



Monterey County Tourism Reaches Record \$3.3 Billion, Marking Full Recovery and New Growth

Jobs and tax revenues climb to all-time highs as industry leaders highlight impact and partnership during California Tourism Month

MONTEREY, Calif., May 7, 2026 – Monterey County’s tourism industry reached a major milestone in 2025, with travel spending climbing to \$3.3 billion—a 4.1% increase over 2024 and surpassing the previous high of more than \$3.2 billion set in 2019, according to the latest economic impact study from Dean Runyan Associates.

The gains reflect more than a rebound—they point to a visitor economy generating tangible benefits for the community. Tourism supported a record of nearly 28,000 jobs, and state and local tax revenues reached a record \$346 million (+6.1%), helping fund essential public services—from infrastructure and public safety to parks and community amenities.

This performance is being shaped by targeted strategies under See Monterey’s Monterey County Tourism 2030 Roadmap (MCT 2030), including high-impact marketing campaigns designed to drive higher-value visitation, expanded group and meetings sales efforts to fill need periods and stewardship initiatives like the “*The Right Path*” program, which encourages responsible travel and protects the destination’s natural assets. Together, these efforts help to balance demand across seasons, increase visitor spend and strengthen long-term sustainability.

“These numbers reflect more than growth—they represent an industry delivering real value to Monterey County,” said Janine Chicourrat, See Monterey board chair and managing director of the Portola Hotel & Spa. “Driven by strong alignment across partners and communities, we’re being intentional about the type of visitation we attract—focusing on managed growth, sustainability and community benefit—and that’s translating into stronger economic returns.”

That alignment is driven in part by the partnership between See Monterey and the Monterey County Hospitality Association (MCHA). While See Monterey leads destination sales and marketing efforts to attract meetings, events and visitors, MCHA

serves as the voice of the hospitality industry—advocating for policies, workforce development and resources that support the people and businesses behind the visitor experience.

“Behind every tourism dollar is a person, whether a room attendant, server, golf professional, event staff member, chef or small business owner, helping create the Monterey County experience,” said Kevin Ellis, board chair for MCHA. “Our industry’s success is built on collaboration between hospitality businesses, community partners and our county and city leaders. Together, we are strengthening an industry that supports local jobs, invests back into our communities and helps Monterey County continue to thrive.”

Together, See Monterey and MCHA are advancing a tourism economy that is collaborative, sustainable and community-focused, ensuring that growth continues to benefit residents while preserving what makes Monterey County unique.

“California Tourism Month is an opportunity to recognize the people behind the numbers,” added Rob O’Keefe, president and CEO of See Monterey. “When we work together—as an industry and as a community—we’re able to deliver meaningful economic impact while continuing to move Monterey County forward.”

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About See Monterey

See Monterey is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the county. See Monterey is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to generate community prosperity and enrich economic vitality for Monterey County through the responsible growth of the tourism economy. In 2025, travel spending in Monterey County was \$3.3 billion, supporting nearly 28,000 jobs and generating \$346 million in state and local tax revenue that directly benefited the community. For more information, visit [SeeMonterey.com](https://www.see-monterey.com) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Monterey County Hospitality Association

The Monterey County Hospitality Association (MCHA) provides a unified voice for nearly 28,000 local hospitality professionals. Since 1975, the nonprofit trade organization has protected the interests of employees through advocacy and strong partnerships with local government, elected officials and community groups. MCHA also leads employee recognition events and expands career opportunities through educational programs

serving all facets of the hospitality industry. MCHA proudly supports the hospitality and tourism businesses that generate more than \$346 million in state and local tax revenues a year, directly benefiting all Monterey County residents. Learn more at www.mcha.net.

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