



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, June 2nd, 2025

Regional Solutions Program Updates

Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meetings:

- [Mid-Valley](#) (Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties) June 12, 1:30-3:30pm
 - Chemeketa Community College, Building 9, Rm. 128, 4000 Lancaster Dr NE, Salem
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [North Coast](#) (Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties) June 16, 1-3pm
 - Port of Tillamook Bay, 4000 Blimp Blvd Ste 100, Tillamook
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Metro](#) (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties) June 16, 3-5pm
 - [Virtual Link](#) (virtual only)
- [North Central](#) (Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco Counties) June 17, 3-5pm
 - Columbia Gorge Community College, 1730 College Way, Hood River
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Southern](#) (Jackson and Josephine Counties) July 16, 1-3pm

RSAC Appointments:

Thank you to everyone who applied to serve on a Regional Solutions Advisory Committee! Our team is currently reviewing applicants for recommendation to the Governor and new appointments will be announced in late June.

Regional Updates

South Central – Scott Aycock

- **Lakeview & Lake County Visit:** I spent two days last week meeting with Lakeview and Lake County community leaders. It was a very informative visit, and I left with a much better sense of some of the key challenges as well as potential opportunities that the Town and County are facing. A key critical challenge is the financial situation facing the Town of Lakeview, who requested support to help identify ways for them to manage through their legacy and future budgetary limitations. Working alongside the League of Oregon Cities, we are looking into options to restructure current costs, as well as exploring potential technical assistance resources to help them build a longer-term plan. The community also faces critical issues with their water infrastructure and access to energy which impacts their ability to serve residents, critical facilities, and economic development opportunities. In better news, Green Cement will soon begin operations, providing critical jobs and revenues for the community. Town and County leaders also outlined a variety of economic development opportunities rooted in renewable energy development and tourism/lifestyle. I also stopped at the Pioneer Saloon in Paisley to spend a little more time with Commissioner James Williams. The Pioneer was recently recognized as the oldest bar in Oregon, which will be celebrated at the annual [Mosquito Festival](#) in late July.

Central – Scott Aycock

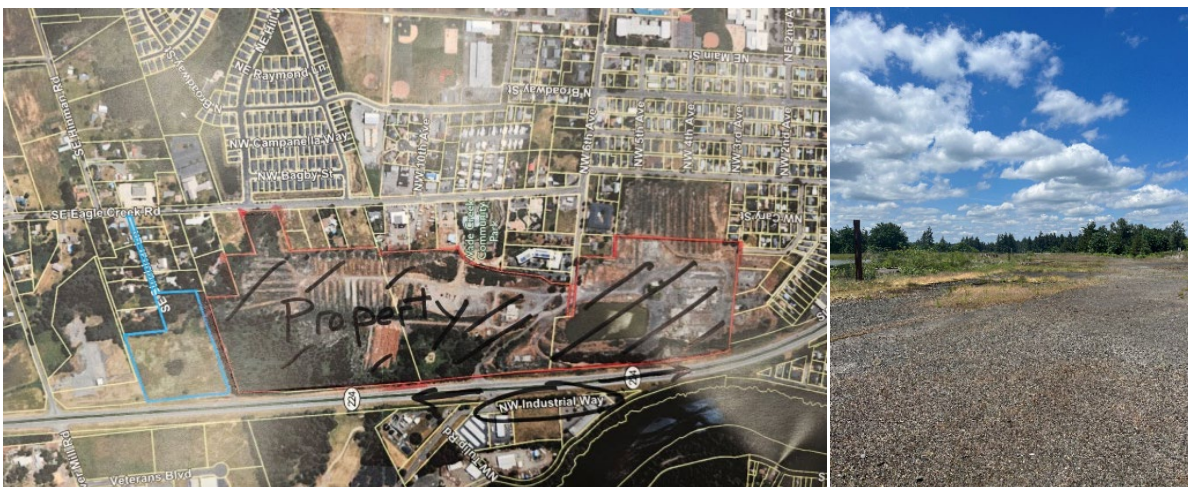
- **Reducing Wildfire Risk:** Communities across Central Oregon received a boost in wildfire preparedness this spring, thanks to a coordinated effort by local and state agencies. The Central Oregon Fire Prevention Cooperative, in its second year of organizing such outreach, hosted events in Prineville, Sisters, Culver, La Pine, Sunriver, Warm Springs, and Bend. Each event was tailored to fit the needs of the host community, taking place in a variety of locations including fire stations, community centers, parks and a community college. Some events featured informational booths, while others offered presentations and free food to engage attendees. Participants received preparedness information from numerous agencies, including the Oregon State Fire Marshal, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Division of Financial Regulation, county public health departments, emergency management teams, the PET Evacuation Team, OSU Extension, local Oregon Conservation Corps programs, the U.S. Forest Service and local fire departments. Other organizations, such as local soil and water conservation districts, county departments of natural resources and wildfire-related nonprofits, also participated. Roughly 700 people attended the events. Many pledged to take a specific action this spring to better prepare for wildfire season.

North Central – Kathy Hyzy

- **Multnomah Falls/Gorge Waterfalls Parking:** The summer crowds are arriving to enjoy Multnomah Falls and the surrounding wonders, and some of them are using timed entry parking, some are using the great shuttle system, and some are parking illegally along the Historic Highway. When one person does it, everyone else follows suit, causing safety hazards for pedestrians, drivers, and any emergency vehicles trying to navigate choked roads. ODOT is seeking law enforcement support to issue tickets and deter law-breakers.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

- **Estacada Mill Site:** On Friday a couple RST members traveled to Estacada for a behind-the-fence tour of Estacada's 90 acre former mill site. The parcel was recently purchased by two local business owners who are excited to give back to their community by turning this unused property into something new. They are looking forward to working with the City of Estacada to develop a vision and master plan for the property, and hope to build hundreds of units of housing as well as commercial and mixed-use buildings. Site development will be phased, with the first phase focusing on redevelopment of thirteen acres adjacent to the city to provide housing, ideally for seniors and workforce. The new owners are hoping to be able to provide not just affordable rentals, but home ownership opportunities for the local workforce, and are interested in cottage clusters as a way to achieve a lower price point. Estacada is home to Sauter Timber's new mass timber plant, and they will be exploring opportunities to work with Clackamas County's nascent mass timber/Glulam industry to build on the site. The property will need to be assessed for brownfields, and it's likely some cleanup will be required before moving ahead. This is a transformative opportunity for Estacada, and Regional Solutions is excited to help make it happen!



Mid-Valley - Beth Wytoski

- **Wildfire Educational Session:** The Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Advisory Committee is facilitating a session on June 12 to provide education on comprehensive wildfire resilience. We are coordinating with the State Fire Marshal's Office, Oregon Department of Forestry, Chemeketa Fire Prevention Program, a private firefighting firm, the City of Detroit, and the Santiam Canyon Long Term Recovery Group. It will provide an opportunity for attendees to hear about the economic and community impacts of fire, financial costs to the state, forestry policy around prevention, defensible space, emergency response and workforce needs, and recovery case management to see where we can collaborate to improve resilience. The session will be held at Chemeketa Community College in building 9, room 128, or virtually at [this link](#).

- **Three Basin Rule:** In response to Marion County’s rulemaking petition, the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) directed DEQ to begin the rulemaking process and consider revision to Oregon’s Three Basin Rule. The current rule restricts effluent discharge in three watersheds that provide drinking water to significant populations - the Clackamas, North Santiam, and McKenzie basins. The prohibitions include new or expanded wastewater discharge systems. To address the petition, DEQ convened a Rule Advisory Committee (RAC) to develop and consider new rules. The RAC will post draft rules, record public comment, hold public hearings, and propose final rules for the EQC to consider. The rule revisions could allow DEQ to issue new water quality permits for wastewater facilities seeking to discharge to groundwater. This month brought the second RAC meeting to hear public comment on potential changes and June will bring the third. Early this fall, DEQ will respond to comments and prepare the staff report for the EQC before the EQC presents its new rules near the end of the year.
- **Center Street Bridge Repair:** ODOT will be replacing several bridge joints on Salem’s Center Street Bridge that will improve weather resilience of the structure. There are six 9-year-old joints that need to be replaced to ensure the bridge is able to expand and contract with changes in temperature and weather conditions. The work will begin early this summer and is planned to be conducted overnight. There may be lane closures between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. along with lights, noise, and work crews. The repair should take only about a week but dry conditions are necessary so the schedule may need to adjust for weather. The larger seismic retrofit project will follow in 2026 after inspections are completed.
- **Emerald Ash Borer:** This tiny and destructive beetle is wreaking havoc across North America, killing millions of ash trees and, in some regions, completely eliminating ash trees with their feeding damage. Coming off EAB Awareness week, it’s worth reminding community leaders that there is a quarantine on all components of ash, white fringe, and olive trees from movement outside of Washington, Yamhill, Marion, and Clackamas counties. The intent of the quarantine is to slow the spread of the EAB, as the beetles themselves have limited mobility but are easily transported as firewood, mulch, nursery stock, and more. The beetles were first identified in Forest Grove in 2022 and the infested trees were immediately cut and chipped, but the pests still spread, with a notable presence in Woodburn, and few remaining resources to address the affected trees. While there are some pesticides to control EAB infestations, the best form of control remains prevention, so please remind the public not to transport firewood or other vulnerable products to contain the spread.

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- **Grassy Mountain Mine Sage Grouse Mitigation:** Regional Solutions is helping to convene a conversation between the owners of Grassy Mountain Mine and ODFW and DOGAMI to discuss sage grouse mitigation and the next steps in the process to nail down a mitigation plan for the project.

- **Highway 20 Wildlife Crossing/Mitigation project:** After over a year and a half since the designation, we kicked off the Highway 20 Wildlife Crossing project last week with our first steering committee. It went well with setting the stage and timeline for the project. Next steps include a community/partner update meeting on June 26th where we will invite all the partners, stakeholders and local community members to attend an online meeting to hear the progress that has happened on the issue and project over the past two years. This will get everyone up to speed before the first official project team meeting in Juntura in July. Feels good to have this project off the ground!
- **Milton-Freewater Water Collaborative:** The Oregon Solutions project in Milton-Freewater continues to move forward and already the group is reviewing and finalizing an MOU between CTUIR and the Milton-Freewater Water Control District that would outline the roles and responsibilities of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers General Investigation Study. Addressing fish passage and flood control issues along the Walla Walla River within Milton-Freewater is a key piece of the work of the Walla Walla 2050 basin effort and getting this general investigation study underway is the first step. So far, it has been a great collaborative process. Regional Solutions sits on the steering committee and helps to keep all the partners coming to the table.
- **Treasure Valley Reload Project:** Our weekly conversations between ODOT and the Malheur County Development Corporation (MCDC) are continuing and MCDC and ODOT were able to sign and execute the first of two latest amendments to the Connect Oregon grant. The first amendment was signed this week that will use up to \$1.6 million of an appropriation made in 2023 to finalize the rail work at the Reload project site. The rail work is underway, and the money will be spent and rail project complete by the end of June 2025.
- **Dayville Wastewater Project:** DEQ and the city of Dayville completed and signed the mutual agreement order (MAO) this week that will get the city back into compliance on their wastewater system. This comes after about five months of monthly coordination calls to help the city and DEQ find a path forward. Huge kudos to everyone involved in this project and to DEQ for their flexibility in working with a very small community with very limited capacity. We have agreed that we no longer need to meet monthly but will be on hand to help the city of Dayville as they move forward with additional planning efforts for both wastewater and drinking water updates.
- **Owyhee Lake Road Project:** Regional Solutions brought together the Malheur County Sheriff, Malheur County economic development, Sens. Wyden and Merkley and Congressman Bentz's offices, ODOT, BLM, OPRD and US Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to discuss the Owyhee Lake Road and efforts to keep that road maintained and operated. This stems from conversations that have been had over the past year about both wanting an access fee that could be used to maintain the road and addressing the threat of invasive mussel species getting into Oregon. Rep. Owens has a bill that would establish a work group dedicated to this topic and I told him that Regional Solutions would be willing to bring all the parties together to see if we could find a solution. This was the first of many conversations, but it was a great jumping off point. BOR and ODOT identified two grant

opportunities that could be used to upgrade portions of the road and we will have a sub-group that will work on taking advantage of those grant opportunities. We also discussed that having an access fee to all users will not be possible due to all the federal and state regulations and conditions within the contract that Malheur County and BOR have about the road. However, we are going to continue having conversations about developing an invasive species control fee and checkpoint that would both address the threat of invasive species and help raise some funding for the county to keep the road maintained in the future. We'll meet again next month and add additional participants including ODFW, Oregon State Marine Board and the local irrigation districts.

- **Southeast Area Committee on Transportation (SEACT):** Attended the SEACT meeting last week and provided an update on all the Regional Solutions projects happening in Malheur, Grant and Harney counties and shared the collaborative work that ODOT is doing with other agencies in the region. Lots of great stuff happening and great opportunity to share with community leaders in Southeast Oregon.

South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

- **Congratulations Team Oregon Build!** [Team Oregon Build](#), a program launched by Lane ESD, Southern Oregon ESD, and the Mid-Willamette Education Consortium that connects youth with high-wage, high-demand careers in the construction trades, was recently named the National Workforce Program of the Year by the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. Congratulations! Representatives from Lane Workforce Partnership and the Eastern Oregon Workforce Board traveled to the national conference in Virginia Beach, VA in May to accept the award. This program has grown into an impressive statewide collaboration in which more than 5,000 students have participated across 86 schools in 23 counties, helping to build over 430 transitional housing units, sheds, and other community structures. On May 22nd, Governor Kotek visited Amity High School's Construction Trades Program which is part of the Team Oregon Build program.



Resources and Opportunities

- **OSFM Fire Service Recruitment & Retention Webinar June 10th**

The Oregon State Fire Marshal is excited to launch its workforce webinar series, a series of webinars focused on the non-legislative solutions highlighted in the [2024 Convening of the Fire Service report](#). The webinar will be held Tuesday, June 10 at 10 a.m. This first webinar features a panel discussion on the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association's diversity, equity, and inclusion toolkit and resource guide, [found here](#). Panelists will also share best practices and lessons learned in recruitment and retention, drawing from the IAFC Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS).

Speakers:

Troy Davis, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager, Oregon State Fire Marshal
Trish Connolly, Deputy Chief of Administration, Bend Fire & Rescue
Amy Hanifan, Operations Chief, McMinnville Fire Department
Rich Cowger, Fire Chief, Columbus Rural Fire District # 3

The event will include time for audience questions. [Register here](#).

- **OHCS and BuildUp Oregon commit \$7.4 million to expand early care and education**

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), in partnership with BuildUp Oregon (BUO), has committed \$7.4 million in grants and loans to nine innovative projects that co-locate early care and education (ECE) with affordable housing developments across the state. These projects, which leverage an additional \$20 million of public and private investment, will strengthen communities by simultaneously increasing access to affordable housing and opportunities for quality early care and education, serving families where they live and dream.

The OHCS Co-Location Fund was established by the Oregon Legislature through House Bill 5011 in the 2021-2023 biennium. It is the first funding of its kind dedicated exclusively to integrating early care and education into affordable housing developments in our state. By simultaneously addressing two of Oregon's most pressing needs, this approach realizes cost savings that maximize public investment while also reimagining how we effectively build thriving communities.

This year's awardees represent projects in seven counties and respond to Oregon's urgent child care shortage, where 72% of counties are considered child care "deserts." Together, these nine projects will create or preserve 542 child care seats statewide, offering lasting benefits to children, caregivers, and the communities they call home.

[Click here](#) to view the list of projects receiving funding commitments and read the full press release.