

# Sweet Home, Linn County, Oregon

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## NEAI Projects<sup>1\*</sup>

Sweet Home Projects				
Year	Applicant	Project	Funding Source <sup>2</sup>	Amount
94	Sweet Home	Flexible Manufacturing Building	RD-RBEG	\$495,000
94	Linn County	Highland Forest Products Loan	FS-OGDF (via OEDD)	\$5,000
94	Oregon Dept. of Forestry	Jobs-in-the-Woods Labor Sweet Home Pilot	FS-RCA FS-OGDF (via OEDD)	\$50,000
94	University of Oregon, Labor Education & Research Center	Jobs-in-the-Woods: Tracking Sweet Home Pilot	FS-OGDF (via OEDD)	\$5,000
95	Sweet Home	City Hall ADA Access	HUD-CDBG (via OEDD)	\$267,000
95	Sweet Home	Shea Point Water Extension & Restrooms	RD-RBEG (funding later rescinded)	\$240,500
95	Sweet Home	Downtown Master Plan	FS-RCA	\$37,000
95	Linn County	KOA Kampground	FS-OGDF (via OEDD)	\$50,000
96	City of Sweet Home	Foster Lake Marina Road	FS-RCA (funding later rescinded)	\$175,000
97	City of Sweet Home	Calapooia Events Facility	FS-RCA	\$200,000
97	City of Sweet Home	Sweet Home's Wilderness Village Feasibility Study	FS-RCA	\$63,000
99	City of Sweet Home	Ames Creek Revitalization and Beautification Project	FS-RCA	\$20,700
2000	City of Sweet Home	Sweet Home Strategic Plan/ Leadership Project	FS-RCA	\$20,000

\* Project funding reflects initial loan and grant totals. Final funding amounts may be different.

1. This list of projects was obtained from the OR-CERT database, maintained by Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. Following review of this document by interviewees, additional projects thought to have been funded through NEAI were identified. These projects include (1) Midway Well Contamination (CDBG), (2) Sweet Home Community Center (Boys and Girls Club/Senior Center—CDBG), (3) Pilot for Regional Downtown Development (OEDD), and (4) Mill Site Redevelopment (EDA), and (5) Business Assistance to Rural Communities (USDA-RD). Researchers were unable to investigate these projects due to limitations on time.

2. Key to Funding Sources: FS=Forest Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture); RCA=Rural Community Assistance program; RD=Rural Development (U.S. Department of Agriculture); RBEG=Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program; IRP=Intermediary Relending Program; EDA=Economic Development Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce); OEDD=Oregon Economic Development Department (now Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECD)); OGDF=Old Growth Diversification Funds (administered by the State); HUD=Housing and Urban Development; CDBG=Community Development Block Grant (administered by the State); JTPA=Job Training Partnership Act (U.S. Department of Labor); SBA=Small Business Administration; JITW=Jobs-in-the-Woods; BLM=Bureau of Land Management (U.S. Department of Interior); FWS=Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. Department of Interior).

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**Regional Projects**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
94	Linn-Benton Community College	Self-Employment Training, Counseling, Business Development	JTPA	\$38,000
94	Linn County	Investments Incentives Fund	RD-RBEG	\$267,450
94	Linn County	Fiber Optics Feasibility Analysis	FS-RCA	\$30,000
94	Linn County	Sweet Home income survey	FS-RCA	\$8,910
94	Oregon Consortium	Dislocated Worker Training	JTPA	\$564,387
94	Linn County	Business Incentives Fund	FS-RCA	\$250,000
94		Jobs-in-the-Woods Contracts	BLM FS-JITW	\$83,000 \$397,333
95	Linn County Tourism Coalition	Linn Tourism Coalition Community Action Package	FS-RCA	\$149,250
95	Linn County	Linn County Technical Assistance	FS-OGDF (via OEDD)	\$15,000
95	The Campbell Group	Wiley Creek Restoration Project	FWS-JITW	\$15,000
95	Eight Businesses	Guaranteed Loans	SBA	\$1,525,960
97	Linn County	Small Business Development	RD-RBEG	\$200,000
99	Linn County Business Development Center	Small Business Development Center	RD-RBEG	\$20,000
2000	Linn County	Continuation of Revolving Loan Fund	RD-RBEG	\$30,000
94	Cascades West Council of Governments (CWCOG)	Intermediary Relending Program	RD-IRP	\$1,500,000
94	CWCOG	Capacity-Building – Planning Supplement	EDA	\$190,000
94	CWCOG	Project Development – Technical Assistance	EDA	\$91,500
94	CWCOG	Planning Grant	EDA	\$89,000
96	CWCOG	Intermediary Relending Program	RD-IRP	\$1,500,000
96	CWCOG	Economic Development District Technical Support	EDA	\$95,000
97	CWCOG	Economic Development District Technical Support	EDA	\$50,000
98	CWCOG	Intermediary Relending Program	RD-IRP	\$1,000,000

## Background

Sweet Home is located in forested foothills of eastern Linn County, in the central Willamette Valley. The town lies approximately 25 miles from Interstate 5 at Albany and about equidistant (50 miles) to Eugene to the southwest and Salem to the northwest. The South Fork of the Santiam River borders the town to the north, with two large reservoirs, Foster Lake and Green Peter Lake, just east of town. The forests immediately surrounding town are primarily under state and private industrial ownership, with the Willamette National Forest comprising the higher-elevation, forested lands. The 2000 population of Sweet Home was 8,016.

### Brief History

Prior to European-American settlement, the Kalapuyan Indians inhabited the Sweet Home area, primarily living along the Santiam River (Ruby and Brown 1986). The Kalapuyan spoke a dialect of Kalapuyan (also spelled Calapooian) and were related to other Kalapuyan Indians that lived throughout the Central Willamette Valley. Livelihoods were based on hunting and gathering of fish, game, berries, and camas root. In 1856, the Kalapuyan Indians along with over 20 other Indian bands were moved to the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation in Polk County. In 1870, there were 125 pure blood Kalapuyan Indians living on the Reservation, but by 1910, only nine remained. Today the Kalapuyan, as a separate tribe, are extinct.

European-American settlers arrived in Sweet Home in the early 1850s, primarily as homesteaders. These settlers found productive farmland in the valley and cleared forested areas for farming. Initially, wheat was the primary crop grown, and later, in the early 1900s, orchards and berries. In addition to farming, settlers raised cattle, sheep, and hogs. For the first 75 or more years, agriculture provided the primary source of income in Sweet Home (Carey and Hainline 1979).

In 1865, the Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Wagon Road Company completed construction of the Cascade Mountain Wagon Road, connecting the town of Ontario, on Oregon's east-

ern border, to Albany in the Willamette Valley. As compensation for building the road, the federal government issued to the company title to 800,000 acres of land comprising every other section along the right-of-way from Albany to Ontario. Lozard & Freres of Paris, France later purchased the land, and in 1907 sold it to Louis Hill and W.P. Davidson. Hill, the son of James J. Hill, owner of the Great Northern Railroad, started the Oregon and Western Colonization Company with Davidson with the goal of establishing a railway line that would connect central Oregon to the Oregon Electric Railway in the Willamette Valley via the South Santiam Valley (Carey and Hainline 1979). In 1913, the property was divided, with Davidson taking the eastern sections (from Sisters to Ontario) and Hill taking the western section from Sisters to Albany (Steinbacher 1979). The Hill property was not touched until 1940, when the family agreed to allow a small portion of timber to be harvested to start a sheep ranch (Steinbacher 1979). The Hill land subsequently became an important source of timber in the region, and the family established profit-sharing contracts with a number of logging companies.

The 1930s marked the beginning of the industrial age of timber production in Sweet Home. In 1931, after years of delays, the Oregon Electric Railroad line finally arrived in Sweet Home, connecting the Santiam Valley to the Willamette Valley. Santiam Highway (Hwy 20) between Sweet Home and Albany was also paved in 1930. These new lines of transportation transformed the community into a booming timber center that would continue for the next 50 years. Between 1930 and 1940 the population of Sweet Home grew from 189 to 1,090, and by 1950 had reached 3,603 (Carey and Hainline 1979). In 1932, Norvil Rice built the first modern sawmill in Sweet Home. In 1935, Carl Davis and Fred Powers, owners of the Powers-Davis Lumber Company of Powers, Oregon, purchased the Rice Mill, establishing the Santiam Lumber Company. Several other mills opened up in the 1930s and 1940s, and by 1950, Sweet Home had eight large wood product mills and several small mills, employing hundreds of mill and woods workers.

In 1946, Willamette Valley Lumber (based in Dallas, Oregon), in search of new supplies of timber, approached the Hill family with a proposal to cut timber from its land in exchange for a percentage of the gross profits. A contract was later signed that allowed Willamette to cut one billion board feet of timber (comprising all of the timber on the Hill land) over a 15-year period. In exchange, the Hills were guaranteed a percentage of the gross profit, or a minimum stumpage price, whichever was greater. The contract was later modified to allow Willamette to buy timber on the open market to sustain the Hill timber over a longer period of time. A spin-off company, called Willamette National Lumber Company, was formed to take over the Sweet Home operation. The company constructed a mill in Sweet Home to process hemlock cut from the Hill property. It also constructed another mill just east of Sweet Home, in Foster. In 1958, the company added a sheathing plant to the Foster mill, and in 1959, opened a plywood plant in Sweet Home.

Willamette National played an important role in the community. To guarantee a stable workforce, the company offered a payroll deduction plan to allow workers to construct homes (Steinbacher 1979). Employees were given credit to purchase building materials from the company's retail outlet. The company also encouraged its employees to participate in civic projects. It held company dances, social activities, and published a magazine featuring family news, photos of children, and pictures of its employees' newly constructed homes (Steinbacher 1979).

In the late 1940s, Willamette Valley Lumber began to look for expansion opportunities and started to acquire other mills in the area. In 1951, the company purchased the Santiam Lumber Company, which at the time had 850 employees, and in 1953, purchased Western Veneer. In 1967, Willamette Valley Lumber and its affiliated businesses (Willamette National, Santiam Lumber, Ward Fiberboard Company (Duraflake), Western Veneer and Plywood, Dallas Lumber and Supply Company, and Western Kraft), merged to form a new company called Willa-

mette Industries, Inc. Willamette Industries has since been one of the primary employers in Sweet Home.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the timber industry, dam construction in the 1960s brought additional workers and their families to Sweet Home. In 1961, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began the Green Peter-Foster dams project to provide flood control on the Santiam River, as well as hydroelectric power and recreational opportunities. Construction was completed on the two dams in 1968, resulting in the creation of Green Peter Reservoir (about 20 miles east of Sweet Home) and, a few miles downstream, Foster Lake.

The timber industry in Sweet Home continued to expand through the mid-1970s. According to one resident, there were 13 mills in Sweet Home in the mid-1970s. The town was "booming," with many retail businesses and services, including a hospital and dentist offices. The Foster area, just east of Sweet Home, was annexed in the 1970s, increasing the population by 50 percent. Despite the boom, however, one interviewee noted, "the community decided not to reinvest in their future." He goes on to explain, "There was a lot of money in town and that was when they should have been stuffing money away for the infrastructure in the community. They knew they had problems then, but the money was flowing everywhere, nobody cared. They figured it was going to last forever."

In the late 1970s and 1980s, as a result of economic recession, increased mechanization, log exports, and pressure from environmental groups to reduce timber harvests on National Forest lands, Sweet Home's timber industry began to wane. Mill shutdowns and layoffs were common. Boise Cascade's plywood plant, which had about 80 to 90 employees, closed in 1984. Although purchased and reopened by Wheeler Lumber, the plant closed again in 1989. Pleasant Valley Plywood purchased the mill in 1989, operated it with only 25 employees, and closed it in 1990. Willamette Industries' Sweet Home mills also experienced periodic shutdowns. In 1989, Willamette's Sweet Home sawmill closed its doors, laying off 63 people. In 1990, Willamette Industries' Midway Veneer Plant, which

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3. At the time of this study, Willamette Industries was battling a hostile takeover by Weyerhaeuser Corporation. Many Sweet Home residents, fearing that the buyout would lead to further mill shutdowns and layoffs, wore "Just No Wey" buttons in protest. Nevertheless, in 2002, Weyerhaeuser successfully completed its takeover of Willamette Industries.

employed 24 (nearly 50 at its peak), also shut its doors. A few years later, Willamette's plywood mills in Lebanon and Sweet Home, as well as the Foster Sawmill were also closed. The five Willamette Industries mill closures resulted in the loss of approximately 410 permanent layoffs (SHOL 1997).

Much of the timber that fed the Sweet Home mills came from the Willamette National Forest. At its peak in 1987, the Willamette National Forest sold almost one billion board feet of timber. Two years later, court injunctions brought this value to zero. Apart from timber sales that still needed to be harvested, logging on the Willamette National Forest came to a virtual standstill.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the community faced a major economic crisis. According to one interviewee, "there was a mass exodus of people . . . when the mills closed down. A lot of the middle class and working class people moved out. In some of the nicer neighborhoods, every third house was vacant for a long time." Many of those that remained in the community found jobs in other areas and commuted to work. Highway 20 between Sweet Home and Lebanon had recently been expanded in the 1980s, and, according to one source, as timber industry jobs declined "a steady stream of traffic began to flow in and out of the community." Many Sweet Home residents found jobs in Lebanon, Albany, Corvallis, and as far as Eugene, Salem, and Portland. Companies such as Hewlett-Packard (based in Corvallis), Ore-Met Wah Chang (producers of titanium and other metal products based in Millersburg (near Albany), and Willamette Industries (paper plant in Millersburg and secondary wood products plant in Lebanon) employed many Sweet Home residents.

Census statistics indicate that in 1990 the poverty rate was 17 percent among Sweet Home residents, in contrast to 13 percent for the county and 12 percent statewide. Eighteen percent of children under 15 received public assistance, and 13 percent of the total population received public assistance. Median household income was \$18,685 compared with \$25,209 for Linn County and \$27,250 for the state. The population of Sweet Home was 6,850, down

from an estimated 7,250 in 1978 (Carey and Hainline 1979). Unemployment was at 14 percent. Among those employed, 32 percent worked in durable manufacturing, 15 percent in retail trade, nine percent in education, and six percent in agriculture/forestry/or fisheries.

In an effort to pull the community together and promote economic diversification, the Oregon Economic Development Department (OEDD) sponsored an assessment for Sweet Home to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). The SWOT analysis led to the formation of a Community Response Team (CRT) to address the findings (Sweet Home Strategic Plan 2001). One participant noted the importance of these processes: "The community had to go through a grieving process . . . go through all the steps of grieving to get to a point where we could go forward—disbelief, denial, then anger, revisiting where we are, and finally trying to identify what needs to be done to go on." At the same time, the Sweet Home Economic Development Group, Inc. (SHEDG), a private, nonprofit 501(c) 6, was created as a formal, economic development organization. The Community Initiatives Program, a program of OEDD at the time, held training sessions and provided technical assistance to the CRT. Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (CWCOG), which represented Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties, also provided planning assistance to the community. In 1990, with facilitation assistance from Pacific Power, the CRT completed an Action Plan for the community. Since then, Rural Development Initiatives,<sup>4</sup> formerly the Community Initiatives Program, has assisted the community with its strategic planning process. In 1993/94, SHEDG, with RDI's assistance, put together a Strategic Plan for the community based on the 1990 Action Plan. The strategic plan was updated in 1996/97 and in 2000/01.

As part of a fundraising effort, SHEDG also began the Oregon Jamboree, a summertime country music festival. Beginning in 1992, with a \$600,000 budget, 400 volunteers, and a professional program manager hired to organize the event, Sweet Home held the first "Jamboree." A few years later, the com-

4. Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. is a nonprofit organization originally created by the Oregon Economic Development Department in 1989 as Communities Initiatives. In 1992, they became a private, nonprofit with the mission of building capacity in rural communities.

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munity decided to take on the management of the Jamboree themselves. Although able to secure a good lineup of talent, the lack of experience and skills resulted in poor planning, management, and marketing of the event. One week prior to the event, participants realized that they were \$100,000 over-budget. Rather than cancel the event and, as one committee member put it, “triggering more financial losses and causing unknown repercussions throughout the community,” the committee secured an emergency loan from Linn County. SHEDG Board Members also donated \$4,000 to \$6,000 each from their personal funds. One interviewee recalls, “this was a huge risk at the time, and a heroic response by a few individuals.” The following year, the Jamboree was a huge success, and the personal loans were paid off. Since then, the Jamboree has become an annual, nationally recognized event, featuring top name musicians from around the U.S. The event draws about 10,000 visitors to the community over a three-day period. One volunteer commented that after so much loss in the timber industry, “the Jamboree made people feel good about their community.” Another stated that, “the coming together of literally hundreds of community members, devoting untold volunteer hours annually, was a key contributor to the positive approach the community took to pull itself out of the economic doldrums.”

### Key Issues in the 1990s

By the 1990s, the timber industry, which had defined the community for the past 50 years, faced

an all-time low, and the community fell into an economic depression. Some key issues faced by the community during this time include:

#### *Loss of Leadership*

Many who had played important leadership positions in the community were affiliated with the Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, Pacific Power, Willamette Industries, small business owners, and the school district. Little by little, because of downsizing, consolidation, and other changes, the people who held these positions moved out of the area. For example, Willamette Industries consolidated its offices at its headquarters in Albany; Pacific Power closed its Sweet Home and Lebanon offices; the Forest Service’s Sweet Home Ranger District reduced its staff of over 100 down to around 30.

#### *Creating a New Identity*

For most of the residents, Sweet Home had always been identified with the timber industry. Now, in the face of its collapse, residents began to look for other ways to maintain a local economic base. Located 45 miles from Hoodoo Ski Resort and close to outdoor recreational activities in the Willamette National Forest, Mt. Jefferson and Mt. Washington Wilderness Areas, and Green Peter and Foster Reservoirs, some Sweet Home residents felt that tourism could provide a new economic base for the community. Other residents were less convinced, and the downtown business community was often divided over promotional activities to encourage tourism.



Main Street in Sweet Home, Oregon

## NEAI Projects and Programs

### Community Economic Revitalization Team (CERT)

One of the primary mechanisms for implementing the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative (NEAI) was the development of State Community Economic Revitalization Teams (SCERT). The purpose of the SCERT was to coordinate the delivery of state and federal assistance, and work with tribal governments, local governments, and private and nonprofit organizations. In Oregon, the Oregon Economic Development Department (OEDD), later renamed the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECDD), coordinated the OR-CERT process.

### *Local Implementation of SCERT*

#### County-Level

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (CWCOG), which comprises the Economic Development District for Benton, Linn, and Lincoln Counties, played a lead role in facilitating NEAI interventions in the region. CWCOG received approximately \$515,500 from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) through the Initiative for Technical Assistance in Project Development, Capacity-Building, Planning, and Economic Development District Technical Support. It immediately hired staff, initially part-time and later expanded to full-time, to assist with implementation of the Initiative and the CERT process. Funds supported CWCOG staff participation at the state, regional, and local levels of the NEAI process. The CWCOG solicited and collected project concepts in incorporated communities that lacked adequate staff, worked with county commissioners to prioritize and rank projects, and submitted projects to the Oregon Economic Development Department.

The CWCOG staff also visited communities, meeting with and regularly communicating with commissioners, city recorders, mayors, and planning staff. They provided technical support that included working with community groups to develop projects; defining the scope and funding needs of projects; helping community members complete the three page application (Project Notification Forms); grant

writing; and building the capacity of communities to take over the same range of responsibilities.

The CWCOG also provided technical assistance to the counties' board of commissioners by assisting with project identification and proposal development. Staff examined funding agencies' requirements to help match community needs with the agencies' programs. CWCOG participated on various CERT committees to represent the needs of communities and maintain a flow of communication between communities and the CERT.

#### Community-Level

In Sweet Home, the City took the lead in notifying the community about the CERT process. City employees talked to different community groups about the availability of funds and assisted with proposal writing and completion of the CERT applications. During the first several years of the Initiative, a staff person from CWCOG assisted the City with project development and proposal writing and also facilitated many of the community meetings. City employees felt that CWCOG's assistance with writing grants was essential to obtaining funds. CWCOG also assisted in managing grants (e.g., writing up progress reports) once projects were funded. City employees felt that they had a good working relationship with CWCOG. The CWCOG had been actively involved in the community prior to NEAI, with the CRT, and was aware of the different projects. The CWCOG staff person attended local meetings, knew the people involved in projects and what they were doing, and interacted on a regular basis with the community. "Because they were so often here they knew the community well enough to be able to anticipate and interact with what we were going to need . . . They understood the personalities," one city employee observed. This early assistance from the CWCOG, eventually enabled the City to take on the development and management of projects themselves. One city staff person notes, "You learn the process . . . You can step into it. A lot of the grants that we've gotten in the last few years were because we learned from them . . . If we didn't have that to begin with, we would've floundered."

According to city staff, many of the City's CERT proposals were for pre-existing projects that had been sitting "on-the-shelf." The city often lacked the time and staff to create new projects. "We had a number of grants that we didn't write . . . a number of good projects that had to sit on the back burner because there just wasn't the time," states one city staff person. Often, submitted projects were related to previously funded projects (i.e., second or third phases).

Once a list of projects had been compiled, the city would hold a community meeting to receive public input and prioritize projects. The city invited all of the community groups to the meeting, as well as the general public, and prioritized projects by dot voting. The prioritized list was then submitted to the city council for final approval. In some years when there was a sudden deadline, the city council would prioritize the list because of insufficient time to hold a public meeting. In these situations (which occurred twice) the city would contact the groups that had submitted projects to insure that they had some involvement. One interviewee felt that the public meetings ultimately did not make a difference in terms of determining which projects would be funded, but were important for community buy-in and the community's perception of projects. At times, there was conflict about project prioritization, with political clout occasionally influencing project ranking order.

Once the community established a local list, it was then sent to CWCOG. The CWCOG compiled project lists from each jurisdiction and submitted them to the county commissioners for final prioritization. The city never had any input on the County's prioritization. Although several projects were funded in Sweet Home over the years, the city felt that low prioritization on the county's list made many infrastructure projects ineligible for funding.

#### *Community-Level Projects*

##### Flexible Manufacturing Building

In 1994, the city of Sweet Home applied for a \$495,000 USDA-Rural Development (RD) Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) to purchase a 7.4-acre site and construct a 10,000 square foot, flexible, manufacturing building. The concept behind the building was that it would be used as a "business

incubator" to help small and emerging businesses develop and grow. A "bird-in-hand" business, Cirtek, located in the community, committed to leasing the property once the building was completed. The new building would enable the company to expand its operation without which there was the good possibility that the business would close. Expansion would thus allow the company to hire at least 15 additional employees and save 20 existing jobs.

Willamette Industries donated 7.4 acres to the city for the development. Topography and restrictions on the property, however, made only three acres available for development. The city completed construction of the flexible manufacturing building in 1996. Initially, Cirtek leased only half of the space, but as it expanded, the company eventually negotiated a lease with the city for the entire 10,000 square feet. Cirtek, which manufactures electronic components, at one point had a contract with General Motors to supply components for their radios. During this period, the company was reported to have had 96 employees and was running three shifts a day. By 1999, however, the number of employees decreased to 23.

Cirtek's expansion into the entire space aroused some concern with USDA-RD. From the agency's perspective the goal of a flexible manufacturing building was to house four to five relatively small operations as incubators. As these businesses grew and expanded, they would leave, allowing other new businesses to move in. Cirtek, however, could not find another suitable building in town. The new flexible manufacturing building was clean, energy-efficient, fully heated, and air-conditioned—an ideal site for electronic manufacturing. The only local alternative was a converted feed store/storage area that the company had occupied in the past in which, according to one source, "he [the owner] was constantly having to get the hay and straw particles out of his products." Instead, Cirtek offered to purchase the flexible manufacturing building and property from the City, and with the money allow the city to build a new building on an adjacent site. Although USDA-RD rules allow for the sale of a building if compensated for the amount of federal funds granted, the idea behind the RBEG funds was not to promote further construc-

tion of new buildings, but to promote the incubator concept. Although efforts were made by both the city and Rural Development staff to investigate various alternatives, Cirtek, in the meantime, had found a new building space in Lebanon, Oregon (about 20 miles west of Sweet Home), moving its operation in December, 2000. Although about 75 percent of its employees are still from Sweet Home, the percentage has dropped from 90 percent when the company was in town. The flexible manufacturing building has since been vacant for about six months at the time of this study.

#### City Hall ADA Access

In 1995, the city of Sweet Home received a \$267,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through OEDD (funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) to install an elevator in City Hall to provide handicapped access. Completed in 1997, the city's one complaint about the project was the requirement to hire contractors at prevailing federal wages (the Davis-Bacon Act requirement). This became "a huge, administrative burden to deal with," according to city staff because it required staff time and energy to monitor contractors and subcontractors to insure that they were in compliance. One interviewee stated that these requirements, especially on smaller projects, are "just killers." The city has consequently become more selective about applying for federal dollars.

One resident complained that the new elevator is often out of service, and felt that the money could have been better spent on building an entirely new building that was up to code. The city council meeting room is a relatively small space and often exceeds capacity during meetings. The City Hall ADA Access Project (i.e., construction and addition of the elevator), however, occurred on the opposite side of the building and had no effect on the city council chambers. Restrictions on the use of CDBG funds also precluded its use for construction of general government space.

#### Shea Point Water Extension & Restrooms

In 1995, the city of Sweet Home received a \$240,500 USDA-RD Business Enterprise Grant to extend city water to the town's eastern end. The pro-

posal included construction of a 4,000-foot waterline from 57th Street to the east side of Riggs Hill Road, along Highway 20. In addition to the waterline, the project also included construction of fire hydrants, one railroad crossing, and any necessary fittings. Water would serve the Point Restaurant (which at the time had 18 employees), two RV parks (including the KOA Campground that was being proposed at the time), Willamette Industries Foster Mill, six residences, a tavern and the proposed restrooms and marina. The waterline project was successfully completed, benefiting residents and small businesses.

The original project proposal also combined the waterline project with construction of public restrooms at the Shea Point visitor area on Foster Reservoir. The reservoir is an important recreational facility and tourist destination for boating, fishing, water-skiing, and other related outdoor activities. Due to restrictions on the types of infrastructure projects that could be funded, USDA-RD never funded the restroom portion of the project. Because the Foster Lake Reservoir is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, regulations prohibiting the use of these funds on federal lands also precluded construction of the restrooms.

#### Downtown Master Plan

In 1995, the city of Sweet Home received a \$37,000 grant from the Forest Service Rural Community Assistance Program (FS-RCA) to develop a Master Plan for the downtown district. Developing a Master Plan included studying the need for downtown improvements such as public restroom facilities, additional parking, streetscapes, sidewalk benches, and a water fountain. The goal of the plan was to identify where resources and funding should be focused to promote economic diversification, tourism, community pride, and beautification efforts. Previous efforts to improve the downtown area included constructing a median planter along Main Street, improving storefronts, and painting murals. The CWCOG representative working with the City wrote the original grant proposal while initiating meetings with the Sweet Home business community. The downtown business community at the time, however, saw no value in a marketing plan and de-

cided not to move forward with the project. Since the funds had already been awarded, however, the city used the money for clean-up and beautification efforts in the downtown area (e.g., painting some of the storefronts and planting trees). A volunteer through the University of Oregon's Resource Assistance for Rural Environments program (RARE) coordinated the work.

#### KOA Kampground

In 1988, two local women decided to develop a KOA Kampground in the Sweet Home area. After years of planning and several drafts of a business plan, they applied for partial funding through the CERT process. Originally, they wanted to locate the site next to Foster Lake, on the eastern edge of town, but faced restrictions on where they could build because of the site's proximity to land owned by the Army Corps of Engineers. They were subsequently offered a seven-acre piece of property across the highway for \$90,000 that they purchased in 1994. They had been working with the CWCOG and the Linn County Business Development Center to obtain an SBA loan to finance the project. One immediate barrier, however, was that the SBA loan could not be used to fund construction projects. The project needed \$241,000 to cover the remaining construction costs.

The Forest Service, aware of the project through the CERT process, offered to assist. With funds from the Rural Community Assistance program, the Forest Service awarded Linn County \$250,000 for its Business Incentives Fund. The county subsequently loaned the money to the business to cover the construction costs for the KOA. One source commended the Forest Service, stating, "the Forest Service was able to break some barriers . . . they stuck their necks out." Once the owners completed construction, SBA provided \$251,000 in funds for the project that included paying off the Linn County loan. The County then included these funds as part of a much larger project to build a new county fairgrounds. In addition to the Forest Service RCA funds, OEDD provided \$50,000 through its Old Growth Diversification Fund. A private bank loan and cash from the owners provided the remaining

funds. The total construction cost was \$891,174, with the owners providing much of the construction labor. The owners estimated that without their own labor, the project would have cost \$1.5 million.

The campground opened in November, 1996, with 81 sites (including tent sites, "Kamper Kabins," partial RV hook-ups, and full RV hook-ups), a store, recreation hall, and swimming pool. Business is "busy" in the summer (about 50 percent occupancy and 100 percent occupancy during the Jamboree), and "dead" in the winter (with six to 12 full-time residents and about three visitors per month). In April of 1999, one of the partners left the business after filing for personal bankruptcy. The remaining partner is determined to keep the business going, recently changing the name to Foster Lake Campground. Although in the original CERT application the campground was expected to create 11 direct jobs, the business currently has no employees (other than the owner). One individual works 30 hours a week in exchange for free board (on an RV site), free laundry, and a discount on store items.

#### Foster Lake Marina Road

In 1995, the city of Sweet Home applied for Initiative funds to construct a new road from Highway 20 to Foster Dam. The existing road, built on the dam abutment, had no direct access to Foster Lake. The location of the existing road was also the only viable site for the development of a proposed marina facility on Foster Lake. Because the lake is surrounded on all three sides by roads and highways, commercial recreation development had always been constrained due to land and access limitations. At the time, private investors had committed to building a marina and recreation facility at Foster Lake if the public road could be relocated. Thus, project goals included creating public access to the west end of Foster Reservoir and supporting the development of a new marina at the lake to promote tourism in Sweet Home. In 1996, the city received a \$175,000 grant from the FS-RCA for the project. The developers of the proposed marina facility, however, eventually dropped out, and the city terminated the entire project.

Those interviewed about the project felt that the project was continually fraught with problems, and attributed much of the trouble to the developer's lack of organization, preparation, and commitment. For example, a marina feasibility study had been conducted several years earlier that raised issues about the carrying capacity of the lake. The developer, however, conducted no follow-up studies to insure that the lake could accommodate his proposed 200-boat marina. The city also complained that the developer had not been prepared with the necessary planning permits, traffic impact studies, and environmental assessments, and that the city had to pick up a lot of the work. City staff estimated that they spent approximately \$10,000 of the city's own money to help with the planning of the marina.

Boat ramp access proved to be another problem. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction of the lake and would not allow a private company to develop a boat ramp. Instead, they would allow the city to lease the land from them, which in turn could be sublet to the developer. The developer wanted the boat ramp to be available exclusively to marina tenants, which posed a problem for the city as a public entity. Furthermore, the Army Corps of Engineers also required that a large crane be used to move the boats into and out of the lake, creating many logistical problems.

One interviewee felt that the reason the city got involved in the project was to support any kind of development in the community, regardless of how well thought out it was. "One aspect of small communities with depressed economies is that there is a desperation for any kind of development. Our community agreed to site a women's prison here and nobody really wanted it, it was just that you want anything. The city had been empowered to go out and get anything."

#### Calapooia Events Facility

In 1997, the city of Sweet Home applied for NEAI funds to develop an outdoor events facility with seating capacity for 10,000. Working in partnership with the Sweet Home Chamber of Commerce, which hosts the annual rodeo (Calapooia Roundup), the city was interested in expanding the

existing events facility to promote additional tourism in the community. The initial application proposed to install a complete arena facility, partially covered grandstand seating, RV and spectator parking, electrical lighting and sound equipment, ADA access, landscaping, and other improvements. The site was to be located on city-owned property and would be developed for the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association level of approval. The new facility would also allow for the hosting of other events including the Oregon Jamboree (the county-western music festival); national rodeo competitions; 4-H shows; mini concerts; high school rodeo and related events; and other community, regional, and statewide outdoor events.

The city received a \$200,000 grant from the FS-RCA for the project. At the time of the award, however, the city was in the process of recruiting a new city manager. The original proposal was subsequently modified upon arrival of the new manager. Rather than constructing a completely new arena, funds were used to purchase portable, aluminum bleacher seating. Because the bleachers are portable, the city has been able to use them for other community activities and events, such as groundbreaking ceremonies and building dedications, in addition to the rodeo. The original event location was also moved, due to noise complaints from local residents, to a new 20-acre site now leased by the city. New events have also recently been booked at the site, including a Celtic dance festival (which the city anticipates will bring in 5,000 participants), and a tough truck rodeo competition (anticipated to be more of a local event). The city is also hoping that the Oregon Jamboree, which brings in up to 10,000 visitors over three days, will eventually relocate to the new site.

#### Wilderness Village Feasibility Study

In the late 1980s, a group of Sweet Home residents, interested in promoting greater economic development efforts in the downtown area, formed the Sweet Home Downtown Business Association. In the early 1990s, the group began to explore various economic development alternatives for the community, eventually coming up with the idea of developing a high-tech training and conference center, called the

Wilderness Village. The idea of the Wilderness Village was to target large corporations that could use the facility for staff training, conferences, and retreats. The vision of the center also included a virtual reality logging museum, golf course, and hotel and restaurant accommodations.

To further explore the feasibility of such a project, the Downtown Business Association conducted economic evaluations and studies of existing businesses that offered similar amenities and accommodations in the Northwest. After spending over three years and \$35,000, as well as thousands of volunteer hours, to conduct these studies, the group concluded that the Wilderness Village concept could be financially rewarding, and could attract other businesses to the community over time. The Wilderness Village Steering Committee was subsequently formed, with a 27-member board made up of local business representatives, professionals, and citizens. The group was interested in developing a private/public partnership, in which the land and building would be owned by the Wilderness Village Foundation working in conjunction with the city of Sweet Home, and the operations and management of the facility would be contracted out to a private firm. A Board of Directors, made up of local professionals, businessmen, and community members, would have complete oversight of the operation and would redirect all profits back to the community for further economic and community development endeavors. The group estimated that profits could range from \$500,000 to \$1,250,000 after five years. To justify what would potentially be a \$25 to \$30 million project requiring taxpayer support through bonds, city staff felt that an independent feasibility study conducted by outside professional consultants was necessary.

The Wilderness Village Steering Committee applied for Initiative funds unsuccessfully for several years to fund the feasibility study. Finally, in 1997, the city received, on behalf of the Wilderness Village Steering Committee, a \$63,000 FS-RCA grant to conduct a feasibility study of the Wilderness Village concept. The grant required a match of \$12,000 (raised by the Wilderness Village Steering Committee) and \$3,500 in city staff time. The city hired a team of consultants to conduct the feasibility study.

The consultants found that the concept, although risky, could work, but with some limitations. For example, Sweet Home's geographic location and climate (e.g., cold, rainy winters) could present some limitations to international businesses that generally prefer warm, tropical climates. The consultants also felt that, in contrast to the group's idea of attracting corporations from around the world, the facility would most likely attract regionally-based companies (from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and California). Sweet Home's distance from international airports (90 miles to Portland International Airport) presented an additional barrier. Finally, the report recommended that the conference and training center also serve as a destination resort to attract a broader clientele that could provide a sufficient occupancy rate to the cover costs of running the facility.

The Wilderness Village Steering Committee was disappointed with the study and felt that the consultants had not understood the concept correctly (that is, to create a high technology business and conferencing center). The group decided to move forward with its original idea. In 2001, however, a private developer based in Eugene reviewed the feasibility study and has since proposed to develop a resort. His plans include developing a golf course, high-end housing, condominiums, hotel and time-shares. Other ideas include building a recreational complex that would feature indoor competition skating, BMX and skateboard facilities to host statewide competitions, as well as a swimming pool and gym. Instead of a logging museum, the developer is also interested in creating an Oregon Rivers Museum, a project that would create a freshwater aquarium by diverting water from the Santiam River. The museum would feature salmon and other river species as well as cultural exhibits on Oregon rivers. At the time of this study, the developer had purchased a 68-acre parcel along the Santiam River, with an option to purchase another 600 acres, including the former Midway Veneer and Sweet Home Plywood mill sites. Thus, although the Wilderness Village Steering Committee was disappointed in the findings of the feasibility study, the study did attract the interest of a private entrepreneur and the potential for future development activities. One resident noted, however, that although a resort



Stankey Park and Ames Creek with Senior and Youth Center in the background

facility will create much-needed jobs in the community, unlike the Wilderness Village model, the profits will go to the developer, rather than back to the community.

#### Ames Creek Revitalization and Beautification Project

In the early 1990s, a member of the Sweet Home Tree Commission raised the idea of cleaning up Ames Creek, a local stream which runs through the center of town. Historically, the lower portions of the creek had been a dumping ground for garbage and debris. According to local residents, the creek “had been trashed . . . it had been sprayed, the banks filled . . . it was ugly.” One portion of the creek was also dammed, creating a pond that had historically been used to store logs. The Sweet Home Tree Commission wanted to plant trees and clean up the garbage around the downtown portion of the creek to create a green “portal” or park into Sweet Home to attract business and industry, as well as provide local amenities for residents. The group attempted to obtain funding through the CERT many times, but the project was never entertained, even though it rated fairly high on the County’s Ecosystem Investment project list.

#### **A. Phase I – Upstream Restoration**

At the same time the Tree Commission began seeking NEAI funds for its beautification efforts, the

South Santiam Watershed Council formed and was in search of a project. The watershed council was also interested in restoring the creek and initiated a pilot project on the upper reaches of Ames Creek. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Forest Service Watershed funds provided initial funding for the project. Paid crews, students, and volunteers removed invasive exotic vegetation (e.g., blackberry), planted native vegetation, and constructed hydrological and fish structures. Local equipment operators installed in-stream structures, and eight junior high school students were hired in the summer to water the planted vegetation and remove blackberry. One of the students eventually became a team leader, and, as a high school student, now takes younger kids out to do fieldwork.

#### **B. Phase II – Downstream Restoration**

In February of 1996, heavy rains resulted in a major flood event in Sweet Home, with flooding occurring on several sections of Ames Creek. The former log pond, which was supported by the small dam, filled with sediment and debris. After the flood, the city applied to the Division of State Lands (DSL) for a fill-removal permit to remove the sediment that had been blocked by the dam. During that time, however, a proposal to list steelhead under the Endangered Species Act was underway, and DSL re-

quired a fish passage around the dam in order to grant a permit. Retrofitting a fish passage along the dam was estimated to cost between \$300,000 and \$500,000, and local engineers recommended that the dam simply be removed.

The 1996 flood raised community awareness about the need for restoration efforts along Ames Creek. One resident noted that the flood “made people realize that they have a real live stream in their backyard—not an open sewer or drainage ditch.” It also prompted the Tree Commission to partner with the South Santiam Watershed Council and the U.S. Forest Service to expand its original beautification and clean-up project to include stream restoration (i.e., development of fish passages, hydrological repairs for flood relief). The partnership enabled the groups to pool their funding. In 1999, the city of Sweet Home, on behalf of the Sweet Home Tree Commission, received a \$20,700 grant from FS-RCA for restoration efforts on Ames Creek. The grant provided seed money to leverage an additional \$35,000 from the Forest Service Regional Office as a Regional Cost-Share grant because the project already had a Forest Service commitment. Funds helped pay for engineering and landscape design. Although not yet completed, the project will replace old riprap, put in a fish structure, and add baffles under the highway. A seasonal wetland will also be constructed to provide flood relief.

Although the city owned most of the 13 acres along Ames Creek destined for restoration, 18 additional properties would also be affected. To inform these property owners of the project, the city and watershed council mailed information packets to residents and held community meetings to explain the project and receive input from property owners. Volunteers also went door-to-door to residents who had property on the creek to obtain permission to work on their land and have them sign a waiver. Many of the commercial businesses that had property on the creek were happy to have the area cleaned up, and all but four residential owners signed the waiver. Some residents feared that if the blackberry were removed, “kids would come hang out and party.” The watershed council hired a landscape architect who worked with the property owners, considered their concerns, and developed a design that explicitly outlined work

on each property. Once the brush was removed residents appreciated having a visible stream in their backyard. Because the stream bank was now open and visible, youth who had previously “partied” along the creek were detracted.

### **C. Phase III – Restoration of the Pond**

A third phase of the project focused on the former pond area. Located in Stankey Park, the main city park in the community, a local mill built the pond in the 1940s and used it to store logs. Many residents felt an attachment to the pond and were eager to have it replaced after the flood. The pond served as an important tourist attraction during the annual Jamboree, which had its beer garden adjacent to it. Also, in 1998, the Sweet Home Community Center (which houses the Senior Center and Boys and Girls Club) was built adjacent to the pond site, and many of the seniors expressed their desire to have the pond back.

In 1999, the Forest Service, watershed council, and city of Sweet Home held a stakeholder meeting, inviting representatives from the Boys and Girls Club, Senior Citizens, School District, and Jamboree to brainstorm a vision for the park and discuss alternatives to a pond. The meeting revealed that people enjoyed the pond primarily because they liked the aesthetic appeal of the reflection on the water. Working with the landscape architect, the community developed a stepped stream (low grade with trickling water and long pools) alternative that would provide the reflective aspects of the pond, but also allow for fish passage. The stream would thus be returned to its more natural course and could also serve as a seasonal wetland. Plans include developing an interpretive walkway that connects the community center with the park, as well as the high school and adjacent low-income housing—creating what residents envision as a “community hub.” Currently, the project has raised \$200,000 in grant funds for the pond project. In 2001, the city requested \$112,000 from the Forest Service through CERT to fund the pond conversion. The Forest Service, however, had placed a \$50,000 cap on funds during that year, and the city had to re-submit the grant. The project was ranked as the number one project in the county. The Forest Service was awarded a \$170,000 grant from the Bonneville



Forest Service biologist and high school student mentor middle school students on restoration of Ames Creek

Power Administration to plan and implement portions of Phase III. Ground breaking will begin in August, 2002.

#### **D. Training for Contractors**

At the time of this study, Forest Service staff were making efforts to use the pond project (phase III) as a means of training restoration workers on contracting procedures. Because a portion of the Sweet Home Ranger District was designated as part of the Central Cascades Adaptive Management Area<sup>5</sup> (AMA) under the Northwest Forest Plan, federal funds are available for grants and contracts. This particular AMA was originally intended to focus on understanding the effects of forest management practices and restoration on the socioeconomic component of forest dependent communities. Emphasis, however, has been placed on the biophysical component. “We as an agency . . . we as an AMA haven’t looked at watershed management impacts on socioeconomic concerns within communities that are dependent on national forest land,” reflects one source. The Ames Creek Project was thus recommended as a potential showcase for adaptive learning about restoration contracting.

One interviewee noted that the Ames Creek Project has become a model of what can be done in a community. “Every community has a little bit of water . . . You can do simple things like just getting kindergartners out there, to doing very advanced monitoring.” The Ames Creek project has attracted the attention of the county commissioners, federal legislators, and the governor, all of whom paid visits to creek. Residents also talk about the potential of the creek to be used as a wetland bank, allowing for development of other areas.

#### Sweet Home Strategic Plan/Leadership Project

Following the initial strategic planning process that occurred in 1988-89, the Community Response Team (CRT) updated the City’s strategic plan in 1993/94 and in 1996/97. As time passed, however, the leadership in the community underwent a transition. Many of those who had played key roles in the community during the early 1990s had either left or were burned out. At the strategic plan update in 1994, for example, only about a dozen participants remained active. In 1998, Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) invited four CRT members to participate

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5. The Northwest Forest Plan created Adaptive Management Areas (AMAs) to provide places for experimentation and adaptive learning. The Forest Service created ten AMAs throughout Washington, Oregon, and Northern California (within the Spotted Owl range), with the intention to focus on different aspects of forest management.

in their Rural Futures Forum—a leadership-training forum. After completing the forum, the participants felt that this type of training would be beneficial to others and also help support the development of new community leaders. The CRT thus organized a Leadership Academy, led by RDI, in Sweet Home. The goal was to increase and diversify participation in leadership and decision making, and improve communication and working relationships among businesses and community organizations. In addition to the Leadership Academy, the organizers thought it would be a useful exercise for participants to apply their knowledge to update the community's strategic plan. In previous years, participation had often been limited to the same traditional leaders who, according to one interviewee, “do everything.” By involving the trainees, the city hoped to gain better representation of its citizenry in the strategic planning process, as well as identify emerging leaders that the city “never knew were out there.”

In 2000, the city of Sweet Home received \$20,000 from the FS-RCA for the Leadership Fair and Strategic Plan update, as well as a Ford Family Foundation grant to fund the completion of the program. The city invited current and potential community leaders to participate in the training, including people who had been involved in community organizations such as the Jamboree, SHEDG, and the Chamber of Commerce. Of the 47 people invited, 28 attended the three-and-a-half days of training. The Leadership Academy included Myer Briggs Personality Type Indicator testing, and sessions on working with diverse people, communication skills, and team building. The final session, which took place in June, 2001, focused on volunteer recruitment and retention. One participant praised RDI for holding the forum in Sweet Home: “It’s important to have leadership training locally . . . People often don’t have the time, budget, and willingness to travel to do it.”

When it came time to develop the strategic plan, however, participants were less enthusiastic. Although, initially, about 40 people attended the strategic planning meetings and over 150 participated throughout the seven-month process, as time went on, attendance dropped, until in the end only five to 10 people remained. “It was frustrating at times . . .

Everyone wants change, but nobody is there to help make it happen,” comments one participant. Some who participated felt that they were not well notified of what the strategic planning process would entail. Others attributed the lack of enthusiasm to a lack of decision making authority given to the strategic planning committee. The organizers of the event soon realized that those that sought leadership training did not necessarily want to participate in the strategic plan. One interviewee said that separately the leadership training and strategic planning were good projects, but they “didn’t mesh together well.” Despite the relatively low attendance by the end of the process, the group completed the updated strategic plan in 2001, and now meets quarterly to keep the plan “more alive.” “One of our goals is to have a living strategic planning process rather than just a static process,” one participant noted.

#### *County and Regional Projects* Intermediary Relending Program

The USDA-RD’s Intermediary Relending Program finances business facilities and community development projects in rural areas or cities with populations of less than 25,000. Rural Development provides loans to intermediaries, who establish revolving loan funds. Intermediaries must have a successful record of assisting rural business and industry and can provide repayment assurance. Recipients may be private or public organizations or individuals. Both intermediaries and recipients must be unable to obtain the proposed loan elsewhere. Loans from intermediaries to recipients must be for the establishment of new businesses, the expansion of existing businesses, creation of employment opportunities, saving of existing jobs, or community development projects. Loans may finance no more than 75 percent of the total cost and generally do not exceed \$150,000.

In 1994 and 1996, Cascades West Council of Governments (CWCOG) secured loans of \$1.5 million each from USDA Rural Development/Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) through its Intermediary Relending Program (IRP). In Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties, where CWCOG operates, the program provides loans for land, build-

ings, machinery, equipment, and fixtures, as well as working capital for rural businesses outside of the Corvallis and Albany urban areas. Loans of up to \$250,000 are available with up to 25 percent equity required. One job is expected to result from every \$35,000 borrowed. Of the \$3 million in IRP loans distributed, CWCOG reported the creation and/or saving of 309 jobs, or one job developed or saved per \$9,700 borrowed. In 1998, an additional IRP loan of \$1 million was given to CWCOG for Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties.

The IRP is one of a suite of loan programs administered by the CWCOG. The five other loan programs include the EDA-funded Revolving Loan Fund, the state-funded Business Investment Fund, and three Small Business Administration loan programs, including a micro loan program. The five loan programs vary in amount, interest rates, level of risk, equity requirement, terms, and fees. Because USDA-RD's IRP is funded as a loan to CWCOG, its loans have a higher interest rate and are made to lower risk applicants than EDA's revolving loan program, which is grant funded. Individuals who are unable to acquire bank loans are often referred to the CWCOG. CWCOG has made a substantial effort to build public sector awareness through outreach to various groups including city and county planners, certified public accountants, realtors, and nonprofits.

Between 1994 and 2000, seven businesses in Sweet Home received loans through the IRP, creating approximately 50 new jobs. Businesses that received funding include Cirtek (circuit board manufacturing), Investicast (titanium casting for golf clubs), Discovery Electronics (metal detector manufacturing), Fish Health Labs (diagnostic and research services for commercial salmon farms in Canada, Chile, and the U.S.), Sweet Home Rental (equipment rental), Mountain View Holdings (real estate office), and North Pacific Naturals (produces skin care products – located in Crawfordville). At the time of this study, all but two of the businesses were still in operation. Rural Development Initiatives, funded under a Business Enterprise Grant through USDA-RD, worked with the city of Sweet Home to organize a business retention and expansion program, and helped many of these businesses obtain loans.

#### Guaranteed Loans

In 1995, eight businesses in Linn County received a total of \$1,525,960 in SBA loans. The companies that received these loans are not identified because information on SBA loans was not available.

#### Business Incentive Funds

Working with CWCOG at the county-level is the Linn County Business Development Center. The center, located in Lebanon, provides business assistance to new and existing businesses in Linn County, including business planning and counseling, loan packaging, and financial assistance. Its goals are to create new family-wage jobs; build closer connections between public, private, and academic sectors; promote economic growth and increase the success rate of local businesses; help diversify local economies; and promote value-added processing. Financial assistance is provided through the Linn County Investment Fund, which can cover up to 50 percent of a project's cost on a dollar-for-dollar match. The business must provide at least 10 percent of the matching funds, while the remaining 40 percent match can come from other lending sources. Businesses can borrow up to \$50,000, interest-free, based on the creation of one job per \$20,000 received.

The program started in 1988 as part of a state-wide Regional Strategies Program. During the first four years, the program operated jointly between Linn and Benton Counties, after which each county administered the programs separately. As of 2001, the program has gone through six rounds of funding. Beginning in 1994 (Round III—the Linn County Regional Strategies Round), the program received \$267,450 in NEAI funds through USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Enterprise (BE) grant, which was used to establish the Business Incentives Fund, a revolving fund. USDA Rural Development provided funding again in 1997, with a \$200,000 BE grant, and in 1999, with a \$20,000 BE grant. The Rural Strategy Funds and North American Development Bank funds (in Round VI) provided additional funding for these rounds. Rounds I through III allowed credits for job creation (\$10,000 per job for Rural Strategies Funds). Also available was \$2,000 credit for the creation of a family-wage job (using

USDA-RD funds and repaid funds). Current rounds do not allow for credits. Since its inception, through the end of 2000, the program has provided 51 loans to businesses in Linn County and dispersed a total of \$1,731,578.

In Sweet Home, between 1994 and 2000, 10 businesses received loans through Linn County's Businesses Incentives fund, three of which have since closed. Many of these companies also obtained financing through CWCOG. These businesses are:

- Doug James' Taxidermy Supply
- Discovery Electronics (manufactures metal detectors)
- Fly Guard Systems, Inc. (manufactures fly/insect controlling air space units for livestock pens, petting zoos, packing plants, and veterinary hospitals)
- The Energy Connection, Inc. (uses waste materials from cardboard recycling plants to produce livestock bedding and clean-burning hog fuel for commercial use)
- Highland Forest Products (harvests and sells special forest products) (located in Crawfordsville)
- Fish Health Labs (diagnostic and research services for commercial salmon farms in Canada, Chile, and the U.S.)
- E&S Environmental Restoration (restoration contracting, hired Sweet Home Jobs-in-the-Woods trainees)
- North Pacific Naturals (produces skin care products) (located in Crawfordsville)
- Sweet Home Economic Development Group, Inc. (SHEDG) (Initial funding for The Oregon Jamboree)
- KOA Kampground (see above)

#### Fiber Optics Feasibility Analysis

In 1994, Linn County secured a \$30,000 grant from the Forest Service-Rural Community Assistance Program to assess the potential for a fiber optics network that would link various county, city, and educational support services. Applications for a county-wide fiber optics network included a new Geographic Information System (GIS) that would

be available to interested parties within the county; network-wide e-mail; library system networking; distance learning; internet access; bulletin board services; law enforcement; and video arraignment. Completed in October, 1995, the feasibility study recommended that Linn County and participating agencies continue operating services with presently owned private facilities, expand where affordable, and combine with leased services where appropriate (Simmons and Hayes 1995). Researchers were unable to determine if these recommendations were implemented.

#### Sweet Home Income Survey

In 1994, Linn County received an \$8,910 grant from the FS-RCA as part of a statewide Rural Community Income Surveys project sponsored by the Oregon Economic Development Department (OEDD). The income surveys identified communities that were eligible for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for public works projects and community facilities (provided by U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered through OEDD). Without the surveys, some communities would have had to wait until the 2000 Census to qualify for these grants. OEDD contracted Portland State University to conduct local surveys in seven cities: Brownsville, Canyonville, Cottage Grove, Drain, Glendale, Sweet Home, and Yoncalla. Of the seven surveyed communities, all but Brownsville had a high enough percentage of low to moderate-income persons to be eligible for CDBG funds. Results of the Sweet Home survey showed that the percentage of low to moderate-income persons increased from 49 percent in 1990 to 57 percent in 1994. The city of Sweet Home subsequently accessed \$267,000 through CDBG for its City Hall Expansion, and \$600,000 for its Community Center (i.e., Senior Center and Boys and Girls Club).

#### Linn Tourism Coalition Community Action Package

In the late 1980s, as a result of the declining timber industry, communities in Linn County, including Sweet Home, initiated a strategic planning process to promote economic stability. All of the community plans included the goal of developing a tourism industry as a means of diversifying their economies. In

1989, these communities formed the Linn County Tourism Coalition (LCTC) to begin to work together on tourism development efforts. The goal of LCTC was to promote year-round tourism in Linn County. In 1992, LCTC completed a Tourism/Recreation Plan, which identified significant tourism resources (e.g., outdoor recreation, special events, cultural and historic resources), as well as a strategy to market those resources. All Linn County cities officially adopted a resolution that recognized this program and the need to work cooperatively. Each community, through its Community Action Team (a.k.a. Community Response Team), then reviewed and prioritized potential projects based on the guidelines of the Tourism/Recreation Plan. The LCTC then reviewed the projects submitted from each community and submitted a package of selected projects to the Forest Service Rural Community Assistance Program for funding in 1995. A month later, FS-RCA approved a grant for \$149,250 for project implementation. The project was awarded to Linn County, with administrative assistance from CWCOG. Projects funded under this grant included the following:

- Bohemia Hall Covered Bridge Reconstruction (Albany)
- Brownsville Victorian-style Street Lighting (Brownsville)
- Halsey Memorial Park Rehabilitation (Halsey)
- Harrisburg Riverfront Park Improvements (Harrisburg)
- Lebanon Century Park (Lebanon)
- Linn County's Sunnyside Park and Campground
- Lyons City Park Rehabilitation (Lyons)
- Mill City Kimmel Park Playground (Mill City)
- Scio "New Face on Trash" Receptacles (Scio)
- Sweet Home Visitor Information Kiosks (Sweet Home)

The Sweet Home project created three visitor information kiosks located at the KOA Kampground,

Sunnyside Campground, and in front of the Sweet Home Chamber of Commerce. The junior English class at Sweet Home High School, in a school-to-business partnership, recruited local businesses to advertise in the kiosks. The students raised \$3,000 as a local match from advertising sales. In addition to construction of the kiosks, funding paid for development of a visitor's guide brochure highlighting community events; places of special interest; a map of the city; and a list of restaurants, lodging, shopping, services, and real estate offices. The total cost of the project was \$15,000 including the \$3,000 local match.

### **Jobs-in-the-Woods**

When the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative was launched in 1994, four federal agencies (U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs) began to redirect funds to a program called Jobs-in-the-Woods (JITW). The idea was to create a new restoration industry that could absorb some of the job losses resulting from timber industry layoffs. An Ecosystem Investment Team was formed as part of the OR-CERT to help develop employment opportunities for dislocated timber workers in watershed restoration (Taylor 1997). The Ecosystem Investment Team members included representatives from the federal land management agencies as well as staff from the Oregon Economic Development Department, the Ecosystem Workforce Project at the University of Oregon - Labor Education and Research Center (LERC), and Oregon State University Extension. Because of funding limitations, the focus was on developing high-quality jobs rather than trying to create a large quantity of jobs. The emphasis on quality meant creating jobs that paid a family-wage and provided year-round employment, which could be achieved by pooling multiple jobs (e.g., thinning, surveying, planting) into one contract. Workers would be required to have multiple skills, which would justify paying a higher wage. One interviewee observes, "It was a new model for how the feds did work on the ground. It began to force the Forest Service to adopt a socioeconomic ethic."

*Sweet Home Pilot Project*

One of the initial goals of the OR-CERT's Ecosystem Investment Team was to initiate a pilot program to demonstrate the Jobs-in-the-Woods concept. In 1994, staff from the Oregon Economic Development Department (OEDD) began to look for a location to carry out the pilot project. The Forest Supervisor for the Willamette National Forest, a CERT member, proposed the Sweet Home Ranger District. The Sweet Home District Ranger supported the idea, and a team was convened to establish the program. The goal of the program, called the Ecosystem Workforce Pilot Program or "Sweet Home Pilot," was to provide training and job opportunities for displaced timber workers in watershed restoration. A steering committee was convened which included staff from the Ecosystem Workforce Project at the University of Oregon - Labor Education and Research Center (LERC), Oregon State University Extension, OEDD, U.S. Forest Service, the Community Services Consortium (which administered the Job Training Partnership Act funds for Linn, Benton, Lincoln, and Lane Counties), Oregon Department of Forestry, Bureau of Land Management, and the local labor union. Funding for workers was provided in part by a \$25,000 grant from the FS-RCA, and \$25,000 in Old Growth Diversification Funds from OEDD. The Ecosystem Workforce Project (EWP), which the University of Oregon-Labor Education and Research Center was developing at the time through a three-year grant from the Northwest Area Foundation, took the lead in facilitating and administering the training program.

With only a few months to establish the program, the Steering Committee met every other week to initiate the pilot. The first task was to find an employer for the crew. The Forest Service was in the process of downsizing, and did not have the funds to hire new staff. It also faced legal restrictions on selective hiring of displaced workers. The Oregon Department of Forestry, which had had a long-term working relationship with the Forest Service in Sweet Home, agreed to be a temporary employer for the pilot. The Community Services Consortium screened dislocated workers, selected a pool of applicants, and

provided career development assistance. OSU Extension and LERC developed a curriculum and provided training. The Sweet Home Ranger District did not have enough work on its own land to support a 10-person crew full time, but secured additional work with other districts and the BLM. The LERC received \$5,000 from the Old Growth Diversification Fund to track and assess the Sweet Home Pilot. One observer noted, "It was an interesting partnership because it required that all agencies do businesses differently. Everyone had to let go of their notions of how to do programs."

Potential crewmembers were notified of the Sweet Home Pilot through newspaper articles, flyers, and community meetings as well as through the Community Services Consortium. Applications were accepted from throughout the region. Fifty people applied for the program, 30 were interviewed, and 10 were selected. The program consisted of four days per week of on-the-job training in the field, and one day per week of classroom instruction. Participants earned an average hourly wage of \$10.56 plus \$2.42 per hour in benefits during both the on-the-job training and classroom instruction. Work included removal of invasive, exotic vegetation; planting; vegetation and fish surveying; thinning; and fence construction. Coursework was divided into three components: Watershed Processes and Ecology, Safety and Technical Knowledge, and Business Development and Management.

In 1995, the pilot project was repeated in Sweet Home, and the EWP, OSU, and OEDD helped other communities, including Tillamook, Waldport, Deschutes, Oakridge, Roseburg, and Medford, create similar programs (Taylor 1997). For the second Sweet Home Pilot, twelve people (two women, and 10 men) ranging in age from 33 to 61 participated in the program (one later dropped out). One was a former logger, seven were former mill workers, three were forestry technicians, and one was from an occupation outside of the timber industry. The Forest Service, Soil and Water Conservation District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) funded the project, which cost \$261,800. The Forest Service and BLM bundled contracts to provide enough work for a full year.

In 1996, members of the Sweet Home Steering Committee began to raise the question of how to transition the program to the private sector. ODF had agreed to be a temporary employer for the pilot and was getting nervous about continuing beyond two years in this role. Forest Service staff also felt the pilot programs had successfully demonstrated that this type of training and work was possible. “We’d proven what we set out to do...Workers were capable of doing a fine job,” stated one agency staff person. They felt that the only way to create permanent employment, however, was through the private sector. One staff person notes:

I’ve always supported the training process, but I’m really supportive now of doing it the way we are doing it and getting out of the training business. Let 20 contractors train those people instead of getting 10 people and putting them in a room. You can get more site-specific that way...you can spread that training throughout the industry.

Since its inception in 1994, most of the JITW funds went to existing private contractors to do a variety of watershed restoration activities, ranging from traditional tree planting and thinning to revegetation, road decommissioning, culvert removal, and fish and wildlife surveying. Traditionally, Forest Service contracts for work such as thinning or tree planting were short-term and highly labor-intensive. Contractors would submit bids on jobs, and work would be awarded to the lowest bidder. As one interviewee explains, “one ugly reality that emerged was the way the federal agencies did contracting.... The contracting process was designed based on dollar efficiency and had evolved into a system of high paid contractor and low paid migrant workers.” The JITW efforts to create a high-skilled, high-paying contracting industry thus became contingent on the willingness and ability of contracting officers to create new multi-task contracts that stretched the work over a longer period of time, and combined labor-intensive work with technical work. The agency began to examine its criteria for awarding contracts, and began to shift attention to local employment

and “best value” (i.e., high quality work) over lowest bid.

This effort to institutionalize “best value” contracting resulted in the creation of the Willamette Province Workforce Partnership (WPWP). The Partnership included the Willamette National Forest, the Salem and Eugene Districts of the Bureau of Land Management, the EWP, and community and regional non-governmental partners. The partnership worked to create multi-disciplinary contracts as well as contracts for technical work that had previously been done in-house or was new to the agency (Moseley 2001). Projects also combined work from the BLM and Forest Service, and were awarded based on a contractor’s past performance and personnel. An interagency working committee, composed of resource managers and procurement officers, met monthly to coordinate projects, work to overcome administrative barriers, and pool funds. Between 1996 and 2000, the WPWP awarded 31 contracts to 14 different contractors, totaling approximately \$1,376,584 (Moseley 2001). Most of the contractors were from Eugene and Corvallis, with one or two coming from Sweet Home and Oakridge (Moseley 2001).

The first “Best Value” contract was awarded in 1996 to E&S Environmental, a Corvallis-based watershed restoration company. E&S hired four of the Sweet Home Pilot’s JITW trainees and offered help them transition into contracting. The idea was that after four years, the company would be turned over to the trainees, once the initial investment was repaid. During its first year in operation, E&S secured about six months of steady work. One of the jobs involved work on Phase I of the Ames Creek Project (see section on Ames Creek above). One of the workers commented, “It was nice to do something in the community—close to where you live.” Although steady, much of the work was spread over a large geographic area. Travel (sometimes up to two hours each way) was an added expense and took its toll on the workers. In 2000, the company won a bid for a large culvert project, but overextended itself and eventually closed. Two of the employees now work for Cascade Timber Consulting (managers of the Hill family land) in Sweet Home, one works at the Durafake Mill in Albany, and one moved out of the area.

### *Barriers to Jobs-in-the-Woods*

Those interviewed identified several barriers to the JITW program. These include the following:

#### **A. Matching the Work to the Workers**

One of the initial challenges of the Sweet Home Pilot was finding workers who would be interested in pursuing a job in watershed restoration. Many of those selected for the program had previously been mill workers and were not accustomed to the harsh working conditions of the woods. A few interviewees noted that most people who participated in the program were not interested in continuing afterwards due to the nature of the work. “It takes a special person to do that kind of work . . . you are either working in 90 degree heat or in the snow . . . and then there are the mosquitoes! Most people couldn’t handle it,” stated one participant.

Some that completed the program and experienced working as a private contractor realized that the demands of the job did not suit them. One interviewee explains:

A contractor has to have motivation, drive and hustle. [We] did a lot of bidding, wrote contracts, found out about jobs, did time-estimates. We spent a lot of time on that. We would work 10-hour days, and have to come home and spend two to three hours after work making phone calls. Spent a lot of time with no reimbursement. If I were a contractor, I would have to spend four hours a day hustling and talking to people about jobs. I didn’t want to do that.

#### **B. Lack of Work**

Although contracting officers working on the Sweet Home Pilot made a great effort to develop contracts that would provide diverse and longer-term work, many felt that work was still scarce. Graduates of the JITW program had high expectations about contracting opportunities. Once in business, however, they were disappointed by the lack of work. One graduate of the program, who originally worked for E&S, left to start his own contracting business. He secured a few government contracts for restora-

tion work, but after a year closed his business. At one point he bid a job against E&S but didn’t get the work, although his bid was \$6,000 lower. “What was the intent of the training and hiring if we can’t get contracts?” he commented. “We were certified Jobs-in-the-Woods trainees and they didn’t give us the contract.”

#### **C. Competition from a Pre-existing Workforce**

Competition from a pre-existing workforce presented one of the biggest barriers faced by the JITW trainees. This workforce conventionally provided labor-intensive services such as pre-commercial thinning, tree planting, trail building, and some timber and vegetation inventorying. Timber receipts traditionally funded these types of contracts, and with the drop in timber harvests, funding and contracting jobs decreased. The JITW trainees thus had to compete with established contractors also struggling to find work in a downsizing industry.

In addition, these contractors often employed a young, strong labor force that could endure the harsh conditions the work demanded. Standard contract workers were also often paid less than the JITW crews, which enabled the contractor to submit lower bids. The JITW trainees who went on to work in contracting ranged in age between the late 30s through 60s, and had a difficult time competing against younger and less well-paid crews on labor-intensive jobs. One interviewee explains:

It was difficult to compete with other companies that weren’t ecosystem workforce crews. Our company was solely displaced workers—people in their late 30s and 40s . . . Most of the contracting opportunities, however, were more physical work—little brainpower. The competition was companies that relied on people in their 20s and on foreign labor. Wages were low. There was no way for us to compete. When a project came along that required more savvy and know-how, then we could be competitive. But there weren’t that many contracts like that available.

One person felt that the program could have been more successful had the agencies restricted the contracts to JITW crews: “They [FS, BLM] were working on a low-bid mentality. Even if they gave us preference with a five percent differential, the costs for us were really 30 to 40 percent higher. Unless the work was highly technical . . . you couldn’t make it fly.”

#### **D. Downsizing within the Forest Service**

Downsizing within the Forest Service is another factor that may have contributed to the limited success of JITW. Beginning in the early 1990s, the Forest Service began to undergo a series of major staff layoffs, closing offices, and consolidating districts. For example, the Sweet Home Ranger District had about 110 full-time employees and 50 to 60 temporary staff in 1989, but by the end of the 1990s was down to 34 full-time employees. The agency was thus in the midst of its own budget crisis, while being asked to create new jobs for contractors. The proposed family-wage jobs were often higher than what long-term agency employees earned. Agency employees had once done much of the technical work (i.e., monitoring and surveying) that was now being contracted out through JITW. One staff member commented, “It looked like what we were doing was privatizing out the work that had been done by the Forest Service in the past. What we should’ve realized was that people working for the Forest Service and going through the downsizing saw what we were doing as a threat to their jobs.”

#### **E. Agency Entrenchment**

Interviewees identified agency entrenchment and the difficulty of adjusting to a new way of doing business as another barrier. Some attribute this entrenchment to a fear of change and the consequences of implementing such a change. “People were worried about the backlash from implementing new rules for contracting. It was the fear thing. The contracting officers were not interested in doing things differently. There were some exceptions, but even those guys were cautious,” states one interviewee.

Much of the fear can be attributed to the dramatic changes being asked of contracting officers. One sensitive point was shifting from a low-bid men-

tality to ‘high quality’ as the criterion for awarding projects. Lowest-bid contracting had been the standard policy. Rather than focusing on how much the contractor would charge, agency staff were asked to change their emphasis to who would do the work, the worker’s skills, abilities, wages, and past contract performance. Another significant change was creating mid-level technical jobs within a contract. In the past, the Forest Service divided contract work into labor and professional services. JITW proposed the creation of technical service jobs, such as wildlife surveyor.

Trying to keep the work “local” was also problematic because the definition of “local” was fairly subjective. For example, one interviewee stated that “the concept of local is different depending on where you are . . . A Willamette Valley contractor will travel a long way. So the sense of local changes . . . You can’t restrict [work] to only contractors in Sweet Home. ‘Local’ could be the whole mid-to-southern Willamette Valley commuting-shed.” Agency staff have noticed, however, that lengthening the duration of a contract encouraged more locals to take on work because non-local contractors “didn’t want to motel a crew for a year.”

These new criteria for contracting demanded that a contracting officer be innovative, as well as careful about how a contract was put together. Interviewees discussed ethical issues around tailoring contracts for a particular contractor. One interviewee stated, “You have to be real careful how you put [contracts] together. You really have to know who your contracting community is . . . so that everybody has a chance to play the game. There’s a whole ethical part of contracting.”

The Willamette Province Workforce Partnership represents the only institutionalized and sustained effort to redefine restoration contracting based on the initial JITW vision that continues today.

#### *Job Training Partnership Act*

In place since 1983, the Job Training Partnership Act provided job-training services to economically disadvantaged adults and youth, dislocated workers, and others who faced significant employment barriers. As part of the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative’s effort to assist displaced timber workers

and their families, the U.S. Department of Labor provided additional Title III Secretary's Reserve funds (referred to as "Timber Grants") to regional and local JTPA service providers. The "Timber Grants" provided additional services to displaced timber workers, such as longer-term training packages, on-going case management, and support services, such as childcare.

### The Community Services Consortium

The Community Services Consortium (CSC), a public, nonprofit community action agency, administered the JTPA program in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. Between 1994 and 1999, the three-county region received approximately \$3,127,606 in "Timber Grants." As part of its job training and development program, the CSC offers assistance with job searches, placement, and retention; assessment of current skills; occupational skills training; retraining and relocation for laid-off and dislocated workers; case management; career progression services; customized training; and work experience. At the time of Initiative funding, eligible recipients included workers affected by permanent plant closures, anyone dislocated from the timber industry (including secondary manufacturing), people over 40 and unemployed for over 15 weeks, and people who had been injured or whose occupation had undergone a technological change (e.g., mechanization) that had left them displaced. In addition, midway through the Initiative, eligibility was expanded to include tertiary workers. Under the CSC, these were defined as anyone living in eastern Linn County who was dislocated from any job.

People generally found out about the CSC's programs by word of mouth. Services were also advertised in classified advertisements, at theaters, at taverns, at churches, on television, on radio, at business expositions, and through Rapid Response team members directly meeting with employees at work sites. CSC staff felt that the Rapid Response program effectively informed workers of their benefits

and available services. Reaching those not associated with a large plant closure, however, was more difficult. Despite people's awareness of the program, staff found that the greatest barrier to accessing their services was "denial" on the part of the workers. Some workers were also wary of the program, feeling it was akin to receiving welfare.

With Initiative dollars (i.e., "Timber Grants"), the CSC opened a learning center for dislocated timber workers. The Center staff provides computer training, conducts basic skills testing, and also works with people to complete their GED. Many of the retraining programs required that students have a high school diploma. Those at the CSC stated that completing the GED requirement presented a major barrier for many workers. One staff person cited the following example: "One guy in his 50s who had worked for Willamette Industries got his GED. He had always been afraid to go back and complete it. He had turned down a management position with Willamette Industries because of it. Spent all of his life hiding from the GED. Then he got it easily." Completing one's GED was, according to CSC staff, "a real confidence-raiser." Initiative dollars also allowed the CSC to hire additional staff and increase recruitment efforts for the program. In addition to NEAI-related "Timber Grants," many displaced timber workers were also eligible for benefits through NAFTA-TAA,<sup>6</sup> which allowed for extensions on unemployment benefits. These extensions allowed people to go to school and obtain two-year degrees. The NAFTA program also paid for school tuition and fees.

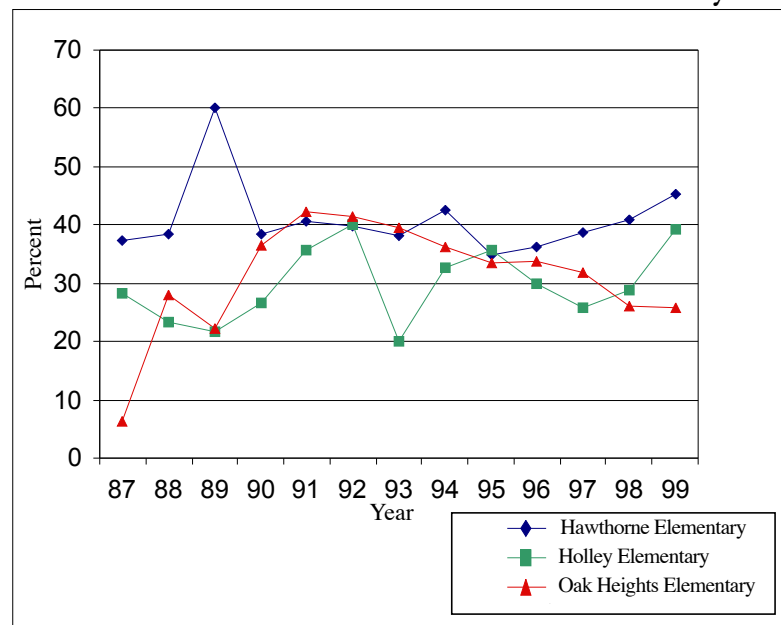
Although most of the CSC's programs focused on retraining those displaced in the timber industry into professions outside of natural resources, the CSC Lebanon office did collaborate on the Sweet Home Jobs-in-the-Woods Pilot projects in 1994 and 1995. In addition to notifying and interviewing potential applicants for the Pilot, the CSC provided trainees with tools, equipment, and covered the costs of gas to and from work. Staff at the CSC, however,

6. The North American Free Trade Agreement -Transitional Adjustment Assistance (NAFTA-TAA) program offers reemployment assistance to dislocated workers whose companies have been directly or indirectly impacted as a result of trade with Canada and/or Mexico. Eligible workers may receive up to 104 weeks of approved training in occupational skills, basic and/or remedial education, and/or training in literacy and/or English as a Second Language (ESL). Workers are also eligible for re-employment services such as career counseling, job placement assistance services, supportive services, skills assessment, job development, and referrals. Workers are eligible to receive income support of weekly payments up to 52 weeks after the worker's Unemployment Compensation benefit is exhausted and during the period in which the worker is participating in an approved full-time training program

had mixed feelings about the JITW pilot program. Some felt that restoration was a good concept and that many of the workers already had the skills needed to do the kind of work that was required. There was the expectation that the Forest Service and other agencies would be able to bundle jobs to create a viable industry. Other staff members, however, were wary of the program because of the uncertainty of job opportunities following the training. “The program was very expensive. We couldn’t figure out how

people were going to make a living when all was said and done . . . You need to match the training with a job you intend to do in the end . . . We need to train people in jobs with long-term potential,” one CSC staff person comments. One person noted that the Pilot “woke up some folks to know that they needed to find another occupation.” Following the training, the CSC connected trainees to its Job Club, helped trainees develop their resumes, and helped them find work.

**Figure 1. Percent of elementary school students eligible for free lunch in Sweet Home between the 1987-88 and 1999-2000 school years.**



**Figure 2: Total elementary school enrollment in Sweet Home between the 1987-88 and 1999-2000 school years.**

1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
769	794	850	785	812	863	809	770	783	826	780	748	725

### Current Socioeconomic Conditions and Effects of NEAI on Community Well-Being

#### Community Capacity

Community capacity is the collective ability of residents in a community to respond to external and internal stresses, to create and take advantage of opportunities, and to meet local needs (Kusel 1996). For this study, we identify five dimensions

of community capacity: (1) physical capital, which includes a community physical infrastructure (e.g., sewer systems, business parks, capital assets such as equipment, housing stock, and schools); (2) financial capital, which includes money, credit, and other financial resources available for local use; (3)

human capital, which includes the skills, education, experiences, and general abilities and capabilities of residents; (4) cultural capital, which includes the myths, beliefs, norms, and lifeways that serve to organize groups and facilitate survival; and (5) social capital, which includes the willingness of residents to work together toward community goals (and not just self-interested goals). In evaluating the effects of NEAI projects on community capacity, we break our analysis down into these various dimensions. In addition to understanding NEAI effects on community capacity, we also look at its effects on natural capital (i.e., the biophysical environment), particularly how Initiative-generated policies and programs have affected the relationship between natural capital and community well-being.

#### *Physical Capital*

Projects funded under the NEAI had a number of effects with regards to building physical capital in Sweet Home. The Flexible Manufacturing Building provided a space for small, manufacturing companies to start-up and expand. The building enabled Cirtek, an electronics company, to maintain and expand its business, creating jobs for Sweet Home residents. Regulations within USDA Rural Development, however, prevented the conversion of the building to Cirtek, and led to the loss of the business from the community. Thus, although the investment in physical capital (i.e., construction of the building) provided the potential to support businesses and create jobs, the mediating environment surrounding the use of, control over, and access to the facility precluded the utilization of the building to its full potential, at least in the case of Cirtek.

Other investments in physical capital include the City Hall Expansion (ADA access/elevator); new bleachers for the Calapooia Rodeo; construction of the KOA Kampground; and the Downtown Master Plan project (in which funds were used for downtown beautification—painting storefronts and planting trees). These projects (apart from the KOA), however, did not result in any direct job creation, though they may have helped improve residents' attitudes about their community.

#### *Financial Capital*

With regards to financial capital, Initiative funds provided working capital for various loan programs to support new and expanding businesses. USDA-Rural Development gave key support through its Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) to CWCOG, which was able to expand its lending program. In Sweet Home, seven businesses received loans through the IRP from CWCOG. Rural Development also contributed significant dollars to Linn County's Business Incentive Fund, which provided loans to 10 businesses in Sweet Home. The Small Business Administration (SBA) also provided funds to CWCOG, which enabled eight Sweet Home businesses to receive loans.

#### *Human Capital*

Several Initiative-funded projects helped to advance the skills, education, experiences and general abilities and capabilities of community members. RDI's Leadership Academy and the subsequent Strategic Plan/Leadership Fair helped to identify, train, and encourage emerging community leaders.

The Ames Creek Project also offered a number of training and educational opportunities, particularly for youth. Several school groups, including two elementary schools, as well as the junior high and high schools worked on field projects along the creek. An after school program for at-risk youth also conducted fieldwork on the creek. Students learned about watershed processes, stream ecology, and restoration. They had hands-on experience conducting stream surveys and vegetation and wildlife monitoring. The high school provided free scuba diving lessons in its swimming pool so that the students could conduct snorkel counts of fish. One interviewee states, "A lot of these kids are third and fourth generation logging kids. They always thought they'd be setting chokers . . . Now they find out they could get paid to build a rock dam in the middle of the river. 'This is cool.' Get them thinking that there are other applications, other jobs out there in the woods."

The worker retraining and Jobs-in-the-Woods programs are additional examples providing new skills, education, and experience for displaced timber workers. Despite the lack of long-term contracting opportunities for JITW trainees, those that were inter-

viewed about the program felt they had benefited from the experience. Support services through the Community Services Consortium provided the opportunity for many people to complete their GED and continue on with their education and training.

Additional NEAI monies used to build human capital include the technical assistance provided by CWCOG. EDA-funded grants for technical assistance, capacity-building, and planning allowed the COG to hire staff to work directly with communities. In Sweet Home, the CWCOG staff person provided critical assistance with grant writing, project development, and grant management. In addition to helping to fund projects, the assistance enabled Sweet Home city staff members to eventually gain the knowledge and experience to take over these tasks themselves.

### *Cultural Capital*

Cultural capital includes the myths, beliefs, norms, and lifeways that serve to organize groups and facilitate survival. NEAI projects contributed to changes in the attitude, community organization, spirit, and pride. The Ames Creek Project is a prime example of a shift in attitude and values about restoration, nature, and the relationship between people and the environment. The community's relationship with the creek—as a drainage ditch/log pond/garbage dump—was transformed through the project, with new values placed on aesthetics, fish and wildlife habitat, and flood control. “A very interesting project in that this community has long been known as . . . being a timber community. The typical stereotype . . . of a timber community is that they don't give a rip about their environment—just cut down the trees and make money. The Ames Creek revitalization and beautification project has a significant amount of broad-based support in the community now, so we are seeing a transition.” stated one person. Another stated, “The people said we couldn't do an ecosystem project in Sweet Home . . . . Eventually we overcame all of that . . . . Can't think of anybody not supporting the project.”

Other projects, such as the Wilderness Village Project, the Downtown Master Plan, and the Information Kiosks reflect a new attitude in the community around tourism, and efforts to create a new identity. The Calapooia Events Facility project helped to pro-

mote and maintain the existing cultural identity of the community. Local events such as the Rodeo help to maintain community spirit and pride, allow for celebration, and bring community members together.

### *Social Capital*

Social capital can be defined as the willingness of residents to work toward community goals. Much of the success of the Ames Creek Project was the ability to bring together different groups of people to work for a common cause. Key partnerships were created among the Sweet Home Tree Commission, Kiwanas, South Santiam Watershed Council, Fish and Wildlife Department, local schools, local businesses, residents, and the Forest Service. The Tree commission also worked with a number of high school and middle school classes, such as the forestry and ecology class. One participant estimated that as of May, 2001, about 1,000 volunteer hours had been put into the project. At the time of the interviews, 30 volunteers had just spent half a day removing English Ivy from the stream banks. Local equipment operators donated their time with a backhoe or dump truck or donated rock. One Forest Service engineer living in the community donated his time to help with the engineering plans.

Other projects that promoted social capital in the community include the facilitation assistance provided by CWCOG in prioritizing CERT projects. The CWCOG staff person who worked with the community often led and facilitated community meetings to discuss projects and help determine community priorities. She effectively brought together different groups in the community to promote understanding, discussion, and collaboration.

The Strategic Plan/Leadership Fair also focused on bringing various groups and individuals together to promote collaboration and cooperation toward community development goals. The training participants received at the Leadership Fair in working with diverse groups, team building, communication skills, and volunteer recruitment were deliberate efforts to not only raise the capacity of individuals within the community but to promote interaction and build social capital. The Strategic Planning again brought diverse individuals together to work for the betterment of the community. Despite a declining turnout over

time, participants felt that the process resulted in tangible goals and established a more consistent program of community planning.

Although the idea for a Downtown Master Plan was originally turned down by the majority of the businesses owners, some interviewees have noted that more recently, many downtown businesses are starting to see the need for a marketing plan. One resident explained that back in 1995 the business community had a very different attitude than they do today. “They weren’t working together . . . They were in a survival mode coming out of our depressed economy . . . They wouldn’t talk to each other. Wouldn’t share information. Didn’t want anyone to know about their businesses,” she states. Downtown businesses are now beginning to collaborate. One interviewee attributed the change in attitude today to the recognition that “the timber industry is not going to come back in the way that it was. They have to look at being diversified and they don’t know how to do that on their own.”

### *Natural Capital*

Both the Ames Creek Project and the JITW program had an important effect on the natural environment. Direct outcomes of these projects include habitat improvements for fish and wildlife, fire and flood risk reductions, erosion control, and even improvements in the aesthetic value of the landscape. The JITW Program was an effort to redefine the relationship between natural resource based jobs and

the environment—expanding the definition of woods work to include other kinds of land management practices apart from logging. The Ames Creek Project worked in a similar vein to redefine the relationship of a town to its river—allowing residents to see the creek as an asset, an educational tool, a protector during floods, a place to find fish and wildlife, a place to recreate, and a place to appreciate beauty. The JITW trainees who had moved into contracting also did some work on the upper reaches of the Creek, thus creating a direct connection to jobs. In addition, the Forest Service has recently discussed the possibility of using the pond project (Phase III of the Ames Creek Project) to train restoration workers on contracting procedures.

### **Effects of NEAI on Workers**

Although most of the projects funded through the CERT process focused on community and economic development efforts, the JITW program and the JTPA funds specifically targeted displaced timber workers. The JITW program provided short-term employment and training in restoration for displaced timber workers. One participant commented, “I got involved in Jobs-in-the-Woods because it guaranteed me an income for one year. . . . It was a good opportunity to have a stress-free life for a year . . . . Didn’t have to worry about getting laid-off.” The program thus offered short-term jobs security and benefits. Though the work was guaranteed, those interviewed felt that the program was “not a handout.” “We learned some-



Beautification efforts included the painting of murals in the downtown area.

thing. It was an opportunity to train a person to do this kind of work,” states one trainee. Although a few of the trainees went on to work as contractors, ultimately the competition from existing contractors and the lack of work precluded any long-term job security.

In contrast, the JTPA funding focused on retraining displaced timber workers in jobs that had more long-term work potential. One challenge, however, was recruiting people to the retraining programs. Mill workers and others associated with a mill had greater access to information about retraining opportunities and available services through the Rapid Response program compared to independent workers. Other factors, such as denial (e.g., believing the mill will reopen), pride (e.g., not wanting to receive a “handout”), and fear (e.g., never completing high school) may have also prevented workers from accessing all of the ser-

vices available to them. Although some workers also qualified for NAFTA funds and could extend their unemployment benefits for two years, others lacked that option and could thus not afford to go through extensive (i.e., two-year) training programs.

Other projects/programs that had an effect on workers include the Flexible Manufacturing Building, which allowed a manufacturing business to expand, for a short period, and hire additional workers. The Business Incentive Funds offered through the Linn County Business Development Center provided a loan to E&S Environmental, the company that hired the JITW trainees. Although all of these programs were intended to assist displaced timber workers to some degree, the number of workers actually served relative to the total investment of funds appears quite small.

## Patterns and Themes of Successful Interventions

This section describes some factors leading to the success and/or failure of NEAI-funded projects in Sweet Home. By identifying, discussing, and understanding these factors, we hope to provide some guidelines or “lessons learned” for future economic and community development endeavors.

### Obstacles/Barriers to Success

The following identifies some of the factors that may have hampered the success of projects or prevented projects from achieving their full potential.

#### *Administrative Change*

A high turnover in city managers may have prevented some projects from achieving their full potential, specifically, those that were funded between 1995 and 1997. When the NEAI was first launched in 1994, the city manager, together with assistance from CWCOG, applied for a number of grants through the CERT. When he left his position in 1995 and was replaced by several short-term and interim city managers, however, many of the projects that had been “in the pipeline” were suddenly left unmanaged or hanging. According to one source, “Lots of projects were dropped because there was

not enough staff resources and institutional knowledge to keep them going.” Although other city staff members picked up some of the projects, the initial momentum that the first city manager created was lost. Also, the additional workload created by taking on the tasks of project implementation and grant management severely taxed the energy of those staff members. According to one interviewee, the city went through four city managers (some were interim positions) between 1995 and 1997. In 1997, the current city manager was hired, which finally established stability within city government.

#### *Loss of Leadership Capacity*

Declining leadership capacity in the community created another barrier to project implementation and development. As mentioned above, the early 1990s was a period of high transition, and many of the people who had played important leadership positions in the community had either left, been relocated, or were already overwhelmed with other tasks. Many of these individuals also had connections to granting or other funding sources. “There used to be a core group of folks . . . who lived here in the community and knew how to squeeze some money out

of the feds and help put it back into the community. They had a commitment to do that,” an interviewee observed. One person commented that the downsizing in the Forest Service resulted in a large loss of leadership:

The consolidation of three Forest Service Ranger Districts in 1993 in the southern end of the Willamette National Forest took up a lot of folks’ energy. Specialists who were trained in going after grants were so involved in the downsizing and pushing together office space—survival in their own jobs—they didn’t have the opportunity to look beyond their own survival to help the community out.

As a result of this loss in leadership, the few leaders that remained ended up “doing everything.” This resulted in people over-extending themselves and often to leadership burnout. Support offered through CWCOG with grant writing, project development, and grant and project management provided a mitigating factor that allowed projects to continue and succeed. The Leadership Academy also helped to address and respond to the vacuum created by the loss of community leaders.

### **Factors Contributing to Success**

Despite the barriers to project success identified above, there were many project successes. The following describe some of the factors that led to the success of projects in the community.

#### *Building Trust*

Many of those interviewed talked about the importance of building trust among stakeholders, different groups, and the community in general as a means of promoting support and buy-in on projects. For example, one of the primary factors contributing to the success of the Ames Creek project, according to those interviewed, was overcoming peoples’ fears. “A lot of folks associated watershed restoration with big government coming in and telling them what to do . . . They were saying, ‘Will this bring endangered species into my backyard?’ It

was scary stuff,” observed one participant. Some attribute changes in people’s attitude and removal of fears to holding public meetings, mailing information, and getting input from residents about what they wanted to see. Another key ingredient was involving youth in the project early on. “Buy-off in the community has been so successful because we got to the kids first. Kids talked to their parents. People in the community saw kids and teachers walking around in hip boots and would ask what they were doing. Turned out to be a real positive thing cause they always see the kids there,” one participant stated.

Another effort to build trust and support for projects was the community meetings to prioritize projects submitted to the CERT. The CWCOG staff person working in the community was very helpful in this effort because she had worked in the community in the past and was well trusted by many community members. One resident commented:

In a community that has a ‘we can take care of ourselves’ attitude it’s hard to bring somebody in from outside (you know the joke being that if they have to travel 20 minute then there’s an expert) . . . I think it was important because it brought in resources that we maybe didn’t have available. I think it was beneficial because given the circumstances in the community there was enough trust with the groups that we were working with to come to meetings and talk with these people, and truly believe that they weren’t going to come in and tell them what to do because that’s what they did in Portland or Salem. But they would truly come in and say, ‘What do you guys want to do?’ and ‘I’m (or we) are here to help you figure out how to get there.’

#### *Stakeholder Involvement*

Related to trust building is stakeholder involvement. Throughout the various stages of the Ames Creek Project, efforts were constantly being made to involve those that would be affected. Project or-

ganizers held community meetings, and volunteers went door-to-door to talk to people individually. For the pond project (Phase III), organizers were careful to include all relevant parties in discussions about the design of the site. One person described the process as, “Let’s get all of the stakeholders here. Let’s get all of these issues out, cause we’ll make a better decision that will be more long-term and longer lasting. And it will be a sustainable decision.”

Similarly, for the CERT prioritization, as with trust building, stakeholder involvement in the process promoted community buy-in and project support. Although some felt that the prioritization ultimately did not matter in terms of funding, community involvement in the process was important in familiarizing people with projects early on. One city staff member observed:

We can sit here in city hall and make decisions, but if the community won’t buy into it, all they are are our decisions. [The] level of implementation and action and results you get are going to be pretty small. It needs to be a collaborative effort. You’ve got to engage the public and engage them early, so that they’ve got buy-in from the get go. So that they’re not threatened by it . . . And you’ve got to be able to go slow in the beginning and go fast in the end. And going slow means taking the time to deal with people, hear their concerns, address their concerns, make sure that everybody that had an interest has a voice and is willing to and does have their voice be heard. And generate the momentum slowly. Because then the momentum that is generated—the synergy is much stronger than if you do it quickly . . .

Stakeholders could also help improve upon a project idea by sharing their own experiential or personal knowledge. This was the case for JITW projects, where participants had the opportunity, based on their observations and past experience, to recommend modifications to an existing plan (that is, in effect, do ‘adaptive management’).

### *Partnerships*

Partnerships among various groups and individuals also contributed to project success. Many of those interviewed for the JITW Sweet Home Pilot attributed the success of the program to the partnerships that were created among various agencies. For example, when the Forest Service was unable to directly hire a crew, Oregon Department of Forestry offered to be the employer. Similarly, when the Forest Service could not put together enough contracts to support a crew for one year, the BLM came fourth with additional contracts. One participant recalls, “at each meeting we’d go until we’d hit a brick wall . . . Every meeting we’d run into a brick wall . . . but the steering group would fill the void . . . someone would step forward . . . it was amazing.” One person attributed the ease with which partnerships were created to pre-existing relationships that had been established and maintained long before NEAI.

The Ames Creek Project is also an example of collaborative partnering. By forming a partnership among the Forest Service, the Sweet Home Tree Commission, the South Santiam Watershed Council, the Kiwanas, the City, and the schools, the project leveraged much more funding and support than it could have if each entity worked independently. The partnership between the Forest Service, the city, and other entities was also critical in getting the National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) to sign off on its consultation requirement. NMFS requires that any project that can potentially impact species listed under the Endangered Species Act must go through consultation with the agency. Because the Forest Service has a programmatic agreement with NMFS, the project was able to bypass the normal consultation requirements. “That would’ve been a major barrier. If the city were on its own, it couldn’t do it because consultation is gridlock . . . because of all of the lawsuits,” states one participant.

### *“Common Denominator”*

One positive outcome of having a small leadership base and only a few people “doing everything” is that the same people are often involved in multiple groups and committees, facilitating the flow of information and communication. By having what

one interviewee called, a “common denominator”, that is, the same individual on multiple committees and boards, it helped promote collaboration and partnerships on projects. On the Ames Creek Project, for example, the Forest Service employee on the project was also a member of the Watershed Council as well as the Tree Commission. This individual had also been working with a Sweet Home Junior High School science teacher on a hands-on, field class in which students learned about fisheries biology by monitoring stream water quality and conducting fish counts. By being involved in all of these groups, he was able to inform each group about each other’s activities, and bring the groups together to form a partnership.

Other Forest Service employees also took on multiple roles in the community. For example, the former District Ranger involved in setting up the JITW Pilot program, was also a member and president, at one point, of the Sweet Home Economic Development Group (SHEDG). These individuals acted as common threads that connected multiple activities and projects.

#### *Pre-Existing Social Capital*

High levels of pre-existing social capital played an important role in project success. Events such as the Oregon Jamboree, which had up to 500 volunteers, helped maintain and nurture a spirit of volunteerism. Many of the volunteers at the Jambo-

ree took on jobs requiring significant organizational and management responsibilities. Some volunteers, after working at the Jamboree, began to participate in other community activities and organizations, e.g. Sweet Home Economic Development Group. The Jamboree thus played a significant role in developing both human and social capital. One source commented, “The Oregon Jamboree experience, bringing together hundreds of community members in a successful activity, was a significant factor in helping to build the ‘can do’ attitude in the community that spilled over to other projects.”

Other examples of the high level of social capital in Sweet Home include the construction of the Boys and Girls Club/Senior Center, which also had an outpouring of volunteers who offered their time, money, equipment, and supplies. The Sweet Home Community Foundation, an offshoot of SHEDG, is in the process of developing an endowment fund with the goal of giving \$100,000 annually for community development projects. Other civic organizations, such as the Rotary Club and the Kiwanas, also contribute to community development endeavors. One interviewee commented, “the volunteer spirit is almost always here as long as there is a project that is good.” The high volunteer turnout for the Ames Creek Project can be attributed to the nature of the work, the involvement of the schools, and the culture of volunteerism that existed in the community.

## **Conclusion**

Although hit heavily by the downturn in the timber industry of the 1980s and 1990s, the community of Sweet Home has managed to recover, maintain its community spirit and pride, and move forward in its efforts toward economic diversification. Sweet Home received a substantial amount of funding for projects through the NEAI that focused on a variety of approaches to economic and community development. Projects ranged from infrastructure development to financial and business assistance, leadership training, tourism marketing, downtown revitalization, feasibility analysis, and watershed restoration. Sweet Home

was also the experimental grounds for developing a value-based restoration industry and broke new ground in efforts to change the relationship federal land management agencies have with forest workers and communities. Staff turnover and the loss of community leaders proved to be key barriers to the success of some projects. On the other hand, the community eventually overcame these barriers. The success of many of the projects can be attributed to efforts to communicate with and include stakeholders in decision making processes, build trust, create partnerships, and facilitate dialog among groups.

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### Interviewees

Rolf Anderson	Former District Ranger, Sweet Home Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service
Larry Blem	President, Cascade Timber Consulting, Inc.; President of SH Chamber of Commerce
Jane Brass-Barth	Rural Development Initiatives
Todd Bucholtz	U.S. Forest Service Wildlife Biologist, Sweet Home Ranger District
Mandy Cole	Oregon Tourism Commission; Former U.S. Forest Service Rural Community Assistance Coordinator, Sweet Home Ranger District
Duane Davis	JTPA Trainee
Dave Furtwangler	Director of Sale Planning and Inventory, Cascade Timber Consulting, Inc.; Chair of Sweet Home Tree Commission
Tanarae Greenman	Regional Manager, Community Service Consortium
Roger Hudson	Jobs-in-the-Woods Trainee
Jan Horner	Sundberg, Rauch, Benneth & Horner CPA Partner, Former Member of SHEDG
Tom Johnson	Retired Teacher, Sweet Home Junior High School
Dick Knowles	Member of the Wilderness Village Association
Bill Lafferty	Oregon Department of Forestry, Formerly with the Linn District (in Sweet Home)
Brad Leavitt	Project Coordinator, Willamette Province Workforce Partnership, Willamette National Forest, U.S. Forest Service
Carol Lewis	City Planner, City of Sweet Home
Mary Mansfield	Owner, Sweet Home RV Center; Member of SHEDG
Craig Martin	City Manager, City of Sweet Home
Don Maynard	Jobs-in-the-Woods Trainee
Mary Merriman-Smith	Executive Director, Cascades West Financial Service, Inc.
Keith Miller	Coordinator, Linn County Business Development Center
Cliff Oden	Member of Wilderness Village Association
Christina Pace	Sweet Home Resident
Steve Pace	Jobs-in-the-Woods Trainee
Vicki Robbins	Employment Specialist, Community Service Consortium
Jeri Reynolds	Owner of KOA Kampground
Pam Silbernagel	Former Community Development Planner, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments
Cynthia Solie	Director of Community and Economic Development, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments
Tim Sullivan	E&S Environmental
Bob Warren	Regional Development Officer Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties, OECD
Joanne West	Sweet Home Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service

### Focus Group Participants

Bud Liberatore	Sweet Home Resident
Corky Lowen	Sweet Home Resident and Business Owner
Jean McKinney	Director, Sweet Home Senior Center; SHEDG Member
Joyce Ohnesorge	Sweet Home Resident
Max Thompson	Former Sweet Home City Manager; SHEDG Member
Henry Wolthuis	Sweet Home Dentist and Resident Assistance/Support
Rosella Burns	Sweet Home Genealogical Society
Richard Lillich	Sweet Home Genealogical Society
Craig Smith	Rural Development Initiatives