

# Council Business Meeting

July 21, 2020

Agenda Item	Resolution 2020-13 Allocating Anticipated Transient Occupancy Tax Tourism Restricted Revenues for Fiscal Year 2021 and Repealing Resolution 2020-07	
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## **SUMMARY**

At its [May 19, 2020 Business Meeting](#), Council approved a resolution that served as a “re-set” of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues for the remainder of the current biennium based on the altered revenue projections. However, a decision on where to re-allocate specific portions of the proposed funds was not presented for the second year of the biennium (FY2021). The attached resolution serves to provide these specific allocations for the second year of the biennium.

## **POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED**

D. Develop current and long-term budgetary resiliency.

E. During the 2019-2021 Biennium analyze various departments/programs with the goal of gaining efficiencies, reducing costs, and improving City services.

## **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION**

At its [May 5, 2020 Business Meeting](#), Council directed staff to prepare a resolution to “un-commit” a portion of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues to be available for any and all allowable uses consistent with Oregon Revised Statutes. In recognition of the significant anticipated reduction in revenues for the TOT, Council also discussed initiating the process to re-allocate the proposed distribution of TOT funds for the upcoming second year of the biennium budget. This information and a resolution was presented to Council at its [May 19, 2020 Business Meeting](#).

The resolution included the following:

- Updated TOT revenue estimates for FY21
- Removal of the previous Council decision ([Resolution 2019-17](#)) to commit and reserve a portion of TOT revenues for future parking supply
- Removal of allocation of funds for the ORS restricted TOT funds previously approved by Council with pre-COVID-19 TOT revenue estimates. ([Resolution 2019-17](#))

Additionally, at its [May 19, 2020 Business Meeting](#), Council also made a commitment to continue funding tourism eligible only grants to local non-profits. This process typically also includes Economic, Cultural and Sustainability funding through unrestricted TOT funds, but this allocation was removed due to the previously mentioned shortfall in revenue. Details on the modified grant program are available in [resolution 2020-06](#).

## **BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Allocation of TOT funds is based on anticipated revenue estimates done within the biennial budget process. The current COVID-19 crisis has drastically altered the revenue projections that were originally established in the biennial budget. The estimated reduction of revenue of approximately \$3 million represents a fifty percent reduction in TOT revenues for the two-year budget period.

In [resolution 2020-07](#), Council was presented a “re-set” of the TOT revenues for the remainder of the current biennium and provided Council and staff with the opportunity to evaluate economic recovery needs, take advantage of potential changes to current ORS restrictions on the allowed uses of TOT funds and generally target the uses of

TOT funds to maximize their benefit to the community while concurrently preserving as much of the unrestricted TOT funds for public safety operations in the General Fund as possible. This resolution required that actual allocations be confirmed at a later date.

#### Allocation Resolution Structure

The draft TOT allocation resolution begins with recitals that provide the methodology to determine what percentage of the total TOT revenue is restricted by Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) to be utilized only for legislatively approved tourism specific expenditures. Below are several key definitions from the relevant ORS sections:

- **Tourist** means a person who, for business, pleasure, recreation or participation in events related to the arts, heritage or culture, travels from the community in which that person is a resident to a different community that is separate, distinct from and unrelated to the person's community of residence, and that trip:
  - (a) Requires the person to travel more than 50 miles from the community of residence; or
  - (b) Includes an overnight stay
- **Tourism-related facility** "means: (a) A conference center, convention center, or visitor information center; and (b) Other improved real property that has a useful life of 10 or more years and has a substantial purpose of supporting tourism or accommodating tourist activities." ORS 320.300(9).
- **Tourism promotion** "means any of the following activities: (a) Advertising, publicizing or distributing information for the purpose of attracting and welcoming tourists; (b) Conducting strategic planning and research necessary to stimulate future tourism development; (c) Operating tourism promotion agencies; and (d) Marketing special events and festivals designed to attract tourists." ORS 320.300(7).

Following the recitals section of the resolution are two tables. The first table is a summary level calculation to distinguish the tourism restricted funds from the unrestricted funds that are utilized in the City's general fund for operational purposes along with other similarly unrestricted revenues (property tax, franchise fees, etc.)

The second table is the allocation of the tourism restricted funds. Council's prior decision to "un-commit" previous years "future parking supply" funds results in the tourism restricted funding total slightly higher than the original "pre-COVID" revenue forecast and allows Council to allocate funds consistent with prior year methodology or alter the methodology to adjust for the economic impacts to the tourism sector of the local economy.

The staff proposed allocation of these tourism restricted funds is based on the following:

- The loss of OSF performances for nearly all of the 2020 season and likely at least a portion of the 2021 season has significantly altered the tourism promotion strategies, tools and needed activity level to sustain and eventually return to historical levels of tourism activity. This will require additional resources for the City's destination marketing organization, Travel Ashland, operated by the Visitor and Convention Bureau of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce.
- Related to the loss of OSF performances is a request from OSF leadership that the City significantly reduce (by 67 percent) OSF specific tourism marketing efforts in this coming fiscal year and leverage the remainder of their traditional allocation to boost the broader local tourism marketing and promotion done by Travel Ashland.
- Supports and maintains the level of funding already approved by Council in its May 19, 2020 business meeting for the Tourism only small grants program that is currently underway and scheduled to be awarded within two to four weeks.
- Supports and maintains the increase from three percent to five percent for the allocation percentage for funding Public Art approved by Council in its May 5, 2020 business meeting

#### FISCAL IMPACTS

Because of the ORS limitations on the use of these funds, there are no direct negative impacts to the operating budget of the City. The draft resolution incorporates prior year funds originally reserved for "future parking supply" which provides the Council with the ability to maintain slightly enhanced funding levels for tourism promotion

efforts critical to the economic recovery of a significant sector of the local economy without the need to utilize general fund operating funds of the City to do so.

Without the prior year funds, tourism promotion efforts would either be severely reduced creating additional challenges for recovery efforts or be funded with general fund operating dollars that are critically important to the operating Departments within the general fund, primarily Police and Fire.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff supports the approval of this resolution.

### **ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS**

- 1) I move to approve Resolution 2020-13 as presented.
- 2) I move to approve Resolution 2020-13 with the following adjustments.
- 3) I move to direct staff to bring this resolution back to Council at a future meeting date and incorporate the following alterations to the resolution.

### **REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Resolution 2020-13 Allocating Anticipated Transient Occupancy Tax Tourism Restricted Revenues for Fiscal Year 2021 and Repealing Resolution 2020-07

Attachment 2: Travel Ashland/Ashland Chamber of Commerce – FY20-21 Grant Request Letter

Attachment 3: Travel Ashland FY18-19 Annual Report

Attachment 4: Travel Ashland – Agreement for Services FY19-20

Attachment 5: OSF FY20-21 Grant Request Letter

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**RECITALS:**

## SECTION 1.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the City of Ashland expects to receive an estimated **\$925,513** for Transient

Occupancy Tax collections. The annual allocation between tourism and general governmental operations is as follows:

TOT Anticipated Revenues	% of Total	FY 2020-21
Tourism Restricted (ORS 320)	29%	268,399
General Government Operations	71%	657,114
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$925,513</b>

**Tourism Allocation**

Tourism restricted funds will be allocated as follows:

<b>Tourism Restricted TOT Allocation</b>	<b>% of Tourism</b>	<b>Originally Adopted 2020-21</b>	<b>Projected 2020-2021</b>
<b>TOTAL Tourism TOT</b>		<b>949,884</b>	<b>268,399</b>
Long Term Parking Supply		245,727	0
FY 2019 Uncommitted Parking Supply (removed commitment)			241,326
FY 2020 Uncommitted Parking Supply (removed commitment)			245,727
<b>Unrestricted Remaining Tourism TOT</b>		<b>704,157</b>	<b>755,452</b>
Visitor & Convention Bureau – Chamber of Commerce	75%	446,338	566,589
Oregon Shakespeare Festival	Fixed	110,000	\$35,000
Tourism Small Grants Program	11%	80,000	80,000
Public Art	5%	35,208	37,772
Other City Tourism eligible Capital Projects	Remainder	32,611	36,091
<b>TOTAL RESTRICTED TOT ALLOCATION</b>		<b>\$704,157</b>	<b>\$755,452</b>

If actual tourism specific TOT revenue collections exceed the above allocations or if actual, qualifying expenditures in the year are less than the appropriated amount, the additional or unused amount(s) will be reserved for qualifying future Tourism related expenditures as determined by Council.

**Non Tourism Allocation**

The remaining estimated TOT revenue allocated for general government operations will be 100 percent appropriated through the budget process. Unrestricted TOT revenue unspent in a budget

1 year becomes part of the General Fund unrestricted ending fund balance unless otherwise  
2 determined by City Council.

3 <b>Unrestricted TOT Allocation</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
4 <b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$657,114</b>

5 SECTION 2. Resolution 2020-07 is repealed upon passage of this resolution.

6 SECTION 3. This resolution is effective upon adoption.

7 ADOPTED by the City Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

8 ATTEST:

9 \_\_\_\_\_  
10 \_\_\_\_\_

11 Melissa Huhtala, City Recorder

12 SIGNED and APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

13 \_\_\_\_\_  
14 \_\_\_\_\_  
15 \_\_\_\_\_  
16 John Stromberg, Mayor

17 Reviewed as to form:

18 \_\_\_\_\_  
19 \_\_\_\_\_  
20 \_\_\_\_\_

21 David H. Lohman, City Attorney



Travel Ashland/Ashland Chamber - City Grant Request for Fiscal Year 20-21

## What we know: Ashland's tourism is changing

**National trends are affecting travel and consumer behavior throughout the country:** As visitors begin to travel again, Ashland is well positioned as an accessible drive market destination with proximity to I-5 and traveler sentiment showing a significant increase in their preference of traveling by car to small, rural towns such as Ashland, as opposed to air travel both domestically and internationally.

**Visitors want and need information on travel destinations now more than ever in all forms of communication:** Tourism research shows that DMO websites (Destination Marketing Organizations such as Travel Ashland's site, [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com)) play a critical role in visitor research. **This past March, we successfully launched a newly designed site.** Being the singular, central source of key importance to visitors and travelers, **Travel Ashland's website and social channels are crucial.** In addition to digital reach, we are actively developing tools to most effectively share our timely messaging and invitation to Ashland through effective campaigns to new and established markets.

**New visitors this summer are revealing younger and more active travelers:** With the past visitor economy including a third of the visitor base attending plays at OSF, they were traditional, loyal and predictable with long term booking windows. We are already seeing a younger visitor, many here for the first time for new reasons such as recreation, exploring the outdoors, tasting wine and seeking culinary experiences. For over a decade, Travel Ashland has been enacting that message and invitation to visitors to educate them on reasons to enjoy Ashland beyond the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, not just this year with their closure, that we will continue to do. **We have convened outdoor industry leaders and have been creating dialogue, ideas and strategy for building Ashland's identity as a mountain town with culture.** By refining the messaging, telling the stories and creating authentic content of Ashland's outdoor recreation and open spaces, with little ego and big access to amazing terrain for all ability levels to enjoy, Travel Ashland is enabling the Ashland visitor to evolve to include the responsible recreator. We are doing this with partners such as Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association, Ashland Trails and Woodlands Association, Mt. Ashland, the Bureau of Land Management, Rogue River- Siskiyou National Forest, local trail runner and hiker experts and river outfitters.

**Partnerships are more critical than ever for collaboration with business and government:** Travel Ashland is the respected entity with regional partners such as Travel Southern Oregon and neighboring DMO's (Destination Marketing Organizations). We have direct, strong, longstanding partnerships with Travel Oregon as well as representation on Oregon Destination Association's Board of Directors that provides guidance to DMO's statewide. These partnerships amplify and align our brand with statewide messaging and regional lifts in messaging, campaigns and opportunities. Our established relationships with key legislators and government officials enable valuable communication and progress towards effectively leading. **The strength is in our unique role that no one else can fulfill.** The strength of our partnerships and role we play with regional and state entities are key to showing our resiliency as a visitor economy. We are at the table, engaged in each conversation from local, regional and statewide tourism policy, research, brand alignment and opportunities.

**Ashland Chamber of Commerce and Travel Ashland (Visitor & Convention Bureau)**

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**[ashlandchamber.com](http://ashlandchamber.com)**

**Visitor analysis and profiles need to be developed in this changing environment:** Given the changing visitor and behavior, we are going deeper into our continued research and analysis and expanding it to provide more key data that directs our strategic marketing and implementation of a new Ashland brand as we further embrace culinary, outdoor and refine the cultural message. New sources of data are enriching the scope of research such as the data tracking of regional visitors both this year and for the past 2 years with GPS phone data showing Lithia Park is the #2 top destination right now in Southern Oregon. We have the opportunity to retarget these visitors to invite them back. New data and studies on the outdoor visitor such as Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association's new trail count user project will tell us who is using the Ashland Watershed and where they are coming from. We are well versed in promoting to markets such as Northern California, the Bay Area, Portland, Eugene and Bend. We will expand our reach into new markets based on what our latest research and trends are showing.

**Short term promotions are critical such as the Ashland Summer Celebration to boost business this summer into fall** Through the collaborative effort led by the Ashland Chamber with support and participation from the City of Ashland, building owners, businesses and partners, the Summer Celebration is a 12 week themed weekend series showcasing outside dining, shopping and an invitation to safely experience Ashland's downtown. With the goal of building back vitality and celebrating Ashland's amenities in a socially distant way, the Summer Celebration is a short-term trial project to bring business back to Ashland.

**Rebranding and retooling of visitor messaging is critical for the near and long term:** We recognize many businesses were and still are dependent on the OSF visitor as their primary market. While we continue to work as a supportive partner with OSF, we are consulting with businesses to help refine their models to adapt to new visitors and markets. We need to refresh Ashland's identity to the visitor and rebrand to encompass not only culture but the outdoors and wine industry, for example, combined with the scenic backdrop of Ashland's natural beauty, wellness roots, music and visual arts.

**Now more than ever, the Ashland economy and community needs Travel Ashland's effective leadership and technical marketing skills.** We need the City's support and investment to navigate through this changing visitor landscape. We are the organization to meet the change as we retool and rebuild Ashland's economy and inspire visitors both returning and new to experience Ashland. By continuing to fund Travel Ashland, this investment will perpetuate economic growth and activity. It will provide a return on investment by enabling Travel Ashland to continue to diversify and grow the visitor base, one of the largest key economic drivers in Ashland's economy.

- **Travel Ashland is nimble and able to meet the new demands from the visitor**
- **Travel Ashland is the trusted entity to influence, inspire, inform and educate visitors to travel to Ashland with the furthest market outreach, continually positioning Ashland as a unique destination.**
- **Travel Ashland has successfully fulfilled the scope of work outlined in the City Grant contract for over thirty-eight years, increasing TOT and F&B revenues year over year, creating a steadier stream of visitor volume.**





Photo by Kirk McKenzie



Photo by Karl Young @meatballmama



Photo by Chris Constantine



Photo by Kirk McKenzie

**City Grant Annual Report  
FY 2018 - 2019  
Ashland Chamber of Commerce  
Travel Ashland (Visitor & Convention Bureau)**



# Ashland's economy and livability depends on tourism

## Travel Ashland Annual Report FY 2018-2019

### Overview Points:

- Tourism is the key economic driver in Ashland. (Pg.6)
- The growth of the outdoor industry is fueled by the tourism base that respects and engages in Ashland's environment. (Pg. 7)
- Businesses, owners and employees of Ashland depend on Travel Ashland and the Ashland Chamber to promote tourism through the strength of its partnerships.(Pg. 8)
- There is a clear impact of tourism in Ashland on employment, revitalization and expansion. (Pg. 10)
- Who is Travel Ashland and what do they do? Travel Ashland is Ashland's official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) who is the trusted entity to promote Ashland. (Pg. 13)
- Travel Ashland's projects and programs showcase the strategic plan of promoting Ashland's tourism and economy and thus improving lives through a strong, sustainable local economy. (Pg. 19)





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Photo by Jeffrey McFarland



## Purpose:

Travel Ashland's job is *"to promote Ashland to visitors traveling from more than 50 miles to Ashland and to visitors who stay overnight in Ashland. Promotion includes advertising, publicizing, distribution of printed materials, marketing special events and festivals, conducting strategic planning, visitor center management and research necessary to stimulate tourism development."* Excerpt from Agreement for Services between City of Ashland and Ashland Chamber of Commerce 2018-2019.

## Mission:

To deliver an unmatched travel experience that engages the visitor, encourages repeat visitation, converts visitors into potential residents and services groups, tours and conferences. Attracting outdoor travelers, culinary and food enthusiasts and those with cultural interests, Ashland has become a desirable destination whose amenities are fueled by the visitor population.

## About Travel Ashland:

For thirty-seven years, the City of Ashland and the community have relied on Travel Ashland (Ashland's official Destination Marketing Organization) through an annual grant, to promote Ashland as a unique year-round, travel destination, to visitors traveling from more than 50 miles away and those staying overnight.

Travel Ashland's work is done through leveraging dollars received through the grant and fostering strategic partnerships with public and private sectors to promote and engage the tourism industry and visitors while conducting effective research and analysis each season that focuses on growing business in times of lower occupancy.

## About this Report:

With the passing of Ashland City Council Resolution 2017-03, Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland are required to submit an annual report regarding funds received during the prior fiscal year pursuant to ORS 320.300 through ORS 320.350



Photo by Lindsey Bolling



## **Executive Summary of FY 2018-2019**

The following grant report represents the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year and the work completed in compliance with the grant guidelines and purpose stated in the contract for services between the City of Ashland and Ashland Chamber/Travel Ashland (VCB). Using dollars received from the City of Ashland grant with the private sector and other organizations, Travel Ashland has successfully increased visitation towards a **steadier visitor volume** thus increasing revenues of the Transient Occupancy Tax, the Food & Beverage Tax and the tourism industry. This success is a collective effort through growing our valuable partnerships and diversifying our visitor. The overarching goal is to deliver a unique travel experience that engages the visitor, encourages repeat visitation and converts visitors into Ashland residents. This is done through servicing individuals, industry partners, groups, tours and conference attendees. We accomplish this through our scope of work and strategic initiatives.

**In addition to the primary purpose and goals directed from the City of Ashland grant requirements, Travel Ashland's scope of work included the following strategic initiatives that were accomplished during the reporting fiscal year:**

- **Expanded and evolved the marketing strategy to welcome new visitors from new markets and new demographics for new reasons including outdoor and wine experiences to create a steady visitor volume throughout the year.** Travel Ashland expanded its reach and message into new markets such as San Jose, Bend and Portland with strategic targeted campaigns reaching the outdoor traveler and wine lover. Travel Ashland built strength in visitation with the outdoor and wine industries despite the slight decline in the cultural, OSF playgoing visitor.
- **Engaged and involved – Travel Ashland is at the table with partners and therefore relevantly connected locally, regionally and statewide to take on opportunities, tackle issues and grow all segments of the economy.** Travel Ashland is nimble and operates with fluidity to adapt to shifting markets that we saw with an increase in occupancy in spring with consumer confidence being tested in August due to past summers of poor air quality due to wildfires and reduction of outdoor performances. Through engagement, Travel Ashland listens, analyzes and responds to changes facing our tourism industry.
- **Implemented tools that adapt to changes in visitor behavior** such as booking trends, search engines and social channels. Travel Ashland is in the process of launching the new [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com) site as a stand alone visitor experience, now separate from [www.ashlandchamber.com](http://www.ashlandchamber.com) which focuses on locals and members. Strategies include meeting the visitor where they are at digitally when making travel decisions from social platforms, to targeted email campaigns along with adapting to Google's changes and ensuring our online presence is optimized. With a shorter booking window, campaigns are placed closer to when the visitor travels with compelling stories.

**During the beginning of the fiscal year 2018 – 2019, we witnessed significant impact on businesses and loss that occurred during the 85+ days of smoke in Ashland in the summer of 2018.** We used our established collaborative partnerships to work together, informing visitors, keeping businesses apprised on current air quality data and serving as an information center not only for visitors but for residents, members and businesses. We stayed connected regionally and statewide with reporting on weekly impacts and building strategies for the future. While we experienced a loss in business during the smoke event of mid-summer, we focused on solutions and moving forward towards the fall and winter promotions that generated increased business in the fall and during Festival of Light.

**We were able to gain back visitors for a strong Fall 2018 and Winter 18-19 through the Holidays as a result of targeted campaigns** and supportive exposure from Travel Oregon campaign that highlighted Lithia Park. **We then built a strategy for spring and summer 2019** knowing from the Travel Southern Oregon Visitor Smoke Survey (see Data on Pg. 12) that visitors wanted to return to Southern Oregon despite the smoke filled days of 2018 but would be more wise in their travel decisions, make last minute bookings based on weather and perhaps shift their visit to

other months. As of January 2019, we, along with the business community and visitor industry were also aware of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's choice to forego performances in the Allen Elizabethan Theatre and instead hold them in the Ashland High School Mountain Ave. Theatre from late July through early September 2019 reducing seating per performance by 800. Staying ahead this, we prioritized inviting the outdoor adventure and culinary travelers to Ashland, continuing to diversify why someone comes to Ashland.

**We targeted the culinary traveler and outdoor adventure seeker specifically in San Jose, Bay Area and Bend markets to experience the emerging wine industry, access to outdoors and welcoming vibe of Ashland.** We saw strong engagement from our campaigns (see Campaigns pg. 23) in those markets which proved for a strong spring, including May, June and July. Conversely, we saw businesses that did not diversify their visitor clientele but rather remained focused solely on the OSF playgoer, take a direct impact from the 6-week closure at the Allen Elizabethan. Some saw their patrons coming in the Spring and Fall to avoid the summer when many businesses are used to seeing their highest occupancies. As a support to the entire visitor industry, we continued to tell the story of Ashland to new audiences to backfill the summer along with each season while encouraging the industry to be open to change, nimble to adapt and evolve.

**Within the 2018-2019 fiscal year, we continued to expand our digital platforms including our social media channels and audiences.** We hosted travel writers, influencers and the tourism industry through FAM trips and itineraries that resulted in features, stories, articles and blog posts that reached new audiences. We saw growth in the culinary traveler traffic as well as significant growth in the outdoor industries and travelers. We generated return on our investments through effective promotions, events and measurements while expanding our database and partnerships. We saw continued growth of large group business, with the exception of the OSF affiliated group. We saw new group travel trends. We enacted our role in promoting, servicing and supporting the growth of this group business sector. Production wise, over **100,000 publications** were produced, meeting the continuing demand for print from our visitor demographic while we grew the online capacity through our website and anticipate the launch of the new [travelashland.com](http://travelashland.com) in 2020. **Lead generation increased by 26% and our campaigns reached over 19+ million people (impressions) through** targeted promotions expanding into new markets and demographics. Discussions, task forces and some successful implementation resulted in an improvement in behavior issues, downtown beautification, parking and exploring transportation for our visitors around Ashland and from the airport with the implementation of Uber and Lyft.

Ashland's tourism industry continues to strengthen. We are growing as a unique destination that fuels an economic platform for innovation that attracts not only a highly educated resident but sustains a highly educated visitor base. By passionately promoting Ashland, with its sophisticated amenities, colorful seasons and amazing outdoors, we continue to enhance and deliver that authentic experience our visitors seek.

For branding purposes and to maintain a current identity within the tourism industry, Ashland VCB will be referred to as **Travel Ashland** for the remainder of this report and is how it self-identifies within its public relations.

Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland (VCB) have a unique vantage point, serving as a sounding board and liaison fostering effective partnerships and innovative programs that position our organization. In addition to the traditional responsibilities of a Chamber of Commerce and membership organization, we enjoy the added responsibility of a Destination Marketing Organization and a key element of the City of Ashland Economic Development Strategy.

Travel Ashland collects industry knowledge through research and depending upon the need, plans accordingly, in collaboration with our business partners, the most effective marketing promotions to meet the demands we hear. This strengthens and validates our direction as well as expands our market reach.

Travel Ashland (VCB) serves as the gateway to Ashland, Southern Oregon and the entire state with approximately 60% of visitors arriving to Oregon through our corridor. We are open to the public year-round, free of charge, providing an authentic message and superior travel experience. We submit this report for your review and thank you for your continued partnership and investment.



**Katharine Cato**  
Travel Ashland Director



**Sandra Slattery**  
Executive Director





## **Tourism is the key economic driver in Ashland**

Without it, we would not have a healthy economy in Ashland or the state of Oregon.

Tourism supports not only 3000 jobs, more importantly, it supports a lifestyle that Ashland residents enjoy every day.

Ashland's amenities are amazing because of the visitor base of approximately 350,000 visitors annually that support it from the restaurants to the wineries, the retail shops, the attractions and outfitters.

Ashland's resident population alone could not sustain what amenities Ashland offers.

Ashland's beautification, streets, police, fire and public works department are all part of the infrastructure that is supported by tourism that fuels Transient Occupancy Tax revenue to nearly \$3million annually.

Ashland's parks system and other City Services are supported through the 5% food and beverage tax.

In 2018 it collected nearly \$3million in tax revenue that is sustained by visitors engaging in the culinary scene and restaurants in Ashland.

# The growth of the outdoor industry is fueled by the tourism base that respects and engages in Ashland's environment

With partners like Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association and Ashland Woodland Trails Association, Ashland's trails and assets are very well maintained through effective stewardship practices and encouraging responsible recreation. These assets and easy access along with little "ego" enable Ashland to grow as an unmatched outdoor destination for runners, hikers and riders.

Ashland welcomes cyclists – mountain bikers and road riders of all ages who come to enjoy over 15,000 acres of amazing trails in the watershed along with the Officially Designated Scenic Bikeway whether free riding or taking part in an event. We are seeing increased data that shows these visitors have significant expendable income and thus support Ashland's amenities while here.

Outfitters that run the rivers saw an increase year over year, despite the smoke-filled days of 2018, by expanding their reach and continuing to deliver an authentic outdoor experience coupled with Ashland's culinary scene.

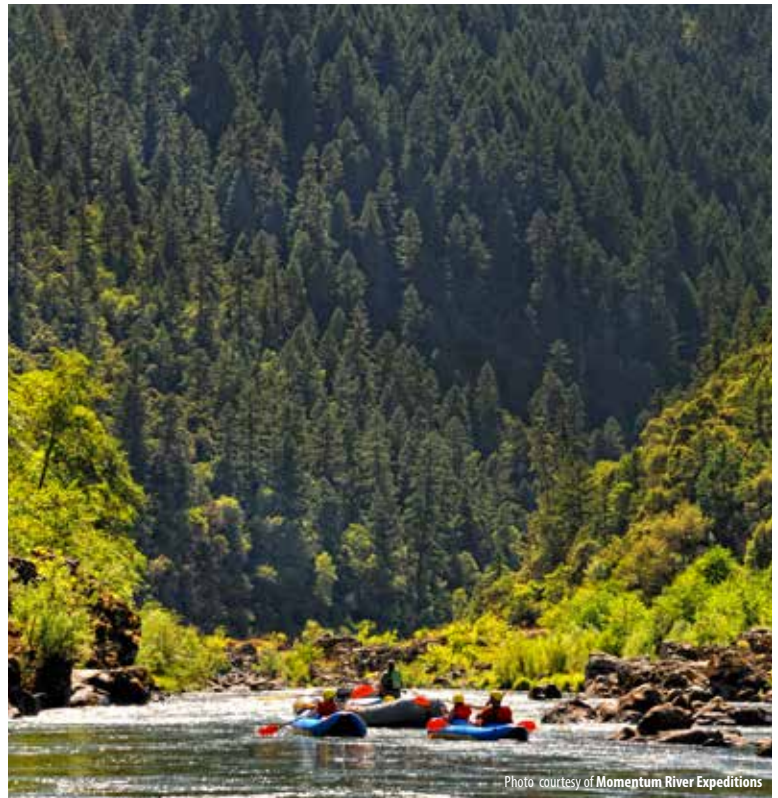


Photo courtesy of Momentum River Expeditions

Mt. Ashland has sustained itself through low snow years, making great strides with trail trimming and snow decks to cater to low snow. Meanwhile they have excelled in high snow years.



Photo courtesy of Momentum River Expeditions

Their capital campaign enabled the lodge to be fully renovated, with a new roof, new rental shop and continued maintenance to increase their infrastructure. They are seeing visitors from new markets and increased visitation. They implemented their shuttle moving more skiers and riders to the mountain with less impact on the access road and parking lot.

From natural beauty to rigorous recreation, Ashland offers a full spectrum of outdoor experiences thus attracting that outdoor traveler.

Ashland visitors are highly educated and therefore appreciate the stewardship of Ashland's natural resources.

Ashland's walkability supports our climate action initiatives. As one of the top walkable towns in the country, Ashland's visitor base enjoys Ashland by exploring on foot and by bike.



# Businesses, owners and employees of Ashland depend on Travel Ashland and the Ashland Chamber to promote tourism and further the industry through the strength of its partnerships.

Tourism encompasses a full spectrum of jobs. Hotels, restaurants and attractions are supported by the work Travel Ashland does. Retail businesses depend upon the visitor industry as the locals alone could not support them. Through valuable partnerships we foster alignment with our stakeholders, state agencies and industry. We improve people's lives through promoting and supporting a strong, sustainable economy.

Travel Ashland and Ashland Chamber serve a role only we possess. This is a very unique position in the community and business industry that allows us to create such valuable partnerships and serve as a sounding board to a diversity of organizations, residents, visitors, members and private sector businesses.

## Officially Designated Tourism Organizations and Alignment in Oregon:



Travel Ashland's **partnerships** are inherent to our success. We maximize and leverage exposure for Ashland as a destination through strong cooperative efforts by sharing the message of the brand with partners and stakeholders while growing partnerships within the industry and fostering the growth of industry relations locally, regionally and statewide.

### Industry Partnerships:

- **Private sector partners** include lodging, restaurants, wineries, attractions, retailers, outfitters, members of Ashland Chamber and beyond;
- **Oregon Tourism Commission dba. Travel Oregon** (statewide tourism)
- **Ride Oregon** – cycle tourism branch of Travel Oregon
- **RDMO's (Regional Destination Marketing Organizations)**
  - **Central Oregon Visitors Association**
  - **Travel Southern Oregon (formerly Southern Oregon Visitors Association)** Current Board Member and incoming president : Katharine Cato, Travel Ashland Director. Membership provides opportunities for exposure at trade shows that market directly to tour operators and group coordinators. Membership results in creating itineraries and welcoming them to Ashland to experience the town while researching the amenities for their group. Many leads for travel writers come through this partnership channel.
  - **ODA – Oregon Destination Association** – Board Member, Katharine Cato serves representing Southern Oregon in the statewide discussion on issues such as lodging taxes, funding, visitation trends
- **ORLA- Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association**
- **Regional DMO's (Destination Marketing Organizations):**
  - **Travel Medford, Discover Klamath, Travel Grants Pass**
- **OACVB- Oregon Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus**
- **Oregon Film and Television Office and Film Southern Oregon**
- **OTIC- Oregon Tourism Information Council**

- OTTA – Oregon Tour and Travel Alliance
- NTA- National Tour Association
- IFWTW – International Food & Wine Travel Writers
- BATW – Bay Area Travel Writers
- Oregon State Parks and Recreation Scenic Bikeway Committee
- Federal Agencies:
  - o The Nature Conservancy
  - o Bureau of Land Management
  - o United States Forest Service
  - o ODOT – with the construction of the Oregon Welcome Center completed in summer 2019, Travel Ashland played a key role in the opening and training of visitor information to staff, in partnership with Travel Southern Oregon. Now open it serves all north bound visitors with much needed travel information and a welcoming person to educate them about Oregon.
- **We value our Local Partners and work with them to support them, collaborate and expand our success:**  
 Jackson County – bicycle and pedestrian, roads and parks divisions; Ashland Parks and Recreation; Ashland Forest Resiliency Project (now AFAR) Ashland Independent Film Festival; Stay Ashland; Ashland Gallery Association; Britt Festival; Oregon Shakespeare Festival; Southern Oregon University; International Mountain Bike Association; Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association; Siskiyou Velo Club; Rogue Valley Growers and Crafters Market; Klamath Bird Observatory; Scienceworks Hands On Museum; Mt. Ashland Ski Area; Southern Oregon Winery Association and Rogue Valley Vintners.

### **Crisis Communication:**

Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland have longstanding partnerships with legislators, representatives, regional and statewide organizations that became very important to rely on during the smoke-filled days of July and August in Summer, 2018. This crisis showed the strength of our partnerships as we collectively dealt with fire and smoke impacts. In addition to the successful [www.smokewiseashland.com](http://www.smokewiseashland.com) initiative of our Fire Prevention Task Force that supported businesses, employees and residents, Travel Ashland engaged in a regional statewide strategy weekly call reporting on the impacts and how we move through it together. Travel Oregon engaged in that call knowing that Southern Oregon saw the greatest impact in 2018. Creating solutions and building awareness with legislators in addition to launching fall campaigns were created to support our region from Travel Oregon were part of the strategy. After a visit to Ashland coordinated by the Chamber and Travel Ashland, Governor Brown awarded Travel Southern Oregon a grant from Business Oregon to lead a visitor survey to measure impact of smoke on travel decisions and plans. The survey was conducted in 2019 with results in April to help the tourism industry understand the current and possibly long-term affects smoke is having on travel in southern Oregon communities and how the market is shifting. The survey is a collaboration between Travel Southern Oregon, SORCE, and DMO partners in southern Oregon. For results to this survey see Clear Impacts of Tourism section pg. 12.



Photo by Bob Palermi

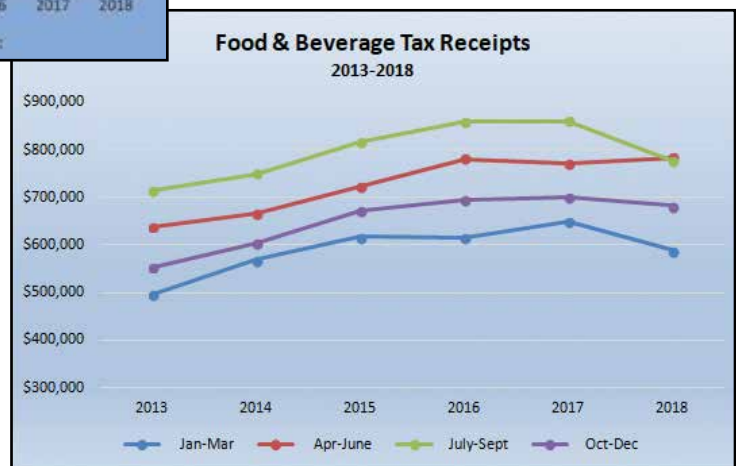
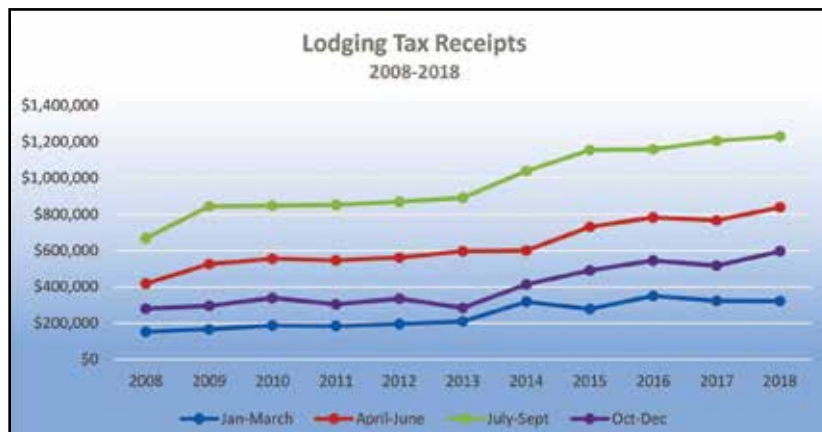
# The clear impact of tourism in Ashland on employment, revitalization and expansion

Tourism is the main driver to Ashland's economy welcoming approximately 350,000 visitors annually. Statewide, Oregon tourism is an \$12.3 billion industry that directly generates more than 115,400 jobs with secondary impacts that create another 57,200 jobs. Tourism generates \$539 million in state and local tax revenues. In Southern Oregon there are over 12,000 tourism related jobs.

In Ashland, over 3000 jobs are fueled by the visitor spanning Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Lodging and Restaurants. Employment, quality of life and the success of Ashland's economy is directly dependent upon tourism. This can be shown not only from historical data with growth in the lodging and food & beverage tax revenues year over year but also through the growth of the number of tourism related business and jobs. In 2018, the City collected nearly \$6million from the two visitor-oriented taxes. Tourism has contributed to the increase of jobs, payroll and wages. Retail expansion and growth of local businesses along with the revitalization of the Historic Railroad district cater not only to a local but visitor clientele is fueled by a strong visitor base.

The hospitality industry provides full time and part time jobs for people, including students who can hold part time jobs enabling them to afford and obtain higher education.

We have data that shows companies relocate to Ashland not only for lifestyle and quality of life but because of the amenities that are afforded by tourism such as Wholesale Solar from Mt. Shasta. Ashland has a dynamic and energized business core with restaurants and activities to engage in. The tourism base affords the opportunity to be welcoming to those type of businesses, employers and thus employees with living wage jobs.



Transient Occupancy Tax by Quarter	
Amount (\$)	Quarter Ending Date
1,227,996	9/30/2018 (July/Aug/Sept)
596,145	12/31/2018 (Oct/Nov/Dec)
338,542	3/31/2019 (Jan/Feb/Mar)
960,041	6/30/2019 (Apr/May/June)
<b>18-19 Total: 3,122,724</b>	

Food and Beverage Tax by Quarter	
Amount (\$)	Quarter Ending Date
777,103	9/30/2018 (July/Aug/Sept)
682,523	12/31/2018 (Oct/Nov/Dec)
588,899	3/30/2019 (Jan/Feb/Mar)
811,053	6/30/2019 (Apr/May/June)
<b>18-19 Total: 2,859,579</b>	



## Research and Analysis

**Background:** For years, the tourism industry has been researched and assessed providing direction to the approach we use in our marketing.

**There is an inherent value in Ashland's downtown.** Visitors value the downtown lodging and proximity to our amenities. This underscores the importance of the commitment and investment to keep our downtown's physical structure and ambiance vibrant, beautiful, well maintained and welcoming. In 2008, it was determined that the Tourism and Recreation Cluster, so important to Ashland's economic base, needed extensive research and analysis to better understand the strengths and inherent challenges. In addition to planning for a Tourism BR&E (Business Retention and Expansion) survey, it was decided to do more in depth analysis of the tourism sector, which we continue today.



Photo by Kirk McKenzie

**Travel Ashland collects industry knowledge through research and depending upon the need, plans accordingly, in collaboration with our business partners, the most effective marketing promotions to meet the demands we hear. This strengthens and validates our direction as well as expands our market reach.** It is important to note in these times we have particular strength that we are nimble and flexible to react to market changes and constantly adapting our marketing efforts to reflect those trends. Travel Ashland annually analyzes the Food and Beverage tax collections and the Transient Occupancy Tax collections. We chart the data and look for strengths and weaknesses in seasonal fluctuations. This tells us where we need to then effectively target areas that need focus. Hence why we created the Ashland Culinary Festival in November and Ashland Culinary Month in February.

**January – March has the greatest opportunity to grow based on our research with the lowest occupancy.** We continue to analyze OSF, TOT and F&B data comparatively to best assess visitor demand, market changes and price sensitivity. with the lowest occupancy and then created some campaigns to target that window of time. Travel Ashland surveys businesses to determine their visitor's travel patterns and behaviors. By focusing on Spring and Summer promotions, we have seen results as an increase in occupancy March - June, year over year.

We continue to study the visitor sector and analyze current trends, behavior and growth with the growing tourism economy which has been seen through the strength of increased revenue during the fall and holidays. Trends such as the **last-minute traveler**, with a very short decision-making window, affect how we market to them, not rewarding the last-minute behavior but offering incentives to choose Ashland. Last minute decisions are often made using online tools hence why we must constantly be in front of the visitor, digitally, directly and in print.



Photo by Sean Bagshaw Outdoor Exposure Photography

**We saw less walk-ins due to smoke in the summer of 2018. We are seeing a possible market shift with visitors booking prior to July and August and thus increasing occupancy along with room rates in May and June.** Trends in growing niches such as the culinary traveler and those seeking Ashland as a wine destination are resulting in the execution of regional surveys with partners such as Rogue Valley Vintners and Travel Southern Oregon. We continue to research our market, geographically, psychographically and demographically. Monthly, we track the analytics and traffic of our websites to tell us who is coming to our site, where they are, what their preferences and behavior are. We use Google and Facebook to measure those behavior markers of visitors and trends to keep current on a weekly basis and adjust our messaging accordingly.

#### **2019 Travel Southern Oregon's Wildfire and Visitor Perception Study**

As a follow up to the summer smoke filled days of 2018, Travel Southern Oregon, along with regional partners such as SORCE, Travel Ashland and the Coraggio Group embarked on a survey for visitors to see the impact of the wildfire smoke on their travel plans, behavior and outlook. Travel Southern Oregon's Wildfire & Visitor Perception Study was released in April 2019. The visitor study, which begun back in October of 2018, presents tourism partners with valuable data from recent summer visitors about the way wildfire smoke has impacted the visitor perception of Southern Oregon as a travel destination. All in all, the findings were heartening with 85% of respondents planning to visit Southern Oregon in the future. The results showed that there is visitor interest in shoulder seasons, the ways smoke impacts vacation plans and much more. There were also a major difference in the type of visitor comparing Klamath Basin and Crater Lake to the Rogue Valley and Ashland visitor. View full report here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FaRvC80CNe9trWlq\\_AfEH0JGqMymenUR/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FaRvC80CNe9trWlq_AfEH0JGqMymenUR/view).

**Summer 2019 Survey showed variance in the summer despite clear skies.** Many tourism related businesses were flat or down in August due to the perception being stronger than the reality of poor air quality. May, June and July were pacing very strong, however August was down for many downtown lodging and those closely affiliated with the OSF playgoer. Conversely wineries and outdoor outfitters were strong through the summer and fall as they welcomed new visitors.

- o Responses: 35% DINING; 37% lodging; 16% retail, 8% attraction and 5% outdoor.
- o May: 37% up, 24% down and 35% flat
- o June: 56% up, 21% down and 18% flat
- o July: 54% up, 35% down and 10% flat
- o August: 45% up, 35% down and 18% up

Findings included variance of business through the summer. Survey comments ranged from new clientele to less predictable behavior. Less business in advance, some heard disappointment about less indoor shows @ OSF, some are getting a younger visitor base and it is evolving for some. More visitors are here to taste wine and outdoors.

**Ashland's visitor is diversifying and there is new data on the outdoor traveler – the mountain biker.** Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing sports in the country and is the current number one user of public lands in the country. The average mountain biker spends \$491 for a weekend visit to a destination. (source: IMBA) Ashland is currently shuttling over 3,000 riders per year up into the Ashland Watershed. This number does not include riders who ride uphill into the watershed. In Oregon, mountain biking and bicycle tourism is a \$400million industry. Ashland's notoriety for its well maintained trails and access is becoming more well known, attracting both professional riders for events and competitions and families. (Source: International Mountain Bike Association and Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association).

#### **Travel Ashland and Oregon Shakespeare Festival Collaborate**

Travel Ashland worked with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival following their decision to forego outdoor performances for 6-weeks from late July to early September in 2019. Travel Ashland worked with OSF on a business community forum in April, 2019 where questions that had been submitted and compiled prior were addressed by Paul Christy and Torrie Allen. Following the forum, that left many unsatisfied in the business community, there was a debrief meeting, looking at the outcomes and impact. While many of the questions related to marketing, the group felt collectively it was the beginning to the conversation, reconnecting and reengaging for OSF with the business community. OSF agreed to follow up with an Business Update Report and outlook, sharing data that could help the businesses for planning. In their Business Update published in September 2019, they quoted seeing higher August ticket sales than originally forecasted back in May with the indoor theatre. For the 2020 Season, they decided to stay in the Allen Elizabethan Theatre which brought great relief to the tourism industry that relies on the cultural traveler.

# Who is Travel Ashland and what do they do?

For thirty-seven years, the City of Ashland and the community have relied on Travel Ashland (Ashland's official Destination Marketing Organization) through an annual grant, to promote Ashland as a unique year-round, travel destination, to visitors traveling from more than 50 miles away and those staying overnight.

Travel Ashland's work is done through using dollars received through the grant and fostering strategic partnerships with public and private sectors to promote and engage the tourism industry and visitors while conducting effective research and analysis each season that focuses on growing business in times of lower occupancy.

The goal is to deliver an unmatched travel experience that engages the visitor, encourages repeat visitation, converts visitors into potential residents and services groups, tours and conferences. Attracting outdoor travelers, culinary and food enthusiasts and those with cultural interests, Ashland has become a desirable destination whose amenities are fueled by the visitor population.

Travel Ashland has significantly increased the **TOT and F&B** revenues to nearly 6 million EACH a year with a ½ million dollar increase alone in just three years. Tourism revenues **support businesses** in retail, lodging, food and beverage, attractions and subindustries who serve those businesses.

Travel Ashland **produces, manages and distributes the tools that visitors use to make their travel plans such as Travel Ashland's social media channels on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.** Travel Ashland's **website, [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com)** guides visitors effectively within the site to serve them the most relevant information in the fewest clicks in mobile, tablet and desktop versions. **Travel Ashland's Visitor Guide** showcases an annual calendar, maps, Itinerary ideas, reasons to make Ashland their next travel destination. The digital version of the Guide can be downloaded for free. The **Ashland Map Guide** provides wayfinding and access to Ashland's recreation and outdoors including Lithia Park, the Ashland Watershed, the City of Ashland and Parks, Crater Lake National Park, Table Rocks, the Mountain Lakes, and the Cascade Siskiyou Scenic Bikeway. Free digital version available. **Seasonal enter-to-win getaways** leverage partnerships by packaging Ashland in an attractive way to entice a visitor to share their information, become a follower of Travel Ashland and possibly win a trip that includes unique experiences based on the time of year.

Travel Ashland manages the **visitor center and Plaza information kiosk** serving tens of thousands of visitors year-round. We operate the **Travel Ashland Advisory Committee** made up of tourism industry representatives from lodging, restaurant, outdoor outfitters, wine industry, theatre and attractions. This advisory committee assesses each season's visitation and provides input to planning campaigns and programs that Travel Ashland carries out. Travel Ashland attracts, promotes, services and supports **groups, tours and conferences** through collaborative partnerships. We serve as a **sounding board** to the tourism industry, members and businesses, providing support, guidance and facilitating opportunities to grow together depending upon the issue, the partner or timing.

Travel Ashland and the Chamber **produce major events** including the Ashland Culinary Festival, the Festival of Light Celebration, the Fourth of July, Children's Halloween Celebration and the Martin Luther King Junior Celebration. Travel Ashland also supports many **community events**. Travel Ashland and the Chamber provide **educational workshops**, seminars and conferences to help businesses improve their operations.

Tourism promotion is a **key element of the City of Ashland Economic Development Strategy** and is the front door for economic development inquiries.

## Travel Ashland Leadership:

The Travel Ashland Advisory Committee (see pg. 33) is made up of members from different areas of the tourism industry from lodging, restaurant, outdoors, culinary, wineries, theatre and attractions. Under the advisory direction of the committee and Chair, Hiram Towle, General Manager of Mt. Ashland Ski Area, Katharine Cato, Director, executes the strategic direction, promotions, campaigns, project and programs. This work could not be done without the full support of STAFF and the amazing work of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce staff.

### **Hiram Towle**

*General Manager of  
Mt. Ashland Ski Area  
& Travel Ashland Chair  
2018 - Present*



### **Katharine Cato**

*Director  
Travel Ashland*



**Ashland Chamber & Travel Ashland Staff**



# The Ashland Brand

The Ashland Brand style and messaging are the foundation for the story we tell. We refine it each year with fresh messaging, images and content. We continue to evolve each year with a sophisticated, yet approachable, current look and feel to appeal to a visitor to choose Ashland as their travel destination. The Ashland Brand showcases the discovery of each season and the niche interests that attract targeted audiences.

## Logo description:



A trip to Ashland is not just a single experience. It's the coming together of many extraordinary people, places and events to create a city that is unique to every single person who comes to visit. "As you like it", while alluding to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for which Ashland is best known, truly speaks to multitude of choices and lets our audience know that, here, they will experience the exact version of Ashland that they love most.

## Brand Statement:

At the convergence of the Cascade and Siskiyou Mountains, where forested alpine peaks give way to some of the most fertile and bio-diverse lands to have ever been shaped by geologic wonder and the hands of time, lies a town that's just as unique and authentic as the terrain that surrounds it. Nowhere else do so many experiences- from performing, visual and culinary arts, to education, wellness and outdoor recreation – combine to create something so inspiring. While others may try, there's only one authentic Ashland, Oregon. (there are 31 in the United States!)

## The pillars are the foundation to the Ashland brand – culture, culinary and outdoors.

### Culture - The cornerstone to Ashland's visitor draw:

#### Branding statement:

Come experience culture like no other. Home to America's oldest Elizabethan theatre and SOU, Ashland's long cultural history is built upon innovation, theatre, education and wellness. Enjoy 365 days of theatre, a thriving artist community, art galleries and museums offering a diverse range of fine art from around the world. Attend independent films, markets, festivals and explore a diverse shopping experience with Ashland's eclectic collection of sophisticated shops. Enjoy discovering on foot or on bike, from Downtown to the Historic Railroad District and Southern Oregon University's campus.

**Culinary** – Ashland has an award-winning culinary scene that is growing in its notoriety of talented chefs as well as the identity of the Rogue Valley Wine Country. Through alignment and collaboration, Travel Ashland is positioned for growth as a major destination and leader, fueling visitation in the region.

#### Branding statement:

- Explore Ashland's thriving culinary scene with over 100 restaurants, talented chefs and innovative restaurateurs who incorporate produce and products from local farmers and food artisans. Discover coffee shops, farms and taste delicious specialty foods made by local artisans who take pride in their sustainable practices. Sip and taste local at Ashland's micro- breweries and distinguished wineries that are gaining national recognition. Culinary events abound and are a reason to visit year-round with events such as the Ashland Culinary Festival, Taste of Ashland, Oregon Chocolate Festival, Oregon Honey Festival, Brews and Boogie all of which Travel Ashland partners with to promote.



Photo by Lindsey Bolling



- **Travel Ashland produces the Ashland Culinary Festival each November.** This event has produced four Iron Chef Oregon winners and engages the entire culinary scene of Southern Oregon. Learn more in the event section.
- **Ashland Culinary Month (February) and Restaurant Week** – expanded to encompass the growing wine region of southern Oregon with events throughout the month. Each February promotes restaurants, culinary events and specials to the regional visitor and to enter to win a night out.
- **By hosting culinary travel writers and influencers, the Ashland culinary scene is being noticed** and written about through multiple media channels and gaining more followers on social media channels.
- **Travel Ashland is at the table for projects such as the Rogue Valley Food Trail,** a Travel Oregon commissioned project. Once complete, this trail will amplify the agritourism experiences one can have here in Southern Oregon by providing valuable wayfinding and illustrating the pathway throughout our region that leads to an incredible variety of farms, artisans, produce and culinary adventures. Ashland welcomes over 350,000 visitors annually, with culture being a cornerstone to Ashland’s traditional visitor, the culinary and outdoor traveler are the emerging segments of the growth of our visitor base. The Rogue Valley Food Trail will be yet another effective tool to invite, welcome and provide the culinary traveler and agritourist with experiences they are seeking.
- **We acknowledge and are grateful for the positive economic impact the farms, artisans, markets and collaborative energy** in those industries have upon our economy and lifestyle. It supports the amenities all residents, in addition to visitors, benefit from
- **Rogue Valley Vintners is putting Rogue Valley Wine Country** on the map inviting visitors to think of the southern Oregon vacation as synonymous with a wine getaway. Travel Ashland is an Associate Member and serves on the Marketing Strategy committee. **The reason visitors visit Ashland is diversifying beyond the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to the outdoor and culinary experiences one can have here.** With the emerging wine industry and Rogue Valley Vintners branding the identity of the wines offered in the region, many are seeking that experience as the reason to come to Ashland for the first time and then discovering the array of cultural amenities that Ashland has been most known for.

**Outdoors** – there is continued significant growth in the outdoor tourism industry, attracting more outdoor enthusiasts each year to enjoy our natural beauty, challenging recreation and access to an amazing region to enjoy.

#### **Branding statement:**

- From Ashland’s walkable downtown and 93-acre, Lithia Park to more adventurous pursuits on the Rogue and other nearby rivers and lakes, including the Ashland Watershed, Mt. Ashland, and along the Pacific Crest Trail, Ashland’s outdoor adventures offer something for everyone. Whether you are a pro-mountain biker, marathon runner, adventure cyclist or taking your first hike or ride with your family, Ashland offers four seasons of **natural beauty and adventures.**
- With partners like Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association and Ashland Woodland Trails Association, Ashland’s trails and assets are very well maintained through effective stewardship practices and encouraging responsible recreation. These assets and easy access along with little “ego” enable Ashland to grow as an unmatched outdoor destination for runners, hikers and riders.
- **Travel Ashland serves as the Lead Proponent, driving the effort to get the official designation for the Cascade Siskiyou Scenic Bikeway (CSSB), one of 14 Scenic Bikeways in Oregon and was designated by the Oregon State Parks and Recreation commission on June 25th, 2015.** Of the thousands of proposed miles the Scenic Bikeway committee reviews, less than half are recommended. The route begins at Garfield Park on East Main, travels up the Green Springs Hwy 66, over Hyatt and Howard Prairie and back down Dead Indian Memorial Road to Garfield Park, totaling 52 miles. The Scenic bikeway has seen an increase in ridership. The Up and Down Bike Event each July commemorates the route welcoming over 100 riders. Official signage has been installed along the route to create awareness for riders.
- As the Destination Marketing Organization, Travel Ashland is leading the effort on creating more **Bike Friendly Businesses** and awareness for the positive economic impact of cycle tourism which brings \$400

million to Oregon and nearly \$40 million to Southern Oregon annually (Travel Oregon). Partnerships include Oregon State Parks and Recreation, Ashland Parks and Recreation, Jackson County and Ride Oregon in this effort.

- **Ashland's visitor is diversifying and there is new data on the outdoor traveler – the mountain biker.** Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing sports in the country and is the current number one user of public lands in the country. The average mountain biker spends \$491 for a weekend visit to a destination. (source: IMBA) Ashland is currently shuttling over 3,000 riders per year up into the Ashland Watershed.



## Regional Tourism Programs

The Travel Ashland director, Katharine Cato serves on the Travel Southern Oregon Board of Directors and is incoming president in 2020. Travel Ashland has had a continued presence at the regional tourism table since its inception.



## Statewide Tourism programs

**After decades of deliberation The NEW Siskiyou Welcome Center opened for Labor Day Weekend 2019** with a regional gala opening including partners from around the region with collaborative efforts from Travel Oregon, Travel Southern Oregon and local DMO's and attraction. It is open daily until 7pm in the summer and 5pm in the winter. It is staffed by employees of Travel Southern Oregon and managed by TSO under contract with Travel Oregon. The newly constructed welcome center is located at the ODOT Siskiyou Safety Rest Area along the northbound I-5 corridor, near mile post 12 south of Ashland. The welcome center serves

as a respite for travelers coming from the Siskiyou Summit, the highest pass on I-5 between Canada and Mexico. Additionally, it will provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about and be inspired by Oregon. The center will be staffed by experts offering concierge-style guest service.

### Oregon State Welcome Centers –

- Travel Oregon operates now eight staffed **welcome centers** at key entry points around the state.. These welcome centers are an essential part of a visitor's experience and provide in-person engagement with Travel Oregon's brand. They are able to offer this efficient and extensive program thanks to critical partnerships with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, ODOT, Oregon Travel Experience, Seaside Visitors Bureau, Port of Portland, and the Port of Morrow.
- **\$1,858 vs. \$652** - The average trip spend for visitors to Oregon Welcome Centers who stay overnight in Oregon is \$1,858 versus the average Oregon overnight trip spend of \$652. Based on 2016/2017 Travel Oregon Welcome Center Survey and Dean Runyan Associates Oregon Travel Impact 2017
- **VISITOR STATISTICS** Staff interacted with visitors from all 50 states and at least 57 countries. Top 5 countries visitors came from: Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, Australia and the Netherlands. 208,000+ travelers visited at least one of the welcome centers (up 11% over FY16/17), with August seeing the most visitors:

**OREGON GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM** Each year, Travel Oregon hosts the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism in a different part of the state. The 2018 conference, held in Bend, offered three days of networking and workshops for more than 450 attendees, exhibitors, sponsors and industry experts.

## Image and Video

Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland contract with **local photographers and influencers** to continually refresh the portrayal of Ashland's experiences, seasons and amenities that are then published through our digital channels, publications, material and social channels. **Travel Ashland is the one entity in Ashland that responds to all media inquiries and provides images of Ashland upon request that are published in stories, coverage and articles.** In Spring 2018, we contracted with a local photographer to create "moments of Ashland" that included a family in the park, shopping at the Farmer's market, eating at local eateries, the friendly vibe Ashland with young folks eating together and wine tasting. By creating these scenes, young visitors can see themselves here and are more likely to visit.

In 2019, we captured "Ashland Fall moments" with some of the members from the cast of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's production of Hairspray. The goal was to develop content for social channels, publications, the new Travel Ashland website in addition to promotions. The photos (see below) showcase diversity, the Railroad District, shopping, dining and happy people. We worked with Illustrated Sandwich production company to gain both footage and imagery following along their journey through Ashland as they enjoyed Noble, Peerless Restaurant, Alchemy and Hearsay

The library of b-roll, footage and finished **videos** Travel Ashland and Ashland Chamber produce continues to grow to meet the demand of how we sell Ashland to the visitor but also how we build the brand of Ashland's seasons and promote major events. Whether it is 5 second, 15 second, or 2 minutes videos, we have the capacity by contracting with talented partners to help us deliver the Ashland brand. Housing the most current videos on our site to further inspire visitors to plan their trip is our ever-arching goal.





# Travel Ashland's projects and programs showcase the strategic plan

## Events

### Festival of Light

- **"Find your Holiday Spirit in Ashland"** - 27th annual event drew over 15,000 attendees, including many visitors from Redding and Northern California for the Grand Illumination. Kicking off the day after Thanksgiving through New Year's, this promotion's success results in increased business year over year each December in retail, lodging and restaurants and provides a unique holiday destination.
- **Festival of Light** invites families and the regional traveler to Ashland during the months of November through January. With lodging packages, events and celebrations, Ashland attracts visitors not only from surrounding communities, but from far and wide.
- **The Holiday Gift Guide (formerly the Coupon Book) produced by the Chamber**, promotes our retail sector, shopping and dining locally in Ashland while creating awareness for Ashland's retailers, in 2014 we created, sold and published a sophisticated branding piece that had 48 coupons good at local businesses, told the story of Ashland's holidays and Festival of Light and showcased the winter season and upcoming events. 8,500 copies were printed, and all copies were distributed and utilized by visitors, locals and businesses. In 2015, we successfully grew the publication with more coupons and wider distribution. In 2017, it was direct mailed to 7,500 targeted residents and 1,000 were distributed to retailers, hotels and motels. This generated an increase in local business. In 2018, 25,000 were direct mailed to residents in Grants Pass, Ashland and Medford. In 2019, 25,000 were direct mailed to Ashland residents while over 5000 were distributed to local retailers, high visitor and local traffic areas, hotels and partners.
- **Walking in a Window Wonderland** – to support our local retailers and encourage local shopping, the Ashland Chamber created the Walking in a Window Wonderland promotion. Over 30 retailers compete with their window decorations to win various categories that locals and visitors can nominate them for through the ballots that are available at each participating business. Maps of the participating businesses are printed and available online. This provides wayfinding for shopper and encourages them to shop local and engage with their local retail sector as well as magical windows creating a charming visitor experience.



Photos by Graham Lewis

**Strategic Initiative: Elevate Ashland's notoriety in the culinary world through: Amplifying Ashland as a year-round culinary destination and wine vacation destination in the Rogue Valley. Promoting Ashland as home to four Iron Chef Oregon winners. Building the Ashland Culinary Festival now in its 13th year and expanding Ashland Restaurant Week to Ashland Culinary Month each February.**



## 13th annual Ashland Culinary Festival 2019 Celebrating Southern Oregon's food, drink, talent and creativity

Travel Ashland, with the Ashland Chamber, promotes Ashland as a year-round paradise with an award-winning culinary scene, rich culture and epic outdoors. The Ashland Culinary Festival began in 2007 to showcase the bounty of Southern Oregon during the fall, to increase visitation after OSF closes, inviting culinary locals and visitors to taste, enjoy and learn about all things culinary. We have seen an increase in Northern California visitors.

- Over the past 12 years, it has grown to encompass four days of a dynamic destination festival. The **Top Chef Dinner** honors the legacy of talented chefs that have won the **Top chef competition** (where 12 chefs compete each year for Top chef honor) in past years. Four of these top chefs have gone on to take the Iron Chef Oregon title at the Bite of Oregon's Iron Chef Competition in Portland. This elevates Ashland not only state-wide but nationally in terms of what types of Chefs we produce here and underscores Ashland as a culinary destination.
- The **Mixology competition** provides a platform for bartenders to show their skills and build camaraderie while showcasing local distilleries and ingredients used to make the specialty cocktail. As a membership organization, the Ashland Chamber alongside Travel Ashland supports the growth of the food and beverage industry not only through this festival but through workshops, conferences and providing a venue such as this event to network and partner. Over 12 bartenders competed. The largest attendance EVER on a Friday night – welcoming over 400 people. **Top Mixologist 2019: Jordan Shepard-McGuire, Larks Kitchen & Cocktails**
- As an educationally based Chamber, the Ashland Chamber's role includes economic development for Ashland. In this case, we are cultivating potential future chefs through the **Junior Chef Competition**. The Junior Chef competition welcomes talented high school, aspiring chefs. The positive impact of this part of the event is felt by entire classes who engage, fine-tuning their skills prior to the competition. The service industry has a need for more skilled workers. This event inspires high schoolers to pursue their culinary path and gives them insight into the culinary industry. **Top Junior Chefs 2019: North Medford High School**
- At the heart of the event, the **Top Chef competition** puts the spotlight on local chefs that work hard year-round welcoming thousands of visitors and locals alike. It gives the restaurants an opportunity to share small bites from their menu as well as gain exposure through the many channels of promotion. We also see restaurateurs discovering new wines to add to their menu or new artisans to collaborate with. The local farms and their contributions make the ingredient table that the chefs use truly abundant and interesting for the audience to see how they incorporate the produce to compliment the secret ingredient. **Top Chef 2019: Billy Buscher (Top Chef 2012) of Larks Kitchen & Cocktails**

- The workshops provide culinary education with something new each year. This year's **workshops** included Biodynamic – Organic Wine Education, Texas Beef Brisket, Winter and Dried Fruit Desserts and CBD infused Bitters.
- Southern Oregon is best exemplified through the **vendors** that surround the room. Restaurants share their samples, food artisans provide holiday gift ideas, award-winning wineries, breweries and distilleries educate guests on their practices. Over 40 vendors attended and sold at this festival.
- This event, that attracts over 3000+ each year is not only measured by how many visitors come from around the west coast (primarily Northern California and now the Portland market) but rather how many people it engages. The power of partnership and collaboration that delivers a collective impact to our local economy is felt not only in those four days but throughout the year by the sharing of the images, talent and momentum that showcases Ashland's Culinary Scene.

Promotion of Ashland Culinary Festival spans from targeted digital ads to video, social, email blasts and print ads. Below is an example of the entirety of the messaging for the event.



13th annual **Ashland Culinary Festival**  
**November 7th – 10th, 2019**

**Produced by Travel Ashland**  
 At the Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites

**ASHLAND**  
 as you like it

Top Chef Dinner, Mixology, Junior & Top Chef Competitions, Culinary Workshops, Vendor Samplings, Tours and Getaway Packages

**12 local chefs compete for Top Chef Honor:**

<b>Raider Babcock</b>	Standing Stone Brewing Company	<b>Mike Hite</b>	Alchemy Restaurant & Bar
<b>Billy Buscher</b>	Larks Kitchen & Cocktails/Inn at the Commons	<b>Julian Jones</b>	Macaroni's/Martino's
<b>Javier Cruz</b>	Simple Café	<b>David Kay</b>	Caldera Brewery & Restaurant
<b>Tony Efstratiadis</b>	Plancha	<b>Keenan McGraw</b>	Carriage House Jacksonville
<b>Skye Elder</b>	Brickroom	<b>Alfredo Nava</b>	Omar's Fresh Seafood and Steaks
<b>John Hill</b>	Southern Oregon University (The Hawk Dining)	<b>William Snyder</b>	Curbside King

**2019 Chef Competition Judges:**  
**Lead Emcee & Head Judge - Chef Tselani Richmond** (Oregon Culinary Institute), **Chef Rebecca Peizer** (CIA/Napa) and **Chef Shaun O'Neale** (Winner of MasterChef Season 7)

**2019 Event Schedule:**

<b>Thurs., Nov. 7th:</b>	<b>Ultimate Top Chef Dinner</b> 5:30pm	<b>Sat., Nov. 9th:</b>	<b>Chef Competition &amp; Vendor Sampling</b> 12:00 – 5:00pm Round 1 (12:30) & Round 2 (3pm)
<b>Fri., Nov. 8th:</b>	<b>Culinary Kickoff Event</b> 5:30pm. <b>4th annual Top Mixology Competition</b> , drink samplings, small bites and more!	<b>Sun., Nov. 10th:</b>	<b>Culinary Workshops</b> 10:00 – 11:30am <b>Chef Competition &amp; Vendor Sampling</b> 12:00 – 5:00pm Round 3 (12:30) & Final Round for Top Chef 2019 (3pm)
<b>Sat., Nov. 9th:</b>	<b>Culinary Workshops</b> 10:00 – 11:30am <b>Junior Chef Competition</b> 10:00 – 11:30am (4th annual)		

**For tickets and all event info visit:**

**TravelAshland.com**

SEVEN FEATHERS | Good things come from Sysco | TOYOTA | Let's Go Places

Instagram | Facebook | Twitter



## Digital Channels



Travel Ashland utilizes our digital and social channels to engage followers who are fans and visitors to Ashland and attendees of our destination events. Travel Ashland and Ashland Chamber's social media channels are effective ways to reach new and existing visitors. The audiences on each channel have nearly tripled in the past two years. Our effective social media and digital plan is crucial in delivering relevant information regarding events, seasonal travel and new reasons to visit. These are also the "highways" where visitors, especially in the younger

demographic,

are finding their information and researching destinations. Our strategy includes "takeovers" by widely known influencers infusing our channels with their imagery and voice, along with enter to win contests, audience created content such as images and videos showcasing their experiences and compelling content, we continue to grow exposure for Ashland. We leveraged the audiences of travel writers and influencers to grow our followers. These social channels drive increased traffic to our website promoting the destination of Ashland.

### Ashland Chamber (@AshlandChamberOregon)

Facebook: 3096 followers (27% growth)

Instagram: 1273 followers (25% growth)

### Travel Ashland (@TravelAshland)

Facebook: 1,850 followers (46% growth)

Instagram: 2,183 followers (39% growth)

Ashland Culinary Festival (@AshlandCulinaryFest)

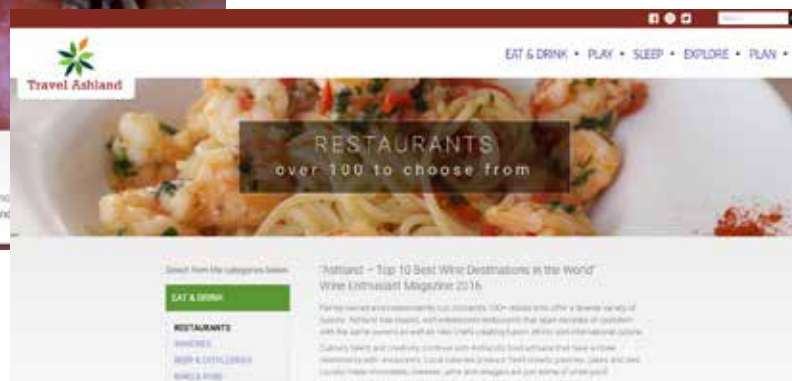
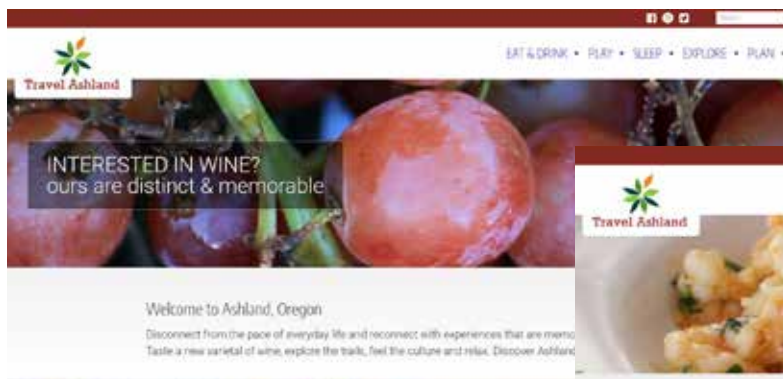
Facebook Page: 1,650 followers (28% growth)

Instagram: 1,158 followers (25% growth)

### Influencers:

- All throughout the year: What to do in Southern Oregon - @WhattodoinSouthernOregon
- For Culinary Month - Erika Reyes @\_erikarey
- For Culinary Month and the Culinary Festival - Kari Young @meatballsmama
- Nichole Oxford @itsnicholemarie
- Chenoa @chenoacoviare

[www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com)



**Launching January 2020: The new [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com) site will be launching early 2020.** From our research, Travel Ashland understands we need to meet visitors where they are at in their search process when deciding upon where to travel. This means getting in front of them digitally whether it be targeted display ads on sites they visit, email blasts into their inbox or engaging them on our social channels.

Aside from our digital channels, the need for a new, robust, visitor focused website was evident to be able to create an entire visitor experience that delivered on the messaging in our promotions. Travelashland.com is where all traffic is driven to. Hence the development of the new site (homepage and interior pages pictured). Demand for print is still very strong and continues to grow based on the demographic of our visitor base. While visitors find information online, they still desire to be inspired by our print publications, by requesting and using both.

As of the launch of the new site, [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com) will deliver a streamlined, modern visitor online experience with rolling video on the homepage, targeted messaging making it easier for visitor to navigate through their search from dining to lodging, attractions to information. New aspects of the site will include an Industry resource page to support our partners with regional and statewide resources. A new media page will track on all coverage on Ashland. Featured partners and sophisticated layout will compliment the content of the Ashland brand.

## Campaigns and Results

**Strategic Initiative: Expand our audiences through engagement into new key markets and niche demographics** such as San Jose, Portland and Bend – see campaign examples of results. Continue to market into Northern California and the Bay Area, Redding and Eugene because these are responsive markets, highly engaged in our outreach that we have been able to grow and saturate in terms of educating them of Ashland's attractions and draw. Social audience growth and targeted niche markets includes new demographics such as outdoor and culinary travelers.

**What is an Impression?** Sometimes called a view or an ad view, is a term that refers to the point in which an ad is viewed once by a visitor, or displayed once on a **web page**. The number of **impressions** of an advertisement is determined by the number of times the particular page is located and loaded.

**Below are examples of campaigns throughout the year that amplify each season.**

### Spring Campaigns

#### Ashland's Culture and Outdoors

Travel Ashland promotes the warmth of Spring that starts sooner then destination to the north. Promoting to Bend, Eugene and Portland as well as Northern California invites travelers – families, couples, friends and all to enjoy festivals, wines, the culture from OSF to the Cabaret, performing arts and the beauty of the season.

**Three-month (Mar/April/May) campaign on Sunset.com online run of site ads garnered 375,047 impressions and 459 clicks, .16% CTR.** These results exceeded the industry benchmark goals of .10%. In the reporting fiscal year Sunset ad placements activated **1248 leads** that were fulfilled with Visitor Guides and inclusion in our visitor database.

Enjoy Ashland, #AsYouLikeIt  
this spring



Photo by Lindsey Bolling

Travelashland.com

March promotion of Springtime in Ashland. Sunset.com - 127,381 Ad Impressions, 131 Clicks .10% CTR.



## Award-winning wines & first-class hospitality

Photo by Lindsey Bolling

[www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com)

## Fall Campaigns

Travel Ashland fall campaigns showcase the colors and adventure of fall leading up to the Ashland Culinary Festival and Festival of Light in November. Targeting the outdoor traveler and the wine/culinary traveler, the message is to enjoy Ashland's sunshine, access to amazing terrain and award-winning wines in a casual setting. These promotions have supported increased occupancy in September and October, year over year.

AAA/VIA ad campaigns reached a combined 6 million readers and activated over 1700 leads. Seasonal campaigns with ad placements in AAA/VIA publications target Northern California, Northern Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Phoenix and Idaho. Each lead is responded to in a timely manner with a current Visitor Guide. 'Four Day Destination Culinary Festival' – email campaign with SacBee – Sacramento Bee News

**NW Travel Fall Campaign reached the greater Pacific Northwest, Seattle and Olympic Peninsula.**

**Results:**

## Northwest Travel & Life Digital Content Network (DCN) Results October 2019

Newsletter	Date	Open Rate	Click Thru
October 2019	10/29/19	20.3%	1.7%

Banner Ads	Impressions
October 2019	922,286

Social Media	Date Boosted	Reach	Engagement	Link Clicks
October 2019	10/30/19	8,356	157	142

- **Newsletter ran on Tuesday, October 8, 2019.**
- **Very high number of banner ad impressions.**
- **Excellent reach and engagement on the social media ad!**

## Ashland Culinary Month Campaign

Ashland Culinary Month encompasses all things culinary throughout February with participation from over 50 partners such as wineries, restaurants, lodging and theatres offering specials and an enter to win a night out. The goal of Culinary Month is to amplify Ashland and Rogue Valley Wine country, winery events, culinary classes, dinner series and the thriving culinary scene for regional visitors while continuing momentum from the Ashland Culinary Festival from November by highlighting the Top Chefs and Mixologists. Each restaurant provides gift certificates to participate and those are what folks can enter to win by dining at one of the participating restaurants. Restaurants have reported the promotion generated business they would not otherwise have enjoyed this time of year. **We have seen an increase in F&B tax in February 2018 that underscores the value of this promotion.**



## **SacBee Culinary Month Campaign:**

### **Results:**

- Demographic: Adults over 21, Sacramento and surrounding 25 miles
- E-Blast deployed January 31st, 2019
- 50,000 emails sent; #26,861 opens; 53.73% open rate (unheard of! Great results!); 1381 clicks; 2.76% CTR

## **KOIN NEWS Culinary Month promotion results reaching the greater Portland Market:**

### **KOIN TV Commercials Schedule:**

- 71 television commercials
- Commercial schedule delivered 1,458,948 Impressions
- Eye On the Northwest Segment
- Segment delivered 41,806 Impressions

### **KOIN.com Digital Schedule for Culinary Festival:**

- 300x250 Video Ad = 115,006 Impressions
- Homepage Takeover on 1/25/19 = 139,711 Impressions

### **Total Deliverables:**

- 71 Commercial Views
- 1x Eye On The Northwest Segment
- 254,717 Digital Impressions
- 2,232 Click Thru's to Travel Ashland website
- 0.88% Click Thru Rate (national average is 0.04%)

## **Edible Shasta Butte reaching Northern California –**



## **Summer Campaign**

Travel Ashland promoted summer into the San Jose, Bay Area and Bend markets in addition to continued promotion throughout Oregon, Idaho and Northern California. Travel Ashland invested additional dollars into summer promotion for July and August in 2019 to recover from the wildfire smoke filled days in 2018 that decreased visitation. Below is the San Jose campaign with SacBee.

### ***Discover the outdoors in Ashland, Oregon***

### ***Discover Ashland's amazing wines this summer***

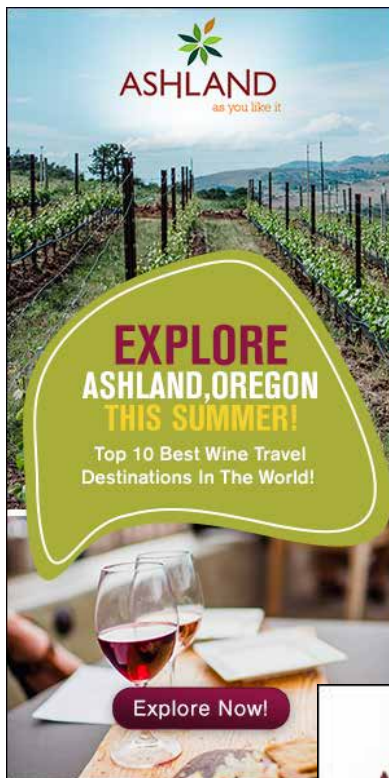
Both strategic targeted campaigns reached the San Jose and surrounding markets telling the story of Ashland's outdoors to the outdoor adventure traveler and the burgeoning wine industry and amazing wines to the culinary traveler with the goal of building brand awareness for Ashland during the summer beyond culture. Campaigns launched in May (outdoor message) and in July (wine message) positioning Ashland as a unique destination.

Campaigns included a targeted email campaign, Facebook video campaigns, videos that Travel Ashland produced and targeted display ads on a network of sites administered through SacBee.

### **Results:**

- Target Demographic: 21+ men and women, HHI \$150K, interested in outdoors, wine tasting, travel
- Facebook Campaign: 237,591 Impressions; 354 clicks; .15% CTR with 8133 video engagements
- Targeted Display Ads: 139,881 impressions, 99 clicks, .07% CTR
- E-Blast Campaigns:
  - o Outdoor Adventure Traveler deployed 5/21/19
    - 50,000 emails sent; #7926 opens; 15.85% open rate; 808 clicks; 1.62% CTR
  - o Wine Adventure Traveler deployed 6/25/19
    - 50,000 emails sent; #8662 opens; 17.32% open rate; 1068 clicks; 2.14% CTR

#### Digital Targeted Ads and E-Blast email examples:





## Lead Generation

In the 2018-19 fiscal year, lead requests increased by 26% due to effective promotion and new lead sources. A lead is a request for information from an individual that is generated by our strategic ad placements in reader services online and in print, primarily in Sunset and VIA/AAA channels. See Results section for each campaign's leads generated. By generating the leads through effective advertising, we have grown and diversified our databases to include visitors who want to receive ongoing updates, become event attendees, members, workshop participants, followers on our social media channels and enter to win entries who we have become a part of our fan base. With each lead we generate, we send a Visitor Guide to that individual, hand addressed via first class mail that same day. We include the Ashland Map Guide and the Living & Doing Business Guide when applicable. Our timely response often exceeds other Chambers and Bureaus while exceeding visitor's expectations.

## Media Coverage and Hosting Writers

**Strategic Initiative:** Welcome and host influencers, travel writers and tourism industry partners that provide connections and coverage for Ashland from a 3rd party perspective that engages their readership and diverse audience. This requires staff time that includes building itineraries, customizing experiences and showcasing Ashland based on their story focus. It also includes hosting them while they are here, guiding them through their itinerary and spending time with them to share the in-depth knowledge only our staff has. In addition, this initiative encompasses developing content including images and stories to build upon brand and differentiate Ashland as a unique destination.

**Industry relationships:** Travel Ashland and Ashland Chamber have had valuable partnerships with organizations such as Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) and the International Food and Wine Travel Writer Associations (IFWTWA) for over three decades. These partnerships have resulted in hosting notable writers, both returning and new that reach a highly desired audience.

### Hosted Media Trips included:

- July 2018 – **Guy Fieri** featured 3 Ashland restaurants filming at Sammich, Agave and Blue Toba for the **Triple D Nation Food Network show**.
- January 2019 - BJ Oudman, certified Sommelier and contributor to several major publications in Canada including **Globe and Mail, Culinaire Magazine, IMPACT Magazine** and is a writer for **Natalie MacLean** – Canada's Largest Wine review site. She attended the Truffle Festival in Eugene and after toured Southern Oregon with a focus on wine, culinary and outdoor experiences.
- Ashland Culinary Month 2019 – Kari Young @meatballsmama visited and promoted February on our Instagram page while producing high quality images for Travel Ashland. We also hosted her during Ashland Culinary Festival to build momentum and awareness for Ashland's culinary destination and stories and is returning in 2020.
- June 2019 - Peter Robinson – **NPR Bay Area** radio host, broadcasting a few episodes on Ashland and OSF during summer 2019. Plus published story in the **San Francisco Books & Travel** (summer 2019 issue) about Ashland, AHH, Larks and OSF.
- Summer 2019 - Editor in Chief, 1859 – the **Oregon Magazine** - Kevin Max. Here to produce a pilot video featuring Ashland for the 1859 digital road tripping feature.
- August 2019 - Allen Cox, editor of **Northwest Travel & Lifestyle** magazine staying at ASH. Story: "72 Hours in Ashland"
- September 2019 - Tamara Gane – "Glamping Southern Oregon" river trip, plays, dinners, time in Ashland. collaboration with Travel Ashland, Momentum River Expeditions, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Neuman Hotel Group. Writer for **Washington Post, Huffington Post, Fodor's Travel**
- Fall 2019 - Kim Cooper Findling – Ashland Culinary Festival coverage and Ashland beyond OSF.



Photo by Kari Young @meatballsmama

## LA Wine Travel Writer Group – Fall Harvest Tour, October 2019

Katharine Cato of Travel Ashland and Dionne Irvine of Irvine & Roberts Vineyards put together a dynamic itinerary to showcase the best of Ashland and the Rogue Valley during harvest. Working with Group Leader, Cori Solomon, an IFTWA writer and well known in the industry, a 5-day, 4-night robust itinerary brought the group to experience DANCIN, Irvine & Roberts, Weisingers and Cowhorn. Winemaker dinners included Quady North at Alchemy and Troon at Peerless Restaurant. From Applegate Valley to Jacksonville and Ashland the group experienced farmer's markets, lunches, OSF play and backstage tour, history tour given by Walk Ashland, Peter Finkle as well as time to explore on their own, shop and take in the feel of Ashland. By hosting this group, there will be numerous points of exposure from articles, blogs and coverage on their unique experiences we will be providing for them. We have already seen impactful stories, radio shows and articles shared as a result. Travel Ashland, Ashland's official destination marketing organization for the tourism industry invests time and energy into partnership by building itineraries that welcome writers to tell the story of what makes Ashland and the Rogue Valley an unsurpassed travel destination. This group, listed below, consisted of vetted, notable group of seasoned wine travel writers.



LA Wine Travel Writer group on a guided historic tour by Walk Ashland's, Peter Finkle

### Ashland Fall Wine Travel Writer Group

- Andy Harris - SoCal Restaurant Show
- Patricia Decker - Wine Along the 101 -
- Cori Solomon - The Written Palette, FWT Magazine and Vine.ly
- Robin Dohrn Simpson - Beverage Master Magazine and Grapevine Magazine
- Barbara Barrielle - Oregon Wine Press and Napa Valley Register
- Danielle Bauter - Outlets Include: Saveur, Wine Enthusiast, Budget Travel, Atlas Obscura, Laguna Beach Magazine, OC Register and Coast Magazine.
- Don Sonderling - Wine Country This Week....both the weekly (N. CA) on occasion, Central Coast monthly (Wine Country this Month), Very Napa Valley Magazine, Paso Robles Daily News, SLO Visitors Guide, also has a for fun blog: <http://winersdelight.blogspot.com/>
- Tamara Belgard - WinePress Northwest, Oregon Wine Press, SIP Northwest, The Oregonian, NW Travel and Life, Eater PDX, satiatepdx.com

## Groups, Tours and Conferences

Travel Ashland plays a key role in developing and sustaining group business to Ashland through outreach, collaborative planning with partners such as Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Neuman Hotel Group, promotional efforts and fulfillment with groups, tours and conferences. Ashland serves as an ideal destination for groups and conferences of all sizes from thousands to small seminars because of its amenities and proximity to major markets. Through Travel Ashland's strong partnership with Travel Oregon and Travel Southern Oregon, Ashland welcomes many types of tours and tour operators expanding their Oregon product and itineraries with its location on Interstate 5 coupled with its unmatched visitor amenities.

Travel Ashland is engaged in the process of bidding with groups and conference planners, writing letters of support, consulting and actively recruiting as well as welcoming and servicing group, tours and conferences. Ashland annually welcomes different sizes and types of groups such as associations, school, youth groups and travel industry representatives. On a weekly basis, we field inquiries of groups and tours that seek planning advice, logistical recommendations such as transportation, accommodations, dining options, itinerary building and venues. Travel Ashland and group partners promote staying longer, returning and inviting significant others and family.

Lodging partners and those who cater to group business have continued to see an increase in bookings in fall, winter and spring. Though there has been a decrease in groups staying in the downtown specifically noted in August 2018 due to wildfires and smoke and August 2019 with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival cancelling plays in the Allen Elizabethan Theatre. Because groups book out a year or more ahead of time, the perception and probability of poor air quality from wildfire smoke in August are causing groups to either schedule another time of year or try a new destination. That said, partners including Travel Ashland are working to invite new groups for new reasons from new markets.

Here are highlights of the groups, tours, industry and conferences Travel Ashland worked with:

- **MINI TAKES THE STATES**, a consumer-based loyalty event, 7th biennial road rally through **MINI USA (i.e. Mini Cooper)** simultaneously kicked-off in Orlando, FL and Portland, OR on Saturday, July 14, 2018 and converged at Keystone Resort in Colorado on Friday, July 20. MINI USA is proud to support **Feeding America** in the fight to end hunger. join them as they raise money and awareness for this worthwhile cause. <http://www.minitakesthestates.com/faq.htm> / <http://www.minitakesthestates.com/charity.htm>
- **TUI - Germany's largest tour operator** in the German speaking market (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) in support of the non-stop service between Reykjavik and PDX. 16 top travel agents and TUI product management staff were hosted by Travel Ashland, Travel Southern Oregon and Travel Oregon. After spending the day at Crater Lake, they attended a Welcome Reception then dinner at Standing Stone.
- **VIVENW group** toured Ashland creating footage to promote EDI awareness in rural destinations and make them welcome. This was a result of the new Tourism Inclusion Council of Southern Oregon spearheaded by Travel Southern Oregon that Travel Ashland serves on. May, 2019
- **Packard Auto Classic group**, May 2019
- **AAAS – American Association of Advanced Science Conference** at SOU. Assisted with planning, brochure and collateral support and Welcome Address at opening, June 2019
- **August Tahoe Trampers** – Carole – group of 80
- **Little America Dutch Tour Operators** – Marloes Meinders Product Developer and Laurens Garendregt Owner, expanding their itinerary with Oregon products. 6000 clients in Australia and New Zealand. Focus on B&B's, nature and culture for unique specialty destinations. Tour included hosting lodging at Country Willows B&B, tours of Iris Inn, Peerless Hotel and Winchester Inn as well as dinner at Peerless and Alchemy. Entire Ashland portion of itinerary was coordinated by Travel Ashland. September 2019
- **CANUSA** – Top German Specialty Tour Operators of North America visited Ashland to expand their itinerary and Oregon product to offer to clients. September 2019



## Publications

It requires **staff time** to write, design, build, produce and distribute these quality publications.

**Partners** depend upon these publications and rely on the information we compile within each of them to attract potential employees, customers and businesses such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Asante Ashland Community Hospital and Southern Oregon University.

While we grow the experience on our digital platforms and outreach, the Ashland visitor demographic continues to **demand and expect printed material** in the tangible form to hold and be inspired by. Each publication has an annual shelf life because of its useful tools and serves as a resource many plan their travels with, take with them on their trip or move here with. The printed piece is something that cannot be replaced by a webpage.

*continued . . .*





## Ashland Visitor Guide

The Ashland Visitor Guide publishes annually to target the spring traveler and coincide with the launch of each visitor season. It is an effective tool for marketing tourism with a distribution of 60,000 that is designed in house. It is mailed as a response piece to all online and phone inquiries and provided to all walk-in inquiries. It is annually distributed at Portland International Airport, all Oregon State Welcome Centers and Chambers/Visitor Bureaus and many trade shows. It is distributed to all groups visiting Ashland, within all travel writer welcome bags, recreation event goodie bags, all lodging properties, restaurants, members and advertisers in addition to realtors and anyone locally that can use it to help showcase Ashland. Showcasing the annual events, food, lodging, shopping, fine arts, museums, maps, entertainment and outdoor recreation that Ashland offers, it is a complete picture of what the Ashland experience is. We have seen demand increase for this publication both through increased individual requests as well as increasing the distribution points. The PDF version can be downloaded online from [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com). New in 2018, the cover was printed on a thicker cover to further the shelf life and differentiate it from other destination materials. A new layout gave it a fresh and current look and feel. Tools within the guide that provide trip-planning resources include Sample Itineraries with themes such as culinary, cultural and outdoor ideas. Maps include Lithia park, the region, wayfinding downtown and promoting the Historic Railroad District. An annual calendar, travel and transportation information along with referring to the websites, enable this Guide to remain relevant and useful to our visitor market and tourism industry partners.

Travel Ashland participates in the Travel Oregon's Welcome Center Brochure Program that gives us the opportunity to reach visitors directly by displaying their brochures. Through this program, each welcome center carries a broad selection of local, regional and statewide visitor information materials.

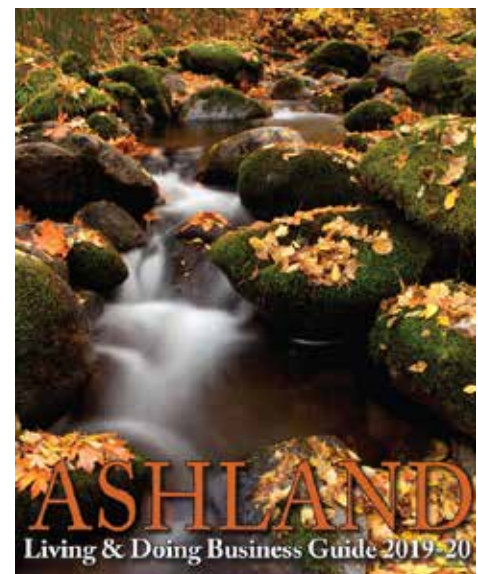
In addition to robust staff distribution throughout Ashland and the Rogue Valley, Travel Ashland contracts with Certified Folder Display to reach over 250 locations spanning from Roseburg to Crater Lake, Klamath and Josephine counties.

The ***Living & Doing Business Guide*** is the primary economic development marketing piece for Ashland produced by the Chamber. The purpose of this annual publication is to provide accurate and substantive information on the Ashland community to help guide decisions for local business development and relocation for prospective businesses and residents. Significant work is done annually by staff to showcase the depth of our community including quality of life, community values, visitor amenities, demographic and economic data all done in an engaging graphic format. Many visitors use this publication to consider converting to residents of Ashland. Ashland's amenities are highlighted along with the strength of Ashland's ever-growing tourism industry.

**Grand Award for Communications Excellence, July 2009** given by ACCE (American Chamber of Commerce Executives) – the premier national organization for Chamber Executives. This is the highest national award that can be given in the nation for Chamber publications competing with some of the largest cities in the country.

**Content:** Each year, this publication is revised to reflect the current 700+ Chamber membership, efforts and themes surrounding Ashland lifestyle, economy and its businesses.

**Growth in Demand and Distribution:** We have seen an increase in the demand for this publication from individual requests to increased needs from local realtors. It is used in recruitment and distributed at Asante Ashland Community Hospital, Providence Medford Medical Center (Medford and Portland), Asante, Southern Oregon University and the City of Ashland along with medical offices, lodging properties, members and advertisers.





**Ashland Map Guide** The Ashland Chamber & Travel Ashland partnered with AFR (Ashland Forest Resiliency) to create this collaborative, educational, free Map Guide to foster stewardship and create awareness for the history of fire, our source for drinking water, resources and the balance of recreational uses in the Ashland Watershed. We contracted with Lea Richards, GIS analyst for City of Ashland to build the maps. Editorial, image collection, layout and graphic design was done by Katharine Cato and Dana Welsh, in house at the Chamber & Travel Ashland. 25,000 copies were printed and distributed from 2014 – 2016. In 2018, we produced 50,000 to meet the growing demand. The 5th edition, published in July of 2019 included updated Watershed, City Street and Lithia Park maps. NEW in 2019, Travel Ashland partnered with Rogue-River Siskiyou National Forest Service to enable the Ashland Watershed map to be geo-referenced, digitized and available on [www.avenzamaps.com](http://www.avenzamaps.com) so when a user is out on the trail, they can see their location. Other maps included in past editions have included the Cascade Siskiyou Scenic Bikeway, Crater Lake National Park, Table Rocks Hiking Trails and the Mountain Lakes. The map is distributed and used by real estate offices, outdoor stores, groups, tours and conferences in Ashland, retailers, public libraries, REI, the Rogue Valley International Airport, hotels, outfitters, retailers, SOU, Medford Visitor Center, cycling shops and more. The map can be found on [ashlandchamber.com](http://ashlandchamber.com) as a downloadable PDF, [avenzamaps.com](http://avenzamaps.com) or in print at the Chamber/Travel Ashland office.

## Administration and Operations

**Staff:** The Ashland Chamber & Travel Ashland staff is made up of six individuals who manage the membership organization of over 700 members, the economic development entity for Ashland as well as the destination marketing organization serving over approximately 350,000 visitors and the producer of major Ashland events. The staff responds to all local, member, visitor and relocation needs daily. Serving as Ashland's welcome center to visitors, every day, year-round, we offer free information services and provide professional and knowledgeable service while operating the office, the Plaza Information booth (May – October), maintaining our equipment, tools and conducting daily operations.

**Volunteers:** The staff annually trains and oversees over 200 volunteers that help operate the Plaza Information Booth serving over 15,000 visitors and the front desk at the office. Volunteers are a key part of all the events we manage as well, completing planning, preparation, set up, execution and cleanup of events that is not possible with a staff of six. They answer questions, support the staff's work, provide wayfinding and information for visitors, residents, members and those considering relocating. There is immense gratitude for these volunteers, who give their time, philanthropically and give back to their community with pride.

**In-House Printing:** Besides our publications, Travel Ashland can print the majority of all materials in house which saves time, money and maintains an authentic brand. Producing these materials, in addition to the graphic design and coordination is a significant part of promoting tourism that takes **staff time**. For every event and promotion Travel Ashland produces, there is a repertoire of printed materials that there is a continued demand for.

This includes brochures, signage, monthly calendars, advertising, rack cards, enter to win entries and correspondence. In **conserving energy wherever possible**, we use electronic versions of these printed materials to communicate the message and engage participation.

**Postage** is a necessary cost to meet the demand of our ever-increasing lead generation and visitor requests. Postage enables our office to respond to all inquiries received in the Chamber & Travel Ashland from emails, walk-ins, phone calls and referrals. We maintain a high level of customer service by corresponding via first-class mail to each inquiry, mailing them a *Visitor Guide* for visitor inquiries, *Living & Doing Business Guide* for relocation inquiries and an *Ashland Map Guide* upon request. The personal touch of a hand addressed envelope and timely receipt of information introduces a potential visitor or resident to Ashland and engages them. Postage supports communication to our members, invitations to events, invoicing, partnership correspondence and daily operations. With the growth of meetings and conventions in Ashland and our role, we are seeing an increase of information we are sending for solicitation and outreach to meeting planners both digitally and in print. Correspondence to travel writers and our brochure distribution model are also supported through postage as a cost of doing business.



Ashland Chamber of Commerce					
Revenue and Expenses - Combined Activities					
For the Year Ending June 30, 2019					
CITY GRANT					
Visitor & Convention Bureau					
Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual	
Revenue					
VCB tourism grant	\$446,338	\$446,338			\$ 446,338
Membership Dues					135,000
Advertising Revenue			\$135,000	\$128,779	128,779
Sponsorships	40,000	35,328	294,000	232,398	232,398
Economic development			176,000	166,056	201,384
Health & Wellbeing			45,000	18,150	18,150
Use of Contributed facilities			30,000	0	0
Other Revenue			30,000	30,000	30,000
			15,000	44,638	44,638
Total Revenue	486,338	481,666	725,000	620,021	1,101,687
Expenses					
Website Design/Main	8,000	1,404	10,000	999	2,403
Regional Marketing/Events	74,000	75,914	32,000	25,966	101,880
Business Conferences & Workshops			27,000	23,531	23,531
Photofile/Graphics	5,000	4,200			4,200
Travel & Marketing Shows	14,000	18,164			18,164
Winter marketing - F&W, FOL	92,000	92,250	48,000	47,185	139,435
Dues / Insurance	8,000	6,653	9,000	7,806	14,459
Printing	16,000	20,138	38,000	25,733	45,871
Hospitality/Recognition	11,538	14,812	17,000	18,156	32,968
Payroll costs/taxes/benefits	205,000	205,000	370,000	329,794	534,794
Accounting	8,000	9,150	18,000	18,300	27,450
Equip. Rent, Purch, Storage	7,000	6,294	6,000	6,851	13,145
Postage	20,000	16,457	6,000	584	17,041
Office Supplies	6,000	2,481	5,000	2,930	5,411
Office Maintenance	5,800	3,159	6,500	2,810	5,969
Telephone	5,000	4,180	4,500	4,370	8,550
Volunteer Appreciation	1,000	843	4,000	2,318	3,161
Use of Contributed Facilities			30,000	30,000	30,000
Health & Wellbeing			30,000	238	238
Economic development			40,000	12,150	12,150
Other Expenses			24,000	55,776	55,776
Total Expenses	486,338	481,099	725,000	615,497	1,096,596
Net Surplus (Deficit)	-	567	-	4,524	5,191



## Travel Ashland (VCB) Advisory Committee Members

### ***Committee Member:***

**Don Anway**  
**Michael Biggs**  
**Vicki Capp**  
**Graham Sheldon**  
**Julie Gurwell**  
**Ariel Sherman**  
**Pete Wallstrom**  
**Michael Stringer**  
**Hiram Towle**  
**Paula Muncaster Walker**  
**Katharine Cato**

### ***Business:***

Neuman Hotel Group, Oregon Tourism Commission  
 Peerless Hotel & Restaurant  
 Stay Ashland/ Iris Inn  
 Stay Ashland/ Ashland Creek Inn  
 Hearsay Restaurant, Lounge & Garden  
 Weisinger Family Winery  
 Momentum River Expeditions  
 Mt. Ashland Ski Area  
 (Current Chair 2nd year) Mt. Ashland Ski Area  
 Oregon Shakespeare Festival  
 Director/ Chamber Marketing

## 2018 – 2019 Ashland Chamber Board of Directors

### ***Board Member:***

**Gary Blake**  
**Deena Branson**  
**Mary Gardiner**  
**Sheila Clough**  
**Julie Gurwell**  
**Debra Ingram**  
**Elijah Katkin**  
**Marie Lange**  
**Jac Nickels**  
**Meiwen Richards**  
**Anne Robison**  
**Larry Steiner**  
**Eric Weisinger**

### ***Business:***

Recology Ashland  
 Branson's Chocolates  
 Southern Oregon University (*President*)  
 Asante Ashland Community Hospital  
 Hearsay Restaurant, Lounge and Garden  
 First Interstate Bank  
 Brickroom  
 Ashland Homes Real Estate (*Past President*)  
 Architectural Design Works Inc. (*Secretary/Treasurer*)  
 Honorary Life member  
 The Crown Jewel  
 Edward Jones  
 Weisinger Family Winery



**Ashland Chamber of Commerce / Travel Ashland** (Visitor & Convention Bureau)  
110 East Main Street • PO Box 1360 • Ashland OR 97520

**Katharine Cato • [katharine@ashlandchamber.com](mailto:katharine@ashlandchamber.com) • (541) 482-3486 ext. 106**

**[ashlandchamber.com](http://ashlandchamber.com) • [travelashland.com](http://travelashland.com)**

**AGREEMENT FOR SERVICES**  
between  
The City of Ashland  
and  
The Ashland Chamber of Commerce

This Agreement for Services ("Agreement") is made by and between the City of Ashland, an Oregon municipal corporation ("City"), and the Ashland Chamber of Commerce ("Chamber") for Fiscal Year 2019-20.

**RECITALS**

- A. The Chamber has a Visitor and Convention Bureau that promotes the City of Ashland to visitors traveling from more than 50 miles to Ashland and to visitors who stay overnight in Ashland. Promotion includes advertising, publicizing, distribution of printed materials, marketing special events and festivals, conducting strategic planning, visitor center management and research necessary to stimulate tourism development.
- B. The City has historically provided funds to the Chamber for its Visitor and Convention Bureau to assist in promoting the City of Ashland to visitors.
- C. The City wishes to provide funds to the Chamber for the Fiscal Year 2019-20.

**AGREEMENT**

**A. CITY PROVIDED FUNDING:**

The City shall provide \$446,338.00 (four hundred and forty-six thousand three hundred and thirty-eight dollars) to the Chamber in equal monthly installments for the purpose of promoting tourism in the City of Ashland. This amount to be provided is based upon Ashland City Council Resolution 2019-17. Expenditures of the funds provided by the City must meet the requirements of ORS 320.300 through ORS 320.350.

**B. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CHAMBER:**

In providing services and conducting any work under this Agreement, the Chamber shall emphasize in its Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) activities that highlight and showcase:

- Ashland as a high-quality destination in the winter, spring, and fall as well as the summer;
- Ashland as a destination for visitors of all ages, including families with young and school-aged children;
- Ashland as a destination for visitors at all levels of the economic spectrum;
- Ashland as a center for cultural, social, and intellectual pursuits; and
- Ashland as a center for high quality outdoor recreational opportunities.

**C. TASKS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE CHAMBER:**



1. The VCB will develop and implement strategies to maintain current levels of tourism in the summer months and increase tourism in fall, winter, and spring. This strategy should rely on the best available research into visitor behavior and best practices in the convention and tourism industry.
2. The VCB will help the City leverage its investment into cultural and economic development grants by promoting the events and performances of groups that receive small grants from the City.
3. The VCB will provide accurate and timely information to potential visitors and on-site information about the community to people who are visiting and/or considering relocation.
4. The VCB will have an active multi-channeled marketing campaign to encourage and promote visits to the City of Ashland that reinforce the strengths of the community.
5. The VCB will market and promote festivals and events throughout the year, including those provided by other recipients of cultural and economic development grants from the City.
6. The VCB will develop and implement specific marketing campaigns targeted at attracting additional visitors in the shoulder and winter season and extending the length of stays of visitors in the summer months
7. The VCB will develop and implement marketing strategies and campaigns that encourage return visits and that also provide accurate and updatable visitor profiles, both demographic and economic, to align with existing and potential new types of activities, events, campaigns, or festivals to encourage expansion and diversification of the visitor base and the local economy that supports it.
8. The VCB will continue to expand the utilization of social media and other emerging marketing and communication tools to effectively target and reach existing, returning and new visitors.

#### D. REQUIRED REPORTING:

The Chamber shall provide an annual report to the Ashland City Council no later than January 31 on its previous year's activities. The report shall include:

1. A summary and analysis of the specific steps taken to perform the tasks set forth in this Agreement.
2. Performance Measures. The report shall include data that measures its effectiveness in tourism promotion in its report, including data that measures and analyzes the impact of the VCB efforts on the total collection of both transient occupancy tax and food and beverage tax, by quarter, in the grant year over the previous year. The report shall also include data on occupancy and room rates in local lodging establishments, by quarter, as available and shall work with the City and the tourism industry to improve the accuracy and accessibility of data over time.
3. Information on the variety of specific promotion activities executed for the purpose of attracting visitors to Ashland. Include samples of advertising emblematic of efforts to reach the visitors and markets described above and targeted within individual marketing strategies and campaigns.
4. The Chamber's analysis of the viability of new festivals, events, programs and activities that could support and expand tourism during the times of the year where capacity exists, including efforts the Chamber made to support other recipients of cultural and economic grants from the City.
5. Information on the activities by the Chamber conducted in cooperation with other organizations, businesses, and people to support the services and work required by this Agreement.

#### E. TERM:

This Agreement shall be effective retroactively to July 1, 2019 (the "Effective Date"), and shall continue in full force and effect until and including June 30, 2020.



## F. GENERAL PROVISIONS:

1. **Use of Funds.** The use of funds provided by the City is expressly limited to the objectives identified in this Agreement.
2. **Unexpended Funds.** Any funds provided by the City to the Chamber that remain after the purpose for which the funds were provided or this Agreement expires or is terminated shall be returned to the City within 30 days of completion, expiration, or termination.
3. **Financial Records and Inspection.** The Chamber shall also include in its annual report to the City:  
a) copies of its 501c letter, IRS non-profit status and corporate bylaws; b) a list of its Board members, their occupations, and years on the Board; c) financial statements showing previous year expenses and revenues; d) current and projected budgets (total organization and individual programs' funded by this grant). The Chamber's report should show the relative share of City funds expended for any project compared to overall project funds.
4. **Living Wage Requirements.** If the amount of this Agreement is \$21,507.75 or more, then Chamber is required to pay a living wage, as defined in Ashland Municipal Code Chapter 3.12, to all employees and subcontractors who spend 50% or more of their time within a month performing work under this Agreement. The Chamber is also required to post the notice attached hereto as "Exhibit B" predominantly in areas where it will be seen by all employees.
5. **Default.** If the Chamber fails to remedy any material breach of any of Chamber's obligations under the terms of this Agreement within thirty (30) days of receipt of written notice from the City of the breach, or if Chamber fails to expend the funds provided or enter into binding legal agreements to expend the funds within twelve (12) months from the Effective Date of this Agreement, the City, by written notice of default to the Chamber, may terminate this Agreement and may pursue any remedies available at law or in equity. Such remedies may include, but are not limited to, termination of this Agreement, stop payment on or return of the funds, payment of interest earned on funds provided or declaration of ineligibility for the receipt of future awards by the City.
6. **Amendments.** The terms of this Agreement may not be waived, altered, modified, supplemented, or amended in any manner except by written instrument signed by the parties. Such written amendment will be made a part of this Agreement and subject to all other provisions.
7. **Indemnity.** The Chamber agrees to defend, indemnify, hold harmless, and save the City, its officers, employees and agents from and against any and all losses, claims, actions, costs, expenses, judgments, subrogation's, or other damages resulting from injury to any person (including injury resulting in death,) or damage (including loss or destruction) to property, of whatsoever nature arising out of or incident to the performance of this Agreement by Chamber (including but not limited to, Chamber's employees, agents, and others designated by Chamber to perform work or services relating to Chamber's obligation under this Agreement). However, the Chamber shall not be held responsible for damages caused by the sole negligence or intentional misconduct of the City, its officers, employees, or agents.
8. **Insurance.** The Chamber shall, at its own expense, at all times during the term of this Agreement, maintain in force a policy or policies of comprehensive general liability insurance, including coverage for contractual liability for obligations assumed under this Agreement. The liability under each policy shall be a minimum of \$2,000,000 per occurrence (combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage claims) or \$2,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and \$100,000 per occurrence for property damage. Liability coverage shall be provided on an "occurrence" basis. The City of Ashland, including its officers, employees and agents shall be named as an additional insured. Endorsements acceptable to the City shall be filed with the City prior to the expenditure of any funds provided to the Chamber hereunder. The Chamber shall at its own expense provide

Worker's Compensation insurance in compliance with ORS 656.017, which requires subject employers to provide Oregon Workers' Compensation coverage for all their subject workers.

9. Merger. This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the parties. There are no understandings, agreements, or representations, oral or written, not specified in this agreement regarding this agreement. The Chamber, by the signature below of its authorized representative, acknowledges that it has read this Agreement, understands it, and agrees to be bound by its terms and conditions.
10. Notice. Whenever notice is required or permitted to be given under this Agreement, such notice shall be given in writing to the other party: by personal delivery, by sending via a reputable commercial overnight courier, or by mailing using registered or certified United States mail, postage prepaid, to the address set forth below:

If to the City of Ashland:

Kelly Madding, City Administrator  
20 East Main Street  
Ashland, OR 97520

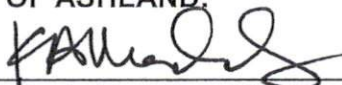
If to the Ashland Chamber of Commerce:

Sandra Slattery, Executive Director  
110 East Main Street  
Ashland, OR 97520

11. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Oregon without regard to conflict of laws principles. Exclusive venue for litigation of any action arising under this Agreement shall be in the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Jackson County unless exclusive jurisdiction is in federal court, in which case exclusive venue shall be in the federal district court for the district of Oregon.

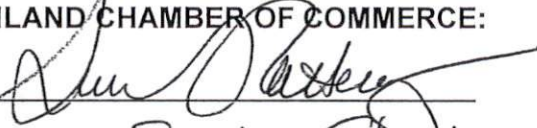
**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the parties have caused this Agreement to be signed in their respective names by their duly authorized representatives as of the dates set forth below.

**CITY OF ASHLAND:**

By:   
Kelly A. Madding, City Administrator

Date: 7/12/19

**ASHLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:**

By: 

Printed Name: Sandra Slattery

Title: Executive Director

Date: 7-12-19



July 15, 2020

Mayor John Stromberg  
Ashland City Council  
Adam Hanks, Interim City Administrator  
City of Ashland  
20 E. Main Street  
Ashland, OR 97520



P.O. Box 158  
15 South Pioneer Street  
Ashland, OR 97520

541 482 2111  
541 482 0446 *fax*  
541 482 4331 *box office*

[www.osfashland.org](http://www.osfashland.org)

Dear Mayor Stromberg, City Councilors, and Adam:

I'm writing on behalf of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to submit a revised request of OSF's allotment from Ashland's transit occupancy tax (TOT) pool for the City's 2020-21 fiscal year.

In recent years, OSF has requested and received \$110,000 from these funds, and we have worked with the City of Ashland and Travel Ashland to promote and support tourism in our beloved region.

With OSF's stages silent for the coming months due to the coronavirus pandemic, OSF asks that two-thirds of its TOT allocation be returned to the City for its effective use in supporting local businesses and the tourism economy. OSF's revised request is for \$35,000 and will be used to support our continued nonstop work in communications, marketing, and development that effectively spread the word about Ashland's and the region's attractiveness and value.

We will continue working effectively this year and through 2021 to ensure that both OSF and Ashland remain in the public eye, and to bring word of the Festival and its hometown to new audiences around the region and world, while in constant touch with returning visitors. Though our efforts will be on overdrive, we recognize that OSF's Ashland and local business partners would be best served to receive the majority of the funding for our grant from the City this year, to help with their important work.

The transformative work that takes place across OSF stages will return at some time in the City's 2021-22 fiscal year; in the meantime, it is critical that a portion of the typical level of support from the TOT for OSF's efforts that highlight Ashland should remain in place throughout this current 2020-2021 funding cycle as well. OSF's marketing and communications team continues to perform at its highest level, and in order to provide excellent value for the City's investment and we have already made significant new investments in our marketing and communications functions.

The financial support of the City of Ashland has been crucial to the success of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival since our founding in 1935 and continues to be essential today. Funding for local and regional awareness and visibility has never been more important than during this time of pandemic, and we look forward to reporting the successes provided by the City's vital support provided through TOT and continuing to deepen our partnership in the years to come.

Very sincerely yours,

Paul Christy  
Acting Executive Director  
Oregon Shakespeare Festival