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Opportunity Village Eugene and the Conestoga Hut



by Andrew Heban

I am with the non-profit Opportunity Village Eugene and thought you might be interested in posting about our newly developed 60 sq. ft. Conestoga Hut here in Eugene, Oregon.

The Conestoga hut is 6 by 10 foot shelter that can be built for between \$250 and \$500 depending on the utilization of re-used or donated materials. While this price is similar to a quality tent, the Conestoga makes significant improvements upon the tent – most notably an insulated and lockable space – while minimizing the cost, skill and labor required by a more conventional, four-walled structure.

There are four components to a Conestoga hut: a basic 6 by 10 foot insulated floor, two solid, insulated walls that line the short sides of the flooring, and a metal wire roof that is curved to connect to the long sides of the floor. The roofing frame is then covered with insulation and outdoor vinyl that is attached to the base of the structure.

The result is a structure that resembles the Conestoga wagons used during early American westward expansion. The components of the shelter can then be easily assembled or disassembled on site, drawing a reference to the rugged individualism again linked with the Conestoga wagon.

The purpose of building these huts is to expand St. Vincent De Paul's existing car camping program, which already allows a limited number of RVs or tents to stay on land hosted by faith communities, businesses, non-profit organizations, or governmental offices. The huts will provide more unhoused citizens a safe and secure place to be in Eugene.



The Reverend Brent Was, board member of Opportunity Village Eugene, and The Church of the Resurrection have already agreed to host three Conestoga huts as part of the car camping program and are conversing with neighboring religious organizations to see if they will do the same.

The non-profit Opportunity Village Eugene (OVE) sees this as a chance to incrementally begin to realize their vision for a village of simple micro-houses. While the city continues to weigh potential sites for such a village, OVE is moving to expand emergency and transitional shelter this winter.