

Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District January 2011 Newsletter

Issue 8

January 2011

July—December 2010 Update

Although business and employment activity continue lag, the last six months have been used productively to support and augment economic development capacity:

1. Business Development

◆ Main Street Development: This Fall, Col-Pac underwrote expenses of four local community “teams” at the Oregon Main St conference: Astoria, Garibaldi, St Helens and Tillamook. Participants have since been working on their work plans and activities to begin to implement Main St programs within their communities. Workplans and progress reports are due in March 2011.

◆ Business Financing: Two new loans were approved, totaling \$400,000. Col-Pac’s Rural Business Enterprise (RBEG) Loan funds are also available for businesses impacted by the December fire on Astoria’s Waterfront.

2. Infrastructure Project Support

Col-Pac managing over \$300,000 in Oregon Department of Energy projects in NW Oregon. A lighting project for Jewell School was completed last Fall, and the four projects (City of Astoria Public Safety and Public Library, Columbia County Courthouse and Columbia County Transit Center) are either ready to bid or to start construction.

Col-Pac has also been coordinating communications with USDA for assistance with construction of an Emergency Communications Center as the Nestucca Fire District rebuilds their Fire Station after a fire in May 2010.

3. Grow Local Economic Development Capacity throughout NW Oregon

Col-Pac participated in the hiring of two new county economic development directors, Dick Powell For Clatsop Economic Development Resources (CEDR) and David Stocker for the Columbia County Economic Development Team (CCET). A start-up organization, CCET now has a committed and active board comprised of both public and private sector members.

4. Association of Oregon Economic Development Districts

Col-Pac’s Executive Director was elected Vice-President, and is also serving on the Association of Oregon County’s Community Development Committee. Most recently, the Committee met with a member of Oregon’s new Governor’s transition team, who indicated significant willingness and interest in utilizing the Districts for regional economic development capacity.

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5. NW Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (NWACT).

The first half of the year has involved multiple project application reviews and prioritizations, with some success regarding funding outcomes:

- ConnectOregon III Multi-Modal Transportation Projects—Sixteen projects applications were reviewed and prioritized. Out of the \$97 million, six NW Oregon project applications were approved, totaling \$18 million.
- 2014—2015 STIP Project Identification—The significant reduction of funding simplified project identification and prioritization this year. All five projects were listed on the 2010—2013 STIP, and moved up in priority in the 2014—2015 STIP. For Clatsop County, highest priority is fixing the flooding south of Seaside on Hwy 101. For Tillamook County, highest priority is Hwy 101 climbing lanes north of Manzanita. Turn lanes on Hwy 101 at Camp Rilea will move into construction. Two projects in West Washington County continue to receive highest rankings, Glenco Rd interchange on Hwy 26 and Staley’s Junction (Hwys 26 and 47)
- Greening Rural Oregon Energy Grant—Col-Pac assisted with the application to develop a regional transportation system. The project award was \$3.5 million
- Transportation Enhancement Grants—Four of the 8 submissions made it through ODOT’s initial review, all of which NW Oregon supported because of the direct economic benefits to the local communities: City of Astoria and Columbia River Maritime Museum Historic Railroad Depot Restoration; Garibaldi/US 101: 3rd St to 7th St Sidewalk and Bike Lanes; Neahkahnie Mt Rock Wall Repair (Phase 3; Tillamook County 3rd St Sidewalk and Bike Lanes.
- Dennis Edwards Tunnel—A significant repair project on one of NW Oregon’s main highways to the coast will require full closure of the highway at times. Last year, Col-Pac helped coordinate the public meetings regarding how the closures would be handled (night closures only, 4 nights a week until the repairs are completed). The last six months, Col-Pac has been assisting with the public information regarding the tunnel working starting in January 2011.

◆ Seaside Transportation Plan—A popular visitor destination, Seaside also suffers some of the worst traffic gridlock during peak travel times of any community along the Oregon Coast. This Fall, after over two years of intensive work with local residents, businesses and public officials, the City adopted an alternative mobility Transportation Plan, one of the first in Oregon. Residents decided how much traffic congestion they were willing to live with during peak visitor travel, and ODOT worked on establishing alternative streets for local traffic.