



## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Travel Oregon Announces Recipients of 2009 Tourism and Hospitality Industry Achievement Awards

SALEM, Ore. – April 12, 2010 – The Oregon Tourism Commission (dba Travel Oregon) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2009 Tourism and Hospitality Industry Achievement Awards, presented at the 2010 Governor’s Conference on Tourism.

The annual awards recognize people and organizations across the state that go the extra mile to promote the tourism and hospitality industry in Oregon. Nominated by their peers, 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, presented this morning by Governor Ted Kulongoski, was given to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Founder Angus Bowmer created the company with a \$400 loan from the city of Ashland and a construction crew courtesy of the state of Oregon. Now, OSF sells about 400,000 tickets per year and employs more than 500 people.

“We’re delighted to see such a uniquely Oregon attraction that has done so much for our state recognized in this way,” said Todd Davidson, CEO of Travel Oregon. “The Tony Award-winning Oregon Shakespeare Festival, with world class performances and talent, brings prestige and recognition to the area. It’s an iconic cultural asset for Oregon.”

The 2009 Tourism and Hospitality 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 was an enthusiastic man who 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 attraction focused on Oregon’s natural beauty or outdoor recreation. The award was presented to **Jerry Norquist** for his work with **Cycle Oregon**. Norquist has been instrumental in making Cycle Oregon a world-class cycling event. The weeklong ride brings thousands of cycling enthusiasts from across the globe, resulting in media coverage that showcases Oregon’s natural beauty, resources and sustainable ethic. Proceeds from the event are distributed in grants to rural communities in an effort to promote tourism to these areas, preserving their unique sense



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of place.

The Oregon Tourism & Hospitality Tourism Development Award recognizes an innovative program, promotion or product created by an organization, business, community or region in Oregon that exemplifies best practices, sustainability and creative problem solving. The award was given to **The Columbia Gorge Winegrowers**. In 2009, they created a unique wine-tourism event, “A Passport to a World of Wine Weekend.” Wine growers in the Columbia Gorge region partnered with local Destination Marketing Organizations, lodging properties and attractions to create a successful event that saw a substantial increase in visitor traffic and sales.

The Outstanding Oregon Tourism Volunteer Award recognizes an individual who exemplifies the impact of volunteers in Oregon’s tourism and hospitality industry and on Oregon’s economy. The award was presented to **Jan Cupernall of Eastern Oregon**. Cupernall, considered an “incredible asset” to her community, donated her time last year at the Harney County Historical Society (including the Harney County Museum), Harney County Chamber of Commerce, the John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and the Sagebrush Symphony Orchestra Centennial Celebration.

The Oregon Tourism & Hospitality Industry Exceptional Partnership Award recognizes the efforts of a group of tourism organizations that together created a successful tourism program, promotion or product that is more successful than any single entity could have produced alone. It was presented to the **Southern Oregon Coast Partnership**, which includes Brookings/Harbor Chamber, Lakeside Chamber, Gold Beach Promotions Committee, Bandon Chamber of Commerce, Coos Bay-North Bend Visitor and Convention Bureau and Reedsport/Winchester Bay Chamber. To promote this diverse region as a unique destination that is a “varied and beautiful place that has much to offer potential visitors,” their multi-layered marketing plan included a television campaign, a collaborative Website (southcoastoregon.com), Facebook page, an interactive map of the area, YouTube videos of each community, a “Text to Win” promotion and a morning news feature in Eugene called “Wake up and Win.”

The Oregon Sustainable Tourism Leadership Award recognizes an individual who demonstrated a strong commitment to conserving Oregon’s natural and cultural resources through leadership in environmental stewardship and socially responsible practices. The award was presented to **Henry “Hank” Hickox** for spearheading **Bandon Dunes’ program “Green to a Tee,”** helping it become a leader in environmentally-safe business practices in the golf and resort industry. The program involves environmentally friendly golf course maintenance, habitat management, water conservation, energy usage, recycling and green vendor utilization. Largely due to Hickox’ efforts, Golf Digest gave its “Green Star” Award to Bandon Dunes in 2009. Hickox has also begun the process to certify Bandon Dunes



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as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

The Oregon Heritage Tourism Award recognizes outstanding use of Oregon's cultural or natural history by an Oregon individual, organization, business, community or region, in order to draw visitors to the state. The award was given to **Pendleton Woolen Mills**. "Weaving America's Spirit Since 1909" was the theme of the 100-year anniversary of the Pendleton, Oregon mill in 2009. A rededication celebration in February 2009 included the opening of the Heritage Collection Museum in the mill, showcasing the gifts given by the Native American community to the Bishop family (now in its sixth generation of ownership). Tours of the Pendleton Woolen Mills are offered daily and attract people from around the world.

The International Marketing Development Award recognizes excellence and creative accomplishment in the marketing and promotion of Oregon as a destination in the international marketplace. The award was given to **Woodburn Company Stores**. The Stores' marketing efforts to attract international travelers through incentive programs for tour bus operators, participation in international tradeshows and a strong relationship with the Shop America Alliance, helped them become one of Oregon's most-visited attractions.

For more information on these awards, go to [www.oregontourismconference.com](http://www.oregontourismconference.com).

Image requests and all other inquires can be directed to Linea Gagliano at [linea@traveloregon.com](mailto:linea@traveloregon.com).

*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. By strengthening economic impacts of the state's \$8 billion tourism industry, the commission aims to improve Oregonians' quality of life. Visit [www.TravelOregon.com](http://www.TravelOregon.com) for details.*

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