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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



VISIT SLO CAL BOOSTS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL THROUGH DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP WITH TOURISM EXCHANGE USA

San Luis Obispo County, California, September, 4, 2024 – With traveler preferences increasingly leading to [smaller destinations that offer unique experiences](#), Visit SLO CAL (VSC), the official destination marketing and management organization (DMMO) for San Luis Obispo County (SLO CAL) is excited to announce a transformative collaboration with Tourism Exchange USA, an open digital marketplace backed by Visit California, that is set to redefine the way local tourism businesses engage with the global travel marketplace. This partnership creates new opportunities, which enable smaller accommodations, tours, events and activities to step into the digital realm and positively impact not only their own sales, but the local economy, as well.

According to the [American Express 2023 Global Travel Trends Report](#), more travelers want to discover lesser-known destinations and hidden gems in a way that benefits locals and future visitors. 86% of Gen-Z and Millennial respondents and 83% of all surveyed respondents want to shop at small businesses when they travel to a new location. But oftentimes, those businesses in smaller destinations like SLO CAL either aren't online or have very limited bookability. That's where The Exchange comes in; the partnership between Visit SLO CAL and Tourism Exchange USA will be a game-changer for local travel businesses that have traditionally operated offline.

The Exchange bridges that disconnect by helping these enterprises seamlessly share live inventory and content with distributors worldwide, breaking down barriers and embracing the digital age as they grow their sales. According to an [estimate from Statista](#), two-thirds of revenue in the global travel and tourism market came from online sales channels in 2022. Those businesses not utilizing online bookings are missing out. The Exchange enables travel businesses to offer bookable products through globally recognized booking sites, including Expedia, TripAdvisor, Google and other niche international channels for no upfront costs. As the program rolls out, our objective is to elevate SLO CAL's visibility, but also empower our local entrepreneurs to expand the reach of their products to buyers and distributors around the world in new ways.

"We are excited to partner with Tourism Exchange and Visit California to expand SLO CAL's bookable offerings, from lodging to experiential attractions that are integral to our local



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economy,” said Cathy Cartier, President & CEO of Visit SLO CAL. “This collaboration with Tourism Exchange USA is a testament to our commitment to empowering tourism businesses of all sizes, enabling them to reach a global audience and driving growth while cultivating a vibrant tourism community in SLO CAL.”

Tourism Exchange USA's Senior Vice President, Nate Huff, shared in the excitement, stating, "We believe that every travel business adds to the unique story of a destination. Our partnership with Visit SLO CAL is about amplifying these stories through empowering small businesses to thrive in the digital world of travel trade product development and distribution. By providing them with a platform to reach global travel distributors, we're helping level the playing field for smaller businesses."

In a world where personal experiences and local authenticity are valued more than ever, this partnership is a strategic move for Visit SLO CAL to not only enrich the travel experience for visitors, but also support local businesses who haven't been able to sell their products through global platforms previously. By collaborating with The Exchange, Visit SLO CAL showcases its dedication to innovation, community empowerment and the continued economic growth of its destination.

For more information about Tourism Exchange USA, visit www.tourismexchangeusa.com and to learn more about Visit SLO CAL, visit slocal.com or email Mayla Lohnes, mayla@slocal.com.

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About Visit SLO CAL:

[Visit SLO CAL](http://slocal.com) is the countywide non-profit destination marketing and management organization (DMMO) for San Luis Obispo County (SLO CAL). Visit SLO CAL is responsible for promoting SLO CAL as an attractive travel destination and enhancing the public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, Visit SLO CAL strengthens the economic position and provides opportunity for all people in the community. Built on research with a strategy of continuous improvement, Visit SLO CAL aims to establish SLO CAL as a favorite West Coast destination known for its signature slower pace of life and unique mix of incredible, immersive guest experiences.

About SLO CAL:

South of the Bay and north of LA, SLO CAL is conveniently located midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. It features more than 100 miles of breathtaking coastline and expansive vineyards covering over 40,000 acres. The area's scenic open roads are beyond compare and its stretch of Highway 1 is an unforgettable journey through some of California's most captivating coastal landscapes. In 2023, tourism in SLO CAL reached \$2.32 billion in direct travel spending, marking a consistent performance from the previous year and generated \$60.1 million in transient occupancy tax revenue, contributing \$110 million in local tax revenue. For more information, go to slocal.com.



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About Tourism Exchange USA:

[Tourism Exchange USA](#) is a B2B, innovative open digital marketplace designed to facilitate the exchange of live inventory and content between suppliers and distributors in the global travel industry. The product is supported by Brand USA in its mission to increase incremental international visitation, spend, and market share to fuel the nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide. By connecting destinations with partners worldwide, the platform empowers small businesses and transforms the way travel experiences are discovered and booked.