

# the columbia gorge

## *Economy*

### ***A Distinctive Place with a Bright and Prosperous Future***

This incredibly diverse region along the magnificent Columbia River is home to more than 85,000 people. Located just east of Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington, it stretches for over 100 miles.

Unlike other rural economies within driving distance to major metropolitan areas, the Columbia Gorge is experiencing unprecedented and continued economic growth.

#### **HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OR**

Natural Resources | Agriculture/Value-Added Agriculture | Recreation/Tourism | Sports Gear Manufacturing | Technology | Healthcare

#### **KLICKITAT COUNTY, WA**

Technology | Agriculture/Value-Added Agriculture | Light Manufacturing | Renewable Energy | Wood Products

#### **SHERMAN COUNTY, OR**

Agriculture | Tourism/Recreation | Wind Energy

#### **SKAMANIA COUNTY, WA**

Natural Resources | Tourism/Recreation | Technology | Light Manufacturing | Value-Added Agriculture

#### **WASCO COUNTY, OR**

Agriculture/Value-Added Agriculture | Manufacturing | Renewable Energy | Technology | Tourism | Healthcare



#### **THE GORGE AT-A-GLANCE**

**Legacy & Growth Industries In the Five-County Region**

### **CONNECTING EDUCATION TO INDUSTRY**

Together, community colleges, local K-12 schools, and Oregon and Washington universities are collaborating on ideas and partnerships, such as the Regional Center of Innovation and Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership, to meet workforce demand in the Gorge.

### **A ROBUST REGION**

The Gorge economic region is notably healthy, especially compared to once-major industries, such as aluminum, telecommunications and timber. Over the last two decades, the regional economy has evolved significantly with the growth of leading innovation-industries such as aerospace, composites and software.

**+18%**

REGIONAL  
JOB GROWTH  
2002-2012

**+78%**

INCREASE IN  
PER CAPITA  
INCOME  
2002-2012

**\$1.83**  
BILLION

TOTAL  
INDUSTRY  
EARNINGS  
2012<sup>1</sup>

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Gorge's infrastructure and connectivity includes:

- Key highways East/West and North/South: I-84 & SR-14 and I-97 and proximity to I-5
- Rail lines East/West on both sides of the Columbia River
- Three bridges that connect Washington and Oregon
- River transport with ports on both sides
- The Dalles Airport and close proximity to Portland International Airport (PDX)
- Existing and planned telecommunications and fiber optic networks

<sup>1</sup> U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2002-2012 comparison

<sup>2</sup> Washington Employment Security Department, State of Oregon Employment Department

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## ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Although the five main Washington and Oregon counties that comprise the Columbia River Gorge share some geographic and natural resources, each is unique in its own right. Their similarities deliver on a highly desirable “live-work-play” community promise, while their differences promote sustainable economic diversification.

### AGRICULTURE

- A 100-year, hallmark industry
- Strong agriculture business concentrated on fruit and wheat
- Value-added food and beverage production
- Vibrant wineries and craft breweries

### TECHNOLOGY

- Strong tech presence (Boeing subsidiary Insitu and Google)
- 100+-member strong technology alliance
- Unique quality of life and close proximity to Portland attracts top-talent tech professionals

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

- Rapid-growth industry
- One of the largest and most advanced methane-to-energy power plants in the world
- Hydroelectric, wind, geothermal and state-of-the-art landfill, clean power
- Affordable, business-attracting power options
- Community college training equips and qualifies employees

### PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL

- Growing, broad-based category
- Significant economic support and impact
- Opportunity attracts diverse service segments
- Highly livable region invites professionals and entrepreneurs

### TOURISM/RECREATION

- Designated a National Scenic Area in 1986
- Favorite year-round tourism and recreational mecca
- Scenic playground for outdoor enthusiasts
- Abundance of hospitality and retail support (wineries, farm markets, craft breweries)
- Destination attracts an array of businesses

### HEALTHCARE

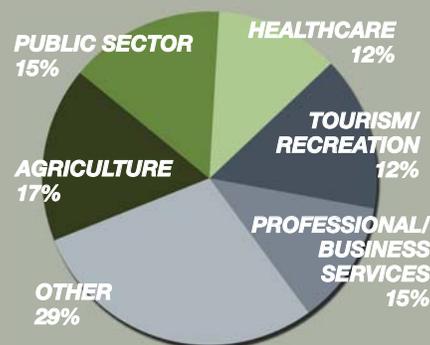
- Significant population increase fuels additional service and support
- Four major hospitals serve the region (The Dalles, OR; White Salmon, WA; Goldendale, WA; Hood River, OR)
- Thriving healthcare-oriented professions complement the industry
- Growing opportunities abound across a variety of healthcare segments
- Nationally ranked, state-of-the-art cancer treatment at Celilo Cancer Center

### PUBLIC AGENCIES

- Served by Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service
- Regional presence of numerous federal, state and local government agencies
- Sizeable sector strengthens regional economy

## JOBS by the numbers<sup>2</sup>

% OF EMPLOYMENT, BY INDUSTRY



THERE IS MORE  
POTENTIAL FOR  
ECONOMIC GROWTH  
IN RURAL AMERICA  
THAN AT ANY TIME  
IN DECADES.

-- TOM VILSACK,  
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE



We represent the public, private and non-profit sectors coming together to advocate for regional needs that are foundational to a strong and sustainable Gorge economy...

ONE community, ONE economy,  
ONE future.



fast facts