



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Travel Salem Honors Exceptional Tourism Partners at
“Absolutely Fabulous” Awards Event!**

SALEM, ORE. — Travel Salem announced the recipients of their “Absolutely Fabulous” Awards at the Second Annual “Ab Fab” Awards Luncheon Thursday, May 19, 2011 at Northern Lights Theatre Pub. Local celebrity, Sal, the Golden Pioneer jumped down off the Oregon State Capitol to greet visitors to the event!

Mayor Anna Peterson was there to help celebrate the event and read a proclamation from the city to Salem to recognize National Tourism Week.

The Ab Fab Awards recognize tourism industry partners who have gone above and beyond in 2010-11 to increase the economic impact of visitors. These recipients are movers and shakers whose collaboration and partnerships, innovation, vision, awareness, environmental initiatives, product development and regional strategies are Absolutely Fabulous!

Listed below are the winners of the 2011 Ab Fab Award in each category:

“Absolutely Carpe Diem” Award - Salem’s Underground Tours – Rebecca Maitland.
For seizing the opportunity of bringing to life another cultural asset to share with visitors and the community.

“Absolutely Pioneering” Award - Virginia Green.
For her absolute support of all things heritage in Salem.

“Absolutely Keystone” Award - Chemeketa Community College
For the way they champion education and training in the tourism industry!

“Absolutely Green” Award - Grand Cru Wine Tours – Byron Williams.
For their commitment to having a sustainable business from first sip to last nibble.

“Absolutely a Home Run” Award - City of Salem Softball Program.

For elevating Salem softball to the National level and bringing millions of dollars in economic impact to our community.

“Absolutely Gets it!” Award - Willamette Art Center – Karl Knudson.

For the wonderful way they’ve brought art to the people!

“Absolutely Thinking Big” Award - The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

For their remarkable collaboration with our heritage sites to give visitors a truly authentic taste of Oregon.

“Absolutely Fabulous” Award - Ron Cooper.

For the way his stellar photographs help brand and promote our beautiful region.

“We are extremely proud to honor these amazing people in the tourism sector, who, through their tireless work, creative energy and remarkable vision make the Salem area one of the best places on the planet to call home!” said CEO of Travel Salem, Angie Morris, about the recipients of this award. “They truly have demonstrated a commitment to creating the best of what Salem has to offer, helping strengthen community and building the travel industry in powerful ways!”

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****Travel Salem is a non-profit organization that promotes Salem and Marion and Polk counties for leisure tourism and convention and event business. The local annual economic impact of the greater Salem area visitor industry is \$452 million. Travel Salem manages the Official Salem Area Travel Café/Visitors Center located at the historic Grand Hotel building (181 High St. NE, Salem), two I-5 satellite visitor information locations located at the BEST WESTERN PLUS Mill Creek Inn (3125 Ryan Dr. SE) and the Red Lion Hotel (3301 Market St. NE), and the Official Salem Area Website www.TravelSalem.com****