

## Update **Rogue To Go**

During this crazy time to be alive, a new program was launched barely a year ago and has proven to be an effective way for restaurants to stand out with an offering that prevents waste, offers re-use and pleases its customers who share those values. **Rogue To Go** started in early 2020. The pilot has been doing a “test drive” offering reusable containers for eating ‘on the go’ at participating eateries without the usual waste that occurs with single use containers.

Customers are now able to purchase a reusable take out container from (9) participating locations including (2) in Medford. A grant from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) seeded the pilot starting with 5 Ashland eateries.

The concept is simple: 1. Become a **Rogue To Goer** with a one time \$10 buy-in fee. 2. Get your take out in the reusable to go container. 3. Rinse it clean after eating. 4. Next time you visit one of the participating eateries, exchange your container for a sanitized one or a token to redeem another time.

Ashland’s Conservation and Climate Outreach Commission (CCOC) advocates for waste prevention and supports the city’s Climate Energy Action Plan (CEAP). The catalyst for **Rogue To Go** sprouted from our community. The CCOC was

inspired by local business owner, Javier Cruz, of Simple Cafe. He took the idea of reducing the waste from take-out containers from his cafe and purchased reusable containers for his customers. His forward thinking inspired us to figure out a way for restaurants to team up to eliminate the single use to go containers rather than each business buying its own inventory.

Besides, we don't need more containers, we need fewer. While the idea of a broader community program for reusable containers isn't a novel one, the current programs in urban centers are costly and primarily structured for denser populations. We leveraged our amazing local businesses to develop this ground-breaking partnership to reduce waste.

The City of Ashland has administered the grant during the pilot phase to get it off the ground. The grant has allowed us to test the idea in our community. So far the feedback has been very positive from the participating restaurants and customers.

For the last 9 months, Rogue To Go has been a shining example of how our community can support local businesses and express the value of avoiding waste and enjoying food that someone else makes. It's a great start that has proven sound, even during a pandemic. Every container is

commercially sanitized in between uses which makes the health department, restaurants and customers happy.

Our current focus is to create a solid “forever home” for **Rogue To Go** and continue to expand the program throughout the Rogue Valley. Hence the name, ***ROGUE To Go***. Once **Rogue To Go** has settled into its new “forever home,” we hope to be able to reduce more single use trashed items by offering reusable 16 ounce cups, utensils, and the multiplicity of too many other materials we hardly notice anymore except for that moment before we discard them into the trash or mistakenly add them as contamination to recycling.

Please consider supporting these Rogue To Go participating eateries: Falafel Republic, Pie & Vine, Sesame Kitchen, Simple Café, the Ashland Food Coop, Kobe. And in Medford: Buttercloud Bakery and Common Block Brewing.

Success can be measured one meal at a time while supporting our community’s economy and sustainable choices that reflect a smarter way to consume.

To learn more and see the growing list of

participating restaurants, check out  
**roguetogo.com**

Risa Buck is a member of the Conservation and  
Climate Outreach Commission in Ashland