

## Smoke Free Cars for Kids

It can now cost you a \$500 fine for smoking in the car with kids present.

Effective January 1, 2014 in Oregon, smoking in a motor vehicle with any youth under the age of 18 present is a secondary traffic violation. The penalty is a \$250 fine for the first offense and up to \$500 for the second or subsequent offenses.

This is a new law passed to further protect children from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is classified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a Group A carcinogen and is shown to cause cancer in humans. According to the EPA, secondhand smoke in cars is especially harmful to children because of the small, confined space. Secondhand smoke levels are more concentrated,

which is particularly damaging to developing lungs. Children in an estimated 50,000 Oregon families are currently exposed to secondhand smoke in motor vehicles, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Studies have found that rolling car windows down while smoking does not protect passengers from dangerous levels of second hand smoke. According to the American Lung Association children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to suffer from respiratory infections like bronchitis and pneumonia, ear infections, and worsened asthma symptoms and attacks.

Police officers have the authority to enforce the law only if they have already stopped the driver operating the vehicle for a separate traffic violation or other

offense.

If you or anyone you know is interested or ready to quit using tobacco products, the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line can help. Please call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or go to [www.quitnow.net/Oregon/](http://www.quitnow.net/Oregon/). The Spanish Quit Line: 1-855-DEJELLO-YA (1-855-335-3569).

If you are interested in learning more about the new law, please contact the American Lung Association in Oregon at 503-924-4094 or visit [smokefreecarsforkids.org](http://smokefreecarsforkids.org). If you are interested in local tobacco prevention efforts in Columbia County, please contact Ashley Baggett, Tobacco Prevention and Education Coordinator for The Public Health Foundation of Columbia County: [abaggett@tphfcc.org](mailto:abaggett@tphfcc.org).

## CAT Program

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Community Action Team, (CAT) has been building Mutual Self-Help housing since 2000. CAT has helped to build nearly 20 houses in St. Helens, Oregon. Mutual Self-Help building is a unique program to achieve homeownership. The standard program model utilizes building groups of between eight and 12 families who all build new homes next to one another over a 10-12 month period. This traditional model requires that everyone contributes labor to each other's homes and all of the families move into the new homes at the same time. Self-Help homes in the standard program range from 1100 and 1400 sq ft and have mortgages between \$140k and \$160k. CAT's innovative

new program will benefit both the future homeowner and the community. The staff at Community Action Team is very proud to be one of a handful of agencies approved to do this work and are eager to help members of our community to become homeowners.

For information or if you have questions, Sally can be reached at 503.366.6544 or [smclaughlin@cat-team.org](mailto:smclaughlin@cat-team.org). Casey Mitchell, program director, can be reached at 503.366.6550 or [cmitchell1@cat-team.org](mailto:cmitchell1@cat-team.org).

Let us help you become one of the 15 new homeowners! If you or somebody that you know are interested, please contact us as soon as possible, as slots are limited.

## Creature Comforts ~ What's New

By Michal Smith

Creatures is continuing to grow and change in almost every aspect of the business. Aside from having just learned and implemented our new "high tech" software (allowing us more efficient tracking, ordering, and inventory reporting, etc.) we've also been growing the general inventory in our regular departments giving customers more overall selection in the store. Although we can't stock all things for all people we can always order items in for pick-up if what you're looking for isn't here!

This month we've added even more reasons to come visit. We've picked up where the Clever Cricket

left off when they closed last year and are carrying Melissa and Doug brand toys, puzzles and games. These are high quality, unique and durable for age infant through tween. You'll also be able to find western style gifts and accessories from Ozark Leather alongside basic tack supplies!

Pet Odor Exterminating Candles continue to be a huge hit with new fragrances available just in time for Valentine's Day!

And, as spring rolls around, for many it will be time for large animal vaccinations. Creatures can order many types of vaccines for goats, cows, pigs and horses. Large animal vaccine orders will be taken in person only so we're sure to have exactly what you need. (kit-

ten/cat and puppy/dog vaccines are always available in-store).

We continue to be a hub for Bailey's Pantry pet food donations and have been able to provide regular food deliveries in the last few months – THANK YOU to all who have helped with this amazing endeavor and watch for the next FUNdraiser soon!

We keep hearing our customers proudly exclaim that they are consciously making an effort to "keep it local" please know that we at Creatures deeply appreciate your patronage! Come in and see what's new Monday-Friday 10-6 ; Saturday 10-5; Sunday 12-4! 503-429-PETS(7387).

## WOEC Current: Adding Valuable Services for Our Members

By Sarah Rossi

Online Bill Pay is now available directly on the West Oregon Electric Cooperative website, [www.westoregon.org](http://www.westoregon.org). WOEC members have access to an easy-to-use online bill pay and account information system. SmartHub provides convenient account access available 24/7 by computer, tablet, and smart phone. This new system delivers account information, mobile payments and more in a secure environment. There are two options on the website, the "Pay Bill" button is a quick pay system that you only need to have your account number and name to be able to complete a payment, the "SmartHub logo" at the bottom of the home page and the "My Account" button at the top of the home page are links to the full SmartHub system that will show your account information and usage history.

Some of the features of SmartHub include:

- View bill and account information
- Contact customer service
- Bill payment and set up recurring payments
- Request paperless billing
- Electric usage details

SmartHub provides a safe and secure environment for your private information and payment transaction. Go to our website for more information or call the office at 503-429-3021 if you have any questions about this new way to pay your bill and see your account information!

West Oregon Electric

Cooperative is also pleased to announce our new partnership with Energy Efficiency Services (ESG) to provide additional energy efficiency support for our member programs. ESG became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ruralite in May of 2013, which added value and services to what both companies offer to electric utilities. With the trusted relationship WOEC has with Ruralite, it was a natural fit for us to start using ESG as our energy efficiency support. WOEC has a long history of providing conservation and energy efficiency rebates and programs to our members, and this new collaboration with ESG will expand and enhance our program offerings.

Energy Efficiency (EE), which can be defined as doing more with less energy, is by far one of the most important energy resources available to each and every one of us. It saves you money, it is good for the environment, and can also improve the economy. Even just changing out a few regular light bulbs to CFLs or LEDs, and adding some caulking around leaky windows and door trim can help you become more energy efficient in your home without costing you a lot of money. WOEC provides other helpful EE hints on our website ([www.westoregon.org](http://www.westoregon.org)) under the Member Services tab. Some are no cost / low cost and others like installing new windows and additional insulation are more costly to begin with, but if you have electric heat as your main heat source, may be eligible for EE rebates to help lower the cost.

Details about our newly expanded program, and a chart of available EE rebates can be found on the "Rebates: Energy Efficiency" page on our WOEC website. All of the eligible rebate forms are on that website page in fillable PDF form for our members' convenience. We also have a new "Frequently Asked Questions" section on the website rebates page about our EE programs and rebates. WOEC members may now call 1-888-883-9879 to talk to a dedicated energy efficiency specialist that can answer questions and follow up on EE rebates.

Home Energy Audits for residential members as well as commercial lighting project audits will continue to be offered free of

charge to WOEC members. Expert energy efficiency auditors will make appointments with WOEC members who request an audit to assess their home energy usage. The auditors will then prepare a report with helpful information on reducing electric usage and measures such as new windows and insulation that could be done to increase the member's energy efficiency. Just call 1-888-883-9879 to schedule an audit.

WOEC looks forward to working with the professional staff at ESG and being able to provide additional programs and services to our members. Please take this opportunity to check out the energy efficiency pages on our WOEC website to learn more about what you can do and how WOEC can help!



- Kitchen & Bathroom Remodels • Finish Carpentry
- Ceramic Tile Work • Custom Home Construction
- Additions • Commercial Tenant Improvements

Jim Morrison, Jr.  
General Contractor  
CCB# 112057

Ph: (503) 429-0154  
[MorrisonRemodeling@hughes.net](mailto:MorrisonRemodeling@hughes.net)  
Vernonia, OR 97064

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