



## **Monterey County CVB Announces 2021 Tourism Impact Numbers** *Destination sees positive signs of recovery, but lags behind 2019 spending and traveler mix*

Monterey, Calif., May 3, 2022 – Tourism is a critical economic driver around the world and is the number two industry in Monterey County and number one industry on the Monterey Peninsula. Every year, the U.S. Travel Association creates awareness for the impact of this global industry with National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW). As NTTW kicks off, Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau (Monterey County CVB) celebrates the destination’s hundreds of hospitality and tourism businesses that continue to recover from the effects of the pandemic. Many businesses weathered challenges like reduced staffing and financial issues, but there were also silver linings like new and innovative business models. Through it all, Monterey County’s tourism economy made great strides in 2021, however, more work remains to fully recover to pre-pandemic levels.

According to a recently released economic impact of tourism report prepared by Dean Runyan Associates, in 2021 Monterey County saw \$2.5 billion in travel spending, a 22 percent decrease of travel spending from 2019. Visitor spending in the destination supported 21,600 jobs and generated \$264 million in state and local tax revenue that supports infrastructure improvements, first responder and emergency services, and other programs and projects that benefit residents of the community.

“Our marketing programs are working and there is a positive momentum for hospitality businesses throughout the destination,” said Rob O’Keefe, president and CEO of Monterey County CVB. “Yet we aren’t seeing the travel spending dollars that we have in the past and are still lagging behind 2019 in the slow return of international and business travelers, which is crucial for maintaining economic vitality.”

Monterey County’s groups and meetings market was unable to operate for most of 2020 and into 2021 and has been slow to return. Additionally, while international visitors from Canada, Mexico and some parts of Europe begin to return to California, highly valuable markets in Asia are expected to lag in recovery. Both group and international visitor travel segments tend to stay longer and spend significantly more, making a larger impact on the local economy, especially during the times of year when leisure travel is softer.

Along with the slow return of group and international markets, Monterey County faces additional challenges as destinations across the state compete for visitor dollars coming into what is predicted to be a strong summer travel season.

“Monterey County benefited from its scenic location along California’s central coast and expansive outdoor recreation opportunities,” said Chris Sommers, board chair at Monterey County CVB and managing director at Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa. “As the world continues to open up and travelers have more options, the competitive landscape will grow and some of the benefits our destination has experienced may diminish.”

Major competitors for Monterey County, such as Napa Valley, San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara, are actively working to generate demand for their destinations for the summer and beyond.

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“As incredible and inspirational as Monterey County is, travelers have choices,” said O’Keefe, adding “the competitive landscape is only intensifying.”

To keep Monterey County competitive, Monterey County CVB and its Board of Directors have embarked on a Five-Year Strategic Plan that will ensure Monterey County continues to thrive well into the future. The plan is in its preliminary stage, analyzing data collected from community outreach on the perceptions of Monterey County as a tourism destination and what the future could hold. The plan is tentatively set to be completed this fall.

To learn more about Monterey County CVB and tourism's economic impact for the County, visit [www.SeeMonterey.com](http://www.SeeMonterey.com).

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## **ABOUT MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (Monterey County CVB) is a 501c6 non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the County. The MCCVB is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to drive business growth through compelling marketing and targeted sales initiatives that maximize the benefits of tourism to its guests, members and the community. Travel spending in Monterey County was \$3.24 billion in 2019, representing a 3.3 percent increase from 2018. This \$3.24 billion in visitor spending supported 27,120 jobs, contributed \$296 million in total taxes and generated \$153 million local tax dollars that directly benefited the community. For more information, visit [www.SeeMonterey.com](http://www.SeeMonterey.com) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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