



Quarterly Report April - June, 2009

Spring time is always a joy for us in the sports and recreation world in the Wenatchee Valley. It's a time when our fields become jammed with baseball and softball and more and more sports tourists flock to the sunshine and fun of the Wenatchee Valley. And despite the reality of a nationwide economic downturn finally hitting home in the Wenatchee Valley, sports tourism remained a constant in the face of it all. The road ahead looks rather bumpy, however, as two major events have been cancelled. The Sports Council is working feverishly to try to assist those event-holders through the difficult times as well as scope the horizon for new events that could even out the bottom line.

2nd Quarter Economic Impact Numbers

Upon further review, the 1st quarter economic impact numbers were in error. Due to a calculation oversight, the numbers reported in the 1st quarter report were inflated by over \$800,000. Despite the gross error, the sports tourism sector of the Wenatchee Valley economy was still up during the first three months of 2009 versus 2008. And, now with the second quarter numbers updated, we're still on an upward trend.

(adjusted)	Visiting Participants	Visiting Coaches	Visiting Fans	Room Night Factor	Economic Impact
January	669	152	882	812	\$248,985
February	1,176	88	1,688	1,213	\$412,335
March	2,467	602	4,167	3,472	\$1,059,498
1st Quarter Totals	4,312	842	6,737	5,497	\$1,720,818

The \$1.7-million of economic impact in the first quarter of 2009 is 8% higher than the \$1.5-million during the same period the year previous. Now, as we conclude the first half of the year, the numbers continue to hold at an 8% increase over the previous year:

	Visiting Participants	Visiting Coaches	Visiting Fans	Room Night Factor	Economic Impact
April	1,273	58	1,608	1,275	\$417,211
May	2,695	153	5,332	3,821	\$1,188,099
June	2,672	207	4,308	3,126	\$1,020,962
2 nd Quarter Impacts	4,791	418	11,248	8,222	\$2,626,272

Much, if not all of the increase can be attributed to new events at the Town Toyota Center such as Wenatchee Wild Hockey as well as organizers of ongoing events in the Wenatchee Valley reporting their results to the Sports Council. The story is much different when comparing events head-to-head with their own reports from one year to the next.

Examining 21 events which took place in the first half of both 2008 and 2009, such as Hog Loppet, Ridge to River and the Sterling Invitational Softball Tournament, participation and economic impact are down.

	Visiting Participants	Visiting Coaches	Visiting Fans	Room Night Factor	Economic Impact
2008	7,347	724	11,944	9,336	\$2,790,167
2009	6,918	740	10,459	9,058	\$2,690,375
% Change	-6%	+2%	-14%	-3%	-3.7%

And as we look ahead to the summer months, two groups have already cancelled their events. Retired Senior Volunteer Program of North Central Washington cancelled the Hot August Days Tour of the Columbia Basin bike ride scheduled for August 15th. In addition, Arlberg Sports just cancelled the Tour de Vine bike and wine tour that had been a very popular event the second Saturday of September. This really hurts the Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation because Arlberg's had donated proceeds from the ride to the Foundation's Scholarship Fund, to the tune of \$6,000 over the last three years.

1st Quarter Sports Council Activities

April 14th Meeting - Land For Use Presentation by Evy Gillin of WRAC

Evy Gillin passed out an overview of the Wenatchee Racquet and Athletic Club's land available for non-commercial use. Specifically, the WRAC is interested in a local group or sports club turning the 2-3 acres into a ball field. The club's long-term recreational plan will not develop the space for at least 10-years, so the WRAC is interested in entering into a lease and possibly even help pay for access and development. The former orchard property has considerable slope, so a lot of fill dirt would need to be brought in. And, there's no direct access to the site from Number 2 Canyon Road, so an access would have to be built off the WRAC's current parking lot.

April 14 & 20 - Mediate Field Use Fees Between Chelan PUD & User Groups

The Sports Council learned of a change in policy by the Chelan County PUD regarding charging for softball field maintenance for Walla Walla Point and Hydro Parks. We quickly organized a sit-down between Ryan Baker, the PUD's Parks Director and member of the SC Board, and representatives of the Apple Valley Slowpitch Softball Association. The mediation was successful in bringing to the two sides together for a

solution for this year's tournaments to be held on those fields and an active dialog for future planning.

April 26-30 - Eric Granstrom at National Association of Sports Commissions Conference

Denver was the site for this year's conference as attendance was the largest ever with over 800 people representing 363 event owners, suppliers and sports commissions and councils. The Director met with 19 event owners and suppliers and feels made solid contacts for possible events in Wenatchee including Triple Crown Sports (baseball in 2010); the US Olympic Committee (USA Hockey, Volleyball and Figure Skating); as well as the World Cup Stacking Championships. Eric also gave the opening address of the conference, representing the entire state of Washington and incoming president of the Washington Association of Sports Commissions.

Wenatchee Valley Sports Foundation News

The Foundation *finally* received it's 501(c)(3) approval notification from the IRS on May 8th and immediately went about the business of fundraising. It hired a new assistant in Molly Steere in April, only to have Molly turn in her resignation a month later. She was pregnant and the general contract on a house project she and her husband were building, so it became too much to add the Foundation duties on top of it. The Foundation was also able to secure a computer and monitor and Quickbooks software for non-profits through Tech Soup, a company which provides non-profits with inexpensive computer software and equipment. The Foundation also held a retreat with the Community Foundation of NCW June 15th to format a plan for the future. That was also the day the Foundation turned in an grant application for \$5,000 to the Community Foundation for help in funding an administrative position.

June 9th SC Meeting - Bob Bugert & Kitty Craig of Land Trust Presented Foothills Trails

Representatives from the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust talked to the Council Board about the future of the Foothills Trails and the need for a comprehensive plan. The SC Board agreed to support the Land Trust's efforts via a letter of support and possible research study funding in 2010.

June 23rd - Olympic Day Fun Run/Walk

Working together with the marketing group E3NCW and the City of Wenatchee, the Sports Council helped organize the Olympic Day Fun Run/Walk June 23rd, complete with US Olympic flags and guest appearances by 1984 Gold Medal Winner Phil Mahre and Olympic hopeful Andi Jo Stump. 51 participants took part in the 1- or 2-mile walk/run and received official certificates of appreciation from the US Olympic Committee. The day was also officially proclaimed Olympic Day in Wenatchee by Mayor Dennis Johnson.

Web & Electronic Media

Newsletter - 14,629 people received the weekly reminders and three newsletters between April and June this year. Of those recipients, 22% have become hard-core users of the information and links contained within. According to tracking data provided by our provider, Constant Contact, an average of 324 people spend over 15-minutes reading the reminders and newsletters and click on at least five hyperlinks in each. Data trends show more people consuming the information in April than in June, which stands

to reason. The weather is better and families are out doing more in summer than in spring, so less information is needed on a weekly or monthly basis on “what to do.”

Website - Spring typically is the time when usage of the Sports Council’s website goes up, and such was the case in the second quarter of 2009. According to Google Analytics, visits to the website were up 5.78 percent over 2008; page views were up 1.44%; and the Events page of the website saw traffic increase by 46.8% over the previous year. New visits were down from 2008 to 2009 by nearly 3%, but reasoning dictates that more and more people are familiar with the site and use it more often, thus the reduction in “new visitors.” For the Quarter, 3,493 visitors were recorded using the website with 6,779 page views. Daily highs over the period saw 70 visitors on April 27th and 69 visitors on June 12th.

Summary

So even though we grossly erred on our first-quarter numbers in our last report, the message is still a good one: sports tourism holds the line in the Wenatchee Valley’s economy. Overall, the first half of 2009 shows an 8-percent improvement over 2008 equaling a \$4.3-million economic impact to the area’s pocketbooks.

We don’t like the trend of two events being cancelled over the summer ahead nor the reduction in some of the softball tournament numbers which have already happened. That is why it is imperative to always be on the lookout for new and exciting opportunities to team with local groups and organizers to bring new events to the community. At quarter-end, the Sports Council was working with groups on new baseball tournaments, a beer and wine festival and mountain bike event for 2010.