



# RS EXCHANGE

## REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

### Weekly Report

Wednesday, April 1, 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 state, federal, regional, and local economic and workforce development partners. Convened by Regional Solutions, the team is sharing information about impacts and needs, resources and supports, and beginning to shift to a recovery planning framework.

*Update* – This week Senator Ron Wyden joined the North Coast Team meeting to provide an update on the \$2 trillion federal stimulus package, highlighting an expansion of unemployment benefits to include contractors, sole proprietors, and gig workers, small business relief, employee retention benefits, and healthcare investments. Oregon Employment Department provided updates on unemployment claims, NW Oregon Works, the regional workforce investment board, shared information about layoff aversion funding, and the NW Regional ESD's Early Learning Hub provided information about expanded child care supports.

We continue to hear concerns about delays in accessing SBA funds. Local organizations are looking for ways to provide bridge loans and other gap financing. Team members emphasize the importance of establishing protocols for assessing the health of businesses absent the COVID-19 disruption, emphasizing the importance of making informed investments. Regional Solutions has been meeting weekly with economic developers, chambers of commerce, and downtown associations, destination marketing organizations, workforce partners, and ports to better understand the challenges they are facing as they respond to business needs.

- Small Business Development Centers and Chambers of Commerce are assisting local businesses in better understanding the SBA's Economic Impact Disaster Loan (EIDL) and Payroll Protection Program (PPP). This week, the Clatsop County Small Business Development Center launched a webinar series. On Wednesday, they had a record 150 participants join their SBA EIDL training!
- With a foundational spirit of collaboration, North Coast businesses and organizations have come together in creative ways to support the economic ecosystem during this time. For example, the Tillamook Area Chamber of Commerce and Tillamook Coast Visitors Center partnered to stand up a *Tillamook Coast Take-Out and Delivery* social

media campaign. Participating restaurants reported revenue of \$127,000 between March 17 and 25!

- Ports are beginning to receive requests for moorage and lease payment relief. The loss of cruise ship revenue and sharp drop in commercial fishing activity are significant. North Coast ports are concerned with making sure they are able to continue moving commerce, particularly as we shift to recovery planning.
- **Hospitality and Tourism Recovery Planning – Background** – Following the Governor’s “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order, Clatsop and Tillamook counties were overwhelmed by an influx of tourists. Local officials passed resolutions restricting tourism, chambers of commerce and destination marketing organizations took bold steps to curb advertising, and private businesses chose to close to protect their employees and the public from behavior inconsistent with social distancing guidelines.
  - Update – Destination marketing organizations and chambers of commerce are beginning to shift to a recovery mindset. There are concerns that pent-up demand for recreating could lead to a similar surge in visitation when restrictions are lifted. Messaging designed to stimulate the tourism economy must be well-timed. Hotels and restaurants will need sufficient time to staff up and stock up. North Coast leaders are wrestling with these difficult questions and weighing strategies that anticipate and balance impacts.

Date of next Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meeting: April, 2020 – TBD

## Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **Mid-Valley Economic Recovery Team (M-V ERT)**, convened by Mid-Valley Regional Solutions, includes representatives from the Employment Department, Small Business Development Center, the Workforce Investment Board, utilizes, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, county commissioners, the Oregon Community Foundation, early learning hubs, city and tribal governments, chambers, state and regional economic development, local emergency managers, destination marketing organizations, Chemeketa Community College, and federal delegation representatives. The team focuses on coordination, collaboration and communication of response and recovery efforts in the region.
- The ERT has been meeting twice weekly to coordinate and communicate recovery efforts in the region. Priority topics from the last two meetings are:
  - Need for more translated and culturally appropriate COVID related information
  - Concerns from child care providers/small business owners about losing their businesses as a result of COVID
  - Immediate need for cash to “hit the streets” now
  - Clarity on CARES Act and timing of programs and release of funds

There are several updates provided in this week’s report.

- The Mid-Valley utilities are working to help residential and commercial customers. Here a few updates include:
  - McMinnville Water & Light expanded its Customer Helping Customer (CHC) fund and modified its programs to include business customers
  - Pacific Power’s business support is localized to their regions
  - Salem Electric has been reaching out to business customers to solicit impact/needs and adjust payment policies
  - NW Natural has suspended disconnects and providing bill payment assistance

- PGE is working on a package of changes to bill payment assistance, new time payment plans and setting aside funds to contribute to Oregon Community Foundation's [new small business stabilization fund](#).

Thank you to M-V ERT member, PGE's Theresa Haskins for connecting with our regional utilities.

- The Strategic Economic Development Corp (SEDCOR), in partnership with the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Business Oregon and the Willamette Workforce Partnership (WWP), are working with Mid-Valley manufacturers to retool to address the critical need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).



Some of the Mid-Valley companies retooling production include Salem's [NW Alpine](#), an outdoor clothing manufacturer, [Watershed](#), a premium rainwear manufacturer, and Newberg's [A-dec](#), one of the world's largest dental equipment manufacturers. The company is making face shields and developing other PPE products.

WWP, the regional workforce investment board, awarded a Layoff Aversion Grant to A-dec to support the retooling.

*Photo credit: [A-dec's website](#)*

- In partnership with WWP, Marion County has committed additional funds for the existing Layoff Aversion Grant program. This fund will be targeted to eligible businesses within the Marion County.
- Mid-Valley Economic Development and Chamber Alliances are meeting weekly to share up to the minute communications, resource mining, and best practices. They are also tracking business impact data. Thank you to M-V ERT members Danielle Bethell (Keizer Chamber) and Tom Hoffert (Salem Chamber) for co-convening the chamber alliance and to the Ec Dev Alliance co-conveners M-V ERT members Dennie Houle (Business Oregon) and Erik Andersson (SEDCOR).
- Regarding Mid-Valley employment and business impact data, the Marion County economic development department is providing expertise in managing the collected data and will be distilling the information for the ERT and the alliances. This information will be used to identify trends and needs unique to the Mid-Valley. Thank you to Danielle Gonzalez and Jason Schneider. And thank you to Pat O'Connor, who is presenting weekly Employment Department data to the groups as well.

## [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 has met four times in an effort to share information, identify immediate needs and understand impacts. The most immediate impacts continue to be on the region's retail and hospitality sectors although all sectors, including manufacturing are being impacted.

Identified needs/challenges include:

- Unemployment Insurance coverage

- Immediate access to flexible capital
- Debt relief and/or commercial lease/mortgage moratorium for business
- Additional guidance on CARES Act as it's available
- Assistance for businesses to complete applications (SBA)
- Layoff Aversion Funds are extremely popular and need to be recapitalized
- DMO's are beginning to face challenges and are implementing salary reductions and furloughs. These organizations are largely funded with TLT funds.

Best practices include:

- County based webinars/conference calls with local partner organizations to do information sharing and bring in subject matter experts on relevant topics. Conveners range from SBDC's, County Ec/Dev staff, or City staff.
- WIB's are partnering with local jurisdictions to leverage additional funding for Layoff Aversion efforts.

Special thanks to Senator Wyden and Senator Roblan who joined the Team last week to provide an update on the CARES Act the work of the Joint Committee on Coronavirus. Another thank you to Representative Gomberg who joined the Team earlier this week to give both a legislative and Coastal Caucus update. Upcoming agenda items include discussion of identified needs/gaps that could be addressed in the next stimulus package. The Team is also beginning to think about longer term recovery efforts.

## Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- South Coast Umpqua Recovery Team:  
The team met on Monday. Both Senator Wyden and Senator Merkley called in to discuss CARES Act implementation. Several cities raised concerns that, as they are not eligible for the same subsidies private companies are, Family Medical Left Act expenditures could become a significant liability for them. Several good connections were made, including connecting a local hospital expansion effort with US Army Corps of Engineers resources. There were several questions about decision-making around use of the State/Local Stabilization Fund. Several voices called for making business assistance information more digestible and consistent. A Business Services Coordination team has taken that on and produced a flyer for distribution. The same group has organized a zoom call with local bankers and lenders to describe what assistance they may be able to provide.
- Southern Oregon Recovery Team:  
The team met on Tuesday and was also fortunate to have both U.S. Senators join. A good question raised by an SBDC representative: is there any requirement for Paycheck Protection Program applicants to demonstrate injury from COVID-19? The group is collaborating on consistency of message; developing a training on cash flow management; and assisting expansion of capacity of efforts on local PPE production. Sen. Golden suggested some work on best practices for retailers to limit hoarding.

## Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Metro Economic Response Team:** – Background – The Governor's Metro Regional Solutions Team is partnering with Greater Portland, Inc. (GPI), to co-convene a Metro Economic Response Team. In addition to state agencies (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, community-based organizations, labor, members of the Governor's Metro Regional Solutions Advisory Committee and workforce development organizations.

- Update – The Team had its second meeting and had the pleasure of being joined by Senator Ron Wyden who provided an update on the \$2 trillion federal stimulus package that at the time had recently passed the Senate. The house passed it the day after our Team meeting. Senator Wyden answered a number of questions about Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, business relief and the expansion of unemployment insurance (UI). The Team provided feedback to the Governor's Coronavirus Economic Advisory Council (CEAC) on the Oregon Employment Department's (OED) temporary UI rules and on the potential use of state flexible funds for small business relief. UI feedback was largely positive with a recommendation that independent contractors, gig workers and sole proprietors be eligible as well as undocumented individuals. The feedback received about the potential use of state funds for small business relief included making the funds immediately accessible and leveraging/matching existing funds in communities. The Team meets again this Thursday, April 2, 2020 and is scheduled to hear from city and county leadership as well as community-based organizations.

## North Central Region – Nate Stice

- The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District and Region Regional Solutions have mobilized the bi-state Columbia Gorge/Mid-Columbia Bi-State Economic Resilience Team, and this group is serving as the Governor's Regional Economic Recovery Team for Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler Counties. The structure for the team was outlined in a 2019 report produced by [MCEDD](#). The team is updating information on [mcedd.org/ready](#), and sharing in a daily digest of consolidated information with regional partners. Last week, the team convened four working focused on: 1) workers/employees, 2) traded sector businesses; 3) tourism/main street businesses; and 4) ag sectors. This team is now fully integrated with the county emergency management structure, and is under that structure, formally tasked with long-term economic recovery. This week, under the umbrella of the Resilience Team, area chambers, the SBDC, and other partners are holding webinars for businesses on resources and the federal package.

## Central Region – Annette Liebe

- Central Oregon Recovery Team:

The recovery team is serving a key need for communication and coordination. The list of invited people has grown to over 70. The team met on March 26<sup>th</sup>; Senator Knopp provided an overview of the recommendations of the Joint Coronavirus Committee, the team also heard about what was in the Senate stimulus bill and regional updates.

  - The Bend Chamber SOS website is housing all resources for employers and employees. All regional organizations are linking to that webpage.
  - Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council is convening partners to assess establishing centralized grant and loan programs for small businesses. There is a need for grant and loan-making partners. There is an ongoing survey to determine 30-60-90 day needs.
  - Economic Development for Central Oregon has heard employer concern regarding inability to get sick people tested; anxiety about those without sickness being around those who have been sick, especially in the food-processing industry.
  - Zach Bass, Redmond Airport – No decrease in flight frequency. There has been a 90% drop in passengers, which is affecting businesses. Layoffs are unknown.

- Prineville Chamber – The Chamber is working on grants for small businesses. They have also identified a need for Wi-Fi in the community. Judge Crawford indicated that school buses who can broadcast Wi-Fi will be deployed in the near future.
- Economic Development Partners Sub-Committee: Carolyn Meece, RDO, Business Oregon convened this group. Two follow up items from the discussion:
  - There is a need for a simple integrated matrix of available resources that is understandable to lay people and is in multiple languages. SBDC is leading a workgroup to develop this.
  - A sub group will be looking a key sectors already impacted and ones that are expected to be impacted in the future so that strategies can be appropriately aligned.

## South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- South Central Oregon Recovery Team:  
The team was fortunate to be joined by Senators Wyden and Merkley who provided overviews of the recently adopted federal stimulus package. Commissioner Winters commented that the formula for allocating PPE are not providing adequate supplies to Lake County hospital. Additional follow up items: there is a need for a simplified fact sheet on UI benefits for self-employed individuals, independent contractors and sole proprietors. Amy Amrhein, Sen. Merkley’s Office, will distribute a list of banks in South Central Oregon that work with SBA.  
Regional updates:
  - Klamath IDEA is serving as the central point of contact where information about all available resources can be found.
  - Penny Newton, Klamath Community College (KCC) mentioned that through KCC there are grants (up to \$5k) for businesses who need to get their books in order to apply for assistance.
  - Jim Chadderdon, Discover Klamath, convened lodging and tour operators. Federal land closures and the impact to outfitters/guides was raised as a significant issue. Coordinating with Cailin O’Brien-Feeney on follow up.

Date of next Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meeting(s): **TBD, Klamath Falls**

## Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Eastern Oregon Economic Recovery Team** – *Background* – The Eastern Oregon Economic Recovery Team is comprised of state, federal, regional, and local economic and workforce development partners and local representatives from across Eastern Oregon. Convened by Regional Solutions, the team is sharing information about impacts and needs, resources and supports, and how we can help our rural communities stay informed.
- *Update* – The Team had its second meeting this week and had the pleasure of being joined by Senator Ron Wyden who provided an update on the \$2 trillion federal stimulus package that at the time had recently passed the Senate. We were also joined by Senate Finance staff who were able to help answer technical questions about the SBA programs outlined in the bill. Additionally, our team had a good conversation about how we can help our local cities, counties and chambers who are on the frontlines working with small businesses to streamline information about the federal stimulus package and get them the information they need without overloading our Small Business Development Centers. We have created a small planning group that is led by the Rural Engagement and Vitality Center at EOU that is going to work on

identifying the resources for small businesses through the stimulus package and walk through the steps necessary for businesses to access those resources. We are hoping to get this guide up as soon as possible to help our local partners who are navigating these new resources.