



RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, January 12th, 2026

Upcoming RSAC Meetings

Metro (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties)

Friday, January 30th from 11:00am-1:00pm

World Trade Center Portland; Roundup Conference Room

[Virtual Link](#)

Mid-Valley (Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties)

Thursday, March 12th from 1:30-3:30pm

Chemeketa Community College (Salem); Building 9, Room 128

[Virtual Link](#)

South Valley/Mid-Coast (Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties)

Thursday, March 26th from 1:00-3:00pm

Corvallis/Albany location TBD—will be announced in future Exchange

[Virtual Link](#)

Regional Updates

South Coast – Jessica LaBerge

Bay Area Chamber Economic Forum: The Regional Solutions Team had the pleasure of attending the 33rd Annual Economic Outlook Forum hosted by the [Bay Area Chamber in Coos Bay](#). This event is always a highlight, and this year was no exception! We heard from incredible leaders and collaborators on workforce development and other key topics. State Senator David Brock Smith shared insights on workforce, trade, and legislative priorities. A lively panel discussion on workforce brought together diverse voices and perspectives, and several homegrown businesses were showcased throughout the day. Guy Tauer, Regional Economist, gave a local economic update, and the keynote speaker, Damon Runberg from Business Oregon, delivered an engaging and thought-provoking presentation. While his outlook was sobering, Damon kept the conversation interesting and even humorous—making complex economic trends easy to follow.

A big thank you to Rosey Thomas, Executive Director of the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, and the KoKwel Casino Resort for hosting such a fantastic event. We're already looking forward to next year!



Southport Lumber Tour Report

In December, the Business Oregon Regional Development Officer (RDO) and Regional Solutions visited Southport Lumber, for a tour and discussion with Jason Smith, Owner of Southport Lumber, and Payton Smith, Director of Communications and Government Affairs. The visit provided an opportunity to learn more about Southport's operations and its recent expansion into renewable energy production.

During the tour, we explored the [pellet mill manufacturing facility](#) and the Oregon Pellet Mill, a new venture co-owned by [Southport Lumber](#) and the [Swanson Group](#).

This partnership was established to address the challenge of sawmill residuals—such as sawdust and shavings—by converting them into high-quality fuel pellets. These pellets are primarily produced from Douglas fir and are targeted for export to Asian markets, where demand for renewable biomass energy continues to grow.



The Southport Pellet Mill features advanced technology, including pellet press systems that compress wood fiber into dense, energy-efficient pellets. The operation includes a dryer island and a large storage facility to support production and distribution. Additionally, the new marine export terminal at KoKwel Wharf in North Bend, which is the [Oregon Pellet Mill](#), boasts a 200-by-450-foot warehouse with a capacity of approximately 35,000 tons of pellets, ensuring

efficient handling and shipment for international trade.



A key highlight of the visit was touring the new distribution facility on the KoKwel waterfront, which will serve as a loading point for pellet cargo destined for Asia. This development positions Oregon as a significant player in the renewable energy export

market, while also creating local jobs and reducing waste in the timber industry. The partnership between Southport Lumber and the Swanson Group demonstrates a strategic commitment to sustainability and economic growth in the region.

Eastern Oregon – Courtney Crowell

Fry Foods Water Project: After our Regional Solutions team visited Fry Foods in Ontario this past year we've been working with the company, the city of Ontario and Snake River Correctional Institute on a possible connection into the city water system. Last week we met with Fry Foods, the city of Ontario and Department of Corrections to see if Fry Foods can put together a design concept and approximate cost for Fry Foods to build a water line from their facility to the Department of Corrections water line that serves Snake River Correctional Facility from the city's system. We are hopeful that there is a possible path forward that would help address key infrastructure challenges that the company faces and could lead to an expansion of the within the facility. Our team will continue to help move this project forward.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

Made In Old Town: I recently joined staff from Business Oregon for a site tour of the newly-launched Made In Old Town facility in Portland's Old Town district. Housed in what was to be a co-working space that was shuttered by the pandemic, MiOT is working to meet a host of needs unique to the footwear and apparel industry, which is a major part of Oregon's economy. The Metro region is a global magnet for this sort of work, and many major brands have a presence here. In the apparel industry, designers often spend years developing future product lines, and face many challenges moving from a concept to a production-ready piece. Creating samples is an essential part of the process and is especially time-consuming, as production work is typically performed in Asia. MiOT brings the sample production process across the ocean and puts it at the fingertips of the design teams, along with the expertise in materials and production processes to actually make the samples. The sample





making lab is filled with everything from industrial sewing machines to 3-D printers—all the tools needed to make a shoe or garment. A materials library is in the works, and as MiOT scales up, they will also be providing meeting space, short and long-term office space, events, and other amenities that will foster both startups looking to launch into the industry and well-established brands. Technology and materials that reduce waste and pollution are prioritized in the facility. Made in Old Town was the

recipient of \$2 million in state funding and is an innovative, promising development in downtown as Portland looks to reimagine millions of square feet of empty office buildings.

Metro Regional Solutions Team Visit to Tigard: We started 2026 right with a field trip to the City of Tigard! Tigard has long been an innovator and leader in adding housing options for their community, with thousands of new units of housing constructed in the past decade. We focused our attention on the proposed River Terrace 2.0 project, which would add hundreds of acres of additional development and wrap around the River Terrace 1.0 development that launched in 2014. The city has set ambitious goals for 2.0 that reflect their community's values: 20 dwelling units per acre (high for a suburban area); protection of native white oak groves and natural areas, particularly near waterways; mixed housing types with an emphasis on affordability; and livable, walkable neighborhoods with good transit and shopping options readily available. It is



challenging to deliver on all these goals while also satisfying the profit expectations of the investors who typically back developers working at this scale and also meet the many Metro and state requirements. We were joined on the tour of River Terrace by Rep. Watanabe and staff from Metro and the state's Housing Production and Accountability Office. Thank you to Council President Wolf, Councilors Shaw and Robbins, and the many city staff who joined us for the tour and following discussion. We look forward to continuing to work with you to help make this project possible!

Mid-Valley - Beth Wytoski

RSAC: The Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Advisory Committee convened for a panel on ***Natural Resource Stewardship***. This meeting was the last in an educational series to learn about current work and stakeholders related to each of the adopted priorities. Attendees heard about the social, environmental, and economic benefits of Oregon forests from Oregon Forest Resource Institute; profitable private forestry work from Zena Forest Products; the challenges of developing near resource lands from the City of Independence; the unique value of wetlands and the systems of mitigation from Oregon's Department of State Lands; the stewardship and leveraging of Oregon's working lands from the Department of Agriculture; water rights, watersheds, and waterways from Oregon Water Resources Department; and where Oregon is headed in natural resource policy from the Office of Governor Tina Kotek. The meeting material and minutes will be available at [Governor of Oregon : Mid-Valley Region : Regional Solutions : State of Oregon](#). Please be encouraged to reach out directly with any questions or requests for information.

Resources and Opportunities

Apply for OWRD Water Project Grants and Loans 2026 funding by January 21st

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) invites applications for Water Project Grants and Loans (WPGL) projects. This year OWRD will accept applications through a new online grant platform.

- This program provides grants for water projects to evaluate, plan, and develop instream and out-of-stream water projects that have [economic, environmental and social/cultural benefits](#). Projects must provide benefits in each of these three categories to be eligible for funding. This competitive funding opportunity is meant for implementation-ready projects.
- Eligible projects include: conservation, reuse, above-ground storage, below-ground storage, streamflow protection or restoration, water distribution, conveyance or delivery systems, and other water resource development projects that result in economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits.
- Grants require a 25% cost match.
- Any local government, Indian tribe, or person may apply for funding.

If an applicant or co-applicant is required to have a [Water Management and Conservation Plan](#) (WMCP), the plan must be submitted to the Water Resources Department prior to the application date and receive approval prior to the funding decision date.

OWRD anticipates having approximately \$2M available for the first 2026 funding cycle pending a spring 2026 lottery revenue bond sale.

- **Application Deadline:** Wednesday, January 21, 2026, by 5 p.m.
- **How to Apply:** [Apply online through the grant platform](#)
 - [View a video introduction to the grant platform](#) – *please note the video says grantees will be able to receive payments via ACH by entering the information in their profile. OWRD will not be using this feature of the platform.*
 - View [application instructions](#)

Water Project Grants and Loans applications are scored using 18 questions to assess the project's public economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits. View the [Scoring Criteria](#) document to learn more.

For more information, visit the program's website [here](#).

Plan for Resilient Oregon's Statewide Resilience Forum Meeting 1/21/26

The Statewide Resilience Forum is made up of state agency representatives and the facilitators of each of the Regional Resilience Forums, and meets on the third Wednesday of the month, from 1:00-3:00 pm Pacific Time via Zoom. The next meeting is taking place on January 21st, 2026. Everyone is welcome to join as an observer, please [register for the Zoom meeting here](#).

Hear from Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield

Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield plans to travel the state throughout the spring and summer hosting town halls about federal oversight, with stops planned for Eugene, Portland and Bend. The Portland event is scheduled for 1/21 from 6-8p at Revolution Hall. An RSVP is required: <https://bit.ly/Jan21-TownHall>

House Speaker Julie Fahey, D-Eugene, will join Rayfield at 6:30 p.m. April 9 at the University of Oregon's Prince Lucien Campbell building.

He'll also host a meeting at 10 a.m. in Bend on May 3, with location TBD. Rayfield plans to host additional meetings throughout the summer.