



## Quarterly Report January - March, 2009

With the nation's economy taking a nosedive in the final quarter of 2008 and into the first quarter of this year, the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council looked with much anticipation to the economic impact figures of sports tourism to the area. Thanks in large part to the Wenatchee Wild hockey team and Wenatchee Valley College reporting it's visitor's numbers for the first time, sports tourism in the Wenatchee Valley saw a 38% increase in the first quarter of 2009 over 2008. In addition, the Sports Council was extremely busy working with local groups planning sports events in 2009 as well as putting together bids for large sports events at the Town Toyota Center. So, what is usually a quiet quarter was one hopping with activity for the Sports Council this year.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Economic Impact Numbers

According to reports from event managers in the Wenatchee Valley, 10,130 sports tourists came to the Wenatchee/East Wenatchee area between January and March, resulting in 19,522 room nights in area hotels. That's an estimated direct economic impact of \$2.4-million, compared to \$1.5-million in 2008.

	Visiting Participants	Visiting Coaches	Visiting Fans	Room Night Factor	Economic Impact
January	300	29	402	327	\$176,987
February	1,176	88	1,688	1,213	\$704,583
March	2,131	558	3758	3,157	\$1,589,074
1st Quarter Totals	3,607	675	5,848	4,697	\$2,470,644

According to tracking data, Wenatchee Wild games brought in 762 sports tourists in the first quarter of 2009, resulting in an economic impact of \$75,438. In addition, another \$15,840 of economic impact was developed by the Kiss My Ice women's hockey tournament and the Wenatchee FiRE indoor soccer game versus Spokane during the first three months of this year.

# Request For Proposals

The Barracudas Swim Club came to the Sports Council again this year for help in finding available room blocks for three swimming tournaments in 2009. In all, the three events (in June, July and December) will take up approximately 795 room nights.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Sports Council Activities

**Coaches of Inspiration - Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>** - The 4th Annual Coaches of Inspiration Awards featured a guest appearance by Dr. Ed Farrar (FARE-uh), the local Orthopedic Surgeon who was seriously injured while riding his bike in Wenatchee last October. Dr. Farrar said he was happy to be a part of a great community event such as Coaches of Inspiration and has always been a strong supporter of sports in the Wenatchee Valley. It was only recently that Dr. Farrar returned home in Wenatchee following three-months in hospitals rehabilitating from the accident which left him a paraplegic.

30 coaches in 11 sports were honored for their mostly work coaching youth sports. This annual event is put on by the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council and its newly-formed Sports Foundation, which provides scholarships to coaches and athletes throughout Chelan and Douglas County.

**WIAA State Volley Bid - Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>** - The Sports Council organized a bid effort for the 2010-2015 State 2A, 3A and 4A volleyball championships for Town Toyota Center. Accompanied by Wenatchee High Athletic Director BJ Kuntz, WIAA District Six Executive Secretary Bruce Campbell and Town Toyota Center General Manager Rob Cline, we presented our proposal to the WIAA Staff January 20<sup>th</sup>. We were the last of three presentations and unfortunately, did not get the bid. Instead, the Tri Cities won the 5-year bid for the three classifications. It was a great experience and showed great teamwork and flexibility in local organizers and facility owners to attempt to win the bid.

**Robertson Cup NAHL Hockey Finals - January** - The Sports Council was approached by Wenatchee Wild General Manager Bill Stewart about providing assistance to bid for the Robertson Cup, the final four of the NAHL playoffs, for 2010. We spoke with various civic and business leaders about their willingness to host a week-long event like this during Apple Blossom week and received full support. We also had wonderful conversations with local hotel managers about reasonable rates and complimentary rooms for the tournament, should we win the bid. Even though the bid went to Fairbanks, Stewart is petitioning NAHL commissioners about re-thinking their decision since Wenatchee led the entire league in attendance in its inaugural season. At quarter's end, the 2010 location for the Robertson Cup was still undetermined.

**Event Marketing Assistance - January & March** - The Sunrise Rotary Club's Alice Thompson and Gary Loomis approached the Sports Council for assistance in promoting the Apple Century Ride coming in June. We provided them hours of advice and

assistance on website design, brochure design and marketing ideas to help promote the event.

The Sports Council also met with local organizers of this August's American Junior Golf Association tournament at the Wenatchee Golf and Country Club. They were looking for assistance on planning and brainstorming potential sponsors for the upcoming tournament.

**International Bike Expo - March 11-13** - The Sports Council purchased a booth and promoted the Wenatchee Valley and it's cycling related events in Seattle. For the weekend, we handed out approximately 300 Sports Events Guides, 200 Visitors Guides, 200 Trips and Trails Guides and nearly 500 apples. The event was marred by horrific weather, with torrential wind and rain, which negatively affected attendance.

## Web & Electronic Media

**Newsletter** - The emphasis on electronic communications continued in the first quarter of 2009 through the Sports Council's newsletter. Circulation increased 25.8% in the first three months of 2009 versus 2008 from 2,944 to 3,968. In addition, a weekly reminder through the newsletter began in January of 2009 as a brief summary of the upcoming Friday-Sunday activities in the Wenatchee Valley. This allowed the Sports Council to reach another 9,331 people. The total reached through the newsletter in the first quarter of 2009 was 13,299 people. Response has been very favorable to the increase in available information.

**Website** - Website design remained rather static in the first quarter of 2009 versus the previous year's first quarter. As a result, some of the tracking statistics via Google Analytics™ declined.

Overall, site visits were up 7.7% between the first quarter of 2008 to the first quarter of 2009, with 3,749 visitors. Absolute unique visits were also up 5.8% over the previous year. Overall page views were down 3.5%, with 6,968 in the first three months of this year.

## Summary

Thanks to increased sports activities at the Town Toyota Center, the overall sports tourism market was up for the Wenatchee Valley in the first quarter of 2009. In addition, it appears that the sports tourism industry in the Wenatchee Valley is proving recession resistant. At a time when the rest of the economy might be suffering and business traveling is down, it's a good thing we have a strong sports tourism element to the overall picture in the Wenatchee Valley's economy.

The Wenatchee Valley Sports Council will continue to strive to improve the sports tourism outlook in the months to come, as well as help local sports teams, clubs and facility owners see the importance of sports in our community.