Visitor Readiness Report

Florence, OR

Total Destination Management

Contents

Introduction

The Florence Area Visitor Readiness Report is an initiative by the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, the department of Lane County Economic Development, and the Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County Oregon. It is designed to provide a checklist of actions to enhance the destination's tourism performance. It is not a tourism development, branding or marketing plan, hence does not include all of the actions that the area may address in its annual tourism programs.

Florence is located on the coastal strip of Lane County at the intersection of Oregon's coastal highway 101 and Highway 126, linking the city to Eugene and the Interstate 5 to the east. Highway 126 also extends further east via Springfield along the McKenzie River Valley corridor into the Cascade Mountains (the eastern limit of Lane County).

Florence enjoys recognition as a destination on the Oregon Coast, yet despite its very attractive Old Town, dramatic coastal scenery, wildlife and abundant recreational opportunities it is not as well known as many other cities along the Coast.

The recommendations in this report were created after research, site visits within the city and surrounds, and consultation with local stakeholders.

The priority issues identified include:

- Branding and positioning
- Brochures and information distribution
- Focus on key experience themes
- Positioning and Branding
- Streetscapes
- Wayfinding and signage
- Web marketing

The recommendations should not be interpreted as meaning that current tourism efforts have been flawed. They are designed to fine-tune critical points of contact and communications with visitors and to take the area's tourism performance and economic benefits to the next level.

Methodology

The development of the Visitor Readiness Report for the Florence area involved a variety of actions which included:

- An review of past reports, strategies and plans relating to Florence.

- Review and analysis of past and current marketing materials, including brochures, web sites, maps and partner marketing materials (e.g. hotels).

- Online research to review key web sites relating to Florence, as well as those that potentially should carry references to Florence.

- An online community survey providing stakeholders with an opportunity to express their opinions.

- Personal interviews with local businesses and community leaders.

- Discussions with local residents, particularly those in contact with visitors.

- On-site assessment of the city and its surrounding region.

Total Destination Experience

The Visitor Readiness Report is founded on the need to deliver outstanding and appropriate experiences at every point of contact with visitors at each stage of their destination experience. The information and experience needs of prospective visitors change according to the stage in their decision making in regard to the destination.

The following model is useful for considering customer's decision-making and satisfaction at key moments in their contact with Florence. It reflects the fact that as customers proceed from one stage to the next, their behavior, desires and needs change. This has a direct influence on the methods and content of communications.

These five stages are:

1) Search: This stage includes the early points of contact that influence whether the person becomes a customer for the destination or not. Commonly, these points of contact include advertising, articles in newspapers and magazines, brochures, web sites, guidebooks, word of mouth, emails and past experiences.

2) Plan, Compare and Book: Bridging the gap between a potential visitor's consideration of a community and becoming a customer is possibly the greatest challenge facing all destination marketers. The points here commonly include fulfilling the questions from prospects and the ease of making transactions and bookings. They may relate to web sites, reservations services, price, conditions and rules, discounts, packages, and staff.

The Total Destination Experience

3) Travel and Arrival: At this point the experience is well underway, and the journey is an integral part of the total destination experience. The cost, quality, and ease of access and transport can influence attitudes toward the place. Upon arrival in the city, is it easy to find their way around? What are their first impressions? Is there a sense of welcome?

4) The Visit: This is the phase where we are most conscious of the experiences associated with a destination. What is the quality of the attractions and their experiences? How are customers interacting with the place? What are the quality and

service standards? What is the appropriateness of attractors, signage, brochures, tour guides, taxi drivers, and visitor services?

5) Post Visit: This phase is frequently overlooked and does not receive the attention that it deserves to build positive word of mouth and positive memories. What is their reaction to leaving the place, engagement in social networking sites, souvenirs and local products, direct mail, and "thank you" emails and correspondence?

The Visitor Readiness Report

This Visitor Readiness Report provides recommendations for enhancing the Florence area's capabilities and competitiveness in ways that are essential for successful tourism. It is divided into the following sections:

1.	**Positioning and Branding**	What does the city want to be known for and how will it build its reputation as a desirable destination?
2.	**Attractors and Experiences**	These are the elements that attract visitors, encourage them to stay longer and are the core components of the area's tourism experiences.
3.	**Streetscapes, Signage and Wayfinding**	Streetscapes are integral to the visitor experience, while signage and wayfinding inform, guide, and motivate travelers.
4.	**Marketing Communications**	The actions and messages that communicate the tourism benefits of the area.
5.	**Soft Adventure Operators and Outfitters**	These businesses enhance the visitor experience by enabling a higher level of engagement and excitement with the destination.
6.	**Leadership and Organization**	These capture the way that the area is organized and motivated for tourism.

1. Positioning and Branding

While fundamental positioning and branding issues are addressed in this report, it is <u>not</u> a brand strategy. Increasingly, places of all sizes are turning to the principles of positioning and branding in order to shape their marketing and to help them stand apart from competitors. It establishes what is special about the place. This plays a role in influencing whether people plan to visit, recommend it to others or decide to stop there in transit to other places. This top-of-mind awareness is activated when people hear the name of the place or associate it with activities or experiences.

Positioning is at the heart of branding and establishes what we want customers to think and feel about the place. It relates to the position in consumer's minds (and hearts) that we want to occupy. The strongest positioning frequently involves temporarily sacrificing some attributes in order to select the most enticing, meaningful and differentiating. The objective is to secure the largest number of high yield customers possible, while upholding the community's values and achieving its strategic objective of benefit for the community.

The three most important concepts for places like Florence to master in branding are (i) differentiation and positioning, i.e. leading with what sets it apart, (ii) focusing on those attributes that provide its differentiation, and (iii) being consistent in how these attributes are presented, and ensuring that tourism partners deliver on the city's brand promise.

> *"A brand is a living entity – and is enriched and undermined cumulatively over time, the product of a thousand small gestures."*
>
> Michael Eisner
> Former Disney CEO

Florence Positioning and Branding

At present there is no clear positioning for the city in regard to its competitors.

Despite its considerable visitor appeal, Florence does not enjoy the same top of mind awareness and reputation as several competitor destinations along the central and northern areas of the Oregon Coast such as Newport, Lincoln City, Seaside, Cannon Beach and Astoria.

While Florence is recognized as a city on the Oregon Coast, it needs to establish a stronger competitive identity to more clearly project its most compelling strengths and be recognized as one of the most desirable and centrally located destinations on the Coast. In potential markets, Florence does not enjoy the level of association with National Dunes Recreation Area, Heceta Head Lighthouse or the Oregon Sea Lion Caves that it should have.

Among the questions that Florence needs to consider in developing its brand identity are:

- Why should prospects visit or stay in Florence, when Newport, Cannon Beach and Seaside look like good options?

- Are we projecting what is distinctive about Florence that other places cannot deliver?
- What do we want to be known for?
- Are we communicating the relevant benefits of visiting Florence to different target audiences?
- What are the experiences, key words and phrases, images, colors and designs that should be consistently used in our communications to distinguish Florence from competitors?

One important consideration is that virtually all of Florence's coastal competitors are featuring similar attributes and images in their marketing. Interestingly several are prominently using images of bridges. Fortunately, Florence possesses a variety of outstanding attributes that can resonate with prospective visitors and help distinguish the area in meaningful ways.

A particular challenge for Florence the myriad commercial tourism publications projecting images and content about Florence and the Oregon Coast. These are mainly advertising-driven media and coverage is biased toward paying advertisers. The copy and images do not always reflect the city's strengths and benefits to visitors. In this environment the Chamber and its partners must be more active in managing the city's identity.

Recommended Actions:

1. Develop a **brand strategy** for Florence and surrounds to determine the ideal positioning, competitive identity and the framework to direct the future marketing of the area. Among the options to consider in founding the positioning on Florence, are staking ownership in Old Town, dramatic coastline, Sea Lion Caves, Heceta Head Lighthouse, Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, the river, beaches and lakes, plus soft adventures. An important element of the brand should be establishing Florence as the most conveniently located base from which to explore the Central Oregon Coast. The brand strategy should lead to a distinctive visual and verbal identity, as well as key phrases and words to be consistently conveyed to specific target audiences for all organizations to use when describing the city as a visitor destination.

2. Increase the top of mind awareness for Florence by referring to the city as **"Florence, Oregon Coast"** when appropriate and establish Florence as an integral element of the Coast.

3. Clarify **target markets** for future marketing, enabling the Chamber to be more focused in the allocation of its limited marketing resources.

Alignment with Regional Brand

The new regional tourism brand is founded on accessible soft adventures. The Florence Area experiences which are most aligned with this brand are sand boarding, dune buggy riding, kayaking, boating, sail boarding, coastal hiking, beach and dunes horse

riding, fresh and salt water diving, fishing, trail biking, camping, scenic coastal biplane flights, and marine and wildlife viewing.

Recommended Actions:

4. Collaborate with CVALCO to ensure that the Florence area's **soft adventure experiences** are projected wherever appropriate in the region's brand communications and product development initiatives.

5. The Chamber of Commerce, in association with CVALCO, should **convene meetings** with all relevant businesses throughout the area to demonstrate the importance of the new county and local area branding and positioning. The organizations should convey how the initiatives will enhance the success of the area's businesses and the steps needed to underpin and deliver the brand to visitors.

2. Attractors and Experiences

These are the features and attributes that motivate people to visit a place and in turn encourage them to extend their stay. They may be physical sites, events, places or a feeling that people derive from the place.

The visitor attractors for Florence and its coastal area are centered on the city's historic Old Town; the area's coastal outdoor recreation activities including sand boarding, dune buggy riding, kayaking, beach trail horseriding; the nearby Oregon Dunes and scenic parks, lakes and beaches; and the Oregon Sea Lion Caves and Heceta Head Lighthouse. The newly expanded Three Rivers Casino with its wide variety of visitor facilities adds greater depth to the area's tourism appeal.

Key Experience Themes

Key experience themes are the broad categories of activities that complement and support the positioning of the city. These themes reflect its value proposition and competitive advantage in delivering outstanding customer moments in these activities.

The recommended **key experience themes** for **Florence** are:

- Coastal Adventures
- Coastal Getaways including romantic, family, and friends getaways
- Events
- Natural Wonders

When projecting the area geographically it should be presented as three distinct precincts - Historic Old Town, Sea Lion Caves and Heceta Head Lighthouse, and the Dunes and Lakes.

Geographic Precincts

The aspects of Florence that hold visitor interest cover a very large area, particularly north and south along the coast. When combined with the variety of locations and activities available, visitors may not readily comprehend the range of options that Florence has to offer. Importantly, some of these options, such as the Sea Lion Caves and Heceta Head Lighthouse area, are not always identified specifically with Florence.

A simpler way to present Florence and surrounds is to focus on three tourism precincts – Historic Old Town and River, Sea Lion Caves and Heceta Head Lighthouse, and the Dunes and Lakes. These precincts provide the greatest density of high quality visitor experiences, and simplify the presentation of the area's attractions.

Recommended Actions:

6. When expressing Florence in geographical terms as a destination, present it as comprising three visitor precincts: Historic Old Town and river, the Sea Lion Caves - Heceta Head Lighthouse, and the sand dunes, lakes and parks areas. When developing a map of the area, focus on the detail of the three precincts, not on most of the intervening areas between the precincts.

Historic Old Town

Florence's Historic Old Town is an outstanding case study on the preservation and development of an historic district. A former fishing village, Old Town is now a vibrant and historically-intact riverside precinct. Its timber buildings and Victorian style, historic significance and many positive qualities suggest it should be designated as a National Historic District.

Easy to walk, Old Town contains numerous excellent specialty shops including clothing, toy, antique stores and art galleries. Its main street (Bay Street) and side streets possess between them at least twelve quality dining and food service establishments. There are also coffee shops, bakeries, candy stores, bars, wine bars, bookshop, gift shops, and a central set of riverside restrooms. There appear to be few vacant buildings. The business signage is in keeping with the theme of the district and work well. Only one sign along Bay Street was neglected and in need of repair.

Old Town is an outstanding precinct and should be renamed Historic Old Town and apply for designation as a National Historic District.

Its juxtaposition to the historic Siuslaw River Bridge adds to the precinct's charm. The original port area and a marina are located on its eastern side across from the large parking area and its Boardwalk overlooking the docks.

The precinct contains two museums, Siuslaw Pioneer Museum focused on local history and the Fly Fishing Museum. Some interpretation plaques and materials are occasionally found, however it is fragmented. There is a walking map of Old Town, but it does not provide insights into the history or other parts of the area.

A visitor to Florence entering Old Town from Highway 101 immediately notices a stark contrast between the character of Highway 101 streetscapes and those of Old Town. The enjoyable ambiance of Old Town is tied closely to the vision, policies, and regulations that have influenced the sense of authenticity in regard to its architectural, streetscape and precinct integrity. This balance appears to have been aided by developers, landlords and business owners who have maintained quality design standards for signage, renovations and remodeling. This has all been achieved without the district feeling overly 'touristy' – an immensely attractive and distinguishing attribute in the eyes of many of today's discerning tourists.

Old pylons at Old Town Park obstruct scenic views and photographs of the bridge. The term "Loop" is not readily meaningful to visitors and the gateways and advanced warning signage to the precinct should be improved.

Pleasantly, there is the evident lack of chain stores and ubiquitous fast food outlets. The authenticity of the area is integral to its tourism appeal and integrity. Many other historic districts have discovered this benefit, when ensuring such controls are introduced and enforced. It is these and other qualities of Old Town that make Florence distinctive. Yet, the precinct and its importance to the city's tourism economy does not seem to get the level of priority treatment that it should, particularly in regard to directional signage, gateways and marketing exposure.

As one local tourism industry leader said, "It is not obvious how to get to Old Town", one of the city's most important business generators. Local businesses indicated that they feel the Highway 101 "Old Town Loop" signs are not working because the meaning of the term 'loop' is not clear. We agree! Additionally, these signs are not optimally positioned for driver visibility.

The entrances to Historic Old Town from Highway 101 and 126 are inadequate and do not suggest the quality of the experiences offered by the heritage district. Additionally, the typeface or font used on the Old Town gateway signs should be more attuned to the maritime heritage qualities of the precinct.

Recommended Actions:

7. Ensure that City **guidelines and policies** in regard to Historic Old Town and the Sluislaw Bridge precinct continue to protect the authentic, historic and distinctive character of the area.

8. Formally change the name of the district from Old Town to '**Historic Old Town**'.

9. Apply to the National Register of Historic Places to have the Historic Old Town area designated as a **National Historic District**.

10. Develop an extended over-water **boardwalk on the river side of Bay Street** to strengthen the water related experience of visitors. It should be designed to provide expanded dining opportunities with river views.

11. Introduce **thematic interpretation signs and displays** throughout Historic Old Town that reflect the important cultural and natural heritage themes of the town and the river. These should form interesting self-guided walking tours which are supported by brochures, maps, web pages and costumed guides.

12. Improve the attractiveness and welcome at all **Historic Old Town gateways** with appropriate landscaping, welcome signs using fonts and designs that are appropriate to the theme of the precinct.

13. Intensely **landscape** the entrance and roadway from the corner of Highway 126 and Quince Street, which is an important gateway for visitors from Eugene. This should be extended all along Quince Street into Old Town, using a unifying species of trees to define the path and to provide privacy for residents where necessary.

14. Remove the highest old **wooden pylons** in the water that are blocking excellent photo opportunities from the viewing deck of Old Town Park.

15. Introduce additional **landscaping** including tree plantings and **public art** to visually and physically connect the eastern end of Bay Street to the Bridgeport Market and Marina area.

16. **Landscape** the area of Bay Street just below and around the **Siuslaw River Bridge** support posts and stairs to present a more attractive path for visitors wanting to explore the bridge.

17. Change the confusing '**Old Town Loop**' highway signs to read 'To Historic Old Town' or, if too long, 'To Old Town'. Review their placement to improve visibility and to provide sufficient decision time for motorists if they want to turn.

18. Install additional **advance warning highway signs** for Historic Old Town along Highway 101, particularly one far enough in advance of crossing the Siuslaw River Bridge from the south so that a right hand turn for the district is possible and safe.

19. Increase awareness of the large parking lot beside the boardwalk by providing additional **directional parking** (P) **signs**.

Hiking and Adventure Trails

There are so many natural areas and related trails to explore around Florence that they need to be prioritized to identify those which provide the must do or best experience for visitors. This approach will make it easier for visitors to quickly review and decide on their options.

Recommended Actions:

20. Identify the area's trails that should be **prioritized** and highlighted as the "must dos" because of their variety of memorable, scenic and exciting features. For example, those in the Lighthouse area would include the Hobbit Trail.

21. Do not overlook trails, or sections of them, that are of **State significance**, like the Coast Horse Trail System, Oregon Coast Birding Trail, the Oregon Coast Bike Trail. Ensure these are featured in CVALCO and Chamber marketing materials.

22. Install **'Begin Trail'** signs with relevant biking and hiking symbols on signs and interpretive information at the key entry points to the area's priority trails. Advance warning signs on roads approaching these sites should also be installed.

Lane County Parks

The County Park closest to Historic Old Town is the popular Harbor Vista Park which provides an excellent range of well maintained facilities and sites for RVs, campers and day visitors. This park is well signed on and off Highway 101 with international symbols for activities and services also clearly visible. At Heceta Beach, there is a second small County Park. This is a fee-based beach access parking lot for a very limited number of vehicles.

Recommended Actions:

23. Provide signs to indicate that an excellent **viewpoint** and beach access is available with the Harbor Vista Park site.

Touring Route

While preparing these Visitor Readiness Reports, the TDM team was informed that many international visitors stop in Oakridge while traveling to or from Crater Lake and the Oregon Coast. A route originating in Portland and including Florence, Oakridge, and Crater Lake would be of interest to international visitors.

Recommended Actions:

24. Develop and publicize a **self drive itinerary for international visitors** in conjunction with CVALCO and Travel Oregon.

Cultural Activities

During interviews and in the community survey, residents expressed the need for more opportunities enabling the community's growing population of artists to exhibit their skills and products. Each year, Florence hosts a number of excellent events that add to the city's appeal as an attractive place to visit. Among the events are the Rhododendron, Winter Folk, and Rods 'n Rhodies Festivals, additionally the opportunity exists for the city to capitalize on its quality seafood restaurants and create an annual Seafood Festival.

Consider introducing landscaping and public art to the grounds of the Florence Events Center. Assess the feasibility of establishing an event that focuses on Florence's many fine fresh seafood restaurants and growing arts community in an annual "Seafood and Arts Festival" centered in the Historic Old Town precinct.

Recommended Actions:

25. Investigate the feasibility of initiating another community event in Spring or Fall based on a **Seafood and Art Festival**, or Seafood and Wine Festival if that is considered more appropriate. This combines the excellent local seafood restaurants, the art community and Lane County wineries.

26. More prominently reflect the **Florence Events Center's** many arts activities, events and related activities on its external upper tower walls. This could be achieved with two colorful designs or murals possibly featuring local artists or local Native American art. This will also have the effect of enlivening the center and making it more attractive and noteworthy. Increase the landscaping of the Events Center site, in conjunction with the landscaping that has been recommended for Quincy Street, including the placement of public art in the grounds.

3. Streetscapes, Signage and Gateways

This section addresses the streetscapes, place elements and signage that are needed to provide a quality visitor experience. These provide a sense of place, welcome and community spirit.

It is easy for communities to overlook the appearance of their streets, the absence of trees, the poor lighting, trash and bad signage that may have evolved over the years. Visitors however, are much less forgiving. Where attention has been paid to the aesthetics of a place including preserving or enhancing its natural qualities and environments, it gains the reputation as a "special place".

These are issues of great importance to Florence's tourism appeal, development and continuing success, particularly given that more and more tourists are becoming concerned about issues of authenticity and local character.

Streetscapes

The most important thoroughfares in Florence are Highways 101 and 126. The impression that motorists obtain driving Highway 101 through Florence is not necessarily one of an enticing and attractive city. This view was reinforced by our interviews and discussions with residents, our site inspections and from some of the comments in the community online survey. This lengthy stretch of highway is characterized by visual clutter from unattractive strip malls and commercial buildings, a multitude of signs, inadequate official signage and extensive un-landscaped sidewalks and properties. Noticeable efforts have been undertaken in some blocks, most notably by the Fred Meyers, however other properties and businesses lack similar attention to their visual attractiveness.

Highway 101 through Florence is characterized by visual clutter from unattractive strip malls and commercial buildings, a multitude of signs, inadequate official signage and extensive unlandscaped sidewalks.

There are other cities on the Oregon Coast that have similar problems with their streetscapes on Highway 101 and Florence should attempt to do everything possible to distinguish itself from them. The city has the opportunity to turn this negative into a positive. Our interviews revealed that a major deterrent for businesses in addressing many of the beautification and signage issues was that they would have to consult with ODOT. One person during an interview informed us that consulting ODOT "would open a whole other can of worms and we would rather live with our problem than get involved with them." If this sentiment is widespread, the perceptions and fears of ODOT (whether well founded or not) are negatively impacting the attractiveness and economic vitality of the city.

Recommended Actions:

27. Form a highway **signage and beautification working group** comprising government, private and non-profit representatives to initiate imaginative park-like and signage improvements on Highway 101. If one does not already exist, in collaboration with ODOT, the City of Florence and public, private and non profit organizations develop a **corridor beautification plan** for Highway 101.

28. **Landscape sidewalks** at the unattractive entrance to Florence for visitors from Eugene at the intersection of Highways 126 and 101.

Gateways

First impressions start at the entrance to the city. Appearances really count when it comes to attracting visitors and the economic well-being they can bring to places. Visitors are attracted to, and spend more time in places that are attractive, clean, welcoming, and well maintained. The gateways to Florence are not always well defined, nor are the welcome signs necessarily positioned in the most appropriate locations. The welcome sign greeting motorists from the north is situated about two miles from City Hall and Historic Old Town and adds to the impression that Florence is one long commercial strip.

Recommended Actions:

29. Move the welcome sign at the **northern entrance** to the city to an appropriate point about a half or a quarter mile from City Hall to present a better sense of arrival.

30. Introduce **pull-off information bays** on 101 on the outskirts of Florence, allowing easy off highway access from 101 north and south and 126 heading west. These should feature a large area map identifying the area's three key visitor precincts and important information to orient the visitor to the area.

Highway and Street Signage

Signage and wayfinding systems also serve vital roles. They inform, guide, and motivate travelers. They are also important in shaping the identity of a place through their style, design, colors, lettering, content and placement.

Highways 101 and 126

These highways into the Florence area provide an excellent opportunity to influence thousands of motorists every day. Importantly, many of them are interstate and overseas visitors who could be enticed to make Florence their overnight or multi-night base for exploring the coast.

Others may have only an hour or two to spare in the area but by their volume can also make a valuable economic contribution to the area. If impressed by what they can see and do, they may even decide to stay over or at least return in the future.

Recommended Actions:

31. Introduce and enforce **guidelines and controls** for business signage along 101 aimed at improving both their visual attractiveness and functionality.

I-5 Freeway to Florence

The visibility of Highway 126 directional signage to Florence and the coast through Eugene-Springfield could be improved. There is a critical link to be followed from Eugene to Florence if the process of attracting and diverting potential visitors off the Interstate 5 is to be successful. Signs to Florence from the Interstate 5 were missing when driving from the south, but the newly developed section of freeway now has directional signage specifying 'Florence'.

However once the turn to the west is made into Eugene, there is a need to review the signs directing travelers to Florence, particularly as they negotiate the various lane changes and turns before reaching the city's outskirts. It is too easy to lose this path and potentially become lost. For example, when turning left on Chambers Street and heading for Florence, the turn left sign is small and is located on the right hand side of the road. Then heading into 11th, there is either no sign or it is too easily missed if one exists.

Recommended Actions:

32. To enhance international and national travelers' understanding of the area, request that ODOT make the highway signage from the **north and south on the I-5** in Eugene even more effective by introducing the signs 'Florence-Oregon Coast' in one or two lines.

33. Review and improve where necessary the **directional signs to Florence - Oregon Coast** through Eugene-Springfield.

Tourist Attraction Signage

Along Highway 101 there are many faded and unattractive commercial signs in need of refurbishment, including some for the highway motels. Adding to the signage confusion and clutter, a giant and not particularly attractive billboard dominates the horizon approaching the Historic Old Town area from the north on Highway 101.

The large Highway 101 *Driftwood Shores* billboard directing travelers down Heceta Beach road to their facility is also looking washed out and in need of refreshment. The photographic image should be clearer and more attractive.

Heceta Beach Road has a directional sign at a key intersection, with an arrow pointing to the right when the beach is located to the left. This is a little confusing when most people would initially read the larger type saying Heceta Beach and most likely fail to read the much smaller 'Rd' letters.

An old and virtually unreadable "Chamber of Commerce Tourist and Service Club Information" sign, with an under-hanging board giving the highway address in Florence in small lettering that could not be read by a passing motorist, remains on the southern approach to the Siuslaw River Bridge, on the right side.

Seaplane rides are still advertised near Woahink Lake but it is nearly impossible to establish if this service still operates. It apparently may not, making the sign misleading and in need of removal.

The prominent highway signs pointing the way to the Port of Siuslaw and presumably its RV Park, reflect a much higher priority than the signs for directing visitors to the city's major attraction, Historic Old Town.

When viewed from a northern approach, the privately erected and fairly large 'Sand Master Park' and 'Sand Ranch' sign next to the highway at the Park's entry point is initially obscured by a Speed 40 sign and then by an Ocean Dunes Golf Links sign. There is also a need for a more prominent advanced warning sign for Sand Master Park from the Southern approach on Highway 101.

Recommended Actions:

34. Ensure that vegetation obscuring the final sign indicating the turn off point to **Honeyman State Park** is always cleared. This is possibly only a seasonal problem.

35. Install highway signs indicating **'Beach Access'** or 'To Beach' where it is missing at key 101 intersections, such as the Heceta Beach Road turnoff and at access points to the ten mile stretch of wide sandy beach commencing south of the Sea Lion Caves promontory area. Heceta Beach itself has two ¼ mile advance signs, but none at the actual street turnoff.

36. Introduce advance warning tourist attraction signs where missing, such as for the **Sand Master Park**.

37. Encourage ODOT to introduce, the **international symbol signs** highlighting the access to key activities such as hiking, horse riding and kayaking, etc. along highways.

Wayfinding

Florence is growing and maturing as a city to the point where a formalized, well designed wayfinding system is becoming necessary. This system will enable residents and visitors to find their way to the many community, business, visitor and government locations in the area.

Recommended Actions:

38. Introduce a formalized and well designed **wayfinding signage system** in Florence.

4. Marketing Communications

This section outlines the approaches that should be taken to communicate the Florence area's brand messages to prospective visitors. These actions may be enhanced in the future according to the scale of the budget available for these activities and the level of partner participation.

"What's in it for me?"

In order to ensure that all communications are customer-focused and convey enticing benefits, imagine that the customer is looking over your shoulder as you prepare the marketing materials. When you proof-read the copy, select an image, or complete the production, imagine that the customer asks you, "*So, what's in it for me*?" This technique helps to maintain a customer-centered approach and can counter the bias of locals. The approach becomes all the more relevant when trying to satisfy people with specific special interests such as kayaking, sandboarding, hiking, diving, etc. Generalized statements are not effective with these visitors. They require specific, detailed information expressed using the terms that they recognize.

Wherever possible, all communications should be led by core experiences and benefits, and not by facts, member lists or information included mainly to please internal stakeholders. Marketing materials must portray how the place will make customers feel and answer their perennial question, "W*hat's in it for me?"* In doing this, it is important to recognize where the visitor is in their decision-making and total destination experience. Don't make the mistake of overwhelming the prospective visitor with too much information that is irrelevant to their immediate needs.

Publications

Despite the advances in online communications and the Internet, brochures continue to play an important role in marketing and visitor satisfaction. However, they need to be well designed, thoughtfully written, and carefully distributed. Importantly, brochures should be designed so that they are aligned with the visitor's information needs at specific points in their decision-making as outlined on page 4.

Many cities try to promote themselves by using uninteresting lists of local attractions, businesses and services. While this information does have a role later in the decision-making of customers, it is rarely important at an early stage when visitors are developing their initial awareness and image of the place. Lists of where to eat, stay, and shop alone do not achieve this. Prospective visitors first need to be convinced of what is appealing, special and memorable about the place, i.e. the reason/s for choosing to visit

Florence Area Visitor Brochures and Maps

One of the most serious impediments to the marketing of Florence is that there is not an **Official Florence Visitor Brochure** currently produced by the Chamber. The

provision of visitor information is largely left to the many commercially produced brochures on the area. Many of these are "advertising vehicles" and frequently do not present Florence in a manner which makes it enticing when compared to other costal destinations. The existence of so many publications makes it confusing for prospective visitors to review them quickly and to make informed decisions. Florence must take control of its identity by more carefully managing how it is portrayed. A need exists for a well designed 'official' guide to Florence that is comprehensive and is of the highest competitive standards.

Another important concern is that Florence's main recreation and soft adventure guide officially endorsed by the Chamber, the *Midcoast Wave Recreation Guide*, does not present a balanced view of the areas relevant experiences. Recreation is a very loose term with no easily definable meaning to many different types of visitors, e.g. international visitors would be more familiar with the term 'adventure' activities. The Guide does not prioritize the activities and key experiences in a user friendly way. This fact is reflected in this guide's approach, to its detriment. For example, a page on antique shopping is positioned exactly opposite a page on sand boarding. Image standards are inconsistent and it soon becomes clear to a reader that it is primarily an advertising driven publication.

Commercial advertising dominates even more so in the equally significant visitor need for a good map of Historic Old Town. The current *Old Town Walking Map* for this highly important precinct sensibly adopts the use of a bird's eye 3D view of the area and is almost pocket-sized, but when first unfolded shows a page filled with disparately designed ads. Given that most of these duplicate their well structured official listings on the map page, the advertising space could be more effectively used to convey Historic Old Town in a more enticing way.

The publication assumes that people are already committed to visiting Historic Old Town because there is very little focus on portraying the appeal and personal benefits of a visit. The overall design and selection of images fail to do this in an evocative way. For instance, the cover image should not feature the bridge, but communicate the attractiveness, benefits or rewards of special moments in the precinct.

The visitor map currently produced by the Chamber is very detailed and ideal for new residents, however from a visitor perspective it is far too detailed, e.g. includes all neighborhood streets, and it does not include many important locations for visitors.

There is the need for an increased level of collaboration between CVALCO and all Chambers of Commerce throughout Lane County to develop a brochure and map production strategy. This will serve to conserve resources, improve quality, increase distribution and avoid duplication.

Recommended Actions:

39. In addressing the brochure needs of the city, the Chamber should take advantage of CVALCO resources and participate in the development of a county-wide publication and distribution strategy. A **Florence Activities Guide** is needed. This

rack brochure should have its sole focus on what to see and do, highlighting the key experience themes. It should be designed to entice people from hundreds of miles away to visit the city. A good example of this is the attractively produced Newport, Oregon brochure. The cover image of the Florence brochure should not feature the bridge because other Oregon Coast cities such as Depoe Bay and Astoria highlight bridges in their marketing. Florence should not market itself on the basis of a "me too" approach. Instead the city must feature what makes Florence distinctive, engaging and a place to go out of your way to visit – a bridge does not achieve this. The focus must be on communicating the benefits of the area's key experience themes.

40. Produce a **visitor's guide**, specifically for use by people staying in the area. Care should be taken to ensure that advertising in the publication does not dominate the design and detract from its effectiveness. Do not include businesses that are not directly relevant to visitors e.g. insurance agencies. This brochure should not be used as a device to publicize all members of the Chamber as this is counter productive to the purpose of the guide. To simplify travel within and impart an understanding of the Florence area, consider separating the destination into its three key visitor zones by the use of a set of interconnected maps, images, and specific information on each precinct.

41. Because visitors have trouble finding access points to the beach, ensure that all appropriate maps show the most convenient beach access points. Additionally, create suggested itineraries to demonstrate how visitors can spend one, two, three and four days using Florence as a base. This will not only assist the city in attracting and retaining visitors, but also help create effective links between Florence and the area's three precincts. These should be included in Chamber and partner brochures, web content and press releases.

42. **CVALCO's Visitors Guide** description of Florence should be more specific rather than general. It should be focused around the specifics of the key experience themes and itineraries, and not simply generically describe the place.

43. Ensure that Florence is included in future editions of the **Travel Oregon Trip Planner.** The information should be specific as in the CVALCO brochure suggestions.

44. Ensure that all significant **State and County parks** are clearly indicated on the all area maps. The maps should indicate how to access the parks and use international symbols to convey available activities and services. Where possible the same approach should be employed in regard to the area's river system, beaches, and trails.

45. Redesign the map of Florence and surrounds with the focus on the three visitor precincts. This should be addressed with CVALCO to ensure that the map is appropriate for their needs as well and to gain maximum distribution. Importantly,

it should be designed with a strong visitor needs focus and provide detail specific to their interests, and not include all neighborhood streets.

46. Ensure that the brochures of Florence **lodging establishments** use the most enticing and relevant copy and images to project the area's key experience themes and the benefits of its central location.

47. Ensure that Florence's priority soft adventure experiences are featured in **CVALCO's proposed soft adventure guide**.

Information Distribution

Access to visitor information in the form of brochures, maps and personal advice is critical to visitor satisfaction and extending a visitor's length of stay in the community and whether they return to the city. In the case of Florence and its coastal surrounds, strategically located information will assist in encouraging people to stop, visit and extend their stay in the area.

The new Florence Area Chamber's Visitor Information Center is well run with great strengths in terms of location, service standards, and well informed about the area's tourism attractors and visitor services. The center is located on Highway 101 and a short walking distance from Historic Old Town, although this may not be immediately apparent to visitors.

The Visitor Center has a wide range of brochures available on the area. This material is available 6 days a week. The building is closed on Sundays and only opens on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm from May through to September.
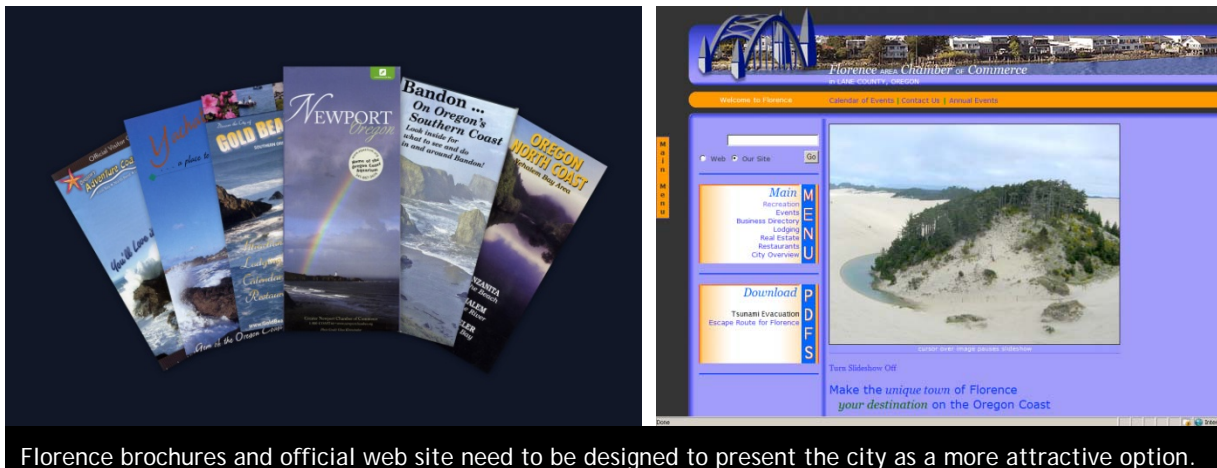
Opportunities for improvement still exist, particularly in regard to signage, presentation of visitor information and the use of visual imagery of the area. The TDM team noticed a visitor information sign on the casino administration office on Highway 101 and on entering the building found that information is no longer available from this location.

Recommended Actions:

48. Install a large Florence area **weatherproof visitor map** with a floodlit, vandal resistant surface in the most appropriate position outside the Visitor Center to facilitate after-hours access to information. It should also provide a dispenser for the official visitor guide and map.

49. Restructure the **organization of the brochures** in the Visitor's Center foyer to prioritize all tourism and local destination brochures. The focus should be on these, rather than non tourism material relating to real estate agents and other business services. Also undertake this restructure with a view to highlighting the three key visitor precincts/zones and the area's key experience themes.

50. Adopt the approach, similar to Portland's Pioneer Square Visitor Center in creating an instant impact of the area's stunning beauty by installing a **large, high**

definition monitor on the wall space above the main counter. Feature only the best and most evocative imagery of the area.

51. During peak periods extend Visitor Center **operating hours** to seven days per week.

52. **Hotels** should be encouraged to display Florence brochures separate from the brochures for other regions in their lobbies. Other businesses, especially restaurants should be encouraged to display local brochures.

53. In collaboration with CVALCO work with **brochure distribution companies** to ensure that Lane County and Florence area attractions, operator and activity brochures are visible and organized together, possibly on the top shelf in brochure racks. This task may eventually rest with the management of lodging to ensure that this local information is prominently and conveniently displayed because it can directly add to their guest's length of stay.

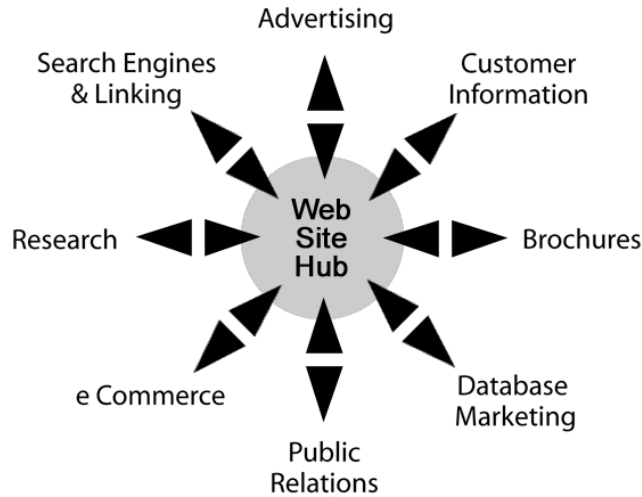54. Remove the "visitor information" sign at the **casino offices** on Highway 101.

Florence brochures and official web site need to be designed to present the city as a more attractive option.

Web Marketing

The Florence area web site should be the central hub for all external marketing and communications programs conducted by the Chamber. It should provide the focal point for consumers, media, and travel trade to easily access information and interactive experiences. People searching online for travel information are generally seeking four important benefits:

1. They want to find the site they are looking for quickly,
2. They want the site to be very easy to navigate,
3. They want comprehensive and credible content, and
4. Assistance in taking the "next steps".

The following diagram illustrates the marketing activities that can be integrated into the Chamber's web site.

The diagram shows a "Web Site Hub" at the center with bidirectional arrows connecting to: Advertising, Customer Information, Brochures, Database Marketing, Public Relations, e Commerce, Research, and Search Engines & Linking.

Florence Area Web Sites

The internet allows destinations like Florence to project their message globally at a fraction of the cost of a decade ago. However, simply having a web site does not guarantee that online visitors will access the site nor guarantee that once there they will spend time exploring it.

City and Chamber web sites are frequently the front windows for their communities and play essential roles in their marketing and economic development. They are also important to the self image that residents hold of the place where they live. At present the Chamber web site is not maximizing its potential in projecting the distinctiveness or character of Florence. The Chamber's web site serves a dual role in trying to provide information for Chamber members and visitors. The focus needs to be more clearly focused on satisfying the needs of visitors.

Chamber Web Site

The **Florence Area Chamber of Commerce's** web site, like many other Chamber web sites, is trying to serve multiple roles by providing information for visitors, prospective new residents, investors, businesses and Chamber members. The challenge for the Chamber is to satisfy the needs of all audiences without negatively impacting the others. At present the visitor appeal of Florence and surrounds as a distinctive place with visitor appeal is diluted because of these multiple roles. For example, prominently featured on the Home Page is the Tsunami Warning and "How to escape Florence". Hardly a welcoming message.

The Chamber's main menu also clearly demonstrates these competing objectives. The primary role of the Chamber's web site should be to attract more visitors to the city and convert their interest into actual business for the community. This is a process that requires high quality, evocative imagery and detailed, customer-focused information.

Where the tourism identity of a community is secondary to economic development and member communications, it is far less successful in its tourism marketing. Increasing the emphasis on Florence's tourism appeal will have a greater benefit to Chamber members. Accordingly, the city's tourism identity should lead the design, content and navigation. It should also be organized around the key experience themes with the copy having sub headings to aid speed reading and enable readers to click on links to navigate to more detailed information. Lists of members do not achieve this.

Landing on local web sites for many people can be the result of searching on many other web sites, including Travel Oregon, CVALCO and Oregon.com. These people are possibly near the end of their search and are wanting detailed, accurate, relevant and easy to read and navigate information on specific subjects. They want less generic copy. Now is the time to sell Florence by expressing why it's special and how to experience it.

The CVALCO web site has an important role in the search for information. The Florence information on this site must be more specific. Again, the information needs to be focused around the key experiences.

Recommended Actions:

55. The Florence Area Chamber of Commerce **website should be redesigned** to project a stronger identity for the area as an outstanding and exciting place to visit. Its navigation, content and page design should be carefully reviewed in close consultation with CVALCO to ensure that the site embraces the best techniques appropriate to online tourism marketing. It must be more clearly focused on satisfying the needs of visitors and integrated into the Chamber's other marketing and information distribution programs, as well as those of CVALCO and Travel Oregon. Consider including the following pages in the redesigned site:
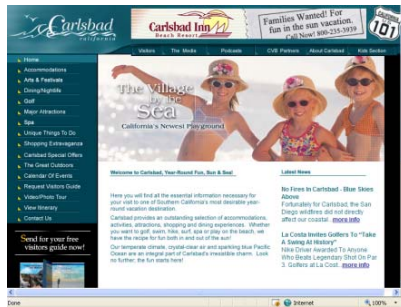
   - Home Page - structured around key experience themes and the three local precincts. It should reflect the brand positioning when that is determined.
   - Adventures in Nature
   - Adventures on Land
   - Adventures on Water
   - Book Now
   - Day Planner/Suggested itineraries
   - Distances to Other Places – including a basic map
   - Events
   - Find Outfitters and Guides
   - Leading Trails – descriptions of each including key features, distance, approximate time required, trailheads, international activity symbols, PDF of Trail
   - Links
   - Maps
   - Media Room

- Seasonal information – winter accessibility
- Testimonials
- The Coast-Cascades and Crater Lake Route
- Travel Trade – group tour information
- What to See and Do
- What's Happening
- What's New feature on Home Page
- Where to Eat and Drink
- Where to Shop
- Where to Stay

The web site should instantly differentiate Florence from other similar cities along Highway 101 and convey that it is THE central and most desirable visitor base on the Oregon Coast for easy access to dune, ocean, lake, river and land adventure activities. The images, copy and content should show that the destination makes it easy to enjoy even with limited time should support this claim.

The redesigned web site should feature direct telephone assistance and email hyperlinks prominently on the home page and not hidden under the *Contact Us* heading.

56. Investigate the possibility of the CVALCO and Florence sites sharing **a common database** of information. This will contribute to more relevant, accurate and comprehensive information being distributed and avoid the duplication of this task by all organizations.

57. **Maximize links** <u>to</u> the site from Florence, Oregon Coast, Northwest organizations and other third party sites. It is particularly important for local partners such as hotels to provide links from their web sites for prospective visitors to the city.

58. Invite visitors to the web site to **register to receive future email newsletters** regarding coming events, activities and seasonal news. Develop a database of contacts that can be contacted in future according to their interests and the availability of special deals, events and activities.

59. Those destinations that orient their web site content and images around **experiences and emotion** have found they are able to generate stronger connections with prospective visitors and this leads to a higher conversion rate to travel and positively influences their length of stay. Some examples of sites effectively using experiences and emotion are:

www.carlsbad.com

www.bellingham.org

60. The best **web copy** has a balance between being motivational and informative and strikes a chord with the reader because it does not speak in generalities, lists or features that are common to most places. The copy that speaks directly to the reader and connects with them by addressing how the place will make them feel and how this place meets their particular needs like no other. The copy on the Travel Wales web site (www.travelwales.org) is a good example of using these techniques.   The same techniques should be employed in preparing the copy for brochures and other collateral materials.

Web Search Issues

Search engines regularly visit web sites and filter their content to analyze, record, and file every word on every page. After thoroughly analyzing the site, algorithms are assigned to these words and phrases and a value assigned to the overall site. The web site's content and ease of navigation are instrumental in determining the priority that it is allocated by search engines and their ranking when visitors are searching for information. Additional elements which enhance the profile of web sites for search engines are key words, meta tags and meta descriptions that make it easier for online visitors to find their way around. It would seem that many of the techniques mentioned here have not been practiced as precisely as possible.

The website link that tops the search list on Google when the words 'Florence Oregon' are used is www.florenceoregon.net with the Chamber's site www.florencechamber.com listing in second place and www.oldtownflorence.com in third. Then two positions down is the www.el.com/to/florence.

This latter site is titled (under the Google listing) with 'Welcome to Florence, Oregon' whereas the Chamber's site is titled the very official 'Florence Oregon Chamber of Commerce' with no immediate indication of its tourism and visitor information content except the for the sub-text's mention of the word 'destination').

The leading entry from the search www.florenceoregon.net features some reasonable copy about the visitor attractions of the area, but it is mixed with business, retirement and real estate information on a rather low impact home page. This copy is published in a light grey or silver color which reduces its readability.

What is immediately apparent, in relation to searches to Florence and its attractions, is that a Google search conducted using the words *'sea lion caves'* generates by far the greatest number of pages with exposed subtext or headings mentioning 'Florence' as well the caves location near and above the city.

The CVALCO -Lane County website at www.visitlanecounty.org appeared at the very bottom of the fifth page of listings for this particular Google search. The generic opening copy on Florence coupled with the chosen order of content was not addressing key interests and the area's most potent attractors.

The Oregon Coast Visitors Association website also did not emerge early on the search for 'Florence Oregon' but did rate at fifteenth position under the search 'Florence Oregon Coast'. The overall presentation of Florence information on this site is very disappointing. It is as if the customer has to have detailed knowledge of the area first. Much of the information is in the form of generic copy and lists. It is not experiential or enticing, nor does it have a satisfactory depth of information. It is more a portal to other web sites and is not adding any value for the prospective visitor in their search.

The featured activity for Florence on OCVA's visittheoregoncoast.com/cities/florence page was the Sea Lion Caves, along with a featured link for 'Northwest Magazines' with no direct Florence content showing upon entry. Old Town was mentioned but not featured on OCVA's page for Florence amongst some generic opening copy. The map locating Florence along the Oregon Coast found on the left hand side did not highlight Florence's exact location when the Florence page is opened. If this was corrected it would certainly make it a little more user friendly. Additionally, www.beach connection.net carries some reasonably good copy and text describing the attractions of the wider Florence area.

When conducting searches using important park names from the area, one of the prominent sites listed on Google is www.stateparks.com. The site has flawed links and inadequate descriptions of attractions and parks. Yet the site appears to be an official website, but is competing with and potentially negating the value of the real Oregon State Parks website www.oregonstateparks.org.

Recommended Actions:

61. In conjunction with CVALCO, engage the services of a **search engine optimization specialist** to ensure that all aspects of the web site are operating at optimal performance levels for search engine optimization. Ensure that meta tags, meta descriptions, links, and key word density are considered as appropriate.

Public Relations

Allocating resources to generating increased media coverage can be highly effective in reaching key markets. The dissemination of materials to the media, handling their enquiries, and coordinating their visits can generate positive coverage of city attributes. Public relations should play a dynamic role within the Chamber's strategy to attract more visitors. The objective is to gain synergy from the collective efforts of

local partners as well as those of CVALCO and Travel Oregon to maximize media exposure.

Recommended Actions:

62. In conjunction with CVALCO, develop a basic media kit to promote the newly defined three key visitor precincts, the destination identity and positioning and their related key experiences, attractions and activities.

63. Prepare a media kit to be available online and provide updates as needed.

64. In collaboration with CVALCO, continue to explore how to assist them and Travel Oregon to publicize the area's key experience themes.

Images

The Florence area is competing against destinations that are well financed and use highly sophisticated marketing techniques. It is essential that the area's marketers use the highest possible quality images to project the beauty of the region and the exciting opportunities for its key experience themes. The opportunities for waterside lodging also need to be presented at their absolute best to convey their special qualities and establish why Florence is the best choice as a base for visitors to the Coast.

Many of the slideshow images currently in use on the Chamber website have merits but are inconsistent in quality and impact. The images should be upgraded and reformatted to achieve greater impact.

Recommended Actions:

65. In conjunction with CVALCO, develop a portfolio or image library of evocative and **high quality images** of the area's key experience themes including the waterside lodging options and great dining choices. Aim to make these 'wow factor' images as definitive and true to life as possible.

66. At the first opportunity, create or obtain the rights to high quality **video imagery** of the area's key positioning themes, experiences and attractions. It should be applied in all relevant marketing applications, particularly media, visitor center videos and web video.

Co-operative Marketing

Tourism businesses in Lane County have a variety of marketing opportunities at their disposal. Among the most effective are often the opportunities presented by CVALCO and Travel Oregon because they produce material that is integrated into wider marketing communication programs, including advertising. These provide exposure in applications that may not normally be accessible to small budget advertisers. Other co-operative marketing opportunities include public relations activities, database marketing, online marketing and direct mail. Importantly, these organizations are generating interest in Oregon and Lane County as destinations.

Recommended Actions:

67. Consult with CVALCO to optimize the city's participation in the **cooperative marketing and free publicity** activities offered by CVALCO and Travel Oregon.

68. Collaborate with CVALCO to ensure that **advertising** in publications by the Chamber and local tourism partners is targeted toward the most appropriate outlets and most likely to generate the best results.

69. Investigate and capitalize on the marketing opportunities presented by the **Three Rivers Casino and Hotel** to reach new markets and help define Florence area attractions and adventure and recreational activities.

Partners and Third Party Marketers

Destination marketers rely on a wide variety of organizations and partners to distribute information about their attractions and travel products. The Florence area is no exception and in this regard there are several organizations such as CVALCO, Travel Oregon, AAA and a variety of others that are in touch with prospective visitors to the area.

A short time spent using online search engines, browsing guide books and reviewing the brochure racks in Visitor Information Centers may reveal opportunities for additional exposure for the city. It is possible that Florence and the complete scope of its most significant attractions and experiences have been inadvertently omitted or have incorrect copy in some important publications, articles and web sites.

A short time spent using online search engines, browsing guidebooks and reviewing the brochure racks in Visitor Information Centers may reveal opportunities for additional exposure for the area.

Bookstores offer dozens of guidebooks relevant to travel in the Northwest and Oregon. The guidebooks cover a wide variety of interests from traveling with children and pets, to driving, hiking, camping, bird watching and weekend escapes. These guides are widely distributed in the USA and overseas and are highly influential in assisting readers, particularly interstate and international visitors, with their travel decisions.

The need to monitor third party publications and web sites is particularly acute for Florence because there is so much coverage for Oregon Coast publications that give little consideration to Florence's strategic and information distribution objectives.

Another important area that now requires constant monitoring by tourism organizations (and businesses) is the realm of social networking. Over the past decade, we could not have imagined the power that is now at the fingertips of our customers because of this new online technology. We seem to be leaving the information economy and now entering a conversation economy. Everyone can now be a journalist, travel writer, documentary-maker, promoter, opinion-leader, travel advisor, or food critic. These are low cost, yet high impact sources of opinion. The most powerful medium today for enticing customers isn't advertising – it's the conversations that we have among our family, friends and colleagues – and increasingly these are digital conversations through a screen of some sort.

Visitors to destinations have the tools to instantly blog about their experiences (good or bad) from anywhere in the world at any time, find their friends using mapping technology, use Flash applications to make their arrangements, subscribe to information sources using RSS, access someone's video of their vacation on YouTube, see pictures and comments on MySpace, and read the critiques of past visitors on sites like TripAdviser. All of these applications are available outside of the control of DMOs – and will have a profound impact on destination branding.

The challenge for places like Florence is to remain relevant when so much communication is taking place through informal channels. The marketing team, even in small cities will have to be more actively engaged in these social networking formats to monitor and assist the user-content that is being created. Places now must pay even more attention to the experiences that they are delivering and explore how to play a meaningful role in social networking applications.

Recommended Actions:

70. Conduct a thorough review of the coverage of Florence and its surrounds in **third party brochures, maps and web sites**. Check for accuracy, whether they project Florence in the best light, and whether they conform to the identity that the community wants to project. Contact these organizations immediately because harnessing the distribution power of third parties through their web sites, maps, and brochures can provide considerable leverage, add credibility and help get the city on more visitors' "shopping lists".

71. Establish a group of volunteers to **constantly monitor exposure** of Florence in publications and web sites.

72. Annually review the coverage of the Florence area in travel **guidebooks** such as Fodors, Lonely Planet, Moon, Rough Guide, and the many special interest guides for dining, hiking, cycling, ATVs, sandboarding, fishing, wildlife viewing, kayaking and kids etc., and their online versions. Check for accuracy and whether the Florence area is projected accurately and favorably. Ensure the coverage conforms

to the identity that the community wants to project. When appropriate, approach guidebook publishers with any suggested additions or corrections.

73. In collaboration with CVALCO develop a plan (that is constantly revised) to actively monitor and be engaged in **social networking applications** to ensure that Florence is accurately represented and provide clarification when needed. This should be closely integrated with CVALCO's own social networking strategy because visitor comments in most cases will relate to local attractions, lodging and services.

Research

Research does not have to be an expensive proposition. There are many cost effective options. Gaining an understanding of visitors and their motivations, attitudes and behavior can lead to greatly improved tourism performance. It is important to constantly monitor visitor satisfaction and seek ways of improving the experiences that are extended to them. This can be achieved by making a simple survey form or card available to them. The objective of this survey is not necessarily to register a high number of responses, but to monitor the specific issues that visitors raise in regard to the quality of their experience and identify where improvements might be necessary.

Recommended Actions:

74. In conjunction with CVALCO, the Chamber and appropriate local partners, initiate to **customer survey and research** program to gain insights into the demographics, behavior, motivations and satisfaction of visitors. Provide ongoing opportunities for visitors to provide feedback on their experiences by making **a simple satisfaction survey** or feedback form readily available through lodging, dining, Visitor Information Centers and online.

75. **Discuss visitor satisfaction** results at every Chamber tourism committee meeting.

5. Soft Adventure Operators and Outfitters

The diverse topography of Lane County makes it an ideal location for soft adventure activities. The region has an increasing number of soft adventure operators and outfitters offering activities and services such as sandboarding, rafting, fishing, mountain biking, and sea kayaking. These are generally small businesses that do not have broad distribution and sale of their products. However, when their role in the visitor experience is fully understood and acknowledged, they do represent many benefits of importance to those communities in which they operate.

The Benefits of Adventure Operators and Outfitters

These businesses enable communities to develop a more professionally based tourism industry and capture many benefits that may otherwise elude the community.

The simplest way to illustrate this point is that when such experiences are available and made known to visitors, they not only increase the reasons to make a visit, but also extend the time and spending of visitors.
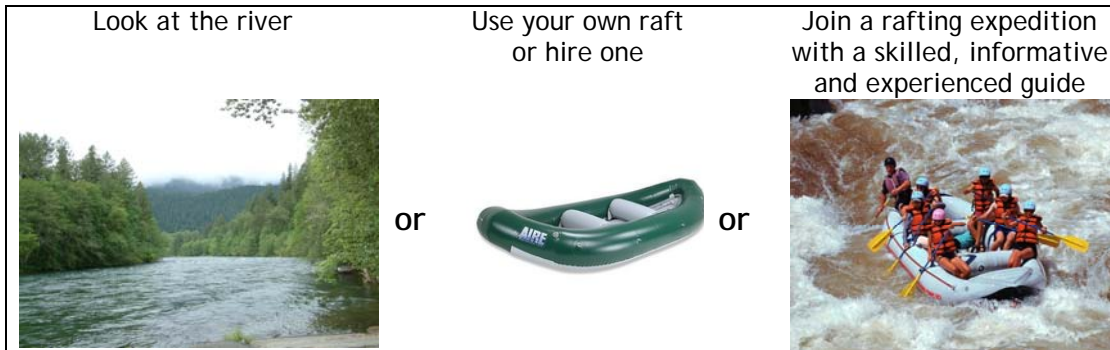
Having something to do for a half or full day, rather than say an hour, can mean the difference between a visitor either driving on or returning home, without the need for an overnight stay - and depriving the community of valuable income.

The range of benefits to communities includes:

- Attracting incremental visitors that the community may not have otherwise welcomed

- Attracting high yield visitors who usually buy other local services

- Increased length of stay

- Promoting the community through their sales and marketing, thus complementing the Chamber's marketing

- Increased economic and employment opportunities for the community

- A more personalized and authentic experience for visitors

- Increased interest from interstate and international visitors

- More small and micro businesses for small communities

Adventure Operators and Outfitters Add Value

A challenge for places that rely on nature-based tourism is one of generating economic benefits for their community. Forests, rivers, lakes and trails are usually free of charge or may involve a small parking, entrance or use fee, as in the case of County Parks, State/National Parks and some other categories of Federal/State land management agencies.

| Look at the river | Use your own raft or hire one | Join a rafting expedition with a skilled, informative and experienced guide |

The river in its natural form can be considered a commodity and not generate any direct economic benefit. A visitor might bring his own raft from home and in this case makes no direct, local economic contribution through use of the river. When the visitor hires a raft from a local outfitter, an economic contribution is made. However, when the visitor joins a rafting expedition that may include a mini-bus transfer, a meal, seat on the raft, the personal involvement of a skilled and experienced guide, and a fascinating and informative commentary about the river, he is purchasing a value-added experience. He has purchased more than a ride on the river, he has purchased a sense of security, an adventure he might not attempt without expert assistance, and a level of engagement that has created a memorable experience.

Adventure operators and outfitters not only add value to the visitor's experience, but also add to the greater economic well-being of their communities. The added economic value is generated through local payments for supplies, services, equipment, and the payment of wages to local staff.

The Power of Networking

Adventure operators and outfitters are small, independent businesses that must be highly targeted in their marketing activities. *Cross selling* may provide the synergy to generate increased distribution and sales by providing existing or potential customers with the opportunity to enjoy complementary or similar experiences. The idea is to capture a larger share of the consumer market by meeting more of their needs and wants and successful destinations deliberately set out to make this process as 'seamless' or effortless as possible for the visitor. Within the region this concept most readily applies to soft adventure operators and outfitters who can boost business for each other, as well as their communities and other tourism businesses e.g. lodging and dining establishments, general stores, etc. by adopting a more collaborative approach.

Some of the cross selling techniques that can be employed include:

- Displaying brochures of other operators

- Providing information and advice on other activities whenever possible

- Packaging and bundling of the products of different operators

- Pricing incentives such as discounts or two-for-ones, e.g. take a rafting trip and get a 10% discount on sandboarding

- Recommendation and selling the product of others to consumer, trade and media

- Web and brochure coverage and links to other operators

- Staff training in products of other operators

Recommended Actions:

76. **Meet with operators** from around the region on a quarterly basis to explore ways to collaborate and address priority issues of importance to all.

77. Operators should identify and activate appropriate **cross selling techniques**.

78. Operators should participate in appropriate CVALCO and Travel Oregon **cooperative marketing** opportunities that are directed toward their target audiences.

79. Ensure that soft adventure operators are given prominence in the **Chamber's destination marketing** and not treated as "just another member". They are attractors in their own right, just like a Broadway show is to New York. They can provide a competitive edge over other places and may attract visitors who may not otherwise visit the area.

80. Work with appropriate **local and regional lodging** to encourage them to actively promote operators to guests, develop packages and include operators in web and brochure copy.

81. Ensure that the services of local operators are **easy to book** via phone and internet.

82. Investigate the need for and feasibility of a **regional reservations system**.

83. Ensure that all Florence area soft adventure opportunities are included in CVALCO's **proposed adventure tourism brochure**.

Florence Operator Issues

The availability of quality outfitters and operators is very important for action-oriented visitors to Florence. Among the leading operators are Central Coast Water Sports, Sand Master Park, Sand Dunes Frontier, Sandland Adventures and C and M Stables. Several operators are evidently already under financial pressure. Most are seasonal operations and the current economic downturn is adding to their problems. These businesses provide a very important value-added role for the region and have the ability to substantially enhance the experience of visitors. They have the capacity to attract more visitors to the city and encourage them to stay longer. It is important that the opportunity to participate in these activities is strongly associated with a visit to Florence. Accordingly, they should be an integral element in the marketing of the attractors of the city. At present there appears to be very little synergy and cross selling between these operators. It is quite possible that a customer for one of these businesses is likely to be a customer for the activities of another. Their operating

locations are spread over a large geographic area and none have a presence or visibility in Historic Old Town, the area's main visitor pedestrian precinct.

Recommended Actions:

84. Investigate establishing a '**one stop shop**' soft adventure and recreational activities sales and booking outlet in an Historic Old Town location, with kayaking hire and river access nearby. This will elevate the profile of all operators and integrate them into the area's main tourism experiences. The adventure center may be a booking office operated by a business relocated to the Old Town area e.g. kayaking.

85. Ensure that soft adventure operators are given prominence in the **Chamber's destination marketing** and not be treated as "just another member". They are attractors in their own right, just like a Broadway show is to New York, they may provide a competitive edge over other places and may attract visitors who may not otherwise visit the city.

6. Leadership and Organization

Tourism is an important form of economic development and is about generating added income and jobs for communities. Successful tourism requires a seamless delivery of information and experiences between public, private and non profit organizations. Optimizing its benefits will require the support and actions of more than the Chamber of Commerce. It will also require the long-term advocacy, support and collaboration of many individuals and organizations both within Florence and further afield.

The area's tourism leadership must help ensure that all its key tourism assets and precincts are more fully acknowledged and capitalized upon in the future. The tourism industry at large must also respond to the need to refine its focus in positioning, marketing and a more unified and strategic approach to visitor communications.

Recommended Actions:

86. Establish **Florence Tourism Development Working Group**. It is recommended that this group comprise representatives of a variety of local, county, state and national organizations with an interest in tourism and economic development. It should not be dominated by members of any one local organization category. The objective is to facilitate the effective development of tourism by optimizing access to marketing, funding, and governmental agencies at county, state, and national levels.

87. The tourism committee should review the recommendations in this Visitor Readiness Report with the view to developing an **Implementation Action Plan**. After considering the actions required, the budgets, timeline and organizations responsible for each recommendation, they should all be prioritized according to their importance/impact, urgency and resources required. In developing the Action Plan it is important to ensure that there are some quick and easy early successes. Consider 30 day/90 day/ six month and one year action goals.

88. Develop an annual **Tourism Action Plan** in consultation with CVALCO to ensure that all opportunities are being optimized.

89. Participate with other **Lane County destination marketers in regular meetings** by CVALCO in order to optimize integration of web marketing, brochure production, information distribution and the optimization of cooperative marketing opportunities.

90. Keep residents informed of the **economic and social benefits** of tourism to the city and surrounds, particularly as it relates to recreational activities, outfitters, Old Town and Highway 101 businesses and events. The target audiences here should be residents, community opinion leaders and government officials.

91. In conjunction with CVALCO conduct **Tourism 101 workshops** for local tourism partners to ensure that they are familiar with the tourism marketing, distribution and product development best practices.

The Spirit of Hospitality

Oregon's visitors are becoming more experienced and discerning in what they expect from the places they visit, where they stay, shop, eat and relax. Generalized conclusions about the extensive Florence area's customer service standards would neither be practical, advisable or accurate given the range of possibilities and variables arising. Observations on this issue must be limited to the 'secret shopper' experiences encountered as a visitor at those establishments and services able to be patronized within the time available.

What was evident from several TDM team visits to Florence was that most customer service experiences were of a good, appropriate and satisfying standard. Particularly outstanding were some of the dining and food service standards. Experiences with lodging staff also reinforced this observation.

One exception related to the rather abrupt attitude found at an otherwise appealing and well run outfitter. But their product was certainly locked into what market research says is of interest to many visitors and they seemed to be doing well "despite themselves".

When put to the test by a variety of means, the Chamber's own staff (from director level down to front desk and call center) without exception, proved highly commendable in the knowledgeable, prompt and friendly way they delivered their genuinely helpful information assistance. This also helps make an excellent leadership statement to the wider business community.

The "Q Program" developed by Travel Oregon is an excellent primer for communities to refresh and refocus on service. Florence and its Chamber in association with Lane Community College have been one of the leading localities on the Coast to activate this program to good advantage.

Recommended Actions:

92. Continue the "**Q Customer Service Training Program**" in Florence.

93. **Front line staff** in lodging and restaurants should be kept informed about things to see and do locally for their guests. This can be achieved by visits to the attractions and familiarizations designed for them.

94. In conjunction with the local media, introduce an educational program to encourage **local residents** to become familiar with the area's recreational opportunities, trails, outfitters and natural attractions.

Appendix 1: Florence Area Community Online Survey

The following are results from the online survey for local residents and stakeholders conducted by Total Destination Management between October 13 and November 30, 2008. A total of twenty people completed various questions in the survey. Note that the responses in this report are verbatim and may include typographic and grammatical errors which were in the original responses.

1. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about tourism and destination marketing in Florence.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. As one of a number of industries, tourism is important to the economic mix of Florence	75% 15	15% 3		5% 1	5% 1
B. The overall benefits from tourism in Florence outweigh any negative impacts	5% 1	55% 11	25% 5	10% 2	
C. Florence presents a distinctive and attractive image of itself	25% 5	50% 10	15% 3	10% 2	
D. The levels of service by hospitality and tourism businesses in Florence are of a high standard?	15% 3	40% 8	25% 5	20% 4	

2. Would you like to add any comments in regard to any of the above questions or issues? Be sure to identify what issue you are commenting on.

- The use of 'Any' negative impact is difficult to define. Much more positive impact in any case.
- we are usually VERY friendly and a homey feeling …. glad you are coming here to see us
- Florence Chamber and CVALCO both do a great job. Most restaurants and motels are of a good quality though there are some low end properties.
- Florence is unique and distinctive but I don't think we strive to make it as attractive as possible. There are a lot of unkept areas, run down, not pretty. We could do a lot better at presenting ourselves with more pride and work. Also, the levels of service and hospitality are very poor in some places. You'd never know that Q-Service or Quality Customer Service was offered and taught in this town. Some are very rude, dismissing customers and more.
- I would strongly agree if Florence presented itself as a destination town for the arts. We have beat into the ground that we are a retirement and dunes town when there is a huge population of talented artists who could add much to the reason people come here in the first place
- Your focus is just on tourism - we are not a retail business of sort the focus always for now seems to be on Bay St. Merchants and their tourism benefits

3. What do you consider to be the TWO greatest STRENGTHS of Florence from a visitor's perspective?

- As a former visitor- It has coastal appeal without coastal smell.   Old Town
- It's location, and options of outdoor activities.
- Near ocean Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area

- Our harbor area - the walk along the boardwalk and pier. Also the quaint shops all along Bay Street.
- People and natural beauty.
- quaint waterfront, easy to get to
- THE BEACH
- The coastal setting and the mild climate.
- the natural beauty and is what attracted to this area
- the ocean   the sand-dunes
- The ocean and Old Town, plus river and Casino
- The ocean and the river
- Variety of recreation Location of Florence
- we have the river, lakes and ocean for recreation and sightseeing.
- Wide variety of outdoor activites Charming Old Town/Great Restaurants

4. What do you consider to be the TWO greatest WEAKNESSES of Florence from a visitor's perspective?

- BIG BUSINESS CONTROL
- cost of FOOD here businesses--- closing down early
- For as much as this is an artist colony on the Oregon coast… we don't emphasize the arts much - not garden art in parks or on sidewalks. I also think that we roll up the sidewalks way too early - even in the summer. See alot of visitors walking Bay Street but no place to go into - including many restaurants are closed early.
- Highway 101 is not attractive, there are no signs welcoming the visitor here (and I've seen even the smallest towns with beautiful signs welcoming their visitors in.)
- Hotel connseaire(sp?) Boat trips from the port
- If there are any, I haven't discovered them yet.
- Lact of directions/signs to key destinations and attractions (ie…old town, beach etc.)
- long strip of highway entering town from both north and south.
- No nightlife, everything closes early therefore attracting only empty nest tourists and not young folks.
- not well advertised, variable service levels
- The lack of pride of ownership of many visible businesses.
- the one greatest for everywhere for now is the economy in general - travel to Florence; in addition the focus seems to be on retail when there is plenty of other opportunities to attract people w regard to the beauty that makes up Florence
- Too far from Portland Lack of funds for promotion
- Weather and lack of destination resorts.

5. From time to time you may hear complaints or negative comments from visitors to Florence. What is it that you are most likely to hear?

- High traffic in the summer. Periodic construction noise and traffic hold-ups on bridge.
- How do I get to the beach? We are a coastal town and shouldn't have to draw a map to get our visitors to such a main attraction
- I do not hear many negative comments about Florence.
- it is cold & windy here
- many of the 'small town' business owners display a 'small town' attitude.
- MEXICAN FOOD, IS ALL YOU CAN GET
- Most businesses close too early. Movie theater is small and uncomfortable.
- Not enough ocean front recreation or lodging. Not enough stuff for kids to do.
- Not open early or late enough for most tourists. Bad service at Bay Street Grill. Unfriendly people in some shops. And also harbor could be fixed up more and made more user-friendly.
- poor food service

- Racism - how people of color are treated from time to time because of their skin color; from some locals how some merchants treat them because they are "regulars" to their restaurants, retail purchases - follow them around the store or don't acknowledge them when they walk into their stores
- Service is slow. Directions
- The condition of the road getting here from Eugene
- There's not enough to do after hours
- Weather and lack of good restaurants.

6. Considering your replies to question 5, what do you think needs to be done to address these issues?

- Bridge work needs to be done so we understand the congestion. Traffic flow has been worked on; I don't know anything else that can be done.
- buy a USED coat or Sweat Shirt from St Vincent dePaul's and enjoy the clean AIR
- Each business runs thier own operations.
- I'm not sure these are really that important because you can't please everybody. The theater is too small.
- increased training, buy-in from owners
- Lane county needs to take its taxpayer $ and fix the road.
- Signs, and a community map to is easy to read without too much details
- The current economic issue will likley eliminate many of these businesses,
- The obvious - open earlier & stay open later; improve attention and service more, and more friendly attitude in most shops.
- There needs to be more activity for the younger crowds who like to go out and dance or listen to some other kind of music than what is usually presented here.
- these questions have been addressed several times over the past years

7. How can Florence capture more business from passing motorists?

- Beautiful, readable artistic SIGNS, artwork from the local artists put alongside of the roads like flags, murals, more plant life on the 101.
- Beautify Hwy 101 and make a more distinct signage and loop for old town.
- Better signage!! We didn't even know there was an Old Town until much later when we arrived. The signs that are up are ugly, blah and blah. More signs for Old Town at both entrances to town - by Fred Meyers somewhere and across the bridge coming north and also a nice big sign coming in from Hwy 126.
- Better signage.
- ditto from above - money was spent to attract people into old town already - money can be spent more wisely where it is needed for the people in need of of health care/prescriptions/food,e tc
- Fill-up stores on Hwy 101, Empty stores, empty lots may not be a good thing.
- Get them to stop with easy signs and directions
- Getting control over the visible appeal … move the beggers off the highway and make the business maintain a more consistant flavor.
- Improve directional signage to Old Town. Promote Old Town in a variety of ways both north and south. Remove overhead power lines and enforce sign code.
- increase advertising
- Old Town needs to be better advertized -especially from the north, but also from the south
- Play up our strengths.
- slow the speed limit or at least inforce it in the Down-town area Hwy 126 to the bridge !!!!!
- There are many run-down buildings on Highway 101. If there were a continuum of attractive places to stop along Highway 101, people would spend more time in Florence even if they hadn't planned to. Old Town is lovely but driving the coast you don't see it from the highway.

8. Would you like to comment on how Florence can improve its visitor experiences in regard to the following? NOTE: It is not necessary to respond to all questions.

a. Visitor Attractions (Heritage and Cultural)

- A river walk could become a major attraction.
- greater awareness
- Making old town a historic district
- Signs on Bay Street and Hwy directing to museum, and larger sign directing to Events Center.
- Siuslaw Pioneer Museum is great
- The Events Center should be pushed in the limelight.
- Visitors 1st impression is OldTown, and the Port. A boat trip, or whale watching excursions...
- We don't have much in town to show off our heritage or culture. In fact I can only think of one thing - Pioneer Museum and it's not advertised with signs, etc.
- We have an exceptional Event Center and Museum already in place.
- we have none other than the museum.

Natural areas (e.g. Forests, parks, coast, rivers, trails etc)?

- better signs so that people can easily find and enjoy all that florence has to offer
- Establish a "Florence Pass" wich would cover entry/parking to all Federal and State day use areas within 25-40 miles of Florence and publish a brochure to go along with the pass.
- Fabulous in this area!! Couldn't be much better.
- make ONE yearly PASS to all
- more advertising
- Mother nature has been kind to us.
- no comment
- No county fees at Heceta Beach parking area.
- These are great already

b. Lodging Facilities?

- Adequate for the demographics but a handful of motels are downright scary.
- Florence currentoy has a surplus of lodging facilities. Many of them are not up to a very high standard, but I do not see how, in our market economy, we can force a change. Perhaps some kind of city awards program would help.
- more advertising
- More friendly. More competitive prices. Better kept.
- Ocean front
- UPGRADE into the 21st century

c. Shopping?

- consistent excellent service and quality
- Florence current has a number of very fine restaurants. More needs to be done to promote this fact to potential visitors. Our restaurant could become an attraction in their own right. Shopping is good in Florence. More shops could bring more shoppers.
- more family friendly dining, more fresh seafood and more variety. We don't have any thai, indian, greek food and have two crappy choices for mexican and chineese.
- More stress on sidestreets around Old Town. More affordable seafood restaurants.
- shopping (for tourism) is great ... the majority of the restaurants are inconsistant in their mediocrity.
- Signs to attract and direct visits to these places.
- We have good restaurants but if you don't know about Old Town you would never find them.
- We're blessed to have such great restaurants in such a small town.

d. **Signage, Wayfinding, Parking, City Gateways / Welcome?**

- better old town signage, make old town one way street with more parking and a more obviouis "loop"
- City gateways are average for the coast. There is room for great improvement. Parking is a issue, particulary in Old Town. If we could doo something about employee parking in Old Town there would be plenty of parking for visitors. i.e. Rent the parking lot at the Lotus for the summer and encourage employees to park there. I recently returned form a trip to Bermuda. Everyone we met had a warm hello for visitor and resident alike.
- dislike too much signage takes away from the beauty and will make Florence look like an inner interstate I5 city
- I think that is is one of our bestes issues. It should be easy and clear how to get around and where you can park.
- More control … ie Carmel, Palm Springs … who do we imitate?
- More signs and directional signs.
- Needs improvement for visability.
- Updated direction signs for Old Town.

e. **Events, Festivals and Performances?**

- An arts festival would be great, some younger music coming to town, venues for larger bands to play in that don't require going to the casino.
- Highlight the rhododendron on its festival … not, whatever is currently highlighted.
- more advertising
- More entertainment for people under 70, draw more of the U or O students over. Hold more original festivals.
- More events/festivals in the off season would benefit everyone.
- Thank God for the casino and all they offer in entertainment, good dining, events, performances… if it wasn't for TRC… there wouldn't be much of a social life. Staying up past 8 pm is popular among many people in Florence.
- The people at the Event Center do an excellent mob for us.

f. **Outdoor Recreation and Soft Adventure Activities?**

- better advertising
- Better exposer of these activites within town so that we as a comminity can talk these things up.
- i think we should cash in more on atv recreation.
- More trails and better promotion of the ones we have. The ATV set already knows we are here. A fishing brochure promoting the lakes and streams would also help.
- these also are good.
- We have two first rate 18 hole golf courses, a state of the art skateboard park for the young, excellent hiking for all ages. We're fortunate for what we have.

g. **What marketing or visitor information initiatives would you like to see Florence improve or introduce?**

- Appeal to the general public to Travel America in this time of economic uncertainty. Have special promotions to lure people to Florence rather than other destinations in Oregon.
- Let's inform potential visitors about our fine restaurants and promote the wealth of outdoor activities available.
- more and better signage; more benches on sidewalk on Bay Street, more art sculptures, more parks, etc.
- Stop touting this town as the retirement capital of the world. It's going to make this town go into the mud. There are young families who live here and they aren't being well represented.
- Youth involvement in the visitor center. Avoid appearing as a tired senir community.

9. **What additional businesses, services or activities do you think are needed to supply the necessary experiences and products for increased visitor satisfaction in Florence?**

- a one stop shop that handles booking tours, rides etc. And we need bike tours. And more wine related stuff.
- AMERICAN FAST FOOD
- At this point we need to pull in any ventures that do not offend or harm the environmment.
- Emphasize niche marketing such as kayaking, bird watching, family adventures, etc.
- greater awareness and focus on visitor satisfaction
- INDOOR swiming pool INDOOR wave pool
- More after hours businesses…speakeasy's, places to dance, more current bands, comedy club?, an arts center that includes all forms of art, from music, performance, ceramics, painting, possibly in conjunction with the FEC.
- more and consistently good restaurants offering more ethnic type foods. And of course more seafood.
- Persuade the Forest Service and State Parks to staff the visitor center.

10. **CVALCO is going to increase its focus on soft adventure activities. What does Florence need to do to capitalize on this?**

- A strong campaign by the Chamber of Commerce.
- Be as involved as possible
- I dont know.
- identify all existing activities and increase awareness
- make them more accessible to the visiters and supply more information for locals so that they can "advertise" it to visitors
- river tours train rides
- sand master park, atvs, kayaking, diving, etc. Basically we need to help get the word out but we have to rely heavily on CVALCO as we have very little money.
- what's soft adventure?

11. **What can be done to enable soft adventure / outdoor recreation related businesses in Florence and in other parts of the county to improve their tourism performance?**

- advertising
- Advertising is the only solution. Word of mouth follows.
- get the word out and provide a good service for a reasonable price
- I can only suggest rewarding those businesses that offer outstanding tourist experiences.
- this is different for each business. some need to be open consistently, some need to advertise, some need to clean up their location or move to a better location, some need to diversify,

12. **Which of the following descriptions best describes your organization or relationship to tourism in Florence? Please check ONE answer only.**

Lodging	5
Visitor Services - Restaurant, Retail, Transport, Entertainment, etc.	6
Other business	3
Non profit	1
Other	2
Skipped question	3

13. Would you like to make some additional comments?

- Backstreet Gallery at 327 Laurel Street is a fabulous gallery and local artist co-op. You'd think the town would be proud to have a local artist co-op in town and help to publicize it. It's been there over 3 years but is a constant challenge to even let tourists know we're there. ODOT won't let us put up signage and yet there are signs for casino and golf course and others. Not fair. We can't even have a sandwich board out in front of our gallery - even though it's NOT a danger to have one. Letting people know we're part of OLD Town but off the beaten track is a huge challenge. Would love to have some kind of support, encouragement and respect from Chamber, etc.
- No. We are all concerned about getting more people to Florence and look forward to the findings of your survey.
- This is a beautiful town and the people here are fantastic. I am not against the retirement community in the least and I know the dunes bring in a lot of money for Florence, as well as the casino. However, there are many other age groups that live here and it is just as important to bring younger people to this town (20's, 30's, etc.). When the sun goes down, there's not much to do. A community place for late night coffee as well as alcohol, non smoking with different kinds of performances would, I think, be well accepted. It has been a fishing town as well, but not everyone fishes. We have incredible artists here. Why not capitalize on that part of it? When I'm travelling, I'll often remember the places that had murals and artwork in their town, sculptures, etc. to beautify where they live. I've made it a point to revisit those places often. I think Florence would be wise to use their artists in this manner. I appreciate that Florence is interested in learning how to make this town the best it can be.
- We need funding for tourism promotion!

14. It is NOT necessary to identify yourself. However, if you would like to identify yourself, please do so here.

- Born & raise here in Florence
- Gary Hoagland Hoagland Properties, Inc.
- Jennifer French, founder and artist of Backstreet Gallery. Published author of two novels. I love Florence but definitely think it needs some work and spit-shining! There isn't enough pride in our town for as great a place as it is. We could shine all up and down the coast - IF WE WANTED TO.
- Karen Hazelwood-Dantone
- Loretta Hoagland Hoagland Properties, Inc. dba the River House Inn and the Old Town Inn.
- Sadie Ward On Your Feet Footwear

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