



Annual Report

A Year in Realignment

Big Bear Lake Resort Association

DBA: **Visit Big Bear**

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Submitted to the City of Big Bear Lake
August 13, 2025

bigbear.com

Executive Summary

The fiscal year 2024–2025 was a period of **transition and strategic realignment for Visit Big Bear.**

While revenue fell short of budget, the primary causes were **staff restructuring and venue challenges** that impacted program delivery. The reorganization of the **Visit Big Bear team**, led by the Board of Directors and CEO, modernized the team structure to better align with updated marketing priorities. Though changes to *long-term staffing* naturally cause *short-term disruption*, they ultimately improved morale, increased efficiency, and **positioned the organization for long-term success.**

One key setback was the inability to secure a suitable venue for the *Holiday Light Display*, leading to the postponement of this anticipated high-impact winter activation. This, combined with the transitional period for new staff, impacted seasonal revenue generation. Despite these hurdles, **Visit Big Bear** maintained momentum through **focused investment in its most controllable and measurable initiatives.**

Major achievements this fiscal year include:

- Marketing and PR gains
- Event-driven economic impact
- Visitor services excellence
- Expanded responsible tourism programs
- Responsible financial stewardship

Looking ahead, **Visit Big Bear** will continue refining its *cost-effective marketing model*, leveraging cultural and high impact sporting events to grow shoulder seasons, and further strengthening its position as a **resilient, four-season mountain destination.**

Visit Big Bear responsibly leaned on *reserve funds*, as designed, to maintain core operations, deliver visitor services, and protect the destination’s momentum. Simultaneously, the organization undertook a major shift in its marketing strategy: **pivoting away from high-cost, upper-funnel paid media toward a more resilient model focused on organic channels, owned content, and user-generated storytelling.** This new approach **prioritizes authentic, lower-funnel tactics that drive direct conversions, strengthen the destination’s digital footprint, and extend the ROI of every dollar invested.**

Despite these headwinds, **Visit Big Bear** delivered strong outcomes. Our owned digital channels, including **BigBear.com**, **generated record organic reach and direct booking revenue** – demonstrating the effectiveness of investing in our most controllable marketing assets.

As we move forward, our focus remains clear: **to restore reserve levels, continue to refine our cost-effective marketing model, and continue strengthening Big Bear’s position as a resilient, four-season mountain destination through event promotion.**

Respectfully,
Travis Scott, CEO



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Marketing – ROI Delivered

Visit Big Bear’s marketing and events strategy in FY 2024–2025 **prioritized measurable results**, moving from broad awareness to lower funnel conversion and direct revenue. Total marketing program expenditures reached **\$2,336,476.98** according to the [Treasurer’s Report](#) and were strategically used to strengthen bigbear.com as the anchor for trip planning and direct booking. The [Website ROI Study](#) shows that **42,499 incremental trips**, a **5.2% increase year over year**, were driven by the site, generating **\$49.8 million** in direct economic impact with a healthy **27.9% increase in length of stay** and **spend per day of 8.8%**.

Trips Generated		2024
Incremental trips generated by the website		42,499
Average length of stay (on incremental trips)		2.7 nights
Total visitor spending per day (on incremental trips)		\$394.65
Total visitor spending on incremental trips		\$45,844,246
Trips Extended		
Incremental visitor days spent on trip extended by the website’s influence		10,231
Total visitor spending on trip days extended by the website’s influence		\$4,037,740
Total Return on Investment		
Total economic impact/ROI of the website		\$49,881,986
Total economic impact/ROI per unique visitor		\$96.88

Direct booking revenue through the site **grew 314%** year over year from **\$235,984 to \$978,182**, creating an average of \$146,727 in OTA fee savings for local lodging partners over bookings through other online booking platforms. This outcome demonstrates that by shifting spending from broad awareness to focused conversion, **Visit Big Bear delivered measurable, trackable value for members and local business.**

Website Booking Engine	Transactions	Revenue	OTA Fee Savings (avg)
Percent change YOY	284%	314.51%	76%
2024-2025	1606	\$978,182.54	\$146,727.38
2023-2024	418	\$235,984.64	\$35,397.70



Visit Big Bear Annual Treasurer’s Report
 Fiscal Year 2024-2025
 Prepared by Nick Lanza, Treasurer

Overview

The fiscal year 2024-2025 was marked by unexpected operational challenges that tested the resilience of Visit Big Bear and our community partners. Despite careful planning and responsible stewardship, our financial performance was significantly impacted by the three-week Lake Fire closure, an unusually late-arriving snow season, and the loss of anticipated revenue from the canceled Christmas Light Village event.

While snow arriving after the traditional peak winter period is rare for our destination, this year’s delayed snow pushed critical overnight stays and visitor spending outside the prime holiday window, affecting both our lodging partners and THED collections. Despite these challenges, we continued to deliver core programs, community support, and strong recovery marketing campaigns—relying on our reserves, as intended, to bridge shortfalls between disbursements.

Revenue Performance

Total income for the year reached \$5,829,670.61. Led by THED lodging and mountain payments totaling \$3.49 million. Other income streams included:

- Interest Earned: \$174,647.79
- Partnership Revenue: \$51,253.06
- Visitor Center Revenue: \$53,751.54
- Events Revenue: \$113,008.58

A loss of \$54,720.68 in Marketing Channel Revenue offset a portion of this income.

Expenditures


Total annual expenses totaled \$6,567,885.51, invested in destination operations, marketing, PR, visitor services, and direct event support. Key spending areas included:

- Admin & Operations: \$532,163.92
- Events & Community Grants: \$2,016,464.57 to support major events like Tough Mudder, Spartan Race, Polar Plunge, FISHin’ for \$50K, and local cultural programming.

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 30001 Big Bear Blvd, Big Bear Lake, CA

CONNECT WITH US
 @visitbigbear @visitbigbear

Treasurer’s Report



**Visit Big Bear
 2024 Website User & Conversion
 Study**

Website ROI Study

PUBLIC RELATIONS delivered exceptional returns.

A total PR investment of \$126,872.31 supported a strategic shift from *Bluebird’s* seasonal outdoor high adrenaline sports narrative to *Koli Communications’* broader lifestyle, local culture, wellness, and hidden gems storytelling. This evolution produced 3,489 placements, 45.5 billion impressions, and an earned media value of \$477.7 million, along with 10 curated media visits by top-tier journalists.

PR	Blue Bird 4/24 - 10/24	Koli 11/24 - 3/25	Total FY 24-25	Total FY 23-24	YOY Change
Placements	666	2823	3489	467	3022
Impressions	3,378,107,886	42,174,411,768	45,552,519,654	9,633,278,890	35,919,240,764
Advertising Equivalency	\$46,218,416	\$431,505,055	\$477,723,471 (not tracked in FY)		-
Media Visits	4	6	10	17	-7

A key component of the updated *marketing and PR Strategy was brand storytelling that functions like an influencer campaign*. The team produced more authentic, in-house video and short-form content, supported by cross-trained staff in drone work and photography, maximizing value and speed to market. This content, implemented across social and organic channels over time, *helped raise engagement rates by 18% and session time by 16% year over year*.

The team further strengthened ROI by adding retargeting, weather-based ad triggers, regional travel partnerships, radio in key markets, and micro-influencer campaigns. This integrated, conversion-focused approach *maximized lower funnel performance while managing acquisition costs and decreasing the dependence on paid awareness clicks*.

To quantify these results, **Visit Big Bear** invested in:

- ✦ **Future Partners Web Survey (\$24,500)** – website efficacy and conversion tracking
- ✦ **Placer.Ai (\$26,250)** – location insights and visitor demographic data
- ✦ **Destination.Ai (\$9,000) with Predict HQ (no extra cost)** – visitor sentiment, trend forecasting, and event economic impact
- ✦ **AgilityPR Tracker (\$1,333.33)** – earned media/PR tracking

LOOKING FORWARD →

The launch of the **Visit Big Bear Film Office, allocated \$150,000** (budget adjustment approved at the July 2025 Board Meeting), will amplify shoulder season growth opportunities and new content partnerships. This initiative is designed to position Big Bear Lake as a **premier destination for filming motion picture and television productions**.

Big Bear has deep historical ties to the entertainment industry, and the *Film Office* will actively market to **location managers and decision-makers**, highlighting the destination’s proximity – a short scenic drive – from Los Angeles, the hub of film and TV production. This accessibility allows for ease of planning and execution for industry partners, while **showcasing Big Bear’s unique landscapes and venues**.

The initiative directly supports our arts & culture strategy by **extending our reach into the Los Angeles arts scene**. We anticipate an **October 2025 launch** once a Film Commissioner is selected through the RFP process.

Daily booking engine monitoring, SEO work, and programmatic improvements will continue to maximize bigbear.com’s value as the core marketing asset for the destination.

Visitor Services – Guests Served & Expanded Impact

In FY 2024–2025, the **Visit Big Bear Visitor Center** welcomed **52,232 guests**, demonstrating its continued role as the communities’ *front line for guest care, local business support, and destination stewardship*.

While the counts remained **steady** YOY we can note September and October saw reduced visitor count and **Visit Big Bear** attributes that change with the **Line Fire**. The Visitor Center expended \$471,370.23 to maintain **high standards in WALK-IN service, PHONE support, and LIVE CHAT interactions with visitors – all key touchpoints for extending overnight stays and increasing guest satisfaction**.

Visitor Center Counts	2023-24	2024-25	YOY Change (%)
April	2967	2742	-7.58
May	3279	3518	7.29
June	3781	4689	24.01
July	6917	6496	-6.09
August	4708	5224	10.96
Sept	4539	2501	-44.90
Oct	4622	3985	-13.78
Nov	3767	4198	11.44
Dec	4865	6157	26.56
Jan	3820	3533	-7.51
Feb	3631	3614	-0.47
Mar	3126	3833	22.62
Total	50022	50476	0.91

A major milestone this year was deploying **three existing branded digital kiosks**: one at **Cross-Border Express** and two at the **Ontario Airport** baggage claim area. These kiosks mirror bigbear.com and add to our organic engagement analytics by bringing *destination messaging directly to travelers at key points of entry* – an effort that had been in the works for several years and was fully implemented in this reporting cycle.

Beyond *in-person visitor engagement*, the Visitor Services team broadened its impact by **cross-training staff to support marketing, events, and member & partner services**. This strategic shift expanded team capabilities to include videography, drone operations, photography, website updates, membership outreach, and other vital back-office tasks – *increasing organizational efficiency without adding new positions*.

A highlight this year was the **revival of the Scarecrow Competition**, a community-facing contest that encouraged a total of **34 residents and local businesses** to decorate their storefronts or homes with creative displays. **803 visitors and locals voted for winners**, driving *local pride* along with **visitor and community engagement**, while giving visitors one more ‘thing to do’ while in-destination. *This initiative was part of the broader “Back to Big Bear” campaign to restore momentum after the Line Fire*.





The role of **VISITOR SERVICES** and **MEMBER & PARTNER RELATIONS** are a key role of **Visit Big Bear**, supporting our visitors *in-destination* extends our commitment as a destination to support the visitor in a **wholistic** approach from the first **visitor touchpoint** (either through our deployed campaigns or bigbear.com) to **time of departure**, **Visit Big Bear** seeks to educate and guide our visitors.

This not only helps the visitor make travel decisions that work for them, it also allows **Visit Big Bear the opportunity to ensure that our visitors receive education and information on responsibly visiting our destination.**

The addition of a **Member & Partner Manager** in the reporting period has allowed the organization the ability to not only **develop new programs that support membership through data sharing**, by creating **specialty campaigns which also highlight the offerings our members and partners are showcasing.**

The team also developed an **internal communications program** that allows **reciprocal communication** between **Visit Big Bear** and our Members & Partners, this also includes quarterly round-table meetings where the VBB team shares out current data, state of tourism reports and campaign updates. This platform also allows the tourism community the opportunity to ask questions of the **VBB** team.

As the program moves forward we are seeing **greater community engagement.** This also allows the **VBB** team the opportunity to understand the needs of the tourism community giving the organization the ability to **adapt to the current needs of our members & partners.**

LOOKING FORWARD

The FY 2025-26 budget allocates **\$425,485.90**, a reduction of 3% for Visitor Services operations, as documented in the approved **2025-2026 Budget.**

The Visitor Center team will continue to deliver premium guest service IN-PERSON, by PHONE, and via LIVE CHAT.

In partnership with the Member & Partner Manager and with support from the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Experience Industry Management program, **Visit Big Bear** will develop a dedicated Big Bear Lake Guest Service community training program – **ensuring that frontline hospitality standards meet the high expectations of both visitors and the local community.**



Events – Impact & Future Growth

In FY 2024–2025, **Visit Big Bear** strategically invested strategically in a balanced portfolio of **15 major events** that delivered a combined economic impact of **\$5,895,464.63 for the local economy**, as outlined in the [Event Economic Impact Report](#). *These events generated meaningful overnight stays and visitor spending, complementing the incremental trips driven by the website and marketing/PR campaigns.*

Event	Month	Days	Category	Impact	Attendance	Predicted Spending Total	Predicted Spending Hospitality	Hosp %	Food And Beverage	Food %	Spending Other	Other %	Notes
Spartan Race	May	2	Sports	High	10,000	\$385,000	\$119,350	31%	\$150,150	39%	\$115,500	30%	
Big Bear Grill & Chill Craft Beer & Food Festival	May	2	Festivals	High	6,900	\$232,320	\$51,110	22%	\$102,220	44%	\$78,988	34%	
Fishing for 50K	June	2	Sports	Medium	1,200	\$46,197	\$14,321	31%	\$18,017	39%	\$13,859	30%	
Big Bear Lake Village Wine Walk	June	1	Expos	Medium	1,000	\$33,670	\$7,407	22%	\$14,814	44%	\$11,447	34%	
Holcomb Valley Trail Run	June	1	Sports	Low	686	\$26,411	\$8,187	31%	\$10,300	39%	\$7,923	30%	
Highlander Adventure	June	4	Sports	Low	450	\$17,325	\$5,370	31%	\$6,756	39%	\$5,197	30%	
4th of July Festival & Fireworks	July	3	Festivals	High	80,000	\$2,693,600	\$835,016	31%	\$1,508,416	56%	\$350,168	13%	
Puptopia	July	2	Festivals	Medium	1,900	\$63,973	\$14,074	22%	\$28,148	44%	\$21,750	34%	
Monster Energy Pro Downhill	July/Aug	2	Sports	High	4,600	\$177,092	\$54,898	31%	\$69,066	39%	\$53,127	30%	
Swim Lakefest	August	2	Sports	Medium	2,810	\$94,612	\$14,191	15%	\$56,767	60%	\$23,653	25%	
Tour de Big Bear	August	1	Sports	Medium	1,600	\$53,872	\$16,700	31%	\$21,010	39%	\$16,161	30%	
Drone Show - Boat Parade Labor Day	August	1	Festivals	High	51,400	\$1,730,638	\$380,740	22%	\$761,480	44%	\$588,416	34%	
Big Bear Fun Run/Car Show	August	3	Festivals	High	22,000	\$1,407,759	\$212,469	15%	\$848,391	60%	\$346,899	25%	Not Counted
Grizzly Off-Road	September	1	Sports	Low	450	\$17,325	\$5,370	31%	\$6,756	39%	\$5,197	30%	
Tough Mudder	September	1	Sports	High	6,000	\$231,000	\$71,610	31%	\$90,090	39%	\$69,300	30%	Not Counted
Motocross Grand Prix	September	2	Sports	High	3,700	\$142,450	\$44,159	31%	\$55,555	39%	\$42,735	30%	Not Counted
Kodiak Ultra Marathons by UTMB	October	2	Sports	High	4,000	\$289,758	\$72,432	25%	\$154,252	53%	\$63,072	22%	
Big Bear Lake Village Wine Walk	October	1	Expos	Medium	1,000	\$33,670	\$7,407	21%	\$14,814	44%	\$11,447	34%	
Theatre Project	June-Oct												Sample Size too Small
Totals						\$5,895,464	\$1,606,578		\$2,922,971		\$1,365,912		

Data Sources

Predict HQ + Placer.ai + Destination.ai + VBB & Event Sponsors





When complimented by incremental travelers influenced by bigbear.com, this incremental and event mix demonstrates the importance of **pairing high-visibility events with strong digital marketing to maximize total ROI – a finding supported by both the [Website ROI Study](#) and [Event Economic Impact Report](#).**

The **Big Bear Theatre Project** added significant cultural depth to this year's event offerings. With four full-scale productions at the Performing Arts Center and two supporting shows at Sessions Retreat & Hotel, the **Theatre Project generated \$113,400 in ticket sales.** The organization supported the Theatre Project with a \$40,000 loan rather than a grant, ensuring accountability and future payback to offer further TBID support to another organization wishing to develop a visitor-facing event.

The 2024-2025 investment in events, totaling \$2,016,464.57, was carefully aligned with the goals outlined in the BBLTBID Management District Plan. The newly implemented marketing strategy leaned heavily into the events **Visit Big Bear** invested in by focusing on these events in our lower funnel marketing. Spotlighting these events through organic and owned channels bolsters consumer engagement which leads to conversion. **These events continue to build Big Bear's year-round destination brand, driving visitation in shoulder seasons.**

LOOKING FORWARD

The 2025-2026 budget for events is set at \$1,915,170, reinforcing Visit Big Bear's commitment to producing high-value, strategically timed events that support local businesses and community culture.

Looking ahead, the organization is collaborating closely with **Alterra Mountain Company** and other partners to pursue hosting the **XGames League winter games in 2027**, in partnership with Mammoth, official RFPs expected soon. **Visit Big Bear** is also working with community partners and local agencies to position Big Bear Lake as a **training destination for LA28 Olympic teams.**

The **Big Bear International Film Festival** is scheduled for September 24-29, 2025. The Board of Directors approved a **\$225,000 grant** at its May 2025 meeting, followed by a budget augmentation in July 2025. The total expense budget for the festival is **\$541,000**, with sponsorships making up the balance of funding needed to support the event.

This multi-day festival will attract filmmakers, industry media, and visitors **during the fall shoulder season**, strengthening Big Bear's position as a cultural destination and driving national attention to its creative offerings. **By combining screenings, industry panels, and community events, the festival will create a high-value visitor experience while boosting economic impact for local businesses. This is a long-term growth initiative.**

Additionally, discussions are underway with an existing venue operator to bring the **Holiday Light Show** – an investment initiated in FY24-25 – to life in the coming winter season.



Responsible Tourism – Care for Big Bear in Action

CARE FOR BIG BEAR continued to **grow** in FY 2024–2025 as the guiding sustainability and stewardship framework for **Visit Big Bear’s** destination management work. The program expensed **\$188,362.20** in **sustainability, stewardship and education** initiatives that meet the priorities outlined in the [BBLTBID Management District Plan](#).



Key efforts this year included expanding *family-friendly programing* focused on *dark skies adventures and photography, astronomical events, launching nature photography experiences to highlight Big Bear’s natural beauty, and investing in trail development and maintenance projects to support responsible outdoor recreation*. These new actions were layered on top of our ongoing valley-wide **trash cleanup and litter removal efforts**, which have been central to **Care for Big Bear** since its inception.

Care for Big Bear remains at the CORE of **Visit Big Bear’s** destination story and branding strategy. *By telling an authentic story about stewardship, conservation, and community pride, the program has become an essential pillar for building trust with visitors and locals alike.*

LOOKING FORWARD

Visit Big Bear will continue to grow **Care for Big Bear’s** impact by integrating **stewardship messaging** across all visitor touchpoints and seasonal campaigns. The team is exploring dark sky education and programming, trail volunteer programs, and eco-tourism experiences.

These planned efforts are designed to fulfill the [BBLTBID Management District Plan’s](#) requirement for **sustainability as a core responsibility of Big Bear’s destination marketing**.



Financial Accountability – Stewardship in Practice

In FY 2024–2025, **Visit Big Bear** maintained strong fiscal accountability reporting, fulfilling all requirements in the **BBLTBID Management District Plan**. According to the [Treasurer's Report](#), total revenue reached **\$5,829,670.61**, primarily generated through TBID lodging and mountain payments, supported by interest earned, partnership revenue and Visitor Center operations.

Total annual expenditures were **\$6,567,605.51**, reflecting investments in **STRATEGIC MARKETING, PUBLIC RELATIONS, EVENTS, VISITOR SERVICES, AND CARE FOR BIG BEAR**.

Major program investments included:

\$2,336,476.98 for Marketing

\$2,016,464.57 for Events

\$126,872.31 for Public Relations

\$471,370.23 for Visitor Services

\$188,362.20 in Care for Big Bear

The organization closed the fiscal year with a **net operating loss of \$793,142.21**, using reserves responsibly to sustain programs during challenging seasonal disruptions and organizational changes.

Visit Big Bear's final net cash position of **\$4,932,676.25** and stable total assets of **\$6,352,536.02** demonstrate sound stewardship and compliance with industry reserve best practices.

At the time of writing, the organization has engaged with LSL CPA's which is scheduled to perform annual audit services in August 2025. *The annual audit reports will be delivered to the City of Big Bear Lake at the time of acceptance by the Board of Directors.*





Conclusion – Deliverables Met, Outcomes Delivered

Visit Big Bear has fulfilled all major obligations outlined in the MOU and the Management District Plan for FY 2024–2025. Despite the transitional challenges posed by staffing realignment and venue constraints, the organization successfully delivered:

- Robust destination **MARKETING**
- Impactful **EVENTS**
- Resilient **VISITOR SERVICES**
- Strong **STEWARDSHIP** under the *Care for Big Bear* sustainability framework

Marketing and **Public Relations** initiatives pivoted to a more **cost-efficient, conversion-focused model**, with [BigBear.com](https://bigbear.com) delivering record-breaking direct booking revenue and economic impact.

The strategic introduction of the **Big Bear Film Office** – set to launch in October 2025 – will further diversify our marketing reach by:

- Positioning the destination as a **PREMIER FILMING LOCATION**
- Targeting mid-week and shoulder **SEASON GROWTH**
- Strengthening ties with the **LOS ANGELES ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT COMMUNITY**

Our event portfolio produced over \$5.89M in direct economic impact, supported by culturally rich additions like the Big Bear Theatre Project and major forward-looking investments, including:

- **BIG BEAR INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL** (September 24–29, 2025) with a \$541,000 expense budget funded through board-approved grants and sponsorships
- Collaboration with Alterra Mountain Company and Mammoth for the **XGAMES LEAGUE WINTER GAMES (2027)**
- Positioning Big Bear Lake as a training base for **LA28 OLYMPIC TEAMS**

These efforts reinforce our commitment to driving visitation during both peak and shoulder seasons while enhancing Big Bear's profile as a four-season cultural and sporting destination.

From a financial perspective, FY 2024–2025 closed with \$5.83M in revenue and \$6.57M in expenditures, resulting in a draw on reserves to sustain programming during transitional challenges. With a final net cash position of \$4.93M and stable total assets of \$6.35M, **the organization remains in compliance with industry best practices for reserves** and has engaged LSL CPA's for the annual audit to be completed in August 2025.

IN THE YEARS AHEAD, we look forward to expanding the scope of this report to cover an even broader range of programs and initiatives, continuing to **demonstrate our shared commitment to making Big Bear Lake a premier, resilient, four-season destination.**



References

[Future Partners Website ROI Study](#)

[Event Economic Impact Spreadsheet](#)

[2024-2025 Treasurer Report & Financial Statements](#)

[2025-2026 Approved Budget](#)

[BBLTBID Management District Plan 2021-2031](#)

[BBLTBID Memorandum of Understanding](#)

[2025 Big Bear Film Festival Introduction Presentation](#)

[2025 Big Bear Film Festival Second Presentation](#)

[2025 Big Bear Film Festival Budget](#)

[Big Bear Film Office Presentation](#)





We thank the City of Big Bear Lake for its steadfast support – *especially in developing this report format*, which will serve as the foundation for future reporting to both the City and our membership.