

MEETING SUMMARY

SOUTH COAST / UMPQUA REGIONAL SOLUTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date: October 30, 2015

Meeting Location: Port of Coos Bay conference room

Committee members present:

Convener: Keith Tymchuk, Port of Umpqua

AOC Rep: Commissioner John Sweet, Coos County

LOC Rep: Mayor Crystal Shoji, City of Coos Bay

Business Rep: Dave Kronsteiner, West Coast Contractors

Philanthropic: Marie Simonds for Jim Seeley, Wild River Coast Collaborative

Curry County Commissioner Susan Brown, Committee Appointment

Douglas County Commissioner Susan Morgan, Committee Appointment

Regional Solutions Team members present:

Chris Claflin, Business Oregon

Mark Usselman, Department of Transportation

Dave Perry, Department of Land Conservation and Development

Annette Shelton-Tideman, Oregon Employment Department

Jeff Griffin, Governor's Office

Guests (spellings may be incorrect):

Jonathan Wright, City of Reedsport

Fred Wahl Marine

Dave Koch, Port of Coos Bay

CCD Business Development

Peggy Lynch LOWV (phone)

Annette Liebe, Governor's Office

Regional Solutions Update: Annette Liebe introduced herself and provided an overview of the process that the regional solutions priority implementation projects funding request went through during the previous legislative session. The South Coast / Umpqua region ended up with only a portion (\$820,000) of the \$2 million request for youth workforce training because the legislature primarily funded only infrastructure projects with lottery bond revenue. Ms. Liebe discussed creating a more programmatic process going forward that would remove much of the uncertainty regarding funding criteria and availability.

Youth Workforce Project Development Update: Chris Claflin provided an overview of the youth workforce project concept. The Oregon Employment Department estimates that over 21,000 new workers will be needed within the region over the next eight years – currently about one third of the total jobs in the region. About 7,000 of those are new jobs that the economy will create. The remaining 14,000 jobs are replacements of existing positions. As good as 21,000 openings sounds in a region long starved for jobs it could actually be a significant problem considering employers are having difficulty today filling many positions for the following reasons:

- The population of the region is aging and quickly moving out of the “prime” working years and entering an age where labor force participation rates decline significantly.
- Young workers account for a disproportionate share of overall unemployment and falling labor force participation. Youth and overall workforce participation rates in the Coos, Curry, and Douglas region are the lowest in the State.
- Skill, education and work experience requirements have become more specific. Reading, math, communication and technological competencies are now necessary for even starter jobs. Employee “fit” is now critical as employers move to self-directed work teams and away from a command and control management model. As more potential employees are screened out larger candidate pools are required.
- Urbanization migration impacts employee recruitment. Cultural urbanization also explains in part why it is difficult to recruit skilled people to rural communities in this region to fill job openings.

The best source of labor remaining is the emerging workforce – youth. The biggest barrier to youth employment is the lack of work experience.

The South Coast / Umpqua Regional Solutions Youth Workforce Training Project will provide funding to local governments and other organizations for community infrastructure construction projects provided employers agree to provide work experience opportunities for teens and young adults. This kind of arrangement is common across the country and the vehicle proposed to create hiring requirements is a Community Workforce Agreement. In our case the CWA will be negotiated between our local workforce and training providers and potential youth employers.

The project will include work readiness and National Career Readiness Certificate assessments, a Career Pathway/Exploration course, work experience placement and on the job training. It is expected to serve up to 200 youth aged 17-25 over a two year period.

Team Project Reports: Team members and Jonathon Wright provided updates focusing on the State of Oregon’s Rural Resilience Oregon Incubator (Rural ROI) which is in Phase 2 of the National Disaster Resiliency Competition. Team members discussed projects that have been proposed in two coastal communities, Brookings and Reedsport, including water resilience, flood resilience, health clinic expansion, transportation system improvements, power resilience and new and relocated LMI housing in upland locations.

Port Reports: Dave Koch with the Port of Coos Bay provided an update on the activities of the Port, including the status of the Jordan Cove Energy project. Griffin provided an update of the South Coast Ports Coalition – permitting and dredging work in coastal marinas.

Public Comment: Jonathon Wright discussed the Fred Wahl Marine expansion project on Bolan Island and asked the Committee members to support a Connect Oregon grant funding request for a component of the project. It was decided that it was more appropriate for committee members to provide support letters from their respective organizations instead of from Regional Solutions since members of Regional Solutions provide technical assistance in reviewing applications.

Roundtable: Advisory Committee members provided brief updates on current activities. Commissioner Kronsteiner discussed permitting challenges with in-water marine projects such as pile driving and suggested that the RST continue to provide some assistance streamlining permitting processes. Commissioner Sweet discussed the problems associated with failing tide gates in the lower Coquille estuary, specifically mosquito ecology, and the impacts to the community, stating more focus on this problem is critically needed.

Commissioner Morgan asked for preparation of a letter from the RST Advisory Committee commending Alex Campbell's (Umpqua Economic Development Partnership) work related to the Fred Wahl Marine project. Members supported the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.