



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Anthony Tham
Public Relations Manager
503-581-4325, ext. 25
atham@TravelSalem.com

**Businesses Recognized at Travel Salem's
"Absolutely Fabulous" Awards Event**

SALEM, ORE. — Travel Salem announced the recipients of their "Absolutely Fabulous" awards at the First Annual "Ab Fab" Awards Luncheon Thursday, May 20, 2010 at Willamette Valley Vineyards.

The Ab Fab awards recognize tourism industry partners who have gone above and beyond in 2009-10 to increase the economic impact of visitors. These award recipients have pushed the envelope; they are "traditional" rule breakers; they have turned ideas upside-down and inside-out to get the maximum return from marketing, collaboration and partnerships, innovation, vision, awareness, environmental initiatives, product development and regional strategies. They are Absolutely Fabulous!

Listed below are the winners of the 2010 Ab Fab award in each category:

"Absolutely Green" Award

Salem Conference Center —

For their numerous green initiatives to reduce their carbon footprint.

"Absolutely Top of the Barrel" Award

Willamette Valley Vineyards —

For their commitment to sustainability and tourism industry partnerships.

"Absolutely Innovative" Award

Digital City Guide & Hospitality Vision

—

For creating a mechanism to promote the Salem area to visitors in more than 700 hotel rooms.

"Absolutely Thinking Big" Award

Willamette Heritage Center —

For their ability to think big and create an umbrella organization that will benefit a number of heritage resources.

"Absolutely Heads in Beds" Award

Salem Area Lodging Association —

For their constant promotion of the Salem area as an overnight visitor destination.

"Absolutely Smokin'" Award

Woodburn Company Stores —

For their red hot domestic and international marketing efforts that benefit the entire region.

“Absolutely Big Picture” Award

Marion County Oregon 150 —

For the ability to unite 20 communities to organize the “150 Miles for 150 Years” relay and passport promotion.

“Absolutely Pioneering” Award

Oregon Travel Information Council —

For their pioneering effort to create “I” signage to direct visitors to key visitor information resources.

“Absolutely ‘Gets It’” Award

Austin McGuigan, community

development director for Polk County —
For his understanding of the local tourism industry as an economic generator.

“Absolutely Fabulous” Award

Statesman Journal —

For their relentless effort to inform Salem area residents and visitors about all of the wondrous assets of the region; and the economic and quality of life impact of tourism.

As the awards luncheon concluded, Angie Morris, Travel Salem’s president and CEO, expressed: “I’m humbled today to be here, surrounded by folks who day in and day out, follow their dreams and pour their hearts into their work, making the Salem area one of the best places on the planet to call home. Not only do we applaud the achievements of our award recipients, we also applaud each of you, our inspiration and our partners in the tourism industry. Thank you!”

In attendance were Mayor Janet Taylor and Marion County Commissioner Janet Carlson. Commissioner Carlson accepted the “Absolutely Big Picture Award” for her work with the Marion County Oregon 150 campaign. Travel Salem also recognized Mayor Taylor — to a standing ovation — as a champion for tourism. Mayor Taylor has opened doors, created connections and advocated on behalf of tourism-related issues. Her leadership, marketing savvy and foresight have helped shape the economic development landscape of the Salem region.

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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 \$496 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 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****