



Kickoff Dinner for Local Farming and Forestry Group Aims to Bridge Rural-Urban Divide

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At a farm-to-fork style dinner at Sweet Cheeks Winery outside Eugene this week, a well-represented group of Lane County farmers and foresters kicked off what they intend to be an ongoing conversation with the Lane County community on the value of farming and forestry.

“Our Feast in the Forest event this week highlighted nearly 20 different crops grown right here in Lane County, either in the food we sourced from local growers or in the decorations created with donations from local growers,” said Marie Bowers, a grass and wheat farmer who serves as the Lane Families for Farms and Forests chair. “Those of us who grow the food and produce the fiber in this county are quite literally coming to the table to talk with our neighbors about what we do and why we do it.”

The event attracted roughly 100 attendees including growers, elected officials and other influencers and community members from throughout the county.

“This is a unique group,” said Gordon Culbertson, small woodlands owner and Lane Families for Farms and Forests vice-chair. “We’ve brought together farmers and foresters to talk to each other and to the community in a way that hasn’t been done before. Collectively, between agriculture and forestry, this group represents about 9,000 jobs in Lane County. It’s imperative that we remind folks why we’re here and how important what we do is to the vitality of this community. If you’ve never worked on a farm or in the forest, you might have questions about some of our practices. We’re here to answer those questions and hear your thoughts.”

Lane Families for Farms and Forests has been meeting regularly since last summer. The Feast in the Forest event served as an initial event to start a dialog with the community, and the group is planning future events such as farm and forest tours and meet-and-greet opportunities.

Lane Families for Farms and Forests (LFFF) is a non-profit organization committed to harnessing support for Lane County’s rich heritage of agriculture and forestry, two cornerstones of our local community. For more information on Lane Families for Farms and Forests, visit www.lanefamilies.com or follow us on Facebook @LaneFarmsForests.