

Business Notes

Col-Pac receives grants for storm-related small business loans

Col-Pac has received two grants, \$199,000 technical assistance funding and \$499,000 loan funding, targeting small companies with storm damage and/or business interruption and those companies needing to "storm-proof" for future weather events. Over 80% of NW Oregon's economy is small business, with relatively limited resources for recovering from significant weather events such as the severe December 2007 storm. Given the likelihood of future storm events, this funding will provide counseling on

business recovery and loans to implement needed recovery or storm-proofing projects.

Col-Pac will be partnering with Clatsop Economic Development Resources (CEDR) in Clatsop County, the Economic Development Council of Tillamook County (EDCTC) and Columbia County to identify affected small businesses and work with them on providing technical assistance and/or loan funding. Technical assistance and loan funding will be available through June 2009.

"These two grants will signif-

icantly enhance NW Oregon's business retention and expansion activities, and provide long-term self-sustainability to our regional economy," stated Mark Labhart, President of Col-Pac and Tillamook County Commissioner. Mark Simmons,

Oregon Director for USDA added, "We are pleased that NW Oregon's funding applications were successful, as assisting small businesses is a core component of USDA's Rural Development mission.

Columbia-Pacific Economic

Development District (Col-Pac) includes Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and western Washington counties. Information about Col-Pac, its meetings, and its deliberations can be found at NWOregon.org.

Confusing flood zones explained

by Jill Hult, Columbia County Flood Relief

It is easy to get confused and ask why areas designated as 100-year and 500-year floodplains have flooded twice in 11 years.

It is a continuing effort of Columbia County Flood Relief (CCFR) to better educate our community on all matters of flooding and what it means for now and into the future.

When examining the floodplain, there are more accurate terms to define what the 100-year and 500-year floodplain truly are.

Preferably, the 100-year floodplain is referred to as zone A or a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). As we can attest,

it does not mean a flood will occur only once every 100 years. An area designated as flood zone A means there is a one (1) percent chance of flooding per year. In the same vein, a 500-year floodplain referred to as zone X has a 0.2 percent chance of flooding per year.

There are subtle but distinct differences between the flood zones within the Vernonia city limits and those unincorporated rural areas in the County. Briefly, Vernonia has flood zones AE and X. This simply means elevations determined by detailed methods such as a hydraulic analysis are attached to the AE zone to establish a Base Flood Elevation (BFE) or

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Public input wanted on hazard plan

A meeting for public input and review of the Columbia County Hazard Mitigation plan will be Wednesday, August 13, at 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. at the Emergency Communications District office, 58611 McNulty Way, St. Helens.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing technical assistance to Columbia County to facilitate the update of our existing natural hazards mitigation plan to a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan. The following jurisdictions have designated steering committees, completed the hazard screening process, and gathered data to analyze the risk associated with the hazards affecting the people and property

in the following jurisdictions: Columbia County, St. Helens, Columbia City, Scappoose, Clatskanie, Rainier, Prescott, and the Vernonia area.

All interested parties are encouraged to attend one of the three informational sessions presenting the results of the risk assessment. This opportunity for public participation is designed to describe the planning process to date; natural and technological hazards identified to occur in your community; people and property at risk from each hazard; goals your community wants to achieve; and mitigation actions or projects your community can implement to reduce or mitigate the risks associated with the hazards.

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