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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mono County Honored with Visit California Poppy Award

Organization's "How to Poo Like a Pro in the Eastern Sierra" viral video recognized for excellence in tourism marketing

MONO COUNTY, Calif. (March 18, 2024) – Visit California honored tourism destinations and attractions across California for excellence in tourism marketing and destination stewardship at the organization's biennial Poppy Awards, held March 12 in Greater Palm Springs.

Mono County is proud to announce that it was selected as the winner in the Destination Stewardship and Sustainable Travel category for its *"How to Poo Like a Pro in the Eastern Sierra" viral video*. Mono County faced a real problem with an abundance of human and dog waste left across its trails and in dispersed campsites. To educate visitors and redirect behaviors to make a sustainable decision while in market, Mono County Tourism staff created a video about the unique outdoor challenges people face while experiencing the wilderness, including how to go to the bathroom properly in the outdoors. The "Poo Like a Pro" video went viral due to the frank, but funny, presentation style. The video has over 1.5 million views and has been shared 1,500 times. The video can be viewed on the Mono County Tourism – California's Eastern Sierra Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitEasternSierra/videos/2230739997117002>

"We are thrilled and honored to receive the Poppy Award for our 'How to Poo Like a Pro in the Eastern Sierra' video," said Christine Bouchard, Mono County Assistant County Administrative Officer. *"This accolade is a testament to Mono County's commitment to preserving our natural beauty while welcoming visitors to enjoy everything our region has to offer. Through innovative and engaging initiatives like this video, we aim to ensure sustainable travel practices that protect our environment for future generations. We hope our efforts inspire both locals and tourists alike to embrace responsible tourism and contribute positively to the preservation of our cherished landscapes."*

“The past two years have seen tremendous growth, resilience and innovation from California’s travel industry,” said Caroline Beteta, president and CEO of Visit California. *“This year’s Poppy Award-winning campaigns inspired visitors from around the world to rediscover California, highlighting our state’s welcoming spirit and abundance of world-class experiences.”*

Beteta, alongside Visit California’s board officers, presented the 2024 Poppy Awards during the 16th annual Visit California Outlook Forum, held March 11-12 at the Westin Rancho Mirage Golf Resort & Spa. This year’s Outlook Forum celebrated record attendance, welcoming more than 800 attendees.

A panel of industry marketing experts selected the winners of the Poppy Awards in nine categories, awarding winners in both business and destination categories.

Winners included:

- Best Content Marketing
 - Business: Belmont Park
 - Destination (tie): San Francisco Travel, Visit Greater Palm Springs
- Best Strategic Partnership
 - Business: San Francisco Giants
 - Destination: Visit Ventura
- Best Public Relations Campaign
 - Business: LEGOLAND California Resort
 - Destination: Visit Newport Beach
- Best Influencer Campaign
 - Business: Mendocino Railway | Skunk Train
 - Destination: Visit Long Beach
- Best Crisis Recovery: See Monterey
- All Dreams Welcome: Visit Sacramento
- Best Group Meetings Marketing: See Monterey
- Destination Stewardship & Sustainable Travel Award
 - Business: Rush Creek Lodge & Spa at Yosemite
 - Destination: Mono County Tourism
- Best Paid Brand Campaign, Under \$1 Million
 - Business: Palisades Tahoe
 - Destination: Visit Lake Tahoe
- Best Paid Brand Campaign, \$1 Million & Up
 - Business: San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (Zoo)
 - Destination: San Diego Tourism Authority

As the evening’s finale, Beteta presented the California Dreamer Award, which recognizes individuals who embody California’s pioneering spirit, to Chairman Reid D. Milanovich, who accepted the award on behalf of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

More about the Poppy Awards:

Crafted by California artisan Nicholson Blown Glass in Auburn, Poppy Awards are bestowed every two years to acknowledge the best of California's tourism promotion. Programs started Jan. 1, 2022 or after were eligible for the 2024 Poppy Awards. Submissions were reviewed by Visit California staff, then blind judged by California travel industry experts.

More about Outlook Forum:

Outlook Forum is the premier travel industry conference for California, the No. 1 tourism destination in the United States. Outlook Forum brings together C-suite executives and industry decision-makers from California's hotels, rental cars, attractions, restaurants, retailers and other travel businesses, as well as representatives from Visit California's global network of offices.

ABOUT MONO COUNTY:

Mono County, California is a rural county situated between the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the California/Nevada border. Accessed by state-designated Scenic Byway US Highway 395 which weaves its way north-south, Mono County is 108 miles in length, and has an average width of only 38 miles. With dramatic mountain boundaries that rise in elevation to over 13,000 feet, the county's diverse landscape includes forests of Jeffrey and lodge pole pine, junipers and aspen groves, hundreds of lakes, alpine meadows, streams and rivers, and sage-covered high desert. The county has a land area of 3,030 square miles, or just over 2 million acres, 94% of which is publicly owned. As a result, Mono County offers vast scenic and recreational resources, and has unsurpassed access to wilderness and outdoor recreation and adventure. To learn more about Mono County, visit www.monocounty.org.

ABOUT VISIT CALIFORNIA:

Visit California is a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs – in partnership with the state's travel industry – that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination. For more information about Visit California and for a free California Official State Visitor's Guide, go to visitcalifornia.com. For story ideas, media information, downloadable images, video and more, go to media.visitcalifornia.com.

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