

Travel Lane County

SEMI ANNUAL REPORT

FY24 July - December

**EUGENE
CASCADES
AND COAST**

EugeneCascadesCoast.org



Kari Westlund
President & CEO



Dana Turell
Chair, Board of Directors

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

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

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

Promise

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

Mission

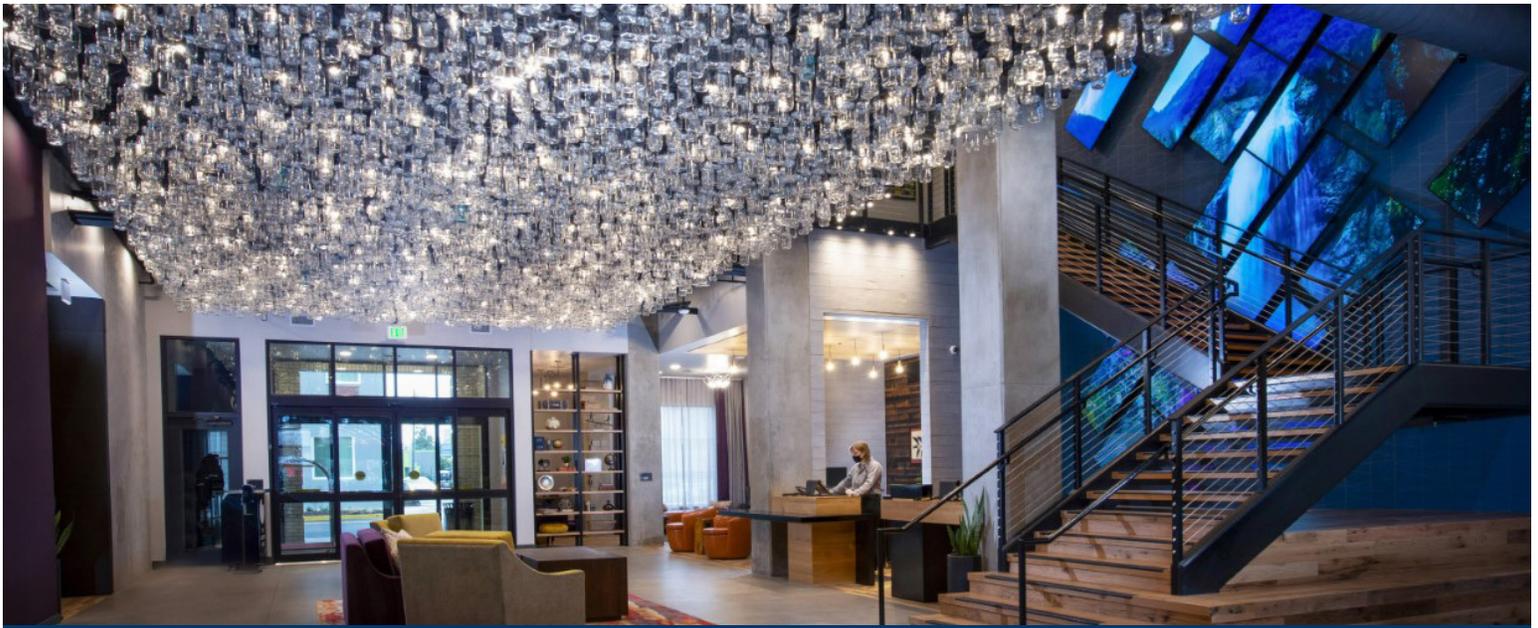
Grow overnight visitors for a vibrant, year-round and county-wide economy.

Why

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

Vision

Travel Lane County is a recognized leader in achieving year-round economic growth throughout the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region through innovative destination marketing, product development and exceptional visitor experiences.



Industry Indicators

Transient lodging tax receipts are tracking well with the FY24 budget, allowing Travel Lane County to invest confidently in the marketing programs and services outlined in our workplan. The 2022 change in collection and remittance of transient lodging tax receipts by the Oregon State Department of Revenue continues to challenge recipients.

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

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

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

Hotel:

Room Demand	-6.1%
Occupancy	+3.1%
Average Daily Rate	+4.2%
Revenue per Available Room	+8.3%

Short Term Rental:

Room Demand	+1.1%
Rental Occupancy	-7.5%
Average Daily Rate	-5.1%
Revenue per Available Room	-12.2%



Leisure Visitors

Paid, earned and owned media channels inspired potential visitors from our traditional drive-and-fly markets. The implementation of a local Explore campaign delivered content to residents as well. Short-form videos on strategic social media channels exceeded destination inspiration and storytelling goals. These placements resulted in more than 25 million impressions (+37%) and 108,000 clicks to our website from potential visitors in key target markets. Estimated earned media impressions topped 357 million impressions (+158%) in the first half of FY24.

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

25 million

impressions to potential visitors in target key markets

108,000 clicks

to our key visitor content

4.3 million

impressions to Lane County residents

357 million

earned media impressions

“I had the best time exploring downtown Eugene. Checking out the Farmer’s Market, 5th Street Public Market, etc. I especially enjoyed urban wine tasting, this is such an asset to this incredible town!”

-Tracy Kaler, Travel Mag



Conventions & Group Business

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

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

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

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



16 confirmed
events resulting in 5,636 room nights

\$2.2M
total estimated economic impact (EEI)

32%
open rate for Meeting Planner newsletter

65%
increase in website impressions
year-over-year



Sports Commission

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

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

The Sports Commission hosted a track & field round table that included key stakeholders from the track & field community. Participants included the University of Oregon, TrackTown USA, Eugene Marathon, media representatives and former athletes. The group's work will ensure the 2024 track season will be as, or more, successful than recent seasons.



15 confirmed

events resulting in 50,383 room nights

\$30.4 million

total estimated economic impact (EEI)

46% open rate

of Sports Commission newsletter

38% increase

in website impressions year-over-year



Connecting with Communities

Investment in the hearing loop program that kicked off last fiscal year continues, utilizing a Travel Oregon grant to expand the program to include performance venues.

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

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

As a 501c6, professional not-for-profit organization, we maintain a strong membership base in communities throughout Lane County. To reduce barriers to membership, the Travel Lane County board of directors approved membership model changes that include a free membership level. This will result in visitors having a fuller understanding of the opportunities they have to experience the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region.

Hearing Loops Installed

25
Hotels

4
Theaters

4
Visitor Centers

2
Retail/Restaurants

5
Museums/Attractions



Integrated Marketing

Our new website launched last year continues to be a boost to lodging searches, with searches up more than 200% and referrals up 61% from the same period last year.

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

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

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

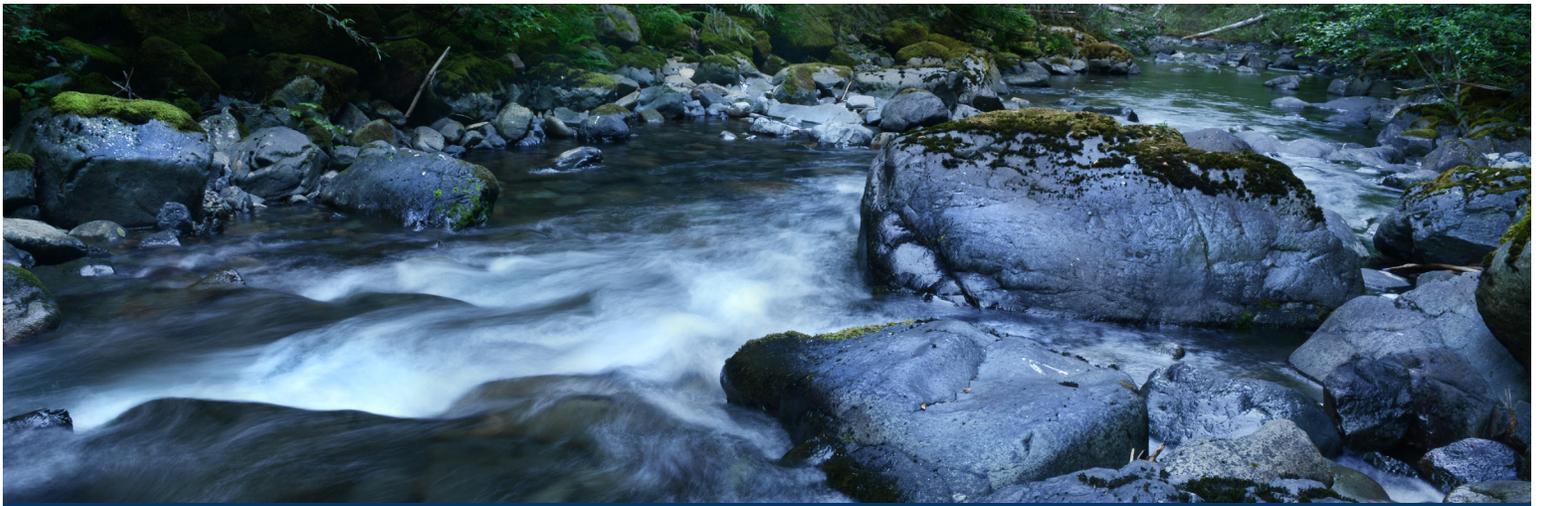
So far videos produced this year have been viewed more than 2 million times by our target consumer audiences.



2.2 million
views of our short-form videos

532,000
website users and 714,000 website sessions

205
new photo and video assets added to
media library



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Jeri McPherson

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