

2002 Annual Report Executive Summary

Josephine County Enterprise Community

The past year saw the adoption, by the community elected Board, of a sustainability plan designed to prolong operations of the CRT beyond the end of the EC designation. Social Investing (creating profit-making businesses to further the CRT Mission and produce income for the organization) and establishing programs for direct service delivery are the chosen strategies to accomplish this with economic development and job creation as the new priorities. In addition to hiring a new Executive Director in November 2001, this year our staff of three has been supplemented by two Americorp VISTA volunteers and regular placements from our local Job Council's Work Experience program.

Considerable progress has been made in finishing or advancing previous projects and in preparing for implementation of the new strategy. A first season managing the Oregon Caves National Monument solidified the CRT's tourism coordination role, while earning the organization more than \$80,000. Development of a multi-functional tourism gallery/business development center is underway with considerable community support and enthusiasm. Infrastructure development has occurred with the completion of the Light Industrial Park at the IV Airport, which should be ready to receive tenants this spring. The Kerby Water District Formation Committee is close to forming a Water District assisted with a \$23,000 grant from the CRT. The economic feasibility study is completed and the petition designed and ready to be circulated. The second phase of the Jubilee Skate Park in Cave Junction has also been completed, adding another recreational opportunity for young people. Economic Development has occurred with the help of a National Fire Plan grant to assist wood product businesses market collectively through a portal website and shared photographic equipment. This is the first instance of formal collaboration among local business owners. Training is being organized for small businesses in federal contract management to increase local access to forest restoration and thinning work and research has been undertaken on incubators and Internet marketing through community connectivity centers in preparation for the submission of an RBOG for business support program and an RBEG to construct a multi-use facility. An application has also been submitted for an additional \$95,000 to increase our very successful Revolving Loan Fund.

The CRT left the sidelines to become a major tourism player when it won management of the concession for the Oregon Caves National Monument this past year. This allowed the CRT to better coordinate tourism activities, culminating in a Tourism Gathering of over 30 business owners at the Oregon Caves Chateau to review the past season and prepare for 2003. The Illinois Valley Forks State Park got its most thorough spring-cleaning ever when over 75 participated in SOLV's "Down by the Riverside" clean-up. From this event has emerged a "Friends of the Park" group, who are working with ODPR to build a pavilion to increase day use. With the drying up of public funds to implement the Park's Master Plan, a more gradualist approach has been adopted based on increasing usage and demand before making large infrastructural investments. Cave Junction has a new look thanks to the proliferation of rock sculptures built with funds from the Oregon Tourism and Arts Commissions; although important in their own right, the thematic sculptures are the first step to a building façade, makeover. Over \$16,000 of grant funding was obtained from USDA and Cow Creek foundation at the instigation of the Education Committee to support the tissue culture lab at the IV High School.

A CRT grant of \$12,000 was awarded to the Illinois Valley Safe House Alliance (IVSHA) through the Quality of Life Committee to continue their fund raising for a shelter and begin service delivery. The IVSHA has leverage this grant into an additional \$423,000 of funding, including \$150,000 in a USDA Community Facilities grant. The Community Outreach VISTA Volunteer has been working to identify potential clients for referral to the USDA housing repair and ownership programs and has just begun

working with the Quality of Life Committee on finding ways to increase affordable housing in the area.

SWCRT 2002 was a year of extraordinary challenge and transition for the Sunny Wolf Community Response Team (SWCRT). With a complete loss of staff, including the executive director, the SWCRT, together with its board of directors, had to refocus their priorities, not only on Sunny Wolf community development, but also on organizational infrastructure. Towards the middle of the fiscal year Sunny Wolf was charged with aligning their philanthropic activities with current business realities. We found ourselves in a very cash conservative environment for the foreseeable future. A major part of our reorganization was the reduction of costs across the board, including dollars earmarked for community support. All paid staff not funded by grant administration dollars were downsized, with the exception of a part time bookkeeper. An experienced volunteer director was brought on board in September 2002 to not only continue the work in progress, but to initiate new projects as well. Participation at community meetings noticeably dropped off when the public became aware the SSBG funds were, for all intents and purpose, depleted. 28 meetings were held with a total attendance of 531 or an average of 18 per meeting. Of that 18 a minimum of 10 attendees were board members. Participation rose sharply when addressing “hot topics” such as future funding. Community meetings for discussing restructuring the SWCRT and plans for its future were held. Project priorities were chosen at these meetings allowing the board and remaining staff to focus on community needs and wishes. The most important indicator was when the community was asked to vote whether to keep the CRT or close the doors; the vote was overwhelmingly retention. Because of the fiscal crisis several projects had to be abandoned when it was determined they were not cost effective. The ‘dial a ride’ transportation program was cancelled, as was the Tech Lab, which was turned over to the Wolf Creek Elementary School.

On the other hand the SWCRT was active in many community events, such as the annual Easter Parade, when we opened our doors to serve corn dogs and cold drinks, a community Christmas Party, several open houses, a used clothing exchange, to name only a few. The volunteer level remained high. Although the past year appeared chaotic, the previously laid foundation of SWCRT importance to the community was reinforced in that we were found to be a viable organization within the Sunny Wolf community for future positive change and forward momentum. Over the past year the SWCRT has pursued development projects in the following areas: (1) Natural Resources and Environment; (2) Economic development in the form of infrastructure improvements in the Sunny Wolf Fire Station; (3) Small business development through the established Small Business Revolving Loan Fund program; (4) Human Resource needs through the Big News, The Sunny Wolf Teen Center, and the Translink Medical Ride programs; (5) Administration of the Wolf Creek Library Grant.

The SWCRT has every intention of continuing its organizational renewal and redevelopment process through community outreach efforts and by focusing on financial sustainability for years to come. We are certain, despite the setbacks of 2002, we are in an excellent position to continue to positively impact the future of the Sunny Wolf community.