

# SISTERS

*Oregon*

EST. 1901

## ANNUAL REPORT

Explore Sisters  
2024



- 3 TEAM & BOARD**
- 4 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**
- 5 FUNDING & BUDGET**
- 6 DESTINATION MARKETING**
- 17 STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
- 21 DATA & RESEARCH**
- 27 SUSTAINABLE OPERATION**



Explore Sisters is a 501(c)6 nonprofit that serves as the Destination Management Organization (DMO) for the greater Sisters, OR area.

We strive to increase community livability and economic vitality through the development of intelligent management and stewardship of the Sisters local community, natural and cultural resources, tourism, and outdoor recreation.

Through a partnership with the City of Sisters as their official DMO, Explore Sisters collaborates with our industry partners towards a healthy shared vision of tourism for the area.



## VISION

A thriving community through a robust tourism industry balanced with local livability.

## MISSION

Guide intentional stewardship of the unique character of the greater Sisters area to enhance economic, social and environmental vitality.

## VALUES

### TRANSPARENCY

We want what we do to be visible to our stakeholders

### QUALITY

We want our work to meet a very high standard and have low tolerance for errors

### COLLABORATION

We want people to work together easily and reduce friction and barriers between teams

### INNOVATION

We want to consistently cultivate new ideas and intentionally evolve

### AGILITY

We want to be able to respond nimbly to shocks and setbacks



# OUR TEAM

**Scott Humpert**

Executive Director

# OUR BOARD

**Greg Willitts**, Chair - FivePine Lodge

**Brady Rhodes**, Vice Chair - Ski Inn Taphouse & Hotel

**Nancy Connolly**, Treasurer - Resident At-large

**Jesse Durham**, Secretary - Sisters Coffee Co

**Tori Graves**, Director - Three Creeks Brewing (former)

**Dawn Boyd**, Director - Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show

**Kris Rodgers**, Director - GrandStay Hotel & Suites

**Michael Preedin**, Director - Sisters City Council\*

**Kerry Prosser**, Director - City of Sisters Staff\*

\*Indicates non-voting member

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1

## DESTINATION MARKETING

Drive strategic visitation and awareness to the greater Sisters area

2

## STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Collaborative partnerships that build a connected and cohesive tourism industry

3

## DATA & RESEARCH

Insights into the Sisters community, visitors, needs and perspectives

4

## SUSTAINABLE OPERATION

Commitment to strategically building a strong organization to fulfill our mission



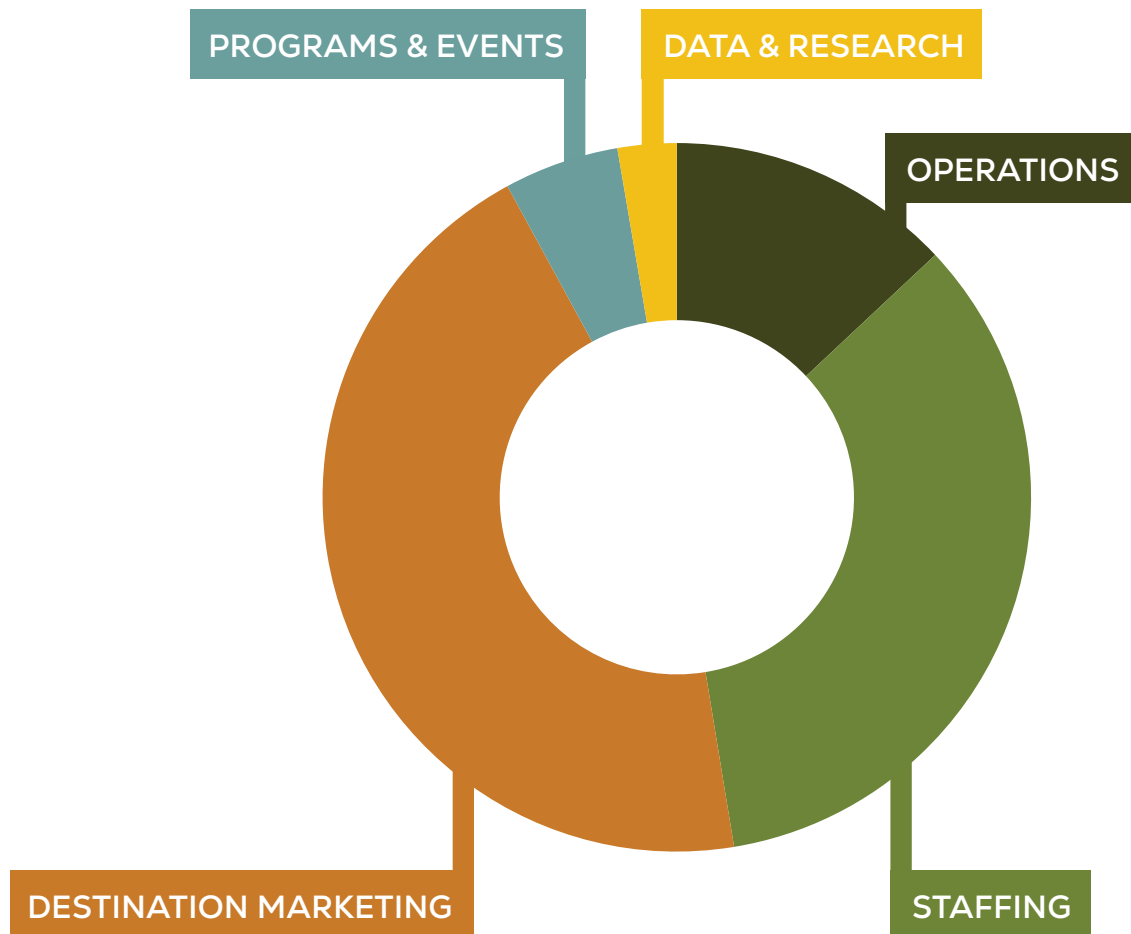
# OUR FUNDING

Explore Sisters is funded by a portion of the local Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) collected by the City of Sisters to optimize the economic impact of tourism for the area in collaboration with industry partners.

We receive \$350,000 annually, or up to 33% of local TLT collections, whichever is greater.

# OUR BUDGET

**2024 Budget: \$372,000**



## MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

In 2024, Explore Sisters launched its first branded marketing campaign “The Old West, All Grown Up.” Highlighting brand awareness, inspiration and lifestyle, the campaign focused on digital marketing and select print publications. Timing of the campaign included a spring pulse, a fall/winter pulse and an always-on component. The spring pulse coincided with the launch of the Explore Sisters brand with a family audience as the primary target, while the fall/winter pulse targeted an older demographic and empty nesters. The always-on component supported campaign pulses with additional destination awareness through publications such as travel guides by Visit Central Oregon and Travel Oregon.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: DESTINATION MARKETING

**SISTERS**  
Oregon  
EST. 1901

**The Old West, All Grown Up**

-----

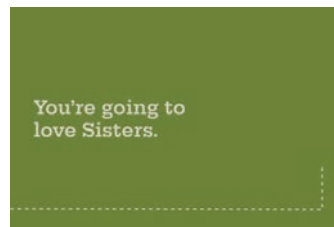
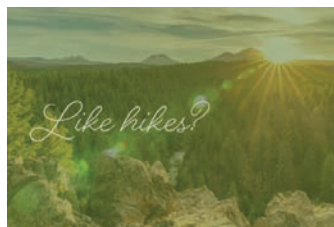
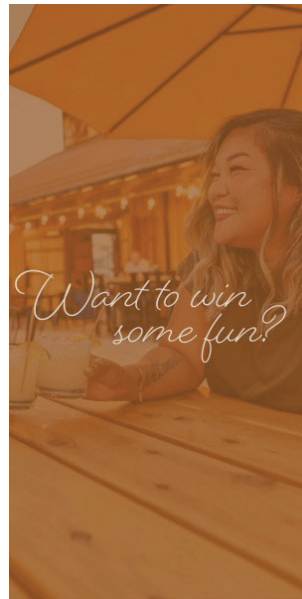
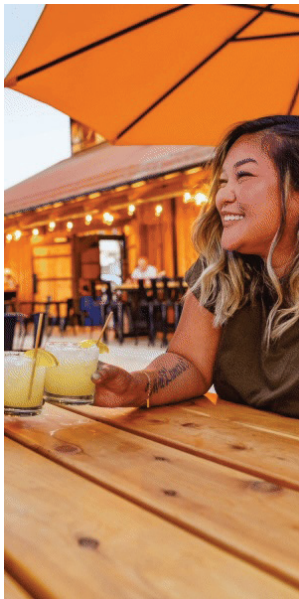
[exploresisters.com](http://exploresisters.com)

**SISTERS**  
Oregon  
EST. 1901

**The Old West, All Grown Up**

-----

[exploresisters.com](http://exploresisters.com)



*The Old West*

All Grown Up.

**SISTERS**  
Oregon

[exploresisters.com](http://exploresisters.com)



**MARKETING CAMPAIGN REACH**

**12.7M**  
**CAMPAIGN  
IMPRESSIONS**

**51K**  
**LINK  
CLICKS**

**22K**  
**GIVEAWAY  
PAGEVIEWS**

**9.5K**  
**LEADS  
GENERATED**



## WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

The Explore Sisters website launched in 2024 following brand development. This first phase of the website features essential visitor information for building awareness, inspiring a visit and planning a trip. The site also includes an industry section to keep industry partners up-to-date with information, provide resources and answer questions about Explore Sisters. An expanded phase of the website will launch in 2025 offering more robust content and increased functionality.

**56K**  
**SESSIONS**

**127.5K**  
**PAGEVIEWS**

**15K**  
**OUTBOUND  
LINK CLICKS**

**12.7K**  
**FORM  
SUBMISSIONS**

### TOP TRAFFIC SOURCES

1. Direct
2. Organic Social
3. Paid Search
4. Organic Search
5. Referral

### TOP TRAFFIC LOCATIONS

1. Portland, OR
2. Seattle, WA
3. Bend, OR
4. Eugene, OR
5. Salem, OR

## ORGANIC SEARCH RESULTS

Explore Sisters Search Engine Optimization (SEO) efforts boosts organic search traffic generation driving organic traffic and user engagement to [exploresisters.com](https://exploresisters.com).

SEO also increases organic search result rankings for keywords driving users to the site.

**6K**  
**SESSIONS**

**8.7K**  
**PAGEVIEWS**

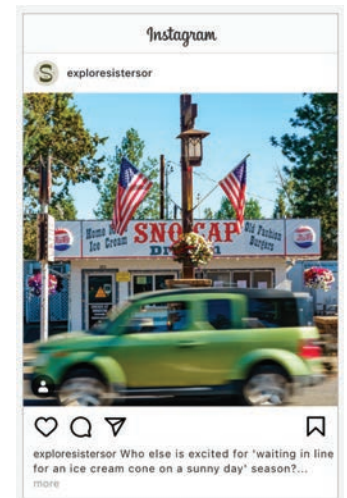
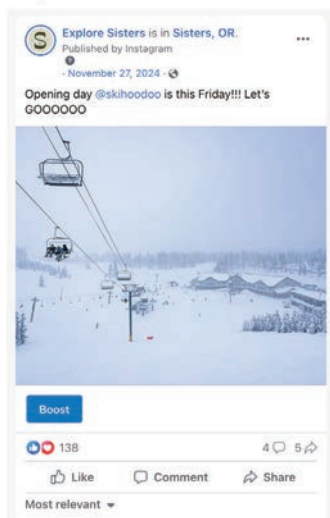
# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: DESTINATION MARKETING

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Explore Sisters' social media channels are central to our marketing efforts through both paid and organic means. These platforms provide access to a curated audience interested in our destination and allows Explore Sisters to partner and engage with other local accounts.

 **3.4M IMPRESSIONS**  
**7.5K ENGAGEMENTS**  
**1.5K FOLLOWERS**

 **105K IMPRESSIONS**  
**5.1K ENGAGEMENTS**  
**2.6K FOLLOWERS**

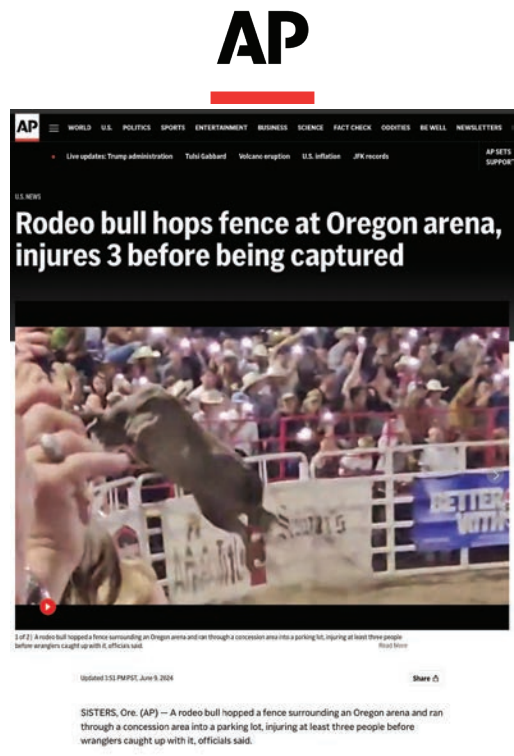


# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: DESTINATION MARKETING

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

Explore Sisters uses public relations to generate earned media and build destination awareness. Through collaboration with Visit Central Oregon we were able to host media tours, writers and influencers, and pitch stories to the media.

## NOTABLE STORIES



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: DESTINATION MARKETING

## MEDIA TOURS, TRAVEL WRITERS & INFLUENCERS



## EMAIL MARKETING

---

Explore Sisters began building a consumer email newsletter subscriber list through our paid marketing campaigns in 2024. After developing a significant contact database through spring and fall/winter campaign pulses, the inaugural consumer newsletter was delivered to subscribers themed for holiday promotion near the end of the calendar year.

**9.7K**  
**SUBSCRIBERS**

**38%**  
**OPEN RATE**

**1.3%**  
**CLICK RATE**



**SISTERS**  
*Oregon*  
EST. 1901

**Holiday Palooza**

Join us this year on November 30 from 3:30pm - 5:30pm as we combine two holiday favorites into one spectacular event! The Holiday Palooza will kick off with the holiday parade down Main Ave and culminate with holiday activities, including the

## VISITOR SERVICES

---

Explore Sisters opened a new Visitor Information Center in 2024 in downtown Sisters. This unstaffed center provides guests with dedicated in-market access to information resources. Resources available through the Visitor Information Center will be expanded in 2025.

**8K**  
**VISITOR  
COUNT**

**1.5K+**  
**COLLATERAL  
DISTRIBUTION**

**250**  
**QR CODE  
SCANS**



## CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

Explore Sisters partners with content creators like local photographers to develop and curate a media library, which supports all of our marketing efforts. In 2024 Explore Sisters added 1,000+ images to our library.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: DESTINATION MARKETING



## ENGAGEMENT

---

By actively engaging local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders, Explore Sisters can develop strategies that create long-term benefits for both visitors and local residents. Strong partnerships lead to a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable destination that thrives economically, socially, and environmentally while building trust within the community.

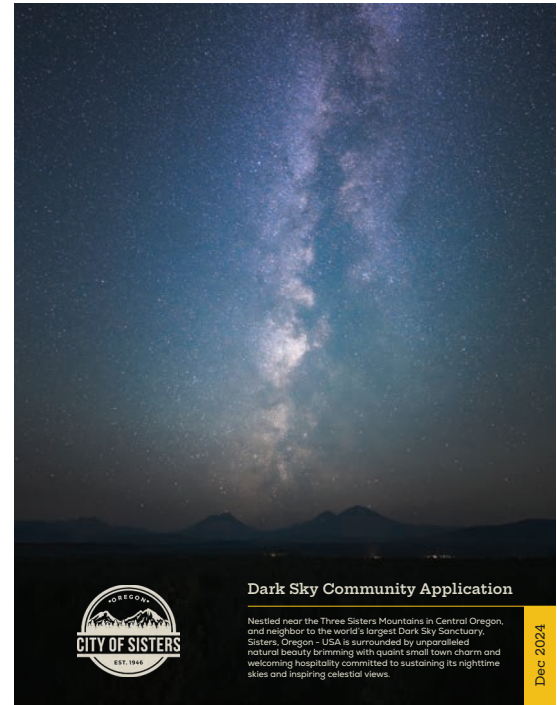
### VISION IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Vision Implementation Team (VIT) was established to serve as a collaborative table for catalyzing and tracking progress on the Vision Action Plan. Composed of local agency representatives, organizational leaders, and community volunteers, the VIT meets regularly to identify challenges, brainstorm solutions, coordinate community engagement, and secure support for Vision-aligned initiatives. Explore Sisters lends tourism expertise and experience to this group and engages in broad collaboration between local stakeholders and community members.



## DARK SKY WORKGROUP

Explore Sisters participated in a local dark sky workgroup, which included representation from the City of Sisters, Sisters Astronomy Club, Sisters High School Astronomy Club, and a local journalist. Collectively, this group devoted time and talent to pursue Dark Sky Community certification through DarkSky International for Sisters. The group organized and submitted a certification application in December 2024. Dark sky tourism is a priority at the regional and state level with emphasis on sustainable travel.



## RESIDENT SENTIMENT SURVEY

In partnership with the Oregon State University Sustainable Tourism Lab, Explore Sisters launched a resident sentiment survey to evaluate local perceptions of tourism. The study will measure residents' quality of life, perceptions of how tourism impacts their wellbeing, and overall support for tourism in Sisters. Resident sentiment surveys enable Explore Sisters to lead with a stewardship approach and help us work towards sustainable tourism. This survey work will continue into 2025.



**Take the survey!**

<https://beav.es/panel>

## INDUSTRY COMMUNICATIONS

Explore Sisters developed a section of its website dedicated to industry resources designed to inform partners and interested members of community on the progress of the organization, availability of industry resources, partnership opportunities, and other relevant news. An industry newsletter is regularly distributed to directly update partners on these resources.

Sign up for the industry newsletter  
<https://exploresisters.com/tourism-industry-newsletter>



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Tourism is a multi-faceted industry that requires collaboration across various sectors. To maximize impact, Explore Sisters forms strategic partnerships that help enhance visitor experiences, improve sustainability, drive economic growth, amplify marketing efforts, and support community livability.

Partnerships are formed through collaborative strategies, shared objectives, cooperative programs, sponsorships, and resource sharing. We look forward to maintaining and creating new partnerships.



## DESTINATION MANAGEMENT STUDIO

In January 2024, the Central Oregon Destination Management Studio (CODMS) commenced. Travel Oregon offers this program “to identify the right balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the impact on local services, amenities, quality of life, and natural and cultural resources.” Through a core team represented by Visit Central Oregon, Travel Oregon, Explore Prineville, Explore Sisters, South Wasco Alliance, and Visit Bend, the CODMS planned a regional collaboration that seeks to shape a shared regional vision of the destination.



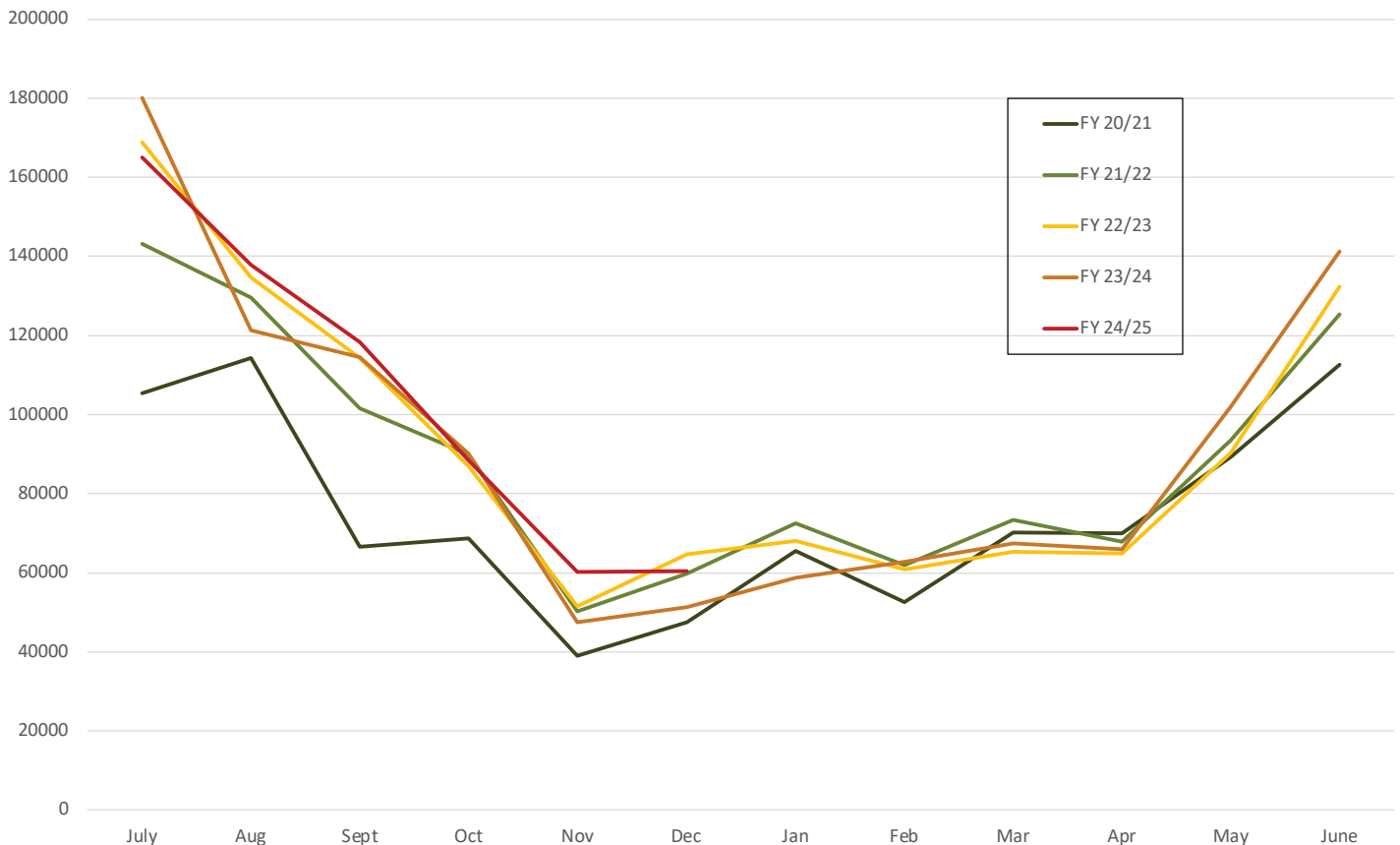
# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: DATA & RESEARCH

## BY THE NUMBERS

Data and research are essential to plan strategies, inform effective marketing, and understanding the value of tourism in our community. Explore Sisters sources information from a variety of outlets to drive decision making, measure success, and share with industry partners.

## TLT COLLECTIONS

	FY 20/21	Change	FY 21/22	Change	FY 22/23	Change	FY 23/24	Change	FY 24/25	Change
July	\$105,511	-3.83%	\$143,086	35.61%	\$168,945	18.07%	\$180,018	6.55%	\$165,094	-8.29%
Aug	\$114,254	14.56%	\$129,661	13.48%	\$134,705	3.89%	\$121,391	-9.88%	\$137,787	13.51%
Sept	\$66,519	-8.33%	\$101,686	52.87%	\$114,325	12.43%	\$114,610	0.25%	\$118,430	3.33%
Oct	\$68,623	12.08%	\$89,934	31.06%	\$86,920	-3.35%	\$90,110	3.67%	\$88,430	-1.86%
Nov	\$39,006	3.71%	\$50,301	28.96%	\$51,522	2.43%	\$47,462	-7.88%	\$60,310	27.07%
Dec	\$47,512	24.45%	\$59,813	25.89%	\$64,727	8.22%	\$51,226	-20.86%	\$60,369	17.85%
Jan	\$65,459	49.22%	\$72,571	10.86%	\$68,133	-6.12%	\$58,794	-13.71%		
Feb	\$52,613	8.85%	\$61,843	17.54%	\$60,936	-1.47%	\$62,743	2.97%		
Mar	\$70,110	292.07%	\$73,481	4.81%	\$65,279	-11.16%	\$67,463	3.35%		
Apr	\$69,994	1222.64%	\$67,832	-3.09%	\$64,801	-4.47%	\$65,962	1.79%		
May	\$89,292	380.89%	\$93,527	4.74%	\$90,285	-3.47%	\$102,014	12.99%		
June	\$112,609	73.93%	\$125,302	11.27%	\$132,364	5.64%	\$141,354	6.79%		
<b>FYTD</b>	<b>\$901,502</b>		<b>\$1,069,037</b>		<b>\$1,102,942</b>		<b>\$1,103,147</b>		<b>\$630,420</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$901,502</b>	<b>45.94%</b>	<b>\$1,069,037</b>	<b>18.58%</b>	<b>\$1,102,942</b>	<b>3.17%</b>	<b>\$1,103,147</b>	<b>0.02%</b>	<b>\$630,420</b>	<b>4.20%</b>



## **VALUE OF TOURISM**

**Central Oregon Region (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook & So. Wasco Counties)**

Report data provided by Dean Runyan Associates via Oregon Tourism Commission



# **1.74 BILLION**

Total Travel Economic Impact for Central Oregon

## **4.11M**

Overnight Visitors

## **10.7K**

Tourism Industry Jobs

## **\$294**

Average Trip Spend

## **TRAVEL IMPACTS**

**Central Oregon Region (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook & So. Wasco Counties)**

Report data provided by Dean Runyan Associates via Oregon Tourism Commission

# **\$1.3 BILLION**

Total Impact from Travel Expenditures

## **\$390M**

Industry Earnings

## **\$63M**

Local & State Taxes

## VALUE OF TOURISM

### Central Oregon Region (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook & So. Wasco Counties)

Report data provided by Dean Runyan Associates via Visit Central Oregon



**HOTEL, MOTEL & STR - \$698M**



**PRIVATE HOME - \$170M**



**OTHER OVERNIGHT - \$141M**



**DAY TRAVEL - \$166M**



**ACCOMMODATIONS - \$271M**



**FOOD & BEVERAGE - \$255M**



**FOOD STORES - \$108M**



**AIR & GROUND TRANSPORTATION - \$180M**



**RECREATION - \$97M**



**RETAIL SALES - \$109M**

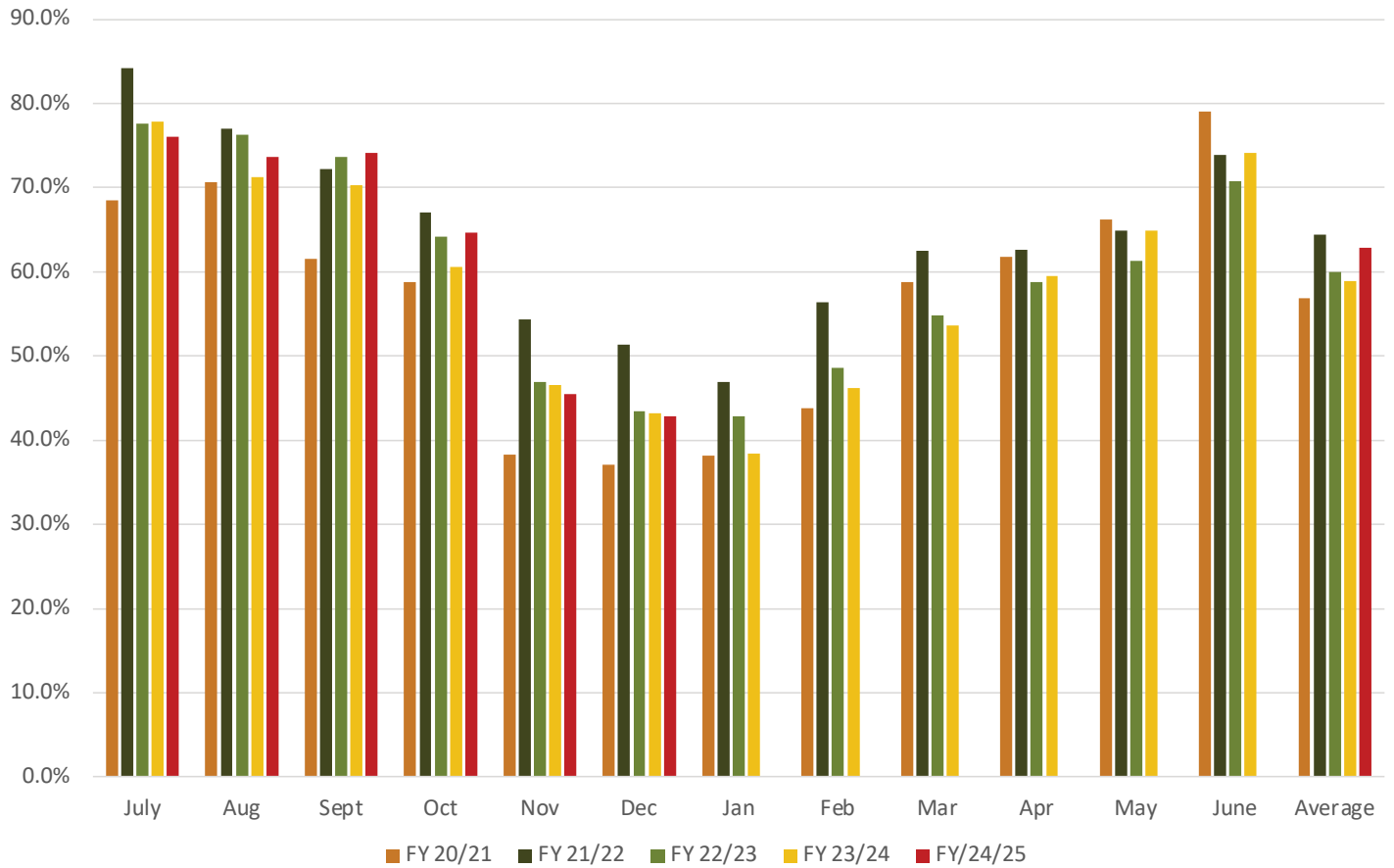


## HOTEL OCCUPANCY

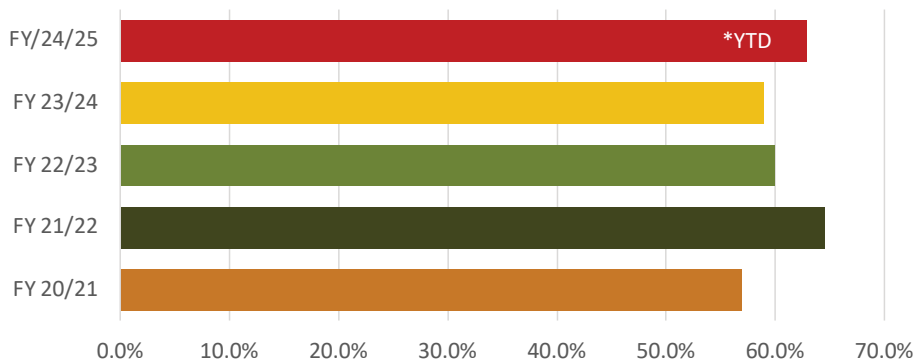
### Central Oregon Region (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook & So. Wasco Counties)

Report data provided by Smith Travel Research via Visit Central Oregon

#### Hotel Occupancy by Month in Central Oregon



#### Average Hotel Occupancy in Central Oregon

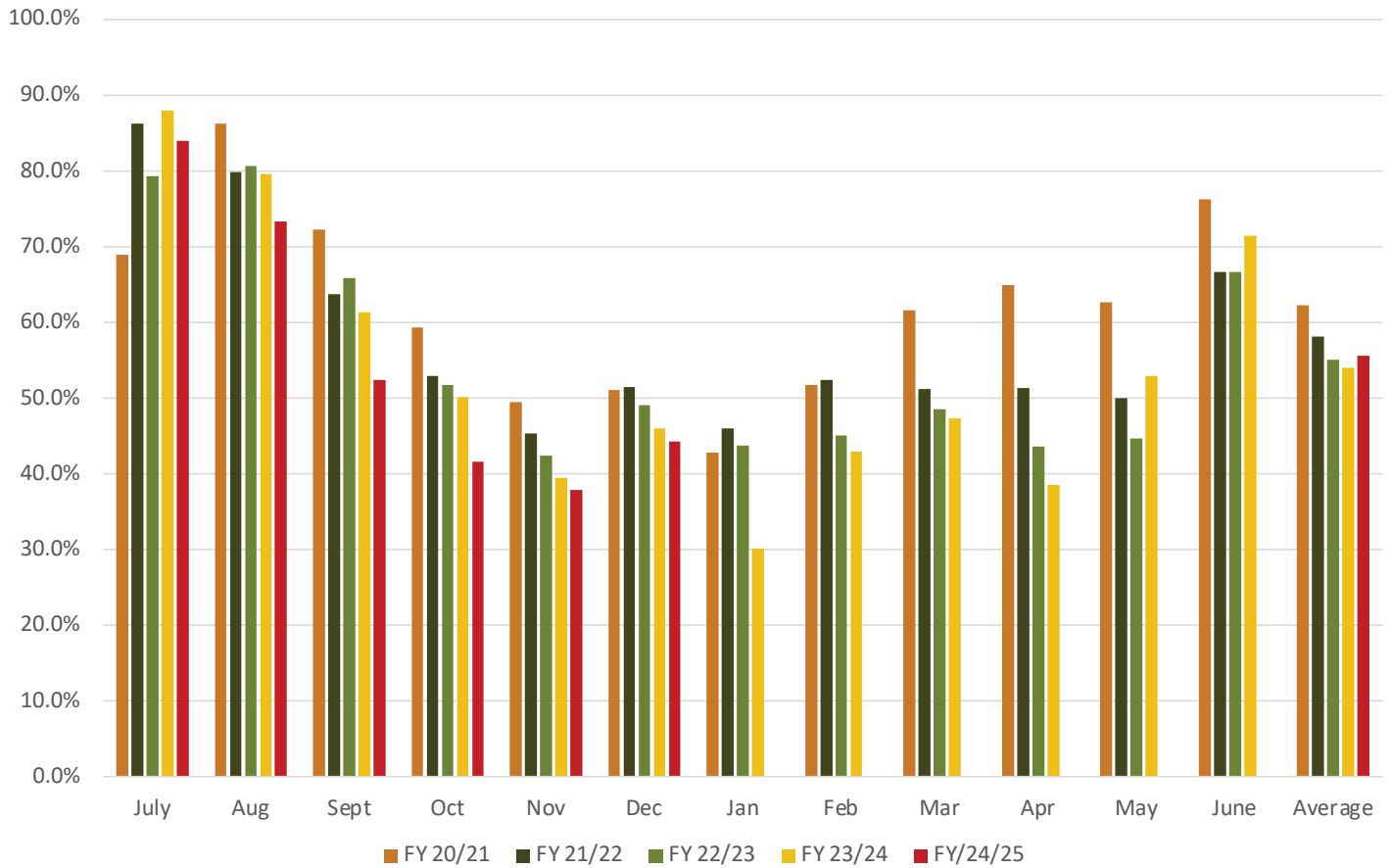


## SHORT TERM RENTAL OCCUPANCY

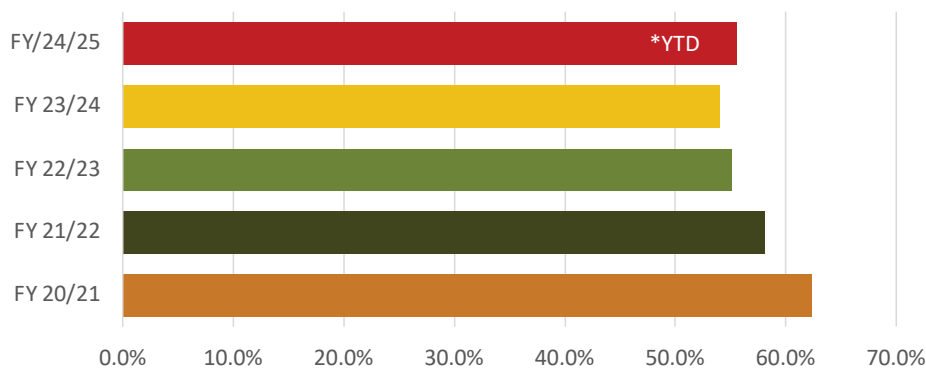
### Central Oregon Region (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook & So. Wasco Counties)

Report data provided by AirDNA via Visit Central Oregon

#### Short Term Rental Occupancy by Month in Central Oregon



#### Average Short Term Rental Occupancy in Central Oregon



## AVERAGE DAILY RATE (ADR)

### Central Oregon Region (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook & So. Wasco Counties)

Report data provided by Smith Travel Research via Visit Central Oregon

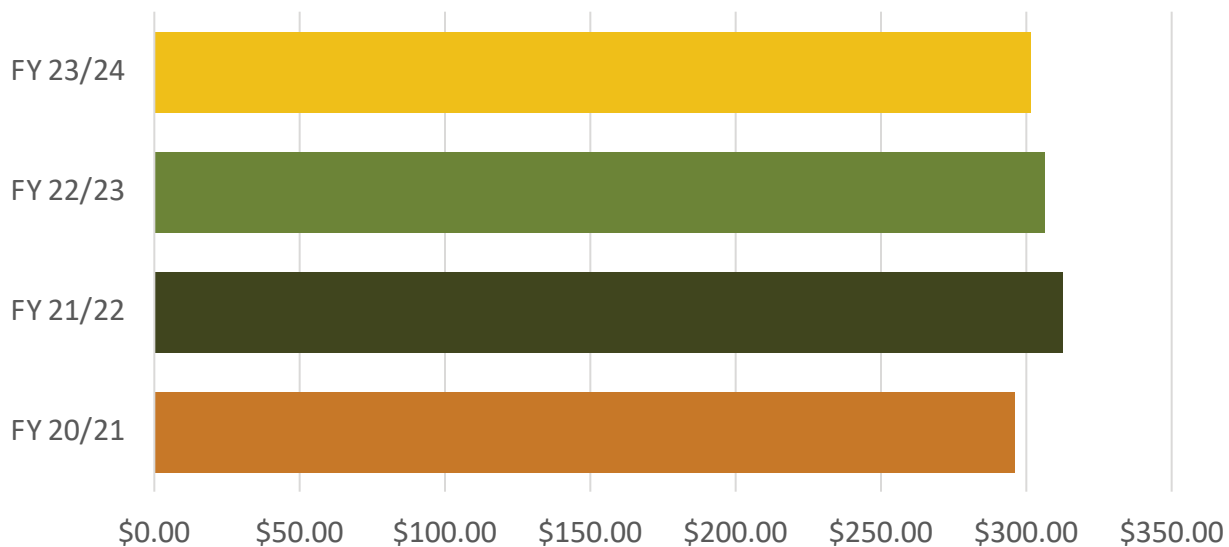
#### Hotel ADR in Central Oregon



### Central Oregon Region (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook & So. Wasco Counties)

Report data provided by AirDNA via Visit Central Oregon

#### Short Term Rental ADR in Central Oregon



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: SUSTAINABLE OPERATION

## OPERATIONS

---

Explore Sisters is committed to building a strong organization. Through intentional strategic planning, thoughtful budgeting, and sustainable capacity Explore Sisters will maintain a sound position to carry out its mission and deliver community support through tourism.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

As a startup organization, strategic planning has not always come easy. Hitting the ground running in 2023, action often had to come before planning processes. 2024 saw the beginning of Explore Sisters formal strategic planning efforts, which will carry over into 2025. Explore Sisters Board and staff worked in collaboration with Crosscurrent Collective shepherding an internal planning process identifying key impact areas and strategies for the organization. Industry partner engagement will take place in the coming year. The creation of this strategic plan will guide Explore Sisters over the next three years, providing a north star for the organization.

## CAPACITY

Explore Sisters employs one full-time staff member in its Executive Director. In 2024, we hired additional capacity through the services of a marketing contractor. This contractor has been invaluable to achieving our goals through management of Explore Sisters' social media channels, website updates and maintenance, consumer email marketing, and paid advertising. We intend to retain these services through 2025 and are investigating potential sustainable funding sources to support this much needed capacity long-term.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: SUSTAINABLE OPERATION

## 2024 ADOPTED BUDGET

	2024 - Budget		2024 - Budget
Beginning Balance	20,000	<b>Marketing &amp; Development</b>	
Indirect Public Support	350,000	<b>Contractors</b>	
Investment Revenue	2,400	Branding	3,000
		Website	10,000
<b>TOTAL INFLOWS</b>	<b>372,400</b>	Marketing Services	30,000
		Graphic Design	4,000
<b>Operations &amp; Administration</b>		Content	16,000
<b>Wages, Taxes &amp; Benefits</b>	127,902	Website Hosting & Maintenance	2,500
<b>Facilities and Equipment</b>		Paid Advertising	90,000
Rent - Facilities	5,050	Email Marketing	500
Telecommunications	1,740	Shipping	1,000
Rent - Equipment	332	<b>Programs</b>	
Sm Furnishings & Equipment	1,000	Dev Site / FAM Tours	1,000
<b>Business Expenses</b>		Banner Program	10,000
Supplies	1,000	Hanging Baskets	3,500
Postage & Shipping	100	<b>Events</b>	
Software Fees	1,200	Sponsorship	5,000
Printing and Reproduction	150	<b>Research</b>	10,000
Dues	2,500	<b>Opportunity Fund</b>	9,000
Insurance	1,500		
Business Registration Fees	100	<b>TOTAL MARKETING &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>195,500</b>
Board - Meetings & Consulting	2,400		
Strategic Planning	10,000	<b>TOTAL OUTFLOWS</b>	<b>(371,774)</b>
<b>Contract Services</b>		<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>626</b>
Accounting & Tax Fees	9,800		
Legal Fees	1,000		
Outside Contract Services	500		
<b>Travel and Meeting Expenses</b>			
Travel	500		
Meals & Hospitality	1,500		
Conference Expenses	8,000		
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONS &amp; ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>176,274</b>		

# SISTERS

*Oregon*

EST. 1901

