

MINUTES

ROGUE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

April 22, 2022

In-Person for 5-6 People & Zoom Conference Call

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Begg, Mike Card, Bret Champion, Mike Donnelly, Nikki Jones, Brent Kell, Cathy Kemper-Pelle, Norm Kester, Sherri Stratton, Kim Whitney

Heather Stafford, Jim Fong, and Commissioner Dotterer attended in person.

QUORUM PRESENT: No

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Jackson County Commissioner - Dave Dotterer

Veterans Administration - SORCC: Peter Weston

Oregon Employment Department - Guy Tauer

State Labor Liaison - Josh Hall

ODHS- SSP - Melissa Wolff

Project Youth+ - Jen Perry

Oregon Commission for the Blind – Jane Hagle

Rogue Community College – Lori Lundine, Joe Anderson

WorkSource Rogue Valley - Joe Spagnuolo, Kok Foo, Josh Morell, Uriah Lamproe, Tammy Schroeder, Jaymes Tadlock

Rogue Workforce Partnership- Sherri Emitte, Heather Stafford, Jim Fong, Ida Saito, Greg Thweatt, Tami Allison

CALL TO ORDER

The RWP Workforce Board meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Mike Donnelly at 9:02 a.m.

Welcome & Introductions

RWP Workforce Board Members introduced themselves and the non-members roll was documented through the Zoom meeting participants list.

CONSENT AGENDA

This item was deferred to the next Rogue Workforce Partnership Workforce Board meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

RWP FINANCES

- [Audited Financial Statement for Year Ending June 30, 2021](#)
Sherri briefly reported that RWP received a clean audit report where no concerns were expressed by the auditors.
- [Budget/Actual Report for Six Months Ending December 31, 2021](#)
Sherri presented information indicating that at the March 30, 2022, Corporate Directors meeting this information was presented for review. The Workforce Board was asked to review the information, particularly the graphs shown in the brief, as it tells the story of where we are currently and sets the stage for the budget modification that is on the agenda for approval.

- [PY 21 Budget Modification](#)

Because we did not have a quorum today, no action was taken. This item will be deferred to the next RWP Workforce Board meeting.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC & LABOR MARKET REPORT

Guy Tauer presented information for February as well as some March data.

- Updated numbers show a little improvement from February
- Jackson County down about 1400 payroll jobs from March of 2020
- Josephine County down about 130 jobs from March of 2020
- Close to record low levels of unemployment rates seen before pandemic
 - Jackson County March 4.2%
 - Josephine County March 4.8%
- Number of unemployed is trending down
- UI Benefits paid out is back to where we were before pandemic
- Labor market has recovered in terms of these metrics
- Despite challenges such as concerns about war, global supply chains, etc., we haven't seen anything showing softness in the labor market
- Lots of self-employed, agricultural employment
- Seen a decline in the number of people working two jobs
- Civilian labor force continues to grow
- Jackson County sectors with largest deficits include Leisure and Hospitality (down 14%), Local Government and Education (down 11%), and Other Services (down 7%)
- Jackson County sectors adding jobs include professional and business services, as well as retail trade and financial activities
- Josephine County sectors with the largest deficits include Professional and Business services (down 11.7%), Local Government and Education (down 10%), and Mining and Logging (down 12.5%)
- Josephine County sectors adding jobs include Construction, Retail Trade, and Leisure and Hospitality
- Just released fourth quarter payroll employment data on Qualityinfo.org
- 890 new online ads in March in Jackson County
- 245 new online ads in March in Josephine County
- Ads posted with employment department -- 2000 openings between both offices
- 2021 Vacancy Survey data released
- While wages have been rising, inflation has been eating up most of that
- Minimum wage to increase as of 7/1/22
- Building permits issued by various entities still down
- Trends in homes for sale show very lean availability
- Home prices continue to spike
- Oregon Office of Economic Analysis outlook expects employment in Oregon to return to pre-recession levels by fall of 2022.

Mike Card indicated that he feels the numbers are a bit misleading, if you look at the amount of growth we would have had over the past two years. Guy indicated that if we had labor supply to fill positions, job growth would be stronger and would be more recovered than what we are. Another compelling point is if you look at the total number of people in the labor market (approximately 140,000), this tells us we are at full employment and still have all this demand. Although we are coming out of the COVID dip, we still have the long-term demographics of baby boomers (COVID accelerated baby boomers retiring) and low fertility rate of the younger generation. Labor shortage is going to be with us for quite some time. How does all of this inform our strategies of how to build and fill the pipeline?

Commissioner Dotterrer talked about the wage loss chart that Guy provided that shows if you were a higher wage earner, your wages didn't decrease much; however, if you were in the bottom 1/3 of wage earners, your wages took a significantly larger hit, which shows the bifurcation of society and what lockdowns do to people in our community.

2022 INCOMING WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS

- **Future Ready Oregon & Oregon Youth Employment Program Funds**
 - Governor signed the Future Ready Oregon bill on April 5, 2022
 - Comprehensive \$200 million package of workforce investments
 - Two separate bills came out that merged into one
 - Through Prosperity 10,000, Local Workforce Boards will receive a combined amount from state general funds and ARPA funds totalling \$37,100,000
 - Funds in the amount of \$10,000,000 from ARPA will be received for Benefit Navigators
 - Many other funds going to BOLI, Community Colleges, Youth Programs, etc.
 - State will release through a state-based RFP process \$95,000,000 to community-based organizations. Although we won't be receiving these funds directly, we need to do regional coordination with community-based organizations, and we need to align this so more fragmentation and silos are not created.
 - Different funds will have different shelf lives; and ARPA funding will come with a different set of rules than general fund money.

The good news is that there are resources on top of the formula and disaster grant funds that we have received. We are currently not drawing down as many funds for the disaster grants because of the low number of people coming in.

Cathy talked about the money coming to the community colleges. Each college is getting \$300,000 and the remaining is being distributed based on an FTE funding formula, which Cathy feels disadvantages colleges who are trying to build back their enrollment. There is potential for the credit for prior learning to put systems in place that bring students in with work experience or military experience and place them with significant credits in their programs. Because RCC has so many partnerships with CBOs in the community, Cathy's hope is that they can partner with them to connect under-represented populations with career pathways into employment. "As a group, we want to coordinate the best we can with projects locally who are going to apply, and this is the role of the workforce board," Heather stated.

Cathy indicated that the two biggest barriers to community members getting the training they need are childcare and affordability, and this is where we should be coordinating our efforts. Jim indicated that a call was set up with Kinder Care, who does not have a presence in our region, but was very interested in partnering with us.

Jim indicated that we should have a conversation with Asante (largest employer in the region) about childcare supports as RWP can provide childcare supports for people in training, whether they are employed or not employed. Robert indicated that people want to be trained, but they need to keep working and need childcare while being trained. Robert also stated that about 8% of their workforce is indicating that childcare is a barrier for them to remain employed.

When asked if there were scholarships available to help with the affordability of childcare, Cathy indicated that the word "scholarship" is a problem in that underserved populations interpret a "scholarship" to mean they must be smart and prove they are smart to even apply. Suggestion made to come up with new terminology for providing financial assistance. Mike suggested "on-the-job learning dollars" as a possible new terminology that could be used across all industries.

RWP is actively having intensive conversations with early learning partners in the region. When we have a quorum, we want to ask the workforce board to include them as our 7th industry sector. Even though they are not a traded sector, they are critical in terms of meeting the workforce needs. Ida Saito is point and holding this body of work. We are very clear that COVID has revealed the gaps that we already knew were deep in our society. The childcare system has been broken for a long time and now, with the labor market the way it is, it has really been exposed. The economics of the

childcare system is not affordable. The only people we know who have enough money to fix this is the federal government. Jim indicated that we can pay childcare subsidies for only people who are in training. There is not a local financial fix. The biggest thing we can do is to make sure there are enough childcare workers to fill the need. When we talked to childcare providers, the biggest need they identified is supervisory level positions, which take 3 terms at RCC to get the training. Can we shorten the amount of time it takes for training? The next highest priority is the entry level workers. What we see there is that people do not see this as a viable job due to the wages. The only way we know to do that is to incentivize a career path.

Cathy feels there is a parallel path that we can do while trying to build childcare capacity and that is a weekend college model where people can get training on weekends when they can rely on family members to watch their children. This requires hiring completely different instructors to fill this need because current instructors do not want to work on weekends; however, it is a way to use grant funding to launch a cohort -based weekend college where short-term stackable certificates can be identified, and where people can work online as well as in-person. This type of program takes some upfront funding to hire a weekend advisory, etc. Robert indicated that we could create a program where there could be weekend childcare.

Joe Anderson noted that with Student Success initiatives that are happening around the United States, there are some great models of how some of the larger businesses have partnered with colleges to provide around-the-clock childcare for both colleges and hospitals.

- **OYEP (Oregon Youth Employment Program)**
 - \$9 million available 1/2022 through 6/2023
 - RWP received \$539,395 total
 - Provides meaningful paid work experiences and workforce preparation to youth and young adults between the ages of 14-24 (RWP will target mainly 16-24)
 - Paid work experience can include internships, apprenticeships, summer jobs, etc.

Briefly reviewed a previously presented slide about [how we propose using current and new funding](#). The overarching game plan is to continue doing what we have been doing. These plans will work in a recession, as well as in the current situation. An option is to increase the limits on our training investments. This will be a moving target based on how the spending goes. We will make sure we coordinate and augment services.

- Want to also provide [Career Accelerators](#) to skill people up in a pathway.
 - Market particularly to the younger generation, as well as Hispanic-serving organizations.
 - Partnering with CBO's and enhancing career pathway training capacity.
- [Next Gen Youth/Adult "Apprenticeship" Program](#) – *Summer 2022 launch*
 - Snapshot at live activities happening.
 - We are creating consistency between how we approach paying for, incentivizing, recruiting for, and working with employers to have a seamless experience.
 - We are getting good at working with the connective tissue between the K-12 groups, workforce, WSRV, and the employers.
 - Conversations are starting with various businesses about their unique pathways.
 - Conversations are ongoing with BOLI for when these can be turned into registered apprenticeships.
 - We have an idea of a rotational experience for entry-level workers where they can experience various types of jobs – to discover their talent and what their interests are.
 - We intend to shorten the trajectory and get people into what they love to do

Briefly shared the work RWP is doing with Asante.

- Priority is CNA1, CNA2
- Next priority is Environmental Service Workers
 - Recruit for a career pathway, not just an entry-level job
 - Those who can go right into a job can do so, and we can offer a training scholarship to go further
 - If a person is not ready to go into the job right away, they can try out the rotational offering

“With the internship program, Asante wants to show the person not just the entry-level position, but the next levels beyond,” stated Robert Begg.

Norm talked about the articles from the Central Bank predicting a recession from the third quarter of 2022 to 2024 across Europe, all of Asia, and the Americas, and wonders what we are doing looking forward. As the supply chain starts to come free, should see a reversal in the employment trends. There will be a lot of changes. What are we doing to plan ahead and account for the influx of people who will be coming in requiring services?

Jim feels our strategies are solid, whether we are in recession or full labor market mode. If we have people unemployed and requiring services, we will revert back and get ready for the next uptick and incentivize people to get into training paths. Recessions usually cause an uptick in enrollments in post-secondary education.

It is important that as a workforce board we are prepared to respond accordingly. We are seeing drawdowns across certain parts of the economy. We need to be aware of the pivot that is about to happen and be sure we are prepared for the people who could be coming through our doors. We should see a dramatic softening of the labor pool, seeing people be repurposed, downturn in wage pressure, etc.

Heather indicated that we have been talking about this internally and we have been doing a lot of weaving. She feels we will be able to move more quickly and have an infrastructure built to address the need.

Cathy added that community colleges are seeing a decline in enrollment across all age groups. They are seeing a lack of interest in pursuing something that takes a long time to complete. The move toward short-term stackable credentials is critical to getting people back into the workforce. They will have to maintain a lot of marketing and recruitment efforts that they normally wouldn't do in this type of climate.

RWP's sense of this is to be mindful and be ready to pivot as needed; continue the one-on-one conversations with employers about their priorities; and be very demand-driven to the needs of the employer.

Mike Card was recently in D.C. meeting with the President about the first in the country CDL apprenticeship program that he and Andy Owen are starting.

Use the apprenticeship to:

Do proper training

Follow certain guidelines

Work with the workforce board and other state agencies to help with on-the-job learning and training, Mike recommends that we have the ability to be flexible with the programs between the different sectors.

Healthcare

Brent suggested being very nimble, resilient, and flexible as we move forward.

- [Career Accelerator Program](#)

A draft of an infographic was shared that we can give to various employers to show what we can do to partner with tuition reimbursement, etc.

As we talked with RCC, part of the strategy is that for those who want to go on to post-secondary education, that's great; however, for those who do not, we have an entry-level position with career pathways.

Cathy requested that the employers stay in close touch with RCC to let them know what working, and what is needed for your people. LaClinica has asked for weekend college. Mike encouraged Cathy to drive the department/curriculum leaders to get out and spend time with the manufacturers talking about what the qualifications are that enable success in any role.

[Innovative Strategies for Systems Transformation](#)

There are a lot of academics and national research pieces that are saying that we need to create partnership with industry and business and meet the needs in real time. This validates that we are on the right path with the work we are doing in our region. A recent presentation from the Oregon Business Council is saying that we must get more aligned with public education system, CTE, K-12, community colleges, etc. from entry level workers to the engineers, designers, etc.

- [RWP Big Rocks/Priorities Infographic](#)
We did not discuss this today.

RWP STRATEGIC ROAD MAP - UPDATES & COORDINATION

Filling the Talent Pipeline

- [Objectives & Key Results](#)
Two overarching objectives and five strategies focus and guide us in our work together. Our region has some of the highest rates of poverty in the state. Oregon is the lowest in the nation and our region is the lowest in the state for the percentage of people graduating high school and moving on to post-secondary education.

We are still reeling from the impacts of the timber industry decline and the loss of those jobs, particularly in Josephine County. Medford and Jackson County are in a better place as there is a more diverse and higher skilled workforce. There is also the impact of the cannabis industry and other alternative income services that influence some of the data.

This roadmap talks about our industry sector driving all of this work to include:

- Reimagining K-20 education
- Reimagining WSRV
- Learning Communities / Longitudinal Data Analytics
- Equity and Holistic Focus

[Objectives and Key Results Dashboard](#)

We are making an effort to better track our impact, and how these priorities are working so that we can work in real time. RWP has been working to create these internal dashboards with our partners to be more predictive. We are looking to be more proactive so we can pivot quickly. We are also looking at this organizationally to clarifying roles and responsibilities and demonstrate what we do that will drive value for the community. This is a foundational infrastructure resource that can be used to create grant applications, supporting sectors, etc.

- [Reimagining Higher Education](#)

Cathy reported that on March 29, 2022, the Southern Oregon Education Leadership Council (SOELC) had a meeting focused mainly to give historical background for Rick Bailey. They got a sense of work accomplished and work still needing to be done. Data sharing agreements with K-12 are still needed. The next meeting will be held on June 30, 2022 (which is Cathy's last day). Rick and Randy Weber wanted to meet with Cathy one last time before her departure. Excited for Randy to be coming on as his background is strong in enrollment management and in workforce development.

RCC retired the following programs based on low-to-zero enrollment and how well it was aligned to workforce:

- Redundant electronic certificates
- Mechatronics – learned from industry leaders that the program isn't well aligned to industry need. Will spend a couple years working with industry to align with their needs and will then bring it back.

SOELC Objectives and Key Results

- SOU is working on developing meta-majors that align with RCC.
- Rick Bailey is going to each community college in the state talking about the partnerships we have here in this region and encouraging similar partnerships to be formed around the state.
- They are developing common course numbering for general education courses and reverse transfer options between RCC and SOU.
- They are expanding short term stackable credentials, such as badges and certificates
- They are looking at packaging transfer programs into small bundles of classes where certificates could be attained.

The Oregon Community College Association conference was held last week and RCC had four students representing the college. Two of them were being awarded national honors for scholarship, leadership and service -- one is a manufacturing major and one a business major. The other two students are president and vice-president of student government, who sat on a student panel being interviewed about challenges students are facing today. Out of the four students, three had one thing in common – all found RCC through WSRV. Two of these students had graduated from high school and done other things and then came back through WSRV. The other two were high school graduates who found their connection to RCC through WSRV. It's important for us to realize that we have to be sending our message out through multiple sources to get people connected to training. Traditional places where students received their information may not still be valid today.

This is Cathy's last meeting. As a workforce board we want to honor the great leadership she provided to the community. Jim showed a picture of the print of Table Rock Mountain that we will be giving to her. We appreciate the leadership and partnership that Cathy has brought to our community. Mike added that the businesses have really appreciated the work she has done – she's been a great contributor to the local economy, workforce partnership, and the different sectors she supported. Cathy indicated that partnerships like ours don't exist in other areas of the state.

As Cathy left the meeting, she reminded everyone to come to Table Rock Campus on June 22, 2022, at 5 pm for her retirement celebration.

- Communications & Engagement

Highlights:

- We've been collecting success stories and have a dedicated page on the Rogue Careers site where they are shared <https://roguecareers.org/success/>

- When video success stories are done, we will post them on YouTube and social media; these will be a collection for soundbites for advertisements
- We're working with partners, PY+, RCC, and Empower to share their success stories
- Next focus area will be employer testimonials
- We're moving to more of a targeted approach for outreach
- We saw a dip in the winter months as we wrapped up a lot of our messaging in December
- We've been gaining since March and continuing to show growth on our social media reach
- We're doing specific ads for Careers in Gear and Natural Resources
- Careers in Gear coming up April 27, 2022
 - 143 employers committed (with a waiting list)
 - 2500 students have registered
 - Event promoted extensively to adults in the afternoon

Let Joe know if anyone wants additional information on metrics.

Kudos to Stacie Grier, Jen Perry, Shauna Bland, and Dana Shumate for their work on this event.

- [Reimagine WSRV](#)

- Tight labor market continues
- The number of active jobseekers coming to WSRV remains low
- CDL has been the top training funded this year with an increase of 247% since pre-COVID levels
- Construction trainings are increasing, fueled by the WSRV/PY+/Equus Valley Trades Training Center
- From July 2018 through March 2022:
 - Healthcare training (especially for CNAs) has been the top training funded
 - Followed by transportation (mostly CDL) trainings

- [Learning Community / Longitudinal Data Analytics](#)

- Continue to engage state agencies (HECC, ODE) to gain approval to access K-12 datasets
- Ready to convene other partners to start analyzing datasets we can directly access
 - Workforce programs
 - Higher Education
 - Early Learning

- [Holistic & Equity Focus](#)

Several slides were reviewed showing information about populations that have been historically underserved, as well as information on the Empower life coaching and Launchpad Workshops.

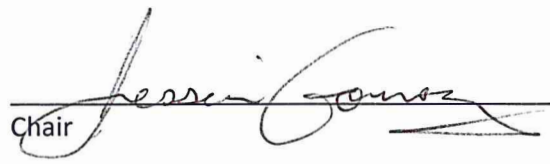
ADJOURN

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:58 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tami Allison
Senior Project Manager
/tka

APPROVED:

Chair 

8-3-2022
Date