

Visitors Here, But They're Spending Less

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The tourists have been coming ... and coming ... and coming in July and August to add their highly welcome dollars to the local economy.

The County Convention and Visitors Bureau was told Wednesday that after a relatively weak showing in June, the tourist industry began to pick up sharply.

But, there was a note of caution in the report: there are more tourists than ever, but they are spending less money.

CVB President Dietrich Pahnke said that conventions attracted here are smaller and that this is just as well because there is no hotel here that can

provide 150 rooms to a convention without disturbing its economic base, i.e., provisions for other clients.

Pahnke said also that because of the sales effort of the CVB and private businesses, the occupancy rate here in winter in the visitor accommodations is now around 65 percent, contrasted with about 45 percent a few years ago.

The report indirectly highlighted the value of the promotional work done by the CVB and its executive director, Barbara Klein, to bring visitors here.

One part of the report dealt with the receipts derived by both the city and county from the transient occupancy tax levied on accommodations used by visitors.

In fiscal 1979-80, the report shows, the receipts increased sharply for both the city and county. The city took in \$621,039, compared with \$495,575 the previous year, an increase more than 25 percent. The county got \$474,193 in fiscal 1979-80, an increase of more than 62 percent increase over the \$293,520 of last year.

Another part of the report shows that convention bookings for calendar 1980 are well in excess of those in 1979 with 470 booked so far this year, compared to a total 410 last year.

It is in this area that the smaller sizes of the groups coming here are noted. For the 470 conventions booked this year, a total of 44,000 delegate days are expected, con-

trasted with the 44,225 delegate days for the 410 conventions in 1979.

The value of the conventions booked to date for 1980 is \$2.86 million, it is estimated, contrasted with the \$2.5 million of 1979.

The CVB's promotional efforts are now geared to a five-year plan, but projects are put into a shorter term schedule for the directors to consider and approve.

This month, the directors were told, the CVB projects include preparing a restaurant guide, final production of a Santa Cruz brochure ... among all the other activities carried on daily.

September plans include the Capitola

Begonia Festival, the Santa Cruz Fiesta on Mission Hill and the County Fair.

The CVB program includes preparation of releases to newspapers and other media on attractions, events and other matters of interest here.

For example, some \$31,500 will be spent in fiscal 1980-81 promoting Santa Cruz in the Bay Area. Klein and the city are convinced that this area can accommodate far more tourists than it does and will do so once it becomes known that the city and county are one of the best vacation buys around.

The restaurant guide will cost an estimated \$1,600. Not realized generally is there are some 385 restaurants in the county providing a broad range of dishes

at a broad range of prices. A restaurant guide, it is thought, will add to the fun of the Santa Cruz experience for visitors who want not only good food but a guide to different areas of the county.

The city this year increased the amount of money it allocates to the CVB from its transient occupancy tax receipts. This year it is giving the CVB \$149,500, compared with \$92,400 last year.

The county is contributing \$63,000, while Capitola has more than doubled its contribution, giving \$2,500 this year, compared to \$1,000 in 1979-80.

The CVB also expects to collect \$40,000 in membership fees from businesses and others that benefit from the tourist trade.

Total budget approved Wednesday is \$255,200, compared to \$186,600 last year.

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