

RAIN *from A1*

businesses. “We work directly with communities across Oregon — and soon to be beyond Oregon — and we work in those communities to support the entrepreneurs,” Ruben summed up.

Supporting entrepreneurs can manifest itself in many ways and the organization avoids a one-size-fits-all approach, instead building upon “entrepreneurial ecosystems” to accomplish its goal.

“And what we mean by ‘ecosystems’ is that it’s not just about helping the small businesses and the entrepreneurs,” said Ruben. “It’s also about making sure that there’s news and media and government support and mentors and activated capital.”

Making use of a community’s retired population with a desire to give back, initiating education programs and getting connected with local business-minded groups are all pieces of the puzzle.

“So, we’re a bridge builder. We’re a connector,” explained Ruben. “And we want to make sure that companies in small towns have access to all the resources that a metro area might have.”

RAIN staff is also made up of individuals with boots-on-the-ground experience when it comes to business.

“All of us that work at RAIN are entrepreneurs ourselves,” said Ruben. “We need to have skin in the game. We need to know what it’s like to grow and start a company.”

Ruben herself was part of a startup which ran out of local co-working kitchen Bohemia Food Hub for years. The business, Hazel People, produced hazelnut milk but was eventually

forced to close when a fitting manufacturer could not be found.

“But then I got recruited to this job at RAIN two and a half years ago and have been working with small businesses ever since,” said Ruben.

With a broad range of experience to draw on, she said the resources available within the organization are boundless.

“Collectively, we have a large network across Oregon and beyond,” she said. “I mean, you want to export to China? Sure, I’ll connect you with someone. You want to get manufactured in the USA? Sure. You’re starting a restaurant? Sure, I’ll connect you there. You want to build an app? Okay, great. You want to build an agriculture business? Perfect. So, we have experience across all fields, collectively, and our Rolodex is broad enough to encompass all ideas and all needs and all businesses.”

RAIN has several years of experience stimulating the business communities in numerous other cities in the state.

In Florence, for instance, RAIN held an entrepreneurial activation event in November 2019 with a turnout of more than 200 people. Local businesses tabled their goods and services and shared their stories on stage.

“I’ve also been helping two high schoolers start a delivery service in Florence — a food delivery service like an Uber Eats,” said Ruben.

In the last six years, RAIN has worked with at least 70 entrepreneurs from the

Florence area. Entrepreneurs have begun more than 30 startups, created more than 30 jobs and generated nearly \$500,000.

RAIN has also helped jumpstart shops in Veneta, where the city set up shipping containers in conjunc-

tion with its farmers market, providing new businesses the experience of holding retail space.

In Oakridge, the nonprofit worked with a high school teacher to bring business education to students. “She was actually the business class teacher and she had never taught business class or entrepreneurship before,” recalled Ruben. “And she reached out to us and she was like, ‘What am I doing? Please help.’ And so we actually helped her develop the entrepreneurship curriculum for the entire year.”

Because each city is characterized by its own particular challenges and opportunities, the RAIN approach in a new community is to listen and observe before implementing plans. “It’s really about connecting at first and getting to know folks. Shaking hands. And then we start by doing some activation events and meet-ups,” Ruben said. “We’re investigative, not prescriptive. So that means that we’re ears-to-the-ground listening, like what does the community need?”

Through the investigative process, Ruben hopes to identify potential within

companies can show off their products or services and take the stage to share their stories.

And beginning Aug. 12, Ruben and Lane Small Business Development Center Director Robert Killen jointly launched a Startup Bootcamp, an eight-week online program which will occur every Thursday night from 6 – 8 p.m. until Sept. 30.

The program aims to teach new skills and enhance business strategies for participants in a 16-hour startup training course which is free to rural participants in Lane County.

Even as these first steps are being taken, Ruben said she has already noticed a potential avenue in Cottage Grove.

“One of my passions is getting youth involved with entrepreneurship and businesses,” she said, “and I know that the schools are excited about potentially working together and having some type of entrepreneurship club or like a

young person’s entrepreneurial gathering.”

As the project moves forward, Ruben added she is sensitive to the idea that growth and preserving the spirit of community can seem contradictory to some.

“This really is a long game,” she said. “And it’s also community-led, so we’re here to just start those conversations and say, ‘Hey, what does the community want?’”

Part of the notion of a community-led project is growing sustainably in a way which promotes local collaboration, she noted, pointing to the education, business and farming communities as possible intersections.

Locals will have a chance to participate in the process in a direct way as well. One way RAIN promotes this is

the hiring of a local to the part-time position of “entrepreneur in community” — a role which makes use of an on-the-ground networker who can funnel others into the program.

In the meantime, Ruben invited those interested to take part in future events to help begin establishing connections.

“I would say that any type of early-stage business who’s interested, we would love to see you come and we would love to hear about your idea,” she said. “And then if you’re an existing business, we would love to know who you are and understand what your needs are around growth, maybe progress within your community, and if there’s any connections that we can help make.”

More information about RAIN can be found on its website at www.oregonrain.org.

COVID CHALLENGES

“COVID has definitely brought up a lot of challenges and I’m seeing, of course, workforce as one of the biggest challenges right now for local businesses. No one wants to work. There’s certainly a shift in what we care about and what people are prioritizing. People are prioritizing maybe quality of life and vacation. ... So definitely workforce is a huge issue right now. We’re seeing that across the board. But some businesses are even having to close their doors or close up shop or close for extended periods because they have no one to work, which is crazy.”


*Ariel Ruben
Lane Venture Catalyst, RAIN*

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KNND'S 2021 ROCK ROLL N' RUMBLE
Saturday, August 21
Car Show 8am-3:30PM
Car Cruise 6-8:30pm

The cruise will start at Cottage Grove High School, proceeding down River Road, before going through the Main Street historic district and looping back.

KNND's Preregistration Party Friday August 20th 5-7pm at Hamilton Auto Sales on Hwy 99. T-shirts and goody bags will be available along with refreshments for those who register their vehicle.

Following the cruise, KNND and Stacy's Covered Bridge restaurant will host an after cruise party featuring the 50s and 60s music of the Men From Surf from 8-9:30pm.

Face coverings and social distancing is encouraged.

Worship Directory

<p>COTTAGE GROVE: 6th & Gibbs Church of Christ 195 N. 6th St. • 541-942-3822 10:00am Christian Education: Pre-K through 5th Tim Baker, Senior Minister www.6thandgibbs.com</p> <p>Calvary Baptist Church 77873 S 6th St • 541-942-4290 Pastor: Riley Hendricks Sunday School: 9:45am Worship: 11:00am The Journey: Sunday 5:00pm Praying Thru Life: Wednesday 6:00pm</p> <p>Church of Christ 420 Monroe St • 541-942-8565 Sunday Service: 10:30am</p> <p>Cottage Grove Bible Church 1200 East Quincy Avenue 541-942-4771 Pastor: Bob Singer Worship 11am Sunday School: 9:45am AWANA age 3-8th Grade, Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm www.cgbible.org</p> <p>Cottage Grove Faith Center 33761 Row River Rd. 541-942-4851 Lead Pastor: Kevin Pruett www.cg4.tv Full Children's Ministry available Services: 9:00am & 10:45am</p> <p>Delight Valley Church of Christ 33087 Saginaw Rd. East 541-942-7711 • Pastor: Bob Friend Two Services: 9am - Classic in the Chapel 10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium</p> <p>First Baptist Church 301 S. 6th st • 541-942-8242 Pastor: David Chhangle Sunday School 9:30am Worship Service 10:30am Youth Wednesday 6:30pm cgfirstbaptist.com</p>	<p>First Presbyterian Church 3rd and Adams St 541-942-4479 Rev.: Karen Hill Worship: 10:00am Sunday School: 10:00am fpcgrove.com</p> <p>Hope Fellowship United Pentecostal Church 100 S. Gateway Blvd. 541-942-2061 Pastor: Dave Bragg Worship: 11:00am Sunday Bible Study: 7:00pm Wednesday www.hopefellowshipupc.com "FINDING HOPE IN YOUR LIFE"</p> <p>Living Faith Assembly 467 S. 10th St. • 541-942-2612 Worship Services Sundays: 9a & 11a Youth Worship Sundays: 11a (all ages welcome) Mondays: 5:30p (6th-12th grades)</p> <p>Non-Denominational Church of Christ 1041 Pennoyer Ave 541-942-8928 Preacher: Tony Martin Sunday Bible Study: 10:00am Sunday Worship: 10:50am & 5:30pm www.pennoyeravecoc.com</p> <p>Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Philip Benizi Catholic Churches 1025. N. 19th St. 541-942-3420 Father John J. Boyle Holy Mass: Saturday Vigil - 5:30 pm Sunday - 10:30 am For weekday and Holy Day of Obligation schedule see website OLPHCG.net Confession: 4 PM to 5 PM Saturdays or by appointment St. Philip Benizi, Creswell 552 Holbrook Lane Sunday 8 am</p>	<p>St. Andrews Episcopal Church 1301 W. Main • 541-767-9050 Rev. Lawrence Crumb "Scripture, Tradition, Reason" Worship: Sunday 10:30am All Welcome</p> <p>Seventh-day Adventist Church 820 South 10th Street 541-942-5213 Pastor: James D. Boram Bible Study: Saturday, 9:15 am Worship Service: Saturday, 10:40 Mid-week Service: Wednesday, 1:00</p> <p>Trinity Lutheran Church 6th & Quincy • 541-942-2373 Pastor: James L. Markus Sunday School & Adult Education 9:15am Sunday Worship 10:30 am Comm. Kitchen Free Meal Tue & Thur 5:00pm TLC Groups tlccg.com</p> <p>United Methodist Church 334 Washington 541-942-3033 Worship 10am umcgrove.org</p> <p>"VICTORY" Country Church 913 S. 6th Street • 541-942-5913 Pastor: Barbara Dockery Worship Service: 10:00am Message: "WE BELIEVE IN MIRACLES"</p> <p>CRESWELL: Creswell Presbyterian Church 75 S 4th S • 541-895-3419 Rev. Seth Wheeler Adult Sunday School 9:15am Sunday Worship Service 10:30 am website www.creswellpres.org</p>
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Our Worship Directory is a weekly feature. If your congregation would like to be a part of this directory, contact us today!

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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