



Yosemite/Mariposa County
Tourism Bureau

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2012-2013





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 2012-2013 year will be remembered for many challenges as well as many achievements. Under new leadership at the YMCTB, changes were undertaken to improve productivity of advertising and marketing efforts; grow communication with lodging partners and the community; and implement more cost-effective daily operations.

The YMCTB made great strides in revamping its websites (YosemiteExperience.com and Yosemite.com), switched its UK representation company and secured renewal of the five-year continuation of the Tourism Business Improvement District funding, as well as having initiated regular constituent outreach efforts to its lodging partners.

A strategic move away from the traditional four-week seasonal ad campaign in the fall, winter and spring to a longer off-season approach (better utilizing online and social media strategies) paid great dividends. A late-spring online campaign played a big role in generating overnight bookings that had been slower than usual to develop for the busy summer season. This initiative also resulted in one of the most successful paid Twitter campaigns in the industry. A more robust inventory of postings on YosemiteNation, the YMCTB's Facebook page, generated 11,000 more "fans" and stimulated engagement at a never-before-seen level. All types of lodging properties were included in the broad range of advertising efforts.

A record number of tour operator, travel agent and journalist visits were facilitated, resulting in new tour itineraries for the region and millions of dollars in media value.

With the momentum established this past year, the YMCTB team is enthusiastic about the coming year's initiatives and the opportunities to continue to better serve Mariposa County.

Sincerely,

Terry Belk
Executive Director

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In partnership with the Economic Development Corporation of Mariposa County, the YMCTB engaged Townsend Public Affairs in an effort to address several issues relative to concerns for the region including official position statements on National Park Service initiatives as well as infrastructure development opportunities. The following are a few of the major situations Townsend services were utilized:

National Park Service

The National Park Service recently concluded public comment periods for its Merced River Plan and Mariposa Grove Restoration Plan. Given the tremendous impact the plans would have on tourism and economy in Mariposa County, Townsend Public Affairs (TPA) worked with the Bureau and submitted formal response letters for each plan.

Mariposa County Fairgrounds

TPA has been working closely with the Fairgrounds to identify capital needs, grant funding and other ways to cut unnecessary costs.

John Muir Geotourism Center

TPA conducted a meeting with the Center to identify areas of need and continues to work on identifying opportunities for grant funding and other assistance.

Proposed Hotel and Conference Center

Mariposa County stakeholders are working to develop a conference center facility that will host events, workshops and larger conferences, as well as serve as a community resource for local events.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau is the branding, sales and marketing agency responsible for positioning Yosemite National Park and Mariposa County as the destination of choice for leisure and group business, for the economic benefit of the region.

KEY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Promote off-season overnight visitation
- Educate our customers and constituents
- Operate a fiscally sound and effective business
- Foster positive relationships with stakeholders and partners
- Stimulate economic impact for Mariposa County

MARKETING

Advertising

LODGING PARTNERSHIPS

Yosemite/Mariposa County offers a variety of ways to stay and play, and the Bureau promotes various properties throughout all four seasons. All year long, great lodging options both in and around the Park were featured – vacation homes were highlighted in select TV spots, while romantic bed and breakfast inns were promoted during the “Valentine” campaign.

FALL CAMPAIGN

The 2012 Fall Campaign aimed to change the perception that Yosemite is always booked in autumn, and to generate leads for the Bureau. Targeting empty nesters from the Bay Area and Central Coast, the campaign’s media included TV, BART, radio, online and newspaper ads, which resulted in more than 26,000 unique visitors to the site – 37.5% of all site visits during that period.

WINTER CAMPAIGN

The 2012 Winter Campaign highlighted four key elements: the variety of lodging options, a “Valentine” special, DNC/Badger Pass and the area’s many winter activities. From web ads to broadcast spots to BART signage, the message was clear that everyone could find something to do, and OnlyInYosemite.com was the website to help plan the perfect getaway.

The number of TV spots were increased 27% above what was ordered, and impressions increased 130% – an **additional 9.3 million impressions** (including online streaming). Banners also produced a click-rate that was **100% higher than the industry average**.



Visits to the lodging pages increased **791%** over the previous year



SPRING CAMPAIGN

Families who were looking for a weekend getaway were targeted for the Spring Campaign. Whether they sought outdoor adventures such as hiking or biking or indoor fun like wine tasting, the TV spots and online banners highlighted accommodations and fun family-friendly activities in and around the Park.

The number of TV spots were increased 30% above what was ordered, and impressions increased 64% – an **additional 9.2 million impressions** (including streaming impressions). Additionally, the banners produced a click-rate that was 90% higher than the industry average.

SPRING-SUMMER BOOST CAMPAIGN

A two-pronged, Spring-Summer Boost Campaign was developed to increase bookings throughout Mariposa County, particularly in Curry Village. Prospective visitors were targeted with messaging about great accommodations and deals that were available, but only for a short time.

A variety of value-added deals and promotions were also secured from local lodging partners to be featured on the Bureau’s website. With only six weeks to increase bookings, the media strategy included highly targeted paid search, online banners and behavioral retargeting with database-driven email campaigns and social media.

The campaign results speak for themselves: Area hoteliers reported being “booked solid” throughout the season. In just six weeks, the campaign delivered **48,525 unique new visitors** to the Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau website. Plus, the search campaign (SEM) campaign delivered a click-through rate **640% above industry average**.

International

Yosemite National Park is a favorite destination of international visitors to California, behind only San Francisco and Los Angeles. In 2012-2013, through a partnership with Visit California, the YMCTB refocused its international

marketing efforts in the Australia, Germany and UK markets (three of the largest inbound markets for California). Yosemite/Mariposa County also obtained additional marketing exposure in France, one of the state's top secondary markets.

Using the state's tourism marketing offices provided for a more efficient use of limited resources while maximizing return. The YMCTB is also engaged in a variety of programs with BRAND USA, the recently launched national tourism marketing program focused on promoting the United States in the global arena.

International representation offices:

- Australia - Visit California/Gate 7
- Germany - Visit California/MSi
- United Kingdom - Visit California/Black Diamond

Highlights from the year include:

- YMCTB's positioning as a featured destination in a key German tour operator's USA campaign
- Sponsorship of a new monochrome division in the 10th anniversary of a global photo campaign (Travel Photographer of the Year)
- New tour products in key markets
- Valuable exposure in a variety of key media
- Innovative itinerary partnerships

real-life experiences, such as a climbing wall, that allowed the customer to be more directly connected with the destination. The cooperative effort was one of the most popular exhibits in the shows.

The YMCTB was featured at key domestic travel trade exhibitions, including:

- National Tour Association annual convention
- Student Youth Travel Association annual conference
- International Tour Management Institute Annual Symposium

International-focused events included:

- US Travel's Discover America Pow Wow
- International Tourism Boerse in Germany
- World Travel Market in the UK
- Visit California Sales Mission in France, Germany and UK



Meetings and Group Business

Group business and small meetings are very important to Mariposa County, and the YMCTB maintains an efficient effort to attract this vital sector. Membership in the California Society of Association Executives; attending the American Incentive Business Travel Market and International Meetings and Exhibitions; and presenting in target markets such as Sacramento ensure that the Yosemite/Mariposa County area is top of mind for regional, national and international meetings.

To better highlight the limited but diverse array of small group meeting facilities, the YMCTB developed a top-line profile document that highlights facilities both in Yosemite as well as in the surrounding Mariposa County region. This information piece proved very beneficial in demonstrating the broad range of facilities available to prospective client groups that were unaware of non-traditional options.



Consumer and Travel Trade Shows

Consumer and travel trade engagement is especially important in promotion of Yosemite/Mariposa County as a four-season destination. The YMCTB attended key consumer shows in Los Angeles and San Francisco in partnership with other Yosemite regional partners. The innovative group effort incorporated

SOCIAL MEDIA

The 2012 fiscal year saw a dramatic increase in social media presence and growth among our online fan base. Four new blogs were written for the Yosemite Nation website that highlighted upcoming promotions, including the Travel Photographer of the Year contest and additional photo contests. YouTube was another medium used to reach the online audience: two videos were developed for the Yosemite Nation channel and its other social sites.

For those who enjoy viral photography, an Instagram account was created for Yosemite Nation, with all posts dedicated to photos received from Facebook fans. A Pinterest account was also built, and various boards each feature a different part of the County. Within a 60-day period, Instagram picked up 136 new followers, while Pinterest gained 133 new followers.

Yosemite Nation's Facebook saw incredible fan growth this past year, with 11,000 new fans following the page and **18.7 million impressions**. Fans shared 413,372 stories during the year – letting their friends and family know about all of the various events happening in and around the Park. From lodging deals to annual Mariposa festivals, the Bureau's message was successfully delivered in a viral way.

The most phenomenal social media results came from Yosemite Nation's Twitter campaign. With more than 4,500 followers, the Yosemite Nation account delivered the **most successful Twitter ad campaign in the history of the travel industry**.

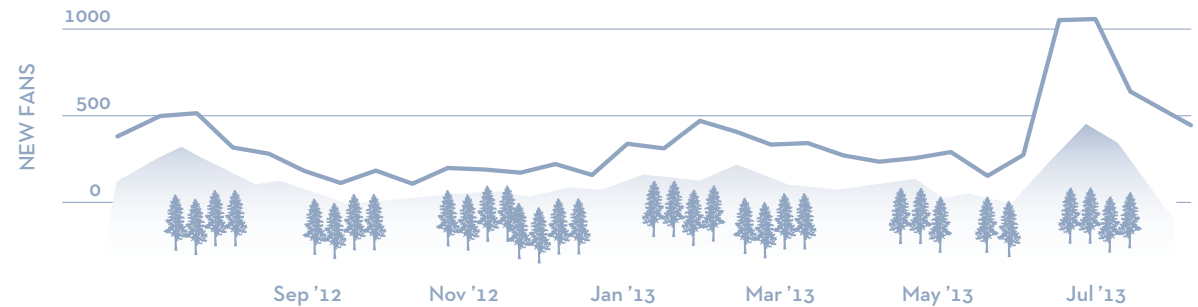


FACEBOOK PAGE REPORT

 Yosemite Nation

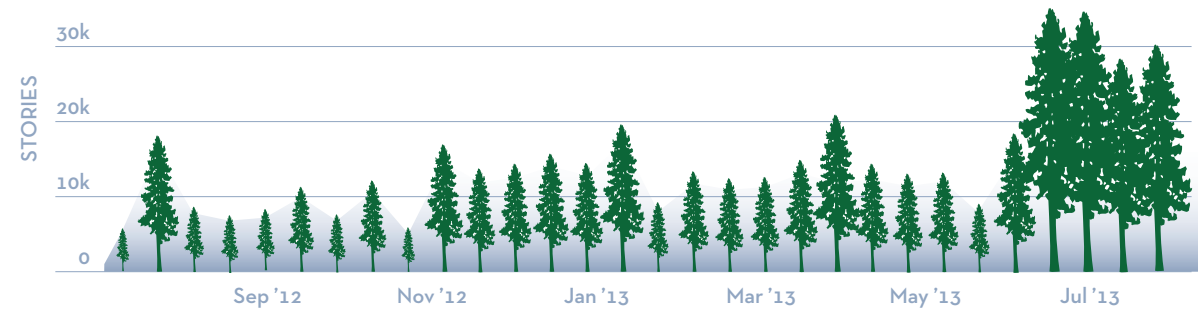
71.83k Total Likes

New Fans 11.0k



TOTAL STORIES SHARED FROM NEWSFEED

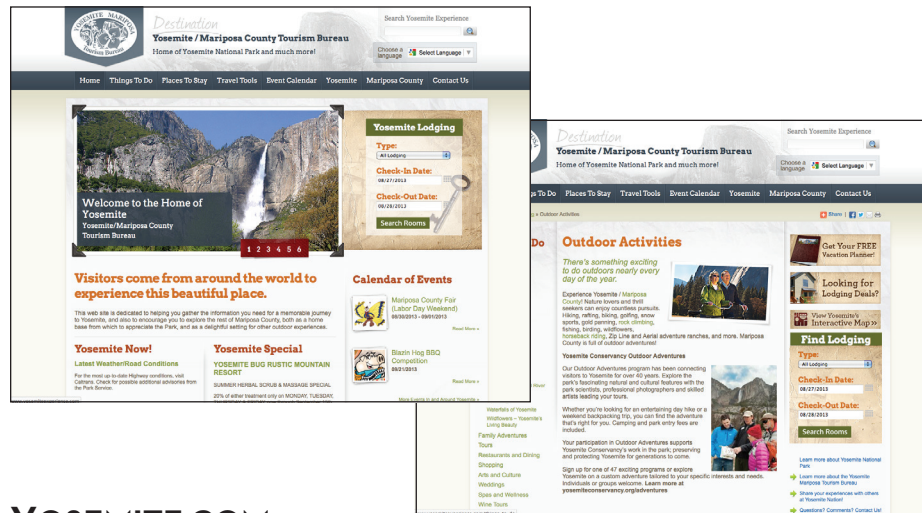
Stories Created: 413,372 by 336,301 users



WEBSITE

YOSEMITEEXPERIENCE.COM

This past year, the Yosemite Experience site received a full site redesign, incorporating new features, improved drop-down navigation and easier ways to book. The Jack Rabbit booking widget was added, along with a dining section, improved “Things to Do” listings and a “Find Your Experience” section on the home page. In addition to a revamped site, YosemiteExperience.com is now mobile-compatible. With goals to increase website visitors and online booking through the site, the updated YosemiteExperience.com aims to get higher search rankings and increase awareness of Mariposa County.



YOSEMITE.COM

Yosemite.com also saw a full site redesign that’s mobile-compatible. In the 2012 fiscal year, the site moved to Digital Gear servers, which allowed for a faster site load speed. With goals to improve advertising revenue and promote all gateways equally, the enhanced site also offers new features for the users. An interactive map and sortable directory were added. With plans to improve page organization, provide stronger content and incorporate higher-quality imagery, the site will only continue to enhance the user experience.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Bureau’s public relations efforts delivered incredible results in 2012-2013. With more than 800 million domestic media impressions and features in local, national, and worldwide outlets, the Bureau secured coverage throughout the year. From articles such as “Best U.S. Hotels for the Holidays” and “Yosemite’s Quiet Winter Splendor” in national media to local spring events highlighting the annual Mariposa Butterfly Festival, YMCTB made headlines from CNN to the San Francisco Chronicle.



San Francisco Chronicle



DAILY CANDY



San Jose Mercury News

TRAVEL+LEISURE

Highlights:

- More than 800 million domestic media impressions
- Nearly \$7 million in media coverage
- More than 80+ journalists hosted



**Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau
Board of Directors
2012 - 2013**

Executive Committee

Dan Jensen
President
DNC Parks and Resorts at Yosemite

Kevin Shelton
Vice President
Yosemite Resorts

Donna Nassar
Treasurer and Secretary
Yosemite/Mariposa Bed and Breakfast Association

Board Members

Brian Bullis
Mariposa Fair Grounds and Exposition Center

Donna Davis
The Redwoods in Yosemite

Jonathan Farrington
DNC Parks and Resorts at Yosemite

MaryAnn Huff
John Muir GEO Tourism Center

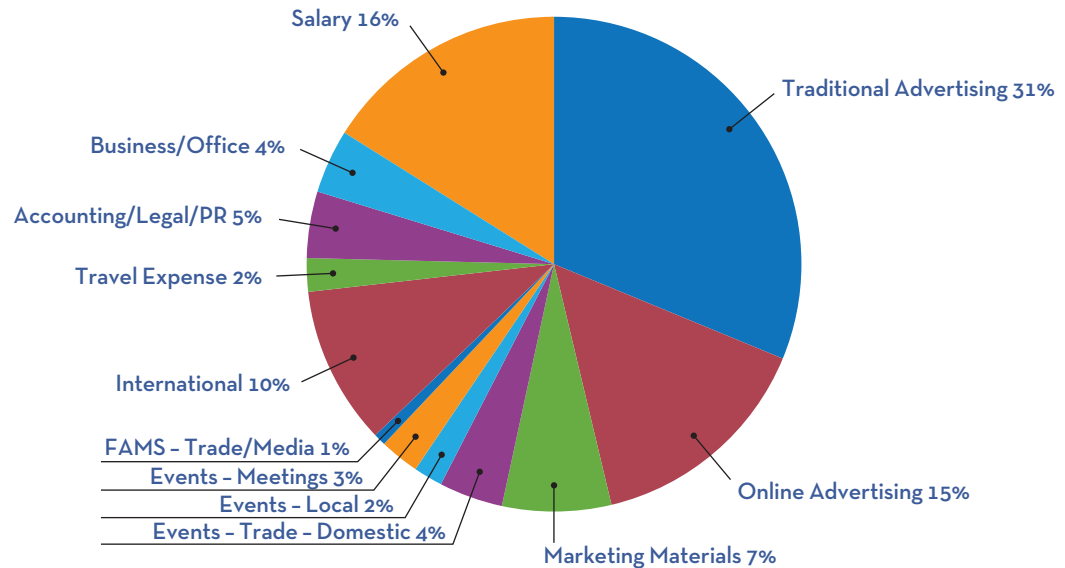
Kathy McCorry
Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce

Barbara Robinson
Indian Peak Ranch

Douglas Shaw
Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort

Sara Zahn
Hotel Jeffery

**YMCTB
2012-2013 Expenditures
\$1,539,319**



YMCTB Advisory Council

Roger Biery
Economic Development Corporation
of Mariposa County

Kevin Cann
Mariposa County Supervisor
Board Supervisor, District IV

Candy O'Donel-Browne
Community Member

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park



P.O. Box 967
5320 Highway 49 N., Suite 4
Mariposa, CA 95338
209-742-4567
terrys@homeofyosemite.com