

Rebranding Seaside gives us opportunity for promotion

How do you describe Seaside to your friends, neighbors and relatives? Better yet, how would you, if asked? You may have an answer on the tip of your tongue. Perhaps you have a different description depending on who you are talking to? There's no right or wrong answer. However, in the world of destination marketing, the task is to make sure that description resonates with prospective visitors. We want to inspire them to visit and we want to be authentic in our portrayal of this great place.

For the past two months we've been working side-by-side with Portland-based Lookout Consulting, and a team of three branding experts, to reimagine Seaside's identity and determine how it is that we should and will talk about Seaside.

SIDE RAIL
JON RAHL

This decision to rebrand our communications did not come overnight. As I look back on it, it was an evolving decision that gained steam in mid-April during my attendance at the 2015 Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism. I was asked if Seaside would serve as a case study during a session on developing an integrated marketing plan. Never one to shy away from constructive feedback — and free I might add — I had no hesitation in agreeing to the exercise.

While the session offered a holistic look at our content development, the team of panelists also recommended a simple yet impactful new approach to Seaside's advertising creative; this new thinking really encouraged me to take the next step towards rebranding. After consulting with my Tourism Advisory Committee, the decision was made to hatch this project.

Beginning in early January, the descriptions, colors and identity of Seaside marketing will change dramatically and I could not be more excited about the new direction and opportunity it will give us. A new primary logo features various icons that celebrate the unique identity of our town, echoing the love and nostalgia visitors have felt for Seaside for generations, while introducing a visual abundance of what to see and do here in vibrant coastal colors. With this new logo, we will also roll out a new tagline.

It's easy to Seaside will become our new consumer facing tagline. It speaks to our audiences leading hectic lives in nearby urban areas about how easy it is to have a fantastic time in Seaside. The tagline will anchor our new brand campaign, which tells visitors how to experience all the amazing things to do and see in and around town through fun, informative "how to" instructions.

It will not entirely replace More Than Just a Day at the Beach — which has been our tagline since the late 1990s. We look at it instead as an evolution. There are times where the More Than... can and will be used. But as we develop new advertising creative, we will want to use It's easy to Seaside to play off of the new "how to" executions we'll be introducing.

This "how to" campaign will not only give us a way to have fun (by telling people how to eat taffy), but also allow us a way to describe to new visitors how to do something that maybe didn't seem so obvious (like finding the perfect hike or learning how to dig for razor clams).

It's difficult to summarize a 48-page style guide down to a 600-word column, but whether you are a life-long resident, a casual part-timer with a second home or a prospective new visitor, the ceiling is truly high in the number of ways we can tell everyone that It's easy to Seaside!

Have a thought or a question about tourism in Seaside? Drop me an email at jrah@cityofseaside.us. Jon Rahl is the director of tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau and assistant general manager of the Seaside Civic & Convention Center.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS



Doug Barker gets into the holiday spirit in Seaside with some tree decorating.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Monday, Dec. 14

Seaside City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Tuesday, Dec. 15

Union Health District, 8 a.m., Providence Hospital, Education Room B.

Seaside School District, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin St.

Monday, Jan. 19

Seaside School District, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin St.

Wednesday, Dec. 16

Seaside Tourism Advisory Commission, 3 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Wednesday, Jan. 21

Seaside Tree Board, 4 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Thursday, Dec. 17

Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Tuesday, Jan. 26

Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Monday, Jan. 19

Seaside Planning Commission, work session, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

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