

VISIT SUN VALLEY



2024 – 2025 | **ANNUAL REPORT**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



DEAR VALLEY RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, AND STAKEHOLDERS:

Visit Sun Valley's mission is to support the Wood River Valley visitor economy by encouraging travel to Sun Valley, particularly through commercial airline service. Tourism continues to drive nearly two-thirds of our local economy, and a strong airport is essential to our valley. It not only brings visitor dollars into our communities but also provides national and global access for residents - making it possible to build a business, work semi-remotely, and stay connected while living in a place we are all so fortunate to call home.

Visit Sun Valley is primarily funded by a one-half percent Local Option Tax (LOT) on selected tourism-oriented items in the valley. Approximately 75% of this funding comes directly from visitor spending. In 2023, we agreed to reduce our funding in half, from a 1.0% to a 0.5% LOT. We are proud that we have continued to do more with less - reducing headcount, keeping expenses in check, and making strategic, data-driven media decisions. The bulk of our marketing investment is focused on targeted digital channels, complemented by a strong national public relations presence that has generated meaningful word-of-mouth exposure for Sun Valley.

It is also important to note that visitors contribute significantly to overall LOT collections, which help our cities keep property taxes in check. A substantial portion of these funds support essential community services such as fire, police, and Mountain Rides. Visitors typically come to Sun Valley for a week or ten days,

during which time they spend freely and contribute tax revenues that help fund amenities and services enjoyed by residents year-round.

This past year was a strong one for our valley. We benefited from a healthy snowpack, spectacular summer weather, and continued progress on long-awaited road construction projects. Tourism numbers in 2025 were solid and, importantly, realistic and manageable for a community our size.

We remain focused on attracting like-minded visitors who value and respect the natural beauty, arts, culture, and lifestyle that define our valley. Our efforts are concentrated during peak winter ski months as well as the quieter spring and fall seasons, helping to balance quality of life with the need for consistent economic vitality.

Clearly winter has brought less natural snowfall than hoped this year. As a result, visitation over the next few months may trail 2025 levels. Fortunately, Sun Valley's long-term investment in snowmaking has positioned us better than many destinations across the West, and our performance reflects that. Still, this serves as a reminder that we operate in a competitive and ever-changing environment, making consistent and thoughtful marketing more important than ever.

We look forward to another successful summer and fall, and the excitement of hosting the FIS World Cup Finals in March 2026. Through collaboration, careful stewardship, and shared commitment, we remain confident in Sun Valley's ability to thrive economically, culturally, and as a place we are proud to call home.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we work together to ensure a strong and sustainable future for Sun Valley.

Sincerely,

DAVE LUHR

Board Chair | Visit Sun Valley

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This report covers our fiscal year
October 2024 - September 2025.



OUR TEAM

Our team is comprised of a stellar group of core operators, Visitor Center staff, a Board of Directors, an Advisory Committee and outsourced contractors.



VISIT SUN VALLEY CORE TEAM

RAY GADD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



KENDALL KIRKPATRICK
MARKETING & GRANT MANAGER

JESSICA MAYNARD
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

VISIT SUN VALLEY VISITOR CENTER TEAM

**SUE
COSSEY**
MANAGER

**CRUGER
THOMAS**

**JONATHAN
KANE**

**PAUL
BLAIR**

**KENNETH
FLANZ**

VISIT SUN VALLEY BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**DAVE
LUHR**

BOARD CHAIR



**ADELAIDE
SMITH-MASON**

AT-LARGE



**GRETCHEN
GORHAM**

CITY OF KETCHUM
Representative



**MIKE
BURCHMORE**

CITY OF SUN VALLEY
Representative & Treasurer



**CANDICE
PATE**

AT-LARGE & SECRETARY



**JACOB
FREHLING**

EMERGING
DEMOGRAPHIC



**PETE
SONNTAG**

SUN VALLEY RESORT
Representative

VISIT SUN VALLEY ADVISORY COMMITTEE



VISIT SUN VALLEY CONTRACTORS

VIDEO PRODUCTION

Stellar Media

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Cara Shumate & Kate Elgee

MEDIA BUYING & WEB DEVELOPMENT

Bridge Business Development

PR Fahlgren Mortine

SEO RightNow Communications

CPA Sage Bookkeeping

PAYROLL & HR Ataraxis

WRITERS Hayden Seder

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Lodging Association
Outdoor Recreation Group
Business Working Group
5B Can Working Group
Ketchum Business Advisory Coalition
Fly Sun Valley Alliance Board
Sun Valley Economic Development Board
Central Idaho Dark Sky Board

WHO WE ARE

We're a local nonprofit tourism organization that focuses on visitor awareness, attraction, and education to the greater Sun Valley area. We emphasize opportunity periods as well as getting visitors to utilize the local air service.

PURPOSE

To create a better life for our mountain community and the experience of visitors through sustainable tourism with the strategy of right place, right message, right time.

MISSION

Visit Sun Valley is committed to enriching the lives of our mountain community through a balanced level of tourism that focuses on economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and the preservation of the Valley's vibrant character.

VISION

Sun Valley will be recognized as a leader in mountain resort lifestyle through sports, recreation, arts, and culture.

FOCUS

Efforts will continue to look for the next generation of visitors to foster sustainable tourism. Managing visitor expectation and educating them of the mountain culture before and during their trips will be a top priority.



HOW WE DIFFER

	ORGANIZATION	PRIMARY FOCUS	GEOGRAPHIC REACH	HOW WE PARTNER
▶	VISIT SUN VALLEY	Drive visitation, raise awareness	From Craters of the Moon to the Stoney Basin	We collaborate with many local organizations to increase visitation
▶	WOOD RIVER VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	Local business promotion & events	Wood River Valley	We work alongside The Wood River Valley Chamber of Commerce to divide and conquer.
▶	SUN VALLEY COMPANY	Resort operations, mountain, lodging, recreation experiences	Sun Valley Resort & Bald Mountain	Though we have "Sun Valley" in our name, we are a separate entity. We work closely together, but our reach extends beyond the resort.
▶	FLY SUN VALLEY ALLIANCE	Retaining and expanding commercial air service to the Wood River Valley	Wood River Valley air access	They secure flights; we drive demand to fill those seats and sustain airline service.

THE NUMBERS

A quick look at our funding sources and total budget over the years, as well as revenue vs. expenses for fiscal year 2025.



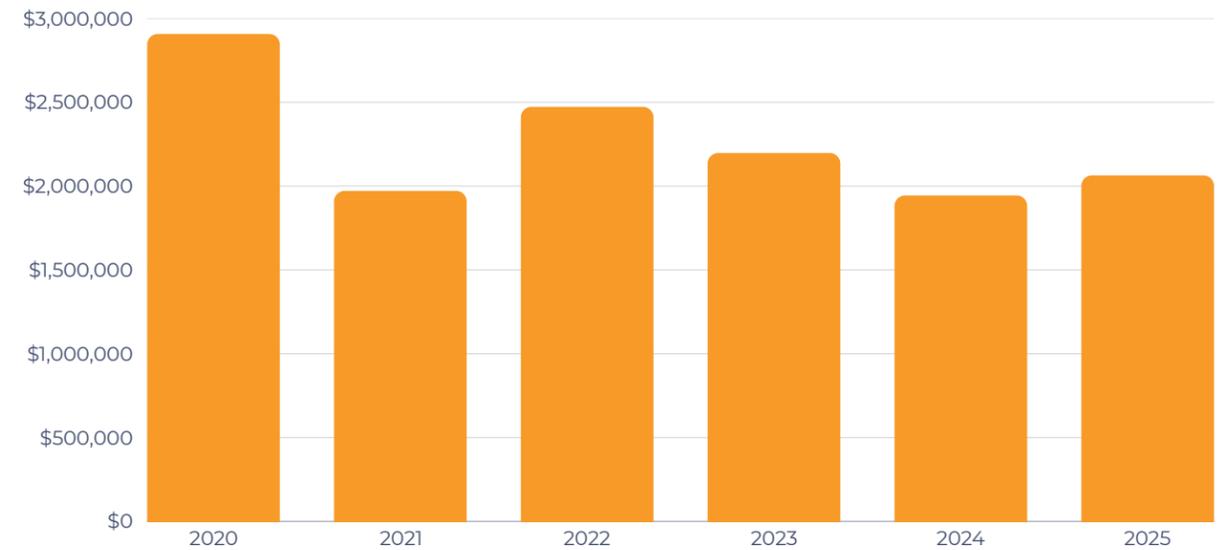
FUNDING OVER TIME

Funding sources come from a 0.5% Local Option Tax for Air Service which is applied for from the Sun Valley Air Service Board as well as from the Idaho Travel Council which collects a 2% travel and convention tax and distributes a portion of the funds to seven different regions through their grant application process.

We have a small amount of income from membership dues via businesses that do not charge for local option taxes as well as interest income.

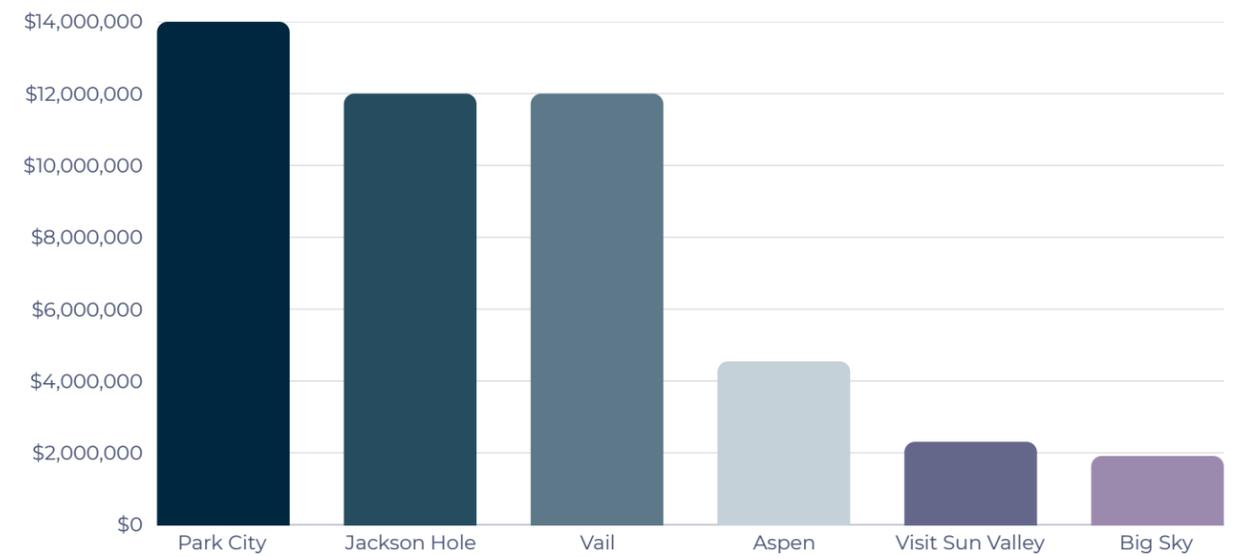


VISIT SUN VALLEY FUNDING OVER TIME



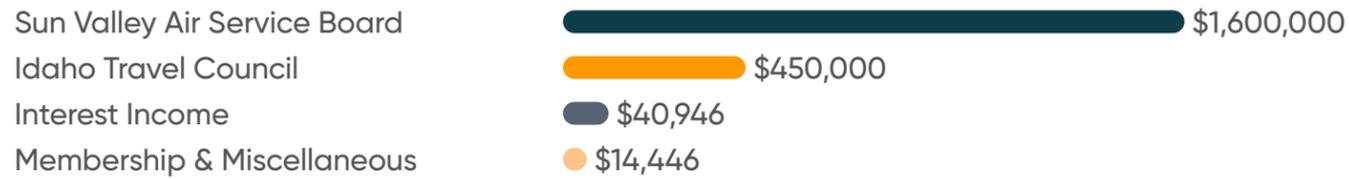
The dip in the 2021 budget reflects the impacts of COVID. The dip in 2024 budget is a result of the 1% for Air Local Option Tax splitting in half to be 0.5% for Air and 0.5% for housing.

VISIT SUN VALLEY FUNDING COMPARED TO OTHER DESTINATIONS



REVENUE VS. EXPENSES

2025 REVENUE



Total Revenue: \$2,105,392

2025 EXPENSES



Total Expenses: \$1,746,029

Total Revenue:	\$2,105,392
- Total Expenses:	\$1,746,029
	\$359,363 surplus

IMPORTANT CONTEXT

For FY25, there were several factors leading to an underspend in our budget that include:

- **Interest Income:** High interest rates brought in significantly more interest income than anticipated.
- **Admin & Overhead:** We had a change of roles and the marketing director role has not been backfilled at this time.
- **Web & Creative Development:** We did not utilize a creative agency with the drawing down of the Stay Sunny campaign. We do have plans to work with an agency in the future. Additionally, we came in well under budget for our video capture plan for the World Cup.
- **Public Relations:** Cost savings were realized through local partnerships and in-kind contributions.
- **Advertising:** With the sunset of the Stay Sunny campaign, we had a budget surplus for our local initiatives. We have greatly reduced this line item for the 2026 fiscal year and reallocated those dollars to visitor outreach.

The remaining balance was rolled into the FY26 budget and reserves.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Uncertainty was the theme for most of the year. Socioeconomic and political factors put pressure on leisure travel, but it wasn't all doom and gloom. We had a great win hosting the Audi F.I.S Ski World Cup Finals and, and we had one of the best summer seasons.



2024/2025 RECAP



WINTER & SPRING

- Winter visitations were challenging to predict from month to month. Last-minute bookings, a mix of snowfall and noteworthy events ultimately brought people to town and delivered strong results for the season.
- We had a robust winter flight schedule with nonstop service from 6 major cities including Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Denver, and Chicago. It was great to have once again the service from Chicago, which proved to be a draw in bringing in new visitors from the Midwest and East to our area.
- The increase in our public relations budget and emphasis on winter paid off, thanks to some great coverage of the Sun Valley area as a result of our collaborative journalist hosting and media missions.
- The Sun Valley Film Festival made the transition from March to December. Offering a smaller scale event in December 2024 and returning to the 5 day festival in 2025. The new time frame positions the SVFF as 'must-stop' destination for the big film award-season contenders and provides attendees with highly anticipated films and award nominated talent showcasing their work in Sun Valley.
- March came with the excitement of the Audi F.I.S Ski World Cup Finals, and it was an incredible event for the Sun Valley area to host. The communities, private sectors, and residents banded together to make it a success.





360° FOR WORLD CUP WEEK

VISITOR CENTER

- Training Sessions with our Visitor Center team to ensure they had as much information surrounding the World Cup & 5850 Fest happenings
- Easy to access printed resources with quick QR codes to scan to cover a variety of user preferences and information.
- We extended our hours at the Visitor Center to ensure ample opportunities to connect with visitors.

WEBSITE

- We consolidated as much information regarding the World Cup week happenings into one streamlined landing page. www.visitsunvalley.com/winter/world-cup.
- Information included the full slate of events, transportation logistics, maps, and visitor details.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- We had local ski racer Haley Cutler take over our Instagram account to provide a behind the scenes look at the happenings.
- We put ad dollars behind our Instagram account to build visibility for the event.

ADVERTISING

- Upon hearing of slower than expected bookings, we activated a series of digital ads.
- We built out and distributed an easy to reference events rack card.
- We put together a :30 spot featuring three seasons of activities that can be found here and had Steve Porino's poetic tone for the voiceover. The ads ran nationally and in select European countries

CONTENT CAPTURE

- We contracted Stellar Media to capture as much of the festivities as possible for future advertising opportunities.

2024/2025 RECAP



SUMMER

- All in all, it was an exceptional summer season. We had the best air service to date, amazing weather with lovely temperatures and minimal smoke, plus a great line-up of events, despite the cancellation of the Sun Valley Tour de Force event in July (due to the sudden loss of their insurance).
- There was a strong demand for group business – such as conferences and other similar organized events – along with weddings.
- While the highway 75 road construction was challenging for commuters in the valley, it ultimately did not deter visitors from showing up and spending.



FALL

- This September we saw the return of the Idaho Governor's Cup, an event that is held in the Sun Valley area every other year. Early bookings painted a very strong September, up 24% as of July, however as we moved closer occupancy was only up 4%, and ended 8% up year over year.
- In addition to the Governor's Cup, we saw strong visitation for Rebecca's Private Idaho, Wagon Days, and Trailing of the Sheep.



TOURISM KPI'S

There are a number of "Tourism Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)" that Visit Sun Valley currently tracks on a regular basis.

The primary metrics followed are lodging occupancy, lodging Average Daily Rate - ADR, airline seat enplanements, and local option tax collections (primarily from the city of Ketchum). Other indicators include traffic counts, web traffic, and social media followers.

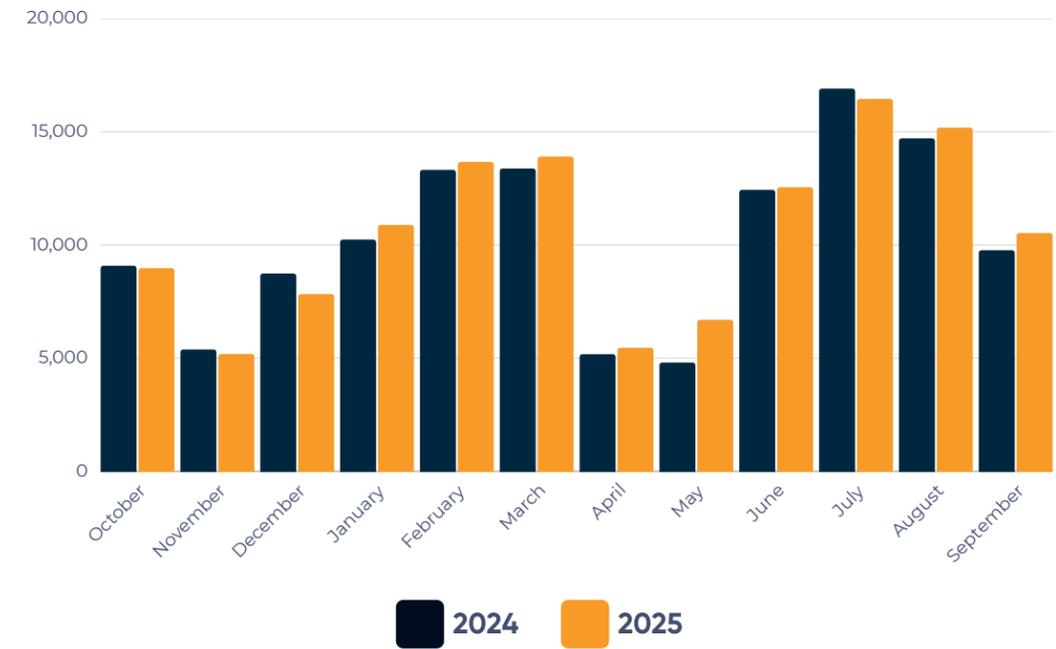
Stats are based on a fiscal year running October – September.

KETCHUM LOCAL OPTION (LOT) TAX



Increased visitation and inflation were the primary factors boosting the collections.

ROOM NIGHTS SOLD



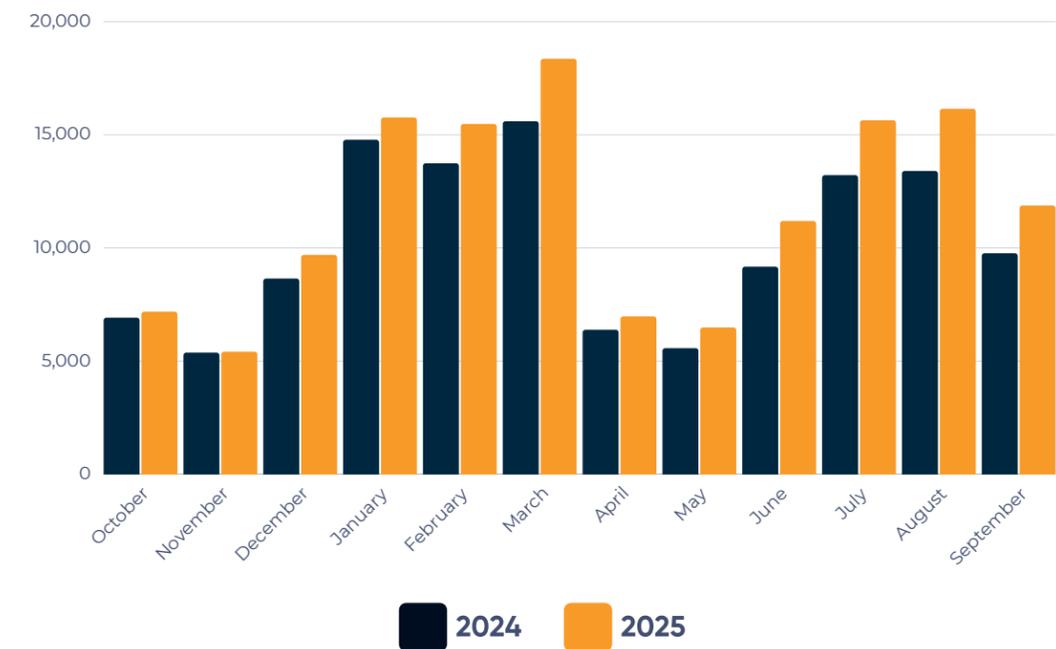
We had strong visitation throughout the year with a slight decline in July due to shifting dates of the Allen & Company Conference.

LODGING AVERAGE DAILY RATE



Average Daily Rates continue to rise giving lodging properties more opportunity for revenue despite any lower occupancy rates.

AIRLINE ENPLANEMENTS



The increase in enplanements comes from additional seats into the Sun Valley and added marketing to help fill those seats.

Stats are based on a fiscal year running October – September.

MARKETING & PR

A look at our top priorities, target markets, target audiences, and partnerships, plus advertising and PR efforts for the fiscal year.



SEASONAL STRATEGY

EMPHASIS ON WINTER & FALL SEASONS

Winter and fall present the most amount of opportunity to fill-in visitation to the Sun Valley area. We have ample capacity on the paid lodging front, within the local businesses, and with the outdoor recreation offerings.



The Ikon & Mountain Collective pass offerings are a great way for us to speak to a broad yet qualified base of skiers and snowboarders.

OPPORTUNITY SEASONS



FALL

mid-September – early November



WINTER

December – mid-April



SUMMER

4th of July

The Allen & Company annual conference shifted its dates, leaving ample opportunity for visitation over that holiday.

OUR TARGET MARKETS



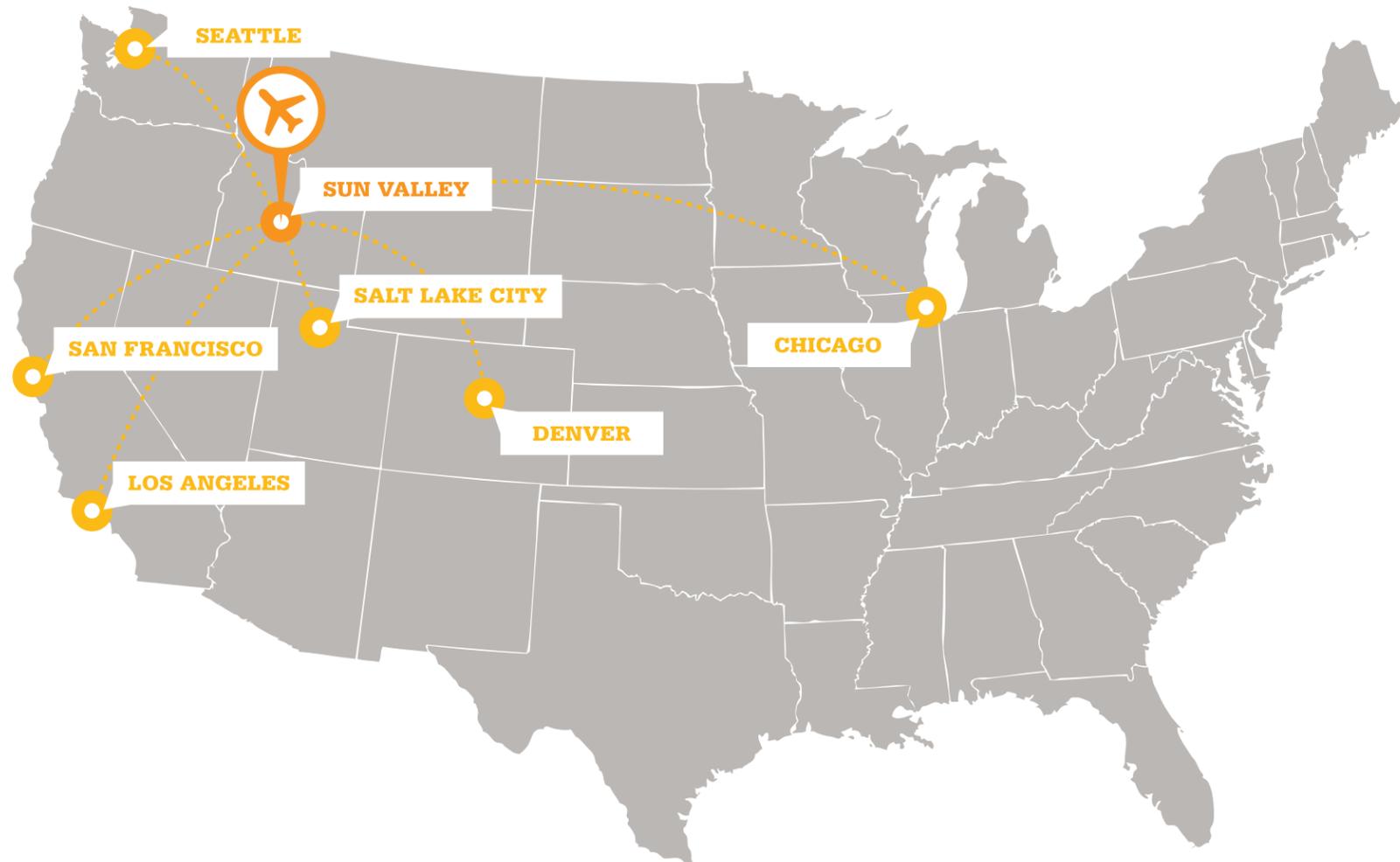
FLIGHT MARKETS

The nonstop flight markets that service the Friedman Memorial Airport (SUN) remain our top priority not only to ensure that the airline's seats are filled but also noting that travelers that get on airplanes have a tendency for a longer length of stay. These cities include:

- Seattle, WA
- San Francisco, CA
- Los Angeles, CA
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Denver, CO
- Chicago, IL

In addition to the nonstop markets, we look at destinations that tap into the existing routes as fly through hubs. Supplemental markets include:

- New York City (greater area), NY
- Boston, MA



DRIVE MARKETS

During shoulder season, we look to a variety of regional drive markets. These include but are not limited to:

- Boise, ID
- Twin Falls, ID
- Salt Lake City, UT

TACTICS

TARGET AUDIENCES



IKON & Mountain Collective
Pass Holders



Avid Activity Participants in our nonstop
flight markets – skiing/snowboarding,
mountain biking, hiking, fly fishing, etc.



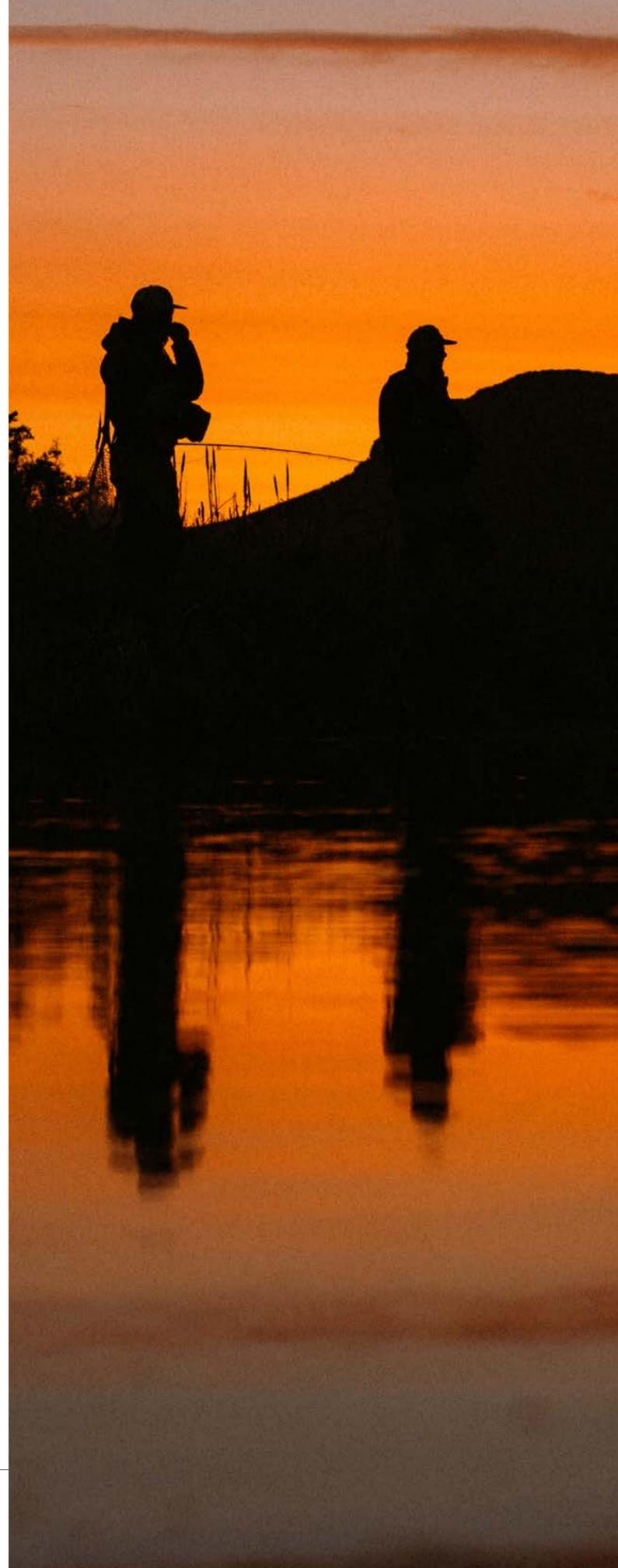
Active families



Second homeowners, friends
& family, repeat visitors



Skewing younger
(30-55 years old)



PARTNERSHIPS

- Mountain Gazette
- WildSam
- Ori
- Expedia
- The Ski Journal
- United Airlines
- Ori Magazine
- Freeskier Magazine
- Brand USA
- The New Fly Fisher

DISPLAY MEDIA

- Google PMAx
- Flight Aware

IN-HOUSE CONTENT

- Social media presence with an emphasis on Instagram
- What We're Made Of, 24hrs in Sun Valley, and other blog content
- Monthly email campaigns

PR

It's a common misconception that stories about Sun Valley emerge entirely organically...

While some do, many are the result of intentional, behind-the-scenes efforts to bring them to life. At Visit Sun Valley, we work closely with local partners to connect with journalists and publications that align with the unique and diverse narratives found throughout the greater Sun Valley area.

Hosting media is more important than ever with the increased usage of AI. Curating unique stories from trusted sources is an integral part of having a presence in AI search queries.

2024/2025 MEDIA HOSTING & MEDIA MISSIONS

- Journalists hosted: 8
- Media missions: Chicago and Denver/Boulder
- We increased our PR budget by 25% compared to the previous year for journalist hosting.
- These dollars also supported destination-based media hosting events (welcome receptions/meet and greets) in key markets as well in-person hosting of journalists in the greater Sun Valley region.

TOP MEDIA MENTIONS

NYT 52 Places to Go in 2025

Forbes World Cup Finals Mark Pivotal Moment For Sun Valley—And U.S. Ski Racing

SKI Everything I Wish I Knew Before Skiing Sun Valley For The First Time

TripAdvisor 6 North American ski towns that even non-skiers should visit

Lonely Planet A first-time guide to Sun Valley, Idaho

Maxim Sun, Snow & Literary History at The Legendary Sun Valley Ski Resort

AFAR 5 Best U.S. Ski Towns with European Charm

Travel + Leisure 10 of the Best Small Towns in the U.S. for a Summer Getaway, According to Travel Experts

James Beard America's Classics: Mountain - Restaurant Award

Travel + Leisure American Airlines Is Making It Easier Than Ever to Get to These Popular Ski Destinations—What to Know

Plus [many more...](#)



VISITOR CENTER

Visit Sun Valley's Visitor Center goals are to enhance the visitor experience, providing trip planning information and helpful resources about the Sun Valley area including business recommendation, activities, attractions, experiences and more.



VISITOR CENTER STATS

BUDGET



*Includes office supplies & expenses, printed brochures, mailing Visitor Guide & other brochures.

Total Expenses: \$78,987

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SUMMER & FALL

- Hiking & biking trails
- Redfish Lake & Stanley area
- Ernest Hemingway
- Fishing
- Gondola

WINTER

- Holiday events
- World Cup Finals information
- Galena Lodge area
- Nordic skiing

ALL SEASONS

- Things to do
- Dining recommendations
- Events, live music & concerts
- Airport transportation: taxis & shuttle information
- Hot springs

TOTAL VISITORS ASSISTED IN PERSON

10,314

These numbers are down 15% in part because visitors are planning their trips further in advance rather than making last-minute plans once they arrive.

TOTAL EMAIL INQUIRIES

216

This number is down 45% in part because visitors are finding the information they need on our website, as well as utilizing our new AI Chatbot feature, reducing the need for email communication.

VIRTUAL ASSISTANT



DIGITAL VISITOR INFORMATION KIOSK

Located at the Friedman Memorial Airport



NEW! VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

"SUNNY" THE AI CHATBOT

On the Visit Sun Valley website

In November 2024, we launched "Sunny", an AI chatbot feature on our website to deliver curated answers to Sun Valley Area questions in an expedited manner.

- Sunny is active 24/7, with most traffic occurring during daytime and early evening across all days of the week. Conversations match our destination's seasonality, around winter (ski season) and summer (events & activities), with quieter volume during shoulder seasons.
- Sunny is helping convert website visits into deeper engagement, assisting with itinerary planning and delivering partner value via direct clicks to businesses and events.



SUNNY STATS NOVEMBER 2024 - SEPTEMBER 2025

2,789 Total Conversations

- 2,535 high-intent conversations
90.9% of total conversations

Top Conversation Topics Breakdown

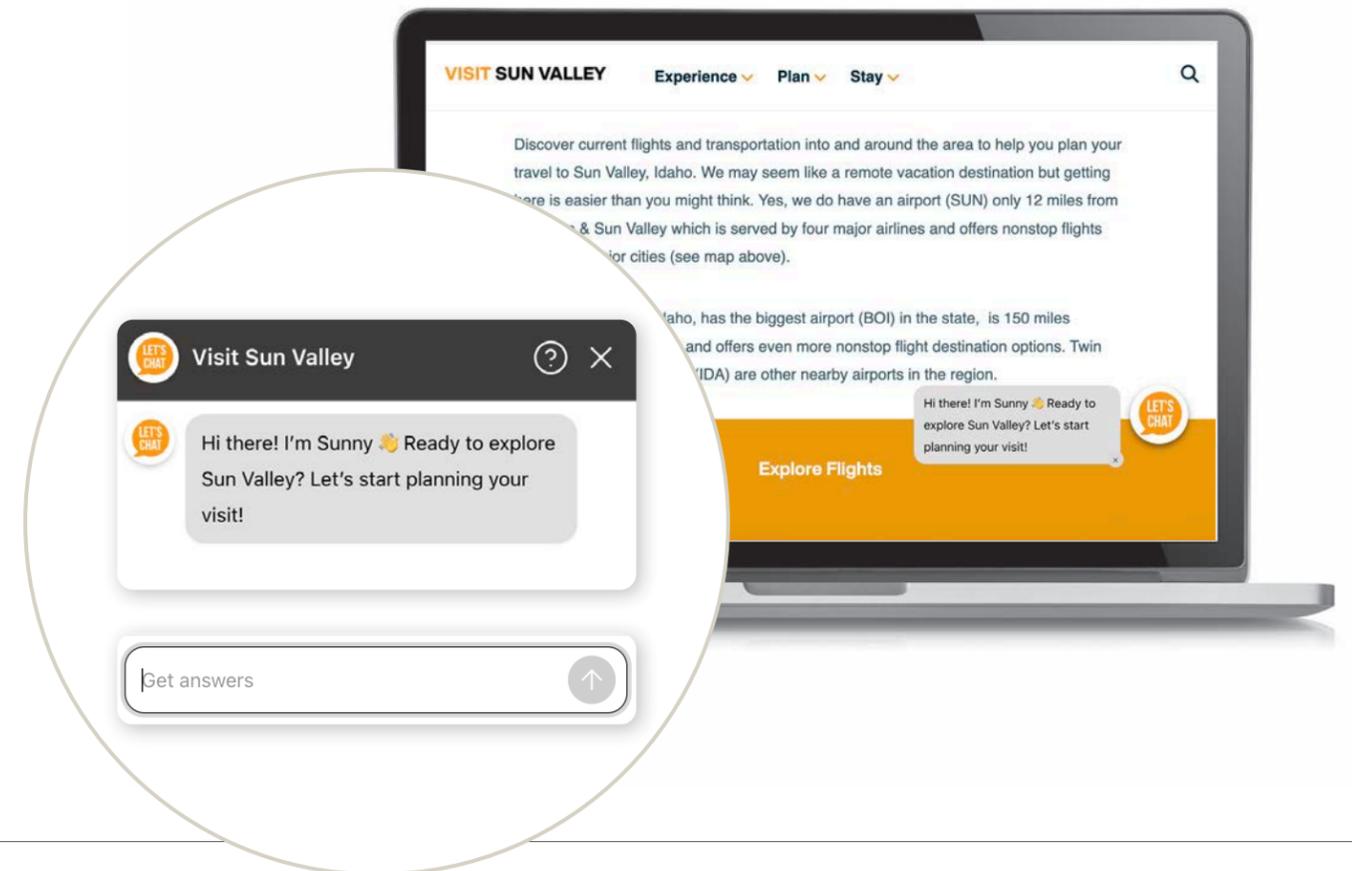
- Events, Concerts & Festivals
880 | 31.6%
- Activities & Outdoors
370 | 13.3%
- Lodging & where to stay
361 | 12.9%
- Transportation, shuttles & parking
239 | 8.6%

Visitors Origins (Top States)

- Idaho 471 | 28.9%
- California 244 | 15%
- Utah 189 | 11.6%
- Washington | 9.1%

981 Documented Link Clicks

- Roughly **three quarters** of conversations include at least one link to a Visit Sun Valley page, but also to Sun Valley Resort and local partners websites.



SUMMARY & KEY TAKE-AWAYS

CONCLUSION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

The past year brought its share of uncertainty for travel nationwide, shaped by shifting economic conditions and changing visitor behavior. Even so, Sun Valley continued to stand out as a destination defined by resilience, collaboration, and enduring appeal.

Winter and spring visitation fluctuated month to month, driven largely by last-minute travel decisions, weather patterns, and a dynamic events calendar. A strong schedule of nonstop flights from six major cities played a critical role in sustaining visitation and introducing new travelers to the region. Increased investment in storytelling and public relations helped elevate Sun Valley's winter narrative, while targeted marketing ensured the destination remained visible during key booking windows.

A major highlight of the year was hosting the Audi F.I.S. Ski World Cup Finals, a milestone event that placed Sun Valley on a global stage. The success of the Finals reflected extraordinary collaboration among local governments, businesses, volunteers, residents, and regional partners. The event not only delivered immediate economic impact, but also created lasting awareness and marketing assets that will benefit the destination for years to come.

Summer 2025 proved to be one of Sun Valley's strongest seasons. Excellent weather, expanded air service, and a vibrant lineup of events attracted visitors throughout the valley. Demand for group travel, conferences, weddings, and family vacations remained high, and despite local construction challenges, visitation and spending remained strong.

Fall travel once again demonstrated both promise and unpredictability. While booking patterns shifted closer to arrival, signature events such as the Idaho Governor's Cup, Rebecca's Private Idaho, Wagon Days, and Trailing of the Sheep continued to draw visitors and reinforce fall as a meaningful opportunity season.

Throughout the year, Visit Sun Valley focused on thoughtful, data-driven marketing – prioritizing winter and fall travel, nonstop air markets, and high-interest audiences. Strategic partnerships and expanded media outreach resulted in national and international coverage from leading travel, lifestyle, and outdoor publications, further strengthening Sun Valley's profile as a world-class mountain destination.

As **visitor planning habits continue to evolve**, Visit Sun Valley remains committed to enhancing the visitor experience through both in-person and digital tools, including the Visitor Center, airport information kiosk, and website AI chatbot.

Looking ahead, **Sun Valley is well positioned for continued success.** The lessons learned, partnerships strengthened, and momentum gained over the past year provide a strong foundation for the future. Even amid uncertainty, Sun Valley's sense of place, welcoming spirit, and year-round appeal continue to inspire travelers from around the world.

THANK YOU.



VISIT SUN VALLEY

CONTACT US visitsunvalley.com | (208) 726-3423

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER 491 Sun Valley Road, Ketchum, Idaho 83340

OFFICE LOCATION 160 Sun Valley Road West, Ketchum, Idaho 83340

MAILING ADDRESS PO Box 4934, Ketchum, Idaho 83340