

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 21, 2008

**\$531,000 Grant Awarded to the Northeast Oregon Network
(NEON)
to Strengthen the Rural Healthcare Systems in Baker, Union,
and Wallowa Counties.**

La Grande, OR – The Northeast Oregon Network (NEON) and the Center for Human Development, Inc. (CHD) recently received a three-year \$500,000 grant from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy to assist in meeting the diverse health needs of rural eastern Oregon. NEON is a group of healthcare providers and social service agencies from Union, Baker and Wallowa counties who have worked to address healthcare needs in eastern Oregon for the past three years.

Currently in northeast Oregon at least one in four people are uninsured and have difficulty accessing necessary health services. NEON will utilize this grant to strengthen the collaborative network, to raise awareness through health promotion, and to increase access to primary care services and medical homes in the network area by establishing an outreach and enrollment program based upon the national model of Covering Kids and Families.

Union County Commissioner Steve McClure, is pleased to hear the news of NEON's success. "This funding is so timely, NEON members have worked very, very hard for this grant and it's something that is needed in this community right now."

State Senator David Nelson echoed Commissioner McClure's congratulations; "Far before other health providers and agencies joined forces [...] in order to enhance health services for residents of underserved, rural communities, NEON began its mission of collaboration and integration of services. Now, NEON has succeeded in bringing home a prized grant which will go a long way in providing access to health services including health education and preventative care to Union, Wallowa and Baker Counties." Nelson further stated, "This is great news and a real opportunity to increase health care access in these communities".

For more information on NEON see
http://www.cjaonline.net/Communities/OR_Neon.htm

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