

Tourism Drives Economic Growth Across Oregon

MT. HOOD
& THE GORGE



Modoc Stories

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. As of June 2020, the tax is now 1.5%, with statute dedicating 30% of the state lodging tax to regional tourism organizations and grant programs across Oregon. This industry investment has delivered results. An increase in visitors has equated to increased resources for regional programs that support jobs, culture, infrastructure and public services.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR MT. HOOD AND THE GORGE

	2003	2022	Avg. Annual Change
Direct Employment	3,590	5,710	2.50%
Employee Earnings	\$61.2 million	\$185.5 million	6.00%
Visitor Spending	\$219.9 million	\$488.4 million	4.30%
State & Local Taxes Generated	\$7.7 million	\$26.6 million	6.70%

TOURISM BOLSTERS OUR COMMUNITIES

Distinct from the statewide tax created in 2003, more than 120 cities and counties across Oregon collect a local transient lodging tax to expend on local programming. A statewide 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%

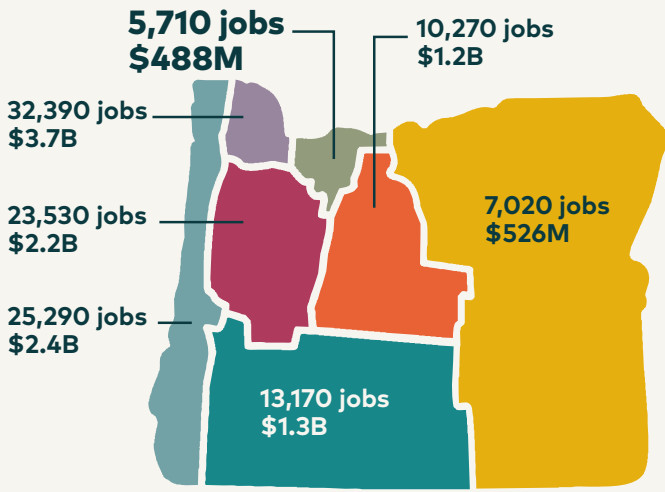
These dollars, especially those expended in the tourism facilities and promotion and marketing programs, can be leveraged against the regional destination management organization and state tourism investments.

\$1 SPENT ON STATE MARKETING = \$157 IN VISITOR SPENDING

TOURISM CREATES CAREERS

- The tourism and hospitality industry is Oregon's largest traded sector employer and a leading contributor to our gross state product. In 2022, travel spending directly generated 5,707 jobs in Mt. Hood and the Gorge.
- Tourism jobs are often small business jobs connected to the communities they serve across Oregon. Nationally, the travel and tourism industry is the #1 small business employer.
- Tourism jobs can provide a training ground for Oregon's future workforce, enhancing skills like communication and problem solving. Workers who had their first job in the travel industry achieve higher salaries than most other industries.





\$12.2 BILLION IN VISITOR SPENDING AND 117,400 JOBS ACROSS OREGON

TOURISM BENEFITS MT. HOOD AND THE GORGE

- Mt. Hood and Gorge area transient lodging tax revenues accounted for \$1.8 million in 2022 state taxes, with millions more being generated at the local and county level.
- In 2022, visitor spend in Mt. Hood and the Gorge was \$488 million, a 15% increase from \$423 million over 2021.
- Through consistent investments by the tourism industry, efforts are being made to uplift all Mt. Hood and Gorge communities by addressing seasonality through encouraging year-round visitation while supporting rural tourism development through visitor dispersion.

TOURISM INVESTS MT. HOOD AND THE GORGE

In accordance with statute, Travel Oregon makes 10% of its budget available for a statewide competitive grants program. These grants invest in tourism facilities and tourism promotion around the state. Grant dollars have been awarded to communities across the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region:

- The 2023 competitive grants program focused on awarding projects that increased accessibility and inclusivity. Highlights include supporting the City of Troutdale in undertaking a parking management and shuttle feasibility study, and the expansion of Friends of the Columbia Gorge's "Find a Hike" website through Spanish translation.
- The 2021 Travel Oregon grants program centered on

supporting communities in recovery from the pandemic. Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge awards included funds to ensure that boat rentals at Trillium Lake could operate safely and to create enhanced water access along the Hood River waterfront.

- Local destinations have also utilized their own dollars to activate grant making in the region. In early 2024, Mt. Hood and the Gorge will make funds available to local organizations for strategic investment in mission aligned projects.

Through Travel Oregon's Regional Cooperative Tourism Program, the Mt. Hood and Gorge region received \$1.09 million over the last two biennium. The funding was programmed to support projects like:

- The creation of a new, high-quality, visitor facing map, providing an updated tool that frontline staff could reference when talking to visitors and help shift visitation away from high use areas in the region to disperse visitation, maximizing economic impacts throughout the region.
- Supporting Estacada and its neighboring communities in the response to and recovery from the 2020 fires, developing new messaging that reminded visitors of closures and responsible recreation practices while encouraging visitation to the open communities working to recover from the economic devastation of the wildfires.



Oregon Adaptive Sports / Patrick Addabbo



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We inspire travel that uplifts Oregon communities. Collaborating with stakeholders to align as stewards of Oregon, we work to optimize economic opportunity, advance equity and respect the ecosystems, cultures and places that make Oregon ... Oregon. Learn more at industry.traveloregon.com



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