

Community Pages

DOUGLAS COUNTY ROSEBURG

Community Produce Projects Expand Reach

Douglas County's produce-sharing initiatives continue to expand, connecting families with seeds, gardening classes, and weekly produce boxes. Programs emphasize local participation, with many growers donating part of their harvest to food banks.

Organizers say the projects reduce food insecurity while fostering neighbor-to-neighbor support.

SUTHERLIN Volunteer Groups Keep Youth Sports Thriving

Sutherlin's youth sports programs remain largely volunteer-driven, with parents and community members filling coaching, fundraising, and equipment roles. Organizers say participation remains strong despite rising costs.

Families credit the programs with keeping kids active, connected, and engaged locally.

OAKLAND Downtown Cleanups Spark Civic Pride

Regular downtown cleanup days in Oakland have drawn steady volunteer turnout. Residents say the effort has improved walkability and encouraged small storefront improvements.

City leaders say even small visual changes help maintain community pride.

DRAIN Lougheads Re-Opens



Loughead's Automotive & Towing (AAA) at 438 S Cedar St has re-opened after completing their new building. Lougheads welcomed the public to their Grand Re-Opening on January 3rd.

School-Community Partnerships Gain Momentum

Drain schools have expanded partnerships with local businesses for mentorships and short-term job shadowing. Teachers report improved student engagement, particularly among teens exploring career options.

New City Administrator

City of Drain has installed a new City Administrator, Simon Dwyer. Originally from Oregon, Simon was most recently in the same position in the State of Texas. He is glad to be back in Oregon.

YONCALLA Small-Town Fundraisers Keep Traditions Alive

Yoncalla's community fundraisers — from pancake breakfasts to holiday raffles — remain essential for school and civic projects. Organizers

say turnout reflects strong local buy-in.

ELKTON River Stewardship Brings Neighbors Together



Elkton volunteers continue seasonal river cleanup and habitat projects along the Umpqua. Organizers say turnout remains steady, driven by residents' connection to fishing, recreation, and conservation.

Elk Creek Watershed Coalition meets Jan 13th, 7:00 at the Civic Center, 205 W A Ave, Drain, public welcome.

REEDSPORT Hands-On Learning Strengthens Port Connections

In Reedsport, renewed shop classes and maritime-focused instruction are strengthening ties between schools and the working waterfront. Students gain exposure to marine mechanics, fabrication, and safety — skills that support the port economy.

Educators say students who once planned to leave the area now see viable career paths closer to home.

LANE COUNTY EUGENE

Community Gardens Grow More Than Food



As grocery prices remain stubbornly high, Eugene's community gardens are doing more than stretching food budgets — they are quietly rebuilding neighborhood connections. The city now supports five community garden sites with roughly 350 plots, alongside larger teaching gardens such as GrassRoots Garden and Amicus Memorial Garden Collective.

Garden coordinators report waitlists at several locations. Families, retirees, students, and first-time growers are signing up to plant beans, greens, squash, and culturally specific crops not always easy to find in stores. Many gardeners say the appeal isn't just savings, but shared knowledge — trading tips, tools, and stories across generations.

Several gardens now donate a portion of their harvest directly to food pantries and free produce markets, including Eugene's Resilience Market, creating a loop where neighbors help feed neighbors. For many participants, it's one of the most tangible ways to turn

local effort into local support.

SPRINGFIELD Students Find New Momentum Through Skilled Trades

Springfield schools are seeing renewed interest in hands-on learning as skilled trades programs expand. Welding, construction basics, and shop safety courses are drawing students who want practical skills alongside classroom instruction.

Local contractors and fabrication shops have contributed equipment, materials, and guest instruction, helping students connect school learning with real-world applications. Educators emphasize that the programs don't replace college-prep tracks, but expand options — particularly for students who want to enter the workforce locally without taking on heavy debt.

Parents and counselors report increased engagement from students who previously felt disconnected from traditional academic pathways.

JUNCTION CITY Community Events Rebuild Small-Town Rhythm

Junction City's recent slate of seasonal events — from holiday markets to youth sports fundraisers — has brought renewed foot traffic to downtown businesses. Merchants say even modest gatherings help restore the familiar rhythm of community life after several quieter years.

Organizers credit volunteers and small sponsors for keeping events simple and affordable. The goal, they say, isn't regional draw but giving residents reasons to gather locally.

COTTAGE GROVE Library Seed Program Spurs Spring Planning

The Cottage Grove Library's seed-sharing program continues to grow in popularity. Residents can "check out" vegetable and herb seeds at no cost, with encouragement to save seeds or share surplus produce later in the season.

Library staff say the program draws new visitors and sparks conversations between longtime gardeners and beginners. For families facing tight budgets, the seeds offer a low-cost way to grow fresh food at home.

FLORENCE High School Trades Programs Reconnect Students to Local Work

Florence-area schools are part of a coastal push to rebuild skilled trades education. Programs in welding, carpentry, and maritime maintenance align with community college certificates, allowing some students to graduate with both a diploma and recognized credentials.

Local boatyards and marine businesses say the programs help address workforce shortages while keeping young people rooted in coastal communities.

LINN COUNTY ALBANY Youth Apprenticeships Bridge School and Work

Albany-area schools have expanded youth apprenticeship opportunities in manufacturing and skilled trades. Students split time between classrooms and supervised job sites, earning experience while completing graduation requirements.

TANGENT Community Events Strengthen Rural Ties

Tangent's recent holiday and school events drew strong attendance, reinforcing the importance of local gatherings in rural towns.

SHEDD Volunteer Fire Support Remains Strong



Shedd residents continue supporting their volunteer fire services through fundraisers and equipment drives. Organizers say community backing remains critical.

HARRISBURG Youth Programs See Steady Participation

Harrisburg's after-school and recreation programs report steady enrollment, supported by volunteers and local sponsors.

BENTON COUNTY CORVALLIS Holiday Parade Signals Community Renewal

After several years on hiatus, the Corvallis Holiday Parade returned in December, thanks to volunteer coordination and modest sponsorships. Families lined downtown streets to watch homemade floats, marching groups, and lighted bicycles.

Organizers say the event's success confirms demand for shared, low-cost traditions.

CORVALLIS Crisis Center Offers Calm Alternative

The Benton County Crisis Center continues serving residents seeking immediate mental health or substance-use support without involving emergency rooms or law enforcement. Early reports suggest reduced strain on hospitals and patrol officers.

Staff emphasize walk-in access and dignity-first care.

COOS COUNTY • COASTWIDE "Gems of the Oregon Coast" Highlight Quiet Service

Several small coastal businesses were recently recognized as "Gems of the Oregon Coast" for everyday acts of kindness — helping neighbors after storms, supporting youth teams, and stepping in quietly when customers need help.

The recognition focuses not on size or revenue, but on community presence. For many recipients, the acknowledgment simply confirms what locals already know: the coast still runs on people looking out for each other.