



New Mexico, USA

**Tourism and Marketing
2016 Report**

**Wilann Thomas
Tourism & Marketing Supervisor**

City of Aztec
110 N. Ash Avenue
Aztec, NM 87410-2143
O: (505) 334-7632
C: (505) 330-1231



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	3
MAJOR PROJECTS & ACHIEVEMENTS	4
Aztec Street Map Project	4
Brochures & Booklets.....	4
Grand Circle Association.....	4
Photo Library.....	5
Other Achievements.....	5
Other Projects	5
NETWORKING	6
Geo-Tourism	6
New Mexico Tourism.....	6
Travel and Training	7
PRINTED MARKETING.....	7
Print and Web Advertisement	7
Aztec Brochures.....	8
Information Bags.....	9
Jump Drives	9
SOCIAL MEDIA	10
Constant Contact	10
Facebook	10
Instagram	10
TOURISM WEBSITE	11
Web Inventory.....	11
Major Upgrades	11
VISITOR CENTER	12
Visitors	12
Sales.....	13
IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES.....	13
Physical Impacts.....	13
Positive Impacts.....	13
Staffing Challenges	13
PROJECTS FOR 2017	14

INTRODUCTION

Year 2016 saw some significant changes. From January through mid June, the Visitor Center was, due to budget constraints, open five days a week (versus the seven days a week operations from the previous 2015 year). Staffing was also down-sized from one and a half full-time employees to one full-time employee and contracting TEMP help on an as-needed basis.

A second major change was the restructuring of the Tourism Marketing and Visitor Center. The over-sight of this office was moved from the Community Development Department and is now under the Projects Management Department.

A third major change was the decision to move Visitor Center's longtime tenant, the office of the Aztec Chamber of Commerce, to the new Aztec Business HUB. With the newly available floor space, plans are underway to refresh the Visitor Center's main floor space with new customer service oriented features, including:

- More area amenity visuals, including maps and photographs
- A new dedicated computer that will allow users to go online for:
 - New Mexico state fishing licenses;
 - Access to New Mexico True marketing videos filmed in northwest New Mexico; and updates from NM True Television, a weekly travel show produced by Cliffdweller Digital in cooperation with the New Mexico Tourism Department, has been awarded a Regional Emmy® Award in the category of "Magazine Program - Program/Special." Note: The show is to be expanded to national viewership in January 2017, on "Fun Roads TV," which is distributed to 20 million households nationally via DISH Network and in Florida via Comcast.

The added space also will allow the Visitor Center new office space that includes dedicated workspace for producing Brochures, Information Bags and special projects.

MAJOR PROJECTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Aztec Street Map Project

Another successful project was the Aztec Street Map, which was made possible thanks to a funding partnership with ATOS. The reverse side of the Street Map offers a Street Bike Trail Map of Aztec, a key effort driven by ATOS. In addition to the new City of Aztec Street and Bike Map, the department also produces a Relocation Booklet, both of which are frequent ingredients in the Aztec Relocation Information Bags.

Brochures & Booklets

The Visitor Center worked with Doug McKim from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), who gave us permission to reproduce and distribute brochures for Angel Peak and Bisti Wilderness as neither of these brochures are published by the BLM anymore. These two brochures have proven very popular with Aztec visitors. In addition, a similar format and layout was utilized in publishing brochures for the Lybrook Badlands and North Road Experience.

Angel Peak Scenic Area

Facilities:
There are three picnic areas and a campground within Angel Peak Scenic Area. Each site has shelters with tables and fire rings with metal grates. Stage and City Photo areas and the campground have vault toilets. The campground has nine camping spaces and a short nature trail that passes through yellow pined pines and ends at a bench overlooking the canyon. There is no availability of trash pickup in the scenic area - Please pack out what you pack in. [Click here for the map or other availability in the scenic area - 2016 availability of water](#)

Stay Safe and Enjoy Your Visit!
Visitors sometimes can't change quality at Angel Peak, so be prepared. Visitors can't get any food, supplies, water, or services. Bring a jacket, hat and sunscreen. There is no cell or gas development in the area. For fire safety, stay away from the fire and gas facilities. Motorist vehicles and mountain bikes must stay established roads. Off highway vehicles are permitted only on unestablished roads, and only vehicles with a permit.

Showing is not allowed.
Recreation, mountains and vegetation options like this area, be careful where you go and do not plant your hands and feet where you cannot see them. [Click here to learn why not to show!](#)



ANGEL PEAK SCENIC AREA

Camping
Hiking
Picnicking
Photography



Aztec Visitor Center
www.aztecmn.com

Another worldy land...

Managed and protected by the Bureau of Land Management, the Bisti/De-na-zin Wilderness is 42,000 acres of early eroded badlands and desert. Located about 30 miles south of Farmington, New Mexico, in the Four Corners area, Bisti/De-na-zin is a strange and magical "strange landscape" and De-na-zin (De-na-zin) is the name used for "hanging valleys." Paleogeology look out looking upon the best fossil record of the West.

Between 10 and 33 million years ago the Rocky Mountains rose to the north and east, and other mountains to the west. As they were pushed down from the mountains, a wave of sandstone, cutting through to the softer layers beneath in some places, eroded an amazing landscape of sandstone mesas, arches, and spires. Rain and wind, and forming valleys like hoodoos. These hoodoos are like mushrooms, arches, and even topped.

It seems incredible that this fantastic desert landscape was left formed by water. Seventy million years ago, this area was covered by a shallow sea and coral reefs. Wind eroded the sea bed, and the thick layers of coral formed by plants and animals that died. Sand dunes that were formed to rock. Fossilized wood and whale bones can be seen scattered on the hills. Geologists named this coast line the "Tympanon" because the shape has been named the "Bisti Board" a new beach with a sand sea or a cave. You are welcome to look at any fossils of plants and animals that died, but it is illegal to remove them from the wilderness.

At the end of the Cretaceous the Age of the Dinosaurs, the sea withdrew and the dinosaurs disappeared. The Bisti Board behind a flat plain - a layer of soft shale and mudstone.



Another worldy land...

Today the wilderness is home to herpetofauna and reptiles, snakes, gophers, and prairie falcons, all of which nest in the area. Ground sloths, burrowing owls also nest there. Five in all are listed as endangered. Other birds include yellow jays, ravens, scaled quail and mourning doves. Curlew's, prairie dogs, rabbits, coyotes and badgers live in the wilderness, as do various tortoises, snakes, herpetiles and scorpions.

Help keep the wilderness wild!
The Bisti/De-na-zin is a wilderness area and there are no facilities or trails. Hiking, backpacking and primitive camping are encouraged, but mechanical vehicles (including mountain bikes) are not allowed in the wilderness area.

These sensitive rock pillars of sandstone form that can be destroyed in an instant! Please do not disturb or remove any natural features.

US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management
Farmington Field Office
2551 College Boulevard
Farmington, NM 87402
(505) 994-7600

BISTI / DE-NA-ZIN WILDERNESS



Aztec Visitor Center
www.aztecmn.com

Another worldy land...

Managed and protected by the Bureau of Land Management, the Lybrook Badlands area comprises 10,000 acres in the Lybrook Badlands in an area of badlands, eroded by wind and water. The area is home to many species of plants and animals, including prairie dogs, badgers, and burrowing owls. Access to the badlands is about 97 miles south of Aztec, New Mexico.

Between 10 and 30 million years ago the Rocky Mountains rose to the north and east, and other mountains to the west. As they were pushed down from the mountains, a wave of sandstone, cutting through to the softer layers beneath in some places, eroded an amazing landscape of sandstone mesas, arches, and spires. Rain and wind, and forming valleys like hoodoos. These hoodoos are like mushrooms, arches, and even topped.

It seems incredible that this fantastic desert landscape was left formed by water. Seventy million years ago, this area was covered by a shallow sea and coral reefs. Wind eroded the sea bed, and the thick layers of coral formed by plants and animals that died. Sand dunes that were formed to rock. Fossilized wood and whale bones can be seen scattered on the hills. Geologists named this coast line the "Tympanon" because the shape has been named the "Bisti Board" a new beach with a sand sea or a cave. You are welcome to look at any fossils of plants and animals that died, but it is illegal to remove them from the wilderness.

At the end of the Cretaceous the Age of the Dinosaurs, the sea withdrew and the dinosaurs disappeared. The Lybrook Badlands behind a flat plain - a layer of soft shale and mudstone.

Today the wilderness is home to herpetofauna and reptiles, snakes, gophers, and prairie falcons, all of which nest in the area. Ground sloths, burrowing owls also nest there. Five in all are listed as endangered. Other birds include yellow jays, ravens, scaled quail and mourning doves. Curlew's, prairie dogs, rabbits, coyotes and badgers live in the wilderness, as do various tortoises, snakes, herpetiles and scorpions.

Help protect the area!
Lybrook is a wilderness area and there are no facilities or trails. Hiking, backpacking and primitive camping are encouraged, but mechanical vehicles (including mountain bikes) are not allowed in the wilderness area.

These sensitive rock pillars of sandstone form that can be destroyed in an instant! Please do not disturb or remove any natural features.

US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management
Farmington Field Office
2551 College Boulevard
Farmington, NM 87402
(505) 994-7600



LYBROOK BADLANDS



Aztec Visitor Center
www.aztecmn.com

Salmon Ruins

In the late 1800s, George Salmon and his family founded a small town called Salmon Ruins. The property was the site of an Ancestral Puebloan site dating back to 1100. The site has 12 miles south of the Aztec State Historic Monument in Idaho.

The original structure included a tower, 200 rooms, many of which were destroyed in a fire in 1890 which was followed by a second fire in 1910. The Salmon family owned the ruins until 1900 when the State of Idaho purchased them. The ruins are now a National Historic Landmark and are open to the public.

The Great Kiva has been restored and presents a beautiful view of the site. The site is open to the public and is a popular destination for visitors.

Salmon Ruins
1100 N. 2nd St.
Salmon, ID 83421
(208) 755-2222

Attec Ruins National Monument

On January 24, 1923 the Ancestral Puebloan ruins at Attec became a national monument. Early Euro-American settlers mistook the site for the remains of the Aztec Indians of Mexico. The monument state and the ruins are now a National Historic Landmark.

All Attec Ruins National Monument are open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except Monday. The site is open to the public and is a popular destination for visitors.

The Great Kiva has been restored and presents a beautiful view of the site. The site is open to the public and is a popular destination for visitors.

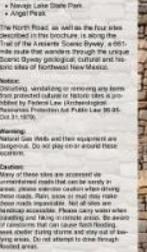
Attec Ruins National Monument
1100 N. 2nd St.
Salmon, ID 83421
(208) 755-2222

North Road Experience

Managed and protected by the Bureau of Land Management, the North Road Experience is a 10-mile drive through the Bisti/De-na-zin Wilderness. The drive is a scenic and educational experience, featuring a variety of desert landscapes and unique geological formations.

The drive is a scenic and educational experience, featuring a variety of desert landscapes and unique geological formations. The drive is a scenic and educational experience, featuring a variety of desert landscapes and unique geological formations.

North Road Experience
1100 N. 2nd St.
Salmon, ID 83421
(208) 755-2222



Grand Circle Association

Membership with the Grand Circle Association allows the department several perks, including virtual representation at major national travel shows by way of City of Aztec Tourism Brochure distribution. For a small fee, brochures were distributed at the 2016 Los Angeles Travel Show, and that effort will be followed by virtual representation at the January 2017 Chicago Travel Show.

Photo Library

The department's growing high-resolution image library grew significantly in 2016, including new images from Christmas Parade, Highland Games, San Juan River Fly Fishing and the Aztec Municipal Golf Course.

Other Achievements

- Tourism/Visitor Center moved to a different department.
- Developed new system for Visitor Center help and coverage.
- Updating Social Media and added Instagram.
- New Ads for published media.
- Worked with High School Hospitality Class and with Volunteer program to take a High School volunteer once a week for two hours.
- Hosted and distributed the department's Aztec History Book (authored by Marilu Waybourn) to 200 Park Avenue School 4th Graders, and hosted (and distributed an additional 55 books) Aztec High School students who were taking classes in Hospitality.

Other Projects

- Tourism Media Press Kit
- City of Aztec Media Press Kit
- Developing of Tourism Marketing Plan
- Five-Year Budget for Tourism/Visitor Center
- Distribution of 3,099 Information Bags
- Distribution of 28,885 Aztec Brochures
- Delivered 3,225 Response Mailers

NETWORKING

Geo-Tourism

Aztec has been a part of the Geo-Tourism Fair since its beginning. The department has attended every annual event. Membership in this organization has proven highly beneficial, including visual representation, distribution of information, and networking with strategic local and regional entities. Our ongoing association enhances the department's understanding of the area, and opens opportunities to visit and work with local and regional attributes.

“Geo-tourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of a place - its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.” It is vital that Aztec be part of the larger regional picture in its pursuit of Tourism.

Story from Geo-Tourism Fair

Staff met a woman who owns an RV park across the highway from Mesa Verde National Park. She was excited that Aztec was represented, and she made a special effort to seek us out. She regularly sends her RV park visitors to experience the Aztec Arches and the Aztec Ruins. Our conversation resulted in a very positive strategic contact: She plans to distribute our brochures at her RV park.

Participants at the 2016 Geo-Tourism Fair included:

- Chaco
- Aztec Ruins
- Chimney Rock
- City of Aztec
- Cortez Cultural Center
- City of Farmington
- Southern Ute Museum
- Zuni Pueblo
- Ute Mountain Tribe
- Trail of the Ancients
- Acoma Pueblo

New Mexico Tourism

New Mexico Tourism reports tourism is driving job growth as more trips are being taken to New Mexico. Statistics include:

- 7.5% increase in direct tourism employment since 2010 (an additional 4,760 jobs).
- Tourism has generated 15% of all new jobs in New Mexico in the last five years.
- 33.4M trips were taken in New Mexico in 2015, making it the fourth consecutive record-breaking year for tourism growth.

- Hotels are being built and renovated. New tourism businesses are opening their doors. And, NMHA is securing new member benefits and developing new programming to support this rapid growth.

Travel and Training

In 2016, staff attended the following key meetings and conferences:

- TRENDS Conference (Santa Fe)
- Grand Circle Quarterly Meetings
- Steam Punk Convention (Aztec)
- Geo-Tourism Fair (Mesa Verde National Park)
- NM Governor's Conference (Las Cruces)

Training efforts are often restricted due to budget constraints. However, staff took advantage of several free online webinars provided by NM Hospitality, of which the department is a member. Webinars included:

- The Power of Branded Content
- Yelp For Businesses: The Tools Explained
- Managing Your Online Reputation
- NM Lodging Review and Outlook
- Avoiding the Pitfalls of Conducting Marketing & Visitor Surveys In-House

Additionally, staff took advantage of a webinar from the AIANTA to learn more about Native Tourism, and participated with the A2D Online Training from Farmington, which also required attending a live class in August 2016.

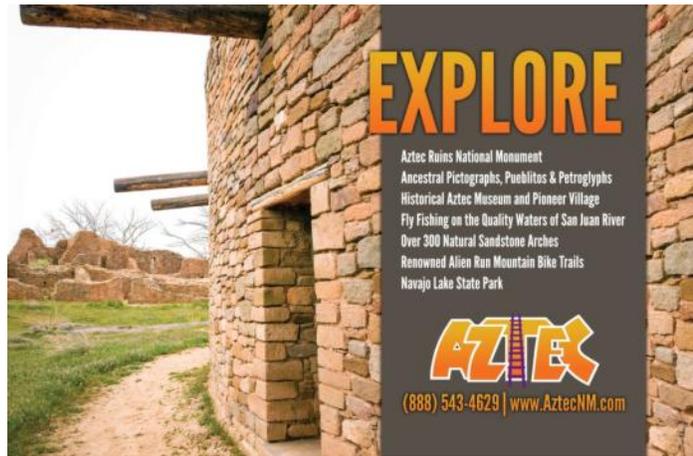
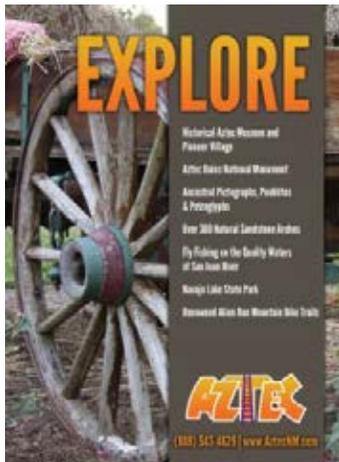
PRINTED MARKETING

Print and Web Advertisement

To date, we have placed advertising in:

- Durango Magazine
- Durango/LaPlata Airport Digital and Brochure
- Grand Circle
- Group Tour Magazine
- National Bus Tour Magazine
- NM 2017 True Magazine
- Sunset Magazine
- Trip Advisor

This year's advertisement appeared in the following ways:



Requests for additional information as a result of printed advertisement in the above publications resulted in:

<u>Publication</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Requests</u>
Grand Circle	Year Round	1,408
Sunset	May, November	772
True West	January, March, April	66
<i>Total</i>		2,246

Aztec Brochures

The Visitor Center has been diligently developing new brochures or updating existing brochures for various attractions. Currently we have brochures for:

- Aztec
- Camping
- Fishing
- Restaurants
- Bisti Wilderness
- Angel Peak Recreation
- Lybrook Badlands
- North Road Experience

The Aztec Brochure is the one brochure which is distributed throughout the region through various outlets:

<u>Aztec Brochure Distribution</u>	<u>Qty</u>
Local Businesses	1,650

NM Visitor Centers	2,500
Aztec Ruins	1,800
Fun & Games Distribution	8,200
Certified Distribution	13,400
Durango Airport	1,200
Aztec Airport	135
TOTAL	28,885

Information Bags

The visitor Center develops informational bags for a number of reasons:

- Tourism
- Special Events
- Relocation

The informational bags contain:

- Aztec Tourism Brochure
- Arches Brochure
- Aztec Fun Map
- Aztec Streets Map
- Annual Events
- Local Brochures (Restaurants, Camping, Fishing, and Stay-n-Play)

Additional information is also included depending upon the event and for relocation a telephone book is provided.

Informational bags were distributed at the following 2016 events:

- 4th Graders and High School Students
- Government Day at the County
- Business After Hours
- Local Golf Course Tournaments
- Annual / Regional Events
 - Animas River Blues
 - Antique Truck Show
 - Earth Day
 - Geo-tourism Fair
 - Gun and Knife Show
 - Highland Games
 - National Night Out
 - Mac and Cheese
 - Santa Dash
 - Senior Center Events

Jump Drives

As an alternative to the printed material, the Visitor Center has purchased jump drives for distributing information about Aztec.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Constant Contact

Constant Contact is a paid service that the Visitor Center uses to collect email from visitors and help develop email advertisements. The Constant Contact list has been updated and now boasts 2,934 contacts. These contacts will receive a quarterly published email. A sizable addition of contacts came as the result of Print Advertising placed in Sunset, True West and Grand Circle magazines.



Facebook

Facebook Likes statistics:

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
<i>End of Year Total</i>	2,290	1983	1475
<i>Increase By</i>	307	508	333

Instagram

Added an Instagram account in the last quarter of 2016. Over the three-month incubation period (October – December 2016), our Instagram page had:

- Posted 16 times
- Had 306 post interactions (likes and comments)
- Attracted 437 followers

We have launched a hashtag campaign for people to share their photos with us. The Hashtags are:

#VisitAztec

#ExploreAztec

#LoveAztec

We have gained a little bit of traction here with 2 post shares under #VisitAztec. Given the newness of this social media and implementation, it is anticipated that the volume for 2017 can only grow.

TOURISM WEBSITE

The Tourism website has been updated to improve Google Search efforts and added content for attractions (15 new locales) and things to do in and around Aztec.

Web Inventory

<i>Section</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Number of</i>		
			<i>PDF</i>	<i>Images</i>	<i>Other</i>
Archaeology	Dinetah Pueblitos (Crow Canyon, Encinada Mesa, Francis Mesa, Largo Canyon, and Simon Canyon).	13	7	69	3
Arches	Arches located in the Aztec Region (26 canyons).	31	86	274	3
Aztec	Various attractions and events in Aztec (e.g. History, Parks, Museum, Ruins, etc).	34	17	197	0
Culture	Categories of things to do.	7	1	0	0
Four Corners	Arizona Points of Interest	16	12	150	18
	Colorado Points of Interest	23	16	198	18
	New Mexico Points of Interest	29	36	249	24
	Utah Points of Interest	18	15	161	1
Recreation	Various recreational areas (e.g., Alien Run, Angel Peak, Bisti, Lybrook, Navajo Lake, etc).	17	30	173	20
Travelers		23	5	0	0
<i>Total</i>		<i>211</i>	<i>225</i>	<i>1,471</i>	<i>87</i>

Major Upgrades

- Social Media share links added. This allows people browsing the web site to share a particular page with other social media accounts.



- Development of recreational QR Codes (Ah-she-sle-pah Wilderness, Alien Run Mountain Bike Trails, Angel Peak, Aztec Arches, Bisti Wilderness and Lybrook Badlands). Allows users of smart devices to scan and visit pages or maps without typing in long URL addresses.
- Addition of New Mexico True video links for various New Mexico attractions.

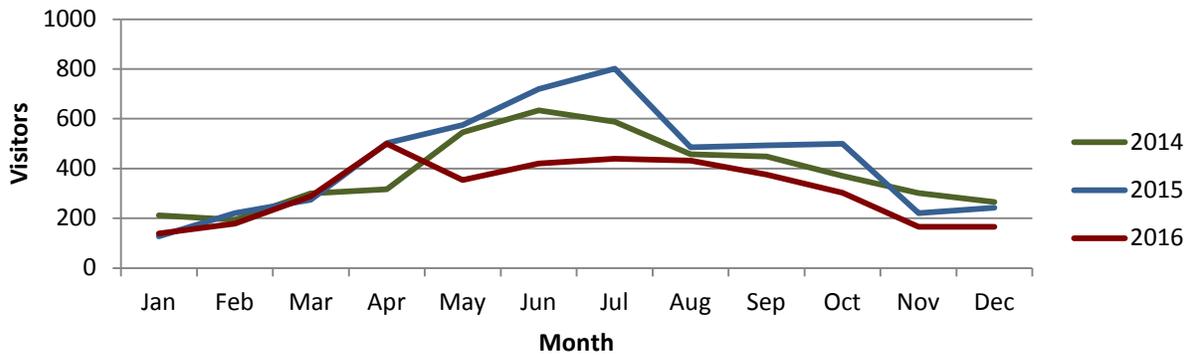


VISITOR CENTER

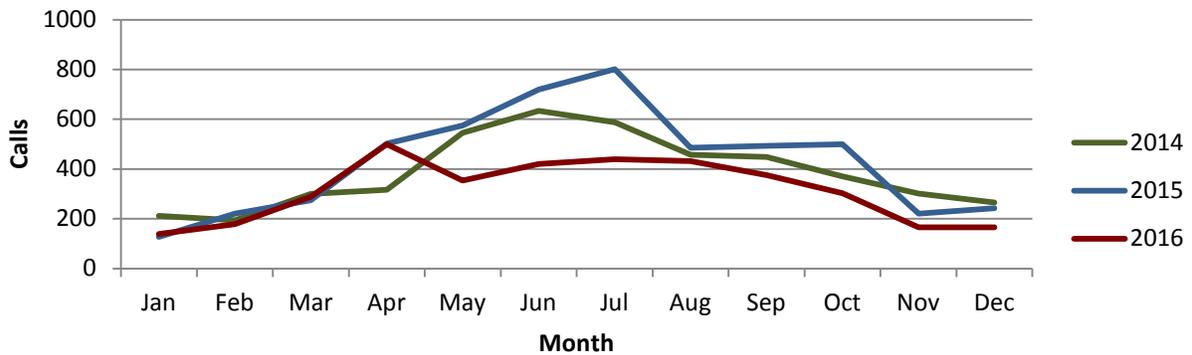
Visitors

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Walk-Ins	3,760	5,113
Phone Inquiries	862	1,004
International Travelers	28 Countries	29 Countries
Top 4 Countries	Germany (56) France (35) Canada (25) United Kingdom (20)	Canada (60) France (54) Germany (49) United Kingdom (40)
USA Travelers	47 States	49 States
Top 4 States	Colorado (266) Texas (139) New Mexico (132) California (106)	Colorado (442) New Mexico (257) Texas (164) California (115)

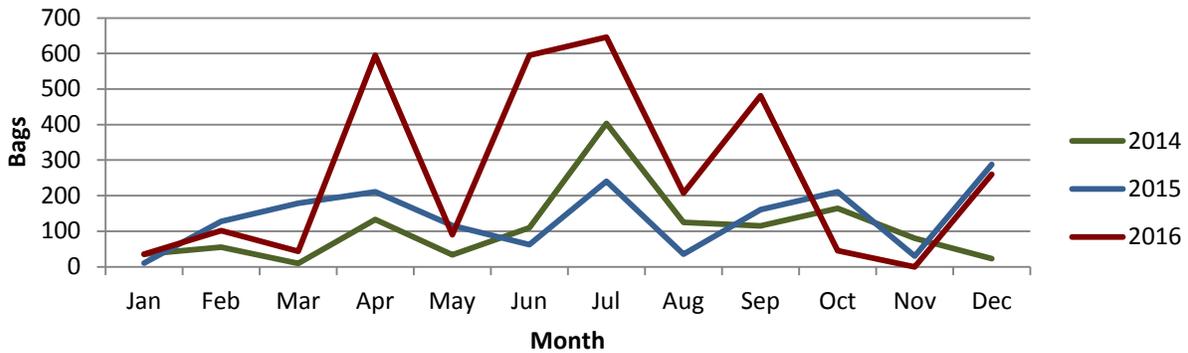
Walk-In Visitors



Phone Inquiries



Information Bag Distribution



Sales

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Visitor Center Store	\$845.64	\$1,214.27
National Geographic / Geo-Tourism Maps	2	5
Arches/Regional/Bisti Maps	29 (\$290)	46 (\$460)

IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES

Physical Impacts

In 2016 we experienced one negative issue that impacted the Visitor Center: Water that flowed into the center under a wall. (We believe we have addressed this issue, but time will tell.)

Positive Impacts

In 2016, we were publicized in two nationally distributed publications: Group Tours and Bus Tours magazines. In addition we were included in an online Colorado AvidGolfer article about golf in the Four Corners.

Staffing Challenges

Staffing changes, in particular the department’s decision to shorten the Visitor Center opening from seven days a week to five, have affected the Visitor Center numbers:

	<u>Walk-in</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Bags</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
January	139	73	35	247	+34%
February	179	74	102	355	-16%
March	289	105	43	437	-21%
April	500	91	595	1186	+49%

April's higher numbers are due in part to our hosting 200 4th Graders, as well as coordinated efforts to distribute Information Bags for upcoming events. We will be making up additional bags for summer and fall events.

Thoughts on differences in visitor numbers for 2016:

- We were closed 1-2 days a week more than previous year.
- We are distributing a higher number of our Brochures in New Mexico and Southwest Colorado. The availability of our Brochure is greater, as shown by the number of Brochures distributed.
- Information Bags, distributed to regional events, impacts visitor walk-ins because it precludes them from needing to stop by the Visitor Center for information.
- We also make Information Bags available in the Kiosk in front of the VC even when we are closed.

Overall, our visitor count is down 2% versus 2015. In 2014, we were up 45% over 2013, and in 2015 we were up 9% over 2014.

PROJECTS FOR 2017

1. Visitor Center remodel which will include:
 - Painting old chamber office space.
 - Rearrange visitor space to include additional offerings for visitors.
 - Develop workspace for volunteers.
 - Update backroom.
 - Install door bell for front door.
2. Vancouver Outdoor Adventure Travel Show – March 2017
3. Concrete mow strip around the building.
4. 2017 History Book distribution.
5. Complete Aztec Tourism & Marketing Plan.
6. Develop possible new brochures:
 - Cross Cultural Brochure
 - Outdoor Activities Brochure (Mountain Biking, Hiking, Walking Trails, etc.)
 - Cemeteries' and Ghost Towns