

16 April 2021

Dear

This is a letter in support of the Oregon State University Extension Service, specifically the Grant County OSU Open Campus. I am an avid supporter of the Land Grant Mission in general, and the Oregon State University Public Service Programs that are focused on helping Grant County in many ways.

As you are aware, Grant County has been in dire economic straits since the timber industry began to decline two decades ago. And recently, with catastrophic wildfires across the state, including Grant County, the economy took another hit. And then there is COVID.....

I have been working closely with Ms. Didgette McCracken, the Director of the OSU Open Campus in Grant County, on several economic development projects. One project, that we call "CyberMill," is aimed at providing access to Broadband internet to those in Grant County in need. A large percentage of Grant County residents (students, entrepreneurs, adult continuing education seekers, and other citizens) don't have access to the internet, nor the equipment needed to take full advantage. CyberMill would be a "store front" in the center of each Grant County community that would have a strong Broadband connection, computers, printers, scanners, and some coaching resources available for those in need.

Didgette has been a key leader in this effort, and would help manage and lead these CyberMill units as part of her job responsibilities under the OSU Open Campus mission. With the support of OSU Extension, and with Didgette's leadership, we have garnered part of the funding required to start up three of these CyberMill sites, and are confident of finding the rest through our continuing efforts.

Without Didgette McCracken and the OSU Open Campus Extension Service, we would be hard-pressed to succeed in a project like CyberMill, and many Grant County residents would suffer in kind.

I urge you to provide as much funding as possible in these trying times for the continued and expanded operations of the OSU Extension Service. It is money well- and efficiently spent on the rural citizens of Oregon—again directly in line with the Land Grant mission of Oregon State University.

Please let me know how I could help further in securing this funding.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Rod Ray  
OSU, 1979  
Former CEO, Bend Research, Inc.