



**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 04-04**

**OFFICE OF RURAL POLICY AND RURAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Pursuant to my authority as Governor of the State of Oregon, I find that:

Oregon is a state of great economic and geographic diversity. While that diversity brings us strength, it also challenges us to meet the needs of all communities, both urban and rural. Although Oregon is challenged by a sluggish economy, poverty and hunger, rural Oregon is even more deeply affected because the natural resource base that has been the foundation of rural Oregon's economy has changed dramatically over the past two decades.

The diversity within "Rural Oregon" (as defined below) can be best understood by understanding the following geographic distinctions:

- Frontier Rural – a geographic area that is at least 75 miles by road from a community of less than 2,000 individuals. It is characterized by an absence of densely populated areas, small communities, individuals working in their communities, an economy dominated by natural resources and agricultural activities, and few paved streets or roads.
- Isolated Rural – a geographic area that is at least 100 miles by road from a community of 3,000 or more individuals. It is characterized by low population density (fewer than five people per square mile), an economy of natural resources and agricultural activity, large areas of land owned by the state or federal government and predominately unpaved streets.
- Rural – a geographic area that is at least 30 miles by road from an urban community (50,000 or more). It is characterized by some commercial business, two or fewer densely populated areas in a county, an economy changing from a natural resource base to more commercial interests and reasonable, but not immediate, access to health care.
- Urban Rural – a geographic area that is at least 10 miles by road from an urban community. It is characterized by many individuals commuting to an urban area to work or shop, an economy with few natural resource and agricultural activities, easy and immediate access to health care services and numerous paved streets and roads.

Rural Oregon communities are in need: unemployment in those communities is often many percentage points higher than the state average; Rural Oregon communities have significant threshold issues to overcome to compete with urban communities for economic and community development resources; the lack of an industrial base in most rural communities, makes funding for education, health care, economic development and other social services more difficult to attain; and finally, Rural Oregon communities often lack administrative mechanisms and infrastructure to share information and to collectively construct solutions to its problems.



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Oregon's drive to economic and social prosperity must include all areas of our state, including Rural Oregon. To that end, coordination should begin with state agencies but extend to those Rural Oregon communities identified above.

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DIRECTED AND ORDERED:**

1. The Office of Rural Policy (the "Office") is hereby established. The Office shall be staffed by the Office of the Governor or the Department of Administrative Services and funded through the Department of Administrative Services to the extent such funds are so identified. On behalf of the Office and to the extent allowed by law, the Department of Administrative Services, may accept funds from any lawful source, including the federal government, and may expend those funds in accordance with law to fulfill this Order.
2. The Office shall coordinate the formulation of rural policy for the state. Through research, promotion and coordination of activities throughout Oregon, the Office shall foster and represent the interests of Rural Oregon as described in this Order.
3. The Office shall serve as a clearing house for the collection and dissemination of information about issues that are of special interest to Rural Oregon. It shall serve as a liaison between elected officials in rural Oregon, the Governor and the executive branch and the Legislative Assembly. In addition, the Office shall assist in educating members of the Legislative Assembly about issues of special interest to Rural Oregon and shall evaluate the effects of state policies on those areas in coordination with the departments identified in paragraph 4 below, and report those effects to the Governor and Legislative Assembly.
4. The director of each the following state departments shall identify at least one individual from each department as a Rural Policy Liaison responsible for working with the Office:
  - a. Department of Fish and Wildlife;
  - b. Department of Agriculture;
  - c. Department of Forestry;
  - d. Economic and Community Development Department;
  - e. Department of Environmental Quality;
  - f. Department of Land Conservation and Development;
  - g. Department of Education;
  - h. Department of Energy;
  - i. Department of Human Services; and
  - j. Department of Water Resources
  - k. Housing and Community Services
  - l. Oregon University System



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The Rural Policy Liaisons shall coordinate relevant portions of their departments' work with the Office and shall facilitate a dialogue between their departments and rural Oregon. Additional departments of state government may, upon the request of the Governor, be required to appoint Rural Policy Liaisons.

5. All departments of state government shall cooperate fully with the Office in the performance of its mandate. In particular, the Economic and Community Development Department shall work with the Office and rural communities to explore economic development opportunities throughout Rural Oregon.
6. The Office shall report to the Governor through the Governor's Natural Resources and Intergovernmental Relations advisors at their request but shall report not less than quarterly.
7. Within ninety days of the date of this Order, the Office shall provide an initial report to the Governor. That report shall list the Rural Policy Liaisons named by the departments listed above and shall detail the processes that will be used by the Office and the Rural Policy Liaisons and the deliverables to be completed to implement this Order as well as identify available funds from the Department of Administrative Services. The processes, implementation and deliverables to fulfill this Order shall be scoped to the available funds.
8. The Rural Policy Advisory Committee (the "Committee") is hereby created. The Committee shall work closely with the Office in the performance of the Office's mandate.
9. The Committee shall consist of fourteen members. The membership of the Committee shall include a geographic distribution of Frontier Rural, Isolated Rural, Rural and Urban Rural areas of Oregon. The members of the Committee must be residents of Rural Oregon. The members shall be appointed as follows:
  - a. ten members shall be appointed by the Governor;
  - b. the President of the Senate shall appoint one member of the Senate who is a member of the Democratic Party and shall appoint one member of the Senate who is a member of the Republican Party, in consultation with that party's leadership; and
  - c. the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint one member of the House of Representatives who is a member of the Republican Party and shall appoint one member of the House of Representatives who is a member of the Democratic Party, in consultation with that party's leadership.



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10. The chair of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee.
11. A quorum for Committee meetings shall consist of a majority of the appointed members. The Committee shall strive to operate by consensus; however, the Committee may approve measures and make recommendations based on a vote of a majority of the quorum present.
12. The members of the Committee shall not be entitled to the reimbursement of expenses or to the per diem provided in ORS 292.495.
13. The Committee shall meet quarterly and develop an annual report on the needs of Rural Oregon. The report shall be coordinated with the relevant state agencies and with the Governor's Natural Resources and Intergovernmental Relations advisors. The report shall be submitted to the Governor and to the Legislative Assembly by December 31 of each calendar year, beginning in 2004.
14. This Order expires on January 31, 2007.

Done at John Day, Oregon, this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2004.

  
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

  
SECRETARY OF STATE

