



RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Tuesday, February 10th, 2026

Upcoming RSAC Meetings

South Central (Klamath and Lake Counties)

Tuesday, February 17th from 9:00am-11:00am

[Virtual Link](#)

Greater Eastern (Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, and Wheeler Counties)

Tuesday, March 10th from 2:00-4:00pm

[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](#)

Northeast (Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties)

Friday, March 13th from 2:00-4:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

Southern (Jackson and Josephine Counties)

Wednesday, March 25th from 12:00-2:00pm

Location TBD—will be announced in future Exchange

[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

Spotlight on Wildlife Safari: A Southern Oregon Treasure – In early February, representatives from the Governor’s Office, Business Oregon, and the Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board had the privilege of meeting with leadership at [Wildlife Safari](#) in Winston, Oregon. If you



haven’t experienced this unique destination, it’s truly one of Oregon’s gems.

Founded in 1972, Wildlife Safari is the state’s only drive-through animal park, spanning 600 acres and welcoming more than 200,000 visitors annually from around the world. The park is home to an incredible array of species and operates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, fully funded

through ticket sales, memberships, donations, and volunteer support—receiving no local, state, or federal tax funding.

Wildlife Safari is internationally recognized for its cheetah breeding program, the only one in the U.S. and one of just two worldwide. The park also offers exceptional educational opportunities, including internships and an international veterinary medicine program that attracts students nationwide.

During our visit, we explored the Safari Village, which is free and open to the public daily. Visitors can enjoy botanical gardens, animal exhibits featuring cheetahs, red pandas, lemurs, alligators, and a children’s petting zoo. The drive-through safari offers an unforgettable experience, allowing guests to observe animals in a natural, open setting. Wildlife Safari also provides rental spaces for private events, making it a perfect destination for families and special occasions.

We extend our gratitude to the Wildlife Safari team for their hospitality and for showcasing this remarkable Southern Oregon attraction. If you’re looking for an adventure that combines education, conservation, and fun—plan your visit to Wildlife Safari today!

Mid-Valley – Beth Wytoski

Business Visits and Economic Development: In collaboration with the Mid-Valley Regional Development Officer, I visited and/or toured a few local businesses. With increased effort in business retention and expansion, we have had on-site discussion with more than a dozen owners or operators in the area. In recent weeks, we met with Radius Recycling, Apple Tree Companies, and Solid Form Fabrication.

- Radius is larger than many realize, employing more than 3,000 employees and bringing in \$1.9B across 100+ locations in North America. They are headquartered right here in Oregon and have 8 in-state operations. After being purchased by Toyota, the Japan trade mission brought Governor Kotek, Director Cheang, and other partners to discuss the various operations and challenges. Our conversation focused primarily on the McMinnville steel mill where they produce green rebar, coiled reinforcing bar, wire rod, merchant bar, and other specialty products.
- Apple Tree is a local business with a handful of services related to solid waste removal offering trash and recycling hauling as well as junk pickup, medical waste collection, and drop boxes for large cleanup projects. With looming capacity limits, recent facility closures, pending expansions, and a new task force to consider what solid waste disposal will look like, waste processing innovation is critical for the future of this region. Apple Tree is hoping to step up in new ways, and is currently offering residential, commercial, and industrial hauling to Keizer, Salem, and surrounding areas through *Loren's*; the same services are offered in St. Paul, Donald, and the nearby county jurisdictions through *North Marion*. *Wheat* offers regional waste transport as well as street sweeping, and *ReHub* is a proposed recycling and refuse facility designed to provide long-term, efficient solid waste services for Polk County.
- This week, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission Consortium Director joined our RDO and myself at Solid Form Fabrication, a metal fabrication company in McMinnville. As a startup, Solid Form worked primarily on small decorative and ornate orders but grew to offer unique components like spiral staircases, catwalks, and equipment-based projects. They pride themselves on bringing beauty, function, and durability to their work. What I was struck with was the commitment to growing the workforce, with training programs, ties to local collegiate institutions, and supporting high school career technical programming.

Eastern – Courtney Crowell

Visit to Wallowa County: Regional Solutions had the opportunity to visit Wallowa County recently and met with both Commissioners Hillock and Hayward about what's happening the county and how Regional Solutions can be helpful. We talked about the opportunities to engage with the Economic Prosperity Roadmap and how we can get Eastern Oregon feedback included in that work. Additionally, I had the opportunity to sit down with Lisa Dawson of the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District and talk about opportunities for collaboration.

Harney County Groundwater Visit: Regional Solutions and the Governor's Natural Resource team visited with Harney county residents and leaders about the new groundwater rules that the Oregon Water Resources Commission passed in December. Rep. Owens held a community meeting, we met with High Desert Partnership and Oregon Solutions, visited the Burns Paiute Tribe and held a meeting with the Tribe, city of Burns, city of Hines and Harney County. Regional Solutions will stay engaged as we move forward on implementation of these new rules and helping set a collaborative table for reducing water usage across the basin.

Beurman's Ranch Meats Visit: Business Oregon and I visited Beurmann's meats in Hines which received significant grant funding from both Business Oregon and ODA to build a new meat processing facility in Hines, Oregon and is now a state certified meat inspection business. It was great to talk about the new opportunities that are available to the company due to the state certification process and to learn about the growth opportunities they are looking at. Additionally, Business Oregon and I met with USDA to learn more about grant funding that could be used to purchase some of the equipment that the company is looking at to grow.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

Metro RSAC Meeting: At the January RSAC meeting, we dove into Governor Kotek's bills on economic development and behavioral health, both great matches to the Metro Regional Priorities. Committee members also discussed the possibility of adding another Regional Priority around the Willamette River; staff will draft proposed language to consider and vote on at a future meeting. The group also discussed the governor's Prosperity Roadmap and future opportunities to plug into the work of the Prosperity Council, and heard some exciting updates from committee members on the

work they are doing to advance the priorities. Highlights included news that this month, OnPoint Credit Union is opening the OnPoint Plaza, which includes centralized and expanded services for small businesses and non-profits. The Northwest Native Chamber of Commerce is partnering with several other culturally-specific chambers to create a one-stop small business support center in downtown Portland, simultaneously helping to revitalize downtown by being present there and providing education and networking opportunities for culturally-specific small business owners. It's exciting to see so much creativity and leadership at play in the region!

Oregon Historical Society: Regional Solutions was able to help Oregon Historical Society figure out the next steps in addressing new building efficiency requirements that are a part of Oregon's Building Performance Standard. This standard aims to help achieve Oregon's climate goals by asking commercial buildings to look at their energy usage, evaluate how they're doing compared to their peers, and if applicable, come up with plans to reduce energy use over time. Commercial building energy use is substantial in Oregon: 15.5% of the total. If you or someone you know received a letter from ODOE about a commercial building this summer, and you have questions, please visit [State of Oregon: Save Energy - Building Energy Performance Standards](#) to learn more. Staff have added helpful guidance and links to grant programs to help pay for evaluation or improvements.

Bob's Red Mill Visit: I joined Jeff Hampton, Metro RS team member and Business Oregon Regional Development Officer, for a visit to the world headquarters for Bob's Red Mill. Bob's is many things: a purveyor of premium whole foods; a signature Oregon brand; a major employer with 600 employees in the state; and a business operated under an ESOP, or Employee Stock Ownership Plan, with 100 percent employee ownership! We learned about Bob's continuing growth and talked about how the state might work to support more ESOP adoption in the future.

Resources and Opportunities

[Oregon Prosperity Council Survey](#)

Governor Tina Kotek created the [Oregon Prosperity Council](#) in January 2026 to advise her on near- and long-term strategies to achieve the goals in her [Prosperity Roadmap](#).

The council includes representatives from different regions of the state, key industries, and labor, and is focused on three main areas: business climate, workforce, and tools for growth. Its role is to develop practical recommendations for the near, medium, and long term in each of these areas. Council meetings began in January 2026 and will conclude in June 2026, when a final report of recommendations will be delivered.

Through statewide community engagement, the Prosperity Council is creating opportunities for Oregonians from every corner of the state to share their insights, experiences, and ideas about our collective economic future. Feedback will help shape and drive the work of the Council.

This survey should take 15-minutes or less, and is a way to provide clear feedback and ideas to the Council so they can consider your input as they develops their recommendations.

[Take the survey here!](#)

For more information on the Prosperity Council's work, including future options for engagement, visit the website [here](#).



Oregon Opportunity Zones 2.0 – Program Updates & Resources

Oregon is preparing for the rollout of Opportunity Zones 2.0, a permanent and enhanced version of the federal Opportunity Zones incentive program. This program is designed to channel private investment into underserved and rural communities, creating jobs and driving economic growth statewide.

Opportunity Zones are federally designated census tracts that offer tax incentives to investors who reinvest capital gains into projects and businesses located in these areas. Each state can nominate up to 25% of its eligible tracts. The goal is to stimulate economic growth and job creation in low-income and underserved communities.

The updated program includes several enhancements:

- Permanent program with redesignations every 10 years
- Stricter eligibility criteria for census tracts
- Improved tax benefits:
 - 5-year capital gains deferral
 - 10% basis step-up after five years
 - Tax-free appreciation after a 10-year hold
- Additional incentives for rural zones
- Annual reporting requirements for Qualified Opportunity Funds to improve transparency

Important Dates

- **Spring 2026:** Eligible tract list released*
- **March 2026:** Local nomination applications open
- **July 1, 2026:** Governor's 90-day selection window opens
- **January 1, 2027:** OZ 2.0 designated tracts go into effect

**Treasury will release the final eligible tract list in Spring 2026; exact date TBD.*

Business Oregon will facilitate the nomination process and answer questions related to Opportunity Zones 2.0. Visit the updated Opportunity Zone webpage for program details, maps, FAQs, nomination guidance, upcoming webinar information and registration links.

More details are available on the [Opportunity Zone 2.0 webpage](#). Stay up to date on all of the latest program changes by [subscribing to their email list](#).

Rural Prosperity Partners Offering Grant Pilot

Rural Prosperity Partners has developed Grant Pilot, an AI-powered platform to help jurisdictions, nonprofits, and special districts find, apply for, and manage grants more efficiently. Grant Pilot streamlines the full grant lifecycle, combining practitioner-led design with AI to build long-term fundraising capacity and measurable impact.

Beginning in April 2026 they are inviting a small number of communities and organizations to join a 6-month pilot that will provide free access to Grant Pilot, plus training and support.

Participating communities & organizations will receive:

- 3-month free Grant Pilot license
- Optional Training: how to use the platform (monthly virtual webinar series)
- Optional Weekly virtual office hours (Q&A / troubleshooting / best practices) with

Rural Prosperity Partners founder, Rachael Maddock-Hughes

To be included, confirm your participation by February 16th at this link:
<https://bit.ly/GrantPilot>

For questions, please contact:

Rachael Maddock-Hughes, CEO Rural Prosperity Partners
503-810-4985 or rachael@ruralprosperity.com

Apply to Serve on a State Board or Commission

Are you looking for a way to serve your community while having an impact on issues important to you? Consider applying to serve on one of the Governor's boards or commissions!

By serving on a state board or commission, you can:

- Contribute to state government and serve your fellow Oregonians
- Be part of statewide decision-making
- Participate in developing a wide variety of important governmental policies
- Have an impact on issues important to you and your community
- Learn more about state government and how it works

Members of Governor Kotek's boards and commissions are vital participants in statewide decision-making and have the opportunity to participate in developing a wide variety of important governmental policies. To learn more about the board system and how to apply, please visit [Governor of Oregon : Boards & Commissions : State of Oregon](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to the Executive Appointments Office via email at executive.appointments@oregon.gov.