



Northeast Oregon Economic Development District

GROWING BUSINESS :: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Annual Report and Update – June 30, 2016

Changes in Economic Conditions

Unemployment rates in the region have continued to recover since the significant effects of the recession in 2009. However, Union, Baker and Wallowa counties continue to have higher rates of unemployment and lower average wages than Oregon or the nation. In 2015, annual average unemployment rates were in Baker County 6.9%, Wallowa County 7.9%, and Union County 6.3%. The average annual unemployment rate in Oregon was 5.7% and in the United States was 4.9%. While decreases in the unemployment rates have been partially accounted for by decreases in the workforce, for the first time in many years the civilian labor force in the region actually increased between 2014 and 2015. There was a 3% increase in Baker County, 2% in Union County, 5% in Wallowa County and 3.5% in Oregon. These increases are modest compared with the national average over the same period, which was 41%, but they are still movement in a positive direction. Regardless, in none of these counties has employment returned to pre-recession lows of 2007 (5.8% in Baker County, 5.5% in Union County, 6.1% in Wallowa County, and 5.2% in Oregon).

The average wage per job in 2015 was: Baker County \$34,152, Union County \$36,213, Wallowa County \$32,218, and Oregon \$48,312. (Sources: State of Oregon Employment Dept. and Bureau of Labor Statistics. Total nonfarm employment in the region remained the same in Wallowa County and increased slightly in the rest of the region between March 2015 and 2016. Baker County's nonfarm employment rose by 110 jobs, and Union County's by 170. There was no distinct shift in types of jobs available. (Source: State of Oregon Employment Dept.)

Travel Oregon, the state's bureau of tourism, has paid a lot of attention to the region in past years. After dipping a bit in 2013 and rising an average of nearly 4.5% in 2014—ostensibly due to Travel Oregon launching its “7 Wonders” campaign that featured the Wallowa Mountains as one of the state's most beautiful places, direct travel spending in 2015 increased slightly in all three counties. At \$44.3M, Baker County's 2015 travel-related income increased 1.3% from 2014. At \$33.3M, Union County's 2015 travel-related income was up 0.6% from 2014. In Wallowa County, 2015 travel-related income, \$28.4M, was up 2.9% from 2014. (Source: Travel Oregon)

The region's agriculture sector continued to be strong. Sales of both crops and animal products increased in all counties from 2011 to 2012. Baker County experienced a 14% increase in gross farm and ranch product sales from 2011 to 2012. Union County had an 8.1% increase and Wallowa County saw a 7.0% increase. Oregon State University's Oregon Agricultural Information Network has not reported data beyond 2012.

The 2012 Census of Agriculture lists Baker County's total value of agricultural crops sold as \$93.2M. Union County's total value of agricultural crops sold is \$68.3M. The top sales by commodity group are from cattle/calves, hay crops, and grains/oilseeds/bean/peas. Wallowa County's total value of agricultural crops sold is \$46.6M. In all three counties, the top sales by commodity group are from cattle/calves, hay crops, and grains/oilseeds/bean/peas. Additionally, Baker County has sales from specialty crops (vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes). The USDA has not reported data beyond 2012.

Actions to Enhance Resiliency

The regional counties' emergency plans cite in their letters of promulgation a need for post-disaster "recovery: short- and long-term activities that return all systems to normal or improved standards." However, the plans themselves include little information describing how that recovery might take place. The plans also do not address recovery from a significant economic shift, such as this region experienced in the 1980s-'90s with the decline of the forestry industry. NEOEDD is involved in several activities intended to improve regional resilience in responding to climate change, economic fluctuations, and other stresses. These activities include nurturing a local-investing ecosystem and developing a community food system.

Local-Investing Ecosystem Creation



NEOEDD has engaged partners from throughout the region in an initiative to create a local-investing ecosystem designed to increase the resiliency of the region's capital system. Re-localizing a portion of citizens' capital from Wall Street to Main Street will both strengthen local economies and communities, and reduce the effect of negative fluctuations in the stock market on local capital. If 1% of the region's long-term estimated savings were invested in locally owned businesses, this could create access to \$1.1 million of capital. Anyone with retirement savings, bank deposits, insurance annuities, or money market accounts is, already, an investor. By diverting just 1% of current diversifying the region's economy. Citizen-investors could help employ local people, reduce their carbon footprint by not having to travel as far for goods or services, and diversify the region's tax base to improve infrastructure (roads, schools, or water-delivery systems). Developing relationships between citizens with capital and businesses and organizations can also increase social, political, built, cultural and human capital, further increasing the resiliency of the

region. (Left to right: Heather Stafford, Business Oregon; John McDougall, CPO entrepreneur; Kristin Wolff, Hatch Oregon; Lisa Dawson, NEOEDD)

NEOEDD began discussing these issues with economic development groups throughout the region in 2012, and in 2013 formed the Northeast Oregon Community Capital Collaborative (NEOC³) with the following partner organizations:

- Baker County Chamber of Commerce
- Baker County Economic Development Council
- Blue Mountain Community College Small Business Development Center
- City of La Grande and La Grande Urban Renewal Agency
- Northeast Oregon Economic Development District
- Oregon Rural Action
- Rural Development Initiatives
- Slow Food Wallawas
- Springboard Innovation
- Union County Chamber of Commerce
- Union County Economic Development Corporation
- Wallowa County Business Facilitation
- Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce

Led by NEOEDD, the NEOC³ leverages expertise, resources and regional networks to transform the region's economic ecosystem.

Oregon's Department of Consumer and Business Services passed a rule called the "Intrastate Offering Exemption" in January 2015. This rule allows Oregon businesses to publicly raise up to \$250,000 without registering their securities (*including Wallowa County resident, right, with NEOEDD's Sara Miller*). Under the rule, investments must only be advertised to and accepted from Oregon residents, with a maximum of \$2,500 invested per Oregon resident in any one offering. Unlike donation-based crowdfunding, this type of crowdfunding has the potential to generate profit for the investor, in the form of interest on a loan or revenue (dividends, profit sharing, or stock appreciation) on equity shares. Under the moniker "Community Public Offering," or CPO, this rule has raised \$429,299 for Oregon entrepreneurs as of May 25, 2016 (Source: Hatch Oregon). See more about NEOEDD's efforts to build a strong local economy in the "Progress in Implementing the CEDS" section.



Community Food System Development

Northeast Oregon is a rural area with a rich agricultural history. Up until the 1960s (the era of "get big or get out" agriculture policy) the region was self-sufficient in producing, processing and distributing food to its residents, and exporting products nationally. It is now a region of major agricultural commodity production for international export markets, with a dearth of local agricultural infrastructure and supports, and several "food desert" census tracts of low-income, low-food-security communities.

Outreach, networking, and community food assessments have helped residents to share their experiences with the vulnerabilities and challenges of the food system. These include the hugely significant loss of food dollars leaving the region via purchases of foods that have travelled long distances and lost some of their nutrition; and concerns about the loss of knowledge and infrastructure required to grow, prepare, store and process locally raised foods. Citizens have a growing awareness of the vulnerability of a minimal inventory, just-in-time food supply that often comes from other states and countries, as well as concerns about how the current food supply system contributes to foodborne disease and public health.

NEOEDD continues to work collaboratively with partners in the region and across the state, providing development support and capital for food and farm businesses and technical assistance for non-profits working on community food system development. An increasing number of community gardens and local farms provide surplus fresh food to schools, food pantries, summer and senior meal programs and other food access outlets. More restaurants, stores and farmers markets are providing outlets for regionally produced vegetables, fruits and meats. Farms and ranches are increasing their sales of direct-marketed products, which improves their profits and diversifies their revenue streams. From preschool to high school, more students are able to engage in activities to learn about production of food for local consumption, and the economic and health benefits of locally produced and consumed foods.

Community food system development can create resiliency in a number of ways. Purchasing food from local growers can help plug the leakage of capital for non-local food purchases. If residents of the smallest county in the district (Wallowa County) increased local food purchasing to 15%,

\$1.6M dollars could be generated for the local economy. With locally distributed and consumed food, food safety concerns are more easily traceable. The direct connection with customers can help raise the level of trust and build social capital. Small-scale farms often produce a variety of crops, contributing to biodiversity which helps support the long-term sustainability of ecosystems by building resilience and reducing susceptibility to disease or natural disasters. The freshness of local foods provides greater nutritional benefits that can contribute to the health and productivity of the populace.

During the past year NEOEDD staff continued to serve in a pivotal role with the newly formed Oregon Community Food System Network, a cohort of 38 (and growing) food-system partner organizations across Oregon. The network has an initial focus on the statewide priorities of Access to Land, Wholesale Success, Veggie RX and SNAP-Match (food stamps). An interim leadership team and 4 project teams have worked to generate and coordinate strategic actions, shared messaging, and evaluation measures, and to procure additional funding and provide network governance and communication. District staff are serving on the Interim Leadership and Access to Land teams, and assisting with the hiring of a RARE Americorps coordinator.



NEOEDD coordinated partner organizations and supported the implementation of the strategic plan of the Wallowa County Food System Council with the assistance of a RARE AmeriCorps participant. Work areas included strategic planning for farmers markets and community garden organizations; farm-to-school expansion; cooking, gardening, nutrition, food storage and preservation education; development of a growers network to jointly sell produce to wholesale buyers; development of a matching funds program for SNAP (formerly food stamps) fresh-produce purchases at the farmers markets; addendum to update the 2012 Wallowa County Community Food System Assessment; and fundraising (including this lemonade stand at the Wallowa County Farmers' Market, left) to support these initiatives. The council met in November to review progress made and consider next steps.

NEOEDD partnered with Washington State University Extension and Oregon State University Extension to host a satellite site of the 2016 Women in Agriculture conference (photo, right). This site hosted 18 ranchers and mixed-vegetable and commodity farmers for networking and marketing training for value-added and local markets. Three food-related businesses participated in the most recent offering of the Business Foundations planning classes. Four businesses in NE Oregon are utilizing CASA of Oregon's Individual Development Account matched-savings program to start or expand their food/farm-related businesses. NEOEDD has also provided support for a Wallowa County-based quinoa project, which is currently developing a business plan.



Changes in Goals/Objectives/Action Plans/Priorities/Projects

While there have not been any major changes to its goals, objectives or action plan since 2013 (see pages 8-16), NEOEDD conducted a call for projects this spring. The board may set NEOEDD's priorities at any time, and projects may be submitted or updated at any time. We are now using the Agora platform for project information. This online site replaces the list of projects included in the original 2013-2018 CEDS.

NEOEDD entered into a pilot agreement with the Mid-Columbia EDD to use an online platform for CEDS projects, called Agora. Agora connects local communities and funding sources (public, private, and philanthropic) by offering one location for civic groups and funding sources to come together around common interests. NEOEDD staff hope that Agora will enable civic leaders to build a strong funding case for their projects. Community leaders, including city and county staff, elected officials, and nonprofit directors, are encouraged to create a profile and register projects for which they seek funding. NEOEDD staff will then review each project proposal and provide free consultation about ways to make each proposal stronger and more compelling to potential funders. Once logged in, users can create networks of other community leaders and organizations and view their projects. And users can, of course, upload their own projects, called "deals." Private capital providers, such as state and federal agencies, community foundations, and banks, and philanthropic sector individuals and organizations are also encouraged to register so they can view projects and consider them for funding.

CEDS Goals and Objectives and Action Plan						
Long-Term Goals	Businesses realize higher net incomes, create new, higher-wage jobs, increase product exports; consumers spend and invest more within the region; non-profits and local governments meet needs and enhance quality of life of citizens					
Intermediate Objectives	Businesses are successful & adequately finance, individuals invest and spend more money locally	More locally produced food eaten in the region, increased exports of value-added food	More tourists spend more money in the region	Infrastructure meets local need, non-profits accomplish missions	Properties returned to productive or public-benefit use	Citizens informed and engaged, downtowns are vibrant
Short-term Objectives	Businesses and investors increase knowledge, businesses network with each other, Local Loyalty Point program launched	Increased knowledge & skills of food producers, connections made between producers	Business connections strengthened, projects completed	Projects developed & funded, citizens trained, social enterprises established	Assessments completed, clean-up projects funded	Economic development project information disseminated, CEDS updated, staff knowledge increases
Activities	Local investing ecosystem, IDAs and loans for businesses, networking opportunities, counseling & referrals for entrepreneurs	Training for food producers and organizations, connecting producers, helping implement strategic plans	Bicycle and agritourism projects, Rail-with-Trail support, information for tourism partners	Project development & funding assistance, organizational development training, IDAs for education, community fund development	EPA funding for environmental assessments, improving staff knowledge, coordinating projects with partners	Disseminating information, supporting leadership development, engaging partners, encouraging youth
Partners	Chambers of commerce, Hatch, NOBD, BMCC SBDC, Baker EDC, UCEDC, ORA, banks, VIDA, businesses, USDA, utilities, RDI	ORA, Wallowa Co. Food Council, OSU, Meyer Memorial Trust, ODA, TFFF, producers	Travel Oregon, EOVA, Chambers of commerce, STI, WURA, OPRD, ODOT, businesses	Cities, counties, non-profits, RDI, VIDA, TFFF, foundations, Regional Solutions, OCF, Wallowa Fund	EPA, cities, counties, landowners, DEQ, OPH, OBD	TFFF, cities, counties, non-profits, RDI, Main Street, OSU
Focus Areas	Entrepreneurial Development	Food System Development	Tourism Development	Non-Profit & Government Support	Brownfields Redevelopment	Collaborative Planning, Leadership, Partnership

Progress in Implementing the CEDS

NEOEDD made significant progress in implementing the CEDS Action Plan. The action plan is a five-year plan, however much was accomplished this year. A summary of NEOEDD's goals, and the activities undertaken to reach them in the past year, is listed below.

Goal 1 – Entrepreneurial Development

Provide access to capital, technical assistance and training for businesses to start, grow and thrive.

- A. NEOEDD serves in a leadership role and promotes the community-capital initiative via the Northeast Oregon Community Capital Collaborative (NEOC³), the mission of which continues to be to leverage expertise, resources and regional networks to transform the region's economic ecosystem. NEOC³ partners met in May 2015 to plan activities, review progress and update the strategic plan for 2015-2017 activities; they have not met since then but have communicated via email and telephone. The committees established in 2013 to help support this effort have been retired, and the Local Impact Investing Opportunity Networks (LIIONs) that were launched in each county are dormant. The Local Loyalty Point program may still occur; however, delays with the program vendor have kept it "on hold."

Hatch Oregon and Community Public Offerings

The majority of NEOC³ effort has been focused on educating the public and preparing local entrepreneurs for capital-raising. NEOEDD continues to work with the nonprofit Springboard Innovation (now Hatch Oregon) to provide technical assistance for NEOC³. Amy Pearl, Hatch's founder and executive director, was instrumental in persuading Oregon's government to authorize in January 2015 an Intrastate Offering Exemption, known as the "Community Public Offering" (CPO), which allows Oregon entrepreneurs to make public securities offerings to Oregonian investors on a limited basis. Oregon businesses may publicly seek debt or equity investments of up to \$250,000 without registering their securities. Unaccredited Oregonian investors may invest up to \$2,500 per deal. Hatch Oregon received a USDA Rural Development to provide a detailed training series in early 2016 for businesses in Baker and Wallowa counties interested in completing a CPO. A training session for Union County is planned for Summer/Fall 2016.

Hatch Oregon has taken the lead in gathering Oregon entrepreneurs who are interested in trying out this new rule. Hatch staff and CPO entrepreneurs have traveled the state in small groups to spread the word and try to attract investors. Hatch held its second conference (ComCap:Oregon) in April 2016, and offered, in conjunction with The Ford Family Foundation, travel stipends and comped admission fees to those attending from the far reaches of the state. Joseph energy-bar maker, Judy Goodman, launched a CPO for her business, BGood Bars, in time to solicit investors at ComCap, and signed up her first investor there. Six weeks later, Judy had raised \$3,100 of a minimum raise of \$12,000 and a goal of \$70,000. Four business owners completed the CPO training but have not launched a CPO campaign. NEOEDD staff have discussed the prospect of launching or supporting a CPO with numerous local business-owners, entrepreneurs, and potential investors.

Recent Public Events

NEOEDD continued to explain to interested Oregonians how they can support their communities in a manner that is not charitable giving, but an investment with a potential for monetary returns via NEOC³-sponsored public events and state and national conferences such as Oregon Business Plan Summit (*photo, right*) and National Association of Development Organizations. A total of 300 potential investors or businesses were served through these activities. Since July 2015, NEOC³ has hosted the following workshops and events:

October

Local entrepreneurs were encouraged to attend Hatch Oregon's "Intro to the CPO" webinar prior to the 6-week CPO preparation workshop series. NEOC³ offered evening presentations featuring an introduction to the CPO by Amy Pearl and Ruth Miles (Office of Secretary of State), and presentations by CPO-launcher John MacDougall of MacDougall & Sons Batmakers and Baker City-based John Childers of Baker Saddle Company (whose offering was posted and then later removed from consideration).

December

Local entrepreneurs were encouraged to attend Hatch Oregon's "Intro to the CPO" webinar prior to attend the 6-week CPO preparation workshop series.

January/February/March

NEOC³ supported and hosted Hatch Oregon's InvestOR Ready Accelerator program Baker and Wallowa counties. Five business owners or potential owners participated.

April

Three NEOEDD staff attended ComCap:16. Lisa presented on a panel "Working with Economic Development Business Networks," and Sara moderated a panel called "Leverage: The Other Half of US," which discussed the urban/rural exchange and gap. In attendance were former NEOC³ program guests Michael Shuman (*Local Dollars, Local Sense*) and Amy Cortese (*Locavesting*).

May

NEOC³ offered evening presentations in Joseph and Baker City featuring an introduction to the CPO by Lisa and Sara, and an offering presentation by CPO-launcher Judy Goodman of BGood Bars.



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- B. NEOEDD provides access to Individual Development Accounts for people saving for business or education goals. NEOEDD was awarded \$85,000 of matching funds, an increase of \$10,000 from the previous year, which will allow another 7 to 15 savers to participate in the program. NEOEDD supported 30 savers in 2015 with an 86% graduation rate. NEOEDD has been designated one of the pilot areas for a new vehicle purchase asset category. NEOEDD recruited IDA graduates to contact the state legislature to support continued funding of the program, which was successful.
- C. NEOEDD provided business assistance services through business planning, local investing and training workshops. More than 350 individuals were provided services through business planning, local investing, and training workshops held in all three counties. In addition to local-investing training, NEOEDD helped Pacific Power host a session about electricity-saving programs and incentives for agriculture businesses (11 businesses); delivered an updated business-planning curriculum (31 graduates); partnered with MPzero Studios to offer social media and build-your-own-website classes (27 participants).
- D. NEOEDD maintained a strong loan portfolio and operations. During the past year, 1 new loan was closed and 51 businesses served via the loan portfolio.

Goal 2 – Food System Development

Increase economic activity related to production, processing, marketing and consumption of locally produced foods by fostering business development and working collaboratively with local government and non-profits.

- A. NEOEDD participated in the Leadership, and Access to Land teams for the Oregon Community Food System Network, including attendance at the Access to Land team meeting in Corvallis to review research results from Portland State University and Oregon State University staff on transition of agricultural land ownership. NEOEDD worked with Oregon Food Bank and other food system partners to plan an Eastern Oregon Community Food Systems Gathering held on May 18 in La Grande. Sixty people attended this event, representing food access, education, research and production interests. NEOEDD helped introduce the Oregon Community Food System Network and presented information on food system indicator data available at the county level. Attendees provided information on activities they are involved in, plans for future projects, and ways to move forward on priority areas of interest.
- B. NEOEDD provided training and resources for food businesses. As noted above, NEOEDD partnered with Washington State University Extension and OSU Extension to host a satellite site for the day-long 2016 Women in Agriculture Conference. The La Grande site had 18 participants, including ranchers, mixed-vegetable, and commodity farmers, who gathered to network and participate in marketing training. Three food-related businesses participated in the most recent offering of the Business Foundations planning classes. Four food businesses accessed Individual Development Account matched savings to start or expand their food/farm businesses. NEOEDD also provided business-

development support for a quinoa production and value-added project partnership, and input and referrals for the development of a commercial kitchen facility in Wallowa County.

- C. NEOEDD conducted outreach and shared-funding resources, research reports and other food-system resources to the public via social media and the organization’s website.

Goal 3 – Tourism Development

Access resources and provide technical assistance to leverage tourism assets for economic development

- A. NEOEDD supported the development of bicycle-tourism projects. Staff promoted participation in the Oregon Department of Transportation public-input process for planning of cycling-related developments in the Joseph/Wallowa Lake area. Staff participated in meetings with tourism partners regarding upgrades to the Wallowa Mountain Loop Road (Hells Canyon Scenic Byway) and the need for timely information regarding closures, improvements etc.
- B. NEOEDD continued to work with Eastern Oregon Visitors Association and Travel Oregon; they hired a contract coordinator to collect information for a regional agritourism “inventory,” and to conduct outreach and site visit activities with farm owners and others interested in agritourism. Staff helped represent eastern Oregon agritourism at the Governor’s Conference on Tourism held in Pendleton in April. NEOEDD also planned and assisted with training during two days in May of business-development workshops delivered by Travel Oregon staff and additional contract instructors in La Grande. These workshops will be delivered in nearby Hermiston and Boardman in June. NEOEDD provided technical assistance to entrepreneurs starting agritourism businesses, including zoning and food safety regulatory information, marketing resources, business planning tools, and sharing of product information for new points-of-sale. Business and tourism partners developed a regional rack card for shared promotion of local food/agritourism outlets.
- C. The concept plan for the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail project was approved at WURA’s February board meeting. NEOEDD assisted with activities to move forward with planning for a “pilot project” for a trail segment from Joseph to Enterprise. Work has included research of the need for transportation and land-use plan amendments in Joseph, Enterprise and Wallowa County, and planning for fundraising, adjacent landowner outreach and other public information processes. NEOEDD helped host an invitational meeting for adjacent landowners in Joseph in May, to discuss development of a pilot trail segment between Joseph and Enterprise.

- D. NEOEDD assisted Travel Oregon to convene and subsequently participated in county-level tourism organizing and planning activities in Wallowa County. Staff also provided referrals and outreach for Travel Oregon and Eastern Oregon Visitor Association promotional opportunities available to tourism businesses.

Goal 4 – Non-Profit and Local Government Support

Access resources and provide technical assistance and contracted services to plan, fund and implement projects and develop capacity

- A. NEOEDD provided assistance with project development, funding plans, funding applications and grant administration for infrastructure and community-development projects. Staff:
- Contracted grant-administration work for the Community Development Block Grant-funded (CDBG) water/wastewater projects in Enterprise, Halfway and Richland. This included managing the mandatory display of a Fair Housing exhibit in various locations in the region.
 - Contracted services for organizational-development services to Grande Ronde Symphony Association, Creating Memories, Eastern Oregon Mediation Center and Soroptomist International of Wallowa County.
- B. NEOEDD provided 9 Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) to individuals saving for post-secondary education.

Goal 5 – Brownfields Redevelopment

Access resources and provide technical assistance to remove barriers to reuse of potentially contaminated industrial and commercial lands

- A. One petroleum-only brownfield assessment project was completed in La Grande. Another petroleum-only project was rejected because the property owners are responsible for any potential contamination. NEOEDD worked with Baker County, Baker Technical Institute teacher Megan Alameda, and state and local partners to create a plan for clean-up and redevelopment of the Lime Cement Plant site. Stained soils were identified and marked by a consultant and BTI students on June 3. The wooden structures will be demolished this summer by a team of county employees and an environmental contractor, with funding from Business Oregon.
- B. The EPA contract was amended and extended to December 31, 2016, to allow some of the assessment funds to be used to conduct additional work on the Rail-with-Trail feasibility study for the Wallowa Union Railroad. Staff completed the procurement and contracting process for this activity. Sufficient “petroleum-only” funds remain to complete one additional assessment project.

Goal 6 – Collaborative Planning, Partnerships, Leadership

Participate in region-wide collaboration, facilitation and cooperation to plan and implement community growth and sustainability

- A. NEOEDD engaged community partners, private-sector representatives, local government, and non-profit representatives in discussions about regional opportunities, projects and priorities. Press releases and e-newsletters were used to solicit input on projects for the district CEDS update. Staff participated in the Governor’s Regional Solutions Advisory Team meetings to discuss projects, priorities and opportunities.
- B. NEOEDD presents information about community/economic resources, activities and lessons learned to public/private groups daily through social media (Facebook and Twitter), and via a monthly e-newsletter with approximately 900 subscribers.
- C. NEOEDD staff participate in the Oregon Economic Development Districts and National Association of Development Organizations meetings and information-sharing opportunities to enhance their knowledge of potential funding sources and to communicate how existing funding sources benefit regional projects. NEOEDD’s executive director, Lisa Dawson, is currently serving as chair of the Oregon Economic Development Districts.
- E. NEOEDD organized a meeting with providers of entrepreneur-development services in Union County. These individuals and organizations agreed to continue meeting together to improve services to entrepreneurs. The next step to improving service delivery will be the creation of the Entrepreneurial Center at the Firehouse. This project is being developed by the City of La Grande in conjunction with La Grande Main Street, Business Oregon and NEOEDD.