



**FY  
25**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



Letter from the President & CEO .....	3
Board, Committees & Team.....	4
Strategic Direction 2026 .....	8
Why Tourism Matters.....	10
Tourism Data Insights .....	11
Data Reporting .....	12
Paid Media .....	16
Owned Media .....	18
Earned Media.....	22
Integrated Storytelling.....	24
Partnerships & Events.....	26
Sales.....	30
Film SLO CAL .....	32
Advocacy .....	34
Experience SLO CAL 2050.....	36
FY 25 Financial Results .....	38
FY 26 Budget .....	39



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

**Dear Visit SLO CAL Investors, Partners & Stakeholders,**



As we wrap up Fiscal Year 2025, we have much to celebrate in SLO CAL's journey of success and growth. Direct travel spending in our region reached \$2.4 billion in 2024, an impressive milestone for Visit SLO CAL and our destination partners. Despite challenges such as the Highway 1 closure at Regent's Slide and evolving travel trends, this growth underscores the enduring appeal of our region driven by the unwavering support of our investors, partners and stakeholders.

Our achievements are built on a foundation of collaboration and innovation. The annual SLO CAL Summit saw continued engagement, with over 250 investors, partners and stakeholders coming together from across the region. Key initiatives like *"Unpacking SLO CAL,"* Sojern media buys, trade shows, media missions and *"Wine-O-One,"* have been pivotal, amplifying the strength of our House of Brands collaboration.

In FY 25, we deepened our insight into visitors' perceptions through comprehensive Ethnographic Research, which informed the creation of our new SLO CAL hero brand campaign, *"Turns Well Taken."* This campaign will capture the unique pace of our region, where every turn can bring delightful, unexpected moments.

Our small but dynamic San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport (SBP) shattered records, handling 746,764 passengers, a 13% increase. Over the past decade, passenger traffic has grown by 144%. We collaborated with SBP on a "Last Mile" survey to identify the challenges in connecting travelers from the airport to accommodations. This study will inform work being done in the new fiscal year to identifying potential solutions. Additionally, we've made strides in advancing a Tourism Industry Workforce Strategy aimed at inspiring the next generation by convening a working group with leaders across SLO CAL.

Through our partnership with Visit California, we launched the Tourism Exchange, making SLO CAL experiences bookable online and broadening both domestic and international business opportunities.

As we conclude FY 25, our commitment to stewardship, authenticity, inclusion and excellence remains steadfast values that define Visit SLO CAL. With your continued support, we eagerly anticipate building on our successes and elevating SLO CAL as a sought-after destination for travelers worldwide.

Here's to another year of growth, opportunity and success. Together, we'll make SLO CAL a place where visitors and locals alike thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Cartier".

**Cathy Cartier**

President & CEO, Visit SLO CAL

# BOARD, COMMITTEES & TEAM

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### MARK EADS

Chair | Embassy Suites | San Luis Obispo  
Elected At-Large Seat ( — June 2025)

### AMAR SOHI

Vice Chair | Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites  
Atascadero  
Appointed Atascadero Seat ( — June 2026)

### AARON GRAVES

Past Chair | EverlyGrove Hotel Brokers  
Unincorporated Area  
Elected At-Large Seat ( — June 2026)

### HEMANT PATEL

Treasurer | 805 Hospitality | Morro Bay | Paso Robles  
San Luis Obispo | Unincorporated Area  
Appointed Morro Bay Seat ( — June 2026)

### CLINT PEARCE

Secretary | Madonna Enterprises | Atascadero  
San Luis Obispo  
Appointed SLO TBID Seat ( — March 2026)

### JEDIDIAH BICKEL

SeaCrest OceanFront Hotel | Pismo Beach  
Appointed Pismo Beach Seat ( — June 2027)

### BRYAN BONELLI

Paso Robles Vacation Rentals | Paso Robles  
Elected Designated Vacation Rental Seat  
( — June 2025)

### SEAN DASMANN

The Agrarian Hotel | Arroyo Grande  
Appointed Arroyo Grande Seat (—June 2027)

### JIM HAMILTON

County of San Luis Obispo  
Appointed County At-Large Seat ( — June 2026)

### TONI LEGRAS-PRICE

Beachside Rentals | Unincorporated Area  
Appointed Unincorporated Area Seat  
( — June 2025)

### HAMISH MARSHALL

AuzCo Developments | San Luis Obispo  
Elected At-Large Seat ( — June 2025)

### NIPOOL PATEL

Lamplighter Inn & Suites | San Luis Obispo  
Elected At-Large Seat ( — June 2025)

### PRAGNA PATEL-MUELLER

Samata Management, Inc. | San Luis Obispo  
Elected At-Large Seat ( — June 2026)

### VICTOR POPP

La Quinta Inn & Suites | Paso Robles  
Appointed Paso Robles Seat ( — June 2027)

### BRITTEN SHUFORD

PRG Hospitality Group, LLC | San Luis Obispo  
Cambria  
Elected At-Large Seat ( — June 2025)

### KIMBERLY WALKER

Nomada Hotel Group | Paso Robles  
San Luis Obispo  
Elected At-Large Seat (—June 2027)

### OPEN SEAT | BED & BREAKFAST SEAT

Elected Designated Bed & Breakfast Seat  
( — June 2024)

### OPEN SEAT | GROVER BEACH

Appointed Grover Beach Seat ( — June 2024)

### OPEN SEAT | RV PARK SEAT

Elected Designated RV Park Seat ( — June 2025)



## MARKETING COMMITTEE

### **ASHLEE AKERS**

Partner & Chief Strategy Officer | Verdin  
(— June 2026)

### **JIM ALLEN**

Director of Marketing & Communications  
Hearst Castle (— June 2025)

### **TERRIE BANISH\***

Director of Community Services & Promotions  
City of Atascadero

### **SHERIDAN BOHLKEN\***

Director of Recreation Services  
City of Arroyo Grande

### **JACQUI CLARK-CHARLESWORTH\***

Tourism & Community Promotions Manager  
City of San Luis Obispo

### **CHERYL CUMING\***

Chief Administrative Officer | Unincorporated CBID

### **GORDON JACKSON\***

Executive Director | Pismo Beach CVB

### **STACIE JACOB\***

Executive Director | Travel Paso

### **LORI KELLER**

President/Principal | Blu Hotel Management  
(— June 2027)

### **KATHLEEN NAUGHTON**

Executive Director | SLO Coast Wine Collective  
(— June 2027)

### **COURTNEY PENE**

Deputy Director, Planning and Outreach  
San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport  
(—June 2027)

### **JOEL PETERSON**

Executive Director | Paso Robles Wine Country  
Alliance (— June 2026)

### **LINDSEY ROBERTS**

Director of Marketing | Peregrine Hospitality  
(— June 2027)

### **LINDA PARKER SANPEI**

CEO & Founder | Parker Sanpei Lifestyle  
Marketing & PR (—June 2025)

### **LYNETTE SONNE**

Founder & Herd Boss | FARMstead ED/SLO Co Farm  
Trail (— June 2027)

### **JOHN SORGENFREI**

President & Owner | TJA Advertising (— June 2025)

### **LEANN STANDISH**

Executive Director | San Luis Obispo Museum of Art  
(—June 2027)

### **JILL TWEEDIE**

Founder & President | Breakaway Tours Wine &  
Events (— June 2025)

### **MICHAEL WAMBOLT\***

Executive Director | Visit Morro Bay

\* Destination Partners

# BOARD, COMMITTEES & TEAM (CONT'D)

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### **MATTHEW PONTES**

County Administrative Officer | County of San Luis Obispo

### **DAWN ORTIZ-LEGG**

Supervisor, District 3 | County of San Luis Obispo

### **MATTHEW DOWNING**

City Manager | City of Arroyo Grande

### **LAN GEORGE\***

Councilmember | City of Arroyo Grande

### **JAMIE MARAVIGLIA**

Councilmember | City of Arroyo Grande

### **JIM LEWIS**

City Manager | City of Atascadero

### **MARK DARIZ**

Mayor Pro Tem | City of Atascadero

### **MATTHEW BRONSON**

City Manager | City of Grover Beach

### **ZACH ZIMMERMAN\***

Councilmember | City of Grover Beach

### **KATHY MCCORRY-DRISCOLL**

Councilmember | City of Grover Beach

### **YVONNE KIMBALL**

City Manager | City of Morro Bay

### **JENNIFER FORD\***

Councilmember | City of Morro Bay

### **CARLA WIXOM**

Mayor | City of Morro Bay

### **TY LEWIS\*\***

City Manager | City of Paso Robles

### **CHRIS HUOT**

City Manager | City of Paso Robles

### **STEVE GREGORY**

Councilmember | City of Paso Robles

### **JORGE GARCIA**

City Manager | City of Pismo Beach

### **STACY INMAN**

Councilmember | City of Pismo Beach

### **WHITNEY MCDONALD**

City Manager | City of San Luis Obispo

### **ERICA A. STEWART**

Mayor | City of San Luis Obispo

\* Until December 2024

\*\* Until January 2025



## TEAM



**CATHY CARTIER**

President & CEO



**ANNIE BRAUNSCHWEIG**

Chief Financial Officer



**LISA MARIE BELSANTI**

VP of Communications



**MOLLY CANO**

VP of Marketing



**JESSIE BORCHIN**

Operations Manager



**KRISTEN CARLSON**

Director of Sales



**GRACE DOMINGUES**

Senior Manager, Human Resources



**WHITNEY CHANEY**

Director of Community Engagement & Advocacy



**RACHEL GOODE\***

Communications Coordinator



**MATT HALVORSON**

Director of Marketing



**ALEIGH HOGAN**

Sales Manager



**MEGAN LEININGER**

Marketing Operations Specialist



**MAYLA LOHNES**

PR & Communications Manager



**ALYSSA MANNO**

Partner Engagement Manager



**LAUREN MILLER**

Graphic Designer



**THERESA NAGAI**

Marketing Specialist



**RACHELLE RAMIREZ\*\***

Event Manager



**EMILY RUDGE**

Executive Assistant to the President & CEO



**BROOKE WEISBECKER**

Social Media Manager

\* Until February 2025

\*\* Until May 2025

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2026

## Vision

A vibrant and sustainable SLO CAL, fueled by a collaborative and flourishing tourism industry

## Mission

Inspire travel, foster our unique experiences and champion quality of life to create life-long ambassadors and economic growth for SLO CAL

## Values

### STEWARDSHIP

We value our people and care for our community and resources

### AUTHENTICITY

We strive to embody the SLO CAL lifestyle of “people, place and pace”

### INCLUSION

We engage and collaborate with an array of voices and perspectives

### EXCELLENCE

We are ambitious in our work and prioritize initiatives to achieve results

### FUTURE FOCUS

We deliver today with an innovative eye on tomorrow

## Strategic Objectives

**Enhance our organizational effectiveness**

**Amplify and steward the SLO CAL brand through unified efforts**

**Lead the county tourism industry in fostering a vibrant destination**

**Demonstrate value to investors, partners, stakeholders and communities**

Visit SLO CAL (VSC) is a team of destination marketing professionals who work with, and on behalf of, its investors, partners, stakeholders and communities to promote SLO CAL® (San Luis Obispo County, California) to both domestic and international visitors. As the countywide nonprofit destination marketing and management organization (DMMO) for SLO CAL, VSC's goal is to collaborate with partners to build resident quality of life. Built on research with a strategy of continuous improvement, VSC aims to establish SLO CAL as a favorite West Coast destination known for its signature slower pace of life and unique mix of incredible, immersive guest experiences.

## Objective 1: Enhance our organizational effectiveness

### STRATEGIES

- Complete updates and streamline processes, procedures and workflows
- Cultivate a values-centered culture reflective of the SLO CAL lifestyle
- Conduct a skills assessment and talent mapping exercise throughout the organization and act on findings
- Celebrate, recognize and develop the VSC team

### KEY RESULTS

- Formalize and advance a strategy focused on making VSC a desirable, sought-after place to work, committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) principals by December 31, 2024
- Increase average employee tenure to two years or more by June 30, 2025
- Maintain or grow annual employee engagement and satisfaction scores over 2024 baseline by June 30, 2025

## Objective 2: Amplify and steward the SLO CAL brand through unified efforts

### STRATEGIES

- Continue to build on House of Brands marketing strategy
- Increase share of voice through integrated storytelling efforts
- Increase local adoption of SLO CAL nomenclature
- Continue to advance sustainable tourism strategy

### KEY RESULTS

- Develop ethnographic research to fuel insights for next chapter of brand storytelling by October 31, 2024
- Grow partner participation in VSC marketing efforts by December 31, 2024
- Create two video assets focused on telling the story of sustainability in SLO CAL by December 31, 2024
- Produce and increase earned and owned assets focused on SLO CAL nomenclature by June 30, 2025

## Objective 3: Lead the county tourism industry in fostering a vibrant destination

### STRATEGIES

- Champion improvements in county transportation
- Develop a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for SLO CAL
- Participate in a Regional Tourism Industry Workforce Strategy

### KEY RESULTS

- Establish a connection between the tourism industry and local stakeholders to advance discussion on the tourism industry workforce challenges by August 31, 2024
- Develop and implement a marketing and sales strategy to address increased lodging inventory by December 31, 2024
- Work with community partners to develop a roadmap for a regional sustainable tourism strategy by June 30, 2025
- Collaborate with lodging investors to advance discussions about last-mile challenges by June 30, 2025

## Objective 4: Demonstrate value to investors, partners, stakeholders and communities

### STRATEGIES

- Build awareness and deepen engagement of investors, partners and stakeholders
- Build local understanding of the positive impact tourism has on the community
- Advance our efforts to educate, inform and collaborate with our investors, partners and stakeholders

### KEY RESULTS

- Activate community engagement plan by August 30, 2024
- Year-over-year increase in investor, partner and stakeholder engagement over FY 2024 baseline by June 30, 2025
- Create educational forums to increase investors' and partners' sales knowledge and opportunities by June 30, 2025
- Secure local media stories to promote positive impacts of tourism by June 30, 2025

# WHY TOURISM MATTERS



## TRAVEL SPENDING

**\$2.4B** ↑2.6%  
INCREASE YOY

\$6.5M a day | \$273K an hour | \$4.5K a minute | \$75 a second

## INDUSTRY EARNINGS

**\$953.1M** ↑4.3%  
INCREASE YOY



## TOURISM PUTS

**23,820** ↑3.7%  
INCREASE YOY

RESIDENTS TO WORK EACH DAY

## TOURISM CONTRIBUTES

**\$60.1M** ↑.04%  
INCREASE YOY

IN TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX REVENUE

## DIRECT SPENDING BY SECTOR



WITHOUT VISITORS  
EACH SLO CAL HOUSEHOLD  
WOULD NEED TO SPEND  
AN ADDITIONAL **\$21,707**

TO CREATE THE SAME ECONOMIC BENEFIT  
for the community

WITHOUT STATE & LOCAL TAX REVENUE  
GENERATED BY TRAVEL & TOURISM  
EACH SLO CAL HOUSEHOLD WOULD

PAY AN ADDITIONAL  
**\$1,855** in taxes



TRAVEL SPENDING CREATED **\$105.6M** IN LOCAL TAX REVENUE

which could cover the expenses for

- 940 POLICE OFFICERS' SALARIES
- OR
- 1,419 FIREFIGHTERS' SALARIES
- OR
- 1,189 TEACHERS' SALARIES
- OR
- 176 MILES OF RESURFACED ROADS



TOURISM COMPRISES **10.39%** OF COUNTYWIDE GDP

Data based on 2024 calendar year. Source: Visit SLO CAL, "The Economic Impact of Travel in California" from Dean Runyan Associates, Bureau of Economic Analysis, United States Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Tourism Economics, County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works

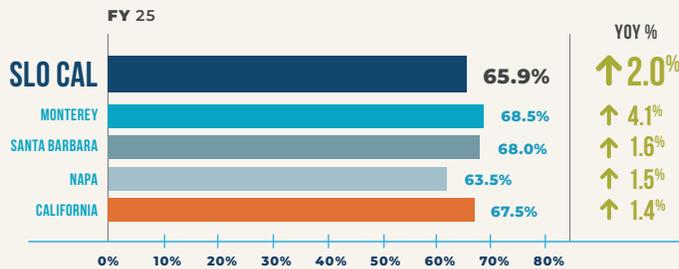
# TOURISM DATA INSIGHTS

Visit SLO CAL (VSC) has continued to work with the San Luis Obispo region's local municipalities and the County of San Luis Obispo to secure data on transient occupancy tax (TOT) by community that segments the area's unique lodging mix (hotels and motels, short-term rentals, bed and breakfasts and RV parks). VSC continues to provide weekly and monthly Smith Travel Research (STR) reports to its partners while working with Tourism Economics to produce monthly business intelligence reports that combine an array of data from TOT, STR, Azira, VisaVue, Community Benchmark and the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport (SBP). These reports provide VSC's partners and stakeholders with a complete understanding of how the tourism industry is performing across the entire county.

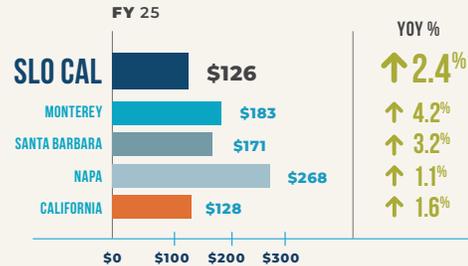


# DATA REPORTING

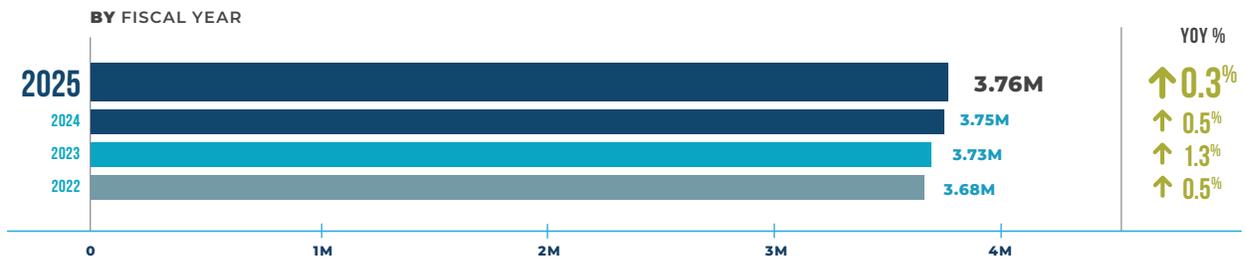
## HOTEL OCCUPANCY OCC



## REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM REVPAR



## SLO CAL SUPPLY

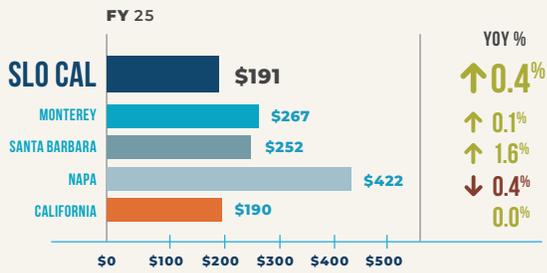


## TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX TOT

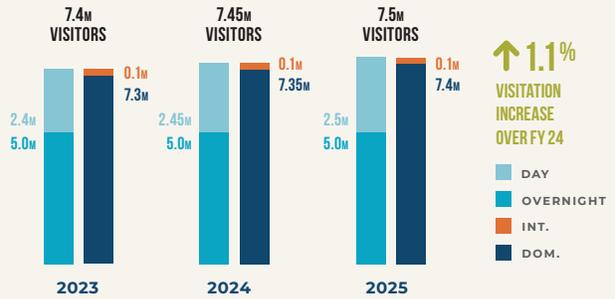


July 2024–June 2025 Source: Visit SLO CAL, Tourism Economics, CoStar Group, STR, LLC. Based on unaudited tax revenues. Replication or other reuse of this data without the express written permission of STR, LLC is strictly prohibited. Data as of August 2025.

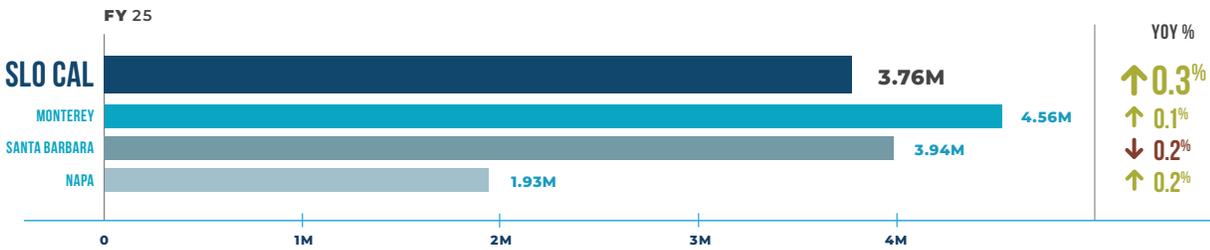
## AVERAGE DAILY RATE ADR



## VISITOR VOLUME



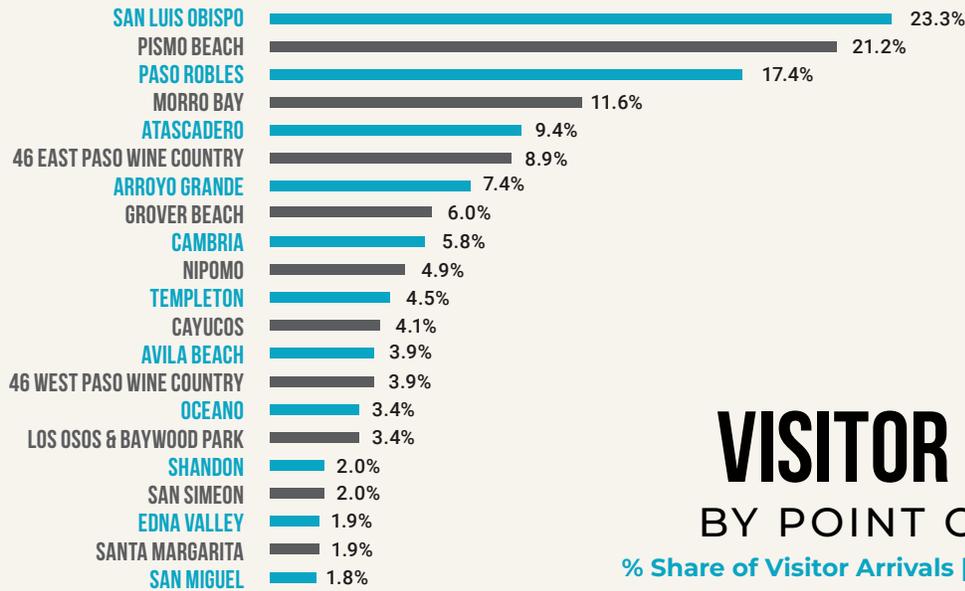
## SUPPLY



# ARRIVALS AND VISITATION

In partnership with Azira and Tourism Economics, Visit SLO CAL (VSC) provides its partners and stakeholders with insights on visitor arrivals to SLO CAL (San Luis Obispo County), covering key points of interest (POI), arrival times, origins, cross-visitation, length of stay and campaign lift driven by paid media and organic traffic, informing and assessing VSC's advertising efforts.

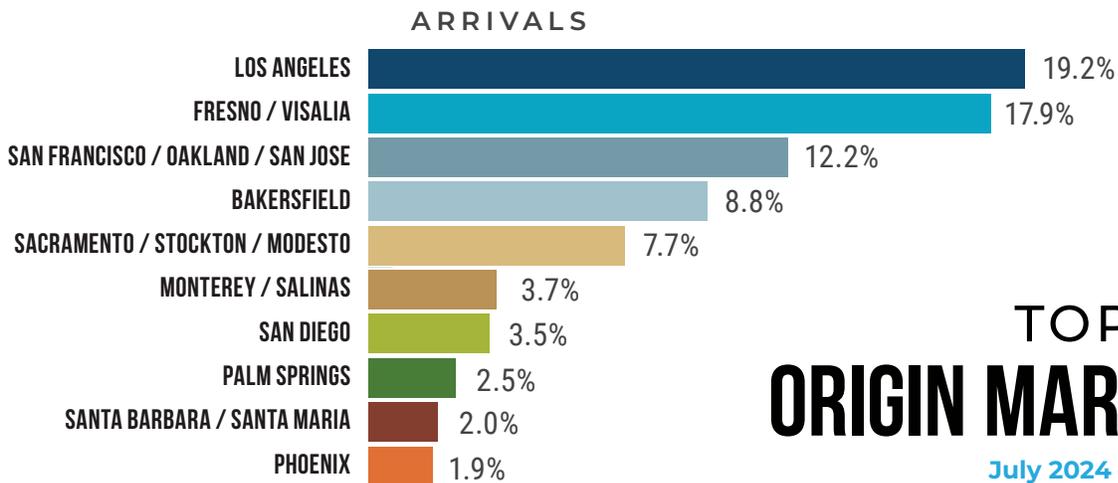




# VISITOR ARRIVALS

## BY POINT OF INTEREST

% Share of Visitor Arrivals | July 2024 – June 2025



# TOP TEN ORIGIN MARKETS

July 2024 – June 2025

## CROSS-VISITATION

1.4

COMMUNITIES PER  
UNIQUE ARRIVAL

July 2024 – June 2025

## LENGTH OF STAY

2

DAYS

July 2024 – June 2025

Source: Azira, Tourism Economics. The percentage share of visitors and origin markets represents data from a sample of tracked devices and do not estimate total devices or total visitors. Data as of August 2025.



## PAID MEDIA

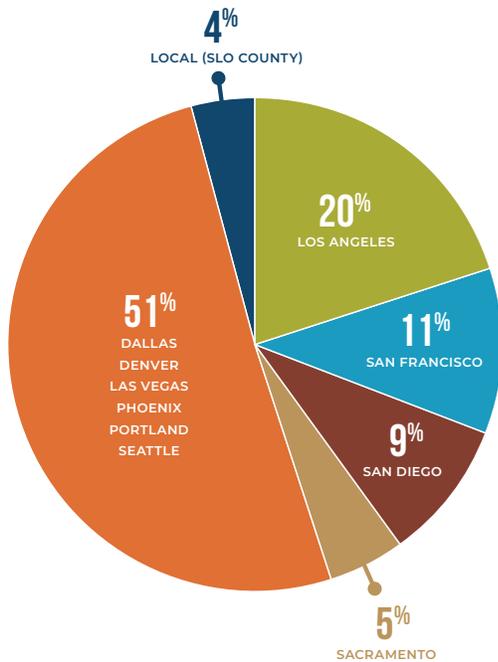
Visit SLO CAL (VSC) continues to leverage its partnership with The Shipyard, an independent full-service advertising agency, for creative assets and media buys. “The Land of...” campaign remains central to VSC’s advertising efforts, driving strategy across platforms and complemented by sustainability content, “*SLO CAL Crafted*” videos, House of Brands messaging and cross-visitation spots for a cohesive marketing approach. A cooperative (co-op) advertising campaign with Sojern bridges VSC and participating partners through cross-channel executions. Entering its second year, the local nomenclature campaign featured several strategic partnerships and key placement of the “*My SLO CAL*” video. Specialty videos released this year were also supported by media dollars, including the second and third installments of the “*Unpacking*” series as well as a new series, “*Wine-O-One*,” highlighting the region’s approachable wine culture.

# FY 25 PAID MEDIA MIX & BUDGET ALLOCATION

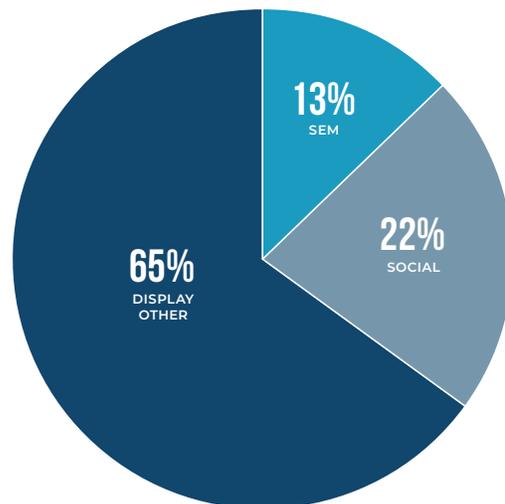
## FY 25 PAID MEDIA SNAPSHOT



### PAID MEDIA BY MARKET



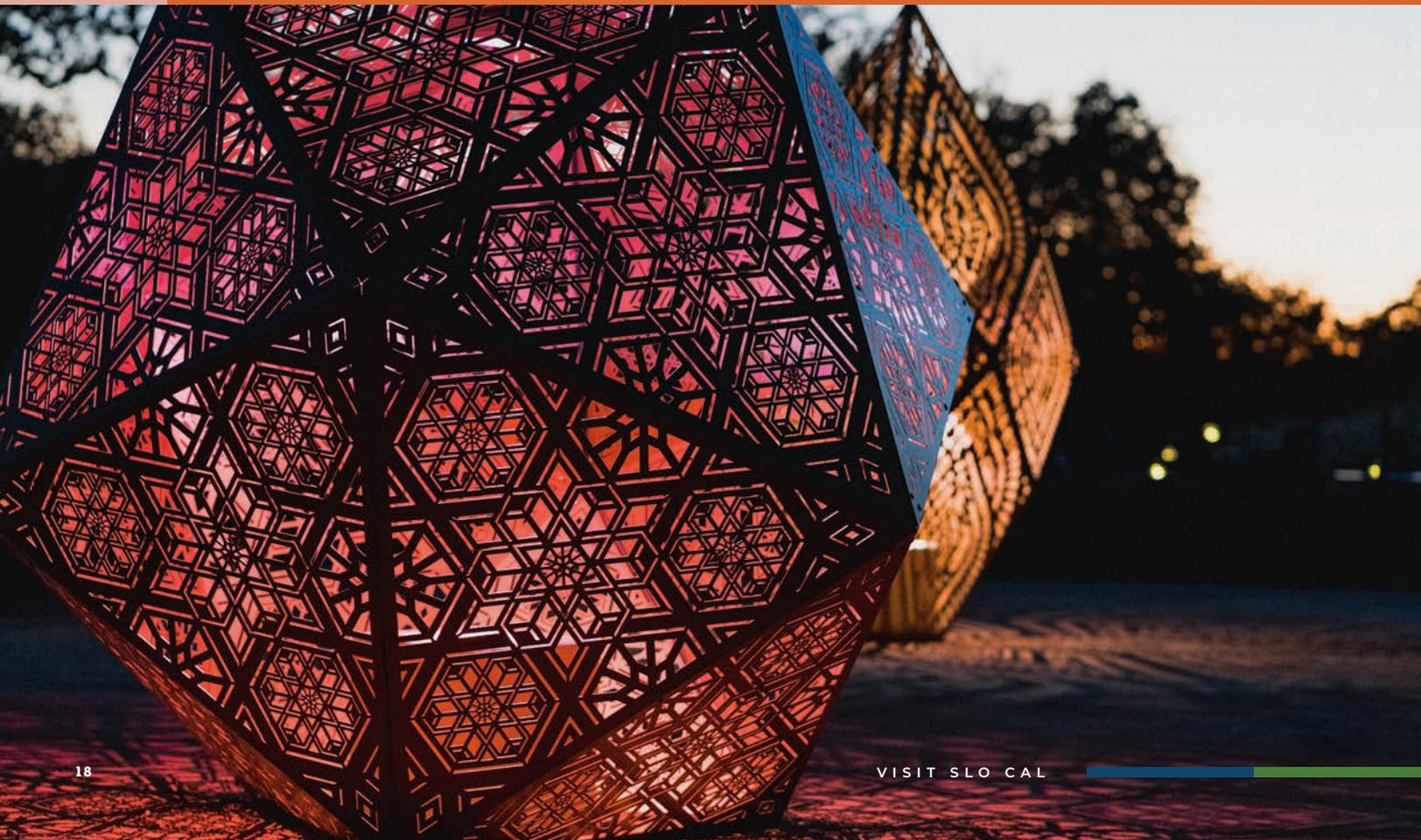
### BREAKDOWN BY CHANNEL



*Spend does not include co-op dollars.*



# OWNED MEDIA



**Visit SLO CAL (VSC) continued a multi-year effort to optimize all owned media platforms, focusing on refining systems to enhance user experience and boost engagement. This data-driven process, applied to the website, social media, newsletters and visitor magazines, ensures every step is backed by research and analysis.**

## **WEBSITE | SLOCAL.COM**

In FY 25, VSC took findings from past studies and data collection to make changes to page structures and overall content. A top priority was optimizing individual pages for search to drive additional, quality traffic. These efforts were successful as reflected in a 10% year-over-year increase in keywords ranking in Google spots first through third and an 8% year-over-year increase in organic engaged sessions.

In addition to optimizing editorial and structure of pages site wide, major information hub areas of the website were revamped to provide additional value to the user. The Explore the Region pages representing the 20+ communities of SLO CAL saw a large revamp and key pages Plan Your Trip, Things to Do and Eat & Drink all saw page improvements.

Publishing relevant blog content remained another key priority. In FY 25 there were 54 new blogs published that included highlighted seasonal content, spotlights on local experiences, stories celebrating diversity and filling content gaps. In addition, many blogs from past years were refreshed and republished.

**2.1M** ↑ **31.4%** YOY  
**TOTAL SESSIONS**

**1.19M** ↑ **13.2%** YOY  
**ENGAGED SESSIONS**

**638K** ↑ **7.3%** YOY  
**ORGANIC SESSIONS**

**209K** ↑ **2.5%** YOY  
**PARTNER REFERRALS**

# OWNED MEDIA Continued

## SOCIAL MEDIA

VSC continued its strategic partnership with Pensara to further refine its social media approach, focusing on a video-centric strategy that blends high-quality branded content with authentic, story-driven reels and complementary stills. This collaboration also encompasses the development of a refreshed framework for partner collaborations and expanded engagement opportunities.

Over the past year, and in alignment with shifting consumer preferences and platform trends, VSC has recalibrated its content strategy to prioritize increasingly narrative and experience-driven storytelling. This evolution is designed to foster deeper audience connections and drive more meaningful engagement. The pivot responds directly to recent algorithmic changes and growing signs of inspiration fatigue-indicators that audiences are actively seeking greater authenticity, educational value and emotional resonance in the content they consume.

VSC's content series has also matured, placing greater emphasis on storytelling and lived experiences while remaining grounded in the core brand pillars of people, place and pace. This evolution lays the foundation for the launch of Social Strategy 2.0 in FY 26, ensuring long-term consistency with VSC's brand voice and alignment with audience expectations.

## FY 25 ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS

**5.9M** ↑15% YOY  
TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

**8.7k** ↑94% YOY  
AUDIENCE GROWTH

**234.5k** ↓3% YOY  
TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS

**5.8M** ↑49% YOY  
TOTAL VIDEO VIEWS

**4.6%** ↓.7% YOY  
ENGAGEMENT RATE



## CONSUMER NEWSLETTER

In FY 25, VSC focused on serving more customized content to a larger audience, finding new opportunities to leverage partnerships and optimizing existing touchpoints that allow newsletter opt-ins. This led to one of the largest increases in consumer signups in recent history. In a first for VSC, newsletters dedicated to shopping, food, wine and the outdoors were sent to those who had shown interest, resulting in a significantly higher rate of engagement.

**625** ↑ **13.6%** YOY  
E-NEWSLETTER SIGNUPS

**11.87%** ↑ **9.5%** YOY  
E-NEWSLETTER CLICK RATE

**62.15%** ↑ **4.1%** YOY  
E-NEWSLETTER OPEN RATE

## VISITOR MAGAZINE

In FY 25, VSC brought on a new publisher and completely refreshed the overall look and information presentation of the yearly magazine. Advertising sales increased significantly, resulting in a more robust and informative publication. With new distribution data in hand, VSC continued exploring ways to optimize and strengthen both physical and digital engagement by maximizing the number of physical copies distributed and testing new ways for users to experience the digital version.

**41.7k** ↑ **20.2%** YOY  
VISITOR MAGAZINES DISTRIBUTED

**201** ↑ **9.8%** YOY  
LOCATIONS REACHED

**1,917** ↑ **0.42%** YOY  
CONSUMER ORDERS





# EARNED MEDIA



In FY 25, Visit SLO CAL (VSC) partnered with domestic and international PR agencies MMGY and MMGY Hills Balfour. VSC also partnered with Visit California and worked alongside local destination partners, investors and stakeholders to engage with the media through in-market meetings, co-op opportunities and hosted familiarization (FAM) tours. VSC attended and participated in key media events such as the Brand USA's Travel Week in London, Visit California's Outlook Forum, U.S. Travel's IPW, the PRSA ICON Conference and a media and partner dinner co-op in San Diego. Locally, VSC invited top-tier local reporters to cover its highly anticipated sponsored events at the SLO CAL Open in Pismo Beach, the SLO CAL Open in Morro Bay and the Spartan Race at Santa Margarita Ranch.

As part of collaborative storytelling efforts, VSC partnered with See Monterey to host LA-based travel content creator Alex Khachigian in support of See Monterey's How2HWY1 campaign. Alex captured scenic content along Highway 1 in SLO CAL, including Cambria, San Simeon, Ragged Point and a detour in Paso Robles, before continuing to Big Sur and Monterey. The campaign aimed to reshape Highway 1 messaging, positioning the iconic coastal route as a flexible, rewarding road trip experience regardless of seasonal conditions or closures.

DOMESTIC   
**147 ARTICLES**  
**\$15.6M AD VALUE EQUIVALENCY**  
**967M IMPRESSIONS**

LOCAL   
**67 ARTICLES**  
**\$65K AD VALUE EQUIVALENCY**  
**6.8M IMPRESSIONS**

INTERNATIONAL   
**64 ARTICLES**  
**\$2.1M AD VALUE EQUIVALENCY**  
**177M IMPRESSIONS**

TOTAL

**278 ARTICLES**      **\$17.8M AD VALUE EQUIVALENCY**      **1.15B IMPRESSIONS**





# INTEGRATED STORYTELLING

**In FY 25, Visit SLO CAL (VSC) continued its commitment to authentic, cross-platform storytelling with the launch and distribution of three video series across paid, owned and earned channels. From human-centered sustainability narratives to interactive influencer activations and fresh takes on wine education, these productions elevated SLO CAL's voice, deepened brand resonance and showcased the breadth of experiences available across the region. Each effort was rooted in the values of people, place and pace, reinforcing the destination's distinct identity while driving partner engagement and cross-visitation.**

## **“SUSTAINABLY SLO CAL”**

VSC completed the “Sustainably SLO CAL” video series in FY 25, releasing seven of the program’s eight total episodes. This series was built on the belief that sustainability is most effectively communicated through the voices of those who live and work in the region. It was inspired by the success of our earlier “SLO CAL Crafted” initiative. Each episode highlights a unique sustainability story across various industries and communities, from Hotel SLO’s eco-conscious hospitality to Firestone Walker’s brewing innovations and the Cal Poly Pismo Clam Project’s conservation efforts. Additional features included Niner Winery’s regenerative farming, Lazy Arrow Adventures’ land conservancy, Couleur de la vie’s art-meets-nature philosophy and Life Elements’ wellness-forward approach. Collectively, the series strengthens SLO CAL’s positioning as a destination where sustainability is a daily practice rather than just a marketing message.

7

VIDEOS

166k

VIDEO VIEWS

36k

LANDING  
PAGE VIEWS

## **“UNPACKING SLO CAL”**

“Unpacking SLO CAL,” the destination’s influencer-led travel series, returned in FY 25 with the release of its second and third episodes. Designed to boost cross-visitation and inspire discovery, the format features creators selecting one of three mystery suitcases, each packed with items hinting at surprise activities across SLO CAL. From adrenaline-filled adventures to coastal relaxation, each experience reveals the unexpected depth and variety the region offers. The campaign was executed in partnership with local destination marketing organizations, whose buy-in and collaboration helped ensure region-wide representation. The series struck a chord with viewers by blending entertainment, education and exploration into a single scroll-stopping concept.

2

VIDEOS

61k

VIDEO VIEWS

71k

LANDING  
PAGE VIEWS

## **“WINE-O-ONE”**

Launched in FY 25, “Wine-O-One” is a 12-part video series created in collaboration with Travel Paso and the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance. The goal was to position the region’s wine culture as laid-back, inclusive and approachable, particularly for younger audiences. The series was organized into three pillars. The first, a set of “101” videos, delivered fun and digestible wine education with topics like how to taste, talk, pair and understand the craft. The second focused on cinematic, personal storytelling from local winemakers at Aaron Wines, Castoro Cellars, High Camp Wines and MAHA/Villa Creek. The third included rapid-fire social videos designed for short-form platforms, where winery professionals answered quirky, fan-submitted questions with authenticity and humor. Together, the series reinforces SLO CAL’s identity as a wine destination that is both world-class and welcoming.

12

VIDEOS

82k

VIDEO VIEWS

12k

LANDING  
PAGE VIEWS



# PARTNERSHIPS & EVENTS

**In FY 25, Visit SLO CAL (VSC) continued to expand its efforts to strengthen partnerships and enhance destination visibility through strategic initiatives. This section highlights key accomplishments in partner engagement, events and sponsorships. Together, these efforts reflect VSC's ongoing commitment to collaboration and impact for the region's tourism industry.**

## PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES & SATISFACTION SURVEY

In FY 25, VSC continued to expand its partnership opportunities to local tourism businesses, onboarding 321 new partner accounts. Engagement with SLO CAL Connection, the partner portal, also saw significant growth, with an 11% increase in the number of accounts actively logging in and utilizing the platform.

VSC launched a partner satisfaction survey at the end of FY 25 to assess how investors, partners and stakeholders value the organization's work and impact. Based on the responses received, VSC earned an 86% satisfaction score.

VSC also developed a system to track the number of partners featured across its content and initiatives. This includes mentions in blogs, social media features, marketing campaigns, familiarization (FAM) tours, events and other key programs. Over the course of the year, more than 1,300 partner accounts were included in VSC's promotional efforts, showcasing the wide-reaching benefits delivered to our partners in FY 25.

## IN-KIND EVENT SPONSORSHIP PILOT PROGRAM

VSC launched the In-Kind Event Sponsorship Pilot Program, a new initiative aimed at increasing the visibility of regional events while enhancing destination awareness. Through this program, VSC provided marketing support to selected events. In return, event organizers leveraged their platforms to promote the SLO CAL region to attendees. Designed as a mutually beneficial partnership, the program supported four regional events during FY 25 across two application periods.

## ***"SLO CAL CRAFTED" PROGRAM***

VSC expanded the *"SLO CAL Crafted"* initiative in FY 25, growing the program to 170 certified partners. The program hosted three key events: the second annual *"SLO CAL Crafted"* Pop-Up Market at the Downtown SLO Farmers' Market, featuring seven partners, live music by Dante Marsh, a Visit SLO CAL booth and photo wall; a pop-up at the annual SLO CAL Summit with eight vendors showcasing local products to tourism and hospitality professionals; and a collaboration with Women Making Waves at the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) Retreat, spotlighting female-owned *"SLO CAL Crafted"* businesses to attending women entrepreneurs.

# PARTNERSHIPS & EVENTS Continued

## SLO CAL SUMMIT

In September 2024, Visit SLO CAL (VSC) hosted its annual SLO CAL Summit at the Embassy Suites in San Luis Obispo. The sold-out event welcomed over 250 attendees, including government officials, local partners, investors, stakeholders and hospitality leaders. The program featured keynote presentations from Geoff Freeman, President & CEO of the U.S. Travel Association and Dr. Eric Solomon, PhD, CEO of The Human OS. The keynote presentations were followed by two panel discussions: “How Sustainability Impacts Your Bottom Line and Brand: Fireside Chat” and “Fostering Radical Collaboration” moderated by an industry expert and featuring tourism leaders from across SLO CAL. The event concluded with a networking reception and showcase of “SLO CAL Crafted” partners, including a pop-up market with eight curated vendors.

## SPARTAN RACE

In November 2024, VSC was the host sponsor for Spartan Race, an endurance race with a community of eight million participants world-wide. The event was held at Santa Margarita ranch and brought over 7,500 racers and spectators over the two-day race weekend. As part of VSC’s sponsorship benefits, Spartan promoted the SLO CAL region to its event audience across their paid and owned marketing channels, resulting in a combined total reach of 17.4M impressions, views and engagements. Additionally, in partnership with co-op sponsors City of San Luis Obispo and the City of Atascadero, VSC hosted an on-site activation designed to enhance brand presence and engage directly with event attendees. As part of the activation, CASS Winery, a certified “SLO CAL Crafted” partner, offered complimentary wine tastings, adding a local flavor to the experience. The activation also included interactive elements such as photo opportunities, lawn games and a giveaway to collect visitor data and promote SLO CAL nomenclature.

## SLO CAL OPEN

VSC was the title sponsor of the SLO CAL Open at Morro Bay and Pismo Beach, held in partnership with Surfing For Hope and the World Surf League (WSL). The Morro Bay event took place December 5-8, 2024, and featured a Regional QS 1000, while the Pismo Beach event followed on January 20-26, 2025, with both a Regional QS 3000 and a Pro Junior competition. Together, the events attracted top-tier surfers from around the world to SLO CAL.

Collectively, the two events generated a total reach of 5.8M impressions across all WSL platforms. Views of the event pages, live streams, results and content on the WSL website reached 170.8K with total engagement across social media and YouTube posts reaching 53K. These events represented a strong media investment for VSC and -supported off-season tourism to the region.





# SALES

**In FY 25, Visit SLO CAL (VSC) strategically expanded its international travel trade presence with a strong focus on the UK and Irish markets. In partnership with its international representation agency MMGY Hills Balfour, VSC executed a targeted UK sales mission, showcasing SLO CAL to key travel industry stakeholders in the fall of 2024. This initiative was complemented by several familiarization (FAM) tours, where top-tier tour operator agents were invited to experience SLO CAL firsthand-deepening their knowledge of the destination and enhancing their ability to promote it effectively.**

VSC also bolstered its international visibility by participating in premier travel trade events, including Brand USA Travel Week, IPW and Go West Summit. These shows provided invaluable platforms to cultivate relationships with both domestic and international tour operators, with the goal of increasing visitation to SLO CAL. Additionally, VSC collaborated with local destination partners to take part in a digital marketing campaign with Visit California and Hotelbeds, generating 6,954 room nights in SLO CAL from key international markets, including Canada, Mexico, Germany, the UK, France and the U.S.

A significant advancement this year was VSC's partnership with Tourism Exchange USA, a B2B platform that connects U.S. tourism products with global and domestic distributors. Through this partnership, more SLO CAL lodging properties and local experiences were integrated into the global tourism marketplace. This enabled increased exposure and booking access through international travel sellers and online travel agencies-driving broader reach and year-round visitor interest.

VSC also advanced its Meetings, Incentive, Conferences and Events (MICE) strategy by participating in high-impact events such as the Smart Meetings Incentive Experience and North Star Meetings' Destination California. These events connected VSC with dozens of qualified meeting planners actively seeking destinations for incentive travel, wellness retreats and corporate meetings. These engagements opened new avenues for SLO CAL to attract high-value group business and elevate its profile as a compelling meetings destination.

# 2024

## SEPTEMBER

North Star Meetings:  
Destination California

## OCTOBER

National Association of  
Women Business Owners  
Familiarization Tour (FAM)

Brand USA Travel Week  
UK Sales Mission

## NOVEMBER

UK Sales Agent  
Familiarization Tour (FAM)

## DECEMBER

Smart Meetings:  
Incentive Experience

# 2025

## JANUARY

GoWest Summit

## FEBRUARY

Visit California Korean  
Familiarization Tour (FAM)

## MARCH

Visit California Australian  
Familiarization Tour (FAM)

## JUNE

IPW



*\*Lead: A connection or opportunity provided to local investors and partners to book business, promote their company or host travel buyers and meeting planners to experience their product.*



# FILM SLO CAL



**Film SLO CAL (FSC), the official film commission for the County and a division of VSC, supported a dynamic slate of productions in FY 25, including commercials, feature films, music videos and more. Among the most notable projects, F1 The Movie filmed its final scene at the Oceano Dunes State Park, starring A-list actor, Brad Pitt. Audi also selected SLO CAL's scenic landscapes and stretches of iconic Highway 1 to showcase their Q5 in a commercial shoot. Due to FSC's outreach and marketing efforts, the region saw an increase in leads for filming.**

In FY 25, FSC remained equally committed to industry engagement and education. In April 2025, the team hosted a successful familiarization (FAM) tour of the region, aligned with the SLO International Film Festival, welcoming seven influential film scouts from the Los Angeles market. Additionally, FSC organized a film permitting partner workshop the same month.

FSC also continued to strengthen its digital presence with the launch of a brand-new microsite, providing additional resources for film professionals.



**42 PRODUCTIONS**



**39 LEADS\***



**67 FILMING DAYS**



**\$1.15M ESTIMATED SPEND  
IN SLO CAL**

*\*Lead: A connection or inquiry from a filmmaker, production company or industry professional seeking information about SLO CAL as a filming location.*



# ADVOCACY

**Visit SLO CAL (VSC) champions tourism advocacy by proactively engaging in initiatives that support resident quality of life, foster economic development and enhance the visitor experience. Through collaborative partnerships, research-driven strategies and community outreach, VSC advocates for responsible tourism policies that align with regional needs while reinforcing the value of the travel industry across SLO CAL.**

## **TOURISM ADVOCACY PARTNERSHIPS**

In FY 25, VSC maintained membership and a board seat at CalTravel and U.S Travel. At a local level, VSC joined all SLO CAL chambers and sits on the Cal Poly EIM Advisory Council, Cal Poly Local Economic Development Council, SLO Chamber Business and Economics Committee and South County Chamber Government Affairs Committee. VSC participated in key meetings, including CalTravel Advocacy Day, U.S. Travel's Destination Capitol Hill and was invited to advise World Travel and Tourism Council on how to strengthen relationships with the United States.

## **ADVOCACY SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT**

In FY 25, VSC submitted advocacy letters and offered public comments at legislative hearings in support of policies aimed at advancing tourism-driven economic development locally and nationally. Notable efforts included helping secure Assemblymember Addis' authorship of Assembly Bill 1008 to expand Type-47 liquor license availability in SLO CAL and advocating for continued federal funding of Brand USA.

## **HIGHWAY 1 ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT**

In FY 25, VSC advanced Highway 1 advocacy efforts by facilitating important conversations about infrastructure challenges affecting the tourism industry. In February, VSC brought together over 30 stakeholders and representatives from Caltrans District 5 and See Monterey to discuss the ongoing closure of Highway 1 and its expected reopening timeline. To keep the momentum going, VSC hosted a hospitality roundtable in May 2025 with Senator John Laird, Visit California, See Monterey and local partners to further explore the closure's economic impacts. In July 2025, VSC joined Caltrans, California Secretary of Transportation Toms Omishakin, Visit California President & CEO Caroline Beteta and regional leaders for an on-site tour of Regent's Slide, providing direct insight into the complexity of the repairs. After the tour, VSC facilitated a discussion between Secretary Omishakin and local business owners, strengthening alignment on infrastructure priorities across SLO CAL. As a result of VSC's consistent advocacy and lobbying, Caltrans launched weekly updates on Regent's Slide, called The Highway Highlights—your weekly report on construction activity along the Big Sur coast. These coordinated efforts and accomplishments highlight VSC's dedication to promoting infrastructure solutions that safeguard regional connectivity, support local businesses and maintain the vitality of SLO CAL's tourism economy.

# EXPERIENCE SLO CAL 2050

Experience SLO CAL 2050 is the destination management strategy aimed at enhancing resident quality of life while driving economic growth and regional stewardship through targeted initiatives that support Industry Advancement & Advocacy, Infrastructure & Investment and Experience Development.

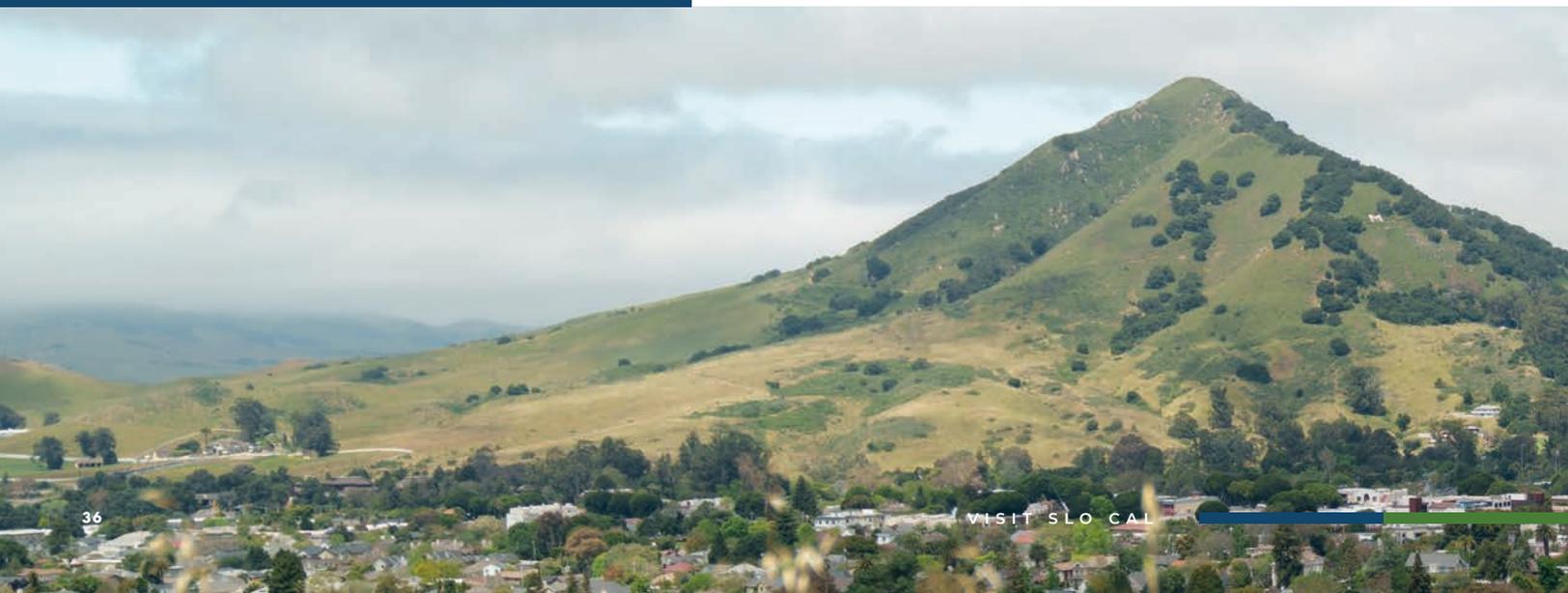
## ITEMS VISIT SLO CAL ADVOCATED FOR IN FY 25

### SLO CAL WELCOME 2.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE & HOSPITALITY TRAINING

In FY 25, Visit SLO CAL (VSC) began transitioning its SLO CAL Welcome Customer Service Training to a new platform, enhancing usability, enriching content and reducing costs. Guided by stakeholder feedback, this reimagined program, launching in FY 2026, empowers frontline teams to deliver exceptional hospitality and elevate the guest experience across the region.

### TALENT ATTRACTION, DEVELOPMENT & CAREERS

In FY 25, VSC formed a Regional Workforce Working Group to create a regional tourism industry workforce strategy. Recognizing a widespread lack of awareness about hospitality career opportunities, the group focused on how to inspire the next generation. The resulting strategy prioritizes outreach through schools and community engagement, aiming to change perceptions and spark interest in hospitality careers by highlighting long-term industry opportunities. VSC will implement this strategy through continued collaboration with education partners, local stakeholders and tourism businesses to create tangible, inspiring pathways into the hospitality field.



## GROUND TRANSPORTATION

In FY 25, VSC formed a Last Mile Transportation Working Group to identify opportunities for improving regional mobility and enhancing the visitor experience related to travel to and from the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport. Discussions focused on improving transportation access, streamlining communication and fostering innovative partnerships. A traveler-focused survey was conducted both in person at the airport and through their Wi-Fi survey, with insights intended to guide future strategies and shared solutions to be reported in FY 26.

## STEWARDSHIP IN TOURISM

In FY 25, VSC continued its emphasis on promoting sustainability as a key aspect of SLO CAL. These efforts can be seen in website and newsletter editorial content, press releases and stories and the “*Sustainably SLO CAL*” video series focusing on celebrating local sustainability efforts spanning a wide variety of industries. In addition to informing potential visitors of key messaging, VSC’s partnership and community engagement teams worked closely with partners and stakeholders to identify new opportunities to broaden our representation in the space.



# FY 25 FINANCIAL RESULTS

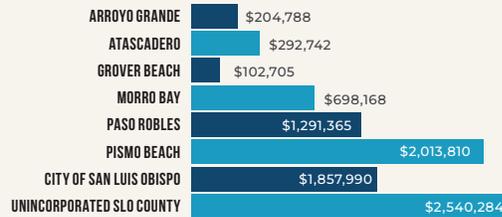
## METHOD OF BASIS OF LEVYING ASSESSMENT

The annual assessment rate is 1.5% of gross revenue from short-term rentals (stays 30 or fewer consecutive days). The County and each city collect this assessment from lodging businesses in their jurisdiction monthly or quarterly, including any delinquencies, penalties and/or interest. Within 30 days of collection, the County and cities transfer these assessments to the Tourism Marketing District (TMD) managed by Visit SLO CAL.

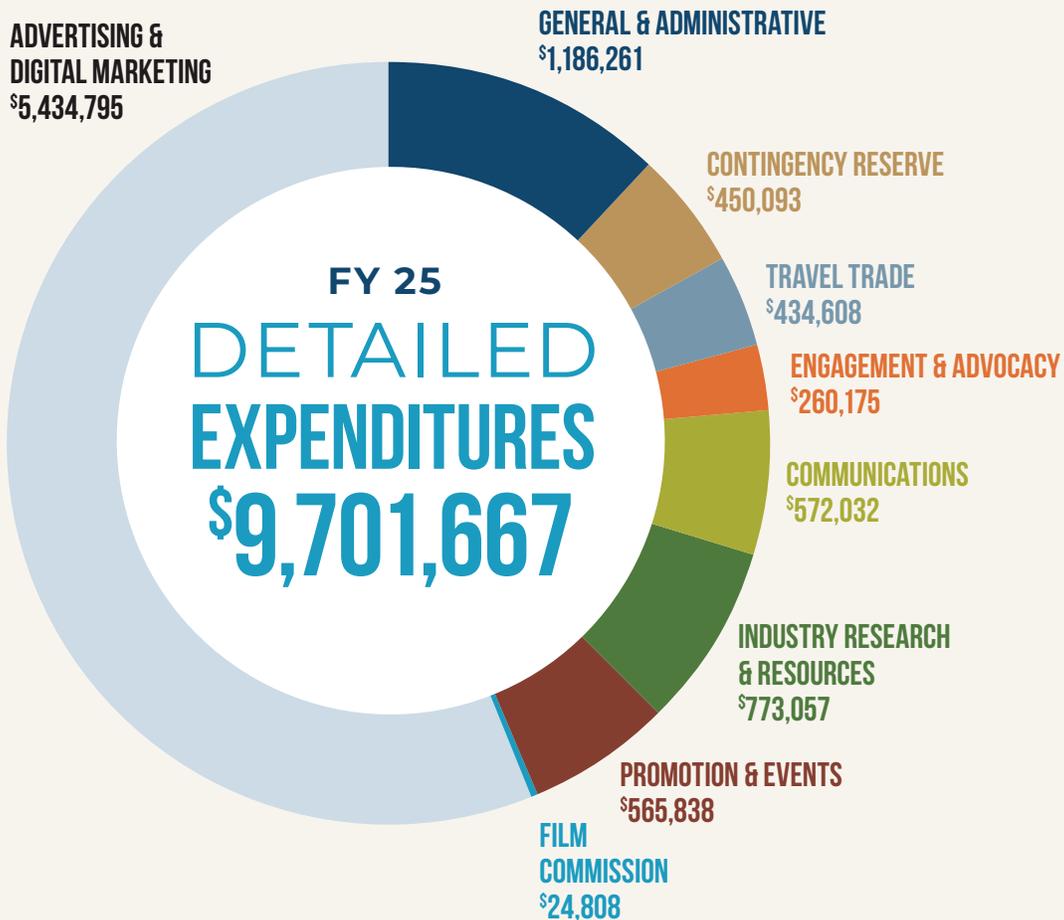
## PROPOSED BOUNDARY, ZONE OR CLASSIFICATION CHANGES

There are no proposed boundary, zone or classification changes for the coming year.

## FY 25 TOTAL ASSESSED FUNDS\*: \$9,001,852



\*Collections remitted from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, including adjustments made for current year remittances that varied from accrued amounts.



# FY 26 BUDGET

ESTIMATED COST OF PROVIDING ACTIVITIES IN THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR  
**\$10,161,920**

ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION FROM TOURISM MARKETING DISTRICT ASSESSMENT  
**\$9,015,000**

ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTION FROM NON-ASSESSMENT SOURCES  
**\$271,500**

ESTIMATED PRIOR YEARS' CUMULATIVE SURPLUS CARRIED FORWARD TO FY 26  
**\$1,153,380**





**slocal.com**

805-541-8000



slocal



@slocal



slocal



slo\_cal