

Orange County Sets Tourism Record of 50+ Million Visitors in 2018

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Left to Right: Andrew Do, Supervisor, First District; Michelle Steel, Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors and Supervisor Second District; Jay Burrell, Chairman, OCVA and President & CEO, Visit Anaheim; Lisa Bartlett, Chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors and Supervisor, Fifth District; Ed Fuller, President & CEO, OCVA; Lynn Clark, Vice President, Sales, Disneyland Resort; Paulette Lombardi-Fries, President, Travel Costa Mesa; Deanne Thompson, Manager, Public Relations, John Wayne Airport; Micky Rucireta, Senior Vice President, Administration & Operations, OCVA; Doug Chaffee, Supervisor Fourth District

From the Orange County Visitors Association:

The Orange County Visitors Association (OCVA) today announced that Orange County welcomed a record-breaking 50.16 million visitors in 2018 according to a preliminary report on visitation. This tremendous milestone brought with it impressive visitor spending of more than \$13 billion county-wide. The 50+ million visitor achievement reflects a 1.6% increase in visitation over 2017 figures. With respect to visitor spending, the new tally is 4.2% higher than 2017 levels. (Source: CIC Research, Inc.)

“Orange County is such a unique destination. From gorgeous beaches and world-famous attractions to extraordinary shopping and dining to luxurious hotels and the largest Convention Center on the West Coast – Orange County really does have something for every traveler,” said Jay Burrell, Chairman of the Orange County Visitors Association. “We are thrilled about reaching this historic milestone of 50+ million visitors, but what’s especially exciting is that it translates directly to the creation of more jobs and more economic opportunity for Orange County.”

When combined with results of OCVA’s most recent economic impact study, the latest preliminary figures underscore the critical role tourism plays in the Orange County economy. The study found that tourism sustained over 179,000 jobs in 2017, making tourism the 7th largest employer in Orange County. These tourism-related jobs range from entry level to executive management and occur across a variety of employment sectors, including food and beverage, recreation, lodging and retail. Since 2010, the growth of tourism-related employment has outpaced overall job growth in Orange County and in California. (Source: Tourism Economics)

“As Orange County residents, we are blessed with a wonderful climate and world-class arts & culture, attractions, retail and recreation. It is no surprise that these very same amenities have drawn an incredible 50+ million visitors to our community – what a milestone!” said Lisa Bartlett, Chairwoman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors. “The County of Orange is proud of the role we play in welcoming these visitors by providing wonderful parks and beaches, the unparalleled Dana Point Harbor and customer-favorite John Wayne Airport.”

The Orange County Board of Supervisors recognized the record-breaking visitation milestone at its regularly scheduled meeting this morning. Chairwoman Lisa Bartlett presented OCVA Chairman Jay Burrell and OCVA President & CEO Ed Fuller with a resolution from the Board applauding the achievement and commending “the OCVA Board of Directors and its partners for their outstanding efforts in promoting tourism in The OC.”

“Whether visitors travel here from a few miles – or a few thousand miles – they know that Orange County will provide both a warm welcome and the one-of-a-kind experience they seek,” said Ed Fuller, President & CEO of the Orange County Visitors Association. “OCVA and its partners, working with the County of Orange, have built a hard-earned and well-deserved reputation as a world-class destination. This incredible visitation milestone confirms that our unique partnership is working, and working well, for the benefit of Orange County.