

2019/2020 Annual Review

SONOMA COUNTY · CALIFORNIA · LIFE OPENS UP° SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM

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BOARD MEMBERS LISTING AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS STAFF LISTING



AS BOARD CHAIR OF SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM, I look back at the twelve months we've all just experienced and find it hard to catch my breath. We've had an intense roller coaster ride and as of right now, we are still working through the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

As partner properties in all sectors of the tourism industry, you have had to make very difficult business decisions. No industry suffered more in during the PSPS events, wildfires and Coronavirus pandemic than the tourism and hospitality sectors. We mourn with those who have lost homes and businesses, suffered economic devastation and have lost colleagues and loved ones. We honor those who found innovative ways to engage customers via new virtual platforms. And, we look toward the future with some optimism knowing that Sonoma Countians are resilient, smart and creative and Sonoma County is a place people will want to visit.

The theme of this year's annual meeting and of this report is "We're all in this together." We've heard this sentiment time and again during the pandemic, but in Sonoma County, this also aligns with the incredible efforts made around the Kincade Fire. For so many reasons, it's more important than ever to collaborate with all of you and our industry partners across the state to create compelling messages and enticing marketing campaigns that bring people to Sonoma County.

We feel incredibly lucky that in 2018, we identified "Life Opens Up" as the Sonoma County tourism brand. Little did we know then how important this mantra would be in 2020. We will work to maximize opportunities around this brand and the region's ability to bring visitors their own Life Opens Up experiences.

This annual report is designed to showcase the financial, programmatic and strategic strength of Sonoma County Tourism and its efforts to manage through the two major crises we've faced during this 12-month period. I want to thank the team at SCT along with all who serve on our board and committees for the enormous commitment made by all to navigate through this time period. I also thank the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and those serving on city councils and the local MACs for your work on behalf of bolstering the tourism industry.

To those of you who come in contact everyday with visitors – you are the first and often the last touchpoint of our guests. Thank you for understanding that a warm welcome, great service and exceptional memories are keys to the success of this destination. My tremendous appreciation for all within this industry who support tourism in Sonoma County and continue to elevate the brand and the experiences for our visitors.

We are most definitely "all in this together."

Steve Jung, SCT Board Chair Doubletree by Hilton Sonoma Wine Country, General Manager

MISSION

PROMOTE OVERNIGHT STAYS AND ENCOURAGE TOURISM WITHIN SONOMA COUNTY.

VISION

A ROBUST ECONOMY FOR SONOMA COUNTY BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS BALANCED WITH STEWARDSHIP OF THE REGION'S NATURAL, CULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND INTELLECTUAL ASSETS.

VALUES

TRANSPARENT

All budgets and programs administered by Sonoma County Tourism are done so within an environment of transparency. This helps ensure all stakeholders have a high level of understanding regarding the operational effectiveness of the organization and can champion the organization as an efficient steward of the funding provided.

STRATEGIC

Sonoma County Tourism approaches all programs and opportunities with a framework built on a foundation of research and structured with consideration for all potential program outcomes and impacts.

SERVICE CENTERED

The organization is committed to providing bestin-theindustry service to both trade professionals and consumers.

Sonoma County Tourism is successful only if its partners and stakeholders are successful. This occurs within a robust business development environment offering opportunities for constituents to benefit from partnerships with the organization and gain business-driving benefits from the programs administered by the organization.

COLLABORATIVE

INNOVATIVE

Sonoma County Tourism ensures its programs represent the latest thinking in tourism sales and marketing. SCT doesn't embrace "fads," but rather measures new opportunities against its core values and program strategies to continuously move the organization forward. The organization achieves its mission through incorporating new technologies, sales and marketing methodologies, and both traditional and nontraditional partnerships.



SONOMA COUNTY ACCOLADES

AS WE ENTERED INTO 2020, SONOMA COUNTY RECEIVED SEVERAL IMPORTANT ACCOLADES.

WINE ENTHUSIAST - WINE REGION OF THE YEAR

"... Sonoma County is renowned for producing high-quality wines of distinction. The region is also a standard-bearer for best practices beyond just wine production, as a champion of true sustainability."

FORBES TOP 20 (GLOBAL) TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

"The area's picturesque vineyards, delightful restaurants and gorgeous galleries offer all the elegance of Napa without the crowds."

FROMMER'S READER'S CHOICE WINNER FOR BEST PLACE TO GO 2020

"Sonoma County was recognized for its notable and extensive wine region, generous range of outdoor activities and resiliency. Frommer's Travel Guide also described the region as "expansive, with a variety of appellations to explore," highlighting the wineries, scenery and attractions throughout Dry Creek Valley, Alexander Valley, and the Russian River Valley."

HSMAI ADRIAN AWARDS WINNER

Life Opens Up Campaign. Largest and most distinguished global travel marketing competition. This year's competition garnered more than 1100 entries, judged by senior industry leaders and media experts.





FY 19-21

ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

DURING THE 2019-2021 TIMEFRAME, SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM WILL WORK TO CREATE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR LONG-TERM PLANNING AND DEVELOPING LEGACY PROGRAMS THAT WILL PUT THE ORGANIZATION IN THE BEST POSITION TO ASSIST THE COUNTY INTO THE FUTURE.

DRIVE INCREMENTAL REVENUE

SCT will take an entrepreneurial approach to obtaining incremental revenue. Programs will be launched that help drive revenue through corporate partnerships, consumer loyalty, potential BIA/BID funding sources, and more.

DRIVE BUSINESS

Continue to build on the Life Opens Up brand through robust sales and marketing programs that create personal connections with audiences and drive purchase decisions. Develop opportunities for BIA properties and local tourismrelated businesses to promote their own entities through attendance at targeted travel trade shows, valuable cooperative consumer marketing campaigns and business-building engagement with travel trade and media during in-market visits.

DRIVE DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

As a Destination Stewardship Organization (DSO), SCT will craft a program platform that shows thoughtful stewardship of the county. This means determining the right level of marketing, sustainable tourism programming and opportunities to give back to the community all while working to achieve the overall mission, vision and values of the organization.



FY 19 - 21 OVERARCHING KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

THESE OVERARCHING KPIS ARE ASPIRATIONAL BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTED TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGHOUT A TWO-YEAR CYCLE. Some we may not achieve, but we set the bar very high to keep us aspiring towards excellence.

1. INCREASE REVENUE TO SONOMA COUNTY BY 2% (\$43.5 MILLION) YEAR-OVER-YEAR THROUGH TOURISM-BASED ACTIVITIES. FUNDING WILL BE REALIZED WITH THE TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX (TOT) FUNDING STREAM AND AS IDENTIFIED AS VISITOR SPENDING IN THE DEAN RUNYAN ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY.

Achievement: 70%

Both the crises have made organic visitation increases and associated revenue gains incredibly challenging. We continue to work on messaging and other programming to help drive revenue related to increased visitation, especially from longer haul markets aligned with the increased number of direct flights.

The direct travel impact for Sonoma County¹:

2018: \$2.2 Billion 2019: \$2.27 Billion

Revenue increased by 1.4% rather than the goal of 2%.

¹ Dean Runyan Associates, Sonoma County Travel Impacts, April 2020

2. INITIATE AN INCREMENTAL FUNDING MODEL FOR SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM THAT "GROWS THE PIE" FOR THE ORGANIZATION'S SALES AND MARKETING BUDGETS.

o Year 1 Goal: \$500,000

o Year 2 Goal: \$1 million

Achievement: 25%

SCT is working on a number of initiatives to increase revenue. During FY19-20, the Revenue Generation Committee was formed, with the goal of creating ideas around and avenues for increased revenue. SCT is working with our partners across the county on revising the BIA to help make-up for the revenue lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this point, the work is to get SCT back to pre-COVID levels rather than incremental to the budget in place at the start of this plan.

FY 19 - 21 OVERARCHING KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

3. DEVELOP AND BEGIN TO IMPLEMENT A DESTINATION MASTER PLAN DESIGNED TO IDENTIFY A RESPONSIBLE LONG-TERM APPROACH TO DESTINATION PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

Achievement: 10%

SCT did meet with the Coraggio Group team to start the process, but that was just before the Kincade Fire. We suspended the project for the FY19-20 year with plans to restart in FY20-21, but we have stalled again due to the COVID-19 pandemic and financial impacts. Currently SCT is researching other funding sources for this plan. 4. CREATE NEW SALES, MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH COOPERATIVE SALES AND MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS THAT PROVIDE LOCAL PARTNERS THE CHANCE TO BUILD BUSINESS AND ENHANCE THE LIFE OPENS UP BRAND THROUGH PARTNER ALIGNMENT.

Achievement: 100%

- SCT did develop additional business building opportunities for partners within all market segments, for example:
 - o Travel Trade: Virtual trade show opportunities to connect 1:1 with domestic agents and operators, ILTM France offered chance for partners to connect with international luxury buyers trade and media.
- o Group Business Development: Photo shoot offered partners opportunity to showcase their space in a social distancing environment; Gather in Sonoma San Francisco event provided opportunities to connect with local meeting planners, travel trade and media.
- o Marketing: Two cooperative advertising programs were initiated, helping partners reach new audiences.

FY 19 - 21 OVERARCHING KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

5. RECONSTRUCT THE ORGANIZATION'S FINANCIAL OPERATIONS INCLUDING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, CONTRACTING, INVESTMENTS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND RECEIVABLES -- ALL WITHIN A FULLY TRANSPARENT ENVIRONMENT.

Achievement: 100%

• SCT's new VP Finance and Operations did a full-scale overhaul of the methodology and format for providing financials. A switch to a new financial software system was initiated, helping elevate financial transparency.

6. REVIEW, AND REVISE AS NEEDED, SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM BUREAU GUIDING ORDINANCES AND BYLAWS TO REFLECT CURRENT NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

Achievement: 50%

• SCT reviewed the ordinances and bylaws as they pertain to any revisions to the BIA. We have not made substantive changes to the either as the foundation continues to be sound.



BUDGET



FY 19-20 Original Budget

44.6%	Marketing	\$3,561,986
12.2%	Tourism Development	\$976,321
15 . 2%	Group Business Development	\$1,216,731
6.9%	Community Engagement	\$553,946
21.1%	Administration	\$1,683,350



FY 19-20 Ending Budget

44.8%	Marketing	\$2,678,299
11.1%	Tourism Development	\$661,493
15.3%	Group Business Development	\$915,132
6.1%	Community Engagement	\$363,632
22.7%	Administration	\$1,356,450



FY 20-21 Forecast Budget

48.1%	Marketing	\$2,553,738
1.7%	Tourism Development	\$88,472
17.3%	Group Business Development	\$919,980
7.9%	Community Engagement	\$420,983
25.0%	Administration	\$1,327,323

\$7,992,333

\$5,975,007

\$5,310,496

SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM KEY INITIATIVES ACCOMPLISHMENTS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR EACH

SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM IS GUIDED BY FIVE KEY INITIATIVES. EACH OF THESE INITIATIVES IS DEVELOPED TO GAIN MAXIMUM Return-on-investment through building brand awareness and compelling both consumer and business travel. These ultimately help sct achieve its mission of driving overnight visitation.



BUILD A DATA-DRIVEN FOUNDATION

LEADING WITH AN EVIDENCE-BASED FOUNDATION IS CRITICAL FOR ENSURING ALL EFFORTS ARE DONE IN THE MOST STRATEGIC WAY. INSIGHTS INTO THE VISITOR PROFILE, CONSUMER SENTIMENT AND ONGOING RESPONSE TO CRISES HELP INFORM ALL PROGRAMMING. THIS IS LAYERED ONTO A ROBUST DATABASE PROGRAM THROUGH SIMPLEVIEW TO ENSURE BOTH SCT AND OUR PARTNERS HAVE THE INFORMATION NEEDED TO CONVEY THE FULL SONOMA COUNTY EXPERIENCE.

Conduct organization-wide analysis of research gaps and redundancy, with the goal of developing a comprehensive body of research at SCT. Achievement: 100%

• Working in collaboration with the Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), the research group onboarded a new research fellow in July and worked throughout the year on research projects specific to tourism in the County. SCT worked with its new vendor, Longwoods International on two reports: visitor data and insights and marketing return-oninvestment (two firsts for SCT). SCT also worked with MMGY on data insights and marketing strategy for FY19/20. MMGY provided critical campaign metrics, allowing SCT to monitor and modify campaign performance and program components.

In September and October and the onset of the Public Safety Power Shut-offs (PSPS) and Kincade Fire events, SCT worked with the EDB and partners to conduct PSPS economic impact and postfire research

To better understand the motivations driving visitation, SCT worked with Destination Analysts, to deploy a non-visitor study with the goal of determining whether the recent fires were impactful in visitation. Since March, SCT has conferred with research organizations to determine the evolution of consumer sentiment as it relates to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Performance and Insights weekly e-newsletter was created to provide data on lodging as well as the ever-evolving traveler and resident sentiment metrics.

Create updated measurement of earned media efforts/results. Achievement: 100%

• To better measure the value of media coverage, SCT began using the **Barcelona Principles** method of valuation in the fall of 2019. These principles serve as a guide for practitioners to incorporate the ever-expanding media landscape into a transparent, reliable, and consistent framework.

Brand team to work with Insights and Systems team to identify opportunities to capture and report web, social and content results for partners. Achievement: 100%

• The teams have collaborated and incorporated the technology needed to achieve this goal. Added fields to Simpleview for tracking of website articles/blogs and social media posts.

DRIVING OVERNIGHT VISITATION FROM DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL, LEISURE AND BUSINESS TRAVELERS IS THE HALLMARK OF SCT'S EFFORTS. THIS INITIATIVE COMPRISES THE BULK OF THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES AND BENEFITS FOR PARTNERS AND THE COUNTY.

THE PROGRAMS REACH THREE KEY AUDIENCES:

- 1. POTENTIAL VISITORS
- 2. MEETING AND EVENT PLANNERS
- 3. TRAVEL TRADE

CONSUMERS

Create Awareness of Sonoma County in Emerging Markets primarily those with direct flight access to the destination, including: LAX, SAN, SNA, PDX, SEA, DEN, DFW, PHX. Achievement 100%

• SCT included each of these markets within its campaigns and began to see an uptick in visitation prior to the COVID-19 shutdown.

Drive 25,000 leisure room nights via targeted advertising and promotions in FY19/20. Achievement: 100%

 In collaboration with marketing contractor, MMGY, SCT developed and executed specific advertising plans with the goal of generating room nights. Following the Kincade Fire, SCT developed a shortterm 90-day plan that generated 13,987 room nights through an Expedia program. The Fall campaign drove 4,833 room nights through Expedia (4,722) and Adara (161). GIS campaign Nov-Jan: 7,500 Expedia and 942 Adara. Spring campaign: 342 Expedia plus 153 Adara.

Total: 27,807 room nights. (This does not include the 2020 Spring campaign that was cut short due to the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic.)

Register 1,000 new subscriptions to SCT e-newsletters in FY19/20. Achievement: 100%+

• During FY19-20, an additional 7,899 subscribers joined our e-newsletter list. We began the year with 143,991 and ended with 151,890.

Create at least three seasonal campaigns, targeting specific need periods to drive overnight visitation and zeroing in on key target markets. Achievement: 100%

- Due to the crisis events that occurred during the year, SCT crafted four campaigns:
 - 1. 90-day summer plan designed to drive visitation following the flooding and to boost overall business;
 - 2. Fall campaign begun in mid-August;
 - 3. Gather in Sonoma Campaign (following the Kincade Fire to drive visitation during the holidays 2019); and
 - 4. Spring campaign (ran for ~month and then re-launched in June 2020 as part of our COVID recovery campaign).

Establish brand partnership with celebrity, company, or brand. Achievement: 50%

• SCT had several discussions with Alaska Airlines about a brand alliance/partnership, but since COVID has not gone anywhere. SCT also had discussions with Sonoma County-based CamelBak, that resulted in a presentation to them about a partnership. They chose not to move forward with this partnership.

Develop brand toolkit for SCT partners and roll out to partners. Achievement: 100%

• Toolkit was developed for the Gather in Sonoma campaign, and was evolved from there. A spring campaign toolkit was developed in February 2020.

Develop and produce Sonoma County video series, showcasing unique, compelling destination stories. Achievement: 65%

• SCT created a production plan for the video series. Originally scheduled to launch as part of the Spring 2020 campaign, this is now re-positioned to Fall 2020.

Create and roll out unified brand voice across all platforms, departments. Achievement: 100%

• SCT updated the brand guidelines, and shared them both internally and externally. As more cross-functional work is being done at SCT, other teams are leveraging brand guidelines in how they approach their respective audiences.

Create comprehensive content calendar. Achievement: 100%

• The content plan and associated calendar informs the breadth of SCT's content development. The calendar includes messages for both direct-to-consumer social posts as well as travel, business and trade media outreach. This calendar can be found in the marketing strategy action plan helping ensure maximum flexibility.



EMILY KAUFMAN, THE TRAVEL MOM

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS: 46,063

FACEBOOK LIKES: 301,392

TWITTER FOLLOWERS: 30,266

YOUTUBE VIDEO VIEWS: 937,100

WEBSITE METRICS: JULY 1, 2019-JUNE 30, 2020:

VISITS/SESSIONS: 2,246,965

PAGEVIEWS: 4,285,359



WELCOME TO SONOMA COUNTY





June is Levender Month in Sonoma County! We look forward to the future when visitors can return to enjoy our lavender farms. Meanwhile, discover a few of Schoma County's farms below many of which offer shipping on their products

https://www.sonomacounty.com/ /june-lavender-month-sonoma-w.



1 Get More Likes, Comments and Shares When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people

1.549

Ergagerwirks

OOV Sheya Querra, Elvis Barresa and 554 others

18,980

People Resched

Boost Post

16 Comments 77 Starts



MEDIA RELATIONS

7 Best Weekend Getaways in California

Condé Nast Traveler's Carey Jones, who the Gaige House hosted last year, listed Sonoma County as an ideal territory for a weekend getaway in California. The piece mentions The Donum Estate, Gaige House + Ryokan, and Kenwood Inn & Spa.

Road-tripping Sonoma County's Bohemian Highway

As a result of SCT's outreach efforts, Amy Bizzari of Lonely Planet (UMV: 11,849,867) featured Sonoma County's Bohemian Highway in a recent article.

So Much More to Sonoma Than Wine

As a result of SCT hosting, Michele Jarvie produced an article in the Calgary Herald (UMV: 1,497,622) titled "So Much More To Sonoma Than Wine".

Samantha Brown Reveals A Scary Encounter While Traveling Solo

As a result of hosting Samantha Brown, Forbes Travel Guide (UMV: 99,022) included Sonoma County as a top under-the-radar winter destination.

Romantic Weekend Getaways Aren't Just for Valentine's Day

As a result of SCT's dedicated pitching efforts and ongoing relations with Travel Editor Jill Fergus, BestProducts.com (UMV: 647,311) featured the destination in an article entitled, "Romantic Weekend Getaways Aren't For Valentine's Day" on December 6. This piece has also been syndicated by Yahoo! (UMV: 10,030,975) www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/discover-most-romantic-weekend-getaways-175100956.html

An LGBTQ guide to Sonoma County, California

As a result of previous deskside coordination and hosting, Kelsy Chauvin of USA Today (UMV: 586,000) produced coverage centered around an LGBTQ guide to Sonoma County. The article also syndicated to MSN.

After Fall's Wildfire Scare, Visitors Will Find Napa and Sonoma Pleasantly Normal As a result of SCT outreach efforts, Rosemary McClure of the Los Angeles Times (UMV: 23,975,350) featured Sonoma County's resiliency and recovery efforts after the Kincade Fire.















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TRAVEL TRADE

The Travel Trade segment has been the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. While this high-performing group was tracking well towards all its KPIs during the first eight months of the fiscal year, the realities of the impact of the pandemic on international and leisure group travel required SCT to make significant changes to both the internal team and external programming. The following summary is based on a shortened timeframe (July 1, 2019 – March 1, 2020).

Media Relations and Marketing to work in partnership with Tourism Development to develop comprehensive per-market strategy. Achievement: 30%

• SCT, along with the Travel Trade Committee and Trio partners, developed a per-market strategy roadmap, encompassing marketing, promotions and public relations programming. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SCT paused this effort.

Travel Trade Education - Educate key global industry partners (travel agents, tour operators, wholesalers and receptive operators) on all aspects of Sonoma County through:

- Sonoma County Travel Pro (training program) The online training platform was initiated.
- Sales Missions & Client Events SCT participated in the first Brand USA Europe mission in London. The travel trade team participated in the Sonoma County Gather event in San Francisco.

Trade Shows

• Attended the ILTM luxury travel trade show in France. We also participated in the Visit California And before they were cool (and required) we conducted a Virtual Trade Show which successfully attracted over 600 agents across the two days. Many of the trade shows we planned to attend were cancelled.

Marketing & Communications – Establish, maintain and grow partnerships with key global industry partners (travel agents, tour operators, wholesalers, receptive operators & distribution channels), keeping Sonoma County top-of-mind for current programs, sales opportunities and future product planning. Achievement: 50%

- Conducted a marketing campaign with Concrete Playground and Travel Advisors in Australia conveying bookable destination experiences.
- Initiated new partnership program with Bandwango. This program encourages visits to participating businesses that will be a cross-section of Sonoma County businesses.

In March, SCT cancelled the contracts for all international office vendors.



BRAND USA EUROPE MISSION, TRAVEL TRADE



MEETING PLANNERS

The global pandemic has significantly impacted the group business segment. While meeting planners continue to contact SCT regarding meetings, we saw most meetings for 2020 cancelled. We are currently fielding meetings for 2021 – seeing most of the activity for the second quarter of the calendar year. The following activities reflect accomplishments July 1, 2019 through March 1, 2020.

Increase Lead Generation by 10%. Achievement: 84%

- For the year in total, lead generation was down 16%. Prior to the Shelter-In-Place order, lead generation was strong, up 18%. While leads have continued to come in during the pandemic, the timing of reopening and uncertainty around large groups and events has significantly impacted the lead volume.
- Total room nights were up 12% at the end of June.

Support, Plan & Execute Qualified Fam Tours, Site Experiences, Sales Calls & Client Events. Achievement: 100%

- During the 8-month period (July 2019 February 2020), SCT hosted three (3) in-market FAM Tours, conducted seven (7) Site Inspections and participated in two (2) Sales Missions.
- As a result of these activities, 58 activity tags were tied to leads.

Create 200 Targeted Group Meeting Messages. Achievement: 71%

- The SCT Group Business Development team created 103 messages with 999,962 impressions.
- Staffing for the year was at 73% of plan which would equate to 146 messages.
- Due to COVID-19, the team made the determination to pause communication via social channels.

GATHER IN SAN FRANCISCO

SPEARHEAD LONG-TERM DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY FORM CRUCIAL COMPONENTS OF THE SONOMA COUNTY ECONOMY AND COLLECTIVELY EMPLOY ALMOST 1 IN 10 Sonoma countians. Taking stewardship of the destination means sct will be part of driving both the conversation and the Experiences attributed to making decisions that help protect and preserve the county's natural and cultural resources.

SUSTAINABILITY

During FY19-20, Sonoma County Tourism will identify partnerships, research destination best practices and gain insights from various local, state, national and global agencies as the foundation for creating a plan that integrates the appropriate components, partners and practices.

Identify partners within the economic growth, environment conservation, education, governance and marketing arenas that can assist drive the conversation. Achievement: 100%

- SCT engaged Kind Traveler in a partnership that created solid media engagement with Jessica Blotter and her platform. As Jessica's notoriety grows within the sustainable tourism arena, Sonoma County is lucky to be included in several of her presentations and in the Kind Traveler promotions.
- SCT also participated in the Center for Responsible Tourism (CREST) and World Travel and Tourism Organization's meeting in Washington D.C. where we were able to showcase our Travel Kindly Pledge and continue to engage with this industry segment.
- SCT worked in collaboration with Land Paths to identify opportunities to expand this experience into offerings for travelers.
- SCT also was in the midst of working with Visit California on its Destination Stewardship initiative when the COVID-19 situation put a halt to this program.

Weave sustainability into the overall destination master plan. Achievement: N/A

• Unfortunately, due to the Kincade Fire and then COVID-19 budget impacts, SCT has not been able to move forward with the destination master planning initiative.

Identify potential partners including corporations, retailers, celebrities and other partners who can assist with program activation. Achievement: 0%

• This initiative has not begun.





JESSICA BLOTTER, CEO OF KIND TRAVELER

TOURISM CARES, BEACH CLEAN-UP





SCT ANNUAL MEETING 2019

SPEARHEAD LONG-TERM DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

Craft a Sonoma County commitment statement and key measures for responsible visitation. Achievement: 90%

- SCT did craft a Travel Kindly Pledge and was working on ways to integrate this initiative into its general marketing outreach. The Travel Kindly Pledge helps ensure visitors protect and preserve Sonoma County's natural and cultural resources:
 - **Leave No Trace:** pick up, pack up, recycle and say 'yes' to re-usable products
 - **Tread Lightly:** stay on roads, footpaths, hiking trails and park in designated spots
 - **Go Beyond:** spread your travel footprint and explore the road less traveled.
 - **Think Local:** support local businesses, community festivals & events **Make an Impact:** respect local communities, volunteer or support a non-profit
 - **Spread Kindness:** make a positive impact on your fellow travelers and local neighbors
 - **Plan Ahead:** indulge your tastebuds, yet plan ahead and drink responsibly
 - **Be Mindful:** stay aware of weather conditions, natural elements and advisories

SCT also focused on sustainable travel at its 2019 Annual Meeting at which sessions and insights focused on creating sustainable travel experiences and offerings were provided to partners.



SPEARHEAD LONG-TERM DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

SONOMA LOYAL

Incentivizing consumer behavior is often a good way to shift behavior. Continuing the work started in FY18, we will evaluate the opportunities that come with a destination loyalty program.

Due to budget constraints, this initiative has not been started.

CRISIS PLANNING AND EXECUTION

FY19-20 has been an unprecedented year for crises. With the events of the Fall of 2019 including the Public Safety Power Shut-offs (PSPS) and the Kincade Fire and then the COVID-19 global pandemic beginning in March 2020, the year has largely been dedicated to responding to crises.

Plan is updated on an annual basis. Achievement: 75%

 The plan has been updated as each crisis occurs. The process for responding to a crisis remains the same, but with each crisis comes a new set of external contacts, issues for each impacted audience and unknown factors for which novel approaches must be determined. Each of these areas have been addressed in the best possible way for each crisis.

SCT staff, board and committees are educated regarding the plan and each person's role in executing. Achievement: 50%

 Because of the constant "in crisis" mode, we haven't taken the time to plan each person's role in executing a specific place in a crisis. In both crises, we have kept the staff apprised of the situation and the issues of importance during each phase. The teams then decide how each person can play their role. Because each incident has its own set of parameters and impact each team differently, this is almost on an "as needed" basis.

Should the need arise, the plan is executed as designed. Achievement: 100%

• SCT has responded to two crises this year. Each is outlined within the Appendix section of this document.

Appendix A – Kincade Fire and Appendix B – Coronavirus Global Pandemic provide detailed overviews of the efforts undertaken by SCT to address response and recovery issues as each related to three key audiences:

- 1. Leisure and business travelers
- 2. Sonoma County's visitor-facing businesses
- 3. Local Residents

DESTINATION MASTER PLANNING

SCT did gain proposals from three potential partners and went through the approval process with the Coraggio Group. But, due to the budget impact of the Kincade Fire and then the COVID-19 pandemic, we put this process on hold.

ENHANCE VALUE THROUGH ROBUST PARTNERSHIPS

SCT WORKED TO ENHANCE ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR OWN INDUSTRY AS WELL AS WITH SONOMA COUNTY VISITOR-FACING ENTITIES AND POTENTIAL TRAVELERS. WITH THE SUSPENSION OF THE TRAVEL TRADE GROUP, INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNER SERVICES WERE ONLY ABLE TO BEGIN PROGRAMMING AND EFFORTS.

PARTNER EDUCATION

Continue to provide relevant training opportunities to our partners.

Conduct a Survey with Partners to Determine SCT's Value in the Meetings/Incentive Arena.

Achievement: 0% - due to committee input

• The GBD Committee determined this survey was not necessary given the transparency and solicitation of feedback from the GBD team.

Complete an Annual Destination Experience Training and Semi-Annual Refresher Courses to Hotel and Experience Partners. Achievement: 100%

- Training was completed in February with 41 in attendance.
- Second training and refresher course(s) are on hold due to COVID-19.

Ensure Bi-monthly check-ins, initiates and conducted by GBD Managers with Directors of Sales for Designated BIA Partners. Achievement: 100%

- Bi-monthly check-ins were held by GBD managers prior to the pandemic.
- Due to staffing changes not all were completed for the 4th quarter. Hotels have been reassigned moving forward.

Provide Three (3) GBD Training Sessions for Lodging Partners. Achievement: 30%

• One training session was completed. 41 people participated in the training session held at Paradise Ridge. Terri Roberts with 2Synergize provided in depth training on how to elevate what is traditional known as a "site inspection" to a "site experience" through a series of steps in the booking process. In this meeting SCT also launched the new Site Experience form which will be given to each location that will be visited prior to arrival.





For the past 18 years, Sonoma County Tourism and Vintners Resort have worked together as strong partners to develop many successful initiatives to improve our recognition in the travel industry. Many programs and available resources have benefited Vintners Resort as a whole. SCT's 'Crafted Connections: The Site Experience' seminar was an effective training to help properties like ours create memorable site experiences with customers. The strategic tools developed through SCT's seminars continue to help set Sonoma County apart from competing destinations. - PERCY BRANDON, GENERAL MANAGER VINTNERS RESORT



ENHANCE VALUE THROUGH ROBUST PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNER SERVICE LIAISONS

Create an extension of our hotel partners sales teams by providing support, referrals and selling tools not readily available. Achievement: 100%

• SCT further integrated the Knowland platform to provide leads and insights to partners.

Conduct organization-wide analysis of Simpleview usage, with a goal of creating a roadmap to onboard more SCT functions and processes onto the platform. Achievement: 100%

• Simpleview provides the critical database for all our partner and organizational initiatives. It's through this database that partners can log events, offerings, amenities and other key consumer-facing components. Throughout the year, various members of the team worked both internally and with Simpleview to ensure all applicable program components were being entered into the system and our team was adept at working within this platform. This included cross-functional meetings and a full-scale project plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Establish and maintain relationships with key local stakeholders, thereby establishing Sonoma County Tourism as a trusted, valuable partner.

Certified Tourism Ambassador Program: The Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) program seeks to improve visitation by inspiring front-line hospitality employees and volunteers to work together to turn every visitor encounter into a positive experience. **Achievement: 100%**

- The CTA program underwent a revision during FY19-20 with the goal of making it more beneficial to those participating and for SCT and the Sonoma County tourism industry.
 - o Current Active CTAs: 444
 - o FAM Tours: 2
 - o Total partners featured: 11
 - o Total participants: 77

Additional FY 19-20 Program Highlights:

- Lunch & Learn Series: Launched in 2020, 5 Lunch & Learns have been held with 147 participants
 - Exclusive invitations to industry events: 144 attended an educational event on the Petaluma Gap AVA.
 - Invitation to participate in SCT's monthly staff Partner Information Program (PIP)





We are proud of our longstanding relationship with Sonoma County Tourism and value its consistent support of air service development and its contributions to the Airport's success. Over this last year, SCT has helped beautify Airport Blvd. with its welcoming message of 'Life Opens Up.' We look forward to many more years of collaboration and mutual support.

- JON STOUT, AIRPORT MANAGER Charles M. Schulz - Sonoma Cou<u>nty Airport</u>



ENHANCE VALUE THROUGH ROBUST PARTNERSHIPS

Tourism Cares: Since its inception in 2017, Sonoma County Tourism Cares has organized 21 events with more than 938+ volunteers, giving back to the community, and showing them that our industry cares about our local community.

Achievement: 100%

- FY 19-20 Program Highlights:
 - o Bodega Dunes Coastal Clean-up Sept. 21, 2019
 - o Foothill Regional Park Restoration Feb. 26, 2020
 - o National Travel & Tourism Week Blood Drive May 3-9, 2020
 - o Total volunteers: 138+

Partner Information Program: A monthly program that allows a small number of partners from various parts of the hospitality industry the opportunity to share information on their business with Sonoma County Tourism staff, Sonoma County Vintner's staff and Certified Tourism Ambassadors. **Achievement: 100%**

• SCT created nine (9) PIPs featuring a total of 40 partners

Partner Communications: Ensure ongoing, timely and relevant communications with our partner communities. **Achievement: 100%**

• While we communicate via email on a regular basis to our 4,203 subscribers regarding regular news and resources for the tourism industry, in FY 19-20 we sent 38 Partner Alerts, which are special communications dedicated to providing communication around pressing crisis like the Kincade Fire or the Coronavirus. While all of our partner communications feature an open rate of over 30% (industry average is 13%), our Partner Alerts averaged a 38% open rate and a 14% click rate (industry average is 5%).

National Travel and Tourism Week: Administer a robust National Travel and Tourism Week, conveying the value of tourism to key local stakeholders. **Achievement: 100%**

Due to the Coronavirus, this year's National Travel and Tourism Week theme was The Spirit of Travel. Held May 3rd-9th, the week's events were all held virtually:

- Distributed over 500 #HospitalityStrong posters to partners across Sonoma County
- Provided an industry unity Facebook profile frame
- Released five digital Sonoma County jigsaw puzzles
- Held a Tourism Cares blood drive throughout the week, encouraging our partners to make an appointment to donate blood
- Released virtual backgrounds to be used during video conference calls
- Sonoma County was lit in pinot purple. 27 partners lit their businesses in "pinot purple" to celebrate the unity of the hospitality industry
- Our Certified Tourism Ambassadors participated in a daily photo contest featuring the beauty of Sonoma County
- The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors declared the month of May Travel & Tourism month in Sonoma County





TOURISM CARES, FOOTHILL REGIONAL PARK CLEAN-UP

#HOSPITALITYSTRONG POSTER

PINOT PURPLE BUSINESSES



The Sonoma County Tourism team helps visitors discover the iconic trails and open spaces that define Sonoma County and they also help us care for our local parklands. This was evident last winter when Tourism staff and volunteers showed up in force to lend a hand with over 200 hours of service restoring Foothill Regional Park following the Kincade Fire.

- BERT WHITAKER, DIRECTOR SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS



PARADISE RIDGE WINERY MUSEUM OF SONOMA COUNTY

INCREMENTAL REVENUE

With much of Sonoma County Tourism's funding at the discretion of others and the current softness in the market, it is imperative the organization shores up an ongoing revenue source through programs that raise incremental funding. This will be achieved through both external marketing partnerships and revenuegenerating monetization of various assets and internally through new initiatives with SCT's traditional funding models.

Initiate an incremental funding model for Sonoma County Tourism that "grows the pie" for the organization. Year 1 Goal: \$500,000. Achievement: 25%

• SCT is working on a project to elevate funding through the BIA allocation. While this project was begun in FY19-201, due to a number of issues, the lion share of this initiative will be pushed to FY20-21.

Undertake project to unify visitors guide, map, web and e-newsletter properties under one umbrella, to maximize revenue generation and unify messaging across all platforms. Achievement: 50%

 During the first part of the year, SCT was working on a "monetization" of the visitors' guide as well as all consumer-facing channels program. The concept was researched and planned, a vendor RFP was written and a potential vendor list developed. The RFP was sent out March 2, 2020 and submissions were received. The project was suspended due to the pandemic and budget constraints around any new program. We will revisit this potentially fund-raising program in 2021.

Generate \$100,000 in private revenue (cash) from Marketing/Communications/Community Engagement initiatives in FY19/20. Achievement: 70%

• Based on revenue garnered from the Visitor Guide and Map ads, Coop GIS, and Coop Spring Campaign, the total revenue was \$69,365.

FINANCIALS AND ACCOUNTING

Sonoma County Tourism is committed to ensuring all funds are allocated and spent at the highest level of efficiency and have absolute transparency. Sonoma County Tourism will conduct its financial and operational programs with an unsurpassed level of integrity.

Entire financial system is assessed and transformed. Achievement: 100%

• SCT adjusted the way it records revenues and expenses to properly conform with GAAP best practices and provide a more transparent environment for reporting financials to the organization and board.

Overall program budgets are within 1% of their total annual operating budgets. Achievement: 90%

• The SCT Team adjusted spending and expenses to align with revenue reduction as much as possible to minimize risk to organization.

Shortfall of approximately 2% between the 2 reductions.

- a. Overall organization revenue down 28% and expenses down 26%
 - i. Budgeted net income of \$36.11 and actual projected at approximately -\$26.509.06 (subject to change depending on Apr-Jun actual revenue and not factoring in return of Ironman money from Santa Rosa)
- b. Admin budget \$1,672,365.26 (21.1% of total spend) actual \$1,349,737.09 (22.63% of total spend)
- c. Tourism Development budget \$970,221.07 (12.2% of total spend) actual \$659,610.94 (11.06% of total spend)
- d. Marketing budget \$3,081,267.19 (38.9% of total spend) actual \$2,253,234.50 (37.77% of total spend)
- e. Group Business Development budget \$1,214,506.69 (15.3% of total spend) – actual \$917,646.09 (15.38% of total spend)
- f. Community Engagement budget \$509,836.96 (6.4% of total spend) actual \$362,709.05 (6.08% of total spend)
- g. Public Relations budget \$474,783.82 (6% of total spend) actual \$422,697.67 (7.09% of total spend)

The Finance and Legal Committee reviews the accounting practices. Achievement: 80%

• A formal review was not completed. However the team discussed and recommended new practices to keep SCT in compliance with GAAP, and government regulations, and industry best practices.

Contracts are reviewed and revised to protect SCT. Achievement: 100%

- Contracts were completed in compliance with the SCT procedures, using the SCT crafted contract when appropriate. This became especially important when we needed to cancel contracts with vendors due to COVID-19 budget impacts.
- An RFP or quotes from multiple vendors were solicited in advance of selecting vendors for new products or services (for example the new accounting system).

Annual audits done in compliance with the County and the contract. Achievement: 100%

• SCT complied with the annual audit requirements and received "clean" audits from Piscenti & Brinker, a County approved contractor.

External audits do not find irregularities and auditors issue a clean opinion of the financial statements. Should any audit exceptions be identified, the issues are resolved prior to the audit distribution. Achievement: 95%

• In FY19-20, SCT conducted audits to measure processes against policies for the organization's financial and travel/entertainment expenses. One small audit exception totaling \$60 was found in the travel area. A policy revision has been adopted to help ensure this does not reoccur.

Insurance coverage is reviewed annually and adjusted for changing environments and needs. Achievement: 100%

• SCT worked with its HR representative and insurance broker to review plans and identify the best opportunities for the SCT staff.

BUSINESS PROCESSES

SCT will manage effective, efficient, and strategically aligned business processes that integrate and capitalize on SCT's staff and technology resources. SCT encourages the development of flexible, reliable, and collaborative business tools and technologies designed to support SCT's mission, processes, staff, stakeholders, and customers.

Provide the county-requested marketing plan and annual report before March 15 of each calendar year. Achievement: 100%

• Documents were provided to the EDB and County on time. Because this was the start of the pandemic and we were beginning to see the impacts, we held off in presenting the plan to the Board of Supervisors until June 4. At that time we had an initial response and forecastedbudget decrease along with a revised plan that reflected the changes.

Review organizational policies and procedures; identify at least two to be revised, vetted and approved. Achievement: 100%

• SCT conducted a full review of policies and procedures and provided updates in its revised Employee Handbook presented to the team in January 2020.

Review IT procedures and platforms to ensure SCT has the most appropriate, cost efficient and effective services as possible. Achievement: 100%

• SCT has continued to ensure it has the most robust IT environment possible given its budget and need for transparency. We are working with TenesiTech on all IT matters.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

SCT recognizes that its team is its most valuable asset. While the COVID-19 remote working environment has created an entirely new team dynamic, we work collectively to keep the group engaged and motivated.

A Satisfied or Very Satisfied rating is given to the organization through an annual employee survey performed to assess structure and communications. Achievement: 0%

• Due to having two very unusual circumstances with the crises, SCT did not perform an annual employee survey during the FY19-20 timeframe.

All-staff meetings are held at least once per quarter to ensure employees are informed, empowered, and recognized. Achievement: 100%

• When the staff was working from the office, we did hold all-staff meetings on a quarterly basis. When we moved to a Shelter-In-Place environment, we held all-staff calls twice per week. We also had virtual "happy hours" and found ways to engage the team outside the regular business calls.

Biennial salary and benefit surveys are performed. Achievement: 0%

• Due to the COVID-19 situation, we did not perform salary or benefit surveys during this year. As a biennial goal, we will see if FY20-21 offers a better environment for this effort.

A majority of employees are participating in the Wellness Program and report positive results. Employees and their supervisors jointly establish career development plans that are reviewed and adjusted annually to align with the performance review time period. Achievement: 80%

• Due to the budget impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wellness Program was disbanded. It was a popular benefit prior to this cut-back.

The employee handbook is reviewed and updated annually. Achievement: 100%

• The employee handbook was fully revised and distributed to the team in January 2020.

All employees, contractors, and volunteers understand and comply with SCT policies and procedures and follow State and Federal labor laws and regulations. Achievement: 100%

• While SCT had to cancel the contracts of most of its external vendors due to budget cuts from COVID-19, up to that point, compliance was complete.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS/COMMITTEES ENGAGEMENT

Sonoma County Tourism will be most effective when it works in collaboration with an engaged group of Board of Directors, committee volunteers, and business partners.

SCT will hold board meetings as required by its bylaws and ensure committee meetings are held at least once per quarter to ensure both the board and committees have the information needed to make well-informed decisions. Achievement: 100%

• All board and committee meetings were held according to schedule, The exception was with the Tourism Development Committee which was suspended due to the program suspension doe to the impact of COVID-19.

Conduct an annual meeting to include the official installation of SCT board members during the quarter following the end of the fiscal year. Achievement: 100%

• The FY18-19 Annual Meeting was held August 27 at the Doubletree Hotel. The meeting was expanded to include ½ day of informational sessions plus the business meeting. The focus of the meeting was "Stewardship of our Past, Present and Future." SCT board members were officially installed during this time.

Conduct an annual Board retreat, focused on issues and opportunities as identified by the board. Achievement: 100%

• The Board Retreat was held on February 26, 2020 at which discussions initiated by the Board were addressed.

Schedule Board of Directors and committee meetings following bylaws and committee charts of work/goals. Achievement: 100%

• All meetings were scheduled according to the bylaws and charts of work.

Implement a new board member orientation module. Achievement: 100%

• New orientation program was developed and delivered to new board members.

Create, and update as needed, committee handbooks. Achievement: 100%

• SCT reviewed and made updates to committee handbooks during FY19-20.

Conduct an annual Board of Directors and committee survey to assess SCT value, personal and business goals, board structure, and communications. Achievement: 80%

• The survey was drafted during FY19-20 and distributed in early FY20-21.

INDUSTRY ALLIANCE SUPPORT

Interacting with organizations either directly or indirectly involved with promoting Sonoma County and serving Sonoma County's tourism and hospitality industry is critical for SCT's engagement with the entire community.

Meet with the Trio Executive Team at least quarterly and identifies key issues and opportunities for the upcoming time period. Achievement: 75%

• SCT did meet quarterly with the Trio Executive Team until the beginning of 2020, when the communication became less scheduled and more infrequent. We continue to communicate, but need to return to a more structured schedule.

Work with the Sonoma County Hospitality Association and identify ways to help the organization move forward with staffing and programming that help bolster advocacy and industry training. Achievement: 100%

• SCT has a seat on the board of the SCHA and works closely with that team on initiatives especially as they pertained to the two crisis situations.



PAYING IT FORWARD IN THE COMMUNITY AFTER KINCADE FIRE

Meet with key members of the Sonoma County Economic **Development Board at least once per guarter.** Achievement: 80%

• Claudia and Sheba had guarterly meetings from July 2019 through March 2020, but did cancel the regularly scheduled meetings due to the Shelter-In-Place orders. SCT and the EDB continue to work closely on issues related to the tourism industry workforce and in programming related to grants and the Economic Development Administration (federal) grants.

Engage with the BIA community through invitations to participate in board meetings and create annual succession plans for board rotation to increase awareness and transparency of SCT organization. Achievement: 80%

• SCT invited not only the BIA community, but all within the tourism industry to participate in two town halls during both the Kincade Fire and Coronavirus crises. SCT also provided an invitation to several key partners to call in for the April and May SCT Board meetings as the crisis response was being discussed.

Integrate with regional and national level organizations on advocacy and promotional opportunities as they arise. Achievement: 100%+

• SCT was fully connected with Visit California through the Kincade Fire crisis and then again with the COVID-19 situation. SCT also reached out to CalTravel on issues related to funding for DMOs during the pandemic. In addition, SCT was involved with conversations about crisis response with the U.S. Travel Association, MPI and CalSAE. This outreach continues.



KELLEY & YOUNG WINE GARDEN INN A small family owned and operated B&B and tastin room, Kelley & Young Wine Garden Inn supports a variety of community-centric programs that enrich Cloverdale for visitors and residents alike.



FORFSTVILLE CHARMER Forestville Pharmacy owners Mark & Pam Olsen are community focused and very supportive of th town's activities. They are always willing to go th extra mile for their valued customer



SAFARI WEST (and the Safari West Foundation Over the past 30+ years, Safari West owners Peter and Nancy Lana have established a world class conserva breeding facility and exotic wildlife preserve with a



ROHNERT PARK CHAMBER AMY'S DRIVE THRU Amy's operates with a passionate commitment to making foods produced with integrity, and contin strive to reduce the environmental impacts associated with the foods they mak







CLEAN RIVER ALLIANCE

The CRA provides a cleaner and

HOSPITALITY safer environment for local wildlife and COMMUNITY the community as a whole through their protection of the Russian River watershed

We♡

This Valentine's Day, Sonoma County Tourism

would like to express our gratitude to the local chambers, visitor centers, and 22.300+ hospitality

professionals for their exceptional service.

Featured here.

Sonoma County chambers

highlighted a business,

non-profit, or individual

who has acted as a

quality steward of our destination.

We thank them, and

evervone within the local tourism and hospitality

industry, for making Sonoma County a better

place to visit and live.

A place where

Life Opens Up.

The tourism industry is one

of the largest employers in Sonoma County, with

hospitality employment comprising one in 10 jobs.

Additionally, it drives the

local economy, enhances

ifestyle and culture, and helps

to support local government

programs, nonprofits, and

regional parks.

SONOMA COUNTY LIFE OPENS UP

SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM

SONOMACOUNTY.COM



TRAIL HOUSE Trail House has raised tens of thousand of dollars for local nonprofits like the dwood Empire Mountain Bike Alliance and Friends of Triane, Annadel State Park



PACIFIC MARKET For the past 19 years Pacific Market has bee instrumental in making holiday dinners available to those in need by donating ingredients that result in m meals. They are a respected community partne



ST. FRANCIS WINERY & VINEYARDS Since 1971, St. Francis Winery & Vineyards has been ted to creating a quality, sus wine by utilizing renewable green policies to benefit their husiness employees and the comm



very – As leader of the Waste Less Windsor (WLW) taskforce, Justin was instrumental in the design ation of waste reducing programs for the Windsor summer concert series



APPENDIX A KINCADE FIRE

OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 7, 2019

CRISIS MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Situation Overview

As Sonoma County entered into the popular harvest/fall season of 2019, a full slate of events, visitor experiences and meetings were in the books and for which planning was complete. In September, however, the tenor of the season took a turn down an uncertain path with the first of what would become frequent public safety power shut-offs (PSPS) events initiated by PG&E. While the events were designed to stave off the possibility of a fire sparking a live electrical wire, this did not provide to be effective.

When the most impactful PSPS event began on Oct. 7, many businesses were caught unaware of the situation. Both visitors and residents were caught in properties without power for days. Working with the Sonoma County Economic Development Board and its researcher, Moody's, it was estimated that the three-day (Oct. 7 – 9) event cost businesses and the County upwards of \$70 million.

In the ensuring month, the County experienced other PSPS events, creating uncertainty around the destination for visitors. Worried event and meeting planners canceled events heightening anxiety among an already anxious tourism industry.

During one of the PSPS events, a flame ignited on one of the generators located in the Geysers above Geyserville. At 9:24 p.m. on October 23, 2019 the Kincade Fire started in the hills above Geyserville and soon spread to the northern portion of Sonoma County. Ultimately the first burned 77,758 acres until it was fully contained on November 6, 2019.

Sonoma County Tourism sprang into action, enabling its crisis communication plan and mobilizing its team into responding to this crisis.
SCT Response

In response to the Kincade Fire, SCT enacted a three-phase approach:

Phase 1 (Onset through Containment) - Address misinformation, convey the real situation through imagery of the area, keep the industry informed of ongoing issues, monitor the situation.

- Marketing
 - o Paused all advertising, social media outreach, Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
 - o Deployed SCT staff to take pictures/videos of destination to show unaffected areas
 - o Facilitated an ad agency call on Nov. 1 to identify strategic approach
- Media
 - o Media calls/interviews
 - o Coverage tracking domestic and international 324 Stories
 - 43% of all coverage is Only Sonoma County
 - Include "Sonoma County" AND
 - Napa, Wine Country, LA Fires = 4%
 - Napa, Wine Country = 6%
 - Napa, LA Fires = 4%
 - Napa = 9%
 - Wine Country, LA = 12%
 - Wine Country = 10%
 - LA Fires = 12%
 - o Conducted daily PR/media calls with TRIO

- Travel Trade
 - o Provided toolkit and messaging for SCT international offices
 - o Provided toolkit and messaging for VCA global offices
- Board/Internal Team
 - o Executive team engaged on multiple calls over first weekend
 - o SCT office in evacuation zone; closed office for until given the clear to return to the building
 - o Set up Command Center at DoubleTree
 - o Conducted an all-staff call each day
 - o Provided daily messages to the SCT Board
 - o Developed talking points developed for Board/staff
- Partner Outreach
 - o Provided daily messaging to partners
 - o Facilitated a meeting with the area AVAs, Sonoma County Vintners, Sonoma County Winegrowers – 10/31
 - o Initiated a partner toolkit, posted to the website
- Visitors/Public
 - o Determined canceled or postponed events and updated partners and website accordingly
 - o Provided fire updates through banner on website

Phase 2 (Following Containment, Short-term Strategy) –

Begin promotional outreach to key audiences, continue to erase misperceptions, determine strategic direction

- Marketing
 - Identified need to pivot marketing to focus on the Spring – nice alignment with the brand, seasonal reliability
 - o Re-started social media 10/31, leveraging new photos and #GatherInSonoma
- Partner Outreach
 - o Participated in the statewide Visit California Crisis Task Force Call – 11/4
 - o Conducted Partner Town Hall 11/15 to update regarding SCT efforts and go forward strategy
 - o Provided staff with \$100 each to spend locally
- Travel Trade
 - Provided toolkit and messaging for SCT's International Offices
 - o Provided toolkit and messaging for VCA global offices
 - o Developed and distributed travel trade e-newsletters -California
 - o Developed and distributed travel trade e-newsletters -National & International
 - o Created LinkedIn posts to drive awareness 3 x week
 - o Continued to engage agents through closed Facebook group with daily posts & inspiration
 - o Created Webinars for international Account Managers
 - o Participated in Kind Traveler dedicated newsletters

- Meeting Planners
 - o E-Pro email blast Gather In Sonoma
 - o Full page ad in November Issue of SMART Meetings Magazine
 - o SCT planner database email Plan your next gathering in Sonoma County
 - o Featured presenter during ILEA webinar
 - o Leverage relationships
 - o MPI, MPISSN, MPIOC, MPINCC
 - o CalSAE
 - o Epro Email Support Sonoma County
 - o Attendance at CalSAE Seasonal Spectacular, Holiday Luncheon
 - o PCMA pre-post trip package offerings

Phase 3 (Recovery) – Move into full recovery mode with a short burst of promotional activity. Continue to promote Sonoma County as planned.

- Marketing
 - o Gather in Sonoma campaign Timing: November – January Markets: Bay Area/Sacramento LA/Orange County Elements: Earned Media Social Media "Gather" Landing Page Content & Video Paid Media Events Destination Partnerships Partner Toolkit

Messages: Visit Now Holidays in Sonoma County Key Moments in Time/Events Partner Deals Deskside visits: Bay Area – 11/21-22

- Group Business Development
 - o Participation in PCMA Convening Leaders 2020
 - Conference 5,000 attendees
 - o Continue E-Pro email blasts
 - o Cvent Hero ad placement
 - o HB partner buzz article 2 months
 - o CalSAE featured FaceBook postings
 - o Full page digital ad placement in MPISSN newsletter
 - o Site experience training
 - o Partnership Opportunities
 - o PCMA Convening Leaders Opening Reception January
 - Sonoma Gathers San Francisco January
 - Sonoma Gathers Los Angeles Feb / March
 - MPINCC ACE San Francisco March 24th
 - CalSAE Elevate Host Hotel Hyatt Regency Sonoma Wine Country – April
 - Global Meetings Industry Day Luncheon Sacramento & Bay Area – April
 - IMEX Las Vegas September
 - o Sales Calls Local markets
- Tourism Development
 - o United Airlines Australia FAM (Nov 3-5)
 - o Virtual Trade Show FOC (Nov 12 & 13)
 - o German Product Manager FAM (Nov 21-23)
 - o Travel Associates Conference/Show Aus (Nov)
 - o ILTM Luxury Trade Show (Dec 2-6)

o ILTM Client Event Travel Trade & PR (Dec 2)

- o Sonoma County Virtual Trade Show (Feb 26 & 27)
- Entire Team
 - o Sonoma Gathers San Francisco (Jan)
 - o Sonoma Gathers Los Angeles (Feb/March) Planned but did not execute due to COVID
- Evolving Marketing Strategies
 - o Pre-2017 fires: SCT charged with Marketing Sonoma County November – April
 - o October 2017 October 2019: Year-round marketing support, new brand launch, surgical approach to key market/audience outreach
 - o Post-2019 fire:

o November - January: Gather In Sonoma Campaign

- o February May: Spring Campaign/Bud Break
 - Life Opens Up brand alignment
 - Bay Area and Non-stop flight markets (leisure)
- o Meetings
- o Always-On strategy between campaigns
- Promote Autumn to leisure in-state market spontaneous travelers
- Moving Forward... Together
 - o SCT team will spend more time listening, engaging, researching
 - o We will work to create more opportunities for partners to build business through programming now, and moving forward

The COVID-19 global pandemic plunged the tourism industry around the world and in Sonoma County into a recessionary situation. With massive personnel layoffs, decimated budgets and uncertainty around response and recovery, the industry has been pushed to its limit. Sonoma County Tourism, accustomed to dealing with crises, began immediate response and has continued to respond as needed during a very unstable and evolving situation.

The outline below represents the first two phases of the response as we continue to experience fluidity in Phase 3.

While this crisis differs from the localized natural disasters previously faced, the phased approach is similar:

Phase 1: Start ----> Public Health Order Allowing Business Activity

(Pause paid media, monitor local health conditions, provide information updates to travelers, internal/external stakeholders, restructure organization, engage customers through social posts – protracted "dreaming" phase, Virtual Town Hall, Partner Alert, Performance and Insights)

Phase 2: Business Activity ---> Travel Allowed to Resume

(Encourage local business support, convey protocols [develop and distribute SAFE Travel Promise], continue to engage customers via social channels, coordinate with statewide industry organizations, determine funding opportunities.)

Leisure – Convey Protocols and SAFE Travels Promise, monitor health orders and convey to visitors via web and social channels, inform via Coronavirus webpage

Group – Continue to field leads, create social distance photo shoot, develop virtual trade show, monitor other destinations and opening for groups, inform via monthly outreach to partners and stakeholders.

Travel Trade - Monitor activity within the domestic and international arenas, identify long-term opportunities

Leisure – Create compelling messages via promotional burst and seasonal campaigns, continue to convey safety protocols, develop video series that welcomes people back – in a responsible way.

Group – Continue to field leads, engage planners through direct mail and social posts, identify opportunities to reestablish connections with top buyers.

Travel Trade – Continue to monitor activity within the domestic and international arenas. Begin to engage travel agents and tour operators as partner organizations such as San Francisco Travel and Visit California begin to re-engage travel trade.

APPENDIX B COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC CRISIS APPROACH

BEGINNING MARCH 16, 2020

During each phase, SCT focused on its core audiences:

- 1. SCT Team
- 2. Key Stakeholders Board, Committees, Elected Officials, Chambers/Visitor Centers
- 3. Partner Businesses
- 4. Local Residents
- 5. Travel Trade Agents, Tour Operators, Meeting Planners
- 6. Travelers Leisure/Businesses

Phase 1: Start \longrightarrow Public Health Order Allowing Business Activity

SCT Organization – Immediate Response

- All teams reviewed programs ended all non-mission critical
- The Executive Team went to 80% salary throughout April and May
- Six positions were immediately furloughed. Four were permanently laid off, two returned to the team.
- SCT began immediate communication and coordination with key local, state and national industry groups regarding the local, regional and global impacts of the pandemic on the industry.
- Communication began with local, statewide elected officials
- Local business closures were tracked
- Creative approaches to customer engagement were recognized and shared via social media
- Partner outreach began with 2x per week Partner Alerts; this was followed by the Performance and Insights e-newsletter than tracked consumer sentiment and STR reports
- Consumer notices were posted on the website through a Coronavirus banner on the home page

Marketing

- Paused all promotional elements as of mid-March
- Cancelled contracts with most vendors
- Revised ad agency agreement
- Limited content development and social media has shifted to inspiration and information during-crisis content and messaging calendar
- Utilized owned social channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) as places for information and inspiration.
- Consumer message posted and updated on homepage, with helpful links and information. Updated daily.
- Created the "We're In This Together" video and distributed via social channels
- Inspiration examples:
- Current photos of Sonoma County
- Web cams throughout Sonoma County
- Sustainability initiatives

Group Business

- Insights
 - o In March the number of leads received was down 45%
 - o YTD lead volume is still up 9% despite the reduction in March
 - o SCT has continued to receive leads during SIP
- Lead volume per week is only down 20% compared to pre-crisis levels
 - o There are 17,479 tentative room nights in the market between June and December
- This does not include the room nights which will rebook from cancellations March May

- Hotels with upcoming groups or active RFPs have been assigned to VP/Manager for outreach to offer support and to establish a main point of contact from our team for each property
- Support including but not limited to, planner outreach and statistical support
- Communication to GBD Committee and DOS team included an initial direct outreach, as well as supplying pertinent information to be included in the semi-weekly partner outreach
 - o Direct outreach with top planners to offer support
 - o Mass email to offer support and resources to 2,600+ planners whom we've engaged with in the past 2 years
 - o Managing a comprehensive list of lodging partners willing to provide essential services to persons in need
 - o Outreach to local, state and nationwide organizations to identify housing needs for essential personnel
 - o In preparation for return to business:
 - Creating and scheduling content for social media, direct planner messages/newsletters, and future ads
 - Compiling comprehensive prospecting lists for use by both SCT and hotel partners
 - Emphasis on attracting 2021 bookings (understanding Partners are prioritizing the rebooking of postponed programs within 2020)
 - Lists being derived from our internal database and Knowland
 - o Investigating advertising and coop opportunities in the local drive market with various meeting publications and websites to be top of mind as travel returns
 - o Renegotiating terms with all vendors
 - o Assume in-house responsibility of future ad buy for
 - GBD division

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Phase 2: Business Activity ---> Travel Allowed to Resume

Research

• Monitored consumer sentiment studies conducted by Longwoods International and Destination Analysts. Convey information via weekly Performance and Insights e-newsletter.

Local Business Community Support

- Beverage Industry
 - o Maintained list of wineries, breweries, cideries, and distilleries offering curbside pickup or delivery services
 - o Supported Sonoma County Vintners' Sip from Home program
 - Throughout the shelter in place, SCT partners can upload shipping deals into the extranet, so they appear as part of their online listing
- Restaurants
 - o Maintained list of restaurants offering delivery, curbside pickup, and take out services including:
 - A map feature
 - Restaurant "Take Out/Delivery" sign distribution o Supported #SCTakeOutEatIn
- Partner Information Program (PIP) Sessions
 - o Continued to hold virtual PIP sessions allowing businesses to amplify their connectivity to SCT

Marketing

- Continued to communicate updated Information about local businesses, for example:
 - o Supporting partners who are open for business (take out/delivery, beverage pick up/delivery, etc)
 - Help people enjoy the wide open spaces of Sonoma County, while respecting social distancing norms, and government-mandated regulations
- Created videos that engaged Sonoma County fans. In this phase, the "Virtual Cheers" video was produced and distributed.

Group Business

- Continued to field leads and distribute to lodging properties.
- Monitored industry to determine movement toward allowing group events.
- Connected with counterparts at regional DMOs to identify opportunities for collaboration and ways each is managing the crisis

	Phase 1: Shelter in Place	Phase 2*: Destination Re-opening/Summer Campaign		
	MARCH-MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Primary Message/Campaign		Life Opens Up - Visit Sonoma County this Summer		
Content and Social	Dreaming Phase of Travel Support open businesses S.A.F.E Travels Promise Video releases	Turning dreams into realities, Road Trips, S.A.F.E Travels Promise, Pa		
Partner Deals and Offers	Limited	Welcome Back Offers and Deals		eals
Promotions	None	Drive awareness of road trips e-guide, partner integration, and elen of fun.		ntegration, and element
Advertising - Paid Media	None	SMM & SEM. Phased in paid media.		nedia.
Digital	New content. UGC. 1x month consumer enews- letter.			
Public Relations and Influencers	Pitches and Releases Sup- porting "Dreaming"	Summer road trips, promotion, partner safety messages, new videos. Deskside visits in key markets. Hosting media from key markets. Hosted influencers from North Bay and then drive markets		

Phase 3: Travel Resumes → Full Recovery (pulled back required after travel resumed, modified phase)

Marketing

This phase has been put on hold due to both the Coronavirus and now the Wallbridge Fire.

Group Business

- Coordinated and executed two photo shoots designed to show Sonoma County's lodging venues, restaurants, wineries and other properties given social distancing parameters.
- Continued to field leads and distribute to partners

	Phase 3: Fall Campaign			
	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Primary Message/Campaign	Autumn - Enjoy Harvest Season in Sonoma County			
Content and Social	Turning dreams into realities, Road Trips, S.A.F.E Travels Promise, Partner Amplification, Visit Now, Video Releases			
Partner Deals and Offers	Fall travel deals and offers from partners			
Promotions	Best Job in the World			
Advertising - Paid Media	SMM & SEM. Paid media campaign. September co-op campaign.			
Digital	Landing page focused on: road trips; book "now" messages; partner offers/deals; health and safety protocols; promotion. 1x month consumer enewsletter			
Public Relations and Influencers	Fall road trips and itineraries in wine country. Deskside visits in key markets. Hosting media from key markets.			

Safe Travels Promise

As leisure travel resumed, it became clear that those traveling to Sonoma County were not abiding by the protocols required. Working with Chambers of Commerce and Visitor's Centers across Sonoma County, the Safe Travels Promise was created, encouraging visitors to be safe, smart, responsible and kind during their visit in Sonoma County. The promise was distributed through posters, window clings, bookmarks, postcards and signage in highly visible locations like the Sonoma County Airport. Over 6,700+ materials were distributed through over 140 partners.

Additional information about the program may be found on the Safe Travels Promise <u>webpage</u>.

SAFE TRAVELS PROMISE We're in this together, While visiting Sonoma County, please be a conscious traveler. We'll do our best to make your stay happy and healthy. RE SMARTI Maintain high standards of hygiene and observe all Sonoma County health regulations, even if different from your home region. DE SAFLI Take needed precautions to ensure you're safe. teomes: observe all restrictions. Wear your mask. BE AIND. ing their best in spite of extraordinary challenges. We all need to exercise extra patience. STAT HEALTHT. nd wellbeing of our visitors, our residents, and our es are top priority. Be thoughtfal and cautious. our visit. Thank you for doing your part to protect and preserve Sonoma County. AT. BE SAFE, BE RINE STAT HEALTHY. a keepasmondum. KEEP -KEEP CONOMA COUNT

TOTAL SIZE OF SONOMA COUNTY 2019 DOMESTIC TRAVEL MARKET



YEAR-OVER-YEAR COMPARISONS

	2018	2019	Difference
Day Trips	6,00,000	5,400,000	(0.1%)
Overnight Trips	4.800,000	4.900,000	+0.9%

DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT EXPENDITURES PER SECTOR

Activity	Expenditure	Percent Change
Lodging	\$445 Million	43%
Restaurant/Food & Beverage	\$251 Million	25%
Retail Purchase	\$133 Million	13%
Recreation/Entertainment	\$104 Million	10%
Transportation in Destination	\$90 Million	9%

APPENDIX C LONGWOODS INTERNATIONAL

2019 VISITOR PROFILE AVERAGE PER PERSON EXPENDITURES ON DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT TRIPS - BY SECTOR



AVERAGE PER PARTY EXPENDITURES ON DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT TRIPS - BY SECTOR



MAIN PURPOSE OF LEISURE TRIP



STATE ORIGIN OF TRIP

State	2019	2018
California	47%	53%
Texas	5%	4%
Illinois	5%	3%
Florida	4%	4%
New York	4%	5%
Hawaii	3%	N/A
Nevada	N/A	3%

DESIGNATED MARKET AREA (DMA) ORIGIN OF TRIP

DMA	2019	2018	Difference
San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose	13%	21%	-8%
Sacramento-Modesto	8%	9%	-1%
Los Angeles	17%	12%	+5%
New York	7%	6%	+1%
Chicago	4%	2%	+2%
Honolulu	3%	2%	+1%

TIME OF YEAR VISITED

DMA	2019	2018
January - March	23%	22%
April - June	25%	26%
July - September	28%	29%
October - December	25%	24%

More information about the 2019 Visitor Profile is located on the <u>Research & Reports</u> page of the Partner Portal on SonomaCounty.com.

Longwoods International – Study Methodology

Each quarter, a random, projectable sample of adult members (18 years of age and over) of a major U.S. consumer panel is invited to participate in the **Longwoods Travel USA®** survey:

Selected to be representative of the U.S. adult population

For Sonoma County, the sample achieved in 2019 was 529 overnight travelers.

For analysis, data were weighted on key demographics to correct for any differences between the sample and U.S. population targets.

SCT Staff

Management & Administration Claudia Vecchio, President & CEO

Kelly Bass Seibel, Director of Community Engagement

Tracy Koch, Administrative Program Manager Devin McConnell, Community Engagement Specialist

Marketing & Communications

Todd O'Leary, VP, Marketing & Communications Ariane Hiltebrand, Director of Marketing Systems & Insights

Spencer Spellman, Director of Brand Development Birgitt Vaughan, Director of Global Media Relations Anna Yan, Public Relations Manager Katja West, Marketing Data & Systems Specialist

Group Business Development Jennifer Richards, VP, Group Business Development Samantha Paull, Group Business Development Manager

Laura Broderick, Project & Design Specialist Phuong Luu, Group Business & Tourism Dev. Specialist

Finance & Operations Lori Angstadt, VP, Finance & Operations

SCT Board of Directors

Steve Jung, CHAIR / Doubletree by Hilton Sonoma Wine Country, General Manager

Joe Bartolomei, VICE CHAIR / Farmhouse Inn & Restaurant, Owner Keo Hornbostel, TREASURER / Safari West, Executive Director Rachel LeGrand, SECRETARY / Russian River Getaways, Owner Tom Birdsall / Hampton Inn - Windsor, Partner Percy Brandon / Vintners Resort, General Manager Jennifer Buffo / Pure Luxury Transportation, Owner/COO Thera Buttaro / Sonoma Coast Living, Owner Patty Ginochio / Ginochio's Kitchen, Owner Dustin Groff / Hotel Petaluma, General Manager Kristina Jetton / Flamingo Resort, General Manager Karissa Kruse / Sonoma County Winegrowers, Presiden Kirk Lok / Quality Inn Petaluma and Fairfield Inn & Suites Sebastopol, Owner James Luchini / Francis Ford Coppola Winery, Manager, Hospitality **Training & Development** Crista Luedtke / Boon Hotel, Owner Dan Michael / Mayacama, General Manager Ashish Patel / Olea Hotel, Managing Partner Bert Rangel / Rivers End Restaurant & Inn, Owner Edward Roe / Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa, General Manager Peter Rumble / Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, CEO Tim Zahner / Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau, Executive Director

Sheryl Bratton / Sonoma County Administrator / Ex-Officio
Kristen Madsen / Director, Creative Sonoma / Ex-Officio
Alternate to Sheba Person-Whitley
McCall Miller / Administrator Analyst, County Administrator Office
/ Ex-Officio
Alternate to Sheryl Bratton
Sheba Person-Whitley / Executive Director, Sonoma County
Economic Development Board / Ex-Officio

SCT STAFF & BOARD



Executive Committee Steve Jung, DoubleTree by Hilton Sonoma Wine Country

Finance and Legal Committee Keo Hornbostel, Safari West

Governance Committee Joe Bartolomei, Farmhouse Inn

Marketing & Communications Committee Crista Luedtke, Boon Hotel & Spa

Group Business Development Committee Percy Brandon, Vintners Resort

Global Tourism Development Committee Jennifer Buffo, Pure Luxury Transportation

Community Engagement Committee Thera Buttaro, Bodega Bay & Beyond

Revenue Generation Committee Keo Hornbostel, Safari West

COMMITTEE CHAIRS



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