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RS EXCHANGE
REGIONAL SOLUTIONS
Monday, January 13th, 2025
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SOLUTIONS

Happy New Year, and happy start to the 2025 Legislative Session. Today the 83rd Legislative Assembly met in the Oregon House Chamber to organize and hear the State of the State address delivered by Governor Kotek. In attendance were lawmakers, former elected leaders, and representatives of the nine federally recognized Tribal nations. The Governor's invited guests included county chairs and city leaders, affirming her ongoing commitment to partner with local governments in the spirit of the One Oregon Listening Tour during her first year in office.



“Today, I am renewing a conversation with you about Oregon’s future and how we build shared prosperity over the next two years,” Governor Kotek said. “We are beginning to see a glimpse of a brighter horizon ahead. Let’s focus on that horizon — and be sure to keep our feet firmly planted on the road of hard work and partnership.”

Key takeaways from the address include the Governor’s continued efforts to listen to and work with local communities, a call to action to stay the course on addressing homelessness and housing supply, mental health and addiction care, improving outcomes for Oregon students, and encouragement to lawmakers to rise above partisan differences and work together to solve problems – citing the transportation package, public defense, and wildfire funding in the upcoming session.

You may view the State of the State, [here](#).
You may read her full remarks [here](#).

Regional Solutions Program Updates

- **Learning Opportunities for Regional Solutions Advisory Committees**
Happy New Year! With all of the Regional Solutions Advisory Committees digging in to different issues as they identify Regional Priorities for Community & Economic Development, Regional Solutions is adding a series of learning opportunities to share foundational information about the currently existing programs, funding sources, and agency supports related to topics are arising statewide. The webinars will be public meetings that all RSAC members are invited to attend, and we will record the content for those who can't join live. Our first webinar takes place later this week. Please join us!
- **Infrastructure 101;** January 15, from 2-3pm; [Virtual Link](#)
Business Oregon, DEQ, and USDA Rural Development will share information about the various programs that support local infrastructure needs, and how these agencies collaborate to compile funding to help projects come to fruition.
- **Childcare Webinar;** date TBD.
This webinar will feature guests from Business Oregon, DLCD, and the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) outlining the various work happening across the state enterprise on childcare and highlighting funding opportunities and other resources for communities.

Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meeting:

Upcoming committee meeting dates are as follows:

- [South-Valley/Mid-Coast](#) (Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties)
 - February 5th, 2-4pm
 - Location TBD in Albany, or join online with this [Virtual Link](#)

Regional Updates

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- **FEMA Wildfire Assistance:** President Joe Biden approved federal disaster assistance for the state of Oregon to supplement recovery efforts in the areas affected by the 2024 wildfires. The declaration comes after Governor Kotek [sent a letter to President Biden](#) requesting a presidential major disaster declaration. The declaration provides Public Assistance federal funding which will soon be available to the state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations. The money comes on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by wildfires in Gilliam, Grant, Umatilla, Wasco and Wheeler counties. The Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) is collecting information from potential recipients to ensure efficient access to federal funding available through this disaster declaration. In addition to Public Assistance, federal funding will support hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Regional Solutions had a briefing with OEM this week to understand more about the resources coming to the state. FEMA will be hosting a program briefing next Thursday for emergency managers, community members and stakeholders to review what this grant opportunity is, the types of expenses that may be reimbursable, and who may want to apply. There will also be time to work together to submit the 'Request for Public Assistance' which is an online form that must be submitted by organizations by the deadline of January 30th in order to be able to participate in the grant round. We really recommend folks in Gilliam, Grant, Umatilla, Wasco and Wheeler counties who might be interested in this opportunity to join the meeting next Thursday for more information. Information on the event is attached.

- **City of Hermiston Infrastructure Expansion Projects:** Our Regional Solutions team met with the City of Hermiston this week to continue conversations around potential sewer and water extensions around the city. There are a number of areas where additional sewer and water infrastructure might be needed to both help get folks off of domestic wells or open up additional opportunities for housing. We will continue to work with the City of Hermiston to see how we can make some of these ideas into reality.
- **Congratulations to Kathleen Cathey on her Retirement:** I attended the community retirement celebration for Kathleen Cathey who has served as Sen. Ron Wyden's field representative for the past 19 years. Regional Solutions has worked closely with Kathleen over the years and we can't imagine life without her, but I guess we are going to have to figure out a way forward. It was great to hear so many amazing stories about the impact that Kathleen has had on Eastern Oregon and wish her the best in her retirement!

South Coast Region

- **Bay Area Economic Outlook Forum:** In December, Regional Solutions attended the (Coos) Bay Area Chambers' annual Economic Outlook Forum. It was a packed room of local and regional leaders, thought partners and community members. Many robust conversations were had, including a panel discussion on housing and opportunities along the South Coast. We heard from many experts in the room including our own RS team members Guy Tauer and Christopher Frazier discussing data and programs from Oregon Employment Department (Mr. Tauer) and Business Oregon (Mr. Frazier). There are significant housing efforts along the South Coast, and I look forward to sharing some of these opportunities in the near future. Hold December 12th, 2025 on your calendar for 2025 Bay Area Economic Outlook Forum.



- **Southwestern Oregon Economic Summit:** It's never too early to advertise a regional learning opportunity! Brian Prawitz, Executive Director of the Umpqua Economic Development Partnership is partnering with business leaders, policymakers, and community stakeholders from Douglas, Coos, Curry, Jackson, and Josephine Counties to address critical economic challenges and the opportunities that exist as we look into the future. Conference will be held May 13th-15th, 2025 at Seven Feathers Casino Resort. Registration and more information at www.sworegoneconomicsummit.com

Southern Region

- **I-5 Wildlife Crossing Federal Funding Award:** The Federal Highway Administration just announced \$125M in grants for 16 wildlife crossing projects through the BIL Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program. Oregon/ODOT was awarded \$33.2M, the largest award allotted, to build a wildlife crossing structure along Interstate 5 within southwest Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. The project includes construction of a wildlife overpass bridge and fencing to direct wildlife to the structure within the Mariposa Preserve. The wildlife crossing structure will be among the largest in the nation to significantly improve the movement of a wide array of animals, while increasing the safety of drivers traveling on I-5 between Ashland and the California border. The application was done in great partnership with many organizations, agencies, and congressional/legislative support.
- **City of Talent:** \$1,500,000 Total - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Award! The City of Talent received funding from Business Oregon to purchase and make improvements to a building to serve as a Community Resource Center. This Community Resource Center will include at least one food pantry, as well as offices of non-governmental agencies providing services to Talent residents including job counseling, family counseling, crisis counseling, access to public assistance, immigration assistance, housing assistance, shelter referrals, small business development resources, mental health support, training, and community networking. Way to go City of Talent!

Mid-Valley – Beth Wytoski

- **Welcome New Leaders!** Across Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties, new elected officials have been sworn in over the last couple of weeks. Please join me in welcoming these new faces (and ideas) and encourage them to register for various coalitions and publications. City officials, I encourage you to look at the League of Oregon Cities (and Oregon Mayors Association if applicable) as well as local governance coalitions for education and connection. It is easy to feel alone when difficult and/or controversial decisions become necessary – but there are robust networks of individuals at various stages of their elected paths and in many cases, someone else has faced a similar circumstance and can help provide guidance (or at least commiseration). In many cases, you do not need to re-invent the wheel – instead, find old records and ask questions of current and former leaders so you can add and improve. Consider attending conferences, regional meetings, and statewide events, and if your city is not able to budget for such opportunities, know that many

associations provide scholarships. County officials should get plugged into the Association of Oregon Counties and check out “County College,” designed primarily for new commissioners, judges, and executive level staff, the program offers a comprehensive overview of the responsibilities and authorities of a county, as well as training on government ethics, public meetings and records law, parliamentary procedure, and much more. While this list is not exhaustive, I offer congratulations to the following newly elected officials as well as the City Councilors, Judges, managers, and others who have stepped up to serve our communities.

Marion County is welcoming:

- Donald Mayor James Houdyshell
- Gervais Mayor Brian Wagner
- Jefferson Mayor David Watkins
- Mt. Angel Mayor Joseph Pfau
- Salem Mayor Julie Hoy
- Sublimity Mayor Michael Taylor
- Turner Mayor Steve Horning

Yamhill County is welcoming:

- Commissioner Bubba King
- Sheriff Sam Elliott
- Treasurer Paulette Alexandria
- Dundee Mayor David Ford
- McMinnville Mayor Kim Morris
- Willamina Mayor Vickie Hernandez
- Yamhill Mayor Shea Corrigan

Polk County is welcoming:

- Clerk Kim Williams
- Dallas Mayor Rich Slack
- Independence Mayor Kate Schwarzler

The Oregon legislature is welcoming from our region:

- Senator Todd Nash (SD29)
- Senator Bruce Starr (SD 12)
- Representative Lesly Munoz (HD 22)

- **Economic Development:** The Mid-Valley region is busy working on planning & zoning, fee structure analysis, cost sharing & grant programs, improving access to childcare, supporting commercial construction, building industry-based groups, transportation safety, community events, Mainstreet operations, and creating marking collaborations to share about progress and opportunities. It is clear that building up the local business community is a widespread, shared priority. In Yamhill County, we recently met to hear reports from economic development and management staff about several key projects. Some themes that will result in follow up meetings included water and wastewater infrastructure funding as well as land re-development. Thank you to Gioia for facilitating the conversation.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

- **Housing in Molalla:** I visited with Mayor Keyser and staff to discuss their UGB expansion process and a few unrelated ODOT questions. Metro RS Team member/DLCD staff Kelly Reid has been working with the city extensively as they update the city's vision for the future. Molalla's recently completed Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) identified a need to bring in more acreage in order to satisfy their housing requirements. As a city that is both very interested in increasing its population and in providing housing that is more affordable to residents, they are seeking a path to meet all those needs.

Molalla currently has no identified urban reserves; under state law, they will be required to utilize their exception lands. There are similar lands adjacent to the city that may be easier and lower-cost to develop, are contiguous to existing residential neighborhoods, and better-served by the new wastewater treatment plant currently under construction—but are not designated as exception lands. Additionally, the similar properties are large properties with owners who are interested in selling, versus the puzzle-piece landscape of the designated exception lands. DLCD is working through many similar land use questions statewide, and it often requires a lot of detailed information as well as good communication. We're glad Molalla reached out!

Resources and Opportunities

US Department of Treasury Direct Pay Program:

The Department of Treasury's [Direct Pay program](#) includes new provisions that will enable tax-exempt and governmental entities—such as states, local governments, Tribes, territories, and nonprofits—to take an active role in building the clean energy economy, lowering costs for working families, and advancing environmental justice.

The Inflation Reduction Act's "[elective pay](#)" (often called "[direct pay](#)") provisions, tax-exempt and governmental entities, for the first time, are able to receive a payment equal to the full value of tax credits for building qualifying clean energy projects. Unlike competitive grant and loan programs, in which applicants may not receive an award, direct pay allows entities to get their payment [if they meet the requirements](#) for both direct pay and the underlying tax credit. For more information about using direct pay on projects that are receiving grants and forgivable loans, [click here](#).

Here are some helpful resources for local jurisdictions to get started: <https://www.progressivecaucuscenter.org/direct-pay>

Federal Rural Funding Opportunities:

[Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\) Grant Program](#)

U.S. Department of Transportation

DOT offers grants for capital investments in unmet infrastructure needs with an emphasis on rural areas and tribal lands. **Application Deadline: 1/30/2025**

[Community Wildfire Defense Grant](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture USDA

Forest Service offers this program to assist at-risk communities, including tribes and Alaska Native Corporations, with planning for and mitigating wildfire risks. **Application Deadline: 2/28/2025**

Rural Business Development Grants

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA Rural Development offers grants to fund business opportunity and enterprise projects that may be used to establish business support centers, finance trainings/leadership programs, purchase/develop land, repair/modernize buildings, finance planning, buy equipment to lease to small or emerging businesses, etc. **Application Deadline: 2/28/2025**

Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) introduces this [new opportunity](#) to provide support for rural and remote communities to build clean energy projects that benefit their communities. This program serves communities of **10,000 people** or fewer. For more clean energy funding opportunities at OCED [click here](#). **Concept Paper Due: 2/27/2025**



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

VIRTUAL APPLICANT BRIEFING FEMA Public Assistance Program FEMA-4854-DR-OREGON Gilliam, Grant, Umatilla, Wasco and Wheeler Counties

Wildfires

Incident Period: July 10 – August 23, 2024

Declared: January 1, 2025

WHAT:

FEMA Public Assistance is available to state, tribal and local governments, and certain private nonprofit organizations in the designated counties of Gilliam, Grant, Umatilla, Wasco and Wheeler.

The Public Assistance program provides federal financial assistance on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of public facilities damaged by the wildfires that occurred in Oregon **July 10 to August 23, 2024**.

The deadline to apply for this event is January 30, 2025.

Oregon Department of Emergency Management staff are conducting a virtual Applicant Briefing to give an overview of the Public Assistance program and process, with a Q&A and Grants Portal walkthrough to follow.

WHO Should Attend?

The agent, financial officer, or an appointee who will manage your organization's Public Assistance grants should attend this briefing.

WHEN:

All briefings will be conducted on Microsoft Teams. Attending the Applicant Briefing is not mandatory but strongly encouraged. If a potential applicant is unable to attend the applicant briefing, please follow the instructions below.

The briefing will be held Thursday, January 16, 2025, from 2:00-4:00 PM.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 268 904 843 801

Passcode: GZ364HJ3

Dial in by phone

[+1 503-446-4951,,805808277#](#) United States, Portland

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 805 808 277#

Schedule:

2:00-2:50: Applicant Briefing

2:50-3:00: Break

3:00-4:00: Q&A & Grants Portal

Walkthrough

Questions or concerns?

Please email: oem.pa-recovery@oem.oregon.gov for questions or assistance.