



# Tahoe South<sup>®</sup>

## Annual Report 2019-2020 July 1, 2019—June 30, 2020

### **FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO**

This was from last year’s annual report: *“Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO’s), like the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, are the experts in reaching markets and influencing the decision to travel. Even so, social media and global access to travel information have created an increasing interest by an overwhelming number of visitors, which now makes us ponder, are marketing efforts required in some cases and at certain times? We recognize that our destination needs to be sustainable, and the DMO is in a position to engage, not only in encouragement towards off-peak travel, but also responsible - even stewardship travel. The LTVA sees its role evolving to include stewardship initiatives and deeper connection and partnership with other organizations.”*

We could not know how true this would be when COVID-19 shut every destination down in March 2020. From then until now, we have been in the “Recovery” mode, starting with a “don’t travel here” theme to the current “come but be safe and help us stay open” theme. Little could we anticipate in March how pent-up demand for travel would overwhelm Lake Tahoe. Or how to predict visitor behavior as some loosening of travel and gathering restrictions were lifted. The entire LTVA staff was immersed in learning and collaborating at an intense level, engaged in protecting our destination, and at the same time working towards climbing out of a ruinous economic collapse. This year’s report sections will start with our traditional analysis of results and all will end with the quick and firm pivot the LTVA did in March in response to COVID-19.

Yours in Tourism,  
  
Carol Chaplin  
President & CEO  
Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

It’s a slow—sometimes daily—check-in on local sentiment, visitor behavior and any glimmer of opportunity to safely and responsibly support our community. We paused our advertising, cancelled events, and closed visitor centers in response to COVID-19. Now we have an eye on winter and how that will unfold with ski resorts limiting capacity, restaurants with limited indoor seating, and lodging still at less than 100% capacity. Our drive market appears to be strong, but our fly markets will need coaxing for several years for us to claw our way back. With this as our landscape, and the Events Center construction resuming in the spring of 2021, the LTVA will continue to evolve to meet all of these challenges.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the  
Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority  
is to market the South Shore of Lake Tahoe  
as a unique, year-round destination  
to the global marketplace  
and to favorably impact the South Shore economy  
through overnight stays and tourism spending.



## SALES & MEETINGS

The LTVA works with the travel trade industry domestically and internationally to introduce and promote Lake Tahoe as a world class, year-round destination. It facilitates contract negotiations with third party vendors and also provides the tools and media assets needed to market and sell the destination.

### INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

The LTVA retains the services of four international representative firms, for sales, public relations and social media purposes:

#### International Representation



Australia



China (Beijing & Shanghai)



Germany



United Kingdom

### MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS & GROUPS

The LTVA promotes Lake Tahoe's South Shore as a destination for meetings, conventions, corporate retreats, and other group gatherings, and assists potential clients in identifying appropriate venues and contracts. Trade show attendance at major meetings supports local meetings properties:



The FY19/20 Meetings marketing campaign reached nearly 1 million planners, generating 10,000 clicks to the landing page and 246 soft leads for hotel partners to develop.

For the first time the LTVA hosted a meeting planner FAM with nine third party planners and one journalist introduced to Tahoe South. Digital Edge's production team shot throughout and created 5 meetings videos. A pre and post destination perception study was completed with attendees to assist with ongoing meetings campaign strategy.



## SALES MISSIONS

The LTVA attended the following sales missions:

- Visit California IFTM Top Resa Trade Show & Mission - France
- Visit California India Sales Mission

### FAMILIARIZATION TOURS (FAMs)

The LTVA and partners in the community are proponents of educational FAM tours, and host individuals and small groups of travel trade professionals from key markets.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, five international FAMs from the following countries were conducted:



Australia



France



India



United Kingdom

### TRADE SHOWS

The LTVA represented the destination at the Nevada Governor's Global Tourism Summit and Visit California Outlook Forum.

Due to COVID-19 other events were postponed or cancelled.

### INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Brochures: Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish

Trade Newsletters: Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish

Website: 14 foreign language landing pages & 42 specific country pages

## PARTNERSHIPS



## VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

The LTVA operates a Visitor Center at 169 Highway 50 Stalene, NV 89449 and the Explore Tahoe Visitor Center in the Heavenly Village. Due to COVID-19, both centers were closed in mid-March and remained closed through the end of FY19/20. Daily calls and emails were handled by staff during the shut-down, with many inquiries related to state and local travel restrictions and availability of services.

With very strong visitation at the Heavenly Village location prior to the shut-down, Visitor Information Specialists assisted almost 35,000 in-person visitors, 77% of them at that location.

## ADVERTISING

The destination’s personality and attitude is delivered through all creative messages, images and experiences. Tahoe South is young at heart, adventurous, social and active around the clock. It possesses an energetic nature that is reinforced by the juxtaposition of the environments in which it lives; day and night, winter and summer, outdoor adventure and indoor play. The brand resonates with a diverse audience, appealing to a broad spectrum of demographics that embrace the brand values. Our target market includes above average income active consumers who enjoy life, live it to the fullest and put pleasure first. They are always in search of new experiences and making new discoveries.

### SUMMER CAMPAIGN

The objectives were to raise awareness of South Lake Tahoe as a summer destination and to increase traffic and engagement on TahoeSouth.com website for inspiration and information on summer activities and events. The FY20 Summer campaign extended through to the end of September and included a new market, the Seattle DMA. The campaign resulted in over **78 million digital impressions and 616,000 website sessions**.

#### Campaign Channels

- Digital TV
- Targeted Display Ads
- Mobile Apps
- E-blasts
- Paid Search
- Facebook & Instagram

#### Traditional Markets

- San Diego
- Orange County/Long Beach
- Los Angeles

- San Francisco
- Sacramento (Bridge Construction & Hwy 50 Road Closure information only)

#### New Markets

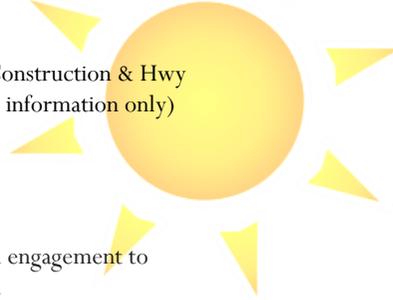
- Seattle

#### Objective

- Drive preference
- Increase traffic on and engagement to TahoeSouth.com

#### New Target

- Summer Active Adventurers Ages 25-49



### WINTER CAMPAIGN

The FY20 Winter campaign objectives included driving preference for Tahoe South as a vacation destination and increasing shoulder season and mid-week stays. Another emerging market, Houston was added to support increased flight service to Reno Airport.

#### Traditional Markets

- Los Angeles
- San Francisco

#### New Markets

- Seattle
- Houston

#### Objective

- Drive preference
- Increase traffic on and engagement to TahoeSouth.com

#### New Target

- Winter active adventures ages 25-49



The FY19/20 winter campaign was originally planned for longer flight dates than previous years. The goal was to push out specific messaging supporting the extended four weeks of Spring Break events through mid-April, branded under the umbrella of “Tahoe South Spring Loaded”. However, due to travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire campaign was paused in mid-March. The winter campaign ran from November 4, 2019 through March 16, 2020 and received over 28 million digital impressions and 328,000 website sessions.

With paid media paused, LTVA staff utilized owned and earned channels (social, website and PR) to promote a safe, caring, “stay at home” message. This was timely and well received by consumers. In early summer the message evolved to one of inspiration to keep our destination top of mind when the time was right to travel again. In this messaging, there was no direct call to action.



## WEDDING CO-OP

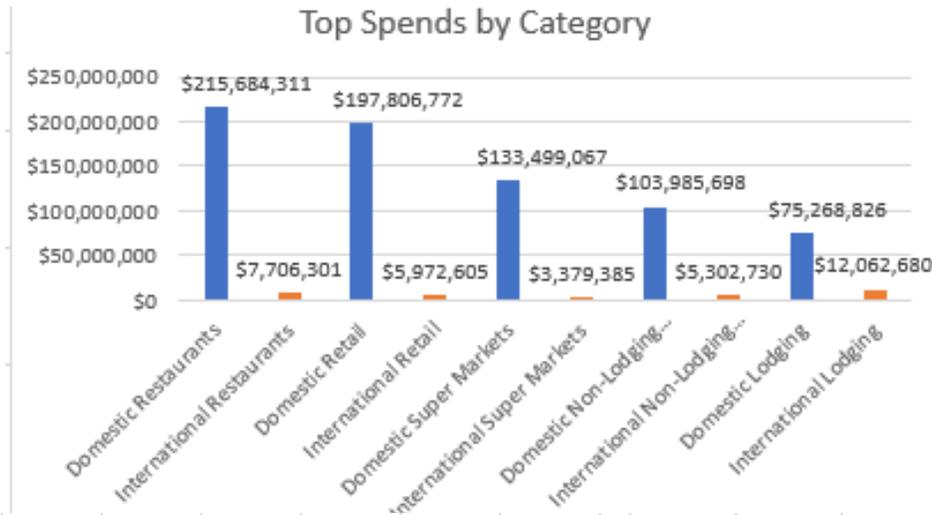
The LTVA Wedding Co-op performance, despite COVID-19, has remained steady and strong. All performance indicators are up substantially and partners are receiving an average of 55 RFP’s per month, a 60% increase over last year. The combination of the TahoeWeddingSites.com website redesign, plus better tracking, new creative, and quick adjustments in campaign strategies to maximize ROI, has helped to keep marketing performance high.



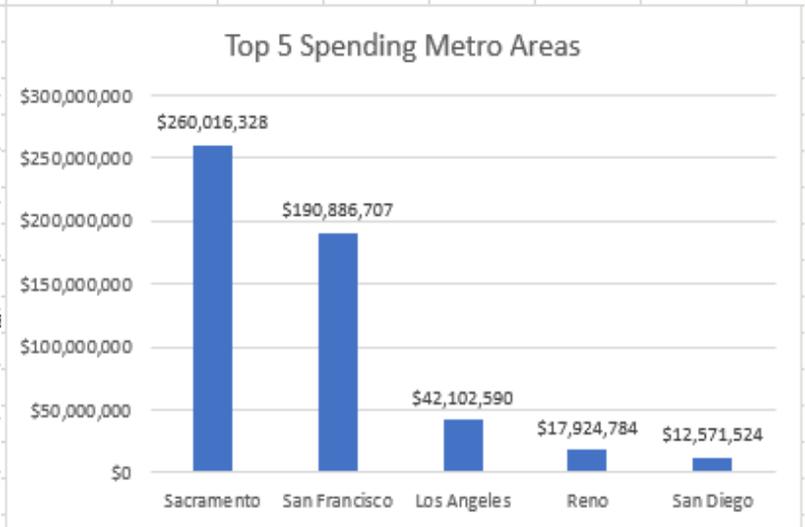
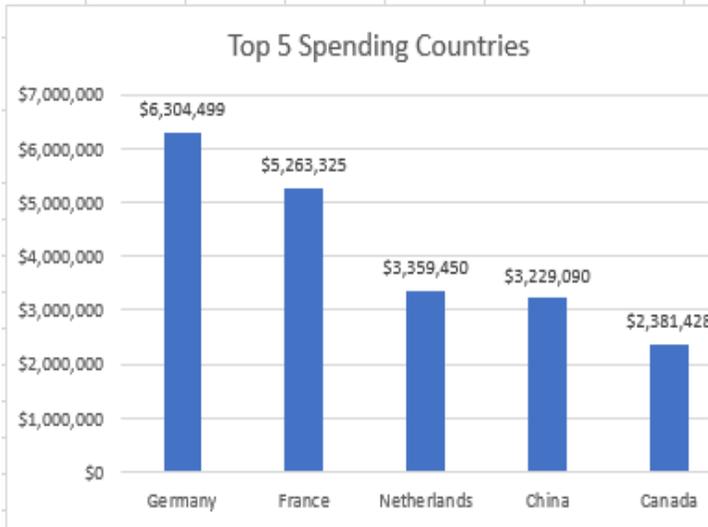
## RESEARCH

LTVA has contracted with four research entities for a number of years to promote strategic planning.

- VisaVue - Credit card sales tracked to their zip code
- nSight - OTA search and bookings
- STR - Lodging occupancy, ADR and REVPAR
- EMC Research - an umbrella report that consolidates the above with reports from government agencies into four quarterly reports and one annual report.



\* Graphs are representative of January—December 2019



## TAHOE SOUTH EVENTS CENTER



With LTVA's leadership, personal one-on-one connections and committed outreach, the community overwhelmingly rallied to support the Events Center's TRPA and Douglas County approval process in early spring. It was a true testament to the trusting relationships staff has built over the years and to the potential impact the project will have on our residents and businesses. The impressive roster of public meeting speakers, emails and letters ensured the future of the facility that will offer arts, culture, sports, music and meetings. While the scheduled construction was reduced in scope for the summer, the ground breaking took place in July 2020 and excavation began. Utility and water line work will continue through mid-October and vertical construction will commence in May 2021, with the anticipated completion in early 2023. The virtual tour of the Events Center can be viewed at [www.tahoedouglasva.org](http://www.tahoedouglasva.org).

## DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Digital marketing has proven to be the most crucial and meaningful part of the LTVA’s advertising, public relations, and sales strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic. LTVA staff was able to quickly pivot messaging and creative for owned and earned channels, enabling LTVA to be relevant, up-to-date, and responsible.

The tactic continues to emphasize the area’s outstanding natural beauty, while focusing on safer visitation and responsible recreation. The monthly e-newsletter promotes events, entertainment, news and special offers and is distributed to 39,000 opt-in subscribers. In FY19/20 the list was updated to remove stagnant emails which resulted in a doubling of the open rate.

### TAHOE SOUTH VISIT WIDGET APP

In November 2019, Tahoe South introduced Visit Widget, which is a trip-planning application. This tool provides a new way to explore what the area has to offer, including hotels, popular restaurants, activities, and shopping. View it all at once or search by categories like Beaches, Golf, and Campgrounds.

- 48,000 user sessions
- 2.5 minutes average session
- 4,000 IOS downloads
- 800 Android downloads

### TAHOESOUTH.COM

2.3% decrease in organic visits due to lower website visitation during the first two months of the pandemic. The website saw a huge increase in visits to the newly created Healthy Travel page, which informs the visitor what is open and the restrictions and protocols in place. The Healthy Travel page remains the most visited page during the recovery phase of the pandemic.

- 149,000 referrals to lodging
- 2.3 Million unique visitors, up from 2.1
- 3.1 Million total website visits, up from 2.8
- 61% use a mobile device
- 33% use a desktop
- 5% use a tablet

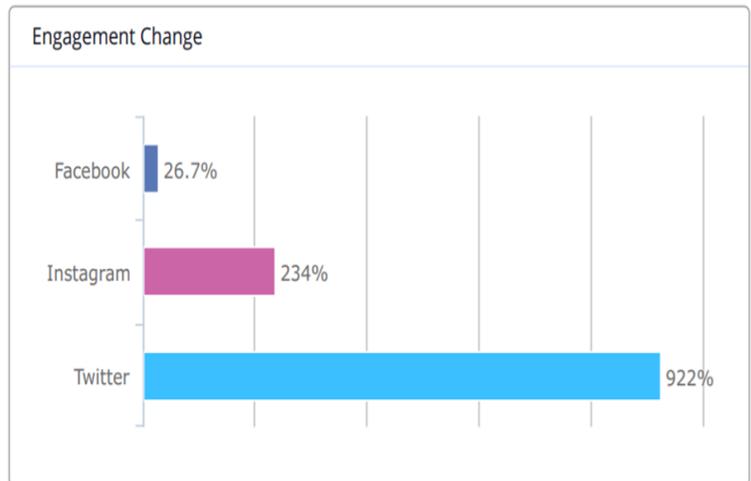
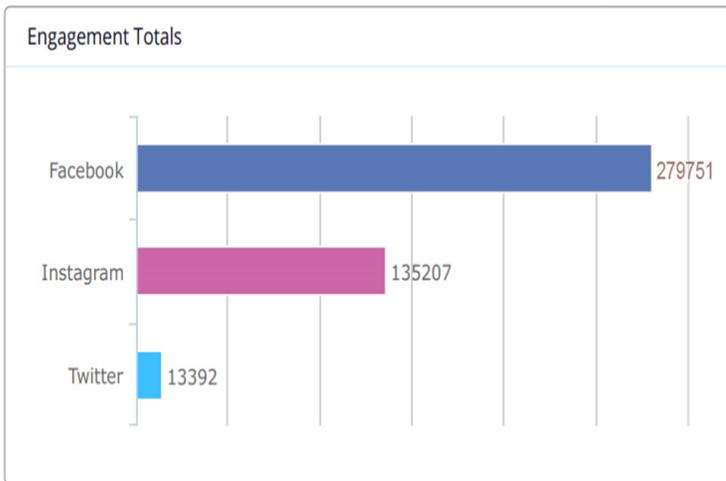
### VISITINGLAKETAHOE.COM

VisitingLakeTahoe.com is a cooperative partnership between north and south Lake Tahoe. In key markets, the cooperative buys the term ‘lake tahoe’ to drive traffic to the website to avoid competition and cost for that term. The simple website then refers visitors to the north or south Lake Tahoe bureau websites. In FY20, TahoeSouth.com received 48,000 referrals from VisitingLakeTahoe.com, down 28% from the previous year (67,000), due in part to COVID-19 campaign pause in Spring 2020.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Audience Growth by Channel

Channel	Audience Growth (Net)	Growth Rate	Total Audience
 Facebook	3,243	2.17%	152,415
 Instagram	10,558	20.31%	62,549
 Pinterest	369	36.53%	1,379
 Twitter	792	6.37%	13,216
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,962</b>	<b>6.52%</b>	<b>229,559</b>



### LTVA.ORG

Business to Business Resource site

Website visits up 242%

#### TOP 5 MOST VISITED PAGES:

COVID-19 | American Century Celebrity Golf Future Dates | Home Page | Industry/Data Statistics | Contact Us

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

### Media Objectives:

- Obtain media coverage in 5-10% of top 150 media outlets as defined by LTVA and WPR, reinforce key messages, talking points and the brand within a 12-month period
- Produce an earned media value of 5 – 10:1 the PR investment within a 12-month period

### Results:

- Exposure in 17%+ of top 150 desirable outlets: reinforced key messages, talking points and brand
- Circulation, Viewers, Listeners: 153.5 million; Total publicity value to date: \$1,055,000; editorial value of 14:1

### Digital Influencer Objectives:

- Host 8-12 digital influencers over a five-month period with a minimal engagement of 3-5 percent (industry standard is 3 percent) and minimum of 10,000 followers per single social media channel
- Generate an exposure value of 3-5 times in DI fees

### DI Results:

- Spring 2020 influencer visits were cancelled due to COVID.
- Average engagement rate of 2.5%
- Earned publicity (determined by third party, Influencer Marketing Hub): \$29,165; Total Impressions: 551,000; exposure value of 3.35:1 (publicity value/influencer fees)

### AMERICAN CENTURY CHAMPIONSHIP—JULY 2019

TOTAL PUBLICITY



TOTAL AUDIENCE



41 South Lake Tahoe area nonprofits received \$180,500 in total distributions through a grant award process

### Featured on:

- TODAY Show: Two ACC features aired during the week
- NBC Nightly News: Multiple interviews
- ESPN Sports Center interview feature
- Golf Digest and Golf.com on quality of golf
- AP exposure on wagering opportunities; daily game stories in thousands of outlets

### OPERATION SIERRA STORM—JANUARY 2020

TOTAL PUBLICITY



TOTAL AUDIENCE



Live and taped shots from major drive and direct service air markets:

- Los Angeles, Denver, Portland, Washington D.C., Boston, Orlando, Sacramento, and Reno.

### Featured on:

- Yahoo! News
- NBC News Channel 4 – Los Angeles
- NBC News Bay Area
- CNN.com
- Tahoe Daily Tribune

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Highlights from key markets included a Chinese group that drove 240,258,000 impressions at a media value of \$294,462.

Indian Celebrity Ranjivay Singha’s visit was seen by 13.5M Indian viewers and 20 minutes on the Tabi Salad Japanese TV program with 9M viewers.

The travel editor of Cosmopolitan UK visited and wrote a story aimed at the female, luxury market.

**Known Media Value:** \$1 Million +

**Impressions/Viewing/Circulation:** 571 Million

**Media Visits:** 17

**Magazine Placements:** 109

*International media visits ceased in early 2020 due to COVID-19.*



Tahoe South received media exposure in the following countries:



China



United Kingdom



India



Japan



Australia



Norway



Sweden



France



Germany



Belgium



Canada



Mexico



Brazil

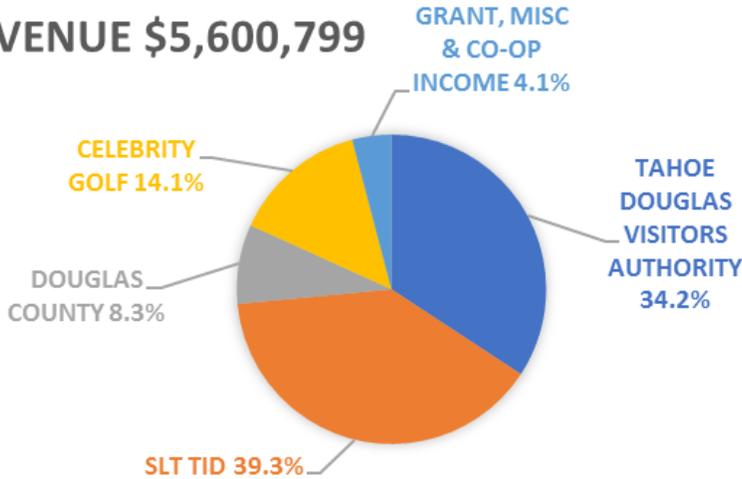
## EVENTS

Special events showcase touristic assets of the region to increase awareness of the destination. The LTVA sponsors and supports iconic events:

- American Century Championship (2019 record attendance of 60,000+)
- Labor Day
- Heavenly Holidays
- SnowGlobe
- Spring Loaded 2020 (most events cancelled due to COVID-19)

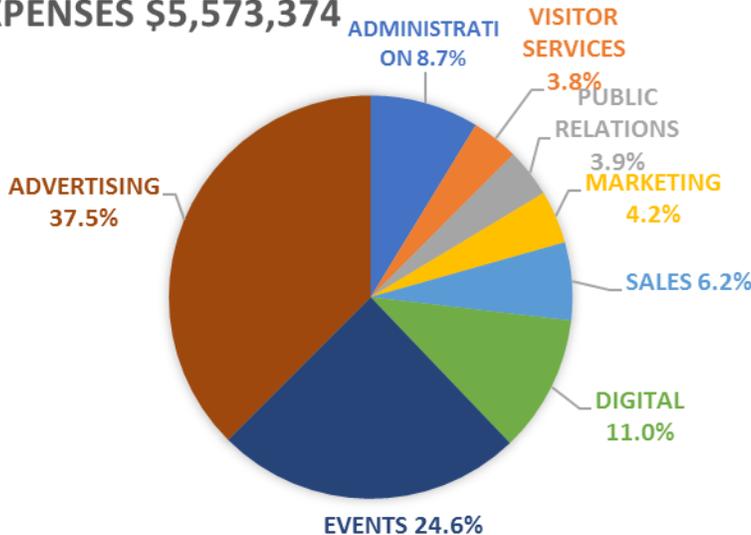
## REVENUE

REVENUE \$5,600,799



## EXPENSES

EXPENSES \$5,573,374



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2019-2020

*South Lake Tahoe Tourism Improvement District*

Jerry Bindel, Chairman, Forest Suites Resort

Bill Cottrill, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel

*Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority*

Nicholas Breaux-Fujita, Harrah's/Harveys Lake Tahoe

Joelle Shearin, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Lake Tahoe

*Douglas County*

Wesley Rice, County Commissioner

*At-Large*

John Packer, Harrah's/Harveys Lake Tahoe

Jason Collin, City of South Lake Tahoe

### MARKETING COMMITTEE

Mindi Befu, Barton Health

Rich Bodine, Hotel Azure

Nicholas Breaux-Fujita, Harrah's/Harveys Lake Tahoe

Kelly Campbell, Heavenly Mountain Resort

Diana Evans, DAE & Co

Luca Genasci, AleWorX, LLC

Jenn Gleckman, Marketing Strategist/Consultant

Dan Keenan, Hatchback Creative

Michael Newberger, Hotel Becket

Brandie Warr, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Lake Tahoe

### CONTRACT SERVICES

Duncan/Channon, Advertising/Brand Agency

Noble Studios, Digital Agency

Weidinger Public Relations, PR Agency

Digital Edge, Meetings Marketing Agency

DAE & Co, Project Advertising

Local Freshies, Social Media Agency

EMC Research, Data Analysis



# Meet the Staff



## CAROL CHAPLIN

President & CEO

**Primary Responsibilities:** Administration, Marketing, Public & Community Relations

**Background:** 35+ years in the hospitality industry including Hotel & Attraction Management Operations, Sales & Marketing, Food & Beverage

**Affiliations:** Executive Director: Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority; Chairperson: Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority



## SUE BARTON

Senior Vice President, Administration & Operations

**Primary Responsibilities:** Administration, Visitor Center Oversight & Special Projects

**Background:** 35+ years in the hospitality industry, including Attraction Management & Operations, Sales & Marketing, Food & Beverage

**Affiliations:** Chairperson, Reno-Tahoe Territory; Board Member, Nevada Commission on Tourism's Territory Advisory Committee



## TONY LYLE

Vice President, Tourism Development

**Primary Responsibilities:** Strategic Marketing Distribution Partnership, Planning & Implementation; Digital Marketing Oversight; Global Partner Relations

**Background:** A recognized executive-level steward with 25+ years experience in Leisure, Tourism & Travel Industry & Destination Marketing.

**Affiliations:** President, High Sierra Visitors Council



## MIKE FRYE

Event & Media Relations Manager

**Primary Responsibilities:** Event Logistics & Oversight, International Media Communication & Story Development

**Background:** 40+ years in the hospitality industry in South Lake Tahoe, including Ski Resort Senior Management & Operations, Sales & Marketing



## ANNE SUTTERFIELD

Online & Operations Manager

**Primary Responsibilities:** Tahoesouth.com & LTVA.org, Activity Tickets, SMERF & Motorcoach Group Sales, Visitor Center Operations, Outreach & Social Media.

**Background:** 20+ years experience in the hospitality industry in Tahoe South, including Sales & Operations

**Affiliations:** South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association



## STUART MAAS

Sales & Marketing Manager

**Primary Responsibilities:** Content Calendar, Social Media, Marketing Strategies, Public Relations, Domestic & MICE Sales

**Background:** 15 years in recreation, tourism, marketing & sales industries

**Affiliations:** Tahoe Regional Young Professionals, Lake Tahoe Master Gardeners



## KATHARINE MCCOMB

Accounting Manager

**Primary Responsibilities:** Financial Preparation & Reporting, Payroll & Human Resources

**Background:** Graduated from UC San Diego with a degree in Economics & a minor in Environmental Studies.



## IRMA SALAZAR

Senior Program Specialist

**Primary Responsibilities:** Visitor Center Operations & Oversight and Execution of a variety of LTVA programs

**Background:** South Lake Tahoe native. Graduated South Tahoe High and completed AA at LTCC in Small Business Management. 15+ years in hospitality.



## JENNY SKELLY

Administrative Assistant

**Primary Responsibilities:** Office Administration & Staff Support

**Background:** Born & raised in South Lake Tahoe. Completed an AS in Social & Behavioral Sciences and carries 10+ years in an Administrative Support role.

## LTVA LOCATIONS

Executive Offices  
169 Highway 50  
Stateline, NV 89449  
775-588-5900

NV Visitor Information Center  
169 Highway 50  
Stateline, NV 89449  
775-588-4591