

# Travel Lane County

## Annual Report FY14





## Board of Directors

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Pam Whyte, Treasurer  
Emge & Whyte

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Robert Canaga Studios

Richard Boyles, Past Chair  
InnSight Hotel Management

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High Country Expeditions

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Commerce

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Jacque Betz  
Florence City Manager

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Territorial Seed Company

Corey Buller  
Lane Events Center

Jonas Kungys  
Hop Valley Brewing Co.

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Oregon Adventures

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Commerce

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Kesey Enterprises

Kim Godfrey  
Oregon Electric Station

Mike Rose  
Three Rivers Casino &  
Hotel

Renee Grube  
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Services

Pat Straube  
DariMart

Jody Hall  
Hilton Eugene & Conference  
Center

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Springfield Economic  
Development

Andy Vobora  
Lane Transit District

Maxine Walton  
Willamette Stationers

## President's Message



### Visitor Volume and Spending at Record Levels

- Kari Westlund, President & CEO

Room tax collections surpass \$8.2 million for the first time in FY14, marking a third consecutive record level year for lodging revenues. Only Central Oregon's growth rate exceeded Lane County's mid-way through calendar year 2014, as that region recovered from a deeper recessionary plunge.

As we finished FY14 and started FY15, we were engaged with major track and field events, hosting the IAAF World Junior Track & Field Championships and glowing after securing the NCAA Track & Field Championships through 2021. We've marked other successes booking prestigious conferences like the Overseas Association of College Admissions Counselors and the American Scientific Glassblowers Society, while extending planning and hospitality services to events like the Neighborhoods, USA Conference and the H2O Dragon Boat Paddle Challenge.

Other key accomplishments of the Convention and Sports Marketing program included increases in earned media in national and regional trade publications and in loyal social media followers. Janis Ross now serves on the National Association of Sports Commissions' board of directors and is an accomplished national presenter on topics of sustainability and green practices in sporting events and meetings.

Website visits and social media traffic hit all-time records, with unique visitors to the website rising to 402,727 (up 62%) and mobile site visitors increasing to nearly 80,000 (up 759%). Social media contests, featuring communities countywide, have generated thousands of entries and followers. Multiple social media channels are maintained with fresh, inspiring and engaging content. Online marketing channels have never been stronger, and our upcoming launch of a fully-redesigned website will make trip planning even more efficient. Visitor center counts are also up, and responses to new advertising campaigns, focused on checking off your adventure ("bucket") list, have generated web visits and calls that tell us the ads are getting the job done.

We launched our third and fourth GeoTour editions, featuring the Willamette Highway and Territorial Highway corridors, which produced trackable visits and powerful visitor testimonials. The extremely successful Eugene Ale Trail also launched spurring travel to metro area breweries, as well as those in Coburg and Oakridge. From city-based ad campaigns to video productions and festivals, we've collaborated and supported community partners generating fruitful results and relationships. Lane County's tourism team has truly worked together to generate the strongest outcomes possible.

**Return on Investment:** \$72,260,203 million was generated for local communities. For every room tax dollar invested in Travel Lane County, \$39 in visitor spending returned or will return to Lane County's economy. Earned editorial media coverage totaled \$5,194,692. In-kind contributions totaled \$18,359. Room tax rose 10.15 percent and occupancy rates averaged 62.74 percent, up 5.8 percent over FY13.

ROOM TAX	FY14	FY13	FY12	FY11	FY10
<b>Eugene</b>	8.65%	3.61%	1.71%	9.2%	-9.56%
<b>Springfield</b>	11.28%	5.07%	15.16%	15.5%	-8.14%
<b>Florence</b>	15.72%	-1.93%	2.13%	2.6%	4.34%
<b>Cottage Grove</b>	13.11%	0.92%	11.88%	-8.0%	-8.61%
<b>Other</b>	9.67%	6.15%	1.30%	10.0%	-3.48%
<b>Total Tax</b>	10.15%	3.83%	5.27%	9.7%	-7.33%

# Convention & Sports Marketing

Sales and marketing efforts helped generate an economic impact of \$47.2 million in convention and event delegate spending. Staff booked 97 conventions or events, representing 136,591 delegates and 68,500 room nights.

Among the largest bookings were the multi-year NCAA Division 1 Outdoor Track & Field Championships (15,000). Other confirmations included the YESS Spiketown MLK Volleyball Classic (1,248), American Scientific Glassblowers Society (300), Overseas Association of College Admissions Counselors (1,100), the Oregon Department of Education (500) and the Lutheran Women's Missionary League District Conference (350).

Staff served on the planning committees for the Neighborhoods, USA Annual Conference, Wordcrafters of Eugene Conference, H2O Dragon Boat Paddle Challenge, Mayor's Cup Soccer Tournament, WJ Skatepark Grand Opening, Northwest Jam, Pacific Northwest Masters Basketball Tournament and the IAAF World Junior Track & Field Championships.

A total of 185,537 meeting/sports delegates received personal convention and sports services, which included on-site information booths and registration assistance, website and social media publicity, and delegate welcome signage. The "Show Your Badge" program provided discounts for delegates and sales for area businesses. The member leads program connected planners and delegates with local products and services.

Staff met with meeting and sports planners across the U.S. at the following shows: Meetings Professional International World Education Congress, Las Vegas; Meetings Focus Live, Portland; USOC Olympic SportsLink, Colorado Springs; Bravo Live, Portland; Rejuvenate, Daytona Beach; TEAMS, Salt Lake City; US Rowing Association Conference /Trade Show, Seattle; US Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association Conference, Orlando; Meeting Professionals International Cascadia Conference, Spokane; National Association of Sports Commissions, Oklahoma City; OSU Event Planners Conference, Corvallis; HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference, Dallas; Christian Meetings & Conventions Association, Rapid City; Meeting Professionals International Southern California Conference, Los Angeles; Meetings Quest, Mesa; Healthcare Convention & Exhibitors Association, Cleveland; and MEET West, San Diego.

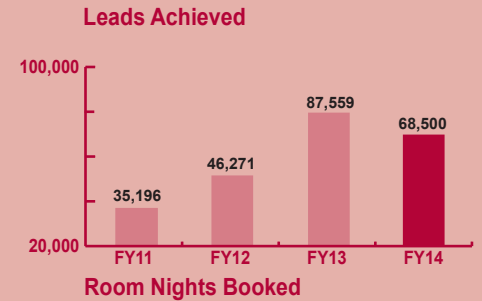
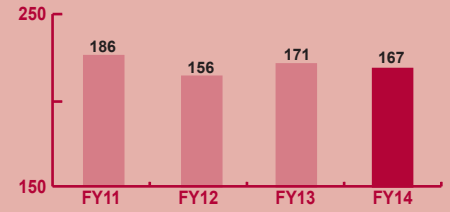
Advertising was placed in Association News, Meetings Focus, Northwest Meetings + Events, Sports Destination Management, Sports Travel Magazine, Smart Meetings, Small Market Meetings and SportsEvents Magazine, while editorial outreach generated \$132,010 in earned media coverage within trade publications.



Meeting and sports-related blogs and e-newsletters targeted planners and industry representatives, while social media outreach continued on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.

The first Eugene, Cascades & Coast Sports Summit was held and led by national sports consultant Jon Schmieder.

Janis Ross was elected to the National Association of Sports Commissions' Board of Directors, as well as the Meeting Professionals International Oregon Chapter Board of Directors.



## 2014 Eugene, Cascades & Coast Convention & Sports Leadership Awards

Travel Lane County presented awards to groups and individuals responsible for the confirmation of a meeting or event generating significant overnight visits to the region.

### PEO Sisterhood

Convention Leadership Award  
*For hosting its Annual Convention*

### UO Volleyball Program

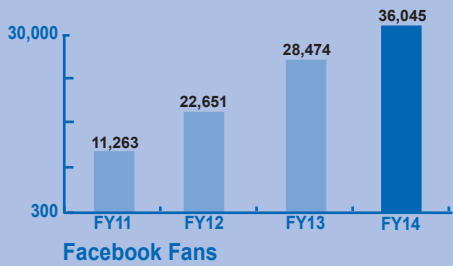
Sports Leadership Award  
*For hosting the Oregon MLK Team Classic*

### View award videos at:

[EugeneCascadesCoast.org/award-videos](http://EugeneCascadesCoast.org/award-videos)







**Visitor Inquiries** A total of 43,144 inquiries for visitor information were tracked as a direct result of ad placements, public relations and regional partnerships. Overall website visits totaled 527,075 (up 58%).

**Media Relations/Editorial/Film** Lane County tracked \$4,992,542 (up 339%) in positive destination coverage during FY14. Press releases, press trips and media assistance resulted in coverage in regional, national and international newspapers, guidebooks, travel/lifestyle/adventure-related publications, and online blogs and magazines. A new subscription to Meltwater media monitoring service increased trackability.

Travel Lane County, in partnerships with the Oregon Film & Video office and Travel Oregon, assisted the Travel Channel, Bellum Entertainment, Bacardi and a New York film producer in connection with productions and/or ads being produced or researched in Lane County.

**Oregon Fall Foliage Campaign** Visits to Lane County's Oregon Fall Foliage blog were up 44 percent over last year (August - November). Story pitches and social media outreach resulted in articles in The Oregonian, Portland Monthly, About.com, Northwest Travel Magazine, Northwest Road Tripper and AARP Magazine.

**RV Outreach** Travel Lane County promoted the region as a destination for RV travel to the following groups: Chico Elks RV Group, WIN RV Rally Planners, 2014 RV Palooza at Lane Events Center, NW Family Motorcoach Rally, Country Coach Friends Rally and Vintage Women with Trailers. Visitors guides were also delivered to 22 local RV sites.

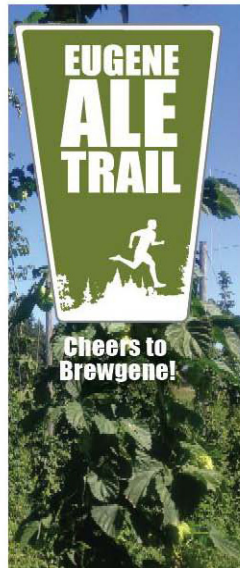
**Regional Partnerships** Travel Lane County partnered with Willamette Valley and Oregon Coast Visitors Associations, taking on PR, travel tour and board positions.

# Tourism Marketing & Sales

Marketing efforts to attract leisure and group tour travelers resulted in \$16,634,676 in economic returns.

A "7 Waterfall Wonders" campaign, launched in the spring, leveraged Travel Oregon's new Seven Wonders promotion. Waterfall related print and online ads, web pages, itineraries and a getaway giveaway provided countywide exposure and travel inspiration. More than 3,000 unique users visited the website.

In June, Travel Lane County launched the Eugene Ale Trail in partnership with its member brewing businesses and Lane Transit District. A trail passport and map features 11 breweries, along with six bottle shops and tap houses stretching from Eugene to Oakridge.



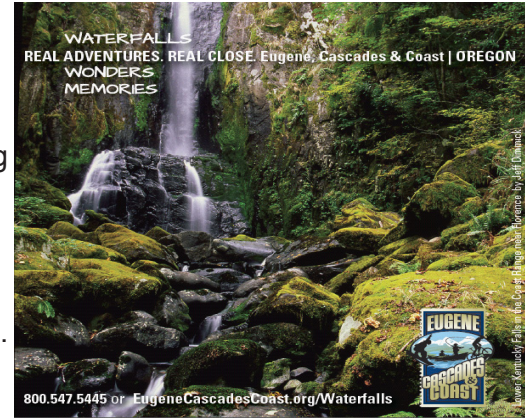
Social and traditional media outreach, blogs, postcards, posters, merchandise and extensive website presence has generated awareness and participation. Overnight and day visits resulted in \$20,000 in economic impact in the first six weeks.

Travel Lane County participated in travel trade, consumer shows and sales missions, including the NTA Travel Exchange in Los Angeles, the World Travel Market in London, Go West Summit in Tacoma, ITB in Berlin, IPW in Chicago, TAP Dance in Reno, and a Canadian sales Mission in Vancouver, BC. Marketing efforts resulted in 82 leads/partner referrals and/or service requests.

Travel Lane County assisted in familiarization tours during the year, introducing 154 tour operators, media representatives and/or other travel-related individuals to the region.

Social Media channels continued to provide significant engagement with visitors and potential travelers. Twitter rose to 4,342 (Up 26.4%). The blog, launched in May 2014, generated 5,410 views. Facebook remained the foundation of social marketing efforts. A contest strategy was tested to grow Facebook fans, which helped increase fans to 36,045 (up 26.6%), pushing past the 30,000 mark for the first time.

Launched in February, three Facebook campaigns, promoting the Oregon Coast, McKenzie River and Oakridge/Westfir generated, 11,833 visits, 8,097 entries, 1,087 shares and 923 likes. The campaign also generated several hundred fans for campaign partners.



# Visitor Services

Travel Lane County's visitor services staff personally assisted 16,333 (up 1.7%) visitors and residents during FY14. Walk-in visits at the Adventure Center and downtown Visitor Information Center totaled 9,740 (up 7.5%) visits, additionally the center assisted 2,131 guests who called the Adventure Center for assistance (up 29.4%). The mobile visitor van staff served 6,593 people at various attractions and events across the region.

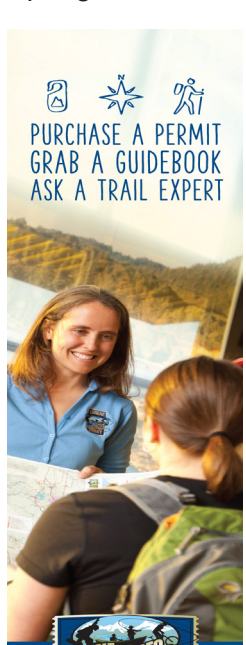


The Official Eugene, Cascades & Coast Visitor Guide (140,000 printed) was produced with new content and four cover shots. An updated visitor map/pad map was inserted in the guide and available for further distribution at visitor venues. More than 77,974 (up 25.4%) guides were tracked and distributed through Certified

Display Folder sites, at Travel Lane County member locations, statewide information and welcome centers, the Eugene and Portland Airports, and through local convention, meeting, sports and community relations outreach. Distributions accounted for an estimated economic impact of \$7,812,995.

Travelers visiting state rest areas were greeted with new display ads. Eight ad panels featuring maps, travel resources and visitor information at the Adventure Center were placed in rest areas near Brookings, Wilsonville, Woodburn, Klamath Falls, Ontario, Multnomah Falls and two 1-5 locations north and south of the Eugene-Springfield metro area. Displays highlighted key

attractions and visitor experiences, including wine tasting, covered bridges, waterfalls, hiking and Heceta Head Lighthouse.



PURCHASE A PERMIT  
GRAB A GUIDEBOOK  
ASK A TRAIL EXPERT

Ads promoting the Adventure Center as a source for travel information, permits, guidebooks and trip planning assistance were placed in Travel Lane County publications, The Register-Guard Discovery Magazine and Eugene Magazine. Monthly giveaways also encouraged Adventure Center visits.

During FY14, combined sales in the center totaled \$41,662 (up 12.5%) over last year. Retail sales accounted for \$14,426 (up 4.5%) and sales of tickets and passes total \$25,266 (up 23%).

A total of 139 deals/coupons (up 3%), with views totaling 3,080 (up 44%), enticed website visitors with discounts and offers on lodging, dining, recreation, arts and culture, university visits, family and geocaching adventures.



## Top Geographic Markets

U.S.	International
Oregon	Canada
California	Germany
Washington	Australia
Texas	United Kingdom
Arizona	Japan
Florida	France
Colorado	Switzerland
New York	Netherlands
Alaska	New Zealand
Idaho	Norway

## Eugene, Cascades & Coast GeoTour

Travel Lane County's successful GeoTour expanded to include Oakridge/Westfir (October 2013) and Territorial Highway (March 2014) editions, completing the four-part tour. A total of 280 geocachers attended the kickoff events and participated in the new editions that same day.

Since the first edition's original launch of the Eugene, Cascades & Coast GeoTour, an estimated 42,636 visits have been made to the 143 geocache site locations.

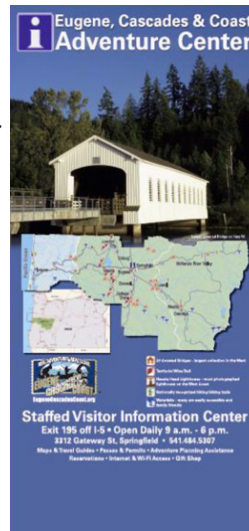
Of the geocachers who completed the GeoTour's accompanying passport, the following was tracked through surveys: 57% of cachers were from out of the area, 10% of the cachers were from out of state, 23% were first-time cachers and 41% stayed overnight during their GeoTour experience.

Cachers finding a minimum number of required sites were eligible to earn locally-produced, collectible coins.

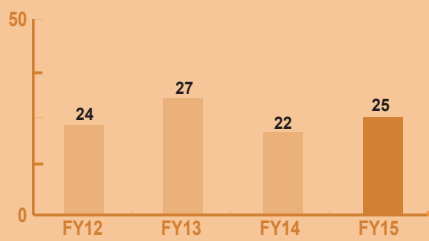
## Consumer Shows

Visitor Services staff promoted the region in Canada at the Vancouver Outdoor Adventure Show and Vancouver Bike Show. Partnering members included the Three Rivers Casino, Oregon Adventures and the McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce providing opportunities to promote coastal offerings, as well as key destination draws for mountain bikers.

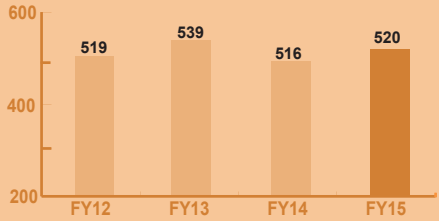
Meanwhile, staff attended the Sunset Celebration, which generated more than 1,000 leads and trip planning interactions.



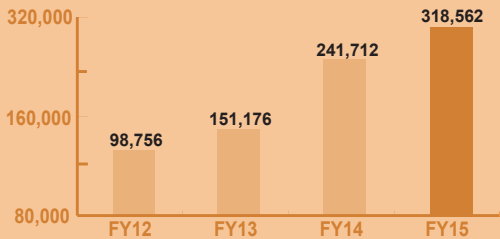




New Members



Total Members



Website Sessions

### Top Visited Web Pages

- 1 Event Calendar
- 2 Things to Do
- 3 Places to Stay
- 4 Where to Eat
- 5 Waterfalls Campaign

### Top Website Orgins Visit (Domestic)

- 1 Oregon
- 2 Washington
- 3 California
- 4 Colorado

### Top Website Visit Orgins (International)

- 1 Canada
- 2 United Kingdom
- 3 Brazil
- 4 Germany

## Membership

Travel Lane County's members continued to provide quality products and services, contributing to the overall success of Lane County's visitor industry. The department's hire of a new Director of Partner Development helped increased new and prospective members during the period.

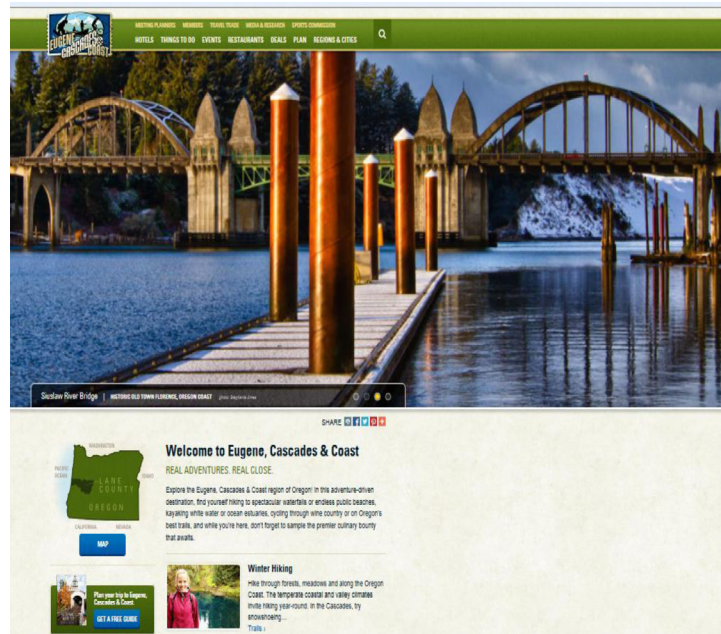
### Membership Support

Total membership rose to 520 businesses, organizations and individuals. Combined member dues and ad purchases accounted for \$75,912 in revenue.

Member Orientations and Member Spotlights provided industry partners with networking and educational opportunities. Travel Lane County's Member Update e-newsletters kept members informed of marketing opportunities and industry news. Leads were also available to members via Travel Lane County's work with conventions, tour operators and media.

## Integrated Marketing

Online marketing efforts grew exponential during the period as Travel Lane County launched a newly designed website and saw continued growth through online advertising and social media channels.

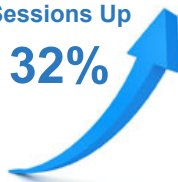


### New Website Launched

The overall look, navigation and organization of Travel Lane County's new website has enhanced the internal effectiveness and the end user experience. Changes focused on improving search returns, microsite and advertising integration, and key placement of tools like Trip Planner and the What's Nearby map feature. In addition, emphasis was made on the use of large-scale images, and those associated with member listings, deals and events.

Website Sessions Up

32%



### Website Growth

The website continued to produce growing volumes of visits, increasing a total of 318,562 (up 32%) in website sessions, 246,694 (up 32%) users and 52,604 (up 54%) mobile sessions.

### Member Publications

Members received significant exposure key visitor publications during the period. In September, a 44-page Eugene, Cascades and Coast Dining Guide featuring 128 restaurants was produced with the support of \$21,231 in ad revenue. Work began in October on the Lane County Visitor Map, which generated \$20,280 in revenue to cover production costs.

# Community Relations

Community Relations programs generated awareness about the impacts of the local visitor industry, Travel Lane County marketing efforts and regional travel opportunities.

Media outreach through news releases, e-newsletters, interviews and editorial assistance earned record coverage valued at \$70,140 (Up 38%) and 131 broadcast story/article placements with KEZI, KVAL, KMTR, FOX News, The Register-Guard, KUGN, The Siuslaw News, Cottage Grove Sentinel and others. Coverage included stories about the impacts of visitors, conventions and sporting events, new hotel development, fall foliage, bicycle tourism, local wineries, breweries, Kids' Adventure Club events, Create! Eugene, the Oregon Covered Bridge Festival, the Oregon Truffle Festival, the Eugene, Cascades & Coast Photo Contest, Eugene, Cascades & Coast GeoTour, as well as Travel Lane County publications, staff, board and member news.

A KUGN radio partnership continued providing weekly opportunities to promote more than 300 community events, as well as Travel Lane County's members, website, calendar and Adventure Center.



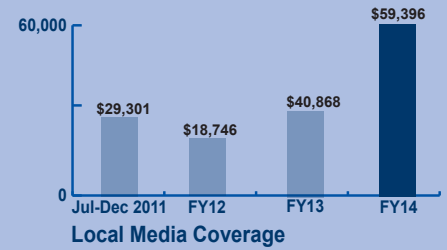
The Kids' Adventure Club provided opportunities to promote countywide travel adventures, family-friendly events and local member attractions to families in and outside the region. During the year, the number of members expanded to 961 (up 90%), representing more than 3,363 parents and children. The number of page views also increased on the Family Fun/Kids Adventure Club microsite, which included 12,793 page views on the Family Event

Calendar Page alone.

Club members received e-newsletters promoting travel adventures, seasonal activities and deals, as well as monthly Kids Club Calendars that link to the Family Fun/Kids Club microsite.

Kids Club Family Days were held in conjunction with the Oregon Covered Bridge Festival and the City of Eugene's Grand Opening of the WJ Skatepark + Urban Plaza. A fishing-themed Family Day, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Cabelas and Cascade Family Flyfishers, was held at the Adventure Center drawing 116 attendees.

**create** **eugene** In partnership with the Arts and Business Alliance of Eugene, Travel Lane County worked on the first and second years of Create! Eugene, an event highlighting arts and culture during a month-long, hands-on series of workshops and special events. A highlight included a Plein Air Paint Out competition, which culminated with a City of Eugene sponsored Summer in the City event showcasing the artists' entries painted earlier in the day. Work began on year two and a new Kids Create! Eugene was set for August.



## Candidate Survey

A tourism survey was conducted with candidates seeking office for Lane County Commissioner in the May Primary. Responses to tourism industry related questions were shared with Travel Lane County's membership and key industry partners.

## Photo Contest

The Eugene, Cascades & Coast Photo Contest expanded to 16 categories, increasing member and sponsor participation by 24 percent. In exchange for contest-related publicity, partners provided more than \$2,320 in prizes awarded to contest winners.

More than 140 images, valued at an estimated \$14,000 were permanently secured for Travel Lane County's free use for editorial and marketing purposes. An awards ceremony was held in October, drawing photo contest participants and their family to the Adventure Center.



## Local Advertising

An underwriting campaign with public radio station KLCC continued into FY14 with messages reaching a weekly audience of 80,000 listeners over four months. Messages focused on tourism's economic impacts, sustainable travel and Travel Lane County/Adventure Center travel resources.



# Travel Lane County Mission

To increase the number of overnight visitors to the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region for the benefit of its members and all businesses and citizens who depend on a strong Lane County economy.

## Eugene, Cascades & Coast Travel Impacts

Visitors spent an estimated  
**\$575.7 million in 2013**, supporting a  
variety of businesses and jobs in  
Lane County.

### Food Service

\$167 million

### Accommodations

\$102.4 million

### Retail Sales

\$90.1 million

### Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

\$79 million

### Local Transportation & Fuel

\$76.2 million

### Food Stores

\$60.9 million

### State & Local Tax Revenues

\$28.9 million

### Jobs

8,510

### Direct Earnings

\$173.3 million

### Source:

Oregon Travel Impacts 1991-2013p Report,  
Dean Runyan Associates, April 2014

Staff directory available at:  
[EugeneCascadesCoast.org/staff](http://EugeneCascadesCoast.org/staff)

*Back: Lower Kentucky Falls near  
Mapleton, by Jeff Dimmick*



## Travel Lane County

541.484.5307 | 800.547.5445

[EugeneCascadesCoast.org](http://EugeneCascadesCoast.org)

Eugene, Cascades & Coast  
Adventure Center  
3312 Gateway St | Springfield

Downtown Eugene  
Visitor Center  
754 Olive St | Eugene