



RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, April 20th, 2026

Upcoming RSAC Webinar & Meeting

RSAC Webinar: [Plan for a Resilient Oregon \(PRO\)](#)

Thursday, May 7th from 12:00-1:30pm

[Virtual Link](#)

Regional Solutions is excited to host our next learning opportunity on a topic that is arising in RSAC discussions statewide: community resilience! Please join us for a webinar featuring an overview of the PRO—a people-centered resilience strategy to help communities around Oregon adapt and thrive in the face of increasingly severe disasters. The PRO aims to be responsive to the unique cultures, demographics, histories, and hazards of Oregon's diverse regions.

The PRO will inform the work of Executive Branch agencies and the Governor's recommended budget and legislative work for the next biennium.

The webinar will be a public meeting and will be recorded and shared in a future RS Exchange. Please feel free to share this opportunity with other interested parties.

Central (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties)

Tuesday, April 28th from 12:30-3:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

Regional Updates

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

Governor Kotek Signs Farm Stand Bill, Immigration Justice Package:

At two very different but equally joyous bill signing events, Governor Kotek joined in celebration with the Oregonians who worked so hard to help make a host of critical bills happen during the short session. Topaz Farm, a family-owned farm on Sauvie Island, provided a warm reception to farmers, advocates and legislators to commemorate the signing of House Bill 4153, a bill from this year's legislative



session that protects existing farm stand permits and gives Oregon farmers new options to support the long-term success of their farms. The law creates an optional permit for farms that want to open a small farm store on land zoned for farming. It also provides clearer guidelines for agritourism activities such as farm tours, educational exhibits, hayrides, and seasonal events while ensuring these uses serve as a supplement to farming activities, not a replacement.

"At a time when most of us feel helpless, everyone together made this bill happen. It would have never passed without the overwhelming support from the public," Kat Topaz, co-owner of Topaz Farm, said. "Oregonians want to connect with farms and the farmers who grow their food. So many advocates made this happen: lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the Oregon Farm Bureau, the Association of Counties and of course, the Governor, who has been a huge supporter from the start."

Later in the week, supporters gathered at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's East Portland facility to witness Governor Kotek signing a package of eight bills that enact new safeguards for immigrant communities, protect civil liberties, and uphold Oregon values of transparency, accountability, and justice. The legislation comes as the federal administration continues escalated deportation enforcement,

disregard for the rule of law, and other federal overreach. Governor Tina Kotek has taken action in support of immigrant and refugee communities since before President Trump took office.



Representatives Willy Chotzen (D-SE Portland) and Lesley Muñoz (D-Woodburn) spoke at the event, along with Jessica Maravilla, the policy director of ACLU Oregon; Ira Cuello-Martinez, the policy director at PCUN; Suzanne West, the superintendent of Forest Grove School District, and Brian Hughes, Assistant Chief of Police for the City of Portland. The packed room cheered loudly as Cuello-Martinez said, "This package did not come out of nowhere. It is the result of years of organizing, of people speaking up, of families refusing to stay silent when their rights were violated. It reflects something simple but powerful: Oregon chose to act. At a time when immigrant communities have faced fear, uncertainty, and targeted enforcement, this state stepped forward and said we will do things differently."

Metro RSAC Meeting: Thank you to Governor Kotek for joining the first portion of the meeting to learn about the Metro RSAC's Regional Priorities! Members presented their five priorities to the governor, and engaged with her in a robust discussion of the focus areas under each priority. This RSAC has been particularly focused on small business supports and workforce needs, and Governor Kotek encouraged the group to continue with that focus, providing her perspectives on opportunities the state has to strengthen the connection between employers and the workforce pipeline, particularly in the Metro region, where there's lots of opportunity but not a lot of coordination. In a wide-ranging conversation, the group also

discussed the need to improve services that meet the specific needs of small businesses, especially those looking to grow, and to ensure infrastructure dollars are going to projects that help meet both housing and manufacturing/economic needs.

During the second hour, Chief Prosperity Officer Tim Knopp was on hand to engage with the RSAC around the Prosperity Roadmap. RSAC members raised concerns about the potential financial impacts to local government from business tax break proposals that might come forward, as well as examples of the ways that cities and counties can really provide leadership when it comes to business retention. Cities like Sherwood really focus on relationship-building with their businesses, and their economic development staff strive to offer concierge-level service for navigating the complex of city, county and state opportunities and regulations. They also stressed the need to make it easy for existing businesses to grow here in Oregon, rather than focusing on recruiting from outside the state. Other contributions from the group included suggestions for improving Business Oregon offerings, sharing prosperity progress with Oregonians via robust online tracking resources, and many other great ideas. Thanks to everyone for all your thoughtful contributions!

Eastern – Courtney Crowell

DEQ Business Visits: Our Regional Solutions team had meetings and tours with Ash Grove Cement, Simplot Potatoes (Ore-Ida facility in Ontario) and Lamb Weston in Hermiston. This was a chance for DEQ staff to meet directly with these companies to learn more about their operations, see the facilities in person and talk about the upcoming climate protection program rulemaking through the department. It was great to have in-depth conversations with company leaders and see the impressive work they are doing on the ground in Eastern Oregon.

LUBGWMA Committee Meeting: We held a quarterly LUBGWMA advisory committee meeting last week in Hermiston and gave the committee members updates from the various state agencies on their progress related to the Nitrate Reduction Plan (NRP) and the annual updates that the agencies are planning to make to the NRP.

Regional Solutions Outreach Meetings in Burns and Hines: Our Regional Solutions team (Governor's Office, DEQ, Business Oregon and DLCD) traveled to Harney County to hold outreach meetings with the city of Burns and the city of Hines. Both cities are experiencing capacity issues with their wastewater systems so we met to discuss how we can work together to address their aging infrastructure and capacity concerns so they

can be ready for upcoming housing projects in their communities. Our team will continue to work directly with both communities on their planned infrastructure projects.

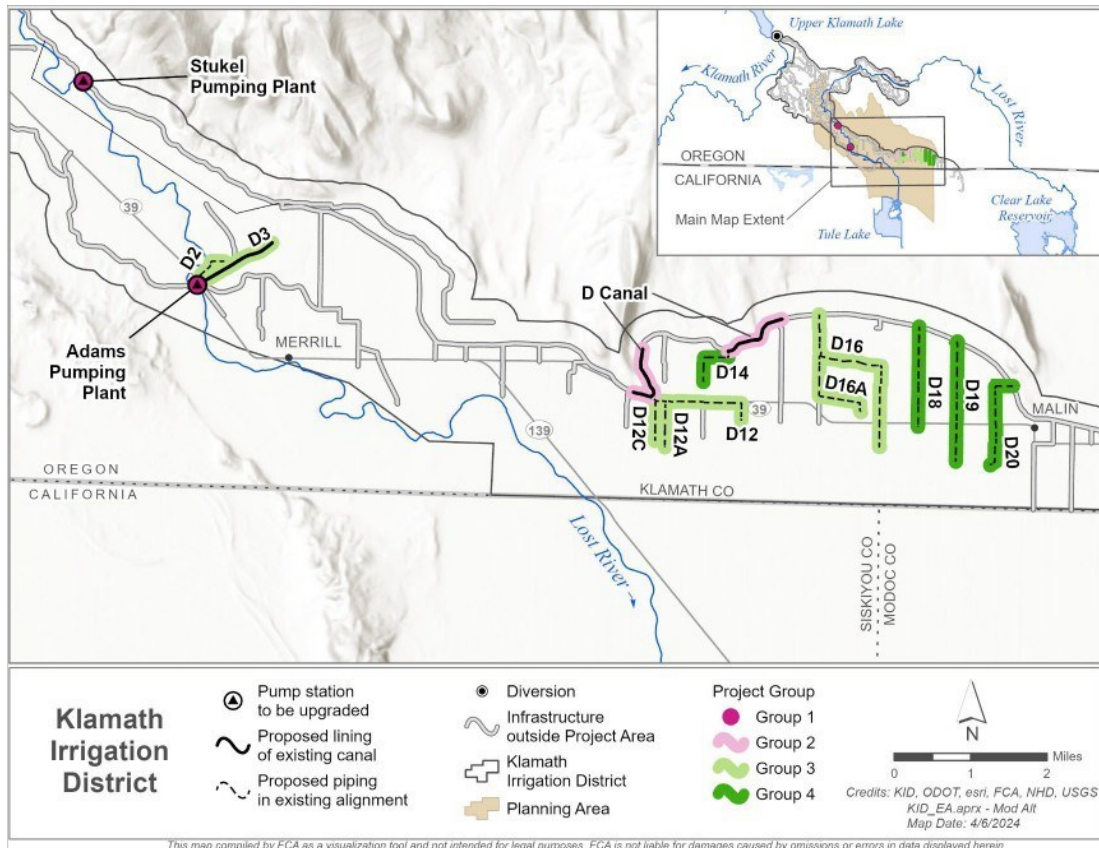
Central – Scott Aycock

Deschutes County Biomass Biochar Workshop: I participated in a fascinating workshop on the topic of biochar – a carbon-rich, charcoal-like substance produced by heating organic waste materials such as wood chips, manure, or agricultural residue in a low-oxygen environment. The workshop was co-hosted by Commissioner Phil Chang and experts in the fields of biomass utilization and carbon sequestration, and was attended by representatives from a wide swath of timber and biomass companies, universities, non-profits, climate experts, and the Oregon Department of Forestry and Oregon State Fire Marshall's Office. Attendees explored the potential uses of biochar, focusing on its abilities to sequester carbon and as a valuable soil amendment. Everyone agreed that biochar has excellent potential for helping manage the high volume of biomass that must be managed to increase forest health and wildfire resilience in Deschutes County (and across Oregon) but also acknowledged the difficulties in bringing this product to market. The group agreed to continue exploring the topic together and outlined a series of insights and next steps.



South Central – Scott Aycock

Klamath Irrigation District Infrastructure Modernization Project: I attended an April 9 public meeting in Merrill on behalf of the Governor. The event was convened by the Klamath Irrigation District (KID) and the Farmer's Conservation Alliance as part of public outreach for a series of federally funded water conservation projects including canal lining and pump station upgrades. As on one of the farmers who helped get this project going stated, "It's time for us to admit that we don't have a lot of hope right now, and we're going to have to rethink... the things that we do. I was reflecting on how many meetings with so much conflict we have been to in this room, and today we get to talk about something is hopeful... and that's a welcome change." This individual went on to note how the KID effort was inspired in part by successes at the Three Sisters Irrigation



District outside Sisters. This will not only help the District conserve enormously valuable water, they offer an opportunity for diverse interests to work together and collaborate on water issues. We applaud the District, FCA, and project partners for taking on this effort, and we are hopeful that this project will be a leaping-off point for additional collaboration in the Basin.

North Coast – Nate Stice

North Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Meeting: The North Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee met on April 7 to offer feedback on the Governor’s Prosperity Roadmap, bringing together local governments, ports, industry, and economic development partners from across Clatsop, Tillamook, and Columbia counties. The discussion highlighted both the region’s strengths and the constraints shaping economic opportunity. Participants pointed to continued demand in core sectors such as seafood processing, timber, and port activity, but noted that infrastructure limitations—particularly water, wastewater, port facilities, and transportation reliability—are increasingly limiting growth. At the same time, businesses and project sponsors continue to face complex and often unpredictable permitting processes across multiple agencies.

Feedback from the committee emphasized the importance of focusing on implementation. Participants called for improved coordination across state agencies, clearer and more predictable permitting pathways, and targeted infrastructure investments that can unlock private sector activity. There was also a strong interest in demonstrating near-term progress, particularly on projects already underway, to build confidence that the Prosperity Roadmap will result in tangible outcomes. Regional Solutions will continue working with partners to advance priority projects and align state resources with the North Coast's economic development needs.

ColPac Convenes Agency Partnerships Working Group to Advance Industrial Symbiosis Efforts: The Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District (ColPac) recently convened a kickoff meeting for a new "Agency Partnerships" working group as part of its broader industrial symbiosis efforts on the North Coast. The initiative builds on ongoing work to bring together seafood processors, ports, researchers, and public agencies to identify shared solutions—particularly around water and wastewater challenges. This next phase is focused on improving coordination across agencies early in project development, with the goal of reducing duplication, increasing clarity, and helping projects move more efficiently from concept to implementation.

Regional Solutions team members participated in the kickoff and see strong alignment with ongoing efforts to support project delivery and economic development in the region. The conversation highlighted clear opportunities to better connect state resources with locally driven innovation, particularly as partners explore new technologies and approaches. The team is encouraged by the collaborative momentum and looks forward to continuing to engage with ColPac and partners to identify where stronger agency alignment can unlock progress on priority projects.

South Coast – Jessica LaBerge

South Coast RSAC April meeting: The South Coast RS Advisory Committee met online last week, which included an overview of the state's [Economic Prosperity Roadmap](#). The advisory committee was joined by Tim Knopp, the state's Chief Prosperity Officer, to hear regional perspectives on opportunities and barriers to economic growth. Discussion from the committee was focused on the three areas of work the Council is tasked with: Business Climate, Workforce, and Tools for Growth.

Committee discussions highlighted several interconnected challenges and opportunities shaping economic development across the region. Participants noted that Oregon's overall economic development direction could use more

clarity, and small jurisdictions often struggle to navigate complex state systems, particularly around permitting and regulatory requirements. Paid Leave Oregon and childcare regulations were cited as ongoing burdens for small employers, while concerns were raised about incentive structures that inadvertently shift workers between local industries rather than expanding the overall workforce. There was broad agreement that more emphasis should be placed on retaining existing businesses through policies that support long-term stability and local reinvestment.

Workforce needs were a consistent theme, especially regarding the apprenticeship ratio in Oregon compared to other states. Childcare repeatedly emerged as a cross-cutting issue that directly affects business operations, workforce participation, and economic vitality. Employers continue to identify inadequate childcare availability as a barrier to recruitment and retention, underscoring the need to incorporate childcare more intentionally into workforce and economic development strategies.

In exploring tools to support growth, participants raised the concept of a sales tax—despite voter resistance—as a potential source of steady economic development revenue. It was mentioned that communities could reassess internal operations to better match available resources, rather than relying on tax increases. Strengthening support for small businesses and entrepreneurs through consulting, coaching, professional development, and disaster recovery assistance was identified as essential. Additionally, participants discussed the potential benefits of shared services or a Council of Governments model to help jurisdictions collectively manage key functions such as HR, planning, grant writing, economic development, and social services in more efficient and cost-effective ways.

Southern – Jessica LaBerge

Innovative housing solutions in Josephine: I recently met with Susan Clark, Executive Director of the Mid Rogue Foundation. She shared information about their services, including their Mobile Navigator program, and toured me through several of their housing sites, the new Hillcrest Veterans Village, Foundry Village, and Evan’s Place.

Mid Rogue Foundation, established in 2009, has grown and adapted its vision over time while remaining committed to helping community members access and afford the social and physical environments that support good health. The Foundation played a leading role in developing Grants Pass’s first transitional housing project, Foundry Village, which provides short-term sober housing and case management to help individuals transition from homelessness into long-term housing.

Their continued investment in programs such as the Mobile Navigator Services underscores the positive impact they have on individuals and families experiencing crisis. If you or someone you know could benefit from their services, you can learn more on [their website](#). The photo is looking east at the new [Hillcrest Veterans Village](#), in Grants Pass – coming along quickly!

Mid-Valley – Beth Wytoski

Last week I attended the **North Marion Business Services Alliance** Meeting, composed of state agencies, local leaders, and nonprofits that provide supportive services to the business community in North Marion County. The discussion was broad, but key topics included:

- The business resource center overview and training that is available
- Childcare was a significant discussion as its availability, accessibility, and affordability is notably impacting workforce challenges. There is a clear supply issue, with the county identifying 13.7 available slots per 100 children
- Employer practices were discussed including potential retention tools such as:
 - Predictable and flexible schedules and thoughtful leave policies
 - On-site services like childcare, fitness/recreation , and even medical care
 - Stipends for employment related expenses (like those mentioned above)
- Apprenticeship programs and challenges with sustainability
- Local collaboration with space/office sharing and referrals as key options

SEDCOR Mid-Valley Economic Summit: The gathering formerly known as the Oregon Economic Forum is offering a high-impact morning program. There will be networking opportunities as well as perspectives on the economic outlook, current and projected business conditions, and factors affecting the regional economy.

Speakers will include:

- Tim Knopp, Chief Prosperity Officer
- Tim Duy, Economist, SGH Macro Advisors
- Damon Runberg, Economist, Business Oregon
- Preston Mann, VP of External Affairs, Oregon Business & Industry
- Cara Turano, President & ED, Oregon Entrepreneurs Network

More information and registration can be found [here](#).

Resources and Opportunities

Business Oregon Opens Applications for Venture Fund Program

Business Oregon is now accepting applications from venture capital fund managers for the Venture (BOV) Fund Program under the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) program. Venture capital fund managers can play an important role in Oregon's entrepreneurial ecosystem through leveraging fund managers' expertise, networks, and private capital to develop and maintain a strong pipeline of high-growth opportunities.

Business Oregon will deploy a portion of its overall SSBCI allocation through the BOV Fund Program to invest in SEC-accredited venture capital funds in need of capital to become operational or scale up significantly. Business Oregon plans to allocate approximately \$15 million to the BOV Fund Program, a portion of which has already been allocated. The agency seeks to deploy up to approximately \$10 million through this solicitation.

Due to the nature of the venture capital industry and SSBCI program guidelines, Business Oregon will be accepting and reviewing BOV Fund Program applications on a rolling basis and expects to review applications once every month. Program eligibility requirements can be accessed on the [U.S Treasury's website](#).

Basic criteria for venture capital fund strategies include:

- State participation limited to Oregon companies only.
- Average portfolio company of fewer than 500 employees.
- Average check size to portfolio companies smaller than \$5 million.
- Portfolio company equity rounds smaller than \$20 million.
- Funds must demonstrate that \$1 from the BOV Fund Program will "cause and result" in at least \$1 of new private financing at the fund level.

Business Oregon staff will screen all BOV Fund Program proposals for eligibility and completeness and refer the qualifying submissions to a review committee. To learn more and download the application for the BOV Fund Program, visit their [website](#) or email SSBCI.info@biz.oregon.gov.

For clarification, The BOV Fund Program is separate from the Business Oregon Venture Direct Program. More information on these and other SSBCI-funded venture capital, venture debt, and small business lending programs can be found on Business Oregon's [website](#). Links to additional program documents are found below:

- [SSBCI Initial Program Guidelines](#)
- [SSBCI Fact Sheet](#)
- [SSBCI FAQs](#)

Applications Open for OWRD Place-Based Water Planning Grants

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) invites entities to submit applications for Place-Based Water Planning grants. [Place-Based Water Planning](#) (PBWP) is a voluntary, locally-led, and collaborative process that brings together water interests to develop a holistic understanding of an area's water resources and plan for a water future that promotes and sustains a healthy economy, environment, and society.

Application Deadline: Thursday, July 2, 2026, by 5 p.m.

Total Funding Available: \$2 million

Grant Types

For this funding cycle, grants are available to support three different planning phases:

1. **Planning Readiness Evaluation and Preparation (PREP) Grants:** Support the preparation for or assessment of a community's readiness to engage in place-based integrated water resources planning for a proposed planning area.
2. **Plan Development Grants:** Support development of a place-based integrated water resources plan following the process, content, and structure provided by OWRD.
3. **Post-Plan Coordination Grants:** Support continued coordination while implementing a state-recognized place-based integrated water resources plan.

Funding Levels and Match Requirements

- **Prep Grants:** Up to \$100,000 (10% match required)
- **Plan Development Grants:** Up to \$450,000 (25% match required)
- **Post-Plan Coordination Grants:** Up to \$150,000 (25% match required)

Apply online through the [grant platform](#). OWRD encourages all applicants to request a pre-application conference. Staff will review your draft application and provide feedback. See the [grant pre-application conference document](#) for details.

Additional Resources:

- [Place-Based Water Planning Handbook](#)

- [Introduction to Place-Based Water Planning Webinar](#) (recorded March 25, 2026)
- [Video Information Session on Place-Based Water Planning Grants](#)
- [Video introduction to the grant platform](#) – please note the video says grantees will be able to receive payments via ACH by entering the information in their profile. OWRD will not be using this feature of the platform.

DLCD 2026 Land Use Legislation Report and Updated Guidance

The land use legislation report for the 2026 legislative session is now available on the [DLCD website](#), with other legislative reports. Guidance on [SB 1537 One-time UGB amendments](#) has been updated to reflect the legislative changes from the recent session.

Oregon Heritage Conference April 29–May 2

The 2026 conference, themed, 'Stories, Culture, Place - Weaving Community Heritage' will be held April 29 - May 2 in Woodburn. Those who research, record, and honor Oregon's heritage will gather to grow in their understanding of the connections, relationships, and opportunities of the historical sector. There are sessions intended to address current challenges and opportunities in preservation as well as motivational reinforcement of the work. Topics will include: museums, archives, libraries, Main Streets, historic cemeteries, archaeology, Tribes, genealogy, as well as history of the local, state, and federal governments. Monica Rhodes, founder of the Rhodes Heritage Group, and globally recognized cultural heritage leaders will speak about how preservation work has protected iconic sites while engaging visitors and stabilizing funding. More information can be found [here](#).