

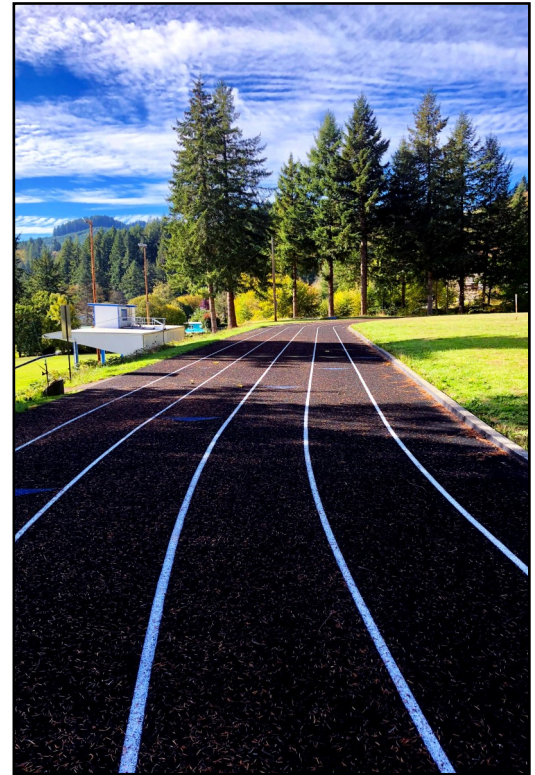
Rural Housing Service • Community Facilities Program

## Rural School District Sprints to the Finish Line with Major Track Repair

In the rural town of Mapleton in western Oregon, students attend high school on a campus sandwiched between the Siuslaw River on one side and the Coast Range on the other. Nestled in the forest, the high school track is distinctive with its triangular shape and 300-meter length. It was built to fit the available space within the confines of these natural barriers on the school’s campus. For years, the school could not host meets for the local track and field league because its track did not conform with the national criteria for record setting. In the 1980s, however, Nike co-founder and U.S. Olympic coach Bill Bowerman successfully petitioned to allow national records to be set on different length tracks, and he used this distinctive Mapleton track as an example to demonstrate his case.

In 2009, the Bowerman Track at Mapleton High School started to show signs of needing to be resurfaced, but this small school district serving 150 students could not afford the significant cost of those repairs. For seven years, the school made do with patching the deteriorating track.

When they learned about the USDA [Community Facilities Program](#), which can help finance the renovation of rural school facilities, they applied and were awarded \$50,000, the maximum grant amount available. The school also received matching contributions from the non-profits Oregon Community Foundation and Three Rivers Foundation. With this assistance, the track was finally resurfaced in 2016.



*The Mapleton High School track was resurfaced with help from a USDA grant.*

“It is a marvelous facility,” said Track Coach Johnny Sundstrom. “And it’s one of the only tracks in our League that’s used by both the middle school and high school.”

The newly reconditioned track is allowing this rural school district to continue offering a robust track and field program. This year, 24 middle school students and 18 high school students will participate. Sundstrom says “The community, the school, and the kids are all deeply grateful for the new track.”

**Obligation Amount:** \$50,000 grant

**Date of Obligation:** June 2016

**Congressional District:** Representative DeFazio, District 4; Senators Wyden and Merkley

**Partners:** Oregon Community Foundation, \$25,000; Three Rivers Foundation, \$6,000

**Demographics:** Mapleton, Oregon; population 1,343

**Impact:** A resurfaced track is enabling a rural school district serving 150 students to continue offering a track and field program.