

CITY OF YREKA

STRATEGIC TOURISM MARKETING PLAN

Dec 31, 2013 | Yreka, CA



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Yreka is a town unlike no other. Coined as California's "Golden City" due to its rich history in gold mining, Yreka uniquely balances a strong cultural heritage with dynamic new opportunities for residents and visitors alike to experience this charming historic town to the fullest.

The best and the brightest community leaders provided invaluable assistance in creating a strategic tourism marketing plan that aims to serve as a foundation to forge ahead in the tourism industry and capitalize on emerging trends and opportunities.

With the time and creativity invested by the City of Yreka, the Siskiyou County Economic Development Council, and our strategic partners in this plan, it is clear that Yreka is in a unique position to collaboratively overcome challenges and set new standards in the travel and tourism industry in Siskiyou County. Poised to emerge as a leader in an evolving travel and tourism landscape, Yreka has an opportunity to market itself in a way that is responsive, creative, and forward-thinking.

Tonya Dowse

Handwritten signature of Tonya Dowse.

Executive Director
Siskiyou County Economic Development Council

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SCEDC Organizational Overview

Siskiyou County - County Wide Tourism Marketing Plan

Civitas Tourism Business Improvement Districts Overview

Civitas "Property and Business Improvement District Law of 1994"

Project Purpose

Yreka's 2013 Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan is a comprehensive plan developed to provide a thorough assessment of the travel and tourism industry in Yreka and to provide an evaluation of the opportunities, needs, and level of support for collaborative tourism efforts. Looking at the topic through the lens of boosting Yreka's overall brand awareness and visitation revenues, this plan identifies goals, anticipated outcomes, and strategic funding options.

The Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan aims to become a key component to the City's overall strategic vision and is designed to be referenced and built upon as challenges are overcome and progress continues in the industry.



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Background

In 2009, the County of Siskiyou in conjunction with the City of Yreka and the City of Mt. Shasta identified the travel and tourism industry as a relatively untapped industry, despite the region's abundant natural and historic attractions. The City of Yreka (City), with the assistance of the Siskiyou County Economic Development Council (SCEDC), applied for and received funds from a Planning and Technical Assistance (PTA) grant 11-PTEC-7648 from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). This application was approved in December, 2011 with a completion deadline of December 31, 2013. The stated goal for this PTA was the creation of a tourism marketing strategy in the City of Yreka and the evaluation of a Tourism improvement district in the County of Siskiyou. Due to the reputation of the organization for delivery of excellent professional economic analysis, organizational expertise, local knowledge, and a previous strong relationship, the SCEDC was named in the grant application and thus acted as a sub-recipient for the performance of the deliverables. The SCEDC undertook the study in cooperation with key local partners and assistance from sub-consultants.

COLLABORATIVE WORKS

The Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan has been created as an integral foundation for tourism efforts in the City of Yreka in harmony with a broader county-wide strategy. This plan leverages previous work from multiple studies and a county-wide strategic marketing plan that was developed by the Strategic Marketing Group (SMG), with Carl Ribaldo as the final author of the County-Wide Strategic Marketing Plan. With over 20 years of specific experience in the travel and tourism industry and previous works such as the Rural Tourism Strategic Marketing Plan and Sustainable Tourism Plan for the California Travel and Tourism Commission, Mr. Ribaldo successfully provides background to the overall California tourism landscape and highlights trends specific to Siskiyou County. This is an important referential component (and attachment) of this plan which provides usable information at the regional level.

The Yreka Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan builds on the expertise and work in the County-Wide Strategic Marketing Plan to specifically provide Yreka with a tool that delivers an objective look at the status of the city's travel and tourism industry as well as a tailored set of recommendations to move forward with success.

It should also be noted that the SCEDC is contracting with Civitas Advisors, the world

leader in Tourist Business Improvement Districts (TBIDs), the recommended funding mechanism outlined in this document. Civitas is working to develop a TBID analysis and legal structure, and implement a TBID for Siskiyou County that will be concluded by the end of 2014.

TOURISM FUNDING

As discussed in the County Wide Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan, tourism funding has recently changed considerably overall.

Over the past ten years, the state of California has faced significant budget challenges. State politicians have increasingly turned to appropriating local monies as one method of balancing the state budget.

This action has put more and more pressure on local cities and counties, and as a result many regions have seen tourism funding reduced or cut entirely. To combat this trend and restore a source of revenue that cannot be allocated for other purposes, many communities have explored new funding options.

These options are varied and include strategies such as increasing municipal taxes, increasing marketing, supporting tourism organizations, and reallocating funds. One of the most recent and successful ideas has been the implementation of Tourism Business Improvement Districts (TBIDs). These improvement districts have been formed in a number of situations by local lodging operators to specifically fund tourism promotion efforts through self-assessments.

Because of the ongoing economic challenges at the state and local level the popularity of Tourism Business Improvement Districts (TBIDs) in the state of California is growing. As local communities look for solutions to budget shortfalls and seek to increase tourism revenues, the development of this funding mechanism has become the choice for many tourism destinations.

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Executive Summary

Yreka’s Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan is a comprehensive framework designed to guide city leaders and industry stakeholders’ efforts to identify and address the city’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the current travel and tourism industry. In addition, specific recommendations are made that are intended to help establish a long term budget and stable funding, leverage existing partnerships, and build on the momentum of the city’s current infrastructure and community enthusiasm.

Key components include:

1. The inventory and analysis of current infrastructure in the city of Yreka that identifies where the city can improve its services and add new amenities. This includes a discussion of advantages and disadvantages for the city and its competitors.
2. An assessment of the target markets and the most effective means of attracting potential tourist visitors.
3. An assessment of the tourism strategies that are currently being utilized by the city of Yreka and what new strategies could be employed to support a regionally beneficial effort.
4. A targeted action plan that recommends strategies to be implemented, including organizational leads and funding options.
5. An assessment of funding and the specifics of a Tourism Business Improvement Plan (TBID) that will act as a funding mechanism for Yreka and the County of Siskiyou.

Summary of recommendations:

1. Establish a Tourism Steering Committee.
2. Establish sustainable long-term funding through a county wide TBID.
3. Develop fundamental marketing tools to establish a recognizable brand identity and increase visibility within target market.

4. Capitalize on existing relationships and increase potential collaboration opportunities with industry partners to leverage resources, increase impact of messaging, and boost market share.
5. Develop community support for integrated tourism efforts. The goal is to provide visitors with access to information while fostering an overarching welcoming “feel” to the area that encourages deepening the connection with travelers and to motivate return visits and word of mouth.

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Process & Methodology

A variety of outreach methods were employed to engage the community stakeholders in further research and discussion about the state of the tourism industry in Yreka, strategic marketing efforts, and long term funding. The SCEDC took a detailed assessment of all lodging operations in Yreka and contacted each one via phone, email, and mail to be involved in the conversation. To spur the efforts and help set and guide work being done, a steering committee was formed at the early stages of the grant inception in 2011 and promptly assisted in the decision to engage Strategic Marketing Group at a county level to direct a larger conversation across the county. SMG facilitated a kick off weekend to address an overview on the status of the tourism industry and help develop goals and next steps. The City of Yreka played an integral role in these meetings where the vision was developed: "To be a unique, desirable, sustainable tourism destination."

In the two years ensuing the formation of the steering committee and the kick off meeting, the SCEDC stayed connected with hoteliers throughout Yreka and the county by making phone calls and checking in in-person to continue the conversation of a collaborative marketing effort.

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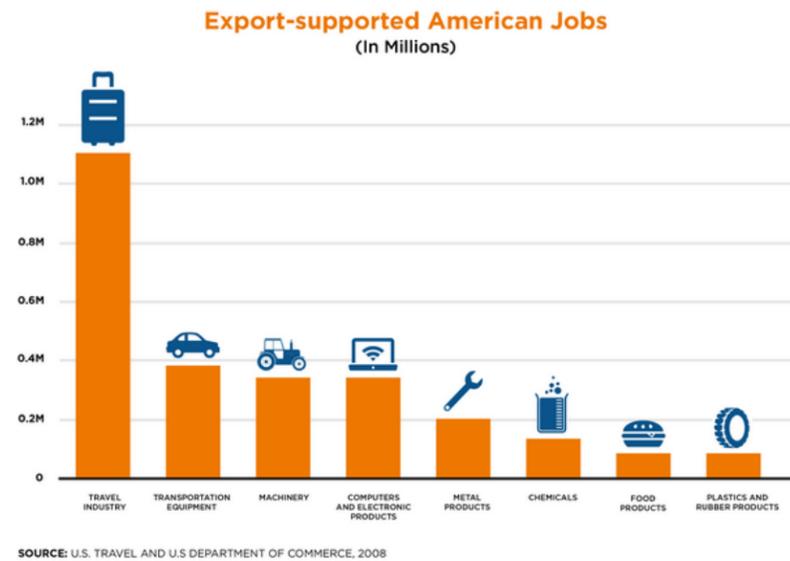
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Tourism Overview

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND STABILITY

Tourism is a growing sector across the nation; travel and tourism generates two trillion dollars for the U.S. economy and supports one out of every eight jobs (<http://VisitCalifornia.com>). Tourism related jobs represented over 13% of the jobs in the county in 2010. The lack of a major population center and relatively poorly-developed infrastructure limits the ability of Siskiyou County to develop complex industrial clusters. Siskiyou County's strength is in its major resources in the form of natural assets. The beauty of Siskiyou County, and especially the broad area around Yreka, provides multiple excellent tourism opportunities. A major economic driver and goal for any city is the flow of money into the community from out of the area. By attracting tourism to the area the city can support its local industries, continue a multiplier effect, and increase the standard of living for its community.



TRENDS

As detailed in the County-Wide Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan, it is critical to understand regional, state, national, and international tourism trends that are often driven by sustained economic challenges, evolving demographics, emerging technology and shifts in consumer travel patterns. No single tourism destination, whether city, county, region, or state, operates in a vacuum, but rather is subject to a variety of market influences. As such, it is important to understand the changing environment in which the destination is operating.

The key macro trends outlined in the County Wide Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan that influence Siskiyou County are:

- TRAVEL
- ECONOMIC
- TECHNOLOGY
- CULTURAL/SOCIAL
- DEMOGRAPHIC

The central implications resulting from trends in these arenas for Siskiyou County are:

- The tourism economy has experienced an uptick suggesting the economy has improved.
- Continued consumer technology use is quickly changing the game for destination marketing organizations
- Siskiyou County's location can at times be challenging to its primary Northern California market. While the access is good, the distance can be challenging. Its location may work for the drive market in the event that gas prices continue to increase as consumers pare back more expensive and further distant destinations to closer drive markets.
- The California marketplace continues to see a changing demographic picture. This offers an opportunity to target and attract an ethnically diverse market.
- The continued concern for the environment means Siskiyou County should continue to focus on the environmental aspects of the destination. This includes featuring the natural assets of the region as well as the sustainability efforts of the tourism industry.

In addition to the above mentioned trends, an interesting shift is taking place in rural areas that puts Yreka in a prime position to capture a large market share of experiential (as opposed to geographic based) tourists. Large numbers of travelers have lost interest in cookie cutter restaurants, lodging and attractions.

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Instead, they want local food, local attractions and connection to the lifestyles of local people. This has led to new trends that cater to small towns, their unique cultures, and often significant historic happenings. The benefits of small rural towns experiencing an uptick in tourism can be of significant impact to overall economic vibrancy of these regions without disturbing the charm and heritage of a town's personality.

However, it can be challenging for rural areas to fully leverage this consumer interest with often minimal funding for tourism marketing and little insight as to how to develop a market share of their own. To successfully overcome this obstacle, creative thinking and collaboration play a critical role.

With its rich heritage, charming agricultural lifestyle, and close proximity to larger population centers, Yreka serves as an ideal model to implement a sustainable travel and tourism strategy that has the potential to increase the region's visitation revenues.

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Yreka

INTRODUCTION

Nestled in the northwestern corner of the Shasta Valley, Yreka offers panoramic views of Mount Shasta and the Cascades, along with the Siskiyou Mountain range. Yreka is within close proximity to a variety of recreational activities and is home to several retail shopping areas, restaurants and hotels.

As the largest city and county seat of Siskiyou County with a population of 7,765, Yreka serves as a regional hub for shopping, dining, and culture over a large area. Due to its central location in the county with major attractions in all directions, Yreka is positioned to be an effective center for tourist activities. The short list of activities accessible includes Lava Beds National Monument, the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway, Tulelake National Wildlife Refuge, and Crater Lake to the north and east, Mt. Ashland and the Rogue Valley wineries to the due north, the Klamath River and Cave Junction to the northwest, and the activities around Mount Shasta and the Pacific Crest Trail to the south. Hiking, camping, fishing, horseback riding, biking, hunting, mining, and agri-tourism are also easily accessible from Yreka. As the most historic city in the region, Yreka contains over 70 quaint and beautiful houses built before 1900 and a deep rooted local pride in its heritage that tie into the city’s rich history as a gold mining town and spur its nickname as The Golden City.

LOCATION & ACCESSIBILITY

Yreka is located on the I-5 corridor, 22 miles south of the California/Oregon border, 260 miles north of Sacramento, 312 miles north of San Francisco, and 323 miles south of Portland. Yreka is located on the junction with Highway 3 to the Scott Valley and Highway 96 to Happy Camp along the Klamath River.

These facts give Yreka the advantages of being away from major urban areas, but still within easy striking distance for several major population centers. Its convenient location right off of Interstate 5 between the major metropolitan areas of Portland and San Francisco makes it a visible and easily accessible stopping point for vehicle travelers passing through.

Although not a major population center itself, Yreka is easily accessible to the nearby population centers of Medford and Redding, both also along the interstate 5 and both home to national airports servicing the area.

From a travel and tourism perspective, Yreka is in an ideal location to attract nearby populations as well as pass-through visitors. Not “off the beaten path,” Yreka is visible (with potential to increase visibility through extensive marketing efforts) and easily accessible, yet offers a quaint, rural, small-town experience that is gaining popularity with travelers today.

AMENITIES & ACTIVITIES

In considering amenities, it is important to consider Yreka’s offerings from a visitor’s perspective and understand what motivates spending decisions. Everything from easy access to lodgings, relevant information, friendly and accommodating business owners, and a vibrant local culture are all important focuses. One of the most discouraging things to a visitor is if marketing messages do not align with actual experience; before Yreka invests in expensive marketing, it is important to assess the city’s offerings.

TOURISM ELEMENT	CHARACTERISTICS
1. Natural Resources	Natural assets unique to the region.
2. Infrastructure	Air access, roads, utilities, etc. All elements that help support the visitor’s experience.
3. Hospitality	Human elements that interact and serve the visitor.
4. Visitor Services	Hotels, Food & Beverage and retail services designed to assist the tourist.
5. Attractions	Natural and built facilities, events and local residents that provide visitors with experiences.
6. Local Culture	Culture is what makes the destination unique and real and provides memorable experience to visitors
7. Organizational	Organization and processes that work to attract visitors to the destination using a variety of promotional techniques.

Source: McIntosh, Goeldner and Ritchie Tourism: Principles, Practices and Philosophies and the Strategic Marketing Group

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In relation to areas immediately surrounding Yreka, the city offers the most amenities appealing to travelers including 13 different lodging accommodations and 39 different eateries (according to Yelp as of 2013), including fast food chains.

LODGINGS

Business Name	Address
Holiday Inn Express	707 Montague Road
Baymont Inn and Suites	148 Moonlit Oaks Avenue
Super 8 Motel	136 Montague Road
Relax Inn of Yreka	1210 S. Main Street
Klamath Motor Lodge	1111 S. Main Street
Mountain View Inn	801 N. Main Street
Rodeway Inn	1325 S. Main Street
Motel 6	1785 S. Main Street
Best Western Miners Inn	122 E. Miner Street
Budget Inn	306 N. Main Street
Comfort Inn Yreka	1804 B Fort Jones Rd
Econo Lodge Inn & Suites	526 S. Main Street
The Yreka Third Street Inn	326 Third Street

For visitors passing through, Yreka offers an easy stop for fuel and groceries and for those staying a bit longer, there are additional amenities and activities that can be sought out to experience the area. The core of the historic downtown, along West Miner Street, is listed as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as a California Historical Landmark, offering local shops and eateries. Yreka is home to the Siskiyou County Museum, and to a number of Gold Rush-era monuments and parks. Visitors also come to enjoy trout fishing in the nearby Klamath, Sacramento and McCloud Rivers, or come to see and climb Mount Shasta, Castle Crags or the Trinity Alps. Visitors also ski (both alpine and cross-country), or bike or hike to the waterfalls, streams and lakes in the area, including nearby Falls of the McCloud River, Burney Falls, Mossbrae Falls, Lake Siskiyou, Castle Lake and Shasta Lake.

The town hosts Gold Rush Days every year in June as well as a farmers' market throughout the summer months, art walks once a month, holiday festivals, and the county's signature fair, the Siskiyou Golden Fair, at the end of summer.

With a solid foundation of amenities and events, there is a huge opportunity for Yreka to build on this base and generate increased momentum towards increasing tourist-based amenities and increasing knowledge of existing amenities to outside populations. The basic structure for appealing offerings exists, yet Yreka is at the early stages of building a strong tourist culture that portrays a vibrant down-town and highlights organized efforts to disperse information to visitors and encourage them to become Yreka brand ambassadors. In considering Yreka's amenities and activities, it is critical to understand the city's competition to gain insight on strong points and areas to improve.

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Competition

Yreka is a charming historic town that offers a core experience speaking to its distinct heritage (museums, monuments, events, etc), a rural “small-town” way of life, as well as abundant outdoor adventure. There are hundreds of towns all over the United States that could be identified as potential competitors, all in various stages of progress in developing a strong tourist appeal. For the sake of this report, the competitors called out were selected due to proximity and/or similar amenities.

The selected competitor cities include Ashland, Medford, Jacksonville and Redding. To set itself apart from these locations, it is important to understand what draws people to the area and to identify key differences that are unique to Yreka. All of these immediate competitors have significantly larger population bases, or are closer to larger population centers than Yreka and have also been established as tourist destinations for longer. For these reasons, they all have more lodging and dining options and other amenities that appeal to travelers. Yreka would benefit in leveraging its unique location, experiences, and value propositions in creating marketing messages to reach the target market. The strict competition surrounding Yreka places the city at a disadvantage for attracting potential travelers. The lack of dedicated marketing funds gives the city fewer channels to reach the consumer and with several other attractive locations in this region there is little reason or motivation for consumers to learn about. Yreka must provide this information in order to reach these consumers.

ASHLAND

Ashland is a town of roughly 20,000 located in Southern Oregon that has a unique higher end product that touts its history in the performing arts, wellness-centered culture, and alternative lifestyle. This town boasts a major Shakespeare Festival and ties to education and diversity through its local college. The town’s experiences are all rooted in the city’s pride for its unique culture. This makes Ashland a major competitor to Yreka in attracting and providing higher-end products and shopping. The culture of Ashland will continue to provide Ashland with a raised profile and an advantage in external marketing. Ashland has a cohesive marketing strategy and a local culture that is centered around travelers. While Ashland is clearly established as a tourist destination and Yreka is not, there is also an opportunity to utilize the close proximity to such a visible and well-marketed destination to the advantage of Yreka. It would be an obvious collaboration and marketing opportunity to work to pull in Ashland visitors by offering them a distinctly different experience in Yreka.

MEDFORD

Medford is the regional population center for the Rogue Valley and much of Southern Oregon and Northern California. It boasts a culture of outdoor adventure, wine tasting, and commercial opportunity. It has a growing art and performance scene, and is the center for health care in the region. Medford proper does not have the same diverse outdoor activities as Yreka but they are available within a short drive. Medford benefits from major stores and facilities that make it an important hub for the larger region, but does not offer a unique culture that currently rivals Ashland. Medford is the major base for tourism in Southern Oregon and so competes with Yreka for visitors to areas between them. The advantage Medford has is particularly in the form of major guide organizations and superstores, yet this also serves as a strength to Yreka as Medford cannot offer the same small town historic experience.

JACKSONVILLE

A small city of about 2,800 people, Jacksonville is located about five miles west of Medford. With a charming historic downtown, Jacksonville capitalizes on its heritage as a gold mining town and has many events and amenities to draw visitors from all over to experience its well-preserved quaint culture. In addition, Jacksonville is home to the Brit Festival, a hugely popular music festival that runs through the summer months and serves as the base to the city’s tourism industry. With the festival a major draw to visitors, Jacksonville has successfully marketed itself in a way that makes it a destination all year long. Nearby activities include wine tasting and outdoor adventuring. In many ways, Jacksonville is the most similar to Yreka of all competitors, but does not offer as immediate access from the interstate, large amenities such as superstores, or large chain hotels (all of this is offered in nearby Medford). As an obvious competitor, Yreka could easily look to Jacksonville to serve as an example in developing a thriving tourism industry.

REDDING

Redding claims to be the “Trail Capital of California” and emphasizes its outdoor adventure activities. Redding is the largest city north of Sacramento in California and serves the Central Valley as well as the southernmost mountain areas of Northern California. Similar to Medford, it is a center for health care and serves as a base for outdoor purchases and adventures. The city has low-to mid-priced hotels and the widest selection of dining and lodging locations amongst the mentioned competitors. Redding presents a major challenge to Yreka because it contains many of the same summer outdoor activities available in Yreka, and infringes on activities in Siskiyou County. While Redding is not immediately adjacent to winter and snow opportunities, its moderate climate, size, and closer proximity to larger populations give it an advantage. Redding is a strong marketer outside the region and market not just itself, but also locations in Siskiyou County. In the sense that it is an interstate 5 stopping point for travelers that provides easy access to fuel and eateries, it competes with Yreka. However, in more significant ways, Redding and Yreka appeal to very different markets and have very different offerings that make them less direct competitors for destination travel and more competitive with interstate stops.

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Visitors

When discussing competition, it is important to consider the type of traveler the city is competing for. Broadly speaking, there are two types of travelers; the destination traveler who is seeking a specific experience that is unique to the area, and the visitor that has chosen to stop briefly in Yreka while traveling on to a different end destination. Different approaches are necessary to capture the market share of these individual markets, as per the recommendations outlined at the end of this document. In addition, fully understanding the city's specific target market is a critical step to developing a memorable and impactful brand identity that resonates with the population it is trying to reach.

In regard to these two types of visitors, it was previously mentioned that Yreka's easy accessibility from Interstate 5 is a definite strength. Yreka has a great potential to convert overnight visitors traveling through on I-5. It can be a logical stopping point for travelers making a long trip north or south by increasing awareness of Yreka as a convenient place to stop on their travels. The city can further capitalize on these stop-overs by showcasing all the community has to offer to them as a visitor.

Although not a final destination for outdoor enthusiasts, Yreka is central to many outdoor recreational activities close by. Educating potential visitors about all the outdoor adventures there are to experience can help the community tap into the natural resources of the region as an economic driver. Yreka has potential to continue to capitalize on its unique historic culture to create experiences that would draw destination visitors. For weekend get-aways from urban areas, the region tends to pull visitors from the following areas;

San Francisco/Bay Area

Many urban consumers enjoy getting out of the city and enjoy the outdoors on weekends and vacations. Targeted advertising would pay off in this region due to its dense population and high average household income levels. Yreka leaders could capitalize on their intra-state connections with the rest of California and portray the area as a prime California getaway. Attracting this group will require competition with established destinations in the rest of California

Portland

While Oregon offers many outdoor adventures, the weather of northern California is a huge draw for the market. Many consumers from the Portland area travel south to get away from the cloudy and rainy days. Portland is further away and thus more difficult to attract, and resorts in the Cascades pull a similar demographic to the City.

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Funding

Any concerted effort to research and analyze Yreka’s specific target market, develop a solid brand identity, and employ a meaningful marketing strategy requires a secure and sustainable source of funding streams.

Tourism Business Improvement Districts (TBIDs) are one solution that communities across California and the U.S have recently begun to undertake in effort to develop funds that are not tied to government that can be used specifically for travel and tourism efforts. There are several types of improvement districts: some are for physical improvements to an area and some are for marketing and advertising purposes. Tourism Business Improvement Districts are most commonly formed by a group of hoteliers who choose to create an assessment fee that is charged to all rented rooms. This assessment can be a percent of the total fee or a set amount per rented night. Some communities have chosen to extend assessment to other business such as restaurants, shopping establishments or guides and outfitters. Lodging assessments tend to be the most easily established which is why many communities start with a lodging assessment. Assessments can be collected in multiple ways, but the most common are to assess as a percentage of a portion of taxes hotels pay and to assess a flat fee by bed. The following chart contains scenarios for a countywide TBID and the funds that could accrue from that to the benefit of Yreka (and the rest of the county). This is purely a flat rate and a percentage method could very well be used in practice.

Siskiyou TBID Funding Scenarios

Hotels, Motels, B&B	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Scenario	\$1 Night	\$2 Night	\$ 3 Night
Number of Units	1,770	1,770	1,770
Estimated Annual Occ	45%	45%	45%
TBID Rate	\$1	\$2	\$3
Projected Revenue	\$290,723	\$581,445	\$872,168

RV Parks	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Scenario	\$1 Night	\$2 Night	\$ 3 Night
Number of Units	1,495	1,495	1,495
Estimated Annual Occ	45%	45%	45%
TBID Rate	\$1	\$2	\$3
Projected Revenue	\$121,095	\$242,190	\$363,285

Yreka could capitalize on its initial tourism strategy by developing a tourism improvement district. This district would increase the overall marketing power of the city. Data from Visit California indicates that in 2011 a TBID of 1% in Yreka alone could have raised an additional \$56,800 for tourism marketing funding. The cooperation between jurisdictions in the county would bring in even more money which would be utilized as the governing board would decide. Yreka would benefit in that almost all of this additional funding would be targeted towards marketing efforts that the City could never afford alone.

When deciding on the area to include in the TBID the city should consider partnerships with other cities/areas of the county. With very little brand recognition for the region, any additional funding that can be used to promote the region as a whole will also help each individual region. When the funding is limited combining efforts can yield a higher return on investment.

A sample TBID legal structure has been provided as an addendum to this document for reference. It should also be noted that the SCEDC is contracting with Civitas Advisors, the world leaders in TBID analysis and formation, to analyze and apply a sample TBID structure specific to Siskiyou County that will further detail how this funding model would impact travel and tourism funds for the county. This is an ongoing public project that is expected to conclude by the end of 2014.

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Partnerships

As mentioned above, partnerships and ongoing collaborations are crucial to the success of tourism in Yreka, the county, and the region as a whole. Currently there are abundant opportunities for Yreka to collaborate among enthusiastic community groups, non-profit organizations, other jurisdictions within the county, at a regional level with northern California, with the state at large, and even across state borders with Southern Oregon. Since all cities in the area are fairly small, the availability of funds for tourism promotion is limited. This means that in competition with larger municipalities for tourist dollars, all cities in Siskiyou County are at a disadvantage if working individually. This can be overcome to an extent through partnerships, and specifically through combining funds towards a common purpose. Through combining funds, the County as a whole can be promoted, and major features can act as a destination that benefits all jurisdictions.

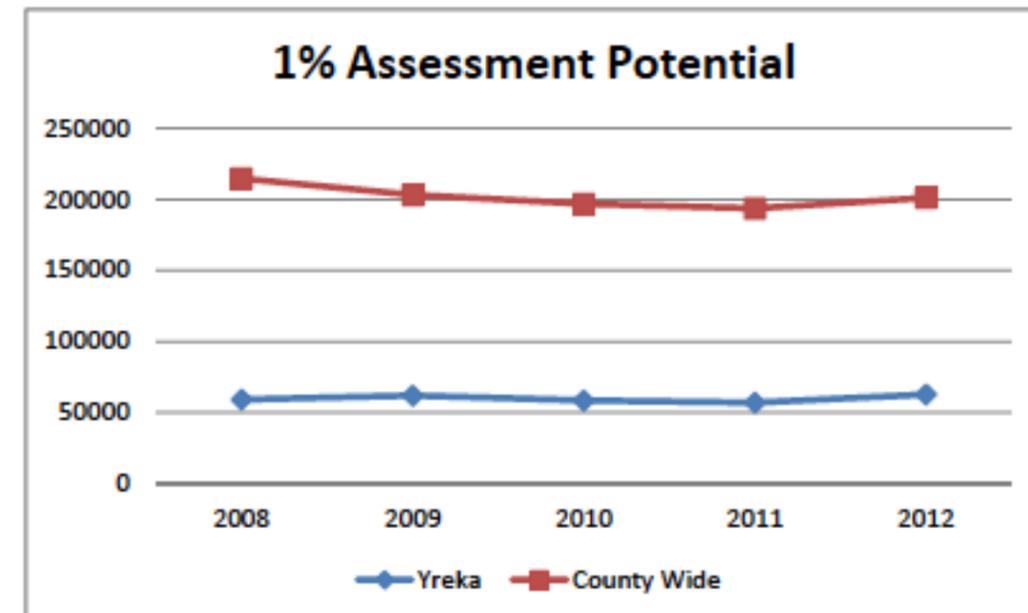
The diverse geography of Siskiyou County does pose a challenge in presenting a unified front for the county. The distances involved and differences between the northern and southern portions of the county have allowed a disassociation to evolve. Rivalries and failure to realize common bonds have not just led to a lack of cooperation, but an active competition in some cases. Yet it is important for stakeholders throughout the county to realize that the common features they share and the advantages that would accrue through cooperation are more important. Key organizations to consider as partners:

- All city & county organizations with an interest in promoting tourism including the Yreka Chamber of Commerce, Cycle Siskiyou, and others; partnering with groups within the County that influence tourism can always help all parties involved. Many of these organizations, while invested, are low on resources to assist the process of tourism promotion. Despite this, it is important to engage any groups or organizations with invested interest and ongoing activities to be sure no one within the county is duplicating efforts and thus wasting precious marketing, development and advertising dollars. Other organizations within the county to consider include, the museums, the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway Committee, and the Forest Service.
- The California Welcome Center at Collier's Rest Area: The California Welcome Center at Collier's Rest Area celebrated its grand opening as California's newest Welcome Center during the spring of 2013. Recognized as a huge asset to all of Northern California, Siskiyou County in particular benefits greatly from this fantastic tourist amenity. With a beautiful information center, there is abundant opportunity to market the area (and specific destinations within the area) to visitors that stop by looking to explore Siskiyou County.

- Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association: The Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association is charged by Visit California to represent the 8 counties in Shasta Cascade region. As Siskiyou County is one of the 8 counties represented, it is important that Yreka works with them to make sure that they city events and activities are properly showcased in their marketing efforts.
- Visit California: At the state level Visit California's mission is "to develop and maintain marketing programs in partnership with the State's travel industry that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination." They work closely with Brand USA to ensure California has a strong presence with the organization. They also work to provide many co-op advertising and marketing programs to help each region of the state better market itself. Working with Visit California to ensure local events and activities are highlight on Visit California will help to give the City an upper hand with people are exploring where they want to visit in California.

Visit California aptly describes the tourism ecosystem as a target. Having a strong presence at each of the rings moving outward help to bring visitors down the buying change to a region and ultimately in the individual businesses.

Below is an example of the potential a 1% assessment over the last five years.



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Tourism Ecosystem



visit
California

BRAND USA

Brand USA was established by the Travel Promotion Act to spearhead the nation's first global marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and to communicate U.S. entry/exit policies and procedures to worldwide travelers. Brand USA works in close partnership with the travel industry to maximize the economic and social benefits of domestic travel. These benefits include fostering understanding between people and cultures and creating jobs essential to the economy. Each state works closely with Brand USA to provide content, images and videos to support Brand USA's efforts. The City can further benefit by providing its own content that can be used in Brand USA's marketing efforts internationally to raise awareness for the US and Yreka.

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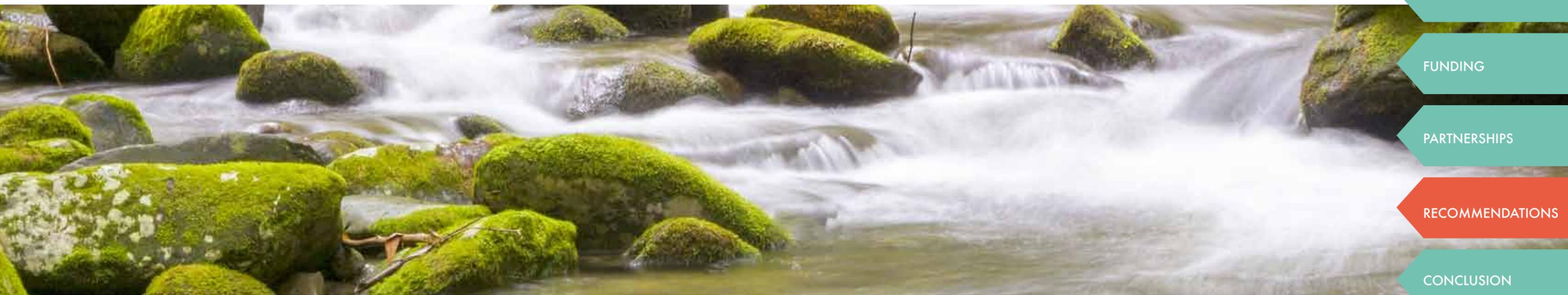
Recommendations

1. Establish a Tourism Steering Committee: Build on the momentum created in developing this report to develop a committee dedicated to the furthering of the travel and tourism industry in Yreka. The committee should represent key stakeholders and industry leaders to develop and execute a strategic vision that establishes funding and promotes industry growth. The committee should assemble a list of marketing goals which can be undertaken in order to increase tourism. The next step will be to agree on which organization will take the lead in implementing those goals. There are many organizations in the county and only through a cohesive effort to bring these organizations together and decide on common cause can an effective plan be created. There are several options for this leadership including the creation of a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) that are discussed further in the SMG document. They can be summarized as giving leadership to a single organization, giving it to the County of Siskiyou, or creating a new DMO.

Once an organization is created or decided upon, the decision will have to be made as to which strategies would provide the most return on investment and how they are to be implemented.

2. Establish sustainable long-term funding through the creation of a county-wide TBID: Tourism business improvement districts (TBID) are powerful funding tools that help hotels and other lodging businesses increase occupancy rates and revenues. TBIDs have become an increasingly popular - and important - method of providing stable funding for destination marketing and promotion, tied directly to the lodging industry. Creating a Tourism Marketing District is another popular strategy for these areas that reflects the major activity of TBIDs - marketing. TBIDs can provide funding for destination promotion efforts, sales lead generation, special event promotion, and other activities that directly benefit lodging businesses in the district. In many destinations, TBID funding supplements local government marketing funds, and is managed by the Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB). In other destinations, hoteliers have chosen to form a nonprofit corporation to manage funding for marketing and promotion efforts.

Currently Yreka devotes relatively light funding specifically to tourism marketing. General funds are provided to the Chamber which then produces the visitor guide and maintains the tourism website. With no additional funds, building the tourism brand for the city will be difficult. The established steering committee is to work directly with hoteliers to generate enthusiasm and determine leadership for creating a successful TBID, using the information from this report, the County-Wide Strategic Tourism Plan, and the forthcoming Civitas study.



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3. Develop fundamental marketing tools to establish a recognizable brand identity and increase visibility within target market: The Steering Committee should establish a marketing sub-committee with key marketing professionals to be a part of the committee (recommend hiring outside consultant or team if necessary) that develops deliverables around the following marketing activities:

Identify target market: This is the first crucial step that should be a thoroughly researched piece and not based off of subjective perspective. A complete target market analysis should be included.

- Refine the brand identity based on target market analysis: A strong brand identity is more than a name, slogan, logo, or website. It is an entire presence that encompasses the culture and key amenities in a way that is consistently conveyed through all marketing materials. It is recommended to consult with a marketing professional to assist in this process.
- Create a strong online presence that successfully portrays brand identity and connects with the established target market. The online presence should include the following: a high quality website, an interactive social media presence including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, and regular mass email campaigns through an established portal (i.e. Mailchimp, Constant Contact, etc.). Other online opportunities include paid advertising through Google Adwords, Facebook, and relevant high-traffic blogs. A self-authored blog for the city is also an option as long as it is done professionally, with great photography, updated consistently, and not bogged down with unattractive or distracting advertisements from businesses.
- Research and identify paid advertising opportunities that would reach the desired target market: print advertising (including billboard), television, radio, etc.
- Develop a strong public relations strategy that focuses on getting Yreka in the media through the development of media tools such as a press kit and press release. Thorough research, public relations activities, and/or the hiring of an experienced professional are recommended to successfully develop and implement this component.

4. Capitalize on existing relationships and increase potential collaboration opportunities with industry partners to leverage resources, increase impact of messaging, and boost market share. The steering committee should prioritize collaboration and partnerships when developing their marketing mix. The partners included in this report should be included, when possible, in quarterly meetings.

5. Develop community support for integrated tourism efforts. The goal is to provide visitors with access to information while fostering an overarching welcoming “feel” to the area that encourages deepening the connection with travelers and to motivate return visits and word of mouth. The marketing message should portray an experience that is authentic to the city and that is welcoming to visitors through avenues such as consolidated, easy to access/understand information about how to get around, what to do, and where to go. Businesses should be included in how to make visitors feel welcome: are they friendly to diversity? Are their hours geared towards visitors? Etc. Efforts to integrate the community should be a part of the overarching strategy so as to not duplicate efforts (ie. multiple websites trying to communicate about the same things, similar projects being executed by different non-profits) and to be comprised of any related projects going on with other organizations.

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Conclusion & Yreka SWOT Analysis

Yreka is a small, historic town that has the potential to greatly increase activity in the travel and tourism industry and, thus, the associated revenue that could greatly impact the overall economic well-being of the area. Currently, Yreka is at the early phases of beginning to position itself as a tourism destination and therefore faces many challenges (large and small) to become competitive in the market. Below is a current snapshot that summarize the city's strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the tourism industry.

Strengths

- National and Federal Recreation Lands
- Lakes, Rivers and Waterways
- Easy I-5 Access
- Rich history

Weaknesses

- No dedicated funding
- Limited indoor activity options
- Limited high-luxury

Opportunities

- Cycle Tourism
- Leverage Mount Shasta area
- Leverage other natural areas
- Increase branding efforts

Threats

- Cities to the north and south have similar characteristics and established marketing programs
- Political rivalries with other Siskiyou County jurisdictions

As discussed, a fundamental step to developing strong momentum in the industry through the development of a stable and long-term funding mechanism that is dedicated 100% to the betterment of attracting tourists and delivering a unique and memorable experience. The travel and tourism industry today is shifting away from cookie-cutter experiences and more and more travelers are seeking unique ways to integrate with their destinations in authentic ways; food, culture, events, and history. With proper funding and dedicated leadership, Yreka could build its brand identity and visitor amenities/activities to build a strong market share that puts the city on the map in the travel and tourism industry.

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Resources:

American Fact Finder. Ashland.

American Fact Finder. Yreka. http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

Ribaudo, Carl. Siskiyou County County-Wide Tourism Marketing Plan. Strategic Marketing Group, 2013.

Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association. www.shastacascade.com

The Brand USA. http://www.thebrandusa.com/About_Brand_USA#sthash.KUU-Jdxq5.dpuf

Transient Occupancy Tax. County of Siskiyou. Treasurer – Tax Collector.

Transportation Revenues and Expenditures. Fuel Excise Taxes. CA Dept of Transportation.

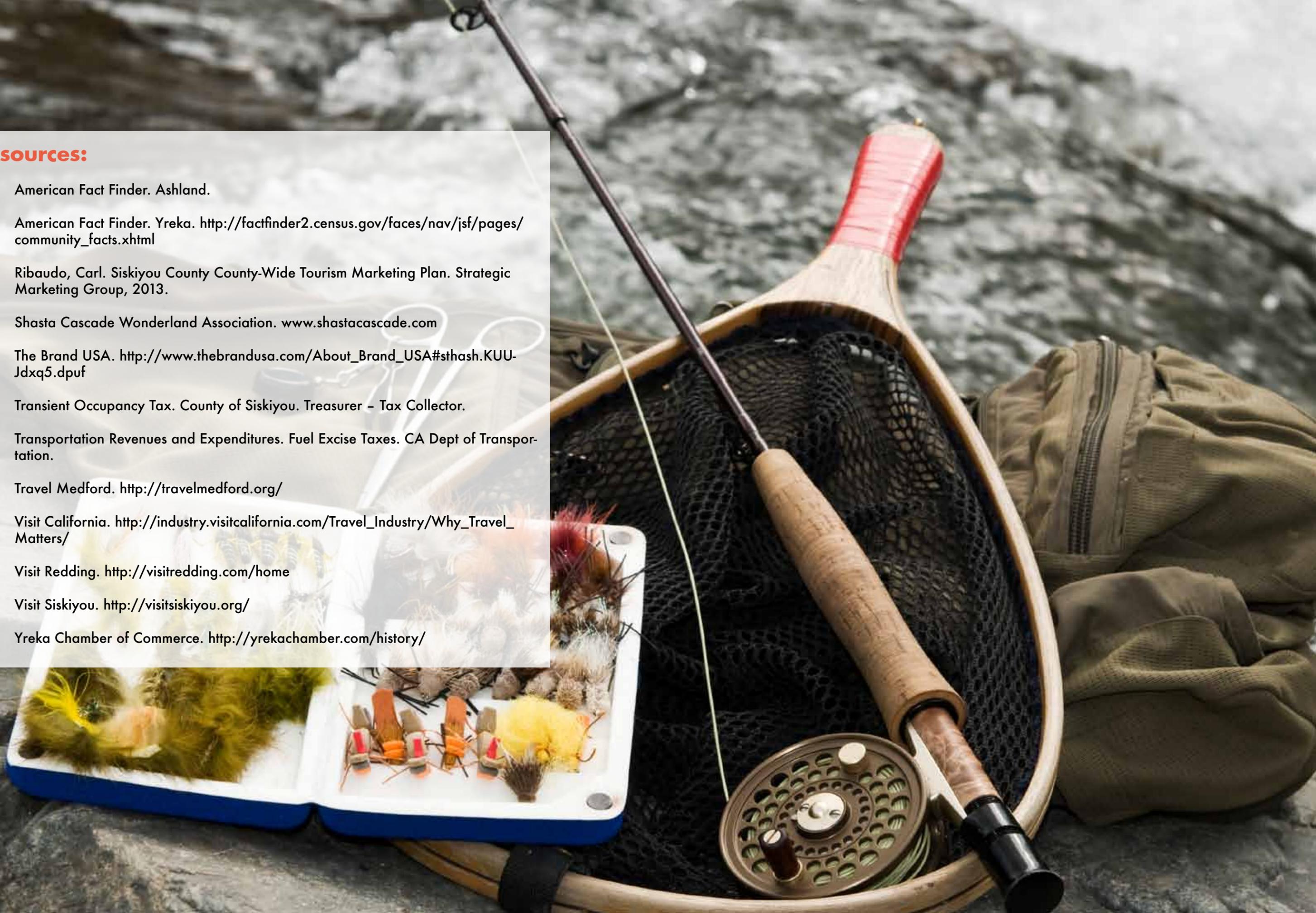
Travel Medford. <http://travelmedford.org/>

Visit California. http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/Travel_Industry/Why_Travel_Matters/

Visit Redding. <http://visitredding.com/home>

Visit Siskiyou. <http://visitsiskiyou.org/>

Yreka Chamber of Commerce. <http://yrekachamber.com/history/>



ABOUT THE SCEDC

The SCEDC has a Board of Director's composed of twelve members that represent leading industries from jurisdictions throughout Siskiyou County. The Board directs the organization in policy and decides on the vision for the organization. Following this direction, the SCEDC places a strong emphasis on supporting countywide efforts aimed at improving the local economic base and generating increased permanent employment opportunities. The SCEDC develops strategies that will result in the constructive, balanced economic growth of our region. The SCEDC works in close cooperation with the multiple jurisdictions across the county to conduct research, analyze business trends, attract investment, and improve job prospects. The organization furthermore supports businesses in the county through consulting and advocacy. The Siskiyou County Economic Development Council prides itself on having a knowledgeable staff that is effective in providing full-service hands-on expertise, as well as valuable resources for growth and development in the county. The organization currently consists of the following Staff.

Tonya Dowse, Executive Director

Tonya Dowse has been the Executive Director of the Siskiyou County Economic Development Council since 2005. Tonya has over 20 years of experience in Economic Development. Her hard work resulted in the designation of the Siskiyou Enterprise Zone which helps to attract, retain and expand business in Siskiyou County. Tonya represents the Siskiyou County at the state level in leadership and advisory board positions with Upstate California, Housing and Community Development CDBG (Community Development Block grant) funds, and more organizations. Tonya has economic development experience in several locations in California and Oregon and has in-depth knowledge in economic and community development. Her experience in marketing, analysis, administration, and leadership has been extremely important to the organization as well as partners in the community. Tonya oversees all the grants and programs for the SCEDC. Her experience includes the successful attraction and siting of multiple businesses, effective consulting and technical assistance, and a strong record of coalition-building.

Jason Darrow, Program Director

Jason Darrow has four years of experience directing programs at the SCEDC. He has diverse experience as an entrepreneur, real estate developer, city council member, and swim coach. He has comprehensive knowledge of strategy development, marketing, finance and operations together with team-building, training and customer service and legal implications of operations. His extensive experience in company-startup, leadership, general management and project management is invaluable to the organization. Jason has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Southern Oregon University and a Master's of Business Administration from Ashridge Business School, United Kingdom, and

Niki Brown, Program Manager

Niki Brown is the Siskiyou Harvest Program Manager and the Marketing & Communications Manager at the SCEDC. With a degree in Design Management and Business Marketing from Oregon State University, Niki has over 7 years of extensive experience in sales, marketing, and project management. Niki came to Siskiyou County in 2010 after leaving her hometown of Portland, OR, where she was an integral member of a team leading the sales and marketing for over \$1 billion in LEED certified urban housing developments with one of the nation's most prominent sustainable builders. Since coming to northern California, Niki has had the opportunity to continue her career in marketing, with a new focus in the farm, food, and wine industries and is combining her passion for the local food system with marketing and economic development at the SCEDC.

Robert Coox, Program Manager

Robert Coox has a diverse experience with the SCEDC in managing grants in the brownfields, industry, airport, tourism, and enterprise zone programs. Robert brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in economic development from previous occupations as well as well-rounded knowledge of urban and rural economic development. Robert has a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Political Science and a Master's of Public Policy degree from the University of Southern California.

APPENDIX B: PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The SCEDC is an experience organization that works on diverse projects for the benefit of Siskiyou County. These projects include facilitating food hub programs, research and analysis for airport, industry and tourism efforts, administration and outreach for brown-fields programs, and general consulting and business advocacy services. The SCEDC leads the way in Northern California in attracting business, supporting industries, analyzing infrastructure, and promoting economic development.

- 2009 International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Gold Award for “Best General Purpose Website” – SCEDC Website, Population Less than 50,000
- 2013 International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Silver Award for “Best Business Retention and Expansion – Single Event” – Belcampo Meat Processing Expansion, Population Less than 25,000
- Successfully conducted consulting and siting assistance for Belcampo Farms (County) & Belcampo Butchery (Yreka) in the region. Successfully conducted consulting and siting assistance for Castle Rock Spring Water in Dunsmuir
- Managed the Siskiyou Enterprise Zone which created 414 jobs, retained 1,716 jobs, assisted 400 businesses, and united organizations, communities, and individuals in promoting economic development in Siskiyou County. This effort provided tax credits for employee hiring and retention, tax credits and accelerated depreciation for machinery, loan incentives, and workforce development.
- Successfully applied for and managed 21 grants related to the Enterprise Zone, Brownfields redevelopment, Food Hub development, Tourism, Industry development, and Airport Assessment.
- Administered three Brownfields program totaling more than \$1 million in Yreka and Mt. Shasta which included one of only 10 pilot multipurpose grants in the nation in 2011. Through this effort the SCEDC has supported the assessment, cleanup, and reuse of property in the county which increases security, lessens stress on greenspaces, decreases blight, and promotes new development.

- Managed the Siskiyou Harvest Food Hub Program which has included a Commercial Kitchen, Food System Study, and Farmer’s Market Promotional Program. The SCEDC has provided technical support for small food businesses through the county and has invested in Siskiyou County’s largest industry.

APPENDIX C: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION & EEO STATEMENTS

SCEDC’s policy is to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals and employment decisions at SCEDC will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. SCEDC does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

SCEDC’s policy is applied to all matter relating to hiring, promotion, transfer or employee termination, and covers all salaried and hourly employees.

SCEDC will assert leadership in the community whenever possible in an effort to achieve the full employment, skill utilization and productivity of all citizens without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, or physical handicap; and SCEDC will cooperate to the fullest extent with the applicable federal and local affirmative action regulations, including but not limited to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



Images Courtesy of the Yreka Chamber of Commerce, Linda Freeze, Stanley Krute, Jason Larsen and Tammy Strobel