

Donations lag at Kiwanis Food Bank

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Donations for the critical fourth quarter are down significantly at the Sisters Kiwanis Food Bank.

Tom Hesper, who oversees the Food Bank project for the service club, explained that October, November and December are the most critical months in donations for the Food Bank. That's when the bulk of donations come in.

"That's when we have to make it or break it — in the fourth quarter, in the giving season, if you will," Hesper said.

So far, the Food Bank is not making it.

"Where we are is, we're down \$25,359," Hesper said.

Hesper said that translates to a 30 percent drop year-to-year against 2018, and a 48 percent drop in Q4 donations. Last year, the Food Bank received multiple donations in the \$10,000 range. Those have not occurred yet, though Hesper holds out hope for December. He noted that the website has been receiving contributions, and food drives like that conducted through November by *The Nugget* and the Cub Scouts and others help. It just hasn't been enough.

Hesper said he is not sure what has caused the steep drop-off.

"It's not for lack of trying, I can tell you that," he said. "There's no obvious explanation for this in my mind."

The drop-off in donations comes at a time when costs and demand are growing.

Food expense is up four percent at \$53,576 and the amount of monthly food distribution is up 3 percent at 118,489 pounds (9,874 monthly average). The number of clients served is up significantly, among both families who have shelter (31 percent) and those who are

homeless (34 percent).

To make a cash donation, visit the website and click on the "Donate" button. Checks payable to Sisters Kiwanis Food Bank may be mailed to P.O. Box 1296, Sisters, OR 97759.

Hesper assured the public that there is no danger of the Food Bank closing its doors.

"We have a very robust business model," he said.

The Food Bank's model allows its clients to shop for their food, rather than just handing them a box of whatever is on hand. That means families get what they really want and need. The Kiwanis Food Bank also allows multiple visits. That policy makes the food bank more efficient and effective, with less potential for waste.

However, the downward trend is troubling, especially as the Food Bank is in the midst of a season of high demand and — usually — generous giving.

Hesper deployed a football analogy for the critical nature of this last month of the year.

"We're in the red zone," he said. "We've got to score. We've got to score in December."



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LETTERS

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To the Editor:

I wish to echo Josh Groves' concerns about development in Sisters (*The Nugget*, November 20, page 2).

Although it is both impossible and undesirable to live in a fossilized community, local development has gotten out of hand. *Nugget* writer Sue Stafford writes in Area 97 that in Sisters "growth is accompanied by the usual benefits and growing pains one would expect." This begs the question of what are the "usual benefits"? Do they outweigh the growing pains?

The municipal authorities seem to have no resistance to the blandishments of developers or certain businesses no matter what the effect on the community as a whole. They also seem to forget that Sisters cannot be thought of as just a small town of 3,000 people because probably twice that number live within five miles of it and are affected by what happens there.

Why does Sisters need a Dollar Store or need to give Laird Industries \$50,000 of our money to set up shop? The argument that the

town needs to diversify its economy is hollow, unconvincing and ignores the nature of the larger community (especially retirees). The growing strip mall west of town and subdivisions in town are turning Sisters into an expanding patch of mostly ugly urban sprawl. In the summer the town almost comes to a halt because of the traffic. Sisters' small-town atmosphere and natural beauty, which have made it an attractive place in which to live, are being undermined by pointless development, that is, the irresponsible policies of the municipal authorities.

Growth for growth's sake is the rationale of the cancer cell. The word "country" can now be dropped from the marketing phrase "Sisters Country."

Gary Leiser

To the Editor:

Just wanted to thank Jim and Sue and the staff at *The Nugget* for the GREAT coverage of C4C's "Let's Sing" event last Friday. It was very well-attended by 200 multigenerational folks who sang and smiled together through the night.

Thank you for supporting us so strongly in creating this success.

Chris Laing

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