

Vitality



Vital rural economies take a long-term view

Increase the odds of success by investing in local businesses

By **Nancy Straw**
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When Facebook announced last year that it was building its third data center in Prineville, adding hundreds more jobs to the 147 it already created, the region's vigorous efforts to attract outside business were rewarded. The incentive package offered by Crook County and Prineville exempted Facebook from taxes on its buildings, equipment and improvements for 15 years, a multimillion-dollar benefit to the company.

Incentive-based business attraction strategies like the ones employed by the Central Oregon region are a favorite economic development tool for many communities. Data centers may well be a win for some rural areas, but there are not enough to bring prosperity to all. Plus, incentives don't always work out.

In 2002, for example, Dell opened a much-anticipated call center in Roseburg, drawn by a generous package of tax breaks and other financial incentives. Five years later, when many of the incentives ran out, the call center abruptly closed its doors, leaving 220 Douglas County residents without jobs.

"Too often winning the chase for jobs from outside corporations is nothing more than fool's gold," says Portland consultant Rich Bruer. "It may look like real economic development, but it is soon followed by the realization that the same thing that draws large companies to a community — lower costs and higher profits — is what sends them on their way when their business declines or better opportunities present themselves elsewhere."

Improving the vitality of

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THE UMPQUA STORY PROJECT

Many acts of kindness

The Umpqua Story Project was formed in the weeks after the shooting on Oct. 1, 2015, at Umpqua Community College. Nine people were killed when a gunman opened fire in a classroom at UCC. Eight others were injured.

The creative and experimental project has sought ways to provide healing to affected communities through story. Volunteers trained in compassionate listening collected hundreds of stories, both written and recorded. The stories are being shared in a variety of ways, including an exhibit at UCC during October and a live event (October 8) at UCC Jacoby Auditorium. A website (umpquastoryproject.com) serves as an archive and will be live for years to come. If you would like to add your story to the collection, click on "Share" at the The Umpqua Story Project website. The project is sponsored by Douglas County Museum and The Ford Family Foundation. ■



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Accent on leadership

Euvalcree links Latino families with an eye to improving community

Symbols, like photographs, can be worth many words. When the nonprofit group Euvalcree of Ontario, Oregon, adopted a winged beacon as its logo in November 2014, the message was as clear as a speech.

Euvalcree was an outgrowth of the Treasure Valley Community Resource Center, which was created in 2012 to address frustrations of the region's Latino community. Under its first incarnation, the organization's logo was a fist. But as the group shifted its focus, members realized another change was in order.

A beacon of hope

"With a fist, the only thing you will confront is another fist," says Euvalcree Executive Director Gustavo Morales. "With Euvalcree, we wanted to symbolize a beacon of hope, and a commitment to ourselves re-establishing the passion for creating better places for our family and community."

Though the nonprofit group is young, Euvalcree has galvanized a Latino population strong in number but underrepresented in leadership roles. That disparity troubled Ontario resident Maria Romero.



Euvalcree-sponsored events, such as family dances in the park, barbecues and street gatherings have all been catalysts for forging connections.

Romero says a perception persisted that area Latinos had little interest in civic affairs. Latinos make up 67% of Ontario School District students and 33% of Malheur County's population. Yet Romero says Latinos are absent from city, county and school leadership roles.

A paralegal for 35 years with the Oregon Law Center, Romero began exploring how to launch nonprofit groups. She also canvassed people she knew, many but not all of whom worked in social services.

"I began having small meetings in the community asking folks, 'What is needed? What keeps you awake at night? What would you like to see different?'"

Families: a priority

As the group that became Euvalcree evolved, one of its earliest tasks was to dispel the notion that Latino residents were uninterested in community issues. Morales points out that family is a top priority for Latinos — so much so, adults often work long hours in demanding jobs to support their children.

Morales says Euvalcree leaders understood that one key to inspiring time-pressed people to connect is to bring them together to relax and enjoy themselves.

"We get people by being happy. They have a great time and that provides an opportunity to network," he says.

Family dances in the park, community barbecues and street gatherings have all been catalysts for forging such links, Morales says. Such events have drawn hundreds of celebrants who came together for something as simple as hot dogs, nachos and music. From these occasions, potential volunteers have been open to Euvalcree's message, Morales says. The focus was on people, not frustration.

As a result, Euvalcree has inspired 65 participants to sign up for Celebrating Latino Leadership, a program designed to increase management and

leadership skills while increasing Latino visibility in society. To date, 47 Ontario-area residents have completed the program, according to Morales.

In addition, Euvalcree is in the process of establishing a community resource center to help connect Latino residents with services they need to be successful citizens.

Connecting with resources

Morales and Romero say Euvalcree does not seek to duplicate existing services. Nor does it provide direct services. Instead, staff members seek to help residents solve their problems by connecting them with available resources. They also shepherd clients through the process of resolving their concerns.

For example, staffers may guide a renter with landlord problems to a mediator. They offer guidance on filing for naturalization status. Staff can direct adults where to register for GED instruction. They may also help a non-English speaker get access to health insurance.

Morales says he believes Euvalcree's biggest achievement has been to stay true to its grassroots origins. Like any nonprofit group awarded grants, Euvalcree must comply with funding standards. But Morales says its emphasis is on people rather than institutions.

"A community will always have needs," he says. "It's how we address those needs that makes a difference." ■

Close-up: Euvalcree

WHAT THE NAME MEANS: "Euvalcree" comes from three Latin roots: "eu," meaning "good," "val," meaning "valiant" or "strong" and "cree," meaning "faith" or "belief."

MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS: Euvalcree is made up of nine board and 18 committee members, with about 75 volunteers. There are also four paid staff members.

FUNDING: Euvalcree received a \$30,000 organizing grant in 2015 from the Northwest Health Foundation of Portland. In addition, Euvalcree was chosen as a community partner by NHF's Healthy Beginnings + Healthy Communities Initiative and will receive \$750,000 over five years. The grant will allow Euvalcree to create a five-year sustainability plan to continue its community work.

PROJECTS INCLUDE: Organizing the Children's Day Celebration with 1,500 community members

Providing basic English classes to domestic violence survivors in partnership with Project Dove, an agency providing shelter and services to sexual assault victims in Malheur County

Organizing leadership training and educational outreach on signing up for health care

Reaching 85 families through a Toys for Tots drive

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.euvalcree.org

Growth-from-within transformation

Community Building Approach looks different in every community

What do The LEGO Movie and the Ford Institute's approach to community building have in common?

Lots, according to the Foundation's first Community Building Approach (CBA) working group. As the 13 graduates of the Ford Institute Leadership Program worked to put the CBA mission into words, the movie analogy kept coming up.

In an open letter members wrote to future working groups, they explained the analogy.

"In the beginning of that film, Emmet is an ordinary construction worker. Everything about his life ... is carefully prescribed," they wrote. He is building his world according to somebody else's blueprint. But by the end of movie, Emmet has

been transformed into a "master builder." He has vision. He has become a co-maker of his world.

It is this kind of transformative, growth-from-within process that is at the heart of the Community Building Approach. **Multi-step process**

Rural communities across Oregon and Siskiyou County, California, are implementing this process as they build on the skills learned and experience gained through participating in the Ford Institute's leadership opportunities.

CBA is a multi-step process that provides a framework in which community members learn to listen to each other, identify and engage residents, assess which skills and training are needed, develop networks and communication systems,

create and manage action plans, and celebrate change.

"Community building requires us to be intentional about engaging with those we might not be hearing, and to be willing to listen and be influenced by their input," says Amy Carlson, director of Rural Programs for the Nonprofit Association of Oregon.

"The ultimate result is more relevance and impact."

The process looks different in different communities. In Coos Bay, for example, the year-old New Community Coalition uses CBA principles to promote community collaboration.

"It's a grassroots movement led from community members gathering for conversation, often facilitated, to identify who is doing what around issues and ideas for improvement," says community leader Char Luther.

NCC organizes community meetings for diverse stakeholders to generate ideas, resources, opportunities and needs to solve locally identified issues through a collaborative approach.

At a series of Chat & Chew gatherings, for example, participants identified large issues — affordable housing, volunteer recruitment and management, and access to community resources. Breakout groups addressed each of these, followed later with outreach to stakeholders and information holders.

Town Hall meetings featuring a panel of drug abuse



experts initiated action around the large heroin/opiate problem in Coos County. The initial gatherings soon gave way to monthly meetings where different sectors gathered to share knowledge and expertise. "Projects were developed, services expanded, information was discovered," Luther says.

Rebuilding leadership

In the Mt. Hood area, CBA is helping volunteers rebuild community leadership; Clackamas County dissolved an advisory council representing five areas after a series of raucous public meetings.

"We hope to use the Community Building Approach as our guiding light, customizing it as necessary to suit the needs

of our community," says community leader Becky Downard. "We have started by using the principles of the CBA (building on what we have, being profoundly inclusive, keeping our community's needs at the center of the work, and ensuring all voices are heard) to guide our work."

The Community Building Approach has been particularly effective on the issue of inclusiveness, Downard says. "In the past, a few powerful voices drowned out the less-assertive voices, and entire segments of our community were not represented," she says. "Through using the CBA, we hope to unite our community, and the communities which surround us, to open lines of communication,

to engage those who have been hesitant to get involved in the past, and to move forward with impactful work to address the challenges our communities face," Downard says.

Back in Coos Bay, Luther says, "Every community member, through CBA, can become a social entrepreneur doing something to make a positive impact on the community." ■

The Master Builder

"In the beginning of [The LEGO Movie], Emmet is an ordinary construction worker. Everything about his life — his job, his schedule, his environment and even his entertainment — is carefully prescribed. He is an "assembler," building his world according to somebody else's blueprint. But by the end of movie, Emmet has been transformed into a "master builder." All around him he sees new possibilities and interesting connections. He has vision. And he has claimed his own creative capacity. He has become a co-maker of his world."

— Community Building Approach, Working Group 1



In Coos Bay, the year-old New Community Coalition uses the Community Building Approach to promote collaboration.





Computers are a popular resource at the main branch of the Douglas County Library in Roseburg.

PHOTOS: NORA VITZ HARRISON

Still in circulation: Libraries adapt

Public libraries offer volumes of community engagement

In a corner wing, preschoolers and their parents gather for story time, awash in pirate tales. It's the same site where, earlier, children with autism or Down syndrome giggled and clapped as they crawled through a plushy fabric tunnel designed to engage their senses.

Across the foyer and past an information desk, adults sit at a bank of computers. One man fills out an online job application. The woman beside him visits Facebook to see photos of her grandson's birthday party two time zones away.

Later that evening, in an adjoining meeting room, candidates debate in a gathering sponsored by the League of Women Voters.

This hub of activity, or some variation of it, is typical of the Douglas County Library headquarters in Roseburg. But it could be unfolding in any of the 224 branches of Oregon's 131 public libraries. And all of it is free of charge — from Wi-Fi access to public forums to after-school activities for children and teens.

Encouraging reading is probably the public library's best-known role. But frequent visitors know there's much more going on than following the Dewey Decimal trail.

"Everybody likes to talk about the demise of the book and how our society has gone beyond the need for public libraries," says Harold A. Hayes, director of the Douglas County Library System. "But from the time of Benjamin Franklin onward, public libraries have contributed to a viable and working democracy."

Nevertheless, to keep from fossilizing into extinction, libraries have had to adapt to patrons' needs. Exploring this necessary evolution was one of the goals of a recent assessment commissioned by the Oregon Community Foundation.

Library consultant and former Canby Public Library Director Penny Hummel researched and produced the study published last summer. Eight primary roles were assessed. Hummel says the results show great variation in what libraries offer their patrons. Nevertheless, "public libraries are actively engaged in fulfilling all those roles in the community, and how they do so depends on their individual characteristics," Hummel says.

Kirsten Kilchenstein, a senior donor relations officer with the Oregon Community Foundation, says she is struck by the assessment's finding that while Oregon ranks well below the national average in state funding of its public libraries, Oregon's public libraries charted the

highest circulation per capita of all 50 states in the fiscal year ending in 2012.

"What is clear to me is that libraries are a point of contact for so many families who are struggling," Kilchenstein says. "Everyone is welcome to come and find their needs met, and the library is a go-to place on so many fronts."

Economic and workforce development

Hummel reported in the assessment that some libraries on the national level are placing great emphasis on economic and workforce development. This happens on a more informal basis in Oregon libraries. However, the study states, a temporary shutdown of Wi-Fi in one Oregon library prompted complaints that made it clear that patrons were running their small businesses on personal devices at the library.

In Douglas County, where county funding for the library has been cut by more than half since 2007, Hayes says system resources concentrate on three roles in particular: early childhood learning; educating and lifelong

Many depend on the library as the sole place they can conduct job searches or keep in touch with distant relatives.

learning; and digital inclusion.

Libraries play an important role in early childhood learning, providing a place where families can go to get the help they need to nurture children. Many libraries offer story time programming, access to age-appropriate books, book give-aways and celebrations. Libraries serve as an outreach point to families for available community resources, such as free lunch programs and quality childcare.

Library staff

also guide parents of preschoolers in teaching reading skills in the home — the start of lifelong learning.

As for digital inclusion, offering Internet access is critical in an area where numerous residents live in poverty or out of Wi-Fi range. Many depend on the library as the sole place they can conduct job searches or keep in touch with distant relatives.

For Oregon communities with large immigrant populations, being inclusive means reaching out in another way.

Oregon State Librarian
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Putting a price on libraries

Published in June 2015, the *Oregon Public Libraries Needs Assessment* was commissioned by the Oregon Community Foundation to examine the roles of public libraries in its communities. The report also identifies the challenges they face to fill those roles.

Consultant Penny Hummel, who conducted surveys with library directors statewide, says the assessment underscored the diversity of Oregon public libraries, including their funding sources.

"It's clear that there's a heavy dependence on local public funding, whether through a district or levy," Hummel says, "and sometimes it's not transparent to the public how important that funding is."

Disappearing revenue

Yet public discussion of library funding is ramping up in places like Douglas County, where timber revenues have dried up, and county general funds will no longer be allotted to the library system by 2017. This lack of funds forces Douglas County to join other library districts around the state that must look to support beyond the county budget.

Last November, The Ford Family Foundation awarded the Douglas County Library System a \$300,000 grant to support operating costs. The grant was aimed at keeping the system operating at current levels until voters decide the matter. Community library supporters are preparing a measure that will be on the ballot in November that would establish a library tax district.

In Jackson County in 2007, the libraries closed for six months for lack of funds.

Such measures have met with mixed results in Oregon. Voters in Eugene approved a five-year property tax levy in November 2015 that will collect \$2.7 million a year to pay for staff and services at the city's main library and two branches. The vote was by no means a mandate, however. Voter turnout was about 37% of ballots mailed, with nearly 53% approving and 47% against the measure.

"We credit the success of the library levy largely to the efforts of community volunteers who worked on the 'Yes' campaign," says Renee Grube, executive director of Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services for the City of Eugene.

Jackson County made national news in 2007 when all 15 of its library branches closed after county voters rejected a tax levy. Six months later, a down-sized system reopened under private management; most of the libraries cut their open hours in half. In 2014, voters passed a levy that created a new library district. Supporters promoted the district, an independent unit of local government, as a way to provide permanent, stable funding for the county's libraries.

Coos County features a cooperative of eight public libraries and an Extended Services office, all funded through a dedicated tax base. Each library is accountable to the citizens of its area. The system has low overhead with no central headquarters and stays responsive to local needs.

Josephine County voters rejected a tax base for its library system in 2014. Today, a nonprofit organization runs the system and must rely on contributions and volunteers. The largest branch in Grants Pass is open 14 hours a week; other branches are open even fewer hours. ■

By participating in home visiting programs, families can receive support from a variety of professionals from health, social service, and education sectors. During weekly or monthly home visits, parents build on their strengths while learning about resources and critical information to support their children's healthy development.



Coordination for home visiting

New project fosters collaboration in Coos, Douglas and Siskiyou county programs

When it comes to strengthening families and improving the health of women and young children, home visiting is a proven strategy. Programs are voluntary and serve families from diverse backgrounds and with a variety of needs.

By participating in home visiting programs, families can receive support from a variety of professionals, including health, social service, and education professionals. Through regular home visits, parents have increased access to resources and critical information to support their children's healthy development.

"The home visiting service delivery model is about building a relationship and supporting the family in its own home," says Robin Hill-Dunbar, a program officer with The Ford Family Foundation. "Parents can access health screenings, emotional support, and connections to other services in the community through a trusting relationship with their home visitor."

Planned and supported coordination across multiple home visiting agencies can help identify gaps in service and resources in our regions as well as strengths. A major aim of the coordinating across models is to improve the intake and referral processes so that families receive the best fit home visiting services available.

New multi-year early childhood project

The Ford Family Foundation recently launched a multi-year project to foster collaborative

relationships between home visiting programs, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for parents and children and improvement of each region's capacity to serve families.

The program aims to develop a coordinated system in Douglas, Coos and Siskiyou counties that strengthen and benefit all home visiting programs, as part of each region's greater birth-to-five early childhood development system.

Full-time home visiting system coordinators have been hired in three counties to build relationships and lead advisory groups that will work together to meet project goals.

The project had three specific goals: create a common referral process, a professional development plan for all home visitation providers and a regional communication plan.

The program kicked off in June. One full-time coordinator has been hired in each of the three core counties to build relationships across multiple home visiting program models, as well as establish an advisory group that will co-design and implement each of the three elements of the coordinated system.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for everyone to support collaboration," Hill-Dunbar says. "The Foundation's support can help ensure all the home visiting programs have an opportunity to meet on a regular basis, and have an agreed-on process for referrals, shared professional development and communication." ■

Libraries

Continued from page 7

MaryKay Dahlgreen points out that supporting non-English-speaking populations may not be at the top of the radar for libraries that are struggling to provide basic services. Still, to the extent they are able, Dahlgreen says libraries can be a bridge to children whose parents are working multiple jobs or who are hesitant about links to any government agency.

"At the one end of the spectrum, there are libraries that provide English Language Learning classes, as well as an online service. Some may even use Ready to Read grant money to hire a Spanish-speaking liaison," Dahlgreen says.

Smaller libraries with tight budgets at least can "provide materials in other languages and, hopefully, a welcoming face," Dahlgreen says.

Reflecting needs

Whether they are connecting people with necessary services or linking patrons to career certification tests, public libraries attempt to reflect the needs of those who visit them. Defining that value isn't always a matter of citing numbers or statistics.

"I can tell you how many books were checked out last month or how many people walked through the doors," Hayes says. "But to really tell you what libraries are, I'd have to say that a community without schools or parks or libraries — it's not a community most people want to live in." ■

New staff: Welcome aboard

Foundation team grows with six newly created positions

Our team is growing. Six new employees have filled newly created positions.

Kathleen Flanagan is a program officer for Community Economic Development. Flanagan comes to the Foundation from the Wildhorse Resort and Casino in Pendleton, Oregon, where she was the business development manager for 17 years. As a program officer, Flanagan will focus on workforce development, business financing, entrepreneurship, community economic development and promoting family economic success.

Ford Family Foundation Opportunity Scholarship alumna **Robin Hill-Dunbar** is now a program officer for Children, Youth and Families. Previously, Hill-Dunbar worked for the Maternal Child Health Section of the Oregon Health Authority/Public Health Division. As a program officer, she will help shape and execute the Foundation's strategies to support strong families and healthy children. She is a master's degree candidate in Early Childhood at Portland State University, has a graduate certificate in infant-toddler mental health from PSU and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Oregon. She received an associate's degree from Umpqua Community College.

As the first manager of Scholar and Alumni Engagement, **Bonnie Williams** is responsible for programs that engage a network of nearly 3,500 alumni and 1,000 current Ford Family Foundation scholarship recipients. Before coming to the Foundation in 2015, Bonnie worked at the University of Oregon School of Law as the associate director for the Center for Career Planning and Professional Development. Williams earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and communication from the University of Alaska in 1998 and a law degree from the University of Oregon in 2004.

New field coordinators

Three community leaders have been hired to serve in field-based positions for the Foundation. The three new field coordinators will represent the Foundation in rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, California, to support the Foundation's work at the community level. They are: Crystal Aston, Mt. Shasta, California; Denise Bacon, Newberg, Oregon; and Maurizio Valerio, Union, Oregon.

Crystal Aston has worked at the nonprofit Great Northern Services in Weed, California, for 11 years, most recently as the community services



Flanagan

Hill-Dunbar

Williams



Aston

Bacon

Valerio

manager. She was instrumental in growing the community food program and played key roles in providing assistance to the survivors of the Boles Fire of 2014. Aston has a bachelor's degree in liberal studies from California State University Chico.

Denise Bacon is a lifelong community builder, and she currently serves as city councilor for the City of Newberg, Oregon. Her public service also includes helping to create a program to house Newberg's homeless during severe weather, working with the community to create solutions for affordable housing. She is a Ph.D. candidate in public policy and administration at Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota. She has a master's degree in public administration from Ashford University, Clinton, Iowa, and a bachelor's degree in political science and government, also from Ashford. Bacon is a graduate of the Ford Institute Leadership Program.

Maurizio Valerio comes to the Foundation from Rural Development Initiatives where he facilitated leadership programs for nine years and recently piloted a coaching program for rural organizations and individuals in Eastern Oregon. As a ranch owner in Northeast Oregon he has managed a horse and cattle operation; he is currently involved in a long-term forest stewardship plan. Valerio has a Ph.D. from the University of Parma, Italy, in natural sciences, and a master's degree in zoology from the University of California Berkeley. Valerio is a graduate of the Ford Institute Leadership Program. ■

Justice and opportunity

Scholar tells stories of human trafficking to raise awareness, promote solutions

Leif Coorlim says there are two clear themes in his work as an executive editor at CNN: justice and opportunity. Whether uncovering evidence of human trafficking in the southern United States or speaking before the European Parliament regarding modern-day slavery and the migrant crisis in Europe, he looks for ways to highlight injustices and change the narrative.

“I don’t tell these stories just to uncover a problem, but rather to find a solution and to engage the right people to address the issue,” Coorlim says. **Being a catalyst**

Coorlim, a Ford Scholar, Class of 1997, understands the importance of one small action



Leif Coorlim

causing a chain reaction that can lead to something great. Prior to college, he had never left the country. Now he estimates he has traveled to more than 50 countries in pursuit of news stories.

He credits receiving the Ford Family scholarship as the catalyst in a chain of events that led him from Gladstone, Oregon, to Brussels, Belgium, to report on the terrorist attacks for CNN.

Coorlim enrolled at the University of Portland where a professor pointed him to an internship with a local television station, which ultimately led to a permanent job with the local FOX affiliate.

From there, he moved to the FOX affiliate in Washington D.C., and finally to CNN, where he worked in Atlanta and now Los Angeles.

Coorlim directed the documentary, “Innocence for Sale,” about Cambodian girls working in a brothel. A year later, he was entrusted to build the concept

that would ultimately become The CNN Freedom Project. According to its website, The CNN Freedom Project seeks “to amplify the voices of the victims of modern-day slavery, highlight success stories and help unravel the tangle of criminal enterprises trading in human life.”

Through his work on The CNN Freedom Project, Coorlim has told hundreds of stories of human trafficking, from Thailand, the Philippines, Mexico, North Africa, Haiti, and many points in between, including the United States. Two recent projects in the United States include a documentary with Jada Pinkett Smith, “Children for Sale,” and a report on wounded veterans who were retrained to help find and rescue exploited children.

Coorlim’s work has been the catalyst for many positive changes with a worldwide impact. The film with

Pinkett Smith played an instrumental role in passing a law in Georgia that provides harsher penalties for traffickers and extends increased protections and supports for victims.

Additionally, Coorlim notes “The CNN Freedom Project stories have contributed to changing laws and corporate policies, led to more than 1,000 survivors being rescued, and sparked more than \$24 million in donations to anti-trafficking organizations.”

Human rights/social justice

In the future, he hopes to tell more stories that showcase human rights and social justice issues.

“People think of it as activism journalism, but it isn’t. It’s just journalism. We tell the facts as they are on the ground. Stories are vetted. The principle of objectivity still applies. We seek out both sides just like reporters would on any other topic. But we stay on the story as long as it takes, and we’ve seen some amazing examples of what can happen as a result of that.” ■



Leif Coorlim (center), an executive editor at CNN, interviews Italy’s Minister of Education Stefania Giannini in Rome. The Italian government will use CNN Freedom Project stories to educate the country’s 9 million students about human trafficking.

“Don’t tell these stories just to uncover a problem, but rather to find a solution and to engage the right people to address the issue.”

— Leif Coorlim
Ford Scholar
Class of 1997



Left: The Gem Theatre in Athena, Oregon, is being restored. Right: Master plans for the Gem Theatre include space for a rental apartment and a museum.

Restoring the past

Theaters rise again as community centers

When the Ross Ragland Theater opened its newly renovated doors in March 1989, it gave the town of Klamath Falls more than a new entertainment venue. The Art Deco theater, built in 1940, quickly served as a catalyst for renovation of the downtown area. Side benefits included extension of the city’s geothermal line and a revived community interest in the performing arts. Today, the Ross Ragland Theater and Cultural Center serves more than 100,000 people each year.

The restoration of theater buildings can be an economic engine for towns such as Klamath Falls. The historic preservation group Restore Oregon found in a 2015 study that historic theaters in the state held over 61,100 events that brought in a total of \$23 million in revenue. Theaters also provided jobs to 193 full-time staff and 504 part-time or seasonal staff.

Restore Oregon, along with several partners, is in the midst of a multi-year initiative working with Oregon’s 127 historic theaters, hoping to spur further economic redevelopment in struggling downtowns.

“Just as the curtain seems to be falling on the era of the independent neighborhood theater,

a counter-movement is slowly taking root across the U.S.,” says the group’s report, *Oregon Historic Theatres: Statewide Survey and Needs Assessment*. “Fueled in part by ‘buy local’ supporters who favor neighborhood establishments over national chains, many venerable theaters are experiencing a comeback.”

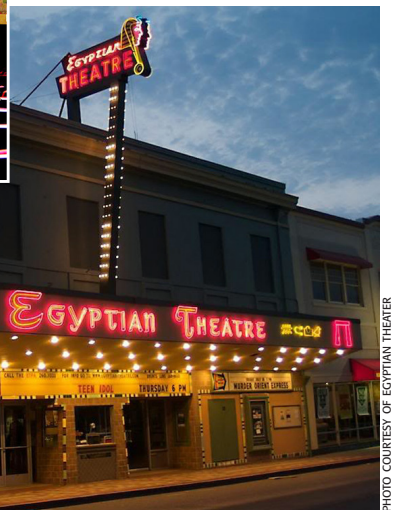
Tenuous

But, according to the report, the health of the theaters is tenuous. The youngest of Oregon’s historic theaters is 66 years old, and most are overdue for repairs or seismic upgrades. Forty-four percent of responding theaters weren’t sure if they would break even this year.

Several theater makeovers have happened in different parts of the state. In Coos Bay, the Egyptian Theatre has served as a gathering place for Oregon’s central coastal communities since 1925. After commercial operations came to a halt in 2005, the theater was converted to a community convening space and operated by the nonprofit Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association. It closed again in 2011 for structural safety reasons, but an active volunteer

group raised the \$1.3 million necessary to fix the building, and it opened its doors again two years ago.

In the northeastern Oregon town of Athena, community volunteers are working on a multi-phase renovation of the 300-seat Gem Theatre. The Athena Gem opened in 1908 and closed 60 years later, as televisions gained popularity. The theater was donated to the city of Athena in 2004, and when the doors were opened, residents found a time capsule – everything in its place,



The Egyptian Theater, restored in 2014, serves as a performing space and community center for the town of Coos Bay. Top left: Interior of the Egyptian Theater.

including film reels and projection equipment.

Volunteers for the Athena’s Gem nonprofit group envision a theater and community meeting space, along with a small museum featuring vintage Hodaka motorcycles, once designed and assembled in Athena. Rental income from an apartment on one end of the building will help pay for maintenance and utilities.

With financial support from the community and grants, volunteers have replaced an outside brick wall, gutted the theater and replaced part of the building’s façade. The second stage of the ambitious plan calls for replacing the roof and moving a wall 30 feet out to accommodate a stage and dressing rooms.

“Theaters are social spaces, economic catalysts, and cultural ambassadors for their communities,” says the Restore Oregon report. “With coordinated support, perhaps theaters will continue to shine as a beacon of community vitality for yet another century.” ■

Learning how to ask for a fair share for rural

Training provides skills needed to write proposals for federal grants

When it comes to securing their share of federal grant dollars, rural communities are lagging far behind their urban counterparts.

Consider this: In the most recent federal fiscal year, the federal government awarded \$3.2 billion in competitive grant awards within Oregon. Of those funds, just 3.7% were to recipients in Oregon's 2nd Congressional District, which includes nearly all communities east of the Cascades as well as some rural towns in southern Oregon. While that was a slight improvement from the 2.4%

awarded in fiscal year 2010, the actual dollar value decreased by \$6.5 million or 5 percent.

"Rural Oregon is still lagging far behind urban Oregon in securing its fair share, on a per capita basis, of competitive federal grant dollars," says Kathy Ingram, a nationally certified grant professional and coach based in the Coos Bay area.

Federal grant proposals are notoriously difficult to successfully complete, and rural areas often do not have access to qualified grant writing professionals. In an effort to level the playing field, the Ford Institute sponsored a federal grant writers training program from 2011 to 2014. Under Ingram's direction, two rural cohorts received comprehensive training in federal grant development. Six of the nine participants went through a rigorous process that certified them as Grant Professionals by the Grant Professional Certification Institute.

"By building the capacity of persons in rural communities to craft federal funding proposals, more dollars can be brought into these communities," says Timothy Hoone, a member of the second cohort and a graduate of the Ford Institute Leadership Program.

Since he finished training in 2014, Hoone, a resident



Timothy Hoone helped develop more than a dozen grant applications successfully raising more than \$5 million in new funding. One of the grants provided \$400,000 for a four-year, USDA project to expand community gardens and improve local food access in Northern California.

of Crescent City, California, has helped develop more than a dozen successful grant applications totaling more than \$5 million in funding. Grants ranged from a \$400,000, four-year, USDA-funded project to expand community gardens and improve local food access in Del Norte County, California, to a \$350,000, two-year program providing transitional housing in Del Norte County and Curry County, Oregon. The program provides transitional housing for people affected by domestic violence.

Hoone has joined fellow student Lyn Craig of Joseph to offer grant-related services through consulting group NorthxNorthwest.

"I learned immediately that federal grant applications are completely different than those

of foundations and require a singular skill set," Craig says. "I also learned it's much more exciting to bring in \$500,000 than \$50,000."

Training program participant Elaine Eisenbraun of Long Creek, Oregon, says, "The joy of this work flows from helping people to create a project design that is effective and functional, including a clearly understood budget to assure a project that hits a home run for the mission of the organization."

Not 'federal dependency'

Ingram says there is a sufficient knowledge base and available technical assistance to assist rural communities in securing competitive federal grant resources. But in order to win those dollars, she says Oregon's rural communities need to be willing to risk scarce

resources in the costs of grant development, knowing that not all grant proposals will be successful.

Rural communities also, she says, "need to come to terms with the fact that, in accepting federal grant assistance, one is not substituting fierce rural independence for federal dependency."

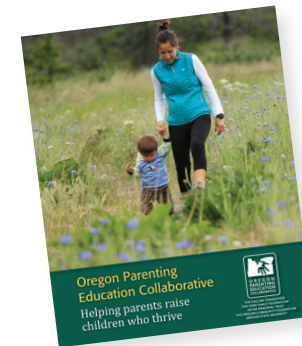
Finally, she says communities need to become much more savvy about the wide diversity of federal grant programs and the availability of federal grant resources.

Much work still needs to be done in rural communities. "The greatest remaining barrier is not the lack of federal grant development acumen," Ingram says, "but the unwillingness of rural communities to allocate scarce resources to federal grant development, take risk, and/or participate in federalism." ■

Resources offer insights

Get the tools you need to help make a difference in your community with the Ford Institute for Community Building Select Books. We provide these resources at no charge. Keep them, share them. The only requirement is providing us with your feedback on the publication ordered.

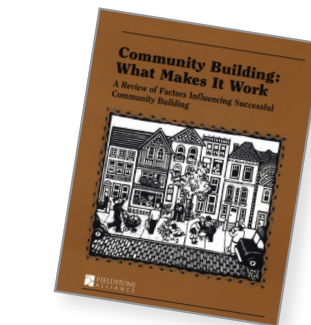
Here are details on several of the books on the Select List:



Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative: Helping Parents Raise Children Who Thrive

by Bill Graves. 20 pages. ©2015. This report summarizes the work of the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative during its first five years, 2010-2015. OPEC is a multi-year initiative supported by several Oregon foundations and Oregon State University. The initiative supports expanded access to best practice parenting education programs, with a focus on reaching parents of children prenatal to age six, and supports efforts to develop and strengthen regional parenting education hubs.

Community Building: What Makes It Work, by Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey. 99 pages. ©1997. This practical guide gives the reader 28 keys to help build community in the most efficient and effective way possible. The inclusion of



a detailed bibliography, colorful examples and definitions of key words make this report a must for those interested in developing their community's potential.

The Local Economy Solution: How Innovative, Self-Financing "Pollinator" Enterprises Can Grow Jobs and Prosperity, by Michael Shuman. 248 pages. ©2015. Growing evidence has proven that economic development's current cornerstone — incentives to attract large businesses — is a dead end. This book suggests an alternative approach: nurture a new generation of enterprises that help local busi-

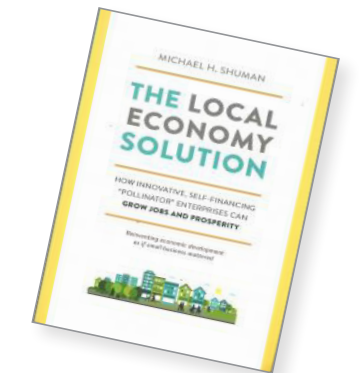
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nesses launch, grow and create jobs in self-financing ways. The book includes two dozen successful case studies. It also shows how the right public policy can encourage this growth at virtually no cost. ■



Two ways to read

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

Community Vitality is online. www.tfff.org/cv

Receive email notifications when a new online issue is available. Sign up at: www.tfff.org/cvsubscribe



Local businesses drive majority of job creation

Continued from page 1

rural economies with the tools of economic development is a long-term commitment. And it is hard work.

The strategy of business attraction is just one tool and, despite its upside, it has several potential downsides. Incentives may attract businesses whose only loyalty to the community is financial — when the incentives run out, the companies leave town.

In addition, offering incentives to outside firms to locate in a community sends a message to those who are already there that new firms are more important than they are.

Up to 80% of job growth comes from startups and existing businesses, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. But, according to Michael H. Shuman's book *The Local Economy Solution* (see page 15), in one study, 80% of the funds given by state economic development programs were given to nonlocal businesses. Since a majority of job creation happens in local businesses, this is not playing the odds.

There are many entrepreneurial development and business retention and growth strategies that rural communities can employ:

Engage the broader community in supporting new and existing local businesses through "Buy Local" cam-

aigns or "Cash Mobs": In a Cash Mob, residents gather and "mob" one business each month to make small purchases. The business enjoys a boost in its daily sales, and townspeople learn what is available in their own community (to start a Cash Mob, see article, right).

Provide incentives to existing businesses: Many communities have provided financial incentives for property owners to upgrade store appearances through façade improvement grants through a model offered by Oregon Main Street program.

Increase your knowledge about the local business climate: There may be some fairly easy ways to change regulations that may be presenting a barrier, and educating local, regional and statewide policymakers about them is a good first step toward starting or expanding businesses in the area.

Increase the odds of strengthening businesses in your community: Talk with existing businesses and identify the barriers to their business growth and stability. There may be skill sets needed by several employers, such as truck driving; find ways to provide the training for those skills. Perhaps they are unable to find financing for their next phase of growth; help find financial resources and organizations that work across the spectrum, from startup to global enterprise. Whatever it is, you will find that other businesses share the same or similar challenges and the



The town of Myrtle Creek has built a sense of community while helping local businesses through the popular "Cash Mob" activity. Residents "mob" one business a month.

Start a Cash Mob in your town

One of Paulette C. Roden-Jones' favorite Cash Mob visits was to the Myrtle Creek Saw Shop. "That mob blew our mobsters minds," says Roden-Jones. "They had no idea our saw shop carried Carhart clothes for adults and kids. It gave them an insight and a new place to shop for clothes."

"Cash Mobs are an amazing way to get to know your community, your customers and your local business owners."

Cash Mobs are like flash mobs, but instead of singing and dancing they spend money as a group. They target local businesses to give the business owners an economic stimulus.

Interested in starting a Cash Mob in your town? Roden-Jones wants people to know it is not a complicated task. "It takes maybe two hours a month to plan and see it through, once the stage is set," she says. "I own a business, have a husband and three kids, and volunteer with other organizations, and I was able to create and implement our program in a very short time with amazing community support."

"Community buy-in is important, so if you can get the support of your city council, mayor, city staff, chamber of commerce and any other organization, you are set."

For general information on cash mobs, visit <https://cash-mobs.com>. Roden-Jones also welcomes inquiries at paulette@thehappydonut.com. ■

community can come together to help resolve them.

Identify opportunity gaps in the business sector of your community: Perhaps your area needs a specialty retail outlet or service. By identifying gaps, there may be entrepreneurs ready to step up and supply the missing pieces.

Encourage the creativity of local people to establish new

businesses: Make it known that you want your community to be a place friendly to new endeavors by local folks.

Your community's greatest assets may already be in place. Before committing time and resources to attract outside businesses, it's worth the time to employ strategies that make the most of what communities already have to offer. ■

A regional approach to economic development

A group promoting a regional approach to boosting rural economies is WealthWorks. Originally formed in Appalachia, it has spread across the country to other rural areas. It aims to advance a region's overall prosperity and self-reliance, strengthen existing and emerging sectors, and increase jobs and incomes.

The goal, organizers say, is to build wealth that can benefit community residents today and for generations to come, while at the same time create value in local people, places and businesses.

In Oregon, for example, the Southwestern Oregon Food Systems Collaborative is researching the complete value chain of the fish and small meat industries to identify gaps and opportunities for investment. The goal: to capture more wealth locally. According to one analysis, if fish



Regional collaboration in Michigan's Upper Peninsula resulted in more visitors to tourist sites such as the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum.

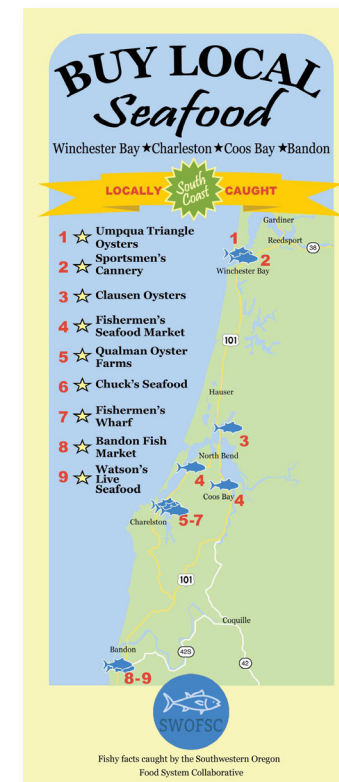
could be fully processed (value-added) locally rather than just cleaned and shipped out of the area, an additional \$400 million would remain Oregon.

In Michigan, a set of stakeholders—small firms, local tourism bureaus, chambers of commerce, cultural organizations, food concerns, artists, local governments and land managers—came together to connect their dots to attract more tourism. They recognized stranded assets and found ways to build a stronger, regional identity. The result? Tourism revenues have grown. Jobs have been retained and created.

Across the nation, other WealthWorks projects have created a clearinghouse for wood products manufacturers to supply products to green builders in the region, and grown small businesses that supply biofuel production jobs to community college graduates.

For other success stories and more information: www.wealthworks.org ■

A poster produced by Southwestern Oregon Food Systems Collaborative promotes local seafood.



Effective community building

Continued from page 16

Successful efforts more likely occur in communities where residents recognize the need for some type of action, the authors say. "A community building effort must address an issue that is important enough to warrant attention, and which affects enough residents of a community to spark self-interest in participation."

Product and process

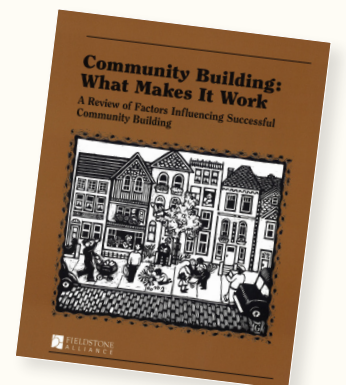
A success factor in the community building process is focusing on product and process at the same time. "Initiatives are more likely to succeed when efforts to build relationships (the process focus) include tangible events and accomplishments (the product focus)," the authors write.

And in the third category, characteristics of successful organizers, understanding of community is essential. "Successful community building efforts more likely occur when organized by individuals who convey a sincere commitment for the community's well-being," say the authors.

Community Building also devotes a chapter to instruction on how to use the information in the book. Its appendices are meaty, with one offering

comprehensive definitions of terms such as "community," "capacity building," and "community competence." Another provides questions for each community building success factor that enables organizers to assess the work they are doing. For example, in the community awareness factor, organizers are encouraged to ask questions such as: Are the objectives for our community building project based on the immediate concerns of the neighborhood? Can we broaden them later into a more comprehensive effort? Do community members understand and are they aware of how the issues affect them?

This book is available for free to residents of Oregon and Siskiyou County, California, through Select Books. See page 13. ■



BOOK REVIEW

What leads to success?

Authors identify keys that help build community efficiently and effectively

Community building is a complex process with a lot of moving parts. It helps to know what has worked. Many people start by doing extensive research into what has worked in similar towns, but doing the research that identifies these successful strategies can be a daunting task.

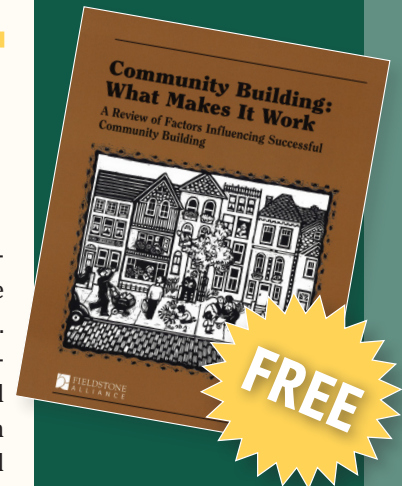
Fortunately, it's not a task you need to take on. In the eminently readable *Community Building: What Makes It Work*, Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey have done the research for readers, identifying 28 "keys" that help build community efficiently and effectively. "The thousands of hours of preparation required for this book ... is the nitty-gritty homework that all of us

who are interested in community building rarely have the time to do," write the authors.

In their search for critical factors, Mattessich and Monsey kept two questions in mind: What leads to successful community building, and what distinguishes efforts that succeed from those that fail? The answers to those questions led to the identification of the 28 factors, which are divided into three categories: characteristics of the community, characteristics of the community building process, and characteristics of community building organizers.

For example, a community characteristic identified as essential to success is the community awareness of an issue.

Continued on page 15



Yours for the asking

See page 13.


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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

