



Rural Organizing Project

Advancing Democracy in Rural Oregon since 1991

March 12, 2012
Dear ROPNET,

Despite the cold and often snowy weather keeping folks indoors, Occupy Rural Oregon has been reflecting, analyzing, strategizing, and preparing for the spring!

The Rural Organizing Project has been facilitating Occupy Rural Oregon Think Tanks in small town and rural communities across the state. In each Think Tank we have shared innovative tactics rural Oregon Occupations have been using, discussed regional and statewide Occupy actions in small town and rural Oregon, and to have conversations on the next step strategies to build the movement for economic justice across rural Oregon.

The conversations have been rich and incredibly honest as we reflected on what this moment means. **In this moment that rewards creativity and boldness, we are actively envisioning what we want our communities to look like, redefining what we consider critical community infrastructure, and redefining ourselves and our roles in our hometowns.** It is clear that the 1% will not be addressing our community needs so we are stepping up to fix our problems ourselves through actual democratic processes.

The Think Tanks made it clear that now is the time to explore how we can engage with our communities to support and inspire each other – to unite the 99%! People are beginning to break down the walls they built to protect their families in order to open themselves up to community. How do we overcome the rifts and divides that wedge issues have created in our hometowns?

Oregon is not alone in this fight. [At least 56 cities and towns in Vermont passed local resolutions challenging corporate personhood.](#)

Let's draw inspiration from all the activities, planning, and thinking across the state! Stay up to date and [follow Occupy Rural Oregon on Facebook!](#) **Check out snapshots of Occupy organizing from rural and small town Oregon below!**

Rural Occupations from across the state will converge to share strategy, tactics, materials, and camaraderie on Saturday, May 12th in Woodburn during the Rural Caucus and Strategy Session. [Register now for an earlybird discount!](#)

Warmly,
Jessica

Occupy Roseburg

Occupy Roseburg does it all! When they aren't busy feeding Roseburg with their Feed the 'Burg potlucks, they have time to plan elaborate political theater with **giant black coffins**. Protesting corporate personhood, Occupy Roseburg set up a giant black coffin, buried Lady Liberty (also known as the Bill of Rights) until an Occupy group took over the funeral, raised Lady Liberty, and buried Corporate Personhood in her place! [Watch the video here!](#)

Occupy Roseburg will Occupy Willis Park this weekend in solidarity with the houseless who have been ticketed and arrested for sleeping there. "The city would like us to believe that the homeless are the problem in Roseburg," said Occupy Roseburg. "Many of the businesses in town would like to blame their bad sales on those who call the streets of Roseburg their home instead of the systemic lack of job growth and horrible unemployment in Douglas County. **Not having a home should not be a crime, and any law that says so is a law that is worth breaking.**"

Join Occupy Roseburg this weekend! [For more information, check out their Facebook event!](#)

Occupy Bend

Occupy Bend is engaging the community! Four members of Occupy Bend spoke at a well-attended panel and group discussion at Bend's First Presbyterian Church on January 22. They held a successful and fun Occupy the Music fundraiser featuring an amazing evening of folk and protest music from local and national performers. The brainchild and work of the stalwart Foster Fell, one of the Bend 8 arrested in Rep. Walden's office on December 5, Occupy the Music drew about 200 people and also featured a silent auction full of great local prizes. Occupy Bend will kick off their second weekly General Assembly on March 17 at noon at Bend's central and iconic Drake Park.

Occupy Klamath Falls

Occupy Klamath Falls responded a call from local teachers to bring visibility to the work that teachers are expected to do unpaid while funding for schools continues to be cut. Klamath Falls City teachers hosted a "grade in" event to have conversations with the public about what public teachers do on January 23rd at 4:00 p.m. at Fred Meyer in Klamath Falls.

Occupy Klamath Falls Occupied the Courts for two days despite the rain on January 20-21. [Check out their photo album on Facebook to see them in action.](#)

Occupy Wallowa

Occupy Wallowa is focusing on the Oregon State Bank. They hosted Cara from ROP for a Brown Bag on the Oregon State Bank and then held an Occupy Think Tank at the nearby coffeeshop. Their conversation touched on topics including integrating with the

local community, engaging ranchers, and local food security efforts.

Occupy Union County

Occupy La Grande held a think tank in late February that looked developing a middle class strategy for those on the verge of losing it all, reaching out to neighbors, and engaging small businesses. Since the Think Tank folks have become inspired and interested in participating in this training: <http://the99spring.com/>.

Occupy Panhandle (Halfway)

Occupy Halfway held an Occupy Think Tank in late February. It was a rich conversation with several core themes coming up. How do we build more community? How do we get past divisiveness? How do we reach out and engage more people effectively? Do we lead with the Occupy frame or from somewhere else? Can we do both? While we didn't resolve each of these questions, the conversation teased out some of the tensions and allowed us a framework to work from when thinking about some next steps, which include working with other communities in Baker County.

Occupy Panhandle is using an online whiteboard website to discuss next steps and share information. [Check it out!](#)

Occupy Elkton

Occupy Elkton rallies every Friday at 3:30 by the highway!

Occupy Newport

Occupy Newport has been engaging in a visioning project to identify their direction for the year. Great work Occupy Newport!

Baker City

Folks in Baker County who are interested in the Occupy movement got together for a Think Tank last month. Much of the conversation focused on how to reach out and build connections and support in the community. Baker City leaders are considering focusing on addressing campaign contributions, including Citizens United, as a way to start the conversation in their community.

Occupy Medford

Occupy Medford successfully shut down their Bank of America on February 29 for Shut Down the Corporations! [Check out their photos from Occupy the Courts on January 20th!](#) Occupy Medford has also amassed a team to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity.

Occupy Medford held a day of education and action on January 11th for Guantanamo's 10th anniversary. Their call to action read, *"...As we know in the United States, repression is on the rise. Between the continued use of inhumane prisons like Guantanamo Bay and the recently passed National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2012, people in the US are becoming more and more aware of the injustices of this globalized corporate system. We also see the inconsistency of the US government's support of pro-democracy movements when it is actively derailing the very democracy it*

claims to protect.”

Occupy Corvallis

Occupy Corvallis held a successful Open Mic night at the Majestic Theater on March 9th that featured music, poetry, and food. Occupy Corvallis shut down Wells Fargo with spectacular backpack puppets during Shut Down the Corporations on February 29.

[Read about it here!](#)

Occupy Oregon State

Occupy Oregon State has been hosting a book club in addition to their Occupy Philosophy class!

Occupy Cottage Grove

Occupy Cottage Grove held a series of rallies at the middle school, high school, and alternative high school in support of teachers, school employees, and to raise awareness to funding shortfalls public education faces. They were supported by the school district, every school administration, and the teachers' unions.

Occupy Cottage Grove continues to hold weekly vigils and General Assemblies.

Occupy Grants Pass

Occupy Grants Pass is putting the pressure on Oregon's Congress! Thursday, January 26th, Occupy Grants Pass kept Congressmen Walden and DeFazio company as they held a press conference in a tiny room.

On January 21st, Occupy Grants Pass held their first General Assembly with over 100 participants! [Check out their photos!](#)

Occupy Grants Pass stands in solidarity with the 99% every Thursday at 3PM outside of the Josephine County Courthouse.

Occupy Silverton

Occupy Silverton held a Learn & Talk Event titled "What is the Citizen's United Supreme Court Decision" at the Silver Falls Library on Saturday, January 21st. They discussed: how does it affect you? Why should it be reversed? How can we get a Constitutional amendment to prevent corporations from receiving First Amendment rights as humans? Is money really free speech? What can be done to prevent this from happening in our town and our state as well as nationally?

Occupy Albany

Occupiers rally in support of the 99% outside the Albany Courthouse every Friday at 5PM. Occupy Albany also holds monthly meetings to plan strategies and tactics to strike down corporate personhood.

Occupy Ashland

Occupy Ashland has been busy! In addition to Occupy the Courts, they are currently

canvassing for legalizing sleep for the homeless coming up in the next few weeks.

Occupy Coos Bay

Occupy Coos Bay continues to hold signs every Saturday! Members of the community gathered next to Highway 101 to stand in solidarity for Occupy the Courts.

Is your Occupy activity not listed? Send Jessica@rop.org an update!