

Oregon Tourism Commission Briefing September 12, 2023

Wildhorse Resort & Casino
Broadcasted via YouTube Live

Tourism Commissioners present included: Chair DiNovo, and Commissioners Richard Boyles, David Penilton, Maria Ponzi, Mia Sheppard, Erin Stephenson, and Scott Youngblood.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair DiNovo opens the briefing at 2:00 p.m. and welcomes everyone to the September 12, 2023, Oregon Tourism Commission meeting.

Chair DiNovo thanks everyone that has joined us today in Pendleton, and to those joining through Travel Oregon's Industry YouTube channel.

Chair DiNovo acknowledges that in holding a meeting today, all Public Meeting notice requirements were met and states that today's meeting materials, including the agenda and supplemental material can be found on the Travel Oregon Industry website.

The Oregon Tourism Commissioners and Todd Davidson, CEO of Travel Oregon, introduce themselves.

Todd states that as our speakers come forward, he's excited for the opportunity we have today to hear about the work of the Tribal Tourism Committee. This panel, made up of both staff and external partners, shows the collaborative nature of how we truly see our work moving forward with our 10-Year Vision.

Tribal Tourism Committee Update

Lisa Itel, Director Industry Relations provides the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation regarding Oregon's 9 federally recognized tribes and that Tribal Tourism work. Lisa introduces Michelle Liberty, Attitude Marketing, Travel Oregon's Tribal Tourism contractor and they share about the Tribal Tourism work including:

- The history of the Tribal Tourism work group
- Michelle's role working with the Tribes and Tribal enterprises
- Participants of current Tribal Tourism Leadership Committee
- Guide to Indian Country creation and reprint plan of 100k
- Recent Mercury Award from U.S. Travel Association for best printed collateral
- Review of AIANTA conference '22 and '23

- Twice yearly meetings of the Tribal Tourism Leadership Committee

Lisa welcomes Travis Hill, Chief Operating Officer, Umpqua Indian Development Corporation and committee member. Travis provides some background on the kinds of businesses that the Cow Creek currently run.

Travis discusses some new enterprises that they are working on including: newly acquired property in Sisters, Oregon as well as adding some EV chargers at the Seven Feathers Resort.

Lisa welcomes Starla Green, Warm Springs Community Action Team and committee member to provide the Commission with some background information on the Warm Springs Tribe and the work the Action Team is doing to revitalize Kah-Ne-Tah, as well as current happenings for the Commissary Project. New expected opening date of Kah-Ne-Tah is June of 2024 and states that it will now include mineral spring pools, a lazy river and a sports pool, new sports bar and restaurant, all 30 rooms of hotel have been revamped, new teepee area, and outside food carts. Discusses new uses of river recreation area.

Lisa welcomes Roberta (Bobbie) Conner, Director of Tamastlikt Cultural Institute and committee member provides an update on all the efforts the tribe is working on. Bobbie states that with the partnerships of Travel Oregon attending international trade shows, she has seen a huge increase in international travelers coming to Tamastlikt Cultural Institute. She states that the Guide to Indian Country provides a great menu of opportunities for travelers to not only visit tribal lands, but all that Oregon has to offer. She iterates what the partnership of the tribes to Travel Oregon is – authentic and place based, providing a uniqueness of Oregon to the tribes for international travelers, showcasing the traditions of the people. And with the Tribal Tourism Leadership Committee – there are now tribal leaders coming together to promote the state together. She states that Oregon was the only state at the AIANTA conference that had their tourism agency along with tribal representatives attending together. She states that working together makes the work so much more enjoyable and that she's proud of this partnership.

Lisa continues with PowerPoint sharing what's next for the Tribal Tourism Leadership Committee.

Todd states that Bobbie has been patient and sometimes appropriately impatient with him for the work they are doing together. He states how grateful he is for the partnership and the work for this committee. Todd states that at their bi-annual meeting last February, someone asked why Travel Oregon was doing this work with the

tribes. Todd states that he responded by stating that no one has asked us to do the work – we are going it because it is the right thing to do.

Commissioner Penilton thanks the panel for presenting today. David states that there have been many sacrifices and that jobs and economic impact really show how well we are doing the work together. David states he's excited to hear updates, especially about progress on Warm Springs – Kah-Ne-Tah efforts.

Todd states that he's been learning how much entertainment, leisure and gaming are important to the tribes.

Commissioner Ponzi states that it is so important to tell the story of the tribes and that having more cultural centers to share the story of the tribes is so important.

Chair DiNovo thanks Lisa and states that not all tribes have a casino but by driving people to the casino helps support services to the tribes.

Chair DiNovo congratulates the Travel Oregon team and the nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon for receiving the ESTO award. Stating that this guide, the first project of the Tribal Tourism Leadership Committee, is what my late husband, Chief Don Ivy would call "the good work". Doing the hard work for no other reason than being the absolute right thing to do.

Chair DiNovo states that she's seen first-hand how Travel Oregon embraced the work with the formation of this committee in 2019 and the thoughtful intention to foster and build relationships with representatives of the tribes. My sincere thanks to tribal member, Michelle Liberty of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation for helping forge and deepen these relationships.

It's so rewarding to be recognized at a national level for this publication, what's even more rewarding is all nine tribes participated in this guide and entrusted Travel Oregon to share their stories and showcase their tribal tourism assets.

Chair DiNovo thanks Lisa, Mo, Jen, Harry, Kevin, Katy, Mark, Michael, Staj, Matthew, Teresa, Michelle, Travis, Todd, Megan and the MediAmerica Team, along with the members of the Tribal Tourism workgroup and most importantly the nine tribes of Oregon

Chair DiNovo also congratulates Travis Hill on his recent nomination by Governor Tina Kotek to serve on the Oregon Tourism Commission – replacing Commissioner Mia Sheppard whose term is expiring. That confirmation hearing and subsequent Senate

approval will take place later this month – and she states that she's beyond thrilled to officially welcome Travis to the Commission in December.

Executive Session Explanation

Chair DiNovo states that over the course of the past year, that she and immediate Past Chair Boyles looked for ways to make the CEO evaluation process more efficient. Past practice was to select a review committee, and each commissioner was tasked with completing a 360 review. Members of the review committee were assigned to conduct three, one on one interviews with commissioners and the review committee met with the CEO to conduct performance evaluation.

Going forward we have changed this practice, eliminating the one on one interviews. Instead, the Commission is choosing to go into Executive session for the purposes of conducting the CEO's performance evaluation. We believe this is a more efficient process and allows the commission to meet as full body with the CEO.

With that said, we will meet pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2) (d) for the purpose of reviewing and evaluating the employment-related performance of the chief executive officer of any public body, a public officer, employee or staff member who does not request an open hearing.

Since no decisions may be made in Executive Session, once we have completed our discussion we will adjourn. Any outcomes will be stated during tomorrow's Commission Meeting.

Representatives of the news media and designated staff shall be allowed to attend the executive session. All other members of the audience are asked to leave the room.

Before we take a 10-minute recess, prior to the Executive Session, let me state that I look forward to seeing our friends and partners throughout the next several days as we get the opportunity to enjoy all that Pendleton has to offer during the Round-Up!

Chair DiNovo thanks everyone for the input and time today and recesses the meeting at 3:05 p.m.