

Oregon Country Trails: Bringing Urban Buyers to Rural Businesses

Outline of Need: It started in 2005, when two entrepreneurs in Junction City, Oregon sought ways to increase the number of buyers to their small rural businesses. Liz Doyle, owner of Diamond Woods Golf Course, and Danuta Pfeiffer of Pfeiffer Vineyards decided to target urban consumers, encouraging families from the city to explore “Oregon Country Trails” and spend money along the way. They captured the concept in a motto: “Bringing the suits to the boots.”

The idea quickly took hold among other local business owners looking for ways to market their unique products and services. They developed maps for self-guided Trail tours, distributed through convenience stores, local businesses and other venues. A grassroots concept was born.

How Rural Development Helped: To publicize the Oregon Country Trails and expand their market, Doyle and Pfeiffer decided to launch a Web site that would make Trail maps widely available and provide small rural businesses with the opportunity to sell goods online. They joined forces with Cascade Pacific RC&D and applied for a Rural Business Enterprise Grant for FY ‘06 (\$10,000) to develop the Web site.

“This Web site may be unique not only to Oregon but to the nation, where rural folks sell their goods and compete in the global market. For many people, this translates into saving a way of life.” ~ *Danuta Pfeiffer*

The Trail system quickly grew as more small businesses signed on and additional trails were established. A second RBEG for \$8,000 in FY ‘08 added 35 rural businesses to the Web site and enabled training for these businesses on how to manage their new online stores.

The Results: By late 2008, four Oregon Country Trails were established, representing over 65 businesses in Lane, Lincoln and Benton Counties.

Maps of self-guided tours can be downloaded from the Web site (www.oregoncountrytrails.com). The many businesses and activities highlighted on the maps include alpaca ranches, farmer’s markets, corn mazes, art and craft galleries, quilt shops, nurseries, and much more. Families can watch sheep shearing, explore a white wolf sanctuary, spend the night at a B&B or Farm Stay; feed fish at Oregon hatcheries, dine at a "floating bar and grill" and swim, kayak, or launch a boat along the Alsea River.



Pfeiffer Vineyards. Photo courtesy Danuta Pfeiffer.