

## **LEC Agenda Item 9: Northwest Youth Corps Small Business Kitchen Incubator Project**

### **Project Summary**

Northwest Youth Corps proposes to build the first certified rental commercial kitchen in Lane County specifically designed to provide short-term and part-time kitchen access to early-stage catering, retail and wholesale food or related businesses. The proposed kitchen would be located at the NYC campus, between the Glenwood exit of the 1-5 and the University of Oregon. The photo to the right shows a kitchen approximately the size of NYC's proposed facility, 450 square feet.



By renting shared kitchen facilities on a timeslot basis to users, this kitchen will help small food-based businesses get “off the ground”, and developed to the stage where they can invest in their own facilities. In addition, these businesses will be supported through coordination with services provided by Lane MicroBusiness, and retail opportunities such as Lane County Farmers Market. Over the useful life of the kitchen, estimated at 25 years or more, the kitchen could support 200-300 businesses (at 12 businesses a year) that could not otherwise exist.

### **Tie-In With Local Planning**

This project supports the approved 2007-2013 BL3 Regional Investment Strategy, which states that the heart of regional economic development is supporting existing businesses and encouraging start-ups. Lane County has a long history of growing successful start-up businesses. The region's goals include:

- Building on the region's entrepreneurial culture to meet local, state and national markets
- Assisting Oregon communities to build capacity to retain, expand and attract businesses
- Supporting the unique project and program needs, as well as the assets of rural areas
- Encouraging the emerging specialty foods and direct marketing clusters, defined by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade as "limited supply, high quality" foods using fruits, nuts, berries, vegetables and animal products (jams, spaghetti sauce, pesto, etc.)

### **Major Program Components**

Kitchen construction will take place beginning November 2009-April 2010. The project will also require the construction of publicly accessible (men's and women's) restrooms, accessible public entrance, and the construction of a durable driveway that could accommodate commercial vehicles.

The kitchen will operate year-round, throughout the week, and be equipped with commercial stoves, ovens, mixers, refrigerators, work tables, etc. Renters will register to use the kitchen and pay a deposit, and either an hourly fee or monthly rent depending on the number of hours needed weekly or monthly. All renters must be Licensed Food Handlers and will need to complete paperwork required by the appropriate Environmental Health department.

Having an on-site, managed facility means that there will be an organization (NYC) coordinating the rental schedule, billing, providing needed cleaning and maintenance and repair, advertising, etc. at the lowest possible price, since NYC already has existing bookkeeping, logistics, and facility rental staff. Rental rates will be figured to cover a pro-rated cost of these personnel, but are anticipated to run \$16/\$25 hour. As one of the area's job-training programs, NYC can connect willing, trained workers with job opportunities posted by kitchen renters/food producers who need kitchen production help.