

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PATTERSON AND
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: Chief Executive Office AGENDA # 4

AGENDA DATE: August 18, 2009

SUBJECT:

Report on the Progress of the Regional Tourism Roundtable and the Development of a Self Guided Drive Tour of the West Side Communities of Patterson and Newman

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Regional Tourism Roundtable is a public/private consortium of Cities, Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureaus and tourism businesses including downtown improvement districts, theaters, museums and the hospitality (hotel) sector. To date the Roundtable has existed as a strategic planning workgroup meeting regularly in a mutually in-kind capacity. The strategic initiatives formulated by the Regional Tourism Roundtable are funded annually through a nominal appropriation to the CEO Operations/Economic Development budget in the amount of \$40,000. This is matched by contributions from public and private sector partners and affiliates.

DISCUSSION:

Tourism as Economic Development: Why this is important

The multi-billion dollar travel industry in California is a vital part of state and local economies. The industry is represented primarily by retail and service firms, including lodging establishments, restaurants, retail stores, gasoline service stations, and other types of businesses that sell their products and services to travelers.

During 2008, travelers to California contributed an estimated \$96.7 billion to the state economy. In Stanislaus County, this equated to approximately \$435 million dollars in local travel spending which generated over \$6.3 million dollars in local tax receipts. As we move further into the services-led new economy of the 21st century, travel and tourism will continue to expand in our region.

Californians are the mainstay of the state's travel and tourism industry, comprising 85% of domestic travel or approximately 265.7 million person trips. In the great Central Valley, location remains a key to our current and future successes. As the graphic insert highlights, nearly 6 million people live within a 50-mile radius of our communities. When this sphere is expanded to 100 miles (a simple day trip by any California driving standard), that number increases to 13.6 million Californians.

As an industry, travel and tourism is expected to double in the next ten years, with California leading all other states in tourism spending. In fact, tourism remains the third largest employer in the state of California.



Purpose

In June of 1999 the Economic Development staff of Stanislaus County's Chief Executive Office convened a meeting of representatives from all nine of the county cities, the various chambers of commerce, the Economic Development Corporation, convention and visitor bureau affiliates, and interested business and citizen participants. The primary intent of this gathering was to entertain establishing a focused and collective regional marketing and development strategy around the concept of regional travel and tourism.

The concept was unanimously well received by the group and a task force, the Travel and Tourism Roundtable, was developed. To the credit of this workgroup there have been four multi-year strategic planning documents to date. (See attachment one and two for strategic plan and Roundtable deliverables/participation roster)

The Travel and Tourism Roundtable has evolved into a larger, more diverse group than initially established. County, City, and Chamber staffs have worked together with business owners, museums, theaters, art centers, and interested citizens to increase travel and tourism awareness in our County.

Some of the key Roundtable initiatives include:

- Attendees at 15 fairs and festivals throughout the County are surveyed annually by student volunteers with the event customer service data shared with the event planning groups in the spirit of promoting continuous improvement;
- A website was developed and subsequently folded into the popular community web portal – connectingstanislaus.com with the target URL visitstanislaus.com identifier;
- A comprehensive activities brochure continues to be widely distributed from Northern California (Redding) to Bakersfield, the entire valley floor, foothill region and Gold Country, and the urban Bay Area.
- The Roundtable has hosted ten annual business forums, providing and soliciting improvement information regarding travel and tourism best practices;
- The development and deployment of an informational kiosk at the Regional Mall (over 8 million visitors from the tri-county area traffic the Vintage Fair Mall annually);
- Three self-guided agriculture tours featuring:
 - The eastside of Stanislaus County: Oakdale and rural eastside Knights Ferry,
 - The greater Modesto area including Modesto and Salida, and
 - The south side communities of Turlock, Ceres and Hughson.
 - The newest excursion, featuring the West Side communities of Patterson and Newman will be released later this month at a release party at Stewart and Jasper Nut Farms on August 28th.

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The Wild, Wild West Side: Self Guided Entertainment with an Historical Charm

The drive tour concept captures the history, the natural beauty and proximity that our communities have to offer our traveling guests. With so many of those who travel through our County doing so in personal vehicles – meandering at a vacationer pace, the flexibility of the self guided tour is very appealing.

The Wild, Wild West Side is no exception.

Starting in downtown Patterson, the West Side tour departs the “city on a circle” sharing some of the city’s palm tree history - taking the explorer out and up into the beautiful Del Puerto Canyon drive. From there the route winds through Hills Ferry and includes a discussion of produce from field to freezer eventually finding its way to downtown Newman. In Newman the attractions include the Old Orestimba School House and the Historic Giddings House.

The self guided drive tour (offered in the lobby of many of our local hotels, on-line, and at all three Convention and Visitor Bureaus) offer travelers an added incentive to explore Stanislaus at their own pace. These approximately four hour self guided tours add to the Stanislaus experience, extend the day and increase the possibility of an extended stay.

In addition to out of town travelers, these tours have been well received by local educators (k-6 primarily) and human resource directors – used as unique incentive content for specialty recruitments.

POLICY ISSUES:

The work of the Stanislaus Regional Tourism Roundtable including the self guided drive tour promotional are sound examples of promoting a Strong Local Economy through developing positive community image and perception and developing Effective (public and private sector) Partnerships.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Existing staff resources with assistance from all Regional Tourism Roundtable member affiliates continue to manage the work required to help facilitate and implement the important strategies identified by the membership. No additional positions are recommended.

Attachments:

Then and Now: Tourism Roundtable at a glance
Wild, Wild West Side Self Guided Drive Tour

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE
FROM YOUR CLERK