

## **Monterey Businesses Reporting Busiest Summer Yet - KSBW Text**

### **MONTEREY, Calif. —**

Labor Day Weekend marks the unofficial end to summer and businesses on the Monterey Peninsula are reporting 2018 brought one of the best summers yet for tourism.

"With the conference center and the roads opening on Highway 1 south of Big Sur this is going to be one summer for the books for businesses here in Monterey," said Chris Shake.

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Shake owns multiple restaurants on Old Fisherman's Wharf including Fisherman's Grotto and Scales. He said record inland temperatures and smokey skies have also been bringing visitors to the Central Coast.

In Pacific Grove Moe Ammar with the Chamber of Commerce said a number of factors contributed to high tourism spending this summer, but the most significant were fires in other parts of California.

"The fires in Yosemite, we had tons and tons, I mean we had record numbers at the tourists centers of mostly Europeans who were booked at Yosemite that ended up in Pacific Grove," he said.

In July Big Sur businesses reported seeing a spike in visitors as well as tourists were forced to divert due to the fire related closure at Yosemite National Park.

Another big event bringing more people to Monterey was the U.S. Amateur Golf Championship. The tournament at Pebble Beach delayed Monterey Car Week by one week resulting in back to back booked weeks for hotels in the area.

Summer of 2018 also saw the Monterey Conference Center up and running for the first summer since 2015.

"There is no question we would not have nearly the number of group business in the city of Monterey if it weren't for the Conference Center," said Doug Phillips.

Phillips is the general manager at the Monterey Conference Center and he said since the re-opening in January the Center has generated \$16 million in economic impact.

The figure represents the impact the 30 different conference groups have had on the area. In hotel stays alone those travelers have generated \$4 million. The city's hotel tax paid for the \$60 million renovation of the center.

Labor Day Weekend is also expected to be a busy one in Monterey. Inland temperatures are forecasted to rise and it could drive more visitors to the coast.

"Out of 23 hotels in Pacific Grove only four still have availability and it is early in the weekend," Ammar said.

The Chamber is estimating by Friday night the town will be booked solid.