



## **Fiscal Year 2013-14 Annual Report**

### **Operating Budget Request For Fiscal Year 2014-2015 TBID**

Submitted to HB City Council July 2014

Visit HB Fiscal Year 2013-14 Annual Report  
Operating Budget Request For Fiscal Year 2014-15

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## Introduction and History

In 1989, the Huntington Beach Conference and Visitors Bureau incorporated as a private, not-for-profit mutual benefit corporation in the State of California. Its original mission statement was “to create, develop, promote and maintain a strong Visitor and Conference industry that will benefit Huntington Beach economically, environmentally and socially.”

Funding for Visit Huntington Beach began in 1989 with a \$150,000 annual grant from the City of Huntington Beach. The grant’s purpose was “to provide a promotional program for the City designed to attract visitors and conferences to Huntington Beach through advertising, promotion, familiarization, trade shows, market places and other activities.”

In 2002, the Huntington Beach City Council approved the creation of a Hotel/Motel Business Improvement District (BID), to include all hotel/motel properties in the City of Huntington Beach. The creation of the Hotel/Motel BID also included an assessment of 1% on hotel and motel overnight room stays to be used by Visit HB to increase overnight business and leisure stays in Huntington Beach lodging properties.

In 2010, the Huntington Beach City Council approved a Hotel/Motel BID assessment increase of 1%, making the current assessment 2% on hotel and motel overnight room stays.

Visit Huntington Beach’s current mission statement is to market and sell Huntington Beach’s Surf City USA brand experience as the preferred quintessential California beach destination leading to increased visitor spending and enhanced quality of life for residents. Today, Huntington Beach visitors spend over \$350 million in the city each year, resulting in over \$9.7 million in tax revenue.

As the official advisory board for the Huntington Beach Hotel/Motel BID, Visit Huntington Beach uses BID funding to support the projects described in this report. In the coming fiscal year 2014-2015, Visit HB staff will continue to improve these programs, add new programs, and increase its efficiency as a destination marketing organization.



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## Awards & Recognition

Visit Huntington Beach, and members of its staff, were recognized by multiple industry organizations throughout this fiscal year.

### Visit California Poppy Award

Visit Huntington Beach won two prestigious Poppy Awards from Visit California in 2014. The awards were given for Best Public Relations Campaign for both the Save the Southern California Beach Bonfire campaign and the Surf/Ski/Speed campaign featuring NASCAR driver Jimmie Johnson. Poppy Awards recognize outstanding tourism marketing programs that celebrate California's innovative, creative spirit and raise the bar for travel marketing statewide and beyond.

### Public Relations Society of America PRISM Award Nomination

In late 2013, Visit Huntington Beach and Cerrell Associates, Inc. were selected as finalists for a PRISM Award from the Los Angeles Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. Visit HB was selected as finalist in two categories: Community Relations and Public Affairs. The PRISM Award recognizes outstanding programs and materials created by public relations professionals in the Greater Los Angeles area.

### Latino American Who's Who

Elsie Jean Rodriguez, National Sales Manager, was recognized by the Latino American Who's Who, a New York based biographical publication that selects and distinguishes leading Latino professionals throughout the world who have attained a recognizable degree of success in their field of endeavor and who contribute to the growth of their industry and culture.

### California Travel Association Emerging Leader Award

Rachel Volbert, Communications and Social Media Coordinator, received California Travel Association's Emerging Leader Award, given to individuals age 30 or younger whose contributions positively support and promote travel, tourism and hospitality. The California Travel Association is the advocacy and education organization that works to protect the state's tourism industry.

### OC Metro 40 Under 40

OC Metro selected Madison Fisher, Director of Marketing and Communications, as one of Orange County's 40 Under 40 in 2014. This award is given to the county's highest achieving young professionals, who are selected based on their drive, passion and accomplishments within their field.

### Robert Mayer Leadership Academy

In June 2014, Briton Saxton, Film & Sports Commissioner and Travel Trade Manager, joined Nicole Llido, Director of Visitor Services, as a graduate of the Robert Mayer Leadership Academy. Sponsored by the Robert Mayer Corporation and operated by the Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce, the Leadership Academy exposes Huntington Beach professionals to all facets of the community, including government, public safety, business community, economic climate, social uniqueness, education, and the health care system.

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## Public Relations

Public relations are an essential and effective part of Visit Huntington Beach's marketing program. Earned media placements have been proven to influence public perception and consumer decision making more effectively than paid advertising. Through Visit HB's efforts, including attendance at media receptions, cultivating relationships with media representatives and industry organizations, and familiarization tours, Surf City USA earns media placements in television, radio, digital and print mediums – generating demand for Huntington Beach both domestically and internationally.

### Media Receptions

Both Visit HB's Director of Marketing and Communications, Madison Fisher, and Communications and Social Media Manager, Rachel Volbert, participated in five Visit California Media Receptions: Toronto, Vancouver, San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York. These reception-format events receive an incredible mix of high-level media from newspapers to magazines to digital media.



Seen right: Rachel Volbert speaks with a member of the Canadian media at the Visit California Toronto Media Reception in June 2014.

Examples of publications and media in attendance at the Media Receptions include:

- *Huffington Post*
- *Coastal Living*
- *New York Times*
- *Ladies Home Journal*
- *Travel Weekly*
- *Epoch Times*
- *Travel + Leisure*
- *The Toronto Star*
- *The Toronto Sun*
- *Discovery Channel Canada*
- *TravelWeek*
- *Canadian Traveller*
- *Canadian Travel Press*
- *Meetings Focus*
- *Smart Meetings*
- *San Francisco Chronicle*
- *Sunset Magazine*
- *Coastal Living*
- *Examiner*
- *Yahoo! Travel*
- *AOL Travel*
- *California Meetings + Events*
- *Lonely Planet*
- *Conde Nast*

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**2014 Euro Media and Trade Mission**

In June 2014, Madison Fisher, Director of Marketing and Communications, spent a week traveling throughout Paris, Dublin, and London to conduct media calls and sales appointments with Visit California. Working with Visit HB's local agency, Black Diamond, she showcased Huntington Beach travel products and the destination to top UK and Irish travel trade and media, while MN Organisation set up media appointments in Paris.

*Seen right:* The media delegation at the Visit California European Media Mission before lunching and networking with 18 members of the Irish media in Dublin. *Seen below:* The entire delegation with representatives from destinations all over California at the Visit California European Sales and Media Mission networking and education day in Paris, France.



**Familiarization Tours**

Throughout the year, travel industry professionals and media with secured assignments are invited to experience Surf City USA first-hand via Familiarization Tours (aka "FAMs"). These tours are coordinated by Visit Huntington Beach, with the support of local partners, and are customized to match the individual interests and needs of each group/guest.

Visit HB hosts a number of media and travel trade FAMs each year, with guests from domestic and international print and online publications. Participants in the FAM tours come from the United States and all over the world, including Canada, Australia, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, the UK, China, Japan, France, and Ireland.

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Visit HB thanks the hotels and vendors who helped host FAM tours throughout the year: Brewbakers, Cucina Alessa, Don the Beachcomber, Duke's, Fred's Mexican Restaurant, HB Surf School, Hyatt Regency, Main Street Wine Company, Pedego, Rocky McKinnon, Ruby's, Sandy's, Shorebreak, Solita, Spark Woodfire Grill, Surf City Segway, Sunset Gondola, Toes on the Nose, Waterfront Adventures, Waterfront Hilton, and Zack's.

**Travel Weekly FAM Tour Spotlight**

The Cover Stars FAM tour visited HB in November 2013 and turned out coverage in February and April 2014. Twelve of the top-selling travel agents from the UK participated in a fam tour and photo shoot depicting inspiring California destinations that were then featured in *Travel Weekly* magazine, one of the UK's top trade media publications. HB was featured in two magazines, with beach photos on the cover and in editorial. The ad value equivalency of this coverage totaled over \$43,000, with a circulation of 37,875.

Seen right: One of two resulting *Travel Weekly* cover images. Seen bottom left: FAM tour travel agents before their surfing lesson. Seen bottom right: Interior pages from the resulting *Travel Weekly* magazine article.



**READERS' LIVES**

**COVER STARS 2014**

**SIMON ORAM**  
senior travel consultant, The Travel Shop, Sutton Coldfield

**Cover Star Simon ends trip with a marriage proposal to his girlfriend**

The Cover Stars 2014 trip to California will always hold a particularly special memory to most agents. Simon Oram, senior travel consultant at the Travel Shop in Sutton Coldfield, brought an engagement ring for his girlfriend. In the week just before getting on the plane, she was offered a job with a company she was interested in, and she was offered a job with a company she was interested in. It attached it with a ribbon to a brown shaped silver handle and gave it to her as an early Christmas present. I didn't get down on one knee - just as well, she said she would have said no if that's the case. I was more nervous about her parents' permission the week before, but they were really pleased. Although Simon hadn't planned to buy a ring while in the US, when he was given a surprise gift and worth \$2000 in spend at the Ritz-Carlton in Los Angeles, one of the Simon's shopping destinations visited during the trip, he simply couldn't resist. "I was looking around and thinking I was surprised at me except for the ring. In the end I fell in love with the ring and I own it."

Simon Oram, who began to work for a student nurse in the summer of 2005. "This made the trip even more special," admits Simon, 36, who works in the family business and is now director of a newly acquired business, Florida Holidays. Simon started at the family agency five years ago after working in various sales jobs and spending time in the US. He was already destined to work in travel - his parents met at Boston Travel before setting up the agency when the agent was sold to Thomson in 1993. From an early age, Simon worked in the family's shop putting labels on brochures. "I wish I'd done it sooner, but I thought people would say I was a bit out of my mind for my mum and dad. It's great actually. He adds: "Being a travel agent and having opportunities to go on those trips is a privilege - and I made some good friends on the way."

**SIMON'S CV**  
2011 to date: director of Florida Holidays, Sutton Coldfield  
2008 to date: travel consultant and then senior travel consultant, The Travel Shop, Sutton Coldfield

Want your life to be profiled on Reader's Lives? If so, please contact: [rl@travelweekly.co.uk](mailto:rl@travelweekly.co.uk)



**ABOUT OUR SPONSORS**  
Travel Weekly Cover Stars 2014 is running in association with local business Visit California, exclusive partner Simon Shopping Destinations and exclusive Virgin Holidays.  
**SENON-ON-CALIFORNIA**  
The Cover Stars trip to southern California came just as the right time for Simon Oram. "We have a lot of clients coming out of California and so the trip was really useful. I had never been to Palm Springs and I don't know I thought it was like a retirement village where old people went to relax, but it was a beautiful village and the views were stunning." The highlight of Simon's California experience was a visit to California's...  
Read more about our Cover Stars sponsors: [visitcalifornia.com](http://visitcalifornia.com), [simonshoppingdestinations.com](http://simonshoppingdestinations.com), [virginholidays.com](http://virginholidays.com), [simontravel.com](http://simontravel.com)

**ALL ABOUT YOU - READER'S LIVES**

California is not just Los Angeles and Hollywood - there is a lot more to it. There are beaches, national parks, Palm Springs and plenty of places California can visit and do. A lot of people think as if they holiday in California it will involve staying in big houses on the hill that's not the case.

Request to clients who have already been but have only seen the highlights such as San Francisco and LA. It's a great second time holiday destination.

Holiday in California don't have to be expensive there is accommodation to suit all budgets.

Shopping in California cheap. If you can't find what you want at the store, the Simon's Shopping Destinations offer online about half the price or more you would pay for the UK.

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**Press Coverage**

Print, online, television and radio press coverage are the result of Visit Huntington Beach's efforts via attendance at Visit California Media Receptions, hosting of familiarization tours and working directly with journalists seeking information about Surf City USA. The estimated ad value equivalency for press coverage this fiscal year exceeds \$1.5 million with a total circulation of 2 million. Samples of press coverage include:

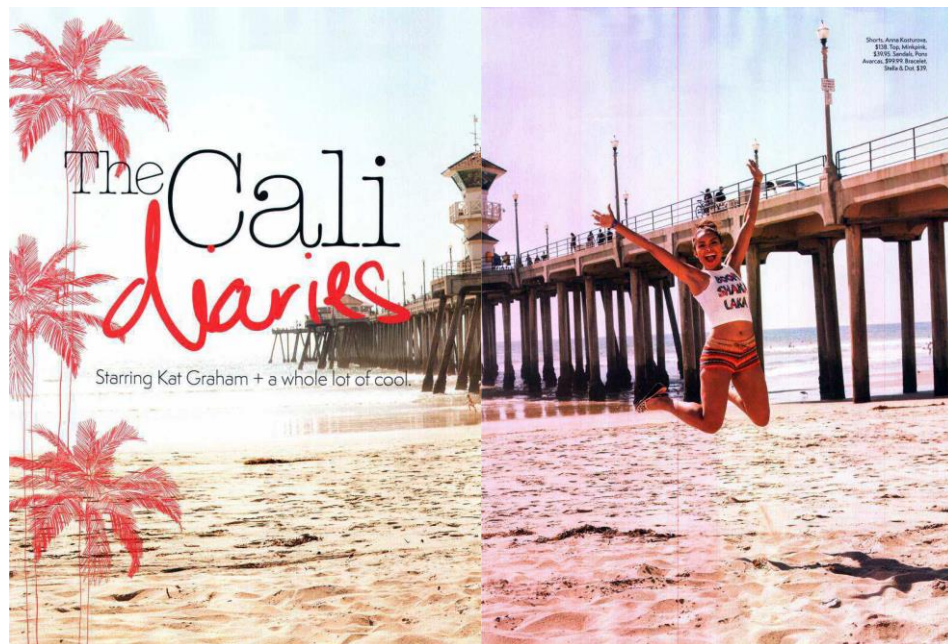
**Girlfriend Magazine – The Cali Diaries**

January 2014 (Print/Online)

Print Circulation: 70,002

YouTube Views: 3,603

Print/Digital/Social Media Ad Value Equivalency: \$285,369



**Die Welt – HB Surf Story**

December 2013 (Print)

Circulation: 134,297,562

AVE: \$307,564



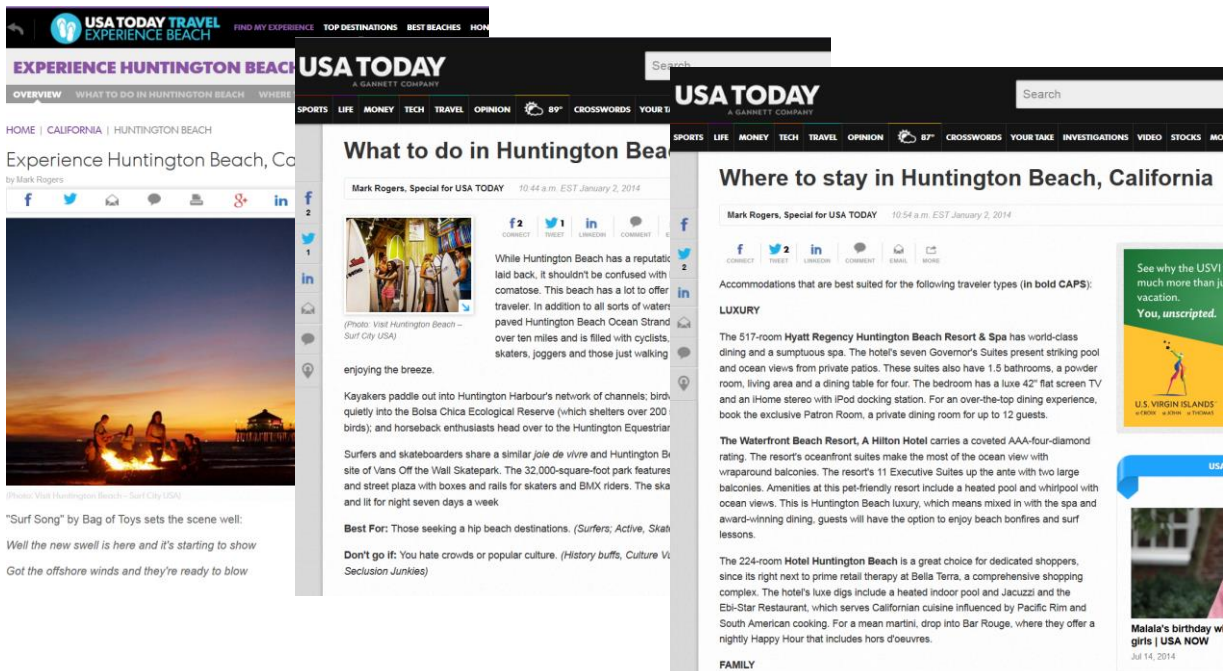


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The Sun - Surfin' USA  
February 2014 (Print)  
Circulation: 2,299,522  
AVE: \$174,664



USA Today – Three featured online articles  
January 2014 (Online)  
Circulation: 45,986,991  
AVE: \$52,876





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## Travel Trade and Wholesale Leisure Market

The Travel Trade market connects Visit Huntington Beach with tour operators, wholesalers, and travel agents – namely, those people and companies that sell travel products to potential visitors. Visit Huntington Beach participates in the Travel Trade market in multiple ways. Visit HB is continuing its successful international travel trade and public relations agency representation agreements in the UK, Germany and Australia. It also participates in Visit California events and co-ops with organizations such as the Orange County Visitors Association (OCVA).

### International Pow Wow



In May 2014, Madison Fisher, Director of Marketing and Communications, attended the US Travel Association's International Pow Wow in Las Vegas, along with John Ehlenfeldt, VP of Sales and Marketing, and Rachel Volbert, Communications and Social Media Coordinator.

In just three days of intensive pre-scheduled business appointments, more than 1,000 U.S. travel organizations from every region of the US (representing all industry category components), and close to 1,500 international and domestic buyers from more than 70 countries, conduct business negotiations that result in the generation of over \$3.5 billion in future Visit USA travel.

At this year's event, Visit HB staff conducted 41 business appointments with travel wholesaler and receptive tour operator contacts from Australia, Spain, Germany, UK, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, China, France, the United States, Japan, Canada, Chile, Portugal, and New Zealand. They also met with over 80 domestic and international journalists.



*Seen right: Media room from Pow Wow. Seen below: Show floor during Pow Wow.*



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**2014 California Cup**

For the fifth consecutive year, Visit Huntington Beach was invited to participate in the California Cup, held in San Francisco/Yosemite just after International Pow Wow. Each year, the California Cup attracts the most influential decision makers within premier domestic and international tour companies and airlines, as well as select travel media, to inspect area tourism products and experiences. Senior level, primarily international travel trade and media representatives, attend from various countries throughout the world, including Australia, Canada, Germany, Scandinavia, Japan, South Korea, and the United States, along with representatives from Visit California and Brand USA.

This year, Visit Huntington Beach was represented by Madison Fisher, Director of Marketing and Communications. Seen below is the official California Cup group photo while in Yosemite.



**Orange County Visitors Association China Initiative**

For the second year, Visit Huntington Beach participated in the Orange County Visitor Association's China Initiative, which has representatives on the ground in Beijing and Shanghai selling Orange County to Chinese travelers. As a relatively new market, Visit HB sees this program as an investment in the future. The typical first-time Chinese traveler to the United States will first visit well-known attractions such as Disneyland and the Hollywood sign. Visit HB's goal is to attract Chinese visitors to HB on return visits.

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## Group Sales

Group Sales staff is responsible for generating leads that result in booked meetings, conferences, and incentive programs in Huntington Beach. By focusing sales efforts in key demographic markets, the group sales department works to increase overnight stays in Surf City USA, resulting in an increased economic impact to businesses throughout the city.

New hire, Elsie Jean Rodriguez, began with Visit Huntington Beach in February 2014 and started out with a bang by booking her first group within her first week of work. Together with Vice President of Sales and Marketing, John Ehlenfeldt, the two are on track to reach their goal of 14,900 definite room night bookings for fiscal year 2013-14. To date, the department has processed over 185 leads for the destination and developed over 2,400 new client contacts.



*Seen left:* Rodriguez and Ehlenfeldt at the Visit Huntington Beach sponsored Site SoCal Poker Tournament. Site is a global network of travel and event professionals committed to motivational experiences that deliver business results.

### Tradeshows

Group Sales staff attend various shows throughout the United States in order to cultivate relationships with key meeting planners and potential clients. This year, Visit Huntington Beach updated its tradeshow booth (pictured below) to reflect a modern design featuring a dramatic image of the Huntington Beach Pier and coastline. By attending shows and actively participating in organizations such as those listed below, Ehlenfeldt and Rodriguez have presented Surf City USA as a viable, exciting meetings destination to over 10,000 qualified meeting planners.

- MPI EdCon 2014
- MPI Annual Golf Tournament
- IMEX America
- Collaborate Marketplace
- Connect Marketplace
- HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference
- Site Southern California Holiday Event
- Luxury Meetings Showcase
- MPI World Education Congress



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### Economic Impact Calculator (EIC)

In June 2014, in an effort to show the group meetings industry's value to Surf City USA, Visit HB worked with Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) and Simpleview (its customer relationship management software vendor) to implement an Economic Impact Calculator within its system. The EIC details the monetary value of each group meeting booked by Visit Huntington Beach. Meetings input into the EIC to date have shown values ranging from \$90,000 to \$4,000,000 per meeting.

### Advertising and Promotions

In addition to direct sales efforts within the meetings market, Visit HB hosts the MeetInHB.com website and conducts group marketing advertising campaigns and promotions that target meeting and event planners.

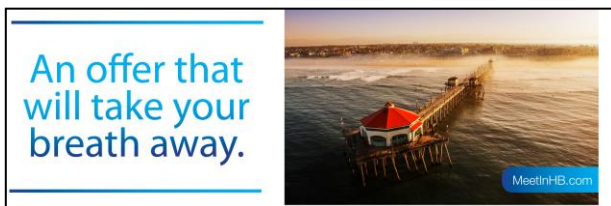
With the launch of the new SurfCityUSA.com came an updated MeetInHB.com website. The new meetings site is embedded into SurfCityUSA.com and provides meeting and event planners information on Huntington Beach conference hotels and facilities. The site also includes an online RFP submission tool and meeting planner toolkit, allowing users to download images and get quick access to information most often needed by meeting planners.

This year, Visit Huntington Beach placed print ads in select meetings industry magazines, listed below. These ads were strategically placed to allow Visit HB sales staff to attend additional tradeshow and events that provide extended exposure to meeting planners throughout the country.

- Meetings Media
- Collaborate
- MPI Southern California Annual Directory (pictured left)



To drive traffic to the meetings website, Visit Huntington Beach purchased banner ads on Cvent.com, a popular online tool for meeting and event planners. In addition, Visit HB sponsored an online webinar by Meetings West called "How to work with CVB's", which had an online attendance of 550 meeting planners.



As an incentive to bring meetings to Huntington Beach, Visit Huntington Beach offered another popular sales promotion in 2013-2014. The Breathtaking Offer compensated meeting planners for conducting Huntington Beach site visits, with an additional credit to the master account for meetings that were held in Surf City USA.

**A Breathtaking Offer**

With sunsets that inspire, wide-open beaches to let your ideas soar, and hotels steps from the sand, Huntington Beach, California offers the perfect setting for your next meeting or conference. And we'll add to the beautiful backdrop with a breathtaking offer!

**EXPERIENCE THE INCREDIBLE VIEWS**

Schedule a site visit through the sales team at Visit Huntington Beach and we will pay for your domestic, round-trip airfare\*. If you are within driving distance of Huntington Beach, we will offer car service to and from your location. In addition to your transportation, you will receive the 99 very important planner's treatment by experiencing Huntington Beach the same way your attendees will - relaxing and having fun in our destination. From spa treatments and shopping to something more out of the box, like getting your attendees in networks and getting the local views, you will quickly see how Huntington Beach can have an impact on your next meeting.

**OFFER THAT TAKES YOUR BREATH AWAY**

If your contract is signed within 45 days of your site visit, an offer will be extended to your group that will totally take your breath away. As well as some on the site mentioned with your meeting, Visit Huntington Beach will apply \$1,000 to the master file of your group with a minimum of 100 consecutive room nights at a Huntington Beach resort hotel for each specific meeting.

**MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

Please contact the sales department with Visit Huntington Beach today at (714) 969-3492, sales@surfcityusa.com or visit our website at www.MeetInHB.com. Now that you have caught your breath, let's get your program booked into Huntington Beach!

**HAVE A LARGER PROGRAM?**

Visit Huntington Beach will apply \$2,000 - \$5,000 or more towards the master file for your group with a minimum of 500 consecutive room nights or more for each specific meeting at a Huntington Beach resort hotel (subject to details).

**Requirements for this offer:**

- Airfare guarantee up to \$500.00
- The lead RFP must be issued directly through Visit Huntington Beach at the same time initial hotel contract is made.
- \$1,000 or more is paid directly to the resort hotel in full contracted for the program and paid when the program activates.
- A total minimum of 100 room nights must be contracted with a HB resort hotel for each specific meeting.
- Cash offer cannot be used as a deposit or cancellation fee for meeting and is paid directly to HB resort hotel.
- Offer is valid until September 30, 2014.

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## Huntington Beach Film Commission

Now in its fourth year, the Huntington Beach Film Commission continues on its mission to increase awareness of Huntington Beach as a viable location for film production, thereby increasing revenue to the city.

As of July 2014, the City of Huntington Beach has issued 57 film permits, while the State Beaches have issued 14 film permits. These numbers are expected to grow through the end of the fiscal year and match or exceed last year's 95 film permits.

In January 2014, the Film Commission hosted 30 location managers for a Huntington Beach familiarization tour that showcased Huntington Beach filming locations, including Huntington Beach Central Library, Purcell Murray Kitchen Showroom, AES Power Plant, City Gym & Pool, Bolsa Chica State Beach Lifeguard Headquarters, Waterfront Hilton Hotel, Hyatt Regency Resort & Spa, and Shorebreak Hotel.



*Seen right:* Scott O'Hanlon from the Waterfront Hilton speaks to location managers during the FAM tour.

In summer 2014, the Film Commission took on its first intern, a Cal State University, Fullerton senior who gained first-hand experience in location scouting, working in the industry, and marketing a film-friendly destination.

Briton Saxton, Film Commissioner, and Joseph Aranda, Office Manager, also staffed the HB booth at the AFCI Locations Tradeshow in Los Angeles for the fourth year in a row. The show is the largest of its kind that caters specifically to location managers in the industry.

In a continuing effort to increase filming locations in Huntington Beach, Saxton also spoke at meetings of the Sunset Beach Community Association and the Chamber of Commerce's AM Connect to explain the benefits that filming brings to the city and to encourage business owners and residents to open up their homes and businesses to film productions.

A sample of film productions conducted in the city this year include:

- *Storage Wars* (multiple episodes)
- *True Life*
- *Jane the Virgin* (CW pilot)
- *Showdown of the Unbeatables* (multiple episodes)
- *Myth or Science*
- *Love & Hip Hop*
- *Restoration Garage*
- Coca Cola commercial (featured during Superbowl)
- Pepsi commercial
- *Playbook 360*
- Capital One commercial
- Oakley commercial
- Charmin commercial and event

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### Filming in Huntington Beach

Filming in Huntington Beach could not be accomplished without the help and partnership of the City of Huntington Beach and its various departments, including marine safety, parking and community services, just to name a few.

In its inaugural season, *Showdown of the Unbeatables*, a popular National Geographic series, filmed two separate episodes in Huntington Beach. Each episode, the best American companies use their prized products to battle each other and see which one withstands the test. In the first episode, which was shot in the Huntington Beach Sports Complex, the Bleacher Reacher Mega, a compressed air gun for launching t-shirts, went up against iStretch, a wire that can stretch 300 percent without breaking.



The second episode was filmed at Don the Beachcomber, where the show tested whether it's possible to break glass using sound waves. Both film shoots were highly successful and have led to increased interest for filming in HB by other National Geographic shows.

### Sports Commission

In partnership with the City of Huntington Beach, Briton Saxton, Sports Commissioner, is working to bring new, revenue-generating, sporting events to Surf City USA. In its second year, the Sports Commission continues to educate sporting event planners of the benefits of holding events in HB during off-season need times.

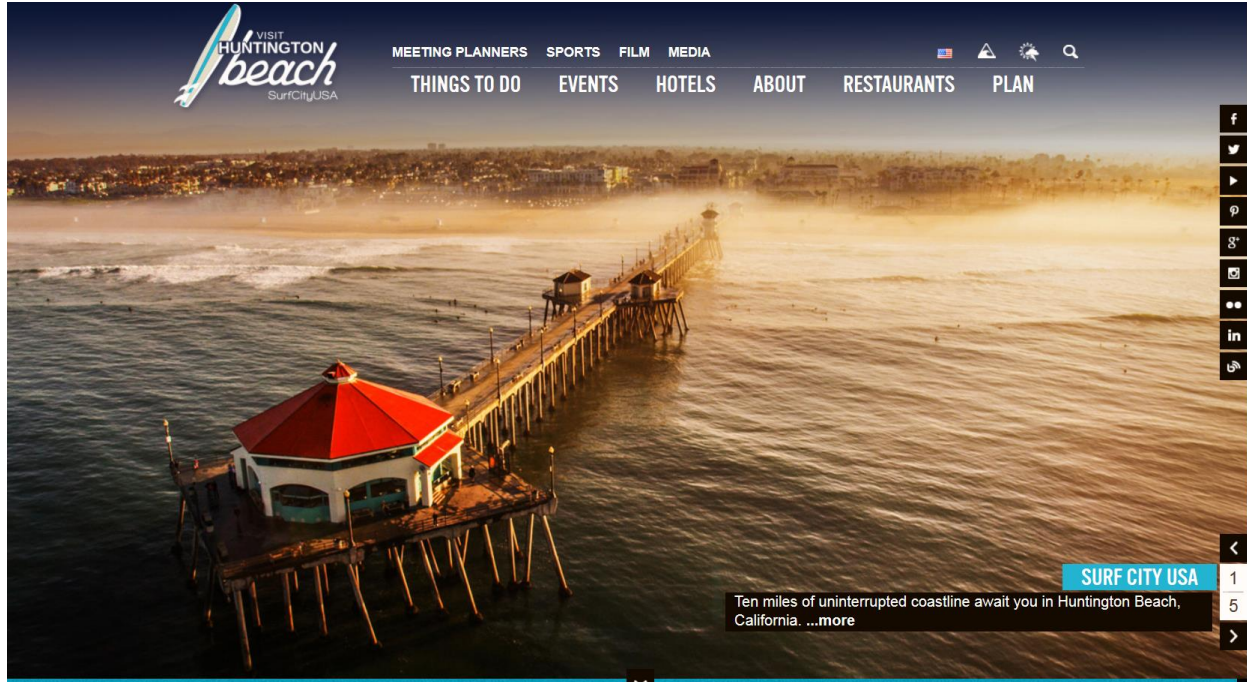
This year, Saxton attended the NASC (National Association Of Sports Commissions) Sports Symposium, where she met with over 25 sporting event owners to tout Huntington Beach, and the TEAMS Sports Conference, where the Sports Commission was successfully able to nominate the 2012 US Open of Surfing for a Sports Travel Award. Saxton is also working with Simpleview to implement Destination Management Association International's Economic Impact Calculator into its Customer Relationship Management system in order to better tabulate the potential economic impact of events in the city.



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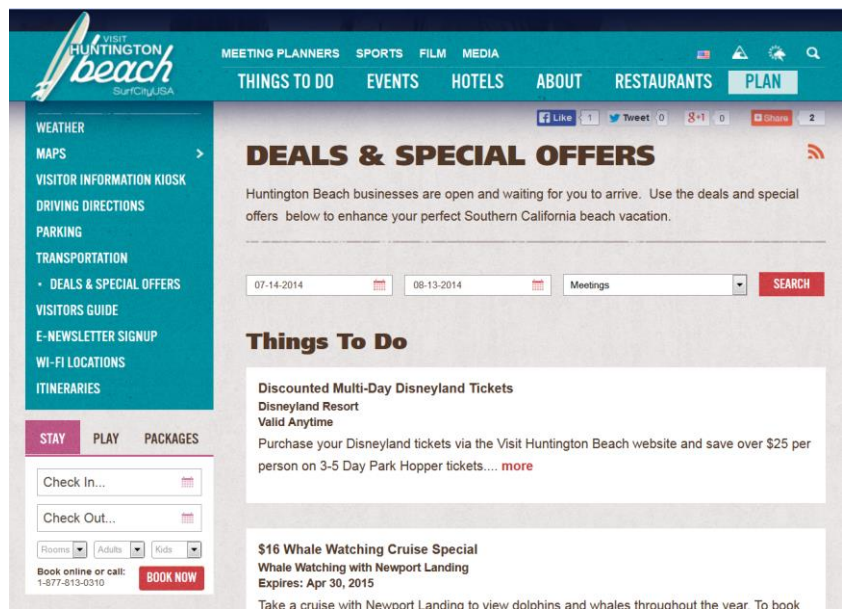
## Website

In October 2013, Visit HB launched a brand new website at SurfCityUSA.com. Created in partnership with Simpleview, one of the top website and digital marketing agencies for destination management organizations in the United States, Visit HB's new site provides stunning visuals that entice visitors to want to visit Huntington Beach, along with a wealth of information about hotels, shopping, dining, activities, events, and attractions.



Special features include a Huntington Beach Blog, a live webcam of the pier and surf conditions, deals and special offers listings, and Yelp and Trip Advisor reviews for business listings. The site also features information for media, meeting planners, the film industry, and sporting event planners.

*Seen right:* The deals and special offers page with discounts to local attractions, restaurants, and hotel packages.

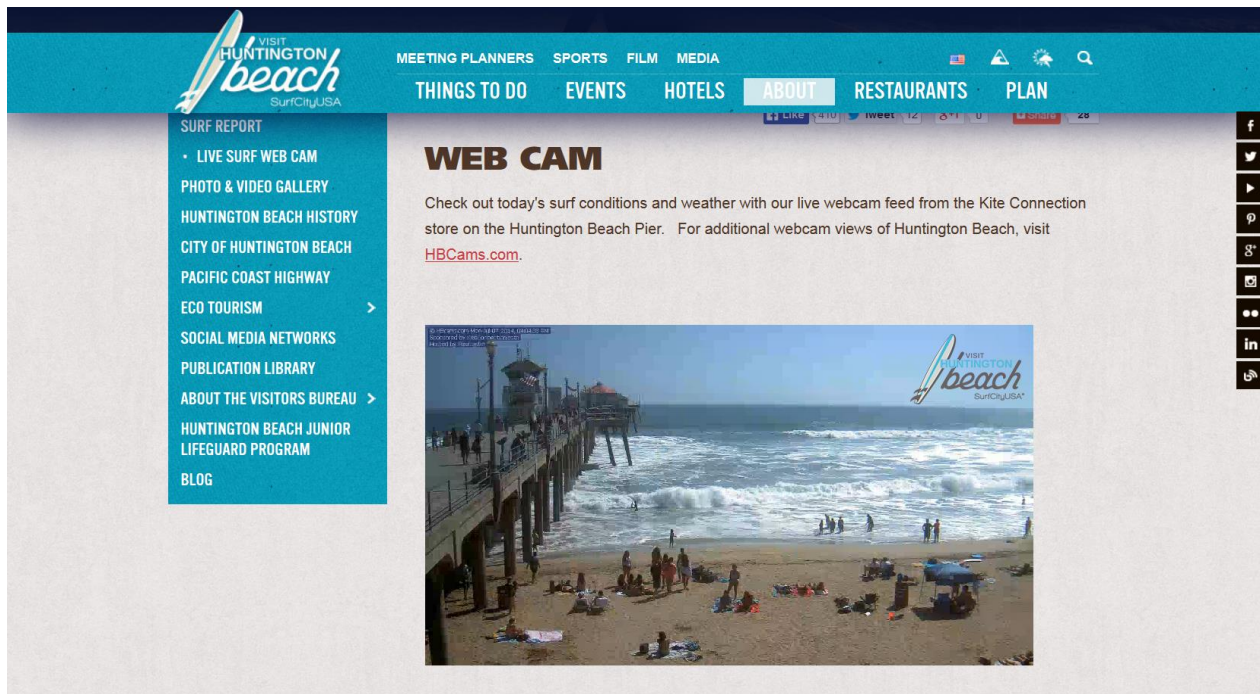
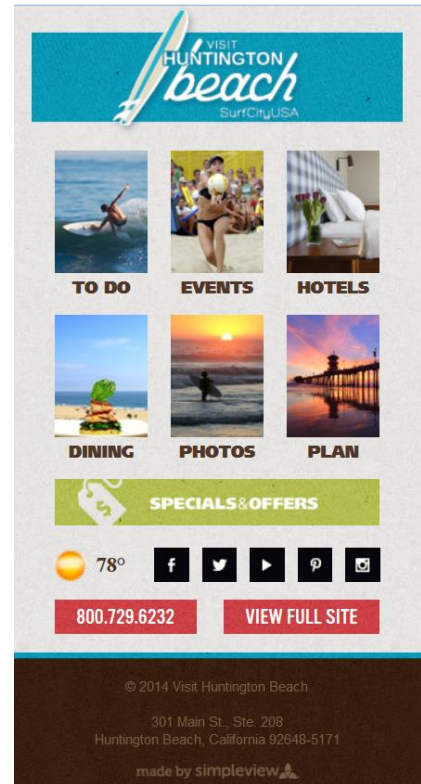


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At the same time as the new SurfCityUSA.com was launched, Visit HB launched a new mobile website (pictured right). Designed for ease of use on mobile devices, the mobile site allows users to search for local businesses and events based on their current location.

In addition to building the website and mobile site, Visit HB also partnered with Simpleview to provide Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) services. Each month, Visit HB staff meets with a dedicated team of Simpleview employees to monitor the progress of the site and its SEM campaigns to see where improvements can be made. In June 2014, Simpleview conducted a heat map of the homepage to see what areas of the homepage are clicked on more often. The results of this study will be used to improve click throughs to other areas of the site. Simpleview will also be conducting A/B testing on specific pages of the site to improve usage of the pages' forms.

Google Analytics of the new site show it is consistently performing above industry averages in bounce rate, time on site, and pages viewed per visit. Visit HB will continue to work with Simpleview to increase overall site visitors and performance.



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## Social Media

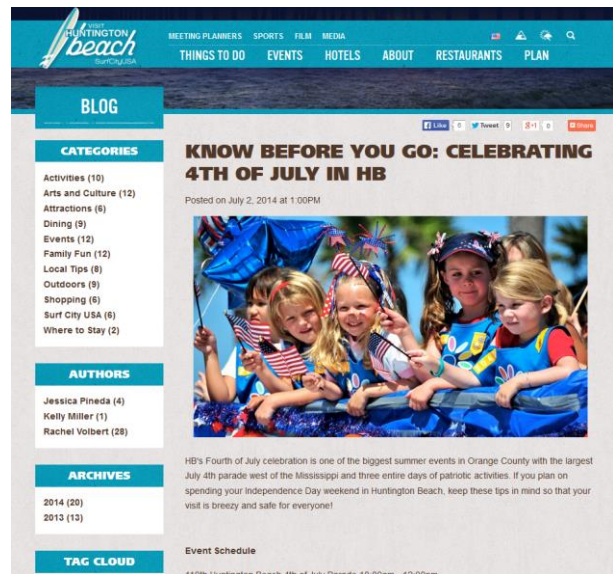
Social media is an important part of Visit Huntington Beach’s public relations efforts, allowing immediate, direct, and consistent contact with Huntington Beach guests, residents and fans. Visit HB continues to partner with Think! Social Media for strategy and help with specific social media campaigns. Rachel Volbert, Communications and Social Media Coordinator, oversees all social media outlets on a daily basis. This year has seen a tremendous increase in social media followers, due to Visit HB’s consistent posts and responses seven days a week.

The table below provides an overview of Visit Huntington Beach’s social media followers on its four primary social media accounts. Zeros indicate that that specific account had not yet been created. Additional social media presences are maintained on Yelp, Flickr, and YouTube.

Social Media Followers by Account				
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Facebook (Visit Huntington Beach)	800	8,500	29,000	42,000
Twitter (@HBSurfCityUSA )	0	561	1,133	2,233
Instagram (@SurfCityUSA)	0	0	1,875	7,729
Pinterest (Pinterest.com/SurfCityUSA)	0	0	272	549

In October 2013, Visit Huntington Beach also began a blog on its website. The Huntington Beach Blog is updated regularly with posts featuring specific events and businesses, things to do in Huntington Beach, or tips and guides for niche markets. The blog has seen a steady increase in readership each month and is becoming one of the most popular pages on the website.

*Seen right: Blog post from July 2014, Know Before You Go: Celebrating 4<sup>th</sup> of July in HB. The post gave tips and schedule information about how best to enjoy your holiday weekend in Huntington Beach.*



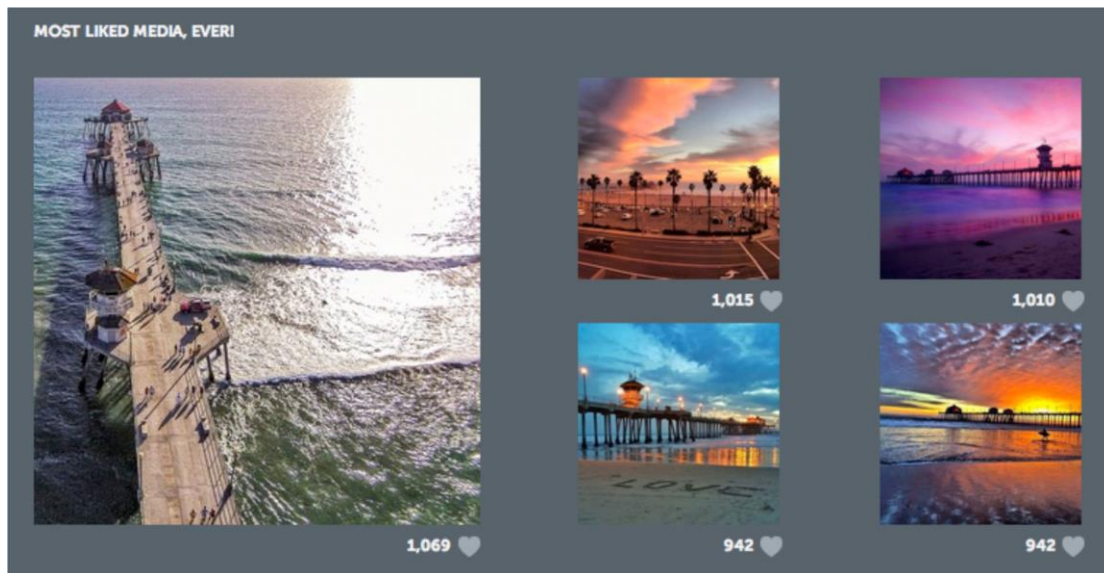
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### Social Media Campaigns

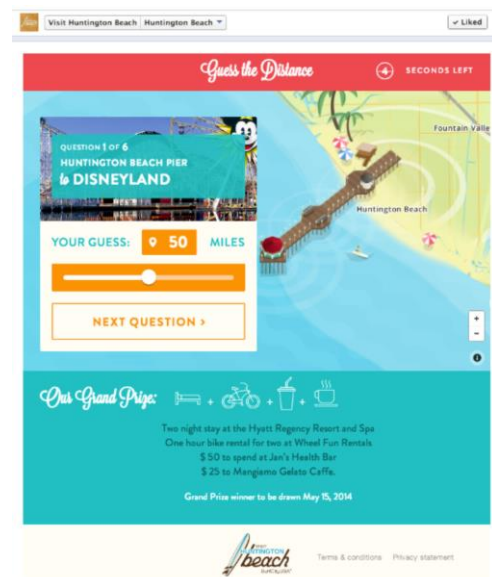
With the help of Think! Social Media, Visit Huntington Beach completed two successful social media campaigns during the 2013-14 fiscal year.

#### #SurfCityUSA Photo Contest

In order to further develop the Surf City USA brand, Visit HB encouraged social media fans to use the hashtag #SurfCityUSA on their Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook posts to share why Huntington Beach was the ultimate Southern Californian beach vacation destination. From February 6 to April 2, 2014, the campaign received 245 contest entries and 4,132 photos using this unique hashtag. Throughout the 8-week contest, Visit HB increased its Instagram followers by 1,192 and added 3,074 new Facebook likes. Every other week, user generated photographs were compiled and shared on Visit HB's Facebook page in order to promote the contest and engage fans. Ultimately, two winners were chosen to receive a Surf City USA beach vacation.



#### SoCal Hub: Guess the Distance Facebook Contest



The SoCal Hub: Guess the Distance Contest ran on the Visit Huntington Beach Facebook page from April 24 to May 14, 2014, gaining 5,910 new Facebook page likes. There were 26,265 guesses of the distance from the iconic Huntington Beach Pier to Southern California attractions via the game application and more than 4,377 rounds played. The winner with the closest guesses was awarded a Huntington Beach vacation package.

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## Advertising

### Print Advertising

Print advertising is still an important part of Visit HB's marketing efforts. Select consumer magazines and publications whose readership aligns with Huntington Beach's key demographics are targeted for print advertising – usually by taking advantage of remnant space and special offers in order to stretch the advertising budget as far as possible.

### California Visitors Guide

With partners Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort & Spa; Shorebreak, a Joie de Vivre Hotel; and Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel, Visit HB again produced a cooperative full-page ad for the *California Visitors Guide*.

The *California Visitors Guide* is the official publication of Visit California with 500,000 copies distributed annually via 20 California Welcome Centers, consumer travel trade shows, visitor centers across the state and at Visit California travel trade shows. The guide also received more than 100,000 downloads of the digital California Visitors Guide from [www.VisitCalifornia.com](http://www.VisitCalifornia.com).

In addition to the domestic *California Visitors Guide*, Visit HB also collaborated with the Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort & Spa; Shorebreak, a Joie de Vivre Hotel; and Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel to extend our ad in 200,000 copies of the official *California Visitors Guide* in the UK, Scandinavia, Mexico, China, Korea, Japan, France, Brazil, Germany, Australia, India, and Italy.



TODAY,  
THE BEACH.  
TOMORROW,  
THE BEACH.

Discover the best of Southern California culture in Huntington Beach – where the day starts and ends on 10 miles of uninterrupted coastline. You don't just go to the beach here, you live the beach lifestyle, in all of its bike riding, s'mores making, volleyball playing, sand-in-your-toes glory. Explore the vibrant downtown or relax on the sand where you'll find waves as consistent as the sunshine. See why Huntington Beach is the only place that can truly be called Surf City USA®.

HYATT REGENCY HUNTINGTON BEACH RESORT & SPA | SHOREBREAK HOTEL, A JOIE DE VIVRE HOTEL | WATERFRONT BEACH RESORT, A HILTON HOTEL | VISIT HUNTINGTON BEACH SURFCITYUSA

800-729-6232 SURFCITYUSA.COM  
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### International & Domestic Travel Brochures

Travel brochures are still quite popular in countries around the world. As such, Visit Huntington Beach invests in the following travel brochure advertising:

- Virgin Holidays (UK)
- Qantas Holidays (Australia)
- DerTour (Germany)
- Get Away Today (Domestic)

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**Consumer Magazine Advertising**

In 2013-2014, Visit Huntington Beach took out full and partial-page print ads in the following magazines:

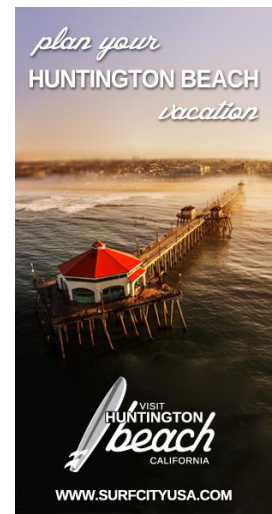
- Coastal Living
- Food & Wine
- National Geographic Traveler
- OC Weekly
- Sunset Magazine
- Travel + Leisure



**Digital Advertising**

Visit Huntington Beach also targets select websites and e-newsletters to place digital ads. These ads allow for a greater reach at a lower cost. This year, Visit HB placed ads in the following digital spaces:

- TripAdvisor
- Facebook
- Visit California e-Newsletter
- Sunset Magazine e-Newsletter



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**California Welcome Center – Buena Park**

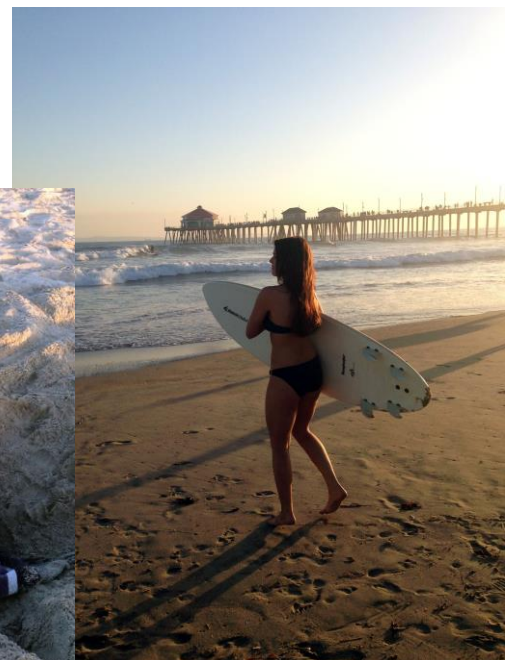
Visit HB continued its agreement for two display ads in the California Welcome Center in Buena Park. The larger display ad is located in the front entrance while the second display ad is located in the main room containing the brochure racks, above the Orange County section. The newest California Welcome Center, the Buena Park center is the only location in Orange County. It is located 15 miles from Surf City USA off Beach Blvd by the 5 freeway, making Huntington Beach the most easily accessible beach by visitors to the welcome center. During its third year of operation, the Welcome Center assisted 30,000 walk-in visitors. Of these, 24% are international visitors, 31% are out-of-state visitors, and 45% are from within California.

As part of the display ad agreement with the Welcome Center, Huntington Beach is also featured on the homepage of the California Welcome Center's website as one of the Top 5 Most Popular Things to Do in the area.



**Destination Photo Shoot**

In early 2014, Visit Huntington Beach worked with its new Visitors Guide publication partner, Orange Coast Magazine, to conduct a small-scale photo shoot at specific locations in Huntington Beach to gather images for the 2014-15 Visitors Guide. The images will also be used at events and tradeshows, client trainings, on various websites, and to market the destination to meeting planners, leisure visitors, travel agents and on Visit HB's website, SurfCityUSA.com.



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## Visitor & Partner Services

### Visitor Information Kiosk

The Visitor Information Kiosk at Pier Plaza continues to serve visitors and residents seven-days-a-week throughout the year, with extended operating hours for holidays and special events such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration and Vans US Open of Surfing.

The Visitor Information Kiosk served over 37,000 walk-ups last fiscal year. As of July 6, 2014, the Kiosk has served almost 30,000 walk-ups this year, putting it on track to exceed last year's numbers for this fiscal year.

Kiosk services are information-based and include transportation; restaurant, shopping and dining recommendations; HB and surrounding attractions; events; and a daily weather/water condition report located in the front window. Visit HB publications are also distributed including the Visitors Guide, Visitor Map, and maps of the downtown area with information in French, German, Japanese and Spanish, in addition to monthly event calendars for the current and forthcoming months. The Kiosk also distributes coupons and event flyers for Huntington Beach-based businesses and events.



The Kiosk is staffed by one full-time staff person and two part-time staff persons who are continually trained throughout the year on HB amenities and visitor services. Building maintenance this year included repainting the exterior of the kiosk.

### Welcome Center



Visit HB has also partnered with the Huntington Beach International Surfing Museum to create a Welcome Center in the museum lobby. The Welcome Center provides the same informational material as the Visitor Information Kiosk. It offers two dedicated 20-minute parking spaces, making it a great point of contact for visitors who arrive via automobile. In the future, Visit HB plans to sell tickets to attractions and provide a trained staff person to answer questions.

### Partner Services

This year, Visit HB has made a concerted effort to provide a consistent stream of communication with its partners. Beginning with a quarterly e-newsletter, Visit HB will also build out a partner section of its website that will provide partner benefits, industry research and links, a Partner Blog, bulk publication request form, and a Partner Connect Bulletin Board, among other features. The goal is to build and strengthen partner relationships that will improve the visitor experience throughout the city.



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## Publications & Collateral

### Huntington Beach Visitors Guide

Visit Huntington Beach worked with its new publisher, Orange Coast Magazine, to create the 2014-15 Huntington Beach Visitors Guide. The guide reflects a chic, modern Surf City USA feel with spreads that were designed in a surfing magazine style.

Visitor Guides are used as lure pieces outside the Orange County area, throughout the United States, and internationally including in the UK, Germany and Australia to increase demand for overnight visitation.

Visit HB also provides Visitors Guides in bulk for conferences and groups holding overnight events in Huntington Beach. Additional Visitors Guides are distributed at the California Welcome Center in Buena Park; John Wayne Orange County Airport; and in visitor information racks throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties.



The remaining guides are primarily distributed in-market via Huntington Beach lodging properties, local retail and restaurant locations, the Visit HB office, the Visitor Information Kiosk at Pier Plaza, and the new Welcome Center at the International Surfing Museum.

### Huntington Beach Visitor Maps



Visit Huntington Beach also publishes Huntington Beach Visitor Maps, primarily for distribution in-market at Huntington Beach lodging properties and at other local distribution points, including the Visitor Information Kiosk at the pier and the Welcome Center in the International Surfing Museum. Additional distribution takes place at the California Welcome Centers in Alpine, Buena Park, Barstow, Oceanside, Oxnard; the Ontario, Los Angeles and Orange County airports; and visitor information racks throughout the Los Angeles County region. The Visitor Maps also enjoy limited out-of-market distribution internationally, and have been hailed by local concierge and customer service personnel as excellent tools for assisting visitors and residents.

### Visit Huntington Beach 2012-13 Annual Report



Visit Huntington Beach published its fourth consecutive Annual Report for fiscal year 2012-2013. The report highlights Visit Huntington Beach's accomplishments throughout the year and focuses on how tourism builds community. Covering Huntington Beach public relations, destination sales, Film and Sports Commissions, marketing, visitor services, and administration, it also gave a preview of upcoming projects and programs for the following fiscal year.

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## Advocacy & Community Relations

### 100 Years of Surfing

2014 marks the anniversary of 100 Years of Surfing at the Huntington Beach Pier. Visit Huntington Beach partnered with a group of surf-enthusiasts and surfers, including PT Townend, Don MacAllister, and Steve Bone, to help promote this momentous occasion and use it to market the destination.

Events created specifically for the 100 Years of Surfing celebration include the When Men Were Men and Boards Were Wood surfing exhibition, the Greens Room Golf Tournament, and the Guinness World Record attempt for most riders on the world's largest surfboard. Proceeds from these events will be donated to the Huntington Beach International Surfing Museum.



In addition, several special events were held in conjunction with 100 Years of Surfing, including Rotary Club's Surfboards on Parade, the Century of Stoke exhibit at the International Surfing Museum, and The Art and Soul of Surfing at the Huntington Beach Art Center. Other popular annual events also joined in under the 100 Years of Surfing banner, including the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration "Waves of Freedom", Blessing of the Waves, US Open of Surfing, Surf City Surf Dog, and Surf City Days.



100 Years of Surfing enjoyed extended media coverage, including mentions on the KTLA Morning News and a front page story in the *OC Register*.

The image on the right shows Bart Genovese, of Costa Mesa, with his 13-foot, 9-inch board that was made in 1934. Genovese, who only began surfing recently, took home one of four prizes in the When Men Were Men and Boards Were Wood exhibition in June 2014.

### Save the Beach Bonfire Rings Update

Last fiscal year brought a fight to keep Huntington Beach fire rings, along with all other Southern California fire rings, on our beaches. While Huntington Beach's fire rings were saved, Visit HB continues to monitor the ongoing proceedings between state legislature, the Southern California Air Quality Management District (AQMD), and the City of Newport Beach. Travis Allen's Assembly Bill 1102, which aims to protect fire rings in Southern California, passed unanimously in the Assembly in January 2014, but was then amended in the Senate to require compliance with both AQMD and Coastal Commission rulings. Visit HB's former President & CEO, Steve Bone, traveled to Sacramento in June 2014 to speak in support of the bill, where it was again passed unanimously by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources. It will go to the Senate Appropriations Committee in late summer. Visit HB will continue to do everything in its power to see that Surf City USA's beach bonfire rings are kept available to its visitors.

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## Administration & Operations

The 2013-2014 fiscal year saw a number of changes at Visit Huntington Beach. In January 2014, Visit Huntington Beach moved to a new office space in Downtown Huntington Beach. The new office allows for a more efficient work space, giving Visit HB the opportunity to implement an internship program that had been in the works for over 3 years. The program currently has a Marketing Intern and a Film Intern in the office two to three days a week.

In February 2014, Elsie Rodriguez joined the Group Sales department as Visit HB's new National Sales Manager. Rodriguez brings over 20 years of hospitality experience to Visit HB, with stints at Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort and Spa, Omni Los Angeles Hotel, The Balboa Bay Club & Resort, and our very own Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel.

Briton Saxton, Film and Sports Commissioner, took on an additional role in summer 2014 as the new Travel Trade Manager. Saxton will be working with Madison Fisher, Director of Marketing and Communications, in this arena. This change allows Visit Huntington Beach to increase its reach in the international and domestic travel trade industry, exposing Surf City USA to more wholesalers and travel trade agents throughout the globe.

### Visit HB Staff

Kelly Miller, President & CEO

John Ehlenfeldt, Vice President of Sales and Marketing

Madison Fisher, Director of Marketing and Communications

Nicole Llido, Director of Visitor Services

Elsie Rodriguez, National Sales Manager

Briton Saxton, Film and Sports Commissioner and Travel Trade Manager

Rachel Volbert, Communications and Social Media Coordinator

Joseph Aranda, Office Manager

Kevin Keller, Kiosk Tourism Coordinator

Bridget Barrett, Kiosk Tourism Coordinator

Denice Yeager, Kiosk Tourism Coordinator

### Visit HB Board of Directors

Brett Barnes, Chairman

Nicole Thompson, Chief Financial Officer

Paul Devitt, Secretary

Paulette Fischer, Vice Chair

Paul Frechette, Vice Chair

Michael Ali

Meg Bernardo

Suzanne Buekema

Chris DeGuzman

Barbara Delgleize

Steve Dodge

Sue Gordon

Janis Mantini

Kiran Patel

Gordon Smith

Dean Torrence

Peter Townend

Mike Van Voorhis

Robert Vaughan

Jerry Wheeler

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## Looking Ahead

As this Annual Report has shown, Visit HB has had a transformative year, improving its offices and administration and restructuring and hiring new personnel to be more efficient in achieving its mission. While a number of changes were made internally, Visit Huntington Beach also launched a new website, greatly increased its social media reach, established the momentous 100 Years of Surfing campaign, and continued to receive recognition in the travel industry via a variety of awards for the organization and staff.

Visit HB plans to use the accomplishments of the 2013-2014 fiscal year as a foundation for creating new projects and improving current projects in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Some of the projects that are planned for next year include:

- Marketing Department: Hire an agency of record for public relations and marketing to create a comprehensive and targeted advertising, marketing, branding, and public relations plan for the destination both domestically and internationally. The agency will also explore upcoming target markets and possible new demographics for Visit HB.
- 100 Years of Surfing: The historic 100 Years of Surfing campaign will continue in Spring 2015 with the Guinness World Record attempt for most riders on the world's largest surfboard.
- Group Sales Department: Increase tradeshow efforts by 10% in order to increase sales efforts in new target markets that align with Visit Huntington Beach's marketing strategy.
- Film Commission: Increase the number of film friendly locations in Huntington Beach, both on public and private property; speak to additional Film Departments at local colleges about the filming process and the benefits of working with a film commission; and increase the Huntington Beach Film Commission's presence on the State Film Commission's website.
- Sports Commission: Create and grow sports-based social media for Huntington Beach. Promote Huntington Beach as an active and healthy city.
- Visitor Services: Work with the City of Huntington Beach and Downtown BID to create an ongoing Ambassador Program, beginning with Downtown and spreading to other parts of the city; improve amenities at the Welcome Center in the International Surfing Museum.
- Partner Services: Create a Partner section at SurfCityUSA.com that provides a list of partner benefits, a partner blog, links to research and industry organizations, information for front-line staff, a bulk publication request form, and a Partner Connect Bulletin Board.

These are just some of the programs that Visit Huntington Beach would like to implement in the coming fiscal year. However, in order to take these to the next level and increase its ability to affect visitor experiences in Huntington Beach, Visit HB has come to recognize the need for additional funding.

On behalf of the Visit Huntington Beach Board of Directors and the Huntington Beach Hotel/Motel Business Improvement District, Visit HB is asking the Huntington Beach City Council to adopt a resolution to establish a Huntington Beach Tourism Business Improvement District (HB TBID), with a self-assessment of 3% on overnight stays in the City of Huntington Beach.

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As shown in the 2014-2019 Management District Plan, the new HB TBID will allow Visit Huntington Beach to maintain and enhance its position in the marketplace, putting its budget more in line with its direct competitors in Newport Beach, Santa Monica, and Santa Barbara. It will be formed under a different law that guarantees long-term funding of five years, allowing Visit HB's partners to feel comfortable making an investment with a stable organization.

Funds received via the HB TBID will be used for marketing, sales promotions, destination product development, and visitor services enhancements to increase overnight visitation. Approval of the HB TBID will make the following projects possible, with an emphasis on public/private partnerships to improve Surf City USA's visitor amenities. Additional detail and projects are outlined in the Management District Plan.

- Continued enhancements to the [www.SurfCityUSA.com](http://www.SurfCityUSA.com) website
- More online and social media campaigns/promotions
- Increased sales and marketing efforts to attract leisure travelers
- More innovative promotions targeting meeting/convention planners
- More resources for public relations campaigns and story placements
- Funding assistance for destination product development, such as a citywide wayfinding signage program and a trolley service
- Enhanced visitor services, including playing a key funding role in establishing a trained and staffed Ambassador Program, with knowledgeable staff deployed throughout Huntington Beach
- Increased dollars to make Huntington Beach a more prominent name in the film and sports markets

A proposed operating budget can be found below. We encourage you to contact Kelly Miller, President & CEO, at (714) 969-3492 or [Kelly@SurfCityUSA.com](mailto:Kelly@SurfCityUSA.com) with any questions about the new HB TBID and thank you for your support of Huntington Beach tourism.

**2014/2015 Proposed Operating TBID Budget\***

<b>Income</b>		
Projected Assessment at 3%	\$	2,400,00.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,400,000.00</b>

<b>Expense</b>		
Sales and Marketing	\$	1,300,000.00 54.2 %
Destination Product Development	\$	300,000.00 12.5 %
Visitor Services Enhancements	\$	120,000.00 5%
Administration	\$	460,000.00 19.2%
Contingency/Renewal	\$	196,000.00 8.1%
City Collection Costs	\$	24,000.00 1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,400,000.00 100%</b>

\*As explained in the 2014-2019 Management District Plan, TBID revenue will fluctuate due to market conditions, but Visit Huntington Beach will keep the proportional allocations of each line item and use the additional funds as appropriate in each category to drive increased overnight stays in Huntington Beach.

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**Visit Huntington Beach**

Administrative Office  
301 Main Street, Ste. 212  
HB, CA 92648

Visitor Information Kiosk  
325 Pacific Coast Highway  
HB, CA 92648

Welcome Center  
411 Olive Avenue  
HB, CA 92648

(714) 969-3492 | (800) SAY-OCEAN | [info@SurfCityUSA.com](mailto:info@SurfCityUSA.com) | [www.SurfCityUSA.com](http://www.SurfCityUSA.com)