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MORRO BAY TOURISM BUREAU

## MBTBID/MBTB ANNUAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 12, 2015

Breakfast & Networking, 9:00-9:30 A.M., 9:30 A.M. Meeting  
Vets Hall – 209 Surf Street | Morro Bay, CA 93442

### I. CALL TO ORDER

Member Solu called the meeting to order at 9:32am

Members Present: Michele Jacquez, Taylor Newton, Amit Patel, Jack Smith, Joan Solu

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Sharon Bufo, Brent Haugen, Jazmyn Strickland

Guests/Audience Present: Ruth Ann Angus, Jayne Behman, Jim Berg, Trena Cadwell, Lisa Campolmi, Jill Crosby, Joel Clay, Chuck Davison, Ginger DiNunzio, Beverly Durrer, Lenny Durrer, Mark Elterman, John Flaherty, Kaori Funahashi, Jan Goldman, Stephanie Goodwin, Sabin Gray, John Headding, Walter Heath, Josh Heptig, Kristin Horowitz, Kylee Jepsen, Maggie Juren, Nick Juren, Ken MacMillan, Marly McPherson, Nick Mendoza, Jennifer Redman, Fred Reed, Megan Rivoire, Bill Schuecheck, Tracy Schuecheck, Ken Scott, Valerie Seymour, Maryann Stansfield, Susan Stewart, Kelly Wells, Mary Verdin, Carla Wixom, Nick Yellin.

### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Jacquez made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 10, 2014 meetings of the Morro Bay Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) Board of Directors and the Morro Bay Tourism Bureau (MBTB) Board of Directors. Member Newton seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

### III. WELCOME & OPENING COMMENTS

Member Solu thanked members of the audience for their attendance, introduced current and some past TBID/MBTB Board of Directors, and shared the purpose of the meeting as well as some background on the TBID/MBTB.

Comments from Member Solu: Approximately five years ago the Morro Bay lodging partners decided to form a TBID via a self-assessment at 3% of gross revenues for each transaction. Morro Bay has the highest assessment of any municipality or unincorporated area in SLO County; most other cities have a 1% assessment. Over the last five years there has been a significant change in how Morro Bay is marketed. Tourism in Morro Bay was flat for about 18 – 19 years and hotels averaged a 50% occupancy rate. Hoteliers realized they needed to make an economic development plan for their industry and proposed the self-assessment. The assessment law requires the TBID to share with stakeholders how those funds are used annually. Although only the lodging partners pay into the assessment, the TBID/MBTB Board of Directors considers the larger Morro Bay community (retailers, restaurateurs, attractions, etc) to be stake holders as well, which is why the TBID/MBTB Board of Directors includes two members that are not lodging partners.

#### IV. YEAR IN REVIEW, 2014-15

##### a. Brent Haugen, Morro Bay Tourism Bureau Executive Director

New for the 2014-15 Fiscal Year (FY), the MBTB began generating leads for lodging partners. Eighteen leads were shared for FY 2014-15. Eighteen advertising/promotional opportunities were created for lodging partners as well as the larger Morro Bay community. The Visitor Center saw 9,300 visitors (as of January 31, 2015). Director Haugen acknowledged and thanked the Morro Bay Visitor's Center Staff - Carrie Aguirre, Sharon Bufo, Jan Goldman, Ed Krovitz.

Listening Sessions were completed with individual property owners/managers. The Jack Rabbit reservation widget was added to other partners' site as a convenience for guests to book rooms in Morro Bay.

The MBTB Board of Directors established the following short term goals:

- Increase mid-week business (Monday - Thursday) and overall occupancy, focusing on low and shoulder seasons to benefit all properties. Revenue increased each month (over the previous year). There was an increase in occupancy for July, August, October, November, December and January. September occupancy did not increase.
- Host Board of Directors training and strategic planning session. A Board of Directors retreat was conducted in May of 2014. Board of Directors training along with a strategic planning session was conducted in February 2015, which clarified the big-picture goals of the organization and provided the starting point to create a 3-5 year strategic plan. The roles of Board and the Executive Director were clearly defined which also provided a better understanding of organizational structures, policies, and liabilities.
- Policies and procedures were established for accounts payable/receivable, media, and a financial reserve policy was adopted. These processes allow for more efficient time management and expense tracking.
- Communication with stakeholders was increased and improved via ongoing listening sessions, email marketing, vacancy reports and a Monthly Executive Director's report. The increased communication helped build relationships and feedback amongst the lodging community.
- A sales and promotion process was established to support more group business for Morro Bay, creating compression and a foundation for growth.
- Two part-time staff members were hired to engage the lodging and business community in bureau marketing and outreach. Hiring of staff increased overall efficiencies internally as well as externally. Promotions provided new and inexpensive opportunities to increase overall room nights; and provided a platform for increased engagement of our targeted audiences and the business community.



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The MBTB has a balanced budget where \$750,160 in expenses was[is] covered by \$750,160 of revenue. Expenses include \$105,600 to operate the Visitor's Center and over \$540,000 dedicate towards marketing and public relations. Marketing and public relations activities include direct mail programs, print advertising, publishing a Visitor's Guide, exhibiting at tradeshow, monthly/seasonal promotions to encourage overnight stays, sponsorships, and partnerships.

### **Discussion on the MBTB Executive Director's Year in Review Report**

John Headding, Morro Bay City Council and TBID/MBTB City Liaison asked for comparative data from other SLO County cities, for their costs in operating their respective Destination Marketing Organizations or TBIDs as well as their Transient Occupant Tax (TOT) increases. Haugen responded that Visit San Luis Obispo County (VSLOC), provides those reports and Haugen will share them via MorroBay.org. A STR Report (hotel benchmark data) comparing the previous three years of data from San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles, and unincorporated SLO County area was available/posted during the meeting. That STR report highlighted Morro Bay's significant gain of market share within the county (over the last three years).

#### **b. Mental Marketing (Public Relations Firm)**

Mental Marketing was hired by the TBID/MBTB in March of 2014. Maryann Stansfield is the Director of Marketing for Mental Marketing and she shared the firm's PR goals for the FY 2014-15 as well as accomplishments for the trailing 12 months (March 2014 to February 2015).

Public Relations goals for Morro Bay included increasing awareness of unique offerings as a visitor destination through third party endorsements, increasing visitation from California feeder markets, growing awareness of year round food, wine and cultural events, increasing awareness of group and tour opportunities, generating exposure in primary domestic markets outside of California, driving incremental bookings through packages and special promotions, and to support the overall marketing, promotions, goals and objectives of the MBTB.

These goals were addressed through three PR programs: Monthly Press Releases, Media Familiarity Trips/Pitches, and Reactive PR. Monthly press releases focused on newsworthy, meaningful stories, and lifestyle-focused activities. Freelance travel writers, media writers, regional and national publication writers and editors were pitched story ideas and were encouraged to visit Morro Bay in exchange for travel features. Through these efforts Morro Bay was featured nine times in the previous 12 months.

[Reactive PR] Specific stories and releases were tailored to respond to media inquiries from VSLOC, Central Coast Tourism Council (CCTC), Visit California (Visit CA), Sunset Magazine, and regional wine alliances.

The MBTB's return on investment included 12 hosted media visits, 87 travel features and high profile pickups, 653 million print and online media impression, which equate to \$2.58 million in advertising and a \$7.74 million dollar publicity value.

### **Discussion on the Mental Marketing Year in Review Report**

Ken MacMillan, owner of DiStasio's on the Bay [Italian Restaurant] asked why the plan included outreach/marketing efforts directed outside San Luis Obispo county (statewide and international), as he understood it was VSLOC's per view to attract visitors from outside the county and that the MBTB was supposed to focus on local marketing. Mr. MacMillan and was curious as to those costs associated. Stansfield responded that Mental Marketing was not actively seeking international marketing opportunities, but would appropriately respond to international inquires via reactive PR.

Bill Schuecheck, of Suite 1 Gallery [Art & Photography] questioned [Stansfield] on why retail promotions were not part of the PR plan. He also asked Haugen to share press releases with the larger Morro Bay business community. Stansfield clarified that promotion of retailers was included in the PR plan, as marketing the overall Morro Bay experience. Haugen notified the audience that Press Releases are shared via MorroBay.org. Member Solu also shared that, although the lodging partners are the only group to provide funds for marketing Morro Bay- the MBTB never participates in marketing, promotions, or PR which solely mentions lodging partners. The MBTB markets Morro Bay as a destination inclusive of shopping, dining, events, attractions, and more. The MBTB seeks partnerships and cooperation from other businesses in Morro Bay to compress the economic impact of tourism.

Sabin Gray, of Hooray for Hollywood [Novelties & Gifts] noted that the Marina Square Complex has a community bulletin board and posting press release there would be helpful for informing visitors and the business community. *[Haugen notified the audience that Press Releases are shared via MorroBay.org and anyone is welcome to print/post them for their use.]*

Jennifer Redman, of Edward Jones Financial Advisor and President of the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, [attempted to] clarify Mr. Gray's comments that business community members are asking to be informed of promotions to support the larger marketing efforts. Ms. Redman agreed that distributing press releases locally would be beneficial and also suggested that MBTB provide articles on promotions to be included in Chamber Newsletters.

Jazmyn Strickland, Hospitality Coordinator for the MBTB reiterated the numerous of ways (emails, phone calls, mailings, and in-person visits) the MBTB staff shares promotion and marketing information with the larger business community. Mrs. Strickland also noted that often times these modes of communication are ignored or met with negativity. Mrs. Strickland asked the business community to continue to share suggestions on how best to communicate with them and encouraged the business community to be receptive to communications from the MBTB.

John Headding, Morro Bay City Council and TBID/MBTB City Liaison asked what qualities differentiate Morro Bay [from other destinations] from the PR standpoint and what themes are used in promoting those unique qualities. Stansfield shared that the message for Morro Bay has to be diversified; they cannot pitch the same stories/angles over and over. So the Mental Marketing team participates in a brainstorming process to highlight the unique qualities of Morro Bay and match those with specific PR opportunities.

Member Solu encouraged audience members to allow the meeting to move to the next agenda item for the sake of time, but also encouraged the audience to contact the MBTB to discuss issues and questions they are not able to share during this meeting.

**c. Verdin Marketing (Marketing Firm)**

Year in Review, presented by members of the Verdin Marketing Team: Most of the paid advertising approaches began in October of 2014. Generally all mediums performed very well with new creative and targeting strategies. The results showed an increase in website traffic and occupancy rates year over year. During the 2014 – 2015 advertising campaigns Verdin focused on targeting audiences by age and geographic location. Target age groups included Millennials (aged 25-35), Generation Xers (aged mid-30s to late-40s, possibly with children) and Baby Boomers (aged 50+). Geographic targets included the California Central Valley (Bakersfield, Fresno, Visalia, Sacramento) and Coastal California cities in Northern and Southern California near Los Angeles, San Francisco, and the Bay Area.

All advertising creative for the 2014 - 2015 FY followed the “Morro Bay Way” Campaign. This campaign featured one or two hero images featuring one Morro Bay activity. The ad images included a fresh-shucked oyster, a girl playing with a kite on the beach, surfers frolicking at the edge of the ocean, and boats in a race on the bay. The images were coupled with a short two to three word headline followed by “The Morro Bay Way” [text].

Trip Advisor is performing almost twice as strong as this time last year. From October 1, 2014 through March 1, 2015- 19,465 users have visited the Morro Bay page on Trip Advisor. This is an 80% increase over the same month, last year. Additionally, 3,750 unique users clicked through to the Morro Bay Website from Trip Advisor; and once

the Morro Bay website was reached, they viewed an average of 1.9 pages of content. The Click Through Rate (CTR) for Morro Bay ads on Trip Advisor is .11%, which outperforms Trip Advisor's average of .07% and the industry standard of .06%.

Facebook has been a strong marketing staple of the Morro Bay Tourism Bureau campaign. Since October 1, 2014, Facebook ads alone have reached 1.7 million users. Over 43,000 individuals clicked on at least one of the ads, while over 33,000 have engaged in some way with the ads. The overall CTR of all Morro Bay ads to date is 2.55%. All of the Facebook ads direct users to the lodging page of the Morro Bay website. The campaign is divided into two targeted areas: Coastal California cities and Central Valley California cities. Verdin saw a further increase in performance as ads with stronger calls-to-action were introduced (e.g. "Stay for as little as \$75 a night").

A Google AdWords campaign began in October 2014. During the past five months, the MBTB has received 13,082 total clicks to their website with 568,930 impressions being served and an average CTR of 2.3%. These numbers have improved monthly as management of the program is fine-tuned. The AdWords program targets Morro Bay's top geographic markets, as previously mentioned.

Digital banner ads, and recently video ads, began in late October of 2014. The campaign focuses on Central California first and Coastal California secondly. The campaign has received 1.5 million impressions with 908 direct clicks to the Morro Bay Website. Thousands of users engaged with the ads in some way other than clicking to the website. In late January, banner ads were changed, wherever possible, to videos ads, which have increased digital ad performance dramatically.

Two full color half page print ads ran in the December and [will run] in the April issues of Sunset magazine. The December ad appeared within the San Francisco area section, and the April ad will appear inside of the Los Angeles area section. The first ad featured the boat image with "Rush Hour, the Morro Bay Way" headline. The April ad features the Oyster and dining with "Ocean to Table the Morro Bay Way". Digital ads also ran on Sunset.com from November 2013 until June 2014. While the print ad increased activity to the website in the San Francisco area, the digital ads are only average in performance. While impressions reached 684,558 the clicks were low at 275, with a subpar .04% CTR. Visuals and headlines have repeatedly been updated to enhance performance, but ultimately we [Verdin] recommend discontinuing this medium for the remainder of the year.

The social media marketing strategy as implemented by Verdin has been very successful. From specific social campaigns to strategic engagement, social media has played an important role in the branding of Morro Bay as well as the acquisition of website visitors. Overall the MBTB has seen a significant increase (14%, to over 30,000 fans) in fans and engagement on the Facebook page from June 2014. Facebook



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continues to make it increasingly difficult to reach more people organically, thereby effecting page fan momentum and engagement.

While there was a small decline in the first quarter of 2015 as a result of Facebook's most recent and significant algorithm change, Verdin continues to adjust and modify its tactics to maintain engagement with its most loyal fan base on Facebook while increasing the potential to acquire 'Likes' and Page Fans.

Overall we've seen Twitter to be a moderately effective social channel to connect with Morro Bay Twitter followers. While reaching an audience through Twitter has proven somewhat difficult, those we have reached and connected with seem to be quite engaged with the Morro Bay brand. This is indicated by the @Mentions and Messages Received – which represent followers who specifically mention (use) the Morro Bay handle @morrobaytravel. Twitter followers have increased 25% from June of 2014; Morro Bay currently has 1,125 followers.

Overall, Instagram is proving to be a social network of choice for deep engagement and fan interaction. It offers a great way to share rich, authentic images and videos. This is a natural and perfect social media outlet for tourism and travel enthusiasts and for the Morro Bay brand as it boasts incredible, sharable scenery. Instagram followers have increased 48% from June 2014. Currently, the Instagram channel for Morro Bay has 1,114 followers and continues to rise and will be a focus for future social media marketing campaigns.

Of the social media channels, Facebook has had the most significant impact on driving traffic to the website. There has been a Year Over Year increase in Desktop website Facebook traffic by over 248%. Facebook has also had an incredible impact on traffic to the mobile website. There has been a Year Over Year increase in mobile website Facebook traffic by more than 1,600%. Visits have increased from 312 last year to 5,520 visits this year.

Social media continues to be an important marketing tool for Morro Bay. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have increased the Morro Bay brand reach and exposure and has helped drive traffic to the website for prospects who are looking for a new and unique destination on the California Central Coast.

### **Discussion on the Verdin Marketing Year in Review Report**

Susan Stewart, Owner of Beads by the Bay [Retailor] shared a small criticism on the font size used for "The Morro Bay Way". She noted the call-to-action in the ads is large and bold, but "Morro Bay" is sometimes lost in the ad. Verdin team responded that research and experience has taught them to utilize and highlight compelling photos in ads, rather than drawing the attention to text.



Director Haugen shared the new cover of the Official Morro Bay Visitor Guide, which was created using two photos submitted via a photo contest. The new cover features “Morro Bay” in a bold block text- in response to feedback of the previous Visitor Guide, which requested the words “Morro Bay” be more prominent.

John Headding, Morro Bay City Council and TBID/MBTB City Liaison commented that the [geographic] target audience did not represent a “high-quality” consumer and wondered why visitors with higher levels of disposable income were not being attracted to Morro Bay, and further asked if it was due to the quality of lodging offered in Morro Bay or due to the audience we target. Headding also cited Morro Bay’s increase in occupancy but decline in sales tax revenue. Verdin responded that the quality of consumer is based on lodging options as well the audience target. Verdin noted that a target audience is an evolution, as more time is spent developing the approach, the targeting will become more specific and dig deeper into demographics. Verdin also stated they look to strike a balance in attracting the “low hanging fruit” (people most anxious to visit) and reaching audiences that are practical for Morro Bay. It is important that the [Verdihn]team does not target consumers who won’t view Morro Bay as an attractive destination when compared to the other options their income affords them, like Bali for example.

Member Jacquez commented that it is important for Morro Bay to stay true to “the Morro Bay Way” and not try to promote things that “we are not”. Jacquez acknowledged that Morro Bay has aging properties, but that condition is not exclusive to lodging- the City also has aging restaurants and retail shops. Member Jacquez encourages the City of Morro Bay to renovate as a whole.

Sabin Gray, Hooray for Hollywood asked why Pinterest was excluded from the Social Media marketing platform. Verdin responded that Pinterest was not as effective in marketing Morro Bay and they chose to spend their time with Social Media efforts that provide a significant return on investment.

## V. LOOKING AHEAD, 2015-16

### a. Chuck Davison, Visit San Luis Obispo County

#### i. Updates on the County-Wide Tourism Marketing District

Chuck Davison thanked the Board of Directors for inviting him to present on behalf of VSLOC. Davison also congratulated the MBTB on the results and success of their marketing efforts and further offered compliments to Director Haugen on his diligence and persistent in pushing the tourism agenda of Morro Bay. Davison addressed an earlier comment of John Headding regarding comparatives of DMO reporting- noting that the MBTB provides the most detailed data (Average Daily Rate, Occupancy, etc) of any area in SLO County

so it is difficult to compare the MBTB with other SLO County cities, on a detailed level.

California is the number one U.S. destination for international travelers. Statewide it is the aim of the Central Coast Tourism Council to entice visitors to the Central Coast and VSLOC's goal is to get visitors to SLO County. One area where Morro Bay lags behind other regions in county is the average length of stay. As length of stays increase, sales tax should also increase. VSLOC is developing strategies to support Morro Bay in increasing visitors' length of stay.

The cover of the new VSLOC Visitor Guide is a photo of Morro Bay. Commenting on sales tax again, Davison noted that one messaging platform of VSLOC and their Visitor Guide is "Pure Play". SLO County is more of an activity destination than a shopping destination.

Davison shared some collaboration opportunities. VSLOC is creating a video loop of SLO County to feature during the International Pow Wow tradeshow and are planning a research initiative to understand the consumers in the SLO County market.

The proposed County-wide Tourism Marketing District, is in its final phase of approval with the County Board of Supervisors, the final (of three required meetings is scheduled for Tuesday April 7, 2015 where VSLOC expects the TMD to be installed and assessment collection will begin between May 1 and July 1. VSLOC hopes the assessment will begin before the start of peak season to collect significant funds to create an impact via tourism. The details on the assessment and TMD implementation will be mailed to constituents after the April 7, 2015 meeting.

Davison reminded the audience of the opportunities available to Morro Bay to have a voice/seat on the TMD Board. The TMD guidelines call for BOD members from each community, plus 3 additional members of the lodging community county wide, and representative each of Vacation Rentals, Bed & Breakfasts' and RV Parks. VSLOC is also accepting applications for the TMD Marketing Committee, which does not have to represent a lodging entity.

Ken MacMillian, owner of DiStasio's on the Bay [Italian Restaurant] asked which metrics VSLOC uses to evaluate success? Davison responded that VSLOC is working with county destination of develop a standard of reporting, that will be utilized once the TMD is in place and again noted that Morro Bay provides the most detailed data.

Kelly Wells, Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce asked what information was available on a day-of-week basis that may impact marketing approaches for hotels. Davison responded that information is unique to each destination and changes from peak season to low season. Director Haugen added that the MBTB also has plans to further research specific day-of-week stays,

John Flaherty, Central Coast Outdoors asked how the individual TBIDs work with/within VSLOC to be cooperative, and will the structure of individual TBIDs change. The individual cities pass along the 1% assessment to VSLOC. The best way for cities to participate with VSLOC is via collaboration and using the fund to penetrate markets that individual cities cannot reach on their own.

b. Verdin Marketing (Marketing Firm )

The following recommendations are broad in nature for the 2015 – 2016 Morro Bay Tourism Bureau Fiscal Year. The budget has been divided into advertising mediums and offered recommendations in all areas. This advertising recommendation is fluid and open to changes as new opportunities and research becomes available. We have approached the total budget with strategies informed by the first year's performance and success. The goal of the campaign is to rotate coverage of all geographically desirable target locations with the three defined target audience groups during off seasons.

Audiences will be targeted based on qualities that make up a "persona". Millennial travelers are looking for a unique coastal experience interested in a laid-back environment, fresh seafood and exploring the central coast. These travelers are within driving distance and sometimes stop in Morro Bay on a drive between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Baby Boomers are traveling with adult children and grandchildren looking for a relaxing coastal vacation within driving distance that ranks high in affordability. Often these travelers are looking to beat the summer heat inland and take part in low-intensity activities like walking the beach.

Outdoor adventurers seekers are coming to Morro Bay to partake in activities like surfing, kayaking and go fishing. These outdoor enthusiasts are also within driving distance although some will travel a little further for that exciting experience.

The geographical target areas have been categorized by tiers.

- Tier 1: Los Angeles, Central (Fresno/Clovis/Visalia/Hanford/Bakersfield), San Jose /San Francisco, and San Diego
- Tier 2: Sacramento, Phoenix/Mesa (Arizona), Reno/Sparks (Nevada), Las Vegas (Nevada) and Houston (Texas).
- Tier 3: Australia, Canada, China, Brazil, Mexico

Seventy one percent of the budget is dedicated to digital advertising. Trip Advisor accounts for 23% of the total budget. We recommend continuing with the same budget on Trip Advisor in the upcoming year. We see improvements in traction and engagement as we add events to the Morro Bay Home Page and are impressed with the quantity and quality of leads generated. We recommend seasonally changing the Trip Advisor ad locations to reach the target geographical areas. We also propose spending a small percentage of total Trip Advisor budget on second tier locations during summer months.

We have seen an excellent response to Facebook ads this year and encourage the continued use of the medium. We recommend the same percentage of budget to be used on Facebook in the upcoming year to continue to primarily target our tier one audience. In the coming year, we recommend widening the reach of Facebook exposure by tying locations and personas together in targeting efforts. In addition to targeting tier one markets along with the target personas, we recommend targeting tier two markets during peak months (as well as following trade show locations with Facebook ads). We propose more use of the Facebook micro-targeting tools, targeting travelers, outdoor adventurers, active seniors, etc.

We recommend continuing the current tier one Adwords campaign, and adding dollars using to grow awareness in the tier two market during summer season. Adwords directly promotes the Morro Bay website and helps digital users get to pages that interest them. We have seen improvement by altering categories and keywords to enhance certain pages.

We recommend using a small percentage of the current advertising budget for non-traditional, experimental mediums that will be tested for two to three months. Target audiences and target geographical locations will continue to dictate their usage. These mediums may include but not be limited to Pandora, Lifestyle Websites, Hobbyist websites and Alternative Lifestyle websites. We strongly believe that Pandora should be tested in the upcoming media schedule. Research indicates that it has been very successful with travel industry clients. Recently Ventura County West (CIB for Oxnard Ventura and Camarillo) has seen website clicks and visitor travel increase with Pandora. This group targets similar beach resorts up and down the coast of California and gave Pandora a test run of 8 weeks. Upon completion the group resigned a long-term contract. We recommend a test campaign for this medium. Several lifestyle websites target common behaviors for their visitors that may be an excellent fit for Morro Bay Tourism Bureau. Like all of the more experimental media, these tests would be closely monitored.

Twenty nine percent of Total Budget is dedicated to print Advertising. This year's print advertising included two regional ads in Sunset magazine, quarterly ads in Access Publishing Visitors Guide and a Savor the Central Coast ad. In accordance with

requests made for more print advertising during the 2015- 2016 year, we are recommending taking a break from Sunset Magazine to reach more potential visitors for the same budget. We would recommend more public relations efforts toward Sunset Magazine to garner unpaid earned media instead. There are several print opportunities to be explored in the upcoming months, including:

- Visit California Road Trips
- Hobbyist magazines like Kayak & Canoe, Walking Magazine, regional surfing magazines
- Travel 50 and Beyond Magazine
- West ways, Monterey Bay Wine & Travel, Destinations Magazine
- Arizona Highways, Overland Travel Journal, Fun Fit Life Vegas

We recommend a targeted direct mail campaign, along with targeting several e-mail marketing opportunities. Trip Advisor, Visit California, as well as many other travel vendors offer weekly or monthly email marketing to their customer and fan base.

c. Mental Marketing (PR Firm)

Looking ahead, Mental Marketing will continue to use the three PR programs in place (Monthly Press Releases, Media Familiarity Trips/Pitches, and Reactive PR) but will also incorporate two new programs - Guest Bloggers and Vertical Pitches. The Guest Blogger Program reaches out to top travel bloggers who also offer advertorial opportunities for destinations to garner custom third party media attention at affordable prices. The program's goal is to connect with four high quality bloggers. Vertical pitches will be seasonally targeted to highlight timely stories, such as adventure travel in the Spring.

d. Brent Haugen, Morro Bay Tourism Executive Director

Short term goals for the 2015-16 year are to

- Increase Midweek Business and Overall Occupancy, focusing on low and shoulder seasons to benefit all properties.
- Hire a Part-Time Sales Person to focus on leisure, group tour, sports groups, small meetings, and partnership sales.
- Expand into niche markets, such as the LGBT community and hobby groups (biking, golf, kayak, surf, boarding, etc)
- Conduct Lifestyle Research to determine who our current audience is and who we're looking to attract in the future.
- Automate the Lead & Promotion Process, simplifying these processes will create better efficiency and time management.
- Maximize Our Business & Industry Partnerships.
- Increase Alternative Revenue Streams such as the Pay-to-play options, ticketing systems, and a sustainable source for Visitor Center funding
- New Experiential Website – Experience & Lifestyle focus in all formats



- Simplify the Purchasing Process, we'll use technology for customers to "Buy with Ease" on the MorroBay.org website
- Expansion of Public Relations: diversify media outreach to benefit all partners
- Morro Bay Image Building - Focus on creating more positive press and perceptions of Morro Bay locally.
- Expansion of Photo & Video Library - Creation of Morro Bay promotional video, plus content for industry partners
- Education & Training - Providing opportunities for staff and stakeholders

Long term goals, to be achieved over the next three to five years, are:

- Increase Midweek Business and Overall Occupancy
- "Become China Ready", as Chinese tourist are exploring more than the California Gateways Cities, we want Morro Bay to be prepared to capture additional business. ( 5-year partnership programming to benefit all stakeholders)
- Adopt a full-time staffing model, supported by increased revenue.
- Be featured in major publications like National Geographic
- Help attract new product for Morro Bay, specifically Hospitality and hospitality-related businesses.

The Primary Target Markets for Morro Bay (in order of importance) are Los Angeles, Central Valley, San Francisco, San Jose, and San Diego. Markets that will be targeted on a seasonal basis are Sacramento (April – October), Phoenix (April – October), Reno (May – August), Las Vegas (May – August), Houston (May – August).

International Markets will be reached through digital marketing and industry partnerships with Tripadvisor, Visit San Luis Obispo County, Central Coast Tourism Council, Visit California, and Discover America; those markets include Australia, China, Canada, Brazil, and Mexico.

**2015 - 16 PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

**REVENUE**

Tourism Bureau	761,308.20
Cooperative Advertising	16,000.00
Financial Reserves	38,065.41
Total Revenue	\$815,373.61

**EXPENSES**

Tourism Bureau Admin.	171,228.00
Tourism Bureau Mrkt.	202,415.10
Public Relations	75,000.00
Marketing Firm	293,465.10
Website Project	30,000.00
Visitor Center	5,200.0
Total Expenses	\$815,373.61

The budget includes over \$580,000 towards Marketing and Public Relations activities.

The MBTB will be on the road promoting Morro Bay and reaching various geographical markets and lifestyle groups by participating in tradeshow. Shows currently on the calendar include San Luis Obispo Pride in the Plaza, Central Coast Women's Conference, Savor the Central Coast, Los Angeles Ultimate Women's Expo

American Buses Association Conference, San Diego Amazing Pet Expo, Bay Area Travel & Adventure Show, Nevada Women's Expo, Arizona Ultimate Women's Expo, International Pow Wow.

Seasonal promotions will also be used to attract visitors and celebrate various events/happenings in the area.

- August, September & October "Perfect Pairings"
- November, December & January "Rock the Holidays"
- January "New Year's Resolution Destination"
- February "Romancing the Rock" – Will also feature a Beach Wedding promotion
- March "Girlfriend Getaway", has been moved from January to better fit with events and festivals in the area
- April & May "Wheels, Wings, Woofs, & Water"

There are multiple opportunities for hoteliers and the business community to get involved with the MBTB, such as joining MBTBID & MBTB Boards, Committees, Taskforces, responding to leads & business opportunities, providing lodging specials and offers, participating in promotions or Pay-to-Play Programs. Director Haugen encouraged the community to reach out to him with questions, comments, and general feedback on the performance of the MBTB throughout the year.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Member Solu thanked the attendees for staying for the length of the meeting and being vested in the success of Morro Bay. She reminded them that the Marketing plans for the MBTB are dynamic (not stagnant) and that the MBTB BOD and staff are open to hear questions, comments, and feedback.

#### VII. ADJOURN

Member Newton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Smith. Motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 12:42pm.