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EDITOR'S PICK

Editorial: Sustainability fund is a good idea from Visit Bend

Bulletin Editorial Board
Jun 23, 2021



Bend from Pilot Butte.

123RF

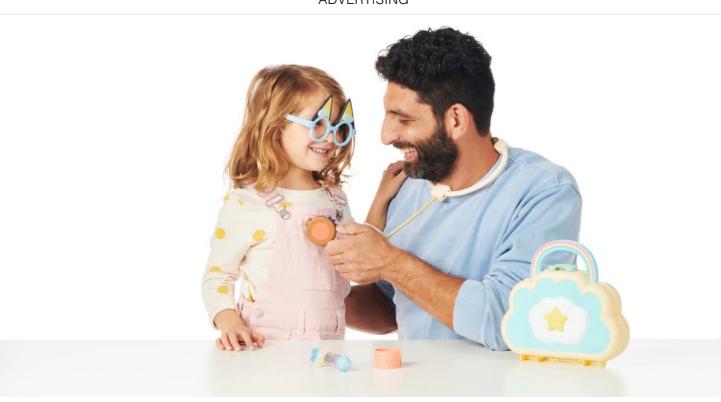
Some people will harrumph and scrunch up their faces if you mention tourists and Bend.

They have had enough of tourists. They have had enough of people treating Bend like a play thing. They have had enough of the added traffic. They have had enough of people visiting and then deciding to move here.

And for the scrunched up harrumphers there is perhaps no more despicable villain than Visit Bend. It's the economic development organization that adeptly tries to bring tourists here and ensure they have a positive impact. "We don't need it," we often hear harrumphed. "The word is out about Bend."

Of course, they do have a point. But Bend would be a very different place if those tourist dollars weren't boosting the economy. And by law, the money that comes in from tourism taxes has to be spent on tourism-related stuff.

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Already, Visit Bend has had a serious campaign at the forefront of its marketing efforts urging visitors to take [The Bend Pledge](#). It encourages people when they visit to tread softly, take only memories and leave only footprints. Be nice and behave. Visit Bend even gives away prizes for people who sign the pledge, encouraging more people to pay attention to it.

Visit Bend is also launching something new, the [Bend Sustainability Fund](#). It's going to take some of its funding and invest it in the community. It is looking to create tourism-related facilities that will last for more than 10 years. Such a facility would have to have substantial use by visitors because of those legal requirements for tourism taxes.

Anyone can apply for project funding. They must be able to pull the project off and the project must create sustainable recreational resources and outdoor experiences. Projects should be shovel ready. There must be community support for the project. There should be a plan for long-term maintenance and care. It should be accessible to all. The money is coming from the city's transient room tax, not other taxes. The grant application process starts on July 1.

What sorts of things might be right? Trailhead parking. Bike trails. Sports facilities. An equestrian camp. Improvements to Deschutes River access. Public restrooms, too.

Do you have an idea? There is more information here: www.visitbend.com/bend-sustainability-fund/.

This fund could bring some great improvements to Bend and environs for everyone.