



COMMUNICATION PACKET MEMORANDUM

No decisions will be made based on the information provided herein. The memorandum is for informational purposes only.

April 3, 2026
Friday

1. Chamber of Commerce Annual Grant Report

MEMORANDUM

City of Springfield, Oregon

Date: 04/03/2026
To: Nancy Newton, City Manager
From: Allie Camp
Subject: Chamber of Commerce Annual Grant Report

**COMMUNICATION
PACKET
MEMORANDUM**

INFORMATION SHARE:

The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce provides tourism promotion services in the historic Springfield Depot Building to non-local visitors of the region. The City provides a grant of \$68,709 to the Chamber of Commerce using Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenues for the tourism promotion services offered. Transient Lodging Tax is required to be reinvested in services, marketing, and improvements that support the intention of attracting non-local visitors to the area. The Springfield Municipal Code 7.728 identifies that "no less than 44.4% of the [TLT] revenue from the tax rate of four and one-half percent shall be used for tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities."

As part of the grant agreement, a report from the grantee is required to demonstrate the use of the TLT funds. The report for the grant period from July 2025-June 2026 is included in this communication packet memorandum.

Attachments

1. Grant Report



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February 19, 2026

TRT GRANT SERVICES REPORT | Fiscal Year 2025-2026

This report highlights tourism related services delivered by the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce under the TRT funded grant agreement with the City of Springfield for Fiscal Year 2025–2026. While the grant term follows the City’s fiscal year, performance metrics and marketing data referenced herein primarily reflect activity from the 2025 calendar year, unless otherwise noted.

The tourism grant remains a vital funding source that leverages the Chamber’s operational backbone to provide marketing, visitor services, and community information that support Springfield’s visitor economy. Through strategic use of TRT funds, the Chamber has elevated local attractions and events, enhanced visitor experiences, and represented Springfield’s tourism based economic interests. We are grateful for the continued partnership of the hospitality industry, tourism development leaders, and City staff.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Springfield Visitor Center Operations The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce’s Visitor Center serves as the "front door" for Springfield, welcoming residents, visitors, and new community members. The Visitor Center is located at the Historic Southern Pacific Railroad Depot at the western gateway to downtown, is easily accessible from the freeway and is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30am – 5:00pm throughout the year. By maintaining resource-rich and user-friendly digital platforms, the Chamber also connects visitors to the best Springfield has to offer, from cultural and historical attractions to recreation and relocation resources any day, any time. Significant facility interior improvements in recent years have enhanced the visitor experience, making the Center a cornerstone of Springfield's tourism outreach.

Core Visitor Services Provided:

- In-person visitor assistance
- Email inquiry response
- Telephone inquiry response
- Digital visitor information services at Springfield-Chamber.org

The Chamber manages the Springfield Visitor Center as a hub of information and resources for visitors. Open five days a week, the Center offers personal, responsive service via in-person visits, phone calls, emails, and its robust website. Staff are trained to be knowledgeable, resourceful, and visitor friendly.

Visitors frequently seek information on maps, lodging, dining, shopping, biking, public services, and cultural or recreational activities, such as visits to Dorris Ranch, Springfield’s downtown murals, the History Museum, the Emerald Art Center, and Splash!

The Chamber also supports those relocating to Springfield, with relocation packets customized for individuals, employers recruiting talent, and families planning moves. These packets are delivered by hand and mailed across the United States, providing valuable insight into Springfield’s livability.

The most frequent inquiries—maps, directions, biking routes, lodging, dining and attraction recommendations, and relocation information—underscore the Visitor Center’s role as both a first point of contact and a trusted resource for visitors.

Common Inquiry Categories:

- Lodging and accommodations
- Maps and wayfinding
- Dining and shopping
- Outdoor recreation and biking routes
- Arts, culture, and historic attractions
- Relocation and community information

Visitor Resource Inventory & Distribution (sampling)

- Local and regional attractions
- Accommodation
- Tourist-oriented activities and events
- Springfield Museum
- Springfield historic attractions (Depot, Dorris Ranch)
- Unique and major community sports events
- Online community calendar of Springfield events
- Maps and wayfinding materials
- Relocation information curation and distribution

Service Quality and Visitor Experience The Springfield Visitor Center’s impact is defined not only by volume of service, but by the quality, consistency, and professionalism of each visitor interaction. Whether assisting travelers navigating Springfield for the first time or responding to relocation inquiries from across the country, Chamber staff provide knowledgeable, welcoming service that turns routine questions into positive, lasting impressions of the community.

- Visitor feedback consistently points to the value of a friendly welcome and clear guidance, particularly for travelers arriving tired or disoriented, as reflected in comments such as, *“Your able assistance on the map got us to our hotel in one try—many thanks;”* and *“The chamber feels welcoming and accessible in a way that’s rare.”*
- Our member survey ratings reflect strong service performance, with “Promoting the Community” scoring 9.33, “Communications” scoring 9.24, and “Staff Knowledge” scoring 9.16 on a 10-point scale.

SPRINGFIELD PROMOTIONS

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce elevates Springfield's profile as a destination for visitors, businesses, and residents through a combination of marketing campaigns, print and digital distribution channels, and media coverage. These efforts leverage the Chamber's platforms to highlight the city's small businesses and its distinct, culturally rich and family-friendly offerings.

Event Promotions: Approximately 80 targeted community event boosts over the past year amplified visibility for local events and highlighted Springfield's culturally rich, family-friendly offerings. In 2025, event promotions across digital marketing platforms included:

- 45 Bottom Line articles receiving 36,678 pageviews
- 30 Facebook posts receiving 18,886 views
- 9 Instagram posts receiving 3,806 reach

Promoted activities included Downtown Springfield 2nd Friday Art Walks, the ILLUMINATION Project, Willamalane's Concerts in the Park, The Block Party, TrackTown events, Springfield Drifters promo, City Hall-O-Ween, the city's Multi-Cultural Summer in the Plaza events, Dia de los Muertes, Mill Street Walk/Bike Ride, and dozens of local restaurant and venue events.

Online News: *The Springfield Bottom Line*, the Chamber's digital, hyper-local news platform, continued to increase its overall reach in 2025, recording 54,775 views from 33,000 unique users. Top-performing content featured community event highlights next to business and community profiles and program recaps. Using this free platform, the Chamber can leverage its online news readership to promote Springfield to broad audiences and demographics.

Website: In 2025, the Chamber's tourism-focused web pages attracted nearly 10K views (9,994) from 4,355 unique users, representing nearly 10% of total website views and 9% of unique traffic.

Social Media: In 2025, the Chamber's social media posts received 329.3K Facebook views, 48.7K LinkedIn impressions, and 44.6K Instagram views. Overall, the Chamber's social media presence saw significant growth (26.5%) in 2025, most notably on Instagram with an overall 15.9K reach (^144% YOY).

Publication: The *Springfield Magazine + Directory* celebrates Springfield's contribution to regional economic and community development. In 2025, 3,500 copies were printed and distributed at no cost to offices, hotels, in relocation packets, and through a partnership with The Chronicle at newsstands throughout the region. The *Springfield Magazine +Directory* digital version is made available online to extend the reach to non-local audiences.

ADDED VALUE: BEYOND THE SCOPE OF WORK

Leveraging Facility Improvements and Operational Investments Over the past several years, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce has made strategic capital investments in the Visitor Center that expand the impact of TRT funding by leveraging the Chamber's operational resources. Accessibility upgrades, cyclist friendly infrastructure, and interior renovations ensure

the Center functions as a high performing, inclusive visitor hub while minimizing ongoing facility costs to the city. These improvements have strengthened the Depot's role as a community anchor, now serving as home base for both the *Willamette Cascade Model Railroad Club* and *Latino Professionals Connect*.

These investments allow TRT funds to be leveraged through Chamber operating dollars, staff capacity, and in kind community support. Together, these resources support daily visitor services, host partner and community meetings, and maintain a visible, welcoming gateway to downtown Springfield. Recently approved funding for a design build contract to restore and enhance the building's structure and exterior will further preserve its historic character and reinforce its long term role in tourism promotion.

Regional Tourism Partnerships Through active coordination with Travel Lane County and regional partners, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce advances Springfield's tourism priorities within broader destination development, economic policy, and event-driven visitation strategies. The Chamber's president and CEO serves on the Travel Lane County Board of Directors, ensuring Springfield's priorities are integrated into regional tourism strategies. By serving in regional advisory roles and collaborating with institutional partners, the Chamber helps position Springfield to benefit from year-round tourism opportunities, major sporting events, and long-term development planning that strengthens the region's visitor economy while elevating Springfield's visibility as a destination.

- **Representation of Springfield's Visitor Economy interests:** Active participation in Travel Lane County governance and planning, including service on the ten-year destination development master planning steering committee, ensures Springfield priorities are integrated into regional tourism strategies.
- **Strategic advocacy outcomes:** Continued advancement of regional priorities, including advocacy for a regional indoor multi-use facility to attract winter and shoulder-season visitors and elevating awareness of Gateway as a potential regional development asset.
- **Event-driven collaboration:** Coordination with Travel Lane County, the University of Oregon, the Eugene Marathon, Willamalane, and regional partners to promote Springfield during major sporting events, supporting increased visibility and visitor spillover during high-profile regional activations.

Summary & Looking Ahead By pairing TRT funding with Chamber-funded facilities, staffing, and operations, the City of Springfield benefits from a cost-efficient tourism service model that delivers consistent visitor impact without duplicating infrastructure or administrative expense. This model has supported dependable visitor services, strengthened regional alignment, and elevated Springfield's visibility as a destination. Looking ahead, the Chamber will continue to steward TRT investments deliberately - maintaining the historic Depot as a high-performing visitor gateway, attracting visitors through signature sporting, entertainment, and downtown events, and advancing regional collaboration on destination-based infrastructure that supports long-term economic vitality in Glenwood, Downtown, and Gateway.

Submitted by: Vonnie Mikkelsen, president and CEO, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce