



## State of Washington Tourism Conference – Main Program

October 24-25, Yakima Convention & Event Center

### Tuesday, October 24

- 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.     **Optional pre-conference tours of the Yakima Valley** (Choose one. Advance registration required)
- Tour option 1:** Jump on The Little Hopper, Yakima’s Craft Beer Bus, for a tour of three Yakima Valley breweries
- Tour option 2:** Cowiche Canyon Conservancy (CCC Hike and Wine Tasting at Wilridge Winery, Vineyard and Distillery)
- 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.     **WTMA, WSDMO, SWT board meetings** (exact times TBD)
- 2:30 p.m.     **Registration opens**
- 3:30 – 5 p.m.     **Regional Breakouts**
- 6 – 8 p.m.     **Taste of the Valley Opening Reception at Yakima Convention Center**

### Wednesday, October 25

- 7:30 a.m.     **Breakfast Buffet**
- 8:30 a.m.     **Opening General Session**
- Welcome address
  - SWT annual meeting
- 9:30 a.m.     **Concurrent breakouts**
- **How Generative AI is Transforming Marketing**  
The rise of generative AI is changing the content marketing landscape. Tools such as Chat GPT and others can help marketers and content specialists save time, generate ideas, revise content, and more. This panel will provide insights and tips for how you can leverage AI and make it work for you.
  - **Measuring Success: KPIs for destination organizations**  
Rethinking KPIs for sustainable tourism and communities. This breakout session will examine data sources that track tourism performance and build resilience in four key areas: visitor economy, resident support, workforce satisfaction,



and environmental health.

- **The Power of Welcoming**

The ability to warmly welcome and embrace visitors from all walks of life can make or break a destination's reputation. Led by a panel of on-the-ground experts, cultural ambassadors, and community leaders, this session is a must-attend for tourism professionals, front-line staff, destination managers, and anyone passionate about fostering a culture of genuine hospitality.

10:30 a.m.

**Networking Break**

11 a.m.

**Concurrent Breakouts**

- **Native Tourism**

This breakout session will focus on building capacity, sharing knowledge and resources, and forging stronger partnerships to support Native tourism throughout the State of Washington.

- **Business Growth through Marketing: Deciding which Channels and Strategies to Pursue**

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, effective marketing strategies are essential for driving business growth in the tourism industry. This engaging and insightful session will delve into the art and science of selecting the most impactful marketing channels and strategies to propel your visitor-facing business forward.

- **Agritourism**

Agritourism, the harmonious fusion of agriculture and tourism, has become a dynamic force, breathing new life into rural communities and fostering sustainable economic growth. Hear examples, challenges and best practices from organizations and businesses around the state in agricultural and food-based tourism.

Noon

**Networking Break**

12:30 p.m.

**Lunch and Keynote Presentation from Sherry Rupert**

AIANTA CEO Sherry L. Rupert (Paiute/Washoe) has nearly two decades of executive-level experience managing and promoting Native American tourism. As CEO of the only national association dedicated to Native tourism, she is the leading voice when it comes to advocating for travel and tourism as a significant economic driver in tribal nations. Enjoy lunch while you learn about new initiatives from AIANTA and applications in your local community.

2 p.m.

**Concurrent breakouts**



- **Emerging Trends in Social Media**  
Social media is constantly evolving, with new platforms and technology keeping marketers on their toes. From video content to Threads, this panel will dive into predictions for marketing to and engaging with audiences in 2024 and beyond.
- **DMO Marketing on a Small Budget**  
Discover the art of destination marketing on a modest budget. Join the experts as they delve into innovative strategies that empower you to make a big impact with limited resources. This session will equip you with the knowledge and creativity to showcase your destination's unique charm without breaking the bank. Don't miss this opportunity to learn the secrets of successful destination marketing on a small budget and set your venture on the path to flourishing success.
- **Community Partnerships: Creative Districts, Trails and Collaborative Marketing**  
In an era where tourism thrives on authentic experiences and community engagement, harnessing the power of strategic partnerships has become pivotal for the growth of local tourism. This session will delve into the art of cultivating collaborative relationships, sustaining momentum and creating value for your visitors.

3 p.m.

**Networking Break**

3:30 p.m.

**Closing General Session – Best New Ideas**

Closing remarks from David Blandford, Executive Director of SWT

4:30 p.m.

**Networking Break**

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Offsite Reception at The Outskirts Brewing Co.**

Reception, cocktails, and light fare at The Outskirts Brewing Co. This beautiful location makes for a perfect evening at the Yakima Valley's newest craft brewery brought to life in a restored historic barn. Transportation provided. Pick up and drop off at the Yakima Convention Center. Live music featuring local country singer/ songwriter Cody Beebe.

7:30 p.m.

**Optional dinner at The Outskirts Brewing Co. or dine throughout Yakima**