

## LOCAL

# Visitors Bureau begins developing strategy

By Cornelia de Bruin

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With a new chairman at the helm and a marketing communications group in town gathering information, the Visitors Bureau is developing a program to bring tourists to Del Norte County and entice them to stay awhile.

Jim Strong, CEO of Sutter Coast Hospital, is the new visitors board chairman. Motivo of San Mateo is developing a marketing campaign for the area, and is aided by Ripple Effects Interactive, which will handle the Internet component of the effort.

"We want to refine and put into effect a program to market Del Norte to increase tourism and be a destination vacation spot," Strong said.

To do that he said the group will begin a program whose principal focus is using the Web for event promotion and data gathering to track peoples' inter-

est in vacationing here.

Adrienne Parker, the principal of Motivo Marketing, spent Sunday and Monday — her second trip to the area — gathering information to develop a marketing strategy.

"We plan to develop a campaign to increase awareness and get more heads on beds," she said.

The Internet, and radio and print advertising are the tools of the trade, but that doesn't tell the whole story.

She and Patrick Nace of Ripple Effects Interactive have their sights set on interactive marketing: accepting feedback from people who visit the Website, then following through



Parker



Nace

with information specific to their interests.

They will track users' interests, along with their own progress during the first year.

Including other Web site links geared to users' interests is possible and Internet searchers for users and "flash" presentations are likely — in short, as much information as creative people can string together to capture potential visitors' interests and woo them on poking around the county is the goal.

"We want to create an emotional experience," Parker said. "We are trying to inspire them."

Eventually the visitors bureau and Crescent City-Del Norte Chamber of Commerce will

cross market to give the effort an extra punch.

"There's been a lot of focused marketing, but we've never had a cohesive effort to market the whole area," said Kelly Schellong, visitors bureau secretary.

Added Chamber President Chris Howard, "We've had bed taxes since 1964, but it's taken 42 years to come up with a budget and a plan. I see the culmination of the effort to set up a visitors bureau and board."

Strong noted that one focus of the new group's effort is to show that future years can grow from the work that's about to be done.

"The goal is to get a return on our investment," he said.

As the group collects data on overnight stays in the county, Ripple Effects Interactive will track the number of Web site visits, length of time visitors spend on the site and the information they're accessing there.