

INFORMAL SESSION MINUTES

March 22, 2016

2:00 p.m.

Commissioners' Office Conference Room

PRESENT: Commissioners Mary Starrett and Allen Springer; Commissioner Stan Primozich being excused.

Staff: Laura Tschabold, Todd Sadlo, Desiree Lundeen, Jayne Mercer, Silas Halloran-Steiner and Emily Piper.

Guests: Nicole Montesano, News-Register; and Chad Freeman and AJ Foscoli, SEDCOR.

* indicates item forwarded to formal agenda

Commissioner Starrett called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

* Personnel - see agenda for details.

* Contracts - see agenda for details.

SEDCOR update - Chad Freeman and AJ Foscoli provided an activity report stating that they continue to see a steady growth in companies that they've been working closely with and described their marketing and workforce development efforts. AJ reviewed and discussed the strategic investment summary (see Exhibit A).

HHS update - Silas Halloran-Steiner discussed the need for medical providers in Adult Behavioral Health and Public Health.

Emily Piper provided a brief summary of the Supported Employment program through Abacus. She stated that overall, employment numbers are up. She expressed the effectiveness of the program and follow up after job placements to help client's maintain employment.

Following commissioner updates, the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Lucy Flores Mendez
Secretary

Mar. 22, 2016

Commissioners
Yamhill County
434 NE Evans St.
McMinnville, OR 97128

RE: SEDCOR 1st Quarter 2016 Activity Report

Executive Summary:

In the past quarter, Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR) has been continuing its work in supporting manufacturing in Yamhill County to impact economic development. In business retention and expansion efforts, we have met with several manufacturing companies to discuss various concerns, ranging from workforce recruitment and training issues, to land inventory shortage, to expansion support, as well as infrastructure issues. One of the most specific efforts has been in the community of Yamhill, where SEDCOR is continuing to work with local businesses and government to systematically analyze the strengths and weaknesses in order to develop long-term economic strategies. Through this process, we have enhanced the effectiveness of the partnership between SEDCOR and several local entities.

Unlike the previous quarter, there have been some sizable layoffs in the county and it has been challenge for SEDCOR and other entities to respond to these developments. Though the layoffs were due to corporate decisions that had little to do with the local thriving business reality, it did impact the community. As the previous county-wide job fair helped to either connect, or strengthen connections with local workforce agencies, as well as educational institutions to help fill new jobs, the participating organizations have started efforts for the next one. The partnership of community colleges, chambers of commerce, SEDCOR and workforce agencies, are following a successful template for recurring job fairs to give local companies an additional resource that can address region-wide workforce development issues, and which can be implemented very rapidly, as the need may arise.

SEDCOR, in conjunction with several other economic development organizations around the state, helped 6 companies from Oregon, which included one from Yamhill County, feature in the Team Oregon Food Processing group booth at Natural Products Expo West. This premier trade show event for food processing companies with products that focus on health conscious consumers, was very successful for the Oregon companies in attendance. All of the attendees were able to promote their products to national and international distributors, brokers and retailers and thanks to the show were able to significantly increase their overall sales outlook. The company from Yamhill County in particular, was able to open direct avenues to both the Chinese e-commerce market and the Japanese retail market, through the efforts of AJ Foscoli and the other team members in organizing networking opportunities between our Oregon companies and international distributors, brokers and retailers.

Strategic Initiatives:

- 1) **Introduce SEDCOR** – To assist the region’s players with their challenges and obstacles, SEDCOR has been in contact with several local manufacturing companies from several different clusters, including food processors, high tech manufacturers, heating systems manufacturers, metals manufacturers and clothing manufacturers. This has brought the total number of manufacturers that we have contacted to date at over 60 companies in Yamhill County. Through these interactions, SEDCOR has helped connect these companies with various resources to achieve their short, medium and long term goals.
- 2) **Innovate Yamhill County**– In addition to directly helping businesses with their hiring needs, SEDCOR has been active in partnering with local and statewide organizations and businesses in helping to develop industry-specific curriculums for schools, as well as helping them connect to funding sources for their ongoing CTE revitalization efforts. This effort has led to the creation of a county-wide initiative to support school districts in connecting to businesses by adopting industry practices, including agile learning methodology and collaborative make-a-thons. The January event at Chemeketa Community College Yamhill campus brought together more than 60 people, from school teachers and administrators, to local industry representatives and students between the ages of 10-18. The event was a resounding success thanks to the collaborative effort of a very diverse group of people in the community working toward long-term economic development, and has become a template to bring inclusive efforts of career technical education to all parts of the county, including the West Valley, where the next event will be held.
- 3) **Marketing Local Companies** – SEDCOR, as part of the Team Oregon Food Processing group has the ability to take part in trade shows of international renown, and help promote Oregon companies. The Team Oregon Food Processing booth allows companies that otherwise would not be able to attend these shows due to financial constraints, presence at premier events where they can meet national and international distributors, brokers and retailers. All of the participating companies expressed gratitude at being included in the Team Oregon Food Processing group efforts to help promote what Oregon has to offer. The various connections and sales that they made during the show and at our reception efforts were invaluable in helping the companies expand their client base and achieve their strategic goals.
- 4) **Workforce Development Efforts** – SEDCOR has been supporting local companies in their hiring efforts by organizing county-wide job fairs in partnership with the McMinnville Economic Development Partnership, Worksource Oregon, Chemeketa Community College, the Chehalem Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the McMinnville Chamber of Commerce. This event typically includes between 20-25 local companies and organizations and is usually attended by over 200 jobseekers. All of the past participants of the event have said that it helped them identify qualified applicants for their open positions, and have pledged to continue to participate in the event as it has proven to be a reliable avenue for local talent acquisition.

- 5) **Business Retention & Expansion Program** – In addition to directly talking with local companies, SEDCOR has engaged the local communities' governments to enact a systematic approach to identify their strengths and weaknesses through a business retention and expansion survey program. This comprehensive approach encompasses all aspects of a community in order to analyze it from the inside out, to highlight needs and opportunities that local efforts can be focused on. This approach has the added benefit of helping to educate all members of a community by engaging them in the process, thus enhancing their cooperation in implementing successful strategies.

Though some of the recent layoffs have had a slightly negative effect in people's confidence of the health of the local economy, most of the companies involved made their decisions not based on the region's economic outlook but based on national and global trends of the industries involved. Most economic indicators point to an improving outlook for business which has seen interest rates rise in response to an expanding economy. Even with statewide effects such as the impending increase in the minimum wage and the introduction of new tax legislation, many local companies are growing their full time employee base to keep production up with demand. This trend has reinforced the need for continued efforts in workforce training and strengthening partnerships between educational institutions, industry partners and economic development organizations. The countywide push to re-visit the educational approach to better serve the thriving business community is already paying dividends in the strengthening of the community through collaborative efforts. We are encouraged by the current efforts and look forward to continuing to play a key role in supporting all initiatives to improve the local economy.

Thank you, once again, for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Chad Freeman, President
SEDCOR