

The Chamber Connection: Economic Vitality comes three ways!

By T. Myers

Excitement mounts throughout the community as we prepare to do work on three separate and much focused committees (action roundtables) that represent a sizeable cross section of the area residents and community businesses!

What am I speaking to? The Rural Development Initiative (RDI) has taken notice of La Pine in a big way. They have come to town, working with their community partners to help La Pine grow up the right way with plenty of good leaders who work together, with goals that can be attained and are recognized as solid community priorities and with opportunities for more training in order to plan and expedite projects correctly and efficiently.

When the Ford Family Foundation (FFF) explored how they could help the new City of La Pine back in 2007, they were formulating a way to organize and train leaders to be able to work together to accomplish goals for the new city. They proposed a new kind of idea called a Co-Hort. The first of four co-horts (mixed groups of community members of all ages) and a half dozen other training workshops to improve organizations, strategic planning, leadership training, etc., began the process of the FFF trainings and now with their partner, RDI, the process is continuing with a series of workshops/summits that will address 'immediate results projects' to begin showing a recognizable difference to area residents!

What kind of projects?

One committee was determined to be beautification of the city. This goes along with the notion of Main Street USA, the Urban Renewal Project and various other curb appeal improving projects much like the annual Let's Pull Together project that happens the first Saturday of June each year. They committee has come up with a project title called *Put a Shine on La Pine!* It is working now to get local businesses/residents to improve their curb appeal. They are considering everything from weed pulling (Call Kim at the Community Kitchen to be a part of this aspect of the project 536-1312) to painting, planting and other appealingly beautiful things that will make your business seem more welcoming!

A second committee is about marketing La Pine and the project name is *Hear Here!* These folks are working to get the word out that we want to work together as a community and that when you want to enjoy the lovely outdoor environment, with all of the amenities that La Pine has to offer you will be getting the word here! Additionally, they want to be the coordinating body for events and activities so LA Pine organizations and groups can host fundraising and fun activities on separate days and not have too many on the same days. The notion or concept of **We Speak La Pine**, with the training that customer service folks in local businesses can use to explain all about our town will be a part of this committee.

The third Committee is also one of the three Business Vitality Action Roundtables and it deals with how to develop business opportunities and the workforce.

All three committees have set dates for the next step in each committee's project phases with Workforce meeting on August 20, Marketing on September 3rd and Customer Service meeting on September 17th.

You can lend your voice to the conversation about any or all three of these topics and you can come in person to the three meetings at the La Pine Park and Recreation building LPCC from 11-1. Lunch will be served. Chad Carpenter, the LPRD Adult Education Coordinator is taking your RSVPs by phone 541-526-2223. You can also call Ann Gawith at the Chamber 536-9771 for more information about getting involved.

Don't miss an opportunity to use your voice to plan La Pine's future! Call today!