marketing coalition of Humboldt County organizations, and is uniquely positioned and qualified to provide leadership and support to its partners who share the goal of building Humboldt’s tourism economy. This partnership is largely informal, but is nonetheless of critical importance in leveraging the resources of each organization synergistically. The combined results of this coalition will then prove to be greater than what would be achieved were each to work in isolation. The key organizations in this coalition and their respective roles are:

City of Eureka is actively developing itself as a compelling destination, with investments in trails, the zoo, public art, events, signage and more (as well as funding the lion’s share of destination marketing).

Eureka Visitors Center along with Humboldt Made provides visitor services in

the heart of Old Town, organizes events such as Friday Night Market, leads on cruise ship hospitality and is an active promoter of Eureka events and content through social media.

Eureka Main Street organizes events and works to improve the visitor experience in Old Town Eureka.

The Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce and its Tourism Committee are advocates for increasing Eureka’s stature and services as a tourism destination.

Redwood Region Economic Development Commission, apart from working to expand air service to Humboldt County, is working to coordinate social media posting and sharing among Humboldt County boosters.

All Chambers of Commerce are involved in destination marketing through local event sponsorship, destination improvements in their respective communities, and social media postings.

Southern Humboldt Business & Visitors Bureau provides specific marketing of Southern Humboldt attractions and in particular has embraced cannabis tourism.

The Humboldt Lodging Alliance, through the Misfit Agency, conducts a half-million dollar campaign that complements the Bureau’s marketing platform and is developed in close coordination with it.

The Bureau will implement strategies to communicate and coordinate with these destination marketing partners, including a dedicated Facebook page and regular meetings.

4. Partners

strategic local, regional, state and national partners. Together as allies, we will extend our

To share our story most effectively, the Bureau will continue to strengthen relationships with key marketing messages, leverage greater spending power and make better decisions that benefit the Humboldt tourism economy. We're honored to count the following organizations among our working associates:

City of Eureka
County of Humboldt
Humboldt Lodging Alliance
Humboldt Made
Fly Humboldt
Humboldt/Del Norte Film Commission
Visit California
Society of American Travel Writers
Outdoor Writers of California
Save the Redwoods League
Redwood National & State Parks
Eureka Visitor Center
Eureka Main Street
Humboldt Bay Harbor District
North Coast Tourism Council
Humboldt State University
Eureka Chamber of Commerce
Arcata Chamber of Commerce
Fortuna Chamber of Commerce
Ferndale Chamber of Commerce
Orick Chamber of Commerce
Trinidad Chamber of Commerce
Willow Creek Chamber of Commerce
Southern Humboldt Business & Visitors Bureau
Garberville Chamber of Commerce
Sequoia Park & Zoo
California State Parks
Humboldt Redwoods State Park
Six Rivers National Forest
Southern Oregon Visitors Association
San Francisco Travel
Bay Area Travel Writers
Bureau of Land Management
Crescent City/Del Norte Chamber of Commerce
California Travel Association
California Lodging Industry Association
California Association of Boutique & Breakfast Inns
Shasta-Cascade Wonderland Association

IV. The Marketing Environment

1. Trends and Implications

When creating the strategic framework for Eureka-Humboldt destination marketing, the Bureau is factoring in the latest research on demographics, visitor behavior and technology, some of which includes:

- **Economy:** Declining unemployment and increases in personal disposable income are projected as we move into 2019—all important factors in travel demand. Despite gradual improvements in the economy, consumers are still cost-conscious when making decisions, so value is an important part of messaging.
- **Demographics:** Increasingly, baby boomers will move out of the high-income brackets and will not be replaced in the same numbers by the next generations. With these shifts, all generations will contribute to economic recovery. Therefore, the Bureau will focus programming on each distinct generation.
- **Repeat Visitation:** Research shows that frequent travelers are often motivated by visiting friends and relatives (VFR), using their own experiences with family to plan travel. It's important to engage these travelers, resident friends and family members (who act as reliable and trusted sources for other travelers) to become brand advocates.
- **Technology:** Rapidly evolving technologies are changing the way consumers access information and make their decisions. Global Internet penetration is reaching critical mass in many markets. At the same time, how consumers are accessing the Internet is changing, with mobile Internet users now surpassing desktop users. Given these trends, it's critical to continue developing accessible and diverse content that can engage consumers in multiple ways.

Internet consumption is going portable and will continue to fragment. The Bureau will make its content accessible across a range of devices, and live in a range of places, so it can be relevant to users when and where they need it. Social media is driving Internet growth, engagement and preference—via its push and pull of content generation and consumption. The Bureau will identify ways to engage social media users in the Eureka, Humboldt and Redwood Coast brands, encouraging user feedback and content-generation to grow the brands.

2. Market Insights

a. Interests and Demographics

International and non-California guests spend more money per capita and stay longer than California guests, but the majority of travelers to Humboldt come from in-state, in particular, the greater Bay Area. To gain strategic insights to reach them, the Bureau commissioned an extensive survey of past and potential visitors from Northern California. Some key findings:

1. Nearly all Northern California leisure travelers (77.2%) are “Interested” or “Very interested” in visiting rural destinations in the northern part of California. The remaining 22.8 percent of respondents are either neutral or uninterested in these destinations.
2. Northern California leisure travelers value scenic beauty, relaxing ambiance and affordability most when evaluating regional rural destinations to visit. Nine in ten (89.0%) consider scenic beauty as either “Important,” or “Very Important” to their interest in visiting destinations in rural Northern California. A “relaxing ambiance” (85.0%) and “affordability” (83.6%) are similarly important. “Safety,” “lots to see and do,” “coastal views or beaches” and “scenic drives” were also noted as critical destination attributes.
3. Unaided awareness of Humboldt County is relatively weak amongst Northern California leisure travelers. The destinations with the highest top-of-mind awareness are Napa or Sonoma Wine Country (24.9%), Yosemite (15.8%) and Lake Tahoe (14.0%). Just 5.6 percent specifically stated Humboldt County (although, in total, 16.7 percent mentioned either Humboldt County or some comprising destination such as Eureka and/or Avenue of the Giants).
4. Regional travelers report that scenic beauty, redwood trees and peaceful serenity are the strongest impressions they have about Humboldt County. When asked in a open-ended question how they would describes Humboldt County, its natural beauty, redwoods and peaceful serenity are all top of mind amongst regional travelers.
5. Humboldt County’s association with natural beauty and serenity were also strongly expressed by Northern California travelers in a close-ended association question. When examined in the broader context of all destination associations, Humboldt County’s connection with counter-culture elements such as hippies appears to be rather unimportant.
6. While Humboldt County, Mendocino County and the Lake Tahoe area are all perceived as beautiful, Humboldt County appears to own the mind-space for redwoods, as Mendocino County does for coastal beaches and Lake Tahoe does for casinos and winter sports.

Other conclusions in the report:

- The majority were interested primarily in seeing the redwoods.
- Most would only do short-term planning, between two and five weeks.
- The most popular offline planning resources were opinions of friends and family, travel and lifestyle magazines, commercial guidebooks and newspaper travel sections.
- The most popular online planning resources were travel agencies, destination websites, mapping sites, consumer review sites, hotel websites, discount sites, and lifestyle/travel media and blogs.
- As for specific demographics, those most likely to visit Humboldt tended to be older, more likely to be married, less ethnically diverse, and less affluent.

Source: Destination Analysts Humboldt Brand Development Report: 2013

An addendum report shed more light on potential guests and their habits, such as:

- Amongst regional travelers, Humboldt County is seen as a 3-4 day trip that is planned 1-2 months out. The travelers interviewed look at a trip to Humboldt County as an extended weekend getaway.
- Cabins, camping, bed & breakfasts are the lodging options most in line with experience sought from Humboldt County and thus most appealing to potential visitors.
- One of the key motivating factors for considering a rural destination is an understanding of what is truly unique about the area—“what I can’t see or do anywhere else.”
Source: Humboldt County Brand Research: Qualitative Study of Traveling Consumers. 2013

b. Web Analytics

While users of our website don’t provide exact data for those who visit Humboldt, analytics of their interests can shed light on what motivates and interests our potential guests. Among the insights among users to our site, VIsitRedwoods.com, in FY2017:

Top Sources of Traffic by City

San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, San Jose, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, New York

Top Pages Visited on the Site

Home Page, Drive Thru Trees, Request a Map & Guide, Bigfoot Found in the Redwoods, Tour the Avenue of the Giants, Ten Must See Redwood Trees, Explore the Redwoods, Lodging Page, Explore Redwood National Park, Fern Canyon in Prairie Creek Redwoods SP

Top Sources of Traffic

Organic Search, Paid Search, Referral, Direct, Social, Display Ads, Email, Other

Top Google Keywords

redwood national park, redwood forest, red wood forest, +redwood +park, avenue of the giants, redwood tree forest, +redwoods +national +park, giant redwoods, redwood natinal park, +redwood +forest

c. Market Segments

- Drive Market Leisure Travel
- Regional Leisure Travel
- Western Leisure Travel
- National Leisure Travel
- International Leisure Travel
- In-Destination Leisure & Business Travelers
- Meeting & Conference Business
- Retreat, Reunion & Incentive Travel
- Group Tour Business

- Wedding Business
- Sports & Event Business

Special User Groups & Niche Markets

- Eco-Tourists
- Arts & Culture Aficionados
- Paddle Sports
- Hiking Enthusiasts
- Cannabis Fans
- Motorcycle Touring
- Fishing & Hunting
- Culinary Explorers
- Car Clubs
- Birdwatchers
- Bicycle (touring & singletrack)
- History Buffs

d. Market Composition

Who is coming to Humboldt County, and Why?

1. What are today's reasons for travel? (Bureau survey)

To visit family and friends:	78 percent
To visit beaches or lakes:	76 percent
To visit small towns or rural areas:	67 percent
To visit parks & forests:	53 percent
To visit historical sites:	48 percent
To engage in outdoor recreation:	46 percent

2. The growth of weekend travel (TIA survey)

Half of U.S. adults take at least one weekend trip per year. Of these:

- Thirty-three percent visit a city/urban destination
- Twenty-six percent visit a small town/rural destination
- Sixteen percent visit the ocean or the beach
- Ten percent visit the mountains

3. Humboldt County Visitors (Bureau survey)

- There has been a slight increase in CA average party size, up to 2.4 people, BUT IN HUMBOLDT the average party is 3.6 people.
- 33 percent of Humboldt's visitors are traveling with children
- The average overnight stay in Humboldt is 2.7 nights

3. Marketing Metrics

The Bureau places great importance on research and evaluation, which are essential in developing an effective strategic marketing plan. To measure the success of its brand advertising campaigns, the VisitRedwoods.com website and various other marketing channels, the Bureau, often with third-party vendors, evaluates the awareness of each campaign and marketing element, how each influences consumers' perceptions of Humboldt County as a travel destination, how each channel impacts eventual travel to and spending in the county, and campaign ROI. Depending on the marketing campaign or channel, the following metrics may be collected and calculated:

- Marketing Impressions
- Cost per Impression
- Clicks
- Click-Throughs
- Inquiries & Fulfillments
- Cost per Inquiry
- Website Traffic
- Page Views, Time on Site
- Website Lodging Activity (Conversion)
- Social Media Followers
- Social Media Engagements (Likes, Posts & Shares)
- Media Placements
- Advertising Equivalent Value
- Travel Trade Inquiries and Appointments
- Leads produced for suppliers
- Supplier RFPs and contracts enabled
- Travel trade room nights generated
- Fam Tour participants hosted
- Direct (personal) consumer interactions

4. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- The Redwoods are a world-famous icon and a lifetime “bucket list” item
- Endorsements include Lonely Planet’s Best US Destination, Eureka a State Cultural Arts District
- Scenic beauty and extensive outdoor recreation assets
- A rural destination with peace, quiet and safety
- Location on Route 101/Coast corridor
- Long-standing, active members and staff with institutional knowledge
- Visitor industry is maturing — more professionalism, more cooperation, bigger thinking
- Cool summer temperatures

Weaknesses

- Difficulty of access — we are not an “impulse trip”
- Lack of major tourist attraction hubs such as theme parks, aquarium
- A wet season, with perceptions of unfavorable climate
- Persistent high gasoline prices
- Visitor services staff tend to have poor local knowledge
- Many of the best attractions not visible/promoted from Hwy 101
- Funding for tourism promotion has been inconsistent
- Limited air transportation
- Lack of keystone conference center and sporting venue

Opportunities

- Growing population of Bay Area, Sacramento, Redding, Sonoma markets
- Crowding of neighboring destinations—we’re the relief valve
- Research shows visitors are seeking authentic hands-on experiences
- Decline in long-distance air travel may help us capture new market share
- Regional DMO partners ready, willing and able to work with us
- Renewed enthusiasm for driving vacations; drive time increased to 5-6 hours
- Growth of Internet travel planning puts us on an equal footing with competitors
- Cannabis tourism potential market development

Threats

- Scenic destinations have a lot of competition in California
- Local news stories may cause negative impressions
- Geopolitical factors may reduce international travel
- Local government may further curtail funding support
- Rising fuel costs may curtail auto travel
- Direct competitors are good marketers and are well funded
- Perception of panhandling, crime and unsafe environment in cities

V. Marketing Objectives & Strategy

1. Primary Objectives

As the primary role of the Bureau is to reach potential customers outside of Humboldt, we will continue to focus on reaching consumers who will travel, spend the night, and shop, eat and play in Humboldt. Toward that end, virtually all of our advertising spends, whether in social media, other digital media or print media, are in platforms that reach outside of Humboldt County.

A secondary role is to reach those same guests once they are in Humboldt and provide them with information and inspiration to stay longer. This market the Bureau will continue to reach through the A) Referring in-county guests to local visitor centers B) Distributing Bureau literature throughout the county, and C) Refining our website to its two-tiered mission: Attracting new guests and retaining those already here.

The Bureau marketing program is guided by a set of key marketing objectives. Developed as part of an ongoing marketing planning process through which bureau staff and industry leaders have guided the bureau for decades, these objectives have been refined to reflect the current landscape and planned program of work:

a. Expand the Eureka-Humboldt Brand and Marketing Platform

Take advantage of the Redwood Coast’s position as an international icon to create desire for the Eureka-Humboldt travel experience, and provide a platform that supports local business.

STRATEGIES

Paid & Earned Media
Partnerships & Co-op Marketing
Research

METRICS

Marketing Impressions
Incremental Travel & Spend
Co-op Partners Spends & Reach

b. Grow Visitation and Travel Spend

Increase conversion of potential visitors to actual visitors with compelling content, multiple calls to action, and tactics to increase length of stay and in-county spending.

STRATEGIES

Website & Social Media
Supplier Offers
In-County Communications

METRICS

Unique visitors, Lodging clicks
Clicks and click-throughs
RevPAR, TOT collections

c. Deepen Consumer Engagement

Strengthen relationships with consumers to provide inspiration and entice sharing while also serving to connect travelers to best-in-class resources (both industry partners and third parties) to facilitate planning and booking.

STRATEGIES

Content Distribution
Digital Owned Platforms
Social Media

METRICS

Content Reach/Impressions
Followers & Interactions
Buzz & Sentiment

2. Primary Strategies

- a. Eureka-Humboldt Branding—Build a regional, national and international brand platform that goes beyond California gateways and showcases Humboldt as a premiere state destination.
- b. Cooperative Marketing—Create programs that generate economies of scale both domestically and internationally that allow the industry to provide product messaging and retail calls to action.
- c. Research Platform—Share Bureau research products to support the internal plans and cooperation of the county tourism industry.
- d. Integrated Media—The Eureka-Humboldt brand will continue to focus on proven programs such as brand advertising (online & offline) that utilize layered messaging and media.
- e. Engagement—Deepen relationships with consumers to move beyond inspiration and planning, and engage potential Humboldt visitors during every stage of the travel cycle.
- f. International—Welcome inbound visitors from international markets, creating awareness of Humboldt County and the California redwoods, and inspiring the desire to visit.
- g. Advertising—In high-volume/high-yield markets (primary markets), conduct brand advertising to protect Humboldt’s market position.
- h. PR/Travel Trade—Maintain Humboldt’s presence through B2B relationships (travel trade, airlines, media) across all target markets, with particular emphasis on emerging markets where advertising resources are limited or not available.
- i. Content—Bring our brand to life online through the use of compelling content and video assets.
- j. Distribution—Distribute content through multiple channels (publications, website, e-mail, mobile, social and direct) to reach customers when and how they want across the travel cycle.
- k. Social Media—Develop programs to inspire frequent visitors to share their Humboldt experiences and visual content to influence others to visit.

3. Marketing Core Tactics

Key marketing for FY18/19 will remain consistent with programs of recent years. The Bureau will continue to focus on the overall Redwood Coast/Humboldt brand programming and further develop content distribution and consumer engagement platforms in paid and owned media programs. New program execution to achieve the core program objectives will include:

Innovation—The Bureau will continue to focus on the mobile platform and working directly with consumers to upload content and increase interaction/engagement. Our content will continue

evolving to appeal to different target audiences. The organization will work to deepen technology partnerships and reach consumers during the inspiration and planning phases of the purchase funnel. The Bureau will also include a larger component of user generated content and consumer-to-consumer (C2C) engagement programs.

International—In addition to core regional markets such as San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Oregon and Washington, the organization will continue to expand Eureka-Humboldt content offerings to reach international markets such as Canada, Mexico, Great Britain, China and India. The Bureau will work with partners like Visit California, Redwood National Park, Save-the-Redwoods League and the North Coast Tourism Council to evolve both localized content and specific regional content across all platforms. Content partnerships will be explored to increase the Bureau’s reach.

Influencers—The Bureau will focus on regional and global influencers of the Redwood Coast-Humboldt brand and recruit spokespeople willing to tweet, post and write about us to their fans and followers. We will work with influencers across paid, owned and earned channels and will further coordinate efforts to secure local voices supporting Eureka-Humboldt messaging.

4. Branding & Messaging Strategy

Core Brand—From 2001 until early 2013, the brand under which the Bureau marketed Humboldt County was California’s Redwood Coast. This moniker encapsulated the three most distinctive features of our destination. It placed us in California, one of the world’s most valuable travel brands; it communicated that we are a coastal destination, which bestows upon us many built-in favorable expectations; most importantly, it claimed ownership of the Redwood experience—an international icon.

With the launching of a new marketing campaign by the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, a new brand was developed: Humboldt. The Bureau successfully lobbied to have “California’s Redwood Coast” included as a subordinate message. Then, to avoid the confusion of competing brands in the marketplace, the Bureau adopted the new branding for all of its marketing programs.

Today, all destination marketing for Humboldt County appears under the distinctive “Humboldt/California’s Redwood Coast” logo and branding. This includes the “Follow the Magic” campaign conducted by the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, which is an image campaign designed to build awareness of Humboldt as a truly special place of spectacular beauty and magical possibilities. The Bureau also uses some generic image-building messages, but is more likely to promote specific attractions and activities. Most of all, Bureau marketing continues to present the Redwood forests of Humboldt County as a world-class, one-of-a-kind destination that just cannot be experienced anywhere else.

Over the years, many tourism stakeholders and special interests have lobbied for the Bureau to make some other attraction or destination attribute the topic of our marketing messages, or some of them at least. While we have endeavored to give these other attractions strong representation (and our files are stuffed with advertising, social media posts and extensive publicity we have generated for them), we have always kept our redwood messaging first and foremost. As this is the central decision of our messaging strategy, it deserves some explanation:

1. The California Redwoods are a world-famous icon, with built-in name recognition and many positive associations. In terms of travel inspiration and competitive differentiation, our work is already half done because throughout the world the redwoods are known and considered a must-see attraction. For many years our goal has not been so much to sell the redwoods as it has been to create the unquestioned association of Humboldt County with the California redwoods—to position our destination as the TRUE home of the redwoods.
2. This position is strongly supported by data such as search keywords, clicks, likes and shares of redwood related content. Messages about the big trees automatically gain more traction than messages about other destination assets. We are very aware that this could be perceived as the result of our preference for redwood content, but the data holds true outside of our marketing platform. That is, there is independently a strong demand for redwood travel information. We see it as an obvious imperative to fulfill that demand and of all destinations we are the most qualified to do so.
3. The more we are familiar with competing destinations and how they develop their branding and messaging, the more we realize how lucky we are to have the redwoods. Destination brands are developed around the promise of the experiences those destinations offer. Our competitors offer many interesting and pleasant experiences, but these experiences seldom rise above the marketplace noise to stand out as truly exceptional. Brands and messages, therefore, tend to be generic, unfocused and a little bland. They often fall into the marketing trap of trying to be all things to all people. Humboldt County, however, enjoys the rare advantage of a truly unique experience in our ancient redwood forests. Unfortunately, there are a few other destinations with pretensions to redwoods, and our core challenge, therefore, is to educate, persuade and convince the market that the Humboldt County redwood experience is superior to that of any other destination. Since it actually is by numerous measurements, we have always considered this challenge achievable and have made considerable progress toward meeting it.
4. We are aware that redwoods alone do not a destination make, so while redwoods may be the leading message of our advertising and public relations, they are by no means the only one. Numerous other destination attributes, attractions, events and experiences all feed into our marketing platforms. These may be of general interest to the travelling public, or focused with laser precision on a special user group or niche market. In the Earned Media section of this plan, some of the campaigns planned for the coming year are laid out. These topics and stories—our “content”—will also inform our advertising, social media and other marketing channels. But they will all have something in common: the setting for every Humboldt County story will be in the magical forests of the Redwood Coast.

VI. Marketing Channels

To achieve our core objectives, the Bureau will include the following marketing channels:

1. Google Ads (paid search)

The Bureau will continue to work to make its largest marketing spend provide the best ROI for the Eureka-Humboldt tourism economy. To achieve this, the Bureau has partnered with Logical Positions, one of the most respected digital ad agencies. Already the partnership, which started in 2018, has resulted in the Bureau's best cost-per-click benchmark in years, less than 25 cents cost per click.

It should be noted that while visual advertising has its role, search engine text advertising remains the single highest source of paid traffic to the Bureau website. And of those who click on the ads, more than 30 percent will then go to lodging-related content on our website.

2. Bing (paid search)

Given that the c.p.c. with Google Ads has dropped considerably with our Logical Positions partnership, the Bureau will use the savings to expand its digital ad outreach to the second most popular search engine. In the past, the Bureau has been hesitant to doing paid ads in Bing, but given that its search traffic has increased to about 30 percent of the market in recent years, that much of its user base doesn't overlap with Google, and that the starting cpc is much lower, the Bureau will launch a Bing campaign and monitor its results.

3. Content Discovery

One of the most effective online ad spends in recent years for the Bureau has been via a partnership with PulsePoint, which distributed Bureau advertorial content on major national online news and travel sites, primarily targeting users in the West. However, given the escalating costs of working with such a vendor, the Bureau is eliminating the middle man and working directly with the top performing ad platforms themselves, such as Taboola and Yahoo Gemini, to deliver the same content to hundreds of thousands of potential guests each week at a fraction of the cost. The Bureau will continue to monitor the new direct advertising campaigns and modify them based on the effectiveness of each.

4. Facebook

With more than 50,000 likes and an audience reach of more than 2M a year, the Bureau's Facebook page is a popular place for people to hang out and enthuse all things Humboldt. The Bureau will continue to build its base through the following paid strategies, which primarily reach non-Humboldt audiences: A) boosted posts B) managing event ad campaigns C) audience outreach campaigns. Moreover, the Bureau will continue to coordinate with the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, whose ad agency is operating a branded Facebook ad campaign, also for non-Humboldt audiences, via the Bureau's Facebook page.

5. Instagram

The Bureau's Instagram base has tripled in recent years to more than 6,000 followers, a reflection in part of the success of its ongoing Instagram advertising campaign which, like the Facebook one, is geared primarily to reaching non-Humboldt audiences. The bureau will continue this campaign as well as its non-paid Instagram campaigns, details of which are in the social media section of this marketing plan.

6. TripAdvisor

The Bureau has worked closely with the world's number one source of online travel information, ensuring that Humboldt content is the best it can be and that links back to the Bureau site are prominent. Toward that end, as a paid advertiser, the bureau has in recent years sponsored the Eureka and Redwood National Park pages, making sure that favorable content and images are first and foremost, as well as the Humboldt County page, which was created from scratch at the behest of the Bureau. Moreover, the Bureau convinced TripAdvisor to change the listed address of Redwood National Park from Crescent City in Del Norte County to Orick in Humboldt County. Last year, the Bureau TripAdvisor campaign included Humboldt ads on the pages of competing destinations, such as Mt. Shasta and Mendocino County, and ads on mobile platforms. The result: Bureau content on TripAdvisor generated more than 1M impressions. The Bureau will continue this relationship and, should the budget permit, expand its advertising to additional pages representing other destinations.

7. Print

Given the growing dominance of digital advertising, which allows the Bureau to target and track the ROI of its spends more effectively, print media has declined as a Bureau priority. However the Bureau has found it worthwhile to pursue travel magazine spends in some cases, and will continue to do so should quality opportunities arise. They include A) remnant sales in which the Bureau negotiates ads a fraction of the retail cost, B) legacy media with audiences for which Humboldt content is highly appealing, such as Sunset, Via and National Geographic Travel and C) Co-op opportunities with local partners, such as the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, to defray the costs of advertising.

8. Other Outreach

In addition to organic content on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, the Bureau will expand its posting on Pinterest, an unheralded but top-performing source of referrals to VisitRedwoods.com, and will boost top performing posts on Facebook to reach larger audiences. Moreover, the Bureau will upgrade visual resources to make them both more accessible and attractive to the media and public. Initiatives will include:

- Partner with Eureka Visitor Center to commission Leon Villiagomez to expand photo resources
- Leverage the HLA video library to a much greater extent
- Technological solution for hosting and sharing visual content
- More social media integration to share consumer content

VII. Publications

The dominance of digital marketing channels notwithstanding, print publications still play a critical role in both travel inspiration/planning and in-county visitor information and referral. The Bureau's published products include:

1. **Redwood Coast Travel Guide**—advertising supported and presented in a proven brochure/magazine format, this comprehensive guide to the county is our primary fulfillment piece sent to visitors requesting information. With a print run of a quarter million each year, this piece is also distributed widely throughout Northern California in the Certified Folder system, targeting travelers at home and on the road with the Humboldt-Redwood Coast brand.
2. **Tear-off Map**—This has proven to be a popular tool in visitor centers and at the hotel front desk, to which it is provided in pads of 50. With 25 top attractions suggested, the map is a quick and easy tool for concierge staff to recommend what to see and do, and how to get there.

3. **Humboldt Adventure Guides**—This set of 12 topical brochures in a custom redwood rack was funded in 2017 by the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, and has proven to be popular beyond all expectations. For 2018-2019 a reprint of all 12 brochures made updates and additions, and a contract with Certified Folder for rack service and maintenance was put in place to ensure availability to the travelling public. Some 70 of these racks have been placed throughout Humboldt County at locations with high visitor traffic.

All of the above publications are available for digital download at www.VisitRedwoods.com.

VIII. Earned Media (Publicity)

Given the limited resources of the Bureau compared to other California destinations, stories in the travel media generated through Bureau efforts are essential for its outreach. Whether through direct pitches, familiarization trips, relationship building, fact checking or content sharing, such as videos and photos, the Bureau will continue to ensure that Eureka and Humboldt are shown in the best light possible in the regional, state, national and international media.

1. Goals

Among the highlights in CY18 was the naming of the Humboldt Redwood Coast as the Top US Destination by Lonely Planet, a coordinated effort between the Bureau and the LP editors that generated more than **one billion** impressions worldwide. Another was the publication of eight-pages of editorial content devoted to Humboldt in the San Francisco Chronicle Travel Section, the end result of a bureau pitch, worth an estimated \$450,000 or more in comparable advertising space. Building on this momentum, the Bureau in FY19 will:

- Target key regional travel editors and writers as well as key regional digital influencers.
- Expand its world footprint through more FAM trips with international media
- Attend media receptions hosted by the state tourism office to showcase Eureka and Humboldt
- Further develop relationships with key figures in Bay Area, state and national travel media associations

2. Key Media Campaigns

The Bureau will continue to promote key Humboldt destinations, such as redwood parks, Eureka, Humboldt Bay and the Lost Coast to the media, as well as timely topics such as:

Save the Redwoods League Turns 100

The premier non-profit dedicated to the big trees considers Humboldt Redwoods State and Redwood National and State Parks its crown jewels. The more we promote this celebration, which includes numerous events in Humboldt, the more we promote our destination as the top redwood experience.

The Women Who Saved the Woods

While Save the Redwoods officially started in 1918 in San Francisco, it was women in Humboldt County who were instrumental in first raising awareness and preserving old growth redwoods in Northern California. In 1919, these unheralded heroes began purchasing land to save the most amazing stands of redwoods, here in Humboldt. We will work to promote this historic centennial.

Redwood National Park Turns 50

Home of the world's tallest trees, an international biosphere reserve and a UNESCO world heritage site, RNP will celebrate its golden anniversary with many events in the park and beyond. The Bureau is partnering with the park and businesses to bring media to here to cover this semi-centennial.

Eureka, an Arts Mecca

With the accolade of being named a state cultural district, along with the growth of a burgeoning arts scene, illustrated by the new Friday Night Markets and inaugural Street Art Festival, Eureka in 2018 is coming into its own as a cultural destination. The Bureau will work with partners such as the city of Eureka, the Eureka Visitor Center, Eureka Main Street and the Ink People, and build on past media work highlighting the city arts and reach out to the travel media to encourage them to visit during these and other cultural events.

More In the Works

Depending on media interest and strategic opportunities "on the ground," the Bureau will mobilize any number of other campaigns, which may include but not be limited to: The Patterson Gimlin Bigfoot Turns 50, the future Redwood Canopy Walk in Sequoia Park, the designation of two coastal National Monuments in Humboldt County, and the proposed Great Redwood Trail, to transverse much of Northern Coastal California.

IX. Direct to Consumer

Within our primary market area (drive market), we have found direct to consumer marketing to be a productive channel with good ROI. Exhibiting at consumer travel shows, home & garden shows and other events allows us to make a personal invitation to thousands of qualified, targeted consumers who frequently have a shorter planning window than generic consumers. That is, they are receptive to visiting soon, often to experience an upcoming event. These shows also provide an opportunity for primary market research and "feeling the pulse" of the consumers most likely to visit Humboldt County. In Fiscal Year 18/19 we will:

1. Attend four consumer shows in Northern California (Sacramento, Bay Area and Santa Rosa).
2. Attend a consumer travel show in Southern California to promote the new direct flight.
3. Invite Bureau partners to exhibit along with us at these shows.
4. Collect email addresses from those who wish to receive our e-newsletter.
5. Conduct sweepstakes for Humboldt travel packages at each show.
6. Network with travel trade and travel media who attend these consumer shows.

The Bureau's direct-to-consumer channel also includes walk-in visitors to our office, who are provided with local information and a referral to the Eureka Visitor Center, as well as travelers who seek information from us by phone call and email. Each of these inquiries are fielded by experienced staff members who know Humboldt County inside and out, and appropriate referrals are made.

The direct-to-consumer channel also embraces our fulfillment program, the core of which is travel guide requests through our website or through an advertising reader response program. These requests are processed into our inquiry database and the fulfillment is farmed out to our mailing house partner, NorCal Presort. Specialized and urgent requests for visitor information are handled in-house with custom selections of visitor information to fulfill specific interests, and first-class mailing of these fulfillment packets.

X. Website

The Bureau's website consistently attracts as many as two million visitors a year, more than a third-of whom, based on Google Analytics, go to a lodging-related page, one of the primary goals of the site. Accessing lodging information demonstrates strong travel intentions, so this is counted as a "conversion" of a website visitor to an actual visitor. In October 2017, the site re-launched with a completely revamped design and new URL, VisitRedwoods.com. While a drop in traffic took place after the changes, as was expected due to SEO issues related to new site designs and web addresses, the Bureau traffic began to pick up within a few months.

To take advantage of the more robust content management system behind the site, and an array of new design features available at the front of it, the Bureau's goal is for traffic to reach and then surpass its average monthly user level within a year of launch.

Among the goals for the website are:

- Increase the conversion rate for site visitors, so that more go to lodging-related pages.
- Reach and surpass the average site traffic at time of reboot (October 2017).
- Improve search engine optimization so that Bureau content appears at or near the top of search results for Redwoods, Humboldt, Eureka and other travel destination keywords.
- Promote seasonal specials for lodging and other partners.
- Continue to improve the new site through better content, media, and organization, e.g.
 - More promotions of events
 - More posted press releases
 - Expand original content, e.g., photos, videos
 - Improve image galleries for media, public
- Increase user engagement on the site in general and for Humboldt campaigns in particular, such as the Humboldt Sweet Spots, the Bigfoot App, and the Carson Mansion Video Promo.
- Continue to grow the Bureau's e-newsletter list, currently at 15,000 Humboldt enthusiasts.
- Showcase Bureau partners and their campaigns, e.g., Eureka as a cultural arts mecca.

A key feature of the website which contributes to conversion is our "faux booking engine" which provides the look and feel of a familiar booking tool such as Travelocity or Hotels.com, but which feeds directly to the booking pages of member lodging properties. While chamber of commerce and destination websites on the whole contribute very little to room reservations, the Bureau's "booking engine" together with our exceptionally strong site traffic has consistently provided a valuable source of bookings to our lodging members, usually among their top ten booking sources, and which moreover is at full rack rate without commissions or discounts.

XI. Special Campaigns and Markets

Whether through earned media, social media or other marketing channels, the Bureau will work specifically to focus on the following in FY19:

Sequoia Park & Zoo

The Bureau is committed to supporting Sequoia Park and Zoo as it upgrades its facilities in the coming years, in particular, the Redwood Canopy Walk. When it opens, the eyes of the world will be on the Eureka attraction as the newest and most exciting old growth redwoods experience. This tremendous opportunity will create a global glow effect — much like Lonely Planet designation of the Redwoods Coast as the top U.S. destination in 2018 – and allow the Bureau to leverage the attention through specific Eureka and Humboldt-related messaging.

Fly Humboldt

Since the launch of direct flights between Humboldt and LAX in June 2017, the Bureau has been committed to helping Fly Humboldt fill the incoming planes with tourists from our second biggest market after San Francisco. Current and future outreach include: 1) Identifying and inviting key travel media and digital influencers from the Los Angeles market on FAM trips to promote our destination and direct flights as the method to get here. 2) Do specific outreach in Los Angeles, including attendance at the VisitCalifornia media reception and the Los Angeles Adventure Travel Show.

Events Micro-Campaigns

Building on years of experience, the Bureau will continue to provide its services, gratis, to manage targeted advertising and media campaigns for seasonal events in Humboldt County, often in conjunction with the Humboldt Lodging Alliance community funds for financial support. In recent years, for clients as diverse as at the Trinidad Clam Beach Run, the Eureka Jazz Festival, Godwit Days, and the Trinidad Bay Arts & Music Fest, Bureau-led campaigns have generated hundreds of thousands of social media impressions, thousands of clicks and prominent earned media in targeted California media outlets. This service will be communicated to all bureau partners; the process begins with a meeting to identify campaign resources, goals and schedules. A campaign plan is produced that integrates all the bureau's marketing channels, as well as those of our destination marketing partners. Metrics of the micro-campaign, including audience reach as well as direct actions such as clicks, are tracked and will be reported to the event holders who are sponsoring the campaign.

Niche Markets

While recognizing the value of the redwoods as our primary tourism driver, the Bureau will continue to promote other specific markets such as outdoor adventure, watersports, culinary and art excursions, nightlife, Bigfoot Americana, Victorian heritage, and specific geographic regions outside of the traditional redwood zones, like the Lost Coast, Humboldt Bay and Humboldt's towns and villages, including Gateway communities. Toward that end, the Bureau is expanding its distribution in FY2019 of its popular Humboldt Adventure Guides to more locations inside the county, which promote dozens of non-redwood activities and businesses.

Humboldt Sweet Spots

The Bureau will continue to market its consumer campaign to encourage Humboldt visitors to post or send us their Humboldt travel photos, which the Bureau repurposes on its own social media channels for further distribution, in exchange for a free Humboldt branded t-shirt. Two great benefits, beside the social media exposure, are 1) extending the stay of our guests, who enjoy the scavenger hunt-like promotion; and 2) the recruitment of Humboldt ambassadors across the world, who proudly wear their souvenir shirts. As one guest said: “We saw some beautiful places we hadn’t planned on seeing before we saw your list.”

Eureka Arts & Culture

The City of Eureka, long known as a hotbed of artistic expression, is becoming even more of a cultural destination with new public art projects, a hugely successful week-long mural event, its legendary Arts! Alive monthly event, and—not least of all—its recent designation as a California Cultural District. The Bureau will focus diverse marketing channels, especially earned media, on publicizing Eureka’s artistic credentials and the amazing culture to be experienced here.

Cannabis Tourism

With the agreement of the Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau Board of Directors at its July, 2018 meeting, the bureau has added cannabis tourism to its marketing program. While the cannabis industry works to develop tourism experiences, the Bureau will establish a platform for providing visitors with the information they need and for referring them to cannabis tourism experiences as they come on line.

A website tab labeled “Cannabis” has been added under the “Things to Do” section of the website. The landing page for this tab provides basic “need to know” information about Cannabis in Humboldt County, including where you can and cannot consume cannabis and any other legal or regulatory requirements. This is provided in a “Frequently Asked Questions” format.

This landing page also links to relevant cannabis tourism resources. At present, the known resources that visitors will be directed to include:

- Humboldt Cannabis Chamber of Commerce
- Humboldt Cannabis Tours
This is a bureau member who provides a specific service for visitors.
- Southern Humboldt Business & Visitors Bureau
This organization has taken the lead in cannabis promotion, and Southern Humboldt is the epicenter of Humboldt cannabis culture. Its new website provides an excellent history of this industry and description of the current cannabis scene.
- Humboldt County Growers Alliance
- Riverbar Pharms Bed & Breakfast
- California Department of Public Health
- State of California Cannabis Information

An ad hoc Cannabis Tourism committee, formed at the direction of the Bureau board president, has been meeting to develop plans and policies for cannabis tourism. The recommendations of this committee will continue to help guide the Bureau’s cannabis tourism component.

Bureau marketing and sales staff members are highly skilled in tourism product development and promotion, and stand ready to assist with the creation and marketing of cannabis tourism experiences.

XII. Travel Trade

The Sales Department of the Bureau focuses on the Travel Trade, by which we refer to all business channels using intermediaries to help us sell Humboldt County. These include tour operators (both foreign and domestic), group tour companies, meeting planners, wedding planners, sporting events and any other wholesale channel that is outside our “direct to consumer” channels.

The number one goal of the Bureau’s Sales Coordinator is lead generation. For every Travel Trade prospect—be they a travel agent in China, a wedding planner in Sacramento or a corporate meeting planner in San Jose—our first job is to sell the destination. Once the prospect is interested in bringing business to Humboldt County, we provide personalized consultation to help them design their travel product, wedding or event. This takes us very quickly to the production of leads—specific requests for proposals from hotels, dining, transportation services and attractions.

Since the Bureau is not the buyer or supplier of these services, the success of our efforts must be measured by the quality of these leads—by doing everything in our power to make sure the prospects are qualified and motivated, and that our suppliers are carefully chosen to meet the exact needs of the prospect. We are very much a matchmaker or dating service in that regard.

Our marketing outreach to the Travel Trade is divided into two tiers: direct and partnership. For some types of wholesale travel such as weddings, meetings and events, we are the sole destination and are in direct competition with neighboring counties for this business. But for international travel and most group tours, Humboldt County is but one of several destinations that will make up the visitor’s itinerary. Therefore, we have formed partnerships with other DMOs to market our region as a distinctive travel destination. Much of the Bureau’s sales activity is coordinated with the North Coast Tourism Council, a partnership between Humboldt, Del Norte, Mendocino, Lake and Sonoma Counties with Visit California.

In fulfilling this sales mission, the Bureau will:

- Respond promptly and professionally to all travel trade inquiries we receive. These include website queries as well as contacts generated at travel trade shows and by other methods.
- Continually update our sales materials and website with specific information for tour operators, wedding planners and meeting planners.
- Maintain excellent communications with our suppliers (member businesses) to keep them informed of Bureau outreach, business trends, best practices and opportunities to partner.
- Be an excellent partner with the North Coast Tourism Council to ensure that our partners have the best information about Humboldt County, and that we are prepared to represent our partners to their advantage when we engage in regional sales outreach.
- Coordinate closely with appropriate departments at Visit California, to make sure that we take full advantage of opportunities to be represented in their marketing programs, and to keep Humboldt County top-of-mind with Visit California staff.

- Seek to originate Familiarization Tours, and to be included in Fam Tours originated by Visit California and North Coast Tourism Council. Fam Tours, in which travel trade representatives are invited to visit the destination and experience it first-hand, are the most powerful tool available for influencing decision-makers to choose our destination. They have frequently led to contracts with suppliers written on the spot. Fam Tours are appropriate for tour operators, travel wholesalers and wedding/meeting planners.
- Reach out to travel trade prospects with personalized sales messages that invite them to learn more about Humboldt County. More than just destination messaging, we need to demonstrate how our travel/meeting/wedding experiences will meet their customers' needs and help them make money. This outreach will mostly be through digital channels, though the option of printed sales messages should be reserved for highly qualified and /or profitable sales prospects.
- Attend selected travel trade shows. This will nearly always be in partnership with the North Coast Tourism Council or with Humboldt County suppliers (see appendix for planned show schedule). More than just attending, the sales department will conduct exemplary follow-up with all leads and contacts generated at these shows.

The Sales Department outreach schedule may include:

- Sacramento Bridal Expo
- Receptive Tour Operator Show
- Connect CA Conference (meeting sales)
- IPW—International Tour & FIT sales
- Spotlight Networking Northwest (Domestic group tour sales)
- Small Market Meetings Conference
- Boomers in Groups/Agritourism (Domestic group tour sales)
- CalSAE/ SGMP Tradeshow (meeting sales)

EHVB Business & Marketing Plan

Appendices for Fiscal Year 2018-2019

I. Bureau Organization

Board of Directors 2018-2019

The Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau is a 501c6 nonprofit, mutual-benefit corporation guided by a 21-member board of directors. These representatives of the tourism and hospitality industry as well as government donate their time and energy to help us build a bigger and better tourism economy.

Chris Ambrosini	Best Western Humboldt Bay Inn
Paul Beatie	Ferndale Music Company
Rex Bohn	County of Humboldt
Michelle Cartledge	Humboldt Cider Company
Alicia Cox	Cox Rasmussen & Company
Lowell Daniels	Victorian Inn
Greg Foster	Redwood Regional Economic Development Commission
Barbara Groom	Lost Coast Brewery
Rob Holmlund	City of Eureka
Cathy Kunkler	Old Town Coffee & Chocolates
Laura Lasseter	Southern Humboldt Business & Visitor Bureau
Greg Litten	Redwood National & State Parks
Meredith Maier	Six Rivers Brewery
Libby Maynard	Ink People
Pete Oringer	Pacific Outfitters, Retired
Aaron Ostrom	Pacific Outfitters
Shailesh Patel	Hampton Inn & Suites
John Porter	Benbow Inn
Marc Rowley	Coho Cottages
Chris Smith	Plaza Grill/Abruzzi/Moonstone Grill

Executive Committee

President:	Marc Rowley	Vice President:	Barbara Groom
Past President:	Lowell Daniels	Secretary:	Chris Ambrosini
Treasurer:	Pete Oringer	Marketing Chair:	Aaron Ostrom
At-Large:	Chris Smith	At-Large:	Cathy Kunkler

Marketing Committee

Aaron Ostrom, chair; Chris Ambrosini, Pete Oringer, Alicia Cox, Lowell Daniels, Meredith Maier, Rob Holmlund, Barbara Groom, Laura Lasseter, Alegria Sita, Alanna Powell, Becky Reece, Allie Heemstra.

Bureau Staff

Tony Smithers	Executive Director	Richard Stenger	Media & Marketing Director
April Hagans	Sales Coordinator	Genie Brady	Office Manager

II. Bureau Budget 2018-2019

REVENUES

Membership Dues	36,000
Member Advertising	35,000
City of Eureka	370,000
City of Ferndale	1,500
County of Humboldt	352,209 (\$164,364 passed through to other agencies)
HLA—Administrative	65,000
<u>Donated Services (non-operating)</u>	<u>1,500</u>
	861,209 (\$696,845 after pass-through)

EXPENSES

PERSONNEL

Wages & Salaries	245,000
Payroll Taxes	25,884
Employee Benefit	5,100
Insurance-Medical	41,516
<u>Insurance-Workers Comp</u>	<u>2,500</u>
	320,000

ADMINISTRATIVE

Computer	500
Dues & Subscriptions	500
Equipment Rental	500
Insurance	4,000
HLA Insurance	3,000
Interest	100
Occupancy	24,000
Utilities	1,500
Building Maintenance	100
Office Supplies	2,000
Bank Charges	500
Postage	1,000
Professional Fees	12,000
HLA Professional Fees	8,000
Repairs & Maintenance	600
Telephone	5,000
<u>Other</u>	<u>200</u>
	63,500

MEMBERSHIP

Local Meetings	1,000
Automobile	1,500

HLA Member Postage	400
Membership Postage	700
HLA Member Printing	300
Membership Printing	500
HLA Member Events	3,000
Member Events	4,000
Public Relations	1,000
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	11,400

RESEARCH

Marketing Associations	1,200
Registration Fee	1,500
Research Transportation	1,000
Research Accommodations	2,500
Research Meals	1,200
Research Materials	100
Subscriptions	500
	<hr/>
	8,000

ADVERTISING/PROMOTION

Ad Production Costs	1,000
Magazine Advertising	10,000
Online Advertising	120,000
Advertising Contingency	9,000
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	140,000

REGIONAL MARKETING

Automobile	1,000
Fam Trip Accommodations	2,000
Fam Trip Meals	2,000
Fam Trip Expenses	1,000
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	6,000

ONLINE—IN HOUSE

Access & Hosting Fees	25,000
Website Maintenance	3,500
Website Upgrades	5,000
Video/Media Production	1,500
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	35,000

TRADE SHOWS

Registration Fees	6,500
Trade Show Transportation	4,000
Trade Show Accommodations	3,000
Trade Show Meals	2,500
Booth Expense	1,000
Trade Show Outside Services	5,000

EHVB Business & Marketing Plan

Trade Show Contingency	1,000
	23,000
PRINTED MATERIALS	
Printing Costs	30,000
Photography	2,500
Production Costs	2,500
Printing Outside Services	500
	35,500
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	
Co-ops & Partnerships	11,000
Literature Distribution	11,000
Gateway Chambers of Commerce	164,364
Donated Services	1,500
	187,364
MEDIA RELATIONS	
Media Hospitality	1,500
Media Transportation	2,500
Media Accommodations	3,500
Media Meals	2,500
Media Registration Fees	1,200
Media Subscriptions	200
	11,400
INQUIRY FULFILLMENT	
Fulfillment Postage	5,000
Fulfillment Shipping	500
Fulfillment Telephone	3,000
Fulfillment Outside Services	4,500
	13,000
SALES DEPARTMENT	
Sales Transportation	1,500
Sales Accommodations	1,000
Sales Meals	500
Sales Membership/Subscriptions	150
Sales Registration Fees	1,800
Sales Collateral	500
Sales Postage	500
	5,950
SPECIAL PROJECTS	
Humboldt Adventure Guides	15,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$875,114

III. Annual Marketing Schedule FY 2018-2019

August 2018	Spotlight Networking Northwest	Travel Trade/group tour sales
September 21-23	Destination Travel Show Sacramento	Direct to Consumer
September 22-25	Small Market Meetings Conference	Travel Trade/meeting sales
October 2018	San Francisco Media Reception	Earned Media/Publicity
October 2018	Boomers in Groups/Agritourism	Travel Trade/group tour sales
November	EHVB Annual Meeting	Member event
December	CalSAE/SGMP Trade Show	Travel Trade/meeting sales
January 2019	Sacramento Bridal Expo	Travel Trade/weddings
January 2019	International Sportsmens Expo Sacramento	Direct to Consumer
February 2019	RTO-International Receptives	Travel Trade/FIT
February 16-17	Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show	Direct to Consumer/Travel Trade
March 2019	Connect CA Conference	Travel Trade/meeting sales
March 15-17	Sonoma Home & Garden Show	Direct to Consumer
March 23-24	Bay Area Travel Show	Direct to Consumer/Travel Trade
June 2019	IPW International	Travel Trade/FIT & tours
June 2018	California Travel Summit	Industry event

IV. 2018-2019 Marketing and Operational Goals

Member Services:

To achieve the goals of marketing partnership opportunities, member communications and better destination management, the Bureau will change its format for partner communications from a quarterly newsletter to a MONTHLY bulletin containing news of interest to all tourism stakeholders. This will include bureau marketing activities and metrics, information about new businesses and attractions, and other items of interest to the industry.

Destination Management:

The Bureau will implement strategies to communicate and coordinate with these destination marketing partners, including a dedicated Facebook page and regular meetings.

Humboldt Lodging Alliance:

- Manage updating and approval of Management District Plan.
- Expand collaboration with Misfit Agency; carefully coordinate marketing elements.
- Manage Community Tourism grants, especially the Sequoia Park & Zoo canopy walk project.
- Assist HLA with creation and promotion of destination events.
- Assist with and manage new display at State Capital building.

Specific Marketing Goals:

- Identify and target **25 new** digital travel influencers.
- Increase social media followers **by ten percent** for each major platform, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Identify and use the **25 most effective** travel and Humboldt related hashtags across all social media.
- Revamp the Bureau's photo and video content to **share more effectively** with the media and public.
- Post at least **100 Facebook posts, 100 IG posts and 50 Twitter tweets.**
- Increase web traffic from last year by **at least 10 percent.**
- Increase lodging referral conversions on our site **from 30 percent to 35 percent.**
- Increase overall impressions, generated from all bureau sources, by **at least 10 percent to 110M.**
- Launch a search marketing campaign on Bing
- Install Adventure Guide racks at 25 additional locations