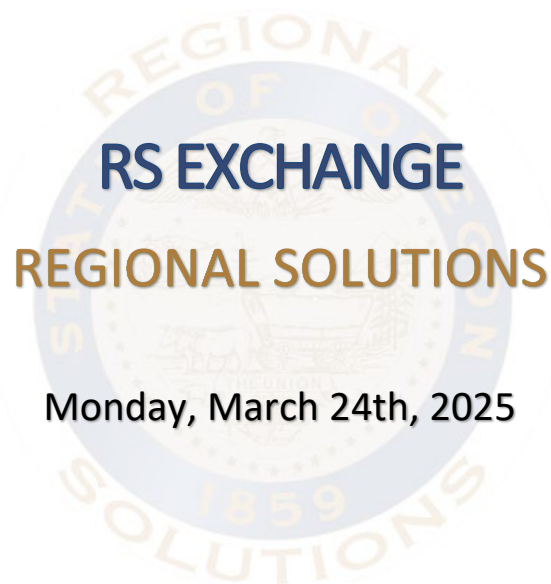




Monday, March 24th, 2025

Regional Solutions Program Updates

- **RSAC Childcare Lunch and Learn Webinar**

Thank you to all our panelists and attendees who participated in last week's Child Care Webinar! If you were unable to attend or would like to review any of the content, a recording of the presentation can be found at the following links. Slides are included as an attachment to this email.

[Virtual Link](#)

Password: A%vH8SgH

Stay tuned for our next webinar coming later this spring, where we will focus on housing production. If you have any ideas for other topics we can cover, please let us know!

- **Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meetings:**

Agendas and materials can be found at the Regional links below:

- [Southern](#) (Jackson and Josephine Counties): March 24, 1-3pm
 - RCC Redwood Campus 3345 Redwood Hwy, Bldg B, Grants Pass,
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [South Coast](#) (Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties): April 9, 3:30-5:30pm
 - Newmark Center, 1988 Newmark Ave, Coos Bay, 2nd floor conference room
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Mid-Valley](#) (Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties): April 10, 12:30-3:30pm
 - Chemeketa Community College, 4000 Lancaster Dr. NE, Building 9, Room 128
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [South Valley/Mid-Coast](#) (Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties): May 21, 10am-12pm
- [Mid-Valley](#) (Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties): June 12, 1:30-3:30pm
- [North Coast](#) (Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties): June 16, 1-3pm
- [North Central](#) (Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco Counties): June 17, 3-5pm

Regional Updates

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- **Harney County Flooding:** This week Harney County and the City of Burns have been hard hit by flooding. The Governor included Harney County in a state emergency declaration but we are continuing to monitor the situation over the next week. The city's wastewater system has been inundated and there is risk of the entire wastewater treatment system being severely damaged. Our Regional Solutions team will continue to work with the City of Burns as they weather the situation this week and as they figure out a long-term solution in recovery.
- **US Army Corps of Engineers Storymap of recent Malheur County Flooding:** USACE put together a great storymap with excellent pictures that gives an overview of the recent flooding in Malheur County that impacted the city of Vale and Highway 20 between Vale and Burns. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a27ce7c183644c8ea9bb120e4791501e>
- **Southeast Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (SEACT):** I gave a presentation on Regional Solutions and an overview of the program and regional project updates to the SEACT this week in John Day. It was a great discussion about how Regional Solutions can help communities and a good opportunity for communities to flag transportation issues for our office. During the meeting we also learned that the transportation for veterans to medical appointments from Burns to Bend has been eliminated due to the federal funding cuts and the community is asking for volunteers to help take veterans to their dialysis appointments in Bend twice a week.

Additionally, the small city allotment program is now open for cities with populations less than 5,000. The next Small City Allotment Application period which will run from March 3rd through April 30th.

The application form can be accessed here: [2025 Small City Allotment Grant Application](#) (cognitofrms.com). Please review the [SCA Application Instructions](#) prior to completing the application form.

- **City of Dayville Wastewater Project:** Our Regional Solutions team has been working with the city of Dayville and DEQ over the past few months to get them into compliance with their DEQ permit and on solid footing moving forward. We started monthly coordination calls last month and met again this week. It was incredible to see the progress that has been made. The city and DEQ are close to finalizing a mutual agreement order (MAO). Additionally, the city was able to find a certified operator in John Day who is willing to contract with the city to oversee their paperwork and ongoing operations. This was the big stumbling block that we had been running into because most certified operators were either too costly or unwilling to take on the city. Now with a certified operator and an MAO agreement in place (almost) we should be able to have the city close out all their enforcement issues from the past and move forward. There will still be some needed

updated plans put in place but DEQ is helping them out with a planning grant that will allow them to contract with an entity to get those plans updated. Our Regional Solutions team will continue to meet until the MAO agreement is finalized and then we will continue to stay engaged but not on an ongoing basis.

Mid-Valley - Beth Wytoski

- **RSAC:** The Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Advisory Committee is planning to ***talk trash*** on April 10th. Long term waste management is a key priority for the region and our next meeting will include a panel to discuss how landfills are sited, current remaining capacity, potential expansions, and alternatives. With the recent closures of Riverbend Landfill (outside of McMinnville) and Reworld (the incinerator formerly known as Covanta), there is a local focus on waste reduction, waste relocation, and the potential expansion of Coffin Butte Landfill (outside of Corvallis). Coffin Butte Landfill receives garbage from nearly two dozen Oregon counties, collecting more than one-million tons annually. The facility's operators have applied for an expansion, as has been the plan for some time, but there are concerns with air quality - including high quantities of methane gas - environmental compliance, and quality of life challenges for nearby communities. With Reworld's closure, the landfill is also taking in more medical waste that, until recently, had been incinerated. The incinerator was the only facility on the West Coast capable of processing certain biohazard medical waste and its closure has forced agencies to look for other solutions, including transporting waste as far away as Kansas. And it's not just hospitals left scrambling. Law enforcement agencies also have waste that must be disposed of carefully, including seized drugs and evidence no longer needed, that require secure destruction. Regional leaders will be thoughtfully looking at current and future needs to plan for the future of waste management. If you're interested in learning more about this critical issue, our meeting is offered with hybrid attendance options (see above for details)
- **Defensible Space Grant:** The Santiam Canyon Long Term Recovery Group is offering in-person grant assistance to homeowners interested in creating defensible space around their homes and properties. Defensible space is critical in increasing your home's chance of surviving a wildfire, even when firefighters cannot reach the structure. Defensible space also allows for safer evacuations in the event of an encroaching wildfire. Some related improvements include installing protective roofing material, changing out wood or plastic fencing materials for metal, trimming trees, upgrading siding, enclosing eaves and decks, and upgrading window materials. In order to apply for the grant, the Oregon State Fire Marshall is partnering with local fire agencies to provide access to the required 'Defensible Space Assessment,' then homeowners can complete the application, including the site assessor's recommendations to make them eligible for cost reimbursement related to proactively creating defensible space to slow or stop the spread of wildfire. If you're interested and may need assistance (or know someone who is), please consider stopping by the Gates Fire Hall on March 18 between 3:30 - 6:00 pm or March 19 at the Mehama Old School Community & Youth Center in Lyons from 3:30 - 6:00 pm.

- Hazelnut Growers of Oregon:** Quality hazelnuts have become integral to Oregon agriculture with orchards lining roadways in much of the Willamette Valley. The region produces more than 95% of the commercial hazelnut crop for the entire United States and around 5% of the global supply. But markets are uncertain, and things can change suddenly. Citing productivity and growth concerns, in the summer of 2024, Wilco announced their divestment from the Hazelnut Growers of Oregon, rocking the local industry. This took 25% of the State's hazelnut processing capacity offline, which may have led to a disaster for hundreds of Oregon hazelnut farmers. Instead, Business Oregon got to work and found resources to support reviving the facility. Using the Strategic Reserve Fund and Oregon Department of Ag's Machinery and Equipment Exemption program, a local buyer assumed ownership and created 70 jobs in the process. On Friday March 14, Business Oregon and Governor Kotek celebrated this project with a visit to HGO, including a meeting with Ferrero, the maker of Nutella and other popular hazelnut products. Due to the State's investment, the facility is now able to meet Ferrero's exacting quality standards which will allow the company to significantly increase its purchase of Oregon-grown hazelnuts in the coming years, not just stabilizing the industry, but setting the stage for increased demand.



North Central – Nate Stice

- Bi-State Recreation Insights:** Former US Forest Service Staff Lynn Burditt continues to convene recreational site owners from both sides of the Columbia River Gorge, a forum that was created by Lynn and Regional Solutions during COVID. Several units of the USFS, Bonneville Power Administration, State Parks from Oregon and Washington, ODOT, Counties, Ports, and others participate in in forum, exchanging notes on access, fire response, visitor activity and more. Among the highlights of this month's meeting, the Port of Cascade Locks shared exciting news that their mountain bike trail CLIMB, will officially open in May, and Emily Reed with the Gorge Tourism Alliance shared information on the Gorge Transit Summit, scheduled for April 10. Federal partners expressed a lot of uncertainty about hiring for the coming season.
- Sherman County Senior Housing:** I met with Sherman County to discuss a proposed senior housing project. The County is looking at purchasing property next to their current senior center to build 10-15 more units. We discussed the Moderate Income Revolving Loan Fund and other OHCS programs as potential resources. The county is looking for a developer that can complete the project quickly.

North Coast – Nate Stice

- **Prescott/Columbia County Outreach Meeting:** The North Coast Team met with the project manager for Prescott's combined sewer/water system update. The City of Prescott in Columbia County consists of 38 single family homes. Prescott was developed in the 1940s and existing systems (septic for wastewater) have not undergone regular updates. Business Oregon is funding a feasibility study that looks at both at water and wastewater system options. The project manager hopes to complete the project soon, and the team will reconvene to look at options for engineering. The County offered updates on its work on housing and several key recruitments. The County is working on a DLCD funded project to look at infrastructure barriers to housing. Planning Director Suzie Dahl also spoke about the barriers that the FEMA BiOp will create to new housing development. County Commissioner Casey Garrett spoke about several major recruitment efforts around Scappoose and St. Helens.

South Coast Region – Jessica LaBerge

- **South Coast RS Advisory Committee:** The Advisory Committee wishes Christopher Glenn, Director of the [Umpqua Small Business Development Center](#) a wonderful retirement and lots of future adventuring! Christopher held the Business Representative seat on the Advisory Committee, and we are now recruiting to fill that position. Christopher brought his passion for rural Oregon, education and business to the Advisory Committee and we are grateful for his involvement and partnership. If you are interested in this opportunity please visit our [website](#) and visit this [link to apply to the Committee](#).
- **South Coast Development Council (SCDC):** SCDC continues to drive entrepreneurship and economic development in Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties. Here's a look at some key successes shaping the region's business landscape.
 - **Growing the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Morning Grind Mastermind:** SCDC is developing Morning Grind Mastermind, a peer-driven business support group designed to strengthen the regional economy by fostering collaboration among entrepreneurs. This monthly program will rotate among Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties, ensuring accessibility and diverse participation.

Each session will feature one to two businesses presenting a challenge they are facing to a group of fellow business owners and Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESOs). Through shared experiences, problem-solving discussions, and resource connections, participants will help each other navigate challenges by offering insights, referrals, and practical solutions.

This program is about businesses supporting businesses—helping each other grow, strengthening the local economy, and creating a network where entrepreneurs no longer feel isolated. By building stronger connections, we empower businesses to succeed together, reinforcing the vitality of Southwest Oregon's business

community. Follow SCDC for updates on the Morning Grind Mastermind and other business support programs on Facebook (@SCDCInc) and LinkedIn (South Coast Development Council, Inc.), or visit sdcinc.org for more information.

Southern Region – Jessica LaBerge

- **2025 State of the Rogue Valley Breakfast:** Hosted by Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc (SORED) this was a beautiful event with knowledgeable speakers, recognition of local innovation and a great networking opportunity. Regional Solutions attended, including Guy Tauer, an employment economist with the Oregon Employment Department since 1999. Guy presented on information and data concerning Jackson and Josephine counties, with concentration on labor force, economics and demographic data. Businesses highlighted included [Grants Pass's Rentec Direct](#), an award-winning company which supports rental software used by landlords throughout the US; Brian Hall from [NIC Industries](#) spoke to how they have invested in their company and their staff. Both of these companies are doing amazing things in our communities and I continue to be impressed by them. This year's Prosperity Award was given to [PacWall from Phoenix](#), they have demonstrated sustained financial growth over the past several years, as demonstrated by expansion of products, and employment. PacWall, established in 2007 designs and builds prefabricated wall panels and floor systems delivered to your construction site. Many innovative entrepreneurs were showcased as was Dr. Kim Freeze from the Southern Oregon Innovation Hub. A great event, please consider attending in 2026!
- 
- **[Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau](#)** – Regional Solutions met with the Friends this week to discuss funding needs and gaps at the Chateau. In 2022 the Friends and the National Park Service (NPS) worked together to integrate structural plans for preserving and restoring the historic integrity of the building. The Chateau is desperately in need of a life, safety, accessibility, and seismic upgrade, as well as stabilization to solve deficiencies. In 2023 the NPS paused restoration work until additional funds could be secured. The Friends are working to gain support both financially and with letters to show citizens, local government and community support this important project. The Chateau has now been closed since 2018, this is a historical gem in our region and needs our support more than ever. The Caves and Chateau are part of the [Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve](#), a protected area in the Siskiyou Mountains. The park is 4,554 acres, managed by the NPS and is 20 miles east of Cave Junction. Fun Facts: The National Historic Landmark Lodge hosts the world's largest public collection of the iconic Monterey Furniture and was the birthplace of the "View Master"! The Caves are still open for tour, please consider visiting!

- **1 million cups**: Regional Solutions attended 1 million Cups in Grants Pass recently, impressed with the amount of community support and engagement at the event. We heard from the new owners of [Rita's](#), a women's clothing retail store, and [Rare Find](#), a boutique – both on the corners of G street and 6th (different corners). This is a weekly event, each Wednesday, for local entrepreneurs to present their early-stage company to their peers for advice and feedback. Coffee is highly encouraged!! There are many of these opportunities in a town near you!



South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

- **Mapleton Water District**: Since February 2024, I have been coordinating a monthly meeting with the Mapleton Water District (MWD), their engineers, state and federal agencies, Lane County staff, and technical assistance providers. In that time, Mapleton Water District has made significant strides toward addressing their infrastructure needs. This includes upgrades to their water treatment facility, completion of a new master plan and the launching of a critical project to stabilize their water intake funded by USDA-Rural Development. They have several other projects underway including an EPA Community Grant to replace distribution lines and two FEMA BRIC applications to improve the resilience of their distribution and storage systems. MWD participated in a One-Stop with Business Oregon last month to begin exploring additional funding opportunities for the next projects on their capital improvement plan. Much credit goes to the MWD board and staff who remain committed to these projects and their community and continue to do an admirable job seeking out funds to support their grant writing and project management needs to keep these projects moving forward. Kudos!
- **Lincoln County Economic Summit**: On March 13th I attended the 2025 Lincoln County Economic Summit hosted by the Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County (EDALC). This event always provides a great opportunity to hear updates about Lincoln County's economy from community and business leaders and to connect with partners from across the county. The agenda included a presentation by the Oregon Employment Department, panels featuring Blue Economy leaders, Lincoln County mayors, and local entrepreneurs, and a keynote address by Marty Alvarado who spoke about the intersection of AI and workforce development. Many thanks to EDALC for organizing this great annual event!



- Community Collaborative & Industry Luncheon:** Collaborative Economic Development Oregon (CEDO) hosted the second annual Community Collaborative & Industry Luncheon in Eugene last week. Under the theme “Building a Future-Ready Workforce,” the event brought together industry leaders, economic development practitioners, and public partners from across Lane County to learn about current workforce needs and innovations and be challenged to think about how to foster more inclusive and collaborative economic and workforce development in every corner of the county. Many thanks to the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, Oregon Coast Visitors Association, and Oregon Bioscience Association for sharing your insights!



Resources and Opportunities

- **Second Round Child Care Infrastructure Fund Opens March 26th:**

Business Oregon is excited to announce that the second round of the Child Care Infrastructure Fund will be opening March 26, 2025! This round will consist of \$15,000,000 in grant funding for infrastructure projects that further the wellbeing of children and families in Oregon.

Eligible Project Types:

- Minor Renovations/Repairs (\$20,000 - \$100,000)
- New Construction or Major Renovation (\$100,001 - \$2,000,000)
- Real Property Acquisition (\$20,000 - \$2,000,000)

Notable Changes for Round 2:

- Stand-alone planning projects are no longer able to be funded, however, planning costs can be included in an application for construction or renovations/repairs
- Real Property Acquisition applications no longer need to include an appraisal. For the application, these projects will need to include a Comparative Market Analysis performed by a licensed realtor in the State of Oregon. If your project is awarded, a property appraisal will be required prior to contract execution and may be eligible for reimbursement.
- The Continued Use Period has been adjusted for Round 2 awards:
 - Projects \$20,000 - \$49,999 – 3 years
 - Projects \$50,000 - \$299,999 – 5 years
 - Projects \$300,000 - \$2,000,000 – 10 years

Updated documents will be available shortly on the agency's [webpage](#).

It is also important to note that this is not the last round of funding. The Child Care Infrastructure Fund is set to release an additional \$25,000,000 in funding starting Summer 2025.

- **Housing Infrastructure Support Fund Accepting Applications through March 31st**

The Housing Infrastructure Support Fund (HISF), held within Business Oregon, is a technical assistance/capacity building fund that must provide a direct benefit to a city (or cities if a regional project) and be for the planning and financing of infrastructure for water, sewers and sanitation, stormwater, and transportation to produce housing units of certain densities. For this program, capacity and support include assistance with local financing opportunities; state and federal grant navigation, writing, review and administration; resource sharing; regional collaboration support and technical support, including engineering and design assistance.

Eligible applicants include cities, county service district, certain special districts, drainage districts, Ports and federally recognized tribes, technical assistance providers (Economic Development Districts, Councils of Governments, non-profit or for-profit entities).

Max award is up to \$100,000 or cost of the project, whichever is less. For projects that will benefit a region (multiple cities), the max award is up to \$200,000 or the cost of the project, whichever is less.

Please refer to the HISF Program webpage for more information including the Request for Grant Agreement and Application. [Business Oregon : Welcome Page : Housing Infrastructure Support Fund Program : State of Oregon](#)

- **Apply for Water Source Protection Grants through March 28th**

The Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Services division is accepting applications from public water systems (PWSs) for drinking water source protection (DWSP) projects. This year the application period is open through March 28, 2025.

This funding, in the form of grants and low interest loans, is intended to provide financial assistance to public and privately owned community water systems and nonprofit noncommunity water systems for the implementation of projects that help protect their existing drinking water sources (groundwater and surface water) from contamination. Eligible projects must be focused on contaminant risk-reduction efforts in the delineated source water area. Eligible PWSs can apply for DWSP grants of up to \$50,000 and loans of up to \$100,000 per water system. They can also coordinate with other eligible water systems in their vicinity and combine funding for larger "regional" projects.

Example projects include mapping and risk assessment of drinking water supply areas, resiliency assessments, emergency and spill prevention planning, landowner outreach and education, land conservation and restoration, ensuring proper private well abandonment, and developing local drinking water source protection plans and ordinances (see the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's [Interactive Drinking Water Source Protection Funded Projects Map](#) for examples of previously funded projects).

For 2025, eligible PWSs may apply for land acquisition (conservation) planning grants (up to a maximum of \$70,000) that will be funded with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds. Land acquisition for conservation purposes refers to the preservation of land to protect, restore, or enhance sources of drinking water serving eligible PWSs. Conservation planning projects can include studies or activities that involve or are related to assessing the legal and/or financial feasibility of purchasing land, easements, etc. within an identified drinking water source area.

For information regarding the application process, eligibility, funding (loans and grants), and rating process, please see the [Application Guide](#) on the OHA-DWS [Drinking Water Source Water Protection Projects](#) web page.

- **State Lands Inventory:**

Last week, Governor Kotek announced the launch of the Oregon State-Owned or Managed Lands Inventory, a new [online tool](#) where the public can find state owned or leased properties which may be suitable for housing development. The tool was among the Governor's Housing Production Advisory Council's ([HPAC](#)) recommendations, with a goal to connect interested housing developers with available land to build on.

Since her first day of office, the Governor has taken bold steps to address the housing affordability crisis caused by decades of underbuilding. On day one, she established the HPAC which developed a robust set of recommendations, including the development of this online tool. Nearly half of these recommendations have been implemented or are represented in the Governor's Recommended Budget for 2025-2027.

As a result of the Governor's and the Legislature's efforts, Oregon established the [Housing Accountability and Production Office](#) (HAPO), funded [infrastructure projects for new housing](#) across Oregon, financed an [expansion of modular housing development](#) capacity, and created a [moderate-income revolving loan](#) (MIRL) fund to support cities and counties in developing more housing. By July, the state estimates that 2,800 affordable housing units will be financed and infrastructure for over 25,000 affordable and market rate housing units will be in progress.

The Governor's 2025-2027 [budget](#) and her Housing Initiative bills ([HB 3031](#), [HB 2138](#), and [HB 2258](#)) continue to build on that progress to increase Oregon's housing supply in every part of the state.

- **OR Department of Energy Awards Grants to 19 Counties for Energy Resilience Planning**

The Oregon Department of Energy has awarded \$950,000 in grants to 19 Oregon counties to support development of energy resilience plans through the agency's [County Energy Resilience Grant Program](#).

Energy resilience plans – and the actions to implement them – will strengthen the ability of a community to maintain or quickly recover the energy systems needed to support critical public services during disruptions to the state's larger energy systems. Strengthening local energy resilience is fast becoming a priority as Oregon has experienced more extreme weather events in recent years like ice storms and extreme heat, as well as public power safety shutoffs during potential wildfire conditions. Local energy resilience will also support communities in the event of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake.

ODOE awarded each participating county \$50,000 to develop a plan that outlines current energy infrastructure, determines resilience needs, identifies communities more vulnerable to energy disruptions, and maps out a path for implementation. Plans are due to ODOE by August 1, 2025.

The 19 counties who applied to participate in the program, including two cohorts pooling funding, are:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| ○ Baker | ○ Malheur | • Cohort: Hood River, |
| ○ Benton | ○ Lake | Gilliam, Sherman, |
| ○ Clatsop | ○ Lane | Wasco |
| ○ Columbia | ○ Tillamook | • Cohort: Crook, |
| ○ Grant | ○ Union | Deschutes, Jefferson |
| ○ Harney | ○ Wheeler | |

The Oregon Legislature created the County Energy Resilience Program in 2023 through [House Bill 3630](#). Each of Oregon's 36 counties were eligible to receive funds provided they met the eligibility requirements. If passed during the 2025 regular session, [House Bill 3171](#) would extend the timeline for the program to allow remaining counties to participate. More information about the program is available on [ODOE's website](#).