



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
A family walks down to the beach from the WorldMark Seaside Resort Saturday. The Seaside Visitors Bureau gets more than 20 percent of the lodging tax collected there.

Tourism: Seaside Visitors Bureau gets 20.1 percent of whatever lodging tax is collected

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Klein said employment in the tourism industry started picking up about a year later than spending. The report found that industry employment tied to travel spending, dominated by the lodging and food service sectors, has increased over the same five-year time frame by 10 percent, from 3,520 in 2010 to 3,880 in 2014.

Filling rooms
“The bottom line for my community is bed taxes, how many people are here,” said Jon Rahl, the tourism marketing manager for the city-funded Seaside Visitors Bureau.

Rahl said one of the easiest statistics to track is transient room taxes, used to fund the bureau and similar community improvement programs around Clatsop County. According to the Dean Runyan study, Clatsop County has had a 30 percent increase from 2010 to 2014 in local and state taxes collected from the tourism industry.

“We have 13 consecutive quarters of year-over-year growth,” Rahl said of Seaside’s performance. In the first two financial quarters of the 2014-15 fiscal year, Seaside earned \$2.5 million, equal to what it earned in the entire 2010-11 fiscal year, which runs July 1 to June 30. And that doesn’t include the revenue Seaside will collect during one of its busiest quarters.

Rahl said he hears anecdotally from Seaside-area businesses that winter weekends are increasingly becoming like summer weekends used to be.

Caroline Wuebben of the Holiday Inn in Astoria, which recently announced the expansion of its 78-room hotel by another 20 rooms, said her location is at full capacity between Memorial Day and September, with rates charged for rooms increasing across the county.

Looking into reports from the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association, Wuebben said she’s noticed the Oregon Coast is driving the state’s increase in occupancy rates, including a 15 percent increase for this February over a year ago.

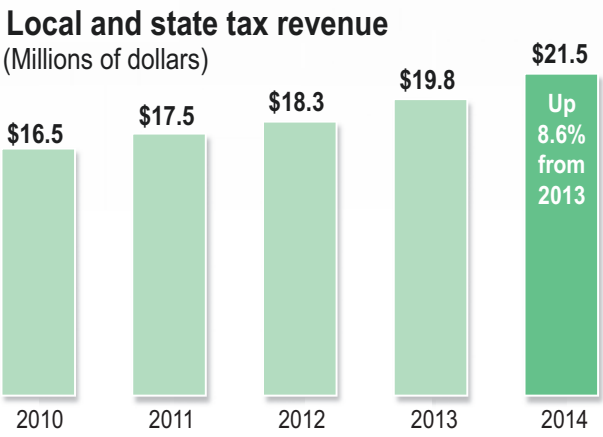
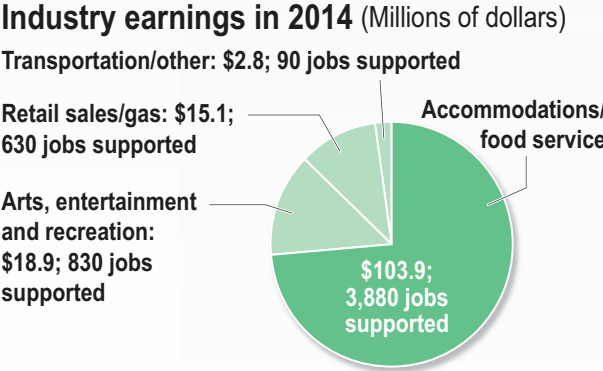
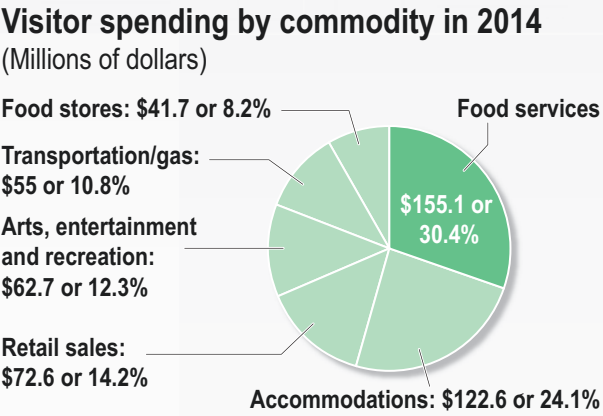
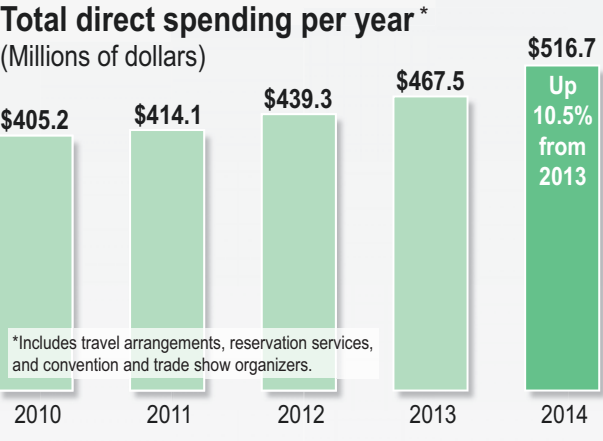
Wuebben and Rahl both credited the milder weather and lack of snow in the mountains to the increased coastal traffic. But they also noted the extensive regional marketing campaigns local chambers, the visitors bureau and other groups are using to lure visitors.

Marketing the coast
The Seaside Visitors Bureau gets 20.1 percent of whatever lodging tax is col-



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian File
Alerted by the blast of the 951-foot Star Princess’ horn, hundreds of seagulls say their goodbyes and help the visiting cruise ship push off from the face of the Port of Astoria’s Pier 1 in September 2013.

Economic impact of tourism in Clatsop County



lected in a given year, Rahl said, spending between \$250,000 and \$300,000 of it promoting Seaside throughout the region.

For the past four springs, the bureau has partnered with the Astoria-Warrenton Area and Cannon Beach chambers of commerce on the “Oregon’s North Coast” campaign, advertising online in Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia.

“We’re definitely finding that our core demographic is still young families,” Rahl said, adding that the demographics coming to Seaside

are expanding in tandem with the culinary offerings and events.

Since 2010, the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber has partnered with Maxwell PR and Robeson Communications on its own regional marketing efforts. It’s taken multiple iterations, from several different targeted campaigns to www.travelastoria.com. This year, the focus is on family travel, motorcyclists, beer aficionados, foodies and, of course, Goonies fans, Account Manager Sara Stewart from Maxwell said.

Masons: ‘The stewardship of these scholarships will fall apart unless we get new blood’

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Marsch will study animal sciences at Oregon State University, with hopes of one day working at a zoo.

Gateway Lodge

Some members of the Gateway Masonic Lodge estimate the average age of its 50 members at around 70 years old.

“The stewardship of these scholarships will fall apart unless we get new blood,” Worshipful Master Archie Cook said, adding that the lodge doesn’t appeal for new members, but that people are more than welcome to join.

About five years ago, Cook enticed one of the lodge’s youngest members, 27-year-old Sean Morgan, who said he didn’t know much about the Masons before joining Seaside’s chapter.



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Guest speaker Steve Berk, a professor emeritus at California State University in Long Beach and an adjunct history professor at Clatsop Community College, talks about the history of the Masons during the banquet.

“We are just another volunteer organization,” Morgan said. “The common bond we have is masonry.”

Morgan said the organization has taught him stewardship and management skills, as well as exposing

him to a group of community-minded people with a storied history of members. “Lewis and Clark were Masons.”

For more information on Gateway Masonic Lodge, visit <http://gatewaylodge175.org/>



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Proud parents try to get photos of their students after the 55th annual Warrenton High School Honor Student Banquet.

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