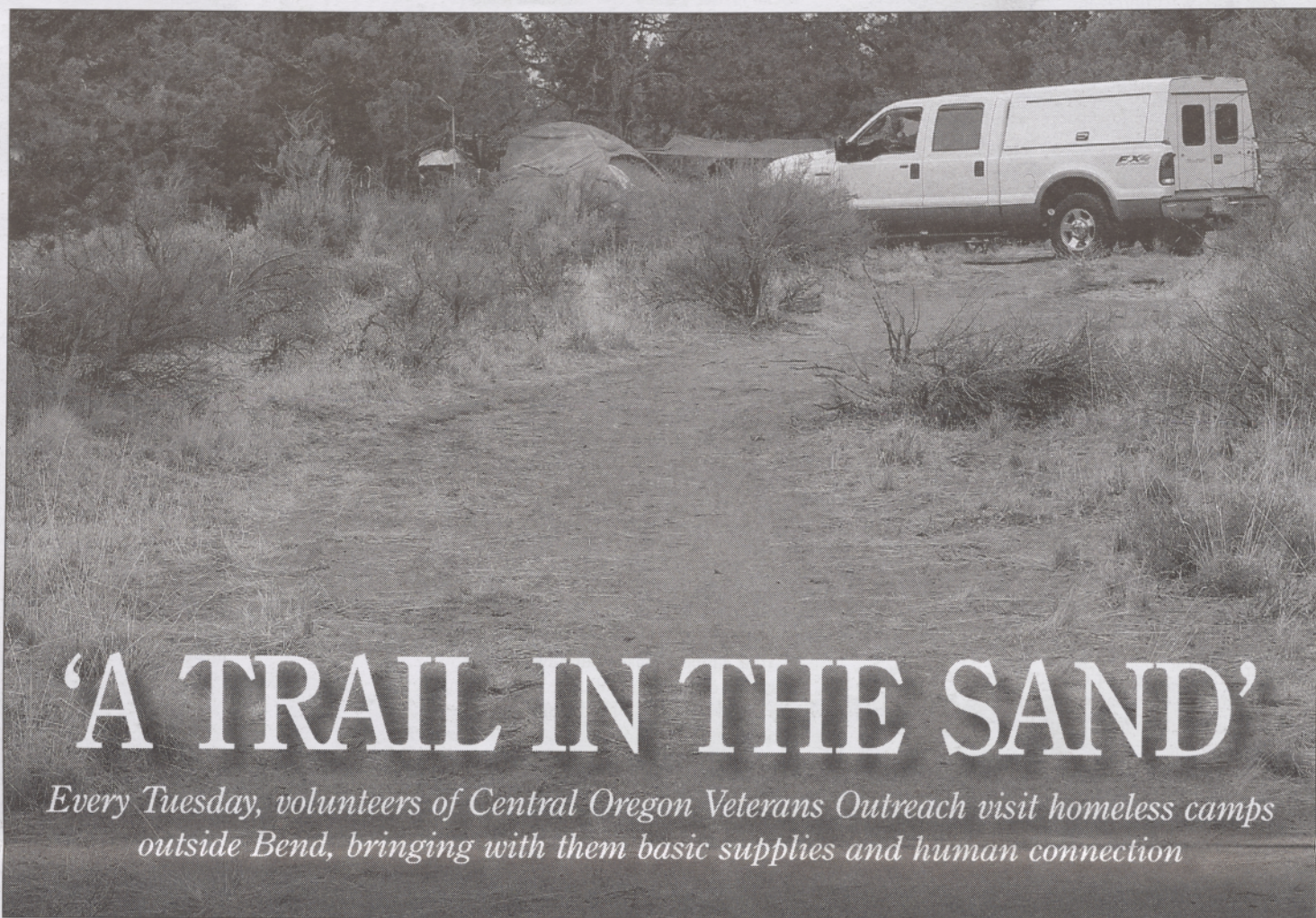


 Housing Rural Oregon


'A TRAIL IN THE SAND'

Every Tuesday, volunteers of Central Oregon Veterans Outreach visit homeless camps outside Bend, bringing with them basic supplies and human connection

Roy Crafts, a volunteer with Central Oregon Veterans Outreach, a Bend-based social service agency that serves homeless people, drives to a camp that he and other volunteers visit on Tuesdays.

PHOTO BY AMANDA WALDROUPE

BY AMANDA WALDROUPE
STAFF WRITER

BEND, Ore. — It is quiet and still in the juniper forests north of Bend as four volunteer outreach workers, all retired Vietnam War veterans, visit with a homeless man who goes by "Sarge."

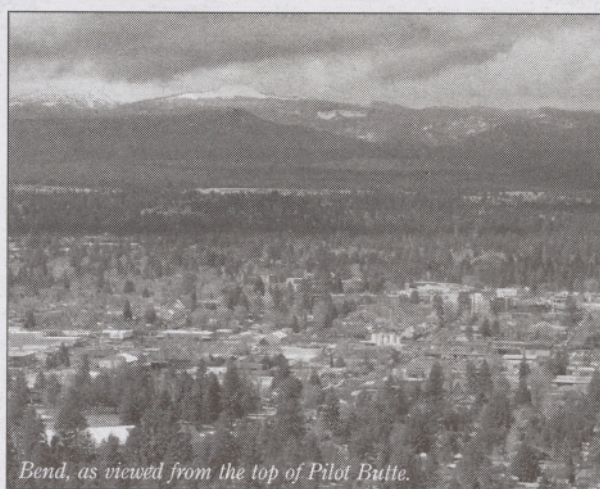
Sarge is tall and lean, an Army veteran who wears camouflage pants and a beanie. At one point in the conversation, he describes himself, in a long drawl, as "a redneck." He's one of hundreds of people believed to be camping in the forests around Bend, Redmond and throughout Central Oregon, all in various stages of survival.

The volunteers who have come to visit are part of a small outreach program, operated by Central Oregon Veterans Outreach, or COVO, a Bend-based homeless services agency that provides trash pickup to the homeless camps, as well as basic supplies.

Four plastic water jugs, the color of Army green, sit on a couch cushion. The jugs get filled with water from a tank in the back of one of the volunteers' truck. While they wait, the volunteers ask Sarge how he is doing and make small talk.

"That fish was delicious," Sarge says, drawing out each syllable. "That fish was delicious! That was fish was good!"

See COVO, page 5



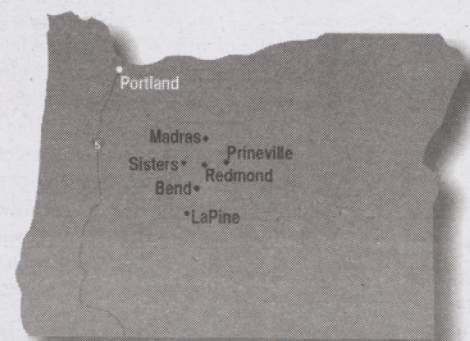
Bend, as viewed from the top of Pilot Butte.

PHOTO BY AMANDA WALDROUPE

Poverty – with a view

— Part Four: Campers in the Woods —

Once a rural timber and agricultural region, Central Oregon is now beset with a housing shortage and an increase in homelessness. How will the region respond as it continues to grow?



About this series

This article is part of Street Roots' Housing Rural Oregon series. It is the fourth in a collection of stories looking at Central Oregon. Street Roots received funding from Meyer Memorial Trust's Affordable Housing Initiative to develop dedicated reporting on rural housing issues. Read previous articles from the series at news.streetroots.org/ruralhousing



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Powerty - with a view

by John Doe

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