



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Weekly Report

Wednesday, August 19, 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:
 - Economic development partners expressed concerns regarding **small business relief funds** being limited to those businesses who have not previously received CARES Act funding. Counties receiving funds for distribution to local small businesses, either directly from the state or through the regional economic development district, are finding the eligibility criteria restrictive. Funding remains unallocated and partners are unable to meet business needs. Additionally, local economic development partners are managing the promotion and distribution of the small business relief funds, incurring significant administrative costs that are not reimbursable.
 - Chambers of commerce and destination management partners are very concerned about **increasing tourism impacts and visitor behavior**. Destination marketing was discontinued early in the COVID pandemic, replaced by messaging that focuses on public health and safety and responsible recreation. A strong network of regional travel and tourism partners have been working closely to coordinate strategies. Despite best efforts, north coast communities and public land managers are dealing with significant impacts and rising costs associated with increased visitation, including garbage, human waste, natural resource and transportation impacts. Local leaders anticipate that with schools moving to comprehensive distance learning, visitation may continue into the fall. Targeted state and local stewardship messaging is expected to increase in hopes of impacting visitor behavior.

- **Childcare Licensing – *Background*** – Regional Solutions and Economic Recovery Team members have been working hard to better understand school plans, employer needs, and connecting partners who may play a role in providing supports for students and families as we return to school under a comprehensive distance learning model.
 - *Update* – As existing childcare providers are considering expanding services and new providers are exploring opportunities to provide services, licensing delays may prevent timely solutions from being implemented. COVID restrictions interrupted the work of licensing specialists and as they resume inspections virtually, the backlog coupled with increased demand is creating a pinch point. The challenges are even greater in rural and isolated communities. Childcare options were extremely limited prior to COVID. Many providers have closed due to health and/or economic considerations, only adding to the shortage. Rural communities are isolated from the resources and investments that are more readily available in urban communities. Limited access to the necessary licensing supports will increase delays, risking valuable partnerships that have been forged to address immediate community needs. Regional Solutions met with the Regional Childcare Resource and Referral Director to better understand licensing challenges and explore solutions.

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 monthly to share information, identify immediate needs and understand impacts. Between meetings, RS is meeting regularly with regional partners to stay up-to-date and engage where appropriate and needed.
- Identified needs/challenges/opportunities this past week include:
 - Childcare needs are of significant concern for parent, employers, school districts and childcare providers. Lane County regional partners met to discuss and identified that there is a need for space and operating funds for smaller providers. Linn/Lincoln/Benton county partners have identified access to weekday care (for all age groups) and costs associate with staffing and meeting the sanitation requirements. Lincoln County, in particular, has always been a childcare desert and lacks providers.
 - As a longer term solution, the Early Learning Hub of Linn/Benton/Lincoln has secured funding for a childcare accelerator position similar to the one that has been developed in Central Oregon. Position will be posted later this year with a goal to have the position filled by early 2021.
 - Communities are still struggling to find companies that meet the criteria for the business assistance funding. The EIDL/PPP restrictions are challenging the distribution of funds to businesses. Communities continue to ask that these restrictions be lifted.
 - Higher Ed is experiencing some challenges with how to regulate fraternities/sororities.
 - Hospitality businesses continue to struggle with finding staff and accessing PPE (specifically gloves).
 - Lincoln County, in particular, is struggling with out of state visitors. There are reports that these visitors are not complying with the face covering requirements.

Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- **South Coast Umpqua**
 - **South Coast Umpqua Economic Recovery Team:**
 - Reviewed grant support for cultural organizations. A lot of interest in whether Chambers of Commerce and other 501c(6) organizations are eligible (they are).
 - Several participants expressing concern about how enrollment will be calculated and whether/how COVID-19 changes will impact school funding distribution formulas.
 - Continued concern that a travel ban would hit Curry County very hard economically—in the face of very low case counts in the area.
- **Southern Oregon Region**
 - **Southern Oregon Recovery Team:**
 - Multiple school superintendents described their plans for providing student support in Comprehensive Distance Learning mode. For instance, Grants Pass School District is seeking confirmation from ODE that they can contract with the YMCA to provide management of child care at school sites. Some businesses may be pursuing similar approaches.
 - Several CTE programs are considering virtual job shadows and means to provide hybrid education (even under Comprehensive Distance Learning, using the limited in person exceptions).
 - Medford School District is launching a social media campaign: “Get to Green” to educate the community of the need to slow transmission to allow schools to re-open.
 - **Cave Junction Wastewater Site** – Cave Junction sprays treated effluent on a small golf course adjacent to their treatment plant. The golf course is for sale and the city is concerned about the long-term impact on their wastewater management system. DEQ is in conversation with the city about possibly finance the City’s purchase of the site.

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 – Metro RS presented the Governor’s Equity in Response and Recovery Framework, including information about the Racial Justice Council (RJC) and Regional Equity in Recovery Councils (RERC) to 77 meeting participants. Metro RS encouraged meeting participants who are interested in participating on the Metro RERC to notify Metro RS for the Governor’s consideration. Also, many thanks to Elana Pirtle-Guiney for joining the meeting to provide a recap of the recent second legislative special session. The special session was focused on rebalancing the state’s budget, but lawmakers passed a few policy bills:
 - Police accountability measures focused on follow-up from last special session:

- Chokehold ban:
 - Using medically correct terminology to define chokeholds
 - Narrowing instances where police could use life-threatening force

Unemployment insurance:

- Bill ensures benefit structure does not discourage people to go back to work full-time.
- Streamlining delivery of benefits:
 - Bill to adjust Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits based on actual earnings over the last year. This should help people get additional benefits owed.

Budget-related actions:

- Adjustments to bonding:
 - Hold put on lottery bonding due to decrease in lottery dollars coming in.
 - Lottery fund bonds can be spent on any project; general obligation fund bonds can only be spent on state-owned projects.
 - Most projects that were lottery fund bonded have been cut, though some have been moved to general obligation bonding.
 - Adjustments to general obligation bonds:
 - Community college projects, courthouse projects put on hold
 - Continued work on key higher education buildings, prioritizing science buildings
 - Other key projects funded:
 - Early warning earthquake system
 - Capitol remodel project
 - Housing supports through the LIFT program
 - Every agency received cuts, though cuts were largely short-term, not long-term
 - Dipped into one-time funds and reserves to fill remaining budget gap:
 - Education Stability Fund
 - Money set aside for local governments in PERS
 - Public Employees' Benefit Board reserves
 - Budget will likely be worse in the 2023 biennium. Next revenue forecast comes out in September.
- **North Plains Remote Outreach Visit** – The entire Metro RS team met with city of North Plains economic development, planning and finance staff. Many thanks to Anne Debbaut, DLCD liaison to Metro RS for setting up the meeting and developing the agenda with city leadership. The city of North Plains is experiencing significant growth with 500 single-family homes under construction. Located off HWY 26, it's a bedroom community with a number of residents working throughout the Metro Region, primarily in Washington and Multnomah Counties. The city has a renewed focus on their downtown including of NW Commercial Street. Metro RS will follow-up with the Metro RS toolkit of resources and technical assistance available through

various state agencies and will facilitate a meeting between ODOT, DEQ and the city of North Plains to work through permitting needs and easements for a desired dog park.

North Central Region – Nate Stice

- **Mosier Creek Fire** – The Mosier Creek Fire started on August 12 and burned near 1000 acres. It destroyed 36 structure, including 8 occupied homes. The team is working with Wasco County Emergency Management to coordinate outreach to the impacted families around rebuilding and assistance programs. The team is providing resources to Wasco County to include in a PSA. Several other fires have started in Wasco County.
- **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.
- Highlights:
 - The team will host a training on employer responsibilities around leave with the US Department of Labor, the Bureau of Labor and Industries, and Oregon OSHA on August 25. Thanks to the SBDC for hosting. Link here: <https://clients.bizcenter.org/reg.aspx?mode=event&event=140400060>
 - The team is working with the Four Rivers Early Learning Hub and CGCC's child care Resource and Referral to address child care shortages. CCRR is sending materials for the econ team to distribute on how to become a home care provider and on how to access open slots. The Hub plans to launch surveys to parents and businesses to really understand the need and ask the business community for assistance.

Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Central Oregon Response Team** – Background – 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 – RS shared the Equity in Recovery Framework and next steps in establishing a Regional Equity in Recovery Council. RS is actively making new contacts and reaching out to potential council members. RS is also working closely with community based organizations and philanthropy seeking to address the needs of school aged children for Comprehensive Distance Learning (whose parents are working outside the home; or they need support).

South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **South Central Oregon 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 – This week's agenda focused on schools and childcare. The Lakeview School District thanked the Governor for giving rural school districts more opportunity to open.

They are excited to open in person and are actively planning to make it a success. Klamath County School District plans to open K-3 on an am/pm model and start with Comprehensive Distance Learning for all other grades. The Klamath Falls School District Board has voted not to re-open until and unless there is liability protection. Both districts in Klamath County are using wireless hot spots to ensure connectivity. The group also discussed the need for Safe Online Learning Spaces and other supports for students to be successful. We also heard from the childcare resource and referral manager about efforts to direct families to available childcare slots.

Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Eastern Oregon Economic Recovery Team** – This week the Eastern Oregon Economic Recovery Team has representatives from the OSU TRACE research team come and talk about the research project, specifically the results out of Hermiston and Boardman and answered questions from the group. There have been some communities that are interested in having this research program come to their communities and there were a few questions about the results that were found in both Hermiston and Boardman. Additionally, we talked about the need to have more conversations with both Oregon Department of Education and the Early Learning Division about childcare and how to balance online schooling while parents have to work. We are hoping to have a regional discussion with state leaders about this soon.
- **BMCC UAS Workforce Program** – BMCC was selected by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to participate in the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Collegiate Training Initiative (UAS-CTI). The FAA's Collegiate Training Initiative (CTI) program allows educational institutions to collaborate with the FAA to help students pursue their aviation career goals. The UAS-CTI program recognizes institutions that prepare students for careers in unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), commonly referred to as drones. RS has been working with both BMCC and the UAS industry in Pendleton to make this education and workforce program a reality for the past year and it is great news. There are 20+ open UAS jobs in Pendleton right now and many more to follow so this education and workforce training option will allow local students the ability to compete for these high paying jobs.
- **Morrow County Manufactured Housing Damage** – Back on May 30, 2020, a wind storm damaged many homes in a manufactured housing park in Boardman. Five homes were completely destroyed and 6-8 homes sustained damage that still needs to be fixed. CAPECO, the local community action agency, has helped to find temporary rental housing and some permanent housing for those displaced. However, there are still 6-8 homes that have damage and need some help. RS helped bring together CAPECO and Morrow County to talk about next steps to see if we can determine the amount needed to fix these homes before the weather turns. CAPECO and the County are going to do a soft assessment to see if weatherization funding can be used to help these individuals and RS is reaching out to OHCS to see if there are any additional funding sources to help.