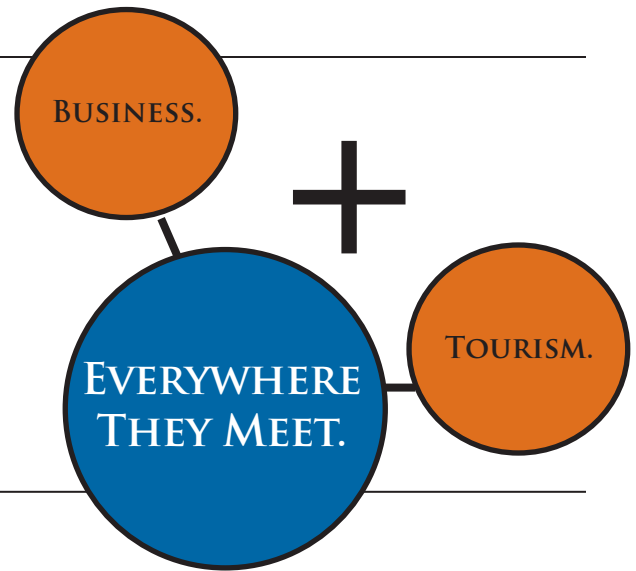


WELCHES

MARCH 2, 2009



Panelists:

Linda Bell, Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory
Jeff Hampton, Oregon Lodging Association
Greg Moreno, Mt. Hood Adventure
Bob Austin, Clackamas County Commissioner
Laurel MacMillan, Rural Development Initiatives
Gary Larsen, Mt. Hood National Forest

Moderator:

Scott West, chief strategy officer, Travel Oregon

The talk was all about Mt. Hood Territory in Welches recently, and it wasn't because the venerable landmark was just 40 miles up the highway. In a Town Hall meeting co-sponsored by the Clackamas County Tourism Development Commission, Mt. Hood and the area's other attractions took center stage, as talk ranged from transportation to tourism marketing to quality of life for residents. About 50 people met at the Resort at the Mountain for the spirited, audience-dominated discussion.

Panelist Gary Larsen, supervisor of the Mt. Hood National Forest, provided a few numbers to put the importance of the forest in context: The mountain entertains about 4.5 million visitors a year, more than a million of them skiers. "Just think of Mt. Hood as your 1.2 million acre backyard," Larsen said.

And how important are those visitors to businesses in the region? Panelist Greg Moreno of Mt. Hood Adventure answered that question early on: "No tourism, no business, is what it comes down to—it's a pretty easy question for us." Seventy-five percent of his business comes from out of state.

Linda Bell, executive director of Clackamas County Tourism & Cultural Affairs, said it's important to remember that visitors affect a broad section of sectors. "There are lots of ways visitors directly impact Oregon business," she said. "But it's also important to realize the indirect impacts."

"Together, we're pretty successful"

Several audience members commented on the importance of working together to promote tourism and to support each other. In its early days, for example, Mt.

Hood Roasters benefited greatly from the patronage of local businesses. "That gave us a foot into the Portland market, where we do most of our sales now, but it also means that thousands of people today are drinking Mt. Hood-branded coffee," said owner Greg Althaus.

Another participant pointed to the new museum on Mt. Hood, created to fill a niche in the cultural offerings in the area, as an example of the area's cooperative nature. "What I find on Mt Hood is that any one of us can't do it alone, but together, we're pretty successful," he said.

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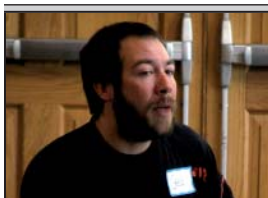
GREG MORENO
MT. HOOD ADVENTURE

Panelist Laurel MacMillan agreed. "You may be the activity of the day, but then where are they going to eat and sleep? Businesses working together—it's all about the linkages."

The issue of transportation came up several times during the wide-ranging discussion. "In my judgment, transportation is the single largest issue that hinders development in the Mt. Hood area," said Gary Larsen. "In order for people to come to the mountain, it needs to be relatively easy. It is not. Our transportation system—buses, cars, shuttles—need to work together and share a common vision. We haven't done that historically."

"You may be the activity of the day, but then where are they going to eat and sleep? Businesses working together - it's all about the linkages"

LAUREL MACMILLAN
RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



GREG MORENO
Mt. HOOD ADVENTURE



LINDA BELL
OREGON'S MT. HOOD
TERRITORY



LAUREL MACMILLAN
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVES

Tax initiatives that support tourism efforts, particularly the lodging tax, drew comment as well. "This issue of reinvesting in the industry that collects the tax—that's critical," Jeff Hampton said. "That says our state values and recognizes the contribution that tourism in general, and the lodging industry specifically, has as an economic driver."

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JEFF HAMPTON
OREGON LODGING ASSOCIATION

Keeping Oregon, Oregon

One audience member pointed out the importance of keeping local people in the equation, sparking a discussion about how tourism shapes the fabric of the community.

"It's really important to maintain the character of your community—there are areas that definitely need to be protected," said panelist Bob Austin. "Trail

systems such as the Springwater Trail place are a way for folks to get out and see the area without the huge impacts."

Several audience members pointed to the cultural opportunities that tourism efforts have made available to residents. "Look at Government Camp," said one attendee. "Everyone says 'It's so much nicer here!' but it wouldn't have been done without the tourism funding to get all that done."

The challenges were also discussed. "Gov Camp was written up once as that 'really kind of nice ratty little burg' and then we started down this tourism development path and suddenly we became 'Mt. Hood's alpine village'—cool!" said an audience member to general laughter. "It is cool, but you then look about the community and people can't afford to live there anymore. We've got a lot of things going here that are really good, but we have a lot more hard, hard work to do and we have to keep our eye on the ball."

"If we do not preserve what it is that makes Oregon special, we will have failed," summarized moderator Scott West, to enthusiastic applause.

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PANEL MEMBERS (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT):

GREG MORENO - MT. HOOD ADVENTURE, JEFF HAMPTON - OREGON LODGING ASSOCIATION, BOB AUSTIN - CLACKAMAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER, GARY LARSEN - MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST, LINDA BELL - OREGON'S MT. HOOD TERRITORY, LAUREL MACMILLAN - RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



SCOTT WEST
 TRAVEL OREGON



MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE