

# Diane Hoover carries on public health mission in private sector

**Annette McGee Rasch**  
IVN Senior Contributing Writer

Former Josephine County (JoCo) Public Health Department director Diane Hoover, widely credited with rehabilitating that department's fiscal health, left her job a little more than a month ago and has taken on a new role as Community Program Manager for the Grants Pass Blue Zones Project - and she's loving it. "I'm so excited to be on the Blue Zone team," she said. "This is the best job ever. We have the opportunity to really encourage more community building."

Established in 2010, Blue Zones Project is a national network of 42 grassroots-led initiatives in nine states designed to help community leaders make healthy choices by that promote well-being and optimal health for citizens through permanent changes to a city's environment, policy, and social networks. The program was inspired by Dan Buettner, a National

Geographic Fellow and New York Times best-selling author who identified five regions of the world - Blue Zones - that possess the highest concentrations of people living to 100 years or more.

Before serving as JoCo's Public Health director for six years, Hoover had clocked in 26 years in the U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps, retiring at the rank of captain. According to former county commissioner Cheryl Walker (who was recently tapped to serve as JoCo's interim Public Health director), Hoover left the public health department much stronger than she found it.

"When Diane came on board six years ago, that department was having severe financial difficulties ... having a very hard time staying afloat," Walker said. "She worked hard at securing more grant funding, streamlining programs and networking with partner organizations. She was able to get Allcare [a public-benefit community care corporation that operates in

JoCo, Jackson and Curry counties] contracted to provide additional nurses and public health workers, and with that additional staff, we were able to provide a higher level of service to the public."

Walker also said Hoover brought "expenses and revenues in line. She brought in a positive cash flow and left a great legacy." Public Health drew \$300,000 from JoCo's General Fund until Hoover pared that number down to approximately \$150,000. Walker added that Hoover's positive influence is evident throughout the public health department, including "major improvements to animal protection services."

Nancy Lindquist, Illinois Valley resident and chairperson of the Animal Shelter advisory committee, also worked with Hoover. "Diane was instrumental in helping get this volunteer committee involved hands-on with the shelter to use levy funds for badly needed improvements," she said. "She'd roll up her sleeves. She'd even clean out cat cages and

dog runs when help was short. The bottom line was that she really cared about the well being of Josephine County's animals."

"It's been a privilege to serve the citizens of Josephine County as the public health director in 2011," Hoover said. "I want to publically thank Dr. David Candelaria and my staff for their hard work and selfless service during my tenure. The department's success is a direct reflection of their commitment to our community."

Now Hoover brings her considerable experience and strong work ethic to the Grants Pass Blue Zones project. "Grants Pass's being selected as one of Oregon's newest 'Blue Zones Project Demonstration Communities' is a result of the city's motivation to inspire people to live, work, learn, and play in settings that better support health and well-being," Hoover said.

"This is the work I have dedicated my career to and I am honored to be part of a skilled team so focused on getting results," said

Hoover, who joined Denise Kalic, George Prokop and Cort Cox, southern Oregonians who likewise possess backgrounds in community transformation, to lead the Grants Pass effort. "Hundreds of community leaders and engaged citizens are working on projects to bring positive change to our community, and we are excited to have this Blue Zones Project join these efforts." And she added that, "there may be potential opportunities for neighboring communities like Cave Junction to apply to also become a Blue Zone Demonstration project in the future."

Currently, Blue Zones Projects impact more than 3.3 million Americans nationwide and the movement includes three beach cities in California; 15 cities in Iowa; Albert Lea, Minnesota; the city of Fort Worth, Texas; and communities in Southwest Florida, Hawaii, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wisconsin. Blue Zones Project is a division of Sharecare. For more information, visit bluezonesproject.com.

# Dozens of forest fires burn in Oregon, casting pall of smoke

**Andrew Selsky**  
Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) - Much of Oregon was wrapped in a haze of smoke Monday as dozens of wildfires burned in the state, with one blaze forcing part of an interstate highway to be closed.

In the Willamette National Forest alone, 16 fires covering 71 square miles (184 sq. kilometers) were burning, officials said. Campfires were banned and a third of the forest was off limits, the forest service said.

In southwest Oregon, evacuations were ordered in a rural area near Cave Junction because of another fire. The current size of the blaze was unknown because heavy smoke has kept infrared mapping flights grounded, fire managers said.

"Smoke levels are creating unpleasant

and unhealthy conditions across much of southwest Oregon," the Joint Information Center said in a statement.

But smoke also filters sunlight, limiting additional heating of potential fuels on the ground and stifling small fires, the center said.

Air quality alerts were issued for several parts of the state. Doctors recommended that anyone with existing pulmonary conditions such as asthma stay indoors.

On the northern end of the state, a fire in the Columbia River Gorge that separates Oregon from Washington state caused ashes to drift onto the town of Cascade Locks. A stretch of Interstate 84 that runs by the town was closed because of the fire, the Oregon Department of Transportation said Monday evening. The highway will reopen when authorities determine that the road is safe.

Evacuation orders remained in place in and around Cascade Locks for 283 structures, including 15 businesses. After quickly spreading since it started on Saturday, apparently from a youngster playing with fireworks, the fire held the same position overnight and is an estimated 3,200 acres (1,295 hectares).

Native Americans who fish for salmon in the broad Columbia River consider Labor Day their busiest day to sell the smoked fish, but a market where they sell it by the Bridge of the Gods was quiet, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

Some hikers on Pacific Crest Trail, which runs through the area, were seen in Cascade Locks and told OPB that fires had prevented them from hiking about half the trail in Oregon.

The fire in southwest Oregon, which has burned more than 219 square

miles (567.21 sq. kilometers) was also threatening a tree that marks the site of a bombing of the continental United States by the Japanese during World War II, fire management officials said.

The redwood was planted as a symbol of reconciliation over a half-century ago by the family of Nobuo Fujita, a Japanese Navy pilot who dropped incendiary bombs on the forest near Brookings, the Bulletin newspaper of Bend reported.

Firefighters wrapped the redwood in a fire-retardant sheet to protect it, and the flames were believed to be about a mile (1.6 kilometers) away, said Terry Krasko, a spokesman for the firefighters.

Fujita's two bombs had little effect. He returned to Brookings after the war to apologize.

Saturday was the 75th anniversary of the firebombing. Fujita died in 1997.

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- Indian Life Naan: \$3.59 ea. (Reg. \$5.29 ea.)

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- Organic Pink Lady Apples: \$1.49 lb. (Reg. \$2.19 lb.)
- Organic Russet Potatoes: 89¢ lb. (Reg. \$1.19 lb.)
- Organic Red & Yellow Bell Peppers: \$3.39 lb. (Reg. \$4.39 lb.)

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