

WALLOWA COUNTY VITALITY SUMMIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Organization: Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce
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Organization: mission and purpose

Mission: To promote business in Wallowa County.

The first bylaws of the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce were created in 1979. At this time the chamber was a group of committed citizens that gathered to work on the economic issues identified in the County. Many of the early projects were related to tourism. The chamber was not a 501© status at this time.

Board Members of the WC Chamber worked to have a 5% motel room tax in the County to support the operation of the chamber. In 1995 the Chamber began to receive funds from the motel tax. Soon thereafter, the organization received IRS status as a 501©6 organization in 1998.

The purpose of a **chamber of commerce** is to form an organization of businesses seeking to further their collective interests, while advancing their community. The Wallowa County Chamber does this in the following:

- To promote Wallowa County as a premier place to do business and to live.
- To be the destination marketing organization of Wallowa County and a leader of tourism.
- To provide a business network whose goal is to advocate on behalf of local business interests.
- To provide a visitor center and be an information hub for the county.

The chamber is not a grant supported organization, but an organization supported by the motel tax, membership dues, and small project grants or local fundraising.

Key metrics/outcomes and impact from the past year:

2012 Business Referrals:16,437
2012 Wallowa County Contacts: 9052
2012 Visitor and Business Walk-ins: 3511
2012 Website Visits: 305,288
2012 Visitor Packets: 618
2012 EOVA Collaborative, Visitor Packets: 23,000
2012 Membership: 355
2012-2013 Buy Local Campaign: \$20, 065 (Buckskin Bucks)
2012 Annual Goals: Achieved

Current top 3 priorities/focus areas:

- I. Market Wallowa County events and attractions: (1) 2013 radio media program with NW Outdoors (Pacific Northwest - Washington, Oregon Idaho, and Montana); Cherry Creek Radio KONA & KUJJ (Tri Cities Region, Yakima, Ellensburg, Walla Walla, and the Dalles, etc), Outlaw Radio KMOK (Lewiston/Clarkston); (2) collaborate with regional and state tourism partners in marketing programs for NE Oregon, and attend the (3) 2013 Oregon State Fair.

- II. Develop a business profile packet for Wallowa County to be used for recruitment inquiries; distribute the packet to local government and organizations.
- III. Convene a local legislative teleconference meeting with Wallowa County's district legislators for the 2013 Session.
- IV. Wallowa County Chamber Website. Rebuild search engine optimization for new website.

Challenges where help is needed, either from another organization or the community:

- I. Marketing Wallowa County has endless opportunities and not all marketing is advertising. As social media has become the new "Mecca" for finding information, along with websites and Google, feeding information back to the greater public as well as local, regional, and state tourism organizations through social media is vital; this includes updated information on new businesses, new events, and new attractions. We need: Story Lines, Images and Partners.
- II. More effective communication with event organizers, merchant groups, nonprofits, and businesses is one of our challenges in promoting Wallowa County. Team capacity and spirit.
- III. The Chamber has reached its capacity with its current resources. Limited funding is restricting the chamber's ability to achieve greater outcomes in programs that cost big to play.
**The communities of Wallowa County expect more from our organization. Focus and prioritizing our resources is challenging.*

Top 3 Opportunities for the coming year:

- I. Expand radio coverage for the next year.
- II. Further partnership with the Wallowa Lake Tramway and possibly the Wallowa Lake Tourism Committee.
- III. Support the development of the Oregon Employers Council.
- IV. Expand the Buy Local Campaign.

Number of current active or serious collaborators:

- I. Wallowa Lake Tramway & Wallowa Lake Tourism
- II. Joseph Chamber of Commerce
- III. City of Enterprise
- IV. Eastern Oregon Visitors Association EOVA
- V. Hells Canyon Scenic Byway Committee
- VI. Travel Oregon

The Chamber would like to collaborate more with the following:

- I. City of Wallowa/Lostine.
- II. Fishtrap.
- III. Farmer Markets.
- IV. Joseph Center.
- V. Valley Bronze, Park Bronze, and art galleries.
- VI. Wallowa Valley Music Alliance.
- VII. Wallowa Valley Arts Council.
- VIII. Local food entrepreneurs.