



TRAVEL OREGON STRATEGIC PLAN

ACTIVATING EXPLORERS 2017-2019

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2017–2019 STRATEGIC OVERVIEW



VISION

A better life for all Oregonians through strong, sustainable local economies.

MISSION

We inspire travel that drives economic development. Through innovation and partnerships, we share the stories of Oregon's people and places, deliver world-class experiences, strengthen the industry and ensure the preservation of Oregon's way of life and its natural places.

OUR UNIQUE VALUE: Travel Oregon delivers unequalled tourism expertise to the entire state and tells Oregon's story to the world.

OUR BRAND INTENTION: Oregon's visitors and Travel Oregon's partners feel connected, empowered, optimistic and inspired.

OUR VALUES: Integrity. Collaboration. Innovation. Leadership. Excellence. Purposeful.

We are passionate about and committed to achieving success through mutual respect, innovation and leadership.



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

Optimize Statewide Economic Impact	Support and Empower Oregon's Tourism Industry	Champion the Value of Tourism	Run an Effective Business
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KEY INITIATIVES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align and optimize integrated sales, marketing and destination development strategies with Oregon's tourism industry • Drive business from key global markets through integrated sales/marketing plans leveraged with global partners and domestic travel trade • Facilitate the development of world-class tourism product in partnership with community leaders, tourism businesses and key agencies • Guide tourism in a way that achieves the optimal balance of visitation, economic impact, natural resource conservation and livability • Inspire overnight leisure travel through industry-leading branding, marketing and communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide development and training opportunities to meet the evolving tourism industry needs • Implement industry leading visitor information network • Fully realize statewide, strategic integration of OTIS (Oregon Tourism Information System) • Deploy tourism programs (e.g. Regional Cooperative Tourism Program, Competitive Grants) in a powerful way that fulfills unique opportunities and challenges as defined by the tourism industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow and align strategic partnerships to leverage resources and capacity to address key issues • Empower and equip Oregon's tourism industry with power of travel and issue-oriented messages • Engage policymakers to strengthen Oregon's tourism industry • Improve industry and public feedback channel/process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize the implementation of technology to make Travel Oregon more effective and efficient • Attract, develop and retain top talent • Continuously review, improve and document policies and processes/procedures • Improve internal alignment amongst Travel Oregon departments • Measure and drive employee engagement and satisfaction
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KEY MEASURES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All regions show 1.75 percent increase in year over year lodging demand • Increase Oregon's market share of U.S. visitor spend • Establish a baseline for destination management needs • Establish a baseline measure and grow the amount of partner investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish local engagement baseline by end of year 1 and increase in year 2 • At least 5 of 7 RDMOs use OTIS to add and syndicate content back to their sites (targeted partner utilization strategy) • 100 percent of Rural Tourism Studio communities utilizing OTIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earned media demonstrating the value of tourism increases by 10 percent • Establish and monitor public perception of Oregon's Tourism industry as it contributes to the economy and quality of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemplary ratings of fiscal processes from third party evaluators are maintained • Employee engagement increases in identified areas of need • 100 percent of staff utilize enterprise-wide dynamic industry database
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INTRODUCTION

Oregon is one of those remarkable places where everyone seems to have their own favorite place. It may be a perfect stretch of river, a backcountry ski trail, or a food truck serving homemade bread and huckleberry preserves. We recognize that our fellow Oregonians make this place even more special. When we connect with knowledgeable tour guides, talented chefs or innovative ranchers, our ties to Oregon’s “sense of place” become even stronger. Oregonians are as unique and charming as the state’s diverse landscape and are a big part of why we like it here.

Visitors traveling to and within Oregon have figured out that a little exploration and curiosity can lead them to discover their *own* little slice of Oregon. We’re getting a reputation as a place where, no matter where you go in the state, odds are good you’re going to find that special combination of nature, people and authenticity that makes you smile deep. And that is a rare and beautiful thing.

There is a lot of data and plenty of pie charts and trend lines that show the power of the \$11.3 billion impact of Oregon’s growing tourism industry. We’ll get to that in a bit.

Here’s the thing: It’s a fact that people who come to Oregon, and experience Oregon, are *changed* by Oregon, just like those of us lucky enough to live here. So we can talk about the art and science of driving economic outcomes through the modern tourism industry all day long, as long as we begin

by acknowledging and committing to protect the special chemistry of people and place that is Oregon. That’s why this plan, developed with the input of hundreds of stakeholders from the industry and from every region of the state, focuses on the bet that mutual respect, innovation and leadership will provide the perfect balance to grow our industry while keeping Oregon, Oregon.

Striking that perfect balance brings us to the meat and potatoes of this plan. Where do we start? We just dig right in, because what we need is already all around us. Travel Oregon’s mission is to inspire travel that generates strong positive economic impact, so that’s what we are going to do: Turn inspiration into an economic boon that will improve the lives of all Oregonians. And we want that impact to be felt in every corner of Oregon. That’s why we’re offering new levels of support for the industry that go beyond traditional destination marketing. We’re going to optimize and amplify the message that tourism is good for Oregon. And we are going to work smarter and more efficiently because that’s the way we do things in Oregon. Our vision for this plan, and guiding principle for everything we do, is: Building a better life for Oregonians through strong, sustainable, local economies. So how are we going to achieve this? Through alignment with our partners, the best use of technology and finding the best people, we can make this plan a reality. Sure, there are plenty more details, but that’s it in a nut shell.

Let's start with alignment: If you are an Oregonian and you are reading this plan, thanks for all you do to make this state such an amazing destination for visitors from around the world and for all of us to discover, explore and enjoy. And, thank you for continuing to recreate in our own beautiful backyard. Every time you choose to stay in our state for your vacation, you are not only experiencing some of the best culinary delights and scenic splendor in the world, but you are also helping your fellow Oregonians.

If you're not an Oregonian, but recognize the unique draw of the state, we're pretty sure you must be really smart and driven to seek out the best this world has to offer. Because we bet whatever your "best thing" is, you can find it in Oregon. You should expect disagreement about whether it's the coast, the high desert, Portland, wine country, the Cascades or Southern Oregon. And to be fair, you should explore them all and decide for yourself. And then let us know (we're talking to you Oregonians, too!).

But don't stop with your favorite part of the state; tell us what parts of the tourism industry inspire you the most. We're pretty sure that, much like our opinions on which part of the state is the most beautiful (you're all right, by the way), you'll have thoughts on the best way to enhance Oregon through travel and tourism. And like typical Oregonians (or would-be Oregonians), you'll want to share your ideas and inspirations far and wide. So share with us!

IT'S DIFFERENT HERE

We could debate when Oregon's \$11.3 billion tourism industry began. Oregon has a long and storied legacy of people and programs that laid the enviable foundation of where we stand today. And in 2003, Travel Oregon came into existence through House Bill 2267. Forgive the brief history lesson, but it often helps to look back just a bit to explain why we see the future the way we do. The Oregon tourism industry, the governor, legislators, private business owners and trade associations were certain that Oregon was so special that people from all over the world would treasure their time spent here, whether they traveled solo or with friends and family. They were certain the positive economic and social value of tourism would be undeniable. It was time to recognize that tourism jobs are good jobs and that tourism could be harnessed to help Oregon's struggling economy. Based on that premise, Travel Oregon started building the foundation of a comprehensive Oregon brand that lifted efforts all over the state, every season of the year.

If you know any of the people working at Travel Oregon, you know they are an enthusiastic and quirky set of nerds who have the gut instincts and heart to do the best things to help move the tourism industry forward. And move forward following their instincts, they do. But only once *hard data* confirms what their gut told them in the first place. Commissioned research shows us who visits Oregon and why they visit. It calculates specific economic development impact by region. It enables small regional marketing efforts to make the best use of their budgets, and to gain a powerful global presence with Oregon's brand.

The data shows that dollars invested in tourism pays off:

	2003	2016	Change
Direct Employment	84,000 jobs	109,500 jobs	+30%
Employee Earnings	\$1.7 billion	\$3.1 billion	+82%
Visitor Spending	\$6.5 billion	\$11.3 billion	+74%
Taxes (State/Local)	\$246 million	\$507 million	+106%

Source: Oregon Travel Impacts, Dean Runyan Associates, 2017

Policymakers may now say HB 2267 was a good bet because it was no bet at all. It was an intentional and reasoned investment in Oregon's economy. Turns out, it was an extremely successful investment that lifted the tourism industry and helped set the stage for the 2016 legislative session when House Bill 4146 passed. HB 4146 is a big deal for a lot of reasons—we see it as Oregon's tourism investment 2.0—as it is a testament to the success of the industry; entrusting increased resources to empower and support the industry more than before.

But what's more, this bill was put forward by policymakers who recognized the power of the tourism industry as a vital part of the state's economy. Representative Nancy Nathanson, the bill's chief sponsor, stated, "This bill increases resources for the Oregon Tourism Commission to invest in furthering the state's tourism industry, to promote all of Oregon. And we know that investing in tourism pays off, big time."

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~ Representative Nancy Nathanson

Along with increased funding for the industry, there are some other aspects of HB 4146 that will help evolve and improve this crucial sector:

First, HB 4146 changed the Regional Cooperative Marketing Program. It changed the word “marketing” to “tourism.” This may not seem like a big deal, but it is. It allows money allocated to the now Regional Cooperative *Tourism* Program (RCTP) to be used for tourism product development in order to create additional authentic products to inspire visitors through marketing. Bringing us full circle in how we can serve up the best things Oregon experiences to potential travelers, inspiring them to choose Oregon. This virtuous cycle is what happens when all cylinders are firing together to propel the economic engine of this industry to new heights. We recognize that Eastern Oregon has different needs than the Willamette Valley to optimize their tourism draw and ensure an outstanding visitor experience, as is the case with each individual region. This change allows Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMOs) to be more nimble in recognizing and acting on what their regions need in order to sustainably attract and host more visitors.

Additional changes included increasing the amount of the state transient lodging tax dollars to be collected and invested back through the seven Oregon tourism regions based on a pro-rata basis up from “up to 15 percent” to 20 percent. This change represents a new level for Oregon tourism, having achieved alignment and strength in the

Oregon brand, regions can now actively build the product that make sense for their communities in order to have more developed product and/or a bigger footprint in the marketing space. So yeah, changing the word “marketing” to “tourism” is an important breakthrough for the industry.

Second, you don’t need to be a genius to know things change fast and the best ideas come from real people trying to solve real problems. That is why HB 4146 also sets up 10 percent of our funding to go to a competitive grant program to bring the best marketing, development, sales and industry services ideas to life. To match the diverse industry we serve, these grants will not be a one-size-fits-all. There will be different size grants with different requirements to meet more needs of the industry. This means people with good ideas and solutions can get the funding they need to make their ideas a reality. And, these grant monies will give us the chance to pursue opportunities that will showcase Oregon to the world, such as the 2021 International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Track and Field Championships, which will be a big deal, for sure. The event will be an opportunity to showcase the entire state to an international audience while giving the athletes and their families from 216 countries a warm Oregon welcome. We know that this is just the beginning of introducing Oregon to new audiences. We are excited about the multitude of opportunities we now have to share more of Oregon with the world, while ensuring the state remains as authentic and impressive as it is today.



HB 4146 is a game changer for Oregon. It is an acknowledgement of the success of our tourism industry, of the tangible economic impact lifting up communities around the state and the need to grow the investment in sustainable ways. The bill gives Oregon a boost to stand out in the destination marketing industry at a time when more and more people are seeking the kind of genuine, adventurous and natural experiences that are around every corner in this special state.

But in the context of this strategic plan, HB 4146 and the new economies of scale it provides are indicators of maturity, trust and reliability in the economic engine of Oregon tourism. And the industry shares this sense of achievement and the potential for the future.

We know this will mean a lot of work and collaboration with industry partners, RDMOs, state and federal agencies and entrepreneurs. That work and collaboration is what this plan is about. The *imperatives* in this plan, those things we believe we must do, build the capacity and expertise to help our industry prepare for a world increasingly aware of the many wonders of Oregon.

And this is where we heard from you, as we all know great ideas do not come alone. We are only as good as our industry, and it's your voice that helps determine the route we take.

LISTENING TO OREGON

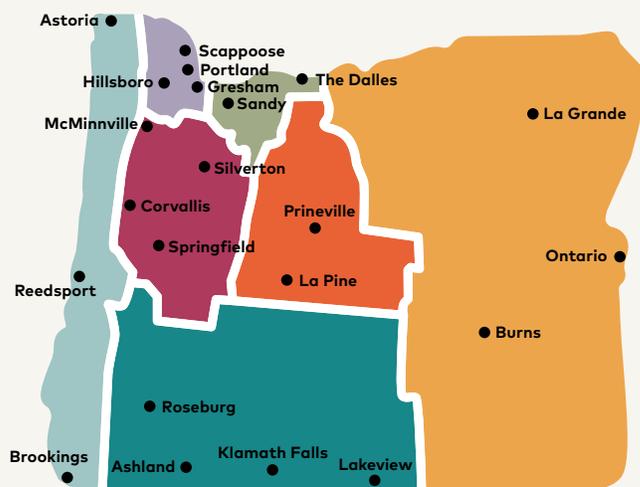
Here is a little secret. Just after HB 4146 passed, we at Travel Oregon paused for about three minutes. Then, like that moment when you get home with a large box that reads: "Assembly Required," the enormity of what we needed to do began to settle in. It takes a lot to simply *maintain* the momentum of the industry, and a lot more to *grow capacity* in every region, in every season. And oh, by the way, the whole world is going to check in on our progress.

We are still not sure if it was exuberance or instinct, but our next steps were as clear as Crater Lake; we needed to *connect* directly with the people in Oregon who *are* the tourism industry stakeholders. We also wanted to be sure we were prepared with the right questions to ask, and we were ready to hear the answers.

That is why we started with the Tourism Engagement Survey in March of 2016. This comprehensive survey was shared with the entire industry. Statewide and regional findings were analyzed and discussed. This soup-to-nuts survey allowed us to engage people with a common vision and a shared understanding of their priorities.

We also wanted to have open, face-to-face discussions with our industry partners about HB 4146 and its potential impacts. So we conducted Town Hall meetings all around the state. Between June and October 2016, we visited 22 locations, covering every region of the state.

OREGON TOURISM TOWN HALLS



In August 2016, we convened a Competitive Grants Workgroup made up of industry leaders to think through the use of our grant program to best drive development, opportunity and innovation. Recall the developments you read on page 5. We convened a RCTP Workgroup between August and September, bringing industry leaders and members of the Oregon Tourism Commission together to help guide the development of the of the RTCP evolution, which you also read about on page 5. On October 27, 2016 we pulled everything together, hosting a Strategic Planning Leadership Summit to share the new story of tourism in Oregon, bringing together members of the Oregon Tourism Commission, Regional Destination Management Organization leads, Oregon Destination Marketing Organization's board members, niche tourism industry partners and business representatives, along with federal agencies, education professionals and economic organizations.

These candid discussions set the stage for many of the *initiatives* covered in this plan. In fact, the inputs and conversations were so compelling that when we began the process of writing this plan, we realized these areas of focus were not just priorities, they were *imperatives*. As you proceed through the plan, do so with the confidence that the voices of hundreds of experts, industry leaders and stakeholders have been solicited and heard and we are deeply grateful for that input.



Oregon tourism industry partners share their thoughts during the Strategic Planning Leadership Summit in 2016. Photo: Jenny Hill

This collaboration with our industry partners has put Travel Oregon in motion...well, even more motion than usual. As that good ol' chap Isaac Newton once said, an object either remains at rest or continues to move at a constant velocity, unless acted upon by a force. We harnessed this increased force by ensuring every single staff member at Travel Oregon was fully engaged in this planning process so every action we take aligns with this Strategic Plan and ladders up to the vision of improving the lives of all Oregonians.

But wait! There's more. It was not lost on us that while our meetings around the state were rich in content, takeaways and action items; the real value was found in the connections, relationships, brainstorming, honesty and laughter that marked every meeting. It wasn't hard work; it was sincere and motivating. These things happen naturally when talented people work together to take care of this amazing place.

THE IMPERATIVES

The increased motion and momentum have added an element of urgency to this plan. The clock is ticking and there is much to do. And there is a sense that, right now we are in a unique moment socially, environmentally and economically. More people than ever are seeking experiences

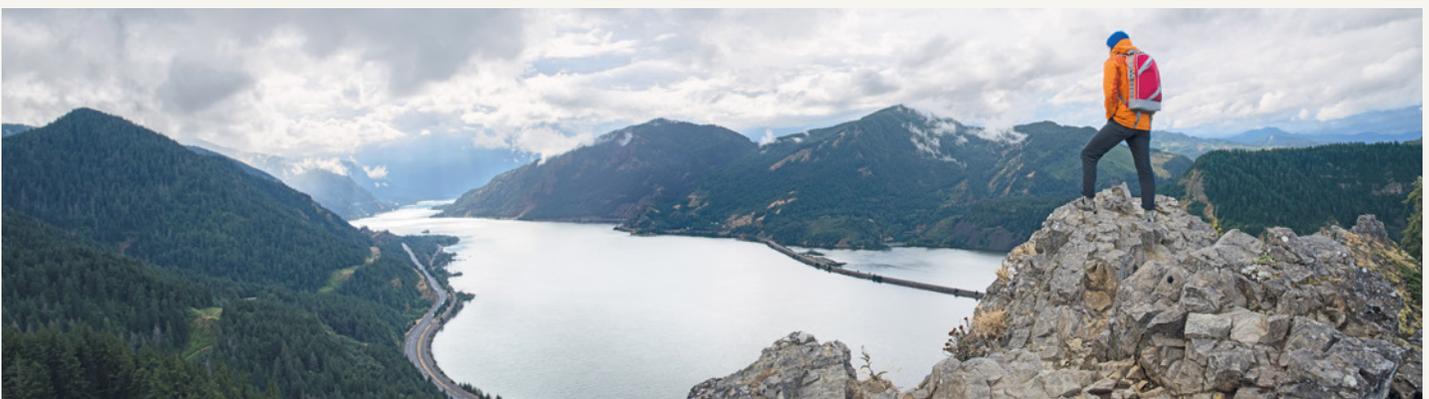
over acquisitions; they seek authenticity over artifice; and they are drawn to the ever-dwindling parts of the world where nature is abundant and cherished. Oregonians do more than cherish our natural wonders, we celebrate and actively protect them. As our brand reach grows and takes deeper root, we find we are increasingly perceived in a category of one. Crater Lake, the Painted Hills and Haystack Rock can *only* be found in Oregon. Nothing matches sipping wine in the rolling hills of the Willamette Valley or relaxing on a sunny patio in Bend with a cold craft brew. Oh, yes. There is urgency; it is in the staggering opportunity of the coming decade. We'll take that cold brew now, please.

Never mind that beer for now. At Travel Oregon we don't rest on our laurels. We have work to do! To focus attention on the things we know we need to do, we identified four *imperatives*. As exciting as that sounds, they are not the kinds of things you want to print on a t-shirt (I helped shape this Strategic Plan and all I got was this lousy t-shirt!). At first glance, the *imperatives* seem to imply business as usual; no duh; ho hum. But they are much, much more when considered in context and application. The four *imperatives* are:

1. *Optimize statewide economic impact*
2. *Support and empower Oregon's tourism industry*
3. *Champion the value of tourism*
4. *Run an effective business*

See what we mean? These efforts aren't Oregon-y, quirky or outrageous. At face value they just make good sense. But are they compelling or inspirational? Uniquely Oregon?

What is Uniquely Oregon, anyway? Check it out: Can you fathom the majesty of Mount Hood without seeing it for yourself? To understand the splendor of Oregon, you have to lean headlong into the fresh east wind that powers world-class river sports in Oregon's Columbia River Gorge. You have to dip your toes in the Pacific on one of our 363-miles



of public coast. You have to actually taste beer made with hops being grown in the field next to you to understand where we are coming from and who we are.

The point is: we all have a shared perspective of what it means to be an Oregonian. These *imperatives* reflect our shared perspective. And when we look *closer* at the *imperatives* in this plan we see their real power.

First, all four of these *imperatives* are designed to work in concert with one another (collaborating just like good Oregonians do). They are catalytic by design. Success in one area enhances the likelihood of success in the others.

Second, the scope of these *imperatives* is as big as the Wal-lowas. Travel Oregon is committed to facilitating tactical support *for the entire Oregon industry* to be successful in every region, every month of the year. The historical goal for Travel Oregon was to drive marketing for the state. That has not changed. But, we are also working with communities throughout the state to develop their tourism products, like outdoor recreation and agritourism. We can then share these new stories with potential visitors and Oregonians, inviting them to explore more of Oregon, which will lead to enhanced economic impact throughout the state.

Finally, each of these *imperatives* acknowledges the deep truth that statewide success will only be possible with the collaboration and support of the people in Oregon. This means stepping up our efforts to include, communicate, plan, collaborate, problem solve, innovate and protect the resources that are Oregon's brand. This means expanding our models to go beyond the dynamics of marketing to include the whole life cycle of Oregon's tourism industry. The *imperatives* are broad in scope and deep in complexity. And they all have plenty of room for real-time adaptation.



ZOOMING IN: THE INITIATIVES

Optimize Statewide Economic Impact

This *imperative* is a biggie. I mean, tourism is kind of a big deal in Oregon. Coming off the heels of the most successful campaign to-date, the 7 Wonders of Oregon, we “wondered” (sorry!) if we could beat those kind of successes and results the campaign produced. With our new campaign, You Might Like Oregon, we liked the results. You might, too. Here are some numbers that speak to the current success and momentum we are enjoying in helping bring economic impact to the state.



The Painted Hills 7 Bikes for 7 Wonders bicycle before it was hidden for our greatest scavenger hunt to date!

We've seen clear results in lodging success due to the tourism industry's efforts from July 1, 2015 to Jan. 1, 2017 vs. the same period for 2013-2015.

Smith Travel Research indicates:

- RevPAR has grown 8.2 percent
- Occupancy is up 2.2 percent
- Revenue has increased 9 percent

Travel Oregon websites have attracted more than 4.6 million unique users who want to learn more about Oregon and plan their trips, be they weekend warriors or international tour groups. That is a 12 percent increase over the same 18 months in 2013-2015 during the “7 Wonders Years.” That successful campaign nearly doubled the amount of users checking out our websites. And now, we're turning it up... to twelve.

We know our investment in advertising pays big dividends. In an Advertising Accountability study from Longwoods International in 2013, it showed that for every \$1 Travel Oregon invested in advertising, \$237 was generated in visitor spending, including \$11 in tax revenue.

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While these numbers are pretty darn good, we are just getting started. Our primary efforts on this imperative focus on the potential for positive impact for the whole state—all year round. This focus will require a more comprehensive approach, recognizing the need to develop the perfect mix of marketing, integrated sales, and destination development strategies for every region of the state.

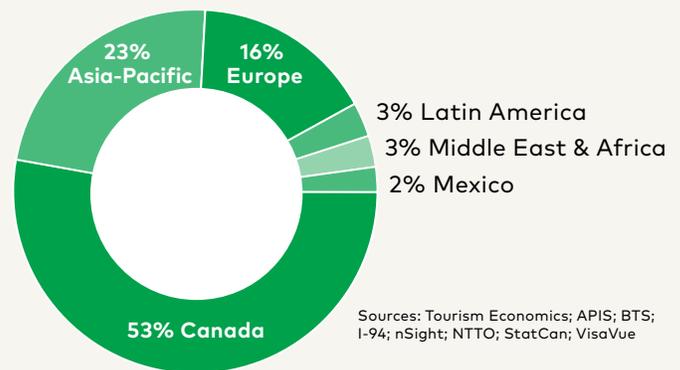
Travel Oregon's inspirational efforts will help guide would-be Oregon explorers to more detailed information from our partners so they can help them plan and book their trip. We will drive business from key global markets, developing a substantial and sustainable flow of visitors. The global reach of Oregon's brand is one of the exciting developments that emerged over the past strategic planning cycles. Now is the time to take advantage of that distinction. In fact, international travelers are now discovering Oregon at a record pace. We don't think we're that competitive, but thought we should note that Oregon outpaced the United States in overseas visits by 8.3 percent. We win! Not that it's important to win. But if it were important, we would win.



International visitors spent \$1.2 billion in Oregon in 2015, with \$825 million coming from overseas markets, a 4 percent increase over 2014.

- Oregon hosted more than 1 million international visitors in 2015, up from 784,000 visitors in 2010, a 30 percent increase in the last seven years. These visitors accounted for 4.7 million visitor nights. Canada, with 540,000 visitors remains our No. 1 inbound market. However, China is a rapidly-expanding market, with its tourism spend in Oregon predicted to grow 40 percent in the next few years. Are you ready for this new market? Travel Oregon is helping partners get, “China Ready” and will continue to do so in the next biennium.
- The top five overseas markets are: China, Japan, UK, Germany and Australia.

Oregon's International Source Markets by Region Share of total state visits, 2015



- With four non-stop flights from Europe: the UK, Germany, France, Scandinavia and the Netherlands; non-stop service from Japan and Canada; and new non-stop air service from Mexico City commencing December 1, 2017, PDX is connecting important inbound global markets with Oregon.

Continuing to build on this international momentum, Travel Oregon will host the Oregon Road Rally, which kicked off for the first time in April 2016. This one-week research trek showcased all seven regions of Oregon to 22 influential tour operators from Germany, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, The Netherlands, China and France. Now, they are able to better sell Oregon as a tourism destination to their large customer base of international travelers. Travel Oregon hosted 28 tour operators and media for the second annual Oregon Road Rally in April 2017, with increased engagement from regional partners and even more unforgettable Oregon experiences. This is one of the many ways we will continue to innovate in order to bring more visitors (read: jobs and economic impact) to Oregon.



Photo: Jane Mackay

And all this economic impact from visitation is good. So good! But there has to be a balance. Right? That’s why we are calling out the need for a perfect mix of economic development, natural resource conservation and livability to achieve our goals. Part of what makes Oregon, Oregon is our reverence and discipline to make sure we take care of this place we cherish. This sense of stewardship is built into every effort we undertake.

By ensuring our marketing outreach is welcoming and inclusive to all, developing world-class tourism experiences while balancing access and use, and encouraging longer stays during Oregon’s off season, we will see those impressive economic impact numbers get even better while still keeping Oregon, *Oregon*.

So how we do plan to do that? By focusing on the following *initiatives* that will propel us to greater economic impact throughout the state:

- Align and optimize integrated sales, marketing and destination development strategies with Oregon’s tourism industry
- Drive business from key global markets through integrated sales/marketing plans leveraged with global partners and domestic travel trade

- Facilitate the development of world-class tourism product in partnership with community leaders, tourism businesses and key agencies
- Guide tourism in a way that achieves the optimal balance of visitation, economic impact, natural resource conservation and livability
- Inspire overnight leisure travel through industry-leading branding, marketing and communications

Support and Empower Oregon’s Tourism Industry

In communities that enjoy a sustained and significant tourism economy, everyone sees themselves as participants in the industry. It is not just the hoteliers and restaurateurs, it is everyone sharing information and making a thousand little adjustments to improve the visitor experience. It might look like collaborations with downtown businesses around a calendar of events in peak season; or developing an intentional plan to bring educational conferences into wine country during the off season.

But this kind of collaboration and this kind of focus on the visitor experience doesn’t just happen. As we went around the state listening and learning through our Town Halls,

Regional Gatherings and Tourism Studios, it was clear we need to do more to provide destination management learning opportunities for the tourism industry. This effort recognizes the practical need to offer services and support training, while keeping our eyes on the values of purposeful collaboration and developing new leadership.

People remain a key part of the Oregon experience and our strategic plan. Well, people, technology and data...but mostly people. Since we began in 2003, Travel Oregon has amassed a huge amount of information about tourism and shared those learnings with our partners. We wanted to know everything we could. Who is visiting? Where are they staying? How long are they staying? Why did they come to Oregon in the first place? How did they get here? How much did they spend? Did they have a great time? Are they buying Oregon products when they get home? Are they using technology to explore Oregon? Are they posting to social media? And on and on.

Now we know all those data points are vitally important for us to develop and support the industry, and we know visitors are increasingly managing their entire travel experience through their smart devices. Understanding how people use technology is huge. So how do we do that today? We do that through big data. What in the world is big data, you ask? Well, for starters, it's a big deal.

Big Data Mining

Travel Oregon is working to harness big data in ways that will make the sharing of content more efficient for our partners and more satisfying for Oregon visitors.

Travel Oregon has already built a collaborative platform used for sharing and maintaining Oregon's tourism assets. They used to refer to it as "the Orb." And by any standard, the Orb was ahead of its time for building a database driven web resources.

The goal in this plan is to take this data strength to the next level. This comprehensive data management resource for Travel Oregon is now called OTIS (Oregon Tourism Information System). OTIS unifies the efforts of the tourism industry, helping streamline content management and communications.

Travel Oregon will conduct statewide trainings to drive awareness for the use of OTIS, ensuring robust, quality content is being added to the system and that this content is shared between tourism sites.

We're also working to build a new Visitor Lifecycle Management (VLM) system that takes more than 16,000 content data points and delivers them in customized ways to consumers who are engaged with Travel Oregon's marketing channels. Wait. What? How does that work?

The VLM Path



Emotional:

Dream > Anticipate > Commit > Enjoy > Brag > Crave

We're glad you asked. It's a complicated way to simplify the traveler experience as they peruse information while deciding on their next vacation destination. Today's consumers expect the brands they interact with to know what they like and what they don't and to use that knowledge to simplify their lives by making thoughtful recommendations and suggestions. VLM is a technology solution that will allow Travel Oregon to do just that for would-be Oregon "Explorers." We can help guide these Explorers to an unforgettable Oregon experience by leading them through their visitor lifecycle by identifying where they are in the path and delivering up personalized content to them via TravelOregon.com, the Travel Oregon e-newsletter or through one of our social media platforms. We've already tested basic personalized content delivery through "Get Smart Content" on TravelOregon.com and have seen increased click-thru rates of 5 to 14 percent (the baseline is 1.8 percent).

What are other ways Travel Oregon has responded to our partners' needs? Well, like they say: Winter is coming. But were the visitors coming in winter? The answer: Yes, but not enough of them. So in response to industry requests for additional marketing support during the fall and winter, Travel Oregon and Wieden+Kennedy conducted listening sessions with each of the seven regions. Those sessions informed the development of Travel Oregon's 2016-2017 Fall/Winter campaign, which focused on the idea that Oregon's cool winter climate doesn't take away from the beauty and experiences that the state has to offer. Now in

winter, we celebrate the unexpected travel opportunities in all of our advertising elements, with the honesty and understated cool Oregon is known for.

Travel Oregon will also continue to support and empower our partners through robust training programs and informational sessions like the Oregon Tourism Studios (OTS) and Travel Oregon 101s. OTS continues to evolve with our partners' needs, adding elements that focus on agritourism, outdoor recreation and cultural heritage.



Community stakeholders meet in Cascade Locks to discuss the future of tourism during the Gorge Tourism Studio. Photo: Aaron Marineau

And speaking of outdoor recreation, Oregon's bountiful natural resources are cornerstone to our legacy, our identity, and our economy. As an industry, outdoor recreation has the potential to significantly impact the well-being of Oregon's communities, its residents, and its natural resources. Developing a shared vision with a common agenda for how we manage our work and play in the outdoors will ensure these impacts are positive and inclusive of all.

This is the impetus for a statewide effort called the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative, which seeks to bring together businesses, agencies, land managers, conservation groups, and recreational user groups around the goal of expanding access to outdoor recreation and increasing the economic impact and sustainability of Oregon's outdoor recreation industry. To prepare for the launch of this initiative, Travel Oregon convened a leadership team representing key sectors of the outdoor recreation industry to lay the groundwork for a vision, desired outcomes and strategies to achieve these goals.



We also know that inviting people to enjoy all the stunning vistas of Oregon's natural splendor may cause some areas to get a little congested at times. How do we help disperse visitors to the places that are thirsting for more visitors while also alleviating some congestion issues that might arise when too many people choose to visit the same place at the same time in the same season? Well, we promote the shoulder seasons, as we touched on already. And, we provide visitors with the tools to not only have the best experience possible, but to also recreate responsibly and take care of this place we all love. That was the motivation behind a program we collaborated on with Oregon Solutions, Oregon Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service and Friends of the Columbia River Gorge, called: Ready, Set, Gorge! This program encouraged Oregonians and visitors to: Go Early; Go Late; Go East; and Go By Bike. This program gives visitors the best possible experience by directing them to avoid busy times or congested areas, making sure that the economic impact from visitors positively affects more towns in the Gorge. Win-win.



Visitors to the Gorge line up for the Columbia Gorge Express shuttle, a congestion-mitigation aspect of the Ready, Set, Gorge! program.

How are we going to make this all work and be an avid supporter for our industry partners (another win-win? We like those.)? Through these *initiatives*:

- Provide development and training opportunities to meet the evolving tourism industry needs

- Implement industry leading visitor information network
- Fully realize statewide, strategic integration of OTIS (Oregon Tourism Information System)
- Deploy tourism programs (e.g. Regional Cooperative Tourism Program, Competitive Grants) in a powerful way that fulfills on unique opportunities and challenges as defined by the tourism industry

Champion the Value of Tourism

Let's be blunt here; for all the amazing metrics highlighting the economic impact of tourism in Oregon, and for all of the potential of the industry, there are still plenty of people who haven't grasped the importance of the industry and naysay efforts to develop tourism in their communities. They will say they believe that tourism only benefits certain parts of the state or generates minimum wage jobs, or that it isn't a "real" industry like making widgets. Some of these folks come round when they see the kind of positive impacts reported in this plan. Some change their tune when they directly experience the economic advantages that come from tourism when they meet a new businesses owner in a small town making a life for her family by serving local ingredients grown by the farmers down the road...etc. You get the gist. But real transformation occurs when the skeptics actually become a part of a successful plan that supports, grows and revitalizes communities through tourism.



It's another Oregon thing (like we reference in things "uniquely Oregon" before): how can you understand the grandeur of the Oregon coast if you're not digging your toes into the sand? How can you describe the beauty of the light if you haven't seen the sun rise over Smith Rock? We need to help those naysayers understand the industry and how much it benefits Oregonians. We need them to dig their toes into the sand and to see the light. In other words, we need everyone to get involved in order to see the ways this industry makes Oregon such a special place.

We know we need support, wisdom and resources from a wide range of people and agencies in order to realize the potential of the industry. That is why this plan calls for substantial effort to develop and align strategic partnerships. These partnerships will allow us to leverage resources and capacity, and to address specific issues or barriers. This means educators, policy makers, community leaders, entrepreneurs, hoteliers, restaurateurs, wilderness experts, artists, historians, tribal leaders, transportation leaders, brewers, winemakers, and more will all work together to positively impact their communities by strengthening tourism. The travel industry is comprised of talented people from widely different walks of life who share a desire to generate economic advantages while protecting the source of those advantages. This plan asks Travel Oregon to engage policymakers and to be more intentional in convening productive partnerships to get real work done. And it asks them to travel the state: Literally dig their toes into the sand and watch as the sun rises on the natural splendor of Oregon.

Oregon Wines Fly Free continues to be a successful partnership between Travel Oregon, the Oregon Wine Board (OWB) and Alaska Airlines – allowing consumers to check one case of wine for free on any outgoing Alaska Airlines flight in Oregon and receive a free tasting at hundreds of participating wineries.

A throughline in this effort will be an industry-wide communication plan. We are looking beyond e-mail blasts and social media posts. We are creating a dynamic and interactive communication model that remains relevant, accurate and convenient for stakeholders. This effort is less about sharing talking points and more about actually talking. We will do more to improve industry and public feedback opportunities and communication channels. Hosting industry feedback events is one thing, but building feedback loops into daily business practices—and using that feedback in real time—

is another thing all together. We believe that an innovative use of communication and data gathering methodologies, coupled with plenty of face-to-face discussion is a good place to start.

So when you get the chance to attend a local meeting, or offer your point of view or expertise, do it! The diversity of people affiliated with the rise of tourism in Oregon is astounding. And the industry is on the lookout for fresh ideas and leadership with the growing opportunities and challenges ahead.

If you are already a veteran of conferences and conversations with the travel industry, thank you! Now is the time to apply that experience and influence as we work to make Oregon ready for an unprecedented moment in the global travel spotlight.

How in the world are we going to bring all Oregonians into the travel and tourism fold, you ask? Well, for starters, it goes back to Travel Oregon Supporting and Empowering our Partners (previous imperative), which will lead to the entire travel and tourism sector (and then some!) actively supporting the industry by Championing the Value of Tourism. And, of course, these *initiatives* will help us get there:

- Grow and align strategic partnerships to leverage resources and capacity to address key issues
- Empower and equip Oregon’s tourism industry with power of travel and issue-oriented messages
- Engage policymakers to help strengthen Oregon’s tourism industry
- Improve industry and public feedback channel/process

Run an Effective Business

For the most part, the challenges facing the Oregon tourism industry fall into the category of “good problems.”

- The entire state of Oregon is amazing, and we want visitors to explore the whole state; that means many return visits. That’s a good problem.
- There are a lot of people who want to experience each of Oregon’s 7 Wonders in their lifetime—and we need to protect, as well as share, these wonders. That’s a good problem.
- We have communities around the state innovating and developing new product and experiences for visitors—and they want support and promotion to be successful. That’s a good problem.



Attendees pictured in Pendleton at the 2016 Oregon Governor’s Conference on Tourism.

And the list goes on. We could sit around all day and go on and on about all of our “good problems,” all of which need attention. And even with the expanded resources being generated by record-level visitor spending, we continue to be driven to ensure all our resources are being used to their highest and best purpose.

So we will have to be smart and efficient with our resources. Interestingly, over the past 14 years, Travel Oregon has matured, in almost precise lockstep, with the growth of social media and smart mobile devices. We see the use of technology as an essential characteristic for scalability and success—and we see it as a differentiating strength in our culture and our people. We understand technology, because we have grown up alongside it (please refer to quirky nerd statement in earlier text). Over the next two years Travel Oregon will expand its commitment to arm our staff with the technology and automation they need to increase access, convenience, relevance and impact, all while lowering costs and moving faster.

Savvy people who can leverage technology, and the 24/7/365 cycles of social media, are also a part of the solution for Oregon’s travel industry. We are coming to grips with the fact that our organization is now complex and substantial. The days of informal yelling across the office no longer suffices as building alignment. We are in a process of reviewing and adapting all of our policies and processes to build more alignment among our departments and with our stakeholders.

Remaining lean, tech savvy, aligned and engaged, Travel Oregon will not be satisfied with anything but exemplary ratings from third party evaluators. It is not enough to simply update practices and policies, we will continue to ensure that our staff remains up-to-date on policies, procedures and key practices, reflecting the responsibility we feel to support all Oregonians in our business operations.

But, enough talk about technology and policies. Like we said earlier, it’s mostly about the people. We are conscious of the need to find and retain the best talent, and to give them the opportunities to lead and engage with the industry and ultimately make a difference for Oregon. The best part of what makes Travel Oregon, Travel Oregon is the people: People who are passionate about this industry; people who recognize the power of travel and its ability to shape lives and enhance communities; people who recognize that our success depends on our partners’ successes.

We’re all in this together. This is why we will also make recruiting the best talent a priority, so we can serve the industry with the best resources available: our people.

We know that in order to be a high performing organization, Travel Oregon must cultivate an inclusive work culture and create an environment that reflects the diversity of Oregon. This involves leveraging the diversity of our workforce and empowering our employees to be fully engaged and to contribute to the agency’s mission. In our work around the state, we value and proactively seek genuine participation from under-represented and underserved groups and recognize them as an essential component of creating a welcoming and rich cultural environment for visitors and Oregonians alike. We all share the responsibility to promote and embed the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout Oregon’s tourism industry. Our priorities include:

- Ensure diverse perspectives are heard
- Develop recruiting practices to attract and retain top-tier talent
- Facilitate exchange of ideas and best practices to accelerate industry innovation

Diversity and inclusion cultivates innovation and results, leading to a stronger, more sustainable tourism industry in Oregon.

By now, you get the drill. How are we going to achieve this? Through these crucial *initiatives*:

- Prioritize the implementation of technology to make Travel Oregon more effective and efficient
- Attract, develop and retain top talent
- Continuously review, improve and document policies and processes/procedures
- Improve internal alignment among Travel Oregon departments
- Measure and drive employee engagement and satisfaction

THE KEY MEASURES

Some of you, and you know who you are, love the numbers and the measures. The fact is, we do too (welcome to Nerdville! We like it here. You might, too.). But before we dive into the success measures guiding this plan, it's important to call out the Mount Hood of our success measures: Are we actually building a better life for Oregonians through strong, sustainable, local economies? As stated earlier, this is our guiding light, our true north. This is important because in a minute we are going to be talking about numbers of visitors and the use of systems...all of which are important. Because all of those measures need to roll up in support of strong, sustainable, community economies in Oregon. It's also important because it confirms there is no magical finish line where we will finally arrive or win the race. This plan is a testimony to our state's long-term commitment to harness the power and potential of tourism in order to bring added economic stability and prosperity across the state. Since 2003 we have been building momentum, and we intend to continue for years to come.

If you hadn't noticed, there is a lot of lingo and acronyms in the tourism industry; RDMOs, TLT, "heads in beds" etc. You'll notice that when you review the very handy one page overview of Travel Oregon's 2017-2019 Strategic Plan calling out the Strategic *Imperatives* and Key *Initiatives* in the beginning of this document. But how will we get to our destination of success? We'll get there by achieving Key Measures to know we are on the right course. Well, that and Google Maps.

Optimize Statewide Economic Impact

This *imperative* is about activating the industry and leveraging everything we know about tourism, global markets, seasonality, regional opportunities, branding and marketing. In other words, Travel Oregon's success depends on effectively collaborating with our partners and continuing to innovate in marketplace. The Key Measures are:

- All regions show 1.75 percent increase in year-over-year lodging demand
- Increase Oregon's market share of U.S. visitor spend
- Establish a baseline for destination management needs
- Establish a baseline measure and grow the amount of partner investment

Support and Empower Oregon's Tourism Industry

This *imperative* calls on the industry to learn and evolve. It is about developing talent and resources, and it is about optimizing an industry-leading visitor information network that supports tourism professionals and enhances the visitor experience. Here's how we get there:

- Establish local engagement baseline by end of year one and increase in year two
- At least five of seven RDMOs use OTIS to add and syndicate content back to their sites (*targeted partner utilization strategy*)
- 100 percent of Oregon Tourism Studio communities utilizing OTIS

Champion the Value of Tourism

This *imperative* is about aligning messaging, engaging policymakers, building a model for dynamic communication throughout our industry and sharing the power of tourism story with industry leaders. These key measurements will demonstrate that the public further understands and appreciates the power of tourism:

- Earned media demonstrating the value of tourism increases by 10 percent
- Establish and monitor public perception of Oregon's Tourism industry as it contributes to the economy and quality of life

Run an Effective Business

This *imperative* combines efforts in efficiency, scalability, improved processes and employee engagement. It is about evolving as a strong business unit to further support the industry. Here's what that will look like:

- Exemplary ratings of fiscal processes from third-party evaluators are maintained
- Employee engagement increases in identified areas of need
- 100 percent of staff utilize enterprise-wide dynamic industry database

CONCLUSIONS

Tourism, whether you are the “industry,” or you are the traveler, is not the goal. Wait. What? Stick with us here. We’re almost done. The goal is to realize the enrichment and connections that come from sharing experiences and our connections with Oregon and to generate positive economic, cultural and social returns for Oregon and her communities. It will take work and innovation, but we are certain we can continue to make Oregon better through tourism. We will continue to work with our partners to develop the industry, as there is so much more potential at hand.

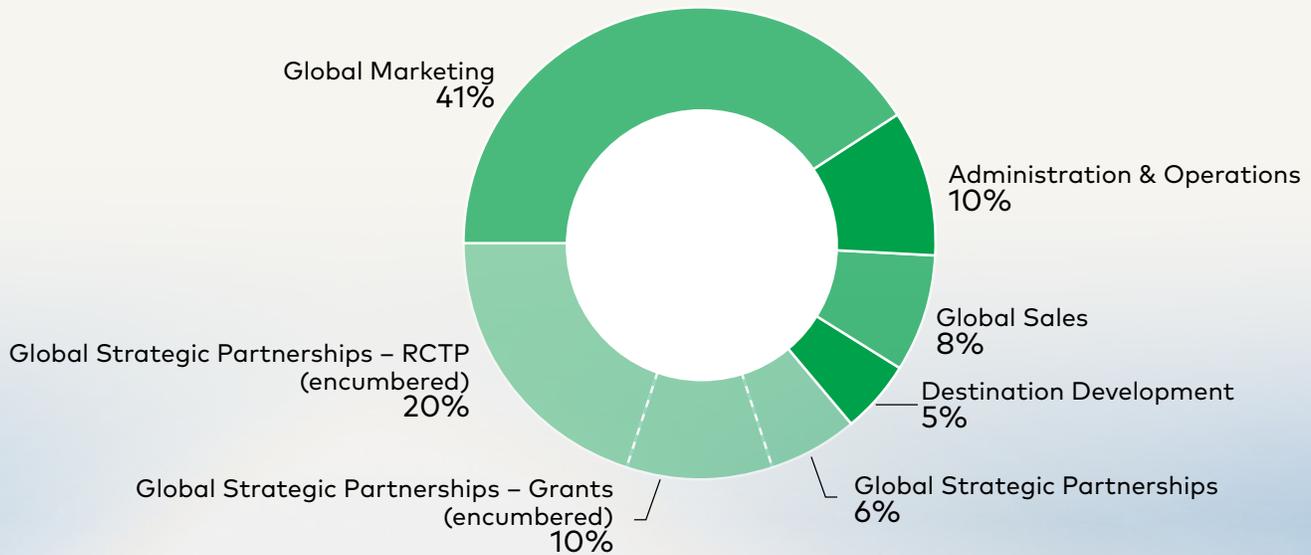
When our next Strategic Plan begins in a couple of years, we will be depending on the success of the efforts described here. Establishing a more prepared, informed, aligned and efficient tourism industry will drive near-term economic success, and it will tee us up for an even more prosperous future.

And like a skier looking at a challenging run of pristine powder, a distiller taking that first sample from the barrel, or a young cowgirl ready to make her debut at the Pendleton Roundup, we are feeling some healthy trepidation, but mostly we are feeling exhilaration. The next biennium promises to be remarkable. Knowing we will move ahead with your help and guidance, we feel inspired and confident. We live here. We think about and talk about and travel across Oregon all the time, and it never disappoints. When we work together, we can ensure the magic of Oregon is protected, accessible to the world, and a source of ongoing economic prosperity, adding to that long list of reasons why Oregon is unlike any other place and is a big reason why we like it here.

2017-19 BIENNIAL BUDGET

State Lodging Tax Revenue	\$75,340,000
Other Sources	\$400,000
TOTAL	\$75,740,000

Global Marketing	\$31,250,000
Global Strategic Partnerships	\$4,199,000
Global Strategic Partnerships – Grants (encumbered)	\$7,534,000
Global Strategic Partnerships – RCTP (encumbered)	\$15,069,000
Global Sales	\$6,406,000
Destination Development	\$3,392,000
Administration & Operations	\$7,890,000
TOTAL	\$75,740,000



OREGON TOURISM COMMISSION

Nine commissioners oversee the activities of the Oregon Tourism Commission. The Governor appoints all Commission members with five representing Oregon's lodging industry, three representing the tourism industry at-large and one representing the public-at-large:

2016-2017

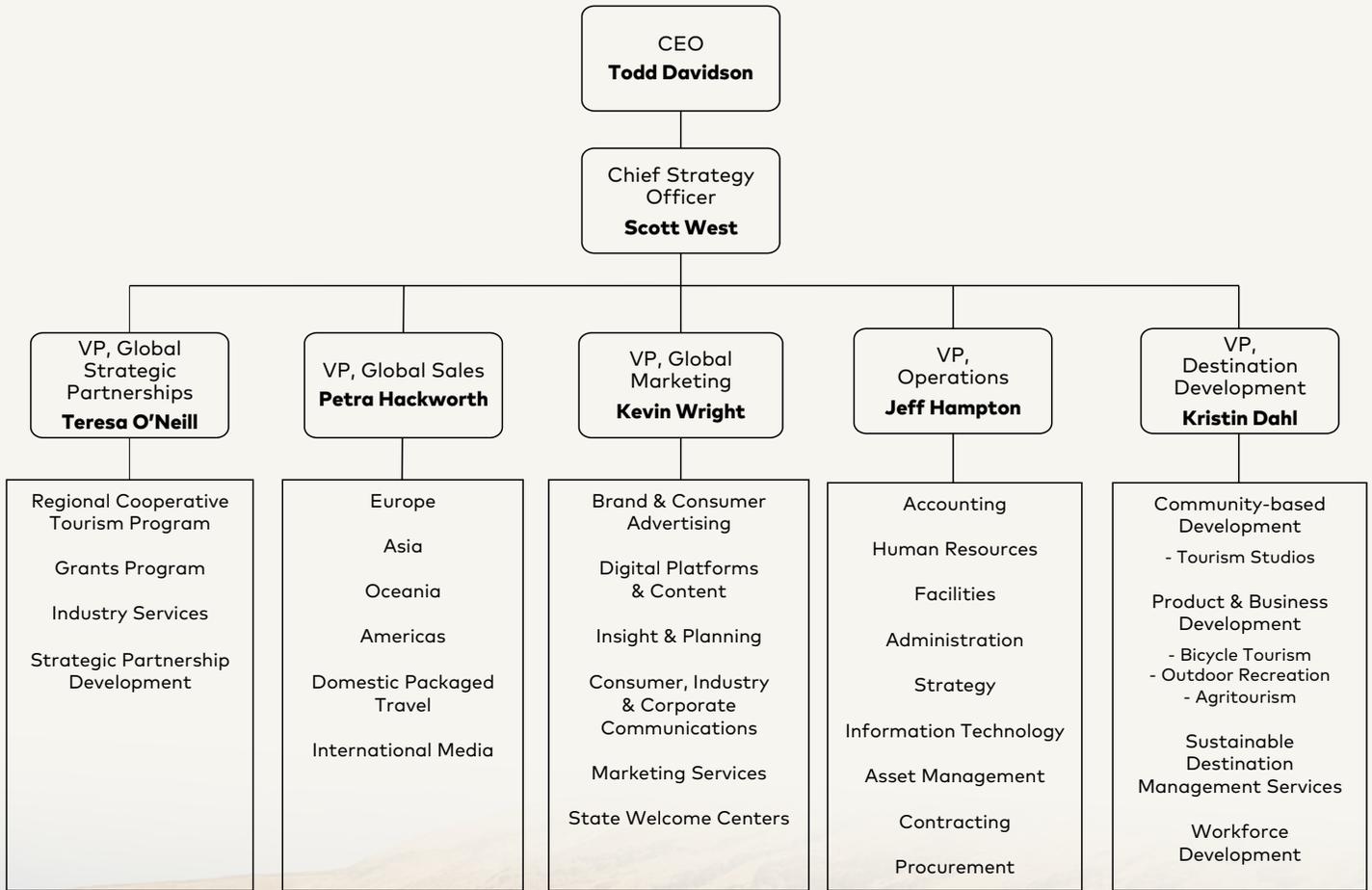
Alana Hughson, Chair
Ryan Snyder, Vice-Chair
Kara Wilson Anglin
Don Anway
Richard Boyles
Nigel Francisco
Al Munguia
Kenji Sugahara
Scott Youngblood

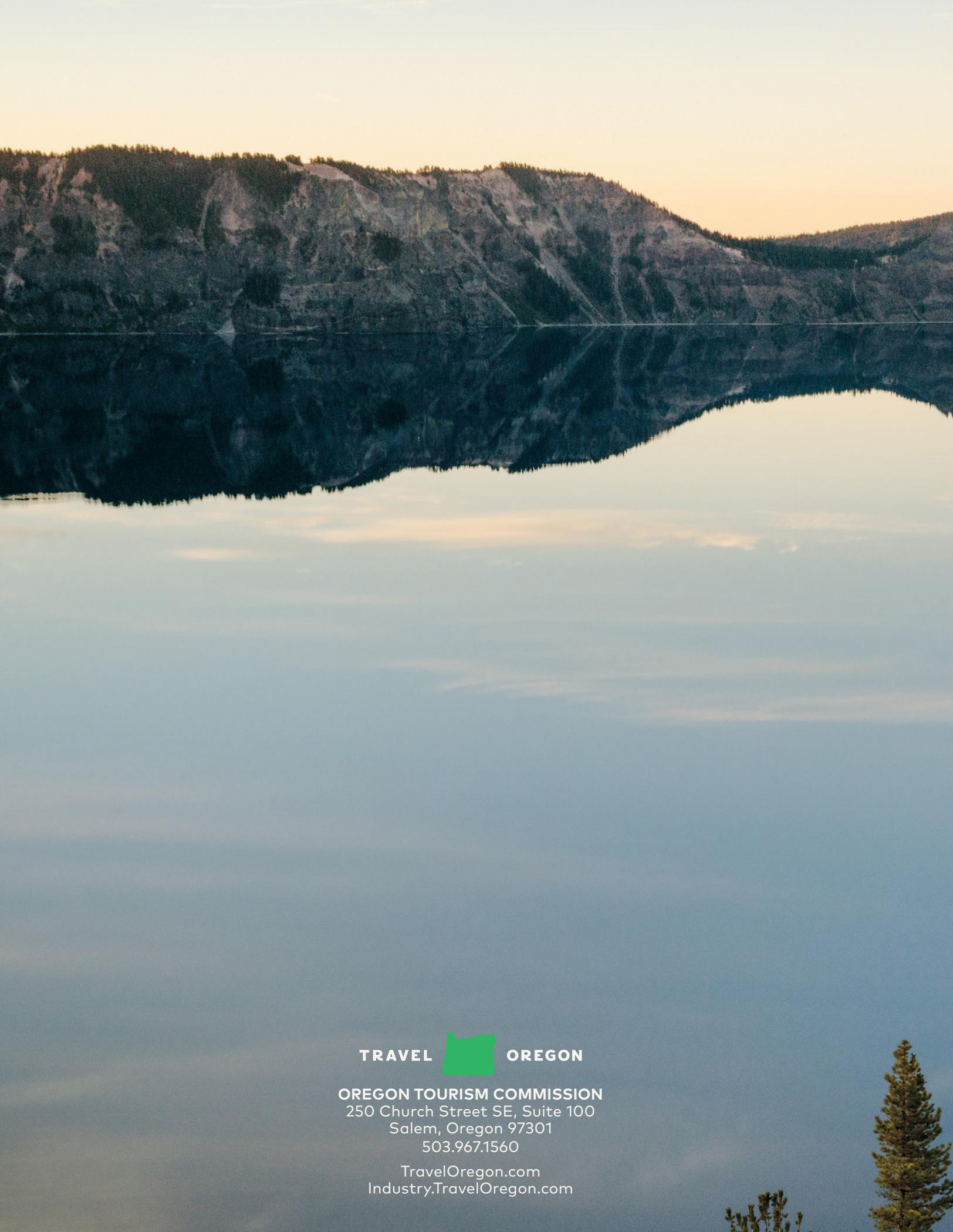
2017-2018

Ryan Snyder, Chair
Scott Youngblood, Vice-Chair
Kara Wilson Anglin
Don Anway
Richard Boyles
Nigel Francisco
Alana Hughson
Al Munguia
Kenji Sugahara



TRAVEL OREGON – PROGRAMMATIC ORGANIZATION CHART





TRAVEL  **OREGON**

OREGON TOURISM COMMISSION

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