

# Volume II

Strategies to Build Economic Resilience and Preparedness Across Oregon

June 2018

Training Needs Report

**Prepared For:**

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This report was prepared by:



With support from:



In partnership with:



Project funding provided by:

Additional support provided by:



Economic Development Association (EDA)  
CFDA 11.307 – Economic Adjustment Assistance  
Contract #: 07-79-07410

Oregon Governor Kate Brown’s Office of Resilience  
State Resilience Officer, Mike Harryman

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# Special Thanks & Acknowledgements

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Community Planning Workshop at the University of Oregon developed this report with funding from the Economic Development Administration: Contract #: 07-79-07410. This pilot project involves a unique collaboration between the EDA, five Oregon Economic Development Districts, the Governor's Office of Resilience, and the University of Oregon. This project would not have occurred without the leadership, vision, and dedication of Scott Aycock with the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council.

The University of Oregon Community Planning Workshop Team specifically wishes to thank the following individuals for their assistance with this project.

## Economic Development Administration

David Porter, EDA Regional Representative

## Economic Development District Partners

Scott Aycock, Community and Economic Development Director, COIC

Lisa Dawson, Executive Director, NEOEDD

Susan Christensen, Executive Director, GEODC

Renata Wakeley, Community Development Program Director, MWVCOG

Phil Warnock, Community and Economic Development Director, OCWCOG

## Governor's Office of Resilience

Mike Harryman, State Resilience Officer, Office of Oregon Gov. Kate Brown

## Local Project Partners:

### Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation

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#### Northeast Oregon Economic Development District

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#### Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council

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Nathan Garibay, Sheriff, Deschutes County

Michael Ryan, Emergency Manager, Crook County

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Casey Kaiser, Executive Director, Prineville-Crook County Chamber of Commerce

Joe Krenowicz, Executive Director, Madras Chamber of Commerce

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Maricela Guerrero, Destination Development Manager, Travel Salem

James LaBar, Regional Solutions Mid-Willamette Valley

Brian Dalton, Mayor, City of Dallas

Cascades West Economic Development District

Phil Warnock, Community and Economic Development Director, OCWCOG

Caroline Bauman, Executive Director, Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County

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## **Additional Thanks:**

The UO would specifically like to thank the Resilient Organizations NZ for their vision and leadership related to organizational resilience. In 2004, Resilient Organizations formed as a small group of New Zealand based researchers. They had an idea that resilience could be the key to helping organizations not only survive disruption, but also thrive in the aftermath. Since then, Resilient Organizations has developed 13 indicators of organizational resilience. Over the years they have stress-tested and refined those indicators (particularly in response to the 2011 Christchurch and 2016 Keikoura earthquakes). They have surveyed and interviewed practitioners in hundreds of organizations and made numerous refinements to our collective understanding of resilience. Yet the essence of their initial findings remains true – resilience emerges from an organization’s culture. It isn’t what an organization does that is so important, but how it does it that leads to effective preparation, trust building, increased adaptability and thus fosters resilience.

## **About the Community Service Center**

The Community Service Center (CSC), a research center affiliated with the Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management at the University of Oregon, is an interdisciplinary organization that assists Oregon communities by providing planning and technical assistance to help solve local challenges and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents. The role of the CSC is to link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the transportation, economic development, and environmental needs of communities and regions in the State of Oregon, thereby providing service to Oregon and learning opportunities to the students involved.

### **About Community Planning Workshop**

Community Planning Workshop (CPW) is an experiential program within the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management at the University of Oregon. Students work in teams under the direction of faculty and Graduate Teaching Fellows to develop proposals, conduct research, analyze and evaluate alternatives, and make recommendations for possible solutions to planning problems in Oregon communities. The CPW model is unique in many respects, but is transferable to any institution that desires to link pedagogy with community service.

### **About the Oregon Partnership for Disaster Resilience**

The Oregon Partnership for Disaster Resilience (OPDR) is a coalition of public, private and professional organizations working collectively toward the mission of creating a disaster-resilient and sustainable state. Developed and coordinated by the Community Service Center at the University of Oregon, the OPDR employs a service-learning model to increase community capacity and enhance disaster safety and resilience statewide.

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# Section 1: Introduction

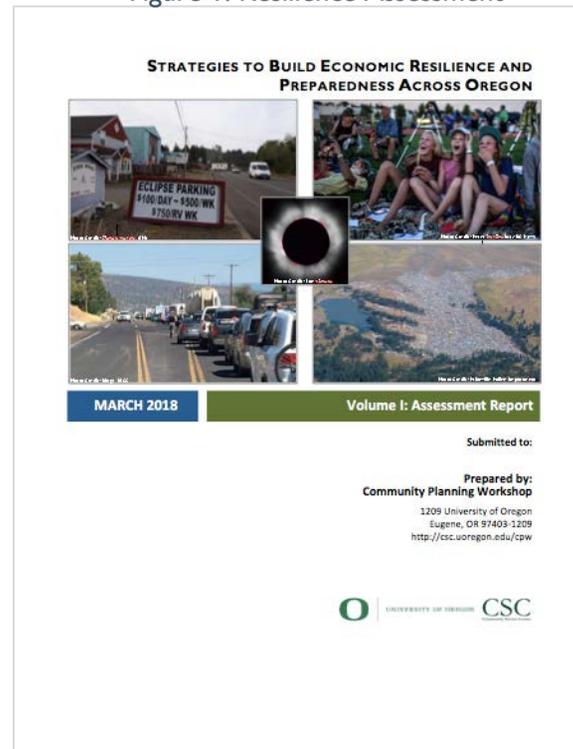
This report assesses economic resilience tools and training needs. The University of Oregon’s Community Service Center developed this report in coordination with the Economic Development Agency and economic development professionals from across the state of Oregon. This report is the second of three project deliverables. The ultimate goal of this project is to develop an innovative statewide Economic Resilience Training Module to spur economic resilience and economic growth in all regions of the state.

## Background

From winter storms and wildfires to a Cascadia subduction earthquake and tsunami, Oregon faces a range of chronic and catastrophic hazards. While a range of emergency management protocols are available to prevent loss of life and property, Oregon must also prepare itself to mitigate economic impacts. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), over 40% of businesses that close their doors due to a crisis never reopen. Of those businesses that do reopen, only 29% are able to survive the following two years. This can cause a ripple effect of unemployment and economic instability. In the wake of disaster, how can Oregon ensure that its vibrant and unique businesses survive? More importantly, how can economic resilience planning activities support innovation, job creation, and business retention in the near term?

Economic resilience is “an area’s ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from major disruptions to its economic base.” The ability to build capacity surrounding prevention and recovery is key to the stability of economies of all scales. This can be achieved through policy, planning, training, and resources both material and digital. Incorporating economic resilience into communities is a proven return on investment. The National Institute of Building Sciences has demonstrated that for every dollar spent on prevention and mitigation, six dollars are saved post- disruption.

Figure I. Resilience Assessment



To facilitate economic resilience in Oregon, the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) contacted the University of Oregon’s Community Service Center in May 2017. The purpose of this outreach was to request assistance in designing and implementing a project to study economic resilience in the state of Oregon. The resulting project is comprised of three parts:

- 1) An assessment of economic resilience.
- 2) An assessment economic resilience tools and training needs.
- 3) The development of an Economic Resilience Training Program that can be applied statewide.

Results from the first project phase can be found in “Strategies to Build Economic Resilience and Preparedness Across Oregon EPA Project Report Volume I: Assessment Report”.

The project uses the 2017 solar eclipse as a proxy for large-scale, unpredictable events such

as earthquakes, wildfires, the closure of a major local employer, or an economic recession/depression. The eclipse was projected to attract up to one million visitors to the state of Oregon. This influx of persons was predicted to stress basic lifeline infrastructure systems such as food, water, communications, and transportation. The nature of the eclipse being a known event with anticipated stresses provided a unique opportunity to study the economic resilience of the businesses, communities, and Economic Development Districts (EDDs) affected by the 90-mile wide “path of totality” that crossed the state.

This report is the culmination of the second phase of the project. The objective of this report is to demonstrate the areas of need for a training module/toolkit. The findings from this report will be used in conjunction with the assessment report to develop an economic resilience training program/toolkit to be used to increase regional economic resilience across the state.

## Need for Trainings/Best Practices Report

Economic resilience planning brings a range of public and private agencies together before a disaster to safeguard local and regional business against crises. However, preparing for disaster events doesn’t mean funneling resources toward possibilities. Improving economic resilience not only positions regions to absorb or bounce back from shocks, it also improves a business’ ability to take advantage of economic opportunities today. Ideally, resilience improves business today, and helps organizations to avoid shocks completely.

Day-to-day benefits of resilience include streamlined communications, improved inter- and intra-agency relationships, more effective asset leverage, and increased capacity. More effective networks ensure swift crisis response, but also unify messaging and business capture efforts. In addition to helping companies keep their doors open through crises, resilience at the state level can ensure that local industry thrives during business as usual.

Our assessment report revealed several gaps in Oregon’s economic resilience. While professionals from different agencies and jurisdictions worked well together, they noted that they rarely collaborate unless there is a specific impetus. This lack of coordination impedes the sharing of knowledge and expertise and reduces the efficiency of resource networks. The assessment likewise revealed that fragmented messaging compromised the ability of some regions to take advantage of the economic opportunity presented by the eclipse. For example, potential visitors were discouraged from coming by warnings of possible supply shortages, while business owners were told to stock up. Our assessment also revealed a lack of confidence in cross-training and role-redundancy. Interviewees and survey respondents indicated that it is difficult to find people to fill in when others are unavailable.

To summarize, opportunities to improve resilience in the State of Oregon include:

- Expanding inter-agency collaboration opportunities
- Unifying regional messaging
- Improving expertise sharing
- Expanding cross-training and role-redundancy
- Optimizing resource networks

A resource consisting of document templates, model language, and best practices can provide a framework to adopt and practice resilient behaviors. By making collaboration a part of day-to-day operations, and highlighting the widely shared economic benefits of resilience, agencies can provide even better support to local businesses. In the short term, this strong support helps economies to prosper. During crises, this support helps businesses to withstand impacts, or bounce back quickly.

## Methods

The training needs report documents the needs that were identified by each of the five (5) participating economic development districts (EDDs). To create the training needs assessment, the team used the findings from the Resilience Assessment Report to develop our methods for focus group exercises. Because the significant finding from the Resilience Assessment related to the advantages of continuous communication and collaboration, the focus group methods were designed to highlight where gaps exist in communication, collaboration and access to resources. In addition to exploring what types of tools, resources, or training materials would benefit the EDDs, the intention of the focus groups was also to understand how the Institute of Policy, Research and Engagement (IPRE) can support communities in improving economic resilience.

The CSC team structured the focus group by first reintroducing the project and its progress with a brief presentation, and then outlined the findings from the Resilience Assessment Report, including the key themes that emerged in the focus group's specific district. Following this introduction, the team facilitated three (3) group activities to prompt a discussion about the district's training needs. The activities included a hazard simulation exercise, an assets and gaps brainstorming exercise, and a tools and training needs exercise.

### Hazard Simulation Exercise

Focus group members first participated in a hazard simulation exercise. The group was given a scenario in which their community had recently experienced a disaster, and the group was asked to identify fast, tangible solutions for keeping their community's businesses open, and economy up and running. Each participant was and assigned a professional role to play, that provides critical support to communities recovering from major economic disruptions. Group members were encouraged to problem solve while thinking from a different perspective, and considering various interests and priorities based on their role. CSC team members worked with each group to facilitate

conversations and ask prompting questions about challenges to achieving economic resilience.

### Snow Card Exercise

The CSC team next facilitated a "Snow Card" exercise, where focus group participants were asked to write down their region's assets and resources onto a Post-it note, and then write down their gaps and needs. The purpose of this exercise was to gather tangible, documented ideas from focus group members to narrow down their community's "training needs". After exploring the group's ideas, a full group discussion ensued to further discuss how to bridge the gaps that were identified and leverage the assets that already exist.

### Tools and Training Needs Exercise

The final exercise facilitated by the CSC group was an overall debrief of the previous focus group exercises, where ideas and concepts were discussed in more detail. During this reflection, the group had the opportunity to consider additional training tools that would dovetail into programs and events that were already in place, and how to introduce new processes, structures or resources for economic resilience into their current efforts. The focus group identified their essential training needs during this final discussion and considered ways for IPRE to be involved in supporting their community.

## Organization

This report is organized to highlight areas that Economic Development Districts (EDDs) identified as important to give attention and direct resources to. The report is organized into four (4) chapters and one (1) appendix as follows:

**Chapter 1: Introduction.** This chapter introduces the second phase of the project and discusses why incorporating best practices and trainings are important to achieving economic resilience.

**Chapter 2: Re-cap of Needs Assessment.** This chapter recalls the findings from the Resilience Assessment Report and describes how they informed the development of methods for the focus groups.

**Chapter 3: Results of Focus Groups.** This chapter describes the methods used for focus group development, describes participant characteristics, and discusses the key training needs that were identified from each economic development district.

**Chapter 4: Findings and Recommendations.** This chapter offers recommendations to achieving economic resilience statewide based on the findings from the focus groups.

**Appendix I: Focus Groups.** Appendix I presents the findings collected from focus group sessions.

## Section 2: Needs Assessment Recap

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In the spring of 2017 Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) partnered with the University of Oregon Economic Development Center to design and implement a business impact assessment associated with the August 12, 2017 total solar eclipse. Reflecting on the eclipse--with a focus on how systems responded to this surge in use--offered a chance to assess Oregon's ability to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from future large-scale events, including natural catastrophes like earthquakes, wildfires, tsunamis, or human-originated events like terrorism or economic downturn. This report presents the findings from that assessment.

The assessment utilized the eclipse event to better understand:

1. The extent to which economic and emergency management professionals currently collaborate and how they can collaborate better; and
2. Potential business impacts and opportunities resulting from events that strain lifeline infrastructure systems.

The assessment focuses on understanding the resilience of Oregon's existing economic and infrastructure systems. To do this, the assessment studies the five (5) geographic regions in Oregon that were directly impacted by the August 12, 2017 total solar eclipse.

In collaboration with participating economic development district partners, the CSC will use this report to select and develop tools to increase regional economic resilience throughout Oregon.

The overarching goal of the project is that this assessment will lead to the development of tools that can support Oregonian communities to

withstand economic shocks by generating near term economic opportunities that reduce long-term economic impacts.

### What is Economic Resilience?

According to the Economic Development Administration, **economic resilience** includes three primary attributes: (1) the ability to recover quickly from a shock, (2) the ability to withstand a shock, and (3) the ability to avoid a shock altogether.<sup>1</sup> Establishing economic resilience in a local or regional economy requires the ability to anticipate risk, evaluate how that risk can impact key economic assets, and build a responsive capacity.

### Key Pre- and Post-Assessment Survey Findings

To assess economic resilience across Oregon, this assessment utilized two surveys. The first survey was distributed pre-event, and the second survey was distributed post event. The surveys were sent to stakeholders in the five (5) economic development districts across Oregon that were affected by the 2017 solar eclipse. The districts surveyed were:

- Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC)
- Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC)
- Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG)

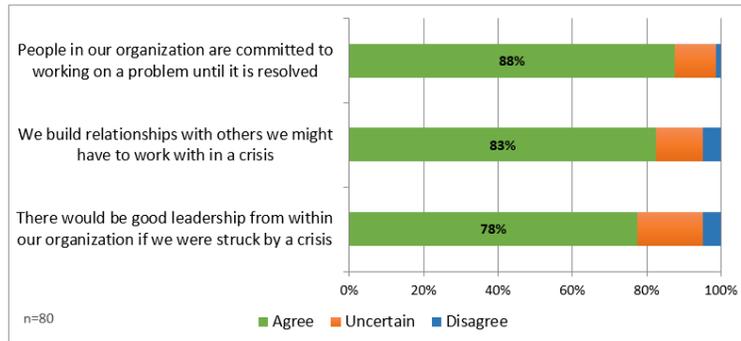
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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (<http://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/economic-resilience.htm>)

- Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD)
- Oregon Cascades West Council of Government (OCWCOG)

Below are the key findings from these two surveys.

Figure 1: Statements with Most Agreement



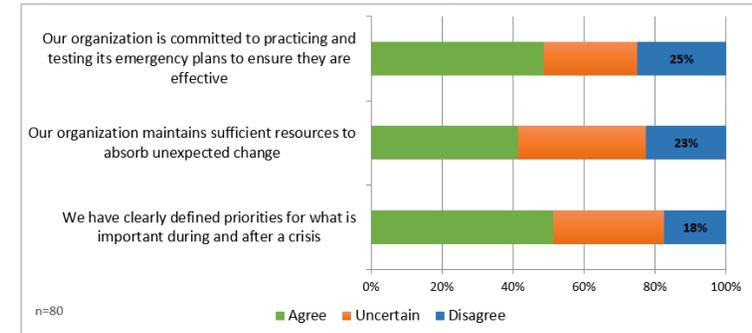
Source: CPW Thumbprint Survey

- Overall, **respondents tended to agree more with statements related to decision-making and leadership.** Statements with the highest post-event agreement include:
  - Should problems occur, staff have direct access to someone with authority to make decisions (93% agree)
  - In a crisis, staff accept that management may need to make some decisions with little consultation (89% agree)
  - We build relationships with others we might have to work with in a crisis (88% agree)
- Respondents **expressed the most uncertainty about proactive posture, breaking silos, and planning strategies.** Statements with the highest post-event uncertainty include:
  - In a crisis we seek opportunities for our organization (37% uncertain)
  - Staff are encouraged to move between different departments or try different roles to gain experience

(36% uncertain, 33% agree)

- We actively plan with our suppliers how to manage disruptions (34% uncertain, 46% agree)

Figure 2: Statements with Most Disagreement



Source: CPW Thumbprint Survey

- Respondents **expressed the most disagreement with statements about breaking silos and stress testing plans.** The statements with the highest post-event disagreement include:
  - Staff are encouraged to move between different departments or try different roles to gain experience (29% disagree)
  - Our organization is committed to practicing and testing its emergency plans to ensure they are effective (22% disagree)
  - Staff can take time from their day to day roles to practice how to respond in a crisis (22% disagree)

## Key Interview Findings

- Overall, interview participants felt **more confident in relationships** that were in place prior to the events of the eclipse.
  - Communication during the preparation phase of the eclipse confirmed trust between agencies and organizations and increased the level of support that they gathered from their region.
  - The attitudes toward preparation for the eclipse were consistent across all districts; each region expressed the value in preparing for an event at this scale.
  - Districts overall remarked that they are now more comfortable reaching out to partners after working together to plan for the eclipse.
- **Table I: Comparative Table, Thumbprint vs. Full Survey**
- Source: CSC Pre- and Post- Event Surveys
- Participants overall expressed **improved interagency collaboration** across a variety of disciplines.
  - Organizations reported that new relationships have emerged because of the cross-agency coordination that was required to plan for the eclipse.
  - Emergency management and economic development professionals collaborated during this event, and established a new working relationship.
- Participants expressed **improved confidence in leadership and recognized their capacity**.
  - Regions expressed that the eclipse was an opportunity for them to assess their capacity, and stress test their plans to understand where gaps exist in their resources.
  - Communication networks that were established to handle the influx of visitors played a significant role in organizing leadership in the region. Connecting

- agencies through one point of command was successful in preparing for emergency response, and providing a consistent message to all regional agencies.
- Many regions expressed the opportunity to showcase their communities and capitalize on the economic benefits of increased tourism to the area.

## Assessment Findings Summary

We have organized overarching assessment findings into three key themes: Preparation, Leadership, and Collaboration.

### Preparation

A diverse range of organizations and agencies came together to plan and prepare for the eclipse well in advance of the event. Many interviewees commented that their preparations ensured that the event went smoothly. Continuing to prepare for unknown events will increase the abilities of regions and the state to respond to an emergency event. In particular, the following themes were highlighted in both the survey and the interviews:

- **Emergency event preparation is important.** Survey results and interview discussions confirm that local stakeholders value preparation.
- Interview discussions especially highlighted that **preparation leads to increased business exposure/capture.** Preparation for the eclipse event brought not only tourist dollars on the day of the event but also exposure to the State and the potential for a continued return on investment from repeat visitors.
- **Having a unified message is key.** Interview discussions confirm the pre-event messaging is important for both tourists and local residents. Ensuring that message is unified across the district and across the State addresses potential challenges, encourages visitors to attend events, and assists districts in leveraging resources.

### Leadership

Survey respondents and Interviewees demonstrated confidence in leadership across all sectors and economic development districts. Ensuring trusted and positive leadership is important both in times of crisis and in preparation for events. Regions should continue to use strong leadership to maintain a culture of collaboration and preparedness. In particular, the following themes were highlighted in both the survey and the interviews:

- **Practice is valuable, but not happening on a regular basis.** In the absence of known disaster events, multi-agency/multi-discipline opportunities to practice disaster preparation will require leadership to organize events and institute a culture of preparedness across the State.
- The eclipse demonstrated that **known events provide a reason to convene collaborations.** Survey and interviews confirmed that organizations seek to build relationships with others, and preparation for the eclipse brought many organizations to the table together for the first time.
- **Connections between organizations were initiated by Economic Development Professionals.** The willingness of economic development folks to take a leadership role in planning for the eclipse demonstrates the resilience of the economic development sector. Continuing to foster these relationships will provided continued resilience in the face of known and unknown events.
- Survey results demonstrated a **high level of confidence in leadership and decision making.** Unknown events or crises require strong leadership.

## Collaboration

Collaboration is strong in Oregon. Survey respondents and interviewees from each Economic Development District discussed their ability to collaborate and the positive results from collaborating with organizations and agencies they were not familiar with. In particular, the following themes were highlighted in both the survey and the interviews:

- **Strong cross-agency, cross-disciplinary collaboration is critical.** Interview participants emphasized the value of economic development, emergency management, and critical infrastructure collaboration during the eclipse.
- **Strong relationships already exist and can be strengthened.** Many interviewees confirmed that relationships were strengthened both in the planning phase and during the event itself. Sustaining these collaborations will be key to ensuring continued collaboration within the State.
- Despite the development of strong relationships and the desire to collaborate, **Silos still exist at all levels.** Breaking these silos will ensure continued collaboration and information sharing when preparing for semi-known events such as the annual wildfire season, or unknown events such as the Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake.

## Section 3: Focus Group Results

During the period of April 25 to May 9, the UO CPW Team conducted four focus group meetings in Salem, John Day, Baker City, and Redmond. The purpose of the focus group meetings was to identify the tools needed by communities across Oregon to help build economic resiliency. Participants included elected officials, state and local economic development representatives, and emergency management professionals from each of the five participating Economic Development Districts (EDDs). This chapter presents a summary of the key findings from the focus group meetings.

Figure 1. John Day Focus Group



Source: Josh Bruce

### Focus Group Development and Administration

Focus groups were conducted to gather information from each economic development district for the Training Needs Report. The CSC team conducted four (4) focus groups total:

- **Mid-Willamette Valley & Cascades West** - April 27, 2018 @ Salem
- **Greater Eastern Oregon** - May 4, 2018 @ John Day
- **Northeastern Oregon** - May 4, 2018 @ Baker City
- **Central Oregon** - May 9, 2018 @ Redmond

The focus groups were structured into sections. First, the CSC team gave a brief presentation of the project, including project status and timeline, key findings that emerged during previous surveys and interviews, and the objective of the activities for the focus group. After two group activities, the group members came together again for a final debrief discussion.

#### Hazard Simulation Exercise

Group members first participated in a hazard simulation exercise. They were given this scenario:

*“Your region experienced a disaster 3 months ago. The initial emergency response has been taken care of including housing, transportation, and immediate infrastructure damage repair. You are now in post-event recovery and working to get your economy up and running again. You’re starting to write grants, businesses are coming to you because they are ready to open but they need gap funding, and support, etc.*

*What economic opportunities do you see that you can take advantage of even after this major disruption? What can you do to support your local businesses, and help the city continue to operate? How can you demonstrate to visitors and people outside the community that you are still open for business? How can you work to minimize your losses?”*

Participants were assigned to play a role that varied from their normal professional role. These roles included emergency management and

economic development professionals, local government officials, local and federal finance specialists, a school teacher and a farmer. Each role card had descriptions of the role play's priorities and concerns. All focus groups participated in one role playing group together, except the Mid-Willamette Valley and Cascades West focus group which was split up into two groups.

The objective of the simulation exercise was to develop 3-5 tangible action items that their community can take to quickly get their economy up and running again after experiencing the disaster, as detailed in the scenario. While one CSC team member facilitated the role-playing exercise, one team member transcribed ideas on a whiteboard as they were discussed in the group, and one team member took hand written notes.

The purpose of this exercise was to encourage focus group members to problem solve while thinking from another perspective, and to think more holistically about solutions to those challenges. This exercise opened a group discussion about what the challenges are to interagency coordination, and allowed the group to identify where improvements could be made in coordinating economic recovery efforts.

Figure 2. Snow Card Exercise in Baker City



Source: Josh Bruce

### Snow Card Exercise

After the debrief of the role-playing exercise, participants were split into two (2) separate groups to identify what gaps and assets exist in their community related to economic recovery and preparedness. Each person was given three (3) index cards to write down either three (3) assets or three (3) gaps, one for each index card. The CSC team helped post the index cards on the wall for everyone to see. The groups then switched categories and did the exercise again.

A CSC team member reviewed the posted assets and gaps, and facilitated a discussion about what the assets and needs the group identified. They asked clarifying questions to understand what group members were implying on their index cards, and supported group discussion. This exercise allowed focus group members to deliver information in a non-auditory way, and individually contribute ideas to the discussion.

### Final Debrief Discussion

The discussion from the Snow Card exercise carried over into the final debrief discussion of the ideas and comments that were made during each part of the focus group. One CSC team member led the final

group discussion, bringing attention to themes and comments that were made during the exercises. While one member led the group facilitation, other team members transcribed notes on a whiteboard and took handwritten notes. This discussion was an opportunity for participants to talk in more detail about their ideas for economic pre-recovery efforts and challenges to pre-planning for disaster events.

The important question that the CSC team asked in every focus group was, “What can we do, as your partner at the University, to help support your efforts towards improving economic resilience?” The responses varied by district and region. Summaries of responses are in the following section.

### Summary of Participant Characteristics

Focus group participants represented a range of relevant professional identities. We categorized these professions into three groups: economic development, emergency management, and government. Economic development professionals included EDD employees, tourism representatives, innovation lab staff, and council of government (COG) staff with explicitly economic roles. Emergency managers and the State Resilience Officer represent emergency management. COG employees working in government, as well as city, county, and state employees working in non-emergency and non-economic capacities.

Out of twenty-eight (28) total participants across all four focus groups, eight (8) represented emergency management, eleven (11) economic development, and nine (9) government. The focus group held at MWVCOG/CWEDD had the most participants, with nine attendees, and NEOEDD had the least participants, with four. COIC had a higher percentage of emergency managers in attendance, with four out of seven, or 57% of attendees working as emergency managers. GEOEDD had the largest proportion of government representation, with 50% of participants working in government.

## Statewide Findings

Through the activities used in the focus groups, participants identified a number of assets and gaps to economic resilience in their regions. Analysis of the identified material resources and abstract characteristics reveals several common themes across all regions. These general findings from across all five (5) economic development districts are discussed in the following section.

### Assets/Resources

- Key assets identified across all regions focus on:
- Identity/Sense of Place
- Relationships/Collaborations

Residents are proud of the identity and culture of their regions. This is driven by a connection to the landscape and the character of local businesses. Residents with an emotional connection to their community are more likely to participate in recovery efforts and remain in their locality after a major disruption. Strong relationships among fellow residents was evident, and human capital was described as being one of the strongest assets in each district. Relationships between the business community foster the sharing of skills and resources between community members. These relationships also build trust and can drive collaborative efforts to restore an area to a state of normality. The value of human capital in each region shone through during each focus group, with participants listing residents, grassroots coalitions and volunteer groups as assets.

### Gaps/Needs

Key needs identified statewide primarily regard:

- Communication barriers between agencies
- Lack of Business Continuity Plans/Awareness of Post-Disaster Next Steps
- Geographic location

Participants across regions noted communication barriers between agencies as a gap. Several districts reported that breaking silos both within and between agencies would help to create a unified voice to state and federal officials. Amplifying their collective message would help achieve necessary resources and funding. Improved communication between economic development, emergency management, and tourism professionals would also help regions to better capitalize on already occurring annual events such as county fairs and music festivals.

Focus group participants also noted that that businesses struggle to develop Business Continuity Plans. Their priorities are related to managing the daily demands of running a business, before preparing for theoretical problems down the line. Due to limited capacity, many businesses lack an awareness of the next steps required to reopen as quickly as possible after an economic disruption. There is consensus among business recovery statistics that each day a business remains closed, business owners, employees, and local and regional economies are negatively affected.

The geographical location of regions is another gap noted across focus groups. Participants from Eastern Oregon highlighted the remoteness and isolation of their regions. Vulnerable infrastructure and a lack of redundant systems contribute to the complications communities in the east face. Members from Western Oregon spoke of the dangers inherent in being located on a subduction zone and that it contributes to a “why bother?” attitude that prevents pro-active pre-covery efforts such a Business Recovery Plan.

## Results by District

This section provides a district-by-district summary of findings from focus groups conducted on April 25, May 4, and May 9 of 2018.

## Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments/Cascades West Economic Development District

On Wednesday, April 25, the team traveled to Salem, Oregon, to conduct a focus group at the MWVCOG office. Renata Wakeley acted as a host for the event. Attendants represented the University of Oregon Community Service Center (CSC), Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVGOC), Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD), Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR), the Governor’s office, the City of Dallas, and Travel Salem.

### Key Findings

This focus group revealed that local and regional sense of place is a substantial asset for the coast and the valley. The University of Oregon and Oregon State University represent substantial information resources, and provide research capacity to the region. Gaps in the region include difficult permitting and approval processes, and a lack of inter-jurisdiction relationships. Participants also noted that business owners lack procedural awareness, as well as the time and resources to plan for crises. The following sections detail these findings.

### Assets

The coast and valley have a strong sense of place, which functions as a major asset for developing resilience. Many communities are devoted to their landscape and culture, which can be harnessed to inform both mitigation and recovery efforts. People who feel more committed to their communities are more likely to invest in the community’s resilience, and also more likely to stay after a disaster.

Focus group participants noted that small businesses drive this sense of place. While “big box” stores provide necessary services, they do not necessarily contribute to the community character that provides a sense of uniqueness. While small, locally owned businesses contribute to regional character, they are also more vulnerable to economic upsets. Agencies on the coast and in the valley can leverage constituent

rapport with these businesses to encourage economically resilient behaviors and practices.

Focus group participants noted that the region has a wealth of educational activity, which enhances the quality of information available. However, participants noted that university research could be more effectively shared with community members. Model narratives and language could help city officials to share information with their constituents.

## Gaps

Focus group participants noted that cumbersome permitting processes can inhibit an agency's ability to respond swiftly after crises. Establishing ordinances to expedite permit issuance in the aftermath of disasters is one opportunity to improve agility and responsiveness. The APA provides a model pre-event recovery ordinance in Planning Advisory Service (PAS) report 576 (Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery: Next Generation). This model ordinance could be used to establish "break-in-case-of-emergency" protocols for navigating permitting, certification of occupancy, and similar workflows in the aftermath of an unexpected event.

Participants also noted that businesses aren't consistently aware of the documentation necessary to apply for recovery funding. They elaborated that eligibility requirements and application processes for gap funding can be intimidating and inscrutable. Improving the accessibility of these processes would encourage more business owners to establish documentation protocols. Resources that make requirements accessible and easy-to-read might help local economies be more prepared. These enhanced protocols could result in more federal support for local recovery.

Many business owners are occupied with maintaining day-to-day operations, and as a result do not have the time or resources to build relationships and protocols related to crisis management. Focus group participants noted that one opportunity to enhance these relationships would be a partnership between Community Emergency Response

Teams (CERT) and Main Street. This partnership is one method for keeping economic recovery in the foreground. Coordinating activities between CERT and Main Street could both engage downtowns and highlight the role of economic development in getting a community back on its feet.

Focus group participants noted that sister-district relationships might provide an opportunity for mutual support pathways to function quickly and effectively in the aftermath of crises. Establishing these cross-jurisdiction relationships in advance of crises would allow districts to build the trust and mutual understanding necessary to ensure collaborative recovery processes.

## Recommendations

- Leverage constituent commitment to local/regional landscape and culture to enhance resilience
- Enhance protections for small businesses to maintain sense-of-place
- Create and distribute customizable templates for business continuity plans
- Create and distribute easy-to-read documentation requirements for federal gap funding
- Encourage partnerships between Main Street and CERT programs
- Establish sister-district relationships among regional agencies

## Greater Eastern Oregon Development District

On Friday, May 4, the team conducted a focus group at the John Day Fire Hall in John Day, Oregon. Persons in attendance represented economic development and emergency management professionals from the region.

## Key Findings

The region's strong sense of community both enhances constituent resource sharing, and makes effective public relations especially pertinent. Remoteness, infrastructure vulnerability, and decentralized communication have the potential to inhibit crisis recovery. The following section details these assets and gaps.

### Assets

Attendees identified the region's largest asset as being its sense of community. This sense of community informs the willingness of all members of the community to pitch in during times of crisis. According to participants, people living in the region have a range of resources and skills, and would be amenable to contributing these during a disaster.

### Gaps

The region's remote location, vulnerable infrastructure, and lack of broadband contribute to the region's difficulty in attracting middle-income employers and workers. Local agencies are already at work to remedy some of these issues, like broadband. Strong communication systems can foster information and idea sharing, and ultimately can mitigate the impacts of large-scale disruptions.

Participants expressed concern regarding the region's ability to handle an influx of visitors. To offset the impacts of an influx, regional agencies broadcasted a message that visitors for the eclipse should arrive prepared. Visitors responded to this message. While the region avoided a crisis and maintained adequate resources to serve guests, visitors only made minor purchases and the region did not experience a substantial economic impact. Strategic, centralized messaging might have enhanced business capture.

### Recommendations

- A Resource Center could help disseminate information

and resources to the public about what to do before, during, and after a major disruptive event

- Written resources should provide adaptable templates so they can be tailored to individual community needs
- Combining workshop and/or training events with already occurring events can foster inter-agency communication between emergency management and economic development professionals
  - These joint events can serve to stress-test plans
- Public support will be crucial to encourage community resource adoption
- North Eastern Oregon Economic Development District

The team conducted an additional focus group on May 4 at Hatch Lab Baker in Baker City, Oregon. Attendants represented economic development and emergency management professionals from the region.

## Key Findings

Strong relationships between residents coupled with grit and determination propell communities to work together to overcome times of strife. A shortage of trained staff, vulnerable infrastructure, and cross-agency communication gaps hinder recovery efforts after a major disruption. The lack of time and well-known resources available to residents and businesses from governing agencies obstruct their ability to prepare for and mitigate the effects of disruptive events.

### Assets

The strength of relationships within regional communities and the persistent "can-do" attitude of residents are substantial assets. This allows residents to lean on each other and help one another to thrive should an event disrupt the status quo of day to day living.

## Gaps

Participants stated that their region needs more redundant systems and trained personnel. Lack of redundancy in staffing and infrastructure increases the region's vulnerability.

Participants identified communication barriers between emergency management, economic development, and tourism agencies. Attendees stated that without a specific event acting as a grounding mechanism, communication halts.

According to attendees, many regional business owners have not drafted a business continuity plan. Busy day-to-day schedules present a barrier to the creation of these sorts of plans. Agencies could provide a checklist-style document, template, or a one-page information sheet to assist business owners in the creation of continuity plans.

Lastly, attendees mentioned that the resource being developed should be well-marketed, constantly available, and provide incentives. Avenues for marketing include the Chamber of Commerce, mailing lists, and social media. Accessible forms that the resource might take include an independent study course for business owners, and a series of online webinars or workshops for new employees to complete during onboarding.

## Recommendations

- Increase collaboration and communication between economic development, emergency management, and tourism agencies
  - Create a policy that requires consulting Emergency Management Services as part of hosting an event.
  - Host inter-agency workshops, meetings, or trainings in conjunction with already existing annual events such as county fairs
  - Set an annually recurring date or set of dates for workshops, trainings, or meetings separate

from existing annual events

- Agencies can provide an adaptable checklist/template or a one-page document with key information about recovery and continuity planning
- Resources should be well-marketed, incentivized, and easily available

Figure 2. Focus Group in Redmond



Source: Josh Bruce

## Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council

The CSC team traveled to Redmond on May 9, 2018, to conduct a focus group at City Hall. Staff members of the COIC attended, as well as local emergency management officials, city and county officials, and an economic development specialist who worked closely with eclipse preparation in the City of Madras. The team had interviewed many of the participants during the creation of the assessment report, so participants were familiar with project goals. The CSC team relayed the progress of the project during the presentation, and explained the goal of the activities in the focus group. The group developed several strategies and recommendations for improving economic pre-covery

efforts within the region. This section identifies key findings from the focus group:

## Key Findings

Emergency managers find economic resilience challenging and do not see a clear relation to emergency response/management in disaster situations. Similarly, economic development professionals are uncomfortable sharing responsibility with emergency managers. Their roles are unclear to each other. Both emergency managers and economic development specialists want more interaction and collaboration with each other.

Allocating scarce resources to pre-planning recovery efforts requires political will, and more time-sensitive, concrete issues often demand available funding. Improvements need to be made to the governance and partnership arrangements that exist on a state and federal level to improve access to resources and enhance communication.

## Assets

The region identified assets related to people, human capital, grassroots coalitions, and volunteers. Relationships and collaboration between community members and governmental agencies enhances resilience in the region. Central Oregon has a strong regional culture, and Tri-County communities stick together and support each other.

The strength of existing organizations provides regional support, including partnerships with FEMA, Economic Development Districts, Faith-Based Networks, and other community action groups. Volunteer groups within the region also provide support, including the Food Bank, Family Self-Reliance agencies, and Head Start programs.

The MACC was essential for coordinating messaging and useful after the eclipse when summer wildfires started. Participants noted that the community trusts emergency managers.

## Gaps

Gaps related to lack of available resources and geographic isolation. Participants reported the need for a stronger vision from the State level, and that cities and counties are underfunded. Because the State lacks the capacity to deliver on local needs, it serves as a weak partner for cities and counties in Central Oregon, regarding economic resilience efforts. Political resolve and slow decision making also challenges economic development professionals in the region.

One participant noted that emergency managers and economic developers should get together to run through realistic hazard simulation exercises. These collaborative exercises could help their region to better understand how to work together on response efforts. This sort of activity could help communities to break through inter-agency barriers and begin the planning process for economic resilience.

The geographic isolation of Central Oregon contributes to difficulty in accessing resources. The communication system in the region is unreliable in all areas, and affects the region's ability to access vulnerable areas.

## Recommendations

- The Central Oregon region identified several strategies for improving economic resilience. Recommendations based on focus group discussion are as follows:
- Business Recovery Center
  - Emergency management suggested modifying an existing emergency recovery operations center to include resources for economic recovery
  - The fundamental role of the Business Recovery Center would be to run needs assessments and analyze economic impact and damages
  - To accommodate economic development and emergency management professionals sharing responsibility after a disaster event, the timing of transferring responsibility must be specified

- Template and Model Language Development
  - Emergency managers suggested incorporating requirements for economic recovery into the County Charter
  - Model language for job descriptions of emergency managers could include responsibilities for economic pre-recovery and resilience
  - Agencies could provide templates for community outreach and engagement and drafts of one-page documents to distribute to the community/business owners
  - Draft language for emergency managers who regularly speak publicly, and provide economic resilience language
- Collaborative hazard simulations involving emergency managers and economic developers can enhance trust and knowledge-sharing



# Section 4: Findings and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes the results of the CSC’s training needs assessment. It presents specific training tools and best practice recommendations to achieve economic resilience. The collective assets and needs that were identified in districts across the state are documented here. We’ve organized the recommendations that emerged from discussions during the focus groups into three categories: structures, resources, and processes. The following section discusses the overall findings and recommendations that emerged from the training needs assessment.

## Economic Resilience Best Practices

Based on the findings from focus groups in each participating economic development district, we created a list of tools that can be used in communities across the state. These resources, structures and processes are described in detail in this chapter, and are categorized below by their level of difficulty for implementation:

## Training Tool Recommendations

Any toolkit developed to support economic resilience in the state of Oregon needs to be:

- Adaptable
- Customizable
- Easy-to-Read
- Always Available
- Well-Marketed

Oregon communities are unique. Each city and town has a distinct character, with a specific set of assets and challenges. A one-size-fits-all solution will not be appropriate. Tools should also be customizable, so that each agency can control content and maximize the usefulness of materials for their specific needs.

Category	Solution	Implementation Effort		
		Easy	Medium	Hard
<b>Structures</b>	Redundancy: Cross-training		■	
	Redundancy: Business systems			■
	Business Recovery Center			■
<b>Resources</b>	Model Language	■		
	Templates	■		
	Ordinances for Expedited Processes			■
	Inventory Templates	■		
	Directory Templates	■		
<b>Processes</b>	Trainings		■	
	Partnerships		■	
	Annual Events	■		

Source: Final Team Presentation

## Recommendation Themes

Several themes emerged across all five (5) EDDs. These themes were organized into three categories of structures, resources, and processes. These broad categories can serve Oregon's unique, diverse communities. Structures provide scalable, adaptable frameworks for developing resources tailored to an agency's specific needs. Resources are customizable deliverables that IPRE can provide agencies. Agencies will need to tailor these tools to their region's unique geography, culture, and professional framework. Processes are one-time or ongoing activities that serve to enhance resilience. The following section provides a detailed description of the tools that fall into each of these categories.

### Structures

Structures refer to professional frameworks and operational patterns that can improve economic resilience. Structures include redundancy, transparency, improved communication, and providing a central source for relevant resources.

### Back Up

Back up refers to both cross-trained staff and duplicate business support systems. During a crisis, staff may need to fill roles that differ from their day-to-day positions. Key personnel might be committed to tasks that take them away from their routine duties. Cross-training ensures that staff are equipped to step into necessary roles when others are unavailable. Cross-training also improves inter- and intra-agency communication by ensuring that professionals understand one another's responsibilities and priorities. Training tools should suggest cross-training opportunities and best practices.

Redundant business support systems ensure that employers are able to maintain critical functions in the event that some facilities suffer damages. For example, backup generators allow businesses to continue offering services if the power grid is damaged. Analog card readers and other non-digitized commerce equipment can also support

transactions during power outages. Training materials should suggest key systems to back up, so that in the event of a crisis businesses can keep their doors open.

### Diversity

Having a range of protocols, facilities, supply chains, and revenue generating activities are all means of enhancing economic resilience. Businesses that have multiple avenues to self-sustenance are better able to withstand shocks. Training tools that can encourage diversity will provide key insight into operating within a resilient framework.

### Trust

Trust requires openness and accessibility. Economic resilience entails collaboration of partners across a range of agencies. To collaborate well, professionals need to access and understand each others' workflows. Business leaders can create a culture of trust by providing online accessibility, regular availability, and opportunities to work together. Training tools should be transparent in their objectives and strategies, and support improved transparency among participating organizations.

Agencies within the five (5) EDDs of our study area indicated an opportunity to improve communication. Specifically, participants noted an opportunity to broaden and enhance communication channels between economic development and emergency management. Training tools should support clear, frequent inter-agency communication.

### Business Recovery Center

Focus group participants identified a business recovery center as a key component of economic resilience. Business recovery centers are pre-determined facilities that house recovery resources, information, and expertise to help businesses stay open or re-open following crises. A

business recovery center could operate as a resource hub, acting as a one-stop-shop where business owners can access recovery services. These services include identification of gap funding, help with documentation processes. Training materials should help communities identify facilities, infrastructure, partner organizations, and workflows for setting up and operating a business recovery center in the aftermath of a crisis.

## Resources

Resources and tools refer to documents and materials that organizations can use to enhance resilience. These tools should be customizable, constantly accessible, and easy to use. Tools and resources include expedited permitting and review processes, resource inventories, contact directories, model language, and document templates.

### Contact Directory Template

Contact directories can help professionals and constituents to quickly find necessary information. A contact directory could include relevant persons working in local, regional, state, and federal economic development agencies, as well as emergency managers, chamber of commerce staff, government officials, and any private partners.

### Equipment Inventory Template

Equipment inventories can help connect recovering businesses with the tools they need to repair and rebuild. Resource inventories might include equipment, infrastructure, facilities, and other community-identified materials useful for economic recovery processes.

### Model Language

Model language refers to stock text that agencies can customize to their specific needs. Model language can include job duties, narratives for public officials, economic development language for emergency managers, and legal support language. Pre-established language can

simplify the task of creating plans, public information, and training materials.

## Document Templates

Templates can include continuity plans, community outreach pamphlets, web content, and other text-based resources. These resources can encourage busy professionals to develop continuity plans. Focus group participants in all five (5) EDDs indicated that their local business owners are occupied with day-to-day operations, making it difficult to find the time to document assets, plan for crises, or consider threats.

## Processes

Processes refer to one-time or ongoing activities that agencies can undertake to improve resilience. Resilience enhancing processes include trainings, partnerships, and leveraging recurring events to stress-test plans and networks.

## Training and Education

Providing continuously accessible, on-demand training materials regarding resilient economic behaviors will allow busy professionals to learn when it's convenient for them. Materials should be easy-to-read, with minimal jargon and clear visual communication. By developing incentive systems, agencies can ensure that their staff have the best knowledge about economic resilience. Training materials should cover continuity planning, documentation requirements for federal disaster funding, and economically resilient professional behaviors.

## Expedited Permitting and Approval Processes

Focus group participants across all five (5) EDDs noted that cumbersome permitting and review processes can inhibit recovery. Business owners waiting to reopen post-disaster suffer real and substantial economic losses while waiting for building inspection and approval. Pre-establishing expedited processes to deploy in the

aftermath of disaster events can help local economies recover more quickly.

## Recovery Ordinances

The American Planning Association has APA developed model language for recovery ordinances, including “granting emergency powers for staff actions which can ensure timely and expeditious recovery.”

Training materials should incorporate similar resources, with language tailored to the State of Oregon.

## Annual Events

Managing chronic hazards like floods, wildfires, and winter storms provides an opportunity to consider larger unexpected events. Other planned events have a similar capacity to stress-test plans and relationships. Annual festivals, rodeos, and county fairs bring together emergency managers and economic developers. Agencies collaborate to make sure that visitors and residents stay safe, but can also work together to enhance business capture. For example, unified regional messaging can ensure that publicity frames crowd management as a reason to come to an event, rather than a reason to avoid it. This same unity of message has the potential to keep residents safe during crises.

Annual events also provide an opportunity to assess capacity, including infrastructure, staff, and resources. Observing event management in action provides valuable insights for improving the effectiveness of relationships, and expanding the capacity of systems.

## Partnerships

Partnerships enhance trust and mutual understanding, which improves resilience. Possible partnerships include Main Street working with Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), and ambassador programs to connect professionals across agencies and regions. 2017’s fire season highlighted opportunities to use regional partnerships to improve statewide economic resilience. When wildfire smoke led to the cancellation of several performances during Ashland’s annual

Shakespeare Festival, a partnership with a sister district could have provided an opportunity to temporarily relocate and keep revenue in-state.

## Chapter Summary

Similar training needs emerged across all five (5) economic development districts, and each district developed various strategies for improving their economic resilience. Their recommendations are categorized into themes, but some overlap exists across them. The most important takeaway is that districts are aware of the importance of improving communication and collaboration with one another, and have several strategies for enhancing their relationships and improving access to shared resources.

This chapter provides recommendations based on the identified needs in each participating economic development district (EDD), with the intention of highlighting gaps that could appear across EDDs statewide. The training needs discovered during the focus groups will inform the training needs module that will be developed in the final phase of this project.

# Appendix I: Focus Groups

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During the period of April 25 to May 9, the team conducted four (4) focus groups with participating Economic Development Districts (EDDs) and Councils of Government (COGs). The focus group consisted of a brief presentation summarizing the project, a hazard simulation exercise, and a breakout activity.

The presentation summarized findings from the resilience assessment report, which synthesized data from surveys, interviews, and document review. The presentation discussed findings specific to each district, as well as state-wide themes.

The hazard simulation consisted of a role playing exercise, in which participants were asked to assume a professional role other than their own. Participants were given a scenario, in which their community was six (6) weeks out from a crisis, and needed to get the economy back up and running. In their assumed roles, participants were tasked with developing 3-5 action items for supporting economic recovery.

The breakout activity was modeled after snow card brainstorming techniques. Participants were divided into two groups, with one group focused on assets/resources, and the other on gaps/needs. Facilitators gave each participant three cards and a marker. Participants were asked to write one (1) asset or one (1) gap on each card, depending on which group they were in. Cards were put up on the wall, and organized into thematic groupings. Facilitators discussed thematic groupings with participants. Participants then switched topics, and contributed additional assets/gaps to the wall, respectively.

The focus group concluded with a discussion of emergent themes identified via the two exercises. The facilitator asked prompting questions related specifically to training needs, and our team's role in supporting enhanced economic resilience.

## Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments / Cascades West Economic Development District

This section provides detailed notes from the focus group with participants from the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) and the Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD).

### Introduction

On Wednesday, April 25, the team traveled to Salem, Oregon, to conduct a focus group at the MWVCOG office. Renata Wakeley acted as a host for the event.

### Attendees

Oliver Gaskell - University of Oregon  
Josh Bruce - University of Oregon  
Jessica Morey-Collins - University of Oregon  
Karen Mason - University of Oregon  
Molly Bradley - University of Oregon  
Renata Wakeley - MWVCOG  
Brian Dalton - Dallas  
Maricela Guerrero - Travel Salem  
Lisa Howard - Governor's Office  
Mike Harryman - Governor's Office  
Jeff Gepper - CWEDD  
Phil Warnock - CWEDD  
Chad Freeman - SEDCOR  
Alex Laraslow - SEDCOR

### Presentation

After delivering a brief presentation of project progress and findings so far, the team opened the floor for participant questions and discussion. Questions considered the capture & metrics of media coverage regarding the eclipse, and the focus of messaging on emergency management rather than tourism. Conversation turned to the impact

of the tension between preparedness and economic development on business capture. Josh Bruce highlighted that a primary reason for these focus groups is to identify the proper balance for encouraging public safety without discouraging economic participation.

Mike Harryman indicated that he would like to use our materials and will credit us appropriately. He stated that the eclipse provided a long lead time which was useful for relationship building. He acknowledged that messaging regarding the eclipse may have been in error, but because this messaging led up to the fires and then the region saw that agencies were well prepared for crises, there was some benefit. According to Harryman, his region saw a core response from communities impacted by fire.

Participants noted that it would be interesting to see the economic impact of the eclipse if emergency management and economic development hadn't done anything. Attendees reiterated that they were curious regarding the impact of planning and messaging.

During the eclipse they moved EMS and Ambulances around behind the scenes. This process provided useful practice for when other events happen.

During the Q&A, participants noted that economic resilience was not included in the resiliency plan. They asked for protocols for asking for more money during next budget session to look at economic resilience and the resilience plan.

A representative from SEDCOR indicated that every community has a chronic or major hazard they face. He asked about worst-case scenario planning, and indicated that regions and agencies just need to move through planning processes.

The discussion indicated that marketing could be a means of demonstrating that the area is prepared to deal with hazards in a mature, measured manner. In response to this, Harryman countered that small and large businesses have different focuses during hazard

recovery, and as such hazard management will look different depending on the scale of the business.

## Role Play

### Introductions

During the role play, participants broke up into two groups. Participants introduced themselves using the information from their role card. The "mayor" indicated that his primary priority is to bring in tourist revenue. The "farmer" stated that he needs to get back to work, and feels that local government is impeding his ability to do so. The "teacher" stated that getting the school safe and children back in class is her priority. The "economic development specialist" indicated a focus on big cities, and mixed messages from the EPA. The "local emergency manager" stated an intention to be difficult and unhelpful.

### Role Play

The role play began with the "emergency manager" reiterating that he did not have any intention of being helpful. The participant indicated that this attitude stemmed from his own experience, and that he wanted to play the part as authentically to his experience as possible.

Participants identified road infrastructure as the most significant barrier. They discussed possibilities for rebuilding roads, and the farmer stated that he had usable equipment that could contribute to the effort.

The economic development specialist urged others to identify private resources, as he was occupied with another city. He suggested that they seek excavation services from other nearby cities to help out.

The mayor stated that immediate cash flow issues could be solved by bringing in tourist revenue. The emergency manager countered that the town was not yet safe enough to accommodate visitors. This tension carried through the exercise.

The local economic development professional revealed that he had a business recovery center at his disposal. The local economic

development professional expressed willingness to act as a liaison between local community and state and national economic agencies

The emergency manager stated that he was buried in paperwork, but could send more up the chain if it would help ease the recovery process. He stated that the folks up the chain don't care but he might be able to ask for some support.

Participants indicated that they are a smaller city with only one building inspector, so the community needs another solution. The Emergency Manager stated that he was willing to ask for the expanded capacity necessary to support this. Despite this, participants worried that their small town would not garner the necessary attention to accrue resources.

The economic development specialist stated that participants need to document everything they do in order to be eligible for federal grant money. The emergency manager stated that he is willing to support some of the paperwork processes. The farmer indicated that he would be willing to participate as long as he worked with local economic development professionals, rather than federal professionals. Participants noted that they observed tension between the need for agility, and the need to maintain documentation for federal funding.

## Solutions

### Solution 1 – Expedite permitting/contracting

- Transportation is a major priority. Bringing relevant organizations together more quickly could ease the burden of cumbersome bureaucratic processes.
- The mayor could be a good mouthpiece to leverage the community's will regarding expedition.

### Solution 2 – Force connections between cities and resource communities

- The EDA could potentially draw on connections with larger cities for capacity building.

- A directory of resources could help connect regional farmers with each other.

### Solution 3 – Develop a Sister District program

- A sister district program could help to establish avenues for providing additional capacity support to Emergency Management, educational institutions, businesses, and other key elements of the community.

### Solution 4 - Create a local resource center

- A local resource center might connect business owners with fast access to capital immediately that can be back-filled with federal funding.
- The center could include a resource inventory of tools and assets in the community and who has or wants funds/resources. The center could connect people with those willing to help.
- Credit union staff should be involved in the local resource center.
- Physical location will be critical: multiple entrances, and multiple physical resources available—as in communication facilities, redundant infrastructure.
  - Federal fund access
    - Professionals with knowledge of how to access federal funds
  - Local capital
    - Local lenders and financial expertise
  - Inventory
    - Understanding of local resources and their availability
- One key component is that the resource center must be tailored to community needs and pre-planned.
- The resource center could incorporate technology for distance learning.
- The resource center could act as a conduit to the EDA,

prioritizing centralized messaging from the community.

- The major caveat is timing, delayed funding from federal agencies makes local lending crucial.
- The private sector might provide faster solutions but they won't do it for free.
  - Setting up a rainy day fund might help alleviate this tension.
  - A sister-relationship with another district could provide a pathway to low interest loan opportunities.

#### Solution 5 - Documenting processes

- Documenting routine operational costs, profits, and assets will be critical to obtaining back funding from federal agencies. Many business owners are not aware of these documentation requirements.

#### Solution 6 - Centralized messaging is key

Having the mayor and other regional public figures on board can help capture cultural momentum, and ensure that the region has a unified message.

#### Debrief

Participants noted that local grocery stores are already distribution centers, and could function as a conduit for FEMA money and other recovery supplies, and then revert to a functioning business.

One participant asked, "Why would local investors reinvest in a place that has been leveled?" The question was clarified, "If you build relationships and encouraging folks to stay, are they going to?" The discussion turned to the implication of workers leaving on public services. Taxes get cut when people aren't working, which heightens the importance of getting the economy back running. The challenge is figuring out how to bounce back quickly.

Josh clarified the frame of the exercise, stating that we went through a post-event exercise. He challenged the room to consider what prevents them from making their economy resilient in the present moment.

#### Gaps/Assets

Some tensions exist between the city government and emergency management in Dallas, and perhaps other communities. The recovery after the Oso landslide was difficult. Information dissemination is another major challenge.

Intelligent resource distribution is critical--the loudest voices are not always the people who need the most information or resources.

Connection to place is more than just box stores, it's usually the mom and pop operations that make a place livable. These are the business owners who want to be in a community, and who are vulnerable to crisis events.

#### Final Debrief

Some participants stated that the exercise didn't change their perspectives significantly.

The exercise highlighted the importance of schools. The role of the teacher caused some participants to think differently about the role of educational institutions in the community.

Some participants hadn't considered people leaving. They had thought that people would stay in Oregon. Josh Bruce noted that there are statewide differences—there is a sense of coastal pride of location, for example. However, there is less connection to the community in some other areas. Participants questioned the role of demographics in whether community members stay or leave. Some suggested that older residents may be more likely to stick around.

Crises can change your mentality. The way this occurs is hard to predict. People are individuals, and as such, generalizations can't be reliably made. Disasters change the way you respond, and attendees noted that people can be especially irrational in these situations.

Participants stated that people in the Mid-Willamette Valley are not teed up for federal funding. Business owners may not know how to submit information for reimbursement. Participants asked “How do we make these workflows more accessible?” They noted that Business Continuity Plans are a key tool in preparing for these funding and reimbursement opportunities.

Delays in permitting, and slow permitting processes in general, are major inhibitors to recovery. Building inspections were noted as a particular problem—they’re slow and difficult to obtain during routine operations, so getting them during crisis recovery seems like it will be difficult.

This conversation led to a discussion of participant perception that Oregon is tied up in regulations. Several attendees echoed this sentiment. They were curious about opportunities to waive regulations in the face of hazards, or other opportunities to streamline approval processes. Bringing the private sector and land use planners together was one possibility floated. Another suggestion was encouraging people to get bureaucratic requirements taken care of on a regular basis, so they are done beforehand.

One attendee notes that a risk of neglecting documentation is that FEMA might come in and take over and obliterate the local professionals. Another pointed out that pre-adoption of an ordinance before the event that has a model in APA. Someone asked if that been proved to work in the state of Oregon, which participants agreed can be more regulatory than other states. They asked if it’s possible to identify a case study community for the adoption of APA’s model ordinance. They asked if there are opportunities to relax some restrictions in the State plan. Mike Harryman responded that the Department of Energy has identified 16 permits that they will waive during crises, and that the key is to encourage organizations to prepare for these processes.

Ideas for continuing these conversations include a dashboard spearheaded by the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, pilot community adoption of regulations, continued funding for CERT teams,

community level councils, and community conversations. Focus group participants suggested that Regional Solutions could offer leadership for economic recovery during fire season. Participants noted that guidance from the State, and from counties that are successful with Emergency Management, would help give direction to current efforts; Marion County is an example. The conversation shifted to methods for pushing research from universities to communities to ensure that the state’s academic institutions serve the good of the state itself.

Mike Harryman asked, “What is the pain point that makes you change your behavior?” He indicated that discomfort is sometimes necessary to convey enough urgency to get people to modify their actions immediately.

Discussing the eclipse, participants noted an opportunity to capture more of the economic benefit. They vocalized the connection between resilience and economic success during the day-to-day. Another opportunity to capture business are the RVs who visit the state for outdoor recreation—this source of disposable income might be taken advantage of more successfully. Recreational visitors might be another opportunity to stress test plans. Main Street professionals could provide leadership for business capture efforts, and the process could function with economic development teams. This would help to engage downtowns and highlight the impact of economic development.

Having local counterpoints as well as state level counter points will ensure that the sense of place stays in tact. Mayor Dalton noted that city leadership could have a role in this process, and indicated that he would like to give a speech stating what Dallas would look like post-earthquake. He could use support and inspiration for this speech, including a prototype with a model narrative. He believes this narrative could be useful for multiple communities and organizations to successfully communicate risks.

Phil Warnock noted that he would love to see the team focus on how small events can be used as opportunities to capture economic factors in the moment, and then start to engage folks on what economic resilience looks like.

Ideas for names for the training resource include:

- Playbook
- Checklist
- Toolkit/Toolbox

SEDCOR representatives indicated that they'd be a great place to do piloting during Fall 2018.

## Greater Eastern Oregon Economic Development District (GEOEDD)

John Day Fire Hall, May 4th, 9am - 11am

Tammy Bremner, Manager, Grant County Chamber of Commerce  
Rammin Burrell, City Manager/Recorder, City of Seneca  
Allison Field, Economic Development, Grant County  
Matt Manitsas, Agribusiness Project Manager, City of John Day  
Ted Williams, Emergency Management Coordinator, Grant County  
Judge Scott Myers, Grant County

Organized with help from Susan Christensen, Executive Director, GEODC

### Presentation Discussion

Representatives from Grant County thought they could handle 10,000 visitors during the eclipse, but anticipated that they could receive up to 50,000. It was expressed that the not knowing of just how many people were going to arrive was the most difficult part of preparing for the eclipse. Worried about the potential number of visitors to the area, they told people to plan ahead. This message was heard and visitors arrived prepared. This was a double-edged sword in that resources were less strained, but it also resulted in a lessened economic benefit to communities. Accepted unofficial numbers are that Grant County hosted 22,000 people for the eclipse, 50% of which were in national

forest. While it is not known just how many people were in the woods, vehicle counts provide some evidence.

In preparation for the eclipse, officials blocked public parking spaces. This frustrated locals and businesses who expressed concern that lack of parking was negatively affecting business. This was reflected in a positive business capture when parking was reopened.

### Hazard Simulation

In response to the hypothetical hazard scenario, the option of opening a secondary stand at the farm was floated. Rational was that people who live both in town and by the farm can be served. It would also allow the farmer to directly sell what crops are still viable and not damaged.

The option of setting up a Business Recovery Center (BRC) was also discussed. The idea for this was included on a role card prompt, but generated conversation about what form this Center would take and what services it would offer. Options discussed included using a fairground or community hall, and the need to communicate to the public the BRC's existence. Methods of communication discussed included the radio, newspaper, word of mouth, and social media. The BRC then decided to be too narrow in focus and morphed into a more general Resource Center for business, insurance, health and safety, and donations.

The tight-knitness of the community was discussed and that despite differences of opinion, people always come out of the woodwork to help one another during times of need. This was demonstrated after a recent local fire when members of the community provided donations. It was also mentioned at these times, communication with someone at the top was needed

It was also determined that it would be beneficial for businesses to create of a Business Continuity Plan/Fallback Plan *prior* to an event. It was mentioned that employees should play a participatory role in the creation of these plans because they are the backbone of a business.

Additional points that came out during the simulation were:

- Horses and four-wheelers can help support movement of goods and temp transportation due to a well-known and mapped dirt road network.
- Disaster type is important - Fire falls under Forest Service, and Emergency Operations Centers can help out with organizing communications.
- It is important to Buy Local during times of economic stress.

## Hazard Simulation Debrief

Consensus was that it was difficult to step outside of one's normal role and put on a different hat that requires the use of unfamiliar tools.

Discussion continued around the idea of a resource center that would help guide things both before and after the event by helping craft business continuity plans.

The topic of communication also emerged. The fact that communication is key, but is often lacking, causing public frustration, was brought up. Possible areas of improvement might involve a website. It was also discussed that Grant County is a strong, but reactive community and not knowing what you're planning for is tough.

## Breakout Activity

Gaps identified were

- A lack of willingness to change among the community.
- The lack of broadband and thus a lack of correct information being disseminated among the community.
- The geographic remoteness of the community contributing to a general distrust of outsiders and the hardship of attracting major employers.

It was also discussed how the lack of broadband and geographic remoteness hindered the development of middle class jobs. It was noted that many of the gaps are already being worked on.

The biggest asset identified revolved around the sense of community in the region. Aspects of this include the willingness of all members of the community to pitch in during times of crisis, contributing their individual resources and skill-sets. The idea of an inventory of such skills and resources was floated and that emergency management is already trying to develop such a list, but that individuals in the community tend to be wary of such documentation.

## Final Reflection

When asked how to better foster trust, attendees responded that the need to encourage community members to understand that change is important and that wanting change doesn't place them in the minority. One local example of successful change in the John Day Greenhouse. This establishment used a feasibility study to build a greenhouse for fresh vegetables using hydroponics that would be available year-round for local market, schools, hospitals, and stores. The greenhouse is part of an innovative greenway that includes 80 acres of reclaimed mill territory and is looking to expand in the future in coordination with a new wastewater plant that is coming to the area in the near future. More information is available on its website: <http://www.cityofjohnday.com/planning/page/pilot-scale-greenhouse-innovation-gateway>.

The importance of building communication systems to help funnel information and encourage people to ask questions and talk straight was also discussed. The establishing of a Community Center was mentioned as a possible method of doing this. The Chamber and Library already contain information resources, but an issue is that people aren't aware of that. To facilitate better dissemination of information, a website with a good search bar, a directory of resources, and individuals who have access to the directory and can spread the word are needed. Possible persons identified for the job include

emergency managers, members of the Chamber, and representatives from the Oregon State University extension.

When asked what should we call the resource we are building it was determined that we should use every tool available to us, including hiring a town crier to get the word out. Additionally, we were told that in order to successfully pitch our resource, we would have to convince the community that the resource was their idea and that we ought to bring certain respected families or local leaders on board to help sell it. Reasoning for this was that locals are trusted more than organizations and that people are trusted more than organizations.

Further dialogue regarding what form the resource should take revolved around training or workshop events that should occur in conjunction with already occurring events such as the health fair or county fair. Spring events were favored so that departments could better prepare for the summer and the wildfires that accompany the season. Reasoning behind this was the ability to stress-test plans. The need to integrate economic resilience with emergency management was brought up. The possibility of an adaptable template that was cognizant of differences across the state and that could be modified according to the needs of individual communities was also mentioned.

## Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD)

Hatch Lab Baker, May 4th, 2pm - 4pm

Lisa Dawson, Executive Director, NEOEDD  
Jason Yencopal, Baker County Emergency Management  
Courtney Crowell, Governor's Coordinator, Greater Eastern Oregon Regional Solutions  
Bryan Tweit, Manager, Hatch Lab Baker

### Presentation Discussion

After the presentation of work done on the project so far, it was agreed that after the eclipse there was increased confidence in leadership and

collaboration, but a decrease in confidence in redundancy. It was also noted that without a specific event, continued collaboration and communication across agencies was difficult due to lack of available time.

### Hazard Simulation

Bryan personally identified with the hazard simulation scenario because Baker City currently has a condemned school.

Moving forward into how officials might respond to the hypothetical situation, steps toward recovery mentioned included conducting a building inventory, buying down bankers' risk with grants available from the local community, and the need to market to locals before tourists.

It was also decided that a meeting in the Business Recovery Center (BRC) should be called. The idea of establishing such a center was included in a prompt on one of the role cards. Discussion surrounding the BRC included that it would most likely be operating with limited staff, but would be able to offer just-in-time training packets. It was also discussed that the BRC should be incorporated into the Emergency Operations Center to help deliver a unified message and attract more resources, people, and building inspectors into the local recovery center.

When addressing the transportation issue, the discussion revolved around the need to get all businesses and residents to the table. It also focused on trying to identify what resources would be needed to address the issue and how to facilitate bringing those resources into town.

The Mayor pronounced that a citywide meeting would be held to identify top priorities for the community, readily available resources, and to determine if the school is safe for the kids. In the scenario, residents are considering leaving town if schools (for the children) and places of business (for the parents) aren't operational soon.

Finally, it was discussed how funding from the Economic Development Agency might be a slow process requiring documentation.

## Hazard Simulation Debrief

After the hazard simulation was concluded, participants were asked to reflect on the experience. It was agreed that it was difficult thinking from a different perspective and that there was a lack of understanding between roles.

Participants were asked if there might be the possibility of conflict arising in real life should such a situation occur. It was agreed that yes, conflict might occur, but the community would have to come together and resolve it.

Participants also discussed how at six weeks after a major disruptive event, like how the scenario is set, the community would not be ready to welcome tourism. The major question was then raised, “how *do* we float businesses in the meantime?” The idea of looking at Florida and New Orleans as case studies that might have valuable information was mentioned in response.

## Breakout Activity

Assets identified during the breakout activity were:

- Community / relationships / community connectivity scaled to region/state/fed
- Can do attitude / resilient attitude
- Search and rescue
- Ability to sound alarm
- Natural Resources / Farmland
- Connectivity to highway system

Gaps identified were:

- Proximity to Western Oregon. Reasoning behind this was that the general people care less about things that happen in Eastern Oregon.

- Limited Emergency Services / Qualified Trained Staff / Personnel Shortage
- Lack of training availability
- Large geographic area
- The size of size of buildings and the Emergency Operations Center
  - That the Emergency Operations Center isn't a dedicated facility - that it is located at the courthouse and also used for commissioners meeting
- Limited road connectivity
- Lack of funding/financing for small communities
- Limited reserve dollars for emergency funds
- Vulnerable infrastructure systems such as roads and telecoms

It was also identified that Baker City has the capacity to accommodate 15,000 people.

## Final Reflection

During the final reflection portion of the afternoon, the need for redundant systems was mentioned. One example of this was the need for businesses and financial institutions to operate both electronically and through paper documentation. It was also discussed that the funds available to build redundancy were limited and that having a clear pathway of existing funding from the State would be extremely beneficial. One method of addressing the issue of limited funding and resources was to attack it piecemeal style, focusing on the most needed things first - today a switch, tomorrow a generator, so on and so forth.

Another topic of discussion was the lack of communication surrounding the Hell's Canyon Motorcycle Rally and how that was reminiscent of planning for the eclipse. The Rally would take place two months after the time of the focus group and Emergency Management did not as yet have information regarding the route that would be used. This reminded Jason of the eclipse because tourism was holding meetings

for eclipse planning six months before emergency management did. It stated that in an ideal world regular meetings between agencies would be beneficial and further discussion revolved around at what occasion those regular meetings might look like. Possibilities mentioned included:

- Creating a policy that requires consulting Emergency Management Services as part of hosting an event.
- Hosting inter-agency workshops, meetings, or trainings in conjunction with already existing annual events such as county fairs
- Setting an annually recurring date or set of dates for workshops, trainings, or meetings separate from already existing annual events.

The next topic of conversation centered on how to help businesses create a Business Continuity Plan (BCP). One major hurdle for most businesses that was noted was that it is often difficult for business owners to find the time to create one on top of completing daily operations tasks. One possible solution mentioned was developing a checklist or template for businesses to use when drafting their own BCP. It was then noted that the provision of this type of resource often is not enough on its own. Jason recollected that prior to the eclipse he had distributed such a list to businesses and that approximately five percent of businesses actually utilized them. The provision of an “At a Glance” one page resource of “If X happens, do Y” to businesses was floated as a way to address this issue. Further, it was noted that BOLDplanning, Inc., an independent firm that offers Continuity of Operations Planning, Emergency Operations Planning, Business Continuity Planning, and Hazard Mitigation Planning services, already serves as a contractor for BCPs in the state, offering templates as one of their services.

It was discussed that whatever resource is developed, due to the busy schedules of business owners, it would need to be well-marketed, constantly available, and provide incentives. The Chamber of Commerce, mailing lists, and social media were all listed as methods

that could be utilized for marketing such a resource to businesses. Noting that free food always works to get people into a room, additional methods included breakfast meetings, the Baker Pub Talks, and Baker Business After Hours events held within the city. Brainstorming what such a resource might look like, one suggestion was an independent study course for business owners to complete regarding how to prepare for and respond to major disruptive events. Another was a series of online webinars/workshops that would be an on-boarding employment requirement.

Wrapping up the meeting, final thoughts included that the resource might be called a Tool or Toolkit, and additional forms it might take could be a Train the Trainer Program, and Ambassador Program, or an online forum/listserve where members of the community - business owners, emergency management professionals, economic development professionals, local officials, and more - might be able to share information and resources with one another. There was support for the resource in the room and mention of presenting it to city council for further momentum.

## Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC)

City Hall, Redmond, OR  
May 9, 2018

### Attendees

Scott Aycock, Community and Economic Development Manager, COIC  
Gus Burrill, City Administrator, City of Madras  
Lysa Vattimo, Communications Specialist, City of Madras  
Nathan Garibay, Emergency Services Manager, Deschutes County  
Mark Carman, Emergency Management Coordinator, Jefferson County  
Michael Ryan, Emergency Manager, Crook County  
Chris Doty, Road Department Director, Deschutes County

## Presentation Discussion

Many of the focus group participants were interviewed for this project earlier in the year, and took the pre- and post-event surveys. They were familiar with the project, and understood the progress the CSC team made up to this point. After the presentation, the abbreviation for MACC center was clarified to stand for Multi-Agency Coordination Center. On that subject, the group discussed the role of the MACC as a unified messaging system.

The group discussed what opportunities exist to capture new EDA funding and resources when partnering with those who are familiar with working towards economic resilience across the state.

Josh Bruce: Would there have been as much interest in EDA funding prior to the eclipse for emergency managers?

Nathan Garibay: No, I don't think emergency managers would have made that connection. We know about economic resilience, but we don't see economic resilience connections on the ground. Last year was our first experience, when the City of Sisters received a declaration from the Small Business Association after summer wildfires impacted the city's tourist revenue.

Scott Aycock: What information they we send out to engage the community to embracing economical resilience?

Nathan Garibay: Economic development folks work separately from emergency managers. How can emergency managers better engage economic development specialists, since they do not want to manage the unpleasantness of emergency management?

## Hazard Simulation

During the hazard simulation activity, the group focused on a few main solutions to getting businesses up and running again quickly after a disaster:

- Needs Assessment – Analysis of economic impact to

understand the recovery needs

- Support business owners to navigate the damage assessment process, and quantify how much damage they sustained from the hazard.
- Help business owners determine the structural vs. financial damages to their business
- Business Recovery Center. The fundamental role of the Business Recovery Center would be to run the needs assessment and analysis. It would be a one-stop-shop for:
  - Collecting community resources locally
  - Coordinating people from various professions in one place
  - Aiding in navigating the land use process and legal issues.
  - FEMA and emergency management should be located here as well.
  - Advocate for business owners to insurance companies locate here.
- Pre-event Training:
  - Identify key players and organizations already involved in economic development and recovery
  - Identify resource pools and connect them with people, i.e. gap funding
- Directory of relevant professionals:
  - Oregon Chamber Association
  - Association of Oregon Counties
    - Events for visibility and interagency connection
- Loan Guarantee Program
  - Help businesses navigate the Small Business Administration (SBA) for loan guarantee. This will give more confidence to banks to lend to damaged businesses, and allow more support for employers to stay in operation and pay

- o their employees to work.
- o Create an ambassador position to advocate for small business owners to insurance companies.
- o Hold seminars for Economic Development Districts, Chambers of Commerce, and insurance companies. Determine how businesses are uninsured for economic impacts, and develop scenario-based strategies ahead of time to prepare for helping businesses recover.
- Template Development
  - o Model language for job descriptions to include planning for economic resilience. People will only complete tasks if they are specified in their job descriptions.
  - o Develop a model/template specifying chain of command to ensure economic resilience, similar to disaster response.
  - o Model language for protocol/operations

The focus group members focused more on findings solutions to disaster recovery efforts than on strategies for pre-disaster, or pre-recovery solutions. During the hazard simulation role playing exercise, participants stepped in and out of their assigned roles and spoke from both their personal perspective and from what they might expect to hear from their assigned role. Focus group members noted that they train heavily on everything else, and should therefore also be trained on economic recovery.

## Hazard Simulation Debrief

Many of the focus group members help professional positions in emergency management, with one group member who specifically worked in economic development. When the group was asked how they felt about stepping out of their daily roles and playing the part of a different profession, most people found it challenging. They do not

usually think of solutions from another perspective and did not know where to start.

The economic development professional especially felt “uncomfortable and unprepared.” This may be in part because their assigned role was an emergency manager, and there were mostly emergency management professionals in the room. The emergency managers varied in their participation in the exercise. Some did not enjoy role playing, while others found it useful to look at problems through a different lens.

The group discussed the difficulty of identifying when to transfer responsibilities from the disaster response team to the economic recovery team. Some might assume they will recognize where the hand off should be when they see it, but it is difficult to determine in the moment. Through a Business Recovery Center operation, both emergency management and economic recovery teams could start at the same time, and coordinate efforts through the Recovery Center. They can engage communities in different ways.

In any recovery operation, the most difficulty is in the politics of the place. It takes political will to begin strategizing recovery events prior to a disaster taking place. Resources are limited, and advocating to spend money on an event that is not yet affecting a community is politically challenging. Focus group members discussed strategies for approaching politicians in a way that will encourage them to initiate pre-recovery efforts. For example, the public health issues that are so prevalent in modern dialogue have led to public behavior changes, focused on preventing negative impacts to health before they appear.

## Breakout Activity

Assets identified during the breakout activity are as follows:

- Location – Places to set up MACCs, and other recovery centers
- Design and character of the community
- Mutual Aid Agreements (ORCA system)

- Relationships and Collaboration
  - MACC and ESO
  - Central Oregon “hangs together”
  - Tri-County community
  - People and Resilient Communities
- Existing organizations
  - Economic Development Districts/COIC
  - FEMA
  - Faith-Based Networks
  - Neighbor Impact (Community Action Group)
  - Energy assistance
- Volunteer groups
  - Faith-Based Networks
  - Food Bank
  - Family Self-Reliance
  - Head Start

Gaps identified during this activity are as follows:

- Geographic isolation
- Communication system; access to help
- Lacking an Economic Center/Financial Coalition
  - Community-based group of bankers connected to the idea of resilience.
- Resources
  - Availability of resources and the economic climate
  - Emergency managers have access to individual asset lists for each county. This should be shared with the State.
    - Personnel, trucks, traffic cones
- Weak partnership with the State. There is underfunding at the State level, and a lack of capacity to deliver on local needs. There is not a strong vision from the State level.
- Political resolve
- Timeliness of decision making

While transitioning from identifying gaps and assets in the region, the focus group began discussing how to start resilience planning without financial support. The economic development professional suggested getting economic groups together to practice disaster simulations and help them to better understand what happens when there is an economic disruption in their specific community. Identify specific scenarios to work with that are relevant to your community. These exercises might spark a willingness to initiate precovery planning, and put more focus on economic development during emergency management trainings.

### Final Reflection

In the final debrief of the focus group, members discussed the original solutions they proposed to achieve quick economic disaster relief, including hashing out the framework and operations of a Business Recovery Center. First, it is necessary to identify who would operate and maintain it, and how it would be funded. An inventory of resources must be provided to understand what is available in the region, and what services the center will offer. People operating the center should travel to other cities for training on how to develop a business recovery center. Suggestions for other communities to look to include:

- Snohomish County, WA – OSO mudslide
- Wenatchee Complex Fires (Leavenworth)
- Chetco Bar Fire / Gorge Fire

FEMA’s response to natural disasters varies, and funding from the federal government is not always reliable, as Leavenworth experienced in the Wenatchee Complex Fires. Response and recovery classes are offered by FEMA, but emergency management does not typically interact with economic development, especially at the federal level.

The discussion focused on how to modify response from emergency management to include strategies for economic recovery. Strategies for placing value on economic recovery should be incorporated into emergency response efforts/plans. Emergency managers suggested to engage the county and require them to include economic recovery into

their charter, otherwise the county will not pay attention. Following this, they recommended that model language be crafted for job descriptions with information about their role in economic recovery operations.

Regarding public education and engagement, the group suggested developing a one-page document with information about why economic resilience is important to the community. This would be passed out to business owners and community members as an at-a-glance info sheet, with resources where more information can be found. In addition, the group recommended creating a seminar of “Train-the-Trainer”, to ensure that all business recovery center operators, COIC or the Chamber, for example, would have the knowledge and skills to assist during a crisis.

The best way for emergency management officials to communicate with economic development professionals is by knowing who each other are. This is a job for the politicians, who regularly speak to the general public. Nathan Garibay sits on the board for emergency management, and his leadership role in the community is valuable for spreading knowledge and awareness of economic resilience. He recognizes that the public has trust in messaging from him, and wants to know how to translate messages in the language of economics to ideas people can understand.

Ultimately, the group asserted that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and it is not our goal to develop one. A menu of great options, or templates, would help eliminate the barrier that exists between economic precovery messaging and disaster preparedness. A response and recovery plan should be incorporated within the Community Wildfire Protection Plan for the region. A regional solution is highly suggested.

