

THE [E-Link]

Connecting Southern Oregon's COG With Its Members

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RVCOG MEMBERS

- Jackson County
- Josephine County
- City of Ashland
- Town of Butte Falls
- City of Cave Junction
- City of Central Point
- City of Eagle Point
- City of Gold Hill
- City of Grants Pass
- City of Jacksonville
- City of Medford
- City of Phoenix
- City of Rogue River
- City of Shady Cove
- City of Talent
- Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon
- Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District
- Rogue Community College
- Rogue Valley Sewer Services
- Rogue Valley Transportation District
- Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.
- Southern Oregon University

Emergency Board Prevents Cuts to Critical Services...for now

While many of us were enjoying time outdoors this summer, a select few were not so lucky. They were, instead, spending countless hours working to restore services to some of southern Oregon's most vulnerable citizens as a result of the Governor's directive to all state agencies to cut their budgets by 9%. In the case of Oregon Project Independence and Medicaid Senior Meals, the result was to be nothing short of catastrophic.



In our region, by the end of July...

- 150 Jackson and Josephine County seniors 60 and older receiving services through Oregon Project Independence (OPI) would have lost all services;
- 35 paid providers would have lost their ability to help these people live independently in their homes; and,
- 110 Medicaid Personal Care clients including younger adults with disabilities ages 18 to 64 and seniors 65+ would have lost their services.

In addition, subject to federal approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, further cuts were to be instituted on October 1, 2010:

- 1,264 Jackson and Josephine County Medicaid in-home service clients, including younger adults with disabilities ages 18 to 64 and seniors 65+, would have their authorized hours for Instrumental Activities of Daily Living such as meal preparation, shopping, help taking medications, and housekeeping reduced by 75%, on average, resulting in a 31% reduction in total authorized in-home service hours for these clients.
- Medicaid home-delivered meals (HDMs) would have been eliminated affecting approximately 150 Jackson and Josephine County clients including younger adults with disabilities ages 18 to 64 and seniors 65+ who receive their meals through the Food & Friends Senior Meals Program.

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Emergency Board

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From the beginning of this latest crisis, COG Senior and Disability staff found themselves wearing two hats. On the one hand, as directed by the state in early July, staff was forced to mail 30-day notifications of termination of care to SDS clients and caregivers. On the other hand, staff immediately began working with counterparts and with state lawmakers throughout Oregon to make the case that these cuts were counterproductive and counter-intuitive on both a personal and state budget level.

As SDS Director Don Bruland has pointed out time and again, “The irony of the OPI and Medicaid in-home care/home-delivered meals cuts and reductions is that they are supposed to save the state money; but they won’t. Many of the affected clients will likely end up qualifying for the State General-Fund-Matched federal Medicaid Long-Term Care program and for the Oregon Health Plan. Oregon is required to provide Medicaid nursing home care to all eligible clients. Medicaid is an entitlement program. For more than 30 years now, Oregon has been smart and has been granted waivers of the federal rules to allow us to serve Medicaid-eligible clients in less expensive community-based care settings such as in the home. OPI has been an important part of this system because it delays or prevents seniors at risk of institutional placement, with a little too much income to qualify for Medicaid, from quickly spending down their resources and being forced into Medicaid.

This preventive, continuum-of-care approach provided by the mix of OPI and Medicaid-waivered services keeps folks from needing more expensive care. The OPI and Medicaid-waivered in-home service and community-based care approach is the direction the nation should be headed in preparing to meet the long-term care needs of baby boomers.”

Fortunately, enough of that message resonated with the Legislature’s Emergency Board, which recently restored Oregon Project Independence and other in-home care programs. In doing so, the Emergency Board made the unambiguous decision to protect the most vulnerable members of our community while also avoiding higher costs down the road. Some of the restorations will protect services through the remainder of the biennium, ending June 30, 2011. Others will be protected until March 1, 2011.

While this is only a reprieve, we are grateful to the E-Board and local legislators for their tireless efforts to restore these vital services. Community partners and SDS staff also deserve special recognition; particularly Don Bruland, whose efforts were unparalleled. According to Don, though, the real heroes are the seniors and people with disabilities who bravely told their stories about what it means to them to live independently, with dignity, in their own homes.

In an email to RVCOG staff, Executive Director Michael Cavallaro had this to say about Don:

Don has worked his entire career at developing a voice that is respected and closely listened to at the state level in matters of senior and disability services. This accomplishment with OPI and Medicaid is the culmination of all those years of patient passion on behalf of those who have little or no voice in who gets what in this society. While some of you don't work in human services, and others don't know anyone who would have been personally impacted by these cuts, it's enough to appreciate the fact that Don's efforts have managed to preserve an important part of what will allow us to continue to call our society civilized.

August 1, 2010, was Don’s 35-year anniversary with RVCOG.

CURRENT PER CLIENT RATES FOR SERVICES

OPI / MEDICAID HDM	\$200/MO. (AVERAGE)
MEDICAID ADULT FOSTER CARE	\$1,300–1,900/MO.
RESIDENTIAL CARE	\$1,250/MO.
NURSING HOME CARE	\$5,800/MO. (STARTING)

And the Removal Goes On...

First completed in 1904, and then significantly modified in 1940, the Gold Ray Dam served an important purpose during the 20th century. Although not everyone has agreed on the fate of the dam, the courts have spoken and work has resumed on the dam's removal. The coffer dam was completed in late July and the majority of the Phase 1 section of the dam was removed in early August. The contractor is currently focused on removing the last remnants of the dam down to the bedrock.

As soon as the contractor finishes removing the south side of the dam, they will then remove the "timber" crib dam (the original wooden dam) and connect the coffer dam to the Tolo Slough spit in preparation for draining the slough.



Current plans have the contractor draining and removing fish from Tolo Slough around August 10. About a week later, the contractor is scheduled to breach the coffer dam and shift the river into its original channel (where the dam has already been removed).

Turbidity around the project area is expected to be at its heaviest levels on these dates.

Timely information related to the project, including a live photo and updated construction schedule, can be accessed from [RVCOG's website](#).

Despite the construction activity, many people continue to recreate, fish and boat immediately below

the dam. Others are taking advantage of the high points around the dam to watch the proceedings. Once the Gold Ray Dam is gone, the Rogue River will flow freely for 157 miles, from the dam at Lost Creek Reservoir to the Pacific Ocean.



Food & Friends Annual Client Satisfaction Survey



Each spring, a client satisfaction survey and associated questionnaire are conducted to determine how well the Food & Friends program is responding to our clients' needs. This year, in order to improve our response rate, we changed our delivery of the survey, asking our volunteers to hand out a survey form with a confidential return envelope to each client along with the client's meal. We also adjusted many of our questions to gear them towards logic model goals, in an effort to better assess how we are doing in terms of measurable, quantifiable data.

The adjustments worked. Out of a total of 743 surveys distributed to home delivery clients, we received an unprecedented 353 (47%) responses. In addition, the refinements to the questions not only gave us the information we needed in the form we needed it, but, as in previous years, continued to indicate that satisfaction with the program was very strong:

- 94.78% are satisfied to very satisfied with their meal service.
- 74.12% agree to strongly agree that they feel like they can remain in their own home as a result of receiving Home Delivered Meals.
- 77.58% agree to strongly agree that they feel safer in their home knowing that the volunteer visits them at their home, thereby providing a safety check.
- 82.41% agree to strongly agree that Home Delivered Meals have improved their quality of life.



The data gathered as a result of this survey is incredibly valuable to us, not only in helping us to secure funding for the Food & Friends program by providing statistical data for grant reporting and writing, but also to aid us in our goal of providing the best possible service to the seniors and eligible people with disabilities who we serve. We can utilize the responses from the survey to pinpoint potential concerns that may need to be addressed, as well as to let us know what we are doing right and need to continue.

RVPSA Plans Impressive Lineup for the New Season

The Rogue Valley Public Service Academy's summer break has ended and planning for the upcoming season has begun. Local favorite, Bill Gallagher, founder of *Teamworks*, will offer two workshops that expand on the importance of understanding personality types: 1) *Managing Differences Constructively in the Workplace: A Deeper Look into Personality Types*, and; 2) *Managing Gossip in the Workplace*. Leigh Anne Jasheway-Bryant, author and stress management expert, helps people manage stress, embrace change, and become healthier by learning to lighten up. Humor is the key in, *I'm Flexible as Long as You Don't Change Anything: How to Embrace Change and Expect the Best*. Nationally acclaimed lecturer and trainer, Executive Director and founder of *StirFry Seminars*, Lee Mun Wah, will focus on the challenges and opportunities present when diverse race and gender groups interact in, *Across Gender and Race: Diversity Conversations in the Workplace*. Want to become a more effective presenter? Learn tips and tricks for organizing a presentation, vocal effectiveness, and overcoming nervousness in, *Presentation Skills for Busy People*.

In addition, RVPSA is capitalizing on unparalleled local talent to provide specialized technical trainings. For example, Bill Harrington, City of Medford Arborist, will provide training on proper pruning techniques and chainsaw safety to local Public Works departments. Dick Converse, Principal Planner, RVCOG, will provide land use planning training for new council and planning commission members in January 2011. Managers will benefit from attending, *Supervising IT Staff for Non-IT Supervisors*, presented by Byron Reed, Chief Executive Officer, Jefferson IT. [Visit RVPSA on the web for more information.](#)

RVCOG

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VISIT US ON THE WEB

www.rvcog.org



Founded in 1968, RVCOG is a voluntary association of local governments and special districts in southern Oregon.

OUR MISSION

We shall act as a catalyst to promote quality of life, effective and efficient services, and leadership in regional communication, cooperation, planning, and action in southern Oregon.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Michael Cavallaro
Executive Director

Don Bruland
Director of Senior and Disability Services

Craig Harper
Natural Resources Program Manager

Alan Hudson
Finance Manager

Evelyn Kinsella
Nutrition Program Manager

Sandi Morton
Asst to Exec Dir / Human Resources Manager

Berta Varble
SDS Operations Manager

RVCOG Board Designates Green Jobs Taskforce



**Southern Oregon
Green Jobs Council**

In the fall of 2009, a group of business, governmental, labor, and community organization representatives formed the Southern Oregon Green Jobs Council to explore opportunities for green job development in Jackson and Josephine counties. The Council met monthly, and gradually refined its focus to the development of a large scale weatherization program for Southern Oregon. With this definition of scope also came the group's decision to ask the RVCOG Board to be the lead organization for the Green Jobs Council, and to designate the group as an official taskforce of the RVCOG. At their May 26, 2010 meeting, the RVCOG Board of Directors did just that, agreeing with the Green Jobs Council that establishing the taskforce could lead to significant future benefits for the COG's members and for the region as a whole.

The newly designated green jobs taskforce is in the process of developing a residential energy retrofit program for southern Oregon. The goals of the program are to upgrade homes to conserve energy and increase opportunities for careers in energy efficiency and living-wage jobs in the Rogue Valley. The proposed program, similar to [Clean Energy Works Portland](#), looks at establishing a revolving loan fund and incentive package that provides homeowners with energy audits and home weatherization improvements. Not only will the total cost of home weatherization be reduced for families due to energy savings and state and federal cash rebates and tax incentives, but homeowners would be able to pay back the weatherization loan through their utility bill.

For more information about the Southern Oregon Green Jobs Council, please contact Dan Moore at 541-423-1361 or dmoore@rvcog.org.



The Job Council's Dennis Alexander, ACCESS's Jackie Schad, and RVCOG's Dan Moore hosted the SOGJC's booth at this summer's Green Expo held at the Medford Armory.