



RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, April 6th, 2026

Upcoming RSAC Meetings

North Coast (Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties)

Tuesday, April 7th from 10:30am-12:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

Metro (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties)

Wednesday, April 8th from 1:00-3:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

South Coast (Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties)

Wednesday, April 15th from 1:00-3:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)



Regional Updates

South Coast — Jessica LaBerge

2026 South Coast Housing Summit: I was fortunate to spend two energizing days on the south coast surrounded by leaders, doers, and innovators in housing. The people working to advance housing solutions in this region are an incredible group—approaching challenges with optimism, creativity, and a true problem-solving mindset. They are the connective tissue driving this work forward and helping make the south coast a model for collaboration across the housing continuum. Since last year's summit, they have secured funding to advance all the initiatives launched in the last 18 months, including [SPARC](#) (Service Providers and Regional Connections) – the link will connect you to a blueprint to ending homelessness on the South Coast. Oregon Housing and Community Services Director Andrea Bell spoke about the state working for communities (photo below), and many speakers throughout the two days were passionate, informed and fierce in their connection to community and serving others. Follow along on their progress here - [Southern Oregon Coast Regional Housing](#). A big shout out to Stephanie Hadley and Matt Vorderstrasse, and their amazing teams.



DR Johnson Site Visit with Energy Sector Partners: I joined energy sector partners this month for a talk and tour with DR Johnson in Riddle. We were onsite discussing the barriers and opportunities of reactivation of two existing biomass power facilities. The opportunity of reactivation of two existing 8.5 MW biomass cogeneration facilities, one in Riddle and another

in Prairie City, provides an alternative option for wildfire fuel reduction, dispatchable renewable power, rural job preservation and economic development, and increased grid reliability. As wildfire and forest health



continue to come up in planning and management of our forest, this effort supports SB 762, advances USFS shared stewardship and BLM forest initiatives, this would also reduce open burning and unmanaged fuel accumulation through contracts and partnerships. We also toured the sawmill and their CLT (Cross Laminated Timber) site. Check out more about [DR Johnson here](#).

Southern — Jessica LaBerge

Southern RSAC meeting: We had a robust meeting in late March where the Chief Prosperity Officer and I presented on the Governor’s Prosperity Roadmap and heard from Committee members on the three focus areas the Prosperity Council is seeking feedback. Members shared that employers continue to face rising costs and regulatory uncertainty and stressed the need for clearer timelines, predictable processes, and faster permitting pathways, including better inter-agency coordination.

Workforce challenges persist across sectors, particularly in agriculture and healthcare, with housing shortages limiting recruitment and retention. Members emphasized that unstable, short-term funding for workforce and housing programs disrupts local progress and undercuts long-term economic goals. AI is expected to have additional impact going forward.

Land use constraints can limit economic development, though members recognized the importance of preserving farmland and encouraged innovative strategies to maximize already-served land and infrastructure. Water scarcity remains a competitiveness concern, though the Medford wastewater-to-irrigation reuse project was noted as a successful example of investments that strengthen long-term water resilience.

Members stressed the need for stronger coordination across state agencies and with local implementers. Improved alignment could shorten permitting

timelines, address conflicting policies, and support a more business-friendly environment. HB 4084's permit audit and streamlining efforts were highlighted as a step toward statewide improvement.

North Central — Nate Stice

RSAC Feedback on the Prosperity Roadmap: The North Central RSAC met to provide input on the Governor's Prosperity Roadmap, emphasizing persistent structural barriers that limit economic and community development across the region. Members highlighted the ongoing shortage of developable land for both housing and industry, noting that Scenic Area and UGB constraints continue to restrict growth in The Dalles and Hood River. Workforce challenges—including limited housing options, childcare gaps, and aging school facilities—remain significant obstacles for employers trying to recruit and retain employees. Agriculture stakeholders reported increasing pressure from labor regulations, high production costs, and limited access to modern packing and processing infrastructure. Water and wastewater capacity issues in several communities were also identified as major barriers to business expansion.

Committee members encouraged the state to consider coordinated approaches that link housing, land-use flexibility, infrastructure investment, and economic development tools. They underscored the importance of maintaining balanced policy toward data centers, which several local governments rely on for stable revenue, while also improving transparency and community engagement. RSAC members ultimately called for state support that improves permitting predictability, modernizes critical infrastructure, strengthens the agricultural economy, and enables the region to meet its workforce and housing needs. This feedback will be forwarded to the Prosperity Council and Business Oregon as they refine statewide economic development strategies.

Outreach Meeting with Cascade Locks: The North Central Regional Solutions Team met with the City of Cascade Locks and Port of Cascade Locks to discuss a range of priority economic development and infrastructure initiatives. The Port and City are advancing several projects, including a proposed 100+ site campground, downtown revitalization and redevelopment planning, and efforts to position key properties for housing and mixed-use development. These efforts are supported by ongoing investments in water and wastewater infrastructure and exploration of opportunities to expand industrial capacity for existing employers. A local small business grant program is also beginning to generate visible improvements in the downtown core.

The group also discussed an urgent landslide (the “Ruckel Slide”) impacting the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail near Cascade Locks, which is blocking access along a key tourism corridor and affecting both daily use and upcoming events. Preliminary cost estimates for debris removal and stabilization range from approximately \$400,000 to \$1M, depending on mitigation needs. The project presents a significant funding challenge, as the trail is a state asset located on federal land, with no clear funding mechanism and limited options for timely reimbursement through federal disaster programs. Partners are exploring a mix of potential solutions, including bridge financing, philanthropic support, and in-kind contributions, but near-term funding remains uncertain. The team welcomes ideas or connections to potential funding sources that could help address this immediate need while longer-term solutions are pursued.

Basalt Commons Housing Project: Wasco County deployed a unique tool to help advance a critical housing project in The Dalles, utilizing a land purchase and leaseback structure to close a remaining financing gap and move the project toward construction. Under this approach, the County will acquire the project site and lease it back to the developer, retaining ownership of the underlying asset while creating a pathway to recover its investment through a repurchase option at the original acquisition cost. In the interim, the County receives lease revenue, positioning the investment to perform competitively with other public uses of funds while maintaining strong downside protection. This structure allows the County to support project delivery while preserving and potentially enhancing its financial position.

The Basalt Commons project has been in development for nearly a decade, with Regional Solutions helping to steward coordination and problem-solving efforts over that time. Located in the City’s downtown urban renewal area, the project is planned to deliver approximately 108–116 housing units along with ground-floor commercial space, supporting both housing supply and Main Street revitalization. The development is expected to serve as an economic anchor for surrounding businesses, increasing foot traffic and supporting long-term downtown vitality. The project has received prior support from the Urban Renewal Agency, including funding to offset system development charges and provide gap financing; however, rising construction costs and interest rates created ongoing feasibility challenges. The County’s participation builds on these earlier investments and demonstrates how thoughtfully structured public involvement can create a win-win outcome—advancing housing and economic development while maintaining strong fiscal stewardship.

County Administrator Tyler Stone and the Wasco County Board of Commissioners demonstrated strong leadership in developing and advancing this approach, and I am certain they would be willing to share their experience with other communities.

North Coast — Nate Stice

NXT Clean Energy DEIS Engagement: The North Coast Regional Solutions Team supported coordination on the NXT Clean Fuels project in Columbia County by reading a letter of support from Governor Kotek into the record during a recent U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) public hearing. The hearing is part of the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process and follows release of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, representing a key milestone in the project's multi-year permitting process. Regional Solutions has been engaged on the project over several years, supporting coordination across state agencies, local partners, and the project proponent as it has advanced.

The Governor's letter highlighted the project's alignment with Oregon's economic development and climate goals, noting the potential for significant private investment, job creation, and long-term tax revenue, as well as the production of lower-carbon fuels. The letter also emphasized the extensive state-level review and permitting already completed. Regional Solutions will continue to support coordination and engagement as the project moves forward through the federal review process.

Outreach Meeting with OMIC: The North Coast Regional Solutions Team met with leadership from the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center Research & Development (OMIC R&D), Portland Community College, and local partners in Scappoose to receive an update on operations and future growth. OMIC R&D, hosted by Oregon Tech, continues to expand as a hub for applied research in advanced manufacturing, with approximately 40 industry members and growing capabilities in additive manufacturing, machining, materials, and automation. The facility supports more than 20 staff and is actively adding equipment and research capacity to meet increasing industry demand.

OMIC represents a nationally unique model that integrates industry, higher education, and government to support innovation and workforce development in a rural community. As a designated Center of Innovation Excellence, OMIC connects companies, researchers, and entrepreneurs while accelerating adoption of new technologies and supporting pathways to commercialization, including collaboration with the Oregon UAS Accelerator. In parallel, partners are advancing the broader "OMIC Quarter," with plans

for additional research and training space, student housing, and amenities such as a proposed hotel to support visiting partners and events. Continued expansion, including a planned third facility and additional federal partnerships, positions OMIC as a long-term driver of high-wage jobs, industry competitiveness, and regional economic growth in Columbia County.

Eastern — Courtney Crowell

Amazon LUBGWMA Settlement Fund: This week Amazon Web Services settled with litigants in the LUBGWMA for \$20.5 million. Over \$20 million of the funds will be used for infrastructure improvements to develop clean-drinking water solutions for the community.

Annual EPA Meeting on LUBGWMA: This week the state interagency team on LUBGWMA met with the EPA enforcement team as part of our ongoing relationship with them. They were extremely pleased with the progress that Oregon has made on the Nitrate Reduction Plan which addresses both public health and safety but also long-term efforts to reduce nitrates. This plan has short, medium and long-term goals and the agencies are committed to making progress. One of the key elements of success this year was the development and now implementation of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's LUBGWMA groundwater rules.

Wallowa Lake Dam Project: The Wallowa Lake Dam project has gotten to 60% design and is about ready to move into the next phase of the process. Regional Solutions has been convening meetings with CTUIR, the Nez Perce Tribe consultants, Wallowa Lake Irrigation District and their consultants, ODFW, USFWS and NOAA over the past few months to work through the remaining issues. We still have a few issues to get to completion, however, I'm hopeful we will get there in the coming days/weeks.

Mid-Valley — Beth Wytoski

Prosperity Roundtables: We have two upcoming conversations for city managers and administrators (or other economic development related staff, as appropriate) to speak directly with the state's Chief Prosperity Officer, Tim Knopp.

- Yamhill County cities on April 7th in Carlton
- Polk County cities on April 20th in Monmouth

This will be an opportunity to discuss programs and policies that are working well (and should be preserved) - *and those that are not* - as the council considers proposals to improve the economic climate and the

development, retention, and growth of Oregon businesses. If you have feedback, suggestions, or illustrations that could be helpful as the Prosperity Council considers recommendations and you are unable to be at one of these roundtables, please send them to me by April 20th and I'll include them in our submission to the Council.

Stratus Village: I recently provided an update on this critical housing project in McMinnville that features 175 affordable units. This week, I attended a ribbon cutting and tour and was so impressed with the collaboration that drove the progress and the community enthusiasm for adding housing units for individuals and families. The gathering began with a drum prayer, led by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, which was followed by encouraging and inspirational comments from local leaders who helped bring this vision to fruition.



Northplace Groundbreaking: The Governor's housing policy team, Salem leaders, construction partners, housing providers, and community stakeholders gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking of the second phase in the Northplace housing development. This construction will increase the availability of affordable housing and support the statewide housing production goals. This is tangible progress in the community, especially as it highlighted leveraging public-private partnerships to improve housing accessibility in Oregon.

Business Visits: I joined representatives from Business Oregon and SEDCOR for visits to two innovative businesses: Agri-plas and PDO.

- Agri-plas, Inc. is a family owned business that recycles agricultural plastic waste such as nursery pots and flats, greenhouse cover, shrink wrap, storage drums, and twine. Their work processes more than 10 million pounds of plastic each year that may otherwise end up in a landfill. Instead, the recycled materials are sold for reuse in roofing,

cabinetry, and other building materials manufacturing. They currently have more potentially recyclable material than the market has demand, and they are exploring additional options for diverting trash through recycling and reuse with additional partners.

- Originally founded as Plas2Fuel, PDO (Plastic Derived Offtake) Technologies is working to reshape the plastic lifecycle into a circular economy. Like Agri-plas, PDO also works with agricultural plastics. They densify and convert waste with mechanical and advanced recycling methodologies, but their product is a synthetic crude oil, which can be sold in the refining market.

I will be tracking both of these businesses as they explore opportunities for new markets.

Central – Scott Aycock

Central Oregon Regional Strategic Plan for Homelessness

Workshop: I participated in an April 2 workshop as part of the Homeless Leadership Coalition-sponsored regional strategic homelessness plan process. The purpose of this effort is to develop a set of shared strategic objectives and associated implementation plan across Central Oregon's network of service providers, local governments, and state agencies. The workshop was attended by members of the Homeless Leadership Coalition (HLC), The Coordinated Houseless Response Office (CHRO), the Regional Housing Council (RHC), and the Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC). A key theme was the need to simplify regional governance structures in the region; to make them more inclusive and transparent; and to increase systematic communication, coordination, and collaboration among service providers and local government agencies.

Mazama Energy's "Mazama Empower" Program: Mazama Energy is working to develop large-scale "super hot rock" enhanced geothermal power systems (ESG) production in the Newberry Caldera area, south of Bend and near the community of La Pine. Mazama is planning for long-term and growing presence in the area and envisions Central Oregon as a hub for geothermal energy development. In support of this vision, the company has launched [Mazama Empower](#), a "structured economic development and engagement program designed to support local participation in geothermal development. EMPOWER clarifies needed service categories, communicates readiness expectations, and creates a practical pathway for qualified vendors to participate as opportunities arise." Mazama is already taking inquiries from local businesses that can provide services and products needed for enhanced geothermal power production, including site preparation; logistics, equipment, and rentals; transportation and materials

handling, and utilities and site services. We are excited to see Mazama thinking big and working with local businesses!

South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

Community Collaborative & Industry Luncheon: On April 1st, Collaborative Economic Development Oregon (CEDO) hosted the third annual Community Collaborative & Industry Luncheon in Eugene. This year's theme was *Business at the Center: How Industry Leadership Drives Regional Success*. Emceed by Business Oregon Economist Damon Runberg, the event featured a Strategic Industry Leadership Panel that included Kris Latimer (Knife River), Stephen Laffoon (Penderia Technologies), and Alicia Beyer (PeaceHealth) who shared insights about what's happening on the

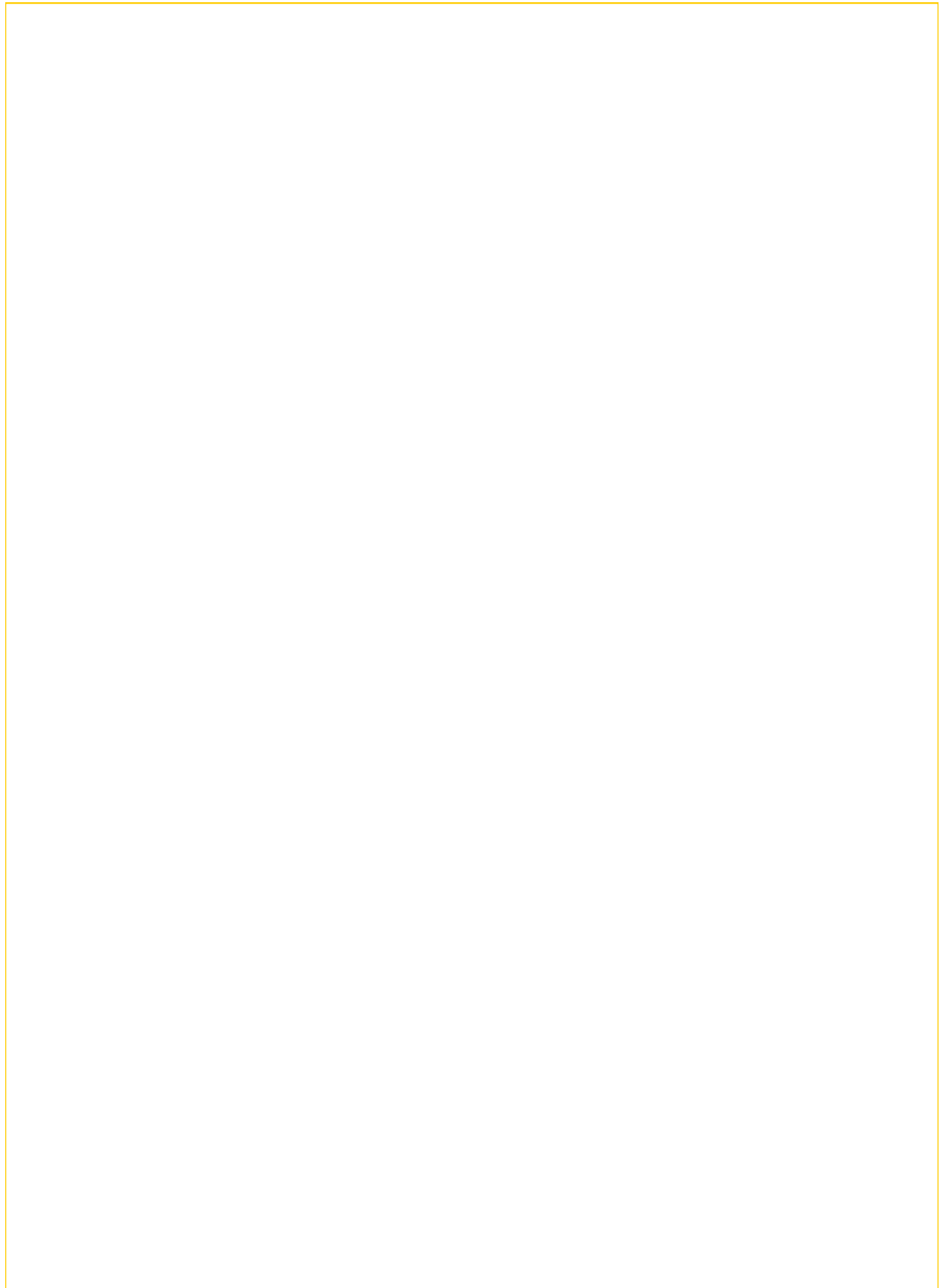


frontlines of the construction, life sciences, and health care industries. Francie Genz, Co-Founder & CEO of [Formation](#), provided the keynote address in which she focused on the transformational potential of business-led collaboration where employers work alongside education, workforce, and community partners to tackle shared challenges and move economic development forward. Watch this [video](#) to learn about how these kinds of sector partnerships are advancing community and economic development in Lane County.

Economic Mobility & Opportunity Program in Newport: The City of Newport is one of sixteen cities nationwide selected to participate in the International City/County Management Association's Economic Mobility & Opportunity Program. Over the next two years, Newport's new Economic Mobility Manager will work with partners including the Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County to develop an Economic Mobility & Opportunity workplan, begin implementation, and develop a sustainability strategy. The goal of this program is to bolster local leadership and advance programs and priorities that will enable all residents in their community to climb the economic ladder. The Economic Mobility & Opportunity Program is funded by the Gates Foundation.

DEQ's Onsite Septic Financial Aid Program: In 2021 the Oregon Legislature allocated \$15 million in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act for septic system repair and replacement. DEQ used this funding to establish the Onsite Septic Financial Aid Program (OSFAP) to award pass-through grants to local public agencies and other qualified institutions which in turn provide financial assistance to eligible property owners. Priorities for this funding included recovery from the historic 2020 Labor Day wildfires, protection of sensitive watersheds, and projects that benefit low-and-moderate income households. DEQ recently published a report on this program which can be found [here](#). In 2022, DEQ allocated over \$7.3 million for wildfire recovery to five organizations including Lincoln County, Lane County, Homes for Good, and Eugene Water and Electric Board. The remaining \$7.7 million was awarded to additional organizations in 2023. As of January 2026, 679 projects have been completed with this funding marking a significant increase in access to effective wastewater treatment for rural and low-to-moderate income Oregonians by addressing failing and outdated septic treatment systems.

South Valley/Mid-Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Meeting: The SVMC Regional Solutions Advisory Committee met virtually on March 26th. The focus of the meeting was to discuss the Governor's [Prosperity Roadmap](#) and provide feedback for the [Prosperity Council's](#) consideration. The Governor's Chief Prosperity Officer Tim Knopp joined the meeting to hear feedback directly from Advisory Committee members. The Committee also agreed to provide a letter of support for a grant application for the Oakridge Forest Restoration & Wood Products Infrastructure Campus.



Resources and Opportunities

Oregon Cultural Trust Conversations with Funders Workshops

With \$5 million in funding available for FY2027, this is a prime opportunity to “speed date” with the Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Heritage, Oregon Humanities and important regional funders. Whether you represent a library, museum or arts organization, this is where your next project begins.

Upcoming Conversations with Funders Workshops

- Newport: Tuesday, April 7 | 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Sisters: Wednesday, April 8 | 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Pendleton: Friday, April 10 | 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

[Register here!](#)

Oregon Humanities Community Action Fellowship – Apply by April 10th

Oregon Humanities is currently accepting proposals for their new Humanities Action Fellowship, a supportive program for cohorts of 4–6 young adults aged 18–25 who are interested in developing or facilitating public humanities programs in their communities. Fellows will receive a \$1,500 honorarium as well as support from a mentor to complete a community-focused project that brings people together across differences of background, experience, or belief.

To learn about eligibility and how to apply, visit the [Humanities Action Fellowship page](#).

Plan for Resilient Oregon – April 15th Regional Resilience Forum & Survey

For the past several months, Regional Resilience Forum members have been engaging with their circles, reaching out and having conversations about the challenges and strengths of their communities as it relates to resilience. Folks have gathered in many ways, as staff and program recipients alike, bringing their best thoughts forward to inform the Plan for a Resilient Oregon.

You are also invited to participate in this effort! Fill out their [Community Resilience Survey](#) by **April 15th**. It takes just 15 minutes and is available in Spanish online, and PDF copies in Vietnamese and Simplified Chinese is

available by e-mailing aimee.fritsch@oregon.gov. Please share it with your networks!

You can also attend the next meeting of the Regional Resilience Forum on April 15th at 3:00. [Register here!](#)

DLCD & LOC Hosting Webinar on One-Time UGB Expansion Program Update on 4/16

The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and League of Oregon Cities (LOC) are co-hosting a webinar on changes made to the state's One-Time Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Expansion Program, originally established in SB 1537 (2024) and updated in HB 4035 (2026). This program allows cities to use a faster, one-time UGB expansion to bring in more land for housing, both affordable and market rate, and land to ensure creation of complete communities.

Cities that were not eligible for a one-time UGB expansion under the original program may be eligible now, and there are other changes that now make it easier to bring in more acres and build more housing. More information can be found in the program's [one pager](#) and [FAQ](#).

LOC members are invited to join the webinar to learn more about eligibility and what steps a city needs to take to utilize this updated resource.

The webinar takes place on **April 16 at 12 p.m.** Register in advance for this webinar [here](#).

Opportunity Zones Webinar April 21st

Business Oregon's third webinar in their series on Opportunity Zones is coming up on **April 21st from 1:00-2:00 pm**. This series offers opportunities to connect with communities, investors, and local leaders as Oregon prepares for Opportunity Zone 2.0 selection process. Engagement events and informational sessions will provide a chance to learn about the updated program, learn about the nomination process, and ask questions. At this next webinar, learn best practices for attracting private investment and understanding investor priorities, including:

- How to assess whether a tract is attractive to investors
- Building narratives that align community priorities with developer goals
- Demonstrating project viability and avoiding land-use constraints
- Basics of financial structuring and post-designation management

Co-hosted with [Healthy Sustainable Communities](#), this will be a **live webinar with Q&A**. [Register for the Webinar here.](#)

OEM Webinar Series to Help Rural Communities Prepare for Disasters

From ice storms and flooding to wildfires and extreme heat, rural communities across Oregon face unique challenges when disasters strike. To help address these challenges, the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) is hosting "[Rural Communities Prepared for Disasters](#)," a free, two-part virtual educational series focused on practical strategies to help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

The webinar series brings together trusted partners and subject-matter experts to share tools, resources and real-world insights tailored to the needs of rural communities across Oregon.

Session 1: Preparedness & Response: Wednesday, April 22 | 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

- How disasters can impact communication systems and ways to stay informed when systems are disrupted
- How to know when to evacuate and what to do if evacuation is not possible
- Understanding backup power options and how to determine what solution best fits your needs

Session 2: Recovery & Long-Term Support: Wednesday, May 13 | 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

- How disaster recovery is funded and what the recovery process looks like
- Steps individuals and communities can take to support smoother recovery efforts
- The role of Long-Term Recovery Groups and how communities can get involved

This series is intended for organizations, community groups, and faith-based organizations supporting rural communities, emergency management professionals, and anyone interested in disaster preparedness and recovery. Both sessions will be recorded and posted on OEM's [Be 2 Weeks Ready YouTube channel](#). The events will be offered in English with Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Chinese, and Ukrainian interpretation, as well as American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and CART real-time captioning in English.

[Register here!](#)

For questions, contact: community.preparedness@oem.oregon.gov

2026 Governor's Marketplace Events

Governor Tina Kotek announced that this year's Governor's Marketplace events will take place in Salem, Ontario, and Coos Bay. Hundreds of attendees joined the Salem event on April 2 to learn more about opportunities to contract with the State of Oregon.

"Oregon's small businesses are the backbone of our local economies," Governor Kotek said. "Helping businesses gain access to state partnerships will move Oregon's economy forward. While the federal government causes chaos for its vendors and our broader economy, I'm making sure all Oregon businesses, whether urban or rural, have the opportunity to contract with a steady and reliable partner in the State of Oregon."

Contractors who are licensed by the Construction Contractors Board (CCB) and attend these training sessions are eligible to receive one continuing education unit per session.

The Governor's Marketplace has traditionally been held every year in Salem. After seeing success with an event in Portland in 2024, Governor Kotek directed expansion to rural parts of the state. The next event will take place in Ontario on June 10th. Details on those events will be shared at the [Governor's Marketplace Conference & Tradeshow](#) website when available.

Oregon Federal Land Access Program Now Accepting Applications through June 12th

The [Oregon Federal Lands Access Program \(FLAP\)](#) is accepting applications now through June 12. Oregon FLAP has provided funding to state and local transportation system owners in support of federal lands access improvements since 2013.

Projects funded by the FLAP are identified through a competitive process in which non-federal applicants submit proposals which are evaluated against a set of specific criteria and final selections are determined collaboratively by the state's Programming Decisions Committee. Many of Oregon's FLAP funds go towards necessary maintenance and capital construction projects in rural counties, with local agencies historically receiving the majority of funds and project awards.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration oversees the program. Member cities are encourage to review the [application materials](#) and reach out to FLAP staff with questions about the application process.

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 [our website](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to the Executive Appointments Office via email at executive.appointments@oregon.gov.