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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Swarm Season for Honeybees - Help Them Find New Homes

First Talent, then Ashland, and now Phoenix have elected to become a Bee City USA, and Southern Oregon University has become the first “Bee Campus USA”. Throughout our region, people are committed to raising awareness of the importance of pollinators and the challenges they face.

While honeybees are responsible for every third bite of food we eat and contribute \$15 billion to American agriculture each year, their numbers are declining precipitously worldwide. This spring, our communities can work together to protect and support our honeybees.

This time of year, you may have the privilege to witness swarming honeybees. This unique event occurs when a growing colony splits in half, leaving with the old queen to seek out a new home. Before leaving the hive, worker bees must fill their honey stomachs for the journey. With such full abdomens, swarming bees are incapable of stinging.

Unprotected, a bee swarm is exposed to rain, cold, and myriad predators and generally cannot survive more than three days. Even if their scouts do find a suitable location for the new hive, colony survival rates can be quite low when unmanaged. Careful beekeeping can increase survival rates to 50% -70% per year.

Most beekeepers dream of catching swarms, and bringing them back to manage and care for them. So if you see a swarm or a colony that needs extraction, please report it immediately by calling one of the numbers listed below. You will be helping to sustain one of the world’s most fascinating and beneficial creatures.

1. Southern OR Beekeepers Association at www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/report-a-swarm 541-462-1604
2. Bee Rescue Team, College of the Melissae 360-531-3017
3. Southern Oregon University Beekeeping Club 541-244-0391
4. Ashland: Police Department Dispatch 541-776-7206
5. Talent: Public Works 541-535-3828

If, on the other hand, you are a beekeeper and would like to respond to reports of swarms or colonies

needing extraction, please list yourself with the Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association at www.southernoregonbeekeepers.org/contact-us, 541-462-1604 and/or Police Dispatch at 541-776-7206.

A national directory of willing swarm catchers can be found at www.honeybeeswarmremoval.com. More information about bee rescue in Oregon can be found at www.beeremovalsource.com/bee-removal-list/oregon/.

Bee City USA is making the world safer for pollinators, one city at a time. For more information, visit beecityusa.org. Thanks to Phyllis Stiles, Director of Bee City USA, for the original wording of this article.