



Visit 29 Palms
Twentynine Palms Tourism Business Improvement District
2023-2024 Tourism Marketing Plan & Budget

Presented by the Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board:

Chair, Rakesh Mehta
Vice Chair, Nalini "Ash" Maharaj
Boardmember, Heidi Grunt
Boardmember, Patricia Knight
Boardmember, Maria Madrid

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Visit 29 Palms Tourism Business Improvement District Overview

Branded as Visit 29 Palms, the Twentynine Palms Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) was established in October 2017, with the purpose and goal of increasing awareness, interest, and positioning of the city as a premier travel destination, and to execute creative destination marketing programs to drive tourism.

The Visit 29 Palms TBID operates under the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 and is formed through a public-private partnership between the City of Twentynine Palms government and the lodging operators and owners within the district. The district is defined by the city's incorporated boundary and includes all lodging properties within it, including hotels, motels, RV resorts, and short-term vacation rentals, excluding lodging properties aboard the Twentynine Palms Marine Base.

Funded entirely by the revenue generated by the self-assessed 1.5% TBID assessment levied across the lodging properties in the district, Visit 29 Palms executes creative tourism marketing activities and initiatives throughout the year to build interest and awareness for the city as a travel destination, and to drive overnight room demand.

Destination Market Overview

Twentynine Palms is small and rural incorporated city in the County of San Bernardino, located along the southeastern range of California's Mojave Desert that welcomes over 800,000 overnight visitors annually. The city is the proud home of Joshua Tree National Park Headquarters, historic Oasis of Mara, brand-new park Visitor Center, and main north park entrance. It is recognized as the official gateway community to the newly designated Mojave Trails National Monument through a unique MOU agreement with the Bureau of Land Management and is also the proud home of the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center which was established in 1952.

Leisure travel and tourism to Twentynine Palms is primarily driven by visitation to Joshua Tree National Park, which now welcomes over 3 million annual visitors a year. With visitation to the National Park surging and the COVID-19 pandemic shifting travel trends and consumer traveler preferences, the city and the Morongo Basin region have seen rapid growth in the short-term vacation rental market, and emerging trends in alternative lodging such as airstreams and glamping style accommodations while traditional hotel inventory levels have remained unchanged. Post-pandemic travel motivation is much more centered around discovering off-the-beaten path and lesser-known destinations and driven by the desire to reconnect – with each other, and the world around us. These shifting trends have favored small and rural destinations like Twentynine Palms, and the city has seen TBID assessment revenue surpass pre-pandemic levels in the 2021-2022 fiscal year, a year ahead of

Lodging Market Overview

Hotel Inventory

With 596 rooms across 11 hotels/motels, the City of Twentynine Palms continues as the market leader in traditional hotel inventory, representing 66% of the hotel room inventory in

the Morongo Basin. Exempt from TOT/TBID assessment, the two hotels aboard the Twentynine Palms Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) are excluded from this count, and combined offer an additional 111 hotel rooms.

Short-Term Vacation Rentals (VHR's)

With 482 permitted vacation rentals in Twentynine Palms, the city is home to 14% of the estimated 3,000 VHR's across the Morongo Basin, with the community of Joshua Tree and Town of Yucca Valley continuing to outpace the other communities.

Recreational Vehicles (RV)

With the ability to accommodate 175 recreational vehicles, the RV resort in Twentynine Palms is the largest in the area.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Now completed, Freedom Plaza has increased the vitality of the city's downtown area and contributed to positive economic development and new businesses and helping to position Twentynine Palms as an emerging and growing destination.
- Twentynine Palms is surrounded by incredible public lands, including the world-famous Joshua Tree National Park, the Mojave National Preserve and Mojave Trails National Monument, offering unparalleled access to the great outdoors and California's Mojave Desert region to travelers from around the world.
- Offering the Morongo Basin's most diverse collection of lodging options, Twentynine Palms continues to meet the varied needs, wants, and budgets of today's travelers.
- The Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center serves as a major economic catalyst for the Morongo Basin and Twentynine Palms; visits by family members and friends of military personnel, civilian workers employed at the Combat Center, and business travelers and government officials, drive significant year-round demand for room nights for the lodging properties in Twentynine Palms.
- The city has attracted new hotel development interest and will see both a Hilton Home2Suite and shipping container style resort developed in the future.

Weakness

- While the annual signature events in both Twentynine Palms and the Morongo Basin were able to relaunch and recover quickly following the pandemic, there is a strong need to establish additional events in the city, specifically to increase tourism in shoulder and off seasons.
- While the city has seen growth in key tourist amenities such as retail, shopping, and restaurants, and a new event venue has been established, the city's offerings still have much room for additional growth as compared to neighboring communities.
- Direct public transportation to/from the Palm Springs and Ontario International airports remains limited, as does availability of car rentals in the Morongo Basin.
- For some incoming visitors to Joshua Tree National Park, there is still the perception that the community of Joshua Tree is *the* destination, and there continues to be opportunities to increase awareness for what Twentynine Palms has to offer.

Opportunities

- While focus has primarily been centered around increasing visitation through Joshua Tree National Park's north entrance, it should be also be considered to use messaging to promote leaving from the north entrance and ending your park visit in Twentynine Palms and exploring all that the city has to offer.
- Designed with flexibility in mind, Freedom Plaza opens up tremendous opportunities to host a variety of types of events and conferences and increase tourism in the city.
- Twentynine Palms has a rich and unique history, with a growing arts and culture community that can be strategically marketed to increase tourism.
- With stargazing and astronomy growing in popularity, Twentynine Palms is well positioned to attract visitors seeking to experience the dark night skies as the city borders an International Dark Sky Park (Joshua Tree National Park) and is home to Sky's The Limit Observatory and Nature Center and the 29 Palms Astronomy Club.
- Increase sustainable travel to and within the city.

Threats

- Inflation, concerns of recession, and other shifting headwinds in the economy create uncertainty in consumers, and price sensitivity increases when considering travel.
- Increased competition from neighboring communities and increased saturation in the market area makes for a more competitive landscape for lodging business operators as travelers have more choices for where to stay.
- With Joshua Tree National Park and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corp Air Ground Compact Center serving as two of the biggest drivers for overnight room demand, the city is vulnerable to future Federal Government shutdowns which can impact activity at the base and visitation to the national park.
- Climate change and destructive natural disasters such as wildfires, monsoon rains and flash flooding can cause temporary closures and limited access and have lasting and detrimental impacts to the natural and cultural resources that draw visitors to the area.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Branding and Positioning

Twentynine Palms offers visitors a uniquely rural desert experience with incredible opportunities to explore the vast and beautiful Mojave Desert wilderness with its world-class hiking trails and rock-climbing routes, incredibly dark, star-studded night skies, and a rich arts and culture community which attracts and inspires artists, musicians, and creatives from around the world.

Branding and positioning of Twentynine Palms must support the multi-faceted appeal of the destination - an oasis where one can explore and unwind, steeped in rich history, culture, and natural beauty, offering unique experiences for adventure seekers, history enthusiasts, wellness pursuers, and culinary explorers alike.

Destination Pillars

Branding and advertising programs developed to build awareness and create interest in traveling to Twentynine Palms will continue to support the multi-faceted appeal of the city and are to be centered and themed around the destination's five pillars:

1. Outdoor Recreation
2. Health and Wellness
3. Arts, Culture, History
4. Stargazing and Astronomy
5. Culinary

Target Markets

Through targeted destination marketing programs across paid, owned, and earned channels, Visit 29 Palms will work to:

Strengthen in-state drive markets (Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco)

Grow out-of-state drive markets (Arizona, Nevada)

Build domestic markets (Oregon, Washington, Texas, Utah, Colorado, NY, IL)

Develop international markets (Canada, Mexico, Europe)

Content Creation

To increase visibility and awareness, drive lead generation, continue to build an authoritative voice, and increase engagement across owned channels, fresh and creative content creation must be ongoing. To further develop the content marketing strategy, focus will be put towards building out audience personas. Investment in video content will continue, specifically in the short video format, and new for FY23-24 will be a robust visitor guide made available for download on the new website.

Event Development

Identifying the need to establish new signature events in the city to help drive tourism, Visit 29 Palms will invest heavily in supporting event development, with the goal of bringing two or three new events to the city, in key shoulder/off seasons.

Develop Group, Meeting, and Retreat Business

As part of the vision for the new Visit29.org tourism website, new sections will be built out following launch to support interest and growth in group business, meetings, and retreats in the city. Planning resources and guides will be developed, fostering stronger relationships between the Visit 29 Palms team and group coordinators and retreat planners.

Increase Awareness for Sustainability

Establish Twentynine Palms as a destination that cares for, supports, and protects people and the planet. Build awareness for ways to make travel to and within the city eco-friendlier, and celebrate local initiatives for sustainable practices, from recycling and water conservation, to reduced single use plastics, and preservation of the dark night sky through responsible lighting.

Visitor Services

As a destination marketing organization, it is acknowledged that our work is not simply done once a travel decision and booking has been made and that it is important to support our visitors once they arrive at our destination. The Visit 29 Palms TBID will continue to manage and operate the City of 29 Palms Visitor Center, where in-person interactions will continue to be valuable for driving return visits, and longer lengths of stay.

MARKETING PROGRAMS

Digital Marketing – Website

A complete rebuild, redesign, and relaunch of the Visit29.org website is currently underway, with an updated and improved digital brand style, increased visual storytelling capabilities, and powerful abilities for driving lead generation coming soon. Powered by a dynamic CMS, the new site will improve user experience, enhance presentation of business listings, and continue to serve as Visit 29 Palms' most powerful marketing tool. Supported by a powerful CRM and extranet, the new site will also improve communications with business owners and allow owners to independently manage their listings.

Digital Marketing – Search Engine Marketing

To continue to increase visibility in online search results and drive targeted traffic to Visit29.org, monthly paid search campaigns with Google will remain a key element of the digital marketing strategy.

Digital Marketing – Display

To increase brand awareness and generate new interest, digital display campaigns will continue to be executed seasonally across the Google Display Network. This network includes Google's own sites such as Gmail and YouTube, and reaches 90% of Internet users worldwide, across millions of websites, news pages, and blogs.

Digital Marketing – Social Media

As an effective marketing platform for experiential storytelling, Visit 29 Palms will utilize its social media channels to build awareness and engagement, drive lead generation and outbound link clicks to business partners, and nurture relationships with new and returning visitors. Social media platforms will include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok.

Digital Marketing – Email Marketing

To deliver inspirational content and travel planning resources directly to new and returning visitors, e-newsletter campaigns will be executed throughout the year. A key aspect of the newly redesigned Visit29.org will be increasing lead collections and increasing e-news subscribers.

Print Advertising

Visit 29 Palms will look for paid print opportunities to strengthen brand recognition and target key audiences, with special focus on publications with state-wide or national distribution.

Airport & Out-of-Home Media

Investment in maintaining and growing digital advertising presence in regional airports will continue to be part of Visit 29 Palms' digital marketing strategy to reach frequent flyers and travelers and raise brand awareness. Out-of-home advertising, specifically digital billboards, will also be considered and leveraged when possible.

Bloggers and Influencers

Recognizing that working effectively with bloggers and digital influencers can have equal or more sway in decision making for leisure travel consumers, Visit 29 Palms will look for opportunities to work with the right content creators to build excitement and interest in the destination.

Partnerships & Co-Ops

In order to effectively amplify messaging and extend reach into long-haul domestic and international markets, Visit 29 Palms will work strategically with tourism partners at the regional and state level to leverage co-ops and partnership opportunities. Key partnerships include Visit California, Visit Greater Palm Springs, and Discover Inland Empire.

FAM Tours

Targeting travel media, tour operators, travel agents, and event organizers, Visit 29 Palms will work to organize and host familiarization tours to promote the growth in travel and tourism by showing first-hand what the destination has to offer.

Goals, Metrics, and Key Performance Indicators

TBID Assessment Revenue

The most important KPI for Visit 29 Palms is TBID assessment revenue, which is tracked and reported on a quarterly basis. Increasing assessment revenue year-over-year is the primary goal of the Visit 29 Palms TBID.

Lead Generation and Lodging Partner Referrals

Through marketing activities, advertising programs, industry events, and website optimization, Visit 29 Palms will work strategically to increase lead generation and lodging partner referrals, tracked as outbound lodging link clicks on the Visit29.org site.

Engagement, Reach, and Following Across Owned Channels

By effectively developing and distributing timely and creative content, Visit 29 Palms will work to increase engagement and reach in its digital marketing programs and grow its social media audience. Quarterly marketing reports will track results and key metrics of the different campaign types.

CITY OF 29 PALMS VISITOR CENTER

In partnership with the City of Twentynine Palms, Visit 29 Palms will continue to manage and operate the visitor center located at 73484 Twentynine Palms Hwy. This center is open to the public seven days a week, providing in-person visitor services, maps, brochures, and travel resources. In partnership with the Public Arts Advisory Committee (PAAC) the visitor center will continue to host the Art in Public Places program which features rotating art exhibitions.

ADMINISTRATION

Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board

Appointed by the City Council, the TBID is administered by a 5-member Advisory Board made up of lodging owners, operators, and representatives, from each segment of the city's lodging industry. The TBID Advisory Board oversees the development and implementation of the annual tourism marketing plan and budget and provides strategic oversight, guidance, and direction to the TBID staff.

Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Staff

The TBID staff team will consist of one full-time director of marketing, one full-time marketing/visitor center assistant, and one part-time visitor center associate. The director of marketing will oversee and manage the staff team and reports directly to the City Manager and TBID Advisory Board.

Finance

TBID assessments will be collected and reported on a quarterly basis by the City of Twentynine Palms finance department who will also assist with other aspects of financial reporting for the Visit 29 Palms TBID.

Contract Services

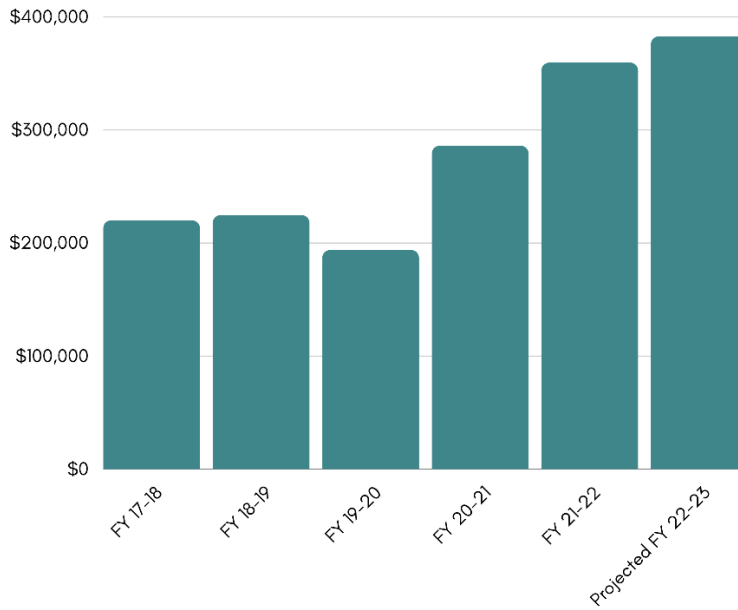
As needed, Visit 29 Palms will retain contract services from related agencies such consulting advisors, content creators or web developers.

TBID Budget & Expenditures

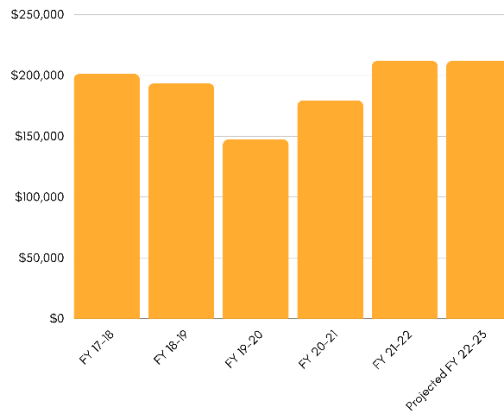
	FY 22-23 Budget	Actuals Through 8-8-23	Projected Year- End Actuals	FY 23-24 Budget	FY 22-23 Budget vs. FY 23-24
Reserves					
Reserve Balance		\$ 560,669.49		\$ 412,239.49	
Revenues					
4125 TBID ASSESSMENT (1.5%)	\$ 285,000	\$ 317,442	\$ 365,000	\$ 350,000	
4150 VISITOR CENTER CONSIGNMENT SALES	\$ 500	\$ 549	\$ 549	\$ 500	
4152 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM	\$ 3,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,500	
4245 INTEREST	\$ 500	\$ 7,717	\$ 7,717	\$ 1,000	
RESERVES				\$ 148,430	
Total Revenues	\$ 289,500	\$ 325,707	\$ 373,265	\$ 503,430	
Expenses					
5110 SALARIES	\$ 87,184	\$ 69,493	\$ 86,709	\$ 97,646	12.00%
5120 SALARIES PART TIME	\$ 19,500	\$ 11,490	\$ 15,708	\$ 16,673	-14.50%
5250 HEALTH BENEFITS	\$ 12,000	\$ 11,763	\$ 15,914	\$ 20,806	73.38%
5251 RETIREMENT BENEFITS	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,246	\$ 6,537	\$ 7,499	49.98%
5252 WORKERS COMP	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,437	\$ 3,295	\$ 4,001	0.03%
5254 UNEMPLOYEMENT	\$ 305	\$ -	\$ 305	\$ 305	0.00%
6241 OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,721	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,000	20.00%
6244 MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,226	\$ 1,226	\$ 5,000	0.00%
6245 CONTINGENCY	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	0.00%
6251 MEETING & TRAVEL	\$ 1,000	\$ 165	\$ 165	\$ 200	-80.00%
6291 BUILDING OPERATION & MAINT	\$ -	\$ 1,258	\$ 1,258	\$ 500	100.00%
6343 VIDEO PRODUCTION	\$ 16,000	\$ 13,000	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	0.00%
6344 BROADCAST MEDIA	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,900	\$ 24,900	\$ 36,000	50.00%
6345 REGIONAL PRINT ADS	\$ -	\$ 2,730	\$ 2,730	\$ 11,800	100.00%
6347 TRADE CONVENTIONS & MEMBERSHIPS	\$ 800	\$ 8,020	\$ 8,020	\$ 19,000	2275.00%
6353 CONTRACT SERVICES	\$ -	\$ 26,910	\$ 39,390	\$ -	0.00%
6356 DIGITAL MARKETING	\$ 78,250	\$ 35,900	\$ 40,100	\$ 45,000	-42.49%
6360 SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	0.00%
6371 EVENT SPONSORSHIP	\$ 10,000	\$ 17,254	\$ 17,754	\$ 200,000	1900.00%
6518 ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT	\$ -	\$ 578	\$ 578	\$ -	0.00%
6841 LEGAL SERVICES	\$ -	\$ 6,741	\$ 6,741	\$ -	0.00%
6350 REPORTING & ANALYSIS			\$ 6,770	\$ -	0.00%
Total Expenses	\$ 285,539	\$ 240,831	\$ 296,098	\$ 503,430	
Excess Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	\$ 3,961	\$ 84,877	\$ 77,168	\$ -	

TBID ASSESSEMENT REVENUE RESULTS

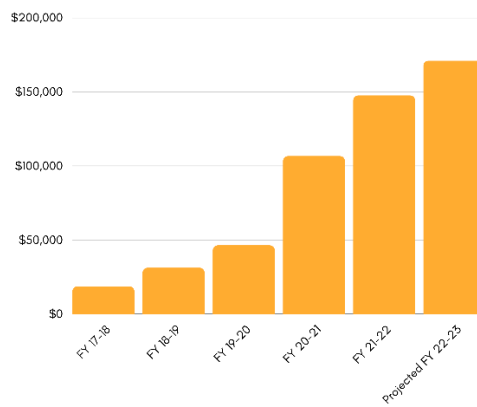
Visit 29 Palms TBID Assessment Revenue



Visit 29 Palms TBID Assessment Revenue - Hotels



Visit 29 Palms TBID Assessment Revenue - VHR's





1.5% TBID Assessment Revenue Results

2017/2018	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Year End
Hotels	43,254	63,021	53,802	41,005	201,082
VHRs	1,851	6,919	5,066	4,724	18,560
Total	45,105	69,940	58,868	45,729	219,642

2018/2019	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Year End
Hotels	44,683	54,772	52,457	41,290	193,202
VHRs	7,239	9,910	7,054	6,939	31,142
Total	51,922	64,682	59,511	48,229	224,344
YOY % Change	15%	-8%	1%	5%	2%

2019-2020	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Year End
Hotels	47,918	37,197	24,281	37,732	147,128
VHRs	9,908	7,464	8,696	20,239	46,307
Total	57,826	44,661	32,977	57,971	193,435
YOY % Change	11%	-31%	-45%	20%	-14%

2020-2021	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Year End
Hotels	41,474	41,416	55,091	41,194	179,175
VHRs	20,007	33,121	26,526	26,896	106,550
Total	61,481	74,537	81,617	68,090	285,725
YOY % Change	6%	67%	147%	17%	48%

2021-2022	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Year End
Hotels	54,235	59,370	58,441	39,649	211,695
VHRs	33,735	49,842	30,374	33,540	147,491
Total	87,970	109,212	88,815	73,189	359,186
YOY % Change	43%	47%	9%	7%	26%

2022-2023	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Year End
Hotels	45,780	67,397	57,387		170,564
VHRs	45,554	60,159	41,553		147,266
Total	91,334	127,555	98,940	0	317,829
YOY % Change	4%	17%	11%	-100%	-12%