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## **Tourism Spending Increases in Salem & Mid-Willamette Valley for Sixth Consecutive Year**

### **Record Setting Numbers Reinforce the Tourism Industry as a Powerful Economic Engine**

Salem, OR - The Oregon Tourism Commission, dba Travel Oregon, confirms that 2015 was the travel industry's sixth consecutive year of accelerated growth and economic impact, reaching new heights in revenues for the state. Independent findings by Dean Runyan Associates indicate that travel-related spending increased by nearly \$500 million last year to achieve a record \$10.8 billion in revenues.

The Gross Domestic Product of the travel industry was \$4.3 billion in 2015. Overall, the travel industry is one of the three largest export-oriented industries in rural Oregon counties (along with agriculture/food processing and logging/wood products).

Locally in the Salem/Mid-Willamette Valley region (Marion and Polk counties), new economic impact heights were reached as well. The report found:

- Visitors to the Salem/Mid-Willamette Valley generated \$553.2 million in revenue in 2015 as compared to \$548.2 million in 2014.
- Travel-generated employment increased 3% over the prior year, resulting in 6,450 travel industry jobs across Salem and Marion & Polk counties (an increase of 200 jobs).
- Travel-generated tax in the Salem/Mid-Willamette Valley region generated \$19.9 million (gas tax and lodging tax).
- The region hosted 2.4 million visitors who generated 6.4 million overnight stays.

"All of the economic indicators have reached record-setting levels for the region," said Angie Morris, president and CEO of Travel Salem, the Salem region's nonprofit destination marketing organization.

"Tourism benefits the entire Mid-Willamette Valley through healthy job creation, vibrant quality of life and innovative product development that creates a premier destination. We thank our industry partners, the City of Salem and Marion and Polk counties for their continued support of tourism, which is making a positive impact on our economy," added Morris.

For detailed information regarding Travel Oregon's Travel Impact report visit:

<http://industry.traveloregon.com/research/economic-impact>.

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*\*\*\*Travel Salem is a non-profit organization that promotes Salem and Marion and Polk counties for leisure tourism and convention and event business. The local annual economic impact of the greater Salem area visitor industry is \$553.2 million. Travel Salem manages the Official Salem Area Travel Café/Visitors Center located at 181 High St. NE, in downtown Salem, two I-5 satellite visitor information locations located at the Best Western Mill Creek Inn (3125 Ryan Dr. SE) and the Red Lion Hotel (3301 Market St. NE), and the Official Salem Area Website [www.TravelSalem.com](http://www.TravelSalem.com)\*\*\**