



# RS EXCHANGE

## REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

### Weekly Report

Wednesday, September 23, 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* – This week the North Coast Regional Economic Recovery Team met with members of the Governor's Regional Solutions Advisory Committee, Regional Solutions Team, and individuals considering appointment to the Governor's Regional Equity in Recovery Council. The discussion considered what might be happening in the North Coast economy in the coming 12 months, what priorities for recovery should be, and what is needed to move these priorities forward. Highlights included:
    - COVID has uniquely impacted our tourism and hospitality industry. Supporting restaurant and lodging partners, and maintaining strong visitor experiences, were identified as priorities.
    - Expanding access to housing, childcare, and broadband is essential to the foundation of our regional economic recovery.
    - Opportunities for targeted statewide priority include expanding remote work, supporting small business through mentoring, technical assistance, training and fostering entrepreneurship.
    - Priorities for recovery include streamlining regulatory processes, meeting employer and employee needs with workforce development, training, and community college investments, and new market development.
- **Joint Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care** – Regional Solutions (RS) presented to the Oregon Legislature's Joint Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care. Annette Liebe, Central Oregon RS Coordinator, provided an overview of the RS workgroup co-convened with the Early Learning Division (see the Central Region report below for additional information). The presentation highlighted regional collaborative efforts to expand access to child care and early learning services across the state. North Coast RS presented findings and recommendations from the Tillamook County Early Care and Education Taskforce. Highlights

included the importance of multi-sector investments, including employer and philanthropic partnerships, the need for workforce development collaboratives, and technical assistance for childcare and early learning businesses.

## Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **Beachie Creek Fire** – As of 9/24, the fire has effected 192,838 acres and is 49% contained. Rain is expected in the next few days, which could be favorable to the slow the fire activity and subside the smoke. The wet conditions could also cause some dangers in the coming days including unstable ground under trees, and rock and mudslides are possible.

A full damage estimate is expected soon. The City of Gates and City of Detroit are still under Level 3 notice.

- **Santiam Canyon Wildfire Response, Assessment, and Recovery:**
  - The Mid-Valley and South Valley Regional Solutions Teams have combined efforts as Marion and Linn Counties cover the Santiam Canyon. The Regional Solutions (RS) Team has been engaging with local and regional assessments and pre-planning activities and coordination. RS is convening a weekly coordination taskforce and federal delegation check in.
  - As the Governor’s Disaster Cabinet and Wildfire Economic Recovery Council (WERC) launch, each fire affected region will active their Regional Solutions Advisory Committees to focus on issue identification and problem solving. The Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Advisory Committee will be convened for the Santiam Canyon Recovery and engage in the WERC. Representatives Noble and Alonso Leon will be co-convening the weekly meetings starting the week of October 5. The meetings will be open to the public.

## South Valley/Mid Coast Region – Sarah Means

- **Holiday Farm Fire** – As of 9/23, fire is approximately 173,000 acres and is 27% contained. Evacuation zones continue to be evaluated and downgraded over the past week. Damage assessments have been completed and include 431 residential structures and 24 non-residential structures destroyed. Highway 126 continues to be hazardous. ODOT and fire personnel are working to remove hazard trees and large debris. The highway is closed from MP 28 east to MP 40. RS has convened the Holiday Farm Fire Coordination Taskforce. The group is meeting weekly to ensure clear and coordinated communications among partner agencies and organizations. Topics of concern have included FEMA resources, temporary housing and the interface with Red Cross, debris removal/management, state agency representation into the Multi-Agency Resource Center, and communications (cell and internet).
- **Santiam Canyon Fire** – This is primarily located in Marion County, but has impacted communities in Linn County – specifically Lyons and Mill City. South Valley and Mid-Valley RS are coordinating on assisting with response efforts at this time.
- **Echo Mountain Fire** – As of 9/23, fire is 100% contained. Preliminary estimates indicate approximately 293 structures were damaged. Many of these were mobile/manufactured homes. RS has convened the Echo Mountain Fire Coordination Taskforce. The group includes local community and state agency representatives for the purpose to ensure coordinated communications on priority next steps. FEMA resources, housing and debris management are the primary concerns. The group will continue to meet weekly.

## Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- **Southern Oregon**
  - **Alameda Fire**
    - Regional Solutions is assisting with outreach to impacted businesses. The initial damage assessment included almost 200 commercial/business structures destroyed, including the headquarters for companies such as SunDay Afternoons and Infostructure. The Oregon Employment Department's initial analysis was that were fewer than 500 jobs directly impacted by the fire.
    - RS Team member Josh LeBombard (DLCD) began working with local planners before the fire was out and has been tasked by the county with gathering information about potential interim/transitional housing locations. A request to review the initial list came from FEMA yesterday. Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) is gaining confidence that a housing mission will be declared, which could allow direct provision of interim/transitional housing by FEMA.
  - **Slater/Devil Fires:**
    - The complex, which straddles the California/Oregon border, is over 150,000 acres.
    - Evacuation levels around Cave Junction, O'Brien, and Selma were reduced this week. The very southern portions of Redwood Highway remain under a Level 3 evacuation.
    - Some precipitation was received Wednesday night (as much as .7" on the western edge of the fire) and lines generally held despite some gusty winds middle of this week.
  - **Obenchain Fire:**
    - Incident teams are mostly in mop-up mode; all evacuations outside the fire perimeter have been reduced to Level 2 ("Get Set"). The fire received precipitation this week.
    - Approximately 150 structures were lost in the area (between Butte Falls, Shady Cove and Eagle Point in eastern Jackson County).
- **South Coast Umpqua**
  - **Archie Creek Fire:**
    - In eastern Douglas County, the Archie Creek Fire is estimated at over 130,000 acres.
    - Roughly 100 residences have been destroyed in and near the community of Glide.
    - RS is engaging with Glide Revitalization to connect them with resources and information.

## Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Riverside Fire** – The fire is the largest in Clackamas County and is 138,000 acres and about 31 percent contained. Preliminary damage assessment numbers for the Riverside and other smaller Clackamas County fires is estimated to consist of damage to 50 residential structures and 150 additional outbuildings. These numbers will continue to be updated as more information is

learned. Evacuation levels continue to be lifted as progress is being made and fire lines established. About 3,000 people east of Estacada are expected to live in areas that remain under a Level 3 evacuation order.

Regional Solutions continues to conduct remote outreach to city and county staff and businesses in the fire-affected areas of Clackamas County. Metro RS continues to share information and resources and is working to recruit members to the Metro Regional Solutions Advisory Committee on Wildfire Recovery. The Committee will focus on wildfire recovery work in Clackamas County since the fires in Washington County (Powerline and Chehalem) are considered 100 percent contained and deemed to have caused little, if any, structural damage with no lives lost or injuries reported.

- **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 – The group met and there were 75 meeting participants. Many thanks to State Economist, Mark McMullen, for presenting the state quarterly revenue forecast to the group. Summary of Highlights:
    - Overall, the current state of the economy is much better than feared at the time of the previous forecast. However, the economic outlook in the years ahead has only improved modestly.
    - Job losses have increased but revenues continue to grow. Most of the job losses have been among lower-income populations. This points to growing income inequality. We know that the pandemic has exacerbated inequities among our most vulnerable and underserved populations.
    - Federal stimulus packages have also helped infuse money into our economy and help explain for increased revenue despite significant job losses.
    - In the near-term Oregon’s economy is impacted by COVID-19 and the wildfires that destroyed communities. Over the long-term, Oregon’s ability to attract and retain skilled, working-age households is one of our comparative advantages. To the extent the pandemic, wildfires, drought, or protests and clashes of violence impact this advantage remains to be seen, but they all represent downside risks to the outlook. On the other hand should telecommuting and remote work increase as a result of the pandemic and changing business practices, Oregon stands to take advantage.

## 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 team hosted businesses from five sectors as its last meeting, including a panel of small business owners, including Blair Carr (Muggs Coffee and Trellis Fresh Flowers & Gifts, Bingen, WA), Ken Whiteman (pFriem Family Brewers, Hood River and Cascade Locks, OR), Kenya Kramer (Terra Cotta Boutique, The Dalles, OR), Jennifer Phipps (Satori, The Dalles, OR), Mindy McHale (River View Massage Therapy, The Dalles, OR). Some themes highlighted included:

- Ongoing need for community support for businesses
- Varying impacts by industry
  - Food and beverage struggling with limited seating and keeping up morale
  - Retail moving to online with less in person
  - Personal services reported maintaining or increasing sales
- Businesses had concerns over paying rent and utilities during the pandemic.
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- **Mosier and White River Fire** – The Mosier and White River fires were much smaller and with a much more limited impact than the fires that start after Labor Day. Wasco County lost 12 homes and 24 structure in the Mosier Creek Fire. The Regional Solutions Team (RST) has been working with Wasco County to provide the families with any resources available. Unfortunately, because the fires occurred just a couple weeks before the large fires, they are not covered by the FEMA declaration, and the impacted families will not have access to individual assistance.

## Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS)** – The contract has been signed for the first tranche of water project funding awarded by the Emergency Board. Great work by Business Oregon ensuring that the paper moves as fast as the project needs. Confirmed the CTWS did not lose any structures during the Lionshead fire.
- **Fire Evacuees** – There are still more than 100 people who are in Deschutes County after evacuating fires in Lane, Linn, Marion and Clackamas Counties. RS has been working closely with Deschutes County EMS and the Red Cross to connect evacuees with resources.
- **Childcare:**
  - RS presented to the joint childcare Task Force on the overview report developed from the workgroup we co-convened with the Early Learning Division to understand the landscape of state touchpoint for early childhood education in Oregon and to assess creative ways state resources could be aligned to increase supply of high quality childcare. The presentation also included updates on the various regional collaborative efforts. There are several regions creating a childcare accelerator position similar to what the Bend Chamber has done for Central Oregon and several regions are creating backbone shared services agencies to handle HR, billing, training, hiring, etc... Several jurisdictions have dedicated a portion of their CARES Act funding to support childcare providers. The Central Oregon Childcare Steering Committee met to finalize a request for qualifications for a “hub” that will serve as the backbone for micro centers. The request for quote (RFQ) went out on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>. The micro centers will be stood up on-site in partnership with employers.
  - **High Desert Museum emergency licensing** – RS assisted the High Desert Museum in securing pre-approval of their Emergency Childcare License; the museum is standing up a location for families from La Pine who need distance learning support. Kudos to Miriam Cecilia and Carol Peterson for resolving this late on Friday.

RS participated in meeting with Bend Chamber and Bend Parks and Rec highlighting conflicts in the draft Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rules and sector specific protocols. Many thanks to Alyssa Chatterjee and others working to ensure alignment between Oregon Health Authority (OHA) protocols and OSHA rules.

- **Business Diversity Institute** – RS participated in Minority Enterprise Development Week. Most relevant presentation was from Raahi Reddy, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Metro. Metro has been leading a construction workforce collaboration that focuses on increasing diverse workers in public sector construction projects. RS is exploring opportunities to replicate this effort.
- **Prineville Biomass** – RS, along with Kristen Sheeran Governor Brown’s Climate Director, met with Re. Breese-Iverson, community leaders and biomass business experts to discuss a proposed 20-megawatt biomass power plant near Prineville. Goal is to provide much needed local power, support forest health restoration and create local jobs. The team is seeking to site the Biogreen project originally proposed for construction in La Pine. The proponents asked the state to sign a power purchase agreement for all 20 megawatts. We’ll be following up.
- **City of Madras Cinema** – City of Madras awarded the only cinema in Madras \$200k in Coronavirus Relief Funds. As part of the award, the cinema agreed to show at least one Spanish language film each week.

## South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Fire updates** – 242 and Brattain fires are no longer a threat. RS is working with Klamath and Lake Counties, and the Klamath Tribes to ensure that resource information is available to all who need it.
- **Klamath County Community College (KCC) Apprenticeship Center** – KCC was awarded \$3M from the US Economic Development Association for construction of the Center. The Center also received \$200k RS funding for engineering and design work. With this funding, the college has enough funds to move forward with engineering, design and construction.
- **Lake County Railroad** – Lake County has secured a Business Oregon infrastructure loan to match their \$5.5M federal grant to improve the rail infrastructure to serve Red Rock Biofuels and other Lakeview businesses. The railroad is seeking California Department of Transportation funds for improvements on the California portion of the rail line.

## 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 latest guidance updates related to COVID-19 and talked a bit about the need for more flexibility in the guidance as we head into cooler months and outside dining and events will move inside. We also talked about the timing for the Regional Equity in Recovery Council that will get started in the next few weeks. This group will continue to meet periodically to go over guidance updates and changes and talk about COVID-19 business updates.
- **Ione Wastewater Project** – RS (Business Oregon representative) pulled together a meeting between the City of Ione, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Business Oregon and Morrow County to talk about the proposed wastewater system upgrade that the city is considering. Ione is currently has no wastewater system other than septic so they are looking at a system for a very small community like them. They are looking at a type of Orenco system and have engaged an engineering consultant to work with them. RS will continue to help the city move forward with the planning and possibility for this project.
- **Farewell Bend Travel Plaza Project** – DEQ issued a permit to the Travel Plaza project in Farewell Bend this week. The consultant and company still have to provide final plans before construction on the wastewater lagoons can begin but this is a huge step forward in this project

coming to fruition. Farewell Bend has long been a truck stop along I-84 but has been vacant since 2011 when the truck stop and motel closed down. This new travel plaza will help revive the town and allow a safe place for motorists to stop and get services when the freeway is closed in the winter.