



RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, November 3rd, 2025

Upcoming RSAC Meetings

North Coast (Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties)

Wednesday, November 5th from 2:00-4:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

South Valley/Mid-Coast (Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties)

Thursday, November 13th from 2:00-4:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

South Central (Klamath and Lake Counties)

Tuesday, November 18th from 2:00-3:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)

South Coast (Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties)

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

[Virtual Link](#)

North Central (Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco Counties)

Wednesday, December 3rd from 2:00-4:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)



Regional Updates

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

AOC District 8 Meeting: Earlier this month I joined Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas County officials at the regional AOC meeting. It was great to spend time in person with this cross-section of the region and hear what's on their minds. FM3 reported out on their latest Metro polling on voter sentiment regarding a host of local issues; in sum, voter moods are less negative than 2022 but there is room for continued improvement. Many area legislators joined the meeting for a 2025 session report-out + forecast conversation. Budget concerns were top of mind for all, but several commissioners also asked about economic development and behavioral health policymaking.

Celebrating Oregon Consensus' 20th Anniversary:

Congratulations to our partners at Oregon Consensus for twenty years of convening, collaboration, and building a better Oregon! I had the honor of representing Regional Solutions at a well-attended party to celebrate their 20th anniversary. A five-person panel of OC project participants provided great perspectives from across the state on the benefits of collaboration. Union County Commissioner Paul Anderes, as part of the panel, shared how the work with Oregon Consensus has led over time to moving a



regional conversation with the Forest Service about a new forest plan from stuck and contentious to a place where he feels they are close to a plan that will work for everyone—and they even sit down over beers to talk now and again. This kind of community building is foundational for the long-

term health of any community. Thank you to Oregon Consensus for filling such an important role, and being our thought partners and collaborators in work that matters deeply.

Lloyd District Venue Ground-Breaking: Governor Kotek was on hand in Portland's Lloyd District on a crisp fall day to help celebrate the ground-breaking for a \$70 million, 4,200-person performance venue. The press conference occurred in what was previously Nordstrom's women's show department. Longtime local promoter Monqui Presents partnered with entertainment venue developer AEG on the project. With an open floor plan and flexible performance space, they expect the new venue to provide excellent sight lines and state of the art options for performers. This is the first major move in redeveloping Lloyd Center, known at its opening in 1960 as the world's largest shopping center, and will anchor future economic development and housing in the district. As the governor said, "This project celebrates a core part of Portland's identity: a city that creates, attracts, and inspires extraordinary talent — and the passionate audiences who show up to experience it."



QB Fabrication & Welding Site

Visit: Part of the Metro Regional Solutions team joined Clackamas County staff and officials on a fascinating tour of QB Fabrication & Welding. This family-owned multigenerational metal fabrication shop does one very important thing: they make transformer towers. We were able to witness the myriad steps that go into the process of designing and fabricating the many pieces that make up those enormous structures,



and see a test assembly of one small piece of a tower. With the recent acquisition of a large parcel next door, QB is poised to double its operations, provided they can line up the necessary workforce. The demand for skilled workers in metal fabrication is off the charts in the Metro region, and we talked about ways they might partner with Clackamas Community College to develop apprenticeship placements, along with potential future DEQ permitting needs they might have as they expand their operations.

Metro's Creating Our Shared Future: I joined leaders from throughout the region for an afternoon of learning and talking about the future of economic development in the Metro region. A panel of speakers featured perspectives from the Brookings Institution and the cities of Austin and Minneapolis/St Paul on cross-sector collaboration. This was the first of a series of events seeking to shape a refresh of Metro's 50-year vision for the greater Portland area. The panel offered many hard-won kernels of truth from their own experiences and provoked great conversations. They ended by holding up a mirror for Portland and reflecting back that it remains an incredible, dynamic place with world-class transit, deep pools of workforce talent, and people-friendly design – all terrific ingredients for a great future, and the envy of many cities around the world.

South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

Strategic Reserve Fund Award to Patrick Lumber:

Congratulations to Patrick Lumber who recently received a \$100,000 award from the Governor's Strategic Reserve Fund to support their hardwood mill expansion in Philomath! This expansion, also support by a Community Wood Grant from the U.S. Forest Service, will increase the mill's capacity fourfold. With this investment, the company will also create at least nine new jobs in the community. Patrick Lumber is unique in the wood products industry, utilizing locally sourced, underutilized hardwood species to create high-quality lumber products. We are grateful for their commitment and investment in Oregon!

Oregon Economic Development Association (OEDA) Annual Conference:



Last week I represented the Regional Solutions program at OEDA's annual conference hosted at Salishan in Lincoln County. This annual gathering of economic development practitioners from across the state featured keynote addresses by Oregon Business & Industry's President and CEO Angela Wilhelms and the Oregon Entrepreneurs Network's Cara Turano. Several informative breakout sessions ranged in topic from updates on Business Oregon's incentives modernization work and the intersection of economic development and housing production to mill site redevelopment and a preview of Opportunity Zones 2.0. The second day featured local tours where conference attendees had the opportunity to get on the ground and learn about local success stories in Lincoln City, Depoe Bay, and Newport. A special shoutout to local partners including the Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County for helping to organize the conference and

leading interesting tours showcasing some of the impressive work happening in the South Valley/Mid-Coast region.

Inspire Oregon: Rural Housing Policy Incubator: On October 29th & 30th Lane County and the University of Oregon's Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (IPRE) hosted the [Inspire Oregon: Rural Housing Policy Incubator](#) on the University of Oregon campus. This gathering provided participants including practitioners, policymakers, industry leaders, and subject matter

experts the opportunity to collaborate over the course of two days on the development of policy and funding proposals aimed at accelerating housing production in Oregon's communities of less than 10,000 people. The event also featured a keynote address "Financing the Future of Housing: How Infrastructure Supports Communities of All Sizes" by Brookings Senior Fellow Adie Tomer. You can learn more about the outcomes of the policy incubator at an event hosted by the Wayne Morse Center on Thursday, November 6th. [Housing Solutions for Oregon's Rural Communities](#),



[a Panel Discussion](#) will take place from 6:30-8:00pm in person in Knight Law Center Room 110, 1515 Agate St., Eugene or [via livestream](#). This event is free and open to the public. No registration required.

North Coast – Nate Stice

North Tillamook Water Coordination: At the request of Tillamook County Commissioner Erin Skaar, the Governor's Office – Regional Solutions convened representatives from Manzanita, Wheeler, Nehalem, Neahkahnie Water District, and state agencies including DEQ, OHA, OWRD, and Business Oregon to continue exploring long-term water supply and resiliency. The group revisited a 1993 regional water study and expressed interest in updating it to reflect current challenges, including regulatory constraints, workforce limitations, and climate-related risks.

Guest speaker Paul Matthews, CEO of Tualatin Valley Water District, shared lessons from the Willamette Water Supply Program, emphasizing the importance of trust, shared governance, and long-term planning in successful regionalization. Mark Knudson of the Special Districts Association of Oregon provided valuable expertise, drawing on his experience coordinating regional water planning in South Tillamook County and highlighting the need for dedicated project management and early trust-building.

Participants agreed to pursue a broader stakeholder convening in early 2026 to scope a study update and assess master planning status. A successful outcome is seen as critical to supporting the resolution of the Manzanita-Wheeler water rights issue, which remains foundational to future planning and development in the region.

North Central – Nate Stice

Oregon Solutions Wheeler County EMS Project Moves Toward Centralized Model: On October 30, the Wheeler County EMS Project Team met in Fossil as part of the Oregon Solutions-supported effort to strengthen emergency medical services in the region. The meeting featured a presentation from Emily Roberts of Opportunity Healthcare Consulting, who shared insights from rural communities that have transitioned to paid, centralized EMS systems. The team discussed key components of a potential model for Wheeler County, including 24/7 coverage, staffing strategies, and opportunities to integrate EMS with broader public health needs. The conversation focused on sustainable funding models.

The Dalles and Google complete Water Storage Project: Congratulations to the City of The Dalles and Google on the completion of a new Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) system. The project was celebrated at a ribbon cutting attended by local officials and members of the Governor’s Regional Solutions team, highlighting the importance of collaborative, regional approaches to water management. The system captures excess winter water and stores it underground for use during dry months, contributing up to 100 million gallons annually to the city’s water supply.

The \$28 million project was funded by Google and transferred to city ownership, including groundwater rights. City officials noted that the system will support long-term planning efforts, improve drought resilience, and provide additional capacity for future residential and economic development.

Google has also supported related water conservation efforts in the region that Regional Solutions has engaged with, including watershed restoration in Fifteen Mile Creek and irrigation improvements in the East Fork Irrigation District. These projects align with broader regional goals for sustainable water management.

South-Central – Scott Aycock

Klamath Falls 2nd/3rd Floor Downtown Housing:



Back in late September I toured downtown Klamath Falls and viewed a few older buildings with potential for housing development. In most cases, the ground floors are occupied with active and vital commercial businesses, but the 2nd and 3rd floors are empty and ready for use! The community

is interested in converting these upstairs floors into “attainable” workforce rental housing, with the potential for 100+ units in aggregate. Local leaders indicated that developers were unable to make these projects pencil due to costs such as ADA/elevators, seismic retrofits, and sprinkler systems. I engaged with the Governor’s Housing Team, the state’s new Housing Accountability and Production Office, and Oregon Housing and Community Services and determined that the ADA and seismic upgrades are in fact not required by the state for these types of retrofits, and also identified technical and financing assistance (such as OHCS’ [Permanent Loan Guarantee](#) program) that could further support the community in realizing their housing production goals. I’m looking forward to continuing to work with the community as they move forward on their efforts.

Central – Scott Aycock

CORE3 Site Visit: I participated in a [CORE3](#) site visit just north of the Redmond airport. CORE3 is a proposed regional public safety training and emergency coordination center designed to serve Central and Eastern Oregon, as well as the state as a whole in the event of a major incident such as the Cascadia Subduction Zone event. Participants included COIC (regional COG coordinating CORE3 development), local public safety agencies, city councilors and county

commissioners, members of the Central Oregon Caucus; and the Oregon State Fire Marshall's office, Oregon Department of Emergency Management, Department of Human Services Office of Resilience and Emergency Management, and the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. Updates included:

- ♦ Design and engineering for CORE3 Phase 1 is nearly complete. Phase 1 includes development of transportation infrastructure, utility extension across Highway 126 and onto the site, an Emergency Coordination Center/Admin building, a fire training tower, an Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC), and associated site prep and environmental remediation.
- ♦ Partners have sufficient funding at this time to complete the design, site prep and infrastructure/utilities for the facility, as well as a portion of the ECC/Admin facility. Partners intend to build the ECC/Admin facility first because that is the highest need.
- ♦ State agencies such as DPSST have been working with the design team to ensure that the facility can serve as an east-side state training facility.
- ♦ CORE3 partners are engaging in the [Plan for a Resilient Oregon](#) process, to help determine the appropriate regional and statewide role for CORE3 in the state's overall emergency response and recovery system.



Central Oregon Housing Tour: I joined Governor Kotek, local leaders and housing advocates at the October 20 Central Oregon Legislative Housing Tour, hosted by the [Central Oregon Builders' Association](#) and the [Oregon Home Builders' Association](#). The tour

provided an opportunity to view a variety of housing developments in Bend and Sisters that were made possible in part by recent housing legislation, including Parkside Place (HB 4079 – allowed UGB expansion for affordable housing), the Stevens Road Tract (HB 3318 – also related to UGB expansion), and Caldera Ranch (SB 1537 – affordable housing financing).



Southern – Jessica LaBerge

Food Manufacturing Tours: Two tours to highlight; Business Oregon, RS and SOREDI toured [Amy's Kitchen](#) in White City. Amy's began as family business in California in the 1987 with a focus on family farms, organic produce and sustainability; with 3 main production facilities between California, Oregon and Idaho – we were able to tour and talk business with the White City production



facility. The White City location employs between 700 and 750 Rogue Valley residents, and much of the food is handmade on site before reaching packaging.

The following day Business Oregon and RS toured [Heather's Choice](#) facility in Ashland. Heather Kelly is the founder of (formerly) Anchorage, Alaska-based Heather's Choice – now in Ashland, which sells lightweight, packable meals — just add hot water — and ready-to-eat snacks for outdoor adventurers.

An adventurer herself, Kelly started the company in 2014, Heather's Choice had its first million-dollar revenue year in 2022, indicating an upward trajectory. They make the food by hand and dehydrate it in large quantities – they have more interest now than product and are always looking for opportunities to meet the market needs. Find their food at REI or online. Thank you to both Amy's Kitchen and Heather's Choice for great tours!

[NIC Industries](#): Big kudos to the NIC Industries team and Brian Hall, CEO who accepted this year's OBI Visionary Award in Portland. Founded in White City more than 35 years ago, [NIC Industries](#) produces industry-leading coatings that are distributed and sold in more than 90 countries. It employs more than 250 people at its facility in southern Oregon. OBI produced an outstanding video that you can [see here](#).

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

SageCon: Regional Solutions attended the annual SageCon conference which is focused on collaborative solutions to addressing the Sage Grouse habitat restoration efforts. I was able to thank the participants for their ongoing collaboration and efforts to reduce the decline of sage grouse populations. I highlighted the Governor's latest executive order on developing programs focuses on the resilience of our natural and working lands. The good news is that in the past year we've seen a 15.1% population increase in sage grouse which while we've seen a lot of habitat impacted by fires over the past two years, we have seen above annual precipitation which helps with the population.

Threemile Canyon Farms Tour: Regional Solutions was able to tour Threemile Canyon Farms this week and see the impressive operation on both the dairy and farming sides. We had great conversations about energy, water, and sustainable agriculture. It was fun to finally visit the facility after working closely with the farm over the past few years.

Painted Hills Beef Business Visit: Business Oregon and I were able to visit Painted Hills Beef in Fossil recently. It was interesting to hear about the challenges that the company is facing and their hope to grow and expand. We talked about bringing together a conversation with other similar beef producers and processors in the region to see if there is any opportunities to partner. I'll be reaching out to ODA and Business Oregon to see if this might be something we could partner together on.

Highway 20 Wildlife Crossing Project Meeting: We had our second project team meeting for the Highway 20 wildlife crossing project and had a great conversation about all the different ideas that have come out of our conversations and we started to narrow down ideas for addressing both the decline of the mule deer population in the area and the traffic safety concerns. There are a lot of tangible solutions on both safety and habitat mitigation that we will continue to engage on moving forward.

Port of Morrow Milestone: As we near November 1st, we have good news that the Port of Morrow has met their deadline and the first of two new lagoons have been completed and the second will be completed in the coming weeks. This means that they will meet their deadline to have no winter application this year. Combined, the two lagoons will hold 1.6 billion gallons of water sent to the Port from local food processors, industries and data centers. The lagoons are part of a larger, multi-million-dollar project to enhance the Port's processing of industrial wastewater for beneficial agricultural reuse. Anaerobic digesters are already in place and advance planning is underway for a secondary water treatment system.



Resources and Opportunities

Making MIRL Work for Your Community Webinar 11/5/25

The Moderate-Income Revolving Loan Program (MIRL), established by [Senate Bill 1537](#) (2024), capitalizes a \$75 million investment to support local efforts in increasing production of both rental housing and homeownership for households earning up to 120% of area median income. MIRL funding can be used to fill a gap in eligible project financing, allowing Oregon Housing & Community Services (OHCS) to issue loans to cities and counties (referred to as sponsoring jurisdictions), who then award the funding as a grant to housing project developers. The loan is repaid to OHCS in lieu of property taxes on project improvements to replenish the revolving loan for funding future MIRL projects. MIRL funding is allocated on a first-come first-serve basis. A maximum of \$50 million is available in the first two years with 20% of that being allocated to rural communities.

OHCS, the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), the League of Oregon Cities (LOC), and the Oregon Homebuilders Association are holding a joint webinar about the program.

Webinar: Making MIRL Work for Your Community

Wednesday, Nov. 5, 3:00-4:30 p.m. [Click here to join the webinar](#)

More information and additional resources are available on the [MIRL Webpage](#), or you can schedule a [1:1 Technical Assistance](#) meeting with the MIRL Team.

OWRD Seeking Applications for 2026 Water Project Grants and Loans

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) is seeking applications for Water Project Grants and Loans (WPGL) projects. The agency is now accepting applications through its new online grant platform. The new system is designed to streamline the application process, improve accessibility, and make it easier to track and manage awards.

The [Water Project Grants and Loans](#) program provides grants for projects to evaluate, plan, and develop instream and out-of-stream water supply projects. This funding invests in projects that meet water supply needs and result in [economic, environmental and social/cultural benefits](#). Projects must provide benefits in each of these three categories to be eligible for funding, and grants require a 25% cost match.

- ♦ **Eligible Projects:** Water conservation, reuse, above-ground storage, below-ground storage, streamflow protection or restoration, water distribution, conveyance or delivery systems, and other water resource development projects that result in economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits. Any local government, Indian tribe, or person may apply for funding.
- ♦ **Anticipated Funding Available:** Approximately \$2 million
- ♦ **Application Deadline: Wednesday, January 21, 2026, by 5 p.m.**
- ♦ **How to Apply:** [Apply online through the grant platform](#)
 - ♦ [View a video introduction to the grant platform](#) – *please note the video says grantees will be able to receive payments via ACH by entering the information in their profile. OWRD will not be using this feature of the platform.*
 - ♦ View [application instructions](#)

Questions about the new platform or need assistance? Attend a drop-in session with grant staff by registering for a session below:

- ♦ [Registration Link: Monday November 10, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.](#)
- ♦ [Registration Link: Wednesday November 19, 2025 from 9 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.](#)
- ♦ [Registration Link: Tuesday December 2, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.](#)

Application Scoring: Applications are scored using 18 questions to assess the project's public economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits. View the [Scoring Criteria](#) to learn more.

Pre-Application Conference: OWRD encourages all applicants to request a pre-application conference before applying. Staff will review draft applications and provide feedback. Please note – applicants must complete the sections identified in the [grant pre-application conference document](#) before requesting a pre-application conference and email a request at least two weeks prior to the desired pre-application conference date.

Get Involved with the Plan for Resilient Oregon

The Governor's Office is developing the Plan for a Resilient Oregon (PRO), a people-centered resilience strategy to help communities around Oregon adapt and thrive in the face of increasingly severe disasters. The PRO aims to be responsive to the unique cultures, demographics, histories, and hazards of Oregon's diverse regions. The PRO will inform the work of Executive Branch agencies and the Governor's recommended budget and legislative work for the next biennium. There are several ways you can get involved:

If you are doing resiliency work in any settings, please join the Resilience Action & Impact Network! To join, [just fill out this form](#).

Join the monthly Statewide Resilience Forum on November 19:

The Statewide Resilience Forum began its monthly meetings in October, on the third Wednesday of the month at 3:00 p.m. Join the next monthly Forum on Wednesday, Nov. 19th, from 1:00-3:00 pm via Zoom. To join, [register for the Zoom meeting here](#).

Have a great example of community resilience happening near you? Please reach out to aimee.fritsch@oregon.gov.