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Students to help protect rural environments

By Kaly Soto
Oregon Daily Emerald

The ad might read: WANTED: innovative and courageous graduate students for *Northwestern Exposure*-esque adventure in rural Oregon. Must be willing to work very hard.

The Resource Assistance to Rural Environments (RARE) program is an outgrowth of the Community Planning Workshop offered by the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management.

The program is intended to match rural Oregon communities with graduate students who will be able to "help them diversify their economies and improve their environmental conditions," said David Povey, a professor of urban and regional planning at the University and director of the community planning workshops.

"Our goal is to find out if there are other products in their areas for which there is a market value such as mushrooms in the forest which can be harvested without cutting the trees down," Povey said.

Oregon's citizens have borne witness to the ongoing battle between environmentalists and those seeking to preserve jobs in the timber industry.

According to the application provided to those interested in RARE, 65 percent of Oregonians employed in lumber and wood products manufacturing lived in rural portions of the state.

Additionally, 18 of 36 Oregon counties have 20 percent or more of their private sector labor force employed in industries dependent on the use of these natural resources.

Counties such as Lake, Harney, Malheur, Crook and Jefferson have more than 30 percent of their counties employed in the timber industry, according to Povey's research. He concluded that these counties have relied for too long on a very limited number of "renewable resources" which no longer ap-

pear to be renewing themselves at a rate which allows the communities to sustain themselves.

The objective of RARE is to help communities adjust and sustain by supplying them with a person who's full-time job is looking for new approaches to the communities' woes.

Communities that find themselves in a position of need are encouraged to apply. Ideally, two or three communities in need would band together and apply, Povey said.

Judith St. Claire, executive director of Oregon Rural Development Council, said, "lack of capacity to hire a professional development staff" is one of the barriers rural communities face when trying to diversify. "One of the biggest challenges is that most of the efforts by these communities to diversify depend largely on volunteer services.

At first, volunteers expend a lot of time and energy, but they get burned out. RARE will bring vitality and invent new ways to help rural communities deal with their problems. "It will give them a needed shot in the arm," St. Claire said.

The Oregon Rural Development Council was established four years ago to help solve some of the same problems RARE participants will be trying to solve.

In addition to finding new products to replace timber, a student selected to participate in RARE would help communities develop service industries such as "rural transportation systems," Povey said. An experiment with such a system is being conducted right now in Hood River.

Like many other agricultural communities, Hood River is dealing with a heavy influx of migrant workers—many of whom do not have vehicles yet still need to get to work. "Rural transportation systems" will solve the problem of the migrant workers and provide a market niche for entrepreneurs who are looking for a way to diversify

their business interests.

Interested students should have already completed one year of graduate work in Urban and Regional Planning or a related field, two terms of Community Planning Workshop, completed course work or be able to show evidence of skill and knowledge in three or more of the following areas: planning analysis, legal issues in planning policy, public planning theory, DOS-based computer skills, project management, geographic information systems and grant writing. Selected students will be paid \$12,000 as well as \$4,700 in educational cost.

Interested communities need a survey of city administrators in their community so that specific skills of students can be matched to those lacking in the community. The communities also need some sort of strategy for diversifying as well as local contacts with some resources to help them fulfill their plan of diversification.

The most important factor when selecting the communities will be need and willingness to participate.

Students chosen will be available for placement in October.

RARE is funded by a \$200,000 grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service. The U.S. Department of Education will provide an additional \$67,000 to train and manage those selected for the program and to help implement community service projects.

The grant money from the CN&CS will allow RARE to continue for at least three years, at which time Povey hopes the success of the program will entice public and private benefactors to contribute the funds necessary for the program to continue. Initially Povey will place 10 graduate students in rural communities in need.

Applications are due no later than Aug. 5. For more information, call 346-3812.

Colorado town remembers firefighters killed on duty

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — As wisps of white smoke drifted skyward from the ashy mountainside, mourners held hands, sang "Amazing Grace" and wept at a service for 14 firefighters who died trying to stop a runaway wildfire that threatened this resort town.

Fourteen chairs draped with American flags and black and white ribbons stood before the stage as about 3,500 people gathered Sunday to honor the firefighters, who were burned to death when the wildfire suddenly roared up Storm King Mountain's steep, rocky slope on Wednesday.

"We're glad they died doing what they liked to do," Montana firefighter Ted Murray said.

Five helicopters flew past in the missing man formation, with four leading and one bringing up the rear. A 30-foot electric cross, high on nearby Red Mountain, was illuminated. Usually only lighted for Christmas, it will blaze for 14 days, one for each victim.

The dead firefighters were veterans, highly skilled at the dangerous work of containing the wildfires that blow up across the hot, dry

West each summer. Nine were from Prineville, Ore.; others were from Montana, Idaho and elsewhere in Colorado.

"These 14 are now part of Glenwood Springs," said Bob Zanella, mayor of this Rocky Mountain town of about 6,000. "They are ours. They will be remembered."

Up the mountain's slope, black skeletons of juniper stood out against the gray ash dusting the ground.

"Please forgive this mountain, she couldn't control what happened up there," U.S. Rep. Scott McInnis told those gathered at Two Rivers Park, where the Colorado and Roaring Fork rivers meet. "It's truly a beautiful mountain. If it had emotions it would feel as deeply about this as we do."

The fire, which burned 1,856 acres, was surrounded Saturday by firelines dug into the ground. Crews dumping water from a giant bucket suspended from an Army helicopter assisted those on the ground, struggling to put out the remaining small, isolated blazes on Sunday.

Couple fighting release of their granddaughter's murderer

EUGENE (AP) — The grandparents of a 2-year-old girl who was brutally beaten, sodomized and finally smothered by Jeffrey David Halladay are arguing against a possible parole.

Halladay, now 34, was sentenced to 30 years for the 1987 slaying of Reitta Bessey and the beating of the girl's brother, Charles Grossman, then 14 months old.

But a good prison record has qualified Halladay for a July 28 parole board hearing that could cut his sentence by 20 percent, or six years.

Additional good behavior could earn him similar hearings

and reductions every three years.

Charles and Linda Bessey of Elkton find the possibility alarming.

"We do not hate him and we are no longer angry at him," the Besseys wrote in a letter to the Oregon Parole Board. "We just do not want to see him on the streets. Ever!"

Coos County District Attorney Paul Burgett agrees. "Jeffrey David Halladay is a monster who should never be allowed to set foot in free society," Burgett wrote in a letter to the parole board.

"In my 13 years as Coos County district attorney, I have never

had a case that approaches this in terms of sheer cruelty to a helpless victim. For the sake of our society and our children, don't release this man."

On Oct. 17, 1987, police were called to an apartment in Coos Bay that Halladay shared with the children's mother, Marcia Grossman, daughter of Charles Bessey.

Halladay was trying to revive Reitta. He told police a stereo speaker had fallen on her. The girl was dead on arrival at Bay Area Hospital.

The cause of death was listed as "battered child syndrome" and asphyxiation, from smothering.

An autopsy showed numerous

bruises and broken bones — injuries that had been inflicted over several weeks. A doctor in Portland said Reitta had anal injuries "consistent with forceful painful sodomy."

So severe were her injuries, "she must have been in daily pain for several weeks," Dr. Jan Bays wrote in a letter to the parole board.

Charles Grossman also had suffered numerous bruises and fractures. Adopted by the Besseys, he now is a thriving 8-year-old.

Halladay was charged with murder, sodomy and assault, but pleaded guilty to murder and assault under a plea bargain.

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