



The Ashland Chamber of Commerce is pleased to present the City Grant report for our efforts with Travel Ashland (Ashland Visitors and Convention Bureau) for the FY 2020 -2021. The Ashland Chamber has been producing a report annually to the City on behalf of our tourism promotional efforts since the first grant was received in 1982.

The Ashland Chamber is the umbrella organization that administers the grant to promote tourism for Ashland. A dedicated staff and budget, Travel Ashland Director and industry professionals who serve on the Travel Ashland Committee create and manage the programs, projects and events. The Chamber, in collaboration with Travel Ashland, enhances the efforts and greatly magnify what the tourism program creates.

As the following report details, Travel Ashland launched an in-depth visitor research and analysis study, completed in April of 2021 that validated one of the largest shifts in Ashland's visitor base. Findings from the study served as the foundation to the launch of a new brand for Ashland, launched in December of 2021. Travel Ashland produced a seasonal visitor guide to meet the pivotal demands of our industry and best showcase each season. We worked with regional and statewide partners to further and strengthen alignment to be most effective. Ashland was very fortunate to rebound faster than many other destinations in Oregon as can be seen in the following report. While promoting safe and responsible travel through the pandemic and the emerging new visitor with current changing protocols and variants, Travel Ashland continues to promote year-round visitation. With the new brand, Travel Ashland is implementing a new strategic direction following the launch to target new personas, with broader interests. The work through the years has not only grown our economy but has increased our tax base and employment. **Please review the Executive Summary in the report for highlights of the pivotal efforts and promotional program along with detailed description of Travel Ashland's scope of work throughout the report.**

We are proud, not only of our efforts promoting tourism over the years but for crucial work of the Chamber to enhance and improve our economy beyond what is included in the City Grant report. Our strong partnerships include our state and federal legislators and staff, private and non-profit key leaders, business owners and the City which continue to grow as we collectively address issues and challenges. In 2020 and 2021, these relationships and efforts were imperative to our ability to provide ongoing support as we evolved through the pandemic and its impact on our businesses. Their resiliency and ability to adapt, survive, restructure and rethink the way they did business will enable Ashland's economy to emerge stronger than ever. From the beginning of the pandemic and even into 2022, we provided assistance and guidance, access to resources, new programs and campaigns in an ever changing, uncharted world. Together with our businesses, we have pivoted, adapted and focused on solutions through a very challenging time that continues to have a changing landscape. Beyond the continued assistance and support provided to businesses directly, in November of 2021, the Ashland Chamber embarked on an Economic Development and Diversification strategy for Ashland with local and regional partners. The Ashland Chamber continues to pursue and receive regional, state, federal and private sector grants to create programs specific for our businesses to help them be more resilient. We conceived and launched a very successful Language of Business campaign in summer of 2021. We are enhancing our Emergency Preparedness efforts and launched an online Tool Kit to assist businesses in Fall of 2021. We will continue to create and manage Ashland's beloved community events as we are able to do so. The Ashland Chamber is a unique and nimble organization that works to serve the interests of our community, improve the economy, enhance our quality of life and support local business.

With over five hundred diverse members, representing thousands of employees, the Chamber promotes the entire community. We believe by working collectively we are successful. It is with appreciation that we present the enclosed report and stand ready to continue to be a partner in Ashland's success.



**Sandra Slattery**



**Gary Blake**

**Ashland Chamber of Commerce and Travel Ashland**

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**ashlandchamber.com**



**City Grant Annual Report**  
**FY 2020 – 2021**  
**Ashland Chamber of Commerce**  
**Travel Ashland** (Visitor & Convention Bureau)

# Tourism's resilience continues to drive Ashland's economy and livability

## Travel Ashland Annual Report FY 2020–2021

### Overview Points:

- Tourism continues to be a sustainable economic driver in Ashland. (Pg. 6)
- Our partners; businesses, owners and employees of Ashland depend on us. Travel Ashland and the Ashland Chamber effectively communicates, educates and inspires visitors through crisis, opportunity and periods of growth. (Pg. 7)
- Travel Ashland's Visitor Research and Analysis Study revealed key findings that validated observations of the largest shift of Ashland's visitor base trending younger and coming to do a multitude of activities. This shift will drive diversification and growth for evolving visitor related industries and employment. (Pg. 10)
- Who is Travel Ashland and what do we do? Travel Ashland effectively serves as the official Destination Organization who is the trusted entity to promote Ashland. (Pg. 35)
- The new Ashland brand invites visitors to 'Live your daydreams', substantiated by the recent Visitor Study findings, the new brand includes targeting lifestyle personas, interests by season with a fresh verbal and visual identity that is approachable and appealing. (Pg. 37)



Photo by Judiann Woo



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Photo by Graham Lewis



## 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 from City of Ashland and Ashland Chamber of Commerce 2020-2021.

## 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 wine enthusiasts and those with cultural interests, Travel Ashland researches, analyzes and assesses the visitor and our assets to best promote, respond and pivot using the latest tools available through times of crisis, opportunity, recovery and expansion.

## About Travel Ashland:

For thirty-nine 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.

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 2019-17, 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.





# Executive Summary of FY 2020–21

The following grant report represents the 2020–2021 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). It also reflects the additional dollars granted to conduct a Visitor Study completed in April 2021.

**From July 2020 through when the report was composed in early January of 2022,** Travel Ashland launched an **in-depth visitor research and analysis study, completed in April of 2021** that validated one of the largest shifts in Ashland's visitor base. It also clearly revealed Ashland has an advantage as a small, friendly town with many outdoor offerings coupled with unmatched culture, wine and culinary experiences that are unexpected. The Study conducted both qualitative and quantitative surveying of leisure travelers in Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, Sacramento, Redding and within the state of Oregon. The Study also researched recent visitors to Ashland through our partners databases to learn of sentiment from those familiar with Ashland. Findings from the study served as the foundation to the launch of a new brand for Ashland, launched in December of 2021.

**Travel Ashland launched the new brand for Ashland in December 2021.** The development of the new brand began with the conclusion of the visitor study. Through a discovery phase that included stakeholder interviews of a variety of visitor industry related community members, an existing brand audit and review of visitor study findings, the brand then started to take shape through brand workshops, and the creation of the brand verbal and visual identities. A new voice, tone and messaging coupled with a new color palette, logo and assets were developed by closely working with the hired firm, Travel Ashland and Ashland Chamber staff and the Travel Ashland advisory committee who served as the sounding board for the project. Within the new brand are identified lifestyle personas that drive how and when people travel such as quick escapes, families, destination friends and wanderers. Combining these personas with the time of year and identified interests within the brand such as access to nature, something for everyone, modern amenities and homegrown hospitality, enables our targeted messaging to be effective and timely showcasing the outdoors, the wine and culinary experience and arts and culture. Following the new brand launch, in 2022 will be the implementation of the new brand's identity and the new strategic marketing plan.

Travel Ashland saw **significant growth in our digital and social channels and engagement** on [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com). We produced 2 seasonal visitor guides to meet the pivotal demands of our industry and best showcase each season.

We worked with **regional and statewide partners** to further and strengthen alignment to be most effective.

Destinations reliant on tourism were severely tested by the events of the last two years. A global pandemic, social justice unrest and devastating wildfires turned Oregon's destination travel industry inside out. Addressing unprecedented challenges many organizations such as Travel Oregon as well as locally, Travel Ashland initiated in-depth studies and revised their approach.

**Ashland was very fortunate to recover faster than most other destinations** aside from the Oregon coast who maintained and exceeded occupancies the past two years. Early in the pandemic the impact was felt however by summer 2020, many businesses were seeing their best year ever in terms of welcoming a sustained influx of new visitors for new reasons. Wineries, outfitters and hotels were seeing an influx of new visitors. This resiliency grew with 2021 resulting in revenues exceeding 2019 pre-pandemic numbers. Ashland and Southern Oregon held their room rate stronger than the rest of the state and retained those dollars and inherent value of the visitor experience.



**Over the past few years with the closure of the Oregon Shakespeare festival due to poor air quality from wildfires, then because of the pandemic, many businesses realized they had to change and adapt.** In 2020, many visitor related businesses realized visitors were coming to Ashland for other reasons. Though not the historical playgoer, but in fact they were new, exploring new experiences at new times of the year. There was a significant realization of the reliance on OSF and the need to diversify beyond it. The Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland have been backfilling Ashland's visitor base with new visitors, outdoor and culinary travelers, as we promote all of Ashland so this did not come as a surprise to us but rather gave us an opportunity to substantiate a broader dialogue with our visitor industry partners with their buy-in and acceptance of change. December 2021 proved to be very successful for many retailers, hoteliers and restaurants given OSF's new holiday show. We are encouraged by their 2022 season and welcome the return of playgoers to come alongside our already evolving visitor base.

**Travel Ashland's work continued welcoming and hosting travel writers.** We witnessed a major shift in group, tour and conference travel and business. **We saw continued increase in visitor inquiries,** leads and expansion of our database.

**We continue our mission to educate, promote, to assess, listen, support and move forward** with the goal of increasing visitation, towards a **steadier visitor volume** thus increasing revenues of the Transient Occupancy Tax, the Food & Beverage Tax and the tourism industry. We understand and acknowledge the temporary impacts of COVID in 2020 and 2021. This is a collective effort through growing our valuable partnerships and diversifying our visitor. The overarching goal continues to be 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.

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) continues to serve as the gateway to Ashland, Southern Oregon, all of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest with approximately 60% of visitors continuing to arrive to Oregon through our corridor. We are open to the public year-round (outside of COVID restriction time periods), 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 continues to be a sustainable economic driver in Ashland.

Destinations reliant on tourism were severely tested by the events of the last two years. A global pandemic, social justice unrest and a devastating wildfire turned Oregon's destination travel industry inside out. Addressing unprecedented challenges many organizations such as Travel Oregon, as well as, locally, Travel Ashland initiated in-depth studies and revised our approach. Ashland was very fortunate to recover faster than most other destinations aside from the Oregon coast who maintained and exceeded occupancies the past two years. Early in the pandemic the impact was felt, however, by summer 2020, many businesses were seeing their best year ever in terms of welcoming new visitors for new reasons. Wineries, outfitters and hotels were seeing an influx of new visitors. This resiliency grew with 2021 resulting in revenues exceeding 2019 pre-pandemic numbers. Ashland and Southern Oregon held their room rate stronger than the rest of the state and retained those dollars and inherent value of the visitor experience. This sustained rebound proves Ashland and Oregon's economies rely on the influx of tourism dollars. Each visitor related business has had to change, pivot and revise the way they do business to be most efficient and fluid with the ever-changing landscape. Tourism has already returned to and remains a driving force of economic impact as Ashland is a mature destination that has the ability to diversify its visitor because of the variety of its offerings and the new visitor who is here to take part in many of them. Tourism supports jobs year-round and a lifestyle that Ashland residents enjoy year-round.

Ashland's amenities are supported by its visitor base. 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. Ashland's parks system is supported through the 5% food and beverage tax.

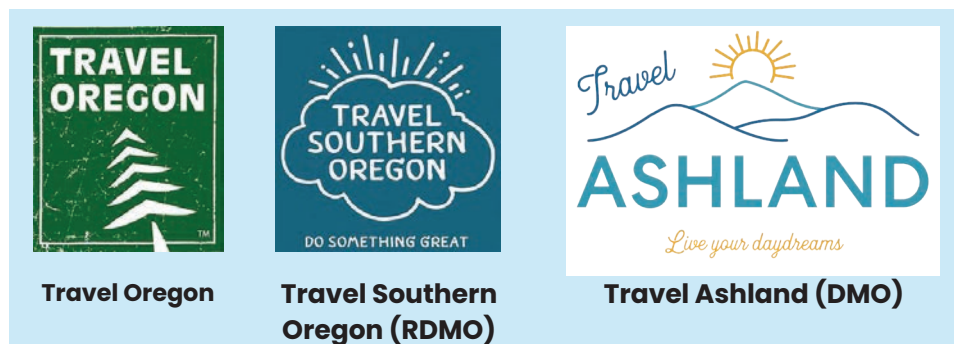




# Our partners: businesses, owners and employees of Ashland depend on us. Travel Ashland and the Ashland Chamber effectively communicates, educates and inspires visitors through crisis, opportunity and periods of growth.

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, lean on those in times of crisis and serve as a sounding board to a diversity of organizations, residents, visitors, members and private sector businesses. From retailers to hotels, restaurants, outfitters, wineries, artisans, galleries, theatres and our community, relies on us.

## Officially Designated Tourism Organizations and Alignment:



Travel Ashland's **partnerships** are inherent to our success. We maximize and leverage exposure for Ashland as a major 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) Addressing unprecedented challenges from the last two years, Travel Oregon initiated an in-depth program and operations transformational review and visioning process, the outcomes of which will define the industry path statewide.
- **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 President and Board Member: Katharine Cato, Travel Ashland Director. Alignment with our regional partners is key to providing a positive and consistent visitor experience and effective industry communication. Exposure from features and opportunities to host travel writers come through this partnership channel.

- **ODA – Oregon Destination Association** – Current Vice President and 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** Workforce development issues continue to be a central challenge for most industries, including tourism and hospitality. ORLA and Travel Oregon are looking at what a partnership might be in tackling the workforce development challenges of 2022 and beyond with the goal of strengthening strategies to be supported and implemented by DMOs at the community level.
- **Regional DMO's (Destination Marketing Organizations):**
  - **Travel Medford**
  - **Discover Klamath**
  - **Travel Grants Pass**
- **OACVB- Oregon Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus**
- **Rogue Valley Vintners and Rogue Valley Wine Country** – Current Board Member, Katharine Cato. The Rogue Valley's organization that promotes wine in the Rogue Valley AVA and the Applegate AVA. A new wine club coming in 2022 along with a strengthening in the identity and collaboration of the wine in our region.
- **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:**
  - **The Nature Conservancy**
  - **Bureau of Land Management**
  - **United States Forest Service**
  - **ODOT**
- **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 and Mt. Ashland Ski Area.

### **Crisis Communication:**

Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland have longstanding partnerships with legislators, representatives, regional and statewide organizations that are key to be able to rely on during not only the impacts of wildfire the past few years but as we collectively navigated the impacts of COVID in 2020. These crises showed the strength of our partnerships as we worked forward towards solutions. In terms of fires, [www.smokewiseashland.com](http://www.smokewiseashland.com) launched as a result of collaboration of our Fire Prevention Task Force that supported businesses, employees and residents. Through the COVID crisis, Travel Ashland and the Ashland Chamber engage in regional and statewide strategy building weekly calls hearing and reporting on the impacts and how we move through the COVID crisis.



# Regional and Statewide Tourism Programs

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

**After decades of deliberation 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 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 provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about and be inspired by Oregon. The center is staffed by experts offering concierge-style guest service.

**Oregon State Welcome Centers** Travel Oregon operates 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.

**OREGON GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM** Each year, outside of COVID, Travel Oregon hosts the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism in a different part of the state.

**For more information on Regional programs visit:**  
[www.southernoregon.org/industry](http://www.southernoregon.org/industry)

**For more information on Statewide programs visit:**  
[www.industry.traveloregon.com](http://www.industry.traveloregon.com)



# Travel Ashland's Visitor Research and Analysis study revealed key findings that validated observations of the largest shift in Ashland's visitor base trending younger and coming to do a multitude of activities. This shift will drive diversification and growth for evolving visitor related industries and employment.

Since the inception of Travel Ashland, our programs and promotions have been based on quality research. Given the anecdotal changes we were observing in pre-pandemic years then exacerbated by the pandemic, OSF's closure and increased poor air quality due to wildfires since 2017, Travel Ashland embarked on the Visitor Research and Analysis Study outlined below.

Travel Ashland has been diversifying the type of visitors Ashland welcomes for decades including the younger, outdoor and culinary traveler. Balancing this with the historical, cultural traveler, and working to maintain the steady visitor volume throughout the year, Travel Ashland embarked on the visitor study to explore new trends, competitive markets, and the highest potential visitor personas to target in future marketing.

## Visitor Study Background and Introduction:

Upon receiving funding in July of 2020 earmarked for research, Travel Ashland created a **Request for Proposal to conduct a Visitor Research and Analysis Study**. We interviewed four research firms. With the guidance of a steering committee of tourism industry leaders and Travel Ashland's committee, we chose to work with Destination Analysts out of San Francisco. We launched the Visitor Research and Analysis in November 2020.

**The Visitor Study's scope of work included researching the Ashland leisure visitor** – the previous and current visitor, the first-time visitor, as well as future and potential visitors. Based on the current and common observations, we wanted to explore the changes in loyalty, demo and psychographics, their spending trends and length of stay. The study also analyzed personas including families, wine travelers, culinary, outdoor adventurers, arts and culture as well as young travelers. We explored new seasonality trends and potential that is driving travel consideration to Ashland. As well as competitive markets such as Bend, Lake Tahoe and Healdsburg and evaluated new market potential. The scope of work included recommendations on how to best leverage our assets. Deliverables includes an in-depth analysis and assessment of the above that would then drive our informed marketing decisions, strategic direction and ultimately a new brand for Ashland.

The study included three surveys, the first being a **quantitative survey of Leisure Travelers in Key Markets (1500 results** from LA, San Francisco, Seattle, Sacramento/Redding and within the state of Oregon). From those respondents, the second survey consisted of **qualitative in-depth interviews of individuals** who were vetted through our research firm that showed strong interest to travel, were a diverse group and a high potential to Ashland. **Ten, 45-minute interviews** were conducted which provided key insights into unfiltered feedback and perceptions of Ashland. The third **survey was of Owned partner databases** that included over 5700 responses who had visited Ashland within the past 3 years and were engaged with one of our key partners such as



Mt. Ashland, Neuman Hotel Group, Weisinger Family Winery, OSF and Momentum River Expeditions. The balance of these 3 surveys provided us a well-round analysis. The findings from this study will then serve as the foundation for the new brand and guide the updated marketing strategy.

**The deeper level of research revealed key findings that validated our observations of the largest shift in Ashland's visitor base trending younger and here to do a multitude of activities including wine tasting, outdoor adventuring and shopping.** The study found we have a clear opportunity to educate new and potential travelers, expand upon drive markets, push into new flight markets and increase steady visitor volume year-round. It found Ashland's strengths to be a walkable, small, friendly, welcoming town with scenic beauty with well established wellness protocols in place that was and still is important to those respondents of the survey.

**The focus of this study was on the visitor and will influence the larger research project the Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland are concurrently doing.** These findings have been embedded in the overarching Economic Development analysis we kicked off in November of 2021 that will analyze all sectors including the evolving regional visitor industries that are responding to these changes.

**Below are highlights from the Visitor Study completed in April 2021 by Destination Analysts.**

## ABOUT DESTINATION ANALYSTS

Destination Analysts is a full-service market research company that provides the greater travel, tourism and hospitality industry with a breadth of insights—from the comprehensive understanding of target audiences, to ROI analysis and economic forecasts. Our more than 200 clients seek our unique and more deeply thoughtful analysis, our actionable storytelling of data, high quality and defensible findings, and progressive and open approach to research methodologies.

Founded in 2003 by tourism marketing and research professionals, we bring our extensive industry and technical experience to conducting visitor research on behalf of destination marketing organizations. We look forward to being an ideal research partner to Travel Ashland in profiling current and potential Ashland visitors and in supporting the DMO's strategic direction and future branding efforts.

Destination  Analysts



## RENOWNED INDUSTRY WORK

In addition to our custom work for destinations and the greater travel, tourism and hospitality industry, since March 15<sup>th</sup>, Destination Analysts has conducted the **Coronavirus Traveler Sentiment Index Study™**, a weekly survey of American travelers that provides timely insights into their feelings and behaviors and gauges the pandemic's changing impact on travel as a lifestyle priority.

We also conduct **The State of the American Traveler™** and **The State of the Global International Traveler™**—the industry's premier studies for tracking traveler sentiment and global destination brand performance—as well as the annual **The CVB and the Future of the Meetings Industry Study** for the greater meetings industry.

Our work is used by both the **US Travel Association** and **Destinations International** and is cited by numerous media, including **CNN**, **Forbes**, **The New York Times**, **The Wall Street Journal**, and **USA Today**.



## LEAD RESEARCH TEAM

The following are bios for each member of the Destination Analysts lead research team.



**Erin Francis-Cummings – President & CEO**

A go-to expert resource in the destination marketing industry, Erin Francis-Cummings has spent the last nearly two decades studying travelers from across the globe and translating their evolving, complex and fascinating behaviors and opinions into marketing insights for Destination Analysts' 170+ clients.

Erin has designed research strategy and facilitated consumer research for some of the world's greatest destination brands, including Bermuda, the Fiji Islands, California and Florida. Erin currently serves on the international Board of Directors for the Travel and Tourism Research Association and is a frequent speaker for U.S. Travel, Destinations International and at several other industry events. Prior to leading Destination Analysts, she held advertising and marketing management roles at Amtrak and the San Francisco Travel, and holds a Bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California Los Angeles.



## LEAD RESEARCH TEAM



**Dave Bratton – Founder and Managing Director**

Dave Bratton is a widely respected DMO industry thought leader. Dave is well known for his creative approach to market research and with rigorous, carefully-designed programs. Dave's work has been

recognized with several awards, including being named as one of HSMIA's 25 Most Extraordinary Minds in Sales and Marketing. Prior to founding Destination Analysts, he spent a decade pioneering new tourism research techniques and digital marketing for the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau as Director of Marketing and Research. Before coming to the travel industry, he worked as an economist for the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis in Washington, D.C. and was a contributor to the noted journal, Survey of Current Business. Dave holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Iowa State University and a Master of Arts in Economics from the University of Arizona.



**Kimberly Vince-Cruz – Vice President**

Having spent the last decade conducting market research for destinations, the travel trade and meetings industry, Kim directs and implements the vision of all Destination Analysts' research

studies. Kim brings a wealth of experience to our clients—overseeing project launch, data collection and analysis for all research projects, from visitor profile and in-depth brand research to ROI and conversion studies. Kim is a sought resource in the industry for her expertise in DMO website usability, audience profile, analytics and conversion, and was recognized as one of California Travel Association's "30 And Under" Tourism Emerging Leaders. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and Ethnicity with a minor in Spanish from the University of Southern California.





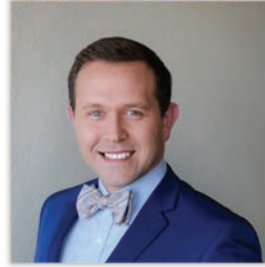
## LEAD RESEARCH TEAM



**Myha Gallagher – Senior Director of Research**

As Destination Analysts' Senior Director of Research, Myha thoughtfully designs and manages the implementation of Destination Analysts' suite of research services. With nearly a decade of

experience deeply analyzing quantitative and qualitative data on leisure travelers, meeting planners, DMO stakeholders and tour operators, she is incredibly effective at distilling actionable insights and marketing intelligence that support our clients' missions. Her creative flair and graphic design skills also guide the visual story-telling and layout of Destination Analysts' report deliverables. Myha holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.



**David Reichbach – Senior Director of Analytics & Data Security**

David Reichbach is a highly regarded information privacy attorney, who oversees the analysis, retention and security of data collected in Destination Analysts' diverse research programs. With his BS in Engineering,

Mathematics and Statistics from the University of California, Berkeley and a passion for technology, David brings his specialization and skills to Destination Analysts' quantitative studies with extensive experience in data segmentation and analysis. With his JD from the University of San Francisco, David is also highly valued by Destination Analysts' clients for his leadership in qualitative research, including focus group moderation and user experience research. David is a frequent speaker on technology's role in tourism insights at travel industry events.



## LEAD RESEARCH TEAM



**Melissa Elkins – Director of Research**

The former Director of Research for the Arizona Office of Tourism, Melissa brings her thirteen years of highly-skilled tourism research practice to her servicing of Destination Analysts clients. Melissa plays an instrumental role in managing the multiple

components of each research project, for both quantitative and qualitative efforts. Prior to joining Destination Analysts, Melissa spent a year working with the Wyoming Office of Tourism, launching and managing the organization's expansive tourism research programs. In her nine years at the Arizona Office of Tourism, she led the annual strategic segmentation analysis of AOT's target audiences and pre/post campaign research efforts. Melissa has served as a board member for the Greater Western Travel & Tourism Association and holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of New Mexico.



**Chingun Ganzorig – Research Manager**

As Destination Analysts' Research Manager, Chingun plays an instrumental role in collecting, cleansing and analyzing data for use in Destination Analysts' reporting. Most recently, Chingun

managed the data collection, data analysis and report development for Destination Analysts 2019 The State of the International Traveler study. His professionalism, tenacity, and optimism are essential in the punctual execution of Destination Analysts' research studies. Chingun's Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies from San Jose State University allows for detailed and timely communications with Destination Analysts' clients, as well as his critical analysis of data that results into actionable marketing insights.

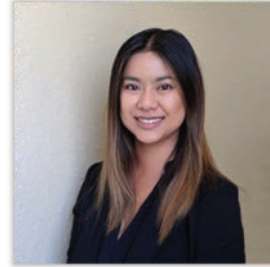


## LEAD RESEARCH TEAM



**Stefanie Thompson – Field Research Manager**

Stefanie has overseen the field research to support comprehensive visitor profile studies on behalf of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater, Nashville Convention & Visitors Corporation, Visit Big Sky and Visit Ludington, as well as numerous special event and festival attendee and economic impact studies.



**Mytho Vo – Field Research Manager**

Mytho has overseen the field research to support comprehensive visitor profile studies on behalf of the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, Visit West Hollywood, Santa Monica Travel & Tourism, Visit Napa Valley, Visit Santa Barbara, Nashville Convention & Visitors Corporation and the Greater Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau.



# ASHLAND 2021 VISITOR RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

SURVEY OF LEISURE TRAVELERS &  
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH DOMESTIC LEISURE TRAVELERS  
REPORT OF FINDINGS

March 2021



## RESEARCH OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This report presents the comprehensive findings of a visitor research & analysis study conducted on behalf of Travel Ashland. This research was specifically designed to consist of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies—Survey of Leisure Travelers in Key Markets and In-Depth Interviews with Domestic Leisure Travelers—to fulfill the following objectives:

- An exploration of traveler behaviors and motivations
- An analysis of key target personas: families, Wine Travelers, Culinary Travelers, Outdoor Adventurers, arts and culture travelers and younger travelers
- An exploration of the new seasonality that is driving travel consideration to Ashland
- An analysis of competitive markets and evaluation of new market potential
- Identification of new ways Travel Ashland can leverage the destination's assets
- Analyze current, relevant secondary data
- Assess the data collected to provide Travel Ashland with important insights to drive marketing decisions, strategic direction and ultimately a refresh of the Travel Ashland brand

Destination Analysts 3

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Survey of Leisure Travelers in Key Markets

Destination Analysts and Travel Ashland worked closely together to develop the questionnaire for the Survey of Leisure Travelers in Key Markets. The survey was then distributed to travelers in the following domestic markets: Oregon (excluding Ashland), Seattle, WA, Sacramento/Redding, CA, San Francisco, CA and Los Angeles, CA. Once the survey was finalized, it was then distributed online via global sample provider Dynata/Research Now/Survey Sampling International.

The survey sampling plan and collection breakdown by market is outlined in the data table presented to the right.

Domestic Markets	Sample Size
Oregon (excluding Ashland)	332
Seattle, WA	300
Sacramento/Redding, CA	301
San Francisco, CA	302
Los Angeles, CA	304
TOTAL	N=1,539

Destination Analysts 4



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Survey of Leisure Travelers in Key Markets (continued)

In order to complete the full survey, respondents must have met the following screening requirements:

- Adults age 18+
- Annual household income of \$40,000+
- Took at least one overnight leisure trip to a destination 50 miles or more away from home in the past 2 years
- Expects to take at least one overnight leisure trip to a destination 50 miles or more away from home in the next 12 months

The survey was fielded from January 8– 26, 2021. In total, 1,528 completed surveys were collected.

*Note: All data collected from individual markets has been weighted to be representative of the overall population of households in each market.*

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# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## In-Depth Interviews with Domestic Leisure Travelers

To support quantitative findings from the Survey of Leisure Travelers in Key Markets, Destination Analysts conducted one-on-one in-depth interviews with domestic leisure travelers via online video conference. This qualitative research allowed for a deeper, richer exploration of travelers' interests, motivations and perceptions, particularly in relation to visiting Ashland. Each of the travelers interviewed represent high potential visitors to Ashland.

In total, 10 travelers who live in the following markets participated in a 45-minute online interview:

- Oregon (excluding Ashland)
- Seattle, WA
- Sacramento/Redding, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Los Angeles, CA



Above: Screenshot of the online interview environment from the moderator's perspective.

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# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## SURVEY OF OWNED AUDIENCES

- 5 Travel Ashland partners distributed the survey
- Adults age 18+
- Must currently live outside of Ashland
- Recent visitors were identified as those who visited Ashland between 2018 – 2021.
- Non-visitors, comprised of lapsed visitors who traveled to Ashland more than three years ago and those who have never visited Ashland, answered the brand-related questions within the survey
- 5,771 total completed surveys were collected

Destination Analysts

## LEISURE TRAVELERS

All survey respondents.  
1,539 COMPLETED SURVEYS.

The summary at right details key characteristics of all Leisure Travelers surveyed.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- On average, leisure travelers took 5.6 overnight leisure trips in the past two years. One quarter of them (24.9%) visited Ashland in the past three years, averaging 3.3 trips to the destination in that time frame.
- Despite COVID-19, the majority (63.9%) of leisure travelers are ready to travel or are already traveling, underscored by their plans to take an average of 3.4 trips in the next 12 months.
- Half or more describe traveling as time to spend time with their family (56.4%) and find destinations with small, walkable downtowns very appealing (50.4%). A wide range of outdoor recreation motivates almost as many (45.0%) to travel.
- The top three attributes, almost equal in **importance**, for selecting Pacific Northwest destinations are **scenic beauty** (83.3%), a **welcoming atmosphere** (82.7%), and **safety/pandemic protocols** (82.2%). Three-quarters of leisure travelers add four more features: **weather** (77.0%), dining (74.8%), a chance to **"get away from it all"** (74.5%), and **affordability** (73.1%).
- According to leisure travelers, Ashland **performs** well on most of those **key** important attributes. **Scenic beauty** tops the list (71.7%), followed by a walkable downtown (69.1%). A **welcoming atmosphere** (67.5%), a chance to **"get away from it all"** (64.1%), and outdoor recreation (63.5%) round out the top half-dozen highest rated features. **Weather** (55.9%), **affordability** (54.4%), **safety/pandemic protocols** (52.7), rank lower, but are still rated highly by over half.
- Competitively, Ashland has no threatening challengers in the arts & culture sphere. It almost triples second-place Healdsburg (44.6% vs. 16.8%) as "best" for that experience, of five possible destinations. However, of the four other types of experiences, with admittedly tough competitors, Ashland lags most of the other destinations on wineries (13.6%), dining (11.8%), outdoor adventure (7.9%), and family fun (5.7%).
- Ashland has strong drawing power for leisure travelers and that indicates a good prognosis for attracting tourists. Most (75.8%) view Ashland as welcoming (the second-most important attribute), almost two-thirds (62.4%) find Ashland's attractions and things to do appealing, and half (49.0%) expect to visit in the next three years.
- Key **motivators** for visiting Ashland are led by its small, walkable downtown (78.8%), proximity to rivers and lakes (72.5%), award winning cuisine (71.3%) and culinary festivals (70.1%), uncrowded hiking/biking trails (67.9%), and music/art/cultural events (65.7%). The Oregon Shakespeare Festival (57.8%) and unique wines/wineries (55.7%) also lure more than half.
- Ashland needs broader awareness and familiarity. Nearly a third (29.8%) do not feel they know enough about Ashland, its biggest hurdle. Additionally, one in four cites personal safety (23.4%), never hearing about it (22.3%), and being too far from home (21.4%) as leading deterrents.
- Reaching potential travelers and inspiring them to visit requires a strong internet presence. Top digital resources include online searches (45.1%), travel review websites (38.0%), and social media (37.1% friends/family; 30.5% general).
- Off-line, aside from direct contact with friends/family (47.3%) for travel ideas, this audience will most commonly turn to print magazine articles, travel-related TV shows and television programs to get ideas on where to travel.

## LEISURE TRAVELERS *Who they are*



### Gender

Female: 42.7%  
Male: 51.8%  
Non-binary: 0.7%



### Marital Status

Married/partnered: 74.7%  
Single: 24.1%  
Children under 18: 19.6%



### Average Age: 46.6

Millennials or younger: 37.0%  
Gen Xers: 27.6%  
Boomers or older: 35.4%



### Ethnicity

Caucasian: 77.3%  
Non-Caucasian: 22.7%



### Household Income

\$119,631



### Education

College Graduate: 77.0%



### Top States of Origin

California: 72.2%  
Washington: 14.4%  
Oregon: 13.2%



### Top MSAs

Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA: 27.5%  
San Francisco-Oakland, CA: 14.5%  
Seattle-Everett, WA: 10.8%

5.6

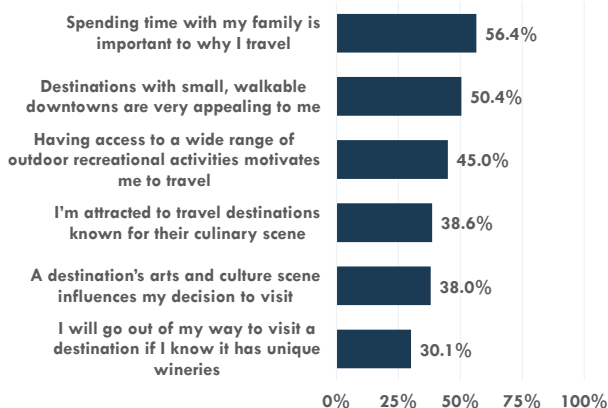
Average number of overnight leisure trips in the past two years

3.4

Average number of overnight leisure trips planned in the next twelve months

## LEISURE TRAVELERS *Psychographics*

### Psychographic Statements



63.9%

Are Ready to Travel or Already Traveling

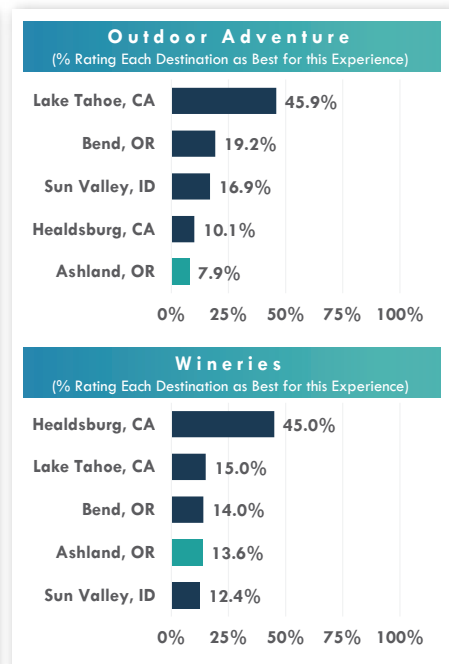
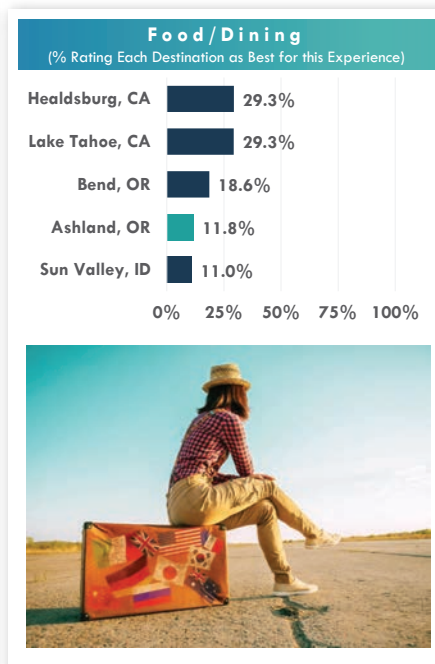
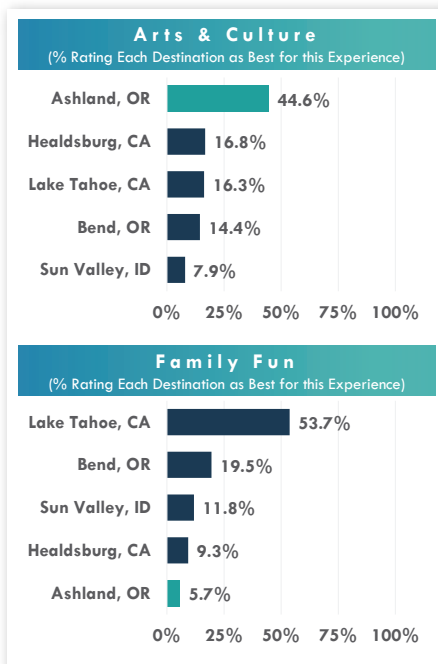
### Attributes Important to Selecting Pacific Northwest Destinations

(Top 2 Box Score—% selecting each as "Important" or "Very important")

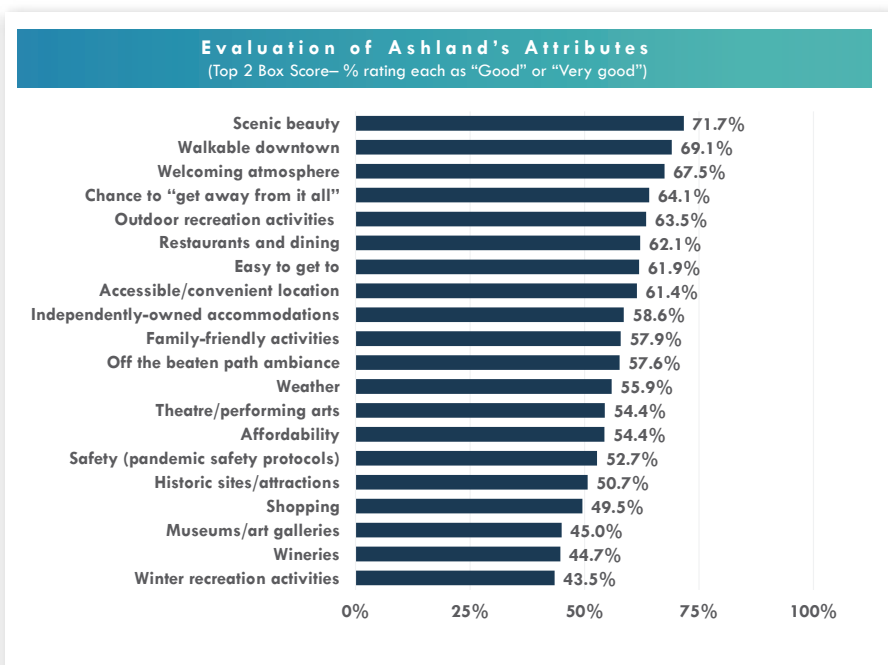
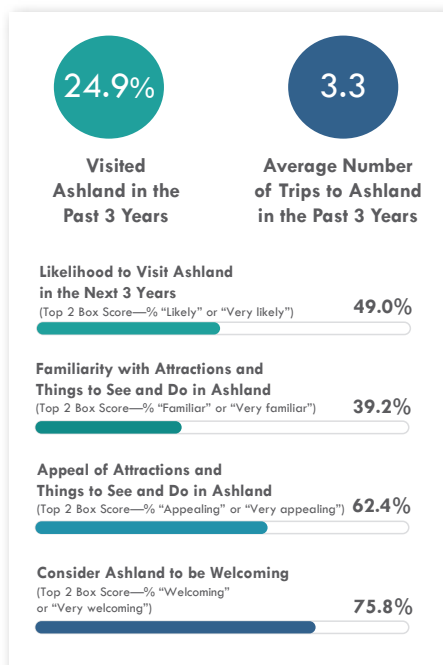




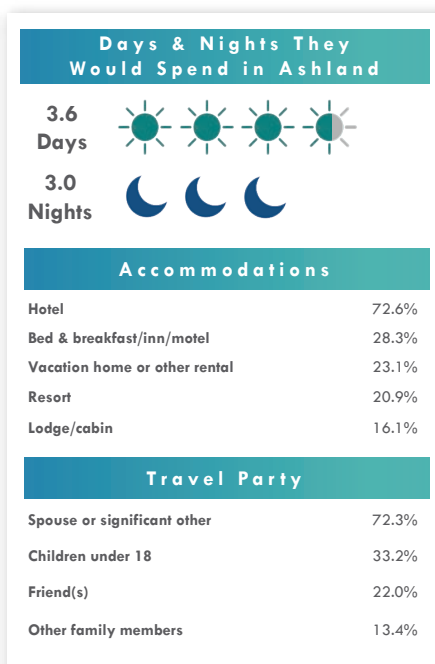
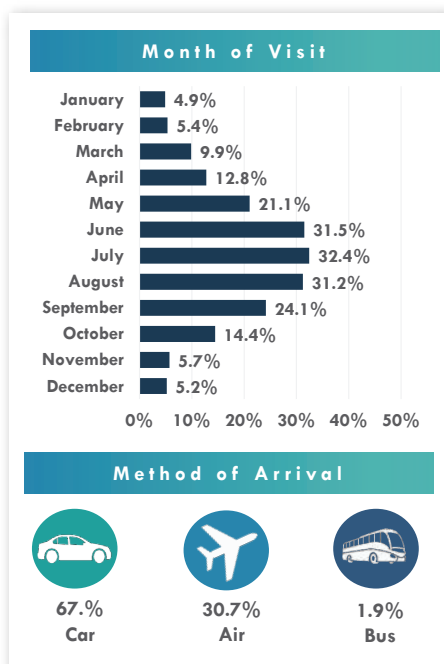
## LEISURE TRAVELERS *Ashland's Competitive Situation*



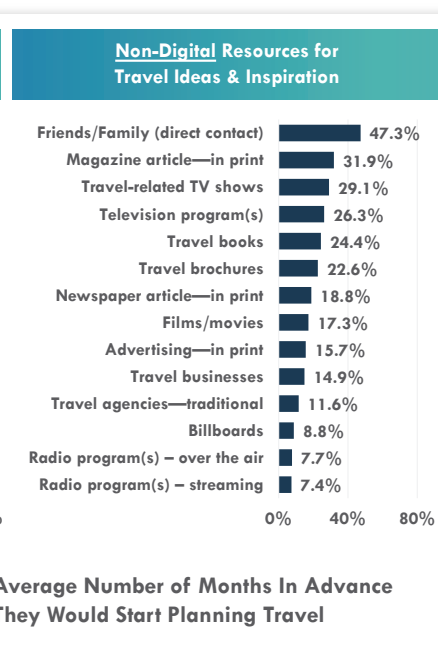
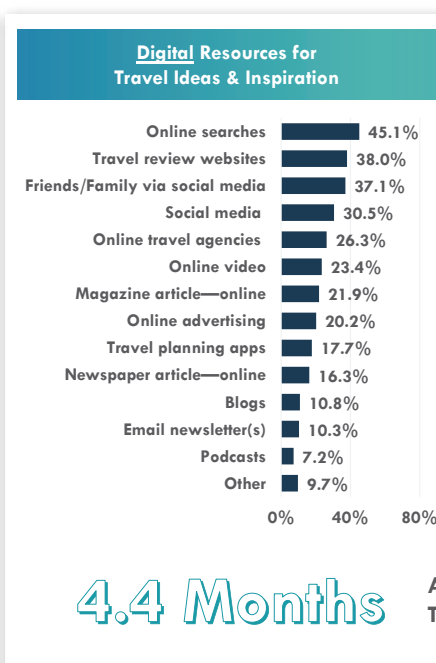
## LEISURE TRAVELERS *The Travel Ashland Brand*



## LEISURE TRAVELERS *The Ideal Ashland Trip*



## LEISURE TRAVELERS *Marketing Ashland*



# CALCULATING ASHLAND’S VISITATION INDEX

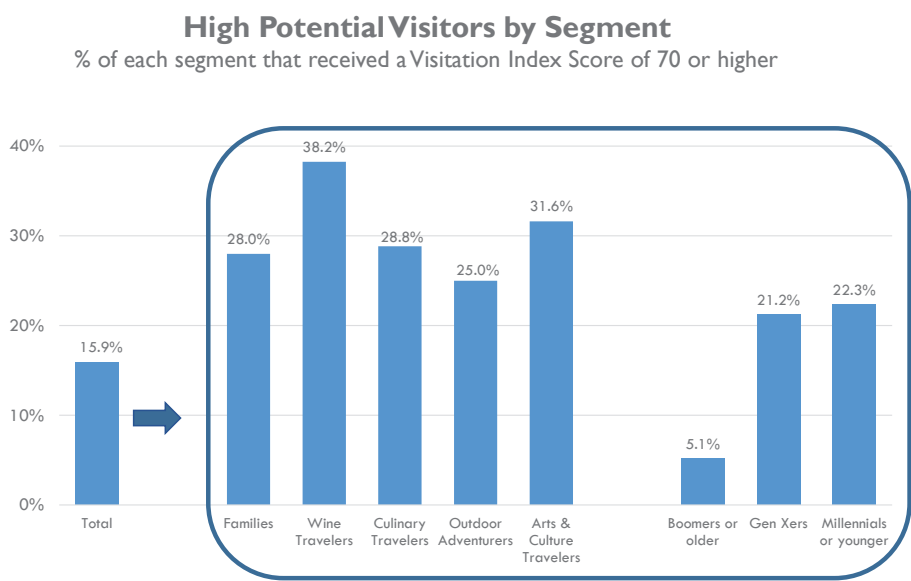
An average index score of 70 points or above (on a 100-point scale) defines a High Potential Visitor.

A visualization of this index calculation is shown below:

$$\frac{\left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Likelihood to take a} \\ \text{Leisure Trip to} \\ \text{Ashland in the next} \\ \text{three years} \\ \text{(On a 5-Point Scale)} \end{array} \right) \times \left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Appeal of things to} \\ \text{see and do in} \\ \text{Ashland} \\ \text{(On a 5-point scale)} \end{array} \right) \times \left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Familiarity with things} \\ \text{to see and do in} \\ \text{Ashland} \\ \text{(On a 5-point scale)} \end{array} \right)}{1.25} = \text{Score on a 100-Point Scale}$$

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# HIGH POTENTIAL VISITORS BY SEGMENT

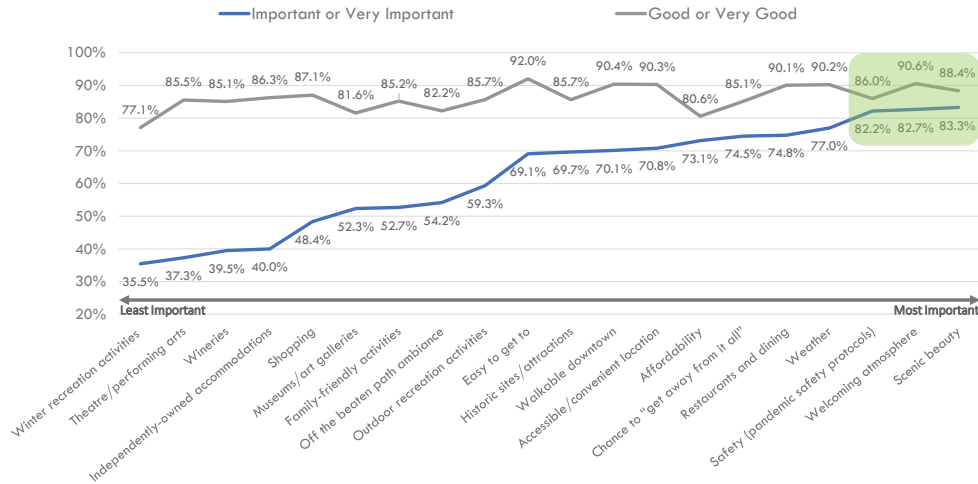


Destination Analysts



## HIGH POTENTIAL VISITORS: ATTRIBUTES IMPORTANT TO DESTINATION SELECTION vs. ASHLAND'S RATINGS

Figure: Attribute Importance to Selecting Destinations in Pacific Northwest vs. Ashland's Ratings of High Potential Visitors



Question 1: Think carefully about how you usually approach selecting the places you visit for leisure in the Pacific Northwest region. In general, how important are each of the following to how you select the places you visit? Please use the scale below where "1" equals "Very unimportant" and "5" equals "Very important" to answer for each. 2. Please use the scale below where "1" equals "Very poor" and "5" equals "Very good" to evaluate each attribute of Ashland a place to visit to visit for leisure travel. Even if you are unfamiliar with Ashland, please answer based on your current perceptions. Base: All respondents. 1,539 completed surveys.

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## THE ASHLAND DESTINATION BRAND

The "lightning round" during the in-depth interviews specifically captures top-of-mind reactions to Ashland. And these top-of-mind reactions highlight the ideal visitors for Ashland and the destination's strengths, which are again tied to arts & culture and nature.

Best Visitor	If in Ashland, I would ...	You'd be crazy to visit Ashland without experiencing ...
Outdoor enthusiast	Snowboard	Mountains
Active and enjoys outdoors	Enjoy outdoor activities	Local art galleries
Health-conscious traveler	Explore	Outdoor activities of Ashland
Nature lover	Visit wineries	Food and shopping
Someone who likes nature and theatre	See different areas, not just downtown	Local river and mountains
Explorer	Visit the museum	Visit the local community
Anyone	Soak in the art	Shakespeare festival
Something for everybody	Be outside a lot	Go to theatre
Enjoys small towns		

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# ASHLAND 2021 VISITOR RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

SURVEY OF OWNED AUDIENCES  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS

April 2021



## RESEARCH OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This executive summary presents the key insights that emerged from a Survey of Owned Audiences—part of a larger Visitor Research & Analysis study—conducted on behalf of Travel Ashland by Destination Analysts.

The primary objective of this study—to collect data on Ashland’s recent visitors and most loyal customers—is supported by learning about these visitors who are currently engaged with the destination, including:

- Perceptions of Ashland
- Trip details and in-market behaviors
- Motivators to generate repeat visitation to Ashland
- Marketing messaging that will most resonate with Ashland’s owned audiences
- Demographics and psychographics
- Visitor point of origin



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Destination Analysts worked closely with the Travel Ashland on developing and designing the questionnaire for this study, otherwise referred to as the Ashland Survey of Owned Audiences. Travel Ashland's partners then distributed the survey to its own consumer database.

The following five Travel Ashland partners and key tourism businesses distributed the survey to their consumer lists:

- Momentum River Expeditions
- Mt. Ashland Ski Area
- Neuman Hotel Group
- Oregon Shakespeare Festival
- Weisinger Family Winery

Destination  Analysts 4

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given this approach of surveying owned audiences, it should be noted that survey respondents are not the typical nor average visitor to the destination (e.g., the average visitor who could potentially be surveyed in-market via an in-person intercept survey approach). Rather, recent visitors surveyed for this study are those who are currently engaged with Travel Ashland's key partners.

In order to complete the full survey, respondents must have met the following screening requirements:

- Adults age 18+
- Must currently live outside of Ashland

Recent visitors were identified as those who visited Ashland between 2018 – 2021.

Non-visitors, comprised of lapsed visitors who traveled to Ashland more than three years ago and those who have never visited Ashland, answered the brand-related questions within the survey.

Destination  Analysts 5



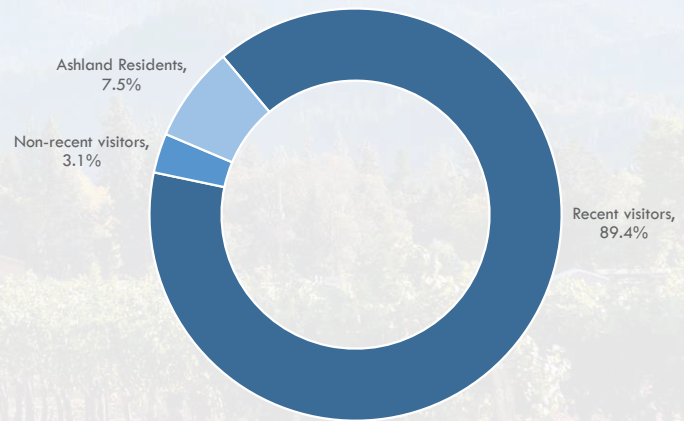
## DATA COLLECTION

In total, 5,771 completed surveys were collected between January 22 and March 5, 2021.

Of the 5,771 completed surveys, 5,158 surveys, or 89.4 percent, were from recent visitors who took a trip to Ashland within the past three years. 178 surveys, or 3.1 percent, were from non-recent visitors who live outside Ashland and did not visit the destination within the past three years. The remaining 435 surveys, or 7.5 percent, were from Ashland residents who completed the demographic questions, as well as a few brand-related questions within the survey.

The breakout of all completed surveys collected by respondent type is presented in the chart at right.

**Breakout of All Completed Surveys Collected by Respondent Type:**



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## DATA COLLECTION

The following is a breakout of completed surveys collected by each Travel Ashland partner.

Source	Invitations Sent	Completed Surveys
Momentum River Expeditions	2,006	611
Mt. Ashland Ski Area	11,978	98
Neuman Hotel Group	55,221	1,021
Oregon Shakespeare Festival	50,345	3,956
Weisinger Family Winery	2,147	85
TOTAL	121,697	5,771

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## OWNED AUDIENCES *Who they are*



### Gender

Female: 65.0%  
Male: 33.1%  
Non-binary: 0.4%



### Marital Status

Married/partnered: 76.2%  
Single: 19.9%  
Children under 18: 9.3%



### Average Age: 63.8

Millennials or younger: 6.8%  
Gen Xers: 14.4%  
Boomers or older: 78.8%



### Ethnicity

Caucasian: 77.3%  
Non-Caucasian: 14.2%



### Household Income

\$124,730



### Education

College Graduate: 89.8%



### Top States of Origin

California: 42.8%  
Oregon: 34.6%  
Washington: 13.7%



### Top MSAs

Portland, OR-WA: 19.0%  
San Francisco-Oakland, CA: 16.3%  
Seattle-Everett, WA: 8.0%

7.7

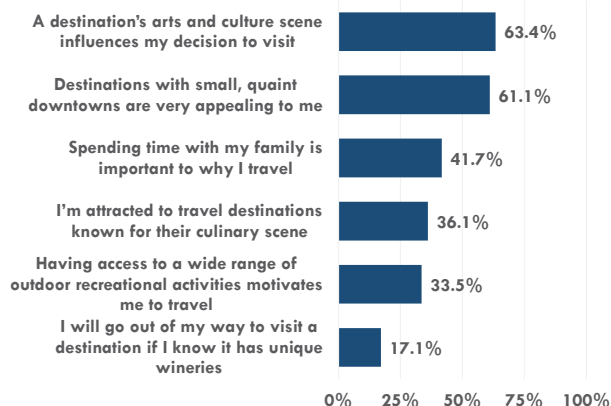
Average number of overnight leisure trips in the past two years

4.0

Average number of overnight leisure trips planned in the next twelve months

## OWNED AUDIENCES *Psychographics*

### Psychographic Statements



41.9%

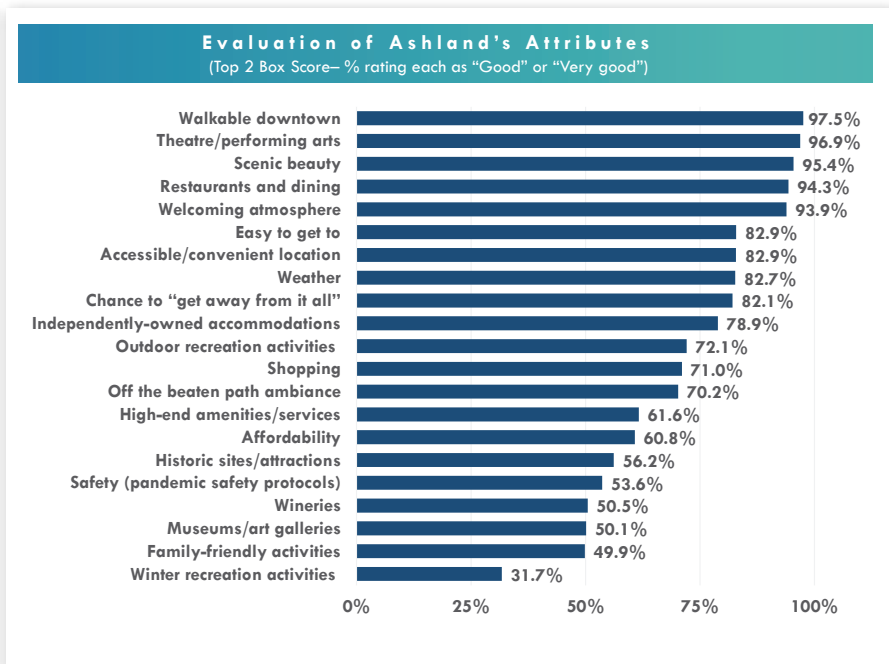
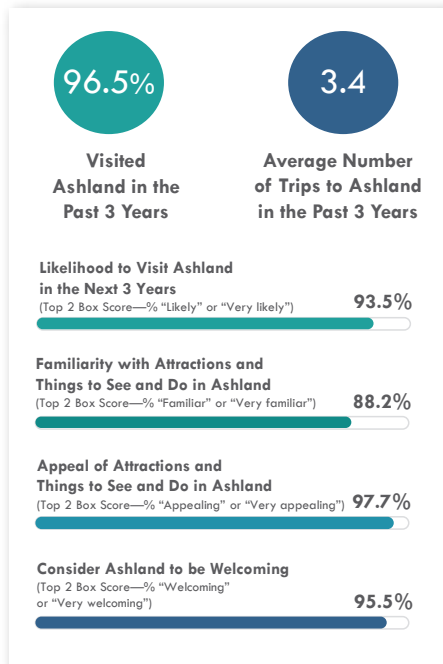
Are Ready to Travel or Already Traveling

### Attributes Important to Selecting Pacific Northwest Destinations

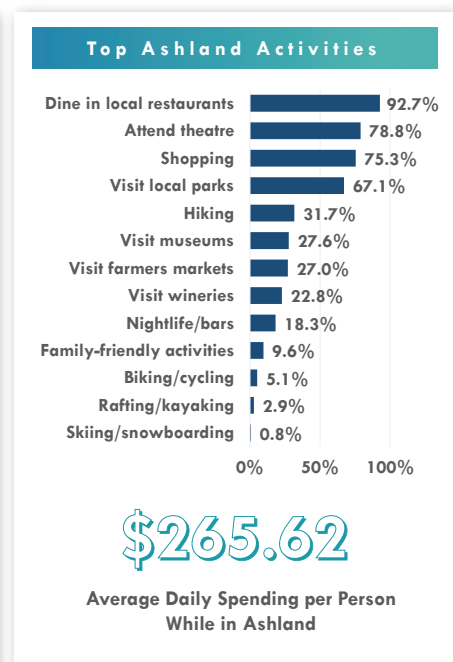
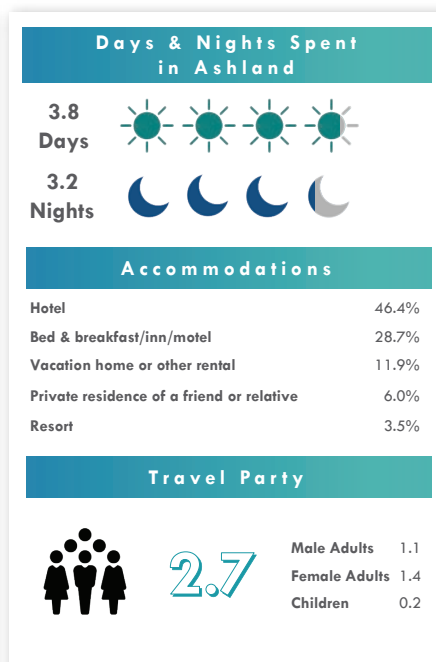
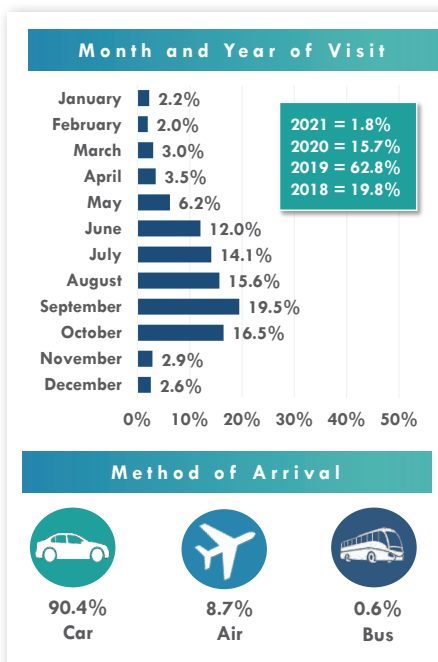
(Top 2 Box Score—% selecting each as "Important" or "Very important")



## OWNED AUDIENCES *The Travel Ashland Brand*



## OWNED AUDIENCES *The Ashland Trip*





**Motivators to Visit Ashland  
in the Next 3 Years**

(Top 2 Box Score—% "Interesting" or "Very interesting")

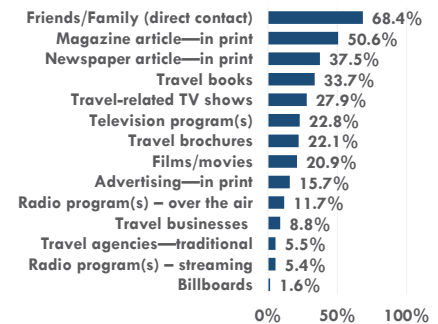
The Oregon Shakespeare Festival	93.1%
Small, walkable downtown	90.6%
Music, art and/or cultural events	82.1%
Award-winning restaurants and chefs	76.0%
Uncrowded trails for hiking and biking	53.8%
Culinary and food festivals	52.9%
Proximity to rivers and lakes	44.1%
Conveniently located near Interstate 5	40.7%
Unique wines and wineries	38.8%
Skiing, snowboarding and other snow sports	6.9%

**Top Deterrents to Visiting Ashland**

Personal safety concerns	43.5%
Too far from home	22.7%
Personal financial reasons	10.8%
Lack of personal vacation time	10.3%
Too expensive	8.7%
Too difficult to travel to	6.3%
Too hard to convince my friends/family to go	4.0%
No friends/family in the area	3.9%
Not enough to do there	2.6%
Doesn't fit the types of travel experiences I'm into	1.2%

**Important Factors in Decision to Visit Ashland in the Next 12 Months**

Theatre/performing arts scene	81.9%
Mass distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine	71.3%
Flexible cancellation policies for lodging/accommodations	67.7%
Business operational practices in response to COVID-19	58.9%
Number of coronavirus cases in Ashland	50.6%
Attraction and hotel stay package deal	33.4%

**Digital Resources for  
Travel Ideas & Inspiration****Non-Digital Resources for  
Travel Ideas & Inspiration**

## THE DESTINATION SELECTION PROCESS



**Destination selection is very much tied to individual traveler interests and motivations.** Travelers look for different things for a leisure trip based on their passions/interests, travel partner(s), and life-stage (age/children). Most have a desire for a variety of activities, relaxation, and affordability to appeal to not only themselves, but their travel companions as well. With Ashland's variety of experiential offerings, and provided that more awareness about the destination brand is generated, the destination is uniquely positioned to attract more visitors.

**Small towns have a favorable image that Ashland can capitalize on.** High potential visitors clearly see the value and benefits of visiting small towns. Small towns are associated with easy navigation, fewer/smaller crowds, less expensive, slower pace, more relaxing, more welcoming and a more authentic, natural feel.

**COVID-19 clearly affects travel and travel planning.** The pandemic brings an aversion to flying and some general resistance to overnight travel. The pandemic creates reticence to dining out or being in crowded areas. Some noted challenges in finding open attractions during recent past trips. That said, those who have traveled, or feel ready to travel, find that the first trip builds confidence. As seen in Destination Analysts weekly *Coronavirus Travel Sentiment Index Study*, as well as through other qualitative research conducted, the pandemic will continue to be top-of-mind in planning travel. This should be considered as Travel Ashland develops future marketing.

## THE ASHLAND DESTINATION BRAND

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In general, High Potential Visitors express positive opinions about Ashland:

**Culture and nature are largely associated with the Ashland destination brand.** Both past visitors and non-visitors focused on Ashland's beauty, outdoor assets, and arts and culture in describing the city and its strengths. In addition, these High Potential Visitors value Ashland's small-town feel, warmth, and friendliness.

**Wineries, wine bars, museums, coffee shops, parks, unique shopping, and the walkable and interesting downtown add further appeal.** A few participants acknowledged a "hippie-ish" motif, which for some builds a deeper interest in exploring Ashland.

**"I searched online for places to visit in Oregon and Ashland appeared as a top 10 small arts and culture town."**

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## WHAT SETS ASHLAND APART

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Past Ashland visitors and non-visitors shared Ashland's unique value proposition and the destination's attributes that distinguish it from other leisure travel destinations, which range from arts & culture to being a close-knit community. The following summarize what travelers feel set Ashland apart from other places.

- **The culture.** Visitors come for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and enjoy the food and "quaint" and "charming" ambiance.
- **Great place to explore.** Ashland offers a collection of museums, a walkable downtown, local shops, and friendly, laid-back people.
- **Lots to do, yet warm and inviting.** Ashland lacks the intensity of some high-end ski resorts, which can be perceived as a positive.
- **Wide array of things to do in quiet peaceful scenery.** Ashland gives visitors the ability to explore and visit year-round for seasonal activities.
- **Easily accessible things to do.** Ashland is a blend of nature and small town, offering wineries, hiking, and bodies of water.
- **Ashland is a magical place.** It has a relaxing, free spirit, home-in-the-mountains vibe. It's fun, laid-back and hippie-like.
- **Ashland is a little, big city.** It has the amenities of a big city, such as shopping and great restaurants while also being surrounded by nature.
- **Ashland gives the impression of close community.** Everyone seems to know each other, and locals are perceived to be friendly and welcoming.



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## SEVEN MESSAGING ESSENTIALS: MOTIVATING TRAVELERS TO VISIT AND/OR STAY LONGER

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**1.) Communicate the ease of travel to Ashland.** Convince potential visitors that the distance is worth the effort and if at all possible, make the transportation options easy. Direct air service development will especially entice farther markets to visit Ashland more frequently. Additionally, show ways that travel can be unique (train options), economical and/or simple to plan.

**2.) Demonstrate that there is more than enough to do.** Show visitors engaging in the many activities and experiences in Ashland. This may ultimately communicate *“there is so much to do that can fill a long trip.”*

**3.) “Come for the Shakespeare, stay for the trails.”** The focus on the Shakespeare festival draws many visitors, but potential visitors could very well be unaware that Ashland offers miles of scenic trails and other outdoor recreation.



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## SEVEN MESSAGING ESSENTIALS: MOTIVATING TRAVELERS TO VISIT AND/OR STAY LONGER

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**4.) Balance Ashland between nature and arts & culture.** The destination excels in both; it would be easy for one to overwhelm the other.

**5.) Position Ashland – both as a leisure destination, as well as geographically.** Ashland can potentially serve as a base camp for exploring the larger area and encourage visitors to expand their length of stay.

**6.) Acknowledge COVID-19 and the measures Ashland is taking to ensure health and safety.** From the numerous qualitative and quantitative research studies Destination Analysts has conducted over the past year, it's clear that COVID-19 has impacted travel planning and the places travelers choose to visit. Illustrating how the city and its tourism community is addressing the situation will likely go a long way in getting travelers to consider Ashland.

**7.) Show that Ashland can be economical.** Visitors can experience Ashland without *“breaking the bank.”* However, this message should be balanced with luxury options for those who like to *“splurge on travel.”*

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# The legacy of tourism's impact and resilience

**Travel Ashland, since its inception thirty-nine years ago has collected 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 rapidly changing 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 when we need to promote and target areas that need focus.

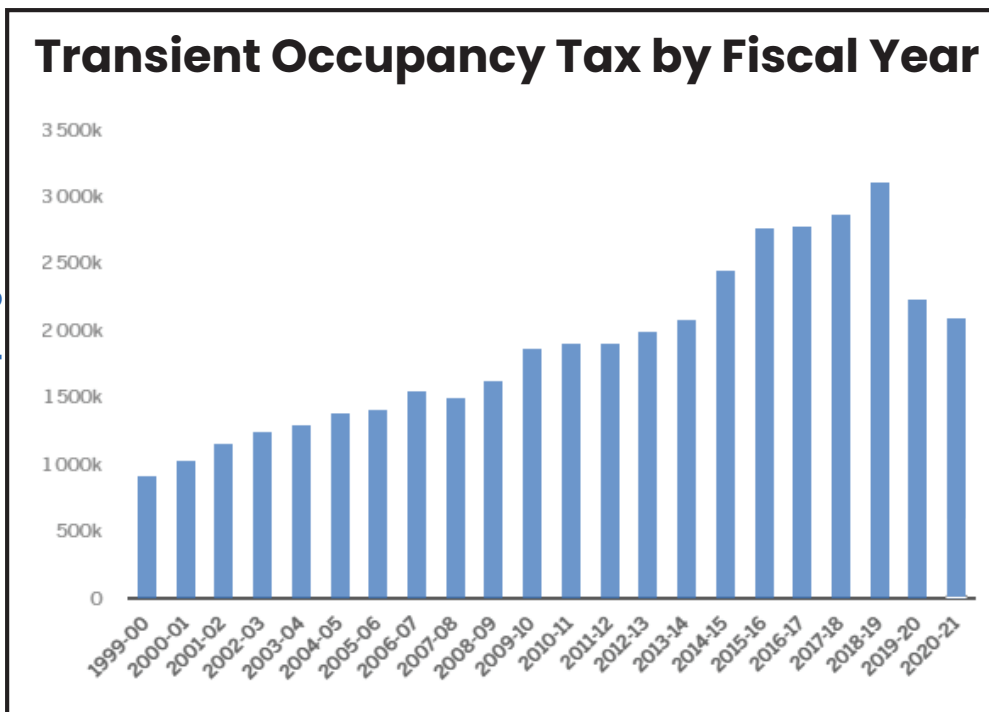
**Despite the pandemic, tourism remains a key driver to Ashland's economy and locally we have been fortunate to have rebounded much faster and stronger than the rest of the state of Oregon. Statewide, Oregon tourism endured the pandemic with \$6.5 billion in total spending that directly generates more than 92,300 jobs. Tourism generates \$967 million in state and local tax revenues. In Southern Oregon there are over 12,000 tourism related jobs.**

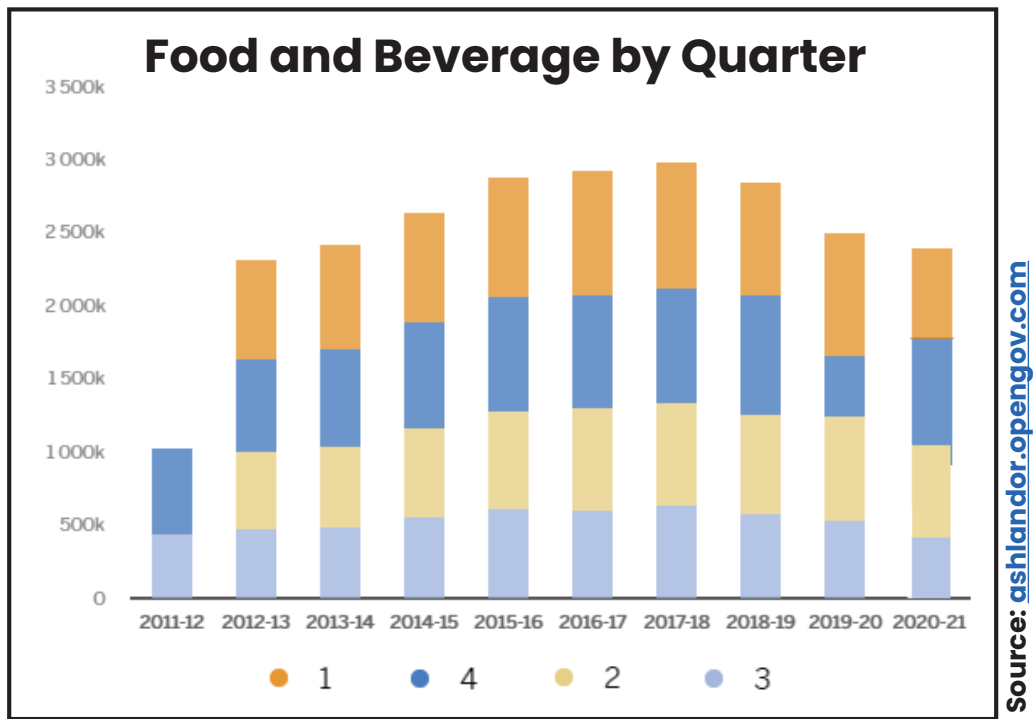
In Ashland, over 3000 jobs are fueled by the visitor spanning Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Lodging and Restaurants. Employment, quality of life and the success of Ashland's economy is directly dependent upon tourism.

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. 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 catering not only to a local but visitor clientele is fueled by a strong visitor base. The number of jobs has fluctuated through the pandemic largely because of OSF's closure but with strong visitation maintaining even through 2020 and then exceeding 2019 revenues in 2021, jobs exist however staffing them is the current challenge.

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.

Source: [ashlandor.opengov.com](http://ashlandor.opengov.com)





The above data was sourced from [ashland.or.opengov.com](http://ashland.or.opengov.com) and the City of Ashland finance department as of January 11th, 2022. The above graphs reflect the most current data available including tax receipts collected through June 30th, 2021. Therefore, these graphs do not reflect data or impacts between July 2021 and January 2022.

## Tourism's Resilience

Noted in the charts above and below, the pandemic greatly affected Ashland's tourism in the very early months of March and April 2020. However, Ashland rebounded faster than most of the state with visitors seeking the small town of Ashland and the drive market exponentially expanding even as early as summer 2020 being "only" 50% down from 2019 in TOT revenue though some saw their best year ever such as wineries and rafting companies. Fall 2020 TOT was 28% down from 2019, again, most other areas in the state have even yet to regain that visitation with the exception of the Coast. Winter of 20-21 was within 5% of pre-pandemic TOT revenues followed by Spring 2021 which was 25% down from 2019 TOT revenues.

	FY 2018-2019		% change	FY 2019-2020		% change	% change	FY 2020-2021	
TOT			18/19 to 19/20			18/19 to 20/21	19/20 to 20/21		
Q1 (July, Aug, Sept)	1,227,996		-1%	Q1 (July, Aug, Sept)	1,215,870	-52%	-52%	Q1 (July, Aug, Sept)	590,833
Q2 (Oct, Nov, Dec)	596,145		1%	Q2 (Oct, Nov, Dec)	597,296	-27%	-28%	Q2 (Oct, Nov, Dec)	434,940
Q3 (Jan, Feb, Mar)	338,542		-27%	Q3 (Jan, Feb, Mar)	244,266	-5%	25%	Q3 (Jan, Feb, Mar)	324,813
Q4 (Apr, May, June)	960,041		-80%	Q4 (Apr, May, June)	192,571	-25%	375%	Q4 (Apr, May, June)	722,235
	FY 2018-2019		% change	FY 2019-2020		% change	% change	FY 2020-2021	
F&B			18/19 to 19/20			18/19 to 20/21	19/20 to 20/21		
Q1 (July, Aug, Sept)	777,103		6%	Q1 (July, Aug, Sept)	833,132	-20%	-25%	Q1 (July, Aug, Sept)	628,134
Q2 (Oct, Nov, Dec)	682,523		5%	Q2 (Oct, Nov, Dec)	713,596	-22%	-26%	Q2 (Oct, Nov, Dec)	534,633
Q3 (Jan, Feb, Mar)	588,899		9%	Q3 (Jan, Feb, Mar)	540,144	-19%	-12%	Q3 (Jan, Feb, Mar)	477,038
Q4 (Apr, May, June)	811,053		-49%	Q4 (Apr, May, June)	420,544	5%	51%	Q4 (Apr, May, June)	847,771

Food & Beverage reflects visitor spending but also includes the regional day traveler as well as local spending showed resilience with 25 – 26 % of revenues down in Summer and Fall 2020 respectively. Winter 20-21 showed 12% less revenue collection despite closures due to the pandemic, however in Spring of 2021, F&B revenues returned to pre-pandemic levels, exceeding 2019 by 5%.

2021 as a whole has exceeded 2019 numbers for industries such as retail, lodging including retaining and increasing their nightly room rates as well as wineries, outfitters and restaurants. Anecdotally, we saw the strongest December we have ever seen with the increase in visitation coupled with the new OSF holiday show welcoming OSF playgoers in the off-season resulted in higher revenues than expected for many businesses who projected losses of 80%+ finished the year stronger than originally forecasted in June of 2020.

## Travel Ashland's Past Research Findings

- **There has been an inherent value for visitors in Ashland's downtown. This past research also concluded that the inherent value of the downtown was closely tied to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. With the recent and variance in closures, we have seen growth in properties outside of the 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, well maintained and welcoming. Over the past two decades, we have conducted extensive research to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the geographic layout of our accommodations through BR&E (Business Retention and Expansion) surveys, ongoing visitor profile and lodging analysis studies that were conducted by Rebecca Reid, Independent Research consultant.
- **January – March has consistently had the greatest opportunity to grow with the lowest occupancy.** While we prioritize this quarter with targeted campaigns and promotions, we are very nimble to adjust as we have seen much needed promotion throughout the year, not just in the off season. Given Travel Ashland's new brand and the publishing of the Winter Visitor Guide along with Mt. Ashland joining the Indi-Pass program, we look forward to continuing to grow this season with new events and new reasons to visit.
- **Spring and Summer travel can vary and are seeing market shifts.** Through our past research, results show variance in occupancy based on how each year unfolds whether summer travel is affected by wildfires, poor air quality, intentional avoidance of the busy season and now COVID. With the current shift towards a new, first time visitor, we are researching emerging trends taking into account new demographics, spending and travel preferences.
- Over the past decade, we have seen increasing trends such as the **last-minute traveler**, with a shorter decision- making window that affects how we market to them, 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.
- **Wildfires and poor air quality have affected travel.** We saw this even more so with the devastating Almeda and Obenchain fires affecting perception of visiting Ashland. Travelers want transparency, timely and accurate information when planning their trips. **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. 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 was 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).



# Who is Travel Ashland and what do we do?

For thirty-nine years, the City of Ashland and the community have relied on Travel Ashland (Ashland's official Destination 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 effectively uses dollars received through the grant and fosters strategic partnerships with public and private sectors to promote and engage the tourism industry and visitors.

In 2020, we began a much needed, robust Visitor Research and Analysis Study to look at the evolving Ashland visitor, changing trends and how we can best leverage our assets. The overarching goal is to create a steady visitor volume year-round, increasing times with 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 3 million EACH year with a ½ million dollar increase alone in just three years. We saw a major dip in revenue collections due to the pandemic, Ashland has recovered faster and stronger than most other destinations in the state. Tourism revenues **support businesses** in retail, lodging, food and beverage, attractions and subindustries who serve those businesses. Though we saw an impact of COVID due to travel and safety restrictions throughout 2020 and into 2021, we saw resiliency and responded accordingly to the visitor who continued to come explore Ashland, as a rural destination with world-class amenities such as our wine industry and outdoor experiences. We see increased visitation continuing into 2022. This is not a short term bump post onslaught of the pandemic.

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 newly refreshed 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 pivoted to produce the 2021 Spring/Summer Visitor Guide and then expressed the new brand through the Winter Visitor Guide for Winter 2022. The Visitor Guide** showcases tools such as a 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. Free digital version available on all sites and [www.avenzamaps.com](http://www.avenzamaps.com)

Travel Ashland **manages the visitor center and Plaza information kiosk** serving tens of thousands of visitors year-round, with the exception of 2020 and 2021 due to COVID. We operate the **Travel Ashland Advisory Committee** made up of tourism industry representatives from lodging, restaurant, outdoor outfitters, wine industry, retail, 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, with

the exception of years with impacts due to COVID. 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 when we are able to** including the Festival of Light Celebration, the Fourth of July and the Children's Halloween Celebration, with the exception of years we could not due to COVID. Travel Ashland also supports many **community events with partners such as SOPride, Mt. Ashland events, Ashland Gallery Association, AIFF, OSF, Britt and outdoor partners.** Travel Ashland and the Chamber provide **educational workshops** and seminars as well. 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 is made up of members from different areas of the tourism industry from lodging, restaurant, outdoors, culinary, wineries, retail, theatre, museum and attractions. Under the advisory direction of the committee and Chair, Katharine Cato, Director, executes the strategic direction, promotions, campaigns, project and programs with support from Chamber staff. Hiram Towle, General Manager for Mt. Ashland Ski Area served as Past Chair 2018 – 2021 lead Travel Ashland through the majority of the pandemic through October 2021. Pete Wallstrom, owner of Momentum River Expeditions began as Travel Ashland Chair November 2021.

**Pete Wallstrom**  
*Momentum River Expeditions  
Current Chair*



**Katharine Cato**  
*Director  
Travel Ashland*



**Hiram Towle**  
*General Manager  
for Mt. Ashland Ski Area  
Past Chair 2018 – 2021*



# The new Ashland brand invites visitors to ‘Live your daydreams’ substantiated by the recent Visitor Study findings, the new brand includes targeting lifestyle personas, interests by season with a fresh verbal and visual identity that is approachable and appealing.

## The new Ashland brand story:

As Travel Ashland was nearing the completion of the Visitor Study, knowing this would be the foundation for our rebranding, we created an RFP for the Destination Brand and Organization Identity. We interviewed and vetted 6 firms with input from our Travel Ashland 10-person committee including Chamber Liaison Councilor Gina DuQuenne. We arrived at 3 final proposals and chose **Intently Collaborative** out of Bend. The choice was based on building a new strategic brand platform using the recent Visitor Study, an effective measurement system with metrics, key performance indicators, as well as, fostering a valuable partnership that provided complimentary skills to our team. Their innovative strategic approach combined with their creative ability and experienced guidance for implementation is what we are most excited about. The goal is to ensure voice and overall image of Ashland that reflects all that Ashland has to offer and resonates with each persona.

**Ashland’s new visitor brand platform was a project that included four phases.** The **discovery phase** was an in-depth **information gathering process**. In addition to intake from the Travel Ashland team, time was spent reviewing the in-depth visitor study, existing website and social media analytics, **conducting 18 Stakeholder interviews** with members of the tourism business community, Ashland Parks and Recreation and volunteer organizations and **detailed brand & competitive audits**.

**Stakeholder interviews** conducted during Discovery Phase of Rebranding Project are below. Intently Collaborative also interviewed each member of the Travel Ashland Advisory Committee:

- Don Anway & Karolina Lavagnino – Neuman Hotel Group Management
- Bob Hackett – Travel Southern Oregon Executive Director and former OSF Marketing Director
- David Schmitz – OSF Executive Director
- Michael Black and Mike Gardiner – Ashland Parks and Recreation Director and Commission Chair
- Dionne Irvine – Irvine & Roberts Vineyards Owner
- Pam Hammond – Paddington Family of Stores co-owner
- Lisa Beam – Skout, Pie & Vine, Burrito and Falafel Repulics
- Bob Horton – Ashland Chamber Volunteer
- Dana Preston and Dana Welsh – Ashland Chamber Staff
- Scott Malbourn – Schneider Museum of Art Executive Director
- Bryant Helgeland – Ashland Mountain Provisions
- Casey Botts and Martin Stadtmueller – Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association
- Torsten Heycke – Ashland Woodland Trails Association



Feedback from these interviews were incorporated into the Discovery Synthesis, including a summary of feedback which will be used for consideration as part of the data collection of the Economic Development Diversification Study that kicked off December 2021.

# Travel Ashland

*Destination Brand Positioning and Organizational Creative Identity*

Proposal prepared by **Intently Collaborative**

## Our Philosophy

### Data + Strategy

*Fundamental to our approach, we utilize data to help define your audience personas, determine targeting tactics, select media channels and define KPIs.*

## Intently Co.

*Creative and strategic partners on a mission to share our branding and marketing expertise with brands that view business as a vehicle for good.*

*Through a customizable and collaborative approach, we empower intentional brands to positively impact the world.*

### Creative + Brand

*We build brands for the market the business serves and creative built around audience insights and needs. This enables us to deliver the right message, with the right visual, at the right time.*

## How We Work

### Listen

We approach every project by listening first, acting second. This applies to how we partner with our clients as well as how we think of strategy. We take the time to get to know your needs as well as the market.

#### *How we do this:*

- Data/Analytics First
- Audience centered design and strategy
- Stakeholder interviews and full brand immersion

### Collaborate

We consider ourselves to be part of your team and your insights and knowledge are crucial to the success of the project. We don't believe in silos and celebrate the unique perspectives the full team provides.

#### *How we do this:*

- Working sessions + Workshops
- Transparent roadmap
- Weekly status updates

### Support

Our projects don't end with an individual deliverable but a system that works. To us, success is our clients knowing how to use the tools, strategy and assets we create. A solution is only as good as the ability to implement it.

#### *How we do this:*

- Program + Tool recommendations
- Guidance on workflows
- Training and education throughout the project and after.

## Who we are

### Dena DeRose

*Co-founder + CMO*

Dena's career has been focused on helping businesses reach their targets through a strategic approach to marketing. Dena started her media career with Dow Jones Local Media and ultimately served as the local advertising director for the Mail Tribune and Ashland Tidings. As a local and corporate level director for large media companies, Dena has developed marketing strategies utilizing traditional media and highly targeted digital media for clients on local and regional levels. Throughout her career Dena has collaborated with clients in many industries including destination, tourism and lifestyle travel brands.

Having relocated to Bend for work and now skiing Bachelor and riding the high desert trails, the Rogue Valley will always hold her heart as the place where she learned to kayak, challenged herself in the Spring Thaw and most importantly had her daughter.

### Sam Berliner

*Co-founder + CCO*

Sam is an award winning advertising creative. She began her career working at a global agency in NYC working on national ad campaigns. Upon moving to Austin, she shifted her focus to working at small to midsize agencies growing both her branding and digital design experience. Sam is happiest when collaborating directly with client teams and developing custom solutions that work for them. She brings her vast experience working in both B2B and B2C marketing and branding to every project and has experience working with associations, hospitality and lifestyle brands.

When she isn't geeking out over strategy and branding with her sister, Sam loves going on hikes with her corgi Oliver and catching all the live music she can in Austin, TX. Ashland will forever hold a special place in her heart as it is where she broke her first bone mountain biking down Mt. Ashland.

## Intently Collaborative

While Intently Collaborative is a newly formed company, it is not a new partnership. As founding partners we share more than a love for branding and marketing, but are also sisters. What started as a pipe dream became a partnership in consulting and evolved into the boutique agency Intently Collaborative. With a combined 30+ years of experience in Advertising and Marketing we have set out to use our experience to partner with brands and businesses we believe in.

### Our Extended Family

We work with a network of consultants in order to leverage the best talent for each client. These are the partners we have selected for the Travel Ashland project based on their industry experience and specialty.

#### Jocelyn Eide

*Senior Copywriter*

#### Lori Samocha

*Senior Copywriter*

#### Kathryn Dreier

*Senior Designer*

#### Monica Miller

*Production Designer*

## Deliverables by phase

### Discover

- Brand + Competitor Audits
- Brand Immersion
- Stakeholder interviews
- Analytics + data audits
- Audience Development

### Envision

- Brand Workshop
- Workshop Synthesis
- Brand Platform + Audience Snapshots
- Visual Identity Moodboards

### Develop

- Logo Redesign
- Set Visual Identity (photo/graphic style)
- Verbal Identity (voice and tone)
- Messaging examples

### Implement

- Guidelines
- Systems + Workflows
- Marketing Templates
- Campaign planning and deployment

# Discovery Synthesis Findings

**Positioning Structure includes who we are, what we offer, for whom we do it, how we do it and why we're different.**

## What we heard



PLATFORM

### Why

- Introduce visitors to Ashland through arts, wine, culinary experiences and outdoor adventure
- A strong economy is a great sign of a healthy community and creates longevity
- Sustain our community, businesses, and uniqueness
- Promote tourism as the key economic driver of Ashland

### What

- Educate people on what Ashland offers
- Support local businesses and help strengthen the economy
- Bring more and diverse visitors to Ashland year round
- Promote Ashland as a visitor destination
- Inspire travelers to visit Ashland and engage with our tourism businesses

### How

- There is something for everyone
- Provide opportunities for education and promotion
- Quaint downtown with nearby nature, parks, wineries and opportunity for outdoor adventure
- Charming small town with amenities generally found in larger city without the issues of a larger city
- Work with top notch influencers invite them to Ashland so that they can experience Ashland and they will do the work for us

## Brand Impression



PLATFORM

### How you are currently viewed

- Arts and culture town
- Small town with beautiful views
- Home to OSF
- Artsy town
- Expensive
- Off the beaten path
- Summer destination
- Open to some and not others

### How you want to be viewed

- A town that has something for everyone
- Small town feel with plenty to do
- Year round destination
- Diverse small town
- Destination for outdoor activities
- A place for families to visit
- Small town getaway for families and urban professionals
- Outdoor attractions and wine country



# Brand Expression

## Key takeaways

- All the colors are very rich which can be rounded out and balanced moving forward no matter what is chosen for the final palette
- The imagery on the site is often hidden by overlays or is small. There is an opportunity to really showcase (visually) all that makes Ashland great
- Creating an icon system for categories of activity and experience will be less overwhelming than relying on image thumbnails or lists
- The clever tagline may lean too Shakespeare for some or fall completely flat for others
- Leveraging more of Ashland's personality can make the content more engaging and welcoming

## Differentiators

### Bend, OR

Known for the outdoor adventure, a walkable and bikeable town, proximity to Mt. Bachelor, and over 700 miles of maintained mountain bike trails.

#### Benefits

- Outdoors
- Breweries
- Mountain biking
- Skiing

#### Barriers

- No wine/vineyards
- Weather & road conditions

### Lake Tahoe, CA

Tahoe has something for everyone as it has two sides with unique attractions. An outdoor enthusiast destination and close to a major airport.

#### Benefits

- Outdoors
- Most skiing
- Mountain biking
- All about that lake

#### Barriers

- Bad traffic
- Weather & road conditions

### Sun Valley, ID

Sun Valley is known more for winter experiences, a down-to-earth feel, and it's unique and star-studded history as the country's first winter resort.

#### Benefits

- Outdoor adventures
- Skiing
- Historical destination
- Hot springs & spas

#### Barriers

- Weather & road conditions
- No wine/vineyards

### Healdsburg, CA

As part of Sonoma Valley, Healdsburg is primarily known for its wineries. It skews older, and while they have outdoor attractions, they are less on the adventurous side.

#### Benefits

- Wine & cuisine
- Arts
- Outdoor experiences
- Scenery

#### Barriers

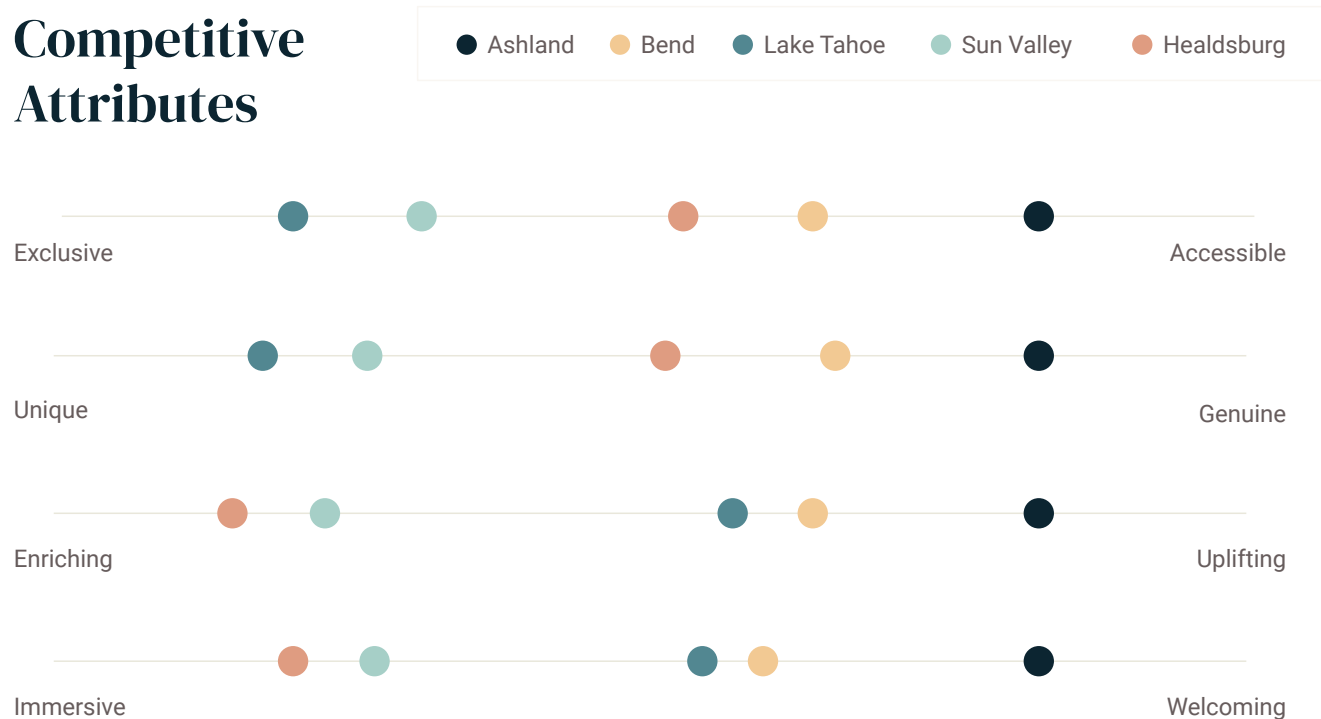
- No skiing
- Sonoma snobbery

## Key Takeaways

### Overall

- Bend and Tahoe are doing a better job at creating a more appealing brand for all ages. They do a good job of showing personality without alienating visitors that might not fit their main base
- Bend, Tahoe and Sun Valley lead in creating easy to use trip planners on their websites and feel user friendly
- Bend has the most unique and authentic voice, but the bar is low for reflecting any area's personality and welcoming travelers via messaging

## Competitive Attributes



## Categories



Accessibility	Experience		Personality	Values	Service
Year-Round	Modern	Creative	Vibrant	Progressive	Responsible
Easy To Get To	Tailored	Calm	Quaint	Community	Stewardship
Variety	Family-Friendly	Artsy	Humble	Sustainability	Detail-Oriented
Convenient	Outdoorsy	Relaxing	Down-To-Earth	Safety	Reliable
Consistent	Active	High-End	Genuine	Inclusivity	Professional
Welcoming	Healthy	Fun	Cultured	Preservation	Responsive
	Adventurous		Laid Back		
			Open-Minded		

**We want visitors to feel...**

**Refreshed**

**Safe**

**Relaxed**

**I want to visit Ashland**

**Comfortable**

**Stimulated**

**Fulfilled**

**Exploratory**

**Authentic**

**Welcomed**

**Happy**

**Excited**

**Hip**

**Community**

**Reconnected with nature**

**Curious**



## What we heard

“Ashland has a sense of place”

“People living here are arts/culturally minded individuals. You're with your tribe.”

“A genuine legacy that has evolved naturally over time”

“Charming small town with amenities generally found in larger cities.”

“Be part of our story”

“Access to artisans/trails; biodiversity ”

“Year round activities/opportunities”

“I believe we need to be innovative so that Ashland remains relevant.”

“Small, friendly, walkable town with easy access to wine, trails and adventure with culture”

“Quiet badasses and humble talent”

“Regional draw is huge”

## What we heard

### From Stakeholders

Quotes from Interviews

- “A wonderful small community with some of the best culinary/culture you would typically find in bigger cities”  
-Dionne Irvine
- “There’s something magical about it”  
-Dana Welsh
- “Coming from a bigger city, I would say the culinary scene is underwhelming”
- “There needs to be more affordable options and a focus on creating more fun stuff for families” -Bob Horton

### From Travelers

Quotes from the Ashland Visitor Research Survey 2021

- “Ashland is warm, welcoming, and inviting”
- “I can see Ashland as a hidden gem - a small town with big city experiences and lots of activities”
- “Ashland is an outdoor activities town; you can experience a lot of things all-in-one”
- “There’s a lot of natural beauty and it’s not terribly overwhelmed by people”

### From Reviews

Reviewed travel sites and comment threads

- “Tourism is the main life blood of Ashland and people won't be coming if they can't breathe the air.” -Trip Advisor
- “Astounding park with lots to explore. Absolutely wonderful to visit in the fall and get lost in the many trails and vibrant colors” -Google Review
- “The natural surroundings are ideal for adventure, or just marveling out the window” -Vogue
- “A great community with a lot of artistic flare, style and cuisines” -Yelp



## How we position Ashland

Ashland is a true destination

- **Year-round travel** four seasons of activities for travelers
- **Convergence** of interests or geological formations
- **Undiscovered** a hidden gem that surprises and inspires people to come back
- **Unfolding legacy** be a part of our story as it grows
- **Magical escape** a friendly place where you will be welcomed by locals and feel inspired



## Brand Opportunity

### Delivering on your aspirations

What do you need to do to attract your desired visitors and the reality of what is possible

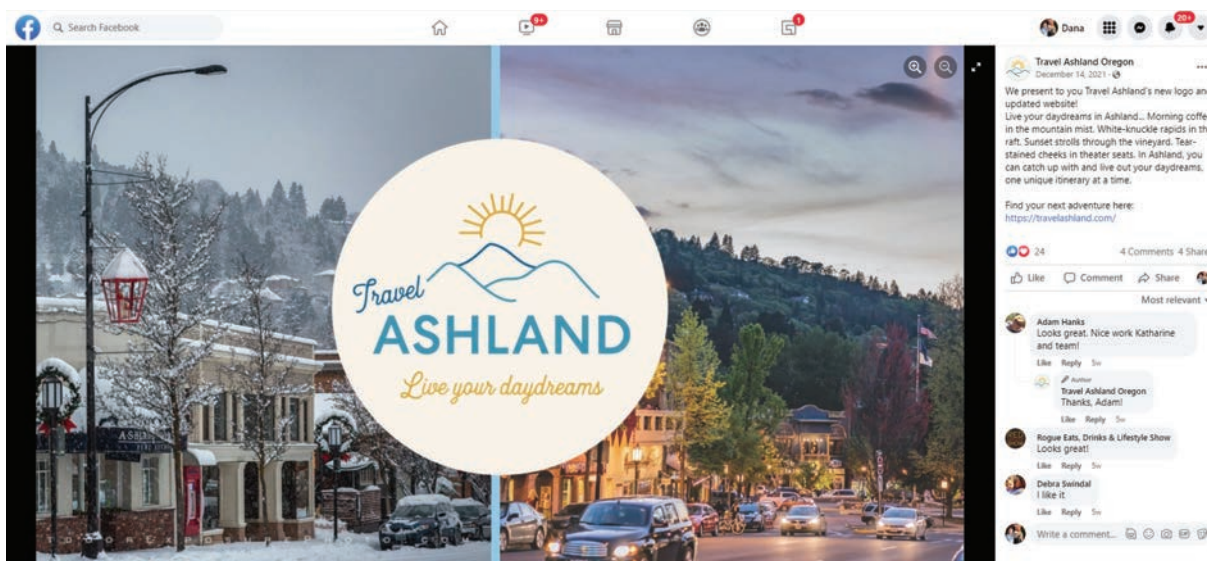
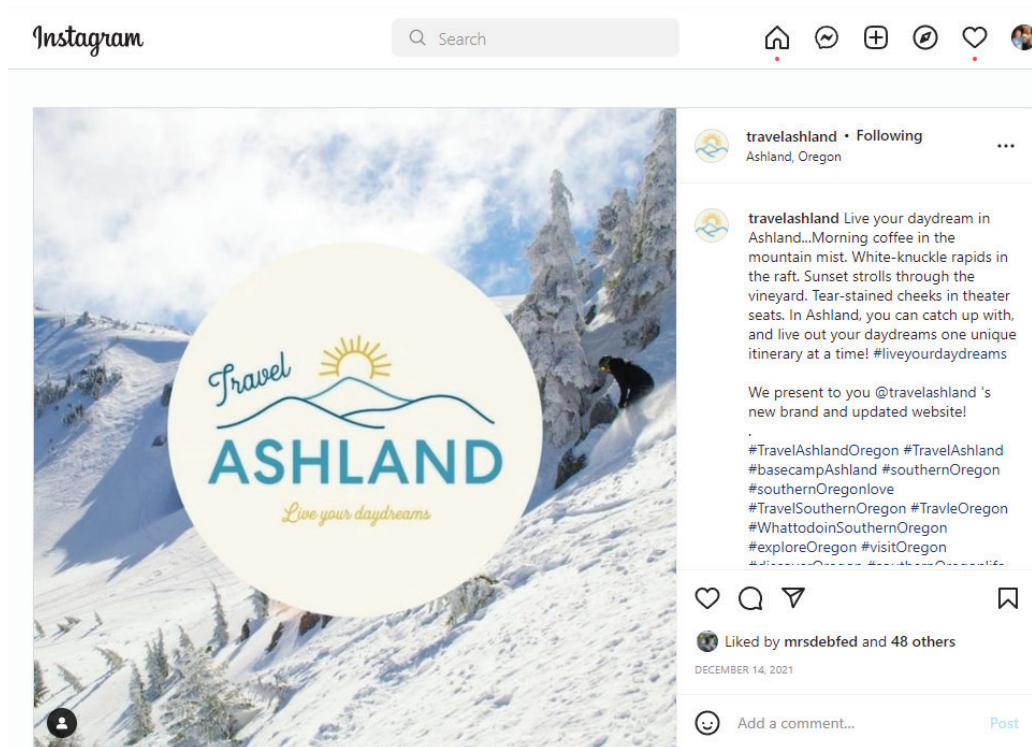
### Telling the full Ashland story

What you need to do to showcase the breadth of activities, accommodations, and attractions

### Leading with Ashland hospitality

What you need to do to invite and welcome the travelers you want to have visit your beautiful community

The **Envision phase** encompassed the **Brand Workshop** with the Travel Ashland Committee, exploration of visual identity and the building blocks of the audience snapshot. The **Development phase** is where the **brand identity came to life**. Multiple work sessions, explorations brought them to where we are today. Lastly, the **implementation phase began with the launch of the new brand on December 14th, 2021**. The **implementation phase will continue over the next year to rollout**. The brand launch included travelashland.com and social channels going live with the brand along with a regional media push and release of their Winter Visitor Guide showcasing the new brand. The new, effective, strategic marketing direction includes targeted, timely campaigns and messaging to the brand's established lifestyle personas showcasing the seasons and spectrum of experiences and interests.

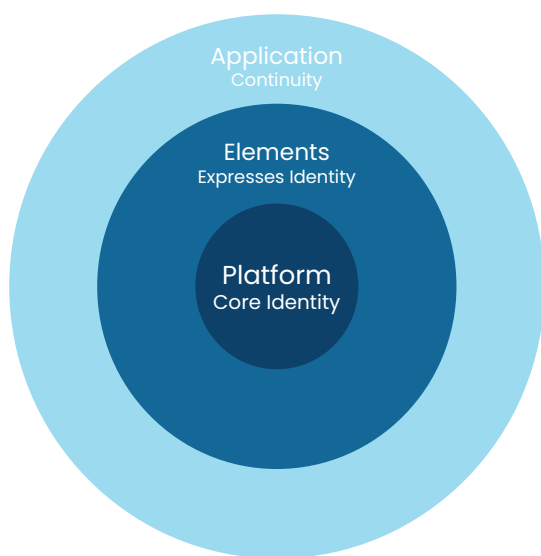


# Brand Platform

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## BRAND PLATFORM



OVERVIEW

### PLATFORM CORE IDENTITY

Establishes the core Identity of the brand including its *Mission, Values and Offerings*. It establishes the uniqueness of a brand and how it delivers on its promise.

### ELEMENTS BRAND EXPRESSION

Brings the brand identity to life by establishing both the visual identity and the voice of the brand.

- Voice/tone of brand
- Boilerplate messaging
- Logo, colors, fonts, imagery
- Graphics, iconography

### APPLICATION BRAND MATERIALS

Creation of systems and templates to communicate the brand and services offered. This includes but is not limited to:

- Website
- Sales materials + Marketing automation
- Marketing templates + Social assets
- Messaging frameworks



## The Vision

*Ashland is a modern mountain community that offers outdoor adventurers, foodies, families, and culture seekers a beautiful destination to pursue their passions through year-round nature access, a spectrum of events, and homegrown Rogue Valley hospitality.*

## Brand Promise

*Ashland provides a year-round destination for travelers to pursue their passions.*

### Access to Nature

*Ashland immerses travelers in nature with easy and nearby access to mountains, forests, and rivers.*

### Something for Everyone

*With a lush landscape and year-round events, Ashland has thousands of itineraries for travelers of all interests.*

### Modern Amenities

*Ashland offers small-town quaintness with performing arts, upscale dining, and culture you expect from a big city.*

### Homegrown Hospitality

*From local food and wine to unique B&Bs, Ashland's hospitality is steeped in the area's rich culture, landscape, and history.*

## Brand Pillars

### Access to Nature

Ashland immerses travelers in nature with easy and nearby access to mountains, forests, and rivers.

- Hiking and mountain biking trails accessible from downtown parks
- Biking, winter sports, and rafting access all within a 30-minute drive
- Short drive to experience Crater Lake National Park
- Scenic drives with beautiful seasonal landscapes

### Something for Everyone

With a lush landscape and year-round events, Ashland has thousands of itineraries for travelers of all interests.

- Year-round outdoor activities and nature access
- Farm-to-table dining experiences with seasonal harvests
- Renowned global wine destination with 70 varietals
- A year-round roster of theater, performing arts, and other cultural events

### Modern Amenities

Ashland offers small-town quaintness with performing arts, upscale dining, and culture you expect from a big city.

- Variety of lodging with modern amenities
- Award-winning chefs and unique restaurants
- World-renowned theater performances
- Progressive university setting with diverse student body

### Homegrown Hospitality

From local food and wine to unique B&B's, Ashland's hospitality is steeped in the area's rich culture, landscape, and history.

- History as a destination has created unique travel culture
- Gateway to over 100 local wineries and 200+ vineyards
- Local, farm-to-table dining, breweries, and more
- Variety of only-in-Ashland scenery, landscapes, and experiences



# Audience Personas



## AUDIENCE

### Lifestyle Personas

*The entry point to their travel and the type of travel they are looking for.*

Quick Escapes

Destination  
Friends

Family Getaways

Wanderers

### Interest Categories

*Interests/Experience will vary by persona types*

Wine + Culinary

Arts + Culture

Outdoor Enthusiasts

Family Fun

## Audience

### Lifestyle Personas

#### Quick Escapes

These travelers are interested in a nearby destination with minimal preparation—get in the car and go! This also includes people passing through the area who get delightfully sidetracked in the heart of Ashland.

#### Destination Friends

These travelers love to meet up in fun and interesting places that have enough things to do to keep the entire squad busy. A diversity of activities is key, and they'll catch up later at a winery, brewery, restaurant, or their shared rental.

#### Family Getaways

There comes a time when every family needs to get out and explore or get some overdue rest and relaxation. They need options: activities for the kids, places for parents to chillax, and lodging that loves the family dog as much as they do.

#### Wanderers

Be it outdoor adventures or cultural exploration, these nomads love to take in new places and come from all walks of life. They are looking for interesting lodging and easy access to the experiences that have captivated their wanderlust.

## Audience

### Interest Groups as identified in the Visitor Study

#### Wine & Culinary

A day at the wineries to an evening of culinary delight makes Ashland the perfect weekend foodie escape.

**Average Age: 42.7**  
**Millennial or younger: 47%**  
**Gen Xers: 32%**

**Top attributes in importance:**  
Welcoming; scenic beauty;  
safety/pandemic; wine; dining

#### Arts & Culture

Exploring the beauty of Ashland through the arts, theater and scenic views.

**Average Age: 43.5**  
**Millennial or younger: 45.2%**  
**Gen Xers: 30.2%**

**Top attributes in importance:**  
Welcoming; scenic beauty;  
safety/pandemic; museums &  
art galleries; theater; wineries

#### Family Fun

Flexibility and variety so they can go at their own pace with the whole family.

**Average Age: 40**  
**Millennial or younger: 51.8%**  
**Gen Xers: 42.2%**

**Top attributes in importance:**  
Family-friendly activities,  
welcoming atmosphere,  
scenic beauty, affordability,  
convenience, dining and  
weather

#### Outdoor Enthusiasts

Basecamp for their adventure all year long to ramp up and wind down.

**Average Age: 43.7**  
**Millennial or younger: 44.4%**  
**Gen Xers: 30%**

**Top attributes in importance:**  
Welcoming; scenic beauty;  
safety/pandemic; outdoor  
adventure; winter recreation

## AUDIENCE

# Quick Escapes

### Lifestyle

These travelers are interested in a nearby destination with minimal preparation—get in the car and go! This also includes people passing through the area who get delightfully sidetracked in the heart of Ashland.

### Demographics

- **Age** 25 - 55
- **Income** 75k+
- **GEO** Driving distance from Ashland: Central Oregon, Portland, Seattle/Tacoma, Bay area

### Interest Groups

- Wine & Culinary
- Arts & Culture
- Outdoor Enthusiasts

### Values

- Lodging near activities
- Multiple dining options
- Last-minute planning

### Goals

- One-of-a-kind experience at a moment's notice
- Quick getaway to immersive destination
- Get out of the smoke or into the snow

### Marketing opportunities

- Last-minute marketing based on weather—no smoke, new snow, better weather than home
- Local events with available tickets
- Wine releases

AUDIENCE SNAPSHOTS

## AUDIENCE

# Destination Friends

### Lifestyle

These travelers love to meet up in fun and interesting places that have enough things to do to keep the entire squad busy. A diversity of activities is key, and they'll catch up later at a winery, brewery, restaurant, or their shared rental.

### Demographics

- **Age** 25 - 55
- **Income** 75k+
- **GEO** Anywhere in the northwest.

### Interest Groups

- Wine & Culinary
- Arts & Culture
- Outdoor Enthusiasts

### Values

- Activities for various interests
- Dining reservations
- Cocktail, beer and wine experiences like pairings and tastings

### Goals

- Accommodations comfortable for friends lodging together
- Create memories
- Balance of relaxation and adventure

### Marketing opportunities

- Highlight diverse opportunities for varied interests
- Stay and experience packages (eg., hotel and spa or hotel and ski)
- Pairing entertainment, adventure and dining

AUDIENCE SNAPSHOTS

## AUDIENCE

# Family Getaways

### Lifestyle

There comes a time when every family needs to get out and explore or get some overdue rest and relaxation. They need options: activities for the kids, places for parents to chillax, and lodging that loves the family dog as much as they do.

### Demographics

- **Age** 30 - 55
- **Income** 100k+
- **GEO** Anywhere in the northwest but focus on driving distance from Ashland

### Values

- Kids feel welcome
- Family friendly casual dining options
- Indoor and outdoor activities within a 90-min drive

### Interest Groups

- Young families
- Intown to unwind
- Outdoor Enthusiasts

### Goals

- Activities the family can do together or divide by skill level
- Create memories
- Stress free meals and outings

### Marketing opportunities

- Varied terrain on Mt Ashland for the expert and beginner
- Kid friendly exhibits at Schneider museum and (of course) ScienceWorks
- Family friendly lodging and dining near biking, parks and Crater Lake

AUDIENCE SNAPSHOTS

## AUDIENCE

# Wanderers

### Lifestyle

Be it outdoor adventures or cultural exploration, these nomads love to take in new places and come from all walks of life. They are looking for interesting lodging and easy access to the experiences that have captivated their wanderlust.

### Demographics

- **Age** 25 - 55
- **Income** 50k+
- **GEO** Anywhere in the northwest but focus on driving distance from Ashland

### Values

- Eclectic and special lodging
- Place to park the camper van
- One-of-a-kind dining and entertainment experiences

### Interest Groups

- Wine & Culinary
- Arts & Culture
- Outdoor Enthusiasts

### Goals

- Experience world class culinary & wine pairings
- Attend special events unique to the area
- Try new adventures

### Marketing opportunities

- Showcase bed and breakfast and historic hotel lodging
- Unique spa experiences like Ashland Springs and Chozu bath house
- World class river experiences, opening week at OSF, Cabaret theater

AUDIENCE SNAPSHOTS



## Winter Experiences by Lifestyle

### Quick Escapes

#### Wine & Culinary

Wine tasting in the Applegate or Upper Rogue; sitting around a firepit; a cozy refined meal at Beasys or Peerless

#### Arts & Culture

Local music on a weekend night; an exhibit at the Schneider Museum and a stroll through the galleries

#### Outdoor Enthusiasts

Take advantage of a big snow on Mt. Ashland and wrap the day with a casual meal downtown

#### Family Fun

An day of shopping and an evening of checking out the lights downtown after a casual dinner.

### Destination Friends

#### Wine & Culinary

Espresso from Luna and a shuttle ride to Mt. Ashland; meet for cocktails at Alchemy and then dinner at Hearsay.

#### Arts & Culture

Relax at Chozu and the Tea Room by day and catch dinner and a show at Oregon Cabaret

#### Outdoor Enthusiasts

Choose your own adventure of the day- maybe a backcountry tour or a day riding chairs. Wrap the day with a flight at Caldera and soothe your adventure muscles with a spa day.

### Family Getaways

#### Wine & Culinary

Pick up some local wine, cheese and produce for a feast and family game night at your rental. Beer tasting for the adults at Caldera while the kids enjoy their great kids food selection.

#### Arts & Culture

Take in a ScienceWorks exhibit one day and the Schneider Museum the next.

#### Outdoor Enthusiasts

Family Ski trip to Mt. Ashland

#### Family Fun

Bundle up for a Farm Tour at Willow-Witt Ranch. When the snow piles up, a day of sledding at Table Mountain Snow Park

### Wanderers

#### Wine & Culinary

Explore a different wine region each day, Ashland, Upper Rogue, The Applegate.

#### Arts & Culture

Experience an exhibit at the Schneider Museum, a show at Cabaret and OSF.

#### Outdoor Enthusiasts

Take a six pack and a picnic to Grouse Gap; wrap your skitour with Bloody Mary's at the Mt. Ashland Lodge. Snow shoe with a ranger at Crater Lake and bring back a Pie from Becky's.

#### Family Fun

Bundle up for a Farm Tour at Willow-Witt Ranch.

# Brand Personality



## Personality

*We all have a personality and so do brands. While certain aspects of your personality shine at different times, all facets are expressed at some point through both your visual and verbal identity*

### Visual Identity

#### Image

*Logo, colors, fonts that usually make up one of the first impressions of the brand*

#### Style

*Imagery, graphic elements, photography treatments, iconography all help express the brand's personality.*

### Verbal Identity

#### Voice

*Expression of a brand's personality through its messaging.*

#### Tone

*The way a brand communicates to its audience(s), which flexes to fit the situation*

#### Message

*All the statements a brand makes about itself and its values*

# Voice + Tone



VERBAL IDENTITY

# How We Sound And What We Say

**Voice** who we are  
**Tone** how we sound  
**Messaging** what we say



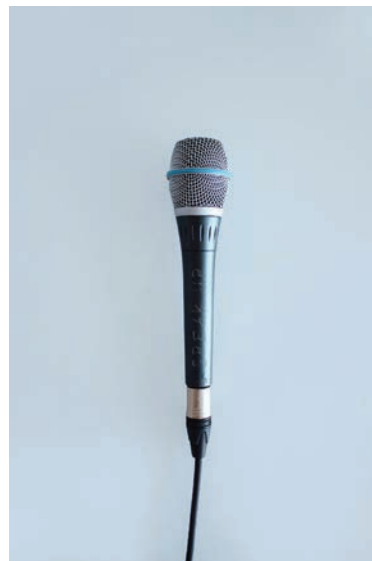
OVERVIEW

VERBAL IDENTITY - OVERVIEW

BRAND PERSONALITY

## Voice

Expression of a brand's personality through its messaging.



### ACCESSIBLE

We engage with travelers lending our local expertise to help improve their experiences.

### GENUINE

We stay true to Ashland, accurately representing amenities, attractions, and culture.

### UPLIFTING

We invite people to visit and help inspire the memorable experiences that bring them back.

### WELCOMING

We celebrate all people and are working hard to make our community a safe place for everyone.

OVERVIEW

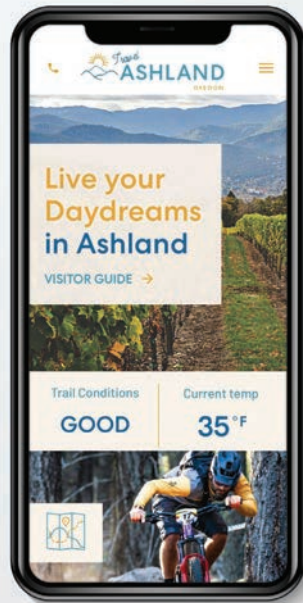
BRAND PERSONALITY - VERBAL IDENTITY



Morning coffee in the mountain mist. White-knuckle rapids in the raft. Sunset strolls through the vineyard. Tear-stained cheeks in theater seats. In Ashland, you can catch up with and live out your daydreams, one unique itinerary at a time.







## VISUAL IDENTITY

### Icons Experiences

- Represent the core experience categories based off the visitor study
- There is a set available for light backgrounds and dark backgrounds
- New categories may be established in the future but should continue to use the cold as an accent color and the light and mid blue as the primary circle color.
- All new icons should follow the same monoline style and be built at a 2-3px line weight before being converted to filled shapes.

#### Culture + Arts



#### Wine + Culinary



#### Outdoor Enthusiasts



#### Family Fun



## VISUAL IDENTITY

# Icons Seasonal

- These are the winter icons that were featured in the winter visitor guide
- When creating seasonal icons, try to represent various types of experiences you can have in Ashland to speak to various audience groups.
  - For examples, highlight outdoor activities, cultural/arts, food and culinary rather than just one type of experience.

Mt. Ashland



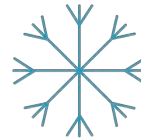
Winter Events



Hot Cocoa



Snow Activities



## VISUAL IDENTITY

# Icons Categories

- Category icons will mostly be used for itineraries and feature callouts to help visitors plan their trips. They follow the same monoline style of outlined icons with two colors.
- Will be the most robust library of iconography that continues to build out.
- At times icons will need to be simpler when they are created for plotting on maps but can be more detailed when used to call out listings and features in marketing materials.

Wellness



Getaways



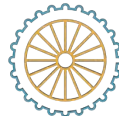
Trails



Shopping



Mountain Biking



Cocktails



Wine



Access to Nature



Beer



Food



Stay



Coffee



## Ad Examples



67

**Travel Ashland's has fostered the growth and visitor experiences collaboratively with partners that showcase Ashland's culture, culinary and outdoor offerings.**

### Evolving Cultural offerings

Ashland, compared to many other destinations, saw the greatest change in its visitor base of 350,000 with the temporary omission of a third of its visitors, who traditionally come to see plays at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Even in recent years, Ashland had started to see a preview of those changes due to wildfires, smoke and poor air quality. **Culture and theatre have been the historical reason approximately 120,000 visitors seek Ashland as their travel destination.** Over the past decade the Ashland visitor has been evolving, with a declining OSF audience that is aging and a growing number of outdoor adventure and culinary travelers that skew younger.

**The Ashland visitor and industry became less reliant on OSF's playgoer when they were absent in 2020 and partially 2021. This was a significant acknowledgement to the strength of the other reasons visitors come to Ashland.**

#### Biggest shift:

**Historically, a third of this visitor base has been playgoers to OSF which is why their profile has been an integral part of the demographic and behavior driving the Ashland visitor as well as shaping how visitor related businesses cater to them.** Their traits include staying 5 days, seeing

3+ plays, traveling over 100 miles, with incomes over \$100K, highly educated from CA, OR and WA and a median age of 55 – 74.

With 85 days of wildfire smoke in 2018, OSF moved or canceled 26 performances and in their response to anticipated poor air quality in 2019, chose to retrofit their outdoor performances to the Ashland High School therefore limiting capacity to 400 down from 1200 seats, though they had been running at approximately 80% capacity in recent years. In 2020 and into 2021, due to COVID, OSF did not hold performances for the season, forcing a massive acknowledgement to businesses dependent upon the OSF playgoer that they must diversify.

In 2021, OSF reopened with a summer show, Fannie in the Allen Elizabethan Theatre along with offering a variety of online streaming performances to keep their audience engaged. The community, businesses and visitors were delighted to have a new option for the holidays to the It's Christmas Carol at OSF to coincide with the efforts of promoting the holidays and it was indeed a success they sold 90% of their tickets. They sold half the house intentionally to keep their patrons distanced. They have announced their 2022 season including 7 shows from April through July.

**There are many other cultural reasons visitors are drawn to Ashland. Through our Visitor Research and Analysis Study, we found visitors are not just coming for one reason or experience, but they are coming to experience a multitude of experiences and therefore spend more time and engage with more of the amenities Ashland offers.**

**Performing arts beyond OSF** – OSF has been the platform for many other theatres to grow, some of which attract both visitors and locals. The Oregon Cabaret and neighboring Camelot Theatre both reopened offering shows and selling out in many cases.

**Heritage** – With a growing interest in visitors seeking out historic locations and trips guided by heritage, there is a warranted avenue for Ashland to explore in attracting more heritage travelers with alignment from regional partners.

**Music** – With our proximity between Portland and San Francisco, we have the ability to attract more musicians and performances that create a visitor draw. As we continue to grow in notoriety for music, we are looking at opportunities to partner more with entities such as Britt, Oregon Center for the Arts and Rogue Valley Symphony.

**Visual arts** – Ashland galleries, artists, markets and the creative community draw visitors from all over the world to Ashland.

**Shopping** – Visitors are drawn to Ashland for an authentic, shopping experience, forming relationships with independently owned shops and store owners who create retail experiences for them that are memorable. Given the changing visitor demographics, we have been and continue to assess how it is affecting retail trends in product demand and spending.

## Ashland's thriving Culinary Scene

**The number of culinary travelers, wine enthusiasts and agritourists have increased year over year- being drawn to our emerging wine country, award-winning chefs, innovative restaurants, breweries and food artisans coupled with the unique destination of Ashland.**

This segment of our visitor base ranges in age, demographics and markets on the West coast, primarily the Bay Area, Northern California and lately including Portland, Seattle, Eugene and Bend. We have observed younger travelers and their travel patterns to be year-round spanning the four seasons. Refer to the Visitor Study data on page 33.



Culinary events, as they have occurred in the past, have driven visitation in the off-season and throughout the year. Regionally, with the formation of Rogue Valley Vintners and Rogue Valley Wine Country identity, signifying southern Oregon as a wine destination synonymous with a southern Oregon vacation, there is an anticipated trajectory of growth in attracting more wine enthusiasts to our region of all ages.

Another regional example is the Rogue Valley Food Trail, launched in 2020, a collaborative effort with Travel Oregon, Travel Southern Oregon, Travel Ashland and local partners that showcases itineraries highlighting agritourism – farms, food artisans and onsite experiences throughout the Valley.

Travel Ashland has worked with founders of Ashland On A Plate since its inception, serving on the Advisory committee to collaborate and collectively promote Ashland's culinary scene. As a DMO, our role is to inspire travelers and connect them to experiences. The current state of Ashland On a Plate is merging up into the Rogue Valley Vintners organization as their missions align. The possibility for AOAP to grow into Rogue on a Plate is very likely but yet to be seen.

**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.

## Ashland's outdoors

**Ashland has always attracted outdoor travelers to experience its trails, mountains, lakes and rivers. Given Ashland's unique location at the convergence of the Cascade and Siskiyou Mountain ranges and proximity to the Pacific Crest Trail, Ashland is an ideal basecamp for adventure.**

With the backdrop of the Ashland Watershed, Mt. Ashland and accessibility to trails and regional terrain, Ashland has been growing as an outdoor destination in recent years. What sets Ashland apart from destinations such as Bend is that Ashland is a mountain town with unmatched cultural and culinary amenities such as Rogue Valley Wine Country, over 100 restaurants and the arts. By attracting the responsible outdoor adventure traveler, we sustain Ashland's quality of life and thus attract a future, active workforce.

**The outdoors has been the leading reason new visitors are coming to Ashland.** With the past visitor economy comprised of a third of the visitor base attending plays at OSF, their characteristics were traditional, older, loyal and predictable with long-term booking windows. With OSF closed in 2020 and into 2021, many businesses, partners and our organization saw more younger visitors, many here for the first time for new reasons such as recreation, exploring the outdoors, tasting wine and seeking culinary experiences. Their travel plans spanned from short term weekend trips to Ashland without much future planning to the road trip visitor traveling parts of the country. **Into 2022 we saw the sustained growth of the outdoor adventure coming to Ashland. Handlebar, the new bike shop with a coffee bar in downtown Ashland is an example of how visitor interests can drive business growth. It is exciting to have new energy in the downtown.**

**For over a decade, Travel Ashland has been enacting that outdoor 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. As a community and as businesses, we have an opportunity to welcome, attract and build relationships with outdoor adventure travelers who are coming to Ashland.**

**Our outdoor partnerships and work to showcase Ashland's outdoors include:**

- With partners like **Mt. Ashland and the Ashland Forest Resiliency project along with Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association, Ashland Devo and Ashland Woodland Trails Association**, Ashland's trails and assets are 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, and drove 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 is 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. When weather is conducive, 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 Organization, Travel Ashland continues 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.



Photo courtesy of Momentum River Expeditions

# Image and Video

**Serving as a Destination Organization, a Chamber of Commerce as well as an Economic Development entity requires our consistent responsibility and response to all media inquiries and providing images of Ashland upon request that are published in stories, coverage and articles. 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. 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 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.

In 2020, we strengthened our connection with our outdoor partners such as Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association, Mt. Ashland and others to build up the content and assets we have that showcase our trails, active lifestyles and outdoor adventures experiences. **The culmination of this can be seen on our social channels as well as our websites. We will continue to expand our content to include the various outdoor experiences and also portray the new post-pandemic world we are entering into and how to best exemplify that.**

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.

To express the new brand for Ashland and portray the look and feel of the brand, photography and video will be dreamy and bright and it reflects the colors of the seasons. Images have energy and action where folks can see themselves there including all races, sexual orientation and interests. As we roll out the brand, staff will be curating video and photo shoots to showcase each season, interest and target each of the personas identified in the brand - the Quick Escapes, Destination Friends, Family and Wanderers again with representing diversity in an authentic, real way for Ashland.





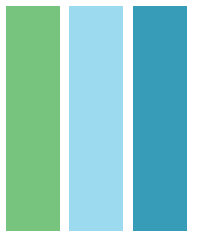
Fall



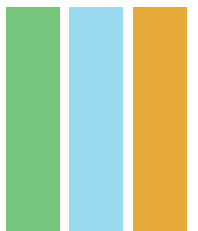
Winter



Spring



Summer





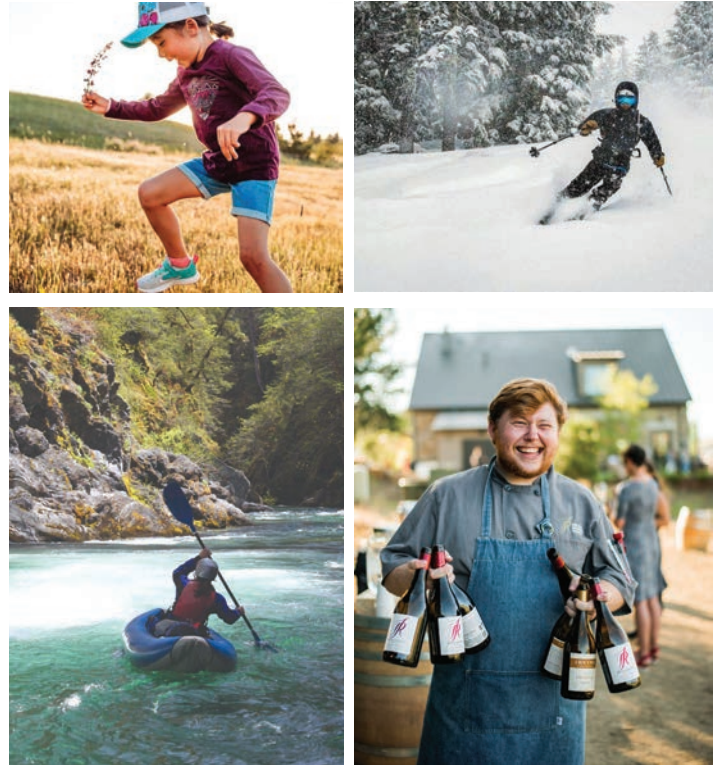
## VISUAL IDENTITY

### PHOTOGRAPHY

## People

- Showcase all types of people that make up the community and that pass through but always stay authentic to your environment and how you represent your community to future visitors
- Showcase people experiencing Ashland rather than looking to camera. They should feel natural in their environments and never overly staged.
- It is okay to include imagery from the person's perspective or from behind the subject so the viewer feels like they are there with them

PHOTOGRAPHY



## VISUAL IDENTITY

### PHOTOGRAPHY

## Places

- Showcase the unique beauty and layered landscape of Ashland
- Balance showcasing wider landscape images with more intimate spaces through close up shots
- Showcase Ashland through various seasons to highlight its beauty throughout the year
- Include businesses and destinations when showcasing "places" and when possible, show people enjoying the space

PHOTOGRAPHY



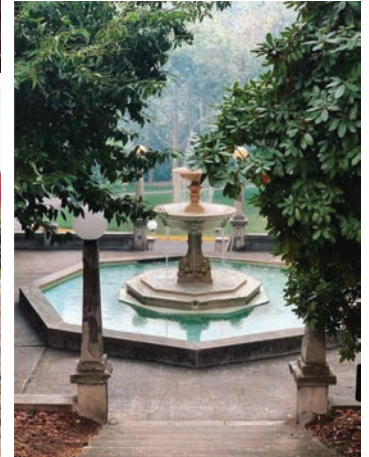
## VISUAL IDENTITY

### PHOTOGRAPHY

## LIGHTING / STYLE

- Natural Lighting when possible
- Should feel bright and uplifting with a dreamy aesthetic
- Limit color usage and avoid overly vibrant colors that might vibrate
- When selecting imagery, photos that use light and composition to create a dreamy feel are preferred. Future photoshoots should aim to tell the story of the tagline; communicating Ashland is a place to escape to your dreams no matter what they might be.
- Select images that have colors that represent the season you are in or showcasing

PHOTOGRAPHY



# Digital Channels

## Social

Travel Ashland's social channels on Facebook and Instagram have become even more important throughout the impacts of the pandemic. Channels reach new audiences and continue to broaden followers by engaging photography, showcasing partners and sharing a collective message to inspire visitors to love and visit Ashland. Our effective social media and digital plan is crucial in delivering relevant information and inspiration towards the seasonality of Ashland and new reasons to visit. We contract with social media consultant Lanessa Pierce, (What to Do in Southern Oregon) who executes the social media plan and editorial calendar established by staff.

### Social Media Analytics

## Key takeaways

- Facebook Page followers have increased every month since tracking is available in February 2019
- Facebook Likes have also increased every month since tracking is available in February 2019
- From FY 2019/2020-FY 2020/2021 Page followers increased 5.45% and Likes 8.23%
- From FY 2020/2021 - FY 2021/2022 (as of end of December) Page followers increased 4.12% and Likes 3.65%
- Inviting User Generated content over the next year perhaps through contesting will bring increased awareness to the page and the brand
- The top posts were from a variety of topics- keeping posts varied helps with the reach and page traffic
- In the next year boosting posts that have similar qualities of past popular posts with specific audiences will improve page traffic and brand visibility
- Top age range reached on Instagram 35-44 29.3% of audience; 69.5% women
- Instagram engagement has increased in all engagement categories over the last 90 days
- Instagram Posts out perform Stories in regards to reach

## Top Posts on FB

Top posts on FB	Date	Reach
Enjoy Outdoor Dining at Restaurants and Wineries throughout Ashland	12/07/2020	2,300
Smithfields Restaurant and Bar outdoor space is divine	3/19/2021	1,400
Spring Shows off The Magic of Ashland	4/20/2021	1,200
A Favorite Past time of visitors and locals alike is visiting Lithia park	6/5/2021	1,200
Did you know the movie Coraline is set in a fictionalized version of	7/5/2021	2,100
Take a serene walk along Calle Guanajuato to find beautiful display of public art by local artists all along the way.	9/29/2021	1,134
Lithia Park Fall color	10/23/2021	1,500
Did you know that in the winter Ashland skating	11/16/2021	2,300

## Top Posts on IG

Top posts on IG	Date	Reach
Belle Fiore	12/30/2021	3,612
Day Dream In Lithia Park in the snow	12/27/2021	3,173
Queens Tea Service	11/14/2021	2,373
Ice Rink	11/17/2021	2,187
MT Ashland	2/8/2021	1,562
Hikes in Ashland	9/6/2021	1,505

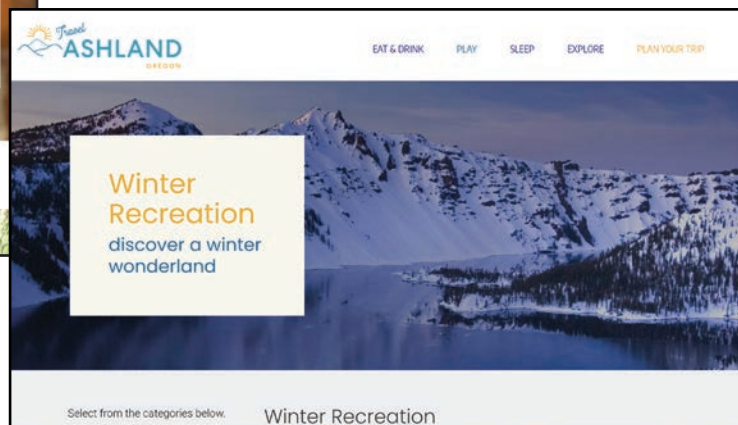


## NEW Brand social templates:



## www.travelashland.com –

### Ashland's travel destination website



Destination organization's websites play a key role for visitors when researching and planning travel. An informed website serves as an effective tool in decision-making by providing accurate and current content and compelling messaging. As found in our recent Visitor study, visitors rely on a destination to provide accessible information, travel resources and trip inspiration. Hence the value of investing and continually optimizing our site with new information and fresh photography.

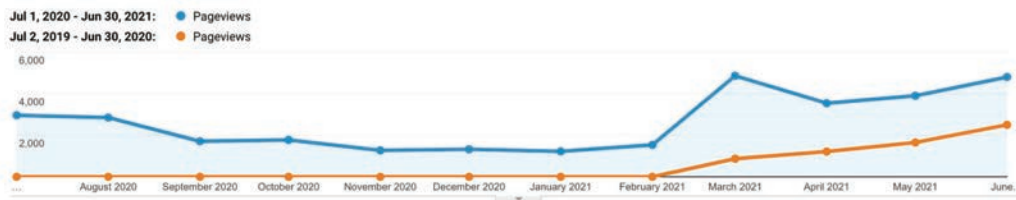


Launched in 2020 as a stand-alone visitor site, separate from Ashland Chamber's site that features local, community and member related content, [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com) served as a relevant tool for visitors during the early stage of the pandemic when everyone was online and the world was dormant dreaming of travel. Upon the launch of the new brand, in December of 2021, the site was refreshed with the new brand colors, logo and look and feel. The work continues to infuse the new brand into each page of content and will be finished in the coming months. As people land on the Ashland Chamber site, the Visit Button directs them to the Travel Ashland site for visitor information.

#### Website Analytics

## Key takeaways

- Data tracking began in March or 2020 so when we look at comparisons we are looking at average by month since we can't get a true annual YOY comparison. [Link to data by month.](#)
- Average monthly pageviews, users and session all increased from fiscal year 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 and YTD FY 2021/2022 is trending up to 42% YOY and is pacing to exceed that improvement.
- December 2021 is up 272% over the previous year and by almost 2k pageviews over the previous month. This is promising as December is when the new brand was reflected on the site.
- While bounce rate was up and session duration and pages per session were down in 2020/2021 vs 2019/2020 the changes were minimal and inconsequential.
- While bounce rate was up and session duration was down slightly in 2021/2022 compared to the previous year the YOY gap is even smaller and pages per session has stabilized. Additional site optimizations is expected to improve these areas.
- The top two pages after home pages changes from year to year, with Cycling appearing twice with the longest time on site. Also, interesting to note is the appearance of the Ashland 4 Kids page ranking in the top three in the current fiscal year
- Behavior flow after homepage shows where users navigate to after the homepage. The first year of the site we see Getting Here which changes to Outdoor for the next two years. This is in alignment to what the Visitor Study told us about our emerging traveler.



## Website Analytics

## Metrics by Year 2021/2022 vs 2020/2021

Averages by month	2021/2022	2020/2021	Change	Change
Pageviews	3,764	2,650	1,114	42.01%
Users	1,545	1,120	426	38.00%
Sessions	1,824	1,285	539	41.92%
Bounce Rate	63.17%	62.53%	0.64%	1.02%
Session Duration	1:40	1:41	-0:0035	-0.58%
Pages per session	2.06	2.05	0.01	0.35%

## Behavior Flow

Top Pages	Top Pages	Top Pages	*Where users go after the Homepage
<p>2019/2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home Page <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 1,705</li> <li>27.30% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 1:15</li> </ul> </li> <li>Cycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 362</li> <li>5.80% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 4:47</li> </ul> </li> <li>Getting-here <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 283</li> <li>4.53% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 1:31</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>2020/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home Page <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 9,919</li> <li>31.19% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 1:04</li> </ul> </li> <li>Cycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 1,627</li> <li>5.12% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 3:58</li> </ul> </li> <li>Outdoor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 1,249</li> <li>3.93% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 1:37</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>2021/2022 (through Dec 21)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home Page <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 5,242</li> <li>23.21% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 1:11</li> </ul> </li> <li>Wineries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 1,081</li> <li>4.79% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 2:35</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ashland 4 Kids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PV 985</li> <li>4.36% of total</li> <li>Time on pg 2:38</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>*Where users go after the Homepage</p> <p>2019/2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pg: Getting Here</li> <li>Visits after HP: 151</li> <li>Through traffic** 50.30%</li> </ul> <p>2020/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pg: Outdoor</li> <li>Visits after HP: 310</li> <li>Through Traffic 63.80%</li> </ul> <p>2021/2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pg: Outdoor</li> <li>Visits after HP: 253</li> <li>Through Traffic 64.40%</li> </ul> <p>*The most singular visited page users navigate to from the homepage  **Percent of traffic that goes on to at least a third page and</p>

## Implementing the new Ashland brand

With the launch of the new brand in December 2014, [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com) was refreshed, social channels were updated to reflect the new brand and there was an regional industry splash of media, digital and radio messaging initiated.

Looking forward, the new brand will be implemented through an effective marketing plan. The plan includes targeting each defined persona of the brand, with each season and each interest group based on their values, demographics, goals and marketing opportunities. This is done with consideration of each persona. Each month, paid digital media will be deployed with optimization of paid digital display, social and search campaigns, review of key performance indicators, objectives and metrics along with the creation of ad sets for each persona and interest group. Media channels will be adjusted to optimize performance. Media channels include a robust programmatic display of targeted digital ads, Google Search engine optimization, Google ads and targeted campaigns per season to best express the brand including a social media editorial calendar that mirrors these campaigns, the new annual visitor guide and [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com) along with PR and media efforts.

### Live your daydreams in Ashland.

**Vision:** Ashland is a modern mountain community that offers outdoor adventurers, foodies, families and culture seekers a beautiful destination to pursue their passions through year-round nature access, a spectrum of events and homegrown hospitality.

**Brand promise:** Ashland provides a year-round destination for travelers to pursue their passions.

**Brand Pillars:** Access to Nature, Something for Everyone, Modern Amenities and Homegrown Hospitality.



## Lifestyle Personas:

**Quick Escapes** – these travelers are interested in a nearby destination with minimal preparation, get in the car and go! They value lodging nearby activities, last-minute planning and multiple dining options. Their interests groups include wine and culinary, arts and culture and outdoors. Marketing opportunities consist of wine releases, last-minute marketing based on weather, clear skies and better weather than home.

**Family getaways**, these travelers want to get out and explore but the destination needs something fun for kids but also for the parents – fun and ease to visit. Interest groups include young families, in town to unwind and outdoors. They value kids feeling welcome, family friendly dining and short drives. Marketing opportunities include kid friendly terrain whether biking or skiing, family friendly lodging and fun events.

**Destination Friends** – these travelers love to meet up in fun and interesting places that have enough things to do to keep an entire squad busy. A diversity of activities is key and they will catch up later at a winery, brewery, restaurant or their shared rental. They value dining reservations, various activities and access to them along with unique pairings of food and drink to experience. Marketing opportunities include pairing entertainment with adventure and dining along with stay packages that include a variety of experiences. Their goal is to have a balance of relaxation and adventure.

**Wanderers:** be it outdoor adventures or cultural exploration, these nomads love to take in new places and come from all walks of life. They are looking for interesting lodging and easy access to the many experiences that have captivated their wanderlust. They value eclectic and special lodging, a place to park their camper van perhaps, and one-of-a-kind dining and entertainment experiences. Their goals including trying new adventures, not just being one track, but rather an omnivore of activities and attending special events. Marketing opportunities include showcasing world class river experiences, unique spas, historic lodging, heritage sites and inspiring or interactive culture they can learn from.

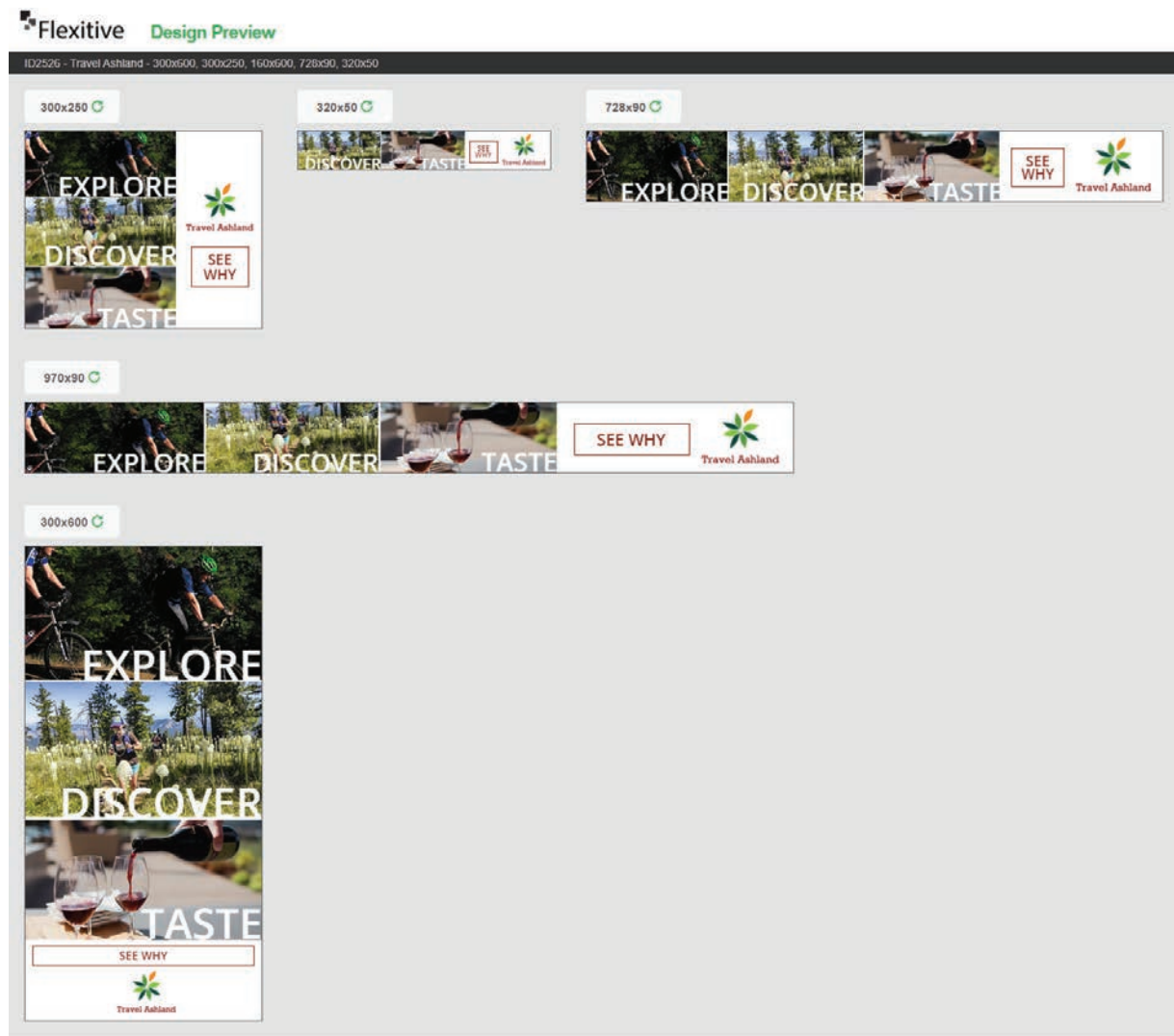
## Campaigns

**Below are examples of campaigns in the reporting fiscal year as well as the new brand expressed just prior to launch in Winter 2021–2022.**

### **Bay Area News Group Digital Campaign March – September 2020**

Prior to our rebranding, Travel Ashland created a **6-month campaign targeting San Francisco, Sacramento and Redding with the Bay Area News Group**. The campaign investment was \$5,000 per month that included a quantum digital ad campaign combined with a Google ads search campaign. Continually optimizing our destination in search with Google is inherently important, takes time and investment. **The message for this campaign was inviting visitors to explore, discover and taste in Ashland targeting the outdoor adventurer, wine and culinary travelers in the geo area with HHI \$100K+.** The monthly goal was 375,000 impressions which totals 1.5 million for 4 months. This campaign garnered 6.9 million impressions for 4 month nearly 5x the goal. The programmatic campaign that used predictive modeling was able to build upon itself retargeting as it continued to be more effective the longer it ran. Top key words were: what to do, things to do, wineries, hiking, dining, travel to Ashland, trails and biking.

The campaign also produced above-industry conversion rate of 41% from ads to [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com) . Conversions include requests of our guides, phone calls, email inquiries and action on our targeted webpages.



## NW Travel Digital Travel Network November 2021

**Includes:** Digital targeted ads, E-newsletter blast feature and feature on [www.nwtravel.com](http://www.nwtravel.com)

**Featured article provided by Travel Ashland with digital ads:**

### Live your daydreams in Ashland this winter

Ashland has four seasons of magical moments – come find yours this winter. Over one million lights adorn the downtown, inviting you to taste, sip, relax and soak in the festive ambiance. High above the city, Mt. Ashland glistens with fresh snow, welcoming you and your family with easy-to-access winter adventures. From the shopping and cocktails to the tranquil trails, you are invited to come experience the magic.

### Savory winter delights

Ashland's wine and culinary scene invites you to taste our flavors at over 100 restaurants. Sip local at one of our tasting rooms with humble winemakers ready to share their varietals with you. Enjoy



pampering yourself at one of Ashland's spas, followed by shopping at our unique retailers, and round out the day with an unforgettable dinner and wine pairing.

### Snow angels and pirouettes

If it is the outdoors you crave, Ashland provides snowcapped hills and Mt. Ashland for skiing, snowboarding, and backcountry beauty. Families can enjoy the ice rink in Lithia Park or a day on the mountain. With a great kid's menu and the widest selection of local brews and guest taps, Caldera Brewing Company makes everyone feel at home.

### A bright, musical world

For over 25 years, Ashland has celebrated the season by lighting and decorating the town. This year, you can also enjoy the new Winter Soundwalk. Produced by Rogue World Music, the experience includes 8 art installations coupled with music from around the world. Each installation showcases how cultures embrace the changing of the seasons. Self-guided via a QR code download, this socially-distanced activity adds a new element of culture to town.

### Just your scene

Whether it is a weekend road trip or a friend's getaway, there is a seat waiting for you at a theatre in Ashland. For the first time ever, both the Oregon Cabaret and Oregon Shakespeare Festival have holiday shows running through the end of 2021. Beyond theatre, the Schneider Museum of Art on Southern Oregon University's campus has a repertoire of exhibits that, along with Ashland's art galleries, make a winter stroll around Ashland a visual delight.

Outdoor fun, local wine, upscale dining, and world-class performances – the magic is in the mix this winter in Ashland.



## Snow Capped Peaks to Downtown Lights

Ashland has something for everyone.

[Travelashland.com](https://Travelashland.com)

[Plan your getaway](#)

# Media Coverage and Hosting Writers

Travel Ashland welcomes and hosts influencers, travel writers and tourism industry partners that provide connections and coverage for Ashland from a third party perspective that engages their readership and diverse audience. This requires partnership collaboration and 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.

Travel Ashland active media partners include Rogue Valley Vintners, Neuman Hotel Group, Travel Southern Oregon and Travel Oregon, all of whom rely on Travel Ashland to best support each media trip, recommend the Ashland component of a trip or host an aspect of their visit. These media trips result in blogs, articles, features and stories that reach a dedicated audience. Examples of features garnered by hosting writers we welcomed as part of a collaborative effort include:

- *Seattle Post Intelligencer*: [Where to sip and celebrate wine country this fall in Oregon, Arizona, California](#). The Seattle Post-Intelligencer is an online newspaper and former print newspaper based in Seattle, Washington, United States. The newspaper was founded in 1863 as the weekly Seattle Gazette, and was later published daily in broadsheet format. Seattlepi.com is read by about 4 million readers per month, including about 1 million readers in the Seattle area
- <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-oregon> EDITORIAL PROFILE/BACKGROUND  
Leading travel media company and the world's number one travel guidebook brand, providing inspiration and information on almost every destination in the world. Covers travel news internationally. UVPM 1,689,687
- <https://www.travelweekly.com/North-America-Travel/Things-to-do-on-a-family-trip-to-Oregon> EDITORIAL PROFILE/BACKGROUND Travel Weekly (circ. 37,000/141,800 monthly website visitors) was established in 1958 and written for U.S. travel agents, tour operators, corporate travel executives, and travel industry suppliers. Covers airline, lodging, packaged travel, tourist-focused rail and cruise industry news. Also covers news from major regional and national travel agencies and agent networks, as well as travel agent trade associations
- *Electric Blue*: [Circling Crater Lake http://ambergibson.com/Magazine%20PDFs/HemispheresOctober2021.pdf](http://ambergibson.com/Magazine%20PDFs/HemispheresOctober2021.pdf)  
MEDIA DESCRIPTION: Hemispheres (circulation 562,038) was established in 1973 to serve airline passengers on United Airlines' national and international flights. Covers global business, finance and political news, cultural trends and customs, travel and vacation ideas and entertainment and lifestyle updates.
- <https://www.oars.com/blog/san-francisco-road-trip-southern-oregon-to-scenic-highway-one-loop/>

The OARS blog averages 60+k visitors per month, with an email list of 50k+ and their social following is 100k+.

- Alex Pulaski's visit for his story in The Oregonian (daily newspaper, circulation 122,064). The link to the story can be found here if you have an account with The Oregonian: [Southern Oregon's cool waters provide late summer respite from pandemic](#)

## Groups, Tours and Conferences

**We observed major shifts in group travel prior to the pandemic that are noted below. Due to travel restrictions and travel sentiment halted due to the pandemic as of March 2020 and the inability for OSF to operate, this put further impacts upon groups booking. While the majority of group travel has not yet returned, we did start to see small groups returning to Ashland in 2021. The outlook for 2022 is stronger with more interest in groups and conference returning to gathering. We work closely with our partners frequently to stay abreast of the booking trends. We believe group travel will return as Ashland is a viable group travel destination. Below is a summary of Travel Ashland's role within the group, tour and conference industry.**

**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. Many religious groups, alumni and medical associations annually convene in Ashland. 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.

# Publications

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

Partners depend upon these publications 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. The printed piece is something that cannot be replaced by a webpage.

There was an increased demand for all our Guides that we continue to see. Visitors continue to request our visitor guide and map guide as a useful tool for wayfinding and destination information.

## Travel Ashland's Visitor Guide



## Ashland Visitor Guide Spring/Summer Visitor Guide 2021

**\*The most requested publication in Certified Folder Display's Southern Oregon circuit.** In 2021, we shifted to a 2-part series of the Ashland Visitor Guide to represent the current seasons and be nimble towards our upcoming rebranding. The first edition showcased Spring and Summer. The Winter Visitor Guide expressed the new brand and was published in December 2021 upon the launch of the brand. The Visitor Guide is our primary response piece to all visitor inquiries. Visitor related businesses use the Guide to inform and educate their clients and customers.

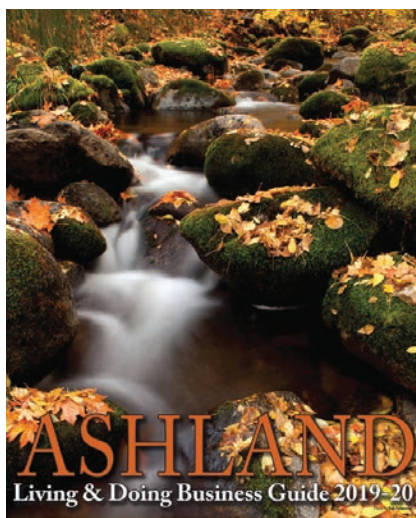
It is **an effective tool for marketing tourism** with a distribution of 60,000 that is designed in house. It is mailed as a response piece to all online and phone inquiries and provided to all walk-in inquiries. It is annually distributed at Portland International Airport, all Oregon State Welcome Centers and Chambers/Visitor Bureaus and 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. 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. Tools include maps, itineraries and travel information, The PDF version can be downloaded online from [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com). 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. Plans to return to an annual guide for Spring 2022 are underway.





Winter 2022



The **Living & Doing Business Guide** was last produced in 2019. It is the primary economic development marketing piece for Ashland. 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. **Following Ashland Chamber's current Economic Development diversification study, the next edition of this publication will be considered.**

**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 500+

Chamber membership, efforts and themes surrounding Ashland lifestyle, economy and its businesses. The Guide is annually critiqued by the ESC (Economic Sustainability Committee) with staff.

**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, both in print and online. 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.

**\*We saw major increase in demand and relocation inquiries both through direct requests and the need for realtors to use this publication as a tool. Many were seeking a rural location, exiting metro areas through the pandemic.**

**We acknowledge the continued housing inventory shortage in our region but feel our role in promotion and education continues for both residential and commercial relocation.**



## Ashland Map Guide

**Demand has increased for the Ashland Map guide with Ashland welcoming more outdoor adventurers interested in hiking, biking and exploring Ashland. The Ashland Map Guide is a trusted tool to provide accurate information on trails in and around Ashland.**

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 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. In 2021, 50,000 more copies were produced to meet increased demand with updated maps. 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, retailers, public libraries, REI, the Rogue Valley International Airport, hotels, outfitters, retailers, SOU, Medford Visitor Center, cycling shops and more. New in 2021, the Ashland Map Guide and Visitor Guides can be found at the kiosk in the Mt. Ashland parking lot in the summer. The Map Guide can be found on [www.travelashland.com](http://www.travelashland.com) as a downloadable PDF, [www.avenzamaps.com](http://www.avenzamaps.com) or in print at the Chamber/Travel Ashland office.



# Travel Ashland Events

## Festival of Light – annual holiday season event to attract visitors

- **Creating Magic for Ashland during the holidays:** For the 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions, we could not hold the parade or festivities however with sponsorship and collaboration we were able to light the town with over one million lights and have the town decorated with the historic lanterns, wreaths, bows and snowflakes.
- **2021 proved to exceed both 2020 and even 2019 numbers** in terms of visitors, revenues and traffic for retailers, restaurants and lodging partners. With OSF having their first holiday show ever, It's Christmas, Carol, combined with fresh snow and the opening of Mt. Ashland, there was great synergy to the winter, far exceeding what 2020 looked like and returning to past revenues.
- **In 2019:** "Find your Holiday Spirit in Ashland"– 27th annual event drew over 15,000 attendees 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.
- **Exploring future opportunities:** We have started planning for 2022 and creating the best essence of the event which could possibly include a holiday procession leading to the lighting of the town. We are surveying our local businesses and partners to gather their feedback and exploring all options as to how to best showcase Ashland and welcome everyone for the holidays knowing December has grown year over year.
- **Travel Ashland's holiday promotion and Festival of Light historically** 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 Southern Oregon, but from Northern California as well as Central Oregon. See the Campaign section for winter promotions including the holidays and Festival of Light.



# The legacy of Travel Ashland's Ashland Culinary Festival

## 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. As part of that, the Ashland Culinary Festival ran from 2007 through 2019. It began as a way 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.

- **The Ashland Culinary Festival put Ashland on the map in the culinary and beverage world being home to 4 Iron Chef Oregon Winners.** In 2020 due to the pandemic, we were unable to continue the event. In 2021 due to staffing as well as evolving trends, Travel Ashland and Chamber staff decided to convert the dollars spent on this event into year-round culinary promotion that could reach a bigger audience throughout the year.
- **Evolving culinary event trends:** We listened and heard quite clearly that collectively consumers, chefs and the industry were more interested in smaller, curated events where they could learn and taste as opposed to attending a show. The concept of hands-on workshops, online cooking classes, and the sharing of recipes and best practices is more attractive. During the 13 years of the Ashland Culinary Festival, consumers very much enjoyed the structure of the event and different facets they could enjoy. Looking forward, it made the most sense to shift event dollars towards an increased effort in promoting Ashland's wine and culinary offerings that we already invest a significant effort into.
- Given the challenges that the pandemic imposed upon restaurants, it was also clear that trying to produce an event amidst closures, staffing issues and varying business was not favored. Instead, Travel Ashland and the Chamber's role is and always has been to best support our businesses in the best light. Vendor hesitation also played a part in having to make the hard decision to forego the event.
- Over the 13 years, it grew a four-day, destination festival. The **Top Chef Dinner** honored the legacy of talented chefs that have won the **Top Chef competition**, where 12 chefs competed each year for Top chef honor. 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** provided a platform for bartenders to show their skills and build camaraderie while showcasing local ingredients used to make the specialty cocktail. As a member organization, the Ashland Chamber alongside Travel Ashland supports the growth of the food and beverage industry through workshops, conferences and providing a venue such as this event to network and partner. Over 12 bartenders competed. The largest attendance ever occurred in 2019 welcoming over 400 people.
- The **Top Chef competition** put the spotlight on local chefs and gave the restaurants an opportunity to share small bites and gain exposure. We also saw restaurateurs discovering new wines to add to their menu or new artisans to collaborate with. The local farms and their



contributions for the ingredient table that the chefs use gave the audience a way to see how to produce to compliment the secret ingredient.

- The **workshops** provided culinary education with something new each year from Biodynamic – Organic Wine Education, to Texas Beef Brisket, Winter and Dried Fruit Desserts and CBD infused Bitters.
- Southern Oregon is best exemplified through the **vendors** that surround the room. Over 40 vendors shared their samples, gift ideas, award-winning wineries, breweries and distilleries educate guests on their practices.

## Administration and Operations

### Staff

Travel Ashland staff is comprised of a professional Director with shared costs of a graphic designer, webmaster, event coordinator, volunteer coordinator and contracted event staff. Travel Ashland is the destination organization for Ashland with direct linkage to Travel Southern Oregon and Travel Oregon.

The staff executes the brand marketing messages, and working closely with the Travel Ashland Committee develops all promotions, outreach, travel industry tours and creates and markets events. The staff responds to all local, visitor and relocation needs daily by phone, website, and in office when possible. In addition to serving as Ashland's welcome center, we operate the Plaza Information booth (May – October). In summer 2020 and 2021, we were not able to operate our Plaza Information booth. We were able to reopen our office in July of 2020 with a small volunteer support for our front desk. Our office hours are Monday through Friday 10am – 3pm.

The staff, in the past has, trained and overseen 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 with assistance in planning, preparation, set up, execution and cleanup of events. They answer questions, support the staff's work, provide wayfinding and information for visitors, residents, businesses and those considering relocation. We have immense gratitude for these volunteers (primarily Ashland residents) who generously give their time, expertise and love of Ashland showing deep community pride.

### In-House Printing

Besides our large printing runs of publications, Travel Ashland prints smaller jobs 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 to name a few. In conserving energy wherever possible, we use online communication, processing of requests and fulfillment 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 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 brochures specific to the visitor needs. The personal touch of a hand addressed envelope and timely receipt of information introduces a potential visitor or future resident to Ashland and engages them. This includes solicitation and outreach to meeting planners, tour operators, travel writers and bulk distribution to other visitor centers across the west.



# 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**  
**Anne Robison**

### ***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 (*Chair 2022*)  
Mt. Ashland Ski Area  
Mt. Ashland Ski Area (*Chair 2018-21*)  
Oregon Shakespeare Festival  
Director/ Chamber Marketing  
The Crown Jewel/Board Liaison

## 2020–2021 Ashland Chamber Board of Directors

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

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

### ***Business:***

Recology Ashland  
Branson's Chocolates (*President*)  
Southern Oregon University (*Past President*)  
Asante Ashland Community Hospital  
Hearsay Restaurant, Lounge and Garden  
True South Solar  
First Interstate Bank  
Brickroom  
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)**



March 29, 2022

To Whom it May Concern:

Destination Analysts is honored to be Travel Ashland's tourism research partner. Destination Analysts is a full-service market research company specializing in yielding actionable marketing intelligence for the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. We provide destination marketing organizations with a breadth of insights, from the comprehensive understanding of target audiences to ROI analysis and economic forecasts. Since March 2020, Destination Analysts has been conducting an ongoing traveler sentiment study to track how Americans think, feel and behave when it comes to travel. Destination Analysts' also conducts *The State of the International Traveler*—the industry's premier study for tracking traveler sentiment and global destination brand performance and *The CVB and the Future of the Meetings Industry*, the go-to study for anticipated trends for the meetings and event industry and how CVBs can best support meeting planners.

In Destination Analysts experience working with Travel Ashland, the organization values its mission to inspire, welcome and serve year-round visitors to Ashland and supports the destination's tourism-related businesses through marketing programs and actionable research insights that benefit the local tourism community by creating consumer awareness of Ashland as a desirable destination.

Having conducted the Ashland Visitor and Research Analysis study in 2021, Destination Analysts and Travel Ashland worked closely together to design a comprehensive research program to profile the destination's visitors and potential visitors, identify high value traveler segments and personas, explore seasonality and year-round travel consideration to Ashland and explore ways in which Travel Ashland can leverage the destinations assets. In addition to understanding visitors and potential visitors, the data from this research study supported Travel Ashland in making actionable marketing decisions, guiding strategic marketing direction and in refreshing the Travel Ashland destination brand.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or comments about Destination Analysts letter of support for Travel Ashland.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in dark purple ink that reads "Kimberly Vince Cruz". The script is fluid and cursive.

Kimberly Vince-Cruz

Vice President

Destination Analysts

[kimberly@destinationanalysts.com](mailto:kimberly@destinationanalysts.com)

March 24, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of continued monetary support of the Travel Ashland group and Chamber of Commerce. I have been involved in the steering committee of this group for many years, and my business has been a chamber member for decades. I have seen a great many contributions to the community as well as my business directly tied to their efforts.

During the pandemic they greatly helped the city navigate the ever-changing new normals of tourism. From helping implement outdoor seating, mask mandates, and PPE support. They were a stable resource during a time of complete instability.

And most importantly the efforts begun a year ago or more to reevaluate our tourism draws as a city and rebrand Ashland have now born fruit. The change in how we market ourselves is epic and a massive change. Bringing on board the professional design and implementation firm has given us an approach and a look and feel that befits such a great city. We are extremely well positioned to react to our new normal as well as being highly nimble and able to shift quickly as things change.

The team has shown a willingness to listen to their customers and provide what we need. They deliver extremely well from community events like the Holiday events and parades (which are coming back!), to more constant day to day efforts. In short, I see the value of dollars invested with them as extremely high. I encourage you to support them with your choices for how to allocate what I know are limited resources.

Thank you,

Graham Sheldon, Owner  
Ashland Creek Inn



Dear Ashland City Council,

I am writing in support of Travel Ashland and all it does. I started Momentum River Expeditions about 18 years ago. And a big part of our current health and growth is because of the work of groups like Travel Ashland.

I joined the Travel Ashland board a few years ago and recently became the Chair. I could not be happier with the work they have done and the work that we are doing now.

Tourism in Ashland provides us with amenities and a quality of life that we would not have without the business and the diversity of thought and background that travelers bring to the area. Ashland's 'big city amenities in a small town' and overall vibrancy is the reason I moved here. And it would not be possible without a healthy tourism economy. Done right tourism and outdoor tourism can be a huge part of a vibrant and sustainable community.

Travel Ashland has been amazing at promoting Ashland overall but navigating and fostering the current moves to diversify our tourism industry has been particularly impressive. At some point before I began working with them, they began setting the foundation to build and promote outdoor tourism in the area. That decision was almost prescient with where we are now with outdoor tourism and Covid. There has been huge growth in people wanting to get outside and Travel Ashland was instrumental in setting the foundation to take advantage of that. It is a perfect example of the saying 'luck happens when preparation meets opportunity'.

Change is almost always difficult, and Travel Ashland has also done an incredible job of navigating the changes that come with diversifying our tourism economy - by fostering both the new opportunities and helping strengthen our long running core opportunities. When things are changing many people want to dig in and resist change, or on the other end, want to get rid of everything that came before in the name of change. Travel Ashland recognizes we are stronger (and more fun!) with the new and the established. Navigating this is not easy, but Travel Ashland has done an incredible job.

In this vein, recently Travel Ashland began a big rebrand. I think of good rebrand as, not as much of a change, but more of an addition and remodel to fit the time. A chance to refresh the way we communicate with potential visitors and with the community - basically fit the message to the current time and current needs. In this case Ashland already is known for its amazing theater and food scene, that has been and always will be one of the core parts of Ashland. Now we have an opportunity to strengthen what we are already known for, and also add what many of us know makes Ashland truly unique - That mix of theater and food with the trails, rivers, and mountains that are literally right outside our homes. And, we also have a huge opportunity to become more resilient and more sustainable by spreading visitors out over all seasons rather than in just a few intense months, and to get a wider range of visitor types.

There are very few places like Ashland and the rebrand will help tell that story. I am extremely excited about it.

Finally, as a small business owner, I know that even the best run small business has limited time and resources outside of running the business. Strong and nimble public/private partnerships are key to having a vibrant and healthy community and healthy small businesses. Entities like Travel Ashland help small businesses and the community come together and compete with bigger towns and industries. Without effective groups like Travel Ashland we would end up with only giant companies that have the resources to have full teams working on things like marketing and lobbying.

Building a community cannot be done alone and I have worked with and am a part of many organizations that help to bridge that private/public divide and advocate for healthier and more vibrant communities and Travel Ashland is among the very best and most effective.

Kind Regards,  
Pete Wallstrom

Owner – Momentum River Expeditions  
Chair of Travel Ashland





March 13, 2022

Members of the Ashland City Council,

As General Manager at Mt. Ashland Ski Area, the former Chair of the Travel Ashland Committee, and a current member of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to offer my full support of Travel Ashland. The quality of the work that has been produced by Travel Ashland reflects the keen local knowledge the staff and committee have. It is so important that we keep the voice of Ashland local. To farm it out to a far-away consultant or contractor is to risk losing the local knowledge and passion that drives the authenticity and effectiveness of our city's invaluable outbound marketing messages.

The Ashland visitor profile has undergone a significant shift in recent years. Travel Ashland's staff has done an excellent job surveying those visitors and validated trends we have seen developing at the ski area in recent years. Armed with this new information, they successfully underwent a rebranding process that produced a striking new logo and promotional materials that will appeal to the new visitor. Fortunately, thanks to the hard work of Travel Ashland, we have a solid set of resources to attract these new visitors, encourage them to stay longer, and help diversify and enhance Ashland's economy.

Mt. Ashland looks to visitors from outside of Ashland and the Rogue Valley to help us grow our revenue streams while also continuing to offer a great experience for our committed local guests. Travel Ashland has helped us as we spend marketing dollars outside of our community to "sell the full Ashland story." We joined the Indy Pass partnership this year and this has helped us attract new visitors from far outside of our region. Our strong relationship with Travel Ashland helps us tell the complete story of the value and quality of the experiences offered here.

Simply put, without strong partners like Travel Ashland, our business would suffer. We rely on Travel Ashland to effectively promote our community as a great place to visit, no matter the season. Therefore, we request that the Ashland City Council make every effort to ensure Travel Ashland's success in the coming year by fully granting this year's funding request.

Thank you for considering the profound positive impact Travel Ashland has on Mt. Ashland and the rest of our community. Your support of Travel Ashland undergirds the current and future success of our entire community

Warm Regards,

Hiram Towle  
General Manager Mt. Ashland

LOCAL MOUNTAIN FUN  
— SINCE 1964 —



# NEUMAN

HOTEL GROUP

March 28, 2022

To: Ashland City Council

I am writing this letter as support for Travel Ashland. I have been working with Travel Ashland for over 16 years and have seen huge growth and benefits. Over the years we have partnered with Travel Ashland to inspire and welcome visitors to Ashland and Southern Oregon. I currently serve on the Travel Ashland Advisory Committee where I have served for many years which also provided me the opportunity to serve as the Chair of the committee for multiple years. During this time, we identified the importance of diversifying our visitors and creating the three pillars of culinary, outdoors, and culture. These pillars helped Ashland to position itself to attract many new customers during the recent years including during the pandemic.

In the last year I have worked with Travel Ashland to complete the visitor study and the rebranding project which has led to a new brand promoting Ashland. I am excited about the new platform to bring Ashland forward while continuing to build resiliency of tourism. With the new brand, Travel Ashland is positioned to partner with different markets to create awareness and position Ashland as a year-round destination.

I have also been fortunate to serve on the Economic Diversification steering committee which has allowed me the opportunity to help plan for future economic development in Ashland. We all know of the important role that tourism plays in the economy of Ashland. I am excited to continue to build tourism but also look for ways to diversify the economy too.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Don Anway

Chief Operating Officer

Neuman Hotel Group



March 28, 2022

Ashland City Council  
20 East Main St  
Ashland, Oregon 97520

Dear Mayor Akins and Ashland City Council,

On behalf of the Oregon Destination Association (ODA) and our local and regional Destination Organizations (DOs) from across Oregon, it is my privilege to attest to the vital role Travel Ashland serves in helping to sustain the local economy and community quality of life for the residents of Ashland.

Travel Ashland is your proven boots-on-the-ground organization providing tourism promotion, destination management and stakeholder business support. Travel Ashland's work is leveraged widely by industry partners, generating visitation and fueling local tax revenues which directly reduce the tax burden on local residents. Continuing to invest in Travel Ashland has never been more critical as you look for partners to help southern Oregon recover from the devastation of wildfires and COVID-19.

Just to touch on a few key programs that demonstrate the effectiveness Travel Ashland, and how your community DO set a standard of program excellence:

- Travel Ashland led the industry with visionary research through a visitor impact study and branding project, developing the platform to support Ashland's resiliency.
- Travel Ashland positions Ashland as a unique travel destination promoting outdoors, culinary, wine and culture targeting the outdoor traveler in key markets such as the greater Bay Area, Redding, Sacramento, LA, Seattle, Portland, and Eugene. Telling the story of Ashland to new audiences to drive off-season travel, thereby dispersing the seasonal impacts of visitation.
- Travel Ashland's service to the community is augmented by the leadership role the organization plays at the Regional and Statewide level. These connections provide Ashland with the tools and relationships to leverage their market outreach with partners to create awareness and position Ashland as a competitive year-round destination.

Pent-up demand for travel post-pandemic will be strongest in leisure and drive markets. Ashland is ideally positioned to benefit as a desirable destination offering an abundance of activities and open spaces.

Travel Ashland is dedicated to positioning the destination to its fullest potential, and the funding partnership with the City of Ashland is critical to this vision. Thank you for your consideration and support for one of Oregon's key Destination Organizations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alana Hughson", is written over a horizontal line. Below the signature, the name "Alana Hughson" and title "Managing Director" are printed in a black, sans-serif font.

Alana Hughson  
Managing Director



March 27, 2022

City of Ashland  
Mayor Julie Akins  
51 Winburn Way  
Ashland, OR 97520

Dear Mayor Akins and Council,

As the state's regional tourism office for Southern Oregon, our work is to support tourism-related businesses and the Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) they work with to optimize the positive economic impact to communities in Southern Oregon. The last two years have been tumultuous to our industry, and as the City Council reviews the budget and contract for Travel Ashland we hope you'll fully support their continued efforts—and recognize the significant successes that Travel Ashland has accomplished in spite of the challenging Covid environment.

Having worked in the OSF Marketing Dept. from 1998-2017, and collaborated with Travel Ashland for as many years, the work they do matters to the health of your community. With renewed focus on the need for sustainable and equitable contributions from the tourism economy in communities, Travel Ashland has been a partner that embraces this work and puts the health of the Ashland community at the forefront of its work. Katharine Cato currently serves in our leadership as President of the Travel Southern Oregon Board.

Most significantly in this past year, Travel Ashland's visitor study and branding project met the challenges of profound changes to the Ashland economy head on. The newly launched brand - and the platform to bring Ashland tourism forward building resiliency - shares a vision of Ashland as a destination that goes well beyond its traditional home to OSF. It truly positions Ashland as an outdoor recreation and wine & culinary destination that is a true-to-life differentiator in the crowded space of destination marketing..

Stable and ample funding needs to stay in place for this work to continue. For every dollar invested in Oregon tourism marketing 8 dollars come back in visitor spending. As we see signs of tourism economic activity increasing, now is the time to keep investing in this key area of economic impact for the city of Ashland.

Sincerely,

Robert Hackett  
Executive Director  
Travel Southern Oregon  
bob@southernoregon.org  
541.326.2640



Dear Honorable Ashland City Councilors,

Please accept this letter of strong support for Travel Ashland. I continue to be impressed with the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the work Travel Ashland does, and I see the great benefit to my business as well as to the economy of Ashland.

As a member of the Travel Ashland Advisory Committee, I get to see firsthand how Travel Ashland, with its limited budget, leverages the experience and perspectives of diverse business leaders in the community to build an organization which accomplishes more than do many larger Destination Marketing Organizations. As such, Travel Ashland couldn't be more in touch with and responsive to the local tourism business community. Behind the scenes, TA also has leveraged the latest in online marketing technology - measuring effectiveness, learning more about our audience, and adjusting marketing campaigns in real time.

This past year I also got to see the development and implementation of a rebranding project aimed at refocusing Travel Ashland's messaging and audiences. From conception to completion, this project was outstanding. At the outset, the right outside partners were chosen to implement the project, and after much input from community members, the project was successfully launched. I think you will agree with me when I describe our new Travel Ashland logo and marketing materials as beautiful - a real home run for our town. Furthermore, they clearly position Ashland as a town with many more diverse activities and assets than just the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, ensuring the health of our tourism industry for the future. Building diversity of audience, as well, was always a key aspect of the new branding and messaging, aligning with the values of our town. Our town, climate, and the world are changing, and Travel Ashland is a role model for the pivoting and flexibility necessary to support Ashland's economy.

Finally, the proof is in the pudding. As a retail shop owner, I see the results of Travel Ashland's hard work. The past few years has seen a dramatic shift in the types of visitors coming to Ashland, and I credit Travel Ashland for continuing to bring people to town even with OSF not giving performances. In fact, even without OSF, I feel as though more and more people are visiting Ashland, and exploring all the wonderful businesses and activities Ashland has to offer - these are the kinds of visitors that benefit a wider variety of sectors in our town, spreading dollars to more businesses.

Thanks so much for your work, and I hope you too will continue to support Travel Ashland, for the health of our local economy.

Yours,

Anne Robison

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*Ashland/Billing/Shipping Address*

266 E Main St  
Ashland, OR 97520  
541-488-2401

*Jacksonville Street Address (no mail)*

165 E California St  
Jacksonville, OR 97530  
541-899-9060



March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022

**RE: Letter of support, Travel Ashland**

Dear Ashland City Council:

Please accept this letter of support for the work conducted by Travel Ashland.

The Schneider Museum opened its door in 1986 and quickly became recognized as a gem of the University campus and an effective tourism draw for the City of Ashland, a city which is widely recognized an arts and cultural destination. Of our annual 14,000+ visitors, 49% come from 50+ miles away. The recent energy and symbiotic relation the museum established with Travel Ashland has become essential for the museum's sustainability and growth.

Travel Ashland does the work, keeping their fingers on the pulse of current tourism trends happening nationally and internationally. Travel Ashland has provided like-minded professional connections to allow collaboration and team work in the community. The professionalism and expertise I have witnessed through our communications with Travel Ashland have always impressed me and now helps guide the museum's advertising and marketing output. The positive and effective partnership and connection between the work Travel Ashland does to inspire, welcome and serve visitors to Ashland year-round and the Schneider's visitor draw has sincerely strengthened what we do. It provides confidence for our tourists who come to Ashland seeking reprieve as well as fulfilling excitement and engagement.

The new branding project and the newly launched brand is testament to the extraordinary work facilitated by Travel Ashland. I had the pleasure to be part of the sounding board of this work in which Travel Ashland graciously carried that process through every little step and nuance in order to get a unanimous YES for the final design. As a whole, the City of Ashland and Ashland tourism is building crucial resiliency needed to keep our community thriving in both pandemic and endemic times. Travel Ashland's market outreach that the museum relies on, creates awareness and positions the museum and the City of Ashland as a year-round desirable destination. As masks come off and visitors seek out their next adventure, I have the utmost confidence in Travel Ashland's ability to communicate our greatest strengths.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Malbaurn".

Scott Malbaurn  
Executive Director  
Schneider Museum of Art  
Direct: 541-552-8484

