



Wednesday, September 10th, 2025

Regional Solutions Program Updates

Regional Solutions Staff Transition

It is with mixed emotions that we announce that Regional Solutions Assistant Zach Piippo will be leaving the team to take a promotion within the Governor's Office. Zach will be shifting to the role of Executive Appointments Coordinator, which will be a wonderful fit for his skillset. We're so appreciative of all of Zach's work over the past two and a half years on behalf of the Regional Solutions Program – please join us in wishing him well in his new role!

We are excited to share that Tyler Andrews will be stepping into Zach's former position as our new Regional Solutions Assistant starting September 15th. Tyler has been serving as scheduler for the Governor's Housing Team, and brings a strong knowledge of the office to the role. Please help welcome Tyler to the team!

Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meetings

- [Central](#) (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties) September 12, 12-1pm
 - [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](#)
- [Greater Eastern](#) (Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, and Wheeler Counties) September 22, 1-3pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [South Central](#) (Klamath and Lake Counties) September 24, 9-11am
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Mid-Valley](#) (Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties) October 9, 1:30-3:30pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
- [Northeast](#) (Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties) October 14, 2-4pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)

- **Regional Solutions Presentation at the Oregon Infrastructure Summit**

This week, Regional Solutions hosted a Workshop and Roundtable at the [2025 Oregon Infrastructure Summit](#), focused on offering creative approaches to advancing infrastructure projects in communities of all sizes, particularly in rural Oregon. We shared how the Regional Solutions program can help foster collaboration across the state by connecting communities wrestling with common challenges, and brought together a panel of speakers who described their experiences of managing through shifting times and adapting to disruptions in four key areas:

- Titus Tomlinson, Program Director for the Resource Assistance for Rural Environments or RARE AmeriCorps Program, spoke to the topic of capacity.
- Paul Matthews, Chief Executive Officer of the Tualatin Valley Water District, spoke about regionalization and partnerships.
- Shannon Beaucaire, City Manager of Carlton, talked about project scaling and adaptation amid funding disruption.
- Tillamook County Commissioner Erin Skaar discussed ways to successfully bring the community along when faced with making tough decisions.

Our panelists then led small group discussions where attendees could share ideas and workshop current projects and needs. We hope this workshop provided an opportunity to learn from one another and identify ways to expand creative approaches and try new ideas in new places. Thank you to the panel for sharing your expertise with our participants.



Regional Updates

Southern – Jessica LaBerge

- **Rogue Water Forum:** Regional Solutions joined a well-attended Forum on the current state and future of the Rogue Valley's water. Presenters, a panel discussion, group discussions and networking allowed a full room to listen, absorb, and provide feedback on a variety of subtopics, and information focused on level setting the tone of the day. Local water operators, food producers, irrigation districts, elected officials, local government, nonprofits, associations, state government and many more were on hand to share and engage on this enormous topic. This forum was part of a larger place-based planning process (PBP) and opportunities through Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) and other state agencies to provide guidance, funding, and technical assistance to place-based initiatives to bring interested parties together, develop and update plans, and coordinate plan implementation. OWRD anticipates awarding new PBP grants in early 2026. [Visit OWRD for more information.](#) Special thanks to Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District, Oregon State University, OWRD, Rogue Valley Food Systems Network, Rogue River Watershed Council, Oregon Consensus, and others for encouraging collaboration and an open dialog about how we can be part of a solution to a very complex subject matter.



- **City of Rogue River:** Regional Solutions was onsite recently to talk and tour with the city regarding water infrastructure concerns including bank erosion, soil slippage and winter weather/high water scenarios. RS is pulling together a small team of state agencies to add capacity to Rogue River for planning, permitting, and funding opportunities. Many rural communities have infrastructure challenges and Rogue River is not alone. The cost to communities to keep these often-unseen undergrown operations in good working health continues to rise and requires considerable planning and expenses on the local municipality. I look forward to sharing a success story with you all in a future Exchange.

- **Mercy Flights:** RS & Business Oregon recently visited with Executive Director Sheila Clough from Mercy Flights to better understand operations, opportunities for RS Team engagement and discussion around programing. Mercy Flights is a Medford based not for profit who has been in operations for over 75 years. Committed to patient care they have created a Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) program. Starting in 2016, Mercy Flights launched this unique program providing personalized healthcare at the convenience of a patient's home. This care is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team that receives specialty training to deliver it. The healthcare continuum in the United States is overdue for a change in how we provide patient care, and the Mercy Flights MIH Team has been positioned to transform the pre-hospital and post-patient approach. [Visit the Mercy Flights website for more information.](#)

Mid-Valley – Beth Wytoski

- **Revino Bottles:** Newberg-based Revino was recently awarded \$250,000 from the state's Strategic Reserve Fund to support the expansion of the "nation's first reusable wine bottle ecosystem." The company operates a circular glass system that makes and washes wine bottles which drastically reduces waste and shipping related emissions. The bottles can be used up to 50 times, cutting glass costs for the bottlers as well. More than 100 wineries have committed to partnering with the innovative company, which will soon be able to come to fruition, as they expand their bottle washing facility. The following was taken from the Business Oregon press release: "Through this project, Oregon has the unique opportunity to continue leading the country in sustainable agriculture and industry practices, while strengthening our wine industry and creating new jobs," said Sophorn Cheang, Director of Business Oregon. "Oregon's wine industry is extremely competitive, and Revino, Inc.'s bottle washing and reuse program will help maintain that competitiveness by firming up its supply chain." After meeting the founders nearly two years ago, I have been a proud supporter of their efforts and I am so excited follow their journey and track the differences they will make. Congratulations, Revino!



- **Economic Development:** I have been enjoying opportunities to join economic development partners on business tours to establish connections and build relationships that encourage candid conversations about community partnerships, natural resources, workforce/labor issues, and other policies.

1. With the McMinnville Economic Development Partnership, I visited Precision Analytical and learned about their hormone testing and the world of functional medicine. Founded in 2012, the facility hosts office space and a significant lab where chemists process samples that patients have collected with the at-home urine collection kit. There are kits for cycle tracking and hormone analysis to help with conception, but most of their work is identifying imbalances and deficiencies related

to nutrition, oxidative stress, gut health, melatonin and more than could explain common symptoms such as fatigue, hair loss, mood swings, and weight gain, helping patients to make adjustments to lifestyle and avoiding or delaying medication. One challenge they are experiencing, is difficulty in recruiting for leadership and lab staff. In order to remain certified, they have certain educational requirements that are somewhat short in the region, so they must employ out-of-state medical consultants and recruit lab technicians straight from education programs to meet their needs. They have found limitations in the workforce willing to relocate so they are hiring many positions with virtual and hybrid work requirements, though they would prefer to have more in person work.

A single test
gives the
full picture



2. With SEDCOR, the regional strategic economic development corporation, I visited Durant - the Oregon Olive Mill. We heard about the family's history; how they searched for a farm in the area, but could only buy in the (previously) undesirable area of the Dundee Hills, which has now been completely transformed, hosting several premier Yamhill County wineries. After trying some other ventures first, Paul explained that his parents decided to try grapes, mostly because his dad was wine making as a hobby. Although their wines are now well known, they are still sold direct-to-consumer. In 2008, the family added olive trees and a processing plant. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to maintain healthy olive trees in Oregon, so while they do continue to grow locally, they also source olives from California to meet their needs. Durant is the only Olioteca in the Pacific Northwest and now offers infused blends and several award-winning products. Their biggest challenge is sourcing quality olives, but global markets also bring some interesting issues, since most olive oil sold on store shelves is imported, and roughly 80% of imported oil is fraudulently labeled as pure olive oil, when it is, in fact, often soybean or other oils (which is something the U.S. does not test). My favorites are the Tuscan and garlic-infused oil and the peach vinegar is amazing in dressings or on sandwiches. If you visit for a tasting, let me know your favorites during our next visit.



While there are several more business visits on the horizon, I am also booking out my calendar for city and county visits to talk through priorities, projects, and potential! Reach out to schedule a visit with me and let me know if you would like other agency partners to join us.

North Coast – Nate Stice

- **North Tillamook Water Outreach Meeting:** On September 4, the Governor’s Regional Solutions Team facilitated a North Tillamook Water Coordination meeting at the request of Tillamook County Commissioner Erin Skaar. The meeting brought together local governments, state agencies, and nonprofit partners to discuss water supply challenges, infrastructure conditions, and legal questions related to development. Participants included representatives from the cities of Manzanita, Wheeler, and Nehalem, the Neahkahnie Water District, and agencies, including Business Oregon, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), the Department of State Lands (DSL), and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Local systems reported aging infrastructure, seasonal supply constraints, and unresolved water rights. Neahkahnie is managing debt from a watershed acquisition, while Manzanita and Wheeler are addressing staffing and system upgrades. Nehalem remains stable but cautious.

Participants expressed interest in regional collaboration, including shared staffing, emergency interties, and revisiting a 1990s regional water study. Workforce capacity and training partnerships were also discussed. Agencies shared funding and technical assistance resources, including Business Oregon’s planning grants, OHA’s Circuit Rider Program, and DEQ’s source water protection workshops. Next steps include gauging local interest in collaboration, identifying additional stakeholders, and coordinating with the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District (ColPac) on a potential regional water supply study.

North Central – Nate Stice

- **Rowena Fire Recovery:** Team members participated in several key meetings supporting long-term recovery efforts following the Rowena Fire:
 - **Rowena Fire Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) Meeting:**
The group shared updates on housing, infrastructure, communications, and environmental recovery. Guest speaker Devin Thompson from the McKenzie River Valley LTRG discussed strategies for addressing unmet needs. Topics included communications planning, city service feasibility, and coordination on environmental assessments.
 - **Willamette Partnership Technical Assistance Kickoff:**
Regional Solutions helped bring Willamette Partnership into the recovery effort to support technical planning on water and wastewater/septic concerns. The meeting focused on several key deliverables: developing roadmaps for decentralized drinking water and clustered septic systems, and supporting funding applications.

- **LTRG Housing Subcommittee Meeting:**

The subcommittee featured a guest presentation by Alex Annand from CASA of Oregon, who shared insights on developing cooperative housing communities, particularly in post-fire recovery contexts. Regional Solutions helped facilitate this connection. The group also reviewed updates from Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC), state and county partners, and discussed current housing challenges and opportunities.

*****Special thanks to Willamette Partnership and CASA of Oregon for their partnership and contributions to the Rowena Fire recovery efforts.*****

South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

- **Regional Solutions Team Visit to Sweet Home:** Many thanks to the City of Sweet Home for hosting the South Valley/Mid-Coast Regional Solutions team last week! During our visit we heard an update on the city's wastewater treatment plant project and toured the city's drinking water treatment plant. At the water treatment plant, we learned about the city's efforts to secure two generators to ensure the city can supply residents with clean water in the event of a power outage or disaster and discussed the city's preparations for the annual drawdown of Green Peter Reservoir. We then ventured downtown where we toured a building the city purchased in hopes of establishing a new anchor business in the downtown core through a public-private partnership. We also discussed opportunities to develop further plans for the surrounding downtown plaza area. We ended our visit at Quarry Park, a 230-acre parcel owned by the city where they are exploring ways to develop recreational opportunities and draw visitors to the area.



- **Elm Park Development Groundbreaking (Florence):** On August 25th I was honored to join the groundbreaking event for the Elm Park Planned Unit Development in Florence. This development includes a 32-unit apartment project serving families with incomes between 30% and 60% AMI and a co-located early learning center. This project is made possible by a

\$1.9 million state investment from SB 1530 (2024) that is paying for the infrastructure that opens this area to development. Other state investment in the housing project includes an OHCS LIFT Loan (\$11.83 million) and a \$1.85 million low-interest loan through the Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program. The Elm Park Early Learning Center is supported by \$1.43 million in grant and loan funding through BuildUp Oregon and a \$2 million grant from Business Oregon's Child Care Infrastructure Fund. Congratulations to all the partners that contributed to the success of this project!



Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- **Highway 20 Safe Passage and Wildlife Habitat Collaborative:** Last week, Oregon Solutions convened a webinar on the Highway 20 Safe Passage and Wildlife Habitat Collaborative project. The Burns Paiute Tribe, ODFW, ODOT, Regional Solutions and Oregon Solutions all participated in the webinar that was designed to get stakeholders and partners up to speed on the progress that has been made over the past two years on this project. The official kick-off to this Oregon Solutions project will happen later this month on Sept. 16th in Juntura. In addition to the project kickoff meeting, there will be a community open forum to hear from the community about the project. It's exciting to see this project get off the ground!
- **New City Manager in La Grande:** Regional Solutions was able to meet with John O'Brien, the new city manager in La Grande who is taking over from Robert Strobe after his retirement later this fall. It was a great opportunity to share more about the services that Regional Solutions provides and talk about opportunities to work together in the future. Regional Solutions is currently working with both Union County and the City of La Grande on the water and wastewater extensions to the Union County fairgrounds and it is exciting to have a new partner in John. Welcome John!!

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

- **Governor Hosts Energy Bill Signing:** Governor Kotek hosted a ceremonial signing for a bipartisan slate of energy legislation at The Dolores, a 67-unit community currently under construction in Hillsboro. State Senator Khanh Pham (D-Portland), State Representative Pam Marsh (D-Ashland), Hillsboro Mayor Beach Pace, 2025 Kid Governor Rosie Lanenga, and Anahí Segovia Rodriguez, Energy Justice Coordinator at Verde joined the governor in celebrating this important package of bills with a crowd of advocates for consumer protections, energy stewardship, and affordable housing development. The four energy bills will lower costs for households, increase accountability for major energy users, and expand assistance for low-income Oregonians. After the event, Hacienda CDC staff led tours of The Dolores, which received funding from the Oregon Multifamily Energy Program and is built with energy



efficiency and low utility costs in mind: there are solar panels on the roofs, native landscaping, and mini-splits in every unit. Apartments range from one to four bedrooms and provide ample natural light and views to the playground and courtyard. The apartments are designated for community members earning 60% of the Area Median Income and below.

Resources and Opportunities

- **Mass Timber Construction & Housing Development Webinar on September 11th**

The Cascades West Council of Governments is hosting a webinar workshop to provide a brief orientation to mass, cross laminated timber, and engineered wood, its construction and housing development use, and permitting, building, and planning code requirements. CEUs are available from the Oregon Home Builders Association.

The free webinar takes place on Thursday, September 11th, from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. Attend the Webinar and Register at this [Link](#).

- **2025 Age-Friendly Oregon Summit: Thursday, September 18th**

Did you know that adults over the age of 65 now outnumber youth under 18 in Oregon? This historic shift is transforming our state — and it's an opportunity to reimagine a future that supports livable communities for people of all ages and abilities. Join age-friendly champions from across the state to hear from subject matter experts, visionary leaders and fellow community members. The 2025 Age-Friendly Oregon Summit brings together policy makers, advocates for older adults and people with disability, livability and intergenerational advocates, and diverse Oregonians interested in making Oregon a great place for people of all ages and abilities. [Register Here!](#)

- **Provide Comments on the FEMA BiOp Draft EIS by October 6th**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently published their Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the BiOp in the [Federal Register](#), which is available at FEMA's [NEPA Repository](#).

Communities, agencies, and the public are encouraged to review the Draft EIS and share input on the action alternatives and what the benefits and impacts might be on people, communities, endangered species and the environment. FEMA is holding several virtual meetings to discuss their DEIS – details and meeting registration can be found on FEMA's [project website](#). Upcoming opportunities to engage are listed below:

- Visit the [virtual open house](#) and learn more about the Draft EIS and the Draft Implementation Plan for NFIP-ESA Integration
- Virtual meetings will be held:
 - [Thursday, Sept. 11](#): 6 to 8 p.m. PDT.
 - [Wednesday, Sept. 30](#), 6 to 8 p.m. PDT.

You can offer [comments online](#) by October 6, 2025, to FEMA as they may relate to your subject matter expertise or attend one of FEMA's meetings to learn more.

- **2025-2027 DLCD Technical Assistance Grants: Apply by October 10th**

The Department of Land Conservation and Development is pleased to offer grant awards for land use planning projects in Oregon communities during the 2025-2027 biennium. If your community or organization is considering a planning project that is eligible for Technical Assistance grant funding, please complete and submit an application. The form and instructions are available at <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/CPU/Pages/Community-Grants.aspx>. If you experience difficulty accessing the materials, please contact Gordon Howard, Community Services Division Manager at 503-856-6935 or DLCD.GFGrant@dlcd.oregon.gov.

Please contact the DLCD regional representative for your region or community for guidance prior to submitting the application. You can find a current list of regional representatives at <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/CPU/Pages/Regional-Representatives.aspx>.

Technical assistance grant applications are due no later than October 10, 2025. The grant awards will be determined through a competitive process based on program priorities contained in the Grants Allocation Plan approved by the Land Conservation and Development Commission and evaluation criteria explained in the application packet.

- **Community Green Infrastructure Grants: Apply by October 13th**

DLCD's Community Green Infrastructure Program (CGI) supports projects that bring green infrastructure into Oregon communities. This includes:

- Planting or building green infrastructure that benefits people and ecosystems
- Growing and supplying native plants and seeds
- Creating green infrastructure master plans

Green infrastructure consists of nature-based systems that increase community resilience by managing stormwater, reducing heat, restoring landscapes, and providing a wide array of other benefits. Examples of green infrastructure include trees, rain gardens, bioswales, and green roofs.

DLCD is accepting applications for the CGI Grant Program until Monday October 13, 2025. Learn about [grant requirements](#) and how to apply on the [CGI website](#).

- **September is National Preparedness month: Be 2 Weeks Ready**

Disasters can happen at any time—wildfires, floods, heatwaves, ice storms, or even a major earthquake. In Oregon, being prepared can make a lifesaving difference. During September, Oregonians are encouraged to focus on disaster preparedness as part of National Preparedness Month, supported by FEMA and the Oregon Department of Emergency Management.

The Oregon Department of Emergency Management has a helpful ‘Be 2 Weeks Ready’ toolkit, available online in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese, with American Sign Language videos coming soon. The toolkit provides practical guidance for individuals, families, and communities to get ready for emergencies and practice preparedness together.

The Be 2 Weeks Ready program is designed for neighborhood groups, faith organizations, 4-H clubs, schools, workplaces, and other community groups. By collaborating, these groups can improve readiness and test emergency skills. One way to practice is through the Great Oregon Camp-In, happening the weekend after the Great ShakeOut on October 16. Participants spend time without electricity or running water, testing their preparedness in a safe, practical way. If an overnight event isn’t possible, even a few hours or a full day without conveniences is a helpful exercise.

Being ready means more than just having supplies; it’s about knowledge, skills, and community support. This September, take the time to plan, practice, and help your community prepare for the unexpected. For the Be 2 Weeks Ready Toolkit and more preparedness resources, visit Oregon.gov/OEM