

# FY21



Travel Lane County  
Semi-Annual Report FY21



# MEMBERS, STAKEHOLDERS & FRIENDS



Travel Lane County and the Eugene, Cascades & Coast Sports Commission are pleased to present this mid-year report. Facing continuing COVID-19 challenges and the devastating effects of the Holiday Farm Fire resulted in strengthened partnerships with our Chamber of Commerce partners,

local government and non-profit agencies and with our professional staff. Our industry has been one of the hardest hit by the pandemic, but we are encouraged by the resilience our business partners have shown and what 2021 holds for our region.

## Our Brand Promise

Eugene, Cascades & Coast offers a variety of enriching, authentic, approachable adventures for all ages and abilities.

## Our Communities

### Eugene & Willamette Valley

Coburg, Cottage Grove, Creswell, Eugene, Junction City, Lowell, Springfield, University of Oregon, Veneta

### Cascade Mountains

McKenzie River, Oakridge, Westfir

### Oregon Coast

Dunes City, Florence



## Why We Do What We Do

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



## How Do We Do it

We provide Leadership in the development of the region's year-round tourism sector.

We are Brand Ambassadors who are committed to knowing our destination from one border to the other and living our brand promise.

We are Professionals who provide informed, friendly, prompt and respectful service.

We Value our staff, members/partners and customers.

We practice Good Stewardship of resources.

We are Welcoming and oppose discrimination of any kind.



## What We Do

We market Lane County to leisure travelers, sports planners and meeting planners.

We create content that is inspiring, available and valuable.

We provide member benefits that create value.

We greet visitors with information and resources to plan experiences.

We communicate timely and accurate information to our stakeholders.

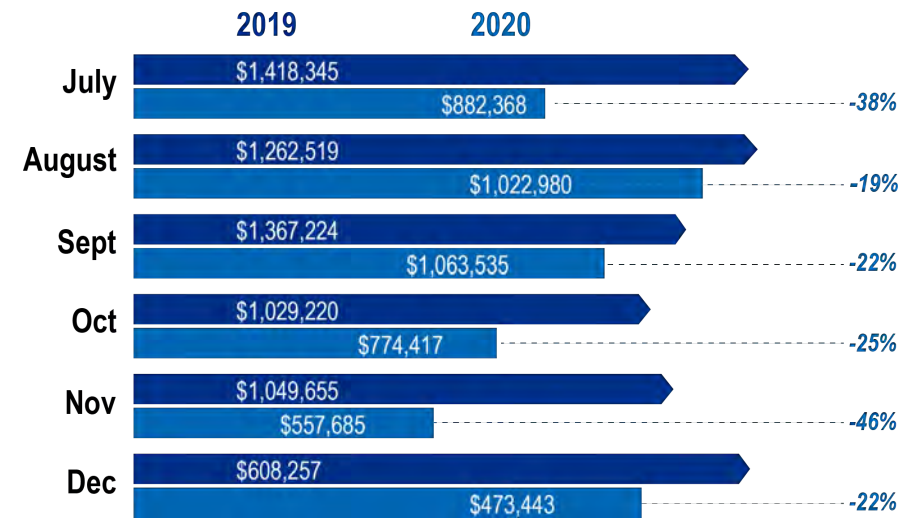
We develop tools that allow staff to be effective and efficient.

We partner with communities and organizations to provide the right experience for the right person at the right time.

# ROOM TAX REVENUE

Moving into FY21, transient room tax revenues were estimated to be 50% of prior year collections and grow throughout the period. These projections were exceeded during the summer months as pockets within the County saw visitor numbers approaching normal. The Holiday Farm Fire devastated the lodging market upriver and smoke settling in the valley resulted in additional strain on lodging properties. Once the smoke cleared, an uptick in metro area hotel occupancy was seen as fire evacuees were housed in area hotels.

December collections were closer to estimated projections and we anticipate this level of collections to continue into late spring. If mass gatherings are allowed in the last half of the fiscal year, including the activation of Hayward Field for a great lineup of track and field events, we will see occupancy rise and tax collections increase.



# VISITOR SERVICE EVOLVES

The Eugene, Cascades & Coast Adventure Center opened ten years ago following the rebranding work Travel Lane County embarked on nearly two years earlier. Located off the busy I-5/Beltline interchange, the hope was to pull visitors off the interstate and expose them to the exciting experiences our region offers. The Adventure Center attracted thousands of locals and visitors each year, but never quite provided the number of interactions the organization desired. With the lease coming due at the end of the calendar year, and discussions of how better to deploy visitor services throughout the region, Travel Lane County made the move to centralize visitor services at its 8th and Olive Street location. The pandemic required furloughing visitor services staff and during this time our visitor services team has left for other opportunities. This provides an opportunity for Travel Lane County to reimagine what's next for Visitor Services in 2021!



# DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

## PROJECTS FROM THE COAST TO THE CASCADES

The introduction of the South Willamette Valley Food Trail in late FY19 was followed by additional efforts around our culinary and agritourism product. The coast saw continuing efforts by the Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative. In the Cascades, Connect Lane made strides to implement signage on a second cycling route.



Our culinary and agritourism marketing efforts pivoted to help businesses advertise to a more local audience during COVID-19. The South Willamette Valley Food Trail created a holiday gift box featuring products from multiple food trail businesses. It was organized and offered on Provisions Market Hall's web sales platform. Gift boxes were purchased locally, statewide and across the United States and the steering committee will be evaluating future sales opportunities. The campaign was well-received by Travel Oregon and was featured in the statewide Giving the Gift of Oregon campaign.



The Central Coast Food Trail is nearing completion and will launch in 2021. The steering committee collected and reviewed applications and is now working on web content and marketing materials. Seven different Florence area businesses applied and will be featured on that trail.



After the devastating Holiday Farm Fire in the McKenzie River, the Development team created an inventory of recreation assets in the region, and reached out to partner businesses in the area to discuss their re-opening plans and what marketing support the region will need in 2021.

# LODGING SECTOR

Lodging property remodels continued throughout the region, and work on The Gordon and the expansion of the Best Western GreenTree continued in Eugene. The increase in rooms from these projects will be offset by the announcement that the Phoenix Inn will be closing this summer. Their lease with Bushnell University has not been renewed, which means the use of this property is being changed to student housing. Additionally, the Travelodge on Broadway Street in Eugene was removed for a housing project.

Our lodging properties stepped up in a big way following the Holiday Farm Fire. Fire evacuees were housed for many weeks as long-term housing was arranged. Additionally, lodging properties worked with the county to house homeless residents who tested positive for the COVID virus.

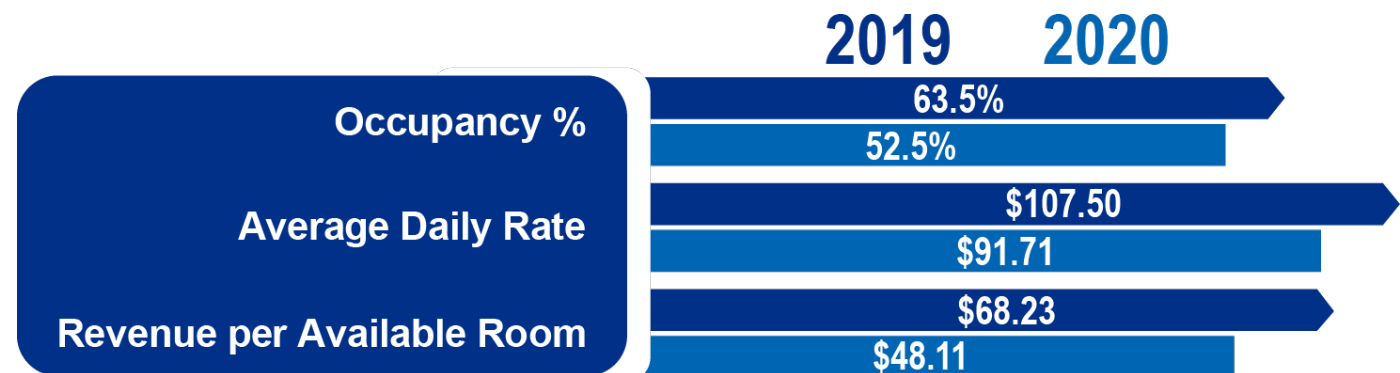


The Gordon Hotel



Best Western Greentree

As noted earlier, our lodging sector performance exceeded projections for much of the period, but remains significantly impacted by the pandemic. Stronger than anticipated occupancy early in the period was offset by decreases in average daily rates and revenue per available room.

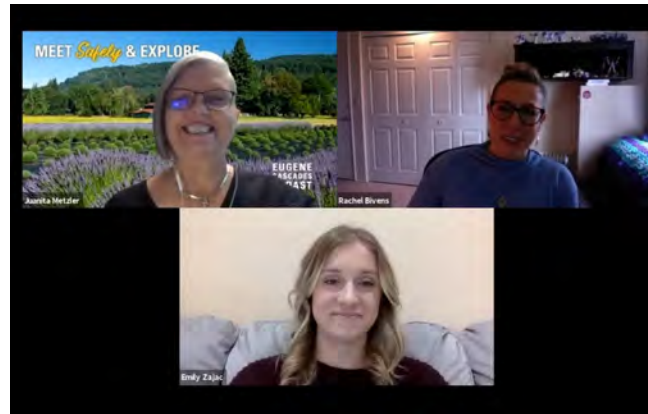


Source: Smith Travel Research

# CONVENTIONS & SPORTS

Conventions and sports marketing staff developed new branding assets for social media and the website that align with existing campaigns and support safety during the pandemic.

The Conventions team worked closely with the Integrated Marketing team to produce two videos highlighting local event venues Lane Events Center and Venue 252. These videos highlight the safety protocols for meetings that are being used to encourage meeting planners to return to the region when restrictions ease. The videos were then featured in a Meet Safely in Eugene virtual webinar for Oregon meeting planners in November.

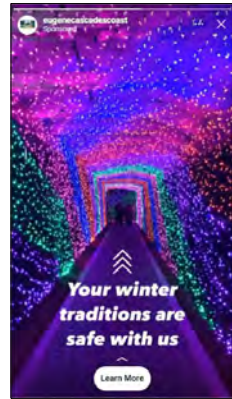


Eugene, Cascades & Coast Sports Commission staff were actively involved in helping to define and establish safe and manageable protocols for outdoor regional sporting events and also helped planners with strategies for meeting the required protocols. Several successful sporting events were hosted in the region during the summer including youth baseball tournaments and outdoor running and cycling events. Sports Commission staff continued selling events in 2021 and beyond, including working with the University of Oregon to secure the NCAA Division 1 Outdoor Track & Field Championships for 2021, 2022, and 2024-2027.

The Sports Commission hosted a successful virtual Oregon Sports Summit that brought together event planners and other members of the Oregon sports community for three half-days of educational sessions, roundtable discussions and networking opportunities.



# TOURISM MARKETING



Travel Lane County’s “Staycation” promotion gathered momentum in late summer and then was curtailed when the region faced both the Holiday Farm Fire and rapidly increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases. Tourism marketing efforts completely shifted to support businesses during this difficult time and prepare for visitation recovery.

During fall and winter re-assessment of high risk for Lane County and the State, Travel Lane County focused on a goal of supporting our local businesses by encouraging local spending and keeping locals safe but encouraged with inspiration. Travel Lane County also positioned safe travel messaging to those who were choosing to travel throughout the fall and early winter.

In preparation for travel recovery, efforts are aimed at planning marketing placements to drive and extend overnights stays as quickly as possible. This includes planning content with partners & vendors, developing creative placements and allocating funds to be positioned to implement a targeted travel campaign. With COVID vaccinations starting to roll out in late December, Travel Lane County is anticipating that travel demand will shift from planning to actual travel within this fiscal year. When it does, Lane County will be ready.

## Shop Local Campaign

335,103  
people reached

721,113  
impressions

16,569  
landing page views

3,000+  
clicks to events and deals

## Expedia Campaign

<h1 style="margin: 0;">3,467</h1> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Room nights generated</b></p>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">\$452,553</h1> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>in estimated lodging revenue generated</b></p>
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# INTEGRATED MARKETING

## EUGENECASCADESCOAST.ORG WEBSITE

### Sessions

2019 583,978

2020 455,631 -22%

### Users

2019 437,880

2020 357,789 -18%

Website traffic decreased from FY19 numbers, but an investment in search engine optimization and unique content has kept website performance relatively strong. The loss of events contributes significantly to this decrease, with the sharpest decreases occurring around key holidays like the 4th of July. Through participation in Destination Analysts' Website Importance Study during the first half of FY19, we were able to learn more about what information locals and visitors were looking to us to provide. 78% of survey respondents reported that the information they found on our website was either important or very important.

## CREATIVE & CONTENT

While the "This Moment" creative campaign helped keep our communities top-of-mind with nearby and future travelers, much of our creative and content support focused on supporting messages of safety and support for local businesses. All assets were developed in line with public health messaging, and in a way that they could be easily shared by area Chambers of Commerce and small businesses.





# STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

Travel Lane County partners struggled as COVID restrictions became more restrictive in late fall, which hit restaurants particularly hard. Cities worked to provide additional outdoor dining opportunities and the State passed legislation allowing to-go cocktail sales and a temporary cap on food delivery fees, which should help some restaurants stay afloat. Recognizing the financial strain on Travel Lane County partners, our board of directors approved a mitigation plan for partners who could not maintain their dues payments, including McKenzie River partners who will require time to rebuild and reopen to visitors.

Our strong partnerships with Lane County chambers of commerce provided opportunities to leverage training sessions, provide comprehensive COVID and fire relief information and to collaborate on “shop local” marketing campaigns. Working with the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) on “shop local” campaigns allowed Travel Lane County partners to be featured in regional and statewide promotional efforts. Coordination with WVVA around fire relief efforts, including the development of “volunteerism” opportunities for the McKenzie River corridor, has been a focus for Travel Lane County staff.



Travel Lane County, the Springfield Chamber of Commerce and the City of Springfield partnered to provide the 3rd Savor Springfield passport program. Participation was limited due to Holiday Farm Fire.



Award videos were created and shared on our YouTube channel. The 2020 recipients include: Destination Award – Obie Companies; Convention Leadership Award - Jeff Mugato of the University of Oregon; Sports Leadership Award – Moodo Taekwondo; Sports Legacy Award – Tom Jordan; Community Leadership Award – Marianne Brisbane; Stewardship Award – WildCraft Cider Works.



Our annual holiday party was another COVID casualty, so our team decided to thank area lodging partners for their hard work. Cookies were delivered throughout the County in early December.

# OFFICERS

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McKenzie River

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Turell Group  
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Lane County

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Florence - Oregon Coast

**Cathryn Stephens**  
Eugene Airport  
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**Travel Lane County**  
**Eugene Cascades & Coast**  
541.484.5307 800.547.5445  
EugeneCascadesCoast.org

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University of Oregon Athletics -  
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Trillium Community Health Plans  
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## Vonnie Mikkelsen

Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
Springfield



Eugene, Cascades & Coast  
Sports Commission

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EugeneCascadesCoastSports.org

# TRAVEL LANE COUNTY STAFF

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President & CEO

**Liz Bocking**  
Vice President of Finance & Administration

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**Natalie Inouye**  
Vice President of Destination Marketing

**Jeff Malik**  
Destination Development Manager

## Convention Sales & Marketing

**Juanita Metzler**  
Senior Director, Conventions

**Philis McLennan**  
Director of Conventions & Sports Marketing

**Linda Norris**  
Director of Convention Services

## Eugene Cascades & Coast Sports Commission

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Senior Director, Sports Commission

**Jessica Joyce**  
Director of Event Operations

**Katie Morton**  
Sports Sales & Marketing Coordinator

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**Julia Voigt**  
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**Taj Morgan**  
Director of Content Strategy

**Melanie Griffin**  
Content Manager

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Vice President of Stakeholder Relations

**Maxine Walton**  
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**Hayley Radich**  
Partner Services Manager



Travel Lane County  
Eugene Cascades & Coast  
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Sports Commission

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