

Tourism Drives Economic Growth Across Oregon

WILLAMETTE VALLEY

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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 THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

	2003	2022	Avg. Annual Change
Direct Employment	16,420	23,530	1.90%
Employee Earnings	\$271.7 million	\$705.3 million	5.10%
Visitor Spending	\$1 billion	\$2.2 billion	4.30%
State & Local Taxes Generated	\$38.7 million	\$104.7 million	5.40%

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%

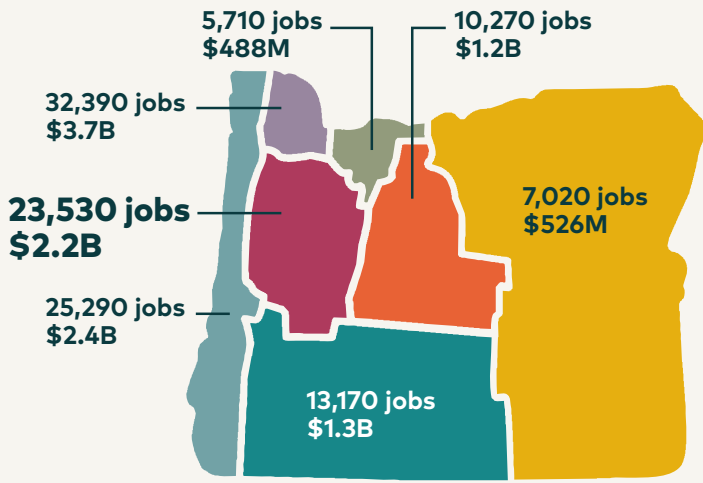
These dollars, especially those expended in the tourism facilities and promotion and marketing programs, can be leveraged against the regional destination management organization and state tourism investments.

\$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 23,500 jobs in the Willamette Valley.
- 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 THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

- Willamette Valley transient lodging tax revenues accounted for \$5.5 million of 2022 state taxes, with millions more being generated at the local and county level.
- In 2022, visitor spend in the Willamette Valley was \$2.2 billion, a 17% increase from \$1.9 billion over 2021.
- Through the tourism industry's consistent investments, efforts are being made to uplift all Willamette Valley communities by addressing seasonality through encouraging year-round visitation while also supporting rural tourism development through visitor dispersion.

TOURISM INVESTS IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

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 Willamette Valley:

- The 2023 competitive grants program focused on awarding projects that increased accessibility and inclusivity. Willamette Valley highlights include supporting the Oregon Garden in becoming more wheelchair accessible, and the expansion of Lane Arts Council's First Friday ArtWalk—centered on supporting BIPOC and LGBTQIA artists.
- The 2021 Travel Oregon grants program centered on supporting communities in recovery from the pandemic. Willamette Valley awards include funds to ensure that

the Corvallis Fall Festival could operate safely and to create enhanced covered and heated dining spaces outdoor dining spaces in Downtown McMinnville.

- Local destinations have also utilized their own funds to activate grant making in the region. In 2021, the Willamette Valley Visitors Association made \$78,000 available to local organizations for projects that supported driving shoulder season visitation, enhanced destination stewardship, or provided industry development opportunities. Funded projects include wayfinding for the Corvallis to Sea Trail and support for renovations at the Albany Historic Carousel and Museum.

Through Travel Oregon's Regional Cooperative Tourism Program, the Willamette Valley region received \$2.8 million over the last two biennium (2019-2023). The funding was programmed to support projects like:

- The management of the Willamette River Water Trail Project and Steering Committee, which executed a large-scale destination management plan in response to increased recreation along the Willamette River. This included the funding of porta-potties and trash clean up, a robust water safety campaign including the distribution of 800 free lifejacket via five kiosks built along the river.
- Rebranding from Oregon Wine Country to the Willamette Valley Visitors Association, including launching a new website. This new brand allows for a more holistic identity across the region and better alignment with partners in the outdoor recreation, agriculture, culinary, and wine spaces



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



Learn more at willamettevalley.org/about-us