

Report: Salem hotels see 374% spike in revenue on night before solar eclipse

WHITNEY M. WOODWORTH
STATESMAN JOURNAL

Of the 15 largest cities in the path of totality, Salem hotels saw some of the biggest spikes in revenue per room.

According to a report by analytics firm STR released Sept. 1, Salem hotels reported a 374 percent increase in revenue per available room the night before the Aug. 21 solar eclipse.

Almost 140,000 hotel rooms lie in the path of totality, according to STR. Nationwide, hotels in the path reported a 244 percent increase in revenue per room.

“There was simply no modern comparison for this event, so while performance increases were expected, we weren’t sure what extent hotels would capitalize on what ended up being a two-minute event,” STR vice-president of consulting

and analytics Carter Wilson said.

Wilson said smaller areas with limited hotel supplies showed the biggest gains. Hopkinsville, Kentucky, a city of about 32,000, showed the largest increase in hotel revenue per room of 1,644 percent.

Bigger cities like Nashville showed smaller, but still substantial, increases. Among the 15 largest cities in the path of totality, Salem hotels showed the fifth largest increase.

Idaho Falls had the highest average daily hotel rate of \$368.

Many hotel reservations in Salem and Madras were quickly gobbled up months — even years — before the eclipse.

For questions, comments and news tips, email reporter Whitney Woodworth at wmwoodworth@statesmanjournal.com.

Farm

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Keizer and Marion County. But about the time Ray was prepared to taper off his workload, his son came back to tend the task.

“When I was in my late teens wanted to farm,” Bryan recalled. “But after college, I got into police work. At that time we were set up to do row crops and wheat. We weren’t set up to do grass seed, the up-and-coming crop.”

Five-plus decades ago a fair portion of the land was wooded, providing a shady area for the farm animals the family had at the time.

“I remember even up to junior high we’d go out there and pick up sticks as we were clearing the property. We had cows that would roam the woods,” Bryan said.

In those days when harvest time would roll around, Haslebacher cousins and extended family living elsewhere would often come to the farm to pitch in. Especially in the era of row crops, labor was always a concern, one among many that often crop up in the farming business.

“Farming has been a good life, though it’s not been easy. I remember one year my dad was counting on the last beans, and we had an early frost that took the whole crop,” Bryan explained, further noting that this year has been a tough one for many onion growers. “You just can’t control the weather.”

What a farmer can control, to some extent, is the type of crop. Bryan took a good look at the hazelnut market — for which

Oregon is famous — the labor and tools involved and decided it was a good fit. The family first leased out land to grass-seed farmers for a couple of years, which interestingly prepared the soil to grow a hazelnut orchard.

“The grass seed prepared the ground; it needs the right humus, PH level and right nutrient base,” Bryan said. “A lot of (hazelnut farming) is mechanized and I have the machines for that.”

“There’s a little spray work, and pruning. The harvest is pretty easy; nuts fall on their own and you use a machine like a big sweeper into rows and another machine comes in and picks the winrow up, blows out the chaff and potted nut. Then you send (the crop) to a processor.”

The downside is that the trees have to mature before a crop is harvested. But after hanging on for that period, the hazelnut decision has worked out, and in doing so it also nurtured the Haslebacher family farm tradition.

“It’s tough hanging onto a farm; making to that century mark really is quite a feat. I imagine there was more than a time when my grandfather had worries,” Bryan said, noting that his grandfather also built barns and had a steam harvester as side gigs.

But Bryan adds that there are rewards to farming that, perhaps, extend beyond a budget line:

“I remember that first year I got these trees, I was out on the tractor, the sun was shining and I look out (over the horizon) and there’s Mt. Hood on a beautiful day — I couldn’t be happier.”

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Oregon Century Farms

Every Oregon farm and ranch has a unique history and special family story. The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch program encourages agriculture families to share, with a broader audience, these stories. By promoting family stories, rich cultural heritage is passed down to future generations while educating Oregonians about the social and economic impact of Oregon agriculture.

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program began in 1958 to honor farm and ranch families with century-long connections to the land.

To qualify for a century or sesquicentennial award, interested families must follow a formal application process. Members of the Application Review Committee review each application against the qualifications, which include continuous family operation of the farm or ranch; a gross income from farm use of not less than \$1,000 per year for at least three years out of five prior to application; and family members must live on or actively manage the farm or ranch activities.

Award winners receive a certificate signed by the Governor and Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Historic roadside signs are imprinted with the founder’s name and the year the ranch or farm was established.

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program is administered by the Oregon Farm Bureau Foundation for Education. It is supported by a partnership among the Oregon Farm Bureau, the State Historic Preservation Office, OSU University Archives, and by generous donations of Oregonians.

—Oregon Farm Bureau Foundation for Education

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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Chat

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community view has broadened to include the pivotal role social services play in getting help for offenders outside the courtroom.

“There are problems in our community that don’t need to be served by the criminal justice system,” she said.

An example of alternate treatment is the diversionary trio of Drug Court, Mental Health Court and Veterans Court, for those willing to submit to intense accountability rather than the traditional court system. Clarkson serves in Veterans Court, and she’s also part of an effort to bring Seattle-style wrap-around services to people committing crimes because of homelessness, unemployment and substance abuse.

“You’d think my job would make me a harder person, but it’s made me a more compassionate person,” she said. “People make bad choices. It’s not my job to judge, it’s to hold people accountable and to make the community safer.”

Community safety is dinner table conversation at home because Clarkson is married to a police officer and United States marine. At work, she strives for “open lines of communication” with the various police departments in Marion County.

You never know which department the DA’s 30-attorney team might be talking to next as they decide which cases to take to court and what charges to file.

Four years ago, Clarkson came to Silverton to look into the fatal police shooting of Jimmie Eugene Hickey, after the 78-year-old former resident

of the Silver Spur RV Park returned to the park, shot an assistant manager and opened fire outside. After Clarkson presented her findings in Grand Jury, its members unanimously decided the officers who shot Hickey had acted appropriately.

That’s not always the case, though, and she’s also occasionally prosecuted police officers for misconduct.

She’s part of a workgroup dedicated to encouraging all Oregon district attorneys to follow best practices regarding officers whose credibility as witnesses is questionable.

“We are constantly holding police officers accountable,” she said. “They not only have to follow the law, but they are examples of the law.”

District attorneys, too, are charged with obeying the law, including Measure 11 and its mandatory sentences for violent crimes, she said.

Other crimes carry more elastic sentencing guidelines, but either way, Clarkson said she hopes voters see her decision-making as fair and balanced.

“Prosecutors have some discretion, and it’s right that they do,” she said. “You want a prosecutor who has good sense and a goal of fairness.”

Next chat

What: Creekside Chat

Where: Silver Creek Coffee House, 111 Water St., Silverton

When: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 20 (First and third Wednesdays)

Questions and information: Contact Justin Much, jmuch@Statesman-Journal.com; cell 503-508-8157; or follow at twitter.com/justinmunch

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PAIGE CLARKSON
MARION COUNTY DA CANDIDATE

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Published every Wednesday by the Statesman Journal,
P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309.
USPS 469-860, Postmaster: Send address changes to
Appeal Tribune, P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309.
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