

CLIFF SMITH MOTORS
(541) 386-3311
 CHEVY BUICK PONTIAC GMC **CLIFFSMITHMOTORS.COM**



Sales & Service

- RV Parts
- Cooking
- Laundry
- Dishwashers
- Satellite Systems
- Refrigeration
- Television

RADDOCK'S
APPLIANCE ELECTRONICS



419 State Street Hood River, Oregon Phone: 541-386-1234 Fax: 541-386-6796

[News Tips](#)
[Letters to Editor](#)
[Subscriptions](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Contact Info](#)



Hood River News

Official Newspaper, City of Hood River and Hood River County



Gorge Weather

August 07, 2004

Local News

[City/Community](#)
[Hood River County](#)
[Features](#)
[Local People](#)

Local Sports

[HRV Athletics](#)
[Youth/Community](#)
[Wind Sports](#)
[Sidelines](#)
[HRV Schedules](#)

Lifestyle

[Entertainment](#)
[Opinions](#)
[Letters to Editor](#)
[Obituaries](#)

News Links

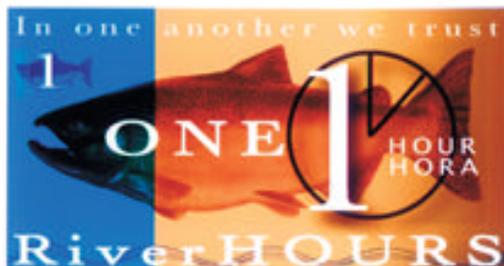
[W. Salmon](#)
[Enterprise](#)
[The Dalles](#)
[Chronicle](#)
[Oregon Live.com](#)
[Bend Bulletin](#)
[East Oregonian](#)

Photo Gallery



Photographs from around the Valley

Local legal tender starts circulating in Mid-Columbia



By **JANET COOK**
News staff writer
 August 3

A group of Gorge citizens is launching a local currency with the aim of benefiting local consumers, entrepreneurs and businesses. The currency, called RiverHOURS, is printed notes — or scrip — that can be used only in the Mid-Columbia. RiverHOURS can be used in conjunction with federal money at participating businesses, with the effect of augmenting the local economy.

“Community currency is about increasing our quality of life and our standard of living,” said Stacey Shaw, a member of the Gorge Local Currency Cooperative (GLCC). Since RiverHOURS can only be spent locally, the purchasing power stays within the Gorge, according to Shaw, thereby increasing the amount of money in circulation within the local communities.

Shaw began researching local currencies several years ago after watching them being launched in places she previously lived, including Olympia, Wash.

“I started thinking a local currency would be great for the Gorge,” Shaw said. In 2001, she made presentations to the Downtown Business Association

10% Discount with Hood River County Driver's License

GORGE SATELLITE
 WE BRING SATELLITE TELEVISION & INTERNET DOWN TO EARTH
SALES - SERVICE INSTALLATION

HOOD RIVER FORD MERCURY
 800 875-7564



HOOD RIVER NEWS COVERS THE GORGE



Mid Columbia Weather

HRN Archives

Story Archives
Photo Archives

City/State Links

City of Hood River
**HR County Chamber
of Commerce**
Hood River County
Hood River Fire
Hood River Police
Port of Hood River
Gorge Kids

Education

HR County Schools
CGCC (The Dalles)
MHCC (Gresham)
Univ. of Oregon
Oregon St. Univ.
HR Community Ed

Services

Gorge Classifieds
HR County Library
Oregon Blue Book
Gorge Commission
The Next Door, Inc.

and the Visitor's Association to gauge interest. But at the time she was a graduate student and she had to step away from the project to focus on school.

"I always said, if it's something that resonated with people in the Gorge, then it's going to happen," Shaw said. And sure enough, Shaw's initial presentations had gotten the word out and fanned the interest of several community activists, who kept enthusiasm for a local currency alive.

Finally, about a year ago, a group of eight people — including Shaw — began meeting in earnest to launch RiverHOURS. They've spent countless hours studying economics, monetary systems and the federal reserve. "We've all become economists," Shaw said. "We all felt the need to really study this stuff."

RiverHOURS come in three denominations: a one HOUR note equals \$10, a one-half HOUR note equals \$5, and a one-tenth HOUR note equals \$1. Any local business or person who offers a service can register with GLCC to accept RiverHOURS and will be listed in a quarterly "barter paper" that will be distributed around the Gorge.

Businesses can set their own policies as to how much of the currency they will accept. For example, a store might offer specific items for sale in RiverHOURS, or offer to accept RiverHOURS as part of a total sale price on goods or services. Similarly, at participating businesses customers can ask for their change in RiverHOURS.

Employees also can request RiverHOURS as a portion of their wages from participating employers. Even someone who offers a service — like massage — can accept payment in RiverHOURS.

"Most of the time, RiverHOURS will be used in conjunction with federal money," Shaw said. "When they're spent locally over and over again, they have a multiplier effect to help boost the local economy."

Local currencies have sprouted up in dozens of communities over the past decade after widespread media attention focused on Ithaca HOURS, a local currency launched in Ithaca, N.Y., in 1991. The currency is thriving in that city, where more than 2,000 individuals and 300 business participate. About \$70,000 worth of Ithaca HOURS are in circulation, with approximately \$2 million in transactions generated to date.

Local currencies have been declared legal by the IRS, the FBI, the Federal Reserve Board and the Treasury Department.

"It's the same as federal cash as far as the IRS is concerned," Shaw said. "For bookkeeping purposes, it's the same as petty cash."

Local currencies are meant to be spent, not saved, according to Shaw.

"RiverHOURS have value when they're circulated," she said. "It will be good for the big picture if they're spent reliably." Toward that end, she and the GLCC members are encouraging businesses to set "workable" policies regarding RiverHOURS.

The local currency will be good around the Mid-Columbia, from Cascade Locks and Stevenson to The Dalles, and from Parkdale to Trout Lake.

"It is our hope that RiverHOURS will help Gorge residents see each other as valuable resources rather than as competition for scarce dollars," Shaw said.

Hood River News, Columbia Gorge Press and HRN Images are all subsidiaries of Eagle Newspapers, Inc.
Copyright 2003 * Hood River, Oregon

