



2005 Government to Government Report

AGENCY: Oregon Employment Department

KEY CONTACTS: Greg Hickman, Deputy Director

Tamara Brickman, Legislative Coordinator

The mission of the Oregon Employment Department is to support business and promote employment. We accomplish that mission by:

- Supporting economic stability for Oregonians and communities during times of unemployment through the payment of unemployment benefits;
- Serving businesses by recruiting and referring the best qualified applicants to jobs, and provide resources to diverse job seekers in support of their employment needs;
- Developing and distributing quality workforce and economic information to promote informed decision making; and
- Providing access to child care that is safe, high quality, and affordable.

The Oregon Employment Department (OED) was created in 1993. Laurie Warner, the department Director, reports directly to Governor Kulongoski. The department is an active partner in the development of the state's workforce.

Through 47 Business & Employment Services (BES) field offices across the state the OED serves businesses by recruiting and referring the best qualified applicants to jobs, and provide resources to diverse job seekers in support of their employment needs. The OED administers a statewide no-fee referral and placement service for Oregon job seekers, and provides recruiting services to new and expanding businesses in Oregon. The department supports worker retraining by providing tools to assess workers' current skills and identify skill-transfer opportunities, providing specialized placement for targeted applicant groups (e.g. veterans, migrant and seasonal farm workers) and forming partnerships with other employment and training agencies in the workforce system. OED serves employers through timely recruitment of a qualified workforce, customizing state and local labor market information for use as a business planning tool, and by offering job-matching services based on the need of each employer. Labor market economists and research analysts identify major workforce policy areas that require additional research and present their findings and ideas for solutions to decision makers. Statewide, regional, and local economic information is prepared for use by employers, community leaders, and policy makers. The department helps job seekers find jobs that match their skills and employers' needs, provides them with up-to-date information about trends in occupations and skills needed for success in the job market, and works with other agencies to direct them to appropriate training programs and job experiences.

The OED also supports economic stability for Oregonians and communities during times of unemployment through the payment of unemployment benefits. Unemployment Insurance services are provided out of three regional centers in Oregon. Unemployment insurance benefits, financed by employer payroll taxes, supply temporary wage-replacement income to Oregonians unemployed through no fault of their own while they search for suitable new jobs. Oregon's unemployment insurance trust fund maintains enough funding to provide benefits for eighteen months at a moderate recession level.

Employer payroll taxes, which go into the trust fund, are determined each year by the amount of benefits paid out and the amount of payroll taxes paid by employers.

The Employment Department's Child Care Division helps to provide access to child care that is safe, high quality, and affordable. The Child Care Division regulates child care providers to ensure that minimum standards are met in child care facilities. These standards promote the health and safety of children. The Division assists providers to meet the standards through training and technical assistance. Additionally, the division works to reduce the number of illegal providers and providers who do not comply with state standards.

To ensure successful relationships with tribal governments, Greg Hickman, Deputy Director, and Tamara Brickman, the agency's Legislative Coordinator, were appointed by the Director as the department's primary contacts for tribal issues. Both Greg Hickman and Tamara Brickman represent the Employment Department at the Economic Development Cluster Meetings.

Business and Employment Services (BES)

In 2005, several of our BES Field Offices worked with the tribes as partners in the workforce system and to provide business and employment services. In:

BES Programs- This Central office unit provided at least one prevailing wage request to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla and one to the Columbia River Intertribal fish commission.

The Dalles- The manager of The Dalles Office maintains close contact with Sal Sahme of the confederated Tribes of Warm Springs as both are members of the Region 9 Workforce Investment Board. Staff members of The Dalles office have also participated in several meetings sponsored by Warm Springs, concerning the potential Casino; they have offered the Tribe assistance with filling positions if they are able to build.

Gresham- The Gresham office continued to work with The Confederate Tribes of Siletz Indians by providing a work location for work experience. Currently, there are two clients working in the Gresham office providing customer service in their Job & Career Center and at their Greeter desk. This has been a great collaboration. The clients get some essential hands on experience working with a culturally diverse population and we get the benefit of their assistance which allows our staff to focus on other high demand business services.

In addition, this past year the Gresham office manned a WorkSource Oregon Employment Department booth at the Bow & Arrow Pow Wow held in June at Delta Park. They also maintain an ongoing relationship with Native American Rehabilitation Association and the Grande Ronde Drug & Alcohol Program assisting their clients who have completed their program with work search and job placement.

Hermiston/Pendleton/Milton-Freewater- The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) located east of Pendleton continue to be an important workforce partner in Region 12 and part of the One Stop in Pendleton. Jue Jue Withers and Susie Calhoun represent CTUIR on the Regional Workforce Investment Board and our Morrow Umatilla Workforce Response Team.

This past year they had an On The JOB Training (OJT) with CTUIR where a member worked as a greeter at the One Stop in Pendleton for six months. She did such a good job, that the Workforce Investment Act Title 1B partner, CAPECO, picked her up as an employee and she continues to work at the One Stop.

They recently began a partnership on the Oregon Bridge Project with CTUIR. CTUIR has a unique agreement with the Oregon Department of Transportation whereby any construction work within a sixty mile radius of the reservation requires hiring preference be given to tribal members. All job listings and referrals will be handled through iMatch to ensure tracking in PRISM.

The OED offices in Region 12 enjoy an excellent partnership with CTUIR and the Wild Horse Casino which is a separate entity within CTUIR.

Eugene- Last year the Eugene office provided a work experience for a youth intern for the Siletz Tribe. It was very successful and they would like to do it again. This office also provides recruitment services for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw in Florence. They conduct all recruitments for the Casino. All applicants go through the Employment Department for applications etc.

Klamath Falls- The Klamath Falls Field Office in 2005 continued their hosted worker and space lease agreement with Klamath Tribes Education and Employment Department. This provides an opportunity to share resources with this tribal agency in order to facilitate services to tribal members involved with the Education and Employment Department. The hosted worker and space lease agreement provides a convenient location for tribal staff to meet with clients in Klamath Falls. Also, in 2005 we had staff participate and assist with several special events sponsored by Klamath Tribes Education and Employment. This included participation in a career fair, providing a presentation with other community partners for the Summer Youth Intern program on how to begin a career with our agency, and providing a one time class for tribal clients called First Impressions related to job search and interviewing for positions. Finally, Klamath Tribes Education and Employment applied in 2005 for assistance with the Summer Youth Internship program through the Community Development Fund administered by OED. This application was accepted for part of the funding requested and we are looking forward to completing and agreement in this regard.

Madras/Redmond- Our Madras office works with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Human Resources on a daily basis, providing our labor exchange services to a number of tribal departments and Kahneeta High Desert Resort & Casino. They have provided on-site instruction on how to use iMatchSkills and the benefits of the system. Our Madras office offers tribal job seekers job search assistance and referrals to community service agencies. Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Human Resource staff has attended our Central Oregon Employers Council seminars.

Because of geography, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs has chosen to participate with the Region 9 Workforce Investment Board.

McMinnville- The McMinnville office has an Account Representative assigned to work with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Spirit Mountain Casino. That person attended the Tribes job fair in April. She has also been in communication with one of the Tribes educational counselors and has given them information regarding job fairs and WorkSource Oregon publications. The Account Representative has also sent them flyers for their Employer council seminars several times this year. The McMinnville office also lists most of the Tribes open positions in iMatchSkills

Ontario- In Region 14 the Ontario office had 147 jobs listed with the Old Camp Casino- Paiute Indian tribe. Employment department hires were 54% of the total hires on these job listings. The Paiute Tribe continues to list all casino jobs, and the office maintains a good relationship with the tribe.

Oregon Employer Council (OEC) - The OEC hosted its state conference at Seven Feathers, Canyonville, in 2005. This is the second time the organization has worked with Seven Feathers to produce its annual event. Seven Feathers is owned and operated by the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians. <http://www.cowcreek.com>

OEC also held a successful promotion with the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde. OEC produced the 8th annual speaker showcase in June at Washington Square. One of the major sponsors was Sprit Mountain, which was created to enhance economic self-sufficiency opportunities for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, its members and surrounding communities; to promote economic diversification by the Tribes: to support a variety of housing, educational and cultural programs under the direction of Tribal Council.

Sprit Mountain hosted the breakfast that kicked off the day-long event. They also exhibited at the trade show. This is the second year that they have participated at this level.

Roseburg- The Roseburg office works with the Seven Feathers Casino on a regular basis to recruit for and fill open positions.

Workforce and Economic Research Division

The Workforce and Economic Research Division develops and distributes quality workforce and economic information to promote informed decision making. The division researches and distributes state and local labor market information on worker supply, skills and occupational demand data to: employers, workers, educators, and decision-makers. A group of Workforce Analysts provide localized employment data to businesses throughout the state. Employment Economists work with the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics to provide information about Oregon's unemployment and employment rates.

In 2005, Workforce and Economic Research provided a wide variety of publications to all tribes over the year. The Division also publishes "Indian tribal" industry employment in some areas if it's not considered confidential. In some cases, the tribes have given us permission to publish employment if it is confidential.

Regional economists and workforce analysts periodically respond to data requests from tribes. Here's an example from the workforce analyst who covers the Hermiston/Pendleton area:

"The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation regularly call me for information. Requests included updating a data sheet they keep on Umatilla County with labor force, job seeker, and industry/occupation data for specific industries they're targeting to attract to the reservation. I also supplied data on educational attainment (associate's degrees) for Umatilla County, with job seeker data, and national wage rates associated with different education levels.

I'm currently helping them in a technical advisory role with their desire to publish their own labor market publication. I've supplied input on basic sampling procedures, and explanations of how we define and calculate our labor force statistics."

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) unit is primarily responsible for contacting and processing the occupational wage and employment information sent from tribal businesses. The confidential OES survey sample is selected by BLS and there are at least 5 tribal businesses included in the sample each year.

The Occupational Employment Statistics Survey asks all sampled businesses to supply occupational and wage information for each employee at specified locations for a specific date in time (May 12th or November 12th). This is a voluntary survey and respondents are given many chances to participate. Contact with the tribes may be at any time along the process but primarily is as a follow up to clarify data sent by the tribes.

Contact with the tribes is to request information from them. After processing this information, it is distributed as a yearly publication called the Oregon Wage Information available to all.

Legislative Relations

In 2004, Tamara Brickman, the OED Legislative Coordinator, worked to inform the tribes and ask for comment on an OED Legislative Concept. After discussing the issue with two tribes that inquired about the concept, the Legislation passed through the Legislature and was signed into law. HB 2125 amended Oregon law to treat Unemployment Insurance taxpaying Indian tribes in the same manner as Unemployment Insurance taxpaying political subdivisions with respect to charging for extended benefits.

In 2001, the Oregon Legislative Assembly passed HB 3596. HB 3596 changed unemployment law to treat Indian tribes similarly to local governments, political subdivisions and non-profit entities. Legislation at the state level was required in order to comply with the enactment of the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) of 2001. The CAA amended Federal law regarding the application of the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) as it applied to American Indian tribes.

As a condition of state conformity with federal requirements, unemployment insurance is now required for services performed for Indian tribes. Under the law, Indian tribes are given the same option available to local governments, political subdivisions and non-profit entities either to pay the quarterly unemployment insurance tax, or to reimburse the unemployment compensation trust fund for all benefits paid to an employee or former employee.

Under the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 1970, during periods of high unemployment, an extension of benefits may be available to unemployed individuals. Under an Extended Benefit (EB) period, there is a shared responsibility between the federal and state government for paying EB to claimants. The federal and state government each pays 50%. With respect to EB, local governments, political subdivisions, non-profit entities and Indian tribes electing to reimburse for benefits paid are required to reimburse all of the extended benefits. Local governments and political subdivisions that choose to pay taxes rather than reimburse are charged one-half of extended benefits. During the development of HB 3596 (2001) there was a drafting oversight and language to charge taxpaying Indian tribes one-half of extended benefits was not placed in the bill. Unemployment insurance tax rates are based on an employer's experience with unemployment benefits (or charges) and their taxable payroll. The taxpaying employer does not directly pay the "charge" amount.

Future Activities

The OED will continue to attend the meetings of and provide support for the Economic Development Cluster, as well as explore possible participation in the Education Cluster related to workforce activities.

The department will continue to provide information about its programs and services.