



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Weekly Report

Wednesday, May 6, 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 – The North Coast Regional Economic Recovery Team had the privilege of being joined by Governor Brown and Senator Jeff Merkley. Each thanked team members for their work with businesses and communities on the north coast and for their representative voice at the state and federal level.

- Team members asked Senator Merkley for additional guidance from the Small Business Administration and clarity for businesses who have received PPP or EIDL funding. The Senator shared information about his advocacy in support of coastal communities. Specifically, Senator Merkley led a bipartisan group of lawmakers in pushing to make sure that urgently needed federal assistance is delivered to fishermen and seafood processors, who have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.
 - Governor Brown addressed questions about the adequacy and sustainability of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) supplies, particularly as we move into reopening and demand increases. Team members also raised concerns about the disparate impacts of COVID on our coastal economy and what resources may be available as we consider recovery. The Governor also spoke to concerns about travel impacts as we begin to open boat launches and recreational opportunities.
- **North Coast lodging and tourist accommodations** – Tillamook and Clatsop counties implemented restrictions on overnight lodging and tourist accommodations following the overwhelming influx of tourists over spring break. As cities and counties consider reopening transient lodging facilities, including hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and short-term rentals, they are seeking guidance to inform next steps regarding health and safety protocols. Regional Solutions participated in a discussion with local officials and short-term lodging providers in Tillamook County, weighing the timing and conditions under which overnight accommodations might begin to reopen. Concerns include sanitation protocols for protecting staff and guests,

limiting units to minimize visitor impacts, ensuring visitors feel welcome, and consistency of requirements to eliminate competitive advantages and disadvantages. Tillamook and Clatsop counties have both extended local states of emergency through May 31.

- **Halibut season** – Charter operators are wanting to reopen safely, seeking clarification on restrictions and guidance, and local governments and coastal ports are hoping for a coordinated approach to reopening boat launches. Regional Solutions has been sharing information with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Director, Curt Melcher, and the Governor’s Natural Resources Office regarding coastal community preparedness for the scheduled all-depths halibut season opener.
- **Health Region concerns** – Tillamook, Clatsop, and Columbia counties have expressed strong reservations about being included with the Metro counties in Health Region #1. There is a lack of clarity around how health regions were defined and what purpose they serve. There are concerns that this grouping will limit the voice of the north coast counties, restrict access to PPE for our smaller communities, and impact a county’s ability to proceed with reopening.
- **Clatsop County COVID cases** – Over the weekend, Clatsop County had a spike in COVID cases. The initial case was identified Friday and associated with a seafood processing facility. Additional testing and robust contact tracing is. Local testing capacity and PPE supplies are being strained. By way of fortunate timing, the County had received 1,100 testing kits from the state on Friday. Prior shipments had included as few as 20 kits, which would have proven substantially insufficient. This has raised significant concerns about access to PPE and testing supplies and questions about the state’s distribution protocols. Additionally, the community is expressing concerns about how the increase in cases may impact reopening.

Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **Mid-Valley Economic Recovery Team (ERT)** – 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 meets twice weekly to coordinate and communicate recovery efforts in the region. We have also established weekly calls with the Mid-Valley County Commissioners and tribal government representative, the Mid-Valley Economic Development Alliance and Mid-Valley Chambers Alliance.
 - Department of Agriculture Director Alexis Taylor joined last Thursday’s call to provide an update on the agency’s goal of keeping the Ag supply chain open in the state while protecting employees, continuing the work of the department (e.g. inspections), and providing critical services to food and agriculture producers. The focus has been on high risk, high priority activities, working during off-peak hours, low traffic times in grocery stores, etc. The department has had success in helping to maintain livestock auctions which are critical to Oregon’s supply chain and developing social distancing and other measures to allow farmers markets to open around the state. Additionally, she has been working on a national scale with colleagues from other states and US territories to open up Small Business Administration emergency resources to farmers and producers, leverage US Department of Agriculture dollars effectively, and provide input as to what Oregon producers will need in the upcoming fourth phase of federal relief packages.

With restaurants being closed or with limited service, the markets for Oregon produced food have changed abruptly, leaving processors with stocks of French fries, onion rings

and other products. The Department has been working to help move those foods through Farm to School networks; additionally, the Oregon Food Bank has received assistance from the Legislature in the form of \$1M per week for eight weeks to leverage displaced production due to COVID-19. The Department is also working with institutional buyers such as the Department of Corrections to buy more local products and produce.

Thank you to Director Taylor for her time on the call.

- Over the last several days, the ERT shared the draft public health guidelines for restaurants, retail, childcare, and personal services with community members, businesses, public health, and other stakeholders. The comments were gathered and submitted for consideration.

Identified needs/challenges/opportunities include:

- How are cities being engaged in the county reopening request process?
 - How will guidelines be enforced?
 - What events are possible under Phase 1?
 - When will faith-based organization be allowed to open to more people?
 - Guidance needed for lodging and accommodations.
 - Opportunities to facilitate relationships between travel organizations and economic development entities.
 - Can gym be added to Phase 1?
- **Mental Health Concerns** - Keizer Mayor Cathy Clark reached out about increased mental health issues in local communities. She also has concerns about COVID-19 marketing messages and its effect on fragile people. Tina Edlund, the Governor's Healthcare Policy Advisor, connected RS with Oregon Health Authority Behavior Health Director Steve Allan. Mayor Clark, Director Allen, and RS met to discuss the concerns and how best to help local governments with mental health. Steve will provide information to the mayor. RS also met with Mike Cully to expand the assistance via League of Oregon Cities.

South Valley/Mid Coast Region – Sarah Means

- **The SVMC Economic Recovery Team (ERT):** 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 this past week include:

- With the introduction of the Reopening Oregon Framework and introduction of the specific sector guidance, the ERT has been working hard to gather feedback from all parts of the region to share with the Governor's Economic Advisory Council.
- Lincoln County has extended their closure to May 31. Short-term rental and lodging continues to be a challenge and there are a number of requests for specific guidance for this sector.
- Communities continue to have many questions on the Coronavirus Relief Fund and what that will mean for local governments.
- Questions regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing are coming up often in conversations with businesses. Businesses are concerned about where they will access the needed PPE.

- Businesses are expressing concerns with Paycheck Protection Programs (PPP) and the ability to spend those funds prior to the deadline in June. The inability to have employees come back to work – either because of closure or employees not feeling safe – is a concern for business owners. That feedback has been shared with our federal delegation partners.
- Special thanks to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for their work with Central and North Coast communities related to outdoor recreation and the halibut season opening.

Best practices include:

- Oregon Coast Community College (OCCC) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has been developing a mentorship series for businesses that have received Payroll Protection Program funds. The focus on this work will be to help businesses maximize forgiveness in this loan program.

Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- **South Coast Umpqua Recovery Team:**

- Lots of concerns raised that small businesses are running out of cash and likely to start reopening regardless of rules.
- Presentation from participant in Governor’s Council sub-committee on small business assistance fund was well-received. Questions: Can local funds that have already expended their dollars still apply for match from the state pool? Will 501c6 organizations be eligible?
- Lots of discussion about differing views of appropriate re-opening steps among/between coastal communities. Generally, cities are taking more conservative approach than the county, particularly in Curry County.
- Gold Beach Fire District has purchased 100K masks, which are being distributed at cost to health care, first responders and business.
- Request for clarity for boat tour operators. Jet boat tours of the Rogue are significant regional tourism driver.
- Port of Coos Bay expressed concern about seafood / seafood processing sector as potential transmission vector. Are working without PPE.

- **Southern Oregon Recovery Team:**

- Lots of concerns about businesses losing patience and opening in advance of Phase 1
- Several discussions of liability concerns of businesses
- Josephine County, City of Medford, and City of Ashland all moving forward with grant programs for businesses.
- Loud chorus for need to understand ASAP what mass gathering limits for Phases 2 & 3 look like. Essential for planning summer season for chambers and other groups.
- Locals reporting heavy revenue losses, but property development applications moving forward.
- Rep. Marsh raised concerns about how temporary supports for homeless/houseless stabilization are kept in place.

Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Metro Economic Response Team:**
 - Background – The Governor’s Metro Regional Solutions (RS) Team is partnering with Greater Portland, Inc. (GPI), to co-convene a Metro Economic Response Team. 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, community-based organizations, labor, members of the Governor’s Metro Regional Solutions Advisory Committee and workforce development organizations.
 - Update – The Team had its seventh meeting. Congressman Earl Blumenauer joined the meeting and shared the following:
 - Congress is working on another relief package, which will likely include healthcare protections and support for state, local governments and education. Negotiations are underway, and it may take some time to reach an agreement.
 - There will be more pressure to move forward with an infrastructure bill by the fall, which has the potential to provide hundreds of thousands of family-wage jobs throughout the country, tens of thousands of family-wage jobs in Oregon.
 - There is strong support among Democrats to add 501(c)6s in the next relief package.
- Metro RS presented the draft phase one industry-sector guidelines for restaurants, retail and childcare. The following is a summary of the comments/feedback received:
 - Government needs to ensure that disinfecting and cleaning supplies remain available, especially for small businesses that lack sourcing.
 - Restaurants:
 - Many expressed concern be over the 50 percent capacity limit.
 - Many expressed concern over the inability to serve food and drink past 10 PM
 - Many expressed concern over the need to reconfigure / redesign their spaces and the costs associated with doing so especially if the guidelines for phase one are temporary (i.e. three months to a year out, for example)
 - Some expressed concern about businesses operating illegally in order to stay in business and make profit margins work. They suggested enforcement.
 - Some felt that many restaurants/bars will choose to offer take out only in phase one due to the costs associated with offering dine-in services under the draft guidelines.
 - Retail:
 - There were questions about financial assistance for cleaning products and Plexiglas dividers, etc. especially for smaller retailers who may not be able to afford them.
 - A lot of questions about bathrooms and social distancing and cleaning protocols for them.
 - A lot of questions about changing rooms for clothing retailers and the ability to try on clothing.
 - Social distancing may be more difficult for retailers who sell smaller products i.e. jewelry, bike parts, etc.
 - Childcare:

- Many providers expressed concern over student / teacher ratios, the number of students in a classroom, split days or partial weeks, etc.
 - Many had questions about face coverings and cleaning and sanitization.
 - Many expressed concern over their workforce returning to work for minimum wage or slightly more than minimum wage especially given the risk of exposure to the virus.
 - Many worry that families are not ready to come back and that they will lose revenue.
- **Governor’s Reopening Framework:** Metro RS presented the Governor’s Reopening Framework and phase one draft industry-sector guidelines for restaurants, retail and childcare to Prosper Portland’s Economic Recovery Task Force Meeting. There were over 80 people in attendance including Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, Portland City Commissioner Joanne Hardesty, Prosper Portland Executive Director Kimberly Branam, Port of Portland Director Curtis Robinhold, Worksystems Director Andrew McGough, Paul Slyman (Chief of Staff to Metro President Lynn Peterson), Multnomah County economic development staff, property owners/ developers, and several community-based partner organizations.
 - Will employers be required to provide their employees personal protective equipment (PPE)?
 - How will feedback be incorporated into the industry-sector guidelines?
 - Metro is concerned about the Oregon Zoo. They would like for the Oregon Zoo to be classified as a park.

North Central Region – Nate Stice

- The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) 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 [Mid-Columbia Economic Development District \(MCEDD\)](#), based on work Regional Solutions led efforts around fire recovery for the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire and 2018 Grass Fires. This emphasis of the team this week has been three-fold: 1) supporting county public health leads in developing county level reopening plans; 2) developing forums for conversation about outdoor recreation; 3) building a platform for business adaptation.

Highlights:

- Our weekly Economic Recovery Team Meeting focused on a side by side comparison of Oregon and Washington sector reopening plans, and getting input on the Oregon sector reopening plans
- Working with the Business Oregon, the SBDC, chambers, ports, MCEDD, and the East Cascades Workforce Investment Board, the team is working to finalize an online virtual Business Adaptation Training for five Oregon counties. The training will provide a forum for businesses to think about operating in now and into Phase 1. It will include a plenary session with public health leads to discuss high level guidance and include breakout for industry sectors, including non-emergency medical, restaurants, retail, child care, and outdoor recreation.
- With United States Forest Service National Scenic Area Manager, Lynn Burditt, RS co-convened a bi-state (OR and WA) conversation on outdoor recreation attended by over 100. The meeting built on a real time information sharing forum we launched earlier in the week to help decision makers around recreation in five Oregon counties (Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler) and two Washington Counties (Klickitat and Skamania), namely county officials and land managers, to discuss their concerns and

plans around reopening. Borrowing a concept from the workforce world, supporting partners sat “around the table” to listen and think about how they help address the concerns of the decision makers. This week we are working to focus on more geographically specific concerns around recreation. Many thanks to Lynn, The Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance Director Emily Reed, and Hood Gorge’s Lizzy Keenan for their expert help on this front.

Process highlight – Based on best practices advance by the University of Oregon and ECONorthwest in a recent white paper, the team is separating out capacity to think about the different phases of this event. In particular, the team has created a business adaptation team to focus on the reopening phases and is working on standing up a recovery team to look down the field.

Next week:

1. Our weekly ERT will take a deep dive into the child care sector with guest speakers from the Four Rivers Early Learning Hub and Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC) Child Care Resource Center.
 2. The team will launch the Business Adaptation Training.
- **The Dalles EPA Brownfields Grant** – Regional Solutions and Business Oregon worked with the City of the Dalles to complete a downtown brownfields inventory in 2019 and helped in the drafting on an application to the Environmental Protection Agency. The Dalles was among 151 communities were selected to receive 155 grants totaling \$65.6 million in EPA Brownfields funding through our Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup (ARC) Grants to assess, clean up and redevelop underutilized properties while protecting public health and the environment. The \$600,000 grant will expand the ability of The Dalles to recycle vacant and abandoned properties for new, productive reuses. It will prove a particularly important investment as The Dalles main street struggle through the COVID crisis, and RS is grateful to have had an opportunity to help move this effort forward. Congrats to Mayor Rich Mays and City Manager Julie Krueger and to the local project leads, Matthew Klebes and Carrie Pipinich. Thanks to Business Oregon’s Michael Held, Carolyn Meece, and Karen Homelac for helping along the way.

Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Regional re-opening metrics** – Worked with Oregon Health Authority (OHA) regional coordinator to communicate the status of Healthcare Coalition Region 7 relative to the regional gating criteria, i.e., hospital capacity and PPE for hospitals. Home Care Commission (HCC) Region 7 has met all the regional gating criteria. Jefferson and Crook Counties submitted their re-opening plans May 6th.
- **Economic Development Sub-Committee Central Oregon ERT** – The personal services draft protocols were shared with this group to gather feedback on the ability of businesses to open under these guidelines. The major issues raised by businesses in both Central and South Central Oregon is the lack of PPE to implement the protocols. One specific example is the need for disposable capes for salons and barber shops. Barber shops also tend to be drop in and the ones who provided feedback don’t intend to purchase an appointment management system. They’ll have to figure out another way.
- **OSU Cascades Innovation Summit** – working closely with regional partners to put together a virtual training and peer to peer conversation assisting businesses to implement the Phase 1 re-opening protocols.

- **Warm Springs Water System** – Regional Solutions has co-convened two funding partner summits and two tribal strategic planning sessions to assist the tribe with infrastructure needs. This week the tribe submitted a \$556,000 Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation (WIIN) grant application to support water system engineering and system improvements. These funds are Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) dollars and are jointly administered by Business Oregon and OHA.

South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **South Central Oregon Recovery Team** – The team reviewed the list of re-opening prerequisites and the regional gating criteria. There was discussion about how to provide for isolating COVID+ people in rural communities. In addition, RS provided the Labor Commissioner’s guidance to both Klamath and Lake Counties as they seek to shore up this aspect of their plans. The Klamath Tribes have a house set aside for this purpose. There was also a question about whether current testing is being done at the Warner Creek Correctional Institution; they are not currently testing but are monitoring staff/population under the OHA guidance. Lake County submitted their re-opening plan April 30th; Klamath County submitted May 6th.
- **Red Rock Biofuels** – Convened the monthly check in meeting with agencies, the county and Red Rock. The County Commission approved seeking \$2.9M in loan funds from Business Oregon as part of the match for the \$5.1M federal CRISI grant awarded last year. County and Red Rock are working with Federal Railroad Administration to resolve whether Red Rock’s investment (\$1.5M) since the grant was approved can be counted as match. The Red Rock spur and needed mainline connection points are completed. The project is experiencing some delays due to supply chain disruption and has secured a PPP forgivable loan to defray the cost of these delays.



Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team** – The Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team continues to meet weekly to discuss what is happening across the region and share resources.
 - This week the team reviewed the personal services industry sector guidance and provided feedback. We also walked through the Prerequisites for Reopening Document and talked with OHA regional staff who is helping pull the data together for the health region portions. Lots of questions came up that RS is working to get answered for the region. Every county in the region has either submitted a plan for Phase 1 reopening or is working on sending in a plan.
- **Brownfields Grant for BTI** – The Baker Technical Institute (BTI) was awarded a \$500,000 grant through the EPA to help clean up the Central Building property in Baker City. The building was used as a middle and high school from 1917 until 2009 and is now mostly vacant except for some items stored by the Baker School District. It is contaminated with inorganic contaminants and metals. Grant funds also will be used to conduct community outreach activities. This is part

of the innovative Brownfields program through BTI that works on cleaning up brownfields sites throughout the community.

- **Eastern Oregon Border Board** – The Border Board met this week to review applications for the Education and Workforce Training, Community Planning, and Competitive Edge grant programs. They made decisions to fund nine different grant applications.