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RootedHomes recently announced the appointment of **Nathan "Than" Clevenger** as its new executive director and **Eliza Wilson** as deputy director. These leadership changes come as Karl Dinkelspiel steps down from his role as Interim executive director and deputy director, effective June 26, 2025.



Clevenger brings over two decades of extensive experience in real estate development and affordable housing across North America. With a proven track record of leading successful development firms and raising significant capital, Clevenger is a "field first" leader dedicated to private/nonprofit collaborations to address the global housing crisis. He aims to leverage his expertise in land acquisition, finance and community development to create impactful, affordable and sustainable housing solutions throughout Central Oregon, believing the region can be a national leader in such collaborative models.

"I am humbled to be selected to help lead an organization that is at the forefront of leveraging their experience in construction and community development to create the American dream for hard-working families in Central Oregon," said Clevenger.

Wilson is a dedicated affordable housing advocate and strategic systems builder whose lifelong connection to Central Oregon deeply informs her work. Drawing from her own lived experience with youth homelessness, Wilson has built a career focused on transforming housing and homelessness systems to be more equitable, responsive and rooted in human dignity. She will play a key role in expanding access to permanently affordable homeownership and supporting long-term housing stability, while also serving as Chair of Central Oregon's Continuum of Care and a board member of the Regional Housing Council.

"My work has always been about building systems that respond to the full spectrum of housing needs — from crisis to stability," said Wilson. "Joining RootedHomes is a natural extension of that mission, and I'm looking forward to deepening cross-sector partnerships to ensure everyone has access to a safe, affordable place to call home."

Dinkelspiel served as RootedHomes' Interim executive director since March 2025, and previously as deputy director starting January 1, 2024. During his nearly two years with RootedHomes, Dinkelspiel was instrumental in significantly advancing the organization's development efforts. Under his leadership, RootedHomes began construction on three projects totaling 81 new units across Bend and Redmond, with the first owners moving in this summer. He also played a key role in securing land for three additional projects in Redmond and Prineville, which will add another approximately 80 units to RootedHomes' portfolio. Dinkelspiel also helped establish key partnerships and was a founding member of the now thirty-member strong Partners for Affordable Housing coalition.

"It's been a great honor to be a member of the amazing RootedHomes team," said Karl Dinkelspiel. "I've so enjoyed it, especially the chance to work with our truly talented and dedicated staff and partners."

RootedHomes looks forward to its continued growth and impact under the leadership of Clevenger and Wilson, building upon the strong foundation laid by Dinkelspiel.



Brian August has joined the nonprofit Tower Theatre Foundation as executive director, marking an exciting new chapter for the historic performing arts theatre. Under August's leadership, the board and staff are looking ahead with renewed energy and commitment to creativity, connection and community.

August brings over 20 years of leadership experience in the nonprofit sector, including roles at CauseMic, the Oregon Humane Society and Slalom Consulting. His expertise in strategic planning, team development and sustainable growth, paired with a deep passion for arts and culture, makes him the right leader to guide the theatre forward.

A resident of Bend, he is also a volunteer board member of the Humane Society of Central Oregon and has a longstanding commitment

to community-based service.

SCORE Central Oregon announced **Klaus Mager** as one of its newest members, serving as a certified mentor. Mager brings more than 40 years of foodservice industry experience, beginning his career as a fourth generation, classically trained chef in Germany. Over the decades, he has held leadership roles with the Walt Disney Company in California and Hong Kong and served as head of corporate marketing for Metro C&C in Düsseldorf, one of the world's largest food wholesalers with operations in 30 countries. Since retiring from corporate life, Mager has turned his focus to the intersection of food, agriculture and environmental health. He works with nonprofits and community groups to support regenerative farmers and help local food businesses connect with new markets. Mager offers a wealth of practical knowledge to both established companies and aspiring entrepreneurs, with a special passion for helping small businesses navigate the rapidly changing foodservice landscape. He and his wife, Janet, have called Bend home since 2016, and are grateful to be part of the High Desert community.



COCC'S 2024 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY | PHOTO COURTESY OF COCC

Central Oregon Community College's (COCC) 2025 commencement ceremony, held on June 14 with more than 300 graduates in attendance, included the naming of four student award recipients: **Brad Bennett, Betsy Green, Kaia Hagenbach** and **Nasadia Voltz**.

In full, 759 degrees and certificates are being awarded this academic year at COCC: 598 degrees and 161 certificates.

Hagenbach, of Bend, received the Walter G. Coombs Distinguished Achievement Award, which recognizes the student who maintains the highest scholastic average among those receiving a certificate of completion. Hagenbach earned certificates in graphic design and illustration while maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

Green, of Bend, merited the COCC Distinguished Student Service Award, an honor presented to the student who exhibits a strong contribution to the campus through innovative initiatives, volunteerism, leadership and academic excellence. Green has held leadership roles in student government and in student clubs such as the Q+ and Umbrella Clubs, and also served as an admissions ambassador. She earned an associate of arts Oregon transfer degree and is planning a career in higher education.

Voltz, of Bend, received the Avon F. Mayfield Award, presented to a student who displays progress in scholarship, quality of leadership, contribution to student welfare, progress toward useful and active citizenship and outstanding service. Voltz, a first-generation college student, received an associate of applied science degree in addiction counseling and behavioral health. She has been an advocate for others, pushing for change in addiction recovery and highlighting

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harm reduction.

Bennett, of Bend, received the Helen Leicester Honorary Scholastic Award, a COCC award that honors the student who receives an associate degree while maintaining the highest GPA with the highest number of credits. While earning an associate of applied science in paramedicine, Bennett maintained a straight 4.0 GPA with 94 credits earned. He is currently a state-certified paramedic and working as a firefighter-paramedic with Crook County Fire & Rescue.

The commencement ceremony featured student speaker Irving Daniel of Bend who earned his GED through COCC and went on to receive certification training as a peer support specialist and a certificate in community health, leading to a job as a residential counselor in behavioral health. Daniel led a campus-wide binge-drinking awareness campaign. He plans to pursue an associate of arts Oregon transfer degree in public health and then transfer to a university.

The Bethlehem Inn Board of Directors announces the appointment of Michael Hancock as its new executive director. Hancock, who has served as interim executive director since February following the retirement announcement of longtime leader, Gwenn Wysling, will now officially take the helm to guide Bethlehem Inn into its next chapter.

Hancock brings a rich background spanning business, education and crisis management. He joined during a period of significant change, including the completion of the new Bend campus and the onset of a global pandemic. His leadership has been instrumental in evolving programs, enhancing staff training and development, and helping launch the Bethlehem Inn Redmond Community Housing (BIRCH) program.

"I joined the team in 2019, a time of transition. Or as I like to think of it, a time of transformation," Hancock shared. "We were preparing to open the new Bend campus, and just months later, found ourselves navigating the challenges of a global health crisis. I'm proud of how our team stepped up, adapted and grew stronger together."

Reflecting on his journey, Hancock added, "Long before my time at Bethlehem Inn, I recognized that there were members of our community who needed help. At first, I believed it was the community's responsibility to support those in need. Over time, I came to understand something deeper: we are not required to help, we choose to help."

The Board expressed confidence in Hancock's leadership and vision. "Michael has proven himself to be a steady, thoughtful and compassionate leader," said Kevin Link, president of the Bethlehem Inn Board of Directors. "He understands the mission of Bethlehem Inn and has the experience and heart to move the organization forward."

Bethlehem Inn is a community-supported emergency shelter that provides



PHOTO | COURTESY OF BEND-LA PINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

a safe environment for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Central Oregon.

Five community members elected in May to serve on the Board of Directors for **Bend-La Pine Schools** took the oath of office Tuesday evening at the board's monthly business meeting.

They include **Jenn Lynch**, newly elected to represent Zone 1, and **Ross Tomlin**, who was appointed to the Zone 6 at-large seat last November. Also taking the oath were re-elected Directors **Marcus LeGrand** (Zone 2), **Shirley Olson** (Zone 4) and **Kina Chadwick** (Zone 7).

Lynch succeeds Carrie McPherson Douglass, who served two terms on the school board and decided not to seek re-election this year. Superintendent Steven Cook and board members paid tribute to McPherson Douglass at Tuesday's meeting and thanked her for her service, including serving as board chair during the COVID pandemic.

Reflecting on her eight years on the board, McPherson Douglass said, "Student voice is the most important voice in the room, always. ... I really hope students will keep showing up. There's a few here tonight to speak. And I really hope that the board continues to find really meaningful ways to listen to them."

The board voted to approve the district's 2025-26 operating budget as well as updated bargaining agreements with unions representing certified and classified employees. The agreements include compensation adjustments for the next two fiscal years.

At its July 8 business meeting the board will elect its chair and vice chair for the 2025-26 term.

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