



Rural Resource Forums in Oregon

ORDC has a history of organizing and sponsoring different types of forums to share ideas, promote collaborative problem solving, marshal resources, and shine a light on the issues and needs of rural Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. Since the 1990s, the ORDC has hosted forums organized around specific communities or key issues important to many communities or regions. The ORDC may organize future forums around general policy or issues of statewide or regional importance. In addition, we help successful, locally led community development efforts move to action and assist in finding resources for project implementation at a community-based Rural Resource Forum.

A Rural Resource Forum is a one-stop opportunity for rural communities and regions to discuss their highest community identified priorities with funders and technical assistance providers from a variety of state, federal, nonprofit, educational and other entities. These forums are supported and facilitated by the Oregon Rural Development Council to encourage broad participation by a variety of practitioners that assist rural initiatives. ORDC forums provide local representatives the opportunity to discuss their community and economic goals and explore barriers, strategies for moving forward, alternative sources of funding, and other topics. Participating entities will, in turn, provide recommendations on accessing technical expertise, funding sources, or policy interpretation. Each forum will be co-developed by local stakeholders in collaboration with the ORDC to best address the unique needs of the community or region. You can learn more by visiting the ORDC website at: www.ruraloregon.com under the Rural Forums tab.

Community Forums

La Pine Forum

La Pine, Oregon, October 26, 2015

Local leaders representing the City of La Pine and the unincorporated area in South Deschutes County between Sunriver and Klamath County requested an ORDC Rural Resource Forum to help implement priorities identified in their Economic Vitality Roadmap. Local leaders generated sustained and effective community participation in the planning process, yet, like many rural localities, they needed support to coordinate among assistance providers and secure resources to accomplish their goals. Approximately 40 representatives of federal and state agencies, nonprofits, philanthropy and other partners attended the forum to hear about the local planning process as well as implementation successes and barriers. With facilitation and follow-up from ORDC, attendees provided information and contacts for both funding and technical assistance for their top priorities:

- Downtown Revitalization
- Affordable, Workforce and Family Housing
- Branding, Development and Community Marketing
- Resources for Existing and New Businesses and Entrepreneurs
- Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Expansion

As a result of the Rural Resource Forum, the local community has moved forward with planning and funding assistance from a variety of entities, including: a grant from Oregon Department of Land, Conservation, and Development (DLCD) to help La Pine address building codes for downtown revitalization; a housing forum spearheaded by La Pine leaders and ORDC partners; and a One-Stop funders meeting to address water and wastewater infrastructure.



Illinois Valley Forum

Kerby, Oregon, September 27, 2016

After months of meetings and work sessions, residents and leaders in the Illinois Valley region of southern Josephine County developed their first community-led plan in nearly 20 years. While local will to advance the region's economy and quality of life is strong, they struggle to access the financial and staffing resources to advance projects. ORDC hosted a Rural Resource Forum to bring approximately 60 funders and technical assistance providers to the community to hear about the newly developed IV20/20 Strategic Plan and projects related to their top local priorities:

- Public Safety
- Affordable Housing
- Community Health
- Visitor and Business Amenities
- Local Capacity for Plan Implementation

ORDC is currently developing project follow-up for partner organizations to assist the IV20/20 group in identifying and applying for implementation assistance. As a result of the forum so far, the local group has applied for capacity funding, planned a follow-up meeting with multiple philanthropic organizations, and received a \$16,000 USDA Rural Development grant to support a regional lodging study.

Topical Forums

Rural Broadband Forum

Bend, Oregon, February 2-3, 2016

ORDC in partnership with USDA Rural Development's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) held a rural broadband workshop to assist rural leaders, businesses and stakeholders seeking assistance to plan and finance modern broadband access in rural areas. Nearly 150 rural stakeholders, agency representatives, consultants, lenders, economic developers and others attended. The two-day workshop involved a number of presentations including:

- Updates and information on current state and federal initiatives, including FirstNet and more
- Local and regional rural broadband success stories
- Strategies to leverage other local and regional economic development, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and public safety initiatives
- Planning considerations and how to get a rural broadband project started and deployed
- The pros and cons of different technologies
- Funding opportunities and technical assistance from multiple sources
- Individual project planning consultations with the experts

In a post-event survey, 97% of attendees indicated the workshop helped them identify additional or previously unknown sources of funding, technical assistance, or expertise for a rural broadband effort. Archived presentations can be found on the ORDC website at: www.ruraloregon.com under the Rural Forums tab.



www.ruraloregon.com