

# EASTERN OREGON



## Regional Plan 2017-19



TRAVEL



OREGON

# Regional Cooperative Tourism Program

Research & writing:  
**Travel Portland**

Organized by:  
**Travel Portland**

For more regional information visit:  
[traveloregon.com/eastern-oregon](http://traveloregon.com/eastern-oregon)



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# VISION





## MISSION ---

Promote Eastern Oregon visitor experience and enhance and preserve region's quality of life and economy.

## RCTP GOALS ---



### Industry and Visitor Services Goals

#### Advocacy Goal

Share the impact and role that tourism plays in the economy and culture of Eastern Oregon with policy-makers and increase awareness of EO within the tourism industry.

#### Training and Education Goal

Connect stakeholders in EO tourism industry with educational opportunities and best practices that support communication, cooperation and quality.

#### Exchange/Public Relations Goal

Build awareness of EO through earned media (PR) domestically and internationally.



### Destination Development Goal

Connect stakeholders in EO tourism industry with product development opportunities in the core initiatives of:

- cultural/arts/heritage
- outdoor and cycling
- agritourism



### Global Sales Goal

Create and package experiences that are shared and promoted to international visitors.



### Global Marketing Goals

Build brand awareness and publicize the visitor experiences that distinguish EO as a unique and premier travel destination.

## ORGANIZATION

Eastern Oregon Visitors Association comprises eleven counties, with four sub-regional working groups.

Sub-Regional Working Groups:

- 1 John Day River Territory  
(Grant, Gilliam, Sherman, and Wheeler counties)
- 2 Oregon's Rugged Country  
(Umatilla and Morrow counties)
- 3 Northeast – Hells Canyon Country  
(Baker, Union, and Wallowa counties)
- 4 Southeast  
(Malheur and Harney counties)

The board of directors are made up of dues paying members, who are primarily representative of the destination marketing organizations for each county, or a coalition of counties, pooling resources.

In addition several utilities, along with the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center also contribute annual dues. Several of these cooperatives also contribute additional annual funding to collaborative marketing and product development projects within EOVA's strategic marketing plan.

### Planning process outline:

The organization holds in-person full board meetings, open to all stakeholders or interested parties, quarterly.

Conference calls are held at least 6 times per year with each Committee of EOVA. Communications with the Eastern Oregon tourism industry is accomplished through e-newsletters sent 6 times a year.

Call-outs relaying opportunities occur on an on-going basis. Sub-regional groups (i.e. John Day River Territory – Grant, Wheeler, Gilliam, Sherman counties; Oregon's Rugged Country – Umatilla and Morrow counties; Northeast Oregon/Hells Canyon Scenic Byway – Baker, Union, and Wallowa counties; Southeast Oregon – Malheur and Harney counties) primarily convene around product development projects.

As example, each sub-region has active agritourism development teams, which meet in varying regularity within each sub-region.

**2017/2018 Executive Committee with representation for each of the four sub-regions of Eastern Oregon.**

-  **Chelsea Harrison**  
Harney County Chamber of Commerce and  
2016/2018 EOVA President
-  **Kalie Davis**  
Exec. Director, SAGE Center and current  
Vice-President of EOVA
-  **Rachel Weinstein**  
Economic Development Director – Gilliam County,  
and current Treasurer for EOVA
-  **Vicki Searles**  
Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce  
and current Secretary of EOVA
-  **Timothy Bishop**  
Baker County Tourism and  
Immediate Past President

## OVERALL SUCCESS MEASURES

Measurement of marketing and destination development programs has an inherent subjective quality. Evaluating the influence that the EOVA marketing and product development programs have or will have in the future of maintaining the primary vision for this large region is difficult.

However, EOVA seeks to provide measurability within each program area that yields perspective on the effectiveness of the tactics there-in. The organization will continue to work with Travel Oregon in helping to establish the overall economic impact of tourism for the 11-county region via the Dean Runyan studies, Smith Travel Report, international visitor surveys, and over-laying marketing decisions with reports specific to the core initiatives.

Examples include economic impact and user insights for bicycling/motorcycling (i.e. Outdoor Industry Assn. – Outdoor Recreation Economy report), agritourism/culinary, global sales-international travel, and cultural/heritage studies.

Our partnership with Travel Oregon and their commitment to supplying information that breaks down by region, counties, user groups, seasonality, and trends is critical to Eastern Oregon. This is research we simply could not afford on our own. It becomes a primary tool in not only making future marketing decisions, but provides essential information to accomplish the organization's advocacy goals.

### High-level, over-arching economic impact goals for EOVA for the period of 2017–2019:

- 1** Increase shoulder-season occupancy over 2016/2017 estimates to a +2% for the months of November-March.
- 2** Increase over-all travel and tourism economic impact to the 11-county region over 2016 estimates by 3%
- 3** Please see the Eastern Oregon Metric Template for specific measurement goals per specific tactics.



# OPPORTUNITY



## REGIONAL TOURISM

### In 2015

Total visitor spending contributed \$352 million to the economy of the 11-county region of eastern Oregon. That equated to nearly 6,000 jobs and over \$14 million in state and local taxes.



↑ 3.7%

increase in international visitors

### Overnight Trips

Overnight trips were primarily generated by Oregonians (57%), followed by people from Washington (10%), then other domestic originations such as Texas, California, Idaho, and Arizona.

Total Visitor Spending  
**\$352 million**

**57%**

of overnight visitors are from Oregon

### Internationally

Visitation to Eastern Oregon increased by 3.7% with visitors from China, UK, Germany and the Netherlands.

**\$6,000 jobs**

**10%**

of overnight visitors are from Washington

The primary purpose for the trip to Eastern Oregon was to experience the outdoors (46% compared to the state norm of 23% participating in outdoor activities), followed by touring, and participating in special events.

State & Local Taxes  
**\$14 million**

July - September

**42%**

of visitation to Eastern Oregon occurs

Of particular interest were activities involving camping, hiking, fishing, and the combination with cultural activities such as visiting landmarks or historic sites, museums, and art galleries.

Visitors were also very interested in our culinary and eco-tourism activities, including winery tours and wine tasting.

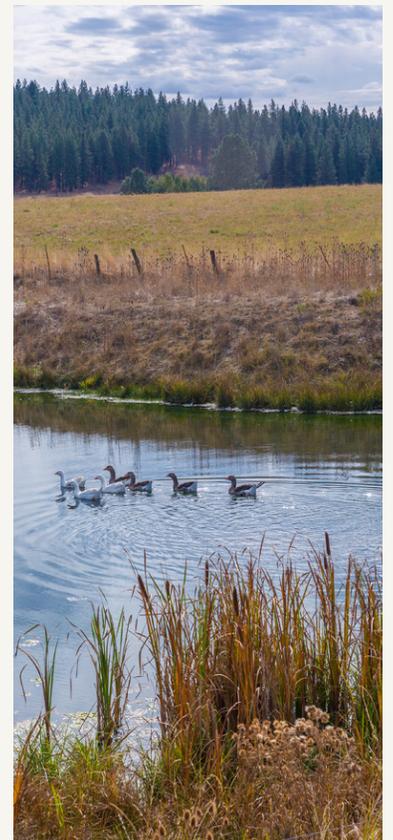
**46%**

visit Eastern Oregon to experience the outdoors

Since visitors were often traveling with grandchildren, activities for kids were of high interest. However, a 59% majority of the travelers did not have children under 18 traveling with them.

**59%**

of visitors did not travel with children under 18



## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Over the course of the past three years, Eastern Oregon Visitors Association's stakeholders have participated in strategic plan development on three levels:

- » Oregon Tourism Industry Strategic Planning
- » Travel Oregon Strategic Planning
- » Eastern Oregon Strategic Planning

In regards to this final item, the EOVA stakeholders held four, facilitated strategic planning sessions in Baker City, La Grande, Pendleton, and John Day during 2014 and 2015. The feedback led to the development of the current model, which clarifies the mission, goals, and specific objectives or program areas that will guide the strategic marketing planning.

The following are core goals for the organization:

- » Advocacy
- » Training and Education
- » Marketing
- » Product Development
- » Information Exchange via Public Relations

These goals are accompanied by specific objectives and tactics which build brand awareness, both within the eastern Oregon tourism industry and with key policy-makers, as well as externally attracting more visitors to the region.

### Key Themes as voiced during the Stakeholder meetings in Boardman and John Day 2017:

- 1** On-going need for Front-line/ Guest Services training
- 2** Desire to increase tourism year-round and decrease seasonality
- 3** Continued Product Development:
  - » Outdoor/cycling, including motorcycling
  - » Cultural/arts/heritage
  - » Agritourism development/marketing - specifically called-out as a high priority
- 4** Regional collaboration – promoting the diversity that each sub-region has to offer
- 5** Grant writing workshops and/or collaborations on granting opportunities
- 6** Outreach to greater community and policy-makers regarding the impact of the tourism industry on the region, as well as the state
- 7** Cooperative marketing opportunities
- 8** Event creation in specific for 2018 – the commemoration of the 175th year of the Oregon Trail
- 9** Re-branding of EOVA



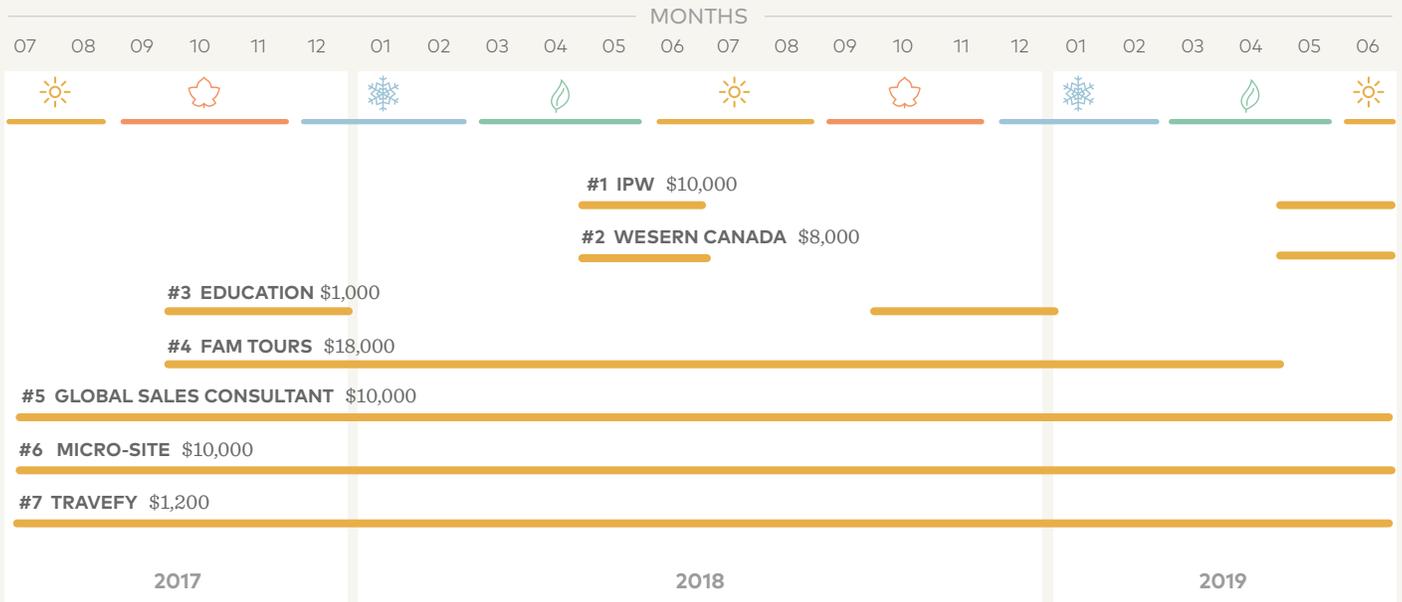
JONI KABANA

# PLAN

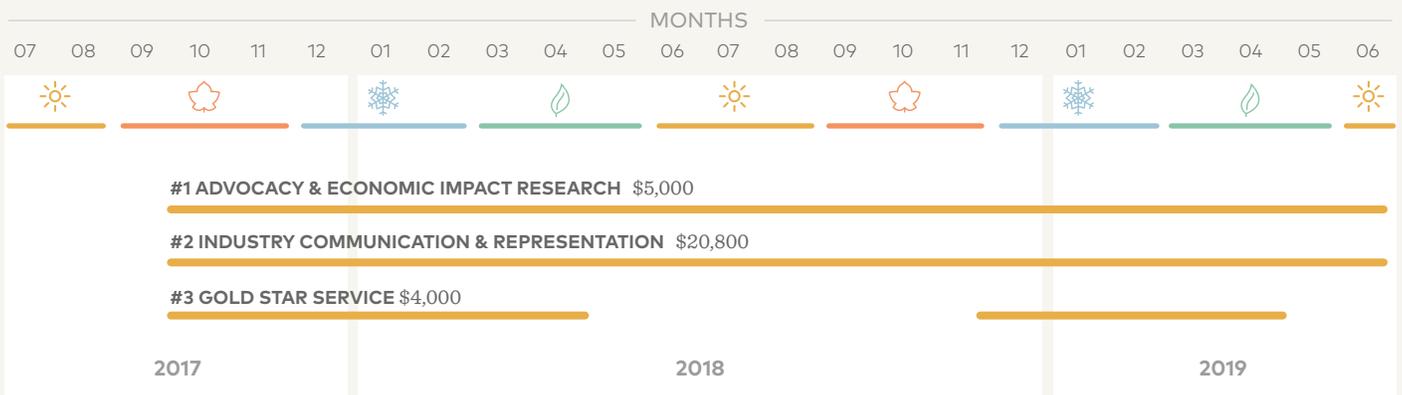




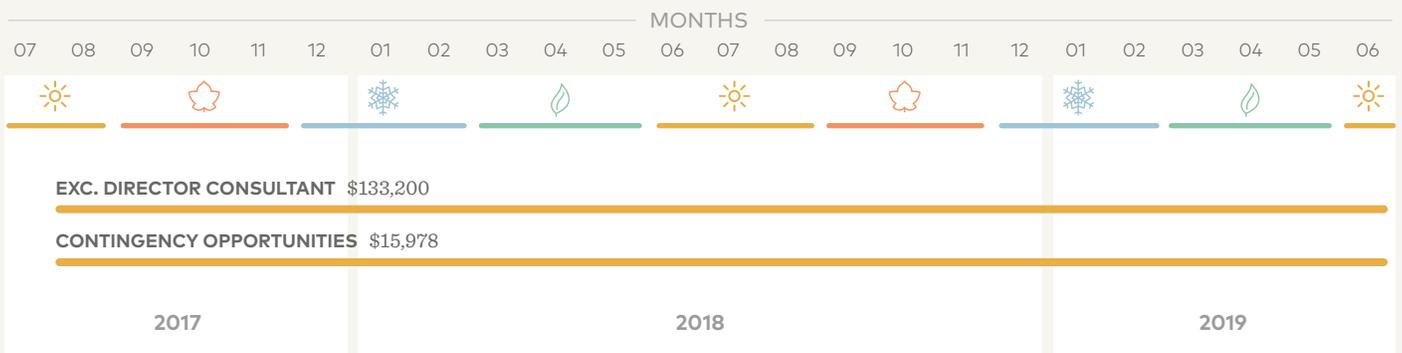
- GLOBAL SALES PLAN -



- INDUSTRY & VISITOR SERVICES PLAN -



- STAFFING & OTHER PLAN -



## GLOBAL MARKETING

*Visit the live RCTP Dashboard for full tactic details and progress.*

EOVA will build brand awareness and publicize the visitor experiences that distinguish Eastern Oregon as a unique and premier travel destination. This will be accomplished by:

- » Rising the awareness of EO through paid media campaigns, utilizing print, digital, and social media relevant to target audiences
- » Leverage of Travel Oregon opportunities by participating in the winter and summer campaigns, participating in relevant FAM tours, and developing synergy between the Travel Oregon brand and a refreshed EOVA brand.
- » Refresh EO brand through engaged stakeholder interaction and raise awareness of brand utilization throughout the region
- » Create tools that aid in planning and distribute to visitors
- » Building awareness of EO through earned media (PR) domestically and internationally.
- » Utilizing interactive platforms with efficient content generation, collection, editing, formatting and distribution

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## TACTICS

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**# 1** Refresh EO brand

**# 2** Develop branded assets per selected media for all core initiatives.

**# 3** Place paid media targeting key audiences

**# 4** Eastern Oregon visitor guide

**# 5** EOVA printed materials

**# 6** Contract for interactive media specialist

**# 7** Influencer tours

## DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

*Visit the live RCTP Dashboard for full tactic details and progress.*

EOVA will connect stakeholders in Eastern Oregon tourism industry with product development opportunities, creating or enhancing existing farms, ranches, businesses, museums, art centers, outdoor recreation suppliers, which allow visitors to share the rich cultural, heritage, recreational experiences of the region.

This will be accomplished by fostering education, training, FAM tour involvement and marketing via the following core initiatives:

- » Cultural/heritage/arts tourism development
- » Two-wheel/outdoor recreation and trails development
- » Agritourism development

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## TACTICS

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**# 1** 175th anniversary of the Oregon Trail

**# 2** Promote the NE Oregon Arts Trail

**# 3** Continue to engage stakeholders and business owners

**# 4** Market the region's outdoor recreation and bicycling

## GLOBAL SALES

*Visit the live RCTP Dashboard for full tactic details and progress.*

EOVA will coordinate with Travel Oregon and RDMO partners to create packages that foster group and FIT travel and ultimately create an increase in international visitors to the region. This will be accomplished by the following:

This will be accomplished by the following:

- » Development of tools and content to inspire packaging of Eastern Oregon's International visitor product, and allow for communication in the marketplace
- » Placement of EO representatives at key travel trade opportunities
- » Education of EO suppliers regarding international business relationships

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## TACTICS

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**# 1** Attendance IPW

**# 2** Participation in Western Canada RoadShow

**# 3** Global sales educational and training opportunities

**# 4** FAM tours

**# 5** Global sales/package travel consultant

**# 6** Brand USA micro-site

**# 7** Travefy

## INDUSTRY & VISITOR SERVICES

*Visit the live RCTP Dashboard for full tactic details and progress.*

The overarching goal of Eastern Oregon’s Industry and Visitor Services Strategy is to foster greater communication within the region between stakeholders that ultimately provides training, the sharing of ‘best practices’, the conveyance of collaborative opportunities, and advocates the positive economic impact of the tourism industry.

### Key focus areas:

**Advocacy** – Influencing and involvement with regional, state, and national policy-makers

**Training and Education** – Including Gold Star Guest Services training and other collaborative educational opportunities in conjunction with Travel Oregon and ORLA

## TACTICS

**# 1** Advocacy - foster engagement of EO tourism

**# 3** The Gold Star Guest Services program

**# 2** Sharing of best practices and cooperative venture

## STAFFING & OTHER

**Staffing Planned Budget: \$133,200**

### Executive Director:

The executive director oversees the RCTP plan and strategic visioning to ensure that RCTP resources are fully leveraged with EOVA’s overarching destination messaging and supported by the Eastern Oregon Stakeholders engagement.

This position ensures that RCTP strategies are staffed and implemented in accordance with RCTP plan. It is also required for them to attend all Eastern Oregon Stakeholder Meetings, OTC and other related industry meetings on behalf of EOVA.

**Other Planned Budget: \$15,978**

RCTP funds contingency to be utilized for projects other than staffing:

These funds are earmarked for new opportunities that arise over the course of the next biennium. Potential projects and programs to invest in could include: Brand USA programs, new Travel Oregon opportunities, destination development priorities and additional support for current programs already in the plan.



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