



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Weekly Report

Wednesday, September 2, 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:
 - Oregon Office of Emergency Management recently announced the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)** funding opportunity. Amie Bashant with Oregon Office of Emergency Management joined the North Coast Regional Economic Recovery Team meeting to provide an overview of the funding opportunity. BRIC replaces FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program. Funds are competitively available for eligible mitigation activities that fall into in two main categories: 1. Capability- and Capacity-Building (C&CB), and 2. Mitigation Projects. Guiding principles encourage innovation, promote partnerships, and priorities incentivize public infrastructure projects, projects that mitigate risk to one or more lifelines, and projects that incorporate nature-based solutions. Pre-applications are due no later than 11:59 pm PST on September 15, 2020. For more detailed program information, visit <https://www.fema.gov/bric>. BRIC-related questions can be sent to shmo@mil.state.or.us.
 - Oregon Employment Department released **July employment data**. Erik Knoder, Regional Economist for NW Oregon, provided the North Coast Regional Economic Recovery Team with an overview of the month's jobs numbers. Overall, while the region continued to experience job growth, the cadence of the region's job growth slowed in July. Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates remain in the double digits (15.2% Clatsop, 10.2% Columbia, and 11.3% Tillamook County), and while job losses continue to be centered in leisure and

hospitality, every industry is down. For more information, visit Oregon Employment Departments' labor market information webpage at <https://www.qualityinfo.org/>. For additional information relating to economic news, analysis, and outlooks, visit the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis' [blog](#). Recent publications include [COVID Challenges Working Oregon Parents](#), [Checking in on Oregon's Regions](#) with a look at Urban-Rural Employment in Oregon, and [Oregon Employment July 2020](#).

- **Coastal Maritime Sector Coordinators – *Background*** – Senate Bill 867 (2017) established the Governor's Taskforce on Maritime Sector Workforce Development, directing the task force to study and develop a description of the maritime sector and maritime sector workforce in Oregon and develop recommendations for the State Workforce Investment Board to incorporate consideration of the maritime sector into Oregon's statewide workforce investment system plan.
 - *Update* – NW Oregon Works recently contracted with two **maritime sector coordinators** who are working to implement the recommendations of the Governor's 2017 Taskforce on Maritime Sector Workforce Development. Kate Frame and Francisco Saldivar met with the North Coast Regional Economic Recovery Team this week. They are beginning their work with a needs assessment, identifying opportunities for immediate investments and longer-term infrastructure needs. For more information, contact Heather DeSart with NW Oregon Works at Heather@onwib.org.
- **Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Impacts** – North Coast communities continue to be concerned with the impacts of increased tourism, particularly among new and first-time visitors. In addition to garbage, human waste, parking and transportation impacts, local law enforcement, search and rescue, and first responder resources are stretched particularly thin. Regional travel and tourism partners, convened by Regional Solutions early in the pandemic, continue to meet regularly to coordinate strategies, including messaging about safe and responsible recreation. This week partners expressed concerns about fire danger, as well as increased incidences of boating, hunting, and other outdoor recreation accidents. North coast communities and local, state, and federal land managers are particularly concerned as we head into the Labor Day holiday weekend. Impacts are expected to continue through September as families have more flexibility with teleworking and distance learning.
- **Outdoor Education and Virtual Field Trips** – Responding to an increased demand for distance learning, coastal outdoor recreation partners are exploring outdoor education opportunities and virtual field trips. During this week's convening of the region's outdoor recreation partners, National Park Service, US Forest Service, and Oregon Department of Forestry indicated they would be providing online learning programs. Tillamook Estuaries Partnership and Oregon State University (OSU)'s Oregon Coast Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Hub were also identified as having outdoor education resources available.

[Mid-Valley Region](#) – Jody Christensen

- **Marion County Public Health and POC Leaders Meeting** – In partnership Marion County Commissioner Kevin Cameron, RS convenes weekly public health COVID response meetings.
 - This week, the county reviewed the COVID 19 sporadic cases by several data points and continued to discuss the need to support increased testing. The group discussed the next steps to their recent letter to the Governor's Office and the Oregon Health Authority seeking additional support.
- **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 COVID response work. The ERT has moved to meeting every other week through September.

- This week, we received updates on three initiatives in the region.
 - Yamhill County Commissioner Kulla and Early Learning Program Manager Jenn Richter shared information about launching childcare assessment study, which seeks to map out gaps for employers in Yamhill and Polk Counties as well as the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.
 - Polk County Commissioner Pope shared an update on a recent broadband expansion to bring more connectivity to underserved areas of the county. This is in direct response to support online education and telehealth needs because of COVID 19. Commissioner Pope noted that project would not have been possible without almost 10 years of due diligence and strategic planning on the county's part.
 - Marion County Commissioner Cameron gave an overview of the weekly meetings with Marion County Public Health and POC community leaders. The work has included increased support for more testing, education, and contact tracing. In addition, the group has given input on assessment tools, data collection, and a recent job description for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion health department position.
- **Mid-Valley Projects Review** – In July, the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments and the Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Team (RST) partnered on a call for regional projects. The projects will be reviewed and aligned for opportunities with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and state agencies programs and resources. We received 61 projects including road improvements, broadband expansions, childcare and workforce housing initiatives, and community planning work. The list continues to be open for new and emerging projects.
 - Last week, the RST began the review process with an overview of each project to assess immediate response and to identify additional information needed. Outreach will be ongoing. In addition, the meeting included a discussion about next steps with EDA. The RST will present an overview of the projects to the Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Advisory Committee at their next meeting.
 - Thank you to Marion County Economic Development Coordinator Jason Schneider for providing and managing the application platform.

Thank you to the Mid-Valley RST for their time and expertise - Renata Wakeley, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments; Jae Pudewell, ODOT; Mary Camarata, DEQ; Dennie Houle, Business Oregon; Chris Castelli, DSL; Kiel Jenkins, DLCD; Pat O'Connor, OED; Ryan Sparks, OPRD; Brian Wolfer, OFWD; David Lane, ODA.

[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 continues to be the primary topic of concern. Prior to the pandemic, Lincoln County already had challenges with access to childcare. Over the last two weeks, Lincoln County School District and Lincoln County, along with local partners have been able to identify locations throughout the county that will offer childcare services. The partnership has been working directly with Early Learning Division (ELD) to make sure all regulatory requirements are satisfied. Funding is still a primary concern.
 - Partners in the Lane County region are working to balance out childcare waitlists where they can. There is more demand in areas of the metro area than others. Coordinating with the providers to help even out the demand is helping with the capacity challenges.
 - Small businesses are being creative in order to create more business opportunities. Many are reporting very positive returns for the summer months.
 - Lincoln County partners are concerned about the amount of trash that is being left on the beach. Messaging to encourage visitors to be respectful travelers and pick up would be helpful.

Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- **South Coast Umpqua Region:**
 - **BC Fisheries/Pacific Seafood – Background** – BC Fisheries constructed and opened a shrimp processing plant in Brookings Harbor in 2015. The State contributed to the repair of the dock needed for operations. Over the last couple shrimp seasons, the company struggled to remain profitable. Regional Solutions team has been engaged with BC Fisheries and Harbor Sanitary District regarding possible state assistance in addressing issues with BC Fisheries wastewater.
 - Update – Pacific Seafood has begun operating the facility and retained the roughly 30 full-time positions.
- **Southern Oregon Region:**
 - **Southern Oregon Recovery Team** – Session was dedicated to broadband. Illinois Valley Data Center, which received one of the recent State broadband grants, reviewed some lessons learned from their successful application. LS Networks participated and offered to engage with any local communities that have an appetite to tackle the issue of broadband access. Interest in deploying “COWS” (cellular towers on wheels) to provide connectivity to remote portions of the region. Learnings are being shared with school districts through Southern Oregon Education Service District (ESD).
 - **Jackson County on the “Watch List”** – Jackson County Board of Commissioners discussed the challenges of addressing sporadic cases last week. The County Administrator expressed thanks that Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has provided a Spanish-speaking contact tracer, but the County is struggling to hire more needed Spanish-speaking contact tracers.

Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Kellogg Creek Dam – Background** – Kellogg Creek dam under OR-99E in Milwaukie prevents effective fish passage into the nine miles of Kellogg Creek tributary to the Willamette River. A full dam removal and bridge reconstruction project estimated to cost upwards of \$20M is prohibitively expensive and has no funding strategy to move forward. The city of Milwaukie and the North Clackamas Watersheds Council is working with the Governor’s Metro Regional Solutions Team (RST)—specifically the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the Department of State Lands (DSL), the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Governor’s Natural Resource Office (GNRO)—to examine the viability and pros and cons of potential lower-cost fish passage alternatives that meet the needs of all state agencies and the city of Milwaukie.
 - Update – Metro RS convened city of Milwaukie leadership including Mayor Mark Gamba, Councilor Lisa Batey, North Clackamas Watersheds Council and interagency state partners including Department of Land Use & Conservation (DLCD), the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Oregon Department of State Lands (ODSL), Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD), the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) and the Governor’s Natural Resource Office (GNRO) to provide feedback on the conceptual channel design scope of work/proposals for the project. Many thanks to Vanessa Vissar, Metro Regional Solutions team member and ODOT liaison, for following-up with ODOT Region 1 managers to review an earlier 2014 cost estimate of bridge replacement/dam removal and to provide updated estimates on potential replacement costs and assumptions.

- **Portland Metro Economic Recovery – Background** – [Greater Portland Inc.](#) and [Metro Regional Government](#) are collaborating on a **bi-state regional economic recovery plan** in addition to an updated five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the greater Portland-Metro region. The regional economic recovery plan is a shorter-term action plan as businesses and communities begin to reopen. It will be advised and overseen by the [Greater Portland Economic Development District Board of Directors](#) but will include the input and feedback of other advisors/partners in the greater Portland-metro region including Metro Regional Solutions.
 - Update – Metro RS participated in a discussion about the Values, Mission, and Priorities of the regional economic recovery plan. The plan vision is in alignment with the Governor’s Equity in Response and Recovery Framework for the state. As of right now, the vision reads as follows, “The Greater Portland region will recover from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger, more resilient, and more equitable by unleashing the full potential of our community and bringing deserved support to underserved individuals and businesses with a specific focus on building opportunities for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities as they have been hit the hardest.” Metro RS will continue to advise and inform the development of the regional recovery plan and will seek opportunities for alignment and coordination with the Governor’s Equity in Response and Recovery Framework.

- **Metro Expo Center Futures Project – Background** – Metro Regional Government owns 53.4 acres of prime industrial land off I-5, which includes the Expo Center. Metro has hired a planning consultant, Cascadia Partners, to help identify potential future redevelopment opportunities for the site. The Expo center has an uncertain financial outlook and Metro Council would like Cascadia Partners to work with community stakeholders to identify up to five viable future options that could compliment, support or replace the current events center operations and that would be guided by the following core principles: honoring the historical and cultural legacy of the site and creating wealth-building opportunities for BIPOC (black, indigenous and people of color).

- Update – The entire Metro RS team met with Metro Regional Government and Cascadia Partners’ project team for an initial project overview. Metro RS addressed the following questions: What space needs or users might be a good fit? What partnership opportunities exist? What state or regional priorities could take shape at the site? What funding sources or evolving state priorities might shape the site’s future? This project is emerging and may become a Metro RS priority project in the near future. The project team will follow-up with Metro RS at the end of 2020/early 2021 when they have identified five or fewer redevelopment options. Metro RS may help to identify specific state resources and offer technical assistance at that time.

North Central Region – Nate Stice

- **White River Fire** – The White River Fire has burned nearly 17,000 in mid/southern Wasco County near the communities of Wamic and Maupin. With the fire reaching 40 percent containment, evacuations have been downgraded. The level of structural damage is still unclear. However, the team has begun to field question about damage to range land and concerns about soil erosion and damage to irrigation infrastructure. We are working with the local United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency Office, Soil and Water Conservation District, and county emergency managers on these issues. We collaborated with Wasco County to compile [the following resources](#) based on previous fire seasons.
- **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 team has now moved to monthly meetings with smaller teams meeting on a more regular basis.
- Highlights:
 - The team hosted a training on employer responsibilities around leave with the US Department of Labor, the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), and Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on August 25. Thanks to the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for hosting. Link [here](#).
 - At our monthly meeting this week, we will host five small business from different sectors to discuss how the status of their operations and any ways we can be helpful.

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 convened a meeting with school district superintendents, after school programs and others working to address the needs of school aged learners who may not be able to effectively participate in Comprehensive Distance Learning from home. Bend-La Pine School District is partnering with Parks and Rec after school programs to offer online learning support for K-5 at elementary schools. Redmond is working with the Champions program. The Early Learning Hub school aged learning coordinator is reaching out to Sisters to see if something can be set up there. Additionally, Superintendents asked if there were opportunities to segment their facilities where

there are multiple buildings to allow for in person learning of 250 persons per week in each building (rather than per school).

South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Klamath County Economic Summit** – RS presented at a small group economic summit hosted by Klamath County Economic Development Association. The group discussed economic, employment and business trends in light of COVID-19. The identified the following priorities: developing a strategic group of industry sectors to recruit from neighboring states based on an understanding of baseline economic characteristics for the county, increase local private and public equity for business, strategize developing a parks and recreation district, develop remote workers strategies, support enrollment and Klamath Community College and Oregon Tech and continue supporting the positive narrative about Klamath County. RS will participate in follow up meetings and actions.
- **Red Rock Biofuels** – RS convened monthly check in with state agency and local partners. The facility plans to open in the first quarter of 2021. The air quality permit revision is nearly complete; DEQ received the application for the water quality discharge permit for the facility lagoons this week. The lagoons will pretreat cooling and process water before it is returned to the town's treatment plant. The company expects to submit their water quality construction permit application for the lagoon this week. Many kudos to Greg Svelund and DEQ staff for working to expedite key permits.

Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Eastern Oregon Economic Recovery Team** – This week the Eastern Oregon Economic Recovery Team had an opportunity to hear about the school opening plans across Eastern Oregon. Wallowa, Grant, and Harney counties are mostly opening up in person learning and the very small districts in other counties are opening up in person as well. For the most part, the larger school districts across Eastern Oregon are starting the year with distance learning. The team also had a good conversation about the census and the concern that Eastern Oregon response rates are very low, particularly in communities that are post office box communities only. RS and the federal delegation representatives are going to dig into this issue more to see if there is anything we can do to help.
- **Umatilla County Rivers and Creeks Workgroup** – After the devastating flooding in February 2020, RS pulled together a coordination meeting this week with over 15 state and federal agencies and communities across all of Umatilla County to discuss the damage that occurred to the rivers, creeks, and property along the rivers during and after the flooding and the need to address this damage before the next high water event. We had 49 participants and it was an opportunity to talk about next steps and create some progress on moving things forward.
- **Oregon Department of Agriculture Meat Inspection Program** – RS attended the first stakeholder meeting of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) state meat inspection program. Many communities across Eastern Oregon have long wanted a USDA meat packing plant in Eastern Oregon or more reliable meat processing opportunities. The legislature passed HB 4206, which gives ODA the authority to create a state meat inspection program. ODA has already submitted an initial proposal to US Food Safety and Inspection Service and has gotten feedback. From the stakeholder call, it was clear there is a lot of interest in expanding the meat processing capabilities in Oregon. RS will continue to engage in this effort moving forward.