



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Weekly Report

Wednesday, June 17, 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** – 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.
 - The limited availability and accessibility of childcare has been identified as a significant barrier to economic development in the region. Prior to COVID, Regional Solutions was working with NW Regional Educational Service District, Early Learning Hub, and Childcare Resource & Referral staff to better understand the opportunities and challenges. COVID has complicated the landscape. Several centers have closed permanently and emergency childcare services provided by school districts are closing for the summer. This coincides with many employees returning to work, particularly as restaurant and lodging operations resume for the important summer season. Parks and Recreation Districts, organizational camps, and other resources are working to provide summer day camp and summer school activities, but regional economic and small business development leaders are concerned about the lack of access to childcare when students return to school in the Fall, particularly given what is expected to be under modified schedules. Regional Solutions is working with regional partners and our Child Care Resource & Referral Director to explore new investments and opportunities to expand services in Tillamook, Clatsop, and Columbia counties.
 - Significant attention is being paid to insufficient broadband capacity across Oregon. As resources are invested in expanding broadband infrastructure, particularly in rural parts of the state, North Coast leaders are exploring opportunities in Tillamook, Clatsop, and Columbia counties. Increasing the

reliable access to internet on the North Coast has been a regional economic development priority for some time. In the COVID operating environment, with students and teleworkers increasingly reliant on the internet, equity of access is highlighted more than ever. Regional Solutions is working with local elected officials and regional economic development partners to identify and pursue opportunities that align resources to address the economic, education, and equity goals relating to improving internet access.

- **Salmonberry Trail** – Envisioned along a former rail alignment from Banks to Tillamook, the Salmonberry Trail will provide a complete coastal trail system, connecting diverse users from the Portland Metro area to the north Oregon coast. The Salmonberry Trail Concept Plan was completed June 2015 outlining the concept of a mixed-use non-motorized trail along the former Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad corridor. The 84-mile long trail will link the urban populations of the Willamette Valley through the wooded Coast Range to the beaches of Tillamook County. The Salmonberry Trail Intergovernmental Agency (STIA) was established in September 2015 to guide the development and maintenance of the multi-use trail envisioned within the Concept Plan. Regional Solutions maintains ongoing involvement through STIA Board membership and facilitating partnerships for catalyst project planning and implementation. The Concept Plan considers the Trail in four segments – Coastal, Valley, River, and Canyon. Coastal and Valley segment master planning is complete and the River and Canyon segment planning project is fully funded and currently in progress.

- Update – The River and Canyon segment planning is well underway. An assessment of current conditions is nearing completion and next steps include convening an advisory committee. Oregon Department of Forestry and the Governor’s Regional Solutions Office, representing the STIA Board of Directors, will co-convene a River and Canyon Segments Plan Review Committee. Committee members will represent a broad constituency of stakeholders interested in the planning and implementation of the Salmonberry Trail, including local governments, interested landowners, local business interests, potential trail user groups, recreational user groups, other interested parties, and motivated and knowledgeable trail enthusiasts.

The Committee’s work will focus on refining the Master Plan for the River and Canyon segments, providing a forum for discussion and recommendations regarding local development, trail alignments and funding priorities. Committee members will consider specific trail proposals and provide recommendations for resolution of local issues and concerns impacting potential trail development. The Co-conveners are actively soliciting applications and expect to convene the first Committee meeting in mid to late July.

Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **City of Falls City Update** – RS recently met with Mayor Jeremy Gordon and Community Development & Outreach Coordinator William Sullivan for an update on the Falls City Greenway Project, which RS has been engaged with since early October 2019. One of the project goals is to link important points (schools, businesses, and parks) in Falls City and to allow for better, safer pedestrian and bicycle access between those points. The city is working on a Safe Route to Schools application. They are also bringing together stakeholders to discuss more outdoor recreation opportunities in the region.
- **Mid-Valley POC Community Outreach Alliance** – meets weekly and includes representatives from Pinos Y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas (MLP), Latino Business Alliance (LBA), Oregon Human Development Corporation (OHDC), Oregon Employment Office – Woodburn, Advanced Economic Solutions, Farmworker Housing Development Corp (FHDC), Unidos Bridging Community, Western Oregon University (WOU)

Multicultural Center, Mano a Mano – Salem, Izo Marketing, City of Independence - Community Engagement, Portland General Electric (PGE), Oregon Childhood Development Coalition (OCDC), Oregon Education Association, the Higher Education Coordinating Committee (HECC), Northwest Human Services, and Micronesian Islander Community OREGON. Strategic Economic Development Corp (SEDCOR), Willamette Workforce Partnership (WWP), the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG), Business Oregon, and the Chemeketa Small Business Development Center join the meetings as well.

- This week, Renata Wakeley (MWVCOG) and Kim Parker-Llerenas (WWP) gave an update on the new and existing funds being combined into one grant program to help COVID affected small businesses in the region. The fund is \$457,500. The application will be available in five languages and will be online and in print. The fund is expected to open in the next few weeks. The POC Alliance will be helping to market the opportunity.
- **Newberg Workforce Housing Consortium** – RS participates in the Newberg Workforce Housing Consortium, which includes SEDCOR, the City of Newberg, local developers, the school district, healthcare and long-term care industry partners, housing management, Oregon Housing and Community Services, and the chamber. The group is seeking to develop a public/private housing project that addresses employee retention and attraction. The next steps include developing a survey to assess the housing needs within a company and drafting a housing “certified site” template based on the Business Oregon’s industrial site certification program. The plan is to engage the RS Team in a review process.

The group was asked about the current needs since COVID. They identified the need for rent relief programs.

- **Mid-Valley Economic Recovery Team (ERT)** – includes representatives from the Counties, Willamette Workforce Partnership, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR), the Small Business Development Center, early learning hubs, local emergency management, the Employment Department, Business Oregon, chambers, regional destination marketing organizations, utilities, non-profits, tribal government, and federal delegation representatives. The goal is to create robust communication and networks in the response and recovery work. The ERT has moved from two meetings per week to one through the end of June.
 - This week, the ERT discussed housing needs and concerns. Three existing initiatives were shared: The City of Donald/GK Machine Pilot, the Newberg Workforce Housing Consortium and the transitional housing for veterans in Polk County. The group discussed the need for more housing for people experiencing homelessness.

In addition, Dennie Houle (Business Oregon) and Kim Parker-Llerenas gave an overview of the Business Oregon Round 1 and 2 funds. The Mid-Valley fund will combine into to one fund of \$457,500, which includes \$50,000 from the Oregon Community Foundation. Several cities received grants as well.

Upcoming Scheduled Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Meeting

- **Friday, June 26, from 8-9 AM - +16699006833,,93562682593#,,1#,993197#**

South Valley/Mid Coast Region – Sarah Means

- **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 as a result of COVID-19 are impacting all industry sectors in the region.

- Identified needs/challenges/opportunities this past week include:
 - The ERT provided valuable feedback on two upcoming programs: Technical Assistance for Underrepresented Businesses and personal protective equipment (PPE) for Small Businesses.
 - Lincoln County is still experiencing a number of outbreaks. The County is working closely with Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and community partners on testing and contact tracing. Of particular concern is the need for bi-lingual contact tracers and messaging, particularly those that speak Mam.
 - City of Newport received more than 118 eligible applications for their business grant fund. Funding should be distributed within the next week. Maximum award amount is \$10,000.
 - Lane County is working with rural partners to make sure infrastructure projects are ready for any funding opportunities that may become available.
- Best Practices:
 - RS partnered with Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) and Travel Lane County (TLC) to host a webinar on venues. More than 50 businesses/organizations from throughout the South and Mid-Valley participated in the webinar to learn more about the Phase 2 guidance for venues and events. Special thanks to WVVA and TLC for hosting the event and inviting RS to participate.
 - Corvallis/Benton County Economic Development is developing a video series where they feature local businesses and the new ideas these businesses are implementing in accordance with the new state guidelines for reopening and keeping the community healthy.

Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- **South Coast Umpqua Region**
 - **South Coast Umpqua Recovery Team:**
 - Sub-group is working on establishing a regional fiber consortium.
 - Multiple “thank-yous” for ERT and other communications from attendees.
 - Positive feedback on “reopening guidance tool”/matrix.
 - Crater Lake is open, which will drive more regional visitation.
 - **Port of Port Orford Project** – Pledged state contribution is approximately \$2M to reconstruction/ re-design of port. Port is a few weeks out from submitting a final application to US Economic Development Administration (EDA), and has been encouraged to ask for higher leverage (i.e., more than the traditional 1:1 formula). Rep. David Brock Smith and other project advocates are very concerned state contribution could be targeted for budget cuts.
- **Southern Oregon Region**
 - **Southern Oregon Recovery Team:**
 - Oregon Employment Department shared new census business “pulse” data: <https://portal.census.gov/pulse/data/#weekly>
 - Southern Oregon University (SOU)/Rogue Community College (RCC) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) webinar series on COVID-19 finance issues

is well attended; last session was focused specifically on how to fill out PPP forgiveness paperwork.

- Broad consensus on priority of additional broadband work.
- Ashland Chamber & City are working on an economic diversification strategy
- Regional cities have funded and issued over \$1M in business assistance grant; glad to have additional state support to continue work and reach more businesses.
- Business representatives report great difficulty hiring entry-level employees.

Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Metro Economic Response Team** – 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 – Thank you, Colt Gill, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Director, for providing an update on Reopening Oregon Schools. Director Gill shared that ODE engaged with 7,000 Oregonians and read more than 10,000 pages of research and plans from other countries and states to inform guidance to reopen schools. This was done under direction from Governor Brown and in close collaboration with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Guiding principles for reopening include the following:
 - Ensure safety and wellness for students
 - Cultivate connection and relationship
 - Center equity
 - Innovate

The ODE is providing a clear set of statewide requirements, but is giving design and decision-making powers about how those requirements are met to the local level. The guidance sets out a process for local and state submission of operational blueprints for re-entry, which schools must complete. They will need to share with local school board, post publicly on school and district websites, and submit them submit to ODE and local public health authority for approval. School districts will be choosing from three models for reopening:

- Open on-site: These will serve every student every day, much like they did pre-COVID, but with extra health precautions in place.
- Hybrid model: Some students on-site, some students in distance-learning model. These two groups would alternate, so both groups get equal time on-site.
- Distance learning: Could be a possibility for all students in a school with an outbreak or where there are too many staff who are in high-risk categories.

Governor will have a Healthy Schools Reopening Council consisting of 20+ members from the community and education and health care sectors. They will review statewide

metrics around COVID-19 and may update guidance. More information on Reopening Oregon Schools may be found on [ODE's website](#).

Also, many thanks to Linda Roman, the Governor's Deputy Legislative Director, for providing a Legislative Emergency Board (E-Board) update. Linda shared that the e-board recently considered 18 items for Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) investments focused in the following four areas: individuals, businesses, adaptation to remote working and agency budget adjustments.

- **Listening Session with Asian Pacific Islander (API) Business Community** – Metro RS presented a summary of the Governor's Reopening Framework and industry-sector guidelines during a listening session hosted by the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce (APACC), Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO) and Prosper Portland for API business representatives. There were 54 participants. Questions/concerns/themes expressed included the following:
 - The backlog of unemployment insurance (UI) is unacceptable and a significant hardship for many who are on the margins.
 - There is a significant need for immediate small business relief. Frustrations were expressed over the lack of urgency to provide quick access to capital for small businesses especially those owned by people of color.
 - Many expressed concerns about the digital divide and the need to get information and resources out to people who don't have access to technology.
 - The need to cap delivery fees of third-party food delivery services i.e. GrubHub, Caviar, etc.
- **Listening Session with Retailers** – Metro RS participated as a panelist during a listening session hosted by Venture Portland and Prosper Portland for retailers. Many thanks to Bryan Guiney, who serves as the Business Oregon liaison to Metro RS for presenting the Governor's Reopening Framework and retail industry-sector guidelines. Questions/Concerns/themes expressed included the following:
 - Customers are receiving mixed messaging between Stay Home Save Lives and Reopening and it is difficult for customers to know they can be safe. Need a broader marketing campaign to restore consumer confidence.
 - Ongoing lease payments without revenue; landlords not sharing the cost burden.
 - Due to economic shock, clients have reduced purchasing power.
 - Managing employees when they get sick, particularly during flu season will be difficult.
 - Health and safety impacts for the Black and African American 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) sourcing answers on phase and 2) helping to connect state and regional efforts to protect farmworker and prepare for harvest.
 - Next week we our focus will be focusing on how we support partners working on equity and inclusion, broadband, and agriculture consideration in Washington.

- Congratulations to the City of The Dalles for receiving a HB 2001 and HB 2003 grant award to continue its work to address housing shortages. Addressing the shortage of attainable housing remains Regional Solutions top priority in the North Central Region. Many thanks to Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) Team Member Scott Edelman for his continued work to help communities address barriers in code.
- Congratulations the Port of Cascade Locks for receiving funding from Business Oregon to help with the expansion of Renewal Workshop in its industrial park. The Port was awarded a \$6.6M loan to build a 40K sq. ft. industrial building inside their business park. This project will be the sixth building constructed on the port's industrial lands and is funded through Business Oregon's Special Public Works Fund (SPFW). Once established, the building will be leased to The Renewal Workshop (TRW), enabling all aspects of their operations to expand - distribution, processing, photo studio, store front, and warehousing. By Spring 2021, the region will welcome 65 new and full time jobs, complimenting TRW's existing workforce of 24 employees. TRW is a leading provider of circular economy solutions for apparel and textile brands with a growing footprint, including a second facility recently opening in Amsterdam. Additionally, TRW has partnered with the nonprofit HMB50 to produce PPE in response to COVID-19, producing well over 10,000 surgical gowns to date. This partnership helped the company avert layoffs and retain jobs in Cascade Locks and the region. Many thanks to Business Oregon's Michael Held and Carolyn Meece for their leadership on this project.

Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Disaster Declaration** – Working with the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties on a Governor's letter to US Secretary of Agriculture requesting a disaster declaration for heavy wind damage to agriculture over Memorial Day weekend.
- **Drought** – Deschutes County made a drought declaration on June 15; Crook County is also working on one. Natural flow in the Deschutes River is very low due to cumulative effects from the past seven to eight dry years. This means greatly reduced water supply for the primary agricultural area of Central Oregon (Jefferson County served by North Unit Irrigation District).
- **Central Oregon Economic Response Team** – Central Oregon 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 weekly since mid-March.
 - *Update* – RS convened the team to learn about the plan for K-12 education next school year. Many thanks to Director Gill for joining. We also discussed the Equity Framework and sought feedback on how best to roll out recent Emergency Board authorizations for \$10M investment in PPE for small businesses and \$3M technical assistance funding for underrepresented and women owned businesses. The team also heard from the Employment Department on the processing of UI claims; while progress is being made, there are still many who haven't received funds. Childcare providers and gig workers are especially impacted.

South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **South Central Oregon Response Team** – 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 weekly since mid-March.

- Update – RS convened the team to hear an update from the Oregon Health Authority; because of the pause last week, there was particular interest in knowing when a county may move back in phases and/or consequences of additional cases. Many thanks to Matt Green, OHA for joining the meeting. The team was also joined by Director Gill to hear about the K-12 plan for next school year. Good discussion about changing seasons for high school sports so that minimal contact sports have their seasons in the fall and football could move to spring, conditions permitting.

Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team** – This week the Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team met and provided feedback on the housing situation within their communities both before COVID, during the COVID crisis, and how they think things will change post-COVID. Interestingly, in many communities there has been an uptick in real estate (both sales and interest) from people looking to move to more remote areas, which will make the housing inventory even more competitive in communities out here.
- **Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Workforce Training Program** – The transfer of equipment from Digital Harvest to BMCC for their UAS workforce training and career certification program was completed this week. This is a huge success for our Regional Solutions team and we hope will be a great opportunity for local students who are interested in working in the growing UAS field in Pendleton.
 - Background – Digital Harvest is a company that had invested in key UAS equipment in Pendleton, but had changed business course and no longer needed this hardware equipment. Simultaneously, BMCC was working with the UAS industry in Pendleton to develop a series of career certification courses and a longer-term education program to develop a pipeline of manufacturing workers for the local UAS industry. As part of the development of the program, BMCC was going to have to find resources to purchase key software and hardware equipment to get the program up and running. The Regional Solutions team made the connection between the company and college and recommended that the company donate the necessary equipment to BMCC so they could get the program up and running. This agreement was finalized this week.
- **Baker Early Learning Center** – The Baker Early Learning Center is still planning for a Fall opening of up to four additional preschool classrooms with a mix of head start, Preschool Promise and community slots. This will help fill a huge gap in early education in this community. The Baker School District is in the process of remodeling an old elementary building to create an early education center for the community. It will house four preschool classrooms, childcare in the future, community resources and eventually kindergarten for the district.