



Historic and Happening Salem, Oregon

History buffs, you'll love Salem—the capital of Oregon and the site chosen for the WBCCI 2018 International Rally.

The first residents of what is now Salem were the Kalapuya Native Americans, and the tribe lived there seasonally near the Willamette River for more than 5,000 years. Descendants of the Kalapuya continue to live in the area.

The first European-Americans, most working as trappers and food gatherers for the nearby fur trading companies, arrived in the area in 1812 and set up residence in log homes. The city of Salem was founded in the mid-1800s at the former site of the Kalapuya village when it was "rediscovered" by a Methodist missionary group led by Jason Lee, who brought his group all the way from New England on the Oregon Trail. All manner of immigrants and pioneers from the Eastern United States soon arrived by riverboat and wagon to establish their homes in the fertile Willamette Valley.

A historic marker stands where Jason Lee built his primitive sawmill, establishing Salem as a lumber town. (Lee's house and several other pre-territorial buildings are preserved and open to the public at the Willamette Heritage Center.) His Methodist missionaries also organized the Oregon Institute—precursor to Willamette University, the first university in the West.

Salem soon became a center of government and commerce and by 1855 residents had raised schools, churches, industries, and agricultural enterprises. During this same period, Marion County built its first wood-frame courthouse on the location still held by the present-day county courthouse.

Oregon became the 33rd member of the United States on February 14, 1859 and in 1864 voters affirmed the selection of Salem as the official capital.

In the mid-nineteenth century “The Hoosier” arrived—a steamboat that traveled the Willamette River south to the city of Eugene and north to Oregon City, near Portland. The Hoosier ferried passengers, mail, and outbound freight including food and agricultural products for the gold miners in California.

Salem experienced a few backslides: the capitol building burned down—twice—and seasonal flooding from the overflowing Willamette river occasionally wreaked havoc on the town. One of the worst floods in 1861 destroyed entire farms and food processing and manufacturing plants.

The capitol town in the beautiful, lush valley continued to thrive and the population grew from 2,500 in 1880 to be the second largest city in Oregon with a population today of nearly 168,000.

Salem also boasts some Airstream history: the WBCCI held International Rallies there in 1971 and 2006—one of only two West Coast locations in 60 years.

Salem, the heart of Oregon state government, is a beautiful, mid-sized city that offers shopping, strolling, outdoor recreation, culinary experiences and more in addition to historic landmarks and learning opportunities.

Don’t miss these historic attractions while you’re in Salem for the 2018 International Rally!

Willamette Heritage Center—Tour the famous Thomas Kay Woolen Mill and the oldest timber-frame structures in the state on the five-acre campus.

Lee Mission Cemetery—The final resting place of many missionaries and pioneers including Jason Lee, Methodist missionary to Oregon in 1834.

Newell Pioneer Village—Inside: Robert Newell House Museum, Pioneer Mothers Memorial Cabin, Butteville School, and the Butteville Jail.

Bush House Museum—Tour the museum and walk the 4.5 acres of manicured and historic gardens; the Queen Anne Victorian residence built in 1878 features Eastern Golden Oak and Povey stained glass windows, original fittings and furnishings, and Salem's first indoor bathroom.

Gaiety Hill-Bush's Pasture Park Historic District—Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this area encompasses 19 city blocks and features architectural styles popular in Oregon during 1878-1938. Four of the properties in the district are listed on the National Register; many more are on existing cultural resources inventories.

Deepwood Museum & Gardens—Public park and historic house museum established more than 120 years ago.

Salem Pioneer Cemetery—The burial place of Oregon government leaders and others making up Salem's diverse, vibrant early society.

Court-Chemeketa Residential Historic District—Historic homes and traces of the pioneer settlement.

Historic Downtown Salem—Visitors appreciate Salem's beautiful architecture, mix of delicious eateries, unique shops, art galleries, salons, and major department stores downtown.

Also in the area:

Colony National Historic District in Aurora—A unique 19th-Century town, founded by German and Swiss immigrants in 1856. Vintage and antique shops, art galleries, wine tasting, and restaurants.

Historic Gentle House in Monmouth—The Gentle Family loved to entertain; the old house and museum are decorated in the style of the 1920's.

Santiam Heritage Foundation in Stayton—Inside the exceptional 1903 Charles and Martha Brown House that served as Stayton's first hospital during the 1920s and 30s; now on the National Register of Historic Places.

Independence Heritage Museum in Independence—Located in the historic First Baptist Church you'll find collections of area artifacts, documents and photographs.

Polk County Historic Courthouse in Dallas—a distinctive structure built in 1899, the third to replace the wooden courthouse destroyed by fire in 1898.

Polk County Historical Society & Museum in Rickreall—Enjoy 14,000 square feet of remarkable displays and artifacts, including historic maps and unique exhibits on logging, agriculture, pioneer town sites and the Kalapuya tribe.

**Register now for the 2018 International Rally in Salem, Oregon
June 17-30, 2018 at the Oregon State Fairgrounds**

Register online (at <http://wbcci.org/activities/international-rally/2018-salem-or/rally-registration>) or call 937-596-5211

Rally general parking—June 20 to June 23, 2018

Opening ceremony—June 24; Closing ceremony—June 29