

**Northeast Oregon Regional Solutions**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting Notes**  
*Representing Wallowa, Baker, and Union Counties*  
March 17, 2016  
1:00 pm- 5:00 pm  
Baker Technical Institute  
2500 E Street, Baker City

Members Present: Tim Seydel, Convener/EOU; Mark Davidson, Union County; Dennis Sands, Joseph; Dianne Ellingson, Leo Adler Foundation; Nils Christoffersen, Wallowa Resources; Mike Key, Baker City; Curtis Martin, VP Ranch; Troy Little, Boise Cascade.

Other attendees: Bill Harvey, Baker County; Ken Patterson, ODOT; Chris Rich, Oregon Employment Department; Melisa Drugge, OBDD; Lena Varley, RARE Participant; Scott Fairley, Regional Solutions; Karen Wagner, Senator Merkley's Office; Lisa Dawson, NEOEDD; Peggy Lynch, League of Women Voters (phone); Adam Lange, Oregon League of Conservation Voters (phone).

**General Action Items:**

Based on member discussion Scott will send revised draft regional priorities to Advisory Committee members for review. There will be a chance for public comment prior to revised regional priorities being finalized.

**BTI Tour**

Jerry Peacock, BTI Director, provided a tour of technical training opportunities available to BTI students to the Advisory Committee. Training opportunities include engineering (including 3D printers), agriculture, aquaponics, woodwork, and welding. Grant funds (CTE Revitalization and STEM) are used to purchase equipment for BTI programs and BTI programs are incorporated into Baker High School programs. Baker High School has one of the higher graduation rates in the state in part due to BTI programs.

**Meeting**

After introductions Convener Seydel introduced Troy Little, the new business appointee on the Advisory Committee. Troy, Boise Cascade Area Manager, replaced Tom Insko after Tom became the President of EOU.

Baker County Commissioner Bill Harvey and Baker City Manager Mike Kee provided an economic and community development update for Baker County and Baker City. Airport improvements are underway and Natural Structures, a plastic molding company, announced they will be expanding. Baker City is marketing the city's quality of life to attract young skilled workers and entrepreneurs. A van pool is providing workforce transportation between Baker and Union Counties. The city and county are working on attracting workforce and new housing to support economic development opportunities.

Chris Rich, Oregon Employment Department, provided an overview of economic data for the region. The six top employment sectors in the region are health services, local government, state government, retail, hospitality, and manufacturing. Higher education jobs pay higher wages with retail and hospitality being at the lower end of the wage range. The labor force has declined since its peak in 2009 and the region is generally attracting an older population.

The Advisory Committee discussed revised regional priorities including:

- Infrastructure for industrial lands
- Workforce training to meet regional employment opportunities
- Quality of Life infrastructure (sewer, water, roads, broadband, and other amenities to attract and retain skilled workers)
- Natural resource utilization (agriculture, forestry, mining)
- Business friendly policies
- Small business/entrepreneur support for business retention and expansion

It was proposed that Scott send revised priorities to the Advisory Committee for review.

Ken Patterson, ODOT, provided an Area Commission on Transportation update. ODOT Region 5 has received \$3.4 million in Enhance-It (primarily bike/ped projects) proposals and \$4.5 million in Connect Oregon (non-highway projects) proposals. Projects will be finalized in August 2016.

### **Public Comment**

Peggy Lynch, League of Women Voters, noted there must be a chance for public comment before regional priorities can be finalized.

Lisa Dawson, NEOEDD, presented information on the Agora Platform (a web-based platform for matching proposed projects and funders) and requested that the Regional Solutions Team and Advisory Committee members list projects in Agora. NEOEDD can provide assistance.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:10pm.