

MARKETPLACE

Cruise ships cut economic wake

Conservative estimates put 15,000 cruise-ship tourists on the streets of The Dalles in 2019, according to The Dalles Mainstreet Program.

And they had money. "Last tourist season was incredible," said Luise Langheinrich, who runs a clothing boutique, Lines of Design, at 107 E. 2nd St. "We had about a 20 percent increase just from tourists on those days."

The same tourists visited the Discovery Center, Fort Dalles Museum and

Word on the Street

Tom Peterson



the National Neon Sign Museum. Neon sign operator David Benko estimated they had between 8,000 and 10,000 people from cruise ships cross their threshold. Langheinrich said tour boats offered three levels

of economic opportunity – tourists, crew members and boat operators — and they all put a ripple in the economy.

Bunny Henningsen with Main Street watched and counted. In 2019, some 130 boats docked during the season, despite a 3-week shutdown to repair Bonneville Dam. Henningsen greets ships and provides help to crew and operators.

She saw some \$17,000 spent during the season, noting one purchase of alcohol

at The Dalles Liquor Store came to \$2,500. Ships also bought televisions and mattresses. Lilo's BBQ and Petite Provence also saw patronage from tourists and crew.

Kennymike De Hart, with GorgeUs Tours, was called to drive a couple from the ship to Portland when they learned their daughter was just days from dying.

Travelers utilized local emergency or urgent care services too. Broken fingers and an ankle were tended to. Dr. Robert Schwartz, a

naturopath operating downtown, saw his urgent care services utilized. Mainstreet Executive Director Terry Chance said Schwartz diagnosed a tourist with pneumonia.

Henningsen projected tour boat numbers for 2020 at 126 and likely to rise before April.

Chance and Henningsen suggested local retailers offer shipping services—easily accessed online—as tourists don't want to carry larger items.

"We really facilitate the use of retail and local services," Chance said.

"We're that bridge," added Henningsen.

If you like what The Dalles Mainstreet is doing, there is an opportunity to support them on Feb. 22.

They will hold a Mardi Gras party and auction at the former *The Dalles Chronicle* building, 315 Federal St. They need auction items and musical guests for the event. Tickets will be on sale shortly.

The Mid-Columbia MARKETPLACE



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