

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

**Minutes | January 22, 2025 | Cambria Pines Lodge**

CBID Board Members Present: Gary Setting, Bram Winter, Mike Hanchett, Melissa Kurry, Laila Kollmann, Aaron Graves

County Liaison: CAO Cheryl Cuming, Tessa Cornejo

Absent:

Guests: Lori Ritchey, Lisa Belsati (SLO CAL)

**Call to Order**

9:12am

**Public Comment**

None

**Administrative Items**

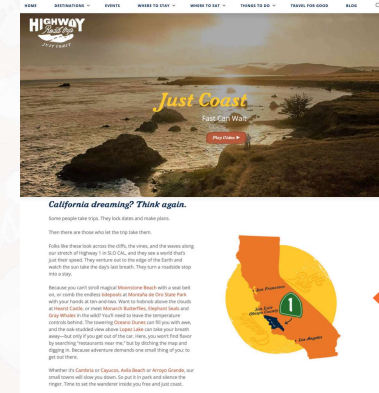
- Roll Call: Gary Setting, Bram Winter, Mike Hanchett, Melissa Kurry, Laila Kollmann, Aaron Graves are present
- Consent Agenda – Minutes: A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Mike Hanchett to approve the December 4 minutes. With no further discussion, these minutes were approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board; Laila Kollmann and Aaron Graves abstained.
- Financials | Balance Sheet, Administrator and Partner updates:
  - This General Fund report ties back to the Bid Bunch expense tracking, both reporting a total of \$64,716 in expenses for the month of December. Year to date expenses are \$747,243. Year to date revenue collected, \$858,752 which is \$3,633 less than what was budgeted through December for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Year to date expenses paid, \$747,243 came in under budget by \$210,886. Net Income is \$207,253 more than budgeted for year to date. Overall cash increased by \$314,039.75 from June 30, 2024. December TOT was up 23% year-over-year.
  - CAO Cuming noted that SLO CAL, SLO and Paso Robles are reforecasting their budgets down by 6.7%.
  - Lisa Belsanti from SLO CAL presented Last Mile. The first meeting was held in December and included discussion of the need for enhanced communication and signage. A shuttle pilot program was also reviewed to include SLO Safe Ride and a selected region. They also explored hotel park-and-ride options. SLO CAL will develop a transit survey and assess the need for shuttles. Mike asked about the challenges and Lisa summarized the issues with late night sights suggestions and provided possible ideas.
- The time for the monthly CBID meeting was discussed and the board confirmed moving to 2pm start time, effective February 26.
- Annual Form 700 filings are due by April 1.

ADA Notice: To receive reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act during the meeting, please notify the local fund area administrator at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.





## Website Performance



<b>560.9K</b> <span style="color: green;">▲</span> 9.5%	<b>523.2K</b> <span style="color: green;">▲</span> 16.8%
<b>SESSIONS</b>	<b>ENGAGED SESSIONS</b>
<b>93.3%</b> <span style="color: green;">▲</span> 6.7%	<b>443.6K</b> <span style="color: green;">▲</span> 5%
<b>ENGAGEMENT RATE</b>	<b>NEW USERS</b>

*Most impressively, our average engagement time per user is :54s*



## SEO Summary

Organic remains the leading channel for site acquisition, maintaining steady performance in the fiscal year's first half.

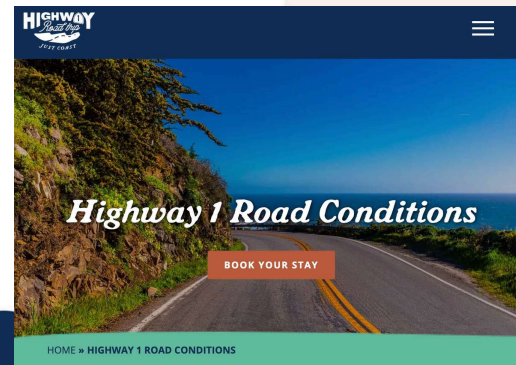
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total clicks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total impressions	<input type="checkbox"/> Average CTR	<input type="checkbox"/> Average position
<b>102K</b>	<b>7.5M</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>18.2</b>

Google's core algorithm update, released on 11/11/24 and completed by 12/5/24, led to increased impressions and traffic for the H1RT website. December traffic saw significant growth compared to the prior three months, highlighting early positive impacts of our content creation efforts.



## Content Creation

Organic traffic ended the year strong, supported by **new page launches** that contributed to the year-over-year growth.

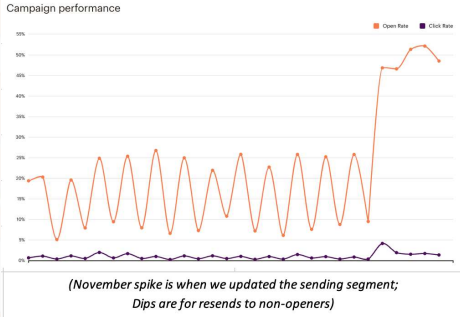


- The road conditions page has quickly vaulted into one of the most trafficked pages from search results.
- It was one of the **top landing pages for driving IMPRESSIONS and CLICKS to the website** via organic search in December.
- Queries: Highway 1 closure, Highway 1 closures map, Is highway 1 open, and highway 1 closures are all **top queries driving clicks to the website.**
  - Five of the top 10 click-throughs were for closure related queries. We may want to strategize on how to further support this visitor persona.



# Email Summary

July through October we faced some challenges with an average open rate of 35% (still above Travel industry average of 33%)...so how did we show **continuous Improvement?**



## UPDATED THE SENDING SEGMENTS

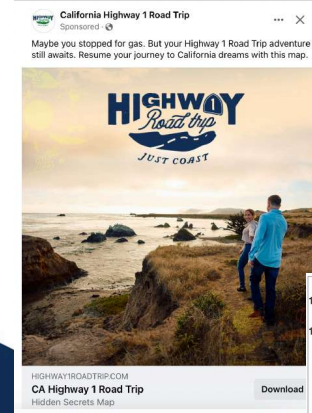
- 50% + open rate since updating the sending segment to more engaged & new subscribers

## OTHER WINS

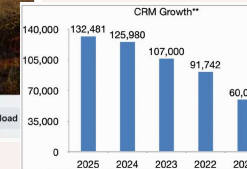
- Click rate doubled in last 2 months
- Increased subscribers (+8,647)
- Rebranding completed across all email marketing templates & content
- Content refreshed to be more relevant and timely



# First Party Data: Growing YoY



- The number of sign ups originating from Paid media **increased 6% YOY** to 132.4k in 2024 (represents 1/2. Year)
- We see the **greatest efficiencies** and **volumes** from **Google** and **Facebook form fills**.
- We saw surprising volume from mediums typically thought of for branding such as Print, Spotify Video and from newsletters that did not have Map Download CTAs.
- Overall **CPL went down** compared to FY'24 a year ago, but is up compared to Full FY. (We believe this will come back down with the Wildlife campaign.)



**132,481 emails**  
in our database



# Paid Media

Less Spend, Bigger Impact

Smarter Engagement, Stronger Results

- **27 M Impressions** (vs. 26M in FY'23) with **\$40k less spent**.
- **Slight drop in CTR 1.69%**, but clicks showed **higher post-click engagement** at a **lower CPC**.
- **New Visitors Increased 25% YoY to 268k**, making up **48% of all new visitors**.



# Paid Media: Key Learnings

Quality over Quantity:

**42% higher conversion level, spending 15% less**

Improvements in *targeting* and *creative messaging* resulted in more qualified traffic and better cost efficiencies.

- Focusing water images only on social.
- Increasing age targeting to 35+.
- Daves continual improvement with Google ads.

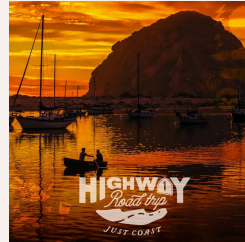
According to US Census data: 58% of the total population of California is 40 years or older, which speaks to our focus on 35+. And the age group with the highest median HHI is Californians between 45-64 with 65+ just right behind them.





## Paid Media: Social

Creative tracked by content identifiers indicated that visuals with WATER in them held much more resonance and back end quality than those without. Early in the fall campaign we instructed social partners to focus on water creative.



Morro Rock with Sunset and Whale drove the most key events to date. Just Coast Launch video in Trade Desk Programmatic and Video ads using Facebook interest targeting with Hearst drove the most engaged sessions.



## Paid Media: Other Creative Wins

### Live Intent

- Vineyard got 100% conversion to key events.
- Tide pool and Yoga ads had high conversions.



### Amazon Programmatic

- Best traction with Yoga and clydesdales both high with conversion to key events.

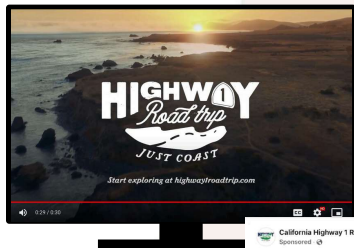


### Retargeting & Spotify

- Best traction with Just Coast Video and Map download ads.

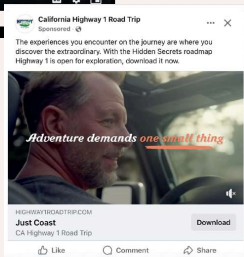


## Paid Media - Video Roared



### 4 Primary Video Uses

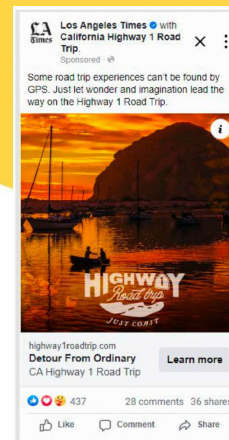
- Facebook - various methods
- CTV with QR Coding
- Spotify Video
- YouTube



- High volume and CTR = 2.8m imp 3.17% CTR
- LOW CPC = \$.33 cents
- Decent CPM = \$10.34
- Highest # of engagements = 364k
- Lowest CPE of all channels = \$.08 (some as low as \$.03)



## LA Times Handshake Ad



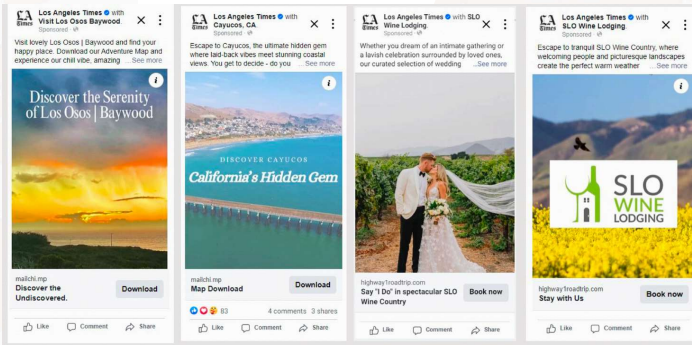
The "Handshake" ad leveraged the power of the LATimes name to elevate H1RT.com.

1. This ad drove the **5th most traffic** of all things CBID is doing (just below Search, direct traffic, email and organic social.)
2. **Top Conversions:** Ranked **5th in conversions** driving results comparable to Search and direct traffic and was cost effective at driving 35 Map downloads even though that wasn't its CTA.
3. **Cost-Effective:** CPC's have been **lower than our program average at \$0.36**
4. **Great Reach:** drove **10.7k new users** and **1.2k individuals exploring 4+ pages**, harnessing the LA Times name for strong engagement.
5. **High Engagement:** An outstanding **98% engagement rate** (site avg. 93%) ensures our message resonates.
6. **Precision Targeting:** While not limited to LAT followers, a Handshake ad allows precise targeting, leveraging the LA Times name for impact.

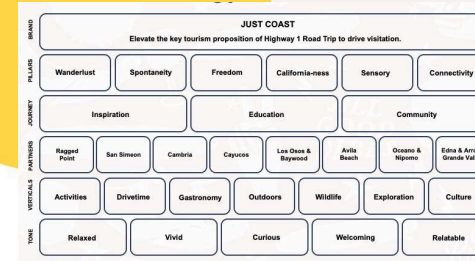


# LFA Program

- Programs generated over
- 5 million impressions
  - 61k clicks
  - 97k engagements
    - at a better CTR than last year (3.64 vs 2.41%)
  - CPC's were higher at \$.33 cents vs \$.26
  - CPE lower at \$.18 vs \$.26



# Organic Social Media



Next steps, connecting Social report to content strategy and tracking share of messaging.



## November 2024 Social Media Check In



Visit SIO.CAL | Social Media Performance Report

# PR & Stewardship

Stronger Integration of Stewardship and Organic Social Into Public Relations efforts.

- 4 out of a goal of 5 articles secured include Stewardship Travel for Good meaningful tips for travelers in the story.
- Collaborating between PR and social media with the goal to better leverage PR results and journalist visits on social media. Now including verbiage on Itineraries
  - Success Story: the article we secured in Travel + Leisure, titled "15 Best Places to Travel in February" was shared by 8 journalists on their social platforms, with a reach of 165,137! The article was also shared on T+L's Instagram, which reaches 6.4M followers.

Collaborations with SLOCAL: Katie has been asked to sit on the Sustainability Task Force, and Cheryl is part of The Last Mile Transportation Task Force and Connecting Trails Task Force.



Questions  
or  
Comments?



## Discussion Items

- Marketing
  - Roll-Up Report: The mid-year report was reviewed with highlights noted.
  - Laila asked if international engagement has increased and it was noted that it is not CBID's focus. Consumers seem to be better informed, which reflects the positive impact of sharing an alternate route to Highway 1. Tessa said she was interested in the data collected. Laila thanked Lori Ritchey for her efforts and the presentation.

## Action Items (each topic will allow for Board Discussion, followed by Public Comment)

- 1989 Ordinance Modification, Non-Profit creation and County services agreement
  - CAO Cuming read the overview for Highway 1 Tourism Alliance. Gary reiterated his reasoning for wanting to be clear on the name. A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Aaron Graves to approve the name Highway 1 Tourism Alliance. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board. Regarding the transition, Aaron said that SLO CAL changed from the 1989 to 1994 ordinance seven years ago. Under the structure, 2% goes to the tax collector of the county admin fee and the organization would want to share costs for services. Bram asked if it would be possible to share any other services based on an overview provided by CAO Cuming; she confirmed that options are being explored. The county would continue to be involved in the annual renewal and Mike noted that there will be insurance requirements. Bram asked about opportunities to look at efficiencies across the LFAs. It was asked about the consideration of contractors or staff as part of the new non-profit. Next steps were identified as further exploration of costs for insurance, legal and tax services; determine efficiencies across LFAs and shared costs. CAO Cuming reviewed the timeline details. Aaron asked if it was important to involve the entire board, which was recommended by Mike and confirmed by the remainder of the board. Tessa suggested that the County pays through June into July and Mike asked about nonprofit funds transfer and timing; August was identified as a possible best start for the nonprofit to begin paying bills. CAO Cuming will continue to explore how to transition services for items needed in April, May and June. It was discussed if the LFAs should share in the additional admin expenses once the new nonprofit is formed, which is the current obligation with the County's administrative fees.
- Local Advisory Board Applications
  - Avila Beach: A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Mike Hanchett to accept the resignation of Chris Oh. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.
  - Cayucos: A motion was made by Laila Kollmann and seconded by Mike Hanchett to accept the application of Taylor Brindley. Tessa confirmed there is no conflict of interest based on Taylor working in a contractor capacity with Beachside Rentals. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.
- Local Fund Area Funding Applications
  - Avila Beach - Friends of the Bob Jones Trail: A motion was made by Mike Hanchett and seconded by Laila Kollmann to approve \$15,000, with the release of funds being subject

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to Friends of the Bob Jones Trail reaching their goal of \$1M. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.

- Cayucos - Business cards & media lanyard: A motion was made by Bram Winter and seconded by Melissa Kurry to approve \$500 for Danna Dykstra-Coy's business cards and media lanyard. With no further discussion, the motion was approved by a voice vote of the Advisory Board.

#### **Future Agenda Items**

- A special meeting may be called based on timing of the new nonprofit

#### **Closing Comments & Adjournment**

Lisa provided SLO CAL updates. Regarding Highway 1 reopening, SLO CAL, VCA and Caltrans may meet in February or March.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08am.

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