

MINUTES
City Council Meeting
March 23, 2026
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MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL
MARCH 23, 2026
5:30 p.m.

VIA ZOOM/ IN PERSON

PRESIDING: Mayor Richard Mays

COUNCIL PRESENT: Rod Runyon, Scott Randall, Dan Richardson, Ben Wring

COUNCIL PRESENT: Tim McGlothlin

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Matthew Klebes, City Attorney Jonathan Kara, City Clerk Amie Ell, Deputy Public Works Director David Mills, Police Chief Tom Worthy, Finance Director Brita Myer

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mays at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL

City Clerk Ell conducted Roll Call. Runyon, Randall, Richardson, Wring, Mays present. McGlothlin absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Runyon invited the audience to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Mays noted the addition of item #9D to the Consent Agenda.

It was moved by Runyon and seconded by Randall to approve the agenda as amended.

Motion carried 4 to 0: Runyon, Randall, Richardson Wring voting in favor; none opposed; McGlothlin absent.

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PRESENTATIONS PROCLAMATIONS

Annual Tourism Report 2025-26, The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce

Lynn Cox, Director of Tourism with Lisa Farquharson CEO of The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce presented the tourism report and answered council questions.

Additional items shared following council questions:

- Expenditures were detailed and aligned with the approved annual budget submitted under the contract. The agreement required, at minimum, an annual report, with additional reporting up to quarterly available at Council discretion; annual reporting was considered sufficient at this stage.
- A digital campaign vendor was selected based on a proposal and demonstrated performance. While advertising occurred across multiple outlets, not all offered the same targeted campaign. The selected campaign reached audiences beyond a 50-mile radius, consistent with State tourism guidance, and showed stronger performance.
- The digital walking tour was developed in partnership with The Dalles Art Center and was hosted on a mobile application. The contract and continued use were under review, with consideration for future promotion.
- Standard reporting provided impression data (views), while advanced analytics tracked engagement, including clicks and visits. A recent 30-day campaign generated 5,244 trips, 9,521 visitor days, and an estimated \$913,000 in economic activity.
- Visitor spending data, particularly for cruise ship passengers, was estimated rather than directly measured. While visitation could be approximated, isolating spending was complex due to overlapping activity. Estimates relied on regional averages from a State tourism entity.
- Lodging data provided more reliable metrics due to established reporting systems. Regional average spending rates were updated periodically and used to inform conservative projections.
- Additional data analysis opportunities could be explored to better understand visitor behavior and economic impact, with staff indicating a willingness to review tools and refine methods.
- The University of Oregon partnership would involve structured class participation, not individual students. Faculty-led courses would complete defined City projects, coordinated across departments, with implementation anticipated as early as fall pending the City's budget process.
- Economic conditions presented the most significant external challenge. Concerns included business sustainability, rising costs, and reduced spending, all impacting the City's role as a destination. Attracting visitors and maintaining viable businesses were identified as interconnected needs.

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- Strategies included increasing visitation through targeted marketing, supporting business readiness through training, and leveraging large events. Events such as Cherry Festival were noted as key contributors, along with efforts to attract new events and secure external sponsorships.
- Marketing efforts were expanding to reach broader and more targeted audiences, including higher-spending visitors, through regional campaigns, niche placements, and State and regional tourism resources.
- “Increased transparency” referred to improved coordination and cross-promotion between the City and tourism efforts, including shared platforms, mutual tagging, and aligned branding.
- “Explore The Dalles” was identified as a City-owned work product developed through the contract and representing the City’s tourism identity. Strengthening coordination and promotion of this brand across platforms was identified as a priority.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Nancy Fork, downtown business owner of The Dalles Wedding Place, provided comment. She stated she had operated her business in downtown The Dalles for approximately 20 years, with multiple locations over time, and was currently located at 419 East Second Street, noting the location had been positive for visibility and customer access. She shared concerns from nearby businesses regarding parking, describing current conditions as inconsistent and challenging, and reported collecting input from several businesses on her block reflecting shared concerns about parking availability and impacts on access. She described a recent incident in the alley behind her business involving a large service truck backing into the area, which created a safety concern and resulted in a minor collision while attempting to avoid the vehicle, and noted ongoing issues with traffic flow, unclear direction of travel, and conflicts between construction activity and business access. She expressed concern about businesses being directed to park within active construction zones, described conditions as unsafe and disruptive, and requested consideration of solutions to improve parking access, safety, and overall conditions for downtown businesses.

Matthew Klebes, City Manager said he would follow-up with her to further discuss her concerns and potential solutions.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Matthew Klebes reported;

- Participated in a community outreach trip to Washington, D.C. to advocate for regional priorities, including Secure Rural Schools, wildfire preparedness, agricultural workforce concerns, and H.R. 655 (The Dalles Watershed Act). The bill remained in Senate committee, and support from Senator Wyden was identified as critical. Continued

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outreach was planned, including a potential town hall.

- Reported that the Mayor, a retired Public Works Director, and the City Manager would present to Governor Kotek's Data Center Advisory Committee, focusing on water systems, long-term planning, System Development Charges, and infrastructure agreements. A follow-up report to Council was anticipated.
- Noted an upcoming Q-Life Board meeting and ongoing coordination related to broadband funding, with updates to be provided to Council.

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Richardson reported;

- Attended the Urban Renewal Agency meeting, where a workshop discussion emphasized a desire for the Agency to take a stronger leadership role in setting direction for the district, including marketing downtown and prioritizing support for entrepreneurs. Noted that Urban Renewal has significant available funds and encouraged engagement with the Agency Manager. Highlighted a new pilot "Refresh" grant program offering up to \$7,500 for exterior improvements, with two projects approved and additional applications in progress.
- Attended a Traffic Safety Commission meeting, where discussion focused on safety concerns at the intersection near The Dalles High School. Testimony was provided regarding a pedestrian injury, and increasing traffic volumes were noted. Staff were expected to evaluate safety improvement options, such as signage, stop control, or traffic calming measures, for future recommendation to City Council.
- Received constituent concerns regarding misinformation and questions related to The Dalles Watershed Act. Encouraged continued updates and ongoing promotion of the City's FAQ resource to provide accurate information and address public concerns.

Councilor Runyon reported;

- Attended a Wasco County Pioneers Association meeting and announced the annual meeting scheduled for May 2nd at St. Mary's, with doors opening at 9:30 a.m. and lunch at 11:30 a.m. It was noted that a former County surveyor and Planning Director would present, with additional information to be shared.
- Announced participation in a community gathering at the Oregon Veterans Home with Point Man Ministries on March 31st from 9:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., inviting community members to attend and visit with residents.
- Highlighted the City's designation as a Medal of Honor City and noted the presence of related historical recognition at City Hall. Suggested consideration of future planning or activities to recognize the upcoming 250th anniversary, given the City's connection to a Medal of Honor recipient.

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Councilor Randall reported;

- Attended the Household Hazardous Waste Steering Committee quarterly meeting on March 11th to review past collection events and plan future efforts.
- Attended the League of Oregon Cities Advisory Committee on water and wastewater on March 16th, with discussion noted as particularly relevant to wastewater planning.
- Participated in a Columbia Gorge Community College roundtable on mission fulfillment on March 18th.
- Attended the League of Oregon Cities President's Regional meeting held in the Council Chambers on March 19th.

Councilor Wring reported;

- Attended the Urban Renewal Agency meeting and reviewed input from the Board regarding use of remaining Urban Renewal funds through 2029.
- Attended Columbia Gorge Community College and participated in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, highlighting collaboration between education and industry to provide training and work experience opportunities.
- Attended the Parks and Recreation meeting and reported that, following the Rip City Rally event, the Portland Trail Blazers organization selected the City to receive a Motor Assist Program donation without a competitive process. The award, estimated to exceed \$30,000, would be announced at the final home game of the season and used for park improvements.
- Met with the City Attorney to review notes related to the Council meeting.

Mayor Mays reported;

- Attended and presented to the Port of The Dalles with a retired Public Works Director regarding the history of the City's relationship with Google, including financial, water, and infrastructure arrangements.
- Attended a Main Street Board meeting with the Economic Development Officer at a local business.
- Participated in a radio interview on KODL.
- Attended the League of Oregon Cities regional meeting held in The Dalles.
- Recognized the Oregon National Guard Youth Program and announced April as Month of the Military Child, including support for "Purple Up Day" on April 9, 2026.

CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Randall and seconded by Runyon to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

The motion carried 4 to 0, Randall, Runyon, Wring, Richardson voting in favor; none opposed; McGlothlin absent.

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Items approved on the consent agenda were:

- A) Approval of the March 9, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
- B) Authorization of Expenditures for 2026 City Street Chip Seal Project
- C) Resolution No. 26-011 Designating Two Previously Adopted Resolutions as Resolution Nos. 24-022A and 24-022B for Administrative Clarity
- D) Adoption of Resolution No. 26-012, a resolution approving a First Amendment to the Joint Funding Agreement with Klickitat County for the Aviation Hangar Expansion Project at the Columbia Gorge Regional Airport and modifying Resolution No. 25-041

ACTION ITEMS

Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for Non-Represented Staff

Matthew Klebes City Manager reviewed the staff report and answered Council questions.

Klebes said total staff included 120 employees, with 56 non-represented employees, 45 represented by SEIU, and 19 represented by the Police Association.

It was moved by Richardson and seconded by Randall to approve the proposed 2.7% COLA for non-represented staff at City of The Dalles.

The motion carried 4 to 0, Richardson, Randall, Runyon, Wring voting in favor; none opposed; McGlothlin absent.

Special Ordinance No. 26-611 Approving a Short-Term Franchise Agreement Extension with Spectrum Pacific West, LLC (Charter Communications) and Declaring an Emergency Charter Franchise Extension

Jonathan Kara City Attorney and Matthew Klebes City manager reviewed the staff report and answered Council questions.

Discussion occurred regarding the absence of a local customer service storefront for the City's primary cable provider and the potential value of having an in-person service location within a reasonable distance. It was noted that a local office requirement had previously been included in franchise agreements but was removed in 2016 and could be considered in future negotiations.

Kara explained federal law limits franchise fees to a capped percentage of provider revenue, and requiring a physical storefront could reduce the revenue the City receives under the agreement.

Wring said the provider maintains a local operational facility but does not offer customer-facing services such as equipment exchange. He raised concerns about impacts to residents, particularly

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those working remotely or relying on internet access for school, due to the lack of a local equipment exchange option and limited nearby shipping services. It was noted that this creates delays and inconvenience when service issues arise.

Klebes said the franchise agreement generated approximately \$92,000 in the last fiscal year and noted that requiring a customer service presence could reduce that revenue due to federal fee limitations. He noted that multiple internet service providers operate within the City, raising considerations about whether similar requirements would apply broadly and the potential cumulative impact on revenue. He said staff could raise the issue with the provider, communicate Council and community interest, and bring information back for Council consideration.

Mayor Mays asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak on the item.

Roger Nichols, resident of The Dalles, requested clarification regarding how franchise fees are calculated. He asked whether fees are based on overall gross revenue within the City limits and expressed uncertainty about how additional service requirements would impact City revenue, noting an assumption that fees might be based on other factors, such as a pole charge.

Klebes clarified that the City charges 5% of the provider's gross revenue generated within the City limits. He explained that if additional requirements are included in the franchise agreement, such as a customer service office, the associated costs could be counted against that capped amount, potentially reducing the revenue received by the City.

It was moved by Randall and seconded by Runyon to adopt Special Ordinance No. 26-611, as presented, by title only.

Mayor Mays asked if there were any Councilors who wanted the Ordinance Red in full. There were none. He asked the City Clerk to read the Ordinance by title.

Amie Ell, City Clerk read the ordinance by title.

The motion carried 4 to 0, Randall, Runyon, Richardson, Wring voting in favor; none opposed; McGlothlin absent.

Special Ordinance No. 26-612 Granting a Non-Exclusive Water Utility Franchise to Chenoweth Water People's Utility District

Jonathan Kara City Attorney and Matthew Klebes City manager reviewed the staff report and answered Council questions.

Discussion clarified that the franchise agreement was not initiated solely due to a recent incident but was part of a broader effort, directed by Council, to review and establish agreements with

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entities utilizing the City's right of way. The recent work within a City arterial highlighted the need for clearer communication, coordination, and formalized expectations.

Klebes emphasized that the agreement establishes a requirement for utilities to notify and coordinate with the City when performing work within the right of way, improving oversight and preventing future conflicts. He clarified that the franchise fee structure would apply to the utility, beginning at 1% of gross revenue and increasing to 5%. The utility's rate structure remains separate from the City, and decisions on how to manage any associated costs would be determined by the utility, not imposed through City water rates.

Klebes confirmed that City Attorney Kara had communicated with the Chenoweth Water PUD attorney and confirmed that the franchise agreement had been adopted by their board at its meeting.

Kara provided an overview of franchise agreements and associated fees, noting that the City collects franchise fees from multiple utility types, including power, water, sewer, gas, telecom, and garbage services, with several telecommunications providers operating within the City. He explained that franchise fee rates vary by utility type and are regulated by law, with telecommunications services capped at up to 7% of gross revenue depending on the service, while natural gas, electric, water, sewer, and similar utilities are generally capped at 5%, and cable services federally capped at 5%. He noted that existing telecommunications franchise agreements are currently at or above 5% and are expected to transition to 7% as agreements are renewed or updated.

Mayor Mays asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak on the topic.

Linda M. Miller, resident of The Dalles, provided comment. She stated that during her prior service on City Council, concerns were raised regarding roadway patches completed by Chenoweth Water PUD, noting that patches were often in better condition than surrounding roadway surfaces. She indicated this condition had not changed and referenced a recent patch on 10th Street, noting differences in patching standards and practices. She expressed the view that patching work should be consistent across agencies. She also questioned the use of franchise fees for utilities, stating that ratepayers already pay for services and raising concern about the additional financial impact.

Discussion occurred regarding responsibility for roadway cuts and repairs within the public right of way. It was clarified that when a utility performs a cut, such as Chenoweth Water PUD, the utility is responsible for completing the repair work and associated costs.

David Mills Deputy Public Works Director explained that roadway cuts reduce the overall lifespan of the pavement, even when properly patched, due to long-term impacts from water

intrusion and environmental conditions. It was noted that a new roadway with a pavement condition index (PCI) of 100 was reduced to 88 following a single cut, illustrating the impact on long-term asset condition. The City maintains engineering standards with specific guidelines based on roadway classification, including different requirements for arterial streets and collector streets, which utilities are required to follow when completing repairs.

Miller expressed concern regarding roadway conditions following recent work, including tire track irregularities affecting vehicle travel.

Klebes acknowledged the issue and confirmed it had been identified, noting that repairs were planned and would be completed in the spring following weather-related restrictions.

It was moved by Randall and seconded by Richardson to adopt Special Ordinance No. 26-612, a special ordinance granting a non-exclusive water utility franchise to Chenoweth Water People's Utility District, as presented, by title only.

Mayor Mays asked if there were any Councilors who wanted the Ordinance Red in full. There were none. He asked the City Clerk to read the Ordinance by title.


Amie Ell, City Clerk read the ordinance by title.


The motion carried 4 to 0, Randall, Richardson, Wring, Runyon voting in favor; none opposed; McGlothlin absent.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Submitted by/
Amie Ell, City Clerk

SIGNED: 
Richard A. Mays, Mayor

ATTEST: 
Amie Ell, City Clerk



2025 - 2026 Tourism

Annual Report

As of May 11, 2026

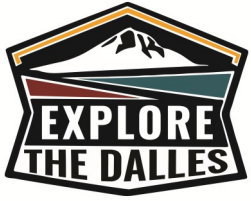


The Dalles Area
Chamber of Commerce
— ESTD • 1883 —

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Community Marketing Work Plan 2025-2026

At the core of our tourism efforts is a consistent “Explore The Dalles” brand message designed to increase destination awareness and encourage overnight visitation. Marketing initiatives focus on highlighting local experiences, businesses, recreation, and cultural assets in a way that supports economic activity and reinforces The Dalles as a year-round destination.



The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce

404 W 2nd St

The Dalles, OR 97058

1. Executive Summary

2. Visitor & Lodging

3. Marketing & Social Media

4. Grants & Event Support

5. Cruise Ship Collaboration

6. Strategic Planning & Future

7. Partnerships Regional Collab

8. Conclusion & Forward Focus



Executive Summary

July 1 – January 31

Tourism Services Report

During the first seven months of the fiscal year, Explore The Dalles delivered measurable visibility, direct visitor engagement, and strategic community support under the City's tourism services contract. Marketing efforts across broadcast, digital, and social platforms generated more than **4.8 million impressions**, significantly increasing destination awareness in key feeder markets.

Highlights include:

- **3,531,800 broadcast impressions** through the KATU Weather Cam partnership
- **26,394 digital impressions** via KATU.com linking directly to ExploreTheDalles.com
- **518,855 impressions** from the Bi-Coastal digital campaign
- **529,662 impressions** from the Datafy targeted digital campaign
- **184,000 Facebook impressions** and **66,900 Instagram impressions**
- **274,746 website search impressions**, reflecting a **110% year-over-year increase** in online visibility

In addition to digital and broadcast reach, the Visitor Information Center recorded **3,275 direct visitor interactions** (walk-in and phone inquiries combined), demonstrating continued engagement from travelers seeking personalized information and trip planning support.

Tourism promotion funds also supported the broader community ecosystem. During this reporting period, **8 marketing grants** were awarded to events and organizations generating visitor activity. Explore The Dalles supported and promoted regional and community events including the PDX and Redmond Sportsman's Shows, Cherry Festival, Starlight Parade & Tree Lighting, Veteran's Day Parade, CCA Banquet, ODA Conference, Travel Ability Conference, and the Governor's Conference. These partnerships reinforce the City's focus on overnight stays and shoulder-season activation.

Operationally, Explore The Dalles strengthened its commitment to inclusive tourism. Staff completed Certified Accessibility Leader training through Travel Ability, and the Chamber is now recognized as a Sunflower Support organization for hidden disabilities in partnership with Travel Oregon. These efforts position The Dalles as a welcoming and accessible destination for a broader visitor base.

The City has also discussed exploring a potential partnership with University of Oregon students to assist in developing a long-term tourism strategic framework beginning next fiscal year. Explore The Dalles is supportive of this collaborative opportunity and will continue coordinating with the City to ensure future tourism efforts remain data-informed and aligned with community priorities.

Throughout this reporting period, tourism efforts have emphasized measurable exposure, responsible stewardship of Transient Lodging Tax resources, and strong collaboration with City leadership and regional partners.



Visitor & Lodging Performance



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Visitor Information Center Activity (July–January):

| | Walk-ins | Phone | Relocation Packets | Welcome Packets/ Bag | Cruise Boat Charm Trail | Tourism Packets | Walk-In Country | Walk-In State |
|-----------|----------|-------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---|
| July / 25 | 430 | 282 | 2 | 70 | 9 | 3 | Germany, Japan, Spain | WA, NV, WI, CA, NJ, MO, IA, OK, FL |
| July / 24 | 227 | 190 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 5 | Canada | FL, WI, IL, TX, AZ |
| Aug / 25 | 252 | 275 | 1 | 636 | 0 | 0 | | CA, OH, IW, TX, MN, WV, ID, IL, NJ, MO |
| Aug / 24 | 325 | 260 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Canada, UK | AZ, MO, WI, DE, AK |
| Sept / 25 | 186 | 195 | 0 | 170 | 0 | 0 | Canada | CA, FL, TX, AK, MT, OH, |
| Sept / 24 | 213 | 105 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 2 | Canada, Fiji | CO, MA, CT, VA, CA |
| Oct / 25 | 258 | 240 | 2 | 135 | 5 | 1 | | MD, IL, ID, WI, HI |
| Oct / 24 | 241 | 153 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | Canada, BC | LA, NC, OR, IL, WA |
| Nov / 25 | 300 | 164 | 1 | 45 | 2 | 1 | | WA |
| Nov / 24 | 174 | 142 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Canada | OR, WA, CA |
| Dec / 25 | 199 | 132 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | WA, ID |
| Dec / 24 | 70 | 34 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Jan / 26 | 186 | 176 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | MS, OK |
| Jan / 25 | 212 | 114 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | | OR, ID |

The Visitor Center served 1,811 walk-in guests and responded to 1,464 phone inquiries during the first seven months of the fiscal year. Staff distributed 1,056 welcome packets and tourism materials, supporting both domestic and international visitors. Guests traveled from across the Pacific Northwest, California, Texas, the Midwest, and internationally from Germany, Japan, Spain, and Canada. These interactions reflect continued interest in The Dalles as a regional and international destination.

Data Provided By



Lodging Occupancy Report

July 2025 - January 2026

Wasco County / Percentage of Occupancy Pacific NW United States

| Month | 2025 / 2026 | 2024 / 2025 | % of change | 2025 / 2026 | 2025 / 2026 |
|------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| July* | 85% | 80.2% | 6.0% | 74.00% | 68.20% |
| August* | 79.9% | 81.5% | -2.0% | 72.80% | 66.10% |
| September* | 72% | 76.0% | -5.3% | 69.10% | 63.40% |
| October | 64.6% | 65.1% | -0.8% | 69.10% | 65.80% |
| November | 47.7% | 45.4% | 5.1% | 60.90% | 57.90% |
| December | 35.8% | 40.0% | -10.5% | 57.10% | 53.00% |
| January | 38.8% | 44.0% | -11.8% | 57.90% | 52.50% |
| February | | 50.2% | | | |
| March | | 49.6% | | | |
| April | | 62.6% | | | |
| May | | 52.0% | | | |
| June | | 72.0% | | | |

*Occupancy was higher than State or PNW rate and last May & June were higher than State and PNW rates and we hope for that again.



Media & Social Media Performance



The Dalles Area
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Marketing & Media Performance

July 1 – January 31

Explore The Dalles generated more than **5.1 million marketing impressions** across broadcast, targeted digital campaigns, social media, and website channels during the first seven months of the fiscal year. These efforts focused on increasing destination visibility in key feeder markets while reinforcing year-round travel opportunities. **Marketing Impression:** *The number of times an advertisement or piece of content is displayed to viewers, indicating the overall visibility and reach of a marketing campaign.*

Broadcast & Regional Media Exposure

KATU Weather Cam Partnership

- **3,531,800 broadcast impressions** (November–January)
- **26,394 digital impressions** via KATU.com, linking directly to ExploreTheDalles.com
- Recurring live news mentions across multiple programming segments

This partnership provides consistent regional exposure within the Portland metro and surrounding markets, maintaining destination visibility during both peak and shoulder travel seasons.

Targeted Digital Campaigns

Bi-Coastal Digital Campaign

- **518,855 impressions**

Datafy Targeted Digital Campaign

- **529,662 impressions**
- **Est. Trips:** 5,244 / **Est. Visitor Days:** 9,521 / **Avg Stay:** 1.8 Days
- **Campaign Total Spend:** \$5,000.01 *vs.* **Community Impact:** \$913,032.84
- Real-time audience segmentation and geofencing strategies targeting high-propensity travelers

These campaigns leverage data-driven placement and visitor analytics to reach audiences most likely to convert into overnight visitors.

Social Media & Website Visibility

Social Media Reach

- **Facebook:** 184,000 impressions
- **Instagram:** 66,900 impressions
- Continued year-over-year follower growth

Website Performance

- **274,746 search impressions**
- **110% year-over-year increase** in search visibility
- Mobile search impressions more than doubled compared to the prior year

These metrics reflect the growing digital visibility of The Dalles as a travel destination and support continued visitor discovery through online search and social platforms. While many destination organizations do not publicly report detailed digital performance metrics, these indicators are included to provide transparency and demonstrate the reach of The Dalles in regional travel markets.



Marketing & Media Performance

July 1 – January 31

Paid & Earned Media Placement Highlights

Tourism funds supported strategic placements in regional and national publications to expand brand reach, including:

- Willamette Week (Winter Escapes feature and full-page destination article)
- True West Magazine (National “Top Towns Where History Is Happening Now”)
- Regional outdoor and recreation-focused publications
- Event-specific and seasonal advertising placements

These placements positioned The Dalles as a year-round destination and expanded exposure to regional and national audiences. Media placements were selected based on audience relevance, regional reach, and alignment with target visitor demographics to maximize return on investment.

Through established relationships with regional media partners, Explore The Dalles is often notified of remnant advertising opportunities—unsold inventory offered at reduced rates. These opportunities allow the organization to secure high-visibility placements at a lower cost, maximizing the impact of Transient Lodging Tax funds and increasing overall return on investment.

Example Remnant Placements

- **1889 Magazine—Washington Edition**
Social Media Reach: **12,000+**
Newsletter Subscribers: **17,000+**
- **1859 Magazine—Oregon Edition**
Social Media Reach: **98,000+**
Newsletter Subscribers: **17,000+**

Through these media relationships, Explore The Dalles secured two full two-page spreads at **\$5,000 each compared to the standard \$8,200 rate**, resulting in approximately **39% savings per placement** while maintaining strong regional distribution.



The Dalles – On I-84.

When Lewis and Clark arrived in 1805, they found one of the Pacific Northwest’s most important trading centers, shaped by the Columbia River and thousands of years of Native American history. Today, that same river defines this vibrant community where history isn’t polished, it’s lived.





At the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, trace the Corps of Discovery’s journey alongside 10,000 years of Native heritage, the Gold Rush, and early Wasco County life. Take in sweeping Gorge views, riverside trails, and open skies much like those the expedition described.


Downtown, explore 35 vibrant murals, tour the 1880s Fort Dalles Museum and the Original Wasco County Courthouse, and visit The Dalles Dam Visitor Center. Relax at Riverfront Park, a premier launch for water sports, picnicking, and birdwatching.

Complete your visit with award-winning wineries, craft breweries, and a local distillery. In The Dalles, you don’t just learn the story, you step into it.

The Frosty Trail: Targeted the Portland market, drawing visitors traveling more than 50 miles and generating approximately \$5,000 in tracked retail spending through the passport program. Additional participation occurred via the Goosechase app, though related spending cannot be quantified.



> RIGHT NOW  **TIGARD**
 7AM  **41°**
 NOON  **47°**
 5PM  **52°**
 5:08 | **42°**
2abc
 KATU.COM

THE DALLES
 clear night  **35°**

TOP STORIES **K THAT KILLED 3 AMERICANS**

> RIGHT NOW  **SALEM**
 7AM  **40°**
 NOON  **47°**
 5PM  **52°**
 5:07 | **42°**
2abc
 KATU.COM

THE DALLES
 clear night  **35°**

TOP STORIES **IS IT FOR STRATEGIC PURPOSES** **US LAUNCHES NEW RETALIAT**



And now imagine you right here



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1859 Magazine Washington

Explore The Dalles

The Best Hidden Gem for History, Adventure & Taste in the Northwest

Tucked along the Columbia River Gorge, The Dalles, Oregon is a rich historical destination that blends outdoor adventure and exceptional local flavor. A hidden gem for travelers in the know, this vibrant town offers memorable experiences at every turn. From storied landmarks to scenic river views, The Dalles has something for every kind of traveler. Here are a few highlights to inspire your visit.




Walk Through History
 Follow in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark, who loved the area so much they camped here not once, but twice during their expedition. Experience stories that span from ancient Indigenous cultures to the pioneer era. Throughout town, historic buildings, museums, and Oregon's oldest bookstore, Klindt's, invite you to connect with the original adventure.

Taste the Region
 Known as the highest per-capita producer of sweet cherries, The Dalles delivers some of the juiciest fruit you'll ever taste. The region's rich agricultural roots of wheat, grapes, cattle, and sheep make it a haven for farm-to-table dining. Visit local orchards, farmers markets, and tasting rooms to savor the bounty.

Get Outside
 Adventure comes naturally here. The Columbia River offers prime conditions for fishing, boating, kayaking, paddleboarding, and jet skiing. Anglers may even catch a glimpse of the legendary river monsters (sturgeon) that have inhabited these waters for generations.



Savor Fun Local Craft
 The Dalles' food and drink scene is as welcoming as it is flavorful. Enjoy locally sourced cuisine, sip wine at Sunshine Mill & Winery inside a historic flour mill (just one of many tasting rooms), or sample craft beer at Freebridge Brewing in the iconic Mint Building.



Feel the Music
 Dubbed "Little Music City," The Dalles boasts a thriving live music scene, with performances nearly every night. Intimate venues showcase talented regional artists across a range of genres, creating unforgettable evenings filled with sound and atmosphere.



Discover the Unexpected
 From Bigfoot lore to immersive museums, The Dalles delights with its unique attractions. The Columbia Gorge Discovery Center offers engaging exhibits for all ages, while the Fort Dalles Museum, Original Wasco County Courthouse, and National Neon Sign Museum provide fascinating glimpses into the area's past and culture. Be sure to explore local shops and eateries along the East Gorge Food Trail.



Learn more at ExploreTheDalles.com
 Make The Dalles your next must-visit destination and discover a place where history, adventure, and flavor come together effortlessly.
 (541) 296-2231



Explore NW Airplane Magazine

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Social Media—Facebook (1,257 Views)

Explore The Dalles is with Wood Family Spirits.

February 15 at 11:18 AM

BIGFOOT HAS BEEN SPOTTED... at the Explore The Dalles booth! ... See more

The Gorge Magazine—Winter Issue

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Social Media—Facebook (1,213 Views)

Delicious FOOD MENU

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LOCAL TO THE DALLES

Delicious FOOD MENU

LAST STOP HOTEL & SALOON

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CHINA BUFFET

Delicious FOOD MENU

PETITE PROVENCE

Delicious FOOD MENU

4TH ST. STATION FOOD CAFE



Grants & Event Support

2025



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Grants & Event Support

July 1 – January 31

Tourism promotion funds were strategically deployed to strengthen local events, increase visitor activity, and support initiatives that generate overnight stays and shoulder-season engagement.

Marketing Grant Program (YTD)

During this reporting period, **8 marketing grants** were awarded to organizations producing tourism generating events. Grant funding prioritizes initiatives that:

- Attract out-of-area visitors
- Encourage overnight stays
- Support shoulder-season activation
- Enhance the overall visitor experience

| | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Nice Dreams, LLC (Neon Nights) [8/25] | Rout 30—The Dalles Witches Walk [10/25] | The Dalles Hoot [3/26] | Love Stinks [2/26] |
| The Grand Dalles Music Festival [5/25] | River Tap—Pride party [6/25] | Fort Dalles Riders Club Ranch Sorting Club [May—July 2026] | Cherry Stomp Dance Revival [4/25] |

Grants Awarded (July 1—January 31)

These grants reinforce the contractor’s role in supporting community-driven tourism activity while ensuring accountability in the use of Transient Lodging Tax resources.

Event Promotion & Industry Engagement

Explore The Dalles supported and promoted the following events and tourism-related initiatives:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>*PDX Sportsman’s Show</i> | <i>*Redmond Sportsman’s Show</i> | <i>*PNW Cherry Festival</i> |
| <i>*Starlight Parade & Tree Lighting</i> | <i>*Veteran’s Day Parade</i> | <i>*CCA Banquet</i> |
| <i>*ODA Conference</i> | <i>*Travel Ability Conference</i> | <i>*Governor’s Conference</i> |

Participation in these events expands regional visibility, strengthens industry partnerships, and promotes The Dalles as a destination within key outdoor recreation and tourism markets.

Accessibility & Inclusive Tourism Leadership

As part of ongoing destination development efforts:

- Staff completed Certified Accessibility Leader training through Travel Ability.
- Explore The Dalles / The Dalles Chamber is now recognized as a Sunflower Support organization for hidden disabilities, in partnership with Travel Oregon.



Cruise Ship Collaboration

2025



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Cruise Ship Collaboration

Explore The Dalles continues to support visitation associated with American Cruise Lines (ACL), which utilizes the City's marine terminal as part of its Columbia River itinerary.

While cruise passengers remain overnight onboard the vessel, ship stops in The Dalles generate daytime economic activity for local businesses, restaurants, retail shops, attractions, and transportation providers.

Tourism Director has strengthened coordination efforts by:

- Establishing direct communication with ACL leadership
- Developed a QR code linking to the community events calendar, to be included in the visitor handout distributed to cruise guests onboard by ACL
- Adding ACL leadership to the Chamber's weekly E-Blast to ensure timely communication of events and activities occurring during ship visits

These proactive measures improve event visibility prior to docking and enhance opportunities for passenger engagement while in port.

Tourism Staff coordinate efforts to:

- Provide visitor information and promotional materials
- Support downtown engagement and walkable access
- Connect cruise operators with local attractions and experiences
- Assis with community awareness and scheduling coordination

Cruise visitation contributes to daytime economic activity and increases national exposure for The Dalles as part of the Columbia River travel experience. Ongoing coordination with the City and Port of The Dalles ensures ship arrivals remain organized and beneficial to the community.



Strategic Planning & Future Direction 2025



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Strategic Planning & Future Direction

The City has discussed exploring a potential partnership with University of Oregon students beginning in the next fiscal year to assist in developing a tourism strategic framework for The Dalles.

This potential collaboration could provide:

- Research-based market analysis
- Visitor trend evaluation
- Long-term positioning guidance
- Strategic recommendations aligned with community priorities

Explore The Dalles is supportive of this opportunity and looks forward to coordinating with the City to ensure any strategic planning effort remains data-informed, fiscally responsible, and aligned with the goals of the tourism services contract.

Staff will also evaluate potential grant opportunities that may help offset costs associated with strategic planning or related destination development initiatives.

This forward-looking approach reflects a continued commitment to measurable performance, responsible stewardship of Transient Lodging Tax resources, and long-term destination sustainability.

Developing a formal tourism strategy will further strengthen The Dalles' competitive positioning within the Columbia River Gorge region.



Partnerships & Regional Collaboration



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Partnerships & Regional Collaboration

Tourism success in The Dalles is strengthened through active collaboration with regional, state, and local partners. Explore The Dalles continues to maintain and expand relationships that support destination visibility, industry alignment, and coordinated marketing efforts.

State & Regional Tourism Alignment

Explore The Dalles maintains active engagement with:

- Travel Oregon
- Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance (CGTA)
- Mt. Hood–Columbia Gorge Regional Destination Marketing Organizations
- Oregon Destination Marketing Organizations (ODMO)
- Oregon Tour & Travel Alliance
- Oregon Festivals & Events Association
- Columbia Gorge Historic Hwy
- Gorge Ride

These partnerships ensure The Dalles is represented in statewide and regional marketing initiatives, cooperative advertising programs, travel trade opportunities, and familiarization (FAM) tours. Collaboration at this level strengthens the City’s presence within broader tourism campaigns and leverages shared marketing resources.

Local & Community Collaboration

Explore The Dalles also works closely with:

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| City of The Dalles | Wasco County | Discovery Center | N Wasco Co, Parks & Rec. |
| Wasco Co. Historic Landmarks | The Dalles Main Street | Downtown The Dalles | NW Regional Chambers & Visitor Centers |

Local collaboration supports coordinated event promotion, visitor services, business engagement, and economic development alignment.

Strengthening City Collaboration

Explore The Dalles remains committed to strong partnership with the City. Efforts are underway to:

- Increase transparency around Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) allocation through City website updates.
- Tag the City of The Dalles in social media posts to strengthen digital reach and visibility.
- Maintain regular communication and reporting to ensure alignment with City priorities.

This cooperative approach reinforces accountability, visibility, and shared success in tourism development.



Conclusion & Forward Focus



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Conclusion & Forward Focus

During the first seven months of the fiscal year, tourism efforts in The Dalles have emphasized measurable exposure, community partnership, and responsible stewardship of Transient Lodging Tax resources. Marketing initiatives generated more than 5 million impressions across broadcast, digital, and social platforms, while direct visitor engagement and event support strengthened the local tourism ecosystem.

Looking ahead, Explore The Dalles will continue to:

- Prioritize strategies that support overnight visitation and shoulder-season activity
- Maintain data-driven marketing efforts that target high-propensity travelers
- Strengthen accessibility and inclusive tourism initiatives
- Support local events and community partnerships that generate visitor activity
- Collaborate with the City on long-term tourism strategic planning initiatives

Beginning this spring, Explore The Dalles will partner with select local businesses to develop short video interviews highlighting their origin stories, unique offerings, and role within the community. These videos will be shared across social media, the Explore The Dalles website, and other digital platforms to support destination marketing efforts. This initiative strengthens digital storytelling, promotes local entrepreneurship, and increases both visitor awareness and community engagement.

Explore The Dalles remains committed to transparency, accountability, and alignment with City priorities as tourism efforts continue through the remainder of the fiscal year.