



# business plan

## 2020-2021

This plan aligns with the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan  
and drives the imperative to  
increase visitor-related economic impact

### Travel Salem

388 State St., Suite 100

Salem, OR 97301

503-581-4325

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



Willamette Valley Sunset, Ron Cooper

# staff

## Executive

Angie Onyewuchi, President & CEO

Jennifer Miller, Operations Coordinator

## Marketing & Communications

Irene Bernards, Director of Marketing & Public Relations

Kara Kuh, Assistant Director of Marketing & Public Relations

Taylor Cantonwine, Marketing Coordinator

Kaitlyn Cook, Polk County Destination Development Manager

Jacob Cordova-Krahn, Graphic Designer & Online Coordinator

Erick Durano, Social Media Coordinator

## Sales

Debbie McCune, VP / Director of Conventions & Groups

Brandon Lawrence, Director of Membership & Sponsorship

Damian Williams, Sports & Event Sales Manager



Ron Cooper

# board of directors

## Executive Committee

**Chair** Jake Bryant, Best Western PLUS Mill Creek Inn

**Vice Chair** Austin McGuigan, Polk County Community Development

**Past Chair** Toby Olsen, Hampton Inn & Suites

**Secretary** Lisa Sumption, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

**Treasurer** Jason Brandt, Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association

Jim Lewis, Salem City Councilor

Courtney Busch, City of Salem

Renee Frazier, City of Salem

## Directors

Kevin Cameron, Marion County Commissioner

Nancy DeSouza, Retired, State of Oregon

Christopher Holland, Taproot Lounge & Café

Ivy Hover, IndieOregon.com

Shawn Irvine, City of Independence

Steve Johnson, VIPs Industries

Sean O'Day, Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

John Pataccoli, Redhawk Vineyard & Winery

Yvonne Putze, Deepwood Museum & Gardens

Rochelle Rafn, Rafn's Restaurant & Salem Orchestra

Jim Rasmussen, Modern Building Systems

Scott Snyder, The Grand Hotel & Salem Area Lodging Association

T.J. Sullivan, Huggins Insurance

Dino Venti, Venti's Restaurants



## Our Mission

---

**Inspire travel and foster economic prosperity by harnessing our destination's unique value proposition through partnership, innovation, and responsible development that enhances the visitor experience and enriches the lives of residents.**

---

As of June 24, 2020 when this plan was adopted, it was recognized that implementation of the plan may be limited due to COVID-19 impacts on Travel Salem's staff capacity and funding.



Kara Williams

## CORE AREA OF FOCUS

# destination experience

Create transformative experiences utilizing deep industry expertise & unsurpassed product knowledge that connect visitors with the people and the place.

Reed Lane Photography



## 1. Expand the visitor information network by adding new high-traffic locations

- Create a Virtual Visitors Center on TravelSalem.com featuring online experiences, videos, maps and digital Visitors Guide
- Expand Visitors Guide distribution to additional iconic Oregon attractions and visitor locations (e.g. Moda Center)
- Promote sports tourism at Pacific NW events to create awareness of Salem as Oregon's sports destination (e.g. Les Schwab Invitational Basketball Tournament)
- Deliver mobile visitor information via a MOPU branded bicycle; take to events and locations throughout the region (e.g. World Beat Festival)
- Implement touch screen technology to deliver up-to-date visitor information (e.g. Silver Falls)

### Measurement

Visitor network traffic

## 2. Strengthen the capacity of the tourism ecosystem by providing industry training & resources

- Create accessible, user-friendly education and outreach programs that enhance destination knowledge
  - Annual review of Visitors Guide for front-line staff (e.g. lodging, attractions)
  - Visitors Center training for regional tourism information locations (e.g. Chambers)
  - ORLA Guest Services Gold training in partnership with WVVA
  - Sales staff training (e.g. Travel Salem extranet access, leads)
- Rollout the Marketing Toolkit, a best practices resource for businesses, through a phased approach highlighting a variety of content categories (e.g. marketing, business planning, research)
- Create a customizable "media hub" for industry partners to access photo/video content galleries for promotional use

### Measurement

Number of industry partners reached through education & training, and any resulting outcomes





Jen Young

### 3. Provide customized group services that respond to the needs of meeting & event planners

- Launch online Planner Toolkit containing content & resources for pre-promoting the destination
- Implement text messaging strategy to:
  - Notify businesses about groups on the ground
  - Engage directly with group/event attendees to provide event updates & destination information (e.g. deals/packages)
- Create a customized Volunteer Recruitment Plan for incoming groups to meet their specific needs (e.g. Street Team to distribute posters, scorekeepers)

#### Measurement

Number of groups assisted & expand customized services provided

*“Places are about people. People make places. Focus on how your citizens and visitors experience your place. Focus on placemaking.” —City Nation Place*

### 4. Capture visitor feedback through proactive outreach & respond to opportunities with sales and marketing solutions

- Create a plan for collecting visitor data, ideas & suggestions at strategic high-traffic locations
  - Monitor Google Reviews to manage destination reputation & work with partners to create responses when needed
  - Launch a Visitor Survey to examine COVID-19 impact on travel decisions
  - Gather Latinx visitor data in partnership with the City of Woodburn and Latino Business Alliance
- Survey a variety of groups to determine attendee behavior during “free time” (e.g. destination spend, activities) and update group economic impact formula
- Determine what data is available from hotel partners and work with them to develop standardized metrics to assist with marketing strategies and evaluation
- Recruit businesses to collect consumer data & demographics (e.g. age, income, zip code)

#### Measurement

Number of surveys completed, and any resulting outcomes

## CORE AREA OF FOCUS

# destination development

Enhance destination appeal and competitive edge through strategic and sustainable initiatives and product development.

### 1. Develop product for the non-peak season (Nov-Mar) when visitation is lower (e.g. campaigns, trails, events)

- Launch Polk County Great Oaks Food Trail featuring 42 partners
- Develop new sports product that showcases our venues and leverages our centralized West Coast location
- Refresh the Tri-County Charm Trail (new partners & promotional material)
- Create an “indoor recreation” campaign highlighting our unique assets (e.g. Rock Boxx, axe throwing, Athletic Edge)
- Research and develop content featuring distinctive regional lodging experiences (e.g. glamping, yurts, tiny homes, treehouses)
- Investigate public-private partnership opportunities, including available land (e.g. Hazelgreen), to support the development of a multi-sport turf site (e.g. baseball/softball, soccer)
- Support strategic infrastructural facility improvements at the Oregon State Fair Pavilion (e.g. sport court, scoreboards, locker rooms, air-conditioning)
- Create identity for districts throughout Salem that have distinct character (e.g. Theater District, Edgewater District, Historic District) and weave these districts into the destination story
- Partner with outdoor guides and retailers to package winter adventures (e.g. snowshoeing, cross country skiing)
- Develop industrial tours (e.g. Yamasa, Kettle Chips, Il Morrow)
- Create holiday campaigns that leverage the region’s seasonal activities and foster seasonal product development (e.g. Halloween, Christmas)
- Investigate feasibility of a regional Barn Quilt Trail (a hand-painted wooden block display on the side of a barn that resembles a quilt block)
- Identify opportunities for leisure product development
- Collaborate with the French Prairie tourism group to develop a tourism plan
- Participate in the Travel Oregon Rural Tourism Studio for the Woodburn area to identify future tourism development and marketing projects

## Measurement

Increase shoulder season product



Zak Stone



Ron Cooper

*“Tourism development planning really can make or break a destination. If done well, it can ensure the longevity of the tourism industry in the area, take good care of the environment, have positive economic outcomes and a positive benefit to the community.” —Tourism Teacher*

## 2. Work with the Salem Area Sports Commission (SASC) to cultivate the sports/recreation sector by recruiting new opportunities and growing existing events

- Partner with existing events to drive ROI through increased participation and spectatorship
- Secure new events to maximize venue potential and deliver city-wide benefit
- Leverage a Work Group structure to plan and develop opportunities in key focus areas: youth & club sports, college sports, Willamette Valley sporting events, and new events & RFPs

### Measurement

Increase sports/recreation sector bookings

## 3. Assist the culture & heritage sector with planning, collaboration & evaluation

- Audit marketing platforms to evaluate effectiveness and ensure a high-level of consumer engagement (e.g. website, social media, public relations, collateral, branding)
- Standardize metrics and reporting to create alignment and demonstrate collective progress and impact on community
- Review hours of operation to ensure consistency, collaboration & accessibility for visitor engagement
- Identify areas for economies of scale (e.g. printing, design, facility maintenance)
- Encourage the promotion and referral of other tourism assets and opportunities to enhance the visitor experience
- Develop a cultural heritage insert for the Salem Area Visitors Guide including an overrun for individual distribution
- Research experiential product development opportunities that appeal to new audiences and meet evolving consumer expectations

### Measurement

Improved cultural heritage product & communications deliverables





## 4. Identify & influence initiatives that improve destination accessibility (e.g. wayfinding, commercial air service)

- Participate in the Travel Oregon Rural Tourism Studio for the Willamette River to enhance connectivity and identify development opportunities (e.g. kayaking & camping, rentals, restroom facilities)
- Work with regional partners, government agencies and industry sectors to improve connectivity and movement throughout the region (e.g. wayfinding systems, bikeways)
- Engage with the Salem downtown streetscape planning process to ensure an appealing and welcoming visitor experience (e.g. twinkle lights, banners, drip system, signage)
- Engage with the Fly Salem initiative to bring commercial air service back to Salem (e.g. fundraising, marketing)
- Participate in Mainstreet programs throughout the region to ensure the visitor perspective is represented in planning efforts

### Measurement

New transportation-related initiatives underway



Caleb Wallace



## CORE AREA OF FOCUS

# destination marketing

Blaze The Most Oregon Part of Oregon brand and promote the region as a premier destination to create demand for group & leisure travelers.

Emily Crilley-Miller



### 1. Unite Mid-Willamette Valley partners through shared vision, advocacy & collaboration

- Introduce communities to Travel Salem and the benefits of the tourism industry through a coordinated and strategic Speakers Bureau program
- Develop a unified brand position in collaboration with regional partners (e.g. cities, counties, SEDCOR, Chambers, Polk County Tourism Alliance)
- Leverage the unified brand position to create a customized communications strategy for each area of recruitment (visitors, talent and investment)

#### Measurement

Implement a unified messaging strategy with economic development partners

### 2. Craft messaging that differentiates the region's unique attributes through inspirational & actionable content

- Develop a three-year content plan that is reviewed and adjusted annually to adapt to shifting priorities (e.g. nightlife, arts)

#### Measurement

Shift messaging to highlight the people linked to iconic places and focus on defining attributes of the destination



### 3. Secure citywide room nights through innovative group sales strategies

- Connect with local professionals and community members to recruit group business using their spheres of influence
- Develop a digital advertising strategy targeting group planners and group tour operators
- Survey residents regarding local sports events they support as spectator and/or participant, and use findings to explore product development and recruitment opportunities
- Pitch new destination development product to group tour operators and group planners to enhance the destination's appeal and competitive edge

#### Measurement

Increase group bookings

### 4. Target shoulder season visitation through coordinated sales & marketing efforts

- Leverage Agility Funds to incentivize group planners
- Partner with Instagram influencers to promote the region
- Target in-market group attendees with promotional offers and destination information
- Launch a "channel takeover" with a media partner (e.g. Sunset, VIA Magazine) to utilize their marketing channels to promote the destination to their audience

#### Measurement

Increase shoulder season room nights





Ron Cooper

## 5. Promote tourism industry awareness and engage community ambassadors through locally targeted initiatives

- Create a “MOPologist” or “We Speak” campaign to recruit local niche experts to share their passion and knowledge with visitors (e.g. “I Speak Beer” or “I Speak Mountain Biking”)
- Promote Travel Salem and the industry at local events to raise awareness about things to do, create engagement with residents, and build community spirit & pride
- Engage with residents through a comprehensive outreach strategy (e.g. neighborhood associations, rotary clubs) to share resources, gain insight and gauge sentiment related to regional tourism efforts

### Measurement

Increase resident engagement

## 6. Leverage key partnerships & strategies to amplify reach & effectiveness

- Partner with local colleges to provide destination information to visiting audiences (e.g. teams, parents)
- Develop innovative programming in collaboration with state and regional industry partners to drive visitation and increase market share (e.g. sports circuit, preferred wine region)

### Measurement

Increase visitor engagement

*“Consumers who recalled a destination marketing campaign were not only more likely to visit, but also more likely to have a positive impression of a location as a good place to live, retire, start a business or attend college.”*

*—Longwoods International*



## 7. Utilize data & research to anticipate & capitalize on trends & market opportunities

- Conduct a Visitor Intercept Survey focused on COVID-19 impacts
- Conduct a Salem Estimated Economic Impact study
- Gather visitor data from lodging community
- Utilize industry expertise via webinars/conferences to gain insights into trends and best practices
- Analyze tourism industry research (e.g. Travel Oregon, US Travel Association, Smith Travel Report, Visa Vue)
- Partner with industry sectors to gather visitor data (e.g. zip codes)
- Access sports and group research through state, regional and national associations (e.g. Sports ETA, National Tour Association, Meeting Professionals International)
- Identify best practices at DMMOs and leverage competitor research
- Utilize Membership Facebook platform to gather Member input

### Measurement

Utilize data & research to influence marketing decisions





## CORE AREA OF FOCUS

# organizational optimization

Develop long-term stable funding, strategic staffing levels and the technology & tools to support a robust DMMO.



Ron Cooper

## 1. Leverage complex & dynamic funding streams to maximize economic impact

- Collaborate with the Salem Tourism Promotion Area (STPA) Committee to execute the priorities outlined in the STPA Marketing Plan
- Explore voluntary Tourism Promotion Areas for neighboring cities (e.g. Independence, Keizer, Woodburn)
- Convert to an annual Membership program with new levels and pricing structure
- Create a comprehensive and value-driven sponsorship program
- Produce new revenue-generating Travel Salem Sports events
- Create a Travel Salem line of merchandise
- Create an online marketplace to sell locally made products

### Measurement

Maintain diversified revenue streams and successfully implement the Tourism Promotion Area program

## 2. Adapt human resources to meet industry demands

- Restore staffing levels to pre-COVID-19 status after recovery
- Leverage local writers and interns for content creation (e.g. social media, PR)
- Secure contractors for specific destination development projects (e.g. Salem Underground Tours, Wine Charm Trail update)
- Hire a part-time Mobile Visitors Center Coordinator to provide visitors information at regional events
- Research creating a position to support the Sports program
- Research the benefits of bifurcating website management and graphic design duties

### Measurement

Ensure adequate staffing levels



### 3. Hone communication & strategic collaboration across program areas

- Create opportunities for staff integration and collaboration:
  - Bi-weekly management team meetings (Discovery)
  - Weekly management team meetings between Director & CEO (Trench)
  - Weekly program meetings (Marcom staff meetings are attended by other program directors)
  - Weekly staff meetings
  - Quarterly Upstream + Mini-Strategy Meetings (content planning sessions)
  - Individual staff meetings
  - Annual Staff Retreat
  - Annual content planning meetings

#### Measurement

Utilize streamlined and effective communications systems

### 4. Utilize technology to streamline productivity & spur innovation

- Facilitate project management and team collaboration using Basecamp
- Utilize Teams for internal company conference calls and screen sharing
- Utilize Zoom for external conference calls, screen sharing and webinars
- Leverage SharpCloud technology for strategic planning, priority identification and presentation features
- Harness IDSS as the contact management system (e.g. Membership, leads, extranet portal, email campaigns, website integration, housing bureau & registration, and metric management & report generation)
- Utilize Crowdriff for photo and video content management
- Create a content management system for written material (e.g. blogs, social media, itineraries)

#### Measurement

Adopt new technology as needed





*“An organization’s ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage.” —Jack Welch*

## 5. Grow the reserve fund to stabilize consistent programming

- Designate unallocated and unexpended funds annually to the reserve fund as appropriate

### Measurement

Build reserve fund to \$300k by 2023

## 6. Ensure transparency & accountability through detailed reporting, research and stakeholder communications

- Create a communications strategy for disseminating easily digestible information to stakeholders (e.g. policymakers, funders, members, industry, residents) using a variety of platforms and resources (e.g. Market Barometer Report, Tourism Matters Membership e-News)

### Measurement

Track stakeholder satisfaction levels; deliver meaningful & user-friendly reports and industry communications