



Vine maple along the Metolius is turning, creating one of the magical sights of the beloved river's varied seasons.

PHOTO BY CODY RHEAULT

FUTURE: Tension between growth, community character

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expertise in one of four vision areas — Livable Sisters, Resilient Sisters, Connected Sisters, and Prosperous Sisters.

NXT Consulting visioning project co-facilitator Steven Ames told the audience the biggest concern for a vision process is over-planning and under-implementing. Dreams and wishes are nice, but putting practical action plans to work brings dreams alive. To make that happen, Ames explained, community involvement is the key to success.

The three full reports containing all the information gleaned from the vision process are available on the website, www.sistershorizons.org. Also on the website is a comment form on

which people are invited to make comments on the draft vision statement and share action ideas for the top strategies as well as the runners-up. The deadline for submitting comments is October 14. Comments are invited from visitors as well as residents living inside and outside the city of Sisters. Click on “comments” on the home page to share thoughts and suggest ideas.

Distilling all the information to its simplest form, the main tension that exists for Sisters is the tenuous balance between maintaining a small-town atmosphere while accommodating inevitable growth.

Ames indicated for most communities some version of that tension is the key issue. How the action plans accomplish that balance is dependent on the culture and personality of each town and the actions acceptable to the residents. He indicated

that Hillsboro is the current gold standard for measuring the success of a vision process. They are 15 years into their plan and enjoying great success.

Because of their visioning process, Wenatchee and East Wenatchee, Washington, are learning how to collaborate after years of never interacting. Their fire departments have merged and they just had their first-ever joint meeting of the city councils and planners from both municipalities.

Ames cautioned that plans that are too complex, lacking community support, or lacking adequate public/private/community resources will not succeed.

Nick Lelack, Deschutes County community development director, told *The Nugget*, “The plans need to be organic so they are sustainable.” He thinks the Sisters plan will be a model to replicate in other areas of Central Oregon.

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