

ATRIO Health Plans donates \$10,000 to COVID-19 relief efforts

ATRIO Health Plans made a donation of \$10,000 to the Josephine County Foundation (JCF) COVID-19 relief efforts in June. The JCF will direct these funds to support their weekly food-and-essentials program established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

JCF, with a home office based at Hidden Valley High School (HVHS), in Murphy, is a student-led nonprofit organization known for serving the needs of the local community. Among other projects, JCF student volunteers involved in the food-and-essentials program help those with food insecurities and other immediate needs. People who receive these services throughout the county include homeless youth, families, and seniors.

"The Foundation's services are even more important now during the pandemic," said Chris Pendleton, JCF executive director. "We know many families are struggling with joblessness and food insecurity, and unfortunately the pandemic has caused a large increase in those seeking assistance."

Misti King, JCF program manager, added, "We're excited to see our community come together around this important food program initiative. We're not only helping those with critical food needs; we're teaching students about the value and benefit of community involvement while concurrently helping to support local businesses and farms. The Josephine County Foundation loves to grow the community and provide assistance in any way we can."

ATRIO Health Plans is a Medicare Advantage plan established by Oregon physicians in 2004 and has since grown to serve more than 19,000 members in Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Marion, and Polk counties.

JCF was formed in 2011. High school students use their energy and creativity to improve the social and economic wellbeing of the community so every individual has the opportunity to be healthy, educated, and prosperous. Learn more at (541) 244-8276 or online at jcfserve.org.



Posing for a photo marking a donation by the Josephine County Foundation (JCF) to support COVID-19 relief efforts are, from left, Chris Pendleton (JCF executive Director); Misti King (JCF program manager); Paul Moretti (ATRIO sales manager); Madeleine Powell, front (JCF); Dennis Decasas, back (Hidden Valley High School teacher); Tim Haley (JCF); Ashley Griffith, front (HVHS staff); Kathryn Rich (JCF); and Keith Haley (HVHS teacher).

Discover Stories on the Land

This is another in an ongoing series of excerpts from the unpublished 1996 book, Stories on the Land: An Environmental History of the Applegate and Upper Illinois Valley, by George McKinley and Doug Frank. This passage is from pages 67-68.

The railroad comes to southern Oregon

It was the railroad that finally banished the sense of isolation shared among the region's newcomers.

The "railroad boom" in southern Oregon began early in the 1860s, when Captain John Mullan, traveling through Oregon, bemoaned the lack of connection between the Willamette and Sacramento Valleys and encouraged residents of the Willamette to begin pushing the line south.

He was far from alone, of course, in his recognition of the benefits of rail service to the isolated communities of Oregon. The Oregon Democratic Party Platform of 1868 proposed "a judicious system of railroad improvements in Oregon, to develop our vast resources," and urged the United States Congress to make "liberal grants of aid." This represented the most significant appeal for federal assistance in regional matters since the end of the Indian Wars. (The platform was probably for continuing funding, since Congress had already approved funds for the construction of an Oregon Railroad as early as 1866.)

Simon Elliott, a surveyor, began surveying a route north from Sacramento in 1863. In 1867, two companies were building competing routes south from Portland. By 1873, the tracks came south as far as Roseburg.

For several years in the 1870s, debate raged in southern Oregon over the route of the railroad through Jackson County. Jacksonville was the county seat and largest city, and many assumed it would be the main southern Oregon terminal. But as the financially strapped railroad was approaching Jackson County, it requested financial support from Jacksonville to help defray costs of diverting the line from the more direct route following Bear Creek to the vicinity of Ashland.

Jacksville refused the railroad's request for funds. Sporting a new fire engine, in the process of constructing a new courthouse, proud of its status as the primary regional center, the citizenry was confident that it merited a railroad station. It seemed that "the majority of Jacksonville's citizens believed the railroad

needed Jacksonville more than Jacksonville needed the railroad" (*Land in Common: An Illustrated History of Jackson County*, J. B. Dunn, ed.).

To everyone's surprise, "the Oregon and California thumbed its nose at Jacksonville and staked a direct route south along Bear Creek, five miles from town" (Dunn). A group of entrepreneurs less than enchanted with Jacksonville donated 260 acres for a train station. Incredulous Jacksonville residents referred to its barren location as Mudville, Rabbitville, or Chaparral City. The name "Medford" was officially adopted not long before passenger service began on February 24, 1884.

By April of that year, railroad service had reached Ashland, where the project stalled. Captain Mullan had early

recognized that the mountains lying on the Oregon-California border would present a major obstacle to the completion of the railroad. These mountains, he felt, "will not be easily handled. They are high, broad, and broken, and no railroad line can be laid across or through them, except at most enormous cost."

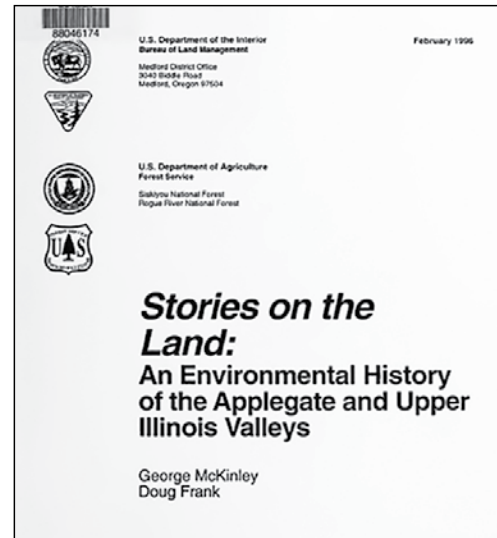
This stretch was the final challenge in connecting Oregon and California by rail.

It took a few years for the Oregon and California, and the Southern Pacific, railroads to agree on a financial plan and develop a strategy for crossing the imposing border mountains. When construction resumed, the "golden spike" was finally driven in Ashland on December 17, 1887.

Through rail service proved a dramatic economic boon to the area. The construction of the railroad employed workers, drew upon local markets, and produced the largest claim upon timber to date. A contemporary observer noted that "the resources of the saw-mills of the whole region have been brought into requisition to provide the necessary lumber for the bridges, culverts, etc." When it was completed, the railroad carried agricultural goods from the area to markets north and south. It also raised the horizon of possible "wants," bringing the ever-expanding profusion of industrialism's fruits into the valley.

The railroad was also directly linked to the continuing population increase in southern Oregon. From 1880 to 1890, the population of Jackson County rose from 8,154 to 11,455. This increase, coupled with an increase of nearly the same number from 1870 to 1880, represents the largest twenty-year population increase by percentage from the time of the first settlement until after World War II.

Excerpted by Diana Coogle



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