



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, June 30th, 2025

Regional Solutions Program Updates

Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meetings:

- [Southern](#) (Jackson and Josephine Counties) July 16, 1-3pm
 - Jackson County Parks Auditorium, 7520 Table Rock Rd, Central Point
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Mid-Valley](#) (Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties) August 14, 1:30-3:30pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Central](#) (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties) August 15, 12-2pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Northeast](#) (Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties) September 23, 2-4pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Greater Eastern](#) (Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, and Wheeler Counties) September 25, 1-3pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)

Regional Updates

North Central – Nate Stice

- **Rowena Fire Update:** Last week, Governor Tina Kotek visited Wasco County to discuss the response and recovery efforts related to the Rowena Fire. The Rowena Fire started the afternoon of June 11 and burned 3,700 acres. At the height of the fire, nearly 8,000 residents were under level 1,2, or 3 evacuation orders. All evacuation orders have been lifted, but many residents are being advised not to return because of risk of environmental

contamination. This is the most loss this community has suffered in recent memory. According to an early OSFM report, Wasco County lost 56 homes (mostly manufactured homes with some stick built), 91 outbuildings, 18 vehicles, and 11 RVs. There were further damaged structures. Wasco County Emergency Management estimates that up to 50 percent of lost homes were un/underinsured, citing difficulties in insuring manufactured dwellings. At least two community water systems were impacted by the fire and at least one community septic system – in addition to many individual septic systems. The impacted area included many residents on fixed incomes and experiencing poverty. For many, their homes were their primary asset, passed down through generations. All losses were in the National Scenic Area.

The Governor visited the impacted area, met with survivors, and hosted a working meeting with local officials working on clean up and recovery. More about the visit [here](#).



The Governor [declared](#) a State of Emergency on June 21, 2025, due to the threat to life, safety, and property due to the wildfire that caused a natural disaster in Wasco County. The State of Emergency declaration has enabled state agencies to rapidly mobilize resources and streamline support to impacted communities. It authorizes the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) to coordinate interagency response efforts, assist local jurisdictions in identifying critical needs, and direct state resources to where they are most urgently needed. With OEM's coordination, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has been authorized to work as subject matter experts to evaluate debris management and conduct environmental assessments.

The Governor has directed her team and agencies to work closely with the county, and the Regional Solutions team met with Wasco County to discuss immediate needs and long term

recovery from the Rowena Fire. Kelly Howsley-Glover, Wasco County Community Development Director and Rowena Fire Recovery Section Chief, and Stephanie Krell, PIO for Wasco County joined the meeting. Krell shared about the county's efforts to meet with immediate needs of residents in sheltering and other needs. The County has organized a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) with the help of Oregon DHS OREM and other partners, which includes resources on sheltering, clean up, food, clothing and other basic needs, and rebuilding. It is the first MARC hosted in the county in recent history, and it is an impressive mobilization. Howsley-Glover shared about the county's efforts to mobilize a long-term recovery group to care for the long-term recovery needs of fire survivors from everything from shelter and rebuilding needs to spiritual needs. The team shared some potential resources for recovery. There is some potential for emergency CDGB dollars. DLCD is thinking about how some of its technical assistance resources might be helpful. The team discusses some challenges with rebuilding. Most residences were on aging private septic systems that were damaged during the fire. Rebuilding will require replacement and often new drain fields, meaning rebuilding within ten percent of the current footprint—an NSA requirement—will likely be unattainable in most circumstances.

[You can donate to the Rowena Fire Recovery here!](#)

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- **Wallowa Lake Dam Project:** Regional Solutions continues to work with all the stakeholders on the Wallowa Lake Dam project and will be helping to facilitate more regular meetings over the next few months to get the proposed alternative fish passage option to a place of submitting an application to ODFW for fish passage approval. Regional Solutions will be working closely with Trout Unlimited as we work to keep the progress moving forward.
- **Milton-Freewater Water Collaborative:** We had another meeting of the Oregon Solutions Milton-Freewater Water Collaborative meeting. During last week's meeting we finalized the MOU between the CTUIR, the Milton-Freewater Water Control District and the irrigation districts within the area. This MOU is designed to state the collaborative efforts for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) who are considering funding a general investigation study of a 10- mile stretch of the Walla Walla River within Milton-Freewater. This project has been moving along very smoothly and we expect the MOU to be signed by all the parties and we are working to gather 20+ letters of support to send to the USACOE over the next month. The main purpose of the Oregon Solutions project was to finalize this MOU so we are right along schedule.
- **Eastern Oregon Homebuilding CTE Program Development:** Regional Solutions is working with a housing developer out of La Grande to hopefully develop additional homebuilding CTE programs in high schools across Eastern Oregon. Both Baker and Ontario high schools are interested and there are a few other that might come through as well. We found out recently that DEQ has a \$25,000 grant through their materials management program that can be used toward curriculum and start-up costs for these new programs.

- **Lake Owyhee Road and Invasive Species Checkpoint Project:** Regional Solutions convened our second meeting of various state and federal agencies and partners (BLM, BOR, OPRD, State Marine Board, ODFW, ODOT, Malheur County, etc) to discuss our work towards identifying and applying for grant funding to address deferred maintenance on the Lake Owyhee Road and the development of a boat checkpoint on the way up to Lake Owyhee to ensure there aren't invasive aquatic species coming into the state. Overall, it was a good discussion and we are planning a field trip for late July for everyone to travel up the road to Lake Owyhee to start and prioritize areas where Malheur County will apply for funding through grant programs at US Bureau of Reclamation and ODOT. Additionally, we are scheduling additional meetings to discuss how to move forward on a feasibility study and options for a checkpoint. There are a lot of partners in this project but we definitely have some momentum right now.
- **John Day Wastewater Site Visit:** Regional Solutions team members joined with DEQ staff (permit writer and compliance, environmental engineering, funding and Eastern Region leadership) to meet with the city of John Day about their wastewater system upgrade and take a tour of the current wastewater system. The City of John Day has been working on developing a new wastewater system over the past eight years and due to changes within the city of John Day there has been a lot of shifts and changes with what the new system will look like. They are currently working on getting to final design and locking down funding so they can hopefully move to construction next summer. Additionally, the city was able to secure \$5 million in the end of session bill towards the project. Overall, the visit to John Day was great. It was wonderful for everyone to meet in person and for key DEQ staff to see the plans for the future system and troubleshoot a few key issues. Additionally, we were able to discuss a path forward where the city would be able to use DEQ funding and they were able to get more clarity about the process and what they need to do to move forward on the funding side.
- **Carcass Debris Removal Issues:** Regional Solutions met with ODFW and Defenders of Wildlife to discuss the need for a more statewide solution to carcass debris removal. This is an issue that continues to come up across the state but particularly in Eastern Oregon given the way that carcass debris can attract predators (including wolves). We talked about the regulatory issues with landfills through DEQ and the challenges that ODOT, ODFW and agricultural users have with removing carcass debris. It was clear that we need to bring the state agencies together to dig into this issue a bit more. Courtney is going to work on convening the agencies (ODOT, DEQ, ODFW and ODA) to continue the conversation.

South Coast – Jessica LaBerge

- **Southern Oregon Trade Careers Expo:** Coming this fall, Tuesday September 30th, 2025. Over 140 companies attend the Expo, which has free admission. It will be held at the Seven Feathers Convention Center in Canyonville. The Expo is for high school and college students from Lane, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Jackson, Josephine and Klamath counties; and adult job seekers including Veterans, active-duty military, spouses, and public and private agencies. [Link here for more information.](#)

Southern– Jessica LaBerge

- **Rogue Valley Food Systems Network**: RVFSN gave a great presentation this month to the Southern RS Team on their State of the Food System Rogue Valley Community Food Assessment Action Plan. There are many ways the RST, the RS Advisory Committee and the community can support their work and advancing opportunities for clean water & soil, increasing access to food grown locally, looking at policy that could be updated to better serve our region, decreasing food insecurity and so much more. RVFSN will give a presentation to the Southern RSAC in September, stay tuned or more information regarding that meeting. For more information on the RVFSN, their recent Assessment and Action Plan, and more, [please visit their website](#).
- **Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative**: I'm excited to share this success story and opportunity for support from Southern OR. The Collaborative originally reached out after they were notified that their EPA grant supporting their work was cancelled in March. They have a funding gap to keep their programming running, which supports local education initiatives, training teachers and students, career development, and student leadership. Since 2023 they have served over 2,200 students across 5 counties (Coos, Curry, Jackson, Josephine and Klamath); they have trained 148 teachers statewide in wildfire resilience curriculum; students have completed 782 hours of defensible space and fuel reduction service-learning; they have supported three High Schools developing CTE wildland firefighting programs in rural, fire prone communities. These programs have produced several youths now starting their own local fuels reduction business and other workforce opportunities out of this training. Jackson and Josephine counties rank in the 90th percentile nationally for wildfire risk and I see their efforts as highly influential across the state. RS is working with the Collaborative to identify potential funders and elevate this program within communities that support this work.
- **Oregon CEO Brian Hall Named Entrepreneur of the Year® 2025 Mountain West Winner**: Ernst & Young LLP (EY US) announced that Brian Hall, CEO of Southern Oregon-based [NIC Industries](#), was named an Entrepreneur of the Year 2025 Mountain West Award winner. Entrepreneur of the Year is the premier competitive awards program for entrepreneurs and leaders of high-growth companies. For 40 years, EY US has celebrated ambitious entrepreneurs who are transforming industries, impacting communities, and creating long-term value.

Hall was chosen by an independent panel of past winners, top CEOs, and business leaders. Judges assessed candidates on long-term value creation, entrepreneurial spirit, purpose-driven commitment and significant growth and impact.

Hall's award comes as NIC Industries is gaining a wider reputation as a manufacturer of world-class high-performance coatings, resulting in substantial company growth. The privately-owned Oregon company now maintains a network of over 4,000 certified applicators across the globe and has established a first-of-its-kind robotics application program used by major global manufacturers and defense agencies. Under Hall's leadership, NIC has evolved from a niche coatings manufacturer into one of the top 20 in

the United States by revenue. The company has developed expansive reach and secured retail partnerships with Walmart and Amazon – all while staying rooted in southern Oregon.

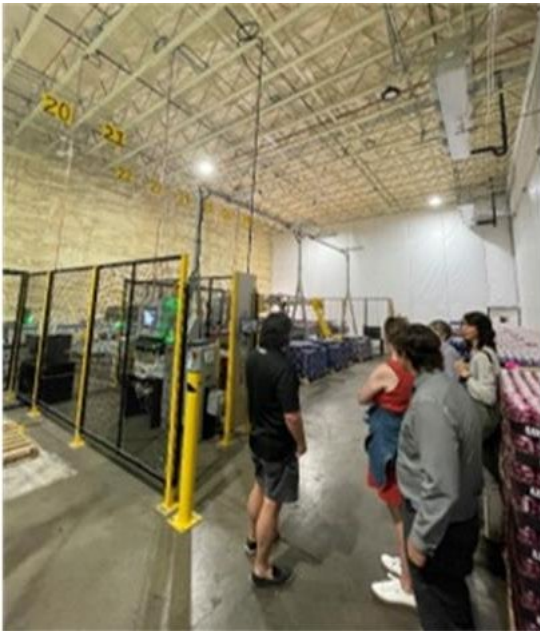
South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

- **Benton County Crisis Center Ribbon Cutting:** On Friday, June 20th Governor Kotek joined Congresswoman Val Hoyle, local leaders, and behavioral health service providers to mark the opening of the Benton County Crisis Center in Corvallis. This new facility will expand Benton County’s existing mental health crisis services to add additional staff and services, including crisis assessments, safe and supportive spaces for those individuals experiencing a crisis, short-term therapy, skills training and case management, and referrals for ongoing treatment and community resources. “This center is a result of our state’s ongoing work for more spaces and places for Oregonians to get the help they deserve,” Governor Kotek said. “It is the type of capacity that we need, where someone in crisis can stabilize in a safe space, and for those who need more time, a residential setting where they can stay up to 29 days and receive therapy, life skills training, case management, and connections to long-term care.” The Benton County Crisis Center received \$7.7 million in state and federal funding, including \$5.45 million from the Oregon Legislature in 2022 and an additional \$1.1 million from the Oregon Health Authority in 2023. “Benton County would not be opening this crisis center without tremendous support from the state, and it comes at a critical time,” said Benton County Commissioner Nancy Wyse. “The center will fill a gap in our community and allow our behavioral health team, community partners and law enforcement to work together to improve the continuum of care in the County. The need for services is growing, and this new facility increases our capacity to provide them.”



- **SVMC Regional Solutions Team Visit to Corvallis:** The South Valley/Mid-Coast Regional Solutions team visited Corvallis on June 17th. The visit included a walking tour of downtown Corvallis to highlight several active redevelopment projects, a discussion with the City Manager, Community Development Director, and Economic Development staff about the

city's economic development priorities and persistent challenges, and a tour of 2 Towns Ciderhouse's production facilities in South Corvallis. Some of the most significant barriers to economic development include the need for infrastructure investment in the city's industrial lands to ready them for development, the lack of rail access to the industrial park after the train trestle collapse earlier this year, power supply challenges, and the cost and uncertainty of wetlands permitting and mitigation. The Regional Solutions team will continue to work with Corvallis to utilize Business Oregon's industrial lands programs and keep engaging in conversations on wetlands and power supply that are recurrent barriers to projects in the Willamette Valley.



- **South Metro Wastewater Collaboration:** In the South Eugene/Springfield metro area, Lane County is working to extend wastewater service from the Metropolitan Waste Management Commission (MWMC) system that currently terminates in Springfield south to Goshen (unincorporated Lane County) and the Short Mountain Landfill. The City of Creswell has significant challenges with their wastewater system and is currently restricted from nearly all new development until they make improvements to this system. The city's preferred solution is to build off Lane County's proposed extension of wastewater service to Goshen and connect to MWMC. Conversations about this regionalization effort have been underway for the last couple of years and Regional Solutions recently stepped in to play a more direct coordinating role. This work includes convening local and regional partners and state agency staff to work through a variety of complex issues that need to be addressed to advance this regional approach, including planning, permitting, route coordination, and funding. Following two large coordinating meetings, we have developed three small workgroups to begin focusing on the details and will continue to check-in as a large group quarterly.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

- **Metro RSAC:** The Metro RSAC recently met to learn more about the impacts of tariffs on local businesses, state procurement processes, and to adopt a host of focus areas to further refine the Regional Priorities. They are:
 - Housing Production: 1) promote transit-oriented development and 2) increasing production of safe, responsive housing;
 - Community Resilience: 1) disaster preparedness 2) local, clean energy for increased resilience and 3) foster business connection, collaboration and information flow amongst businesses of all sizes;
 - Infrastructure: 1) active transportation safety and 2) improving water and wastewater capacity;
 - Workforce Issues: 1) holistically support workforce training tied to regional employment need 2) increase quantity and quality in the behavioral health workforce 3) improve the pipeline into the trades and 4) improve pipeline into and retention for childcare workforce; and
 - Small Business Development: 1) support mentorship opportunities for small businesses 2) improve recession and tariff resilience.
- **City of Banks:** Banks is growing, and growing fast! Aerts Addition is the redevelopment of a golf course into more than 900 homes, and all the essential infrastructure needed to create safe and welcoming neighborhoods. The developers recently hit a snag that Regional Solutions and the Governor's Housing Initiative Team were glad to assist with. Due to the nature of the development, Clean Water Services will need to add two pump stations. The building site of one of these stations is located near a small wetland, part of which overlaps with the footprint of the proposed building. Because the City of Banks did not have a pre-existing wetlands inventory, the Department of State Lands had some additional work to do in order to determine the appropriate way to permit the site. We were able to meet with both the developer and DSL to help explain the situation, and DSL was able to both reassure Clean Water Services and DEQ there would be a permit issued and to expedite the process. We really appreciate the partnerships with state agencies on moving forward with Governor Kotek's housing goals!

Resources and Opportunities

- **HUD Housing Affordability Funding – Apply by July 24**
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), through its Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R), has announced two new funding opportunities offering up to \$20 million in competitive research grants to address the housing affordability crisis and support evidence-based policy and innovative housing solutions.

Addressing the Housing Affordability Crisis Research Grant Program

This grant supports research in five key areas influencing housing affordability:

- Government-Induced Demand
- Immigration
- Financialization of Housing
- Economic Opportunity Costs
- Opportunity Zones

HUD seeks proposals that will deliver timely, policy-relevant findings, with early outputs encouraged within the first year.

Advancing Building Technology Grant Program

This program funds research on how innovative building technologies can increase housing supply. Focus areas include:

- Post-Disaster Housing Recovery
- HUD Code Reform
- Offsite and Emerging Technologies
- Innovative Financing
- Artificial Intelligence for Regulatory Relief

The program aligns with the January 20, 2025, Presidential Memorandum on reducing the cost of living and expanding housing supply.

How to Apply: Applications are due by July 24, 2025. Eligible applicants include universities, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit entities. Full details are available at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). For more information about these funding opportunities, visit [HUD User](#).

- **Business Oregon Child Care Facilities Funding Awards**

To address the shortage of local, affordable, quality childcare for Oregon's workforce, Business Oregon announces \$20 million in grant funding for 57 child care infrastructure projects to expand access to this critical resource throughout the state. Last week, recipients awarded in Round 2 of the [Child Care Infrastructure Fund \(CCIF\) program](#) received email notification of their award.

The demand for this program mirrored the demand for child care services, as Business Oregon received 697 applications in Round 2 with over \$279 million in requested funding. Fifty-seven projects were awarded for a total of \$20,046,607 in funding. Eligible projects in Round 2 included minor renovation and repairs, major renovation, or new construction and property acquisition. The final awards are currently still pending a signed contract with awarded entities.

The CCIF program has been helping improve and expand Oregon's child care facilities since 2024 when \$50 million in lottery bonds was approved by the Oregon Legislature at the recommendation of Governor Kotek to support this program. Business Oregon is working

with the Department of Early Learning and Care, other state agencies, as well as private and non-profit entities to implement the CCIF program.

The Child Care Infrastructure Program directly supports Governor Kotek's Education and Early Learning priority by expanding and improving child care infrastructure so that children in Oregon can thrive in their early learning environments and families are empowered with high-quality, affordable, and safe child care options.

Additionally, \$1,288,210 was awarded to child care programs operating in areas of the state near new or existing semiconductor facilities. This additional funding is the result of the CHIPS Child Care Fund (HB 4098, 2024). These funds helped support seven additional projects in Round 2 of the CCIF awards.

The first round of CCIF awards granted a total of \$10 million to 64 child care businesses in 29 different Oregon counties. Learn more about the Round 1 projects at www.oregon.gov/biz/.

Additional funding for CCIF program awards will become open for applications later in 2025. Round 3 will continue to address the needs of child care providers, ensuring that every dollar invested makes a meaningful difference in the availability and quality of child care services throughout Oregon.

All applicants received numerical scores and are encouraged to reapply in future rounds. Awardees or applicants who have questions regarding the CCIF program or their application are encouraged to contact a technical assistance provider directly using the information below.

- First Children's Finance:
Email: infoOregon@firstchildrensfinance.org
Phone: (503) 967-8600
- Northwest Native Chamber
Email: CCIFSupport@nwnco.org
Phone: (503) 894-4525