









# Visitors Centers Annual Report

2014-15 SONOMA COUNTY





































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#### **Sonoma County Visitor Center Report**

June 2015

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), in partnership with Visitor Centers throughout the county, is pleased to present the *2014 Sonoma County Visitor Center Report*.

This report gives an overview of what the Visitor Centers achieved during calender year 2014 and introduces various Centers throughout the county.

Highlights from this report include:

- Visitor Centers all over Sonoma County welcomed more than 390,000 walk-in visitors, handled over 160,000 inquiries by phone, mail, or e-mail, and distributed almost 300,000 guide books and maps.
- In total, the combined hours of operation of all Visitor Centers exceeded 32,000 hours. Almost 200 volunteers all over our county have invested over 16,000 hours of their time to help at the Visitor Centers and to assist visitors during their stay in Sonoma County.
- Many Visitor Centers are using new media channels including Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn to promote their particular region and Sonoma County in general. The aggregate Facebook post reach for 2014, which measures how many times the various posts by the Visitor Centers are seen, is more than 650,000.

The Centers inform visitors to Sonoma County about attractions, events, hotels, restaurants, wineries, and many other things, and thus help strenghten local businesses. By providing personalized information on-site, the Visitor Centers' services ideally complement Sonoma County Tourism's work and help ensure that visitors get the best experience possible.

The EDB highly appreciates the active role that the Visitor Centers take in developing the local economy and we are looking forward to hearing more success stories in the years to come.

Thank you for your interest in the Economic Development Board's research. For additional information, questions, comments, or suggestions please contact us at (707) 565-7170 or visit www.sonomaedb.org.

Sincerely,

Pamela Chanter

Chair

**Economic Development Board** 

Ramela Charles

Ben Stone

**Executive Director** 

**Economic Development Board** 

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#### **Visitor Centers in Sonoma County - Map**

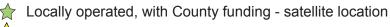
Visitor Centers play a vital role in the local tourism industry by welcoming travelers, providing information about local attractions, and organizing events for the community and tourists.

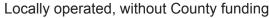
There are currently 20 active, walk-in, "meet and greet" Visitor Centers in Sonoma County, Many of them are run by local Chambers of Commerce. Some, however, are affiliated with the State Parks located in Sonoma County or are organized independently as a stand-alone V isitor Center. Despite the differences in how they are organized and funded, they all have a common goal and purpose: to inform visitors about local attractions, help them find their way around, and make their stay as pleasant and enjoyable as possible. Considering the importance of tourism for Sonoma County's economy, the services that the Visitor Centers provide contribute considerably to the economic progress and well-being of our community.

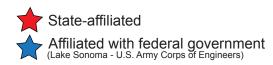
The map shows where the Visitor Centers - or Visitors Bureaus and Information Centers, as they are also called - are located. The aggregate numbers on the following page are based on 15 Visitor Centers that provided data for their 18 locations. Specific information and an introduction of each participating Visitor Center is presented on the following pages.

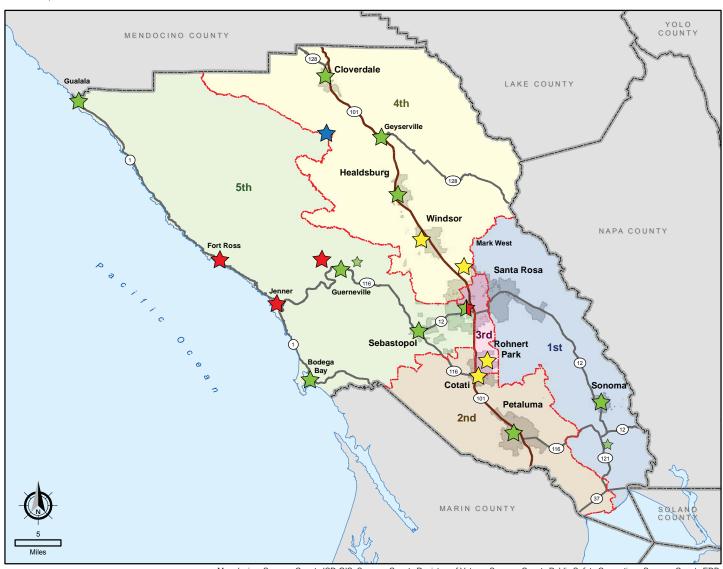


Locally operated, with County funding - main location









Map design: Sonoma County ISD-GIS; Sonoma County Registrar of Voters; Sonoma County Public Safety Consortium; Sonoma County EDB This map is for illustrative purposes only

### **Visitor Centers in Sonoma County - Overview**

	Visitor Center	Address	Contact	Hours of operation	Walk-in visitors
$\Rightarrow$	Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Information	126 North Cloverdale Boulevard, Cloverdale, CA 95425	info@cloverdalechamber.com www.cloverdalechamber.com 707-894-4470	Apr. to Oct. M-F:12pm-4pm S&S:11am-3pm Nov. to Mar. M-F:12pm-4pm	3,000
$\Diamond$	Cotati Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center	216 East School Street, Cotati, CA 94931 (For mail: P.O. Box 592)	chamber@cotati.org www.cotati.org 707-795-5508	TuTh.: 10am-3pm 24/7 brochure and map rack	n/a
$\Rightarrow$	Geyserville Visitor Center and Museum	21060 A Geyserville Avenue, Geyserville, CA 95441	moreinfo@geyservillecc.com www.geyservillecc.com 707-276-6067	May to Nov. Fr., Sa., & Su.: 12.30pm-4.30p m	540
$\Rightarrow$	Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau	217 Healdsburg Avenue Healdsburg, CA 95448	info@healdsburg.com www.healdsburg.com 707-433-6935	Mo Fr.: 10am-4pm Sa. & Su.: 10am-3pm	10,600
$\Rightarrow$	Lake Sonoma Visitors Center - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	3333 Skaggs Springs Rd. Geyserville, CA 95441	www.spn.usace.army.mil/ Missions/Recreation/Lake Sonoma.aspx 707-431-4533	call for hours: 707-431-4533	not part of this report
$\Diamond$	Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center	417 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, CA 95403	offices@markwest.org www.markwest.org 707-578-7975	Tu., Wed., &Th.: 10am-3pm	not part of this report
$\Rightarrow$	Petaluma Visitors Center	210 Lakeville Street Petaluma, CA 94952	www.visitpetaluma.com 877-273-8258	Daily: 10am to 4pm	7,600
$\Rightarrow$	Redwod Coast Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center	39150 Highway One, Gualala, CA 95445	info@redwoodcoastchamber. com / www.redwoodcoast chamber.com / 707-884-1080 or 707-778-5252	Th., Fr., & Sa.: 11am to 5pm Su.: 11am - 2pm	2,100
$ \stackrel{\wedge}{ } $	Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Information	101 Golf Course Drive, Suite C7 Rohnert Park, CA 94928	info@rohnertparkchamber.org www.rohnertparkcham- ber.org707-584-1415	Mo Fr.: 9am-5pm	1,200
$\Rightarrow$	Russian River Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center	16209 First Street Guerneville, CA 95446 (For mail: P.O. Box 331)	news@russianriver.com www.russianriver.comn 707-869-9000	May to Oct. M-S.:10am-5pm Su.:10am-3pm Nov. to Apr. M-S:10am-5pm	10,800

### **Visitor Centers in Sonoma County - Overview**

	Visitor Center	Address	Contact	Hours of operation	Walk-in visitors
$\Diamond$	Russian River satellite location at Korbel winery	13250 River Road Guerneville, CA 95446	news@russianriver.com www.russianriver.comn 707-869-9000	May to Oct. Dai- ly:10am-4pm Nov. to Apr. Dail.:10am-3pm	26,000
1	Visit Santa Rosa / California Welcome Center	9 Fourth Street Santa Rosa, CA 95401	www.visitsantarosa.com 707-577-8674	MoSa.: 9.00am-5pm Su.: 10am-5pm-	45,000
$\Rightarrow$	Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center	265 South Main Street Sebastopol, CA 95472	info@sebastopol.org www.sebastopol.org 707-823-3032	Mo Fr.: 10am-5pm Sa.: 10am-3pm 24/7 brochure and map rack	1,600
$\Rightarrow$	Sonoma Coast Visitor Center	850 Highway One Bodega Bay, CA 94923	www.visitbodegabayca.com 707-875-3866	Mo Sa.: 9am-5pm Su. 10am-5pm Winter: closed Wednesdays	82,600
$\Rightarrow$	Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau - Historic Plaza	453 First Street East Sonoma, CA 95476	info@sonomavalley.com www.sonomavalley.com 707-996-1090	MoSa.: 9am-5pm Su.: 10am-5pm	41,600
$\Rightarrow$	Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau - Cornerstone, satellite location	23570 Arnold Drive Sonoma, CA 95476	info@sonomavalley.com www.sonomavalley.com 707-996-1090	Daily: 10am to 4pm	30,300
	Windsor Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center	9001 Windsor Road Windsor, CA 95492 (For mail: P.O. Box 367)	info@windsorchamber.com www.windsorchamber.com 707-838-7285	MoFr.: 8.30am-4.30pm Sa.&Su.: 10am-3pm	4,200
<b>*</b>	Fort Ross State Historic Park and Conservancy Visitor Center	19005 Coast Highway One, Jenner, CA 95450	info@fortross.org www.fortross.org 707-847-3437	Th., Fr., Sa., & Su.: 10am-4.30pm	22,000
<b>*</b>	Stewards of the Coast - Armstrong Redwoods Visitor Center	17000 Armstrong Woods Road Guerneville, CA 95446	stewards@stewardscr.org www.stewardscr.org 707-869-9177	Daily: 11am-3pm	60,000
<b>*</b>	Stewards of the Coast - Jenner Visitor Center	10451 Highway One Jenner, CA 95450	stewards@stewardscr.org www.stewardscr.org 707-869-9177	MoFr.: 10am-3pm (most days) Sa.&Su.: 10am-3pm	14,400

#### Visitor Centers in Sonoma County - Combined impact

#### Walk-in visitors at the Visitor Centers

Throughout calender year 2014, the V isitor Centers in Sonoma County welcomed **more than 390,000 walk-in visitors** at their locations. The peak was in July , when more than 55,000 people frequented one of the Centers, while the least busy month was December with slightly more than 16,000 visitors.

Depending on the month, the portion of international visitors varied between 6% and 9% with an overall average of 7%.

#### Assistance by phone, mail, and e-mail

In addition to the walk-in visitors, the Centers received well **over 160,000 inquiries**, mainly electronically (80%), but also by phone (14%) and mail (6%). Most inquiries were made in July (over 25,000), whereas the lowest number of inquiries was received in January (slightly over 8,000).

In total, the combined hours of operation of all V isitor Centers **exceeded 32,000 hours**.

#### Distribution of promotional materials

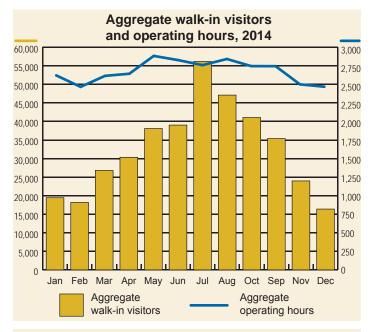
In 2014, Visitor Centers distributed almost **300,000 guide books and maps** to interested parties. 23% of this material was related to Sonoma County as a whole, while the remaining 77% was promoting specific regions within Sonoma County.

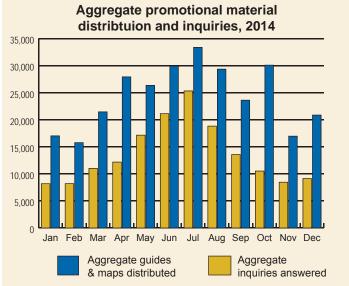
#### New media

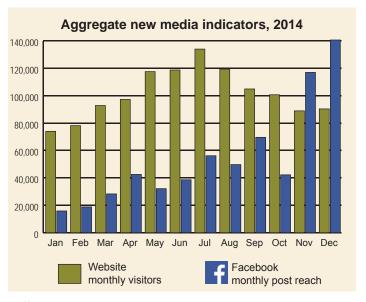
When looking at new media, the numbers are equally impressive: during 2014, the combined **post reach on Facebook amounted to more than 650,000**. Interestingly, the reach on social media fluctuates considerably and does not necessarily peak in summer, when all the other indicators do.

The reason for the peak in November and December was the successful "Holidays in Sonoma" promotion by the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau. Their winter marketing campaign, as well as the pictures of the new Christmas lights in Sonoma, gained a lot of traction on Facebook. During 2014 the V isitors Bureau's Facebook likes also increased from 3,000 to almost 20,000. This staggering growth was made possible by hiring an external expert for managing the Facebook page and placing posts according to a newly devised strategy.

Based on the data at hand, monthly visitors to the V isitor Centers' websites can vary between just over 70,000 in January, and more than 130,000 in July. In total, there were **more than 1,200,000 people visiting the websites** of the Visitor Centers during 2014.







#### **Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce and Information Center**

### About the Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce and Information Center

The Information Center has been operated by the Clover-dale Chamber of Commerce for over 35 years. It is identified by the "i" information sign on the Business Route 101/128. Several of its staf f have completed the Certified Tourism Ambassador program, which allows them to provide top quality service to visitors.

The Cloverdale Information Center is the first stop in Sonoma County for all visitors arriving from the north on Highway 101 or 128. It provides significant services to the unincorporated area of Sonoma County by providing tourism information about Sonoma County as a whole, as well as information specific to the North County. The focus of these information requests lies primarily on Wineries, redwoods, beaches and outdoor activities.

### Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce and Information Center

126 North Cloverdale Boulevard Cloverdale, CA 958425

#### **Hours of Operation:**

**April to October** 

Monday - Friday: 12:00pm to 4:00pm Saturday &Sunday: 11:00am to 3:00pm

**November to March** 

Monday - Friday: 12:00pm to 4:00pm

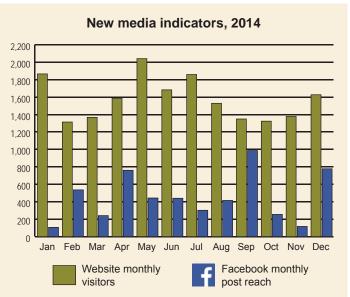
The Car and Motorcycle Show takes place in Cloverdale every September. It is always a well-attended and colorful event.

## The Cloverdale Information Center by the numbers

CLOVERDALE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- ...almost 3,000 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 5,000 people reached on Facebook.
- ...more than 19,000 visitors to the website.
- ...over 700 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 1,000 guides and maps were distributed.





#### Cotati Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center

#### About the Cotati Chamber of Commerce and **Visitor Center**

The Cotati Chamber of Commerce is a volunteer member organization of business people and individuals who promote the economic well being of the City of Cotati and adjacent lands. The Chamber fosters and promotes actions that enhance the local economy; provides employment, cultural, and recreational opportunities; and protects and preserves the environment.

The Visitor Center opened its doors at the current location in 2002. Various publications about Cotati and Sonoma County are available all week long in the racks outside of the center. Some of the main events and attractions in the region that attract many tourists include the Cotati Historical Museum, the Chimera Albino Redwood, Sonoma State University and Green Music Center , Graton Casino, La Plaza Park, the annual Accordion Festival, Jazz Festival, Kids Day Festival & Parade, Oktoberfest, and the Farmers Market.

We will continue to work together to ensure Cotati is an economically viable and desirable community in which to live, work, and visit.

**Cotati Chamber of Commerce** and Visitor Center 216 East School Street Cotati, CA 94931

#### **Hours of Operation:**

Tuesday & Thursday: 10:00am to 2:00pm

24/7 brochure & map rack

On behalf of the Cotati Chamber of Commerce, Suzanne Whipple managed the Visitor Center which supplies interested people with information, brochures, and maps.

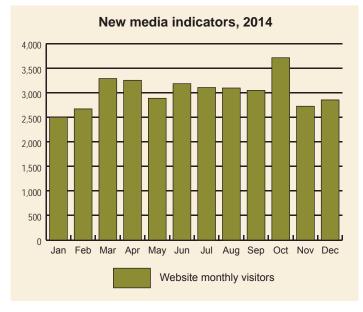
# COTAT Chamber of Commerce

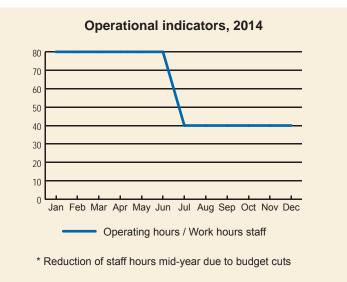
#### The Cotati Visitor Center by the numbers

...over 130 followers on Twitter.



- ...over 470 likes on Facebook.
- ...over 33,800 visitors to the website.
- ...more than 720 work hours were put in by the staff of the Visitor Center.





#### **Geyserville Visitor Center and Museum**

### About the Geyserville Visitor Center and Museum

Geyserville, California, is about an hour and a half north of the Golden Gate Bridge, in beautiful Sonoma County . It boasts some of the most magnificent vineyards and talented winemakers in the world. Visitors come to Geyserville from around the world to experience the finest in food and wine, as well as our gorgeous, romantic countryside that rivals even the most exotic of European destinations.

The Geyserville Chamber of Commerce represents the pinnacle of wine country business:

Talented artists, artisans, and long-running, family-owned commerce define us. We offer an exciting and rich economic community for individuals and small business, as well as medium and large companies. Come visit us. Join us at the Geyserville Chamber of Commerce and experience small town charm in a world class destination. Geyserville, the Wine Capital of Sonoma County.

#### **Geyserville Visitor Center and Museum**

21060 A Geyserville Avenue Geyserville, CA 95441

#### **Hours of Operation:**

May to November Friday, Saturday, & Sunday:

12:30pm to 4:30pm

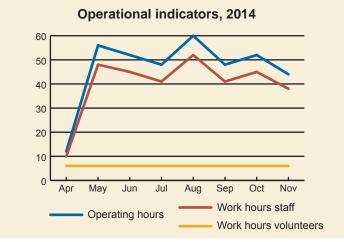




## The Geyserville Visitor Center and Museum by the numbers

- ..more than 540 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ..more than 370 work hours were put in by staff and volunteers of the Visitors Center.
- ..more than 370 hours of operation between May and November.





#### **Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau**

### About the Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau

The Healdsburg Visitors Bureau has been operating in this location since 1937, sharing space with the Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce until 2010 when the Chamber moved into new offices adjacent to the Visitors Bureau.

The building was built as part of the Works Project Administration (WPA) projects and is a dedicated historical building.

### **Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau**

217 Healdsburg Avenue Healdsburg, CA 95448

#### **Hours of Operation:**

Monday - Friday: 10:00am to 4:00pm Saturday & Sunday: 10:00am to 3:00pm



Three dedicated greeters at the Healdsburg V isitors Bureau (clockwise): Rachel Droesch, Barbara Sereni, and Margot Ellison.



The Visitors Bureau in Healdsburg is well marked with the international sign for tourist information centers and ofers useful advice to visitors.

## The Healdsburg Visitors Bureau by the numbers

ore than 10,600 walk-in visitors were helped.

- ...over 2,000 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 2,700 work hours were put in by the staff and volunteers of the Visitors Center.
- ...more than 200,000 people were reached through new media channels, including webpage, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and Google+.





#### **Petaluma Visitors Center**

#### **About Petaluma and its Visitors Center**

Picture yourself in Petaluma shopping for funky to fabulous treasures in antique galleries and boutiques in Historic Downtown, sampling artisan cheese at the source, or savoring farm-to-table Wine Country cuisine in one of the many award-winning restaurants.

Located just 32 miles north of San Francisco, Petaluma is the gateway to Sonoma County and centrally located in the North Bay, making this city a perfect home base for excursions to the Wine Country, the dramatic Sonoma Coast and the majestic redwood groves. It's easy to stay in affordable Petaluma and sightsee in San Francisco. Or just kick back in Petaluma, exploring our downtown and taking one of several self-guided walking tours to see our architectural gems or film locations from Hollywood favorites. Then wind down with a gutsy local brew , a glass of Petaluma Gap wine, a scoop of ice cream, made by hand the old-fashioned way, or some irresistible artisan pastries.

Petaluma is accessible by airport bus or rental car from the San Francisco, Oakland, and Santa Rosa airports. If you are more of a waterway rather than highway type of traveler cruise up the Petaluma River by boat, dock at the Turning Basin and be just steps away from dozens of restaurants, specialty shops, movies and live music.

The Petaluma Visitors Center is located in the former NWP Depot. The staff and volunteers at the Petaluma V isitors Center serve visitors from around the world, helping them with directions, of fering local maps and brochures, local points of interest and others are just curious about the inside of the restored depot building.

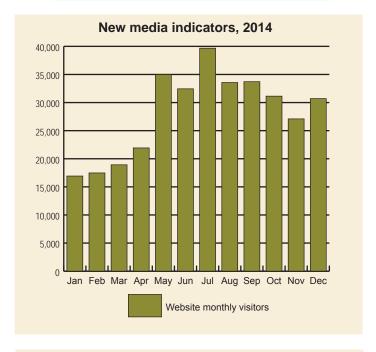
#### to Petaluma!

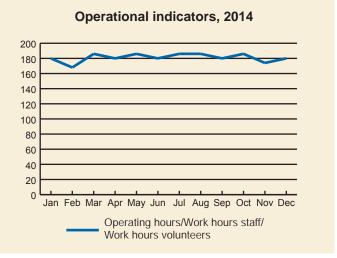
Petaluma's population is on the small side (59,000) but our personality is big. Our Events Calendar, on our website and in our V isitors Guide, is packed with fairs and festivals that invite visitors to share in our community spirit; whether it is by celebrating our agricultural heritage, love of the arts, riverfront location, or diverse culture.

No wonder Travel & Leisure Magazine named Petaluma one of the "Nation's Top Ten Getaways Near a Major City" and the "#1 Fall Destination" in Harpers Bazaar!

### The Petaluma Visitors Center by the numbers

- ...more than 7,600 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 338,000 visitors to the website.
- ...more than 7,500 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 68,000 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...more than 4,300 work hours were put in by staff and volunteers.
- ...over 900 international walk-in visitors from five different regions were helped, including Australia, Canada, Europe and Japan





#### **Petaluma Visitors Center**





The Petaluma Visitors Center is located in the historic Depot Building (corner Lakeville & Washington Street).

#### **Pictures of Petaluma and its Visitors Center**

nter

210 Lakeville Street Petaluma, CA 94952

**Hours of Operation:** 

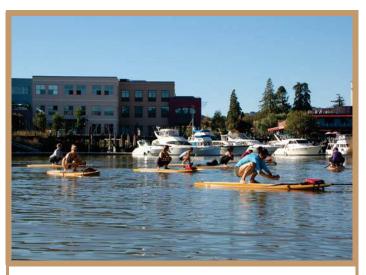
Monday - Sunday: 10:00am to 4:00pm



There is always fun happening in Petaluma!



Petaluma's Spring Antique Faire showcases over 200 vendors in Historic Downtown.



The Petaluma River attracts recreational boaters, rowers, kayakers, photographers, bird watchers and anglers.

#### **Redwood Coast Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center**

#### **About Redwood Coast and its Visitor Center**

As the "Gateway" to Sonoma County on Redwood Coast Hwy. 1, traveling from north to south, Gualala's Visitor Center also functions as the headquarters for the local Chamber of Commerce.

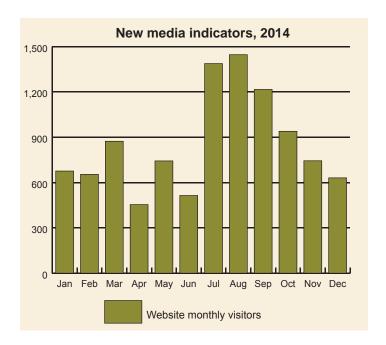
Here on the California Redwood Coast you will find sandy beaches and coastal access for many recreational activities such as fishing, diving, surfing, kayaking or tide pooling. Walking, cycling or driving along Route 1, or simply meditating near the ocean and redwoods in the fresh air is enough. History tells us, the greater Gualala area was originally settled by Pomo Indians. The term that the natives used - qh awa'la li - means "water coming down place".

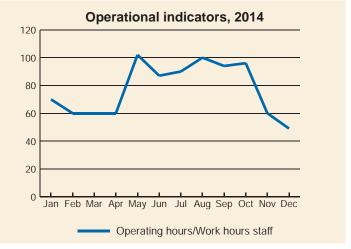
The Visitor Center for this unique 60 mile stretch of coast-line is well marked and can be found in the Forte Gualala building, located between the Surf Motel and the Seaclif f Center, on the oceanside of Coastal Highway 1. Being located so close to the Sonoma/Mendocino County line (the middle of the Gualala River), the Center carries a substantial amount of promotional materials about both Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, including the communities of Fort Ross, Timber Cove, Ocean Cove, Salt Point, Stewarts Point, The Sea Ranch and Annapolis. A stop at Gualala's "I-sign" & "Information" Center is well worth the visit!

### The Redwood Coast Visitor Center by the numbers

than 2,100 walk-in visitors were helped.

- ...more than 1,300 people reached on Facebook.
- ...more than 10,200 visitors to the website.
- ...almost 7,700 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 3,200 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...more than 900 work hours were put in by the the staff of the Visitors Center.
- ...over 400 international walk-in visitors from 31 foreign countries were helped:
  Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium,
  Belize, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech
  Republic, Denmark, England, France,
  Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan,
  Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland,
  Portugal, Russia, Scotland, South Africa,
  South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland,
  and Venezuela







#### **Redwood Coast Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center**

#### **Pictures of the Redwood Coast Visitor Center**



Where the Redwoods, River, and Pacific Ocean meet.

Redwood Coast Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center

39150 State Highway One Gualala, CA 95445

**Hours of Operation:** 

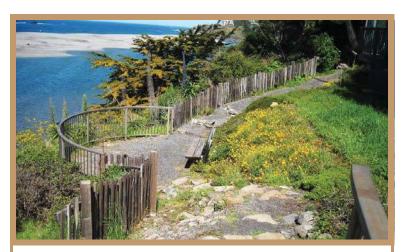
Thursday - Saturday: 11:00am to 5:00pm Sunday: 11:00am to 2:00pm



The Visitor Center is well marked and can be found in the Forte Gualala building.



Robert Juengling is the Executive Director of the Chamber and the Visitor Center.



The Gualala Bluff Trail invites visitors to enjoy the beauty of the Northern California coastline.



A look south down Gualala's Main Street, towards the historic 1903 Gualala Hotel.

#### **Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Information**

#### About the Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Information

Rohnert Park is a friendly city , home to Sonoma State University, the world-renowned Green Music Center, and the recreation destination of Sonoma County . With Graton Resort & Casino, Scandia Fun Center Foxtail Golf Club, Cal Skate, Fundemonium, Rebounderz, SOMO Village Event Center, Driven Raceway, and Q-Zar, there is fun and entertainment for all ages.

The Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization made up of companies and individuals in business. The mission is to create an environment in Rohnert Park in which businesses can thrive economically, socially and culturally and to improve the quality of life in the community.

**Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce** 

101 Golf Course Drive, Suite C7 Rohnert Park, CA 94928

**Hours of Operation:** 

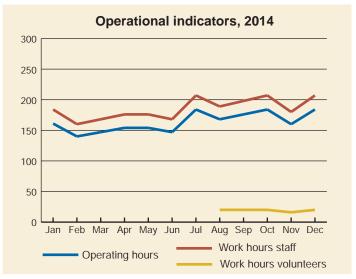
Monday - Friday: 9:00am to 5:00pm



### The Rohnert Park Visitors Information by the numbers

- ...more than 1,200 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 44,000 people reached on Facebook.
- ...more than 45,000 visitors to the webpage.
- ...more than 2,200 work hours were put in by the staff and volunteers of the Visitors Center.







#### **Russian River Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center**

#### **About Russian River and its Visitor Center**

The Chamber is a nonprofit organization with approximately 270 member businesses. Ranging in size from the smaller micro-business to mid-size firms to large international companies, they represent every industry sector and all areas of Western Sonoma County. While the reasons for becoming a member of the Russian River Chamber of Commerce vary widely from member to member, two main interest groups are most common:

The first features business builders who join the chamber for direct business referrals, networking opportunities, greater visibility for their business, professional development, and business opportunities. The second includes public policy advocates who value joining with others to affect public policy and taking initiative to solve problems to create a healthy environment for business and economic growth.

In addition to the aspects mentioned above, the Chamber is running two Visitor Centers in the Russian River area: The main location is at the historical bridge in Guerneville, the satellite location is at Korbel in the old train depot.

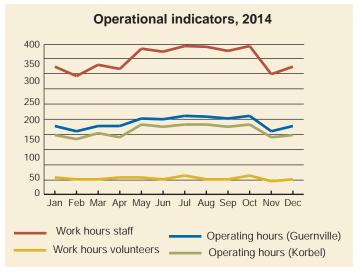
#### **Chamber of Commerce Mission:**

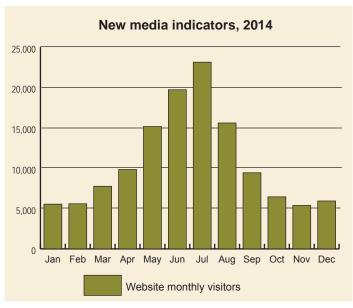
The chamber of commerce is organized to promote the general welfare and prosperity of the Russian River area business community.

### The Russian River Visitor Center by the numbers

- ...more than 36,800 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 113,000 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 2,300 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...more than 4,800 work hours were put in by staff and volunteers.
- ...almost 130,000 visitors to the website.
- ...almost 1,500 people reached on Facebook.





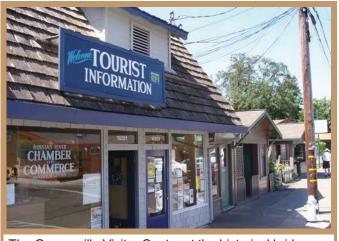


#### Russian River Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center

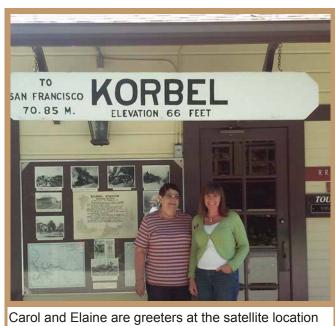
#### Pictures of the Russian River Visitor Centers



The Visitor Center in the Old Train Depot at Korbel Winery.



The Guerneville Visitor Center at the historical bridge.



at Korbel Winery.









#### **Guerneville Visitor Center**

16209 First Street P.O. Box 331 Guerneville, CA 95446

#### **Hours of Operation:**

May to October

Monday - Saturday: 10:00am to 5:00pm Sunday: 10:00am to 3:00pm

**November to April** 

Monday - Saturday: 10:00am to 5:00pm

#### **Korbel Visitor Center**

13250 River Road Guerneville, CA 95446

#### **Hours of Operation:**

May to October

Monday - Sunday: 10:00am to 4:00pm

**November to April** 

Monday - Sunday: 10:00am to 3:15pm



Joann and Joannine are greeters at the main location in Guerneville.

### About Visit Santa Rosa and California Welcome Center

The California Welcome Center in Santa Rosa is operated by Visit Santa Rosa and the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce in partnership with V isit California Tourism. Originally opened in 1997 as the Santa Rosa Visitors Center, in 2003 it became a recognized California Welcome Center. Today there are 20 Welcome Centers in the state.

The Welcome Center is housed in the old Train Depot in the heart of Historic Railroad Square. The building was built in 1904 and was one of the few structures to survive the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. The depot is also home to the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Museum and hosts rotating Sonoma County themed artwork presented by the Sonoma County Photography Group. The Depot was made famous when it appeared in Alfred Hitchcock's movie "Shadow of a Doubt" in 1943.

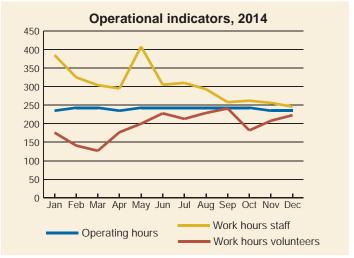
In the most recent survey by Visit California, the Santa Rosa Welcome Center was consistently rated as one of the top centers for providing information, brochures and a great retail experience. The Center is one of the few in Sonoma County to be open 361 days providing a year round experience to our visitors.

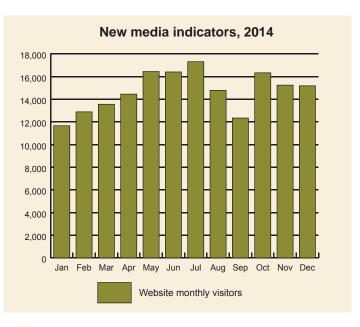
The Welcome Center and V isit Santa Rosa partner with multiple organizations in Sonoma County, including Sonoma County Tourism, the City of Santa Rosa, the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce, the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, the Historic Railroad Square Association and Sonoma County BEST along with our museums, attractions, wineries, hotels, restaurants and retail establishments.

#### Visit Santa Rosa by the numbers

- ...more than 45,000 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 6,500 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 2,000 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...more than 176,000 visitors to the website.
- ...almost 6,000 work hours were put in by the the staff and volunteers.
- ...over 2,500 international walk-in visitors.







#### Visit Santa Rosa / California Welcome Center

#### Pictures of Visit Santa Rosa and the California Welcome Center



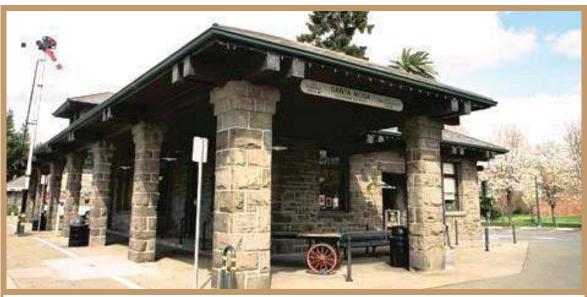


Visit Santa Rosa and California Welcome Center

9 Fourth Street Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**Hours of Operation:** 

Monday - Saturday: 9.00am to 5:00pm Sunday: 10:00am to 5:00pm



The location can be found at the Railroad Square in the old Train Depot building.



Gifts and souvenirs at the California Welcome Center.

#### **Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center**

### About the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center

Sebastopol is located 55 miles north of San Francisco in beautiful Sonoma County, California. Serving as the hub of Western Sonoma County Wine Country , Sebastopol is surrounded by majestic rolling hills in the diverse landscape of a rich agricultural heritage. Gateway to the breathtaking Sonoma Coastline and Russian River Redwood Corridor , Sebastopol is bordered on the East by the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetlands Preserve. Sebastopol offers the charm of a small town community with the cultural and recreational activities of big city sophistication. The Sebastopol Visitors Center is located in the front of the Chamber of fice. Rack cards and brochures are kept full with information about local restaurants, nearby destinations and businesses information. We have 24-hour Walk-up Visitor Information.

Sebastopol is host to an eclectic community of businesses, mostly small employers, locally owned. In recent years the town has become a wine and food mecca and is home to a large number of artists, writers and musicians. There are a number of major festivals in the area, including the Apple Blossom Festival, the Gravenstein Apple Fair, the Cajun Festival and the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival. An area originally famous for the Gravenstein Apple, the area has now converted to wine grapes and is famous for its Pinot Noir.

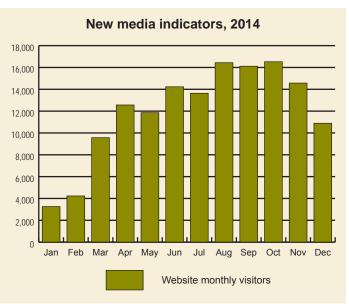
The Sebastopol Chamber is a membership of 350 businesses and individuals whose mission is to foster a strong local economy, provide networking opportunities, educational and professional development and serve as a resource hub for the community.

### The Sebastopol Visitor Center by the numbers

- ...more than 1,600 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 140,000 visitors to the website.
- ...almost 1,500 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 1,800 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...more than 2,100 work hours were put in by the the staff of the Visitors Center.
- ...over 40 international walk-in visitors from 7 foreign countries were helped:
  Australia, Canada, England, Germany, Japan, Spain, and Switzerland







### **Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center**

#### **Pictures of Sebastopol and its Visitor Center**

**Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center** 

265 South Main Street Sebastopol, CA 95472

#### **Hours of Operation:**

Monday - Friday: 10:00am to 5:00pm Saturday: 10:00am to 3:00pm

24-hour walk-up visitor information



The Visitor Center in Sebastopol is well-marked and frequently visited by tourists.

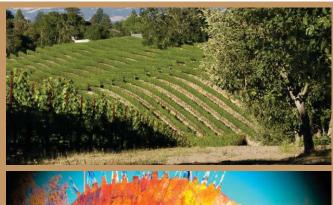




The annual Apple Blossom Festival, organized by the Chamber of Commerce, is a highlight in Sebastopol.



The Chamber members, a friendly crowd, standing in front of the Visitor Center in Sebastopol.





#### **Sonoma Coast Visitors Center**

#### **About Sonoma Coast and its Visitors Center**

The Sonoma Coast V isitors Center in Bodega Bay provides friendly, quick answers to your questions about the more than 50 miles of beautiful Sonoma Coastline.

From details on where to eat, places to stay, beaches to visit and even maps for an Alfred Hitchcock tour of where "The Birds" was filmed, the staff is ready to answer your questions.

#### **Sonoma Coast Visitors Center**

850 Highway One Bodega Bay, CA 94923

#### **Hours of Operation:**

Summer, Spring, and Fall

Monday - Saturday: 9:00am to 5:00pm Sunday: 10:00am to 5:00pm

#### Winter:

Like rest of the year, but closed Wednesdays.

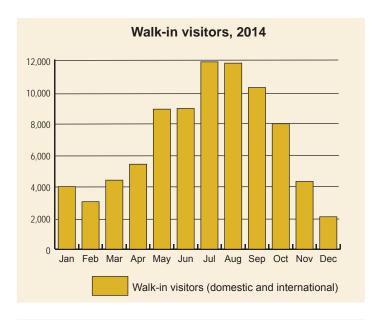


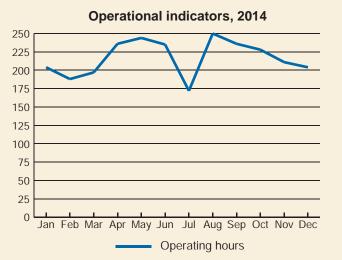
The Sonoma Coast Visitors Center in Bodega Bay.

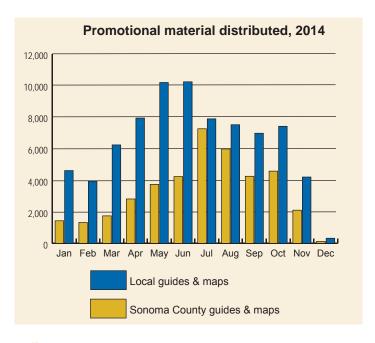
### The Sonoma Coast Visitors Center by the numbers

- ...more than 82,600 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 3,000 inquiries by mail and phone were answered.
- ...more than 117,000 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...more than 2,600 work hours put in by the staff of the Visitors Center.
- ...almost 4,000 international walk-in visitors from nine foreign countries:

Australia, Austria, China, England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia







#### Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau

#### **About the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau**

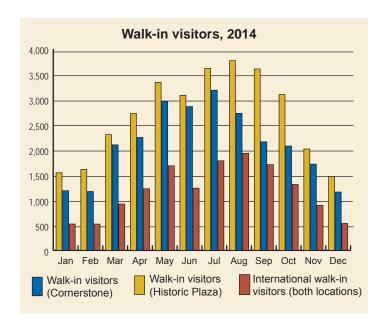
The Bureau was established in 1984 for the purpose of providing information to visitors and vacationers and to promote the hospitality industry in the V alley. The SVVB is governed by a Board of Directors elected from and by the membership of over 350 member businesses. The 11-member Board includes a 5-member Executive Committee. The programs and policies of the SVVB are approved by the Board of Directors and carried out by a fulltime professional staff reporting to the Bureau's Executive Director.

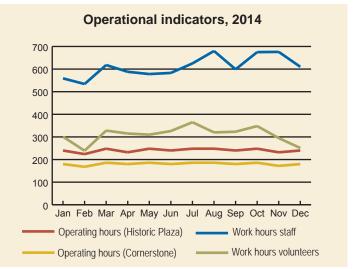
Guided by unparalleled customer service and the passionate expertise of 50+ local volunteers, the Sonoma V alley Visitors Bureau operates two comprehensive, knowledgable Visitor Centers seven days a week. Outfitted with the most up to date information, resources and maps, we steer visitors toward the essential landmarks, events, tours, products, accommodations and establishments that define our Sonoma culture.

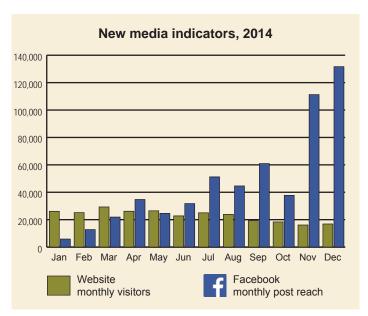
We at the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau are proud to serve as the premier advocate for our beloved Sonoma Valley! We aim to delight, because delighted visitors and locals fuel our local economy. They become repeat tourists and ardent proponents of Sonoma as a world-class destination.

### The Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau by the numbers

- ...more than 70,000 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 560,000 people reached on Facebook.
- ...more than 270,000 visitors to the website.
- ...almost 17,600 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 60,000 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...more than 11,000 work hours were put in by staff and volunteers.
- ...over 14,000 international walk-in visitors from six foreign countries were helped:
  Australia, Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom







### Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau

#### Pictures of Sonoma Valley and its Visitors Bureau



Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau Historic Plaza

453 First Street East Sonoma, CA 95476

**Hours of operation:** 

Monday - Saturday: Sunday:

Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau Cornerstone Sonoma

23570 Arnold Drive Sonoma, CA 95476

**Hours of operation:** 

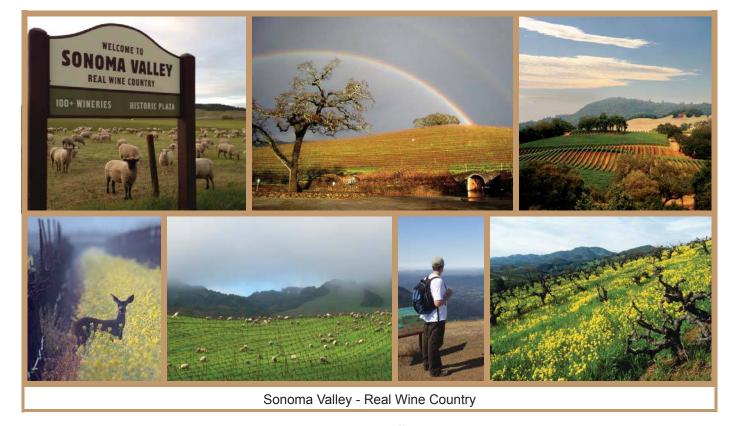
Monday - Sunday: 10:00am to 4:00pm



The Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau's main location on the Historic Sonoma Plaza.



The second location can be found at Cornerstone Sonoma or Arnold Drive at the south entrance to Sonoma Valley.



9:00am to 5:00pm

10:00am to 5:00pm

www.sonomaedb.org

#### Windsor Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center

#### **About Windsor and its Visitors Center**

The Windsor Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center is located at the corner of Windsor River Road and Windsor Road in the Depot building in the heart of downtown Windsor. Windsor's location at the center of Sonoma County's famous Wine Country, combined with its characterization as a relaxing, welcoming, friendly, family-oriented destination makes it an ideal place to visit or make your home. Windsor offers a wide variety of services, parks and recreational amenities, wineries and breweries, restaurants and a popular Farmers Market, ease of access to the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport and Highway 101, and a well-planned, picturesque Old Downtown.

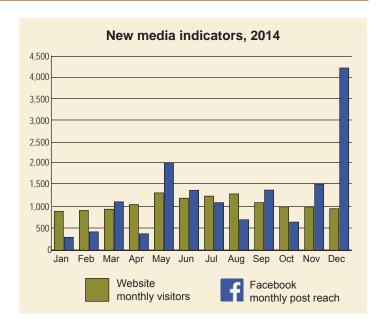
Windsor is home to numerous events including the incredibly popular Summer Nights on the Green Concert Series held June through August on the Town Green, the Sonoma County Hot Air Balloon Classic, the Windsor Days Parade, and the annual Holiday Celebration. In addition, Windsor hosts the Windsor Half Marathon as well as the V ineman 70.3 and Ironman Triathlon, which attract visitors from all over the world.

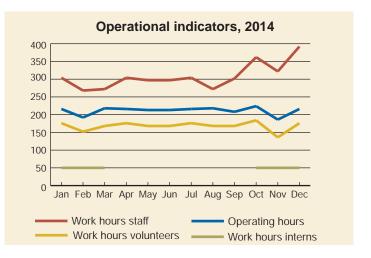
We, the Windsor Chamber of Commerce, provide many resources for business owners, tourists, locals, and those who are looking to relocate their residence and/or their business to Windsor. The Town of Windsor and the Sonoma County Transit Authority are huge supporters of the Visitors Center. We give back by selling bus passes and keeping transit riders informed of the many schedules, both local and regional. We are open seven days a week to meet the needs of everyone.

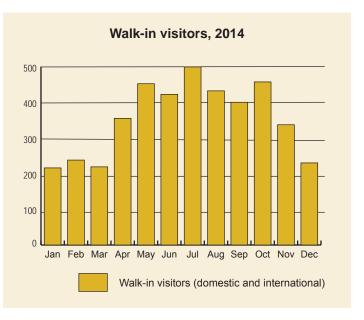
#### The Windsor Visitors Center by the numbers

- ...more than 4,200 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 15,000 people reached on Facebook.
- ...almost 13,000 visitors to the website.
- ...more than 6,000 work hours put in by staff, interns, and volunteers.
- ...walk-in visitors from more than ten foreign countries were helped:

Australia, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, Finland, France, Israel, Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland



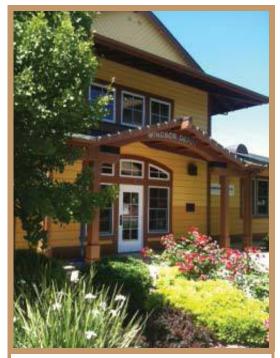




#### **Windsor Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center**

#### **Pictures of Windsor and its Visitors Center**





The Visitors Center is located in the Depot building in the heart of downtown Windsor.

#### **Windsor Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center**

9001 Windsor Road Windsor, CA 95492

**Hours of Operation:** 

Monday - Friday: 8:30am to 4:30pm Saturday & Sunday: 10:00am to 3:00pm



The lovely Windsor Town Green.



The team of the Windsor Visitors Center: Christine Tevini (President/CEO), Lyone Lazzarini (Office Administrator), Gay Salisbury, and Edna Honsa (left to right).

#### Fort Ross State Historic Park and Fort Ross Conservancy Visitor Center

### About Fort Ross State Park and its Visitor Center

The Visitor Center was built in 1985 by California State Parks and is operated by the cooperating association, Fort Ross Conservancy. The Conservancy maintains a fully stocked book and gift shop with the largest selection of Russian American History north of San Francisco, and also maintains the library, and the auditorium. The Visitor Center, the gateway to the park, is tucked inside a grove of trees alongside the main parking lot. It provides a comfortable place to begin your park visit by helping you get oriented to the park's cultural, natural, and recreational resources and by providing a gathering place for groups and interpretive programs.

The Visitor Center accommodates special events, guided tours, and educational seminars, and it provides a valuable resource to the Fort Ross community. It is available for rent for special events after hours; contact info@fortross.org for more information. The center contains several rooms with different functions.

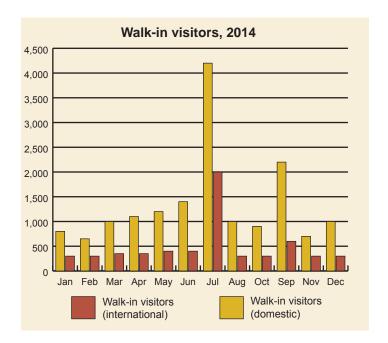
Fort Ross Conservancy bookshop sells books, memorabilia, jewelry, and childrens items related to Fort Ross' natural and cultural history. It also carries a nice selection of Russian chocolate and Russian snack foods as well as a wonderful selection of natural history guides, historical books related to the breadth of Fort Ross history , and hard-to-find books on Russian America. For FRC members and visiting scholars, FRC provides access to an extensive research library of Fort Ross-related documents.

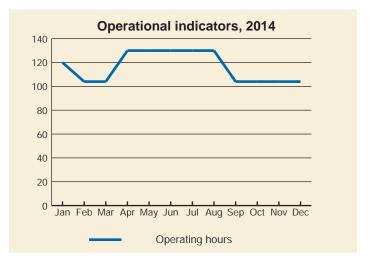
The auditorium, with its large fireplace and expansive picture windows, provides comfortable seating for up to 70 people. During park hours you can watch the 18-minute Fort Ross documentary that introduces the park's history with stunning visuals. And on windy days it is the perfect place to come in from the cold!

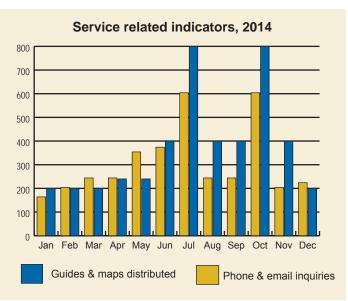
## The Fort Ross Visitor Center by the numbers

- ...more than 22,000 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 3,700 inquiries by email, phone, and mail were answered.
- ...more than 4,500 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...over 5,900 international walk-in visitors from 12 foreign countries were helped:

China, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Ukraine







#### Fort Ross State Historic Park and Fort Ross Conservancy Visitor Center

#### **Pictures of the Fort Ross Visitor Center**



### Fort Ross State Historic Park and Fort Ross Conservancy

19005 Coast Highway One Jenner, CA 95450

#### **Hours of Operation:**

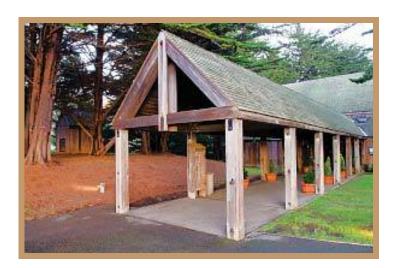
Thursday, Friday

Saturday & Sunday: 10:00am to 4:30pm











A wide variety of books and memorabilia are offered at the bookshop.



The Fort Ross Visitor Center serves as the gateway to the State Park.

#### Stewards of the Coast / Armstrong Redwoods Visitor Center

### About Stewards of the Coast and Armstrong Redwoods Visitor Center

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods is a non-profit organization that partners with the Russian River Sector of California State Parks. The sector includes Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve (outside Guerneville), Austin Creek State Recreation Area (a park Stewards is now operating), Sonoma Coast State Park (from Bodega Bay to Jenner) and includes the Willow Creek watershed. State Parks depends on Stewards to provide funding for the "Volunteers in Parks" program, educational and interpretive activities, for resource management and stewardship projects, and to assist in the development of interpretive facilities and displays.

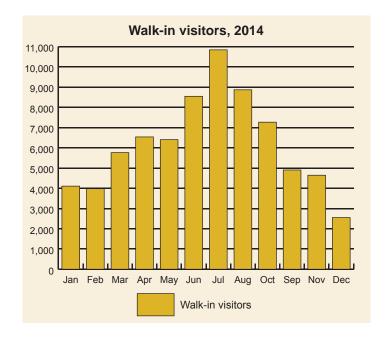
The State Parks of Sonoma County's coast and Russian River valley are rich in natural and cultural history, biological diversity and distinctive geology.

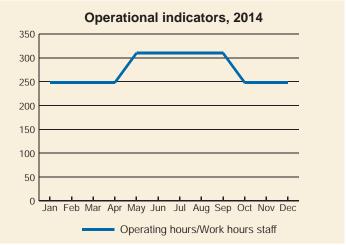
Stewards is protecting Austin Creek State Recreation Area with volunteer patrols and stewardship support. They have reopened Bullfrog Pond Campground and three backcountry campsites. They are providing public access and programs in closed areas on the Sonoma Coast, as well as continuing all their existing education and stewardship programs during these unprecedented times. Stewards launched a new Marine Education Program in 2014, which includes their Mobile Marine V an, a.k.a Stewards Ship. The Nature Stores located inside our V isitor Centers help to provide funding for educational programs in its parks.

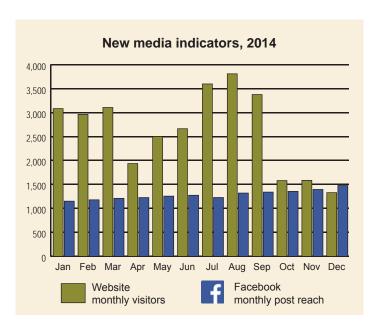
Our mission is to promote education, preservation and restoration of the natural and cultural resources of Russian River area State Parks through interpretation and public stewardship. We do this by providing park visitors of all ages with a variety of programs and opportunities to experience and explore these exceptional parks.

### The Stewards of the Coast and Armstrong Redwods by the numbers

- ...more than 74,000 walk-in visitors were helped.
- ...more than 47,000 guides and maps were distributed.
- ...more than 3,200 work hours were put in by staff and volunteers.
- ...over 31,000 visitors to the website.
- ...over 15,000 people reached on Facebook.







#### **Stewards of the Coast / Armstrong Redwoods Visitor Center**

#### Pictures of the Visitor Centers managed by Stewards







The Center in Jenner , directly on the shore of the Russian River.



Stewards docent Linda Fisher (right) in a conversation with a park visitor.



#### **Armstrong Redwoods Visitor Center**

17000 Armstrong Woods Road Guerneville, CA 95446

#### **Hours of Operation:**

Monday - Sunday: 11:00am to 3:00pm

#### **Jenner Visitor Center**

10451 Highway One Jenner, CA 95450

#### **Hours of Operation:**

Monday - Friday: 11:00am to 3:00pm

(open most days)

Saturday & Sunday: 11:00am to 3:00pm



Visitors find useful information and unique souvenirs inside the Visitor Center in Jenner.

#### **Sonoma County Tourism**

#### **About Sonoma County Tourism**

Sonoma County Tourism (SCT) is the of ficial destination marketing organization for California's Sonoma County SCT is a private, non-profit marketing and sales organization dedicated to increasing overnight stays in Sonoma County, California.

Local businesses have great stories to tell. They work with their local chambers and visitors centers to get the word out. Those organizations share with SCT, which turns around and extends the reach of local businesses by broadcasting their stories and marketing messages to destination marketing partners — SF Travel, Visit California, and Brand USA.

SCT offers a global outreach with a staf of sales, marketing, public relations, communications, and administrative professionals. SCT promotes Sonoma County as a desirable overnight destination to three main markets: leisure, meetings and groups (including weddings), and tour and travel to state, national, and international markets.

Sonoma Count Tourism also supplies the Visitor Centers in Sonoma County with promotional material, like guides and maps.

Located 45 minutes from San Francisco, Sonoma County provides a genuine and adventurous wine country experience. //

**Sonoma County Tourism** 3637 Westwind Boulevard Santa Rosa, CA 95403

**Hours of Operation:** 

Monday - Friday: 9:00am to 5:00pm

# TOURISM

#### Sonoma County Tourism by the numbers

...more than 1,000,000 visitors to the website.

... 450,000 guides and maps were distributed to the Visitor Centers in Sonoma County.

...more than 120,000 likes on Facebook.

...more than 4,200,000 people reached on Facebook.

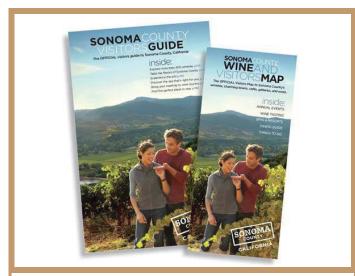
...over 11,000 followers on Twitter.

...almost 82,000 tweets on Twitter.

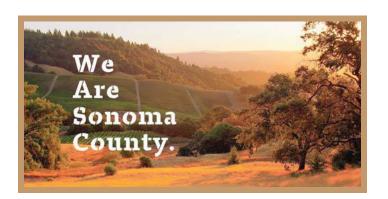




Whereas the Visitor Centers operate on a local level and greet as well as inform visitors to Sonoma County Sonoma County Tourism promotes the entire county as a travel destination to domestic and international tourists.



Sonoma County V isitors Guide and Map, distributed through the Visitor Centers



The Sonoma County Economic Development Board would like to thank all the V isitor Centers for their extraordinary work and important contribution to the local tourism industry A special thank you goes to all the centers that contributed their iformation and input to this report!

Currently, there are 20 walk-in Visitor Centers throughout the county, which are listed below in alphabetical order.

Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center

Cotati Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

Fort Ross State Historic Park & Fort Ross Conservancy Visitor Center

Geyserville Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau

Lake Sonoma Visitors Center - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center

Petaluma Visitors Program

Redwood Coast Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Information

Russian River Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Centers - main location in Guerneville

Russian River Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Centers - satellite location at Korbel

Visit Santa Rosa / California Welcome Center

Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

Sonoma Coast Visitors Center

Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau - main location in Sonoma

Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau - satellite location at Cornerstone

Stewards of the Coast / Armstrong Redwoods - location at Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve

Stewards of the Coast / Armstrong Redwoods - location in Jenner

Windsor Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board would also like to thank Don Bennett, Wendy Peterson, and Sonoma County Tourism for their input on this report.

The Sonoma County V isitor Center Report was prepared by the Economic Development Board's project coordinator Corinne Knoepfel.

#### Methodology

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board collected data from the participating \( \) isitor Centers through a standard-ized spreadsheet, which was structured in way that allowed the data to be as detailed as possible. 15 V isitor Centers returned the spreadsheet with information on their 18 locations for calender year 2014. The numbers were then aggregated to reach an estimate of how many people demanded the Centers' services in the previous year.

Please note that exact counts were not always available. In these cases, we asked the Centers to provide realistic estimates of their numbers. Therefore, the numbers in this report might vary to a certain extent from the actual figures. However, the intent of this report is to provide the public with a general overview of how diverse our lightor Centers are and how they serve visitors to Sonoma County.



The EDB is pleased to thank the following Signature Sponsors for their support of our important programs.

#### PRESENTING LEVEL













#### **FOUNDATION LEVEL**



#### PREMIER LEVEL





#### **EXECUTIVE LEVEL**

AmericanAgCredit American River Bank City of Santa Rosa Comcast NorBAR Sonoma County Alliance Vantreo Insurance Zainer Rinehart Clarke

#### MEDIA LEVEL





Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Economic Development Board 141 Stony Circle, Ste. 110 Santa Rosa, CA 95401 (707)565-7170 www.SonomaEDB.org