



Oregon Travel Information Council

1500 Liberty Street SE, Suite 150
Salem, Oregon 97302

Minutes – Rest Area Committee Meeting
Oregon Trucking Association Offices
Thursday, February 4, 2016

Members Participating:

Bob Russell; Mike Marsh; Ed Washington; Kathy Watson (by phone)

Members Excused:

Ryan Snyder

OTE Staff Participating:

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director; Tim Pickett, Operations Director; Jason Nash, Rest Area Administrator; Jessica Carbone, Office Assistant

The meeting of the Travel Information Council Rest Area Committee was called to order by Chair Russell at 10:00a.m.

Roll Call: Washington, Marsh, Russell. Watson was present by phone.

Business Meeting:

- **Status of Sponsorship Rule with ODOT and FHWA:** DeSouza reported that an agreement was reached at a joint meeting on January 22 with ODOT and FHWA for rest area sponsorship rule provisions. There will be templates for three different tiers of sponsorships. Tier one will be sponsorship of the overall rest area resulting in a main line sign. Tier two would be major components of individual rest areas and tier three would be individual subcomponents. FHWA would like to keep their need for approval at top two tier sponsorships. ODOT Director Matt Garrett instructed staff to make rule adoption a top priority. DeSouza thanked Matt Garrett and FHWA with their willingness for us to try something new in Oregon.

DeSouza reported she and Pickett had met with Todd Davidson and Scott West of Travel Oregon to discuss building new Oregon-oriented imagery and brand for the Travel Information Council that would tie in with Travel Oregon's statewide efforts and those of other sister agencies including Fish & Wildlife, Parks and others. They agreed to a joint meeting between our two governing bodies, but scheduling conflicts will likely push it out to a December meeting in Forest Grove.

- **Sponsorships:** DeSouza read a text from Snyder, who could not attend. He will report on his sponsorship research at the March meeting. He said by text that he is working with Carol Astley of Travel Oregon, who has compiled and provided him with information that will be helpful.

- **Performance Measures:** At Chair Russell's request, DeSouza gave an overview of the Tourism and Transportation Task Force findings and a list of discussion points from her meeting with Marsh and Pickett. Included in the packets for discussion were the Missouri Department of Transportation Rest Areas Performance Measure and the Iowa statewide management plan.

Marsh discussed the Tourism and Transportation Task Force-Rest Area Strategic plan. Russell said the committee had laid out a strategic plan in the last meeting and what is important about the strategic plan are the standards for basic services in rest areas. He noted those same things in Missouri's measures.

Marsh asked how public thoughts on our rest areas would be addressed. In which ways do we address policing/ law enforcement, highway, travel/ tourism or local economic interests? Russell said these groups were brought into the discussion on the former strategic plan and the charette for OTE's current strategic plan. They should be surveyed when we have finalized performance measures.

Marsh asked if the rest areas have current checklists that quantify cleanliness and grounds care that could be performance measures. DeSouza said the agency had developed one, but it had not been implemented.

Discussion moved to how to create a performance measurement for tourism. Russell sees it as an economic development piece: How rest areas and kiosks direct travelers to Oregon services and attractions. There is an open conversation with Travel Oregon about what we can do better to promote each other's messages. A number of options were discussed including QR codes on kiosk panels. Travel Oregon may already have some ways to measure impact and we may be able to use some of their sources.

The "safety" performance measure has two parts. The first is that rest areas are safe, in good condition and people feel safe in them. The second is that rest areas are promoting safety on the highway. Incident reports, including exclusions that happen when rest area staff are gone, could be used to track unsafe activity. The information from calls placed to the rest area toll-free number could be tracked as real data of our motorists' experiences in the rest areas.

A survey of state troopers' opinions on rest area safety could be used as a measure. Our goal is to continue an open conversation of what our staff could be doing better and what we can do structurally to make rest areas more safe. For example, a sign could be posted reserving a parking spot for law enforcement.

An "impacting people" performance measure could be measured by people/car counters. Currently the agency measures the number of people entering bathroom facilities. There was discussion of license plate readers to determine the number and type of vehicles entering the rest areas, and whether the vehicle was from Oregon or another state or country. Pickett discussed the seasonality of rest area use. Nash discussed his early research into the cost of equipment and installations in the current infrastructure. It may be desirable to pilot such equipment to determine value and viability. Nash was tasked with further investigation into costs of equipment, how it would be installed, and how the information would be stored and used to protect traveler privacy.

Marsh discussed a statewide user survey. Pickett said that two had previously been done. One was in advance of the brand creation focused on rest areas with an onsite survey at French Prairie and a later phone survey component. The second was an electronic survey that ended up with very low response numbers.

The Committee listed several proposed Performances Measures:

- Physical Condition of Rest Areas – Measured by OTE checklist
- Tourism/Economic Growth – To be discussed following Snyder’s research with Travel Oregon on sponsorships
- Safety of Traveling – Measured by national statistical data
- Traveler Safety in the Rest Area – Measured by surveys, incident report data, 800-line call information, exclusions
- Traveler Counts – Based on current people counters, license plate cameras – This could be its own measure possibly or could be placed under traveler safety and tourism/economic growth.

Grove of the States: DeSouza reported that Annie von Domitz is working on the overall plan and the RFQ for the tree removal. She and workgroup member experts are surveying and assessing the value of the timber to be removed for the restoration project. With preliminary approval for rest area sponsorships, staff will begin plans to actively seek sponsors for the Grove of the States component projects.

Electronic Kiosk and Family Restroom at Government Camp: DeSouza reported that discussions are underway with Clackamas County for the installation of a digital kiosk in the restroom lobby area at Government Camp. Design specifications are yet to be finalized.

Nash estimated that a family bathroom project at Government Camp would cost between \$30,000 - \$50,000, crossing the threshold requiring Council approval. DeSouza noted that while there is a demonstrated need for the ADA/Family bathroom to replace the portable now in use, the rest area’s future is in flux with the planned Cooper Spur land swap. Watson expressed reluctance to invest at the capital level until we have clarity on the future of the rest area. Because of unresolved challenges with the rest area’s access and egress over the adjacent parking lot, the committee discussed the possibility of relocating the rest area somewhere that would be under OTE’s control. The members agreed that the family restroom construction be tabled until further notice.

Other Business:

Minutes Approval: Watson moved to approve the minutes from the January meeting as submitted. Marsh seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

Next meeting: March 3, 2016, 10:00 a.m. at the OTE Salem offices. The Committee will meet with the Rest Area Supervisors, followed by lunch for those available to stay. Oregon State Police involved in the Exclusion Program will be at lunch, followed by a meeting to discuss expansion of the program.