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The Banks community has shown tremendous growth in the past decade, and was the fastest growing city in the state during the late 1990's. The City of Banks grew by more than 225% between 1990 and 2000 (from 578 to 1,274), and the area served by the Banks zip code, grew by over 130% (from 3,288 to 4,342).

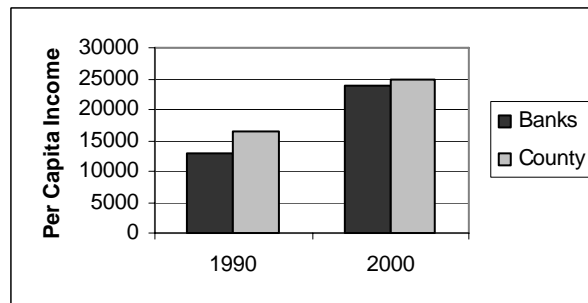
While whites comprise the largest segment of the Banks community (more than 90%), Latinos and Asian/Pacific Islanders are the largest minority communities, each comprising 2.4% of the population. Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans are the fastest growing minority populations in the area (growing more than 425% and 375% respectively in the 1990s).

More than 29% of the area's residents are children under the age of 18, which is a higher percentage than for the county as a whole (26.8%). A higher proportion of single parents live in the city limits, almost 23% compared to 14% in the zip code.

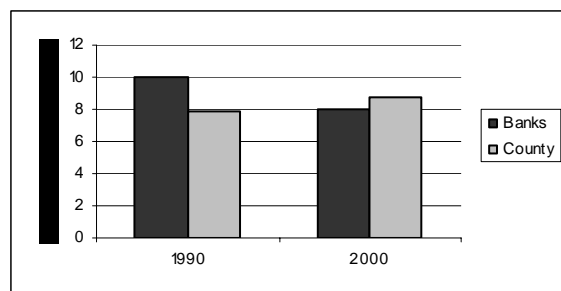
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## ***Poverty***

In general, poverty indicators in the Banks area have declined since the 1990's, illustrating that much of the growth in the area has resulted from middle class, professional families moving into the area, and a shift away from the more agriculturally based economy.



Per capita income in Banks has increased dramatically since 1990. In the City of Banks, it has risen from \$8,126 in 1990 to \$21,354 in 2000, an increase in excess of 250%. Similarly, in the Banks area (based on zip code), per capita income has risen from \$13,029 in 1990 to \$23,854 in 2000 (a 183% increase). During the same period, per capita income county-wide rose by just over 150%, from \$16,351 to \$24,969.



Other poverty indicators show similar improvement in the Banks area. Poverty rates among single parent households in the Banks area have declined in the past decade, from more than 35% in 1990 to just over 16% in 2000, which is slightly below the poverty rate for single parents in the county (18.5% in 2000). Poverty among

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children under the age of 18 went from almost 10% in 1990 to just under 8% in 2000 in the Banks zip code, while in the city limits child poverty declined from almost 17% to just over 2% in the same period. During this same period, poverty in the county showed an increase, from 7.9% in 1990 to 8.8% in 2000. Free and reduced lunch rates are another indicator of poverty, and this indicator suggests that poverty may be on the increase in Banks. The percentage of students eligible grew from 14.8% during the 2000-01 school year, to 17.7% in the 2006-07 school year, an increase of almost 20%. This compares to the 28% increase county-wide in students eligible during the same period.

## ***Education***

Consistent with population trends suggesting significant growth in middle class, professional families in the Banks area educational attainment levels have also increased significantly over the past decade.

In 1990, almost a quarter of adults (individuals over age 25) in Banks had not completed high school, and by 2000 only 11% of adults hadn't completed high school. There was also a significant increase in the percentage of adults who had completed college; in 1990 just over 10% had a college degree, and by

2000 this had increased to almost 22%. While high school completion and college completion rates among the county-wide adult population also increased, the increases were not as large as in the Banks area. High school completion rates increased from 88.2% in 1990 to 88.9% in 2000 (compared to 76% to 88.9% for Banks), and college completion rates increased from 29.8% to



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34.5%, although college completion rates for Banks continue to be lower than for the county as a whole.

School dropout rates for high school students have shown consistent improvement since the late 1990's, when dropout data began being collected consistently. During the 1997-98 school year, Banks had a drop out rate of 7.38, compared to a county rate of 6.68 and a state rate of 6.88. By the 2005-06 school year, the Banks rate had dropped to 1.25, with the county rate dropping to 3.4 and the state rate to 4.1.

Census data suggests that the drop-out rate may be higher. In 2000, among 16 to 19 year olds in Banks, 5.4% were not enrolled in school and had not graduated. Among White youth 16-19, in 2000, 4.2% were not enrolled and had not graduated, while among Latino youth, 14.25 were not enrolled and had not graduated from high school.

Student performance data for Banks school children have also shown gains in recent years, with Banks students showing improvement, similar to students statewide. In the third grade, the percentage of Banks students meeting standards in reading went from 80% in the 2001-02 school year to 84% in the 2005-06 school year.



The percentage of Banks students meeting math standards in third grade went from 85% in 2001-02 to 88% in 2005-06. Statewide, third graders meeting reading standards grew from 85% to 90%, and those meeting math standards went from 77% to 88% in the same period. Among eighth graders, those meeting reading standards in Banks went from 66% to 82% compared to

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64% to 68% among eighth graders statewide. Those meeting math standards went from 65% to 68% in Banks and from 56% to 68% statewide in the 2001-02 to 2005-06 time period.

## ***Community Needs and Issues***

The Commission on Children and Families has spent the last year talking with hundreds of people in communities across the county to explore the issues facing children and families. In Banks, these conversations revealed significant concerns relating to the health and well-being of our children, youth and families. The following issues emerged in conversations with school personnel and community leaders in Banks:

- Very limited after school and summer activities for youth who are not involved in sports
- While the community has grown a lot, and wealth is increasing, some families really struggle financially. There is good emergency assistance available through churches and the Family Resource Center, but employment and training opportunities are extremely limited.
- There is a lot of isolation in the rural areas, and with no public transportation it is a challenge for youth and families to be able to make it to town for fairs, services, etc.
- Employment opportunities are extremely limited – especially entry level kinds of positions appropriate for teens, which is compounded by the lack of public transportation.
- Hunger issues have continued to grow, and food bank resources are challenged to keep pace.
- Lack of after-school options for young people is reflected in increasing vandalism, substance use, etc., al-



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though levels are probably consistent with other communities – it feels more visible when there aren't options for youth.

- It is a challenge to identify viable strategies to bring resources needed to sustain initiatives that may be able to be started, with a small population through which to build a tax base.
- If a family doesn't have a child in school, or is not involved in a community church or community group it is hard to find out what is going on in the community and how to become involved.
- There are some challenges to integrating newer residents into the community. It can be challenging for those who have moved more recently and may work in other parts of the county to build connections to more established residents and organizations in the community.
- There are no health care providers located in Banks, which when couple with no public transportation, makes access to health care a great challenge. It is a particular concern for students in area schools.
- There are very few community based parenting, family support or other social services located in Banks, although several agencies provide school-based services and will provide outreach services to assist families in accessing needed services.

## ***Existing Services and Supports***

Conversations with the community revealed a number of strengths in the Banks area, both in terms of the characteristics of residents and the community as well as in terms of community supports:

- There is a strong sense of community, with many individuals and organizations helping to support children and families. There is a lot of cooperation and collaboration which results in there being child and family activities at community events, lots of volunteers and donations to have community

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activities and resources such as hearing/vision exams through the Lions, scholarships through Lions and the Chamber, cultural passes through the Friends of the Library, and playground equipment at Sunset Park.



- A number of residents don't have children yet they are active in supporting things for children and families
- There is a strong focus on higher education, and lots of students go on to college. There is also a good career center at the high school which helps students in planning for their future and accessing employment options.
- Lots of young people stay in the community, or they may leave for school and often return when they start a family.
- Good, strong schools that serve as a focal point for the community, and strong support for the schools.
- The 'reader board' in front of the high school provides a way to get key information to community residents when there is no community newspaper.
- Churches, businesses, schools and the library all support and invest in community services and events for children and families
- General belief that we have 'good' kids in Banks, and that it's still a safe place where kids can walk and bike around.

Conversations with school and community leaders in Banks revealed a dearth of services and supports for children, youth and families in the Banks area, although residents can access a

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range of services and supports in the nearby communities of Forest Grove and Hillsboro. Services available in and targeted to residents of the Banks area include:

## ***Health***

- *Community Health Nursing* – Washington County Health Nurses provide home visits and specialized services to new parents who have children with special medical needs. Community health nurses help families access other health and social services
- *Health and Developmental Screening* – Community health nurses provide regular health and developmental screening for children with special health needs. Children who participate in Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten services also receive health and developmental screening and their families are assisted in accessing any needed services. New Parent Network/Healthy Start home visitors provide regular screening for at-risk first time parents and their babies as part of intensive home visitation services. Schools partner with the Lions Club, Pacific University and other health care organizations to provide screening and referral for follow up services for vision, hearing and other health concerns.
- *Direct Care* - Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center operates several clinics in Washington County serving lower income and uninsured residents, including a clinic in Cornelius and one in Hillsboro. During the migrant season, the clinic provides outreach services to migrant camps, including camps in the Banks area. The Essential Health Clinic provides acute care for uninsured patients two evenings per week at the Hillsboro Public Health clinic.



- *Nutrition* – The Women Infants and Children nutrition program provides vouchers for dairy, cereal, fruit juices (and fruits/vegetables as Farmer’s Markets) for lower income pregnant women, and young children. Nutrition education is also provided through regular classes held in health clinic settings in a number of locations around the county.
- *Outpatient Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Services* – for children and families are available through a network of county-funded treatment providers. Services can be provided in home based settings to facilitate access to services. For children and youth experiencing serious mental health or substance abuse concerns, community treatment providers will work to assist families to access intensive community based treatment and or residential treatment services.

### ***Parenting and Family Support***

A number of parenting and family support services are available and are provided in the Banks area:

- *Banks Family Resource Center* is a central resource for families who need emergency assistance, who need help identifying and finding health and social services such as mental health, parenting, child care and other critical services. The Family Resource Center also provides a bridge between individuals and organizations seeking to provide assistance and families in need.
- *Parenting Classes* are available through a partnership between the Banks and Forest Grove Family Resource Centers, and classes are regularly scheduled in Eng-



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lish and Spanish. Classes can be offered at a Banks location.

- *Family Coaching* is a home-based skill building service for families with a child displaying high risk and/or challenging behaviors.
- *The New Parent Network/Healthy Start program* provides home visitation service to at-risk first time parents, providing individualized parenting education and support to assist parents in supporting their child's development and meeting their family's basic needs.
- *Babies First* provides community health nurse home visitation services for families who have an infant with special health needs.
- *Family Support and Connections* – Community outreach specialists provide families involved in Department of Human Services programs (i.e. cash assistance) who are at-risk of involvement in the child welfare system with individualized support, case management and assistance accessing community resources.



There are also a range of services available to support families from throughout the county, although there is not service capacity in Banks. These services include:

- *Self-Sufficiency Services* – The Oregon Department of Human Services provides a range of services and programs for low income families, including cash assistance, food stamps, child care assistance, and Oregon Health Plan. Offices are located in Tigard, Beaverton and Hillsboro. Application materials are available at the Banks Family Resource Center to facilitate families accessing services.

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- *Child Welfare* – The Child Welfare Division of the Oregon Department of Human Services provides Child Protective Services to investigate allegations of abuse and neglect and assure safety of children, permanency planning for long term placement of children in foster care or adoptive homes, family reunification services to support children returning home, and system of care supports to provide specialized and individualized services for individualized wrap-around services to children in the Child Welfare System.
- *Homeless Shelters* – There are four shelter programs serving homeless families in the county, one shelter serving women and children leaving domestic violence situations, and one shelter serving runaway and homeless youth.
- *Court Appointed Special Advocates* – Community volunteers who are recruited, trained and supported to provide advocacy, monitoring and support for children in the Child Welfare system.

## ***Youth Development***

There are limited school and community-based services to support youth success in school and provide them with constructive activities during non-school hours. Those that are available in Banks are highlighted below, followed by some county-wide supports which can be utilized by Banks residents.

- *After School Activities* – There are a number of activities offered after school hours sponsored by the school district, including sports, academic enrichment and some activity clubs which meet seasonally (sports) or on a regular basis. Through a partnership with Pacific University, there are additional activities available for students at all grade levels, which are interest based and offered on a seasonal basis.

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- *Family Resource Center* – The Family Resource Center sponsors short duration camps and activities during school breaks, primarily for students at the elementary level.
- *Public Library* – Offers the Summer Reading program which includes regular special activities during the summer months to encourage children to read, and provides incentives at the end of the summer. During the school year, libraries offer reference assistance and access to the internet to aid students in completing school assignments.
- *Community Service* – The annual Youth Summit provides an opportunity for middle and high school student teams to submit a proposal for funds to implement a school or community based project to improve conditions in their community.
- *Counseling, Skill Building and Prevention Education Groups* – Through school counselors and Youth Contact, a community mental health and alcohol treatment provider, offer individualized and group based counseling. Additionally, skill building groups, education and awareness groups are offered in specific areas: substance abuse, violence prevention, problem solving, etc. The Health Department has health educators who can provide education programs in school and community settings for youth and adults on a range of topics from health topics to gambling to substance use.
- *Alternative Education / Options* – All school districts offer alternative education options programs for students for whom a traditional education program is not meeting their needs.
- *Homeless Education Services* – Under the auspices of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, every school dis-



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trict has a designated staff person who works with building staff to identify homeless students (unaccompanied older students or students living with their homeless family), and works with staff to minimize disruption to students' education, works to develop plans to maintain students in their home school, and helps them (and their families) to access needed community resources.

County-wide services which are available to youth from Banks, generally relying on families to provide transportation if needed, include:

- *Mentoring* – Programs such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters can provide adult mentors to at-risk youth who would benefit.
- *Employment and Training* – Several organizations provide specialized employment and training services for youth. Community supports range from the State Employment Division which offers basic pre-employment training and job search assistance regardless of income to federally funded employment and training services including educational supports, pre-employment supports, employer based training placements, job referrals and follow-up support and assistance accessing post secondary education and training opportunities for lower income youth.
- *Juvenile Department* – The Juvenile Department offers a range of services for youth referred to prevent further penetration into the juvenile justice system, provide sanctions and restitution, and provide youth with opportunities to develop skills and capacities to succeed in



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their family, school and community.

- *Runaway and Homeless Youth Services* – A short term, home based shelter program has been available for runaway youth and/or youth with a mental health crisis since the late 1970s. In May, 2007 Boys and Girls Aid opened the Safe Place Shelter, offering short term facility based shelter and transitional housing to runaway and homeless youth. Additionally there is a small transitional housing program using scatter site apartments and case management for homeless youth. The 24 hour mental health crisis line provides crisis counseling for runaways and their families, as well as access to shelter services. The Home Plate program is a community collaboration which provides an evening meal, access to showers, a movie and social recreational activity, and referral to community resources for homeless youth once a week.

## ***School Readiness***

There are limited services available in Banks for families with young children. A brief review of services in the community is provided below.

- *Child Care Resource and Referral* – CCRR, operated by Community Action, provides individualized phone support for parents seeking child care, offering information and education in how to select care, indicators of quality, opportunities for assistance in paying cost of care, as well as referrals and information about specific child care providers in family, group home or center based settings. CCRR also provides support and training for child care providers, and works to identify providers and to build capacity in the community for under-served popula-



tions. CCRR offers workshops for child care providers on promoting early literacy through reading and other activities, and has a structured early literacy curriculum that is offered to child care providers in their home or center based setting.

- *Child Care Division, Oregon Employment Department* – registers and licenses child care providers in the state of Oregon assuring that minimum standards for care are met.
- *Oregon Department of Human Services* – administers funds to help lower income families pay for the cost of care (Employment Related Day Care)
- *Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten* – Oregon Child Development Coalition provides Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten services in western Washington County including Migrant Head Start and specialized child care services for migrant farm worker families. Transportation services are provided to assure that low income children and their families can participate in services.
- *New Parent Network/Healthy Start* – provides home visitation services including parenting and child development education and support for at-risk first time parents.
- *Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education* – the Northwest Regional Education Service District provides services for young children with disabilities for children from birth to school age. Services for children birth to age three (Early Intervention) are generally provided through home visits and parent training to support children’s optimal development, while services for pre-school aged children (4 and 5 year olds) are provided in



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program sponsored classrooms, community placements and through parent groups.

- *Banks Community Library* – Public libraries throughout the county offer a number of early literacy services, including story hours where young children’s books are read aloud to model reading to young children and to provide exposure to books appropriate for different ages of children. ‘Theme bags’ can also be checked-out through inter-library loan that contain books, videos/DVDs, games and resource information on a variety of topics.
- *Health Services* – Community health nurses provide home visits to families with a young child who has special health needs. The WIC program provides nutritional supplements and nutrition education for lower income families with young children. Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center provides primary health care to migrant and seasonal farm workers and other low income residents in three clinic locations in the county, as well as outreach services to migrant camps during the summer months. Limited dental and vision care are also available through Virginia Garcia’s Cornelius clinic.
- *Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation* – is available to provide individual consultation and assistance accessing community based mental health services for children and their families around emergent behavioral and mental health concerns as well as consultation for child care providers and other early childhood professionals to provide information and training in supporting positive social emotional development and early intervention for children displaying early



signs of mental health challenges.

- *Outpatient Mental Health Services* – for children and families are available through a network of county-funded treatment providers. Services can be provided in home based settings to facilitate access to services.

### ***Strategy Analysis***

While there has been some growth in services available to families in Banks in recent years, and many agencies are developing capacity to provide home based services, there continues to be a dearth of services to meet the diverse needs of a growing Banks community. There is limited awareness of services which do exist, and while many services may be able to be provided in schools or at home, families must often travel to other jurisdictions to complete eligibility processes (WIC, DHS services, Head Start, etc). In addition, on a county-wide basis, service capacity has not grown quickly enough to keep pace with overall population growth which further hampers the ability of service systems to respond to the needs of under-served geographic communities.



### ***Gaps and Barriers to Service***

- **Transportation.** There is a need to expand bus and transportation services to more rural parts of the county. Peak hour runs to major arterials could vastly improve access to services for Banks residents: early morning for commuters; after school for students; early evening for commuters. Expansion of volunteer based transportation assistance for the elderly and the disabled, to include school age children/youth to help get them to medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment appointments to reduce barriers to access to care. Activity buses from the schools to transport students who participate in after school activities.

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- **After School Activities.** There is a need to expand availability of activities for school aged children and youth during non-school hours, including activities during school breaks and the summer months.
- **Health Care.** There is a need to facilitate access to health care for low income and uninsured children, youth and families from Banks, given there are no health care providers located in the community. Partnerships with Forest Grove School District, Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten programs, and others could assist with access and transportation. Expansion of screening and school based health services to enhance access to early treatment.
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment.** Expansion of school based supports for mental health, to assist in identification of children, youth with behavioral health concerns and assist them and their families to access services. Increase home-based treatment options to facilitate access and reduce transportation barriers for families in rural communities.
- **Community Awareness.** There is limited awareness of needs of children, youth and families and the barriers that are faced in access to services. There is limited awareness of resources and services that are available and how to access them, and how individuals and community organizations could help with access and service expansion.
- **Need to increase parenting and family support services,** to offer classes and individualized support to families in Banks, and



build local capacity to support parents/families.

- **Need to provide access to career exploration and employment options for Banks area youth.** Entrepreneurship opportunities as well as traditional employment opportunities

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which may be available in nearby communities.

- Lack of a stable tax base an issue, which limits availability of law enforcement and other community infrastructure such as parks and recreation services.

## ***Potential Solutions***

There are several initiatives under-way in the county which will help to address some of the major concerns identified in Banks.

- Banks School District is working with a broad based community collaboration working to develop a county-wide system of School Based Health Centers over the next five to ten years. The feasibility of establishing a center in Forest Grove during the 2008-09 school year is being explored, and the model under consideration would provide access for students from Banks.
- The NW Regional Education Service District is facilitating a collaborative effort to develop and implement systems to improve access to school and community mental health treatment supports for students. The collaboration involves all school districts, the County Mental Health Organization, the Juvenile Department, community behavioral health treatment providers and the Commission on Children and Families. To date, results of the initiative have included development of district and county-wide, cross-district crisis response protocols, training of district staff and mental health treatment staff in evidence-based practices to enhance identification, treatment and support of students with behavioral health concerns, and development of a guide for school staff to the county mental health system and services.

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- In order to help facilitate access to needed health care, a county-wide initiative to enroll all eligible children in the Oregon Health Plan is being under-taken. In the Banks area, there were 137 children under the age of 18 enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan in 2006. Income eligibility for the Oregon Health Plan is comparable to that for the free and reduced lunch program, which served almost 200 school age children in the Banks School District in 2005-06. This suggests that more than 70 children may be eligible for OHP coverage who are not currently covered.

Conversations with school and community leaders in Banks also revealed a number of strategies that could be under-taken in the community to help address concerns identified. Strategies discussed included:

- Expansion of after school and summer activities for children and youth to include non-sports activities as well.
- Build on and strengthen the partnership with Pacific University in developing an expanded array of after school activities, academic support and enrichment, and mental health supports.
- Create a community center or community school where activities can be offered for children, youth, families, seniors that could house events, parks and recreation kinds of classes and activities, computer lab, kitchen facility, etc. This has consistently been identified as a need.
- Develop a stronger resource base for parks.
- Work with Ride Connection to expand transportation options for residents.



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- Eligibility Determination for DHS Services and other services (e.g. Housing). Outstation DHS and other agency eligibility staff on a regular basis at the Family Resource Center to facilitate access to OHP, child care subsidies, food stamps and other services for lower income families for whom transportation to an office located in Hillsboro is a barrier.
- Develop new community events to build sense of community and help integrate newer residents.
- Identify alternative methods of communication to help facilitate community wide communication when there is no community newspaper (e.g. email newsletter published by city, send school district communications to all households, etc.)
- Expand capacity of the Family Resource Center.

