



# *2004 All-America City Award Application*

All communities are encouraged to apply.

## **Community Information**

**Community name and state:**

**Cottage Grove, Oregon**

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**Your community is applying as a:**

Neighborhood  Town  City  County  Region

**If applying as a region, name participating communities:**

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**If applying as a neighborhood, name city:**

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## **Contact Information**

**All-America City Award contact (primary contact person available throughout entire competition and for follow-up):**

Name: Richard Meyers

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Title: City Manager

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Organization: City of Cottage Grove

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Address: 400 E. Main Street

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City, State, ZIP: Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424

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Phone (business/day): (541)942-5501

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Fax (business/day): (541)942-1267

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Phone (home/evening): (541)942-3223

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Fax (home/evening):

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E-mail Address: citymanager@cottagegrove.org

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List the 3 individuals who most actively participated in filling out this All-America City Award application (add additional lines if needed): (Provide name and title; organization; phone; e-mail address)

Casey Woodard, Vice President  
Woodard Family Foundation  
(541)914-3573  
cwoodard@kimwood.com

Wayne Clark, Transportation Supervisor  
South Lane School District 45J3  
(541)942-2803  
wclark@lane.k12.or.us

Howard Schesser, Community Development Director  
City of Cottage Grove  
(541)942-5501  
cddirector@cottagegrove.org

The community applying will receive one complimentary membership (or a membership renewal if an AAC application was submitted last year) to the National Civic League for one year. To whom should this membership be directed?

Name Richard Meyers  
Address 400 E. Main Street  
City, State, Zip Code Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424  
Phone Number (541)942-5501 Fax (541)942-1267  
Email citymanager@cottagegrove.org

If we are designated an All-America City, we agree to follow NCL’s rules (available on the Web site) regarding use of the All-America City Award logo, a registered trademark of the National Civic League.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Richard Meyers Title: City Manager

**Community Statistics**

Note: Use the most up-to-date statistics possible for your neighborhood, town, city, county, or region (*source suggestions*: U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Economic Security, State Department of Finance, Department of Public Health, and local school statistics)

POPULATION (in year 2000 or most recent): **8,910** (July 2003)

Source/Date: Portland State University – Population Research Center

POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE 1990-2000 (indicate + or -): **+ 14 %**

Source/Date: U.S. Census, Census 1990 & 2000 (April 1 1990 – April 1, 2000)

**RACIAL/ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN** *(percentage):*

<b>White alone</b>	90.5 %
<b>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</b>	4.9 %
<b>Black or African American alone</b>	0.2 %
<b>Asian alone</b>	0.9 %
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) alone</b>	1.2 %
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOP) alone</b>	0.1 %
<b>Some other race alone</b>	1.6 %
<b>Two or more races</b>	3.2 %

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census, Census 2000

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**MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: \$ 37,457**

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census, Census 2000

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**PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 15.6 %**

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census, Census 2000

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**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 6.5%**

**Source/Date:** U.S. Dept of Labor, Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area / December 2003

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**POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP** *(percentages, if available):*

<b>19 years old and under</b>	30.0%
<b>20-24</b>	5.8%
<b>25-44</b>	26.4%
<b>45-64</b>	21.7%
<b>65 and over</b>	16.0%

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census, 2000 Census

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**PERCENTAGE OF HOME OWNERSHIP: 62.4%**

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census, 2000 Census

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**WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION -- Name the three largest employment sectors in your community and provide the percentage of total employed in each:**

<u>Manufacturing</u>	19.2%
<u>Retail Trade</u>	17.6%
<u>Education, health and social service</u>	14.2%

**Source/Date:** U.S. Census, 2000 Census

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# Part I: Community Background and Community Challenge Section

Add lines as needed for your responses

**1 (A). Community Background:** Set the background for your community. Tell its story. Summarize your community's history, successes and struggles. Describe how your community got to where it is today and your community's current state of affairs. (700 word maximum):

Cottage Grove is a small rural community of 8,910 people nestled in the southern end of Oregon's Willamette Valley. Early settlers farmed in and around the Cottage Grove area, raising sheep and cattle and growing fruits, vegetables and grasses. The population of the area began to increase significantly after 1858, when gold was discovered in the mountains 30 miles east of the city. The discovery of gold and the expansion of the timber industry lured many people to the area. The arrival of the railroad expanded the accessibility to markets and the timber industry became the primary employer. The timber industry remained the predominant industry supporting many of the families in the area until the mid 1980s when the industry deteriorated.

The community is the largest city in Lane County outside the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area twenty-one miles to the north. Living in the shadow of a major metropolitan area creates challenges for our community. Since the decline of the timber industry, over two-thirds of our workforce commutes to the Eugene/Springfield area for employment. With a significant population leaving the community every day, extra efforts are necessary to maintain our unique identity, support our own local businesses and fund basic municipal services.

The citizens of Cottage Grove are proud of the community's heritage and are actively involved in maintaining its identity. Such involvement has secured a National Historic District designation for our downtown core. In addition, we annually celebrate the historic discovery of gold with Bohemia Mining Days. In 1999, the celebration, through poor management, suffered substantial losses and ended with over \$70,000 in debt. Citizens rallied in support and kept the celebration alive. The organization was restructured and within three years the debt was cleared up and the event increased in size and attendance.

Tourism and related recreation services have grown to have a major impact on the local economy. We have undertaken a number of projects to enhance Cottage Grove's recreational potential such as:

- The Cottage Grove Covered Bridge Tour Route. The collection of six covered bridges all within a short drive in and around Cottage Grove has earned us the title of "Covered Bridge Capital of Oregon."
- Mining Musuem. The Bohemia Mine Owners Association, one of the nation's oldest organizations of mine owners and operators, opened a mining museum in the National Historic District downtown. During the first six months of operation, the museum had 835 visitors.
- Buster Keaton Days & Animal House Celebration. Both of these celebrations were created to draw visitors to the community and commemorate the filming in Cottage Grove of Buster Keaton's classic *The General* in 1926 and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the filming of *Animal House*. Over 5,000 people traveled from all around the United States to attend the Animal House celebration, which included the World's Largest Toga Party.
- Row River Trail. This 17-mile Rails to Trails project was a collaborative effort with the city, BLM, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and many private citizens. The trail runs from downtown Cottage Grove, along Dorena Lake to the forest near Culp Creek.

- Interstate 5 Travel Information. The community had new tourist attraction signs installed on the interstate.

Statewide budget and tax limitations and the sagging economy have made it a struggle for the city to maintain many local services. However, even with restrictions, the city has been innovative in its use of partnerships and community involvement to improve local services. In 2000 the city received a “Good Governance Award” from the League of Oregon Cities for our Library / Community Center project. Through the efforts of citizens, foundations and the city an existing 24,000 sq. ft. building was purchased to house our library and a new community center.

Since receiving the All-America City Award in 1968, civic involvement has continued to be a way of life in Cottage Grove. The community has a wealth of eager citizens anxious to find ways to make their community a better place. Physical improvements to the community are exciting. But more exciting is the knowledge that the citizens in this community have the ability to make their visions come true.

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**1 (B). Community Celebration:** Why should your community be selected as an All-America City? Describe what makes your community a great place to live, work, and play. (300 word maximum)

***“What’s going on down in Cottage Grove?”***

This is the most common question that is asked of City officials when they travel to other communities in the state. Cottage Grove is recognized around the state for the variety of projects and activities that are occurring while most other communities are struggling just to provide basic services.

The attention is the result of a widespread commitment of the members of Cottage Grove to be involved in solving the problems facing their community. The citizens have a renewed vigor that only comes from personal involvement in making their hometown a full-service community that truly is a great place to live, work and play.

The citizens of Cottage Grove give generously of their time and talents to help their each other. Volunteering is second nature in Cottage Grove. The members of the community love to volunteer and when they do, they have a lot of fun. Whether it is 500 citizens lining the streets passing books from the old library to the new library in an old fashioned Book Brigade or reconstructing a storm-damaged gazebo in Coiner Park, everyone is taking part and having fun.

Living in Cottage Grove is not just about volunteering. It is also about playing. Whether playing is cycling on the Row River Trail from downtown to one of two lakes, fishing in one of the two rivers that flow through town, enjoying a theatrical performance at the Cottage Grove Theatre, strolling through antique shops or museums in the historic district or dancing and singing along to “Louie, Louie” being sung by the Kingsmen during the world’s largest toga party, we have it in Cottage Grove.

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**1 (C). Community Challenges:** Based upon your community's current status, describe your community's two most pressing challenges.

**Challenge #1:** *(200 words maximum)*

The closure of the Cottage Grove Hospital in 1998 created a critical void in essential medical services. The loss significantly impacted our senior and at-risk citizens who found it difficult to access appropriate healthcare. In addition to the loss of the hospital and emergency room services, the community feared continued reductions in the availability of local physicians and clinical services. The community felt isolated from the nearest hospital, especially those living in the outlying rural areas located throughout the mountains surrounding Cottage Grove.

As a result, citizens began to leave the area to move to other locations where needed medical services were available. Local jobs were threatened as industrial operations and businesses became increasingly uncomfortable with the lack of emergency room services.

The community recognized that restoring hospital services would be essential to maintaining its quality of life and reversing the out-migration trend. However, it would not be enough to simply reopen a hospital; the underlying economic issues facing health care reimbursement would have to be addressed so that a new, modern hospital could be financially stable for the long term.

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**Challenge #2:** *(200 words maximum)*

Downtown Cottage Grove struggles to remain a viable commercial center for the community. Growth and development in other locations in the City and the aging infrastructure have lured commercial development away from the historic downtown. Revitalization efforts to create additional traffic and recognition of the downtown area have included designating the area as a National Historic District in 1993, creating the Cottage Grove Covered Bridge Tour Route in 2000 and including the downtown in the City's Enterprise Zone in 2002. The additional traffic and recognition for the area have been helpful. However the aging infrastructure, both public and private, the City's inability to consistently fund even minor improvements and the lack of regular promotion of the downtown area remain barriers to a successful revitalization of the downtown. Successful downtown revitalization needs a consistent funding source to assist with the necessary physical improvements, redevelopment and promotion. Due to the city's budget struggles to provide basic municipal services another funding source is needed.

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## Part II: Community-Driven Projects

Add lines as needed for your responses

Part II requires descriptions of three collaborative community projects that have significantly affected the community.

The first two projects should be drawn directly from the two community challenges stated above.

The third project should be reflective of what your community is doing for children and youth.

### PROJECT ONE (Challenge #1)

#### 1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. (150 word maximum)

*The New Hospital Project* began following the bankruptcy of Cottage Grove's private nonprofit hospital with the goal to restore financially sustainable health care services for residents of Cottage Grove and the surrounding rural area. Moreover, we wanted to enhance local services by establishing a new, state-of-the-art hospital designed to address the complexities associated with rural healthcare.

To accomplish this goal, we needed to pass federal and state legislation that would enable our health service providers to receive higher reimbursements for care given to Medicare and Medicaid patients. We also needed to attract a health care organization willing to invest in, build and operate the new facility. We also needed to raise \$2 million in donations from local residents as the community's share of the hospital construction cost.

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#### 2. Describe the relationship between this project and your first challenge, the project's history, and how it is being sustained? (300 word maximum)

*The New Hospital Project* was necessary to restore citizens' confidence in essential services, preserve local access to medical care for elderly and disadvantaged residents, maintain citizens' desire to stay in our community and protect our quality of life.

The project began in 1999 following the bankruptcy and closure of the former community hospital. Civic leaders and concerned citizens rallied together to address the gap in services. We asked PeaceHealth, a provider of hospital and clinic services in Eugene, Oregon, to help us restore local healthcare. They offered to provide local outpatient care, and agreed to build and operate a state-of-the-art hospital if Cottage Grove committed to address financial issues.

Encouraged by PeaceHealth's offer, Cottage Grove established a team of civic leaders and citizens to fulfill its commitment. The team worked with federal congressmen to obtain "critical access" designation granting the hospital full Medicare reimbursement -- an Act passed by Congress and signed by the President of the United States -- all within three months. The team also worked with Oregon legislators to pass state legislation providing full Medicaid reimbursement for outpatient services. With legislation secured, Cottage Grove and PeaceHealth hurried to temporarily reopen hospital services in less than four weeks, before the end of 1999, to preserve the hospital's operating license.

The next phase of the project was the campaign to raise \$2 million. The grass-root capital campaign was completed in less than two years.

PeaceHealth opened the new Cottage Grove Community Hospital in October, 2003. The facility is operating in the “black” and is expanding services including physical therapy. Moreover, PeaceHealth is on schedule to restore services that had been provided by the former hospital, including obstetrics, gynecology, orthopedics and general surgery. Local residents have re-established a volunteer auxiliary to raise funds and enhance the compassionate service by staff.

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**3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)**

The collaborative efforts to implement our New Hospital Project focused on three key goals: 1) find a health care provider, 2) pass federal and state legislation to support financial stability, and 3) conduct a capital campaign.

First, 250 residents formed “Citizens Supporting Healthcare” to explore options, and following much study, recommended that PeaceHealth be invited to partner on the temporary reopening of the old hospital and construction of the new health care campus. This was a natural conclusion given that PeaceHealth had already agreed to employ area physicians and maintain clinical services.

The next step was to foster long-term financial stability. The Tax Reform Act of 1997 had led to the demise of the former hospital by radically changing the way health costs were paid. Civic leaders wanted to obtain Critical Access status so the new hospital could receive full Medicare reimbursement. But Critical Access was restricted to rural hospitals located beyond 35 miles from the nearest hospital. Cottage Grove was 21 miles from the nearest facility. Civic leaders collaborated with U.S. Senators Smith and Wyden, and U.S. Representative DeFazio to pass federal legislation lowering the distance from 35 to 20 miles. The bill passed in three months. Oregon legislators joined the effort obtaining state classification for South Lane Medical Group as a Provider-Based Rural Health Clinic enabling it to receive the highest possible Medicaid reimbursement rate.

The third phase was to raise \$2 million to leverage PeaceHealth’s original promised investment of \$7 million. Volunteers conducted a grass-roots campaign to collect pledges from residents and solicit business donations. The first \$1 million was raised within three months.

Throughout the effort, this alliance of civic leaders, elected officials, health care providers and citizens was the keystone of the *New Hospital Project’s* success.

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**4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)**

The most important and lasting outcome of the *New Hospital Project* remains the collective vision and energy it has engendered in our community.

Similar to many small communities, particularly those located in the shadow of larger communities, Cottage Grove has struggled to attract business investments, provide essential human services and to maintain an image as a desirable place to live. Compounding these difficulties, the community has been impacted by the demise of a once-thriving forest products industry and the national economic downturn following the September 11 attacks on our nation.

The prospect of losing local hospital services galvanized our community, eliciting a collective decision to transform its future. But this desire was not the pivotal change. Instead it was the collaborative actions of many people that not only restored local healthcare, but also created opportunities for future teamwork with their families and neighbors.

Over the past three years, in addition to creating a successful team, we have:

- Established the first Critical Access Hospital in the nation to open a new \$12.3 million facility designed around the rural health care model connecting clinic and in-patient hospital services on one site.
- Restored and enhanced local health care services, including all-digital imaging technology for faster radiology and ultrasound results and on-site advanced CT-scanner technology.
- Preserved more than 100 jobs associated with the hospital, generating \$7 million annually in salaries, wages, benefits and property taxes.
- Recruited two new physicians and are actively recruiting more providers.
- Positioned the facility to, in time, restore general surgery, orthopedics, obstetrics, and gynecology services while remaining financially healthy.
- Re-established a vibrant auxiliary of 60 volunteers to greet patients and visitors and raise funds for new equipment.

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**Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)**

Casey Woodard, Vice President,  
Woodard Family Foundation  
40 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424  
(541)914-3573  
[cwoodard@kimwood.com](mailto:cwoodard@kimwood.com)

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## **PROJECT TWO (Challenge #2)**

### **1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. (150 word maximum)**

*E/BID Formation.* The Chamber of Commerce and downtown businesses in partnership with the City of Cottage Grove and other agencies undertook the creation of the Cottage Grove Economic and Business Improvement District (E/BID) to fund necessary improvements, redevelopment and promotion of the downtown area. The formation of the Economic and Business Improvement District was at the request of local business owners and operators to address the need to consistently fund improvements and to promote downtown Cottage Grove.

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### **2. Describe the relationship between this project and your second challenge, the project's history, and how it is being sustained? (300 word maximum)**

In late 2000 members of the business community began meeting with City and Chamber of Commerce representatives to discuss the need for revitalizing the downtown area. All parties recognized the pressures facing local government in Cottage Grove. The economy and various statewide tax limitation measures had severely restricted the ability of local budget resources to meet ever-increasing demands. Together the City and business community explored the possibility of the formation of an Economic and Business Improvement District. The Chamber of Commerce sponsored a number of public forums to discuss the needs of the downtown area. Guest speakers from other communities with successful Economic and Business Improvement Districts were brought to the community to provide insights and additional information.

The Chamber of Commerce hired an intern from the University of Oregon to assist in conducting a business inventory and educating the businesses about the improvement district. The intern visited each of the affected businesses.

After several meetings and the completion of the appropriate documents, the business community formally requested the City Council to establish an Economic and Business Improvement District. Through the E/BID, the business community took an active role in the revitalization of downtown Cottage Grove. The businesses requested that voluntary assessments be levied against themselves for improvement of downtown. The participation in the district has been overwhelming with 110 (80%) property owners and 107 (93%) business owners participating.

The district was created for a three-year period and is beginning its third year. Preparations are being made for the district to be renewed for an additional five-year period. The district has successfully used its limited funding to leverage significant improvements in the downtown area.

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**3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)**

The formation of the Economic and Business Improvement District was a major undertaking. The individual businesses needed to work together on a common goal. They had to cooperate and learn about all of the possible impacts of the improvement district.

Early in the process, the members of the business community met with city officials and discussed the possibility of the improvement district. The city was supportive and assured the business representatives that the city would approve the formation if the business community supported the proposal.

The business community, through the Chamber of Commerce, partnered with the University of Oregon, Oregon Downtown Development Association, Rural Development Initiatives and the city to prepare the necessary information for creation of the district. The Chamber of Commerce committed \$2,100 to fund an intern from the University of Oregon to conduct the business inventory and prepare assessment projections. Staff from the Oregon Downtown Development Association, Rural Development Initiatives and the city provided advice and answered questions.

Business owners and operators met with their colleagues and began communicating with one another. Contacts were made with absentee landowners. Relationships were strengthened and partnerships were developed within the business community itself. As a result, participation in the district has been overwhelming. It is important to note that participation in the district is voluntary. Any business that did not want to pay the assessments could simply file a letter of remonstrance to be excluded.

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**4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)**

Upon the successful creation of the Economic and Business Improvement District, a board of directors was organized and a strategic plan was developed. The implementation of the district's strategic plan has resulted in improvements downtown and created additional partnership opportunities.

The E/BID partnered with the Chamber of Commerce's Mural Committee and provided funding to assist with the completion of two murals in our historic downtown. The murals have been well received and a third is in the planning stages. The district and chamber partnered in the installation of new travel information signs on Interstate 5 promoting Cottage Grove attractions.

The district partnered with the City and the Cottage Grove Community Foundation to secure a private donation of vacant land in front of one of the murals. The E/BID plans to improve and maintain the site as a downtown park.

Through a partnership with a private foundation the district purchased and installed decorative benches, bicycle racks and trash receptacles in the downtown area.

The E/BID hired an arborist to assess the health of the 47 downtown street trees and provide much needed pruning. The district replaced the aging downtown public parking lot signage.

The City and E/BID joined together and successfully applied for a \$112,000 Transportation Growth Management grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation to study and to prepare a plan for street and sidewalk improvements in the National Historic District.

The funds generated by the E/BID assessments totaled about \$70,000. However, through the development of strong partnerships, an additional \$175,000 has been leveraged for improvements.

In addition to physical improvements noted above, a local art guild has been formed as a result of the new improved interactions among the downtown businesses. The guild has started a bimonthly Art Walk that draws 200 people to the downtown each month.

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**Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)**

George Devine, E/BID President  
49 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424  
(541)942-1301  
gdevine@oip.net

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**PROJECT THREE**

As a commitment to America’s Promise, the National Civic League has issued the Youth Initiative Challenge. We ask that at least one project from each All-America City applicant document ways in which the lives of children and youth have been tangibly improved.

**1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. (150 word maximum)**

*The “Build It” Campaign*, a community grass-roots effort was organized to support the passage of a \$25.9 million bond to build a new high school in Cottage Grove. The existing high school was constructed in 1940 and was in major disrepair. Previous attempts in the 1990s to pass a bond measure had failed by as much as 3,000 (70 percent) votes. In order to gain support for a revised bond measure citizens organized the “Build It” Campaign to educate the community regarding the need for the new high school and the benefits the new school would bring to the community. The “Build It” Campaign successfully garnered the voters’ support for the bonds by a 70-30 percent margin. The new Cottage Grove High School opened in September 2003 and is a source of pride for the entire community.

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**2. Describe the relationship between this project and the challenge it is addressing, the project’s history, and how it is being sustained? (300 word maximum)**

The condition of the community’s existing high school prevented students from enjoying many educational opportunities available at other schools in the state. Technology classes were especially challenging due to electric power limitations. Fine arts classes were limited due to flooding in the auditorium when it rained. Physical education and athletic facilities were antiquated.

The old facility had serious safety issues since it had multiple entrances that were difficult to monitor.

Families found the school facilities unfit and either left the area or enrolled their students in other schools in nearby cities. Without the proper facilities the education system in Cottage Grove suffered. Local youth were unable to secure the education or training needed to successfully prepare them for higher education or the workforce.

The new school has allowed students to stay in Cottage Grove and study at a state-of-the-art high school. Enrollment has already increased by almost 50 students. New engineering, professional and technical programs are offered that use modern equipment. The Fine Arts Department has grown and the athletic facilities have attracted many state playoff games to Cottage Grove.

A new sense of pride has encouraged students to perform at higher standards. The students feel like the community is committed and interested in their education. The members of the community have a renewed interest in becoming involved with students through volunteering in the classrooms and supporting school activities.

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**3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)**

The “Build It” Committee engaged individuals from local business, education, civic, service and religious groups. The committee built a network of supporters who donated time and money to the campaign. More than \$10,000 was raised in private contributions.

Groups of people were organized to canvass the entire area, including rural and urban settings, encouraging people to support the project. Other groups staffed phone banks and organized community meetings to educate and encourage voters. As more citizens were educated, they joined the efforts. Parent clubs from every school in the district also joined the campaign.

The Chamber of Commerce and many of its business members actively supported the campaign, as did the Cottage Grove City Council. Supporters spoke at service club meetings and many religious leaders joined the effort. Many local, county and state elected officials lent their support to the campaign. In the end, the nearly two-to-one victory of the bond measure demonstrated the power of the collaborative effort.

The partnerships and energy created in the campaign continue to have a positive impact on other programs within the community.

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**4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)**

The new Cottage Grove High School is the top success story in South Lane County. About 900 students attend the school, an increase of nearly 50 over prior school years. An engineering course targeting female students has been established and is popular at the school as are advanced metals, robotic engineering and woodworking classes. New computer technology labs have been developed, increasing opportunities. The campus of the new school is located adjacent to the Lane Community College Cottage Grove Campus greatly expanding the accessibility of educational opportunities for our community’s youth. The close proximity has fostered additional partnerships between the Community College and the school district.

As a result of the passing the bond measure, the school district was able to divert \$100,000 it was using to repair the old high school to other school properties. Many improvements and repairs were accomplished at the district’s other six schools that would not have been possible if the bond measure had been unsuccessful.

While the school was being constructed, the school district conducted guided tours of the project. The public was encouraged to be involved in the project and enjoyed many special events during the two years of actual construction. More than 1,500 residents attended the dedication of the school in September of 2003. The new high school was the first school built in the district since the mid-1970s, when an elementary school was constructed.

**Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)**

Wayne Clark, Transportation Supervisor  
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wclark@lane.k12.or.us

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## **Part III Civic Infrastructure**

Describe your community. Using the four major sections of the National Civic League's *The Civic Index, Second Edition* (see [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org) for more information), examine your community's civic infrastructure and civic capacity and describe how your community *lives* each of the answers to each of the following questions. Please include real examples of how your community has demonstrated its strengths and faced its challenges. The roman numerals correspond to parts of *The Civic Index, Second Edition*. Also see the application instructions for this section.

Add lines as needed for your responses

### **I. What is our community vision for its future? (300 word maximum)**

In 1998 the Cottage Grove community through the Community Issues Advisory Committee developed a vision statement for 2015 and a strategic action plan for the community. The Community Issues Advisory Committee involved the local media and a substantial number of citizens in a town hall meeting and in workshops to prepare the vision and action plan. As the final step prior to adoption of the vision and action plan, the committee conducted a formal survey of residents. During the last six years, slight modifications have occurred to the plan and vision to incorporate the successes, the accomplishments and the failures that have occurred. Overall, the vision has stayed true to the work conducted by the committee. The vision describes Cottage Grove as an attractive, historic community committed to providing economic and recreational opportunities as well as essential services for the safety and welfare of all our citizens.

To achieve the vision, the community identified four areas of focus:

- **Quality of Life.** Create opportunities for recreation and public involvement.
- **Finance.** Develop sustainable financial resources for public services.
- **Economic Development.** Create an environment to foster and encourage economic development opportunities that will create family wage jobs.
- **Physical Infrastructure.** Improve the physical infrastructure within the community to continue to meet the needs of the growing community.

Within each of the areas of focus, the community established specific goals and objectives that are monitored annually. Biannually, the areas of focus are reviewed and new goals and objectives are added as needed. Because of the extensive participation in the preparation of the vision and action plan, the

community has had remarkable success in achieving many of the goals and objectives and is actively moving toward the future vision of the community.

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## **II. How are we fulfilling the new roles for community governance?**

### **II. (a). What is the extent and nature of community member participation in community improvement efforts? (300 word maximum)**

The extent of participation by members of the Cottage Grove community in improvement efforts can be summed up in one word, “awesome.” Last year members of the Cottage Grove community donated over 57,680 hours of service on city and school-related projects. That is almost 6.5 hours for every citizen in the community. They donated time weeding flower beds in Coiner Park, picking up litter on the Row River Trail, reading to youth, strengthening math skills, teaching sportsmanship, staffing the community center information desk, pulling trash from the river and the list goes on. These hours do not include hours of service contributed by various service clubs or organizations to non-profit community service agencies within the community but only the hours directly related to city or school district projects.

The success of the City of Cottage Grove and South Lane School District volunteer programs can be attributed to the active recruitment of volunteers and volunteer opportunities by the volunteer coordinator with each agency. The city and district’s volunteer coordinators regularly discuss with agency staff community needs to determine whether volunteers can fill the need. Volunteers have become a vital part of all projects completed.

Every year all the students from the middle school leave the classroom for one day and work on projects throughout the community. The students clean the pioneer cementary, wash windows downtown, build trails at the trout ponds, visit care centers, plant trees, serve meals to the elderly, make quilts and pick up litter. Through their efforts they make Cottage Grove their hometown. When the students graduate from middle school some of their fondest memories are centered on the projects they participated in during their “Day of Caring.”

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### **II. (b). What role does government play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)**

Government agencies in Cottage Grove strive to actively involve citizens in resolving local issues. Input and advice is commonly sought from a variety of committees or commissions. The Park Advisory Committee completed a master plan for the Cottage Grove park system and presented the information and plan to the City Council for review and approval. The City of Cottage Grove and the South Lane School District play a leadership role by setting the example in partnering with each other and other organizations.

One of the most successful city/school partnerships resulted in creating and operating the Youth Peer Court. Through peer court, juvenile offenders are diverted from the county juvenile system to the local system to provide consequences and accountability for youth offenders. Our peer court was the first in Lane County.

The city pursues improvements by partnering with non-profit organizations in a variety of ways. Partnerships may involve providing meeting space, leasing office space, providing sound or special event equipment or cosponsoring grant applications and activities.

The city also enhances the community by operating, maintaining and improving vital community services and infrastructure. The city recently completed the final design for a new modern wastewater treatment plant and will begin construction during the spring of 2004. The new \$10.4 million facility will be a model of efficient treatment and reuse. Our support of the improvements and commitment to effluent reuse demonstrates the community's stewardship of the environment.

South Lane School District initiated a community-wide program to improve the education system by engaging citizens in dialogue and strategic planning in the "Schools of the Future" program. The school district plans to use the recommendations to form the foundation from which to address future education needs of the community.

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**II. (c). What role does the non-profit sector play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)**

Cottage Grove has 37 active non-profit organizations that satisfy essential needs of many at-risk or disadvantaged citizens within the community. Not only do the non-profits fill service delivery needs within the community but they also bring an awareness to the entire community of the many special needs that exist. The following is only a small sample of the variety of services provided by our non-profit community:

Since forming in 1994, the Family Relief Nursery has helped strengthen over 300 families. They work with families to overcome risk factors such as domestic violence, disabilities and teen parenting. They have a proven track record of keeping families together and preventing child abuse and neglect. The Cottage Grove Family Relief Nursery is recognized statewide as the model relief nursery.

Community Sharing assists with satisfying basic physical needs for an average of 135 families each week. Often they are the first point of contact for services and provide connections to other organizations.

Last year, South Lane Wheels provided over 30,000 rides, covering more than 200,000 miles, to senior, disabled or low-income citizens to reach medical appointments, shopping or other community service organizations.

Cottage Grove Community Foundation is a resource for citizens and private companies to make donations to improve the quality of life of Cottage Grove residents. Last year the foundation awarded \$5,000 in grants to local organizations and since 2002 has distributed \$12,300 in scholarships to high school students.

Parent Partnership has a wide variety of programs that provide resources to families. Among their premier programs is the First Steps Nursery operated at the high school. Every day six to 10 infants and toddlers are in the nursery allowing their teen parents to attend regular classes. Parent Partnership also assists 150 Hispanic members of the community with family support and translation services.

**II. (d). What role does business play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)**

In addition to voluntarily creating the Economic and Business Improvement District and levying an assessment against themselves, the business community generously supports the non-profit organizations by donating materials, funds and time.

Businesses provide numerous opportunities for youth in the community. They support sponsorships and scholarships for recreation programs through Cottage Grove Recreation Association and school district athletic activities.

Through the Chamber of Commerce, the business community sponsors annual events such as the “Chili-Cookoff” that provides fund-raising opportunities for many non-profit organizations. Also through the Chamber of Commerce, businesses award annual scholarships to graduating high school seniors.

Beginning in the spring and running through the fall, the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce hosts a series of “Concerts in the Park” on Thursday evenings. The concerts feature a variety of music and entertainment such as folk, polka or big band. Families and citizens with a variety of backgrounds and musical tastes join together to celebrate the different styles of music.

The Chamber of Commerce has also forged a strong partnership with both the city and school district. This partnership has created innovative programs and activities such as the Yard of the Week, Job Shadow and tourism promotion through the operation of the Visitors Information Center. The Chamber of Commerce and business community provided input supporting the adoption of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Members of the business community lend their expertise and experience by serving on every board or commission within the community. Every year, the business community partners with the service clubs in the community to recognize outstanding volunteers.

The business community sponsors public forums on topics such as “Avoiding Scams” and “Healthcare Cost Containment.” During election years, a candidate forum is sponsored allowing the public to gain first-hand information about local political candidates.

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**III. How do we work together as a community?**

**III. (a). How does our community recognize and celebrate its diversity? (300 word maximum)**

Every evening the airwaves throughout Cottage Grove ring with the sound of Mexicana as the locally owned radio station, KCGR begins its evening format. Hosted by local talent, the program strives to meet the need of the community’s Hispanic population. The radio show has become a hit in the community and the listening audience has increased substantially. The radio program has drawn the attention of Hispanic music artists from around the world and several have stopped in Cottage Grove during their national tours to visit.

The annual Cinco de Mayo celebration is a rich mix of the citizens from the entire community. The celebration has grown into a major annual event. Since moving to the new building in 2000 the library has been able to develop a larger Hispanic reading collection.

During the annual Bohemia Mining Days celebration, the community takes special note of the diverse population that settled in the Cottage Grove area. The Native American encampment is an integral part of the celebration as it highlights the original inhabitants of the area. Cottage Grove was the first community in the Willamette Valley to recognize the presence of the Kalapuya, using the officially recognized proper spelling of their name on two streets.

The Growers Market held every Saturday during May through September has become a showcase of diversity as citizens from a variety of walks of life and backgrounds join to not only sell their locally grown fruits and vegetables but to demonstrate their crafts and skills.

Cottage Grove downtown hosts an Art Walk the last Friday of every other month. During the Art Walk a growing number of citizens walk from business to business to view locally produced art.

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**III. (b). How does our community work with neighboring communities to address shared challenges? Is there a shared regional vision? (300 word maximum)**

Although Cottage Grove is nestled in the foothills of the southern end of the Willamette Valley and somewhat isolated from the communities to the north, we have a long history of being active in areas of regional concern. We are involved with the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), a regional organization representing a variety of public agencies throughout Lane County. Representatives of the community participate on various committees associated with the Lane Council of Governments. Several members of our community participate on the LCOG 2050 Committee. The 2050 Committee is looking at the future of the region into the year 2050 and creating a growth management strategy that will address the needs of the individual communities as well as the region. Members from the business community serve on the Lane Economic Committee, which is working to enhance economic development on a regional level. In order to protect and enhance the quality of air in the region, a representative from Cottage Grove serves on the Board of Directors of the Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority.

Last year the City of Cottage Grove worked closely with the South Lane Rural Fire District to develop a regional fire protection district to serve the city and rural residents. The close relationship continues as the City coordinates Homeland Security Grant applications for the community.

Cottage Grove also worked closely with Lane County and the cities within the county to consider regional transportation system funding options. The efforts resulted in a coordinated adoption and implementation of local motor vehicle fuel taxes in Eugene, Springfield and Cottage Grove.

Members of Cottage Grove realize that often seemingly local issues are also confronting other communities. Frequently coordinating solutions with other communities results in more effective and successful resolution of problems.

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**IV. How does our community strengthen its ability to solve problems? (300 word maximum)**

The successes that have occurred in Cottage Grove have not been the result of any one individual or organization. These successes have been the result of the active involvement of many -- the more citizens that are included or involved in a project the more likely the success. When it comes to improving the quality of life of a community there is truly "strength in numbers."

The City of Cottage Grove and the South Lane School District believe that community involvement is essential to strengthening the community's ability to face the challenges ahead. The City Council and South Lane School Board encourage public comments at their regular meetings and they frequently organize special committees to review or gather input on specific matters. Both the City and School District remain committed to the recruitment of new volunteers.

Currently twenty-one local residents are participating in a leadership development program that was funded through a Ford Family Foundation Grant. The participants were nominated to attend by non-profit organizations and local government. The nominations were not based on their past involvement but on their potential to be involved in the future. The purpose of the training is to increase the pool of trained and involved citizens within the community. Part of the training that is being facilitated by Rural Development Initiatives involves the participants researching different needs within the community and as a group selecting a project to address a community need. The final steps in the program will be to request funding from the Ford Family Foundation and undertake the project.

In Cottage Grove, business, government and non-profit organizations constantly seek opportunities to partner and coordinate efforts. Seldom is there a successful project in the community that only involves one organization. Working together as a community will carry us into the future.

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*End of Application*

See [www.ncl.org/aac/](http://www.ncl.org/aac/) or the application instructions for detailed application instructions and sample applications from previous All-America City Winners.

