



## Quarterly Report April - June, 2008

The only pains felt in growing so much during the second quarter of 2008 were those of the Director of Marketing for his camping experience and sleeping on the ground. Otherwise, all arrows point north and toward progress following an exhilarating three months.

Experiences gained at the National Association of Sports Commission Symposium the later part of April paid quick dividends and continued to do so at quarter's end. From website development to newsletter techniques to professional networking with sports councils and commissions throughout the country, the NASC proved worth more than the cost of admission.

The second quarter of 2008 also saw great strides taken toward the development of the Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation and all it entails. The Sports Council welcomed a new member in Dave Graybill and hosted the World Harmony Torch relay on its round-the-country trek. And while Request for Proposals decreased in number, as you'll see, an explosion occurred in sports participation and its corresponding economic impact.

All told, the second three months of 2008 were incredibly informative, thought-provoking, productive and an exquisite launching pad into the second half of the year.

### **NASC Symposium in Omaha, Nebraska**

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.

It began for me with a half-day's Certified Sports Event Executive course on **website enhancement**. I immediately came away with several ideas on how to improve not only the Sports Council's website, but also the Wenatchee Visitors Bureau site and how to

*Did You Know?*

**85%** of ALL internet users check a search engine **FIRST?!**

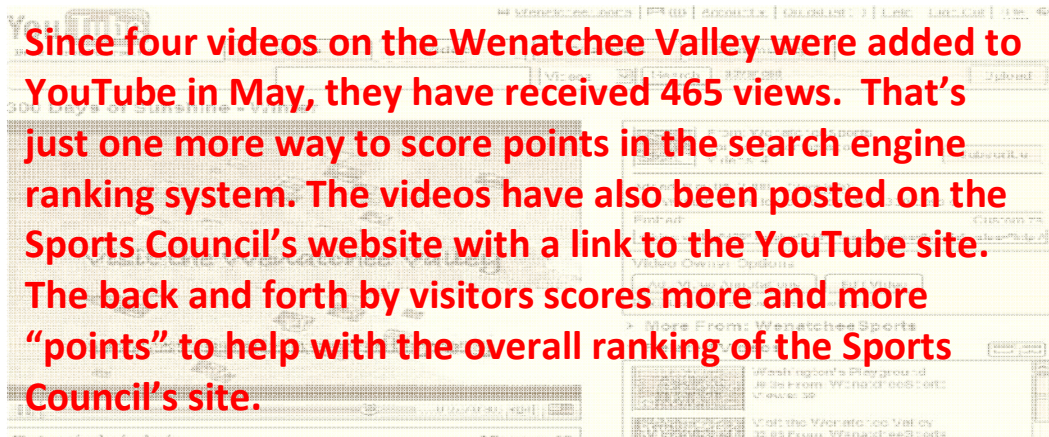
adequately plan to create a website for the newly created Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation.

I learned the amazing importance of **search engine maximization**. This is a trick for arming your website with the

correct information to qualify the site to rank highly among internet search engines. For example, key words such as “Wenatchee Valley Sports” occurring in strings in the text, the body, the heading and lurking behind pictures and graphics earns “points” in the internet search engine ranking system. So when a user searches “Wenatchee Sports,” the more likely it is your website will appear higher up on the search engine result page.



Another way to earn points in search engine maximization is to provide tools for people to access your website from other sources, such as links or interactive video on sites like YouTube.

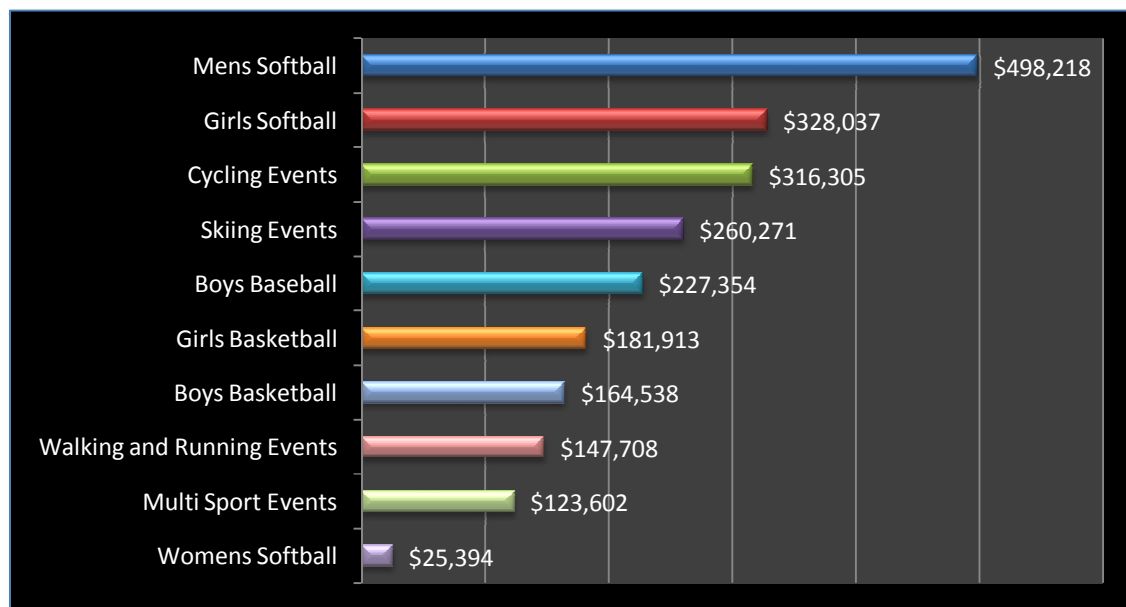


A Google Analytics™ report comparing visitors to the Sports Council's website from May 1<sup>st</sup> of 2007 to May 1<sup>st</sup> of 2008 since the enhancements were made shows a 45% increase in traffic. The June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 to June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 numbers are even more staggering with traffic increasing 59%.

Another great benefit of traveling to NASC in Omaha was 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.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Economic Impact Numbers

The natural progression toward better weather and more outdoor activities in the second quarter of 2008 helped to boost the economic impact numbers as relating to sports in the Wenatchee Valley. Since the first of the year, 22,488 sports tourists have come to the Wenatchee Valley for 80 sports events. That’s 101.5 room nights in Wenatchee Valley hotels. All told, sports tourists contributed \$4,272,593 to the Wenatchee Valley economy. The largest weekend so far was the first weekend in June. Between the 6th and 8th of June, nearly 6,000 people took part in 7 different sports events, contributing \$309,000 to the economy. Breaking it down by sport, softball is still king, bringing in an estimated \$851,649 over 14 events, or an average of nearly \$61,000 per tournament.



## Request For Proposals

Only three RFP's went out from the Sports Council desk in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. But those three were for a total of 1,222 room nights.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter RFP Breakdown

<u>Sport Requiring Rooms</u>	<u>Room Nights</u>
Soccer (Apple Cup)	800
Gymnastics (State in '09)	350
Men's Softball	72
Total	1,222

But even though RFP's weren't flying out the door in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, the need for room nights was incredible. In three months, sports events in the Wenatchee Valley took up 5,714 rooms in Wenatchee-area hotels. For the year-to-date, sports events in the Wenatchee Valley have filled 10,285 hotel rooms.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Sports Council Activities

**April 8<sup>th</sup>** - The Sports Council voted Dave Graybill of Leavenworth to fill a vacancy on its Board of Directors. Known as the "Fishin' Magician," Graybill will add a much-needed perspective on outdoor recreation to the Sports Council.

Rob Cline also paid the Sports Council a visit in April. As the General Manager of the Greater Wenatchee Regional Events Center, Cline pitched the idea of hosting a North Central Washington high school basketball showcase December 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at the Events Center and asked the Sports Council to be involved. The Council agreed and suggested it could even provide a scholarship to the MVP's of games during the tournament.

**May 8<sup>th</sup>** - East Wenatchee Mayor Steve Lacy was a special guest of the Sports Council at its meeting in May. The mayor outlined the proposal for a new Sportsplex to be built in East Wenatchee with financing from Waste Management. Lacey said the local media jumped the gun on the idea and fairly-well killed it before it got a chance to take flight.

Wenatchee City Administrator Allison Williams was also at Sports Council in May to assist me in proposing the Sports Council host the World Harmony Run June 27<sup>th</sup>. It was with some trepidation that the Council gave me approval to go forward with the idea of welcoming a torch relay spreading a message of world peace and international understanding.

**June 11<sup>th</sup>** - I had tons of Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation news for the Board in our June meeting. We teamed with Solutions Resource Team, Sangster Motors and the AppleSox on a promotion that would net the Scholarship Fund \$1,500 and further expose the Foundation during AppleSox home games. The money would come from a donation from Sangster Motors while a child randomly selected during games would determine the incremental amount of a possible donation during that game. SRT had also proposed a Beer and Wine Festival in conjunction with the Sports Foundation's O'Terry's Softball Tournament as a fundraiser. SRT suggested a possible \$20,000 benefit to the Foundation.

I also started a challenge through Liberty Mutual called Responsible Sports Program to possibly land the Scholarship Fund a \$2,500 grant. Visitors to the Wenatchee Valley Sports Council website are urged to follow the link to the Liberty Mutual Responsible Sports quiz and the more people who take it the more likely the Sports Foundation could win the grant.

It was also announced at the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting that the Cycle Washington Memorial Ride was cancelled for this year. As of the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, only 10 people had registered for the ride from Redmond-to-Cle Elum-to-Wenatchee. At least 53 were needed just to break even. Several factors including poor weather in Western Washington, fuel prices and the economy were blamed on its lack of success.

**Washington Games** - 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.



The potential was greeted with great enthusiasm and more meetings were planned to discuss logistics and expenses.

**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.

The recipients are: 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 is a 50-nation torch relay to promote international friendship and understanding through athletics. The team of World Harmony Runners were 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.

## Web & Electronic Media

**Newsletter** - Spreading the good news of the Sports World in the Wenatchee Valley continued with the Sports Council's monthly newsletter. Over the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2008, the newsletter reached out to 3,223 recipients around the state and the country. Fine tuning is constantly being made to make it more interactive and the work is paying dividends with more and more readers following links and opening to read the newsletter more than one time.

**Website** - The Sports Council's website took on a new look on the home page in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. We also added a link to sign up for the monthly newsletter and to help the Sports Foundation through the Liberty Mutual Responsible Sports Program. The highlight for me was the completion of three months of work to assemble a camping, fishing and golf map to help visitors to the Wenatchee Valley.



With the assistance of Google Maps, I've populated a map of our area with the Camping, Fishing and Golfing information within an hour's drive of the Wenatchee Valley. It will be linked on our website at [www.wenatcheevalleysports.com](http://www.wenatcheevalleysports.com) and through the Visitor Bureau's website at [www.wenatcheevalley.org](http://www.wenatcheevalley.org).

**Google Analytics** - According to Google Analytics tracking of the Sports Council's website, nearly all pages of the site were up again over the previous quarter. The website received 3,302 visits between April 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>. 75% of those were new visits. The Sports Facilities Index remains the most-viewed page on the site, receiving

2,115 views in the second quarter.

## **Summary**

The one thing that sticks out in my mind as we venture forward into the second half of 2008 is the success in tracking sports events in the Wenatchee Valley and what sports truly means to our economy. \$4.2-million over six months? The number truly astounds me. And as we continue into the future, this factor needs serious consideration when local schools, governments and private sector companies planning growth and space issues. With such a significant impact, it cannot and should not be overlooked. And it is my goal to keep hammering away at these numbers to get people to understand what a difference sports makes, not just economically, but socially and spiritually as well.