

Business Notes

ODDA resource team will conduct analysis of downtown Vernonia

The City of Vernonia, the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECD), and the Oregon Downtown Development Association (ODDA) have formed a partnership to bring a Downtown Resource Team to Vernonia.

The Resource Team, provided by ODDA, will conduct an on-site analysis from April 26-28, 2005. A team of downtown specialists will examine the challenges and opportunities facing Vernonia, identify next steps and provide recommendations to move downtown revitalization efforts forward.

The team will begin with a public meeting at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 26 at the Scout Cabin in Hawkins Park, to explain the Resource Team process and seek input from community members on downtown needs. Following the meeting, for the remainder of Tuesday and all day Wednesday, the team will interview community members and collect pertinent information.

The final day, Thursday, will be used to prepare recommendations and drawings for a pub-

lic presentation Thursday night. The presentation will begin at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall and the community is invited to attend. At a later date, a written report containing recommendations from the team will also be delivered as part of the Resource Team package.

The Resource Team will be lead by Vicki Dugger, ODDA Executive Director. Other team members will include an architect, business mix specialist and a visitor readiness specialist. The team will examine downtown Vernonia in terms of effective marketing for downtown businesses, façade improvements, and visitor readiness. The Team will also consider and make recommendations for a new Interpretative Center.

Downtown revitalization is important, Dugger explained, because "Downtowns are unique places which reflect local heritage and history. A strong, vibrant downtown gives the community a center and reflects local heritage and history...its pride and identity. Beyond the social importance of downtown is the economic im-

portance of a strong business district. Downtowns are traditionally a very good place to grow local businesses which strengthen the economy."

The Oregon Downtown Development Association is a statewide non-profit organiza-

tion dedicated to assisting Oregon communities with downtown revitalization. Their services are provided within the National Main Street model and are based on the concept that local volunteers can direct the goals and objectives they es-

tablish for their own communities.

For more information about the Resource Team visit, contact Vicki Dugger at ODDA, 503-587-0574, or Robyn Bassett at the City of Vernonia 503-429-5291.

Ford Family Foundation trainees

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boosting the community's economy, as well as becoming a catalyst for attracting additional public art throughout the community.


The process used to select a project included brainstorming for ideas, voting to narrow the choices, presentations by group members of the merits of those choices, and then a final selection based on group consensus. A project application will be created by the group describing their project and their plan for completing it. This application will then be submitted to the Ford Family Institute for approval. The Vernonia group will raise funds for the project, which the Ford Family Institute will match, up to \$10,000.

The leadership training and trip to the "Conference of Communities" is being provided by

the Ford Family Institute, which promotes rural community development, in part by training community members in leadership skills. All the community groups meet one weekend each month, plus the conference at Kah-Nee-Ta Resort, to work on skills such as conflict resolution, conducting effective meetings, communication, fundraising, resource development, and growing volunteers. The Ford Family Institute makes a four year commitment to each of the communities to continue helping with leadership development.

According to participant Scott Laird, "The group from Vernonia is looking forward to their trip and sharing what they have learned with members of the other communities, as well as putting it to work here at home in Vernonia."

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**Join the Fun at Vernonia
River Fest, April 23rd**

