Deschutes County
Board of County Commissioners
Discretionary Grant Program

Board Meeting Date: June 3, 2015

Organization: Rural Development Initiatives

Organization Description: Section 501(c)3 organization formed in 1991 to help rural communities address the economic downturn. Focuses efforts on leadership development and rural economic vitality.

Project Name: Regards to Rural Conference

Project Description: Bi-annual conference to provide resources to people living and working in rural communities. 2015 conference is titled Navigating the Rivers of Change: Rural Communities in Transition and will offer 30 workshops and sessions. The conference will be held at the Bend Riverhouse and is expected to host 500 attendees from throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Project Period: June 26, 2015

Amount of Request: $2,500

Previous Grants: None recorded.

Approved: _____

Declined: _____

Deschutes County Board of Commissioners
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DESCHUTES COUNTY
DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION

Today's Date: April 1, 2015 **Project Name:** Regards to Rural Conference

Project Beginning Date: June 26, 2015 **Project End Date:** June 27, 2015

Amount Requested: $2,500.00 Matching Grant **Date Funds Needed:** May 15, 2015

Name of Applicant Organization: Rural Development Initiatives

Address: 150 Shelton -McMurphey Blvd., Suite 201

City & Zip Code: Eugene, OR 97402 **Tax ID #:** 93-1073746

Contact Name(s): Jennifer Clemo **Telephone #:** 541-684-9077 x 4

Fax #: 541-684-8993 **Email Address:** jclemo@rdiinc.org

On a separate sheet(s), please briefly answer the following questions:

1. Describe the applicant organization, including its purpose, leadership structure, and activities.
2. Describe the proposed project or activity.
3. Provide a timeline for completing the proposed project or activity.
4. Explain how the proposed project or activity will positively impact the community.
5. Identify the specific communities or groups that will benefit.
6. Describe how grant funds will be used and include the source and amounts of matching funds or in-kind contributions, if any. Itemize anticipated expenditures*.
7. If the grant will support an ongoing activity, explain how it will be funded in the future.

Attach:

Proof of the applicant organization's non-profit status.

* Applicant may be contacted during the review process and asked to provide a complete line item budget.

1. Describe the applicant organization, including its purpose, leadership structure, and activities.

Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) develops leaders, strengthens organizations and activates collaborative networks to enhance economic vitality in rural communities. RDI, a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, was formed by the legislature in 1991 to help rural communities across the Pacific Northwest grapple with the economic downturn. Our areas of service focus on Leadership Development (building capacity of rural individuals, organizations, and collaboratives) and Rural Economic Vitality (REV; moving capacity to action).

The organization is led by a diverse Board of Directors, who live all across the State of Oregon and who meet on a quarterly basis. RDI's Executive Director for 23 years, Craig Smith, earned an MBA at Portland State University and directed the Rural Oregon Marketing Project at Eastern Oregon University which supported businesses, counties, and regional strategy committees seeking to support small businesses and the manufacturing sector in Eastern Oregon.

2. Describe the proposed project or activity.

RDI puts on a bi-annual conference called Regards to Rural (R2R) as a resource for people living and making a living in rural communities. The Regards to Rural conference will provide important knowledge, resources, and networking to aid communities in weathering the storm and working to bring economic vitality to Oregon. This year our theme is *Navigating the Rivers of Change: Rural Communities in Transition.*

R2R 2015 will be held at the Riverhouse Hotel and Convention Center in Bend, OR June 26-27. We're excited about the new opportunities this central location brings, including easier access for our friends on the east side of the state. We're expecting 2015 to be our biggest conference ever, with 30 workshops and sessions, and an anticipated audience of over 500 attendees from throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Session topics include: Creating Economic Vitality – Organizing for Success!; Growing Our Own Natural Resource Jobs; Ripple Effects Mapping: A Holistic Approach to Identifying Real Community Development Impact; and Overcoming Rural Resource and Economic Challenges.

R2R also includes a track for rural nonprofits with sessions such as: Leading Organizational Change: Managing Transitions and Gaining Resilience; Meet the Funders: Embracing the Framework of Success; Raising Money in Rural Oregon; and Understanding Financial Information.

Overall, the R2R conference endeavors to offer speakers, workshops and panels that are relevant to leaders in business, non-profits and government, as well as to any citizen who has a desire to see their rural community stronger and more economically robust.

3. Provide a timeline for completing the proposed project or activity.

The conference runs from June 26 – June 27, 2015, yet the impacts of the conference will continue to ripple through rural Oregon well into the future.

4. Explain how the proposed project or activity will positively impact the community.

Bend was selected due to its central location within the state and also because of the high quality conference services located there. With an expected attendance of 500 people, staying for at least one night and eating meals, which represent tens of thousands of dollars going to the hospitality industry alone. While we have not quantified local economic impact, RDI's budget for this event is $176,000 and that does not include the investments of our partners, The Ford Family Foundation, OSU Extension Service, the Non-Profit Association of Oregon and others. RDI is actively working with Visit Bend to ensure that conference attendees are exposed to the wide variety of activities, businesses and opportunities available in the Deschutes County area.

One of the greatest benefits to any of the communities involved in R2R is the information offered by the speakers and workshops at the conference. R2R highlights tactics to address rural economic development, non-profit leveraging of funds, and downtown and tourism development. For many attendees, these concepts turn into real-world success stories.

In 2011, the Heartland Center for Leadership Development presented the HomeTown Competitiveness program concept at the Regards to Rural Conference. Some folks from the Western Treasure Valley area (OR/ID border) loved the idea and RDI worked with Heartland to adopt and adapt the program for the region. HTC has been running in that area for four years and is making quite the impact on their main street efforts, small business development strategies, and youth engagement.

In 2013, RDI brought the WealthWorks concept to the Regards to Rural conference as a learning track looking at potential ideas. The initiative has been very successful in Appalachia and the Deep South. We told their stories and explained the fundamentals of the initiative. Community interest led us to adopt and adapt the program for application in the Pacific Northwest. Once we launched, 18 regions applied to participate. The region selected for the initial application received an award valued at $375,000 for their regional effort, all out of a workshop at an R2R conference. RDI is continuing to scope communities for future WealthWorks projects.

5. Identify the specific communities or groups that will benefit.

Our attendees are a very diverse group. We see youth and soccer dads; county commissioners and USDA staff; small business owners and ranchers... Because RDI's programs seek to represent each faction of a community, our conference reflects that. While we do see a lot of civic leaders and resource providers, we also see a lot of individuals who are simply interested in helping make change in their community.

Some of the greatest direct benefit will, of course, be to those in the local hospitality and business community who will experience the direct impact of hundreds of visitors to their region.

6. Describe how grant funds will be used and include the source and amounts of matching funds or in-kind contributions, if any. Itemize anticipated expenditures*.

Please see attached budget for itemized expenditures.

To date, our sponsors include The Ford Family Foundation, OSU Extension Service, Travel Oregon, Samaritan Health Services, Craft3, Association of Oregon Counties, and numerous in-kind sponsors that have contributed to our raffle.

To make the conference accessible and affordable for all rural leaders who wish to attend, RDI secures sponsorships to defray costs. Your support helps RDI to offer registration well below the true cost. Sponsorships also help RDI bring together insightful keynote presentations, effective skill-building sessions, and access to resources and networking opportunities.

7.If the grant will support an ongoing activity, explain how it will be funded in the future.

N/A

Rural Development Initiatives, Inc.

Regards to Rural 2015

June 25-27 at the Riverhouse Hotel and Convention Center in Bend, Oregon

		Budget	
Revenue			
Sponsorships and Grants		135,000	
Participant Registrations		38,000	
Exhibit Fees/Ad space		2,000	
Raffle/Auction/Donations		1,000	
	Total Revenue	176,000	
Expenses			
Personnel		85,000	
Travel & Meals		4,500	
Catering and Facility Rental			*
Lodging (sponsors' staff, board, some presenters)		8,500	
Presenter fees and expenses		16,000	
Marketing		2,500	
Technology		2,500	
Printing		2,500	
Program Supplies		1,500	
Registration/Bank Fees		7,500	
Office Supplies & Postage		2,000	
Other Expenses		500	
Contingency fund		5,000	
Other indirect expenses		13,800	
Administrative overhead		24,840	
	Total Expenses	176,640	
	Net Results	**(640)**	

* Paid directly by the Ford Family Foundation