

NONPROFIT NEWS AND UPDATES

AGA responds to COVID-19

BY SETH KAPLAN

Rereading the A Greater Applegate (AGA) article in the Spring *Applegater* reminds me again of how much our world has changed in such a short time. Back then, we were excited to share the schedule and early outcomes of our Neighborhood Listening Sessions. A few weeks later, most of us were practicing physical isolation—even more than we usually do in the Applegate! Things may have changed between the time this is written and you read it, but not everything. We will still have people living amongst us in need of support, and we will still have people willing to help.

AGA responded to COVID-19 by postponing our community meetings to an unknown future time. As much as we appreciate Zoom, FaceTime, and the rest, there is no substitute for gathering in community. We are anxious to get back to gatherings in neighborhoods and our business and nonprofit networks.

COVID-19 led us to make some significant changes in our work. We redesigned our community website, applegateconnect.org, so visitors can get daily updates on health from the Oregon Health Agency, on business and employment resources from the state and federal governments, and on our own community response. We will continue to use this site to inform the Applegate Valley on news about COVID-19, fire season, or anything else that comes our way.

AGA created a mutual aid network to connect people in need to people with resources. If you fall into either of these categories, you can sign up on applegateconnect.org through the Volunteer section or at agreaterapplegate.org on the home page. This mutual aid network is a useful resource for anyone who needs support from neighbors.

We were surprised at how many community groups were interested in using our Zoom teleconference resources. We hosted more than a dozen meetings for community groups in the first two weeks after the executive order to stay home. We later partnered with the Jackson County Library Services to offer free Zoom training and to provide three months of free Zoom service to any Applegate Valley organizations that participated.

AGA has worked with local farmers and ranchers to donate free meat and vegetables to the Ruch and Williams Food Pantries. We were proud to partner



Cathy Rodgers, A Greater Applegate board chair, presents a \$500 momentum grant to Joanna and Dusty Davis at the Applegate River Lodge to help cover the cost of the lodge providing free meals on Sundays, no questions asked. Photo: Janet Arseo.

with Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS), Ruch Country Store, Code 3, and Indigo Grill to promote a program to provide free lunches to youths 18 and under in the ROCS service area. We were excited to partner with Shelter-in-Plays to promote online local plays for donations, which raised significant funds for organizations and businesses stepping up in the time of COVID-19.

For AGA, this time has shed new light on issues that were already present in our idyllic valley long before COVID-19: lack of neighborhood- and valley-wide emergency preparedness plans; poor to nonexistent internet access; inequities in access to healthy food, housing, and reliable transportation to needed resources; and, for some, challenges in maintaining properties. AGA is committed to do what we can to support the Applegate Valley in this difficult time and in the difficult times that may continue for some of us.

This interest has led AGA to place a community impact insert in this edition of the *Applegater*. It includes a link to both a print version and an online survey that will help us understand how COVID-19 and the responses to it are impacting *you*. We know some people have lost jobs and others are busier than ever. Families are spending more time together, which can be a joy and a challenge, and some of us are more isolated than ever. Some people are worried about the future, and some are inspired by changes they are seeing. However you are feeling and to whatever degree you are being affected, we need to hear from you.

Thanks for contributing to A Greater Applegate for us all.

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A Greater Applegate
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McKee Bridge Day postponed, but Creativity Contest is a go

BY LAURA AHEARN

McKee Bridge Historical Society has postponed McKee Bridge Day from June 14 to late summer, but the good news is that the Creativity Contest is going forward on schedule. The entry deadline has been extended to June 5, and winners will be announced on June 13.

Students in grades K-8 and equivalent ages can find an interesting story, person, item, or landmark that relates to the history of the Upper and Little Applegate valleys, from the Red Buttes to the Logtown area, for their creative project. They can present their ideas using any medium: an essay, drawing, model, song, or skit. They don't have to live in the Applegate to be a contestant. All students are welcome.

First place in each age group will win a cash prize! (Grades K-2, \$50; grades 3-5, \$75; and grades 6-8, \$100.)

Second and third places will receive McKee Bridge merchandise, such as T-shirts, tote bags, and baseball caps. *All* participants will receive a voucher for an ice cream treat at McKee Bridge Day.

Participants can email an electronic entry form to mckeebridge1917@gmail.com, or scan a drawing, video a skit, or type a story and save it as a .doc file. They can also snail-mail an entry to MBHS at 8595 Upper Applegate Road, Jacksonville, Oregon 97530.

Visit the McKee Bridge Historical Society Facebook page for more details about the Creativity Contest and to download the entry form. (A parent will need to sign the form—a “digital” signature agreeing to the terms, in an email, is fine). While you are there, please “like” MBHS and look over the research, photos, and resources about our community's past that we are archiving and sharing.

Our articles of incorporation spell out two purposes: To engage in the restoration and maintenance of

McKee Bridge and to promote historic preservation and restoration action of other historically significant sites in the area.

Even with stay-at-home orders during the pandemic, the MBHS Board has been working hard in both of these areas. The bridge is due for its next engineering inspection in 2021, with an anticipated cost of at least \$6,000. We are preparing an application for a Preserving Oregon matching grant from the State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) to help offset this expense. (Although Jackson County owns the bridge structure and adjoining land, MBHS is responsible for inspections and any required repairs in order to keep the bridge open for pedestrian use.)

As reflected in our Facebook posts, MBHS is researching, curating, and sharing the voluminous information about Upper and Little Applegate history that is tucked away in family scrapbooks, dusty library files, old newspapers, or courthouse records. To support this ongoing project and produce some tangible, permanent displays, we are developing a proposal for a SHPO Heritage Oregon grant. If you are a history buff, graphic artist, or computer geek who can help create maps and produce high-resolution layouts, your assistance would be greatly appreciated! Please email mckeebridge1917@gmail.com if you can help.

And for one last piece— well, *two* pieces—of good news: Two wonderful new logos designed for MBHS by local artist Whit Whitney, are coming soon on T shirts! Make sure to get yours at McKee Bridge Day later in the summer.

Laura Ahearn
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Local artist Whit Whitney designed new logos for the McKee Bridge Historical Society. Signed T-shirts with the new designs will be available at McKee Bridge Day later in the summer.

Food pantry thanks supporters, offers help

Summer is here, and so are we! We say “thanks” to our generous donors and all the Upper Applegate community. We have had tremendous support from our friends and neighbors that allowed us to stay open during this pandemic.

To our wonderful volunteers, we say we are humbled and so appreciative for your loyalty and hard work.

If you are in need of help, feel free to come by and see us at Ruch Outdoor Community School, by the cafeteria at 156 Upper Applegate Road.

We are open on Mondays from 11:30 to 1 pm. Any questions? Feel free to contact us.

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A screenshot shows an Applegate Nonprofit Network meeting in progress via Zoom. AGA has moved its nonprofit and business meetings online while we practice physical isolation.