Succession (not *Cessation* or *Secession*) Planning for Small Rural Nonprofits
Jane Reid, Chair, Estacada Area Arts Commission

Over the last 25 years, Estacada has been fertile ground for a number of small arts organizations. Folks found that if they had a compelling idea and the ability to convince at least four other people of its merit, creative things could happen here. And on a shoestring. It was this energy, grit and can-do spirit that formed the **Artback Artist Cooperative**, which just painted its 21th annual large outdoor mural. The **Estacada Summer Celebration**, an eclectic art and music festival in the heart of downtown. **The Spiral Gallery**, a cooperative with over 30 members. The **Performing Arts Group of Estacada**, a multigenerational theater group. **OrchEstraCada,** a multigenerational orchestra. The **Estacada Area Arts Commission**, which coordinates an arts and culture series, manages the public art process and convenes semi-annual art summits. And **Estacada Together**, which brought the Oregon Symphony to town, presents performances in our 850-seat auditorium, and is committed to quality arts education experiences for our students.

All these organizations are run by volunteers and all are grappling – at one level or another – with the question of how to carry on when the current leaders, often the original leaders, step down. This is what we are asking ourselves:

- Are there too many of us tapping the same leadership population? Should we be combining some of our organizations?
- How do we convince folks that they really are leaders, that leadership takes many forms?
- How do we reach out to a younger and more culturally diverse population that is overwhelmed by family and work commitments?
- How do we identify newcomers to town who might want to get involved?
- Do some organizations have a shelf life? How do we know when it's time to quit? (This is the Cessation Part.)

Many of us are participating in the Ford Family Foundation's *Ford Institute Leadership Program*, so we have learned about personality styles and effective meetings, organizational phases and project planning – we are ready to take our groups to the next level. Here are a few ideas of how we can identify, engage and recruit new leaders:

- Talk to parent groups at the schools – many of our current leaders started here. Find easy ways they can become initially involved.
- Be invitational and have FUN meetings. Share our excitement about how the arts can build strong communities.
- Reach out to new arrivals to town through the Chamber of Commerce.
- Convene another Art Summit in 2015 to share planning, look for collaborations and identify common challenges and opportunities.
- Create clear expectations for new members – entry-level duties, mentorships.

Tap students as volunteers.