

McKenzie River Tourism Committee
Meeting Minutes 4.12.22

In Attendance: Carol Tannenbaum, Jonnie Helfrich, Jeff Dehne, Bob Wilson, Pete Petty, Natalie Inouye, Jeff Malik

Agenda:

March Minutes Approval

- Make change – Walterville Community Center was not holding fundraisers. They were for the Vida Community Center (but were held at the Walterville Community Center)

McKenzie Music Event Update

- Paul not present; sent update to Nadine

Governor's Conference on Tourism

- Attach Jonnie's notes
- Key takeaways
- "Projects Designed for the Future"
 - What we offer needs to stay relevant to your guests / what visitors are looking for
 - Make sure to fully vet projects and decide if they will be worth it
 - Be patient and be flexible to work when capacity/funding comes
 - Local support is key
 - The job is often bigger than you initially think
 - Collaboration is key
 - Regenerative Tourism is a growing topic/interest
 - Knowing what our big picture is and always keeping it in focus is important
 - Don't get away from the mission when you are working on the details
 - Succeed (and celebrate) with small projects rather than always trying to tackle the big project
- Studies have shown 70% of travelers still want some level of COVID protocols
 - Majority of travelers concerned about environmental practices
 - Main travel drivers are Outdoor recreation and "places to destress"
 - Majority of travelers to Oregon have been before; they are looking for other towns/places when they make return trips
 - We are definitely a place that fits all of these travel drivers, so how do we be more effective in marketing the McKenzie Valley?
- We should keep these tips in mind when thinking about the RTMP Plan
- Other takeaways
 - Facilities, signage, and information important!
 - Lots of discussion on climate change, alternative transportation
 - ODOT has some future funding opportunities related to EV charging stations
- Add Regenerative Tourism for a future agenda item / broader discussion

RTMP Plan for 2022

- Travel Lane County visitor guide – design work done; invoice received
- McKenzie Events posters printed and have been put up
 - Flyers are being distributed in Eugene through program at WOW Hall
- McKenzie River Discovery Center support – invoice not processed yet

- Shoulder Season marketing – discussing some initial ideas with Stephen
 - Need to pull lodging partners into that conversation to make this tactic effective
- Local ads / PR / Marketing
- Website – Chamber is paying someone to update membership records
- Frontline Training funds can be reprogrammed since that training is online
- Opportunity fund still has \$2,000
- Lodging Binders
 - Judy came across old binders that we used to put together for lodging properties
 - Was funded by a grant but has not been updated
 - What is needed in an updated binder, and who has the capacity to build these?
 - How can lodging properties request more materials?
 - How would they be updated?
 - Who decides what information is included?
 - Travel Lane County visitor guide and McKenzie River Reflections guide could be a temporary replacement until larger binder project can be organized
 - Let's think about QR codes to direct traffic to website / more information
 - Need to form a team to tackle this

McKenzie River Marketing Message

- Zartico Data
 - Captures last 12 months of data
 - Roughly 3 to 1 Visitor to Resident ratio
 - Just over 50% of trips are overnight trips
 - Primarily visitors from other parts of Oregon
 - Credit Card data shows visitor spending
 - Portland is the top market, followed by SF Bay, Seattle, LA, southern Oregon, Bend
 - Visitors from Bend are often day trips
- Zartico also tracks which webpages people visit and then end up coming to the county
 - Cascades Road Trip blog drove a lot of visitations
 - What ideas does this trigger?
 - What kind of online marketing should we be looking at?
 - Do we want targeted ads on Travel Lane County's site again?
- Chamber website is not up to date and does not appear very high in search engine results
 - A more engaging chamber website could be good for businesses
 - Maybe funds earmarked for print ads could be repurposed for website redevelopment?
 - Idea – produce blog content that could live on Travel Lane County and/or Chamber site and drive traffic to both?
 - Jonnie tends to send links to Travel Lane County website rather than Chamber site, but would send Chamber links if the site was more robust
 - Jonnie will be doing a trip for 12 tourism professionals and media on May 3rd – if anyone has any talking points for anything about the valley, send them to her
- Judy and Jonnie both looking more into social media
 - As with any project, need capacity from someone who knows how to do this

McKenzie Wayfinding

- Funding secured from the state to begin construction
- Not sure exactly how the funding will come through the county and then to a local entity
- Have an opportunity to raise matching funds
- Who should the Chamber be talking to?
- Not sure if the Scenic Byways grant would be applicable for the east sign location

McKenzie Events Team

- Up coming events at Walterville Community Center:
 - Easter Egg Hunt at Walterville Community Center 10 AM April 16th
 - Play Festival at 7 PM on April 29th, also at WCC

National Scenic Byways Grants

- Who is the best to approach ODOT?
- Funk/Levis, or Chamber directly?

Updates from the McKenzie River Community Track

- Very full schedule of events at the Track this summer
- Track will be hosting a team from Ireland for training before the World Athletics Championships
- Track has held three meets since COVID restrictions lifted
- Have some upcoming district meets
- “Track Camp” will be hosted for high school students the week after OR22
- Gravel Grinders bike ride will be using the Track for camping

Keep next meeting on May 10th

- Stephen will run Zoom meeting
- Add recap of Adventure ELEVATE conference to agenda