

Press Release - Travel Baker County and Baker County Unlimited

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As the Tourism and Marketing Director for Travel Baker County, I am excited to share the successes and milestones achieved in 2023. This year has been a remarkable one, filled with significant developments and strategic initiatives that have greatly enhanced our tourism landscape.

Annual Recap and Achievements:

Monthly Highlights: Our year was marked with notable activities each month, from the 60th Anniversary of Anthony Lakes to the Bigfoot Festival to Taste of Baker to the Tree Lighting. Key projects like the Ski Lift Chair Installation, Billboard on Hwy 7, and collaborative ventures with Travel Oregon and the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA) were successfully completed.

Visitor Center Information:

In 2023, the Baker County Visitor Center witnessed an impressive flow of visitors from various states and countries. The most significant months in terms of visitor numbers were:

January to March: Predominantly visitors from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Arizona, Colorado, Texas, and California.

April to June: A diverse influx from states like Utah, Wisconsin, Kentucky, and Wyoming, and countries including Canada, Switzerland, and Germany.

July to September: Increased international presence from Ukraine, the UK, France, The Netherlands, alongside a steady stream of domestic visitors.

October to December: Notable visitors from Alaska, Hawaii, Virginia, Tennessee, New York, Florida, Nebraska, Utah, and international visitors from Canada and the Philippines.

These numbers reflect the Visitor Center's crucial role in attracting and assisting tourists from a wide geographic spectrum.

Financial Overview and ROI:

Tax Collection: In 2023, we saw a remarkable increase in Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) collection, totaling \$811,425, an increase from the previous year's \$788,185.

Expenditure and Allocation: The total money spent on various services was \$305,207.18 (budget of \$472,500), distributed across Visitor Service (\$90,575.04), Event Grants (\$64,099), Marketing Director (\$65,000.04), Social Media (\$11,010.61), Baker Visitor Guide (\$13,550), and Wayfinding (\$11,513.66) to name a few.

Distribution and Engagement:

Visitor Guides: Travel Baker County procured 30,000 guides, with an expanded content range, reaching more locations including Boise Airport, Oregon Welcome Centers, and various establishments in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Colorado. We are proud to have distributed the vast majority of the guides

Roles and Collaborations:

Leadership Contributions: Travel Baker County role involved forging partnerships with organizations such as Baker County Chamber and Visitor Center, Baker City Downtown, EOVA, and Travel Oregon. Devon Colton of Visit Baker played a crucial role in enhancing our tourism efforts through various initiatives.

Tourism Partners and Roles:

Travel Baker County (TBC) and Baker County Visitor Information Center (BCU): These entities, overseen by the Transient Lodging Tax Committee and the Baker County Commission, play a pivotal role in tourism promotion. TBC focuses on branding, advertising, and attracting visitors through website management, social media, and regional advertisements. BCU, managed by the Baker County Chamber of Commerce, emphasizes visitor interactions, event promotions, and maintaining an active online presence.

Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA): EOVA's efforts are directed towards promoting tourism across Eastern Oregon, offering trip planning, vacation packages, and developing visitor guides.

Travel Oregon and EOVA Collaboration: These organizations jointly promote Eastern Oregon, with EOVA focusing regionally and Travel Oregon covering the entire state.

Digital Presence and Trends:

Social Media and Website Traffic: Our digital platforms have shown positive trends with 283% increase in Facebook Visits and 790% increase in Instagram visits. Travel Baker County has increased its likes and follows on both platforms with 2,093 new Facebook likes and 912 Instagram follows in 2023 alone. The Travel Baker County website has all Organic traffic with 645 improved keyword gains.

Goals for 2024:

We aim to further increase visitor numbers, enhance our online presence, engage more deeply with our community, diversify our marketing channels, and continuously measure and analyze data for improvement.

Additional Plans: Include designing and distributing a new Travel Baker County Visitor Guide, purchasing a drone for enhanced visual content, updating the Walking Tour Guide, designing and selling merchandise, creating more wayfinding in the county, and establishing a quarterly newsletter.

As we look forward to 2024, we are excited to continue building on this success. Our commitment to making Baker County a premier travel destination is stronger than ever.

Please visit our websites at www.travelbakercounty.com or www.visitbaker.com

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