



Making it easy for local food producers and buyers to access markets and products since 2007

NEWS RELEASE

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The **Local Food Connection** will bring together local farmers, ranchers, & fishermen with area food buyers - from Lane, Linn, Benton counties and more. Monday, Feb 6, 2012 from 8:30am – 4:00pm at Lane Community College, Center for Meeting & Learning.

Business opportunities, networking and education are the main focus of this sixth annual business-to-business conference. A gourmet luncheon, featuring all locally grown products donated by area producers will allow for appraisal of the many products our local producers supply us with.

The theme of this year's conference, **local food=economic security**, was inspired by a recent report from the University of Oregon which showed that a 1% increase in spending on local food yields \$11.7 million dollars in increased local revenue for Lane County.

In honor of the sixth year milestone and this year's theme, attendees will have the opportunity to hear Karla Chambers, Vice President and co-owner of Stahlbush Island Farms speak. She is uniquely qualified to present this year's keynote address. Her experience building and managing a large farm and food processing facility in the Willamette Valley is paired with her strong background in financial management. Mrs. Chambers sits on the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

During the last two years of our conference, attendees estimated that they made nearly 400 new business contacts and that these new business relationships would result in increased revenues of \$400,000 to \$700,000. Food buyers are benefited by connecting with a variety of producers at one time, forging links and helping them stay on top of local trends and changes in regional suppliers. Food producers have easy access to a large number of food buyers from grocery store managers, to restaurants owners and chefs, to distributors, and processors – all in a comfortable and casual setting, allowing for connections.

Workshops feature diverse panelists representing producers, food buyers and distributors, municipal agencies, and area nonprofits. Topics include NEW action plans being implemented for driving growth of our food-sector industry by Lane County government and other agencies, agritourism opportunities & zoning updates, grants and resources for farmers, and processing opportunities for area growers and buyers - to name a few. For a full description of workshops and conference itinerary, visit www.localfoodconnection.org.

The event is presented by Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation & Development (CPRCD). **Founding Sponsors** - Eugene Water & Electric Board, Oregon Tilth, and Lane Community College Center for Meeting and Learning. **Gold Sponsor** - Café Yumm!.

Cascade Pacific RC&D is a non-profit organization that works with citizens of rural communities to help enhance their quality of life through social, economic, and environmental improvement.

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