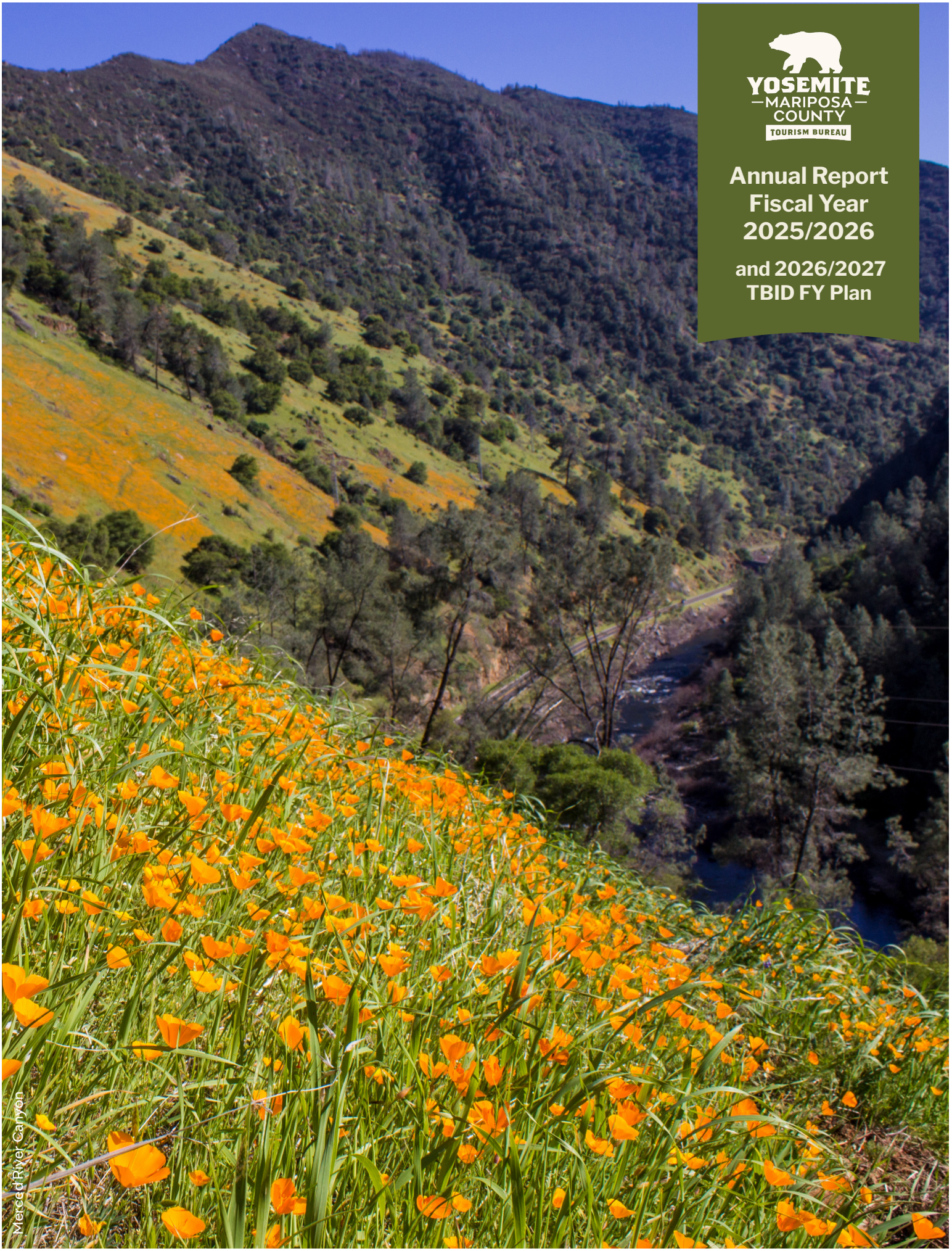


YOSEMITE
MARIPOSA COUNTY
TOURISM BUREAU

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2025/2026

and 2026/2027 TBID FY Plan

Merced River Canyon

Dear Lodging and Business Partners,



Summary:

Overall, the outlook for the year 2026/2027 is positive. As always, the region, California, and the USA's tourism industry continue to face obstacles beyond our direct control, stemming from national and global factors.

In the coming year, the Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau aims to boost off-season and midweek tourism, diversify offerings, and enhance digital marketing amid challenges such as geopolitical conflict and war, U.S. and global inflation, international currency issues, and political barriers. Focus areas include AI, website optimization, deeper market research, Travel Trade engagement, community relations, and improved meetings and conference segmentation growth, while always promoting responsible travel, with a flexible budget to adapt to unpredictable regional events.

Prior Year Impacts

The 2025/2026 fiscal year began with many unknown elements.

When the budget and business plan were finalized in March and April 2025, no decision had been made on Yosemite National Park (YNP) vehicle reservation requirements. Shortly after the plans were created, YNP implemented a limited peak-hours reservation system. Although the system had minimal impact on overall visitation volume, rolling out a fourth version of the YNP reservation system was challenging.

A combination of many factors, including geopolitical issues, threatened Customs and Border Protection restrictions (visas), and inflation in U.S. lodging, car rentals, and restaurant costs, dampened visitor volume. Inflation and poor U.S. dollar exchange rates reduced holiday planning and inbound bookings from our key international markets.

In November, the U.S. Government implemented an international fee increase to access eleven prime national parks. We are all aware of the impact of this decision without recapping it here. After the system was implemented, we learned that the increased cost did not significantly or negatively affect travel decisions. Unfortunately, the system's lack of information and clarity negatively affected travel decisions from November to February.

Overall, tourism for the fiscal year was good. International travel was down. Domestic travel was flat. California visitation was up; however, much of the YNP visitation increase was due to day-use visitors from the Central Valley.

2026/2027

The FY 2026/2027 Annual Plan reflects the continued evolution of the Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau's (YMCTB) marketing strategy in response to changing traveler behavior, advances in digital technology, and an increasingly competitive local, regional, and global tourism marketplace. Building on the successes of FY 2025/2026, this plan shifts from emphasizing content volume to maximizing the performance of existing assets, strengthening Yosemite Mariposa County's visibility in an AI-driven search environment, and increasing overnight visitation to support Mariposa County and the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID).

A note of transition. Jonathan Farrington has served as CEO/Executive Director of the tourism bureau for the past eight years. Jonathan will step down in November 2026, opening the role to new leadership and possibly prompting some priority adjustments.

The plan:

A primary strategic priority is adapting to the rapid transformation of online search. As travelers increasingly rely on AI-powered discovery and generative search tools.

Yosemite.com will focus on maintaining its position as a trusted trip-planning resource by continuing

to invest in technical performance, high-quality content, and user experience.

The website strategy emphasizes strengthening search visibility, improving lodging referrals, and making trip-planning information easier to access, as well as implementing AI tools such as Mindtrip to improve consumer search and information discovery on Yosemite.com.

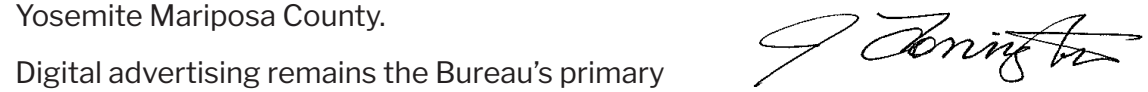
Content marketing will prioritize quality over quantity by auditing, updating, and optimizing YMCTB's extensive content library rather than expanding it. New content will be developed strategically to support destination priorities, seasonal campaigns, and emerging visitor interests, while remaining fully integrated with social media, email marketing, public relations, and paid advertising.

Video production and creator partnerships will continue to inspire travel through authentic storytelling while building a versatile library of marketing assets that support multiple campaigns. Creator partnerships will focus on audiences that align with YMCTB's strategic objectives, including shoulder-season, midweek, and overnight travel, while reinforcing lodging opportunities throughout Yosemite Mariposa County.

Digital advertising remains the Bureau's primary demand-generation tool. Working with Noble Studios, paid search, digital media, and social media advertising will continue to promote seasonal travel, value, and midweek visitation while optimizing campaign performance through ongoing data analysis and audience targeting.

Owned and earned media, including social media, email marketing, public relations, and community outreach, will work together to strengthen destination awareness, engage potential visitors throughout the travel planning process, and communicate tourism's value to residents and stakeholders. Continued emphasis will be placed on short-form video, improved email performance, enhanced media measurement, and meaningful community engagement.

International travel trade and meetings sales represent important opportunities to diversify visitation and support year-round economic activity. The Bureau will maintain strong relationships with our established partners in our mature international markets while evaluating future opportunities in emerging markets. At the same time, 2026/2027 marks the launch of a formal meetings and conferences sales program designed to increase group business and support lodging partners during shoulder and off-season periods.



Jonathan Farrington
CEO/Executive Director



Mule Dear in Yosemite Valley

2025/2026 Financials

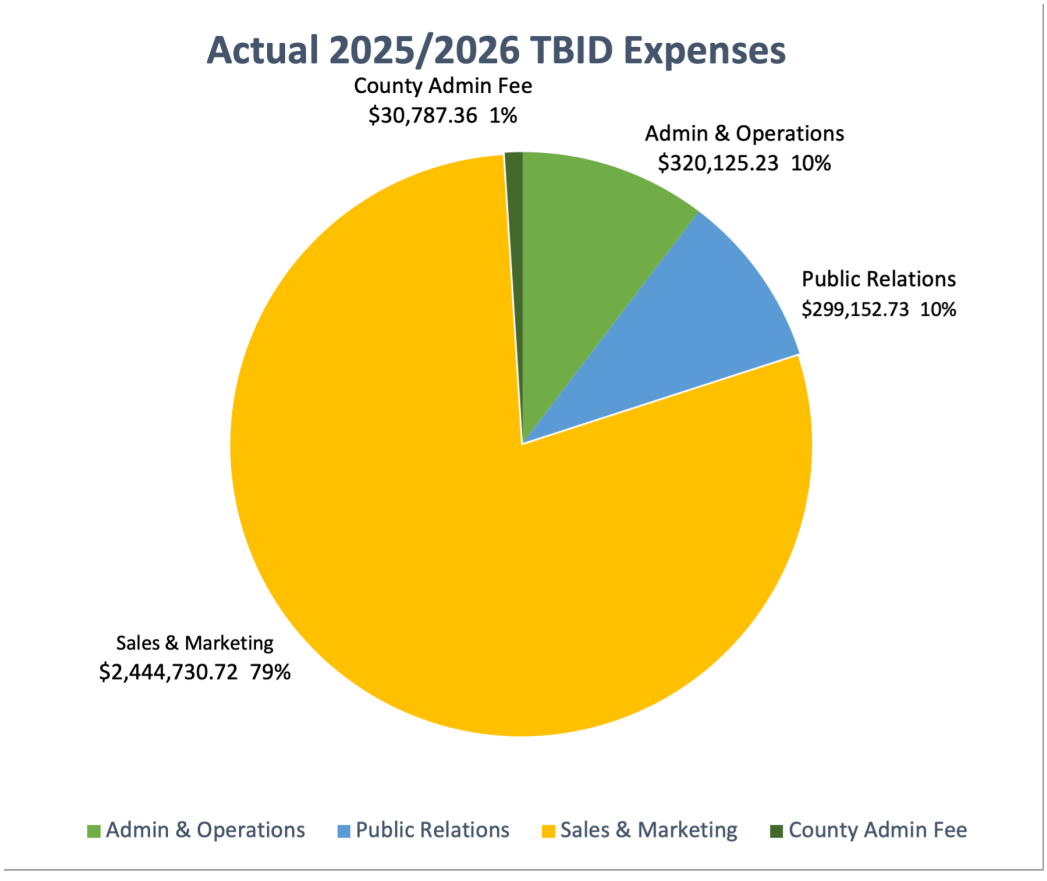
Statement of Financial Position / Balance Sheet

Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

Statement of Financial Position
As of Jun 30, 2026

	Total
Assets	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	$492,919.67
Accounts Receivable	$624,840.18
Other Current Assets	$78,679.00
Total for Current Assets	$1,196,438.85
Fixed Assets	$23,553.35
Total for Assets	$1,219,992.20
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	$87,283.74
Credit Cards	$7,945.25
Total for Current Liabilities	$95,228.99
Total for Liabilities	$95,228.99
Equity	
32000 Unrestricted Net Assets	808,326.42
Net Revenue	316,436.79
Total for Equity	$1,124,763.21
Total for Liabilities and Equity	$1,219,992.20

Expenses



2025-2026 Marketing Report

A Successful Year for YMCTB Marketing Efforts - Highlights

- **Partner referrals.** Yosemite.com provided 1,036,061 referrals to Mariposa County lodging and other stakeholders, an increase of 10.4% over the prior year.
- **Yosemite.com sessions.** We logged 4.01 million sessions from 3.31 million users.
- **AI Visibility.** While organic traffic on Yosemite.com softened, brand visibility surged: AI Overview visibility grew 628%, page-one keywords increased, and AI-referred visitors proved highly valuable. ChatGPT traffic converted at over 60% on lodging pages in December, and average AI-referred sessions lasted more than 23 minutes by May.
- **Paid digital media.** Our paid search conversions rose 147% in March and 137% in May on a flat budget, with cost per click down 28–36%. Agency-managed social media resulting in referrals to lodging partners' direct booking sites rose 874%
- **YMCTB-managed social media.** Our social media drove more than 779,000 website sessions, beating its goal by 50%, with record audience growth and engagement.
- **Email.** Consumer email sessions grew 78.3% with a 65% engagement rate. The list reached an all-time high of 76,439 subscribers, with 16,450 new sign-ups against a 16,000 goal.
- **Special Offers.** The special offers page drew over 220,000 visits and kept 20+ offers live every month.
- **International travel trade.** Despite headwinds in U.S. inbound travel, YMCTB took part in seven major sales missions and marketplaces. Together these produced well over 150 appointments with buyers and YMCTB exceeded its trade communications goal by 67%.
- **Groups and meetings.** This was a foundational year for a renewed meetings focus. Staff developed a comprehensive Groups & Meetings Strategy and completed phase one of their Yosemite.com meetings efforts. LinkedIn venue content performed strongly, with top posts reaching 15–16% engagement.
- **PR and community outreach.** The team hosted 20+ journalists and creators, which produced 90+ stories and an estimated 166 million potential impressions. Locally, National Travel & Tourism Week outreach, a new "About Us" handout explaining how TOT funds county services, and a monthly Mariposa Gazette column helped build resident understanding of tourism's value.
- **Video production.** The team released eight region videos, which together drew 1.8 million views and 34K hours of watch time (nearly 3.9 years of viewing). Other new work included a new destination video with an original score and History & Culture and Family Adventures landing-page videos.

For more details, please see the Year-End Marketing Report attached as an addendum.



Stockston Creek Preserve

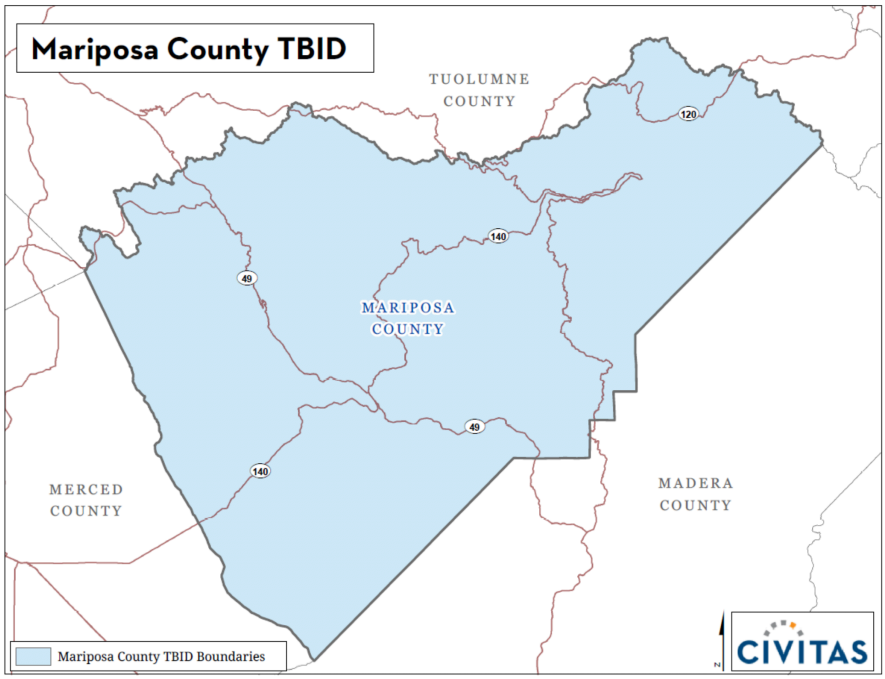
TBID Assessment for 2026/2027

Mission Statement

The Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau is the branding, sales, and marketing agency responsible for positioning Yosemite 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 customers and constituents
- Operate a fiscally sound and effective business
- Foster positive relationships with key stakeholders and partners



TBID Statement

There are no proposed changes to the boundaries or assessed business. The TBID assessment rate for the 2026/2027 year is 1.5%.

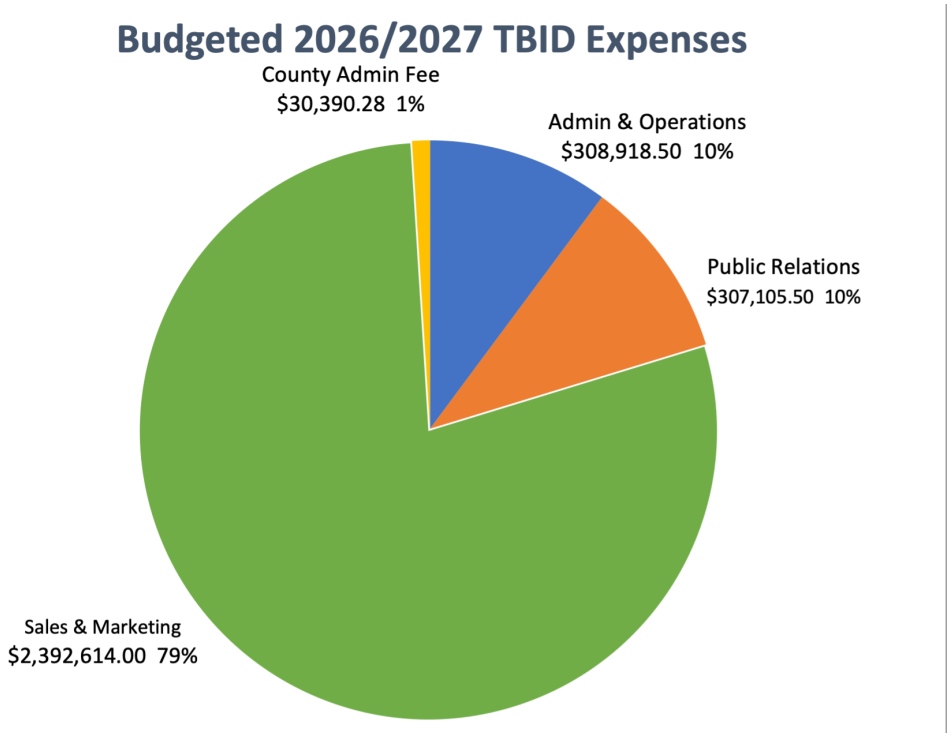
The district will continue to include lodging businesses, existing and in the future, available for public occupancy within the boundaries of the County of Mariposa, as shown.

TBID Expenditures: Carryover from 2025/2026 and the 2026/2027 Budget

At the end of the 2025/2026 fiscal year, the Bureau had a TBID carryover balance of $316,436. This is due to a check received from Mariposa County in the amount of $302,188 to make up for previously owed payments. This amount will be invested in the coming fiscal year. After years of deficit spending, utilizing prior COVID-19 year carryover balances, this fiscal year's revenues of $3,377,366 exceeded the plan by 7% and were $232,366 above the original budget. YMCTB expenditure was 99% to budget prior to the check covering backpay. The carryover balance of $316,436 now remains to be invested in the new fiscal year.

The 2026/2027 budget was developed with the same intent - to spend all TBID income for the year, ensuring that lodging partners receive the maximum benefit from the Bureau's marketing efforts.

The total budgeted expenditures for 2026/2027 are $2,989,200.



2026/2027 Annual Budget Notations

The budgeted revenue was created using three years of blended 1.5% TBID collections, removing any negative crisis-impacted months. Due to the high value of the US Dollar, the coming year plan accounts for a decrease in international inbound travel to 75% to 80% of the pre-pandemic period.

Additionally, the closure of the Wawona Hotel is be an estimated loss of $65K in TBID funding.

The budget is neither aggressive nor conservative. The Board approved the budget with the additional directive that the executive director has the authority to increase or decrease active spend by up to $250K depending on the revenues available.

We will continue to manage the budget based on revenue and spending adjustments quarterly.

We will also add prior year's carryover with budget approval to increase direct marketing spend. Ideally, the balance sheet will be $750,000 to $950,000 at the end of the 2026/2027 fiscal year.

The budget aligns with the tactical marketing initiatives in the 2026/2027 Annual Plan.

Goals for 2026/2027

This is a transition year for YMCTB. Our projected revenue is $2.99 million, about $119,000 below FY25/26 actuals. It's the first year-over-year revenue decline outside of COVID, driven mainly by falling international visitation. With this in mind, our plan focuses on getting more out of existing assets rather than producing new content, staying visible in AI-driven search, and growing overnight, midweek, and shoulder-season stays. It keeps our attention on the California drive market, nearby international markets like Mexico, and increasing the number of corporate meetings in the county.

- **Continue to improve overall KPIs.** We will continue to track and measure our overall key performance indicators (KPIs) for Yosemite.com. We have increased our goals from last year, but only by a few percentage points in terms of lodging and things to do referrals, paid sessions, and organic sessions.
- **Implement our content and creative strategy.** We will optimize our website content, refresh six to eight articles, and hold an annual content strategy meeting. For digital content creators, we will host four to 6 visits reaching at least 2 million combined followers. In addition, we will begin a new local Brand Ambassador Program.
- **Optimize Yosemite.com and SEO.** In addition to our regular work on maintaining the website we will remove duplicate content and optimize pages for AI search, ensuring the addition of summaries, FAQs, and schema. We also will implement AI functionality for on-site search as well as improving our share of voice across ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity.
- **Invest in paid digital media.** Noble Studios manages paid search and most digital media for YMCTB. The goal is to improve click-through rates, conversion rates, and growing lodging referrals. Our budget for paid digital media is down from prior year to $850,000, with 10% to be utilized for promoting meetings.
- **Maintain strong YMCTB-managed social media.** Our targets include 663,000 site sessions from social media overall. Our goals also include 5% follower growth on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. We are aiming for 741,600 link clicks on Facebook to Yosemite.com. Our goals for YouTube include a 20% subscriber growth and 43,838 hours viewed. Engagement goals are held flat from the prior year.



Kayaking on Lake McSwain

- **Improve email marketing.** Our plan is to send at least 24 consumer emails and 12 monthly constituent newsletters. Crisis communications will continue as needed. We will also remove non-engaged subscribers while developing new leads and analyze our email performance.
- **Continue constituent programs.** We will continue our free special offers program for partners who wish to participate with the goal



Sierra Cider

of highlighting at least 20 special offers every month. With some waning interest in co-op participation, we have significantly changed our co-op program; a new "on demand" process is in place for digital advertising opportunities. New options are available on a bi-annual basis.

- **Build up travel trade.** Our plan sets a target of at least 95 qualified trade appointments and three international familiarization tours. Success will be measured by the number of new products, bookings, and content. Other goals are at least 12 trade engagement opportunities through co-ops and training, and bi-monthly trade emails every other month.
- **Focus on meetings and conferences.** This is the foundational year for a formal sales program and $85,000 from of our digital media budget is dedicated to meetings and groups. We aim to garner at least 20 qualified leads, attend at least three industry events (e.g., MPI WEC, IMEX), establish a meeting planner database, and distribute four meetings-focused communications with matching web content.
- **Enhance community relations.** We will continue our monthly column in the Mariposa Gazette, provide at least eight Board of Supervisors updates, and participate in two to four community events. Our plan also includes celebrating National Travel and Tourism Week. Our local sponsorships will continue with some changes to the application process.
- **Expand earned media.** Our goal is to host at least eight media visits and attend five media events during the year to expand coverage of Yosemite Mariposa County. We will maintain PR representation in the UK, Ireland, and France.
- **Produce more video.** Backstory Creative will be our primary video production partner, producing at least five vertical videos per quarter, five videos for our website or social media, more license-free footage for partners and press, and an international training video featuring new lodging footage.



The California Tunnel Tree in Mariposa Grove

2026/2027 Leadership

Board of Directors

Brett Archer
Tenaya at Yosemite

Autumn Bragdon
AutoCamp Yosemite

Kim Brisack, Board Secretary
Big Table Ranch

Jessie Fischer, Board Treasurer
Yosemite Resorts

Ron Halcrow, Board Chair
Yosemite Plaisance Bed & Breakfast

MaryAnn Huff
Community Member

Victoria Imrie
Community Member

Christian Mueller
The Redwoods at Yosemite

Candy O'Donel-Browne
Community Member

Scott Randall, Board Vice Chair
Wildhaven Yosemite

Debbie Wilson
Yosemite Hospitality

Board Liaisons

Jenni Kiser
Mariposa County Board Supervisor, District IV

Danette Toso
Mariposa County Board Supervisor, District III

Advisory Council

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park

Board Chair
Mariposa Chamber of Commerce

Marketing Committee

Kim Brisack
Big Table Ranch

Haley Fielding
Yosemite Hospitality

Jessie Fischer
Yosemite Resorts

Scott Gediman
Yosemite National Park

Yuli Gotsev
The Redwoods in Yosemite



Bridalveil Fall

Victoria Imrie
Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch

Brailey Lisath
Tenaya at Yosemite

Ken Barber
Wildhaven Yosemite

Tourism Bureau Staff

Jonathan Farrington
CEO / Executive Director

Ellen Bergstone Wasil
Director of Marketing & Creative

Kim Lawson
Director of Communications & Content

Noel Morrison
Tourism Development Director

Craig Polson
Social Media & Content Curator

Aaron Demery
Operations Manager

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TOURISM BUREAU

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