

MEETING: **LANE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE**

DATE: May 8, 2023
(LEC meetings are held on the **2nd Monday** of each month)

TIME: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

LINK: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87589582676?pwd=WHlkL2lsMHY1TkxYQ1ZJaFR4ZHpGUT09>

CALL: +1 253 215 8782 US
Meeting ID: 875 8958 2676 Passcode: 265918

CONTACT:

| | | |
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| Denise Walters dwalters@lcog.org 541-682-4341 | Paula Taylor ptaylor@lcog.org 541-682-4468 | Sandra Easdale seasdale@lcog.org 541-682-3359 |
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All individuals are expected to observe respectful behavior and decorum during this public meeting. Anyone acting in a disruptive, disorderly or threatening manner will be asked to leave, and may be precluded from participating in future opportunities for public comment. Please be courteous and respectful.

1. Welcome / Introductions / Changes to the Agenda 11:30
Presenter: Greg Ervin
2. Public Comment 11:35
Presenter: Greg Ervin
3. Comments from Members, Chair, and Staff 11:40
Presenter: Greg Ervin
4. Review Minutes from April 10, 2023 (*action*) 11:50
Presenter: Greg Ervin
Action item: Approve minutes.
5. Launch Oregon 11:55
Presenter: Dr. Anshuman “AR” Razdan, UO Vice President for Research and Innovation
CEDS Priorities: 1-Regional Collaboration & Partnerships, 2-Sector Diversification Through Business Development, 5- Rural Vitality
6. Next Meeting Dates:
 - June 12, 2023
 - July 10, 2023
 - August 14, 2023

May 8, 2023

Lane Economic Committee (LEC)

Agenda Item Summaries

ITEM 5: Launch Oregon

Presenter(s): Dr. Anshuman “AR” Razdan, VP for research and innovation for the University of Oregon.

CEDS Priorities: 1-Regional Collaboration & Partnerships, 2-Sector Diversification Through Business Development, 5-Rural Vitality

Dr. Anshuman “AR” Razdan, works for the University of Oregon (UO) and oversees the support for research centers and core facilities, while providing strategic investment, leadership, and vision for the university’s entire research enterprise through the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation. He is committed to enhancing research excellence and strengthening the role of research, scholarship, and creative activity across the University.

Launch Oregon will create the opportunity to work with UO innovators in various programs and colleges at the university, receive guidance from the Industry, Innovation, and Translation (IIT) unit on best practices, and receive mentorship from industry experts through IIT’s Translational Opportunity Program (TOP). While assisting UO startups with establishing a board of directors and hiring executive leadership, Launch Oregon will also provide initial research infrastructure and seed funding.

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee
Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), Fifth Floor Conference Room
859 Willamette Street -- Eugene (Remote meeting via Zoom)

April 10, 2023
11:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Ervin, Chair (City of Cottage Grove/Government); Anne Fifield, Vice Chair (City of Cottage Grove/Government); Allie Camp (City of Springfield/Government); Cindy Perry (Business/Labor); Cole Haselip (City of Veneta Alternate/ Government); Faye Stewart (Economic Development/Government); Jake Clifton (Business); Jude Anderson (Lane County/Government); Mark Bodie (Business/Finance); Mike Eyster (LCC/Government); Paul Berger (Business); Vanessa Ringgold (Education).

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeremy Caudle (City of Lowell/Government); Kari Westlund (Travel Lane County); Chantelle Meyer (Economic Development/Government); Matt Michel (City of Veneta/Government).

STAFF: Sandra Easdale; Paula Taylor; Denise Walters; Diana Pamir Tisdale.

GUESTS: Justin Peterson (Oregon Cascades West); Anne Whittington (Oregon Cascades West); Jenna Cusimano (Lane County/Government); Brian Rooney (Regional Economist); Clifton Harrold (Lane County Sheriff); Thomas Spieldrich (Lane County Sergeant); Carl Wilkerson (Lane County Chief Deputy); Devon Ashbridge (Lane County Public Information Officer).

1. Welcome/Introductions/Changes to the Agenda

Chair Ervin called the Lane Economic Committee (LEC) meeting to order at 11:30 AM, and introductions were made.

The start time for agenda item number six was changed from 12:55 PM to 12:25 PM.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Comments from the Members, Chair, & Staff

No comments were made.

4. Review Minutes from March 13, 2023

MOTION: Mr. Eyster moved, seconded by Anne Fifield to approve the March 13, 2023, LEC meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Economic Trends and Forecasts

Presenter: Brian Rooney, Regional Economist

Mr. Rooney began by saying that Lane County had not yet reached pre-COVID employment levels. The COVID pandemic recession hit hard and fast, and Lane County lost 26,100 jobs, which equals 16 percent, during the spring of 2020. The county gained back 20,800, or 80 percent of those jobs by February 2023.

Statewide, Oregon experienced a 14 percent job loss in 2020 with 106 percent of those jobs gained back by February 2023. He added that the recession recovery occurred at a fast rate initially, but that trend recently slowed down.

The number of employees among many industries throughout Lane County had grown since February 2022. Of those industries, leisure and hospitality, manufacturing, banking, and government experienced the biggest increase. Employee numbers in retail trade, information, professional and business services, private and public education, and health services were still down in February 2023, totaling roughly 5,300 lost jobs throughout Lane County when compared to numbers in February 2022.

In the state of Oregon, 22 counties had more jobs in February 2023 than they had before the COVID pandemic. Four counties, including Lane County, were approaching 90 to 100 percent recession recovery, while the remaining nine counties had only 89 percent of jobs gained back. Employment in many rural counties was not badly affected by COVID because they had lower COVID cases and less COVID restrictions. Mr. Rooney noted that the percentage of employment was relatively high throughout Lane County in February 2023, but lagging numbers in both the education and health care industries was the reason numbers were below 100 percent.

In 2023, employee pay in Oregon increased among the following industries:

- Professional and Business Services
- Construction
- Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities
- Wholesale Trade
- State and Local Government
- Information
- Banking
- Retail Trade

In 2023, employee pay in Oregon decreased among the following industries:

- Mining and Logging
- Federal Government
- Private Education
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Leisure and Hospitality

Employee pay stayed the same in the manufacturing industry from February 2020 to February 2023 throughout the State of Oregon.

Unemployment rates throughout the State of Oregon and Lane County have increased since the summer of 2022. Unemployment numbers throughout the United States (U.S.) have been comparable to the numbers in Oregon and Lane County since 2008. However, in recent months, unemployment in the U.S. decreased, while numbers throughout Oregon and Lane County increased. Mr. Rooney noted that an increase in self-employed people occurred during the COVID pandemic and speculated that many of those people could be currently unemployed because they are trying to re-enter the labor force. He added that the 2023 unemployment rate in Lane County was at 5 percent, up from roughly 4 percent in February 2022, and down from 14 percent in April 2020. Statewide, the unemployment rate was roughly 4½ percent in February 2023, while the U.S. unemployment rate was roughly 3½ percent. He added that

though unemployment rates rose throughout Oregon and Lane County in recent months, the rates were still relatively low.

Data collected in February 2023 indicated that unemployment rates increased in 13 Oregon counties, stayed the same in 17 counties, and decreased in 6 counties. Klamath County had the largest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate at roughly 6½ percent, and Wheeler County had the lowest rate at roughly 3 percent. However, the number of job vacancies among private sector employers in Lane County was decreasing. Mr. Rooney added that retirement also played a part in decreased labor force participation within Oregon.

In the City of Eugene, the number of people who could afford to purchase a house with 5 percent down payment, and total housing costs not exceeding 30 percent of their income decreased from 36 percent to 20 percent between January 2022 and January 2023. During that time, the cost to buy a house had significantly increased, and although wages and income rose slightly, it was not enough to keep up with the housing market in the City of Eugene. Because of this, rental property inflation accelerated between 2021 and 2023.

Mr. Rooney stated that it took roughly 1,400 new housing units to keep up with population growth in Lane County, and that residential construction in Lane County had increased since 2021. He added that roughly 1,600 new building permits were issued in Lane County for residential construction in 2023. Most permits were for multi-family and student housing.

According to the most recent quarterly revenue forecast from the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, the odds of a soft-landing recession had increased due to a decrease in inflation. According to the long-term forecast, Lane County jobs were projected to increase by 12 percent by 2031, and 15 percent statewide. Mr. Rooney noted that a new Amazon Distribution Warehouse would be coming to Woodburn, Oregon, and that may be the reason why statewide percentages were greater than those in Lane County.

In closing, Mr. Rooney stated that much of the data from his presentation came from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and stressed the importance of participating in those surveys if the opportunity to do so arose.

Mr. Bodie asked Mr. Rooney where replacement employees would come from.

Mr. Rooney replied that improvements in the childcare industry could enable more workers to join the workforce. He added that job openings could also be filled by people migrating to Oregon from other locations, and people enrolled in second chance programs upon release of incarceration.

Mr. Eyster asked if Mr. Rooney had any speculation on the May 2023 revenue forecast for Oregon.

Mr. Rooney replied that the forecast comes out quarterly, and the March 2023 forecast showed increased revenue in the first quarter. He added that the revenue forecast was available to view online.

Ms. Fifield asked if remote employees working for employers in different counties would be included in the statistics for their residing county or the county of their employer's location.

Mr. Rooney said remote workers would be included in unemployment statistics for their residing county, and the employment statistics of their employer's county.

Ms. Fifield said that low average wages had been an ongoing problem in Lane County and asked for advice on how to change that trajectory.

Mr. Rooney noted that all economies have several low paying service jobs. He speculated that improvement could stem from technical entrepreneurial activities coming out of the University of Oregon and the Oregon State University.

There were no other comments or questions.

6. Public Safety Infrastructure

Presenter: Lane County Sheriff, Clifton Harrold

CEDS Priorities: 3-Infrastructure Resilience, 4-Workforce Support, 5- Rural Vitality

Mr. Clifton began by saying that he was proud of what the Lane County Sheriff's Office accomplished despite resource deficiencies. The Lane County government used to be funded by federal timber receipts, but resources had been curtailed for numerous years by logging restrictions put in place during the 1970's. Since then, Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding had been received in lieu of timber receipt payments. Although SRS funds were vital to keep public safety services going, Congress ended the program. Ultimately, numerous budget cuts caused a crash to occur within the Lane County Sheriff's Office between 2008 and 2012. During that time, 200 positions were eliminated from the Lane County sheriff's office, 100 employees were laid off, and a significant number of jail beds were removed from the Lane County jail. This resulted in the Lane County Public Safety Levy, which first passed in 2013.

The Board of County Commissioners voted to put the Public Safety Levy on the May 16, 2023, ballot. If voters approve the levy, the Lane County Sheriff's Office will use the money to maintain 255 jail beds and fund 8 beds for youth detention and 8 beds for youth treatment at Lane County Youth Services. An independent annual audit would provide voters with complete transparency regarding how the funds were spent.

Prior to the levy being initially passed in 2013, the Lane County Sheriff's Office was forced to release law breakers daily, including Measure 11 offenders, due to a lack of capacity within the Lane County jail. The levy would fund 35 percent of Lane County Youth Services' total operations, and 52 percent of the Lane County Corrections Division within the Lane County Sheriff's Office.

The Lane County Corrections Division has a Wellness Program with 5 licensed mental health specialists, 56 beds, and group therapy sessions that help establish pro-social behavior and conflict resolution skills for people suffering from mental illness. The Wellness Program is one of many purposeful investments within the Lane County Corrections Division that attempts to teach offenders with mental illness the necessary skills to help keep them out of jail. Seventy eight percent of these mental health services are funded by the Public Safety Levy. Sheriff Harrold stated that he thought the State of Oregon needed to do a better job in dealing with the ongoing mental health crisis, and that he would prefer for mentally ill people to be treated in a medical setting instead of the criminal justice system.

Sheriff Harrold listed the following crimes people in the Lane County jail were charged with as of 11:00 AM on April 11, 2023:

- 16 People in Custody for Murder Charges
- 72 People in Custody for Measure 11 Charges
- 38 People in Custody for Violent Felonies That Do Not Qualify for Measure 11
- 32 People in Custody for Violent Misdemeanors
- 39 People in Custody as Sentenced Offenders

Typically, when a person is sentenced to jail time at the Lane County jail, it is for a period of 20 days. Each person is required to report to the jail within 3 days of their sentencing. At that time, they are interviewed to determine if they have a job, or other community-related responsibilities. They are asked if they could serve their jail time on a Sheriff's work crew picking up trash. If so, they are given the choice to serve all 20 days consecutively, or 2 days per week on their days off from work, if applicable. In some cases, community service is also offered as an alternative to jail time. Sheriff Harrold stated that the 39 people occupying jail beds as sentenced offenders, as referenced above, were offered options to serve their sentence through an alternative program and demonstrated that they could not follow through with the program rules.

In closing, Sheriff Harrold mentioned Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 161.370 – Determination of Fitness to Proceed. Under ORS 161.370, if an attorney or judge questions a defendant's capability of aiding in their own defense, the defendant cannot be tried in a court of law. The court then orders the defendant to undergo a fitness to proceed evaluation. In Oregon by statute, the defendant is supposed to be entered into the Oregon State Hospital within 7 days for the evaluation. However, due to a lack of capacity in the state hospital, it typically takes as long as 4 months for a defendant to be admitted. This results in the defendant waiting for their evaluation at the Lane County jail. Virtual evaluations can be done if the defendant is able to do so.

In closing, Sheriff Harrold stated that if the Public Safety Levy is renewed, the rate would be at \$0.55 per \$1,000 assessed property value, the same rate that was approved by the voters in 2017. The Board of County Commissioners may opt to not levy the full amount of \$0.55 per \$1,000 assessed value as they have done in the past. Sheriff Harrold was hopeful that his presentation would help people recognize the value that the levy brings to the safety of Lane County.

Mr. Berger asked to what extent was the Lane County Sheriff's Office using intervention methods like those of Crisis Assistance Helping Out on The Streets (CAHOOTS) when dispatching patrols.

Sheriff Harrold replied that all deputies of the Lane County Sheriff's Office undergo a 40-hour crisis intervention training and acknowledged the value of mobile crisis response units as a resource. He noted that Lane County is roughly the same size as the state of Connecticut. During the 1970's, Lane County had 100 deputies, whereas in 2023, there were only 30. In 2023, unincorporated Lane County had only three deputies and one sergeant. The Lane County Sheriff's Office does call mobile crisis units to see if they can assist in unincorporated areas when appropriate. Mobile crisis response units assist in many of those cases, but not all. He added that more crisis response units were needed countywide but expressed concern over the difficulty in providing safety to mobile crisis units in unincorporated areas.

Chair Ervin said he spoke with someone who did not speak favorably about the virtual fitness to proceed process. He asked if an inter-governmental agreement could be made to have full-time mental health specialists exclusively used for in-person mental health evaluations, and if so, how many would satisfy the current need to clear up the delay in evaluations.

Sheriff Harrold said he did not have enough information to provide accurate statistics in response to Chair Ervin's question. He stated that in his opinion, the State of Oregon was taking in more revenue than ever before and that he would like to see some of those dollars going toward the mental health crisis.

There were no other comments or questions.

7. Adjourn

Chair Ervin adjourned the meeting at 1:01 PM.

Next Meeting Dates

- May 8, 2023
- June 12, 2023
- July 10, 2023

(Minutes recorded by Diana Pamir Tisdale)

LANE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE - 2023

| MEMBER | Phone | Email | EMPLOYER | REPRESENTING | Term Began | Term Ends | Alternate | Phone | Email |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|--|
| TBD | | | | Business | 2019 | N/A | Jake Clifton | 541 912-6371 | jake.clifton@gmail.com |
| TBD | | | | Government | 2020 | 12/23 | | | |
| TBD | | | | Government | 7/1 | 12/23 | | | |
| Allie Camp* | 541-726-3700 | acamp@springfield-or.gov | City of Springfield Economic Development | Government | 3/23 | 12/24 | Nancy Newton | | |
| Anne Field* | 541-682-5451 | anne.e.fifield@ci.eugene.or.us | City of Eugene | Government | 12/21 | 12/24 | TBD | | |
| Chantelle Meyer | 541-590-4019 | chantelle.meyer@ci.florence.or-us | City of Florence Economic Development | Government | 2/23 | 12/23 | | | |
| Cindy Perry | 541 255-8116 | cindy@laneworkforce.org | Lane Workforce Partnership | Business / Labor | 2018 | 12/23 | Ashley Espinoza | 541-913-2284 | ashley@laneworkforce.org |
| Faye Stewart | 541-942-3340 | pwdirector@cottagegrove.org | City of Cottage Grove Public Works/ED Director | Economic Development / Government | 2020 | 12/23 | Robert Scoggin | 541-942-8711 | scogginrob@msn.com |
| Greg Ervin** | 541-556-8953 | greg@ervinitconsulting.com councilorervin@cottagegrove.org | City of Cottage Grove Councilor | Government | 12/21 | 12/24 | Len Blackstone | 541-501-53967 | len@blackstoneinc.net |
| Jeremy Caudle | 541-937-2157 | jcaudle@ci.lowell.or.us | City of Lowell City Administer | Government | 7/12 | 12/23 | Mike Galvin | 541-937-2393 | mgalvin@pacbell.net |
| Jude Anderson* | 541-682-3741 | jude.anderson@lanecountyor.gov | Lane County Economic Development | Government | 12/21 | 12/24 | Jenna Cusimano | | jenna.cusimano@lanecountyor.gov |
| Kari Westlund | 541-743-8750 | kari@travellanecounty.org | Travel Lane County | Ex-Officio | 2017 | N/A | Andy Vobora | 541-743-8770 | andy@travellanecounty.org |
| Mark Bodie | 541-913-5564 | mark.bodie1@usbank.com | U.S. Bank | Business / Finance | 2020 | 12/23 | Gary Collins | 541-334-4121 | gary.collins@fib.com |
| Matt Michel | 541-935-2191 | mmichel@ci.veneta.or.us | City of Veneta City Administer | Government | 2020 | 12/23 | Cole Haselip | 541-935-2191 | chaselip@ci.veneta.or.us |
| Mike Eyster | 541-954-6451 | salsamike@comcast.net | Lane Community College Board Member | Education | 12/21 | 12/24 | | | |
| Paul Berger | 541-357-8236 | paulberger@saavsus.com | Saavsus | Business | 12/21 | 12/24 | Larry Brice | 541-954-2619 | ldbrice@comcast.net |
| Vanessa Ringgold | 541-346-8912 | vrr@uoregon.edu | Economic Development | Education | 12/21 | 12/24 | Karen Hyatt | 541-346-5351 | khvatt@uoregon.edu |

* These positions are appointed by their respective elected bodies.

** This position is appointed by the LCOG Board.

Changes are indicated in **Bold**

Last updated: 03/13/2023