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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Yakima Valley Tourism reports 2014 was a successful year**

Yakima Valley Tourism reports 2014 was a successful year for the organization and tourism industry. Lodging data year to date through November showed occupancy at local hotels grew 7.3%, the highest rate of growth in Washington. The state average growth in occupancy was 3.2%. In addition, lodging room rates grew 5%, the fourth highest rate of growth in Washington.

“Lodging data is a key indicator of the health of the local tourism industry,” stated John Cooper, President & CEO of Yakima Valley Tourism. “We saw tremendous growth in leisure travel last year due to our marketing and public relations campaigns. Strong business travel also contributed to the growth.”

The Yakima Convention Center **hosted 104,009 overnight convention attendees and day visitors, resulting in more than \$11.6 million of direct spending to the local economy.** Yakima Valley Tourism sales staff generated 187 convention leads (up 3%) and booked 15,122 future room nights.

Sporting events continued to expand and grow in 2014. Yakima Valley Tourism’s Sports Commission projects the economic impact of sports in the Yakima Valley was \$40 million in 2014 (up 15% from 2013) with the number of sporting events held at 462 (up 3% from 2013).

Yakima Valley Tourism’s main website [yakimavalleytourism.com](http://yakimavalleytourism.com) had 367,419 visitors, a 16% increase over 2013. The organization launched a number of new marketing projects, including WineDoggies.com, a website dedicated to visitors who travel with their dogs.

Through public relations efforts, Yakima Valley Tourism secured 119 travel media features and articles about Yakima and the Yakima Valley. With more than 82 million impressions in print, radio, broadcast and online channels, that number exceeds the previous year's total of impressions by 77%. Examples of their efforts include getting Yakima featured as one of "America's Best Small Cities on the Rise" in SmarterTravel.com; an online story called "Skip Napa Valley: Visit Yakima Valley Instead" that appeared on Conde' Nast Traveler's website, three local segments on KING 5 TV's Evening Magazine and a story in Trailer Life magazine titled "Autumn Across America".

The Yakima Valley Visitor Information Center served 14,699 walk-in visitors (up 5%) plus responded to 14,245 people via U.S. mail and e-mail (double those served in 2013).

Yakima Valley Tourism is the official destination marketing organization for Yakima and the Yakima Valley. Its mission is to stimulate economic development by marketing the Yakima Valley for conventions, groups and leisure travel.

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John Cooper  
President & CEO  
Yakima Valley Tourism  
10 N 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Yakima, WA 98901  
509-575-3010  
[YakimaValleyTourism.com](http://YakimaValleyTourism.com)  
[john@YakimaValleyTourism.com](mailto:john@YakimaValleyTourism.com)  
[linkedin.com/in/johnanthonycooper](https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnanthonycooper)