



JACKSON COUNTY Library Services

Libraries for all: Jackson County votes

BY CYNTHIA CHENEY

After years of uncertainty, Jackson County voters finally have the chance to guarantee permanent, secure funding for libraries. If voters approve a measure on the ballot in May, we will have our own special tax district to fund libraries. The district will be managed by its own elected board of unpaid directors, whose only business is the well-being of the libraries. It will be completely independent of county government.

Library funding history

Prior to 1998, Jackson County voters approved a series of "library levies" enabling the county to fund library services. When Oregon voters passed Measures 47 (1997) and 50 (1998), levies were rolled into the county's general fund. Since then the libraries have been just one department among the many that compete for funding from the county budget.

Beginning in 2000, safety-net funding from the federal government helped to replace lost county income from timber harvest revenue sharing, but that program ended in 2006. Many of you will remember when the county shut down all the libraries for six months in 2007 when those "timber payments" ended. Temporary extensions of the federal payments combined with major reductions in hours and services allowed the libraries to reopen late that year.

Last spring, sharp reductions in the county budget required the library to scale back materials purchases by 19 percent. Since then the county has experienced

lower-than-expected expenses and higher-than-expected revenues, so additional, anticipated service cutbacks in the second half of fiscal 2013-14 have been avoided.

Plan for a stable future

Unpredictable funding disrupts the library's ability to deliver the services and benefits you and your neighbors need and expect. The proposed library district will get the libraries off the funding roller coaster for good. Thirteen Oregon counties already have county-wide library districts established by their voters. Likewise, there are 13 smaller districts in other counties.

At a January 30 community meeting at the Ruch Library, County Commissioner John Rachor voiced his support for the Jackson County library district, emphasizing the benefits of no longer having to compete with other departments for county dollars, while placing decision-making in the hands of an independent board. Gayle Lewis stepped forward to lead the information and support effort in the Applegate/Ruch/Jacksonville area.

To learn more or to volunteer, contact Gayle or your Friends of the Library group: Gayle Lewis—gayleyn@hotmail.com or 541-899-7023; Friends of Applegate Library—Joan Peterson, joanpete5317@gmail.com or 541-846-6988; Friends of Ruch Library—Gerrie Leinfelder, gugg4or@gmail.com; Friends of Jacksonville Library—Joan Avery, mailavery@charter.net.

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— Applegate Library —

The Friends of the Applegate Library (FOAL) held a board meeting on January 14 to discuss the upcoming ballot measure to approve the formation of a library district. Every city in the county voted for inclusion in the district and it is now up to us to persuade voters to support this important effort. Carol Hoon was able to obtain some bumper stickers from the Talent Library, which we will purchase through a printing company and hand out to our library patrons so we can all be involved in promoting the sustainability of our libraries.

Becoming a district means that our libraries will move out from under the governance of the county and will enjoy the stability of a permanent tax base and leadership of a separately elected board whose sole purpose is to guide our libraries. The proposed district funding offers hope

for expanded services at each library. If the ballot passes it could raise as much as \$9 million for the libraries.

Carol Hoon reported on the success of our hat sale. We were able to raise \$620 from the sale of our hand-knitted hats, and we are grateful to Carol for organizing this event and keeping it going throughout the holidays. We also raised \$198 from our annual book sale, despite the fire that had destroyed all of the books we had stored in our storage area.

FOAL gave a program on February 16 in the meeting room of the Applegate Library. Gay Bradshaw shared her work on rescuing desert tortoises. She is establishing a tortoise rehabilitation center through The Kerulos Center on Beaver Creek in the Upper Applegate.

For more information, call Joan Peterson at 541-846-6988.

— Ruch Library —

Thank you, Applegate Valley families and children, for your generous donations to our Lego collection, which is now very impressive. We will be having a Lego Fun event the first Saturday of every month for children four years and older from 1 to 3:30 pm. Adults also are encouraged to attend. Embrace your love of Legos! Lego time is offered after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:45 pm.

Something new at Ruch Library: Older children can listen to a book being read aloud while younger siblings are at Preschool Story Time. All children ages six and up are welcome to attend. Both activities will be on Tuesdays at 11:30 am.

Oregon Reads 2014 is a statewide program featuring the works of the late Oregon and National Poet Laureate William Stafford. Ruch Library will

be celebrating his life and works in April, which is Poetry Month. Check the Applegater's Facebook page and online calendar (www.applegater.org) for specific events.

The A-Frame Bookstore, operated by the Friends of Ruch Library, is open from 12 to 4 pm on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and from 1 to 5 pm on Thursdays. It is now brimming with new titles, including many pristine copies that make great gifts.

Don't forget that your library card is your ticket to a variety of databases offered through www.jcls.org. You can research medical information, learn languages, fix your car and much more!

We hope to see you soon at the library. For more information, contact Thalia Truesdell, branch manager, at 541-899-7438 or ttruesdell@jcls.org.



Williams Library: Providing valuable resources here and now

Technology services

The Internet has given us the ability to learn and connect like never before. Technology is a large part of what our libraries provide. Many of the people using our services are utilizing public-access computers, printers and Wi-Fi provided by Josephine Community Libraries. The value of libraries today is not replaced by, but is in fact *enhanced* by technology.

For rural communities like Williams, our technology services are vital to those who might otherwise be left behind in this digital age. Drive by any day of the week and you will see folks parked outside the library using the Wi-Fi (donated by Hunter Communications). When the library opens, people come in and print documents, check emails and social media, conduct research for school papers, and look for jobs online.

Newly completed wiring will allow us to soon provide more public-access

computers. Wi-Fi service inside and outside the library will now be even faster and more reliable. Williams Library is open in the here-and-now *and* has a free-to-the-public, community-sponsored, high-speed Internet hot spot!

We need a library district

Like the main branch in Grants Pass, demand for our services has grown since the county closed its libraries several years ago. Now run as a nonprofit, Josephine Community Libraries is a valuable part of the community in many ways. Patrons in Williams can request any book, audiobook, or DVD from any of the four branches. Volunteer couriers take the materials from branch to branch each week. Our libraries are available for group meetings, offer children's programs, and work with schools and adult educators to promote literacy.

Checking out library materials could easily save you hundreds of dollars per year! Although getting your library card is free,

we constantly rely on volunteers, donations, and grants to operate. This model is simply not sustainable into the future. We need the opportunities provided by a growing economy. Quality public libraries are at the heart of a sustainable economic future. A place where people can meet and share ideas, seek knowledge, and educate their children is a necessity for our community.

Upcoming events

We are having two yard sales this year to raise funds for Williams Adopt-an-Hour. Last July the community matched a generous donation by Herb Pharm to extend open hours from 9 to 12 hours per week. Save your household items for donation. The first sale will be Saturday, April 19, at the Williams Grange. Music, food, and activities for the kids included.

To join Friends of the Library, volunteer, or share your skills with local children, please stop by. The library is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday from 1 to 5 pm; Stories and Crafts is held on Saturdays at 2 pm. Wi-Fi is available 24/7.

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P & D Small Excavating

P & D Small Excavating was started in 1999. The "P" is Phil Niedermeyer (see photo below); the "D" was Don Yarbrough (deceased). The "Small" comes from the Terex "mini" excavator, which can be used in very tight quarters, making it ideal for backyard projects and maneuvering through gates and so forth. Together with a Yanmar track dump for hauling or removing material, Phil can do a variety of projects including curtain drains, cutbanks, tree/shrub removal, power/water ditching and backfill and a variety of other things his clients come up with. For free estimates and very reasonable rates, please call Phil at 541-660-0896.



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