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Clackamas County Tourism announces \$250,000 in grant funding

Oregon City, Ore. – The Clackamas County Tourism Development Council (TDC), has announced the recipients of \$250,000 in Tourism Development Grants for FY 2016-17. The TDC oversees the county's 6% lodging tax program branded as Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory.

Grant funding was increased by \$50,000 to \$250,000 this year as a result of growing tourism revenues from overnight stays at county hotels, motels and other lodging facilities. "Transient Room Tax revenues have increased to record levels over the past few years and as a board, we determined that reinvesting even more of those funds into further developing our tourism assets in the county was a prudent investment strategy," said John Erickson, Chair of the TDC.

The Tourism Development Grant Program in its current form was launched by the TDC in 2010 to assist in the creation and growth of initiatives that will improve tourism offerings in Clackamas County. Grant funds come from the Transient Room Tax revenue, designated by county law to be used for tourism development and marketing purposes.

This year's awards support projects in five Clackamas County cities as well as projects with countywide impact. A total of eight projects were awarded full or partial funding. The projects include:

- "Genealogy Research Lab" by Clackamas County Historical Society: \$20,000
The genealogy research lab at the Museum of the Oregon Territory will provide visitors researching their family history access to the unique records available on through the Clackamas County Historical Society. The Clackamas County Heritage and Cultural Tourism Development Strategic Plan identified genealogy tourism as ripe opportunity for tourism in the county.
- "Willamette Falls Heritage Area Market Research, Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan" by Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition: \$60,000
The Willamette Falls Heritage Area is the first State Heritage area and is currently being reviewed for designation as a National Heritage Area. The grant award will fund the assessment of tourism assets within the heritage area and evaluate the economic opportunities that could benefit communities and citizens within the area, as well as develop a strategic plan for capitalizing on those tourism opportunities.
- "Sandy Ridge Trailhead Access Improvements" by the Bureau of Land Management: \$80,000
Grant funds will be used for trailhead improvements at the Sandy Ridge Trail System that increase capacity for parking and events. These improvements are part of a large multifaceted BLM project that adds amenities to this well-known mountain biking destination.
- "Canby Bike Hub" by Canby Livability Coalition: \$12,000

The Canby Livability Coalition received funds to create a covered bicycle hub as part of larger plan to promote bicycle tourism in Canby. The bicycle hub is near the Canby Ferry, a popular attraction for cyclists visiting the area.

- “Bike Friendly Amenities for Willamette Street in West Linn” by Historic Willamette Main Street: \$5,000
West Linn’s Historic Willamette Main Street received funds to install bike racks on Willamette St that add to the character of the Historic Willamette District as part of a larger vision for encouraging cycle tourism in the area.
- “River Tourism at Willamette Falls” by We Love Clean Rivers: \$40,000
Grant funds will be used to answer the technical questions that must be addressed for a water or portage trail to be incorporated near Willamette Falls.
- “Clackamas Cultural Plan” by Clackamas County Cultural Coalition: \$20,000
The Cultural Coalition supports cultural tourism opportunities countywide. Funds will be used to hire a professional consultant to guide the public outreach and engagement process that will inform the updating of the cultural plan for Clackamas County.
- “Rodeo Walk of Fame” by the Molalla Area Chamber of Commerce: \$12,000
Molalla Area Chamber of Commerce received funds to expand the Rodeo Walk of Fame. The Rodeo Walk of Fame builds on Molalla’s rodeo heritage and the reputation of the Molalla Buckaroo. The City of Molalla incorporated the Walk of Fame bronze plaques in the Main Street improvements currently underway.

“We congratulate this year’s recipients of our Development Grant awards,” said Chair Erickson. “It is through the partnerships we have developed within our local communities that has really enhanced Oregon’s Mt. Hood Territory as a destination for visitors worldwide. These investments will further enhance our tourism infrastructure throughout the county and improve the economic vitality for all of our citizens.”

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About Oregon’s Mt. Hood Territory: Please visit us at: www.mthoodterritory.com. Clackamas County Tourism & Cultural Affairs (branded “Oregon’s Mt. Hood Territory”), is dedicated to economic development through visitor spending, and is funded by transient room taxes from area lodging facilities and campgrounds. Clackamas County is a contributing partner in enhancing Oregon’s quality of life by strengthening the economic impacts of the state’s \$10.3 billion tourism industry.