

Print

Community and Economic Development Grant Application FY2024-25 - Submission #1031

Date Submitted: 11/18/2024

Name of Applicant Organization*

YachatsNews

Address*

P.O. Box 284

City*

Yachats

State*

Oregon

Zip Code*

97498

Person Completing the Application

Name*

Quinton Smith

Email Address*

YachatsNews@gmail.com

Phone Number*

503-970-3867

Name of Your Project*

Expanding and re-branding of YachatsNews

Total Project Budget*

\$12,000

This includes all anticipated sources of funding

Amount Requested from this Program*

\$9,500

(max \$15k for Standard, \$60k for Impact)

Pool of Funds Applying to*



Standard (\$15K Max)



Impact (\$60K Max)

Project Description*

YachatsNews launched in 2019 as a personal, community service project in south Lincoln County and transitioned to a 501c3 nonprofit in 2022. Its focus is on professionally-reported, contextual local news, available and free to anyone on a 24/7 website. It has a staff of one full-time employee, a volunteer editor, 3-4 regular paid freelance reporters, a current budget of \$90,000 a year and collaborations with a half dozen other news organizations in Lincoln County and across Oregon. From its humble start in 2019, YachatsNews now averages 175,000 page views (the standard online metric) a month and will hit 2 million page views by the end of 2024. More than 2,400 people have signed up to receive our twice-weekly story summaries. Operations are funded by reader donations, advertising revenue and the occasional grant. YachatsNews is in good financial shape to maintain its current operations. But it needs to change in order to grow and as we like to say “To do more and better.” So in the first quarter of 2025, YachatsNews plans to: 1) Change its name to reflect coverage of all of Lincoln County; 2) Redesign and upgrade its website to handle increased content, improve readability, and strengthen reliability; and 3) Conduct an extensive re-branding and marketing campaign to announce the name change and help more Lincoln County residents become aware of what we do.

What is the project and what will it do for community and/or economic development? What tangible items or results will the project deliver? How will the success of this project be judged? IMPORTANT: This fund is not intended for staff or operations. Please describe the economic impact of the project and how it creates or retains jobs in the community.

Funding*

The budget for this project is \$12,500 based on estimates from a graphic designer, web developer and our ad brokerage service, which will coordinate advertising in other media. YachatsNews has budgeted \$3,000 from its operating funds for its share of the project. It is seeking outside help because the more grant funds YachatsNews receives for this project the less in operating funds it will have to spend on it -- which then can be devoted to hiring of a second full-time reporter to be based in Newport. YachatsNews has not applied to other organizations to help fund this project. Most of our grant requests to Oregon or national foundations are for operational support. Without this grant, the name change and web redesign will still proceed, but rebranding and marketing would be done organically and siphon funds away from hiring our second reporter, which has been the focus of our fundraising and other grant requests.

If applicable, please describe status of other funds which you plan or have applied to and whether received. Please give the name of the fund, source of the funds, and when you expect to received an answer regarding funding availability. Also, list any other funds for which you have applied but were not funded. How much did you ask for, from whom, and why was the application not funded?

Collaboration*

While we will have three contractors – our ad agency, a design/branding consultant, and a web designer working on this project, there are no other direct collaborators. We do regularly have news collaborators that enhance and broaden our daily report. These include Oregon Coast TODAY, Oregon ArtsWatch, KLCC News in Eugene, Oregon Capital Chronicle, Oregon Public Broadcasting, and The Oregonian/OregonLive.

If applicable, please list who you are collaborating with and why.

Viability*

YachatsNews has experienced rapid growth since 2019, which we believe reflects the professionalism of our report and the community's thirst for local news. At the end of its first year in 2019, the YachatsNews site averaged 15,000 page views a month. That tripled in 2020, doubled in 2021 and 2022 and now averages 175,000 page views a month. While we have readers and donors from all over Lincoln County (and Oregon) we continue to hear that the geographically limiting name "YachatsNews" hurts our penetration of major areas of Lincoln County. So we're changing the name to reflect the entire county (but it's a secret until we get the proper registration and domain rights). How well the work of this newly-named outfit is received will be easy to measure – page views and reader donations. We expect a significant jump in page views with a name change and marketing that better gets the word out about what we are doing. The project's success can also be measured by the amount of new donations from readers. YachatsNews completed a special, local fundraising campaign in October (following our annual campaign in June) that resulted in nearly \$30,000 in donations from 128 readers – some who made one-time contributions and others who signed up to donate monthly. Those numbers should grow as our geographic reach expands – and again help fund our operations. We plan to complete this project by April 30, 2025. It will not need ongoing funding.

How will the success of this project be judged? State success measures and timeline. Will this project need ongoing funding? and how will this be secured?

Desired Start Date*

1/6/2025

Desired End Date*

4/30/2025

Budget Documents*

EDALC.YN.Budget.pdf

Please submit as a PDF file

Letter(s) of Support

Grant Files.pdf

At least one letter of support is required for an Impact application.

Name of Chief Executive*

Quinton Smith

Title*

Editor/board chair

Chief Executive Email*

YachatsNews@gmail.com

Tax ID Number*

92-0324739

Type of Applicant Organization*

501(c)(3) Nonprofit

YachatsNews	Renaming and Rebranding Project	
	Amount	Status
Expenses		<i>(committed, planned, pending)</i>
Blue Sprocket (Ad) Brokerage	\$6,000	Mailers, radio and billboards
Brett Cambria Design	\$3,000	Rebranding work
Joshua Hicks, Web design	\$3,500	Web design/back end work
TOTAL	\$12,500	
YachatsNews		
Contribution to project	\$3,000	From operating funds
EDALC REQUEST	\$9,500	

DAVID GOMBERG
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 10



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Nov. 18, 2024

Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County
Waldport, Ore.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for YachatsNews and its grant request to help with funding for upgrades to its website, graphics work on its name change and a re-branding/marketing campaign to alert readers in all of Lincoln County to its expanding role.

YachatsNews has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to high-quality journalism and community engagement. Over the last five years, it has become an indispensable source of information for residents in my legislative district, providing thorough coverage of local government, education, and social issues – especially in light of the decline of local news organizations on our Oregon Coast.

Its efforts have been instrumental in fostering a well-informed public, which is crucial for a healthy democracy and community development.

YachatsNews is a 501c3 nonprofit with a proven track record of community support and journalistic excellence. In 2022, the community generously contributed over \$50,000, enabling the hiring of their first full-time reporter. In 2023 and twice so far in 2024, the community showed its support again, raising a total of nearly \$80,000 to support its operations and to help fund plans to expand to more of Lincoln County. This strong community backing underscores the trust and value placed in YachatsNews.

I firmly believe that supporting YachatsNews in this grant request aligns with our collective goal of fostering an informed and engaged community for all of Lincoln County. I urge you to consider this grant request favorably, as it represents an investment in the future of our community, ensuring that critical local issues receive the attention and coverage they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Gomberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "G" at the end.

Representative David Gomberg
Oregon House District 10

11730 NE Beverly Drive
Newport, OR 97365-9540
November 17, 2024

Re: Letter for support for grant request by YachatsNews

I am a Portland native and retired science writer who worked 24 years as a journalist – including a decade as a national science writer for The Associated Press – and 16 years as a university research publicist. After living outside Oregon for 40 years, I retired to the Newport area on the central coast in 2017 only to find it becoming a “virtual news desert” – a place where a withering newspaper is so poorly staffed by underpaid employees that it cannot cover local news adequately.

When I arrived in 2017, the twice-weekly News-Times in Newport – county seat of Lincoln County – had three reporters and a managing editor. Since then, the newspaper dropped to weekly publication, was bought out by Country Media and merged with the Lincoln City newspaper and eliminated three reporting positions. Vital issues in Lincoln County receive scant to no coverage from the merged Lincoln County Leader, which often prints news releases instead of doing original reporting. And media from Portland and the Willamette Valley pay little attention to news on the coast.

The only good source of news in Lincoln County is the online YachatsNews, run by Quinton Smith, a retired Oregonian editor. By himself, Smith did a better job covering the county than the Newport paper, and when he hired a reporter the coverage got even better. Now, Smith is seeking grants to re-tool his operation, change its name, hire a qualified second reporter who will be based in Newport and cover county government, schools, social services, housing/homelessness and other issues.

The YachatsNews repeatedly has filled the gap left by the Newport newspaper’s poor coverage. In both the 2024 primary and general elections, YachatsNews got Lincoln County election results from the county clerk’s office soon after the polls closed, and quickly wrote stories and put them online that night. In contrast, the Lincoln County Leader took more than a week in both the primary and general elections to report the county results online or in print. And, as of this writing (Nov. 17), they still haven’t reported results of some local tax levy votes or on mayoral and council races in several cities.

Other stories covered by YachatsNews (and not covered in a timely manner or at all by the Newport paper) include tension among the county commissioners, sheriff, district attorney and presiding judge over a deflection program for people arrested on drug charges; research at Hatfield Marine Science Center; and the interviews and selection of a new community college president. In a very recent case, the Newport paper and the Portland media simply rewrote a very sketchy sheriff’s news release about a deputy fatally shooting an armed person who has been shooting in a residential neighborhood in Waldport. Only the YachatsNews sent a reporter to the scene to reveal the tragic story of the mentally ill and heavily armed woman U.S. Marine Corps veteran who was killed.

YachatsNews is my go-to source for news in Lincoln County, which has a heavy concentration of educated retirees like me craving to be informed. It will get even better if YachatsNews expands its reach to more of Lincoln County. YachatsNews is doing its best to provide that -- and will do even better under its expansion plan.

Regards,

Lee J. Siegel, retired science writer for The Associated Press, Salt Lake Tribune, University of Utah, space.com and newspapers in Longview, Bellevue and Port Angeles, Wash.

Dave & Niki Price
2163 NE Reef Ave.
Lincoln City, OR 97367

Nov. 18, 2024

This is to offer enthusiastic support for your consideration of the grant request from YachatsNews.

Our background is in newspapers. We moved to Lincoln City in 1996 when Dave became publisher of The News Guard. Within a few weeks, necessity led to Niki serving as editor. We know firsthand the power of effective, inquisitive, and robust journalism in rural communities. Lamentably, we've seen firsthand the effects of the growing paucity of such journalism.

Without an energetic and established Fourth Estate, communities fray at the edges. Disinformation fills the information vacuum. Accountability becomes less important and the risk of malfeasance in trusted public offices grows.

Newport is in the throes of yet another round of media degradation. The News Times has shuttered, merging with the Lincoln City News Guard as the combined "Lincoln County Leader." The merger has been marked by terminations and cutbacks. We're dismayed by the lack of reporters at City Council meetings, fundraising events, county meetings, and more. Frankly, we expect the remaining staff at the Leader feel the same.

Meanwhile, while news coverage declines before our eyes, important issues abound. The Big Creek Dam replacement will be one of the largest public works projects on the coast this decade, if it can be delivered. The city is once again exploring the idea of subsidizing commercial air service to Newport – something that has failed each time it has been tried before. The NOAA fleet will renegotiate its contract with the city, or select a new home, at some point in the next seven years.

These are but a few of many examples of issues and questions that would benefit mightily by the expansion of the YachatsNews' established, proven operation. We've worked in competitive news markets for our entire careers and we know competition improves the work on both sides, thus further benefitting the communities served.

Let's help YachatsNews – with a new, broader name to reflect countywide news coverage – accomplish this.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dave & Niki Price