

# Vitality



## Solving the problem of the thirsty juniper

Collaboration works to slow the invasion while boosting the local economy

**E**arly ranchers shared the wide-open lands of Central and Eastern Oregon with about 1 million acres of native western juniper. Today, because of a combination of factors including fire suppression, grazing practices and climate change, biologists estimate that juniper stands now cover more than 9 million acres. The thirsty trees suck up precious water resources and crowd out other plants and wildlife.

That's not good. High desert ecosystems suffer greatly from the invasion. One juniper can suck up to 40 gallons of water a day, water that could be nourishing grasses, wildlife and cattle. In fact, a quarter of the region's grasslands are considered lost to the expansion of juniper, which is relentlessly expanding at about 1.5% each year.

Here's what *is* good: A collaboration of state and federal agencies, business leaders and nonprofit groups is working

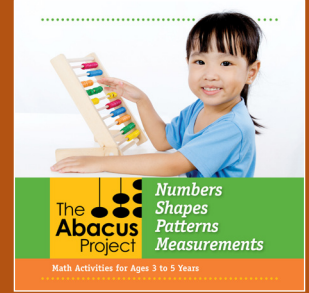
hard to create a market for the species, which would slow the spread of juniper while injecting a dose of badly needed vitality into the region's cash-strapped economy. It's a rare win-win proposition: restoration of degraded acres resulting in jobs for rural industry.

The Western Juniper Alliance was created in July 2013 by then-Gov. John Kitzhaber with the goal of restoring ecosystems in Eastern Oregon through economic development. It's not the first time such efforts have been launched — it's more like the third.

"People have been trying to figure out juniper for 20-plus years," says Dylan Kruse, policy director for Sustainable Northwest, which is leading the effort. "But now, for the first time, we have the full network in place to do this work."

It's the "new natural resource economy," a phrase

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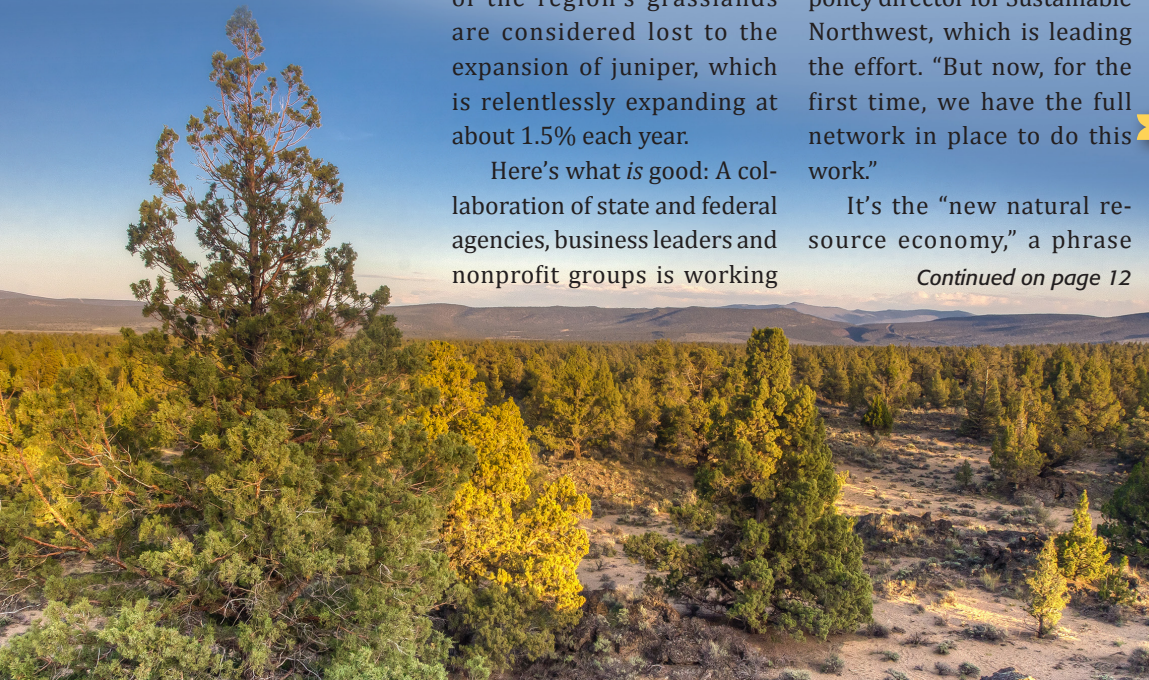
New books. See page 16.

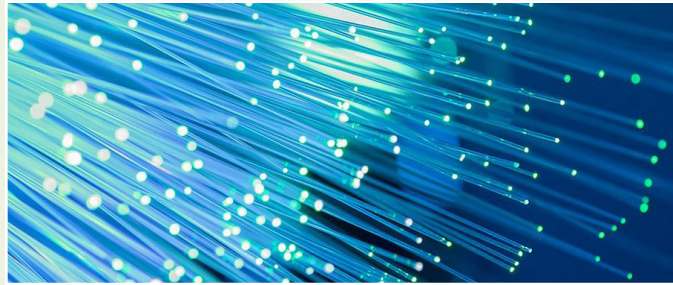
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### Community Vitality

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OnlineNW is partnering with Willamina to build a new high-speed fiber Internet network for the community.

## Broadband comes to Willamina

Dave Buswell knows a golden opportunity when he hears one. OnlineNW, the primary Internet provider for rural communities in the mid-Willamette Valley area, came to Willamina last year to invite the community to partner with it in building a new high-speed fiber Internet network.

The infrastructure would be combined with a 7%-15% revenue-sharing program that would bring learning opportunities for students and community members and create possibilities for economic prosperity. The only catch? Willamina needed to demonstrate its commitment by

getting 40% of area households to preregister for the service before another community did.

Buswell and other volunteers grabbed their clipboards and started knocking on doors. "They wanted to install it on their dime, wanted to bring this innovative design thinking into our community and teach us how to think outside the box," Buswell says. "It was fairly easy to see it was a special deal." The community effort was successful, and OnlineNW started installing fiber in January 2018, making Willamina the fourth 10-gigabit city in the nation.

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Local residents are converting the former Willamina High School, built in 1938, into the West Valley Community Campus.



# Volunteers bring old school to life

## New community center unites Sheridan, Grande Ronde, Willamina

The West Valley Community Campus buzzes with activities. Serving the communities of Willamina, Sheridan and Grand Ronde, it's home to a variety of regular events for the public, from belly dancing classes to music performances, from dog obedience sessions to art classes. Private groups come for weddings and baby showers, birthday parties and memorial services (always free). Filmmakers have come for background shots; a Portland band shot a music video there.

That's a big change from

just a few years ago. Most of the former Willamina High School was built in 1938, with an addition to the sturdy brick building added in 1956. But when the population of the area began declining at the same time the structure started requiring costly repairs, students moved to a new school. That was in 2003, and the building sat

**We want this space to be a place where people can come and expand their horizons, culturally through art and other activities.**

— *Marian Lucas*

largely empty until 2011, when area businessman and stalwart community supporter Dick Paay purchased it with the idea of creating a center for the region.

It was a vision shared by a host of community volunteers, who immediately went to work rehabilitating the aging structure. "It had been empty for eight years, and in that eight years it had suffered from a lot of disrepair," says Marian Lucas, who serves as vice chair of the campus' board of directors. She works at the campus organizing the busy program calendar. "The roof was leaking, and lots of rooms were severely damaged."

It took months of volunteer work time and donations from the community, in the form of dollars and materials, to get the building open for business. "We had regular, well-attended

work days, with 20 to 30 people a couple of times a month," remembers volunteer Dave Buswell. "It was just really a cool thing, the West Valley Community Campus, a way to unite Sheridan, Grande Ronde and Willamina."

The first area of the building to be finished was a wing that included the auditorium, two classrooms and a bathroom complex. "As we restore, we expand our available space and expand our activities," Lucas says. She estimates 30% to 40% of the 42,000-square-foot building is functional right now, including four classrooms, the auditorium, the gym and office space. "Every room in this space has a little dream associated with it," she says.

Volunteers continue to steadily work their way down

the hallway, opening a room for quilting, another one for a children's art group. The next two classrooms to be completed will be the site of a brand-new community kitchen. The board expects to be able to install furnaces in two rooms this fall, thanks to a small grant for installation of gas lines, and are working on a proposal that will help fund the kitchen.

But most of the support has come through the dedication of the community. "Our mission was decided by the initial board and the community meetings that were held when this all started," Lucas says. "We want this space to be a place where people can come and expand

their horizons culturally through art and other activities. We hope people can use the community kitchen to start businesses. We want people to have classes here and come together to make changes in their life through fitness and exercise."

### One workday a month

The West Valley Community Campus is still a long way from total up-and-running functionality, but volunteers continue to steadily expand the renovated areas. "We've slowed down to one workday a month but we are consistently moving forward and making good progress in getting things done," Buswell says. ■



About a third of the new community center is open for business while progress continues on other areas. Volunteers work one day a month.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WEST VALLEY COMMUNITY CAMPUS

# Building economic resiliency

## Solar eclipse, fires offer researchers study opportunities

Forest fires. Floods. Earthquakes. Ice storms. There's no way to predict when potentially catastrophic events will test the economic resiliency of a community. But as astrophysicist Carl Sagan once put it, "the more you know about the past, the better you are prepared for the future."

That's the intent of several studies being done across Oregon right now that measure the impact of recent real-life events, with an eye toward producing data that will aid long-term economic recovery while also identify strategies to help mitigate future events.

"We are learning how to build economic resiliency tools for state economic development agencies to use for major events that may impact our communities," says Kathleen Flanagan, The Ford Family Foundation's senior program officer for Community Economic Development.

At the University of Oregon, the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (formerly the Community Service Center) is about halfway into a two-year economic resiliency study measuring the impact of the 2017 summer solar eclipse to the Central Oregon area. While not a catastrophic event, the eclipse offers the team of student researchers a unique chance to



The University of Oregon is about halfway into a two-year economic resiliency study measuring the impact of the 2017 summer solar eclipse to the Central Oregon area.

study the before and after status of numerous social systems that might be affected in a disaster.

"It offers an opportunity for tourism and economic development officials to look at what happens to our critical infrastructure if we get a million people moving around the

state. It might be a proxy for a major earthquake or a similar event," says Program Director Josh Bruce.

### Chetco Bar fire

In Southern Oregon, the South Coast Development Council is partnering with the City of Brookings to put numbers on

the devastating effects of 2017's Chetco Bar fire.

The fire burned 192,000 acres in the Brookings area, with economic consequences that went far beyond suppression costs or loss of timber. Hotels, restaurants and golf courses went empty, with resulting job losses. Recreation trails (almost 50 miles of them) were destroyed. Many Brookings residents, of which more than half are retirees, left the smoky area for health reasons; a lot of them are not coming back.

"We need to be able to show how devastating the fire was on a local, regional, and state level," says Sam Baugh, SCDC's executive director. "We also want to develop strategies on moving forward, how to prevent it from happening again, and, if it does, what to do differently."

### Biggest takeaway

The biggest takeaway for Bruce so far in his eclipse research? There is a clear advantage to bringing economic development professionals to the table.

"A lot of times when we talk about resiliency, the focus is on emergency management, which tends to be focused on preparation and response," he explains. "But business represents a huge amount of post-event recovery that needs to be taken into account."

Several other economic development organizations in Oregon have undertaken similar studies. The Cascades West Economic Development District

has developed an economic resiliency appendix, with the goal of developing a new regional framework for engaging businesses in economic risk reduction and recovery planning. And Bruce's team worked with The Ford Family Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to create a blueprint for building social and economic networks along the Oregon coast in the context of natural hazard resiliency and recovery.

### Next stage

The next stage of the UO eclipse research will focus on developing resiliency tools that can be shared with communities around the state, such as business recovery centers that pro-

vide advice and resources to get storefronts quickly reopened.

"It's been refreshing; we've been at this work a long time and the emergency management angle hasn't gotten us very far in terms of improving economic resiliency," Bruce says.

"I'm bullish looking forward about aligning economic development, tourism and business in collaboration with emergency management." ■

The next stage of the UO eclipse research will focus on developing resiliency tools that can be shared with communities around the state.



The South Coast Development Council is partnering with the City of Brookings to put numbers on the devastating effects of the Chetco Bar fire in 2017.

## Willamina broadband

Continued from page 2

What's in it for OnlineNW? "It's a critical long-term investment, and you don't build that kind of infrastructure in towns that are dying — they have to be not just alive but thriving," explains Thompson Morrison, the company's director of business development. "We realized we needed to be a partner and catalyst for building a new future in these communities. Many suffer because their young people leave, even though they don't want to."

The company began its efforts three years ago by building its first high-speed network in partnership with the small community of Dayton. The goal of the Innovate Dayton project was to reimagine the town, Morrison says. "In partnership with the school, we wanted to figure out how to create the culture of innovation that will allow us to teach differently and build a future for students in their own communities, where they can connect to global markets but still live down the road from their aunts and uncles."

### Innovate Willamina

Now the ultra-fast infrastructure is a critical piece of Innovate Willamina, a collaboration between local teachers, students, community members and businesses. The initiative creates a new model of hands-on education that fosters innovative thinkers. OnlineNW works closely with Willamina schools and Stanford University's design school to bring training on ways of problem-solving and teaching.

"This is not about technology, it's about opportunity," Morrison says. "Technology is a piece of the puzzle but if you don't look at this holistically, you could put a fiber network in and people would do

nothing with it, or they would just stream Netflix." The Innovate Willamina team is putting the training to work with a real-world project — an event focused on the possibility of a Cascadia earthquake that will engage community groups in identifying challenges the community might face and then creating solutions. Students and teachers will work with first responders and other organizations.

The school is continuing to develop teaching methodologies using a learning approach focusing on speed, flexibility and collaboration. It has launched a Career Academy, for example, and is piloting its first after-school team focused on building and using autonomous drones.

"One of the greatest challenges we have as a country is that we are no longer working together," Morrison says. "Opportunity has been concentrated in certain areas and rural communities have been left behind. We have the opportunity in Oregon to create a model for the rest of the country on how to bring everyone on board and build opportunity for all."

Learn more at: [innovatewillamina.org](http://innovatewillamina.org) ■

# Two Scholars excel after graduation



HAROLD HUTCHINSON

**Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts for 2018: Avantika Bawa, Demian DinéYazhi', Jessica Jackson Hutchins, Bruce Burris and Elizabeth Malaska**

## 2018 Hallie Ford Fellows named

Talent and potential took the spotlight with the naming of the 2018 Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts in June. A jury of five arts professionals selected Avantika Bawa, Demian DinéYazhi', Jessica Jackson Hutchins and Elizabeth Malaska of Portland, and Bruce Burris of Corvallis from a diverse pool of more than 150 applicants. Each artist received a \$25,000 unrestricted award at a reception in their honor at the Portland Art Museum. They join 30 of their peers who have been selected over the last eight years as Hallie Ford Fellows.

"Despite their diverse practices, our newest Fellows share a lot in common — their fearlessness in pursuit of their art and the respect they enjoy among their peers," says Anne Kubisch, president of the Foundation. "They bring into our family of Fellows a richness of experience that will also strengthen the community of contemporary art of the region."

The jurists determined that the new Fellows were at a pivotal moment of transition in their careers and an infusion of resources now might help catalyze their practice.

The 2018 recipients were selected based on:

- Quality of work: artistic excellence/exemplary talent and depth of sophisticated exploration evidenced in past work
- Evolution of their work: whether they are at a pivotal point in their practice and would benefit from a Fellowship at this time
- Effect of the Fellowship on their work: how the Fellowship goals are consistent with the artist's goals, potential for future accomplishment and capacity both to improve individual work and contribute significantly to Oregon's visual arts ecology

For more news from Visual Arts, see page 14. ■

## Ford ReStart Scholar, once homeless, now working on his doctoral degree

Ford ReStart Scholar Joseph Foley is in his first year in a demanding doctoral program in Virginia. Eleven years ago, he was in a very different place.

"I'm a recovering alcoholic," 35-year-old Foley says freely. "In my early 20s, I was homeless and going in and out of rehab. When I was 24, before I won the scholarship, I got into recovery and got healthy."

After a few successful years in the corporate world, Foley decided to go back to school at age 31. "I was in love with history and I knew that teaching was going to be the calling for me," he says.

"I was going to give it my very best attempt, but everything, especially books,

was so incredibly expensive. If I was really going to pursue becoming an academic, I needed to focus on school. Working full time was not a possibility."

That became possible after the spring of his first year at Lane Community College, when he won a Ford ReStart scholarship. He went on to complete a bachelor's degree in history from University of Oregon in 2017.

The Ford ReStart Scholarship Program is need-based and is for adults no more than halfway through their degree program who are seeking an associate or bachelor's degree.

"My vision for my future really opened up after I won the scholarship," Foley says. "It's not just the confidence the Ford group had in me but with the financial support, my goals could change."

Today, Foley is a doctoral fellow in history at the University of Virginia and is deep into research on the prison-industrial complex. He and his wife of three years, Billie, live in downtown Charlottesville, a town he describes as very similar to Eugene. And, as he did when he lived in Oregon, Foley quickly plugged into community service work.

"Service work has been a big part of my life since getting healthy," Foley says. "I did a lot of outreach to the unhoused in Eugene, and I picked that up again in Charlottesville."

Foley's ultimate goal is to teach American history at the



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPH FOLEY

**Joseph Foley and his wife, Billie, live in Charlottesville, Virginia, with their dog, Luka. Foley is a doctoral fellow in history at the University of Virginia.**

university level, where he is confident he can connect with students.

"Over 11 years ago, I was homeless," he says. "Coming back as a nontraditional student, I share a lot of those same fears as other students, about life and returning to college. The most important thing is just the fact that if you believe in yourself and have good support,

anything is possible, no matter what the situation you're in.

"The Ph.D. program here is incredibly challenging," he says. "But I'm just kind of shocked that people will pay you to learn. I just have to pinch myself every day. I can't believe that this is my life." ■

## Ford Scholar chosen for prestigious Fulbright award

Hunter Briggs, a Ford Scholar, has been selected for the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Program. A 2018 graduate of Oregon State University, Briggs will study at the University of Leicester, United Kingdom, during the 2018-2019 academic year.

The Eugene native majored in Ethnic Studies at OSU. For his Fulbright year, Briggs will pursue a master's degree in Criminology in Practice at the University of Leicester. After he returns to the United States, Briggs intends to pursue a joint law and Ph.D. program in preparation for nonprofit and advocacy work. He plans to incorporate arts-based programming into prison reform.

"We are all incredibly excited for Hunter and this amazing opportunity," says Denise Callahan, the Foundation's director of Postsecondary Success. "He earned this honor through hard work and dedication to his academic path. His future is bright, and we look forward to seeing where his path takes him."

Briggs is one of more than 1,900 U.S. citizens who will study, conduct research and teach abroad for the 2018-2019 academic year through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program,

which is administered by the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

"Although I am still spinning from the news of the Fulbright, I find great comfort, humility, and happiness thinking of the community of people behind this

achievement; this was no individual feat, by any stretch of the word," Briggs says. "My family and friends, the Fulbright Commission, and all of the amazing supports at The Ford Family Foundation are to thank for this award, for I would not be where I am today without any of them. Thank you for everything, from the bottom of my heart."

Recipients of Fulbright awards are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, as well as their record of service and leadership potential in their respective fields. ■

Briggs will pursue a master's degree in Criminology in Practice at the University of Leicester.

**Briggs will pursue a master's degree in Criminology in Practice at the University of Leicester.**



**Briggs**

# New report spotlights data

Charts, infographics make numbers easy to digest, compare

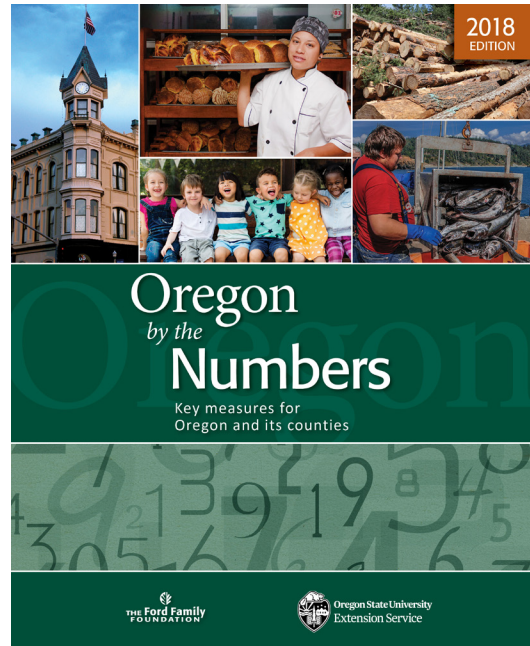
*“Our ability to do great things with data will make a real difference in every aspect of our lives.”*

—Jennifer Pahlka  
founder of Code for America

Good data contribute to good decisions. The ability to access, analyze and act on data is critical to the health of organizations and communities across Oregon. This proves especially true in rural areas where geographic isolation and smaller populations require additional resourcefulness. High-quality data help communities uncover needs, reveal trends, track progress and identify successes. Without it, decision makers must resort to best guesses.

A new report, *Oregon by the Numbers*

The report features compact county portraits for all 36 Oregon counties as well as corresponding measure profiles, with rankings whenever possible.



*Oregon by the Numbers*, pulls together a suite of community measures and displays them in an easy-to-digest format that includes charts and infographics.

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It features compact county portraits for all 36 Oregon counties as well as corresponding measure profiles, with rankings whenever possible. It targets decision makers, including business and educational leaders, local and state government officials, nonprofit professionals, and engaged residents. Any interested citizen should find it useful.

*Oregon by the Numbers* is a collaborative effort between The Ford Family Foundation and Oregon State University Extension Service. It is an out-

growth of the Foundation’s long-term investment in the Rural Communities Explorer, an online tool that helps leaders explore data and statistics about their own communities.

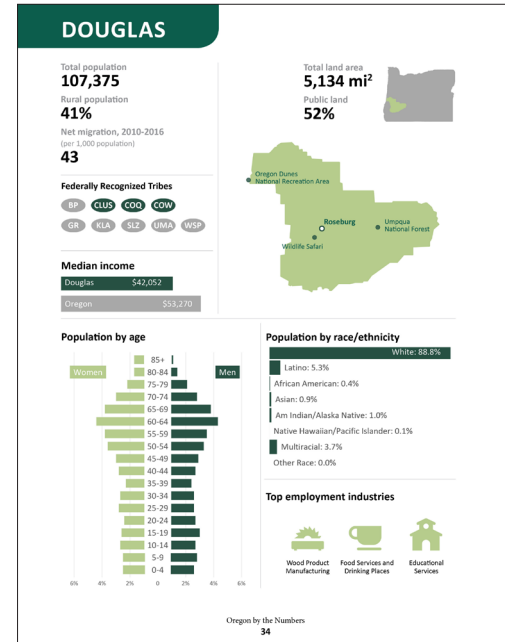
“We need to understand the reality of what is happening across all of our communities,” says Anne Kubisch, president of The Ford Family Foundation. “To aid that process, we need good data.”

*Oregon By the Numbers* identifies six categories: demographics, social, education, economic, health and infrastructure. The report features data for each measure. The “social” category, for example, includes county-specific data on food insecurity, child poverty, child

abuse, crime and voter participation.

The data surrounding these critical measures are organized in two ways: by county and by measure. “This approach makes it possible for community leaders to immediately find valuable county-specific information, as well as to place that information in a statewide context,” says Kasi Allen, director of Learning and Knowledge Management for The Ford Family Foundation. ■

*Oregon By the Numbers* is available for free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif., through the Foundation’s Select Books program (see page 11). Others may download a PDF version for no charge.



Katie Taylor of Drain, Oregon, and her son Derek Taylor, 5, participate in a play-to-learn group at the Drain Community Pool in July 2018.

and other family members. The daily average was more than 50.

The play group provides pre-kindergarten activities, parent supports and relationship-building opportunities prior to kindergarten entrance.

Many of the same concepts that drive the Early Works project are being implemented through the play group pieces: implementing high-quality education from birth; supporting family engagement in their children’s learning; and encouraging good health.

Grant support made it possible to hire staff, which are drawn from all three school districts, as well as a librarian.

## Play initiative

Twice-weekly event draws families for educational games

School may have been out for the summer, but for some families, the learning never stopped. Every Tuesday and Thursday over the summer, a play-to-learn group at the Drain Community Pool drew families for three activity-packed hours.

Parents and children from Drain, Yoncalla and Elkton came together for facilitated games promoting language-arts skills, parent education classes, arts and crafts, lunch, family swim time, and the

helped the grassroots effort develop strategies to ensure that their pre-kindergartners were ready for school.

With increased parenting education and child-development supports, Yoncalla’s incoming kindergartners have seen improvement in early math, language and literacy skills.

“It was really a desire to scale the work in Yoncalla Early Works,” says Erin Helgren, Early Works director, “to look at data regionally and identify needs in all three communities for promoting kindergarten readiness.”

The North Douglas County play group has drawn as many as 70 participants per session, including the target age of pre-kindergarten as well as older and younger siblings, parents

This year, the parent collaborative identified the need for stronger supports in math, and the play group includes math activities and take-home math games, along with an early literacy focus, which gives every participating child a book to take home after each session.

“The biggest value is connection and families having something fun and free that promotes kindergarten-readiness skills,” Helgren says. ■

Two new books from The Ford Family Foundation focus on math activities for infants, toddlers and pre-kindergartners. See page 11. The books are free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif. Others may download a PDF version for no charge.

# Defining equity locally

## Communities do their own exploring

When the Malheur Education Service District gathered a cross-section of the community together to explore the readiness for work around equity, organizers were surprised at the results. “More people showed up than we were prepared for and the energy in the air was just intense,” says Kelly Poe, the ESD’s director of Community Based Services. “We had discussions around racism, discrimination, hardships and people on the margins.”

Similar meetings were taking place in Baker and Wallowa counties, supported by a technical assistance grant from The Ford Family Foundation, and soon Eastern Oregon Equity for Common Good swung into action. The collaborative effort seeks to advance equity, values, the common good and gracious space (a welcoming place where everyone is invited to participate).

The intent of the project is to allow local communities to do their own work in advancing equity, depending on where they are with the issue. Each county participated in at least four half-day workshops to increase community awareness around the issue of equity.

“The dedication shown by participants demonstrates their commitment to building equity and caring leadership in their rural community and daily



**The Malheur Equity Team chose “hope for all” as its theme, after identifying a lack of hope in their community.**

lives,” says Maurizio Valerio, the Foundation’s Eastern Oregon field coordinator. Valerio, a Malheur Equity Team member, participated in activities in all three counties.

### Equal access to hope

Malheur County began its work with a retreat in December 2016, where, after in-depth dialog, participants identified a common thread: lack of hope. “If every person has equal access to hope, our communities would look much different,” says Peter Lawson, a member of the Malheur Equity Team. “This notion was pared down to simply, Hope for All.”

At the retreat, participants committed to attending monthly

meetings for a full year. “There were 18 of us, and we didn’t lose anybody,” Poe says, reflecting on the importance of the issue to the community. “The thing that was so impressive about our first group was the differences in age, in gender, in economic status, in ethnicity.” The cohort’s monthly meetings were facilitated by consultant Bill Grace, author of *Sharing the Rock: Shaping our Future through Leadership for the Common Good* (see Select Books, page 11).

The Malheur Equity Team decided in July 2017 to address the issue of the well-being of newcomers to the Ontario area, which has a substantial number of refugees and immigrants. The group developed a proposal for a welcome center, which has been submitted to the Oregon

Refugee and Immigrant Funders Collaborative.

The Equity Team also held several community events, including a forum on immigration, and created an Equity Compact, inviting businesses and organizations to commit to advancing equity. Part of the commitment was dedicating a person to participate in the second cohort, which began in January.

### Values-based leadership

The initiative looked different in the other two counties, reflecting the specific issues relevant to each community. Baker County held a three-hour workshop in April 2017 which identified personal and group core values, how to create gracious space, and defined equity. The group met four more times, and 14 people have committed to a 2018 book club which meets monthly to dig deeper into values-based leadership and equity.

In Wallowa County, four workshops occurred in Enterprise, with the group identifying positive ways to support groups who typically are not supported, such as people who identify as LGBTQ. Another effort, led by Northeastern Oregon Economic Development District, is sponsoring a series of roundtables about diversity.

“We built trust in Communities of Practice so people could get to know each other at a human level, and as they did, walls came down and bridges were built,” Poe says. “We created safe and courageous spaces where diverse people felt welcome and prepared to explore the complex issues of our day — like equity.” ■

## Resources offer insights

A book to help you be a better parent. A book to help you understand your community. A book to help you build leadership. These are just three of the more than 70 books available from The Ford Family Foundation Select Books Program — all free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif. Keep them, share them. The only requirement is providing us with your feedback on the publication ordered.

revealed, as are the ways in which the data compare to the state as a whole.

**Sharing the Rock: Shaping Our Future through Leadership for the Common Good** by Bill Grace. 224 pages. ©2011.

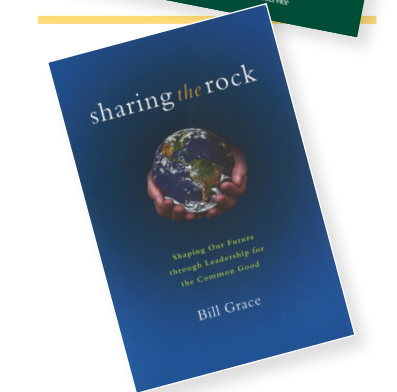
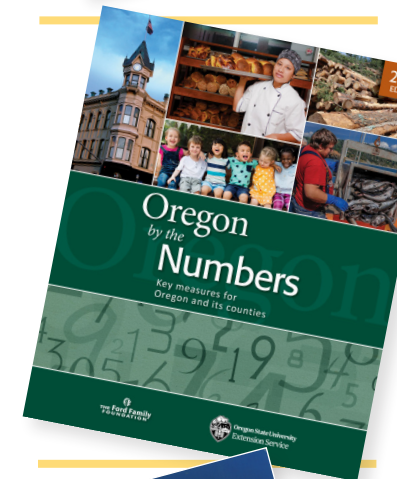
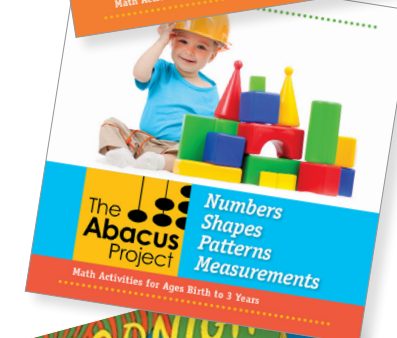
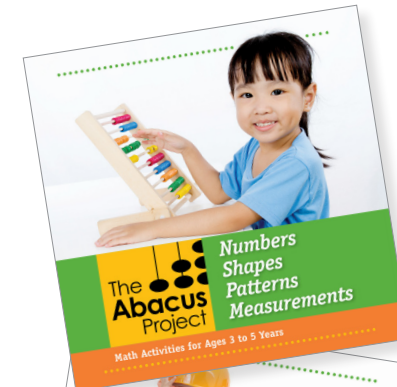
This book provides a practical model for integrating ethics into everyday life and how to make choices based on concern for all. “Powerful, and full of wonderful insight,” says one of our Select Books reviewers.

**The Abacus Project: Numbers, Shapes, Patterns, Measurements: Math Activities for Ages Birth to 3 Years and Ages 3 to 5 Years.** 12 pages each. Published 2018.

Children who start kindergarten with basic math skills are likely to do better in school. These two 12-page books help adults encourage the natural readiness of children to learn these skills, with a wealth of engaging, hands-on strategies. One book targets ages birth to age 3; the other offers activities for ages 3 to 5. See back cover for more information. They are bundled with the children’s classic bedtime book **Goodnight Moon**, which is also available in Spanish.

**Oregon By the Numbers: Key Measures for Oregon and its Counties** by The Ford Family Foundation and Oregon State University Extension Service. 131 pages. ©2018.

Knowledge is power, and this county-by-county collection of facts packs a wallop. The report spotlights each county with two pages full of the information community leaders need to make decisions. Population specifics, social statistics, infrastructure facts, economic data, and education and health insights are all



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## Two ways to read

Printed copies of *Community Vitality* are available on request. Send an email to: [communityvitality@tfff.org](mailto:communityvitality@tfff.org)

*Community Vitality* is online. [www.tfff.org/cv](http://www.tfff.org/cv)

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# Juniper

Continued from page 1

coined by University of Oregon researchers looking for ways to help diversify rural economies and also enhance environmental, social and cultural assets. The research is partially funded by The Ford Family Foundation.

Sustainable Northwest helps create the market and supply chain for juniper products by partnering with manufacturing facilities and distribution channels. The organization provides strategic intervention and assistance all along the supply chain, from the landowner to the logger, to the mill and to distributors and vendors. Its forester connects landowners to loggers and mills.

The organization's for-profit arm, Sustainable Northwest Wood in Portland, ensures that juniper sawmill owners have a place to sell their product. The lumberyard's mission is to support small mills in rural communities. It only carries sustainable wood. "Juniper does that one better," says Ryan Temple, the business' president. "It's not just about sustainability, it's actually about restoration."

John Shelk, managing director of Ochoco Lumber Co. in Prineville, praises Sustainable Northwest Wood for the progress in creating markets for the juniper product.

Shelk, an active member of the Western Juniper Alliance, has been involved in the juniper effort for several years, after mentoring a young juniper mill owner. "The inconsistency of log supply drove that young man to exit the business, but by then I was so emotionally invested in what he was doing,

I really wanted to take on the challenge," he says.

Two-thirds of the issues facing the juniper market two years ago have been successfully addressed, Shelk says, but one remains — building a cadre of loggers willing to harvest juniper. Juniper has to be felled and limbed by hand, an increasingly rare practice as loggers turn to mechanized equipment.

"It's a change in mindset," Shelk says, "and many of these folks just don't want to revert to hand-falling and hand-delimiting. We just might have to grow our own loggers."

## The appeal of juniper

The attributes that make juniper so difficult to manage also make it a great green product. Juniper is durable, rot-resistant and can handle extreme weather conditions. That means juniper works as well or better in applications that traditionally use cedar or pressure-treated wood, such as landscape timbers or fencing. Juniper is gnarly and its knotholes and odd grain make rustic-looking paneling and flooring that appeals to some markets.

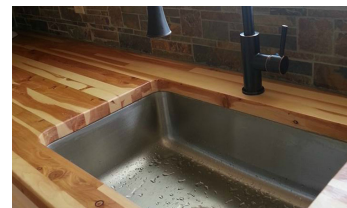
Temple has seen the demand for juniper grow considerably at Sustainable Northwest Wood. "When we started business 10 years ago, juniper was 10% of our sales. Today 50% of everything we do is juniper," he says.

Researchers today are studying the wood to bolster usability claims and develop new markets, such as shavings,

**Juniper is durable, rot-resistant and can handle extreme weather conditions.**



ALL PHOTOS: SUSTAINABLE NORTHWEST WOOD



**Juniper's unique coloration makes a statement whether in a deck or a cutting board.**

compost, mulch or post and pole applications. Oregon State University recently completed research on design values that allowed western juniper to be added to a publication called the National Design Specifications for Wood Construction, a necessary step before many public agencies can order the wood.

It's a great story for rural entrepreneurs, according to Temple. "You have people logging, hauling, trucking and milling — that's creating jobs through the removal and processing of the juniper." And it's environmentally friendly, too.

Sustainable Northwest partners with businesses, including nine juniper sawmills. They are all small operations, typically employing two to seven people, and ranging from sawmill/dryer operations to band-saw and mobile setups.

A mill in Fossil, Oregon, named In the Sticks Juniper

Sawmill (see next page), is one of those businesses. Last winter, owner Kendall Derby kept five workers busy. Depending on log supply, he's had as many as 11 on payroll. "There are only 1,200 people in the whole flippin' county," Derby says. "My sweet spot is about seven people but the trick is finding those seven people."

It's challenges like these that keep Sustainable Northwest and the lumberyard busy. "We spend a lot of time helping to cultivate this growing industry," Temple says. "We've provided advances to allow them to acquire logs. I spend a lot of time giving them whatever support they need."

So far, four years into the effort, the Western Juniper Alliance can point to 45 direct jobs for loggers, millworkers, and in distribution and sales. The goal is to add another 20 in the next five years.

"Juniper is appealing to that green, eco-conscious audience that wants a natural, organic product, and it has a great sustainability story tied to it," says Greg Block, president of Sustainable Northwest. "And we're doing it all with a species we are trying to get rid of. It's a cool story that people really appreciate." ■

# Working hard to meet demand

## Mill supplies juniper boards for landscape needs, paneling, higher-end products

Kendall Derby jumped into the juniper milling game 12 years ago, with a mill in Dayville. He moved to Fossil in 2008 when a mill with a kiln and warehouse went up for sale. Business for his appropriately named In the Sticks Juniper Sawmill has improved by fits and starts.

"I started out with a pickup truck and a chainsaw," he says. "Now I'm at the point where I buy log-truck loads and ship the boards out by semis."

It's not a slam dunk. Living in

sparingly settled Eastern Oregon brings its own rural challenges. "If I work for free and work hard, I can stay in business. If I want to repair equipment and pay crew, I have to put out more volume. The lumber industry is all about how much you can produce."

A year ago, he ran out of logs for a while and had to lay everyone off. "We got our feet back under us and did great for the last 10 months," he says, "and now I'm back down to a couple of guys." Finding the right guys is also an ongoing challenge in a county where the entire population is about 1,200 people, only 450 of them in the Fossil area.

Transportation also poses a problem, especially when dealing

with truckers who really hate to haul empty. As it stands now, they have to make the trek to Fossil empty, get the lumber and then go home, many of them amazed at the twisty, windy roads.

Still, Derby believes in the product. He mills blue pine and fir, mostly for corral boards, but his bread and butter is juniper. He does a lot of 6x6 and 2x6 boards for landscape timbers, as well as some higher-end products such as 1x6 boards for paneling offering consumers that unique juniper look.

## Real opportunity

"The good news is the environmental community is on my side, and the business development community is on my side. I have a pretty good crew, and I'm experienced, and I think there's real opportunity here," he says.

Derby knows juniper inside and out, having spent a year and a half studying the species as a research technician while he worked to get a degree in range management from Oregon State University.

He sees demand going up. "The problem is not the market — the market is wonderful. We have increased prices, and people are happy to pay them. It's other things — last year it was the log supply. But I can sell everything I can mill, and that's a good problem to have."

An encouraging development happened recently when, for the first time, his mill received a shipment of logs from a Forest Service timber sale. Almost all his supply right now comes from land restoration work on private lands. If loggers on public land sales are encouraged to sell the juniper rather than leave it or burn it, supply issues could ease.

And other good-news examples are cropping up with increasing regularity. The Nature Conservancy is using juniper from its own lands for fencing and paneling in a new office building. "They are paying me to mill and dry them," Derby says. "That's The Nature Conservancy putting their money where their mouth is."

The new Cottonwood Canyon State Park, between Condon and Wasco, purchased juniper from Derby for use as siding on a new visitors' center, to construct a gazebo and to panel four rustic sleeping cabins.

"And here's a little tidbit that I just heard about today," Derby says. "The Forest Service on Mount Hood is going to use juniper — an organic restoration product — on bridges on their trails."

Back in the pickup-and-chainsaw days, Derby was approached with an order for 6x6 juniper landscape timbers for erosion control on the southern Oregon part of the Pacific Crest Trail. "I couldn't do that volume then," he says, "but I'm looking forward to the next time they call. I'll be like, why, sure, let's have a party." ■

**Kendall Derby knows juniper. He studied the species as a research technician while he worked to get a degree in range management from Oregon State University.**



MARCUS KAUFFMAN, SUSTAINABLE NORTHWEST

**Kendall Derby started out with a pickup truck and a chainsaw. "Now I'm at the point where I buy log-truck loads and ship the boards out by semis," he says.**

# Studio, artists celebrated

## Book, exhibit focus on the history of a printmaking studio in Eastern Oregon

A new book and exhibition chronicles the 25-year history of a world-class printmaking studio located on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton. The Hallie Ford Museum of Art in Salem, the third largest art museum in Oregon, organized the effort in partnership with the Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts.

"Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts at 25" opened at the museum in September 2017. The Crow's Shadow studio focuses on contemporary fine art printmaking.

The exhibit, supported by a grant from The Ford Family Foundation, features 75 prints drawn from the Crow's Shadow print archive; a full-color, hardbound catalog complements the exhibit.

"It is a coming together of two significant institutions combined with the talent of dozens of the most esteemed artists of our time," says Kandis Brewer Nunn, senior adviser to The Ford Family Foundation's Visual Arts program.

The featured prints are the work of artists who have visited Crow's Shadow over the past 25 years to work with master printer Frank Janzen, who retired last year. The new master printer is Judith Baumann.

Crow's Shadow was founded in 1992, with a mission of providing educational, social and economic opportunities for Native Americans through artistic development. "We quickly grew beyond our borders," says Karl Davis, the Institute's executive director, "and today we are bringing the world to the reservation and the reservation to the world."

The studio's remote, serene location, coupled with 24-hour access to a world-class print facility, draws visiting artists in a variety of mediums. The artists work with the master printer to translate their vision into prints. They leave a proof of their work when they complete their residency.

The exhibit traveled to the Whatcom Museum in Bellingham, Washington, in summer of 2018, and it will continue on this September to the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at Washington State University in Pullman. The

**A full-color, hardbound catalog complements the exhibit, which is supported by a grant from The Ford Family Foundation.**

Boise Art Museum will welcome the exhibit in March of 2019.

"The show was a real hit, and the opening was attended by people from all parts of the state," says Brewer Nunn. "And the catalogue remains long after the exhibition comes down, as a celebration of the life of these two organizations." ■

## Three Hallie Ford Fellows recognized

Three Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts received prestigious awards for their work this year, bringing national recognition for their artistic talent and helping bolster Oregon's place as a preeminent artistic venue.

### Guggenheim Fellowship

Portland artist **Stephen Hayes** (2011 Hallie Ford Fellow) is a new Guggenheim Fellow, joining a diverse group of 172 scholars, artists and scientists. The highly competitive Guggenheim Fellowships are intended for individuals who have already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts. Hayes was one of nearly 3,000 candidates who competed for the prestigious award.

Fellowships are intended to help further the development of scholars and artists by assisting them to engage in research



**Clockwise from above: Stephen Hayes, Ellen Lesperance, Wendy Red Star (with her daughter).**



in any field of knowledge and creation in any of the arts, under the freest possible conditions and irrespective of race, color, or creed. The amount of the grants, which are unrestricted, vary.

"This fellowship is a very humbling validation for decades of focused work," Hayes says. "The award will be used to help fund my current project titled *In the Hour Before*. My hope is that having an Oregon artist receive this award helps shine a bright light on the excellent art and artists that come out of here."

Hayes has been exhibiting his paintings for more than 30 years in solo and group exhibitions across America, in the Middle East and Japan. In addition to teaching and the practice of art, Hayes is actively engaged in the Oregon arts community, serving on advisory panels, curatorial committees and as a visiting artist and juror.

### The Tiffany Awards

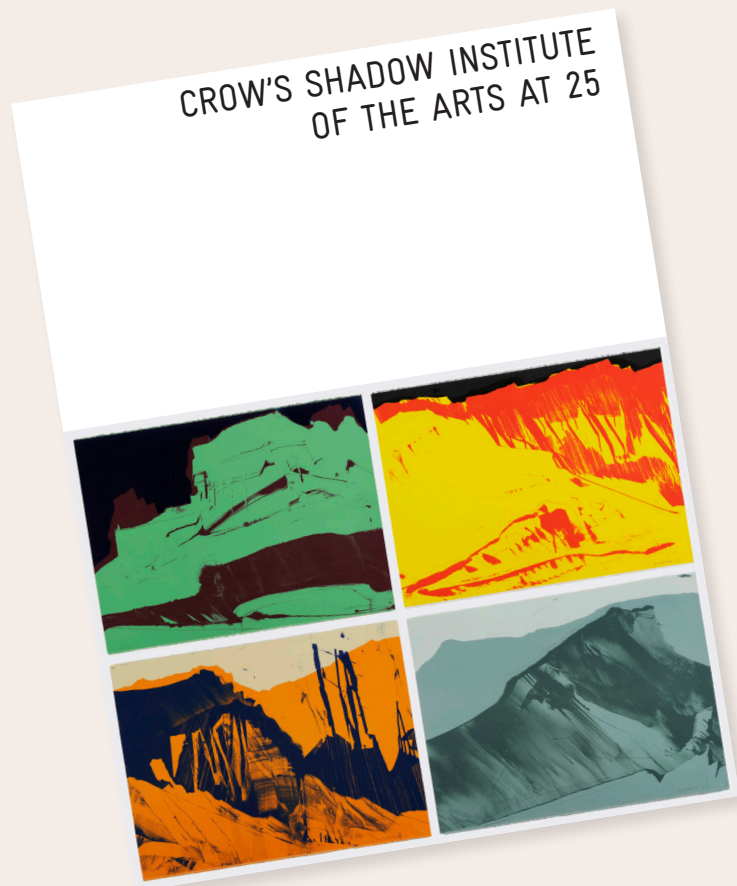
Two Oregon artists were among the 30 winners chosen to receive \$20,000 grants from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation to help them in producing new work. Both are Hallie Ford Fellows in the Visual Arts: **Ellen Lesperance**

(2012) and **Wendy Red Star** (2016). Their artwork will be documented in a catalogue published by the foundation.

The recipients were chosen from 156 artists who were nominated anonymously by artists, critics, museum professionals and Tiffany Foundation trustees. About half of the 30 winners came from the Northeast.

Ellen Lesperance has soloed and been included in group exhibitions for the past 15 years in Portland, New York, Boston, Seattle, London, Miami, Los Angeles, Santa Fe and Kansas City. She works in painting and mixed media.

Wendy Red Star, a multimedia artist, was raised on the Apsaalooke (Crow) reservation in south-central Montana; her works explore the intersections of Native ideologies and colonialist structures. She has exhibited in the United States and abroad. ■



## The Abacus Project books

Continued from page 16

cost, do-it-yourself math kit. A previous edition from 2015 was written and produced by the College of the Siskiyou. The updated 2018 edition was edited and designed by The Ford Family Foundation.

The Abacus Project books are free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif., through the Foundation's Select Books program (see page 11). Others can download PDFs of

The Abacus Project books from the Foundation's website for free.

As a bonus, the two books come bundled with the children's classic bedtime book *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown. The book is loaded with math words and ideas to talk about with little ones. *Goodnight Moon (Buenas Noches Luna)* is also available in Spanish. ■

### A look inside The Abacus Project book for ages 3 to 5:





BOOK LOOK

# Fun with everyday math

Books offer math activities for infants, preschoolers

Most parents are aware of the need for developing reading skills in their young children. But a growing body of research is highlighting the need for children to hone their *math* skills. If you think your infant or preschooler is too young to learn math, you might want to reconsider.

Math skills at kindergarten entry can predict later success in school — even more so than reading abilities or socioemo-

tional development.

“Children are born ready to learn both concrete and abstract math skills,” says Christy Cox, senior program officer for early childhood development at The Ford Family Foundation. “They notice quantities and are tuned in to different shapes and sizes even before they can talk.”

A pair of new books, published by The Ford Family Foundation, foster this readiness to learn. *The Abacus Project: Numbers, Shapes, Patterns, Measurements* is a collection of math activities for children.

Two editions, one for birth to age 3, and one for ages 3 to 5, offer simple, brightly colored and illustrated activities printed on kid-friendly heavy card stock. The books provide ways for parents and caregivers to find math in everyday routines so that children of any age can hone their skills.

Each book is divided into four skill areas: numbers, shapes, patterns and measurements. Each book also contains suggestions for a low-

*Continued on page 15*



This book is yours for the asking

*Goodnight Moon* comes bundled with *The Abacus Project* books. See page 11.



**THE Ford Family FOUNDATION**

**MISSION**

Successful citizens and vital rural communities

**CORE VALUES**

- Integrity:** Promoting and acknowledging principled behavior
- Stewardship:** Responsibility to give back and accountability for resources and results
- Respect:** Valuing all individuals
- Independence:** Encouraging self-reliance and initiative
- Community:** Working together for positive change

