

# S U C C E S S S T O R I E S

Community & Economic Development Program

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## The Regional Housing Rehabilitation Program Helps Lane County Seniors Stay in their Homes

By Heather M. Edwards

*An RHRP loan will allow an Oakridge widow to stay in her home of 50 years. The new insulation and vinyl windows will lower her monthly/yearly utility bills. This year, she will be one of more than 150 loan recipients in Lane County.*

**E**ighty year-old Verna Allen won't have to work next winter in order to pay her utility bills. After her old single-pane windows are replaced with weatherized vinyl windows and insulation is installed in the attic and sub-flooring a degenerative spine condition and arthritis will be much more tolerable for this piano-playing widow.

As a loan recipient of the [Regional Housing Rehabilitation Program](#), Verna Allen will be able to stay in her own home. The few repairs she needs are all eligible under the RHRP priority guidelines for weatherization, livability and safety for the elderly. She will also be getting a new back deck and have walls replaced that have been damaged from dry rot.

RHRP is a regional consortium. Members currently include Lane County, [OHCS](#), and the cities of Florence, Oakridge, Lowell and Cottage Grove. The RHRP commitment is to rehabilitate the homes of Lane County residents who don't necessarily qualify for commercial loans.

"If it wasn't for this program this house would fall down around me," she says, "I've been so blessed."

She works two days a week at



Willamette Pass in order to pay her bills. While she is grateful for the railroad pension she receives it is not enough to make ends meet.

When her grandson came across an RHRP flyer advertising the same kind of repairs she couldn't previously afford, they looked into applying for a loan that could pay a contractor for the necessary work.

Contractor Michael Molton has been working in the Lane County area for more than 30 years. Four years ago he received a flyer in the mail and he has since completed several projects for RHRP loan recipients.

"Every project is different. Nothing is routine," Molton says of the various projects his company has taken on. He finds the work rewarding and prides himself on the fact that they haven't yet left a challenge unmet. "We get invited to dinner a lot," Molton says. "We always leave them happy."

Verna Allen is so excited about enjoying her "new" home she says that now she'll have to live until she's 100 years old to make the most out of it.

"Getting old isn't for sissies," she jokes, but now she has a safe place for her 24 great-grandchildren to visit her.

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