

'Come As You Are'

Lane County's online Diverse Business Directory highlights LGBTQIA+ owned businesses

BY BENTLEY FREEMAN

Lane County's Diverse Business Directory spotlights minority-owned businesses across Lane County to "enhance their online visibility and gain business from allies."

Anyone interested in finding minority-owned businesses can find it online at Lane County's website. Interested business owners can also register themselves for the database online.

Marisa Rubino, the queer owner of Lawn Be Gone LLC, a sustainability-focused landscaping company, says this directory enables queer customers to find her business. "It just helps people feel like they don't have to hide anything about themselves," she says.

Since Lawn Be Gone sends crews out to people's homes, she says it's especially important for people to know they will not be discriminated against. "They know that they're going to be accepted and respected by not only the people owning the business, but the crew that they're having coming and working at their house," she says.

Originally published online in 2020 to spotlight Black-owned businesses across Lane County, the county's equity program expanded it in 2023 to include LGBTQIA+, veteran, Asian, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, persons with a disability, Latino/a/e/x and woman-owned businesses.



CINDY INGRAM, OWNER OF THE HAPPY HILL HOMESTEAD IN COTTAGE GROVE, POSING WITH SUNFLOWERS FROM HER U-PICK GARDEN.
Photo courtesy Cindy Ingram

The directory currently lists 96 businesses.

"We believe in supporting diverse businesses here in Lane County," says Shayna Higashi, Lane County's Equity Program analyst. "This directory can help connect businesses with customers who want to be allies and support diverse community members and local businesses as well as help foster a sense of belonging and representation in the business community."

Cindy Ingram, the queer owner of the Happy Hill Homestead — a u-pick flower and art gallery open July through August in Cottage Grove — says it's important for people to have a safe place to do business. She says she wants people who are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community to "enjoy themselves and come as you are."

"Knowing that you're a part of a diverse group that supports and encourages difference, it makes people feel safe," Ingram says.

Rubino says after registering for the directory, she noticed an uptick in queer customers using her services. "It's been nothing but positive for us," she says. "We're really glad that Lane County decided to put together a database."

Business owners interested in including themselves in the directory can fill out a submission form online at LaneCountyOR.gov/DBD.

slant or Sometimes Askew

>> We often have folks drop by the *Weekly's* office on Thursdays and Fridays to grab and reuse past issues. We do snicker when folks make bird cage liner and fire starter jokes (OK, that one time a white supremacist burned a bunch of *Weeklys* and posted the video on YouTube was weird), but we are delighted when our print pages have a second life. Thank you to the artist who wove a basket out of old papers and left it in a red box for us to find! Any other *EW* art projects we should know about? Let us know! Editor@EugeneWeekly.com.

>> Vice President Kamala Harris has decided on her own vice presidential candidate — Tim Walz — in her campaign for the White House. The two-term Minnesota governor — formerly a member of Congress, a former sergeant major in the National Guard, high school civics teacher and football coach — was tagged August 6 to be Harris' running mate in the general election against the Republican ticket, Donald Trump and JD Vance. **We firmly believe it's better to waltz with Walz than to dance with Vance.**

>> **Pride is this Saturday, August 10, at Alton Baker Park!** (See the viewpoint in this issue, and events in the What's Happening Calendar). The sold-out Ween show at the Cuthbert that was causing parking conflicts was canceled, but organizers are still encouraging alternative transportation. Also this weekend is the **Junction City Scandinavian Festival** (we are so in it for the Danish *æbleskiver*). The fest kicks off Thursday and runs through Sunday. Love



events? We do, too! List your event for free in our copious calendar — email Cal@EugeneWeekly.com for info or just head to Calendar.eugeneweekly.com.

>> Just in time for Pride, **we have cool Eugene Weekly Pride T-shirts.** Swing by and pick up yours for just \$25 and support the LGBTQIA+ community all year!!

>> **A recent vote by the conservative members of the Lane County Commission has us questioning**



their commitment to democracy. In a 3-2 vote on August 6, the County Commission pushed a private law firm's charter amendments to the Nov. 5 ballot, requiring a midcycle 2025 redistricting cycle. Lane County's elections office clerk calls it a threat to "election integrity." Members of the charter review committee have called it gerrymandering. We do, too. Are Commissioners David Loveall, Pat Farr and Ryan Ceniga trying to take away the power of voters in Eugene? Read our story at EugeneWeekly.com.