



## NEWS RELEASE

Media contact: Nicole Steen

Phone: 503.842.2672

Email: [nicole@tillamookcoast.com](mailto:nicole@tillamookcoast.com)

### **Tillamook Coast Celebrates Tourism Leadership at 2026 Awards Banquet**

*Honorees celebrated for strengthening community and sustainable tourism*

**TILLAMOOK, Ore., 05 MARCH 2026** — The Tillamook Coast Visitors Association (TCVA) recognized outstanding local businesses, organizations and individuals at its annual Tourism Awards Banquet on Friday, Feb. 27. Approximately 100 guests gathered to celebrate the people and partnerships that help shape a thriving, sustainable tourism economy across Tillamook County.

The evening featured a keynote presentation by Steve Kruger of [Trailkeepers of Oregon](#), who spoke about stewardship, volunteerism and the growing importance of collaborative trail development along the Tillamook Coast.

“This annual gathering is about recognizing the people who show up for their communities and care deeply about the future of the Tillamook Coast,” said Valerie Folkema, TCVA board chair. “Tourism here succeeds because of local leadership and a shared commitment to stewardship. We’re proud to celebrate the individuals and organizations who are setting that standard.”

#### **2026 tourism award winners:**

- **Destination Marketing Award:** Trent Olson
- **Inclusive Travel Champion Award:** David’s Chair
- **Taste of the Coast Award:** JAndy Oyster Company
- **Adventure and Recreation Leadership Award:** Lower Nehalem Community Trust
- **Keeper of the Coast Stories Award:** Linfield University & Pacific City Dorymen’s Association
- **Caring for the Coast Award:** Oceanside Action Partnership
- **Growth and Innovation in Tourism Award:** Green Coast Market, Rockaway Beach
- **Destination Leadership Award:** Tillamook County Parks
- **Arts & Culture Spotlight Award:** Eric Sappington, YMCA

The event was hosted at the [Tillamook Creamery](#), which provided the venue along with food and beverage service. Guests also enjoyed giveaways from [Pacific Coast Candy](#) in Pacific City and [SaraSotas](#) in Tillamook, balloon artistry by Chella Herder of Tillamook, and event photography by [Bowen Childs](#) of Pacific City.

TCVA’s annual awards banquet brings together community leaders, elected officials, nonprofit partners and tourism professionals to celebrate the shared work of strengthening local communities through sustainable tourism.

For more information about TCVA and its programs, visit [www.tillamookcoast.com](http://www.tillamookcoast.com).

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**About Visit Tillamook Coast**

Tillamook Coast Visitors Association (dba Visit Tillamook Coast) is a destination management organization committed to sustainable tourism principles of community, stewardship and economic vitality. We support the Tillamook Coast through initiatives guided by those principles, including outdoor recreation, accessibility, culinary/agritourism, cultural heritage/arts, community development, natural resources and public safety. For more information, visit [www.tillamookcoast.com](http://www.tillamookcoast.com).