

Community Corner

50 Million Tourists Visit Orange County in 2018: Report

The OC Supes celebrated a record-breaking number of tourists who visited OC last year, showing the critical role of tourism in our economy.

By Ashley Ludwig, Patch Staff | Mar 21, 2019 12:51 pm ET | Updated Mar 21, 2019 2:08 pm ET

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Chairwoman Lisa Bartlett presented OCVA Chairman Jay Burress and OCVA President & CEO Ed Fuller with a resolution. (Orange County Board of Supervisors, OCVA)

ORANGE COUNTY, CA — A record-breaking 50.16 million visitors headed to Orange County in 2018, a preliminary visitation report by the Orange County Visitors Association said. The Orange County Board of Supervisors recognized the ground-breaking milestone during their regularly scheduled meeting.

Estimated visitor spending was over \$13 billion county-wide and reflected a 1.6% increase in visitation over 2017 figure that were 4.2% higher than 2017 levels, according to a report by 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 Burress, 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 California, according to a report from 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 Burress 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."

For more information, head to www.visittheoc.com.

(left to right):

- Andrew Do, Supervisor, First District
- Michelle Steel, Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors and Supervisor Second District
- Jay Burress, 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