



## **2008 Annual Report**

Just by the numbers, sports tourism in the Wenatchee Valley was up 10-percent in 2008. But that doesn't tell the whole story. Increased ability in measuring sports impacts on the Wenatchee Valley economy, and ever-expanding understanding of the local efforts to bring in and put on sports events and strides forward in facility enhancement (i.e. Town Toyota Center) were even larger factors behind the increase between 2007 and 2008. Overall, it was a good year in sports in the Wenatchee Valley.

Over 42,000 sports tourists came to the Wenatchee Valley in 2008 to be a participant, watch or coach in 136 events. A "sports event" in the parlance of measuring economic impact is defined as an event which requires someone to travel to the Wenatchee Valley from over 100-miles away and results in an overnight stay. Total spending by those sports tourists is estimated at over \$6.1-million dollars.

Lessons learned at a national sports commission conference earlier in 2008 were applied throughout with an eye toward exposure. The Sports Council continued updates and improvements on its website, newsletter and web-presence. In addition, we reached out to a wider audience through magazine, newspaper and radio advertising. The focus was not only on sports facilities in the Wenatchee Valley, but coming to the area for an overall outdoors experience.

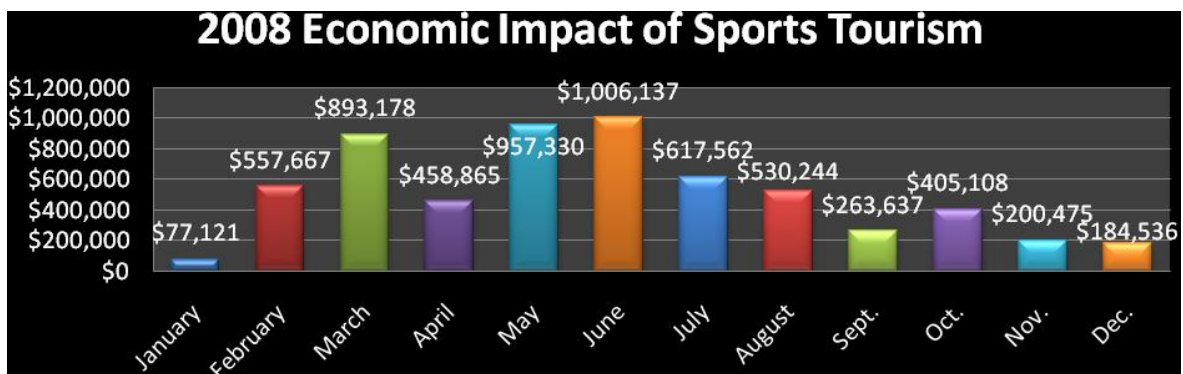
The Sports Council was pleased to see the addition of the Town Toyota Center in 2008 and closely watched and chronicled its completion, grand opening and events. It's anticipated that the multi-purpose arena will add another \$8-million directly into the Wenatchee Valley's economy by the end of its first full-year of operation in October of 2009.

So, despite a national trend towards contrition, downsizing and dwindling resources, the Wenatchee Valley sports economy was very strong in 2008 and looks to expand in 2009. It is our goal at the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council to assist in the valley's sports growth, through marketing, facility enhancement and growth, assistance through our Foundation, exploring new possibilities and seek out those within the valley who are eager to do the same.

## Economic Impact

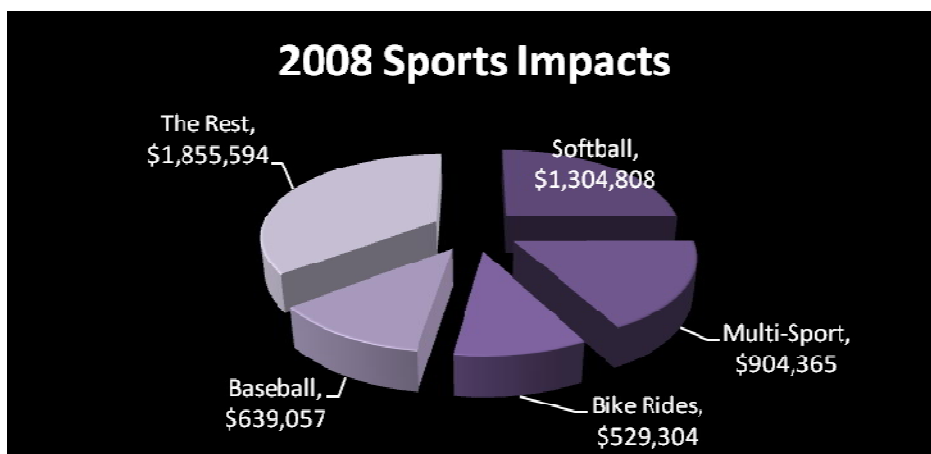
Sports tourism saw a ten percent increase in 2008 from 2007. The overall economic impact grew from \$5.6-million in 2007 to \$6.2-million in 2008. Several factors could account for the increase, including improved reporting by event-holders; additional events in 2008; and the opening of Town Toyota Center in October. At year's end, 42,149 sports tourists came to the Wenatchee Valley to participate, coach or watch 136 events.

As you can see by the graph (g.01), May and June were the best months for sports tourism in 2008. 39 sports events lured 14,354 people to the Wenatchee Valley in the two months, resulting in nearly \$2-million in direct economic impact.



g.01

Improved weather and access to outdoor recreation and facilities greatly enhances Wenatchee Valley Sports Tourism. We truly are a Mecca for outdoor enthusiasts, especially softball players. According to our research, men's, women's and girls' softball bring in more sports tourism than any other sport (g.02).

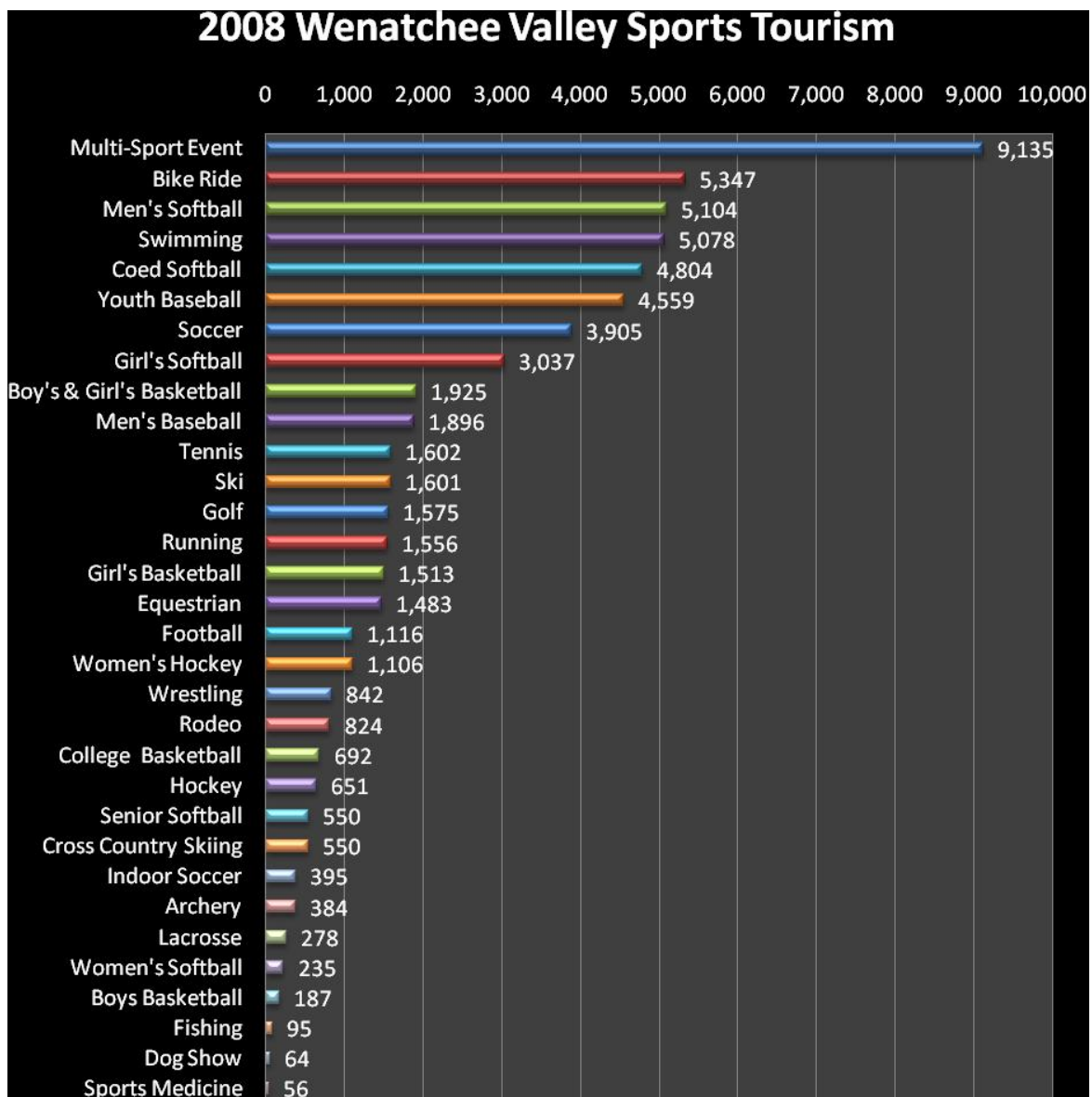


g.02

As we develop these numbers and get good comparisons from year-to-year, it will aid the Sports Council in focusing efforts on facility enhancement and development; assisting hoteliers and event-holders with heavy-volume weekends; and target less-heavy months for event

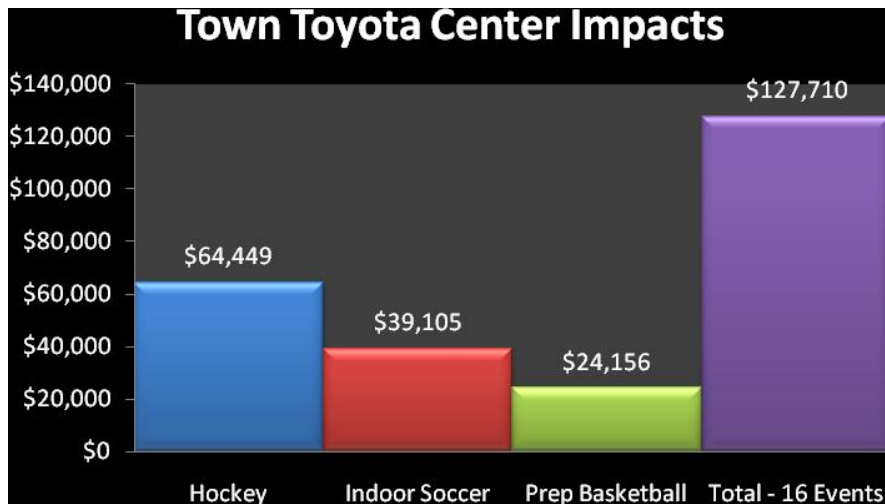
hosting and bids. At year's end, the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council was working with local schools and management of Town Toyota Center to mount a bid to bring the state high school volleyball championships to town in November between 2009 and 2013.

Breaking down the numbers by individual sport, multi-sport events such as Ridge to River and the Special Olympic Winter games lead the way in sports tourism numbers (g.03). Bike ride organizers have done a fantastic job of taking advantage of our supreme weather and beautiful surrounds to entice cyclists from throughout the northwest to come to the Wenatchee Valley. Over 53-hundred people came in to town for six cycling-related events such as Rotary's Century Ride and Mike Utley's Dam2Dam ride in 2008, producing an economic impact of over a half-million dollars.



g.03

The opening of Town Toyota Center October 5<sup>th</sup> marked the first sports facility addition to the Wenatchee Valley inventory in over a decade (Paul Thomas, Sr. Field in 1996). In three months of operation and being the host site for Wenatchee Wild hockey and Wenatchee FiRE indoor soccer, Town Toyota Center was already making its mark on sports tourism in the Wenatchee Valley (g.04). 1,290 sports tourist came to the multi-purpose arena between October 5<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> for 16 events. Their direct impact to the economy was over \$120,000. And that doesn't account for direct spending by locals...that's just those from outside coming here.



g.04

Despite contract difficulties between management of Town Toyota Center and the Wenatchee FiRE, we're still expecting the overall impact of the arena to be about \$10-million in 2009 with just a small portion of that being sports tourism.

## Events

The Wenatchee Valley Sports Council and its Foundation were directly involved with seven different events in 2008, beginning with Coaches of Inspiration Awards in January and ending with the NCW Basketball Showcase in December. The more involved we are with events, the more we're getting the name out to the local user groups, which helps the Sports Council in the end.

*"3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Coaches of Inspiration Awards - January 23<sup>rd</sup>"* - Over 200 people attended the 3rd Annual Coaches of Inspiration Awards Ice Cream Social at the Wenatchee Convention Center. It was a special night, as 34 coaches were honored for their work and Megan Carlson provided the keynote address. Carlson, formerly Megan Franza, was a star basketball player for the University of Washington in the late '90's and led the Husky Women to the Elite Eight in 2000-2001. Legend Award Recipients included Lee Bofto, Paul Preston and Tom Rassley.

*“NASC Symposium- April 22-24”* - The three-day **National Association of Sports Commissions Symposium** held April 22-24 in Omaha, Nebraska was completely worth the investment. Not only did the experience put our Sports Council in contact with other like-minded bodies across the country, but I return armed with new information that will contribute to the betterment of our organization. Lessons learned over three days of classes; presentations; speeches and workshops will result in the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council getting up to speed with the sports tourism industry. I also began the Certified Sports Event Executive course through NASC and hope to become certified by 2010.

*“Washington State Games - June 24<sup>th</sup>”* - The Wenatchee Valley Sports Council hosted the Washington Association of Sports Commissions June 24<sup>th</sup> at the Highlander Golf Club. Prior to the meeting, Ralph Morton, the Executive Director of the Seattle Sports Commission and the Commissioner of the Washington Games sat down with a group of key Wenatchee-area winter sports interests to discuss the possibility of Wenatchee hosting the Washington Winter Games in 2009. While it was too soon to do it in 2009, the group gathered agreed to look at a possible Games in the Wenatchee Valley in 2010.

*“World Harmony Run - June 27<sup>th</sup>”* - Nearly 100 people turned out on a beautiful Friday in June to welcome the World Harmony Runners at Walla Walla Point Park. In addition to welcoming the runners, 11 Torch-Bearer Awards were handed out to local citizens who have made a significant impact to the Wenatchee Valley. Local recipients were: Marco Azurdia; Harriet Bullitt; Dennis Johnson; Ron Johnston-Rodriguez; Mariachi Wenatchee and Director Ramon Rivera; West Mathison, the Mathison Family and Stemilt Growers; Bob Parlette; Mike Utley; Dr. Gene Sharratt; Darci Waterman and Gretchen Woods and Barb Woods and the Woods Families and the Wenatchee World Newspaper. The World Harmony Run was a 50-nation torch relay to promote international friendship and understanding through athletics. The team of World Harmony Runners was assisted around the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail by several local, volunteer runners. Following their stop in Wenatchee, the World Harmony Runners were off toward Waterville and Spokane en route to New York in August.

*“33<sup>rd</sup> Annual O’Terry’s Lads & Lassies co-ed softball tournament - August 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>”* - 37 teams participated in the annual fundraiser for the Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation. The Sports Council helped facilitate the tournament, including promoting, taking registrations and organizing the tournament. All told, the tournament netted \$2,917.61 for the Sports Foundation.

*“The Blimp Project - September 29<sup>th</sup>”* - While preparing for the Ski Fever show in October, an idea was hatched to vividly represent the “300 days of sunshine” theme touted by the Wenatchee Valley Visitors Bureau...purchase a helium blimp. The theme for the Bureau’s booth would incorporate the sunshine, blue skies, skiing and new logo. Upon further investigation and pricing, an order was placed with Above & Beyond Balloons of Irvine, California for an 8-

foot diameter, helium-filled balloon. The balloon made its first appearance at the Ski Fever Show in Seattle in October.

*“NCW Basketball Showcase - December 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>”* - The Sports Council and its Foundation teamed up with Town Toyota Center to provide volunteers and scholarships to the 1<sup>st</sup> ever North Central Washington High School Basketball Showcase. It took place December 11-13 and featured 10 games of boys and girls basketball over the three days. The Sports Council provided volunteers as ushers, ticket-takers and guest service personnel while the Sports Foundation put up \$2,000 in scholarships for schools participating. We worked with ASB Presidents of high schools from Chelan and Douglas County and had them come up with a format for winning the scholarship money. The “Scholarship Shootout” idea was born along with 5 categories of judging to determine who would get \$1,000 for first place, \$600 for second and \$400 for third. Schools were judged on attendance, spirit, sportsmanship, band & cheer/dance. Cashmere took first, Waterville second and Chelan third.

## Projects and Programs

With all the special events, promotions and advertising that swirl around the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council, it’s sometimes hard to remember the everyday work that needs to be done. But working on behalf of sports interests in the Wenatchee Valley is definitely part of the job and was executed consistently in 2008, while the formation of our Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation added to the workload.

### 2008 RFP Breakdown

<u>Sport Requiring Rooms</u>	<u>Room Nights</u>
Women’s Hockey (Hot Autumn)	60
Soccer (Apple Cup)	800
Gymnastics (State in '09)	350
Softball (adult and youth)	1536
Swimming	610
Baseball	1022
Basketball	1008
Lacrosse	150
Cycling	75
Soccer	830
<u>Total</u>	<u>6,441</u>

g.05

*“Request for Proposals”* - Part of the roll here at the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council is to work on behalf of local individuals and organizations work with hotels to block rooms for their tournaments and events. Successfully exposing the public to our name and organization helped in the number of RFP’s. Time and time again, we heard, “...oh, now that I know you’re here and what you do, can you do...” Over the year, requests for room blocks went out to our local hotels for a total of 6,441 room nights (g.05). Following suit with the economic impact results reported earlier, softball was the sport most looking for hotel rooms.

*“The Advocate”* - Another roll of the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council is to lobby on behalf of organizations and facilities here in our area. Such was the case in 2008 as well. This office spent tons of time attending meetings and providing a voice for various sports interests on projects such as the Wenatchee Reclamation Bridge Project and its future as a pedestrian route and part of the Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail as well as hearings regarding the proposed Loop Trail Extension from the Odabashian Bridge to Lincoln Rock State Park. We also lent our time and voice to planning meetings regarding Pioneer and Triangle Parks and Link Transit planning meetings. And, whenever possible, we stood before county and city leaders to advocate development of new parks and sports facilities backed by the economic impact numbers mentioned earlier.

*“Flying a Kite and Bump-Set-Spike”* - The Wenatchee Valley Sports Council worked hand-in-hand with the Convention and Visitors Bureau in 2008 to bid for the American Kite flyer’s Association Convention in 2010. And while we were a finalist in the national search among three other cities, the AKA did not choose Wenatchee. At year’s end, the Sports Council was also working with Rob Cline of Town Toyota Center and BJ Kuntz, athletic director at Wenatchee High School, on a bid to bring the W.I.A.A. State 2A, 3A and 4A volleyball tournaments to Wenatchee over a five year period from 2009 to 2013.

*“Website and Newsletter Enhancement”* - Following an incredibly education seminar at the National Association of Sports Commissions meeting in April, the Sports Council quickly got to work on improving its website and monthly newsletter. In addition, we developed Wenatchee Valley Sports Council pages on My Space™ and You Tube™ to increase our web presence and “searchability” via search engines such as Google™ and Yahoo!® After nearly a year of sending an electronic newsletter through Microsoft Outlook®, which really had its drawbacks, the Sports Council newsletter changed over to Constant Contact™ in 2008 and greatly enhanced our ability to reach sports-minded readers. Detailed statistics will be provided later in this report under *Promotion & Advertising*.

## Promotion & Advertising

A multi-lateral approach was used in marketing by the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council in 2008. Via magazine, radio, television and internet, we tried to reach a regional and national audience like never before. And to a great degree, the efforts were successful.

*“Radio - Make Wenatchee Your Base Camp”* - The Wenatchee Valley CVB purchased advertising time on Dave Graybill’s radio show on KVI in Seattle in 2008, and left most of the content to the Sports Council. We used this vehicle to promote the outdoor recreation opportunities in the area, including fishing, hunting, camping and water and snow sports. Add in our website enhancements to include an interactive map of fishing, camping and golfing within an hour’s drive from Wenatchee and we really hammered home the idea of making the “Wenatchee Valley Your Base Camp.”

*“Television - 300 Days of Sunshine”* - The 300-days of Sunshine ads that ran throughout the year on Comcast in the Puget Sound market featured tons of outdoor recreation and sports footage of the Wenatchee Valley. I also provided the voice-over talent on the spots, which are also included on our My Space™ and You Tube™ pages for download by visitors.

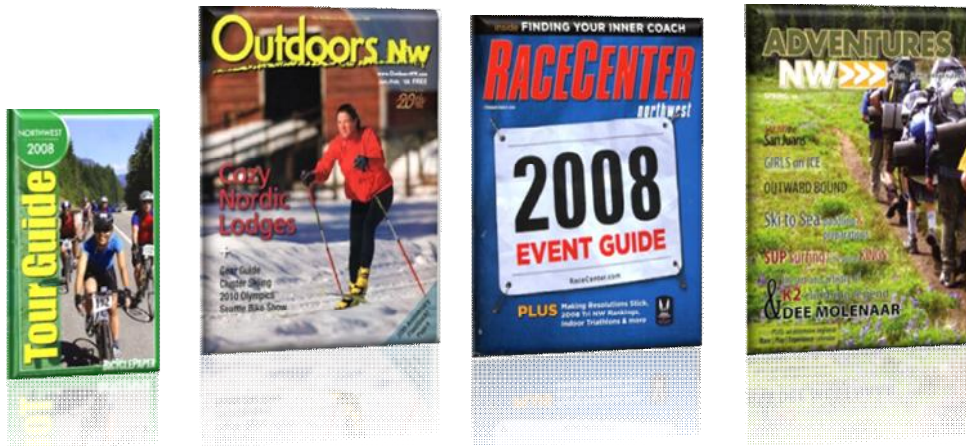
*“Magazine - Sports & Outdoor Recreation”* - Over \$13,000 in print advertising was purchased by the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council in 2008. Again, our angle varied depending on the subscription.

- Facilities - Sports Events Magazine and Sports Destination Management Magazine





- Events - Bicycle Paper, Outdoors NW, RaceCenter NW and Adventures NW Magazines



- Fishing/Hunting/Outdoor Recreation - Fishing & Hunting News Magazine



“Internet Marketing via Website and Newsletter” - Nearly 8,000 new visitors paid over 10,000 visits and looked at over 20,000 pages of the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council’s website in 2008. Again, as was the case in 2007, the Facilities Page was the most-visited page of the site, collecting over 25% of the hits. The Sports Contacts Page was #2, getting 21% of the hits.

Content Overview		
Pages	Pageviews	% Pageviews
/sports/facilities.htm	5,264	25.14%
/sports/sports_contact.htm	4,532	21.64%
/sports/events.htm	2,951	14.09%
/sports/index.html	1,719	8.21%
/sports/contact.htm	1,430	6.83%

g.06

All website statistics are provided by Google™ Analytics (g.06). Website tracking began on May 7<sup>th</sup> of 2007, so comparing one year to the next can only be measured from that point on. In doing so, Unique Visitors were up 17%, Page Views were up 20% and Website Visits were up 21%. We added a separate Events Page that outlines the entire Wenatchee Valley sports calendar as well as the interactive camping, fishing and golfing map mentioned earlier in this report.

We began fully using Constant Contact™ as a production and delivery mechanism for the Sports Council’s newsletter in January of 2008. A total of 13,471 people received the newsletter in 2008, with an overall increase in readership from month-to-month (g.07).



g.07

Weekly reminders were sent throughout the year to local hoteliers, the Sports Council Board, CVB Board, and Foundation Board, members of the media and anyone else who asked to receive it. Over 54 weeks, it’s estimated that nearly 5,400 people received the weekly reminder throughout the year. By December, the weekly reminder also took a new form through Constant Contact™, which included trip ideas from Andy Dappen and fishing reports from Dave Graybill and Anton Jones.

*“Trade Shows”* - The Sports Council represented the Wenatchee Valley at three different trade shows in 2008, beginning with the Seattle International Bike Expo in March. For the weekend, we handed out approximately 2,200 Sports Events Guides, 200 Visitors Guides, 200 Trips and Trails Guides and nearly 1,000 apples. We hit the road to Omaha, Nebraska in April for the National Association of Sports Commission Symposium. Attending allowed us the chance to get to know representatives from other Sports Councils and Commissions in Washington State. Tacoma-Pearce Sports Commission sponsored the opening ceremonies, which included a booth in the Sports Marketplace. Tacoma-Pearce offered the booth space up to the Washington Association of Sports Commissions and it became “home base” for all of us in attendance. That

relationship blossomed into Wenatchee playing host to the Washington Association in June for a tour of the Greater Wenatchee Regional Events Center, lunch and golf at the Highlander Golf Club. As we near another legislative session, having strong relationships throughout the state can help in lobbying efforts on behalf of sports interests locally. In addition, leads to bids for hosting regional and national events are a real possibility out of the burgeoning relationship.

“Travel Writers” - The Sports Council worked with the CVB in 2008 in arranging a writer’s tour for a husband and wife team interested in Devil’s Gulch and other nearby mountain bike trails. The result was a fantastic article in Bike Freak Magazine out of the Netherlands. The Sports



Council also worked with our Public Relations Firm (Hadley-Green) on an article about hiking in the area with writer Craig Romano and Heidi Dietrich of the Puget Sound Business Journal on the new Town Toyota Center.



We plan to continue to reach out to regional and national writers in the years to come to highlight the many sports and outdoor recreation opportunities that exist in the Wenatchee Valley.

## Community Involvement

Running and promoting activities with the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council and the sports community in the area is made easier when its director is also involved in other aspects of the community. So with an eye toward giving back, which in turn can help contribute to effectively completing tasks at hand with the Sports Council, I volunteered countless hours with various organizations throughout the Wenatchee Valley in 2008.

### *“Emcee Work”*

- January - 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Coaches of Inspiration Awards
- April - Alcoa Ridge to River Trophy Presentations
- May - Colockum Chapter of Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Fundraising Banquet
- June - Cashmere High School Golf at Mt. Cashmere Golf Course
- October - YWCA Annual Awards Luncheon
- October - Entertainment Stage at Wenatchee Taste of the Harvest
- December - Public Address Announcer for all 10 games during NCW Basketball Showcase at Town Toyota Center

### *“Volunteer Work”*

- Greater Wenatchee Girls Softball Association - Softball Coach
- Douglas County Representative on Greater Wenatchee Public Facilities District Board
- Vice President of Chelan County Football Officials Association and Referee of HS Football
- Counseled prospective owners of Wenatchee hockey club prior to arrival
- Participated on Link Transit Focus Group

## Summary

Sports Tourism numbers were up 10-percent in 2008. The sports economy in the Wenatchee Valley held strong despite a downward trend nationwide. The addition of the Town Toyota Center showed promise towards year’s end and is anticipated to have a very positive impact on the sports economy in the Wenatchee Valley in 2009 and for years to come. More and more people are becoming aware of outdoor and sports recreation opportunities in the Wenatchee Valley through marketing and electronic media by the Sports Council. And, recognition of our efforts was rewarded at year’s end with my selection as President-Elect of the Washington Association of Sports Commissions. As such, I will present the opening ceremony speech on behalf of the state at the National Association of Sports Commissions symposium in Denver in April, 2009. So, with guarded optimism, we put the finishing touches on a very good 2008 and look forward to a successful 2009 in the world of sports tourism in the Wenatchee Valley.