

**Suisun Valley Marketing Plan
December 2008**

Acknowledgments

This marketing plan is the result of a seven-month process of interviews and research initiated by the Suisun Valley Fund Advisory Committee (SVFAC).

lauracolerowe consulting and L.L. Consulting wish to thank the farmers, vintners, business owners and other agricultural stakeholders who were interviewed during this process. Their honesty, knowledge, and experience helped shape the goals and recommendations in the marketing plan.

Special thanks to Tracy Ellison, SVFAC Agricultural Ambassador, for her availability to answer our questions and her leadership and guidance through the process, which was invaluable.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Suisun Valley, located in Solano County, California, is a small but fertile historic agricultural district. Suisun Valley is recognized for its quality wine grapes, as well as its fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and flowers and produces nearly \$20 million in sales annually. In 1982, the federal government classified Suisun Valley as American Viticulture Area.

The city of Fairfield and the Solano Irrigation District (SID) formed the Suisun Valley Fund "the Fund" in 2002 and the associated Suisun Valley Fund Advisory Committee (SVFAC) to preserve and enhance Suisun Valley agriculture. The Fund receives \$100,000 per year from each of the two agencies; the fund terminates at the end of 2010. The Fund is the primary financial source for many Suisun Valley programs, including this marketing plan.

Since this time, SVFAC has made great strides in marketing the area by hiring an Agricultural Ambassador who has implemented many programs and oversees the marketing of Suisun Valley. In addition, the Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association (SVGGA) was formed with Fund assistance and receives \$50,000 annually, plus marketing services paid for by the Fund. The Suisun Valley Harvest Trails Association (SVHTA) also has recently formed with Fund assistance.

SVFAC requested proposals in February 2008 to prepare a marketing plan for the promotion of agricultural tourism in Suisun Valley. This marketing plan incorporates many of the programs and marketing already done in Suisun Valley, makes recommendations for additional services and marketing, and serves as an organized "roadmap" on what should be continued and added prior to the sunset of the Fund at the end of 2010, as well as what can be continued after the Fund no longer exists with recommendations for funding possibilities.

We note that SVGGA already has a strategic plan in place to continue and fund their organization after the sunset of the Fund, including the institution of graduated membership fees for their association that started in 2008. We also note while SVHTA is currently organizing their association by obtaining their non-profit designation from the IRS, they have not formally put a transition plan into place to carry forward on the work that has been done by SVFAC, including marketing and events.

We strongly recommend that the Growers' Subcommittee of SVFAC begin to formulate a transition plan during the next two years in order for the programs, marketing and services that the Fund has provided to continue after 2010, even in a more limited capacity, and seriously look at how SVHTA will fund these programs, marketing and services. We have insight from previous entities that they have worked with that it will be imperative to have funding in order not to lose the programs that they have made so much progress, build on what the Fund has accomplished, and to be able to hire someone, even in a limited capacity, to implement these programs. SVHTA should not rely solely on volunteers and limited funding capacity to carry forward the momentum and progress that has been accomplished since 2002.

INTRODUCTION

Suisun Valley, located in Solano County, California, is a relatively small but fertile historic agricultural district. Suisun Valley is recognized for its quality wine grapes, as well as its fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and flowers and produces nearly \$20 million in sales annually.

The city of Fairfield and the Solano Irrigation District (SID) formed the Suisun Valley Fund in 2002 and the associated Suisun Valley Fund Advisory Committee (SVFAC) to preserve and enhance Suisun Valley agriculture. The Fund receives \$100,000 per year from each of the two agencies; the fund terminates at the end of 2010. The Fund is the primary financial source for many Suisun Valley programs, including this marketing plan.

PURPOSE

SVFAC has adopted the following vision for the future of agriculture in Suisun Valley on February 23, 2007:

“Suisun Valley is a unique farming region that supports profitable family farms and quality of life for all its residents. It is a destination for tourists seeking world-class wine, identifiable Suisun Valley farm products and a beautiful agricultural landscape with no fallow land. The Suisun Valley appellation is so famous that it creates new markets and increases demand for Suisun Valley wine and other farm products outside of the region.”

The Suisun Valley Fruit Growers Association, Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association, Solano Irrigation District, City of Fairfield, Solano County Farm Bureau, City of Suisun City, Solano Land Trust, and Solano County Agriculture Advisory Committee also support this vision statement.

SVFAC requested proposals in February 2008 to prepare a Marketing Plan for the promotion of agricultural tourism in Suisun Valley. This Marketing Plan includes a review of existing programs and activities, identification of key target markets and a recommended program of marketing activities, new strategies and promotional techniques reflecting the Valley’s current character and building upon and refining the existing marketing efforts.

The existing area farmers, wine makers, farm stand operators and other retail/restaurant/tourist businesses want to benefit from increased customer traffic and sales. The Marketing Plan makes recommendations of revisions and new strategies to assist them to evolve into a stronger, more dynamic economic destination for residents and visitors alike.

The process was focused on developing a marketing strategy that would help promote Suisun Valley as a *regional agritourism destination* and identify key objectives to help the Suisun Valley business community leverage their resources and efforts.

The Marketing Plan includes recommendations of how to leverage the base funding from SVFAC, which will sunset in 2010, and ways to generate new funding as well as how the area can generate more traffic by strengthening Suisun Valley as one of the area’s key destinations.

Suisun Valley has seen an opportunity to establish itself as an important destination in both the Bay Area and the Sacramento region. The marketing plan will help put this in motion.

Suisun Valley has a number of focused promotions and marketing efforts. This plan has organized the various programs, ideas and efforts already supported and recommended additional programs for successfully marketing the Valley through a focused plan of action. It provides general guiding objectives as well as specific strategies for creating enhanced economic activity in Suisun Valley and creating positive energy. It should be used as a living document that will evolve as the Valley community becomes involved in the process and is intended to be a roadmap or tool.

OVERVIEW OF SCOPE OF WORK

- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of/for Suisun Valley
- Identify and profile various market segments, including residents and visitors
- Review Suisun Valley's current special events/promotions and ways to utilize the brand to promote these events
- Identify effective message delivery methods per market segment including press releases, information to travel writers, newspaper advertising inserts, brochures, radio, cable TV, Web site, banners, kiosks, direct mail, wayfinding signage, e-mail newsletters, table tents, etc.
- Identify, define and evaluate marketing budgets and ways to increase them
- Identify resources to achieve objectives, including partnerships with other key agencies and organizations
- Develop suggestions for new special events/promotions
- Identify potential opportunities for funding
- Develop a step-by-step implementation plan to achieve market objectives

We worked with the Suisun Valley Fund's Growers Subcommittee comprising three "landowner/grower" members of SVFAC, plus City of Fairfield representatives, property owners, agricultural business owners, and public regional agencies. The process included a series of one-on-one interviews, review of numerous documents, studies and surveys, research of marketing trends and like agritourism areas, a mailed survey to participants of Fun Family Farm Days, attending Grower Subcommittee meetings, and consultant meetings/conference calls during each phase of the project. The specific tasks undertaken as part of the scope included the following:

Task 1: Develop an understanding of the existing agricultural and agritourism industry in Suisun Valley.

The first phase of the project involved the consulting team becoming acquainted with the key stakeholders, the area and the various promotional and marketing efforts currently being supported by the community to market Suisun Valley.

We interviewed members of SVFAC, the Suisun Valley Grape Growers' Association, the Suisun Valley Harvest Trails Association, and individual farmers, winemakers, farm stand operators, and retail businesses located in Suisun Valley to develop an understanding of Suisun Valley's existing agricultural and agritourism industry, both current and projected. We also reviewed documents, including the American Farmlands Trust Report and the County of Solano's Agricultural Futures Report, and others, as background. A brief report summarizing key characteristics of Suisun Valley agriculture, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was delivered to the Growers' Subcommittee.

Note: Refer to Appendix for Task 1 summary report.

Task 2: Review existing regulatory and planning issues impacting Suisun Valley agriculture

We reviewed the Draft County General Plan for an understanding of projected trends and the potential impact of the proposed General Plan policies on the Suisun Valley agriculture and agritourism markets, and attended a public meeting on the draft General Plan and conducted interviews with growers and property owners to facilitate understanding. A brief report describing key regulatory and planning issues impacting the marketing of Suisun Valley agriculture was delivered to the Growers' Subcommittee.

Note: Refer to Appendix for Task 2 summary report.

Task 3: Review existing marketing programs and activities

We gathered and reviewed all marketing programs, promotional materials and activities from various agencies used to promote Suisun Valley agriculture, farm stands, wineries and other Suisun Valley businesses. This included the Web site, advertising materials, special events and other promotional programs supported by the Suisun Valley Fund, as well as advertising materials, Web sites and special events and other advertising materials produced by wineries, the Fairfield Hotel Association, local Chambers of Commerce, the Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association and other related organizations. We drafted a matrix of all the promotional and marketing programs and materials assessing the strengths, weaknesses and consistencies of each program/marketing collateral. This matrix is incorporated in the final report.

In addition, we interviewed the various segments (local farmers, winemakers, and farm stand operators) of Suisun Valley to determine how well current marketing, advertising, promotional activities and events have worked for both the area as a whole as well as for their individual businesses. A survey was sent to the participants of the Fun Family Farm Days in August regarding their opinions on the event. We summarized the findings and incorporated the feedback in the overall assessment process, and delivered a report describing the existing programs and activities, failures and successes, target market and recommended strategies.

Note: Refer to Appendix for Task 3 summary report and marketing material analysis.

Task 4: Develop Comprehensive Marketing Plan for Suisun Valley

Based on research of market trends, successful similar programs and interviews, we prepared a comprehensive marketing plan that includes identifying and profiling various market segments, including residents and visitors; a value proposition for each market segment; identifying effective message delivery methods per market segment; an analysis of the existing events, marketing and promotional programs; and recommendations of revisions of existing programs and new programs targeted at

current and new markets. This analysis will help Suisun Valley evolve into a dynamic economic destination for residents and visitors.

The marketing plan is very comprehensive in its strategies and tactics and includes suggestions for commerce building tactics, marketing collateral, branding strategies, cross-marketing, partnership opportunities, concepts to encourage weekend and event visits and incorporating new cutting edge technology into the existing efforts.

We developed a marketing budget and ways to leverage the existing budget, including identifying other resources and potential opportunities for funding including sponsorships, grants, and partnerships with other key agencies and organizations.

We will work with the stakeholders on a schedule for implementation for the plan, funding of the plan and develop a step-by-step implementation plan to achieve market objectives. We will make any necessary revisions to the plan based on input from the group.

STRATEGIC GOALS

From the feedback gathered through the interviews with members of the Suisun Valley community, including growers, vintners, business and property owners, community leaders and supporting partners, the following five strategic goals were developed as the framework for the Marketing Plan:

Goal 1: Position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination.

Goal 2: Expand awareness of Suisun Valley as a local source for food, wine and other related businesses.

Goal 3: Strengthen cooperation among growers, wineries and other related businesses to increase profitability.

Goal 4: Build support for agriculture as a vital economic development base for Solano County.

Goal 5: Establish the organizational capacity to sustain current activities and develop new programs.

Goal 1 reflects the Valley's opportunity to position itself regionally and beyond as a viable agricultural tourism destination and how to achieve this position through events, paid advertising, cutting-edge technology and other methods to attract visitors.

Goal 2 is focused on the local market of Solano County and how to expand awareness of Suisun Valley through events, paid advertising, community programming and other methods to attract local visitors.

Goal 3 is targeted at strengthening cooperation among Valley entities through communication, networking, cross-marketing, and education.

Goal 4 is focused on Suisun Valley's advocacy role in building support for agriculture as a vital economic base in Solano County.

Goal 5 is targeted on exploring and establishing funding sources to sustain current activities and developing new programs to keep Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination, a local source for food, wine and other related businesses and to build support of agriculture as a vital economic base for Solano County.

Goal 1: Position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination.

Over the last several years, the marketing efforts promoting the agricultural enterprises and activities within Suisun Valley have started to pay off. The Fun Family Farm Days is starting to become not only a local promotion but also a regional attraction. Suisun Valley's Web site had 2,011 unique visitors for the August event, indicating a solid interest in the area and its activities. The majority of the agricultural related enterprises have all expressed that they are seeing more interest from locals and visitors alike. As a result, this growing interest in Suisun Valley is a strong indicator that the area is primed to take full advantage of strengthening its position as an agritourism destination and reap the benefits accordingly.

However, compared to the Napa area (Suisun Valley's most direct competitor), the Valley has limited inventory (farms, wineries, restaurants) and yet to acquire the long-standing reputation and brand of the Napa Valley and its' surrounding communities. As a result, Suisun Valley's ability to fully capitalize on the visitor interested in agricultural or the "agritourist" will take time, and the enterprises will need to be patient with the process.

The Valley should continue focusing its marketing efforts to attract interest from the immediate local trade area and gradually expand efforts to encompass a larger regional market. Both of these markets will be key to positioning the Valley as a viable agritourism destination. As Suisun Valley's brand or image is solidified and the inventory or number of agricultural enterprises and related businesses are expanded, then the Valley will be a natural choice for those visitors who are wanting to experience a slower, more genuine agritourism outing. The following objectives are targeted at reaching visitors from the regional area versus the local market, however; most of the suggestions will work for both markets.

Objective 1.1 Continue to use your Web site as the central point of information. Make sure that the Valley's Web site is well maintained and positioned as one of the key points that visitors or tourists "visit" for information about the area, the agricultural enterprises and related businesses. Enhance the visual aspects of the Web site to create more interest and impact. The link for the Suisun Valley map should be on the home page, not hidden under resources. Contact information is also hidden; consider putting it in a more visible place. Rework this to have consumers understand that a single phone number is not available, and that information is available by calling that vendor directly. In the future a recorded message and phone may be desirable. Create an area on the Web site that is specifically designed to provide information for the regional visitor. Information that you might want to post in this area would include 1) a solid description of why one should visit Suisun Valley, (2) explanation of how easy it is to travel to the Valley with the downloadable map (3) sample itineraries of how to spend a day/weekend in the Valley, (4) downloadable coupons or special promotions targeted at the regional visitor, (5) testimonials, (6) contact information, and (7) nearby places to stay. Consider adding video streaming to the Web site for a virtual "tour" of the Valley and its amenities, and consider making the brochure downloadable as well.

Objective 1.2 Continue advertising in the Fairfield Activity Guide or any future marketing materials produced by the Fairfield Hotel Association. This publication is a very professional color guide packed with lots of information for the visitor. The 2007 publication included a map, which lists the Suisun Valley wineries as well as mentioning the Farm Trails. There were also two, full page, color advertisements in the publication promoting the Farm Trails on one page and the Fun Family Farm Days on the other. The Fund and its successor group(s) should continue advertising in this publication because of its wide distribution. Look for ways to fine-tune the advertisement so that it supports the Valley's brand and is designed so it "speaks to" the regional

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market the Valley is trying to penetrate. Make the advertisement as compelling as possible creating a feeling of “we just need to go see this place.” It is strongly recommended that the Valley work closely with the Hotel Association to track where the activity guide is distributed (plus the Hotel Association’s distribution of other Suisun Valley marketing materials) and who or what trade area is requesting it.

Objective 1.3 Continue to build and expand upon Fun Family Farm Days. Although only in its third year, this event has done an excellent job drawing individuals from the surrounding regional trade area. Efforts should focus on continuing to grow this event and *branding* it as one of the regional “signature” events. Consider creating a separate brand or logo for the event itself so that it becomes a recognizable icon in the visitors mind. Continue to explore various ways to expand the activities offered at the different agricultural enterprises and related businesses. Continue to work with local complementary businesses to expand offerings/promotions during the day such as restaurants having 2 for 1 offers or retailers offering small free gifts or discounts for showing the trail/farm map. Look for additional ways to expand activities offered at the “event” itself. Have all participants capture emails during the event to use to remarket back to customers.



Images from Fun Family Farm Days 2008

One suggestion is to explore the possibilities of eventually staging a separate *Fun Family Farm Craft Show* in an underutilized area along the Trails where this type of activity would be allowed. This area could include local arts and craft booths, additional food vendors, children activities such as pony rides, petting zoo and games, etc. Of course, this area would only be added as the attendance grows and individual enterprises have reached capacity at their individual sites. Expand sponsorship opportunities as the event grows to leverage advertising and marketing efforts. Work with businesses in town that would support the event with window displays and posters in their windows. Consider incorporating a theme for each month. Seriously look at adding an additional

day (Saturday) in the months that the event is already held and/or an additional month (July).

Objective 1.4 Produce one comprehensive, full color rack card to complement the Harvest Trails Map. The Suisun Valley Fund has produced a very professional, tri-fold full color map promoting the Harvest Trails and the various agricultural enterprises and related businesses. The Map is widely distributed throughout the Valley and has done an excellent job *branding* the area. However, we note that the publication is expensive to produce and limited in its overall shelf life. In addition to the map, there are several rack cards that either promote just some of the agricultural enterprises (*Discover Wines from Suisun Valley* promoting four wineries) and/or mention the Harvest Trails and wineries as one of the areas attractions (*25 Things to Do in Fairfield* rack card produced by the Fairfield Hotel Association). As Suisun Valley's Web site is enhanced and expanded to become the central point for information about the area and the majority of brochures and maps can be downloadable, consider producing a full color, comprehensive rack card. The Harvest Trails Map will still need to be produced (and handed out at events such as the Fun Family Farm Days) but a rack card can be much more cost-effective and easier to distribute as a visitor piece. The rack card should provide a compelling description of the area including a map, list of the events or activities held in Valley, contact information and of course, the Web site address. Develop a detailed plan of where to distribute the rack card so that it reaches your regional market. Consider the costs related to purchasing rack card placement within the targeted regional trade area. Make sure that ALL members, agricultural enterprises and related businesses located within the Valley have the rack cards to distribute.

Objective 1.5 Develop a comprehensive publicity plan to get the word out about Suisun Valley's Agricultural enterprises and activities. *Agritourism* is a subset of rural tourism and can be defined as a commercial enterprise where you invite the public onto your farm or ranch. *Agritourism* can also include "a set of activities that occur when people link travel with the products, services and experience of agriculture." **The product itself can be the "experience."** Suisun Valley has numerous farm stands, a solid showing of wineries, an adequate sprinkling of related businesses and the desire to grow the region's brand or image as an agritourism destination. Throughout the stakeholder and partner interviews, many referred to Suisun Valley "as the best kept secret". In order to position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination for a more regional market, it will be imperative to let the secret out. One very effective method to get the word out about Suisun Valley and generate both interest and exposure is by developing a comprehensive publicity plan. A publicity plan looks at ways to garnish "free advertising" versus paid advertising by focusing on consistently getting the word out about the Valley's agricultural enterprises, activities and benefits through press releases, contacting travel writers, tour operators and key media representatives and having the area represented at trade shows. Specific strategies to support the publicity plan include:

- **Create a comprehensive press kit to be used as a tool to contact regional, State and even national media.** A press kit can be a valuable tool to assist with getting information to media sources if it contains the type of data, information or facts that they are looking for. At minimum, the kit should include the following: history of the Valley agricultural roots, an overview of the Valley today, geographical overview, description of the key enterprises, wines, economic impact, and photographs of wineries, farm stands and Valley agricultural scenery. To keep costs down, create a virtual press kit that can be downloaded from the Web site. When sending out press releases, refer media to the Web site to download the kit. Keep the kit updated and fresh by showcasing current events or activities. A good example is the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance press kit can be found at <http://www.pasowine.com/media/presskit.php>.

Teach the local enterprises and businesses to refer their media sources or contacts to the virtual press kit. Often there is a request for a hard copy of the press kit. Instead of spending precious resources to produce a full hard copy of the kit, consider investing in a full color, heavy stocked folder that can then be filled with the various pieces of information to tailor fit the requests of the various media. In addition, this type of generic folder can also be used to showcase other activities such as a new business welcome package, presenting benchmarks to funding partners, etc.

- **Add an area on the Web site specific for media, travel writers and tour operators.** In addition to creating the press kit and making it available as a download via the Web site, consider creating a separate area on the Web site that is dedicated for media, travel writers and tour operators. The site could include a photo gallery, current press releases, fact sheet and related links including member enterprises, related businesses and supportive partners. The Web site should also have an area entitled “Suisun Valley In The News” where key stories about Suisun Valley are listed and/or a link to the media source that ran the articles is available. This area must be current and updated regularly.
- **Continue to offer information/tours to travel writers.** Contact travel writers with information about Suisun Valley, the agricultural related enterprises, any upcoming special events or promotions (both regional events as well as individual farm or winery promotions) and other related activities that might be of interest and support the overall agritourism experience. Arrange for a familiarization tour once a year to offer travel writers a specialized tour of the Valley stopping at key locations, having lunch, wine tastings and produce tastings. The upcoming Outdoor Writers Association of California conference in the spring of 2009 that the Fairfield Hotel Association is putting together is a prime example of what Suisun Valley should be sponsoring and putting funds toward as the investment in this will pay off substantially in free publicity in coming years. Distribute pertinent information to regional tourism groups. Follow up with all leads and track exposure.
- **Contact the agencies or coordinators of other cultural, heritage or community events and explore possibilities of linking Suisun Valley with their event publicity.** Agritourism complements heritage and cultural tourism, outdoor recreational activities and other forms of tourists related attractions. Contact the Suisun City Historic Waterfront Business Improvement District, the Fairfield and Vacaville Downtown Associations, local historical organizations as well as the City agencies and explore possibilities of partnerships and piggybacking on any of their events or promotional publicity, as well as booth placement in their events, like the Valley already does with the Fairfield Tomato Festival. Fostering and leveraging these partnerships will benefit all entities involved.
- **Make sure that Suisun Valley is represented at key travel and tourism trade shows.** Currently the Fairfield Hotel Association participates in several travel and tourism trade shows representing the attractions, amenities and tourist related enterprises located in Fairfield and Solano County. Continue to work with the Association to make sure that they have adequate materials about Suisun Valley and that the representatives working the booth have a good understanding of agritourism and the products and services offered. Put together a packet about the Valley that has information about the area in general and a collection of all the agricultural enterprises individual marketing materials. Volunteer to help “man” the booth so that you can be ensured that the Valley is being adequately represented. Contact the Vallejo CVB (www.visitvallejo.com) to list local events, as well as making contact with them regarding their trade

shows. Since they are also the official site of the Solano County Film office, offer to take them on a tour of potential film sites in Valley to help foster the relationship. You also may wish to consider joining other CVBs for further outreach.

Objective 1.6 Search out low to no cost advertising targeted at reaching the regional markets. In addition to leveraging publicity and the “free advertising” that may result, concentrate on searching out any no to low cost advertising opportunities available. Focus first on uncovering opportunities that target the regional market and then explore what is available for visitors interested in visiting California. Below are suggested strategies:

- **Link with other Web sites.** The Internet has become one of the most cost effective marketing venues and there are numerous ways to utilize it to get your message out into the marketplace. Link with as many Web sites as possible to get your Alexa ranking (numerical ranking of all Web sites) up as much as possible. First make sure that all of your members, other agricultural enterprises, and related businesses have linked with your Web site. Contact as many of them and offer to cross-link. Teach them how to do it. Next, make sure that any agency or organization that interfaces with the visitor or tourist is linked to your site. This would include the Fairfield Hotel Association, local Chambers of Commerce, City and County sites, etc. and make sure that they have up-to-date information on the Valley. Finally research what other Web sites exist that reach the regional market and would be appropriate to link with, such as online exposure on www.LandOfWineAndFood.com – a Web site that is part of the California Travel and Tourism Commission’s California Wine & Food Co-op Program. The California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC) is a non-profit organization, with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs in partnership with the state’s travel industry and keeps California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination. We found that only two local wineries were listed within this site.
- **Free Web site listings.** There are many Web sites that offer free listings for events, activities and programs. Research what is available that targets your regional market as well as any state and national markets. Make sure to update the listings as needed and review them often. Inform your members and other related enterprises or businesses about these Web sites and strongly encourage them to list their individual events, promotions and activities.
- **We note that Suisun Valley is listed on the State of California’s Tourism site –** www.visitcalifornia.com, under Fairfield, CA as follows (<http://www.visitcalifornia.com/widget/Detail.aspx?OutputType=full-xhtml&IMISID=1692217>)

Suisun Valley Orchards and Wineries
Fairfield

U-Pick (seasonal), wine tastings, farmers markets including Sepay Olive Oil and Vinegars, Ledgewood Creek, Wooden Valley, Vezer wine tastings and Suisun Valley Co-op tastings

Suisun Valley Orchards and Wineries
Phone: (707) 620-0788

AND

Suisun Valley Fruit Loop Tour

Fairfield

Ultra-premium wines and a bounty of farm-fresh produce.

Suisun Valley Fruit Loop Tour

Phone: (707) 425-4625 (Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce)

This needs to be updated and expanded, and events like Fun Family Farm Days need to be listed on the site. For further information, to go <http://tourism.visitcalifornia.com/> to further explore, update and add listings.

- **Newspapers in your regional trade area.** Many local papers offer non-profits the opportunity to list at no charge upcoming events or activities. Look for these types of opportunities in your regional market place and take full advantage of any opportunities. Encourage your members to also send information about their specific promotion or event.
- **Publications.** Look for publications that are typically distributed free within the community. Not only, do these “free” publications offer free listings but they typically have lower per square inch advertising fees giving you more bang for your buck. To help brand the Valley within the regional market as an agricultural destination, create one ad that is compelling and focused at attracting your regional market. Make sure that you are consistent with the brand, the overall message and that same ad is used throughout ALL of the “paid” advertising targeted to reach your regional market. Explore the fees for advertising in the other publications produced by S&J Advertising that are targeted at the Walnut Creek and Lafayette area as well as the Weekender Magazine distributed in both Solano and Contra Costa Counties (www.weekendermagazine.com).
- **Table Tents.** Continue to produce small table tents on Suisun Valley to be placed in Valley restaurants (members of Harvest Trails) to further promote wineries and farm stands.
- **Direct Mail.** If strategically mailed with the right message and some type of “carrot” or offering, direct mail is still a very effective low cost advertising venue. Consider creating a full color, very professional postcard several times a year that is direct mailed to those individuals who have already discovered the Valley as well as a specific targeted zip code in one of your regional markets. One postcard could be mailed out early spring prior to peak season listing the various enterprises, events and to save the Fun Family Farm Days dates. Another postcard could be mailed at the end of the season prior the holidays wishing a happy holiday and reminding them to buy local and look for specials on gifts, foods and wine. Offer some type of gift or discount on the postcard so that you can track the responses. Teach your enterprises and members to start gathering mailing addresses AND emails (although from our follow-up to the Fun Family Farm Days in August, most of them seemed to do so) **so that you can then compile everyone’s list** and use that as a basis for your direct mail campaign. Geolocation technology allows organizations and businesses to target their marketing by city, zip code or even distance. You can purchase a list of addresses for a specific area by zip code and even filter the list by demographic information. One such site is www.infousa.com. There is a fee for purchasing the list, however by identifying the regional market you want to penetrate and profiling the individuals you want to attract (such as families, income bracket, age), your investment should have a much higher rate of return than just randomly mailing out postcards.

- **E-marketing.** As with direct mail, e-marketing is another effective and very low cost marketing tool, which the organization has done well. E-newsletters promote news, upcoming events and special promotions as well as compliment your advertising and public relations outreach. Consider duplicating the postcard as mentioned above and email it out to those individuals who you have collected email addresses. Teach your members and related businesses or agricultural enterprises of how to e-market as a way to stay in front of their customers. The general interest newsletter can be targeted to themes based on consumer interests, including wine, produce and dining. A special "Meet Suisun Valley" e-newsletter can be targeted to travel trade and meeting planners.
- **Put a downloadable podcast on your Web site.** Never before has the online community had such an opportunity to reach its audience offline. Podcasts, like any information you put out, should be of interest and value to your target market. A podcast is a Web-based audio broadcast via an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed, accessed by subscription over the Internet. Podcasts are another marketing tool that you can use to promote the Valley. Gen Y (echo boomers – kids of Baby Boomers) is using podcasts to keep up with news, information and missed TV shows – but Baby Boomers are catching up on the trend.

Think of a podcast as a radio show or simply as a recording available via the web. Podcasts allow you to listen to recordings when, where, and how you want on your computer, with just a web browser, or using your MP3 player or iPod.

The U.S. podcasting market has steadily been increasing in size over the last couple of years and is expected to double within the next two years to almost 38 million people, according to eMarketer. It is estimated that the total U.S. podcast audience for 2007 is 18.5 million with an active podcast audience of 6.5 million. The 18.5 million refers to individuals who have ever downloaded a podcast from anywhere. The "active" user base refers to individuals who have downloaded an average of one or more podcasts per week. The active podcast audience is expected to grow to an impressive 25 million listeners by 2012. More than 75% of all podcast listeners are male – most marketing has been aimed at female shoppers – so take advantage of the opportunity to market to a different segment of the population.

There are many reasons why podcasting is becoming more popular in the U.S. at such a fast rate. Firstly, podcast content is easy to digest. Most podcasts that are downloaded are usually short and focus on specific topics or genres, making it easy for people to listen to exactly what they are interested in and skip the fluff.

Also, there is a much greater awareness and much more promotion for podcasting via large online news and media networks such as CNET, New York Times, and well-respected blogs.

By having podcasts as part of your visitor portion of your marketing of Suisun Valley, people who are yearning to visit can download and learn more about your amenities and easily take it with them on their iPod.

The Valley will need to decide what they want their podcast(s) to be about. We suggest that you start with a podcast, four to nine minutes in length, that is an overview – the Valley's history and highlights of wineries, produce stands and related businesses. Later and more specific podcasts could include 1) a tour of all wineries; 2) a tour of all produce stands; 3) Valley restaurants and other businesses; 4) Fun Family Farm Days. Subsequent podcasts can be more specific

– for example, one could “take a real tour” of the Valley that would include directions on the route with stops at selected venues along the way. Think about using sponsorship to help defray cost.

Other tips for podcasting include:

- How to get there and Web address – At the end of your podcast, give directions from the interstate or highway, which is really important if you are placing your podcast on other Web sites (like the Chamber’s or the Fairfield Hotel Association) or on iTunes.
- Be descriptive – use words that will play upon the listener’s imagination. Avoid using words or phrases that may tongue-tie podcast announcer. Your words should flow as if you’re having a conversation with someone.
- Listen to free podcasts on iTunes – Getting ideas and the tempo and the writing style from free podcasts on iTunes is a great way to start. There are a lot of tourism podcasts available.
- Getting the correct voice can make or break the podcast. Having one voice talk for the entire podcast can become tedious to the listener; break it up with both male and female voices, if possible. Voice talent need not be professional broadcasters; think of someone who has a great voice and can read well with expression; chances are they would be willing to record.
- Any previous script or written history can be easily modified to fit the overview podcast.
- Safety rules – it’s a good idea to remind the listener to follow all the traffic rules, and to yield to all traffic.
- Audio or video – Audio can be done simply, takes less time to produce, and can be listened to anywhere - in the car, during exercise workouts, or in the background at work and tend to have more cultural and educational depth. Video can show off your amenities; stills can be used instead of streaming video, and it can be posted on You Tube, but video is more expensive to produce, and you have to be in front of a computer or have a video iPod to get the full affect of video; and you can't watch videos while you’re driving!
- Publicize your podcast to local and regional media – besides a standard press release on the podcast, send a CD of it to your local media, Chambers of Commerce, State tourism bureau, Fairfield Hotel Association, etc. and information where the public can download the podcast – through your Web site or through ITunes.
- After uploading the MP-3 file to your Web site, submit your link to podcast directories such as iPodder.org, or promote it on sites such as Podcast Alley and the Podcast Directory (<http://www.podcastingnews.com/forum/links.php>). Such sites include links for downloading your podcast.
- Once your podcast is online, you should list your RSS feed on podcast directories such as Yahoo! Podcasts, Odeo, iTunes and others. Make sure that you enter the genre and content categories so that listeners can find

your podcast more easily.

- Getting on iTunes –there are 11 pages of technical specifications on the iTunes web site about submission and feedback processes, www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts.techspecs.html
- Check with your Web master on getting statistics on the podcast file downloading and check search engines to see where you are in the rankings.
- **Become the Expert.** Look for opportunities either on the radio (like Jo Diaz' talk about the Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association on Good Libations Internet radio program on May 1, 2008) or television as well as through print media to have members act as experts within the agricultural and agritourism industry. When media calls and wants an opinion or quote, enthusiastically respond. In addition, reach out to the local media networks and extend your willingness to be an expert as needed.
- **Create a Blog for Suisun Valley.** There are 100 times more blogs than there were three years ago, according Sifry's Alerts' August 2007 post on the State of the Blogosphere. At first, it was only the most tech-savvy businesses that had blogs. Now blogging is on the increase with all types of businesses because it's a cost-effective way to create marketing buzz and communities of support. Blogging is like having a conversation with your target market. It also provides an interactive forum for your target market to talk back to you. A blog done in conjunction with your Web site (blog link is posted on your Web site) gives you one more way to get the word out.

Many blog programs allow you to set everything up yourself with little or no technical know-how. Publishing a blog may be terrific if your target market spends a lot of time online, but not so good to reach those who rarely open their browser.

- **Join an Internet Social Networking Group.** Social networking is free and allows companies or individuals to relate to one another and bypass the fluff. You can access virtual communities of prospects and associates while developing virtual "platforms" to generate interest and establish themselves as recognized experts. Many nonprofits, downtown associations and businesses use social networking sites like Facebook to promote themselves and events and draw the Gen X/Gen Y crowd who look for things to do as well as information.

Yelp.com has reviews and recommendations of businesses and is an online city guide made up of reviews and is a fun and engaging place for passionate and opinionated influencers to share the experiences they've had with local businesses and services. Thirteen million people visited Yelp in August 2008 to read reviews and make decisions about local businesses and services. Setting up a Yelp business page is a great way to get involved in the Yelp community and to ensure you're putting your business' best foot forward. You'll be able to access numerous features (track how many people view your business on Yelp, private customer messaging, immediately update your business' facts).

Objective 1.7 Advertise in publications that reach the higher-end customers in the regional trade area. The majority of the marketing efforts that the Valley will be implementing over the next few years will most likely be centered around low to no-cost advertising due to limited resources. However, as the Valley's budget grows, consider

expanding advertising targeted to reach the higher end customers located in the regional trade area. Strategically placing an ad about Suisun Valley in a pricier, higher-end publication will start to help you compete with other areas such as Napa, Sonoma and El Dorado County. Research what is available in terms of publications, costs and of course benefits. We recommend exploring the advantages and disadvantages of advertising in **the Wine Country Magazine**. This magazine has been published weekly since 1981, has more than 1,200 distribution points (including on the rental car counters at the Sacramento Airport) and coverage includes the greater Bay Area, Sacramento and surrounding areas. To obtain an advertising kit, visit www.winecountrythisweek.com/

Objective 1.8 Create a twelve-month calendar of smaller agricultural related events to attract the regional market. People need a reason or “incentive” to visit an area, attraction or even a business. Communities across the nation have found that hosting an event is a viable way to attract consumers and visitors to the area. While it takes time to create a monthly calendar of events, (and there is a listing of grower events on the online calendar) many of the Valley’s agricultural enterprises already host “mini” events at their specific location and the Valley-wide Fun Family Farm Days is fast becoming a regional event. These two aspects give Suisun Valley a solid foundation for expanding its calendar of events by adding a series of smaller or “mini” events to the already solid listing of existing promotions and activities.

Your members and other related agricultural enterprises or businesses would bear some of the costs of these promotional events by providing materials within their operations. We further recommend working with the local newspaper to coordinate joint advertising for the events. A full-page ad, with a heading about the event and event details, and ads below for individual enterprises, promoting their specials would help bring attention to the event itself and show a coordinated effort for the Valley (like the type of advertising you have implemented with Fun Family Farm Days). While it would be ideal to hold a promotional event each month, because of the lack of resources for advertising and promotion of each event (and the lack of paid personnel to coordinate the events), we recommend starting with six promotional events for the first year; nine for the second year and a monthly event for all 12 months for the third year.

Sample ideas for a yearly calendar might include (larger scaled events are bolded):

Month	Ideas
January	<i>Create a postcard and mail out to all of those who visited the Fun Family Farm Days. Work with each of your agricultural enterprises to host smaller, “winter” type of event. Because of weather concerns during January, explore hosting as many of the activities inside versus outside.</i>
February	<i>Valentine Getaway Packages</i>
March/April	<i>Spring Theme – “Planting in the Valley” An event to promoting Eat Local; Buy Local.</i>
May/June	Art in the Valley. <i>Expand upon the art event that several of the wineries have already implemented by hosting an Art in the Valley event. Consider having a tent at a larger venue that could host local and regional artists, musicians, food and beverages.</i>
July	<i>Expand the Jazz Series to a Music in the Valley with various venues hosting different styles of music over a weekend.</i>
August	Fun Family Farm Days - <i>Consider expanding to a second day in the weekend</i>
September	Fun Family Farm Days
October	Fun Family Farm Days
November	<i>Cornucopia/Harvest theme</i>
December	<i>Piggy back on Shop Until You Drop event hosted by several of the wineries</i>

Objective 1.9 Build strong collaborations with any industry in the county that interfaces with the visitor or tourist market to assist with cross-marketing the Valley. Suisun Valley has done an excellent job forging a partnership with the Fairfield Hotel Association. The Valley is mentioned in many of the Hotel Association’s marketing

collateral and the Fairfield Hotel Association's executive director has a good understanding of Suisun Valley. On the other hand, the Vacaville Conference & Visitors Bureau has no mention about Suisun Valley on their Web site or in their marketing collateral. In fact, because they are part of the City (Hotel Business Improvement District), they mainly promote those activities or enterprises that are located in Vacaville. It will be imperative that any industry that interfaces directly with visitors or tourists helps promote Suisun Valley as one of the area's attractions. In addition, all current and future lodging establishments need to be aware of the Valley's offerings. Strategies to strengthen collaborations and expand awareness of the Valley's agritourism include:

- **Make a presentation to the Fairfield Hotel Association members.** The members of the Fairfield Hotel Association consist of the major hotel/motel operators in Fairfield. Request to make a short presentation to the owners and managers of the hotels. Keep the presentation focused on what the managers need to know about Suisun Valley and the agritourism enterprises and related businesses so they can promote or market it to their visitors. Demonstrate how to navigate through the Valley's Web site and make sure to leave them with an adequate amount of the Harvest Trails brochure as well as rack cards. Inquire if there are any opportunities to have a storyboard about Suisun Valley Agriculture and the Harvest Trails in their lobby. A special touch would be to leave behind something from one of the enterprises (to eat or drink). Follow up with each hotel to see if they have any questions, need more marketing collateral and/or would like to work together to offer their visitors with special tours, promotions or coupons. Make sure that the video portion about Suisun Valley in the Fairfield hotel rooms is up-to-date.
- **Start to nurture a relationship with the new hotel being built in Suisun City.** The hotel in Suisun City is just breaking ground and now is the perfect time to build collaboration with the owner/operator. Get in on the ground floor and explore opportunities to have some type of marketing collateral and special promotional information about the Trails and agricultural enterprises in every room. Consider creating a special rack card that is placed in every room that offers visitors a free wine tasting at the coop or a free bunch of flowers at one of the farms or a free basket of strawberries, etc.
- **Foster relationships with the Hotel Associations and CVB's in the regional trade areas.** Contact any hotel associations, conference and visitor bureaus or visitor centers that are located within your regional trade area and introduce yourself. Often these entities are hosting or are aware of conferences or meetings where groups want to take an excursion. Make it Suisun Valley and not Napa!! Consider sending them a full promotional package that includes a customized cover letter, all of Suisun Valley's marketing collateral, promotional materials about your members and related businesses, advertisement or brochure about the Fun Family Farm Days, etc. Follow up with a call, or hold a "fam" (familiarization) tour for all area hotels and CVBs (like the tour mentioned in Objective 1.5). Add these entities to your contact list for publicity and newsletters and regularly follow up to keep them informed about the exciting activities in Suisun Valley.
- **Develop a training program for the front line employees of hotels and other related visitor/tourist based operations.** The front line of any visitor-related venue often functions as a mini visitor center answering questions about what to do and where to go in the local area. Work with the Fairfield Hotel Association, Chambers of Commerce and City agencies to host a training program that educates their front line employees about the Valley, agritourism and the related

enterprises. Leave them with lots of goodies and offer to host a specific farm tour just for the front line. Follow up regularly and always make sure that everyone has plenty of your marketing materials on hand.

- **Contact the Vacaville Conference and Visitors Bureau.** Unlike the Fairfield Hotel Association where you already have a relationship, it appears that there is less of a collaboration or partnership with the Vacaville CVB. As a result, you will need to be start from square one and approach the CVB accordingly. Consider first meeting one-on-one with the executive director to explore their understanding of Suisun Valley's agritourism and see if there are any possibilities of working together. Follow up as needed. Because the Vacaville CVB may not promote the Valley, do not invest a great deal of time with this agency unless you see the possibility of collaboration.

Objective 1.10 Link Your Agricultural Enterprises to Other Local Sectors to Expand the Offerings. Agritourism cannot survive in isolation from other services and sectors. Visitors want a variety of experiences throughout their day. For those staying over, it starts with breakfast and ends with evening activities. Eating and shopping are considered necessities. Some of the existing Valley agricultural enterprises have already built into their operations added-value activities or programs to help extend a visitors experience, however, not all farms will be able to fill that need. As a result dining and shopping opportunities as well as other community services are critically important for completing the visitor's experience. The ambiance of traditional "Main Street" downtown districts, recreational opportunities including state lands, and water access are important allied tourism venues. By developing suggested visitation programs and ready-made packages, the interests of various target groups could be met. Several strategies for consideration include:

- **Bundle activities with local sectors.** An effective way to expand the inventory offerings and help extend visitors stay in the Valley is to bundle or package various activities, services and amenities. Offer "escape for the weekend" getaways bundling lodging, farm tours, wine tasting and dinner as the package. Offer packages oriented toward attracting families bundling farm tours, picnics, tour of Jelly Belly, etc. Explore "sisters" or girlfriend weekend outings. Build packages targeted at biking enthusiasts, groups interested in gardening and farming, etc. Work with local sectors to brainstorm on various packages. Post the packages on your Web site as well as encourage the agricultural enterprises and local sectors to also promote them through their marketing channels.
- **Itinerary Section on the Web site.** Within the "Visitor Section" on your Web site, have a page dedicated to how visitors can spend a day or a weekend in the Valley. Have example itineraries listed linking to the various venues or attractions sites. Incorporate actual pictures of people enjoying their day in the Valley. List the packages that you have coordinated within this section of the Web site. Be creative and have fun with this page. Help visitors imagine a day or weekend in the Valley.
- **Work with the Fairfield and Suisun City Business and Downtown Associations to explore additional bundling, cross promotion and other ways to link local sectors with Valley enterprises and activities.** Make a presentation to the marketing committee of these associations. Provide an overview the various activities offered throughout the Valley, provide them with marketing materials and open up the discussion of your desire to bundle or package with their members or related businesses. Explore joint advertising opportunities to help leverage everyone's marketing resources. Discuss any opportunities or

ideas that the associations either host events or advertising regarding special holidays or events that the Valley could piggyback on. Offer to provide a series of articles about agritourism in general, the value of the Valley and the various enterprises and related activities for their newsletters. Offer to provide for their members or related businesses a fact sheet about Suisun Valley and additional brochures, maps or rack cards so that they can distribute the within their individual operations.

Objective 1.11 Work with your members, other agricultural enterprises and related businesses to strengthen customer relations and foster a “visitor friendly” environment throughout Suisun Valley. As mentioned previously, agritourism can be defined as “set of activities that occur when people link travel with the products, services and experiences of agriculture.” The product itself can be an “experience.” As a result, many enterprises will find themselves suddenly in the *people* business and not necessarily in farming. They find themselves working directly with the consumer in a relationship just as important, if not more important than the product they are selling. It will be imperative that at minimum, your members understand the importance of making visitors/customers feel welcomed and comfortable and have the training and tools to support strong customer relations. In turn, efforts should also focus on fostering a “visitor friendly” environment throughout Suisun Valley so that anyone who comes to visit and have one a memorable, positive experience and spreads the word. Positioning the entire Suisun Valley as “visitor friendly” could be your strongest competitive edge over the Napa and Sonoma areas. Below are several strategies for consideration:

- **Host a series of workshops or trainings.** Consider hosting regular workshops or trainings (bi-yearly or quarterly) that are focused on helping your members and related agricultural enterprises and businesses strengthen their visitor hospitality and customer service skills. Look for experienced speakers/trainers in the field of agritourism, hospitality and visitor/tourist development. Consider partnering with Solano College’s Small Business Development Center to leverage resources as well as the local Hotel Association, business or downtown groups and other related sectors. Topics could be as simple as *Hosting Visitors at your Farm* to as detailed as *Monitoring Customer Behavior* and *Dealing with Customer Concerns*. Consider group types of workshops as well as providing one-on-one visitations. As interest grows, host additional workshops to address your members’ specific needs and concerns such as marketing ideas, expanding activities and offerings, utilizing the Web site as an e-commerce site, etc.
- **Series of educational articles in newsletter and Web site.** In addition to hosting regular workshops or trainings, have regular educational articles in your member newsletter, posted on your Web site in the growers’ area as well as individual flyers related to agritourism, customer services and general hospitality as it relates to the visitors.
- **Continue to work with your members to operate as “mini-visitor centers.”** Many of your members and related businesses or agricultural enterprises have each other’s marketing collateral at their locations. However, staff was not always knowledgeable about all of the Valley’s agricultural enterprises and activities and able to cross-market other members or related businesses. Make sure that every member is well versed on each other’s operations, including hours open, how to get there, products and services, etc. Work with your members to teach them how to train their staff on how to answer a visitor’s question about the other enterprises located on the Trail and how to refer accordingly. The skill of referral does not often come natural to front line staff. Make sure that everyone is trained on how to keep the visitor on the trail and in

the Valley longer.

- **Community Data Bank.** When a visitor comes to your community, the red carpet should be rolled out and they should feel welcomed. Work with all your members and related agricultural enterprises and businesses to educate them about the community and surrounding area so that when a visitor asks a question about where to eat or what to visit, any member enterprise or related business can answer it with detail, enthusiasm and sincerity. Questions that all your members or related businesses should be able to answer include:
 - *Are there any museums or historical sites in the community?*
 - *What kinds of lodging accommodations are available?*
 - *Can you recommend a good place to eat?*
 - *Are there any local activities or special events occurring in the next two days?*
 - *Where is there shopping?*
 - *What is it like living in this community?*

Create a “cheat sheet” for each of your members with the answer to the above referenced questions. Invite representatives from the various visitor related sectors to provide a brief (15 minute) overview at your regular membership meetings. If you can make every visitor feel special and part of the community instead of an annoyance or just another “tourist”, they will spread the word, return time and time again and bring their friends.

- **Create a “visitor center” location along the trail.** It appears that currently Fairfield Chamber of Commerce functions as one of Solano County’s primary *physical* visitor centers. Although located in a very professional building, the Chamber’s location is well outside of Suisun Valley. As amenities and activities grow and agritourism is strengthened through the County, the Valley may eventually need a centrally located place that is open seven days a week to function as a visitor’s center. The Center would be able to distribute collateral, greet visitors, be an additional outlet to sell Valley agricultural products and help promote agricultural awareness and enterprises. However, funding and managing this type of operation is a huge commitment and should only be considered after Suisun Valley has stabilized its organization, hired professional staff to oversee the organization and grow an adequate budget to support this type of endeavor. **This is further discussed in Goal 4.**

Objective 1.12 Continue to enhance and expand wayfinding throughout Suisun Valley. Navigating around the Valley is key to ensuring that visitors have a fun and hassle-free experience. Because the various agricultural enterprises are spread out within the Valley, it will be imperative that there is consistent, well-marked signage for both the Valley in general as well as individual enterprises.



Wayfinding signs installed in 2008.

Continue efforts to get the Suisun Valley Wayfinding signage installed as planned and evaluate how well it is working and if it can be improved. Make sure to incorporate the sign locations into any marketing collateral and maps used to promote the area. As a longer-term objective, consider installing several road side kiosks that include a map of the Valley that identifies key locations, and has a space for a “take-away” map and business listings. Work with members and related agricultural enterprises and businesses to install individual signage that clearly indicates when they are open to the public, hours and season, and what the visitor can see or do. Work with members to help them understand how signage is part of their overall *brand* or image. Explore the possibilities of creating a small grant that can help your businesses with new signage.

Objective 1.13 Implement a method to track the impact of your marketing objectives. Tracking your marketing efforts is critically important to measuring both the impact of your efforts as well as the overall effectiveness of the various programs. As you move forward with implementing a variety of marketing efforts, it will be important to know which ones have hit your target and why, and which ones did not and why, so you can make strategic changes accordingly. In addition, developing a method to measure the direct impact of your marketing will be imperative to quantifying the return on investment for your funding partners and members. It can take up to seven impressions or mentions before a person makes a decision. Be sensitive to this fact and think through any changes in your marketing program. Create an annual program of work and then measure the results or impact over a period of time. Make key decisions that are based in data gathered directly from your customers and that you have a good sampling of responses. Below are several strategies for consideration:

- **Ask every member, agricultural enterprises and related business or supporting agency to ask every one the question, “How Did You Discover Us?”** Work with your members and related enterprises and businesses to get in the habit of asking their customers and visitors the simple question of “How did you discover us?” Provide your members with a simple tracking sheet to record the responses. Although businesses should always ask this question to help them measure the effectiveness of their own marketing or advertising, you may want to have your key enterprises ask this question during the time when the Valley has launched a new marketing program or venue, made a change to the Web site, or added a new event or program. Each month, evaluate the data and make any changes as needed. Publish the results so your members can in turn make changes to their individual marketing or advertising programs.
- **Survey.** In addition to asking individuals when they are on-site how they discovered the Valley or particular enterprise, survey key market groups several times a year to gather additional input and opinions. Consider questions that not only gather demographic information (where they live, age, income, etc.) but also ask about their experience in the Valley, how effective the marketing worked for them, what else would they like to see, what else did they do while in the Valley, etc. There are some very cost effective Web-based survey tools available to assist with creating, distributing and tracking results. One such program is www.surveymonkey.com. Cost is relatively low (about \$200 per year) and offers an array of options and tools. As with any survey tool, think through the data you want to test and then develop the questions accordingly. Publish the results on your Web site in the growers’ area as well as making it available to all your members. In addition, assist any of your members that may be are interested in using a survey to gather information or data about their operation or business.
- **Determine the Return on Investment (ROI) with your marketing and advertising programs.** Develop a system that can quantify the impact of your

marketing efforts and in turn, determine the return on the investment (ROI). If you are gathering data regarding how folks are discovering the Valley and the various enterprises, then you should be able determine the impact of your paid marketing and advertising efforts by dividing the cost of the program by the number of impressions or responses. Make sure that you have a system linked with your Web site that measures the impact/ROI of your web-based programs (monthly statistics). It is harder to measure the return on publicity or “free advertising” however, located in the Appendix is a simple method of how to calculate the return of investment on newspaper, magazine and even web-based articles.

Goal 2: Expand awareness of Suisun Valley as a local source for food, wine and other related businesses

The local awareness of Suisun Valley has increased over the last several years because of the efforts of the Suisun Valley Fund. More locals have discovered the Valley, its wineries, produce stands and other related businesses. Fun Family Farm Days has brought awareness of the Valley to the local market, as well as the other marketing efforts of the Fund.

As with any business, local promotion and awareness plays a major part of its success. Given that Fairfield’s population has increased 8.2% since 2000, and that we can conservatively assume that 10% of the population turns over each year due to job changes, family changes, military transfers, etc., local promotion of the Valley needs to always be consistent.

Demographics for the population 25 years and over in Fairfield include:

- * High school graduate or higher: 85.0%
- * Bachelor's degree or higher: 20.4%
- * Graduate or professional degree: 6.1%
- * Unemployed: 6.6%
- * Mean travel time to work: 29.5 minutes

Estimated median household income for Fairfield in 2007:
\$65,481 (it was \$51,151 in 2000)
California: \$59,948

The Valley should continue focusing its marketing efforts to attract interest from the immediate local trade area and gradually expand efforts to encompass a larger regional market, including “riding the wave” of the local food movement that is becoming prevalent in California. Positioning Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination regionally was addressed specifically in **Goal 1**.

The following objectives are targeted at reaching the local market; many of **Goal 1’s** suggestions will work for both markets.

Objective 2.1 Develop a series of promotional and advertising venues targeted directly to reach the new residents moving into the region. People new to the area do not generally realize what is available in the area until they have a chance to integrate themselves by talking to new neighbors, new friends and exploring the area on their own. By reaching new residents to come out and explore the Valley when they are new, they can not only experience the local culture, but also develop new habits that make the Valley part of their shopping and cultural routine. Specific strategies to support this include:

- **Make sure that the Suisun Valley marketing piece is included in relocation packets, visitor packets, racks, subdivision sales offices and other key places.** Increase awareness of the Valley when a person is considering moving into the area. If the organization is not a member of the local chambers of commerce, it should join and provide information to the chambers specifically for relocation packages. The organization may also wish to visit local Realtors'® offices as many of them have in-house (franchise) relocation operations.
- **Explore partnership with Welcome Wagon.** Although the day of door-to-door neighborly visits are a thing of the past, Welcome Wagon is still committed to connecting with new homebuyers through their mailboxes and the Internet. They still welcome families to their new homes by providing them with the names and numbers of many local businesses and services that they believe will benefit them as they settle into their new homes.
- **Yearly Direct Mail piece to new residents.** You can purchase a list of addresses for new homeowners in a specific area by zip code and filter the list by demographic information. One such site is www.infousa.com. There is a fee for purchasing the list; however, by identifying new homeowners in the local area, you will increase awareness of the Valley to individuals and households who may not otherwise know its existence.
- **Link with local homeowners associations/neighborhood groups.** We note that many local homeowners associations and neighborhood groups have their own Web sites and newsletters. An example is the Paradise Valley Estates group, that has a tourism page where the Suisun Valley Web site is linked (http://www.pvestates.com/06_02linkstourism.html#). Explore possibilities of getting on other local homeowner association Web sites.

Objective 2.2 Keep Suisun Valley at the “top of the mind” for locals as a viable place to buy wine and fresh produce and the importance of supporting local agriculture through networking. Having a strong local presence is important for Valley; networking through schools, clubs and businesses is essential for reminders to locals of the Valley's importance in the region. We suggest the following:

- **Continue to serve as a speaker for local clubs and organizations.** Continue to have the Agricultural Ambassador speak at local service clubs and other organizations to remind them of the importance of local agriculture and what the Valley has to offer. Send a letter to local clubs and organizations making them aware that a speaker from Suisun Valley is available. Marketing materials and maps should be given out at these meetings, plus a special “door prize” of Valley products.
- **Provide articles about what is happening in Suisun Valley for other local organizations' newsletters.** PTAs/PTOs, service clubs, downtown organizations, chambers of commerce and other organizations are always looking for articles of interest for their members to put in their printed or electronic newsletters. Provide an overview article about the Valley and its products, businesses and services and special event articles; always provide logo.
- **Continue to generate, create and distribute positive media stories/press releases to enhance the Valley's image.** Distribute regular press releases about the Valley. In addition to promoting events, consider press releases and articles about new business openings, expansions and anniversaries, employee

personalities, profiles on unique business practices, products, and business and property owners and their accomplishments. The media can be hesitant if they believe that press releases are marketing specific Valley businesses, so efforts will need to focus on what is new in the Valley as a whole, including general interest stories.

- **Have all members and supporting businesses use the Suisun Valley logo in their individual marketing collateral and promotional pieces.** Suisun Valley's logo should be on all members' marketing materials, their individual Web sites, advertisements in newspaper and magazines, etc. By doing this, it not only shows support for the organization and cohesiveness among the growers, wineries, and other supporting businesses, but also brands the members' businesses as being part of a larger professional association/network.
- **Have restaurants identify with Suisun Valley brand that they offer local produce and wines on their menu.** Encourage local restaurants to use the Valley logo placard in the Valley and other local restaurants at the counter or behind the counter to show that local fresh produce is used in their menus or that they serve Suisun Valley. Create a simple marketing piece to convey the message, or create signage, such as Fresh Choice uses for the produce they buy from the Castaneda Brothers. Give them your logo and encourage them to use it when they reprint their menus to show which of their served wines come from Suisun Valley.



- **Work with local retailers to incorporate signage that states they carry local wine.** Create a point of sale marketing piece that has Suisun Valley logo and information.
- **Outreach to Schools – Farm Tours.** Continue to promote the availability of farm tours to local elementary schools. Work with Valley growers to establish who is willing and available to do these farm tours and establish a schedule when growers are available. Consider a program that schools can also adopt a garden, vine or tree.
- **Consider starting a “Farm to School Connection” program.** The Davis Farm to School Connection started about 10 years ago with people complaining about school food. Delaine Eastin, the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time, had called for a garden at every school. Farm to school groups were already forming.

The mission of the Davis Farm to School Connection is to create an educational and cultural environment in our schools that connects food choices with personal health, community, farms and land. It operates on the principle that children and adults take pleasure in the natural world and the fruits of its soil, enjoy the ritual of the table and engage all of their senses when they eat, garden or visit a farm. It engages children and adults in the seed-to-table cycle that consists of six steps: sowing, growing, reaping, preparing, eating and recycling.

Through gardening and visiting farms children and adults discover the joy of growing, preparing and eating fresh fruits and vegetables, and participating in daily outdoor activities, which are critical to their mental and physical well being. Through participation in this cycle, children and adults learn to become stewards of the Earth, and feel that the community values the seed-to-table cycle at every level (students, teachers, parents, district staff, local businesses, farmers, health providers, county and state agencies).

The program aims to increase locally grown, farm-fresh foods in the school lunch program, snack offerings and fundraising efforts. Davis Senior High and all three junior high schools now offer a complete menu of freshly prepared, mouthwatering dishes, in addition to the standard fare. Each school offers a "Farm to School Hot or Cold Bar," which features a "Farmer's Market Garden Salad Bar," "Southwest Taco Bar," "Hot Potato Bar," and a "Deli Sandwich Bar." Students can build a delicious, healthful meal from locally grown, seasonal and sustainable foods. For more information on Davis Farm to School Connection, visit www.davisfarmtoschool.org.

- **Continue to support and expand cluster cooperative advertising programs and continue the consistent image of Suisun Valley in all communication venues.** In addition to the cooperative advertising done in the local newspaper, we suggest considering additional local cooperative advertising, using the Valley's logo, tagline and name consistently in all communications. This type of advertising will leverage the organization's marketing budget while promoting the Valley as a whole. Suggestions include:
 - **Radio** – Produce a "donut" commercial with a local radio station. The first 20 seconds of the commercial would talk about the Valley and what it has to offer and/or upcoming special events; the next 30 seconds of the commercial is about a Valley business (the business would pay for this portion of the commercial) and the last 10 seconds would remind the radio listener (a call to action) to come to the Valley for a special event, wine tasting, lunch, etc. Suisun City Historic Waterfront (downtown Suisun) has done this successfully.
 - **Cable TV** – Same idea as the above-mentioned radio donut commercial, only with positive film images of the Valley, its businesses, places to see, places to eat, and a cable TV commercial of a Valley business.
 - **Coupon books/magazines** – Valley businesses should cluster their ads together in a section of the coupon/book magazine such as the Breeze and have a heading with "Suisun Valley" in the branded font along with the Valley's logo and tagline.
 - **Flyers available in Valley businesses** – Valley businesses should cluster advertising about their businesses in high quality, professionally produced flyers to cross-promote each other's businesses. These flyers should be placed in the advertised businesses, Chambers of Commerce,

Jelly Belly, Anheuser-Busch, and other high traffic areas.

- **Movie slides** could be run in local movie theatres with different Valley businesses appearing on half of each slide; Suisun Valley's logo, font and Web site address would appear on the other half of the slide. This should be kept simple as each slide only appears for seven seconds on the movie screen.
- **Continue to promote and expand local familiarization tours.** Local "fam" tours on a bus, like the one done this year for local city dignitaries should be expanded to include Fairfield, Suisun City, Dixon, Benicia, Vallejo and Vacaville senior centers and independent living centers as a short day trip that could include lunch at a Valley restaurant, a stop at a produce stand and a stop at a winery and would include a narrated tour about the Valley's history and opportunities. These types of tours can be expanded and customized for other local groups such as the Red Hat Society, the local Garden Club, etc.
- **Buy Fresh, Buy Local program expanded and promoted to local corporations.** Consider outreach to local corporations to have them include information on Suisun Valley in their new employee packages and orientations. During peak season, create a poster that talks about the Valley's agricultural values, lists the various venues and activities and encourages locals to eat local. Strategically distribute the poster in key locations such as large employers lunchrooms, teachers' lunchrooms, community bulletin boards, etc.
- **Host a Mixer for the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce.** If the organization is a member of the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce, consider hosting a mixer at one of the Valley's wineries for the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce. (If the organization is not a member, please consider joining for the networking benefits, including placement of flyers in their mailings). Besides having the local wineries provide wine and wine tasting at this event, have the produce stands and Valley restaurants provide the food as well as having displays about Suisun Valley. You may wish to check with the Chamber regarding any non-member policy restrictions.
- **Continue to have a booth promoting the Valley at large community based events.** It's important to have a booth at large festivals and community events such as the Tomato Festival, Candy Festival, business expos, street fairs, waterfront events in Suisun City, Fairfield and Vacaville to continue to promote the Valley and give it additional exposure to locals. Have a magnet with logo and your Web site address as a give away premium.

Objective 2.3 Develop a series of promotional and advertising venues targeted directly to reach local residents.

- **Publish a yearly local media tab specific for Suisun Valley during National Ag Week.** National Ag Week is March 15-21, 2009; National Ag Day is March 20, 2009 and occurs every year on the first day of spring. The organization, Ag Day (www.agday.org) honors agriculture for providing safe, abundant and affordable products, a strong economy, a source of renewable energy, and a world of job opportunities. The Valley can draw attention to itself by not only publishing a media tab, but also by holding events in conjunction with this week. Their Web site includes event ideas, such as an Ag Day Breakfast (plan your menu around locally grown and raised agriculture products) for local government and business leaders and having a keynote speaker to talk about agriculture; organizing an exhibit at the mall; approaching public or school

libraries about organizing an exhibit during Ag Week; hosting a classroom field trips to a local farms, and essay contests. Have all local jurisdictions proclaim support of local agriculture for this event. An Ag Day media kit is available to build articles for the media. This tab and these events would 1) promote the valley, 2) encourage joint advertising for Valley enterprises and show a coordinated effort, and 3) build advocacy for the Valley.

- **Work with local businesses to support all events with window displays and have information in their stores.** Although we saw lots of signage and posters on Fun Family Farm days, we did not notice any advertising of the event in local businesses in Fairfield and Suisun City. If you did not take the local newspaper or listen to local radio, or happen to be out in the Valley prior to the event, you may not have heard about it. Although this is time consuming, work with local businesses that will be willing to display materials in their windows and on their counters.

Objective 2.4 Expand local outreach to Vacaville. We note that Suisun Valley’s connection to Vacaville is weak, and that there is plenty of opportunity for expansion to make Vacaville residents aware of the short drive to Suisun Valley.

- **Start with connections to the Vacaville Conference and Visitor’s Bureau.** (www.vacavillenow.com) – Suisun Valley is **not** listed under their “Around Vacaville” section of their Web site, where visitors can discover what’s just a short drive away from Vacaville. We note that local (and further) attractions such as Anheuser Busch, Jelly Belly and Sepay Groves, plus casino, and museums and attractions in Vallejo and Benicia are listed.
- **Consider joining the Vacaville Chamber of Commerce.** Again, if the organization is not a member of the local chambers of commerce, it should join and provide information to the chambers specifically for relocation packages, and the ability to promote events and specials through their advertising mediums. Network through their mixers and events.
- **Continue sending press releases to local media and free advertising venues in Vacaville.** The Vacaville Reporter, KUIC and S&J Advertising should continue to receive your press releases and event listings. Continue to track where visitors found out about your events from these free venues.
- **Yourvacaville.com** – The Web site has its own internal links to Suisun Valley, wineries and produce stands. The new “sister” site, www.solanocountybackroads.com, has an interesting video on Wooden Valley Winery. The recent proposal (10-7-08) of becoming an advertiser for \$500/month to place an I-frame link to www.suisunvalley.com and adding Harvest Trails information on four other pages seems expensive for 30,000 visitors monthly (it was not clear in the proposal if those were unique visits, or a total of Web “hits”). We do not see any other type of paid advertiser on the front page of the Web site. Explore this type of advertising after developing stronger partnership with the Vacaville CVB and Vacaville Chamber.

Goal 3: Strengthen cooperation among growers, wineries and other related businesses to increase profitability.

As Suisun Valley moves forward with implementing its marketing plan and starts to successfully attract locals and visitors to the area, it will be crucial that there is a strong working relationship between the agricultural enterprises (growers and wineries), related businesses and other key sectors to maximize the opportunities and increase profitability. Creating consistent communication networks will be key to keeping all members, partners and the community in general well informed about priorities, upcoming meetings, status of projects, activities and benchmarks related to Suisun Valley and agritourism. Helping the various agricultural enterprises understand the importance of working together and exploring ways they can cross-market each other will be key to increasing profitability among them. Finally, working with other related sectors to piggyback on each other's marketing efforts will help increase profitability among the enterprises as well as continue to brand Suisun Valley as an agricultural destination for locals and visitors alike.

Objective 3.1 Enhance communications among the agricultural enterprises. Keeping all of the members and related agricultural enterprises up to speed on meetings, trends, and new programs will be key to strengthening cooperation among them and building a stronger "grower-to-grower" network. The Suisun Valley Web site currently has a "growers area" to update the Web site – think about adding resources to this section (or create a new section) for the Valley's "internal" audience—the agricultural enterprises themselves. Resources such as sample marketing budgets, crop issues and solutions, special event ideas, job descriptions and employment issues, business and retail issues, etc. related to their industry would be able to be accessed by members only.

Twice a month, the Growers' Subcommittee meetings have been held inviting growers, public agencies and other related sectors to come together to discuss key issues and initiatives (i.e. General Plan update). A part time (30 hours a week) Agricultural Ambassador position has been supported through the gracious funding provided by the Suisun Valley Fund. The Agricultural Ambassador has done an excellent job networking with the agricultural enterprises, gathering feedback and helping implement various activities. Efforts to sustain and expand these existing communication networks should be a priority for the Valley. Several strategies to consider include:

- **Maintain a strong *Brand* for Suisun Valley Harvest Trails.** As the Valley moves forward with forming the new Suisun Valley Harvest Trails organization and obtaining the non-profit tax-exempt status accordingly, efforts to maintain a strong *brand* for the new organization should be implemented. Marketing the Valley and attracting customers or visitors to the region will still continue, of course, and we would suggest transferring the current branding of Suisun Valley over to the new organization.
- **Database.** Maintain an accurate database of all agricultural enterprises and related businesses as well as other local sectors and organizations in the Valley. Keep the *email* database that you already have as well as a base for direct mail purposes. Update the database regularly so that contact information is always current.
- **Publish a quarterly newsletter for the growers only.** The objective of the newsletter is to provide your members and related agricultural enterprises information that will help them compete more effectively and increase profitability among them all. Make sure that this newsletter does not become the venue to promote the

“organization”. The newsletter should contain information about current Valley developments, upcoming promotional activities, listing of new or expanding enterprises, incentives or trainings available, educational articles, listing of all meetings and contact information regarding the support organization and work groups or committees. Today more and more organizations are moving away from printed newsletters and using primarily email based newsletters to stay in front of their members and partners. The newsletter should also be downloadable from the Web site from the “Growers Area.” Contact other agricultural-based organizations to see what their newsletters look like and the type of content included.

- **Grower-to-grower networking.** Encourage “grower-to-grower” (or enterprise to enterprise) networking that enables growers to learn about new business strategies and regain confidence and optimism in their future. Each quarter host a “Get to Know Each Other” meeting or forum, such as the “End of Harvest and Fun Family Farm Days BBQ at Erickson Ranch” on November 15, 2008. Alternate locations so that the forum is held at a different enterprise each time. Plan both a social as well as educational component to the forums. Invite a related business or sector to come and speak about their business or industry and how they support agritourism (i.e. representative from the Fairfield Hotel Association, a downtown Suisun City business, etc). Share ideas and network with each other.

Objective 3.2 Provide cooperative advertising and promotional assistance for members and related agricultural enterprises that enable them to reach more customers. For individual enterprises or businesses to advertise as often as they need to penetrate the marketplace can be a very expensive endeavor with sometimes less than expected impact. However providing opportunities for members and related agricultural enterprises or businesses to *cluster* together and buy into a group advertising plan can be a powerful marketing tool for reaching the market and increasing profitability. Many advertising venues or agencies offer a lower rate for non-profit organizations than the open market rate many small businesses have to pay. Work with your local and regional advertising venues to pass this savings on by “buying” a whole page and reselling smaller blocks of space back to your members and related enterprises (much like you have successfully done with marketing the Fun Family Farm Days event.) Of course, the enterprises and businesses should continue advertising on an individual basis but offer cluster or cooperative advertising opportunities at least four times a year that all enterprises and related businesses can afford. Investigate optimal placement four times a year; for example, create a Halloween Harvest promotion for the *Back to School* supplements or a holiday promotion in area newspapers. Again, remind your enterprises to track impact and measure the success of the program by having them ask **their** customers for the week after the cluster or cooperative program is released “how did you discover our farm, winery or business.”

Objective 3.3 Encourage all agricultural enterprises and related businesses located in Suisun Valley to cross-market each other. One of the most powerful techniques for increasing profitability is an individual business is to learn how to cross-sell or market other products or services to an existing customer. The same is true for a “shopping district” or within a destination like the Valley. The longer a customer stays in the district or region and buys, eats and visits, the more opportunities for enterprises and related businesses to increase their bottom line. Strategies to consider include:

- **Staff Orientation.** Most often, the owner of an enterprise or business is comfortable with cross-marketing other venues near their location. They typically network with other business owners, know what they offer and can easily refer another venue or business to the customers. However, during peak season, many enterprises bring on additional staff to interface with the customer. Staff training is an essential component in ensuring a customer or

visitor stays in the Valley longer. Make sure that all enterprises and related businesses understand that their staff should be knowledgeable and well informed about the other operations, services, products and the amenities available in the Valley and that they feel comfortable cross marketing the various venues. Consider hosting a Valley-wide workshop focused at teaching owners and staff how to ask specific questions related to what else the customer is interested in doing. Have each agricultural enterprise share a 30 second description about their venue and the products or services they provide. Encourage all enterprises and related businesses to bring their individual marketing collateral to leave with each other.



- **Provide a quarterly drive around.** Each quarter, host a Valley drive around for owners and staff. Many times, owners and staff are so busy taking care of business at their enterprise that they literally do not have time to get out and visit other Valley venues or businesses. Rent a van, pile in and take a windshield tour of the Valley. Focus on key attractions, cross roads, signage, points of interest, picnic areas, etc. Use this opportunity to also do a self-assessment of the Valley in terms of how does the area, agricultural enterprises and related businesses present themselves to the customers? Is signage working? Do all enterprises have adequate signage? Is the Valley clean and free of litter, graffiti etc.? Make notes of general areas of concern and link with the appropriate agencies or organizations to solve any issues.
- **Create a “business” packet for existing and new enterprises.** Assemble a packet for all agricultural enterprises and related businesses that includes key information about doing business in the Valley. The packet should contain the Harvest Trails Map, information about the Fund (or the new organization as it develops) and benefits of joining, information on any key initiatives affecting agriculture in the Valley, advertising or promotional opportunities, listing of upcoming meetings or forums, “goodies” or give-aways from fellow enterprises, fact sheet, JPG of the logo and how to use, latest press releases, etc. For a new enterprise, have several existing business owners make the visit and leave the packet. Introduce your self and start the cross-marketing from that point forward.

Objectives 3.4 Encourage agricultural enterprises and related businesses to work together and create bounce back promotions, put together packages and/or piggyback on each others’ individual marketing and promotional activities. As mentioned previously, an effective way to expand the inventory offerings and help extend visitors stay in the Valley is to bundle various activities, services and amenities and offer a daylong or weekend “Valley package”. This technique can also be very effective when several enterprises and related businesses get together and explore the possibilities of bundling services and products together offering a smaller, more individual package. Below are several strategies to consider, however, the sky is the limit in terms of what

businesses can create and put together.

- **Bounce-back Promotions.** Individual businesses use bounce-back promotions or coupons at the time of purchase to encourage repeat business from their customers. For example, many pizza restaurants tape coupons on pizza boxes as part of the take-out or delivery orders. Encourage the agricultural enterprises to develop bounce-back promotions with the restaurants and coffee houses in the Valley. For example, a customer visiting a farm could receive a “coupon” for a two for one lunch at one of the Valley’s restaurants or a free dessert with a purchase of a full entrée or a free lemonade with lunch. Bounce back promotions can also be designed to bring customers back for designated periods. Work with members, related enterprises, and related businesses to develop some type of bounce-back promotion targeted at those who attend the Fun Farm Family Days encouraging them to return later in the season. For example, a coupon good for one free pumpkin during October could be given out during the August Fun Farm Family Days.
- **Buying or Loyalty Card.** This type of promotion has been very successful with coffee houses, restaurants and even hair salons. For example, after the 10th cup of coffee is punched on your card, you get one free. Or after you buy \$50 worth of products or services then receive 25% off or a free hair cut. Consider working with your farmers and growers to create a “Fresh Local Produce” Card that after the customer purchases a certain dollar amount of local produce or after some many farm visits; they receive a free . . . (fill in the blank). Have your wineries work together and create a “Wine Tasting” Card that consumers purchase for \$25 to allow them a free taste at all the wineries. The wine tasting rooms and facilities located in Downtown Napa created this promotion focused at capturing customers before they head up the Valley. The card was sold at all the wineries, several of the downtown hotels and at Copia. The direct return for the individual enterprises is that they can use the opportunity of having the customer visit their operation or facility to cross sell them additional products or services thus increasing profitability among them all.

A Valley “Loyalty Card” could also be given out for free by placing them at the Valley businesses and/or by direct mail; offerings and discounts can be accessed at the suisunvalley.com Web site, which would do two things – 1) drive more traffic to the Web site and 2) allow seasonal updates and changes to the offer or discount.

- **Piggyback on each other’s events or promotions.** Many of the agricultural enterprises and related businesses host “mini-events” at their locations and have a healthy promotional calendar already. Without directly competing with each other, the enterprises and businesses should look at opportunities to piggyback on these “mini-events” or promotions. This could be as simple as being open on the day that another enterprise is hosting a “mini-event” or offering to set up a booth at the actual event itself or piggybacking on cluster advertising opportunities.

Objective 3.5 Leverage Community-based Events. As with many areas or communities, Solano County is not lacking in the area of community based events. Enterprises and related businesses should explore the opportunities to create a “mini-event” or activity on their site during the same period as one of the area’s larger events. Host a workshop focused on teaching members and related enterprises how do leverage a community event. Consider having a booth promoting the Valley and all of the agricultural enterprises and related events, at large community based events such as the Tomato Festival, Candy Festival, business expos, street fairs, waterfront events in Suisun City,

Fairfield and Vacaville to continue to promote the Valley and give it additional exposure to locals as mentioned in Objective 2.2. Have the owners of the various enterprises volunteer to “man” the booth and cross promote the area as well as the other enterprises.

Objective 3.6 Encourage growers and vintners to take advantage of relevant education programs targeted at helping them strengthen their business operations and learning how to increase profitability. The environment for the small business owner is constantly changing and extremely competitive. This is magnified for the small grower or farmer. On-going education is essential for the health of any business, however getting owners or managers to attend workshops or seminars can be difficult for small, family owned operations.

A series of recent studies and extensive outreach initiated by the Solano County Board of Supervisors revealed that the local agricultural community held a perception that the County government was a contributor to a “less-than-friendly” agricultural business climate. The Solano County Board of Supervisors recently created two new positions (Agricultural Principal Planner and the Farm Assistance Revitalization and Marketing (F.A.R.M.) Coordinator) directly related to the implementation of the Agricultural Chapter of the General Plan. The F.A.R.M. Coordinator position was created by the Board to change the “less-than-friendly” perception and will serve as an ombudsman and liaison between the County and local farmers and ranchers.

This commitment by the County to maintain a sustainable agricultural environment in Solano County will be very important for the future of Solano County Agriculture. Strategic plans will be developed that recognize and address the unique agricultural requirements of each of the ten in agricultural regions in the General Plan, including Suisun Valley. The development of the strategic plans will be a priority, along with working with the F.A.R.M. Coordinator as an ombudsman/liaison between the County, farmers and ranchers.

- **Encourage Valley growers and vintners to work with the Solano County Agricultural Principal Planner and the F.A.R.M. Coordinator.** The specialized, one-on-one assistance that will be provided by these positions will help guide the development of the strategic plans for the various agricultural regions in Solano County as well as helping to navigate County processes. Needs assessments for individual growers and vintners should capture information of how the enterprise is doing, identify areas of need and determine what kind of training or assistance is required. In addition, the F.A.R.M. Coordinator will be working with growers and ranchers to promote and increase marketing opportunities for Solano County agriculture. Make sure that there is a strategy in place to measure the impact of additional marketing opportunities that have been implemented. Re-assess the enterprises within a certain time period and measure the increase in sales, increase in farm visits, new products or services added, etc.
- **Know about and refer other resources available to growers and vintners.** Suisun Valley’s Agricultural Ambassador should serve as a resource to growers and vintners of knowing where to go for the latest trends in agriculture and agritourism such as the Cooperative Extension, UC Davis Small Farm Center, the County of Solano and others.

Goal 4: Build support for agriculture as a vital economic development base for Solano County.

It will be important for the future of Suisun Valley to promote agriculture and increase the viability of farming as a vital economic base for Solano County. With the passage of Measure T (Solano County General Plan), Suisun Valley will need to build support and advocate for the necessary changes in order to update and build the infrastructure necessary to accommodate expansion of facilities, reduce barriers and streamline processes that prevent growers from becoming more profitable. Throughout our interviews, it was stated that the infrastructure in Suisun Valley is not adequate in its current state and would be need to be improved before increased numbers of tourists could be accommodated. Primarily this was focused at the road systems and flooding issues.

It was also stated that there was a need from the County to help agriculture and agriculture-related businesses become more profitable with emphasis placed on allowing farms and vineyards to process, store, bottle, can, and package and sell products produced both on-site and off-site. New General Plan policies would also support programs that promote the branding and identity of Suisun Valley products.

The General Plan acknowledges the shift in agricultural as it relates to Solano County and the need for “increasing the value added to agricultural produce locally can help Solano County’s farmers maintain viable businesses. Local processing and sales operations for the county’s farm produce can keep more money from the distribution of agricultural produces in the county” which will be important to the future development of agri-tourism in Suisun Valley.

Developing services that support agritourism including restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts and similar tourist-oriented services should also be a priority for Suisun Valley. It was clearly stated throughout the General Plan that Suisun Valley could provide a unique opportunity for the County to promote agritourism, specifically as a destination for visitors interested in local wine production, farm stands and rural atmosphere while avoiding the traffic of the nearby Napa and Sonoma areas.

Suisun Valley growers will need to keep up their advocacy (as they did as they lobbied for changes in the General Plan).

Objective 4.1 Enhance communication networks and outreach efforts to build support for the importance of agriculture in the county. It will be important for all Suisun Valley growers to promote agriculture as a major county industry, support the streamlining of processes and reduction of any barriers that would inhibit business expansion and support marketing efforts for Solano County-grown and value-added products and agricultural services and compatible activities.

- **Make sure that all Solano County City Council members, Solano County Supervisors and key staff receive the Suisun Valley newsletter and other pertinent communication such as minutes from meetings by print or by email.** Information will be key to let all elected officials and staff know Suisun Valley’s efforts in promoting the Valley, its growers, winemakers, crops available, work plans, advertising efforts, etc.
- **Invite key staff from the County of Solano and the cities to serve as an ex-officio representatives/liaisons on all committees.** Currently there are City of

Fairfield representatives who attend the Growers' Subcommittee; expand that to include inviting a representative from the County; the F.A.R.M. coordinator would be the likely representative.

- **Hold monthly meeting with F.A.R.M. Coordinator.** In addition to the possibility of the F.A.R.M. Coordinator attending the Growers' Subcommittee meeting, consider holding a monthly meeting with him to address grower concerns and receive updates on the progress of the County's strategic marketing and economic plans for County agriculture.

Objective 4.2 Build advocacy among Suisun Valley growers at the local, county and state level. Suisun Valley needs to be represented well on any agricultural committee that is created to advise county government on pertinent land use, permitting and other issues, as well as individuals advocating for changes that would increase profitability for Suisun Valley agricultural businesses.

- **Consider creating an Advocacy and Issues Committee.** Currently, the Growers' Subcommittee focuses mainly on advertising and special events, serving as the marketing "arm" of the organization, but also touches upon other issues at their meetings. In order to focus on advocacy and issues affecting Suisun Valley more clearly and to facilitate greater participation, a separate advocacy and issues committee should be formed. This committee could solely focus on issues that affect profitability, streamlining of processes and reduction of any barriers that would inhibit business expansion.
- **Each year hold a work session between the Suisun Valley growers and the Solano County supervisors, city officials, etc. to review Suisun Valley's accomplishments, discuss priorities and address any issues or needs.** We suggest that this should be done after the suggested breakfast for AgDay as mentioned in Objective 2.3 to build momentum and support for local agriculture.
- **Encourage Valley growers and vintners to work with the Solano County Agricultural Principal Planner and the F.A.R.M. Coordinator.** As mentioned in Objective 3.7, the specialized, one-on-one assistance that will be provided by these positions will help guide the development of the strategic plans for Suisun Valley as well as helping to navigate County processes.

Objective 4.3 Find additional ways to increase grower profitability and advocate for them. There are many sources available specifically addressing agritourism, including books (The New Agritourism: Hosting Community and Tourists on Your Farm, by Barbara Berst Adams), Web sites (www.agritourismworld.com) and conferences that focus on the small farmer and vintners. We suggest looking into the following:

- **Investigate the creation of a Suisun Valley CSA.** Although this has been talked about at the Growers' Subcommittee level and there is a program in place with the County of Solano, an effort should be made to involve the local community about the creation of a Suisun Valley CSA. Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is a relatively new socio-economic model of farming and food distribution. A CSA consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. CSA's focus is usually on a system of weekly delivery or pick-up of vegetables and fruit, and dairy products and meat.

The core design includes developing a cohesive consumer group that is willing to fund a whole season's budget in order to get quality foods. Systems have many variations on how the consumers support the farm budget and how the producers then deliver the foods.

Some families have enrolled in subscription CSAs in which a family pays a fixed price for each delivery, and can start or stop the service as they wish. This kind of arrangement is also referred to as crop-sharing or box schemes. In such cases, the farmer may supplement each box with produce brought in from neighboring farms for a better variety. Thus there is a distinction between the farmers selling pre-paid shares in the upcoming season's harvest or a weekly subscription that represents that week's harvest. In all cases, participants purchase a portion of the farm's harvest either by the season or by the week in return for what the farm is able to successfully grow and harvest.

Yolo County farms such as Capay Fruits & Vegetables (Farm Fresh to You), Full Belly Farm, Good Humus Produce and other organic farms were instrumental in developing this form of direct sales from farms to the consumer. The consumer joins a CSA program and purchases, in advance, a share of the farm's crop, and in exchange is provided a part of the crop each week, delivered to a predetermined pick-up spot, usually near the customer's home or work-site. This provides cash flow to the farm and produce to the consumer. The farms are quite diversified, growing dozens of different crops to supply their customers with a varied selection of food every week.

An advantage of the close consumer-producer relationship is increased freshness of the produce because it does not have to be shipped long distances. The close proximity of the farm to the members also helps the environment by reducing pollution caused by transporting the produce. CSA's often include recipes and farm news in each box. Tours of the farm and work days are announced. Over a period of time, consumers get to know who is producing their food, and what production methods are used.

Seasonal eating is implied, as shares are usually based on the outdoor growing season, which means a smaller selection at the beginning and perhaps the end of the period, as well as a changing variety as the season progresses. Some CSA programs offer different share sizes, also, a choice of share periods (e.g. full-season and peak season).

There is an interesting podcast on how Community Supported Agriculture is positively affecting a neighborhood in Brooklyn. See http://idealist.libsyn.com/index.php?post_id=392992.

- **Further investigate cold storage and central processing.** At Growers' Subcommittee meetings there has been discussion about cold storage (by either a refrigerated truck parked at a facility or actually building a cold storage unit) and growers interviewed indicated interest in central processing facilities. Further gauge Suisun Valley growers' interest in these types of facilities and investigate what it would take to build and create these types of facilities.
- **Investigate the creation of a "visitor center" location along the trail.** There was significant agreement among the stakeholders for agricultural tourism through the creation of small tourist-oriented centers to help attract tourists and provide additional opportunities to market local products.

It appears that currently Fairfield Chamber of Commerce functions as one of Solano County's primary *physical* visitor centers. Although located in a very professional building, the Chamber's location is well outside of Suisun Valley. As amenities and activities grow and agritourism is strengthened through the County, the Valley may eventually need a centrally located place that is open seven days a week to function as a visitor's center. The Center would be able to distribute collateral, greet visitors, be an additional outlet to sell Valley agricultural products and help promote agricultural awareness and enterprises.

There has been discussion about the Gomer School property located on Abernathy Road in Suisun Valley becoming the visitor center, and possibly creating a demonstration farm adjacent to the property. To explore this type of venture, there needs to be a community meeting involving the County, County School District, local historical groups such as the Gomer School Historical Association, Suisun Valley growers and others to gauge interest.



Funding and managing this type of operation is a huge commitment and should only be considered after Suisun Valley has stabilized its organization and grown an adequate budget to support this type of endeavor.

- **Investigate “Farm to School” Programs.** Farm to School programs are increasing in popularity throughout the United States. These programs connect schools with local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities that will last a lifetime, and supporting local small farmers. California resources for this type of venture include Center for Food & Justice, CAFF, Center for Ecoliteracy (a public foundation that supports a grant program for educational organizations and school communities in the Bay Area and Yolo County), Tierra Miguel Foundation Farm, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program at UC Davis, (that has been involved with the farm to school programs in Davis, referred to in Objective 2.3) and others that bring locally grown fruits and vegetables, nutrition education, and agricultural literacy to the children. See www.farmtoschool.org for further information.

Goal 5: Establish the organizational capacity to sustain current activities and develop new programs.

Establishing a strong organization structure to carry forward the marketing plan and support Suisun Valley with achieving its vision as a viable agricultural and agritourism region is by far one of the most important goals. Without the organizational “infrastructure” to implement the various ideas shared in this document (as well as others), the marketing plan will soon become just another plan that sits on the shelf.

Developing an effective and efficient structure to carry forward the plan is probably the hardest goal of all. It takes a strong, focused group of individuals who are willing to do the hard work. There are many options of how organizations coordinate themselves and build the capacity to sustain their activities and program. Most importantly, the approach must reflect the character and resources of the community and have buy-in for stakeholders and partners.

The goal of the organizational framework is to involve as many components of the community as possible and not rely on just one entity, such as the Fund, to oversee and implement the various programs or activities. There must be stable, ongoing funding to support both the programs and activities needed to promote and market the area as well as a paid person dedicated to overseeing and managing the process. In short, it will take consistent funding, commitment from all aspects of the community and a paid person whose primary “job” is to champion the program and implement the activities. Without these three key components, the process will be slow and confidence from the stakeholders, partners and even the community will begin to dwindle.

Objective 5.1 Formulate a transition plan from the Suisun Valley Fund to the Suisun Valley Harvest Trails. The Suisun Valley Harvest Trails (SVHT) is currently organizing their association by obtaining their non-profit designation from the IRS. While this is the beginning of the transition of the programs, marketing and services from the Fund to the new organization, they have not formally started a transition plan to carry forward the work that has been done by SVFAC.

L-L Consulting and lauracolerowe consulting are experienced with non-profit organizations that have been solely volunteer organizations, and some that have transitioned from a fully staffed organization to a volunteer-only organization. It has been our experience that most volunteer-only organizations that previously had staff either become stagnant or disband. The issues can become “Who is going to do the work?” and “I don’t have time to do this because I need to concentrate on my business,” thereby losing their enthusiastic volunteer base.

We strongly recommend that the Growers’ Subcommittee of SVFAC begin to formulate a transition plan during the next two years in order for the programs, marketing and services that the Fund has provided to continue after 2010, even in a more limited capacity, and seriously look at how SVHT will fund these programs, marketing and services, as well as setting goals, objectives and strategies for the new organization.

It will be imperative to have funding from sources other than membership (which will need to start soon) in order not to lose the programs that they have made so much progress, build on what the Fund has accomplished, and to be able to hire someone, even in a more limited capacity, to implement these programs. The Suisun Valley Harvest Trails cannot and should not rely solely on volunteers and the current limited funding capacity to carry forward the momentum and progress that has been accomplished since 2002.

We note that the Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association already has a strategic plan in place to continue and fund their organization after the sunset of the Fund, including the institution of graduated membership fees for their association that started in 2008. SVGGA has goals and objectives in place, association objectives, and strategies to accomplish those goals and objectives as outlined on their Web site (www.svgga.com) and have created a cohesive and sustainable competitive market position for wine grape growers within the Suisun Valley AVA. We commend SVGGA for having the foresight to do this prior to the sunset of the Fund in 2010.

Objective 5.2 Continuing funding the Agricultural Ambassador position. With the creation of the Agricultural Ambassador position to oversee and coordinate the agritourism efforts in the Valley, the results have been astonishing. The Fun Family Farm Days are stronger and more organized than ever before, there are regular, coordinated grower meetings, the Harvest Trails Map has been consistently published and distributed and the Valley Web site continues to grow and improve.

It will be critical for the future prosperity of the agricultural enterprises as well as Suisun Valley that the current part time (30 hour weekly) Agricultural Ambassador position continues. However, it will take some strategic planning to grow the funding base so that the Valley can support this position. With the endless potential of agritourism, the Valley cannot afford to go back to just being a volunteer group of growers and farmers.

As the newly formed Harvest Trails organization starts to grow and strengthen its operations, it is imperative that the Agricultural Ambassador position continued to be funded.

Objective 5.3 Invest in technical assistance to help solidify the new organizational structure. As the Harvest Trails organization is formed, it will be important that all parties involved have a solid understanding of their roles, responsibilities and basic non-profit management. Technical assistance should include basic training for the board of directors, strategic planning assistance for the organization, and training any work groups or committees to help develop work plans and budgets. Consider one-on-one training for the Agricultural Ambassador to assist her to learn how to manage a Board of Directors, best practices for volunteer development, and basic non-profit management skills and techniques.

Objective 5.4 Establish a diverse, stable funding base. In order to support the total plan of work outlined in this document, steps need to be taken to establish a diverse and stable funding base. In today's non-profit world, it is strongly recommended that organizations look at developing a funding "pie" that consists of six to seven equal sized "funding" slices. Too often, non-profits have more than half of their funding tied to one source and if there is any shift in that funding support, the entire organization could be in jeopardy. Below are six recommendations to consider as the Valley establishes their "funding pie":

- **Hold one major fund raising event a year.** Although this type of activity takes a great deal of volunteer hours, many not-for-profit corporations hold annual fund raising *galas* or special events to raise much needed revenue for their organization. Start small and grow the fundraiser. Research what other agricultural associations have successfully implemented such as El Dorado's *Art and Wine Affair* or Gold Harvest Wine Trail's *A Grape Affair*. Consider attaching the gala to a "cause" such as a certain percentage of the funds raised is dedicated

for a “*Youth Agricultural Scholarship program*” or the local 4H program.

- **Create Sponsorship and Advertising Opportunities.** Identify key sponsorship opportunities within your annual marketing strategy. Instead of going to potential sponsors for every event or activity, consider developing an annual sponsorship plan that offers various levels of sponsorship for the entire year. For example, an annual sponsorship of \$2,000 would include a listing in all of the Fun Family Farm Days media advertising, receiving a business size ad in the Harvest Trails Map and providing one business size ad in two newsletters. This is an example of only one level. Offer a range of plans so it can be affordable for all size of enterprises and related businesses. Identify additional ways to generate revenue by offering advertising opportunities in the Harvest Map, newsletter, on the Web site, etc. Always make sure that any advertising offered adds value to the marketing collateral and does not jeopardize the overall quality of the piece.
- **Research and apply for grants.** There are many grant opportunities for agritourism, agricultural education, helping farmers add value to their operations, cultural and historic programs, even hardscape grant funding. However, virtually all foundations will not give to a nonprofit if it does not have 501(c)(3) status (as no tax deduction would be allowed). We note that the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a private foundation, has granted many programs funds under their Food Systems and Rural Development grants. Private foundations are directed by specific legislation of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to make grants only to type 501(c) 3, and 509(a) organizations.

We note that the Harvest Trails organization has applied for 501c6 non-profit status with the IRS. The 501(c)(6) is specifically reserved to professional and trade organizations (Associations and Societies), chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, and other types of business leagues. They are characterized by a common business interest, which the organization typically promotes. Organizations under this category are exempt from most federal income taxes. Membership dues for a 501(c)(6) are tax deductible as business expenses, however any percentage of these used for political activities (like lobbying) is not tax deductible. The organization must report what percentage of these "dues" is not deductible. 501(c)(6) organizations may engage in limited political activities that inform, educate, and promote their given interest. They may not engage in direct expenditures advocating a vote for a political candidate or cause.

Once the Harvest Trails organization has been granted their non-profit tax status, it may wish to create a 501(c)(3) organization for educational purposes, such as the creation of a demonstration farm as referred to in Goal 4. Many 501(c)(3) organizations are part of nonprofit "conglomerates," having organizational control relationships with other nonprofit organizations. The board of a 501(c)(6) "business league" may create a 501(c)(3) organization with the purpose of conducting research related to the business focus. While 501(c)(3) organizations may be similarly named to other organizations, they cannot be owned by other organizations, and cannot also have private owners. 501(c)(3) organizations should usually be chartered as independent organizations.

We strongly suggest that the organization consult with a tax attorney or other professional for specific guidance and recommendations for non-profit tax status options for the organization.

administration and staffing. This often is the seed money for building the capacity for supporting a full time position within the organization. Typically however, most grants require some type of matching funds either in hard dollars or in-kind. Be prepared to identify these sources so that your grant application is competitive. Consider taking a course in how to research and apply for grants so that you are up to speed with today's expectations.

- **Pursue funding from the County.** It will be critical that the County financially supports the Agritourism efforts that have been initiated over the last several years. Previous funding from the City of Fairfield and the Solano Irrigation District created the part time Agricultural Ambassador position and the tourism and promotion programs that have been extremely beneficial for the Valley. Without County funding, the newly formed organization will have a very hard time getting to the point where it will have adequate funding to support personnel. Work with the County to develop an agreement that outlines the types of programs and activities that the newly formed organization will provide back to the County for financial support. In turn, the County should look at the funding provided to the agricultural group as "payment for services" to support the growth of agritourism in Solano County. Create some reasonable measurements within the agreement so that everyone knows what is expected. The organization should continue to work with the City of Fairfield's Economic Development Department and the Solano Irrigation District as well, and explore the possibility of extending funding for the new organization.
- **Implement an Ag-Based or Tourism Improvement District.** An Ag-Based Improvement District or Tourism Business Improvement District (BID) is a special benefit assessment district, which allows for an assessment on agricultural businesses within a defined geographic area. An existing organization or a group of progressive business owners desirous of promoting and upgrading their business area typically initiates the BID process. The overall BID establishment process takes from six to nine months to complete and is divided into three distinct phases: the planning and development phase, the "sales"/feasibility phase, and the formal adoption phase. The first two phases, while not specifically required by law, lay the foundation for a successful BID adoption. Revenues from this assessment are directed back to the defined area (Suisun Valley Agricultural Area) to finance enhanced services, including marketing, business development, tourism, promotion, special events, signage, etc.
- **Implement membership structure.** Continue to support and expand the current membership structure, and consider charging membership fees for the businesses promoted for the new organization. (If a Tourism Business Improvement District were put into place, all members who benefit from the activities and enhanced services would be assessed and automatically be considered as members). At minimum, all Valley agricultural enterprises and related businesses should be members. Develop a membership campaign with detailed benchmarks in place. Consider also having an associate membership structure (a campaign can be started through the existing direct mail/e-mail list and expanded through local publicity) where interested individuals, families and businesses could join as members (with no voting privileges) but could receive other type of benefits and show their support of local agriculture. Structure the membership structure for the new organization to make sure that you are asking enough and provide some type of direct benefit back. Consider setting a period for the membership campaign (three months). As you reach out into Fairfield, Suisun City and Vallejo, make sure that the membership fee and benefit structure is adjusted accordingly.

Objective 5.5 Expand knowledge of agritourism development and management. As the organizational framework is strengthened, all parties involved will need to learn what it takes to effectively “manage” an agritourism strategy and keep things on track. To assist with this process it is recommended that the Agricultural Ambassador and other stakeholders and supporting agencies conduct field trips to other agritourism areas and meet with their key stakeholders and partners to discuss common issues and gain insight of their successes. Identify conference or other educational opportunities that are available and bring a strong contingency. Bring back the information you gathered or learned and make it available to the agricultural enterprises and related businesses. We note that there were two recent one-day conferences, the San Joaquin County Agritourism Conference and the North Coast Agritourism Conference, both held on November 12, 2008. Conference fees for both were \$40, which is very reasonable for the type of information that was posted on their agendas (see Appendix).

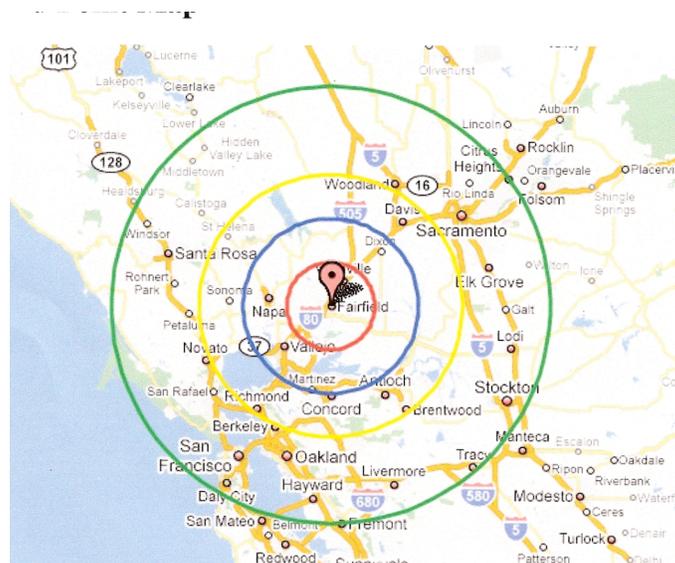
Trade Area

For the purpose of this report, the local trade area has been defined as the communities located within a 10-mile radius, which would include Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, Vallejo and Napa. From the SWOT interviews with members and stakeholders, it appears that the majority of their local customer base is coming from Suisun City, Fairfield and Vacaville. The combined population of these three communities is just over 200,000. Within this combined population, the median age is 32.2, which is younger than the average age in the United States. The average combined families (non-single residences) represent 77.7% of the population, also giving these communities a higher than average concentration of families. As a result, these three communities alone have a strong population base that is ripe with families and young adults that could easily be supportive of visiting agricultural enterprises in their immediate community.

The secondary or regional trade area would most likely be those communities within a fifty-mile radius which could include communities as far west as San Francisco and including Oakland, Novato, and Sonoma and as far east to include Sacramento.

This is an extremely large trade area, which would be difficult to penetrate without a very well funded marketing budget. From the data gathered through the SWOT interviews and focus group discussions, your members and agricultural enterprises indicated that they are seeing an increase of individuals coming from the Contra Costa County communities of Martinez, Concord and Walnut Creek. These three communities are located within 20 miles from the Valley. The combined population of these three communities is just under 220,000 with a combined median age of 39.6 and families representing 62.6% of the total combined population. Although the median age is higher in these three communities, based on the fact that the Valley is already drawing interest from these communities, all three cities are within a 20-mile radius, making it a shorter trip to get to the Valley. We found that 62% of the population are families, and we would strongly recommend these three communities be the focus of any regional marketing for the next three to five years.

Exhibit: Trade Area Map



Source: <http://www.muninetguide.com>

The median age for residents in Fairfield, CA is **31.1** (this is younger than average age in the U.S.). Families (non-single residences) represent **77.8%** of the population, giving Fairfield a higher than average concentration of families. The median age for residents in Vacaville, CA is **33.9** (this is younger than average age in the U.S.). Families (non-single residences) represent **74.6%** of the population, giving Vacaville a higher than average concentration of families. The median age for residents in Suisun City, CA is **31.7** (this is younger than average age in the U.S.). Families (non-single residences) represent **80.7%** of the population, giving Suisun City a higher than average concentration of families.

The median age for residents in Concord, CA is **35.1** (this is younger than average age in the U.S.). Families (non-single residences) represent **68.9%** of the population. The median age for residents in Martinez, CA is **38.6**. Families (non-single residences) represent **64.4%** of the population. The median age for residents in Walnut Creek, CA is **45.1** (this is older than average age in the U.S.). Families (non-single residences) represent **54.6%** of the population.

TABLE 1: ESTIMATED DIRECT COSTS FOR STRATEGIES

Goal/Objective/Strategy	Potential Direct Cost		
	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	
GOAL 1: POSITION SUISUN VALLEY AS A VIABLE AGRITOURISM DESTINATION			
1.1	Continue to use the website as the central point of information	\$15,000	\$21,000
1.2	Continue advertising in the Fairfield Activity Guide	\$1,000	\$2,000
1.3	Continue to build and expand upon Fun Family Farm Days	\$16,000	\$25,000
1.4	Produce full color rack card to complement the Harvest Trails Map	\$500	\$10,000
1.5	Develop a comprehensive publicity plan	\$3,500	\$5,750
1.6	Search out low to no cost advertising	\$5,300	\$12,500
1.7	Advertise in publications that reach higher end customers in region	\$6,000	\$10,000
1.8	Develop a twelve-month calendar of smaller events		
	• 6 events	\$6,000	\$10,000
	• 9 events	\$15,000	\$25,000
	• 12 events	\$25,000	\$50,000
1.9	Build strong collaborations to cross market the Valley	\$1,250	\$2,750
1.10	Link agricultural enterprises with other local sectors	\$500	\$1,000
1.11	Foster a "visitor friendly" environment	\$500	\$2,750
1.12	Continue to enhance and expand way finding	\$10,000	\$50,000
1.13	Implement a method to track the impact of marketing objectives	\$500	\$1,000
	<i>Sub Total for GOAL 1</i>	<i>\$105,550</i>	<i>\$228,750</i>
GOAL 2: EXPAND AWARENESS OF SUISUN VALLEY AS A LOCAL SOURCE FOR FOOD, WINE AND OTHER RELATED BUSINESSES			
2.1	Develop a series of promotional and advertising venues to reach new residents	\$3,500	\$5,500
2.2	Keep Suisun Valley at the "top of the mind" for locals	\$9,000	\$16,000
2.3	Develop a series of promotional venues to attract local residents	\$4,000	\$6,000
2.4	Expand local outreach to Vacaville	\$6,250	\$8,250
	<i>Sub Total for GOAL 2</i>	<i>\$22,500</i>	<i>\$35,500</i>
GOAL 3: STRENGTHEN COOPERATION AMONG GROWERS, WINERIES AND OTHER RELATED BUSINESSES TO INCREASE PROFITABILITY			
3.1	Enhance communication among the agricultural enterprises	\$1,500	\$2,000
3.2	Provide cooperative advertising assistance for members	(Refer to Objective 2.2)	
3.3	Encourage all Ag enterprises and related businesses to cross market	\$300	\$1,500
3.4	Encourage all Ag enterprises and related business to create promotions	\$2,500	\$5,000
3.5	Leverage community based events	N/A	N/A
3.6	Education programs	N/A	N/A
	<i>Sub Total for GOAL 3</i>	<i>\$4,300</i>	<i>\$8,500</i>
GOAL 4: BUILD SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE AS A VITAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BASE FOR SOLANO COUNTY			
4.1	Enhance communication networks and outreach efforts	N/A	N/A
4.2	Build advocacy among Suisun Valley growers at all levels	N/A	N/A
4.3	Find additional ways to increase grower profitability and advocacy	\$1,000	\$1,500
	<i>Sub Total for GOAL 4</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>
GOAL 5: ESTABLISH THE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO SUSTAIN CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOP NEW PROGRAMS			
5.1	Transition from The Fund to 501 C 6 organization	\$2,000	\$5,000
5.2	Continuing funding the Agricultural Ambassador position	\$42,000	\$50,000
5.3	Invest in technical assistance to solidify new organization	\$1,000	\$2,500
5.4	Establish a diverse, stable funding base	\$20,000	\$32,000
5.5	Expand knowledge of agritourism development and management	\$500	\$1,000
	<i>Sub Total for GOAL 5</i>	<i>\$65,500</i>	<i>\$90,500</i>
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$198,850</u>	<u>\$364,750</u>

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

There are a variety of funding sources that are available to Suisun Valley and the supporting organizations to fund the programs and activities recommended within the Marketing Plan. However, keeping track of potential funding sources can be a full time job. There are literally thousands of potential sources. There are hundreds of publications and web sites for this purpose but in the end it takes time and perseverance. Each source has different requirements for the activity, matching funds, application procedures, criteria, etc. The most effective approach is to define the project specifically then conduct a search for funding. Many organizations will develop a project to match a grant. Be cautious of this approach and ensure that the program or project is part of the overall strategy or plan. Following is a brief description of some of the major sources of funding recommended within the implementation matrix as well as other sources to consider a the specific programs or activities are defined.

GRANTS AND TAX INCENTIVES

Federal financial assistance programs that promote community and economic development are key source of funding for historic preservation projects.

Community Development Block Grants – Entitlement Communities

Federal Agency: Department of Housing and Urban Development

Recipients: Local governments (over a certain population)

www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/entitlement/index.cfm

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds help communities carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward revitalizing neighborhoods, economic development, and providing improved community facilities and services. Among the projects eligible for funding are: acquisition of real property; rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures; construction of public facilities and improvements; provision of assistance to businesses to carry out economic development; and job creation/retention activities.

Community Development Block Grants—Non-Entitlement Communities

Federal Agency: Department of Housing and Urban Development

Recipients: States (with pass through to non-entitlement local communities)

www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/stateadmin/index.cfm

www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/smallcities/index.cfm

CDBG funding for non-entitlement communities (those under a certain population threshold) is granted to the States to administer, except in the case of Hawaii, where HUD still administers the funding directly. Among the projects eligible for funding are: acquisition of property; construction or reconstruction of streets, water and sewer facilities, neighborhood centers, recreation facilities, and other public works; rehabilitation of public and private buildings; planning activities; assistance to nonprofit entities for community development activities; and assistance to private, for-profit entities to carry out economic development activities.

Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Grants

Federal Agency: Department of Housing and Urban Development

Recipients: Local governments

www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/economicdevelopment/programs/edi/index.cfm

Special purpose EDI grant funds are congressionally earmarked for economic development projects chosen by Congress.

National Trust for Historic Preservation Grants

www.preservationnation.org/resources/find-funding/grants

The National Trust, through its financial assistance programs, demonstrates that preserving our heritage improves the quality of life in American communities. The National Trust offers grants as well as loan programs.

The *Preservation Services Fund* provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies matching grants from \$500 to \$5,000 (typically from \$1,000 to \$1,500) for preservation planning and education efforts. Funds may be used to obtain professional expertise in areas such as architecture, archeology, engineering, preservation planning, land-use planning, fund raising, organizational development and law as well as preservation education activities to educate the public.

The *Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation* provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 for projects that contribute to the preservation or the recapture of an authentic sense of place. Individuals and for-profit

businesses may apply only if the project for which funding is requested involves a National Historic Landmark. Funds may be used for professional advice, conferences, workshops and education programs.

The *Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors* provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 to assist in the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic interiors. Individuals and for-profit businesses may apply only if the project for which funding is requested involves a National Historic Landmark. Funds may be used for professional expertise, print and video communications materials, and education programs.

USDA – Rural Development Grants

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbog.htm

Rural Business Opportunity Grants. The purpose is to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs. This is accomplished by marking grants to pay costs of providing economic planning for rural communities, technical assistance for rural businesses or training for rural entrepreneurs or economic development officials.

National Parks Service

www.cr.nps.gov

The National Parks Service administers a number of very successful federal historic preservation funding programs.

- ***Preserve America Grants***

www.preserveamerica.gov/federalsupport.html

The grants are designed to support a variety of activities related to heritage tourism and innovative approaches to the use of historic properties as educational and economic assets. They would go beyond the bricks and mortar grants available under the Save America's Treasures. Must be Certified Local Government to be eligible.

- ***Certified Local Government Program***

NPS and State governments, through their State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), provide valuable technical assistance and small matching grants to hundreds of diverse communities whose local governments are endeavoring to keep what is significant from their community's past for future generations. Jointly administered by NPS in partnership with SHPOs, the CLG program is a model and

cost-effective local, State, and federal partnership that promotes historic preservation at the grassroots level across the nation.

- ***Historic Preservation Fund***

State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) can find information and requirements regarding the distribution of federal monies for carrying out preservation activities in their state as directed under the National Historic Preservation Act.

- ***Preservation Technology and Training (PTT) Grants***

Information and application material for grants given by National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) for preservation research, information management, and training projects proposed by non-profit organizations, universities, and federal agencies.

- ***Save America's Treasures Grants***

Information on matching grants for the preservation and/or conservation of our nation's most significant historic artifacts and places. Federal and non-Federal entities may apply for these grants, which are available on a annual cycle.

- ***Charles E. Peterson Prize***

Named in honor of the founder of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), this student competition of measured drawings is intended to increase awareness and knowledge about historic buildings throughout the United States while adding to the HABS collection at the Library of Congress. Annual awards totaling \$7,000 are dispersed to architecture students and related programs. If you have structures needing HABS drawings, you might solicit the help of a nearby architecture school to meet that need.

Economic Development Administration

Program: Technical Assistance Programs — Local Technical Assistance

Program Description: Grants are designed to assist in solving specific economic development problems, respond to developmental opportunities, and build and expand local organizational capacity in distressed areas. Projects might focus on military base and industrial plant closures, deteriorating commercial districts, and technical or market feasibility studies. Priority consideration for funding is given to proposals that benefit areas of severe economic distress; lead to near-term (1-5 years)

generation or retention of private sector jobs; are consistent with the OEDP; document strong local support; and support EDA's special initiatives.

Eligible Communities: Public or private nonprofit national, state, area, district, or local organizations; public and private colleges and universities, Indian tribes; local governments; and state agencies.

Funding Information: EDA awards grants only and considers the unemployment in an area. EDA gives priority to projects designated as high priority by local economic development agencies. In addition, projects must result in job creation. Funds are available on a reimbursable basis upon approval. For technical assistance and planning projects, funds are available immediately or as soon as the work begins. For construction projects, funds are usually not disbursed until all construction contracts are awarded.

Timelines: EDA is funded on the basis of the federal fiscal year that runs October 1 to September 30. EDA is open for pre-applications year-round. The EDA field representative will invite a pre-application for a project that seems to have a good chance of being successful. The pre-application is then submitted to the EDA regional office where a project review committee decides whether or not to invite a final application. After the final application is completely reviewed, the regional director makes the final decision. Most projects that submit a final application are approved for funding. The entire process from pre-application to final decision can take from three months (rare) to a year or more. The process can be lengthy because (1) EDA stops considering pre-applications when spending limits for the fiscal year are complete, and (2) there are always numerous projects for the small staff to review.

TAX INCENTIVES AND LOAN PROGRAMS

The Federal Government offers a variety of tax credits that assist preservation projects, notably a credit that is available only for rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties.

Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Recipients: Owners of commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential properties
<http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/index.htm>

Under this historic preservation tax credit, property owners who rehabilitate historic buildings for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes can

receive a tax credit equal to 20 percent of the rehabilitation costs. The National Park Service must certify that the rehabilitation work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Between 2001 and 2005, the tax credit leveraged over \$11.14 billion in private investment.

Other Federal tax credits can also be used in preservation projects and can be combined with the historic preservation tax credit. For example, there is a Federal tax credit for acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of low-income housing. From 2001 to 2005, 43,566 low- and moderate-income housing units were created in historic properties using the low-income housing tax credit in conjunction with the historic preservation tax credit.

For case studies illustrating how the credits have been combined, visit <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/Affordable/>

A new Federal tax credit that has just become available, the New Markets Tax Credit, may also offer similar opportunities. The credit is targeted at drawing investment to businesses and commercial projects in distressed urban, rural, and suburban communities. To learn more, visit

http://www.cdfifund.gov/what_we_do/programs_id.asp?programID=5

Tax Deductions for Preservation Easements

Recipients: Property owners

<http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/easement.htm> Donation of a conservation easement on property generally qualifies as a charitable contribution for Federal tax purposes, and thus would result in income and estate tax deductions. This provision of Federal tax law thus provides a cash incentive to owners of historic properties to protect them through donations of easements.

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Foundations

Foundations, both private and corporate are excellent grants source for economic development causes. When applying for grants from foundations, be as flexible and creative as possible in the way that you promote or pitch your program. Find creative ways to make the connections between the issues.

Corporate Sponsorships

Corporations like to fund to programs or activities with high visibility to which they can attach their name. They can be a major source of funding for large-scale project with

substantial public exposure. Here is a listing of corporate giving programs that currently favor community/economic development.

- **American Express**
http://home3.americanexpress.com/corp/giving_back.asp
- **AT&T**
www.att.com/foundation
- **Bank of America**
www.bankofamerica.com/foundation
- **Citibank**
www.citigroup.com/citigroup/corporate/foundation
- **John Deere**
www.deere.com
- **Hasbro**
<http://www.hasbro.org/default.cfm?page=productdonations>
- **Home Depot**
http://corporate.homedepot.com/wps/portal/Community_Development
- **Metropolitan Life**
www.metlife.com/Applications/Corporate/WPS/CDA/PageGenerator?0,1674,P284,00.html
- **SBC**
www.sbc.com/Common/files/pdf/npower_community_development.pdf
- **Union Bank**
www.uboc.com
- **U.S. Bank**
www.usbank.com/about/community_relations/charit_giving.html
- **Wells Fargo**
www.wellsfargo.com/about/charitable/ca_guidelines.jhtml

Financial Institutions are particularly interested in numbers—the number of people served, the number of people who attended an event that they sponsored, etc. To increase the chances of receiving grants from banks, work with a local branch manager.

RESOURCES

ACHP – Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

www.achp.gov

ACHP is an independent Federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of our Nation's historic resources and advise the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. ACHP's three programs include

Preservation Initiatives, Communication, Education and Outreach and Federal Agency Programs.

CERT – California Community Economic Revitalization Team

www.ceres.ca.gov/cert/grants

Operated by the California Resources Agency, this program provides links to Federal and State grant and loan programs.

Nonprofit Resource Center

www.nonprofitresourcectr.org

The Mission of the Nonprofit Resource Center is to enhance the resources and improve the management of nonprofit organizations, primarily within California's northern Central Valley and Sierra Nevada regions. If you work for a nonprofit organization, or serve on the board, or volunteer your time, the **Nonprofit Resource Center** has just about every resource you need to succeed in the nonprofit world. Since 1989, the Center has been providing comprehensive services and support to nonprofit groups in Sacramento and 18 surrounding counties. They offer resources, leadership development, workshops, training and consulting.

Foundation Center

www.fdncenter.org

The Foundation Center is a national training organization that provides the nuts and bolts of fundraising. Headquartered in Washington, DC, their nearest field office for Suisun Valley is in San Francisco.

Foundation Center
312 Sutter St., Suite 606
San Francisco, CA 94108-4314
415-397-0902
San Francisco Library: www.fdncenter.org/sanfrancisco

Fundsnet Online Services

www.fundsnet-service.com/cult91.htm

Fundsnet Online Services is a comprehensive Web site for providing nonprofit organizations with online information about financial resources.

Implementation Matrix

The following matrixes have been developed to assist with the implementation of the various objectives and strategies recommended within the Suisun Valley Marketing Plan. Virtually all of the strategies listed could be undertaken in approximately a three-year period. Several longer-term projects have been noted.

Primary Responsibility shows the various potential participants in each strategy and is intended only as a guideline for assigning responsibilities for initial efforts.

At the time of this report, the new 501 C 6 organization (Harvest Trails) has not been fully established, therefore the current Growers Sub Committee has been identified as the primary group that would provide the responsibility for providing oversight and input with the majority of the strategies.

Estimated Costs present a preliminary estimate of the costs for a majority of the strategies. The total direct costs of undertaking all of these tasks would be in the range as indicated on Table 1.

Potential Funding Sources presents sources of funding that should be considered for supporting the relative strategy. It is the understanding of the consultants that The Fund is committed to providing funding to support many of the Valley's marketing and promotional activities until 2010. As a result, many of the objectives listed in the Marketing Plan will depend upon this funding for implementation for the next two years. It is strongly recommended that the Growers Sub Committee start to leverage the current resources (The Fund) and begin to diversify the funding base so that when The Fund sunsets in 2010, the efforts of the Valley and Growers Sub Committee can continue.

Goal 1: Position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 1.1 Continue to use your Web site as the central point of information	High	On-going	GSC; AA; Webmaster	\$15,000 - \$21,000 Website & Design of marketing materials	The Fund; Sponsorships; Advertising; BID
Objective 1.2 Continue advertising in the Fairfield Activity Guide or any future marketing materials produced by the Fairfield Hotel Association	High	Short	GSC; AA	\$1,000 – \$2,000	The Fund
Objective 1.3 Continue to build and expand upon Fun Family Farm Days.	High	Short	GSC; AA; Ag Enterprises; Related Businesses	\$16,000 - \$25,000	The Fund; Sponsorships; Advertising; BID
Objective 1.4 Produce one comprehensive, full color rack card to complement the Harvest Trails Map.	High	Short	GSC;AA; Ag Enterprises Related Businesses	\$500 for Rack Card \$10,000 for Map	The Fund
Objective 1.5 Develop a comprehensive publicity plan to get the word out about Suisun Valley’s Agricultural enterprises and activities					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a comprehensive press kit. • Add an area on the Web site specific for media, travel writers and tour operators. • Continue to offer information/ tours to travel writers. 	High	Short	GSC; AA	\$500 - \$750	The Fund
	High	Short	GSC; AA; Webmaster	Included in Objective 1.1	N/A
	Medium	Medium	GSC; AA	\$3,000 - \$5,000	The Fund

** GSC = Growers Sub Committee; AA = Agricultural Ambassador

Goal 1: Position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority High Medium Low	Time Frame Short: 0-2 yrs Medium: 2-3 yrs Long: 3-5 yrs On-going	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the agencies or coordinators of other cultural, heritage or community events and explore possibilities of linking Suisun Valley with their event publicity. 	High	Short	AA	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that Suisun Valley is represented at key travel and tourism trade shows. 	High	Short	GSC; AA Fairfield Hotel Association	N/A	N/A
Objective 1.6 Search out low to no cost advertising targeted at reaching the regional markets.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link with other web sites 	High	Short	AA	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Web site listings 	High	Short	AA	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newspapers in your regional trade area 	High	Short	AA	\$2,000 - \$5,000	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publications 	Medium	Medium	AA	\$2,000 - \$5,000	The Fund; BID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table Tents 	High	Short	AA; related businesses	\$300 - \$500	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Mail 	Short	High	GSC; AA	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-marketing 	Short	High	AA; Webmaster	N/A	N/A

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Goal 1: Position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put a downloadable podcast on your Web site. • Become the Expert • Create a Blog for Suisun Valley. • Join an Internet Social Networking Group. 	Medium	Medium	AA; Webmaster	\$1,000 - \$2,000	The Fund; BID
	High	Short	AA	N/A	N/A
	High	Short	Webmaster; AA	N/A	N/A
	Medium	Medium	AA	N/A	N/A
Objective 1.7 Advertise in publications that reach the higher-end customers in the regional trade area.	Medium	Medium	GSC; AA	\$6,000 - \$10,000 (I.E. <i>Wine Country This Week; CA Tourism Ad</i>)	The Fund; BID; Sponsorships;
Objective 1.8 Create a twelve-month calendar of smaller agricultural related events to attract the regional market.	High	Short – 6 events Medium – 9 events Long – 12 events	GSC; AA Ag Enterprises; Related businesses, Municipalities Fairfield Hotel Association, Volunteers	\$6,000- \$15,000 \$15,000- \$25,000 \$25,000 - \$50,000	The Fund Sponsorships, Advertising, Municipality Support, BID, Vendor fees, Grants

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Goal 1: Position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 1.9 Build strong collaborations with any industry in the county that interfaces with the visitor or tourist market to assist with cross-marketing in the Valley					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a presentation to the Fairfield Hotel Association members. • Start to nurture a relationship with the new hotel being built in Suisun City. • Foster relationships with the Hotel Associations and CVB's in the regional trade areas. • Develop a training program for the front line employees of hotels and other related visitor/ tourist based operations. • Contact the Vacaville Conference and Visitors Bureau. 	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Short</p> <p>Short</p>	<p>AA</p> <p>GSC; AA, City of Suisun City</p> <p>AA</p> <p>GCS; AA; Ag enterprises Chamber, SBDC,</p> <p>AA</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>\$500</p> <p>\$500 - \$2,000</p> <p>\$250 (Membership)</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>The Fund</p> <p>The Fund, Grant, Sponsorships, SBDC,</p> <p>The Fund</p>

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Goal 1: Position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 1.10 Link Your Agricultural Enterprises to Other Local Sectors to Expand the Offerings.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bundle activities with local sectors. • Itinerary Section on the Web site • Work with the Fairfield and Suisun City Business and Downtown Associations 	High	Short	GSC; AA Business Associations, Chambers, Hotel Association	\$500 - \$1,000	The Fund
	High	Short	AA; Webmaster	N/A	N/A
	High	On-going	AA	N/A	N/A
Objective 1.11 Work with your members, other agricultural enterprises and related businesses to strengthen customer relations and foster a “visitor friendly” environment throughout Suisun Valley.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a series of workshops or trainings. 	High	Short	GSC; AA; Ag Enterprises; Related businesses, Fairfield Hotel Association; Chambers	\$500 - \$2,000	County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of educational articles in newsletter and Web site 	High	Short	AA	N/A	N/A

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Goal 1: Position Suisun Valley as a viable agritourism destination.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority High Medium Low	Time Frame Short: 0-2 yrs Medium: 2-3 yrs Long: 3-5 yrs On-going	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with your members to operate as “mini-visitor centers.” Community Data Bank. Create a “visitor center” location along the trail 	<p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Long</p>	<p>GSC; AA</p> <p>GSC; AA; Ag Enterprises; Related businesses, Community College; Hotel Association</p> <p>Harvest Org; AA; County; City; Hotel Association</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>\$500 - \$750</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>The Fund</p> <p>County; Grant; BID</p>
<p>Objective 1.12 Continue to enhance and expand wayfinding throughout Suisun Valley</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>GSC; AA; County</p>	<p>\$10,000 - \$50,000</p>	<p>County, Grants</p>
<p>Objective 1.13 Implement a method to track the impact of your marketing objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the question, “How Did You Discover us?” Formal Survey Process Determine the Return on Investment (ROI) with your marketing and advertising 	<p>High</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>GSC; AA</p>	<p>\$500 - \$1,000</p>	<p>The Fund</p>

** GSC = Growers Sub Committee; AA = Agricultural Ambassador

Goal 2: Expand awareness of Suisun Valley as a local source for food, wine and other related businesses.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 2.1 Develop a series of promotional and advertising venues targeted directly to reach the new residents moving into the region.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that the Suisun Valley marketing piece is included in relocation packets, visitor packets, racks, subdivision sales offices and other key places • Explore partnership with Welcome Wagon. • Yearly Direct Mail piece to new residents. • Link with local homeowners associations/neighborhood groups 	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>Short</p> <p>Short</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>AA</p> <p>GSC; AA</p> <p>GSC; AA Graphic Designer</p> <p>AA</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>\$500</p> <p>\$3,000- \$5,000</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>The Fund</p> <p>The Fund</p> <p>N/A</p>

** GSC = Growers Sub Committee; AA = Agricultural Ambassador

Goal 2: Expand awareness of Suisun Valley as a local source for food, wine and other related businesses.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 2.2 Keep Suisun Valley at the “top of the mind” for locals as a viable place to buy wine and fresh produce and the importance of supporting local agriculture through networking.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to serve as a speaker for local clubs and organizations. • Provide articles about what is happening in Suisun Valley for other local organizations’ newsletters. • Continue to create, generate and distribute positive media stories/press releases to enhance the Valley’s image. • Have all members and supporting businesses use the Suisun Valley logo in their individual marketing collateral and promotional pieces. • Have restaurants identify with Suisun Valley brand that they offer local produce and wines on their menu. 	High	On-going	AA	N/A	N/A
	High	On-going	AA	N/A	N/A
	High	On-going	AA Ag Enterprises	N/A	N/A
	High	On-going	AA; Ag Enterprises; Related businesses	N/A	N/A
	High	On-going	GSC; AAA Related businesses	N/A	N/A

** GSC = Growers Sub Committee; AA = Agricultural Ambassador

Goal 2: Expand awareness of Suisun Valley as a local source for food, wine and other related businesses.

<p>Objective Strategy/Action Item</p>	<p>Priority <i>High Medium Low</i></p>	<p>Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs Medium: 2-3 yrs Long: 3-5 yrs On-going</i></p>	<p>Primary Responsibility**</p>	<p>Estimated Costs</p>	<p>Potential Funding Sources</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local retailers to incorporate signage that states they carry local wine. 	High	Short	GSC; AA; related businesses; Business Associations, Chamber	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to Schools – Farm Tours. 	Medium	Medium	GSC; AA; Ag enterprises; Schools	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider starting a “Farm to School Connection” program. 	Medium	Medium	GSC; AA; Schools	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support and expand cluster cooperative advertising programs 	High	Short	GSC; AA; local media contacts	\$5,000 - \$10,000	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote and expand local familiarization tours. 	High	Short	GSC; AA	\$3,000 - \$5,000	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy Fresh, Buy Local program expanded and promoted to local corporations. 	High	Short	GSC; AA; Ag enterprises; local corporations	\$250	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a Mixer for the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce. 	High	Short	GSC; AA; Ag enterprises	\$500	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to have a booth promoting the Valley at large community based events. 	High	Short	GSC; AA; Ag enterprises	\$250	The Fund

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Goal 2: Expand awareness of Suisun Valley as a local source for food, wine and other related businesses.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 2.3 Develop a series of promotional and advertising venues targeted directly to reach local residents.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a yearly local media tab specific for Suisun Valley during National Ag Week. • Work with local businesses to support all events with window displays and have information in their stores and on their counters. 	High	Short	GSC; AA; Ag enterprises; related businesses	\$4,000 - \$6,000	The Fund
	High	Short	AA; Business Associations	N/A	N/A
Objective 2.4 Expand local outreach to Vacaville.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with connections to the Vacaville Conference and Visitor's Bureau. 	High	Short	AA	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider joining the Vacaville Chamber of Commerce. 	High	Short	AA	\$250	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue sending press releases to local media and free advertising venues in Vacaville. 	High	On-gong	AA	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yourvacaville.com 	Low	Short	GSC; AA	\$6,000 - \$8,000	The Fund

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Goal 3: Strengthen cooperation among growers, wineries and other related businesses to increase profitability.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 3.1 Enhance communications among the agricultural enterprises.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a strong <i>Brand</i> for Suisun Valley Harvest Trails. • Database • Publish a quarterly newsletter for the growers only. • Grower-to-grower networking 	High	On-going	GSC; AA; Ag Enterprises; related businesses	N/A	N/A
	High	On-going	AA	N/A	N/A
	High	Short	AA; Webmaster	Online- N/A	N/A
	High	Short	AA	\$1,500 - \$2,000	The Fund
Objective 3.2 Provide cooperative advertising and promotional assistance for members and related agricultural enterprises that enable them to reach more customers.	High	Short	Refer to Objective 2.2	Refer to Objective 2.2	Refer to Objective 2.2
Objective 3.3 Encourage all agricultural enterprises and related businesses located in Suisun Valley to cross-market each other.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Orientation 	High	Short	GSC; AA; Ag enterprises	\$100 - \$500	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a quarterly drive around 	High	Short	GSC; AA	\$100 - \$500	The Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a “business” packet for existing and new enterprises. 	High	Short	AA	\$100- \$500	The Fund

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Goal 3: Strengthen cooperation among growers, wineries and other related businesses to increase profitability.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High</i> <i>Medium</i> <i>Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs</i> <i>Medium: 2-3 yrs</i> <i>Long: 3-5 yrs</i> <i>On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objectives 3.4 Encourage agricultural enterprises and related businesses to work together and create promotions together.	Medium	Short	GSC; AA; Ag enterprises; Related businesses	\$2,500 - \$5,000	The Fund
Objective 3.5 Leverage Community-based Events.	High	On-going	AA	N/A	N/A
Objective 3.6 Encourage growers and vintners to take advantage of relevant education programs targeted at helping them strengthen their business operations and learning how to increase profitability.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Valley growers and vintners to work with the Solano County Agricultural Principal Planner and the F.A.R.M. Coordinator. • Know about and refer other resources available to growers and vintners 	High	On-going	GSC; AA; Ag enterprises; County	N/A	N/A
	High	On-going	AA	N/A	N/A

** GSC = Growers Sub Committee; AA = Agricultural Ambassador

Goal 4: Build support for agriculture as a vital economic development base for Solano County.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority High Medium Low	Time Frame Short: 0-2 yrs Medium: 2-3 yrs Long: 3-5 yrs On-going	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 4.1 Enhance communication networks and outreach efforts to build support for the importance of agriculture in the county.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that all Solano County City Council members, Solano County Supervisors and key staff receive the Suisun Valley information by print or by email. 	High	On-going	GSC; AA	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite key staff from the County of Solano and the cities to serve as an ex-officio representatives/liasons on all committees. 	High	On-going	GSC; AA	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold monthly meeting with F.A.R.M. Coordinator. 	High	Short	AA	N/A	N/A
Objective 4.2 Build advocacy among Suisun Valley growers at the local, county and state level					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an Advocacy and Issues Committee 	High	Short	GSC; AA; County	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each year hold a work session with SV growers and the Solano county supervisors, city officials etc. 	High	Short	GSC; AA Municipalities	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Valley growers and vintners to work with Solano County Agricultural Principal Planner and the F.A.R.M. Coordinator 	High	High	GSC; AA; County; FARM	N/A	N/A
Objective 4.3 Find additional ways to increase grower profitability and advocate for them.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the creation of a Suisun Valley CSA 	Medium	Medium	GSC; AA; County	\$1,000 - \$1,500	County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate cold storage and central processing 	Medium	Medium	GSC; Ag enterprises; County	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate creation of a “visitor center” 	Medium	Medium	GSC; Ag enterprises; County	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate “Farm to School” Programs 	Medium	Medium	GSC; Ag enterprises; County	N/A	N/A

** GSC = Growers Sub Committee; AA = Agricultural Ambassador

Goal 5: Establish the organizational capacity to sustain current activities and develop new programs.

Objective Strategy/Action Item	Priority <i>High Medium Low</i>	Time Frame <i>Short: 0-2 yrs Medium: 2-3 yrs Long: 3-5 yrs On-going</i>	Primary Responsibility**	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Sources
Objective 5.1 Formulate a transition plan from the Suisun Valley Fund to the Suisun Valley Harvest Trails	High	Short	GSC	\$2,000 - \$5,000	The Fund
Objective 5.2 Continuing funding the Agricultural Ambassador position after the sunset of The Fund	High	Short	GSC; Harvest Org	\$42,000- \$50,000	The Fund; Grants
Objective 5.3 Invest in technical assistance to help solidify the new organizational structure.	High	Short	GSC; AA Consultant	\$1,000- \$2,500	The Fund; Grant; County
Objective 5.4 Establish a diverse, stable funding base.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold one major fund raising event a year. • Create Sponsorship and Advertising Opportunities. • Research and apply for grants. • Pursue funding from the County. • Implement an Ag-Based or Tourism Improvement District. • Implement membership structure. 	<p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Short</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Short</p>	<p>GSC; AA</p> <p>Harvest Org</p> <p>GSC; AA</p> <p>GSC</p> <p>Harvest Org; Consultant</p> <p>GSC</p>	<p>\$5,000 - \$7,000</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>\$15,000 - \$25,000</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>The Fund</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>County</p> <p>N/A</p>
Objective 5.5 Expand knowledge of agritourism development and management.	High	Short	GSC; AA	\$500 - \$1,000 Membership Conference	The Fund

** GSC = Growers Sub Committee; AA = Agricultural Ambassador

Appendices

TASK ONE – DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXISTING AGRICULTURAL AND AGRI-TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SUISUN VALLEY

As part of the proposed scope of work, consultants were asked to interview members of various organizations in Suisun Valley, Suisun Valley farmers, Suisun Valley farm stand operators, Suisun Valley retail businesses and others to develop an understanding of Suisun Valley’s existing agricultural and agri-tourism industry (both current and projected), and to review all existing documents, including the American Farmlands Trust Report and the Agricultural Future Report, and prepare a brief outline summarizing key characteristics of Suisun Valley agriculture. Below are the consultants’ observations and comments:

- ***Consultants conducted 12 interviews in the months of June and July with a wide variety of organizations and individuals. As part of the interview process, consultants conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercise during the interviews to find out the perceptions of Suisun Valley by these stakeholders.***

STRENGTHS

Persons and organizations interviewed gave the following statements and keywords about the strengths of Suisun Valley:

- Location (4)
 - Close to Sacramento and San Francisco population clusters
 - Near freeway yet still rural
 - History (3)
 - Great soil and climate (2)
 - Close to transportation hub
 - Value-added products
 - Quality of life
 - Assets to other companies
 - Variety of local produce – high-quality (2)
 - Wide variety of grapes
 - Many micro-climates
 - Easy to get to all stands and wineries
 - Range and size of farms/products
 - Upscale wineries, but “un-Napa”
 - Offers products from high price point to lower, more affordable
 - Agricultural-art components
 - Mankas Corner - cluster of produce, restaurants, shops
 - Beauty
 - Grass roots
 - Family ties
 - Family held farmers/generational
 - Lots of things to do
 - Rural in the middle of urban
 - Accessibility – can do it all in one spot
 - Charm
 - Places to come and see
 - American Viticultural Area (AVA) began in 1982
 - Quaint and small
- ***Consultants see common messages on strengths from the stakeholders as follows: a great location with easy access from freeways, charm, beauty and history, great soil and climate, a wide variety of products with a variety of price points, and a place where there are many choices of what to do and see.***

WEAKNESSES

Persons and organizations interviewed gave the following statements and keywords about the weaknesses of Suisun Valley:

- Lack of communication (3)
- County regulations do not support agriculture (3) (Use permit process)
- Farmers not local enough
- Lack of awareness
- Hard life of farmer
- Slow transition from agricultural only
- Current general plan
- No growth initiative
- Lack of notoriety both locally and regionally
- Getting all groups to work together
- Lack of engagement with farmers and growers
- More active in Farmer's Markets
- Not getting people out to the Valley
- Valley has changed
- Individuality – trying to get people to work together
- Quality of products vary
- Fallow land
- Seasonality
- Consumers not knowing about the Valley
- Looking beyond themselves
- Long standing feuding
- Self serving
- Negative toward Jelly Belly
- Lack of signage
- Locals slightly cost sensitive
- Local politics between Valley organizations and competing growers
- Lack of identity and a strong brand
- Balancing the Valley's "draw" between produce stands and wineries
- Future funding of marketing
- Not enough monies to market well
- Properties that are owned by developers – unknown how they will react to Valley's success
- Development pressure

➤ ***Consultants see common messages on weaknesses from the stakeholders as follows: County of Solano regulations/current general plan do not support modern agricultural needs; lack of communication amongst stakeholders; lack of awareness/marketing/identity, both locally and regionally about the valley; lack of cohesiveness between individuals and between groups in the valley; fear of lack of future funding for marketing of the valley; development pressure.***

OPPORTUNITIES

Persons and organizations interviewed gave the following statements and keywords about opportunities for Suisun Valley:

- Cross-marketing (3)
- Bed & Breakfast facilities (2)
- Food, wine and art experience (2)
- General Plan passed by voters in November
- Streamline County processes
- Self-sustainability
- Freedom to process in Suisun Valley
- Process facility

- Retain the quality
- More special events (2)
- Capitalize on Agri-tourism
- Extra day trips from Napa
- Wineries
- Fruit stands
- Events that celebrate agriculture
- Attract more people from the region
- Marketing niche
- Small vacation
- Smaller and less “snooty” than Napa
- In-fill farming on fallow land
- *Brand* the Valley as a destination
- “Foodies” and health trends
- Green trends and localization
- Buying local trend across nation
- Accessibility and location
- Keeping people here longer – 2 to 3 days
- Less inward; more outward
- Being part of “travel” exhibits and travel trade shows
- County rules are changing and becoming easier to deal with

➤ ***Consultants see common messages on opportunities from the stakeholders as follows: cross marketing with other entities to promote Suisun Valley agri-tourism; if the draft General Plan passes, there will be streamlined county processes and opportunities for bed and breakfasts, more fruit stands and wineries, special events, and processing facilities; new trends in healthy eating, buying local food, and becoming green and sustainable; more marketing opportunities to get the word out about the valley.***

THREATS/BARRIERS

Persons and organizations interviewed gave the following statements and keywords about threats/barriers for Suisun Valley:

- General Plan NOT passed (3)
- Rural–residential issue (parcelization)
- Cost of making facilities “legal”
- Politics
- Zoning
- Workforce
- Trend in agriculture
- Gas
- Economy
- “Orderly Growth Group” has no comprehension of what it takes to farm
- Being forgotten during off-season
- When Fund goes away-everything goes away
- Cost of doing business as a farmer
- No visitor center specific for promoting agricultural
- Pressures of development
- Local support is inconsistent
- Rural–residential – anything less than 20 acres would ruin Valley and become “poverty flats”
- Domination of other growing areas for wine grapes

➤ ***Consultants see common messages on threats/barriers from the stakeholders as follows: the draft Solano County General Plan not passing which could affect streamlining county processes and potential processing facilities; parcelization; trends in agriculture; the economy and rising costs of farming; development pressures; orderly growth proponents not understanding the farming industry, and not having adequate funding for marketing and promotion of the valley.***

- Consultants also reviewed the following documents for background:
 - American Farmlands Trust Report
 - Solano Agricultural Futures Project Report (Parts 1 -4)

Other Characteristics/Facts

- The 2007 American Farmlands Trust Report stated, “Suisun Valley is a relatively small but fertile and historic agricultural district in California’s Solano County. Suisun Valley is recognized for its quality wine grapes, as well as its fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and flowers. Agriculture in Suisun Valley produces nearly \$20 million in sales annually. Despite its proximity to the world-famous Napa Valley, Suisun Valley is comparatively undiscovered, even to residents in nearby cities.”
- The federal government classified Suisun Valley as an American Viticulture Area (AVA) in 1982, the second such classification in the nation (a year after the Napa Valley AVA).
- Some farms have been in the same family for generations.
- Land use controls – In 1974, the city of Fairfield and Solano Irrigation District (SID) decided not to provide potable water to Suisun Valley. This agreement expires at the end of 2010. The “Orderly Growth Initiative,” passed by voters in 1984 (Proposition A) and extended through the year 2010, generally prohibits conversion of unincorporated agricultural land (like Suisun Valley) to other uses without an election. In 2003, voters passed an Urban Limit Line that prohibits City of Fairfield annexations in Suisun Valley through 2020. The Orderly Growth Initiative was extended through 2028 as part of Measure T, passed by voters in November 2008.
- The city of Fairfield and SID formed the Suisun Valley Fund in 2002 and the associated Suisun Valley Fund Advisory Committee to “preserve and enhance” Suisun Valley agriculture. The Fund receives \$100,000 per year from each of the two agencies; the fund terminates at the end of 2010. The Fund is a primary financial source for many Suisun Valley programs, including this marketing plan.
- The Solano Agricultural Futures Project Report suggested “the creation of a Small Scale/Value Added Agricultural Committee, composed of successful small scale producers, to advise county government on pertinent land use, permitting, and other issues.”

Suisun Valley Major Crops

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grapes • Tree Fruits • Vegetable Crops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheat • Beans |
|--|--|

TASK TWO – REGULATORY AND PLANNING ISSUES FOR SUISUN VALLEY

REVIEW OF DRAFT SOLANO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

As part of the proposed scope of work, consultants were asked to review the Draft County General Plan as it relates to the future promotion of Agri-tourism in Suisun Valley. Consultants' were asked to review Chapter 2 – Land Use and Chapter 3 – Agriculture. Below are the consultants' observations and comments:

Chapter 2- Land Use Section

- **Suisun Valley Special Study Area (Pages LU 51-67).** As part of the General Plan update process, special community participation programs were conducted in four special study areas including Middle Green Valley, **Suisun Valley**, Old Town Cordelia and Collinsville. Goals and policies were established for each area based on the input from the community. Below are the consultants' observations and comments regarding the Suisun Valley Special Study Area section located on pages LU 51- 67 in Chapter 2 – Land Use.
 - Common messages among the stakeholders who participated in the community meetings included:
 - Maintaining agricultural character through appropriate zoning and prevention of incompatible uses was an important goal to them.
 - Need to help agriculture and agriculture-related businesses become more profitable with emphasis placed on the County's role to reduce barriers that prevent farms from becoming more profitable, including the desire to process crops grown off-site into finished product and to allow processing **without** a conditional use permit was a priority for the stakeholders. *(The desire to reduce barriers and streamline processes were also common messages among the stakeholders that the consultants have interviewed to date.)*
 - There was significant agreement among the stakeholders for agricultural tourism through the creation of small tourist-oriented centers to help attract tourists and provide additional opportunities to market local products.
 - Stakeholders felt that infrastructure in Suisun Valley is not adequate in its current state and would be needed to be improved before increased numbers of tourists could be accommodated. Primarily this was focused at the road systems and flooding issues.
 - The Suisun Valley Land Use Plan statement on page LU-55 reads *“Suisun Valley will serve a destination for those visitors interested in local wine production and local produce. Commercial land use designations are expanded in several Neighborhood Agricultural Centers in Suisun Valley. These Neighborhood Agricultural Centers will allow for additional*

commercial uses in eight areas – Mankas Corner, Rockville Corner, Morrison Road, Gomer School, Rockville Road east of Abernathy Road, Iwama Market, and Cordelia Road at Thomasson Lane.” This statement alone opens the door for endless opportunities to strengthen existing endeavors, foster new agri-tourist business development prospects and expand the “inventory” or *attractions* that will be crucial for supporting an aggressive Agri-tourism strategy.

- **Goal SS. G-2.** “Preserve and enhance the landscape and economy of the Suisun Valley as rural agricultural community” is straight forward and to the point. In the opinion of the consultants, the following policies and implementation strategies by far support the future development of Agri-tourism in Suisun Valley:
 - **SS.P-10.** Establish neighborhood agricultural centers that expand Agri-tourism in the Valley.
 - **SS.P-13.** Allow farms and vineyards to process, store, bottle, can, and package and sell products produced both on-site and off-site.
 - **SS.P-14.** Support programs that promote the branding and identity of Suisun Valley products.
 - **SS.P-18.** Work with local residents to find a suitable location for a public gathering place for community activities including farmer’s markets and seasonal festivals.
- **Desired Uses in the Suisun Valley Special Study Area** (Table LU-7 on page LU-60) appears to be fairly comprehensive and allow a variety of uses that support Agri-tourism efforts. **The only question that comes to mind – Would *festivals and Farmer Markets* uses be categorized under *Special Events Facilities*?**
- **Collinsville and Old Town Cordelia Study Areas.** Both of these study areas identify “*exploring historic preservation for historic buildings*” (Policy SS.P-20 in Collinsville) and “*preventing the loss of significant historic buildings and structures and support incentives that encourage individual property owners to preserve the historic character*” (SS.P-28 Old Town Cordelia) as key policies for supporting future land uses in Solano County. These two study areas and the goals and policies listed in the Land Use Chapter should be considered positive for the support of Suisun Valley’s Agri-tourism development. As these areas are developed, the historic character along with the preservation of their historic assets could add value to the overall Suisun Valley Agri-tourism strategy by leveraging the Heritage/Cultural Tourism opportunities that are created. Building synergy between the historic assets and future activities in these two communities with the agricultural offerings in Suisun Valley could expand the inventory of attractions or activities offered, thus keeping people in the Valley longer. In addition, individuals who are interested in Agri-tourism and those

that are interested in historic and cultural activities or sites have very similar characteristics and interests thus providing a larger market of tourist to draw.

Chapter 3 – Agriculture

- **Vision Statement.** The draft vision statement specifically written to address the agricultural industries important to the county on page AG-2 solidifies the importance of agriculture and Agri-tourism as one of Solano County’s valued economic strategies. In addition, the General Plan acknowledges the shift in agricultural as it relates to Solano County and the need for “increasing the value added to agricultural produce locally can help Solano County’s farmers maintain viable businesses. Local processing and sales operations for the county’s farm produce can keep more money from the distribution of agricultural products in the county” (page AG-8) which will be important to the future development of agri-tourism in Suisun Valley.
- **Agricultural Conservation Tools Section.** The following two programs listed in the section entitled *Agricultural Economic Incentives and Development (pages AG-16 –AG17)* supports the development of Agri-tourism and the promotion of agriculture as it might relate to Suisun Valley:
 - Marketing or branding Solano County’s produce and producing regions.
 - Support the development of limited agricultural services in rural areas AND developing services that support agritoursim including restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts and similar tourist –oriented serves.
- **Goals and Policies Directly Related to Suisun Valley Region.**
 - Suisun Valley’s and Winters’ General Uses listed in Table AG-3 (page AG-21) are the only two regions of the total 10 that will allow “facilities to support the sale of produce and tourist services that are ancillary to agricultural production.” The difference between these two regions is Winters’ minimum acreage is 40 while Suisun Valley’s is 20 acres. This could have some bearing on how each area’s agri-tourism strategy and marketing plan is developed and implemented.
 - The description of Suisun Valley’s region on page AG-24 states very clearly “Suisun Valley could provide a unique opportunity for the County to promote Agri-tourism, specifically as a destination for visitors interested in local wine production, farm stands and rural atmosphere while avoiding the traffic of the nearby Napa and Sonoma areas. “ **This statement in itself supports the development of Agri-tourism and its value economically for Suisun Valley.**
 - Of the four strategies listed on page AG-27 - “providing opportunities for agriculture to serve as an educational tool and tourist draw” is most

relevant to Suisun Valley's desire to develop a stronger Agri-tourism position.

- Goals AR.G-3 and AR.G-8 listed on page AG-28 are most relevant to Suisun Valley's Agri-tourism vision.
- The consultants feel the following general policies support the development of Agri-tourism:
 - **AG.P-12:** Promote agriculture as a major county industry and support marketing efforts for Solano County-grown and value-added products and agricultural services ad compatible activities.
 - **AG.P-14:** Support and promote streamlined permit processing procedures for agriculture-related buildings on Agriculture designated parcels (including barns, farm stands and agriculture process plants).
 - **AG.P-26 and AG.P-27** acknowledges the uniqueness of the 10 agricultural regions' and encourages using the regions to direct marketing and economic efforts.
 - **AG.P-29** supports the unique agricultural uses found in the valleys (Suisun, Pleasants, Vaca and Lagoon) and indicates that these valleys should encourage the "the development of complementary Agri-tourism, processing and commercial uses."
- **Implementation Programs.** Below are the programs that the consultants feel support the development of Agri-tourism.
 - **AG-I-4.** Provides the framework for removing the barriers, streamlining the process and providing incentives to encourage agriculture-supporting uses. *As mentioned before, those who the consultants have interviewed to date expressed removing barriers and streamlining processes as a barrier or weaknesses for developing Agri-tourism in Suisun Valley.*
 - **AG-I-12.** Statement within the policy, "requiring the purchaser to show how the property can still be used for agricultural production and supporting activities" could help ensure that future residential uses on agricultural land will support Suisun Valley's Agri-tourism vision by encouraging future produce stands, agricultural related events and bed-and-breakfasts.
 - **AG-I-17.** By far this policy, which encourages the developing strategic marketing and economic plans for each of the 10 regions (including Suisun Valley) and supports the Suisun Valley's Agri-tourism strategy. However, Agri-tourism development as well as development of value-added production facilities and agriculture-related niche activities have been identified for Pleasant, Vaca and Lagoon Valleys as well as Suisun

Valley. The challenge for Suisun Valley will be how to differentiate itself from the other similar regions through its marketing and economic plans. One suggestion might be to work closer with these similar regions and explore how to foster a more regional approach to Agri-tourism, thus strengthening each individual area.

- **AG.1-20.** Consultants' would strongly suggest that Suisun Valley is represented well on any agricultural committee that is created to advise county government on pertinent land use, permitting and other issues.

TASK THREE – REVIEW EXISTING MARKETING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

As part of the proposed scope of work, consultants gathered and reviewed all marketing programs, promotional materials and activities used by various agencies to promote Suisun Valley agriculture, farmers, farm stands, wine growers and other Suisun Valley businesses.

This included existing Web sites, advertising materials, special events and other promotional programs. The consultants also assessed other key promotional and marketing programs that were not necessarily supported by the Suisun Valley Fund but were targeted at promoting Suisun Valley agriculture. This included any activities or materials produced by the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Fairfield, the County of Solano and other related organizations.

Consultants drafted a matrix of all the promotional and marketing programs and materials assessing the strengths, weaknesses and consistencies of each program/marketing collateral. This matrix will be incorporated in the final report, and is included here as a reference to be used by the consultants in the development of the final marketing plan.

The consultants also met with local farmers, winemakers, and farm stand operators to understand their marketing efforts and needs of local agricultural and agritourism and asked them how well current marketing, advertising, promotional activities and events have worked for both the area as a whole as well as for their individual businesses. Consultants asked for feedback on how they thought the current marketing, advertising, promotional activities and events may be improved. These findings are summarized and incorporated in the overall assessment process.

Below are the consultants' observations and comments:

➤ **Review of existing marketing programs and activities**

Marketing collateral analysis – Consultants examined 19 separate marketing collateral items in regard to Suisun Valley (not event-specific advertising), plus five different event-specific advertising or marketing items that were used for advertising of Fun Family Farm Days.

Materials that were developed by the Suisun Valley Fund (Harvest Trails brochure and Suisun Valley Web site) were very professional and consultants have very few suggestions for their improvement.

- **Harvest Trails Brochure** – We note that the Web site is not listed on the front of the brochure, and there is not a way to contact the organization on the brochure (no email address, address to write to, or phone number). The updated 2008 brochure eliminated listings of other local attractions and expanded Suisun Valley winery information.
- **Web Site** – The Web site is very comprehensive for the consumer, has a consistent look with the brochure, has a wine release page, calendar of

events, harvest calendar, lists all participants, and offers a free email newsletter. The site is very wordy and perhaps could use more images on the front page. A map on the front page to orient the consumer with the region is also needed. It would also be helpful if a PDF copy of the Harvest Trails brochure were available for the consumer to download. There were a few misspelled words on the site.

- **Advertisements in Publications** – Consultants looked at copy and advertisements in the Fairfield Activity Guide, the “Discover Wines from Suisun Valley” rack card, the Fairfield Hotel Association’s “The Top 25 Things to Do in and Around Fairfield” rack card, the Solano County Official Guide Book 2006/2007, the Buy Fresh/Buy Local Bay Area Guide and the Suisun Valley Wine Cooperative rack card.

The Fairfield Activity Guide listed wineries as well as the farm stand trails. The copy was done well and the ad provides a solid overview of Suisun Valley, including a comprehensive calendar of events with all participants listed, including their Web sites and phone numbers. The full page color ad promoted the 2008 Fun Family Farm Days, however, the advertising could be laid out better as it not grab the reader’s attention – no contact information (call for action) is given.

The “Discover Wines from Suisun Valley” rack card did not list all wineries; we assume that this card is funded through the Fairfield Hotel Association, which may have restrictions on what wineries can be listed or advertised.

The Fairfield Hotel Association’s “The Top 25 Things to Do in and Around Fairfield” rack card cross markets Suisun Valley in things to do as well as mentioning several wineries and the Sepay Olive Oil store.

The Solano County Official Guide Book 2006/2007 published by Solano Magazine featured Suisun Valley twice – as a sidebar on the Fairfield page and a page with full editorial. It did not list Suisun Valley’s Web site or contact information.

The Buy Fresh/Buy Local Bay Area Guide used Suisun Valley’s logo, listed all Solano growers (not just Suisun Valley) and applicable Web sites, plus supporting organizations, including Suisun Valley. It only listed three wineries, and used the old name of Suisun Valley Growers’ Association.

The Suisun Valley Wine Cooperative rack card was professional looking, had map, directions, hours of operation, listing of wines and Web sites, plus offered a 10% discount with the rack card. It did not have any cross marketing or mention of others in Suisun Valley.

- **Other Web sites** – Consultants examined the following Web sites:

www.ffsc-chamber.com (Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce)

www.vacavillenow.com (Vacaville Conference and Visitors Bureau)

www.vacavillechamber.com (Vacaville Chamber of Commerce)
www.californiafairfield.com (Fairfield Hotel Association)
www.SVWineCoop.com (Suisun Valley Wine Cooperative)
www.co.solano.ca.us (County of Solano)
www.ci.fairfield.ca.us (City of Fairfield)
www.suisun.com (City of Suisun City)
www.svgga.com (Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association)

The Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce Web site has a visitors' section and links to Suisun Valley, however, it was hard to find (listed under Resources). The leading line describing Suisun Valley was dated and used the dated phrase, "Suisun Valley Fruit Loop."

The Vacaville Chamber of Commerce, Vacaville Conference and Visitors Bureau and City of Fairfield Web sites have no listing of any Suisun Valley activities or any reference to Suisun Valley within their Web sites.

The County of Solano Web site lists some produce stands, and only two wineries. There are no links to events for Suisun Valley on their calendar, and there are no listings of Suisun Valley activities or reference to the Suisun Valley Web site under the agricultural portion of the County's Web site.

The Suisun Valley Wine Cooperative Web site is a professional-looking Web site that mirrors their rack card. It only links to the co-op wineries that have Web sites and does not cross-market to suisunvalley.com.

The Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association's Web site is very detailed and does an excellent job of promoting the association as well as providing industry-related information, including a downloadable PDF press kit. There is not a link on the site to suisunvalley.com, only to members and wineries. It appears that the site is designed for the internal customer and is not visitor-related.

The Fairfield Hotel Association Web site is branded well, and lists local events, tastings and tours, and area attractions. All wineries are not listed. The Suisun Valley link does not work, and Fun Family Farm Days is not listed in their calendar of events. It was indicated throughout the site that a new Web site is coming in the fall of 2008.

The City of Suisun City Web site lists Suisun Valley under things to do with links to the Web site.

- **Advertising of Fun Family Farm Days** – Consultants looked at Suisun Valley's Web site, advertising in the Fairfield Activity Guide and Advertising in the Fairfield Daily Republic, signage, and posters in valley stores.

The event was listed on the front page of the Web site, and had a downloadable flyer and activity schedule that lists all vendors and activities. The activity map was created to capture visitors' information and quantify

attendance if turned in for a gift basket drawing. It encouraged visitors to pick up the Harvest Trails map and provided information on the booth. The Web listing did not grab attention or stand out on the site; the activity schedule was in black and white, and had several misspelled words. It was confusing until the consultants figured out that missing numbers meant that the numbered vendor (as referred to on the map) was not participating in the event.

Advertising in the Fairfield Activity Guide (in color) promoted the 2008 Fun Family Farm Days, however, the ad could be laid out better. It does not grab the reader's attention – and no contact information (call for action) was given.

The *Fairfield Daily Republic* ad on Friday, August 29, 2008 was three-quarters of a full page in color. A similar ad was repeated on Sunday, August 31, 2008. The Suisun Valley ad was about one-quarter page with five participating businesses filling one-half page. It listed all pertinent information including all vendors, and included the Web site address for more information. There was also a listing in the calendar section of the newspaper. The ad did not create excitement or a future “experience” in the consumer's mind. The color logo was not used.

Consultants saw posters in participating vendors windows prior to the event. While colorful and attention getting, the layout was very basic.

Signage – the signage posted at each venue for the event was large and clear and well designed. The numbers in front of each venue were easy to understand as per the activity map.

The follow-up article in the Daily Republic on September 1, 2008 was very positive and listed the next two days of the event in September and October.

- **Fun Family Farm Days Event – August 31, 2008** – Consultant stopped and visited three of the venues during the event and drove by 15 of the others. Traffic seemed to lessen later in the afternoon, although at 4 p.m. three of wineries/wine tasting venues still had plenty of visitors. Consultant mailed a letter with a survey to all participants asking them to evaluate the event. Information from the survey will be used in the marketing plan.

- **Comments from interviews regarding marketing** – As part of the interviews conducted with various local farmers, winemakers, and farm stand operators, consultants asked interview participants the following questions:
 - Who are your customers?
 - Where do your customers live?
 - How many customers are repeat customers in a year?
 - How do you track your customers?
 - What additional events, promotions or marketing activities do you currently use for your business?

- How effective has that been?
 - How do you quantify the results from your marketing and promotional efforts?
 - Have you participated in any of the group marketing efforts for Suisun Valley, i.e. Family Farm Days, Harvest Trails brochure, Web site, Tomato Festival, Art on the Vine, etc?
 - If so, how effective have these events been for your business?
 - What are some of your additional ideas to promote Suisun Valley?
 - What events/marketing pieces have you seen in other locales that you think may work for Suisun Valley?
- **Customers** – Most of the respondents reported that the majority of their customer base was local (Fairfield, Suisun City, Green Valley, Vacaville); most estimated between 70-90%. Other characteristics included:
- Age 35 – 55
 - Had a college education
 - No one in the interviews estimated their customers’ income
 - Most wineries typically had couples come in; most produce stands saw families as well as couples
- **Additional events, promotions and marketing** – Most respondents held or participated in additional events – private parties, farmers’ markets, wine club events, winemaker dinners, barrel tastings, wine strolls, produce tastings, and the Fairfield Tomato Festival. Some participated in charity events by pouring their wine, donating produce or wine, or by hosting an event. Many send postcards or emails/e-newsletters to customers or visitors who opted-in for email or direct mail marketing through other events; wineries seemed to be more adept and consistent in pursuing this type of opt-in direct marketing. Many wineries mentioned food and wine pairings as current or future events. Some felt strongly that this was an important future trend that valley businesses need to be involved with, and it could be used to reach out beyond the local market.
- **Participation and Effectiveness** – most businesses participated in Fun Family Farm Days and many benefited from “spillover” from other events held in the valley (such as Art on the Vine). Businesses thought Fun Family Farm Days was excellent exposure for the valley and saw new people at their businesses during the event.
- **Additional ideas and events in other areas**
- Cross market with Suisun City, Solano County and Fairfield entities (Chambers of Commerce, business/hotel associations, city/county) to stretch marketing dollars
 - More wine/food events
 - Wine event in Lodi
 - Outreach to local schools – field trips to farms
 - Bus/familiarization tours for seniors and others (both local and out-of-town)

- Hay rides/organized tour in the valley making stops at wineries or family-related hay rides that stopped at produce stands with additional activities
- Participation in Bay Area travel shows to promote the area
- More awareness to the visitor with promotion to local hotels, cross-promoting local produce and wines

➤ **Failures and Successes**

- Consultants’ interviews did not reveal any specific failures regarding the efforts by Suisun Valley
- Many feel that there still is in-fighting/jealousy between valley producers and that they do not work together toward the common goal of promoting the valley
- Marketing materials on Suisun Valley are readily available to the public
- Web presence is essential
- Fun Family Farm Days is a good promotional event that gives needed exposure to locals about the valley

➤ **Target Market**

- Local – Many locals are still not aware of Suisun Valley. They may have recently moved into the area, do not take the local newspaper, or need to be reminded of the “hidden treasure” that is in their backyard.
- Regional visitors – Visitors and commuters from the Bay Area or Sacramento region are not aware of Suisun Valley, its beauty, produce stands or wineries as a viable alternative to other wine regions.
- “Foodies” – Pairing food and wine together is a highly subjective and inexact process that is becoming very popular. Vineyard tours and wine tastings are a great way to try different wines and learn about foods that go well with those wines.

➤ **Recommended strategies relating to marketing programs and activities**

The marketing plan will make recommendations of possible revisions and/or new strategies to assist Suisun Valley to evolve into a stronger, more dynamic economic destination for residents and non-residents alike. These marketing strategies will include:

- Expanding awareness of Suisun Valley as a local source for food, wine and other related businesses.
- Positioning Suisun Valley as a viable agri-tourism destination.

The marketing strategy and plan will keep the efforts to promote Suisun Valley focused and effective. Having a clear perspective of long-term objectives and tactical goals will help identify successful opportunities when they arise.

**Suisun Valley Marketing Plan
Results of Interviews
June 19 – June 21, 2008**

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Suisun Valley as it relates to Agriculture and Agritourism.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Close to Sacramento and San Francisco population clusters → Near freeway yet still rural • History (3) • Great soil and climate • Close to transportation hub • Value-added products • Quality of life • Assets to other companies • Variety of local produce • Easy to get to all stands and wineries • Range and size of farms/products • Offer products from high price point to lower more affordable • Agricultural-art components • Mankas Corner -cluster of produce, restaurants, shops • Beauty • Grass roots • Family ties • Family held farmers/generational • Lots of things to do • Rural in the middle of urban • Accessibility – can do all in one spot • Charm • Places to come and see 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication (3) • County regulations do not support agriculture (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Use permit process • Farmers not local enough • Lack of awareness • Hard life of farmer • Slow transition from agricultural only • Current general plan • No growth initiative • Lack of notoriety both locally and regionally • Getting all groups to work together • Lack of engagement with farmers and growers • More active in Farmer’s Markets • Not getting people out to the Valley • Valley has changed • Individuality – trying to get people to work together • Quality of products vary • Seasonality • Consumers not knowing about the Valley • Looking beyond themselves • Long standing feuding • Self serving • Negative toward Jelly Belly • Lack of signage • Locals slightly cost sensitive

Suisun Valley Marketing Plan
Results of Interviews
June 19 – June 21, 2008

OPPORTUNITIES	BARRIERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-marketing (3) • Bed & Breakfast facilities (2) • Food, wine and art experience (2) • General Plan passed by voters in Nov. • Stream line County processes • Self-sustainability • Freedom to process in Suisun Valley • Process facility • Retain the quality • More special events • " • Capitalized on Agritourism • Extra day trips from Napa • Wineries • Fruit stands • Events that celebrate agriculture • Attract more people from the region • Marketing niche • Small vacation • Smaller and less “snooty” than Napa • In-fill • <i>Brand</i> the Valley as a destination • Foodies" and health trends • Accessibility and location • Keep people here longer – 2 to 3 days • Less inward; more outward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Plan NOT passed (3) • Rural –residential issue • Cost of making facilities “legal” • Politics • Zoning • Workforce • Trend in agriculture • Gas • Economy • Being forgotten during off season • When Fund goes away-everything goes away • Cost of doing business as a farmer • No visitor center specific for promoting agricultural • Pressures of development • Local support is inconsistent

Identify who are your customers and where do they come from.

Responses from Farmers/Produce	Responses from Festivals & Downtown	Responses from Wineries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing from little ladies in Napa to more locals from Fairfield and Suisun City • Seeing more from Benicia, Vallejo and Martinez • Families • Tourists from Jelly Belly • From hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% Local <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suisun City ▪ Fairfield ▪ Vacaville • 10% Contra Costa • 10% Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% - Local <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fairfield ▪ Green Valley ▪ Rancho Solano ▪ Vacaville ▪ Suisun City • 15 – 20% outside <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Davis ▪ Benicia ▪ Vallejo • Age – 35 -55 • Family • Couples

**Suisun Valley Marketing Plan
Results of Interviews
June 19 – June 21, 2008**

What types of events, promotions or marketing activities do you currently use to promote YOUR business.

Farmers/Produce	Festivals & Downtown	Wineries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website (2) • Club events • Word of mouth • Signs • Brochure • Tomato Festival • Family Farm Days • Business Cards • Napa Farmers Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local print • Radio • Media around events • TV – 30 second cable spots more effective • <i>Breeze</i> Publication • Bi-lingual flyers to directly to schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited events due to restrictions • Participation at charity events – gather names and emails • Website • Emails to customers • Postcards • Specialized events held at winery • Wine Club • Private events • Winemaker “Journal” • Vacaville Wine Stroll

Ideas to help promote Suisun Valley

Farmers/Produce	Festivals & Downtown	Wineries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have implemented a lot in the last five years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Suisun Valley Website</i> ▪ <i>Harvest Trails Brochure</i> ▪ <i>Family Farm Days</i> • More outreach to schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Field Trips</i> ▪ <i>Farm to School</i> ▪ <i>Adopt a Garden</i> • Promote local produce to Hispanic market • Familiarization Tours • Bus Tours • More radio • Hay rides • Scarecrow Contest • Tours during press time • Visitor Center Outlet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-line with hotels • Farm Tours • More aggressive • More participation with Fairfield Farmer’s Market • Leverage Festivals and Events to build awareness (booth) • Partner more with Fairfield and Suisun City – regional approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at what Lodi and Texas have done to build their “brand” • More links with Food and Art • Cross Marketing • More with wildlife • Winemaker dinners • More activities to connect with food • Education

Vision for Suisun Valley in five years:

- Strong Harvest Trails Association to carry on mission and foster buy in for bringing people to this Valley to appreciate its agricultural products.
- Strong Harvest Trails to continue to educate on what they do and gain buy in from what has been done.
- See an array of fruit/produce that is professionally done with strong ties with food. “Kitchen/garden”; Bed and Breakfast; Restaurants using local produce.

Marketing Collateral Analysis – Suisun Valley

Marketing Collateral	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments
<i>Suisun Valley Harvest Trails Brochure – 2005 version</i>	Full color, glossy, very professional looking brochure. Easy to read, great opening description and location information. Has a harvest calendar and listing of other local attractions. Map is easy to read. Comprehensive description along with hours, phone number and Web sites listed for each vendor or business located on map. Suisun Valley’s Web site address is highlighted in several locations on brochure.	Web site not on front of brochure. No way to contact someone if have questions (no email or phone number). Font is small and bolded, which makes it somewhat hard to read.	Funded by the Suisun Valley Fund.
<i>Suisun Valley Harvest Trails Brochure – 2008 version</i>	Full color, glossy, very professional looking brochure. Easy to read, great opening description and location information. Has a harvest calendar; 2008 edition eliminated listings of other local attractions, but expanded wineries by adding a panel for “Discover Wines from Suisun Valley.” Map is easy to read. Added annual events. Comprehensive description along with hours, phone number and websites listed for each vendor or business located on map. Suisun Valley’s Web site address is highlighted in several locations on brochure. All producers’ names have been enlarged.	Web site not on front of brochure. No way to contact someone if have questions (no email or phone number).	Funded by the Suisun Valley Fund.

Marketing Collateral Analysis – Suisun Valley

Marketing Collateral	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments
<i>www.suisunvalley.com</i>	Comprehensive website with an abundance of information available. Consistent look with brochure. Site is current and updated often. Calendar of events as well as harvest calendar. List all key venues and has linked to individual sites. Lists “What’s in Season” on front page. Wine releases page. Offers free email newsletter.	Very wordy site. Only page that really has pictures is home page. Some are located in the image gallery. Need a visual to link consumer with region (i.e. map) Information about SV Grape Growers Association missing. PDF copy of Harvest Trails brochure not available from Web site; only map. Several misspelled words	Funded by the Suisun Valley Fund.
<i>Suisun Valley Wine Cooperative rack card</i>	Professional looking rack card. Has map, directions, hours, listing of wines and Web site. Offers 10% discount with card.	No cross marketing or mention of Suisun Valley.	
<i>www.SVWineCoop.com</i>	Professional looking page that mirrors the rack card. Does link to those wineries that have Web sites.	Site is only one page. Only links are to their wineries in the cooperative. No other links at all.	
<i>Solano County Web site www.co.solano.ca.us and agriculture portion of site http://www.co.solano.ca.us/depts/agriculture/default.asp</i>		Produce stands are listed on site; only two wineries are listed; no events for Suisun Valley on calendar	No listing of any Suisun Valley activities or reference to Suisun Valley Web site under agriculture portion of site
<i>City of Fairfield Web site www.ci.fairfield.ca.us</i>			No listing of any Suisun Valley activities or reference to Suisun Valley Web site
<i>City of Suisun City Web site www.suisun.com</i>	Under things to do - Suisun Valley is listed with links to the Web site		

Marketing Collateral Analysis – Suisun Valley

Marketing Collateral	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments
<i>Discover Wines from Suisun Valley rack card</i>	Very professional, color rack card that provides a map to local wineries as well as direct contact information. Fairfield Hotel Association’s website – www.californiafairfield.com is listed on card.	Not all wineries listed.	Assuming this card is funded through the Fairfield Hotel Association.
<i>Fairfield Hotel Association’s “The Top 25 Things to Do in and Around Fairfield” Rack Card</i>	Good use of Fairfield brand in rack card. Card is professional looking and cross-markets Suisun Valley in number 4 & 8 “things to do” as well as mentions several of the wineries and Sepay Olive Oil Store. Toll free phone number and website is predominant on card.		Published by the Fairfield Hotel Association.
<i>Fairfield Activity Guide - 2007</i>	Good use of brand; very professional, color guide packed with lots of information for the visitor. Map on page 6 & 7 lists the wineries as well as the Farm Trails. Farm Trails ad on page 18 & 19 is done well and provides a solid overview of Suisun Valley. Comprehensive Calendar of Events listing with phone numbers and Web sites listed. Is not packed with advertising.	Contact information for Fairfield Hotel Association is not very obvious. Really had to search for it.	
<i>Advertising in the Fairfield Activity Guide - 2007</i>	Full page, color ad. Promoted 2008 Fun Family Farm Days in 2007 edition.	Advertising could be laid out better. Not very exciting or didn’t really grab one’s attention. No contract information or “call for action”	
<i>www.californiafairfield.com</i>	Has incorporated brand. Listing of local events, tasting and tours, area attractions, outdoors and arts and culture. Under the Tasting & Tours button provides direct links to Valley Produce and Wineries. Suisun Valley is listed on the 80 on 80 website.	Very busy site that does not look as professional as the Association’s rack cards and activity guide. Suisun Valley link does not work. Fun Family Farm Days is NOT listed in calendar of events. Only lists some of the wineries.	Indicated throughout current site that a new website will be coming in Fall of 2008.

Marketing Collateral Analysis – Suisun Valley

Marketing Collateral	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments
www.sugga.com Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association.	Very detailed Web site that does an excellent job promoting the Association as well as provide industry related information. Has incorporated picture gallery promoting the 25 th Anniversary of the Suisun Valley Appellation. Can download a printable PDF press kit for the Association. A great site for the serious wine enthusiast as well as the growers. The logo on the site is also what is currently being used on signage in the vineyards	No links to any other sites except members and wineries.	It appears that this site is designed for the internal customer and not visitors.
Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce www.ffsc-chamber.com	Professional looking Web site but geared more to businesses. Does have a visitor section and links to Suisun Valley.	Needed to search for Visitor section, which is listed under Resources. Leading line describing Suisun Valley Trails was old and using old name – Suisun Valley Fruit Loop.	
Solano County Official Guide Book – 2006/2007	Suisun Valley was featured two times—As a sidebar on Fairfield and on page 27 with full editorial. Had the map, listing of farm stands and wineries.	Does not list Suisun Valley’s Web site or contact information. No call for action. Published by Solano Magazine.	
Buy Fresh/Buy Local Bay Area Guide	Listed under Solano County pages 29-31. Had Suisun Valley’s logo, listed all Solano growers and Web sites if they had them and list of supporting organizations which included Suisun Valley.	Only listed three wineries/vintners. Used old name – Suisun Valley Grower’s Association.	
Vacaville CVB www.vacavillenow.com Vacaville Chamber of Commerce www.vacavillechamber.com			No listing of any Suisun Valley activities, attractions, etc.

**Fun Family Farm Days Analysis
Sunday, August 31, 2008 Event**

Marketing Venue	Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>Suisun Valley's website</i> www.suisunvalley.com	On front page of the Valley's Web site. Downloadable flyer and activity schedule. Lists all vendors and activities. Activity map was created to capture visitors' information and help quantify attendance. Does encourage people to pick up the Harvest Trails map and provides information of where the information booth is.	Didn't grab attention or stand out on site. Activity schedule was only in black and white, had several misspelled words, could have been worded better. Have to download the activity map to get a listing of the vendors but if you don't know where you are going, also have to print off the google map.
<i>Advertising in the Fairfield Activity Guide - 2007</i>	Full page, color ad. Promoted 2008 Family Farm Fun Days in 2007 edition.	Advertising could be laid out better. Not very exciting or didn't really grab one's attention. No contract information or "call for action"
<i>Advertising in the Fairfield Daily Republic, Friday, August 29th issue</i>	¼ Back page ad in full color. Fund paid for ¼ page with five businesses covering ½ page. Listed all pertinent information including all vendors. Web site was listed for more information. Also a small listing in the Calendar section.	Although a large ad, it doesn't grab attention or create excitement or really create in the consumer's mind the experience. Did not use the color logo for the Suisun Valley trails.
<i>Posters in valley stores and restaurants</i>	Colorful and attention-getting	Layout was very basic.
<i>Event Signage</i>	The signage posted at each venue for the event was large and clear and well designed. The numbers in front of each venue were easy to understand as per the activity map.	

Figuring Return on Investment (R.O.I.)

Newspapers

1. Take a ruler and measure the length of the story in inches including the space for headlines and any photos. Save this number.
2. Look up the newspaper in a media directory such as *Burrelle's Daily Newspaper Directory*. In the newspaper entry, there should be a listing for the cost of per-column-inch advertising.
3. Multiply the length of the article in inches by the cost per-column-inch for advertising (e.g. 65 inches x \$107.50 per column inch = \$6,987.50). This will give you the value of the newspaper article in dollars.

Magazines

1. Count the number of pages over which your article ran. If the article is less than a page in length, determine the fractional amount of the page that the article covers (e.g. one-half, one-third, etc.) Save this number.
2. Look up the magazine in a media directory such as *Burrelle's Daily Newspaper Directory*. In the magazine entry, there should be a listing for the cost of a full page of display advertising.
3. Multiply the display advertising cost per page by the number of pages your article ran (e.g. \$28,000 per page x 2.5 pages = \$70,000). This will give you the value of the magazine article in dollars.

Valuing Internet Articles

With more and more people turning to the Internet for information, it's important to know the value of online placements. Values for online coverage varies greatly, depending on your Web site, number of visitors the site draw, and the prominence of your coverage. However, the advertising guidelines below can help you assign a ballpark value to Internet coverage.

Newspaper/Magazine Websites

<u>Site Users</u>	<u>Rate</u>
1 - 500,000	\$40/CPM*
500,000-860,000	\$35/CPM
860,000-2 million	\$30/CPM
2-4 million	\$25/CPM
4-8.5 million	\$20/CPM

Travel Websites

<u>Site Users</u>	<u>Rate</u>
1 -250,000	\$29/CPM
250,000-500,000	\$28/CPM
500,000-1 million	\$27/CPM
2-5 million	\$22/CPM
5 million +	\$18/CPM

1. Determine the number of Internet users who will see your coverage on the respective Web site. For example, if the Web site received 100,000 viewers per month and your coverage ran for three months, your message had the potential to reach 300,000 Internet users.
2. Use the number of site users to determine the applicable advertising rate.
3. Divide the number of Web site user by 1,000 (e.g. 300,000 users/1,000 =300). Then multiply that number by the advertising rate (e.g. 300 x 28 = \$8,400). This will give you the value of the Internet coverage in dollars.

* Cost per thousand



North Coast Agritourism Conference

Wednesday, November 12, 2008

Ukiah Valley Conference Center

Sponsored by the Mendocino County Promotional Alliance,
The North Coast Tourism Council
UC Cooperative Extension Mendocino County
The City of Ukiah

Join us on November 12th at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center in beautiful Mendocino County to learn more about agritourism and how to take advantage of this exciting revenue opportunity on your farm or ranch.

Conference Agenda

8:30- 9:00 **Registration and Coffee**

9:00- 9:10 **Welcome and Conference Information**
Alydia Atkins, General Manager
Mendocino County Promotional Alliance

9:10- 9:30 **Tourism in the North Coast**
Scott Schneider, Chair
North Coast Tourism Council

9:30- 10:15 **Evaluating your Resources for Agritourism**
Ellie Rilla, Farm Advisor,
UCCE Marin County

10:15- 10:45 **Creating a Business Plan**
Rachel Murray, Program Director,
West Company

10:45- 11:00 **Break**

11:00- 11:30 **Agritourism Operations & County Regulations**
Frank Lynch, Chief Planner
Mendocino County Planning Department

11:30- 12:30 **The Relationship of a County Plan to Agritourism**
Richard Coel, Director, Lake County
Community Development

Diana Hershey, Planner III
Mendocino County Planning Team

12:30- 1:30 **Lunch**

1:30- 2:15 **Managing Risk in Agritourism**
Peter Krause, Agent, Allied Insurance

2:15- 2:45 **Marketing Channels for Agritourism**
Christine Cole, Full House Farm
Sonoma County

2:45- 4:00 **Agritourism Entrepreneur Panel Discussion and Q&A**
Moderator: Ellie Rilla, Farm Advisor,
UCCE Marin County

Anne Austin, Eleven Roses Ranch,
Lake County

Sonoma County Agriculturalist TBA

Karen Bates, Philo Apple Farm
Mendocino County

4:00-4:05 **Closing**

4:05- 5:00 **Networking Social**

Conference Location:

Ukiah Valley Conference Center
200 South School Street
Ukiah, CA 95482
707-463-6700

For additional conference information please contact Mendocino County Promotional Alliance General Manager Alydia Atkins at 707.462.7417.

Agritourism: A business conducted by farmers or ranchers on their working agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operation for the enjoyment and education of visitors.

Registration Information

Conference fee: \$40

Includes UC Agritourism manual, catered lunch, conference packet and morning refreshments.

Registration deadline: November 7, 2008

Register by mail at the information below or by secure website at:

<http://cemendocino.ucdavis.edu>

(credit card payments accepted only through secure web-based registration)

If registering by mail, make check payable to UC Regents and mail along with the completed registration form below to:

UC Cooperative Extension
North Coast Agritourism Conference
890 N.Bush St.
Ukiah, CA 95482
Phone: (707) 463-4495
FAX: (707) 463-4477
cemendocino@ucdavis.edu

NAME: _____

ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

San Joaquin County Agritourism Conference

November 12, 2008

Conference Agenda

Open to Attendees
from All Counties

Cost: \$40

Includes UC
Agritourism Manual,
Catered Lunch,
Conference Packet &
Refreshments

Use the form below to
register

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PH#: _____

E-Mail:

Ranch/Farm/Business:

Send Check payable to:

“Greater Stockton Chamber of
Commerce” and *this form to:*

“Agritourism Conference”
445 W. Weber Ave # 220
Stockton, CA 95203

For Credit Card please call
Michelle @ 209-337-2726

- 8:30-9:00 Registration and Coffee/Refreshments
- 9:00-9:15 Welcome and Conference Information
Scott Hudson, San Joaquin County Ag Commissioner
- 9:15-9:30 Tourism in San Joaquin County
Wes Rhea, Stockton CVB
- 9:30 – 10:00 Adding Value to the Bottom Line – Your Future in Agritourism
Jane Eckert, Founder Eckert AgriMarketing
- 10:00 -10:45 Evaluating Your Resources for Agritourism
Holly George, Farm Advisor, UCCE Plumas and Sierra Counties
- 10:45-11:05 Refreshment Break – Visit Table Displays
- 11:05-11:40 Agritourism Operations and County Regulations
Kerry Sullivan, Director, San Joaquin County Community Development Dept.
- 11:40-12:30 Managing Risk in Agritourism
Cathie Bigger Smith, Risk Management Consultant
- 12:30-1:30 Lunch – Visit Table Displays
- 1:30-2:15 Keynote Speaker – Agritourism in America
Jane Eckert, Founder Eckert AgriMarketing
- 2:15-3:30 Panel: Agritourism in Action- San Joaquin County
Moderator: *Mick Canevari, Director, UCCE San Joaquin Cooperative Extension*

Susan Dell’Osso – Pumpkin Maze/Harvest Fair, Lathrop
Dave Phillips, Phillips Farms, Lodi
Ralph Lucchetti, Fruit Bowl, Stockton
Katherine Setness, Setness Tours, Stockton
Renae Matson, Vino Con Brio, Lodi
Jane Eckert, Eckert AgriMarketing
- 3:30pm Closing Remarks/Next Steps – Jane Eckert
- 4:00pm Lodi Wines, Taste and Learn Social
Lodi Wine Grape Commission

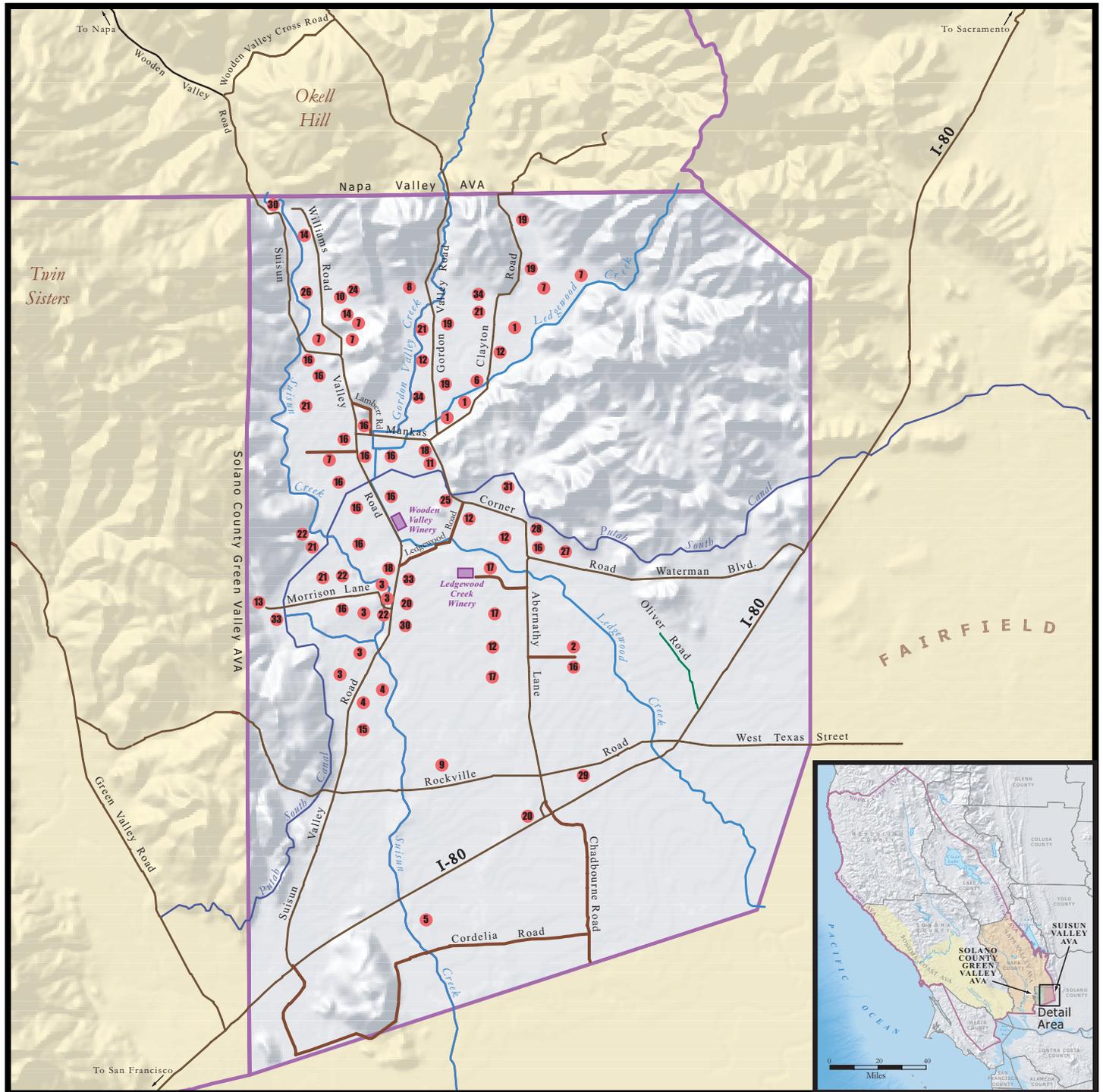
Location:

San Joaquin County Ag Center
2101 E. Earhart Avenue (Arch Airport Road and B Street)
Stockton, CA 95206

For more information visit:

www.visitstockton.org/agritourism.htm

Suisun Valley AVA



Index of Growers - Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association

For more information visit www.svgga.com



Scale = 1 : 75,000

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. A & J Custom Farming | 13. Greystone Creek Vineyards/Balestra | 25. MGR Partners |
| 2. Andrews Vineyards | 14. Hansen Farms/Upper Valley Vineyards | 26. Denise Phillips |
| 3. Babcock Vineyards | 15. Johnson/Regusci Vineyard Management | 27. Adair/Regusci Vineyard Management |
| 4. Balestra/Delehanty | 16. Lanza Vineyards | 28. Solano Foothill Vineyard, LLC |
| 5. Robert Balestra | 17. Ledgewood Creek Vineyards | 29. Tenbrink Ranch |
| 6. Tom & Minnie Bourland | 18. Ledgewood Vineyards | 30. Twin Creek Vineyard |
| 7. Lanny & Sandra Capp | 19. Lindemann Enterprises/M & I Ranch | 31. V. Sattui Vineyards |
| 8. Robert Carty | 20. Loney Ranch | 32. Pete Vernasco/Balestra |
| 9. Casharago Vineyards/Biggs Family Trust | 21. M. German & Son Fruit Co. | 33. Wine & Walker Ranch/Mangels |
| 10. Chris & Traci Estes | 22. Mangels Ranch | 34. Wolfskill Ranches |
| 11. Leonard Gianni | 23. Mason Ranch | |
| 12. Gordon Valley Farms | 24. Meades Ranch | |

VESTRA



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