Plumas County / Feather River Tourism

Assessment, Brand Strategy, 2021-2023 Action Plan

April 2021

WORKING DRAFT 2, REVISED: April 7, 2021
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

SMGConsulting

TAKE ANOTHER PATH.

Executive Summary

Plumas County sits at an exciting moment in its trajectory as a tourism destination.

There is a rich abundance of diverse activities, events and experiences to be had in this destination. Without question, this is a destination with the ingredients required to become a year-round tourism destination.

This assessment and strategic action plan provide insights, ideas and recommendations to assemble Plumas County's ingredients as a full-fledged tourism destination. And then, how to share this destination with the world in a thoughtful and sustainable way. It should be noted that the contents of this document do not address economic development or community building within Plumas County in the way of bringing new *residents* to the area. Efforts of the DMO should be focused on attracting new *visitors*. But, the organization can provide insight and direction to local improvement entities, and work in tandem with them.

Table of Contents:

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Events Strategy

Section 1: Audit & Insights

Owned Channels

What are you saying about yourself?

1. Creative + Brand Messaging Audit

Current Naming and Region Can be Confusing

Currently, there are a handful of naming conventions being "officially" used to describe this region:

- **Feather River or Feather River Watershed**
  - Pros - Recognizable landmark to the region
  - Challenges - Feather river is not exclusive to Plumas County; Butte County has claimed and marketed the "start of the Feather River," so this could pose confusion (an SEO challenge as well)
- **Plumas County**
  - Pros - Name and brand recognition from any previous work; provides sense of place
  - Challenges - Eastern Plumas County has sub-segmented themselves.
- **Almanor Basin**
  - Pros - Lake Almanor is one of best-known attractions within the destination, this plays off of that popularity

- ○ Challenges - Only focuses on one attraction in the destination; could create confusion in promoting entire county

Based on a current audit of names, it will be critical for this destination to select one singular name and align all language around it.

Current Brand Messaging of Plumas County

Address that "we've got it all" on the website, and nothing about what is SPECIAL about the experience. Just a list of assets.

A few of the current key messages (analysis from homepage of website)
1. Northern California
2. There are things to do, places to go and places to camp
3. "We Have it all" - but how is the experience different and special?

> What's your outdoor passion? Winter sports? Snowmobiling? Skiing? Mountain biking? Fishing? Camping? Golf? Scenic drives? Relaxation? We have it all.

    a.
4. There are many different types of places to stay here
5. It is uncrowded with lots of outdoor recreation

Current messaging leads with the assets, and not the heart. There is a lack of emotional language or connectivity, and Plumas County should find a values-based communication instead.

2. Website Audit of PlumasCounty.org

Website Design Positives

- Imagery used throughout site
- Works well on mobile
- Features a number of partners

- Offers robust and diverse information
- Site speed is good - 2.29 sec load time (1-2 sec is goal range)

Google Analytics Audit

As we are all aware, 2020 was not a "normal" year, but will play into the years to come. The Google Analytics and website audit takes into account 2019 numbers as well as 2020 to establish a baseline.

What does the traffic to the website look like?
- Monthly user traffic essentially doubled in 2020 due to COVID-19, but the site had strong monthly traffic in 2019, as well.
  - Peak months (Jun, Jul) had 23-25k monthly users (compared to 12k in June 2019)
  - May, Aug, Sep - still having 10-16k monthly users
  - **This is a key opportunity** - even though these visitors are coming because of COVID-19 travel limitations, you can capture them and target them to visit during other seasons and years
- Plumas County is reaching a primarily new website visitor - about 87% of the traffic in both 2019 and 2020 was new visitors, while 13% was returning visitors
  - Again, capturing this new website visitor to turn them into a repeat visitor is one of your key opportunities in creating off-season visitation

■ New Visitor   ■ Returning Visitor
Jan 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2020

13.1%

86.9%

Jan 1, 2019 - Dec 31, 2019

12.4%

87.6%
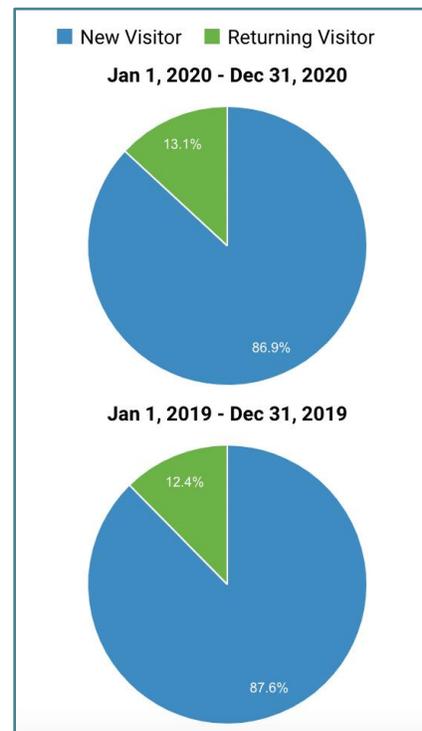
Who is coming to the website?
- By City: Reno (9.6%), Sacramento (7.4%), Chico (6.8%), San Francisco (6.46%)
  - Opportunity: market by location, keeping in mind that a Sac traveler is going to go somewhere very different in the county than a Reno traveler
- Age group: 25-34 is largest group for 2020 - 22.34% of traffic came from them
  - Second largest is 55-64 -- so have an interesting balance of millennials & boomers to cater to
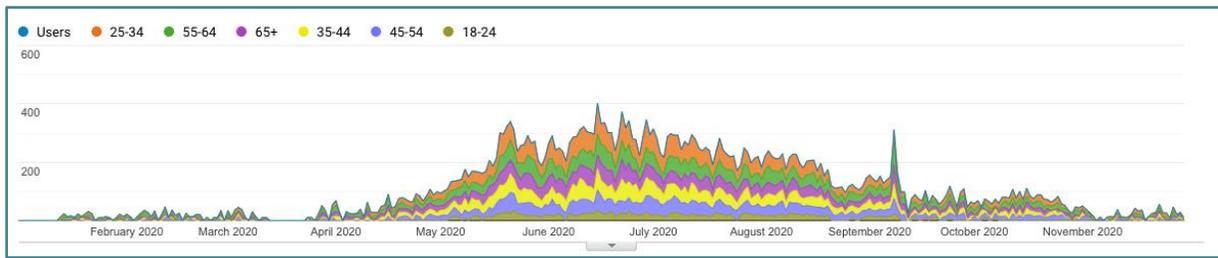
- Evenly split between male and female visitors
- What are they interested in? Lots of outdoor enthusiasts, gardening, arts

Interests of 67% of website visitors

Affinity Category (reach)

34.37% of total users

Percentage	Category
3.95%	Lifestyles & Hobbies/Outdoor Enthusiasts
3.92%	Food & Dining/Cooking Enthusiasts/30 Minute Chefs
3.25%	Home & Garden/Do-It-Yourselfers
3.19%	Shoppers/Value Shoppers
3.18%	Banking & Finance/Avid Investors
2.93%	Travel/Travel Buffs
2.71%	Lifestyles & Hobbies/Business Professionals
2.68%	Sports & Fitness/Health & Fitness Buffs
2.48%	Lifestyles & Hobbies/Green Living Enthusiasts
2.37%	Lifestyles & Hobbies/Pet Lovers

Other Category

33.72% of total users

Percentage	Category
2.89%	Arts & Entertainment/Celebrities & Entertainment News
2.43%	Food & Drink/Cooking & Recipes
2.38%	Real Estate/Real Estate Listings/Residential Sales
2.38%	News/Weather
1.78%	Arts & Entertainment/TV & Video/Online Video
1.43%	[Life Events] Job Change/Recently Started New Job
1.22%	[Life Events] Moving/Recently Moved
1.12%	News/Sports News
1.06%	Sports/Team Sports/American Football
1.06%	Food & Drink/Food/Baked Goods

Where are they coming to the website from?
- Organic Search is by far the top channel, contributing to 83% of total website traffic (people finding you via Google and other search engines)
    - 38 Domain Authority score (scale of 0 to 100) - This is pretty strong -- this is a place that many DMOs spend years trying to get to. So, a great start
    - Need to maintain this organic power as you redesign website

What are they doing once they get to the website?

- Camping Resources have the highest traffic by far for both 2019 and 2020
- Fly fishing is another topic of key interest
- In 2019, recreation and events calendar were also in the top 10

SEO (Search Engine Authority) Audit

SEO is all about the authority a search engine thinks you have. If you have a higher authority, the search engine will rank your content higher than others' in search results.

For SEO, it is key to take note of the keywords that you are currently ranking for, as well as other top keywords by search volume. And, you must consider what other sites are linking to the Plumas County site (backlinks).

Note: without formal and integrated SEO software, data available for SEO analysis is extremely limited. The below is a snapshot - it will be critical to have the website development partner undergo an SEO audit as well to kick off the web project.

Top Keywords around Plumas County (between 100-650 monthly search volume)	Top 10 Keywords that drove traffic to site in 2019-20 - what are people searching when they find our website?
1. Plumas ca 2. Plumas county california 3. Plumas national forest map / Plumas County map 4. Plumas county population 5. Quincy ca county 6. Plumas county cities	1. Little grass valley reservoir camping 2. Rocky point campground lake almanor 3. Plumas county 4. Plumas county california 5. Little grass valley reservoir 6. Antelope lake california 7. Antelope lake 8. Bucks lake 9. Frenchman lake 10. Plumas county ca *Keywords #11-20 are camping*
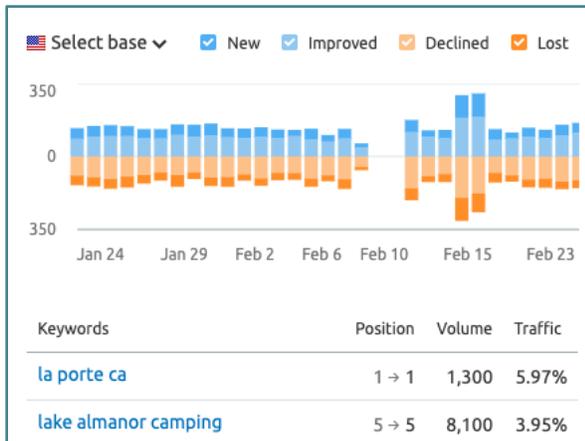
Top 3 Keywords that we are ranking for currently (Feb 2021)

1. La porte ca
2. Lake almanor camping
3. Quincy ca
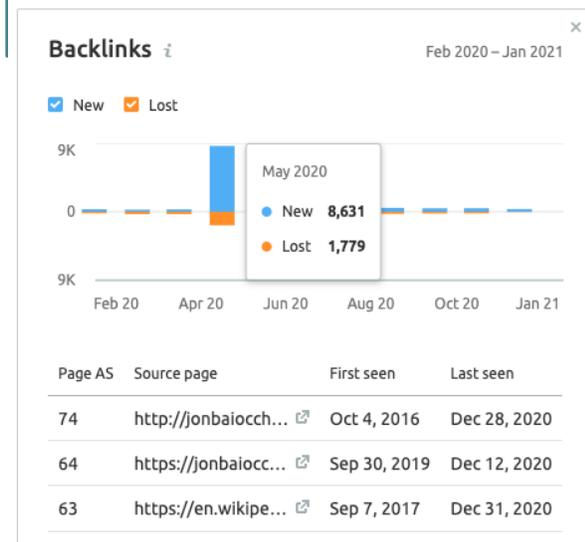
Backlinks

Backlinks are links to the plumascounty.org site from other websites. They are valuable in gaining authority with search engines.

Currently, PlumasCounty.org has 23,000+ backlinks - a strong and respectable foundation. More than 8,500 of these were added in May 2020, perhaps due to COVID-19 getaway related articles.

In order to maintain these backlinks and SEO power with the new website, ensure that each page of the old website is redirected to the same page of the new website.
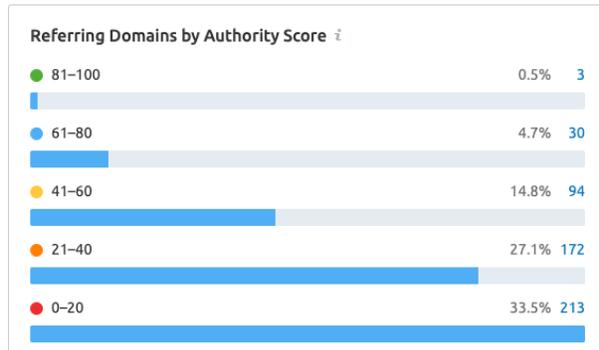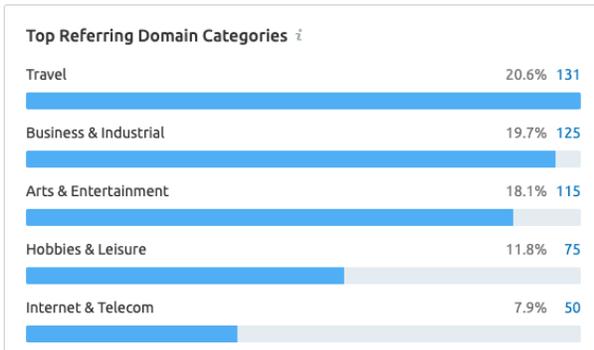
<u>Primary Website Opportunities</u>

Layout and Design
- Design is outdated, could use a revamp to use more modern colors, design conventions, fonts and visuals.
- While it works on mobile devices from a navigation perspective, the new website should incorporate more visuals and User Experience (UX) that is mobile-first - designed specifically for the mobile experience.
- Current coloring and everything is dark and not in line with the environment or feel of being in Plumas County. Does not visually express the experience we want to convey.

Content Strategy and User Experience (UX)
- The way content is presented is the checklist approach of "what to do, where to go, where to camp." This does not inspire or encapsulate the Plumas County vibe. Plus, it boasts that "we have it all," which we do not want to claim. Find ways to own your outdoors, wilderness, experience, and incorporate content that is a little more emotional.
- Once you click into "Do, Go, Stay, Camp," each page offers lists with links. If those pages are made more visual, it will increase the chance of conversions.
- "Outdoor Recreation" is pretty vague right now. This could be broken down more specifically into activities and difficulty levels.
- Homepage: You're taking up the most real estate above the fold without clicking anywhere. The first section on your website should strategically take a user to seasonal information that lands on an itinerary or activity page.

External Channels and Forces

1. Industry Trends

Major Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and tourism marketing trends.

Travel & Tourism Trends

- COVID-friendly destinations - This will be an impact for years to come, and destinations with wide open spaces and fewer crowds will benefit.
- Personalized Experience - Today's traveler has the desire to create a completely unique trip, and 81% of travelers say that it's important for brands to provide personalized experiences to travelers (Evok).
- Multi-generational and Group Travel - The past 5 years have shown a rise in travel between generations, and we're projected to see this increase substantially as life opens up out of COVID. Tourism experts predict that "reunion" trips will be a major new type of traveler to watch for.
- Solo Travel - Over the last decade, "solo" trips have become more of a trend within the tourism market, and offer a great shoulder season targeting opportunity.
- Eco-Tourism - More and more, travelers have eco-friendliness in mind, and are more susceptible to choosing a destination based on their commitment to the environment. Plumas County should consider and highlight the ways in which it supports the environment.
- Experiential Tourism - Travelers want a destination where they can experience something authentic and dramatically different from their day-to-day. They want to escape into another world. Plumas County truly offers this type of experiential "escape," and should leverage this as a key message.
- Millennial and Gen Z Travelers - By 2024, a majority of tourists will be Millennials. Is Plumas County ready to welcome them and provide the experience they require? Do our websites offer mobile platforms to accommodate their dependence on cell phone usage? Are we offering a type of diversity and inclusiveness that makes them feel welcome here?

Marketing Trends

- Video and Storytelling are Widely Adopted - Most marketers are using these as primary tools now. It's no longer enough to just *have* video content, now that content needs to stand out and tell a compelling story to keep people watching.

- All Eyes on Millennial Moms - Millennials are the major family and DINK/group travel target now. And in the coming years, Gen Z will begin to enter the travel market in a big way. Destinations need to think about how to incorporate Gen Z down the line, and to remember where Millennials fit into the strategy now.
- Experiential marketing - Especially coming out of 2020, today's traveler wants to get a taste of the destination's experience before actually going there. Some examples of experiential in action are virtual reality and out-of-market events.

2. Regional Competitive Destinations

There are hundreds of DMOs in the state of California. Each of these could be considered a "competitor" as Plumas County presents itself to its target audience.

However, a couple of major nearby competitors should be kept in mind:

Lake Tahoe

Lake Tahoe is a world-renowned mecca of outdoor recreation and scenic beauty. It is known, beloved and visited regionally, nationally and internationally, and has the lodging and entertainment infrastructure to support these visitors. But, it has been completely overrun with visitors year-round, which does not provide the most positive experience for locals or visitors.

- Our key opportunity: Plumas County has what Tahoe did 100 years ago: uncrowded incredible recreation and unfettered, wild nature. We can position the destination as the uncrowded, authentic option.

Apple Hill

Apple Hill is a "competitor" to keep in mind strictly for the fall season. With fall colors and harvest activities, Apple Hill is a fall experience mecca, and is currently THE dominant fall event of the Sierra Nevada.

Apple Hill is a competitor for Plumas County strictly based on our target audience. If a Reno or Sacramento traveler is considering a regional fall trip, Plumas County will be considered head-to-head with Apple Hill.

An opportunity is that Apple Hill has been overrun, and Reno/Sacramento residents are now hesitant to visit as much. They are looking for the "next" fall destination to discover for themselves.

- **Our key opportunity:** Plumas County has unbelievable fall leaf peeping, as well as harvest activities that draw the fall crowd. The destination can be positioned as the quiet, uncrowded alternative.

Eastern Sierra - Gardnerville to Mammoth

While Plumas County offers the type of recreation and experiences that make it a fair competitor of larger destinations, the destination must consider the current perception held by the traveler.

Currently, the Reno resident thinks of Quincy, Graeagle and other cities inside of Plumas County as "rural towns." Those who have not visited could equate the destination to other regional rural towns. Plumas County must remember this, and focus on communicating what differentiates this region from other "rural" areas.

- **Our key opportunity:** We have substantially better and more variety in outdoor recreation and scenery. And, it is truly a world of its own - not an offshoot town of Sacramento, Reno, Tahoe or Carson City.

3. Aspirational Destinations

There are infinite other destinations to look to for inspiration, of all sizes and types. But, a few destinations that align with potential Plumas County vibe have launched recent campaigns that beautifully

Iceland: Inspired by Iceland Campaign

All eyes are on Iceland as an over-tourism case study, and the volume of visitors they have experienced is much more than we will want to generate with Plumas County.

That said, the similarities between Plumas County and Iceland, a remote, rugged, explore-it-yourself destination, should not be overlooked.

Before launching their "Inspired by Iceland" campaign in 2016, Iceland was relatively unknown to worldwide travelers - they thought of it interchangeably with Greenland. And, those who knew about it were highly intimidated due to a terrain and experience that a visitor must hands-on discover for themselves. This campaign was built on video, and helped to debunk these conceptions of Iceland while inspiring huge interest in the destination.

- Breaking Down Barriers of Travel - More than anything, the [Inspired by Iceland](#) campaign allowed the destination to feel accessible, all while creating a deep desire for travel. They also launched humorous videos that show how to experience the destination like a local.
- Sustainability Messages - The [Iceland Academy](#) series within the campaign allowed for more specific instructions on traveling and enjoying Iceland safely and respectfully. They tackle topics like where visitors are and aren't allowed to visit and stay, traveler safety, and how to take care of the land.
- Adapting to a COVID World - The "[Joyscroll](#)" series launched by Iceland in 2020 is an incredible example of adapting to quarantine times and staying in the mind of your traveler even when they cannot visit.

Wyoming: That's WY Campaign

Launched in 2016, Wyoming's [Thats WY Campaign](#) plays off of the wide open spaces and space to get away available in the state.

- Remote and Rugged - Wyoming strategically positioned their wide open spaces and lack of developed land as the main draw. This authentically provides a visitor with a realistic view of what to expect in the destination, and focuses on their incredible outdoor recreation.
- Storytelling Components - As the campaign has evolved, Wyoming has added a number of stories highlighting different types of characters. This has breathed new life and allowed the campaign to run for a number of years now. The campaign has launched a number of different types of storytelling campaigns, see a few here: [Dogsledding in Wyoming](#), [Wild Grandpa](#), [Capturing Wildlife with Joe Riis](#)

Graubünden Region of Switzerland: Village Phone Promotion

To illustrate JUST how small and remote the town of Tschilin in Switzerland is, the destination ran a unique promotion. They installed a phone in the middle of the town, and encouraged the world to call the phone anytime of day or night. The rules were: if a local doesn't answer the phone, the caller wins a free trip to Switzerland.

[Watch it here.](#)

- Unconventional Approach - While this is a seriously one-of-a-kind, bizarre campaign, the concept and expression of the brand positioning is interesting. It provides a charming, rustic and personal view of this town and region, and tells a special story of its own. And, the virality of it made this campaign huge within media and online promotion.
- Friendly Community Considerations - The Graubünden campaign begs the question: how can you authentically show off your "friendly small town" nature. While this campaign is more of a "stunt" than we would recommend, it inspires an interesting way of thinking and messaging - the opportunity to have real, personal connections with the locals of a region.

Section 2: Messaging and Brand Strategy

The following is aimed to provide strategic brand direction for Plumas County in carving out a strategic niche. While we recommend you hire a contractor or agency to refine and finalize brand messaging with, this can provide a starting point to guide the thinking.

Destination Positioning

The Critical Need for Differentiation

In the state of California alone, there are more than 100+ TBIDs (Tourism Business Improvement Districts). And when a traveler decides to go on an adventure, they are searching and researching a number of these through social media and online.

In order to stand out from this vast and varied competitive landscape, you must align on a values basis with travelers. This makes it key to position the destination around a cultural niche, not just a list of assets.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats of Plumas County as a destination.

Strengths	Weaknesses
● 100 lakes, 1000 miles of river - impressive volume of water ● Nature is truly untouched and remote - can hike, bike, etc. without seeing anyone ● Four-season destination - different attractions each season ● Less congestion and commercialization; a real mountain vibe and experience ● Down-to-earth, unpretentious ● Lovely, charming and welcoming community ● An interesting place - truly a unique and funky vibe	● Limited availability of restaurants and lodging - things are often closed ● Very rural, can intimidate certain audiences and demographics (both from access/discomfort, and diversity concerns) ● Lot of unknowns and can be difficult to navigate throughout county ● Feels like you have to have more of a "plan" to visit - can't just wing it, and people have to find their own way ● Not a ton of "amenities" or easy access items ● Lack of public transportation to get here and around ● Lack of name/brand recognition

Opportunities	Threats

● Crowds of other regional destinations: Tahoe in winter/spring/summer and Apple Hill in the fall
● Lack of amenities = create and explore for yourself
● Ability to be "first in your feed" to travel here and have a completely one-of-a-kind trip - big for millennial and Gen Z
● Have a completely unique trip
● Just far enough from Reno to warrant overnight stay
● Work-from-home and long weekend crowd - more realistic they can travel any time of year
● Not a pass-through destination - you have to actually come HERE with intention
● More interesting than most rural destinations, but still have the charm
● Off-season focus can ensure sustainable growth
● Creating & packaging unique educational experiences:
  ○ Trips with Sierra Institute: What would it take to get them to hold educational bus trips again.
  ○ Trip through logging facility
  ○ Collins Pine Guided birding with Plumas Audubon
  ○ Grebe Festival: 3 day event
  ○ Adding events in Chester/Lake Almanor around night sky event at Lassen
  ○ Fly-in events to Chester and Quincy
● Building on Connected Trails
  ○ Need transportation from starting location to ending location. Possibly even transporting gear from one lodging provider to another.
	● How remote some areas are - no cell reception, limited dining
	● Day-trippers - need to show nearby audience why to stay longer
	● Natural disasters and crises
	● Becoming overrun in peak season (summer)
	● Non-aligned visitors who do not treat the land with respect or take the ownership
	● Not a pass-through destination means there is less traffic that could potentially stop here on the way to other destinations
	● Getting people incentivized to actually spend money here, not just enjoy free outdoor recreation
	● Lack of a visitors' center
	● No electric car charging stations

Product Improvements

There are a number of potential improvements to the destination that would impact tourists in order to define new and changing marketing trends.

A few areas of opportunity are listed below; FRMA should work with younger tourism operations to continue to add to this list on an ongoing basis.
- EV Charging Stations
- Expansion of Broadband and service opportunities
- Tourism Networking
- Restaurants and shopping options - need expanded hours and days open
- Diversity within county - can lack representation and diversity that is represented within target market areas
- Food diversity and healthy options

Competing as a Niche - Key Opportunities

It is critical to establish a niche as Plumas County so that you find your unique place in the marketplace. If you strictly compete on the mecca of outdoors recreation and visual beauty, you'll be competing head-to-head with Tahoe.

Currently, you have an interesting opportunity: people explored this region more in 2020 than many of the previous years.

Why did so many choose Plumas County in 2020?
- Trying to escape the Tahoe crowds and get some space
- Finding nearby destinations that feel new and exciting
- Ideal for families as well as hardcore travelers

Now, Plumas County should consider how to re-engage with these travelers and introduce them to other seasons.

Additionally, to find new travelers, Plumas County should focus on uncovering and marketing on its culture and vibe. This will attract travelers whose values and mentalities align with those of the destination. Target Audience

Geographic Targets

Based on its location and distance, Plumas County should target a traveler within a 1.5 - 5 hour road trip away. However, the destination should keep in mind psychographics of various cities, and focus on those that are most likely to align with Plumas County.
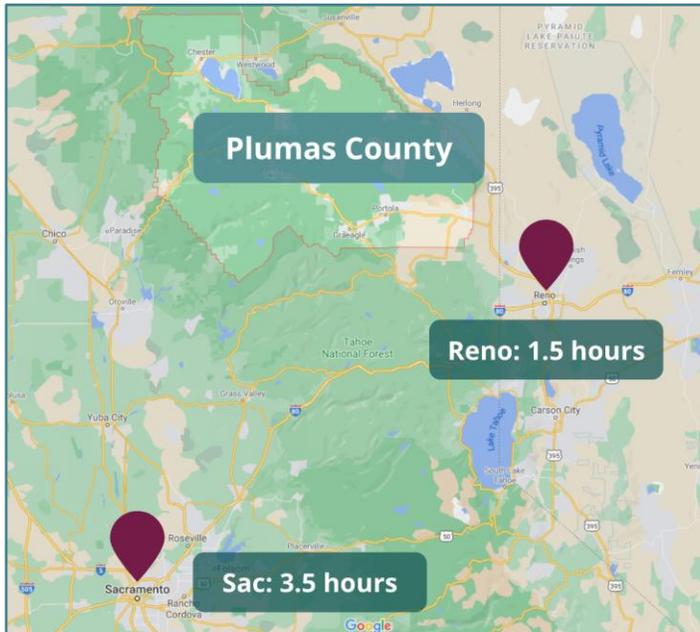
Geographic Target : Sacramento

While there are a number of California cities nearby, not all of them have alignment with Plumas County from a culture and vibe perspective. Sacramento is an ideal target from both a geographic perspective and psychographic perspective.

3.5 hours away from Plumas County, the Sacramento traveler is a longer-stay opportunity, offering potential for 3-6 day stays in the region.

Geographic Target : Reno and its Rurals

Reno is the primary target for Plumas County geographically. This audience offers the largest potential on a cultural and geographic level, and has the most awareness of Plumas County overall. A majority of 2020 travelers to Plumas County came out of Reno, so they are an ideal audience for shoulder season conversion.

1.5 hours away from Plumas County, Reno does offer the threats of short stays and day trippers. To this end, it should not be the only geographic target Plumas County focuses on.

There is also an interesting opportunity to target some of the rural residents nearby - Carson City, Gardenerville, Minden, Fernley, and Fallon, to name a few. This audience fits ideally with the Plumas County vibe on a psychographic level, and they don't shy away from rugged and rustic adventures. And, in recent years these rurals have become higher-income communities, offering real traveler potential.

<u>**Geographic Target : Bay Area**</u>

This audience offers the like minded travelers that appreciate the outdoors and arts, and have the money to spend. They already travel to Tahoe, let's give them a reason to come enjoy the outdoors without the crowds. We are not widely known there, but the potential is huge.

Psychographics

Psychographic targeting considers specific motivating factors, desires and other ways of thinking among the target audience. It answers the question: how does our visitor think?

Plumas County must attract the right psychographic visitor -- someone who aligns with the local values on certain levels. This is critical in both sustainable tourism growth, and ensuring a positive, honest visitor experience.

In order to attract this psychographic, Plumas County must specifically define their ideal visitor, and project this vibe throughout all communications.

The ideal Plumas County visitor is
- A lover of the outdoors
- Rugged and durable
- Not frustrated by changes in plans
- Excited to find their own way and have a unique experience
- An appreciator and caretaker of the environment

These psychographics apply across all personas and target segments.

Brand Personas

	Description & Demographics	Key Factors and Motivators	Key Attractions
1: Family Memory Builder	Family with children between the ages of 0-16 looking to make memories together.	Creating special memories together Accessible activities that	- Camping & RV Travel - History & Museums - Events

		are good for kids	- Christmas Tree Hunting
	Decision maker: typically moms	Exploring and exposing kids to new cultures and environments	- Hunting
	- Age 28-40		- Fishing
	- Gen X or millennial		- Lakes
	- Female	Learning and educating about history	- Hiking
			- Sledding and Winter Play
		Idyllic and traditional family experiences	- Arts & Music Experiences
2: Rugged Adventurers	Adventure lovers and outdoor enthusiasts looking to get off the grid and restore their souls. Typically either millennial or boomers traveling in couples or groups. - Age 24 - 64 - Millennials or Boomers - Male or Female	Not concerned about accessibility -- looking for something remote Typically healthy lifestyle and nature lovers Love the quiet escape that nature can offer Champions of the land and strive to treat it well	- Hiking and Backpacking - Mountain Biking - Backcountry skiing - XC Skiing - Snowshoeing - Snowmobiling
3: Outdoors Vibers	Travelers looking to get away, enjoy a laid back, passive time outdoors with a beer, great music and views. Typically either millennial or boomers traveling in couples or groups. - Age 24 - 64 - Millennials or Boomers - Male or Female	Wants a passive but peaceful experience - somewhere they can call their "own" Not fully comfortable forging their own trail - needs to be shown the way Looking to restore their souls, enjoy the quiet Also enjoy kicking back with a beer, great scene and group	- High Sierra Music Festival - Arts & Music Experiences - Hikes and lower-key outdoor adventures - Lake days and boating - Camping - Scenic drives
Sub-segment: Weddings *More of a B2B approach, will be addressed in Section*	*Wedding planners and brides who are in the process of finding a venue.* *Typically:* - *Female* - *Age 24 - 40 - millennials*	*Is looking for visual beauty and bringing their "dream" to life* *Recommendations from wedding planners and others in the industry.*	*Plumas County offers the idyllic, on-trend look that brides are into in every season, at prices they can actually afford.*

5, Year 3		*Ability to easily reach destination for the whole wedding party.*	

Branding and Messaging Recommendations

NOTE: The name, logo, tagline and creative expressions should be finalized in collaboration with a creative agency. But, we've provided some ideas and examples for each throughout the next few sections.

The below language and insights are just initial direction to get started. Now, the Feather River team has had the opportunity to react and understand what the group does and doesn't connect with. All insights should be passed off to the branding agency as valuable background and research.

Name and Logo

As established in the naming audit, it is critical to align the destination under one consistent name. When selecting that name, we must consider establishing a sense of place, and remembering what the audience already thinks/knows.

Recommended to use either "Discover Plumas County," "Plumas County" or "Discover Plumas"

Rationale:

- Plumas County has at least SOME brand "awareness" and sense of place built up
- Feather River is a river that is not exclusive to Plumas County, it is not going to be as easily understood
- Discover Plumas County offers a more active brand, encouraging the visitors to discover the region on their own terms.
  - May need to coordinate with radio entity to claim the "discover" URL, or move ahead with plumascounty.org as the website

Ethos and Culture - Who are we?

Below are 5 Cultural Tenets that make up the vibe of Plumas County.

Freedom	The ruggedness of the land gives us a pure experience, and makes us free. - Free from physical boundaries - Free from distractions - Free to laugh, play, dance, absorb, soak it in - Free to try new things (music, art, crafting, outdoors)
Wild and Alternative	Plumas County is the Original Alternative - the wild lands match the wild souls. It offers a free-spirited attitude, and aligns with someone who is looking for a completely different experience. - Undeveloped land - But, the souls here are wild, too - they have come here to get away and live in nature - Since the 1970s, Plumas County has offered an escape for wild spirits - The geography drives this culture - it inspires us to remain untethered and unbothered by anything unimportant

Relaxed and Unwound	We move a little slower here, and with this backdrop, you'll see just how nice it can be to move a little bit slower through the day. - It's like sipping a beer outside as the breeze drifts by and you enjoy a band - Get away from any hustle and bustle, you don't need to rush anywhere - Here, you can just take the day as it comes
Unpretentious and Down-to-Earth	We are proud of our real small-town vibe and a genuine community. - Welcoming, friendly - You can come here and experience the local lifestyle - you'll be welcomed - We feel grateful to be in this incredible place and want to share it
Champions of the Environment	We not only enjoy nature and the environment; we are champions of it. - We consider ourselves stewards of this land - Our goal is to preserve this region for generations to come

Creative Tagline and Identity

While a tagline must be short, it should give a quick taste of some sense of place and ethos.

Based on roundtable meetings with stakeholders and research, the following taglines and name pairing offers a number of ideas and different ways to express the ethos and culture.

Discover Plumas County	Plumas County
The Real Rugged. The Real Rustic. True Wild.	Discover Your Wild. Plumas County. Discover True Wild. Plumas County. The Real Mountain Experience

The Wild Sierra Cascade Real Wild in the Sierra Cascade Rediscover the Wild True Wild in the Sierra Cascade Solitude in the Sierra Cascade Untouched Wild. Untouched Wild, Waiting for You. The Real Backcountry.	Plumas County. Don't just go away, get away. Discover New Blue. Plumas County. Rediscover the Wild. Find us where the Cascades meet the Sierra The Backcountry of the Sierra Cascades Wild in the Sierra Cascades**.**

Plumas County Key Messages

- **Closer than it seems, but a world away.** Plumas County is home to more than 100 lakes and more than 75% of the county is made up of natural forest. It is truly a different world compared to surrounding regions, but only 1.5 hours from Reno and 3.5 hours from Sacramento.

- **Home to completely unique and diverse terrain.** The Cascade Mountains and Sierra Nevada converge at Plumas County, resulting in dramatically stunning scenery and diversity throughout the region. The north end is of volcanic origin and Sierra offers granite, combining to create impressive panoramic views no matter where you look.

- **A scenic playground all to yourself.** With Plumas Counties undeveloped terrain, you can find endless opportunities for adventure, with truly no crowds. It's uncrowded, undistracted, unfettered wild.

- **The place where the Alternative Spirits find their home.** Plumas County is the original alternative escape for the wild, free spirit. The free nature of the geography makes those who visit here free, too. The community's passion spills out in a rich art, music and cultural scene truly unlike any other.

- **Shaped by the Wild West.** Historically a mining and logging town, the destination offers a deep historic experience that is reminiscent of an iconic wild west experience.

- **Adventures abound in all four seasons**. Plumas County is truly a year-round destination, with experiences that are unique to each season individually.

Destination Pillars

Pillars offer categories of experiences that are easy for audiences to grasp onto and understand what a destination has to offer.

Pillar #1: Personalized Outdoor Adventure

Our terrain is Wild with a capital W. Discover an adventure that is truly rugged and remote and unlike anything you've ever experienced.

Experiences
- Endless hiking trails, including 60+ miles of the PCT
- Biking
- Whitewater Kayaking
- Equestrian
- Hunting and Fishing
- Watersports - 100 lakes
- Backcountry and cross-country Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Snowmobiling
- Mountain Biking
- OHV trails Caves
- Ice caves by Wilson Lake - A couple of caves near Hamilton Branch, Subway Caves
- Wilderness Backpacking – Snow Camping in Lassen Park

Events
- Guided Snowshoe Walks (winter) and other ranger-led experiences
- Bike and running races
- Fishing Tournaments
- Courage Triathlon
- Poker Paddle

Pillar #2: Laid-Back Outdoors

You don't have to be an adventure seeker to enjoy the beauty here. Serene lakes with warm water, sounds of silence, abundance of nature, and the darkest skies for stargazing -- you can find it all in Plumas County.

Experiences
- Highway 70 and National Scenic Byway - beautiful drives
- 100 lakes - most accessible without hiking
- Laid back music events
- Over 6 Breweries throughout county, many with outdoor seating, because what is music and great views without an ice cold beverage
- Lake Almanor
- Fishing
- Birding
- Stargazing
- Fall Colors
- Ecotourism and Feather River Watershed
- Wildlife Watching
- Lassen Volcanic National Park - only National Park with all 4 types of volcanoes. Highest paved road in the Cascades
- Volcanic Legacy Scenic ByWay
- Geocaching
- Peaceful High Altitude Lake Kayaking

Pillar #3: Art & Music –

With a truly alternative cultural feel, our community is made up of artists and makers of all sorts who love to share their passion. It's not unusual to stumble upon a 2-piece band in the grocery store, for instance, or a new gallery exhibit during First Friday. The Lake Almanor area is also attracting artists and photographers, and a strong art community can be fostered here.

Experiences
- Galleries and Art Scene
- Live music around county
- Over 5 Breweries throughout county, because what is music without an ice cold beverage
- National Barn Quilt Trail

Events
- Friday Music in Quincy (year-round)
- Taste of Plumas (April) or Almanor Art Show (August)
- Plein Air, Art Show
- Plein Air Art Classes
- High Sierra
- Art Around the Lake (Lake Almanor) – Could be brought back.
- 2nd Fridays Art & Music (Chester)
- Beldon Music Festival
- A Few Brews and a Banjo – Chester
- 4th of July Art & Craft Show August Art & Craft Show
- Art & Wine Lassen Park (September)

Pillar #4: History and Nostalgia

In Plumas County, you can step back in time and experience life as if it's the wild west. Take a moment to learn and experience the western history of those who came here before us. Plumas County is one of the original Back to the Earth locations.

Attractions
- Quincy Downtown and Historic Greenville Main Street
- Western Pacific Railroad Museum
- Plumas County Museum
- Jim Beckwourth and Williams House museums - step back in time
- Logging and mining have roots here
- Gold Panning
- Lassen-Feather River History Loop & Seasonal Activities of the 6 regional museums: Lassen Loomis, Collins Museum, Chester/Lake Almanor, Westwood, Cy Hall Greenville, Indian Valley Museum and associated landmarks.
- Indian Valley Museum – Frontier Days
- Greenville Museum
- Chester Museum
- Collins Pine Museum
- Soda Springs in Humbug Valley
- Olsen Barn
- PG&E Stairway of Power
- An Ancient Trail: A Maidu Auto Tour - World Maker Trail

Events:
- [Cowboy Poetry and Music Show](#) (March)
- Longboard Event
- Cy Hall Greenville Museum "Nights at the Museum"
- 4th of July Rodeo and Frontier Days - Taylorsville

Regional Branding

In order to maximize effectiveness of the DMO and its resources, Plumas County should primarily promote itself as one unified destination.

However, a regional approach can assist in educating potential travelers more specifically about what to do throughout Plumas County. Traveler information should not only list the various regions within Plumas County, but should provide maps and other visual aids that help a potential traveler connect with each area.

The Almanor Basin

A mecca of outdoor recreation, and home to Lake Almanor, the county's largest lake.

Primary Attractions:
- Great fishing lake at the base of Lassen Peak
- Lake recreation paradise
- Where the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Range meet
- Eastern Gateway to Lassen Volcanic National Park

Indian Valley

Known for serene, quiet scenery and historic influences.

Primary Attractions:
- Historic Greenville Main Street
- Home of the Barn Quilt Tour
- Annual bike rides and races
- Stunning views ideal for scenic drives

Quincy & Bucks Lake

Largest town in Plumas County, nestled against the western slope of the Sierra Nevada range. Offers major arts and historic experiences to travelers.

Primary Attractions:
- High Sierra Music Festival

- Theater, Music, Art and Special Events
- Plumas National Forest
- Bucks Lake, outdoor recreational enthusiasts

Feather River Canyon

The Feather River Canyon is a stunning scenic area of Plumas County, boasting one of the most popular scenic driving routes in the state.

Primary Attractions:
- Home of the Belden Music Festival
- Feather River Hot Springs
- Scenic portion of Highway 70 with trains, tunnels, and bridges traversing the drive
- Natural beauty of waterfalls, wildflowers, brilliant fall colors, and the North Fork of the Feather River

Gateway to Lassen Volcanic National Park

Plumas County has a key opportunity in owning a regional asset, Lassen Volcanic National Park. By leveraging a "stay here, play there," messaging approach, the DMO can include Lassen visuals and experiences within Plumas County destination communications. This will help draw a connection between Lassen and the Plumas County destination -- you will effectively become the gateway to this national park.

The DMO should aim to align with Lassen, providing resources they and aligning on the ways they are communicating with travelers coming to the National Park.

A Year-Round Destination -- Positioning for Each Season

Summer

Strategic Opportunity:
Run minimal marketing leading up to and during summer. But, leverage people finding you during summer to bring them back in other seasons.

Fall

Strategic Opportunity: Position fall as an extension of summer combined with incredible leaf peeping.

Fall Colors: Become THE fall color destination in the Sierra.
- Summer outdoor recreation without the crowds
- Fall Colors - October & November
- While Tahoe has some fall leaves, they can be hard to find and crowded. Not as enjoyable of an experience
- Plumas County offers a wider variety of fall leaves than what you'll find in the Tahoe region
- Fall Color Photo Contest - Touring downtowns and voting for favorite fall photos. Turn in the voting sheet for prize. Opportunity for guests to submit photos to be considered online voting.
- Guided Photography classes.
- Build out downtown decorations for fall. Battle of the towns for best downtown decorations. Promote on social media. Online voting and Instagram photos.
- *Personas: Family Memory Builder, Outdoors Vibers, Rugged Adventurers*

Harvest Season: offer Apple Hill experiences without the hassle and crowds.
- Farm experiences are already happening in Plumas County. Combine this with the impressive fall colors and regional beauty, you have a major opportunity to bring a fall visitor.
- Add Fall Events: Cider Making, Lil Pumpkin Patch, October Fest,
- *Persona: Family Memory Builder, Outdoors Vibers*

Key Fall Attractions:
- Hiking
- Leaf peeping
- Mountain Biking
- Some water and lake activities – bird watching, peaceful kayaking, fishing.

Winter/Spring

Strategic Opportunity: Offer backcountry sports without the crowds, holiday family experiences, passive outdoor scenic experiences (sledding, cross-country, snowshoeing).

Holiday Events and Activities
- Highlight real-time weather conditions, using website and digital channels as a tool
- Holiday Shopping Spree build it out. If doing a weeklong event add Quincy. Package special week-night lodging stays.
- Christmas tree hunting - Plumas County offers the ideal location for Reno, Chico and Redding families
  - Work with the Forest Service to make it easier to get permits for Christmas trees and/or the county to do a better job on outreach for ordering online.
- Holiday events - idyllic and serene with stunning, snow-covered backdrop
- For 3 Saturday's starting after Thanksgiving - Set-up staging areas for visitors to go and have boy scouts, church groups and others cut the trees, visitors with tree permits choose Make it a family event to remember with hot chocolate, snacks, music and lights
- *Persona: Family Memory Builder*

Outdoor Recreation: play into lack of crowds
- Winter Adrenaline seekers - make your own tracks with snowmobiling, cross-country and backcountry
- Lower-key beauty seekers - snowshoeing and sledding are available
- Special Event at proposed Sled Hill in Jan/Feb
- *Persona: Rugged Adventurers, Outdoors Vibers*

Key Winter Attractions:
- Cross country and Backcountry skiing
- Snowmobiling
- Snowshoeing
- Sledding and Winter Play
- Christmas tree hunting
- Ice skating – Lake Almanor & Quincy (lets work on this!)

Late Spring

Strategic Opportunity: Play off of "wild" and nature brand messaging, visitors can be up close to experience nature come back to life.

- Become a premiere wildflower destination (May/June)
  - Wildflower Destination: more May/June in Lake Almanor Basin. Goes into July at Lassen.
  - Additional opportunity for photo contests and guided photo classes.
- Spring is great time for certain Fishing Tournaments
- June is Hex Hatch in Lake Almanor

Section 3: Destination Marketing Strategy

Overarching Attraction Strategy

Focus on Driving the Website and Influencing Potential Visitors

Given the prominent role that the Internet plays in travel planning, Plumas County's marketing efforts should continue to drive potential visitors to its website. At the core of the strategy are two basic principles:

1. The **best organization to create awareness and brand positioning** to influence visitors to choose Plumas County is the Destination Marketing Organization.

2. The **best organization to book a room or make a sale** is a lodging property or an online travel agency (OTA).

How the strategy works (see the model on page 26)

- Marketing programs (advertising, SEO, social media, public relations) are executed to attract target market segments and to increase the existing database for future tourism marketing efforts. Once the target segment is attracted, they either show interest (go to the Plumas County website) or not.

- Once they go to the website, at some point, they may link to a lodging property or campground. They may book directly, or they may book through an online travel agency or some other channel. This sequence of events may happen all at once or over a period of time.

- Based upon their experience, new visitors either become repeat visitors going back to the lodging property/attraction directly or back to Plumas County's website to choose another lodging property or attraction, or they fall out of the entire system.

- The DMO can measure its effectiveness and accountability at several points.

  o First, it will be able to measure **how many website users are generated overall** by its marketing efforts.
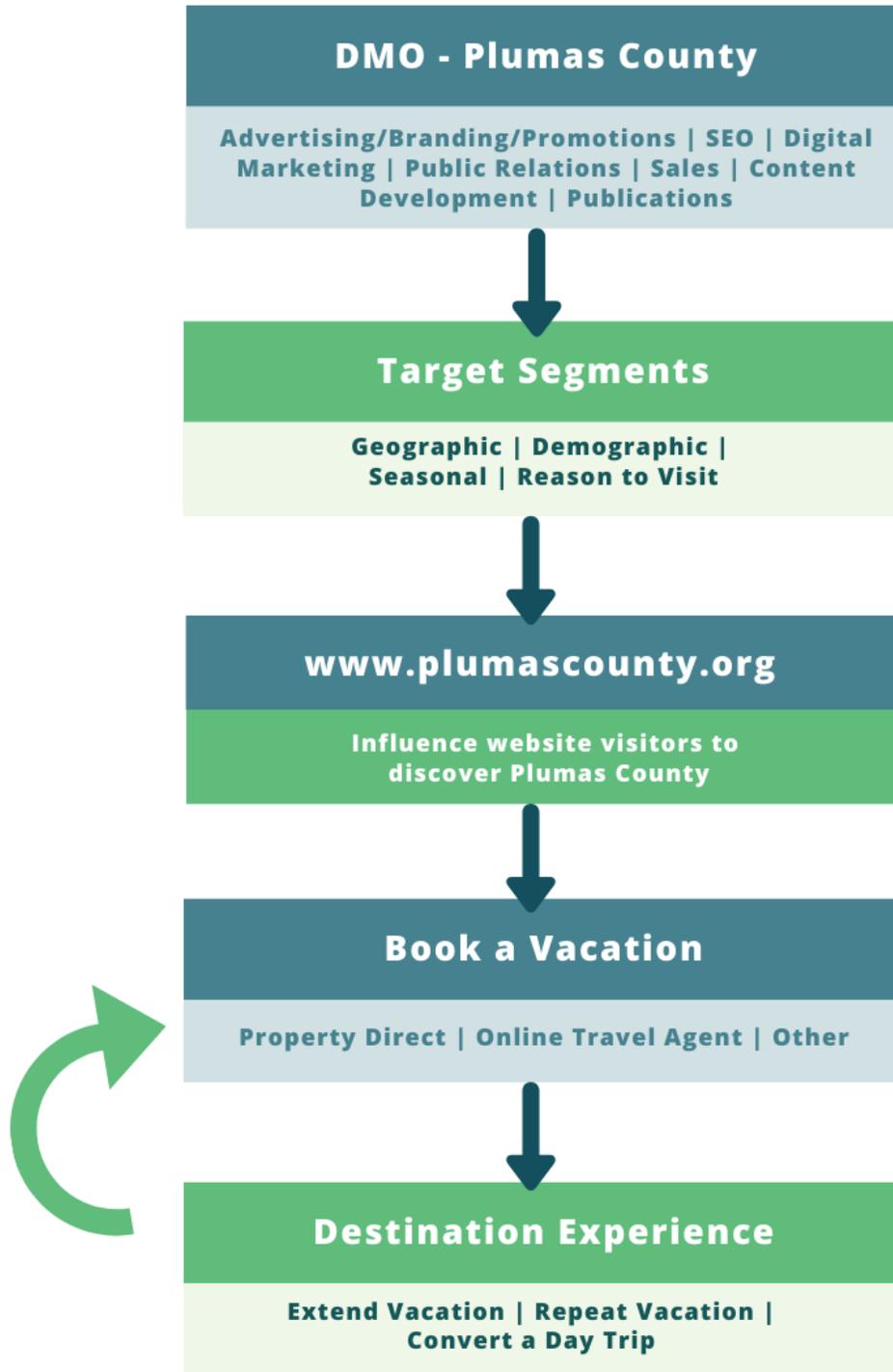
- Second, it can **develop online surveys to determine how people got to the website**, its influence to motivate them to book a vacation, and the return on investment (ROI).

- Third, it can measure **how many visitors (leads) it provides to its TBID members, attractions, and local businesses**.

Plumas County must concentrate its efforts on **repositioning the destination and creating awareness to drive potential visitors to its website** in order to educate and encourage them to visit the destination. In doing so, it is important to remember two key priorities:

1. Tourism promotion efforts must concentrate on **the marketing elements that individual organizations/businesses cannot do (or do as well) for themselves; and**

2. Stakeholders **must work together to support the "Destination Community" strategy.**

COMPETITIVE STRATEGY - "Destination Community"

Plumas County. Discover True Wild.

DMO - Plumas County

Advertising/Branding/Promotions | SEO | Digital Marketing | Public Relations | Sales | Content Development | Publications

Target Segments

Geographic | Demographic | Seasonal | Reason to Visit

www.plumascounty.org

Influence website visitors to discover Plumas County

Book a Vacation

Property Direct | Online Travel Agent | Other

Destination Experience

Extend Vacation | Repeat Vacation | Convert a Day Trip

Feather River Projected Results

As a result of implementing the strategy it is expected that Feather River Tourism will increase interest in the destination with the intent to drive more potential visitors to the website. Current unique visitors to the website are approximately 115,814 annually. The figure below projects unique visitor growth at 10%, 15% and 20% between a five-year timeframe.

Feather River Tourism Unique Visitors to Website | Annual Projections
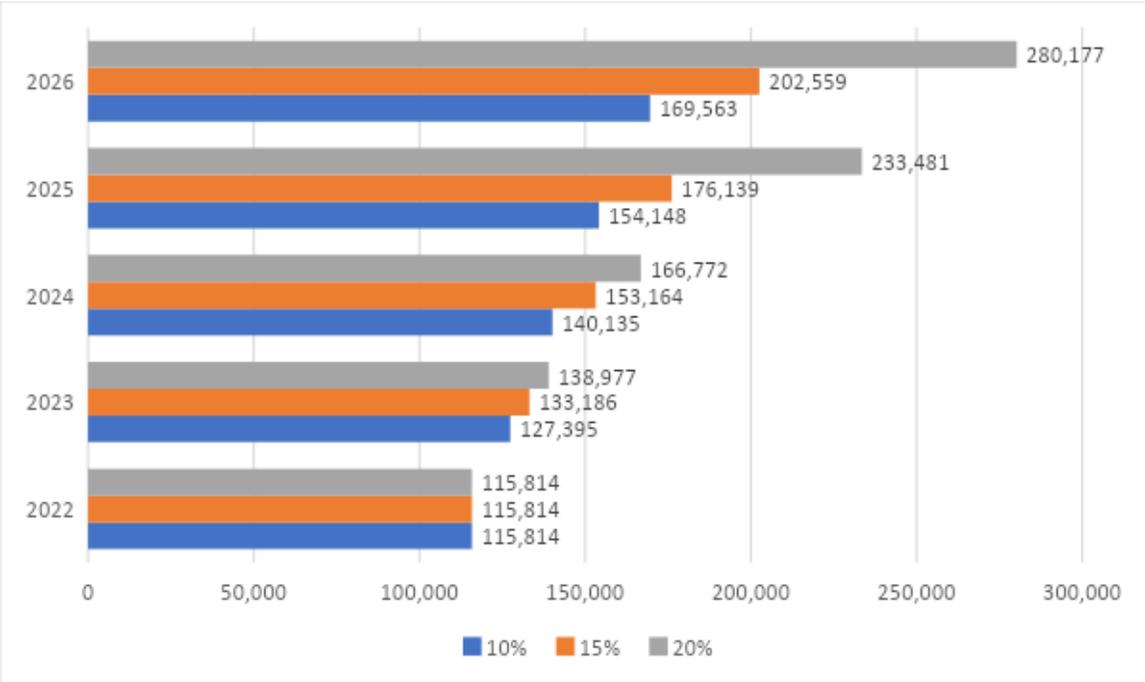
Source: Google Analytics, SMG Estimates

In the figure above, assuming a range of annual growth rates between 10% and 20% of website visitors over the next five years, there would be an incremental increase of website visitors. Assuming 10% are influenced to visit, it would mean potential lodging revenue between $2.6M and $6.7M generated just through the Feather River Tourism marketing efforts. Visitors can be tracked through the website. This does not include consumers that might have been influenced to visit but did not use the Feather River website.

Lodging Revenue Projections

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
10% Growth	$2,647,508	$2,958,112	$3,329,608	$3,718,050	$4,089,860
15% Growth	$2,647,508	$3,092,579	$3,639,177	$4,248,473	$4,885,723
20% Growth	$2,647,508	$3,227,046	$3,962,503	$5,631,562	$6,757,869

Note: Projections are based on website user growth using an estimated 10% influence to visit rate, 1.8 average length of stay, $127 Average Daily Rate (ADR) as a base with a 2% annual increase for inflation.

COVID-19 and Crisis Planning

Positioning & Opportunities with COVID-19

Just by the nature of 2020, COVID-19 travel restrictions brought a much higher number of travelers into Plumas County last year. These travelers offer a huge opportunity in creating a year-round destination -- if somebody has visited in the summer, they are more likely to be open to shoulder season travel.

A few ways to capture summer visitors and convert to different seasons:
- Add cookie to the website to be used for retargeting advertising
- Capture visitors' email addresses to include in ongoing email campaign
- Leverage events and itineraries to serve up comparable experiences in shoulder seasons that visitors may be open to.

While Plumas County will likely be focused on development of destination brand assets, COVID-19 is sure to be a factor for travelers well into the next few years. Plumas County offers the ideal COVID-19 destination due to its wide open spaces, low population and mecca of outdoor adventures. To this end, Plumas County can position and message itself as a COVID-19 friendly destination if that is still a relevant factor for travelers.

Establishing a Crisis Plan

As 2020 proved to many destinations, a crisis plan is not a nice-to-have but a need-to-have. Whether it is an intense snowstorm, pandemic, or wildfire, Plumas County should have a crisis plan at the ready.

During a crisis, the destination's role is two-fold:
1. **Be a mouthpiece for the experts.** Don't craft your own "guidance," but share from trustworthy sources. This includes the U.S. Forestry, Emergency Responders and other experts in the area, state or nation.
2. **Communicate to visitors and media.** Take the key information from the experts and share it out to any visitors interacting with the destination during times of crisis.

Key elements of a destination crisis plan:
- Key stakeholders within and outside of the destination
- Greater crisis response team - all individuals who will be involved in responding to a crisis
- Primary communication channels

Sustainable Tourism Strategy

While sustainable tourism messaging should be intertwined with all destination efforts, Plumas County should enact a specific strategy to encourage sustainable and eco-friendly tourism.

One example, [Big Bear](#) does a great job keeping sustainable tourism at the heart of their messaging. Their "Care for Big Bear" initiative is both inspirational and educational. This initiative makes sure that any visitors engaging with the DMO are aware of sustainability initiatives.

Plumas County should keep the environmental/sustainability message central to everything they do. A few places to focus on include:
- DMO Website
- Content strategy - highlight seasonally on the blog
- Share information and resources on social media

- Keep internal partners in the loop and distribute materials and messaging for them to use and hang
- Work hands-on with lodging partners and campgrounds to include in pre-visit email or check-in packet
- If and when hosting blog or social media influencers, establish that at least one post must focus on the sustainability messaging
- Create and distribute signage within the destination

Creative Messaging for Plumas County: Help us Keep Plumas County Pristine
Tactical ideas:
1. Feature environmental stewards as characters in storytelling videos
2. Cool, retro-style poster campaign playing off of nostalgia and the national park

Event Strategy

Marquee Events vs. Local Events

Plumas County should create a comprehensive list of events, and identify which are the primary "marquee" events that have the biggest potential to attract visitors.

Marquee events should be determined based on their potential to bring visitors from the desired target audience into the destination. Marquee events should be positioned differently and promoted more heavily by the destination, with funds allocated specifically for their support.

Based on the 2019 events calendar, suggested marquee events include:
- Dog Sled Races (February) - Opportunity to move to sled hill and make it a spectator event
- Taste of Plumas (April) - Quincy - Opportunity to build out with follow-up tastings at local restaurants and stores on Sunday.
  - Use Solvang's 3-day "Taste of Solvang" as inspiration -- draws repeat annual visitors from over 200 mile radius
-
- Quilt Show (May) – Quincy & Lake Almanor – but not sure of Almanor's Date
- *High Sierra Music Festival (July)* - Quincy*

- *All Funk Music Festival (August)*- Canyon*
- Solar Cook-Off (July or August?) – Indian Valley
- *Plumas Sierra County Fair (August)* - Quincy*
- Mountain Harvest Brew Fest (October) - Quincy
- Harvest Festival (October)
- Mountain Battle of the Brews – Chester (October)
- Lake Almanor to Indian Valley Holiday Shopping Tour – (Veteran's Weekend November)
- Lake Almanor Turkey Trot (November)

*Marquee events that occur in the summer - Plumas County should engage with the attendees and introduce them to other aspects of the destination.

Secondary events that are of visitor interest include:

- Live Music, Art Shows (Year-Round)
- Guided Snowshoe Walks (Winter)
- Historic Longboard Races (January)
- Cowboy Poetry and Music Show (March)
- Memorial Weekend Craft Show (May)
- Wildflower Photo Walks (May)
- 2nd Friday at Stover Landing – add farmer market, local arts and crafts (May)
- IVCC Spring Century Bike Ride (May)
- Bike Tours and Races, Century Rides, Fishing and Golf Derbies (Summer)
- Plumas County Picnic (June)
- Mile High 100 Bike Ride (June)
- Lake Almanor Wine & Dine (June)
- Paws on Parade (June)
- A Few Brews & a Banjo (June)
- Plein Air Painting Workshop (June)
- Running with the Bears (June)
- Veterans Fishing Day (June)
- Sierra Valley Farmers Market (Summer)
- Guided Birding, Butterfly Valley (Summer)
- Lake Almanor 4th of July Parade & Fireworks Spectacular (July)
- Dinner in the Barn (July)
- Taylorsville Jr. Rodeo (July)
- Poker Paddle Run at Lake Almanor (July)
- Bear Growl Gravel Grinder (July)
- Gold Digger Days (July) - recommended to modify name
- 5080 Camp for Artisan & Crafters (August)
- Lassen Dark Sky Festival (August)
- Almanor Art Show (August)
- Day in the Park Festival (August)

- Labor Day Fireworks (Sept)
- Wild and Scenic Film Festival (Sept)
- Street Rod Extravaganza (Sept)
- Wheel Around Lake Almanor (Sept)
- Lil' Megs Pumpkin Patch (October)
- Scarecrow Contest/Event, Lake Almanor (October)
- Chester Annual Merchant's Night (November)
- Annual Taylorsville Light Parade (November/December)
- Graeagle Holiday Festival (December)
- Santa Book Signing - Chester (December)
- New Year's Eve Fireworks Show - Chester
- Words and Music (year-round)
- Monthly Photowalk (year-round)

Local events like movie nights and hot pot soup lunches could be experiences that a visitor is interested in or would like to participate in once they arrive in Plumas County. But, they are rarely the factors that determine whether or not they will visit your destination.

Marquee events should be featured prominently on the website, while secondary events could live in an events calendar. As you determine how to position and feature these events, ask yourself the following question: "Is this an event I would travel 2 hours to experience? Is this an event I would establish a whole trip around?

High Sierra Music Festival: Leveraging the Opportunity

Plumas County has an advantageous situation with the High Sierra Music Festival: Each year, this event brings 10,000 of visitors to the region who likely would not or have not traveled there otherwise.

Plumas County should find ways to work more closely with High Sierra to engage with the attendees from a destination end. Whether it is a greater event sponsorship, or reciprocal promotion, the DMO should leverage this key opportunity to get in front of thousands of art & music lovers.

Some potential partnership ideas with High Sierra include:

- Sponsorship for onsite Discover Plumas County booth, with experiential activity
- Partnered social media promotion of event, including ticket giveaways, photo contests and other engagement campaigns
- Real-time broadcasts of the event

● Partnered aspect of event which introduces attendees to other Plumas County experiences - on screen videos or sponsored tent

Seasonal Event Program: Gap Analysis

Plumas County can also use events strategically to create higher demand in shoulder seasons.

Based on the current calendar of events and target audiences and timeframes, some recommendations for new events include:
● **Off-season Marquee Event** - Whether growing a current event, creating new events internally or working with event producers to attract larger events, Plumas County should aim to establish at least 1 marquee event for October - April.
● **Spring** - attract an event that is more targeted at families, and/or built around wildflower season
● **Fall** - Create or attract an event that encapsulates the harvest season even more
● **Winter** - Support and grow the holiday events already in Plumas County
● **Year-Round** - Paddle Board Race, and/or lessons for families. Build out to cover 4 events per year: Lake Almanor, Butte Lake, Bucks Lake and Antelope Lake. Incentive if you make all 4 events.
   ○ Recommended timing: May, June, Sept, and Oct.

Section 4: Action Plan + Prioritization

In the following section, we will provide a recommended action plan, timeline and budget for Plumas County to get their first 3 years of DMO work off the ground.

Year 1: **Building the Destination**

Jul 2021 - Jun 2022

Overview: In the first year, main priorities will be refining messaging, establishing a brand, developing critical assets, and building the new website.

Goals and Objectives for Year 1

Goal: Create a strong foundation and brand for Plumas County.

Objectives: what does success look like at the end of Year 1?
- Hire part-time Marketing Manager
- Develop a viable one year budget with realistic income projected.
- Establish regular preliminary communication with lodging providers and execute survey as to what they need for planning purposes.
- Establish communication timeline with all people in District - Plumas News, etc
- Establish clear and strong brand, including logo, messaging and style guide
- Create website that delivers on modern design and effective tourism
- Capture strong visual assets including photos and video of the destination

Strategic Initiative Priorities

1. Hire Marketing Manager
- Create the marketing manager role, and find the right person to fill it
- Role might start out part-time and administrative management, and then will grow to handle certain marketing channels. This will be the point person and manage all of these efforts, reporting back to the county long-term.
- Key skillset & responsibilities:

- ○ Copywriting - blogs, social media content, emails, brochures
- ○ Visual eye and ability to creatively direct photo, video and graphic assets
  - ■ Photography collection/editing or videography
- ○ Basic graphic design
- ○ Excellent organizational, administrative and project management abilities - responsible for executing on the plan and keeping everyone on track

2. Brand, Identity and Messaging Development

- Finalize name
- Work with branding agency to create logo, tagline and identity
- Refine and finalize messaging, create cheat sheets
- Compile all branding items in a Branding Guidelines document

3. Website Development

Bring in a partner agency or contractor to handle website design and development. Below are some strategic insights as you build out the website.

Key Components on Home Page
1. Capture the audience coming to your site due to COVID-19 / Social Distancing
   a. Get them to "subscribe" to News, Events and Deals from Plumas County (nobody wants a "newsletter")
   b. Cookie the website so that you can retarget these individuals with paid (you won't get their email/contact info, but search engines will know to target them) - retarget them for other seasons
2. Quickly establish a sense of Place
   a. When a traveler lands, they will immediately ask "Where is this? How far away is it from me?"
   b. Don't let them leave the site and google map you -- there should be

Website Structure & Content Best Practices
1. Remember what content is driving top traffic to the current Plumas County website: primarily, camping information. Work with this, not against it -- if visitors are coming to the destination with camping in mind, build itineraries and "things to do" in a way that works around these keywords, but exposes them to a greater variety within the county. Position some of the lodging properties as a great reprieve after 1-2 nights of camping, and a way to experience more while a visitor is in the destination. This

will help with extending trip length and introducing travelers to what else they can experience in Plumas County.

2. Rather than a checklist of activities in the destination, turn info into thoughtfully-crafted experiences based on a visitors' persona and interests. Itineraries could be filtered by
   a. *I want to*
      i. Make Family Memories
      ii. Go on an Adventure
      iii. Relax and Enjoy the Outdoors
      iv. Check out Art & Music
      v. Itineraries for
         1. Families
         2. Outdoor Adventurers
         3. Relax and Recharge
         4. Art & Culture Seekers
3. Make SEO maintenance a top priority of the redesign
   a. Make sure to hire an SEO-led website design agency or contractor
   b. Have them take a deep dive on the current website and find ways to maintain the SEO power you currently have
4. Work with the content you know people are coming to you for, not against it.
   a. We know that, by far, the majority of traffic has come to the website looking at camping pages
   b. How do you leverage this -- knowing they will come for camping, but designing those pages in a way that introduces them to other parts of the destination, and lodging partners?
      i. Consider how itineraries and related points of interest are built around this
5. Craft the website for seasonal experiences
   a. Summer - highlight lesser-known activities and events
      i. Also, "if you like this, you'll want to come back for that in a different season" - ways to introduce visitors to different seasons
      ii. Encourage fall bookings
   b. Fall, Winter, Spring - create itineraries and different views for each season
6. Incorporate real-time conditions for weather, especially with winter/snow conditions. Use website to link directly to real-time weather resources, and add timely recommendations and live cameras that play off of current conditions.

4. Visual Development - Assets and Graphic Design

In order to compete in the current destination marketing world, it is critical to create high-quality visual assets. During the first year of building, Plumas County should hire a number of contractors to collect and create visual assets:

- Photography - all seasons and activities
- Videography - drone, environmental
- Graphic design - brochures, experience maps, itineraries

Plumas County should establish their first creative concept before creating and collecting visual (photo and video) content. This way, visuals can be planned and collected for as many multi-purpose uses as possible.

5. Community Building

- During the first year, host a stakeholder event to present major priorities and next steps of marketing effort.
- Begin providing regular communications to all relevant partners - lodging, forestry, activities, park service, towns.
  - Distribute a quarterly partner newsletter via email to update partners on progress.

6. Virtual Visitor Center, Wayfinding and Signage

- Use the first year to create a virtual visitor center with podcast, video content and/or downloadable itineraries.
  - Potential to use app integrations or create own app
- For physical visitor centers (as listed on Plumas County website), plan to update with new assets for new brand
- Begin the conversation with all relevant parties to get destination-messaged signage in and around the destination -- "Now Entering Wild Plumas County" or similar

Year at a Glance: Schedule of Projects and Tactics

Q1 (Jul - Sep '21)	● Find and Hire marketing manager ● Create story bank and populate with any blog ideas, PR angles or other content ideas

	• Release RFP for logo/branding, SEO/web, visual assets/creative • Host community building event #1
Q2 (Oct - Dec '21)	• Select agency(ies) for logo/branding and SEO/web • Begin branding project • Launch Instagram account
Q3 (Jan - Mar '22)	• Begin asset (photo/visual/graphics) collection and creation • Wrap up branding project • Select agency(ies) for assets/creative • Kick off Website project • Host community building event #2
Q4 (Apr - Jun '22)	• Asset (photo/visual/graphics) collection and creation, cont'd • Continue website project

Year 2: **Launching and Introducing**

Jul 2022 - Jun 2023

Goals and Objectives for Year 2

Goal: Wrap up the brand development and launch Plumas County as a destination to its target audiences.

Objectives: what does success look like at the end of Year 2?
- Established branding that is used for all marketing
- Brochures and visual assets (photos and videos) for stakeholders and lodging partners' use
- Membership system established for local businesses other than lodging providers bringing in more flexible revenue. Helps promote local businesses.
- Website updated on daily basis.

- Database of 1000 interested visitors.

Strategic Initiative Priorities

1. Official Brand Launch - Event and Introductory Video Storytelling Campaign

- After website is wrapped up and all assets are prepared, launch the brand to the target audience with a video campaign.
- Create swag and print items to be shared throughout the destination.
- Host an in-market event for all stakeholders who participated in development, as well as other local businesses and regional media. Celebrate and introduce the brand, while getting key partners to buy in on messaging.
- Run introductory video campaign for remainder of Year 1

2. Social Media Channels - Rebrand and reinitiate use of

- Find an agency/contractor to assist with social media strategy and advertising development
- Either outsource social media long-term, or lean on internal Manager to handle
- Begin posting regularly on channels and running targeted ad campaigns. Minimum posting: 2x per week on each channel (Facebook, Instagram are most important)

3. Establish and Launch Content Strategy

Establish ed cal and begin rolling out integrated content strategy:
1. 2-3 emails to subscribers each month (not a "Newsletter" - News, Events, Deals)
2. 1 new blog/itinerary a month
    a. Pull in locals' stories, writing, anything as much as possible
3. Video and photo content to align with blog/itinerary
4. Leverage story bank created in Year 1

4. Create system to keep county aligned and each region working & communicating together

- Seasonally or Quarterly - send out a questionnaire to each partner asking what is happening in their town, business, restaurant, lodging property or organization
- Two times per year - host half-day tourism summit, invite all lodging, recreation, etc.

- ○ Give people time to talk about what they have upcoming
- ○ Share upcoming destination initiatives and messaging
- ○ Review crisis plans and other key information
- Story Bank - Story Idea Submissions
  - ○ Put this out to the community too
  - ○ Keep in a long-running document
  - ○ Create ed cal for content

5. Connect with and leverage greater tourism entities

Plumas County has the advantage of entering a tourism market with larger tourism entities that can help amplify the message and spread the word. Following brand launch and initial campaign go-live, the destination should make contact with two entities specifically:

1. **Visit California** - make connection, attend conferences and regional meetings, submit content on quarterly/seasonal basis (content submission here)
2. **Shasta Cascade** - Connect and coordinate on relevant campaigns, themes and initiatives (more info here)

Year at a Glance: Schedule of Projects and Tactics

Q1 (Jul - Sep '22)	● Asset (photo/visual/graphics) collection and creation, cont'd ● Finish website and push live
Q2 (Oct - Dec '22)	● Asset (photo/visual/graphics) collection and creation, cont'd ● Develop branded content and print collateral ● Create Introductory Campaign Assets ● Prep for Brand Launch Event ● Host half-day summit with stakeholders
Q3 (Jan - Mar '23)	● Host brand launch community event ● Launch Introductory Campaign ● Social Media and Content Strategy
Q4 (Apr - Jun '23)	● Host half-day summit with stakeholders ● Introductory Campaign ongoing

Year 3: **Expanding Attraction Efforts**

Jul 2023 - Jun 2024

In the third year, Plumas County should expand its content initiatives, and really begin to pump budget into attraction efforts. With the introductory campaign under the DMO's belt, Plumas County will be in an ideal place to begin influencer and PR outreach.

Goals and Objectives for Year 3

Goal: Expand footprint of targeted visitors and drive higher volume to website.

Objectives: what does success look like at the end of Year 3?
- Hosted 2-4 influencers and created authentic assets/stories
- Significant increase in ad performance and traffic driven to website
- Growth in Wedding Segment, specifically

Strategic Initiative Priorities

1. Host Influencer Trips

Once the destination's foundation has been launched and the first couple of campaigns under the DMO's belt, Plumas County should begin to bring creators to the destination. The benefit of working with influencers is two-fold:
1. Creation of authentic, first-person content through the influencers' eyes
   a. Pro tip: Always include contract stipulations that the DMO would like to own/purchase photos and video out of the trip
2. Connection and amplification from influencers' audience base

When selecting influencers, it will be CRITICAL to be selective and find individuals who align with our culture. Plumas County should plan to host 2-4 influencers throughout Year 3, at least one per persona.

Some Influencer Examples for Inspiration:
1. **Rugged Adventurers** - [@hannahbrie](Reno-Tahoe), [@thesamgraves](Sacramento)
2. **Family Memory Builders** - [@thismomisgoingplaces](Sacramento), [@genniferrose_blog](Sacramento)
3. **Weddings** - [@feliciaevents](Reno-Tahoe and Graeagle)

2. Expand Introductory Campaign to Storytelling Campaign

Whether Plumas County launches a new campaign entirely or expands the introductory campaign, in Year 3 you should start to incorporate stories and personal experiences.

Content will be largely determined by campaign theme, but some ways to incorporate local characters include:
- Videos following through their day
- Blogs and Itineraries of their favorite places and experiences
- Social media takeovers
- Spotify playlists curated by character

You should think of local characters as both the talent for your campaign, and influencers. They are real, authentic icons for visitors to latch onto.

3. Launch Greater Paid Media (Amplification Channels)

In Year 3, you should significantly increase your investment in amplification channels. Work with an agency and outsource this, give them clear targets and goals.

Recommended media mix at minimum:

SEM (Search Engine Marketing) - $1000/mo or more
- 80% of travel marketers say SEM is the most effective channel at delivering bookings
- Prioritize keywords that both drive visitors and align with SEO goals

Facebook and Social Media Advertising - $2500/mo or more
- 79% of travel marketers use Facebook Ads
- Most robust targeting opportunities

- Largest partner network - can run ads through any partner publications and Instagram

Paid Partnerships with Content Websites
- Find content producers who accept paid partners for digital targeting via website banners, email features and
- Some examples: The Sacramento Bee, Outdoor Project, sacramento4kids
- Whenever possible, pair paid opportunities with content - blogs, videos or other rich content created on their website

4. Launch Wedding Initiative

In Year 3, Plumas County should launch a more organized effort to break into the Northern Nevada/California wedding industry. A few opportunities in this initiative include:

- Collect photo and video assets of weddings specifically - purchase from photographer
- Create information and collateral - page on website, compilation of four-season wedding experiences
- Launch an initiative to engage with wedding planners in Reno, Sacramento, Bay Area
- Find regional wedding fairs to attend, or host one in Plumas County
- Create official partner network of wedding providers and planners
- Incorporate wedding segment to greater campaign and digitally target to women who are engaged

Year at a Glance: Schedule of Projects and Tactics

Q1 (Jul - Sep '21)	• Minimal promotion during summertime; begin promoting fall experiences in August
Q2 (Oct - Dec '21)	• Expand campaign to launch storytelling aspect • Host fall influencers • Launch greater paid media • Ongoing web maintenance, content strategy

Q3 (Jan - Mar '22)	● Launch wedding initiative ● Host winter/spring influencers
Q4 (Apr - Jun '22)	● Leverage influencer content ● Continue campaign promotion

Following Year 3, Plumas County should evaluate the effectiveness of all programs and marketing trends, and then decide how to proceed into Years 4 and 5.

Research and Measurement

In an effort to continually improve the organization's marketing effectiveness and to build confidence among the TMD members, measurement systems need to be more fully developed. Just as important as measuring marketing, sales, advertising, and content development programs is the need to communicate those measurements to appropriate stakeholders. In considering DMO measurement, it's important to consider three distinct tiers.

- Level 1 – Program Level Measurements; These measurements include those associated with the implementation of specific programs, such as website analytics, email opens, and banner ad clickthroughs.
- Level 2 – ROI Measurements; This measurement is the analysis designed to quantify the specific Return on Investment of the funds spent by the organization.
- Level 3 – Destination Level Measurements; These measurements assess how the destination is performing. They include Occupancy Rate, Average Daily Rate and RevPAR.

These measurements combined and effectively communicated will positively impact the long-term marketing efforts as well as build short term confidence within the lodging industry which funds the TMD.

Goals and Action Steps for Measurement

Goal: To develop a comprehensive measurement system that can be used to make marketing and organizational decisions for the benefit of the destination and local community.

Action Steps - Measurement:
1. Develop and distribute a Feather River measurement dashboard. This dashboard should be comprehensive with all measurements available for the destination.
2. On social media, track the number of likes and platform growth for Facebook, Instagram and other priority channels.
3. Integrate this information into an annual summary of activities.
4. Work with Plumas County to isolate the lodging properties in the TBID and track as much activity as is possible for the region. (if possible, this is where you want to get to.)
   - Total rooms available
   - Total rooms sold
   - Average room rate
   - Total room revenue
   - Total T.O.T. collected

Measurement Research Projects

1. **Develop and implement an online Influence ROI study** to understand the influence of the advertising and awareness in consumers' decision to visit and the return on those invested dollars. Additionally, this study will provide good insight into visitor behaviors, attitude, perceptions, demographics etc.

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft Budget: Plumas County Years 1-3

SOURCES

- [Evok - Inspirational Travel Marketing Campaigns](#) - Travel and Tourism Advertising by the Numbers Infographic