

Business Notes

Family Forestlands Committee to meet

The Committee for Family Forestlands will meet at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 10, at the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) campus, Administration Bldg. C, Clatsop Conference Room, 2600 State Street, Salem, Oregon. The meeting is open to the public.

The committee serves as an advisory group to the Oregon Board of Forestry and deals with issues affecting family forestland owners.

The Committee for Family Forestlands will meet Tuesday, Jan. 10, for an update on a proposed rule change to Oregon's Forest Practices Act that would increase tree retention requirements along small and medium fish bearing streams in western Oregon. Recent monitoring by the Department of Forestry has shown that current rules are not providing as much wood to these streams as has happened historically.

The committee will also see "Landmarks in Conservation," an interactive multimedia project designed by Oregon State University Extension Service. The project, which includes DVD video clips and access to print, video and on-line resources using web technologies, will help rural foresters, farmers and ranchers develop

County jobless rate unchanged

Columbia County's unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 6.0 percent in November. This was still a bit higher than the statewide unadjusted rate of 5.5 percent and higher than the national rate of 4.8 percent. Total employment in the county dipped by 25 from October and the number of unemployed people increased by 21.

Columbia County's revised unemployment rate for October was 5.9 percent. The rate was 8.4 percent one year ago in November. Total employment was 21,705 in November and 1,386 people were unemployed. Total employment was 425 greater than one year ago.

Unemployment rates for other counties can be found at <http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmsj/AllRates>.

sustainable natural resource management plans. The project draws on the experiences of nearly 30 land managers across Oregon who are using resource management plans.

An update will also be provided about the progress of workgroups established to explore the feasibility of providing speculatively-grown seedlings using a state/private nursery cooperative and leasing D.L. Phipps Forest Nursery to a private nursery grower. Phipps is a state nursery owned and operated by the State Forester and the Board of Forestry. Increased capacity at private nurseries and concerns from some private nurseries that the state nursery may be competing with private nurseries has prompted a look at possible alternatives for providing a stable and reliable supply of tree seedlings for family forestland owners.

The Committee for Family Forestlands will continue to discuss implementing a communication plan to increase forest landowner and public awareness about the committee's role in advising the Board of Forestry about issues that concern family forestland owners. Increased awareness would improve the likelihood that family forestland owners, stakeholders and the public would share their ideas, thoughts and concerns with committee mem-

bers. Anyone requiring special accommodations should contact Gail Barnhart at least two working days in advance at 503-945-7378, or by text telephone 503-45-7213 (in Salem), or by e-mail at <gbarnhart@odf.state.or.us>.

U.S. funds may guarantee rural home purchase

The Rural Housing Service of USDA Rural Development has \$5,111,524 in funds for mortgage loan guarantees and \$2,083,655.92 for direct mortgage loans to help finance homes for rural homebuyers. In addition, there is \$70,694 to provide limited low income housing repair grants to qualified rural homeowners.

The rural housing programs are for qualified modest and low income buyers to purchase or build a new home in rural Oregon with no down payment and 100 percent financing. The homes must be located in an eligible rural area.

More than 50 banks and mortgage lenders in Oregon participate in the USDA guaranteed program. Additional information can be obtained by calling a participating local lender, or the USDA Rural Development office in Portland at 503-414-3335.

Black Bear Coffee Co. named "2005 Business of the Year"



Dana Roach, owner of Black Bear Coffee Co. and Vernonia Mercantile was honored by the Vernonia Chamber of Commerce for the 2005 Business of the Year. President Donna Webb made the presentation on behalf of the chamber. In addition to being a favorite of Vernonia area residents, Black Bear Coffee Co. received accolades from numerous participants in last September's Cycle Oregon.

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