



Mendocino County's World Famous **SKUNK TRAIN**

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NEWS RELEASE

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Mendocino Railway

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SKUNK TRAIN PUTS MENDOCINO COUNTY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

FORT BRAGG & WILLITS, CALIFORNIA — (September 29, 2026) — September brought a wave of tourism-related media attention to Mendocino County as the Skunk Train and its local tourism and hospitality partners welcomed prominent journalists, content creators and statewide tourism leaders to the region.

The month's highlights included a media experience in Willits celebrating the launch of the Noyo Presidential Class Car, drawing representatives from national and regional outlets including the *Los Angeles Times* and *Travel + Leisure*. On the Mendocino Coast, Visit California's *California Now* podcast team, hosted by comedian Josh Meyers, spent time exploring Fort Bragg and the Skunk Train's coastal experiences. Earlier in the month, the railroad also hosted journalists from *Sunset Magazine*, *USA Today* and *Business Insider*.

Together, these visits reflect a broader effort to leverage the Skunk Train's reach and heritage appeal to drive visitation and support the hotels, restaurants, shops and small businesses that make Mendocino County a destination.

"Bringing people to the Skunk Train is only one piece of what we're trying to accomplish," said David Morrissey, Chief Marketing Officer for Mendocino Railway. "When journalists and creators visit us, they're also experiencing the magic of Mendocino County. They stay in our hotels, dine in our restaurants, shop at our local businesses and explore the natural beauty that makes this region special. We're proud to help create those opportunities and deeply grateful to the hospitality partners and community members who help us showcase Mendocino County at its best."

That impact extends beyond individual media visits in a county that has become increasingly reliant on tourism. In 2025, nearly 104,000 passengers rode the Skunk Train. Previous visitor

research found that approximately 93,500 Skunk Train guests generated more than \$86 million in visitor spending in 2023, underscoring the railroad's role in Mendocino County's tourism economy.

In 2026, the Skunk Train expanded its inland offerings with the launch of the Railcoaster, the arrival of Flynn Creek Circus and the debut of the Noyo Presidential Class Car. Along the Coast, experiences such as Glen Blair Bar and the Redwood Presidential Class Car continue to offer new ways to explore Fort Bragg and the Mendocino Coast.

These experiences create new opportunities to share Mendocino County with audiences far beyond the region through media visits, creator partnerships and collaborations with statewide tourism organizations.

"I've been associated with the Skunk Train for 34 years, and I don't recall seeing this level of coverage all at once," said Robert Jason Pinoli, President & CEO of Mendocino Railway. "Any one of these stories would have made for a successful month in public relations, but combined, it was extraordinary. Our success and the success of the communities around us are absolutely connected, and we are grateful for the support of our partners throughout Mendocino County."

The Skunk Train extends its sincere thanks to the hotels, restaurants, tourism organizations, local businesses and community members who welcomed and supported visiting media throughout September. Among those partners were Visit Mendocino, the Coast Chamber of Commerce and its members, Visit Fort Bragg, Trailborn Mendocino Hill House, Mendocino Cove, The Weller House, The Woodrose, Baechtel Creek Inn, Little River Inn, Noyo Harbor Inn, the Grey Whale Inn, the Beachcomber Group, Kayak Mendocino, Redwood Forest Foundation, the Willits Chamber of Commerce and its members, Floyd + Connie's, the Whistle Stop and the Greater Ukiah Business and Tourism Alliance.

California Western Railroad / Skunk Train is a Class III common carrier public utility railroad located in the redwood forests of Northern California's Mendocino County. This heritage freight railroad, which has been operating since 1885, added passenger service after its founding, initially moved redwood logs from the rugged back country to Mendocino Coast sawmills, later transporting finished lumber out to the national railroad network. In 1925, the railroad became known as the "Skunk Train" and, since that time, 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's journey covers the same 40-mile route that its freight trains use, crossing over some 30 bridges, all while retaining its original charm—minus the historic pungent aroma that once preceded the train's arrival. Freight, passenger, and excursion trains operate year-round. For tickets and more information, visit www.skunktrain.com or call (707) 964-6371.

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Images and video available upon request.

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