



RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, February 23rd, 2026

Upcoming RSAC Meetings

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](#)

South Central (Klamath and Lake Counties)

Tuesday, March 17th from 10:00am-12:00pm

Location TBD—will be announced in future Exchange

[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

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

Microchip Tour: I joined the Business Oregon Metro Regional Development Officer and the City of Gresham's economic



development team on a great visit to Microchip's semiconductor plant in Gresham. Microchip is a large company, with over 20,000 employees worldwide and about 700 in Oregon. They are the leaders of the 8-bit chip market. These are the chips that are in your remote controls and other small appliances—hence their unofficial slogan, "We're in everything!" We learned about their work to enter the 64-bit market at other fabs around the world, the ongoing importance of their 8-bit products, and the dizzying breadth of their presence in our everyday

lives: Microchip provides chips to more than 150,000 companies! They have strong workforce upskilling programs, but are still seeking ways to strengthen the pipeline to bring workers into the field. The operator role is especially challenging to fill, and they are interested in more robust vocational education programs focused on recruiting high school-aged students into advanced manufacturing. The window tour of the fab was fascinating, with a duck down below the factory floor to see all the systems that support materials safety and ultra-pure air and water systems that are critical to the production line. The complex of wires, pipes, ducts and filters is a city of its own down there!

First Family Celebrates Chinese New Year: Governor Kotek and First Lady Kotek-Wilson were the honored guests of the Chinese-American Citizens' Alliance Portland Lodge at their celebration of 105 years of community, culture, service, and friendship. To welcome in the Year of the Fire Horse, the governor wished everyone *Xīn Nián Kuài Lè* (Happy New Year) and participated the ceremonial feeding of lettuce to the lions to ensure prosperity in the coming year. The joyous gathering at Excellent Cuisine in NE Portland also recognized Janet Lee for decades of volunteerism in the community and student recipients of the Alliance's scholarship program. *Gōng Xǐ Fā Cái* (Wishing you great wealth)!



South Central – Scott Aycock

Northern Klamath County Wildfire/Houseless Response Meeting: I co-hosted a meeting of ~40 representatives of local, state, and federal agencies and community members - all with a shared interest in working together to better prepare for the coming wildfire season. The focus of the conversation was the substantial acreage of wildfire-prone private, state, and federal forest lands; the significant presence of persons experiencing houselessness/encampments; and a lack of public health and law enforcement presence. Fortunately, a similar group of partners has found success in tackling these same issues in southern Deschutes County – in that

case, Deschutes County and the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office,



the City of La Pine; the USFS and BLM; local community groups including the [Newberry Regional Partnership](#) and a local camp cleanup group; local fire districts; and community members and homeowners' associations have found a great deal of success in reducing fire starts, reducing the

number of encampments (from 40+ to 17); improving conditions and fire safety in the camps that do remain; and connecting people experiencing houselessness to housing and resources. The meeting started with an overview of the efforts and outcomes of the Deschutes County case, during which we heard the following lessons: 1) spend time communicating across agencies, listening to understand perspectives and concerns; 2) build trust with the houseless population by showing up and listening to them; 3) start with a smaller area/issue and expand your efforts; 4) tailor solutions to individuals' needs; 5) provide resources and options, but also demand accountability and action; and 6) increase law enforcement presence and messaging/alignment. The group also discussed current conditions in Northern Klamath County, and most participants agreed to get together again to begin the process of identifying what assets/resources they have to provide to this effort. The meeting was co-hosted by Kathy DeBone of the Newberry Regional Partnership and Echo Murray from the Walker Range Fire Protection District.

Green Cement/Eco-Materials in Lakeview: Business Oregon Regional Development Officer Marta Tarantsey and I toured Eco-Materials' Green Cement facility in Lakeview, which produces a significantly lower-carbon product than conventional cement, with as much or more strength. Green Cement is now operating, even though construction continues for various parts of the plant. An important aspect of their success in Lakeview is the availability of waste material from the nearby perlite mine that is the ideal ingredient for

Green Cement's product. Company executives led the tour, and we were very impressed with the state-of-the-art facility. Green Cement currently has access to 3MW of power, but needs 5.5MW to be able to operate 24/7, increase employment from 12 to 35, and ramp up to producing 300K tons/year of green cement. Regional Solutions and the Governor's Office are working with local leaders to help find power supply solutions to benefit economic development and community resilience in the Lakeview area.



Central – Scott Aycock

BASX in Redmond: I toured the BASX facility in Redmond with my Business Oregon Regional Development Officer partner, Capi Lewis. BASX is a manufacturer of highly customizable high efficiency data center cooling solutions, cleanroom systems, custom HVAC systems and modular solutions. BASX was founded in 2012 in Redmond and has experienced rapid growth since that time – to the point where it is now the largest private sector employer in Central Oregon! BASX is also an outstanding employer and member of the community, with a strong commitment to workforce training (including a post-incarceration program), additional employee supports such as education reimbursement programs, affinity group clubs and activities; and environmental stewardship through business systems management (increasing efficiency and reducing emissions) and charitable giving. BASX's experience elucidates two business development themes in Oregon: The power of Oregon's Enterprise Zone tax abatement program and the ongoing need for ready, serviced industrial land. BASX utilized Oregon's Enterprise Zone program to develop their primary manufacturing facility. At the time the agreement was signed

in 2021 BASX had 225 employees, and they have since grown to 980 employees in 2026. However, due to their incredible rate of growth, they have already outstripped the capacity of their current space and are eventually going to need to identify a larger site.

Soon after our visit, the [Oregon Prosperity Council had the chance to tour BASX](#) and see firsthand the caliber of businesses we can attract

and grow in this state. Hearing from local business leaders about what's working and what needs to change is important to the Council's work – see the resources section for ways to share your ideas and suggestions as the Council builds its recommendations.



North Coast – Nate Stice

NXTClean Fuels Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Released: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed NXTClean Fuels renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel facility at Port Westward in Columbia County, initiating the federal public comment period. The Regional Solutions Team has supported state-level coordination by convening Oregon permitting agencies and facilitating communication as the project has advanced through key state processes, including land use approvals and Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification. This work has focused on aligning agency timelines, clarifying statutory responsibilities, and elevating issues for early resolution. In 2024, Governor Tina Kotek submitted a letter to USACE requesting a timely, thorough, and coordinated federal review, and asking the agency to consider the project's consistency with Oregon's climate and clean fuels policies, economic development goals, and the importance of regulatory

certainty for major clean energy investments. The Draft EIS and information on how to submit public comments are available here: [NEXT Renewable Fuels EIS](#). Regional Solutions will continue to provide interagency coordination support as the project advances through remaining state and federal review steps.

North Central – Nate Stice

Regional Solutions Presentation to The Dalles Rotary Club: Regional Solutions staff presented to the Rotary Club of The Dalles on Governor Kotek’s Prosperity Roadmap and how the Regional Solutions Program advances local priorities through cross-agency coordination. The team appreciates the opportunity to share updates and engage in discussion. The presentation highlighted how Regional Solutions convenes state agencies and local partners to support housing, infrastructure, and economic development projects; align permitting and funding pathways; and identify opportunities to reduce procedural barriers. Discussion also emphasized the role of Regional Solutions Advisory Committees in shaping regional priorities and elevating locally driven projects. Regional Solutions will continue engaging with civic and business organizations across the region to share updates and strengthen partnerships around priority projects.

Columbia Gorge Community College ITAC Lab Open House: Congrats to Columbia Gorge Community College for opening the Industrial Training and Assessment Center (ITAC), celebrated during an open house last Friday. The new lab expands hands-on training capacity in advanced manufacturing and supports workforce development across the region. The event highlighted expanded training space, equipment, and programs designed to connect students with in-demand technical skills. Regional Solutions team members were glad to attend the open house, and will continue coordinating with education and workforce partners to support locally driven training initiatives across the region.

South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

SVMC Regional Solutions Team Visits Monroe: Many thanks to the City of Monroe for hosting the South Valley/Mid-Coast Regional Solutions team last week! Our visit focused on the city’s priority

capital projects including water treatment plant upgrades, the 1135 dam removal project led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and a pedestrian bridge over the Long Tom River paired with an upsized wastewater transmission line. We also discussed the city's proposed UGB expansion enabled by SB 1537 and vision for a joint City Hall and Emergency Operations Center. The visit resulted in several near-term funding opportunities for the city to consider and deepened relationships between city staff and state agency partners. We look forward to continuing to support the city as they make progress on these critical projects.



City of Siletz Wastewater Project: The City of Siletz is making significant progress on their wastewater treatment plant project. Phase 1 of the project funded by the legislature's investment in SB 1530 (2024) and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians is underway and moving to construction next month. The city's engineers recently completed a Facilities Plan Amendment that is under review. Once approved, the city anticipates completing a One-Stop with Business Oregon to explore funding options for the second and final phase of the project. The city is also working with Portland State University on an income survey to assess eligibility for funding programs. Several members of the Regional Solutions team continue to meet monthly with city staff and the city's engineers to provide ongoing support.

Eugene/Springfield Metro Area Wastewater Collaboration: For the past several years, Lane County has been working to extend wastewater service from the Metropolitan Waste Management Commission (MWMC) system that currently terminates in Springfield south to Goshen (unincorporated Lane County) and the Short Mountain Landfill. The City of Creswell has significant challenges with their wastewater system and is currently restricted from nearly all new development until they make improvements to this system. The city's preferred solution is to build off Lane County's proposed extension of wastewater service to Goshen and connect to MWMC. In the past few months, Junction City has joined these conversations about regional wastewater infrastructure. Junction City is in a similar position to Creswell in terms of needing to make significant improvements to their wastewater system to serve current residents and to provide for future growth. As Regional Solutions Coordinator, I have been convening quarterly meetings to advance this conversation around wastewater regionalization and facilitating work groups focused on key pieces of work related to this effort. Regional Solutions team members are providing subject matter expertise in these discussions. Currently, much of our work is focused on the Metro Plan Amendment process, which is a key first step in allowing MWMC to provide wastewater service outside the Eugene/Springfield UGB. Meetings with Eugene and Springfield City Councils and Planning Commissions focused on this topic started in January and will continue through the spring. We have also focused on identifying funding opportunities to support these jurisdictions in the required planning, design/engineering, and construction of this infrastructure should this project move forward. More to come on this important and complex issue in the future.

Resources and Opportunities

Oregon Data Center Advisory Committee Meets Friday, February 29, 9:00 am - 2:30 pm

Governor Kotek convened the Data Center Advisory Committee to develop recommendations for a comprehensive regulatory framework to strategically pursue economic development opportunities, in line with the work of the Governor's Prosperity Roadmap, while ensuring utility costs, infrastructure investments, and environmental impacts remain sustainable and equitable for all residents, especially low-income and working families.

The Committee will conduct an open and public process to understand challenges and opportunities in key policy areas related to the siting of data centers in our state and then recommend actions that the State of Oregon can take. As such, the Committee's goal is to use these public sessions to gather and share credible information from subject matter experts, based on firsthand experiences, real-world data, and diverse perspectives regarding Data Centers in Oregon.

The committee's first meeting takes place this week and will focus on issues and ideas to:

- Encourage data center policies that support responsible economic development and increase long-term revenue that will strengthen our rural communities; and
- Identify key issue areas that need to be addressed in order to develop a policy framework that will create rewarding jobs and develop our workforce through data centers moving forward in Oregon.

Details on how to attend and to follow the work of the committee can be found on their [website](#). *Note that in-person space for this meeting is extremely limited. If you are not a panelist for this meeting or a member of the Advisory Committee, we kindly request that you please join virtually.*

Oregon Prosperity Council Seeks Your Input

The Oregon Prosperity Council has launched statewide engagement through an online statewide survey and additional tools for engagement, aimed at creating opportunities for Oregonians from every corner of the state to share their insights, experiences and ideas about the state's economic future. The feedback will help shape and guide the Council's work. Engagement tools are available on the [Council's website](#).

OHCS and Tribal Nations launch first-of-its-kind housing initiative

The state recently announced the launch of the Tribal Housing Grant Fund (THGF) – a first-of-its-kind program to provide state funds to help address the housing needs of the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon.

"The Tribal Housing Grant Fund creates a new framework for how the state works with the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon," said Gov. Tina Kotek. "It represents a meaningful step forward in honoring our government-to-government relationship and ensuring Tribes have the resources and flexibility they need to address their critical housing needs."

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) and representatives from Tribal Nations, including housing directors, health and human services directors, and council members, worked for more than a year to develop the program.

"The Tribal Housing Grant Fund is a landmark program that elevates Tribal self-determination in a state-funded program," said Sami Jo Difuntorum, executive director of Siletz Tribal Housing Department and Housing Stability Council member. "The THGF will provide Oregon's Nine Federally Recognized Tribes with critical housing resources, providing flexibility in program design."

In the 2025 Legislative Session, lawmakers allocated \$10 million to OHCS to establish the program. Program funds can be used for affordable rental housing and homeownership initiatives, as well as to maintain By and For Initiative-Native American Tribes of Oregon (BAFI-

NATO) investments.

Tribal Nations will receive funds based on a formula that was previously used by the BAFI-NATO program, where each grantee receives a base amount along with Tribal enrollment numbers. To obtain the funds, grantees must submit a housing plan every biennium outlining how they will use the money.

Eligible THGF program activities include:

- Homelessness response and prevention
- Affordable rental housing
- Land acquisition, infrastructure, development, and rehabilitation
- Financial assistance and support services for households that qualify
- Capacity building

Visit the [THGF webpage](#) for more program details.

AARP 2026 Community Challenge Grants Open through March 4th

AARP is inviting eligible organizations to apply for funding to support tangible improvement projects that help make communities more livable for all residents – especially those age 50 and older. Applications are being accepted through March 4 at 2 p.m. PT for projects that enhance Public places; Housing; Transportation; Digital connections; and Disaster resilience.

Three funding opportunities are available:

- Flagship Grants;
- Demonstration Grants; and
- Capacity-Building Microgrants.

Visit [AARP.org/CommunityChallenge](https://www.aarp.org/CommunityChallenge) to learn more and apply if eligible.

Plan for a Resilient Oregon [Community Resilience Survey](#) open through April 1st

Oregon faces growing challenges from disasters like wildfires, floods, and extreme heat. The Office of Governor Kotek is creating the Plan for a Resilient Oregon — a people-centered strategy to help communities

adapt and thrive. Help inform the Plan for a Resilient Oregon by taking the [Oregon Community Resilience Survey](#). It is designed to capture the lived experiences, priorities, and needs of communities across the state and to identify the policies, funding, and tools needed to strengthen resilience. The survey was developed and will be analyzed by the University of Oregon's Institute for Policy Research & Engagement (IPRE), and findings will inform recommendations for the Plan. The survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete, and responses are anonymous. The Survey will be open through April 1st.

DEQ Materials Management Grant Program Applications Open in March

The Reduce, Reuse, Reimagine Grant Program will be opening applications for the 2026 grant cycle in March. To align with DEQ's 2050 Vision and Framework for Action, the annual funding area will focus on *Built for Well-Being: Reducing Exposure to Toxic Substances in Building Materials*. Many building materials — such as carpet, paint, furniture, insulation, and contract textiles — contain toxic chemicals that are harmful to people and to the environment. Funds will be awarded to projects that help reduce exposure to these toxic chemicals.

Who is Eligible: Local governments; nonprofits (501(c)(3) and (c)(4) status, or a fiscally sponsored organization; Tribal Nations; organizations created through intergovernmental agreements; public schools, public universities or community colleges; and small businesses (50 employees or less).

Important Details:

- \$2 million available in funding, with awards anticipated Dec. 2026
- \$500,000 available specifically for Tribal Nations
- Funding range: \$25,000 - \$225,000

The agency is offering extended applicant support in the form of informational webinars. These sessions are a great opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions about the funding area and the application process.

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 – 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. ([Register via Zoom](#))

Saturday, March 21, 2026 – 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. ([Register via Zoom](#))

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 – 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. ([Register via Zoom](#))
Monday, March 31, 2026 – 3 p.m. - 4 p.m. ([Register via Zoom](#))

Please visit the [RRR Grant Program website](#) for more in-depth details about the funding area, information about the application process, to join the email list and to create your grants application account. Or contact: RRRGrants@deq.oregon.gov

OHCS Grants and Loans for Fire-affected Small Businesses in Jackson County

The Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO) was awarded \$1.2 million by the OHCS [Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development \(PIER\)](#) program to provide grants and loans for small businesses in Jackson County that were affected by the 2020 Labor Day Disasters. In late 2025, IVCDO awarded the first round of grants to microenterprise businesses in Jackson County. A second round of grants is open and accepting applications until March 31. IVCDO's PIER Loan Fund is also accepting applications for fixed, low-interest loans to increase working capital and support credit building for eligible, small businesses (100 employees or fewer) in fire-affected areas to help launch or expand their operations.

For more information or to apply for grants or loans, please visit: [PIER - Jackson County Small Business Loans and Grants - Illinois Valley Community Development Organization](#)

Additionally, **help is still available for renters and first-time homebuyers affected by the 2020 fires.** If you were a renter at the time of the disasters, affected by the disasters, and are currently renting or trying to buy your first home, ReOregon's [Housing Support Services](#) can help with:

- Down payment assistance.
- Short-term rental and utility help.
- Housing counseling for families navigating financial or housing challenges.

To apply, contact a [community action agency](#) closest to you. One application covers all programs you may qualify for.

Rural Visibility Project Community Conversation Feb. 24, 12:00-1:30 pm

You're invited to an online gathering to engage in information sharing, peer learning, and solution building as the Rural Visibility Project talks about Rural Small Business and Main Streets. They'll highlight the information that has been shared throughout the month, bring in expert insights, and open up space to learn from rural community members. This Community Conversation is free and open to the public. [Register here to get the Zoom link.](#)

PDX Small/Medium Size Business Travel Survey

The Port of Portland is working to bring back nonstop air service from Portland International Airport (PDX) to Asia, recruit new service to Mexico, and grow service to Europe. To do so, the Port needs to understand business travel demand so they can share these insights with airlines. Airlines have limited data on the business travel needs of small and medium-sized companies in our region, and this survey will help to provide a more complete picture of travel demand to and from PDX next year. Click on this [SURVEY LINK](#) to get started. Or click here for [Spanish](#) or [Japanese](#) translations.