

NONPROFIT NEWS AND UPDATES

A Greater Applegate fine-tunes Community Vision

BY SETH KAPLAN AND MEGAN FEHRMAN

As Wendell Berry wrote in 1988, “In this difficult time of failed public expectations, when thoughtful people wonder where to look for hope, I keep returning in my own mind to the thought of the renewal of the rural communities.... But to be authentic, a true encouragement and a true beginning, this would have to be a revival accomplished mainly by the community itself. It would have to be done not from the outside by the instruction of visiting experts but from the inside by the ancient rule of neighborliness, by the love of precious things, and by the wish to be at home.” His words seem as fitting in today’s Applegate as they did in Berry’s Kentucky.

The Applegate Valley has no official boundaries. We’re marginally located in three counties and two states. We have no local government presence or services to address our needs or share our hopes. We don’t have accurate statistics about who lives here because we’re not considered an actual “place.” It’s hard to get our voices heard when we are invisible as a community.

By the time you’re reading this, A Greater Applegate (AGA) will have been fortunate to experience the local character, stories, and ideas in neighborhoods throughout this area as we completed the Applegate Valley Vision Listening Sessions. More than 300 people have gathered with us in all areas of our community: Little Applegate, Upper Applegate, Humbug Creek, North Applegate, Thompson Creek, Ruch, Gyda Lane, Sterling Creek, Provolt, Williams, Applegate Lake, Wilderville, and Murphy. Still more have shared their wisdom and experience at gatherings of Spanish speakers, local businesses, community organizations, advocates of the food system, and youth. Each one of these gatherings has been a little different, reflecting specific issues and bringing to the surface common interests, confirming that the Applegate Valley is a community with shared values and vision.

We want to hear from as many Applegaters as possible and to use what we hear to develop an Applegate Valley Vision highlighting community priorities that emerged through this process. *If you were unable to join one of our listening sessions, please complete the survey inserted in this issue of the Applegater. You can return it to the AGA office or your local library in Applegate, Ruch, or Williams.*

The next step in this process is for AGA to organize all we have heard into categories and share it with participants for confirmation. With that confirmation, we can begin to work together to turn vision into action. (On page 12, see the Community Vision graphic on how the process will unfold from here.)

As an outcome of the Applegate Valley Vision Listening Sessions and community-wide meetings, AGA will coordinate with the local community and content experts from public and private agencies to create Community Action Teams in support of the community’s prioritized projects. We will organize these teams around the priority projects and key strategies that emerged through the visioning process.



Members of the Sterling Creek neighborhood take part in a listening session.

The broad categories are:

1. Resilient and Connected

- Emergency Preparedness, Fire Management and Prevention
- Public Safety
- Built Environment/Infrastructure
- Communications Systems
- Energy

2. Vibrant and Livable

- Health and Wellness
- Transportation
- Housing
- Food Access and Security
- Education

3. Prosperous and Vital

- Local Economy
- Destination Management
- Business Network
- Arts and Culture
- (To be determined)

4. Stewarded and Sustainable

- Protect and Preserve Public & Private Forest Resources
- Protect and Preserve Water Resources and Local Watersheds
- Maintain and Enhance Small Family Farming and Local Food System
- Increase Outdoor Recreation Opportunities
- Plan for Climate Resiliency

5. Inclusive and Engaged Community

- Representation and Rural Advocacy
- Community and Neighborhood Events
- Age and Ability-friendly Programs and Activities
- Nonprofit Network Collaboration
- History and Cultural Heritage

It is an honor to witness and record the honesty and passion of so many Applegaters who have participated in this process. We look forward to turning inward during the fall and winter seasons to reflect on what we’ve learned. We are excited to return in the spring for the larger and deeper engagement to follow. If you are interested in playing a role in any of the emerging project and strategy categories, we welcome hearing from you.

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Let your lights shine!

Remember all those wonderful winter lights displays in the December 2020 tour by car? Let’s try to light up the local area again this year!

Contact Janis Mohr-Tipton (541-846-7501) or the A Greater Applegate office (541-702-2108) if you want to be included on the tour map.

Art on McKee Bridge is not to be missed

BY LAURA AHEARN

Sunday, September 12, Grandparents Day, will be a very busy day for McKee Bridge Historical Society (MBHS). MBHS members will meet at the McKee Bridge picnic grounds shelter for their annual meeting at 11 am, while Applegate artists and quilters convert the 104-year-old covered bridge into an art and quilt gallery. The exhibit will be open to the public from noon-4 pm and will feature at least two of the stunning museum quilts designed by MBHS founder Evelyn Byrne Williams.

MBHS is thrilled that Rogue Valley Genealogical Society (RVGS) has agreed to exhibit “Maryum’s Yellow Rose,” the incredibly detailed quilt that depicts the McKee family who emigrated to Jackson County in 1853.

RVGS will also display Evelyn’s large, original drawings, which were used by the Jacksonville Museum Quilters when they crafted this quilt back in 1984. A limited number of commemorative postcards will be on sale. Don’t miss this rare opportunity to see a very special quilt.

If you are an artist, in any medium, and would like to exhibit your work, please contact mckeebridge1917@gmail.com. While the event is intended to showcase Applegate creativity and not necessarily generate sales, it will be fine if exhibitors sell a piece or two or gain a commission. MBHS will charge no booth fees, as what’s important is creating a special space for our community to celebrate Applegate talent.

Speaking of talent, Ruch Outdoor Community School will have a booth. Grandparents who bring grandkids—and vice-versa—will receive a free ticket each for the drawing of their choice: a bottle of superior Cowhorn wine, a “Bigfoot Loves McKee Bridge” T-shirt, or an MBHS water bottle.

A key agenda item for the MBHS Annual Meeting is the election of directors and officers. If you might be interested in joining the board to help keep McKee Bridge open to the public and preserve Applegate history, please send a message to mckeebridge1917@gmail.com. Members will also review some recent and upcoming developments:

- MBHS received 100 percent of the requested grant from the Oregon Historic Cemeteries Commission to repair damaged grave markers and install an interpretive panel at Logtown Cemetery. MBHS volunteers continue to inspect and clean the oldest monuments at the cemetery and to research the pioneers they memorialize.

- MBHS volunteers have staffed a booth at almost every Applegate Evening Market on Wednesdays from 5-8 pm. Thank you, Electric Gardens Flower Farm!

- The Ruch Hardware 20th Anniversary Party was a fun day with lots of great people stopping at the MBHS booth to chat about history.

- Coming up: The decision on the pending grant application to the Oregon Cultural Trust, the mandatory structural inspection of the bridge, and—mark your calendar if you didn’t already—Art on the Bridge, aka Grandparents Day, noon-4 pm, Sunday, September 12.

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Two panels from the exquisite museum quilt “Maryum’s Yellow Rose,” which depicts the McKee family who emigrated to Jackson County in 1853. The quilt will be on display at McKee Bridge on Sunday, September 12.

VALLEY EXPERT!

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