



V I S I T  
**santa rosa**  
*Sonoma County, CA*

# SRTBIA

## SANTA ROSA TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA

**Annual Report**  
Fiscal Year 2019-2020

**Work Plan**  
Fiscal Year 2020-2021

The SRTBIA is a 3% assessment paid by people staying at Santa Rosa lodging establishments. The City of Santa Rosa through the Economic Development Division and the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber through the Visit Santa Rosa program partner to actively promote Santa Rosa as a unique tourism destination, and operate and manage the California Welcome Center.

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# EFFECTS OF COVID-19

## Impact and Uncertainty

On January 31, 2020, the Federal Department of Health and Human Services' declaration of a public health emergency, followed by similar state and local orders in March, instigated what has become a long and impactful contraction of the tourism industry. With travel restrictions, shelter in place orders, and the closure of non-essential businesses including lodging, entertainment, and other hospitality-oriented businesses imposed by the state, travel plans to Sonoma County were nearly entirely cancelled.

In Sonoma County, a little over one quarter (27.8%) of the county's 7,000 lodging rooms were occupied at the beginning of April and May 2020, down from an average occupancy rate of 78% from the same time a year ago. The economic ripple effects on the rest of the local economy are just beginning to be calculated as the county's \$2.175 billion annual tourism economy is still nearly all shut down. Among the 24,750 Sonoma County workers recently filing for unemployment, it is estimated that 12% are from the hospitality and restaurant industry according to a recent article published in the Windsor Times.

The hotel industry continues to face an abrupt and unprecedented drop in hotel demand that is gaining pace and getting progressively deeper and more severe month by month, with hotel owners reporting massive, unavoidable layoffs and furloughs.

Additionally, air passengers arriving at the county's Charles M. Schulz Airport numbered only half of normal traffic in March, after several daily flights were canceled mid-month. Final passenger numbers for April are expected to be as much as halved again, according to one recent industry prediction. Last year, almost 500,000 air passengers were served at the regional airport.

The Sonoma County Tourism forecast predicted a 90% loss of overall tourism-related revenues in April. Embedded in these figures is a big hit to the county government's anticipated collection of transient occupancy taxes which totaled \$194.8 million last year.

While this report provides highlights of a strong 2019 year in tourism and an optimistic Work Plan for fiscal year 2020-2021, the year 2020 remains volatile given the global negative impacts caused by COVID-19. Furthermore, it is anticipated that modifications will be needed to the Work Plan in order to make adjustments to the uncertain trends that will be experienced.

# SRTBIA

## Santa Rosa Tourism Business Improvement Area

### OVERVIEW

The SRTBIA was established by [Santa Rosa Ordinance 3946](#) on August 3, 2010, creating a public-private partnership between the City of Santa Rosa, the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, and Santa Rosa lodging establishments.

The SRTBIA is a [3% assessment](#) paid by people staying at Santa Rosa lodging establishments. On a quarterly basis, the lodging establishments remit these funds to the City. After a 2% City administrative fee is deducted from the total funds remitted, the remaining 98% of the funds are disbursed as follows:

- [30%](#) of the funds collected go to the City and is managed by the Economic Development Division of the Planning and Economic Development Department
- The remaining [70%](#) goes to the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber for their Convention & Visitors Bureau and Welcome Center operations & services

The Assessment provides for efficient and complementary destination marketing, tourism and group sales, and programs that encourage overnight stays and tourism infrastructure support.

### BOUNDARIES (participating businesses)

Lodging businesses collecting the 3% assessment are those operating within the Santa Rosa city limits, and include hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inns, short term occupancies, and all similar lodging businesses.

### AUTHORIZED USES (Ordinance 3946, Section 6-56.290)

The purpose of forming the SRTBIA as an assessment area under State law was to provide revenue to defray the costs of services, activities, and programs that promote and encourage tourism within Santa Rosa to the benefit the assessed lodging establishments.

Revenues from assessments may be used for programs, services, and activities inside or outside Santa Rosa if such programs, services, and activities promote and encourage overnight visits to the city. Revenues may also be used to pay or reimburse

administrative costs incurred by the Contractor or the City in connection with the creation of the SRTBIA and the ongoing administrative costs associated with marketing and event activities.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### SRTBIA Assessment Actuals by Quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	
<b>2019</b>	\$ 351,333	\$ 541,509	\$ 601,194	\$ 468,678	\$ 1,962,736	+ 10%
<b>2018</b>	\$ 393,047	\$ 510,618	\$ 548,560	\$ 420,849	\$ 1,875,075	- 10%
<b>2017</b>	\$ 366,148	\$ 533,979	\$ 651,202	\$ 466,609	\$ 2,017,940	- 10%
<b>2016</b>	\$ 359,117	\$ 532,124	\$ 659,658	\$ 476,708	\$ 2,027,608	+ 10%
<b>2015</b>	\$ 319,047	\$ 471,471	\$ 600,755	\$ 432,620	\$ 1,823,893	+ 11%
<b>2014</b>	\$ 278,597	\$ 414,046	\$ 538,212	\$ 400,503	\$ 1,631,358	+ 11%
<b>2013</b>	\$ 243,392	\$ 388,906	\$ 486,382	\$ 334,930	\$ 1,453,610	+ 12%
<b>2012</b>	\$ 213,069	\$ 324,949	\$ 442,635	\$ 305,237	\$ 1,285,890	+ 11%
<b>2011</b>	\$ 192,463	\$ 285,884	\$ 405,871	\$ 258,274	\$ 1,142,492	

\*2019 Breakdown of Year End Total (note – City budget is on a July 1-June 30 Fiscal Year)

2% Administrative Fee:	\$39,255
30% City of Santa Rosa:	\$577,044
70% SR Metro Chamber:	\$1,346,437

### PROGRAM EXPENSES: BUDGET VS. ACTUAL CITY BUDGET – FY 19-20

	BUDGETED	ACTUAL
Administration + Operations <i>Staff, overhead, maintenance costs (1 FTE added in 2018)</i>	\$ 280,000	\$ 208,031
Professional Services	\$ 240,000	\$ 223,085
Marketing & Promotions	\$ 245,491	\$ 124,008
Event Support & Attraction <i>Includes Ironman &amp; GranFondo, and smaller TBIA application awardees</i>	\$ 150,000	\$ 71,665
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 695,000</b>	<b>\$ 626,789</b>

### Funding Sources – City of Santa Rosa

Council Approved Budget	\$504,500
Carry Forward	\$309,502
Reserves	\$210,140

*(funds held in the account that were received beyond what was approved during the City budget process)*

### VISIT SANTA ROSA BUDGET – CY 2019

	BUDGETED	ACTUAL
Administration / Operations	\$373,870	\$395,826
California Welcome Center Operations	\$208,973	\$206,691
Group Sales, Marketing, Promotions, PR	\$842,320	\$809,547
Event Support & Attraction	\$50,000	\$55,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,475,163</b>	<b>\$1,467,065</b>

### Contributions and Other Funding Sources – Visit Santa Rosa

Visit Santa Rosa received the following additional contributions for the 2019 Calendar Year:

\$ 15,500	County of Sonoma Welcome Center Funding
\$ 40,347	Merchandise Sales
\$ 17,363	Other
\$ 6,000	Certified Folder Contract Fees

### ADVISORY BOARD

The SRTBIA Advisory Board is comprised of five members appointed by City Council as follows:

- One Santa Rosa Metro Chamber employee
- One City of Santa Rosa employee
- Three hotel operators, at least one of whom is employed by a full-service hotel, and one of whom is employed by a select service hotel

The role of the Advisory Board is to advise the City Council on the amount of the Area's assessments and on the services, programs, and activities to be funded by the assessments. The Advisory Board meets on a bi-monthly basis, are open to the public, and are held in the offices of the City Manager.

<b>ROSTER</b>	<b>Affiliation/Position</b>	<b>Representing</b>
• Peter Rumble	President and CEO	SR Metro Chamber
• Rafael Rivero	Economic Dev Specialist	City of Santa Rosa
• Donna Renteria	Best Western Garden Inn	Hotel - Select Service
• Todd Anderson	Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites	Hotel – At Large
• Vern Lakusta	Hotel E	Hotel – Full Service

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIRED COMPONENTS**

In accordance with the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989, Section 36500 et seq. of the California Streets and Highways Code, the following information must be included in the Annual Report and Work Plan:

- **Changes to boundaries:**  
No changes recommended
- **Improvements and activities to be provided for the upcoming fiscal year:** Outlined herein
- **Estimated cost of providing the improvements and the activities for the upcoming fiscal year:**  
Outlined herein
- **Changes to the method and basis of levying the assessment:**  
No changes recommended
- **The amount of any surplus or deficit revenues to be carried forward from a previous fiscal year:**  
Outlined herein
- **The amount of any contributions to be made from sources other than assessments levied pursuant to this part:**  
Outlined herein

# TOURISM ECONOMICS

## Regional Indicators & Data

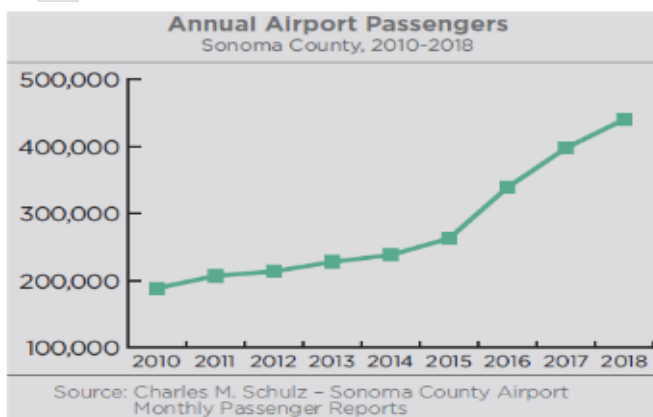
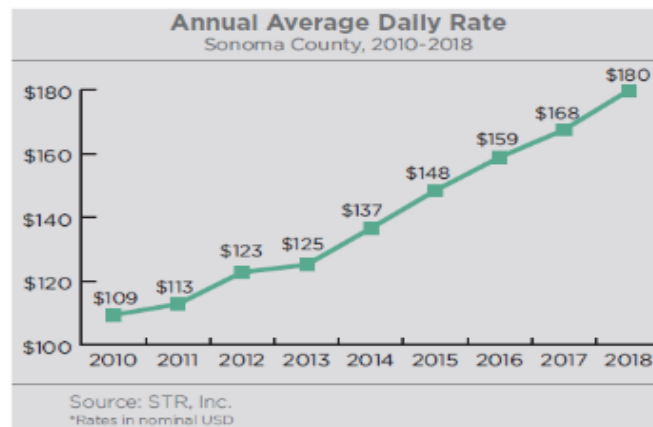
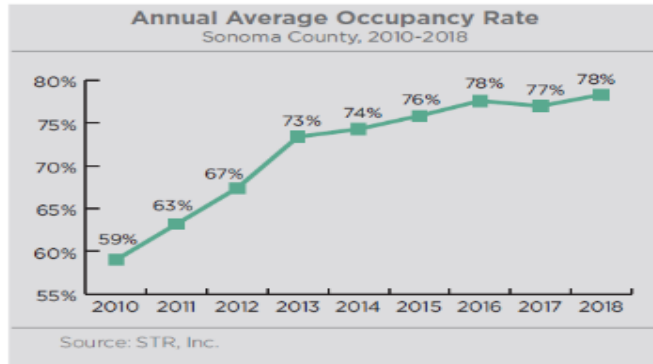
### LODGING & HOSPITALITY ASSESSMENT

Visitors staying in hotels and motels are the single-largest source of destination spending in Sonoma County, with an estimated \$1.1 billion in spent in 2018. This number could be much higher once the money brought into the economy by overnight stays in vacation rentals by owner and campgrounds in Sonoma County are taken into account.

### Occupancy Rate

The occupancy rate for Sonoma County is determined by dividing the total room nights sold divided by the total room nights available for purchase. The average annual occupancy in 2018 was 78%. Annual Average Daily Rate (ADR) Average daily rate (ADR) represents the average amount spent on accommodations by a visitor per room night in Sonoma County. This number has increased every year since 2010. For 2018, the average daily rate improved by 7.4% over the previous year to \$179.90.

**SANTA ROSA AIRPORT** Arrivals at Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport climbed a robust 17% through 2018 compared with a year earlier, as United Airlines launched a new route from Denver in March and American Airlines launched a new route from Dallas in June. The airport served over 440,000 passengers in 2018 and is expected to serve nearly 500,000 passengers in 2019.

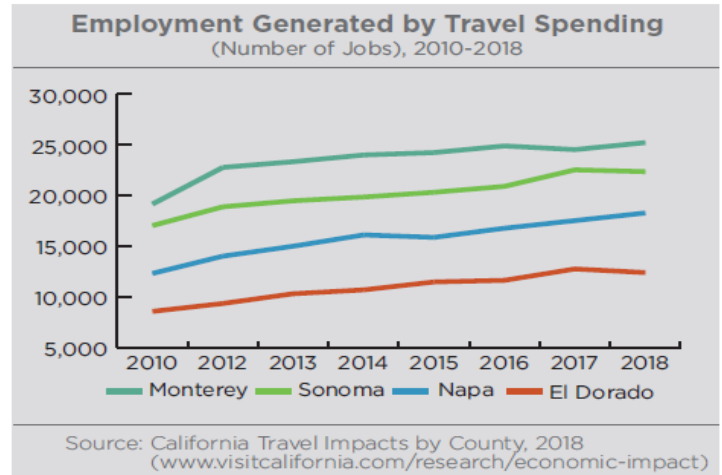




Indicators (cont'd)

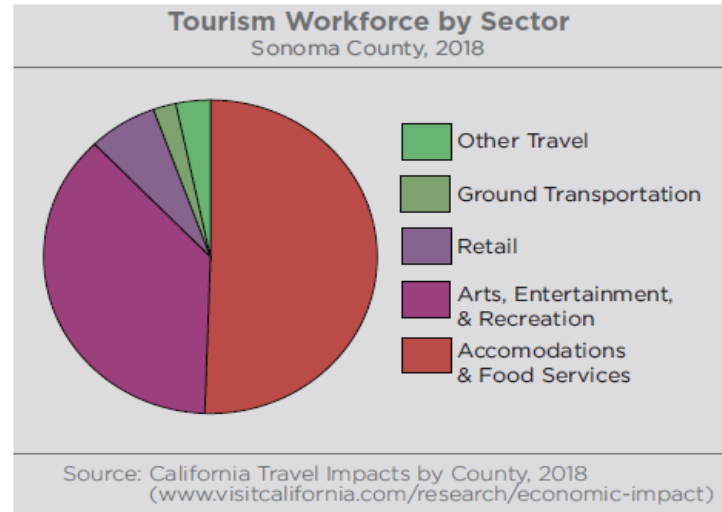
**Employment Generated by Travel Spending**

With 22,330 jobs generated by tourist destination spending, Sonoma County ranks second against comparable counties - Monterey had 25,190 tourism jobs, Napa had 18,260 tourism jobs, and El Dorado had 12,390 tourism jobs in 2018. The tourism industry remains the largest employer in Sonoma County.



**Sonoma County Tourism Employment by Sector**

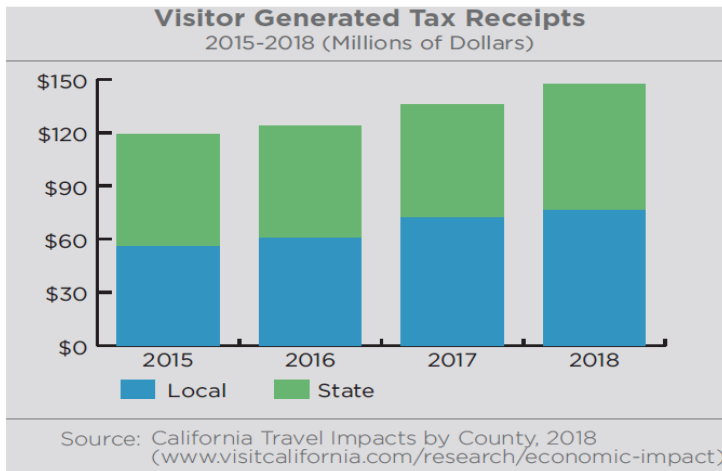
Distribution of employment within Sonoma County's tourism industry is similar to previous years, with 50% of employment in accommodations & food services, 37% in arts, entertainment & recreation, and 7% in retail. Ground transportation and air travel (Other Travel) have also increased their share of employment at 2.3% and 3%, respectively.



**TOURISM-GENERATED TAXES**

**Visitor Generated by Tax Receipts**

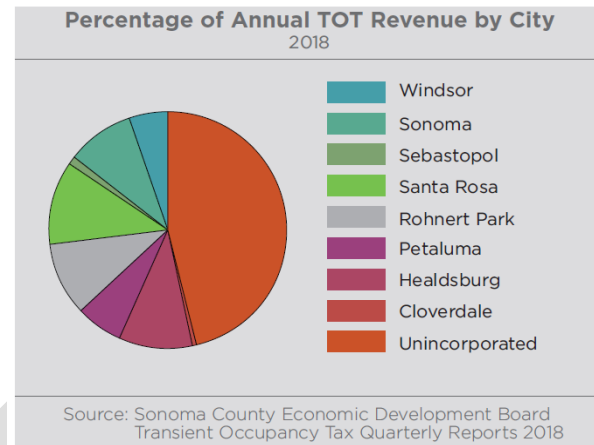
Spending by day travelers and overnight visitors to Sonoma County generate a significant amount of tax for state and local governments. Total local taxes collected from visitors to Sonoma County were estimated at \$76.1 million in 2018. Total state taxes collected from those same visitors was \$71.2 million in 2018. Total local and state tax collection increased by \$11.3 million or 8.3% from 2017.



## Indicators (cont'd)

### Percentage of Annual TOT Revenue by City

Revenues from TOT are divided between the County of Sonoma (which receives revenue from lodging properties in unincorporated regions) and the individual cities in the county. Collectively, the incorporated cities generated 54% of all revenue in 2018, while the unincorporated areas of the county generated 46%.



## TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX

As of 2016, [Santa Rosa lodging establishments generated 16% of the County's Transient Occupancy Tax \(TOT\)](#); higher than any of the other incorporated cities in Sonoma County, and just under half of that generated in unincorporated areas (39%). 100% of Santa Rosa's TOT is General Fund revenue with no special earmarks.

### Santa Rosa Transient Occupancy Tax by Quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	
<b>2019</b>	\$1,053,999	\$ 1,624,527	\$ 1,803,583	\$ 1,406,034	\$ 5,888,143	+ 10%
<b>2018</b>	\$ 1,179,143	\$ 1,531,855	\$ 1,645,681	\$ 1,268,549	\$ 5,625,228	-10%
<b>2017</b>	\$ 1,098,497	\$ 1,601,930	\$ 1,953,564	\$ 1,399,845	\$ 6,053,836	- 10%
<b>2016</b>	\$ 1,077,265	\$ 1,595,832	\$ 1,979,642	\$ 1,429,781	\$ 6,082,520	+ 10%
<b>2015</b>	\$ 957,684	\$ 1,413,327	\$ 1,801,829	\$ 1,294,574	\$ 5,467,414	+ 11%
<b>2014</b>	\$ 836,436	\$ 1,241,528	\$ 1,610,962	\$ 1,200,765	\$ 4,889,721	+ 10%
<b>2013</b>	\$ 730,203	\$ 1,166,691	\$ 1,459,427	\$ 1,004,402	\$ 4,360,723	+ 11%

# 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## City of Santa Rosa Program Highlights

### Initiatives

- **Outbound Relationship Marketing:** Extend the reach of the campaign to effectively reach likely visitors in a disruptive and engaging way. Focus efforts on online channels with strong call to action to OutThereSR.com to increase efficiency, effectiveness and measurability.
- **Content Category Micro-Targeting:** Infiltrate and, as much as possible, disrupt media environments aligned with SR-related areas of interest, such as cycling and craft beer. Tactics include intrusive digital advertising units, promotions and events.
- **Maintain Content Cadence and Relevance:** Through OutThereSR.com, continue to create and disseminate compelling content.
  - Refresh Ambassadors where necessary and continue to introduce new guest-bloggers, particularly those with established followings
  - Consider alternative incentives/rewards for user generated content creation.
- **Maintain Local Engagement:** Continue to have a strong presence at local events and stay active as a participant, sponsor and curator of local culture such as arts, music, food, etc.

### PLACEMAKING + LOCAL ENGAGEMENT:

The **Welcome Wagon** serves as a mobile content collector and public engagement platform. Attendance at events is an important element of the campaign.



**OutThere merchandise** featuring local artists is available online, at special events, at the Santa Rosa Visitors Center, and other locations interested in carrying items.

New merchandise was created for sale and for give-away, extending the brand.



## WEBSITE + SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

Our [blog website OutThereSR.com](#) has fresh content generated by locals about Santa Rosa's food, beer, wine, art, music, and cycling.

- In 2019, the City's visitor sites received approximately 151,400 webpage views.
- OutThereSR.com had 7,100 users (up 4.8 from 2018) and 8,900 sessions (up 2.5%). Major engagement spikes for Out There Expo and Holiday Shopping Guide.
- The [OutThereSR Dispatch, our quarterly email newsletter](#), reaches 7,577 opt-in subscribers to push traffic and highlight blog posts on OutThereSR.co – with an average open rate of 51% and click through rate average of 12%.
- [OutThereSR.com](#) Using multiple social media platforms, we engage:
  - 13,605 followers on [Facebook](#)
  - 7,269 followers on [Twitter](#)
  - 5,316 followers on [Instagram](#)
  - 37,300 followers on [YouTube](#) views to promote Santa Rosa and push website traffic.

# 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Visit Santa Rosa

### SALES

- Work with local clubs, regional state and national organizations to bring sporting events to Santa Rosa
- Focus on conferences, events and meetings group resulting in 2,824 group room nights booked into Santa Rosa SRBIA hotels in 2019
- Through the group sales effort, drove business of non-hotel room nights resulting in non-lodging leads valued at \$449,121
- Work with a diversity of groups that included: Adult and Youth Sports United Flyers Pro AM (Disc Golf), GranFondo, Ride to a Cure, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, DJFE Triathlon Series, Ironman Full & 70.3, Harvest Cup Soccer Tournament, WGAS Monster Trucks
- Work with Festivals and Events - Norcal Beer Geeks Festival, Mariachi Festival, Garagiste Wine Festival, Sonoma County Pride - Cabaret Show, Parade and Pinot on the Square, Heirloom Expo, Emerald Cup, Beerfest
- Business Conferences - SVBTA Planning Session, 20/30 Active Club International Conference, CalPal Conference, Annual California Indian Conference, American Airlines West Coast Sales Conference, Community Colleges League of CA, CEO Retreat and Symposium, Association of Waldorf Schools of North America Conference
- Community Assistance and Servicing - SRJC International Exchange Students Welcome Packets, SR City Schools Teacher Relocation Packets
- Focused on Silicon Valley as a target group market by attending trade shows and meeting monthly in person with travel managers, travel agents, meeting planners and concierges

- Support our SRTBIA events through booking staff and visitor rooms into Santa Rosa lodging and referring ancillary revenues to local businesses
- Capitalize on Sonoma County as a destination wedding location by attending wedding shows and sending out wedding related leads including venue locations, transportation and ancillary events
- Service existing groups who already have rooms secured to increase spend (upsell) and extend stays. Create value added program like dine-arounds and fun-arounds for groups
- Leverage all potential partners including Recreation and Parks, the Fairgrounds, Epicenter
- Promote “local host” and assist residents in bringing their meetings, conferences and regional associations to Santa Rosa
- To attract corporate businesses, advertise in MPI and SV Business Journal

#### MARKETING + ADVERTISING + PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Use multiple platforms of social media focusing on creating engagement and sharing the destination with 34,000+ Facebook and 4,910 Twitter followers at the end of 2019
- Regularly updated content and provided a dynamic website experience resulting in 134,347 unique website visitors in 2019
- Drive revenues to our lodging partners through an effective visitor marketing program to include both print and electronic advertising
- Use programmatic and targeted advertising to focus our messaging to travelers
- Work with partners like Sonoma County Tourism and leverage co-ops to ensure Santa Rosa is present in county wide opportunities and programs including the largest section of the Sonoma County Tourism Guide
- Emphasize public relations and earned media that create favorable converge for the destination by participating with Visit California media missions and outreach to influencers

## CALIFORNIA WELCOME CENTER

- Maintain daily Welcome Center operations 361 days a year
- Welcome 50,630 visitors into the center
- Capitalize on local expertise using volunteers who donated 2,781 hours assisting visitors
- Work with Visit California to promote Santa Rosa and the state-wide welcome center network
- Conduct ongoing training programs for staff and volunteers highlighting the Sonoma County Certified Tourism Ambassador Program
- Work with the Sonoma County Economic Development Board and Sonoma County Tourism to feature and promote both Santa Rosa and Sonoma County to all visitors
- Promote Santa Rosa by featuring merchandise from locals along with merchandise with Santa Rosa proudly showcased on the produce including Out There SR logo items

## TOP ARTICLES

- 1/26/2019 - SF Station - "Road Trippin'! 8 Spots to Eat, Drink and Mentally Unwind in Santa Rosa"
- 2/12/19 – Forbes.com – "Save The Dates: Awesome Food Festivals for Your 2019 Travel Calendar"
- 3/3/19 – Red Tricycle – "20 Spring Break Spots That Are Worth the Drive"
- 4/16/19 – Red Tricycle – "Relaxing Mom Getaways to Book Now"
- 5/1/19 – Katie Godec/Triathlete/Social Media Influencer – "The Real Riches of Wine Country: Visit Santa Rosa"
- 5/8/19 – OC Mom Blog – "Hotels in the Heart of Wine Country"
- 6/1/19 – The Travel 100 – "Luxury Glamping, Wine Tasting on the Sonoma Serengeti"
- 6/8/18 – GoNomad.com – "A Whineless Family Vacation in Wine Country"
- 6/24/19 – Family Vacation Critic – "12 Small-Town Getaways Your Kids Will Actually Enjoy"
- 5/4/19 – Yorkshire Post (UK) – "Follow the Flock - California Bounces Back"

- 7/11/19 – LonelyPlanet.com – “The Best Day Trips from San Francisco”
- 7/14/19 – Red Tricycle – “Wine Country with Kids: Family-Friendly Wineries to Visit Now”
- 8/4/19 – The Travel 100 – “Hotel E: Santa Rosa’s New Lodging from Greystone”
- 8/20/19 – Valerie Stimac/Blogger – “3 Days in Santa Rosa: A Weekend Getaway from San Francisco”
- 9/3/19 – TripSavvy – “Thanksgiving Weekend Getaway Ideas and Deals”
- 9/30/2019 – Via Magazine – “From the Ashes”
- 10/14/19 – We3Travel – “15 Fun Things to do in Sonoma with Kids (That Don't Involve Wine)”
- 11/13/19 – Pink Traveler – “Where Winos Meet Rhinos”

#### MEDIA VISITS

- Shayna Yasuhara – Managing Editor, SF Station and member, Board of Directors, Bay Area Travel Writers; arts, entertainment, and cultural happenings (January 2019)
- Charles Thorpe – Contributing Writer, Uproxx and Men’s Journal; travel, lifestyle, and culture (February 2019)
- Becky Sue Epstein – Contributing Writer, Intermezzo Magazine; travel, wine and culinary (March 2019)
- Christine Austin – Columnist, Yorkshire Post, travel, wine and culinary (March 2019)
- Eddie Zamora (“The Yum Yum Foodie”) – TV personality/social media influencer; culinary and lifestyle (March 2019)
- Irvina Lew – Contributing Writer, Whereverfamily.com; wine and luxury travel; (April 2019)
- Courtney Elko – Managing Editor, Family Vacation Critic (April 2019)
- Mary Charlebois – Freelance Writer; senior travel (April 2019)
- Faye Wolf – Contributing Writer, GoNOMAD.com; travel and lifestyle (April 2019)
- Caroline Mullen – Contributing Writer, Family Circle, family travel (April 2019)

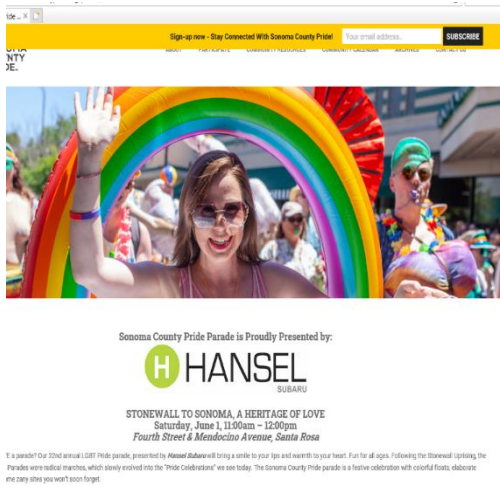


- Shelby Barone – Owner/Blogger/Social Media Influencer, OC Mom, family travel (April 2019)
- Katie Godec – Triathlete/Social Media Influencer, Trilife.com; endurance sport travel (May 2019)
- Valerie Stimac – Contributing Writer, Lonely Planet; travel and space tourism (June 2019)
- Mike and Anne Howard – Owners/Bloggers, Honey Trek; travel (July 2019)
- Tamara Gruber – Owner/Podcaster, We3Travel.com and Vacations Mavens; family and girls travel (September 2019)
- Melissa Larsen – Editor, Arizona Foothills Magazine; lifestyle and family travel (September 2019)
- Steven Lindsey – Contributing Writer, He Said Magazine; gay travel (September 2019)
- Tina & Keith Paul – Owners, Travel Early and Retire.com; senior travel (September 2019)
- Leslie Kelly – Contributing Writer, Forbes.com; travel (November 2019)
- Randall Tierney- Editor, Parenting OC Magazine; family travel (December 2019)

# 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Shared Program Highlights

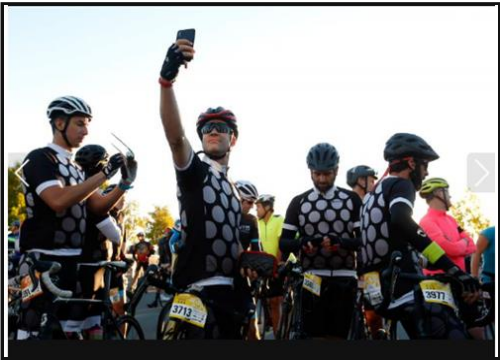
### Event Support



#### EVENT SUPPORT:

- IRONMAN & IRONMAN 70.3
- Country Summer- **\$5,000**
- Active 20-30 Int & US Midterm - **\$3,000**
- Sonoma County LGBTQ Pride Festival - **\$5,000**
- Beerfest – The Good One - \$1,500
- 13<sup>th</sup> California Artisan Cheese Festival - **\$10,000**
- National Heirloom Expo - **\$5,000**
- Levi’s Gran Fondo - **\$15,000**
- Monster Truck Spring Nationals - **\$1,000**
- Sonoma County Hot Air Balloon - **\$2,500**
- AJGA Golf Tournament - **\$2,500**
- 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Salmonid Resto Conf- **\$1,500**

#### Nearly 5,000 cyclists take part in Levi’s GranFondo mass ride



SLIDE 1 OF 34  
Thousands of cyclists begin the start of Levi's GranFondo cycling race, at A Place to Play in Santa Rosa, Calif., on Saturday, October 5, 2019. (Photo by Darryl Bush / For The Press Democrat)

DAN TAYLOR  
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT | October 5, 2019  
Follow this story

Nearly 5,000 cyclists from 14 countries, and most of the United States, embarked on the 11th annual Levi's GranFondo event early on a sunny but still chilly Saturday morning from A Place to Play park, heading out on 11 different optional routes for rides of up to 117 miles.

The scene was festive, with piped-in music and a coffee van, as colorfully garbed riders of all ages gathered near the starting gate.

#### California Artisan Cheese Festival draws thousands to Santa Rosa



SLIDE 4 OF 10  
American Cheese Society certified cheese professional Vanessa Chang smells an apple walnut smoked cheddar from Beehive Cheese during a seminar about pairing cocktails and aromatic bitters with cheese, at the 13th annual California Artisan Cheese Festival at the Flamingo Resort and Conference Center in Santa Rosa, California, on Saturday, March 23, 2019. (Akin Jornada / The Press Democrat)

AUSTIN MURPHY  
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT  
March 23, 2019

They're big dudes to begin with: brothers and identical twins Charlie and Michael Kalish stand 6 feet, 6 inches. But they are huge in the cheese world, which explained why The Cheese Twins, as they are known in dairy circles, came close to selling out their Saturday afternoon seminar at Santa Rosa's Flamingo Conference Resort and Spa.

Their clinic, "A Taste of Cheese Science," could just as easily have been called "Nerds on Curds."

# Looking Ahead

## SRTBIA Work Plans

(Adjusted for COVID-19)

### CITY OF SANTA ROSA WORK PLAN – FY 2020-21

PROPOSED CITY BUDGET (Adjusted due to Covid-19)

	EXPENSE
Administration + Operations <i>Staff, overhead, maintenance costs</i>	\$250,000
Professional Services	\$180,000
Marketing & Promotions	\$ 25,000
Event Support & Attraction <i>Includes Ironman &amp; GranFondo, and smaller TBIA application awardees</i>	\$ 142,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 597,000</b>
	REVENUE
Council Approved Budget	\$445,000
Carry Forward	\$152,000
Reserves Use	\$0

#### Other Funding Sources – City of Santa Rosa

*Estimated funds held in the account that were received beyond what was approved during the City budget process*

Carry Forward -\$152,363

Reserves - \$158,478

### VISIT SANTA ROSA WORK PLAN – CY 2020

PROPOSED VISIT SANTA ROSA BUDGET  
(Adjusted due to Covid-19)

	BUDGET
Administration / Operations	\$ 341,834
California Welcome Center Ops	\$ 106,981
Sales, Marketing, Promotions, PR	\$ 471,447
Event Support & Attraction	\$ 32,5000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 952,762</b>

## CITY INITIATIVES

The Economic Development Division will focus on strategic planning around

- **Organic Outbound Marketing:**
  - In addition to paid media, consider social strategies such as guest blogger outreach, attending out of town events that relate to the OutThere categories, extending personal invitations to specific groups, etc.
- **Local Engagement:**
  - Merchandise
  - Maker Profiles
  - Music Promotion
  - Public Art & Art Exhibitions
  - Event Promotion
- **Campaign Maintenance:**
  - Weekly OutThereSR.com influencer posts
  - Quarterly “high impact” posts
  - Welcome Wagon presence; consider ways to occupy space in newsworthy ways
- **High Impact Media Development – consider:**
  - Commercial Spots - :30 to :60 video ads for broadcast or online
- **Aesthetic Evolution:**
  - Represent a more urban sensibility, further differentiating Santa Rosa from other Sonoma County destinations that have a consistent, rustic wine country identity
  - Introduce more original design work from original artists. While maintaining a consistent brand identity, with the logo and tagline, allow the overall visual aesthetic of the brand to be more flexible and reflective of the local art and design scene.
- **Increase the tourism industry’s impact on the local economy** by supporting opportunities for growth for Santa Rosa’s and Sonoma County’s tourism related businesses:
  - Collaborate with the Sonoma County Economic Development Board on initiatives such as the Outdoor Recreation sector which is comprised of more than 350 outdoor recreational businesses
  - Build and maintain relationships with past, current, and potential event producers such as Bike Monkey, Medalist Sports, The North Bay Hootenanny, The Lost Church, etc.

- [Pursue industries and businesses](#) that can benefit from Santa Rosa’s unique offerings in terms of locational assets (e.g. 5<sup>th</sup> largest city in the Bay Area, largest city in Sonoma County), infrastructure (e.g. water utilities, road network, airport), and business culture (e.g. land use, progressing zoning practices, process improvements).
  - Engage the craft brewing and distillery community, connecting them to operational resources and product suppliers, building networks and enhancing cluster development
  - Partner with Go Local and other initiatives to identify and add value to small local businesses that enhance the visitor experience, such as farms, restaurants, boutiques, etc.
- [Expand opportunities to promote public art](#) and seek greater partnerships throughout the County and the State
- [Marketing and ads](#)
  - Restaurant Week
  - Small Business Awareness Week
  - National Travel and Tourism Week
- [Participate on Sonoma County Marketing Subcommittee](#) as well as the Downtown Action Organization Board of Directors and the newly formed Railroad Square Community Benefit District
- [Incorporate SRTBIA programs and opportunities into the Council’s COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force](#)

## VISIT SANTA ROSA INITIATIVES

Visit Santa Rosa will focus on strategic planning around

- **Market Santa Rosa as a Premier Overnight Destination:**
  - Analyze Visitor characteristics finding appropriate media for marketing and advertising and continually evaluating the ROI.
  - Increase awareness of Santa Rosa as a premier destination through an effective public relations and earned media campaigns.
  - Work with partners like Visit California, Sonoma County Tourism and our Public Relations agency to increase favorable coverage.
  - Manage social media platforms that increase our audience and engage potential visitors.
  - Use our media including the website, blog and digital assets to inspire travel to Santa Rosa.
- **Attract, retain and Grow Groups & Events:**
  - Focus the business development efforts on key markets including; sports, events, weddings and Silicon Valley.
  - Identify and continuously evaluate the optimal trade shows to attend.
  - Promote the local host program.
  - Work with the SRTBIA to evaluate, grow and promote events that bring overnight stays.
  - Service groups and events enhancing the visitor experience and increasing ancillary revenues.
  - Provide group leads creating economic development and visitor spend.
  - Research and qualify all leads resulting in an industry high conversion rate.
- **California Welcome Center:**
  - Use Visit California to drive traffic to CWC and improve best practices.
  - Create an atmosphere that welcomes the visitor to the CWC and enhances their experience of Santa Rosa by providing local expertise and knowledge.
  - Create an environment that welcome visitors with a sense of place and focus on locally themed and made merchandise.

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