

Travel **SALEM**

ABSOLUTELY OREGON

2014-2015

Annual Report

Promoting Salem & the Mid-Willamette Valley





181 High St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301
503-581-4325/800-874-7012 Fax 503-581-4540
www.TravelSalem.com
information@TravelSalem.com

EXECUTIVE & ADMINISTRATION

Angie Morris President & CEO
Kristine Lindholm Administrative Assistant

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Irene Bernards Exec. VP & Marketing
& PR Director
Kara Kuh PR Manager
Dee Hendrix Marketing & Online
Manager
Lourdes Gomez Destination Development
Manager
Barb Cowan Guest Services Manager
Barby Dressler Weekend Travel Café Hosts
Andrew Toney

CONVENTION & EVENT MARKETING

Debbie McCune VP & Director of Sales
Brian Chung Sports & Events Sales
Manager
Tara Preston Service & Events Manager

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Sue Nichols Community
Development Director

2014-15 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Chair **Steve Johnson**
VIPs Industries
Vice Chair **Jim Rasmussen**
Modern Building Systems
Past Chair **Austin McGuigan**
*Polk County Community
Development*
Secretary **Toby Olsen**
Hampton Inn & Suites
Treasurer **Dwane Brenneman**
Retired, Nissan North America

DIRECTORS

Jason Brandt *Salem Area Chamber of Commerce*
Jake Bryant *BEST WESTERN PLUS
Mill Creek Inn*
Sam Brentano *Commissioner, Marion County*
Gus Castaneda *Red Lion Hotel*
Cori Frauendiener *MaPS Credit Union*
Tim Hay *WSPA-NASPO*
Ivy Hover *Left Coast Cellars*
Terry Kelly *Salem Electric*
Steve McCoid *Oregon Restaurant &
Lodging Association*
Bunni Oslund-Fisk *Lancaster Mall*
Anna M. Peterson *Mayor, City of Salem*
Selma Moon Pierce *DDS*
Mark Shipman *Saalfeld Griggs PC*
Ross Sutherland *Bush House Museum*
T.J. Sullivan *Huggins Insurance*
John Wales *City of Salem Urban
Development*

Cover photo courtesy of Susan Seubert

CONTENTS

- 3 Message from the Chair & CEO
- 4 Key Performance Measurements
- 6 Community Relations & Engagement
- 7 Capacity Building
- 8 Marketing & Communications
- 12 Destination Development
- 13 Convention Sales
- 14 Sports & Events Sales
- 15 Services
- 16 Financial Reports

MISSION

Travel Salem **markets and promotes** the greater Salem area as a premier, year-round destination for conventions, events and leisure travelers. Travel Salem serves as the official destination marketing organization and a vital tourism economic development generator for the region.

VISION

Through **bold innovation and integrated partnerships**, Travel Salem's award-winning programs and services heighten the visitor experience and drive economic impact, which supports local businesses, job creation and an enhanced quality of life.

VALUES

We are committed to **service, integrity and excellence** that provide tangible results and strengthen the businesses and communities we serve.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & CEO

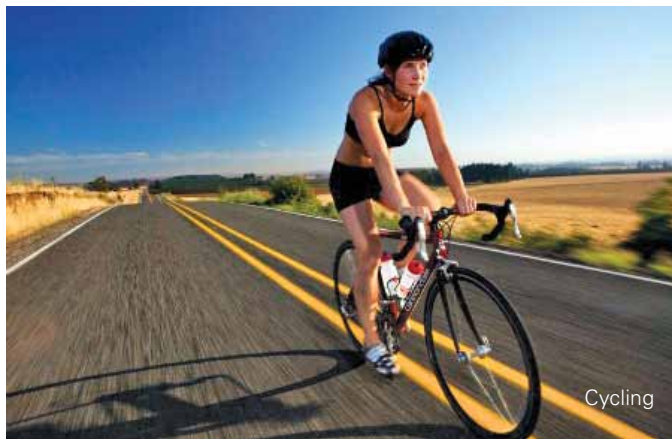
2014-2015 ONE OF THE BEST YEARS ON RECORD

The region's visitor industry reached new heights during 14-15 with Travel Salem expanding its scope of service by adding two new programs – Sports Marketing and Destination Development. These new programs increased Travel Salem's bandwidth and connected with our existing cornerstone programs of Marketing & Communications, Convention Sales and Membership, making 2014-15 an extremely productive and rewarding year.

The Mid-Willamette Valley visitor industry set new records in two of the three key performance indicators (KPIs)! The 14-15 **estimated economic impact** (EEI) trends **increased 2% to \$548.4 million**, the largest EEI on record in the history of the region. The **transient occupancy tax** (TOT) also broke a record reaching **\$3.13 million, a 14.4% increase** over the previous year. Occupancy was up 19% to roughly 466,000 room nights sold with average daily rates cresting \$83. Hotel partners noted that 14-15 was **one of the best years on record**.

The third key performance measurement, **leverage**, decreased 5% to \$1,972,138 million for the year. The decrease stems from less television exposure during the year. Leverage continues to be a vital component to the health of Travel Salem and demonstrates the organizations ability to establish and nurture regional, statewide and national partnerships that deliver bottom-line results to tourism promotion initiatives.

As Travel Salem moves into its 32nd year of promoting Salem and the Mid-Willamette Valley we would like to **thank our funding partners (The City of Salem, Marion County, Polk County and membership)** for their steadfast support, commitment to and recognition of tourism as an economic generator and job creator. Their vision, collaboration and involvement ensure the region's tourism industry will continue its upward momentum.



Kelly James



Steve Johnson

Steve Johnson
Chair



Angie Morris

Angie Morris
President & CEO

“What a wonderful publication your printed travel guide is!! Several weeks ago I ordered a hard copy of your Salem Visitors Guide. I found it to be colorfully enticing, easy to negotiate, and full of information pertinent to my trip planning needs. I give your publication design team a 10 out of 10.”

– **Merle M. Moore**
Estes Park, Colorado

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

Travel Salem's programs and services are designed to deliver tangible results for the communities and businesses we serve.

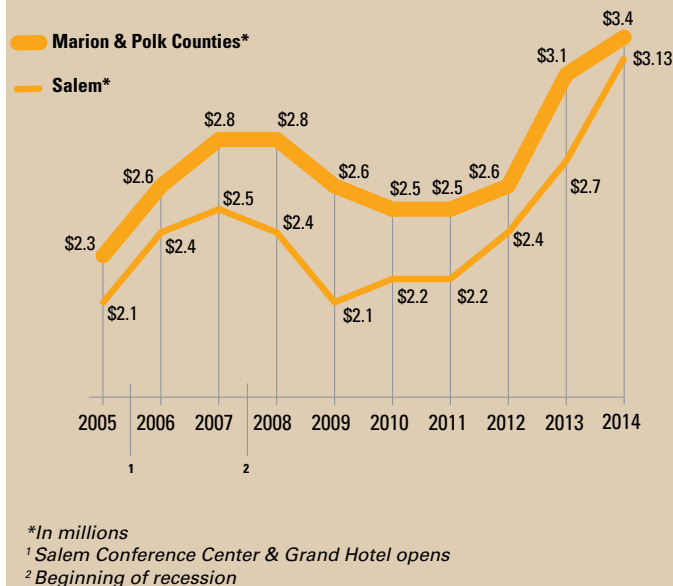
There are several key performance indicators that can provide a sense of the overall economic health of the Salem area tourism industry.

When evaluating progress, these indicators must be considered alongside other measurements such as financial resources and membership support. Add into the mix environmental influences and other economic trends to gain better insight into the health of the industry.

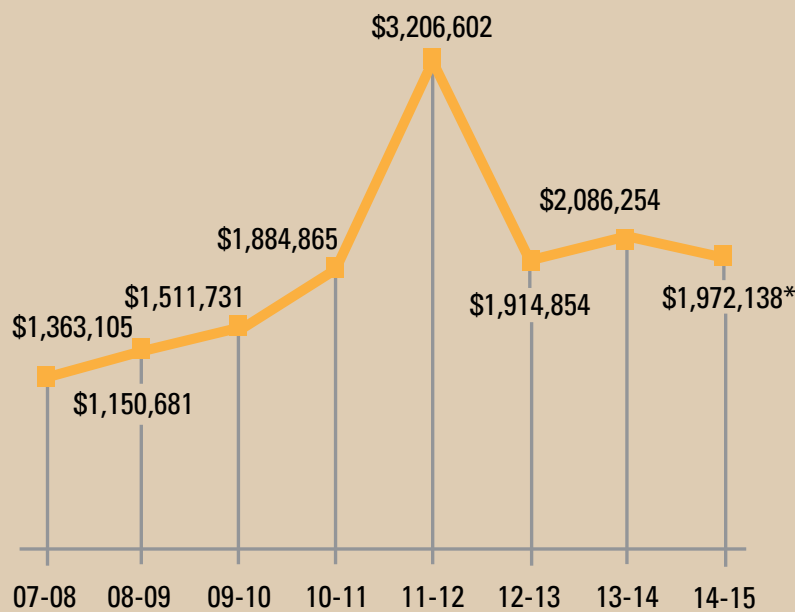
Specific tourism-based activities also provide context for evaluating the big picture, and can reveal trends and key market factors that influence how the organization makes adjustments in program initiatives.

Travel Salem is not the sole contributor or driver to the region's tourism economic outcomes. However, the organization takes a leadership role in tourism promotion to help shape industry results.

TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX (TOT)



LEVERAGE TRENDS



*Leverage down due to less TV media exposure

2014-15 LEVERAGE

Media	\$1,047,244
In-Kind (including VIN)	611,395
WVVA / Regional	185,570
Visitors Guide	82,923
Advertising	41,794
Volunteers	3,212
TOTAL	\$1,972,138

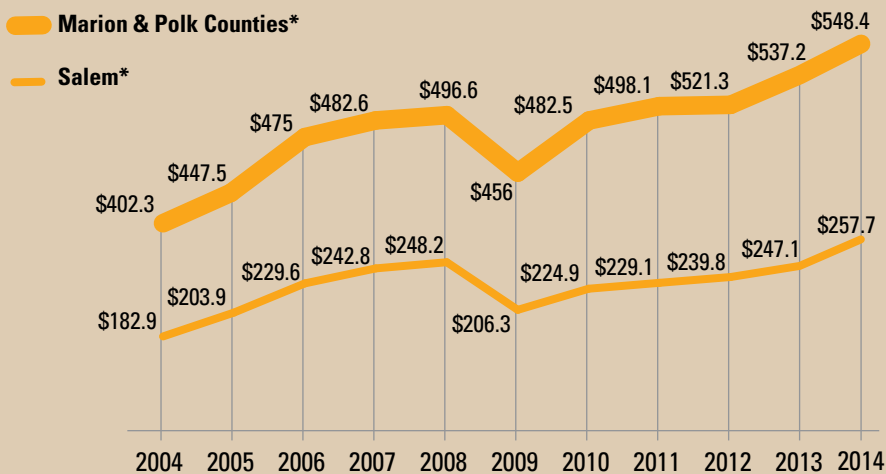
2014 ESTIMATED TRAVEL IMPACTS

MARION & POLK COUNTIES

Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	\$2 million
Food & Beverage	126.4 million
Accommodations	65.9 million
Retail Sales	57.3 million
Food Stores	52.9 million
Local Transportation & Gas	48.2 million
Other Travel	69.1 million
Direct Travel Spending Total	\$548.4 million
Direct Earnings	\$134.3 million
Jobs	6,490

ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT

Since 2010, direct travel spending in Marion & Polk counties grew \$18.5 million on average each year.

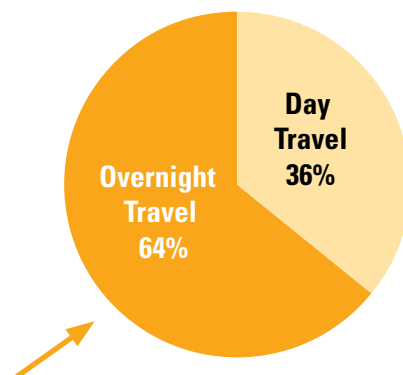


*In millions

*Source: *Economic Impacts of Travel, 1991-2014, Salem, Oregon*, Dean Runyan Associates, www.deanrunyan.com

“Thank you so much for the opportunity to be on the radio program to talk about Brooks Gardens...I also had a photographer stop by to take photos for next week's Woodburn Independent newspaper. Thanks again for the super job you are doing; it is tremendously helpful in promoting our area business.”

— **Therese Sprauer**
Brooks Gardens Peonies



MARION COUNTY VISITOR STATS

Visitors made roughly 1.89 million trips to Marion County in 2014-15.

On average, there were 2.7 people per travel party.

They spent \$181 per day.

And stayed 2.7 nights.



Kelly James

COMMUNITY RELATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Create broader understanding of tourism as an economic development generator utilizing the key performance measurements (EEL, TOT, Leverage). Create partnerships & resources to influence community dialogue and decision-making that impacts tourism, quality of life and the Salem area's viability as a travel destination. Support local businesses by providing opportunities and solutions to open doors, address challenges and harness best practices.

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS AWARDS

The 5th annual **Absolutely Fabulous Awards** event was hosted by the Salem Convention Center with a keynote on "Salem Underground" presented by historian, John Ritter.

2014-15 AWARD WINNERS

Absolutely Cultivating Success

The Oregon Garden

Absolutely 5-Star

Hampton Inn & Suites

Absolutely Scoring

Capital Cup Soccer

Absolutely Hopping

AleWays Brewery Tours

Absolutely Crème de la Crème

Wild Pear Restaurant

Absolutely Activated

Shawn Irvine, City of Independence

Absolutely Above the Fold

MEDIAmerica

Absolutely Fabulous

Willamette Valley Vineyards



OUTREACH

- Participated in the City Manager's Salem Downtown Committee; Salem All-Star Heritage community committee; Polk County Rural Tourism Studio; Polk County Tourism Marketing Committee & Agritourism committee; Downtown Salem 365 committee; Capitol History Gateway Project; Willamette Water Trail; Eola-Amity AVA; Lord & Schryver Conservancy; and the Santiam River Canyon Tourism Committee.

- **Salem Up Front** The event educated front desk staff about area attractions and events, while recognizing them as the "friendly face" of Salem.

- Held a **"Speed Networking"** event to connect business professionals and encourage collaborative opportunities.



Salem Art Festival

Develop long-term stable funding, strategic staffing levels, and the technology and tools necessary for organizational growth.



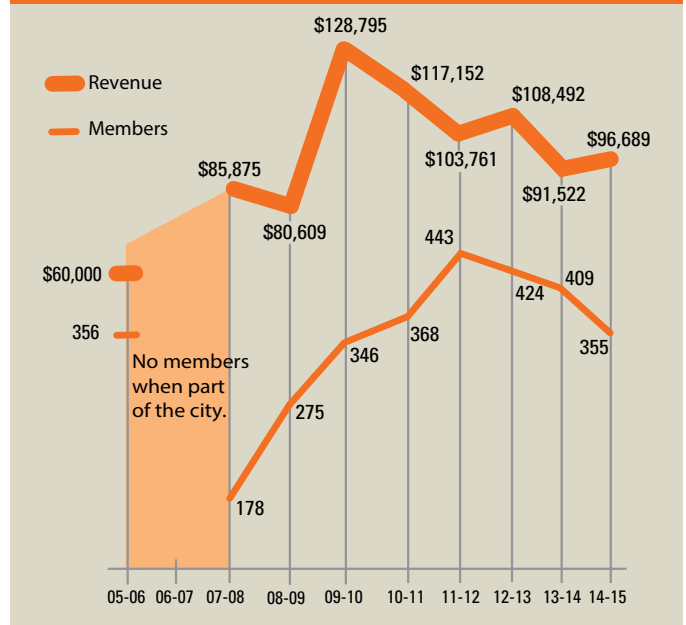
WINE COUNTRY PLATE

Plate sales reached 20,880 by the end of June 2015. The Wine Country Plate is the second-fastest selling specialty plate in Oregon history. Travel Salem signed an MOU with the Willamette Valley Visitors Association to serve as the regional destination marketing organization for the Mid-Willamette Valley region (Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties).

2014-15 LEVERAGE REACHED \$1,972,138

Earned media and the Visitor Information Network (VIN) accounted for 82% of the overall leverage. The Willamette Valley Visitors Association's partnership remained the same as did Visitors Guide advertising sales. The 5% decrease in leverage was due to less television coverage.

MEMBERSHIP TRENDS



MEMBERSHIP

Developed and launched newly **restructured membership dues** in January 2015, which resulted in an **8% revenue increase** for the year compared to the previous year. Also contributing to the increase was the continued trend of more members adding additional marketing options throughout the year.

Membership Stats

- **\$96,689 revenue** (8% increase)
- **355 members** is an overall 13% decrease from 13-14 due to a higher attrition rate, with 21 companies going out of business, sold or relocating. Other businesses considered "non-traditional" tourism businesses did not renew (business goals did not fit marketing options).
- **33 new members** (41% decrease due to only one dedicated sales staff instead of two, and limited administrative support).



Ron Cooper

Cristom Vineyards

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

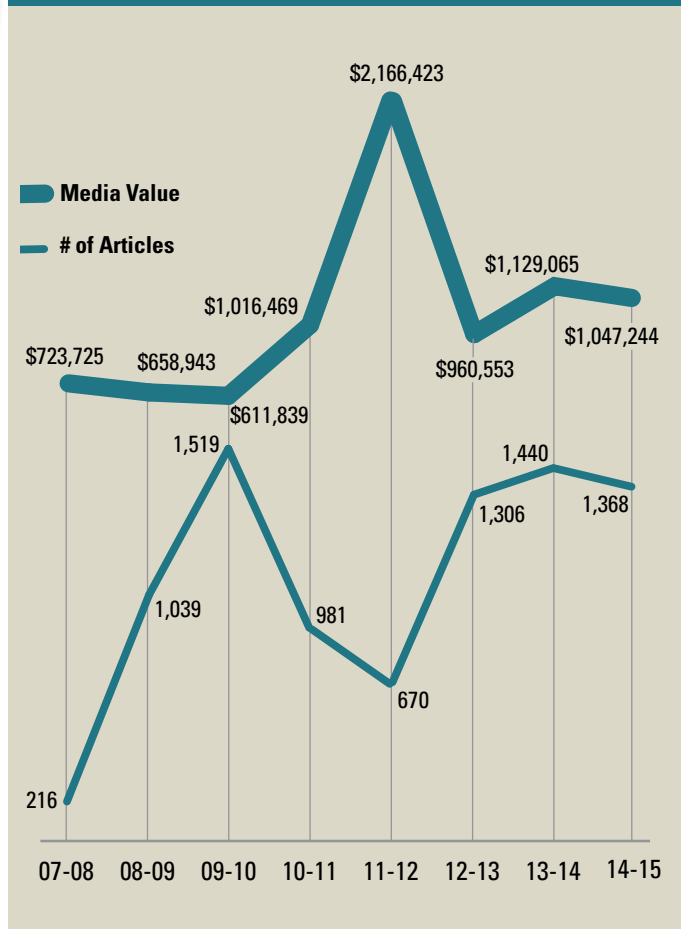
Position the region as a desirable travel destination for convention & leisure travelers utilizing vertically integrated marketing & communication strategies. Leverage the regional travel experience by connecting visitors to the unique people, products, and stories that will lengthen the visitor's stay. Drive Travel Salem's key performance measurements.

MEDIA COVERAGE

- Secured **\$1 million in earned media** generated from aggressive media pitches and hosting travel writers to the area.
- Media coverage from: ABC News.com, Associated Press, 1859 Oregon's Magazine, Canada.com, VIA, KGW-TV Grants Getaways, OregonLive.com, KOIN-TV Go! Northwest, Oregon Beer Growler, Willamette Living, Yahoo! Travel, NW Tripfinder.com, Take Root Magazine, Portland Monthly, Travel Oregon, Northwest Travel, Oregon Wine Press, Seattle Kitchen, Oregon Business, the Bend Bulletin and more.



MEDIA VALUE & ARTICLES



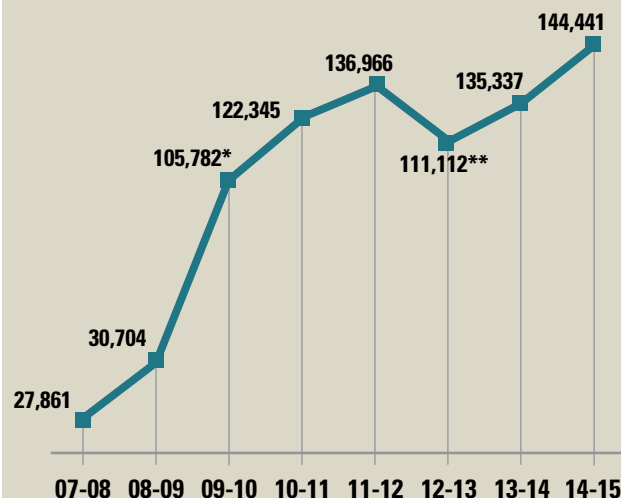
VISITOR OUTREACH & INQUIRY FULFILLMENT

- **The Travel Café & Visitor Information Network*** served 144,441 visitors in 2014-15 an **increase of 7%** over the previous year.
- Travel Salem received **35,054 consumer inquiries** through advertising, mail, phone and online. Each response was customized according to the request.
- Provided support to **518 relocation inquiries** from businesses, families and individuals seeking assistance with resources & connections – an **increase of 44%**.
- Travel Salem's AbsolutelyTix outlet in the Travel Café **sold 1,039 tickets for 23 regional cultural heritage partners**.
- Responded to leads interested in visitor information that were generated by the following organizations:
 - **National Tour Association (NTA):** Motorcoach operators
 - **International Tradeshow Berlin (ITB):** International travel trade (tour operators, travel agents, etc.)
 - **GoWest / ITM:** International tour operators
 - **Japanese Association of Travel Agents (JATA)**
 - **IPW tradeshow:** The travel industry's premier international marketplace and the largest generator of travel to the U.S.

*The network includes: Travel Café, BEST WESTERN PLUS Mill Creek Inn, Red Lion Hotel, Phoenix Inn South, Willamette Heritage Center, Salem Convention Center, Lancaster Mall, Amtrak, Salem AAA and Salem Airport.



VISITOR INFORMATION NETWORK



*Launched satellite visitor information locations

**Limited Visitor Center hours

“Travel Salem information signs took us to your excellent service where we were offered a cold drink of water and a comfortable chair and guidance. Salem's hospitality was welcoming and refreshing. As we say in Canada, “merci beaucoup!”

– Elaine and Laurent Isabelle

VISITOR RESOURCES

- Published the 15-16 Salem Area Visitors Guide with \$82,923 in private funding secured to produce the guide.
- Interactive Online Map
 - **The map (IOM)** highlights points of interest throughout Polk and Marion Counties. The IOM focuses on the following niche areas: Cultural Heritage, Wineries & Vineyards, Specialty Food & Beverage, Recreation, Farms & Markets, Gardens and Birding & Nature
 - The map contains a total of **86 points of interest**.

EVENT PROMOTION

- Marketed & promoted **3,560 Salem area events** (74% increase). An average of 296 events were promoted every month.



Willamette Valley

OREGON WINE COUNTRY

WILLAMETTE VALLEY VISITORS ASSOCIATION PARTNERSHIP







- Placed a Willamette Valley ad in **Alaska Airlines in-flight magazine**; circulation 1.1 million – Promoting the “Wines Fly Free”
- Participated in **FEAST Oregon** with Willamette Valley chefs. Chef Alena Stewart of Amadeus represented Salem.
- Developed a “Wintercation” **Facebook campaign**: 1+ million impressions, 2,614 visitor inquiries, 1,051 sweepstakes entries, 3,445 consumer e-newsletter opt-ins.



- Participated in new **Brand USA Willamette Valley** video.
- Partnered with a sweepstakes promotion to accompany a **five-page spread in Food & Travel Magazine**.
- Created **Willamette Valley videos** promoting: Winery and cycling, culinary, culture, agriculture and family activities.
- Launched PR about “**7 Places to Sip Between the Wonders**” to tie-into and leverage Travel Oregon’s 7 Wonders campaign.
- Promoted the Willamette Valley at the **Travel & Words Conference** (travel writers).
- Met with **travel writers and travel publications** in San Francisco and Seattle to pitch Willamette Valley stories for future publications.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Executed a comprehensive social media program with these concentrated efforts:

-  **Facebook:** Posted 274 events & promotions reaching **8,101 fans (up 12%)**
-  **Twitter:** Maintained “real-time” conversations with **5,179 (up 14%)** local, national and international followers.
-  **Flickr:** Received 326,905 viewer sessions during the year **(21% increase)**
-  **Pinterest:** Featured 54 new pins with 322 followers **(40% increase)**
-  **Instagram:** Launched account in 14-15 with 65 posts and 431 followers
-  **YouTube:** Received 15,093 viewer sessions

Pinterest



Facebook



Twitter



Instagram



TravelSalem.com

WEBSITE ANALYTICS

2% increase in web traffic

75% of web traffic in 14-15 is organic (nonpaid search); remaining 25% is direct or referral

2013-14

268,472 visits
138 countries represented

Top web traffic came from:

1. U.S.
2. Canada
3. India
4. UK
5. Brazil

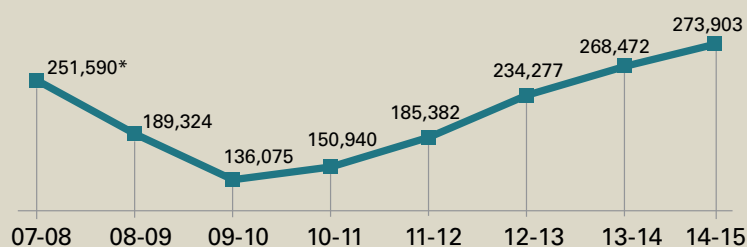
2014-15

273,903 visits
147 countries represented

Top web traffic came from:

1. U.S.
2. Canada
3. India
4. UK
5. Japan

ONLINE USER SESSIONS



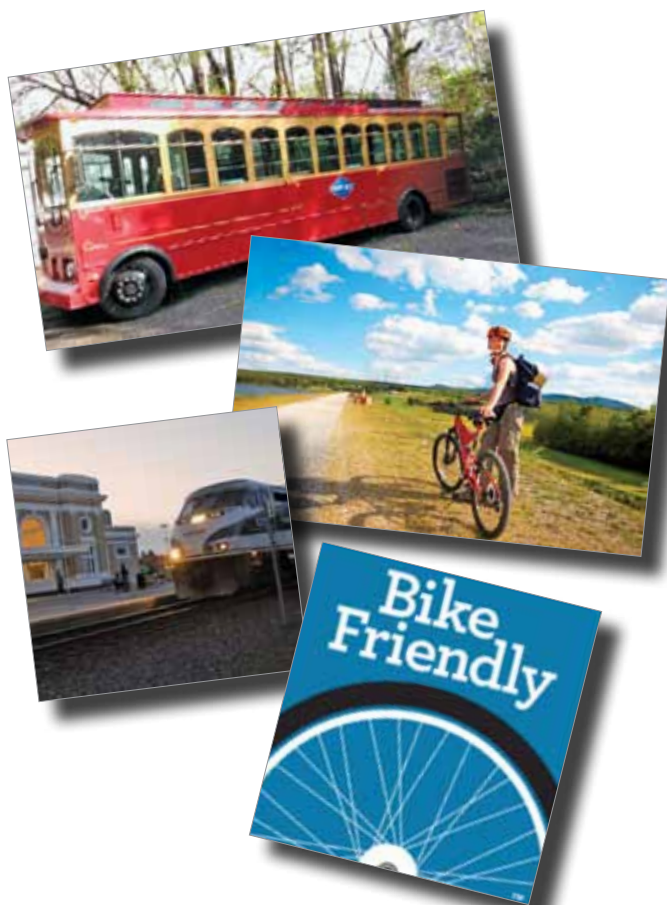
*Began using Google Analytics in 2007-08 to more accurately reflect website traffic.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Contribute to the overall economic health of the region by researching, exploring & facilitating the development of new & existing tourism products. Identify collaborative partners & private funding to implement opportunities. Due to this being a new program, it may take 1-3 years to realize new & expanded products.

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH:

- Launched new program and hired **Destination Development Manager**.
- Developed a **destination development strategic plan** and internal working plan for 2014-17 outlining opportunities within the first three years and strategies to achieve them.
- Launched a year-round **Salem Greeter** promotion offering visitors **free guided walking tours** of Historic Downtown Salem by local residents. Thirty five (35) visitors participated in the tours in the first 3 months. The program garnered Salem national media coverage as the **Global Greeter Network member**, and only the **4th program in the U.S.**
- Worked with the Oregon State Capitol and Salem Chamber Orchestra to create an annual **concert in the Willson Park Gazebo**. The concert was a success attracting 225 people.



\$92,490 of Greeter Media Coverage



IN THE WORKS

- Working with Gray Line of Portland and Amtrak to create a bookable **Wine Tour** and a **Salem City Landmarks** Tour that will be marketed nationally. Goal of launching the tour May 2016.
- Developing six **cycling routes** throughout Salem, Marion County and Polk County. Working with businesses to provide **bike-friendly** resources (i.e. list of repair shops, tire pump, Wi-Fi, water).
- Meeting with local and regional groups to recruit a **robust volunteer corps** to assist with events tied to the Travel Salem sales department.
- Partnering with **Polk County Rural Tourism Studio** workshops and on-going marketing and agricultural committees.
- Participating with the **Santiam River Canyon** tourism committee to identify tourism opportunities.
- Collaborating with local historian John Ritter and Sea Legs Media to create, "**Salem Like A Local**," a series of **historical video chats** to be syndicated out through online and social media channels.
- Working with area breweries and tap houses seeking to create a **Salem Ale Trail**. Goal of launching the trail in 15-16.

CONVENTION SALES

Contribute to the overall economic health of the region by booking conventions & events through direct sales efforts, cooperative promotional efforts & innovative marketing strategies. Drive Travel Salem's key performance measurements.

\$9,587,580
Convention & Event Estimated Economic Impact

PROMOTE SALEM AS A CONVENTION & EVENT DESTINATION:

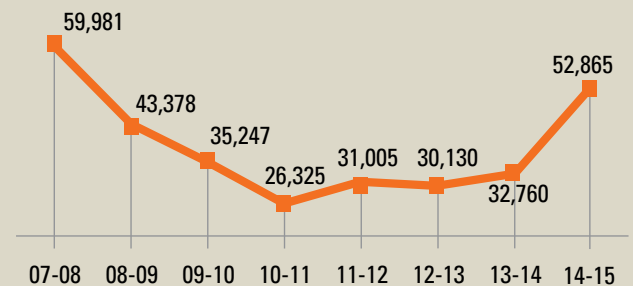
- Convention and Tradeshow for the **International Red Hat Society** held in San Francisco. Travel Salem Co-opted on a tradeshow booth with Salem Convention Center and The Grand Hotel for the 3 day event.
- **BRAVO!** Live tradeshow held at the Oregon Convention Center. Travel Salem and the Salem Convention Center co-opted to reach meeting and event planners at this annual industry tradeshow.
- **Amateur Softball Association Council (ASA)** meeting and tradeshow held in Reno with our City of Salem partners to bid on 2016 ASA tournaments.
- **Oregon Society of Association Managers (OSAM)** conference and tradeshow, held in Portland.
- **Religious Conference Managers Association (RCMA)** tradeshow held in Birmingham, Alabama. This was a co-op with the Grand Hotel and the Convention Center, with 800 attendees from the U.S. and Canada.
- Attended the **Greater Oregon Society of Government Meeting Professionals (GOSGMP)** Annual Conference and Tradeshow in Bend.
- Attended the **Meeting Professionals International (MPI)** Cascadia Conference in Washington.

“I wanted to follow up and thank you for your help in securing A.C. Gilbert House. It was an ideal venue and everything went so well. I don't think I would have thought of having our meeting there if you hadn't suggested it, so thanks for that!”

– Michelle Picinich

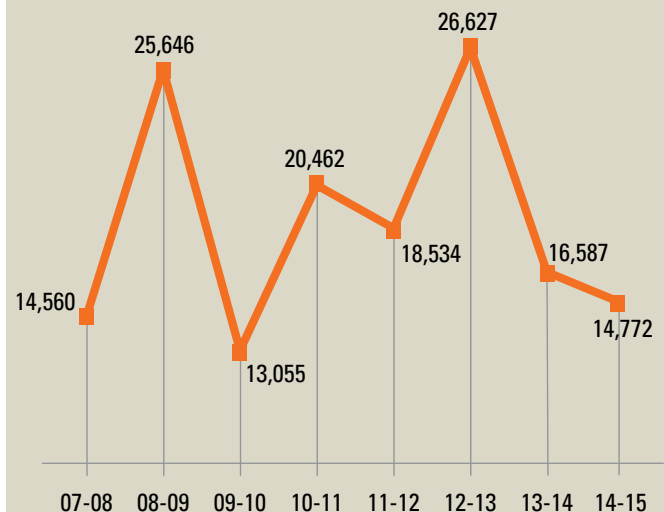


DELEGATES



*Increase was due to day sporting events that did not utilize room nights

ROOM NIGHTS



*decrease was due to not having the large BMW Motorcycle Rally

SPORTS & EVENTS SALES

Identify **new opportunities** and **support upcoming sporting events** hosted in the Mid-Willamette Valley. Expand current and foster new collaborative sporting event opportunities to grow the economic impact of sports and events.

SPORTS SALES AND MARKETING INITIATIVE

- Hired a **Sports and Events Sales Manager**.
- Recruited a twenty-eight member **Sports Committee** to help identify new opportunities and grow current events.
- Attended **TEAMS 2014** conference in Las Vegas. During the tradeshow, 48 new connections with potential clients to host their events in the Salem area.
- Attended the 2015 **National Association of Sports Commissions Sports Events Symposium** in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. During the Symposium, met with 41 tournament directors and event rights holders to discuss hosting their future tournaments in the Salem area.
 - Some highlights from these two tradeshows include the **US Quidditch Association**, **USA Ultimate Frisbee**, **3v3 Live Soccer Tour** and **Senior Softball USA**.
- Attended the first **Oregon Sports Tourism** meeting to partner and recruit more sporting events to Oregon by co-opting and broadening our reach.
- Facilitated a presentation by the **25 Fields** developers to stakeholders. (Marion County Extension Service, Marion County, the National Arboretum, Pickseed, OSU Turf Management and Chemeketa Community College.)
- Started the initial research with Mont Bell regarding the possibility of hosting a **River to Ridge** event in 2017. The event concept includes biking, hiking and kayaking.



Estimated Economic Impact \$772,695



82 LEADS RESULTED IN 60 DEFINITE BOOKINGS:

Examples:

- Girls **Water Polo** Junior Olympic Qualifier, May 1-3, 2015 Kroc Center
- Sub League **Jiu Jitsu**, January 31, 2015, Salem Armory
- State High School **Ultimate Frisbee**, May 16-17, 2015, Salem Futbol Club
- American Legion State **Baseball** Championships, July 29-Aug. 2, 2015, Chemeketa Community College, Willamette University & Volcanoes Stadium
- Animal House Flyball Club **Dog Competition**, January 2016, Oregon State Fairgrounds
- United States **Tennis** Association – Tri-Level Adult Section Championships, Sept. 24-25, 2016, multiple locations
- U.S. **Quidditch** Association, February 2016

- Held a spring and fall **Salem Up-Front**, Front Desk Appreciation event. The event is designed to educate front desk staff about area attractions, while thanking them for serving as the regions welcoming committee

PROVIDED ON-SITE VISITOR INFORMATION FOR:

- Free Masons Conference
- SAIF Health Quest
- Oregon Episcopal Diocese
- Precision Farming Expo
- ATHS York, PA
- OR/ID Conference of United Methodists



Provide the information, resources and support necessary to enhance the travel experience of the convention & group delegate and bolster repeat visitation.

42

GROUPS CONTACTED FOR SERVICE



FINANCIAL REPORTS

\$1 leveraged \$2.52

For every \$1.00 Travel Salem received from public sources—another \$2.52 was generated from outside sources. These results leveraged a 2.52 : 1 ratio for the region's investment in tourism promotion.

OPERATING RESULTS

REVENUES

Public	
City of Salem Contract	\$714,000
Regional	
Marion County	\$100,000
Polk County	\$15,000
Private	
Membership + Donations	\$25,975
Special Events	\$4,482
Advertising & Sponsorship	\$70,714
Other	\$2,533
Restricted	
Temporarily Restricted Revenue	\$22,000

TOTAL REVENUES \$954,704

EXPENSES

Salaries & Related Expenses	\$596,041
Operations	\$226,829
Professional Services	\$46,253
Advertising	\$15,183
Trade Shows & Fam Tours	\$10,452
Special Events	\$4,977
Agility Fund	\$24,036
Misc	\$1,469
Transfer to Restricted Funds	\$22,000

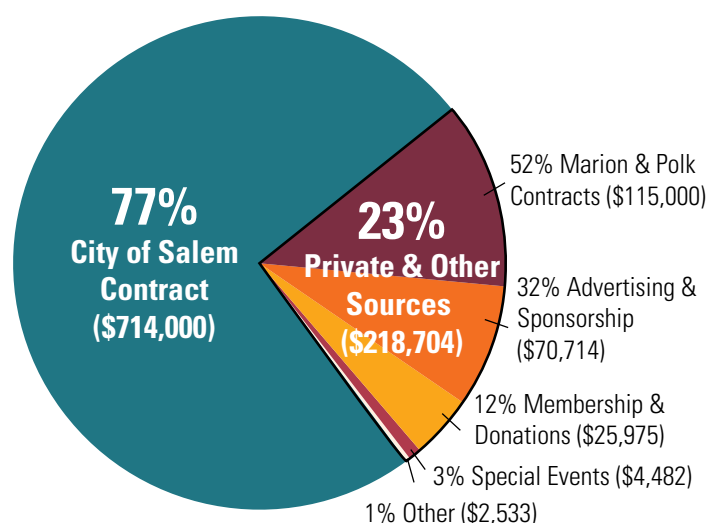
TOTAL EXPENSES \$947,241

OPERATING SURPLUS \$7,463

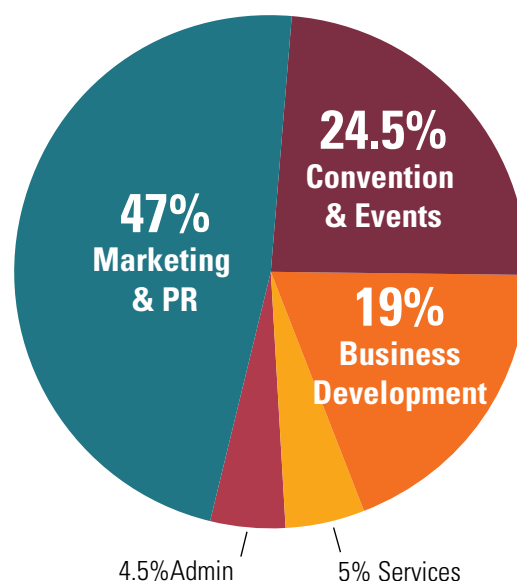
Other Income - Leverage	
Visitors Guide	\$82,923
Volunteers	\$3,212
Media	\$1,047,244
Advertising	\$41,794
In-Kind	\$611,395
WVVA/Regional	\$185,570
SUBTOTAL	\$1,972,138

82% of all revenues go toward direct visitor services

Revenue Sources



Program Expenditures**



**Program costs include overhead expenses.