

DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH ACROSS OREGON

WILLAMETTE VALLEY



PHOTO: WILLAMETTE VALLEY VISITORS ASSOCIATION

TOURISM SUPPORTS OREGON'S ECONOMY

In 2003, Oregon faced one of its highest unemployment rates in history. As part of a statewide initiative to create new job opportunities for Oregonians, the Oregon Tourism Investment proposal was signed into law. This bill made tourism and hospitality a pillar of Oregon's economy by establishing a 1% state lodging tax, which dedicated the revenue into tourism development and marketing for all of Oregon. In 2016, the legislature increased the state lodging tax to 1.8% through June 2020, when it decreases to 1.5%. In addition, state statute dedicated 30% of the state lodging tax to regional tourism organizations and grant programs across Oregon. This industry investment has delivered results with an increase in visitors which has equated to increased resources for regional programs that support jobs, culture, infrastructure and public services.

THE INVESTMENT IS PAYING OFF

Through Travel Oregon's Regional Cooperative Tourism Program, the Willamette Valley region is scheduled to receive \$1.8 million over the 2019-2021 biennium. The funding is programmed to achieve the following goals:

- Increase shoulder season (October – March) occupancy.
- Grow interest and visitation from the Seattle market.
- Increase oregonwinecountry.org sessions by 10%.
- Increase the number of Willamette Valley articles published (traditional & digital).
- Develop industry educational resources.
- Raise the level of seasonal content and wine pairing messaging.

WILLAMETTE VALLEY:

IN 2010	IN 2018	CHANGE
Direct Employment 17,670 jobs	22,600 jobs	+3.1%
Employee Earnings \$349 million	\$565 million	+6.2%
Visitor Spending \$1.28 billion	\$1.7 billion	+3.7%
Taxes (State/Local) \$50 million	\$82 million	+6.4%

STATEWIDE:

IN 2003	IN 2018	CHANGE
Direct Employment 84,500 jobs	115,400	+37%
Employee Earnings \$1.7 billion	\$3.6 billion	+112%
Visitor Spending \$6.5 billion	\$12.3 billion	+89%
Taxes (State/Local) \$246 million	\$560 million	+128%

More than 120 cities and counties across Oregon collect a local transient lodging tax to expend on local programming. A study conducted by ECONorthwest in 2018 found that cities and counties that levied a local transient lodging tax spent the revenue on the following programs that directly benefit Oregonians in those communities:

Program Category	Expenditures	Share
General Services	\$84,194,912	39%
Tourism Facilities	\$58,312,100	29%
Tourism Promotion & Marketing	\$48,965,052	18%
Arts, Culture & Entertainment	\$20,855,625	6%
Events	\$9,184,891	1%
Economic Development	\$4,071,652	5%
Chambers of Commerce	\$4,035,060	2%
Other	\$2,062,897	1%
Administration & Overhead	\$1,170,350	0%
Total	\$232,852,539	100%

These dollars, especially those expended in the tourism facilities and promotion and marketing programs, can be leveraged against the regional destination management organization and state tourism investments.

VINEYARDS AND WINE ARE THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY'S ICONIC ASSETS. IN 2016, THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY WAS NAMED WINE REGION OF THE YEAR BY WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE. THE REGION IS BECOMING RENOWNED AS A WINE DESTINATION BECAUSE OF THE HUNDREDS OF VINEYARDS AND AWARD-WINNING WINES.



PHOTO: DURANT VINEYARD



"Tourism is the foundation of my business, the Westfir Lodge and Mountain Market. At the lodge I welcome mountain bikers, hikers, fisherman and families. They come from all over the world to enjoy the Oregon Cascades, to take photos of the beautiful Office Covered Bridge that is across the street from my lodge, tour the Aufderheide Scenic Byway, or just to enjoy a glass of Willamette Valley pinot on our patio. Tourism has been an essential part of my life. The industry brought me to Oregon to start my own business. I look forward to continuing to be a champion for the travel industry and to helping people experience everything Oregon has to offer."

TRACY SUNFLOWER
Owner, Westfir Lodge



"Being involved in tourism, and specifically agritourism, allows me to find the crossover between the world of agriculture that I live daily and the world of travelers, most are urbanites looking for connection to the natural world and experiences that change them. I can provide that experience on my farm, but I can also help others, both travelers and farmers alike, to be open to the possibilities that both have something the other is seeking. In a nation (and world) with a growing rural-urban divide, we provide a bridge."

SCOTTIE JONES
*Co-Owner/Farmer, Leaping Lamb Farm Stay
Alsea*



"As an artist, my goal is to inspire others and evoke emotion. As an entrepreneur, I have an opportunity to serve others and make a difference in our world. It is an honor and a privilege to combine both passions while serving travelers who seek to view the world in a colorful new way."

LAURA ELLIS
*Artist, Owner of Albany Arts Studio
Albany*



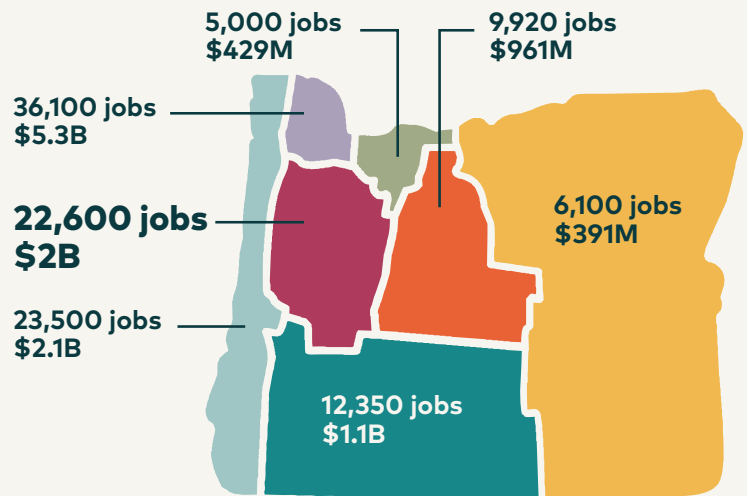
"It is exciting to share the history and beauty of our community with visitors who come to see and enjoy our restored bridges, historic film locations, buildings, lakes, trails and waterfalls. They bring with them opportunities for local businesses and contribute to the economic vitality of the community. But more than that, they instill in us a sense of place and an appreciation for our own community and the beautiful place we call home."

RICHARD MEYERS
City Manager, Cottage Grove

With 49% of the visitors to the Willamette Valley retired and/or not working, and 67% without children under 18, they are a great target demographic during the shoulder season when school is in session.

THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY ATTRACTS PEOPLE WHO ENJOY OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES BUT ALSO APPRECIATE THE HERITAGE AND CULINARY OFFERINGS OF THE REGION.

EMPLOYMENT & REVENUE ACROSS OREGON



Oregon Electric Byways, EV at Pengra Covered Bridge outside Jasper.



PHOTO: DYLAN VANWEELDEN



PHOTO: JONI KABANA



PHOTO: WILLAMETTE VALLEY VISITORS ASSOCIATION



PHOTO: DYLAN VANWEELDEN

TRAVEL OREGON'S COMPETITIVE GRANTS:

In the past year, the efforts to expand tourism opportunities and enhance visitor experiences has seen an investment of \$160,500 in Travel Oregon Competitive Grant funding in the Willamette Valley region. A few of the grant recipients include:

- Salem's Riverfront Carousel to assist in planning and completing a feasibility study in order to expand the carousel's facilities, programs and economic impact in the community.
- Cascades Raptor Center for a feasibility study to determine expansion possibilities for the day facility that fosters a connection between people and birds of prey.
- City of Canby to create the first ever Canby Tourism Plan including input from stakeholders, insights and demographics, marketing and initial strategic plan.
- City of Independence to construct and install pedestrian wayfinding signage throughout the historic downtown and along the Willamette River Trail.
- Cottage Theatre to remodel the facility to increase seating capacity (in addition to ADA seating), improve sightlines and upgrade technical capabilities.
- Eugene Civic Alliance to conduct an economic impact study, develop financial forecasts, identify marketing opportunities and an event outreach strategy for the new Civic Park sports and recreation facility.
- Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society to upgrade the museum's Trolley Barn to provide full visitor access with three additional exit doors, upgraded LED lighting and two ADA parking spaces.

TRAVEL OREGON'S REGIONAL COOPERATIVE TOURISM PROGRAM:

The Willamette Valley regional program received \$1.5 million over the 17-19 biennium and completed a variety of projects, a few of which are highlighted below:

- More than \$250,000 was awarded through 22 grants across the region, providing funds to many partners including:
 - \$10,000 to the City of Harrisburg's Pacific NW Marathon, which saw participation rates double.
 - \$10,000 to the Eola-Amity Hills American Viticultural Area to produce a promotional video highlighting the variety of activities to engage with in the area.
 - \$2,500 to the Gilbert House Children's Museum of a website refresh and search engine optimization campaign.
- Creation of off-season content with the #cellarseason campaign to increase shoulder season visits to local businesses in the region.
- Development and execution of a Capitol Christmas Tree Trail Ornament Contest in the Willamette National Forest in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.



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