



**San Luis Obispo County  
Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board  
(CBID)**

Board Meeting Minutes  
August 23, 2023, 12:00 p.m.  
Cambria Pines Lodge

**DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED**

SLO CBID Members Present:

Board: Bram Winter, Mike Hanchett, Laila Kollmann, Gary Setting

County Liaison: CAO Cheryl Cuming, Tessa Cornejo

Absent: Aaron Graves, Matt Masia

Guests: Dick Clark & Doug Koerper, Cambria Historical Society; Julia Amodei, Skate Cambria; Matt McElhenie, CCSD; Mayla Lohnes, SLO CAL; Lori Ritchey

**Call to Order**

At 12:03pm

**Public Comment**

None

**Presentations**

None

**Administrative Items**

**Roll Call:** Bram Winter, Laila Kollmann, Gary Setting, and Mike Hanchett are present.

**Consent Agenda:** A motion was made by Laila Kollmann and seconded by Bram Winter to approve the June 28 minutes. With no further discussion, these minutes were approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board; Mike Hanchett abstained.

**Financials:** Financials are reconciled through July. Items of note:

- General Fund and BID Bunch expense tracking report \$120,243 for July and \$120,243 YTD.
- YTD collected revenue is \$176,976 which is \$8,939 over budget.
- YTD expenses paid are \$120,243 which is \$55,123 under budget.
- Net income is \$64,061, which is more than anticipated.

- Overall cash increased by \$207,288 from June 30, 2022.

### **Administrator & Partner Updates:**

None

### **Upcoming Events/Deadlines**

- Upcoming board meetings: September 27, October 25 and December 6 (combo November-December meeting)

### **Strategy/Ideation Topic**

**FY 22 | 23 Roll-Up Report:** Lori Ritchey reviewed the fiscal year Roll-Up Report. Slides follow.

### **Discussion Items**

**23 | 24 Content Strategy & Small Towns Campaign:** Lori Ritchey presented the 23 | 24 Content Strategy and the Small Towns Campaign.

Laila thanked Lori and her team for their hard work. Mike noted his excitement about the BID Bunch and how it continues to excel and collaborate. Gary said that he really likes the Small Towns campaign strategy and the work that the BID Bunch is doing. Mike confirmed that the CBID is so much better as a result of the BID Bunch and the contract marketing team is working. Gary noted that the collaboration across disciplines is connecting everyone. Mike said it was important to ensure that such collaboration was deep and rich. Lori confirmed that there is full transparency with all members of the BID Bunch.

**Marketing - Kirstin's Maternity Leave:** CAO Cuming shared that there will be coverage for public relations during Kirstin's maternity leave so she is confident that momentum will not be lost.

### **Action Items**

**CBID Advisory Board Renewals:** A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Gary Setting to confirm the renewals of Laila Fiege-Kollmann, Aaron Graves and Mike Hanchett. With no further discussion, these renewals were approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.

### **Local Fund Board Members**

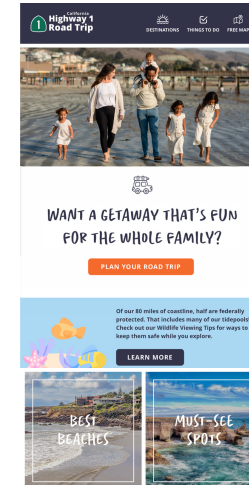
**Avila Beach - Golda Escalante (resigning), Mindy Hunter (new):** CAO Cuming shared Golda's resignation letter. The board discussed Mindy's application; Lori Ritchey said that she knows Mindy and shared her insights, including that she has a solid background in all aspects of lodging. A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Mike Hanchett to accept Golda's resignation and approve Mindy's application. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.

# FUE Review

## A YEAR OF TRANSITION

## FUE 22-23: A year of Transition

- In July 2022, we integrated GA4 onto the website with the vision of ensuring consistent year-over-year data for our reports.
- We transitioned to an advanced email marketing partner to elevate our technological capabilities and improve segmentation.
- Our PR Lead and LFA Admin have gracefully transitioned into retirement.
- We transitioned to our new url AND surpassed last year's figures, affirming our move as a positive step towards the future.



1,000,000 +

For the second year in a row, we achieved **over 1 million** in every discipline, showing resilience in a year of transitions.

1M WEBSITE SESSIONS

H1DR achieved a record-breaking milestone with over **1M sessions** and attracted **877k new users**, a **growth of 4.6% YoY**.

2.5M EMAIL RECIPIENTS

Distributed emails to **2.5 million recipients**. Resulting in **952k opens** and **40k clicks**.

12.2M SEO ORGANIC IMPRESSIONS

Despite a year-over-year **decrease in organic impressions** due to the URL change, we're on the right trajectory. The latter half of the fiscal year showed promising organic growth, with June seeing only an 11% decline.

61M PAID MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

We saw **61 million impressions**, and **over 1 million clicks!** 60% of all new visitors came from paid media, or 528k new visitors.

1,000,000 +  
in ALL of our disciplines, despite transitions.

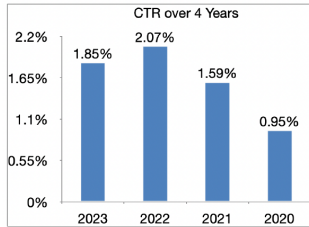
10.3M SEM IMPRESSIONS

**10.3 million Impressions** with **508,996 clicks**.

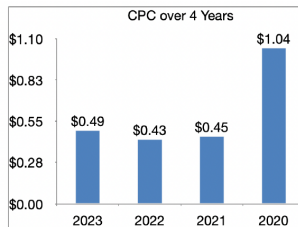
26M SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

Instagram and Facebook combined had nearly **26 million Impressions**, **1.3 million engagements**, and **1.2 million video views**.

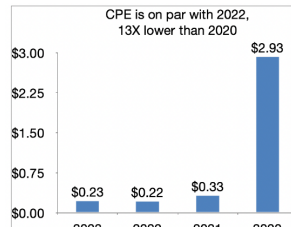
## Paid Media - A look back In time



Click-thru-rate (CTR) fell a bit overall last year, but still better than previous years and Cost Per Click (CPC) was similar.



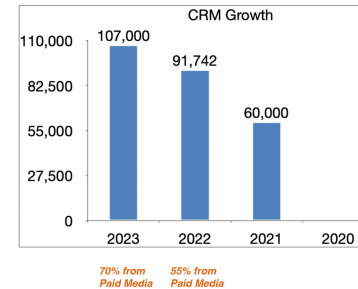
Engagements took off at over 2.4 million, boasting a Cost Per Engagement (CPE) that's 13x lower than 2020 and consistent with last year's performance.



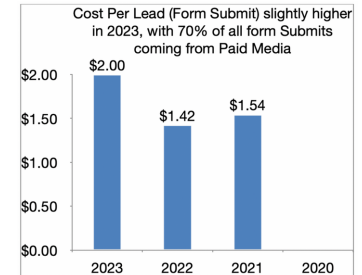
## First Party Data

200+

Utilizing our paid media strategies, we successfully channeled first-party data into the CBID CRM database, with an average of **over 200 leads daily**—twice the daily average from 2022 FY.



The number of sign ups originating from paid media **increased 15% YOY** to 107,000 in 2023.



While some months trended lower or matched 2022, **overall Cost Per Lead (CPL) went up to \$2.00** (vs \$1.42) due to overall increase in Video across tactics (Video is more expensive).

## Search Rankings & SEO

- Search rankings are fluid, shifting daily or weekly. Often, these results are influenced by seasonal trends, leading to continuous changes.
- Google Search Console **prioritizes the ranking of search queries** over **individual pages**, since pages can be found through multiple search queries.
- The graphic below illustrates the performance from the past 90 days, detailing impressions, clicks, click-thru-rate, and average position. Our initial average position hovered between the high 20s and low 30s. Our progress since then has been remarkable.



## Example

To showcase the intricate nature of search rankings, let's look at a specific page from our site: <https://highway1roadtrip.com/things-to-do/highway-1-scenic-drives-where-to-stop/>

In just one month, this single page appeared in search results for **over 1,000 different search terms**.

Here's how it ranks for three of those terms:

- Query: highway 1 scenic drive
  - Position: 1
- Query: hwy 1 road trip
  - Position: 3
- Query: best places to stop on highway 1
  - Position: 6

**400+ pages rank within the Top 3, based on over 1,000 distinct search queries.**

Now, imagine analyzing every page on our website this way -- **every single page will be in "Position 3 or better" for any given number of search queries.**





# Content Strategy

## STORY TELLING

The content strategy will focus on **storytelling**: Road trips are all about the journey; pivot our content to capture the experience of traveling on Highway 1 with the use of **vivid descriptions, photos, and videos to help readers visualize the scenery, attractions, and local culture.**

## CONTENT PILLARS

Our overarching **content pillars** will continue to focus on LFA Destinations, Highway 1 Route Information, Scenic Views, Things to Do, Outdoor Activities, Beaches, Family Friendly Activities, Accommodation Options, Food and Drink, Cultural and Historical Sites, user generated content via CrowdRiff, Local Events, Sustainability, Stewardship, and Travel Tips.

## UPDATE CONTENT

We will **update top performing pages** as well as create additional legs to these pages to support each LFA destination. The content created for Highway 1 road trip will be informative, engaging, and visually appealing.

**Our content strategy is not just a plan for creating and distributing content. It's a narrative that takes travelers on a journey towards discovering the best of Highway 1 and inspires them to embark on the ultimate road trip adventure.**

# Content Pillars

MONTHLY CONTENT PILLARS					
	JULY - 4th of July	AUGUST - Golf Month	SEPTEMBER - California Wine & Surf Month	OCTOBER - Halloween	NOVEMBER - Thanksgiving
VCA Theme	**Family & Accessibility	Beaches & Outdoor Adventure	Wine, Wineries, Whale Migration and Surfing	Haunted Sites & Fall Colors	Shopping & Culinary (Food & Drink)
Road Trips/Scenic drives: Information on the best scenic drives along Highway 1, including recommendations on the best viewpoints, and attractions to visit.		Best Beaches: promotion of best beaches, unknown beaches, hidden gems	California Wine Month: Feature local wineries and vineyards, as well as wine-themed events. Fastest growing wine region in CA, Coastal Wine Region, Wine Trails	Fall foliage: best spots to view fall foliage and enjoy the changing colors of the leaves.	Thanksgiving celebrations: Thanksgiving events and activities in the area, such as holiday parades, turkey trots, and special dining experiences.
Best Beaches: promotion of best beaches, unknown beaches, hidden gems		Outdoor adventures: Feature hiking trails, swimming, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, surfing, scenic drives, and other outdoor activities.	Surfing: best spots, conditions, what to expect etc.	Harvest Events: Information about local events celebrating the harvest season, such as pumpkin patches, apple orchards, and wine tastings.	Wildlife Viewing: Birdwatching, Marine Wildlife, Monarch Butterflies
Family-friendly activities: Hearst Castle, Elephant Seals, Whale Watch, Parks, Playgrounds, etc.		Family-friendly activities: Hearst Castle, Elephant Seals, Whale Watch, Parks, Playgrounds, etc.	Outdoor activities: surfing, hiking, biking, and fishing, highlight specific trails, parks, and fishing spots.	Halloween events: Information about local haunted houses, ghost tours, and other spooky events.	Coastal scenery: The coastal scenery along Highway 1 is breathtaking in November; highlight best viewpoints and scenic drives.
Outdoor Activities: Activities and attractions to experience along Highway 1, including hiking trails, beaches, scenic overlooks, state parks, and historic landmarks.		Scenic drives: Highway 1 is known for its scenic drives, so featuring specific routes and viewpoints could be a popular theme for visitors looking to explore the area by car.	Whale watching: September is a prime time for whale watching; showcase whale trail and the best places to spot whales along the coast.	Local cuisine: Highlighting the local cuisine, including seasonal specialties like pumpkin and apple dishes.	Shopping & Markets: Where to find unique gifts and souvenirs at local shops and markets.
Food and drink: Best restaurants, cafes, and bars along the route, as well as information on local food specialties, such as seafood or wine.		Golf Month: Golf courses along Highway 1	Food and drink: With a focus on farm-to-table dining and craft beer and wine, featuring the local food and drink scene.	Cambria Seascrow Festival	Local cuisine: Highlighting the local cuisine, including seasonal specialties like popovers, breads, and holiday dinners, could be a popular theme for visitors looking to experience the local flavor.
Events: Live music, farmers markets, fairs, and other celebrations.		History and culture: The area has a rich history and unique cultural attractions, such as historic landmarks, lighthouses, museums, and art galleries.	Cultural events: The area hosts many cultural events in the fall, such as art festivals and music concerts, which could be a popular theme for visitors.	Outdoor activities: Such as kayaking, biking, and fishing. Information about guided outdoor tours and equipment rentals.	New Year's Eve celebrations: New Year's Eve celebrations in the area, such as fireworks displays, live music, and special dining experiences.

# Key Dates for Content

	Q3-2023		Q4-2023		
	July	August (Golf Month)	September (Wine & Surf Month)	October	November
New Highway 1 Road Trip brand assets					
VCA Monthly Theme	**Family & Accessibility	Beaches & Outdoor Adventure	Wine, Wineries, and Surfing	Haunted Sites & Fall Colors	Shopping & Culinary (Food & Drink)
PAID MEDIA	Google Keywords & Discovery		PAID Campaign: Small Towns, Big Experiences; Sept. 5-Nov. 15		Holiday & Snow
HIRT Email Themes	7/11 - Family Friendly Activities 7/26 - Beaches/Outdoor Adventure	8/8 - Golf Courses along H1 8/23 - Wine Month	9/7 - Fall Campaign Launch 9/20 - Surf Month / Whale Migration Idea: Best time to see sunsets Fall sites / sunsets and whales Coastal Cleanup	10/3 - Seasonal Fun Fall Festivities 10/18 -	11/1 - Things we are Thankful For 11/14 - National Hiking Day/Hiking Map 11/29 - Monarch Butterflies
Sustainability Content		Ex. Beach Cleanup Tips (Avila & Cambria)	Whale Migration - Whale Trail & Coastal Clean up (third weekend Sept) with new itinerary to focus Sept. 24th Sea Otter Awareness Week	Sustainable wine practices & Paddle Back in time	Monarch butterfly viewing - stewardship wildlife tips on how to best see them
H1DR Listic Blog, include locals tips	Family Friendly Fun Free Things to Do	How to plan a golf getaway on a budget. Where to stay and play. Plug in golf courses in each LFA	Small Towns. Big Wines.	Blog to support paid media campaign	Elephant Seals- learn about and protect - use wildlife viewing tips to best see them
PR Themes - Pitching 1 season ahead	Fall - EV road trips, Harvest Season on the CC, Fall Events & Festivals, Best places to soak up Fall with the Family		Winter - Central Coast Holidays, Stop & See Wildlife, What's New 2024, Birding Stops on H1		Spring - Best spots for wildlife tip, Thrill seeking

Small Towns. *Big Experiences.*





### **Los Osos - Pandora Nash-Karner (renewal) and Curtis Armstrong**

**(renewal):** A motion was made by Laila Fiege-Kollmann and seconded by Bram Winter to approve the renewals. Mike asked about their participation levels and Gary confirmed that they are both active participants. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.

### **Local Fund Area Applications**

**Cambria Art & Wine Festival:** Dick Clark said that he thinks it is a good event. Mike noted the off-season timing of the event and that his property gets reservations from it. Julie works directly to promote the event and that Cambria is well represented. A motion was made by Mike Hanchett and seconded by Bram Winter to approve \$10,000 for the festival. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.

**Cambria Skate Park Bathrooms:** Matt reviewed that the CCSD had raised \$625,000 of the \$1.2M project cost and that a grant award will be finalized. The request is for \$47,500 for restrooms, noting that their goal in asking for the support of these facilities would ensure a closer nexus to visitors within the overall Skatepark project. Julie noted the CCSD is the fiscal agent and appreciates their partnership of the last three years. It was noted that Santa Barbara and others are showing that attractions like skate parts draw tourism. The project has been endorsed by 22 professional skaters. CBID would have a plaque recognizing their support of the project. Bram asked if the County provided any funding and Julie confirmed that they had not, but there was a letter of support from Supervisor Gibson. There was disappointment expressed that the Beautification & Infrastructure Grants are no longer available. Mike commented that there was \$600,000 allocated in previous years from the County to SLO CAL and that is no longer being provided. The CBID represents the only jurisdiction that does not get annual funding support for tourism efforts. Julie said that she is so thankful for the private support received. Mike said that he is in awe of the work that has been done to bring this project to reality; public funding is so important, and transparency is key.

Bram pivoted the discussion to the specific request for funding for the bathrooms. Julie confirmed that Cambria Skate Day was approved by the CTB but not by the CBID due to the lack of nexus to tourism. Mike shared information on how and why that relationship is so important. Julie noted that 60% of the Vet's Hall Farmers Market attendees are visitors so public bathrooms are key. It was reviewed that the CCSD will manage and clean the bathrooms, which will be open from sunrise to sunset. The potential exists that as people use it as a stopover that it will generate future visitors. Julie pointed out that the EV charging stations will be moved to the front of the Vet's Hall parking lot. Bram asked if they will generate revenue and the CCSD confirmed they will cover costs. Bram noted that restroom accessibility is important to visitors, and they will often come into lodging properties. Dick pointed out that there has been no new infrastructure for kids since 1947. Laila reiterated

that the nexus to tourism is important. Julie said that the project will have to go out for RFP with the goal of being completed by 24|25 with \$300,000 allocated for park specific infrastructure.

A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Laila Fiege-Kollmann to approve \$47,500 for the bathrooms. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.

**Cambria Santa Rosa Schoolhouse & Education Center:** Doug reviewed the details of the project, including that all of his work is being done pro bono. There have been some project savings found so that the funding request is now half of what was originally requested, and the project is moving forward. It was noted that the jailhouse will also be relocated as part of the effort. Dick mentioned that the schoolhouse was moved four years ago and has a 50-year lease with the CCSD. Mike thanked the team for their work to make the community better. He inquired if the schoolhouse is open to the public and it was confirmed that it is not. It was confirmed that it has scheduled openings as many local schools visit. There is also a transferable water meter for future restroom possibilities. Doug provided additional construction and structural details; Dick shared specifics about policy and process.

Bram and Mike asked about the CTB funds and CAO Cuming confirmed that CTB had approved half of the amount using long-term capital reserve funds. Laila inquired about the connection to tourism since it will initially be open to school kids. It was said that the hope is to allow tourism access and Doug reminded the board that it will be there for parking and bus turnaround. Dick confirmed that the schoolhouse is being renovated; they want to promote the historic importance to tourists and encourage them to photograph the building. The Historical Society is responsible for maintaining the property. Laila asked for further clarification on the discussion that occurred at the CTB meeting. Doug noted that six acres of parking is used by tourists specifically for events, including event held at the B&B across the street. It was noted that tours, including docent-led, are planned for the future. Bram expressed that the funding is early for a project that is not ready to be opened to the public. Doug said the funds are about one-third of what is needed. Bram said there needs to be a firm plan of how this will be a tourist attraction. Mike confirmed that this connection needs to be clear. The CBID wants to see the project come to fruition as the plan is flushed out. Dick noted there will be a grant request presentation scheduled for later that day. He also expressed his appreciation of the CBID's role and due diligence; he indicated that they will return with a more complete plan.

**Avila Beach Cycle Central Coast sponsorship:** A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Laila Kollmann to approve \$14,450 for the Cycle Central Coast sponsorship. With no further discussion, the motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**Cayucos SF Gate Paid Media:** A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Mike Hanchett to approve \$28,000 for the VAC Story Studio and email marketing program with SF Gate. Laila commented how happy she was that this was approved by the VAC as she is interested in seeing them invest additional money in marketing. With no further discussion, the motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**Other funding requests:** Requests approved by Gary Setting as they are under \$4,999 were: \$4,500 for the EV-AGV SLO Wine Collective partnership; \$1,000 for Los Osos Open Studios Tour; \$4,000 for Los Osos promotional tote bags; and \$2,500 for Los Osos Oktoberfest sponsorship.

### **Closing Comments**

Gary said that he appreciates the discussion that occurs at meetings, and he looks forward to serving as chair.

The board asked for re-evaluation of Beautification and Infrastructure grant opportunities with the County.

### **Future Agenda Items**

- LFA Bylaws - CAO Cuming confirmed review of the details of what was put into place in 2011. Tessa noted recent PRR and the need to review and assess LFA board terms and officer parameters.
- CAO Contract renewal

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:51pm