



Quarterly Report October - December, 2008

It was definitely an up and down final quarter of 2008 in the Wenatchee Valley Sports World, with October really putting us through the rigors. It began with excitement over the ribbon-cutting and grand opening of the \$52.8-million Town Toyota Center. The sports community was dealt a blow a week later with the death of longtime "Voice of the Wenatchee High Panthers", Mike Dempsey due to brain cancer. Then things looked bright again with the opening of hockey and the Wenatchee Wild's first-ever game at Town Toyota Center when 3,677 fans poured into the new facility, making it the largest indoor sports event in the Wenatchee Valley's history. The month ended on another downer, however, when Dr. Ed Farrar was nearly killed riding his bicycle on Skyline Drive in Wenatchee.

An incredible amount of "looking forward" took place in the final three months of 2008, with plans being made for a large fundraiser for the Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation (beer & wine festival in August of '09), event-calendar mapping, budget workshops and working toward bringing new sports events and facilities to the Wenatchee Valley in the coming years.

Despite a downward trend in the nation's economy, things kept perking along on a positive note here in the Wenatchee Valley, especially in the sports world. Thanks in large part to Wenatchee Wild hockey and Wenatchee FiRE soccer at the Town Toyota Center, the Wenatchee Valley saw over 5,000 sports tourists visit in the final three months of the year. The numbers helped keep pace with a stupendous 2007 and lend themselves toward positive projections in 2009.

Electronic marketing via newsletters and website enhancements continued with visits and readership up across the board. Visits to the Sports Council website were up 20% over the same period (October through December) the previous year and readership of the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council monthly newsletter was up 4% since March with over 3,800 recipients. In addition, the Sports Council began utilizing Constant Contact and its newsletter contact list in December to send out the weekly reminders that had been directly emailed to select recipients in the Wenatchee Valley.

Planning for 2009 also took the form of six Request for Proposals for softball and baseball events. A total of 493 room nights were sought out by local organizers of tournaments slated from April through June.

Projects

Wenatchee Valley Sips & Suds - The Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation has entered into an agreement with Solutions Resource Team to organize Wenatchee's first beer and wine festival in August, in conjunction with the O'Terry's Softball Tournament. The two-day festival will feature local and northwest beers and wines as well as local restaurant food and live music. Negotiations were still ongoing at quarter's end on a location, but the date will be Friday, August 14th and Saturday August 15th. It's hoped that this fundraiser will net \$19,000 for our Sports Foundation's Scholarship Fund.

NCW Basketball Showcase & NCW Scholarship Shootout - The Sports Council and its Foundation teamed up with Town Toyota Center to provide volunteers and scholarships to the 1st 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.

WIAA State Volleyball Bid - We received bid information from the WIAA (Washington Interscholastic Activities Association) on December 2nd for the 2A, 3A & 4A State Volleyball championships for 2009-2013. Wenatchee High Athletic Director BJ Kuntz volunteered to be the tournament director as we formulated a team to put together the bid. Also on the bid committee were Bruce Campbell, former Wenatchee High AD and current District Six Secretary for the WIAA, as well as Rob Cline, General Manager of the Town Toyota Center. A plan of attack was being formulated at quarter's end for a presentation before WIAA staff in Renton January 20th.

NCW High School Showcase - Rob Cline, General Manager of the Town Toyota Center, visited the Sports Council in April and expressed his interest in a high school basketball showcase in the new arena. He also asked if the Sports Council would be interested in being involved. At its meeting in September, the Sports Council Executive Board decided to undertake the task of providing volunteers for ushers and ticket-takers as well as host the VIP room at the North Central Washington High School Basketball Showcase December 11-13.

Coaches of Inspiration - Work began in late October for the 4th annual Coaches of Inspiration Awards. Nomination forms were designed and delivered to various sports groups and parks departments. The Sports Council/Foundation also entered into a sponsorship agreement with the Wenatchee World Newspaper to design an on-line nomination form accessible through a banner-ad on the Wenatchee World's website. The ad link was added to the Sports Council and Sports Foundation websites. The date was set for January 28th for the awards night and ideas were tossed around about bringing in a celebrity speaker. It was soon learned that anyone with real star power would cost at least \$10,000 in speaking fees, not including transportation and accommodations. By quarter's end, we had invited Dr. Ed Farrar to be the guest speaker, at no charge.

Marketing

Wenatchee World - The Sports Foundation worked an agreement with the Wenatchee World as a sponsor of the Coaches of Inspiration Awards. The World would provide on-line advertising and nomination forms as well as print 500 copies of the nomination form in return for the Sports Foundation purchasing three ad runs in the newspaper.

Outdoors NW Snow/Sports Edition - In conjunction with the Ski Fever Show in Seattle, the Sports Council purchased a ½-page ad in the Snow/Sports Edition of Outdoors Northwest Magazine. We worked with Brad Fitzgerald at APT Design on the concept of “Wenatchee, Washington - Where Winter Comes to Play.” The magazine was handed out to all 14,000 visitors of the Ski Fever Shows in Seattle, Portland and Spokane.



In addition, the magazine is placed in sporting goods stores and ski lodges throughout the Northwest.

Sports Destination Management Magazine - The winter theme was also used in an ad placement in the November/December issue of Sports Destination Management Magazine. In addition to the ½-page ad, the Wenatchee Valley received double-publicity with an “advertorial.”

[SPORTS LANDSCAPE > **SNOW & ICE**]

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44)

WENATCHEE VALLEY, WA

Washington's Winter Playground!

Welcome to the Wenatchee Valley, smack-dab in the center of Washington State. Famous for their apples, the Wenatchee Valley is quickly becoming known as Washington's winter playground.

Just 12-miles from downtown is Mission Ridge Ski and Snowboard Resort (www.missionridge.com). Mission Ridge offers dry snow, sun-filled days and over 2,000 acres of groomed runs and open slopes.

Wenatchee Valley is proud to announce their brand new multi-events arena, Town Toyota Center (www.towntoyotacenter.com). Home to the Wenatchee Wild hockey team and Wenatchee FIRE in-

door soccer team, the Town Toyota Center is complete with two sheets of ice and seating capacity for up to 5,500.

The Wenatchee Valley is perfectly located adjacent to over four-million acres of public land that makes up the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, a winter-lover's dream with thousands of miles of trails for snowmobiling, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

It's no wonder the Wenatchee Valley is where winter comes to play! Please log on to www.wenatcheevalleysports.com for more information.

Sports Events Magazine - We continued the "Winter Playground" theme in the Annual Guide to Sports Commissions and CVB's by Sports Events Magazine. The ½-page "Where Winter Comes to Play" ad was part of a full-page advertorial about winter play in the Wenatchee Valley.

Advertising & Information Section

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Photo by Andy Davidson

Above: Snowshoeing is very popular in the Wenatchee Valley.

Below: We pride ourselves on 300 days of sunshine, true even during the dead of winter at Mission Ridge.



Photo by Christine Smith



www.sportseventsmagazine.com
December 2008 119

Electronic Communication

Checking website statistics with Google Analytics™, website traffic continued a downward trend as the year came to an end, however the final quarter of 2008 was up 20% over 2007. According to the report from Google, the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council website had 2,037 visitors, 4,074 page views and 1,674 absolutely unique visitors. Those numbers are all up by at least 20% over the same period from the year before. However web traffic has typically trended to slow down between the recreational-heavy summer months and the colder-weather winter months. As we look ahead and plan enhancements to the website, it might be fruitful to increase winter-type recreational information on the web to increase traffic during those typically slower months.

The Sports Council newsletter readership was up 4% since March in the final three months of the year. 3,832 letters were mailed to recipients in the 4th quarter. In addition, Constant Contact technology was used to enhance the weekly reminders that had typically only gone to a local email string

previously. By year's end, the newsletter contacts were also receiving the enhanced weekly reminders with very positive response throughout. The Sports Council took advantage of the Wenatchee World's decision not to renew its contract with Dave Graybill and began including his weekly reports in the weekly reminders. In addition, Anton Jones of Darrell & Dad's Family Guide Service in Chelan added his reports to give the weekly reminders a balanced format of not only sports and entertainment, but also fishing and outdoor recreation.

Impact Numbers

While the economy continued a downward trend as the year came to a close, things seemed to continue perking right along on the sports front in the Wenatchee Valley. The addition of the Town Toyota Center with Wenatchee Wild hockey and Wenatchee FiRE soccer helped a great deal. In all, 5,032 sports visitors came to the Wenatchee Valley over the final three months of the year for 21 events resulting in overnight stays. Their contribution to the Wenatchee Valley economy is estimated at \$717,750 in direct spending on hotels, meals and entertainment.

Year-end totals are looking positive and should continue a growth trend in 2009, according to tracking data with the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council. 37,584 sports tourists came to the Wenatchee Valley in 2008 to participate or attend 131 events. That compares to 36,790 sports visitors in 2007. Estimated economic impact for the year by sports tourism is approximately \$5,641,911. That's up 1% over 2007's impact figure of \$5,593,500. The Sports Council anticipates the Town Toyota Center should help boost 2009 figures to well over \$6-million in economic impact by sports tourism.

Request For Proposal

The Sports Council assisted two organizations in the 4th quarter with Request for Proposals for events taking place in March, April and June of 2009. The Explosion fast pitch softball team asked for help in two of its tournaments while the Apple Valley Packers Legion baseball team enlisted our services to find rooms for three of its events.

4th Quarter RFP Breakdown

<u>Sport Requiring Rooms</u>	<u>Room Nights</u>
Girl's Softball	260
Boy's Baseball (Legion)	233
Total	493

Fourth quarter sports events required a total of 8,869 room nights to accommodate 5,032 sports tourists. Year-to-date totals for room nights through four quarters are 67,173 room nights for 37,584 sports tourists.

Summary

The final quarter of 2008 was certainly an up and down ride. It was a down economy, an up over a new building, a downer with prominent people and health issues, and an upper over new possibilities. But by year's end, the sports tourism market in the Wenatchee Valley was as stable as it was in 2007 with the addition of the Town Toyota Center, 2009 looks very bright.

It will be interesting to watch how much people's travel spending and extracurricular activities may change if the economic outlook continues to be dismal. The one thing great about sports is that it helps people take their minds off their troubles. And, since the Wenatchee Valley is mostly a regional market for sports activities and events, sports tourism trends could benefit from a flat or deflated economy because those persons and families who typically spend disposable income on extravagant trips may choose to stay closer to home. And the Wenatchee Valley is well-suited to host those in the Northwest wishing to do so.

The year ahead looks bright with new possibilities as the Sports Council and Foundation continue to grow. We continue to look forward to serving the sports interests of local user groups as well as those wishing to utilize our magnificent facilities from outside the area. It is our goal to facilitate the needs for hotel rooms, facility enhancement and activity bids to broaden the scope of sports events available in our market.