

BISHOP TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



7/17/2017

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Review and analysis of BTID marketing programs developed and managed by Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau.

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BTID BACKGROUND

On November 10, 2014, the Bishop City Council adopted Resolution No. 14-15, establishing the Bishop Tourism Improvement District (BTID) as requested by the local lodging industry. All lodging businesses within the Bishop city limits participate in the BTID program. The 2% assessment of gross receipts for the district became effective on January 1, 2015 and funds are collected in the same manner and at the same time as City of Bishop TOT collections. BTID funds are used for tourism promotion programs as outlined in the BTID Management District Plan.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We're pleased to present the 2016-2017 BTID annual report. We're more than pleased...we're also quite grateful and proud!

We're grateful to the Bishop Lodging Community and Bishop City Council for believing the Bishop Tourism Improvement District could make a positive impact. In just two years, BTID funded programs have made a measurable difference; elevating Bishop's status as a desirable destination - not just a pit-stop on HWY 395.

We're grateful to our many partners. Bishop lodging establishments have invested in improvements so guests will have the most comfortable experience. Bishop restaurants, retailers and others contribute through chamber membership, co-sponsoring events and offering great products and service. Bishop City Council continues to contribute through the Community Promotion program. Inyo County's CPSP grant program helps with some event expenses, brochure production and other projects. And, we're most grateful for the continued support of our community. Hundreds of volunteers provide thousands of hours to ensure the success of dozens of events – we could never succeed without their generous support!

We're proud to maintain authentic messaging in our marketing efforts. Real locals are having real conversations with our guests. In fact, we don't think of visitors as tourists at all. We think of them as "guests" that are coming to our big backyard to enjoy our place with us and be welcomed back. Local voices are creating the content and we're using some of the best travel industry professionals to help deliver the messages. We are certain this fusion of efforts will lead to sustainable and responsible economic growth that benefits everyone.

As you'll see in this report, we're also proud of the progress made. All metrics indicate the programs are working as planned, most far exceeding expectations. We're looking forward to another great year!

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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. A minimum of three BACCVB Board members represent lodging businesses paying the BTID assessment. BACCVB established a BTID Marketing Committee to develop and monitor progress of BTID programs. All BTID lodging owners and representatives are invited and encouraged to participate in program development.

The Bishop Chamber of Commerce holds regular business meetings on the third Thursday of every month. BACCVB Executive Director presents public updates at Bishop City Council meetings every month. Additionally, BTID Marketing Committee Meetings were held July 1, 2016 and February 17, 2017

2017/2018 BACCVB BOARD MEMBERS

Pete Korngiebel	Community Printing	Board President	
Scott Piercey	High Country Lumber	Vice President	
Tammy Mandrell	Mule Days Celebration	Treasurer	
Corinna Korpi	Alta One Federal Credit Union	Immediate Past President	BTID Marketing Committee
David Bhakta	Holiday Inn Express	Board Member	BTID Marketing Committee
Harry Bhakta	Bishop Elms Motel	Board Member	BTID Marketing Committee
Jose Garcia	Individual Member	Board Member	
John Louth	Mountain Rambler Brewery	Board Member	
Niral Munshaw	Attune Hospitality	Board Member	BTID Marketing Committee
Caroline Nott	Aldridge Plumbing & Heating	Board Member	
Chris Plakos	Individual Member	Board Member	
Cheryl Underhill	Northern Inyo Hospital	Board Member	BTID Marketing Committee
Debi Yerkes	Alex Printng	Board Member	

KEY BISHOP TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

- Promote Bishop as a year-round vacation destination
- Focus new marketing efforts on slower months of November through May
- Strategically target diverse audiences
- Increase travel and sport show representation
- Engage travel trade and media for familiarization trips
- Provide excellent customer service to all guests
- Increase major media advertising
- Improve website
- Develop strategic social media and online advertising campaign
- Partner with event organizers to enhance events and increase attendance

TOURISM PROMOTION PROGRAM - BY THE NUMBERS

With continued financial support from City of Bishop, County of Inyo, Chamber Members and BTID funds, BACCVB was able to maintain existing programs, plus greatly expand marketing efforts in the past twelve months.

TRAVEL SHOWS

Consumer travel and sport shows are very effective in attracting new visitors to Bishop. In 2016, we increased participation from two to five shows in key markets. In 2016/2017, we added two more. In 2015, 8,300 direct contacts were made at the shows. In 2017, we connected with a total of 18,000 at the events.

2014/2015

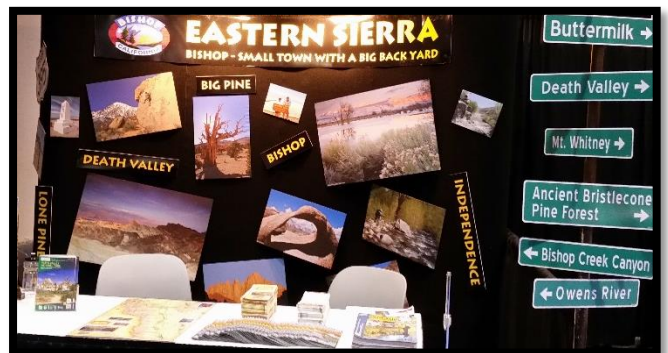
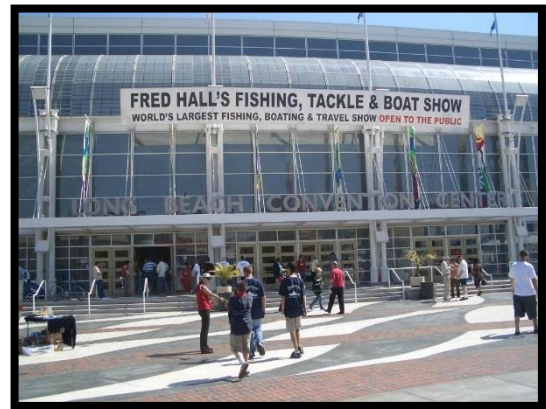
LA Travel & Adventure Show
Fred Hall Long Beach

2015/2016

LA Travel & Adventure Show
San Diego Travel & Adventure Show
Bay Area Travel & Adventure Show
Fred Hall Long Beach
Fred Hall Del Mar

2016/2017

Ski Dazzle
LA Travel & Adventure Show
San Diego Travel & Adventure Show
Bay Area Travel & Adventure Show
Fred Hall Long Beach
Fred Hall Del Mar
Fred Hall Bakersfield



TRAVEL TRADE/MEDIA FAM TOURS

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" our media friends.

On the eve of the general trout season opener, BACCVB hosts the Media Reception to welcome sporting journalists and fishing industry pros to the Eastern Sierra. This year's dinner and program had about 100 guests including reps from Western Outdoor News, Berkley, Fishing Ventures Television, SD Fish.com, Fish Taco Chronicles, San Diego Union-Tribune, CADFW, plus local guides and community leaders. The annual trout opener media reception is an important way we say thank you to fishing industry influencers for keeping the Eastern Sierra relevant in the highly competitive world of sport fishing.

BACCVB facilitated several individual media fam tours last year:

- David Sandel - Grind TV
- Ben and Rebecca Pazdernik – Travel VLOG
- Richard Massey – Sierra Heritage Magazine (now Sierra Living)
- Julie Bigboy – Traveling Mom Blog
- Theresa Carter Goodrich – Author, "The Local Tourist," "Drive By Towns" and "Two Lane Gems, Vol. 1"

In addition to individual media tours, BACCVB hosted the Outdoor Writers Association of California (OWAC) Spring Conference in April. OWAC chooses a different California conference location each year; last time they were in Bishop was in 2007. BACCVB coordinated conference meetings, lodging, meals and field trips for 35 writers, photographers, bloggers and other outdoor media reps. Guided field trips included fly fishing, wildlife photography, viewing of wild horses and Bighorn Sheep, OHV Adventure, Snowshoeing, and a 4WD trip to Cerro Gordo ghost town. This was a big, once-in-a-decade project and well worth the effort. Several stories have already been published and we know there will be many more to come.



TROUT STOCKING

Trout fishing continues to be a very important draw for visitors to Bishop. Lodging owners, guests and community leaders have urged us to increase investment in trout stocking to supplement the efforts of California Department of Fish and Wildlife. In 2016/2017, some BTID funds were matched with contributions from resorts and private donors to significantly increase stocking in Bishop-area waters. The fish were purchased from Desert Springs Hatchery in Oregon, known for high-quality trophy trout.

- August, 2016 – South Lake, Sabrina, North Lake, Intake II and Bishop Creek
- September, 2016 - South Lake, Sabrina, North Lake, Intake II and Bishop Creek
- February, 2017 – Pleasant Valley Reservoir and Owens River
- April, 2017 – Pleasant Valley Reservoir, Intake II, Bishop Creek
- June, 2017 - South Lake, Sabrina, North Lake, Intake II and Bishop Creek

EVENT SUPPORT

Several events draw thousands of participants and spectators to Bishop each year. BACCVB strategically partners with event organizers to enhance events and increase attendance. BTID resources have made it possible for BACCVB to attract and support more events in the past two years.

2014/2015

- Blake Jones Trout Derby
- CHSRA State Finals Rodeo
- Millpond Music Festival
- WMDC Bike Race
- VCMC Dual Sport Rally

2015/2016

- Blake Jones Trout Derby
- CHSRA State Finals Rodeo
- Millpond Music Festival
- WMDC Bike Race
- VCMC Dual Sport Rally
- SCWIFF Fly Fishing Faire
- Craggin' Classic
- WON Big Fish Derby

2016/2017

- Blake Jones Trout Derby*
- CHSRA State Finals Rodeo
- Millpond Music Festival
- VCMC Dual Sport Rally
- SCWIFF Fly Fishing Faire
- Craggin' Classic
- WON Big Fish Derby
- Regional Little League All Stars Tournament
- Taiko Drummers
- Eastern Sierra History Conference
- Flash Foxy Women's Climbing Festival
- Backcountry Horsemen
- Nevada Bar Assn. Conference
- Eastern Sierra Music Festival



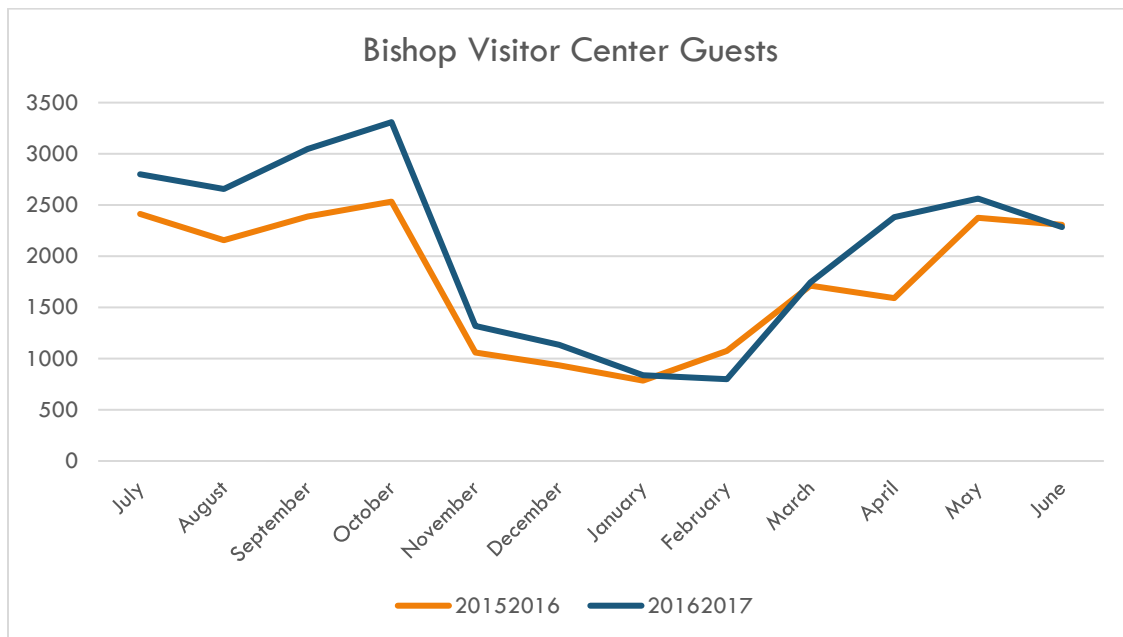
**2017 Blake Jones Trout Derby was canceled a few weeks prior to the event due to unprecedented water flows that created unsafe conditions. All sponsors and previous participants were contacted and have vowed to fully support the 2018 Derby.*

VISITOR SERVICES

BACCVB operates the Bishop Visitor Center at 690 N. Main Street. The Visitor Center is open year-round and staffed by friendly and knowledgeable professionals. Effective visitor center operations are critical to engaging guests, motivating them to stay longer, return frequently and speak favorably about Bishop. BTID funds have made it possible to extend Visitor Center operations hours in busier months and improve staff training. We have seen consistent growth in visitor counts since BTID marketing plans have been implemented; however lower numbers were recorded in two months this year. The dip in February was likely due to higher than normal precipitation, harsh winter conditions and frequent road closures. The slightly lower count for June is attributed to late opening of Tioga Pass, preventing access to and from Yosemite National Park.

Overall Visitor Count for 2016/2017 was 16% higher than 2015/2016!

	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	686	713	785	838
February	677	820	1076	799
March	1120	1429	1714	1744
April	1320	2082	1592	2380
May	2327	2174	2374	2563
June	2156	2136	2307	2284
July	2300	2413	2800	
August	2460	2157	2656	
September	2284	2389	3046	
October	2642	2533	3309	
November	1025	1058	1320	
December	<u>831</u>	<u>936</u>	<u>1136</u>	
	19828	20840	24115	



VISITOR PUBLICATIONS

Print brochures and maps are excellent tools for attracting new visitors and encouraging them to spend more time in our region. In 2016/2017, we worked with regional partners to create and update several key publications. These guides are distributed at travel shows, area visitor centers and businesses. Digital versions are also available on our website.

- Inyo County Backroads Motor Touring Guide
- Inyo County Treasure Map
- NEW Eastern Sierra Fishing Map
- Bishop Visitor Guide

MAJOR MEDIA ADVERTISING

Some BTID funds have been invested in national and regional major media publications. We have strategically chosen to purchase advertising to reach specific targeted markets via print and online magazines. As you can see, prior to BTID, Bishop was only featured in a few regional publications. Since then, we have broadened our coverage significantly.

2014/2015	DIST	2015/2016	DIST	2016/2017	DIST
Scenic 395 Magazine	50,000	Scenic 395 Magazine	50,000	Scenic 395 Magazine	50,000
ES Fishing Guide	55,000	ES Fishing Guide	55,000	ES Fishing Guide	55,000
Yosemite Journal	350,000	Yosemite Journal	350,000	Yosemite Journal	350,000
Mono Co. Visitors Guide	170,000	Mono Co. Visitors Guide	170,000	Mono Co. Visitors Guide	170,000
Fish Taco Chronicles	<u>10,000</u>	Fish Taco Chronicles	40,000	Fish Taco Chronicles	40,000
	635,000	Western Outdoor News	792,000	Western Outdoor News	792,000
		AV Press Newspaper	72,000	AV Press Newspaper	150,000
		Mammoth In-Room Dir	914,325	Mammoth In-Room Dir	914,325
		Sunset Magazine	1,140,000	Sunset Magazine (4)	1,140,000
		Group Tour Magazine	15,184	California Sportsman	320,000
		California Sportsman	320,000	California Visitors Guide	3,900,000
		California Visitors Guide	3,900,000	Arizona Lovin' Life After 50	100,000
		Arizona Lovin' Life After 50	100,000	California Road Trips	600,000
		California Road Trips	600,000	California Fly Fisher	9,000
		This is Fly Magazine	117,041	Sierra Fisherman (2)	48,000
		California Fly Fisher	9,000	California Climber	5,000
		Sierra Fisherman	24,000	Rock & Ice	180,000
		California Climber	5,000	R&I "How To Climb"	30,000
		Rock & Ice	<u>180,000</u>	Adventure Outdoors (2)	1,140,000
			8,853,550	Adventure Sports Journal (4)	560,000
				Cycle California Magazine (4)	368,000
				Trail Runner Magazine (1)	<u>103,775</u>
					11,025,100

25% Increase Year over Year in Print/Online Magazine Impressions!

WEBSITE

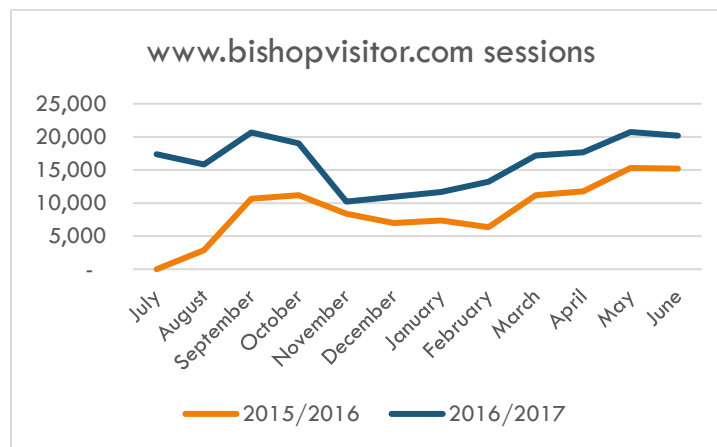
www.bishopvisitor.com was completely rebuilt and launched on January 18, 2016. A variety of metrics are regularly analyzed to measure performance and guide strategic content development.

The site is responsive – it can be viewed on any device.

- 50% view from mobile phone
- 40% view on desktop
- 10% use tablet

E-news Subscriptions – 1,357 new subscribers in past twelve months from opt-in form on the website. This tells us web visitors like the information on the site and want more!

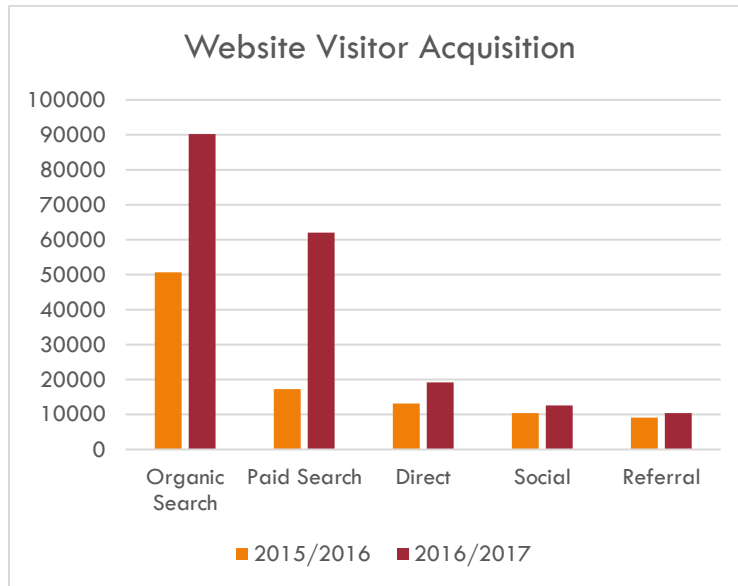
10K-20K Visits per month. We expect to see website visitation rise and fall with seasons and travel trends. We are pleased with significant year over year increase.



- 78.3% are new users. This proves marketing efforts are working to create new interest.
- 95% of traffic is comes from United States. We also recorded many users from United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, India, France and Australia. The website was recently upgraded to include translation in six foreign languages
- 94% of traffic originates from outside of the Eastern Sierra. Top 10 US cities are Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Bakersfield, Riverside and Reno. About 6% of traffic comes from Bishop and Mammoth; it's good that some locals are also using the site.
- 55% users are female, 45% are male.
- Ages are distributed evenly with the largest cluster being 25 to 44.

18-24	9%
25-34	20%
35-44	20%
45-54	19%
55-64	19%
65+	13%

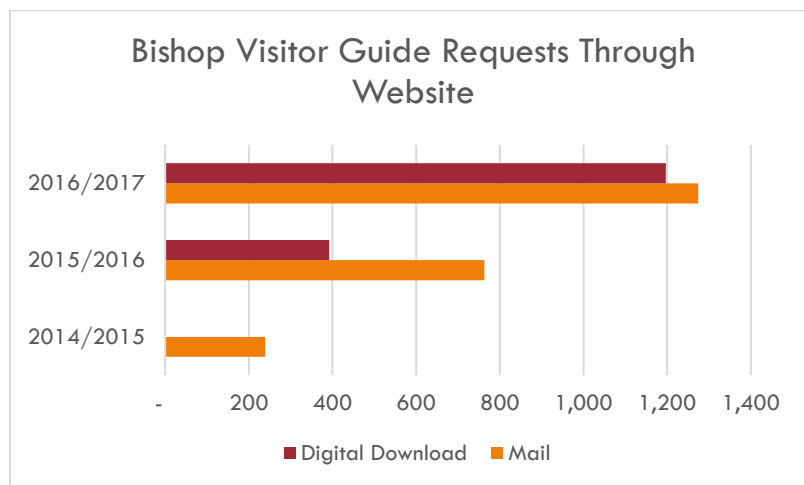
The new website is an excellent tool for measuring effectiveness of all marketing investments. The significant increase in organic search indicates brand awareness is increasing - people are searching specifically for Bishop. We're also encouraged by growth coming from paid search and social campaigns.



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. In 2014/2015 mail requests totaled 239. In 2015/2016, the number grew to 1,155. In 2016/2017, we sent 2,471 Visitor Guides. 52% were mailed and 48% requested the digital download.



Ads in Sunset Magazine and the California Visitors Guide generated an additional 3,625 requests for the Bishop Vacation Planner through the “Reader Response” postcard and online programs. Bishop Visitor Center staff members have been busy fulfilling over 100 requests for Bishop Visitor Guides by mail each week!

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE ADVERTISING

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 messaging and monitor progress of strategic social media and online marketing efforts.

Four new Visit Bishop social media accounts were created and launched in July 2015. All platforms perform well and show measurable progress.

Facebook/Visit Bishop

- 21,280 Followers and growing (7,658 at this time last year)
- Utilizing mix of paid ads and team member posts
- Minimum of two posts per day
- Excellent Reach and Engagement Metrics



Instagram - #Visit Bishop

- 426 Posts
- 5,659 Followers and growing (878 at this time last year)
- Utilizing mix of paid ads and team member posts



Twitter - @Visit Bishop

- 3,275 Tweets
- 379 Followers an growing (247 at this time last year)



YouTube Channel – Visit Bishop

- 65 Videos
- 62,833 Views
- 1-2 new professionally produced videos created per month, featured on You Tube Channel, Facebook, Instagram, E-news and www.bishopvisitor.com.



Online advertising efforts are closely monitored for productivity and cost-effectiveness.

- Paid search cost per click (CPC) averages \$0.87. Travel Industry average is \$1.55. This tells us our team is doing a great job of bidding on relevant key words and continuously improving our Quality Score.
- Click through rate (CTR) is 6.25%. Travel Industry average CTR is 2.18%, so we're thrilled with the success of our Google AdWords campaigns.
- Paid Facebook Ads for Visit Bishop average 2.97% Click Through Rate (CTR). Travel Industry CTR is .9% - our ads are performing three times better than industry average. Cost Per Click (CPC) for Visit Bishop averages \$0.12, while travel industry average is \$0.63.

*Simpleview June 2017 report for SEM and Paid Social Campaigns is included in appendix to this report.

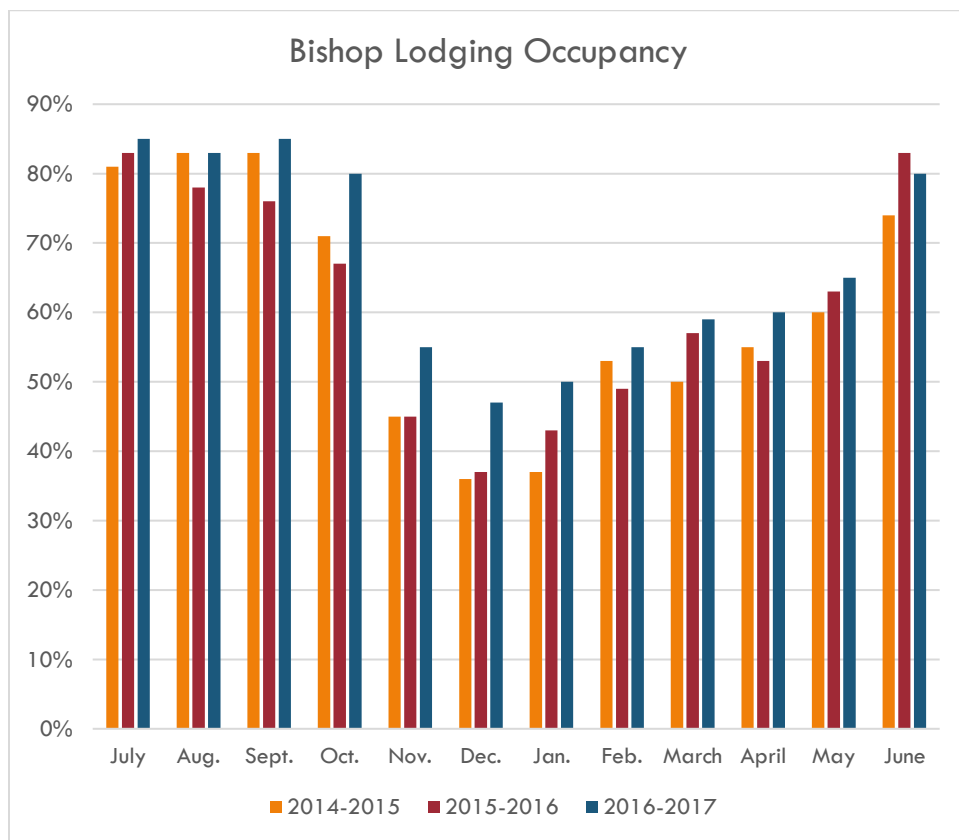
OCCUPANCY and ADR

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 11 of the 21 lodging establishments, representing 70% of BTID room inventory. STR data includes small (25 rooms) and large (86 rooms) properties. We are confident the data is a good representation of overall Bishop lodging trends.

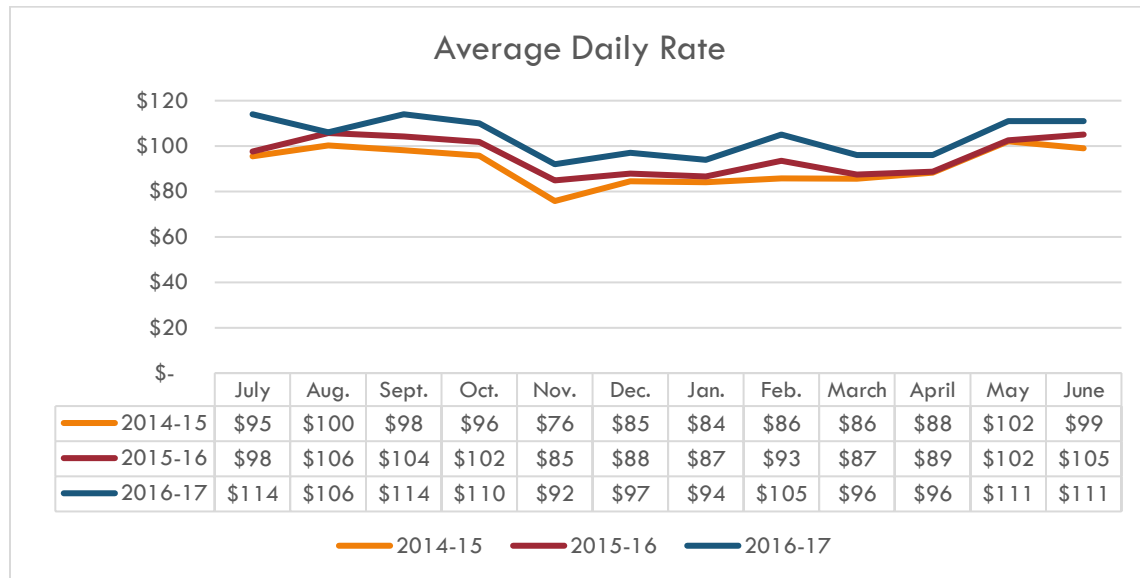
Occupancy varies significantly throughout the year. December and January are the slowest, while June through September is Bishop's peak travel season.

This chart compares occupancy rates for the past three years, showing measurable progress since new BTID funded marketing programs have been implemented. Ideally, we would like to see the blue bar above the red and gold each month. As you can see, the most significant progress has been made November through May. The slight dip in June 2017 is attributed to the late opening of Tioga Pass and less than ideal fishing and hiking conditions due to after-effects of the unusually strong winter of 2016/2017.



In just two years, annual occupancy has increased from 60.7% to 67.0%
That equates to nearly 20,000 more room nights per year.

Average Daily Rate (ADR) is another 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. We are especially pleased to see increased ADR in the off-peak times, most significant growth was in November and February.



LODGING SALES REVENUE and TOT

Occupancy and ADR increases generate significant improvements for Lodging Sales and Transient Occupancy Tax.

	2014/2015		2015/2016		2016/2017	
	Room Sales	TOT	Room Sales	TOT	Room Sales	TOT
July-Sept	\$6,496,580	\$779,590	\$6,496,066	\$779,528	\$8,217,787	\$986,134
Oct-Dec	\$3,649,319	\$437,918	\$3,794,535	\$455,344	\$4,520,748	\$542,490
Jan-Mar	\$2,736,073	\$328,329	\$3,128,848	\$375,462	\$3,877,150	\$465,258
<u>April-June</u>	<u>\$4,700,359</u>	<u>\$564,043</u>	<u>\$5,119,012</u>	<u>\$614,281</u>	<u>*\$5,500,000</u>	<u>\$660,000</u>
	\$17,582,331	\$2,109,880	\$18,538,461	\$2,224,615	\$22,115,685	\$2,653,882

*Note: 4th quarter report not yet received by City of Bishop, estimate based on STR reports.

BISHOP TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
2016-17 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME SOURCE

BTID Assessment (Received 7/1/16-6/30/17)	\$435,825
City of Bishop Community Promotions	\$75,000
Funds from Prior Year	\$16,955
Visitor Event Revenues	\$17,272
Inyo County Project Grants	\$34,272
Visitor Center Sales (net)	\$16,291
Visitor Center Donations	<u>\$4,501</u>
	\$600,116

BTID MARKETING PROGRAMS

Major Media Advertising	\$78,071
Internet Advertising: Google AdWords, SEM, Paid Facebook	\$58,153
Sports & Travel Shows	\$28,973
Website-www.bishopvisitor.com	\$1,944
Social Media	\$51,909
BACCVB Marketing Staff and Visitor Center Hosts	\$179,242
FAM Tours & Media Events	\$18,497
Trout Stocking	\$30,600
Blake Jones Trout Derby Event Expense	\$4,667
CHSRA State Finals Rodeo Event Expense	\$15,137
VCMC Dual Sport Rally	\$1,600
Brochure Production	\$13,530
Information Fulfilment	\$6,009
Bishop Signs/HWY 395 Billboards	\$25,425
Smith Travel Research & Visa Vue	<u>\$9,110</u>
Total Sales and Marketing Expense	\$522,867

Admin/Operations Expense	<u>\$43,583</u>
Total 2016/2017 Expense	\$566,450

BTID Contingency/Renewal	<u>\$21,791</u>
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Carryover Funds for 2017/2018	\$11,875
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LOOKING AHEAD TO 2017-2018

Bishop Tourism Improvement District marketing programs implemented in the first two years have been quite successful. We are looking forward to increasing investment in “tried and true” programs and exploring new opportunities as BTID funds grow. We intend to continue all of the marketing programs as previously outlined in this report. Program expansion is recommended in the following areas:

Major Media Advertising: Strategically increase ads in niche-specific print/online magazines such as Road Runner (Motorcycle Touring & Travel), Outdoor Photographer, Hatch (Fly Fishing) and Westways. Be prepared to take advantage of discounted “remnant” offerings in majors like Sunset.

Social Media: Seek continuous growth in friends, followers and engagement metrics.

Content Development: Build photo and video libraries. Work with industry pros and influencers to create more itineraries, stories and blog posts.

Online Advertising: Continue to strategically invest in Google AdWords, Bing, Facebook ads and others. Consider increasing investment for paid Facebook Ads, Instagram Ads and Google AdWords. Consider adding digital display ads on TripAdvisor and other travel related sites.

Website: Continuous improvement by adding content, photos, videos, blog posts, interactive maps, itineraries. Add booking tool such as Booking.com. Consider allowing paid advertisements for local businesses. Consider adding Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Newsletter: Continue monthly e-newsletters, work to increase subscription base.

Travel/Trade Shows: Consider adding International Sportsman’s Expo, January 18-21 in Sacramento.

Fish Stocking: Increase investment in planting catchable trout in waters near Bishop as funds allow.

Visitor Services: Create/update kiosks on exterior of Chamber building.

Marketing Staff: Additional staff is necessary to keep up with growing workload related to BTID marketing initiatives..

Training/Lodging Outreach: FAM tours and customer service training for front desk hospitality providers will help promote longer guest stays and frequent return visits.

Outdoor: Consider upgrading sign in front of Bishop Visitor Center to digital sign that can promote local events.

BUDGET PHILOSOPHY

- The District Management Plan allocates 85% of BTID funds for sales and marketing; 10% for administration and 5% for contingency/renewal.
- Revenue is conservatively projected.
- Continue to seek support from City of Bishop, County of Inyo, Business Community and other co-sponsors.
- Continue to engage volunteers to minimize staff expense and enhance projects/events.
- Budget must remain flexible to react to market changes and to be prepared to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.