



Monday, April 21st, 2025

Regional Solutions Program & Partner Updates

- **Thank You and Farewell to Jill Rees, USDA Rural Development**

After 25 productive years serving the needs of rural communities, Jill Rees recently announced that she will be stepping down from her role as Interim State Director at USDA Rural Development. Jill has been a wonderful, knowledgeable partner to Regional Solutions, a thought leader about how government systems can better combine forces to provide effective service, and a fierce champion for our state's smallest communities. Though we wish her well in her future endeavors, Jill's presence at this agency will be greatly missed. Thank you Jill for all of your amazing work!

- **RSAC Housing Production Webinar April 30th**

Continuing our series of informational sessions on topics arising in RSAC discussions around the state, Regional Solutions has scheduled our next webinar, focused on Housing Production. Presenters include staff from OHCS, DLCD, and the Housing Accountability and Production Office, who will cover housing finance, Oregon's housing needs assessment, and an overview of the Governor's Housing Production Framework. A recording and presentation slide deck will be shared in our next Exchange for those who are unable to attend. Please join us to learn from state agency partners about the programs and resources that support communities in advancing housing production!

- April 30; 10:00-11:30am
- [Virtual Link](#)

- **Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meetings:**
 - [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
- **DEQ Regroups Following Cyberattack**
 After being hit with a cyberattack earlier this month, DEQ is working to restore service while improving resilience to any future attempts. To ensure no infected files remain from the cyberattack, potentially impacted DEQ servers and all employee computers have to be rebuilt.

Most DEQ employees were without their laptops for the past couple weeks and have been working from their phones. **Note that any emails sent to DEQ employees between April 9 and April 11 did not go through and are not retrievable. You will need to re-send these emails.** Please extend your patience to DEQ staff as they recover, and expect response times to be longer.

Security is the main priority as they bring DEQ back online. They're putting additional measures in place to protect staff, DEQ data and data of those the agency interacts with and regulates. DEQ's goal is to get all of the servers back up and operating shortly. For more information, [read DEQ's news release here.](#)

Regional Updates

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- **Harney County Flooding Visit and Recovery Work:** Huge thank you to the Governor and First Lady for coming out to visit Harney County recently and seeing the flood damage and talking with the local community. Regional Solutions is continuing to work with the Governor's office, Rep. Owens, Sen. McLane and community partners on ongoing needs related to the flooding in Harney County. Rep. Owens pulled together a conversation last week to try and get more clarity on what is going to be needed to get the sewer system completely back up and running. It sounds like they need the water to continue to recede so they can scope the system with cameras to get a sense of the damage underground. There is one lift station that will need to be completely rebuilt and we are trying to get good numbers and timelines associated with the sewer system needs. Additionally, we've been having conversations about interim housing needs and how to help the victims who have been displaced or whose homes have extensive damage. Lastly, we've been working to try and identify a long term recovery group and get them up and running.

- **Milton-Freewater Water Collaborative:** Recently, we had a kick-off meeting of the steering committee for the Milton-Freewater Water Collaborative Oregon Solutions project. It was a great opportunity to get the steering committee together and hear everyone's perspectives on the project and the reasons why they are committed to the project. It was very clear that we should very easily be able to get the group moving on an MOU between the Tribe, the Milton-Freewater Water Control District to support an US Army Corps of Engineers general investigation study application. We also discussed that this is a great opportunity to look beyond just the MOU for the general investigation study to see if there are additional strategies or opportunities that could be completed while the general investigation is occurring that could be included in a declaration of cooperation.
- **Wheeler County Rural EMS Project:** As Oregon Solutions continues to prepare this project for a request for Governor's declaration, I've been working to help identify potential conveners and continue getting the project ready to move forward.

South Coast – Jessica LaBerge

- ***The Regional Solutions Team was busy on the south coast last week – Thank you RST members!***
- **South Coast Affordable Housing Groundbreaking:** As part of this week's South Coast Housing Summit, RS attended a historic occasion for the region – the Groundbreaking Ceremony for North Bend Family Housing, the first major affordable housing development on the South Coast in over 40 years!! The weather was not cooperative, so it was a quick event, but many community members turned out in the rain to support the project.
- **South Coast Housing Summit:** The energy and the momentum on the South Coast around housing is palpable right now. The summit hosted a powerhouse of regional and state partners that have brought affordable housing developments to meet the needs of many in the community and the grit, resilience and heart of the south coast is in their work. Leaders from the Housing Authority, land trusts, non-profits, OHCS, many state agencies, local governments, HUD, philanthropy, developers, funders, CCO's, CBOs, and many others came together for really great sessions and discussions. Congrats to Bandon Dunes Charitable Foundation, Alternative Youth Activities and Brookings CORE Response for awards reflecting the impactful work you are doing in the region. It was a great two days, and I highly recommend others consider attending Spring 2026.
- **South Coast RST Outreach to Salmon Harbor:** Members of the South Coast RST and economic development allies met with leadership from Salmon Harbor this week. Unique in the region, Salmon Harbor looks and functions similarly to a small port, however they are a department of Douglas County within Winchester Bay and inside the Port of Umpqua district. We met to discuss their 10-year Strategic Plan, the vision for growth and economic sustainability and to provide feedback on funding opportunities, resources, and connections within the region to start turning the wheels on some fairly big projects. After touring the Harbor, we talked about many aspects of their projects, what permitting process and

timelines look like, potential funding streams and more. It was a positive visit, and the RST will follow up with Salmon Harbor as the projects progress.

- **South Coast RSAC meeting:** The Advisory Committee met the week of April 7th, they received a presentation from CCD Business Development Corp, the region's Economic Development District, on the 2024-2029 regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), giving a one-year report update as well. Of the goals and strategies outlined in the CEDS, many overlap with the RS Advisory Committee's adopted priorities. It was a good discussion, and we had good representation from the RST and Coos County representatives. Thank you to CCD and specifically Lehi Dowell for a great presentation and the ongoing support provided to the region's communities.

Mental Health was shared as a top concern for many in the community and leaders are feeling and seeing the impacts as well. Real gaps exist in rural capacity to meaningfully address and support those with mental health needs, staffing and recruitment are difficult in rural Oregon.

Mid-Valley – Beth Wytoski

- **RSAC:** The Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Advisory Committee met on April 10 to “talk trash.” We discussed the process for siting landfills and other trash transfer, recycling, incinerating, and disposal facilities. The meeting was well-attended in person and online. We learned about the roles of private businesses in hauling and/or receiving waste, municipalities in setting services and rates through franchise agreements, and the permitting and regulatory authorities of DEQ. We also discussed some concerns about the long-term local capacity and potential cost adjustments from transporting waste in the future. There are many pressures for planning long-term solutions including available capacity of current sites, impact to facility neighbors, environmental concerns, air and water quality, user costs, and more. There is some emphasis on industry-specific needs, especially those where there are few control mechanisms to reduce waste streams, like medical and hazardous waste. Our next learning session will be on wildfire resilience: prevention & recovery, which will be June 12th at 1:30pm on the Chemeketa Campus or virtually.
- **Trade and Tariffs:** Governor Kotek recently facilitated a roundtable discussion and press conference, discussing the impacts of federal tariffs on Oregon businesses. While it was an insightful conversation about how trade agreements affect a variety of industries, there are more voices to be heard at that table. Oregon is home to many locally grown and/or manufactured products, but supply chains often include components, ingredients, or packaging that is sourced internationally. The discussion underscored how interconnected and complex these systems are – and how changes in federal policy can ripple through every stage of production as well as final pricing. The event was graciously hosted by SEDCOR, in Salem, in support of informative, collaborative conversations to advocate for a resilient and competitive regional economy. Business Oregon is also administering a brief [Tariff and Trade survey](#) to better understand the impacts of trade policy on Oregon companies. Please share this link with business partners in your region and encourage participation ONLY with businesses operating in Oregon.

Central – Amelia Porterfield

- **Redmond Hosting Water Summit April 22nd:** The City of Redmond will host a water conservation summit April 22 intended to help Homeowner Association Boards and professional landscapers learn how to conserve water, especially during the summer. The event is open to the public and will feature experts from the city of Redmond, Oregon Water Resources Department, OSU Cascades, and Redmond School District. Each will provide ideas for reducing water use. City staff will also report early results of its conservation efforts and three pilot projects where Redmond replaced turf with native plantings. Mayor Fitch has said he plans to ask City Council to consider new policy approaches to community-wide water conservation, including waiving all regulations to allow for non-turf plantings, and a tiered water rate structure where the cost of water increases with how much you use. The city plans to record the summit, which can be viewed live or on demand at www.redmondoregon.gov/citymeetings. Read more at: <https://redmondspokesm>

South Central – Amelia Porterfield

- **Weigh in on [OR 39 South Sixth Street Facility Plan](#):** This long-range planning project – a collaboration between ODOT and Klamath County – is aimed to address safety and operational deficiencies on OR 39, South Sixth Street, from the Klamath Falls City Limits to the OR 39/ OR 140 intersection in order to create a safe, organized, and modern corridor that provides adequate access for the community and acts as a commercial corridor for the county. ODOT is seeking your help in identifying safety concerns in the area, and has created two ways for you to share your perspective:

Complete this [survey](#) by May 15th or attend the Open House:

When: May 6, 2025- drop in anytime between 5:00pm and 7:00pm

Where: Klamath County Fair Grounds - Exhibit Hall #2 (blue building)
3531 South 6th Street, Klamath Falls

- **Chiloquin Great Streets Project:** Another effort underway in the region to increase safety is the Chiloquin Great Streets Project. It will transform the OR 422 and OR 422S into a "Great Street" to better serve the needs of the community. Bike and pedestrian facilities will be built along OR 422, OR 422S, and Chocktoot Street. Two major intersections in Chiloquin will be realigned and multi modal crossings will be improved to give a safe route for those walking, biking and rolling. The project includes building a multi-use path which will be separated from the highway along OR 422 connecting the downtown core to Spinks Park, the Klamath Tribal Center, and U.S. 97, as well as a pedestrian connection across OR 422 which will connect the Klamath Tribal Administration building and the Wellness Center.

This project also includes improvements along Chocktoot Street (OR 422). These improvements include updated sidewalks and ADA facilities and may also include lighting, streetscaping, additional pedestrian crossings, artwork, etc. These improvements will be decided by the citizens of Chiloquin through input in surveys and community meetings and events. Here's a link to the [project website](#) – stay tuned for opportunities to engage.

North Coast – Amelia Porterfield

- **Biodigester meeting:** Last week Regional Solutions joined an informational meeting for local officials as they learned about potential ways to create a shared biodigester to handle byproducts from core industries such as seafood processing and breweries. Attended by elected officials and staff from Clatsop County, Seaside, Gearhart, and Cannon Beach, a consultant team from Jacobs Solutions shared insights from other similar projects and considerations for the North Coast to ponder. We also heard from the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission in Eugene/Springfield who shared their experience in creating, governing and operating a regionalized system in Lane County. The discussion ranged from workforce needs and governance models to engineering logistics and gave everyone a lot to think about as the North Coast explores options to handle the byproducts of these important North Coast industries.

North Central – Kathy Hyzy

- **The Dalles' Basalt Commons:** Community leaders have been working for several years to support the construction of the Basalt Commons, a mixed use, 104-unit affordable housing complex in The Dalles. They are hoping to make use of the Vertical Housing Tax Credit, a state program that some cities have adopted which allows a partial tax exemption for mixed-use development in certain areas. The Dalles has a serious housing crisis and affordable units are scarce; the goal is to keep costs as low as possible for these units. I am working on assembling a list of other cities using a VHTC and how their projects are valued. Using construction costs, as seems to be the standard approach used by county assessors, would mean a lower tax rate than assessing the project based on rent schedule.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

- **Forest Grove:** I visited with several Forest Grove staff to learn more about all the activity they have going on. Top of mind for staff was the challenges presented to their community as they try to ensure there are sufficient employment lands and housing lands for Forest Grove's future. 2014's "Grand Bargain" in the State Legislature set aside new urban and rural reserves in Washington County, and brought some lands within the urban growth boundaries for several cities. A large portion of the land that was designated for urban reserves for Forest Grove is a big, steep hill with numerous 25 percent slopes and poor integration with existing city infrastructure. A 2014 study of the hill revealed that it will be both difficult and expensive to equip the area with roads and utilities; in addition, the north side of the hill is high-risk on the new urban-wildfire interface map, so insurance costs for any of the expensive, low-density housing that does get built here are likely to be high. Meanwhile, the area that was designated rural reserve is flat and easy to connect to the street network and utilities. Forest Grove would like to encourage development at a lower-cost price point, but they have limited infill opportunities, and upzoning is slow to take effect. Similar areas like Happy Valley and Estacada where they have been able to get developer interest are seeing starting costs for houses at \$700-800K.

- **NW Multifamily Housing Luncheon:** I attended the Spring Northwest Multifamily Housing Luncheon to hear the launch of the Spring Apartment Report. A panel of a half-dozen speakers from different perspectives within the industry shared their thoughts on the present and future conditions for renting and constructing multifamily units elsewhere in the region. The speakers sounded cautiously optimistic about Portland, and generally positive about building elsewhere in the state. Speakers stated that lengthy eviction timelines are negatively impacting both tenants and investor interest, and spoke to the need for property managers to work with tenants to help get them the services they may need to be successful. Call wait times for Care Oregon can make it difficult to help tenants. Overall, the forecast was flat, but with some bright notes beginning to sound!

Resources and Opportunities

- **Tariff and Trade Survey**

Trade is a critical component to Oregon's economy and businesses. By one measure, our state economy's reliance on trade is the sixth largest in the U.S., in terms of export value as portion of state GDP. Oregon also has the sixth highest rate of exports per capita in the U.S.

With recent tariff announcements, we understand Oregon businesses may be facing some uncertainty, and your comments are critical to help gauge the impact to Oregon. In collaboration with the Port of Portland and Oregon Department of Agriculture, Business Oregon is administering a [very brief Tariff and Trade Survey](#) to better understand the impact to Oregon companies.

Please complete the survey or share this link with businesses in your region and encourage participation from businesses operating in Oregon. Small- and medium-sized businesses currently engaged in global trade are encouraged to participate. For more information about Oregon's trade economy, visit Business Oregon's website [here](#).

- **Oregon State Parks Trail Use and Funding Survey Open through April 30:**

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) is seeking input from Oregonians in their new [online trail user survey](#). The survey will collect feedback to better understand how residents use land and water trails throughout Oregon and opportunities for improvement. The survey is open to all trail users and potential trail users including hikers, bikers, equestrians, OHV and ATV riders, snowmobilers and paddlers/boaters who recreate on any public lands or water bodies in Oregon, not just Oregon State Parks.

The information will help inform the Oregon Statewide Trails Plan, which provides guidance for OPRD as well as other federal, state, and local agencies and private sector partners. It outlines trends and issues, creates priorities for grant funding and recommends actions to improve trails over the next 10 years. The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete and is

open to all Oregon residents. Those who complete the survey have the option of entering a drawing for a free Oregon State Parks annual parking permit.

For questions about this survey or the Oregon Trails Plan, please visit OPRD's [website](#) or contact OPRD Statewide Trails Planner Jessica Horning at Jessica.r.horning@opr.d.oregon.gov.

- **Grant Management Training Scheduled for May 12-13**

Clackamas Community College-Wilsonville Campus and Grant Writing USA will present a two-day grant management workshop in Wilsonville on May 12-13. This in-person training is for grant recipient organizations across all disciplines. Attendees will learn how to administer government grants and stay in compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

Beginning and experienced grant managers, grant writers and administrators from city, county and state agencies, healthcare organizations, nonprofits, K-12, colleges and universities are encouraged to attend.

Discounted tuition is \$565 and includes Grant Writing USA's 500-page grant management workbook and reference guide. Please use the code "**ASSN**" at the time of registration to receive this \$30 discount. Groups of five or more receive a \$50 discount per person. Discounts for Grant Writing USA alumni and nonprofits are also available. Please call for details.

Online reservations are necessary. Payment is not required at the time of registration. For event details visit <https://grantstraining.com/or0525>

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- **Help Reduce Disparities in State Procurement:**

Your expertise and insights can help drive meaningful change in Oregon's procurement and economic equity strategies! The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) invites you to apply for the Advisory or Steering Committees supporting the development and implementation of key recommendations from the [2023 State of Oregon Disparity Study](#). These committees will play an essential role in improving participation in state procurement.

Committee Roles & Responsibilities:

- **Advisory Committee (Quarterly Meetings):** Review project progress and disseminate updates, provide insights and recommendations to improve implementation, and provide guidance on policies, strategies, and best practices.

- Steering Committee (Monthly Meetings): Regularly review and assess the disparity roadmap subgroup deliverables and charters, provide feedback on engagement strategies for the subgroups, and support development of action plans based on subgroup task.

DAS is seeking individuals who:

- Have experience in procurement, policy, business equity, or economic development.
- Represent diverse perspectives and industries.
- Are passionate about advancing equitable business opportunities in Oregon.

To express interest in serving, please click here: <https://forms.office.com/g/Ar4VhtZ8GV>.

- **Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Member Recruitment:**

We are still accepting applications for those interested in serving on a Regional Solutions Advisory Committee. Please consider applying, and share this opportunity with others who might be interested in lending their energy and expertise to this collaborative program. For more information about our regions and committees, visit the [Regional Solutions website](#) or contact your local RS Coordinator. Details about the application process, and the links to apply, can be found on the Governor's [Executive Appointments website](#).

Applications are due by May 30th.