

UCAN News Articles – December 2018



Friday, December 7, 2018

Roseburg City Council to decide whether to expand enhanced law enforcement area

The City of Roseburg continues efforts to enact policies that make downtown more appealing.

On Monday, Dec. 10, the Roseburg City Council will decide whether to expand the Enhanced Law Enforcement Area — otherwise known as the exclusion zone — an area of downtown where people can be prohibited from entering for 180 days if they break certain laws three times within its boundaries.

The expanded area would include Riverside Park. At the council meeting on Nov. 26, Roseburg Police Chief Gary Klopfenstein told councilors the park has been “overrun” with people who have migrated to the park because they committed crimes in or were excluded from the downtown area.

But the police department has not provided City Council with data showing that migration, according to councilors Tom Ryan and Steve Kaser. If City Council decides to expand the area, it will be based solely on anecdotal reports from the police.

The city instated the area starting in 2017 to increase safety and discourage crime downtown, particularly crime associated with homelessness such as disorderly conduct and drinking in public.

From July 2017 to July 2018, 29 people received only one exclusion warning, according to police data. Eleven people received just two warnings. Nineteen people were excluded from the area for 180 days. Two people were excluded twice.

The most common charge was drinking in public — 65 citations. It was also the most common cause of exclusion. Ten people received their final warning for drinking in public. Trespassing and disorderly conduct were also common charges.

Police issued 10 prohibited camping citations. People were excluded for camping five times. In accordance with a 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision that decriminalized camping in public, city council removed the charge from the list of exclusion zone crimes.

City council decriminalizes camping in public spaces

In response to a recent appeals court ruling, the Roseburg City Council voted Monday to decr...

Kelly Wessels, United Community Action Network Chief Operating Officer, was troubled that City Council may vote to expand the area without first seeing data focused on the new area first. UCAN works to address homelessness in the city.

“It would concern me to make any decision of any magnitude without some form of quantified data to be able to emphasize the need for it,” Wessels said. “That’s not to say that what they’re doing is right or wrong, it’s to say, ‘If I really feel strongly about this, I need to have something that demonstrates why I believe that.’ So that it’s fact-based.”

Wessels said if city councilors expand the area, she hopes they would also work to address the lack of places for homeless people to go if they are excluded from public spaces.

“If it doesn’t exist here, well then where can they be,” Wessels said. “There’s no solution on the other side. And that, to me, compromises everybody’s ability to solve the problem. It puts more pressure on law enforcement to have to do more, it puts pressure on the individuals who are experiencing it and service providers.”

Councilors said Thursday they wouldn’t require the police department to present crime data for Riverside Park to decide whether it should be included in the exclusion zone.

“We’ll leave it to the chief, and we’ll ask him, but it’s the city manager’s job to say, ‘Is this working or isn’t it,’” Ryan, the council president, said. “I’m sure that it will come up, but we leave them to do the job.”

Kaser said he will ask Klopfenstein at the upcoming city council meeting whether or not the police are seeing people who have been excluded from the area migrate to Riverside Park.

“I don’t know if I want to delay the vote to ask him to try to get some data on that,” Kaser said.

At the previous meeting on Nov. 26, city councilors asked if the exclusion zone could be expanded to include more areas than the current one.

Mayor Larry Rich asked if it would be legal to expand the exclusion zone to the city limits.

City Manager Lance Colley said it wouldn’t be, adding that the city considered including more areas in the ordinance, but officials chose to pursue this expansion because they were sure it’s legal.

“Right now, we feel that this was the largest expansion that we can deal with,” Colley said.

City Council will have a second reading of the ordinance and decide whether to expand the area at its meeting on Dec. 10.



Friday, December 7, 2018

RARE Opportunity Taken



In the fall of 2014, a group of citizens came together in Roseburg around a common mission: To improve quality of life for Douglas County residents while saving them money by catalyzing a shift to renewable energy and energy conservation.

Douglas County Smart Energy was formed, and two years later, they took a uniquely Oregon opportunity to boost their impact by participating in a program called Resource Assistance for Rural Environments. Each year, the RARE Program places thirty AmeriCorps participants in rural communities around Oregon for a one-year period to coordinate a variety of collaborative community service projects.

RARE is how I landed in Roseburg from my former home of Hood River, and my one year of service is now wrapping up. I have had an incredible time working with Douglas County Smart Energy, coordinating renewable energy projects and promoting energy efficiency. With just a few weeks left, I am reflecting on the successes I've helped create and the remarkable people I've gotten to work with. Here are the top projects I got to work on:

- Coordinating the submission of four grant proposals to place solar arrays on the buildings of community groups serving low-to-moderate income residents. Two of these grant proposals were to the Pacific Power Blue Sky Foundation, the fund made possible by contributions of Pacific Power rate payers. We won't know for a couple more months if these projects will be fully funded, but we are feeling very encouraged by the fact that we recently received partial funding for one of them.
- Supporting the development of an additional four solar projects for nonprofits in the county that will serve the low-to-moderate income population as a member of the statewide Sunshot Solar in Your Community team, coordinated by Sustainable Northwest.
- Helping pave the path for more funding options for medium-to-large solar projects in Douglas County by making it easier for nonprofits, local governments, churches and other groups to take advantage of the federal investment tax credit, which can reduce project costs by 30 percent.
- Participating in the submission of a grant to get four new electric vehicle charging stations in Roseburg.
- Creating a plan to promote energy efficiency awareness that targets multiple sectors, including contractors, home builders, realtors, county and city staff and officials, K-12 students, and the general public.
- Conducting outreach to twenty Douglas County school districts to get out the word about Bonneville Environmental Foundation's solar curriculum program, Renewable Energy Leadership Lab.
- Developing a list of Douglas County energy efficiency success stories of people who went the extra mile and built very energy efficient homes, discovering along the way how quickly the investment paid for itself.
- I am in the midst of my last RARE project, surveying realtors and contractors to help DC Smart Energy better understand how to promote energy efficient construction. With buildings being responsible for approximately 40 percent of all energy consumption in the United States, and there being many tried and true (and cost effective) methods for constructing buildings that consume a fraction of the energy of buildings built to code, there is plenty of room for leaders in Douglas County to make a difference. This survey should help us better understand opportunities in the building industry in Douglas County, and potentially bring relevant training to the county.

At this point I haven't decided what I'm doing next, but I'm finishing up my RARE year with immense gratitude for getting to work on such fun projects with such fantastic people. I've gotten to do work I care deeply about, and have discovered passion for a new career path I plan to pursue.

To those of you in Douglas County Smart Energy and others who helped make this possible, thank you, and keep up the excellent work.

Sander Lazar is a RARE volunteer working with DC Smart Energy and UCAN as the Renewable Energy Coordinator. For more information on energy efficiency and renewable energy, visit dcsmartenergy.org, or on Facebook by searching DCSmartEnergy.

Free rides offered here: Bicycle giveaway program a huge hit



JEFF DUEWEL/Daily Courier
Lonnie Boyer (left) and Greg Mortensen get ready to deliver a load of bicycles to donate around town, part of their new community bike program.

Leonard Boyd wore a smile from ear to ear last week talking about his new bicycle.

"This morning I didn't have to catch the bus from where I was camping," Boyd said. "I made my appointment at Options. I made it here."

Boyd is one of a growing number of people in Grants Pass who have received free bikes thanks to a month-old project started by Greg Mortensen and brothers Lonnie and Micah Boyer.

They posted their first Facebook notice shortly before Thanksgiving, and have already given away over 75 bicycles they repaired or tuned up in Mortensen's garage.

"This is our way of giving back to the community," said Lonnie Boyer, a handyman by trade. "Our motivation is supplying low-cost transportation; the poundage of steel we're going to save from landfills."

They're already getting bikes from Cascade Metal Recycling.

On Tuesday they made a stop at St. Vincent de Paul's thrift store in Grants Pass to donate two bikes. They have a trailer full of bikes.

"This one's from Rogue River, this one's Wolf Creek, this one's White City," said Boyer, pointing at the load.

They also leave bikes at ROC Food Bank, Options of Southern Oregon, Salvation Army, UCAN, and Choices

Counseling Center.

Boyer said he saw Boyd outside Goodwill last week and thought he might need a bike. So he told him to run over to the ROC food pantry on Foundry Street and get one.

"Sure enough there were three of them over there, and I grabbed one," Boyd said.

Homeless for about two years now, Boyd said he loaned out his old bike a few months ago and never got it back.

Now, having the new wheels should help him land a job.

"I bet I have a better chance now that I have reliable transportation," he said. "They always ask you that."

The original idea behind the project was to have bikes spread around town to share, similar to rideshare programs in big cities such as Eugene and Portland.

But after conversations with City Hall, they thought it best just to give the bikes away, said Mortensen, who works in construction. Share programs, if not done correctly, can result in bicycles lying around and not being used.

"We are very supportive of them giving bicycles away to kids and other people who need them," said Lt. Dennis Ward of the Department of Public Safety. "In fact we're thinking about taking them some of the bikes we sell. We trash a lot of bikes that are in poor condition."

Mortensen and the Boyer brothers envision a larger operation down the road.

"We're trying to create a nonprofit, have workshops, and a warehouse, and teaching people how to restore a bike," Mortensen said.

Lonnie Boyer said about once a week they take a trailer around and pick up donated bikes, which come from Facebook, Craigslist or by word of mouth.

"We've had practically brand-new bikes, that might have a front tire, or the derailleur doesn't work, and people are donating them, because they know we're giving them back to the public," Lonnie Boyer said.

People wanting a bike, or to donate a bike, can call 651-659-4534, or 541-660-3456.

Mortensen said just last week getting a new bicycle helped another recipient land a job at UPS.

"He was ecstatic," Mortensen said. "He said, 'Somebody gave me a bike for nothing.'"

"This is a lot of work, but it's something that needed to be done. A lot of people out there need stuff."



Sunday, December 23, 2018

Cow Creek Tribe assists Douglas County food banks

The Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe has contributed \$38,000 to food banks throughout Douglas County to assist the local agencies in feeding the hungry during this holiday season.

Volunteers from 19 different food banks from around the county, received checks from the tribe Thursday, at the Cow Creek government offices in Roseburg. All of the agencies received the same amount. They were awarded \$2,000 to help their food banks to supply food for people during the holidays.

Eight of the food banks were in Roseburg including the UCAN Food Bank, St. Joseph's Community Kitchen, St. Vincent de Paul of Roseburg, FISH Food Pantry, the Friendly Kitchen, The Salvation Army, Adventist Community Services and the Roseburg Rescue Mission.

Three pantries that received grants were from Sutherlin including St. Francis Community Kitchen, the Sutherlin/Oakland Emergency Pantry and the ROLWOC Provision Food Pantry.

The Dillard/Winston Food Pantry, Glide Helping Hands, St. Vincent de Paul in Myrtle Creek and the South Douglas Food Bank in Riddle all benefited from the donations.

The food banks from as far away as the AARP Pantry in Reedsport, FISH in Drain, the Glendale Azalea Christmas Bureau in Azalea and the Community Care Food Pantry in Glendale.