



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, August 11th, 2025

Regional Solutions Program Updates

Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meetings:

- [Central](#) (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties) August 15, 12-2pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
 - Sparks Lake Conference Rm, ODOT Building M, 63055 N Hwy 97, Bend, OR 97703
- [South Central](#) (Klamath and Lake Counties) August 26, 10:30am-12pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [South-Valley/Mid-Coast](#) (Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties) September 17, 1-3pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Southern](#) (Jackson and Josephine Counties) September 17, 1-3pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [South Coast](#) (Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties) September 19, 1-3pm
 - [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 Coast – Nate Stice

- **Tillamook Housing Commission:** The North Coast Team joined the Tillamook Housing Commission. The Team learned more about Tillamook’s County-wide housing needs analysis, and discussed the County’s plan to amend their current housing grant program to incorporate OHCS’s Moderate Income Revolving Loan Program (MIRL). MIRL offers a zero percent loan to communities to make grants to developers. The loan is paid back through a payment in lieu of taxes on the improvement value of a property. Tillamook County has two projects—a 72 units workforce housing project in the City of Tillamook and a 15-unit accessible home ownership project by Manzanita that they plan to use MIRL fund for. Their plan is to set up the program and have funds out the door by October, which would make them the first community to adopt and use MIRL. After the meeting, Tillamook Housing Coordinator Parker Sammons took the team to visit several housing sites throughout the county. Many thanks to Kieran Turnbull of the newly created HAPO office for joining the meeting.



South Coast Region – Jessica LaBerge

- **Drought declaration in Douglas County:** Governor Tina Kotek has declared a drought in Douglas, Morrow, and Union counties through Executive Order 25-18 and directed state agencies to coordinate and prioritize assistance to the region.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, Douglas County has been experiencing severe drought since July 15th. Additionally, below normal precipitation, above normal temperatures, below normal streamflow, and soil moisture conditions further indicate drought conditions are present in Douglas County. Drier and warmer than normal conditions during spring and early summer resulted in a decline in streamflow conditions despite normal to above normal snowpack conditions.

The Oregon Drought Readiness Council, a standing body composed of natural resource, public health, and emergency response agencies, heard from the Douglas County Board of Commissioners in July requesting the Governor’s drought declaration.

A link to Executive Order 25-18 can be found [here](#).

Southern Region – Jessica LaBerge

- **Business Incentives:** Business Oregon’s Regional Development Officer (RDO) hosted the Business Incentives Modernization Workshop in Medford on July 29th.



Business Oregon team members and the Smart Incentives Consultant Ellen Harpel presented to and led discussion among 20 attendees from Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath counties about the current state of business incentives offered in Oregon and cast a vision for what the incentives

modernization efforts and outcomes may look like. The outcomes and next steps identified once Business Oregon completes the statewide workshop series will be shared in the fall, possibly timed to coincide with the annual [OEDA conference](#). Attendees across public, not for profit, and private sector alike unanimously expressed interest in being engaged in the project as it rolls out and welcome a follow-up session in the region again. Thank you, Marta Tarantsey (RDO), for bringing this Southern Oregon!

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- **USDA-RD Introduction:** Members of our Regional Solutions team met with USDA-Rural Development state director Jim Carmack this week to talk about the timber industry in Eastern Oregon and how we can work together in the future. We discussed a number of opportunities across the region and will continue working together on projects as they continue to move toward implementation.

- **Super-NOVA (Nyssa, Ontario, Vale and Adrian):** The Super-NOVA group had their quarterly



meeting this week and heard a great update on the Grassy Mountain Mine project that is going through the consolidated permit process here in Oregon. Former Senator Lynn Findley shared the great progress that has been made over the past year and shared that almost all of the draft permits are completed. Additionally, the Super-NOVA group talked about the workforce needs that the mine will need and we’ve identified the need to bring a group of partners together to talk about developing some specific workforce training

programs that would train individuals for the jobs that will be needed at the mine. They are expecting over 110 positions with the average salary of \$100,000 for over ten years. All in all, the Super-NOVA group continues to provide a great venue for partners to come together and share updates and discuss how we can help progress economic and community development in the region.

- **Lake Owyhee Field Trip:** Regional Solutions hosted a field trip with the following agencies (ODFW, OPRD, OSMB, ODOT, BLM, BOR, Owyhee Irrigation District, Malheur County commissioner, sheriff and economic development, Sen. Merkley's and Congressman Bentz's offices) to Lake Owyhee this week to discuss multiple projects that we are jointly working on. First, we stopped at a site where Malheur County and the Owyhee Irrigation District want to develop a boat inspection location. This would help ensure that no zebra or quagga mussels get into Lake Owyhee and Oregon. Currently there is a boat inspection station on the state line on I-84 at Ontario, however, no Idaho boater would pass that inspection station on their way to Lake Owyhee (they would cut south and enter the state near the town of Adrian. The site that they are interested in is on BLM land so we discussed the next steps needed with that agency. We also got suggestions from ODOT, ODFW and OSMB on what would work best at the site.

We also discussed the two grant applications that are available (one through BOR and one through ODOT) to address road maintenance issues along the 18-mile drive to the state park on Lake Owyhee. Malheur County Economic Development will be working with both of those agencies to get started on those grant applications. Next, we learned about the potential upgrades that OPRD is looking at doing at the state park and the funding request they currently have into BOR for those upgrades. Finally, we visited the boat inspection station in Ontario to see what would be needed at the checkpoint near the reservoir. Overall, it was an incredible day and everyone is really committed to trying to make some headway on these projects and sees a lot of benefits including:



- Reducing the threat of aquatic invasive species and the devastation it would have on the agricultural community
- Improving the road for safety
- Creating a checkpoint that would help to deter illegal behaviors that occur along this stretch of the river
- Improving the experience for state park guests



- **Eastern Oregon Economic Summit:** I attended the annual Eastern Oregon Economic Summit put on by the Eastern Oregon Women's Coalition (chaired by Rep. Bobby Levy). As always it was a great crowd (over 350 attendees) and lots of opportunities to connect with Eastern Oregon leaders and state agency partners. There was great representation from state agency partners and lots of discussions about energy in the region.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

- **Estacada Industrial Park Tour:** As part of their National Night Out festivities, several of the businesses located in Estacada's Industrial Park opened their doors to community leaders. Several RS team members joined the tour to hear directly from business owners about the fascinating work they perform in their facilities.

We visited Locke Industries, makers of pole buildings and the new owners of the 90-acre former mill site in the heart of Estacada. They shared their vision for what amounts to a second town center for this rapidly-growing community, one that includes housing of all types and affordability, retail and commercial space, and various greenspace amenities.



Sauter Timber opened the doors to their 45,000 sf manufacturing plant, made entirely of mass timber and filled with multimillion-dollar, state of the art CNC machinery. They do not manufacture mass timber on site and instead focus on the precision shaping and cutting of mass timber panels, beams and more. When they are operational, they will have 25 full time employees and room to grow. This is just the second US-based plant for this German company.



Glaziers Local 740 was proud to show off their brand-new training facility, also located in the industrial park. The building represents a \$3M investment by the union in future workers. Apprentices enroll in the program for four years, with 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and more than 500 hours of class work, which is performed at the facility in week-long blocks over the four years.



The tour's final stop featured NW Technologies, an advanced metals manufacturer who makes everything from basic metal components that go on to be finished by other companies to complete cutting, shaping and welding to a final product. Their products are part of the assemblage for products made by over a hundred companies. Our tour guide explained how they continually seek opportunities to upskill employees, who may start out making basic welds, on to eventually operating robotic lasers and precision computer-aided fabrication machines. For them, the advances in computing representing an opportunity to create more jobs, and more highly-skilled jobs, not worker displacement.



Thanks to the City of Estacada and all the business leaders who helped put this together!

- **Willamette Falls Trust Funding:** In the recent legislative session, the Legislature voted to commit \$45 million in lottery bond funds to assist the Willamette Falls Trust in their effort to purchase the former West Linn Paper Mill site from Portland General Electric. Governor Kotek has a long history of advocacy for public access to Willamette Falls, which is one of the largest waterfalls by volume in North America, and for regional ownership and management of the Willamette Falls Locks. The Willamette Falls Trust was a willing partner with the Governor's Office in working through agreements to further clarify steps and accountability for this significant investment of public dollars. Regional Solutions has a long history of engagement in many projects working to restore and redevelop the area around the Falls, and we anticipate many opportunities to engage with the Trust as they work toward site acquisition.

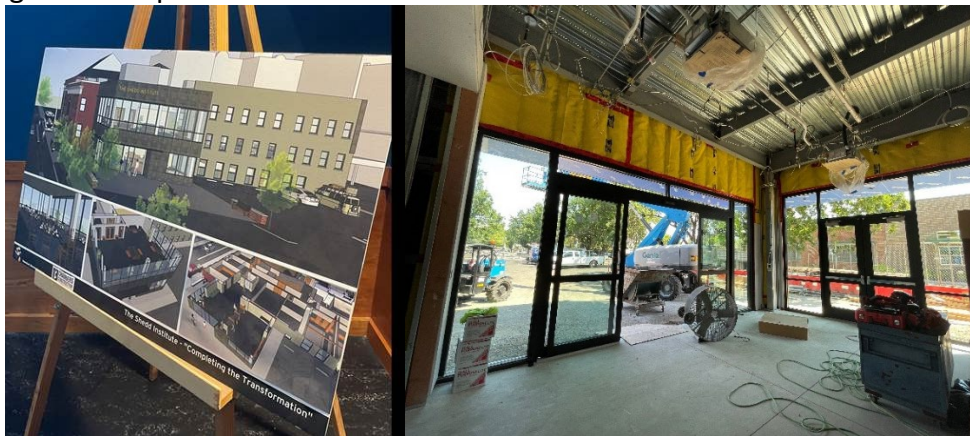
South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

- **Van Buren Bridge Project (Corvallis):** One lane of eastbound traffic and a new multi-use path are now open on the Van Buren Bridge in Corvallis. This \$85 million project, funded by the state legislature with the passage of House Bill 2017 in 2017, aims to ensure a safe and earthquake-ready bridge over the Willamette River on eastbound OR 34. The new bridge is built to modern seismic safety standards and is much stronger than the original 1913 structure. There is also progress on Van Buren Street, where a new protected bike lane,

sidewalks, and curb ramps that meet ADA standards are underway. The next major step of the project is removing the two temporary bridges. Additional paving, completion of the multi-use path, and landscaping will continue into 2026. Congratulations to ODOT and local partners for reaching this significant milestone in this important project!



- **The Shedd Institute North Entrance Remodel Project:** I recently had the opportunity to join Business Oregon staff on a tour of the John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts in Eugene. The Shedd received \$1.6 million from the Cultural Resources Economic Fund (CREF) to help fund the North Entrance Remodel project, making it ADA accessible and creating other improvements surrounding the entrance. The CREF administered by Business Oregon provides capital funding for arts, culture, heritage, and humanities projects. This project will significantly improve accessibility and the visitor experience for guests and performers alike.



- **Sierra Pacific Industries Strategic Investment Program Award:** In July, the Oregon Business Development Commission (the commission overseeing Business Oregon's activities) voted unanimously to approve Sierra Pacific Industries' (SPI) application to the Oregon Strategic Investment Program (SIP) for a planned \$253 million investment in the company's sawmill in Eugene. The tax incentive was unanimously approved by the Lane County Board of Commissioners on June 10th. The SIP allows businesses to forego paying property taxes for 15 years on capital investments such as new equipment. Under this program, SPI anticipates savings of approximately \$6 million over that time. Ultimately,

their investment in this project will generate \$21.9 million in new property taxes and services revenue. This includes an estimated \$19.9 million from new assessed property taxes and \$2 million in Community Service Fee (CSF) payments. The company also plans to make a voluntary, one-time \$525,000 contribution to Lane County's rural patrol program. SPI employs 350 people at its Eugene mill and is a leader in sustainable forestry and manufacturing. Across Lane County, the company also has a sawmill in Noti, nearly 33,000 acres of sustainably managed forests, and a total employment of nearly 500 people. The Strategic Investment Program was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1993 to support large capital investments by companies that create long-term economic value. The program provides temporary property tax abatement to encourage companies to invest in local operations, retain jobs, and strengthen the local tax base over time. Urban SIP projects, including this project, require a minimum investment of \$150 million with companies continuing to pay property taxes on the first \$100 million of that investment.

Resources and Opportunities

- **Business Oregon Grants for Organizations Providing Small Business Technical Assistance**

To ensure that technical assistance for underrepresented and underserved small businesses is widely available and accessible across the state, Business Oregon is pleased to announce that a Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) is now open for the Technical Assistance for Underrepresented Businesses program. A total of \$4,500,000 in grant funding is expected to be available to create a cohort of technical assistance service providers.

The Technical Assistance for Underrepresented Businesses program supports organizations that offer culturally competent and geographically aligned technical assistance (TA) resources to small businesses that are underrepresented or underserved. TA refers to the education, resources, and guidance provided to entrepreneurs and small business owners to help them start, sustain, and grow their businesses. Examples of TA assistance include business plan review and editing, marketing support, mentoring and business coaching, financial education and credit counseling, web development, and referrals and resource navigation, among others.

Interested organizations are invited to submit applications by Thursday, September 4, 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted. The awarded TA service providers will have until June 30, 2027, to provide services to small businesses.

Business Oregon is hosting virtual information sessions for those interested in learning more about this RFGA on:

- Wednesday, August 13, 2025, from 2:30PM - 4PM PDT – [Register here.](#)
- Tuesday, August 26, 2025, from 11AM - 12:30PM PDT – [Register here.](#)

For more information and to access the RFGA, please visit www.oregon.gov/biz/programs/.

- **ODA Specialty Crop Block Grant Survey**

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is urging all members of the specialty crop industry to take part in an important new survey. Scan the Code Below to take the 10 min survey! This survey aims to gather feedback that will help shape the future of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and identify the types of projects that should receive funding.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), specialty crops are defined as “fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture)”. ODA invites anyone involved in any sector of agriculture related to the crops listed above to participate in the survey.

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8404147/Specialty-Crop-Block-Grant-Program-Program-Survey>

- **Business Oregon Child Care Infrastructure Fund – Third Round Applications Open Sept. 17**

The Child Care Infrastructure Fund (CCIF) team at Business Oregon is happy to announce that the third round of the CCIF grant will open on September 17th. If Round 3 is anything like Rounds 1 & 2, you should expect a high degree of interest this third round of the CCIF grant. Round 3 will close on December 16th.

Changes you can expect for Round 3:

- Minor changes to the CCIF application, these will include minor wording and instructional changes
- Minor updates to the Guidelines and RFGA that will not impact eligibility
- Updated Child Care Desert prioritization scoring, based on an updated report to be published by Oregon State University

The updated Guidelines and RFGA will be available by September 3, 2025.

Here are three things you can do to prepare for Round 3:

1. Review your application and the scores you received following Round 2
2. Contact your local CCR&R to find out if there are community needs you can address in your application
3. Contact our TA providers early for additional support in updating your application:
 - a. First Children's Finance
 - i. Email: infoOregon@firstchildrensfinance.org
 - ii. Phone: 503-967-8600
 - b. Northwest Native Chamber
 - i. Email: CCIFSupport@nwnc.org
 - ii. Phone: 503-894-4525

- **Energy Trust Seeking Public Comment on [Draft 2026-2030 Multiyear Plan](#)**

Read the plan and submit your comments at [EnergyTrust.org/MultiyearPlan](https://energytrust.org/MultiyearPlan). The multiyear plan builds on their [2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#), which anticipates growing needs and opportunities to ensure access to reliable and affordable energy for customers. Developed through a collaborative process with utility partners and stakeholders, the multiyear plan will result in increased investment and ways to partner with Energy Trust and, most importantly, significant benefits and impacts for customers.

Under this plan, Energy Trust aims to help more Oregonians create safer, more comfortable and more energy resilient homes and businesses. This will result in significant benefits for customers and utilities including \$6.8 billion in savings on customer energy bills, \$1.9 billion in net benefits to the utility system and 11.6 million metric tons of carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions avoided.

Here's how you can get involved:

- [Read the Draft 2026-2030 Multiyear Plan](#)
- Join the webinar [Aug. 18 from 9-11 a.m.](#) to hear Energy Trust's executive director, Michael Colgrove, present highlights of the draft plan and answer questions
- Attend office hours [Sept. 5 from 9-10 a.m.](#) and [Sept. 8 from 1-2 p.m.](#) to ask questions
- Information on the plan will also be presented at an [Aug. 6](#) meeting of Energy Trust's board of directors and an [Aug. 7](#) joint meeting of their advisory councils

Comments will be accepted through September 15 online at energytrust.org ; via email to info@energytrust.org; or by mail to Energy Trust of Oregon, Attention: Multiyear Plan, 421 SW Oak St., Suite 300, Portland, OR, 97204.