

Community Tourism Proj... ▾

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Organization Name

Rumble Over the Redwoods, Inc

Contact Person

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Project Overview**Project/Event Title**

Rumble Over the Redwoods Airshow

Dates or Duration

August 8 & 9, 2026

Amount of Funding Requested**Entry** ^ ▾ ▲

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\$100,000.00

What is the Return on Investment?

The Rumble Over the Redwoods website is the primary platform used to direct out-of-area attendees to local lodging accommodations. The website includes a dedicated lodging section that features nearby hotels and lodging partners, providing visitors with clear and accessible information when planning their stay in connection with the event.

Lodging information is presented alongside event details to support advance booking and encourage extended stays within the community. By directing attendees to local accommodation through the Rumble Over the Redwoods website, the event contributes to increased overnight room nights and visitor spending, demonstrating a direct return on investment for the local lodging industry.

Seasonal Impact

The Rumble Over the Redwoods Airshow is held in early August, capturing the final weeks of peak summer travel while helping maintain visitation momentum as the region moves toward the shoulder season. The event fills a gap in the local calendar by offering a large-scale, family-friendly attraction that draws visitors from outside the region and introduces Humboldt County to new audiences as a travel destination. The August timing is driven by performer availability, as most airshow performers are booked a year in advance, and this weekend is the only window available to host the event.

Over the past two years, the air show has attracted approximately 14,000 spectators, with attendees traveling from more than 18 states. Performers come from across the United States and regularly participate in nationally recognized events such as Fleet Week San Francisco, Miramar Airshow, Oshkosh AirVenture, and Sun 'n Fun Airshow. This national participation provides exposure for Humboldt County among visitors who may not have previously considered the area for travel. Both performers and attendees generate multiple overnight stays and contribute to extended visitation in the community.

The organization directly supports overnight lodging by contracting over 100 hotel rooms for three to five nights to accommodate out-of-area performers and staff. In addition, many visiting attendees stay in Fortuna, Eureka, Arcata, and Trinidad, while dining at local restaurants and supporting nearby businesses, creating a county-wide economic benefit.

Event promotion includes the production and distribution of over 5,000 posters and postcards throughout Humboldt County and in out-of-town and out-of-state markets. Marketing efforts are further supported through targeted Instagram and Facebook outreach that promotes the event, participating sponsors, and local lodging options. More than 36 local and out-of-area sponsors help expand the event's reach and attract a broad audience.

Feasibility & Track Record

The Rumble Over the Redwoods Airshow is entering its third year of operation, demonstrating sustained organizational capacity, growth, and the ability to successfully deliver a large-scale aviation event in Humboldt County.

Organizational Capacity & Management Team

The event is supported by a contracted professional management team with extensive experience in airshow operations, event coordination, volunteer management, and marketing:

Dennis Dunbar – Operations Manager

Dennis Dunbar has more than 25 years of national airshow management experience. He has led operations for hundreds of airshows across the United States, including major events such as EAA AirVenture Oshkosh and SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo. Notably, Dennis ran EAA AirVenture Oshkosh—one of the world's largest and most complex airshows—for 10 consecutive years, overseeing large scale operations, safety planning, FAA coordination, and logistics.

Dennis currently serves in leadership roles within the International Council of Air Shows (ICAS) and is widely recognized for his expertise in airshow safety, logistics, and large scale event execution. His involvement ensures professional operations, seamless FAA coordination, and adherence to the highest safety and compliance standards.

Angela – Event Coordinator

Angela serves as the Event Coordinator, overseeing on site logistics, scheduling, vendor coordination, and day of execution. She plays a key role in ensuring that performers, volunteers, sponsors, and partners are fully supported throughout both the planning process and event timeline.

Angela has assisted with operations at major aviation events, including the Capital Air Show, and most recently supported the Santa Maria Air Show, gaining hands on experience in high profile, multi day airshow environments. Her organizational skills and attention to detail contribute to the smooth, efficient, and professional delivery of each event.

Megan Thayer – Volunteer Coordinator

Megan Thayer manages volunteer recruitment, scheduling, training, and on-site coordination. With a strong background in community engagement, her role supports effective deployment of a large volunteer workforce while maintaining clear communication and operational coverage across all event areas.

Lindy Linebaugh – Marketing Coordinator

Lindy Linebaugh is an experienced marketing professional specializing in airshows and aviation events nationwide. As the founder of a marketing and public relations firm focused on aviation, she has led marketing efforts for multiple U.S. airshows and performers and has received industry recognition for excellence in event promotion and digital strategy. For

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Rumble Over the Redwoods, she leads event branding, social media, website development, advertising, and sponsor promotion to drive attendance and regional awareness.

Volunteer & Community Support:

The airshow is predominantly supported by a strong volunteer network of approximately 150 local and out-of-area volunteers. Volunteer support includes individuals and groups from:

- Cal Poly Humboldt sports teams
- Boys & Girls Club
- St. Bernard's High School
- Columbia Bank
- Additional community organizations and individual volunteers

This volunteer base provides staffing for admissions, parking, information services, hospitality, and ground operations, significantly strengthening the event's capacity while fostering community ownership and participation.

Past Performance & Success: over the past two years, the Rumble Over the Redwoods Airshow has successfully:

- Attracted thousands of spectators from inside and outside Humboldt County
- Coordinated travel, lodging, and logistics for national-level performers and aircraft
- Generated multiple nights of local lodging through performers, staff, and attendees
- Built long-term partnerships with more than 30 local and out-of-area sponsors
- Established itself as a signature annual event on the regional calendar

The experience gained from two successfully executed air shows, combined with a seasoned management team and strong volunteer support, demonstrates the organization's ability to deliver the proposed project effectively and responsibly.

Innovation & Uniqueness

Historically, Humboldt County has relied on industries such as logging and cannabis as primary economic drivers. The Rumble Over the Redwoods Airshow supports current tourism goals by highlighting the county as a destination offering mild coastal weather, natural beauty, and unique experiences. By introducing new visitors to the area during late summer and encouraging future travel during cooler or winter months, the event helps promote Humboldt County as a year-round destination and supports sustained tourism activity beyond the peak season.

How will you define success with your project and ensure sustainability?

Success for the Rumble Over the Redwoods Airshow is measured by its impact on local tourism, its financial performance, and its ability to continue operating long term. As the event enters its third year, the focus

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is on steady growth and building reliable, recurring revenue that will allow the airshow to become self sustaining.

We track success through several key indicators, including hotel room nights generated by out of area performers, staff, and attendees; attendance from outside Humboldt County; ticket sales; sponsorship revenue; and repeat sponsorships. Each year, the event books more than 100 hotel rooms for three to five nights for performers and operational staff, with additional overnight stays from visiting attendees throughout Eureka, Arcata, Fortuna, and nearby communities.

Rumble Over the Redwoods is a nonprofit organization committed to honoring veterans, educating the public, and promoting Humboldt County as a destination.

The airshow costs about \$1 million per year to produce, not counting the substantial donated labor from Mercer Fraser and community volunteers, which plays a critical role in making the event possible.

Funding comes from ticket sales, sponsorships, earned revenue, and grants. To help establish the event in its early years, the organizer has contributed personal funds, with a clear goal of reaching a breakeven, self supporting model within five years through increased attendance, recurring sponsorships, and long term partnerships.

Beyond tourism and economic impact, Rumble Over the Redwoods is committed to giving back to the community that supports the event. The organization has donated to numerous local nonprofit and community initiatives, including:

- Boys & Girls Club
- CASA
- Hospice of Humboldt
- California Cancer Crushers
- Food for People
- Kevin Ebert Trail Run
- Hensel's ACE Hardware Annual Halloween Event

This commitment to community support will continue as the event grows, reinforcing strong local relationships and ensuring the airshow remains a valued and welcomed community asset.

Room Night Strategy

The primary strategy for generating overnight stays is to capture out-of-area interest early and directly connect attendees to local lodging options throughout the ticket-buying and event-planning process.

Target markets include out-of-county and out-of-state visitors, aviation enthusiasts, and families traveling from surrounding regions and states. Marketing efforts focus on digital and regional outreach, including the event website, social media advertising, email campaigns, and sponsor promotion.

The Rumble Over the Redwoods website includes a dedicated lodging page that directs attendees to hotels in Eureka, Arcata, Fortuna, and nearby communities. Lodging information is promoted alongside ticket sales, event details, and travel planning content to encourage advance booking and extended stays. Ticketing data is used to identify out-of-area purchasers and adjust marketing outreach accordingly.

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Additional room nights are generated through direct hotel bookings for performers and staff, exceeding 100 rooms for multiple nights. Digital campaigns and sponsor partnerships further amplify lodging visibility, helping convert event interest into overnight stays that directly benefit the local lodging industry.

Has this project or idea been successfully tried elsewhere?

This project model has been successfully implemented in many small and mid sized communities throughout the United States. A comparable example is Central Coast AirFest (Santa Maria, CA), first held in 2018. The event now regularly attracts 20,000+ attendees over two days and has secured long term corporate and community sponsorships, showing how a community based airshow can grow quickly and remain financially stable while supporting local lodging and tourism.

Another example is the Truckee Tahoe Air Show, which has operated for more than a decade in a rural tourism market. The event draws an estimated 10,000–15,000 visitors annually, many of whom stay overnight due to travel distance. Its longevity demonstrates long term sustainability in a small community setting and consistent benefits for local hotels and businesses.

Additional examples include:

- Oregon International Air Show – Hillsboro (OR) and McMinnville (OR)

Operated for decades in suburban and small market settings, supported by sponsorships, volunteers, and tourism partners.

- Great Georgia Air Show (Peachtree City, GA)

A community focused airshow serving a mid sized market that successfully combines aviation, tourism, and nonprofit fundraising.

- Wings Over Camarillo (Camarillo, CA)

A community run airshow benefitting local nonprofits, sustained for years through sponsorships, admission revenue, and volunteer support.

Together, these examples show that community based airshows in non metro areas can generate consistent attendance, overnight lodging, and sponsor support over many years, following a proven and sustainable model similar to Rumble Over the Redwoods.

Projected Room Nights

The Rumble Over the Redwoods Airshow is projected to generate approximately 1,000 hotel room nights during the event period. This estimate is based on two primary sources.

First, the organization directly contracts 100 hotel rooms for three to five nights to accommodate out-of-area performers, flight crews, and staff, resulting in approximately 300–500 room nights.

Second, based on prior attendance of approximately 14,000 spectators, a conservative 5–7% of attendees are expected to stay overnight for an average of one to two nights, generating an additional 400–500 room nights.

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Overnight stays occur primarily within Eureka, Arcata, Fortuna, and nearby communities, with most check-ins taking place Wednesday through Monday surrounding the event weekend.

This projection reflects a conservative estimate grounded in historical attendance and documented lodging usage.

Proposed Budget

Total project expenses for the Rumble Over the Redwoods Airshow are \$1,000,000. The organization is requesting \$100,000 from the Humboldt Lodging Alliance to support eligible marketing and production expenses that directly generate overnight lodging in Humboldt County. The requested funds will be used as follows:

\$50,000 – Visitor Marketing & Promotion

Applied to paid media, print and digital advertising, signage, production, and distribution specifically targeting out-of-area audiences and directing attendees to local lodging options.

\$50,000 – Performer Contracts & Event Production Supporting Overnight Stays

Applied to documented performer contracts and required event production costs necessary to bring out-of-area performers, crews, and support staff to Humboldt County. These costs directly support the 100 hotel rooms booked for three to five nights for performers and essential personnel and are a primary driver of multi-night stays.

Humboldt Lodging Alliance funds will support hard costs already incurred or contractually obligated and will not be used for unrelated administrative overhead. The remaining \$900,000 in project expenses is supported by ticket sales, confirmed sponsorships, vendor revenue, private contributions, and pending funding sources.

Room-Night Impact Summary: HLA funds directly support performer contracts and marketing activity that generate approximately 1,000 hotel room nights within Humboldt County during the event period.

Certification

- Yes, I certify

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