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Contact: Tawna Fenske, Visit Bend, 541-382-8048, tawna@visitbend.com
Lynnette Braillard, Visit Bend, 541-382-8048, lynnette@visitbend.com

New smartphone app lets users get techy on the Bend Ale Trail

(BEND, Ore.)— On February 2, 2011 Visit Bend became the first destination marketing organization in the Pacific Northwest to offer a smartphone application. The new travel app is designed to help visitors navigate Bend, Oregon’s popular Bend Ale Trail, which showcases the region’s renowned craft beer industry.

The Bend Ale Trail travel app can be downloaded free from iTunes or www.bendaletrail.com and offers an interactive geolocation based map, one-touch access to brewery information, contact info for taxis, tours, and lodging, and even a quiz that lets users test their beer knowledge. The app is available for iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch users immediately, and will be launched for Android users in April.

“We’ve had over 1,000 visitors complete the Bend Ale Trail since it launched last June,” explained Lynnette Braillard, Marketing Director for Visit Bend. “Statistically speaking, 86-percent of them have mobile phones, and we’re seeing more and more people using GPS-enabled smartphones to plan travel. From a tourism standpoint, it makes sense to offer smartphone users tools to make their Oregon travel experiences even better.”

Visit Bend launched the Bend Ale Trail eight months ago to promote the city’s booming craft beer industry and to diversify Bend’s tourism offerings. Using a Bend Ale Trail Map and Passport, guests can track their route between Bend’s

eight local breweries and earn prizes for visiting all of them.

“Travelers are changing the way they get information, and Visit Bend is at the forefront of this movement by offering this unique travel app,” explained Sean Egusa of SideStreet, a Portland-based startup company that developed the app. “The Bend Ale Trail smartphone app is a natural extension of the unique personality Visit Bend has already created for the Bend Ale Trail. From brochure to Web site to mobile phone - no matter how people interact with the Bend Ale Trail - they get the same content and experience.”

In addition to downloading the iPhone and Android apps, visitors can also purchase *Bend Brews*, a 44-page book with an Ale Trail passport and information about Bend’s breweries. For visitors seeking unique ways to travel the Bend Ale Trail, several local tour companies offer packages including pedicab tours, horse-drawn carriage rides, culinary-themed pub crawls, and the Bend Brew Bus.

“Our world-class, craft brewery culture is one of the most unique things about Bend,” Braillard added. “Surveys show us that 28-percent of Bend visitors stopped by at least one local brewery, so we’re thrilled to be able to offer this free app as a way of enhancing their experience.”

About Visit Bend:

Visit Bend is a non-membership, non-profit economic development organization dedicated to promoting tourism on behalf of the City of Bend. For more information or to order a complimentary Official Visitor Guide to Bend, contact Visit Bend at 1-800-949-6086 or visit www.visitbend.com.

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