

Oregon's hotels and restaurants finding their footing, at last

By MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

SALEM — The pandemic clobbered Oregon's bars, restaurants and hotels, with extended shutdowns and wiping out more than 70,000 hospitality jobs in COVID-19's early days.

The sector was also among the slowest to recover, as successive outbreaks of disease and intermittent restrictions constrained operations and job growth well into 2021. Oregon hospitality jobs lagged far behind the national recovery at the beginning of last year.

Over the past 12 months, though, the industry has picked up the pace. Oregon hospitality employment is nearly 94% of what it was prior to the pandemic, roughly on par with national trends. That's a hopeful sign heading into the summer travel months.

"I do think the worst is definitely behind us, and if we can get inflation under wraps a little bit, then I think the story for Oregon is quite bright in the years ahead," said Jason Brandt, CEO of the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association.

Oregon has roughly 200,000 tourism jobs, according to May data

from the Oregon Employment Department. Roughly three-quarters of those jobs are in bars and restaurants.

The loss of that work was especially hard on Oregon's coastal communities, which rely on tourism for an outsize share of their economic activity, and on younger workers, who do many of the sector's entry-level service jobs.

Federal stimulus payments and beefed-up unemployment benefits blunted layoffs' financial toll for many workers, of course. Their spending, plus billions in business subsidies, buoyed many bars and restaurants that otherwise would have succumbed to the shutdowns. But lasting damage remains, with lives and careers disrupted and scores of popular dining and drinking establishments gone forever.

"We have both great stories and horror stories all at the same time," Brandt said.

Businesses that endured were the ones that found ways to adjust, often by automating aspects of their operations or improving their to-go service to adapt to a decline in in-person dining.

Hospitality businesses face new challenges now, with inflation pushing up their costs and squeezing

their profits. And Oregon's labor market remains extremely tight — the inability to find workers is one key reason hospitality jobs haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels.

"The disruptions are real. We went from one crisis right into another, with the inflationary pressures that everyone is feeling," Brandt said.

The upside for workers is that hospitality wages aren't just keeping pace with inflation, they're handily exceeding it.

The average Oregon leisure and hospitality job pays \$20.77 an hour, according to the latest state data. That's up from

\$16.91 in May 2019, before the pandemic, and a 12% increase in just the past year.

Portland, like urban areas in the rest of the country, continues to face issues resulting from office closures and steep reductions in business travel, according to Brandt. Reputational damage from unrest in 2020 has been a particular issue for Portland, he said.

Overall, though, Brandt said the hospitality's trajectory is good, and he's optimistic about the outlook despite those headwinds and the inflationary pressure.

"Every month," Brandt said, "we seem to see a little bit more progression."



The Observer, File

Tap That Growlers on Adams Avenue in downtown La Grande is busy the evening of Nov. 12, 2020, six days before Gov. Kate Brown's mandates went into effect that would lead to prohibitions against in-person dining at restaurants and bars throughout most of Oregon. Bars, restaurants and hotels have found ways to adapt to COVID-19 but now face new pressures from inflation.

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HOROSCOPES

by Stella Wilder

THURSDAY, JULY 14, 2022
YOUR BIRTHDAY by Stella Wilder

Born today, you are a straightforward, non-nonsense sort of individual with many admirable traits that make you a role model for all sorts of people. Though you do not go out of your way to impress, the fact is that you cannot help but attract attention from those who see in you the kind of person they would like to be. You want to be successful, to be sure, and so you always follow a practical path leading to success.

FRIDAY, JULY 15

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- A familiar situation looms, but what you've done in the past to deal with it may not be appropriate this time around. You'll find an alternative.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- You mustn't use force to get what you want today, whether physical or psychological. An easy, calm negotiation is favored at this time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- You may be confused about what is actually required of you today. Go to the source of all primary information and ask for a complete review.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) -- You may have to attend more than one meeting today that proves a giant waste of time -- or at least that's what it may seem. Let things develop.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) -- You may feel weighed down today by issues that you cannot directly control but which play on your emotions. It may be time to solicit help.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) -- You know who has the answers you seek, but you may think that going to that person today is a sign of vulnerability. This is not so.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- You needn't follow the rules to the letter today, so you are free to experiment. You need please only yourself so long as success continues.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) -- Something

you used to do all on your own may require collaboration this time around -- and that means that you'll have to take more time.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) -- Not everyone is going to interpret the rules the same way you do today, and that will make things interesting when you try to collaborate.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- You may have to juggle a lot of little tasks today before your schedule clears for the big thing that waits for your undivided attention.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Someone is eager to get a rise out of you today, but you're in no mood to cooperate. It may be best for you to go elsewhere for interaction.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- You've taken a stand to which many have voiced objections, but today you can prove that your way of thinking is correct -- at least for now.

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THURSDAY, JULY 14, 2022

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Quit working
- 5 Old soldier
- 8 Zen riddle
- 12 Duel with words
- 13 Alias letters
- 14 Comics pooch
- 15 First-magnitude star
- 16 Mesh
- 17 Tasteful plant?
- 18 Chirped
- 20 Costa del —
- 22 Grand Teton st.
- 24 Penned
- 28 Horror movie sounds
- 32 Los Angeles cager
- 33 Put
- 34 Pitcher handle
- 36 Flatter oneself
- 37 Earthy color
- 39 Alaskan bears
- 41 Literary work
- 42 Rand of fiction

DOWN

- 43 Trip part
- 45 Exclaiming over
- 50 Darth Vader, once
- 53 Shinto or Zen (abbr.)
- 55 Diva's melody
- 56 Cow-headed goddess
- 57 Cunning
- 58 Grade
- 59 Quilt stuffing
- 60 Horse coloring
- 61 Sailing
- 1 Host's plea
- 2 Fencing weapon
- 3 Gray-green shrub
- 4 Stratagem
- 5 Stylish beard
- 6 Just scrape by
- 7 Edges a doily

Answer to Previous Puzzle

H	A	L	E	P	C	T	C	A	T	O
E	L	A	N	A	P	E	A	G	E	D
W	A	I	F	G	U	N	F	O	R	D
S	T	O	K	E	A	E	G	I	S	
				R	O	D	N	E	Y	
U	T	I	C	A	E	N	E	B	B	S
P	U	R	E	B	A	D	W	I	N	K
C	B	S	J	E	T	D	A	D	D	Y
				A	N	O	D	E	S	
P	O	S	E	R	U	N	H	I	P	
S	L	O	G	B	I	T	E	R	O	S
S	L	O	G	E	S	C	R	O	L	E
T	A	P	S	D	U	H	S	N	O	W

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- 8 Odd-looking cabbage
- 9 Work by Keats
- 10 Make public
- 11 Midwest st.
- 19 Fleecy animal
- 21 Harry Potter's messenger
- 23 Port near Kyoto
- 25 Cajun veggie
- 26 Valuable wood
- 27 Units of work
- 28 Swing around
- 29 Smoked meats
- 30 Cookout fare
- 31 Dreamer
- 35 Kings and queens
- 38 Cereal grass
- 40 Spiral molecule
- 44 Latch onto
- 46 Big laugh (hyph.)
- 47 Orchidlike flower
- 48 Cleopatra's river
- 49 Festivity
- 50 Crane arm
- 51 That señora
- 52 Morse signal
- 54 Distinct period

103 Announcements

PULL TABS ACCEPTED AT THE FOLLOWING BAKER CITY LOCATIONS

- Baker City Herald
- Dollar Tree
- Black's Distributing
- Ryder Bros
- VFW
- Baker Elk's Lodge
- Main Event
- Lefty's Tap House
- Baker City Fire Dept.
- Haines Sell-Rite
- Idle Hour
- Salvation Army

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Our farm community is well represented in the classified columns of this newspaper. For all your agricultural needs, look to classified.

104 Community Calendar

VFW POST 460
Every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 7pm.
Corner of Main at Birch in Union

LA GRANDE LIONS CLUB
Meets 2nd & 4th Monday of each month @ 12 PM
Union County Senior Center
1504 N. Albany St., La Grande

PINOCHLE
Fridays at 6:30 p.m.
Senior Center
2810 Cedar St., Baker City
Public is welcome

Baker County United "freedom rallies"
3rd Thursday each month
6 p.m. at the Sunridge
1 Sunridge Lane.
The public is invited

Kiwanis Club of Baker City
Tuesday at 12:00 PM
Sunridge Inn Restaurant
1 Sunridge Lane
For more information call: (541) 523-6027

ROTC CLUB of Baker City
Meets every Monday
Noon - 1 PM
Baker Towers Meeting Room

POWDER RIVER SPORTSMAN'S CLUB
Meets 1st Tuesday of every month
8th & Broadway, Baker City
6 PM - Pistolettes
7 PM - Regular Membership

114 Group Meetings

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
541-805-2229
neo-na.org

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
Monday, Thursday, & Friday at 8pm. Episcopal Church
2177 First St., Baker City

AA MEETINGS - La Grande
Wednesday Nights, 7-8:15pm.
Fort Union Grange Hall, corner of McAlister & Gekeler Lanes. For more info, call 541-786-1222

AL-ANON
Keep Coming Back Family Group
Mondays, 7 pm
at NKWest, 1208 Adams, La Grande, OR

CELEBRATE RECOVERY
Calvary Baptist Church
Third & Broadway
Baker City, OR
EVERY THURSDAY
6:15 - 8:00 PM

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114 Group Meetings

DO YOU HAVE.....HURTS, HABITS and/or HANG UPS?
12 Step Biblical Support
Harvest Church
3720 Birch St. Baker City
Thurs., 6:30 - 8:30 PM

LA GRANDE GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS
Every Friday Night @ 5pm, 2107
Gekeler Ln, LG, Church of Christ
basement. For more info please
call 971-219-8411

Someone's drinking a problem?
AL-ANON Meetings
are available by phone
Info for **Baker City** Meetings
Call: 541-239-7323

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
Goins' Straight Group
Meetings:
Mon., Tues. Thurs. & Fri.
Start at 8 PM
Episcopal Church Basement
2177 1st Street, Baker City

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS
Would you like to
stop compulsive eating?
For Information Call
541-523-5128
Leave a Message
Email: ecapoa@live.com

PEOPLE with PARKINSON'S
Caregivers, Family, Friends
SUPPORT GROUP
Contact: 541-963-1486
Now meeting at GR Hospital
first Thursdays at 4:30 p.m.
education@grh.org

BAKER COUNTY AA MEETINGS BAKER CITY

MONDAYS
Survivor's Group
12 - 1:00 pm
Baker Presbyterian Church
1995 4th St.
(4th & Court, Side Door)

WEDNESDAYS
Survivor's Group
12:05 pm
Baker Presbyterian Church
1995 4th St.
(4th & Court, Side Door)

THURSDAYS
Survivor's Group
12:00 pm
Baker Presbyterian Church
1995 4th St.
(4th & Court, Side Door)

SATURDAYS
As Bill Sees It Group
10:00 am 2970 Walnut
(Corner of "D" & Grove St.)
Grove Apts. Community Rm

SUNDAYS
Been There Done That
5:30 pm
Grove Apartments
Community Room
2970 Walnut Street

Questions call AA Hotline:
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www.oregonaadistrict29.org

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