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Fun and business

It seems spring has just started,
but it's coming to an end already.
Summer's just about here.

It's a welcome transition. It means we can regroup after spring's "harvest havoc" and start to focus on production and future planning.

Because it is summer, hopefully there are plans that include something fun and relaxing. And hopefully, there are also plans to get out and see something or forge new relationships that could impact the business for the better. But what if there was a place where you could do both? There is, and it's called the Farwest Show.

We here in Oregon have things covered when it comes to fun, relaxation, new ideas, and good folks to bond with. This very issue contains a Farwest Planning Guide to help you plan your trip. A few highlights for me include:

Equipment Day. This event is held every three years. Its focus is on truly innovative ideas and technologies. What's exceptional is that it's not tucked away in a building full of video demonstrations — it's out in the open with real live action.

Happy Hour. Who doesn't like happy hour? It's right beside the show floor, right at the end of Day 1. Perfect.

Pub Crawl. This year's planned stops include a relaxing patio and the opportunity to let your competitive juices flow with a game of pub-style ping-pong. Laughing at, or with, competitive friends is also an option.

Keynote speaker Ali Noorani. You can bet we're gonna tackle the heavy-hitting stuff, too. The executive director of the National Immigration Forum is just one of several awesome speakers who will share insights on topics that shape our industry.

All this, plus much more, can be found in the Farwest Show Planning Guide. The sheer abundance of options will quell any doubts or excuses not to go to the show. But I (a pretty proud Oregonian) would like to offer some personal recommendations that are great places to visit for out-of-towners, or to revisit or take customers if you are local:

The Oregon Coast. Being about an hour from the bulk of Oregon nurseries, I even tend to take this for granted. It's incredibly jagged and woodsy, which is probably why no one calls it "the beach" even though there are lots of sandy stretches. Essentially it is 300-plus miles of California's Big Sur, but with dunes, hikes, fishing and better seafood. Climb Neahkahnie Mountain, near Manzanita, to enjoy postcard-worthy views. Or grab a microbrew in Pacific City and watch the surfers until sunset, when folks start roasting marshmallows in a campfire right on the sand.

The Cascades. An hour's drive away from Oregon Nursery Country, or less, are the Cascade Mountains. They are typically in plain sight every day during August. Enjoy them from afar or go up for an up-close look and a giant, mostly tree-covered playground. Hikes, bikes, horses, and boats. Rivers, lakes, and waterfalls. It's hard to pick favorites, but close-in Silver Falls State Park is breathtaking, even after the 1,000 times I have run there! A little further out of the way, the Three Sisters Wilderness is grand and awe inspiring, with its snow-covered peaks and pristine alpine meadows.

The Willamette Valley. By August it's admittedly a bit dry and dusty by our own standards, which means it's still rather lush when compared to the rest of the West. If you get off the beaten path a ways, it is one incredible place. It's covered in green forests and some of the most productive farmland in the world. A unique climate means unique crops: there's wine country in the hills, hazelnuts and berries within arms' reach at all times, specialty seed crops only grown here, and of course our top-quality nurseries. So tour a nursery, enjoy fresh farm produce, and sip a locally grown Pinot Noir while you call it a day.

Have a nice summer! ☺



Josh Zielinski
OAN PRESIDENT