

Central Oregon FY2026 Community-Initiated Project Quotes:

"I am immensely grateful to our Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden for standing with rural Oregonians and recognizing how essential access to health care is to quality of life," **said Nagi Naganathan, President of Oregon Institute of Technology.** "Through the Mobile Dental Clinics initiative, Oregon Tech students and faculty will meet people where they are—bringing much-needed oral health care to families in Klamath and Lake Counties while learning through real human stories and real clinical need. This is education with heart and purpose, improving health outcomes and strengthening rural Oregon communities that too often go without care."

"We are very grateful for Senator Merkley's and Senator Wyden's ongoing support for ecological fuels reduction and tribal workforce development and training in rural Klamath and Harney Counties," **said Marko Bey, Lomakatsi Executive Director.** "This funding will allow us to employ 12 inter-tribal young adults (ages 18-30, and veterans up to age 35) in a year-long training program to accomplish strategic forest health and fuels reduction work on Tribal Trust and Forest Service lands in areas at high risk of wildfire, while providing a pathway to natural resource careers through professional certification and hands-on experience."

"Our community is so grateful that Senators Wyden and Merkley appreciate the importance of addressing acute mental health needs early in a person's life and have made funding for this youth psychiatric facility a federal priority. There are no facilities like this east of the I-5 corridor, so this represents an opportunity to serve families both in Central Oregon and the entire eastern two thirds of the state," **said Phil Chang, Deschutes County Commissioner.**

"We are beyond thrilled with this news as this funding will support creating the only Child Psychiatric Facility in our Region. Children struggling with mental health will no longer have to leave their families and travel over the mountain to receive appropriate care. They can stay right here in their own community near those who love them most. This is a great day for Central Oregon Families," **said Holly Harris, Interim Director, Deschutes County Health Services.**

"We're deeply grateful to Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden for their support, which will allow COCC to strengthen and expand our firefighter training programs. In a region like Central Oregon, where wildfire risk is an ever-present challenge, this funding represents a critical investment in community safety and preparedness. By equipping both structural and wildland firefighters with the skills and tools they need, we're helping to protect our communities and natural landscapes for generations to come." **said Greg Pereira, President, Central Oregon Community College.**

"The Klamath Tribes is thrilled with this news. This funding will allow us to build six new stick built homes on the Klamath Tribes' Reservation at our 55 acre subdivision which is much needed in our Tribal community," **said Tribal Chairman William Ray, Jr.** "Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden understand that Housing is a top priority of the Klamath Tribes, especially in the rural town of Chiloquin and the funding will bring the 55 acre subdivision project closer to

completion sooner than planned. When the project is fully completed, 20 additional families can move into affordable homes on the Reservation."

"Every Opportunity to increase affordable home ownership in Redmond is critical for our community. The Cinder Hollow project will be significant as it will provide affordable housing opportunities for those who cannot currently access the housing market. We are very thankful for the leadership of Senator Merkley, Senator Wyden, and their staffs as they work with the rest of our federal delegation to deliver these much-needed resources to our community," **said Mayor Ed Fitch, City of Redmond.**

"We can't thank Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden enough for taking action to help our community," **said Matt Powlison, Jefferson County Public Works Director.** "This grant is a vital investment in our community's infrastructure. The replacement of the Feather Drive Bridge will not only enhance everyday access for our residents but also ensure that our emergency responders can reach those in need without delay. This project underscores our commitment to building a stronger, safer Jefferson County."

"Westcliff Homes is more than just housing. It's how 60 families will put down roots, build equity, and thrive in the community they love. By investing in Redmond's future, we're strengthening the local workforce and economy while ensuring the people who power Central Oregon can afford to live here," **said Carly Colgan, CEO, Bend-Redmond Habitat for Humanity.**