



**TRAVEL SANTA ANA
QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING
Wed. April 16, 2025**

Call to Order

- A meeting of Travel Santa Ana was held on Wednesday, April 16, 2025
- Time: 2:00 p.m.
- Meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm by Aaron Saliba

Attendees

- Aaron Saliba, Hotel Zessa a DoubleTree by Hilton
- Wendy Haase-Roberts, President & CEO, Travel Santa Ana
- Marc Morley, City of Santa Ana
- Erin Warady, US Cannabis Chamber
- Cory Sams, MainPlace Mall
- Ryan Chase, 4th Street Market
- Frank Atayade, Holiday Inn
- Quinn Su, Former DoubleTree (Phone)
- De'andre Gipson, New GM South Coast Metro Courtyard (Phone)
- *Guest:* Luis Vasquez, Holiday Inn Express & Suites
- *Guest:* Rosie Mohr, Comfort Inn & Suites
- *Guest:* Anita Pitamber, owner, Holiday Inn Express & Suites and Comfort Inn & Suites

Directors Not in attendance

- Alissa Salima, Courtyard By Marriott

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the Jan. minutes approved by Frank Atayade and Ryan Chase

Public Comments

- No public comments currently

Chair Report (A. Saliba)

Tourism Marketing District (TMD) Renewal Update

- On April 15, the Santa Ana City Council approved advancing the Santa Ana Tourism Marketing District (SATMD) renewal process.
- Five hotels submitted letters of support for the renewal.
- Councilmember Penaloza pulled the item for discussion and questioned the rationale for a 10-year renewal term. Travel Santa Ana provided the following responses:

- The initial agreement was a five-year “proof of concept,” which has since demonstrated the effectiveness and value of the SATMD.
- A 10-year term reflects confidence in the district’s success and the continued impact of Travel Santa Ana’s destination marketing efforts.
- There are currently 21 Tourism Marketing Districts in Southern California with 10-year terms, including those in Huntington Beach, Murrieta, Oceanside, Ontario, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Santa Barbara, Lancaster, Greater Palm Springs, Burbank, and Torrance.
- Approximately 90% of all TMD renewals opt for a 10-year term.
- The renewal process requires significant time and resources; a longer term allows both hoteliers and Travel Santa Ana to focus more of their efforts on marketing and sales, rather than administrative renewals.
- **Next Steps:**
 - **June 3** – The SATMD renewal will appear on the City Council agenda as a public meeting. This is an opportunity for hoteliers and tourism partners to provide public comments in support of the renewal and the work of Travel Santa Ana. Letters of support will also be encouraged.
 - **July 1** – The SATMD renewal will return to the City Council for a final vote. Board members and stakeholders are encouraged to attend the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and make public comments in support of the renewal and the destination marketing organization’s efforts.
- **City of Santa Ana & Hoteliers meeting**
 - Three hotelier partners met with City officials in an ongoing effort to keep open communication and collaborations between the partners.
 - These meetings are scheduled quarterly and have proven to be a great collaboration between City and hotel partners.
 - Next meeting is July 14th, at 8 a.m. at the Holiday Inn.
 - Meetings are open to all hotel partners who are encouraged to attend with questions, updates, and discussion.
- **Hotel Update**
 - New GM at Courtyard Costa Mesa South Coast Metro, De’andre Gipson started April 14.
 - Per Quinn, still working through the rebranding transition, hopes to be live by May 1. They presell on IHG on May 28.
 - Hampton Inn & Suites is currently transitioning between brands; more to come.
 - Sonesta Simply Suites is for sale. Believe it will remain the same brand.
- **GROW Conference**
 - The Santa Ana Chamber held a well-attended GROW Conference on March 27.
 - This conference brings together top experts in the field to share their insights and perspectives on current trends and future prospects within our city.
 - TSA President (Wendy H.) presented updates and insights within the growing travel, tourism, and hospitality market here in Santa Ana.

- Link to Q1. financials located here [LINK](#)
- In February, \$120,383.99 in Tourism Marketing District (TMD) revenue was collected.
- Budget YTD (November 2024-to present) TMD revenue = \$461,810.
- Total Tourism Marketing District revenue collected = \$5,805,856 ('1/21-1/25).
- Motion to approve by Frank Atayde and approved by Cori Sams.

President's Report (W. Haase-Roberts)

- **Advertising (Q1)**
 - **Expedia:**
 - Expedia Always-on campaign for January through March has generated 9,069 room nights worth \$1.2 million in hotel revenue. **ROI = \$1,313.**
 - Expedia OC Joint Marketing Campaign for Q1 generated 13,050 room nights worth more than \$1.7 million in hotel revenue. **ROI = \$27,900.**
 - Expedia Soccer World Championship co-op running March through mid-June. Participating with Visit Greater Palm Springs and Visit Buena Park. The event takes place at the Rose Bowl in June. End-of-campaign report will be shared.
 - **Brand USA**
 - Mexico campaign - November 11, 2024-January 16, 2025
 - 4,443,153 Total Impressions
 - 6,384 Total Clicks CTR 14%
 - \$37,871 Total Bookings
 - 264 Room Nights + 6 Number of Flights Booked
 - 40,618 Page Views
 - **ADARA**
 - February 1 – March 31, 2025
 - Hit campaign CTR goal of 0.10% (0.07% - 0.10% is a benchmark for a good CTR)
 - Observed Total Bookings 136 – 125 flight bookings and 11 hotel bookings (Hotel Revenue - \$4,472)
 - Enriched Total Bookings 643 – 475 flight bookings and 168 hotel bookings (Hotel Revenue - \$68,187)
 - Average Daily Rate is \$142
- **Advertorial**
 - Santa Ana content in the March/April issue of *Prevue Meetings + Incentives* (March-April issue).
 - AAA Via article on website + E-newsletter advertorial content. Audience of 1.6M in NorCal, NV, UT, etc. 80% increase YoY.
- **Website**

- January-March received 241,860 page views, an increase of 79.7% YOY.
- The top pages include events, the homepage, meeting spaces, attractions, a public art guide, and an I love Santa Ana mural listing.
- Installing & introducing “Know-It-All” an AI-powered assistant tailored for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs).
 - Transforms a destination's information into real-time, conversational responses, assisting visitors.
 - Benefits for TSA include:
 - Instant visitor support: provides immediate answers to common inquiries.
 - Multilingual communication: engages visitors in their preferred language without additional costs.
 - Local business discovery: helps tourists find nearby restaurants, hotels, attractions, and shops.
 - Real-time updates: ensures visitors have access to the latest information about Santa Ana.
- **Social Media**
 - 213,601 impressions, up 67% from October-December 2024.
 - 17,162 engagements up 100.7% from October-December 2024.

See full Q1 report in the Google folder.
- **QR Codes**
 - Travel Santa Ana tracks all the QR codes that we include in advertising and collateral. The Q1 report is also in the Google folder.
- **Newsletter**
 - Average open rate 42% and average click-through rate 5%.

**average open rate 8% higher than the industry average, and average click rate 3.6% higher than the industry average.*
- **Public Relations**
 - Santa Ana will be included in a story on California towns/cities with distinct ethnic enclaves or cultural identities for the June issue of *Small Market Meetings*.
 - Interview on Big Blend Radio.
 - Santa Ana featured on ApartmentGuide.com.
 - Pitched Downtown Art Walk to Brand USA for inclusion in global press release.
- **Awards**
 - TITAN Brand Awards: SILVER Best Brand Identity - Best Logo category
 - AVA Digital Awards:
 - GOLD Mexico Campaign Digital Marketing
 - HONORABLE MENTION Michelada Guide
 - Muse
 - SILVER Digital Brand Awareness Campaign Targeting Mexico Online Ad Campaign
 - SILVER Official 2025 Santa Ana Visitors Guide Promotional Guide
 - SILVER Santa Ana Michelada Guide Landing Page
 - SILVER Santa Ana's Culinary Passport Landing Page
 - Wendy Haase-Roberts inducted into the Smart Women in Meetings Hall of Fame.
- **Copyrights and trademarks:**

- Last year with the board's approval, Travel Santa Ana solicited a copyright attorney to assist with trademarking the five (Travel) Santa Ana signatures and the four brand slogans, including "United by Originality."
- The five signatures have been successfully registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and are now registered.
- Additional information has been requested regarding the brand slogans.
- Brand Book received a certification of registration.
- **Santa Ana Enthusiast**
 - As of today, we have 101 official Santa Ana Enthusiasts.
 - I am happy to report that all the Travel Santa Ana board of directors have completed the course.
 - Frank and his team at the Holiday Inn lead with 17, and Aaron and the Hotel Zessa team have nine.
 - Six city staff members have taken the course along with four Zoo employees.
 - Surprisingly, almost one-third of Santa Ana residents have completed the course.
 - The next step is to encourage the City Council, and the marketing advisory group to complete.
 - Will be promoting to tourism partners during National Travel & Tourism Week, May 4-10.
- **Visitor Incentive/Guest communications at hotels**
 - Working on the special offers/discounts to Santa Ana attractions, restaurants, etc. for hotel guests.
 - Going to roll out the program to Holiday Inn and Hotel Zessa to gauge execution by front desk and visitor engagement, calling it the "Santa Ana Loyalty Program."

Sales Report (A. Becerra)

Q1. Sales Efforts

Q1 - 2024		Q1 - 2025	
● Leads	24	● Leads	25
● Room Nights	3,286	● Room Nights	4,267
● Delegates	1,517	● Delegates	1,349
● Economic Impact	\$1,429,537	● Economic Impact	\$1,697,37

Canada and Mexico Markets Update

Canada

- **Market Sentiment & Positioning:**
 - Travel Santa Ana is monitoring Canadian market sentiment amid ongoing political tensions and economic pressures.
 - California is generally perceived as more welcoming to Canadian visitors compared to other U.S. states.
- **Visit California Initiatives**

- Visit California is increasing investment in the Canadian market.
- A Visit California town hall is scheduled for next week to explore travel trends and market insights.
- **Media & Trade Missions**
 - In February, Visit California hosted a media mission in San Diego focused on the Canadian market; Travel Santa Ana attended and received positive feedback.
 - Brand USA is continuing discussions with Canadian meeting planners, tour operators, and travel agents.
 - Travel Santa Ana will participate in Brand USA's Canada sales missions (East and West) later this month and in May.
- **Alberta Motor Association (AMA Travel)**
 - Article titled "*The Perfect 2-Day Itinerary for Things to Do in Santa Ana, Orange County*" was published on March 20.
 - The article remains live indefinitely.
 - Current traffic is organic only; promotion paused due to a temporary halt in U.S. travel promotions.
 - Once promotions resume, the article will be featured in AMA's email campaigns and on their social media channels.
 - Canadian efforts currently focus on relationship-building and engagement.
- **Mexico:**
 - **Visitor Profile**
 - Mexican visitors are considered more resilient and less cost-sensitive than Canadian travelers.
 - **PR & Media Engagement**
 - In February, Travel Santa Ana hosted its Mexico City-based PR agency to provide a destination overview.
 - The agency was impressed and enthusiastic about promoting Santa Ana.
 - Media coverage has already been received.
 - Upcoming activities include webinars for travel agents and participation in Mexico-based trade shows on behalf of Travel Santa Ana.
 - **Brand USA Mexico Mission**
 - In January, AnaLaura and Travel Santa Ana participated in the Brand USA Mexico Mission.
 - Engaged with nearly 400 travel agents and tour operators.
 - Strong interest expressed in Santa Ana as a destination.
- **Upcoming Initiatives**
 - A follow-up meeting with the City of Santa Ana (Economic Development and Parks & Recreation) is scheduled for June to discuss strategies to attract World Cup soccer fans to stay and watch games in Santa Ana.
 - Travel Santa Ana will attend the Visit California Mexico Mission in Oakland next month.
 - A promotional campaign on **Despegar** launched in April and will run through June.

- **General International Market Notes**

- **U.S. Travel Association's IPW**

- Travel Santa Ana will not attend this year's IPW in Chicago.
 - Despite this, international attendance remains strong:
 - Hotel nights booked are up 10% over last year (IPW Los Angeles).

New Business

- None currently

Announcements

- Next BOD meeting will be held on **Wed., July 16** at 2:00 pm at MainPlace Mall

Adjournment

- The meeting is adjourned at 3:09 p.m. Minutes recorded by Erin Warady

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