

Chapter 18

The Lebanon Community Resource Unit

Section One: Baseline Social and Economic Information

A. Community Description

Geographic Features

The Lebanon Community Resource Unit (Figure 54) is outlined in the north near Rogers Mountain and Hungry Hill, on the west as Highway 20 turns west into Albany, on the south at Lone Pine and Cedar Buttes to the north of the Calapooia River drainage, and to the east near Santiam Terrace and Binegar Butte, before heading northeast through public lands. The unit includes the towns of Lebanon, Sodaville, Waterloo, and the small communities of Lcomb, Crabtree, and Griggs.

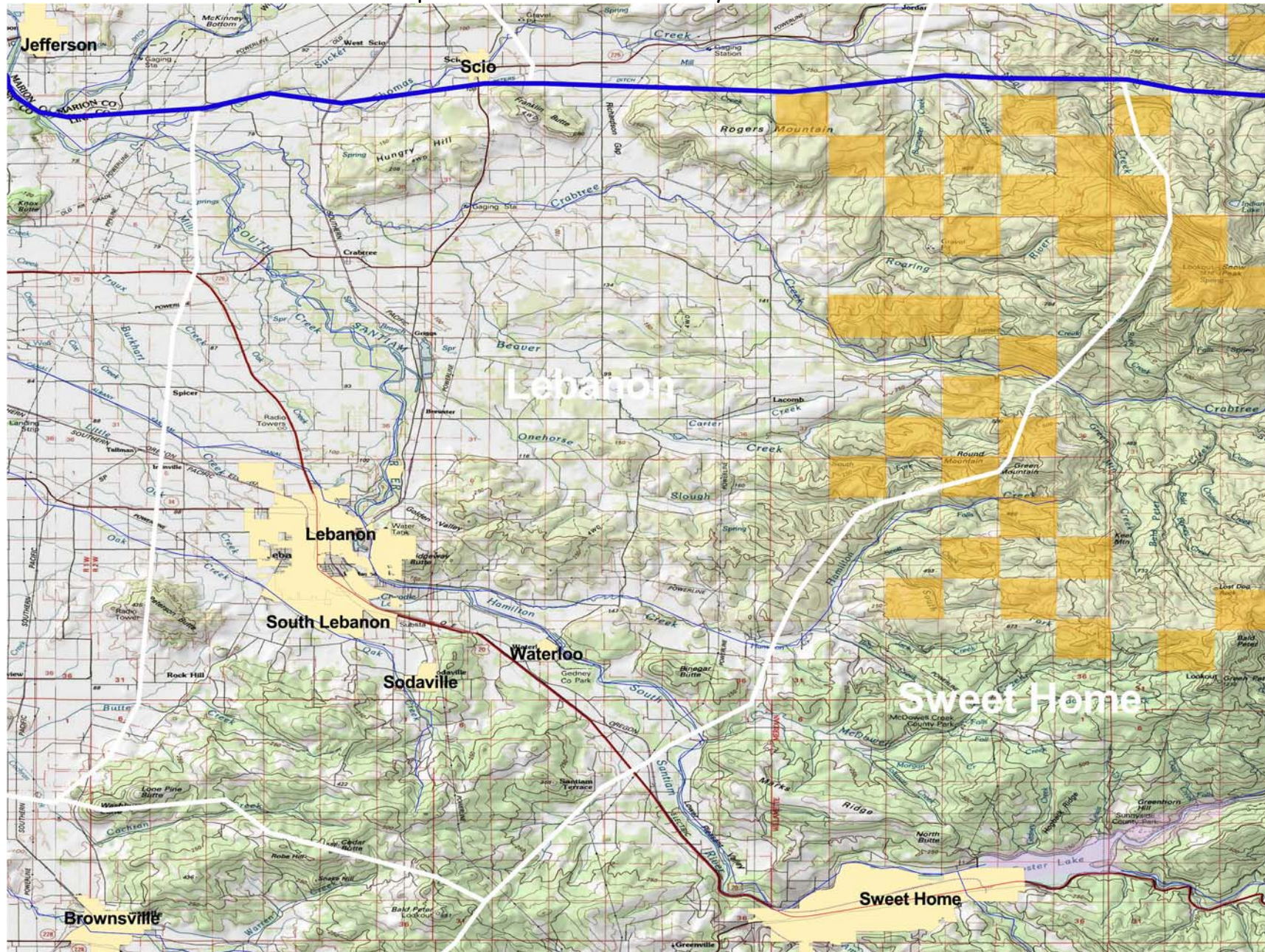
Historically, Lebanon and Sweet Home shared many ties. Primarily through the timber industry, the "Highway 20 Association" was successful in widening the highway long before other places, and this feature helped unite the two communities. In addition, the towns historically have been sports rivals, which has fostered long-term relationships over the years.

Settlement Patterns

Lebanon was begun in 1847. Jeremy Ralston, an early settler, named the community after his hometown in Tennessee, and because the biblical reference to the "cedars of Lebanon" reminded him of his local flora (Lebanon Genealogical Society). Lebanon had 11,408 people in 1990 and 12,950 people in 2000, an increase of 12% (Census Data, Table Five).

Lebanon has been a farming community throughout its history. Residents stated that recently it has become a bedroom community to Corvallis and Albany. Many Victorian homes can still be found in the community dating from the late 1800s.

Figure 54
Map of the Lebanon Community Resource Unit



"We came back here because there's family here. Seattle was too big."

"There's just more and more people, wherever you look."

"My great grandfather homesteaded land between here and Albany."

Publics

Lebanon has a strong farming community, as well as a large commercial and retail business community. It also a strong professional and working class public, many of whom are oriented to commuting to the larger urban centers. Children as a proportion of the population held steady in the last decade (Census Data, Table Five) at 12%, contrary to the decline in many of the other smaller communities, indicating that families are still able to make ends meet in the community. Hispanics doubled in number during the last decade and now comprise 4% of the population.

Networks

See Section Two.

Work Routines

Lebanon serves as a center for shopping and services for residents in surrounding rural communities. As a result, the trades, construction and services sectors dominate its employment base. Lumber and wood products is still the dominant manufacturing activity. Lebanon's biggest employer is Hewlett-Packard in Corvallis (Analysis of the Regional Economy and Housing for Linn and Benton Counties, ECONorthwest for Cascade West Council of Governments, November, 1999).

The City Administration reported the following major employers for Lebanon workers as of August, 2000:

Lebanon Community Hospital, medical services	580
Willamette Industries [now Weyerhaeuser], wood products	411
Entek Manufacturing, micro porous plastic membrane	300

Georgia Pacific, hardwood 127
Willamette Valley Rehab. Center, custom boards for pallets 125
Source: Community Profiles, Oregon Economic and Community Development
Department, 2000.

Timber

"Three mills shut down about 15 years ago, but it didn't hit the town as hard as people expected. The employees came from other places so we didn't notice the effects as much."

Commuting/trades and services

"Nowadays, about 40% of the workers go elsewhere—Albany, Corvallis, and Salem. The improvements to Highway 34 really helped."
[Community Development Manager]

"Walmart was a surprise. It actually helped the community because it has helped Lebanon become a regional shopping center for the small communities around here."

"When Walmart came, a lot of the dollars that were going to Albany began to stay here."

Support Services

The Lebanon Community Hospital has recently joined the Samaritan Health Services Organization. Its service area extends to Sweet Home and Brownsville to the south, Scio to the north, and the many small communities like Lacombe to the east. Residents voiced concern that the close relationship between the hospital and the community could be threatened but those worries have not materialized. The hospital was begun by Mennonites who remain an important presence in the area.

The city recently received nearly \$400,000 of federal transportation money through the Oregon Department of Transportation to implement a downtown beautification program. The project will include trees, curbs, bicycle racks, water fountains, and other features.

Some residents mentioned the Lebanon Basic Services Center. This facility refers citizens to different service organizations and agencies.

Many churches are linked to each other via phone trees that are activated in a crisis. The Lebanon Chapel Christian Fellowship began about 4 years ago to become involved in the community and was instrumental in starting the "Trauma Crisis Intervention Program," training volunteers to counsel those affected by crisis. The program has been well received in the community.

In the last 20 years, the community has been active in preserving historical resources. The City formed an historical commission that has sponsored the nomination of 38 sites to the Lebanon Historic Register and 7 to the National Register.

Lebanon was described as a caring, close-knit community.

"After the February storm, my husband's church organized a relief drive for those who were affected by the storm and those without electricity. For over a week, volunteers served three meals a day for over 400 people."

"My church approached the school district and offered to adopt a school. We began painting classrooms and helping with meals for kids in need. Now other communities are looking at this, especially with the budget cuts."

"Whenever a house burns down, all the neighbors from the immediate area as well as from all over town come to see what they can do to help."

Lebanon has held the Strawberry Festival since 1909. Today, the festival in June attracts people from a wide radius. Residents pointed out that Lebanon people have had the practice of visiting other festivals such as the Jamboree and Sportsman's Holiday in Sweet Home, the Pioneer Picnic in Brownsville, and the Lamb Festival in Scio.

Figure 55 shows a photo of a mural on a City of Lebanon building, downtown Lebanon.

Figure 55
Mural on the City of Lebanon
Community Development Center Building



Recreational Activities

See Section Three.

B. Citizen Themes Related to Community Life

1. "There's more and more people."

2. "Timber doesn't matter anymore." Timber production and forest products manufacturing does not have the place of dominance that it did years ago. People said their economy is fairly diverse and that that is a positive change.

3. "We used to be a local town but now we're regional." Residents stated that they are looking outward now in a way that didn't happen thirty years ago. They realize they are not just a small town but part of a regional economy.

"Real estate listings used to be just local, but now they are posted in the region. With housing high in Albany and Corvallis, people realize that they can buy here much more cheaply."

"Local financial institutions are global now. Nobody makes local decisions."

4. "Lebanon is a very conservative place and I'm a conservative guy!"

"This is a very conservative community, close-knit, and when there is a crisis the whole community is affected by it."

"The golden rule in this community is ask first." [in reference to controversies in which the public was not included early]

5. Economic uncertainty

"The price of gas was cheaper a week ago, then all of a sudden, without warning, it's up like 17 cents. We had nothing to say about that. Those forces are out of our reach."

"We can hardly afford insurance at the church anymore."

Section Two: Communication Strategies

A. Informal Networks and Communication

People rely on the Albany Democratic Herald

Big John's Café, downtown Lebanon, is used by working people who know each other well.

Korner Kitchen

Our Place Deli

McDonalds, a group of elderly folks meet there every morning

B. Formal Groups and Communication

Figure 56

Organizations With Interest in Public Lands in the Lebanon Area

Organization	Contact Information	Mission
North Santiam Slow Pokes Bicycle Club	C/O Lebanon Community Hospital P.O. Box 739 525 N. Santiam Hwy Lebanon 97355	
Cascade Offroaders	http://www.cascadeoffroaders.com/	
Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce	1040 Park Street Lebanon, OR 97355 (541) 258-7164 barballen@lebanonoregon.net	
Linn County Small Woodland Association	Ron Henthorne, ODF Crawfordsville 541-367-6108	Education on small woodlot management; specialty tree management for members

Section Three: The Public Lands Perspective

A. Uses of and Orientation to Public Lands

The county campground recently developed at Waterloo "has been a boon to the community."

Clerks at sporting goods stores reported more sales of hiking equipment in the last couple of years, while hunting and fishing business has remained stable. Lebanon has a specialty outfitter store whose manager stated that they cannot compete with the larger sporting goods stores, so they try to provide items that the big stores don't carry. This store has maps available and limited information about recreation opportunities. They often send people to the Sweet Home Ranger Station for more information. [310]

The Udell family sponsors an annual Tree Day on their family property near Lebanon. Its purpose is to educate youth and the community about timber issues. The Extension Office, other agencies, and the small woodlands association, use the event for educational purposes related to woodlot management, and so on.

Extension agents are used extensively in this part of the Willamette Valley for assistance in woodlot management and private forestry concerns.

B. Citizen Issues Related to Natural Resource Management

"I get a lot of requests for park permits, also for maps and trail information. I send them to the Sweet Home Ranger Station." [Clerks at various sporting goods stores]

"It would be a great service for our customers if we had more information about recreation on public lands and if we could sell permits."

"People causing trouble on public lands are transplants. If I find garbage in the forest, I go through and find an envelope or something and I call whoever it is and give them 24 hours to pick it up or else."

"Lots of hazardous stuff is left in the woods, stuff like paint. That's why private landowners are putting gates on the roads. Weyerhaeuser once paid a guy to haul garbage out of a site near LaComb. The trucker told me he took 33 semi loads out of there."

C. Management Opportunities

Although the JKA team did not find a strong orientation to public lands, the farming lifestyle and the active interest expressed in small woodlot management are clearly centered on sustainability values. Environmental education in the context of these two interests could be highly successful.

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