



Travel Oregon Announces 2018 Travel & Tourism Industry Achievement Award Recipients

The Oregon Tourism Commission (dba Travel Oregon) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2018 Oregon Travel and Tourism Industry Achievement Awards, presented at the 2019 Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism in Eugene, Ore.

The achievement awards recognize people and organizations that enhance travel and tourism experiences across Oregon. The award recipients are outstanding professionals who demonstrate perseverance and dedication to the state. They go the extra mile. It's because of their vision and commitment to making Oregon a better place for Oregonians and visitors that this industry is successful.

The 2018 Oregon Travel and Tourism Industry Achievement Awards were announced in these categories:

The **Oregon Tourism Stewardship Award** recognizes outstanding contributions of a tourism-related activity or attraction specifically focused on Oregon's natural beauty or outdoor recreation, incorporating outstanding leadership, stewardship, philanthropic, and/or socially-responsible practices, as demonstrated by a strong commitment to decreasing the environmental impact of the travel and tourism industry. The award was presented to [Friends of The Columbia Gorge and Mt. Hood & Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance](#) for the development of the Trailhead Ambassadors Program, a volunteer-based program that works to reduce trailhead and trail congestion, improves safety and security at the busiest trails, and promotes responsible hiker ethics such as "Leave No Trace" messaging.

The **Oregon Tourism International Sales & Development Award** recognizes excellence in the creative sales, marketing and development of Oregon as a destination in the international marketplace. This year's award was presented to [Meg Trendler, Travel Lane County](#). Meg has participated as an Oregon delegate many times and has proudly represented not only Lane County, but also the entire state in key international markets. Meg truly understands that we can go further when we work together.

The **Oregon Niche Tourism Award** recognizes outstanding incorporation of Oregon's niche programs as a device to draw visitors to the state. Including, but not limited to, programs, projects or campaigns in the areas of cultural or heritage tourism, agritourism, voluntourism, diversity/equity/inclusion and/or adventure travel and outdoor recreation. This year, two recipients are recognized in this category. The award was presented to [Visit Tillamook Coast](#) for the development of the North Coast Food Trail, a partnership between three sub-regions of the Oregon Coast that bring together the best of the tasty and rugged food-related experiences from Cannon Beach, the Tillamook Coast and Lincoln City.

The co-honoree is [Oregon Adaptive Sports](#). Twenty years ago, some passionate local members of the ski community came together to provide snow opportunities to members of the community with disabilities. Today, Oregon Adaptive Sports (OAS) is the premier adaptive sports organization in the Pacific Northwest, providing a range of year-round programs. They see Central Oregon as a year-round

destination for adaptive sports with OAS as the leader in providing state-of-the-art equipment, professional instructions, staff and dedicated volunteers, resulting in top-quality experiences for participants.

The **Oregon Tourism Development Award** recognizes the creation of an innovative program, promotion, or product that exemplifies best practices, sustainability and creative problem-solving. [IN A LANDSCAPE: Classical Music in the Wild](#) was awarded for their unique outdoor concert series. The classical music outdoor concert series was inspired by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Music Project, which presented thousands of free concerts in public lands during the Great Depression. Hunter Noack performs on a Steinway grand piano in landscapes that showcase Oregon's natural beauty, history, industry and culture. They feature diverse landscapes across Oregon, including private ranches and farms, public lands and resorts, all while following the "Leave No Trace" policy with the goal to create a music experience that cultivates an appreciation for the land.

The **Oregon Tourism Leadership Award** recognizes individuals championing the value of tourism, whose vision and commitment help make our communities, tourism regions and state stronger visitor destinations, and whose behind-the-scenes leadership contributes significantly to the recognition and impact of Oregon's travel and tourism industry. This award celebrates an individual who exemplifies outstanding leadership throughout their career in the tourism industry. The award was given to [Bob Hackett, Travel Southern Oregon](#). Bob has been a leader for Southern Oregon's tourism industry, especially around resiliency and response during wildfires. In the past year, Bob has gone above and beyond to ensure the Southern Oregon region has been able to quantify and communicate the impacts that wildfires have on the local communities and businesses. He has also helped guide local businesses to recovery through identifying marketing co-op advertisements and grant opportunities.

The **Oregon Tourism Digital Marketing Award** celebrates exceptional digital marketing that brings potential travelers closer to their favorite destinations and engages with them in fun and innovative ways. The award went to [Explore Lincoln City](#) campaign, "Random Acts of Findness," which celebrates the 20th Anniversary of visitors finding hidden glass floats on the shores of Lincoln City. This digital campaign is the culmination of a multi-year effort to develop a Lincoln City brand. This effort began in 2015, which included partnerships with all city departments, and input from residents, guests and businesses through nearly two dozen stakeholder input sessions and guest focus groups.

The **Oregon Tourism Communications Program or Initiative Award** commends an effective communications program or initiative that influences the positive reputation of an organization and inspires travelers as they choose destinations. This award celebrates the best domestic or international communications program or initiative that resulted in quality earned media coverage and inspired travel to Oregon. The [U.S. Forest Service, Willamette Valley National Forest, Choose Outdoors and the Willamette Valley Visitors Association](#) were recognized for their work on the **U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree Campaign**. The 2018 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree team, comprised of staff from the Willamette National Forest, Choose Outdoors, Travel Oregon, Weinstein PR, Willamette Valley Visitors Association, and many sponsors, collaborated to execute an incredibly successful nationwide campaign. The efforts of the team highlighted the value of experiencing and caring for public lands through the #ItsAllYours and the #FindYourTrail campaigns. In addition, visitors and locals were encouraged to get outdoors during the "Find Your Ornament" contest. The success of this project, including incredible

media coverage totaling 284 stories reaching an audience of more than 438 million, was a direct result of bringing talented and creative team members in to achieve more together.

The **Overall Oregon Tourism Marketing Program Award** celebrates the best integrated domestic or international marketing program or campaign that attracted visitors to Oregon. [Visit McMinnville](#) earned the award for the creation of a timeless brand that represents the town's personality and a campaign that put new brand assets and voice to work in key target markets. Visit McMinnville utilized intentionally minimal billboard-style "color block" ads with arresting and unexpected statements like, "Crushing it since the '70s." This campaign was intended to create a visual break from previous creative, to be highly visible above the clutter of pre-holiday advertising, and to stand out from typical wine country travel advertising with a colloquial, refreshingly humorous tone.

The **Oregon Guest Service Award** recognizes the employee who exemplifies the Oregon spirit of hospitality through their positive attitude toward every visitor and with the actions they take to meet and exceed these guests' expectations. The award was presented to [Kennedy Oloya](#), the Guest Service Lead for the Mark Spencer Hotel in Downtown Portland. Kennedy's guest service ability is second to none where guests recognize and acknowledge his authentic warmth and kindness every day. Whenever there is a question about how to handle a guest situation, hotel staff simply ask themselves, "What would Kennedy do?" Kennedy always pushes everyone to be their best self and to provide each visitor to the Mark Spencer with a positive and memorable experience, reminding them that they are not only a representative of the hotel, but also Portland and the state.

The **Oregon Tourism Innovative Partnership** recognizes organizations or businesses that have successfully entered into a traditional or non-traditional partnership that resulted in an enhanced visitor experience. This year's award went to [South Coast Regional Tourism Network, Pressing Sand](#). The cities on the Southern Oregon Coast – from Brookings to Reedsport and inland through the Oregon Coast Range – are breaking new ground when it comes to partnerships and collaboration. They are doing things that have never been done before in the region or the state. They call it: Pressing Sand. Through a series of Rural Tourism Studios and collaborative projects, this sub-region was able to embrace the idea that they are stronger together than they are as individual communities. Together, they created the Oregon South Coast Regional Tourism Network (OSCRTN) that regionally collaborates to enhance economic development through sustainable tourism. As a rural area, they are interested in sharing the raw beauty of their region in a way that is respectful to the environment and those who call it home. The network is intentional about leveraging relationships, opportunities and dollars. Working as a team to create consensus around regional priority projects, they are striving to make the Southern Oregon Coast a bucket-list destination.

The state's most prized recognition is the **Oregon Governor's Tourism Award**. This year, [David Zielke](#), Director of Air Service Development at the Port of Portland, was honored for his leadership and commitment overseeing recruitment and retention of strategic air service for Portland International Airport. David began working for the Port in 2005. Before that, he served as Delta Air Lines District Sales Manager for Portland from 1987 until 2003. David was appointed to the Oregon Tourism Commission in 1993 and was Chair of the Commission at the end of his term in 2003. David has influenced the growth in air service at PDX throughout his entire professional career in Oregon. As a member of the International Air Service Committee, David was instrumental in securing the Northwest Airlines/Delta nonstop service to Tokyo in 2003 and the Northwest/Delta nonstop service to Amsterdam in 2008. PDX now offers nonstop service to 63 cities domestically and 11 cities internationally including; Tokyo,

Amsterdam, Vancouver B.C., Calgary, Guadalajara, London, Toronto, Frankfurt, Reykjavik, San Jose del Cabo and Puerto Vallarta.

“The commitment David has shown to Oregon’s travel industry has been monumental. And I cannot overstate the importance of having a leader like David who professionally and selflessly work every day to keep this industry moving forward,” said Todd Davidson, Travel Oregon CEO. “During his career, he has been instrumental in guiding the advancement of the initiatives of the Oregon Tourism Commission and in securing and maintaining domestic and international air service to Oregon. The entire state has benefited immensely from his vision.”

The work of these awardees enhances the travel and tourism industry and contributes to a better Oregon for residents and visitors.