



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Official County Tourism Groups Unite As Visit Mendocino County, Inc.
Lodging and Promotional Alliance Combine Resources To Serve Visitors**

MENDOCINO COUNTY, Calif. – (June 9, 2009) – Starting July 1, when visitors call 866-GoMendo looking for County tourism information, they will hear a friendly voice say “Visit Mendocino, how can I guide you today?” Mendocino County Lodging Association (MCLA) and the Promotional Alliance (MCPA) have now officially combined resources to serve visitors. This centralized organization will now drive the overall County tourism marketing campaign and provide visitors with information on County activities, lodging, wine, events, food, hiking, shopping and more.

“Our new organization, called Visit Mendocino County, Inc., (VMC) is truly the positive evolution of travel and tourism in Mendocino County,” said Scott Schneider, President and CEO of VMC. “A comprehensive travel research study shows that both organizations have established a good foundation/partnership. This study confirmed that combining resources will improve efficiency, providing even better visitor resources---ultimately improving the already strong return on investment.” Schneider led this consolidation, and until July 1 is the board chairman of the Promotional Alliance and the Executive Director of the Lodging Association.

He added, “We are also happy to report that we now have an approved, comprehensive marketing plan. This is the first time in recent history that we have had such an ambitious program that clearly outlines all of our goals and strategies.”

Over the past three years, the organizations have worked on programs that drive visitors to the County. This regional, national and international campaign has generated a 17:1 return on investment. Currently, Tourism efforts generate more than \$592 in tax relief per household. This accounts for more than \$7.6 million in local taxes and 5,300 jobs. By combining efforts, the new campaign is slated to produce more than 15,000 visitors spending more than \$1,311 per visit.

“This consolidation is another positive maturation of Mendocino County’s travel and tourism,” said Steve Dunicliff, County Executive Office Analyst.

The Visit Mendocino County team will function as the official Tourism Bureau, and is focused on growing visitors in order to increase the economic impact of travel in the County. From visitor guides to the website to working with members and businesses, the Visit Mendocino County team will direct and implement the entire campaign.

“Visit Mendocino County is a streamlined team dedicated to sharing our County's attractions with the traveling public.” said Hal Wagenet, Chair of VMC, Inc. “I have had the honor being a County Supervisor and working with dozens of groups and committees The VMC structure works brilliantly. Not only does it focus the board and team members, but it insulates our hard-working staff from political storms, encourages positive ideas, and lets them get on with the big job of serving visitors and members.”

The new Visit Mendocino County brand and logo is already starting to appear in marketing materials, advertising and more. By January of 2010, the website GoMendo.com will re-launch, along with a social media campaign, and even updated visitor’s centers.

-more-

Visit Mendocino County, Inc., page 2 of 2

“While surrounding areas are 10 to 20 percent down, Mendocino County is only four percent down from January through March 2008 versus 2009,” said Jan Rodriguez, President, Mendocino County Lodging Association. “This proves our promotional efforts work, and this new structure will enable us to raise the bar even further, which benefits everyone. We are truly excited about the present and the future of tourism in our County.

A quarterly review by MCPA and MCPA will take place to ensure relevancy and effectiveness of the annual plan. Visit Mendocino County, Inc. will consist of 10 individuals – 5 from the MCLA Board and 5 from the MCPA Board. Members of MCLA’s Executive Committee will serve on the committee as well as one other appointed Board Member. MCPA will have 2 members representing the wine industry, one representing the art industry, one representing the Chambers, and one member-at-large to be appointed by the MCPA Board. The membership will mean quality individuals with experience in the promotion of our County will be making promotional decisions.

To serve both inland and coastal areas of this geographically large and diverse County, Visit Mendocino County will maintain offices in Ukiah and Fort Bragg.

For more information on Mendocino County, call 866-466-3636 (866-GoMendo), or visit www.gomendo.com.

#

Media Contact: Mark Sejvar, HypeHouse, Inc., 415-788-4114, mark@hypehouse.com