



## Quarterly Report October-December, 2010

As we began planning for 2011 over the final three months of this year with budgeting, marketing and strategy decisions, it became clear that the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council is hoping for a brighter future in the new year. As the final days of December passed, the revelation came that only December and April were positive months in a year of declining sports tourism economic impact. The fourth quarter finished 15-percent behind 2009 numbers in economic impact. The good news is because of a huge April, for the year, sports tourism impact was only down 1.5-percent. Further proof that working with local organizers of sports events that could bring in more tourists is essential in the new year. And, so far, it looks like that trend will continue.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Economic Impact Numbers

Going inside the numbers shows that fewer Wenatchee Wild home games over the final three months of the year hurt the economic impact of sports tourism. October was down 23.6-percent under last year from \$534-thousand to \$408-thousand. November was somewhat better thanks to an increase in popularity in the second year of the Turkey Run Thanksgiving Day. The month trailed 2009 numbers by 7.9-percent. December was up over last year by over \$18-thousand. Overall, 16 events bringing sports tourists to the Wenatchee Valley took place over the final three months of the year. That's down from 19 in the final quarter of 2009. For the year, we counted 152 events, down from 165 a year ago.

<b>2010 Wenatchee Valley Sports Tourism Economic Impact</b>				
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	YTD
Visiting Athletes	1,130	338	386	18,656
Accompaniment	1,693	499	439	26,117
Total	2,823	837	825	44,851
Room Night Factor	1,297	346	368	25,037
Economic Impact	\$407,880	\$117,191	\$118,051	\$6,918,808

For the year, and thanks in large part to a HUGE April which saw an increase of 98% over the previous year, Sports Tourism Economic Impact was approximately \$6.9-million, down only 2-percent from 2009.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Sports Council Activities

### October

**6<sup>th</sup>** - Met with Linda Finegold, Ian Crossland & Steve Maher about creating the **Ted Finegold Memorial Award**. The annual award will be given to the community member who most promoted outdoor sports and recreation in the Wenatchee Valley over the last year and would be given out at each Wenatchee Marathon. The Sports Council will oversee the award in honor of Ted serving as one of its first Presidents.

**15-17<sup>th</sup>** - Manned a booth at the **Ski Fever Ski Show** in Seattle alongside Mission Ridge, Leavenworth and Steven Pass. We took in 661 entries for a giveaway of three, two-hundred dollar gas cards from the Visitors Bureau and Wenatchee Valley Lodging Association.

**27-28<sup>th</sup>** - **Organized itinerary for** two-day visit from **Drew Reiners** with Triple Crown Sports to meet with facility owners and area partners involved with the annual baseball tournament in April.

The Sports Council was also contact by **Skip Johnson** with the Wenatchee Row and Paddle Club about helping them promote an event in June called the **David Thompson Brigade**. In celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thompson's exploration of the Columbia River, a group will be paddling kayaks from the headwaters of the Columbia to its mouth at Astoria. They'll be coming through Wenatchee in June and there will be several events planned around their passage.

### November

**4<sup>th</sup>** - Eric **met with Dawn Collings** of the **East Wenatchee Events Board** about helping them with assembling their annual report. It was agreed that Eric would write and produce an infomercial on video for the end-of-year report.

**10<sup>th</sup>** - Eric attended the **CVB Board meeting** where the City of Wenatchee presented a proposal to create a Lodging Tax Advisory Committee to advise the City on its proposal to move \$48,000 of Visitors Bureau funding to the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center. Eric and CVB Staff made suggestions and provided input before the CVB Board selected Eric, Charlotte Mayo, Freyda Stephens, Don Gurnard and Paul Thornton to be on the LTAC.

**15<sup>th</sup>** - At the request from a small group of community leaders, the Visitors Bureau and Sports Council attended what was termed a "**Tourism Alliance**" meeting at Town Toyota Center. Over 60-people were on hand to brainstorm ideas on how the Wenatchee Valley could do better to work cohesively with area attractions and tourist destinations to promote the area.

**16<sup>th</sup>** - Eric attended the first **Thunder Swamp meeting** of 2011 to plan for two races to be held July 9<sup>th</sup> and August 13<sup>th</sup>. The group discussed changing the layout of the areas for the beer garden and general admission. In addition, sponsorship, merchandise, and general setup changes were discussed. Dawn Collings told the group the Conditional Use Permit process would begin the following day, November 17<sup>th</sup>.

**16<sup>th</sup>** - Eric met with Shawn Clodfelder at **Coca-Cola** about sponsoring the **Wenatchee Valley Youth Sports Fair** scheduled for January 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Convention Center. Coke

offered to provide banners and sell product with a portion of the proceeds benefitting the Sports Foundation.

**17<sup>th</sup>** - Eric was contacted by Alice Thompson about the ***possibility of hydroplane racing on the Columbia River***. She said she'd put him in touch with Joe Fraunheim with the Unlimited Lights Hydroplane Racing Association about an event possibly for 2011.

**18<sup>th</sup>** - Eric accompanied Roger to the ***Tourism Promotion Assessment Committee*** meeting to provide a Power Point presentation on proposed marketing spending for 2011. Eric provided valuable input to the process and answered any questions related to sports marketing concepts.

**22<sup>nd</sup>** - Eric was part of a panel with the ***Wenatchee World Editorial Board*** to discuss the possible ramifications of pending legislation to do away with Recreation and Conservation Grant funding for parks and trails projects. Eric lobbied on behalf of the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust and Wenatchee Parks Department about how critical it is to maintain park funding on an economic impact and tourism stance.

**22<sup>nd</sup>** - Eric filled in for Roger at a ***Chamber Alliance meeting*** during a snowstorm in Chelan at Campbell's Resort. At this meeting, Mission Ridge Marketing Director Jerri Barkley outlined her issues with the Visitors Bureau and what she thought was a lack of support for tourism infrastructure in the Wenatchee Valley. Eric defended the Visitors Bureau and Sports Council and suggested anyone with issues regarding those organizations approach the Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors.

**22<sup>nd</sup>** - Eric met with Michael Hansen of Biosports Physical Therapy and others about the creation of a new event called the ***"S.O.S. Adventure Race"*** to be held May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Apple Bowl. The obstacle course race would run under the umbrella of the Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation and would be a fundraiser for schools in the Wenatchee Valley. Eric offered his services to the group as webmaster.

**23<sup>rd</sup>** - The ***Wenatchee Valley Sports Council Board*** met for a ***retreat*** at the North Central Regional Library headquarters in Wenatchee for three hours, mediated by Beth Stipe of the Community Foundation of North Central Washington. In discussing the future of the Sports Council, the majority of the board felt it wanted to do more along the lines of charitable giving and conducting the Coaches of Inspiration Awards program. It was also revealed that the Sports Council is no longer bound by law to meet on a regular basis or follow Robert's Rules as the organizational charter absolved in the merger with the Visitors Bureau in 2004. The question was raised whether the organization wanted to continue existing, change its meetings to quarterly or continue on as it has in an advisory capacity. It was agreed to spend the Council's January meeting discussing these issues further.

**30<sup>th</sup>** - Eric attended another ***Thunder Swamp Meeting*** to discuss specific sponsorship needs and provide updates on website changes.

## **December**

**5<sup>th</sup>** - The ***Sports Foundation met with United Way*** about taking over running the ***Coaches of Inspiration*** Awards program. United Way said it would use its new youth program to make it happen and were very positive about the potential.

**15<sup>th</sup>** - Eric represented the Visitors Bureau and Sports Council at the first ***Lodging Tax Advisory Committee meeting*** at Wenatchee City Hall. The group is tasked with determining a recommendation to the City Council on lodging tax dollar spending to promote tourism for the area.

**20<sup>th</sup>** - Eric met with Heather Ostensen with ***"More Than a Trail"*** to advise her on a publicity path for the future of the Loop Trail and Foothills Trail systems in the

Wenatchee Valley. She was interested in a proposal to include a **user fee system** on the trails to help fund maintenance.

**20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>** - Eric provided **public address** announcing services during three days of the **NCW High School Basketball Showcase** at Town Toyota Center. Again the Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation provided the backdrop for the Scholarship Shootout where schools were awarded pins in five categories (attendance, sportsmanship, spirit, cheer/dance/drill, and band). Quincy placed first, Waterville second and Almira-Coulee/Hartline third.

**28<sup>th</sup>** - Eric met with Cheri Dudek of the **Wenatchee Wild** about advertising in the 2011 **Visitors Guide** and having a booth in the **Wenatchee Valley Youth Sports Fair** in January. The Wild confirmed it would do both.

**29<sup>th</sup>** - The Visitors Bureau and Sports Council led the second “**Tourism Alliance**” meeting at the Wenatchee Convention Center. Eric put together a Power Point presentation to outline the jobs of Visitors Bureau/Sports Council staff and how we work with various groups to promote tourism in the Wenatchee Valley. The meeting was well attended, with 42 people on hand.

**29<sup>th</sup>** - Eric again represented the Visitors Bureau and Sports Council at the second **Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) meeting** at Wenatchee City Hall. Discussion raged about the best use of lodging tax dollars to promote tourism. A minority of the group believes the money should go other places than with the Visitors Bureau. However the majority of the committee voiced support for the Visitors Bureau and its mission.

## Special Projects



*Wenatchee booth at Ski Fever Show in Seattle*

The Sports Council and Visitors Bureau worked with Mission Ridge Ski & Board Resort and the Wenatchee Valley Lodging Association to put together a booth for the Ski Fever Ski Show in Seattle October 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>. The group met several times for over two months leading up to the ski show to plan the booth's theme, a giveaway and who would man the booth. The Lodging Association agreed to pay for hotel and transportation fees of

those who worked the show. In all, eleven people offered to help fill booth shifts during the three-day show. In addition, six hotels kicked in ski-weekend packages for two nights/two people to give away during the show. The Sports Council and Visitors Bureau provided three, \$200 gas cards to give away to show participants as well. In all, 660 people entered at the Wenatchee Valley/Mission Ridge booth for a chance to win. The Wenatchee Wild and Wenatchee Venom donated jerseys to wear to highlight the Wenatchee theme and several fruit companies donated apples and Crunch Pack apples to give away. It was a huge success and built a lot of teamwork and camaraderie among local hoteliers, Mission Ridge and the Visitors Bureau/Sports Council.

## Web & Electronic Media

The newly-designed website for the Sports Council continued to pay dividends in the fourth quarter with significant increases in traffic between this year and last year. Overall visits to the site over the final three months of 2010 were 22-percent higher than 2009, with 2,258. In addition, page views were up 30-percent, time on site up 44-percent and new visitors up 7-percent. For the year, the Sports Council's site attracted 13,527 visitors, up a whopping 23-percent over 2009.

In addition, the electronic reach through newsletters, weekend reminders and Facebook and Twitter continued to see growth in the fourth quarter. Due to a limit of staff timing consumed by other projects, only one of the monthly newsletters went out to 2,692 recipients in the final three months of 2010. The weekly electronic reminders, on the other hand, continued to increase in with eleven separate emails reaching 23,382 recipients. That's up from 19,141 in the fourth quarter of 2009, or 17.9%. For the year, the newsletter was up slightly, getting into the inboxes of 20,167 (up from 20,099 in '09) while the weekly reminders found their way to 89,115 recipients (up from 54,132 in '09). Electronically, the Sports Council newsletters and weekly reminders grew 32.1% for the year, going from 74,231 recipients in 2009 to 109,282 in 2010.

## Summary

It became painfully evident at year's end that the Visitors Bureau and Sports Council need to do more to toot our own horn. Quietly, we've been continuing to increase our reach beyond the bounds of the Wenatchee Valley and increase tourism year after year. But we can afford to be quiet no more. With increased scrutiny in difficult economic times over the spending of tax dollars for tourism promotion, it's incumbent upon the Sports Council and Visitors Bureau to spend the time, energy and resources to remind the local populous of our importance to the Valley's tourism industry. We're doing the job we're, and then some. We just need to let others know how we're doing it.