



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Visitors start to gather for the annual volleyball tournament in Seaside this week, one of the larger draws of the season.

Tourism: Visitors down, but spending up

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“If they are spending more because a room costs more and gas costs more, and maybe they are spending more on restaurants, then you can have more spending without actually having more people there,” Aliski said.

Ideally, the industry would seek higher occupancy and growth in room rates simultaneously, Aliski said, but seasonal dips on the coast make this a challenge. With high demand, it is often easier to increase room rates during the peak season than to entice visitors to travel during the off-season when occupancy rates are lower — even with lower room rates, he said.

Higher rates for hotel rooms could be having a dis-

couraging effect for some visitors, said Marcus Hinz, of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association. But part of the stagnation may just be a sign new lodging is not being built to match growth, with many small towns, like Cannon Beach, already built out.

“When you look at the coast’s rate compared with the rate of growth in Portland, one might think we’re not doing well,” Hinz said. “But Portland is building new hotels left and right; they have more rooms online to be booked, which would add to a rate of growth. On the Oregon Coast, I can only name one new property to come online in the last year.”

Hinz also noted that day-trippers contribute to general tourism growth but are not

accounted for when looking at room nights.

Linea Gagliano, communications director for Travel Oregon, said the dynamic could also point to a different type of traveler. The growth in spending suggests the visitors who are here are destination travelers, who often travel in large groups, for longer periods of time and spend more on accommodations and local businesses during their stays. The coast has also seen international visitors increase by 5.9 percent in recent years — another group which tends to stay longer and spend more.

“What matters to us is that businesses are getting visitor spending, and we are seeing that,” Gagliano said.

Whatever the factors may be, the numbers could be

pointing to the region reaching a certain capacity during peak summer months, Aliski said.

“If they are running at a high occupancy at peak season, then the opportunity for growth is not going to be during the time period when most people are choosing to be (on the Oregon Coast),” Aliski said. “There’s plenty of capacity to grow the industry, but maybe just not in the peak time of the year.”

This view is in line with efforts already in motion by Travel Oregon and the Oregon Coast Visitors Association to focus marketing dollars on encouraging travelers to visit — and pay for a room — in the off-season.

“Any substantial growth is going to come from the off-season,” Hinz said.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The 2018 Astoria Regatta Court gave speeches to the audience at the Liberty Theatre during the coronation.

Queen: 124th Regatta continues with parade

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“This amazing community that has grown beside me, strengthening me, teaching me, has made me who I am,” Postlewait said.

While Postlewait looks forward to meeting new people, she said she will miss the Regatta Court and the Astoria community next year.

“It was a bittersweet moment,” she said of giving up her crown. “I’m really going to miss all the time here, the connections and relationships.”

The queen’s coronation signals the beginning of the 124th Astoria Regatta. The Regatta will continue with the Junior Parade in downtown Astoria at 6 p.m. tonight. The highlight is the Grand Land Parade down-



Hannah Sievert/The Daily Astorian

Catherine Tapales is crowned the 2018 Astoria Regatta queen.

town at noon on Saturday.

While Tapales is excited to get started, she plans on appreciating her year as queen.

“I’m going to enjoy it as much as I can,” she said. “Hopefully it doesn’t go by too fast.”

Graffiti: ‘I’m glad they covered it as quickly as they did’

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“Because this one was big and ugly and of course (because of) our upcoming project in the alley, we wanted to lend a hand,” said Sarah Lu Heath, executive director of the downtown association.

Typically, property owners are responsible for dealing with graffiti, but the city responded because of the images and words used, said Jeff Harrington, the public works director.

Rosie Samp, who owns

Erickson Floral Co. with her husband, said their service door, which opens into the alley, had an obscene image painted on it when she arrived at work Wednesday morning.

“I’m glad they covered it up as quickly as they did,” she said.

The racial slur was the N-word. Samp said she saw a family of color walk down the alley, not long after city staff painted over the slur. “I wouldn’t have felt very welcome if I were them and I saw that,” she said.



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A patch of white paint covers graffiti in the 13th Street Alley between Commercial and Duane streets in Astoria.

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