



A discussion ensued on what draws people to Creswell. Mr. Burke noted that the Chamber is trying to focus on events that are specific and unique to Creswell. They would like to showcase the agriculture in the area and try to put together a Harvest Festival.

Councilor Mounce asked what the membership of the Chamber is and Don Amberg responded saying about 75 members.

Councilor Zettervall asked if there was any way to showcase businesses that are closed during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration to help draw visitors back. Scott Olson responded that the Chamber of Commerce partners with the Creswell Chronicle to put out a guide to showcase local businesses and it is widely distributed leading up to and during the celebration. Chamber Director, Don Amberg reported that the Chamber is working on publishing a Visitors Community Business Guide. He noted that the Chamber does encourage businesses who are not open during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event to do other things such as take out ads, or have a promotion in the week leading up to the celebration that will allow them to capitalize on the event. Cathy Morgan stated that everyone is encouraged to have a booth during the event in the park to showcase their business.

Councilor Mounce asked about advertising on an event calendar in the Eugene publications. Mr. Amberg noted they have advertised locally and are beginning to discover where they can capitalize on events marketing. In the past the Chamber didn't have funding to promote their events.

Councilor Heyman suggested creating/developing a fly-in or drive-in package; fly-in at the Airport, provide transportation and take in a University of Oregon game or play a round of golf, dinner at a local restaurant and spend the evening at a local hotel.

Further discussion ensued on creating a destination to draw people for more than a few hours at a time. Mr. Amberg reported that bicycling, agricultural farm tours and aviation are big draws in tourism at the moment.

Mr. Burke pointed out that the Chamber is working on fostering communication between businesses through the Chamber to create collaboration for business opportunities of that sort.

A discussion ensued on developing relationships/partnerships: reaching out to Emerald Valley Golf Course, promoting Creswell Hobby Field, and Travel Lane County and Travel Oregon.

Natalie Inouye from Travel Lane County spoke up and noted that they do destination marketing and they are very interested in the Creswell area. She said last year they identified four key motivators and connected them to different communities: waterfalls on the McKenzie River, mountain biking in Oakridge, dune buggy riding in Florence and covered bridges in Cottage Grove. They are hoping to work with the Chamber this next year (for a year of discovery) to help identify what the key motivators are in this area so the following year they can build out a campaign specifically to Creswell. She said there are two opportunities in Creswell: building it as a destination or linking it to nearby communities.

Mayor Stram reported that in a few years, Oregon Avenue will be a busy street with buses traveling to the new University of Oregon Golf Course just west of Creswell. He continued pointing out some of the great amenities Creswell has: good track and field facilities and a campground. Creswell's location on I-5 and only being ten minutes from Eugene is also in our favor.

Mayor Stram asked Michelle Amberg to speak in regards to creating an agreement with the Chamber of Commerce for Tourism Services. Ms. Amberg said the Chamber would need to propose an agreement that outlines the types of things they would like to do and the amount of money they would like to receive in return.

A discussion ensued regarding what expectations might be placed in an agreement/contract for tourism services: the term, quarterly itemized invoices, submittal of receipts for reimbursements (accountability) and regular reporting to the Council.

Ms. Phillips commented that the city has been engaged in an exploratory project around Economic Development. The city has been asking owners of the businesses throughout the community "What does it mean to be open for business" and how is the city involved in that. Tourism is a subject that keeps coming up. The city has been working with a University of Oregon group called Community Planning Workshop who are also present this evening. The group is in the process of developing several goals and strategies. Ms. Phillips said Creswell needs

to be ready for visitors; she would like to hear about business development and how we educate new businesses as to how to develop a strategy to respond to the market, and how to address or identify trends.

Ms. Amberg asked everyone to keep in mind that the city receives the money and seventy percent of it needs to be allocated to tourism. This year it is estimated that the city will receive \$53,334 and even more next year with the possibility of an increase every year in the future. We need to find the best way to spend the money either having the City try to accomplish this alone or to partner with another agency such as the Chamber.

A discussion ensued on the Rural Tourism Marketing Program. The County provides the City money based on hotel receipts and the City passes this on to the Chamber for running the visitors center.

Ms. Amberg noted there are different ways to use the tourism money:

- The Council could choose to keep it in the City coffers and when we have a good project we would have the money to move forward with the work
- Create a program where folks who are involved with tourism can ask to be granted some money for their program
- Or, enter into an agreement that assigns that funding to a tourism partner

A discussion ensued regarding the location of the Visitors Center and how it needs to be more visible to travelers.

Don Amberg explained that the Chamber's budget includes regular events and they are looking to expand on a couple of other community functions such as the proposed craft fair, and maybe creating some agricultural tours. He continued stating that this is a new opportunity for everyone and we need to figure out what is best for Creswell and focus our efforts in that direction.

Mayor Stram noted that the Chamber's main function is business development with tourism being a very small part of what they do. He explained that the City should be spending approximately \$37,000 for tourism this year and it could be divided up between the three options Ms. Amberg outlined.

Debbie Wilson explained that one of the values the Chamber members receive from being part of the Chamber of Commerce is hosting events in partnership with the City. The Chamber board sees this opportunity as a valuable potential partnership with the City, and feels that everyone can benefit from it. The Chamber is still learning and growing and is potentially coming into resources they have not had before. They understand that they have a fiduciary responsibility to handle the funds properly and responsibly and want to demonstrate that they can be a trusted partner.

Ms. Amberg noted that one of the benefits of partnering with the Chamber is that it will keep the money local.

The next step would be for City Administrator work with the Chamber to develop a contract that includes a scope of work that would itemize out what it is that they would be doing under that contract and include a contract amount.

Mayor Stram with the consensus of the Council directed Ms. Amberg to work with the Chamber in drafting a contract for tourism services and present to the Council at either the July or August meeting.

#### Request for Street Closures & Use of Public Property for July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade and Celebration

Don Amberg, Director of the Chamber of Commerce addressed the Council to request the closure of some streets during the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and to use Airport property to bring additional activities to the Airport. A street map was submitted showing the parade route along with barricade placement. They are making every effort possible to keep the closures as short as possible.

Ms. Amberg asked for discussion regarding the concerns of last year's celebration. Mr. Amberg noted the concerns involved candy throwing, water balloons and parking issues. He continued by saying on the parade entry form that folks need to sign it states no candy throwing and no water spraying. The Chamber is currently looking at a shuttle service this year from the east side and the southern end of Creswell. The Chamber will look at signage for detours also.

This agenda item will be placed on the June City Council meeting agenda for action.

At 7:23 pm Mayor Stram recessed the meeting for a brief break. At 7:34 pm, Mayor Stram reconvened the meeting.

### **Presentations**

Lane County Rural Prosperity Initiative – Steve Dobrinich, Aniko Drlik-Muehleck, Sara Means Lane County Economic and Development Coordinator and Greg Rickoff, Director of Operations for Lane County

Over the past year or so, Lane County has been thinking differently about Community and Economic Development. Lane County has hired two Hatfield scholars to look at Rural Economic Development. Their process was a listening engagement; the County wanted to know what was and what wasn't working from the rural community perspective. After hearing from various communities, they are taking the results of their plan of action to the City Councils in Lane County. They are dedicating a resource to the world prosperity initiative by hiring a dedicated staff position to work on the issues. Mr. Rickoff continued by saying this is a priority for Lane County and they are ready to put the plan into action.

Steve Dobrinich and Aniko Drlik-Muehleck addressed the Council to describe what the process was and what the recommendation for the County are.

About nine months ago they were tasked with the question of: How can Lane County be better partners with rural communities. They visited the rural communities having conversations with those engaged with Economic Development duties. They have researched the work others around the country have done to know what the best practices are, what works and what doesn't. As a result they have put together the Lane County Rural Prosperity Initiative. This document will provide the framework for expanded economic development services in rural Lane County. It outlines the process the County will use to engage with rural communities, a menu of services Lane County Community and Economic Development can provide, and information on partnerships and how to measure the effectiveness of the Rural Prosperity Initiative and its desired outcomes.

#### Rural Economic Development Philosophy

Aniko explained the philosophy: a rural community with limited resources finds that successful economic development emphasizes community development, capacity building, partnerships and innovative governance are critical to successful economic development.

#### Rural Lane County's Challenges

Through their work they identified rural Lane County community's challenges as communication and coordination with the County and other rural communities, capacity and expertise with limited staff time dedicated to economic development, lack of infrastructure, quality of life factors, a clearly articulated strategic vision, and having the perception of invisibility.

#### Recommendations

The new staff position that Lane County is creating will serve as a liaison for rural economic development providing a bridge between rural communities and Lane County. This employee will focus on four specific areas:

- Collaboration and connectivity – the core of the recommendation is that the County can be a part of a local network through regional gatherings, monthly newsletters, resource fairs and rural working groups
- Technical Assistance – Rural advocacy, strategic planning, marketing and outreach
- Promotion – Community marketing, county marketing, represent communities and regular updates
- Funding – RTMP (Rural Tourism Marketing Program), Infrastructure and/or staff capacity, case by case needs for economic development
- Internal Evaluation – Successful rural economic development in Lane County will require support from all County departments

#### Next Steps

The County is very committed to maintain this initiative and also interested in building out partnerships. They are looking to get a great network created possibly through Travel Lane County. It is important that the County receive feedback and re-evaluate to help them better serve the rural communities.

Ms. Amberg noted that she has heard talk of creating a Rural Planning Organization and asked if this is something the County would be able to assist with. Sarah Means responded that this type of project would be housed out of the Land Management department and thinks that if there are topics of interest that cross pollinate between departments would be a great thing.

Councilor Mounce commended Steve and Aniko for their work and noted he was glad to see the measurement effectiveness piece included in the initiative and appreciates the resources list included in the back of the handout.

Mayor Stram asked for a briefing on the Bicycle Tourism Studio. Steve reported that a group of folks regionally got together to talk about bicycle connectivity between rural communities. This project is through Travel Oregon which you can apply for and they will come in and help your community accomplish your project. East Lane County collaborated to put together an application. This fall they will begin the Bicycle Tourism Studio program. This program centers on the concept of thinking outside the boundaries and making key connectors. Steve continued saying a lot of the conversation happening is centered around using forest roads that aren't being used by motorists; part of the broader vision is connecting all of Lane County riding on dirt and gravel roads or recreational travel using forest roads.

RAIN (Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network) Presentation – Jackie Mikalonis, Regional Solution's Coordinator for the Governor's Office

Ms. Mikalonis addressed the Council to provide a brief overview of the Regional Solutions Program and the RAIN program.

RAIN is the priority project for the South Valley Region.

In 2011, the Governor's office recognized the rebuilding of our economy needed to center around collaboration. The Regional Solutions Program was formed with the goal being to approach community and economic development by recognizing that there are unique needs within each region of the state; and to work with those local assets to identify what are the local and regional priority's and how can we solve problems together and seize opportunities to complete specific projects.

The Regional Solutions program aims to support economic and community development, attract and expand business and industry, create jobs and to improve the economy. The program works by bringing agencies, municipalities, private businesses and others to the table to coordinate state action and solving problems. Oregon is divided into eleven regions and Creswell is located in the South Valley/Mid Coast Region consisting Linn, Benton, Lincoln, and Lane Counties.

South Valley representatives have chosen RAIN as their project. The RAIN committee is made up of various leaders of higher education, government, philanthropy and the private sector located throughout the region. The RAIN strategy is to support entrepreneurs in the southern Willamette Valley and mid-Coast region. Their aim is to launch early-stage businesses and turn them into high-growth companies that will help generate jobs and prosperity in the region and turn the economy from resource-based to one focused on innovation.

RAIN has programs that help start-up businesses, provides mentors and advisors who help the business move forward and capital.

RAIN has been up and running for a little over a year and has two locations, Eugene and Corvallis. RAIN wants to expand their support to entrepreneurs in rural Lane County. RAIN currently has rural programs in Albany, Sweet Home, Lebanon, Brownsville, Florence, and Cottage Grove, and also an Economic Alliance in Lincoln County and has created a network with many entities.

RAIN has recently partnered with the City of Eugene and the University of Oregon to renovate a building in downtown Eugene. RAIN among other things will be located in this building. RAIN was established about eighteen months ago, they formed a non-profit and hired an executive director and are partnering with other agencies. To date, two hundred seventy five companies have received advice of investment from the RAIN program; the companies have generated two and a half million dollars in revenue and attracted more than eleven and a half million in investments; and created one hundred sixty jobs throughout Oregon.

Mayor Stram reminded the Council Committee Chairs that they will need to provide a committee report at the June work session.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stram adjourned the work session at 8:33 pm.

\*Signature on File

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Stram, Mayor

\*Signature on File

\_\_\_\_\_  
Roberta J Tharp, City Recorder