

# FY25

Travel Lane County Annual Report

**EUGENE  
CASCADES  
AND  
COAST**





## Samara Phelps

President & CEO



## Dana Turell

Chair, Board of Directors

**Fiscal Year 2025** began with Samara Phelps joining Travel Lane County as President and CEO. Building on the strong legacy of Kari Westlund’s 28-year tenure, Samara focused on reconnecting with the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region, engaging with local elected officials and getting grounded in the organization’s work and Lane County’s broader tourism industry. That work continues while leading the team through FY26 budget planning and identifying priorities for the year ahead. Samara has connected with the broader community through updates on KLCC, KPNW and KKNV radio stations, as well as a feature article in the Register-Guard.

Dana Turell, owner of Turell Group, concluded two years of dedicated service as Board Chair. Beginning in FY26, Sarah Smith, Director of Operations at InnCline Hotels, will step into the role of Chair, with John Barofsky, owner of Beppe & Gianni’s, serving as Vice Chair.

### Promise

The Eugene, Cascades & Coast region has Oregon’s greatest variety of adventures in easy to reach, uncrowded places.

### Why

We believe our work inspires people to experience and appreciate Lane County, creating opportunities, a sense of place and stronger communities.

### Vision

Travel Lane County is a recognized leader in achieving year-round economic growth throughout the region through innovative destination marketing, product development and exceptional visitor experiences.

### Mission

Grow overnight visitors for a vibrant, year-round and county-wide economy.

Lane County’s visitor industry is a key traded-sector contributor to the local economy, supporting 1 in 9 jobs across the county in 2024. More than 3.5 million overnight stays fueled direct visitor spending that topped \$1.1 billion. That spending helped sustain local businesses and generated nearly \$53 million in state and local tax revenue.

The 2025 legislative session brought challenges to Oregon’s tourism funding model, but strong advocacy from industry leaders, chambers of commerce and member businesses helped safeguard critical resources. A key victory was the passage of SB179, which permanently extends landowner immunity protections. However, a companion bill related to liability waivers for outdoor recreation did not advance and will require renewed attention in a future session. During the interim, efforts will focus on educating legislators about the importance of sustained investment in tourism as a vital engine of economic growth for Lane County and the state.



# WARMING UP WINTER

**Major summer and fall events** and strong attendance at the University of Oregon football games boosted FY25 first quarter performance. The fourth quarter reignited this momentum with the start of another standout track and field season, anchored by record participation in the Oregon Relays and the Eugene Marathon. These events were followed by a series of marquee events, including the Big Ten Outdoor Track & Field Championships and the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships. In response to softening winter demand, Travel Lane County maintained a strong focus on promoting leisure travel through its EXPLORE campaign. Paid media in key drive and fly markets highlighted seasonal experiences like arts performances, whale watching, winter music festivals and cellar season at local wineries, encouraging visitors to discover the region's off-season charm. Investing in "always-on" marketing in key flight and drive markets keeps the destination top of mind with potential travelers and drives traffic to itineraries and destination content on our website.

Lodging tax receipts from July through March dipped 3%, driven by a softening in average daily rates likely influenced by a 7.6% increase in metro-area room supply. The addition of 350 rooms came from the opening of TownePlace Suites and the re-opening of Valley River Inn. Short-term rental revenue grew 1.5%, but these properties account for only about a quarter of total commercial lodging revenue. Overall, FY25 room tax collections are expected to be down slightly when fourth-quarter receipts are reported in fall 2025.

The Oregon Department of Revenue reconciled FY24 lodging tax receipts, adjusting the total to \$23.3 million to correct for an overpayment and reporting error, down from the earlier estimate of more than \$29 million. Even with this adjustment, lodging tax revenue has nearly doubled since the pre-pandemic peak of \$12.2 million, continuing to deliver substantial benefits to Lane County and all its cities.

Convention activity gained momentum with the reopening of Valley River Inn, which resumed hosting events in its newly refreshed conference space. Demand returned quickly, surpassing expectations and easing pressure on the Eugene Conference Center, operated by Graduate by Hilton Eugene, during Valley River Inn's renovation.

Travel Lane County-booked room nights generated nearly \$2 million in estimated economic impact. However, overall bookings were down 63%, largely due to a staffing gap as the convention sales manager position was filled at the end of the fiscal year. With the team now fully staffed, we're optimistic about new business opportunities in FY26.

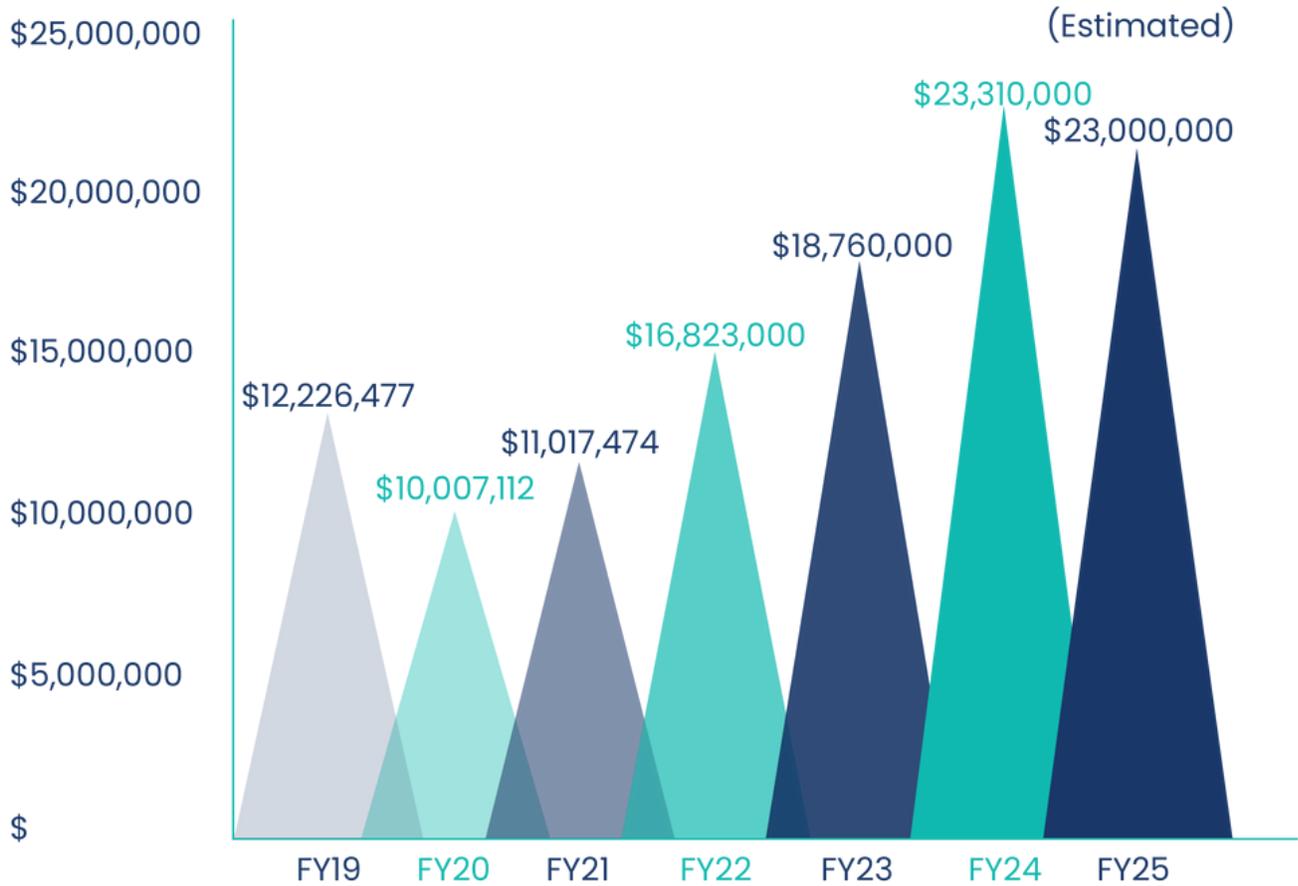
Despite the lower total bookings, the year marked important wins: two-thirds of the 18 confirmed events were new to the destination, and four of those occurred between November and March. This growth in both new and winter-season business directly supports our goal of reducing seasonality and boosting winter demand.

Travel Lane County booked  
room nights generated  
nearly **\$2 Million** in  
estimated economic impact.



Photo: TownePlace Suites Grand Opening

# Lane County Lodging Tax Collections by Fiscal Year



## Lane County Hotel Performance

- Demand (+1.4%)
- Average Daily Rate \$153.35 (-3.5%)
- Revenue per Available Room \$93.79 (-7.9%)
- Revenue \$174.2 Million (-2.1%)
- Source: STR, Inc. 2024-25

## Oregon Hotel Performance

- Demand (+2.8%)
- Average Daily Rate \$140.84 (-0.8%)
- Revenue per Available Room \$85.98 (+0.8%)
- Revenue \$2.3 Billion (+2%)
- Source: STR, Inc. 2024-25

## Lane County Short Term Rental

- Demand (-1.9%)
- Average Daily Rate \$215 (+3.5%)
- Revenue per Available Room \$108 (-0.8%)
- Revenue \$66 Million (+1.5%)
- Source: AirDna 2024-25

## Oregon Short Term Rental

- Demand (+2.6%)
- Average Daily Rate \$266 (+9.4%)
- Revenue per Available Room \$151 (+10.2%)
- Revenue \$1.1 Billion (+12.2%)
- Source: AirDna 2024-25

	Lane County Hotel Performance	Oregon Hotel Performance	Lane County Short Term Rental Performance	Oregon Short Term Rental Performance
<b>Demand</b>	1.4%	2.8%	1.9%	2.6%
<b>Ave. Daily Rate</b>	3.5%	0.8%	3.5%	9.4%
<b>Revenue per Room</b>	7.9%	0.8%	0.8%	10.2%
<b>Revenue</b>	2.1%	2.0%	1.5%	12.2%

Source: STR, Inc. 2024-25

Source: STR, Inc. 2024-25

Source: AirDna 2024-25

Source: AirDna 2024-25

# A VISITOR ECONOMY That Benefits All

**Who visits our region**, where they go and how much they spend are key questions answered through Travel Lane County's partnership with Zartico. By analyzing credit card transactions and mobile location data, we gain valuable insights that shape smarter, more effective marketing efforts. These campaigns are focused on communities within a 500-mile drive or with direct flights into the Eugene Airport.

## Who Are Our Current Visitors?

### Age



**52%**

Age 25-54

### Income



**56%**

Average household income of \$100 k +

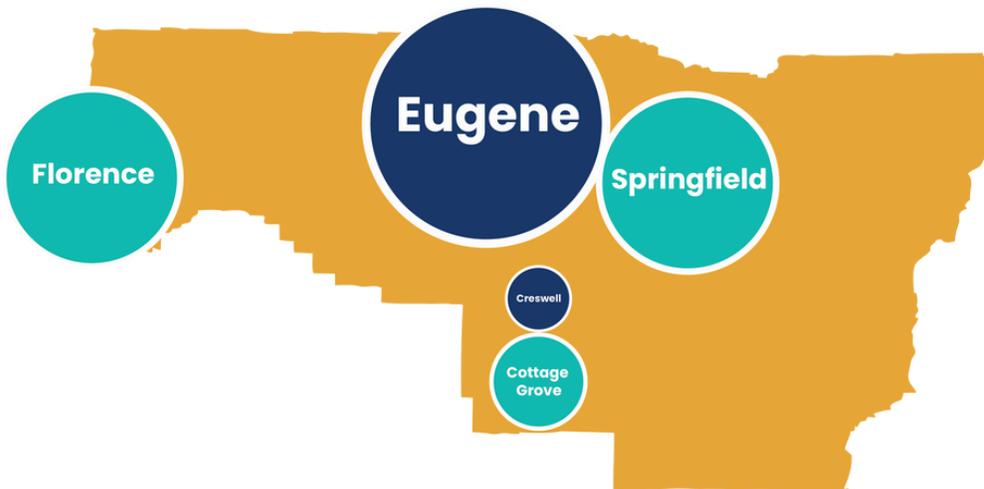
### Family



**30%**

Have children in the household

## Top Visitor Destinations



Visitor spending patterns are consistent across both Zartico data and the Dean Runyan & Associates reports from Travel Oregon. About 40 cents of every visitor dollar is spent on food and beverage, while accommodations account for 17-19 cents. Whether a visitor is staying in commercial lodging, a campground or with family and friends, they all need to eat and drink. Overnight stays in 2024 topped 3.5 million and another 2-3-million day visitors helped push spending over the \$1 billion mark.

Evaluating Oregon visitor data reveals that more than half of our visitors originate from within Oregon. Outdoor recreation and retail are major trip activities, offering strong opportunities for partnership, alignment and content development. Food and wine are another key driver, providing a natural fit for future campaign storytelling.

Visitation across the region is strongly shaped by Eugene's size, concentration of hotel rooms, and the presence of the University of Oregon. On the coast, Florence continues to attract leisure travelers with demand drivers that now extend beyond outdoor recreation to include winter music festivals, arts and culture, and a vibrant food and beverage scene. Travel Lane County's marketing efforts showcased Florence's unique appeal to drive winter visitation from the Portland market.

# A VISITOR ECONOMY That Benefits All

## What Are Visitors Doing? (Points of Interest)



**To grow future visitation**, the data suggests an opportunity to attract more families — especially if we expand offerings that appeal to this group. Currently, many local families are leaving the region to participate in club sports, both indoor (such as cheerleading, wrestling, basketball), and outdoor (including soccer, baseball, and softball). Creating more opportunities to host these activities locally would help retain and attract family travel.

Data confirms that Portland, Seattle, Medford, San Francisco and Los Angeles remain key visitor origin markets across Lane County. These markets were targeted through an always-on media strategy and seasonal campaigns using a diverse mix of tactics, including video, display ads and targeted social media. Performance data from these efforts feeds directly into content development, helping the team shape storytelling around community and destination highlights — ensuring our content continues to reach the right visitors at the right time. These efforts led to nearly 79 million impressions in key target markets and 344 million impressions overall. Nearly 600,000 clicks to Travel Lane County content were recorded, an increase of 89% over FY24.

Last fall, Travel Lane County partnered with Big Ten cities to develop engaging destination content through curated “Top Ten” features tailored to each market. This initiative strengthens our ongoing collaboration with GoDucks.com to connect with drive markets and sports fans, expanding regional engagement and visitor interest.

With the Big Ten Conference expanding Oregon’s visibility, we have several more years to welcome new fans traveling for University of Oregon sporting events. In FY25, sports event bookings rose by 24%, generating nearly \$20 million in estimated economic impact. Although total room nights booked declined, this was largely due to key event timing shifts — the 50th Prefontaine Classic moving to July 2025 (FY26) and the absence of a ten-day U.S. Olympic Team Trials.

# PARTNERING

## For a Stronger Lane County

**Oakridge opened** its dirt pump track at Diamond View Park. The track provides a dedicated training course and a fun, accessible playground for cyclists of all ages and skill levels. Recognizing the community's need for a space to build skills and confidence, local proponents teamed up with the Oakridge Community Parks Committee, the Oakridge Trails Alliance, Disciples of Dirt and Willamette Mountain Mercantile to bring this vision to life. Travel Lane County provided financial support to match local lodging tax funds and private donations used to bring the project to life.



**Supporting our hospitality workforce** remains a key industry priority, which made hosting the Tourism Cares Meaningful Travel Summit this fall especially impactful. Known for its global reach and strong focus on sustainability, the conference brought a sold-out crowd to the Eugene Conference Center. During the event, Tourism Cares awarded a \$15,000 grant to Florence's Inspire Culinary Academy, which trains low-income and underserved youth (ages 16–24) in culinary arts, nutrition, food safety and job readiness. Inspire celebrated its first graduating class this year, and Travel Lane County was proud to support their move to a new home in Florence's Old Town.



**Lane Community College** continued to expand enrollment in its one-year culinary program, while Connected Lane County launched a new culinary training initiative. Both create greater opportunities for young people to enter the hospitality workforce. Travel Lane County became a proud sponsor of the Oregon Hospitality Foundation's ProStart program, which supports culinary education across the state and culminates in an annual statewide competition. As part of our sponsorship, a portion of the funding directly supports the culinary team at Willamette High School.

# PARTNERING

## For a Stronger Lane County

**Travel Lane County** supported Driftwood Shores Resort & Conference Center in joining the Kind Traveler Every Stay Gives Back program, an initiative led by the Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) that transforms overnight stays into support for local environmental and community causes. A portion of each stay is donated to nonprofits dedicated to preserving the coast's natural beauty and cultural heritage. In its first year, nine coastal hotel properties participated, contributing over \$24,000. Driftwood Shores selected the Cape Perpetua Collaborative as its non-profit partner.

Our Integrated Marketing team partnered with Eugene Airport to develop a new welcome display that includes digital signage and an interactive visitor information kiosk. These enhancements create an engaging and welcoming first impression for visitors, offering real-time resources to explore Lane County.



**Travel Lane County** has contracted with JLL to develop a comprehensive 10-year Destination Master Plan for Lane County. With experience in strategic planning for over 100 destinations worldwide, JLL brings deep expertise to this effort. The plan will establish a shared vision for sustainable tourism development across all 12 Lane County communities — emphasizing economic growth, resident quality of life, and responsible stewardship of place. Research and data analysis in early FY26 will be followed by community outreach in the fall 2026.

# OPEN TO ALL

## Welcoming to Each

**Building on Travel Lane County's** commitment to accessibility, a collaboration with social media influencer and passionate disability advocate Kristin Hayes highlighted adventures in the region. Her experience in Florence highlighted the transformative impact of innovative accessibility features, including David's Chair all-terrain track chairs and the Mobi-Mat installation at Heceta Beach. Kristin demonstrated her experience exploring outdoor adventures throughout the county, inspiring others to discover Lane County's natural beauty. This partnership supported our strategic focus on showcasing year-round accessible adventures while amplifying our destination's message through trusted voices who can reach targeted audience segments. This influencer campaign generated over 3,843,363 impressions on Meta, outperforming a typical social campaign by 300%.

Our destination welcomed significant new visitor segments while continuing to support diverse sporting events that showcase Lane County's versatility as a sports tourism destination. The National Amputee Golf Association's 75th National Championship and 34th Senior National Championship in Creswell aligned accessibility initiatives and community development goals.

Accessibility goes beyond infrastructure, and Travel Lane County continues to invest in programs that expand our ability to welcome and serve visitors with disabilities. In partnership with Travel Oregon and Wheel the World, we coordinated accessibility assessments at 17 hotels, restaurants, and attractions. The results are now published on the Wheel the World platform, a resource for travelers with disabilities seeking detailed accessibility information. Oregon is on track to become the first Destination Verified state in the Wheel the World system, with additional assessments planned for FY26 as we work to position the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region as an inclusive destination. Looking ahead, Travel Lane County is increasing access to the destination by facilitating 15 Wheel the World assessments with hospitality partners, supporting Oregon's initiative to become the first certified state within this global accessibility platform.

Travel Lane County's staff and Board of Directors completed VisitAble training to strengthen our ability to better serve all visitors. This scenario-based online training will be offered to Travel Lane County member organizations in FY26. It will be complemented by additional accessibility-focused training through Wheel the World Academy. Both platforms feature flexible, video-based modules that participants can complete at their own pace and on their own schedule.



**In collaboration with** the Black Cultural Initiative, Travel Lane County staff supported the development of a successful Travel Oregon grant proposal. The Across the Bridge Monument — a project honoring Eugene's founding Black families — was awarded \$140,000 and will be installed in Alton Baker Park.

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

**Travel Lane County membership** grew by 20% in FY25 and is approaching pre-pandemic highs of 650. Our free associate membership option is proving an attractive choice for many small businesses that continue to face challenging economic times.



## The 2025 Visitor Industry Celebration & Summit highlighted the impact of these:

- Community Leadership Award: Bev Smith, Eugene Kidsports
- Destination Award: Creswell Bakery
- Sports Leadership Award: Aaron Wasson, University of Oregon
- Convention Leadership Award: Graduate by Hilton Eugene
- Placemaking Award: City of Florence Public Art Committee
- Legacy Award: Jonnie Helfrich, Helfrich McKenzie Rafting

**The Aufderheide Scenic Bikeway**, Oregon's 18<sup>th</sup> such designation, banner-breaking ceremony took place on a beautiful May morning at Portal Park in Westfir. Speakers included Commissioner Buch, State Representative Harbick, Westfir Mayor Watson, Oakridge Mayor Cutchen and several agency partners and supporters.



The Aufderheide Scenic Bikeway also marks the first segment of the Connect Lane wayfinding system. This McKenzie-to-Oakridge route links to the Oakridge-to-Cottage Grove segment and the system's two newest routes: Cottage Grove to Creswell and Creswell to Eugene. Travel Lane County collaborated with Lane County Transportation to identify sign locations, with installation by Lane County Public Works. Website information has been developed and promotional materials will be distributed to bike shops and other locations in early FY26.

**Work on assessing** trail accessibility continued through a financial contribution to our partners at the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA), who were then able to assess King's Castle mountain biking trail near Rainbow. Reducing barriers for all visitors and residents who recreate outdoors, information on King Castle's features, amenities, conditions and sensory experiences will allow trail users to fully plan their ride. This partnership with WVVA also includes the creation of videos of mountain bikers using adaptive equipment for use in marketing channels.

## Reducing barriers for all visitors and residents who recreate outdoors



Accessibility enhancements advanced through strategic installations, including expanded Mobi Mats at Heceta Beach and additional hearing loops at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts' box office and concessions. Additionally, our collaboration with Travel Oregon's Recreation Ready program secured support for the Deathball Trail Complex near Cougar Reservoir, integrating interpretive sites recognizing Molalla, Kalapuya and Chinook First Nations while developing inclusive, adaptive-friendly trail infrastructure.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Irene Alltucker**

Obie Companies Inc.  
Eugene

**John Barofsky**

Beppe & Gianni's  
Eugene

**Richard Boyles**

Merete Hotel  
Management Group  
Springfield

**Corey Buller**

Lane Events Center  
Eugene

**Robert Canaga**

Robert Canaga Studios  
Eugene

**Doug Combs**

Alesong Brewing & Blending  
Eugene

**Julie Collins**

Cascades Raptor Center  
Eugene

**Ian Dobson**

Eugene Marathon  
Eugene

**Mike Drennan**

Individual Member  
Eugene

**Tom Driscoll**

University of Oregon  
Eugene

**Mike Duncan**

UO Athletics  
Eugene

**Alyssa Gomez**

Sweet Springs Family Farms  
Eugene

**Jonnie Helfrich**

Helfrich McKenzie Rafting  
McKenzie River

**Kaarin Knudson**

City of Eugene Mayor  
Eugene

**David Loveall**

County Commissioner  
Lane County

**Ron Moore**

Hoagland Properties  
Florence

**Josh Neckels**

Eugene Ballet  
Eugene

**Michael Newman**

In Business Media  
Eugene

**Tina Patel**

ALKO Hotels  
Eugene

**David Penilton**

America's Hub World Tours  
Eugene

**George Rogers**

Graduate Hotels  
Eugene

**Bev Smith**

Kidsports  
Eugene

**Tim Smith**

Merete Hotel Management  
Eugene

**Vanessa Tharp**

Vanessa Tharp LLC

**Michelle Webber**

City Council  
Springfield

## EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

**Jameson Auten**

Lane Transit District  
Eugene

**Allie Camp**

City of Springfield  
Springfield

**Randy Groves**

City of Eugene  
Eugene

**John Hamilton**

ORLA

**Bettina Hannigan**

Florence Chamber  
Florence

**Jason Harris**

Lane County Admin  
Lane County

**Georgia Haskell**

Cottage Grove Chamber  
Cottage Grove

**Ben Klipfel**

City of Eugene  
Eugene

**Megan Messmer**

City of Florence  
Florence

**Vonnie Mikkelsen**

Springfield Area Chamber  
Springfield

**Steve Mohrohisky**

County Administrator  
Lane County

**Cathryn Stephens**

Eugene Airport  
Eugene

**Brittany Quick-Warner**

Eugene Area Chamber  
Eugene

## OFFICERS

**Dana Turell, Chair**

Turell Group  
Eugene

**Sarah Smith, Vice Chair**

InnCline Management  
Eugene

**Pam Whyte, Treasurer**

Emge & Whyte  
Eugene

**Lorrie Normann, Past Chair**

# SPORTS ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Lauren Anderson**

Warsaw Sports Business Program

**Joshua Bates**

City of Eugene

**Allan Benavides**

Eugene Emeralds Baseball Club

**Mike Duncan**

University of Oregon Athletics

**Daniel Lindsey**

Merete Hotel Management

**Jeri McPherson**

Graduate Eugene

**Becky Radliff**

Eugene Marathon

**Michael Reilly**

TrackTown USA

**Mike Ripley**

Mudslinger Events

**Tony Scurto**

Lane Education Service District

**Bev Smith**

Civic Park

**Rich Spurlin**

Eugene Country Club

**Michael Wargo**

Willamalane Park & Recreation District

**Brittany Quick-Warner**

Eugene Chamber of Commerce

**Thomas Wuest, MD**

DocTom Consulting, LLC





# TRAVEL LANE COUNTY Staff

## Administration

**Samara Phelps**  
President & CEO

**Liz Bocking**  
VP of Finance & Admin

## Destination Marketing

**Natalie Inouye**  
Executive VP

**Philis McLennan**  
Director of Conventions & Sports Marketing

## Visitor Services

**Clarissa Warrick**  
Visitor Services Manager

**Kyle Chase**  
Visitor Services Specialist

**Nicolle Anderson**  
Visitor Services Specialist

## Stakeholder Relations

**Andy Vobora**  
VP of Stakeholder Relations

**Megan Temple**  
Senior Director of Member & Community Engagement

**Haley Mendez**  
Member & Community Engagement Coordinator

**Connor Nolan**  
Destination Development Manager

## Tourism

**Stephen Hoshaw**  
Senior Director of Tourism

**Meg Trendler**  
Director of Tourism Sales

**Julia Voigt**  
Tourism Marketing Manager

## Sports

**JB Carney**  
Senior Director of Sports and Interim Director of Conventions

**Ella Perez**  
Director of Event Operations

**Kate Walkup**  
Sports Sales & Marketing Coordinator

## Integrated Marketing

**Emily Forsha**  
VP of Integrated Marketing

**Taj Morgan**  
Director of Content Strategy

**Melanie Griffin**  
Art Director

## Conventions

**Heidi Albertson**  
Convention Sales Manager

**Brian Saunders**  
Convention Services Manager

# THANK YOU!

For Your Help in Building a Strong Community

**EUGENE  
CASCADES  
AND COAST**

