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GOCAL Presents: Discover SoCal Empire Tourism & Investment Summit 2026

Route 66 International Marketplace: Connecting Buyers & Suppliers

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DISCOVER
SOCAL EMPIRE
— TOURISM & INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2026 —
ROUTE 66 INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE

JULY 7-9, 2026

ONTARIO CONVENTION CENTER
ONTARIO, CALIFORNIA

POSITIONING THE INLAND EMPIRE FOR THE FUTURE

- GLOBAL CONNECTIONS
- STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
- ECONOMIC GROWTH
- TOURISM EXCELLENCE
- STRONGER TOGETHER

BE PART OF THE FUTURE.

discover INLAND EMPIRE
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

GOCAL
GREATER ONTARIO CALIFORNIA

Organized by **Discover Inland Empire**

Summit 2026

Tuesday, July 7 @ 5 PM PDT [Add to Calendar](#)

In Person

[2000 E Convention Center Way, Ontario, CA 91764, USA](#)

Fuel the journey at the Discover SoCal Empire Tourism & Investment Summit—where global connections are made and all U.S. road trips begin.

We warmly invite you to consider making an optional donation to support the continued growth of the Summit and regional tourism development. Your contribution helps broaden access, enhance programming, and foster stronger collaboration across our tourism community. Thank you!

LIMITED TIME OFFER:

- Each early bird Tourism Summit registrant will receive a complimentary admission to the [Discover IE Route 66 Car Show & Fan Fest at the SBC County Fair on May 29 \(2:00–10:00 PM\)](#) only, featuring food, entertainment, and more. Availability is limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Tourism Summit Sponsors who make an additional donation of \$26–\$66 by May 28, 2026 will receive a complimentary Destination Exhibitor Table (a \$600 value) at the [Discover IE Route 66 Car Show & Fan Fest at the SBC Fair on May 29 \(2:00–10:00 PM\)](#) only.
- Discover IE Route 66 Car Show & Fan Fest will feature San Bernardino County Supervisor Dawn Rowe, who will deliver remarks and a special announcement celebrating California Tourism Month and the official countdown to the Route 66 Centennial on November 11, 2026.



Overview

California and its extended destinations, including Nevada and Arizona.

The Summit convenes more than 350 attendees, including Discover Inland Empire members and partners, travel industry suppliers and buyers, media, airports, tourism bureaus, local governments, tribal organizations, and leaders from federal, state, and regional agencies.

By bringing together key stakeholders across the tourism ecosystem, the event fosters meaningful connections, forward-looking education, leadership development, and a global perspective on emerging industry trends.

The program highlights critical topics shaping the future of tourism—beginning at the national level and moving to regional priorities—including America250, the Tourism Outlook, regional identity through the “SoCal Is Who We Are” initiative, LA 2028, the Route 66 Centennial and tri-state collaboration, and the continued growth of sports tourism. Featured speakers include leaders from GO-Biz, Visit California, Travel Nevada, Arizona tourism organizations, and other prominent partners.

The Summit also features a Route 66-themed Buyer/Supplier International Marketplace, connecting destinations and suppliers with high-value leisure and business travel buyers, along with media from the U.S., Canada, Latin America, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region—fostering strategic partnerships and driving new economic impact.

Featured Guest Speakers



Freddy Bi
President & CEO
Discover Inland Empire



Caroline Beteta
President & CEO
Visit California



Michael Krouse
President & CEO
GOCAL



Danna Stroud
Assoc. Deputy Director, Regional
Engagement & Development, GO-Biz



Janet Jernigan
Mayor
City of Needles



Travis Scott
CEO
Visit Big Bear



Rafael Villanueva
CEO
Travel Nevada



Fred Latuperissa
President/CEO
ExIm20/20 Group, LLC



Michael Burrows
CEO
SBD International Airport



Alexander Fung
Economic Development Manager
City of Eastvale

Tuesday, July 7 — VII Reception (Invitation Only)

Location: ONT Field

5:00 – 6:30 PM

VIP Reception for invited speakers and sponsors only

6:35 PM

Game Night Experience

Wednesday, July 8 — General Session

Location: Ontario Convention Center

8:00 – 9:00 AM

Networking Breakfast

9:00 – 9:45 AM

Opening Keynote: “Introducing Discover SoCal Empire: Where Global Connections Are Made and All U.S. Road Trips Begin”

- Discover Inland Empire
- GOCal
- City of Ontario
- San Bernardino County

9:45 – 10:00 AM

Coffee & Networking Break

10:00 – 10:45 AM

Panel 1: “California Jobs First in Action: Turning Tourism Marketing into Measurable Economic Impact”

Moderator: Freddy Bi, President & CEO, Discover Inland Empire

Panelists:

- Caroline Beteta, President & CEO, Visit California
- Danna Stroud, Associate Deputy Director, Regional Engagement & Development, California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)
- Janet Jernigan, Mayor, City of Needles

10:45 – 11:30 AM

Panel 2: “One Route, One Vision: The Tri-State Gateway Connecting the SoCal Empire to U.S. Route 66”

- U.S. Department of Commerce
- Discover Inland Empire
- Travel Nevada
- Arizona DMO Partner (TBD)

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Panel 3: “The Route 66 Region: Powering SoCal’s Economic Engine”

Moderator: Freddy Bi, President & CEO, Discover Inland Empire

Panelists:

- GOCAL
- San Bernardino County
- Visit Big Bear
- Newberry Springs
- Needles Regional Museum

12:30 – 1:45 PM

Networking Lunch & Route 66 Activation Experience

1:45 – 2:30 PM

Panel 4: “From Stadiums to Screens: Capitalizing on Sports & Film Tourism”

Moderator: Freddy Bi, President & CEO, Discover Inland Empire

Panelists:

- LA 2028
- Ontario Sports Empire - ONT Field
- San Manuel Stadium - Inland Empire 66ers
- City of Eastvale
- Ramona Bowl Amphitheatre
- Acrisure Arena

2:30 – 3:15 PM

Airport CEO Pavilion: “Beyond Borders: Connecting the SoCal Empire Through a Tri-State Air Gateway”

3:15 – 4:00 PM

Luxury & International Markets Pavilion: “Capturing the Global Traveler in the SoCal Empire”

4:00 – 5:00 PM

Networking Marketplace: Connecting the SoCal Empire to Global Buyers

6:35 – 9:00 PM

Game Night at ONT Field (A ticket is required for entry)

Thursday, July 9 — America 250 + Route 66 Centennial and Tribal Cultural Tourism International Marketplace

Location: Ontario, California (TBD)

8:00 – 9:00 AM

Networking Breakfast

9:00 – 11:00 AM

Route 66 Corridor Presentations

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Marketplace Networking Session (B2B Exchange)

12:30 – 1:30 PM

Hosted Networking Lunch

1:30 – 2:30 PM

Marketplace Networking Session

2:30 PM

Program Conclusion

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

VIP Reception for invited buyers and media only in Eastvale

Friday, July 10 - Monday, July 13 — Hosted Route 66 Tri-State FAM Experience (For Invited Buyers and Media Only)

Agenda: TBD

Event Sponsorship

Please click [Donate & Ticket button](#) to learn more about event sponsorship opportunities. For any questions, please contact memberrelations@discoverie.com.

Event Hotel Partners

Don't Miss the Fun at [ONT Field](#)— Coming Soon!



Discover Inland Empire



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