

Is Salem a tourist draw? Absolutely, bureau says

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Salem's tourism bureau today is set to roll out a revamped branding effort, with a new catch phrase: "Absolutely Oregon."

Travel Salem, formerly known as the Salem Convention and Visitor's Association, is set to announce the launching of its efforts at a luncheon in Keizer.

"It's very special," said Angie Morris, Travel Salem's chief executive officer. "I'm not sure there's many cities other than Salem that has more of Oregon than anywhere else."

In 2007, about \$512 million tourism dollars were spent in Marion and Polk counties, with tourism creating about 6,000 jobs.

Direct travel spending has grown about \$30 million on average each year in Marion and Polk counties for the past five years, Morris said.

While overall travel in the state is reportedly on the decline during the current recession, Salem tourism has seen a smaller decrease, Morris said.

"People have changed their travel patterns, but they're still traveling," Morris said.

The association's former slogan, "Naturally Inspired", was created in 2002. Morris said visitors liked the old message, but the committee that created the brand wanted to emphasize Salem's ties to the region.

The concept's "absolutely" theme also will be incorporated by business partners in the community. Some examples are SEDCOR, a Salem economic development agency, which adopted "Absolutely Ready!" The Go Downtown Salem! group has adopted "Go Downtown for Absolutely Everything!"

The Salem Area Chamber of Commerce opted for "Leading Businesses Absolutely!"

Mike McLaran, the chief executive officer of the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce, said he's encouraged that various organizations are taking on the slogan in their own form as a type of synergy.

"Salem, as a whole, is unified in absolutely the greatest place to be — to live, work and do business," McLaran said.



Salem's tourism bureau will unveil its new "Absolutely Oregon" logo today.

If you go

Leaders with Travel Salem will talk about its newest slogan at its regular Marketing Exchange luncheon today.

The event is from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at Keizer Renaissance Inn, 5188 Wittenberg Lane N in Keizer.

Vince Porter, the executive director of the Governor's Office of Film and Television is set to speak.

Tickets can be purchased for \$23 at the door.

For information, call Travel Salem at (503) 581-4325.

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Post a comment below to suggest your own slogan for Salem's tourism bureau.