



News Release

Open the door to knowledge

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Local art venues support Josephine Community Libraries

Grants Pass, March 5, 2008 — Nearly a dozen businesses that sell art in downtown Grants Pass have joined in an effort to raise money for the reopening of libraries in Josephine County. Beginning in March, each store will designate one painting, sculpture, jewelry item, piece of handblown glass, or other artwork. If items sell, businesses and artists will donate 20 percent of the purchase price to Josephine Community Libraries, Inc. Many of the business will be opened for extended evening hours for the First Friday art walk on March 7.

Formed in September 2007 as a nonprofit organization, Josephine Community Libraries, Inc. has raised nearly \$120,000 in monetary and in-kind donations to meet its goal of reopening and operating local libraries. After Josephine Community Libraries raises \$300,000, it will apply for \$300,000 in matching funds from the Board of County Commissioners. Josephine Community Libraries has forecast a budget of \$600,000 to \$1 million to open the library. It plans to begin operations by the end of 2008.

The downtown businesses were enthusiastic about joining in the fundraiser for libraries, said Vickie Moore, a volunteer with Josephine Community Libraries. "We got a fantastic response when we asked business owners if they would like to participate. They really understand how critically important the libraries are to the kids, teens, adults, and senior citizens of our community," she said.

Cliff Bennett, owner of Chet's Garden Center on the corner of H and 5th Streets, said he wanted to support the community-led effort to reopen the libraries. He said the libraries benefited his own children, who are now grown. "My kids during elementary school were involved in accelerated reading programs. They were at the library all the time," he said. "Today, my kids are still great readers and it all comes from those early days at the library."

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Businesses are offering a range of items at different prices to accommodate nearly any budget. Chet's Garden Center is featuring a fountain priced at \$299.99. Bennett has generously offered to donate 30 percent of the purchase price. During March, every painting on the walls of Blue Stone Bakery & Coffee Cafe on 6th Street is part of the fundraiser, with 20 percent of painting sales donated. The watercolor and graphite works start as low as \$15.

Other participating businesses include The Glass Forge, Harper Howell Gallery, and Tierra del Sol on G Street; and Treasured Memories Fine Art & Clocks, Home Economics, Heartsong, Treavor Barnes Tattoos & Fine Art, and The Kitchen Company on 6th Street. The businesses have been invited to form a long-term fundraising partnership with Josephine Community Libraries by continuing to designate an item in following months.

The libraries are an important resource for local artists and people who want to learn more about art, Moore said. "Behind the locked doors of the main branch in Grants Pass is a large collection of coffee table books featuring artists like Pablo Picasso, Gustav Klimt, and Ansel Adams," she said. "Other books explore movements such as Impressionism, Art Nouveau, and Abstract Expressionism as well as the art of Japan, Pacific Northwest American Indians, Africa, and other cultures." She went on to point out that the children's section has hundreds of picture books, arts and crafts books for rainy days, imaginatively illustrated biographies of artists like Georgia O'Keeffe and Frida Kahlo, and books that use images from the worlds' museums to teach about the alphabet, counting, animals, and shapes.

The mission of Josephine Community Libraries, Inc. 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 effort can send an e-mail to info@josephinelibrary.org or visit www.josephinelibrary.org. Those interested in making a contribution can make their check or money order payable to "RCC Foundation/Josephine Community Libraries" and mail it to P.O. Box 1684, Grants Pass, OR 97528.

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