

## Mid-Columbia Economic Resiliency Team Meeting

July 10, 2020

### AGENDA

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/98720785607?pwd=TUJEB2JzQkt4SUZ5TzJZeJAvckJYQT09>  
Or Call 669-900-6833, Meeting ID: 987 2078 5607, Password: 2266

- 11:00 a.m. Call to Order, Welcome
- 11:05 a.m. K-12 School Fall Outlook
- Colt Gill, Oregon Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
  - Michaela Miller, Washington Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
- 11:35 a.m. Industry Focus: High Technology
- Carrie Pipinich, Gorge Tech Alliance
  - Mark Zanmiller, Sightline Applications and MCEDD Board Tech Representative
  - Jeff Decker, Insitu
- 12:00 p.m. Reports:
- Economist update
  - Workforce agencies updates
  - SBDC update
  - WA Dept of Commerce/Business Oregon Update
  - Chambers update
  - Ports update
  - Outdoor rec update
- 12:30 p.m. Adjourn

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### Guiding Principles

- Our first priority and common purpose is to serve our region's employees, communities, and businesses, and we will leave our politics at the door.
- We will find way to increase, efficiency and reduce duplication of efforts to not unnecessarily tax the bandwidth of those we are serving.
- We will work in the spirit of collaboration to support each other in achieving our individual mandates in service of our common purpose.
- We offer each other grace as we undoubtedly will make mistakes, recognizing we are all experiencing stress ourselves as we are interacting with others facing tremendous stress.
- We find and take every opportunity to give credit and praise to our colleagues and partners as we encourage each other in this moment.

## **Mid-Columbia Economic Resiliency Team Meeting July 10, 2020**

Jessica Metta (MCEDD) started the meeting with introductions for guest speakers on the call.

Jessica introduced Michaela Miller (Washington Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction) and Colt Gill (Oregon Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction) to discuss guidance developed for reopening K-12 schools in the fall. Michaela noted that her office has been coordinating with their counterparts in Oregon and California to align reopening strategies as much as possible. As schools started shutting down across Washington in the spring, many schools were not prepared to provide remote learning, as many did not have technology bonds in place that would provide funds for the technology students needed. This continues to be an issue. On June 11, Washington's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) released [guidance for reopening schools](#) in fall 2020 ([learn more about the process for developing the guidance](#)), developed in partnership with the Departments of Health and Labor & Industries. Washington's guidance is also based on what schools in other states and countries have learned as they have reopened and officials continue conversations at the federal, state, and local level to develop adaptive strategies that enable students and staff to safely return to school.

Primary risk mitigation measures within Washington's reopening guidance include: screenings for all students, consistent handwashing and hygiene practices, physical distancing of six feet combined with required face coverings for all students, with a few limited exceptions, and cleaning facilities on a routine basis. One of the biggest challenges is that adhering to the physical distancing guidance of six feet will reduce the number of children allowed to be in school at once. The state is still discussing this requirement. The American Association of Pediatrics recently released a set of recommendations for reopening schools that included guidance to maintain three to six feet of distance. With a minimum of three feet required, all students in Washington could be at their school at the same time.

Colt Gill reported that in Oregon, each individual school (public, private, public charters) must use Oregon's reopening school guidance ([link to guidance, community engagement and resources](#)) to develop a reopening plan. Reopening will depend on a school's capacity, and some may be able to accommodate physical distancing requirements on-site with students in school every day while some may need to rely on distance learning or a hybrid model. All will need to take into account current outbreaks and/or staffing capacity. For those choosing to incorporate distance learning, they will need to meet new guidelines that will require daily connection between educators and student and regular assessments of student progress. They first released the guidance on June 10, with additional guidance in late June and another iteration is planned for the end of July. These updates are based on constantly evolving mitigation efforts, input from educators, parents, students, and community members and what is learned from other states and countries.

It was noted that access to broadband is a challenge in rural communities. In Washington, OSPI has been working with Comcast to try to secure broadband connectivity for low-income students but there have been challenges in covering remote areas of the state where there is no Comcast service. Michaela called out the need for federal legislative action to sufficiently meet broadband needs on a national

level. Colt mentioned similar issues in Oregon, noting that Oregon set aside \$20 million of COVID-19 relief funding to support broadband expansion throughout Oregon. The state is also requesting \$28 million from CARES Act funding to supply school districts with funds to support expanded broadband access through the development of more Wi-Fi hotspots, improved broadband connectivity at home, and improved technology literacy support for families and educators. It was noted that broadband access is needed for residents of treaty fishing access and in-lieu sites in both states as well.

Michaela and Colt addressed questions around extended school years and having classes outdoor. The guidance from Oregon and Washington requests that school districts build in additional school days, beyond the typical expansion for weather closures, within the planned school year in case schools need to close to address an outbreak without losing instructional time. See an example intersessional calendar provided by Oregon [here](#). Both Oregon and Washington are committed to providing the same amount of instructional time as pre-COVID.

The use of outdoor space as classrooms will be dependent on the weather conditions but high risk activities like band and choir are encouraged to be held outside if schools are moving forward with them at all. Authorities are trying to be as creative as possible while developing long-term sustainable strategies around the use of classroom space. Lastly, both states are looking at data to see which students were impacted most by the school closures this spring and asking their school districts to take this into account when preparing reopening plans. In Washington, OSPI will be distributing additional guidance that asks school districts to do mock run throughs of their plans from a student and parent perspective.

Jessica introduced Carrie Pipinich (MCEDD, Gorge Tech Alliance Representative), John Wall (Insitu), and Mark Zanmiller (Sightline Applications and MCEDD Board Tech Representative) to provide an overview of COVID-19 impacts to the high tech industry in the Columbia Gorge.

John reported that Insitu's work was deemed essential and has therefore been able to continue its operations, but has faced supply chain challenges. John noted that employee safety is a top priority. Insitu is allowing many employees to work remotely and have flexible schedules. Insitu is also working to change cubicle layouts in their offices so that employees can work from the office while maintaining a minimum of six feet of physical distance. Looking forward, Insitu is discussing strategies to accommodate physical distancing and number of employees, including broader telework practices and spaces that can be reserved for a day by employees who only come into the office a few days a week. Mark reported that his company and other small tech companies in the Gorge had adapted to primarily working from home for the foreseeable future. He noted that the discussion around education is an important one noted by tech companies as it relates to the ability of employees to come back to work as well as workforce preparedness. Companies with manufacturing spaces had to realign their production spaces or schedules to accommodate the physical distancing requirements, but were continuing to push forward with robust operations. Both Mark and John noted that social interaction and in-person face time is important for employees and both mentioned trying to return to a more typical office environment when conditions allow.

Mark noted there haven't been any trends with domestic or international customers that indicate long-term shifts in conducting business, but he acknowledged the possibility of adjusting business operations in accordance with active shifts in the broader economy.

John noted that broadband connectivity remains a challenge for many employees. The majority of Insitu's remote employees rely on broadband access to conduct business and many employees subscribe to multiple broadband services in order to maintain connectivity. Others have to go to an alternate location if they cannot access the internet. Carrie noted that there are existing models to support public-private partnerships to get expanded broadband service and address gaps. The Gorge Broadband Consortium discusses opportunities regularly and both states have opportunities for rural broadband support.

John also noted that becoming acquainted with the nuances of working virtually and learning to navigate cultural differences with international partners and clients in a virtual manner are current challenges as well. Mark noted that adapting to new infrastructure realities will be critical to moving forward in the long-term. There is also a level of uncertainty around supply chains as COVID-19 continues to impact manufacturing facilities. The more industries focus on strengthening local and regional infrastructure, the more equipped businesses will be to overcome challenges as they arise.

**Regional Economists:** Dallas Fridley (Oregon Employment Department) provided a report on Oregon's unemployment claims ([link](#)). Initial unemployment claims have gradually fallen off to near pre-pandemic levels. Most claims are from the health care and accommodations and food services industries. He compared continued claims during the Great Recession (around 1,000 per week) to now (around 1,900/week). Scott Bailey (Washington Employment Security Department) provided a report on Washington's unemployment claims ([weekly report](#)). Details for weekly claims for Skamania and Klickitat counties can be found on the Department's [dashboard](#). Scott also noted concern for a drop in incomes, as the \$600/week additional unemployment support ends at the end of July.

**Workforce Agencies:** Mike Scroggs (Oregon Rapid Response Program, CGCC) mentioned that the Oregon Employment Department has a [new website](#). The Oregon Employment Office in The Dalles has reassigned most of its staff to help assist with processing PUA claims, which will likely remain in place for the next month. CGCC is continuing to focus on worker reemployment training needs and is offering free resume workshops and consult for prospective employees ([link](#)).

Leticia Valle (Washington Employment Security Department) noted that the unemployment insurance division in the UI claims center will not be taking inbound phone calls for the third week. There are currently 35,000 claims logged in the system that they are focusing on processing. Leticia also continues to engage in a weekly Spanish-language radio show, on Tuesdays starting at 8 am, to discuss the unemployment claim processes.

**SBDC:** Greg Price reported that the state SBDC's capital access team is rolling out a PPP forgiveness application support website designed to help people through the application process. SBDC has also introduced five new classes to the schedule for this fall, most of which revolve around business

technology, working remote, and website development. The SBDC has also waived registration fees for all its classes, which can be taken virtually for free until the end of the year ([link](#)).

**Business Oregon:** The Small Business Technical Assistance grant RFP is currently open and due on July 17. Business Oregon is also responsible for distributing broadband CARES Act funding across the state, and the state has received 130 applications for a total of \$55 million. Michael also highlighted that \$270 million in state lottery funds will not be awarded, which means that many projects across the state, including in the Columbia Gorge, are now indefinitely on hold until more funding is available. Business Oregon has developed a GIS maps to show where PPP loans were received by zip code ([link](#)).

**Chambers:** Chambers have been working to distribute masks to businesses in the area. Lizzie thanked those who led the face covering and workplace outbreak training this week ([link to recorded training](#)).

**Ports:** Peter Mitchell (Port of Arlington) reported that the wheat harvest season has begun. Several businesses have faced challenges internally and with customers in adjusting to the mandatory requirement for face masks. Overnight cruise ships will not be allowed to operate on the Columbia River for the foreseeable future. Andrea Klaas (Port of The Dalles) reported that the Port has received a supply of masks and is now distributing them to Port businesses.

**Outdoor Recreation:** Lynn Burditt (U.S. Forest Service) reported that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday was fairly informative in terms of analyzing crowd numbers in outdoor spaces. The discussion now if focused on how and when to reopen Multnomah Falls and Lynn has been working with a variety of stakeholders to determine if the falls can be opened safely and affordably. The U.S. Forest Service has also started receiving calls from people in other parts of the country who want to visit Oregon and Washington, and partners will discuss the need to coordinate messages around reopening recreation sites at their next meeting.

**Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance:** The CGTA is hosting a [Let's Talk Tourism](#) (in the time of COVID) webinar on Thursday, July 22 at 10am. Additionally, Gorge Museums have just launched a [Museums Pass](#) that lasts through next summer to help support them during this time.

**MCEDD:** MCEDD received \$250,000 from Business Oregon to disperse to businesses and nonprofits in Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco that were not able to benefit from PPP or EIDL programs. More information about this program can be found at [mcedd.org/bizgrants](http://mcedd.org/bizgrants).

**Other:** Christa Rude (Four Rivers Early Learning Hub) noted that eight grantees in the State, including Four Rivers, benefitted from the [Student Success Act Early Learning Act](#) awards, creating the opportunity to add ninety-four additional preschool slots at childcare centers in the region. This represents a \$1.2 million investment in the region.

Jessica thanked the group for their work. If there are items you'd like communicated during next week's meeting, please send details to [jacque@mcedd.org](mailto:jacque@mcedd.org). This group will meet in two weeks on Friday (July 24) at 11:00 a.m.

## **CHAT FROM 7/10/2020 MCERT MEETING**

From Colt Gill to Everyone: 11:17 AM

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Pages/Planning-for-the-2020-21-School-Year.aspx>

From Michaela Miller to Everyone: 11:19 AM

<https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/workgroups/Reopening%20Washington%20Schools%202020%20Planning%20Guide.pdf>

<https://k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/Reopening%20Washington%20Schools%20FAQ%20for%20School%20Districts.pdf>

From Scott Bailey to Everyone: 11:27 AM

For hybrid strategies, how do we deal with child care on alternate days?

From Rachael Fuller to Everyone: 11:31 AM

Thank you for all of your work, I appreciate the challenge of maintaining essential services during the crisis. Has any consideration been made for an extended school year to make up for lost time, especially if there are openings and closing. And has there been consideration to use outdoor spaces for classrooms.

What is the guidance to maintain school breakfast/lunch programs during non-school days or periods?

From Kathleen Cathey (she/her) to Everyone: 11:32 AM

I'm back if I can finish my q. (Darned internet.)

From Colt Gill to Everyone: 11:33 AM

Intersessional Calendar: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Documents/Sample%20Intersessional%20Calendar.pdf>

From Scott Bailey to Everyone: 11:36 AM

Long term, looking at the possibility of other outbreaks, is anyone looking at how schools might need to be designed differently?

Historically underserved students were most affected by the cessation of in person classes this past year. What responses are you seeing to increase classtime for these students?

From Buck Jones to Everyone: 11:41 AM

Thank you for this question Scott it would be great to get broadband where residents live on Treaty fishing access and In-Lieu sites

From Colt Gill to Everyone: 11:41 AM

On meals...We are continuing to seek waivers to ensure students have access to meals. The USDA has been good about offering these waivers. We have a record number of districts offering summer meals.

From Scott Bailey to Everyone: 11:42 AM  
What about child care? For hybrid models.

From Colt Gill to Everyone: 11:42 AM  
child care is challenging, really challenging. However, the office of child care is updating their guidance to align more closely with ours which will allow them to serve more children.

From eoc-projector to Everyone: 11:43 AM  
could we get the questions and the answers as well (the EM's)

From Rachael Fuller to Everyone: 11:43 AM  
Thank you both. And thank you MCEDD.

From Jessica Metta, MCEDD to Everyone: 11:43 AM  
Yes, we can send out

From Dan Spatz to Everyone: 11:44 AM  
I'd like these as well. Will advise Child Care Partners of this discussion.

From eoc-projector to Everyone: 11:44 AM  
thank you and thanks for setting this up

From Michael Held-Business Oregon to Everyone: 12:03 PM  
How is technology (not broadband) enabling supply chains and companies to adapt? For example, is AI or machine learning or advanced analytics that are changing the worker landscape?

From Brad Houghton to Everyone: 12:04 PM  
How do we incentivize the providers (Comcast, Verizon, Charter, etc) to expedite expansion of rural coverage (Corona Virus Relief Funds, tax incentives, etc)?

From Christa Rude to Everyone: 12:08 PM  
Just catching up on comments and want to add a note about hybrid models for child care. There are some models that have been used in the Portland areas and MCMC has a model as well. When considering the return on investment for this kind of partnership it's important to acknowledge retention as a key value.

From Michael Held-Business Oregon to Everyone: 12:08 PM  
And Business Oregon is applying for an EDA grant, \$12mn of which would help fund broadband, particularly telehealth, telelearning, and telecommuting

From Michael Held-Business Oregon to Everyone: 12:14 PM  
For those interested, a GIS map Business Oregon put together to show where PPP loans were received by zip code

<https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=37fd11926d9446fa8cc30b2036ce2de9&extent=-127.7559,41.2715,-113.3418,46.8544>

From Christa Rude to Everyone: 12:18 PM

I have an announcement :)

From Mike Scroggs to Everyone: 12:20 PM

New OED website: <https://unemployment.oregon.gov/>

Free Resume workshops and consult: <https://classifieds.gorge.net/?id=9ndwhkpb>

From Christa Rude to Everyone: 12:21 PM

<https://oregonearlylearning.com/student-success-act#ssarfa>

From Gregory Price - CGCC SBDC to Everyone: 12:23 PM

<https://clients.bizcenter.org/Events.aspx?mode=4&area=Ashland&zip=&miles=25&center=2140&topicnum=0&days=90&sort=M&layout=0>

From Emily Reed CGTA to Everyone: 12:30 PM

Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance are hosting Let's Talk Tourism (in the time of COVID) on Thursday, July 22 at 10am: <https://lets-talk-tourism.eventbrite.com/>

Gorge Museums have just launched a Museums Pass to help support them at this time and is a great deal that lasts through next summer as well: <https://gorgeculture.org/museumspass/>

From Me to Everyone: 12:33 PM

<https://www.mcedd.org/bizgrants/>

**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC RESILIENCY TEAM****July 10**

Aaryn Rassmussen	Columbia Gorge Regional Airport	
Abe Friedman	Office of Senator Maria Cantwell	
Alberto Isiordia	Washington Employment Security Department	
Amy Gibbs	Oregon Employment Department	
Amy Martinez	South Central Workforce Council (WA)	
Andrea Klaas	Port of The Dalles	
Angie Waiss	Skamania County Chamber of Commerce	
Anna Osborn	The Next Door, Inc.	
Anne Medenbach	Port of Hood River	
Arlene Burns	City of Mosier	x
Ashley Huckaby May	Visit Hood River Council	x
BJ Westlund	Office of Senator Jeff Merkley	
Brad Houghton	Mid-Columbia Economic Development District	x
Bryan Stebbins	Office of Senator Patty Murray	x
Buck Jones	Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC)	x
Captain Tony Gilmer	Klickitat County	
Carrie Pipinich	Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, Wasco/Sherman EDO	x
Charlotte Bentley	USDA Rural Development - Oregon	
Chuck Thompsen	Oregon State Senate	
Dallas Fridley	Oregon Employment Department	x
Dan Mahr	Office of Senator Jeff Merkley	x
Dan Spatz	Columbia Gorge Community College	x
Dana Peck	Goldendale Chamber of Commerce	
Dave McClure	Klickitat County Economic Development	x
David Kavanagh	Klickitat County Public Health	
Emily Reed	Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance	x
Eric Nerdin	USDA Rural Development - Oregon	
Eric Proffitt	Worksource Oregon	
Erick Garman	Oregon Department of Agriculture (exports)	x
Evan Bryan	Office of State Senator Bill Hansell	
Gabriel Muro	The Next Door, Inc.	
Gladys Rivera	One Community Health	
Gordon Zimmerman	City of Cascade Locks	x
Greg Price	Columbia Gorge Community College/Small Business Development Center	x
Greg Svelund	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality	x
Hannah Brause	WSU Extension, Klickitat and Skamania	
Hannah Ladwig	Gorge Grown Food Network	
Heather Ficht	East Cascades Works (OR)	
Jacob Egler	Office of Senator Ron Wyden	
Jacque Schei	Mid-Columbia Economic Development District	x

Jarett Glibert	Columbia Gorge Community College	
Jennifer Toepke	Port of The Dalles	
Jessica Metta	Mid-Columbia Economic Development District	x
John Huffman	USDA Rural Development - Oregon	
John Swanson	Office of State Senator Chuck Thompsen	
Jonathan Hale	Office of Senator Maria Cantwell	
Josh Bruce	UO/IPRE	
Justin Withem	Office of State Representative Anna Williams	
K'Lynn Lane	Condon Chamber of Commerce	
Kale Donnelly	Oregon Employment Department	
Kallie Kurtz	Washington Employment Security Department	x
Kate Schroeder	Hood River County Chamber of Commerce	x
Kathleen Cathey	Office of Senator Ron Wyden	x
Kevin Waters	Skamania Economic Development Council	
Kristy Beachamp	Oregon Health Authority	
Krystyna Wolniakowski	Columbia River Gorge Commission	
Leticia Valle	Washington Employment Security Department	
Liliana Justo-Bello	The Next Door, Inc.	
Lisa Atkin	Gilliam County	
Lisa Farquharson	The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce	x
Lizzie Keenan	Mt. Hood & Columbia Gorge Regional Destination Management Organization	x
Lynn Burditt	U.S. Forest Service	x
Lynn Longan	WA Department of Commerce	
Marc Thornsbury	Port of Klickitat County	
Marla Keethler	City of White Salmon	
Matt Craigie	ECONorthwest	
Matt King	Wallowa Resources	
Michael Held	Business Oregon	x
Michael McElwee	Port of Hood River	
Michelle Mulrony	Klickitat County	
Mike Scroggs	Oregon Rapid Response Program, Columbia Gorge Community College	x
Nate Stice	North Central Regional Solutions	x
Neita Cecil	North Central Public Health District	
Olga Kaganova	Port of Cascade Locks	x
Pat Albaugh	Port of Skamania County	
Peter Mitchell	Port of Arlington	x
Rachael Fuller	City of Hood River	x
Rep. Anna Williams	Oregon House of Representatives	
Rep. Daniel Bonham	Oregon House of Representatives	
Richard Evans	Office of Senator Maria Cantwell	
Richard Foster	Klickitat County Economic Development	x
Ryan DeGrofft	Business Oregon	

Sarah Kohout	Office of Senator Maria Cantwell	x
Sarah Means	South Valley/Mid-Coast Regional Solutions	
Sarah Sullivan	Gorge Grown Food Network	
Scott Bailey	Washington Employment Security Department	x
Sean McCormick	Oregon Office of Emergency Management	
Sondra Pieti	Washington Employment Security Department	
Stephanie Anderson	Maupin Chamber of Commerce	
Stephanie Krell	Wasco County	
Stephanie Siebold	East Cascades Workforce Investment Board (OR)	
Steve Scardina	Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association	
Susan Nielsen	Washington Department of Commerce	
Tami Stockton	Wheeler County Economic Development	
Tammara Toppel	Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce	x
Tatiana Eckhart	Mid-Columbia Economic Development District	x
Teresa Cummings	Oregon Rapid Response Program, Columbia Gorge Community College	
Tom Schnell	Business Oregon	
Wendy Popkin	Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association	
Will Norris	City of Hood River	

**Guests**

Christa Rude	Four Rivers Early Learning Hub	x
Colt Gill	Oregon Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction	x
John Wall	Insitu	x
Mark Zanmiller	Sightline Applications	x
Michaela Miller	Washington Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction	x
Ingrid Colvard		x
Peter Sandall		x
Rich White		x
Theresa Peters		x