

Oregon Coast offers recreation, relaxation

By STEVE MYERS
Of the Emerald

Every summer thousands of Eugeneans flock to the beautiful Oregon Coast to escape the sweltering heat of the Willamette Valley and explore the miles of uncrowded beach.

Or they go to track down the elusive razor, butter and river clams that can be found in low-tide mudflats of coastal rivers and beaches. Others retreat to the coast to drop crab pots from docks, hoping that several unsuspecting Dungeness crabs will nibble at the bait. Many people head seaward on hundreds of commercial charter boats seeking a chance to catch a 25-pound Chinook salmon.

For reasons of their own, millions of people will go to the scenic Oregon Coast and the Chambers of Commerce at two coastal towns are ready and waiting to serve them.

Only an hour-long drive away from Eugene, the city of Florence boasts some of the biggest sand dunes in the world.

Located four miles south of Florence, Honeyman State Park offers visitors a wide variety of recreational activities including the chance to climb sand dunes over 100 feet high. The park's dunes surround Clewax Lake where anglers can catch their limit of trout or bass. Picnic and camping facilities are also available to people wishing to spend the day or the whole weekend at the park.

Also situated just south of this coast town is the National Dunes Recreation Center which, according to Eleanor Durnel, director of the Florence Chamber of Commerce, is the only place, "from Seattle to San Francisco, where you can get a dune buggy ride." She says



Thousands of tourists will flock to the rugged Oregon Coast this summer to participate in many activities.

there is a choice of riding in a big or small buggy.

Durnel says that the city will be offering, for the first time ever, a boat trip up the Siuslaw River to the town of Mapleton. A round trip takes about two hours and will be offered daily aboard the ship Blue Fin.

"Very few people know of the beauty that the river has to offer," explains Durnel. "In just a short time this attraction has become very successful."

Also in the city itself is Old Town, a rejuvenated version of the Florence bay front as it might have looked in the early 1900's. According to Durnel, Old Town has several unique craft shops offering anything from gifts to leatherwork.

Charter boats are available at the docks on the bay and Durnel says the fishing is very good this time of year. Visitors can also rent clamming and crabbing equipment at Waterland Stor-

age, a local outdoor store and "They'll even show you how to clean one clam," says Durnel jokingly, "but after that you're on your own."

North of Florence are two sites visited by many tourists, the Sea Lion Caves and the Indian Forest. At the caves large sea lions can be seen year-round and the Indian Forest offers visitors a look at rarely-seen artifacts, lodges and buffalo.

To get to Florence, travelers need to drive out West 11th to Veneta, then get on Highway 126 West which crosses the scenic Coast Mountains and ends in Florence. To travel north or south, Coast Highway 101 works the best and it offers a startling view of the rugged Oregon coastline. For more information on the attractions in and around the town of Florence call the city's Chamber of Commerce at 1-997-3128.

About 50 miles north of Florence is the city of Newport. According to Chamber of Commerce Manager Charles Johnson, Newport has at least one million visitors a year. He says the city has, in addition to the regular fishing, clamming and crabbing facilities, some unique tourist attractions.

Johnson says the town's biggest attraction is its bay front and the seafood restaurants found there. The Undersea Gardens, a large aquarium with sea animals from six-foot wolf eels to a chameleon-like octopus, and the wax museum also draw a number of tourists.

Also in Newport is the Oregon State Marine Science Center and Museum, which is fast becoming the nation's research leader in underdeveloped marine resources.

Coastal campers can find two very different state parks just outside the city limits. To the south is South Beach, "a microcosm of dunes," says Johnson, "where agates can be found on the beach." North of town is Beverly Beach, where trees and a small creek can be found right next to the ocean.

For more information on places around Newport call 1-265-2462.

The entire Oregon coast is dotted with commercial and state campgrounds for visitors wishing only to walk up and down the driftwood-lined beach. Beachcombing, as it's commonly called, can provide hours of relaxation and sometimes a treasure or two in the form of a Japanese glass fishing ball.

emu Main Desk

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Big top action arrives in Eugene

By JOHN HEALY
Of the Emerald

Circus Vargas begins five days of performances in Eugene Wednesday with an old-fashioned big top tent-raising ceremony in the Valley River Center parking lot.

The circus brings to town an assortment of Bengal tigers, aerialists, acrobats, clowns and trapeze artists for 12 performances "wrapped up in a turn-of-the-century environment" from Wednesday through Sunday.

A major feature of Circus Vargas is its big top tent, which is "larger than a football field and holds upward of 5,000 people," according to circus officials. The circus' 8,000-pound elephants will start raising the 300-foot by 165-foot canvas tent at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday.

The opening performance will be at 8 p.m. Wednesday, followed by 12:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., and 8 p.m. performances Thursday through Sunday with the exception of Saturday, which will not include a 4:30 p.m. show.

Among the performers will be The Great Million Dollar Golden Carlos Twins, contortionists; The Circus Vargas Disco Dancing Horses presented by The Herriots; Harry Thomas and His Royal Bengal Tigers; Monique and Julian, aerocyclists; Los Gauchos and The Tangier Troupe, acrobats; The Rolls Duo, Senor Antonio, The An-

toines, The Flying Lantons and the Flying Padillas, aerialists.

General admission tickets are \$5.75 for adults (12 and over) and \$3.00 for children; seating in the preferred section is \$7.00 for adults and \$4.25 for children and box seats are \$8.25 for

adults and \$5.50 for children. Tickets can be purchased at the Valley River Center ticket booth in the mall or at showtime. Tickets can also be ordered over the phone at 484-4589, using MasterCard, American Express or VISA.



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