

From: Christina Ammon
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Greetings Travel Oregon!

I'm Christina Ammon and I've been leading the creation and management of the Travel Oregon-funded Wander Applegate website.

I want to say that the business owners, organizations and residents of the Applegate Valley have responded very enthusiastically to the Wander Applegate website. This is the first time the Applegate valley has had all of it's offerings captured under a single URL.

We have developed a successful membership listing program through our local nonprofit, A Greater Applegate. Through this program, the website is generating enough money to finance it's maintenance and it's social media outreach. So, it's self-sustaining!

We also wrote and received a grant from the Oregon Wine Board to finance the printing and distribution of Wander Applegate rack cards, table tents, and wall displays through a partnership with the Applegate Vintners Association.

An online presence and printed materials are very valuable, but we know that at the end of the day, it's all about personal connections. In this spirit, our next step is a simple training program to orient front-of-the-house staff from our local businesses to the site and tips for drawing visitors' attention to the offerings of Wander Applegate.

WanderApplegate.com is unique in that it was steered by a working group of community members over a series of meetings last year. Together we came up with the spirit of the website, the name, the tagline and the content. It features quotes from local authors and residents and true-to-life photography that captures both the gloss and the grit of our one-of-a-kind valley.

To add: Wander Applegate has sponsored events that have brought new people into the Applegate. We have had a performance by the Oregon Poet Laureate last fall and In a Landscape: Classical Music in the Wild brought over 300 people to Applegate Lake just last week.

As an unincorporated rural area spread across three counties (Jackson, Josephine and Siskiyou), we are uniquely poised for collaboration with our local DMOs, however also face unique challenges as a destination. We do not have our own tax base or a consistent set of regulations to unify our valley. Nonprofits like A Greater Applegate have been a great resource for organizing this geographically spread-out region and WanderApplegate.com captures the identity well.

Our next step is to find a consistent source of funding for the Wander Applegate program. While our website listing fees are helpful for the website, a reliable source of funding would help us plan into the future. Any ideas or support on how to do this without a tax base would be welcomed!

Thanks again for your support of the Applegate Valley. WanderApplegate.com has been enthusiastically embraced by our business owners and organizations.
"This land is made for wandering"

Thank you!
Christina

PS : I wanted to express my gratitude in-person but saw that the deadline for signing up to speak was yesterday. I'm watching the live stream now and it was stated that you could sign up at the event. I'm out in the Applegate so probably could not get there in time.