



TESTIMONY FOR HB 3526

OREGON MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM

It is critical to our rural Lake County for HB 3526 to pass. Passage of this Bill will provide relief to our communities in developing organizational focus and infrastructure to address the economic needs as well as structural building repairs and improvements necessary to save our downtown areas.

The economic recession/depression throughout Lake County over the past 30+ years has taken its toll on our buildings as well as community morale. Buildings have been sorely neglected as their owners struggled to keep their businesses or their tenants in place during this long economic recovery period. Heating and cooling systems have become inadequate and outlived their cost effectiveness. Facades have deteriorated and are "worn". Buildings have become unsafe, reported for nuisance ordinances and considered fire hazards.

Recently, there has been a spark of enthusiasm and commitment by Lakeview merchants, property owners and community leaders in working with Oregon Main Street to develop a plan for downtown revitalization. Although, this process is in the very early stages it is clear that this community is ready for the challenge. Soon they will need additional support through on-going coaching by professionals and consultants as well as resources to rehabilitate properties in designated areas where buildings are deteriorating.

The communities of New Pine Creek to the south and to the north Paisley, Summer Lake, Silver Lake and Christmas Valley all have potential to gain from the Oregon Main Street Program as they experience and understand what Lakeview has currently planned and roll out their vision.

Our economic vitality depends on our manufacturing, governmental and other public and private employers' ability to recruit viable work force to this area. The presentation of a downtown or Scenic Byway community that shows community pride and vitality attracts like minded individuals that want to be a part of a positive living environment.

This investment by the Oregon State Legislature for our rural communities will come back to us via stronger personal, business and property tax bases. It is an investment in the future of our

most precious historic and cultural heritage communities that made Oregon what it is today. Please help us recover our Community Pride, our Downtown Heritage and strengthen our Rural Economy.

Sincerely,

Ginger Casto

Rural Development Specialist - Lake County

South Central Oregon Economic Development District