



TOURISM OUTLOOK REMAINS BRIGHT, DESPITE PANDEMIC'S HIT TO INDUSTRY

Like other California destinations, Oceanside was experiencing record travel industry growth before grinding to a halt in March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to a newly released study by Dean Runyan and Associates, in 2019, Oceanside once again enjoyed an increase in visitors and travel spending, which translated to thousands of tourism related jobs and record local taxes for the City of Oceanside. The study tracked growth over the last ten years and the conclusion was what we, at Visit Oceanside, have known all along— tourism is a powerful economic engine for our City and the local economy.

Although 2020 will be much different, we remain optimistic for our industry's rebound. In fact, several factors make Oceanside well poised for recovery. There's pent up demand for travel and the [American Hotel & Lodging Association](#) (AHLA) expects destinations along California coastlines to be among the first to rebound. Work continues on the flagship [Oceanside Beach Resorts](#), which will add to Oceanside's growing cachet as a vacation destination, while introducing new accommodations, restaurant and recreation options for visitors and locals in early 2021. There's also the resilient spirit of Oceanside's passionate [locals](#) who are eager to rebuild the City's tourism economy.



Destination research is telling us that people still want to travel and, more importantly, need it for their mental health. Every day our Welcome Center fields calls from people looking for vacation options where they can unwind, destress and relax when the time is right.

As restrictions ease, it's expected that we still won't be able to travel far from home. To quench that thirst for travel, we encourage residents to consider staycations. It's likely that many of our hotels, restaurants, museums, recreational amenities and attractions will be enticing locals with specials and programs that make it easy and fun to be a visitor in your own backyard. What's more, by staying local, you can support our local economy and neighborhood businesses that have suffered tremendously during this time.

For now, the 2019 data is a benchmark for our recovery and a motivating example of what we can achieve as a community when we work together. According to the 2019 Dean Runyan study, travel spending in Oceanside in 2019 was \$415 million, representing an 8.5 percent increase from 2018 and nearly double that of 2010. Visitor spending directly supported more than 3,500 jobs in Oceanside with tourism industry employment increasing at an average annual rate of 3.4 percent over the

past decade and employment earnings up 9 percent from 2018.

Visitor spending on lodging generated record high local tax receipts of \$12.8 million. The tax receipts, including TOT and sales tax, help the City of Oceanside support essential city services that residents enjoy including parks, recreation and public safety.

In addition to providing revenue for the City, the study also shows that tourism is important to many of Oceanside's small businesses. Nearly 74 percent of visitor spending goes to businesses other than lodging, with the largest portion of visitor dollars spent in restaurants followed by arts, entertainment and recreation.

As we face these uncertain times, we are motivated by the fact that history tells us we will rebound. When the time is right, Visit Oceanside will be ready to support our industry so that we can once again thrive as a home away from home for visitors near and far.

Leslee Gaul is CEO of Visit Oceanside, the official destination management organization for the City of Oceanside. For more information about Visit Oceanside, visit www.visit oceanside.org.