

UCAN News Articles – April 2017



Friday, April 7, 2017

GP Chamber of Commerce needs cheery volunteers (RSPV)

By Rebecca de Greyt for the Daily Courier

Sponsored by the United Community Action Network, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program matches the talents of people 55 and older with nonprofit agencies, and health care facilities throughout Josephine County.

- **GIVE A CHEERY HELLO.** Become a Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce volunteer and learn about your community and your city as you help assist visitors, chamber members, and lend a hand in community events. If you are looking to brighten your day, start with a cheery hello to visitors and citizens of the Josephine County area. There are a variety of roles available. Please contact the RSVP receptionist at 541-956-4472 if you would like to sign up to volunteer.
- **KNACK FOR KNITTING?** Every Thursday at 1:30 p.m. the UCAN Knitters come together and knit for an hour in the break room. They knit hats, scarfs, and blankets for the clients that come into UCAN. Many Josephine County families come through our doors and are in crisis, lacking proper winter clothes to survive the cold nights. Sometimes all it takes is a hat and a scarf to make their day and to see a smile on their face. Come join the UCAN knitting club and be a part of making warm hands and smiling faces. Contact Rebecca de Greyt at 541-956-4474 if you have any questions.
- **BE AN AMBASSADOR.** Volunteers are the heart and soul of the UCAN Josephine County Warehouse and the Raptor Creek Farm. Your generous contributions of time and talent help get our job done efficiently and effectively. We are looking for three people to be cross-trained to serve at the warehouse and be a driver for the Fresh Food Alliance. If you have the time and would like to learn more, please contact Rebecca de Greyt at 541-956-4472.



Sunday, April 9, 2017

City Council eyes Food Bank lease transfer on Monday

By Troy Shinn of the Daily Courier

The Grants Pass City Council on Monday is expected to formally approve the transfer of the lease for the Josephine County Food Bank.

United Community Action Network has been operating the Food Bank since 2005, but the arrangement was never meant to be permanent. UCAN also sponsors the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, or RSVP.

Now a two-year-old nonprofit group called Friends of Josephine County Food Bank is ready to take the reins.

UCAN Executive Director Michael Fieldman recounted how the agency's board initially was reluctant to shoulder the burden due to underfunding.

"I convinced them to give me some time to raise the money because that's a really great thing for the community," he said.

UCAN moved the food bank to where it now operates at 3658 Upper River Road, also known as the River Road Reserve. The site also includes the food bank's Raptor Creek Farm, which is sited on about 10 acres of the 250-acre property.

City Council President Dennis Roler, who was on the food bank board for 10 years, said he is grateful for UCAN stepping in when it did and keeping the operation alive all this time.

"We were very grateful to UCAN for that," he said.

But UCAN has been ready for a while to transfer the lease and leadership to another organization that wouldn't have to split its focus.

The nonprofit Friends of the Josephine County Food Bank answered the call.

It's made up of the same people who have been a part of the operations at Raptor Creek Farm for years, so it is well positioned to take on the added responsibility.

"In the last few years a huge groundswell of community support has led to collaborations with the Food Bank and the City of Grants Pass that resulted in Raptor Creek Farm and a new warehouse for storing food and nutritious produce," said marketing director for the Friends group Jill Gleysteen. "This ... support has enabled the Friends of the Josephine County Food Bank Network ... to return to local leadership of the JCFB to Josephine County — a testament to the heart of our community."

One of the partnerships she speaks of with the city, besides that the government owns the Raptor Creek land, was that Grants Pass applied for federal grants to help with operations.

"With this grant they don't have to pay rent on that land," said Roler. "That means more money toward food operations."

The \$1.5 million grant, a percentage of which was matched with \$400,000 raised by the Friends through various local partners, led to the creation of the new warehouse at Raptor Creek Farm, moving the food storage from the old warehouse on M Street.

The grand opening of that warehouse was two years ago this month.

The food bank serves over 11,000 people every month, moving millions of pounds of local produce from the farm a year. The food is distributed through a network of independent food pantries and social service agencies.

UCAN and the nonprofit Friends still have to solidify the fine print before the transaction is finalized, but that is expected to go through without any problems, as both parties are looking forward to the transition.

"The Friends group has been a huge help and a great partner over the (past two) years," said Fieldman. "I think it will be great for them and for the food bank."

The City Council will vote Monday on whether to approve the lease transfer. That's because the city owns the property.

The Council will hold a workshop afterward to address the Allen Creek Road widening project, as well as hold an executive session to discuss property transactions.

The meetings will take place at 11:45 a.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 101 N.W. A St.



Tuesday, April 11, 2017

City approves Josephine County Food Bank lease transfer

By Troy Shinn of the Daily Courier

The Grants Pass City Council on Monday approved the transfer of the lease for the Josephine County Food Bank and Raptor Creek Farm to a new nonprofit organization.

The Food Bank, which for more than a decade has been operated by Roseburg-based UCAN, will now move back to the local control under the group Friends of Josephine County Food Bank, something that councilors praised.

"I've been appraised of this for a while, having served on the board of the Food Bank for 10 years," said Council President Dennis Roler. "I'm glad to see it going back to local control."

Barbara Bean, president of the new Food Bank board, spoke at the meeting as well.

"I want to thank the Council for considering this today," Bean said. "We are looking forward to continuing with local leadership and to continue to provide food for the needy members of our community."

The Food Bank is located on city-owned property at 3658 Upper River Road, also known as the River Road Reserve. The site also includes the food bank's Raptor Creek Farm, which is sited on about 10 acres of the 250-acre property.

The food bank serves over 11,000 people every month, moving millions of pounds of local produce from the farm a year. The food is distributed through a network of independent food pantries and social service agencies.

In other business Monday, the Council discussed the possibility of roundabouts, or traffic circles, as part of the upcoming Allen Creek Road widening project.

Roundabouts move traffic more efficiently, are safer and are easier on air quality than traditional sign- or signal-regulated intersections. Some motorists prefer taking turns as dictated by stop signs and signals, however.

The only solid plan at this time is to use two stop signs at the intersection of Allen Creek Road and Harbeck Road. The city is still analyzing the impact of using a large roundabout at the other end of Allen Creek at Denton Trail.

The Council did not take any action on the above item, but indicated for Parks and Community Development Director Lora Glover to continue with the project proposal.

Next, the city will post notice to the neighbors in the area and hold an open house to gather questions and concerns from the residents there.



Wednesday, April 12, 2017

Food Bank names new director: Daily Courier Editor Kevin Widdison takes over in May

WIDDISON

By Jeff Duewel of the Daily Courier



Details of the transfer of the Josephine County Food Bank and Raptor Creek Farm lease were revealed at the Grants Pass City Council Monday night.

On Tuesday, Friends of the Josephine County Food Bank announced that Kevin Widdison, editor of the Daily Courier, has been appointed executive director of the Food Bank.

He will take over in May. Widdison follows former executive director Sam Engel, who left in August to accept a position with AllCare Health. Rebecca de Greyt of UCAN has been serving as interim director the past several months.

"We are excited about what the future holds for the Josephine County Food Bank," said Barbara Bean, board chairwoman of Friends of Josephine County Food Bank. "We believe our board of committed local volunteers, working with our new executive director, will allow the Food Bank to better serve the community in its mission: Because no one should be hungry."

Friends of the Josephine County Food Bank took over the lease from Roseburg-based UCAN.

Widdison said the primary role as executive director is fundraising, along with overseeing operations. He was city editor at the Courier beginning in April 1996, and became editor in 2013 when Dennis Roler retired.

The Food Bank is located on city-owned property at 3658 Upper River Road, also known as the River Road Reserve. The site also includes the food bank's Raptor Creek Farm, which is sited on about 10 acres of the 250-acre property.

The food bank serves over 11,000 people every month, moving millions of pounds of local produce from the farm a year.

The food is distributed through a network of independent food pantries and social service agencies.



Friday, April 14, 2017

Vol Ops: Volunteers receive recognition for thousands of hours of service

ADA DUNCAN

On April 4, seven cities in the county as well as the Douglas County commissioners joined the proclamation of National Recognition Day of Volunteers in Service throughout the country.

That's special and long overdue when you consider that in our county volunteers contributed over 147,784 hours of service to our communities.

But in spite of all those efforts there is still much more to do. Check out the opportunities below and find one that suits you.

Genealogical Society needs volunteers of all ages, especially high school and college students, to help “read” and record information on 22,000 grave markers at cemetery starting the last week of April. Applicants will be trained and parcels will be assigned to teams who can work at their own pace until project is completed. For details, call Jim at 541-733-1861 or email him at JBLuse@gmail.com

Roseburg Dream Center, a non-profit food pantry and clothing center, is in need of volunteers from 9 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Monday and Wednesday to distribute food and 9:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday to help with clothing at its location at 1900 S.E. Main St. For details, call Sylvia at 541-673-5918.

Friendly Kitchen has an ongoing need of volunteers to deliver hot meals to homebound seniors, help with meal preparation, dining room assistants, dishwashers, greeters and custodians from 11 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday. For details, call Annette at 541-673-5929 or email her at friendlykitchen@charter.net

Senior Companion Program volunteers offer peer support, escorted transportation, friendship and a helping hand to the elderly. Tax-free stipend, mileage and meal reimbursement is available. For more information, call Colleen at 541-492-3520 or email her at colleen.may@ucanap.org

For the following needs call the Volunteer Hotline, 541-492-3526.

Douglas County Dining Sites are looking for volunteers to deliver meals to homebound seniors and the disabled, and help to prepare and serve meals at the dining sites.

Prescription Assistance team needs volunteers to assist seniors and low-income folks find resources that can help fund their prescription costs.

Community educators are needed to assist Medicare recipients or those approaching Medicare age to understand the complex program. Training is provided.

UCAN Food Bank is recruiting volunteers 18 years and older to help in the warehouse, sort and repack food boxes, as well as drivers to pick up donations from area grocery stores.

UCAN/RSVP Vet Team is looking for male or female veterans to help homeless veterans in the housing program to fill out paper work or take them to look at properties and mentoring them in the process. Call Karen at 541-492-3917 for details.

UCAN/RSVP needs three assistants to review volunteer applications and find the right program for them, help develop promotional materials, work with social media and track volunteer hours. Anyone over 18 years old is welcome. Call Karen at 541-492-3917 to sign up.



Friday, April 14, 2017

Help by being a senior companion (RSVP)

By Rebecca De Greyt for the Daily Courier

Sponsored by the United Community Action Network, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program matches the talents of people 55 and older with nonprofit agencies, and health care facilities throughout Josephine County.

- **BE A SENIOR COMPANION.** UCAN Senior Companion volunteers can enhance the quality of life and help maintain personal independence. Oregon's aging population growth is occurring at a time marked by economic uncertainty, but you can make a difference by becoming a Senior Companion volunteer. You can make a difference by providing 15-40 hours of assistance weekly to individuals through companionship, playing games, grocery shopping, going to the doctor and many other social features. Adults who qualify will be trained, supported and given volunteer service activities that achieve tangible results. Call 541-956-4474 to find out if you meet all the eligibility requirements.

- **DO YOU HAVE A HEART FOR HELPING TEENS?** Hearts With A Mission serves homeless and at-risk youth by providing shelter, educational support, mentoring and transition planning with a faith-based approach. The shelter in Grants Pass has been open since May 2016. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities at this location please contact Rebecca de Greyt 541-956-4474.

- **SUPPORT INDEPENDENT LIVING.** Become a part of the Food & Friends Senior Meal Program, where they provide balanced nutritional meals and provide social contact. This helps in providing a safety net for those in the community and gives those an opportunity to interact with others. Dining Room help is needed and training is provided. Volunteers need to complete a criminal background check.

If you would like to find out more information, please come by the UCAN-RSVP Office at 125 N.E. Manzanita and pick up an RSVP application, or call Rebecca de Greyt at 541-956-4474.

- **COME RIDE ALONG.** Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Josephine County Food Bank. Your generous contributions of time and talent help get the job done efficiently and effectively. The Food Bank is looking for people who are available to ride along on the Fresh Food Alliance runs. There are two runs: 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and noon to 1:30 p.m. If you have the time and would like to learn more, please contact Rebecca de Greyt at 541-956-4474.



Thursday, April 20, 2017

Douglas County Earth Day and Energy Fair 2017 takes place this Saturday, April 22

The 17th Annual Douglas County Earth Day and Energy Fair 2017 will take place this Saturday in the Exhibit Building at the Douglas County Fairgrounds, celebrating the actual date of Earth Day on April 22 this year.

“This is a celebration of the Earth that’s a reminder to all of us to be good stewards of our planet,” said volunteer Earth Day organizer Stuart Liebowitz. “We’re presenting a broad range of options that are friendly to the Earth.”

Among more than 50 Earth Day-themed exhibitors this year, the latest in electric car technology will be a highlight.

“We cover the gamut of alternative transportation, with everything from biking to the latest in alternative technology,” Liebowitz said.

Electric cars like Teslas (with a range of over 200 miles per charge), the Chevy Volt and the Nissan Leaf will be among the vehicles featured, along with electric bicycles. The owners of the vehicles will also be there to answer questions.

“This is real-life experience, not a salesperson giving a pitch,” Liebowitz said.

The Velo Club and Bike Walk Roseburg will also be offering free bike adjustments and minor repairs for bikes at the fair. Umpqua Transit will display a bus, and representatives will answer questions about riding the bus.

The fair is a family-friendly event. Wildlife Safari will bring live animals while the Bureau of Land Management will offer birdhouse building at a migratory bird display. Newcastle Solar will also show the latest in solar technology.

A nature poetry contest will take place at 11:45 a.m. sponsored by An Association of Writers, and Sunrise Enterprises will host a fashion show featuring recycled clothing at 11:15 a.m. Raffles with prizes such as bicycles will also be held throughout the event.

Food will be provided by a Phoenix School fundraiser, and live music will take place all day with the Phoenix School Band at noon, Underground River at 1:15 p.m. and The Rovers, a nine-piece Celtic band, at 2:45 p.m.

This year's fair introduces a new event called the Earth Keeper Art Contest for students in kindergarten to 12th grade. Student artwork will illustrate the themes of environmental stewardship, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

"This gives any public school student in Douglas County the opportunity to create art and have it seen at the Earth Day Fair that draws an estimated 3,000 or more visitors," said Earth Day event coordinator Zev Braun.

The top two students in each grade category will win prizes for art judged by Umpqua Valley Arts Association representatives. The categories are divided into K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10 and 11-12.

All the artwork submitted by students will be exhibited at the fair, with the top 12 winners announced at the fair from 1:15 to 2:30 p.m.

"This art show creates an investment in the next generation of public school students toward the Earth," Braun said. "It shows them that creating things that have some say in how the Earth's conservation unfolds is important, and that they can cause changes based on their self expression."

This new art event also strives to get high school students involved in Earth Day, since they are the closest group of students that can become professionals or advocates for environmental protection and conservation.

Today Earth Day is run by a group of about 12 volunteers who raise enough funds to rent a space at the fairgrounds for a day of celebration honoring the planet we live on.

NeighborWorks Umpqua is the major sponsor for the event, along with multiple local partial sponsors.

For more information, call 541-672-9819 or visit the Facebook page. Guests are also encouraged to bring a canned or nonperishable food donation to help the United Community Action Network, or UCAN, Food Bank.



Friday, April 21, 2017

Help others maintain personal independence as a Senior Companion volunteer (RSVP)

By Rebecca De Greyt for the Daily Courier

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Friday, April 28, 2017

Help others be independent as a Senior Companion (RSVP)

By Rebecca De Greyt for the Daily Courier

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