

WE CAN FOUNDATION

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TO: Board, of the Christmas Valley Park and Recreation District
Christmas Valley, OR 97641
November 2nd, 2019

The Christmas Valley Rodeo grounds had been in a state of deterioration for years; it was in desperate need of repair, and as a Park and Recreation property, it needed to be profitable again. The Foundations discussion about the property included it being a key property inside Christmas Valley and it needed to be refurbished. Prior to us contacting you, we did our due diligence and queried groups about bringing events to Christmas Valley once the grounds had some work done—there was great interest. We then researched the feasibility of grants and they are available. With this in mind, we presented to you, the park and recreation board, a plan to upgrade the rodeo grounds into an equine event center/multi-use facility. It wasn't going to happen this year or next year...but it would happen, one project, one grant, and one work day at a time with event monies going back into the rodeo grounds. The board agreed for us to do this.

Every Rodeo Club, and Horse Association in Christmas Valley has failed; strong personalities frustrating everybody causing people to abandon the group. This is why we opted to function as a committee; no membership, no voting for officers, just professionals getting the grounds back into shape. This is what you agreed to.

The Desert Whispers paper is printed to support Park and Recreation Properties but each of the summer playdays--rodeo grounds events-- were in the back half of the paper. Promotions, as a rule are not in the back half of a paper. This fail was not against us, but your own property. Your own paper did not support your own properties. Is there not a rule that a tax district can compete against private papers if they are in fact promoting their own properties?

Miss Womack was invited to join our committee. Miss Womack brought in other persons who were a deterrence more so than a help. When Barbara heard Miss Womack refer to the committee as a Rodeo Club she reminded her we were a committee, we were not a club. The

We Can – Help Business
We Can – Help our Communities

We Can – Help our Neighbor
We Can – Be a catalyst for great things

We Can –Because we're stubborn that way

downhill slide between Miss Womack and Mr. Terrell was epic and originated with the fourth of July parade, having nothing to do with the committee. No-one from the Foundation was present for the actual blow-ups but when Barbara heard of the problems she always had that necessary conversation with Mr. Terrell. However, I will say, when one is riding in an arena open to the public on non-event days, one keeps an eye out and if they are working their horse and would prefer to have the arena to themselves a simple conversation and asking someone to wait is not unheard of. This is a courtesy accepted *throughout* the horse world but the need *has to be communicated*. The interactions between Miss Womack and Mr. Terrell declined to what some would refer to as childish behavior and others as all out war. Some of the problems between the two evolved around Terry wanting to ride after a grounds workday but not wanting to leave his horse in the trailer while we worked; I totally understand his concern. We secured a place Mr. Terrell could safely put his horse during the work day. This is again a reminder of why we are a committee and not a club. Someone gets mad at someone, sides are taken, and the club fails. The committee did not fail, we continued to work on the grounds, got new barrels, and had another playday. We continued the process of developing the plans and breaking it into smaller projects that were small bite size chunks for work days and grant seeking. We didn't stop there; we continued reaching out to various disciplines to generate interest in coming out here and verifying feasibility, and what their needs would be to ensure the grounds was a great host to their event bringing them back in following years.

Nobody cared about the rodeo grounds or had an interest in repairing this key property until we had the permissions to rehabilitate it. Oddly, people were suddenly interested and/or felt they could do better and let the fun begin. Park and Recreation instead of making the hard decisions, staying true to the verbal agreement with us, seemed to flounder. You didn't support us, you 'left the door open' signaling to us we did not have the full backing of the board but we continued.

Our end goal was the final two-step project of enclosing the arena [step one roofing and step two putting up the walls] a facility that would have given local equine enthusiasts' a year round facility to train, ride, and participate in equine events, and would have given Park and Recreation the only fully enclosed space holding more than 150 persons...the opportunities that presented are boundless.

Your own Board President made the comment that she felt Park and Recreation should manage the rodeo grounds. May we remind you, in recent years, the boards idea of managing the rodeo grounds, an equine facility, was to use the facility as a dumping site to include putting rock in the arena; I believe that was part of the decision letting us step in and do the hard work of bringing the rodeo grounds back to life and generating profit..

And now you quibble over \$14.00 of 'no smoking' signs that were installed on your property. Each of us on the committee have spent personal funds and the Foundation bought items

with their monies. At no time did we ask for reimbursement, yet you decline to pay \$14 for no smoking signs installed on your property, in part, because your own employee was at the rodeo grounds standing in a bunch of dead cheat grass, flicking cigarette ashes behind the stalls. But you know all this and I digress. When the second batch of no-smoking signs was bought it wasn't days or weeks later, it was the same day and less than an hour later. We got the additional signs because we didn't want people thinking they could smoke in the south pasture of dead grass; we got the additional signs to help protect your property. Instead of paying the bill and saying please don't do that again, or contacting us to explain why you didn't pay for the signs; you chose to have Santa's hardware notify us.

Park and recreation is not only working against us, they are working against themselves. Park and Recreation is willing to settle for the crumbs and are not seeing the bigger potential. Please recall in our initial letter we stated the need to bring in outside events to make the rodeo grounds profitable. People pay to golf and use other Park and Recreation properties so it makes sense to institute a flat monthly fee for arena usage. We were not given management of the rodeo grounds so we were unable to institute that policy—a policy that makes sense.

The Foundation board has had discussions regarding the situation. Bottom line is we do not want to be in the position of investing our time and other resources, doing the hard work of planning and then applying for grants, and ultimately losing the grounds to another entity—whoever they may be; seeing the end goal coming to fruition would be our only reward and not being able to participate in that would be devastating after getting the process to that point.

Your actions indicate a lack of trust and without trust you haven't allowed us to manage the property properly. If the Park and Recreation Board would like us to move forward with the project we are happy to do that but only if the board gives us full managing authority—in writing! If you are not willing to give us the authority to develop the rodeo grounds into an equine event center, a necessary move to profitability, then consider us fired and we will walk away. To continue the mindset of past boards, will see the rodeo grounds continue the cycle it has been in for years.

This is not a decision we make lightly, let us know your decision.

RONALD D JOHNSON
President