



February 15, 2022

Board Members:

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Marilyn Cross, Treasurer
Lucy Zammarelli, Secretary
Randy Dersham
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1. LTRGs need capacity in the form of paid staff to help people rebuild. We are a 60-mile community of unincorporated neighborhoods. Half of our 60-miles were devastated by the fire. We work with government agencies, recovery partners, NGOs, grantors, donors, and survivors. This is not work we can do without paid staff. We have been told the County does not have such funds available. We need access to state funds, or federal funds channeled through the state to a rural community where the services people need have never existed.
2. The group that is most underserved on the McKenzie is what you might know as the working poor. In demographic terms, they are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (sometimes known as those living below the ALICE survivable budget). According to the 2018 ALICE report, the McKenzie region has 28% of the households living below the ALICE survivable budget. While more recent stats are not available, it is hard to believe the pandemic has not increased that number. The 28% below ALICE is on top of the 11% living in poverty. Those below ALICE do not recognize themselves as poor. They are unaware of services that might help them and are loath to ask for help from those services when we do try to make them aware. I am making three specific requests for them today:
 - a. The energy efficiency program offered through the DOE and the rebuilding with hardened materials program offered through the BCD are not online in Lane County. But they have the potential to realize several thousand dollars for some who fall into this group, especially those who are rebuilding with manufactured homes. But many of those rebuilding will not be done by June 1, 2023, and even if they are, it is hard to believe the funds will last that long. These programs must be renewed and extended.
 - b. Insurance is a time-consuming challenge. I know contractors who speak to at least one insurance company every day, when their all too limited time should be spent building. Some coverage includes a 20% holdback that is not paid out until the Certificate of Occupancy is issued. Some policies have a two-year time limit on the rebuild. Due to the severe labor and materials shortages, the risk of missing that deadline is increasing for many. The power of the state must be brought to bear on insurance companies to extend that period of rebuilding time.
 - c. Some in this group of people were renting before the fire, albeit in an area that is notorious for having very little affordable, long-term rentals. This housing option was virtually wiped out in the fire. I am not aware of housing programs to address this housing need. We need attention here.

Marilyn Cross