



RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, October 6th, 2025

Regional Solutions Updates

Upcoming RS Advisory Committee Meetings

Mid-Valley (Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties)

Thursday, October 9th from 1:30-3:30pm

Chemeketa Community College (Salem); Building 9, Room 128

[Virtual Link](#)

Central (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties)

Friday, October 10th from 2:00-4:00pm

Redmond City Hall; City Manager's conference room

[Virtual Link](#)

Northeast (Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties)

Tuesday, October 14th from 2:00-4:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

South Coast (Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties)

Wednesday, December 3rd from 11:00am-1:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

North Coast (Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties)

Wednesday, December 10th from 3:00-5:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)



Regional Updates

South Coast – Jessica LaBerge

AOC District 4 meeting: The recent Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) District 4 meeting reflected a tone and set of concerns very similar to those expressed at the recent League of Oregon Cities (LOC) gathering in Jacksonville. A central topic of discussion was the ongoing impact of Measures 5 and 50 on the financial health of local governments. Concerns from County governments included a shared challenge in maintaining essential public services under current fiscal constraints and long-term sustainability of County services. County Commissioners were especially vocal about the long-term financial sustainability of county operations. Several emphasized the urgency of addressing these issues to ensure counties can continue to meet the needs of their communities.

Port of Coos Bay Hi-Rail Tour: As part of the lead-up to the Oregon Coast Economic Summit, RS participated in a Hi-Rail tour of the Port of Coos Bay's Pacific Coast Intermodal Project (PCIP). The tour was conducted in coordination with the Coastal Caucus and several former local elected officials, offering a firsthand look at the infrastructure and scope of the PCIP.



The day began at the Port of Coos Bay offices, where participants received a comprehensive presentation on the PCIP, followed by a safety briefing. We then traveled by truck north to Reedsport, where we boarded the rail line and continued south to Lakeside via Hi-Rail vehicles.

This unique tour provided valuable insight into the current condition of the rail infrastructure and the significant upgrades required to support the future container terminal operations.

Key Infrastructure Highlights included tunnel expansions with nine tunnels along the route requiring expansion to accommodate modern freight operations; roughly 120 water crossings must be secured and upgraded; track improvements - the entire line from the North Spit to Eugene (roughly 139 miles) will be upgraded with new ballast rock, crossing ties, and rail lines; and the project is committed to incorporating green technologies for the transportation of goods, aligning with broader environmental and economic goals.

The Hi-Rail tour provided a valuable preview of the transformative potential of the PCIP. The scale of the infrastructure improvements underscores the



importance of continued investment and collaboration to ensure the success of this critical economic development initiative for the Oregon Coast.

The 2025 Oregon Coast Economic Summit: This year's Summit brought together state leaders, coastal policymakers, and innovative changemakers for two days of future-focused discussion, collaboration, and community building. The event serves as a platform for exploring the challenges and

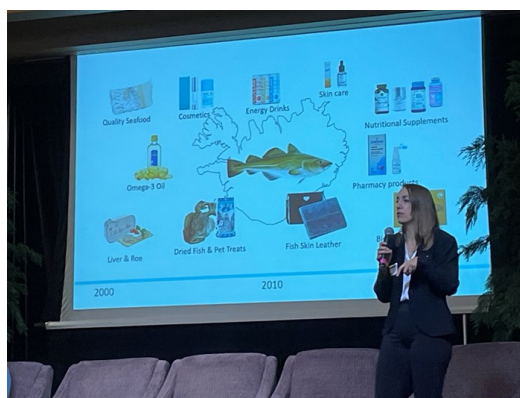
opportunities facing Oregon's coastal communities, with a strong emphasis on bipartisan cooperation and long-term vision.

Organized by the Oregon Legislative Coastal Caucus, the Summit is uniquely led by elected officials and designed to foster respectful, cross-sector dialogue among lawmakers, agency leaders, and community stakeholders. The Oregon Legislative Coastal Caucus is a bipartisan group of legislators representing coastal districts from Astoria to Brookings. The Caucus is chaired by Representative David Gomberg (D-Otis), with Senator David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford) serving as Vice-Chair. Additional members include Senators Dick Anderson (R-Lincoln City) and Suzanne Weber (R-Tillamook), and Representatives Boomer Wright (R-Coos Bay), Cyrus Javadi (D-Tillamook), and Court Boice (R-Gold Beach).

Highlights of the Summit:

- **The Blue Economy:** A central theme of the Summit was the advancement of the Blue Economy—a sustainable ocean-based economic model that emphasizes innovation, conservation, and community benefit. Discussions focused on how Oregon can leverage its coastal assets to create jobs, support marine industries, and protect ocean ecosystems. Topics included sustainable fisheries, marine renewable energy, aquaculture, and coastal tourism.

- **Iceland Ocean Cluster Model:** The Summit highlighted the Iceland Ocean Cluster, a globally recognized model for maximizing the value of marine resources through innovation and full utilization. Presenters explored how Oregon could adapt this model to foster entrepreneurship, reduce waste in the seafood industry, and build a collaborative ecosystem of ocean-related businesses. The Icelandic approach — where “nothing goes to waste” — was presented as a blueprint for coastal economic resilience and circular economy practices.



Southern – Jessica LaBerge

Children’s Museum of Southern Oregon: Business Oregon and RS toured the museum and talked with Executive Director Sunny Spicer about the opportunities, possibilities and challenges with operating a pre-school and children’s museum. This was a great opportunity to see the space alive with families engaging in learning, exhibits and catching some time in the beautiful outdoor spaces. Programs involving music, art, STEAM, fine and gross motor skills, literacy and cooking classes are just some of what you can find in this dynamic



and engaging space. We learned that this Children’s Museum is the largest on the west coast between Seattle and Sacramento – what a cool resource for our Southern Oregon communities! Just this week the Ivy School opened in Grants Pass – enrolling preschoolers for the 2025-2026 school year, offering a Josephine County location for preschool and a future additional Children’s Museum. [Check out this link for more information on events, preschool enrollment and upcoming programming.](#)

Mid-Valley – Beth Wytoski

The last couple of weeks has brought several opportunities to be in the field, in communities, looking closely at complicated issues, and identifying ways to make improvements.

Check-in with the Chairs: During my check-ins with County Chairs, I heard about transportation safety projects, housing needs, recreational plans, and more. Our local governments are hard at work, but a theme that was clear was that current local resources are not stretching far enough. Whether it’s historical spending trends, rising labor and materials costs, or the limitations of statewide tax law, cities and counties are looking to external programs for help, especially for one-time capital expenses. In these difficult moments, it can be of value to visit with agency funders and/or the RS team to brainstorm options and compare timelines and cost-benefit analyses. Sometimes collaboration can reveal unknown options or opportunities for regionalization to share costs more broadly.

Regional Solutions Advisory Committee: The Mid-Valley RSAC is convening on October 9th from 1:30 - 3:30 for an educational session on "Economic Vitality." We will have guests from several economic and business development organizations to talk about entrepreneurship, workforce development, and business recruitment, retention, and expansion. The session will be held on the Chemeketa Community College campus, building 9, room 128 or join [online](#). All RSAC meetings are open to the public and local leaders are welcome to attend.

Ascentec Engineering Tour: I joined a team of economic development leaders to tour the Ascentec Engineering facility in Dallas, where massive, boxy machines efficiently create complicated parts for various spaceflight, medical, defense, telecom, and aviation clients. While there is a nearby headquarters in Hillsboro, it is great to see several machinists from the immediate area able to work close to home, clearly focused on precision and exacting processes and controls, while using advanced machining and CNC tools. I was especially happy to hear about potential expansion in the future.



Aware Food Bank: Congratulations to the Aware Food Bank in Woodburn, which was recently awarded \$417,000 to purchase food and supplies. I visited the site with city staff and was impressed with the grocery store layout, soft music, and culturally relevant options available on the shelves. With the current economic factors, programs like this may become even more critical and, in Woodburn, they have the right people in the right places doing this work.

Dayton Food Pantry: More than seven years after beginning to plan, a local nonprofit opened a new, spacious, standalone facility that had been operating within a nearby church. With funding help from the Yamhill Community Care Organization through the Supporting Health for All Through Reinvestment (SHARE), Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), the



Frances A. Staten Fund, and the city of Dayton, the new facility will allow for a more typical clothing “shopping” experience, allowing residents to look through a boutique setup, and also increasing space for filling and storing food boxes. With a recent grand opening to celebrate the construction, the food bank volunteers added a unique component - a time capsule. They asked community members to contribute small items as a snapshot of life today that would be shared with Daytonians of the future, slated for a 2100 reveal. People brought notes, art, trinkets, crafts, and more, with many participating residents hoping their own descendants might view the contents in 75 years. There are some additional needs including a roll-up door, freezer, and vinyl flooring, which the group is hoping to fund through gifts. Fortunately, ample community backing was evident when a dinner fundraised just over half of the remaining costs.

North Coast – Nate Stice

Outreach meeting on Astoria Waterfront Redevelopment and North Coast Business Park

The North Coast Regional Solutions Team met to discuss progress on two major initiatives: the Astoria waterfront redevelopment and the North Coast Business Park. The waterfront redevelopment was started with the Port working with local stakeholders to create a master plan. The developer they've partnered with shared plans for a mixed-use development featuring a boutique hotel, restaurants, and public market, with the goal of extending the tourism season and supporting local businesses. The team explored funding options — including EB-5 investment and Opportunity Zone designation — and discussed infrastructure needs like wastewater management. Communication challenges with consultants, particularly around wetlands and biological assessments, were also noted.

The group also reviewed the status of the North Coast Business Park, a 130-acre industrial site in Warrenton recently sold by Clatsop County to private ownership to spur economic growth through new business development and job creation. Participants discussed the challenges in wetland permitting.

Northwest Oregon Housing Summit

The 2025 Northwest Oregon Housing Summit, hosted by Columbia Pacific Economic Development District (Col-Pac) in Astoria, brought together local governments, developers, nonprofits, and state agencies to explore collaborative solutions to the region's housing challenges. Members of the North Coast Regional Solutions Team supported the event as volunteers and contributed to panel discussions on infrastructure readiness, housing finance tools, and regional coordination. The summit featured breakout sessions on land use, tribal partnerships, and innovative housing models, offering a platform for sharing best practices and aligning efforts across jurisdictions. Congratulations to ColPac for organizing a dynamic and impactful event that advanced the conversation on housing across Northwest Oregon.

North Central — Nate Stice

Sherman County Outreach meeting

The North Central Regional Solutions Team met with Sherman County and several of its cities to discuss local needs and opportunities. The conversation focused on housing, infrastructure, and energy resilience.

The county is advancing a new senior housing project on a recently acquired site, which is undergoing brownfield cleanup in coordination with DEQ and Business Oregon. A new bus barn is nearing completion and will house transportation services and potentially county planning staff. The county is also preparing to host a national peer exchange on rural renewable energy in December, highlighting its leadership in wind and solar development.

- **Moro** is replacing its water reservoir floor, planning a sewer extension, and coordinating infrastructure for a new senior housing site.
- **Wasco** is upgrading water meters, updating its sewer master plan, and pursuing funding for water and sewer line replacements.
- **Rufus** is addressing wastewater system upgrades and pursuing a feasibility study for a new water well.
- **Grass Valley** was not present, but participants noted increased housing market activity and multiple homes for sale.

The team also discussed the Moderate Income Revolving Loan (MIRL) program and other upcoming funding opportunities.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

Multifamily Housing Investment Roundtable: Governor Kotek and Portland Mayor Wilson convened over thirty developers, investors, brokers, and lenders to discuss increasing financing for multifamily housing construction in the City of Portland. The roundtable advances the leaders' [shared commitment](#) to build more homes people can afford while strengthening the city's economic future. The conversation was frank and

informative, and highlighted investors' ongoing interest in Portland success. As private capital investments in multifamily housing [increase](#) in the Portland Metro area, Governor Kotek is working to actively support that positive trend and direct it toward construction of new multifamily units within Portland.

Weir/ESCO Ribbon-Cutting: Regional Solutions and Deputy Chief of Staff Vince Porter joined Mayor Wilson, Councilor Clark, and many others for a lively grand opening of Weir/ESCO's new headquarters in Portland! For over 100 years, ESCO has designed and manufactured the equipment businesses need for construction, manufacturing, and resource extraction right in Portland. Their expertise in the science of metals, alloys and wear materials made them attractive to the Weir Group, which acquired ESCO in 2018. Weir considered moving the headquarters of the ESCO division elsewhere, but the employees made it clear they wanted to stay in Portland. Governor Kotek approved a \$700,000 forgivable loan that helped make it possible for the ESCO division to relocate within the city, renovating the building to meet their needs. This investment helped retain Weir/ESCO and the hundreds of jobs directly tied to the Portland headquarters.



Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

Carcass Debris Removal Workgroup: The carcass debris removal group continues to make progress and we have finalized a one-pager that outlines the problem statement related to carcass debris challenges in Oregon and the various agencies involved (ODA, ODFW, DEQ, ODOT). The hope is to find some funding to do a feasibility study that would help identify areas across the Eastern half of the state that would be good candidates for small scale animal composting and the resource needed to implement. The good news is that the Western Landowners Alliance has funding from NRCS that might be able to be used for this purpose and could have staff to undertake this feasibility study. While this is an issue that has been getting worse for the last twenty years, we have some good momentum right now and hope to use that momentum to make progress.

AOC District Meeting: Attended the yearly AOC District 1 meeting in Enterprise this week which had a great showing of county commissioners from across the region (Baker, Union, Wallowa, Umatilla, Grant and Malheur). It was great to connect with the county commissioners and AOC staff and provide updates on a few projects and the RSAC regional priority process.

Burns Flood Recovery: I visited Harney County last week and had the opportunity to sit down with Judge Bill Hart to talk about the recovery efforts from the flooding this past spring. Harney County received \$3 million from the legislature for flood mitigation efforts. They have a mitigation plan that was developed back in 2018 that identifies several projects that could be addressed for mitigation. Regional Solutions is going to help in the implementation of this funding and helping the county to move the mitigation work forward.

Biz Harney Opportunity Collaborative: I attended a partner meeting of the Biz Harney Collaborative and was treated to a great discussion about all the great work that the collaborative has already undertaken and a showcase on local businesses and upcoming events. The Biz Harney Opportunity Collaborative exists to help rural Harney County businesses start, grow, and succeed while also helping to build a thriving business environment. This collaborative has worked hard to help showcase Harney County for outside visitors and share the unique and beautiful opportunities within Harney County. Also, last week in Harney County the High Desert Partnership unveiled a new 30-minute [documentary](#) that celebrates the collaborative spirit in the Harney Basin. It's a good look at the work of the wetlands collaborative.

Greater Eastern Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Meeting: Big thank you to Governor Kotek for attending the first hour of the Greater Eastern Oregon Regional Solutions Advisory Committee to hear directly from the committee about their regional economic and community development priorities, the reasons behind them and how they are hoping their work can connect with statewide conversations. Committee members were thrilled to meet with the Governor and after she left, we had a great discussion about more focused areas that they might want to dig into including rural downtown revitalization, food security and rural transit.

Tour of the Hermiston Agriculture Research and Extension Center (HAREC): After the LUBGWMA Committee meeting, Regional Solutions had the opportunity to tour the HAREC facility and hear about the incredible research they are doing at this facility to address ecosystem health in the basin as well research they are doing related to nitrate contamination in the groundwater. OSU is a key partner in the LUBGWMA work so it was great to see their operations in person and discuss ways that we can collaborate in the future.

South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

OCATT Groundbreaking: Last month I joined a well-attended groundbreaking for Oregon Coast Community College's new Oregon Coast Advanced Technology & Trades (OCATT) Center in Newport. The OCATT Center is a direct result of Lincoln County voters' approval of a \$33 million bond measure in May 2024. The center will greatly expand pre-apprenticeship training and programming and offer a variety of certificates

and degrees in the marine, technical, and construction trades. You can learn more and follow along with updates here. South Valley/Mid-Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Convener and OCCC Vice President for Engagement Dave Price emceed the event. Congratulations to all the community college champions that brought this project to fruition!



Central – Scott Aycock

Enhanced Geothermal System Energy at Newberry Caldera:

Regional Solutions helped coordinate a tour of a potential new “Enhanced Geothermal System” (EGS) project on the Newberry Caldera south of Bend. EGS systems differ from “traditional” geothermal in that they do not rely on the availability of hot water to create energy, but rather the presence of hot rocks, and Newberry has very hot rocks on the order of 700 degrees F. The tour focused on Mazama Energy’s geothermal test well operation – Mazama has drilled two 10,000-foot wells into the earth. One well is used to inject water under very high pressure to the hot rocks; the pressurized water opens up and travels through small fissures in the rocks to the second well that delivers the hot water and steam back to the surface. The steam drives a traditional turbine to generate energy and the water is cooled/condensed and then sent back to the first well for reinjection. The technology requires



significantly less water than conventional geothermal as it is nearly closed-loop. Also, the super-hot rocks create a water vapor with very high embedded energy. In addition to Mazama, there are several other companies with active leases and test operations nearby, and industry experts estimate total site potential of 3-5 gigawatts of electrical production capacity, or enough to power 2.6 to 4.4 million households.

If Mazama or the other companies decide to proceed towards commercial production, Regional Solutions can help coordinate across state agencies to outline permitting steps and processes and find ways to avoid preventable delays and redundancies.

Tour participants included Mazama Energy personnel and representatives from the Governor's Office, BLM, Business Oregon, OR Department of Energy, OR Department of Geology and Minerals, and Lake County Commissioner James Williams.



Resources and Opportunities on next page!

Resources and Opportunities

New Toolkit for Wastewater Providers

Willamette Partnership has published [Pathways to Resilient Wastewater Management](#) for Oregon wastewater providers to help improve the resilience and sustainability of their services. The Toolkit **outlines ten potential governance solutions to help struggling service providers find stability**. Because every community is different, we haven't ranked or selected preferences between the options; rather, we developed a rubric that providers can use to identify which options might work best for specific circumstances.

Housing Planning Grants to Local Communities

The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) announced its intent to award over \$7 million in Housing Planning Assistance Grants to 82 cities and counties across the state. Four federally recognized tribes will receive grant funding. These funds will support local efforts to plan for and address housing needs, helping communities lay the groundwork for more affordable, accessible, and diverse housing options.

The grants are administered by DLCD's Housing Division and Housing Accountability and Production Office (HAPO). The housing program provides flexible funding for a range of eligible activities, including housing capacity analyses, housing production strategies, code updates, and urban growth boundary planning. HAPO grant funding is focused on promoting compliance with housing laws, reducing permitting and land use barriers to housing productions, and supporting approval of residential development projects. [The 2025-2027 grant awards](#) prioritize communities facing the greatest housing challenges and those working to meet statutory housing obligations.

"This funding will be a vital tool to help our communities build the housing that Oregonians needs," Governor Kotek. "By investing in local planning, we get closer to an Oregon where everyone can afford a home that suits their life, and no one sleeps outside."

DLCD received an unprecedented number of applications, and after a thorough review, intends to award grants to cities from all regions of the state, several counties, and for the first time, four of Oregon's federally recognized tribes.

Funding for these housing planning assistance grants was included in the Governor's Recommended Budget and the Legislatively Adopted Budget for the 2025–2027 biennium as a demonstration of the state's ongoing commitment to supporting local governments with the resources and tools they need to address Oregon's housing crisis.

A [full list of intended awardees and project descriptions](#) is available on the DLCD website. Congratulations to all the awardees!