



Harney County Economic Development

Minutes
Community Response Team
Wednesday, June 3, 2020

Attendees Via Zoom:

Pete Runnels-Harney County Court	Patty Dorroh-Harney County Court
Kristen Shelman-Harney County Court	Allison Field-Business Oregon
Amber Wares-Symmetry Care	Misti Porter-TVCC Outreach
Lea Gettle-Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative	Brandon McMullen-HC Planning Department
Noelle Colby-Rotell-DHS	Neil Neiwart-Wilderness Wireless
Brenda Smith-High Desert Partnership	Jennifer Taynton-High Desert Partnership
Larry Holzgang-Business Oregon	Kirby Letham-City of Hines
Jen Hoke-Harney District Hospital	Andrea Letham-Small Business Development Center
Becky Cunningham-Rimrock Recycling	Greg Smith, HC Economic Development
Fred Flippence-Harney Electric Cooperative	Denise Rose-HC Economic Development
	<i>One phone number with no identifying information</i>

1. **Greg Smith** welcomed the group, called the meeting to order and asked for a virtual role call to identify those calling in by phone.
2. **Old Business:** May meeting minutes were provided via the website with email reminders. General agreement was that the group should review and let the office know if there are corrections.
3. **New Business:**

A. Regular Reports:

Harney County Court, Pete Runnels- Judge Runnels reviewed the Brownfield grant program and how it could impact business and property owners in the county. Contracts have been signed with MiWave and Business Oregon for funding the cooperative broadband network. The Sheriff’s Office has received a COPS grant to fund a new deputy position. County Emergency Services and th City of Burns have received 7 grants from Office of Emergency Management. It felt like a lot of funding came in this month! **Commisioner Dorroh** has identified a peer in the Workforce Board who may be of some assistance to the internship efforts going on. She recommended contacting Erin Carpenter in EOWB. **Commisisoner Shelman** had no additional comments.

City of Hines, Kirby Letham - the water project will be visible any day, the award letter was signed with Warrington Construction from Ontario last Friday. Sprinklers are in at the Hines Park. The city is in the budget cycle. The planning committee has issued permits to the following: 1) Veteran’s

Association for the clinic construction project in the Rite Aid plaza store front. They will provide clinic services to veterans and will have 6-10 rooms in the facility. 2) McDonalds for a remodel/refresh to their building in the same plaza. Tesla has signed an agreement for a Super Charger station to be located in the lot next to Grocery Outlet.

City of Burns, no report

Burns Paiute Tribe, no report

Business Oregon, Larry Holzgang – Larry introduced Allison Field to the group. She is the new Regional Development Officer for Harney, Grant and Malheur Counties. She was previously the Grant County Economic Development Director for the past year and has lived in Grant County for the past 16 years. Greg commented that Rick Minster might be a good resource for her to connect with. Allison greeted the group and gave a short biography. She plans to visit businesses in all three counties as soon as restrictions allow.

Harney County Economic Development, Greg Smith – Business owners and phone calls from potential owners are continuing to come in. We are seeing both expansion and new business clients. Several local loans have been restructured to help businesses get back on their feet over the next few months. Training webinars are ongoing. The CRT group may be called on to engage in the upcoming work with Cardno and the county brownfield assessment process.

SBDC of TVCC, Andrea Letham- Andrea continues to provide support to local businesses during COVID 19. SBA programs have provided about \$800,000 in financial assistance to county businesses. Feedback has been mixed from owners, with some waiting to claim or utilize funds until they know more about the rules for loan forgiveness. She has been working with many using webinar tools.

B. Regular Committee Reports:

Housing – an investor with local ties and who owns properties here has been identified. The economic development office has been attempting to contact him and will continue to reach out. Kirby Letham gave a recap of the group’s activities. It had been making good progress and was ready to propose an incentive program when COVID restrictions hit. He compared it to a pause button, but will be un-pausing soon.

Small Business Support and Development – Greg gave an update about a client who will be installing a dry kiln. We are reaching out to Susan Christensen at GEODC for a Capital Access series of open houses. Allison Field and Andrea Letham will be starting a conversation about small business support.

Workforce - Brenda Smith talked about the Eastern Oregon Workforce Board internship program and its development. The framework will be in collaboration with High Desert Partnership. There will be a youth initiative meeting in July.

Infrastructure – Pete Runnels asked for input on the revised Economic Development Strategic Plan sent out with the agenda. There was general discussion and he asked that follow up comments be submitted to him by the end of the week. Other infrastructure updates were discussed in the County Court report.

C. Focus Projects:

Wilderness Wireless, Neil Neiwert presented information about Wilderness Wireless and their growth in the community via a PowerPoint presentation. They are ready to roll out new technology in Harney County with band width of 20-100MB. They will be offering 3 separate packages to businesses with deployment meant to cover the mid-sized business, especially those seeking to fill a gap between their current service and fiber speeds. They plan to begin installation in the next few weeks.

Harney County Planning Department, Brandon McMullen – Brandon introduced the Economic Opportunity Analysis process recently launched to evaluate and assist in rural land use planning efforts. A technical assistance committee has been formed and held its first meeting. This process is similar to the one conducted last year for the cities of Burns and Hines. Senate Bill 2 has provided for this aspirational process to look at land rezoning needs for business growth and job creation. Two counties were funded and Harney volunteered to be one of them. The group will likely look to the CRT for community input as they enter that stage.

Eastern Oregon Business Development Loan Fund, Greg Smith – Greg described the private loan fund that services 10 Eastern Oregon counties. They provide business loans, including micro loans for up to \$10,000. Referrals will help businesses take a step forward. Interest rates are based on the intended use of the funds, (usually under 6.5%) and the asset they plan to purchase. They are flexible depending on the project and the borrower.

General Discussion, Announcements:

Fred Flippance announced that, while they will not be able to have the traditional awards luncheon, the Lions Club has awarded \$79,000 in scholarships to 16 students.

Brandon McMullen will be seeking a student intern to work with the EOA planning project for a stipend of \$750. They will perform some interviews and a site visit. Work can be done on school breaks. Interested students should contact him.

Discussion was held regarding the summer CRT schedule and it was agreed that meetings will be suspended for July and August and resume in September.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.