



# Portland Expo Center

2013-2014  
Annual Report

MAKING A  
GREAT  
PLACE







# About the Portland Expo Center

The Portland Expo Center is one of the largest exhibition facilities on the West Coast, celebrated for its diversity in space and events. Each year, nearly half a million guests enjoy popular consumer shows, musical performances, corporate meetings and fundraising galas at its 53-acre campus. Owned and operated by Metro through the Metropolitan Exposition and Recreation Commission, the Portland Expo Center is a rare entity among publicly owned exhibition venues because it does not receive financial support from a government agency or tax revenue stream. ■ The venue's original buildings operated as the Portland International Livestock Association in 1921. In 1941, the venue began operating as an exhibition facility. In the past 73 years, countless relationships have been created and maintained and, for decades, it has been considered home to some of the region's most popular tradeshows, consumer showcases and community events. As the client base expands each year, its legacy is expanded as a leader among the visitor industry for exceptional service and enjoyable memories. ■ The past year was another vital one in the long journey of the Expo Center. It exceeded last year's attendance figures, number of jobs created and much more. This FY 2013-14 Annual Report offers a glimpse into the world of the Expo Center – the year's events, staffing evolution, and community engagement. It also focuses on the economic and fiscal impact data created by the venue's business.

## From the director



**Matthew P. Rotchford**  
DIRECTOR

**“How we do business at the Expo Center matters. We hold true the importance of honoring our history and legacy through the relationships we maintain with longstanding clients.”**

The Portland Expo Center is evolving, innovating towards exciting new opportunities.

For decades, we have earned the reputation as one of the premier visitor venues on the West Coast and a mirror reflection of the Portland spirit – proud of our history but always open to change.

This economic impact annual report illustrates a year of efficiency, growth and potential: With just 12 full-time employees, the Expo Center hosted 110 events that attracted approximately 465,900 in total attendance. These events generated economic impact totaling \$45 million, supported 470 jobs and represented \$18 million in personal earnings. These transactions created approximately \$1.4 million in state and local taxes during FY 2014.

I'm proud that we were able to direct some of these investments into our North and Northeast Portland neighborhoods.

How we do business at the Expo Center matters. We hold true the importance of honoring our history and legacy through the relationships we maintain with our longstanding clients. We have also succeeded in infusing our longtime client roster with new names, events and experiences. Along the way, we've established a solid reputation for considering sustainability in everything we do, from managing events to replacing equipment and capital construction projects. We have committed ourselves towards creating a positive venue atmosphere for our entire community and all of our guests.

Equally important to the entire Expo team is engaging with our local community as good neighbors. We convened a North Portland Hotelier Group to identify ways our facility can help that industry, and vice versa. In addition, we have continued our engagement with the Portland Expo Center Advisory Committee, which provides invaluable context to our business and our place in the community. The committee is made up of event producers, industry experts and community leaders. We are very fortunate that they are willing to lend their expertise in community-building and event planning.

These accomplishments were made possible with an exceptional and dedicated staff and part-time employee pool when compared to other exhibition venues of similar size and scope. The professionalism and commitment demonstrated by our staff makes me proud to be the director of the Expo Center. We are proud to host these events and to welcome our friends to our facility each year. Thank you, everyone, for an outstanding year!



# It's all happening here!

Over the past year, 110 events drew crowds large and small in a wide variety of consumer shows, public exhibits, special events and meetings.

■ Once again, the Expo Center had the distinction of hosting the wondrous performance art troupe **Cirque du Soleil**, the critically acclaimed group of magical acrobats, actors and musicians who brought their mesmerizing brand of theater with “Totem” for a six-week run that welcomed close to 100,000 attendees.

■ Establishing itself as an ideal outdoor concert arena, the **Vans Warped Tour** returned to the Expo Center for the second year and attendance was up 17 percent over the first year.

■ Portland has an emerging, thriving Hindu community, and this year, the Expo Center welcomed a new cultural event: The **Hindu Educational & Cultural Society** hosted an event that reached out towards youths in the Hindu Community.

■ The Islamic Center of Portland hosted **Eid al Adha** at the Expo Center. The event attracted close to 4,000 parishioners for a lunar-based prayer service.

■ **Centennial High School** held its fifth graduation at the Expo Center. Expo is an ideal location for graduations and safe senior parties.

■ The **Sustainable Preparedness Expo** highlighted different kinds of self-sustainability techniques so people can live “off the grid” independently.

■ The **Portland Columbia Symphony** found Expo to be the perfect space for rehearsals and has indicated interest in returning in future years.



Cirque du Soleil's “Totem”



Hindu Educational & Cultural Society



Centennial High School Graduation



Vans Warped Tour

	CATEGORY	AMOUNT
ESTIMATED ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM PORTLAND EXPO CENTER OPERATIONS FY 2014	<b>Spending</b>	
	Direct Spending	\$ 25,404,000
	Indirect/Induced Spending	19,614,000
	Total Spending	<u>\$ 45,018,000</u>
	<b>Total Jobs</b>	470
	<b>Total Earnings</b>	\$ 118,003,000

*Earnings represent the wages and salaries earned by employees of businesses associated with or impacted by the Expo Center.*



#### Metro contracts with Crossroads

Consulting Services to conduct the annual economic and fiscal impact analysis of its visitor venues.

Expenditures generated from facility operations from items such as personal services, food and beverage sales, goods and services, marketing, administration and capital outlay are included as the initial measure of economic impact in the marketplace. So, too, is spending by attendees, sponsoring organizations, event producers and exhibitors outside the facility on items such as lodging, restaurants, retail, entertainment and transportation. A calculated multiplier is applied to the amount attributed to direct spending in order to generate indirect and induced effects. The sum of direct, indirect and induced effects equals the total economic impact, expressed in terms of spending, employment and jobs.

110 EVENTS	STATE AND LOCAL TAX REVENUES GENERATED \$1,435,000	
470 JOBS SUPPORTED	\$45 million IN ECONOMIC IMPACT	12 NUMBER OF FULL TIME EMPLOYEES
465,900 VISITORS TO EXPO	\$18,003,000 IN PERSONAL EARNINGS	



# Capital Investments + Facility Upgrades

In terms of size and space,  
the Expo Center has few competitors.

**The facility comprises more than 333,000 square feet of event and meeting space and 2,500 parking spots. The parking lot itself is big enough to hold several football fields.**

Last year, the Expo Center made numerous capital upgrades to its facilities, including the exhibit halls. This year, planning for the future was the priority.

For example, Aramark/pacificwild Catering, the Expo Center's exclusive food and beverage vendor invested in continued capital upgrades for the facility. Plans include food court enhancements in the connector hall between Halls D and E, portable grab-and-go snack stations highlighting Portland's renowned culinary fare, and new digital menu signage for all permanent food locations.

A number of strategic capital investments did occur this year. A few of note were:

- New golf carts to ferry clients and customers quickly across the 53-acre campus
- A new forklift to replace an aging fleet
- Repair and replacement of numerous roof locations and asphalt maintenance and repair
- Portable bleacher replacements that are safe and more presentable.



THE SUCCESS OF THE EXPO CENTER CAN BE MEASURED IN MANY WAYS:

- The \$1.4 million in taxes generated by operations and the \$45 million in economic impact created by events at the Expo Center.
- The 110 events showcased during the year and the 465,900 in total attendance that exceeded the previous year's figures by roughly 36,000, even though there were two fewer events.

# Sustainability



The Expo Center finalized plans and partnerships for the installation of the Storm Water Green Wall that will be installed in fall of 2014. Located outside of Hall E, the 30-foot tall and 60-foot long green wall will be a special addition to the Expo Center campus and the local sustainability world because it is designed to manage stormwater runoff in a rare and innovative way. Traditionally, green walls are built to cool down warm climates and provide a sense of nature in urban environments.

Through partnership grants with the Energy Trust of Oregon and the Metro Sustainability Center, all lighting in Halls A and B have been replaced and are now outfitted with sustainable T-8 bulbs that reduce energy costs by over half and provide an upgraded quality for clients and guests. Halls D and E will also be upgraded in 2015.

Expo continues to showcase its sustainability efforts through events such as the Food Services of America and CABA Classic Alpaca shows. Event and facility staff collaborated to successfully divert over 60 percent of event waste away from the landfill.



## FOOD AND BEVERAGE

The food and beverage experience is a key function for the Portland Expo Center, where events often take place over days and it's not practical for clients and visitors to leave campus. ■ A welcome addition to the food and beverage operation was the return of Alta Fleming as the new food service director. She brings 25 years of experience in Portland's contract food services market, some formerly at the Expo Center itself. ■ Chef Allan Wambaa, head chef for Expo, as well as the Oregon Convention Center and Portland's Centers of the Arts, attained ProChef III Certification this year, joining an elite group of culinary professionals. ProChef III Certification requires at least 12 years of experience in the culinary field before entry into the several days-long program. The venues also announced the promotion of Ed Strong, a 20-year veteran of ARAMARK, as General Manager of food and beverage services. ■ The professionalism and expertise of the ARAMARK team was fully evident during the VIP opening reception for Cirque du Soleil's "Totem" run, described by attendees as a "perfect event to kick off the show."



# Community

For the Expo Center, establishing meaningful connections with the community is much more than a business decision. It means being a steward of goodwill and creating opportunities for those who have been traditionally underserved or just need help.



Expo Center Director Matthew Rotchford chaired Metro's Charitable Giving Campaign, serving as the official public face and master of ceremonies for this annual event that encourages employees to make donations for those in need. Campaign activities occurred across the region, designed to inspire employees to donate money. The efforts of the campaign resulted in more than 37% percent in employee participation, raising just under \$100,000. The Expo Center hosted its first annual Expo Exerthon where staffers ran laps around the campus after securing pledges for the number of laps to be completed. The event raised \$600 and benefited Sno-Cap Community Charities.

The Expo Center also supported a local youth soccer team from the Portland Youth Soccer League, an all-volunteer run club in the North Portland area and also participated in the annual charity golf tournament held at the Glendoveer Golf Course and Tennis Center, which is managed by Metro.

## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Like other Metro-operated visitor venues, the Expo Center participates in the First Opportunity Target Area (FOTA) program. Created nearly 25 years ago, it offers individuals and businesses who live and operate in North and Northeast Portland first opportunity to apply for bids and contracts at the Expo Center.

This year, a comprehensive review evaluated the effectiveness of the program. A summary report and recommendations is expected in early 2015.





# Planning for the Future

**The Expo Center has been a central presence in Portland's economy for decades, and it will continue to be a mainstay for decades more. To do so successfully requires ongoing and long-term planning and strategy.**

A key step in this process this year was to initiate an independent market feasibility study. Conducted by Hunden Strategies, results of this analysis will be completed in fall 2014.

While the market analysis will consider a range of potential alternatives to position Expo for a long-term growth strategy, it will not take into account other local issues that have posed challenges for the facility. Increasing storm water fees assessed by the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services and levy protection costs charged by the Multnomah Drainage District represent significant costs to Expo on the horizon. Three out of Expo's five buildings are in need of modernization so the results of this analysis will start an important conversation with Expo stakeholders.

As the Expo Center weighs these long-term challenges, the staff is committed to day-to-day investments and opportunities that have proven successful in generating new revenue for the facility:



- **New parking lot banners and signage** with newly designed Expo Center branding located in different areas in coordination with two partners, the Oregon Department of Transportation and Portland Bureau of Transportation.

- **Yearly calendars** that were distributed to more than 60,000 people around the Portland area. Beyond being helpful planning tools, the calendars featured Expo Center events and branding that kept the Expo Center presence, literally, before the eyes of the public on a daily basis.

- **Co-promotion of events and selling advertising space** has created new business partners and generated new lines of revenue. Thanks to Pepsi and Cirque du Soleil for their support of this new venture.



ESTIMATED  
FISCAL BENEFITS  
FROM PORTLAND  
EXPO CENTER  
OPERATIONS  
FY 2014

MUNICIPALITY/TAX

AMOUNT

**State of Oregon**

Personal Income Tax	\$513,000
Corporate Excise & Income Tax	44,000
Transient Lodging Tax	33,000
Total	<u>\$590,000</u>

**Metro**

Excise Tax	\$450,000
Total	\$450,000

**Multnomah County**

Transient Lodging Tax	\$385,000
Business Income Tax	10,000
Total	\$395,000

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,435,000</b>
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**FY 2013-14**

**State of Oregon Bond Payment:** \$1,188,050.01





SUMMARY OF KEY  
COMPARATIVE DATA

CATEGORY	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
<b>Utilization</b>				
Events	93	114	112	110
Total Use Days	371	505	584	507
Total Attendance	390,300	506,900	429,800	465,900
<b>Financial Operations</b>				
Operating Revenues	\$5,090,000	\$6,109,000	\$5,780,000	\$6,061,000
Operating Expenses	\$4,846,000	\$5,213,000	\$5,221,000	\$7,105,000
Net Operating Results	\$244,000	\$896,000	\$559,000	(\$1,044,000)
<b>Economic/Fiscal Impacts</b>				
Direct Spending	\$19,610,000	\$23,822,000	\$22,773,000	\$25,404,000
Indirect/Induced Spending	\$14,117,000	\$16,276,000	\$15,583,000	\$19,614,000
Total Spending	\$33,727,000	\$40,098,000	\$38,356,000	\$45,018,000
Total Jobs	380	450	430	470
Total Earnings	\$12,875,000	\$15,432,000	\$14,756,000	\$18,003,000
Total Fiscal Benefits	\$ 1,026,000	\$ 1,279,000	\$ 1,258,000	\$ 1,435,000

PORTLAND EXPO  
CENTER ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE

**PATTI BEYER**, DWA Trade Show & Exposition Services

**DUANE CASEDAY**, Portland Roadster Show

**MIKE CONN**, Portland Roadster Show

**JIM CORBETT**, Portland Kennel Club

**MICHAEL FISHER**  
National Association of Consumer Shows

**ALTA FLEMING**, Aramark/pacificwild Catering

**DAVID GARSKE**, Hoffman Construction

**AVEL GORDLY**  
Former legislator and community leader

**SAMUEL JOHNSON**, Oxford Suites

**PAT LACROSSE**, Retired venue executive

**SHELLIE O'DONNELL**, NW Quilting Expo

**PETER O'LOUGHLIN**, O'Loughlin Trade Shows

**CHRISTINE PALMER**, Antique & Collectible Show

**LAURA REEDER**, Salty's on the Columbia

**KARIS STOU DAMIRE-PHILLIPS**  
Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commissioner

**ED WASHINGTON**, Portland State University

**DAVE WHITE**, DWA Trade Show & Exposition Services





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Photos by Bruce Forster except as noted: p4 upper, Cirque du Soleil; middle, Hindu Educational & Cultural Society; lower, Jenna Rose; p6 right, Expo; p7 left, Greenworks; right, Jenna Rose; p10 lower right, Jenna Rose