

## HLA Community Tourism Project Application

**Name of applicant:** Ferndale Chamber of Commerce

**Date:** March 2025

**Contact person(s):** President Janet Carney (bunny.janet@gmail.com), secretary Kristie Fellows (kristie@fellows.us)

**Phone:** (707) 786-4477

**Email:** [info@visitferndale.com](mailto:info@visitferndale.com)

**Website:** visitferndale.com

**Mailing address:** PO Box 325, Ferndale CA 95536

**Title of proposed project:** Continuing development of Visit Ferndale social media/website

**Dates of proposed project:** Next 12 months

**Amount of funding requested:** \$12,000\*

**Other funding for this project (how much and from where):** HLA's previous grant funded the Chamber contractor's services for this project in 2024. Chamber additionally funded approximately \$100/month in direct digital ad spending managed by the contractor.

### **Proposal background:**

In recent years, tourism destinations including Ferndale have recognized the critical importance of digital marketing to attract visitors and get "heads in beds." In 2023, the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce brought on a contractor to enhance the town's tourism marketing on social media, on VisitFerndale.com, and in digital ads. In 2024 — the first full calendar year in which HLA funding supported these efforts — the Chamber saw measurable gains in its online reach and effectiveness.

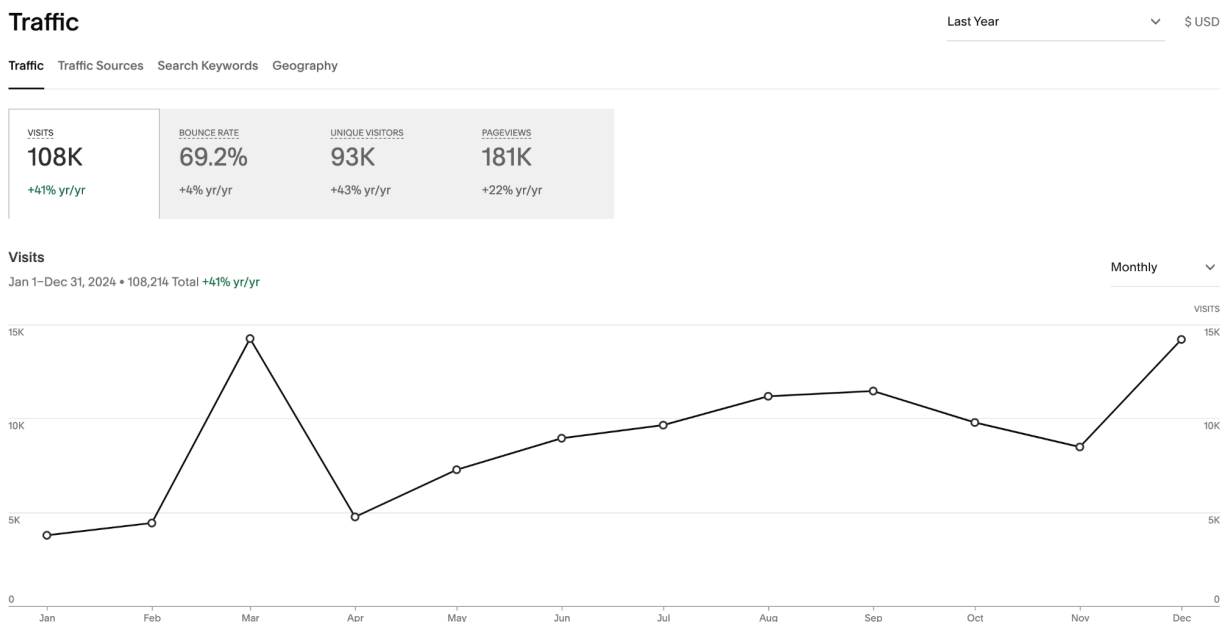
Now the Chamber is seeking funding to continue and enhance these efforts. HLA funding will help broaden the chamber's reach to visitors outside of Humboldt County; boost a positive and engaging social media presence; evolve our website content; and explore new ways to leverage the ever-changing digital landscape to support Ferndale tourism, including on new channels such as Bluesky.

\*With an additional \$2,000, the Ferndale Chamber will assume all marketing for Ferndale Frightfully Fun from the Humboldt County Fairgrounds Halloween event coordinator. The chamber will work closely with Tonde Razooly on these marketing efforts. Having the chamber run Frightfully Fun and cemetery tour marketing will enhance consistency, efficiency, and overall messaging. New physical promotional Frightfully Fun posters will be designed and produced. A single strategy for Ferndale's October online social media marketing will leverage the chamber's reach. Targeted paid advertising will begin in September.

Below are examples of the results that HLA funding has helped the Chamber achieve so far.

- We had more than 108,000 website visits in 2024, a **41% increase** from the previous year. Blog posts written by the Chamber contractor helped drive this increase, along with up-to-date, searchable information on Ferndale's special events, from the Humboldt County Fair to [Frightfully Fun Halloween](#) to the Christmas season and beyond.
  - Example blog posts: [‘I Fell in Love’: A ‘Salem’s Lot’ Superfan’s Guide to Ferndale](#); [Lost Coast Headlands Update: Guthrie Creek, Centerville Road Open](#)
- Our website's up-to-date calendar of special events was also credited as one factor when [InsureMyTrip awarded Ferndale](#) as one of America's 10 most charming small towns.

## Traffic




- We saw major increases in Facebook interactions (17,400, a **58% increase** from the previous year) and visits to our Facebook page (11,700, a **70% increase**).
- We improved our Instagram reach **31%** compared to 2023.
- Our social media following has surpassed **12,500** (as of March 2025), with more than 6,000 followers on Facebook and Instagram each.
- We grew our email marketing audience to 3,984 subscribers, who regularly receive event information, new blog posts, and encouragement to book overnight stays in Ferndale.
- We worked with the organizers of Frightfully Fun and the Ferndale Cemetery Association to promote new seasonal events in the month of October 2024, and this proved to be


some of our **most popular** social media content of the year. Chamber's promotion also helped drive the Cemetery's very successful tours (over \$10,000 raised).

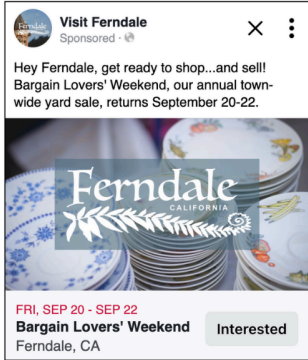
- Our lively and engaging Instagram presence helped attract **travel influencers** and big accounts to feature and/or collaborate with us and extend Ferndale's online reach. Influencers' Ferndale content reaches tens of thousands of additional people (for example: Backroads Culture's Mattole Road video, 76,000 views; Kristina Sit's Humboldt County video, 17,000 views). We've also been featured repeatedly by the official Visit California account and popular travel blogger Alex Khachigian (500,000 followers).
- We maintained a **paid ad presence** on Facebook, Instagram and Google with multiple campaigns promoting special events and Ferndale as an overall destination (examples below).


August 2024  
 Page 7




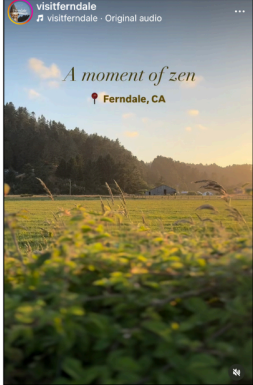
## Ad Creatives











Ad · visitferndale.com

**Visit Ferndale | California Redwoods | Victorian Village Getaway**

Shop, dine & stay. Humboldt County named a top 50 global travel destination by Money.com.

Ad · visitferndale.com

**Visit Ferndale | California Redwoods | Family Vacation**

Kid friendly, cool weather, Victorian beauty. Humboldt County named a top destination by Money.com.

**Visit Ferndale | Cool Coastal Vacation | California Redwoods**

Victorian village beauty on the Northern California coast. Humboldt County named a top destination by Money.com.

**How will this project benefit hotels, RV parks and other lodgings in your jurisdiction, and how will you measure the benefit?**

With renewed HLA funding, we can build on last year's success and continue our positive momentum. Our digital content will continue to emphasize Ferndale's many special events and traditions, for which visitors are encouraged to book overnight stays. We will also continue to emphasize Ferndale's excellence as an (overnight) home base to explore the redwoods and everything Humboldt County has to offer.

We'll continue to track our social media and website statistics closely to measure what's working and what can be improved. These stats are reported to the Chamber board frequently for discussion and brainstorming. In tandem, the Chamber will continue to closely monitor Transient Occupancy Tax revenue as an indicator of the health of Ferndale's lodging sector.

**How is your organization or company qualified to complete this project?**

The Ferndale Chamber, established in 1905, is the core organization of Ferndale's business community, currently with more than 100 business, nonprofit and individual members. The cChamber promotes tourism and nurtures the economic development of local businesses while striving to maintain and enhance our unique quality of life through preservation and promotion of our historic community.

The Chamber's contractor for digital marketing is Ellie Titus, who brings a unique blend of local knowledge (having grown up in Ferndale) with outsider perspective from her previous journalism career outside of Humboldt County.

**What staff members, volunteers and resources will be devoted to this project?**

Ellie will continue to report to the Chamber's board of directors.

**Has this project or idea been successfully tried elsewhere? Please provide details.**

In today's world, professional digital marketing is key for tourism destinations of all sizes. Renewed funding will help Ferndale continue to compete for, and win, visitors.

***Thank you for your consideration!***