



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

**Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 1, 2023
4:00 P.M.**

Via Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82542485496?pwd=NEpYT0Y1bFh3aFZOVGg4MVI0WWZIZz09>

Or call 253-215-8782, Meeting ID: 825 4248 5496, Passcode: 487882

AGENDA

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Estimated Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
Call to Order, Introductions		
Executive Committee Minutes <i>February 2023</i>	2 minutes	Approval
Finance Report	10 minutes	Approval
Budget Committee	5 minutes	Recommendation
Executive Director Report <i>Gilliam County Update</i>	10 minutes	Information
Other New Business; Committee Members Updates	5 minutes	Information
Executive Director Evaluation <i>Executive Session per ORS 192.660(i)</i> (Performance evaluations of public officers and employees) <i>Regular Session Reconvened</i>	10 minutes	Evaluation
Executive Director Action	5 minutes	Decision
Adjourn		

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires any special materials, services, or assistance, please contact the MCEDD office at 541-296-2266 (TTY 711) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

MCEDD is an equal opportunity lender, employer and provider.

**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2023
4:00 PM
ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE

Attending: Eric Proffitt, Leana Kinley, Joe Dabulskis, Les Perkins, Ken Bailey, Scott Clements, Tom Lannen, Lori Zoller

Staff: Jessica Metta (Executive Director), Carrie Pipinich (Deputy Director of Economic Development), Dana Woods (Finance Officer), Jill Brandt (Administrative Assistant), Kathy Fitzpatrick (Sr. Mobility Manager)

Guest: Richard Foster (Klickitat County Economic Development)

CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Vice-Chair Leana Kinley called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. A round of introductions took place.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Leana called for any comments or questions on the December 2022 minutes. *There were none.*

Eric Proffitt motioned to approve the December 7, 2022 Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented. Ken Bailey seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

FINANCIALS

Dana Woods reported on the Caselle transition. In December, the final live data pull happened. Through January the transition process has focused on comparing the numbers that were imported into Caselle from Quickbooks to ensure that the starting numbers in Caselle are correct. The second live payroll is currently being processed in the system. Staff have started electronic timekeeping and the bugs are being worked out. Once approved, the staff timekeeping imports directly into Caselle, which removes the possibility of any manual keying errors. Some bugs are expected due to the complexity of MCEDD's systems and finance. For this fiscal year, MCEDD's interim audit will be on Quickbooks, and the final audit will be with Caselle. Dana opened the floor for questions.

Discussion: Leana asked about time savings, and Dana affirmed that electronic timekeeping will definitely save time. Ken Bailey appreciated that there have not been any major glitches. Eric Proffitt asked what cross training will occur so that Dana will have backup when needed. Dana explained that she and Keli went through the training together, plus Jessica has access and can see snapshots of the budget to compare the payroll actuals.

Ken Bailey motioned to approve the financial report. Les Perkins seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

GORGE REGIONAL TRANSIT STRATEGY UPDATE

Jessica gave an overview of the project's history and a summary of the next steps. She will look for a motion to approve the formation of a Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). She turned the floor over to Kathy Fitzpatrick for her slide presentation on the project

As the Regional Mobility Manager, Kathy's work involves the coordination of public transportation in the five-county MCEDD district. Much of this is done through the Gorge Translink and through staff at the partner transportation agencies (CAT, The Link, Mt Adams Transportation, Sherman County Transit, Skamania County Senior Services). The roots of the strategy began back in 2000 with the formation of the Translink Alliance. The Alliance has undergone much change since 2017-2018, when the momentum and support to create one regional system began to build. The work of the Alliance naturally evolved into the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Project that began in 2020.

Phase One of the project created a blueprint of the stakeholders' vision. Much work went into ensuring that the final vision was approved with full consensus from all of the stakeholders involved. Phase Two is exploring options to implement the vision and will wrap up in July with a final presentation to the MCEDD board to be formally approved/adopted.

The proposed organizational structure will include decision makers from all of the agencies working together. To date, service opportunities and initiatives have been moving forward independently at each transportation agency at the staff level, but a single organization will allow the forward movement needed to create new routes to satisfy the needs for service. Kathy explained that much of the vision is for the current system to work better, with transfers aligned better to get riders across the larger region.

The Strategy meetings have discussed how problems in the current system can be solved with a new organization. Issues that have been identified are: a need for greater clarity for customers and the general public, regional equity that will ensure that our smaller communities will have an equal voice and vote, operational efficiency that will allow all four of the transportation agencies to do more with what each has now by streamlining/ consolidating each of the agency's staff burden and expertise by eliminating work that is currently being duplicated, and securing new funding. Kathy emphasized that the counties have been clear that additional funding for a regional transit operation is not available in current budgets.

Kathy talked through the rest of her slides and opened the floor for discussion, asking for input on the roles, responsibilities, concerns, and details as presented.

Jessica asked the Executive Committee to participate today wearing their MCEDD hat, noting that many have seen this memo and participated in the discussions in their other stakeholder capacities.

Discussion: Scott Clements asked for clarification on the organizational scenarios - is the goal to create a single source authority or is this perceived to be a cooperative effort?

Kathy responded that these are options that the consultants came up with, ranging from simplest to most complex. The recommendation from the consultants was to get all of the decision makers in the room. MCEDD is a natural fit as the coordinator because all five counties have representatives on MCEDD's Board, and because MCEDD has a regional focus and has supported regional transportation for many years. Kathy added that the decision makers are free to talk about other options. She noted that depending on the bylaws of this new committee, decisions will ultimately rest with the counties. Kathy reported that so far in her presentations she has heard a lot of confidence and trust in MCEDD's ability to put together a TAB that will

be acceptable to all of the decision makers. Kathy again emphasized that this TAB would not be able to spend any county monies.

Scott thanked Kathy for her work on this worthy endeavor. He commented that the scope of the project, that includes all of the Gorge's geographically diverse communities, is most ambitious.

Ken Bailey agreed that forming a regional TAB is the next step to move forward by bringing the decision makers into the same room.

Eric Proffitt felt it was important to get the transit users involved. He pointed out that if decision makers don't use the service, it is hard for them to see what is happening.

Lori Zoller added that after hearing this presentation both last week and today, she felt more inclined to support this effort. She represented the concern that Klickitat County transportation would be subordinated to a regional Board and lose its authority.

Leana added that it would be beneficial if the committee was comfortable with the staff and the consultants creating the guidelines for the project. Kathy agreed with Leana that working out as many of the details and guidelines of the strategy as possible with the consultants before the final draft is brought to the Counties in July would be best. The counties would know what they are accepting.

Ken agreed that it would be best to have as much detail on the table as possible at the first meeting.

Eric asked Jessica to clarify the recommendation. Jessica stated that the recommendation is for MCEDD's Board to endorse formation of a Regional Transportation Advisory Board. She added that consensus from the Executive Committee today will support the advisory committee and the consultants to continue to dig into the details.

Eric Proffitt motioned to recommend that the MCEDD endorse the formation of a Regional Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). Lori Zoller seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT

Carrie gave highlights of her work.

- In Wasco County, the EDC has been working with Dufur to update their community visioning. There is good community engagement for this project.
- MCEDD's Rural Capacity grant has picked up support through ongoing connections. Jacque Schei has completed four grant applications from our region for the Community Renewable Energy Program. Three grants were from Hood River County through the Energy Council, which Jacque has assumed the lead on with Lindsay McClure out on maternity leave, and one from Sherman County. Infrastructure projects in the area's smaller communities are picking up.
- The Broadband action focus has shifted to our Washington partners to support gathering the information needed for the infrastructure and digital equity act funding distribution from the state to Klickitat and Skamania Counties.

- The first Regional Innovation Hub steering committee met and discussed the overall concept and what coordination is needed to support innovation-based businesses. Meetings will continue regularly between now and June when the grant's term finishes.
- The Hood River Energy Council website is expected to go live next month.
- The Bigg's reservoir infrastructure project has outlined a path forward with a new timeline for completion.
- Out of State Travel Request: This request is to attend the annual Center on Rural Innovation (CORI) summit. Wasco County's participation in CORI's rural network is supported by Google. This year's annual summit will be held in Michigan in May and provides a good opportunity to compare the progress of this work in our area with the other small communities in CORI's network. CORI provides some of the funding that will cover travel to the summit for Project Manager Kristyn Fix.

Eric Proffitt motioned to approve the out of state travel request to Michigan in May. Lori Zoller seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

- Gilliam County: Jessica reported that Gilliam County approved their resolution to join MCEDD at their last meeting. She is preparing the resolution for MCEDD's Board to vote on at the March meeting.
- Budget Prep: Jessica requested discussion to consider a significant increase in IT costs. She explained MCEDD's current IT support that utilizes a combo of two different providers. We could move it all under one provider to increase our security but the cost goes up significantly.
Discussion: Eric whole-heartedly supported increasing MCEDD's cybersecurity.

Leana asked if MCEDD will put out a RFP or RFQ for these services. Jessica agreed, noting that this was the process followed in the past that resulted in MCEDD's current configuration of IT services. The current two-pronged approach was adopted to save funds. Leana explained that when Stevenson put out their RFQ, the city was able to find competitive pricing.

Tom Lannen added his perspective from Skamania County's recent risk pool management meeting. The County has substantial support for cybersecurity through its insurance. He asked where MCEDD carries insurance, that they might be able to provide grants or direction on this issue. Jessica replied that MCEDD is insured through the Special Districts Association of Oregon, and every year ransomware coverage is reassessed. She made a note to check with their recommendations.

Ken Bailey asked if Caselle will offer a better way to format the budget, observing that the new systems will likely have a different way of getting budget numbers out of the system.

Jessica informed the Committee that she has received a good application for the vacant Budget Committee seat.

- For-Profit Grant Support: The Fruit Company, a private business, has requested that MCEDD apply for a grant on their behalf. Approval for this needs to come from the Executive Committee, as this would set a precedent.

Discussion: Les Perkins stated he felt no misgivings if MCEDD has the capacity for the work.

Other Updates:

- Jessica plans to attend the upcoming One Gorge events in both Olympia and Salem. The Oregon Budget ask will be to continue Rural Capacity funding, a direct allocation to the MCEDD through Business Oregon.
- The next Pub Talk event will be on Feb 16th at Skamania Lodge. Skamania EDC is taking the lead on organizing and promoting this event.
- On MCEDD's DEI project, Jessica is looking for more Board members to join the committee. She will be sending out a request.
- March is Jessica's annual evaluation for her third year as ED. She has been with MCEDD for fourteen years overall.
- Jessica reported a wonderful email of appreciation we received for the work of Travel Trainer Sara Crook from a transit rider.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS/ COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPDATES

Leana asked for any new business or good of the order. *Nothing was noted.*

ADJOURN

Leana Kinley adjourned the meeting at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Brandt, Administrative Assistant

Financial information with new reporting options from Caselle are still in development but will be sent prior to the meeting.

Memorandum

Date: February 22, 2023
To: MCEDD Executive Committee
From: Jessica Metta, Executive Director
Re: Budget Committee

Overview

The MCEDD Budget Committee is an unpaid committee that meets to review and approve the MCEDD budget. The budget is adopted by the MCEDD Board. The Budget Committee consists of an equal number of at-large members and MCEDD board members. Members serve three-year terms, staggered so that one third of the terms of the appointive members end each year. Members are appointed by the MCEDD Board based on recommendations from the MCEDD Executive Committee. The primary qualification for appointive members is that they must be representative of the services provided by MCEDD.

The committee as appointed in 2022 is as follows:

Name	Term Expires
Andrea Krol (At Large)	February 2023
Leana Johnson (Board)	February 2023
Tiffany Prince (At Large)	February 2024
Eric Proffitt (Board)	February 2024
Sam Bauer (At Large)	February 2025
Jonathan Lewis (Board)	February 2025
<i>Budget Officer:</i> Dana Woods, MCEDD Finance and Operations Manager	

Expiring Terms

Board Position

One board position on the Budget Committee expires; the position held by Leana Kinley. She is seeking reappointment.

At-Large Positions

The at-large position held by Andrea Krol expires this year and she is not seeking reappointment. We issued a press release about the position, posted it in our newsletter and social media with a Feb. 24 deadline. As of Feb. 22, we have one applicant Nichole Biechler. Her application materials are included in the packet and staff will forward any additional applications received by the deadline.

Request

Action: Recommend a candidate for the at-large position on the MCEDD Budget Committee.

Action: Recommend a candidate for the board position on the MCEDD Budget Committee.

These positions will be appointed by the MCEDD Board of Directors at their March meeting.

**MCEDD BUDGET COMMITTEE
INTEREST FORM**

The purpose of this form is to assist the MCEDD Executive Committee, Board and staff in evaluating the qualifications of an applicant for appointment to the MCEDD Budget Committee. This is an unpaid position for a three year period. All forms will be reviewed and provided to the MCEDD Board of Directors for appointment. **For consideration of appointment, complete the entire form and return by 5 pm on February 24, 2023 to:**

*MCEDD, 802 Chenowith Loop Road, The Dalles, OR 97058
appointments@mcedd.org
For questions call 541-296-2266.*

PERSONAL DATA

Preferred Mailing Address: Home Business

Preferred Title _____ (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr, etc.)

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Home Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____

Business Name _____

Business Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Occupation _____

Home Phone _____ Business Phone (_____) _____ ext _____

Cell Phone (optional) (_____) _____ E-mail address _____

EDUCATION

Schools attended, including high school. *A current resume may be substituted for this section.*

School	City & State	Dates	Degree/Major
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Nichole Biechler

[REDACTED] The Dalles, OR 97058
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/nichole-biechler>
www.itsallalittlegrey.com



Experience

OCTOBER, 2021 – APRIL, 2022 (STILL OFFERING CONSULTATION SERVICES)

Interim Human Resources Director / MCCFL, The Dalles, OR

- Management collaboration between Wasco County and MCCFL (Mid-Columbia Center for Living).
- Provide HR support for collective bargaining and union policy and procedure
- Compliance and risk assessment
- Pay equity and market analysis lead
- FLSA audit
- Timekeeping/recording keeping audit
- Personnel file review
- Employee performance management
- Professional development of leadership and staff
- Oversight of Human Resources team of an HR Generalist and HR Assistant
- Currently transitioning into mentor/coaching/support role for the new HR Director (May, 2022)

SEPTEMBER, 2016 – CURRENT

Human Resources Director/ Wasco County, The Dalles, OR

Human Resources Director – July 2018-current) • Wasco County • The Dalles, OR

Human Resources Manager – September 2016–June 2018) • Wasco County • The Dalles, OR

- Coach/Mentor to 17 individual department heads and teams focused on human resource education, leadership development, professional development and training, conflict resolution and emotional literacy.
- Oversight, coordination and policy development of the Wellness Committee, Safety Committee, Diversity Committee (DEI), X-Trainers Committee (All-Staff Training/Professional Development) and Recognition & Rewards Committee (STAR Team).
- Development and implementation of the Human Resources Strategic Plan and Wasco County Strategic Plan.
- Development, implementation and education of Succession Planning across all departments with toolkit for documentation purposes.
- Lead on Pay Equity Analysis and education to management. Updated performance review and job descriptions compliant with state guidelines.
- Maintain knowledge of industry trends and employment legislation to ensure organization compliance.
- Annually reviews and makes recommendations to executive management for improvement of the organization's policies, procedures and practices on personnel matters.
- Point of contact for union related concerns including; grievances, labor negotiations, arbitration, etc.

SEPTEMBER, 2015 – SEPTEMBER, 2016

Human Resources Manager/Audigy Group, Vancouver, WA

- Provided direction, consultation, training and dissemination of human resources-related information to private practice audiology clinics located in Florida, North Carolina and Virginia.
- Areas of focus; recruitment, on-boarding/off-boarding HRIS database management, wage and hour laws, civil rights laws/Title VII, workers compensation, FMLA, EEO, ADA, interpreted and revised policies and procedures.
- Updated job descriptions to comply with federal regulations.
- Provided insight for hiring, termination and promotions/advancement.
- Oversaw grievance concerns.
- Created incentive/bonus compensation plans, reviewed benefit packages, etc.

- Internal human resource duties include training and development, conducting webinars focused on compliance and HR related topics, consultant for internal human resources team on issues surrounding insurance and benefits, on-boarding, etc.

MARCH, 2014 – SEPTEMBER, 2015

Human Resources Generalist/Assistant / IMESD, Pendleton, OR

- On-Boarding and Off-Boarding (Job Postings/Descriptions, Hiring, Interviewing)
- Recruitment
- Employee Evaluation Database Development
- HRIS/Personnel Database
- Training
- Employee IS Database Management/OEBB Employee Management
- Investigations/Conflict Management

MARCH, 2013 – MARCH, 2015

Intern (Human Resources/Marketing/Public Relations) / The Next Door, Inc. The Dalles, OR

- Developed Marketing Plan
- Human Resource Employee Survey Analysis/Report to Executive Director and Board
- Parenting in the Gorge Guide Marketing and Development
- Families First Poolside Benefit Concert Project Coordinator/Marketing Coordinator
- New Parent Services "It's a Jungle Out There" Annual Fundraiser and Dessert Auction Volunteer
- Board Breakfast Fundraiser Volunteer

Education

AUGUST 2010

M.B.A. / Marylhurst University, Marylhurst, OR

Master's in Business Administration, 3.9 GPA

AUGUST 2003

B.S. in Political Science / Western Oregon University, Monmouth, OR

Bachelor of Science in Political Science, minor in Legal Studies

Certifications

DECEMBER 2019

IPMA-SCP / International Public Management Association (IPMA-HR)

Senior Certified Professional in Human Resources

AUGUST 2016

SHRM-CP / Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

Certified Professional in Human Resources

AUGUST 2012

Human Resource Management Certification / Portland State University, Portland, OR

Cohort program designed to provide professional development for certified HR professionals.

Boards/Memberships

JANUARY 2020 - CURRENT

IPMA-HR Oregon Chapter President-Elect/ IPMA-HR, State of Oregon (January, 2023)

IPMA-HR Oregon Chapter Board Member/IPMA-HR, State of Oregon (January, 2022-December, 2022)

NOVEMBER 2019 - CURRENT

Human Resources Track, Founder/Chair/Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), State of Oregon

SEPTEMBER 2016 - CURRENT

Columbia Gorge HR Professionals Founder/CGHR Professionals, The Dalles, OR



**Executive Director's Report
Prepared for the March 2023 Executive Committee Meeting**

Gilliam County Updates

- Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corp. (GEODC), the current EDD for Gilliam County, held a meeting in February to review the Gilliam County resolution. The GEODC Board asked for a resolution allowing the change be presented at their March 14th meeting for approval.
- I am drafting our resolution allowing the change for a vote at the March 16th Full Board meeting.

Capacity Building Highlight

We are asking for Oregon Board member support in informing the Oregon legislature about the value of Capacity Building funds. A one-pager created for Oregon's Economic Development District Association is included.

- Background: Oregon House Bill 2345 passed in 2021 created the Rural Capacity program that provided some funding to EDDs to help with project development, grant prospecting, grant writing and grant administration. We received these funds in June 2022 and they were matched by funds from the Ford Family Foundation, allowing us to provide these services to our full Oregon counties. While the state funding has a lot of problematic red tape, the concept has been valuable for our members and fills a budgetary need for our project management team. Business Oregon attempted to include this in their budget but it did not make the Governor's Recommended Budget. We are asking for \$5M split evenly amongst the EDDs to be included in a Christmas tree appropriation.

While we can do a little of this support with our EDA Planning grant/ local assessments, we have been exploring how to provide more support to our Washington communities as well and had a good meeting with the City of White Salmon to explore grant writing needs. There is not a similarly strong relationship between EDDs and the WA Department of Commerce.

Regional Work and Outreach

- I attended the One Gorge legislative advocacy events in Olympia (Feb 8) and Salem (Feb 15). Both events were very well attended. While in Salem, I met with about eight representatives on the Economic Development Committee to discuss the Capacity Building request.
- I am participating on a Steering Committee for Gorge Women in Business to help them consider formation options and how MCEDD can support their efforts to support women-owned business in the region. We are hosting an event for them through the WA State Microenterprise Association grant noted below.
- We held a quarterly Regional Attainable Housing Meeting with staff level leaders involved in planning and housing development. It included legislative updates from the Association of Washington Cities and the League of Oregon Cities and followed a USDA webinar on housing opportunities for rural recreation communities.
- County support: I developed CPACE Program (Commercial Property-Assessed Clean Energy) documents for Sherman County to adopt the program. Hood River County adopted the CPACE program and was interested in contracting with MCEDD to administer it. I am also updating the

Title VI plan for Wasco County. I developed the Hood River County CEDS list through their usual process and brought it to their Board for adoption.

- I engaged in regional outreach with a presentation to the White Salmon Rotary and Hood River Lions Club. I have additional presentations scheduled for Hood River and The Dalles Rotary Clubs.

Business Assistance

- Through our contracted management of the Cascade Locks- Hood River Enterprise Zone, we are assisting partners in Hood River County with consideration for a 15-year property tax abatement request for a cloud services company wishing to build in Cascade Locks. This would be a large investment in the community, and we are setting the table for the negotiations.
- Our work continues with Columbia Center for the Arts (CCA). They engaged Barbara Briggs as a consultant to develop a Strategic Business Plan for the organization and Barbara asked for MCEDD's assistance with the outreach and in-person meeting facilitation in early March, through a small contract with CCA. We helped bring on The Next Door to assist with a Spanish-language focus group. This project supports job creation at CCA as well as our arts/ culture/ tourism industry noted in the CEDS.
- Washington State Microenterprise Association Grant: The first pub talk was held on Feb. 16 in Stevenson with great attendance through the work of Skamania EDC. Next events in planning are March 15 Gorge Women in Business event in Bingen, March 30 Mt Adams Chamber Pub Talk in Bingen. April and May will be in Goldendale and two more events are also being planned by Skamania EDC. We will also be using grant funding to cover legal consulting services for small businesses in our WA counties that work with the Small Business Development Center. We were unable to find a CPA willing to do similar work.
- We received approval from Business Oregon for the maximum award of \$1 Million for both MCEDD and MHEA to their two loan-supporting programs called the State Small Business Credit Initiative Community Relender Program and the Loan Loss Reserve Account Program. We received a lot of kudos for the quality of our proposal to the state and they have recommended others contact us to copy our proposal. These programs will expand our available funds to lend over the next ten years and are waiting on the contract. They wish to sign one contract for both entities, and we are exploring MHEA's willingness to accept this condition.
- We are ramping up outreach with in-person visits to all of the banks in our five-county region, armed with updated flyers about the loan program (attached). We also sent information to commercial real estate agents, got the OIB flyer translated into Spanish, and explored a window cling for clients.
- Newly closed MCEDD Microloans include Miss O's Espresso in Pine Grove and Sergio Almader dba Dingo Dude in Hood River. OIB approved a new loan to Dog River Pet Supplies in Hood River. LAB considered a new loan to Primitive Pansies but tabled it for more information. I also approved new MCEDD Microloans for Outfishing LLC (Maupin) and Bliss Café (The Dalles). We are bringing OIB a new loan request for Ankhiale Outdoors (Hood River).

Gorge TransLink Alliance and Mobility Management

- GORge Pass Marketing: The GORge Pass Marketing grant project built great momentum in 2022 and now 2023 pass sales are already surpassing expectations. 2023 pass has already sold 3 times more passes than the 2022 pass when comparing the first two months of sales for both passes.

To give another perspective on this increase, the gross sales for the first two months in 2022 were \$6,370.00 while the first two month's gross sales in 2023 were \$20,420. Fall and Winter 2022/2023 seasonal social media campaigns have driven a very high engagement rate with a total 3.6k clicks to the website and a reach of 156k to date. The number of followers on Instagram and Facebook are growing steadily, mostly due to the engaging videos produced by the marketing team. See them at <https://www.youtube.com/@gorgepass864/videos> The most popular videos are those that highlight Cascade Locks and Stevenson and the video that shows a rider being whisked right to the departure and arrivals gates of the airport.

- Gorge Regional Transit Strategy II: Kathy and the consultants are working on Memo #6, which will include input from the Key Initiatives Workshop, the Advisory Committee, the Stakeholder Advisory Group, and input from the boards of the decision-makers. This memo will summarize next steps, roles and responsibilities, related funding opportunities, constraints, and a combined rating of potential organizational scenarios.
- SW WA Regional Transportation Council and Klickitat/Skamania County Policy Committees: The RTC has completed the Human Services Transportation Plans for Klickitat and Skamania Counties and is now working on the Regional Transportation Plan for each county that will be completed at the end of this year. The public transportation section will be informed by the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy.
- Travel Training and Outreach:
 - Both Columbia Area Transit and The Link participate in the Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation grant project. Sara continues to grow the program with continued outreach to Veterans and the organizations that serve Veterans. Each Veteran has unique transportation needs that Sara addresses with public transportation and at times with the support of other partners like Circles of Care in Hood River and The Dalles.
 - The Travel Training Videos project has produced the first draft video that highlights the staff and central offices of each of the providers that have fixed route services. These travel training videos will live on the GorgeTransLink.com website for easy access by individuals and organizations.

The LINK Transportation

- Operations: Flixbus has acquired Greyhound. The LINK dispatchers and supervisors are going through training for the switchover taking effect on 2/22/2023. The merger should provide enhanced traveling destinations and options for clients.
- Vehicles: We were informed that our original hybrid option for the two vehicles we are looking to purchase is no longer available as the company has been sold and will not be accepting new orders. Jesus is working with vendors to identify alternatives to continue moving forward with the vehicle procurement.
- Bus Shelter Installation Project: The Dalles High School decided to move forward with the installation of a Simme-Seat for their students rather than a shelter. The four final locations for bus shelter installations are: One Community Health/Mid-Columbia Center for Living, Water's Edge, Foley Lakes, and 2nd and Liberty, which will serve the location near the future transitional housing. We are developing a RFP for contractors to help with installation.
- Planning: We participated in a meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee convened by Wasco County for project to explore transportation improvemenst in South Wasco County and for disadvantaged populations. There will be some outreach events this spring, and they have uncovered a lot of interest in vanpools to support seasonal employees.

Facilities, Trainings and Operations

- The next meeting of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force with our consultant Mariann Hyland will be March 7. We had no additional Board volunteers but are comfortable moving forward with Jason Hartmann and Buck Jones
- I am implementing a systems change to only have digital contracting files, which will involve reorganizing the digital system to be more useful. Jill Brandt is working on this for us.
- I issued a request for quotes for a full-service IT consultant.



OREGON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS



WHO WE ARE

Oregon Economic Development Districts (OEDD) helps to mobilize the resources, technical assistance, strategic planning and project coordination services needed to make Oregon businesses and communities thrive. Oregon's 12 unique economic development districts cover the state's 9 federally-recognized Tribes, 36 counties, 297 municipalities, and numerous unincorporated communities — all working to provide effective, efficient delivery of economic development services within their regions. OEDD brings these districts together and offers a statewide, strategic platform for cross-regional collaboration, information sharing, training, and funding coordination.

Economic development districts are an important part of our state's economic infrastructure — part of a nationwide network of over 380 districts across the country designated and funded in part by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. EDDs take a long-term, holistic approach to regional and community development, looking at the distinct opportunities and challenges that face each part of our state. EDDs facilitate the strategies, solutions and partnerships necessary to address needs around environmental stewardship, infrastructure upgrades, intermodal transportation systems, affordable and quality housing, workforce building, child care, small business development, and so much more.

As practitioners working directly with partners in these key industries, we have witnessed first-hand the significant capacity issues that exist in our rural and underserved communities. Many of our smaller, under-resourced regions struggle to keep up with the work needed to access competitive federal, state, municipal, and foundation grants — which means they are losing access to the dollars needed to be successful. Across the country, states are prioritizing investments in economic development districts to help support the coordination of this work on a statewide level.

WHAT COMES NEXT

OEDD is advocating for an investment of **\$5 million** to ensure that every community has the resources they need to expand housing, improve vital transportation infrastructure, ensure access to clean drinking water, or solve any of the other vexing challenges facing our most underserved populations. These funds are vitally important to ensure that Oregon gets its fair share of federal investments and private philanthropy.

Through this critical investment, Oregon can support our small cities, nonprofits, businesses and community service providers with:

PROJECT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

We have communities across the state in need of workforce housing, child care, water and wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband access, improved roadways, emergency management equipment and so much more. Capacity investments in these projects is a vital first step in rebuilding our state.

FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Many of our community partners lack the financial and technical assistance needed to win competitive federal and philanthropic grants. EDDs support rural and underserved communities in identifying, writing and administering grants for a wide range of projects.

EFFICIENT AND STREAMLINED COORDINATION

Statewide resources, deployed through EDDs and COGs, help foster collaboration throughout small and rural communities. Investing in statewide economic development entities like OEDD helps create a network of trusted technical service providers that local communities can rely on to assist with development and infrastructure projects — from identification, to funding, to completion.

Questions? Contact Taylor Sarman:

 541.910.5711

 taylor@mahoniapublicaffairs.com

LET US BE YOUR

BUSINESS BOOSTER



WHO WE ARE?

MCEDD supports the region's economy by providing gap financing loans for businesses in Hood River, Wasco and Sherman Counties in Oregon and Skamania and Klickitat Counties in Washington. We are here to help when a business can't find funding, or enough funding, from a traditional bank.

WHAT WE DO?

MCEDD provides loans to invest in projects that create or retain jobs and leverage additional investment.

FOR MORE INFO

 541-296-2266

 loanapplication@mcedd.org

 mcedd.org/financing/business-loans/

SUCCESS STORY:

MAUPIN
Outdoor Store



Holly Henderson opened the Maupin Outdoor Store in Summer 2022 to provide the gear, equipment, and apparel that locals and visitors need to fish, raft, bike and camp along the Deschutes River Canyon. To bolster the seasonal walk-in income, the Maupin Outdoor Store also has online sales with either local pickup or worldwide shipping.

The Maupin Outdoor Store's second floor houses Living River Jewelry, providing Henderson space to create her outdoor-themed sterling silver jewelry and to complement the seasonal recreation cycle. Henderson's business plan includes offering silver-smithing classes in the winter for community engagement and to contribute to Maupin's local art scene. MCEDD financing helped Henderson realize her goals by funding the purchase of inventory, wages during the early months of the business, and working capital. Learn more at www.maupinoutdoor.com.



LET US BE YOUR

BUSINESS BOOSTER

ASK ABOUT OUR
FLEXIBLE
MICROLENDING
REQUIREMENTS
AND TERMS FOR
LOANS UP TO
\$40,000!



BASIC LOAN REQUIREMENTS

- Applicant participation: 10% to 25% of funds needed for the project.
- Collateral generally needs to equal 100% of loan amount.
- Business net profit must provide debt coverage of at least 110% of the loan amount.
- Life insurance on applicant or key personnel for the amount of the loan.
- Review of personal credit history and personal financial situation.
- Business performance/forecasting or profit and loss analyzed.
- One job created or retained per \$35,000 in loan funds is the loan portfolio goal.
- Leverages a minimum of \$1 for every \$1 of loan funding received.
- Personal guarantees of principals with 20% or more ownership.
- Applicant unable to receive any funding or enough funding from a traditional commercial lender.
- Project is located in Hood River, Klickitat, Sherman, Skamania or Wasco Counties.



BASIC TERMS

- Interest Rate and Fees: Interest rates range between 2% to 7.5% above Wall Street Journal Prime based on risk of project. Loan fee of 1.5%. Currently no application fee!
- Loan Amount: Loans generally range from \$5,000 to \$500,000.
- Eligible Businesses: Almost any legal business including sole proprietorship, LLCs, Corporations, and partnerships can apply. We support start-ups, established businesses, and businesses from most sectors.
- Other: MCEDD is a gap funder, working in partnership with financial institutions or when they are unable to provide financing. We can accept a wide variety of collateral and can be in a secondary position as a lien holder.

Our staff is here to help you be successful!
Contact us today: 541-296-2266, loanapplication@mcedd.org.

Please see the confidential packet for the
Executive Director's Annual Evaluation.