

Visit Escondido

Year-End Report: July 2015 – June 2016

This fiscal year has been a great growth year in many ways. In addition to tourism visitors we're welcoming a lot of people who have either recently moved here or are considering Escondido for their upcoming relocation. New "locals" have been a highlight of our Visitors Center presence in the community. The Visitors Center has seen a marked increase in walk-ins, calls and requests for visitor packets in addition to traffic on our very successful website.



Escondido as a whole continues to grow and evolve as a destination that people want to visit, live, work and play in. Interesting and trend forward businesses are picking our historic downtown district to build their businesses, such as the new "escape room" Clue Avenue, EcoVivarium (a live reptile educational museum), and a new tasting room, SIP Wine & Beer.

Visit Escondido has developed a collaborative foundation to continue moving forward in its efforts to attract visitors, stimulate increased spending by residents and visitors, and support the marketing efforts of tourism related businesses, organizations and events. This year, specifically in the industry cluster of cultural and heritage tourism, Visit Escondido was instrumental in helping the arts and museums community form a collaborative group with the purpose of attracting more visitors to this diverse community, promote cultural and heritage tourism, and grow their businesses.

This report serves to highlight the City's tourism marketing efforts over the past fiscal year.

Submitted by Katherine Zimmer, Tourism & Marketing Administrator.

Visitors Center **VisitEscondido.com**

235 East Grand Ave
Tue-Fri | 10am-4pm
760.839.4777



Panoramic view of the Visitors Center in the PD Storefront on East Grand Avenue.

**Congratulations to the
Roynon Museum of Earth Science and Paleontology
for winning
"2016 BEST MUSEUM IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY"
by San Diego A-List**

This is quite an accomplishment for the first year in
their new location in downtown Escondido!
457 East Grand Avenue • RoynonMuseum.org



VISITORS CENTER

The Visitors Center at 235 E. Grand Avenue welcomed over 1,022 walk-in guests representing 37 states and 16 countries. Calls, email inquiries and mailed visitor packets totaled 144+. Visitors typically ask for things to do, maps, dining suggestions, hiking locations and other outdoor activities, wineries & breweries, arts & theater, and public transportation information. Many of our guests are locals and new residents coming in to ask relocation questions, learn about things to do and find specific businesses or services.

Some visitors LOVE showing up on our Facebook page where they can share their experiences with family and friends!

*"Your Visitor Center is fantastic!
We're so glad our hotel told us
where to find you."
~ Agnes & Hendrik-Jan, Amsterdam*



Rod & Barbara - Perth, Australia
(Found us because they love Eric Clapton and learned from our website that we have the "Road To Escondido" album cover image.)



"Neal" - San Diego
(Visiting us from Burger Bench while his humans enjoyed lunch!)



Casey, Shelly & Lynn
- sisters from Texas, NY & Colorado
(Meeting up in Escondido without the husbands!)

"On behalf of our family, thank you so much for your email to me with all the great info on what to do this weekend around our grand kids playing soccer at the Ryan Park tournaments. We went to Dixon Lake, enjoyed downtown and had a wonderful family meal at J&M Restaurant!" ~ Randy C., Santa Monica, CA



Volunteers

We utilized the assistance of five volunteers with a total of 126.5 work hours primarily focused on posting events to the website calendar and e-newsletter content. We get the pleasure of teaching them Wordpress skills and social media marketing for business. Our volunteers come from diverse places in the community including the Del Lago Academy mentoring program, a Yale student home for the summer, and several local superstars just wanting to help out!

HOTEL OCCUPANCY & UPDATES

Hotel Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue continues to increase annually.

- TOT revenue has increased steadily over the previous five fiscal years
- In fiscal year 2014/2015 revenue was up almost 8.0% compared to the prior fiscal year
- TOT revenue at the end of Fiscal Year 2015/2016 increased by 9.5% compared to the prior fiscal year.

New property development updates from the City Manager's Weekly Update:

Felicita Development, LLC (Developer: Katherine Park, Creative Design Associates): This project is a 140-unit hotel, and a gas station or office/residential care facility at the southeast corner of Felicita Rd. and Gamble Lane.

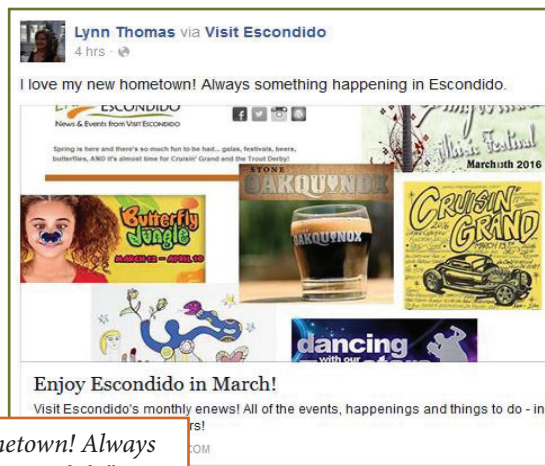
Springhill Suites (Developer: Raj Patel, San Bernardino Hospitality LLC): This project is a 4-story, 105-suite hotel totaling 73,300 sq. ft. located at 200 La Terraza Drive.

DIGITAL MARKETING

Website

VisitEscondido.com continues to bring in excellent traffic and analytic stats.

- 1,723 events were posted to the calendar during this fiscal year with 10 ongoing weekly events and 29 major annual events maintained in side navigation
- Unique visits, monthly average: 10,221
- Page views, monthly average: 39,977
- Featured Homepage "News" blog posts written: 83
- Top Pages Viewed - consistently throughout the year:
 - Event Calendar
 - Unique Things To Do
 - Wineries & Breweries
 - Cruisin' Grand Escondido
 - Dine Out Escondido! Restaurant Week and Food & Dining Experiences
 - Accommodations and Meeting Rooms & Event Venues
- Notable Posts and Pages with high viewing
 - Shopping Escondido
 - Lake Hodges Pedestrian Suspension Bridge
 - Pokemon Go Guide To Escondido
 - Queen Califia's Magical Circle
 - Outdoor Activities



*"I love my new hometown! Always something to do in Escondido."
~ Lynn Thomas, via Facebook comment*

Enjoy Escondido! Monthly E-newsletter

- Averages 1,663 subscribers monthly and has an average open rate of 28.03%, which is well above the industry average of 12.29%.
- For the FY2015-16 period, 17,868 people were reached with 4,491 unique opens.
- Each issue includes 5-7 featured news posts, about 36 of the top and ongoing events for that month.
- Sample from April: <http://ow.ly/10c60w>



Social Media

This year has seen substantial organic and paid growth in our social media efforts with a great deal of interactive engagement. We're having a very positive impact and influence collaborating with our audience.

We are also helping our stakeholders grow their social media audiences with tips and marketing ideas and we continue to attend the San Diego Tourism Authority's Social Media program with workshops throughout the year which assist with trends, channels and functionality education and face-to-face networking to build our regional presence.

Facebook:

- Likes are up from 2,752 to 4,036

Twitter:

- Followers are up from 928 to 1,180

Instagram - new this year:

- 523 Followers



*Great #repost and nod from the San Diego Zoo/Safari Park's Zookeeper Rick!
"BIG BIG thanks to @VisitEscondido..."
~ @Zookeeper Rick, via Instagram*

DINE OUT ESCONDIDO! – 2016 Recap Report

Escondido's Restaurant Week during CA Restaurant Month

"Dine Out Escondido!" (DOE) continued its momentum and growth with a successful third year; partnering once again with Visit California's statewide California Restaurant Month program. Nine restaurants were added to the diverse list of 28 participants representing all facets of Escondido eateries.

MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- 28 restaurant participants: 18 downtown, 10 around town
- 9 new participants added this year
- VisitEscondido.com dedicated DOE web page received 11,731 unique visitors
- Facebook - VisitEscondido page:
 - 535,845 total reach (organic + paid)
 - 11 Facebook posts by Visit Escondido, 55+ FB posts from restaurant participants and others, with many likes and shares
 - 1 Boosted VE post reached 41,577 views with 777 click throughs, 261 likes, and 96 shares
 - Successful FB photography contest, 9 winners awarded gift certificates to participating restaurants
 - 76 new page likes gained through the week, 113 for the month
- Exposure through Facebook pages such as Eating and Drinking San Diego's 8K+ members and My San Diego North County
- Instagram and Twitter showed increased numbers over last year through the use of #DineOutEscondido
- Presence with links on VisitCalifornia.com's California Restaurant Month website
- 6 ads were placed county wide in local and tourism publications such as SD CityBeat, 101 Things To Do, Espresso, Escondido Rec Guide, Escondido Magazine
- Event web calendar listings included VisitCalifornia.com, SanDiego.org, 101TTDSD, WHERE San Diego, Out & About North County
- 3 earned editorial articles
- 19,000 flyers and 75 posters were distributed county wide
- Event logo and information was distributed through over 20 organizational and business newsletters such as California Center for the Arts, Escondido, EUHSD faculty, John Paul the Great Catholic University, Rotary groups, wine clubs, arts orgs and other local businesses



FEEDBACK HIGHLIGHTS:

"This was our first year... we think it's a GREAT idea and look forward to next time." ~ Sunny Side Kitchen

"It was a very nice way to get our name out just after opening our restaurant. We had a very busy week, selling over 137 covers of our special!" ~ Burger Bench

"This program gives Escondido and businesses that reside in it a chance to shine. As always we appreciate your support, we look forward to participating in future DOE weeks!" ~ The Wooden Spoon

"We had an overall great turn out restaurant week, with quite a few new customers, thanks!" ~ Cuscatlan

"Dine Out is getting bigger and better! We've participated all 3 years and did 20% more business this year. Our staff love it because they feel we are giving new and regular customers more value for their money... also being in the program is an honor considering who's in the list." ~ Carin de RIA

"We had many great people come in and take advantage of our deal. It was so nice to talk to many of the customers and hear them share that they had planned on visiting other participating restaurants. We know it helped our business and we met many new friends." ~ A Delight of France Bakery & Bistro

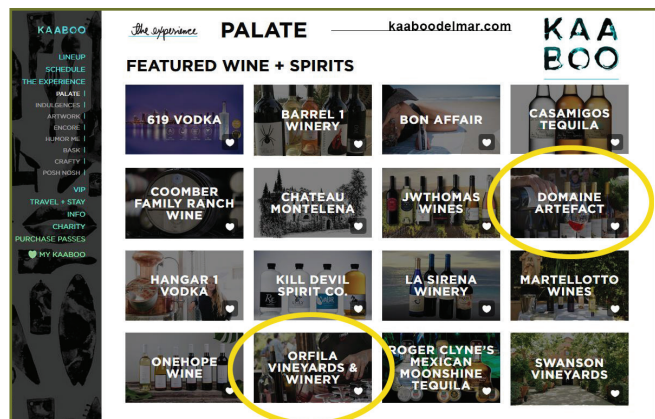
MARKETING & ADVERTISING HIGHLIGHTS

KAABOO Del Mar

Described as “The ultimate “mix-perience” featuring live music (over 60 bands), art, comedy, fine cuisine, top-notch amenities and more,” KAABOO’s 2015 festival debut was wildly successful (“Rolling Stone” named it one of the nation’s Top 5 fests last year) with over 60,000 attendees for the 3-day event.

Through the assistance of Visit Escondido’s wine connections, two of our local wineries (**Domaine Artefact** and **Orfila Vineyards & Winery**) participated in the Palate Experience which showcased their wines with tastings and pairings throughout the weekend.

One of our amazing art galleries, **Distinction Gallery**, also contributed to the eclectic mix in the Art Experience Pavilion.



“Thank you so much for helping us participate in this amazing event. Our wines were big hits and we had a blast! Cheers!”
~ Lynn LaChapelle, Domaine Artefact

Southern Farm & Garden Magazine

Southern Farm & Garden, a Georgia based magazine, has recently gone nationwide with its second issue through distribution in over 225 Barnes & Noble markets in all 50 states, including 8 locations in San Diego County.

Through a past connection, Visit Escondido is benefiting from this national marketing exposure in 50,000 issues of this beautiful “coffee table publication.” Additionally, the Fall/Winter issue will run the same full page ad along with a feature on local Chef Jesse Paul and The Wooden Spoon restaurant.



Phoenix Magazine

- Summer Travel Guide and Mobile App

This year, in addition to our annual co-op advertising with the San Diego Tourism Authority’s “Explore San Diego” bi-annual special sections, we opted in to the new Phoenix Travel Guide+ with print and a mobile app. The printed guide was mailed to 67,000 subscribers plus newsstand distribution. The interactive mobile app featured five states, other than Arizona, with great images and info on multiple pages.

Other print and digital advertising and editorial exposure is consistently successful through:

- San Diego’s Official Visitor Planning Guide
- 101 Things To Do - San Diego
- San Diego CityBeat
- The Escondido Magazine
- Edible San Diego
- The Visitors Center Network
- North County Business Journal
- SanDiego.org
- VisitCalifornia.com
- Your North County SD
- Out & About San Diego
- San Diego Reader
- SoCal Pulse
- WHERE San Diego
- Escondido Recreation Guide
- Eating and Drinking in San Diego
- Escondido Friends
- Espresso SD

Japanese Travel Guide

In partnership with the San Diego Tourism Authority and Japan Airlines, we ran an ad in the 2016 Japanese San Diego Guide & Map. The Map is printed twice a year (100,000 total) and distributed to over 300 locations, including prominent tourism offices in Japan, in-flight on Tokyo - San Diego routes, throughout southern California and online.

