

CAPECO: Since November the program has fed roughly 200 people

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ering healthy, nutritious food to “frontier” communities as far as Spray and Mitchell. Since November the program has fed roughly 200 people each month and distributed 15,615 pounds of food. The grant money helps pay for Garcia, who not only picks up donations but makes delivery runs across the four counties.

Rural distribution sites include Ukiah, Pilot Rock, Heppner, Spray, Mitchell, Fossil, Condon, Arlington, Irrigon and Boardman. The route can sometimes take Garcia 300-plus miles round trip, but he’s not complaining. “I really enjoy my runs,” he said. “You wouldn’t believe the look on people’s faces when I pull up.”

Donations can come to CAPECO one of three ways: from local farms, food processors or the Pendleton River Walk Garden; from the Oregon Food Bank network; or from grocery stores that participate in the statewide Fresh Alliance program. That includes Grocery Outlet in Pendleton, Wal-Mart in Pendleton and Hermiston and Safeway in Pendleton, Hermiston and Milton-Freewater.

Garcia does Fresh Alliance pick-ups three times per week, meticulously sorting and weighing every box of food on a small scale in the back of the van. When he finishes, he writes each store a voucher that they can file for a tax credit.

Based on his schedule and the amount of food he collects, Garcia then delivers to one of 17 food pantries within CAPECO’s region or sets up his own farmers market-style tailgate when the pantries aren’t open. That’s the best part of the job, he said.

“A lot of people are on fixed incomes,” Garcia said. “It’s just seeing the people’s faces when you give them stuff.”

Paula Hall, community services and housing director for CAPECO, said they prioritize food safety first and foremost in the Rural Produce Project. The temperature inside the van is strictly monitored, and Fresh Alliance products must be distributed within a certain number of days to ensure they are safe to eat — for example, most meats can be distributed



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Volunteer Larry Chvilicek places a box of goods from the Rural Produce Program into the storage area at the St. Mary's Outreach during on Wednesday in Pendleton.

Stamp Out Hunger this Saturday

The largest single-day food drive in the country is set for Saturday.

CAPECO is encouraging communities to participate in Stamp Out Hunger, sponsored by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Anyone can take part by collecting nonperishable food items and leaving them in a bag near their mailbox. A letter carrier or volunteer will pick up the donation and make sure it arrives at CAPECO. Donations not picked up by letter carriers can be dropped off at any post office by Wednesday, May 18.

The goal is to raise 1.3 million pounds in Oregon and Clark County, Washington. Some items on the “most wanted” list include: shelf-stable milk; high-protein foods such as canned meats or dried beans; canned fruits and vegetables; whole-grain items such as brown rice and whole wheat pasta; soups, chilies and stews; fruit and vegetable juice; and unsaturated cooking oils. Unacceptable items include: anything in unlabeled cans; glass containers; perishable items; homemade items; noncommercial packaged goods; alcohol, mixes or soda; and anything that’s already been opened or used.

Stamp Out Hunger was created in 1993, and has collected more than 1 billion pounds of food across the country since its inception.

within 90 days of their sell-by date, so long as they are kept frozen. That time frame goes down to just five days for milk, three days for salsa and one day for pre-made salads.

Hall said it makes good business sense for stores to participate in Fresh Alliance, not only for the tax write-off but to save money on dumping fees. Safeway alone estimates it saves about a half-million dollars every year by reducing its waste. Plus, it’s a win-win for hungry families, Hall said.

“It’s food that’s going to the most vulnerable of our population,” she said. “The more we can support our most vulnerable populations, the stronger we are.”

Families in “frontier” communities can also have access to food that might not be available in their local markets, like fresh bok choy or nappa cabbage. The

distributions are free, which Hall said helps them stretch their budgets and gives them healthy food to feed their kids.

“We really wanted to target our efforts to making sure those folks had access to healthy, nutritious food,” Hall said.

Hall said they would not be able to maintain the program without support from the Oregon Community Foundation and Fresh Alliance. Those programs have allowed them to expand Rural Produce and ensure they’re reaching out to all communities at least two or three times every month.

“It costs a lot of money to get food out to those communities,” Hall said. “All of those pieces came together.”

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ROUND-UP: Chief Burke has participated in the Happy Canyon Night Show since birth

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the early Round-Up courts to establish the traditional look for the 75th Anniversary in 1985. This tradition lives on. While serving as Round-Up publicity director, Doug created a sponsorship program tailor-made for the Round-Up, which does not allow arena advertising. He worked to acquire sponsors, set up a sponsor tent, and created a means to provide signs outside the arena. The program has brought in millions of dollars to both Round-Up and Happy Canyon.

Doug spent numerous hours developing and expanding the concerts held annually during Round-Up and Happy Canyon week, including booking acts, building stages, and coordinating with the bands. He was instrumental in bringing the U.S. Bank PBR Classic to Pendleton.

Doug continues to serve on the PBR committee and is on-site veterinarian during the rodeo. Recognized as one of the foremost authorities on animal welfare throughout the United States, Doug is chairman of the PRCA Livestock Welfare Committee, chairman of the WPRA Equine Drugs and Medications committee and chairman of the Unwanted Horse Coalition for the American Horse Council. For his efforts, Doug was elected to the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame in 2007.

Chief Bill Burke

Chief Burke is a member of the Walla Walla and Cayuse tribes. Burke has participated in the Happy Canyon Night Show since birth, with his mother carrying him through the show as an infant. Later, he performed numerous other roles. He has a collection of Happy Canyon programs from years past, including one that lists him as a cast member at age 7. Burke continues an active role in the Round-Up as Chief of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation,



EO file photo

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Chief Bill Burke has participated in the Happy Canyon Night Show since birth.



Contributed photo

J.D. Yates has won the steer roping at the Pendleton Round-Up three times and the all-around in 1994.



Contributed photo

Smokey, 32, has performed many duties for the Round-Up and Happy Canyon, including carrying the flag for the grand entry, riding in the parade and acting in several rolls during the night show. He is now retired.

Canyon arena, he performed in the stage-coach robbery, rescue scene, pony express and quadrille. Smokey is now retired and lives a life of leisure near Pendleton with Steve and JoAnne McGee.

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PENDLETON: Sets aside \$10K each year for assistance

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this break, you have to go and have counseling,” Councilor Becky Marks said.

Marks said the current assistance program was underutilized because many retirees and low-income residents were too proud to seek help in-person. Although, the city sets aside \$10,000 each year for utility assistance, Helping Hand used less than half of that amount during the last fiscal year.

To avoid such situations, Councilor Tom Young said customers could be given the option to submit proof of income documents like

Tax Form 1040 to determine eligibility.

Councilor Paul Chalmers cautioned against the city getting too involved in residents’ personal choices.

“Government shouldn’t have to dictate personal choice for people to participate in programs or not,” he said. “That’s not the function of government.”

Councilor John Brenne said the city should do away with middlemen like Helping Hand and CAPECO and handle an assistance program in-house. But other city council members argued that could open sensitive information to public records

requests and require screening and processing duties fall to city staff.

There’s still much to be determined before the city makes any changes to its assistance program.

Patterson said it would be difficult to apply a discount to apartments or trailer parks where water and sewer is supplied through a single meter to multiple units.

In an interview after the meeting, Patterson said the council will also have to decide what the income qualifications will be. Patterson said he will meet with City Manager Robb Corbett to refine the proposal and present it to the council.



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