



# RS EXCHANGE

## REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

### Weekly Report

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Below are some highlights from the Governor's [Regional Solutions \(RS\) Coordinators](#), on behalf of the eleven interagency teams across Oregon.

## Regional Solutions (RS) Director – Leah Horner

### North Coast Region – Jennifer Purcell

- **North Coast Economic Recovery Team** – *Background* – The North Coast Economic Recovery Team is comprised of local, regional, state, and federal economic and workforce development partners. Convened by Regional Solutions, the team is sharing information about impacts and needs, resources and supports, and planning for recovery.
  - *Update* – Regional Solutions meets weekly with economic developers, chambers of commerce and downtown associations, destination management organizations, workforce partners, and ports to better understand the challenges they are facing as they respond to business needs. This week, Josh Lehner, Economist with the Office of Economic Analysis, joined the North Coast Economic Recovery Team. Josh provided a presentation regarding *Working from Home, and Broadband Access in Oregon*. The North Coast Economic Recovery Team discussed teleworking as an economic development opportunity for our region and constraints relating to both limited access to the internet and poor quality of service, including speed and reliability. The limited supply of housing creates an additional barrier to attracting those who can work from home. Housing supply is uniquely constrained on the coast and in other tourism economies because of the second home and vacation rental market. Anticipating some increase in working from home, particularly in rural areas, improving broadband access and the availability of a range of housing options will be critical to advancing economic opportunity and equity in recovery.
- **Regional Broadband Action Team** – The Columbia Pacific Economic Development District, including Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, and western Washington counties, voted this week to establish a Broadband Action Team. The team will be coordinating and advancing regional broadband initiatives and activities in alignment with the expansion of statewide broadband infrastructure. Regional Solutions and Business Oregon will support this work.
- **Coastal Housing Technical Assistance** – Coastal Regional Solutions Coordinators met with Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), League of Oregon Cities (LOC), and Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) to discuss next steps regarding a partnership for coastal communities to access technical assistance to advance housing development. The coastal region was identified for additional investment because of the limited capacity of coastal communities

to coordinate and implement housing projects. Following a series of stakeholder meetings, four areas of technical assistance were identified as priorities: need for a housing coordinator(s), advancing development of government-owned property, workforce housing development, and essential code updates. Regional Solutions will work closely with the project team, including OHCS, LOC, AOC, and the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), to advise project selection and Regional Solutions Teams will support project implementation.

## Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **Marion County Public Health and POC Leaders Weekly Meeting** – This week, RS facilitated the discussion focused on two items. First, the Woodburn hotel currently under contract with Marion County Public Health for quarantine isolation. The county could not go into details due to a legal matter. They did report that no one is currently housed in the facility. The second item was a review of a county grant launching later this week. The POC leaders were asked to provide input on the application and process.
- **Mid-Valley Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Community Outreach, Chamber, and Economic Development Alliance Updates** – RS joined the weekly Alliance meetings to learn how the statewide face covering is going and what more can be done to help with compliance. The Alliance groups stated that commercial and manufacturing businesses are successfully following the guidance. The Chamber Alliance shared concerns about the possibility of “rolling back” business opening when the issues seems to lay with social gatherings and personal responsibility. The BIPOC Community Outreach Alliance discussed marketing efforts to reach the BIPOC community about the new Mid-Valley Small Business Grant from Business Oregon and gave several testing updates.

## South Valley/Mid Coast Region – Sarah Means

- **Blue River Wastewater** – The community of Blue River has been interested for a number of years in developing a community wastewater system. Blue River is not an incorporated city and, as such, there are a number of steps that would need to be taken in order for a wastewater system to be developed from both a land use and a special district perspective. The RST has been engaging with Lane County and Blue River representatives on the topic to discuss the series of steps necessary in order to develop a community system. If the project moves forward, both DLCD and DEQ will be engaged in the work.
- **The SVMC Economic Recovery Team** – includes representatives from the Employment Department, Business Oregon, local and regional economic development professionals, Workforce Investment Boards, ports, and federal delegation representatives. The Team meets regularly to share information, identify immediate needs and understand impacts. Impacts because of COVID-19 are impacting all industry sectors in the region. For the last several months, the ERT has met a minimum of weekly. Beginning in July, the meetings have been scheduled for every other week.
- Identified needs/challenges/opportunities this past week include:
  - Special thanks to Director Colt Gill for providing an overview of the K-12 school guidance and answering questions from the group at the June 25 meeting.
  - Corvallis/Benton County are seeing continued success with their right-of-way program for local restaurants. The City of Eugene is also experiencing positive results from a similar program.
  - Lane County is working with rural communities to develop business loan programs.

- OCVA's most recent marketing efforts, including two targeted campaigns going on right now. Both of these are being heavily promoted through our social channels. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DB803w0rNxk&feature=youtu.be>
- Communities in SVMC are continuing to struggle with finding non-congregate shelter options. One community has suggesting that a statewide policy may be needed.

## Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Metro Economic Response Team – Background** – Metro Regional Solutions (RS) is partnering with Greater Portland, Inc. (GPI), to co-convene a Metro Economic Response Team in order to share information and resources related to COVID-19. In addition to state agencies (Business Oregon, Oregon Employment Department, Bureau of Labor & Industry, Small Business Advocate, Oregon Housing & Community Services, and Travel Oregon), a number of partners in the Portland-metro region have been invited to participate including business associations, city and county economic development practitioners and elected leaders, community-based organizations, labor, members of the Governor’s Metro Regional Solutions Advisory Committee and workforce development organizations.
  - Update – Many thanks to Sara Morrissey and Katy Claire of Travel Oregon for providing and update on the economic impact of COVID-19 on Oregon’s tourism industry and presenting the agency’s Reopening Campaign.
- **Economic impacts from COVID-19 on Oregon’s Tourism Industry:**
  - Prior to COVID-19, Oregon’s travel industry provided 117,000 direct jobs.
  - Six weeks after COVID-19 hit, 7 in 10 lodging employees and 8 in 10 food service workers were laid off or furloughed. Many remain out of work.
  - Weekly lodging data compared to this time last year:
    - Statewide hotel occupancy: 50 percent, down 37 percent
    - Average daily rates down \$50, down 28 percent
    - Occupancy rates vary widely throughout the state: Oregon coast, central Oregon, southern Oregon have higher occupancy rates, with some properties seeing full occupancy this weekend, but Portland just at 34 percent, 60 percent lower than 2019.
    - PDX’s daily passengers are down 73 percent. Starting to see this metric rise.
- **Impacts on Travel Oregon from COVID-19:**
  - Travel Oregon is estimating 40-50 percent drop in revenue next year.
  - Expected budget of \$37 million will drop to \$20 million or less.
  - This decrease will affect programming, grant dollars for regional partners.
- **Actions Travel Oregon is taking:**
  - Redirected programing to provide grants to tourism businesses. Awarded over \$800,000 in grants to support small tourism businesses, many in small communities.
  - Resources for partners include business toolkit, [weekly newsletters](#), [weekly travel data reports](#)
  - Developing a virtual training program to help small businesses rebuild and recover.
  - Amplifying public messaging around COVID-19.

- **Reopening campaign:**
  - Agency was able to shift spring campaign budget to reopening campaign, set to launch August 3.
  - This campaign will be targeted at Oregonians; inspire them to lift Oregon up by exploring it.
  - Creative will acknowledge new reality: scenes through barriers like windows or binoculars, people social distancing.
  - Campaign takes into account different counties/regions in different phases of reopening. Targeting different creative based on county and zip code. Phase 1 counties will get a different message, encouraged to stay within county/region.
  - The campaign will be all-digital (e.g. no billboards, print ads) to support nimbleness/flexibility if phases change.
  - Ads will encourage people to travel, but only if they do research and plan ahead.
  - Second half of campaign will be more detailed, include itineraries, encourage people to book experiences like tours.
  - Data show that people are traveling within the state. Travel Oregon wants to be a resource, help people travel responsibly.
  
- **Racism in the Construction Industry** – Metro RS attended a listening and brainstorming session on racism in the construction industry that was hosted by Nate McCoy, Executive Director of the National Association of Minority Contractors of Oregon (NAMC-OR). Panelists included Robert Camarillo (Oregon Building Trades), Matt Swanson (Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters), Michael Hawes (Pacific NW Carpenters Institute), William Myers (Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council), Jeff Moreland (Raimore Construction), Andrew Colas (Colas Construction) and Alando Simpson (City of Roses Disposal & Recycling). The construction industry offers quality middle-income jobs for many, including for people without a four-year college degree and offers many apprenticeship and career ladder opportunities. The point was made that the construction spans other industries such as architecture, engineering, real estate development and finance and that there is racism throughout. There was a good discussion about how to address racism and discrimination in the industry in the following ways:
  - Grow local minority, woman and emerging small business (MWESB) companies;
  - Access to capital for underserved populations in real estate development transactions;
  - Lenders and developers should require contractors to track diversity on jobsites similar to the Portland Housing Bureau’s goals and reporting requirements;
  - Bureau of Labor & Industry (BOLI) certified apprenticeship programs should require diversity, equity and inclusion training;
  - There should be leadership and mentorship training and development programs for people of color.
  - Reevaluate low-cost bid requirements that may get in the way of diversifying workforce.
  - Offer an “equitable worksite” certification with real accountability behind it that developers and owners might eventually see as a competitive advantage/”must have” similar to LEED certification.
  
- **Partners in Diversity Retention Project** – Metro RS attended discussion hosted by the Portland Business Alliance and Partners in Diversity on “A Way Forward: Results from the Partners in Diversity Retention Project.” In 2019, Partners in Diversity hired Martinez Organizational Consulting, LLC, led by Larry Martinez, Ph.D., industrial and organizational psychologist, to

conduct a multi-method, multi-series study. Participants of the study were professionals of color. They were recruited via email and snowball sampling. The study, which took place in the summer of 2019, included 30 in-depth interviews conducted by researchers of color, five in-depth interviews with recruitment and retention personnel, and 293 large-scale online surveys of professionals of color. It is important to note that the study took place before COVID-19 and the recent police-involved killings of unarmed black Americans and the calls for police reform and accountability.

Of the 293 individuals who participated in the online survey, 14 percent left the region (Oregon/southwest Washington). The majority of the participants were not from the region originally (86%). They represent a wide range of professional industries, with 81 percent reporting being employed full-time. They represent a wide range of organizational levels, though most said they were managers or associates. Participants were between 23 and 68 years old, with the average age of 39 years old, and were mostly female (74%).

With respect to racial or ethnic identities, 42 percent identified as Black or African American, 21 percent identified as multi-racial or other, 18 percent were Asian, 15 percent identified as Hispanic or Latinx, three percent were Indian or South Asian, while one percent identified as Native American or Alaskan Native.

- **Project Findings:**

- A dominant theme expressed by individuals who stayed and individuals who left was the influence of organizational practices on their work lives. The central concern that connected their experiences was a perceived lack of accountability among organizational leaders following perceived organizational injustices.
- Many also felt like outsiders within their own organization, with 74 percent of participants reporting some form of workplace discrimination.
- These situations, along with a low (27%) job satisfaction rate, were often cited as primary reasons for leaving the organization or the region. Other factors include lack of diversity in the workforce and lack of support from their organization.
- The study showed that experiences in the community also played a major role in determining whether a person of color stayed in the region, which supports the concept of intersectionality—the ways in which people are impacted by their overlapping identities.
- Only one percent felt included in the community.
- Only six percent felt there were appropriate cultural resources in the community.
- Only 16 percent felt comfortable in restaurants, stores and public places.
- Many cited the racist history of the area and more recent events, such as the stabbing on the MAX line, as troublesome.
- Comments by participants reveal their shock and disbelief by the level of racism, bigotry and micro-aggressions that they frequently experienced in the community.

## [North Central Region](#) – Nate Stice

- **North Central Oregon Recovery Team** – The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District and Region Regional Solutions stood up the bi-state Columbia Gorge/Mid-Columbia Bi-State Economic Resilience Team. The structure for the team was outlined in a 2019 report produced by [MCEDD](#), based on work Regional Solutions led efforts around fire recovery for the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire and 2018 Grass Fires.

The emphasis of the team this week has been three-fold: 1) Planning for second round of continuity training, and 2) understanding and supporting education efforts; 3) continued work around migrant and seasonal farm worker supports.

- Highlights:
  - 1) The team was joined at our Friday meeting by the Deputy Superintendents for Instruction from both Oregon and Washington, who outlined reopening guidance and process.
  - 2) The team is working toward to more trainings: a training on protecting employees in high intensity work environments; 2) training employers on tools, resources, and support for their employees.
  - 3) RS has also been working with the City of Hood River and ODOT to find a path forward for parklets in the community: <https://katu.com/news/local/odot-asks-hood-river-businesses-to-move-parklets-along-state-roads>

## Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs** – The tribes were awarded \$3,580,000M from the Emergency Board (E Board) on July 14 to support critical investments in their water systems; these state funds will also serve as match for a ~\$500 EPA grant application directed at the water systems. RS continues to work with the tribe and federal agency partners on next steps for funding the full suite of needed infrastructure. In light of the E Board funding, the team is working to bring together funders to identify additional funding opportunities for the water system will delay the scheduled July 30 meeting until there is clarity from Tribal Council on prioritized needs.
- **Central Oregon Economic Response Team – Background** – South Central Regional Solutions (RS) Team along with county commissioners, city leaders, chambers, economic and workforce development, downtown organizations, local legislators, federal congressional delegation representatives and the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee have been meeting since mid-March.
  - Update: last week's agenda highlights:
    - Employment Department Update – many thanks to David Gerstenfeld for joining to give an overview of the department's progress processing UI/PUA claims. David did a great job helping people understand the challenges of processing such a large volume of claims and implementing new federal programs. There was also discussion about future federal programs and whether the additional \$600/week was providing a disincentive for people to return to work.
    - Enforcement of the governor's COVID directives/protocols:

Michael Wood (OSHA) and Andrew Jurik (OLCC) presented information about the statewide mask requirement and the enforcement efforts over the holiday weekend. Andrew showed several alarming photos from bars/nightclubs in downtown Bend. City of Bend and OSHA/OLCC are coordinating on follow up.
    - Analysis of PPP data in Oregon: Michael Meyers, Business Oregon, shared his analysis of the PPP data released July 6. There were over 62k loans made; the majority were under \$150k. There were over 650k jobs retained attached to those loans. Bend was the #2 city on list of top 20 cities to receive loans. Central Oregon firms received the highest percentage of loans at 61%.

## South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Weddings, county fairs and rodeos** – RS has been working closely with wedding venues, county fairs and rodeos to provide technical assistance on the venue guidance.

## Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team** – This week the Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team met to discuss the latest developments related to COVID-19 in Eastern Oregon. Eastern Oregon continues to be hard hit with outbreaks and Baker County was added as an additional watch list county this week. We also went over the latest guidance on statewide social gatherings and outdoor face covering guidance released this week. Businesses across the region are feeling more and more uncertainty and numbers continuing to drop over the past couple of weeks with cases rising.
- **Baker City Housing Needs Project** – DLCD has provided Baker City with funding for a housing needs analysis and RS is involved in the technical advisory committee. We kicked off the project this week that will look at the housing needs in the community as well as strategies to incentivize growth in the future. Real estate is moving fast in this community and there is already a tight housing market so the local community is hoping for ideas on how to spur development.
- **Heppner Housing Development Project** – RS met with the City of Heppner and Morrow County to discuss a possible housing development project that the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) would lead. RS gave technical advice on the processes needed and the infrastructure that would be needed for the development. This is the start of a long-term project to get additional housing in a community that is in desperate need of workforce housing. WCVEDG has been working for years on ways to incentivize housing in the community and last year finished a duplex project that would provide market rate rental housing for the community's needs. This would be a much larger project but definitely needed for the community.
- **Snake River Trail Project** – RS pulled together the City of Ontario, Department of State Lands (DSL), Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) to discuss the Snake River Trail Project. This is a community development project that would add a 3.2-mile trail along the Snake River on the Oregon side. The city is planning to apply for a National Park Service planning grant, but needs to finalize easements through both public and private land. They are almost done with finalizing the easements for the private land, but need to work with both Department of State Lands and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department where the trail would go through state land. Both agencies are now working on the easement process but DSL and USACOE both explained the additional permitting processes that would be needed for this project. This will continue to be a RS project moving forward.