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# Skyline Rural Watch Newsline

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SRNPDX.ORG | Facebook Group: Skyline Ridge Neighbors



**Date:**

## IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOOD INTERNET

*Barbara LaMorticella has been diligently working on finding a solution to the poor internet service many of us endure in our neighborhood. Here is an email she sent that details what she's been working on.*

### 1. Brad Witt:

Caleb, Rep. Brad Witt's aide, told George Sowder that Witt is interested in perhaps introducing internet legislation. Witt met last Thursday with industry representatives. George talked to Caleb Friday about that meeting. Most of the people Witt met with were cellphone reps. We need to find out what Witt is thinking about legislation, and let him know our area's concerns and priorities.

Caleb also told George that there are federal funds available for rural communities to get high speed internet, but that applying is difficult and slow.

### 2. Federal efforts:

We need to reach out to Senators Jeff Merkley & Ron Wyden and Rep. Suzanne Bonamici to alert them to the area's internet service difficulties & let them know that, although we are so close to Portland,

we are still a rural area. Our hope would be to get information from the legislators about the federal guidelines for funds, & if possible get their help or guidance on maneuvering through federal hoops. But we would present a stronger case to them if we had some hard data in hand- and also a name. (See below).

### **3. Hard data:**

We plan to gather data with a survey of our area's internet service. Miles Merwin has agreed to run a short article in the January SRN newsletter alerting folks to a survey and providing an internet link to it. We'd appreciate help and advice in formulating survey questions and working out the technical nuts and bolts. We'd particularly welcome hearing from anyone who has participated in designing or tabulating a survey. The deadline for coming up with the survey format and questions is the January SRN newsletter deadline.

### **4. Name:**

There was a news item on KBOO radio recently about carriers wanting to discontinue DSL service. Apparently, AT&T is only the first big carrier to officially close DSL for new customers. When it did so, it promised to not cut off existing DSL customers. The news item went on to note that this would be a problem for many rural people, as DSL is currently the main way rural communities get their internet.

Earthlink offered no promise of continued service, but abruptly dropped its Century Link DSL customers in early September. I was one of those customers, which brought me into this effort. Given the circumstances, I suggest "Rural Internet Service Equity" (RISE) as a good name for our working group.

### **5. Equity:**

In Canada, the internet is regarded as an essential public utility. But as far as the internet is concerned, the U.S. is presently the Wild West. That's where we, and other citizen groups, need to come in. Internet is no longer a luxury, but a necessity, and needs to be affordable and serviceable for everyone.

My friend Patty Mclean tells me she's part of a working group called

the Digital Inclusion Network that's sponsored by the City of Portland and meets monthly (since the pandemic struck, it meets on Zoom). She's going to send me their newest working paper. I'll forward it to anyone who's interested. Patty says a representative from RISE would be welcome to attend. She compares what needs to be done to the Rural Electrification Program in the 30s.

Interestingly, Susan M. Noah, the President of the Oregon State Grange, made rural digital equity the center of this year's President's annual address to Grange members. From her address: "Now is the time to call for a dedication of adequate resources to completely eliminate the digital divide. Resources should be focused on broadband deployment that will most rapidly and cost effectively bridge the broadband gap. We should demand that broadband funding meets specific needs. ... Funds should go to prioritize the speed of deployment, the number of unserved Americans who can be reached, and the cost-effectiveness of the project, rather than pushing the market towards one structure over other."

It's important to identify our area's needs and requirements and communicate them to legislators as regulations are being drafted.

## **6. Personal & Contact Info:**

When Earthlink abruptly canceled my internet service in September, I discovered that satellite service is the only current option up here. But when I talked to neighbors about their satellite service, I discovered that for most it's been unsatisfactory- expensive, limited, unreliable, and slow. Signing a two-year contract for bad service, with a high penalty for withdrawal, seemed like extortion to me. I refused to do it, and currently don't have internet at home, but go up the road and access it every few days. Of course this makes it very hard to participate in a group effort!

I apologize for my slowness. I've had to be away from the internet for more than a week. One way or another, I'll hook up with a provider in mid to late December. In the meantime, the most reliable and quickest way to reach me is by phone: 503-621-9894, or if I'm up the road checking the internet, my cell is 971-344-2786. I don't use the cell

often, and it's non- internet connected. You can try to reach me on it, but it's best to leave messages on my home answering machine. I pick up those messages quickly.

## **7. Future:**

Portland's Digital Inclusion Network has been meeting monthly for seven years(!) But I think we've reached a tipping point with Covid, and though solutions won't be immediate, we should get some kind of legislative attention and action on the matter fairly quickly. I'm hoping we can create a neighborhood group to help get better service here and steer public policy away from the rocks of high costs and unregulated, or badly regulated, internet service.

Between now and the end of the year is a fraught time. I suggest we plan an open informational and organizational meeting for all interested sometime after the turn of the year, observing all social guidelines. Cindy Banks has offered the use of her lovely place, the old Brooks Hill Church, where we can also set up a zoom screen.

## **8. Immediate Jobs:**

Putting together and tabulating the results of the survey.

Contacting Brad Witt's office to find out his timeline. We may have to draft a letter to him before the first official meeting, letting him know we're here, what our priorities are, and asking to be included in any further legislative planning meetings. If you're interested in doing this, let me know! Citizen groups have more weight with legislators than individuals (unless the individuals are gazillionaires), so it would be good to start identifying ourselves as members of RISE (Rural Internet Service Equity) when contacting legislators and officials.

Planning the first organizational meeting. We'll want to identify and invite speakers and put together an agenda. (Would anyone be interested in researching internet access in other countries and reporting on how and if it's regulated?)

Recruiting and interesting people with special skills who may be able to help- (lawyers, IT people, researchers, and....)

Please call me if you can help with any of these tasks.

## 9. Thanks

Thanks to everyone who expressed possible interest in serving on the steering committee! I'm sending this to you, with ccs to other neighbors who may be civic minded and interested.

I apologize for the length of this email, and thank everyone who managed to read through it. Feel free to call me with any comments, suggestions or questions.

Here's to a peaceful end to this awful year, and to a better 2021.

Barbara LaMorticella

home and message: 503 621 9894

cell: 971 344 2786

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## **AMAZON SMILE**

Doing any shopping on Amazon? Did you know that Skyline Ridge Neighbors, Inc is set up to participate in their Amazon Smile program where Amazon donates a bit of money from every purchase to a non-profit of your choosing?

This one time set up only takes a bit of time to set up then every time you make a purchase a donation is made to your organization of choice (which we hope is us!)

So, take a little time to set it up and make some donations to SRN without costing you anything!

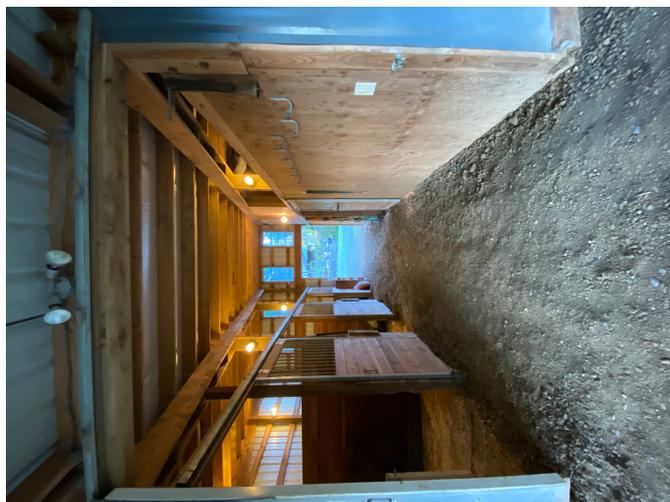
## **BURNING BRUSH PILES?**

Why not take a moment to pull some scotch broom to add to that pile? Borrow the weed wrench to easily pull and eliminate Scotch broom, holly & other woody shrubs and sapling trees easily. SRN will lend 3 sizes of Weed Wrench. Contact Sen 503.621.3331 for large & medium size (Skyline near mile marker 15). Contact Laura 503.407.7175 for small size (McNamee Rd.).

## “BARN WITH A VIEW”: NOW OPEN ON SKYLINE RIDGE

Located off Skyline Boulevard west of Cornelius Pass, the Rich Family Farm is now opening our 3-stall barn to offer full board to ponies or horses. We provide a friendly environment to support the well-being of horse and rider, in a casual, independent, rural setting. Our lighted outdoor small dressage arena has an expansive valley view with shared tack room, indoor barn aisle, stocked kitchenette and cozy upstairs tv/art/resting loft for boarders' use. Jump standards and pole bending poles available. We feed hay and grain twice daily, with 10 x 10' stalls and daily pasture turnout. Cost is \$485 per month.

Please email [jenniferannarich@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferannarich@gmail.com) for more information.



### Calendar

Find the community calendar here: <http://www.srnpx.org/calendar.html>

### Resource Directory

As a service to neighbors, SRN publishes a listing of local government agencies and businesses in the [Skyline Resource Directory](#). Follow the links in this section to view its contents and learn how to add a business or agency listing. Listing of organizations and businesses herein does not imply any

endorsement of SRN nor does it imply a lack of endorsement for similar organizations or businesses not included.

## Community Links

Skyline Grange: <http://www.srnpx.org/grange.html>

Forest Park Conservancy: <http://www.forestparkconservancy.org/>

Linnton Community Center: <http://www.linntoncommunitycenter.org/>

Linnton Neighborhood Association: <http://linntonna.org/>

West Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation District: <http://wmswcd.org/>

Skyline School: <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/skyline/>

Skyline School PTA: <https://skylineschoolpta.com/>

Lincoln High School: <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools/lincoln/>

## About the Newsline

Skyline Rural Watch Newsline is a part of Skyline Ridge Neighbors (SRN) and has been produced since June 1994 as a means to communicate neighborhood information. The Newsline is produced by Laurel Erhardt (editor) with help from Miles Merwin, Libby Merwin, and Sen Speroff.

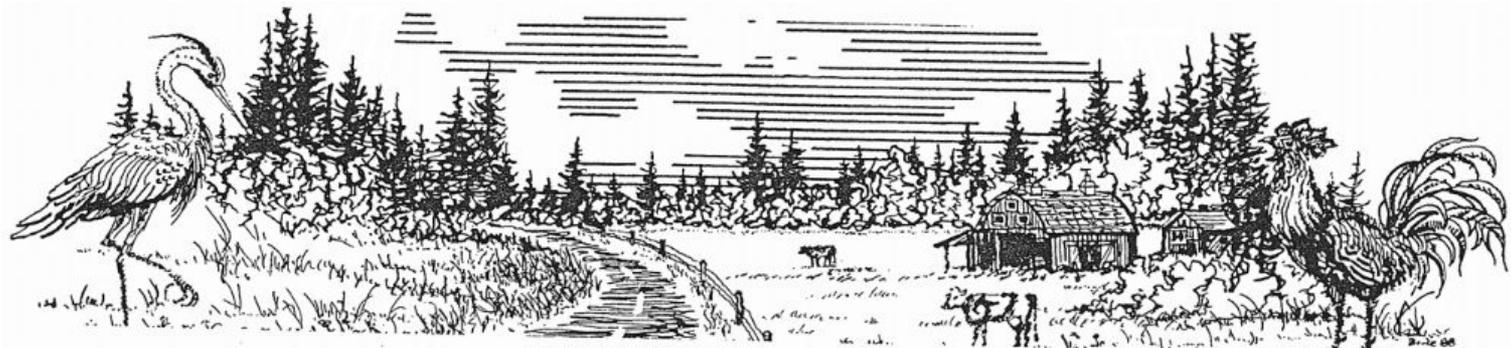
The Newsline depends on you as a source of accurate information about local crimes, upcoming events, and other news pertinent to the area. If you have information you would like considered for the Newsline, you may do so by e-mailing the information to [newsline@srnpx.org](mailto:newsline@srnpx.org), or leaving a message at (503) 621-3501. Urgent, timely items (crimes, lost pets) should be emailed to [alert@srnpx.org](mailto:alert@srnpx.org). If you would like more detailed information about any item on the Newsline, request that information & SRN will e-mail it to you if available.

You can [subscribe to the Newsline](#) at the Skyline Ridge Neighbors website, SRNPDX.org. Tell your neighbors about this free Newsline service.

## About Skyline Ridge Neighbors

SRN is a neighborhood association serving much of unincorporated northwest Multnomah County and some adjacent areas within the city of Portland. SRN is registered as a neighborhood association within Multnomah County, registered as a non-profit public benefit corporation with the State of Oregon and approved as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization under the IRS Code. SRN is operated by volunteers and with donated funds entirely.

If you would like to donate to SRN in support of its activities, such as this free Newsline service and the publication of its quarterly Skyline Ridge Runner, send your donation to "Skyline Ridge Neighbors", c/o Rachael Brake, 14109 NW Rock Creek Rd, Portland OR 97231. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



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