

## **Willamette Valley FY2024 Community-Initiated Project Quotes:**

“The first step to supporting Oregonians in crisis is making sure there is always someone available to listen and to help. Ongoing funding for the 988 call line was a key priority in this year’s legislative session to address our behavioral health crisis, and I was thrilled to see legislators deliver. Now, we need to get the word out to all Oregonians that help is there whenever they need it. Thank you to Senators Merkley and Wyden, and their hardworking teams, for advancing funds to support a critical public awareness campaign,” **said Governor Tina Kotek.**

“Elderberry Wisdom Farm can now gain access to farmland for our people, thanks to Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden,” **said Rose High Bear, Founder/Director of Elderberry Wisdom Farm.** “Their support will make it possible for emerging Indigenous entrepreneurs to receive technical assistance and own their own conservation, environmental or agricultural businesses, opening the door for their families to achieve multigenerational prosperity. Thank you!”

“After experiencing the 2020 wildfires evacuation and the work done by our brave public safety fire and law enforcement to get people out of harm's way, this allocation towards an alert system in the Santiam Canyon will be a blessing to those citizens who are still recovering from this tragedy. Having this in addition to our first responders will help if this or other emergencies happen in the future,” **said Marion County Commissioner Kevin Cameron.**

“Investments like this go a long way to establish peace of mind for residents who have encountered such trauma. I’m grateful for these funds and the impact they will have on the members of our communities who suffered so tragically during the 2020 wildfires,” **said Marion County Commissioner Danielle Bethell.**

“Thank you to Senators Merkley and Wyden for supporting Benton County’s First Responder Radio Infrastructure Improvement plan. The requested funding proposed by Representative Hoyle, would be used by Benton County, Oregon to install an antenna and purchase radios necessary to improve public safety and emergency response for Benton County First Responders. A 2022 Radio Infrastructure Assessment and Improvement Plan revealed a significant challenge with Benton County’s radio communications is the lack of interoperability and situational awareness caused by law enforcement and Fire/EMS when utilizing different radio systems. Furthermore, many parts of the rural county have “dead-zones” in which no radio communications are available. Radio infrastructure, as well as handheld and mobile radios, are also in various states of degradation and need updating. This Federal funding would support a 700MHz antenna to be installed on an existing tower and the purchase of radios to eliminate “dead-zones” in the first phase to achieve interoperability between first responders,” **said Benton County Sheriff, Jef Van Arsdall.**

“Thank you to Senators Merkley and Wyden for supporting our Body Worn Camera and In-Car Video program. The systems assist the Eugene Police Department in our commitment to accountability and transparency by recording interactions between police officers and the

public, capturing evidence, and providing an impartial accounting of events. The Eugene Police Department has been a leader in the State of Oregon on police accountability and has a longstanding body worn camera program. This program coupled with our independent police auditor allows us to continue to build trust between our department and the community we serve. EPD is excited to move forward and stabilize this much needed initiative," **said Chief Chris Skinner of the Eugene Police Department.**

"The City of West Linn appreciates the work of Senator Merkley, Senator Wyden, and Representative Chavez-DeRemer to secure \$1.25 Million in funding towards replacement of the City's main drinking water supply line under the I-205 Abernethy Bridge. This work, required by the State of Oregon as part of the I-205 construction, is essential to West Linn residents and businesses. Our community is already shouldering most of the costs of the replacement and these Federal funds will help us close the gap and keep the water flowing in West Linn. Thank you to our Federal delegation for securing these funds, and to everyone who supported our request!" **said West Linn Mayor Rory Bialostosky.**

"We're very grateful to Representative Chavez-DeRemer and Senators Wyden and Merkley for their support of vital wastewater infrastructure development in Albany. This funding goes a long way to make it possible for our city to open up areas for development, build additional housing, and thereby provide much needed relief from the upward pressure on housing prices," **said Mayor Alex Johnson II.**

"The Senators' steadfast support for our funding request of \$1,160,000 to revitalize the aging sewer system in the Alpine and Alsea Service District is not only about ensuring community safety but also helping keep utility bills affordable for low-income, rural families," **said Benton County Board Chair, Pat Malone.**

"All of us at EWEB and in the McKenzie River Valley are honored to receive the support of Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden as together we invest today in a resilient tomorrow. EWEB's McKenzie Valley Fuels Reduction Project is a vital initiative that addresses the pressing need for wildfire risk reduction in the McKenzie watershed and surrounding communities. This project will help safeguard the region's natural resources, infrastructure, and residents from the devastating impacts of wildfires, while also protecting the water quality that wildfires can threaten," **said Susan Fricke, EWEB Water Resources Supervisor.**

"We're deeply grateful to Senators Wyden and Merkley and Representative Salinas, as well as their staff, for securing funding for the Corvallis Road Waterline and the Chestnut Street Bridge projects," **said The City of Independence Mayor, John McArdle.** "The water line is a critical step forward and integral to our new water treatment facility's development. The Chestnut Street Bridge will enhance the connectivity of our transportation system and reduce congestion. These projects exemplify Independence's commitment to finding community-conscious solutions to fund our essential infrastructure upgrades."

“As Oregon’s landscape is increasingly under pressure from extended high-intensity fire seasons, the collective fire response community has organized many tools and resources to detect and combat wildfire. Fire cameras play an important role in detection, event confirmation, and situational awareness for responders and the public. Thanks to CIP funds and the leadership of Oregon’s own senators, the Committee will now be able to increase the efficacy of detection cameras in Oregon, allowing fire response and defense to be enhanced and safer for first responders. This makes Oregon the first state wildfire camera interoperability committee to have dedicated funding to begin implementation,” **said Leland O’Driscoll, Associate Director, UO Oregon Hazards Lab, and co-chair, Oregon Wildfire Detection Interoperability Committee.**

“Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden’s support for interagency coordination for wildfire detection cameras will help advance the mitigation and response effort amidst a complex landscape of different fire regimes in Oregon,” **said Professor Doug Toomey, Director of UO Oregon Hazards Lab.**

“Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden’s support has been instrumental in securing funding for the McKay/Yergen/Ehlen Safety Corridor project. As the first county designated safety corridor in Oregon, this initiative marks a significant step towards saving lives and improving traffic safety. Their support ensures that Marion County can continue to prioritize the well-being of our community members on the road. We are grateful for their advocacy and partnership in making our roads safer for everyone,” **said Marion county Commissioner Kevin Cameron.**

“Homeownership is a critical part of housing and financial stability for Oregonians but is getting farther out of reach for too many. Senators Merkley and Wyden are continuing their championship for housing in our state, with this investment in Community Land Trust homes in Corvallis. DevNW is thrilled to be able to move forward with this project,” **said Emily Reiman, DevNW/Community LendingWorks CEO.**

“I’m excited to share the enthusiastic backing from Senators Merkley and Wyden, as well as Congresswoman Hoyle, for the Mill Street Reconstruction. This thoroughfare serves as a lifeline for our community, granting access to numerous local parks, recreation spots, bus facilities, downtown establishments, and serving as a crucial link to the University of Oregon. Our collective efforts aim to bolster safety for all users, be it cyclists, drivers, or pedestrians, with a special focus on enhancing ADA amenities. We’re deeply grateful for the recognition of this vital need by our federal leaders, underscoring its significance as a top priority for the well-being of the Springfield community,” **said Springfield Mayor Sean VanGordon.**

“Thank you to Senators Merkley and Wyden, and Representative Salinas for championing this allocation for the City of McMinnville’s historic Third Street Improvement Project. Rehabilitating our main street, increasing safety and accessibility for our residents and visitors alike and fixing critical infrastructure including an aged and diseased urban forest all while painting a picture of the future are all deliverables from this Federal investment,” **said Mayor Remy Drabkin, City of McMinnville.**

“Commercial Air Service has been a game changer for the Salem Municipal Airport and the central Willamette Valley,” **says Salem Mayor Chris Hoy.** “Thanks to the leadership of Senators Merkley and Wyden, the investment of nearly \$1 million has been crucial to the vision of bringing commercial air service back to Salem. Their leadership and support has had a tangible impact on our local economy, increased tourism, reduced traffic and congestion along I-5, and introduced the world to the beauty of the Willamette Valley.”

“Ella Curran Food Bank is thrilled and honored to hear this news. For 45-years the all-volunteer food bank has rented storefront space, having to relocate multiple times, as we provide food to those in need. These funds will be used to build a permanent, accessible, welcoming, food bank that will serve Monmouth/Independence and surrounding areas for decades to come, continuing our mission to end food insecurity,” **said Patty Nevue, Coordinator, Volunteer, Ella Curran Food Bank.**

“We are grateful for the commitment and support from Senators Merkley and Wyden and Representative Salinas, whose efforts have secured the necessary funding to realize the South Salem Transit Center and Mobility Hub. Their work will help us greatly improve our community members' lives through this public transportation project to meet our community's mobility needs,” **said Board President, Maria Hinojos Pressey.**

“We're deeply grateful to Senators Wyden and Merkley and Representative Salinas, as well as their staff, for securing funding for the Corvallis Road Waterline and the Chestnut Street Bridge projects,” **said The City of Independence, Mayor John McArdle.** “The water line is a critical step forward and integral to our new water treatment facility's development. The Chestnut Street Bridge will enhance the connectivity of our transportation system and reduce congestion. These projects exemplify Independence's commitment to finding community-conscious solutions to fund our essential infrastructure upgrades.”

“Health and wellness of Indigenous people is more critical now than ever before due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Opening the doors to a newly constructed Resident and Recreation Center will be a healing step forward for the Grand Ronde Tribe and its members. Having a space for our community to connect, heal, learn, and grow will ensure future generations thrive. Senators Merkley and Wyden as well as Representative Salinas are continuing their support for Indigenous people in our state with this investment in a Resident and Recreation Center in Grand Ronde,” **said Cheryle A. Kennedy, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Chairwoman.**

“Senator's Wyden and Merkley immediately recognized that Lane County's efforts to build out behavioral health crisis services are worthy of federal funding. They advocated for direct funding to assist our Stabilization Center project and were successful in that effort. The Lane County Stabilization Center is a much needed element of community-based treatment services and will be a game changer for local courts, hospitals, mobile crisis responders and police agencies who have struggled to find the right resource for people in our community who may need immediate and targeted help to work through a moment of crisis in their lives that

without such help can enmesh them in a homelessness-jail-hospital pipeline," **said Pat Farr, Chair of the Lane County Board of Commissioners.**

"Senators Merkley, Wyden, and Representative Hoyle's dedication to enhancing healthcare infrastructure in rural Oregon is underscored by their support for the Monroe Health Center project, which is a school-based clinic that serves the whole community. Serving South Benton and parts of Linn and Lane Counties for two decades, the center is a pivotal resource for primary care, dental, and behavioral healthcare services. This support goes beyond healthcare; it acknowledges the significance of sustaining high-quality infrastructure that underpins the legacy of Community Health Center work. We deeply appreciate their efforts to secure the future of such essential services," **said Xan Augerot, Benton County Commissioner and liaison to the Community Health Centers of Benton and Linn Counties Board.**

"Whether during an ice storm or wildfire event, first responders in Lane County depend upon robust and resilient radio communications infrastructure to ensure the safety of our residents. Our thanks to Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden for ensuring Lane County's request for financial assistance for emergency communications equipment and infrastructure was included in the FY 24 federal budget," **said Commissioner Laurie Trieger, Chair, Lane County Board of Commissioners.**

"Thank you to Senators Merkley and Wyden and Representative Salinas for supporting the replacement of the City of Carlton's failing sewer collection pipes. Replacement of these pipes is critical to address the health, environmental, and safety concerns caused by the failing system. Replacement of the failing infrastructure will allow Carlton to continue to grow and businesses to thrive, creating a healthy and prosperous community for businesses and residents alike," **said Mayor Linda Watkins, City of Carlton.**

"Dayton's City Hall campus was constructed in 1935 and no longer meets the modern needs of the City. It's too small to host administrative staff, is seismically vulnerable, and many areas are not ADA accessible. Thanks to Congresswoman Salinas, Senator Merkley, and Senator Wyden, this funding will support development of the Dayton Civic Center. The Civic Center will be the heart of the community, setting the standard for future economic development in design and renewable energy infrastructure. It will provide multiple uses such as community space for public meetings, expanded library space to accommodate more services and educational opportunities for youth and seniors, and emergency services such as emergency warming and cooling for vulnerable residents," **said City of Dayton, City Manager, Rochelle Roaden.**

"The City of Oakridge would like to personally thank Senator Merkley, Senator Wyden, and Congresswoman Hoyle, for including \$500,000 in funding for the Oakridge Willamette Activities Center (WAC) in the FY 24-25 appropriations bills recently passed by Congress. For decades, the WAC served as the social services center for the citizens of Oakridge, Westfir and surrounding rural east Lane County, until roof leaks and electrical issues made the building uninhabitable. Thanks to this Congressional funding, the City of Oakridge is one step closer to being able to bring back these services and repair the building and transform it into a state-of-the-art

Resilience Hub, emergency operations center, cleaner air space, food bank, medical service provider, and disaster recovery center. We are very grateful to our Congressional Delegation for their continued support of projects like this, which are vital to rural Oregonians like us," **said James Cleavenger, Oakridge City Administrator.**

"South Lane Mental Health is a community mental health organization whose mission is to restore hope and renew life through compassionate mental health care services, support, and advocacy. We are grateful that Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden understand that the mental health crisis affecting our nation was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and even more so for those low-income individuals living in rural areas who often cannot afford mental health care," **said Norma Barton, South Lane Medical Health Director of Development and Community Relations.** "SLMH focusses our spending on client care, leaving little to no financial resources for much needed repairs to facilities. Funding for our facility repairs will assist us in continuing to provide mental health therapy for low-income folks in our rural service area of Lane County, Oregon; regardless of their ability to pay for services, a tradition we have kept since our inception in 1988."