

Yachats Area Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center Operating Proposal 2015



Please find attached the proposal from the Yachats Area Chamber of Commerce for the management of the Yachats Visitors Center for the year 2015.

The Yachats Visitors Center has the two-fold purpose of attracting visitors to Yachats and providing information to visitors once they are here. Through its management of the Visitors Center, the Chamber's efforts to attract and to serve potential and actual visitors will continue to include the following:

- friendly on site customer service
- maintaining a comprehensive stock of current local brochures and information resources, as well as key regional and state of Oregon travel guides, maps and magazines
- responding via email and mail to
 - (a) individual requests for information
 - (b) travel interest leads from OCVA, and
 - (c) leads generated by a variety of promotional efforts
- developing, producing, and updating the Yachats brochure and distributing it statewide
- developing, producing, updating and distributing other promotional Yachats print and digital materials, including the Yachats Area Lodging Guide and Yachats Walking Guide, which features shopping, dining and annual events.)

Carrying Forward the Yachats Coordinated Marketing Plan & the South Lincoln County Rural Tourism Studio Projects

In addition, the Chamber will continue to observe the mission, vision, and objectives of the Yachats Coordinated Marketing Plan and the City of Yachats in its management of the Visitor Center and in setting project priorities. Over the past three years, the Chamber has worked very closely with the City of Yachats and local business and nonprofit representatives to develop and implement a coordinated marketing plan. The Chamber also actively participated in the 2012-2013 South Lincoln County Rural Tourism Studio (SLCRTS), and in the subsequent committee projects that have resulted. SLCRTS was initiated by successful application to Travel Oregon from Yachats Marketing Director Andrea Scharf and Waldport Mayor Sue Woodruff. SLCRTS participants from Yachats to Seal Rock generated (a record) 4 project concepts accepted by Travel Oregon; project committees then secured volunteer commitments, developed missions and work plans; and the studio's steering committee obtained matching grant funding from the cities of Yachats and Waldport, Lincoln County, and the Ford Family Foundation. Work proceeded on these projects through 2014. In 2015 these projects will be carried forward and new projects will be developed. The

Yachats Marketing Plan and projects of the SLCRTS are aimed at enhancing service to visitors and increasing lodging occupancy and other local business activity. These shared objectives have made involvement of the Yachats Visitor Center necessary, appropriate, and a welcome opportunity.

One tourism development project in the Yachats Coordinated Marketing Plan falls directly under Yachats Visitor Center / SLCRTS coordination. This project, titled 'We Speak,' was initiated by the Yachats Visitors Center in 2012 after significantly revising a We Speak project of another Rural Tourism Studio to suit our area's particular needs. We Speak Yachats was subsequently adopted by the SLCRTS to become "We Speak Seal Rock-Waldport-Yachats." This project is a subject-based training series involving presentations by local experts on a dozen topics of special interest to area visitors, including trails; tide pooling; local history; local arts; watersports; whale watching; fishing, crabbing and clamming; etc. These trainings expand visitor center volunteer training and are open to frontline staff throughout South Lincoln County. Our project's expert presentations were video recorded for the purpose of ongoing training and subsequent review. The training series is currently being packaged, with the dvds accompanied by corresponding Facts Sheets and subject-based training quizzes. They will soon will be available for distribution. Individuals who complete training(s) will receive a "We Speak" lapel pin and certificate(s) of completion, and businesses with trained staff will also receive a window decal and subject decals for framed display. The Visitors Center Contract Director has coordinated this regional training program working with a committee of representatives from Seal Rock, Waldport, Yachats and Cape Perpetua. Funding for the project's video recording and printing was secured by a grant from Lincoln County Community and Economic Development Fund (LCCEDF), and We Speak graphics development was supplied by Travel Oregon. In 2015, our focus will be on distributing the training packages and on expanding our pool of "graduates."

Another SLC Rural Tourism Studio project with active Yachats Chamber and Visitors Center participation has been the SLC trails map development project. The committee for this project worked through mid-2014 to develop an interpretive map of all non-motorized trails, including hiking, biking, and water trails, from Beaver Creek Natural Area (Milepost 149) north of the community of Seal Rock, to Cummins Creek in Cape Perpetua Scenic Area (Milepost 169) south of the village of Yachats, and extending ten miles inland from the ocean shoreline to Drift Creek Wilderness Area east of the town of Waldport. The map includes descriptions of each of the primary trails, interpretive information, attractive photos, safety tips, contact information, and text to encourage good stewardship. In July the map was published and broadly distributed to local

motels, Welcome Centers and Visitor Centers on the Oregon coast and key distribution points inland. Funding for design, printing, and distribution was secured by a grant from Travel Oregon's Rural Tourism Studio and matching grants from the Ford Family Foundation and cities of Yachats and Waldport. To ensure project sustainability, additional grant funding was secured from the Lincoln County Community and Economic Development Fund for conversion of the map to online application. The online map will be user friendly with trails maps accessible online and off on a variety of digital platforms. Development of the online map is currently underway with anticipated completion in early 2015. In 2015 our focus will be on establishing map links and promoting online use through existing web sites, maps platforms, and social media.

Anyone using this map will see SLC as a region with nature-based outdoor recreational opportunities that could fill multiple days. Such a publication has not been available before and should help to entice our adventure travelers to plan longer stays, return visits, and some visitors to extend their stays to further explore the area

Additional committee members on this project have included representatives from Yachats Trails Committee, Port of Alsea, US Forest Service, Oregon Department of Parks & Recreation, and Waldport and Seal Rock trails committees.

In 2014 a seasonal part-time assistant to our Visitor Center Director was added (June-Oct) to develop a database for a quarterly Visitors Center newsletter, to assist in carrying forward some of the projects initiated by the Yachats Marketing Director, such as the Shop Yachats Holiday Raffle, and to help cover shifts at the Visitors Center. This allowed our Visitor Center Director to focus on the development and production of the "We Speak" training packages, on committee grant reports, efforts to integrate Yachats into the Gravel Epic weekend, to chair SLCRTS umbrella committee meetings, to participate in SLC trails map development and to facilitate map distribution, to develop a quarterly Visitor Center newsletter (launching in 2015 with the new database); and to supply COCA, OCVA, and Travel Oregon with updated information for Yachats.

In 2015, the part-time assistant will continue to develop the Visitor Center newsletter database, assist with the Shop Yachats Holiday Raffle, assist with a new ongoing village-wide art glass sea star raffle, help fill VC shifts, and also help with volunteer recruitment and training. This will allow the Visitor Center Director to focus on the Visitors Center's digital newsletter, develop a "Did You Know" series for Yachats Facebook/Twitter, coordinate new blogs for GoYachats

and submission to Travel Oregon, help to coordinate a new monthly online GoYachats Photo Contest, coordinate an Arts Glass Sea Stars monthly raffle, distribute the We Speak training series and participate in other South Lincoln County tourism committee projects, including drafting applications for new project grants.

Operation of the Visitors Center and the promotion of our unique vacation destination would not be possible without the return of room tax revenue to support the Visitors Center and Yachats promotional activities. We are encouraged by Yachats continually ranking in top 10 favorites designations, and by the upward trend in Yachats lodging tax returns. The Chamber looks forward to continuing its dedicated service to the Visitors Center and to helping develop stronger communication and sustainable, coordinated marketing goals with the City of Yachats.

The Yachats Area Chamber of Commerce is an involved and dedicated membership based organization of the Yachats community. Our membership is mainly composed of Yachats area business owners but also includes private individuals and nonprofit organizations that recognize the value of the Chamber in our community. Our bylaws state that our purpose is to promote the commercial, environmental and general welfare of the city and the surrounding area. We take our purpose and the interdependence of these factors very seriously. As people with vested interests in the economic health of our area, we are committed to ensuring that Yachats remain a visitor destination that is welcoming, friendly and attractive, and to improve upon its desirability. As area residents, we are committed to ensuring that Yachats remain a pleasant, healthy and vibrant place to live.

We thank you in advance for considering our operating proposal as presented and will be available for any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Linda Hezler, President
David Locke, Vice President
Wendy Rush, Secretary

Explanations

Promotion

This includes designing, updating and printing Yachats promotional brochures, lodging lists, postcards, and informational materials; updating information about the Yachats area for travel publications, web sites and regional media opportunities; postage for mailing Yachats brochures to visitor and state welcome centers, postcards and visitor packets to individuals/groups who solicit coast travel and Yachats information; regional tourism agency membership fees; use of telecommunication lines; and social media projects.

The Yachats Visitors Center will continue to update and develop its email database in 2015 for an online quarterly newsletter to be sent to advertising referrals gained from previous years' advertising and to former visitors who have expressed interest in receiving periodic updates.

Yachats promotional materials will be professionally designed and approved by the Chamber's board of directors. The Yachats Walking Guide, which includes shopping, dining, annual events and a business map, will again be updated and reprinted along with the Yachats Area Lodging Guide (which coordinates with the Walking Guide). The Yachats Illustrated Map (local attractions and street map) will be reprinted in early 2015. Coordinating with the city of Waldport in 2014 on design, print and distribution, our popular illustrated map is now dual sided, with Yachats on one side and Waldport on the other. This new map collaboration allows us to expand distribution and the amount of information handily available to visitors, as well as to reduce per/piece map production cost.

An updated Yachats color brochure will be printed and continue to be distributed to visitor centers and welcome centers statewide. This brochure, along with the lodging and walking guides, is also part of the Yachats Visitor Packet. This packet is distributed to our walk-in visitors by the thousands over the course of a year and is mailed to individuals and groups who request visitor information via email, phone, and direct mail. Additional informational pieces are occasionally added to these mailings depending upon the needs and interests of the requesting party.

Visitor information requests received by email come through the Chamber's web site, Yachats.org. The Contract Director, Administrative Assistant and volunteer staff will continue to respond to these email inquiries and requests for visitor information. (The web site's design, maintenance, content, updates and expansion are, however, paid for by Chamber dues.)

Promotion through Social Media: Development of three new social media projects began in latter 2014 including a village-wide monthly *Art Glass Sea Stars Raffle*, a

monthly *GoYachats Photo Contest*, and a *Did You Know* series for Facebook and Twitter.

The *Did You Know* series will be developed from rich information provided in the recorded We Speak training series presentations.

The online *GoYachats Photo Contest* will have a theme that changes monthly. The aim of these contests is to gather inspiration from the natural beauty of our area; to highlight outdoor adventure opportunities; and to reflect the distinctive character of our village. The honorable mentions, finalists, runner up and winner for each Contest Period will become part of the Yachats Gallery after the contest has ended. The 12 winners for the year will be entered into the 2015 GoYachats Grand Finale Photo Contest at the end of the year.

Participation in the *Art Glass Sea Star Raffle* is open to all Yachats merchants. One raffle ticket will be provided to each customer and collected on site. Each month two sea star raffle winners will be announced on Facebook/Twitter by first name, city, state and the store where they entered the drawing. We hope to make winner announcements with a photo of the happy merchant in front of their business when they have a winning customer to announce.

Volunteer Training and Coordination

This includes room rental, food and materials for staff meetings, tours and service training for 2015. Trainings will include new volunteer orientations, customer service review, We Speak training, news concerning businesses, events and services available in our area, and low and shoulder season visits by our volunteer staff to local businesses.

In 2015, our Contract Director also aims to expand the number of "We Speak" graduates by working toward getting the training series adopted by South Lincoln County businesses that have frontline staff that is in regular contact with visitors.

The Administrative Assistant will help with volunteer recruitment and training meetings. Trainings and tours will be coordinated by our Contract Director, as is volunteer scheduling and supervision.

Visitor Center Facility

The current location is centrally located in town where foot traffic is strong, parking is available, and there is easy and direct access to the public. The terms of our lease agreement remain very reasonable. When the Chamber made the decision to occupy the current location, the decision was also made to make improvements to the building as needed. The original project included a redesign

of the interior for more convenient display of information, as well as painting, shelving, carpeting and reorganizing the work area. Since that time, several improvements have been made to the Visitor Center: in 2004, new shelving and the addition of an accessible public restroom; in 2005-06 a new outdoor Visitors Center sign; in 2006-07 new carpet; in 2011 a new 3-color paint job. As in prior years, an adequate insurance policy for the Visitors Center will be maintained for the 2014 business year. Also, as in prior years, the Chamber will provide office furniture for use by the Visitors Center.

Public Restroom Upkeep

This includes all paper supplies and hand soap, necessary repairs, and housekeeping service to maintain the cleanliness of the facility.

Office Equipment and Supplies

This includes Visitor Center copy machine, copy paper, toner, stationery, and other office supplies, as well as a small laptop for use by front desk staff and visitors.

Visitor Center Reports

Reports will be submitted on the quarterly number of visitors to the center, visitor information requests received, center activities, regional tourism agency referrals, media contacts that have been made and activities in which they have engaged. As in years past, the number of visitors to the Center and requests for information will be gathered by way of a Visitors Center register and information requests logs. These reports will be prepared by the Contract Director. Visitors Center budget reports will be prepared by the Chamber's accountant.

Board of Directors - Yachats Area Chamber of Commerce

Linda Hetzler is owner of the Drift Inn Historic Café and Pub. Linda has served for five years on the Chamber board and as President (2014). She has been an active Chamber member for many additional years, including serving on the Village Fungi Feast planning committee from 2004-2009, and the Village Mushroom Fest's Friday night welcome event committee 2012-14. In 2011, she was an active member of the Yachats Coordinated Marketing Team. Also in 2011, she became the new producer of the annual Yachats Celtic Music Festival.

David Locke has been the General Manager of the Overleaf Lodge and Fireside Motel in Yachats for over 17 years. He holds a BS in Hotel and Restaurant Management and has worked in the lodging and restaurant industries for 26 years - in Richmond, VA; Las Vegas, NV; and Yachats. Prior to moving to Yachats, David was Manager of Catering at the Las Vegas Convention Center. David has served on the Chamber board for the past 17 years, chairing its Marketing Committee for 10 years, serving on events committees, and as Vice President (2001-2003, 2014) and President (2004-2006, 2011-13). David also serves on the board of directors of the Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County. He is an active member of the Yachats Coordinated Marketing Team and was Yachats Chamber representative on the 2012-13 South Lincoln County Rural Tourism Studio. David chairs the Hike-Bike-Paddle Trails Map project (that emerged from SLCRTS) and remains an active participant on the South Lincoln County Tourism Committee.

Annette Gonzalez is the former Branch Manager for Bank of the West in Yachats, currently on medical leave of absence. She joined the board in January 2014.

Wendy Rush is Head of Guest Services at Ocean Odyssey Vacation Rentals. She has worked in the hospitality and tourism industry in Lincoln County for over 20 years. Wendy joined the Chamber board in 2011 and currently holds the office of Chamber Secretary.

Bonnie Jean McVay is the owner of Turtle Island Candle Company and Turtle Island Tattoo in Yachats. She joined the board in 2013.

Volunteer Staff Our 9 volunteer staff collectively have decades of experience serving the Yachats Visitors Center. Length of service ranges from 18 years to less than one year. Together our volunteers gave approximately 1000 hours to the operation of the Visitors Center this past year, including shifts at the front desk, training meetings and tours. Most of our staff has had customer service training sponsored by the Oregon Tourism Commission or the Lincoln County Economic Development Alliance.

Visitor Center Contract Director Beverly Wilson has served as our Contract Director for the Yachats Visitors Center since July 1997. During these years, she has attended Travel Oregon Information Council annual conferences and workshops, coastal tourism meetings and workshops, OTC's customer service training, and in 2012-14 the South Lincoln County Rural Tourism Studio training sessions and project development meetings. Wilson also manages the Chamber's web site and has served as events coordinator for the Yachats Chamber for several of its annual events for more than a decade. She is an active member of the Yachats Coordinated Marketing Team. Wilson has more than 25 years of experience in nonprofit organization project management, volunteer coordination, public relations and promotional writing. Prior to moving to Yachats in 1996, Wilson organized national conferences at SFSU as a consultant and was Projects Director at Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute, organizing fundraising events and conferences; training and coordinating project volunteers (retired, college and HS); coordinating mailings; writing project grants, news releases, informational flyers and fundraising letters; and was co-editor of a biennial national human rights organizations and periodicals directory. Famed board members at MCLI included the Honorable Frank Newman, retired Supreme Court Justice and expert on human rights law; and Linus Pauling, Nobel Laureate for Peace and Chemistry. Alongside nonprofit and consulting work, Wilson taught research skills, thinking skills, grammar and composition as a classified instructional assistant, and was reader for English composition and literature classes at College of Alameda. Her early experience includes regional sales in N CA for her family's organic cosmetics company and for a fine books remainder company.

Yachats Area Chamber of Commerce - Visitor Center Operating Proposal 2015

**City of Yachats Visitor Center
Proposed Budget 2015**

FACILITY

Rent	\$550.00/Month	\$6,600.00	
Repair and Maintenance	General	\$575.00	
Restroom	Cleaning & Supply	\$750.00	
Supplies	Office/Misc	\$1,250.00	
Administration	Acct. Review	\$500.00	\$9,675.00

PERSONNEL

Contract Director		\$37,850.00	
Administrative Assistant	Jun-Oct 20hr/wk @\$15	\$7,590.00	
Volunteer Training		\$500.00	\$45,940.00

PROMOTION

Yachats Brochure	2 Year Surplus	\$1,750.00	
Printing Costs	Lists/Letters/Envelope	\$2,550.00	
Postage	Information/Mailouts	\$1,750.00	\$6,050.00
Telecommunication	Phone, 800 #	\$2,250.00	
Memberships	OLA, OCVA	\$600.00	
Travel OR Brochure Dist		\$250.00	\$3,100.00

Oregon Coast Magazine:

\$0.00

Fall Campaign:

\$0.00

Spring Campaign:

\$0.00 **\$9,150.00**

TOTAL

\$64,765.00