

California Welcome Center Program

Ongoing

Program Description

The 16 California Welcome CentersSM (CWCs) serve to promote their immediate regions as well as the entire state of California, giving travelers a reason to stay longer in a selected locality. All CWCs perform a concierge service for travelers while in California by providing destination, attraction, performing arts and accommodations brochures from throughout the state. CWCs also provide reservation services, Internet access, regional and California merchandise, attraction ticket sales and plasma screen advertising.

Target Audience

Visitors to California, particularly drivers.

Objectives & Reach

In nearly all of the state's regions, there are CWCs providing travelers with information, resources and collateral materials encouraging them to extend their stay in the Golden State. CWC staff serve as personal concierges for all aspects of California travel. CWC objectives include acting as a source for statewide visitor information, encouraging an extended length of stay in California and ensuring there are CWCs to provide service to travelers across the state.

Results & Accomplishments

- **CWC RFP.** The State of California/Office of Tourism released a California Welcome Center Request for Proposal (RFP) on July 1, 2009. A total of six proposals were submitted for consideration to be designated as CWCs. The six proposals received by the Office of Tourism were from Salinas, Mammoth Lakes, El Dorado Hills, San Mateo, Livermore and San Diego East (Alpine).
- **New CWCs.** In December 2009, the Office of Tourism/Welcome Center Program officially designated two new members to the California Welcome Center (CWC) family. The new Welcome Centers are located

in Mammoth Lakes and San Diego East (Alpine), offering an additional avenue to assist travelers/visitors from all over the world.

- **CWC Marketing Video.** In September 2009, Leslee Gaul created a video to further promote the CWCs. The video provides a snapshot of the wonderful concierge services offered by the Welcome Centers.
- **Return on Investment (ROI).** At the CWC Managers Meeting on September 30, 2009, Chris Cordova, a well-known engagement speaker who has numerous years of experience with welcome centers, surveys and ROI, provided a presentation on ROI. Chris expressed the importance of CWCs stepping outside the box when operating their centers. During his presentation, he also emphasized how essential visitor feedback and survey information are to running a successful welcome center, as well as CWC sponsors and funding partners. Key points were shared on how to turn important visitor survey information into substantial statistical ROI data to affirm the necessity of CWCs to both the travelers and their sponsors.
- **Web Site Upgrade.** The official new CWC Web site was launched on October 1, 2009. Enhancements have been added to the Web site to better serve travelers with planning their vacation trips. In addition, the international “i” icon for visitor information has also been added to Web site to further help identify Welcome Centers as a place where visitor can helpful information while traveling.
- **Facebook Page.** In December 2009, a Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/ VisitCWC](http://www.facebook.com/VisitCWC)) was created for the CWCs. The purpose of the page is to share a brief story about the individual CWCs and provide additional information to help promote CWCs and their regions. The page will also provide further exposure and marketing both through the CWC page as well as linkage from the visitcalifornia.com page.
- CWCs continue to use the strategic plan developed by CTTC to help guide the program’s efforts throughout the year.
- Monthly conference calls with CWC managers are conducted to keep everyone informed and engaged.
- CTTC’s industry newsletter, *Insights Online*, features a monthly column with information on individual CWCs’ regional news.

- The Online Toolbox, which is available via Sharepoint, continues to serve as a vital tool for providing updates, such as calendar events and announcements; team discussions; and promoting opportunities for managers and other staff to provide feedback on a particular project and/or issue. The Online Toolbox is a key and essential resource to ensure that the lines of communication are always open among CWC Managers and other staff.

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The Mammoth Lakes CWC will help to better serve visitors from all over the world.



Division of Tourism's Sophia Thompson (left) and Cris McLucas (right), with Chris Cordova.



CTTC's Dan Mishell (left) and Jonelle Tannahill with Cordova.