Thank you for all you do
President's Message: Ken Fischang

Last week, we celebrated National Travel and Tourism Week. To extend the celebration, we - the board and staff of Sonoma County Tourism - thank you for your dedication in creating a world-class destination.

Because of you, millions of visitors to Sonoma County each year receive warm, helpful, and friendly welcomes. They, in turn, tell their friends about the amazing time they had, encouraging them to come.

Because of you, visitors spent a record $1.645 billion in Sonoma County last year; and $143 million was collected in state and local taxes. This pays for services such as public safety, regional parks, and economic development programs.

Because of you, hundreds of journalists discovered this amazing destination and influenced thousands of potential visitors through engaging travel stories.

And, because of you, Sonoma County Tourism is poised to celebrate its 10th anniversary, a decade of cohesive marketing efforts to ensure Sonoma County is counted among the top wine regions in the world to visit.

We can do what we do everyday, because of you. Thank you.
Tourism industry grows by 2.4 percent in Sonoma County

Tourism spending grew 2.4 percent in the last year and continues to grow as an important economic sector in Sonoma County, according to Visit California's annual report. The news was reported in the Press-Democrat and other area newspapers.

Total direct travel spending in Sonoma County was $1.645 billion for 2014, according to the annual Dean Runyan Associates economic study performed for Visit California, up from $1.606 billion in 2013.

The total number of jobs in the tourism economy also grew by 2.4 percent, with 19,350 jobs in the tourism sector locally. That equates to roughly one in 10 private employer jobs in Sonoma County.

There has also been a 3.6 percent increase in collected government revenue in the form of local and state taxes. Currently, tourism in Sonoma County brings in $143 million in government revenue. That money is used locally for regional parks, public safety, economic development, and arts and cultural festivals.

According to the report, each household in Sonoma County would pay an additional $760 a year in taxes to make up for the tax revenue attributed to tourism.

Sonoma County Tourism kicks off Faces of Tourism campaign

To illustrate that tourism is part of the fabric that makes up this vibrant destination, SCT launched a new campaign, "Faces of Sonoma County Tourism."

Some 19,350 people - a record number - work in the tourism industry in Sonoma County. They come from all walks of life, live all over Sonoma County and hold all kinds of jobs. What they have in common is they represent Sonoma County to the more than 7 million visitors who come here each year.

The campaign will introduce tourism professionals to the public via print advertising in the Press-Democrat, as well as online ads.

While tourism pros around the county know the best trails to hike or roads to cycle, favorite locales for a picnic, what's the best shopping, and where to get an only-in-Sonoma-County piece of art.

In the community, they volunteer at local schools, coach kids in soccer, and volunteer at non-profits.

The "Faces" campaign is currently running in the Press Democrat, print and
online, as well as online at SonomaCounty.com.

SCT represented at Travel Rally Day and press conference

SCT's Ken Fischang joined Visit California CEO Caroline Beteta and other destination marketing organization CEOs in a joint press conference to talk about the economic impact of tourism on the Bay Area region, as well as on the state of California.

The group also talked about Project Time Off, U.S. Travel's campaign to show the health benefits of taking time off; making vacation a part of a personal wellness plan.

DEADLINES AND OPPORTUNITIES
Get your message in front of thousands of visitors

The Official Sonoma County Visitors Guide and Map are the premier marketing pieces showcasing Sonoma County and are supported by Sonoma County Tourism's sales and marketing programs reaching millions of travelers each year.

Visitors are looking for lodging, food and wine experiences, attractions, recreation, cultural arts, and events. The Official Sonoma County Visitors Guide and Map are the essential traveler's guides for planning a trip or deciding what to do once arriving in Sonoma County.
Ad sales starts June 1.

For more information, contact:
Connie Bowen
707-887-1609
connie@studiompublishing.com

Submit your summer offers

Sonoma County's peak travel season is quickly approaching and now is the time to submit your offers to attract visitors.

The special offers don't have to be discounted, but can be value-added deals. To see the current listing of specials, go to www.sonomacounty.com/deals.

SonomaCounty.com/deals is just one of the ways that businesses can be promoted through SCT's free marketing programs. It's supported with paid advertising, social media outreach, and public relations efforts, making sure that hundreds of thousands of potential travelers get your message.

How to submit your deal:

- Add your deal through the Partner Extranet in the "Web-Coupon" tab, using your login. Instructions for adding a coupon/deal to the Extranet are here: https://vimeo.com/61056556
- To include an image on your deal, you will first need to have images uploaded. Instructions for adding images are here: https://vimeo.com/61056555

If you do not have access to the Extranet, or do not have your password, please email Kristin Clark at kclark@sonomacounty.com.
SCT hosts journalists, garners stories

It's already been a busy year for SCT's PR manager, Biggi Vaughan. With her assistance, more than 25 writers have already visited Sonoma County this year.

This doesn't include the hundreds of journalists who have received the Sonoma County message through pitches, press releases, office visits, and media events.

The resulting stories influence thousands of potential travelers.

Here are some of this month's highlights and find more here.

As a result of hosting Belgian journalist Leentje De Leeuw (pictured here, in the center, with Biggi and Tim Ward of BobDog Wines), a feature about Sonoma County was published in the travel section of Belgium's leading newspaper, Het Laatste Nieuws. 1.2 million people will read it, so be prepared for a lot of Belgians coming our way.

There is additional coverage of Sonoma Wine Country Weekend and the Raford Inn, as a result of hosting freelancer Sharon McDonnell at the 2014 event. The Costco Connection (Circ: 8,694,124, UMV: 150,000 Media Value, $99,534) produced a round-up of "Grape Escapes" in wine countries across the country. A sidebar is also included of top wine events across the country worth attending, including Sonoma Wine Country Weekend. A link to the event's website is also included here.

As a result of hosting Megan Singleton in December (and she was the guest speaker for SCT's media seminar), here is her latest entry in her blog Blogger At Large, about Wine Country Walking Tours.

MPI offers education program in Sonoma County

Sonoma County Tourism and Fairmont Sonoma Tourism Update: Peak season starts Memorial Day Weekend https://ui.constantcontact.com/visualeditor/visual_editor_preview.jsp?age...
Mission Inn sponsored Meeting Professionals International Northern California Chapter's (MPINCC) North Bay education program on April 14.

Meeting professionals from Northern California attended and were treated to an outstanding "Meetings Means Business" program about meetings advocacy, by Roger Rickard. The presentation left the attendees with the tools to communicate the value of meetings to all stakeholders.

Rose Stanton, CMP with Viviani Destination Management Company, received the Meeting Professional of the Quarter award. Congratulations, Rose.

Afterwards key clients were invited on a tour to discover what's new in Sonoma Valley, including VJB Vineyards for lunch and wine pairing, and Hamel Family Vineyards for a tasting with a beautiful view. Special thanks to Pure Luxury Transportation and our driver Jessie for making the trip extra fun.

SCT meets travel pros, media in China, Japan, Korea

Sonoma County Tourism's Tim Zahner and Deleyse Langdale (pictured with Chinese tour operators) recently returned from a whirlwind two-week and five-city sales mission to China, Japan, and Korea.

Organized by Visit California, the mission drew close to 30 delegates from 22 different tourism businesses and DMOs from across the Golden State.

A range of networking events, one-on-one meetings, training seminars, media lunches, and VIP client dinners made up the schedule and provided the platform for spreading the Sonoma County message.

China is one of the fastest-growing markets for inbound travel to California and the United States. The majority (70 percent) of travelers are using packaged and escorted tours, though "FIT" and "semi-FIT" (defined as travelers who fly to California and rent a car and are not part of an escorted group or package).
Korea and Japan are mature markets that have familiarity with California and attributes that align with Sonoma County's core products: wellness, food, wine, and scenery.

SCT staff will meet with their new Chinese, Korean, and Japanese contacts when they attend International Pow Wow 2015 in Orlando, where several thousand international buyers of travel come to hear about destinations and products.

**Sustainability message going strong among growers**

Sonoma County Winegrowers announced that more than half of all vineyard acres in Sonoma County have completed a sustainability self-assessment after just 15 months since the organization announced its bold commitment to become the nation's first 100 percent sustainable wine region by 2019. This early success exceeds expectations indicating the strong commitment by Sonoma County's multigenerational winegrowers.
Super Bowl 50 updates

Sonoma County Tourism, Vintners, and Winegrowers, actively involved in the planning of Super Bowl 50 and the official wine sponsors of the Bay Area Host Committee, announce updates for the planning of this milestone event.

Volunteers are needed
As the welcoming voice of the region, volunteers will be the first contact visitors from across the nation will have. Hundreds of volunteers will be needed to help host this event.

Volunteers will assist with community tours, the fan village, transportation, and Super Bowl Week events, as well as others. An application and screening process will be in place for all volunteers.

Immediate need: The committee is looking for 100 volunteer screening specialists to support the volunteer screening process in June-August. If you have experience as a hiring manager, in HR or are just interested in helping out, visit the website to apply.

The Super Bowl 50 Host Committee will officially open the volunteer application process in early June. Find out more at www.sfbaysuperbowl.com/volunteer, or email volunteers@sfsuperbowl.com

Fan Village announced
The Host Committee announced the location of San Francisco’s Super Bowl City, a free "fan village" that will be held along the easternmost stretch of Market Street and fill Justin Herman Plaza in the eight days leading up to Super Bowl 50. The game will be played in Santa Clara's Levi's Stadium on Feb. 7, 2016.

The fan village will open Jan. 30, 2016, with the relighting of the Bay Bridge's LED light display. The village will include the best the Bay Area has to offer, including food and drink vendors, exhibits, family friendly events. It will also be the staging ground for CBS, which will be broadcasting live throughout the week.

Playmaker grants available
The Super Bowl 50 Host Committee is giving back to Bay Area communities. Playmakers, a program that is part of the 50 Fund grant program, will provide
50 separate $10,000 Playmaker grants, one per week beginning Feb. 23, to Bay Area nonprofits.

Applications will be accepted during the months of May, August, and November, and should include how the project helps to close the opportunity gap for children, youth and young adults.

Find out more about the eligibility criteria, official rules, and apply for a Playmaker grant on 50 Fund's website at www.50fund.org.

**Earn your Certified Tourism Ambassador designation**

Invest in your professional development and earn your Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) designation in this compelling, interactive four-hour class followed by a one-hour open-book test.

This professional designation will follow you throughout your career as you renew annually by attending key Sonoma County events and networking with the 1,000 CTAs already on board.

Enroll today in the four hour certification class for $49. Learn more about the program and sign up for a class at www.CTANetwork.com.

**Upcoming 2015 Classes:**

May 28, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Dawn Ranch Lodge
June 2, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Sonoma County Tourism
July 14, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Sonoma County Tourism
June 25, 5 - 9 p.m., Costeaux French Bakery
July 30, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Location TBD
Aug. 11, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Sonoma County Tourism
Aug. 27, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Location TBD
Sept. 15, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Sonoma County Tourism
Sept. 24, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Location TBD
Oct. 6, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Sonoma County Tourism
Oct. 20, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Sonoma County Tourism
Nov. 5, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Sonoma County Tourism
Dec. 1, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Worth our Weight Culinary Café
Dec. 15, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Worth our Weight Culinary Café

If you are interested in receiving more information, please email Mo McElroy at mmcelroy@sonomacounty.com or call her directly at 707-490-5079.
INFORM SCT OF NEW BUSINESSES

If you know of a new tourism business - restaurant, lodging, winery, tour, or attraction - please send any tips on new businesses to marketing@sonomacounty.com.

Include the name of the business, type of business and a phone number or email. SCT will contact the business in order to keep our website and visitors guide updated.

SCT POWER TIP: STEAL THIS VIDEO

Sonoma County Tourism produces one, and sometimes two, videos each month. Feel free to use the videos by embedding them on your website, referencing them on your social channels or just playing them again and again to the kids.

You can view all the videos on our Youtube channel.

Get to the beach - watch this one.

INDUSTRY NEWS
Top travel headlines show industry impact

The World Travel & Tourism Council, the leading travel and tourism business organization in the world, shows the size of the global travel industry and its growth in five illustrations. The figures are gleaned from its economic impact study. Read more about it [here](http://www.worldtravel.org).

# # #

America is overwhelmed at work. Project: Time Off's report, "Overwhelmed America: Why Don't We Use Our Earned Leave?" revealed that a lack of communication and "work martyr" complex keep us from using all our time off.

Other top travel headlines:

- [Five years in, Brand USA is bringing home the bacon](TravelPulse) (TravelPulse)
- [Bill would revamp visa process to help U.S. travel industry](Las Vegas Review-Journal) (Las Vegas Review-Journal)
- [A $4 fix for the airline industry?](Travel-Intel Newsletter) (Travel-Intel Newsletter)
- [Strong U.S. data makes for happy hoteliers](Hotel News Now) (Hotel News Now)
- [Why hotels can no longer ignore Google](TravelPulse) (TravelPulse)
Focus on global travel: disruption and reinvention (*Travel Weekly*)

The best way to motivate employees? Tell them to take the day off (*Washington Post*)

Amazon Travel launches new brand, Amazon Destinations (*Skift*)

World Travel and Tourism Council released *Economic Impact World* Report (*WTTC*)