



**Humboldt County Visitors Bureau  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
MINUTES**

Thursday, November 16, 2023

Present: Ken Hamik, Ara Pachmayer, Lowell Daniels, Shannon Hughes, Jenny Early, Justin Legge, Lisa Sundberg, Jason Baxter, *Marketing Consultant*, Dianna Rios, *County Liaison*  
Absent Carlton Nielsen, Sam Wedll, Supervisor Michelle Bushnell,

- I. The meeting was called to order at 11:35 am.  
Role call was taken. Directors checked in.  
Welcomed guest, Molly Blakemore, a prospective new HCVB Board Member.
- II. Public Comment: There were no public comments.
- III. Approval of Minutes of November 16, 2023, meeting  
Jenny made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.  
Justin seconded the motion.  
The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.

IV. Board Committee Reports

- Executive Committee

Ken reported that the committee met, the items will be discussed in the Marketing Report.

- Financial Report

Julie noted that the financial report is done on an accrual basis so the numbers do not reflect the actual financial position. HCVB has a total capital on hand of \$340K, of which \$116K is restricted, leaving a balance of \$224K. There will be a couple of major marketing investments made in the near future – will be discussed in the Marketing Report.

- Advocacy & Funding Report

Julie submitted a funding request to HLA for \$25K towards the cost of the Map & Guide distribution costs. The regional LA's are being approached to support local Chambers like Arcata. Ken reported that the Arcata Chamber put in a funding proposal to Arcata Lodging Alliance. Julie will meet with Meredith to see if the Bureau can take on some of their marketing projects.

- Marketing Report

Jason presented the 28-day Digital Analytics report for October 19 to November 15, 2023: (see *full report at end of minutes*). Report includes a comparison to the same period last year to gauge progress and growth. This year, the focus was on identifying specific demographics and

customizing content and on increasing engagement – the most important aspects of social media.

- Both Facebook and Instagram showed slow but steady increases in followers for this period (FB = **58,701** and Instagram = **17,013**)
- In the last year, Facebook followers have grown from 54K, Instagram numbers have grown from 14K to 17K – a great increase.
- Demographics: consistent for both platforms at 35% men, 65% women
- Reach was fantastic this period with Facebook showing over **501K+ reached (visits up 222.6%) and Instagram over 21K+ (visits up 194.1%).**
- We had standout results in early October thanks to “How Tall is Tall” showing amazing numbers (and still growing). **A \$25 Ad grew the already impressive reach from 840K+ to 925K+ engagement and 34K+ shares.**

Lots of places in California have redwoods – so we have been working to distinguish Humboldt. All rare areas of the County are represented on both platforms, with content including quirky and unique to Humboldt stories. Multi-media style posts are very popular. Getting more consistent with the posts and increasing the number of likes, comments, and shares, which helps grow the brand.



#### Street Mural (Nov 2nd)

Reach = 216,795  
Reactions = 10,547  
Comments = 835  
Shares = 1,206



#### Happy Halloween!

Reach = 192,826  
Reactions = 11,413  
Comments = 932  
Shares = 1,712

This original Facebook post was also the second most popular post on Instagram. Do not normally share across platforms because of the different demographics, but this post worked on both Facebook and Instagram.

- In comparison, the best Facebook in November 2022 had a reach of **5,000**. We are now looking at a reach of **215K**, this is not a one-off – there have been multiple posts with a reach of between 120K and 200K. We are not spending a lot of money on ads, rather identifying our target markets and connecting with them by showing how Humboldt is different from other areas.
- We are seeing a high level of engagement with an ad spend of less than \$1,000.

- Visit California picked up one of our Instagram posts (Avenue of the Giants and the Banaba Slug) and reposted it to 500K followers.

Website:

- Changed over to Google G4 analytics for the website, so do not have accurate numbers for last 28 days.
- Top locations Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco. (*See report for details*)

eNewsletter:

- October: (28,903 recipients): Open rate – 39.5%; click rate – 23%
  - November: (27,983 recipients): Open rate – 39.8%; click rate – 31%
- See and uptick when link from a newsletter article to the website.

Ken: With the Monday.com project management software, all Gateways can upload information (press releases etc.) and visual assets about their events, so HCVB can promote the events, festivals and other experiences to attract visitors to stay longer and do multiple things.

Jason: Monday.com also a resource for HCVB as staff will have the information to give prospective visitors and those who come to 422.

Media Hosting: Julie worked with Brand USA to facilitate and hosted 10 Italian Travel Industry leaders including the head of United Airlines Italy, and seven Travel Industry leaders from France, including the head of United Airlines France. Worked with the GM and Chef at Restaurant 301 (Carter House) and created a *Taste of Humboldt* menu with all local food and wines.

Julie reported that Mendocino County, working with Brian Applegarth, has developed a strong cannabis tourism program, while Humboldt has done no marketing. HCVB is about to sign a contract with Brian and become a partner with Visit Mendocino County and Visit Oakland in the Cannabis Trail Campaign. Brian will be working with all partners to develop the Trail assets based on a fly/drive experience with Oakland and Oakland Airport being the visitor gateway, so Humboldt will have a marketing presence in Oakland Airport. The Trail will include accommodations, restaurants and outdoor adventures as well as cannabis experiences. Each partner will put \$25K into campaign development, and we will hire Brian to spearhead the project.

Jenny commented that the Board of the Southern Humboldt Chamber of Commerce was supportive of the campaign but reminded everyone that there is some lack of harmony with the cannabis community and the non-cannabis community that needs to be taken into consideration when developing the Cannabis Trail. Ken noted that Brian is one of the foremost Tourism leaders in the Cannabis industry. He has many years experience in tourism and will facilitate meetings with stakeholders throughout the County. He also brings his extensive network of contacts and relationships. He will also provide analytics of campaign successes, demographics etc.

Julie: Made a proposal to Donna Hufford in Orick for the Bureau to take over the marketing and PR for Northern Humboldt. The contract has been signed and, for an initial 3-month period, HCVB will receive \$18K and will hire a contract person to assist with updating the content of the two website (Orick.org and RedwoodCoastParks.com). Justin will be developing unique content.

Julie will be in Sacramento December 3, 4, and 5, making presentations to 80 Visit California travel industry professionals representing all regions of California.

V: County Update:

Dianna reported that she had been at meetings in Santa Rosa attending informal presentations from airlines regarding their focus and interests. She connected with other travel and tourism organizations and learned about how other communities work on airport development.

Also working with offshore wind and developing a multi-generational community information hub – talking to the Discovery Museum to partner:

Julie asked for an update as Scott Adair had approached HCVB about using 422 for the offshore wind displays. Dianna noted that different scenarios were being explored.

VI: Other Business:

Carlton nominated Molly Blakemore as a HCVB Director. As he was unable to attend the meeting, he wrote a nominating statement that was read by Julie. Molly also submitted a statement. *(Statements attached at the end of this report).*

- Action Item:  
Jenny made the motion to invite Molly Blakemore to sit as a HCVB Director.  
Ara seconded the motion.  
Molly was unanimously voted in as HCVB Director.

Next Meeting: January 18<sup>th</sup> 2024

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

## Digital Summary – HCVB (Oct 19 to Nov 15, 2023)

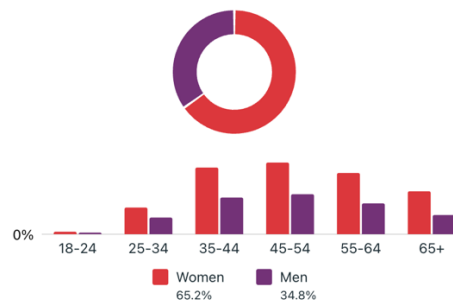
### Facebook and Instagram Results - 28-day Digital Media

- Both Facebook and Instagram showed slow but steady increases in followers for this period (FB = **58,701** and Insta = **17,013**) Demographics shown below.
- Reach was fantastic this period with Facebook showing over 501K+ reached (visits up 22.6%) and Instagram at over 21K+ (visits up 194.1%).

Facebook followers ⓘ

58,701

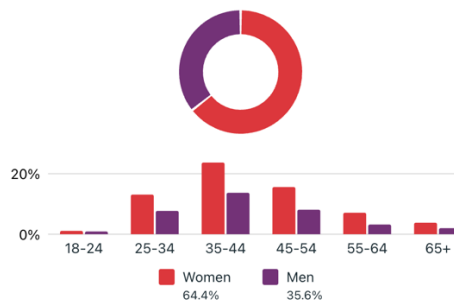
Age & gender ⓘ



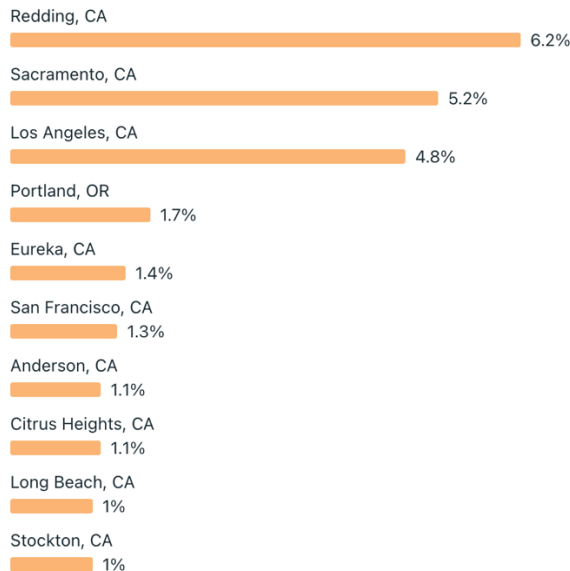
Instagram followers ⓘ

17,013

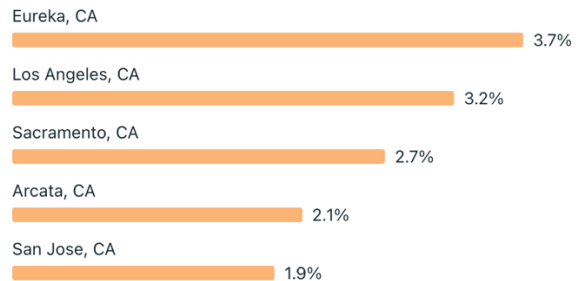
Age & gender ⓘ



#### Top cities



#### Top cities



If you remember from the last report, we had standout results in early October thanks to “How Tall is Tall” showing amazing numbers (and still growing). A \$25 ad grew the already impressive reach from 840K+ to **925K+** with engagement and shares at **34K+**.



Content that resonated the most on both platforms in the past four weeks include:

### Top 2 Facebook Posts



#### Street Mural (Nov 2nd)

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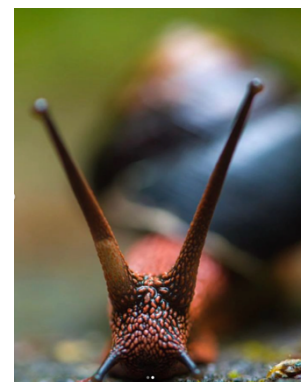
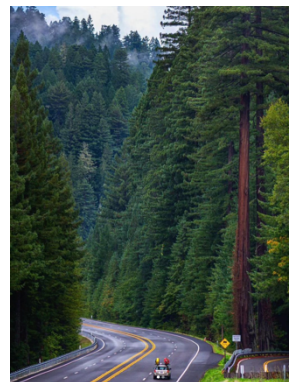
#### Happy Halloween!

Reach = 192,826  
Reactions = 11,413  
Comments = 932  
Shares = 1,712

### Top 2 Instagram Posts

#### Avenue of the Giants... and Not So Giant

Reach = 15,140  
Interactions = 1,933



#### Happy Halloween

- Reach = 6,248  
- Interactions = 1,071

## VisitRedwoods.com (GA4 upgrades)

We're transitioning into the new Google Analytics platform, and it appears that this month's numbers aren't a complete four-week summary. A few details we can see include:

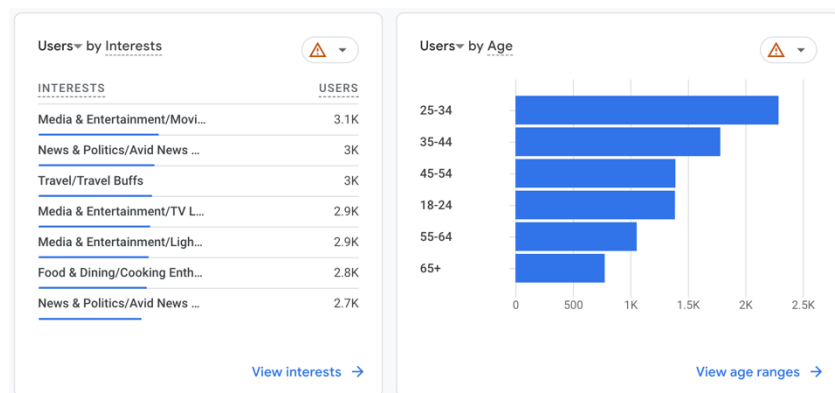
### Top pages:

PAGE TITLE AND SCREEN CLASS	VIEWS
<a href="#">Redwood National Park</a>	4.8K
<a href="#">Travel Info for the Redwood Forests of Calif...</a>	4.1K
<a href="#">Avenue of the Giants</a>	4K
<a href="#">Events</a>	3.9K
<a href="#">Drive Through a Redwood</a>	3.7K
<a href="#">Lodging</a>	2.2K
<a href="#">Ten Must See Redwood Trees</a>	1.9K

### Top Viewer Locations:

CITY	USERS
<a href="#">San Jose</a>	2.8K
<a href="#">Los Angeles</a>	1.6K
<a href="#">San Francisco</a>	1.5K
<a href="#">Arcata</a>	1.4K
<a href="#">Sacramento</a>	1.4K
<a href="#">Eureka</a>	1.2K
<a href="#">Seattle</a>	1K

### Visitor Interests and Ages:



## **HCVB Board of Directors – Nominating Statements**

November 16, 2023

From Carlton Nielsen, HCVB Director

I have known Molly since she worked with us at *101 Things to Do*. She has very developed skills in web development, ran the content and developed the show for a real estate advertising company that we ran in Hawaii, and was consistently an innovative thinker. I know she will be a welcome addition to our board, will give us insights into the goings on at CR, and she has always been a pro-active supporter of our community.

Carlton Nielsen  
707.443.1234 x310

### **Nominee Statement: Molly Blakemore**

Director of Communications and Marketing for College of the Redwoods, (almost 5 years), Marketing Manager for the Career Education programs for one year before that.

Before joining CR, I was with *101 Things to Do* for three years.

Before moving to Humboldt to be closer to family, I lived and worked in communications in SF, DC, Sonoma County and the San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, originally from NY.

In my current capacity, I focus on improving the college's visibility and reputation in the community and keeping it at the forefront of people's minds when considering higher education or skills building. I focus on storytelling – alumni, students, faculty – that highlights the college's excellence and appeals to potential students. I rely heavily on my background in marketing, communication, and multimedia production, which adds a practical aspect to my work.