Do gender imbalances matter in a community’s seats of power?

For the past few years, I have been privileged to volunteer as a board member for a large, local nonprofit organization. The organization is complex and provides services that are an essential component of the surrounding community’s vitality. At the time I joined the 12-member board, there were nine men and three women. When the time came to replace outgoing board members, I suggested that we look for qualified women candidates. I advocated for a balanced board of six men and six women.

As of this writing, there are still only three women board members. I’ve continued to encourage my fellow board members to nominate women, but I often hear “There just aren’t very many female candidates.” At first I felt that the statement was ridiculous. But over time, I’ve realized that there is some truth to the statement. It’s a lot easier to come up with a list of qualified male candidates than female ones.

A host of questions

And that sparks a host of questions. Why? And does a leadership gender imbalance matter? Is my board experience unique or commonplace? What do the national trends look like? Do men and women lead differently? How does gender balance in leaders influence organizations and communities? What are the implications for our community-building efforts?

The Ford Institute for Community Building

Continued on page 13
Callahan named new director for Scholarships Programs

Denise Callahan knows what it’s like to need help to go to school. A first-generation college student from Baker City, “I couldn’t have gone to college without the generous scholarship support from people who I often had never met,” she says.

Callahan is putting that experience to good use in her new position as The Ford Family Foundation’s director of Scholarship Programs, which she began in November. “To have the opportunity to be a part of the ‘giving’ side of college access is a way of acting on something that is very personal to me,” she says.

Callahan comes to The Ford Family Foundation from her alma mater, Willamette University in Salem, where she served in various leadership positions. Her most recent role was as senior director of alumni and parent relations.

She holds bachelor degrees in English and Spanish as well as an MBA focused on organizational efficiency and design from Willamette University. She supports the Liberty House Child Abuse Assessment Center, serves on the board of directors for the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education District VIII and the Atkinson Graduate School of Management advisory board.

Callahan is based in The Ford Family Foundation’s office in Eugene, where the scholarship programs are administered. Five programs have more than 1,000 active college students and 2,800 alumni, with funding of $11 million for scholarships projected for the 2012-13 school year.

When humanitarian Clara Barton made her mark on the world in the late 1800s, it was very different environment than it is today. At a time when few women worked outside of the home, Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, built a career helping others.

Barton’s contributions helped usher in an era of women making their mark in business, philanthropy, volunteerism and government.

Today, we take it as a given that women have a role in all of these sectors — in some cases, the dominant role. Women account for 65 percent of participants in the Ford Institute Leadership Program, for example; 74 percent of the Institute’s Community Ambassadors are women.

In her book *Powering Up!*, author Anne Doyle acknowledges the large number of women in this country whom she describes as achievers, those active in their community, business and politics (see page 16). At the same time, Doyle identifies a need that is today getting a lot of attention in research and in the press: There is a relatively low number of women in leadership positions — positions of power and influence.

It’s a hot topic, and the answer to the question of how women can become effective leaders has prompted a flood of research and books on the subject.

**Gender differences show up in how women lead — with good results**
Embrace transformation

It is widely acknowledged that women’s leadership styles are different than men’s. While men in general focus on facts and logic, researchers say that women are more holistic; they see beyond facts to consider values, vision, mission and relationships.

That’s a good thing, enabling women to identify opportunities and gaps that men may have missed.

This approach is often described as transformational leadership, as opposed to transactional leadership, which is goal- and reward-oriented.

Transformational leaders aim to inspire followers to reach beyond what they thought possible and produce extraordinary results, says Emily Tuuk, who writes for Cornell University’s HR Review. They look “to achieve true commitment and involvement from the follower by involving his or her self-worth in the work.”

Karen Pautz models transformational leadership in Mt. Shasta, Calif. (see page 4). She emphasizes relationships, collaboration and a shared vision in her role as the executive director of First 5 Siskiyou Children and Families Commission.

According to Bernard M. Bass, a leading management theorist, transformational leadership is imperative to success in today’s global economy, and women are more likely than men to embrace this style.

Sharon Hadary, author of How Women Lead, agrees. She advises women to avoid emulating men in positions of power, instead, they should leverage their natural leadership style to benefit their organization.

“For the first time in history,” Hadary says, “there is research showing that companies with more women in high-level positions report better financial performance than those with fewer women at these levels. The results are astounding.”

Find mentors

Business executive Lisa Brookshier of Estacada (see page 12) found success in the male-dominated world of manufacturing. She credits part of that to her practice of finding mentors to guide her through unknown territory. “When I need help, I’ll seek out someone that I see is having success in that area,” she says. “I’ve had both men and women as mentors, but what’s important to me is their knowledge. You want to go to the best.”

“Make your connections work for you,” advises Tracey Wilen-Daugenti in Women Lead: Career Perspectives from Workplace Leaders. Collaboration is a practice women are good at, she says, and helping each other succeed benefits everyone.

Toot your own horn

“Perhaps the greatest trap ever set for women was the coinage of this phrase,” she writes in her recently released book Lean In. Learning that you can’t have it all often results in disappointment at work and, for many, the refusal to even try.

It’s a common lament among thought leaders in women leadership. “Balance is a myth that has been foisted off on women,” Hadary writes. “The concept of a perfectly balanced life, with family, work, community and personal life in equilibrium, is unrealistic and not as fulfilling as the myth suggests.”

But becoming a leader does not mean abandoning priorities at home, and Sandberg describes specific steps women can take to combine professional achievement with personal fulfillment.

“What we have learned is that successful businesswomen focus on integrating their personal and professional lives by setting priorities based on their values,” Hadary says.

While men in general focus on facts and logic, researchers say that women are more holistic; they see beyond facts to consider values, vision, mission and relationships.
Executive cites relationships as key to being a good leader

Karen Pautz is a little uncomfortable in the limelight. At the heart of her personal philosophy is the belief that everyone in a community is equally important, no matter what their job or social status. So, when her work as a leader in early childhood education draws praise, she is quick to credit others.

"People say you do amazing work, etc., but the thing is — leadership is a 'we,'" she explains. "Anytime a person has a success, there are all the people around them. No one can have success alone."

She attributes her value system to her family and the culture of her country of birth. A native of Armenia, Pautz came to the United States with her parents when she was 14. "I grew up in the former Soviet Union in a culture where people are your most important resource," she says. "It was instilled in me that we must honor people as individuals and realize that the collective power of human beings is more powerful than anything else you have in society."

Pautz is executive director of First 5 Siskiyou Children and Families Commission. She works to create collaborative partnerships that serve young children and their families during the critical years of childhood. She has been a preschool teacher, parent educator, national trainer and consultant. In 2003, her advocacy for children and families was recognized by the nationally prominent Children’s Defense Fund with a fellowship in the Emerging Leaders Project.

Each year, more than 80 percent of Siskiyou County’s children benefit from First 5-funded programs and services, which include family support programs, family fun events, literacy promotion activities, oral health education services, and a childcare education and quality improvement initiative.

Education is important to her success, Pautz says, but even more important are the opportunities she’s had to learn leadership skills. "In my opinion, academia is a very small piece of who you are and what you are able to do," Pautz says.
Sawdust, gold dust and faerie dust

Norm Smith, the Foundation’s first president, reflects on his tenure as he sets to retire

When I first arrived 16 years ago in Dillard, Oregon, it was winter. Everything was drab. Kenneth Ford had recently succumbed to cancer, but even as Douglas County and the state mourned his loss, his legacies were very much in evidence.

Roseburg Forest Products prodigiously processed its timber into high-quality wood products for houses, businesses and furniture; Allyn Ford, son of Kenneth and Hallie, stepped into leadership roles; and the fledgling charitable foundation, which dated to the ’50s, geared up under the watchful eyes of the new board of directors that Mr. Ford had hand-picked.

By April I had relocated from the urban vistas of San Francisco Bay and a senior position at AT&T to a largely empty, cavernous, second floor space at the mill’s administration building. I had been selected by The Ford Family Foundation’s board to build up the first programs, procedures and personnel in a new era of the Fords’ philanthropy.

Outside my new “corner office” were railroad tracks, box cars, log stacks, roiling steam plumes and three-story-and-growing piles of sawdust and wood chips. This residue of milling spilled from elevated conveyors to be recycled into particle board.

It was my new horizon at one of the largest industrial facilities in Oregon.

By June 1997, Donna Wolford had been hired as my assistant. She was Employee Number Two at the Foundation.

Kathy and our son, Spencer, arrived from the Bay area when school was out, and we moved into a rental house on the ridge near Mr. Ford’s former residence.

For the first six months I commuted down the steep hill to the Dillard offices. It was not long before my business suits gave way to attire more in tune with rural Oregon and a large mill site. As applications arrived and piles of grant checks left my desk each month, the realization dawned that Mr. Ford had provided a cache of “gold dust” to be used in perpetuity to help people and rural communities.

Most people can think about matters three to five years in the future, perhaps plan for a child’s upbringing and education. Mr. Ford looked out decades. He built buildings and designed equipment for growth and unpredictable capacity.

Mr. Ford’s definition of perpetuity was more literal — simply, forever. His intention was that the Foundation would be doing good things beyond the horizons that we can see today.

That is magical. It transcends sawdust and gold dust and becomes faerie dust to be sprinkled knowingly and “planfully” where it is most needed to meet the Mission of The Ford Family Foundation, “Successful Citizens and Vital Rural Communities.”

The real stories

The former woodsman’s legacy and that of Hallie Ford achieved an important financial benchmark in 2011 when it passed the $250 million in charitable output (scholarships, and grants) with a remaining endowment of another $750 million.

But the real stories are about the libraries, students, fellowships, artists, organizations, communities, leaders, and programs in which the Foundation has “invested” for the very long term.

Attributed to Aristotle on a wall plaque in my office is this statement: “To give away money is an easy matter and in any man’s power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how much, and when, and for what purpose, is neither in every man’s power nor an easy matter.”

It has been a privilege to work with a thoughtful board of directors; a partnering chairman, Ron Parker; the family of Ford and a committed, mission-driven staff of 22 at the Foundation for these 16 years of its infancy on the road to perpetuity. I salute the scholarship recipients, fellows and thousands of grantees, leaders, key partners, friends and mentors, who have been embraced by and joined in this legacy.

The smell of sawdust will always be the perfume of possibilities at this philanthropy.
A diverse group almost always outperforms a homogenous (and potentially more capable group) by a substantial margin.

—Board Brief: Why Gender Diversity Matters
The Jacquelyn and Gregory Zehner Foundation

Does it matter if there is not gender parity or diversity in leadership positions?

Yes. As the Ford Institute for Community Building looks ahead to the next 20 years, what it hopes to see are increasingly vital communities spread across rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif. Experience suggests that capable and connected community leaders are essential to achieving that vision.

Women leaders are an integral part of that vision, and the Ford Institute is heartened by the fact that more than half of the participants in its Leadership Program are women. Yet, as Ford Institute Director Joyce Akse points out (see story, page 1), when it comes time to consider women for leadership positions, there is often a perception that the number of qualified women is lacking.

The issue of women in leadership has drawn a lot of attention in recent years and raised a host of questions.

Do women lead differently than men?

In a recent research study on leadership traits in men and women, Pew Research Center reports that Americans view women as more creative, more compassionate, more honest, and more outgoing than their male counterparts. Men, on the other hand, are viewed as more decisive. Americans view women and men as equally hardworking and ambitious.

“In my experience, men and women generally approach work and leadership differently,” says Denise Callahan, director of The Ford Family Foundation Scholarship Programs. “In general, women are wired to be good listeners and have a desire to gather information from a broad platform before making decisions. There tends to be a ‘nurturing’ style and an awareness or care about the impact of decisions on others.”

Research backs up Callahan’s observations. Women more often lead with a transformational style, which focuses on values, vision, mission and relationships (see story, page 2).

Why is there a gender imbalance in the Ford Institute Leadership Program?

Sixty-five percent of Ford Institute Leadership Program graduates are female and 74 percent of the Institute’s Community Ambassadors are women. The gender disparity may be as simple as numbers: Current research shows that rural counties in the United States are getting older, more ethnically diverse and increasingly female.

The percentages may also be a reflection of women’s larger leadership role in all aspects of today’s society. “Think how the roles for women have changed in three short generations,” says Karla Chambers, a Foundation board member and co-owner of Stahlbush Island Farms near Corvallis. Chambers notes that,
‘One or two jobs make a difference’

Grant County’s economic development director works to bring in more business

When Sally Bartlett was younger, her two biggest ambitions were to bake bread and write poetry. “I was never looking for a career,” she says today.

Nevertheless, she got one. Today, the Prairie City resident serves as economic development director for Grant County, a wide-open Eastern Oregon county with big goals: to provide a thriving place for its 7,500 residents to live and raise their families.

What does it take to build up a county’s economy? The same things that work in the kitchen: patience, time and constant tending. “When I first came, people didn’t understand that economic development is long term,” Bartlett says. “It doesn’t happen tomorrow. It’s 20 years. Sometimes that’s difficult, but you know, it’s one day at a time.

“It’s time, research, tenacity, determination, cooperation and many, many calls and many, many emails.”

Bartlett works with county and state government as well as private sector partners to bring more businesses to the county. Grant County, with two people per square mile, is officially classified by the federal government as “frontier.”

Her work includes fostering interest in enterprise zones, helping small entrepreneurs gain a foothold in business, and finding ways to keep existing business doors open.

In 2010, a study completed by Bartlett and a group of Grant County residents helped Malheur Lumber Company fire up a biomass pellet plant. Grants she wrote helped several small businesses pay for research projects. An AmeriCorps volunteer whom Bartlett brought to Grant County developed the John Day Farmers Market.

Still, Bartlett says, the area struggles.

Grant County sticks out on state charts with one of the highest unemployment rates, often several points higher than Oregon’s average. She says the continual loss of jobs has meant an exodus of whole swaths of the county’s population, which declined by more than 500 people between the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census.

“We don’t have the middle group of people, 20- to 40-year-olds with families. You see holes because families move away,” she says. “If we can stop that drain, that’s an improvement.”

So, Bartlett plugs away at halting population and employment decline while still trying to add more jobs. It’s an uphill battle, but one Bartlett relishes. “One or two jobs make a difference to our economy. That’s why I love being here,” she says. “Little changes here have big impacts.”

Planning for the future while working with today’s obstacles helps Bartlett deal with Grant County’s economic uncertainty as well as her own job insecurity. Her position was funded for only six months when she was hired in 2007.

“They found funding for the next year, and every year since then we’ve figured it out,” she says. “It probably wasn’t the smartest thing to change careers right before the biggest recession in our country hit, but it was good for me. I’m of the mindset that nothing is secure.”

Respected by both men and women

Bartlett says the county population is an even split of men and women, and leadership positions reflect that division. “I have been well treated and respected by the men in leadership roles in the community, as well as the women. I think we have a good balance.”

Bartlett came to Grant County after administering nutrition programs for the state of Idaho for seven years. She grew up in Wyoming and has worked in Eastern Oregon before, but coming back to Oregon meant some adjustments.

“The two things I missed most when I got here were sidewalks and being able to go to the movies. But I’m still working with people to better themselves and become more sustainable,” she says. “It’s been a good trade.”

And every once in a while she has time to bake bread and pen prose.

Continued on page 13
Carol Whipple credits her parents for instilling an ethic of community service. C

Carol Whipple has a long and distinguished record of community service on some of Oregon’s most influential panels, but she says one of the toughest positions she’s ever held was that of school board member in her hometown of Elkton.

Whipple, the second-generation owner of Rocking C Ranch, was asked in the mid-1970s to serve on the Elkton School Board after a contentious recall of three of its members. “I clearly remember the first school board meeting,” she says. “Here’s a gymnasium in Elkton, Oregon, full of people, some on one side, some on the other — people holding different views. It was just very educational, and I’ve never forgotten that.”

Out of that experience came an interest in public policy, and over the next 40 years, Whipple has volunteered thousands of hours to help Oregon chart its course around critical natural resources issues. A former chair of the Douglas County Planning Commission, she has also served on the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission and the Oregon Water Trust Board. She currently sits on the Oregon State University College of Forest Products Lab Advisory Council, the Oregon Water Resources Commission and serves as a senior fellow of the American Leadership Forum’s Oregon chapter.

A family legacy

Whipple credits her parents for instilling an ethic of community service. Her parents, Jim and Mildred Whipple, were lifelong Douglas County residents who were always active in community affairs. Mildred was a schoolteacher, and Jim ran the family’s sawmill in Drain until the early ’60s, when he managed the family’s forest and ranch land until his death in a farming accident in 1979.

Mildred remained active in business and community affairs until her death in 2006, becoming best known for the establishment of the education-based Whipple Foundation Fund. The Whipple family story is one of dedication to community.

“They didn’t call it philanthropy,” Carol Whipple says. “It was just pitching in. It was about what the community was doing to survive — actually what they were doing to thrive.”

Whipple graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in farm crops, then
earned a graduate degree from Colorado State in animal nutrition. She returned to the family ranch in Drain in 1972, and a few years after that, was tapped for the local school board.

It was the start of a long and distinguished career in public service, one that complemented her full life running the Rocking C Ranch.

“I was interested in animal agriculture, I rode a horse, twirled a rope, did all of those things,” she says. “I was working hard and having a good time working with other people.

“In retrospect, being able to match up some of those things is kind of a big deal,” she says. “I was working hard and having a good time working with other people.

Whipple’s school board experience helped her distill some important lessons in leadership. One of them, she says, is the absolute necessity of gaining experience at the local level before venturing into state or regional service.

“If you are interested in public leadership at all,” she says, “you have to have participated in the local level. I really do think our system requires exposure at the earliest possible time to dealing with neighborhood issues. That’s so much harder. It actually gets easier when you are not personally involved.”

Another critical lesson? It’s one that many leaders have pointed out: Develop a thick skin. “I believe in collaborative efforts but it’s a lot of hard work. You have to have the quintessential thick skin and still be able to listen. It’s nice to have a little support,” Whipple adds, “but you need to know that it may be a fairly small circle.”

Whipple says it’s especially important for often-isolated rural leaders to develop an understanding of the world at large — something that can be done by simply reading out-of-town newspapers.

“I would challenge every female leader to cultivate a world view,” she says. “I don’t think you have to talk about it or spend a lot of time on it, but you have to bring it to every meeting. It will help you understand how people see differently than you.”

Whipple has learned from some of Oregon’s legendary women leaders, including politician Vera Katz and university president Nancy Wilgenbusch.

“They were strong women,” Whipple says, “and I am heartened by the work of today’s leaders, women like Tina Kotek and Joyce Akse.” Kotek is the speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives, and Akse is director of the Ford Institute for Community Building.

Whipple has never forgotten her service on the Elkton School Board. “In some ways,” she says, “I’m not sure I ever did anything harder than that.”

With a degree in farm crops from Oregon State University, a graduate degree in animal nutrition and a lifetime on the Rocking C, Carol Whipple is well qualified to run the ranch.

“I would challenge every female leader to cultivate a world view. It will help you understand how people see differently than you.”

—Carol Whipple

Advice from Gloria Steinem

Carol Whipple recently had the opportunity to hear legendary feminist Gloria Steinem speak.

Steinem’s answer to a question about what she would tell the next generation of women really spoke to Whipple. “Gloria said, ‘I’m not sure that the words really matter — what you need to do is listen.’

“What a wonderful message on the importance of listening from someone who has spent a lifetime as an activist,” Whipple says.
Taking charge of a dream

Vicki Jo McConnell was born and raised near the remote southeastern Oregon town of Arock, a rural community two hours from Boise, Idaho. She went to school in the Arock area, leaving to go to college in Boise.

She taught school in Nampa, Idaho, for seven years before getting an offer for her dream job—going back home to be a teacher at the primary school she had attended not that long ago.

“The job opportunity came up in Arock, and it had always been in the back of my mind,” McConnell says. “My husband was game to move out here, and most of my family is here. My parents still ranch and raise cattle, my grandparents live here, I have aunts, uncles, cousins and my brother. It was the ideal time to move home and start a family.”

And that’s what she did. She and her husband, an industrial electrician who frequently travels for work, built a home in 2008 and McConnell became one of two teachers at the grade school, which serves 14 students. They are now the parents of a 3-year-old daughter.

“I wouldn’t trade it for anything,” she says. For McConnell, the advantages of living in a rural community outweigh the inconveniences, which include traveling two hours to Boise for shopping and health care, limited cultural opportunities and lack of jobs.

“You are close to your family here,” she says. “And it’s an old-fashioned value system that you don’t find in town a lot. I feel like kids can get lost in the system, and there’s not much accountability. Kids can’t fall through the cracks here.”

But with the rural life came responsibility. When McConnell moved back to town, she picked up a project that her dad and her uncle had started years ago—the Arock Community Center.

Bringing a dream to life

“The community center was an idea started in 1985 by my dad and my uncle and some others on the school board,” McConnell explains. The Grange Hall, built in 1938, served as the recreational center of the town. But it was built as a meeting place, not for sporting events, and it was really starting to show its age. The structure was infested with bats and didn’t have a kitchen. The bathroom was a privy outside.

Arock residents, McConnell’s dad among them, had talked for years about constructing a community building that could serve as a town center. “There were rumblings for years, but no one really had time. They were
Many women work on ranches just as much as the men in Arock, Ore. “Ninety-nine percent of our people have a ranch or a farm,” says Vicki Jo McConnell.

farmers and ranchers who work sunup to sundown.”

McConnell says she just came along at the right time. “I was passionate about getting it done,” she says. It wasn’t an easy sell to the older generation, who didn’t grow up playing basketball and volleyball. “They didn’t really see the value in having a recreational center for the youth,” McConnell says. “And a lot of them—some in my own family—said, ‘oh I don’t know, that’s a lot of money.’”

A $600,000 building

But, after a lot of time and effort and meetings and conversations, the town embraced the idea, and community giving and foundation grants combined to make the $600,000 building possible. On Nov. 15, 2012, a grand opening was held.

A lot of the naysayers have changed their minds, McConnell says. The youth use it every day, shooting baskets over Christmas break, getting together with their friends. An insurance company held its business meeting at the center, and the school held its Christmas program there. McConnell’s grandmother even celebrated her 90th birthday party at the center, with more than 100 people attending.

Arock residents, McConnell’s dad among them, had talked for years about constructing a community building that could serve as a town center.

The making of a rural leader

Taking a leadership role in her community came naturally to Vicki Jo McConnell. “I’ve been a little bit of a leader my whole life,” she says. “I can see it in my mind’s eye, and I want to work toward it.”

That’s not to say it was easy — building personal credibility was an important step. McConnell ran into a few barriers, especially in the early days of the community center project as she investigated costs and talked to contractors. “Some of them really talked down to me and that was hard,” she says.

And then there was the perception issue. Many community members remembered her as a child and had to adjust to her as a leader. “It’s a fine line between being pushy and getting everybody on the same side, but I wanted everybody to be for it. Eventually, it worked out.”

McConnell already has an eye on the next project — a community library. The school district’s library is currently housed in a singlewide trailer that sits behind the primary school. “It’s falling apart, and it’s an eyesore. Why not create a community library? We don’t have anything like that now, and some people don’t have Internet access.”

McConnell expects that, once again, she will be taking the lead on the project. “It’s another one of those deals where 99 percent of our people have a ranch or a farm,” she explains. “They are busy. They want to have good things happen, but they either don’t know how or they don’t have time.

“I don’t do it for me, but for my daughter, for the community. Why not better the place where we live?”

Many women work on ranches just as much as the men in Arock, Ore. “Ninety-nine percent of our people have a ranch or a farm,” says Vicki Jo McConnell.
No degree, no job

Experience was not enough for this single mom, so she went back to school

In 1998, Lisa Brookshier had a well-paid management job. But everything changed for the single mom of two daughters when her company was sold and the division she worked in shut down.

When she began applying for similar positions, she found more bad news: She was well qualified on the experience side, but, without a degree, no one would even interview her.

“I was overqualified for experience, but they threw my resume away when they saw I had no degree,” she remembers. “I was pretty devastated.”

It quickly became apparent that Brookshier, at age 35, needed to get a college degree. She did, attending Portland State University after winning a Ford Opportunity Scholarship and eventually graduating from Marylhurst University with an MBA in 2006.

“I had two daughters in college at the same time I was attending,” she says, “so the scholarship I was awarded supported our whole family.”

With her MBA in hand, Brookshier went on to find a job with a manufacturing company in her hometown of Estacada. She started with a job in human resources, but that quickly got boring, she says, and she was soon named business manager. “I grew the position as I started bringing clients in,” she says.

Be confident

How did she find success in a male-dominated industry? Be confident of your abilities, Brookshier says. “I earn their respect,” she says, “because I am intelligent and I have a very broad knowledge of industry.”

Brookshier encourages other women to venture into nontraditional careers. “Don’t let your preconceived notions of what the business world is like keep you back,” she advises. “Don’t be afraid to juggle family and career if both are important to you.”

Today, Brookshier works as a procurement counselor, working directly with businesses to help them provide goods and services to the government.

But that’s not all she does. Brookshier has a long history of charitable and community work, which she says is just as important to her as her career.

She recently stepped down after nine years helping lead the Estacada Community Foundation and counts stints with the Oregon Student Assistance Commission and ASPIRE among her favorite activities.

Brookshier was a member of the Estacada cohort of the Ford Institute Leadership Program, where she says she learned the value of collaboration.

“It put a lot of people in the room who don’t normally mix,” she says. “It gave us the opportunity to learn about each other and work together. I so believe in collaboration, that communities should work together and not compete.”

She went on to participate in the Effective Organizations class and recently volunteered to be a Ford Family Foundation Ambassador. Currently, she juggles work with five or six different volunteer positions.

In the manufacturing world, women in senior management are still relatively rare, but Brookshier has worked with plenty in her volunteer activities.

“It’s pretty evident how influential women are in rural activities,” she says. “We’re really good at juggling careers and families—that’s why you see so many of us engaged in our community.”

Lisa Brookshier has found success in the manufacturing world, where women in senior management are still relatively rare.
Gender differences

Continued from page 1

Community Building uses the Tupelo Model to help guide our priorities. The second rung names Leadership Development as a key success factor. We believe that vital rural communities develop in part from a broad base of knowledgeable, skilled and motivated local leaders.

Our investment in the Ford Institute Leadership Program represents a “call to action.” We hope to see greater numbers of rural leaders making things happen in their communities.

Many graduates have listened to this call and stepped up to take new or expanded leadership roles. “Bravo!” to each of you who have answered the call.

A wide spectrum

In recruitment for our leadership classes, we ask local teams to nominate participants, men and women, across a wide age spectrum (from 13 to 103), from all walks of life (public and private sectors, students, retirees, home executives, community volunteers), and ethnic diversity that is reflective of their community.

We promote gender balance as well. However, a quick scan of our graduates shows a significant gender imbalance: 65 percent women and 35 percent men. This statistic does not reflect the norm across the United States, where numerically men far outpace women in leadership positions.

A launching point

This imbalance provides a launching point for increasing our understanding of how men and women lead.

This issue of Community Vitality examines women in leadership and the impact on rural vitality. We’ll look at the demographics, attributes and qualities that are common in women leaders, and we’ll feature stories of dynamic rural leaders. In a future issue, we’ll give equal space to the men.

Meanwhile, I can’t help but wonder if the female leaders stepping up through the Ford Institute Leadership Program and answering our “call to action” are the women who one day will sit with me on the board of that large, local nonprofit organization. We may get a gender-balanced board of directors yet.

Ford Institute Leadership Program graduates

65% Women

35% Men

Economic development

Community development

Organizational development

Leadership development

Human development

The Tupelo Model

Important for women if their leadership is to have a significant impact. In their research on women in public office, Tali Mendelberg and Christopher Karposwitz acknowledge that the current Congress includes a record number of women: 20 senators and 79 representatives. Does that mean Congress is now more attentive to the needs of children, single mothers and other vulnerable populations?

“Sadly, no,” the researchers write. “Our research shows that female lawmakers significantly reshape policies only when they have true parity with men.”

In Powering Up! (see book review, page 16), author Anne Doyle agrees. “One or two token women in a group aren’t enough to significantly impact strategic conversations and decisions.”

What are the trends? Are women leaders gaining ground?

Although it is not unusual to see women holding top executive positions, they do not appear to be gaining ground. A pair of 2012 surveys on Fortune 500 companies found that women held only 16.6 percent of board seats in 2012, marking the seventh consecutive year of no growth; they held 14.3 percent of executive officer positions, flat-lining for the third straight year.

The same holds true in the nonprofit world. The 2010 National Nonprofit Employment Trends Survey found that, although the vast majority of nonprofit positions are dominated by women, they occupy only 34 percent of senior-level executive positions.

The large number of women in the Ford Institute Leadership Program may have an impact on the state of female leadership in future years. “We hear, particularly from women, that participation in the Leadership Program has empowered them to leave their comfort zone and step up as leaders, run for public office, join boards of directors, and generally become more actively engaged in community efforts,” Akse says.

What are the implications for the Institute’s community-building efforts?

Men and women lead differently, with different strengths and different priorities. The Ford Institute for Community Building feels that rural communities are best served by tapping into all of these critical leadership traits.

“True leadership is being able to leverage the skills and talents of everyone in the room, regardless of their gender,” says Callahan.

Akse agrees: “Don’t we want all the high-performing community leaders we can find, in both the public and private sectors, using all their collective talents, energy and skills to enhance community vitality? The Ford Institute thinks we do.”
A century of women’s rights

It took Oregon six attempts to pass women’s suffrage; California did it in two

The early American West demanded tenacity from the pioneers who crossed to settle the Oregon Territory. Farmers, ranchers, miners and trappers were eager to reap the bounty, and the population swelled as the Donation Land Claim Act and later the Homestead Act encouraged people westward.

The women who traveled to the Pacific Northwest were as dogged and determined as their male counterparts to hew out a home here. Life in the early West forged strong, determined men and women among settlers and Native Americans.

Thocmetony “Sarah” Winnemucca, the self-titled Piute Princess who spent much of her life on the Malheur Reservation in the southeast corner of Oregon, was a translator and emissary between her people and the U.S. Army and Indian Agents, according to the Oregon History Project. Winnemucca lobbied for self-government and land rights for her people. She established the first school in the West for Native American children to stay with families and continue to speak their own language. She was also the first Native American woman to publish a book, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*, in 1883.

**Land claims**

For white settlers, Oregon land claims was the first U.S. land policy allowing married women to claim land in their own name. But the pioneer women, like women elsewhere in the United States, were still not afforded all rights of citizenship. In 1870 women’s suffrage organizations formed in Albany and Salem. Oregon’s matron suffragette was Abigail Scott Duniway. The farmer’s wife became the family breadwinner when her husband was permanently disabled in a horsing accident. She taught school and opened a millinery in Albany.

Duniway later moved to Portland where she was a tireless activist for women’s voting rights for more than 40 years. In 2012, The Oregonian called her the movement’s “chief strategist” because she worked on multiple campaigns to win the vote.

Oregon was hardly a bellwether for women’s suffrage. In all, Oregon voted down women’s voting rights five times (more than other state in the Union) before passing suffrage with a 52 percent “yes” count in 1912. Oregon was the last of the four most western states to give women voting rights.

Californians gave women the vote in 1911, after failing in 1896. The urban areas of San Francisco and Alameda voted against the suffragists both times, but in 1911 the small towns and rural areas delivered the votes to secure victory.

However, legend has it that Charlotte Darkey Parkhurst may have been the first woman to vote in California—as early as 1868. Parkhurst, known as Charley, was a road-roughened stagecoach driver living as a man. Voting records in 1868 show the registration of “Charley Parkhurst.” Her ruse was uncovered after she died in 1879.

**Rural areas lead the way**

The first women to hold state offices in Oregon were from rural counties. Marian B. Towne, a Democrat from Jackson County, was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1914, and Kathryn Clarke, a Republican from Douglas County, won an Oregon Senate seat by special election in 1915.

In 1916 voters in the Eastern Oregon city of Umatilla elected a woman mayor as well as an all-female city council. In 1920, Yoncalla did the same. Also that year, the United States Congress passed suffrage at the federal level with the 19th Amendment.

It took Oregon nearly 80 years to put a woman in the governor’s chair. Barbara Roberts was elected in 1990. California has never had a female governor. Today, 29 percent of the Oregon state legislature and 26 percent of the California state legislature are women.
Powering up

Continued from page 16

great training ground, since it requires women to move out of their comfort zones by knocking on strange doors and persuasively talking to strangers.

Research has also documented the side effect of speeding up the cultural mindset change that is needed for women to be seen as the norm rather than exceptions to male rule. According to Benchmarking Women’s Leadership, “Simply watching women run for office has been shown to galvanize female citizens, making them more interested and actively involved in the political arena.”

One piece of advice: Grow Teflon skin. “Here’s the bad news,” Doyle says. “As soon as you overcome your fear, develop your vision and stick your neck out, someone’s going to take a whack at it.” Another: Watch women who raise their voices well. Doyle tells readers about her own role model: her mother. Sitting around the table after dinner, her family did indeed raise their voices to be heard. But Doyle’s mom also demonstrated the importance of speaking up in situations that count. Another woman Doyle admires is MSNBC commentator Rachel Maddow. “Some of the guys were stunned and outraged by the audacity of the lesbian Rhodes Scholar who refused to be intimidated, talked over or shouted them down—something they had been doing to numerous other female commentators for years.”

She also suggests putting your power to work by empowering others. That will lead to the next step, which is for women to come together into a “powerful, collective feminine force field.”

From Powering Up!: How America’s Women Achievers Become Leaders, page 32.

Are you still comfortable accepting the common misperception that American women are already leading side-by-side in equal partnership with men? Then let me alert you to one of the key findings of Benchmarking Women’s Leadership, an October 2009 research report published by the White House Project.... The researchers took a deep-dive look at the current state of women’s leadership in ten major work sectors ... What did they find? American women hold an average of only 18 percent of the highest leadership positions.

Printed copies are available on request. Send an email to: communityvitality@tfff.org
Author explains how America’s women achievers can become leaders

Author Anne Doyle thinks the United States has a problem. This country is home to the largest critical mass of educated, accomplished and politically active women in the world. So what’s the problem? America has plenty of women achievers, Doyle says, but disproportionately low numbers of women leaders — females on corporate boards, serving as CEOs, members of Congress, and in other influential positions.

It’s a situation with global implications, Doyle says, noting that there is still not a country in the world that has achieved equity for its female citizens. And women worldwide are waiting for American women to lead the charge.

“American women underestimate the ability and responsibility they have to help lift their global sisters throughout the world,” Doyle says. “They are asking and waiting for American women Achievers to become Leaders.”

So, what does it take to create a leader? Doyle decided to find out by interviewing more than 125 women of different countries, generations, professions, and economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. What she found provides the meat of her book *Powering Up!* How America’s Women Achievers Become Leaders.

**Female TV sports reporter**

Her credibility in addressing the subject is not in doubt—Doyle was one of the first female TV sports reporters in the country. She went on to a management position with male-dominated Ford Motor Company and to a leadership position in U.S. politics. She mixes her personal anecdotes with wisdom from the women whose stories she tells to provide some real insight on how more women can move from being achievers to being true and powerful leaders.

Doyle repeatedly recommends that women run for office, explaining that it is one of the most visible ways for women of every cultural, ethnic and economic background to claim power. It’s also a

(continued on page 15)