

**Rogue Valley Food System Network (*Rogue Flavor* guidebook)
Report to the City of Ashland:
Economic Development, Cultural, Tourism and Sustainability Grants FY 2017-2018**

With the financial support of the City of Ashland, the Rogue Valley Food System Network (RVFSN) was able to meet the goal of continuing the *Rogue Flavor* guidebook, a publication formally produced by an organization known as Thrive. Thrive and the RVFSN merged in January 1, 2018.

City of Ashland grant funding enabled us to leverage this support for additional funding from AllCare Health and other sponsors to support the production of the guide. Given reduced funding from the city, RVFSN allocated the funds awarded entirely to the publication of the *Rogue Flavor* guidebook. The following is a summary of our activities numbers funded by the grant of \$13,600.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Rogue Flavor* guidebook is to help consumers find locally produced food, the producers of local food, and the retail outlets that support them. It also serves as an educational tool for understanding food labels and business sustainability efforts, as well as the many reasons to buy local food. The guide includes sections for farmers markets, cooking classes, food and farming events as well as community gardens and business listings in four categories: farms and ranches; grocery and specialty markets; restaurants and caterers; artisan foods; and wine, beer & spirits. The guide also features a "Know Your Food" section that helps people understand the various food certifications and labels used. A key component of the guide are the business icons which list which businesses are purchasing renewable energy, are certified organic, or bee-friendly.

HOW WE USED THE FUNDS

We utilized the funds to hire contractors to assist our coordinator and to consult with the previous Thrive director to achieve the goals of this project. Contractors and the coordinator developed a new business model and thus created a new infrastructure to accept advertising and listing submissions. We also started developing new branding and explored alternative business plans. The network is working towards a sustainable business model for the guide in the future.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The financial summary outlines income and expenses for the *Rogue Flavor* guidebook. We made some substantial progress towards our goal of attaining financial sustainability by utilizing a different business model that sought advertising and sponsorship revenue.

Income/Expense		ACTUAL
Income		
	Advertising Income	11,005.00
	Sponsorship/contribution	3,000.00
	City of Ashland Grant	13,600.00
	Total Income	27,605.00
Expense		
Personnel Costs		
	Staff (wage and benefits)	3,150.00
	Contract Services	9553.75
	Printing and Reproduction	6,728.00
	Travel	350.00
	Total Expense	19,781.75

OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT

The following outcomes were realized as a result of these efforts:

- 64-page color guide was published in May, 2018
- 10,000 copies of the guide will be distributed by December of 2018
- 65 locations display the guide in their business or organization throughout the Rogue Valley
- 91 business are listed in the guide, including community supported agriculture opportunities and community gardens

Businesses that advertised in the *Rogue Flavor* guidebook reported satisfaction with the final product. Since publication, many businesses have expressed interest in advertising in the future. The *Rogue Flavor* guidebook, and other similar guides in the state are referenced regularly by employees of the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Farm to School Network.

The number of locations where the guide was distributed increased and changed from previous years. In the past, about 40 locations displayed the guide. Increasingly, the guide is being carried in physician offices and health clinics and is being transferred from doctors to patients who have been diagnosed with diet-related diseases. Due to the diversity of the members of the RVFSN, the guide was distributed to many food and farm-related non-profits, churches and at a variety of community events.

The coordinator exchanged best practices with other statewide organizations that produce guides similar to the Rogue Flavor guidebook. This small group of people plan to continue regular check ins to share lessons learned and may eventually partner on funding proposals and other

collaborative work as ideas emerge. This will ultimately benefit the Rogue Valley and Ashland businesses as the Rogue Flavor guidebook becomes a stronger communication tool and operates with a sound fiscal plan.

LESSONS LEARNED

The main lesson learned was that we need to start the project in the fall of the previous year in order for the guide to be completed before the farmers' markets open in the spring.

The new structure of submitting ads and listings was much simpler than the website submission process that was used in prior years. In the future we will continue to use this method to gather information.