

# SHAPING THE FUTURE

Mid-Willamette Valley  
Affordable Housing Conference

## Presenter Biographies

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Andrea Bell is the executive director of **Oregon Housing and Community Services**, where she oversees the strategic direction, vision, and growth of the state agency responsible for providing stable and affordable housing across Oregon. In her previous role with OHCS, she served as director of Housing Stabilization, where she led the implementation of a wide range of homeless services, energy and weatherization assistance, rental assistance programs, and policy initiatives.

Bell's previous experience across the housing continuum prepared her for her current role as OHCS director. She served as a housing director within the Arizona Medicaid system where she directed the operations and expansion of state-funded permanent supportive housing programs, as well as deployed sustainable solutions to end homelessness. She also spearheaded Arizona's first tax credit project using Housing Trust Fund resources and led the Governor's Housing and Health Initiative aimed at providing long-term housing opportunities for people experiencing homelessness.



Richard Berger is the Director of Development for **Neighborly Development** in Salem Oregon. Neighborly Development builds multifamily projects across Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Utah. Its focus is on large projects (150 to 300 units) in tertiary markets.

Richard has been developing apartments since 2005 and has developed over 3,000 units over that time. One of those developments is the Cornerstone Apartments which is the first development ever to utilize State of Oregon LIFT funding. He has utilized several other unique deal structures to improve project viability including LIHTC funding, land leases, creation of URA areas, partnerships with housing authorities, and leveraging municipal grants.

Richard holds a BS in Geography from Oregon State University and an MS in Urban Planning from Columbia University.



Diana Cvitanovich has been the program developer for the **Polk Community Development Corporation** (Polk CDC) since 2006. She has been developing affordable housing in rural Oregon counties since 1996. Using a wide array of both public and private funding in partnership with national and regional investors, service providers, and local governments, she has worked to marshal housing stability for vulnerable populations unable to secure market rate housing in Linn, Marion, and Polk counties. Diana has assisted in developing more than 500 units of multi-family housing for low-moderate income (LMI) households across a spectrum of housing types. She has secured funding to assist more than 1,500 LMI single-family homeowners with home repairs essential to health and safety. She has helped launch several non-profit housing development organizations in Linn and Marion counties.

Prior to housing development, she directed summer and after-school programs for children in Portland. Diana enjoys the strategic networking needed to foster inclusive community building.

Diana has a BA in Psychology from Portland State University and the Union Institute.

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Morgan Debusk is a manager in the Portland, Ore., office of **Novogradac**. Ms. Debusk has experience in all areas of real estate accounting, with an emphasis on new markets tax credit (NMTC) and affordable housing sectors. She specializes in audit and taxation of NMTC and low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) partnerships, including those subject to the auditing requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, OMB Uniform Guidance, and OHCS. She has also worked extensively in a wide range of services, including financial statement audits; tax return preparation; final cost certification audits; and financial forecasts of NMTC, LIHTC, historic tax credit, and opportunity zones transactions.

She received a bachelor's degree in business administration, majoring in accountancy and finance, from Oregon State University. Ms. Debusk is licensed in Oregon as a certified public accountant.

NOVOGRADAC is a national professional services organization that consists of affiliates and divisions providing professional services that include certified public accounting, valuation, and consulting with more than 25 offices nationwide. Our clients represent a broad range of industries, with a major emphasis in the real estate sector. We provide publicly and privately held national enterprises with a full spectrum of audit, tax, valuation, expert witness and litigation support, property compliance and general consulting services and we work extensively in the affordable housing, community development, historic preservation, opportunity zones and renewable energy fields.

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Samuel Goldberg is an Education & Outreach Specialist at the **Fair Housing Council of Oregon** (FHCO), where he focuses on history and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) trainings. He also coordinates the activities of the AFFH/Systemic Investigations Committee, a collection of land use professionals and FHCO staff which serves as a watchdog for local planning activities, strategizes how best to advance AFFH in state policies, and provides technical support for jurisdictions.



Commissioner Jeremy Gordon was appointed to the **Polk County Board of Commissioners** in August 2021 and elected to a four-year term in May 2022. He is also co-chair for the Association of Oregon Counties Public Safety Steering Committee and serves on the National Association of Counties Human Services & Education Steering Committee.

Jeremy previously served as Mayor of Falls City from 2017 – 2021 and earned an Oregon Mayors Association Small City Merit Award in 2021. He has worked for most of his professional life in the field of higher education administration and helped launch a Governor-supported, competency-based online degree program for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He also spent several years of his young adulthood in a touring rock band, was nominated for three Minnesota Music Awards, and won an international John Lennon Songwriting Contest award.

Jeremy lives in beautiful Falls City, Oregon with his partner, Dr. Dana Schowalter, where they are raising their young son.

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María Elena Guerra (Meg) has made it her life's work to create thriving communities for people and families of color. Originally from Guayaquil, Ecuador, Meg is the executive director of **Farmworker Housing Development Corporation (FHDC)** and **Evolve Workforce and Multifamily Housing Services (Evolve)**. Under Meg's leadership, we work in collaboration to ensure that the opportunities for communities of color to pursue prosperity and growth are as stable and abundant as the housing that we build.

With nearly two decades of experience in asset management, housing development, and community programming, Meg has worked alongside various stakeholders and communities across Oregon's rural, Latinx communities and the affordable housing industry. Before becoming the executive director at FHDC and Evolve, Meg served as the asset and property manager, the portfolio manager for REACH CDC, and as an asset manager with Hacienda CDC.

Meg is currently serving on the Oregon Governor's Racial Justice Council, the Housing and Homelessness Committee, and is co-chair of Housing Oregon's Rural Chapter. She is the proud recipient Enterprise's Impactful 40 Community Leaders across the U.S. and Housing Oregon's Star Player Award. Her vision for Oregon's affordable housing and community development organizing is to foster intersectional and deep partnerships across sectors by centering and supporting communities of color to build wealth and prosperity for generations to come.

Meg holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Espiritu Santo University and a master's degree in public administration from Portland State University. She lives with her partner in Portland, Oregon and enjoys gardening, biking, camping, and mentoring youth.



Elaine Howard is the principal of **Elaine Howard Consulting, LLC**. For the past 17 years, Elaine has concentrated on the area of urban renewal. She has assisted communities in the drafting and adoption of new urban renewal plans as well as completing urban renewal feasibility studies, amending existing urban renewal plans, preparation of city-wide strategic urban renewal policy, preparing annual reports, training for staff and city council members and providing overall urban renewal support.

Education: Bachelor of Arts, Whittier College, Master of Public Administration from Portland State University.



**Salem Mayor** Chris Hoy took office November 2, 2022, after serving as Salem City Councilor for Ward 6 since March 2017. He is a 4th generation Oregonian. He grew up on the Oregon coast where his family was one of the earliest Dungeness crab processors. He graduated from Willamette University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a minor in English before beginning his 30-year career in law enforcement.

Throughout his career, Chris worked to help individuals in the system have better outcomes and reduce recidivism. Some of the highlights of his career include helping people with mental illness avoid criminal penalties for low level offenses, he oversaw a residential alcohol and drug treatment program and started a program dedicated to treating drug-addicted women through trauma-informed care. He initiated one of the first cognitive behavioral programs for inmates in custody to help reduce recidivism, he implemented programs for children of incarcerated parents, and he was a leader in implementing evidence-based practices in corrections in Oregon.

One of Chris' most rewarding experiences was working with domestic violence survivors to break the cycle of domestic abuse. Chris has served on the Governor's Re-entry Council for a number of years. He was first elected to the Salem City Council in a special election in March 2017 and was re-elected in May 2018. He was elected president of the City Council by his peers every year since 2019. In that role, Chris served as the Chair of the Salem Housing Authority. Chris has led the council's efforts to address the shelter crisis and serves as the vice chair of the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance. Chris was appointed to the State Legislature in December 2021 to fill the remainder of the term for House District 21.

Chris lives in east Salem with his two rescue dogs. During his free time, he enjoys photography and cycling.

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Jason Icenbice is a dedicated and passionate Executive Director of the **Marion County Housing Authority** (MCHA), who brings both expertise and a touch of humor to the world of affordable housing. As he often says; You have to maintain a good sense of humor in affordable housing because most of this stuff doesn't make any logical sense. And then they just went and layered HOME funds on it.

Jason joined MCHA in 2018 as the supervisor of the Owned Housing program, where he excelled in property and asset management, eventually leading to his current role. Before MCHA, Jason spent six productive and laughter-filled years at NeighborWorks Umpqua, climbing the ranks from site manager to Operations Manager for the property management division. His wealth of experience in affordable housing covers a wide array of programs, such

as LIHTC, MF Section 8, RD Section 515 & 514, HOME, and many others that he can explain in fascinating detail—or at least he thinks so.

In a previous chapter of his life, Jason worked as a real estate broker from 2001 to 2010 in Klamath Falls, Oregon. The great recession taught him the value of hard work, perseverance, and the appeal of a steady paycheck, even if it meant working twice as hard.

When not immersed in the world of affordable housing, Jason enjoys spending time with his wife and daughter. Though they may find his passion for housing a bit dull, they lovingly support his enthusiasm.

Jason is excited to participate in this conference, eager to share his insights and humor with fellow housing enthusiasts who appreciate both his expertise and his lighthearted approach to creating affordable and sustainable living environments.

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Connie Lindsay is the Communications & Marketing Director for **GK Machine**, a high-tech agricultural and industrial equipment manufacturer in Donald, Oregon. Connie supervises the sales and marketing team of nine and is responsible for marketing GK's products and services nationally and internationally.

Connie has been working to implement a new Workforce Development strategy at GK Machine through her involvement with a variety of youth programs; CTEC in Salem, Willamette Career School, No. Marion High School, Boy Scouts, and a variety of events to introduce students to careers in manufacturing, such as National Manufacturing Day and Future Engineers Day.

Connie has also been involved with the Workforce Housing initiative, working in partnership with the city to develop additional housing options for employees in Donald. She has served as



the chairperson for the Economic Development Taskforce in Donald, Oregon, for the last five years to help improve the look and feel of the downtown area to help attract additional businesses to the area.

Previously Connie worked for Oregon State Parks as the agency's first statewide volunteer program coordinator. She helped design and establish statewide policies and procedures and initiated new program opportunities for seven volunteer programs at the parks department. Connie then moved over to the Oregon State Fair, where she oversaw the marketing, sponsorships, and event planning for the annual event.



Sara Long has been a project manager with the **City of Salem's Urban Development Department** for almost 15 years. Her areas of focus include urban renewal policy and project implementation, economic development programs, and governmental affairs.

Before joining the City of Salem, Sara worked in various project and planning roles within development corporations and agencies in the Midwest and Southwest focusing on tax increment financing.

Sara earned a bachelor's degree in public relations and marketing from Drake University and a Master's in Land-Use and Planning from the University of Arizona.



Traci Manning, Executive Director, **Housing Development Center**, is passionate about advancing the work of organizations that want to increase their social impact and make our community better for everyone. Traci, who was named HDC's executive director in December 2021, provides leadership to advance HDC's mission and supports HDC teams to engage with partners to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

She is the former director of the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB), the city agency charged with developing citywide housing policy and delivering programs that increase and preserve the supply of affordable housing, prevent, and end homelessness, and promote stable homeownership. At PHB, Traci led the development of a cross-jurisdictional plan to end homelessness, established racial equity requirements in all bureau contracts, and created the City's first comprehensive housing report.

Before joining PHB in 2011, Traci worked at Central City Concern as the director of housing development, as director of housing, and then as chief operating officer, in which role she oversaw operation of the organization's business enterprises, employment, healthcare, housing, recovery and engagement services, and supportive housing services programs. Traci worked as an independent consultant specializing in affordable housing policy and development before joining HDC as interim executive director in 2021.

She holds a bachelor's degree in planning, public policy and management from the University of Oregon and is a graduate of the NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence program offered in association with Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.



Nick Popenuk is the founder and principal of **Tiberius Solutions LLC**. With over a decade of experience, Nick has overseen a wide range of projects, including tax increment studies, infrastructure funding plans, and fiscal impact analyses.

After beginning his career in economic development in the public-sector, Nick spent nine years as an economic consultant, before founding his own public finance consulting practice in 2016.

His recent work focuses on solving challenging public finance questions that require both advanced technical skills and political acumen.

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Emily Reiman is the CEO of two affiliated non-profits: **DevNW** and **Community LendingWorks**. Collectively, both organizations work to build the financial security and opportunities for low/moderate income Oregonians, including through affordable housing, asset building, and access to capital. The organizations serve much of Western Oregon, with offices in Springfield, Corvallis, Salem, and Oregon City.

Prior to her work in community economic development, Emily spent ten years working with at-risk youth, mostly centered around the foster care system. She attended Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts but is otherwise a lifelong Oregonian.

DevNW is a community development nonprofit that builds affordable housing (both rental and ownership), helps low/moderate-income families build financial security and opportunity, revitalizes neighborhoods, and helps with disaster recovery. We serve a 7-county region, including Lane, Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Marion, Polk, and Clackamas.

Community LendingWorks is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) affiliate of DevNW, that provides consumer loans (such as credit builder, rental deposit, and home repair loans) and micro/small business loans to individuals and businesses who are not served by the financial mainstream. CLW recently expanded to begin providing affordable housing financing, especially land acquisition and pre-development loans. CLW can lend anywhere in Oregon, with a focus on Western Oregon outside Portland.

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Kristin Retherford is the **City of Salem's Community and Urban Development** Director and past interim City Manager. Her department includes Economic Development, Urban Renewal, Real Estate, Federal Entitlement Programs, the Salem Housing Authority, Planning, Building and Safety, Code Compliance, and Parking Enforcement. She has served as president of both the Oregon Economic Development Association (OEDA) and the Association of Oregon Redevelopment Agencies, and Vice Chair of the Governor's Infrastructure Finance Authority.

Kristin has over twenty-five years of private and public experience in real estate and development. Prior to moving to the public sector, she worked for a development company in New Mexico, for Intel during the initial development of their Ronler Acres campus in Hillsboro, as a consultant developing cell tower sites in the Pacific Northwest and owned a property management business.

Kristin has an MBA with a concentration in Sustainable Development and is a native Oregonian who returned home to raise her family after working in Washington, D.C., and Tokyo.

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Andrea K. Sanchez, **Housing Development Center** Deputy Director, believes access to safe, affordable housing improves health outcomes. As deputy director, Andrea works within HDC's equity-oriented strategic framework to ensure that HDC's program operations respond to the evolving needs of Oregon's affordable housing industry. Additionally, Andrea helps to set organization-wide direction and priorities as a member of HDC's management team.

Andrea has 20 years of experience in public and private real estate development. Prior to assuming the role of deputy director in 2022, Andrea served as HDC's director of project finance and interim director of real estate development, overseeing a team of project managers providing real estate development services to nonprofit and housing authority clients. Previously, from 2013 to 2017, she served as director of housing for Human Solutions, overseeing housing development, asset management, and resident service delivery for a 700-unit affordable housing portfolio.

Andrea's public sector experience includes leading implementation of a 10-year portfolio redevelopment and repositioning strategy with the Housing Authority of Clackamas County and administering the permanent supportive housing component of the City of Portland's 10-year plan to end homelessness.

Andrea began her career in the San Francisco Bay Area working on urban renewal initiatives for a private real estate advisory firm. She holds a Master of City and Regional Planning and a Master of Public Health from University of California, Berkeley.



Derenda Schubert, Ph.D., **Bridge Meadows** Executive Director is a licensed psychologist with extensive professional experience counseling children and families and creating, managing, and evaluating foster care, mental health, and developmental disability programs. Additionally, she has conducted research in the areas of developmental disabilities and children's mental health. She has held several executive leadership roles including Associate Director of Training at two of Oregon's largest child and family mental health agencies.

Dr. Schubert is an intergenerational champion, leading the team that created Bridge Meadows, advocating nationally for intergenerational solutions to complex social challenges, spearheading strategic planning and shaping Bridge Meadows' expansive vision for the future. Dr. Schubert speaks locally and nationally on the topics of children's mental health, community building, and intergenerational living. Under Dr. Schubert's leadership, Bridge Meadows has received national and international recognition from the following organizations: The National Home Builders Association; Angel in Adoption by Senator Wyden; recognized as the 2014 award winner for the Intergenerational Excellence Prize by The Eisner Foundation; winner of the 2017 Fostering Innovation Award from Corporate LiveWire; ranked fourth among the top 10 Most Admired Non-profits by Portland Business Journal, and an awardee of the 2020 Drenda Lakin Memorial Award for Continuing Service to Adoptive Families by Voice For Adoption. In 2016, Dr. Schubert was honored as Extraordinary Executive Director by Portland Monthly Magazine and recognized as a 2017 Woman of Influence by the Portland Business Journal.

Dr. Schubert is a graduate of Purdue University and DePaul University. Her passion for making the world a better place is inspired by her own children and the love of her grandmothers.

BRIDGE MEADOWS helps children heal from the trauma of foster care by providing stable, affordable housing, therapeutic programs, and intergenerational community. By weaving together trauma-informed services and a caring network of community members, Bridge Meadows helps children move from the stress of instability to thriving in a safe environment. Known for its cost-effective approach, Bridge Meadows solves social issues that impact each generation, improving health, well-being, and resilience.



Warren Sebra is a partner in the Portland, Ore., office of **Novogradac**. Mr. Sebra has experience in affordable housing and community development, including low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC), new markets tax credit (NMTC), historic rehabilitation tax credit (HTC) and opportunity zones transactions. He has worked extensively on financial statement audits, tax return preparation, final cost certification audits, transaction underwriting, placed-in service applications, LIHTC compliance, NMTC compliance and NMTC allocation applications. Mr. Sebra has also contributed to various publications, including the Novogradac Journal of Tax Credits, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Handbook and Novogradac Historic Rehabilitation Handbook.

Mr. Sebra is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and seminars on affordable housing and community development industry topics. He received a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's degree in accounting from Brigham Young University. Mr. Sebra is licensed in Oregon and California as a certified public accountant.

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We offer assistance with such specific issues as construction cost studies, the wine industry and defeasance, as well as broader guidance with tax credit developments. Our 30-plus years in business give us unique experience and insight into the issues that matter most to our clients. Whether you seek tax credit guidance or general accounting and audit assistance, Novogradac is prepared to meet your needs.

Our value-added solutions are based on innovative thinking and effective implementation and are the foundation on which we have developed the critical resources necessary to provide outstanding professional services. We are dedicated to meeting client needs in a thorough and efficient manner.



Christine Sommer, **Marion County Housing Authority** Housing Choice Voucher Program Manager, started her journey into the field of housing in December 2017, with Salem Housing Authority, as a Case Manager for the Homeless Rental Assistance Program. In this role, she provided intense case management for participants that were identified as chronically homeless. She worked closely with local landlords and property managers educating them on the needs of this population and created partnerships with these landlords that resulted in the successful long-term placement of approximately 387, with an 84% housing success rate.

From Salem Housing Authority Christine transitioned over to Marion County Housing Authority in April of 2022 where she has worked diligently to streamline the application process to make it less confusing for applicants. As a military veteran, she recognizes the importance of safe, stable housing and is passionate about creating partnerships whenever possible to utilize the housing voucher and make housing more accessible and affordable.

Extending her efforts in making a difference at the community level, Christine also participates in the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance's Built for Zero Case Conferencing team, CoC Collaborative Committee, HMIS Lead team meetings, and other opportunities where she can lend her expertise and passion.





Abisha Stone - Abisha currently serves as a Business Retention and Expansion Manager for **SEDCOR** a regional economic development organization serving the mid-Willamette Valley. Abisha is a veteran of the industrial food manufacturing industry with more than 13 years' experience serving in positions ranging from production management to business development, and executive leadership.

With a strong commitment to serving her community, Abisha is an avid volunteer. She currently serves as the past president for Oregon Aglink - a statewide organization dedicated to agricultural education. She also serves as the Treasurer for both the Oregon Economic Development Association and Cascade Capital Funding. Abisha will tell you that her service as a Marion County CASA volunteer is by far the most fulfilling and humbling role she serves in, aside from being a mother herself. She currently lives in Salem Oregon with her husband Christopher, the youngest of their five children, and their 13-year-old lab, "Silver".



Nicole Utz, **Salem Housing Authority Housing Administrator**. has more than 20 years of experience in administering low-income housing programs and overseeing the management of affordable and subsidized rental units. Through this experience, Ms. Utz is acutely aware of the housing barriers faced by homeless and low-income households. Ms. Utz has direct oversight of Salem Housing Authority (SHA), which is a successful public corporation providing quality housing units and rental vouchers for families, seniors and persons with disabilities living in Salem and Keizer.

The SHA is the third largest public housing agency in Oregon, serving over 9,000 low and moderate-income clients every day through public and affordable housing units and rental vouchers. SHA has day-to-day asset and property management responsibility to oversee a rental housing portfolio serving over 1,800 residents across 110 properties and 789 units of public, affordable, and LIHTC housing. Nearly 100 of these units are scattered site single-family, duplex, and triplex homes. SHA administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and Moderate Rehabilitation Programs. As a public corporation and the City's lead housing agency, chartered by and through the City of Salem, SHA owns real estate assets (land and buildings) totaling over \$32 million and manages an annual operating budget of \$35 million.

Ms. Utz has been directly involved in the development of 10 of the 12 multifamily developments it owns. Development funding sources included: LIHTC, OAHTC, HOME, CDBG, ARRA, HUD CFP, tax exempt bonds and HUD Green Grants. SHA continuously builds operational, technical, and management capacity to provide a high quality, healthy living environment for residents. Ms. Utz also has direct oversight of SHA's implementation and administration of the Homeless Rental Assistance Program (HRAP), a 12-month transitional program providing stepped rental subsidy and wrap-around services that leads homeless individuals and households into permanent housing with a Housing Choice Voucher for those who are eligible. The HRAP program has a continued 84% success rate in placing formerly homeless households in housing.



**The Missing Middle Housing Fund (MMHF)** is an Oregon nonprofit working to solve Oregon's housing underproduction crisis. Our mission is to double the state's annual housing production over the next decade, for half the cost and half the time. The MMHF builds a community of like-minded doers from all sectors, connecting and scaling innovations to build better housing for everyone.

Nathan Wildfire, originally from Pittsburgh, has worked in community and economic development in Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Oregon for over 20 years. His interest in housing started in his youth, watching his grandmother create affordable housing for seniors in rural Pennsylvania. His passions that make him very popular at parties include public/private financing, macroeconomic policy, and anything that has to do with trees.

The co-founder of the Missing Middle Housing Fund, he currently works to solve Oregon's housing under-production crisis, and in his spare time leads a community choir.



Rhonda is the Chief Executive Officer at **United Way of the Mid-Willamette Valley**. She is an experienced Director of Finance and Operations with a demonstrated history of working in the non-profit organization management industry, including 30 years at the Salem YMCA. She is a strong finance professional, skilled in nonprofit organizations, fundraising, coaching, strategic planning, and leadership development.

Rhonda is dedicated to uniting people and resources to build thriving and resilient communities. This dedication is currently focused on the Cottages United project which will provide safe, affordable housing to seniors on fixed incomes.

The Willamette Valley has always been Rhonda's home. She is a strong advocate and support for the community. Rhonda has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Western Oregon State College.