



October 4, 2022

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:

Casey Knopik

Senior PR and Communications Manager

casey@mthoodterritory.com

Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory Awarded Best Idea Program by DMA West

Work was a federal, state and local collaboration promoting visitor safety during the Clackamas River Corridor wildfire reopening.

Oregon City, Ore. – In September of 2020 Oregon's Riverside Wildfire ravaged the southeastern area of the Mt. Hood National Forest, leaving many important recreation assets destroyed or significantly damaged. A large portion of Highway 224 was forced to close, including the Upper Clackamas River Corridor, a popular rafting and paddling destination that also includes hiking trails, cycling routes, campgrounds and day-use areas.

In February of 2022, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced Highway 224's reopening was set for May 2022. Along with the highway, limited recreation areas would also reopen, however many would remain closed. Traffic flows and parking areas had also changed. Many of these spots remained hazardous with the danger of landslides and fallen trees and this effort would require periodic temporary halts of 10 to 20 minutes for ongoing slide mitigation work.

Mt. Hood Territory, the public-facing brand for Clackamas County Tourism, quickly realized the need for a centralized location where Upper Clackamas River Corridor visitors could find all information regarding the reopening, what to expect when visiting the corridor or areas that were still closed.

"With our ability to reach audiences, this project was a natural way for Mt. Hood Territory to support land managers and local communities who had information that needed sharing and were concerned about public safety," said Jim Austin, Development and Community Relations Lead at Mt. Hood Territory.

In collaboration with the United States Forest Service (USFS), ODOT and Portland General Electric (PGE), staff created a landing page with information about the Upper Clackamas River Corridor at mthoodterritory.com/clackamas-river. Mt. Hood Territory worked with these state and federal agencies to ensure the page included constantly-updated FAQs, a user-friendly map with designated open sites, campgrounds, and access points, and links to information on the

nearby community of Estacada. The Estacada Chamber of Commerce also contributed to the landing page and its information to ensure accuracy and consistency.

“Recognizing that not all visitors would see online content before arriving at the Upper Clackamas River Corridor, so our team also created materials for a physical information hub in Estacada,” said Austin. “We collaborated with the Estacada Chamber of Commerce to repurpose an existing informational kiosk.”

The kiosk included printing large-scale versions of the recreation map along with local business and stewardship information from regional and state tourism partners, including Mt. Hood & Columbia River Gorge Region and Travel Oregon. In addition, a large printed map was also provided to the USFS that was placed on an informational board at the newly opened section of Highway 224.

This coordinated effort to educate and inform visitors – organized and led by Mt. Hood Territory – was recently acknowledged by the Destination Marketing Association of the West (DMA West), which represents over 150 destination marketing organizations (DMOs) throughout the Western United States. Four DMOs received a “Best New Idea” achievement award this year, showcasing innovative projects and creative marketing strategies, and accepted it at the annual DMA West Education Summit, held in Ventura, CA in mid-September.

“It was a great honor to accept this award on behalf of all the partners who worked on this project,” said Austin. “This effort helped bring together many organizations and it successfully kept visitors informed.”

#

About Oregon’s Mt. Hood Territory

Clackamas County Tourism is the recognized Destination Organization for Clackamas County, branded as [Oregon’s Mt. Hood Territory](#). The mission is to enhance the quality of life for residents by optimizing the economic impacts of the tourism industry. Tourism is responsible for strategies that both develop tourism attractions, facilities and products, and market the destination through advertising, promotions, public relations and sales materials.