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Travel Oregon Announces Recipients of 2016 Travel and Tourism Industry Achievement Awards

Salem, Ore. – May 11, 2017 – The Oregon Tourism Commission (dba Travel Oregon) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2016 Travel and Tourism Industry Achievement Awards, presented at the 2017 Governor’s Conference on Tourism in Salem, Ore.

The annual awards recognize people and organizations across the state that go the extra mile to enhance the travel and tourism industry in Oregon. The award recipients are outstanding examples of professionals who, by virtue of their vision, perseverance and dedication, are a credit to Oregon’s tourism and hospitality industry.

The state’s most prized recognition is the Governor’s Tourism Award. This year’s award recognizes Gerry Frank, a proud, fourth-generation native Oregonian, with deep roots in the retail, restaurant, political, civic and business sectors of Oregon. For more than 28 years, Frank has been writing for The Oregonian Travel Section, inspiring us to explore all the nooks and crannies of Oregon. Frank also served on the Oregon Tourism Commission for 13 years (from 1988-2001), and was Chair from 1996-2001.

“This award recognizes those in the travel and tourism industry whose exceptional work has helped boost Oregon’s economy and Oregonians’ overall quality of life,” said Governor Kate Brown. “I am thrilled to present the Governor’s Tourism Award to Gerry Frank for his lifelong efforts to inspire people to explore this beautiful place we call home.”

The 2016 Travel and Tourism Industry Achievement Awards were announced in these categories:

The Gene Leo Memorial Award was established in 1994 to honor the late Gene Leo, known for his Oregon tourism contributions as Director of the Oregon Zoo, Portland Rose Festival and the Portland Oregon Visitors Association (now Travel Portland). Gene revered Oregon’s natural beauty, loved her people and enjoyed the outdoors with gusto. This award recognizes an outstanding contribution for a tourism-related activity or

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attraction focused on Oregon's natural beauty or outdoor recreation. The award was presented to the **Tamátslikt Cultural Institute**, who celebrates the traditions of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla tribes that have lived on this land for more than 10,000 years, for its multi-year investment to efficient and renewable energy. Over the course of 14 years, they have reduced their electrical usage by 67 percent and natural gas usage by 76 percent saving more than \$750,000.

The Outstanding Oregon Tourism Volunteer Award recognizes significant commitment by an individual or a group of individuals who exemplify the positive impact volunteers have on Oregon's travel and tourism industry. The award was presented to **The Cornucopia Arts Council**, which formed in 1989 with the vision of promoting access to visual and performing arts in the rural communities in northeast Oregon. Since then, the group has hosted numerous cultural and arts presentations, as well as instructional programs for the local school district. One of their most recent endeavors was Pinefest, an outdoor music festival that brings world-class musicians from throughout the northwest to the foothills of the Wallowa Mountains. In its 4th year, the festival draws nearly 1,000 visitors annually to Halfway, Ore. the weekend after Labor Day.

The Oregon Heritage Tourism Award honors outstanding incorporation of Oregon's authentic cultural or natural history as a way to draw visitors to the state. **The Lincoln City Visitor & Convention Bureau** combined forces with several organizations—North Lincoln County Historical Museum, Taft Pioneer Cemetery Association, Theater West and Chinook Winds Casino Resort—to bring the city's past to life "A Tour to Die For," an event where actors brought to life the historical stories and legends of many of Lincoln City's pioneers. The Lincoln City Visitor & Convention Bureau acted as an incubator for the event providing seed money and marketing support.

The International Sales and Development Award recognizes excellence in the creative sales, marketing and development of Oregon as a destination in the international marketplace. The award was given to the **Central Oregon Visitors Association (COVA)** for its efforts to secure the bid to host the International Association of Golf Tour Operators Conference in 2018, which is estimated to bring 200 international tour operators, wholesalers and golf media to Oregon.

The Oregon Tourism Development Award acknowledges the creation of an innovative program, promotion or product utilizing best practices, sustainability and creative problem-solving. This year's award was presented to the **Spoke'n Hostel**, a new lodging property in Mitchell, Ore. for bicycle tourists traveling the Trans American Trail between John Day and Prineville, Ore.

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The hostel provides all the amenities traveling cyclists need, from hot showers, large beds, full kitchens to public, community spaces. It even provides guests a shuttle service to and from Painted Hills State Park.

The Outstanding Oregon PR Initiative Award celebrates the best domestic PR program that resulted in quality earned media coverage and inspired travel to Oregon. **Weinstein PR** received the award for its outstanding execution of the centennial celebration of the Historic Columbia River Highway. For more than a year, Weinstein PR provided mostly pro bono services, working with a myriad of nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, volunteers, committees and state agencies. Through this work, the PR firm was able to spread the word about the Historic Columbia River Highway and State Trail while garnering exceptional media coverage.

The Outstanding Oregon Social Media Program Award recognizes the best international or domestic social media program that engages audiences and inspires potential travel to Oregon. The **Bureau of Land Management** was recognized for its strong social media presence that engages people with varying interests and influences travel plans. It also acts as a source for breaking news with real-time posts on road closures, wildfire alerts, boating restrictions and other recreation updates – information that is critical to our visitors' experiences in Oregon.

The Outstanding Oregon Visitor Guide Award celebrates the best domestic or international content program that inspires travel to Oregon. **Tillamook Coast's** 2016 Visitor Guide tells the story of why "it's the natural choice" to vacation in Tillamook County. Visually stunning and easy-to-read, the visitor guide pairs the captivating local perspective with photography that collectively captures the essence of Tillamook County.

The Oregon Outstanding Advertising Award commends superior, creative advertising communication, regardless of budget size or medium. The award was presented to the **Oregon Coast Aquarium** for its entertaining campaign that showcased witty headlines by hypnotizing jellyfish, friendly sea otters, and color-shifting octopuses. The fully integrated campaign utilized highly visible print, billboard and transit placements, garnering more than 32 million impressions in five short months.

The Outstanding Oregon Website Award celebrates websites that utilize industry best practices in design, technology, strategy and content to impact travel to Oregon. This year's award went to the **Bandon Chamber of Commerce** for the launch of its new website. After a three-year planning process, Bandon Chamber now has a website that provides visitors and community members with an easy-to-navigate, mobile-friendly experience. -

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In addition to the inspiring photos and fresh content, the site allows the chamber to reach destination-marketing sites across the state, and enables its members to streamline access for business information and event postings.

The Outstanding Overall Oregon Marketing Program Award recognizes the best integrated domestic or international marketing program or campaign that attracted visitors to Oregon. The award was presented to **City of Seaside Visitors Bureau** who went through a complete rebrand including a fully responsive website, a new visitor guide that blends illustration and stunning photography, print and digital advertising, new brand assets and compelling content.

The Oregon Tourism Leadership Award honors individuals who champion the value of tourism and whose leadership behind the scenes contributes significantly to the recognition and impact of Oregon's travel and tourism industry. This year, **Pat Beard** of Travel Pendleton was awarded for paving the way for the next generation to gain knowledge and a budding passion for tourism. A cowboy with an undying love for Eastern Oregon, Beard is someone who truly goes above and beyond his job duties out of genuine love for his community. From creating inspiring itineraries, leading media and familiarization tours, and cultivating large scale events, Beard exemplifies what strong leadership looks like in Oregon's tourism industry.

The Oregon Tourism Commission, dba Travel Oregon, works to enhance visitors' experience by providing information, resources and trip planning tools that inspire travel and consistently convey the exceptional quality of Oregon. The commission aims to improve Oregonians' quality of life by strengthening economic impacts of the state's \$11.3 billion tourism industry that employs more than 109,000 Oregonians. www.TravelOregon.com

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