

visit  
**TUOLUMNE**  
county  
★CALIFORNIA★

2023/2024

# Annual Report



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## A MESSAGE FROM VISIT TUOLUMNE COUNTY PRESIDENT & CEO, LISA MAYO

It is truly hard to believe that another fiscal year is already behind us. We've had some incredible wins for Tuolumne County tourism this past year. You can read all about them in this report. Tourism continues to be the number one private sector industry in the County. Travel spending surpassed all other years with visitors spending \$287 million in Tuolumne County.

We're calling this past year, the year of the "fam" (familiarization) tour. We have had more travel trade and media visits to Tuolumne County than any other year. This is thanks to our ongoing partnership with Visit California, our Public Relations consultant, Laurie Armstrong-Gossy, and to our international offices that work diligently to provide us with the right people at the right time to come experience Tuolumne County. These fam tours result in Tuolumne County being featured on tour operator itineraries and in media outlets (print and online), and on social media across the globe. I'd like to thank our many partners for their participation in these visits. We certainly cannot provide these fam trips without you.

While inspiring visitors to choose Tuolumne County for their vacation is our number one priority, we have another important focus we are spending a lot of time and other resources on and that is forming a Tourism Marketing District (TMD). A TMD is an alternative funding source that will allow Visit Tuolumne County to have stable and sustainable funding for the future. The County has given us a deadline to have alternative funding in place by May of 2026 and we are working hard to meet that timeframe.

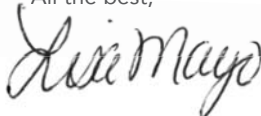
A huge thank you to Team VTC for the dedication and hard work they put in every day. We are a small but mighty team of three full-time and two part-time employees and a handful of contracted professionals that provide various services.

Thank you to the all-volunteer VTC Board of Directors. Your guidance and input are imperative to our success. As we continue to walk through uncharted waters, your leadership is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors and to the Sonora City Council for continuing to support VTC. Tourism is a critical economic driver for our County, and we must continue to invite visitors, or they are certain to take their dollars elsewhere, including TOT and sales tax dollars. Thank you for understanding that.

As we look to the year ahead, we are excited to be renewing successful initiatives and taking on new ones to further ensure a prosperous tourism industry for Tuolumne County. We look forward to your continued partnership as we continue to grow and evolve.

All the best,



**Lisa Mayo, CDME**

President & CEO, Visit Tuolumne County



## MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING VISIT TUOLUMNE COUNTY BOARD CHAIR, KATIE DUNN

It has been my pleasure to serve as the Board Chair for Visit Tuolumne County for the past three years. During my tenure, I have seen significant challenges to Visit Tuolumne County but, in the end, VTC continued to do what they do best and that is inspiring visitation to Tuolumne County and building our visitor economy. I would like to thank the VTC Board and the VTC Government Committee for their diligence, guidance, and support during the challenging contract negotiations with the County.



It has been my honor to be the chair for Visit Tuolumne County and I look forward to the continued growth and synergy in Tuolumne County's tourism industry. If you are a lodging partner with Visit Tuolumne County, please get involved with the Tuolumne County Lodging Association ([www.tcla.us](http://www.tcla.us)). The Tourism Marketing District (TMD) is a huge project that VTC is undertaking, and they are working with TCLA to communicate and educate our lodging industry more about it. Thank you to all the VTC partners for your support these past few years and as we move into a new era of promoting Tuolumne County.

*Katie Dunn*

### **Katie Dunn**

**Visit Tuolumne County, Past Chair**

**President, Sonora Chamber of Commerce**

## A MESSAGE FROM NEW VISIT TUOLUMNE COUNTY BOARD CHAIR, RYAN REIS

A Look Forward

I am very excited to become Chair of the Visit Tuolumne County Board of Directors. In this new year Visit Tuolumne County will continue our focus on destination marketing, which is what we do best. We continue to research and collect data to understand who our visitors are and where they are coming from. In addition to our continued services to Tuolumne County businesses, we look forward to continuing our efforts for sustainable funding through securing a Tourism Marketing District (TMD). We are planning our workshops and meetings with partners in lodging to gain the much-needed support. Tourism continues to grow, and we're excited to share the experiences with our new and returning visitors.



*Ry Reis*

### **Ryan Reis**

**VTC Board Chair**

**Recreation Director, Don Pedro Recreation Area**



Visit Tuolumne County is the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Tuolumne County. As a nonprofit mutual benefit corporation, Visit Tuolumne County promotes tourism to Tuolumne County by inspiring visitors to choose Tuolumne County for their vacation and meetings destination. This is done through strategic marketing initiatives carried out on a variety of marketing and promotional platforms from traditional media to geo-targeted online advertising, influencer hosting and many programs in between.



VTC is an economic development organization that is currently funded through a portion of the transient occupancy tax (TOT) that visitors pay when they stay at lodging properties throughout Tuolumne County. We reinvest those dollars to further promote Tuolumne County to visitors which results in greater visitation, travel spending, sales tax and TOT. VTC received 18% of the County TOT in 2023-2024 and receives 17% in 2024-2025. VTC receives \$150,000 of the TOT collected in the City of Sonora.

Visit Tuolumne County is a partnership organization. We invite businesses in the community, whether or not they are directly related to tourism, to be a part of Tuolumne County's number one private sector industry—tourism. Partnership rates start at just \$200 annually, and that includes a business listing and link on our website, [www.visittuolumne.com](http://www.visittuolumne.com), brochure distribution at our Visitor Center, a listing in the annual Travel Guide, and opportunities throughout the year for various promotional opportunities.

Visit Tuolumne County is proud to have received our Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) designation from Destinations International in 2019. This is the highest honor for a DMO in the industry. We maintain that designation through ongoing updates and renewals.



# TOURISM MARKETING DISTRICT

## BACKGROUND

Last year Visit Tuolumne County received a new 10-year contract also known as the Agreement for the Promotion of Tourism, from the County. Part of this new agreement requires VTC to have an alternative funding source in place by May 2026.

Given that directive, VTC enlisted the help and legal advice of Civitas Advisors, a company that specializes in setting up funding mechanisms for destination marketing organizations. Civitas conducted a feasibility study to determine the level of resources that could be raised apart from the transient occupancy tax (TOT). Civitas also compared our current and projected level of funding against that of the surrounding counties. The comparison was needed since we compete with those counties to attract overnight visitors to the High Sierra and Gold Country region including and surrounding Yosemite National Park.

Civitas concluded that creating a Tourism Marketing District (TMD) in Tuolumne County would be a viable option and that, if formed, the TMD would provide sustainable funding to offset the decrease in TOT funding and support VTC's efforts to promote Tuolumne County's tourism industry.

The proposed TMD would place an assessment on lodging rooms and private campgrounds. This is in addition to the TOT which is currently at a rate of 12%.

Hotels or other lodging properties in the County will need to sign a petition in favor of the TMD's creation. The petition is weighted based on the revenue of individual lodging businesses. The TMD will pass if the hotel and lodging properties who have signed the petition in favor produced at least 51% of lodging revenue in the County during the previous year.

The final element of the Civitas engagement was a series of workshops hosted by VTC to introduce the idea of a TMD to local hotel and lodging properties, including vacation rental companies and short term rentals.

## PROPOSED TMD

For Tuolumne County's TMD to provide enough funds to continue to promote Tuolumne County at its current level, VTC has determined that the proposed assessment be at least 2% of the room rate for all hotel and lodging properties in the County.

The difference between the TOT and the TMD is that TMD funds are strictly for promoting Tuolumne County as a tourism destination and the funds cannot be diverted to government needs, unlike the TOT which is completely government controlled and can be eliminated or decreased at any time.

Until July 2021, VTC received 25% of the TOT collected in the County. Under the new contract VTC now receives 17% and will receive 16% beginning July 2025. The City of Sonora funds VTC at \$150,000 of the collected TOT.



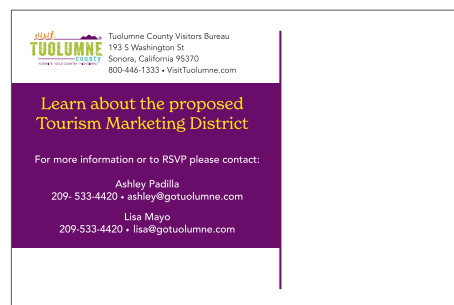
If hotels and lodging properties agree to form a district, the TMD funds will be fully controlled by the district members (in other words, the hotel and lodging properties in the County). Typically, the TMD will appoint a Board to govern the use of the funds and will contract with VTC to carry out the program.

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

VTC is currently in the process of testing the hotel and lodging properties' appetite for forming a TMD, briefing them on the need to do so given the current 10-year contract with the County, and soliciting input on the programs and desired outcomes around which VTC should prioritize the use of the additional funds.

We are working with Clarity of Place, a strategic advisory consultancy specializing in destination management, to help us to communicate the need for an alternative funding source, a base plan for the TMD's programming, and the implications to VTC's programming and ability to market Tuolumne County if an alternative funding source is not developed. To guide these efforts, we have created a TMD Steering Committee comprised of Board members, representatives from hotel and lodging properties, and representatives from the Tuolumne County Business Council.

For anyone wanting to learn more about the TMD we invite you to go to our website: [visittuolumne.com/tmd](http://visittuolumne.com/tmd) or call our office.



# OVERALL TOURISM STATISTICS FOR TUOLUMNE COUNTY

Tourism remains the cornerstone of Tuolumne County’s economic vitality, solidifying its position as the number one private sector economic driver. In 2022, travel-related spending surpassed the record levels set in 2019, underscoring Visit Tuolumne County’s determination to facilitate the recovery of this vital revenue source for the County and the County’s appeal as a premier destination.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

### Key Takeaways:

- In 2023, travel spending in Tuolumne County grew to \$287.5 million, a 5% increase over the previous record year, 2019.
- The County’s travel industry supported approximately 2,560 jobs.\*
- Industry employee earnings were \$101 million.
- Transient Occupancy Tax for Tuolumne County in 23/24 was \$8.6 million and \$692,500 for the City of Sonora.

| 2023 Travel Spending and Tax Revenue                                  |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Total Direct Travel Spending  | \$287.5 million |
| Tourism Industry Employment*  | 2,560           |
| Government Revenue Generated by Tourism                               |                 |
| Local Sales Tax Receipts**  | \$11.6 million  |
| State Sales Tax Receipts  | \$11.5 million  |
| Transient Occupancy Tax   | \$9.3 million   |
| State and local tax revenue equivalency per Tuolumne County household | \$1,063         |

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

\*\*Includes Transient Occupancy Tax for County of Tuolumne and City of Sonora.

This data is provided by Dean Runyan Associates and is preliminary as of May 2024.





# VISITATION

## VISITORS TO TUOLUMNE COUNTY 2023-2024\*

**1.2 MILLION**

unique visitors

**6.1 MILLION**

visits

\*Visitors who stayed at least 90 minutes and their home is more than 30 miles away. Data by Placer.ai.

### Top Visitor Origins - CA Cities

San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley

Modesto

San Jose, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara

Sacramento, Roseville, Folsom

Stockton

### Top Visitor Origins - States\*

Nevada

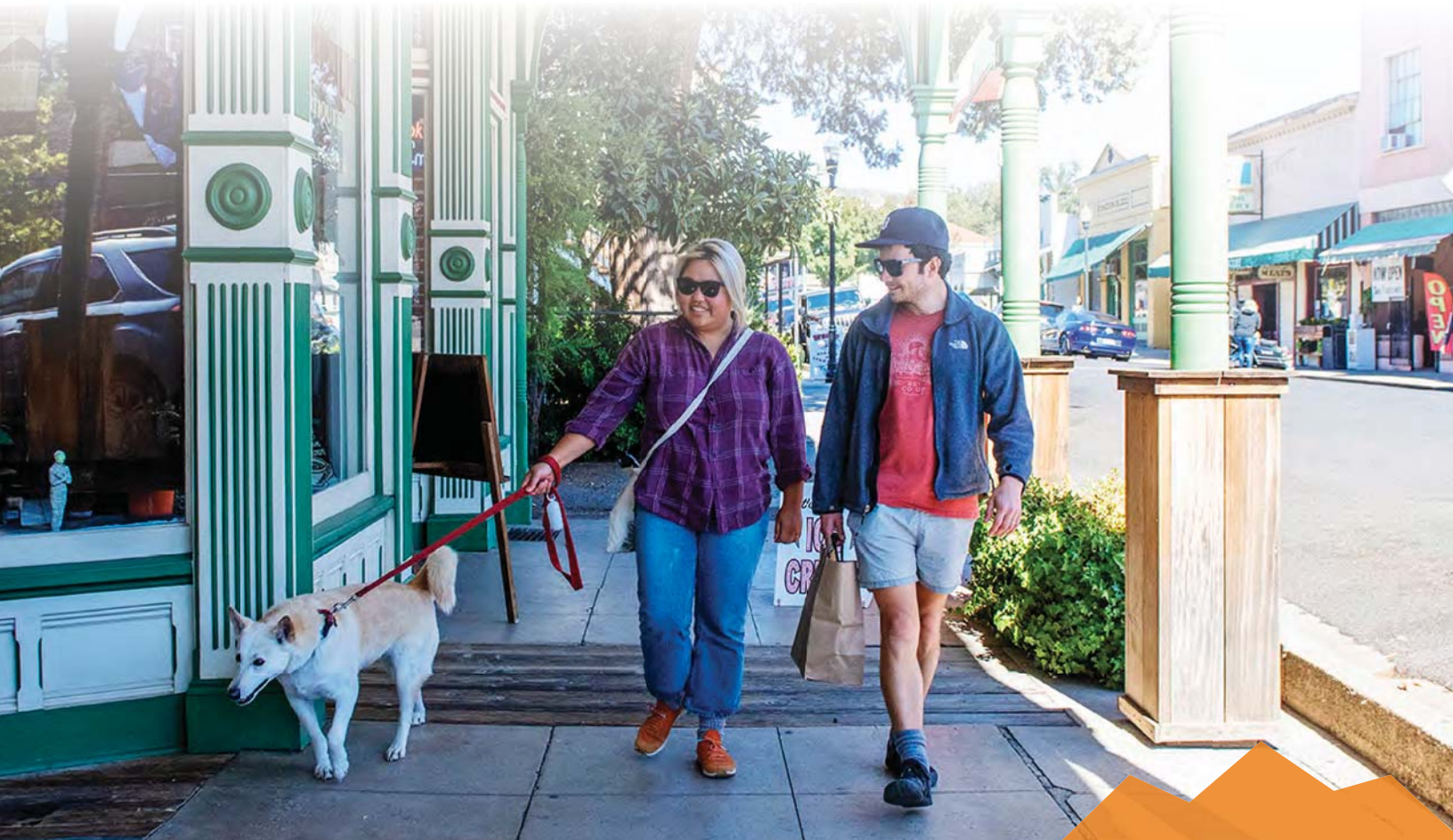
Texas

Oregon

Washington

Arizona

\*States other than California



# MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, UK

VTC worked with our UK public relations agency to secure a *National Geographic UK* journalist and photographer to visit Tuolumne County. The outcome was a beautiful 10-page print article on Tuolumne County in their September 2023 issue. The print circulation of this publication is 48,100 with an estimated advertising value of \$113,645. Unique monthly visitors to the online version is 8.57 million, and the estimated advertising value is \$79,288. The article was also published by *National Geographic US* online.



## SUNSET TRAVEL AWARD

Visit Tuolumne County nominated downtown Sonora for a Sunset Travel Award, and it won as one of the Best City Getaways in the Western US. Sunset Magazine is a Western US lifestyle online and print publication that was founded in 1898. They have a print audience of 1.4 million and 50,500 online readers. As a winning destination, downtown Sonora was highlighted in an online publication and in the October/November 2023 print edition of Sunset Magazine.



## SONORA SELFIE TRAIL

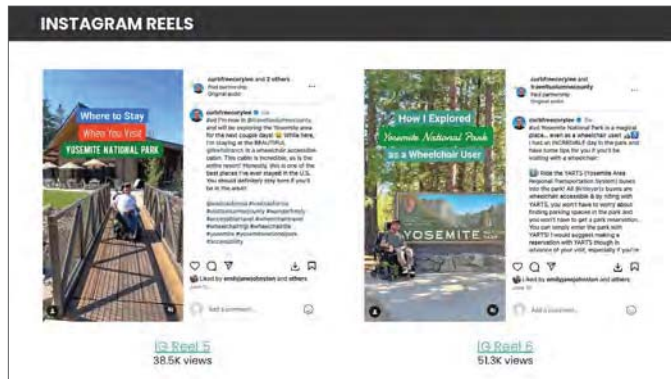
Launched in December 2023, the Sonora Selfie Trail is a curated mobile passport that leads participants to selfie spots within the City. This is an interactive and enticing way to attract visitors and locals to Sonora to spend time exploring the city and businesses. With the input from city administration, staff, the Mayor, and city council, twenty-nine locations were chosen for the trail. The platform has 158 users with 239 "check-ins" and grows weekly.



## “FUEL YOUR JOURNEY” PROMOTION

In January, VTC launched the “Fuel Your Journey” promotion aimed to boost overnight stays during what is typically a slower time of year by offering free gas cards to visitors who stayed at least two nights at a VTC partner hotel, RV park, or campground in Tuolumne County during January and February. To engage our lodging partners in the campaign, we provided a toolkit full of tools such as social media messages and images to help them promote the campaign as well. The initiative proved successful, and VTC plans to implement it again as the need arises. A total of \$1,550 in gas cards were distributed to qualifying participants; the cards were purchased from gas stations in the City of Sonoma. Twenty-seven stays met the promotion’s criteria, though many more were submitted but did not qualify.

Beyond, VTC’s own social media channels and email outreach and those of our lodging partners to promote the Fuel Your Journey campaign, we also enlisted digital advertising agency Sojern to assist with targeted digital ad placement in January, which resulted in 921,544 impressions and 1,094 clicks, with a click through rate of .119%



## CURB FREE WITH CORY LEE INFLUENCER VISIT

In partnership with Visit California, travel blogger and wheelchair travel expert, Cory Lee visited Tuolumne County in June. He stayed at the new Firefall Ranch Resort and promoted the accessibility of the resort, YARTS, and Yosemite National Park. He posted a detailed blog and two Instagram Reels in collaboration with Visit Tuolumne County. In one he stated that Yosemite is his favorite national park. The post also went viral. The comment section is full of people who want to visit. Check out [@curbfreeecorylee](https://www.instagram.com/curbfreeecorylee) on Instagram to see more.





# MARKETING PROGRAMS

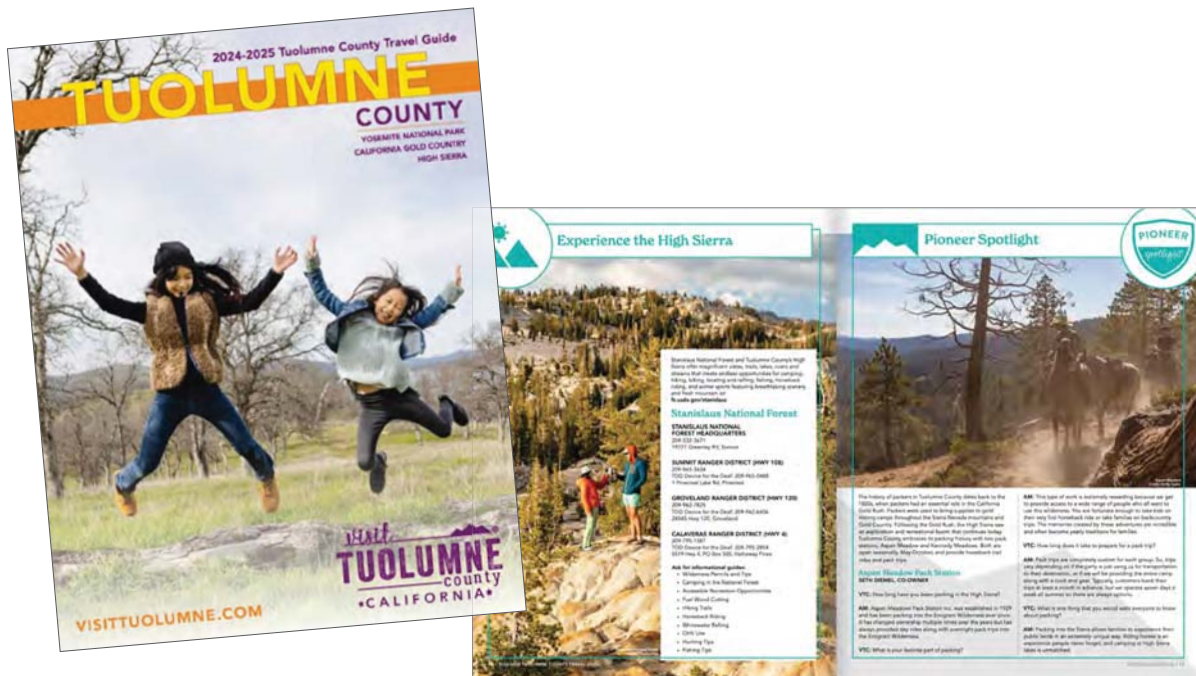
## ANNUAL TRAVEL GUIDE

Visit Tuolumne County creates and distributes the official Tuolumne County Travel Guide, which, along with the VTC website, forms the foundation of our marketing efforts. In 2023, we made the strategic decision to transform the annual guide into a biannual publication featuring evergreen content and comprehensive trip planning tools to increase its longevity and relevance.

75,000 copies of the guide are printed annually and distributed at various Bay Area locations such as the Pier 39 and Fairfield (Jelly Belly Factory) California Welcome Centers, Caltrain stations, Starbucks, Trader Joe's, Stanford University, and San Jose and Oakland International Airports and in Southern California at the John Wayne Airport in Orange County to name a few. They are also distributed at the Tuolumne County Visitors Center, mailed to advertising leads, individual requests, at media events, travel shows, and at local businesses. Local realtors also use the guides to inspire potential home buyers.

The development, printing, and distribution of the Travel Guide represent VTC's largest single annual marketing expense, but the investment yields immense value by providing a high-quality, comprehensive resource that effectively promotes Tuolumne County as a travel destination.

Although the Travel Guide includes a listing of all VTC partners, partners have the opportunity to place full-color advertisements in the guide for an additional cost.



## WEBSITE

Visit Tuolumne County’s website serves as a digital gateway for inspiring and encouraging travel to Tuolumne County. The website functions as an essential resource, providing detailed information on VTC’s partners, accommodations, events, itineraries, and travel tips, ensuring visitors can plan well-informed trips.

### OVERALL SITE PERFORMANCE

JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024

SESSIONS

**481,445** (vs. 310,411 IN 22/23)

PAGES PER SESSION

**1.59** (vs. 1.84 IN 22/23)

PAGEVIEWS

**767,619** (vs. 571,844 IN 22/23)

### TOP FIVE DOMESTIC\* & INTERNATIONAL USERS

JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1. WASHINGTON**</b> | <b>1. MEXICO**</b>   |
| <b>2. OREGON**</b>     | <b>2. GERMANY***</b> |
| <b>3. TEXAS**</b>      | <b>3. CANADA**</b>   |
| <b>4. NEVADA**</b>     | <b>4. UK**</b>       |
| <b>5. ARIZONA**</b>    | <b>5. POLAND</b>     |

\*Not including California

\*\*Indicates locations that VTC ran advertising.

\*\*\*Will be a new market in 24/25





## NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEBPAGE AND RESOURCES

We frequently receive inquiries from individuals interested in doing business in Tuolumne County. They ask about visitor numbers, the benefits of opening a business here, and available resources. To address these queries, we have developed an economic development page on our website, providing comprehensive resources and a reference sheet with essential information. This page includes visitor statistics and spending, climate, and census data, and it outlines the advantages of establishing a business in Tuolumne County. It also includes links to Tuolumne County and the City of Sonora’s business resource pages.

## SIMPLEVIEW BOOKING REFERRAL PLATFORM

“Book Direct,” is a booking referral engine featured on VTC’s website. This platform leads visitors directly to a property’s website or preferred booking platform. During the year, visitors conducted 15,595 searches on the platform, resulting in 86 bookings and an estimated total booking revenue of \$64,000. VTC invests \$5,775 annually into this program, and is provided at no extra cost to our lodging partners. The impressive return on investment of approximately 1,000% emphasizes the platform’s effectiveness and value.

The screenshot displays the SimpleView booking referral platform interface. At the top, navigation tabs include LODGINGS, HOTELS & MOTELS, B&BS & INNS, CABINS, VACATION RENTALS, RESORTS, and CAMPGROUNDS. The main heading indicates "61 PROPERTIES found on Aug 20th - Aug 23rd". A search bar and date selection tool are visible. On the left, a sidebar offers filters for Average Rate/Night, Regions, Location, Lodging Type, and Amenities, along with a "SORT BY" dropdown set to "All".

The search results are presented in a grid format, featuring five property listings:

- McCaffrey House B & B**: Lodging Type: All Lodging, B&B/Inn. Address: 23251 Highway 108, Twain Harte, CA. Average Rate/Night: \$219.00\*. Includes a "BOOK >> DIRECT" button and a "View Rates by Date" link.
- Hotel Lumberjack**: Lodging Type: All Lodging, Hotel/Motel. Address: 128 S Green St, Sonora, CA 95370. Average Rate/Night: \$165.53\*. Includes a "BOOK >> DIRECT" button and a "View Rates by Date" link.
- Best Western Plus Sonora Oaks**: Lodging Type: All Lodging, Hotel/Motel. Address: 19551 Hess Ave, Sonora, CA 95370. Average Rate/Night: \$188.99\*. Includes a "BOOK >> DIRECT" button and a "View Rates by Date" link.
- Red Tail Ranch Bed & Breakfast**: Lodging Type: All Lodging, B&B/Inn. Address: 22307 Ferretti Rd, Groveland, CA. Average Rate/Night: \$289.00\*. Includes a "BOOK >> DIRECT" button and a "View Rates by Date" link.
- Pine Mountain Yosemite Lake Lodge**: Lodging Type: All Lodging, Cabins. Address: Groveland, CA. Average Rate/Night: \$1500.00\*. Includes a "BOOK >> DIRECT" button and a "View Rates by Date" link.

Each listing includes a representative image, a phone icon, and links for "Map", "Website", and "More Info". A note at the bottom left of the results area states "61 properties match your customized search criteria".



## CONSUMER EMAILS

Visit Tuolumne County sends consumer emails to over 15,000 subscribers monthly. They feature engaging content, including highlights of seasonal attractions, upcoming events, and exclusive travel tips.

The average open rate for the emails in 2023-2024 was 43%, exceeding the preceding year's benchmark of 37%, and the click-through-rate was 1.14%.



## “WHAT’S UP WEDNESDAY” EMAILS

“What’s Up Wednesday” emails are weekly updates from Visit Tuolumne County, designed for front-line lodging staff. These emails provide valuable information that can be shared with guests including the weather forecast, upcoming events, and important travel-related details. They also offer a platform for lodging partners to share their upcoming availability, which VTC can then communicate to visitors seeking last-minute accommodations. VTC incentivizes partners to share their availability with an opportunity to be featured in our consumer emails.



## DIGITAL ADS

### OUT-OF-STATE

Over the 23/24 year, Augustine Agency managed VTC’s out-of-state digital ad campaign. The campaign utilized a comprehensive array of digital tactics, including display ads, paid search, paid social media, pre-roll ads, and connected TV/OTT (internet connected TV) ads, to attract potential visitors. Each tactic exceeded industry benchmarks with the exception of connected TV/OTT. On video tactics, the main key performance indicator is View Through Rate (VTR) as it shows an engaged audience who viewed the video ads in their entirety. The video ads did an exceptional job increasing awareness of the destination, as did the display ads which provided the most impressions. Paid social almost doubled the industry benchmark and paid search far surpassed benchmarks as well.

| Tactic           | Impressions | Clicks | CTR   | CTR Benchmark | VTR    | VTR Benchmark |
|------------------|-------------|--------|-------|---------------|--------|---------------|
| Display          | 11,410,393  | 21,474 | 0.19% | 0.10%         | -      | -             |
| Pre-Roll Video   | 1,927,539   | 2,212  | 0.11% | 0.10%         | 68.55% | 15%           |
| Connected TV/OTT | 449,060     | 41     | 0.01% | 0.10%         | 97.32% | 95%           |
| Paid Social      | 3,776,734   | 70,399 | 1.86% | 1.00%         | -      | -             |
| Paid Search      | 249,212     | 19,392 | 7.78% | 4.68%         | -      | -             |

In addition to digital engagement metrics, **the campaign saw an average of 5,200 visits to Tuolumne County per month, with key locations and hotels receiving an average of 2,148 visits per month.** These metrics highlight the campaign’s success in driving both online engagement and physical visits to the County, demonstrating the effectiveness of the targeted digital strategies and the overall appeal of Tuolumne County as a travel destination. The return on ad spend (ROAS) was significant, reflecting efficient use of the budget and strong performance in converting interest into action, further solidifying Tuolumne County’s reputation as a desirable location for visitors.

### IN-STATE SOCIAL ADS

Diamond Digital Marketing Co, which managed many of our social accounts, managed our in-state social ads.

IMPRESSIONS:

**1,445,128**

CLICKS:

**16,784**

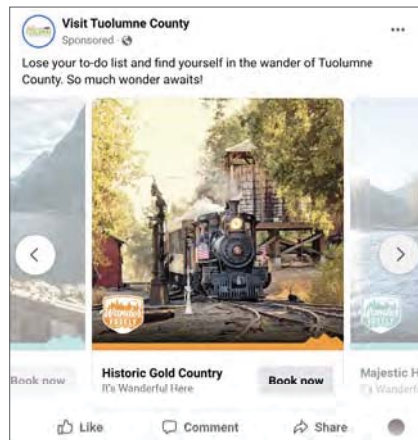
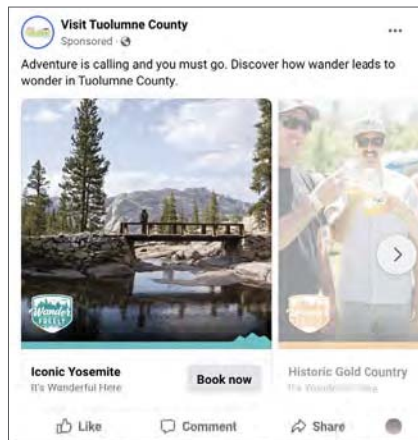
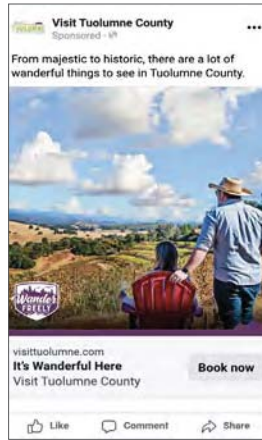
CLICK THROUGH RATE:

**2.9%**





SOCIAL ADS



SUNSET DIGITAL ADS

Banners





**GOOGLE MAX CAMPAIGN**

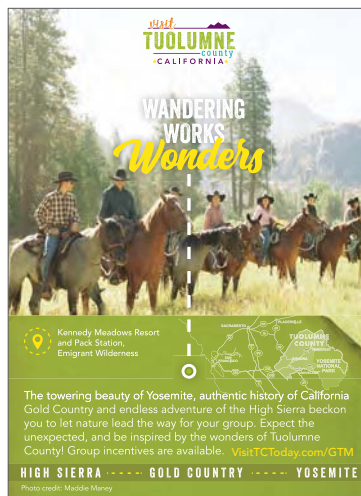
Earlier in 2024, we began hearing from lodging partners that bookings were down compared to previous years. VTC took action and partnered with Madden Media in May to implement a Google Max campaign specifically geared toward increasing bookings for the summer months. Google Max uses AI technology to reach the customers most likely to buy wherever they're browsing - on Search, YouTube, Gmail, Maps, Display, and Discovery. Within just the first week we saw 68 referrals and an estimated six bookings. **As of July 15th, we've seen incredible results – 3,008 referrals and an estimated 240 bookings!**

**PRINT ADS**

Placing print ads in major travel and lifestyle publications is a key component of Visit Tuolumne County's marketing strategy. These ads effectively reach a wide and targeted audience, including potential tourists who are passionate about travel, outdoor adventures, culture, and unique experiences. By placing ads in well-known publications, Visit Tuolumne County leverages the credibility and broad readership of these outlets to enhance its visibility and appeal. In the 23/24 year, our ads were featured in a variety of regional, statewide, and national publications.

Print Ad Placements 23/24:

- Official California Visitors Guide
- Visit California Road Trips Guide
- Diablo Magazine
- Diablo Magazine (part of our agreement with the City of Sonora)
- Meetings & Events Magazine
- Group Tour Magazine
- The Vow Gold Country Magazine
- Yosemite Journal (National Parks Trips)
- Sonora Chamber Magazine
- Sunset Magazine
- Adventure Sports Journal



## TELEVISION

VTC continues to engage key audiences during off-peak times through strategic streaming TV placements of our commercial in targeted regions in the Sacramento market. This year we also added targeted areas of San Diego to the mix.

October-December 2023: Sacramento – 78,000 impressions; 91% of the video impressions were viewed in full.

February-April 2024: Sacramento and San Diego – 549,000 impressions; 94% of video impressions were viewed in full.

## RADIO

Utilizing radio ads is a fundamental component of Visit Tuolumne County's marketing strategy. Radio remains a widely accessible medium, reaching a broad and diverse audience, including potential visitors who may not engage with digital platforms. Additionally, radio ads help reinforce brand awareness and build a positive image of the County as a desirable destination. Over the fiscal year, VTC ran ads in the San Francisco Bay Area November through May and in the Sacramento area February through May.



## BILLBOARDS

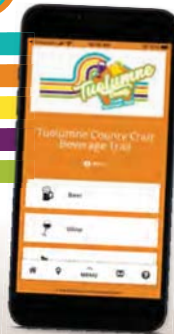
VTC utilized digital billboards on Highway 120 in Manteca and on Highway 108 in Riverbank over the course of the year. The flexibility of digital billboards allows VTC to not only promote seasonal campaigns, but also swiftly update messaging, making them an effective tool for crisis communications, event promotions, and other timely information along gateway routes. Combined, the two billboards had 17,254 daily impressions and 6,297,710 impressions over the year.





## TUOLUMNE COUNTY CRAFT BEVERAGE AND CRAFT BURGER TRAILS

The Tuolumne County Craft Beverage and Craft Burger Trails offer unique and delightful experiences for both locals and visitors. The Craft Beverage Trail showcases some of the County's breweries and wineries, each offering distinct and locally produced drinks. The Craft Burger Trail features a variety of restaurants and eateries that serve up delicious and innovative burgers. Many of the participating businesses offer discounts for pass users, and users also earn points toward eligibility to win grand prizes as they use the passes. Both trails highlight Tuolumne County's commitment to supporting local businesses and providing unforgettable culinary adventures.



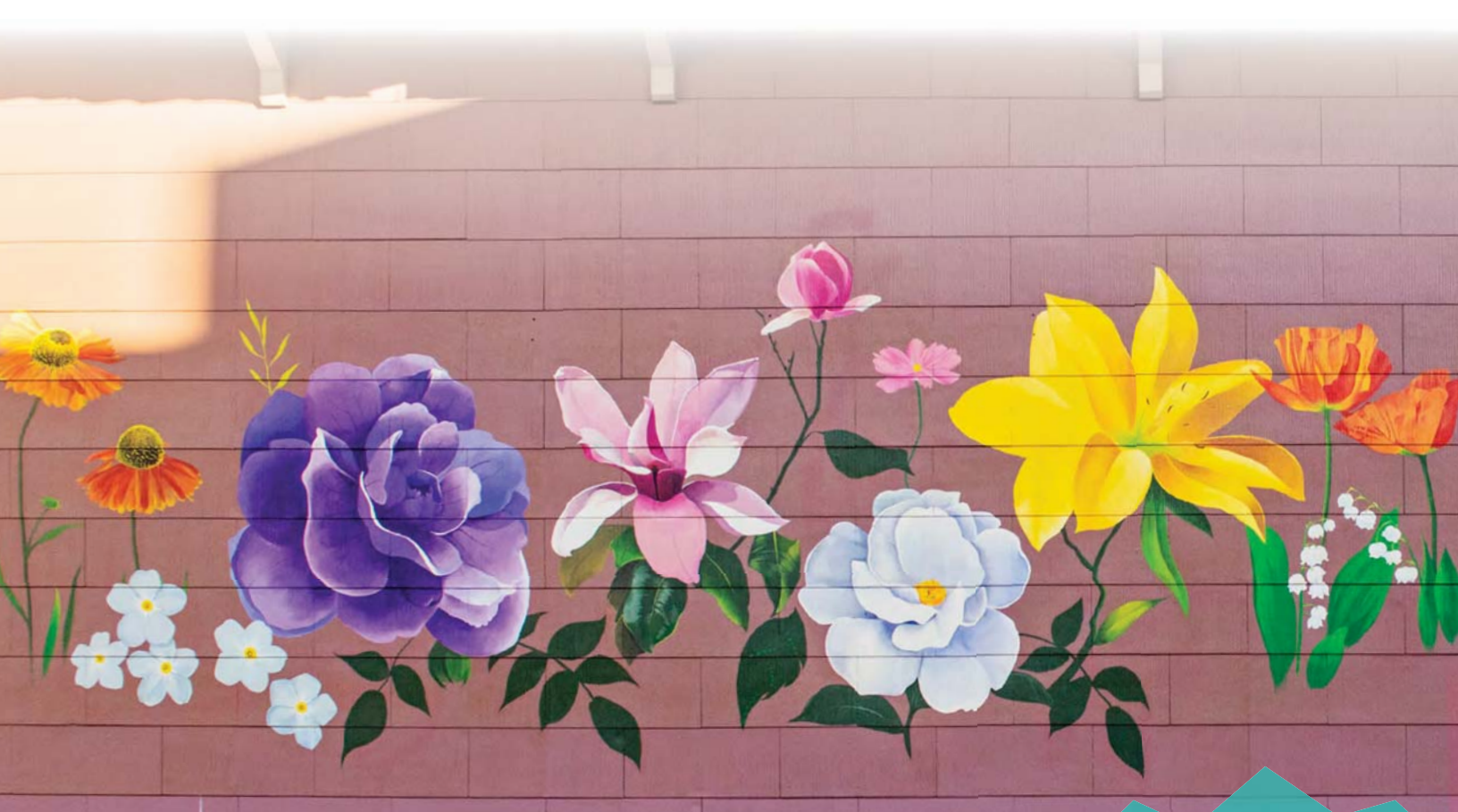
## TUOLUMNE COUNTY ART WEEK

Tuolumne County Art Week is a vibrant celebration of local creativity and culture, showcasing the diverse artistic talents that thrive in our County. Held annually, this week-long event invites both residents and visitors to explore a wide array of artistic expressions, from visual arts and crafts to performing arts and interactive workshops. Local galleries, studios, and public spaces open their doors for exhibitions, demonstrations, and collaborative projects, offering a unique opportunity to engage with the artistic community. Over 20 artists and venues participated, and Visit Tuolumne County proudly sponsored the Mother Lode Art Association Annual Fine Art Show and Exhibit and Tuolumne County Arts' InFocus Photography Competition, Exhibition, and Sale—both of which took place over the duration of Art Week.

Here's what Robert Feigen, President of the MLAA had to say:



*“Your staff was very helpful in guiding and working with us to expand this year’s event. As a result, we have had the most successful show ever in terms of participation, attendance, art sales and fund-raising - better than the results from the 68th Art Show.”*





## DIGITAL ACTIVATIONS

### YOSEMITE JOURNAL (NATIONAL PARK TRIPS)

VTC has partnered with National Park Trips for over eight years. Besides a significant digital activation, the partnership includes a full-page ad and custom content in the print and digital version of the *Yosemite Journal*.

MyYosemitePark.com: Ad and Custom Content:

Banner ad impressions: 240,000

Click through rate: .10%

*Tuolumne's Top 5 on the Edge of Yosemite* pageviews: 3,398

*San Francisco to Yosemite Road Trip* pageviews: 8,108

National Park Trips Newsletter:

Featured on February 25th: 74 clicks

Editorial on May 26th: 135 clicks

National Park Trips Facebook:

Post on February 25th: 27,807 impressions / 1,037 engagements / 495 clicks

Post on April 26th: 92,663 impressions / 2,087 engagements / 996 clicks

Leads received: 2,490

(Every lead is added to VTC's consumer email database, and is sent a Tuolumne County Travel Guide if the address is provided)

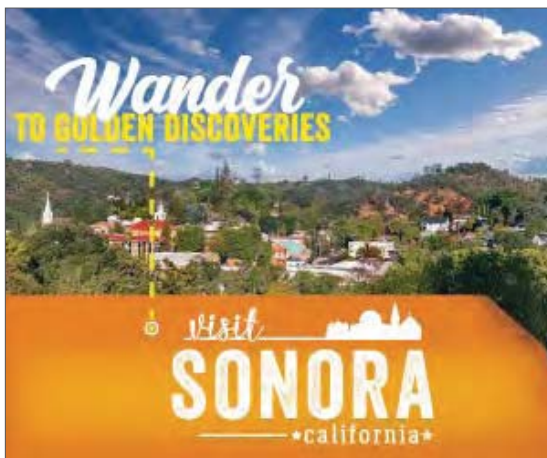
### DIABLO MAGAZINE (CITY OF SONORA-SPECIFIC)

As part of VTC's agreement with the City of Sonora, we ran digital ads with Diablo Magazine in March 2024.

Impressions: 140,015

Clicks: 192

Click through rate: .14%



## LOCAL ADVERTISING

Visit Tuolumne County actively advertises on local media outlets, including with Clarke Broadcasting radio, MyMotherLode.com, and the Union Democrat, to promote a wide range of activities and initiatives to an in-market audience. Our advertising campaigns highlight key events like Tuolumne County Art Week and promote the mobile passport trails. Additionally, we use these platforms to engage with the local business community for partnership recruiting and advertising events such as the Tourism Marketing District learning sessions.

## NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK AND CALIFORNIA TOURISM MONTH



In May 2024, the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors passed a proclamation recognizing May 19-25 as National Travel and Tourism Week and May as California Tourism Month. This proclamation recognizes the importance of tourism to Tuolumne County’s economy.

Established in 1983, National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW) is an annual tradition to celebrate the U.S. travel community and travel’s essential role in stimulating economic growth, cultivating vibrant communities, creating quality job opportunities, inspiring new businesses and elevating the quality of life for Americans every day.

-U.S. Travel Association

In 2016, the California Legislature passed a bipartisan resolution declaring May California Tourism Month, spotlighting tourism’s role as a key economic driver for the state and local communities. Travel is ingrained in the state’s very identity, and its economic and cultural benefits are undeniable.

-Visit California





## TESTIMONIALS



*"Tourism is key to all of our businesses in Twain Harte, especially in the summer months. Hopefully, more people will find out about our little piece of heaven and come to enjoy it as much as we do."*

-Carol Hancock, The Harte of the Kitchen

*"Tourism to us means getting to see old and new friends from different towns, cities, states and even countries! We love to see them and are grateful for their support so we can continue to create memories for all who visit our mini golf course."*

-Thomas and Courtney Atkins, Twain Harte Miniature Golf

*"Tourism to us here at Indigeny Reserve is to celebrate, share, and renew nature's bounty to all who come to seek the local culture in Tuolumne County. We enjoy taking people on a journey through time, taste and visual experience in a natural setting. It is what these visits/tourism are for, to relish in new experiences and explore more of what the world has to offer, by supporting our culture, it keeps our economy alive. Tourism is not only a now but a forever type of feeling, discovering and living through the stories you leave with."*

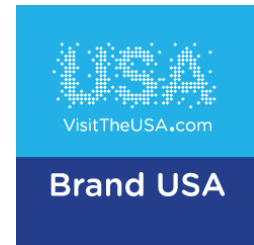
-Cassandra Hard, Indigeny Reserve



# MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS FOR REGIONAL, STATE, NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

## BRAND USA

The Destination Marketing Organization for the United States, Brand USA, works in close partnership with the travel industry to maximize the economic and social benefits of travel. These benefits include fostering understanding between people and cultures and creating jobs essential to the economy. VTC has established a longstanding relationship with Brand USA and continues to take part in their partnership campaigns to distribute content to international travelers that inspires travel to Tuolumne County. VTC opted into two partnerships with Brand USA for the 23/24 fiscal year, one being the Global Inspiration Program (GIP) and the other was an Expedia campaign that focused on the Mexico market. Both programs provide VTC the opportunity to affordably market to international markets.



### Global Inspiration Program Results:

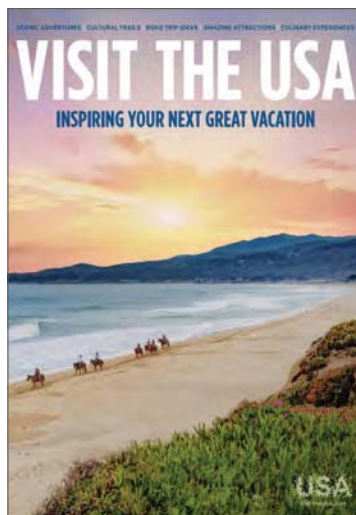
Two article inclusions and two images in print copies of the *Visit the USA Travel Guide*: 125,000 distributed. Visit the USA Travel Spotlight Hub (webpages): two placements: 54,591 total pageviews

### GIP Digital Ad Units:

IMPRESSIONS:  
**5.1 MILLION**

CLICKS:  
**17,559**

VTC-SPECIFIC CLICKS:  
**3,562** (ROI available this fall)





## VISIT CALIFORNIA

Visit California (VCA) is the official destination marketing organization for the State of California. Its primary role is to promote tourism to and within California, both domestically and internationally. Visit California works to enhance the state's economy by developing and executing marketing campaigns and strategies that highlight California as a premier travel destination.



In addition to marketing campaigns, Visit California engages in public relations, media relations, and partnerships with travel trade organizations. It also conducts research and provides valuable insights into tourism trends and data, which help guide the state's tourism strategy and initiatives.

As a partner of Visit California, Tuolumne County is highlighted in several areas on VCA's website. We contribute content for public relations initiatives and event calendars, and we participate in familiarization tours and other events. Our representation extends to various committees, with the President & CEO of Visit Tuolumne County currently serving as the Vice-Chair of Visit California's Rural Committee and as a member of the Marketing Advisory Committee.

VTC has been involved in numerous VCA cooperative marketing campaigns, including one dedicated and three sponsored e-newsletters, a full-page and a quarter-page ad in the Official California Visitors Guide, a half-page ad in VCA's Road Trips Guide\*, and the Leveraged Co-op Digital Ad program. Additionally, VTC attended VCA's annual industry conference, Outlook Forum, to stay updated on the latest destination marketing trends through various seminars and networking opportunities.

\*In 2023/2024, we received 581 unique leads through placed ads, all of which received a Tuolumne County Travel Guide and were added to VTC's consumer email database if an email address was provided.

### VCA Leveraged Co-op Digital Ad Program (2):

VTC in collaboration with Black Oak Casino Resort invested \$8,000 into the program and VCA matched 25% for an added \$2,000 for a total investment of \$10,000.

- The campaign ran from October 15, 2023-December 31, 2023, resulting in 259 confirmed travelers to Tuolumne County and a visitor spend of \$41,699.
- The return on ad spend for this campaign was \$5.21:1.

IMPRESSIONS:

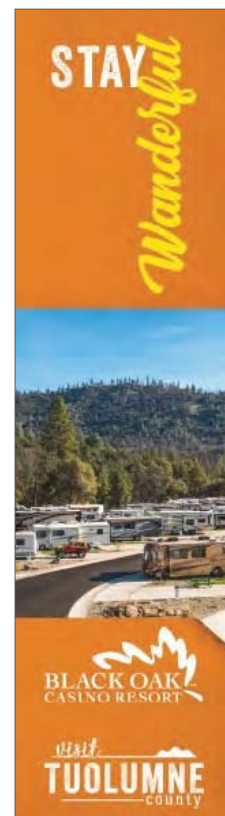
**2 MILLION**

CLICKS:

**1,727**

CLICK THROUGH RATE:

**.09%**



## VISIT CALIFORNIA *continued*

VTC invested \$10,000 into the second dedicated program and VCA matched 25% for an added \$2,500 for a total investment of \$12,500

- The campaign ran from November 1, 2023-January 31, 2024, resulting in 108 confirmed travelers to Tuolumne County and a visitor spend of \$17,388.
- The return on ad spend for this campaign was \$1.74:1

IMPRESSIONS:

**2.3 MILLION**

CLICKS:

**3,000**

CLICK THROUGH RATE:

**.130%**

Emails:

Dedicated (Tuolumne County is the sole focus): October 2023

DELIVERED:

**239,691**

TOTAL OPENED:

**138,257 (57%)**

CLICKS:

**2,395**

CLICK THROUGH RATE:

**1.69%**

Sponsored (VTC ad embedded): November 2023, March 2024, May 2024

AVG. DELIVERED:

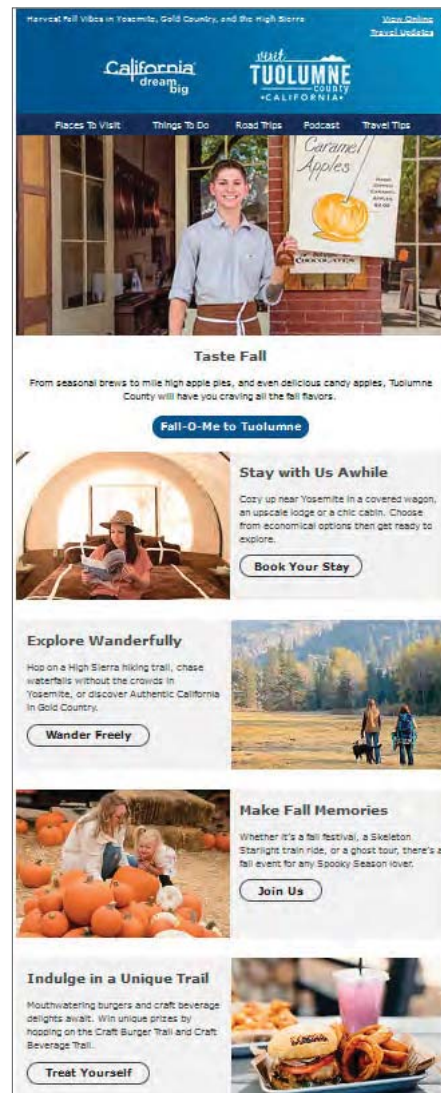
**232,364**

AVG. OPENED:

**117,000**

AVG. CLICKS ON VTC ADS:

**65**



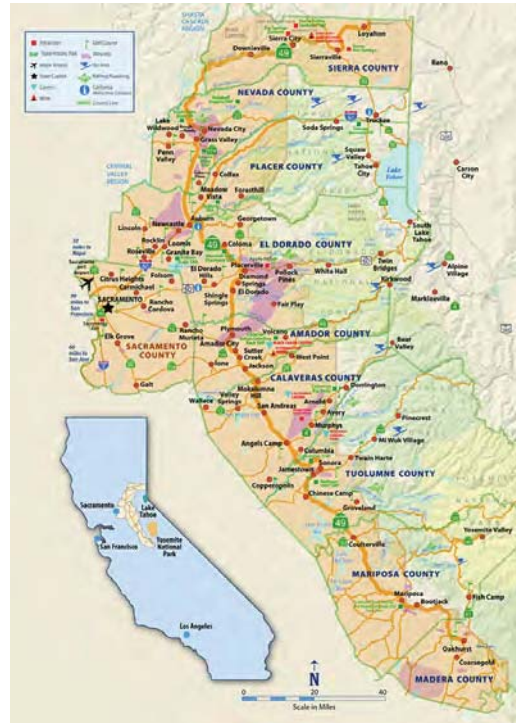


## GOLD COUNTRY VISITORS ASSOCIATION

Visit California breaks down the state into 12 marketing regions. Eight regions fall under the rural umbrella, and VTC falls under both the Gold Country and the High Sierra regions. VTC President & CEO is currently the Vice-Chair of Visit California’s Rural Committee.



Visit Tuolumne County continues to be a key participant in Visit California’s regional marketing organization, the Gold Country Visitors Association (GCVA). Visit California provides matching funds (up to \$60K for 2023-2024). GCVA has a strong marketing focus on pillars that further reinforce VTC’s own marketing efforts including multigenerational family travel, culinary and wine, history, and outdoor adventure. GCVA remains working with a Public Relations strategist to help organize the region when it comes to submitting news, organizing a fam tour or reworking the GCVA press kit. GCVA also has a social media manager who carefully and diligently promotes the entire Gold Country region. This last year GCVA was able to shift some funding to social media advertising which helped bring in new followers and increased engagement and awareness of California’s Gold Country.



Last year the GCVA map proved to be more popular than ever. So much so that there were two print runs for it. GCVA also attends US Travel Association’s IPW which helps strengthen VTC’s presence and messaging at this important industry event. VTC President & CEO continues as President of the GCVA.

## HIGH SIERRA VISITORS COUNCIL

In addition to the Gold Country region, VTC is also part of the High Sierra region, represented by the High Sierra Visitors Council (HSVC). Similar to the GCVA, HSVC receives matching funds from Visit California for the purpose of leveraging membership funds for marketing purposes. HSVC collaborates with Local Freshies, a regional digital marketing team, for domestic social media promotion and website services. Internationally, HSVC focuses on France, and partners with Interface Tourism Group, a European marketing and public relations agency, to promote the region through marketing, social media, and public relations initiatives.



## INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

VTC belongs to several industry associations, all of which are of great benefit to Tuolumne County's tourism industry. Organizations such as Destinations International and DMA West (recently rebranded as One West Tourism Alliance) each deliver different benefits and provide helpful insights into the travel industry, offering educational resources and, thereby, benefiting the tourism efforts VTC implores in Tuolumne County.

CalTravel Association is another key organization providing opportunities for advocacy and education. The National Tour Association gives VTC access to thousands of tour operators across the country who can learn about Tuolumne County and develop product that includes Tuolumne County on their itineraries.

In the 23/24 year, VTC continued to subscribe to and partner with organizations that we have lasting strong relationships.

- California Film Commission
- CalTravel Association
- Destinations International
- One West Tourism Alliance (formerly DMA West)—VTC President & CEO serves on Board of Directors
- Meeting Planners International
- National Tour Association
- Public Relations Society of America
- US Travel Association
- Visit the USA – UK and Ireland



# INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

## BLACK DIAMOND

Visit Tuolumne County continues to work with Black Diamond, a leading full-service travel marketing agency based in London. They help elevate the Visit Tuolumne County brand to travelers in several sectors of the UK and Ireland. Here's a look at 2023-2024 by the numbers:

- 235 agents trained
- 40 sales calls
- 6 training sessions
- 4 events attended on behalf of Tuolumne County
- 4 trade newsletters
- 2 co-op campaigns
- 1 group fam trip (3 product managers and 1 travel trade media)
- \$413,008 Media coverage value
- 76 Media meetings
- 74 Media coverage pieces
- 71 Media pitches
- 14 PR newsletters
- 1 group media trip (4 influencers and 1 Irish media)

### Travel Trade:

Promotion included the launch of our co-op campaign with the travel trade publication, *Travel Gossip*. Launching at the end of November, the campaign ran for a month and included a variety of activity including an online advertorial with 100,000 page views/month. Solus email to 10,000+ newsletter subscribers which has a 45% average open rate. Take 5 with *Travel Gossip*, where VTC President & CEO, Lisa Mayo was interviewed (guaranteed 3,000 views per episode).

Another travel trade promotion currently underway is with American Road Trip Company, a specialist tour operator. The campaign is a co-op with three other Northern California destinations: San Francisco, Monterey, and Lake Tahoe. It provides direct emails to 2,000 clients, top billing on the ARTC website, social media outreach including a \$15,000 "Northern California Road Trip" Instagram campaign. This program runs June 2024-July 2024 and therefore results are not yet available.

Black Diamond also assists tour operators by providing information on new products that are relevant to the tour operators' clientele. This is called product development. As a result of these efforts North America Travel Service has added Tuolumne County to its Yosemite page and is now selling the new Firefall Ranch. British Airways Holidays has added Rush Creek Lodge & Spa as a hotel option. Kuoni has added Rush Creek Lodge & Spa and Evergreen Lodge to their offerings.

The opening of Firefall Ranch was also promoted via e-newsletter to the Black Diamond trade database. It included a comprehensive introduction and overview of the property, its proximity to nearby attractions, and the inclusion of images, bed banks, and a brief write-up that agents can use to promote Firefall Ranch.

Black Diamond represented Tuolumne County at various travel trade events where they are able to meet intimately with key tour operators and even airline carriers like Aer Lingus. Events included Visit USA Ireland Thanksgiving Event, Virgin Atlantic Sky High (BD team met with over 130 Virgin Atlantic sales staff), Travel Counsellors Conference (BD participated with Visit California) and Visit California Planning Day in March where Tuolumne County was one of 19 California destinations represented and promoted to the travel trade.



## BLACK DIAMOND *continued*

### Public Relations

Every year, Black Diamond provides us with an incredible return on investment when it comes to media coverage. They include Tuolumne County news highlighting new attractions, outdoor activities, food and drink and new hotel openings. This news coincides with press releases that are regularly sent out to BD's media list. They also pitch Tuolumne County to relevant media. This might include new openings, festivals and events, seasonal activities and arts and culture.

The fiscal year started off with an incredible 10-page spread all about Tuolumne County in the UK's *National Geographic Traveller*. This one print article was a \$113,645 value, and the online version was a \$79,288 value.

Through Black Diamond, VTC hosted a group media trip for four UK content creators and one Irish journalist. The group stayed at the Sonora Inn and at Lillaskog Lodge. Their itinerary highlights included:

- Columbia State Historic Park
- Cider tasting at Indigeny Reserve
- Hike to Cleo's Bath from Pinecrest Lake (diverting to Cleo's was spontaneous on their part!)
- Pub quiz at Around the Horn Brewing Company
- Jeep tour with Miller's Off-Road Adventures
- Ribbon cutting at Firefall Ranch (this was a fantastic opportunity get immediate media mentions of Firefall Ranch)
- Spa afternoon at Rush Creek Lodge and Spa

This group provided so much content and it was an awesome opportunity for VTC to collaborate with them on their social media channels.

Black Diamond has helped us in pushing out news in advance of openings so they are already known by the time they open. One such example is Under Canvas with its new glamping accommodations set to open in May 2025.

We will continue to work with Black Diamond and further develop our brand in the UK and Ireland market.



## GLOBAL MARKETING AND SALES (GMS)

2023-2024 was the first year that VTC contracted with an agency representing the Mexico market. GMS was contracted for both media (including social and influencers) and travel trade. We had some big wins with them this year.

Social media ad performance was strong with over 8 million people reached, nearly 300,000 engagements and 214,672 clicks onto VTC's Spanish landing page, *Visita Tuolumne*.

Early in the year there was an influencer collaboration with top Mexican travel content creator, @yosoyviajera who has 1.6 million followers. Her time in Tuolumne County included visiting Columbia State Historic Park, Pinecrest, Twain Harte and Hetch Hetchy. Her campaign for Tuolumne County reached over 950,000 people through her two YouTube videos, Instagram post, TikTok and 30 Instagram stories.

Following the 2024 IPW in Los Angeles, a media collaboration took place with three Colombian journalists. This collaboration focused on Highway 120 and included three reels, one Instagram post and 65 Instagram stories.

Visit Tuolumne County was very excited to learn that Marco Beteta, a renowned Mexican Gastronomic Leader would be visiting Tuolumne County. Marco has visited over 14,500 restaurants worldwide and has over 30 years in the industry. Marco promoted Tuolumne County to his 179,000 followers through 10 Instagram stories, and a truly exciting outcome of his visit was that after a special food tasting at The Branch of Twain Harte, he included The Branch in his 2024 *50 Top Places to Eat in California Guide!* Along with this came an incredible write-up celebrating the savory dishes served up by The Branch's Chef Matt Garcia.



On the travel trade side, GMS held 22 webinars educating key partners about Tuolumne County. Additionally, there were 117 sales calls, and there are ongoing training sessions with top travel agencies and tour operators. According to research from Tourism Economics, 62% of this market prefer luxury hotels followed by standard hotels.

Result: Business and lodging partners are reporting an uptick in customers from Mexico. Additionally, according to Visit California, the highest travel spend in California comes from the Mexico market with spending anticipated to be \$938 million in 2024 with steady growth expected through at least 2028.

## DESTINATION COUNSELLORS INTERNATIONAL (DCI) – CANADA

DCI is a full-service marketing agency that provides representation in the Canadian market. VTC has worked with DCI off and on for about five years. This past year DCI provided several media opportunities to highlight Tuolumne County including several press visits with a focus on the Vancouver and Toronto markets.

The year started off with a broadcast partnership with CTV Vancouver where we had a VTC spokesperson discuss all the great reasons for visiting Tuolumne County whether traveling as a single person, a family, or a couple. This broadcast reached over 1.5 million people with an online audience of 604,000 for a total ad value of just over \$20,000.

Media partnerships included an editorial content partnership with St. Joseph’s Media on a *HELLO!* Canada promotion. This included print, digital and social media postings and boosted posts. Some great results came from this as the time spent engaging with the campaign was 2 minutes and 20 seconds and the article page view of 1,400 exceeded the benchmark by four times. Actual total impressions from the campaign reached over 4.8 million, five times the reach!

With DCI we also enlisted a Visiting Journalist program. This is where individual journalists traveled to Tuolumne County to experience our destination for themselves. Journalists visited from the following outlets:

- *Canadian World Traveller*, Article by Jennifer Merrick: *The High Sierra: Divine Road Tripping in Tuolumne County, California*

Jennifer refers to Tuolumne County as “divinely beautiful,” especially for lovers of outdoors and great road trips. Her story takes readers through her journey to the destination, starting from her drive from San Francisco to getting lost (figuratively) in the beautiful scenery of Tuolumne County. Jennifer seamlessly integrates VTC’s partners throughout her story – narrating her unforgettable experiences like including horseback riding at Aspen Meadow, sipping cider at Indigency Reserve, crunching with a view at The Sugar Shack, enjoying Pinecrest Lake, exploring downtown Sonora, learning about the Gold Rush at Columbia State Historic Park and driving down Sonora Pass. The timing of the article was ideal, as it served to inspire Canadian readers to book their next outdoor adventure for the spring.

**CREATED FOR TUOLUMNE COUNTY**

### Your Perfect Itinerary for a Girls' Trip to Tuolumne County

From Yosemite to the High Sierra, we have your ultimate girls' getaway covered.

**T**here's nothing more fun and relaxing than ditching your responsibilities for a girls' getaway. Whether it's a weekend or a whole week, the ultimate girls' trip has a few requirements. A group of your best friends is key – but picking the right destination is no less important.

With three main regions – Yosemite, Gold Country and the High Sierra – Tuolumne County in northern California offers everything you need for a better vacation: a mix of active and laid-back activities everyone will enjoy, awe-dropping scenery, and accommodations that are great for groups.

Here are five can't-miss excursions for the ultimate girls' trip itinerary in Tuolumne County.

**La dolce vita – Tuolumne style**

An afternoon sipping Pinotblends and Merlotblends wines while enjoying soft breezes and vineyard views? You don't have to venture all the way to Italy to enjoy some dolce vita time just north of here. Nestled in the rolling foothills of the High Sierra, **Giaroli Vineyards** is an award-winning Italian-style winery, renowned for its award-winning Pinotblends. Sample your way through their extensive list with an afternoon tasting at Giaroli's picturesque outdoor tasting area, or settle in for an afternoon of cozy sips in the indoor tasting room.

**Blend with nature**

Spending time in the gorgeous great outdoors not only increases happiness but it can deepen social bonds, research shows. In other words, spending a day in **Yosemite National Park** is one way to ensure you reap all the friendship-boosting benefits of a girls' getaway.

But that's just one reason why a day in Yosemite checks all the boxes. Known for its spectacular waterfalls and offering more than 1,000 kilometers of hiking trails, from gentle walks to the more challenging Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoia trail and others, Yosemite promises a day of fresh air and exercise your group will never forget.

**Historic, laid-back digs**

Accommodations fit for a group, with unique ambience and amenities that will enhance your stay, are an absolute must when it comes to a great girls' getaway. **Amy Z Resort** is just the place. This true mountain retreat is based in Tenaya Hills and offers a range of picturesque cabins and cottages with some 60 up to 12 guests – it's the perfect fit.

**Spa Day**

Of course, no girls' getaway is complete without a day of decadent pampering. Located in charming downtown Sonora, **Amelia Center and Spa Lounge** is just the place. Start your group relaxation with a detoxifying hot treatment, an organic massage and 30-minute hot rock followed by a soothing of your waters at the end.

Ready to book your trip? Head to [www.tuolumne.com](http://www.tuolumne.com) to discover all the hot offerings that await you in this northern Californian oasis.

**5 most Instagrammable spots in Tuolumne**

|   |  |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Pinecrest Lake, Tuolumne County</b>  | <b>Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite National Park</b>                        | <b>Railtown 1887 State Historic Park</b>   | <b>Alto of the World</b>  | <b>Five Pointe Vista Point</b>   |
| This 200-acre lake offers picturesque views of the Sierra and soft oak forests along the shore. | Capture beautiful mountain scenery and a dramatic night snow backdrop. | Known as the "house on a hill," Railtown has supported in countless TV shows and movies. | With great wine, coffee, and food, Alto of the World is one of the most scenic spots in California. | One of the most scenic viewpoints in California, with beautiful views of the Sierra. |



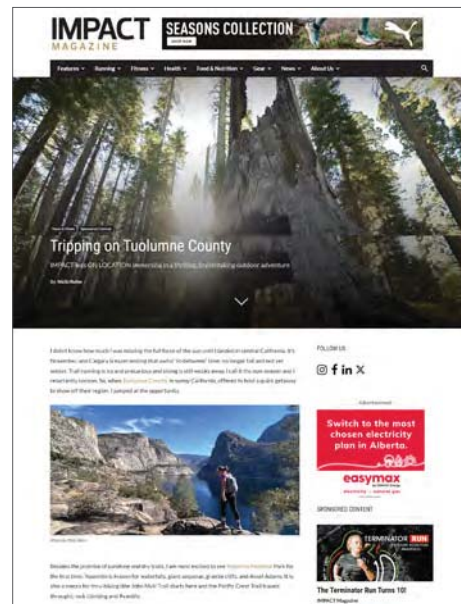
**DCI – CANADA** *continued*

- *Times Colonist*, Article by Kim Pemberton: *Gateway to Yosemite: Relive the Gold Rush in California*

The *Times Colonist* is the oldest daily newspaper in Western Canada and the dominant publication in Victoria, British Columbia, the province’s capital. Kim’s itinerary focused on capturing fall content in the three distinct areas of the County. She experienced hiking through the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias, the spa treatments at Rush Creek Lodge and Spa, and dining at Emberz, Mountain Sage, The Sugar Shack and Indigeny Reserve – all of which were highlighted within the story.

- *IMPACT Magazine*, Article by Nicki Rehn: *Tripping on Tuolumne*

The story narrates Nicki’s account of the destination, from the scenic fall drive to Sonoma, and five-kilometer shake-out run on the trails in Dragoon Gulch, to her meals at The Armory and Eproson House, and her stay at Lazy Z Resort and Rush Creek Lodge and Spa. Nicki highlights the generous partners who we worked with to curate her itinerary, and her story focuses on the unmatched and peaceful outdoor experience that the destination offers, especially for active travelers who enjoy hiking while traveling. We’re very happy to see this story come to life through *IMPACT Magazine* – where the Canadian readers are looking for outdoor, health and wellness adventures, such as those in Tuolumne County.



# MEETINGS MARKET

Visit Tuolumne County continues to work toward securing more groups and meetings business in Tuolumne County. This is an important segment of the travel and tourism market because it can help to bring business at off-peak times like midweek. We have discovered that it is a challenging market for Tuolumne County as our destination does not have any nearby airports that service large carriers. Our focus will remain on touting our unique and intimate meeting venues to the Bay Area and Sacramento drive markets.

## MEETING PLANNER GUIDE AND 360-DEGREE VIDEO

To align with current trends and demands, VTC refreshed the meeting planner guide, adding new information, venues, services, and team-building activities. This guide helps planners organize the best meetings or getaways for their groups. Another tool meeting planners utilize is 360-degree video, which allows them to visualize the setup of their event within the space. VTC collaborates with a local video professional to capture 360-degree videos of meeting spaces in Tuolumne County. VTC has shared the 360-video with participating partners so they can use it to promote their space on their own websites, social media, etc.



## VISIT CALIFORNIA'S MEET WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Visit California's Meet What's Possible initiative promotes California as the place for professional meetings and events. Tuolumne County is one of 55 destinations included in this initiative that touts the state's creativity, positivity, sustainability and technological innovation. Meet What's Possible is promoted through digital and print ads that can be found in the publications most trusted by professional planners. [californiameetings.com](http://californiameetings.com)



Credit: Kim Carroll - Rush Creek Lodge

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Visit Tuolumne County maintains a robust social media presence across multiple platforms to engage and attract visitors. Over the course of the year, we contracted with Diamond Digital Marketing, Inc. to manage several of our accounts. Across our channels we share updates, events, and visually captivating photos and videos, highlighting outdoor adventures, local culture, new offerings, pertinent updates, and more.

## SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS AND ANALYTICS

FY 2023-2024

All channels saw an increase in followers, and in all VTC has 63,526 followers, which accounts for a nearly 10% growth over the previous year.

| Channel   | Followers as of 6/30/24 | Results              | Engagement Rate |
|-----------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Facebook  | 39,600                  | Reach: 4.3 million   | --              |
| Instagram | 19,000                  | Reach: 1 million     | 6.47%*          |
| TikTok    | 2,100                   | Video Views: 285,667 | 5%**            |
| X         | 1,700                   | Not available        | --              |
| Pinterest | 694                     | Impressions 138,530  | --              |
| Linkedin  | 238                     | Impressions 3,000    | --              |

\*Average for Travel, Hospitality, and Leisure: 1.44%. Data provided by Hootsuite.

\*\* Average for Travel, Hospitality, and Leisure: 0.55%. Data provided by Hootsuite.



The Tuolumne County Film Commission is also represented on social media—Facebook and Instagram. There are currently a total of 2,200 followers across both channels. While most of the engagement comes from locals, we do tend to see reach as far as Spain and Chile! Highlighting our gorgeous potential film locations on social media platforms presents the possibility of hosting more film productions in the future.

### TOP PERFORMING POSTS

#### Facebook



REACH:  
**55,156**

IMPRESSIONS:  
**57,785**

INTERACTIONS:  
**1,162**

REACTIONS:  
**945**

#### Instagram



REACH:  
**65,254**

IMPRESSIONS:  
**69,034**

INTERACTIONS:  
**7,334**

LIKES:  
**3,782**

A current travel trend, “set-jetting,” involves travelers visiting a given place to experience the location that was involved in the making of a specific film or television series. This trend also includes the possibility of set-jetting to “dupes” or look-alikes to a given film location even if it wasn’t actually filmed in that spot. The film commission and VTC are leaning into this trend to revitalize the commission’s social media accounts.



# PUBLIC RELATIONS

Journalists can reach a wide audience through their articles, blogs, or social media posts, which helps raise awareness of the destination as they and their respective outlets target specific demographics and/or markets and niches such as leisure travelers, adventure seekers, food enthusiasts, cultural tourists, etc. It's also a cost-effective way to gain media coverage compared to traditional advertising. The return on investment can be significant when the journalists produce high-quality content that resonates with their audience. This past year we have worked with Laurie Armstrong-Gossy, a public relations specialist in various PR areas, and her experience and outreach in this area has helped us to secure several journalists and media mentions. Articles about travel in Tuolumne County are often published as a result of media pitches and journalist visits.

## METRICS FOR VTC PUBLIC RELATIONS

|                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 134<br>Total Articles      | 259.62K<br>Journalist Reach      |
| 18,729<br>Total Engagement | 9.77M<br>Similarweb Average UVM* |
| 139<br>Average Engagement  | 1.31B<br>Similarweb Total UVM    |
| 25<br>Journalist Shares    | \$12.72M<br>Total AVE**          |

\*UVM=Unique visitors per month  
\*\*AVE=Estimated ad value

## MEDIA PITCHES

Media pitches involve proactive outreach to journalists and publications, presenting them with story ideas, unique aspects of the County, and events or attractions worth covering. These pitches aim to spark interest and encourage journalists to explore and write about the County's offerings.

## MEDIA VISITS

Journalist visits, also known as press trips or fam trips, are another key method of garnering media coverage. These visits provide journalists with firsthand experiences of Tuolumne County's attractions, natural beauty, cultural events, and more. By experiencing the area personally, journalists can gather authentic insights and content for their articles. These efforts help increase media coverage and awareness of Tuolumne County as a travel destination.

In 2023/2024 year VTC hosted nine journalists on independent trips and eleven others who were part of mixed (media and travel trade) fam trips.



## INFLUENCERS

VTC hosted nine influencers on independent trips and an additional three who were on mixed fam trips.

There are many reasons for hosting influencers to promote our destination:

- **Reach and Engagement:** Influencers often have large, dedicated followings on social media platforms. They can reach a broad audience quickly, generating awareness and interest in a destination.
- **Targeted Marketing:** They often cater to specific niches, such as adventure travel, luxury, wellness, or food. This allows DMOs to target specific demographics more precisely than traditional advertising methods.
- **Authenticity and Trust:** They are often seen as authentic and relatable by their followers. Their personal experiences and endorsements can carry significant weight, making their audience more likely to consider visiting the destination.
- **Content Creation:** Influencers are skilled at creating engaging and visually appealing content, including photos, videos, and blog posts. This content can be shared across various channels, providing DMOs with high-quality materials to use in their marketing efforts.
- **Real-Time Engagement:** They can provide real-time updates and interactions, which can generate excitement and immediacy around a destination.
- **Cost-Effective Marketing:** Compared to traditional advertising, influencer marketing can be more cost-effective, especially when targeting specific audiences. Influencers can offer flexible arrangements, including product exchanges, travel sponsorships, or other collaborations.
- **Storytelling and Narrative:** Influencers excel at storytelling, making destinations come alive through personal experiences and narratives. This can create a more compelling and memorable portrayal of a place.
- **Measurable Results:** VTC can track the success of influencer campaigns through metrics such as engagement rates, reach, website traffic, and conversions, allowing for data-driven decisions and adjustments in marketing strategies.





## FAMILIARIZATION TRIPS

Just as hosting journalists and influencers has many benefits, hosting travel trade representatives serves multiple strategic purposes as well. Familiarization trips provide tour operators or travel agents firsthand experience of what the County has to offer. This exposure allows participants to gain in-depth knowledge of the destination, enabling them to better promote and sell Tuolumne County as a travel destination to their clientele.

Journalists and travel trade representatives will sometimes visit individually, and other times there are groups of journalists, travel trade representatives, or combinations of both. VTC hosted 22 trips in total. The largest fam we hosted, the IPW-Post fam in collaboration with Visit California, occurred directly after the IPW event in Los Angeles. The fam, called Strike Gold, included nine journalists and eleven travel trade representatives. Tuolumne County was one destination where they spent one night, during a tour that included Gold Country destinations.

In the 2023/2024 year, VTC hosted 74 individuals throughout multiple fam trips, that included journalists, travel trade representatives, and influencers.

VTC engages many local lodging, dining, and activities partners to participate in these fams, and as VTC incurs most of the cost of these trips, many partners provide us with reduced rates or donated rooms and services.



# TRAVEL INDUSTRY EVENTS

## EDUCATION EVENTS

### ONE WEST TOURISM ALLIANCE EDUCATION SUMMIT

The One West Tourism Alliance (formerly Destination Marketing Association of the West) Education Summit is a place for peers to share their successes and challenges in the travel industry. It provides an excellent opportunity for learning and growing. Understanding how other destinations handle certain issues and gaining tips and tricks for marketing Tuolumne County are just some of the outcomes of this annual conference. Three VTC team members attended the event in South Lake Tahoe in October 2023.

### ONE WEST TOURISM ALLIANCE TECH SUMMIT

One West Tourism Alliance's annual Tech Summit features educational seminars about the newest technological trends specialized for the tourism industry. There are networking opportunities throughout the course of the three-day event, and the vendor showcase introduces attendees to new technological platforms, some of which VTC uses as a result of the showcase. Two VTC team members attended this year's event in Mesa, Arizona in March 2024.

### ONE WEST TOURISM ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

This is one of the most popular conferences for DMO CEOs each year. It is an intimate gathering where CEOs can freely share their greatest moments and their biggest challenges. During part of this conference the group breaks out into various sessions to have more in-depth conversations on specific topics whether it be event management, human resources, or destination planning. Often times groups will be broken down by budget size.

### VISIT CALIFORNIA OUTLOOK FORUM

This year's Visit California Outlook Forum was held in Palm Springs in March 2024, and three VTC team members attended. Outlook is an opportunity for California's tourism industry to come together to focus on the state of tourism in the Golden State. Each year attendees hear from a variety of industry leaders including airline CEOs, US Travel Association, and Brand USA. One of the most interesting, as well as useful, sessions each year is hearing from VCA's international markets and learning about the latest trends of travelers from those countries, such as their interests, types of lodging they prefer, etc. This includes considerations like destination spend in California, visitation forecasts, and airlift information. View the VCA International Market Profiles: [industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/global-market-profiles-landing](https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/global-market-profiles-landing)

Every other year the prestigious Poppy Awards of several themes are awarded to DMOs and tourism businesses for outstanding work and contributions toward building and strengthening the tourism economy. Although VTC submitted entries for several awards, we did not win one this year, but Rush Creek Lodge at Yosemite won a Poppy for their "Trade Trash for Spa Treatments" campaign that coincides with Groveland Facelift.

### CALTRAVEL SUMMIT

As CalTravel is the advocacy association for California's tourism industry, this conference focuses on the hot topics in the DMO world including pressing advocacy issues. It covers topics that are very close to the tourism industry including economics, politics, stewardship and sustainability, funding models, homelessness, visa entry wait times, and more. The conference also leaves ample time to encourage idea sharing and insights and lays the groundwork for building solid relationships amongst those in and related to the tourism industry. Two VTC team members attended, and VTC President & CEO sat on a panel regarding tourism business improvement districts.

### VISIT EL DORADO COUNTY TOURISM SUMMIT

Every year Visit El Dorado County hosts a one-day tourism summit. There is always meaningful content including social media, Visit California updates, how to work with tour operators, and much more. This event is both educational and another opportunity to network with people who are a part of the Gold Country's tourism and hospitality industry. It also provides the chance to reconnect with regional partners. VTC's President & CEO attends this event.

### VISIT CALIFORNIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Visit California has quarterly Board Meetings, and as a member of the VCA Marketing Advisory Committee, VTC President & CEO attends these when time allows. The Board Meetings provide in depth insights into VCA marketing plans, budgeting as well as research and travel and tourism trends. All of this is helpful information for VTC's own planning and budgeting.

## MEDIA EVENTS

### INTERNATIONAL MEDIA MARKETPLACE

VTC's public relations representative attended the annual International Media Marketplace in New York City in January 2024. Laurie Armstrong-Gossy, VTC publicist, met with 24 travel media members which resulted in two media visits with multiple social media posts and article pick-ups.

### VISIT CALIFORNIA SAN FRANCISCO MEDIA EVENT

Each year Visit California provides media outreach events where they secure an upscale venue to host vetted travel journalists so that they can meet one on one with various destinations throughout California. Not every destination that wants to attend can, so it is extremely exciting when VTC is able to attend. In April 2024, Laurie Armstrong-Gossy met with nearly 100 travel journalists at the event, where we shared representation with Visit Lake Tahoe. From this event there is much follow up and it will also result in media familiarization tours followed by articles, media mentions, and/or posts about Tuolumne County.



### SOCIETY OF AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITERS VIRTUAL MARKETPLACE

This virtual media event on June 26, 2024 was attended by Laurie Armstrong-Gossy, VTC publicist, and she met with 15 travel media members. The Gold Country Visitors Association also had a presence at this event.

## TRAVEL TRADE EVENTS

### NATIONAL TOUR ASSOCIATION TRAVEL EXCHANGE

The National Tour Association (NTA) Travel Exchange is an annual event that brings together travel professionals, including tour operators, suppliers, and destination representatives, from around the world. It's a marketplace for networking, learning, and conducting business. Participants have the opportunity to meet with potential business partners, discover new products and services, and attend educational sessions on industry trends and best practices.



### NATIONAL TOUR ASSOCIATION'S CONTACT

VTC attended the National Tour Association's Contact event. This event is exclusive to tour operators and the only way a DMO can attend is by sponsoring the convention. VTC was one of less than a dozen DMOs, and we had quality time networking and building relationships with tour operators, other DMOs, and tour suppliers. This event has resulted in at least one new tour group coming to Tuolumne County.

### GO WEST SUMMIT

Go West Summit is a combination of a day of educational seminars and two days of one-on-one meetings connecting tourism industry suppliers, such as VTC, with buyers (travel agents, tour operators, etc.) and media from all over the world. A VTC team member attended this year's event in South Lake Tahoe at the end of February. We had 52 appointments with travel trade and media representatives from eight countries, U.S., Canada, Mexico, U.K., Germany, India, China, and The Philippines. These meetings, although short, are a way for us to introduce Tuolumne County to buyers or present new product to buyers who already do business in the County.



### IPW

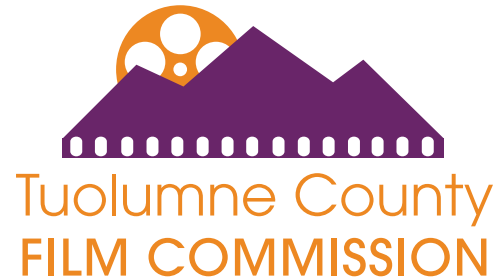
In May 2024, two members of the VTC team along with three hotelier partners from Rush Creek and Evergreen Lodges, the Sonora Inn and Hotel Lumberjack, and Under Canvas Yosemite attended IPW in Los Angeles. IPW is the largest travel show on U.S. soil. We met with 50 travel journalists and influencers and 70 travel trade representatives such as tour operators and travel agents. These meetings provide the opportunity to meet one-on-one with buyers to introduce them to Tuolumne County or, if they are already doing business here, it's a time for us to introduce them to new product and keep Tuolumne County top of mind. Networking events throughout the week provide additional opportunities for growing relationships and meeting new industry representatives.

Visit California's thirteen international offices are also represented at IPW and it is an opportunity for us to introduce Tuolumne County to those representatives who may not otherwise know about us. Prior to the start of each IPW, Visit California hosts a California Caucus to inform the California delegation of strategies, insights, and expectations.



## FILM COMMISSION

Visit Tuolumne County continues to promote Tuolumne County as a film location. Tuolumne County has a long history of filmmaking dating back to the 1920's. While filming has not been as prominent in recent years, this last year saw an increase in film activity. Popular locations include the (new) old jail as well as historic hotels. Since June 2023, we've had seven film permit applications submitted to us and approved by the County.



The filming with the greatest economic impact was the Lowe's Home Improvement television commercial which aired during Super Bowl weekend. This production accounted for a minimum of 480 hotel nights, mostly midweek in early December, an otherwise slower time of year. A crew of up to 100 people were given a per diem to spend on meals at local restaurants and fees were paid to use a local ranch, rent goats, chickens, and parking space. Locals were also used in the commercial and received a stipend as well.

Another production was the popular series *Ghost Adventures* that filmed in Jamestown. This was the second time that *Ghost Adventures* has filmed in Tuolumne County with the last time being in 2013. The crew could be seen around town giving autographs to local fans.

*Row, Don't Drift* was the first production to use the old County jail. They also filmed at Sierra Rock. This is a short film about Yoshi Kubo, a Merced County farmer born and raised in the US who was among the 100,000 Americans of Japanese descent who were evicted from their homes and sent to an internment camp. The story is of his unconventional stand against oppression.

Small productions and even still shoots have helped Tuolumne County to get noticed as a destination for filming once again. Production managers and location scouts have commented that they will "tell their friends" about how film-friendly Tuolumne County is. It appears they have been doing just that.



It has been a pleasure to work with the County's Community Development Department to secure film permits in an efficient and helpful manner.

Visit Tuolumne County is also working on the [FilmTuolumne.org](http://FilmTuolumne.org) website to update photos and provide additional film history information.

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Each year Visit Tuolumne County supports local non-profit organizations to provide sponsorships and/or funds for destination development, beautification, and public arts support. VTC has the Visit Tuolumne County Community Investment Fund account at the Sonora Area Foundation where they help us to award funds for various applicants as related to Tuolumne County's travel and tourism industry.

In 2023-2024 over \$50,000 was distributed to the following organizations and projects:

- Access Fund for Shell Road Parking Project
- Con Amor, 2024 Cinco de Mayo Event
- Don Pedro Recreation Agency, Don Pedro Fireworks Show
- Groveland Trail Heads, 2024 Groveland Grind
- Mother Lode Art Association, 69th Annual Art Show and Exhibition
- MVP Disc Sports HQ
- Pine Mountain Lake, Roping in the Pines
- Promotion Club of Jamestown, Rods to Rails Car Show
- Red Barn Productions, Back to 1885 Event (Back to the Future)
- Sierra Repertory Theatre, Performance Sponsor
- Sonora Chamber of Commerce, 2nd Saturday Sponsorship
- Sonora Chamber of Commerce, Holly Jolly Wagon
- Sonora Chamber of Commerce, Opera & Broadway at the Opera Hall
- Sonora FFA
- Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society, Wine Tasting Cruise
- Tuolumne County Arts, InFocus Photography Event
- Tuolumne County Parks & Recreation Department, Standard Park Sponsorship
- Tuolumne County Sheriff's Posse, Mother Lode Round-Up
- Twain Harte Chamber of Commerce, Summer Concerts in the Park
- Yosemite Highway 120 Chamber of Commerce, 49er Festival and Chili Cookoff
- Yosemite Highway 120 Chamber of Commerce, Beautification Project



In addition to financial sponsorship, VTC provides marketing support for several community-based non-profit events and activities. This includes outreach such as event listings on [visittuolumne.com](http://visittuolumne.com), special social media promotions, and media visits. From time to time VTC also provides auction items for various organization fundraisers.



## CURRENTLY & LOOKING AHEAD

The Visit Tuolumne County team continues to market Tuolumne County using proven strategies that have continued to grow tourism year over year. We attend industry conferences and other events that advance our insights and knowledge of the latest trends in destination promotion and technology. We also learn about co-operative marketing programs that allow us to stretch our precious marketing dollars in the most strategic ways possible.

This year we are excited to immerse Tuolumne County into the German market with MSi, a German-based marketing agency. MSi is already working to ensure that Tuolumne County is featured in itineraries in the German, Swiss, and Austrian travel markets. We have also already secured a major article that appeared in Germany's top-rated newspaper. In September 2024, our representative, Martina Guse, will come to Tuolumne County to experience our area firsthand so that she can have a better understanding of our geography, attractions, lodging opportunities, and shopping and dining experiences. MSi is also the Agency of Record for Visit California and nine other California destinations.

Last year in our Annual Report we said that we were looking forward to 2023-2024 as a transitional year for VTC. It certainly has been and continues to be just that. Our team has gotten smaller, but the task in front of us has gotten much bigger. While marketing is paramount to what we do, we have had to make forming the Tourism Marketing District a significant priority. The TMD will ensure sustainable funding and therefore effective marketing for Tuolumne County for years to come. This in turn will ensure a continued healthy tourism industry, which has been and continues to be the bright spot in Tuolumne County's economic outlook.



# MANAGEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES

VTC President & CEO, Lisa Mayo, retains her Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) certification. This is the tourism industry's highest individual educational achievement. To achieve this designation a series of courses must be taken, and course papers written along with a final that dives deep into an area of destination management. The courses provide a broad knowledge base and provide a multi-disciplinary perspective to problem solving and destination management.

In 2023, VTC renewed its Destination Management Accreditation Program (DMAP) designation through Destinations International. This program serves as a visible industry distinction that defines numerous quality and performance standards in destination marketing and management. To retain accreditation, VTC must gain recertification every three years, a process that includes internal review and updating accreditation documents and submitting them to Destinations International for approval.

In addition, VTC has an independent financial review annually conducted by a third-party Certified Public Accountant. This review is submitted to the County and City every year.

# VISIT TUOLUMNE COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## EXECUTIVE BOARD - 2023/2024

- **Chair - Katie Dunn**, Represents District 1 Lodging: Airbnbs of Tuolumne County
- **Vice Chair - Ryan Reis**, Represents District 4 Lodging: Don Pedro Recreation Agency
- **Secretary/Treasurer - Stephanie McCaffrey**, Represents District 3 Lodging: McCaffrey House Bed & Breakfast

## DIRECTORS

- **Launa Valente**, Represents District 2 Lodging: Lazy Z Resort
- **Casie Schornick**, Represents District 3 Lodging: Century 21 Wildwood Properties
- **Teri Marshall**, Represents District 4 Lodging: Rush Creek Lodge/Evergreen Lodge
- **Eric Barbaro**, Represents District 5 Lodging: Chicken Ranch Casino Resort
- **Zac Broxham**, Represents Restaurant/Retail: Local Collective
- **Hanna Craig**, Represents Attraction: Dodge Ridge Mountain Resort/Dodge Ridge Campgrounds
- **Karen Mariano-Luckhardt**, At Large: Inner Sanctum Cellars Winery and Tap Room at Basecamp
- **Jan Verhage**, At Large: Sierra Repertory Theatre
- **Sam Segerstrom**, At Large: Coldwell Banker Segerstrom

## VISIT TUOLUMNE COUNTY TEAM

### FULL TIME

- Lisa Mayo, CDME, President & CEO
- Jennifer Lopez, Programs & Projects Manager
- Ashley Padilla, Office Coordinator

### PART TIME

- Madeline Birtwhistle, Marketing Coordinator
- Elaine Squaglia, Visitor Services

### CONTRACT

- Ginger Malatesta, Bookkeeper



## COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

The VTC Team is involved in many industry and community organizations which help to strengthen industry knowledge, build valuable relationships, and support the community.

### LISA MAYO:

- One West Tourism Alliance, Board Member
- Visit California's Rural Committee, Vice-Chair, Visit California Marketing Advisory Committee
- Gold Country Visitors Association, President
- Tuolumne County Historical Society, Board Member
- Sierra Repertory Theatre, Board Member
- Tuolumne County Business Council, Member
- Tuolumne County Economic Development Task Force, Member
- Yosemite Area Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Member

### JENNIFER LOPEZ:

- Sonora Chamber of Commerce, Secretary
- Groveland Facelift Committee, Member
- Leadership Tuolumne County, Graduate

### ASHLEY PADILLA:

- Girl Scouts Heart of Central California, Leader



# VENDORS

## AGENCIES

### **Armstrong-Gossy Public Relations**

Laurie Armstrong-Gossy is the Principal at Armstrong-Gossy Public Relations. Laurie is an experienced Media Relations/Public Relations professional with a demonstrated history in the travel and tourism industry. For over 22 years Laurie was the Senior Director for Global Public Relations and Media Relations at San Francisco Travel.

### **Augustine Agency**

Augustine is an integrated marketing and communications agency that VTC hired as its Agency of Record in April 2020, initially to assist with COVID-19 recovery. We have continued our contract with Augustine for the fourth year.

### **Black Diamond**

Black Diamond has represented VTC in the UK for five years by securing media coverage, educating travel agents, and training tour operators. It is very important to reach international travelers as they stay in destinations longer and therefore spend more money than domestic travelers.

### **Civitas**

Civitas is a company that specializes in setting up funding mechanisms for destination marketing organizations. They have set up over 200 tourism business improvement districts across the United States and even in some international destinations.

### **Clarity of Place**

A strategic advisory consultancy specializing in destination management.

### **Development Counsellors International (DCI)**

DCI is a public relations and travel trade agency that represents VTC in the Canadian market. California remains one of Canada's top-selling markets and having representation is important to ensure Tuolumne County is top of mind when booking California travel. DCI was the agency of record for Visit California for many years. As well, DCI was the Agency of Record for Gold Country Visitors Association and VTC pre-pandemic. DCI is familiar with VTC's brand and has been key in launching VTC's brand back into the Canadian market.

### **Global Marketing Sales (GMS)**

GMS is a public relations and travel agency that represents VTC in Mexico. They are also the Agency of Record for Visit California and come to VTC highly vetted. As travel projections suggested in the previous year, the Latin American market has grown in California. There is high demand for outdoor, family, and beyond the gateway destinations in the Mexican market. VTC's partnership with GMS to introduce our brand and destination to the Latin American market has proven to show increased interest and visitation to Tuolumne County by Mexican visitors.

### **Heather Jing Design**

VTC contracts with Heather Jing Design to fulfill our graphic design needs, including the travel guide, print and digital ads, campaign logos, and more.

**Madden Media**

Madden Media is a full-service destination marketing agency on a mission to spark imagination, nurture curiosity, and connect people to Communities.

**TECHNOLOGY****Bandwango**

Bandwango is changing the way that businesses connect with their community by creating mobile passes that drive consumers to businesses. VTC utilizes Bandwango to power the Tuolumne County Craft Burger and Beverage Trails along with the Sonora Selfie Trail which was added in 2023.

**Diamond Digital Marketing Co**

Diamond Digital Marketing Co, a local social media management agency manages several of VTC's social media platforms.

**Drozian Webworks**

Drozian has been VTC's web development agency since 2016. Besides the website, Drozian provides VTC's CRM (our membership database), the partner portal and also manages Search Engine Optimization, ensuring the VTC site garners the most organic traffic possible.

**Muck Rack**

Muck Rack is a public relations management platform that helps companies manage public relations in one place. Companies can combine media database, pitching, monitoring, and reporting. They can also seek out relevant journalists and content creators.

**Placer.ai**

Placer.ai is a robust platform that provides location intelligence and foot traffic insights and allows us to access and analyze domestic visitor origins, demographics, profiles, channels they use to consume content, activities and more to help pinpoint target audiences, ultimately optimizing our reach to potential visitors.

**Simpleview**

Provides Book Direct, a platform housed on the VTC website for visitors to search for and book lodging directly with VTC partner properties. This cost is fully absorbed by VTC and lodging partners pay no commissions on bookings.

# GLOSSARY

**DMO**—Destination Marketing (and Management) Organization; local tourism marketing companies involved in increasing tourism to a city, area or region and helping shape the destination as a visitor economy.

**Drive Market**—Potential travelers within driving distance of a city, port, or attraction.

**Familiarization Tour (FAM)**—A complimentary or reduced rate organized trip for tour operators, travel agents, travel writers, or other members of the travel trade for the purpose of educating and familiarizing them with the tourism destinations. By seeing the destinations where they are sending travelers, the travel trade is better prepared to answer customer questions and promote travel to the location.

**'Free' or 'Foreign' Independent Travelers (FIT)**—Individual travel in which a tour operator has previously arranged blocks of rooms at various destinations for use by individual travelers. These individuals travel independently, not in a group, usually by rental car or public transportation.

**Impressions**—The number of times a piece of content (such as a post, advertisement, or video) is displayed to users. Each time the content appears on someone's screen, whether they engage with it or not, it counts as one impression. It's a metric used to measure the reach and visibility of content rather than user interaction or engagement.

**IPW**—Formerly known as International POW WOW – the largest international travel marketplace held in the United States sponsored by the US Travel Association.

**Leisure Travel**—Travel for recreation, education, sightseeing, relaxing, and other personal purposes.

**Press/Publicity Release**—A news article or feature story written by the subject of the story for delivery and potential placement in the media.

**Press Trips**—Organized trips for travel writers and broadcasters for the purpose of assisting them in developing stories about tourism destinations. Often journalists travel independently, though with the assistance of a DMO.

**Search Engine Marketing (SEM)**—A method of promotion and advertising to help companies' content rank higher among search engine traffic.

**Shoulder Season**—Those periods between the peak and off season when destination demand is moderate.

**Sustainable Tourism**—Refers to a level of tourism activity that can be maintained over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural, and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place.

**Target Market**—The group of customers who will be the focus of a company's marketing efforts.

**Tour Operator**—Develops, markets, and operates group travel programs that provide a complete travel experience for one price and includes transportation, accommodations, sightseeing, selected meals, and an escort. Tour operators market directly to the consumer (sometimes through travel agents) and are beginning to be listed on computerized reservation systems.

**Travel Trade**—Refers to tour operators, travel agents, receptive operators and wholesalers. These professionals organize and contract to buy travel products to sell to groups or individuals.



# TOURISM IS VITAL TO THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY ECONOMY.

*Thank you for your continued support!*



Visit Tuolumne County • 193 S Washington St.  
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