



From the GM:

Growing the Local Food System

by Anne Carter – General Manager

The [Rogue Valley Food System Network](#) (RVFSN) is a nonprofit collaborative that brings together businesses, nonprofit organizations, government entities, farmers, and passionate community members to improve the food environment in our region.

RVFSN's mission resonates with the Medford Food Co-op's efforts to connect our community to the people and the land that produce our food. We partner with RVFSN by holding a seat on the Council, sponsoring the network's annual fundraising event - Brews, Bluegrass, & BBQ, and providing in-kind services.



We recently asked the RVFSN coordinator, Alison Hensley-Sexauer, to tell us about the network's current food system work.

MFC: *What is the RVFSN currently working on?*

RVFSN: Currently, RVFSN is supporting several community driven projects in the Rogue Valley:

FEASTs (Food. Education. Agriculture. Solutions. Together.) FEAST is a community organizing process that is funded and supported through the Oregon Food Bank, with the intention to inspire and catalyze community conversation and action around key food systems issues. Way back in 2019, we received funding to support Josephine County in a multi location FEAST process, however when 2020 hit, we paused and are just now wrapping up.

Through the process we identified 4 great projects to receive

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From the Board President:

One Step Closer to Expansion with Your Vote

by Kellie Hill – Board President

I know it seems like we've been talking the big E (expansion) for years. And that's true; we started the process in 2018. It's taken a lot of work on the Board's behalf to get Medford Food Co-op set up for the possibility. There has been the more enjoyable work of roundtables, surveys, and considering locations. There has also been the less fun work of financial feasibility, store-readiness, pro-formas, bylaw revisions, and now... Articles of Incorporation amendments! The exciting life of the MFC Board of Directors never ends!

The next step is here, we need to amend our Articles of Incorporation. When Medford Market Cooperative (MFC's original name) filed Articles of Incorporation only one class of stock was requested. This capital stock consists of 100,000 shares and is the \$100 share each owner purchases.



As we look toward expansion, the Board of Directors realized it would be better to raise funds from our ownership and minimize (hopefully) the amount of money we borrow from a bank. In order to do this, we are asking the ownership to authorize the sale of a new class of shares known as Preferred Shares. Preferred shares will be sold in increments of \$100, with a minimum purchase of \$1,000.

When we are ready for a capital campaign, selling preferred shares will be one of the ways we will raise funds for an expansion. Holders of preferred shares will receive a dividend of 3% annually. Holders of 250 or more preferred shares will receive 4% annually.

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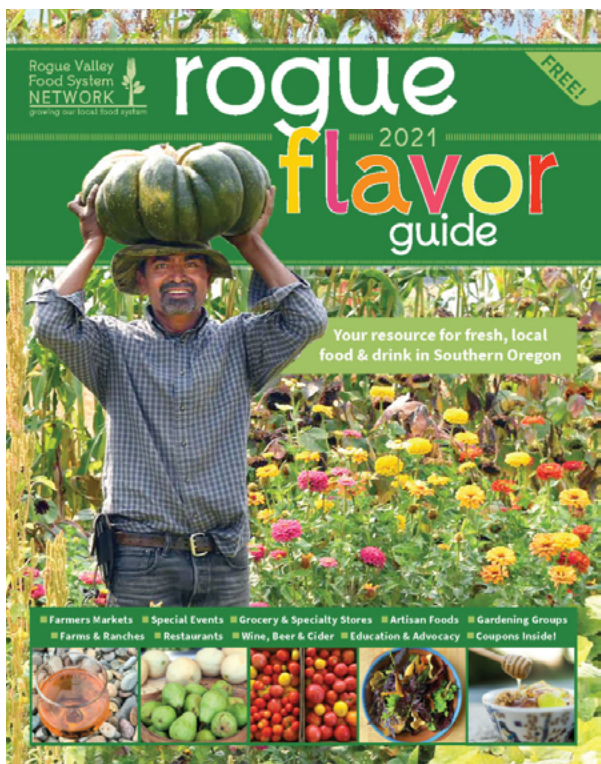


Join the Jackson County Virtual FEAST on an upcoming Wednesday evening.

General Education and Outreach. We are consistently doing our best to support our communities in learning more about how to engage and support local community food systems. Be it a talk, a webinar, or an information session for a business, we are happy to share the information and resources we have.

MFC: *What is the Rogue Flavor Guide and where can I get one?*

RVFSN: The Rogue Flavor Guide is our annual food and farm directory we publish each year in early spring. This guide is in its 17th year and is such an important asset for anyone in our community who wants to support local food, farms, wineries, breweries, and food related non-profits. It is also a great tool for the tourism industry to help drive visitors to support locally sourced businesses. You can find the guide in many establishments across Jackson and Josephine County, or online at rvfoodsystem.org/roguetflavor.



The 2021 Rogue Flavor Guide is now available – pick up a copy in the store or the Café!

the funding that came through the Oregon Food Bank and All Care Health. Projects include: getting an EBT processing machine for the Williams Farmers Market, supporting the Native Womenshare's BIPOC Food Sovereignty gardens, assistance for the Plant-A-Row project in Grants Pass (home gardeners plant a row of crops for the local food bank), and supporting the Illinois Valley Gleaning Project through Spiral Living Center.

Right now, we are initiating this same process in Jackson County. You can learn more about how to get involved with these conversations on our website at rvfoodsystem.org.

Rogue Valley Farm Tour. We're partnering with the Medford Food Co-op and the Ashland Food Co-op to put on the [Rogue Valley Farm Tour](#) on July 18th. This event is a great opportunity for folks to get out and about and visit their favorite farmers.

Southern Oregon Food Alliance. This is a new project that we have stepped in to support. [SOFA](#) is a collaborative of several organizations across the five county region including Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson and Josephine. We are working to implement the recommendations that came out of a year long Food Hub Feasibility Study.



Visit Vince and Mary of Whistling Duck Farm on the Farm Tour this July.

MFC: *Will RVFSN be hosting Brews, Bluegrass, & BBQ this year?*

RVFSN: Yes, but it is going to look a little different. Since we are still staying away from the large gatherings, we have decided that this year we will be teaming up with Fry Family Farm and offering a micro BBB. We are also hosting a really amazing online silent auction that includes a ton of foodie items! This is not to be missed! We will be sharing updates on our website here: rvfoodsystem.org/bbb.

MFC: *How can individuals volunteer time or support the RVFSN?*

RVFSN: We have a couple of volunteer opportunities coming up. Right now we need volunteers to help distribute the Rogue Flavor Guides, and we are also organizing volunteers for the Rogue Valley Farm Tour on July 18th! Learn more and sign up to volunteer at: <https://signup.com/go/DCpqSmK>. ■

From the Board: Board of Directors Stipend Change

by MFC Board of Directors

At the upcoming election, your [Board of Directors](#) requests a change in their stipend. For the work they do on behalf of the organization, MFC directors currently receive a 15% discount on their store purchases. To improve equity for all directors we ask the ownership to give directors a choice of a flat-rate or a percentage stipend.

When the stipend was first established, a vote of the ownership was not required as long as it was the same as the employee discount. In order to change it, however, an ownership vote is required.

This vote is on directors' stipends only; employees will continue receiving a 15% discount as store policy.



We are asking the ownership to vote on whether each director can have a choice of a percentage or a flat-rate stipend. A percentage discount generates revenue for the Co-op because for each \$1 of discount, a director spends \$6.67. Percentage discounts also support directors regularly being in the store and conversing with staff and customers while they shop. However, some directors have been unable to shop regularly at the Co-op for various reasons (e.g., travel distance, mobility issues) and may prefer to opt for a \$50 gift card each month.

In practice, most of the directors would likely opt for the percentage discount, so

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Staff Spotlight *Get to know the staff!*

Wendy Tarin

How long have you been cooperating?

I worked at Ashland Food Co-op for five years previously. I have been at Medford Food Co-op since June 2020.

What do you do at the Co-op?

Cashier & customer service expert.

What brought you to the Co-op?

I needed a change from my previous job and knew the Co-op was a great place to work.

What do you like best about your job?

The great customers – helping them have the best buying experience possible. My co-workers are amazing! They are like family to me. I love making a customer's day.

Tell us your Co-op favorites:

Chocolate of course! Tony's Chocolonely.

How has working at the Co-op affected your life?

It's helped me come out of my shell and be myself. It's opened my eyes to how much compassion people have and how giving they are to total strangers.

Tell us something we don't know!

I have two grandkids (age 4 and 2 months). I paint encouragement rocks and give them to people in the community. After the Alameda Fire, our community was left heartbroken. I tried to boost morale by painting rocks of encouragement and leaving them throughout Phoenix. I also created a Facebook encouragement page, called the Alameda Fire Encouragement Page.

What do you like to do outside of work?

Volunteer serving the homeless, and spend time with my husband.

Where did you grow up/where have you lived in your life?

I grew up in Ashland and have lived in Oregon my whole life. ■





Important Dates

Annual Election & Owner Meeting

Voting in the **Annual Election** is the right and responsibility of every Medford Food Co-op owner – and an opportunity to express your voice. For every vote, MFC will donate \$2 to [Friends of Family Farmers](#) (up to \$1,000). Ballots will be emailed to owners on Friday, April 23rd. The election will end at 5pm on Tuesday, May 11th, prior to the start of the Annual Meeting.

The **Annual Owner Meeting** will be held online via Zoom on Tuesday, May 11th beginning at 5:30pm. The [Annual Meeting](#) will include messages from the Board of Directors and General Manager, election results, and a live Q&A session. The meeting will be recorded and made available for any owners unable to attend.

Brews, Bluegrass & BBQ

The Rogue Valley Food System Network's annual fundraiser will look a little different this year due to restrictions on gathering sizes. RVFSN is teaming up with Fry Family Farm and offering a micro BBB, in addition to an online silent auction. Learn more at: rvfoodsystem.org/bbb.

Rogue Valley Farm Tour

The 2021 Rogue Valley Farm Tour will be held on Sunday, July 18th from 10am to 3pm at participating farms and ranches in Jackson and Josephine counties. Step behind the scenes and meet the makers, taste artisanal foods, and explore a vast array of local goods. Virtually tour farms from the comfort of your home and learn more about this July's event at: www.roguevalleyfarmtour.com.

Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market

Support local farmers, ranchers, food producers, and crafters at the [Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market](#). Held from 8:30am – 1:30pm at the following locations:

Medford Thursday Market at Hawthorne Park
Ashland Tuesday Market at Ashland Armory
Ashland Saturday Market on Oak Street

Board of Directors Meetings

Third Monday of each month from 5:30pm – 7:30pm. Due to the pandemic, the meetings will be held online until further notice. If you are an owner who would like to participate in an online Board meeting, please email Board President Kellie Hill for an invitation to the online meeting: board@medfordfood.coop.

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Owners of preferred shares will have no additional voting rights. The Board will prioritize redeeming the shares (repaying the money to owners).

We will not sell preferred shares until we have a site location, letter of intent, financial review, designs, etc. and are ready to raise the capital to raise the roof of the new MFC! But, before we can even consider selling preferred shares, the ownership has to approve this change to the Articles of Incorporation and the change has to be filed with the state of Oregon. With the idea of keeping ahead on our path to expansion we are asking owners to vote for the change now so MFC will be ready for our future.

Read the amendment (officially called the [Certificate of Designation](#)) on the website at medfordfood.coop/owner-resources.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your Board at board@medfordfood.coop. ■



Stipend Change continued from page 3:

this proposal is relatively revenue-neutral: the amount of the flat-rate discounts would still be more than offset by the revenue generated by the percentage-rate discounts.

Here is what each vote means:

A yes vote means directors can choose their stipend: Once a year, directors can opt to either receive a \$50 Co-op gift card each month (\$100 for the Board president) or a 15% discount on their purchases.

A no vote means no change to the stipend: Directors continue to receive a 15% discount on their purchases. ■