



RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Tuesday, November 18th, 2025

Upcoming RSAC Meetings

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](#)

Central (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties)

Tuesday, December 2nd from 3:30-5:00pm

[Virtual Link](#)



Regional Updates

South Coast — Jessica LaBerge

Reedsport Manufacturing Tour: In early November RS pulled regional workforce and economic development partners together for a manufacturing tour in Reedsport, Oregon, with a visit to Wurgaft Consulting & Development—a vertically integrated food innovation and processing center. The event brought together a diverse group of regional stakeholders and highlighted the potential for innovation-driven economic development in the South Coast region. Wurgaft Consulting & Development with a focus on food innovation & processing includes key capabilities:

- **Vertically Integrated Facility:** Wurgaft supports the full lifecycle of food product development—from early-stage concept to full-scale production.
- **Science-to-Commercialization Bridge:** The facility specializes in transforming novel plant- and marine-based ingredients into market-ready products.
- **Technical Infrastructure:** Combines lab-scale R&D, pilot processing, and techno-economic modeling under food-grade permitting to reduce commercialization risk and accelerate product readiness.

The tour was well attended by representatives from Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC), Business Oregon, Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board, OR Dept of Energy, City of Reedsport, City of North Bend, Douglas County and the Governor's Office.

The tour fostered valuable dialogue among regional partners and highlighted opportunities for collaboration. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the innovation assets available in the region. Wurgaft's model presents a promising opportunity to support local entrepreneurs, attract investment, and grow the regional food economy. The Reedsport Manufacturing Tour underscored the importance of cross-sector collaboration in advancing regional innovation and economic development. Continued engagement with partners like Wurgaft will be essential in unlocking the full potential of the South Coast's food innovation ecosystem.

Southern — Jessica LaBerge

Regional Solutions Team Outreach Report: On Monday Nov. 3rd, the RST conducted a successful series of site visits and stakeholder engagements in Southern Oregon. The day included meetings and tours with the City of Gold Hill, Southern Oregon's Children's Museum & Preschool, and the Grants Pass Family YMCA's Youth Enrichment Center. These visits provided valuable insights into local initiatives, infrastructure projects, and community-based educational programs.

City of Gold Hill, hosted by Lily Morgan, City Manager. Key Highlights:

- **Wastewater System Transition:** The city is in the process of migrating its wastewater system to the Rogue Valley Sewer Services (RVSS), supported by funding from USDA Rural Development.
- **Water Infrastructure Tour:** The team toured the city's water treatment plant and the intake system along the Rogue River.
- **Brownfield Redevelopment:** A visit to the former cement plant site, went under assessment with Oregon DEQ involvement and Business Oregon funding, highlighted ongoing environmental restoration efforts.



Southern Oregon Children's Museum & Preschool (Grants Pass), Former Dutch Bros. HQ Key Highlights:

- **Facility Renovation:** Significant remodeling has been completed, transforming the space into a vibrant early learning environment.
- **Future Vision:** Plans include phased development of a Children's Museum offering drop-in learning opportunities for families.
- **Outdoor Expansion:** The facility is also expanding its outdoor learning areas to enhance early childhood education experiences.

Grants Pass Family YMCA – Youth Enrichment Center. Key Highlights:

- Property Status: The YMCA currently leases the property and holds an option to purchase.
- Program Impact: The Youth Center serves over 100 children in Josephine County through afterschool and summer learning programs.
- Funding Discussion: The visit included a tour and conversations around potential funding strategies to support the center's long-term sustainability.

The outreach provided a comprehensive view of community-driven projects and highlighted opportunities for continued collaboration and support. Each site demonstrated strong local leadership and a commitment to improving infrastructure, education, and youth services in Southern Oregon.

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

Highway 20 Wildlife Crossing Project: We had our third project team meeting for the Oregon Solutions Highway 20 Wildlife Crossing project this week and things are continuing to move forward. The group is considering a mix of possible solutions that include public safety, signage, habitat interventions, infrastructure, and outreach. We have short, medium, and long-term solutions for each of the topic areas and are beginning to look at what would need to be done under each of those ideas. Overall, the collaboration has been great, and everyone seems on the same page about the direction that the group is headed.

Super-NOVA: Attended the quarterly Super-NOVA (Nyssa, Ontario, Vale and Adrian) meeting and got a great update on various projects happening across the region including the childcare business accelerator and Grassy Mountain Mine. NOVA continues to be a great way for partners in Malheur County to come together to discuss regional issues and collaborate on projects.

Eastern Oregon Border Board: I attended the Eastern Oregon Border Board's meeting recently where they were making grant decisions on some of their funding programs. They also shared the impact that the board's investment has made in the region since their inception.

- For their grant funding, they have given out \$2 million in grant funding which has leveraged \$10.4 million in additional investment in the border region.
- They have given out \$800K in incentive funding which has resulted in over 88 new homes built and 18 homes renovated.
- They have given out \$3 million in strategic funds and almost a \$1 million in loans for home rehabilitation and infrastructure improvements.
- Total investment has been \$7 million which equates to \$35 million in leveraged and matched funding.

They are on track to continue spending the funding that the legislature has awarded them and they plan to come back to the legislature in 2027-29 to ask for additional funding.

Additionally, the Border Board has started up their “Rural Roots Community Leadership Academy” which is a leadership program to create more civic leaders in the Border Region. They have their first cohort of 12 people who will go through the nearly yearlong program to develop leadership skills. The cohort will work as a group to complete a capstone project that will be grant funded by the Border Board. The Border Board hired Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) to run this program and so far, things are going very well.

Eastern Oregon Childcare Business Accelerator: The childcare business accelerator has started its first cohort of 13 potential childcare providers across Eastern Oregon. This program will help provide childcare businesses with small business advising, childcare educational credits, curriculum support and ongoing assistance with the business side of childcare. The goal is to get these 13 individuals fully licensed and opening their own childcare business to help add additional capacity for Eastern Oregon communities. I’m continuing to have conversations with the program to see how e can help them find additional funding to start a Spanish speaking cohort and additional cohorts in the future.

Grassy Mountain Mine: The Grassy Mountain Mine is in the final stages of work with DOGAMI and the various state agencies on draft permitting and expects the consolidated draft permit to be issued before the end of the year. This would be a huge milestone for the

project as there hasn't been a consolidated mining permit issued in Oregon since the inception of the consolidated permit process back in the early 1990's. On the federal side, the record of decision from BLM and the final environmental impact study should be complete in December.

South-Central — Scott Aycok

South Central Oregon Economic Development District (SCOEDD): After temporarily contemplating closing their doors, [SCOEDD](#) is once more offering small business loans in Klamath and Lake counties. In July the SCOEDD Board staffed back up with the hiring of two coordinator positions – Johnathan Van Roekel serves Lake County and Bethany Osborn serves Klamath County. While the organization's current focus is on small business lending, the Board has decided to conduct a strategic plan to help define its full mission and roles. Regional Solutions has offered several types of assistance, including connecting the new staff and Board to funding opportunities, to experts on various elements of Economic Development District operations (e.g. small business lending, Enterprise Zone management, generating lists of typical EDD roles, etc.), and have offered support for the strategic planning process. I look forward to continuing to work with Bethany and Johnathan and the SCOEDD Board as a valued regional partner for South-Central Oregon.

Johnathan Van Roekel can be reached at johnathan@scoedd.org and Bethany Osborn can be reached at bethany@scoedd.org.

South-Central Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (SCRSAC): On November 10, the SCRSAC completed their Regional Priority Areas and Focus Areas. These regional priorities are developed to spotlight regional needs and opportunities, to provide support for efforts aligned with the priorities, and to help focus the work of the Committee, the Regional Solutions Team, and the Regional Solutions Coordinator. Here is a summarized version of their Priority Areas and Focus Areas:

- **Housing Production:** Develop a diverse and attainable housing inventory; Develop capacity in the building trades; and Leverage innovative building techniques (e.g. modular)

- **Infrastructure:** Increase power availability for local CED needs; Address high costs of water/wastewater infrastructure provision; Expand broadband/fiber access and redundancy; Improve safety on identified high-risk state highways and invest in alternate routes for freight; and Improve parks and recreation services and infrastructure
- **Community Resilience:** Support and encourage healthcare provision in rural areas; Improve capacity and coordination among non-profits; Create disabled- and elderly-friendly communities; Build locally-appropriate programs to meet mental health needs; Increase availability and access to childcare; and Harness economic development to increase tax base to better meet community needs.
- **Economic Growth:** Restore quality commercial air service; Improve provision of and access to business support services; Explore options to reduce the cost of providing shovel-ready industrial lands; and Increase economic diversity.
- **Natural Resources:** Sustainable natural resource conservation and utilization; Wildfire prevention and recovery; Market outdoor resource while mitigating cultural and physical impacts of overuse; Manage local natural resources to provide community benefits; Water security for irrigation districts.
- **Career Pathway Ecosystem:** Provide career pathways to help recruit, retain and develop people, skills and talent.

Metro — Kathy Hyzy

Hillsboro Year-Round Shelter Ribbon-Cutting: Congratulations to the City of Hillsboro and Washington County on the opening of their new year-round shelter! The low-barrier shelter provides a first step out of houselessness, with trauma-informed design that will help people transition from life outside, connect with wrap-around services, and move into permanent housing. The yet-to-be-named shelter provides 75





beds, through a mix of 40 individual shelter pods and 35 indoor congregate shelter beds designed to maximize privacy and safety. Project Homeless Connect will operate the shelter; they were a recipient of \$915,000 in funding from Governor Kotek's emergency order

on unsheltered homelessness. The first guests will be welcomed the week of Thanksgiving, and some of them will be bringing their pets: there are two separated, fenced play areas with sheltered seating nearby. Thank you to the many partners who worked tirelessly to make this welcoming space a reality.

North Coast — Nate Stice

North Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee: Governor Tina Kotek joined the North Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) on November 5th for a virtual meeting to hear directly from local leaders about the region's top priorities and challenges. The committee presented five focus areas—housing production, economic and community resilience, infrastructure, business diversification, and effective collaboration—reflecting both statewide goals and the unique needs of the North Coast. Topics included addressing infrastructure gaps, supporting the maritime sector, and navigating the impacts of the FEMA Biological Opinion and Habitat Conservation Plan. Governor Kotek expressed appreciation for the RSAC's work and emphasized the importance of the Regional Solutions model in connecting communities with state government. She encouraged members to continue advancing their priorities, collaborate across regions, and use their coordinators as a direct link to her office.

North Coast Business Park: The North Coast Business Park is the last large-scale industrial site available in Clatsop County, totaling approximately 130 acres. After more than two decades of planning and investment, the project is now focused on securing permits for

the first 20-acre phase. The developer is currently working through the removal/fill permitting process with the Department of State Lands (DSL), and recent coordination has helped clarify the path forward. Regional Solutions has been actively engaged in supporting this project, helping to coordinate interagency conversations, elevate permitting challenges, and ensure alignment with regional economic development goals. Many thanks to DSL leadership and team for helping to move this project forward.

Resources and Opportunities

Business Oregon Awards Grants to Organizations Assisting Small Business Owners and Entrepreneurs

To support organizations providing comprehensive technical assistance to underserved small businesses and entrepreneurs statewide, Business Oregon intends to award \$4.5 million from the Technical Assistance for Underrepresented Businesses Program (TA Program) to 28 technical assistance providers.

The awarded TA Program provider organizations will deliver a wide range of services, including business planning, marketing and brand development, technology support, access to capital, and one-on-one business coaching. These services are essential for helping small businesses grow, thrive, and contribute to Oregon's economic vitality. Grants are awarded through a competitive biennial application process, designed to ensure that assistance is both widely available and accessible.

Business Oregon received 65 applications, requesting almost \$18 million in funding, which made this a highly competitive grant process. Before finalizing the awards, a diverse evaluation committee thoroughly reviewed and scored each application based on the applicants' experience providing culturally competent technical assistance, the demonstrated need among small business beneficiaries, their overall project approach, anticipated impact, implementation plan, and budget.

A full list of the 2025–2027 grant recipients, along with project descriptions can be found [here](#). To learn more about the Technical Assistance for Underrepresented Businesses Program, visit www.oregon.gov/biz.

Business Oregon Awards \$1.9 Million to Support Rural Communities & Entrepreneurs

To support the development of entrepreneurial talent, successful enterprises, and resilient place-based economies in rural Oregon, Business Oregon has selected 18 applicants to receive \$1,945,000 in grant funding from the Rural Opportunity Initiative (ROI) program. The ROI program is Business Oregon's strategic effort to empower rural

communities to support entrepreneurs and small business growth through financial support, network expansion, capacity support, and access to business development resources.

Small businesses and entrepreneurs drive rural economies and are a major source of opportunity and growth. The ROI program's "whole community" approach helps entrepreneurs thrive in the good times and recover faster and more fully following disruptions. In lieu of a "one size fits all" approach, the ROI program reflects community priorities and acknowledges that the best people to determine the right approach for a community are the residents themselves.

"Greater prosperity and economic success are goals for every part of our state," Governor Tina Kotek said. "The ROI program lends a hand to innovation and growth opportunities in our rural and frontier communities, getting us closer to our shared goals for our small businesses."

The ROI program is an investment in the vision and leadership of rural communities and aligns with Business Oregon's strategic plan to create economic opportunity, cultivate community and business growth, and reduce barriers to prosperity for all Oregonians. Awardees were selected after a competitive review process that evaluated applicants according to alignment with program intent, demonstrated need, project approach and anticipated impact, implementation plan, and budget.

A full list of the 2025-27 ROI program grant recipients, along with brief project descriptions, can be found [here](#). To learn more about the Rural Opportunity Initiative program, visit www.oregon.gov/biz.