



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, February 10th, 2025

Regional Solutions Program Updates

- **Hiring Central & South-Central Regional Solutions Coordinator – posting closes today!**
The opportunity to apply to be our next Central/South-Central Oregon Regional Solutions Coordinator was re-opened recently, with today as the application deadline. Please 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 midnight on February 10th. Please share this opportunity with anyone who might be a good fit for this meaningful work!

- **Upcoming Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC) Meeting:**
Additional upcoming committee meeting dates are as follows:
 - [Northeast](#) (Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties) February 19, 9:30-11:30am
 - Eastern Oregon University (Room TBD)
 - [Virtual Link](#)
 - [Greater Eastern](#) (Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Wheeler Counties)
 - February 27th, 1pm-3pm
 - [Virtual Link](#)
 - [Southern](#) (Jackson and Josephine Counties) March 24, 1-3pm
 - [South Valley/Mid-Coast](#) (Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties) May 21, 10am-12pm

Regional Updates

South Coast Region – Jessica LaBerge

- **South Coast Housing update – Coos & Curry Impacts:** [The North Bend City, Coos-Curry Housing Authority](#) have had wins I'd like to share! Last year was the Housing Authorities biggest year yet—a testament to the dedication, resilience, and impact of their team serving the communities of Coos and Curry Counties.

HA Impact at a Glance:

- Provided stable housing for 1,262 households, more than 2,500 individuals each night
- Invested \$6.1 million in Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) payments to local landlords
- Spent \$346,000 supporting local contractors and vendors
- Increased community outreach and engagement by 40%
- Provided over \$16 million in rental assistance payments directly to landlords through the HCV program in the last three years
- Introduced Shared Housing into their HCV program, expanding options for voucher holders and increasing access to affordable housing solutions

In addition to their ongoing programs, they made significant progress on major housing developments:

- 🏠 North Bend Family Housing: Phase I starts in April 2025, bringing 105 affordable units, including 30 units at 30% AMI and 20 Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units with on-site services.
- 🏠 Ellensburg Housing – Gold Beach: Expected to break ground in 2026, adding 20 new affordable housing units to Curry County.

Southern Region – Jessica LaBerge

- **Winter weather blankets Southern Oregon** – This week (2/3) we got hit with considerable snow that continued or stuck around much of the week. Heavy snow loads took down trees and power lines, and Pacific Power was working crews around the clock to get residents back online. Please stay safe and don't forget to check regularly on your pets. Remember to download [ODOT TripCheck](#) to your mobile devices!
- **SORED! (Southern EDD) and Innovation Hub update** – A big shout out to Dr. Kim Freeze for having the vision and passion for community organizing; this following update is from Dr. Freeze. The Innovation Hub in Jackson and Josephine counties is fostering a dynamic ecosystem of entrepreneurship, collaboration, and economic growth in the Rogue Valley. Each week, [One Million Cups](#) continues to draw a growing number of community members, entrepreneurs, and business leaders, creating a supportive network for new startups to thrive. This momentum is strengthening the local economy, providing emerging businesses with access to mentorship, resources, and connections that drive innovation and success. We have witnessed increased engagement, energy and positive movement with increased

startups, clearer pathways for entrepreneurs, collaboration with city and county officials and local industry and businesses. This momentum is strengthening the local economy, providing emerging businesses with access to mentorship, resources, and connections that drive innovation and success.

Crucial to this progress is the support from [Business Oregon](#), whose funding has been vital in sustaining and expanding the impact of our Innovation Hubs. These resources allow us to continue creating opportunities for entrepreneurs, startups, scaling businesses, and traded-sector companies, helping them grow and contribute to the region’s prosperity. As we facilitate conversations with city officials, SOREDI, Main Street associations, and industry leaders, we remain focused on fostering economic sustainability and collaboration. Together, we are building a more resilient and thriving Rogue Valley, ensuring long-term success and innovation for our communities.

In addition, ongoing discussions with city officials, [SOREDI](#), Main Street associations, and key stakeholders in the food and beverage and food systems sectors are opening new avenues for conversation, access to resources, statewide collaboration and support. Together we are stronger.

South Valley/Mid-Coast – Courtney Flathers

- **Advisory Committee Adopted Priorities:** Last week the South Valley/Mid-Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee adopted their priorities for community and economic development. The group opted to adopt priority areas alongside focused strategies aimed at operationalizing work under each priority area in collaboration with the South Valley/Mid-Coast Regional Solutions team of state and federal agency staff and regional partners. The adopted priorities and strategies are as follows:

RSAC Priority Areas	Focused Strategies
Housing Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase land availability and readiness for housing production through infrastructure investment and strategies to reduce/subsidize the cost of wetland mitigation • Replicate and scale innovative models to increase housing production at all income levels (e.g., community land trusts, tiered SDCs, ADUs, etc.) • Assist rural communities in developing housing by improving access to state housing programs and technical assistance • Support development of public-private partnerships to facilitate workforce housing production
Community Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for continued recovery from 2020 wildfires • Pursue innovative strategies to support businesses and non-profit organizations during and after disaster • Work to increase coordination and grow capacity across public, private and philanthropic sectors to improve resilience to future disasters (human capital)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support efforts to improve preparedness and resilience of the built environment through investments in communication infrastructure, electrical grid upgrades, etc.
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist communities in updating aging water, wastewater and other critical infrastructure to support housing and employment • Pursue regionalization of infrastructure where feasible to maximize economies of scale and leverage existing investments • Explore models for integration/regionalization of infrastructure services to better meet the needs of rural unincorporated communities
Accessible and Affordable Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support efforts to increase the number and diversity of child care facilities across the region, including through the deployment of child care infrastructure funds and other innovative funding models (e.g., CDBG) • Pursue creative partnerships between public, private and non-profit partners to develop and fund child care facilities, including facilities in rural communities • Identify strategies to address land use barriers limiting the expansion of child care facilities • Explore opportunities to facilitate co-location of child care facilities with housing and employment (including affordable housing projects)
A Thriving Business Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out opportunities to support the existing business community (i.e., connect businesses to resources such as SBDCs, help businesses identify commercial space for expansion and/or relocation, increase knowledge of state incentives, etc.) • Increase industrial land availability and readiness for development by addressing issues including wetlands mitigation, SDCs, etc. and ensuring properties are appropriately publicized • Support regional efforts to advance innovation and commercialization of new technology in partnership with institutions of higher education and emerging organizations including the Cascades West Innovation Hub • Develop strategies to leverage federal investments in regional economic development initiatives including the Mass Timber Tech Hub, Corvallis Microfluidics Tech Hub and Oregon Ocean Innovation Hub.

- Lazy Days Grand Reopening:** Oregon’s State Resilience Office Jenna Papaefthimiou and I were thrilled to join community members, local organization leaders, elected officials, and representatives from Homes for Good and Oregon Housing and Community Services for the grand opening of Lazy Days Mobile Home and RV Park in Blue River on Friday, January 31st. Lazy Days was completely destroyed by the Holiday Farm Fire in 2020 and has been rebuilt by Homes for Good, Lane County’s Public Housing Authority. Twenty modular homes produced by Blazer Industries in Aumsville have been placed on site, and an additional 10 park model RVs are expected to arrive in April. There is also a park and community center on site. While recovery is far from complete, it was a great opportunity to celebrate an important milestone and will allow many community members an opportunity to come home.



Greater Eastern – Courtney Crowell

- Pendleton Workforce Housing Project:** Regional Solutions had the opportunity to tour a number of projects in the City of Pendleton this week with former mayor John Turner. He showed me the new infrastructure that is going in that will open up 260 acres of residential housing in within the city. The City of Pendleton received \$4 million from the legislature in 2023 to add a new road network to open this land for housing development. The project is fully funded and underway and should be ready for housing to get started later this year. He wanted to thank the Legislature for all the support the city of Pendleton has received for various housing projects. In the past few years, they have opened up two new affordable housing developments, a transitional housing project and now new workforce/market rate housing.
- Pendleton Energy Resilience Projects:** John Turner also toured me around the Pendleton wastewater treatment facility which either has or is in the process of establishing three energy projects on site. They already have a small hydro project and have a solar energy project under construction. They also have a battery project that is underway. They believe in the next few years the entire wastewater system could be net zero. It was a great example of how communities are looking at ways to use renewable energy and create community resilience. The Greater Eastern Oregon Regional Solutions committee has identified energy resilience as a regional priority and the work they are doing in Pendleton

is a great example of what other communities could be doing. I'll be having conversations with ODOE to see how we can try and replicate some of what is happening in Pendleton within other Eastern Oregon communities.

North Coast – Nate Stice

- **Seaside Foredune Management:** Regional Solutions facilitated a meeting with the City of Seaside, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development to discuss foredune management along the Seaside shore. This is a part of an ongoing series of meetings to help the city think about a path forward for protecting an important economic driver for the community, while thinking about and protecting the many other values the ocean shore provides. Based on weather, we pivoted from an in person meeting to a virtual one, but we were still able to walk unit by unit through the shore to discuss what consideration and possibilities. Data and expertise from DOGAMI and OSU helped to broaden the conversation and understand the implications of grading and other activities. I greatly appreciate the participants sticking in there for a 3.5 hour zoom meeting.

Central – Amelia Porterfield

- **Bend Ranked in Top 30 Most Dynamic Metro Areas:** Heartland Forward just announced that Bend received the #8 spot in their 2024 “Most Dynamic Metropolitans”. This high ranking is a testament to effective planning, smart policy and a shared commitment to residents – all worth celebrating. Heartland Forward is the nation’s only think-and-do tank dedicated to advancing the economic opportunity of the 20 states we define as the heartland. For the past six years, this report has served as a benchmark to celebrate success and identify opportunities for growth in cities across the country. The “Most Dynamic Metropolitans” report ranks 380 metropolitan areas by measuring key indicators like employment growth, average annual pay, real GDP, entrepreneurial activity and educational attainment. Using multiple data points, the report is a valuable tool for governors, U.S. mayors and economic development departments to evaluate their policies and identify best practices for growth, development and community health. Key trends identified in the report include: AI investment and policy, advanced manufacturing innovation; post-pandemic tourism and recreation growth; oil, gas and alternative energy; and University-driven growth. Congrats to Bend for receiving this recognition!

South Central – Amelia Porterfield

- **Klamath County Winter Storm Emergency:** In last week’s severe winter storms, Klamath County faced heavy snows of up to five feet that blocked roads, resulted in power outages for hundreds of homes, and created challenges in providing supplies and support to some areas. The County’s emergency management team immediately mobilized resources and has been working closely with the Oregon Department of Emergency Management, ODHS and ODOT to provide support to residents who are in need. The County declared a state of emergency on Friday, and remains in coordination with the Governor’s office and state agencies to care for county residents, clear impassible roads and prepare for the possibility flooding.

Metro – Kathy Hyzy

- **City of Possibility: Portland's Next Horizon:** There is a lot of energy in Portland right now around identifying the next big thing(s) that will continue the city's positive trajectory. Much of that energy pooled at the Portland Art Museum on a Sunday afternoon for a sold-out two hour event highlighting seven visionary project proposals for the central city core: Albina Vision Trust's revitalization of the Rose Quarter area; OMSI District redevelopment; and Prosper Portland's plans for the Broadway Corridor; the Rothko Pavilion addition to the Portland Art Museum; the Green Loop, a six mile linear park connecting the east and west sides of the river; Made in Old Town's bid to return manufacturing and fabrication to the district; and the complete redevelopment of the Lloyd Center into a mixed-use commercial/housing/entertainment neighborhood. As one of the biggest economic engines for the rest of the state, Portland's prosperity has benefits well beyond the Metro region, and it's exciting to see so much civic engagement pour into these visionary projects!
- **King City Visit:** I visited with the city manager of King City and joined him on a drive around their extensive UGB expansion areas. King City has been very proactive in identifying developable lands to bring into the UGB, are currently has approximately 1500 units of housing permitted and under way. They also have 320 acres of land they would like to bring in that is fully planned and would include an additional town center, a place for a badly-needed new City Hall, and hundreds of units of housing. All this development will go a long way toward providing a range of much-needed housing in the region.
- **Estacada + DEQ:** In January, the Metro Regional Solutions team worked with DEQ's NW Regional staff to put together an in-person educational opportunity for business owners in Estacada's business park. Hosted at City Hall, the event brought together city staff, DEQ and BizO staff, and invited nearly a dozen business owners to learn more about DEQ's Z-1200 permit. The permit regulates stormwater runoff, and DEQ doesn't have a great system for identifying businesses that need to apply. This can lead to businesses learning years down the road that they are in non-compliance and must now spend thousands of dollars to get the permit and maintain it. While DEQ staff do their best to identify businesses that need the permit early on, we learned that it would also be helpful for BizO staff and city staff to flag this particular permit for businesses as they are being recruited into a city. Regional Solutions will continue to work with DEQ's NW Region staff to develop a handout Coordinators and RS team members can share with cities and businesses statewide, in hopes that we can help reduce confusion for cities and businesses and increase the use of lowest-cost pathways to compliance.
- **Oregon City Mill Fire:** In the early hours on Thursday the 30th, a three alarm fire broke out at the site of the former Blue Heron Paper Mill/future tumwata village. The 23 acre property is owned by the Grand Ronde, and they have been working with DEQ, ODOT, and the City of Oregon City to clean up and redevelop the site. Hazardous material was removed from the site in 2024. Clackamas Fire crews continue to monitor the site, which is still emitting smoke and occasional flames. A representative from DEQ has been on site and confirmed that normal DEQ cleanup and assessment will continue after the fire is fully extinguished.

Resources and Opportunities

- **OHA Water Source Protection Grants:**

The Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Services division (OHA-DWS) is now accepting applications from public water systems (PWSs) for drinking water source protection (DWSP) projects. This year **the application period is open from January 27 through March 28, 2025.**

This funding, in the form of grants and low interest loans, is intended to provide financial assistance to public and privately owned community water systems and nonprofit noncommunity water systems for the implementation of projects that help protect their existing drinking water sources (groundwater and surface water) from contamination. Eligible projects must be focused on contaminant risk-reduction efforts in the delineated source water area. Eligible PWSs can apply for DWSP grants of up to \$50,000 and loans of up to \$100,000 per water system. They can also coordinate with other eligible water systems in their vicinity and combine funding for larger "regional" projects. Example projects include mapping and risk assessment of drinking water supply areas, resiliency assessments, emergency and spill prevention planning, landowner outreach and education, land conservation and restoration, ensuring proper private well abandonment, and developing local drinking water source protection plans and ordinances (see the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's [Interactive Drinking Water Source Protection Funded Projects Map](#) for examples of previously funded projects).

For 2025, eligible PWSs may apply for land acquisition (conservation) planning grants (up to a maximum of \$70,000) that will be funded with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds. Land acquisition for conservation purposes refers to the preservation of land to protect, restore, or enhance sources of drinking water serving eligible PWSs. Conservation planning projects can include studies or activities that involve or are related to assessing the legal and/or financial feasibility of purchasing land, easements, etc. within an identified drinking water source area.

For information regarding the application process, eligibility, funding (loans and grants), and rating process, please see the [Application Guide](#) on the OHA-DWS [Drinking Water Source Water Protection Projects](#) web page.

- **ODOT Small City Allotment Grants:**

The Oregon Department of Transportation recently announced its [2025 competitive grant](#) program is open for proposals. This program allocates \$5 million annually to a competitive grant program for cities with a population less than 5,000. The grants can be up to \$250,000, and allow smaller communities to leverage funds for transportation improvements. In the most recent grant cycle, more than \$17 million in qualified projects were submitted for consideration. Grant applications will be accepted starting **March 3 through April 30, 2025.** More information on the program is available [here](#).

- **Governor's Office Recruiting Behavioral Health Policy Coordinator:**

The Governor's office is hiring a new member of the team to support the Governor's Behavioral Health priorities. The application deadline is 2/18/25. Links to the posting and to apply are below:

Internal candidates can apply [here](#).

External candidates can apply [here](#).

Please share with your networks!

- **State Senate Seeking Applicants for the Honorary Page Program**

The Honorary Page Program provides students with a unique chance to engage with the legislative process by assisting with Senate Chamber tasks, observing floor sessions, and learning firsthand about the role of the legislature. Through this experience, students gain a deeper understanding of how the three branches of government intersect and function. Additionally, the program allows them to meet and interact with their senator, members of the Assembly, and key legislative staff.

This long-cherished program is a valuable tool for civic education, offering students a meaningful way to connect with government and inspire future leadership. The Senate is eager to ensure that students from all parts of Oregon have access to this enriching experience.

Interested students can learn more by visiting the Senate Honorary Page website [HERE](#) or by accessing the application directly [HERE](#). Applicants are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.