



Harney County Economic Development

Minutes
Community Revitalization Team
Wednesday, March 3, 2021
5:30 PM- 7:00 PM
Via Zoom

Attendees:

Pete Runnels-Harney County Judge	Ray LaFrance- WorkSource Oregon - Burns
Fred Flippence-Harney Electric Cooperative	Andrea Letham – Harney County SBDC
Cindy Lemcke – Work Source Oregon	Ed Susman – Work Source Oregon
Jen Hoke- Harney District Hospital	Brenda Smith – High Desert Partnership
Jen Keady-Family Eyecare, City of Burns	Ben Cate – High Desert Partnership
Forrest Keady-Historic Central Hotel	Colby Marshall – Jet Blackburn Real Estate
Misti Porter – TVCC Outreach	Logan Hunt- Burns Paiute Tribe
Dan Porter- Plectrum Music Company	Irene Gonzalez-Small Business Administration
Jennifer Taynton- High Desert Partnership	Kirby Letham – City of Hines
Denise Rose-Harney County Economic Development	Ben Cate – High Desert Partnership

1. **Coordinator Denise Rose** welcomed the group, called the meeting to order and identified those calling in by phone.
2. **Old Business:** The January meeting minutes were sent out by link to the website, and there were no comments or changes suggested. The February meeting was not held.
3. **New Business:**
 - A. **Regular Reports:**

Harney County Court, Pete Runnels – Budget season has started. Vaccines are available now at the health office and in regular clinic events around town. Watch the Health Office Facebook page for announcements. Harney Homes is moving pretty quickly right now, it has moved from “plan to do” stage.

City of Burns, Jen Keady - Dan is doing a great job getting settled in! Council workshops will be held over the next 6 months. They are working to identify city owned properties that need to be cleaned up- clean up our own backyard before we ask property owners to clean up theirs. Dan has also talked to Nick Green in John Day as they are wrapping up some economic Development solutions. Dan and his wife have purchased a home here.

City of Hines, Kirby Letham – Budget season projects- they are working on final approval on a sprinkler system for the rest of the park. They are also planning for another bathroom. Water project is nearing completion, lines, new meters, and a small tower. The new city software connects to meters to collect data electronically which will save a lot of staff time. New grant from Travel Oregon is being pursued.

Burns Paiute Tribe, Logan Hunt – The Tribe is working on renovation of the RV park and Tribal Council and the foundation are actively working to get agreements in place. He and Tracy are also working on another support program for tribal entrepreneurs.

Harney County Economic Development, Denise Rose- The Business Oregon Technical Assistance grant with High Desert Partnership has redistributed additional funds so the office will have extended hours and intern assistance paid for through June. A second to the Judges comment on the housing project.

SBDC, Andrea Letham -outlined the Commercial Rent Relief program related to COVID. She encouraged anyone who is not receiving rent on their commercial or business property to consider applying. It is a joint application with owner and business renter, and funds go directly to the owner.

C. Regular Committee Reports:

Housing, Colby Marshall – The investment in housing in the county is very encouraging. The market has a serious shortage of the types of homes Federal backed borrowers are qualified to purchase. He acknowledged the challenge to build cost effective homes.

Small Business Support- Dan and Misti Porter shared this week’s expectations and plans for the committee work. They are compiling resources and are working to get more benches downtown. They hope to pull in all local business from the Library to Truck Stop, Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 5:30. There is also discussion about how to focus on a different business each month. Pete Runnels and Noelle Colby-Rotell asked to be added to the email list.

Workforce – Brenda – HDP internship program report. She shared the history, structure, and statistics of the current program. Currently there are 7 internships and 3 are paid through HDP. Several others are paid by the employer.

Infrastructure – Mi wave is installing lines on poles by May 1st. Franchise agreements are in place in Burns. Brownfield Coalition work is looking at 8 properties and the Community Meeting will be held at next month’s CRT meeting on April 7th. A question was asked about LS Networks and their service to homes and businesses. Judge Runnels did not know what LSN plans are, but Mi wave serves homes as a “last mile” provider.

D. Focus Project: Work Force Skills:

Ed Susman, Workforce Oregon discussed the current services for business owners. They have had a vacancy in the Burns office, but now Ray LaFrance is in place and working on training. The Business Development Specialist is located in Canyon City and can be reached at 541-276-6542 for business services only. Ed also talked about how recruitment is supported by WorkSource. Employers are now able to log onto the system and post their own jobs. They can choose either enhanced recruitment or self-referral services. This has been a bit more challenging under COVID restrictions, but they are getting creative in how they connect people with jobs.

Some of the challenges callers have experienced in getting help are technology based, and the agency will be getting new phone systems in April and May.

They are holding a virtual youth hiring event in Ontario on March 17th and after they have worked out the process, hope to bring an event here. They are also exploring a drive through hiring event. A

question was asked about the shortage of skilled employees. Their partners at TEC offer workshops in resume, cover letter, soft skills building for job seekers. They can be reached at 800-846-9110.

Other assistance from TEC includes: WOTC (Work Opportunity Tax Credit) a federal program where employers receive credit for hiring/retaining employees with a specific status such as: Vets: multi-status, long term unemployed, SNAP or those transitioning from the justice system. TEC also has a new Career Specialist in Burns, Jeremy Thomas, who is currently working with on-the-job training, teaching skills, working with employers for subsidized wages and training on new equipment. He also provided incumbent worker training.

General Announcements:

Jennifer Taynton, EcoSource- Showed the new EcoSource Native Seed website and announced the newly purchased warehouse, worksite property on Railroad Ave in Burns, thanks to financing from Morrow Development Corporation.

Denise Rose adjourned the meeting at 6:52 PM.