

THE SPOTLIGHT

Coalition to release 'passport' to good health

Goal is to encourage residents to re-explore the county

BY TYLER GRAF

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Stay active and stay in the county.

Those are the main themes of the Columbia Health Coalition's largest campaign of the year, centered on what its organizers call a good-health-related "Passport Guide to Columbia County."

The coalition will roll out its health and wellness campaign next month at the Columbia County Fair. The campaign will feature signs on the sides of Columbia County Rider buses, booths at local farmers' markets and the "passport," which will feature coupons for discounts at many local businesses.

"We're not just working toward getting individuals healthy," said Jenny Rudolph, a health educator through Oregon State University Extension Service: Columbia County. "We want to take this to a broader level."

More than 30 percent of the county's residents are obese, which is 4 percent higher than the state average, according to a 2007 state health report. But those numbers don't begin to scratch the surface: 91 percent of adults in the county have at least one serious health risk factor, with inactivity near the top of the list, the same report states.

Rudolph's "broader level" will require the assistance of local businesses and agencies, she said. She hopes to partner with a number of countywide businesses by the end of the month to provide coupons for healthy goods and services, which will be contained within the coalition's passport.

The passport itself will include a CC Rider bus schedule and a map of the county, with trails, parks and other points of interest highlighted. It will also include the coupons to local businesses.

The hope is that people will ride their bikes or take the bus to the businesses.

It's all part of Rudolph's goal of getting people to "re-explore" their county and maybe even take a "staycation" — meaning they stay in the county for recreational activities.

"In the end, our goal is to reduce chronic disease in the county," she said.

And that means tackling that ugly issue of inactivity by underscoring the beauty of the county, she said.

When and where will the coalition's passports be available: Columbia County Fair, starting July 11.



TYLER GRAF / THE SOUTH COUNTY SPOTLIGHT
THRASHERS — Cody Arnett, 16, and friend Robert Anderson, 16, hit up the Scappoose Skate Park on one of the few sunny spring days.