

RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Monday, September 18, 2023

Regional Updates

Eastern Oregon - Courtney Crowell

- **Baker City Maternity Closure:** The HHS public health service officers that were deployed to Baker City following the request of the Governor to the US Health and Human Services Secretary finished their on-the-ground work in Baker County and sent a final report to the County. This report outlines a list of short-term recommendations related to the closure of the maternity services in Baker City by St. Alphonsus and resources to begin accessing longer term resources to restore maternity services in the future. Regional Solutions has been working with the Governor's policy team, OHA, Baker County and Senator Wyden's office over the past two weeks to address the findings in the report and help provide resources for the County to look a long-term options.
- **Pendleton Round-Up:** The Governor was able to be on hand to celebrate the Pendleton Round-Up this week and partake in the festivities. It was a great chance for the Governor and Regional Solutions to interact with leaders across Eastern Oregon and celebrate the historic event.

Central Oregon – Director Porterfield & Zavier Borja

- **Crook County & Prineville**

Last week Crook County Judge Seth Crawford organized a day of visits in Prineville for Regional Solutions staff that further explored and expanded upon stops made by the Governor on her One Oregon Tour. We were able to tour the construction of the new Courthouse/Justice center, see the data centers and parks and trail infrastructure nearby, and hear from County and City leaders about community needs, challenges, and local innovations related to public safety, transportation, natural resources, and ways to support and grow local industries. Thanks to Judge Crawford and the whole community of Prineville for your hospitality and willingness to share these creative solutions!



North Central – Nate Stice

- **Governor Kotek Visits Sherman, Wheeler & Gilliam Counties on One Oregon Tour**

Last week, Governor Tina Kotek and First Lady Aimee Kotek Wilson visited communities in Sherman, Wheeler, and Gilliam counties on stops 27, 28, and 29 of the One Oregon Listening Tour, stopping in Wasco, Moro, Fossil, Condon and Arlington.

“From precision agriculture in dry land farming to local problem-solving to tackle complex challenges in housing and education, there is exciting work being done in Oregon’s frontier counties,” Governor Kotek said. “Local communities across Sherman, Wheeler, and Gilliam counties are deeply invested in the prosperity of the region. These conversations are integral to gaining a stronger understanding of how the state can be a better partner in the years to come.”

The First Couple started their trip in Sherman County with a visit to Smith Farms, a family-owned wheat farm, and then a tour of Sherman County School. At Smith Farms, they learned about the advanced technology being used for precision agriculture and discussed the challenges of this year’s poor rainfall. At Sherman County School, the county’s K through 12 campus, they met with student leaders, visited the FFA, shop and science classrooms, and observed some first graders.



After lunch with local leaders in Wasco at the Dirty Cowgirl Saloon, they headed to Wheeler County. First stop was the Clarno Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument to meet with National Park Service staff and others to discuss the unique research and educational value of the monument. Next, in Fossil, they sat down with community leaders at Asher Community Health Care to learn about the health care, emergency response, elder care, and workforce housing needs in the area. They rounded out the day with a dinner with local leaders in Condon in Gilliam County. After staying the night at the iconic Hotel Condon, the Governor and First Lady visited some stores on Main Street and then participated in a roundtable conversation about early childhood education at the Condon Early Learning Center. They then headed north to Arlington to tour the Columbia Ridge Landfill, the largest landfill in the Northwest and the largest employer in the county and to have lunch with local leaders to discuss the city’s economic development plans.

Resources and Opportunities

- **New Tribal Electrification Program to Help Tribes Electrify Homes, Expand Availability of Clean Energy in Indian Country**

The Department of the Interior recently announced the launch of a new program and availability of \$72.5 million in initial funding to help Tribal communities electrify homes. This investment is a critical step toward the goal of electrifying all homes in Indian Country with renewable energy sources and advances the Biden-Harris administration’s work to reach a carbon-free electricity sector by 2035. This

funding is part of an overall \$150 million investment from the Inflation Reduction Act to support the electrification of homes in Tribal communities.

Tribal Nations across the country have their own unique energy and electrification-related needs and implementation capacity. The Tribal Electrification Program will meet the unique needs of individual Tribal communities by supporting collaborative and community-led planning and implementation.

The program will provide financial and technical assistance to Tribes to connect homes to transmission and distribution that is powered by renewable energy; provide electricity to unelectrified Tribal homes through zero-emissions energy systems; transition electrified Tribal homes to zero-emissions energy systems; and support associated home repairs and retrofitting necessary to install the zero-emissions energy systems.

For more information on this program, please visit the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#) website. Additional information about federal programs available to support Tribes can be found here:

- [Bipartisan-Infrastructure-Law-Tribal-Playbook-053122-.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#)
- [Inflation-Reduction-Act-Tribal-Guidebook.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](#)

- **EPA Seeking Applicant for 2023 Environmental Education Grants**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that up to \$3.6 million in funding for locally-focused environmental education grants is now available under the 2023 Environmental Education (EE) Local Grant Program. EPA will award grants in each of EPA's 10 Regions, between \$50,000-\$100,000 each, for a total of 30-40 grants nationwide. The program includes support for projects that reflect the intersection of environmental issues with climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, preventing future water quality and human health issues, in addition to other environmental topics.

Funded projects will increase public awareness of those topics and help participants to develop the skills needed to make informed decisions. Each of the 10 EPA Regions published a solicitation notice with their respective regional details. Applicants must apply to the Regional NOFO that corresponds with the location of their proposed project. Through this grant program, EPA intends to provide financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques, that will serve to increase environmental literacy and encourage behavior that will benefit the environment in local communities, especially underserved communities. This grant program recognizes underserved communities as high-poverty areas, persistent poverty counties, communities the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool identifies as disadvantaged communities, and Title I schools.

Visit the new [EPA Grants Community Library of Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) and the [EE grant FAQ](#) webpages to learn more about the current competition and the federal grant process. Find out background information on the EE Grants Program and resources for applicants on EPA's [EE Grant Homepage](#).

Applications are due on November 8, 2023, and the Notice of Funding Opportunities are now posted on [www.grants.gov](#) and the [EE Grant Solicitation Notice webpage](#).

The Office of Environmental Education will also host at least one webinar during the open solicitation period on how to write a competitive application and to address commonly asked questions. Once confirmed, webinar registration details will be available here:

<https://www.epa.gov/education/grants#webinar>

- **National Policy Consensus Center Seeks New Executive Director**

After 18 years at the National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC), with eight of those as its executive director, Laurel Singer will be retiring at the end of this year. We hope you'll join us in thanking Laurel for her years of dedicated service to communities across Oregon and wish her well in her next adventures!

The NPCC has begun recruiting its next Executive Director, who will lead the organization to bring people together across differences to build solutions, solve public problems, and resolve conflict. They are seeking a collaborative and community-oriented leader to serve Oregon and Oregonians and connect with a tremendous network of national and international scholars. More about the position and application process can be found [at this link](#). The position will be open until finalists are identified. More information about NPCC can be found [here](#). Screening for interviews will begin on October 6th and will remain open until finalists are identified. Salary is negotiable based on experience. Please pass on this posting to anyone who you think would be perfect for the role!