



Tualatin is Named a Finalist in the America's Best Communities \$10 Million Prize Competition

Tualatin, Ore., April 28, 2016 – The celebration in Tualatin continues after being named one of eight finalists in the America's Best Communities (ABC) competition yesterday. Tualatin ABC Team Members Mayor Lou Ogden, John Bartholomew from Mask & Mirror Community Theatre and Bethany Wurtz from the Tualatin Tomorrow Vision Advisory Committee presented Tualatin's pitch to the panel of judges in a "Shark Tank" environment. The pitch was based on Tualatin's Community Revitalization Plan which was developed as part of the quarter-finalist round of the competition.

Tualatin's Community Revitalization Plan focuses on increasing opportunity and the standard of living for everyone in the community through advancing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) education. While Tualatin continues to seek solutions to all community-defined needs and priorities described in the Tualatin Tomorrow Vision, the ABC initiative is hyper-focused on one specific target: connecting youth and underserved populations to STEAM education and CTE training that align with Tualatin's advanced manufacturing industry base. In addition to providing jobs and personal growth opportunities for residents, the plan will help the community begin to develop a workforce pipeline for a large cross-section of employers.

In the short-term Tualatin plans to build a mobile makerspace enabling students to create, build, and enjoy hands-on learning. Makerspaces are interdisciplinary innovation spaces dedicated to the art and science of manufacturing goods. The mobile makerspace will be scaled to serve students K-12 with special emphasis on elementary and middle school, girls, and minorities. Its unique attribute is mobility. It will literally roll to wherever the kids are; schools, neighborhoods, and community events, to maximize utilization. The team is working with employers to acquire equipment to outfit a trailer with computers for multimedia and CAD, 3D printers, various tools and equipment that will connect kids to the latest technology. Initial funding will be from the ABC award and local commitments.

Longer-term, Tualatin intends to supplement the mobile maker space with a permanent Community Career and Creative Center. The Center would provide space to add larger maker equipment, conduct classes and workshops and integrate performing arts.

More than 350 communities nationwide entered the competition after its launch in 2014, and 50 were selected as quarterfinalists in April 2015, and this was narrowed to 15 semi-finalists in January 2016.

Tualatin's Team including the City, the Tualatin Chamber, Mask & Mirror Community Theatre, the Tigard-Tualatin School District, Tualatin Tomorrow Visioning Committee, South Metro-Salem STEM Partnership and other businesses and community members developed a community revitalization plan focusing on long-term and short-term goals.

"The feeling in the room was electric! You could just feel the passion each presenter felt when talking about their hometown," said team member Bethany Wurtz.

The America's Best Communities finalists are: Lake Havasu City, Arizona; Statesboro, Georgia; Valley County/Meadows Valley, Idaho; Chisago Lakes Area, Minnesota; Huntington, West Virginia; Darrington/Arlington, Washington; Tualatin, Oregon; and Madison, Indiana. Sponsored by Frontier Communications, DISH Network, CoBank and The Weather Channel, the America's Best Communities competition has dedicated \$10 million in prizes and other support to spark economic revitalization in small towns and rural communities across the country.

"We are so grateful to have stumbled upon this opportunity because it has helped us to discover an answer to a challenge we have faced for many years. This project is going to change people's lives," said Mayor Lou Ogden.

All eight finalists were awarded \$100,000 to begin implementation of their plans. In April 2017, the top three communities making the largest impact and showing the greatest potential for achieving sustainable revitalization will be selected as the grand prize winners. The first place community will receive \$3 million, the second place community \$2 million, and \$1 million for third.

To learn more about Tualatin's plans, visit www.tualatinabc.org.



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