

BTID ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

PRESENTED TO
BISHOP LODGING PARTNERS &
BISHOP CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 2020



A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2019-2020 was on track to be a banner year for the Bishop Tourism Improvement District, Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau and for the City of Bishop! The report given at the March 10, 2020 BACCVB Board Meeting indicated total revenue was up 6.4% from 2019. The souvenir shop inside the information center was bustling with sales 12.6% ahead of last year. BACCVB Staff had just returned from the Visit California Outlook Forum with two highly coveted Poppy Awards. Staff and volunteers were eagerly preparing for the annual Blake Jones Trout Derby just a few days away. We were following news of COVID-19 and started making plans to protect event volunteers and participants with extra handwashing stations.

Then...EVERYTHING changed as the Coronavirus situation became a CRISIS. We salvaged what we could of the derby and closed the information center to walk-in traffic. We paused all paid "Visit Bishop" ads and pivoted our messaging to encourage people to protect themselves and others from the virus. We quickly learned to Zoom and tuned into every webinar and virtual meeting hosted by travel industry experts, small business advocates, local, state and federal health officials.

While paid ads were stopped, we kept social channels open; posting several times each week on Instagram and Facebook. It is imperative to keep relationships with our existing followers. We've been doing our best to answer telephone and email inquiries daily with reduced staff. We've always treated our guests like friends and family, and they actually expected to hear from us during this crisis.

We kept people updated with current conditions, travel restrictions, local health orders and reminded them we'd love to welcome visitors again when it's safe to travel. We posted photos of employees at local hotels and other businesses happily wearing masks while conducting business. We continue to let travelers know Bishop is a safe place to visit and we truly care about their health and wellbeing. Traveler sentiments have changed as a result of COVID-19. Cleanliness and health is a top priority. For the next few years, travelers will seek more rural, outdoorsy, drive-to destinations. Once all travel restrictions are lifted, the world of destination marketing will become fiercely competitive. If we play the cards correctly right now, Bishop is perfectly positioned to recover and even gain market share in the next few years.

I'm proud of the way our organization has handled the challenges of the past seven months. We've made tough financial decisions and personal sacrifice, while always keeping a positive, forward-thinking outlook. We are up for the challenge of leading our destination into economic recovery.

It is important to understand that this year's budget must remain flexible as we continue to adapt to a fluid financial situation and ever-changing rules and restrictions on businesses and events. The travel industry has never seen a catastrophe of this magnitude and length, but **we will bounce back!**

As we write this, summarizing 2019-2020, we don't have a clear picture of what 2021 will bring. With so much uncertainty in today's world, we are certain of some things. We assure you we are nimble and responsive. We will carefully analyze every marketing opportunity and invest carefully for the highest possible ROI. We are vigilant and aware of the many things that affect a traveler's decision to visit Bishop. We respect our natural surroundings and will continue to promote responsible recreation.

As we look back on this unprecedented year, we're grateful to the Bishop lodging community for embracing and supporting the BTID. We're also grateful to chamber members, community supporters, City of Bishop and County of Inyo for believing that if we pool our resources, we can effectively promote our destination for the benefit of all.

Sincerely,

Tawni Thomson

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BTID ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

BISHOP TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BTID)

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BTID BACKGROUND

Developed by Bishop lodging businesses and the Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau (BACCVB), the Bishop Tourism Improvement District (BTID) is an assessment district designed to provide specific benefits to payors, by funding marketing and sales promotion efforts for assessed businesses. The BTID was initially formed in 2014 for a five (5) year term, beginning January 1, 2015. The district was renewed last year for a 10-year term, January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2019.

The district includes all lodging businesses located within the boundaries of the Bishop City limits, including hotels, motels, hostels and short term rentals such as AirBnB. Assessment rate is currently 2% of gross sales and is collected by the City of Bishop at the same time and in the same manner as Transient Occupancy Tax. BTID funds are then forwarded to BACCVB on a quarterly basis. BTID funds are used for tourism promotion programs as outlined in the BTID Management District Plan. No proposed changes to boundary, rate or business classifications are proposed for this year.

The Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau will continue to serve as the BTID's Owners' Association. The Owners' Association is charged with managing funds and implementing programs in accordance with this plan, and must provide annual reports to the Bishop City Council.

In California, TIDs are formed pursuant to the Property and Business Improvement District Law of 1994. This law allows for the creation of a benefit assessment district to raise funds within a specific geographic area. The key difference between TIDs and other benefit assessment districts is that funds raised are returned to the private non-profit corporation governing the district.

The Bishop Tourism Improvement District has proven to be a "win-win-win" program. New marketing initiatives have led to higher occupancy, a "win" for the lodging partners. Higher occupancy increases TOT, a "win" for the City's general fund. Higher room sales also generates additional BTID funds, a "win" for BACCVB's marketing budget, allowing increased investments to properly promote Bishop.

BACCVB's strategic marketing plan is much larger program with much wider reach than any one stakeholder could afford on its own. While a \$600K marketing budget for Bishop might seem like a lot of money, it really pales in comparison to other destinations. Big Bear Lake's budget is \$1.9Million; Missoula, MT is \$1.3Million; and our neighbor Mammoth Lakes is \$5.3Million.

BTID ADVISORY BODY

The use of the assessment fund is based on recommendations of the Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau (BACCVB). The BACCVB is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors, elected by the Bishop Business community to set policy and provide oversight of staff. BACCVB holds monthly business meetings to review programs, discuss progress and monitor the budget. BACCVB Executive Director regularly presents public updates at Bishop City Council meetings. *A minimum of three BACCVB Board members represent lodging businesses paying the BTID assessment. All BTID lodging owners and representatives are invited and encouraged to participate in program development.

2020/2021 BACCVB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Business Representation</u>	<u>Title</u>
Joseph Cabral	*Best Western Bishop Lodge & Comfort Inn	President
Debi Yerkes	Alex Printing	Vice President
Sarah Freundt	Grocery Outlet	Treasurer
Cheryl Underhill	Northern Inyo Hospital	Past President
Rohit Bhakta	*America's Best Value Inn	Board Member
Robin Bolser	Great Basin Bakery	Board Member
Corinna Korpi	Alta One Federal Credit Union	Board Member
Deena Davenport-Conway	Luxe Salon	Board Member
John Louth	Mountain Rambler Brewery	Board Member
Scott Piercey	High Country Lumber	Board Member
Jose Garcia	Individual Member	Board Member
Tara Frank	Owens Valley Paiute-Shoshone Cultural Ctr.	Board Member
Niral Munshaw	*Vagabond Inn, Motel 6 & Travelodge	Board Member
Bina Patel	*Red Roof Inn	Board Member

BTID KEY OBJECTIVES:

The BTID District Management Plan, developed by Bishop Hoteliers prescribes 80% of funds for sales and marketing; 10% for administration; 5% for visitor services/enhancements; and 5% for contingency/reserve.

Sales and Marketing Programs may Include:

- Year-Round Visitor Information Center in downtown Bishop operated by professionally trained staff;
- Membership with local, state and national tourism organizations, such as Visit California and High Sierra Visitors Council, to target key international markets to increase overnight visitation at assessed businesses;
- Production or sponsorship of events that draw overnight visitors, particularly in the off seasons;
- Billboard advertising along Highway 395 and other roads to promote overnight visitation;
- Attendance of travel consumer shows to promote overnight visitation;
- Participation in educational and networking conferences, such as CalTravel, Outlook, Vidcon, Social Media Marketing World and others;
- Online marketing, including website with mobile and foreign language versions, search engine marketing, paid social media ads, banner ads promoting Bishop as a year-round destination;
- Engage professional companies such as Smith Travel Research (STR), VisaVue and others to conduct research that will help guide marketing efforts and measure effectiveness of district funds to increase overnight visitation;
- Print, television, and radio advertising to promote overnight visitation to Bishop;
- Development and implementation of a public relations and communications strategy, inclusive of social media outlets and press release distribution designed to increase overnight visitation at assessed businesses;
- Sales blitzes for assessed businesses;
- Familiarization tours of assessed businesses; and
- Preparation, distribution and production of collateral promotional materials such as brochures, flyers and maps to promote overnight visitation.

Visitor Services/Enhancements may Include:

- Comprehensive and integrated wayfinding signage;
- Visitor Center improvements and enhancements; and
- Trout stocking in Bishop area waters to promote overnight visitation



CONGRATULATIONS TO 2020 TWO TIME POPPY AWARD WINNERS

Best Overall Brand Identity – Less than \$1 Million Best Cooperative Marketing

This competition honors the best and brightest of California tourism promotion and awards are bestowed in even-numbered years as part of Visit California's Outlook Forum conference.

Caroline Beteta, president and CEO of Visit California said, *"This year's finalists inspired travelers from around the world to live their biggest dreams in California."*

To kick off the evening, the Bishop Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, Inyo County, Mammoth Lakes Tourism and Mono County walked away with the award for Best Cooperative Marketing Campaign for the collaborative efforts to promote fall colors in the Eastern Sierra.

"I really love that the Eastside was recognized for our cooperative effort on the Fall Color Campaign. Our guests identify all of us as the Eastern Sierra and the success of this campaign proves that working together can work really well," said Tawni Thomson

And the final icing on the Eastern Sierra cake was Bishop winning the award for Best Overall Brand Identity (with a budget under \$1 million), beating out Visit Carmel and Visit Santa Maria County.

"This is the BIG award, the one everyone wants..." said Julie Faber

*"Our team was so proud to bring home the Poppy for Best Overall Brand Identity," Thomson said. "We really have a great group of local professionals that are passionate about telling Bishop's story to our guests. We love our **Small Town with a Big Backyard** slogan as it resonates with locals as well as our guests."*

Poppy winners are selected by a panel of industry marketing experts in nine categories ranging from best public relations campaign, to best digital campaign to best cooperative marketing campaign.





OUR BRAND – SMALL TOWN WITH A BIG BACKYARD

The brand for Bishop, CA is “**Small Town with a BIG Backyard.**”

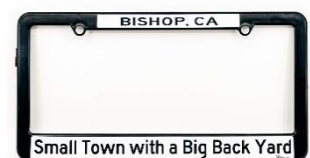
The brand is equally effective when communicating with visitors and locals. It also perfectly describes Bishop. Our town is definitely small – population is about 3,700. Downtown features family-run restaurants, galleries, shops and saloons that take pride in offering old-fashioned hospitality with all modern conveniences. We have one high school, one historic movie theatre and an idyllic park in the center of town. Our backyard is definitely BIG! 98% of land in Inyo County is publicly owned by USFS, BLM and Los Angeles Department of Water & Power. That means Bishop is surrounded by over 6 Million acres of land that’s open for recreation. Within an hour drive from Bishop, you can access Mount Whitney, Alabama Hills and the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest. Just to the north lies Mammoth Mountain, Devil’s Post Pile, Mono Lake and the eastern entrance to Yosemite.

OBJECTIVES:

Bishop has always been known as a nice place to stop on the way to some other destination like Mammoth or Lake Tahoe. International Visitors find it convenient to overnight between Yosemite and Death Valley, but people really weren’t visiting Bishop “on purpose.” **Objective #1** is to elevate Bishop’s status from a “pit stop” to a desirable year-round destination. Bishop offers many outdoor recreation options including fishing, hiking, climbing & biking, but guests tell us the main reason they visit Bishop is to relax and that’s exactly what most people do in their own backyards. **Objective #2** is to attract the “right” type of visitors. By emphasizing “backyard” activities and carefully crafting messages, we’re letting guests know they are coming to our house, to play in our backyard. Mindful marketing encourages guests to respect our home, be courteous and play nice in our backyard so they may be invited back for another visit. **Objective #3** is to have local residents change the way we self-identify. Using “Small Town with a BIG Backyard” has really helped locals appreciate and take pride in the wonderful place we call home.

TACTICS:

Integration: The brand is successfully integrated into communications near and far. Local municipal agencies use it. It’s on a mural behind the dais at City Council and in the signature line of City employee emails. It’s on the website homepage for City of Bishop and Bishop Chamber of Commerce. Visit Bishop uses it in social media, digital and print ads, blog stories, it’s on the cover of our visitor guide and www.bishopvisitor.com homepage. The brand has become so popular, local businesses sell t-shirts, stickers, mugs and other souvenirs. We have not restricted use of the slogan, rather we’ve encouraged everyone to use it.



STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & PROGRAM APPROACH

DIGITAL EMPHASIS –

We work with Simpleview, the travel industry expert, to place paid social media ads and for search engine management. Our website, www.bishopvisitor.com is an amazing tool. It's very dynamic and our team works continuously to update, improve and build the content offered on the site. The greatest thing about online marketing is that we can track and monitor all of the programs, change content according to seasons and events, and make micro adjustments to communicate. Our investment in building this solid digital communications infrastructure has proven to be essential during the COVID-19 crisis. It has allowed us to be nimble and responsive. It has allowed us to keep in contact with our customers, positioning us well for recovery and success in the future. Travel industry experts predict that destinations that “went dark” during the crisis will have to fight exponentially harder to regain market share.

AUTHENTICITY

We've created a “Dream Team” of local experts to share their love of the area with the world. It's imperative we use authentic voices on all platforms. Our social media team, bloggers, photographers, videographers all really do recreate in our big backyard and they share their first-hand experiences. It might be easier to hire an ad agency, but this could not convey the same friendly voice, local knowledge, and true passion achieved by using locals. With this team, we invest in a variety of online marketing programs. Together, we create content and promote Bishop on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TripAdvisor, Expedia and other online platforms.

EDUCATION

We inspire travel that drives community togetherness and economic development. We want to continue to strengthen the image and welcome and preserve the unique guest experience while creating a sustainable partnership between our community and our big backyard. So, we helped fund two Climbing Rangers, in cooperation with ESIA to patrol the lands and educate our guests. We created a full campaign around COVID-19 to encourage face coverings, and safety. The health of our community, our businesses and our guests is paramount. We are encouraging **responsibility** from residents and guests alike.

INVESTMENTS

We invest in a variety of publications, both print and online. We also purchase advertising in regional publications, in addition to producing and distributing visitor publications like the Bishop Visitor Guide, EZ Hikes Brochure, Eastern Sierra Fishing Map, Inyo County Treasure Map, Inyo County Backroads Magazine and Eastern Sierra Fall Colors Guide (all available in print and digital versions).

The most important cog on our wheel is the Bishop Information Center! Our professional team of Guest Hosts respond to every call, email and walk-in inquiry with courteous, knowledgeable and prompt service. As more people are becoming interested in Bishop, we are seeing significant increase in number of inquiries as well as scope of information requested.

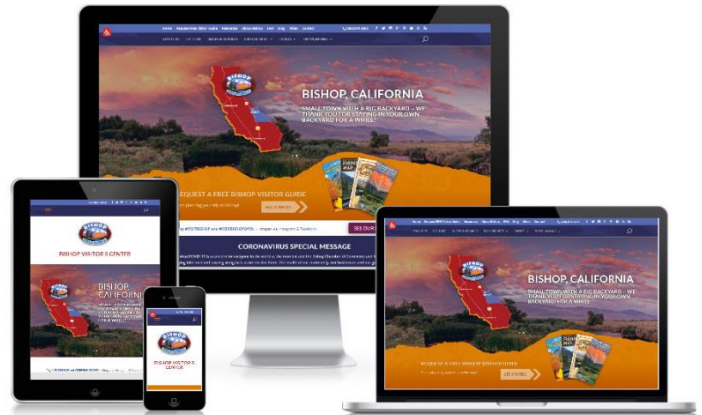
STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & PROGRAM APPROACH

RESULTS/EVALUATION

In 2015, Bishop established a tourism improvement district to generate additional funds for destination marketing - the biggest game changer ever! Our website was rebuilt, new social media efforts launched, print media campaigns enhanced and more travel shows were added to the marketing plan. All efforts are anchored by the brand “Small Town with a BIG Backyard.” Prior to the branding efforts funded by BTID, annual lodging occupancy was 60.7%.

For four and a half consecutive years, we saw steady growth in occupancy and rate. July through December of 2019 were up 4% over 2018, then COVID-19 changed the world as we knew it. Even with a total shutdown for several months and zero international visitation since March, FY 2019-20 showed 62.39%.

Last year, the website received 549K visitors. A significant increase in organic search indicates brand awareness is increasing – people are searching specifically for Bishop. Our Facebook page has 45.5K followers and Instagram has 24.3K. We’ve heard from hoteliers that more guests are staying longer and we’ve seen increased visitor center inquiries from new guests seeking information about a wider variety of recreational opportunities. Lodging owners continue to make major financial investments to improve their facilities, showing a new level of commitment and pride in their properties.



OCCUPANCY & ADR

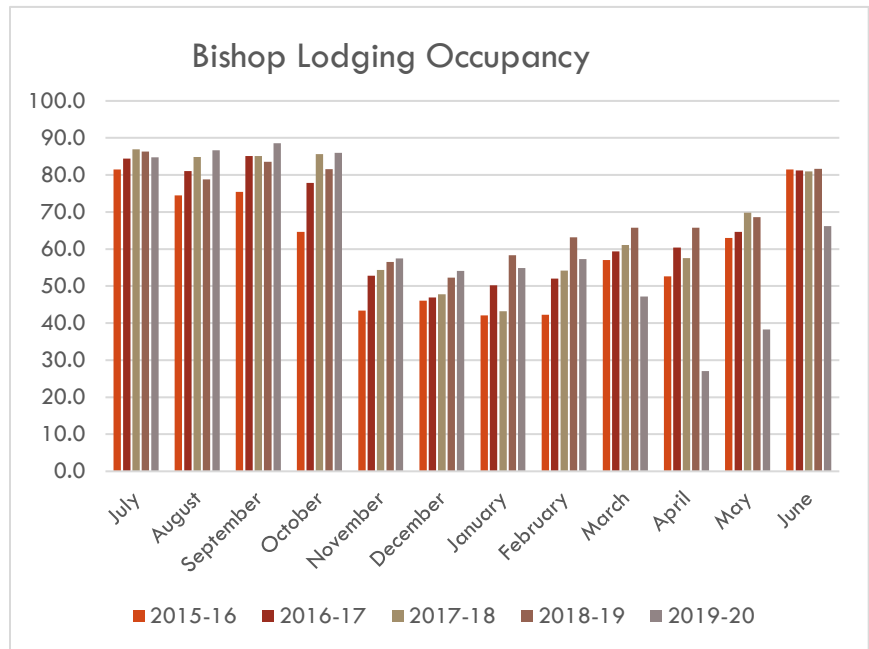
BACCVB subscribes to weekly occupancy reports provided by Smith Travel Research (STR). Smith Travel Research is recognized as the lodging industry expert for gathering data, providing analytics and benchmarking performance data including occupancy and average daily rate (ADR).

STR Reports for Bishop include data from 10 of the 19 downtown hotels, representing 68% of BTID room inventory. STR data includes small (33 rooms) and large (86 rooms) properties. We are confident the data is a solid representation of overall Bishop lodging trends.

Average Daily Rate (ADR) is a carefully monitored metric. Lodging rates vary in all communities according to demand, with higher rates during peak travel season and major events. Increasing ADR is a good indicator that BTID funded marketing programs are working to increase Bishop’s status as a desirable destination. Since inception of BTID, a healthy increase in ADR has been achieved each year. We are especially pleased to see there was no backslide this summer with the loss of international visitors and decreased occupancy due to COVID-19.

BISHOP LODGING PERFORMANCE

Occupancy varies significantly throughout the year. December and January are the slowest, while June through September is traditionally Bishop's peak travel season.



	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
July	81.5	84.4	86.9	86.3	84.8
August	74.5	81.1	84.9	78.8	86.7
September	75.4	85.1	85.1	83.6	88.6
October	64.6	77.9	85.6	81.6	86.0
November	43.4	52.8	54.4	56.5	57.5
December	46.1	46.9	47.8	52.3	54.1
January	42.1	50.2	43.2	58.3	54.9
February	42.3	52.0	54.2	63.2	57.3
March	57.0	59.4	61.1	65.8	47.2
April	52.6	60.4	57.6	65.8	27.1
May	63.0	64.6	69.8	68.6	38.3
June	81.5	81.2	81.0	81.7	66.2
Annual Average Occupancy	60.3	66.3	67.6	70.2	62.4

AVERAGE DAILY RATE					
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
\$ 91.25	\$ 95.50	\$ 103.83	\$ 107.04	\$ 111.16	\$ 111.42

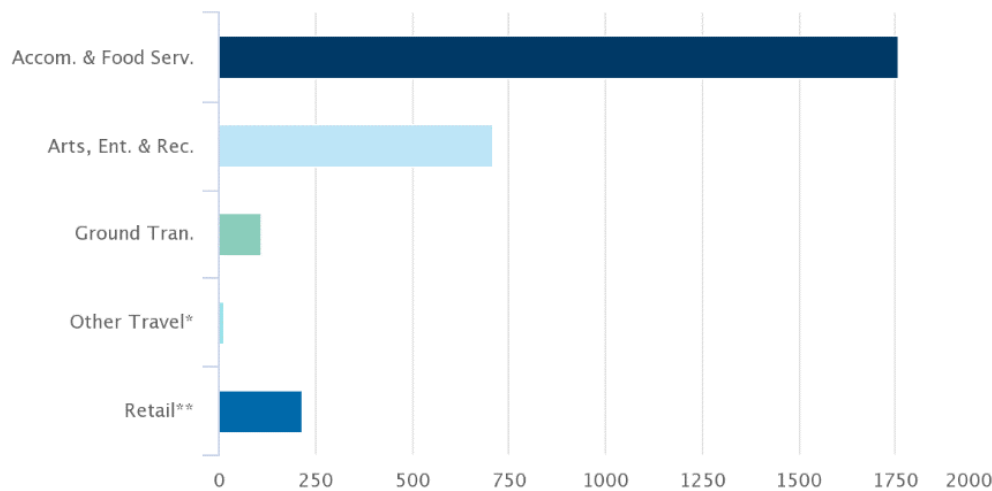


ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM FOR BISHOP

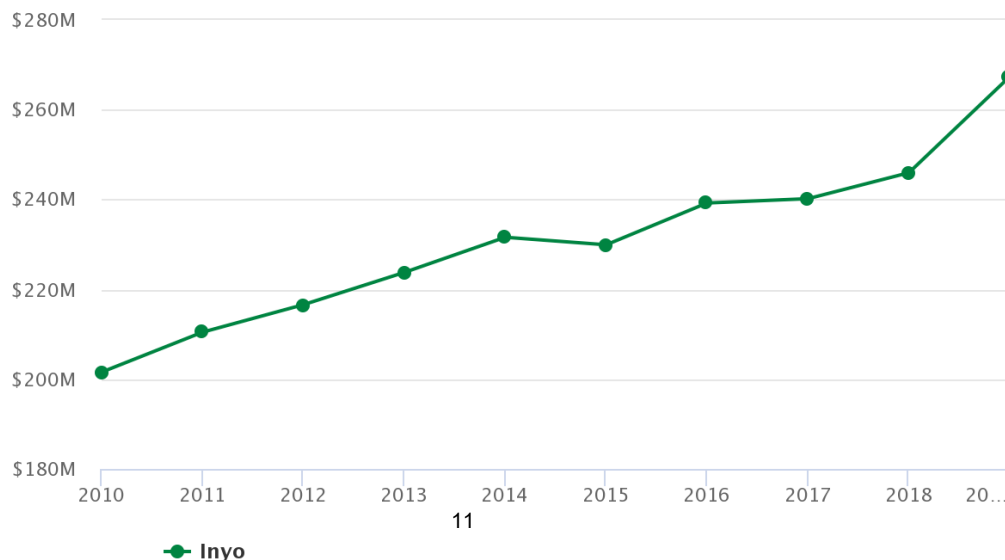
Economic impacts are based on "statewide visitor trips," which are defined as trips taken by individuals who stay overnight away from home, or travel more than 50 miles one way on a non-routine trip. This definition of a visitor is derived from the California Tourism Marketing Act.

According to Dean Runyan Associates, Inc., 2019 brought \$267.4 Million in travel spending to Inyo County. This generated \$20.6 Million in state and local taxes. 2,800 local residents are employed in tourism-related jobs. *The 2019 figures do not reflect major economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on 2020 visitor spending and tourism employment.

INYO TRAVEL-RELATED EMPLOYMENT



INYO HISTORY OF TRAVEL SPENDING IN CALIFORNIA





STRATEGIC PROGRAM: FAM TOURS FOR MEDIA AND FRONTLINE HOSPITALITY PROVIDERS

Establishing and nurturing relationships with writers, bloggers, photographers and other travel media professionals is essential to promoting Bishop. BACCVB's expert staff develops tours and guided excursions to educate, entertain and "wow" media influencers.

Fam Tours are also utilized to train and inspire frontline hospitality providers. Bishop visitors often ask advice of hotel front desk associates, restaurant and retail clerks. When they have experienced and enjoyed an activity or venue, they are much more likely to recommend it. Two tours with a total of 20 participants were conducted last year. The first included birding locations, led by local ES Audubon experts, then touring downtown shops and galleries. The second trip was an OHV adventure in the Buttermilk Recreation Area co-hosted by GSC Offroad Adventures. Both tours were funded through Inyo County CPSP grant program.

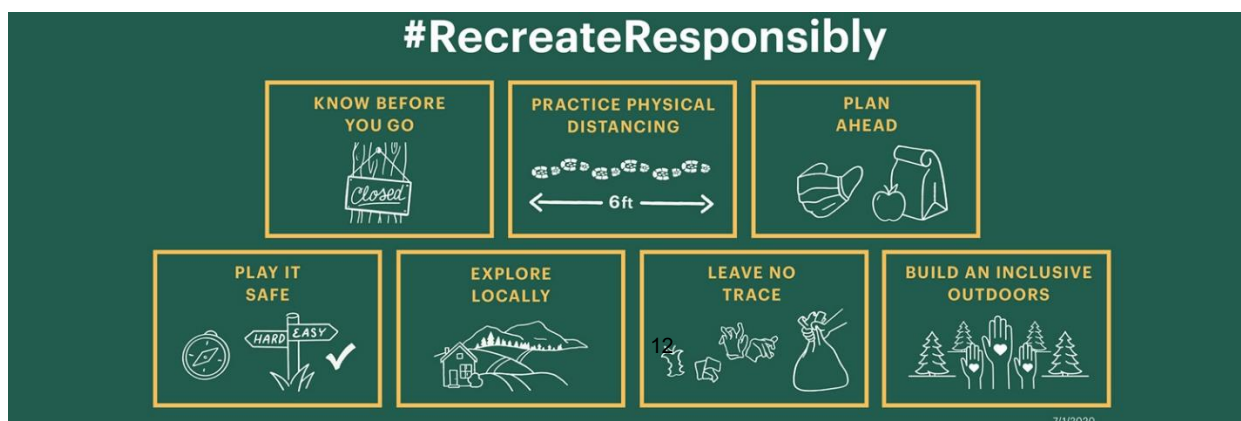
STRATEGIC PROGRAM: PUBLIC RELATIONS

"A gathering of people who are defining moments in mountain towns are here, the leaders are sculpting the future. Let's reinvent the future of our towns in an actionable way." This was a quote from the opening remark of the Mountain Adventure Summit in Mammoth Lakes.

SUSTAINABLE TOOLKIT / TAKE THE PLEDGE

BACCVB is proud of our efforts to educate and encourage sustainable tourism. Our website has a section specifically dedicated to responsible recreation. We promote 4 primary principles and ask people to take Bishop's big backyard "pledge."

- **Protect** our public lands like those who came before us,
- **Preserve** our public lands for those who will come after us,
- **Participate** in taking good care of our public lands for all of us to enjoy right now, and
- **Perpetuate** the benefits by taking the pledge.



DRIVE-IN MOVIE

S E R I E S

TRI-COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS • BISHOP, CA

STRATEGIC PROGRAM: EVENT SUPPORT

Several events draw thousands of participants to Bishop each year. BACCVB is proud of our work to support longstanding events and attract new ones. For FY 2019-20, the late summer, fall and spring events were all super successful.

One standout for last year was the new Falconry Conference. Several hundred falconers and their birds converged in Bishop for a week of education, networking and field trials. BACCVB staff worked for at least 18 months prior to the event to assist with accommodations and other logistics. The organizers were so pleased with the service they received in Bishop that it's likely they'll be back in the very near future.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 forced the cancellation of many events here and around the world. BACCVB acted quickly to alter the Blake Jones Derby on March 14, 2020. Fish had been planted, prizes had been secured, t-shirts had been printed and online registrations had been received. When we realized it would not be safe or responsible to have a "mass gathering" for weigh-in and awards ceremony, we turned the whole event into a raffle and asked participants to convert their registration into tickets. All this was done on two days' notice and allowed us to keep the fishermen happy and salvage most of the major event investment.

Our staff continues to keep in contact with organizers, offering support and helping them plan for their re-scheduled events. We are currently working closely with the Southwest Council Fly Fishing International to bring a new tournament here for February 2021.

Since BTID was established, BACCVB is able to attract and support more than double the number of events. Event support comes in many forms; paid advertising, planning assistance, volunteers and equipment.



STRATEGIC PROGRAM: TROUT STOCKING

Trout fishing continues to be an important draw for visitors to Bishop. Lodging owners, guests and community leaders have urged us to increase trout stocking to supplement the efforts of California Department of Fish and Wildlife. In winter months, we purchase trout from Wright's Rainbows for Pleasant Valley Reservoir and the Owens River. In summer, BTID funds are matched, as we partner with Bishop Creek Canyon resort owners to stock extra fish in the lakes & streams. If we're advertising to attract anglers, we know we better invest in the fish.

- August, 2019 - South Lake, Sabrina, and Bishop Creek
- September, 2019 - South Lake, Sabrina, and Bishop Creek
- February, 2020 – Pleasant Valley Reservoir and Owens River
- March, 2020 – Pleasant Valley Reservoir and Owens River
- June, 2020 - South Lake, Sabrina, and Bishop Creek
- July, 2020 - South Lake, Sabrina, and Bishop Creek
- August, 2020 - South Lake, Sabrina, and Bishop Creek



*One week from
Saturday!*



@visitbishop

Blake Jones
Trout Derby
#BlakesTradition

CALIFORNIA HATCHERIES LOSE 3.2 MILLION FISH

On July 20, 2020 - Three California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) hatcheries in Southern California and Eastern Sierra announced they are fighting a bacterial outbreak *Lactococcus garvieae* among their fish stocks. As a last resort, CDFW pathologists recommended the fish be euthanized and the facilities disinfected before repopulating the hatcheries with *L. garvieae*-free fish. It is suggested it will be 10 months to two years until they generate catchable size fish of a half-pound.

Luckily, we were still able to complete our 2020 summer stocking by importing the fish from Wright's Rainbows in Thatcher, Idaho. And, we were able to mitigate bad press by working with our media friends at Western Outdoor News and Fish Taco Chronicles to let anglers know fishing conditions were still good here.

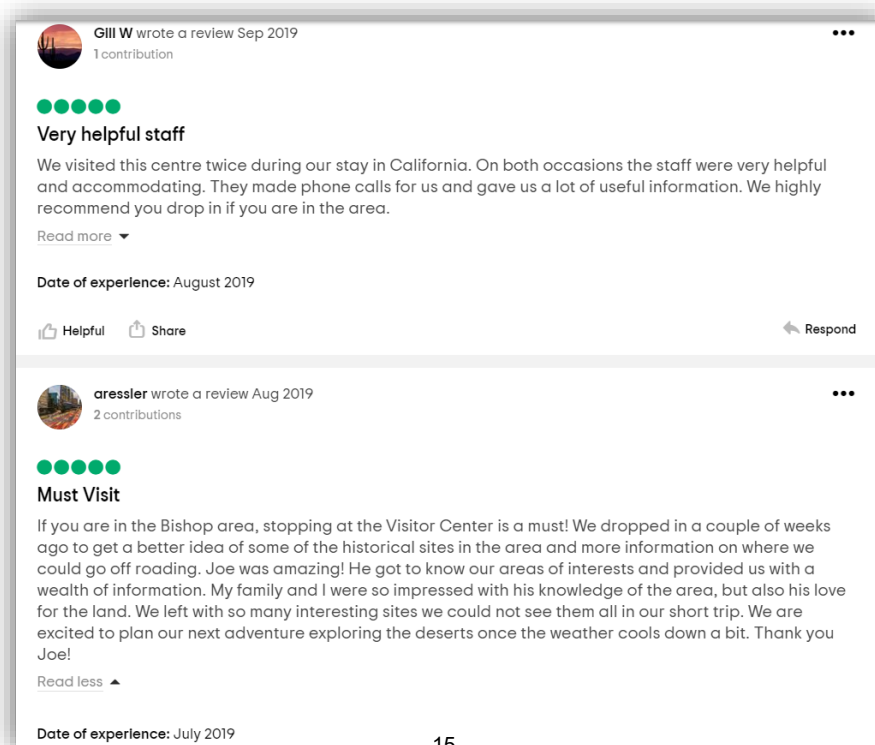


STRATEGIC PROGRAM: VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

The Bishop Visitor Center is typically open year-round and staffed by friendly, knowledgeable professionals. Effective visitor center operations are critical to engaging guests, motivating them to stay longer, return frequently and speak favorably about Bishop. We receive many positive reviews on TripAdvisor and Yelp related to excellent service.

On March 16, we were forced to close the center to walk-in visitors. We shifted to communicate with guests over the phone, through email and on occasion, outside with face coverings and proper physical distancing. Through innovation we have kept the communication doors as open as possible, without being physically open.

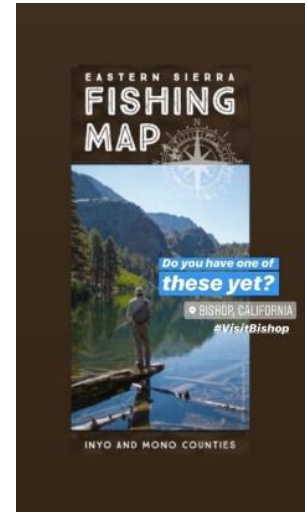
In 2019-20, the Bishop Visitor Center served **16,710 walk-ins**. Prior to COVID-19, we were experiencing consistent year-over-year increases each month. We are hopeful to re-open the information center as soon as budget allows us to re-hire one of the four part-time employees that were laid off at the onset of the pandemic.



STRATEGIC PROGRAM: VISITOR PUBLICATIONS

Print brochures and maps are excellent tools to attract new visitors and encourage them to spend more time in our region. We worked with regional partners to create and update several key publications. These guides are distributed at travel shows, area visitor centers and businesses along HWY 395. *Digital versions are also available on our website.*

- Inyo County Backroads Motor Touring Guide
- Inyo County Treasure Map
- Eastern Sierra Fishing Map
- Bishop Visitor Guide
- Eastern Sierra Fall Color Map Guide
- Inyo County Warm Water Fishing Map
- E-Z Hikes
- Winter Hiking Trails
- New Hidden History Brochure in development
- New Birding Hotspots Brochure in development



STRATEGIC PROGRAM: MAJOR MEDIA ADVERTISING

Some BTID funds have been invested in national and regional major media publications. Many of the publications are very niche-specific; targeting climbers, OHV users, bird watchers or fishermen. Other publications are widely read by general leisure travelers.

Total distribution reached through the media below is at least 13,667,000.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Adventure Outdoors Magazine | • Living Bird |
| • Adventure Sports Journal | • Mammoth In Room Directory |
| • Bird Watcher's Digest | • Mono County Visitors Guide |
| • California Climber | • Road Trips Magazine |
| • California Visitors Guide | • Rock & Ice |
| • Canadian Traveler | • S&S Off Road Magazine |
| • Daily Independent | • Scenic 395 Magazine |
| • Fish Sniffer | • Sunset Magazine and E-News |
| • Fish Taco | • Trail Runner Magazine |
| • Eastern Sierra Fishing Guide | • Western Outdoor News |
| • Inyo County Campground Guide | • Westways |
| • Inyo County Visitor Guide | • Yosemite Journal Print & Online Ad |

Note: All of the publications offer digital versions as well as the printed magazines.

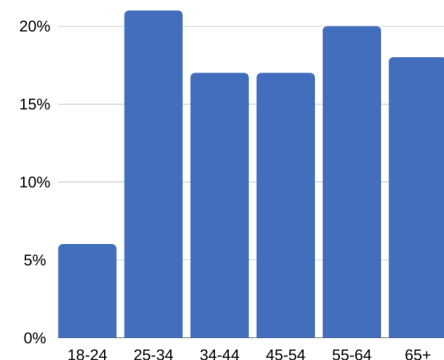
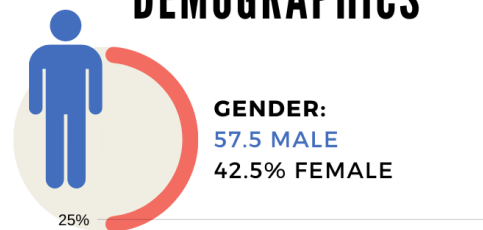
STRATEGIC PROGRAM: DIGITAL

WEBSITE - www.bishopvisitor.com was completely rebuilt and launched in 2016. The goal is to be ranked number one in destination related content. A variety of metrics are regularly analyzed to measure performance and guide strategic content development. The site is dynamic; it will always be evolving as we add content, events and messaging to keep up with changing visitor demands.

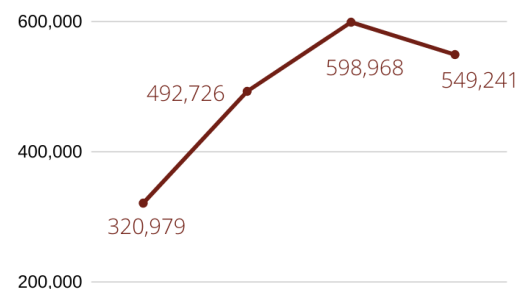
The site is responsive; it can be viewed well on any device. Big strides were made this year to improve site speed, mobile design and organic keywords. Mobile visitation shifted to more desktop visits, as we saw more people at home with COVID-19 restrictions. 2018-19 set a record with 567K visitors. For 2019-20, that number dropped by 8%. Since we stopped paid digital ads, we anticipated a decrease in paid search. Traffic coming in from social media channels is up 25% which is proof that it has been a good decision to keep those channels open. On average, people are staying on the site over 3 minutes, a 15% increase from last year. And, bounce rate has improved by 4%.



DEMOGRAPHICS



BISHOPVISITOR.COM



WEBSITE VISITORS OVER TIME

BISHOPVISITOR.COM ENGAGEMENT	
Website Activity Measurements	-8%
Average Monthly Visits	46K
Annual Visits	549,241
<i>Top Tier Markets</i>	<i>Top Pages</i>
CALIFORNIA Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, Bishop, San Francisco, Irvine, Mammoth Lakes, Ontario	Home Page Request Information Covid-19 Fishing Lodging Bristlecone Pines Death Valley Camping Events
UNITED STATES California, Nevada, Illinois, Texas, Arizona, Washington, Oregon and Florida.	
INTERNATIONAL UK, Canada, Germany, Australia, Indonesia, France, India Netherlands & Spain.	
Average Time on Site	3:13
Bounce Rate	63%

STRATEGIC PROGRAM: DIGITAL CONT.

Email Marketing - Visitors like the information on the site and want more! Our website invites guests to opt-in to receive our e-newsletter. In the past twelve months we gained 9,024 new subscribers; we now have 25,758 subscribers. We acquire e-news subscribers in other ways including visitor center guestbook, travel shows and magazine lead generation. We have a remarkable 30% open rate – industry average is 10%.

Newsletter Activity Measurements	
eNewsletters Delivered	212,215
Open Rate	30%
Total Number of Subscribers	25,758

STRATEGIC PROGRAM: VISITOR INFORMATION REQUESTS



Search Engine Management (SEM) efforts focus on driving visitors to request a FREE Bishop Visitor Guide via a form on www.bishopvisitor.com.

A completed request is considered a “conversion” for purposes of measuring SEM success. Last year, 3,764 requests were received - up 224 over 2018-19!

57% were mailed, while 43% requested a digital download.

Ads in Sunset, Yosemite Journal, CA Visitors Guide and Road Trips Magazine generated an additional 3,651 requests for the Bishop Vacation Planner through the “Reader Response” postcard and online programs.

In 2014-15, prior to BTID funded marketing, we mailed a total of 239 visitor guides.

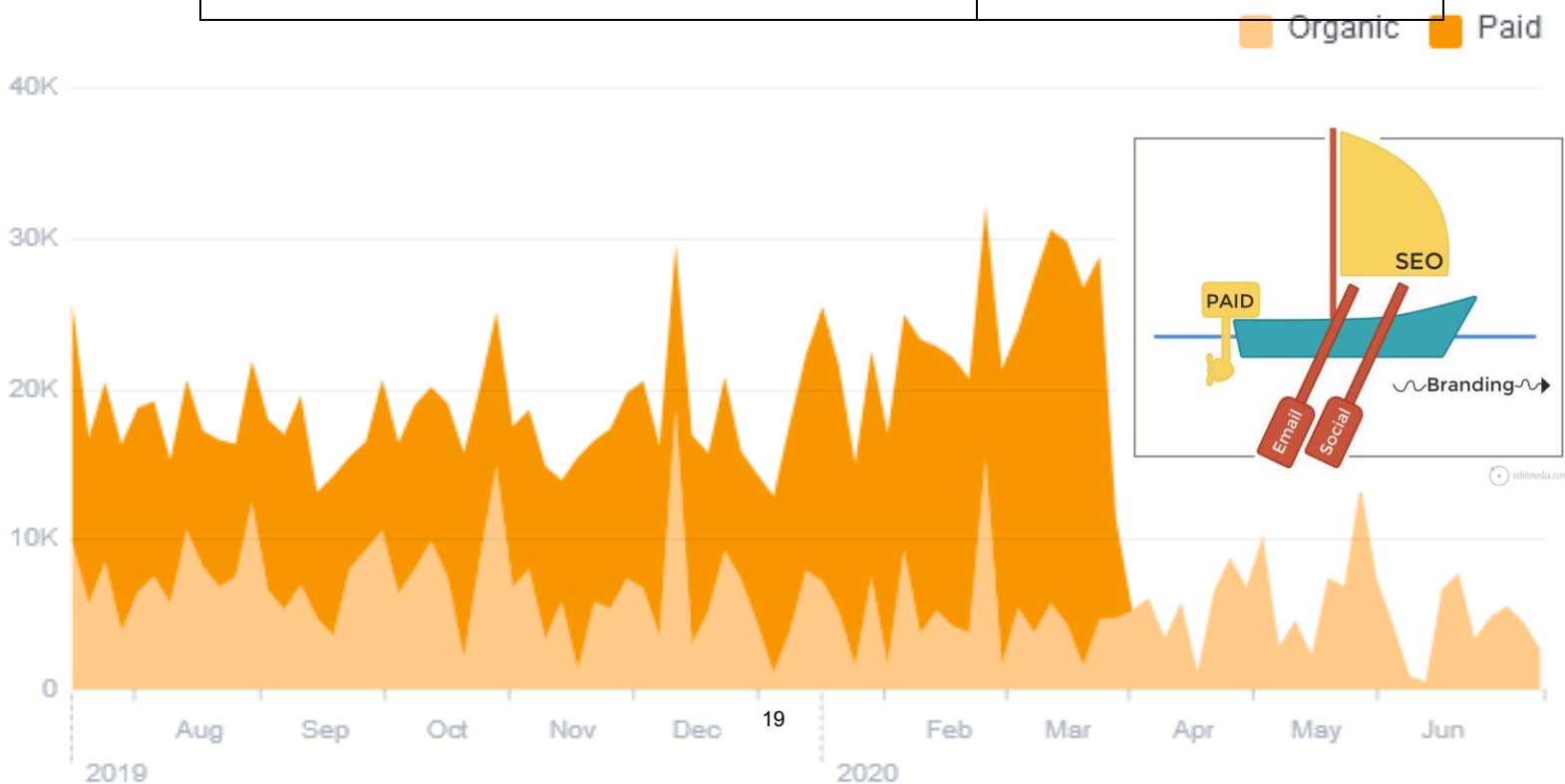
The Visitor Guide Request Form also gathers info on visitor interests. Over 2,000 had interest in sightseeing, camping and hiking; 1,600 History/Heritage and Hot Springs; 1,500 Fishing; 1,400 Photography; 1,000 Arts/Entertainment, Stargazing, Tri-County Fair and Birding; 700 OHV/MotoTouring and Fall Colors Car Show and Horseback Riding/Pack Trips; 500 cycling; 400 climbing/bouldering and Blake Jones Trout Derby; 250 golf, geocaching and downhill skiing. This info helps inform our decisions regarding content development and market targeting.

Even during COVID-19, we are fulfilling dozens of requests for Visitor Guides each week. In August of 2020, we sent 442 guides – a 30% increase over August 2019. This tells us our previous marketing efforts, coupled with continuous social media presence are working well to inspire future travel to our destination.

STRATEGIC PROGRAM: SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL ADS

BACCVB has established a social media “Dream Team.” These contracted professionals work with BACCVB staff to create content including videos, photos, articles, stories and blog posts. The team works collaboratively to deliver daily messaging and monitor monthly progress of strategic social media and online marketing efforts. New Visit Bishop social media accounts were created and launched in July 2015. All platforms perform well and show measurable progress. This year we doubled our reach from the previous year.

#VISITBISHOP METRICS	2019-2020	Change from 2018/2019
Facebook 45K Followers		
Total New Fans	7.1K	5.8K
Average New Fans per Month	591	572
Total Fans	45K	38.3K
Total Reach	1.9M	913K
Total Shares	9.8K	10.3K
Total Engagements	78K	48K
Instagram 24K Followers		
New Followers	6.6K	5.8K
Average New Followers per Month	550	483
Total Followers	24K	15.9K
Total Engagement	251K	119K



STRATEGIC PROGRAM: USER GENERATED CONTENT & INFLUENCER

CrowdRiff - over 100K interactions in 1 year!

- 908 Rights Approved Photo Assets (Photos and Video)
- +127 Galleries with 1,909 assets with 48% engagement rate and 205k views
- Photo Wall Created for Hoteliers + Travel Shows
- Vital addition & time saving tool for social team, bloggers, media requests, print and email marketing and website galleries.
- Itineraries got completely rewritten this year, with over 6K interactions



Visit California Outdoor Influencer Campaign - over 4,500 website leads

- Elena Pressprich, Influencer/Photo Journalist from Find Me Outside visited in January
- Total reach 239k travelers from US drive markets, China, France, Germany and UK
- Total engagements 31.7 with media value of almost \$20K



In response to the recent surge in covid cases our area has experienced, we are kindly (and with all due respect) asking that our local and extended community do their part to slow the spread of the coronavirus in our remote town.

Yes...face coverings, hand washing and social distancing are as important as ever and state regulated guidelines are still in place for everyone's safety. The link in our bio remains a helpful resource intended to keep you up-to-date and informed as we all shift and adapt to the current challenges.

We will get through this together and we can not express how much we appreciate your solidarity. It will make all the difference as to whether or not we can remain open!

Thank you and please stay safe.



STRATEGIC PROGRAM: SEARCH ENGINE & PAID SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Online advertising efforts are managed closely and monitored for productivity and cost-effectiveness by Simpleview, the leading support for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) with tools, knowledge and creativity to help us perform at the top of our game.

We paused all paid ads and paid search mid-March and started running safety messaging in August. Paid search cost per click (CPC) averages \$0.29. Travel Industry average is \$1.55.

- Click through rate (CTR) is 8.69%. Travel Industry average CTR is 2.18%.
- We have \$14K of ad spend reserved with Simpleview that was not used this year. It is our recommendation to spend this on Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for the website, to continue to grow organic traffic to the website.
- Paid Facebook Ads for Visit Bishop average 1.26% Click through rate (CTR). Travel Industry CTR is .9% Even with us turning off all Facebook ads in March, overall, we still have more Visitor Guide Requests, E-News sign ups and Digital Visitor Guide Views!

*Simpleview 2019-2020 Annual report for SEM and Paid Social Campaigns is included in appendix to this report.

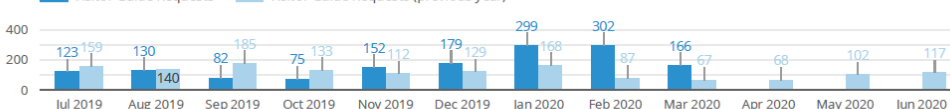
Facebook Conversion Summary | Last Year

Jul 1, 2019 - Jun 30, 2020

How many conversions occurred in the last year?

by Goal and Goal Completions compared year over year

Visitor Guide Requests Visitor Guide Requests (previous year)

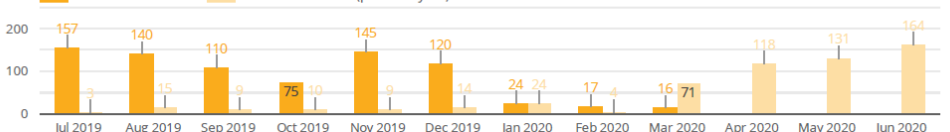


Visitor Guide Requests

1,508

↑ 2.8%

eNewsletter Form eNewsletter Form (previous year)

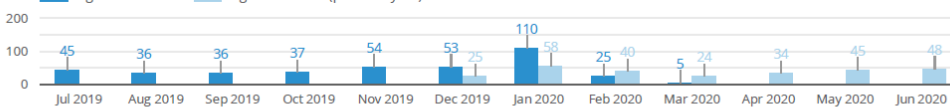


eNewsletter Form

804

↑ 40.6%

Digital VG Views Digital VG Views (previous year)

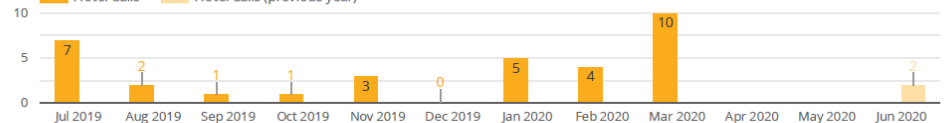


Digital VG Views

401

↑ 46.4%

Hotel Calls Hotel Calls (previous year)

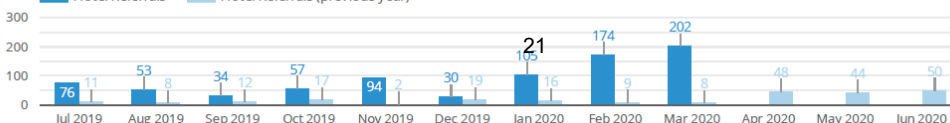


Hotel Calls

33

↑ 1,550.0%

Hotel Referrals Hotel Referrals (previous year)



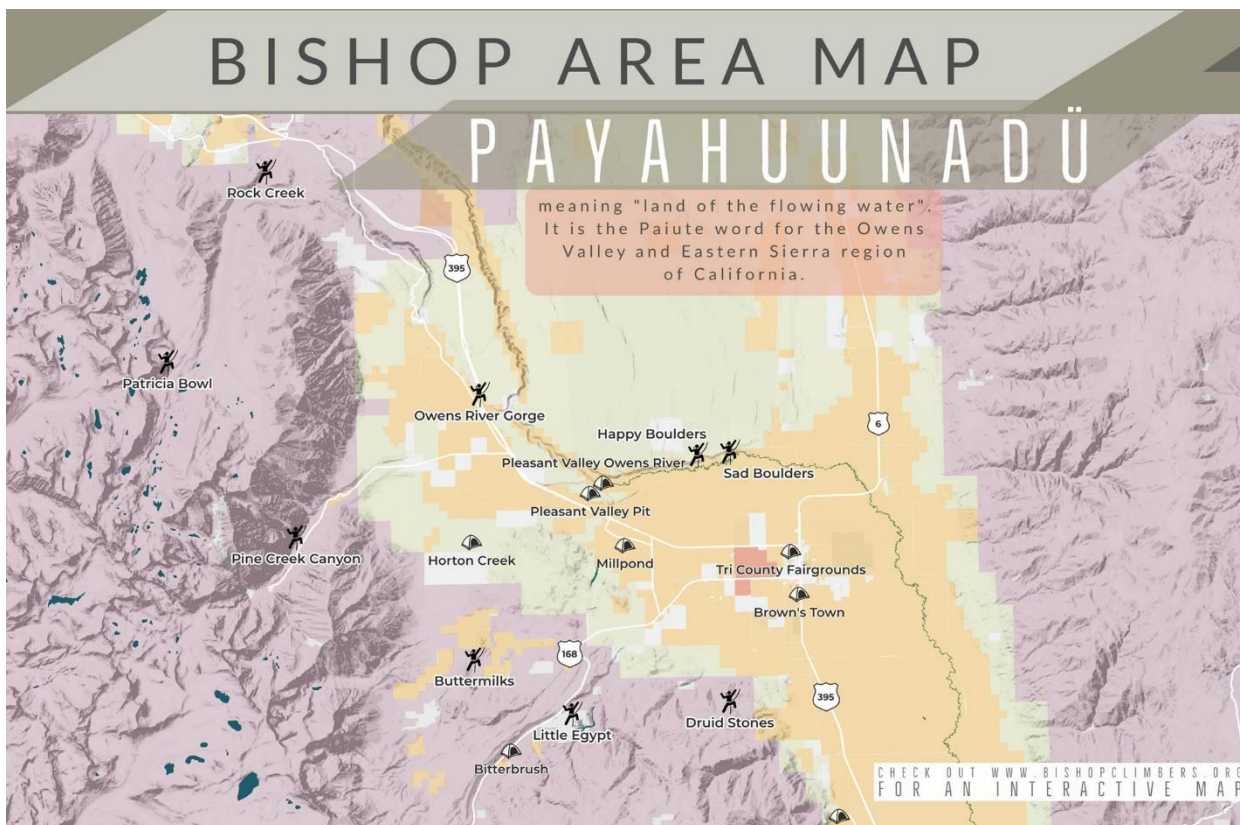
Hotel Referrals

825

↑ 238.1%

STRATEGIC PROGRAM: BISHOP CLIMBING RANGER

For some time, local people have been complaining about over-use and irresponsible recreation on some public lands around Bishop. In effort to curb the undesired behavior and protect our recreational assets, the Climbing Ranger Program was launched in the fall of 2019. This is a collaborative effort supported by Bishop Area Climbers' Coalition, USFS, BLM, Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association, private foundations and BACCVB. Our organization contributed \$12,500 last year which allowed for two full-time people to provide patrols during peak climbing season (November-April). The Climbing Rangers conducted educational outreach and monitored dispersed camping with the goal of educating users about Leave No Trace and best practices for outdoor etiquette. Although COVID-19 shortened the length of last year's program, overall feedback was very positive and all stakeholders would like to continue the program.



STRATEGIC PROGRAM: VISITOR IMPACT STUDY

A project that has been several years in planning finally got started in 2019-20. The long anticipated Visitor Impact Study finally received partner funding through City of Bishop, County of Inyo, Sierra Business Council and BACCVB. Lauren Schlau Consulting worked with all four entities to develop the survey and methodology. Field surveyors were hired, trained and started conducting interviews in mid-February. Unfortunately, COVID-19 forced the abrupt interruption of the project. We are in contact with the consultant and hoping to resume the four-season survey in the near future.

STRATEGIC PROGRAM: TRAVEL TRADE SHOWS

Consumer travel and sportsmen's shows have been a key component of our destination marketing efforts for many years. These events effectively attract new visitors to Bishop and increase awareness of Bishop's brand. These events allow us to personally connect with travel consumers in several key markets. The Travel & Adventure Series attracts leisure travelers looking for relaxation, light hiking, wildlife/landscape photography opportunities, museums and galleries. The Sportsmen's Expo and Fred Hall Shows target active outdoor enthusiasts that enjoy fishing, hunting, and OHV/ATV adventures. Since Bishop's offerings are so diverse, it is good that we promote our destination at both types of shows. A combination of BACCVB employees and volunteers staff the exhibits to maximize effectiveness and minimize cost. BACCVB staff successfully designed a new show backdrop (previous version was nearly 20 years old and showing significant wear). For 2019-20, we had planned to attend seven shows, three were cancelled due to COVID-19.

2019-20 Consumer Travel/Sport Shows

- LA Travel & Adventure Show
- San Diego Travel & Adventure Show
- ~~Bay Area Travel & Adventure Show~~
- Fred Hall Ultimate Outdoor Experience Long Beach
- ~~Fred Hall Ultimate Outdoor Experience Del Mar~~
- International Sportsmen's Expo Sacramento
- ~~IPW Las Vegas~~



Bishop Tourism Improvement District
Financial Statement
FY 2019-20

REVENUE

BTID Assessment (Received 7/1/19-6/30/20)	\$ 480,130
City of Bishop Contribution	\$ 75,000
County of Inyo Project Grants	\$ 25,739
Souvenir Sales (Net)	\$ 18,631
Trout Stocking Co-Op	\$ 10,000
<u>Visitor Events Income</u>	<u>\$ 14,498</u>
TOTAL VISITORS BUREAU INCOME	\$ 623,998

EXPENSES

Marketing Staff Expense	\$ 199,239		
SM Content Creation & Management	\$ 91,984		
Social Media Ads	\$ 55,400		
Major Media Publications	\$ 45,735		
Mid-Winter Trout Stocking	\$ 27,679		
Consumer Travel & Sport Shows	\$ 20,057		
Outdoor Advertising	\$ 3,525		
Brochure Production & Distribution	\$ 10,293		
Website	\$ 4,890		
Sport Fishing Report.com Widget	\$ 1,500		
Crowdriff-UGC Content & Galleries	\$ 11,025		
CHSRA State Finals Rodeo	\$ 1,369		
HMS Global/Visit USA Parks Online	\$ 7,000		
Blake Jones Trout Derby	\$ 8,015		
Photography	\$ 250		
Ventura County Motorcycle Club Rally	\$ 1,508		
Familiarization Tours for Frontline Hospitality Providers	\$ 1,276		
Familiarization Tour for Media	\$ 381		
Poimiroo: www.californiafallcolor.com	\$ 1,000		
KRHV Live Stream	\$ 1,800		
Bishop Oval Logo Decals	\$ 982		
<hr/>			
Total Sales & Marketing	\$ 494,908	103%	Percent of BTID Funds
Co-Sponsor Climbing Ranger Program	\$ 12,500		
Co-Sponsor Summer Fish Stocking Program	\$ 10,000		
<hr/>			
Total Visitor Service/Enhancement	\$ 22,500	5%	Percent of BTID Funds
Administration/Operations Expense	\$ 48,013	10%	Percent of BTID Funds
<hr/>			
Contingency/Renewal	\$ 24,007	5%	Percent of BTID Funds
<hr/>			
TOTAL VISITORS BUREAU EXPENSES FOR 2019-20	\$ 589,428		
AMOUNT TO ROLLOVER TO 2020-21	\$ 34,570		



A NEW LANDSCAPE- LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020-2021

The mantra for BACCVB this year will be **“do your best with less!”** We’re projecting \$180K less BTID revenue, \$13K less in souvenir sales, and \$5K less revenue from events & special projects. At the time of this writing, we are unsure about City of Bishop financial support for this year. Revenue projections are conservative and we are being careful not to overspend and jeopardize the long-term ability of BACCVB to serve Bishop.

BACCVB’s Board of Directors will have its annual strategic planning meeting on October 13th and will have to make some difficult budgetary decisions. Obviously, less money means we’ll have to let go of some programs and postpone some projects; however, we remain committed to focus on what we can do, not what we can’t do.

We are currently working with Inyo County, Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Program, High Sierra Visitor Council, Yosemite Gateway Partners, and Recreate Responsibly. We will continue to listen to Crowdriff Destination Management Organization chats, TripAdvisor, Visit California and Brand USA suggestions on how to navigate tourism marketing and be understanding that our messaging needs to be nimble.

BUDGET PHILOSOPHY

- The District Management Plan allocates 80% of BTID funds for sales and marketing; 5% for Visitor Services/Enhancements; 10% for administration and 5% for contingency/renewal.
- Revenue is conservatively projected.
- BACCVB will continue to seek funding from other sources including City of Bishop, County of Inyo, Business Community and event co-sponsors.
- BACCVB will seek out fundraising opportunities.
- County of Inyo and Visit Bishop have formed a partnership to create unified Destination Marketing and Positive Public Relations Campaign together. Inyo County marketing budget is held separately from the BTID and Bishop Chamber budgets.
- Re-engage volunteers to minimize staff expense to enhance projects/events when it is safe.
- Budget to remain flexible. Will evaluate quarterly and adjust as necessary.



SUGGESTED PROGRAMMATIC PIVOTS FOR THE 2020-2021 BUDGET

FOCUS ON DIGITAL

Social Media: Continue *organic* social conversations, grow fan base and measure engagement.

Online Advertising: Reinstate paid ads with Google AdWords and Facebook when timing is right.

Website: Focus on lead generation and add educational content, photos, videos, blog posts, interactive maps, itineraries. Emphasis on “Recreate Responsibly” and “Know before you go” information.

Search Engine Optimization: Shifting 2019/2020 Unused Media funds to SEO Engagement

Newsletter: Continue monthly e-newsletters to inspire and inform travelers.

Major Media Advertising: This year’s budget will likely not allow for the bigger, national publications such as Visit California Official Visitors Guide. May keep some ads in regional publications and smaller niche magazines to target very specific travelers.

BE CONSERVATIVE

Blake Jones Trout Derby: We are planning to hold the event in mid-March, but may have to go to all online registration and digital “weigh-in” if mass gatherings are still not allowed by then. This will result in significant loss of fundraising revenue for BACCVB, but still very good for hotel occupancy and visitor spending this winter.

Supplemental Fish Stocking: We should plan to stock fish in the winter months and to support the Blake Jones Trout Derby, but cannot commit to the summer co-op stocking program until funding is secure.

Travel & Sport Shows: Traditionally held January & February annually, it is unlikely these will occur in 2021.

Research: We have not renewed the agreement with VisaVue for data on traveler spending. We reduced our contract with Smith Travel Research for occupancy data; no longer seeing competitive markets, only Bishop and Inyo for 2020-2021.

FOCUS ON POSITIVE DESTINATION EXPERIENCES

Visitor Impact Study: Circle back on this co-funded project with Sierra Business Council, City of Bishop and Inyo County to gather vital data, when the time is right.

New Collateral: Create History and Birding Brochures from CPSP grants, plus a paper town map. Mockup is displayed on the following page.

Visitor/Marketing Staff: Re-opening the information center is a high-priority and we will do this just as soon as budget allows us to hire back at least one part-time guest host. Missed phone calls or drop-ins are lost opportunities to promote our wonderful city.

Five star plus plus, fantastic man, with an answer to every question

1 TRAVELER RESOURCE IN BISHOP



PERFECT INFO FOR LAST MINUTE FISHING TRIP

BEST OF THE BEST

IF SPENDING TIME IN BISHOP...STOP HERE

very helpful staff

EXCELLENT INSIGHT

OVER AND ABOVE SERVICE

BEST SERVICE IN LIFE

GREAT INFORMATION

VERY FRIENDLY

VERY INFORMATIVE



HIT THE MOTHERLOAD

**POSITIVE
VIBES**



Stop by and get the 411 on Bishop and beyond. Lots of tips, maps, guides, and humorous info. Joe was outstanding and had lots of advice for us.

Wow! What a find! We were the first tourists of the day and boy were we ever fortunate to stop in here and speak with Chuck. He loaded us up with maps and highlighted them with a perfect way to take our trip.

It a small town with lots of interesting and beautiful places to see near by, I love going to bishop and I have been there 5 times and I will go again.

Joe saved us a 13 hour round trip drive and saved the day. What an amazing service especially during these crazy times.



Lodging

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 America's Best Value Inn
192 Short St. (760) 873-4912 | 8 El Rancho Motel
274 Lagoon St. (760) 872-9251 | 15 Red Roof Inn
150 East Elm St. (760) 873-3564 |
| 2 Best Western Bishop Lodge
1025 N. Main St. (760) 873-3543 | 9 Holiday Inn Express
636 N. Main St. (760) 872-2423 | 16 Super 8 Motel
535 S. Main St. (760) 872-1386 |
| 3 Bishop Village Motel
286 W. Elm St. (760) 872-8155 | 10 Hostel California
213 Academy Ave. (760) 399-6316 | 17 Thunderbird Motel
190 W. Pine St. (760) 873-4215 |
| 4 Comfort Inn
805 N. Main St. (760) 873-4284 | 11 Eastside Guesthouse & Bivy
777 N. Main St. (760) 784-7077 | 18 Townhouse Motel
625 N. Main St. (760) 872-4541 |
| 5 Creekside Inn
725 N. Main St. (760) 872-3044 | 12 La Quinta Inn
651 N. Main St. (760) 873-6380 | 19 Travelodge
155 E. Elm St. (760) 872-1771 |
| 6 Days Inn
724 W. Line St. (760) 872-1095 | 13 Motel 6
1005 N. Main St. (760) 873-8426 | 20 Trees Motel
796 W. Line St. (760) 873-6391 |
| 7 Elms Motel
233 E. Elm St. (760) 873-8118 | 14 Mountain View Motel
730 W. Line St. (760) 873-4242 | 21 Vagabond Inn
1030 N. Main St. (760) 873-6351 |

Other Places of Interest

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 22 Bishop Visitor Center | 27 Library |
| 23 Post Office | 28 Hospital |
| 24 City Hall | 29 Movie Theater |
| 25 Fire Station | 30 White Mountain Ranger Station |
| 26 Police Station | 31 Bishop Country Golf Course |

Bishop Parks

- | |
|-------------------------|
| 36 City Park |
| 37 Dog Park |
| 38 Talmadge Park |

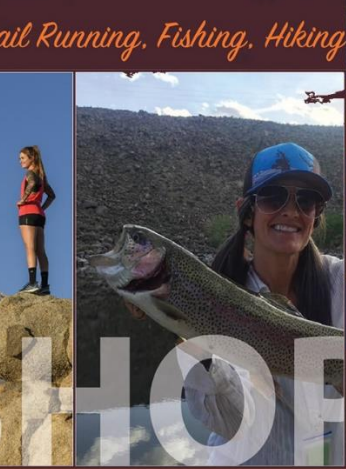
P Public Parking

Public Restrooms

Canal Walk

Wi-Fi
Free Wi-Fi along Main Street and at the city park





Bishop, CA
Small town with a
WWW.BISHOPVISITOR.COM

