Travel Lane County

SEMI ANNUAL REPORT

FY24 July - December

EUGENE CASCADIAN COAST

EugeneCascadesCoast.org
The program year started strong with the successful hosting of 8,000 athletes, parents, coaches, officials and volunteers over seven days at the USATF National Junior Olympic Track and Field Championships. Track season extended to the Wanda Diamond League final at the Prefontaine Classic in September, showcasing our region internationally. The 2024 track & field season should be another gold medal year headlined by our hosting of the 2024 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Track & Field at Hayward Field at the University of Oregon in June.

Hotels experienced softening in room demand however, this has been tempered by growth in room rate which is driving stronger revenues. The completion of the TownPlace Suites and the reopening of the Valley River Inn will bring nearly 350 rooms back into the metro area inventory and important conference room space will ease the burden on the Eugene Conference Center.

Beyond our winter slowdown due to needed indoor space, the easing of inflation and continued strong travel sentiment have us feeling good about travel demand as we move through the second half of the fiscal year. A strong line-up of sports events will be complemented by outdoor recreational opportunities, strong arts and culture offerings and a host of community fairs and festivals.

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

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

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

Vision
Travel Lane County is a recognized leader in achieving year-round economic growth throughout the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region through innovative destination marketing, product development and exceptional visitor experiences.
Transient lodging tax receipts are tracking well with the FY24 budget, allowing Travel Lane County to invest confidently in the marketing programs and services outlined in our workplan. The 2022 change in collection and remittance of transient lodging tax receipts by the Oregon State Department of Revenue continues to challenge recipients.

The hotel lodging sector benefitted from strong attendance at University of Oregon home football games and the Prefontaine Classic. For the period, hotel occupancy lagged slightly behind the Pacific Northwest but three percentage points ahead of the United States. Average daily rates and revenue per available room placed Lane County ahead of both the Pacific Northwest and the United States. Short-term rentals are trending down over the calendar year in listings, occupancy and all revenue categories, likely due to World Championships demand the prior year.

Labor shortage issues continue and are being addressed by local agencies like Connected Lane County, who are introducing young people to culinary opportunities, and through sector designation by Lane Workforce Partnership. Labor force participation is a contributing factor, with rates of participation in the workforce for teenagers and those in their early 20s down from what they were in the 1970s and 1980s.

Efforts to grow winter demand focused on indoor performing arts and cultural events. These were highlighted through editorial on our website, with paid traffic coming from specific buys with the Oregonian, paid social and more. Additionally, an always-on statewide paid social media push kicked off this fiscal year to drive attention to Travel Lane County’s “events this week” highlighting events throughout the county.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Indicators</th>
<th>Hotel:</th>
<th>Short Term Rental:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room Demand</td>
<td>-6.1%</td>
<td>+1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupancy</td>
<td>+3.1%</td>
<td>-7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Rate</td>
<td>+4.2%</td>
<td>-5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue per Available Room</td>
<td>+8.3%</td>
<td>-12.2%</td>
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Paid, earned and owned media channels inspired potential visitors from our traditional drive-and-fly markets. The implementation of a local Explore campaign delivered content to residents as well. Short-form videos on strategic social media channels exceeded destination inspiration and storytelling goals. These placements resulted in more than 25 million impressions (+37%) and 108,000 clicks to our website from potential visitors in key target markets. Estimated earned media impressions topped 357 million impressions (+158%) in the first half of FY24.

Eight familiarization (FAM) tours in collaboration with Travel Oregon and Brand USA occurred in September and October. Influential media figures from AAA Magazine, Travel + Leisure, NW Travel + Life and others explored Eugene/Springfield, Florence, the McKenzie River and Cottage Grove. In partnership with Brand USA, two tour operator FAMs targeted an emerging market in Italy, while another focused on another emerging market, the Netherlands.

Leisure Visitors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impression to potential visitors</td>
<td>25 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in target key markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clicks to our key visitor content</td>
<td>108,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impression to Lane County residents</td>
<td>4.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned media impressions</td>
<td>357 million</td>
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</tbody>
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“I had the best time exploring downtown Eugene. Checking out the Farmer’s Market, 5th Street Public Market, etc. I especially enjoyed urban wine tasting, this is such an asset to this incredible town!”

—Tracy Kaler, Travel Mag
Convention and group business sales continue to recover from COVID-19 pandemic lows and while group sizes are smaller than in past years — the average size is below 100 attendees — room nights booked during the period nearly exceeded the FY24 goal. Trade show participation has yielded promising leads and we successfully landed the Destinations Marketing Association West Education Summit for September 2024.

Travel Lane County continues offering financial assistance to qualifying groups, and during the period, two groups used this assistance, resulting in over 1,300 rooms nights being booked.

Hosting familiarization (FAM) tours provides an opportunity for event planners to better evaluate how their event can be successful here. A Florence FAM resulted in one event booked and a second that is now in the planning stage.

Showcasing our exceptional destination at trade shows like the Greater Oregon Society of Government Meeting Planners, Connect Faith, and more, presented us with valuable opportunities to engage with planners. These interactions led to a significant uptick in leads and bookings. Surpassing 5,600 room nights reserved, the convention team achieved 43% of its annual target.

Conventions & Group Business

16 confirmed events resulting in 5,636 room nights

$2.2M total estimated economic impact (EEI)

32% open rate for Meeting Planner newsletter

65% increase in website impressions year-over-year
Partnering with area sports groups is a key focus this year. Working with Lane United FC and Direct Kick Soccer Shop, the Sports Commission organized a series of engaging World Cup Watch Parties at the 5th Street Market Alley. Rolling out the red carpet for the Collegiate Track & Field/Cross Country Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in September capped off a strong spring and summer of track & field.

Major events were treated to amazing experiences; notably, two of these events were immediately rebooked for 2024: the U.S. Rowing Northwest Masters Regional Championships and the USA BMX Lumberjack Nationals.

The Sports Commission hosted a track & field round table that included key stakeholders from the track & field community. Participants included the University of Oregon, TrackTown USA, Eugene Marathon, media representatives and former athletes. The group’s work will ensure the 2024 track season will be as, or more, successful than recent seasons.
Investment in the hearing loop program that kicked off last fiscal year continues, utilizing a Travel Oregon grant to expand the program to include performance venues.

Upon completion, we’ll have $70,000 invested in over 30 hearing loop installations at hotels, visitor attractions, and venues, including the UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History, Very Little Theatre, Wildish Community Theater, and more.

Additional accessibility projects included supporting the placement of an all-terrain outdoor mobility chair at Heceta Beach in Florence through David’s Chair, support of the Willamette Valley Visitors Association grant to publish accessible trail information on the OregonHikersGuide.org platform, and being awarded a Travel Oregon grant that will allow us to create content that positions the region as an accessible destination.

As a 501c6, professional not-for-profit organization, we maintain a strong membership base in communities throughout Lane County. To reduce barriers to membership, the Travel Lane County board of directors approved membership model changes that include a free membership level. This will result in visitors having a fuller understanding of the opportunities they have to experience the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region.
Our new website launched last year continues to be a boost to lodging searches, with searches up more than 200% and referrals up 61% from the same period last year.

Visitors and sessions to the site are only slightly down year-over-year, and organic traffic numbers show that we’ve made up the ground lost when a new website is launched.

Engaged sessions are trending up, with users spending more time and visiting more pages on our new website than they did on our previous website.

Our social media video project has allowed us to shine a spotlight on a variety of communities and businesses, and we continue to use what we learn from promoting each video to refine our video production process.

So far videos produced this year have been viewed more than 2 million times by our target consumer audiences.

2.2 million views of our short-form videos
532,000 website users and 714,000 website sessions
205 new photo and video assets added to media library
OFFICERS
Dana Turell, Chair
Turell Group
Eugene
Sarah Smith, Vice Chair
InnCline Management
Eugene
Pam Whyte, Treasurer
Emge & Whyte
Eugene
Julie Johns, Past Chair
Territorial Seed Company
Cottage Grove

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Robert Canaga Studios
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Eugene Marathon
Eugene
Mike Drennan
Individual Member
Eugene
Tom Driscoll
University of Oregon Housing Department
Eugene
Mike Duncan
University of Oregon Athletics - Ticket Office
Eugene
Greg Evans (alternate)
Eugene City Council
Eugene
Jonnie Helfrich
A. Helfrich Outfitter
McKenzie River
Lynda Kamerrer
Retired Restaurant/Lodge Owner
Oakridge
David Loveall
County Commissioner
Lane County
Jeri McPherson
Valley River Inn
Eugene
Ron Moore
Hoagland Properties
Florence
Michael Newman
In Business Media
Eugene
Lorrie Normann
Valhalla Winery
Veneta
Fern Ridge
Tina Patel
ALKO Hotels
Eugene
Kari Preston
Holiday Inn Express
Springfield
George Rogers
Graduate Hotels
Eugene
Bev Smith
Kidsports
Eugene
Tracey Sunflower
Westfir Lodge & Cascades Outdoor Center
Westfir
Pat Straube
Dari Mart
Junction City
Lucy Vinis
City of Eugene Mayor
Eugene
Michelle Webber
City Council
Springfield

EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS
Jude Anderson
Lane County Administration
Lane County
Jameson Auten
Lane Transit District
Springfield
Terry Hopkins
Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association
Bettina Hannigan
Florence Chamber of Commerce
Florence
Ben Kipfel
City of Eugene - Library, Recreation & Cultural Services Department
Eugene
Neil Laudati
City of Springfield
Springfield
Megan Messmer
City of Florence
Florence
Vonnie Mikkelsen
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce
Springfield
Steve Mokrohisky
Lane County Administrator
Lane County
Cathryn Stephens
Eugene Airport
Eugene
Brittany Quick-Warner
Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
Eugene

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Sports Advisory Council

Josha Bates  
City of Eugene

Allan Benavides  
Eugene Emeralds Baseball Club

Mike Duncan  
University of Oregon Athletics - Ticket Office

James Feist  
Sprinfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Daniel Lindsey  
Mereté Hotel Management

Jeri McPherson  
Valley River Inn

David Penilton  
America’s Hub World Tours

Michael Reilly  
TrackTown USA

Erin Reynolds  
City of Florence

Mike Ripley  
Mudslinger Events

Tony Scurto  
Lane Education Service District

Bev Smith  
Civic Park

Craig Smith  
City of Eugene

Rich Spurlin  
Eugene Country Club

Michael Wargo  
Willamalane Park and Recreation District

Brittany Quick-Warner  
Eugene Chamber of Commerce

Thomas Wuest, MD  
DocTom Consulting, LLC
## Travel Lane County Staff

### Administration
- **Kari Westlund**
  President & CEO
- **Liz Bocking**
  Vice President of Finance & Administration
- **Amanda Neill**
  Administrative Assistant

### Destination Marketing
- **Natalie Inouye**
  Executive Vice President
- **Philis McLennan**
  Director of Conventions & Sports Marketing

### Convention Sales & Marketing
- **Juanita Metzler**
  Senior Director, Conventions
- **Brian Saunders**
  Convention Services Manager

### Eugene Cascades & Coast Sports Commission
- **J.B. Carney**
  Senior Director, Sports
- **Ella Perez**
  Director of Event Operations, Sports

### Tourism Sales & Marketing
- **Stephen Hoshaw**
  Senior Director, Tourism
- **Meg Trendler**
  Director of Tourism Sales
- **Julia Voigt**
  Tourism Marketing Manager

### Integrated Marketing
- **Emily Forsha**
  Vice President of Integrated Marketing
- **Taj Morgan**
  Director of Content Strategy
- **Melanie Griffin**
  Art Director

### Stakeholder Relations
- **Andy Vobora**
  Vice President of Stakeholder Relations
- **Megan Temple**
  Senior Director of Partner and Community Engagement
- **Haley Mendez**
  Member & Community Engagement Coordinator
- **Connor Nolan**
  Destination Development Manager

### Visitor Services
- **Josh Dichoso**
  Visitor Center Manager
- **Johanna Roseburg**
  Visitor Service Specialist