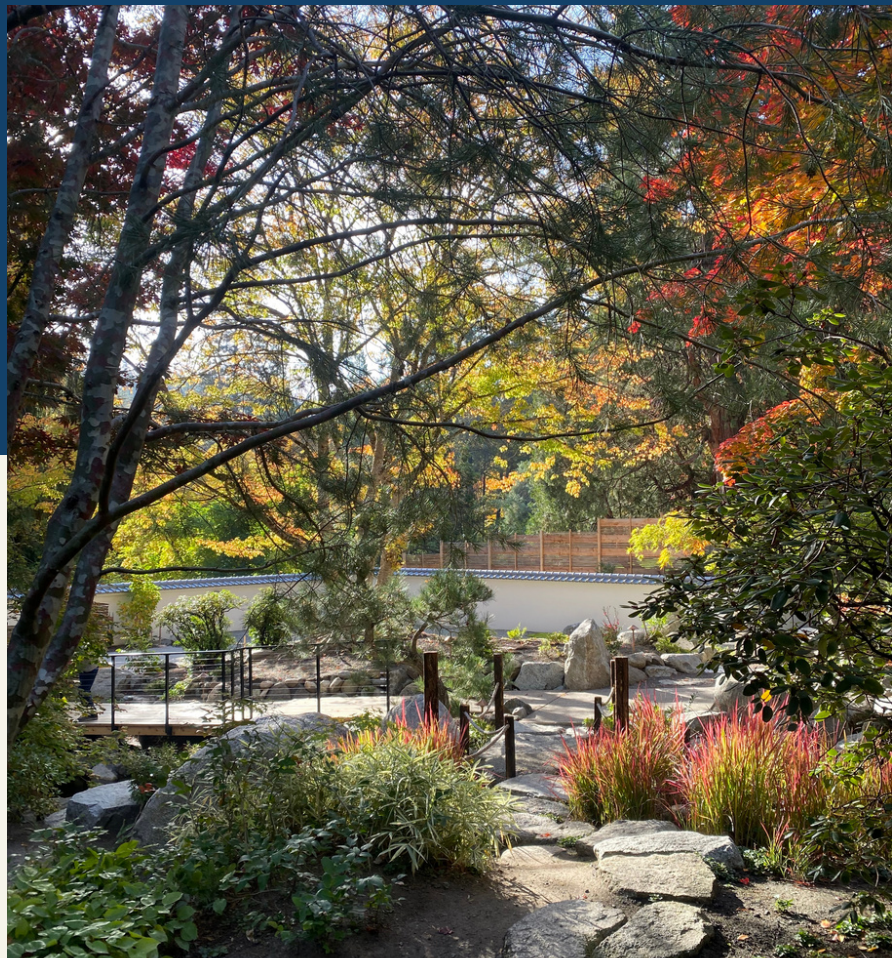


FY 2022 – 2023

City Grant Report

Ashland Chamber of Commerce
Travel Ashland (Visitor & Convention Bureau)



A word from the Chamber

The Ashland Chamber of Commerce is honored to present the City Grant report in collaboration with Travel Ashland (Ashland Visitors and Convention Bureau) for the FY 2022-2023. The Ashland Chamber has been producing a report annually, to the City on behalf of our destination tourism, promotional efforts since the first grant was received in 1982.

The Ashland Chamber is the umbrella organization that administers the grant to manage and promote destination tourism for Ashland. A dedicated staff and budget, Travel Ashland Director and industry professionals who serve on the Travel Ashland Committee create, execute and manage the programs, projects and events. The Chamber, in collaboration with Travel Ashland, amplifies what the tourism program creates.

As the following report details, Travel Ashland expanded the implementation of their brand platform effectively reaching new targeted persons in both drive and flight markets, coupled with the interests and seasons that drove the campaign architecture. Within the reporting fiscal year, a new event was produced, the Ashland Mystery Fest that garnered nearly 1000 attendees in its first year. Travel Ashland also incorporated data platforms to further inform our decisions and planning concerning visitation and travel trends. Travel Ashland invested time and resources building assets for promotions with imagery and film along with launching a new YouTube channel, creating polygonal targeted audiences (PTA) campaigns and garnering strong engagement.

Please review the Executive Summary in the report for highlights of the scope of work completed by Travel Ashland along with the detailed description of Travel Ashland's work throughout the report.

Alongside the effective destination management of Travel Ashland, we serve as the Economic Development entity as well as a vibrant membership organization. Our strong partnerships include our state and federal legislators and staff, private and non-profit key leaders, business owners and the City which continues to grow as we collectively address issues and challenges.

Following the completion of the Economic Diversification strategy for Ashland in October of 2022, the implementation of work done with each pillar identified has incorporated focus groups, subject matter experts and actionable changes that are currently taking place and planned for the year ahead. From downtown revitalization to expanding the talent pool and fostering business growth, we are creating positive changes that are long-term solutions. Diversifying tourism, while a consistent effort of Travel Ashland has expanded to include work with the city on creating fertile ground and streamlining the process of having events in Ashland.

We support our businesses as well as our community seen through our programs including our Emergency Preparedness work and partnerships.

With over five hundred members, representing thousands of employees, the Chamber promotes the entire community. We believe by working collectively we are successful. It is with appreciation that we present the enclosed report and stand ready to continue to be a partner in Ashland's success.



Sandra Slattery
Executive Director



Deena Branson
Chamber Board President



Travel Ashland effectively leverages grant dollars to support a year-round workforce, visitation and quality of life. Tourism dollars generated support essential services for the City and our economy.

- In the reporting fiscal year, Travel Ashland expanded our brand platform implementation through our targeted marketing strategy and channels attracting new visitors year-round from both flight and drive markets.
- We strengthened our industry partnerships with regional and statewide partners; supported and amplified Ashland events and created a new event, Ashland Mystery Fest.
- We incorporated new data platforms to better inform and forecast our decisions and planning. We produced new assets in film and imagery and further diversified our visitor base.
- Travel Ashland leverages lodging tax grant dollars to promote our destination and diversify our visitor, by providing the furthest, effective market outreach and destination management that businesses and partners depend upon.
- For the past 41 years, the City's investment has enabled Travel Ashland to generate lodging tax dollars with our industry partners and operators to fuel Ashland's economy.
- These dollars and the impact of visitation also support our year-round workforce, enhance our quality of life, fund essential services and sustain amenities that residents value. It underscores why we live here.
- Of the lodging tax generated: 70% goes to the City's general fund; 30% are restricted tourism dollars that, by state law, must be reinvested back into the tourism industry.

Travel Ashland

Annual Report
FY 2022-2023

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Purpose

Travel Ashland's job is "to manage and promote Ashland to visitors traveling from more than 50 miles to Ashland and to visitors who stay overnight in Ashland. Promotion includes digital advertising, publicizing, distribution of printed materials, marketing special events and festivals, conducting strategic planning, visitor center management and research necessary to stimulate tourism development." Excerpt from Agreement for Services between City of Ashland and Ashland Chamber of Commerce 2022- 2023.

Mission

To deliver an unmatched travel experience that engages the visitor, encourages repeat visitation, converts visitors into potential residents and services groups, tours and conferences. Attracting outdoor travelers, culinary and wine enthusiasts and those with cultural interests, Travel Ashland researches, analyzes and assesses the visitor and our assets to best promote, respond and pivot using the latest tools available through times of crisis, opportunity, recovery and expansion.

About Travel Ashland

For forty-one years, the City of Ashland and the community have relied on Travel Ashland (Ashland's official Destination Marketing Organization) through an annual grant, to promote Ashland as a unique year-round, travel destination.

Travel Ashland's work is done through leveraging dollars received through the grant and fostering strategic partnerships with public and private sectors to promote and engage the tourism industry and visitors while conducting effective research and analysis each season that focuses on growing business in times of lower occupancy.

About this Report

With the passing of Ashland City Council Resolution 2021-03, Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland are required to submit an annual report regarding funds received during the prior fiscal year pursuant to ORS 320.300 through ORS 320.350.

Executive Summary

Fiscal Year 2022–2023

The following grant report represents the Fiscal Year 2022–2023 (July 2022 – June 2023) and the work completed in compliance with the grant guidelines and purpose stated in the contract for services between the City of Ashland and Ashland Chamber/Travel Ashland (VCB).

Travel Ashland is nimble as it assesses and responds to each month and season in terms of visitation and travel trends to make informed decisions going forward with promotions, campaigns and projects. Now that we are past the pandemic, we saw significant strength in 2022 with travelers emerging out of the pandemic. The outdoor industry was at an all time high in terms of revenues along with the vacation rental market. 2023 saw some softness not only in Ashland but around the country as domestic travel compressed with many Americans traveling abroad on postponed trips from the pandemic. Watching these metrics and data points was key to not only refer to year over year numbers but relating to pre-pandemic revenues for our businesses.

Travel Ashland's unique role as a destination organization is to inspire and attract visitors to Ashland. We do this through our partnerships, our targeted marketing strategy and brand platform, projects, promotions and programs.

In this report you will find a recap of the scope of work completed. Quarterly updates have been presented to Ashland City Council, Mayor and Staff over the course of this fiscal year and are referenced throughout. This proactive, frequent communication and transparency has enabled a stronger alignment and understanding of the work of Travel Ashland.

Travel Ashland invested in new data platforms to inform our decisions and planning that include Datafy which houses visitor geolocation, vehicular and consumer spending data. AirDNA provides vacation rental data that can help balance out the conversation when looking at the entirety of the lodging industry in Ashland knowing traveler trends are emerging the way in which people travel and stay.

Asset development was a major investment and effort in creating film and imagery for each of the brand personas, interests, seasons and utilizing them through our channels.

Travel Ashland's analytics were strong and grew year over year in terms of our engagement through our display advertising, search campaigns, our site traffic to www.travelashland.com along with our social channels on FB & IG which saw a major increase in followers and reach. Within the reporting fiscal year, Travel Ashland launched multiple polygonal targeted audience campaigns, where we can track the visitors that were here during a certain time period and invite them back through targeted marketing campaigns. Travel Ashland launched its YouTube channel that houses the finished promotional videos and is garnering strong engagement as well. We annually produce the Ashland Visitor Guide and the Living & Doing Business Guide informing visitors and those looking to relocate.

Travel Ashland's work with groups, tours and conferences has continued to return from hosting the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association conference with Neuman Hotel Group to securing future conference business such as the Oregon Mayor's Association in summer of 2026 to the Oregon River Systems conference. Travel Ashland hosts media and travel writers to garner the 3rd party perspective with many scheduled for 2024.

Regional and statewide alignment is strong, and Travel Ashland remains a key player at the table with partners such as Travel Oregon and Travel Southern Oregon, continuing to position Ashland as a vital visitor destination.

Travel Ashland worked in fostering a more fertile ground and streamlining the event process to build more year-round events. Those efforts should come to fruition in 2024. Travel Ashland produced a new event, the Ashland Mystery Fest that welcomed nearly 1000 folks and is due to grow exponentially in 2024.

We continue our mission to educate, promote, to assess, listen, support and move forward with the goal of increasing visitation, towards a steadier visitor volume thus increasing revenues of the Transient Occupancy Tax and Food & Beverage Tax and the tourism industry. This is a collective effort through growing our valuable partnerships and diversifying our visitor. The overarching goal is to deliver a unique travel experience that engages the visitor, encourages repeat visitation and converts visitors into Ashland residents. This is done through servicing individuals, industry partners, groups, tours and conference attendees. We accomplish this through our scope of work and strategic initiatives.

Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland (VCB) have a unique vantage point, serving as a sounding board, fostering effective partnerships and innovative programs that position our organization. In addition to the traditional responsibilities of a Chamber of Commerce and membership organization, we enjoy the added responsibility of a Destination Marketing and Management Organization and a key element of the City of Ashland Economic Development Strategy.

Travel Ashland (VCB) continues to serve as the gateway to Ashland, Southern Oregon, all of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest with approximately 60% of visitors continuing to arrive to Oregon through our corridor. We are open to the public year-round, free of charge, providing an authentic message and superior travel experience. We submit this report for your review and thank you for your continued partnership and investment.



Katharine Cato

Travel Ashland Director



Sandra Slattery

Executive Director

Who is Travel Ashland and what do they do?

Serving as a regionally and statewide recognized Destination organization, Travel Ashland's role is to effectively use dollars, received through the grant that is funded by lodging tax revenue collections and to foster strategic partnerships with public and private sectors to promote and engage the tourism industry and visitors.

For forty-one years, the City of Ashland and the business community have relied on Travel Ashland (Ashland's official Destination Organization) through an annual grant, to promote Ashland as a unique year-round travel destination, to visitors.

Travel Ashland promotes all of Ashland, its experiences, events and seasons to targeted personas, interests and markets established in our brand platform. Engaging and educating new and existing visitors to visit Ashland, to spend dollars in Ashland's lodging, retail, restaurants, wineries, outfitters and attractions is at the heart of the work they do.

Travel Ashland attracts, promotes, services and supports groups, tours and conferences through collaborative partnerships. They serve as a sounding board to the tourism industry, members and businesses, providing support, guidance and facilitating opportunities to grow together depending upon the issue, the partner or timing.

They work closely with our stakeholders to support their efforts in delivering an unmatched travel experience that engages the visitor, encourages repeat visitation, converts visitors into potential residents and services groups, tours and conferences.

Travel Ashland uses metrics such as the lodging tax revenue collections, food and beverage tax collections along with new data platforms they have invested in including the STR lodging reporting, Datafy that tracks on vehicular data, consumer spending data and geolocation data. They also have invested with AirDNA to track vacation rental data and show trends over time.

Travel Ashland produces, manages and distributes the tools that visitors use to make their travel plans such as Travel Ashland's social media channels on Facebook and Instagram. They launched our YouTube channel that has garnered strong engagement. Travel Ashland's website, www.travelashland.com guides visitors effectively within the site to serve them the most relevant information in the fewest clicks in mobile, tablet and desktop versions.

Travel Ashland produces an annual **Visitors Guide** that showcases a calendar, maps, Itinerary ideas and reasons to make Ashland their next travel destination. The digital version of the Guide can be downloaded for free. The **Ashland Map Guide** provides wayfinding and access to Ashland's recreation and outdoors including Lithia Park, the Ashland Watershed, the City of Ashland and Parks. Free digital version available on all sites and www.avenzamaps.com

Travel Ashland manages the visitor center and Plaza information kiosk serving tens of thousands of visitors year-round with the help of nearly 50 volunteers. We operate the Travel Ashland Advisory Committee made up of tourism industry representatives from lodging, restaurant, outdoor outfitters, wine industry, retail, theater and attractions. This advisory committee assesses each season's visitation and provides input to planning campaigns and programs that Travel Ashland carries out.

Travel Ashland produced a new event in October 2023, the Ashland Mystery Fest and are working closely with the City to foster fertile ground and a streamlined process for events year-round in Ashland. They produce major events including the Festival of Light Celebration, the Fourth of July and the Children's Halloween Celebration.

Travel Ashland works collaboratively and supports many community events with partners such as SOPride, Rogue World Music Festival, Oregon Chocolate Festival, Ashland Mountain Challenge, Mt. Ashland events, Ashland Gallery Association, OSF, Britt and outdoor partners.

Travel Ashland Leadership

The Travel Ashland Advisory Committee is made up of members from different areas of the tourism industry from lodging, restaurant, outdoors, culinary, wine industry, retail, theater, museum and attractions. Under the advisory direction of the committee and Chair, Katharine Cato, Director, executes the strategic direction, promotions, campaigns, project and programs with support from Chamber staff. Pete Wallstrom, owner of Momentum River Expeditions began as Travel Ashland Chair November 2021 and led through October 2023. Scott Malbaurn, Executive Director of the Schneider Museum of Art is the current Chair.



Katharine Cato

Director
Travel Ashland



Scott Malbaurn

Current Chair
Schneider Museum



Pete Wallstrom

Past Chair
Momentum River Expeditions

These are the roots of our tourism pillars which the Ashland brand grew from. Travel Ashland continues to expand upon these targeting new visitors in new markets.



Evolving Cultural offerings

Ashland's cultural offerings span beyond performing arts to visual arts, music, heritage and so much more. Pre-pandemic, a third of Ashland's visitor base were Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) playgoers. That is no longer the case. Visitors are coming for many different reasons and doing a spectrum of activities while here. OSF is one of those amenities alongside our culinary scene, wineries, trails and other cultural offerings.

For the past decade Travel Ashland has been diversifying our visitor base with new visitors for new reasons such as the outdoors, trails, access to nature, culinary and wine scene, relaxation, art and music.

OSF remains a cornerstone of Ashland's cultural draw and Travel Ashland is enthused by OSF's 2024 season that is returning to a fuller repertoire of plays thus drawing back OSF patrons who have come in the past along with new visitors that can include OSF in their itineraries.

Embracing the change the Ashland visitor and industry became less reliant on OSF's playgoer when they were closed during the pandemic. This was a significant acknowledgement to the strength of the other reasons visitors come to Ashland.

There are many other cultural reasons visitors are drawn to Ashland. Through our Visitor Research and Analysis Study, we found visitors are not just coming for one reason or experience, but they are coming to experience a multitude of experiences and therefore spend more time and engage with more of the amenities Ashland offers.

Performing arts beyond OSF OSF has been the platform for many other theaters to grow, some of which attract both visitors and locals. The Oregon Cabaret, Rogue Theater Company, Ashland New Plays Festival and neighboring Camelot Theatre offer shows and are selling out in many cases.

Heritage There is a strong collaboration with the Arts Commission and regional partners to grow Ashland’s heritage tourism that draws visitors. Beyond history, it is the story and roots of how Ashland and our area evolved.

Music With our proximity between Portland and San Francisco, we have the ability to attract more musicians and performances that create a visitor draw. 2023 saw major strides in building back our music scene at Britt, Oregon Center for the Arts and the Rogue Valley Symphony partnering with OSF to utilize their venue for a sold-out holiday performance.

Visual Art Ashland artists, studios, markets and the creative community draw visitors from all over the world to Ashland. Art Beyond is an example of collaboration with natural spaces and art produced by the Schneider Museum of Art every other year.

Shopping Visitors are drawn to Ashland for an authentic, shopping experience, forming relationships with independently owned shops and store owners who create retail experiences for them that are memorable. Given the changing visitor demographics, we have been and continue to assess how it is affecting retail trends in product demand and spending.



Ashland's thriving Culinary Scene

Ashland's culinary scene draws visitors as its own reason to visit along with serving as the backdrop to the many destination trips visitors plan to Ashland. Over 100 restaurants, our creative chefs and proximity to locally grown and produced goods provide a year-round experience. Coupled with the growth of our wine industry, tasting rooms and identity as the Rogue Valley AVA, the number of culinary travelers, wine enthusiasts and agritourists have increased year over year- being drawn to our emerging wine country, award-winning chefs, innovative restaurants, breweries and food artisans coupled with the unique destination of Ashland.

Many culinary events drive visitation in the off-season and throughout the year. Regionally, with the formation of Rogue Valley Vintners and Rogue Valley Wine Country identity, signifying southern Oregon as a wine destination synonymous with a southern Oregon vacation, there is growth in attracting more wine enthusiasts to our region of all ages. **In 2022, Rogue Valley AVA was nominated as one of the Top 5 Wine Regions in the World by Wine Enthusiast.**

Another regional example is the **Rogue Valley Food Trail**, launched in 2020, a collaborative effort with Travel Oregon, Travel Southern Oregon, Travel Ashland and local partners that showcases itineraries highlighting agritourism – farms, food artisans and onsite experiences throughout the Valley.

By hosting culinary travel writers and influencers, the Ashland culinary scene is being noticed and written about through multiple media channels and gaining more followers on social media channels.

Despite workforce challenges and rising costs, Ashland restaurants, artisans and wineries remain strong, nimble and continue to provide the unmatched hospitality Ashland is known for. Through our economic work, we are creating ways to foster workforce development. The more we promote year-round visitation, the more supported a year-round workforce is employed.



Ashland's Outdoors

Ashland has always attracted outdoor travelers to experience its trails, mountains, lakes and rivers. Given Ashland's unique location at the convergence of the Cascade and Siskiyou Mountain ranges and proximity to the Pacific Crest Trail, Ashland is an ideal basecamp for adventure. Travel Ashland's brand promotes that and its accessibility to the trails.

Continuing to foster the growth of the basecamp aspect is one of the identified key initiatives of the Ashland Chamber's Economic Diversification Study, Diversifying Tourism pillar, released in October 2022.

With the backdrop of the Ashland Watershed, Mt. Ashland and accessibility to trails and regional terrain, what sets Ashland apart from destinations such as Bend is that Ashland is a mountain town with unmatched cultural and culinary amenities such as Rogue Valley Wine Country, over 100 restaurants and the arts. By attracting the responsible outdoor adventure traveler, we sustain Ashland's quality of life and thus attract a future, active workforce.

The outdoors has been the leading reason new visitors are coming to Ashland. With the past visitor economy comprising a third of the visitor base attending plays at OSF, their characteristics were traditional, older, loyal and predictable with long-term booking windows.

Through the pandemic, the outdoor industry exploded and everyone was interested in getting outdoors and recreating. The industry observed a major bubble from 2020 through early 2023 that is starting to right size to pre-pandemic numbers. This includes sales within the outdoor industry, visitation, trips and traffic. In 2022 we saw the sustained growth of the outdoor adventure coming to Ashland. Handlebar, the new bike shop with a coffee bar in downtown Ashland is an example of how visitor interests can drive business growth. It is exciting to have new energy in the downtown.

For over a decade, Travel Ashland has been enacting that outdoor message and invitation to visitors to educate them on reasons to enjoy Ashland beyond the Oregon Shakespeare Festival that we will continue to do. As a community and as businesses, we have an opportunity to welcome, attract and build relationships with outdoor adventurer travelers who are coming to Ashland.

Our outdoor partnerships and work to showcase Ashland's outdoors include:

- With partners like **Mt. Ashland and the Ashland Forest Resiliency project along with Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association, Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest, BLM, Ashland Devo and Ashland Woodland Trails Association**, Ashland's trails and assets are maintained through effective stewardship practices and encouraging responsible recreation. These assets and easy access enable Ashland to grow as an unmatched outdoor destination for runners, hikers and riders.
- Currently we are exploring how best to disperse mountain bikers throughout our trail system, looking at developing wayfinding and connectivity to town and businesses.
- **Travel Ashland serves as the Lead Proponent, and drove the effort to get the official designation for the Cascade Siskiyou Scenic Bikeway (CSSB), one of 14 Scenic Bikeways in Oregon and was designated by the Oregon State Parks and Recreation commission on June 25th, 2015.** Of the thousands of proposed miles, the Scenic Bikeway committee reviews, less than half is recommended. The route begins at Garfield Park on East Main, travels up the Green Springs Hwy 66, over Hyatt and Howard Prairie and back down Dead Indian Memorial Road to Garfield Park, totaling 52 miles. The Scenic bikeway has seen an increase in ridership. When weather is conducive, The Up and Down Bike Event each July commemorates the route welcoming over 100 riders. Official signage has been installed along the route to create awareness for riders.
- **Ashland's visitor is diversifying and there is new data on the outdoor traveler – the mountain biker.** Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing sports in the country and is the current number one user of public lands in the country. The average mountain biker spends \$491 for a weekend visit to a destination. (source: IMBA) Ashland is currently shuttling over 3,000 riders per year up into the Ashland Watershed.

Travel Ashland and the Ashland Chamber effectively communicate, educate and inspire our industry and visitors during periods of growth, challenge and opportunity. Businesses, owners and employees of Ashland depend on us.

Travel Ashland and Ashland Chamber serve a role only we possess. This is a very unique position in the community and business industry that allows us to create such valuable partnerships, lean on those in times of crisis and serve as a sounding board to a diversity of organizations, residents, visitors, members and private sector businesses. From retailers to hotels, restaurants, outfitters, wineries, artisans, galleries, theaters and our community, relies on us.



Officially Designated Tourism Organizations and Alignment:

Travel Ashland's **partnerships** are inherent to our success. We maximize and leverage exposure for Ashland as a major destination through strong cooperative efforts by sharing the message of the brand with partners and stakeholders while growing partnerships within the industry and fostering the growth of industry relations locally, regionally and statewide.



Industry Partners

- **Private sector partners** include lodging, restaurants, wineries, attractions, retailers, outfitters, members of Ashland Chamber and beyond
- **Oregon Tourism Commission dba. Travel Oregon** (statewide tourism) Travel Oregon has created a 10-year strategic plan and is building new grant opportunities across the state.
- **Ride Oregon** – cycle tourism branch of Travel Oregon
- **RDMO's (Regional Destination Marketing Organizations)**
 - **Central Oregon Visitors Association**
 - **Eastern Oregon Visitors Association**
 - **Oregon Coast Visitors Association**
 - **Travel Southern Oregon** Past President and current Board Member: Katharine Cato, Travel Ashland Director. Alignment with our regional partners is key to providing a positive and consistent visitor experience and effective industry communication. Exposure from features and opportunities to host travel writers come through this partnership channel.
- **ODA – Oregon Destination Association** – Current President and Board Member, Katharine Cato serves representing Southern Oregon in the statewide discussion on issues such as lodging taxes, funding, visitation trends. This statewide DMO organization advocates, educates and supports the tourism industry and its leaders.
- **ORLA- Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association** Workforce development issues continue to be a central challenge for most industries, including tourism and hospitality. ORLA and Travel Oregon are looking at what a partnership might be in tackling the workforce development challenges and beyond with the goal of strengthening strategies to be supported and implemented by DMOs at the community level.
- **Regional DMO's (Destination Marketing Organizations):**
 - **Travel Medford**
 - **Discover Klamath**
 - **Travel Grants Pass**
 - **Experience Roseburg**

- **Travel Southern Oregon Coast**
- **Visit Bend**
- **Travel Salem**
- **Travel Portland**
- **Rogue Valley Vintners and Rogue Valley Wine Country** – Current Board Member, Katharine Cato. The Rogue Valley’s organization that promotes wine in the Rogue Valley AVA and the Applegate AVA.
- **Oregon Film and Television Office and Film Southern Oregon**
- **OTIC– Oregon Tourism Information Council**
- **OTTA– Oregon Tour and Travel Alliance**
- **NTA– National Tour Association**
- **IFWTW– International Food & Wine Travel Writers**
- **BATW– Bay Area Travel Writer**
- **Oregon State Parks and Recreation Scenic Bikeway Committee**
- **Federal Agencies:**
 - The Nature Conservancy
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - United States Forest Service
 - ODOT
- **We value our Local Partners and work with them to support them, collaborate and expand our success:** Jackson County – bicycle and pedestrian, roads and parks divisions; Ashland Parks and Recreation; Ashland Forest Resiliency Project (now AFAR); Rogue Valley Vintners; Rogue Valley Symphony; Ashland Independent Film Festival; Stay Ashland; Ashland Gallery Association; Britt Festival; Oregon Shakespeare Festival; Southern Oregon University; International Mountain Bike Association; Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association; Siskiyou Velo Club; Rogue Valley Growers and Crafters Market; Klamath Bird Observatory; Scienceworks Hands On Museum and Mt. Ashland Ski Area among many others.

Crisis Communication:

Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland have longstanding partnerships with legislators, representatives, regional and statewide organizations that are key to be able to rely on when challenges and crisis are present. From wildfires, poor air quality, the pandemic, and tragic issues that arise, we have a strong network and communication plan to ensure we are informing the visitor of real time, transparent information so they can make the best travel decisions.

Regional and Statewide Tourism Programs

The Travel Ashland director, Katharine Cato serves on the Travel Southern Oregon Board of Directors and is Past President. Travel Ashland has had a continued presence at the regional tourism table since its inception.

After decades of deliberation Siskiyou Welcome Center opened for Labor Day Weekend 2019 with a regional gala opening including partners from around the region with collaborative efforts from Travel Oregon, Travel Southern Oregon and local DMO's and attraction. It is open daily until 7pm in the summer and 5pm in the winter. It is staffed by employees of Travel Southern Oregon and managed by TSO under contract with Travel Oregon. The welcome center is located at the ODOT Siskiyou Safety Rest Area along the northbound I-5 corridor, near milepost 12 south of Ashland. The welcome center serves as a respite for travelers coming from the Siskiyou Summit, the highest pass on I-5 between Canada and Mexico. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about and be inspired by Oregon. The center is staffed by experts offering concierge-style guest service.

Oregon State Welcome Centers Travel Oregon operates staffed welcome centers at key entry points around the state. These welcome centers are an essential part of a visitor's experience and provide in-person engagement with Travel Oregon's brand. They are able to offer this efficient and extensive program thanks to critical partnerships with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, ODOT, Oregon Travel Experience, Seaside Visitors Bureau, Port of Portland, and the Port of Morrow.

OREGON GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM Each year Travel Oregon hosts the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism in a different part of the state.

Oregon Destination Association serves as the statewide DMO/RDMO voice for tourism advocacy with the legislature as well as fostering education and collaborative opportunities such as the annual ODA conference, quarterly ODA member webinars to focus on the latest needs such as governance, advocacy blueprints and working to ensure our regional partners are best supported and informed during the legislative session.

For more information on Regional programs visit:

www.southernoregon.org/industry

For more information on Statewide programs visit:

www.industry.traveloregon.com and <https://oregondestinationassociation.com/>

Travel Ashland's Visitor Research and Analysis study followed by the Ashland Chamber's Economic Diversification Study informed and established a solid foundation for a new Ashland brand and building future resiliency for Ashland's economy and tourism base.

Since the inception of Travel Ashland, our programs and promotions have been based on quality research. Given the anecdotal changes we were observing in pre-pandemic years then exacerbated by the pandemic, OSF's closure and increased poor air quality due to wildfires since 2017, Travel Ashland embarked on the Visitor Research and Analysis Study outlined below.



Travel Ashland has been diversifying the type of visitors Ashland welcomes for decades including the younger, outdoor and culinary traveler. Balancing this with the historical, cultural traveler, and working to maintain the steady visitor volume throughout the year, Travel Ashland embarked on the visitor study to explore new trends, competitive markets, and the highest potential visitor personas to target in future marketing.

Visitor Study Background:

Upon receiving funding in July of 2020 earmarked for research, Travel Ashland embarked on the project with the chosen firm through an RFP process, Destination Analysts (currently known as Future Partners) and launched the study in November 2020. created a Request for Proposal to conduct a Visitor Research and Analysis Study.

The Visitor Study's scope of work included researching the Ashland leisure visitor – the previous and current visitor, the first-time visitor, as well as future and potential visitors. Based on the current and common observations, we wanted to explore the changes in loyalty, demo and psychographics, their spending trends and length of stay. The study also analyzed personas including families, wine travelers, culinary, outdoor adventurers, arts and culture as well as young travelers. We explored new seasonality trends and potential that is driving travel consideration to Ashland. As well as competitive markets such as Bend, Lake Tahoe and Healdsburg and evaluated new market potential. The scope of work included recommendations on how to best leverage our assets. Deliverables included an in-depth analysis and assessment of the above that would then drive our informed marketing decisions, strategic direction and ultimately a new brand for Ashland.

The study included three surveys, the first being a **quantitative survey of Leisure Travelers in Key Markets (1500 results** from LA, San Francisco, Seattle, Sacramento/Redding and within the state of Oregon) from those respondents.

The second survey consisted of **qualitative In-depth Interviews of individuals** who were vetted through our research firm that showed strong interest to travel, were a diverse group and had a high potential to Ashland. **Ten, 45-minute interviews** were conducted which provided key insights into unfiltered feedback and perceptions of Ashland.

The third survey was of **Owned partner databases that included over 5700 responses** who had visited Ashland within the past 3 years and were engaged with one of our key partners such as Mt. Ashland, Neuman Hotel Group, Weisinger Family Winery, OSF and Momentum River Expeditions. The balance of these 3 surveys provided us a well-round analysis. The findings from this study will then serve as the foundation for the new brand and guide the updated marketing strategy.

The deeper level of research revealed key findings that validated our observations of the largest shift in Ashland's visitor base trending younger and here to do a multitude of activities including wine tasting, outdoor adventuring and shopping. The study found we have a clear opportunity to educate new and potential travelers, expand upon drive markets, push into new flight markets and increase steady visitor volume year-round. It found Ashland's strengths to be a walkable, small, friendly, welcoming town with scenic beauty with well established wellness protocols in place that was and still is important to those respondents of the survey.

The focus of this study was on the visitor and will influence the larger research project the Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland are concurrently doing. These findings have been embedded in the overarching Economic Development analysis we kicked off in November of 2021 that will analyze all sectors including the evolving regional visitor industries that are responding to these changes.



View the Executive Summary of the Visitor Research and Analysis [here.](#)

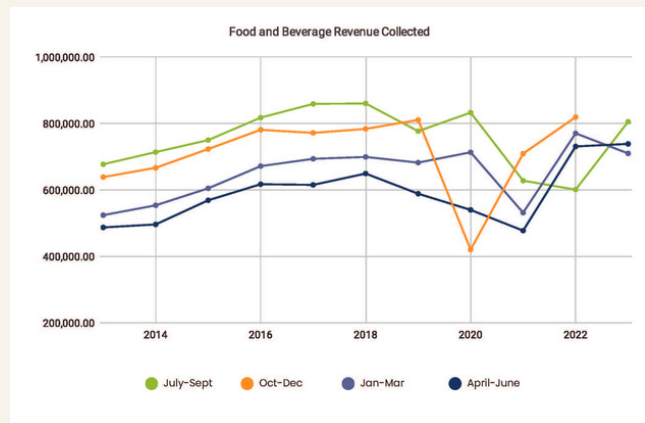
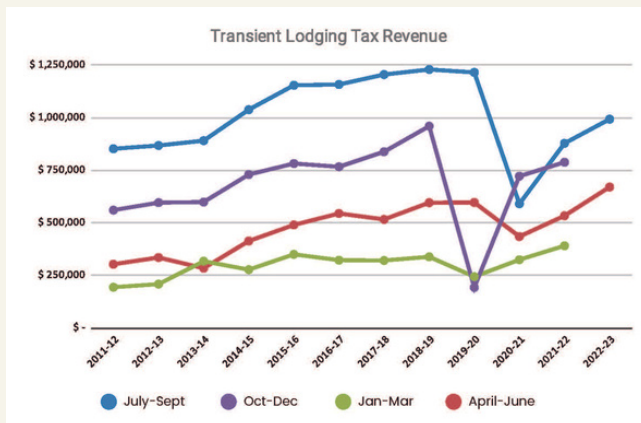


The legacy of tourism's impact and resilience

Travel Ashland, since its inception forty one years ago, has collected industry knowledge through research and depending upon the need, plans accordingly, in collaboration with our business partners, the most effective marketing promotions to meet the demands we hear. This strengthens and validates our direction as well as expands our market reach.

It is important to note in these rapidly changing times we have particular strength that we are nimble and flexible to react to market changes and constantly adapting our marketing efforts to reflect those trends. Travel Ashland annually analyzes the Food and Beverage tax collections and the Transient Occupancy Tax collections. We chart the data and look for strengths and weaknesses in seasonal fluctuations. This tells us when we need to promote and target areas that need focus.

Tourism remains a key driver to Ashland's economy. Ashland continues to be ahead of the recovery curve compared to other destinations coming out of the pandemic following along the continued growth of tourism overall. Source: City of Ashland



To view Industry statistics from this reporting fiscal year, see Travel Ashland's quarterly reports [here](#).

Tourism is Oregon, according to Travel Oregon’s 2022 Economic Impact Report there is \$13.9 billion in total spending that directly generates more than 117,360 jobs. Tourism generates \$643 million in state and local tax revenues. In Southern Oregon there are over 12,000 tourism related jobs.

(Source: www.southernoregon.org/industry and www.industry.traveloregon.com)

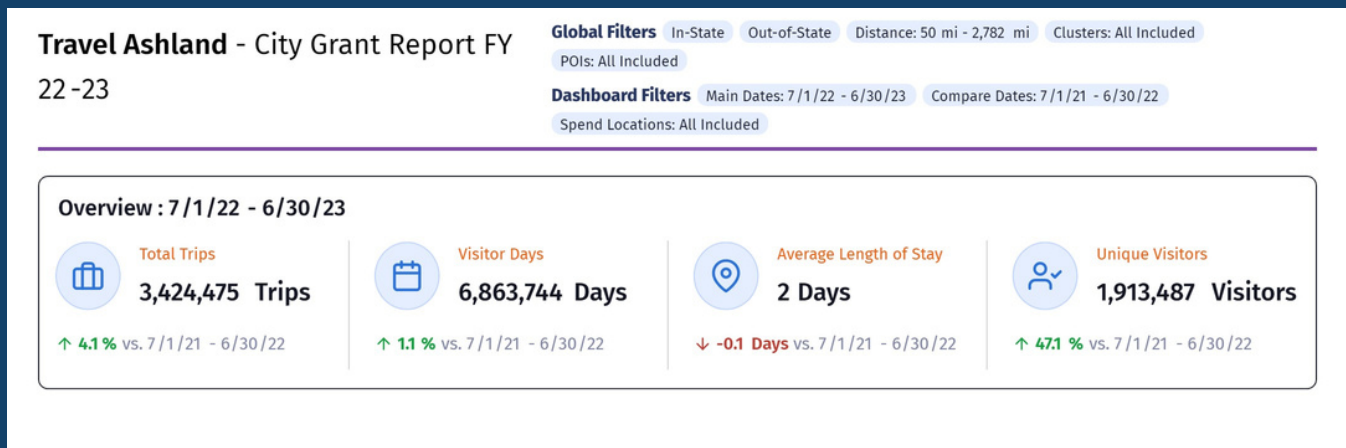
In Ashland, over 2500 jobs are fueled by the visitor spanning Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Lodging and Restaurants. Employment, quality of life and the success of Ashland’s economy is directly dependent upon tourism.

This can be shown not only from historical data with growth in the lodging and food & beverage tax revenues year over year but also through the growth of the number of tourism related business and jobs. Tourism has contributed to the increase of jobs, payroll and wages and returned as we continue to emerge from the pandemic. Retail expansion and growth of local businesses along with the revitalization of the Historic Railroad district catering not only to a local but visitor clientele is fueled by a strong visitor base.

We have seen service jobs returning and stabilizing though there are still challenges with the “back of the house” or staffing kitchens in restaurants and a need to focus on workforce development in all areas to ensure we have a steady employment pool. Ashland is trending with national challenges that are being felt in other destinations as well.

The hospitality industry provides full time and part time jobs for people, including students who can hold part time jobs enabling them to afford and obtain higher education.

Below is the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Executive Summary Report of Visitation using Datafy, our contracted research visitor platform.



Travel Ashland - City Grant Report FY 22-23

Global Filters In-State Out-of-State Distance: 50 mi - 2,782 mi Clusters: All Included
 POIs: All Included
Dashboard Filters Main Dates: 7/1/22 - 6/30/23 Compare Dates: 7/1/21 - 6/30/22
 Spend Locations: All Included

Monthly Volume by Visitor Days All Main Dates vs Compare Dates



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	0	436.5K	545.6K	462.8K	594.3K	748.9K	903.5K	769.2K	627.7K	555.5K	543.0K	538.9K
2019	435.1K	397.7K	534.4K	587.5K	673.4K	827.8K	1.0M	828.3K	671.1K	582.4K	488.9K	530.1K
2020	486.6K	471.4K	520.5K	408.7K	607.6K	770.6K	934.4K	851.5K	704.5K	677.5K	617.5K	564.4K
2021	450.2K	472.0K	675.8K	572.9K	536.4K	725.9K	930.8K	703.3K	544.6K	511.9K	481.9K	479.8K
2022	387.5K	413.0K	468.5K	531.2K	648.8K	936.3K	992.1K	896.1K	669.6K	539.4K	423.0K	463.5K
2023	378.0K	375.6K	487.2K	504.5K	554.2K	728.5K	898.5K	607.8K	475.8K	449.0K	339.6K	388.6K
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Visitor Days by Length of Stay



1 Day	48.3%	2 Days	9.28%
3 Days	6.21%	4 Days	7.23%
5 Days	12.1%	6+ Days	16.9%

Top Spending to Location

DMA	Share of Spend 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023	Change in Share of Spend vs 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022
Portland- OR	16.09 %	+ 1.3 %
San Francisco-Oak-San Jose	15.92 %	- 0.26 %
Sacramnto-Stkton-Modesto	8.1 %	+ 0.22 %
Seattle-Tacoma	7.86 %	- 0.66 %
Los Angeles	7.21 %	- 1.45 %
Eugene	6.12 %	+ 0.12 %
Medford-Klamath Falls	4.56 %	- 0.36 %
Chico-Redding	3.54 %	- 0.2 %

DMA	Share of Spend 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023	Change in Share of Spend vs 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022
Eureka	1.74 %	+ 0.34 %
Bend- OR	1.7 %	+ 0.03 %
San Diego	1.66 %	- 0.07 %
Monterey-Salinas	1.65 %	+ 0.13 %
Phoenix -Prescott	1.43 %	+ 0.28 %
Reno	1.42 %	- 0.1 %
SantaBarbra-SanMar-SanLu	1.25 %	- 0.06 %
Honolulu	1.16 %	+ 0.03 %

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 Spending data represents a statistical model and sample size of devices. Spending data reflects 34% of U.S. credit and debit card transactions.



Travel Ashland - City Grant Report FY 22-23

Global Filters In-State Out-of-State Distance: 50 mi - 2,782 mi Clusters: All Included
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 Spend Locations: All Included

Top Markets

DMA	Share of Trips 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023	Change in Share of Trips vs 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022	% Change in Trips vs 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022
Medford-Klamath Fa	21.37 %	- 1.7	↓ 1.7 %
Portland- OR	12.76 %	- 2.0	↓ 8.1 %
Eugene	10.01 %	- 0.9	↓ 2.9 %
Seattle-Tacoma	7.04 %	- 0.1	↑ 4.2 %
Sacramnto-Stkton-M	6.6 %	- 1.0	↓ 7.6 %
Los Angeles	5.33 %	+ 1.2	↑ 36.7 %
San Francisco-Oak-S	4.86 %	+ 0.5	↑ 17.6 %
Chico-Redding	4.22 %	- 0.2	↑ 1.4 %

DMA	Share of Trips 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023	Change in Share of Trips vs 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022	% Change in Trips vs 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022
Eureka	3.22 %	- 0.4	↓ 5.0 %
Phoenix -Prescott	2.02 %	+ 0.6	↑ 52.8 %
Fresno-Visalia	1.85 %	+ 0.1	↑ 11.7 %
Bend- OR	1.43 %	+ 0.1	↑ 15.8 %
Reno	1.21 %	+ 0.1	↑ 16.3 %
Salt Lake City	1.1 %	+ 0.3	↑ 49.4 %
San Diego	1.07 %	+ 0.3	↑ 52.5 %
Spokane	0.9 %	+ 0.1	↑ 13.6 %

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Geolocation estimates are generated from a statistical model which has been trained using historical behavior. The specific results are based on an observed sample of devices that meet the specified filter settings.



Top Clusters

Cluster	Share of Trips 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023	Percent Change in Trips vs 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022
External Attractions	67.13 %	↑ 4.0 %
City	37.63 %	↑ 7.3 %
Theatres	7.65 %	↓ 18.9 %
Districts	6.75 %	↓ 10.3 %
Ashland Lodging	5 %	↑ 6.7 %
Parks	4.28 %	↑ 14.6 %
Dining	3.56 %	↑ 21.1 %
Outside Ashland Lodging	2.22 %	↑ 28.9 %

Top Clusters

Cluster	Share of Trips 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023	Percent Change in Trips vs 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022
Southern Oregon University	2.08 %	↑ 33.6 %
Attractions	1.62 %	↑ 18.4 %
Wine	0.43 %	↓ 9.0 %

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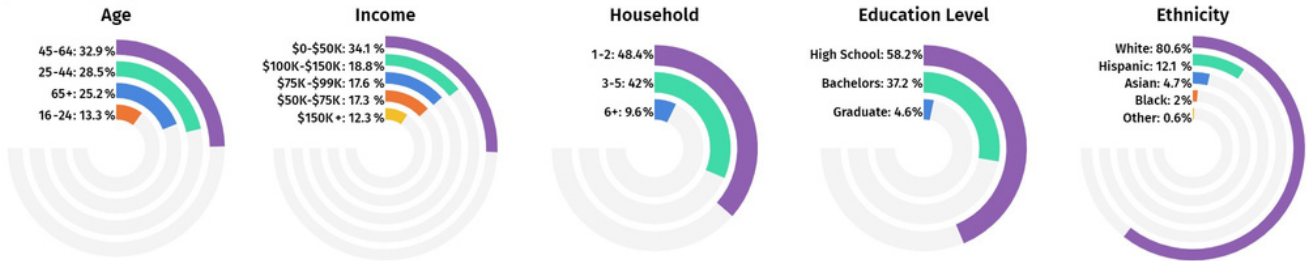
Geolocation estimates are generated from a statistical model which has been trained using historical behavior. The specific results are based on an observed sample of devices that meet the specified filter settings.



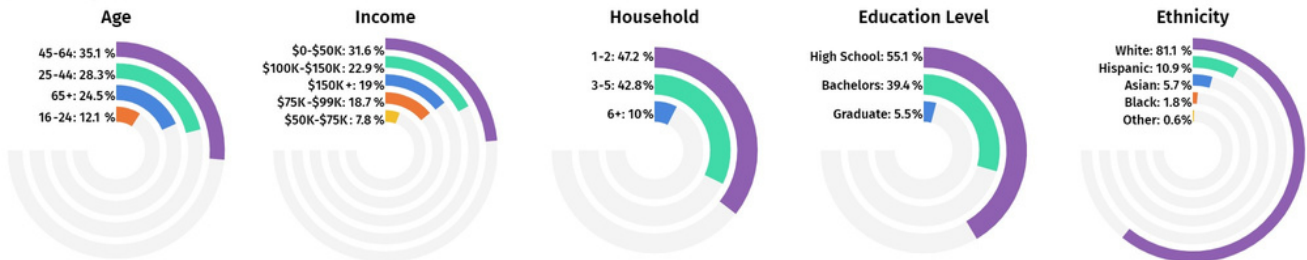
Travel Ashland - City Grant Report FY 22-23

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 Spend Locations: All Included

Top Demographics for 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023



Top Demographics for 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022



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Glossary

Census Demographics - Calculated using the Home Zip Code of the Unique Device, and then matching the zip code to the corresponding data from the US Census and American Community Survey (ACS).

Cluster - A grouping of POIs based on venue type, visit purpose, etc.

Home Zip Code - The inferred home zip code of observed devices. This is determined by a history of observations and patterns of behavior. Our database includes home zip codes for more than 200 million devices. Home Zip Codes are updated monthly based on the historical pattern of behavior, and our process is capable of determining when someone moves to a new zip code.

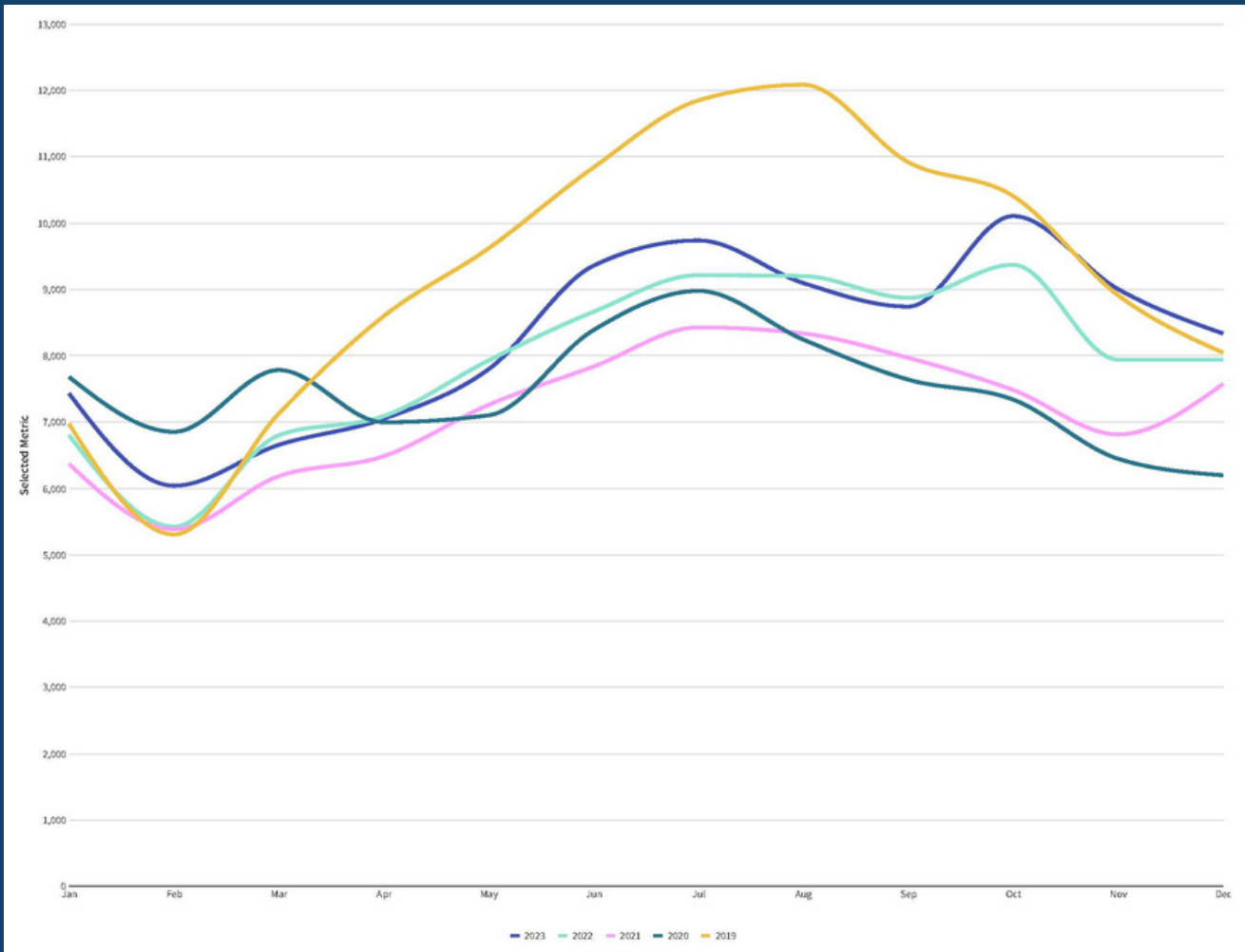
Household Level Demographics - Calculated based on a positive match between a device and a household with a demographic profile. For example, if a college student lives at home with a parent and visits an attraction, then the household profile would report the income, education levels, and age brackets of everyone in the household, including the parent. These are aggregated, weighted, and averaged across all the household members and all of the POIs visited and dates observed within the selected filters. Most of the values reported are at the household level, with a few exceptions that are device-level.

Point of Interest (POI) - A physical boundary drawn on a map and utilized to capture mobile device activity within the boundary.

Repeat vs One Time Visitors - A calculation of repeat Visitors based on observations of Unique Devices and Trips taken within the selected time frame. Once a Unique Device is observed a second time at any of the selected POIs across the date range in the filters, then that device is "flagged" as a repeat visitor. This analysis is dynamic and can span multiple years. For example, if a Visitor visits in March 2020, they would contribute to the yellow line in the chart if the date range covers March 2020. If that Visitor returns and visits again in September of 2021 and the date range in the filters spans March 2020 through September 2021, then that Visitor shifts from a one-time visitor, to a repeat visitor for all of the observations. Therefore, now this Visitor would contribute to the purple line in both March and September and any subsequent visits.

Trips - The number of distinct trips to a destination by a Visitor or POI. Utilizes a combination of observation patterns, distance traveled, etc. For example, if a Visitor visits on Thursday through Sunday, that would be considered one single trip. If the visitor returns later that month, it would be counted as a second trip.

Below is vacation rental Demand data showing trends since 2019. We can see continued strength and recovery through 2023.

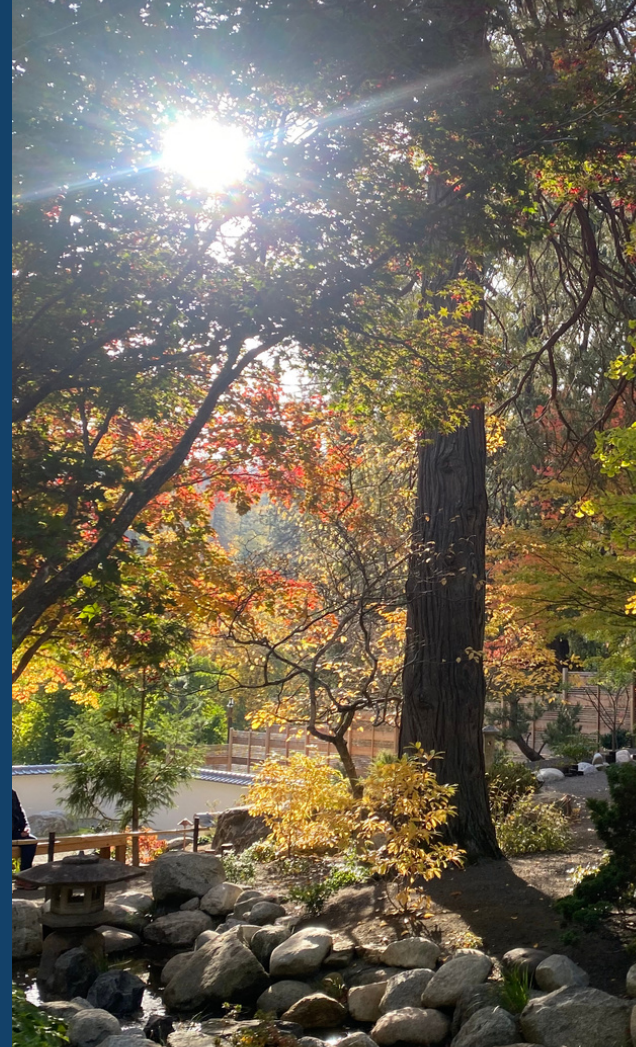


Travel Ashland's Past Research Findings

- There has been an inherent value for visitors in Ashland's downtown. This past research also concluded that the inherent value of the downtown was closely tied to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. With the recent and variance in closures, we have seen growth in properties outside of the downtown. Visitors value the downtown lodging and proximity to our amenities. This underscores the importance of the commitment and investment to keep our downtown's physical structure and ambiance vibrant, well maintained and welcoming. Over the past two decades, we have conducted extensive research to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the geographic layout of our accommodations through BR&E (Business Retention and Expansion) surveys, ongoing visitor profile and lodging analysis studies that were conducted by Rebecca Reid, Independent Research consultant.
- January – March has consistently had the greatest opportunity to grow with the lowest occupancy. While we prioritize this quarter with targeted campaigns and promotions, we are very nimble to adjust as we have seen much needed promotion throughout the year, not just in the off season. Given Travel Ashland's brand, each year we explore how we can grow occupancy and attract visitors with Mt. Ashland's 60th anniversary season offerings, events in February such as wine releases and in 2024 Shakespeare in Love at OSF by the Rogue Valley Symphony.
- Spring and Summer travel can vary and are seeing market shifts. Through our past research, results show variance in occupancy based on how each year unfolds whether summer travel is affected by wildfires, poor air quality, intentional avoidance of the busy season and now COVID. With the current shift towards a new, first-time visitor, we are researching emerging trends taking into account new demographics, spending and travel preferences.
- In December of 2022, we initiated a survey to restaurants and lodging to help garner up to date key data on occupancy and spending trends and fluctuation.
- Over the past decade, we have seen increasing trends such as the last-minute traveler, with a shorter decision- making window that affects how we market to them, offering incentives to choose Ashland. Last minute decisions are often made using online tools hence why we must constantly be in front of the visitor, digitally, directly and in print.
- Wildfires and poor air quality have affected travel. We saw this even more so with the devastating Almeda and Obenchain fires affecting perception of visiting Ashland. Travelers want transparency, timely and accurate information when planning their trips. 2019 Travel Southern Oregon's Wildfire and Visitor Perception Study. As a follow up to the summer smoke filled days of 2018, Travel Southern Oregon, along with regional partners such as SORCE, Travel Ashland and the Coraggio Group embarked on a survey for visitors to see the impact of the wildfire smoke on their travel plans, behavior and outlook. Travel Southern Oregon's Wildfire & Visitor Perception Study was released in April 2019. The visitor study, which began back in October of 2018, presents tourism partners with valuable data from recent summer visitors about the way wildfire smoke has impacted the visitor perception of Southern Oregon as a travel destination. The findings were heartening with 85% of respondents planning to visit Southern Oregon in the future. The results showed that there is visitor interest in shoulder seasons, the ways smoke impacts vacation plans and much more. There was also a major difference in the type of visitor comparing Klamath Basin and Crater Lake to the Rogue Valley and Ashland visitor. View full report here:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FaRvC80CNe9trWIq_AfEH0JGqMymenUR/view.

The Ashland brand continues to invite visitors to 'Live your daydreams'

Substantiated by the 2021 Visitor Study findings, the brand includes targeting lifestyle personas, interests by season with a verbal and visual identity that is approachable and appealing.



The Ashland brand story

As Travel Ashland was nearing the completion of the Visitor Study, knowing this would be the foundation for our rebranding, through a thorough RFP process, we chose **Intently Collaborative** out of Bend. The choice was based on building a new strategic brand platform using the recent Visitor Study, an effective measurement system with metrics, key performance indicators, as well as, fostering a valuable partnership that provided complimentary skills to our team. Their innovative strategic approach combined with their creative ability and experienced guidance for implementation is what we enjoy most. The goal is to ensure a voice and overall image of Ashland that reflects all that Ashland has to offer and resonates with each persona.

Ashland's new visitor brand platform was a project that included four phases. The discovery phase was an in-depth information gathering process. In addition to intake from the Travel Ashland team, time was spent reviewing the in-depth visitor study, existing website and social media analytics, **conducting 18 Stakeholder interviews** with members of the tourism business community, Ashland Parks and Recreation and volunteer organizations and **detailed brand & competitive audits.**

Stakeholder interviews conducted during Discovery Phase of Rebranding Project are below. Intently Collaborative also interviewed each member of the Travel Ashland Advisory Committee:

Don Anway & Karolina Lavagnino – Neuman Hotel Group Management

Bob Hackett – Travel Southern Oregon Executive Director and former OSF Marketing Director

David Schmitz – OSF Executive Director

Michael Black and Mike Gardiner – Ashland Parks and Recreation Director and Commission Chair

Dionne Irvine – Irvine & Roberts Vineyards Owner

Pam Hammond – Paddington Family of Stores co-owner

Lisa Beam – Skout, Pie & Vine, Burrito and Falafel Republic

Bob Horton – Ashland Chamber Volunteer

Dana Preston and Dana Welsh – Ashland Chamber Staff

Scott Malbaurn – Schneider Museum of Art Executive Director

Bryant Helgeland – Ashland Mountain Provisions

Casey Botts and Martin Stadtmueller – Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association

Torsten Heycke – Ashland Woodland Trails Association



To explore our Brand Platform and Architecture click [here](#).

Asset Development – Video and Imagery

Our role as a Destination Organization, a Chamber of Commerce as well as an Economic Development entity is to showcase Ashland and the experiences and serve as a resource to visitors, residents and industry partners. From media inquiries to collaborative projects where Ashland is featured, we provide imagery, footage and assets that exemplify Ashland, today. Our assets then are published through our brand, campaigns, promotions, digital channels, publications, materials and social channels.

Asset creation is an ongoing process and effort that requires time, direction and investment of dollars to execute the projects professionally.. During the Fiscal year 2022-2023, we contracted with NW Collective out of Bend, Oregon to create film shoots that garnered deliverables including :5, :15, :30 and :60 second finished videos that now live on our YouTube Channel along with images of each shoot and raw footage. Each shoot showcased a different persona, interest and season.

Fall 2022 – a couple enjoying downtown, culinary, wine at Irvine & Roberts, walk through, Lithia Park, fall colors, dinner at Brickroom.

Winter 22/23 – 3 friends riding on Mt. Ashland, enjoying Caldera Brewery and Spa day at Blue Giraffe

Spring 2023 – girlfriends get away with morning coffee, hike on Bandersnatch, shopping at Websters and dinner at La Briccola

Summer 2023 – family fun, mountain biking on White Rabbit, lunch at Skout and showing connectivity with bikes into town, Splash pad water fun at Garfield Park, shopping and ice cream at Zoey’s

Mystery Fest 2023 – interview with Ellie Alexander and b-roll during the event showcasing the event attendees, panels, pop ups, author engagement and mysterious fun around town

Holiday 2023 – family during the holidays, shopping at Crown Jewel, ice skating in Lithia Park, hot cocoa at Mix, enjoying the lights in downtown and dinner fireside at Skout.

Prior to this current initiative, we have continually built out a library of assets from “moments of Ashland to showing diversity among our visitors and so people can see themselves here in an authentic way. We partner with many organizations and businesses to share our assets and provide these as a resource.



Implementing the Ashland brand



With the launch of the new brand in December 2022, www.travelashland.com was refreshed, social channels were updated to reflect the new brand and there was a regional industry splash of media, digital and radio messaging initiated.

Since the brand launch, we have been executing an effective marketing strategy that has garnered strong engagement shown in the following program analytics. Analytics include paid media with search, Google ads, display ads, social channels, www.travelashland.com and campaigns.

Implementing the brand includes targeting each defined persona of the brand, with each season and each interest group based on their values, demographics, goals and marketing opportunities. It reaches both flight and drive markets with respective strategies based on their mode of travel and trip planning methods.

Each month, paid digital media is deployed with optimization of paid digital display, social and search campaigns. Media channels are continually adjusted to optimize performance. Media channels include a robust programmatic display of targeted digital ads, Google Search engine optimization, Google ads and targeted campaigns per season to best express the brand including a social media editorial calendar that mirrors these campaigns, the new annual visitor guide and www.travelashland.com along with PR and media efforts, review of key performance indicators (KPI's), objectives and metrics along with the continued creation of ad sets for each persona and interest group.

Live your daydreams in Ashland.

Program Analytics



Display Marketing

Campaign architecture

Each campaign is focused on one or more of our audience personas. Display campaigns were run across three networks with different audience targeting options.

Targeted Display Network

- Ads are targeted based on geography, interest, demographics and keywords.
- Ads can run across 100's of websites and run on both desktop and mobile devices

Google Display Network

- Ads are targeted based on audience groups associated with the Google network, geography and keywords. Geo and keyword targeting is inline with the Google Search campaigns
- Ads run across the Google display network on participating websites and apps and can run on desktop and mobile devices

PTA (Polygonal Targeted Audience)

- Ads are targeted to people who have been in a certain location during a certain window of time. This is our most targeted audience and is utilized for very specific campaigns

Targeted Display Analytics

4,430,346

Impressions

6,870

Clicks

0.15%

CTR

1,236X

Digital Life

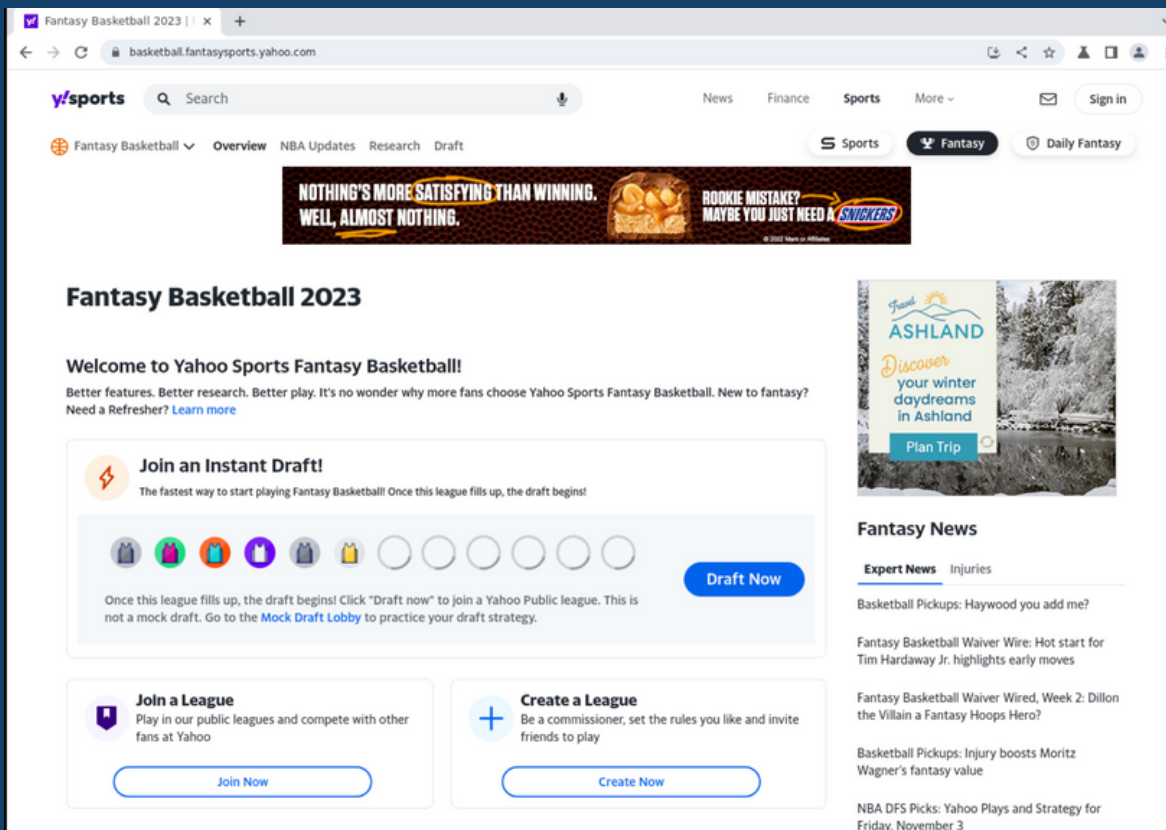
How much more likely someone will visit your site if they see an ad

Top Geographies

Region	Impressions	Clicks/CTR
San Francisco, CA	333,835	535
Seattle, WA	268,629	463
Los Angeles, CA	282,367	340
Portland, OR	236,663	336
Phoenix, AZ	205,035	286
Eugene, OR	108,164	268
Sacramento, CA	132,985	182
Denver, CO	93,978	156
San Jose, CA	88,870	133
San Diego, CA	73,967	119

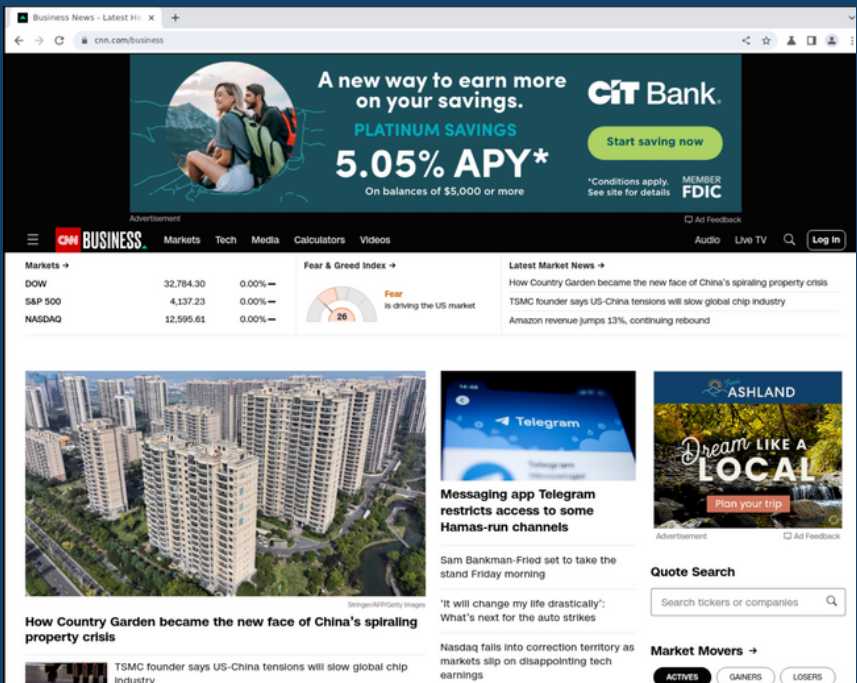
Over the course of the year 28 ad sets ran.

Examples of a few as well as placement samples



Over the course of the year 28 ad sets ran.

Examples of a few as well as placement samples



PTA Campaign Analytics

In Winter of 2022-2023 PTA was used to target those that had visited Ashland during the previous spring and summer and invite them to experience Ashland in the Winter. The campaign ran from December 2022-February 2023. The audience was reached through display ads across a range of website and through Facebook.

PTA Analytics	4,430,346 Total Impressions	2,875 Clicks	0.45% CTR
	509,462 Display Impressions	736 Clicks	0.14% CTR
	123,219 Social Impressions	2,139 Clicks	1.74% CTR



Paid Search Analytics

Campaign architecture

The search campaign is run through the Google Ads Platform on Travel Ashland's Owned Google Ads Account.

The campaign itself is targeted to the geographies part of the overall marketing strategy. The campaign is broken down into 7 ad groups. Each ad group is targeted based on interest unless otherwise noted. Each ad group has unique keywords centered around these interests. The ad groups are made up of between 1-4 ads which consist of headlines and descriptions that include the keywords within that ad group. Each ad links to a unique location based on the ad content. The campaign is optimized for performance each month.

Impressions were up 49% YOY and Clicks were up 10.21%

Paid Search Examples

● Branded

Start Your Journey | Visit Ashland Oregon | Wine, Culinary, and Culture
Ad www.travelashland.com

Ashland provides a year-round destination for travelers to pursue their passions. View sample Itineraries and request your free Visitor's Guide today!

[What To Do](#)
[Explore Ashland](#)
[Dining & Tours](#)
[Family Itineraries](#)

Ad	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
● Enabled	74,534	7,824	10.50%

● Family Fun

Ashland for kids | Family Hiking Trips | Request Your Visitor Guide
Ad www.travelashland.com

Something for everyone in the family. Outdoor adventure for all abilities. Make family memories with an Ashland Vacation. Request your Visitor Guide today.

[What To Do](#)
[Explore Ashland](#)
[Dining & Tours](#)
[Family Itineraries](#)

Ad	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
● Enabled	38,387	3,371	8.78%

Paid Search Examples

● Wine and Culinary

Wine Tasting in Ashland | Locally Sourced Food & Drink | Request...
 Ad www.travelashland.com
 A Wine Enthusiast's Top 10 Best Wine Travel Destination. Book a trip today. Explore farm-to-table dining with beautiful scenery. Live Your Daydreams in Ashland.
 Great For Families, Too · Request A Visitor's Guide · Plan Your Vacation Today · To...
 Types: Cycling, Golfing, Water Adventures, Camping & Fishing, Restaurants, Winer...
[What To Do](#) [Explore Ashland](#)
[Dining & Tours](#) [Family Itineraries](#)

Ad	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
● Enabled	32,092	1,589	4.95%

302,085
Impressions

20,451
Clicks

6.77%
CTR

5.14%
Conversion Rate

Ad Group	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Conv Rate
Branded	86,957	8,121	9.34%	6.24%
Wine & Culinary	87,527	2,516	4.37%	11.69%
Dynamic	24,014	2,994	12.47%	5.58%
Arts & Culture	15,438	1,096	7.10%	3.28%
Family Fun	54,846	3,474	6.33%	0.66%
Outdoors	59,513	2,118	3.54%	1.09%
Local Shopping	3,390	132	3.89%	1.52%

Top 10 Locations by Click

City	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Conversions	Conv Rate
Portland	96,709	4,727	4.89%	156	3.3%
Dorris	22,586	2,304	10.2%	98	4.25%
Salem	9,219	637	6.91%	44	6.91%
Seattle	9,865	609	6.17%	55	9.03%
Sacramento	4,841	452	9.34%	30	6.64%
Eugene	5,555	416	7.49%	24	5.77%
Redding	2,457	362	14.73%	28	7.73%
San Francisco	4,981	361	7.25%	25	6.93%
Bend	2,995	354	11.82%	26	7.34%
Ashland	2,612	349	13.36%	8	2.29%

Top 10 Keyword by Click

Search keyword	Impr.	Clicks	CTR	Impr. (Abs. Top) %	Impr. (Top) %
Ashland Oregon	29,580	3,002	10.15%	34.91%	91.68%
Things to do in Ashland oregon	8,859	2,103	23.74%	27.06%	86.89%
Things to do in Ashland	5,188	1,168	22.51%	26.31%	77.51%
Pacific Crest Trail	37,405	970	2.59%	38.24%	95.83%
Ashland	16,061	885	5.51%	24.12%	43.28%
oregon vacation spots	10,143	735	7.25%	16.53%	96.24%
Ashland	9,691	554	5.72%	37.64%	67.34%
Travel Ashland	3,063	525	17.14%	52.71%	81.66%
What to do in Ashland oregon	1,370	464	33.87%	31.46%	94.08%
visit oregon	11,426	408	3.57%	35.45%	89.49%

YouTube Advertising Analytics

Campaign Architecture

During this fiscal reporting period Travel Ashland Videos were run as preroll, targeting interest, keywords, demographics and geography.

During this time the 60 second Fall and Winter videos were run.

Fall Video Analytics

9,363	6,845	60.62%
Impressions	Views	Completion Rate

Winter Video Analytics

6,487	4,138	49.56%
Impressions	Views	Completion Rate

Traffic by Device

82.89%	9.56%	5.09%	2.4%
Connected TV	Mobile	Tablet	Desktop



**Travel Ashland
YouTube**

During the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year videos were completed for each season in 60sec, 30sec and 15sec lengths so they could be used across different media and different placements. A 5th set was created that covers all seasons. These videos were then used to build out the **Travel Ashland YouTube Channel**. Videos now run through the Google ads account as part of the paid media strategy. They will also be embedded in the website this year.

Digital Channels



Social Media

Travel Ashland’s social channels on Facebook and Instagram function as tools within our targeted marketing strategy to engage visitors and educate them on Ashland experiences, events and itineraries. Reaching new audiences, this is yet another pipeline we effectively engage those who are interested in traveling to Ashland or champions of those who have been here. We contract with a social media consultant who executes the social media plan and editorial calendar established by staff and mirrors our campaigns and promotions. Traffic has continued to increase to our site as you can see below.

Social Media Strategy

Travel Ashland has a three pronged approach to Social Media this year:

1. **Boosted page promotions** to gain more followers of the Facebook page so when organic posts are made it increases the likelihood more people are reached
2. **Organic posts and post shares** of businesses in organizations in town. The organic posts cover everything from events, change in seasons or other special announcements
3. **Paid advertising through boosted posts & paid ads** for specific campaigns. We use the paid ads and boosted posts sparingly as to get the most ideal benefit without affecting the algorithm in a negative way for organic posts

Paid Ad Results

62,692

Combined Paid Impressions

205,612

Combined Paid Reach

Top Paid Ad:
**Festival of Light
30th Anniversary**

137,417 Impressions

39,449 Reach

2,232 Link Clicks



Top Boosted Post:
**No One Knows
Ashland Like Our
Locals**

9,974 Impressions

3,351 Reach

7,417 Thruplays



General Organic Social Analytics

Facebook	Followers	Reach	New Likes/Followers
Prior FY 2021-2022	2,348	14k	62
Current FY 2022-2023	2,705	102k	357

Instagram	Followers	Reach	New Likes/Followers
Prior FY 2021-2022	3,899	68k	771
Current FY 2022-2023	4,670	53k	182

Top Organic Post

21,771 Reach
 867 Engagements
 154 Comments
 99 Shares

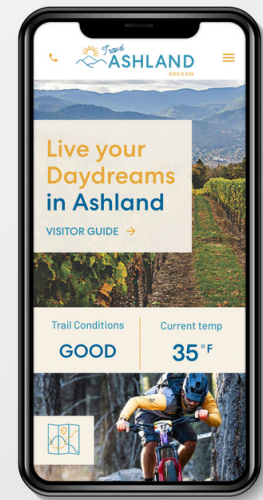
Boost post

Welcome to Ashland's new Japanese Garden at Lithia Park. Join ...
 October 21, 2022 at 2:09 PM
 ID: 552432536885637

Interactions

867 reactions 154 comments 99 shares

Travel Ashland Website



Destination organization's websites play a **key role for visitors when researching and planning travel**. An informed website serves as an effective tool in decision-making by providing accurate and current content and compelling messaging. As found in our recent Visitor study, visitors rely on a destination to provide accessible information, travel resources and trip inspiration. Hence the value of investing and continually optimizing our site with new information and fresh photography.

Launched in 2020 as a stand-alone visitor site, separate from Ashland Chamber's site that features local, community and member related content, www.travelashland.com served as a relevant tool for visitors during the early stage of the pandemic when everyone was online and the world was dormant dreaming of travel. Upon the launch of the new brand, in December of 2021, the site was refreshed with the new brand colors, logo and look and feel.

www.travelashland.com has seen **significant growth in traffic**, engagement and navigation since the brand launch in 2022 driving visitors to the site with targeted campaigns.

Website Strategy

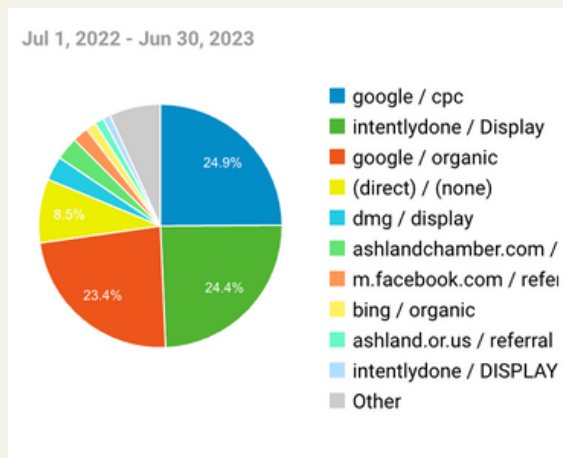
As traffic has increased considerably, session duration and pages per session has decreased slightly YOY. This is due to more intentional direction where organic and paid campaigns link and more event items listed all of which lessen the need for potential visitors to hunt around for what they are looking for, leading to improved ease of use.

Visitors to the site have decreased in age slightly with the largest group of users in the 25-44 age group. The majority of traffic is being driven by paid search (24.9% of traffic) which helps visitors find what they are looking for based on keyword targeting and display ads (24.4% of traffic) which builds Ashlands brand awareness among potential visitors. These two sources are closely followed by Organic Search which accounts for 23.4% of traffic which speaks to the improved SEO profile of the Travel Ashland Website, making it easy to discover in organic search results. The website strategy continues to develop and evolve with additions this new fiscal year including a plug-in for events, making community events easier to share and supply detail on and a new industry page where there will be a quarterly update shared.

Website traffic

	Pageviews	Users	Sessions	Session Duration	Pages Per session
Prior FY2021-2022	91,967	43,381	50,791	1:11	1.81
Current FY 2022-2023	129,975	70,280	80,293	0:54	1.64

Top Traffic Sources



Top 5 Pages

Home Page

3,095 (17.77% of traffic)

Ashland-4-Kids

8,064 (6.20% of traffic)

events-annual-calendar

5,743 (4.42% of traffic)

eat 5,507 (4.24%)

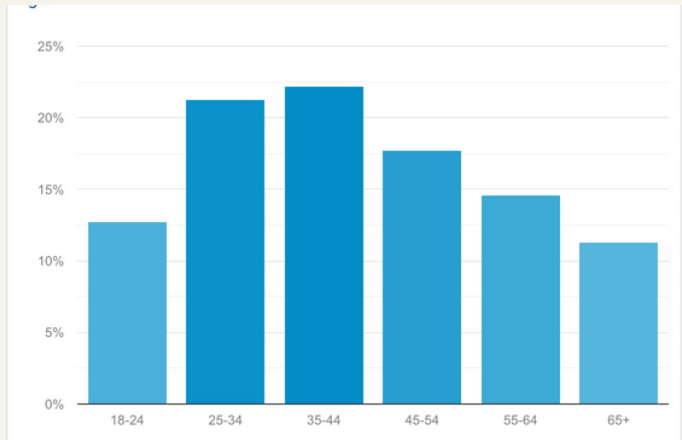
play 5,262 (4.05%)

Website Geography

City	Users	Sessions	Page Session	Avg. Session Duration
(not set)	12,846	13,216	1.18	0:00:15
Seattle	3,627	4,121	1.74	0:01:07
Portland	2,979	3,471	1.74	0:01:00
Los Angeles	2,565	2,970	1.71	0:01:03
Medford	2,121	2,398	1.6	0:00:48
Ashland	2,095	2,987	2.07	0:01:59
San Jose	1,906	2,188	1.81	0:01:13
San Francisco	1,149	1,300	1.69	0:01:06
Ashburn	919	930	1.12	0:00:05
Sacramento	859	1,012	1.68	0:00:48

Website Demographics

Age



Affinity Categories

3.31%	Food & Dining/Cooking Enthusiasts/30 Minute Chefs
2.94%	Media & Entertainment/Movie Lovers
2.86%	Shoppers/Value Shoppers
2.85%	Travel/Travel Buffs
2.81%	Banking & Finance/Avid Investors
2.78%	Media & Entertainment/Book Lovers
2.74%	News & Politics/Avid News Readers
2.71%	Lifestyles & Hobbies/Outdoor Enthusiasts
2.70%	Sports & Fitness/Health & Fitness Buffs
2.57%	Lifestyles & Hobbies/Green Living Enthusiasts

In-Market Segment

2.50%	Travel/Hotels & Accommodations
2.19%	Home & Garden/Home Decor
2.15%	Apparel & Accessories/Women's Apparel
1.90%	Real Estate/Residential Properties/Residential Properties (For Sale)
1.80%	Gifts & Occasions/Holiday Items & Decorations
1.78%	Travel/Trips by Destination/Trips to North America/Trips to the US
1.73%	Real Estate/Residential Properties/Residential Properties (For Sale)/Houses (For Sale)/Preowned Houses (For Sale)
1.71%	Gifts & Occasions/Gift Baskets
1.70%	Apparel & Accessories

Diversifying tourism

Since the completion of the Economic Diversification Study in October 2022, we have been implementing the strategy through focus groups, including subject matter experts, our partners and stakeholders.



Travel Ashland’s role has been to continually diversify tourism. Following the completion of the **Economic Diversification Study** with EcoNorthwest, the Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland created focus groups aligning with the identified pillars of work in the diversification study.

One of the pillars, **Diversifying Tourism**, includes promoting **Ashland as a Base Camp** for recreation, **broadening culinary experiences**, extending the **event calendar year-round and expanding our visitor types**. The work that has transpired includes working with the City staff to foster a more fertile ground for holding events in Ashland and streamlining the applications process to be more transparent, timely, realistic and achievable. Through many conversations, we anticipate the city offering an offset the costs of traffic control and safety to ensure those needs are met for each event but not an obstacle to holding them in Ashland.

Promoting Ashland as a basecamp, we worked with the media industry and writers to create content and push out on channels showing how Ashland is the hub of the wheel as the destination and jumping off point for exploring the region including a feature in Southern Oregon magazine Winter 2024 issue written by K.M. Collins.

With tourism being a key economic driver in Ashland, **diversifying tourism has been Travel Ashland’s work over the past decade** and is an ongoing initiative that was called out by EcoNorthwest as a **viable pathway to pursue** given the recent changes from our evolving visitor base, less OSF playgoers, more first-time visitors, more culinary travelers, less loyalty and more visitors coming for many new reasons from new markets. Diversifying tourism beyond OSF and working to diversify Ashland’s economy beyond tourism.

Background on Economic Diversification Grant and Implementation plan: In 2021, a grant from SOREDI (Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development) was awarded to the Ashland Chamber of Commerce for the development of an Economic Diversification Strategy. This was the most extensive research of the Ashland economy conducted in many decades. The goal of the study was to evaluate the current state of the economy in order to develop economic development strategies with actionable steps to diversify our local economy.

The project was completed in October of 2022 by EcoNorthwest and Ashland Chamber teams with hundreds of businesses who took the time to participate in the survey, an interview or focus group.

The result of the study identified four key pillars to focus on as we diversify and strengthen our economy and multiple key partners that will be counted on to be part of the process.



View the Economic Diversification Strategy Summary [here](#).

Media Coverage and Hosting Writers

Travel Ashland welcomes and hosts influencers, travel writers and tourism industry partners that provide coverage for Ashland from a third-party perspective that engages their readership and diverse audiences. This requires partnership collaboration and staff time that includes building itineraries, customizing experiences and showcasing Ashland based on their story focus. It also includes hosting them while they are here, guiding them through their itinerary and spending time with them to share the in-depth knowledge only our staff has. In addition, this initiative encompasses developing content including images and stories to build upon brand and differentiate Ashland as a unique destination.

Industry relationships: Travel Ashland and Ashland Chamber have had valuable partnerships with organizations such as Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) and the International Food and Wine Travel Writer Associations (IFWTWA) for over three decades. These partnerships have resulted in hosting notable writers, both returning and new that reach a highly desired audience.

Travel Ashland active media partners include Rogue Valley Vintners, Neuman Hotel Group, Travel Southern Oregon and Travel Oregon, all of whom rely on Travel Ashland to best support each media trip, recommend the Ashland component of a trip or host an aspect of their visit. These media trips result in blogs, articles, features and stories that reach a dedicated audience. Examples of features garnered by collectively hosting writers we welcomed as part of a collaborative effort can be found here or by visiting www.travelashland.com/enews/.

Preview: Travel Ashland has been expanding the interests of influencers we work with and hosted a mountain biker travel writer publishing a travel feature on www.bikemag.com coming February 2024 along with hosting a family adventure influencer, Merrills on the Move who will visit in February 2024 showcasing the winter snowplay and family fun, while traveling on a road trip from Idaho with Ashland as their destination.

Earned Media Coverage November – December 2022

- Great coverage for Ashland and the region with many travel writers planning their trips for 2023. Travel Ashland participates by collaborating, hosting, planning and coordinating with partners such as Neuman Hotel Group, Travel Southern Oregon, Rogue Valley Vintners and Travel Oregon.

Big Life Magazine
(circulation: 30,000)



SF Gate
(San Francisco Chronicle Website)
5.6 million UVPM



Be Here Now: Ashland, Oregon

I have been to Ashland, Oregon, only a handful of times but on each visit, I find myself lured further into the charms the little town has to offer. One might imagine seeing the White Rabbit pop out of the town to the south, nestled in the Park that beckons visitors with its magical setting. And a long or even may actually be mid-afternoon nearby at the Shakespeare Festival if you happen to be in town through the festival's celebration. A road through the woods may indeed find you eventually reaching at a wide, emptying highway, one of the hundreds of miles of the state's scenic highway network connected by local roads.

This is a town with a vibrant art scene, a walkable downtown, a range of food and beverage options, a craft beer scene, a fun, growing wine culture, trails for hiking, biking, and running, and a lot more that is worth attention and love. It's also a college town, a feature that brings the town youthful energy. It would be tempting to call Ashland a lovely little town given its small town history on the shores of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, but it offers so much more than that. Add to the scenic beauty some of the finest people around and you get the idea of why this is a magical town.



These Small 'Mom 'n Pop' Ski Resorts Are Locals' Best-Kept Secrets



Men's Journal
(circ. 1.3 million unique visitors per month)

Earned Media Coverage January – April 2023

- Coverage for Ashland and the region continues to be strong with many travel writers touring our region. Travel Ashland participates by collaborating, hosting, planning and coordinating with partners such as Neuman Hotel Group, Travel Southern Oregon, Rogue Valley Vintners and Travel Oregon.



7 Unique Experiences the whole family will love in the Top Global Wine Destination
www.travelawaits.com 3million

Ashland was recognized in 4 of the USA Today Top 10 Readers Choice Awards 2023:

- Top #5 Best Western Small Town
 - Top #6 Best Small Town Cultural Scene
 - Top #7 Best Small Town Food Scene
 - Top #7 Best Small Town for Shopping
- <https://www.10best.com/awards/travel/> February 2023



The Charming Small Oregon Town that ranks among Top 10 Best Art Towns in America www.thatoregonlife.com



[Top 10 Small Towns in the Pacific Northwest to visit in 2023](http://www.traveloffpath.com)
www.traveloffpath.com

Earned Media Coverage Summer 2023

- Coverage for Ashland and the region is strong with many travel writers touring our region.
- Travel Ashland participates by collaborating, hosting, planning and coordinating with partners such as Neuman Hotel Group, Travel Southern Oregon, Rogue Valley Vintners and Travel Oregon.



24 Hours in Ashland
 By Tracy Kaler
www.travelmag.com



Forget California - for a true taste of the wild West Coast, it's all about Oregon
 By Sophie Dickinson
www.telegraph.co.uk & www.msn.com

Current travel writer projects include:

- Sharon McDonnell writing for *Tea Time Magazine* visiting Chozu, Lovejoys and Dobra Tea this past weekend
- Aaron Theisen writing a destination Travel feature on Ashland for *BikeMag* (mountain biking)
- Writer KM Collins for *Southern Oregon Magazine* – Basecamp Ashland – winter adventures
- Merrills on the Move, an Idaho based travel family that will visit February 2024

Groups, Tours and Conferences

Conferences began returning post pandemic and regained significant strength in 2023 with future bookings into 2024 looking robust for groups and conferences. Travel Ashland took a proactive role in encouraging locals and businesses to invite organizations they were a part of to hold their conference in Ashland. Travel Ashland was part of garnering multiple conferences including the Oregon Mayor's Conference in Summer of 2026 as well as hosting the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association Conference in Fall of 2023.

The nature of tours has changed however we are starting to welcome back inbound FAM trips from international markets such as the Netherlands and Germany. Working regionally with Travel Southern Oregon, we anticipate this will help drive more inbound traffic in the coming years.

We work closely with our partners frequently to stay abreast of the booking trends. **We believe group travel will continue to return as Ashland is a viable group travel destination though it will look different in terms of their length of stay, when they visit and what they do when they are here.** Below is a summary of Travel Ashland's role within the group, tour and conference industry.

Travel Ashland plays a key role in developing and sustaining group business to Ashland through outreach, collaborative planning with partners such as Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Neuman Hotel Group, promotional efforts and fulfillment with groups, tours and conferences. Ashland serves as an ideal destination for groups and conferences of all sizes from thousands to small seminars because of its amenities and proximity to major markets.

Through Travel Ashland's strong partnership with Travel Oregon and Travel Southern Oregon, Ashland welcomes many types of tours and tour operators expanding their Oregon product and itineraries with its location on Interstate 5 coupled with its unmatched visitor amenities. Post- pandemic we have not seen tours returning, this is being felt throughout the country. There is an effort to reframe tour development, recruitment and itineraries to cater to smaller more curated tours.

Travel Ashland is engaged in the process of bidding with groups and conference planners, writing letters of support, consulting and actively recruiting as well as welcoming and servicing groups, tours and conferences. Ashland annually welcomes different sizes and types of groups such as associations, school, youth groups and travel industry representatives. Many religious groups, alumni and medical associations annually convene in Ashland. We field inquiries of groups and tours that seek planning advice, logistical recommendations such as transportation, accommodations, dining options, itinerary building and venues. Travel Ashland and group partners promote staying longer, returning and inviting significant others and family.

Publications

Our publications showcase Ashland’s experiences to visitors in our **Visitor Guide**, to those considering to relocate their life or business in the **Living & Doing Business Guide** and to those who want to explore the trails in our **Ashland Map Guide**. It requires staff time to write, design, build, produce and distribute these quality publications.

Partners depend upon these publications to attract potential employees, customers and businesses such as our medical community, realtors, our tourism industry and outdoor travelers. They are tools to invite and inspire visitors and those looking to explore or relocate here.

While our publications are all available digitally, with strong download analytics, the Ashland visitor demographic, spanning generations, continues to demand and expect printed material in the tangible form to hold and be inspired by. The printed piece is something that cannot necessarily be replaced by a webpage.

There was an increased demand for all our Guides that we continue to see. Visitors continue to request our visitor guide and map guide as a useful tool for wayfinding and destination information.

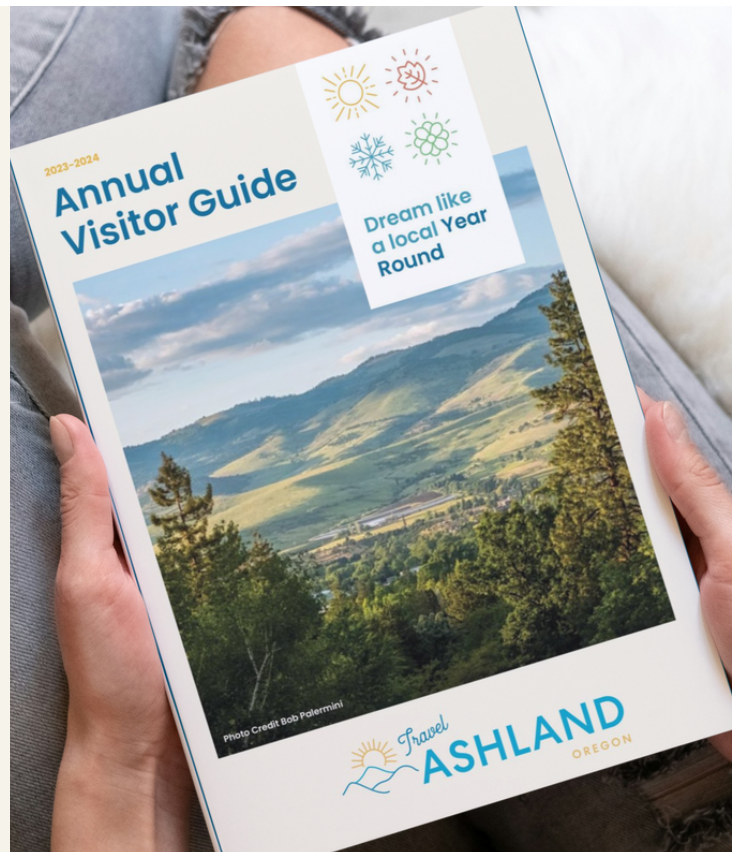
Ashland Visitor Guide

“The most requested publication in Certified Folder Display’s Southern Oregon circuit”

–Matt Preston, Certified Folder Display

The annual Visitor Guide that publishes each Spring is our primary response piece to all visitor inquiries. Visitor related businesses use the Guide to inform and educate their clients and customers.

It is an effective tool for marketing tourism with a distribution of 40,000 that is designed by staff in conjunction with Intently Collaborative. It is mailed as a response piece to all online and phone inquiries and provided to all walk-in inquiries. It is annually distributed at Portland International Airport, all Oregon State Welcome Centers and Chambers/Visitor Bureaus and trade shows. It is distributed to all groups visiting Ashland, within all travel writer welcome bags, recreation event goodie bags, all lodging properties, restaurants, members and advertisers in addition to realtors.



Explore the Visitor Guide **here.**

Showcasing the seasons, annual events, food, lodging, shopping, fine arts, museums, maps, entertainment and outdoor recreation that Ashland offers, it is a complete picture of what the Ashland experience is. Tools include maps, itineraries and travel information, The PDF version can be downloaded online from www.travelashland.com. In addition to robust staff distribution throughout Ashland and the Rogue Valley, Travel Ashland contracts with Certified Folder Display to reach over 250 locations spanning from Roseburg to Crater Lake Welcome Center, Medford International Airport, Klamath and Josephine counties.

ASHLAND MYSTERY FESTIVAL

October 20-22, 2023



Ten mystery writers gather in Oregon's coziest small town.

What happens next? That's for you to decide.

The inaugural Ashland Mystery Festival is coming this October to Ashland, and it's going to be a whodunit of a weekend!

But that's not all, the Ashland Mystery Festival will also feature mystery food and drink pairings at the shops and restaurants around town, a themed-mystery dinner, author pop ups and

Join cozy mystery author Elle Alexander and her mystery writing friends for a weekend full of bookish fun and intrigue, with plenty of twists and turns. From panels and workshops to an interactive mystery with clues located all around town, this festival is designed to put you in the hot seat. You'll have the chance to put your detective skills to the test and interact with the authors who brought these stories to life. You won't just be a spectator - you'll be right in the center of the action.

Whether you're a seasoned mystery reader or just looking for a little excitement in one of Oregon's most charming small towns, this festival has something for everyone.

So get your magnifying glass ready, dust off your trench coat, and come to Ashland this October for a weekend full of intrigue, suspense, and plenty of fun. You'll be right in the heart of the action, and who knows, you just might crack the case.




Elle Alexander
Author, speaker and coach.

2023 Sponsors:

-  FRIENDS OF THE ASHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
-  ROGUES VALLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY
-  ASHLAND
-  Beddington
-  ROGUES VALLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY
-  ASHLAND

Get all the details at
www.ashlandmysteryfest.com

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Winter in Ashland



A Majestic Mountain Escape

Nestled at the base of the mountains, Ashland is a modern mountain town with big city amenities and world class hospitality. Visitors of all ages will enjoy the peaceful winter atmosphere mixed in with more boisterous adventures found on the slopes or in town.

For skiers and riders, Mt. Ashland ski area sits at 7,600', with 1,200 vertical feet of lift-serviced runs. If you prefer backcountry and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, those miles of scenic trails enjoyed in the summer become a glistening winter wonderland.

The backside of Mt. Ashland can be accessed through their parking lot, as a gateway to Grouse Gap Shelter and the Pacific Crest Trail. Before you hit the snowy slopes, check the weather conditions and always bring a buddy to be safe in your travels.

To the north of Ashland, Buck Prairie and Lake of the Woods have an amazing network of trails. Heading east, Hyatt and Howard Prairie lakes have trails that span to the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument and Soda Mountain Wilderness. Whichever direction you choose, you'll enjoy serene views, trails and mountain slopes.

From downhill to downtown, you will feel the magic of the season in Ashland. As our guest, we invite you to meander through downtown and experience the

Winter Events

-  **Festival of Light Celebration 2023**
Kicks off November 24th through New Years. Come shop, play, taste and enjoy the holidays in Ashland. www.travelashland.com
-  **Brass Quintet Performance**
December 1st, 2023
On Brickroom Balcony over the Plaza
www.chambermusicconcerts.org
-  **Mt. Ashland Ski Area**
Opens for the Season December - April, 2024
For tickets, events and info: www.mtashland.com
-  **First Frost Celebration**
December 2023
At the Ashland Ice Rink with music, food and fun activities. Rink opens in November. www.ba.ty/rinkinfo
-  **Rogue World Music's SoundWalk**
December 2023
www.rogueworldmusic.org
-  **Christmas at the Prime Rib Steakhouse**
Nov 17th - Dec 31st, 2023
www.oregoncabaret.com
-  **Brine, Brew, and Barrel**
January 14th and 15th, 2024
Celebrates the multi-cultural culinary tradition of fermented products. Annually in January at Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites www.oregonfermentationfest.com



36 541-482-3486 travelashland.com 37

Living & Doing Business Guide

The Living & Doing Business Guide was completely rebranded and redone in 2023 with all updated data, statistics, and a fresh look at how we tell the story of Ashland. It continues to serve as the primary economic development marketing piece for Ashland that the City of Ashland and regional partners rely on.

The purpose of this annual publication is to provide accurate and substantive information on the Ashland community to help guide decisions for local business development and relocation for prospective businesses and residents. Significant work is done by staff to showcase the depth of our community including quality of life, community values, visitor amenities, demographic and economic data all done in an engaging graphic format. Many visitors use this publication to consider converting to residents of Ashland. Ashland's amenities are highlighted along with the strength of Ashland's ever-growing tourism industry.

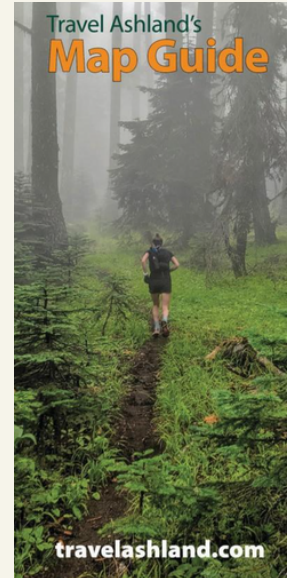
It is used in recruitment and distributed at Asante Ashland Community Hospital, Providence Medford Medical Center (Medford and Portland), Asante, Southern Oregon University and the City of Ashland along with medical offices, lodging properties, members and advertisers.



Ashland Map Guide

Demand has increased for the Ashland Map guide , both digitally and printed, with Ashland welcoming more outdoor adventurers interested in hiking, biking and exploring Ashland. The Ashland Map Guide is a trusted tool to provide accurate information on trails in and around Ashland.

The Ashland Chamber & Travel Ashland partnered with AFR (Ashland Forest Resiliency) to create this collaborative, educational, free Map Guide to foster stewardship and create awareness for the history of fire, our source for drinking water and the balance of recreational uses in the Ashland Watershed. We contracted with Lea Richards, GIS analyst for City of Ashland to build the maps. Editorial, image collection, layout and graphic design was done by Katharine Cato and Dana Welsh, in-house at the Chamber & Travel Ashland.



25,000 copies were printed and distributed from 2014 – 2016. In 2018, we produced 50,000 to meet the growing demand. The 5th edition, published in July of 2019 included updated Watershed, City Street and Lithia Park maps. In 2019, Travel Ashland partnered with Rogue–River Siskiyou National Forest Service to enable the Ashland Watershed map to be geo-referenced, digitized and available on www.avenzamaps.com so when a user is out on the trail, they can see their location. In 2021, 50,000 more copies were produced to meet increased demand with updated maps. Other maps included in past editions have included the Cascade Siskiyou Scenic Bikeway, Crater Lake National Park, Table Rocks Hiking Trails and the Mountain Lakes. The map is distributed and used by real estate offices, public schools, outdoor stores, groups, tours, retailers, public libraries, REI, the Rogue Valley International Airport, hotels, outfitters, retailers, SOU, Medford Visitor Center, cycling shops and more. It can also be found at the kiosk in the Mt. Ashland parking lot in the summer.

The Map Guide can be found on www.travelashland.com as a downloadable PDF, www.avenzamaps.com or in print at the Chamber/Travel Ashland office.

Preview Spring 2024: Travel Ashland is working with Lea Richards, GIS Manager to create a smaller map zooming in on the top of Lithia Park to Four Corners to showcase the intricate trail system with new updates with trails that have been recently built since this printing. This is still a valid educational and wayfinding tool distributed by partners.



View the Ashland Map Guide [here](#).

31st annual Festival of Light

annual holiday season event to attract visitors

- **Creating Magic for Ashland during the holidays:**

The Festival of Light parade welcomed over 10,000 people on a beautiful crisp, clear night the day after Thanksgiving. The parade was full of light, entries with kids and community members including Mt. Ashland celebrated their 60th season this winter. The parade processed to the Grand Illumination and caroling. **This event positively infused dollars into our economy over the Thanksgiving weekend.**

- The Chamber and Travel Ashland brought back caroling on the weekends that was enjoyed by many visitors and businesses in the downtown. In addition to coordinating all the installation of the lights and decorations throughout Ashland, the Chamber and Travel Ashland have a robust media campaign that reaches visitors in drive markets as well as the Chamber's messaging to locals and regional visitors.
- Over 500 kids enjoyed visits with Santa through a collaborative project sponsored by Evergreen Federal and in partnership with Lithia Loft.
- The last half of December proved to be strong both in occupancy for hotels and revenue for retail while restaurants saw strength in comparison to past years.



The legacy of Travel Ashland’s Ashland Culinary Festival

Celebrating Southern Oregon’s food, drink, talent and creativity

Travel Ashland, with the Ashland Chamber, promote Ashland as a year-round paradise with an award-winning culinary scene, rich culture and epic outdoors. As part of that, the Ashland Culinary Festival ran from 2007 through 2019. It began as a way to showcase the bounty of Southern Oregon during the fall, to increase visitation after OSF closes, inviting culinary locals and visitors to taste, enjoy and learn about all things culinary.

- **The Ashland Culinary Festival put Ashland on the map in the culinary and beverage world being home to 4 Iron Chef Oregon Winners. In 2020 due to the pandemic, we were unable to continue the event. In 2022 due to staffing as well as evolving trends, Travel Ashland and Chamber staff made a final decision to convert the dollars spent on this event into year-round culinary promotion that could reach a bigger audience throughout the year.**
- **Evolving culinary event trends:** We listened and heard quite clearly that collectively consumers, chefs and the industry were more interested in smaller, curated events where they could learn and taste as opposed to attending a show. The concept of hands-on workshops, online cooking classes, and the sharing of recipes and best practices is more attractive. During the 13 years of the Ashland Culinary Festival, consumers very much enjoyed the structure of the event and different facets. Looking forward, it made the most sense to shift event dollars towards our new brand and an increased effort in promoting Ashland’s wine and culinary offerings that we already invest a significant effort into.
- Given the challenges that the pandemic imposed upon restaurants, it was also clear that trying to produce an event amidst closures, staffing issues and varying business was not favored. Instead, Travel Ashland and the Chamber’s role is and always has been to **best support our businesses** in the best light. Vendor hesitation also played a part in having to make the hard decision to forego the event.
- Over the 13 years, it grew to a four-day, destination festival. The Top Chef Dinner honored the legacy of talented chefs that have won the Top Chef competition, where 12 chefs competed each year for Top chef honor. Four of these top chefs have gone on to take the Iron Chef Oregon title at the Bite of Oregon’s Iron Chef Competition in Portland. This elevates Ashland not only state-wide but nationally in terms of what types of Chefs we produce here and underscores Ashland as a culinary destination where the NY Times reports on us.
- **Update 2023:** We brought back a new version of the Junior Chef Competition in November. Eight chefs from Ashland High School and North Medford High School competed. We welcomed back some of our past top chefs, Franco Console, David Georgeson and Skye Elder to mentor these chefs as they competed. Judges included restaurant owners, Drew Gibbs and Eli Katkin alongside Educational coordinator, Mahlea Ramsey. Sysco sponsored the produce and ingredients and we are grateful to Ashland Food Co-op for the venue space. We look forward to growing this small yet important industry event next year as it is true workforce development. There were 2 job offers made during the event and positive industry exposure and mentorship that transpired.

Administration and Operations

Staff

Travel Ashland staff is composed of a professional Director with shared costs of a project coordinator, event coordinator, volunteer coordinator and contracted staff including Intently Collaborative team, Dena DeRose and Sam Berliner and Maple Leaf Marketing, Katie Guest who handles Travel Ashland's social channels.

The staff executes the brand marketing messages, and working closely with the Travel Ashland Committee develops all promotions, outreach, travel industry tours and creates and markets events. The staff responds to all local, visitor and relocation needs daily by phone, website, and in office when possible. In addition to serving as Ashland's welcome center, we operate the Plaza Information booth (May – October). Our office hours are Monday through Friday 9am – 5pm.

The staff, in the past, has trained and overseen over 100 volunteers that help operate the Plaza Information Booth serving over 15,000 visitors annually and the front desk at the office. Currently we have over 50 volunteers that serve both the office and Plaza Info booth. Volunteers are a key part of all the events we manage with assistance in planning, preparation, set up, execution and cleanup of events. They answer questions, support the staff's work, provide wayfinding and information for visitors, residents, businesses and those considering relocation. We have immense gratitude for these volunteers (primarily Ashland residents) who generously give their time, expertise and love of Ashland showing deep community pride.

In-House Printing

Besides our large printing runs of publications, Travel Ashland prints smaller jobs in-house which saves time, money and maintains an authentic brand. Producing these materials, in addition to the graphic design and coordination, is a significant part of promoting tourism that takes staff time. For every event and promotion Travel Ashland produces, there is a repertoire of digital and printed materials that there is a continued demand for.

This includes brochures, signage, monthly calendars, advertising, rack cards, enter to win entries and correspondence to name a few. In conserving energy wherever possible, we use digital communication, processing of requests and fulfillment of these printed materials to communicate the message and engage participation. We are mindful of costs and outsource to local printers when necessary for these needs.

Postage

Postage is a necessary cost to meet the demand of lead generation and visitor requests. Postage enables our office to respond to all inquiries received from emails, walk-ins, phone calls and referrals. We maintain a high level of customer service by corresponding via first-class mail to each inquiry, mailing them brochures specific to the visitor's needs. The personal touch of a hand addressed envelope and timely receipt of information introduces a potential visitor or future resident to Ashland and engages them. This includes solicitation and outreach to meeting planners, tour operators, travel writers and bulk distribution to other visitor centers across the west. Digital versions of our guides have offset postage costs in recent years.

Fiscal year end 2023 budget

Ashland Chamber of Commerce
Revenue and Expenses - Combined Activities
For the Yr ending June 2023

	CITY GRANT		CHAMBER		COMBINED TOTAL	
	Visitor & Convention Bureau		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
	Budget	Actual				
Revenue						
VCB tourism grant	\$446,338	\$446,338			\$ 446,338	\$ 446,338
Membership Dues			\$95,000	\$90,876	95,000	90,876
Advertising Revenue			172,000	132,106	172,000	132,106
Sponsorships			120,000	119,970	120,000	119,970
Other Income			28,000	39,165	28,000	21,925
Use of Contributed facilities			30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Other grants		30,000	25,000	12,300	25,000	42,300
Total Revenue	\$446,338	\$476,338	470,000	424,417	916,338	883,515
Expenses						
Tourism Research	10,000	13,932			10,000	13,932
Website/social media	5,000	10,720	4,500	1,856	9,500	12,576
Marketing/advertising/reg events	100,000	128,452	39,000	21,484	139,000	149,936
Conferences/workshops			12,000	10,570	12,000	10,570
Photofile/Graphics	18,000	29,419			18,000	29,419
Travel writer/hospitality	12,000	10,116	1,000	241	13,000	10,357
Dues/Insurance	8,838	8,113	7,000	6,881	15,838	14,994
Printing	38,000	23,080	31,000	22,637	69,000	45,717
Annual Dinner			14,000	12,241	4,000	12,241
Payroll costs/taxes/benefits	220,000	220,000	260,000	227,242	480,000	447,242
Accounting	8,000	7,950	18,000	20,553	26,000	28,503
Equip, Rent, Purch, Storage	8,000	8,111	7,500	13,043	15,500	21,154
Postage	5,000	(3,179)	1,000	232	6,000	(2,947)
Office Supplies	4,500	5,308	2,500	6,664	7,000	11,972
Office Maintenance	4,000	8,705	2,500	8,395	6,500	17,100
Telephone	5,000	4,786	4,500	4,785	9,500	9,571
Use of Contributed Facilities			30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Other expenses/fees/taxes			23,500	14,553	23,000	14,553
Economic Development			12,000	14,522	12,000	14,522
Total Expenses	446,338	475,513	470,000	415,899	905,838	891,412
Net Surplus (Deficit)	-	825	-	8,518	-	9,343

Current Travel Ashland (VCB)

Advisory Committee Members

Don Anway	Neuman Hotel Group, Oregon Tourism Commission
Graham Sheldon	Stay Ashland/ Ashland Creek Inn
Julie Gurwell	Hearsay Restaurant, Lounge & Garden
Pete Wallstrom	Momentum River Expeditions (Past Chair 2022-2023)
Javier Dubon	Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Katharine Cato	Director/ Chamber Marketing
Anne Robison	The Crown Jewel/Board Liaison
Scott Malbaurn	Schneider Museum of Art (Current Chair 2023 -)
Sabrina Cotta	Interim City Manager
Gina Bianco	Rogue Valley Vintners/Rogue Valley Wine Country
Ana Buyers	Rogue World Music
Andrew Gast	Mt. Ashland Ski Area
Gina DuQuenne	Ashland City Council Liaison

Current Ashland Chamber Board of Directors 2023-2024

Gary Blake	Recology Ashland (Past President)
Deena Branson	Branson's Chocolates (President)
Greg White	Reinholdt & O'Harra
Jordan Pease	Rogue Valley Metaphysical Library
Julie Gurwell	Hearsay Restaurant, Lounge and Garden
Eric Hansen	True South Solar
Sue Walsh	Southern Oregon University
Eric Weisinger	The Crown Jewel
Don Anway	Weisinger Family Winery
Marsha Billeci	Neuman Hotel Group
Catherine Greenspan	Evergreen Federal Bank
Chris Spirko	New York Life Insurance
	Sharffen Berger Chocolate

Travel 
ASHLAND

Live your daydreams

**Ashland Chamber of Commerce
/ Travel Ashland**
(Visitor & Convention Bureau)

110 East Main Street
PO Box 1360
Ashland OR 97520

Katharine Cato
katharine@ashlandchamber.com
(541) 482-3486 ext. 106

ashlandchamber.com
travelashland.com

