

**Travel Information Council**  
**Quarterly Meeting**  
**Riverhouse Resort - Bend, Oregon**  
**Friday, June 13, 2008**

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**Council Participating:**

David Porter, Public Member  
George Forbes, Lodging Industry  
Ed Fischer, ODOT

Drew Roslund, Hospitality Industry  
Maria Ponzi, Public Member  
Mike Drennan, Public Member

**Absent:**

John Brenne, Public Member  
Sandra Flicker, Public Member  
Tom Loun, Electrical Sign Industry

Rod Miles, Outdoor Advertising Industry  
Tom Koehler, Vehicular Services

**TIC Staff Participating:**

Cheryl Gribskov, Executive Director  
Mary Pat Parker, Chief of Staff  
Jim Renner, Sign Operation Officer  
Craig Tutor, Dev. & Marketing Manager

Annie VonDomitz, Events & Program Manager  
Sharyl Parker, Industry Dev. Manager  
Angie Picha, Business Manager

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David Porter convened the meeting at 9:00 AM

**INTRODUCTIONS**

David Porter introduced Mary Pat Parker. Mary Pat is the new Chief of Staff at Travel Information Council. She comes to us from the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. She started at the beginning of April.

**MINUTES - FINANCIAL REPORT**

**A. Approval of February 29, 2008 minutes**

Ed Fischer moved the minutes be approved. Mike Drennan seconded the motion. The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

**B. Financial Report**

Angie reported that TIC is showing healthy financial stability. Cash picture shows sufficient income to cover sign installations and upcoming budgeted expenses. Program income is increasing with the summer months which are the higher income season for the sign program; income decreases during the fall and winter months. Expenses are all below budget with the exception of administration, Heritage Programs and New Tech programs.

The Council praised the new format of the financials, utilizing two pages for the analysis allows for a more complete comprehension.

**C. Executive Director Report**

Cheryl Gribskov gave the first Executive report. The report will encapsulate the happenings at TIC that don't necessarily fall under a specific heading for the agenda; an overview of "what's happening".

TIC was recognized and highly praised for their leadership and their role in the Governor's Transportation Tourism Task Force at both the Oregon Governor's Conference and the Oregon Highway Users Alliance.

There have been three Heritage Tree dedications over the last several months that were amazing thanks to Jim Renner and his staff, people walked away energized and these events are creating a sense of excitement about TIC.

There have been eleven town hall meetings along the I-84 & I-5 in two months. Sharyl Parker created the template for the meetings which she started in April; Cheryl and Mary Pat continued in May, finishing the beginning of June. A report is ready for the legislature as soon as we get buy-off from the key lobbyists. Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon State Police were present at each of the meetings and the response to the meetings was excellent.

Cheryl acknowledged the great job reflected on the quarterly Customer Service Report, with 100% staff customer service rating from customers.

Cheryl recognized Sharyl Parker as someone on the TIC staff that has stepped outside the box in what she was hired to do at TIC. When hired she made it clear that she did not have the desire to do fundraising. But when Oregon 150 came up, and after several meetings Annie requested assistance and advice on the fundraising aspect, instead of just giving advice, Sharyl went and researched foundations and grant resources. She then started calling and meeting with them, then started submitting requests and somehow in this process started doing fundraising. Cheryl read an acknowledgement from Annie thanking Sharyl for all the amazing work that she has been doing for the Oregon 150.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. National Highway Sign Changes**

Jim Renner presented follow up to the last meetings presentation on the upcoming National Highway Sign changes. The sign committee reviewed the changes and has made their recommendations. New standard allowing six service categories, adding 24-hour pharmacy to our current five: The Sign Policy Committee (SPC) does not recommend adopting, due to limited number of boards and space. New standard requires all supplemental message be within boarder of logo sign panel: SPC recommends concurrence so follow-up signing is consistent to mainline signing. New option allowing 12 logos on two signs for one service type at interchange: SPC does not recommend adopting option due to limited board space and complications regulating fair sign policy. New standard requiring minimum letter heights for word-only logo panels: SPC found that meeting this standard is not possible on off-interstate and supp logos. SPC recommends that existing TIC Administrative Rules be retained and clarified to allow continuation of word-only logos. New standard mandates Trailblazer sign be duplicate of logo ramp sign: SPC recommends existing TIC Administrative Rules be retained and clarified to allow continued use of word-only Trailblazer signs.

Staff recommends that the Council endorse the recommendations of the Sign Policy Committee and direct staff to submit those comments to FHWA. Staff also recommends that Council endorse clarifying existing TIC Administrative Rules so that current sign program practice may be continued into the future. Staff would be directed to file the necessary Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and statements of Need and Fiscal Impact to the Secretary of State to initiate the OAR public review process.

Ed Fischer moved the Council accept the staff recommendations. George Forbes seconded the motion. The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

### **B. Trails Concept**

At a Scenic Byways meeting earlier this spring a proposal was presented by Allison of Sokol Blosser and Maria of Ponzi Wineries for a Scenic Byway that would encompass six Willamette Valley AVA's, with entry points into the Byway from several locations. The process for this concept is a very daunting, costly and time extensive.

TIC already has several signs developed which incorporate use of symbols along with the standard TOD look. ODOT is amendable to ours signs as they are currently proposed.

Staff recommends Council approval to pursue moving the signs from the Scenic Byway sign portion of ODOT's sign policy manual to the TOD section of their manual.

George Forbes moved the Council accept the staff recommendations. Mike Drennan seconded the motion. The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

**C. PDX Pricing/Update**

Craig Tutor shared that Travel Oregon is in the process of establishing a new Welcome Center in the baggage area at the Portland International Airport. As part of the IGA with Travel Oregon, TIC is responsible for the placement of the brochures at the new site.

Craig has been working with the Sales Committee to come up with a pricing system for the Portland Airport. After reviewing current pricing at the current nine locations and the Vancouver BC airport, they have come up with what they think is a fair pricing structure. The Sales Committee will keep the Council updated on how the pricing structure is working at the new site.

**D. New Program Pursuits**

Mary Pat Parker shared that she and Craig attended the OACVB spring conference and came away with couple new ideas; there is a scenic byway blog that we can participate in and raise awareness of our heritage programs. Mary Pat is checking into the opportunity with this. She also met Shawn Gusa owner of Sidestreet, a mapping website. Shawn built a demo website with several of our Heritage Trees and Historical Marker sites for the Council meeting that Mary Pat presented. It is an interactive site that gives location and some history of the Tree or Marker. Both of these items have some exciting possibilities and she will continue to research.

**E. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup> in Silverton. It is being held in conjunction with a Council Retreat which will be held the day before.

**OLD BUSINESS**

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**A. Strategic Rest Area Plan (Town Halls)**

Sharyl Parker covered the western gorge area; Pendleton west, Roseburg and Lane County. The goal was to include the public along with the local chambers and visitor associations. The intention was to have people to see beyond just the tourism perception. At the meetings the request was for comments of what people perceive about rest areas; also discussed was safety, truck parking issues and whether our rest areas promote tourism for the region adequately. Sharyl shared that comments from area to area were very similar. People were encouraged to think about the whole state instead of just specifically the region they were from for their input. She had anywhere from 4 to 20 people participating at each town hall and a higher number didn't necessarily mean better comments, some of the smaller groups were very insightful. Safety was a big issue for people; in general people didn't feel safe in the rest areas. Panhandling is a big issue. It was also felt that if there was a personnel presence in the rest area such as an ODOT crew, coffee kiosk or other kind of staff that the crime factor was lessened. Also when in the regions they took time to go into local ODOT offices and meet with the local staff. Some of the consistent comments were the availability of visitor centers to increase economic development, Wi-Fi, interactive screens and more TripCheck cameras.

Mary Pat had very similar feed back in Southern Oregon. Wi-Fi was on the top of the list and the suggestion of an amber alert system in all rest areas was recommended.

Cheryl had a very comparable experience to Sharyl's and Mary Pat's. In addition to the information gathered from the town halls, a confidential questionnaire was sent out to TIC's industry list serve asking for their input, and survey cards that are being distributed through the southbound Santiam rest areas visitor kiosk are getting feedback on the rest areas from travelers. So far feedback from our list serve questionnaire show that the rest areas are adequate but could really use some work on updating the facilities.

Cheryl told the Council that there are two sets of legislation in the works; one from ODOT and one from OSP. The one from the state police will allow them to remove panhandlers from the rest areas; currently they are protected by the law making it difficult to remove them. The potential of 6 oasis sites in Eastern Oregon and the Willamette Valley have arisen out of the town hall meetings.

TIC will be introducing legislation for two new Welcome Centers, one at Siskiyou and one in Ontario. We will also introduce legislation for four new Travel InfoCenters with a place for coffee service. The goal is to have funding by the end of the legislative session for the Travel InfoCenters. The new InfoCenter locations are at Santiam Northbound, La Grande, Boardman and Northbound Baldock at Wilsonville.

**B. Boardman Rest Area**

At the Town Hall in the Boardman area concern was raised by the locals as to the condition of the rest area. An upgrade of the InfoCenter similar to what was done to the one located in the Santiam Rest Area is planned. Work with the local Chamber to design new local display panels is also in progress.

**C. Update on Branding**

Mary Pat Parker shared with Council that she is working on a concept that will umbrella the broad spectrum of programs TIC has. She is also working towards development of a DBA for TIC.

**D. Siskiyou Rest Area**

Cheryl reported that the final Siskiyou hearing was yesterday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. It consisted of ODOT giving the rebuttal testimony for all problems that has been raised about this rest area at the previous hearings. The hearing took just short of three hours to wrap up. Craig Stone, Tim Fletcher and Art Anderson were the presenters for the hearing. It was very thorough. July 28, 2008 is the final day anyone can submit any more information; they already have 2200 documents on file. The Planning Commission will make its recommendation as to whether or not the rest area should be built to the Board of Commissioners at the end of August. The Commissioners will then place their vote in September.

**E. Council Retreat**

The Council retreat is set for Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup> in Silverton at the Oregon Garden Resort. It is planned to start about 9:00 AM and run until mid-afternoon. The Council dinner will be that evening and the regular quarterly Council meeting the following day.

**F. Heritage Tree Network**

Jim Renner told Council that there about 15 local city and county based heritage tree programs in Oregon. TIC is working to create Heritage Tree Association. Nancy Appling has been signed to an agreement to reimburse for travel costs so we can get her engaged in developing such an association. A week ago Jim and Nancy attended an annual urban and community forestry conference attended by about 130 people. They set up the Heritage Tree display, handed out Heritage Tree brochures and talked to participants about the idea of an association. The response was positive and they received a very high interest in the program idea. Things are moving forward with the development of the association.

**G. Oregon 150 Markers**

Annie VonDomitz presented the Council with a full sized mock-up first draft of the proposed Oregon 150 design. Development of all of 7 markers is continuing due to timing and sponsorship; it was determined that it's more effective to have a finished product so people can see what they are sponsoring. Things are moving forward and we have some good leads on sponsorship. Annie encouraged any Council input as to sponsorship leads. She feels very confident that will make February deadline.

Shayl Parker is giving a presentation June 17<sup>th</sup> in Roseburg to the Ford Foundation and the City Council Committee. She is also looking at the possibility of meeting the city of Yachats thanks to Drew Roslund and Three Rivers Casino through a referral from Rod Miles.

## **PARTNERSHIP REPORTS**

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### **A. Heritage Tree Program**

Jim Renner shared that he is working on new pages for our website. Each tree will have a photo, stats and a link to a Google map. It will include a way for people to submit their own tree photo and there will be links available to other tree programs.

The Valley of the Giants dedication was on June 6<sup>th</sup>, Jim commended Cheryl for doing a wonderful job speaking at the event. Maynard Drawson was honored; he was key in saving the grove of trees. A field trip to the site was held as part of the dedication.

There are several meeting dates coming up. On July 11 elections will be held; the list of newly elected people will come back to the next Council meeting for confirmation. Then on September 18-19-20 the Committee and any Council Members interested are invited to attend a tour over to Enterprise Oregon. They will stop along way and visit Heritage Trees. This will also be an informative trip giving the Committee a clearer picture as to what all TIC does. When in Enterprise, a one-day field trip is planned to The Indian Village Grove site; this is a remote site in Northeastern Oregon along the historic Nez Perce trail.

### **B. Historical Marker Program**

Annie reported currently three markers in the works. Vanport has not been produced yet. We are still in negotiations with the City of Portland Parks, who are new partner with us; we are slowly working through the process and hope to move to the next step soon.

The Westport marker design has been completed and the committee is currently working with State Parks. It was recently learned that Parks have developed their own interpretive plan for that area and there could possible be a conflict, if the site turn out not to be an option, a new location will be found.

Camp Adair is the third marker. The committee is looking at the possibility of moving the installation of the new marker to a different location to make it easier to access. There is a Camp Adair memorial park about a quarter of mile from the current marker site; they would like to place it in the park, but first need to get community support for the change in location.

### **C. MISA**

Annie presented a copy of the agenda for the upcoming MISA conference that is being held in Seattle at the Red Lion Fifth Avenue, September 29<sup>th</sup> through October 1<sup>st</sup>. The conference is being held in conjunction with the Safety Rest Area group. The Transportation Tourism Take Force is doing a panel presentation at the Conference. Conference participants are encouraged to take the opportunity to attend the Safety Rest Area conference that continues after the finish of the MISA conference.

### **D. Sales & Marketing Committee**

Craig Tutor reported that he has having discussions on the InfoCenter program and possible changes to the program. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has produce 11 panels for placement in the InfoCenters. He has signed State Parks to have panels in all the InfoCenter location, each location will have either a single or double panel display. The Oak Grove and Gettings Creek InfoCenters have been remodeled and we are look at possibly also upgrading the Manzanita and Boardman locations also.

Craig reported another successful Welcome Center training conference was held in March at Bend. The annual Welcome Center brochure program mailing went out in January and we just did a secondary follow up mailing along with a reminder phone call.

ODOT has been paid the 25% of gross sales from Tripcheck. An annual bill has been sent out to TripCheck customers and the returns so far have been very strong.

Full wifi coverage over Stub Stewart State Park is finally complete. We are seeing increases in revenue and usage. The program is about breaking even with expenses to income.

We are looking at possibly amending the current InfoCenter sales contractor contract to encourage new sales instead of just retention.

**E. Transportation Tourism Task Force**

Sharyl Parker reported that the next Task Force meeting will be held on July 1<sup>st</sup> in Wilsonville. At this meeting they will take a look at the draft Strategic Rest Area Plan and get approval to move forward and talk about strategy as to how that is going to happen and how they are going to achieve all the recommendations. A report on the Siskiyou progress and the Oasis program will also be part of the meeting.

**F. Tourism Commission**

Craig Tutor reported on his attendance of the Tourism Commission meeting in Gold Beach. Craig went early and attended the Tourism 101, which informs the local public what TravelOregon does. Income is up approximately \$500,000 above the projected budget. Kari Westlund was elected as the new chair. Todd recognized TIC for the donation of space for panels to Oregon Coast for the Salmon crisis for the past few years. Chrissy Fields Welcome Center is set to open in November of this year.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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David Porter adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Drew Roslund  
Council Secretary – Travel Information Council  
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