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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Council on Aging of Central Oregon Welcomes Seniors Back
for In-Person Dining in Bend**



*Council on Aging of Central Oregon opens the doors to its new Senior Services Center
for senior lunches*

November 16, 2022 – Bend, OR – The Council on Aging of Central Oregon (CoA) is pleased to announce that in-person senior community dining will return in Bend starting with a Thanksgiving meal on Wednesday, November 23rd. After three years of renovations to the old Bend Community Center, and closure due to the pandemic, lunch will now be served in the dining hall of the new CoA Senior Services Center at 1036 NE 5th Street in Bend. All people 60 and over are invited to enjoy meals every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday with the exception of Thanksgiving (November 24th and 25th).

The new Senior Services Center is designed to be a resource for all Central Oregon seniors, featuring an information and referral hub, large dining hall, community room, social areas, computer stations, production kitchen, and administrative offices. The

Center will open with limited hours of operation from 11am-1pm, Wednesday through Friday, until early 2023 when the building will operate five days a week with full business hours.

Community dining is a key part of CoA's mission to keep seniors fed, safe, and connected. This program, which is partially funded by the federal Older Americans Act, transitioned to a Grab-N-Go model in the beginning of the pandemic and is now moving back in-person to provide social opportunities to combat isolation and loneliness. Community dining also provides a venue for nutrition education and access to other aging services and information to nourish the whole person.

In the last twelve months, CoA served over 10,661 Grab-N-Go meals in Bend. In addition, CoA funded 43,862 meals to Central Oregon seniors through its partnerships with the Redmond Senior Center, La Pine Activity Center, Sisters Community Church, Jefferson County Senior Center, and Prineville Senior Center.

CoA's Executive Director Susan Rotella notes, "Community dining is core to our mission to reduce hunger, isolation, and loneliness in the Central Oregon senior community. The Council on Aging of Central Oregon's operations evolved rapidly to meet the changing needs of our vulnerable community throughout the pandemic, and we are thrilled to be able to bring seniors back together for the holiday season and beyond. We look forward to opening the doors of our new Senior Services Center to be a gathering space and resource hub for older adults throughout Central Oregon."

During the past four years, CoA acquired the old Bend Community Center and undertook a complete renovation of the facility. Funding for the \$2.25M renovation was provided with significant community support from organizations including the JTMF Foundation, St. Charles Health System, the City of Bend, Deschutes County, Oregon Community Foundation, Bend Foundation, The Healy Foundation, HEDCO Foundation, Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund, Autzen Foundation and OnPoint Community Credit Union. In addition, there were many generous individual donations including a bequest of \$250,000 from the Elmer F. Kruse Revocable Trust, and a \$250,000 investment from the Oregon State Legislature's biennial 'Christmas Tree Fund.'

In-person Community Dining Information

- Location: Council on Aging of Central Oregon's Senior Services Center, 1036 NE 5th Street, Bend OR, 97701
- Cost: Donations are suggested but not required for people 60 and over. Lunch is \$5 per person for guests under 60.
- Menu changes daily
- Time and Dates: Wednesday - Friday, 11am - 1pm starting Wednesday, November 23rd. CoA will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25.

- Thanksgiving Celebration: Wednesday, November 23rd, 11am-1pm
- Menu: Classic Thanksgiving menu
- Schedule:
 - 11am – Doors open
 - 11:45am – Introductions
 - 12:00pm – Lunch and performance by Bill Sterling & Steven Remington (guitar and mandolin duo)
 - 12:30pm – James Weigelt Magic (magic show)

Social Isolation and Loneliness Facts

[\(The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020\)](#)

- It has been reported that more than one-third of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely, and nearly one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated.
- Social isolation significantly increases a person's risk of premature death from all causes, a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.
- Social isolation is associated with about a 50% percent increased risk of dementia.
- Poor social relationships (characterized by social isolation or loneliness) is associated with a 29% increased risk of heart disease and a 32% increased risk of stroke.

About the Council on Aging of Central Oregon

Since 1975, the Council on Aging of Central Oregon (CoA) has served as the designated Area Agency on Aging for Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson counties, offering adults aged 60 and older and their loved ones a range of support services. CoA advocates for, empowers, and guides older adults and their loved ones to live with independence and well-being.

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