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Fred Douffet inspects a shipment of squash donated by Organically Grown, a local produce wholesaler.

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Community



Douffet's job brings him in contact with many interesting people around Eugene, including this group of cardboard recyclers.

Douffet shuttles food to the needy

Story by Sam Silverstein
Photos by Andre Ranieri

To Fred Douffet, leftover chicken, tuna and egg salad sandwiches are not garbage, but a "high speed problem."

For two and a half years Douffet has picked up donations for FOOD For Lane County and shuttled them back to the agency's warehouse at 255 Madison St. Neither of his battered vans — or his larger five-ton truck — are refrigerated, and donated perishable or frozen foods require quick thinking from a man who is, in his own words, a "technician to the max."

"I've been thrown a lot of curves. Like 5,000 cases of ice cream — we moved all 5,000 cases of it," Douffet said. "By sundown that night, poor people were eating ice cream from Washington to California, Idaho to the coast."

"The cost for that was 65 dollars. It worked out great," he said.

Douffet's job combines mental acrobatics, knowledge of mechanics and nutrition, meticulousness and a lot of heart. He's been juggling them all for more than two and a half years.

Douffet's association with FEELC, the Eugene-based food bank that supplies 61 different local shelters, foster homes and food box agencies, began in spring 1987 as a volunteer.

"It kind of grew on me. I got to where I would prefer to volunteer my time than go to work," he said. That summer he was hired by FEELC as what he calls "transportation engineer."

On a recent overcast Eugene afternoon, Douffet drove his favorite white '74 Chevrolet van on a precisely calculated route through Eugene. He cut through the down-

Turn to Douffet, Page 11

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