

NEWS

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Tillamook Forest Center returns to seven-day operation thanks to local partners, volunteers, and the Tillamook Forest Trust

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The Tillamook Forest Center will be open this year seven days a week starting Wednesday May 26th, just in time for the Memorial Day weekend, and continuing through Labor Day. Summer hours will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

Center programming had been reduced to five days per week during the summer of 2009 due to state-wide budget reductions. Budgets continue to be constrained, however, several new partnerships, along with continuing support from the Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust, matching federal funds, and major assistance from a group of dedicated volunteers, have provided the support needed to extend the Center's days of operation for the coming summer season.

A partnership with the Tillamook School District and the Oregon Youth Employment Initiative is providing a crew to work at the Center throughout the summer. Funded by federal stimulus dollars, this youth crew will provide much-needed support maintaining Center trails and grounds, while also giving assistance to the overall visitor services program. These federal dollars are intended to boost the state's economy, and sustain and create jobs.

Generous funding support from the non-profit Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust has made it possible to obtain federal matching funds from the Trade Act to provide an additional full-time staff position at the Center for the summer. Through the Act, the federal government provides aid to workers who have lost their jobs as a result of increased imports. Coordination of these supporting funds will be managed by MTC Works, a worker training program, and Cardinal Services, a payroll and human resources firm, both serving the Tillamook County area.

"We are extremely fortunate to have this broad support from our community partners, volunteers, and the Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust," said Jim Quiring, the director of the center. "Their support will allow thousands of additional visitors to enjoy the Center and learn more about this beautiful State Forest."

The award-winning Tillamook Forest Center showcases the Tillamook State Forest through a state-of-the-art 'green' building, a 40-foot-tall fire lookout tower, and 250-foot-long suspension bridge over the Wilson River. Engaging, interactive exhibits bring the forest alive and staff naturalists offer free, family-friendly nature programs for visitors, as well as curriculum-guided education programs for school groups.

The Center offers free admittance but gladly welcomes contributions to the donor-supported Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust (a 501(c) (3) charitable organization), which assists with the costs of programs and operations. For more information about the Center and the Trust, visit the Center's website at www.tillamookforestcenter.org.

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