Business Notes

Home improvement loans/grants available to qualified borrowers

Very low income homeowners in Clatsop and Columbia counties who need to fix up or modernize their homes, but who are unable to qualify for conventional credit, may be eligible for financing from Rural Development. The program is accepting applications for home improvement loans and grants.

Loans, up to $20,000, are currently available at one percent interest and may be used for almost any needed repairs or improvements related to the dwelling. The term can be written for up to 20 years and is based on the borrower's repayment ability.

Grant funds, while limited, are also available for up to $7,500 to those who qualify. To obtain a grant, the homeowner must be a senior citizen, age 62 or older, and be unable to repay the funds based upon a loan at one percent amortized over 20 years.

Grant funds can be used only to pay costs for repairs and/or improvements that will remove identified health or safety hazards.

For additional information regarding the Section 504 Loan program, please contact Diana Peterson or Mary Jo Simpson at (503) 397-1432.

Housing loans available for low, very low income

In order to help low and very low income applicants obtain adequate housing in rural areas, Rural Housing Service (RHS) works in partnership with private sector lenders, state or local government, or nonprofit organizations.

At this time, there is funding available for assumptions of existing Rural Development loans (formerly Farmers' Home Administration). Because the amount available is limited, loan leveraging is encouraged to the maximum extent possible.

The program permits lenders to secure their loan amount with a first lien, while Rural Development lends the balance of the applicant's request, secured by a junior lien.

The Rural Development loan can be subsidized to enhance repayment ability. Applicants must meet the requirements of both the lender and Rural Development.

For additional information regarding Section 502 Leveraged Loan Program, contact Diana Peterson or Mary Jo Simpson at (503) 397-1432.

Marine Board funds for county projects

Oregon State Marine Board recently approved funding for three projects in Columbia County, one of which will continue the board's support of Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) projects.

The contribution to OYCC of $10,248 will be used to employ youth to re-establish a sensitive wetland habitat at Scappoose Bay.

The other two projects include $61,600 for constructin of a four-stall flush restroom at the Beaver Boat Ramp on the Clatskanie River. This will replace an older, inadequate restroom.

The largest appropriation, $275,000, is for paving the parking area at the Scappoose Bay boat ramp on the Multnomah Channel. This is the third phase of major improvements at the facility.

Vernonia Chamber slates lunch meeting

The Vernonia Area Chamber of Commerce will have a no-host lunch meeting Wednesday, April 8 at 12:00 noon, in the Lew's Place banquet room.

Speaker for the meeting will be Jim Tierney, president of the non-profit Vernonia Community Development Corporation.

The public is welcome. If you plan to attend, please make a reservation by calling 429-3021 or 429-3751.

Watershed council meets in Elsie

Oney's Restaurant will be the location of a Watershed Council Presentation Night, Thursday, April 2 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

E & S, and PSU representatives will attend, make presentations and hold Question and Answer sessions regarding their proposals to conduct a Nehalem Basin Watershed Assessment in partnership with the Upper and Lower Nehalem Watershed Councils.

This event is being sponsored by the Joint Nehalem Watershed Council Steering Committee.

For more information, contact Maggie Peyton, 429-2401.

Cornelius Pass Road closed due to slide

Cornelius Pass Road is closed between Skyline Blvd. and US 30 due to a landslide. It will remain closed indefinitely.

This section of Cornelius Pass Road is open to local and emergency traffic only.

Most vehicles can bypass the closed section by using NW Skyline Blvd. and Logie Trail Rd., however, truck restrictions will be enforced.

UW distributions up

An overall increase of 9.6 percent in allocations to member agencies was approved last week by directors of United Way of Columbia County. Donations to the 1997 campaign were 9.5 percent higher than in 1996.

Among 30 service providers and programs receiving funds from United Way are Vernonia Cares, Columbia County Council of Seniors, Boy and Girl Scout organizations, Women's Resource Center, and agencies that help with housing, child care, drug prevention and intervention, and energy assistance.