

McKenzie Valley Action Team: Accomplishments and Plans

The accomplishments of the McKenzie Valley Action Team since the Fall of 2015 have been as extensive as indicated below because of the very significant contributions of Ashley Adelman, Community Engagement Coordinator, a RARE AmeriCorps resource, and Stephen Dobrinich and Aniko Drilk-Muehleck, Hatfield Fellows working for Lane Economic Development. Stephen and Aniko focused on Blue River Wastewater and Year Round Tourism with support from Ashley and Ashley took the lead on Community Engagement, the Main Street direction, Chamber Support, the Children's Forest and Rural Broadband.

LOOKING BACK: September 2015 – March 2016

Community Engagement

- Website – Structure is complete and initial content is ready for release.
- A logo was designed and is used on printed material and the website.
- Engaged McKenzie High School to provide input for the website.
- Brochure describing the McKenzie Action Team, its members, goals and projects distributed.
- Community Outreach Meetings scheduled. A flyer distributed.
- Volunteer dB researched with starting lists of participants collected.
- A Survey intended to gather more volunteer information was designed.
- Articles submitted to River Reflections to inform community about Action Team goals/projects.
- Participated in community organizations and meetings.
- Accumulated documents created and stored them on shareable Google Drive.
- Created e-mail distribution lists on Google Groups for consistent distribution of information.

Year Round Tourism and McKenzie Valley Chamber of Commerce Support

- Supported Chamber Tourism Committee to enhance service to community businesses.
- Interviews conducted with community business leaders to understand opportunities and issues.
- Year Round Tourism plan completed.
- Updated Chamber website. Training new Chamber staff member.
- Supported teams defined in Year Round Tourism plan.
- Supported Travel Oregon grant proposal submission.
- Identified grant opportunities for the Chamber to explore.

Main Street Direction

- Explored Main Street approach. Participated in Oregon Main Street conference.
- Prepared summary of Main Street approach.

Blue River Wastewater Project

- Re-energized community participation to move forward from the feasibility study.
- Explored Lane County and State processes to create wastewater district and implement system.

- Created roadmap on how to proceed including engagement, resources and strategies.
- Worked with Rural Community Assistance Corp (RCAC).

The Children's Forest

- Expanded the resource directory and partners' list.
- Organized and facilitated an informational meeting with partners and secured support.
- Collected background information on the Children's Forest model.
- Researched grant opportunities.
- Continuing support of existing programs.

Rural Broadband

- Identified resources available to the community.
- Researched possible sources of funds to support rural broadband initiatives.
- Identified the Rural Broadband Conference put on by Oregon Rural Development Council. Engaged several community members to attend the conference.
- Engaged interested community members to develop a project team.
- Established an Information Group and a Working Group of interested McKenzie Valley residents.

LOOKING FORWARD: March 2016 – August 2016

- Meet with Blue River CDC (a 501 (c) (3)). Rename CDC from Blue River Community Development Corporation to McKenzie Valley CDC. Transition McKenzie Action Team and projects to McKenzie Valley CDC or the Chamber as appropriate. Support community members to assume leadership roles on each project team.
- Budget through Jul 2017. Obtain funding through 2017.
- Submit RARE application.
- Consolidate a CDC portfolio to be used in grant proposals that includes projects completed.
- Evaluate Main Street applicability. Review Main Street analysis with the Chamber. Develop MOU between the CDC and the Chamber.
- Conduct Community Outreach Meetings and compile results to provide feedback to the community on May 17.
- Investigate support of established environmental education programs as a first step Children's Forest. Implement the process designed to complete the Children's Forest Strategic Plan and investigate funding options.
- Organize and initiate the McKenzie Valley Broadband Working Group. Post broadband information to the website and keep the Information Group informed.
- Continue training Chamber staff in website maintenance and membership procedures.
- Meet with Tourism Committee. Continue supporting grant implementation.

LOOKING FORWARD: September 2016 – July 2017

Organization and Structure

- Main Street implementation if agreed to by community members and impacted organizations. Work with organizations that need to be involved in the Main Street implementation.
- Support Valley organizations to help them streamline overlaps and administration that can lead to more efficient operations. Help organizations increase operating efficiencies through:
 - Identifying opportunities to improve communications across groups.
 - Supporting board member and volunteer training.
 - Consolidating functions such as legislative watch, website maintenance, calendar of events.

Resources

- Continue to expand Community Engagement through:
 - Implementing the volunteer Db.
 - Publicizing events and meetings.
- Identify funding opportunities.
- Support grant proposal preparation.
- Provide technical assistance for website and document management.
- Create a Valley fundraising event to benefit the CDC for the purpose of establishing funds that can be used to incubate projects.

Projects

- Provide leadership support through:
 - Supporting the leadership of the Children's Forest project
 - Supporting the leadership of the Blue River Wastewater project
 - Supporting the leadership of the McKenzie Valley Broadband initiative
 - Supporting the leadership of the Year Round Tourism project
- Provide project coordination where project teams are not yet robust enough to manage without coordination through:
 - Developing prospective Children's Forest partners.
 - Investigating funding options for the Children's Forest project.