

Business Matters

Oregon to Receive \$157 Million for Broadband Infrastructure Expansion

Salem, OR—The United States Department of the Treasury announced that Oregon will be awarded \$156.7 million to expand broadband infrastructure across the state through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Capital Projects Fund.

The funding will go to the Oregon Broadband Office, housed within Business Oregon, to secure high-speed internet access to an estimated 17,000+ new locations in the state.

"This unprecedented funding will strengthen Oregon's broadband infrastructure and expand access to quality internet service," Governor Kotek said. "This award, which is part of President Biden's Investing in America effort, will help rural and low-income communities across Oregon develop high-quality modern broadband infrastructure and expand access to telehealth, job opportunities, education, and so much more."

"This award is the latest in federal support towards broadband access and will enable Oregon to continue our work to close the digital divide and provide digital equity for all Oregonians," said Sophorn Cheang, Business Oregon Director. "We look forward to collaborating with our local and regional partners across the state as we put these funds to work for Oregon."

Average Personal Income for Douglas County



Personal Income in Douglas County, OR was 56657.00 in January of 2021, according to the United States Federal Reserve. Historically, Personal Income in Douglas County, OR reached a record high of 56657.00 in January of 2021 and a record low of 23733.00 in January of 1969. Trading Economics provides the current actual value, an historical data chart and related indicators for Personal Income in Douglas County, OR - last updated from the United States Federal Reserve on October of 2023.

Ray's Food Place is Drain's Food Place

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don't have their eye on rural populations.

This is how it is in rural areas; One grocery store in Drain pretty well serves all of Northern Douglas County. Sure there are the little convenience stores, neighborhood markets and even the dollar stores. But they are actually not providing the really needed foodstuffs. The fresh vegetables and fruits, good healthy cuts of meat and fresh baked items, nevermind the myriad of food items that aren't necessarily processed quick heat items.

I believe that in times not so long ago, the grocery store or even general stores were a common intersection for the patrons, neighbors near and far. When that happens I think folks tend to congregate and visit with each others and as my Dad used to say, "Jaw a bit". It seems pretty natural that the local grocery store kind of helps in connecting folks in a rural area. Everybody eats and everybody, most anyway, go to the store so in the country, anyway, just about everyone is a neighbor.

In Drain, prominently on the main drag through town is Ray's Food Place at 308 N. 1st St. There is no other grocery stores around so that's where everyone goes, unless they are one of those who takes a trip to Eugene or Springfield and hits the Costco or whatever. I go to the store like everybody else but I'm one of those that beelines in and grabs what I need and then out the door I go. I decided to go take a trip to the store, just to check it out. First thing was getting inside, all it takes is a "Nice day isn't it?" to someone in the parking lot and the next thing your in a conversation. Not just me, by the time I got through the doors I saw 2 other encounters just like mine.

I wanted to take a new look at the store and I took a little time and walked up and down the aisles taking note of the scope and depth of foods, products and displays. Comparing in my mind, the difference between a full grocery and convenience type stores. Its obvious that the Grocer is out to provide a full compliment of food and general necessary goods.

I know Joe Fleshman, the Manager, and I stopped him to see if he would share a little of his experience and inside knowledge of being a grocer in a rural community.

"Sure, what do you want to know?" Joe, is a friendly guy and I know he's helpful because I can never remember where things are and he never fails to, happily, point me in the right direction.

Turns out Joe is originally from Medford and he has been with Ray's for nearly 25 years. He started out in Central Point in 1997 and worked a number of stores till he landed in Drain as the Manager.

Talking to Joe for a few minutes, it was obvious that providing for his customers was on top of his mind. He was telling me of the importance of having fresh vegetables and fruits and foods that are quality in not only food value but appearance and placement. He described the care spent to providing quality cuts of meat and the satisfaction of meeting customers shopping needs.

Joe went on to let me know that his staff was comprised of mostly local folks who take pride in their work and he expressed some pride in the fact that there wasn't a high turnover. Partly he attested that the Company, Ray's Food Place i.e. CK Market out of Medford is an employee owned company and amongst the benefits was a good feeling of working for a company that's invested in its employees and shows it. I see that there is a little bit of a pride in their work, I think.

Listening to Joe, I realized that my first assessment was about right. It's a hub, the Grocery Store, a hub for neighbors and local folks and travelers alike. Before he rushed off to do his Manager thing, he left me with this.

"Bringing fresh meats and foods and asking, 'what else are you looking for?' That's the point of being a grocer in a small community, good customer service. I have a lot of people shopping here and those customers are most important to us. It's my job and I'm always interacting with people, you know 'if we don't have it, let me know what you need, we'll try to get it'. And, of course, I love the fact that one minute I am busy with some chore and the next thing, I'm in a conversation with somebody about the fishing last weekend. It all adds up to a fulfilling day at work"

It's pretty well known how difficult the small rural grocery stores are struggling with surviving these trying financial times, with competition from corporate chains that can under price and out market them, and diminishing populations and general economic down turns meaning smaller margins and fighting to keep from going under. Read the following article on the history of Ray's, maybe there is good reason for this Grocery to surmount these obstacles and keep this social connection alive as well.

COUNTRY CABIN

COFFEE & LAUNDRY

438 "B" Ave HWY 38 Drain OR
 OPEN 5 am till 5 pm Daily
 Except last Monday of the month.
 Laundry room has same hours.

Hot

Latte	4.00	4.50	5.50
Mocha	4.50	5.00	6.00
Cappuccino	4.00	4.50	5.50
Americano	3.00	4.50	5.50
Drip Coffee	2.00	2.50	3.00
Hot Choco	3.00	3.75	4.75
Hot Tea	2.00	2.50	3.00
Hot Chai	4.50	5.00	6.00

Breakfast Burrito	8.00
Breakfast Sandwich	6.50
Biscuits & Gravy	5.00 7.50

Cold

Milkshakes	7.00
Malts	7.50
Smoothies	5.50 7.00
Italian Soda	4.25 5.25
Root Beer Float	4.50
Frappuccino	5.00 6.00
Blended Chai	5.50 6.00
Iced Red Bull	5.50 6.50
Soft Drink	1.50 2.25
Ice Tea	1.50 2.25
Orange Juice	3.00
Bottled Water	1.50

Desserts

Soft Ice Cream	3.00 4.00
Soft Yogurt	3.00 4.00
Ice Cream Cone	3.00 4.00
Waffle Cone	3.00 4.00
Cookie - Big	3.00
Cookie - Small	.75
Rice Crispy Treat	3.00
Mini Banana Bread	4.00
Mini Pumpkin Bread	4.00
Raised Donut	1.50
Cake Donut	1.00
Danish	2.00
Brownies	3.00
Pies, 5 inch	7.95

"Amazing Food & Drinks"