

The Branding of Huntington Beach: Redux

One year later – an update on the Surf City USA® License Program

It's no secret that the Surf City USA® brand has undergone its fair share of controversy in the media, what with another (Northern California) coastal town vying for the same name, but it certainly doesn't seem to have impacted Huntington Beach's branding effort. In fact, the "powers-that-be" behind the brand development have purposely "slowed things down because we want to make sure that we have a strong foundation for the future of this brand," says Patricia E. Hooper, president of Trademarks International, a Huntington Beach-based brand and patent development and licensing agency.

"Since we filed our first trademark registrations in November of 2004, our brand has rode a wave of international publicity and Surf City USA® products have begun to appear across the globe," says Doug Traub, president of the Huntington Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau. "The Surf City USA® brand was inspired by Huntington Beach - the quintessential Southern California beach town, but its substance goes far beyond simple geography.

It's about surf, sand, sun and fun. It's about the spirit of youth and living each moment to the fullest. It's about living the California dream and SoCal lifestyle no matter where you are. The Surf City USA® brand captures the romance of surfing, but it's not just for surfers or even people who want to learn. It's about a joy for life that is fully awakened in Southern California coastal cities best exemplified by Huntington Beach."

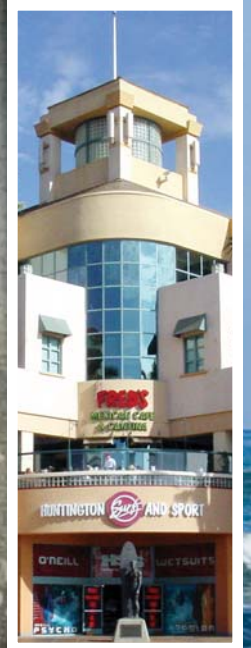
According to Hooper, the early phases of Surf City USA® brand development has been focused on preparing a well-defined strategy for growth, including registration, the incorporation of a distribution company, marketing experts, advertising, promotion, event specialists, licensing and brand enforcement drawing on the strength of Huntington Beach residents and business owners.

"One of the greatest qualities of the residents in Huntington Beach is their passion for their city," she says. "The residents not only live here, they work here, they raise their families here and generation after generation they return to live in

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SURF CITY USA[®]

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA



Huntington Beach. It is a timeless community in more ways than one. Huntington Beach's cosmopolitan component also grew with the world around it; companies based in Huntington Beach are sophisticated, strong and compete on a worldwide basis.

"Officials supporting the Huntington Beach Conference and Visitors Bureau embraced brand development of Surf City USA® because they knew they had an opportunity that would benefit their community, schools and the lives of their children with opportunities other cities could not accommodate. The channels of distribution are inextricably tied to the passion of this city's business owners, who want to make it a strong, safe community for their families."

The brand defined

Surf City USA® is defined by the romance of surfing, sun and the youthful spirit of extreme sports in a community that has maintained a timeless beach lifestyle and is living the California dream. Surf City USA® is Huntington Beach, the only quintessential Southern California beach town that has staked its claim to unobstructed ocean views, a place in time where family bonfires are still possible, where neighbors are best friends and lifeguards aren't just the guys in red on the beach.

Every city has a unique quality, Laguna Beach has its art, Newport Beach a little glitz and glam, Long Beach has its jazz, Huntington Beach evokes a passion that is so much more, some people call it "Old School," others refer to it as retro, but however that feeling is defined, it's here in our fair city - unobstructed views, miles of fire pits will always be a place to spend time with family and friends, in time, the Golden Bear concerts, life guard towers as they were, the red car; this is just a glimpse of what is to return and what never left.

Business licensing partners

Dennis Midden, owner of BrewBakers, is launching his Surf City USA® branded soda in traditional flavors, including rootbeer, orange crème, crème cola and diet rootbeer.

"The Official Surf City USA® is like a big handshake between BrewBakers and Huntington Beach," says Midden. "I've been a supporter of this city since I moved here 20 years ago. BrewBakers has always marketed its beer locally and promoted the Surf City name as a way of promoting BrewBakers and Huntington Beach. So when the opportunity presented itself to join in the branding effort as the official Surf City USA® soda, we were right there in line. We know we have the right products and we are right here in Huntington Beach. The official Surf City USA® branding fits in our plans to grow - and grow not only BrewBakers, but our proud Surf City image for the city at the same time.

"Our Official Surf City USA® Sodas are high-quality, old-fashioned tasting (full flavor.) We may add more varieties of sodas, especially for the holidays like Eggnog and maybe someday we will offer our official Surf City USA® beers and Pretzels."

Other licensees include Felt Bicycles, Surf City Gifts & Collectibles dba California Greetings (gift items from apparel to footwear), Tahiti Sweetie (custom jewelry), Sass n' Class (custom accessories), Surf City USA Photography by Robert Garcia and Corporate Motivators (promotional products).

The first official Surf City USA® Marathon (previously known as Pacific Shoreline Marathon) will take place in next February. Don Kennedy, owner of DK Sports Marketing, will provide a new line of Surf City USA® apparel and bring his experience in event production (previously producing shows such as Winter Fest, Ski Dazzle and Snow Jam) to HB with a pair of consumer trade shows: Surf City USA® Winter Sports Fest and Surf City USA® Summer Sports Fest.

Gary Sahagen of The International Surf Museum, Huntington Beach, in coordination with Guy Takayama and Arnold Schucter are jointly producing a long board and tandem surf competition. The first phase of the Surf City USA® Longboard Pro-Am took place last April 07 and is scheduled to return for the finals in October.

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According to Hooper, other proposed and prospective licensee categories and services include wine accessories, boats, personal watercraft, toys, beach towels, automotive industry products, concerts and plays.

"In addition to managing the Surf City USA® License Program and supporting sales through new channels and distribution, Trademarks International has established several brand promotional opportunities including Honda US Open, Hollister's Abercrombie & Fitch, the OC Fair and Beach Patrol, Huntington Beach" she says.

"Over the next year, our goal is to complete a fully integrated, interactive Surf City USA® website that will provide companies with established upscale channels of distribution and the opportunity to apply and obtain all license requirements online. The new web site will also serve as a cross-promotional, advertising platform which will give our licensee's prime exposure to visitors of Huntington Beach, hotels and other commercial institutions in every industry." **HB**