

## Local nonprofit selected as finalist in grant funding competition

By KARL HOLAPPA staff writer  
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The Ellensburg Glass Recycling Cooperative produces sand from crushed glass at their facility at the IOOF Cemetery

Karl Holappa/ Daily Record

A local environmental nonprofit is hard at work finding funding solutions to increase its long-term sustainability.

The Ellensburg Glass Recycling Cooperative has been selected as a finalist for a \$10,000 grant from Seattle Good Business. The group will go up against four other finalists for the money and is currently working on a multimedia presentation that will be submitted in June.

"We are getting a compressed MBA in my opinion," cooperative member Suzanne Noble said of the competition. "When we started recycling glass, I realized I didn't know much about marketing, so I was trying to teach myself."

Noble said the competition is hosting eight workshops, providing an intensive crash course in marketing in a circular economy, as opposed to a linear economy.

"A linear economy is one that just exploits," she said. "It doesn't consider the future."

## GETTING READY TO PRESENT

As the cooperative progressed through the competition, Noble has begun working on the multimedia presentation that will be given in a virtual meeting along with the other finalists. The presentation involves a five-minute video that demonstrates the passion and soul of the operation.

"We have to sell our value and potential," she said.

Noble created a storyboard that sets up the foundation of marketing the cooperative in the competition. From there, she set out to interview community members to talk about why they are passionate about participating in the cooperative. Cooperative members will speak during the presentation, talking about their parts in the organization. The presentation will continue by showing what the group is doing at their recycling facility.

On June 23, Noble will find out if the cooperative has won the competition. In a virtual meeting, she said venture capitalists will also be present, opening up another opportunity for potential funding. If the group receives funding, she said it will go towards continuing to build infrastructure at their facility located at the IOOF Cemetery, including installing garage doors and purchasing a screener machine.

## BRIGHT HORIZONS

Regardless of the outcome, Noble said participating in the competition has helped build confidence throughout the cooperative in future funding pursuits.

"We will own this pitch video, so we will be able to put this on our website and show people that we have a viable product here," she said. "Our product is special because it is ultra clean, and it will be sorted by size. We will have applications and recipes on our website so people will know how to use the sand when they come and get it."

Looking beyond the competition, Noble said the cooperative has been in conversations with regional businesses to find ways to market the sand produced by the recycling process. One business in particular is showing interest, a company that sells sandblasting materials based on the West Side.

"They're very interested in our product," Noble said. "Right now, they would be able to use 45% of the product that we're making."

In the future, Noble hopes that county officials will show interest in helping the cooperative become more sustainable and grow to meet the needs of the community.

"We would like to see this become something larger," she said. "Something that will help boost the local economy as well."

