

# NORTHEAST OREGON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (NEOEDD)

BAKER, UNION, AND WALLOWA COUNTIES, OREGON

## PROJECT PARTNERS

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### INITIAL PARTNERS

Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce, Oregon Main Street program, Eastern Oregon  
Visitors Association

**+25 NEW PARTNERS**



# NORTHEAST OREGON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

From 2021-2023, Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD) formed a streamlined, county-wide organization called Regional Main Street that focused on convening local entrepreneurs and small businesses in Wallowa, Enterprise, and Joseph, OR. Regional Main Street evaluated current successes and needs in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, and is working to increase the overall awareness of resources.



## BY THE NUMBERS

**115** Entrepreneurs Served Overall



**25** New Partners Added

**6**

Businesses and Nonprofits Accessed Building Improvement Funding Through Main Street Revitalization Grants

**“The creation of the Regional Main Street has been entirely driven by individuals in the communities who want to see more development and/or improvement within their downtown corridors in cooperation with elected officials and city staff. They lead the planning and engagement with other community members.”**



## SUCCESS STORY

The community of Wallowa needs revitalization and investment and has the opportunity to accommodate new businesses. From 2021-2023, were many proposals requesting funding through the Main Street Revitalization Grant program. The Wallowa Main Street committee reviewed the proposals and came up with five projects to bundle together for inclusion in the community’s grant application. They wanted as many parts of the community to benefit from the program as possible, rather than making a large investment in one property. The

proposal was awarded funding. As a result, there will be noticeable exterior building investments made as well as some “behind the scenes” investments. One of the “behind the scenes” investments will improve the HVAC system for a building that is being improved as a community space. Improvements to the former Shell mercantile building and electrical system will help to make reasonably-priced commercial spaces available for new businesses and help to turn an eye-sore into a building that will once again instill pride in the community.



GOAL #1

UNDERSTAND WALLOWA COUNTY'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM (EE), ENTREPRENEUR DESIRES FOR EE AND FOOD SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND PROVIDE RESPONSIVE ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT/SERVICES

- ▶ NEOEDD conducted focus groups, an online survey, and one-on-one interviews to gather entrepreneur perspectives in order to identify current needs in the region, which include: better communication and awareness of development services that are available, and space for entrepreneurial activity (coworking, affordable manufacturing, etc).
- ▶ In response to identified needs, NEOEDD is setting up a database management system to help with entrepreneur outreach and tracking.
- ▶ One food/farm business used TA with a USDA Value-Added Producer Grant application, and received \$250,000 to expand their bison ranch direct-marketing offerings.

GOAL #3

CONTRIBUTE TO A HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE CITY OF ENTERPRISE (& OTHER WORKFORCE HOUSING ACTIVITIES)

- ▶ Housing Survey showed that 74% of entrepreneurs and small business owners are interested in home-ownership options, while 26% are interested in rental opportunities; and workforce housing options are needed in all communities in Wallowa County.
- ▶ During the Enterprise Housing Needs analysis process, a new non-profit was formed to implement strategies to take advantage of opportunities emerging from the analysis, Working Homes, LLC.
- ▶ Over \$400k public and private funding secured thus far to support Working Homes, LLC for planning, conceptual design, due diligence, site evaluation, property acquisition, and development for new projects in Enterprise, Joseph, and Wallowa.
- ▶ Updates and engagement opportunities were shared via the website, NEOEDD newsletters, print and online media, direct mailers, and community meetings with over 100 in-person participants.

GOAL #2

DECIDE IF FORMING REGIONAL MAIN STREET ORGANIZATION IS THE BEST WAY TO SUPPORT MAIN STREET BUSINESSES

- ▶ Many meetings (which included walking tours and business visits) were held with Main Street business owners, community leaders, concerned citizens, local government, Oregon Main Street representatives, and partners to discuss the potential of forming a Regional Main Street program for Wallowa County.
- ▶ NEOEDD applied and was accepted by Oregon Main Street as the convener for the second regional main street program.
- ▶ Wallowa, Enterprise, and Joseph each formed Main Street committees and applied to participate in the Regional Main Street program. Enterprise and Wallowa were awarded grants from the Main Street Revitalization Grant program, and the City of Wallowa was awarded a Community Development Block grant.
- ▶ Joseph and Wallowa held cleanup events—"Wallowa Spring Cleaning" and "Joseph Flower Box Cleanup"—with student participation. Joseph and Enterprise completed the first part of their strategic plan to gather community input through surveys.

LOOKING FORWARD



- Plan to issue a periodic newsletter by Regional Main Street
- Increase the overall awareness of services and resources available by improving marketing, revamping the website, mapping existing resources, engaging NEOEDD's board, and improving tracking, evaluation, and communication processes.

For more information about NEOEDD, visit:  
[www.neoedd.org](http://www.neoedd.org)



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