HUMBOLDT LODGING ALLIANCE REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2023-2024

CALIFORNIA'S REDWOOD COAST





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Humboldt Lodging Alliance <b>7</b>
HLA Meetings and Process
HLA Executive Committee and Board of Directors FY 2023 – 2024 <b>9</b>
The Impact of Tourism in Humboldt County10
Building a Brand Telling a Magical Story <b>13</b>
Outside Marketing Initiatives
Campaign Results <b>16</b>
Campaign Highlights

Campaign Impressions	. 18
Campaign Clicks	. 19
Video Samples "Tall Tales"	. 20
Social Media Ad Samples	. 26
umboldt Lodging Alliance ommunity Funding Program	. 30
ea Guides	. 36
ooking Back Fiscal Year 2024	. 39
ooking Ahead Fiscal Year 2025 nd Beyond	. 40



# ABOUT THE HUMBOLDT LODGING ALLIANCE

In 2012, a group of Humboldt County lodging owners passionately committed to our County's future decided to proactively search for a way to strengthen the Humboldt County tourism industry without adding a new tax or financial burden in the cities or the County itself.

After working closely with local city and county officials, the group created one of California's first "Tourism Business Improvement Districts" (TBID), and the Humboldt Lodging Alliance was born. The HLA TBID ultimately was renewed for 10 years from 2017-2027.

Unlike a traditional TOT assessment, the TBID acts as a selfimposed tax only on Humboldt County lodging property owners. It is important to note this TBID was established and voted on by Humboldt lodging owners county-wide, not through a public vote like a TOT assessment. The TBID calls for a 2% tax to be collected by local hotels with five or more units for three main funding priorities in Humboldt County:

1. Marketing outside Humboldt County,

2. Funding for events that can draw visitors from out of the county,

3. Capital Projects that have the ability to draw visitors from outside the county (like the Redwood Sky Walk at Sequoia Park Zoo).

HLA is comprised of eight jurisdictions within Humboldt County: Eureka, Arcata, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and the unincorporated county divided into County South, County North, and County East. Each of the Humboldt County jurisdictions are represented by board members elected every two years to represent these areas of the county. The number of directors is based on the size of each jurisdiction's TBID revenues. View ByLaws, the management district plan and other agreements on humboldtlodgingalliance.org.

It is also important to note that HLA Bylaws and the Management District Plan (MDP) through the State of California, similar to other TBID"s throughout the state, offer stringent guidelines on how those funds can be used. In short, HLA funds are required to support mainly those activities that generate overnight stays to HLA member properties.

# HLA MEETINGS AND PROCESS

The Humboldt Lodging Alliance board of directors meets quarterly to strategize, set policy, and approve major decisions of the Executive Committee. This committee is comprised of nine lodging professionals who meet monthly to guide the marketing program in detail and to assure fulfillment of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance mission: to put heads in beds. All HLA meetings are publicized and conducted in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and the Public Records Act. HLA board elections are held annually.

Over the past several years, much of the heavy lifting in terms of marketing programs has been handled by Misfit. This cutting-edge team of brand creators and marketers, chosen by the HLA board after a competitive review process lasting over a year, is the HLA's agency of record and receives daily oversight from a subcommittee of three HLA board members.

The following report tracks the HCTBID collections and the funding efforts employed by The HLA Board of Directors and Executive Commitee through fiscal year 2024. A previous report through 2023 was provided by HLA to the County and its members.

This report will illustrate the work put forth by HLA and its directors and the success the group has had in bringing overnight vistors to Humboldt County in fiscal year 2024.

# HLA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FY 2023-2024

CHRIS AMBROSINI Board Chairman Best Western Plus Humboldt Bay Inn (Eureka)

**MIKE CALDWELL** Inn of the Lost Coast (Shelter Cove)

LOWELL DANIELS Victorian Inn (Ferndale)

**DONNA HUFFORD** Roosevelt Base Camp (Orick)

# HLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FY 2023-2024

**Mike Caldwell**, Inn of the Lost Coast (Shelter Cove) **John Porter**, Benbow Historic Inn (Garberville) **Jeannie Jacobs**, Best Western Humboldt House Inn (Garberville)

#### ABOUT THE HUMBOLDT LODGING ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT | 9

NIL PATEL Holiday Inn Express and Suites (Eureka)

SHAILESH PATEL Hampton Inn & Suites (Arcata)

JOHN PORTER Benbow Historic Inn (Garberville)

GARY STONE Best Western Plus Humboldt Bay Inn (Eureka)

#### **HLA EUREKA**

**Chris Ambrosini**, Best Western Plus Humboldt Bay Inn (Eureka) Aplesh Natha, Quality Inn (Eureka) Jayshree Patel, Comfort Inn (Eureka) **Troy Ritchie**, Carter House Inns (Eureka) **Gary Stone**, Best Western Plus Humboldt Bay Inn (Eureka) Nil Patel, Holiday Inn Express and Suites (Eureka)

### HLA ARCATA

Meenal Patel. Comfort Inn (Arcata) Shailesh Patel, Hampton Inn and Suites (Arcata) Sherrie Potter, Hotel Arcata (Arcata)

# HLA SOUTH

**HLA NORTH Donna Hufford**, Roosevelt Base Camp (Orick)

HLA EAST **Noor Mubeen**, Coho Cottages (Willow Creek)

HLA FERNDALE **Lowell Daniels**, Victorian Inn & Redwood Suites (Ferndale)

**HLA FORTUNA Pritesh Patel**, Super 8 (Fortuna) **Einstein Perinbaraj**, The Redwood Riverwalk (Fortuna)

# TOURISM IMPACT IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY

The Humboldt Lodging Alliance understands the critical role of the County's tourism industry in building and protecting a high quality of life for Humboldt residents. We take this mission very seriously, and personally, because nearly all of us live here...and have raised our families here.

Over the past decade, our commitment to this mission has helped drive **record-setting increases** in the number of visitors coming to our County. And while metrics like *overnight hotel stays* and *occupancy percentages* are valuable indicators of our success, it's even more important to measure the growing economic impact that our tourism industry is having on other sectors.

According to *The Economic Impact of Travel in California*, prepared by Dean Runyan Associates on behalf of Visit California in May 2024, total visitor spending in Humboldt County was **over \$479 million in 2023 alone**.

The report also found that, as in previous years, most of the economic benefit last year went to businesses outside the hotel or lodging industry.

## For example:

- Over \$122 million spent by visitors with local food service (restaurant) businesses.
- Over \$61 million spent with local transportation and fuel businesses.
- Over \$52 million spent by visitors within Humboldt's arts, entertainment, and recreation community.
- Over \$45 million spent by visitors at Humboldt retail stores.

Additionally, the same report estimates that the travel industry provided over 5,600 jobs across our County in 2023.

Our work in driving new visitors, investing in new attractions, and supporting the efforts of our partner organizations across the County matters – now more than ever – to **everyone** who calls Humboldt home.





# BUILDING A BRAND TELLING A MAGICAL STORY

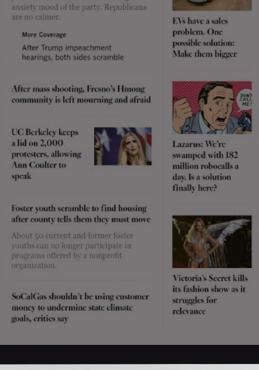
To amplify the impact of our marketing efforts over the years, we've built a cohesive and powerful brand strategy for Humboldt County – one that is relevant to potential visitors outside the County and authentic to the place we call home. The journey to our magical brand began in 2015. At this time, after interviewing several established marketing and advertising firms across California, the HLA hired the Sacramento-based creative agency "Misfit" because of their unique ability to help destinations like ours develop an emotional connection with visitors.

The Misfit team closely analyzed our destination attributes and the overarching personality they embodied. They studied in detail the brand positioning of Humboldt County's competing destinations, identifying open spaces in the marketplace that Humboldt County could occupy. Then, when the process had whittled the potential personality types down to just a few, the Misfit team presented the HLA with sample creative and positioning statements to review – to "try them on and see how they feel."

Following the determination of brand personality, the Misfit team developed several creative strategies and presented them to the HLA board for review. After careful consideration, the board agreed with the agency's proposal for a campaign using the "Follow the Magic" slogan and playing upon the well-beloved themes and characters of Alice In Wonderland. This was the creative inspiration for all the advertising, social media, and marketing tools Misfit developed for the HLA during the initial campaign launch.



In the years since, the campaign has evolved into other iterations, including the current "Tall Tales" campaign that is featured on the following pages. This campaign follows the same magical roots that the original brand campaign was built upon and showcases the endless magical stories and experiences Humboldt County offers visitors.



# Los Angeles Times -

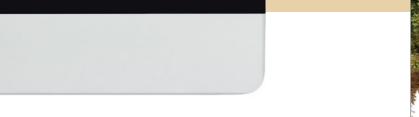


TALL TALE NO. 10

SOMETIMES, THE MOST LEGENDARY

MOMENTS REQUIRE YOU TO DIG DEEP.

> FOLLOW THE MAGIC. SEE WHERE IT LEADS.



**1** Q

# TALL TALE NO. 12 LEGEND SPEAKS OF A LAND WHERE ONE

CAN TOUCH THE SKY.





kes RV

# OUTSIDE MARKETING INITIATIVES

The HLA continued executing the "Tall Tales" branding and marketing campaign in fiscal year 2024 – once again engaging potential visitors to Humboldt County who reside within a five or six-hour drive from the County. The investment in this campaign was budgeted for \$500,000 during this fiscal year and covered all media and creative/production activities provided by Misfit. Similar to previous years, the primary focus of the FY 2024 marketing campaign was to promote travel and tourism during the offpeak shoulder seasons – September thru November (2023) and February thru April (2024).

# CAMPAIGN RESULTS

The Tall Tales campaign has been remarkably successful. Throughout the year, Misfit provides quarterly campaign reports to the HLA board and Executive committees. As in years past, these reports always include detailed analyses of the performance of every creative asset included in the campaign - each measured against industry benchmarks for metrics such as click-thru rates, cost per page views, cost per clicks, and more. In addition, the team at Misfit continued to monitor all campaign activity and performance daily throughout the year, allowing them to continually adjust and optimize all campaign strategies.

During the 2024 Fiscal Year, the campaign delivered over 20 million impressions across digital display, social media, digital video, connected TV, and search alone – driving 225,000 new visitors to the campaign website. These impressions don't include over 3 million impressions served via television on in-game broadcasts for the San Francisco Giants, Oakland A's, Golden State Warriors, and Sacramento Kings.

While a handful of campaign highlights are included here, a more detailed report of all campaign activity is available upon request.

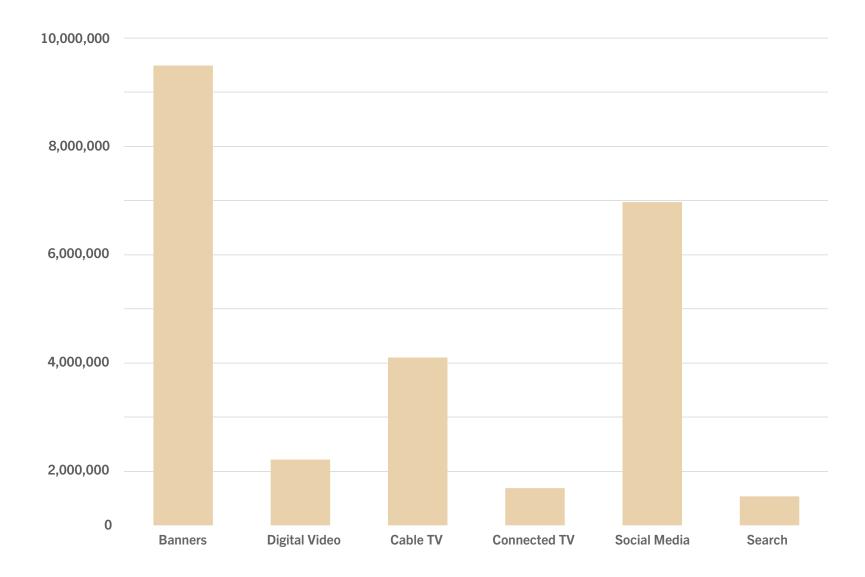
# CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

• Travel industry benchmark for digital display banner click-thru rate: .08% HLA Campaign click-thru rate: 0.11%

• Travel industry benchmark for digital video completed view rate: 60% HLA campaign video completetion rate: 76%

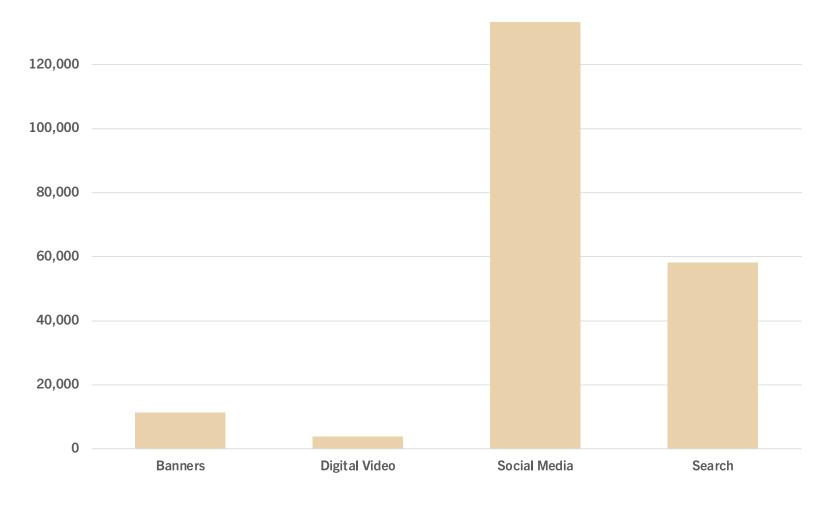
- Travel industry benchmark for paid search click-thru rate: 5.0% HLA campaign click-thru rates: 5.5%
- Travel industry benchmark for paid social media click-thru rate: 0.8% HLA campaign click-thru rates: 1.6%

CAMPAIGN IMPRESSIONS



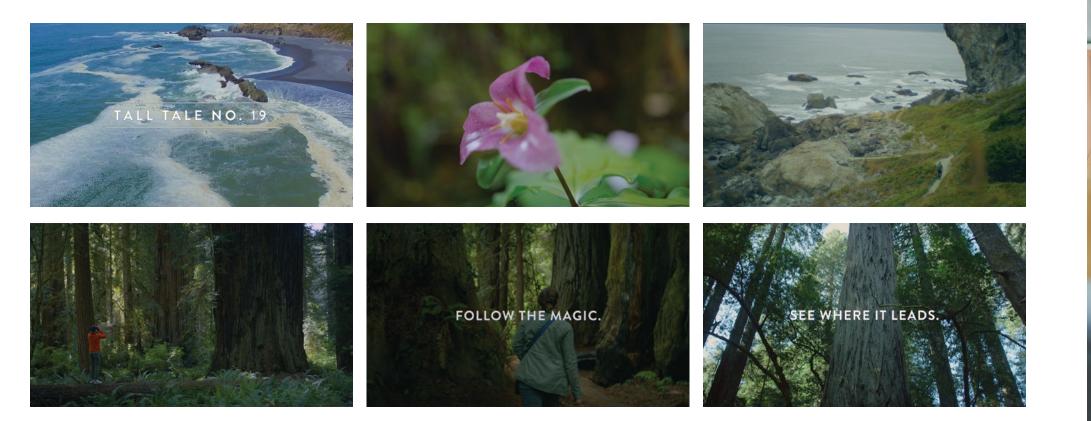
÷.

# CAMPAIGN CLICKS



# **NOTE:** WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE FOR VIEWERS TO CLICK ON OUR DIGITAL VIDEOS, THE PRIMARY MEASURE OF SUCCESS FOR THIS ASSET IS "COMPLETED VIEWS" (NOT CLICKS).

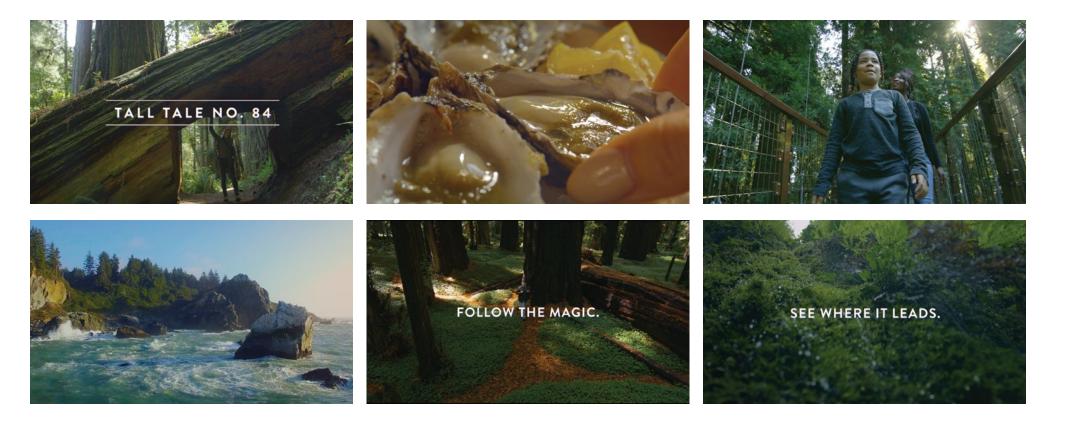




÷.



VIDEO SAMPLES - "TALL TALES"

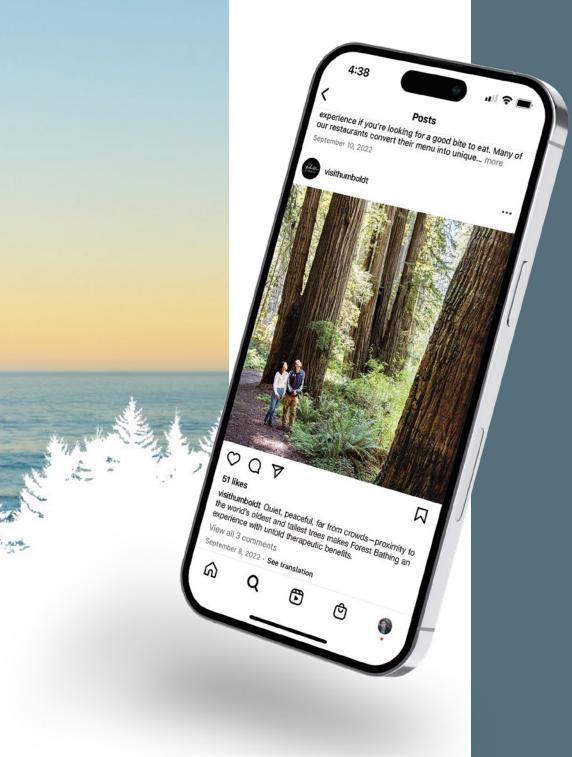




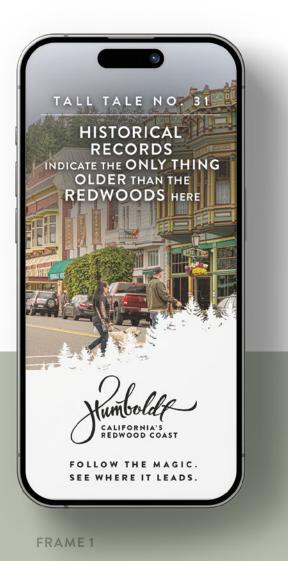
# TALL TALE NO. 104

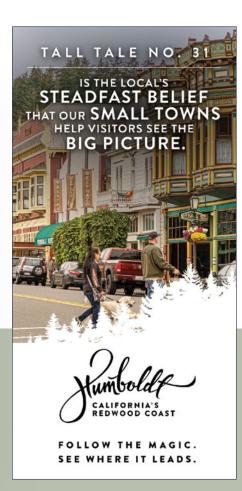
LOCAL LEGENDS SUGGEST AN

OTHER-WORLDLY PARADISE WAITS TO BE DISCOVERED.

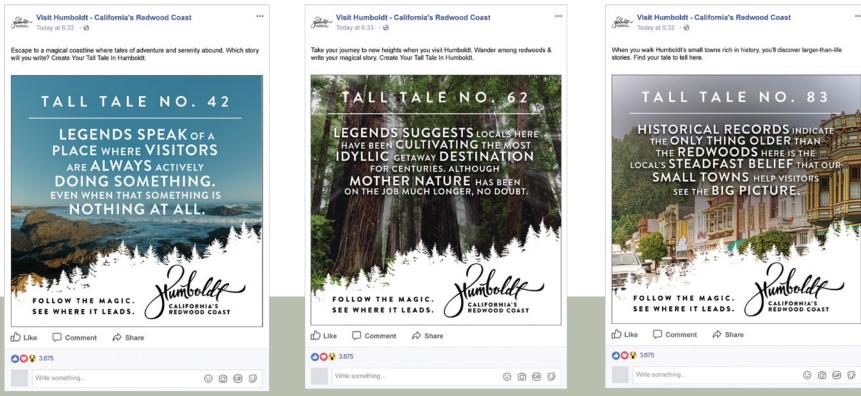


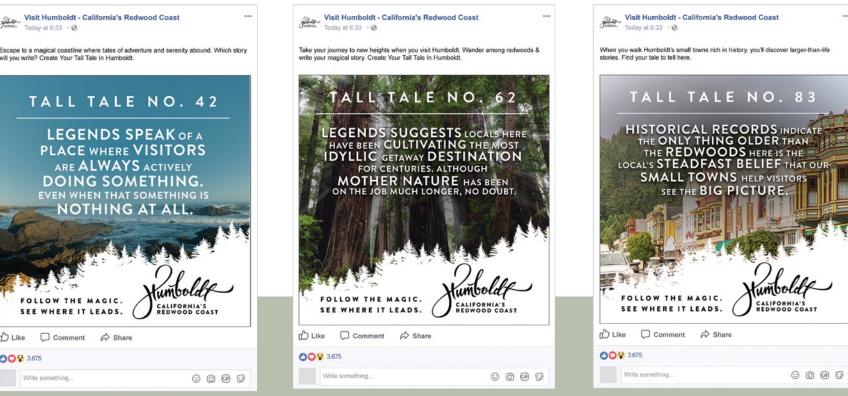
# SOCIAL MEDIA AD SAMPLES

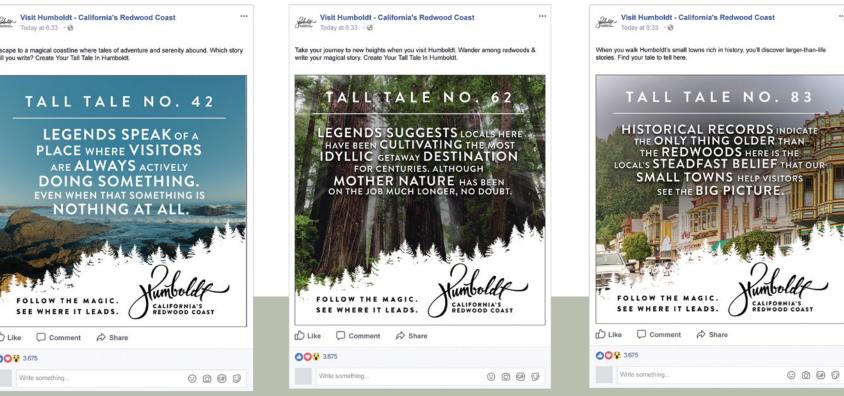


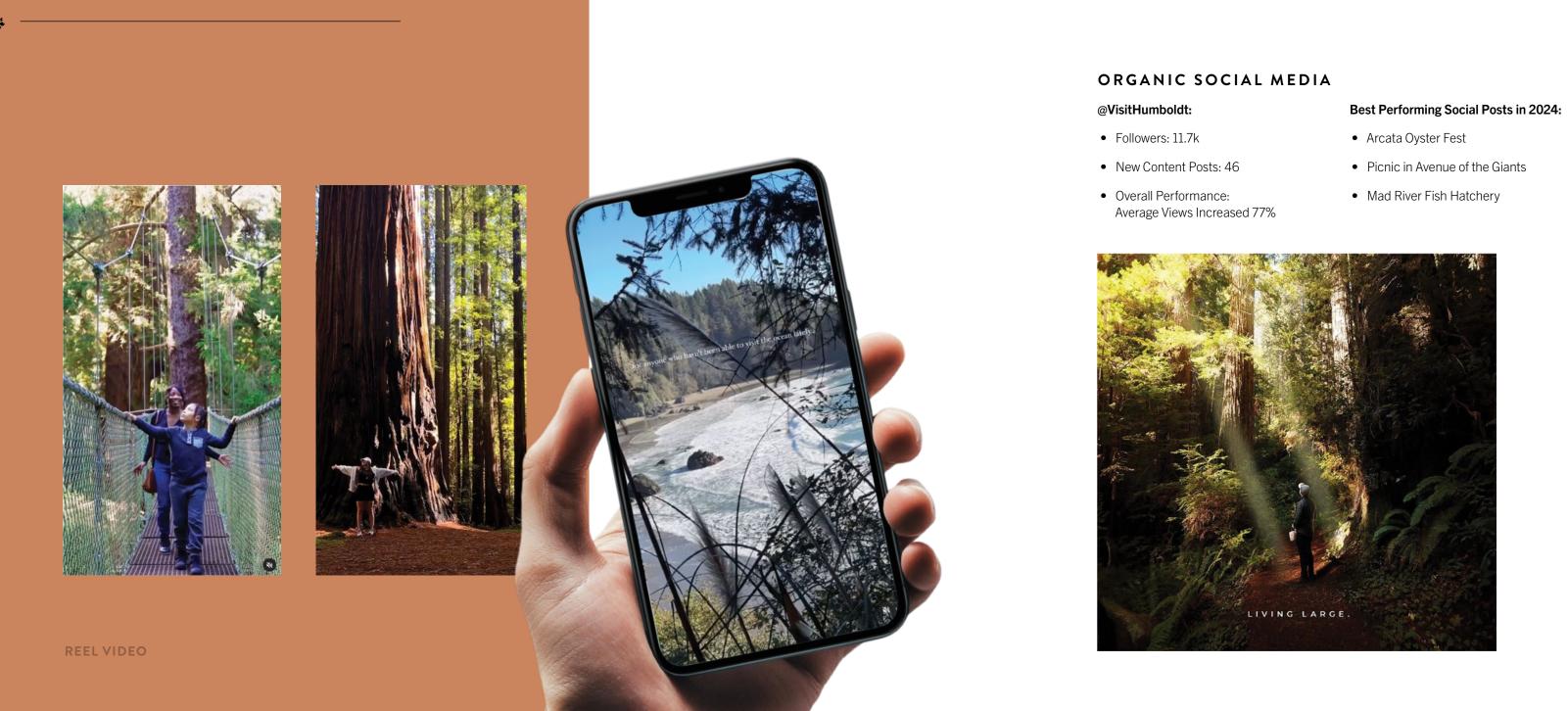


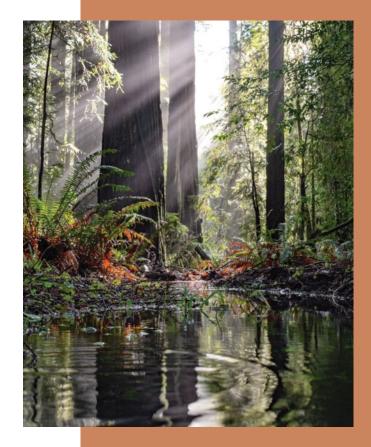
FRAME 2













# HUMBOLDT LODGING ALLIANCE COMMUNITY FUNDING PROGRAM

For events and marketing efforts that include the entire eight regions in the county, funding comes from the Central Marketing Fund which represents 30% of all TBID Collections. Any decision on funding is voted on by the HLA Executive Committee on amounts of \$75,000 or less. Any amount over \$75,000 is voted on by the HLA Board of Directors.

For events and marketing investments in individual HLA regions, the Board members in those regions decide. Each HLA region receives 60% of TBiD collections in their region.

HLA's commitment to supporting local and regional marketing opportunities across the county has never been stronger. Here a few funding highlights from fiscal year 2023-2024:

### HUMBOLDT-DEL NORTE FILM COMMISSION: \$60,000

HLA supports the Humboldt-Del Norte Film Commission annually. In 2023, HLA provided \$60,000 in funding for the film commission's efforts to bring more film projects to the county.

### HUMBOLDT-DEL NORTE FILM COMMISSION INTERACTIVE APP: \$20,000

# CANNIFEST / HUMBOLDT GREEN EVENTS : \$69,000

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ SCOTT ADAIR: \$10,000 To enhance digital presence.

DENVER TRAVEL & ADVENTURE SHOW -SHBVB & HGA \*After June 2024.

## FOREST MOON FESTIVAL : \$50,000



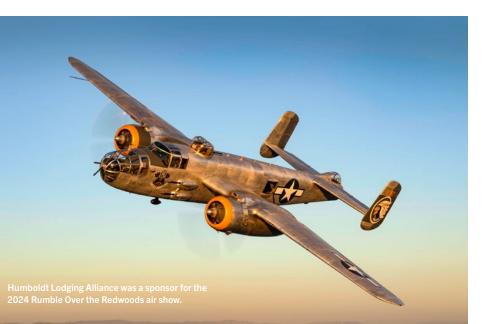
# **ARCATA PROJECTS FUNDED**

### GODWIT DAYS SPRING MIGRATION BIRD FESTIVAL: \$10,000

April 18-21, 2024 : This exciting four-day festival features in-person field trips, a banquet, a silent auction, and keynote lectures. Listen to fascinating presentations by acclaimed biologists, go on birding trips, and view species in their natural habitats during this all ages event. Held at the peak of spring migration, shorebirds abound and special opportunities are planned to see many other species, including CA Condor, Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Tufted Puffin.

# RUMBLE OVER THE REDWOODS: \$150,000 \*August 10-11, 2024

NORTH COAST SUPPORTS AND REC LLC / MAGIC IN THE REDWOODS : \$45,000 New—coming March 2025.





# **EUREKA PROJECTS FUNDED**

CITY OF EUREKA: \$60,000 This is an annual payment to the city of Eureka supporting the SkyWalk at Sequoia Park Zoo.

RUMBLE OVER THE REDWOODS: \$75,000 \*After June 2024

CITY OF EUREKA BEAUTIFICATION: \$50,000

LARGEST LIVING LIGHTED CHRISTMAS TREE IN THE WORLD AT SEQUOIA PARK ZOO: \$100,000

\* Other regions allocated funds to this event as well.



#### HUMBOLDT MARBLE WEEKEND: \$30,000

#### **REDWOOD COAST MUSIC FESTIVAL: \$25,000**

The Redwood Coast Music Festival is a fun-filled four-day event featuring great music from many diverse genres, including Traditional Jazz, New Orleans Jazz, Swing, Blues, Soul, Zydeco, Rockabilly, Boogie, American Roots, Country, and Western Swing.

# FERNDALE PROJECTS FUNDED

# FERNDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE / VISIT FERNDALE SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST/ WEBMASTER: \$10,000

## FERNDALE, FRIGHTFULLY FUN: \$7,000

With an array of spooky events planned each year — not to mention family-friendly offerings and our popular year-round dining, shopping, lodging, and outdoor activities — we have something for everyone.



# FORTUNA PROJECTS FUNDED

NORTH COAST JOURNAL, INC.: \$1,513 Ad in Humboldt Insider Magazine

\*RUMBLE OVER THE REDWOODS: \$37,000

# COUNTY NORTH PROJECTS FUNDED

.GREATER TRINIDAD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/ CLAM BEACH RUN: \$10,000 exploretrinidadca.com/tcbr-history

# REDWOOD PARKS CONSERVANCY ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT WALK : \$5,000

redwoodparksconservancy.org/events

# HUMBOLDT CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU : \$19,500

The Bureau is the authorized Destination Marketing & Management Organization (DMMO) for Humboldt County, whose mission is ensure and enhance the positive economic impact of tourism by keeping Humboldt front and center for state, national and international visitors.

# ORICK RODEO: \$2,500





BILLBOARD FOR LOST COAST BEACHES: \$4,200 Allpoints Advertising

UPDATE LAT 40 Collective; maintain calendar and prepare and email monthly newsletter. \*After June 2024

\* Other regions allocated funds to this event as well.

# **OPTIREV LLC: \$5,115.50**

## MARKETING / ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN SUPPORT IN FISCAL YEAR 2024: \$37,774

Misfit/ Push Marketing

# SOUTHERN HUMBOLDT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: \$30,000

4th of July Fireworks Benbow Recreation Area

# NYE-ZIK CREATIVE: \$2,205

Maintain website, SEO and quarterly reports for discoversouthernhumboldt.com

# DISCOVERSOUTHERNHUMBOLDT.COM: \$3,700

## GATEWAY TO THE REDWOODS SKATING RINK: \$68,000

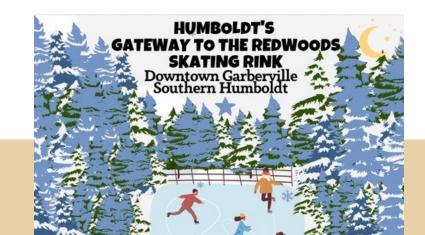
# SCARF SHELTER COVE ARTS & RECREATION FOUNDATION / SHELTER COVE LABYRINTH: \$5,000

The Shelter Cove Arts and Recreation Foundation (SCARF) was established in 2012, and is a community organization dedicated to promoting arts, recreation, and mindfulness, and aims to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

# SOUTHERN HUMBOLDT CLASSIC CRUISE & CAR SHOW: \$5,800

# PARADISE ROYALE MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE: \$25.000

The Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Race is a one-of-a-kind event that combines the thrill of mountain biking with the stunning beauty of the King Range National Conservation Area. Known for its challenging trails and breathtaking views of the Lost Coast, this race attracts adventurers seeking a true test of skill, endurance, and passion.



# AREA GUIDES

# HUMBOLDT AREA GUIDES: \$15,500

In fiscal year 2024, HLA updated and reprinted 12 informational brochures that provide valuable information to visitors. Provided to HLA member lodging establishments, visitor centers, and area chamber of commerce offices, in a custom designed locally made wooden display rack, these colorful brochures add to the hospitality and visitor experience in the county and encourage longer stays at area hotels.



# CALIFORNIA'S REDWOOD COAST

SHOPPING HOTSPOTS

GUIDE TO OUR GUIDED TOURS

MAG



FOLLOW THE

DRIVING





WATCHABLE

AMAZING HIKES



FAMILY

BEACHES & COASTLINE

in Humboldt County

HIDDEN HISTORY



WWW.VISITREDWOODS.COM



ASSESSMENT REVENUES HLA funds many marketing efforts and events in Humboldt County. TBID revenues collected are applied as follows:

30% of collected revenues go into a "central marketing fund". Distribution of those funds are determined by the HLA Board of Directors, or the HLA Executive Committee on funds up to \$75,000. 60% of TBID funds goes to each region based on revenue generated from hotel stays in those regions. Distribution of those funds are determined by HLA board member representatives in those regions.

Juris Arca Eure Fern Fortu Rio I Cour Cour Cour

# 2024 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 (Estimated)

10% of TBID revenues are applied to administration.

isdiction	Estimated TOTALS
ata	251, 314.01
eka	612,436.78
ndale	24,807.72
tuna	142,091.30
Dell	998.54
unty North	165,658.22
unty East	17,548.06
unty South	144,137.24

# HLA EXPENSES

Category	Estimated TOTALS
Outside Marketing	869,805.27
Administration	103.498.95
Community Tourism	745,932.66

### HLA FUND BALANCES (As of June 30, 2024)

Balances	Estimated TOTALS
Marketing Programs	194,990.19
Administrative Funds	575,788.93
Arcata Community Fund	890,977.36
Eureka Community Fund	1,275,026.23
Ferndale Community Fund	41,882.23
Fortuna Community Fund	275,298.70
Trinidad Community Fund	31,247.00
Rio Dell Fund	8,390.93
County Community Fund—North	441,474.51
County Community Fund—East	69,875.09
County Community Fund—South	297,146.30

\*Many of the funds above are committed to promotions, special events and other marketing activities.



FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND BEYOND JULY 2024 - JUNE 2025 Since its inception in 2012, HLA has provided funding on a multitude of projects throughout Humboldt County. Looking back, HLA has consistently provided a strong marketing reach outside of Humboldt County with advertising campaigns, investing millions to bring visitors to experience all the magic this area has to offer. HLA has provided funding for events that bring visitors from far and wide. HLA was instrumental in the creation of the Redwood Sky Walk that now draws thousands of new tourists each year to the area.

Humboldt County is a very special place. When visitors come here, they find the World's tallest trees, uncrowded beaches, mighty rivers and streams, and vistas to last a lifetime. It's no wonder that people want to come here.

In investing millions into marketing and advertising, HLA does its part in providing positive economic impact that spreads out to the many unique shops, restaurants, and attractions that add to the travelers experience.

Going forward, HLA looks to do even more to attract overnight visitors. HLA is exploring new attractions, events, and a robust marketing and advertising program that will continue to attract a growing tourism market.



CALIFORNIA'S REDWOOD COAST