



**TRAVEL SANTA ANA
Q1 2026: QUARTERLY BOARD
MEETING
Wed. Jan. 14, 2026**

Call to Order

- A meeting of Travel Santa Ana was held on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2026
- Time: 2:00 p.m.
- Meeting was called to order at 2:04 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
- Ryan Chase, 4th Street Market
- Frank Atayde, Holiday Inn
- Jimmy Lounethone, Holiday Inn
- De'Andre Gipson, South Coast Metro Courtyard
- Quinn Su, Orange County Hotel
- AnaLaura Becerra, Travel Santa Ana
- Maria Gonzales, Travel Santa Ana

Directors Not in attendance

- Cory Sams, Main Place Mall
- Vacant, Courtyard By Marriott

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the Oct. minutes by Ryan Chase and Marc Morley

Public Comments

- No public comments currently

Chair Report (A. Saliba)

- **2026–2028 BOD**
 - Thank you for your time and continued support by meeting with Wendy one-on-one.
 - Board appointments will be approved at the April meeting.
 - Frank Atayde will move into the Chair position; Aaron Saliba becomes Past Chair. A new GM will be appointed as Vice Chair.
- **Bylaws:**
 - Review the bylaws and vote to extend term limits.
 - Editing current terms from two years until successors are elected or qualified.
 - Motion to approve Frank Atayde and Ryan Chase.

- **Leadership Forum – January 7, 2026**
 - Main topics of conversation were:
 - Homelessness - discussion included that 65% of the homeless are not from Santa Ana. The group felt that there had been improvements, but more progress was needed, especially with certain issues that had recurring problems. The City is working on options with Union Pacific sites. Discussed Cal Optima's Street Medicine program, which is designed to assist individuals experiencing homelessness and in need of medical care.
 - Issues with permitting; concerns that permits take too long, that feedback is incomplete, and there are repetitive issues, and a general sense that some officials are not trying to be helpful.
 - Issues with receiving email responses from some City officials; request that all emails be responded to within two business days.
 - SAPD updates, including a request for the City Council to approve the use of drones, were discussed, as was the substantial drop in crime in 2024.
 - Request that the City review the film project application process to simplify it and attract production for commercials, movies, etc.
 - Marketing; it was discussed that Santa Ana needs to do a better job of marketing our City to others, particularly online. The feeling is that significant progress has been made, but others are unaware of it.
- **City & Hotelier Meeting – January 12, 2026**
 - SAPD provided information on the decrease in crime.
 - A conversation about homelessness and the City working on issues with Union Pacific sites, and the potential impact of Cal Optima's Street Medicine program.
 - Request hoteliers' support for SAPD's drone purchases.
 - Key points:
 - SAPD has an estimated \$275K in its budget for two drones; however, it needs approval to spend the funds.
 - Using drones would allow SAPD to prioritize calls more accurately based on up-to-date information.
 - Drones would allow SAPD to expand its services.
 - While a vehicle break-in may not seem like a priority, if it occurs on hotel property, it ultimately impacts visitors' perception of Santa Ana.
 - This can reduce repeat visitation and, in turn, reduce Hotel Visitor Tax revenue, which helps fund public safety efforts.
 - Santa Ana is the only city in Orange County without drones.
 - The vote will take place at a City Council meeting in February. Wendy to provide an update, a sample support email, and talking points.
- **TMD renewal**
 - The contract with the city was signed effective January 1, 2026.

Community Engagement

- Invited to participate in the city’s Leadership Forum, which demonstrates that they recognize the importance of tourism to the local economy and value Travel Santa Ana’s insight.
- The development of the Marketing Advisory Group has provided a platform for tourism partners to collaborate, including MainPlace Mall, the Zoo, Bowers Museum, and Discovery Cube.
 - John Spiak, Director of the Grand Central Art Center, will be joining in 2026.
- The mayor, mentioning tourism and Travel Santa Ana, displayed a banner at the State of the City, demonstrating the partnership we’ve built with city officials.
- Presented at a Santa Ana Chamber Business Connection Luncheon. Opportunities like this provide Travel Santa Ana a platform to share our efforts and develop more community ambassadors.
- The Annual Celebration brought together various partners, and invaluable introductions were made.

Other

- Travel Santa Ana was recognized with numerous awards throughout the year for our marketing efforts, but being named one of the Best CVBs/DMOs in the 2025 Smart Stars Awards (Smart Meetings) was the highlight.

Sales Report (A. Becerra)

	Leads	Room Nights	Delegates	Economic Impact
Q1	25	4267	1349	\$1,697,375.00
Q2	24	4009	1231	\$1,600,763.00
Q3	21	2765	850	\$1,412,699.00
Q4	25	3487	1653	\$1,943,378.00
	95	14528	5083	\$6,654,215.00

Room Production

- Qualified leads earning opportunity funds doubled vs. 2024, driving contracted room nights to 1,021 (vs. 604 in 2024 and 372 in 2023).
- Room production
 - We track RFP room nights for every qualified lead entered into our CRM and distributed to hotels.
 - One hotel reported added production after joining Mexico booking platforms following our webinar (Nuitee, Despegar, PriceTravel).

- Sports production increased for hotels using EventConnect, enabling real-time bookings from hotel-managed inventory.

2026 Goals

- Focus: Business development that supports sales
- Coverage: All segments across all regions, including Canada and Mexico (single point of coverage)
- Target: Groups needing ≤250 peak rooms and ≤8,000 SF of meeting space
- All efforts will follow SMART goals and be tracked in the CRM to generate new, qualified opportunities.
- Account and market-penetration efforts are budgeted and calendarized to secure business 12 months out.
- Sports strategy: deepen partnership with Santa Ana Parks & Recreation, expand domestic/international housing platform reach, join LamontCo and the Sports Events & Tourism Association, and leverage Playeasy (1 of only 9 California DMOs) to reach tournament organizers seeking team accommodations.

Marketing (M. Gonzales)

Social Media Q4:

- Audience growth accelerated: Total audience reached 12,583 (+31% QoQ), with +2,939 net new followers
- Visibility expanded significantly: Nearly 1M impressions (+3,061% QoQ), driven primarily by Facebook and Instagram
- Engagement surged: 30,209 engagements (+3,793% QoQ) with a higher overall engagement rate (3.1%)
- Stronger traffic performance: 2,654 link clicks to owned content (+643% QoQ)
- Video content delivered results: 22,760 video views (+137% QoQ), led by Instagram Reels and Facebook video

Website Notes:

- Visitors Are Actively Seeking Events, Culture, and Things to Do in Santa Ana

Key Takeaway:

Top website pages show consistent demand for events, cultural experiences, and core destination guides, validating Travel Santa Ana's focus on arts, culture, and experience-driven storytelling.

- Visitors are seeking inspiration and planning tools, with the strongest interest in *events, things to do, and cultural experiences*.
- Events-driven content performs especially well, indicating Santa Ana is viewed as an active, experience-rich destination.
- Cultural identity is a major draw, with strong traffic to pages highlighting Día de los Muertos and public art.
- Evergreen guides outperform niche content, particularly "Things to Do," Events, and the main destination overview.
- Content aligns well with brand positioning, reinforcing Santa Ana as a vibrant, arts- and culture-forward destination in Orange County.

Q4 Top Pages:

✓	1	Travel Santa Ana Your Guide to the Heart of Orange County
✓	2	Santa Ana Events Fairs, Concerts, Festivals, And Shows
✓	3	Dia de los Muertos in Santa Ana Day of the Dead Events in OC
✓	4	Fun Things To Do In Santa Ana, CA Attractions And Sights
✓	5	Santa Ana Public Art Guide Street Murals & Sculptures

Marketing Goals

Goal: Promote 4 major signature events as primary traffic drivers

- Encuentro/Blading Cup/ Fiestas Patrias /Día de los Muertos
- Integrate hotel offerings into high-traffic event and “Things to Do” pages

Why This Matters

- Builds on proven visitor interest rather than creating new demand
- Converts event interest into overnight stays and economic impact
- Strengthens Santa Ana’s positioning as a year-round cultural destination

Increase Public Art & Calendar of Events Usage

- **Goal:** Increase visits to the Public Art Guide and Calendar of Events
- **Strategy:**
 - Cross-promote public art and events within top-performing pages (Events, Things to Do, Arts & Culture)
 - Leverage seasonal campaigns, signature events, and social content to drive discovery
- **Measurement:**
 - Website analytics (page visits, time on page)
 - Outbound clicks to event organizers and cultural partners

Proud Santanero Campaign

- **Goal:** Continue spotlighting local culture, strengthen community pride, and deepen visitor connection to Santa Ana
 - Produce: 1 new Proud Santanero feature per quarter
 - Share: 2 Proud Santanero stories per quarter across marketing channels

Featured Profiles Include:

- Ben Briggs / Hidden House Coffee
- Brett Beale / Beale’s BBQ
- Rickenbacker Guitar Company
- Suavecito
- Jessica – Corazón Coffee Bar
- Benjie’s Diner owner
- Chiarini Fountain (family legacy)
- Harvey’s
- Sonder DTSA or Kaizen (Diana & Lamson)

- John Spiak – Grand Art Central

Maintain a Strong Destination Content Library

- Goal: Work with strategic travel writers and content creators (organic and paid) to produce high-quality photo or video assets per quarter
- Focus: Destination storytelling, events, arts & culture, hotel experiences, and blog content
- Target: Deploy at least 40% of created assets across marketing channels
- Measurement: Asset tracking, campaign usage, and blog publishing cadence

New Business

- The board voted to meet at 1 p.m. for future meetings.

Announcements

- Next BOD meeting will be held on **Wed., April 15**, at 1:00 p.m. Location to be determined.

Adjournment

- The meeting is adjourned at 3:05 p.m.; minutes recorded by Erin Warady.

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