

A Student's Guide to Off-Campus Housing **WHAT'S AVAILABLE?**

La Grande offers a vast array of housing opportunities ranging from apartment complexes, to houses for rent or lease, to studio apartments and rooms for rent. Perhaps most importantly, any or all of these may be found in close proximity to campus and downtown La Grande. Rental amounts can range from just over \$200 to upwards of \$700 a month.

Within this wide range of possibilities, exist residences that will meet the needs of almost any individual or family situation.

WHEN TO LOOK

For fall quarter, we strongly encourage you to have a rental secured by very early summer. Although there are places to be found, they become scarce in August. Finding off campus housing is a challenge and does take work. The housing market in La Grande is usually tight and competitive.

WHERE TO LOOK

Apartments in La Grande

While we do not maintain or provide a list of available apartments in La Grande, there is a bulletin board on the first floor of Hoke Center where people can post notices for roommates and properties to rent. Listed below are apartment complexes in La Grande that advertise in the yellow pages of the local telephone directory.

Catherine Creek Property Mgmt.: 541-605-0430

Cimmaron Manor & Kingsview Manor: 541-963-6649

Country West Apartments: 541-605-0430

Foley Apartments: 541-910-3696

Grande Wood Apartments (Family Assisted Housing): 541-963-8051

Green Tree Apartments: 541-963-7476

Pinehurst Apartments (Family Assisted Housing): 541-963-9292

Sac Annex Building: 541-963-3733

Tamarack Court Apartments (for over 58 and/or disabled individuals): 541-963-4491

Thunderbird Cove Apartments (Family Assisted Housing): 541-963-3785

Carpenter Properties: 541-663-8371

Motels in La Grande

Orchard Motel (Kitchenettes) 541-663-4848

Other good resources for finding available housing are:

The Observer newspaper (classifieds) www.lagrandeobserver.com (541) 963-3161

Nickel Want Ads: 541-963-6237

Northeast Oregon Housing Authority: 503-861-0119

Rental Owner Association of Northeastern Oregon: 541-963-4174 www.neorental.org

As of this date, the following local real estate businesses handle rentals:

Century 21 Eagle Cap Realty: 1511 Adams Ave #1 www.lagrandarentals.com 541-963-0511

Ranch-n-Home Realty Inc: 1526 Jefferson Avenue, 541-963-5450

Valley Realty: 10201 West 1st St, Suite 2, La Grande 541-963-4174

John J. Howard & Associates: 1207 Adams Ave, La Grande, www.johnjhoward.net 541-663-9000

Linda S. Hansen Property Management: 2805 North Cherry St. La Grande, 541-963-9332

MEAL PLANS

Students living off campus may contract to eat meals on campus. Contracts are available in the Residence Life Office, Hoke Center, Room 216, beginning each fall.

CAN'T AFFORD IT?

Financial assistance is available to qualified applicants through various programs designed to assist those individuals and families demonstrating need. Contact the following agencies for specific information:

Northeast Oregon Housing Authority

Phone: (541) 963-5360

2608 May Lane, La Grande, OR 97850

Rent and utility assistance for disabled people, low income families, one parent households, and housing specifically designed for rent based upon income is also available in La Grande and the surrounding area.

Self Sufficiency

1607 Gekeler Lane

La Grande, Or 97850

541-963-4113

A subsidy for families with minor children may be available when parents are complying with the Jobs Program. If parents are not eligible their children may be.

Food Stamps are available for: Families who have children six years old or younger when the parents meet financial eligibility requirements. If parents are not eligible, their children may be.

Work-study students

Students who are working at least 20 hours per week at a job that pays at least minimum wage.

Community Connections

2802 Adams Avenue

La Grande, Or 97850

541-963-3186

COMMUNITY SERVICES AVAILABLE

Help with utility costs can be found through the Energy Assistance Program. Eligibility is based on income. Energy assistance funds are sometimes limited. Interested individuals are therefore encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

Utilities:

Oregon Trail Electric Consumer's Cooperative: 2408 Cove Ave, La Grande, OR 97850, 541-963-3155

Avista Utilities: 1-800-227-9187

La Grande City Water Department: 541-962-1313.

Garbage Collection:

You may contract for garbage collection services through Waste Pro, 541-963-5459.

You may order phone service through **Verizon** by calling them at 541-963-0202 or **Unicom** 1019 Adams Ave., 541-663-9114.

Police:

La Grande City Police have their station near the west end of the university campus on 6th street. Their office number is 541-963-1017. For an emergency call 911.

Fire:

The La Grande Fire Department's office number is 541-963-3123. For an emergency call 911.

TV:

Charter Communications (Spectrum) has an office at 1912 4th Street, La Grande. Their telephone number is 866-874-2389. They offer cable and subscription television services.

RENT OR LEASE-WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Some people are confused about these terms. Although, often subtle, these differences could prove to be crucial under certain circumstances. The following excerpts have been reprinted from Oregon Legal Services Self Help Series #3, and offer some pertinent information and advice.

What is a rental agreement?

This is a spoken or written agreement between the landlord and tenant which spells out the responsibilities of each. If you have a written agreement, your landlord must give you a copy. Any changes should also be put in writing. Be sure to read any agreement carefully before signing it. Having a written agreement is a good idea; it might help if you get into a dispute with the landlord. A rental agreement must include any rules made by the landlord. For a landlord's rule to be valid, you must be notified of it when you enter into the rental agreement, and it must apply fairly to all tenants. If a new rule is made after you enter into the rental agreement, the landlord must get your consent to the rule in writing.

Must a landlord honor spoken agreements?

A spoken rental agreement can be the basis of a court case, but you have to prove what the landlord agreed to. The best proof is the testimony of witnesses present when the agreement was made. Written agreements are better since they are easier to prove.

What is a lease?

Although technically a lease is just a rental agreement, most people use the word "lease" to describe a rental agreement for a longer term, such as a year, at a fixed rate of rent. However, a lease can also say you can be evicted or the rent can be raised with just 30 days written notice. A disadvantage of a long-term lease is that you are obligated to pay rent for the entire term if you move out early unless the landlord finds another tenant. If a new tenant moves in during that time, you do not have to pay for any days the new tenant is there. Your landlord must make reasonable effort to find a new tenant if you move out. (These principles hold true for a month-to-month rental agreement also.)

If you do vacate before the term is up, you can negotiate with the landlord to see if s/he will accept less than full payment. But if the landlord wants full payment, and you refuse, s/he can sue you in *Small Claims Court* or deduct the money from your deposit.

The Self Help Series #3 offers many answers to legal questions regarding tenant rights, rental agreements, deposits, repairs, evictions, and other important items.

Copies are available from:

Oregon Legal Services Regional Office

365 SE 3rd Street

Pendleton, Or 97801

(541)276-6685

Great Expectations

What's expected of my landlord?

Essentially the responsibilities of landlords are whatever is agreed to in the rental contract (another reason to read this document carefully.) There is, however, a basic responsibility mandated by State law. Landlords must provide a place of residence that is "habitable." "Habitable" would include such items as decent plumbing, locks on outside doors and windows, working appliances and a residence free from vermin. A typical agreement of landlord duties in a rental contract would be as follows:

Landlord duties: The landlord agrees to make all repairs and do whatever is necessary to put and keep the premises in a fit and habitable condition in compliance with applicable state, county, and municipal laws and regulations.

The landlord will provide: effective water and weather protection, plumbing which conforms to applicable code and is maintained in good working condition, adequate heating facilities, and an electrical system which conforms to applicable codes, and is maintained in good working order, adequate receptacles for removal of garbage, and approved and adequate water supply capable of supplying hot and cold water, physical plant, including appliances, in good repair, safety from fire hazards, premises in clean and sanitary condition, and will maintain all areas under his/her control in a similar condition including grounds except as otherwise agreed upon, and working locks, with keys for all tenants for all outside entries.

What's expected of me?

In accordance with Oregon State Law, you are required to give 30 days' written notice of intent to vacate the premises. You are financially responsible for the premises for 30 days after the vacate notice was received by the landlord!

Shorter notice, however, may be agreed to in the rental contract. (Know your rental agreement!)

Some typical responsibilities that a tenant would agree to in a rental contract are as follows:

Tenant Duties: Tenant agrees to conduct him/herself, and require others on premises with his/her consent, to conduct themselves in a manner that will not disturb neighbors' peaceful enjoyment, keep all areas under his/her control, and all plumbing fixtures and appliances s/he uses as clean as their condition permits, and to dispose of all waste in a clean and safe manner, use the premises in a reasonable manner considering the purposes for which it was designed and intended, use all appliances and facilities on premises in a reasonable manner, and not deliberately or negligently destroy or remove any part of the premises or knowingly permit others to do so.

YOUR REWARD

In return for all your careful scrutiny, discerning maintenance, and timely rent payments, you should receive, according to the law, “quiet and peaceful enjoyment of the premises. “With good luck, your landlord will grant you this right for which you will be paying. With a little effort and prudence, your relationship with the landlord will be one of mutual respect, and you will gain his/her coveted admiration for being a “good” tenant.

GOOD LUCK!