



## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mendocino Railway  
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### **MENDOCINO RAILWAY - THE SKUNK TRAIN WINS VISIT CALIFORNIA'S PRESTIGIOUS POPPY AWARD**

Fort Bragg, California – (March 20, 2024) - Mendocino Railway - The Skunk Train is thrilled to announce its victory in Visit California's esteemed Poppy Awards. The company has been awarded the top honor in the "Best Influencer Campaign: Business" category, highlighting its dedication to excellence in tourism marketing and innovation in engaging with travelers.

Visit California, the state's official tourism organization, received an overwhelming response this year, with hundreds of submissions for its biennial Poppy Awards, which recognize outstanding achievements in the industry. After a thorough evaluation by industry judges, Mendocino Railway - The Skunk Train emerged as the winner in its category.

“We are beyond thrilled to receive this prestigious award, and thus be recognized by our peers for excellence. The competition is stiff, and our category finalists were top-notch,” said Melodie Hilton, Marketing Director of Mendocino Railway - The Skunk Train. “This award speaks volumes about the impact of our influencer campaign and the hard work of our team in providing unforgettable experiences to our passengers. We are deeply honored to be selected by Visit California for this recognition.”

The award ceremony took place on Tuesday, March 12, at the Poppy Awards Gala, marking the culmination of the Outlook Forum in Greater Palm Springs. This gala celebrates the best work in the tourism industry and honors those who have made significant contributions to California's travel landscape.

The winning campaign, titled "Journey Through the Redwoods: The Skunk Train Influencer Adventure," showcased the company's innovative marketing approach by sending influencers on a captivating journey through the redwoods to The Glen Blair Bar. This initiative yielded remarkable results, including triple-digit growth in social media channels, double-digit increases in site traffic and gross revenues, and the brand's single biggest revenue day ever. These

achievements underscore the effectiveness of Mendocino Railway - The Skunk Train's marketing strategies in engaging travelers and promoting its unique experiences.

Mendocino Railway - The Skunk Train extends a huge thank you to Visit California for this prestigious award.

For a full list of winners, please visit: <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/more/newsroom/2024-poppy-awards-finalists>.

For more information about Mendocino Railway - The Skunk Train and its unforgettable rail adventures, visit [www.skunktrain.com](http://www.skunktrain.com) or call (707) 964-6371.

**California Western Railroad / Skunk Train** located in the redwood forests of Northern California's Mendocino County, is a heritage railroad that has been operating both freight and passenger service since 1885. Initially used to move redwood logs to the Mendocino Coast sawmills from the rugged back country, the Skunk Train has become a beloved institution touted as one of the "10 Best Rail Tours in the Country" (USA Today), and a "Top 10 Family Activity in California" (National Geographic Traveler). The Skunk Train journey covers 40 miles of scenic delights and 30 bridges, all while retaining its original charm—minus the historic pungent aroma that once preceded its arrival. Operating year-round, this multi-generational experience welcomes passengers to bring along their families and even their dog, ensuring a memorable and inclusive adventure.

**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.

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