

Annual Report

JULY 2025 - JUNE 2026



Table of Contents

Strategy One: Position and Amplify the Santa Barbara Brand to Target Markets	03
Strategy Two: Grow Overnight Demand for the Destination	13
Strategy Three: Champion Positive Visitor Experiences	19
Strategy Four: Strengthen the Organization's Effectiveness	22

STRATEGY ONE

Position and Amplify the Santa Barbara Brand to Target Markets



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Due to media relations and partnerships with Visit Santa Barbara (VSB), media outlets outside the region depicted the distinctive neighborhoods and vast range of experiences available to visitors throughout the Santa Barbara South Coast in captivating travel coverage enhanced by on-the-ground reporting and VSB's expertise. During this fiscal year, PR efforts led to the creation of 851 stories intended to inform, inspire travel and enhance the region's reputation. The content highlighted core attributes of the destination, from food and wine, arts and culture, outdoor adventure and wellness to market segments such as weddings, meetings and family travel. Placements in traditional guidebooks, magazines, newspapers and TV segments reached a potential audience of 266 million prospective travelers, while online stories reached up to 6.28 billion readers.

New in the 2025-26 fiscal year was VSB's first out-of-market broadcast television initiative. VSB commissioned travel segments in the winter and spring, partnering with trusted TV travel experts. The pieces aired on mainstream news stations in target markets and supported direct flights, including Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Phoenix and Chicago, with a collective potential reach of 25 million viewers and an online audience of 246 million unique visitors per month. In January, travel spots filmed at East Beach by Gabe Saglie, aka "[The Travel Guy](#)," captured Santa Barbara's appeal as a winter destination, while segments in May shot in Goleta by Emily Kaufman, "[The Travel Mom](#)," showcased reasons to visit in late spring and early summer. All of the segments featured footage from throughout the South Coast, including festivals, museums, seasonal activities and more.

What the Media Are Saying

"The red-tiled roofs of its Spanish Colonial architecture and pristine beaches that stretch along the coastline make for scenes worthy of a postcard, but it's the world-class wines, innovative farm-to-table cuisine, and quirky creative community that keep this city in a constant state of evolution."

Sunset Magazine, August 2025

"California is abundant in charming coastal enclaves and idyllic towns, but few compare to the city of Santa Barbara. This picturesque community within SBC has it all: pristine beaches, a year-round Mediterranean climate, towering mountain peaks and distinct neighborhoods with their own personalities." **Observer, June 2026**

"Montecito's wellness-leaning lifestyle and access to the outdoors provide a reprieve from the go-go-go energy of daily life. Coupled with a standout food and beverage scene, designer shopping, and luxury resorts, it's the perfect base for exploring the best of the American Riviera." **Vogue, June 2026**

"Santa Barbara's dramatic setting—the glistening Pacific Ocean in front, the sharp peaks of the Santa Ynez Mountains behind—leaves little doubt as to why this section of California's Central Coast has come to be known as the American Riviera."

MICHELIN Guide, June 2026

"If a stylish getaway at a distinctly relaxed pace in a sun-kissed beach town floats your boat, Santa Barbara delivers in spades. It's a vision of sun-splashed, white-washed stucco and red-tile roofs under swaying palms." **Newstalk ZB, June 2026**

"Santa Barbara remains Southern California's best getaway." **Eater Los Angeles, May 2026**

Top Media Coverage Highlights

- Significant honors generated for the region included **Travel + Leisure** (9.6 million Unique Visitors per Month) naming Santa Barbara as one of “[50 Best Places to Travel in 2026](#),” which cited new developments in hospitality attractions from Montecito to Goleta. The premier travel outlet followed up with an “[ultimate Santa Barbara getaway](#)” **guide**. **Sunset Magazine’s 2025 Sunset Travel Awards** (230,047 print circulation, 342,060 UVM) named Montecito as one of five cities in the category of “[Where to Go: Beautiful Beaches](#).”
- Standout destination travel pieces in national media outlets included a star-studded [feature story on Montecito](#) in **Vogue** (9.78 million UVM), an “ultimate” [guide to the South Coast](#) in **Sunset** (342,060 UVM), a [winter getaway story](#) in **AAA Trip Canvas** (16.3 million UVM), a [wine lover’s guide to Santa Barbara County](#) in **Forbes Travel Guide** (450,170 UVM) and a [money-smart travel story](#) on Santa Barbara in **NerdWallet** (8.4 million UVM). Bookending the fiscal year, **Observer** (821,534 UVM) produced a [Montecito dining feature](#) at the beginning of the year and in the last quarter created an extensive [insider guide to the South Coast](#).
- National press featured the region in roundup stories that covered myriad facets of travel, such as a “Snob’s Guide” column on weekend getaways from LA in **Town & Country** (709,000 UVM), a Central Coast family travel episode on the TV show “**Great Family Adventure**” on Outside TV (1.1 million average viewers), a **Weather Channel** (59,000 average viewers) story on [top winter destinations](#) and a [guide to “second cities”](#) in the U.S. in **ESSENCE** (1.4 million UVM).
- Regional media brought luster to South Coast travel in dedicated destination coverage such as **Eater Los Angeles’** (1.07 million UVM) stories on the area’s [most anticipated restaurant openings](#) and “best” [restaurants](#), a four-page feature on seven South Coast hotels in **California Wedding Day** (30,000 circulation), a [family travel guide to Santa Barbara](#) in **TravelAge West** (140,786 UVM), a [South Coast travel segment](#) on NBC’s “**California Live**” airing in LA and the Bay Area (3 million potential reach), and a cover story on Santa Barbara travel in a group of Orange-County based publications (combined circulation 175,000), [South County Magazine](#), [Sorbet So Cal Magazine](#) and [HB Magazine](#).



Quick Hits

- **Travel + Leisure** (11.19 million UVM): “[Top 21 Travel Spots for an Unforgettable August Vacation](#)” and “[9 U.S. Coastal Cities That Feel Like a Mediterranean Getaway](#)”
- **Lonely Planet** (4.45 million UVM): “[The 9 best winter sun destinations in the USA](#)”
- **Time Out USA** (5.46 million UVM): “[These are the 12 best wine vacations in the U.S. for a crush-worthy vacation](#)”
- **MICHELIN Guide** (1.75 million UVM): “[5 Best Coastal Towns in the U.S. for a Perfect Summer Escape](#)”
- **The Seattle Times** (4.4 million UVM): “[What to see, eat and do on a road trip down California’s Central Coast](#)”
- **Sacramento Bee** (2.52 million UVM): “[Shoulder season secrets: Prime spots to travel in the U.S. right now](#)”
- **San Diego Magazine** (53,952 UVM): “[Where to Stay, Play & Eat on Your Next CA Road Trip](#)”
- **Haute Living San Francisco** (11,838 UVM): “[The American Riviera Awaits](#)”
- **Diablo** (East Bay; 14,496 UVM): “[Family Travel: Three Ways to Win Summer with the Kids](#)”
- **San Joaquin Magazine** (86,300 circulation): “[5 Wonderful Wine Destinations](#)”
- Australia’s **Explore** (311,398 circ.) and **The Canberra Times** (1.36 million UVM): “[Ultimate guide: how to find California’s hidden gems beyond the tourist traps](#)” (also syndicated across 28 Australian outlets)
- **Meetings Today** (64,659 circ., 12,957 UVM): “[Central California Coastal Destinations That Fly Under the Radar](#)”





Media Relations & Familiarization (FAM) Trips

As part of its year-round visiting media program, VSB supported familiarization (FAM) trips for 79 media guests in 2025-26, representing 47 U.S. journalists, 13 domestic influencers, 16 international journalists and three international influencers. Hosted media visits immersed writers, editors, broadcast journalists and content creators in the South Coast, providing firsthand experiences that inspired destination coverage for audiences near and far. VSB developed tailored itineraries incorporating the region's distinctive communities, hotels, dining, cultural offerings and outdoor experiences, helping generate stories across regional, national and international media. The PR team also collaborated with hospitality partners and Visit California on individual and group press visits, complementing their efforts with destination-wide experiences and storytelling opportunities that presented a broader view of the region.

The PR team supported VSB's FIFA World Cup 2026™ initiative through strategic media and influencer efforts, across local, domestic and international outlets. Outreach positioned the Santa Barbara South Coast as a must-visit

destination for travelers coming to California for FIFA World Cup matches, highlighting related promotions from local businesses, as well as VSB's role in securing two team base camps for the region. Coverage highlights include a [World Cup-themed road trip story](#) in the Los Angeles Times and more than 65 international placements, with a collective reach of more than 18.2 million across print, online and broadcast media. Local news coverage included pieces in KEYT, KCLU, Pacific Coast Business Times, Noozhawk, Montecito Journal and influencer content.

VSB strengthened relationships with travel media and generated new opportunities for destination storytelling through targeted media outreach and industry events throughout the year. PR staff held media desksides in San Diego and New York; participated in Visit California media events in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and San Francisco; and represented the destination at IPW in Fort Lauderdale and the PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference in Albuquerque.



MARKETING

“The Santa Barbara Effect” Brand Campaign

VSB executed a dynamic, seasonally tailored media strategy under the unifying Santa Barbara Effect brand campaign. Running across digital, social, video and print channels, the campaign highlighted the destination’s signature experiences — from outdoor adventure, culinary experiences and wine country to arts, culture, wellness and the region’s distinctive coastal lifestyle — inspiring travelers to experience the relaxation and rejuvenation that define The American Riviera®.

Throughout the 2025-26 fiscal year, VSB continually adapted its media strategy to respond to changing market conditions and traveler behavior. Summer market softness and shorter booking windows prompted a swift shift toward stimulating last-minute travel, with media investment reallocated to Southern California and other West Coast drive markets, increased search engine marketing (SEM) investment and urgency-driven messaging. In the fall, a festive creative pillar kept Santa Barbara top of mind during key holiday planning periods, complemented by a targeted “Q5” strategy during the low-competition Dec. 26-31 advertising window and real-time market pauses during severe weather and evacuation warnings. As advertising costs eased in winter, VSB expanded its multichannel digital strategy to capture spring break demand with family-focused messaging, supported by print placements in Condé Nast Traveler and the Visit California and Visit Santa Ynez Valley visitor guides.

In May, VSB introduced a refreshed creative evolution of the Santa Barbara Effect campaign, featuring updated messaging, music and visuals designed to better reflect today’s traveler while preserving the campaign’s core brand identity.

The new creative suite included 90-, 60-, 30- and 15-second video assets deployed across paid media channels, ensuring the campaign remained fresh, relevant and optimized for spring and summer travel planning.

Media investments continued to be strategically optimized throughout the year to reach high-performing California audiences and qualified travelers across key domestic markets. Through flexible creative execution, data-informed optimization and agile market response, VSB remained focused on driving awareness, inspiring trip planning and increasing overnight visitation while reinforcing Santa Barbara’s year-round appeal.

Backed by a \$3 million paid media investment, the campaign exceeded nearly every performance benchmark established in the 2025-26 Annual Business Plan, generating strong destination awareness and moving travelers from inspiration to trip planning.

Annual campaign results included:

- 394 million impressions at a cost of \$5.58 CPM
- 36 million completed video views at \$16.64 per 1,000 completed views
- 5.3 million website referrals at an average cost of just \$0.36 per click

The result was another successful year of extending Santa Barbara’s reach, engaging new audiences and keeping the destination top of mind among prospective travelers while efficiently driving measurable visitation intent.

Weddings

To position the Santa Barbara South Coast as a premier wedding destination, VSB executed a targeted paid media campaign that ran from Nov. 2025 through Apr. 2026, aligning with the peak engagement season when couples are actively researching venues and destinations.

The campaign showcased the region's diverse wedding venues, exceptional hospitality and memorable guest experiences through visually driven, conversion-focused creative designed to inspire both intimate celebrations and larger destination weddings.

Media and messaging were tailored to two primary audience segments: California couples seeking a scenic, accessible ceremony location and out-of-state couples considering a destination wedding. Performance insights showed the strongest engagement with themes centered on affordability, smaller-scale weddings and hotel-based venues, helping inform future content development and audience targeting.

Supported by a \$106,000 investment across Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok and Google, the campaign delivered more than 19.2 million impressions and 239,000 clicks, driving qualified traffic to wedding content and partner listings. While increasing awareness of the Santa Barbara South Coast as a wedding destination.



FIFA World Cup 2026™

With the FIFA World Cup 2026™ drawing global attention to Southern California, VSB leveraged this event to capture incremental visitation during the late spring and summer months. The campaign launched in March and ran through mid-July, positioning Santa Barbara as both a compelling coastal extension to the World Cup experience and a nearby retreat for Los Angeles residents seeking a more relaxed escape during the tournament.

A dedicated landing page on SantaBarbaraCA.com served as a centralized hub to capture and convert World Cup demand, directly connecting visitors with local businesses and partner promotions. Curated itineraries — including coastal road trips from Los Angeles and “escape the crowds” experiences — alongside integrated hotel offers and events encouraged high-intent travelers to book overnight stays and explore the destination. The microsite and accompanying articles generated 119,000 pageviews and featured 22 partner events and 13 special offers.

To maximize reach, VSB executed a multi-channel advertising strategy targeting both international and domestic travelers. A media investment of \$168,000 supported dynamic Facebook and Instagram advertising in English and targeted languages across key international markets, strategic partnerships with booking platforms and programmatic media, including Expedia, Adara and Datafy. Through Expedia, VSB also participated in a Southern California destination co-op centered on the soccer-themed “Come for Soccer, Stay for SoCal” campaign, which encouraged World Cup visitors traveling to Los Angeles to extend their trip by exploring destinations throughout the region. The campaign included a dedicated Santa Barbara landing page designed to inspire overnight stays on the

South Coast. Collectively, these efforts delivered 34.2 million impressions, 200,000 completed video views and 129,000 clicks while connecting with high-intent travelers throughout their trip planning journey.

Across VSB’s owned social media and newsletter channels, FIFA World Cup content was featured in seven dedicated social media posts and two newsletter placements. These efforts generated an additional 1.1 million impressions and 15,000 engagements, further extending the campaign’s reach through VSB’s owned audience.

New attribution capabilities introduced through Datafy provided VSB with a more comprehensive view of the campaign’s economic impact. Combined reporting across VSB’s Adara, Expedia and Datafy media partnerships attributed 3,924 direct visitor trips resulting from campaign advertising exposure, generating an estimated \$977,076 in economic impact and delivering a return on investment of \$7.75 for every \$1 invested.



Website & Consumer Newsletters

VSB's official destination website, SantaBarbaraCA.com, recorded 6.8 million sessions during the 2025-26 fiscal year, an 11% year-over-year increase and welcomed 4.8 million active users, up 18% from the previous year. Visitors viewed 9.1 million pages, a 9% increase year-over-year, reflecting strong interest in destination content.

While organic search traffic declined by 25% year-over-year, overall website growth was fueled by strong gains in paid social, Google CPC and direct referral traffic. Visitors spent an average of 1 minute and 56 seconds per session, with an engagement rate of 32%.*

The website also generated more than 846,000 referrals to local businesses, demonstrating its ability to move travelers from inspiration to action by connecting them with the hotels, restaurants, shops, attractions and experiences that make the Santa Barbara South Coast such a compelling destination.

Throughout the year, content development and optimization remained priorities. The team published 95 new articles and itineraries and optimized 433 website pages to strengthen organic search visibility, respond to evolving traveler interests and increase exposure for local businesses and organizations. A major initiative included the development of a dedicated FIFA World Cup 2026™ microsite, featuring a central planning hub and supporting content to position the Santa Barbara South Coast as a premier destination before, during and after the tournament.

Content strategy continued to emphasize seasonal travel inspiration, culinary experiences, outdoor recreation, arts and culture, wellness and other evergreen destination themes that encourage year-

round visitation. The completion of the website's suite of seasonal travel guides further strengthened VSB's ability to inspire visitors throughout the year while supporting ongoing search visibility and trip planning.

Consumer email marketing also remained an effective engagement channel. Over the past year, approximately 1.2 million newsletters were delivered, achieving an average 61.11% open rate — an increase of 4.04 percentage points year over year. Total unique clicks reached 27,167, with a 2.20% average click-through rate. Food and culinary content continued to generate particularly strong engagement, reinforcing dining as one of the destination's strongest drivers of visitor interest.

**Please note that metrics are directional due to user privacy settings and cookie opt-outs managed through Osano.*



Social Media

Social media remained a powerful driver of destination awareness this fiscal year, as VSB expanded its platform-specific storytelling, short-form video and local creator partnerships to inspire millions of travelers to discover The American Riviera®.

Across seven social media platforms, VSB published more than 1,150 organic posts, generating over 25 million views*, a 169% year-over-year increase and 1.5 million engagements. The team produced 139 Instagram Reels and 157 TikToks in-house, with an increased focus on showcasing local hotels and distinctive experiences that inspire overnight visitation. VSB's social community grew by more than 57,000 followers during the fiscal year, surpassing 530,000 followers across all platforms. Social media also drove more than 210,000 visits to SantaBarbaraCA.com, where travelers explored itineraries, events and destination content to help plan their trips.

Platform-specific content continued to deliver strong results, particularly on TikTok, while timely Instagram carousel posts featuring seasonal events, local businesses and destination experiences consistently generated high engagement. VSB also expanded its local creator program, partnering with four creators specializing in lifestyle, culinary and family travel to produce authentic destination content that supported both organic and paid campaigns. Specific creator content generated 975,000 views and 24,000 engagements across 13 high-quality videos.

Building on this momentum, VSB will continue expanding its creator partnerships, investing in platform-specific content and showcasing the diverse experiences, local businesses and lodging options that inspire travelers to choose the Santa Barbara South Coast for their next getaway.

Partner Advertising

VSB extended the reach of tourism partners by leveraging its marketing channels to create additional promotional opportunities for South Coast Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) lodging properties and VSB members, generating 9.8 million impressions for 41 partners through digital, native, social and newsletter advertising while producing more than \$101,000 in partner advertising revenue.

The VSB In-Kind Sponsorship Program continued to support local events through promotional marketing partnerships. During the fiscal year, the program generated more than 3 million impressions and 48,000 clicks while providing over \$58,000 in promotional support. New partnerships included Santa Barbara Rodeo Days, Impressionist Revolution: Monet to Matisse from the Dallas Museum of Art, Brave New Work, Wild & Free Film Festival, Santa Barbara Literary Festival, Coffee Culture Festival, the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team match, La Piazza and Wine & Fire on the Road. The program also supported returning signature events including Rescue Rhythm, Ride Santa Barbara 100, Santa Barbara Vintners Festival, Fields of Funk, Santa Barbara Half Marathon, Santa Barbara International Film Festival and the Santa Barbara Culinary Experience.

**Meta has discontinued reporting organic impressions, combining impressions and video views into a single "view" metric.*

STRATEGY TWO

Grow Overnight Demand for the Destination



GROUP SALES

The 2025-26 fiscal year was a record breaker on many levels for the group sales team. Final production totaled 34,042 room nights, marking a 43% increase in room nights over the prior year. Total contracts were up by 3%. Room night production was significantly impacted by the FIFA World Cup 2026™ and the benefit of hosting two team training camps for Qatar and Austria which generated over 5,000 room nights. Average Daily Rate (ADR) showed healthy growth of 19%, which brought total confirmed revenue to an impressive 71% growth over the prior fiscal year's confirmed revenue. Group business confirmed by VSB generated 32,901 room nights for the destination, representing a notable 140% of the previous year's actualization of 23,544 room nights. Looking ahead to 2026-27, 13,809 room nights have already been sold, marking a slight decrease over the prior year's position of 19,435 room nights at the beginning of the year.

In 2025-26, lead volume increased 107% in total leads and 112% in lead room nights, leading the sales team to anticipate continued success while efficiently maximizing resources, minimizing acquisition costs and maintaining high productivity and efficiency as a team.

Site Tours & Client Meetings

The group sales team actively cultivated relationships with hotel partners and engaged with clients through various partner events. Frequent FAM trips showcased the destination. Two FAMs were arranged to coincide with industry events taking place in Southern California: the SITE Southeast Annual Meeting and the HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference, both held in Los Angeles. These events provided an opportunity to invite eight planners from each conference to extend their stays in Santa Barbara. Additionally, the sales team partnered with

MC&A, PRA and Conclave for three additional FAM trips of seven to 12 planners each. Two large Marriott events with VSB sponsorship brought qualified planners representing the insurance and financial industries, as well as wedding planners, to experience the Santa Barbara South Coast for multiple days in August and December, respectively. The team traveled with partners from local hotels to entertain clients at numerous in-market VSB events, including cooking classes in Woodland Hills, Palo Alto, Orange County and Carlsbad; Topgolf in Roseville; salon events in Newport Beach and Dallas; and multiple days of sales calls and client entertainment in Phoenix/Scottsdale, Dallas, Chicago and Indianapolis.

In partnership with Visit California, the team joined a group of California Destination Marketing Organization's (DMO) for Taste of California Roadshows in Kansas City, Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., while also scheduling additional in-market sales calls. The team continued a successful partnership with the Santa Barbara South Coast Vintners Association (SBVA) to bring together clients, hotel partners and the VSB sales team for elevated wine pairing dinners. In partnership with Phil Carpenter of the SBVA, the team hosted dinners at Funke Beverly Hills, Marea Beverly Hills and Rossoblu LA, as well as Bar Boheme in Las Vegas during IMEX North America. Finally, the FIFA World Cup matches in Los Angeles and San Francisco created unique opportunities to cultivate relationships with FIFA and host tours for representatives from the U.S. Men's National Team, Japan, Italy, South Korea, Australia, the Netherlands and Germany. The sales team ultimately secured two training camps for Qatar and Austria.

Trade Show Participation

Third-party trade shows continued to be an excellent source of establishing new business contacts and generating sales leads. The VSB team showcased its expertise at industry standout annual events such as IMEX, CEMA, Associations West, HPN, Prestige, PCMA and AMEX Interaction. The team participated with proven partners Smart Meetings in their Southern CA and Smart Women events, Northstar at Destination CA, Destination West and Small & Boutique Meetings and Connect with Connect Marketplace and Connect West. VSB also selected several new shows to uncover fresh leads from unknown planners by attending Meetings Industry Council in Denver, Connect Winter in Washington D.C., Retreats Resources in Park City, Luxury & Wellness Meetings in Healdsburg and Planner Hero Connections Southern CA. By staying actively engaged with an array of diverse industry events, the sales team effectively broadened its reach and strengthened VSB's connection with the professional community.

Industry Events & Affiliations

DMO alliances continued to prove successful and lucrative for the group sales team. Southern California, Northern California and the Midwest each had a dedicated manager who worked to create opportunities through networking and client events in partnership with other sales representatives from California destinations.

Furthermore, VSB made strategic sponsorship investments with Prestige, HPN, HelmsBriscoe, Associations West, SITE, PCMA and MPI, increasing the exposure of the sales team among prominent meeting planners. These investments provided access to planner lists while also offering networking opportunities in multiple markets throughout the year.



TRAVEL TRADE SALES

Educating the Travel Trade

Customized FAM trips continued to play an important role in showcasing the Santa Barbara South Coast to influential travel professionals. VSB hosted 10 FAM experiences, welcoming a total of 50 travel advisors, tour operators and industry partners to experience the destination firsthand. One standout trip included hosting Bonotel Exclusive Travel's first-ever California tour operator FAM in partnership with Virgin Holidays for nine travel advisors. In collaboration with Visit California, additional FAM attendees included groups based in Canada, South Korea, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom and Ireland, expanding awareness of the destination across key international markets.

Beyond hosting curated experiences for visiting travel professionals, the team also collaborated with local partners to offer educational opportunities throughout the year, including an Expedia meeting for area hoteliers, a Bonotel wine networking event connecting local hotels with their key account representative and a Northstar Travel Group luncheon for hotel and airport partners.

Trade Show Participation

VSB represented the destination at nine industry trade events throughout the year, strengthening relationships with travel buyers across a variety of market segments. The team was joined by hotel partners at Brand USA Travel Week in London and Connections Luxury in West Hollywood and Lake Tahoe. Proven performers including Go West in Las Vegas, the California Cup in Irvine and IPW in Fort Lauderdale were well attended and generated numerous opportunities to grow our client base, add Santa Barbara to itineraries and introduce hospitality partners to qualified buyers. VSB also selected several new shows to uncover



fresh leads from new planners by attending GTM Luxury by Northstar in Los Angeles, ASTA Holiday Showcase in Seattle and Ensemble Horizons in Las Vegas.

Collectively, these events connected VSB with thousands of travel professionals and included nearly 300 one-on-one appointments. Beyond the show floor, the team maximized each event by creating meaningful opportunities to strengthen relationships with key clients. At Go West Summit, the team partnered with Visit Santa Ynez Valley to host an intimate dinner for a select group of travel buyers, fostering valuable connections in a more personalized setting.

The year concluded at IPW, the U.S. Travel Association's premier international inbound travel trade show, welcoming nearly 5,000 delegates from more than 50 countries. During the show, VSB participated as a sponsor of a Visit California luncheon that highlighted California as a world-class sports and events destination. Through custom centerpieces and branded luggage tags, the team highlighted the region while supporting California's broader international marketing efforts.

Building Relationships

Working to expand VSB's presence across key industry organizations and strategic markets, the team participated in several influential industry events including a PROST Desert Cities luncheon in Palm Springs, the Engage!25 Luxury Wedding Summit hosted by the Ritz-Carlton Bacara, Santa Barbara and Visit California's Annual Outlook Forum in Chula Vista. Sales manager Cat Lopez also served on the Board of Directors for the Central Coast Tourism Council, strengthening VSB's influence in regional travel trade initiatives.

Building on growing momentum around sports tourism in both the Santa Barbara South Coast and California as a whole, VSB launched a new Sports and Festivals Task Force to identify future events, address industry needs and develop strategies to maximize the region's potential in this robust market. Finally, three travel trade newsletters were distributed, reaching nearly 7,000 travel advisors per edition with an average open rate of 36%. These communications, combined with year-round sales outreach, helped expand awareness of the Santa Barbara South Coast while strengthening relationships with travel professionals worldwide.



ADVERTISING

Third Night Free Lodging Campaign

The Third Night Free lodging promotion continued to serve as a highly effective tool for driving non-commissioned, direct bookings while encouraging longer stays across the Santa Barbara South Coast. Throughout the year, 25 diverse properties — spanning luxury, midscale and budget accommodations — offered a complimentary third night with a qualifying three-night stay, complemented by additional lodging discounts and exclusive offers.

To maximize visibility and conversion, VSB deployed a comprehensive, multichannel advertising strategy that evolved throughout the year. Targeted consumer emails and CPC advertising through Travelzoo, Dunhill Travel Deals and Luxury Link anchored the campaign, supported by paid social advertising on Facebook and Instagram and promotional placement across VSB's website and owned social channels. New partners and tactics were introduced throughout the year, including a dedicated email with Sunset Magazine, expanded distribution on Reddit and TikTok, new high-intent audience segments on Facebook and Instagram and targeted outreach to University of California, Santa Barbara alumni. VSB also launched a new Travelzoo Showcase microsite featuring a curated multi-day Santa Barbara itinerary, with additional promotion through newsletters and social media.

Collectively, these efforts generated 165,000 referrals to participating hotels and resulted in more than 12,800 consumed room nights, supported by a total media investment of \$989,000. The campaign achieved an efficient cost per referral of \$5.99 and cost per consumed room night of \$77.

Paid media support for Third Night Free concluded in June as seasonal partner demand declined. Looking ahead, VSB plans to refresh the promotion with new offers and creative approaches designed to renew consumer interest and strengthen performance in the coming year.

Locals Lodging Promotion

VSB relaunched its seasonal lodging promotion this year, running from October 2025 through February 2026. The campaign invited locals and their visiting friends and family to enjoy a 30% discount on stays at up to 15 participating accommodations. Designed to help fill vacant rooms during the shoulder season, the campaign encouraged residents to experience their hometown as visitors do while supporting local hotels during a traditionally slower travel period.

New this year, VSB partnered with members to curate exclusive local offers that complemented the lodging promotion. From wine tasting and dining to performances and guided tours, these added incentives made it easy for residents to build a complete staycation experience while driving visitation to 29 local businesses.

Supported by a media investment of \$42,000, VSB executed a multi-channel advertising and public relations campaign with seasonal messaging tailored to locals hosting friends and family over the holidays. The advertising campaign included Facebook and Instagram advertising in English and Spanish, Nextdoor placements, dedicated emails with Siteline SB and the University of California, Santa Barbara Alumni Association, print advertising in the Santa Barbara Independent and radio advertising on KJEE.

Combined marketing and public relations efforts generated 6,213 referrals to participating hotels and 803 consumed room nights during the promotion. The campaign also generated 766 referrals to participating businesses and 192 redeemed local offers, demonstrating strong engagement with both the lodging promotion and the new local offers.



STRATEGY THREE

Champion Positive Visitor Experiences



AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Airline Partnership

To inspire travelers to choose Santa Barbara Airport, VSB partnered with Southwest, Delta, Alaska and United Airlines throughout the year to promote convenient nonstop service to the Santa Barbara South Coast. Paid marketing efforts highlighted both established routes and the launch of new nonstop service from San Diego on Alaska Airlines and Chicago on United Airlines beginning in April 2026. Campaign tactics included Facebook and Instagram advertising, pre-roll video placements aboard Southwest flights, targeted digital advertising, announcements across VSB's owned channels and print placements in *Golf Digest*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Architectural Digest* and *Bon Appétit*. Collectively, these efforts generated more than 51.3 million impressions, 35,000 completed video views and 409,000 clicks to airline booking websites, supported by a \$179,000 media investment. Together, the campaign reinforced Santa Barbara's accessibility and positioned the destination as an easy-to-reach getaway through convenient nonstop air service.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthening the Hospitality Workforce

Through a continued partnership with the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce, VSB supported the Hospitality Inspiration Campaign, an initiative designed to attract and retain talent across the local hospitality industry. The campaign highlights inspiring career stories from hospitality professionals through a multi-channel advertising campaign, encouraging job seekers to explore opportunities and discover the long-term benefits of a career in hospitality. Over the past year, the campaign generated 25.3 million digital impressions, 12,129 video views and drove 640 website sessions to the dedicated campaign website, connecting prospective employees with local hospitality job opportunities and industry resources.

Building Destination Ambassadors

The *I Am Santa Barbara* ambassador program continued to expand its reach, providing complimentary training that equips frontline staff with the knowledge and confidence to create exceptional visitor experiences. Through interactive sessions, participants explored the region's attractions, history, architecture, tourism's economic impact, customer service best practices and resources to help them serve as informed ambassadors for the Santa Barbara South Coast.

During the fiscal year, VSB hosted eight training sessions and certified 119 Santa Barbara Ambassadors, a 33% increase in sessions and a 59% increase in certified ambassadors over the previous year. The program continued to receive positive feedback from participants, with engaging presentations, local trivia and destination experience prizes helping attendees deepen their connection to the community they represent.

Supporting Community Events & Partnerships

Throughout the year, VSB partnered with a wide range of local organizations and signature events to enhance the visitor experience, strengthen the destination's brand and support the region's tourism economy. Through a combination of financial sponsorships and in-kind marketing support, VSB amplified community events across SantaBarbaraCA.com, social media, newsletters and public relations outreach.

Sponsored initiatives included the Goleta Lemon Festival, Santa Barbara Culinary Experience, UCSB Alumni and Parents Weekend, Santa Barbara Polo Season, World of Pinot Noir, NatureTrack Film Festival and Pianos on State Street, among others. VSB also provided promotional support for additional events and festivals that align with and elevate the Santa Barbara brand.

In September, the VSB team participated in the Battle of the Brands at the Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort, a spirited competition that brought together frontline hospitality professionals to showcase their skills while fostering teamwork and industry pride. Established in 2018 to boost employee morale and celebrate the talents of hospitality staff, the event featured friendly competitions including bed-making, mini golf, a cake decorating challenge and a talent show.

Beyond the competition itself, the event strengthened connections among local hospitality teams while giving back to the community through the donation of bookshelves and gently used books to local organizations.



STRATEGY FOUR

Strengthen the Organization's Effectiveness



Member Engagement and Industry Collaboration

Throughout the 2025-26 fiscal year, the community partnerships department continued to strengthen relationships with members by delivering meaningful opportunities to connect, learn and collaborate. Through a diverse mix of signature events, educational programs and networking experiences, VSB fostered engagement across the local tourism industry while supporting professional development and industry collaboration. Collectively, VSB hosted 26 member events that welcomed 1,230 attendees, representing a 22% increase in attendance over the previous year. VSB concluded the fiscal year with 258 members, including 26 new businesses that joined the organization.

Signature Programs and Events

VSB's Annual Tourism Summit, held Jan. 28 at the Hilton Santa Barbara Beachfront Resort, welcomed 210 attendees, a 24% increase over the previous year, including elected officials from the City of Santa Barbara, City of Goleta and Santa Barbara County. Centered on the theme "A Look Ahead: Insights, Advocacy, and the Future of Tourism," the program featured presentations from Tourism Economics and Visit California, along with a panel discussion on the economic and regulatory issues shaping the future of the hospitality industry.

This year's Annual General Meeting & Luncheon, held May 27 at Rosewood Miramar Beach, welcomed 246 attendees, a 22% increase over the previous year, including elected officials and local media. Centered on the theme Powered by Tourism: Supporting Our Community, the program celebrated tourism's contributions to the local economy and quality of life through a panel discussion featuring community leaders, a Community Connection Showcase highlighting

local agriculture, culinary experiences and artisan businesses and a special Tourism Champion recognition honoring every attendee for their role in supporting the visitor economy. Each attendee received a member-donated prize that encouraged them to experience the Santa Barbara South Coast as visitors in their own community.

The Community Partnerships team hosted eight Lunch & Learn sessions throughout the year, attracting a total of 267 attendees. The series provided members with educational and networking opportunities on a variety of topics, including local arts and culture, culinary experiences, workforce development, sustainability, tourism research and analytics, destination marketing opportunities surrounding FIFA World Cup 26™ and environmental conservation. Sessions showcased local businesses and community partners while equipping attendees with practical resources, industry insights and professional connections. Participants consistently praised the series for its engaging content and valuable networking opportunities.

The Meet & Mingle and Open House events continued to foster meaningful connections among members while showcasing the diverse businesses and venues that make up the Santa Barbara South Coast. Hosted at six unique member locations, each event featured networking opportunities, light refreshments, interactive experiences and prize giveaways, encouraging attendees to engage with fellow members, VSB staff and the local hospitality community. Each attendee received a member-donated prize that encouraged them to experience the destination as visitors in their own community.

RESEARCH AND TRAVEL TRENDS

Accommodations Employment FY 2024-25 vs. 2025-26			
	2024-25 Average	2025-26 Average	% Change
Santa Barbara County	5,109	5,300	3.7%

Santa Barbara South Coast TBID Hotel Performance FY 2024-25 vs. 2025-26			
	2024-25 Average	2025-26 Average	% Change
Occupancy	71%	73%	3.2%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$339.42	\$352.90	4.0%
Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)	\$240.70	\$258.21	7.3%
Demand (Room Nights)	1,357,437	1,404,699	3.5%
Supply (Room Nights)	1,914,162	1,919,857	0.3%
Gross Revenue	\$460,744,124	\$495,721,435	7.6%

Airline Passenger Volume FY 2024-25 vs. 2025-26			
	2024-25 Average	2025-26 Average	% Change
Santa Barbara Municipal Airport	1,511,010	1,660,538	9.9%

Weather at Santa Barbara Municipal Airport FY 2024-25 vs. 2025-26			
	2024-25 Average	2025-26 Average	% Change
Average High Temperature (°F)	69.0	70.5	2.2%
Total Precipitation (Inches)	7.09	23.19	227.1%
Days of Precipitation	24	18	-25%

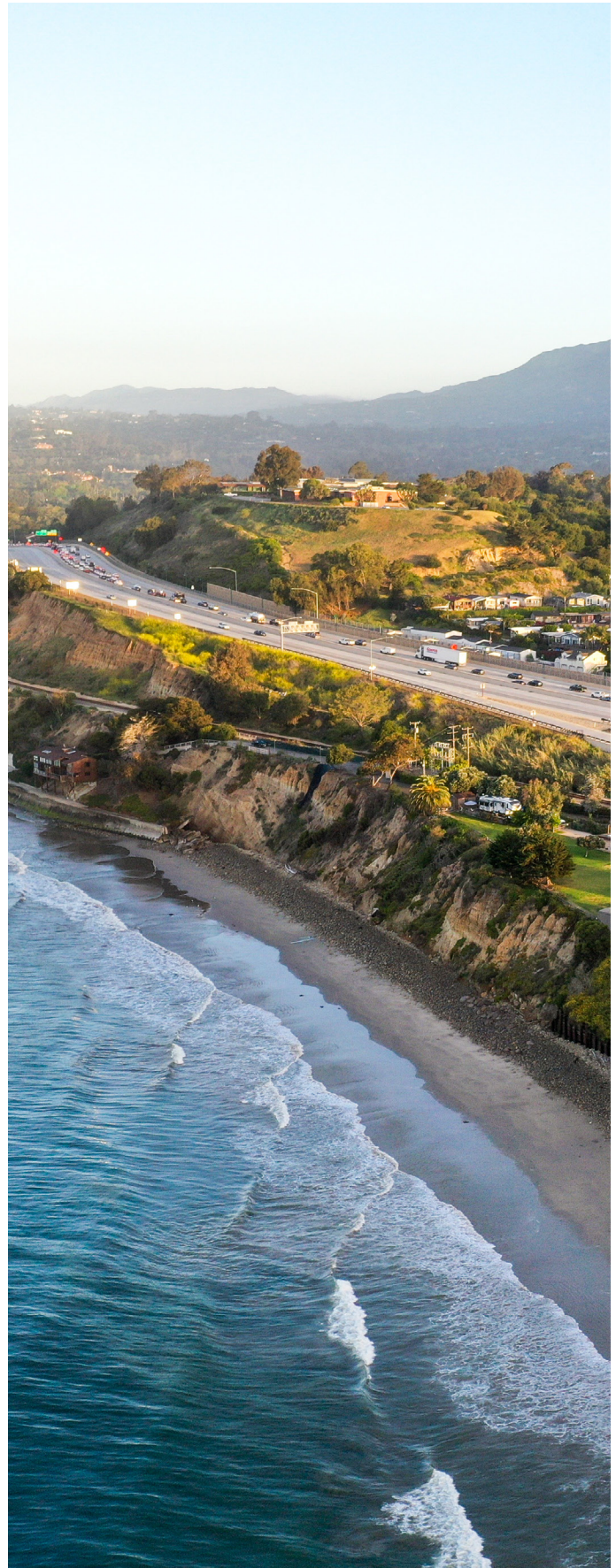


About Visit Santa Barbara

Visit Santa Barbara is a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization funded by the South Coast Tourism Business Improvement District, hospitality industry members, and grants from the City of Santa Barbara and the County of Santa Barbara. As the official destination marketing organization for the Santa Barbara South Coast, VSB is contracted by the City of Santa Barbara to market the area nationally and internationally as a premier destination for leisure and business travel. VSB's Board of Directors is composed of business owners and professionals who have the experience and willingness to serve the community beyond the scope of their demanding work schedules. Their volunteer responsibilities include steering company policy, building relationships with local government, interpreting the needs and interests of the community, shaping how VSB delivers upon its mission and influencing the organization's future evolution.

Purpose

We enhance quality of life for Santa Barbara South Coast residents through inspiring visitation that fosters sustainable economic growth, managing the region's reputation, and supporting the vibrancy of our diverse communities.



2025-26 Board of Directors

Rebecca Anderson, Lotusland

Jens Baake, Acme Hospitality Group

Jason Baker, Expond

Warner Anderson, WA Event Management

Leslie Brickell, Residence Inn by Marriott Santa Barbara Goleta

Bradley Cance, The Ritz-Carlton Bacara, Santa Barbara

Michael Cohen, Santa Barbara Adventure Company

Chris Cline, Hotel Santa Barbara

Amada Cruz, Santa Barbara Museum of Art

Treg Finney, Mar Monte Hotel

Andrew Firestone, StonePark Capital

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Councilmember Mike Jordan, City of Santa Barbara

Trevor Large, Fauver, Large, Archbald & Spray LLC

Kristen Miller, Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce

Gary Obligacion, El Encanto, Santa Barbara

Tom Patton, Ramada by Wyndham Santa Barbara

Councilmember Luz Reyes-Martín, City of Goleta

Woody Sears, Autio

David Sigman, Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club

Tim Snider, Fess Parker Winery & Vineyard

Ben Sprague, Earl Warren Showgrounds



Visit Santa Barbara Staff

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Jennifer Reyes, Executive Assistant
Casey LaHonta, Research & Analytics Manager

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Aleah Elisara, Community Partnerships Manager

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Shantel Adams, Digital Marketing Manager
Taylor Fraser, Content Manager
Lela Brodie, Social Media Marketing Manager
Emily Lauderdale, Web Marketing Manager

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Anna Naughton, Public Relations Manager
Brooke Holland, Public Relations Manager
Dani DeVries, Public Relations Manager

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