



News Release

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New library organization to hold meeting for input and information

GRANTS PASS, October 31, 2007—The newly formed nonprofit organization dedicated to reopening the libraries in Josephine County is holding an informational and input meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, November 6, at Anne Basker Auditorium, 604 NW Sixth Street, in Grants Pass.

"Using a science fair-type meeting format, we will have tables providing information and opportunities for discussion about the library budget, fundraising, and grassroots involvement," said Cathye Mason, chairwoman of Josephine Community Libraries, Inc. "We hope to gather lots of input from the public about how they want to run their libraries."

The Josephine County Historical Society's History Players will provide a short skit, and light refreshments will be served, Mason added.

After Josephine Community Libraries incorporated in September, they started raising funds for the effort. The Rogue Community College Foundation is accepting contributions on behalf of Josephine Community Libraries while the latter awaits its nonprofit designation from the IRS, which can take up to a year. This arrangement allows donors to make contributions now that will be tax-deductible. People interested in making a contribution can make their check or money order out to "RCC Foundation / Josephine Community Libraries." Contributions may be mailed to Josephine Community Libraries, P.O. Box 1684, Grants Pass, OR 97528.

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While the organization is currently developing its budget, it hopes to raise at least \$300,000 to be eligible for matching seed money from Josephine County. In September, the Board of County Commissioners voted to establish a \$300,000 matching grant that can be made available to a qualified nonprofit organization for library operations.

“The county will expect us to show that we can open and operate the libraries for the long haul,” Mason said. “We’ll need to show a solid business plan that demonstrates that we can acquire the funds and the volunteers needed to keep the library running for at least three to five years.”

To raise funds, Josephine Community Libraries expects to set up a patron structure similar to that of public broadcasting, in which library donors would make yearly contributions to provide for operations. The libraries would still be accessible to everyone at no charge.

Josephine Community Libraries is also actively recruiting nominees for its official board of directors. “We hope to have our board in place in December,” Mason said. “The ideal board will include people with experience in fundraising, library operations, administration, finance, law, and non-profit governance.” Those interested in submitting their names as board member candidates can send an e-mail message to info@josephinelibrary.org or call board nomination coordinator Doug Walker at 660-2178. Nominations will be accepted through November 13.

This effort started with a public meeting in late July in which volunteers stepped forward to study the feasibility of operating the libraries as a public-private partnership with the County. It decided to incorporate as a nonprofit organization, and now it’s working on budget, bylaws, and board of directors—all necessary to apply for IRS nonprofit status.

The mission of Josephine Community Libraries is to facilitate the opening and to ensure long-term operations of a public library system serving Josephine County, while adhering to its core values of integrity, credibility, and accountability. People interested in getting involved with the library reopening effort can send an e-mail to info@josephinelibrary.org.

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