

Oregon Tourism Commission Meeting

October 5, 2021

Zoom Meeting and YouTube Live

Commissioners present included: Scott Youngblood, Nigel Francisco, Maria Ponzi, Richard Boyles, Don Anway, Greg Willitts, Lucinda DiNovo, Kenji Sugahara, and Mia Sheppard.

Chair Youngblood calls the Commission meeting to order at 8:32 am and notes that the virtual public meeting is in accordance with state public meeting requirements.

Chair Remarks:

Chair Youngblood introduces himself and asks each Commissioner to do the same. Todd Davidson, CEO of Travel Oregon, also introduces himself.

Chair Youngblood expresses gratitude to the Travel Oregon team through a difficult period while moving forward with diversity, equity, and inclusion work and undergoing a transformational strategic plan.

Willamette Valley Wildfire Recovery

Chair Youngblood notes that the intent was to hold this meeting in person in Salem, but that the Delta variant of COVID-19 made this unwise. He introduces Dawnielle Tehama, Executive Director of the Willamette Valley as the regional host of today's Commission meeting.

Dawnielle introduces Carol Tannenbaum of the McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce, Kari Westlund from Eugene, Cascades and Coast, Angie Onyewuchi from Travel Salem and Marion County Commissioner Danielle Bethelle.

Dawnielle shares a PowerPoint presentation on the Willamette Valley Visitor Association's wildfire response and support.

Carol Tannenbaum of the McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce discusses the resilience the community demonstrated in the aftermath of the Holiday Farm Fire and the Viribus sculpture in Blue River.

Kari Westlund presents on the impacts and recovery of the Holiday Farm Fire. She notes that the combination of the fire and the impacts of COVID-19 have made it difficult to assess losses. She shares the recreation assets map that Eugene, Cascades, & Coast created and the difference in what is available between 2020 and 2021, including current closures. She also discusses the regenerative tours hosted via First Nature Tours and Cascade Volunteers to give back to the McKenzie River area. Ongoing projects include gateway signage, Aufderheide and McKenzie Pass Scenic Bikeway recovery, and the McKenzie River Discovery Center.

Dawnielle introduces Marion County Commissioner Danielle Bethelle. Danielle shares a PowerPoint presentation on the housing needs of families that were fire affected. Marion County is working on a 2–3-year plan with Oregon Housing and Community Services to provide housing for fire survivors. North Santiam State Park will acquire 16 cabins to house families that are still living in hotels. Once these

families transition to permanent housing, these cabins will be operated via Marion County Parks as a lodging option for tourists. They are undergoing a similar project in Gates at the former site of the Oak Park Motel and adding tiny homes in partnership with a local landowner. These tiny homes will primarily house seniors who were affected by the fires and many were without home insurance.

Dawnielle introduces Angie Onyewuchi from Travel Salem. Angie presents a PowerPoint presentation focused on COVID-19 community outreach in Salem via inspirational messaging, “Miss you already” campaign and a regional anthem video. Travel Salem also conducted resident surveys, kept stakeholders aware of financial assistance programs and health protocols, ran a “Salem Strong” digital billboard, and created a landing page on TravelSalem.com to cover details on COVID-19, the wildfires, and ice storms. She also discusses the success of the IRONMAN events held in Salem in July of 2021.

Public Comment

On Wednesday, September 22 the Commission Meeting Notice was posted to the Oregon Tourism Commission webpage and the meeting materials including the agenda, financials, a Strategic Plan Progress Report, along with the public comment form and a link to this Livestream were posted.

One comment was submitted, shared with Commissioners, and will be posted to the public via Travel Oregon’s industry site.

Commission Business

Chair Youngblood asks if all Commissioners received their financial packets.

All Commissioners confirm receipt of packet and Travel Oregon financials.

Financial Update

Chair Youngblood asks Vice-Chair Boyles to review the financials.

Vice-Chair Boyles reviews details from the most current financials and the end of year financials for fiscal year 2021. The final FY21 TLT was \$23,486,589, \$3,486,589 over anticipated budget. Of that almost \$3.5M – per statute, the following was allocated:

- 20% to RCTP: \$697,318
- 10% to Competitive Grants: \$348,659
- 70% available to programs which will be held as a reserve fund balance until spring '22:
\$2,440,612

He states his pleasure in the recovery Travel Oregon is seeing and thanks the team for their diligence in tracking and communicating the budget.

Chair Youngblood asks if there are any questions.

There are no questions.

Chair Youngblood asks if the Commissioners have reviewed the June 15, 2021 Commission Meeting minutes and if there are any comments.

There are no comments.

Chair Youngblood asks for a motion to approve the June 15, 2021 meeting minutes.

Commissioner DiNovo moves to approve the minutes and Commissioner Francisco seconds the motion.

The motion to approve the June 15, 2021 Commission Meeting minutes is adopted by unanimous consent and Chair Youngblood states that the minutes will be posted to the Travel Oregon industry site.

CEO Review

Chair Youngblood introduces Commissioner Francisco to discuss the evaluation of the CEO of Travel Oregon's performance.

Commissioner Francisco notes that the CEO evaluation process included staff and partner surveys along with one-on-one meetings to discuss Todd's performance. Overall, Todd's performance was found to be exceptional through a challenging period. Todd's pay is being adjusted to a 10% decrease from where it was pre-pandemic.

Chair Youngblood asks if there are any questions on the evaluation process.

There are no questions.

Transformational Strategic Plan Update

Chair Youngblood introduces Todd to discuss the Transformational Strategic Plan.

Todd thanks the presenters from the Willamette Valley and commends their resilience through terrible events. He specifically states how impressed he is by their partnership outreach focusing on destination management and recovery.

Todd notes that the Rebuild Strategic Plan that the Commission approved in June was planned to have a 6-9 month shelf life and that Travel Oregon is currently undergoing planning for a Transformational Strategic Plan. Todd notes that the goal is to present this plan to the Commission and the industry in February 2022 with final adoption at the March 14 meeting during the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism. Todd introduces Staj Olson, Strategic Project Manager at Travel Oregon, and Frank Cuypers of Destination Think!

Frank presents the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation regarding the information gathering and development of the Transformational Plan. He notes that currently 50% of the work has been done and in another two weeks the plan will be 80% complete. Destination Think! has completed interviews with Travel Oregon staff, agency partners and consultants, an industry engagement session with Governor's Conference participants, an all-staff survey and analysis, and shared a destination assessment with staff. Coming in the next two weeks, Destination Think! will conduct 7 co-creation labs within each region, a Tribal focus group, an RDMO focus group, a Travel Oregon all-staff workshop, and various focus groups within the BIPOC community. Frank discusses quotes from the most recent co-creation lab in the Willamette Valley, the destination assessment findings, and long-term plans for the transformational strategy including focuses on research, project management, and destination management within Travel Oregon.

Staj shares a PowerPoint presentation discussing the Transformational Strategic Planning process. She specifically notes the intention on bringing diverse community members into this planning process and that Travel Oregon still has work to do in this space. Staj describes the integration of a racial equity lens into Travel Oregon's strategic plan. She also provides an update on the Travel Oregon DEI Taskforce made up of staff members and the stakeholder mapping recently completed. She notes the women-owned and women-of-color-owned businesses Travel Oregon is contracting with to conduct focus groups. She reminds Commissioners and viewers of the meeting to attend the regional co-creation labs that are ongoing now.

Todd thanks Staj and Frank for sharing information on this pivotal moment in Travel Oregon's journey.

Todd asks if there are any questions.

Commissioner Sugahara commends Travel Oregon for making DEI part of Travel Oregon's DNA, as it is so important to creating an equitable destination.

Commissioner Willitts notes that Frank mentioned that Europeans know about Oregon now due to the work Travel Oregon has done. He asks if Europeans see Oregon in the same way that Oregon community members do?

Frank notes that Portland is most well-known in Europe but the name Oregon is recognized. Oregon is also known as a very green state. Frank sees potential to expand knowledge of Oregon to niche markets. Oregon is well-known in the mountain biking community around the world.

Vice Chair Boyles thanks Staj for the presentation and notes how impressed he is with the research that is going into this plan. He asks Frank about the confusion staff have around the role of the Commission that he noted in his presentation.

Frank notes that due to new staff members and new industry members, there is a misconception of the Commission being more akin to a board to Travel Oregon. He believes there is room for more communication about the role of the Commission to staff and to the industry at large. He also notes younger staff and industry members wanting more transparency.

Commissioner Ponzi shares that the Willamette Valley Wineries Association is leading in the DEI space as well and wanted to ensure that Staj is aware to add them to Travel Oregon's stakeholders in this work.

Staj thanks Commissioner Ponzi and notes she will add that.

Todd calls for a break and for the meeting to resume at 10:10 am.

Reports, Updates & Discussions

Todd welcomes the group back and shares the statutory authority of the Commission, including the establishment of the strategic plan and budget. Todd notes that these Commission meetings provide key updates to Commissioners prior to seeing the final strategic plan and budget for the Commission to adopt.

Why Guides Update

Todd introduces Gabi Duarte, Global Sales Program Manager, to discuss the cross-departmental Why Guides program.

Gabi shares a PowerPoint presentation describing the background of the program, how it supports destination management principles and supports local businesses. The Why Guides program is designed to promote and market tour operators, guides, and outfitters, while providing key information on guide operators throughout the state to Travel Oregon. She shares consumer promotions through the Welcome to Oregon Again campaign, an Air Canada promotion, and travel trade and media promotions at tradeshows, like IPW 2021. Gabi notes the importance of guides in keeping travel sustainable in Oregon.

Chair Youngblood thanks Gabi for this program work and notes how incredible the coverage has been. He notes the importance of celebrating guide professionals.

Commissioner Ponzi also thanks Gabi for this work. She asks if there are any gaps in guides and experiences that Travel Oregon has in the registry?

Gabi states that Travel Oregon would love to expand this registry further, as there are only 61 guides registered. Gabi notes that Travel Oregon is also collaborating with the Oregon State Marine Board to help get additional guides added to registry.

Commissioner Sheppard states her appreciation as a guide and is pleased to see that Travel Oregon is collaborating with the Oregon State Marine Board, as there are hundreds of fishing guides alone. She asks what plans for expansion include.

Gabi notes that internally the Global Sales team and Destination Development team are collaborating on what channels to access to gain more registered guides and see how to best support them.

Vice Chair Boyles thanks Gabi for the presentation. He notes that if 61 guides touch half a million visitors a year, and as such they are a mighty force in Oregon through their own marketing. He asks how we can channel Travel Oregon's messaging through these guides.

Gabi notes that initial plans for Why Guides were grand but had to be managed due to resources. She notes that in the future she would like to see more collaboration with the registered guides and there are many opportunities over the next few years.

Vice Chair Boyles notes that this connects to Frank Cuyper's comments on aligning messaging across the industry.

Todd thanks Gabi for the update.

Advertising Update

Todd introduces Katy Clair, Director of Marketing Services, and Bryan Mullaney, Insight and Planning Manager.

Bryan shares a PowerPoint presentation on results of the Welcome to Oregon Again campaign. The campaign began on June 1, 2021 and ran through July 27, 2021 with a budget of \$1,500,000. The Welcome to Oregon Again video had 248,354 views and the web page had 303,752 views while only targeting Oregonians. Adara tracked 112,153 hotel bookings generated from the campaign. Bryan provides updates on the local sponsorships during the campaign. He shares details of the regional direct spend campaign on online travel agencies, like Kayak. Bryan notes key learnings from this campaign and how they will take these learnings into future campaigns.

Bryan introduces Katy Clair to provide a campaign update.

Katy shares a PowerPoint presentation on the Only Slightly Exaggerated (OSE) campaign. She describes how ads are impactful in inspiring visitors to take a trip to Oregon, sign up for Travel Oregon resources, and more. She describes internal Strategy 5 meetings as a cross-departmental opportunity to engage in current marketing programs. She notes that Only Slightly Exaggerated 3 will launch on October 18 and close on December 13, 2021. Primary markets include Oregon, Seattle, and San Francisco and secondary markets are Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Tri-Cities/Yakima. She notes that this is the first advertising Travel Oregon will do outside of the state in over eighteen months and she expects learnings will come out of this campaign. Katy shares a marketing plan for spring 2022 in collaboration with Oregon22. Additionally, Katy shares a snapshot into campaign planning for Extraordinary is Ordinary, which will combine animation and live action. This is an evolution from OSE instead of a departure.

Todd thanks Katy and Bryan and asks if there are any questions.

Commissioner Willitts notes his excitement for the evolution of the Only Slightly Exaggerated campaign to show how truly beautiful Oregon is.

Commissioner Sugahara notes that he will miss seeing the creative and hearing the results from Travel Oregon's marketing campaigns when he departs the Commission. He asks Bryan what demographics Travel Oregon is seeing engaged on Tik Tok.

Bryan notes that Katy is more of an expert on Tik Tok and consents to her. Katy notes that it is very important for Travel Oregon to diversify the platforms we use. Tik Tok targets the 18-34 age demographic, which Travel Oregon hopes to continue expanding. She suggests it is important for brand building as it targets a younger audience.

2021/22 Key KPI Results Review

Todd notes that Bryan will stay onscreen for the next presentation on KPIs and introduces Dr. Ladan Ghahramani, Research Analyst for Travel Oregon.

Bryan shares marketing KPIs for the 2020/2021 fiscal year and notes that the KPIs for this fiscal year will be shared with the Commission after this meeting. He shares Travel Oregon's DEI KPIs and how the development of these was done with Travel Oregon's DEI Taskforce and DEI consultants. Travel Oregon is using OSE 3 and the Welcome to Oregon Again campaign as trials for using these KPIs.

Ladan shares a PowerPoint presentation on KPIs for the Rebuild Strategic Plan including socio-economic recovery of the tourism industry, resident sentiment of tourism in Oregon, and visitor sentiment.

Todd asks the Commission if there are any questions.

Chair Youngblood asks Ladan about the visitor sentiment satisfaction score and net promoter score and asks if they use the same data to gather two different scores.

Ladan notes that they are collected via the same survey but are gathered from separate questions. The net promoter score comes from a question like, "how likely are you to recommend Oregon on a scale of 1-10". Visitor sentiment comes from additional questions on satisfaction.

Commissioner DiNovo asks whether 4000 resident survey samples a year is a large enough sample size to make conclusions.

Ladan notes that it is very difficult to acquire samples due to cost and availability of participants. 1000 per quarter and 4000 a year is a sufficient sample size for this metric. She notes that 3500 is what would be needed to provide statistically sufficient results, but again notes the difficulty in gathering responses.

Todd thanks Ladan and Bryan again for their presentation.

Tribal Tourism Workgroup Update

Todd introduces Lisa Itel, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Harry Dalgaard, Director of RCTP, and Michelle Liberty from Attitude Marketing.

Lisa shares a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Tribal tourism work currently happening. She notes the nine tribes of Oregon and their importance to Oregon and Travel Oregon. She provides a history of Travel Oregon's work with Oregon's Tribes, including the Oregon Guide to Indian Country, and current efforts to connect and collaborate. She notes the reestablishment of the Tribal Tourism Workgroup and Michelle Liberty's role as a consultant in this work. Michelle Liberty shares the work of the Tribal Tourism Committee and their goal of inclusivity. Harry shares outcomes of these collaborations between Travel Oregon, RDMOs, and the Tribal Tourism Workgroup including a place name project the Oregon Coast Visitors Association is undertaking with Coastal Tribes and a Spring Creek restoration project with Travel Southern Oregon and Klamath Tribes. Michelle shares that Travel Oregon and the Tribal Tourism Workgroup will share relevant education and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Todd thanks Lisa, Harry, and Michelle and asks if there are any questions.

Commissioner DiNovo states her gratitude for this work and how much it means to her personally to move this partnership and work forward.

RCTP Investment Update

Todd notes that Harry will remain on-screen and be joined by Kate Sappell, Project Manager for RCTP, to share an update on RCTP investments.

Harry shares that the last fiscal year final report of procedural review with will be shared with the Commission after RCTP partners have the chance to review the Aldridge Financial report. Kate shares a PowerPoint presentation highlighting investment programs from the 2019-2021 biennium. This has been shared via a web report in previous years. Kate notes that over the biennium, Travel Oregon saw over 300 investments from the RDMOs and this report is only a snapshot of these investments. This report was developed with Duende, a contractor of Travel Oregon. Kate shares a video update from Bob Hackett, Executive Director at Travel Southern Oregon, on the Dark Sky Network investment to create Dark Sky places in Lake County and elsewhere. She shares a video highlighting RCTP investments in all seven regions.

Todd thanks Kate, Harry, and the RDMO partners for these presentations and their work on the ground. He asks if there are any questions for Harry and Kate.

There are no questions.

Willamette River Recreation Studio Update

Todd introduces Alexa Carey, Travel Oregon's Community Based Services Director.

Alexa presents a PowerPoint update on the Willamette River Recreation Studio which leveraged the Oregon Tourism Studio program and a Destination Ready investment. Alexa shares a video from communities that received Destination Ready investments describing the hardships of 2020 and the Destination Ready investments supported recovery efforts in their specific communities.

Todd thanks Alexa and Katie for their presentation and asks if there are any questions.

There are no questions.

Closing Remarks

Chari Youngblood thanks all of the presenters at today's meeting and apologizes for being a few minutes past noon. He notes that the next executive appointments to the Oregon Tourism Commission will likely be in November and this is the last public moment he has to thank Commissioners Sugahara and Francisco for their tenures on the Commission. He invites both to speak if they would like.

Commissioner Francisco states that he is honored to be associated with Travel Oregon for their incredible work to move the state forward. His most memorable experiences were visiting communities and seeing the work Travel Oregon and partners had done, like visiting grant recipients. He states his thankfulness to Todd, his fellow Commissioners, and the Travel Oregon staff.

Commissioner Sugahara notes that it has been amazing to see Travel Oregon's evolution over his seven years of service. He states that he has visited every region of the state and is honored to work for the organization and such a tremendous staff and partners. He notes his viewpoint on tourism has shifted through this process and he now sees how vital it is to the economy. He notes the hard work that is being done overseas to promote Oregon and through partners like Wieden & Kennedy. He will miss interfacing with his fellow Commissioners and thanks everyone for the fulfilling experience.

Chair Youngblood thanks both Commissioners for their impact and their service. He opens the floor for parting thoughts or comments.

There are no comments.

The next Commission meeting will be held on February 15, 2022.

Chair Youngblood adjourns the meeting at 12:22 pm.