

# RS EXCHANGE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## **Regional Solutions Visits Gilliam County**

The Regional Solutions staff in the Governor's office convenes together once a month to think big about the program, share notes on problem solving, and appreciate the context of our colleagues' work. Our plan is to periodically hold these gatherings in the field to connect to local communities and see the practical applications of our work. We were very grateful to Gilliam County for hosting us for the first of these field meetings during the Kotek Administration. The team had the opportunity to tour the Columbia Ridge Landfill—the largest landfill west of the Mississippi River—and the Chemical Waste Management Site near Arlington. The Waste Management staff also shared plans to create a renewable natural gas facility with carbon capture technology that will use gas byproduct from the landfill to create energy and limit greenhouse gas emissions. The team discussed Waste Management's long history and engagement with the county, including recent partnership with the county to help address housing shortages for Waste Management's workforce. Many thanks to the Waste Management team for their hospitality.



Over lunch, the team also had the chance to catch up with Port of Arlington Director Jed Crowther, who updated us on key initiatives within the county. Director Crowther shared updates on the many projects that the county, port, and other partners are engaged in, including the rehabilitation of the Condon Elementary School for housing and other community uses (utilizing Brownfields funds from Business Oregon), a plan by the Port to create shovel ready land in Arlington for further residential development, and collaborative efforts to create more affordable childcare opportunities. On all of these fronts, the county continues to make critical and large investments. The Regional Solutions team is engaged in many of these efforts, and Nate Stice and Courtney Crowell, who share coverage for Gilliam County, were able to share context on several projects.

Again, a big thank you to Director Crowther for joining us for a rich discussion, and to Gilliam County and Judge Liz Farrar for allowing the use of their facilities.

## Greater Eastern and Northeast Regions

- **City of Echo Pedestrian Safety Bridge:** Within the city of Echo there are two sets of railroad tracks that cut through the community, with one of the tracks becoming a parking lot for trains in the area. Unfortunately, the Echo school is right near the tracks and the nearest pedestrian crossing is almost a half mile down the road, so many times kids end up crossing the tracks and when there are trains parked there, they can't see and it becomes a huge safety concern. ODOT has partnered with the city to put \$2.5 million towards planning and design of a safety solution. Rep. Levy is requesting \$4 million to create a pedestrian bridge that would run from the school, over both sets of train tracks to the other part of town. RS will continue to follow this issue and help with either the implementation of the pedestrian bridge or looking for other solutions.
- **Umatilla Basin Water Quantity Issues:** RS brought together OWRD, the Port of Umatilla and the Mid-Columbia Water Commission to discuss concerns related to an instream lease of the Port of Umatilla being used for mitigation by the Mid-Columbia Water Commission in order to use water out of the Columbia River for irrigation. RS is working to improve communication and find a path forward for this year's mitigation efforts. Both OWRD and the Mid-Columbia Water Commission are working on finding solutions over the next few days to solve this issue in the short-term.
- **CTUIR/City of Pendleton Transportation Planning:** RS and ODOT convened a meeting between the city of Pendleton and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) to discuss the large-scale transportation projects surrounding exits 209 and 216 and Highway 331. For the past few years both CTUIR and the city of Pendleton have individually applied for federal funding through the RAISE grant program and haven't been successful. The city of Pendleton is trying once again with matching assistance from ODOT but should they prove not successful this year, we are beginning to have conversations about how the three entities (CTUIR, city of Pendleton and ODOT) might be able to coordinate together to make a joint application for a larger and more comprehensive regional transportation project. Not only are their freight issues in this region but there is significant safety concerns associated with this larger project. The hope is that by working together we might have a better shot at the federal funding. RS will continue to help strengthen the working relationship and see if there are ways to work together over the next year.

- **Baker City Wastewater Project:** RS met with both DEQ and Baker City recently to discuss their ongoing challenges with their wastewater treatment project. The good news is that DEQ has put out for public comment the city's Recycled Water Plan which, once approved, will allow the city to land apply their wastewater on land approved by DEQ. This public comment period will last for 30 days and if the city feels they are close to overflowing their lagoons, DEQ has said they will approve a special use permit within 48 hours to allow the city to land apply wastewater. We also discussed what DEQ will need to allow additional land to be brought into land application (medium term solution) and the city is working on providing that information. Regional Solutions will continue to bring the city and DEQ together monthly to discuss next steps and ensure that communication is going smoothly.
- **Verde Light Community Solar Project:** RS has been working for the past couple of weeks with a community solar project in Ontario that is running into regulatory challenges between state agencies. This is a small solar project that has received a \$900K ODOE grant and is about to receive a \$1 million USDA grant to provide solar for the city of Ontario. The land is zoned heavy industrial and was planned to be a truck stop prior to this community solar project. This project has gone through NEPA to account for federal environmental needs, and the land has been deemed not a wetland by the US Army Corps of Engineers. However, the state has determined that the land includes a wetland and there are regulatory challenges between DSL and DEQ to issuing a final permit. RS is working with DEQ and DSL to try and find a path forward for this project.

## North Central and North Coast Regions

- **Dog River Pipeline:** The City of The Dalles has engaged the Regional Solutions Team over the last several years on a project to replace 3.5 miles of aging wooden water supply pipeline that serves as the main water supply for the city. The former pipeline leaked nearly a million gallons a day. The project is designed to create more resilient infrastructure for the community as well as supporting environmental values as well. In particular, the pipeline will include new fish passage and screening systems at the pipeline intake. The project includes a \$1 million investment from the Oregon Water Resources Department and financing from Business Oregon.

Update: The team continues to work with the city through the permitting and construction of the project and met with the city this week to help navigate part of the process.

- **Childcare Center Project:** Regional Solutions has been participating in an effort to house a new childcare center in The Dalles. The project is led by the Columbia Gorge Education Service District and Columbia Gorge Community College Child Care Resource and Referral. Regional Solutions helped the College to secure a legislative allocation to move the project forward. The project group has spent the last year looking at economic models, partnerships, and potential locations, and have identified an underutilized school district property as a potential site for the project: the Chenoweth Middle School site.

Update: Regional Solutions team members rejoined the project steering committee and received an update on engineering and cost estimates for rehabilitation of the site. The middle school will require significant investments to put it into service as a childcare center. The team will work with the ESD and College to explore funding option both for repair of the property and ongoing operations.

- **City of St. Helens:** The City of St. Helens has undertaken a comprehensive look at redeveloping their downtown waterfront district. Of particular interest are brownfield

sites where Boise Veneer and Boise White Paper were once located. Three key waterfront properties totaling over 250 acres that provide catalytic redevelopment opportunities for the city. The City plans to restore the connection between downtown St. Helens and the Columbia River, provide public access to the waterfront, and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of St. Helens.

Update: Thanks to the City of St. Helens for taking the time to get me up to speed on the project and share the many other amazing efforts under way in the community.

## South Coast & Southern Oregon Regions:

- **Roseburg Forest Products** [announced](#) on Friday a suite of planned investments in Southern Oregon totaling \$700 million over the next four years. These investments include the creation of two new, state-of-the-art factories at the company's Dillard, Oregon complex. The new Dillard MDF plant will make Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) and High Density Fiberboard (HDF) panels, and the planned Dillard Components facility will convert specialty MDF made at the company's Medford, Oregon plant into Armorite™ Trim, a new exterior trim product developed by Roseburg Forest Products. Both new plants are anticipated to begin operations in 2025 and will employ approximately 120 people once completed. In addition to these new plants, Roseburg intends to invest \$200 million into modernizing its plants in Riddle and Coquille. The Regional Solutions Team worked hard to help encourage this investment: after working with the company to understand their business needs, which included funding and regulatory certainty, [Business Oregon awarded a grant of \\$3 million](#) from the Emerging Opportunity Fund to help purchase machinery for the \$45 million Dillard Components plant, while the Department of Environmental Quality's Air Quality team provided technical assistance around air quality permit application preparation and timing.

## Resources

### Workforce Ready Grants Available:

The Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has opened the Request for Applications (RFA) for **Workforce Ready Grants, Round Two: Innovation in Workforce Programs** to support the education and training needs of Oregonians through Future Ready Oregon. [Read the press release here.](#)

Future Ready Oregon is a comprehensive \$200 million investment package that supports the education and training Oregonians need for good-paying jobs, prioritizing underserved and historically marginalized communities. You can learn more about Future Ready Oregon on the [HECC Future Ready Oregon webpage](#). Workforce Ready Grants are the largest component of Future Ready Oregon and will be available on a phased or rolling basis through 2024. In Round One, the HECC released \$10 million in capacity-building grants to broaden the type and number of organizations that comprise Oregon's workforce system.

The second round focuses on innovative and collaborative workforce development programming and partnerships that center the needs of Oregon's historically underserved communities. Up to \$35 million may be awarded to develop education and training programs that connect individuals to the resources they need for good-paying jobs and meaningful careers. Investments will advance opportunities to recruit and retain a diverse workforce in key sectors of Oregon's economy—healthcare, manufacturing, and technology.

### ***Who is Eligible***

The HECC welcomes applications from community-based organizations and workforce service providers that administer workforce programs in the healthcare, manufacturing, or technology sectors and prioritize equitable program participation by individuals from priority populations.

### ***How to Apply***

The RFA document—which details eligible activities, timelines, guidelines, and requirements for applications—can be found on [HECC's Grants and Contracts webpage](#). The RFA has been posted in both English and Spanish and can be made available in additional languages upon request. **The application deadline is June 23, 2023.**

### ***Support for Applicants***

Potential applicants have access to Technical Assistance providers who can help them understand the terms and requirements of the RFA, as well as provide feedback on application materials, free of charge. Contact information for Technical Assistance providers is included in the RFA.

Additionally, HECC will host four virtual Information Sessions. These sessions are free, and participation is optional but encouraged. To register, click on the session below that works best for your schedule:

- [Session 1, Monday, April 17, 1:00–2:00 PM](#)
- [Session 2, Tuesday, April 25, 4:00–5:00 PM](#)
- [Session 3, Wednesday, May 3, 1:00–2:00 PM](#)
- [Session 4, Wednesday, May 10, 4:30–5:30 PM](#)

Once you have registered, you will receive an email with the meeting link. Please email [FutureReadyOregon@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:FutureReadyOregon@hecc.oregon.gov) if you do not receive the link, or if you have additional questions.