



# RS EXCHANGE

## REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

### Weekly Report

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

Below are some highlights from the Governor's [Regional Solutions \(RS\) Coordinators](#), on behalf of the eleven interagency teams across Oregon.

#### Regional Solutions (RS) Director – Leah Horner

#### North Coast Region – Jennifer Purcell

- North Coast Economic Recovery Team meeting:
  - Background – The North Coast Economic Recovery Team is comprised of local, regional, state, and federal economic and workforce development partners. Convened by Regional Solutions, the team has been meeting throughout the pandemic to share information about impacts and needs, resources and supports, and planning for recovery.
  - Update – As we transition away from a statewide risk-based framework, lifting all remaining COVID-19 restrictions and reopening Oregon's economy, regional partners met to share questions and concerns. Highlights included:
    - County leaders discussed plans for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Childcare expansion grants, small business assistance, workforce development and training programs, housing, public health, and broadband expansion were mentioned as priorities, along with a strong desire to look beyond immediate needs.
    - Workforce shortages are prevalent throughout the region with employers limiting hours of operation and making adjustments to service. Oregon Employment Department reports that the number of people drawing unemployment is consistent with pre-COVID rates, regional job growth has plateaued, and increasingly people seem to be sitting out of the job market.

- There are concerns about the long-term implications of business disruptions and ongoing impacts to seasonal revenue. Particularly for the hospitality sector, reductions in operating hours due to lack of staff or limited availability of supplies means a loss of important seasonal revenue that carries businesses through the winter months. Anticipating there will be no COVID-related business relief next year, there is uncertainty about the sustainability of these businesses.

## Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- No Report this week.

## Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- Umatilla County Flood Recovery:  
Regional Solutions participated in the long-term recovery workgroup for the 2020 Umatilla flood. This group meets regularly to discuss the ongoing needs to address the damage done throughout Umatilla County. Currently, the group is working on identifying all the levees throughout the county and will be working with Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) on LIDAR, a method for determining ranges, needs related to this project. Additionally, RS is working with Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) and Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to address the ongoing needs around project management for mitigation projects that the City of Pendleton has requested to address the 2019 flooding of McKay Creek in Pendleton.
- Wallowa Dam Rehabilitation Project:  
The legislature has again funded the Wallowa Lake Dam project at \$14M through Lottery Bonds. This puts the project back on track. This project was originally funded in 2019 but due to COVID-19, the lottery bonds for 2019-21 were not sold. Therefore, the legislature had to fund the project again during this session. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the instream water rights is still intact so the project can continue moving forward with design and engineering.

## North Central Region – Nate Stice

- Attainable Housing:

The North Central Advisory Committee invested their 2013 Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) of \$2M in an attainable housing loan fund. The fund provides gap financing to project service the 60-120 area median income range. While the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) administers the fund, a subcommittee of the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee does the first level of vetting to ensure that the projects meet the social metrics determined in the original design of the program. This week, the subcommittee approved a 32-unit project in Hood River for further consideration by the MCEDD loan committee. As a revolving loan fund, it is a RIF investment that will continue to help meet the housing shortage into the future.

## South Valley/Mid Coast Region – Sarah Means

- Lincoln City Highway 101 Sidewalk Project:

**Background** - Lincoln City is looking to begin work on a sidewalk project at the southern edge of the City that would improve pedestrian and bicycle access along Highway 101 where there is a gap in infrastructure. The project is complicated in that it borders ODOT Right of Way, private property, and an estuary boundary and has the potential for substantial Goal 16 and 17 implications. RS convened state agencies (DSL, ODOT, and DLCDD) and representatives from the City of Lincoln City in early 2020 to discuss potential challenges and how they might be addressed.

**Update:** ODOT and members of the Regional Solutions Team met with the City of Lincoln City and their consultants last week to discuss the complicated geotechnical design aspects of this project. While the construction of a sidewalk would typically be straightforward, that isn't the case with this project. The proposed sidewalk is a critical for enhanced pedestrian access, safety and connectivity, but the location along the west side of Highway 101 adjacent to the Pacific Ocean in an area where there have been demonstrated failures of the bank directly below makes this project anything but straightforward. While no specific resolution was agreed to at the meeting, ODOT did agree to take the information and circle back with the City within the next month with options that would be satisfactory moving forward. This was a significant step forward for this important transportation and economic development project. Many thanks to all of the ODOT staff dedicating time and energy to find a solution.

- Next SVMC Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Meeting:  
July 8, 2021; 3pm (via zoom)

Metro Region – **Jim McKenna for Raihana Ansary**

- No Report this week.

Central & South Central Region – **Annette Liebe**

- No report this week.

Southern & South Coast Regions – **Alex Campbell**

- No report this week.