



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Tuesday, January 28th, 2025

Regional Solutions Team News

Central & South-Central Regional Solutions Coordinator Position Re-Opened

The opportunity to apply to be our next Central/South-Central Oregon Regional Solutions Coordinator has re-opened. I hope you'll help circulate it widely amongst your contacts and help spread the word about this exciting opportunity!

We are seeking energetic and entrepreneurial applicants with deep connections within these two regions, which encompass Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Klamath and Lake Counties.

Internal Candidates can apply [here](#).

External candidates can apply [here](#).

The application will remain open through February 10th. Please share this opportunity with anyone who might be a good fit for this meaningful work!

While we are working to hire for this position, RS Director Amelia Porterfield will be filling in to support the Central and South-Central Oregon Regions. Please reach out to her at amelia.porterfield@oregon.gov if you need help or if you have local needs or news to communicate with Governor Kotek. And thanks for your patience as our team fills in this gap!

Regional Solutions Program Updates

Infrastructure Funding 101 Webinar Recording and Materials:

Thank you to all the panelists and participants at our recent Infrastructure Funding 101 Webinar! If you were not able to attend or would like to review any of the information covered, please see the following link and password to view the recording. Meeting slides are included as a separate attachment in this week's Exchange email.

[Infrastructure 101 Webinar](#), Password: !zI0siD%

Stay tuned for our next webinar, which will focus Childcare (date TBD) and will feature guests from Business Oregon, DLCD, and the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELCD) outlining the various programs and work happening within the state enterprise on childcare and highlighting funding opportunities and other resources for communities.

Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meetings:

- [Mid-Valley](#) (Marion, Polk & Yamhill Counties): February 5th, 1:30-3:30 pm
 - Chemeketa Community College, Bldg. 9, Rm. 128
 - Or join virtually at this [link](#)
- [South-Valley/Mid-Coast](#) (Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties): February 5th, 2-4pm
 - City Council Chambers, Albany City Hall, 333 Broadalbin St SW, Albany OR
 - Or join virtually at this [Link](#).

Regional Updates

Mid-Valley – Beth Wytoski

- **Aurora Airport:** I have been sitting on the Public Advisory Committee to update the Aurora Airport Master Plan. Over the last few months, there has been robust discussion about current uses and potential needs as well as impacts if expansion is warranted. The FAA limited some options due to safety requirements for aircraft currently using the facility and a preferred alternative was selected. After further discussion and debate, significant amendments have been adopted and Oregon Department of Aviation and the planning team has:
 - Removed the proposed parallel taxiway
 - Removed the proposed vehicle service road that would have required property acquisition
 - Depicted the priority property acquisition as the property required to meet FAA standards, based on the existing runway configuration

The refined plan maintains required improvements needed to comply with RSA, TSA, ROFA standards but will not have some of the impacts to nearby properties and communities.

- **3-Basin Rule:** The Environmental Quality Commission is moving forward with a petition from Marion County to consider an amendment to the 3-basin rule. There will be multiple meetings to discuss the history, needs, and challenges of the current policy before a decision is issued, which is expected in November. Under consideration is whether NPDES permits should be possible in certain situations, like what is needed to construct the North Santiam Sewer project. The canyon communities are hopeful they may be able to create systems that allow for housing development and may finally provide a path for commercial recovery in fire-damaged cities like Detroit.
- **Reworld:** The Regional Solutions Advisory Committee has adopted its priorities, one of which is long-term waste management. One related topic is Reworld (the facility formerly known as Covanta). The plant recently announced its closure and has already laid off most

of its operating staff. The facility is now receiving only enough waste to keep incinerators operating in order to process medical/blood waste, which will run only until June. There are limited options for waste disposal and the committee will be learning more about remaining capacity in nearby Linn County as well as other facilities around the state. Consider attending the February 5th RSAC meeting to hear more about the regional priorities and to learn about ways to participate in related discussions.

- **Detroit Drawdowns:** The end of 2025 is expected to see Detroit reservoir drawn to a new historical low. This action is intended to address the passage of fish stocks and water temperatures at the lake, which have caused dangerous algae blooms. Leaders of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde are applauding the plan, hoping to support salmon restoration and traditional fishing practices along the waterway, while downstream city leaders are concerned about that the implications could be similar to the Green Peter drawdowns that began in 2023. Those drawdowns led to extreme turbidity and other water quality issues as well as ecological consequences like a Kokanee die off. I'll be working with the Army Corp of Engineers and other partners to communicate and plan for when Detroit Lake is reduced to a lower-than-ever level and sediment is released. There is more than 2.5 miles of river between the Detroit and Big Cliff dams so turbidity may be somewhat settled by the time it reaches water intakes, but collaboration with the downstream entities will be critical so they can be ready. While there are pre-treatment and treatment changes that can protect municipal water, there is potential for a financial impact as was seen with cities like Lebanon and Sweet Home.

South Valley/Mid-Coast Region – Courtney Flathers

- **Semiconductor Investments in the Southern Willamette Valley:** The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) recently announced that the Corvallis Microfluidics Tech Hub, led by Oregon State University, has been selected to receive a \$45 million implementation grant through the Tech Hubs Program. The Corvallis Microfluidics Tech Hub (or CorMic) was first designated a Tech Hub by the U.S. EDA in October 2023. This implementation grant will enable OSU and their partners to continue their work in the development, scaling, and commercialization of microfluidics technologies for use in semiconductor cooling, continuous flow processing, and biotechnology. The intent behind the Tech Hubs Program is to scale up the production of critical technologies, create jobs in innovative industries, strengthen U.S. economic competitiveness and national security, and accelerate the growth of industries of the future in regions across the United States. "This milestone is just one example of how Oregon is leading the way in critical research and development," Governor Kotek said. "This opportunity showcases Oregon's close partnership between higher education and private industry, where everyone is working together towards a thriving economy." This \$45 million investment in CorMic builds on the \$53 million award made to HP Inc. to expand its research and manufacturing facilities in Corvallis. This award, made possible by the federal CHIPS and Science Act, was announced last summer and finalized this month. The state invested \$9.5 million from the Oregon CHIPS Act to support HP's bid for this federal investment.

- **ODOT Receives \$30 million to Invest in Lane County:** ODOT is set to receive a \$30 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program to make critical safety and infrastructure improvements along a 1.9-mile segment of OR 126 in Lane County near the communities of Veneta and Elmira. The improvements will include dual-lane roundabouts at Huston Road and Ellmaker Road, railroad crossing improvements, widening the road from two to four lanes, new transit stops, and creating safe spaces for walking and biking with wider shoulders and a separated shared-use path. Congratulations to ODOT and their partners including the communities of Veneta and Elmira who have long advocated for this important investment. Construction is anticipated in 2026 or 2027. ODOT is working through additional steps including right-of-way acquisitions, environmental and land-use permitting, and collaboration with the Coos Bay Rail Line.

Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- **John Day Wastewater Project:** Our Regional Solutions team met with the City of John Day and their consultant to get an update on their wastewater project and their funding gaps. The consultants are working on final design of the new treatment plant and they will be going out for procurement on some of the larger equipment purchases in the next few months. They are complete on environmental work and the only thing left is for the \$30 million construction work. The city is having conversations about additional funding needs to reduce the impact on ratepayers for the remainder of the work that is necessary.
- **LUBGWMA Committee Meeting:** We had our quarterly local LUBGWMA Committee meeting this past week. It was a chance for the state agencies to give updates on the Nitrate Reduction Plan and had a good conversation on the shared data agenda conversation that Oregon Consensus is leading. Additionally, Morrow County and the state previewed a storymap website that DEQ is hoping to have live by the end of the month. Additionally, DEQ has completed the LUBGWMA Well Network Groundwater Nitrate Trend Analysis. The report summarizes groundwater nitrate concentrations and trends from a network of 33 wells within the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) sampled over a period of 32 years. The report shows that median and maximum concentrations have all increased across the 33 well network and the network-wide trend is slightly increasing. These results are unsurprising since there are still sources of nitrogen in the LUBGWMA. Here’s a [link](#) with further information.
- **Malheur Lumber Final Closure:** After 42 years of operation, Malheur Lumber has finally shut down. Most of the mill’s employees have been laid off in phases over the last six months. Another 26 were laid off Jan. 8, leaving just a few office personnel and two production workers to preside over the silent facility. There is still hope the facility can be sold and restarted and our team remains committed to working to see if there is anything the state can do to assist.
- **Industrial Symbiosis Event at Port of Morrow:** Regional Solutions attended an event last week in Boardman at the Port of Morrow that gave an overview on industrial symbiosis which is the sharing of a by-product or service that would otherwise have been disposed of

or underused in order to minimize waste and maximize the utility of resources. This is technology that Denmark has led over the past few decades and the Port of Morrow is really interested in expanding upon. They already do some of this symbiosis work already but they are working on identifying new ways that they can reduce waste streams and make them into either revenue or public benefit. It was a very interesting conversation and one that the Greater Eastern Oregon Regional Solutions Advisory Committee is really interested in seeing how they can support.

Resources and Opportunities

- **Lowe's Hometowns Project Nomination Launch**

Lowe's recently announced the fourth year of Lowe's Hometowns, a five-year, \$100-million impact program aimed at revitalizing community spaces. This year, Lowe's will award \$10 million in grants to fund 100 renovations.

Through Tuesday, February 18th, you may nominate Lowes.com/Hometowns projects and share this opportunity with your constituents and communities you serve.

Grants will be awarded to nonprofit organizations that support community improvements, safe and affordable housing, and many other causes. Any project involving a community space's physical improvement or renovation is eligible. All grants must go to a local nonprofit that is willing and able to take on the project.

Eligible project types include rebuilding or renovating:

- Safe and affordable housing facilities such as shelters or transitional living facilities
- Community resources such as senior citizen centers, first responder facilities, food pantries or youth clubs
- Outdoor community spaces like parks, gardens, and playgrounds
- Cultural preservation such as theaters or memorials
- Facilities dedicated to skilled trades education

Helpful Links:

- [Program Terms](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Past Projects](#)

If you have any questions or need additional information, please reach out to Community@Lowes.com.