

Community News

Published by South Benton
Advisory Committee,
United Way of Linn, Benton,
and Lincoln Counties



Thank You!

SoBAC would like to thank all of our donors and auction participants for making this year's online event our biggest success to date! We raised approximately \$7,500 to help support charitable efforts in South Benton County, including support for Kepi Nak-Nak Community Resource Center and the Monroe Arts Association.

Community Calendars

Schools

www.Monroe.k12.or.us

South Benton Food Pantry

www.southbentonfoodpantry.org ;

Facebook@sbfp2015/ including South Benton County Gleaners, the Senior Meal Program, the Monroe Community Center

City of Monroe

www.ci.Monroe.or.us/administration/city-calendar/

Monroe Arts Association

www.monroeart.association.info ;

Facebook.@MonroeArtsAssociation

Monroe Community Library

Facebook@MonroeCommunityLibrary

Old Mill Relief Nursery

www.oldmillcenter.org/programs-services/relief-nursery/

Monroe Health Clinic

www.bentonlinnhealthcenters.org/monroe-health-center/

South Benton Communities Museum

Facebook@SouthBentonCommunitiesMuseum

Alpine Community Center

www.alpinecommunity.net

Willamette Grange

www.willamettegrange.org

What is Kepi Nak-Nak?

Big Improvements for South Benton Resources

South Benton donors, leaders, and volunteers achieved big improvements to local resources in 2022. Kepi Nak-Nak is the name of the new community resource center in Monroe; a name selected in collaboration with members of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde meaning Beaver and Duck.

South Benton Food Pantry has been attached to the Monroe Methodist Church for many years. With help from local church members, the Food Pantry recently purchased the church property to expand and improve the community resources available there. The purchase price is already fully paid off. Now improvements to the facility are under way and you can join others in the effort!

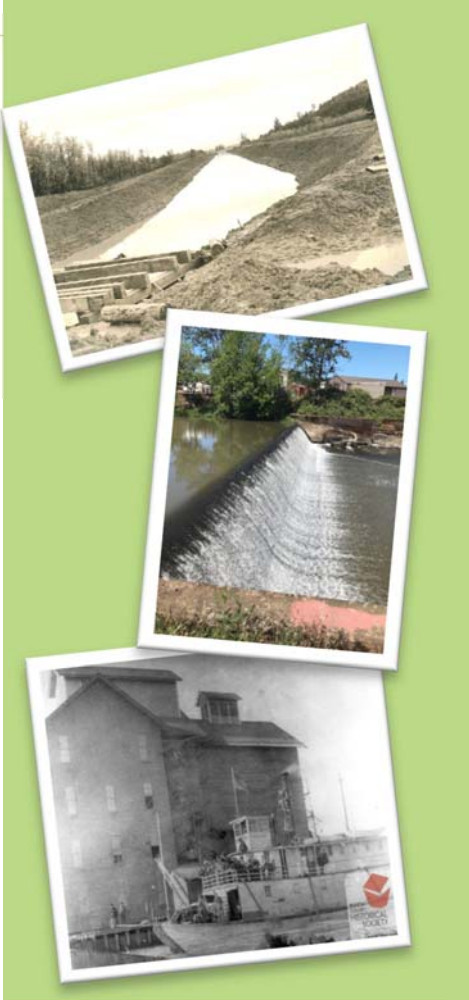
A complete remodel of the kitchen and dining area is in progress with a \$52,000 price tag that is already paid for by members of the church and grant funding, including funds from South Benton Advisory Committee (SoBAC).

The kitchen improvements will mean that Monroe finally has a certified commercial kitchen, creating new opportunities in the community for classes, entrepreneurial activities, even a possible Meals on Wheels in the future.

The food pantry building attached to the church is also being completely re-designed and re-built at a cost of \$250,000. Of that, one local couple has donated \$50,000 so the work has started, but the remainder needs to be raised from grants and local donors.

You can contribute by volunteering for some of the easier physical tasks associated with the work (call Janeece Cook at 541-829-1349); mail a tax-deductible donation to South Benton Food Pantry at PO Box 396, Monroe Oregon 97456; in person at the food pantry at 650 Orchard Street in Monroe; or at Umpqua Bank in Monroe – just give them the account number #2777.

Monroe Drop Structure Study Nears Completion



The Long Tom River drop structure/dam located in Monroe could see major changes in the next few years as the U.S. Army Corps completes an initial study and assessment of the structure.

A low dam was originally constructed in the early 1900s to support a flour mill that operated on the site. Following the construction of the Fern Ridge Dam in 1942, the Army Corps channelized and installed berms along the river to reduce flooding during high water releases from the new dam. As a result, the Army Corps modified the Monroe drop structure in 1946 to slow the velocity of the river. You can learn all about this history at the South Benton Communities Museum in Monroe.

After 80 years, the structure no longer serves its original purpose and is beginning to show its age. The structure is also a barrier to native, migratory fish and has a negative impact on water quality. An Act by the U.S. Congress set aside funds to address fish passage and river restoration at Army Corps structures.

The City of Monroe held public meetings in 2017 to consider seeking Army Corp

funds for an initial study of the most cost-effective approach to improve fish passage and river health at the drop structure site. This early work led to a partnership among the City of Monroe, the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians and the Long Tom Watershed Council. With support from the partnership, the Army Corps secured funds in 2020 and is scheduled to complete the study phase of the project by February, 2023.

As the study phase neared completion, the Monroe City Council created an advisory committee to inform and make recommendations to the Council on implications and opportunities related to the project. Although Army Corps funds must focus on fish passage and water quality, the City has an opportunity to advance goals established in the new Riverside District Master Plan that focus on improved access and recreation along the river.

Once the study phase is completed, the Army Corps will hold public hearings and seek community feedback on the tentative recommendation for the site. These events will be scheduled in March, 2023. Stay tuned!



Updates from Monroe's RARE participant

Chris Rivera is Monroe's latest RARE member. Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) is an AmeriCorps Program through the University of Oregon which aligns perfectly for Chris. He is from the Eugene-Springfield area and graduated from the U of O's School of Planning, Public Policy & Management. Chris studied event planning, city planning, public policy, and museum management. RARE enables him to pursue his interests with real world experience.

Chris's two primary focus areas during his 11 months in the Monroe area are economic development and parks. In addition: he has expertise in GIS, is willing to help with research and grant writing, communication strategies, and coordination with Monroe's Main Street program.

He facilitates the city's Economic Development Committee which is generating a process to determine what direction Monroe wants to take for its future. Ideas generated in those discussions include a range from maintaining the status quo to far-ranging concepts.

Does the city want to develop the capacity to sustain itself as a community? To do this would require finding new revenue resources. Chris's philosophy is "ideas should come from within the community and be sustained from within". His mission as a RARE member is to facilitate what the future might look like via the Economic Development Committee and then vet ideas with the community. This is going to require people to engage!

The second large project Chris has going is to rework and update the city's Parks Plan from 2011. The city owns land north of the library which could become a new park. Again, the city is relying on the community to impact what this could be. It's yours to envision. Chris is facilitating the Parks Committee work along with public engagement opportunities. They also will focus on the existing parks to update the plan from 2011.

Chris is an enjoyable person who is a good listener. Look for opportunities to engage with him and give your best ideas. The City website lists opportunities at <https://ci.monroe.or.us>



Friend us on **Facebook@SouthBentonAdvisoryCommittee** and send us email at **sobac.info@gmail.com**. We'd love to hear your feedback and ideas for future community news stories.

