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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

H.O.P.E. Drug Court Participant Hosts First Responder Appreciation Event to Build Positive Connections with Local Youth and Families

ROSEBURG, Ore., August 27, 2026 – The Douglas County H.O.P.E. Drug Court Program invites the community to attend the **First Responder Appreciation Event** on Saturday, September 19, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the large pavilion at Stewart Park in Roseburg.

Organized as a H.O.P.E. Drug Court graduation community project by participant Charles Lockridge, the free event is designed to give children and families an opportunity to meet local first responders in a welcoming, positive environment. Attendees will be able to meet representatives from different agencies, view emergency and response vehicles, learn about programs and services available throughout the community, and enjoy fun activities for children inside the pavilion.

For Lockridge, the project has a deeply personal meaning. “As a child, I experienced a lot of trauma seeing my mother taken away in an ambulance. This event is to give kids an opportunity to meet the people who provide help and assistance, learn what they do, and hopefully not be afraid when help is called.”

Creating Positive Connections Before an Emergency Happens

First responders are often introduced to children during some of the most frightening or uncertain moments of their lives. The First Responder Appreciation Event provides an opportunity to change that first interaction by allowing children to meet responders when there is no emergency, ask questions, explore vehicles and equipment, and learn that the people arriving during a crisis are there to help.

Douglas County and the Roseburg area are fortunate to have dedicated professionals serving through ambulance and emergency medical services, law enforcement, the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office, fire and rescue agencies, K9 teams, mobile crisis response, behavioral health services, and numerous other community programs. While each agency has a different role, their work is connected by a common purpose: protecting people, responding during times of need and helping individuals and families find safety, assistance and resources.

A strong community is built when these teams and programs work together. Collaboration among first responders, behavioral health providers, treatment programs, courts, nonprofits and other community partners helps ensure residents receive coordinated assistance rather than having to navigate difficult situations alone.

H.O.P.E. Drug Court and the Power of Giving Back

Community projects are an important part of the H.O.P.E. Drug Court graduation phase and give participants an opportunity to use their experiences, personal growth and recovery to make a positive difference for others. H.O.P.E. Drug Court is built around accountability, treatment, structure and support.

Treatment courts demonstrate what can happen when agencies work together toward a shared goal. Recovery is rarely accomplished by one person or one organization alone. It takes partnerships, encouragement, accountability and access to services that help individuals build stability and move toward healthier, productive lives. Projects such as the First Responder Appreciation Event allow participants to take another important step in that process by giving back to the community that has supported them.

Thank You to Our Community Sponsors

A special thank you is extended to **Oregon Pacific Bank** and the **Umpqua Valley Public Defenders Office** for sponsoring the First Responder Appreciation Event and helping make this community project possible. Their support reflects the same spirit of partnership the event is intended to celebrate. When local organizations, first responders, service providers and community members work together, Douglas County becomes stronger, safer and more connected for everyone. Community members are encouraged to bring their children, meet the people behind the uniforms and emergency vehicles, learn more about local programs and services, and join H.O.P.E. Drug Court in showing appreciation for the individuals who respond when our community needs them most.

Community Invited to Celebrate H.O.P.E. Drug Court Graduates

The community is also invited to attend the 114th H.O.P.E. Drug Court Graduation on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 5:15 p.m. at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Cascade Hall. The graduation ceremony recognizes participants who have worked diligently to overcome challenges, maintain their recovery and successfully complete the requirements of the H.O.P.E. Drug Court Program. Community members are encouraged to attend, celebrate the graduates and hear about the accomplishments, perseverance and hard work that brought them to this important milestone.

For additional information about the H.O.P.E. Drug Court Program, upcoming graduation, community projects and program resources, visit the Douglas County website through the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) at:

<https://douglascountyor.gov/851/HOPE-Drug-Court>

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