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**VANCOUVER USA REGIONAL TOURISM OFFICE ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF  
2011 TOURISM AWARDS**

**VANCOUVER, Wash.** —The Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office today announced the recipients of the fifth-annual Clark County Tourism Awards, recognizing key individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to tourism and economic growth in the region.

“There are many unsung heroes that have contributed greatly to tourism in Clark County,” said Kim Bennett, president and CEO of Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office. “The Tourism Awards pay tribute to these organizations and individuals that have gone above and beyond by displaying ingenuity, innovation, and leadership when attracting tourists and visitors to Southwest Washington.”

The following are the 2012 Tourism Award recipients.

- **Tom and Karen Hall**, the owners and operators of the Camas Hotel, received the Tourism Ambassador Award, which is bestowed upon individuals who continually strive to enhance the experience of tourists visiting Clark County. The Halls have owned the historic hotel since September of 2008 and in that time have made major renovations to the 100-year-old property.
- **Hoops on the River - Share of Vancouver**, received the Spirit of Tourism Award, which recognizes a business or organization that has contributed to the economic vitality of the region through attracting visitors. The annual basketball tournament, now in its fifth year, is a fundraiser for Share and draws large crowds of players and spectators to Southwest Washington.
- **Brian Davis**, race director for Energy Events, was recognized with the Outstanding Tourism Professional Award, which honors an individual who has gone the extra mile to promote the tourism industry in Clark County. Davis founded and organizes annual runs in Clark County; the newest and largest is the Vancouver USA Marathon, which was held for the first time in June of 2011.



The three winners were nominated by their peers and then selected by the Tourism Office board of directors.

Tourism is a vital part of Clark County's economy and is one of the leading generators of employment in the area. In the most recent annual numbers:

- visitor spending in Clark County exceeded \$364 million, with \$45 million spent on lodging alone;
- tourism supported 3,720 jobs with a total of \$99.3 million in earnings; and
- also generated more than \$27 million in local and state taxes.

This year, for the first time, local Chambers of Commerce co-sponsored the awards and solicited nominations from their members. Sponsoring organizations include the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, the Battle Ground Chamber of Commerce and the Camas Washougal Chamber of Commerce. The City of Vancouver, Clark County Board of Commissioners, and the Clark County Lodging Association are also supporting the awards.

Videos featuring interviews with the award recipients can be seen on the Tourism Office's website at [www.VisitVancouverUSA.com](http://www.VisitVancouverUSA.com) and on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/user/VisitVancouverUSA](http://www.youtube.com/user/VisitVancouverUSA).

#### **About Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office**

Vancouver USA Regional Tourism Office (formerly Southwest Washington Convention & Visitors Bureau) is an economic development organization responsible for competitively marketing Vancouver and the surrounding area as a destination for meetings, conventions, and group and leisure travelers. The organization's mission is to promote Vancouver and Clark County by increasing convention and visitor business. For more information call 360-750-1553, or log on to [www.VisitVancouverUSA.com](http://www.VisitVancouverUSA.com).

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