

Agritourism

In October, Travel Oregon facilitated a Culinary Agritourism Studio in Southern Oregon in conjunction with Travel Southern Oregon and Travel Medford. These studios, held across Oregon, provide an excellent opportunity for rural agricultural communities to connect with a diverse group of individuals interested in elevating the region through agriculture and food. After months of planning, participants on the steering committee helped shape the studio presentation into something to serve collective and individual interests in promoting regional culinary tourism. The outcome of this studio is to create cohesiveness between existing businesses and produce a Food Trail map for visitors.

The Studio consisted of one day of education on land use planning, reviewing land use rules and regulations, and getting to know the roles Travel Oregon, Travel Southern Oregon and Travel Medford play in the community and how to access their resources. Following a full day, a fun FAM trip was taken to Pheasant Field Farms for refreshments and a hay ride followed by more delicious food at Eden Valley Orchards. Day two had the participants narrowing down their top three themes for the food trail and what they would like the trail name to be. The next step is for the steering committee, as well as any others who would like to participate, to take the information comprised by Travel Oregon and pick the themes and the food trail name. The application process will open in March of 2020.

Group Tour

Kristy Painter will take over the Group Tour and Travel Department when long time contractor Sue Price finally hangs up her hat! Painter is shadowing Price at several upcoming shows to glean over 40 years of hospitality and group tour experience from her.

Painter will attend the National Tour Association (NTA) meeting December 8th-12th in Fort Worth, Texas, as well as the National Tour Association Connect conference in Anchorage, Alaska March 18-21, 2020, representing Travel Medford. NTA features 20-30 one-on-one appointments with domestic tour operators looking for new tour ideas. At this show, Travel Medford works with Travel Oregon and other regions in the state to sell Oregon first by sponsoring an invitation-only dinner and other activities. The existing Travel Medford itineraries will have the new brand and look, as well as a “What’s New” sheet to keep them updated. NTA Connect is an educational session specifically for tour operators. Sponsorship opportunities are available for DMOs and RDMOs.

Painter attended the Fall Board and General Meeting for Oregon Tour and Travel Alliance (OTTA) held at the Oregon Garden Resort in Silverton, Oregon. OTTA is an independent non-profit membership organization that works in partnership with Travel Oregon to increase packaged travel to Oregon. OTTA is a professional association comprised of companies from across the state including: lodging properties, attractions, restaurants, transportation companies, tour operators, receptive operators, destination marketing organizations and more. Many are members of the National Tour Association, the American Bus Association, the Student Youth Travel Association and other professional industry associations. OTTA and its partners work together to ensure members are highly visible at annual conventions, marketplaces and other trade shows. OTTA collectively participates in sponsorships, special events and networking opportunities to increase awareness of unique experiences offered by our members. In addition, we ensure Oregon is top of mind among tour operators (even those who do not attend conventions or marketplaces) through direct mail and special promotions that take place year round. OTTA will also launch a new website soon. The spring meeting will be held in Ashland at the Ashland Hills Hotel, April 5-6, 2020.

Visitor Information Center (VIC)

Volunteers welcomed visitors from 32 of the 50 states, and 20 international visitors, during the month of October. From those who signed our guest book, we had the most visitors from Portland, OR; Sacramento, CA; San Francisco, CA; Seattle, WA and Reno, NV. Our volunteers also visited the historic Lady Geneva Bed & Breakfast Inn so they could learn more about another local business.

Airport

The airport continues to see record number passengers pass through its gates. Also, phase 1 of the new airport information desk is done and phase 2 — work on the signage — has begun. We are looking to complete the installation of the new signage and information desk by mid-November. Stay tuned because we will hold a ribbon cutting and welcome party at the new airport information desk soon.