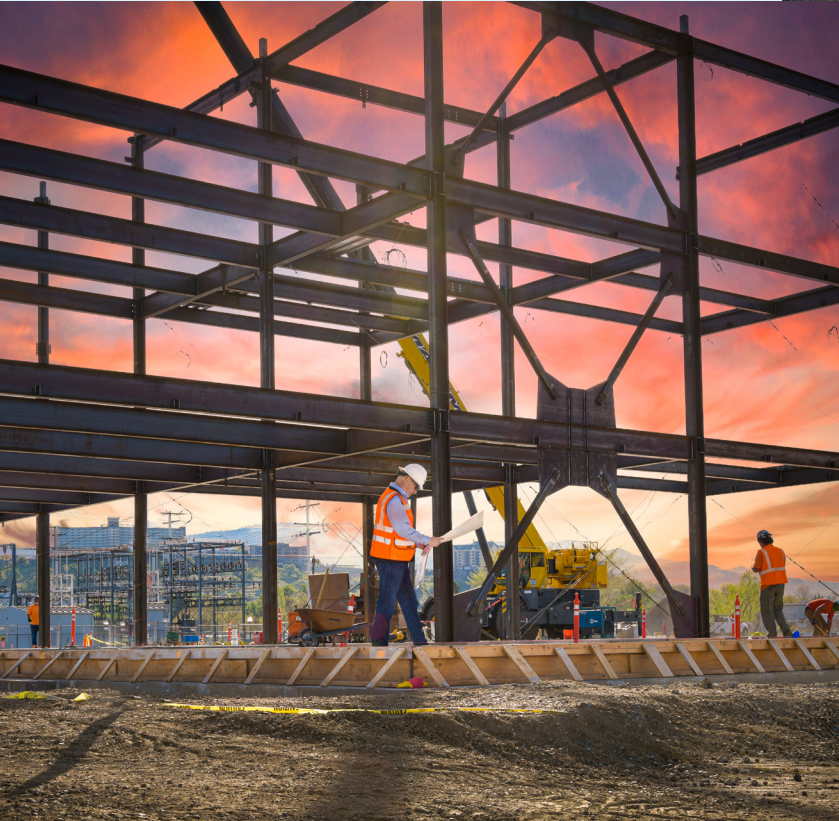


MISSION: *One* ROGUE VALLEY

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Report

July 2020 - June 2023



Committed to Regional Growth and Resiliency



“Engaging with businesses and seeing how they catalyze our region with ideas, jobs and investments drives me to keep looking for creative and meaningful ways for SOREDI to serve!”

Thank you for contributing to the region’s vitality. **Much has changed in our world, no doubt. SOREDI’s purpose has not.** We are committed to regional growth and resiliency, and we are holding true to our marching orders as the region’s economic development agency. SOREDI exists to help businesses start, grow, expand, and stay right here in Southern Oregon.

The economic vitality of our region is intrinsically connected to the success of every business – particularly those companies who create primary jobs. Regardless of where the job is created and retained in the region, we fully understand the worth of each business and the worth for every citizen who calls the Rogue Valley home. The contributions of businesses and the people who work within them, regardless of the community, matters for all of us and is something we celebrate every day. Without thriving businesses, communities cannot flourish.

Successful communities do not thrive in isolation from one another; we must celebrate the successes of every neighboring town. Each jurisdiction is valued and a significant contributor to the area. We have over time referred to the region as the Southern Oregon Jeweled Crown. Each one, from Butte Falls to Cave Junction, from Grants Pass to Ashland, has unique businesses, venues, recreational assets, and more. Without any one of those jeweled communities thriving, the entire crown is less vibrant.

This report looks back at the past 3 fiscal years and captures many outcomes within five specific initiatives. **This is a team event and not only the work of SOREDI, but the collaborative work of many partners, agencies, and each jurisdiction.** We trust you will be inspired by the successes, efforts, and even the challenges ahead as we grow together to become the best region we can be, one day at a time.

Sincerely, Colleen Padilla, SOREDI Executive Director



Read About Key Outcomes

*Business Support Letters - **Business Development, Tourism, and Placemaking: 4***

*Cascade Fire Equipment - **Business Development: 5***

*Cascade Mt. Spring Water, Clean Air Protectors, Steve Clayton Picks, Rural Capacity Funding - **Business Development: 6***

*Enterprise Zones, Dusty’s Transmissions, Blue Marble - **Business Development: 7***

*Herb Pharm - **Business Development: 8***

*Weekend Beer Company - **Business Development: 9***

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*Wildfire Response Grants, Biscuits & Vinyl, Green Frog Lawn Care, Flywheel - **Business Development: 18***

*Small City Grants - **Placemaking: 19***

Cover Photos: Weekend Beer Co., * Grants Pass. S&B James, * Medford. Balloon Festival, Grants Pass.

Back Cover Photos: Cascade Fire Equipment, White City. Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland. Playcraft, * Merlin.

Rogue Truck Body, * Kerby.

Businesses, Photo Credit: David Gibb Photography.

Positioned and Poised to Serve all Businesses



Over the last 18-months I've had the privilege to serve as the SOREDI Board Chair alongside an engaged Executive Committee and Board of Directors. During that time I've witnessed firsthand the uncertain environment in which the SOREDI team has navigated. As our local economy came out of the pandemic, the team at SOREDI

remained poised to assist business and community partners of all types and sizes. While the entity was chartered to focus on traded sector businesses, their work goes beyond that to include facilitating business and development connections, partner referrals, and direct loans made to small businesses for the betterment of our region.

SOREDI serves in ways beyond the traditional economic development organization. The work they do every day helps businesses Launch, Relocate, and Prosper.

I encourage anyone with business questions to reach out to the SOREDI Staff or a current executive committee member (listed below) today.

Sincerely, Chris DuBose - SOREDI Board President

- Chris DuBose, President**- First Interstate Bank
- Tom Fischer, Vice President**- Coldwell Banker Commercial ProWest
- Kaycee Miller, Secretary/Treasurer**- Rentec Direct
- Breanne Eagles**- Moss Adams
- Alan Meyer**- Pacificorp
- Steve Vincent**- Avista Utilities



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- | | | |
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What is the One Rogue Valley Strategy?

SOREDI has been the federally designated Economic Development District since 1992 and is responsible for creating, coordinating, and reporting on activities respective to the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, known as the One Rogue Valley Strategy.

The creation of a strategy provides a crucial forum for prioritizing and coordinating a strategic regional approach for the integrated use of a myriad of local, state, and federal funds. Municipalities and entities seeking federal funding are typically asked if their projects align with the regional CEDS, providing an advantage to those applications over others.

The current One Rogue Valley Strategy covers July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2025 and includes metrics that impact all 15 jurisdictions, within five key initiatives:

Initiative I. Business Development

Ensure thoughtful, sustainable, and equitable economic growth by strategically promoting the region as a destination for business expansion and relocation.

Initiative II. Innovation

Leverage regional assets to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Southern Oregon.

Initiative III. Talent

Invest in the ecosystem that attracts, equips, and retains a strong pipeline of talent to meet the long-term needs of current and future employers.

Initiative IV. Tourism

Support the organizations and places that strengthen the tourism and experiential environment in Southern Oregon.

Initiative V. Placemaking

Nurture an environment that preserves Southern Oregon's quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) exist within over 400 districts in the nation, as is required by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA).

SOREDI's agency charter as established in 1987 is Business Development. Businesses create economic vitality through capital investments and jobs, and create the tax base needed to support community services.

The One Rogue Valley Strategy is a broader road map for many critical objectives important to our region and is a two-county effort accomplished by many partner agencies and communities. For instance, the development of an aquatics center within the City of Medford and the creation of new accessible trails outside Cave Junction are outcomes specific to Tourism and Placemaking.

Although the CEDS cannot address every challenge the region faces, the purpose is to build a resilient region that works collectively to build economic prosperity across borders.

SOREDI wrote 27 unique support letters, tailored to specific initiative metrics within the One Rogue Valley Strategy for municipalities, tourism venues, educational endeavors, airport expansion projects, housing projects, and manufacturing/innovation grants.

- Ashland Chamber of Commerce
- Central Point and Phoenix UGB Expansions
- Medford Congressional Directed Spending
- The Children's Museum of Southern Oregon
- Common Connections, Grants Pass
- Holly Theatre of Medford
- Josephine County Airport
- Mass Timber Coalition, Statewide
- Medford Irrigation District
- New Spirit Village, Medford
- Oregon Caves in Josephine County
- Pacific Retirement Services, Medford
- Rogue Community College
- Rogue River Valley Irrigation District
- Rogue Valley International Airport
- Travel Medford – Wine Country Lane
- Youth 71:5 VoTech, Josephine County



The Children's Museum of Southern Oregon

Business Development and Advocacy Builds Quality of Place

Big Mission, Small Budget, Nimble Staff

SOREDI's mission is to **advance business** in Southern Oregon and **foster economic vitality** by helping companies Launch, Relocate, and Prosper. This work is primarily accomplished through hundreds of annual outreach calls, conversations, and site visits to manufacturers, technology companies, and headquarters. These businesses create the majority of new capital investments and jobs to create State income tax revenues and the property tax base.

The agency's annual budget is typically less than \$800,000 which supports professional staff and programs. Revenues are either operational or restricted to the loan program and special projects. Operational revenues for general programs are supported by private and public memberships, administrative contracts, an EDA grant, and event proceeds. The restricted gap financing program was seeded by federal, state and local grants, along with private sector match.

Membership is a critical component of the annual budget, supported by 15 jurisdictions and many private sector partners, allowing the agency to provide complimentary services to all businesses.

- In June 1988, 48% of the agency's total revenues for its first full year of operations was jurisdictional membership, supporting one staff member and programs.
- In June 2023, 27% of agency revenues were derived from jurisdictional support for five staff members and programs.



Cascade Fire Equipment, White City

Established in Medford in 2003, this company was bursting at its seams and built a 40,000 s/f new facility in White City, doubling its size. In addition to making fire-retardant clothing for first responders along with custom pumps, valves, fittings, torches and more, this company up-fits fire and law enforcement vehicles and has a nationwide customer base. Cascade Fire Equipment is an authorized enterprise zone applicant for its new investments and job creation.

Business Outreach Partners:

Business Oregon, Chambers of Commerce, Rogue Workforce Partnership, Small Business Development Centers, WorkSource Rogue Valley

Advocating for Business, Serving with Partners

- *SOREDI Business Recruitment and Retention Committee*
- *Grants Pass BRE Committee*
- *Butte Falls Community Forest, Economic Development Committee*
- *Ashland Foster Small Business Committee*
- *Regional Economic Vitality Chats with Chambers*
- *Southern Oregon Association of Physicians*
- *Industry Tours with educators and workforce development*

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Business and Community Development - Hand-in-Hand Impact



Cascade Mountain Spring Water, Butte Falls

This traded-sector water bottler in the Butte Falls Industrial Park received direct benefit of electrical upgrades made during the pandemic and received a Jackson County matching grant award the same year. It was authorized for the enterprise zone property tax abatement for new expected investments and new jobs within our region's smallest community, as the company continues to grow its market in the Pacific Northwest.

Steve Clayton Picks, Talent

Innovative musician and manufacturer, Steve Clayton has been making guitar picks for years. The company was awarded a matching grant from Jackson County during the pandemic. In February 2023, SOREDI wrote a support letter—in partnership with the SOU SBDC—for a SBA Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant application, with respect to a newer venture in energy systems.

Business Development 1.1



Federal Funding Supports Regional Capacity

Districts receive an annual grant from the EDA of just \$75,000 which has not increased since 2004. At the onset of the pandemic, all districts were invited to apply for an EDA CARES ACT supplemental grant of \$400,000 for regional capacity to support their agency, CEDS initiatives, and their communities.

SOREDI hired a project manager to oversee sub-grants that were passed through to other agencies and communities, which SOREDI aligned with the One Rogue Valley Strategy to support tourism, placemaking and a business diversification study, thus interconnecting business and community development. Learn more about this on page 19.

Oregon Legislature, Rural Capacity Funding

HB3345 was created in 2021 to provide funding to economic development districts to assist small communities with grant writing and administrative capacity, leveraging other funding sources for key infrastructure needs. \$84,045 was distributed to SOREDI, who sub-contracted with the Rogue Valley Council of Governments. \$42,545 was received from Business Oregon and was matched by The Ford Family Foundation with an additional \$41,500 to increase the impact.



Clean Air Protectors, Medford

These Medford entrepreneurs found a “silver lining” during the pandemic for improved air filtration in businesses, churches, and homes, and paired their long-standing work experience in the HVAC systems industry to create an innovative start-up. They were able to take advantage of a low interest COVID loan program made available by the EDA to purchase their company van.

Enterprise Zone Incentive Results in New Jobs, Capital Investments

Enterprise Zone Incentives are a program created by the Oregon Legislature, to provide property tax abatement incentives to eligible businesses who make new capital investments and increase their full time, permanent employment by 10%. While this incentive is available to new companies, most authorized applicants are local company expansions. SOREDI has served as the region’s Enterprise Zone Manager since 1998 and provides this service to eligible businesses throughout the life of their incentive period. The standard exemption period is three years, though an extended abatement is available when the average compensation for the new jobs created is at least 150% of the annual wage level in the county in which the application is submitted.

Nineteen authorized Enterprise Zone applications during the 2020-2023 period were processed by SOREDI, with expected total economic impact of over \$151million. More than thirty regional businesses have open exemptions with required annual reporting, which SOREDI manages in partnership with both County Assessor’s offices, Business Oregon, the Oregon Department of Revenue and WorkSource Rogue Valley.

Capital Investments	\$120,883,538
Jobs Created/Retained	613
Wage Impact*	\$30,663,486
Total Enterprise Zone Impact:	\$151,547,024

*Based on average two-county wages provided by Business Oregon

New authorized Enterprise Zone applicants include:

Manufacturers

- Environmental Containers Systems (ECS) - Medford
- Blue Marble - Ashland
- Brill Metal Works - Central Point
- Cascade Fire Equipment - White City
- Herb Pharm - Williams
- Mycorrhizal Applications - Grants Pass
- Predator Pet, Inc. - White City
- Purelight Power - Medford
- Rising Sun Farms - Talent
- Rogue Truck Body - Kerby
- Scharffen Berger Chocolate Maker - Ashland
- Weekend Beer Company - Grants Pass

Distributors

- Coast Aluminum - Medford
- Consolidated Electrical Distributors - Medford

Hotels (Five applicants. See page 17)

Business Development 1.1, Placemaking 5.1.5

Commuting Patterns Support a Strong Regional Economy

19.8% of the workforce (6,026) in Josephine County has their primary job in Jackson County. 6.1% of the workforce (5,222) in Jackson County has their primary job in Josephine County.



Dusty’s Transmissions, Central Point (Above Left)

Small businesses may also take advantage of this program if the company is “traded sector,” meaning that the majority of the service or product provided is sold outside the region and creates new wealth that circulates in the region. In 2019, Matt Duste of Dusty’s Transmissions realized a unique opportunity to remanufacture and sell transmissions in the automotive aftermarket, and so he created a separate manufacturing entity and facility with new capital investments and jobs.

Blue Marble, Ashland (Above Right)

Headquarters also benefit from the Enterprise Zone program. Early in 2020, the entrepreneurial company contacted SOREDI with thoughts to build a new facility for their growing team which designs “purposeful products that inspire a love of learning in children.” When an existing facility became available, company leadership pivoted to purchase it and make tenant improvements, which is an eligible new capital investment activity.

Herb Pharm Expands to Jackson County

Forty-four years ago, two self-proclaimed “hippies” out in Williams, Oregon, decided to combine their knowledge of herbal medicine with a business plan. Today, Herb Pharm is a successful producer of liquid herbal extracts, taken from sustainable organic farms around the world.

Herb Pharm is also no longer limited to local distribution. The liquid extracts from the Rogue Valley can be found for sale in over two hundred locations—and now the products are even launching into Europe!

With a variety of over five hundred products (available locally and on sales platforms like Amazon), as well as the bragging right of being the first herb farm to ever receive virgin-organic sustainable farming certification, Herb Pharm’s CEO, Daniel Marple, has a lot to be proud of. And the growth continues! New mushroom based product lines are in the near future.

“We take care of plants, so that they can take care of us,” is the company motto. Marple also spoke about the excitement of moving the company to a larger location near the airport—which will be useful for shipping products around the world.

The expansion onto a new property in 2023 was in part made possible by the property tax abatements through the Enterprise Zone program — managed by SOREDI. The economic development agency also facilitated meetings between regional partners and city officials, making the transition smoother.

Business Development 1.3.2



Herb Pharm’s Central Point Herbal Hub

“We have a fantastic partnership with SOREDI,” said Marple. “They were incredibly supportive and we feel welcome in the community.”

**Partners: City of Medford,
Medford and Central Point Chambers
of Commerce**

Southern Oregon’s Strength in Exports

Jackson County: 213 exporting firms (2021);
\$224 million exported in goods in 2022.
Josephine County: 78 exporting firms (2021);
\$50.9 million in exported goods in 2022.

A graphic with a dark green background and white stars. It features the word 'UPWARD' in large white letters with a green triangle above the 'U'. Below it, the text reads 'Elevate your business performance upward.' and 'We're proud to support the Medford community.' At the bottom, it says 'MOSSADAMS.COM/UPWARD' and includes the Mossadams logo, which is a stylized 'M' inside a circle.

A white box with a blue border. At the top right is the 'usbank.com' logo. The main text reads 'Creating a world of limitless possibilities.' followed by 'Proud to support SOREDI'. Below that is the address: 'Southern Oregon Business Banking, 131 E Main St, Medford, OR 97501-6003'. The 'us bank' logo is at the bottom right. At the bottom left, it says 'Member FDIC. ©2023 U.S. Bank 987701 5/23'.

Raise a Pint to Weekend Beer Co. in Grants Pass

In November of 2018, the citizens of Grants Pass and beyond were invited to celebrate the weekend every day of the week. Weekend Beer Company was launched by two couples—Ashley and Brandon Crews and Kelsey and Troy Yoho, four friends who share a passion for great beer. The business became a quick success story and as the customers increased, the owners began the search for a larger space. In March 2021, the combined brewery and taproom opened a new location on Washington Blvd, Grants Pass, where visitors can now brew up a good time—even on a Monday.

SOREDI was happy to be a part of Weekend Beer Company’s story. A taproom and brewery are not rash investments, and SOREDI helped with gap financing and property tax abatement incentives—helping to reduce bottom line expenses for a few years, making the owners’ dream possible. “Starting our own business was something we’d wanted to do for a long time,” Kelsey Yoho said. “And after going to numerous breweries and taprooms, even in other countries, you start to see what works.”



The Crews and the Yohos, co-founders of Weekend Beer Company, Grants Pass, Oregon

Unlike some industries, breweries benefit from other local competitors. Tourists are more likely to spend a weekend tasting brews if there are multiple taprooms in the area. “It’s a pretty collaborative industry,” said Yoho.

Partners: City of Grants Pass, Ausland Group

Southern Oregon is growing popular with breweries—and when coupled with great outdoor recreation opportunities, the whole region has untapped potential as a tasting spot.

Having already expanded from 500 sq ft of outdoor seating to 8,000 sq ft, Weekend Beer Company has subsequent plans for parking lot expansions, to include forty-four more spaces and the addition of at least two more food trucks. The brewery is poised for future growth and product distribution beyond the taproom’s walls. As expansion continues, Weekend Beer Company encourages others to relax and “live the weekend” —any day.



Carrie Bohl
Communications and
Business Support Manager

“I love telling the story of Southern Oregon and how businesses, partners, and SOREDI connect to make this such a great place to live and work and do business.”



Industry Tours Connect Educators, Workforce Needs



Scharffen Berger Chocolate Maker, Ashland

After a two-year hiatus, SOREDI was thrilled to get back to business and facilitate four different industry tours, and visit fourteen businesses. These industry tours are made possible by a multitude of businesses and partner organizations, working together to highlight exceptional companies and key industries in the Southern Oregon.

Each tour provides twelve to fifteen educators complimentary tickets, thanks to generous sponsor support. A tour through Scharffen Berger Chocolate Maker (above), gave thirty participants a sweet look at manufacturing in the Rogue Valley.

Partners: Rogue Workforce Partnership, Southern Oregon Education Service District, Rogue Community College, Southern Oregon University, WorkSource Rogue Valley, Local School Districts

Industry tours have been popular, award-winning events for over fifteen years and allow participants to see behind the curtain to understand workforce needs, associated skill sets, and ways to tailor best-fit educational programs in response.

Tours are centered around a specific industry such as manufacturing or healthcare. Groups tour three-to-four businesses and meet company leaders, who share their history, needs, and future growth opportunities. The attendees also enjoy lunch together at a local eatery and robust networking.



Mercy Flights, Medford

In addition to fostering a collaborative One Rogue Valley spirit between businesses and educators, and creating a greater knowledge of local traded sector companies, industry tours help attendees identify new opportunities for their students, employees, and respective businesses. The region boasts numerous higher-education or certificate programs, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Innovation 2.2.3, Talent 3.1 and 3.5



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Regional Partners Plan Southern Oregon Innovation Hub

Following Business Oregon’s 2021 ten-year innovation plan to create innovation ecosystems across the state, SOREDI was invited to apply for and was subsequently awarded a \$120,000 Regional Innovation Hub Planning Grant in August 2022. This opportunity specifically aligned with the One Rogue Valley innovation initiative to: leverage regional assets to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Southern Oregon. **Innovation 2.4.1**

“This unique and innovative approach to a regional Innovation Hub will put entrepreneurs at the center of all efforts by uncovering opportunities for collaboration, filling gaps in services, and reducing duplication of efforts.”

- Jason Schneider, Civic* Possible

SOREDI served as the fiscal manager of this award and invited multiple entrepreneurial support organizations (ESO’s) to participate in the plan’s development. The effort included the hiring of a consultant, Civic* Possible, who began work in November 2022.

While a physical space was not determined to be the highest immediate need, the primary needs uncovered were to provide the region’s innovators with:

- Technical Assistance
- Access to Capital, Networking
- Talent Development
- Mentorship while producing a healthy environment for future entrepreneurs.

The preliminary vision for the Innovation Hub, identified by 23 key stakeholders, is: “The Rogue Valley Innovation Hub connects entrepreneurs from different areas to collaborate, exchange ideas and build a brighter future together.”



*Talent Maker City, Talent.
CraterWorks Makerspace, Central Point.*

Goals to achieve this vision include: building a hub (an interconnective team and sharing platform), supporting collaborative programming, harnessing collective resources, and recognizing and building upon success.

The Southern Oregon Innovation Hub Plan includes a Transition Committee of five individuals, voted upon by peers, with the role of creating governing documents to form an ESO association and a job description for a potential “Ecosystem Steward” to implement the plan, pending additional funding.

The Transition Committee includes: Tanea Browning, CraterWorks Makerspace; Marshall Doak, SOU SBDC; Colleen Padilla, SOREDI; Abigail Schilling, Medford Coworking Collective; and Jim Teece, Project A.



Amy Browne
Operations Manager

“To me, working at SOREDI is a commitment to help build a better community. By deepening business relationships, we learn what a business does, and continually look at ways SOREDI or our partners can help. We find a need and fill it.”

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\$7.1 Million in Grants Provide Hope to 557 Businesses

With the updated One Rogue Valley Strategy completed seven months in advance (November 2019), and the call to deepen knowledge of regional businesses and industries, SOREDI restructured staff immediately to strengthen business outreach. The agency added two new business development managers to the team, and established coalitions to complement each strategy initiative.

As the pandemic pounded the world with economic uncertainty, SOREDI paused. Outreach became impossible and like all other partners, the agency pivoted. The pause became an urgent cause to help primarily the hospitality sector and an immediate call to action for providing grant management services over the next two years to **557 businesses**.

Business Development 1.3.1 and Placemaking 5.2.3

Oregon Community Foundation Grants

A \$50,000 grant to SOREDI became \$10,000 in small pass-through grants to eight local chambers of commerce and \$35,000 in grants distributed to sixteen partner-recommended small businesses. **24 businesses served.**



Jackson County SOCARES Grants

\$3,748,040 distributed. **154 businesses served.**

Josephine County JOCARES and JOCO Relief Grants

\$2,250,874 distributed in partnership with RCC SBDC and IVCD. **84 businesses served.**

Matching Grants

\$656,458 distributed. **177 businesses served.**

Community Development Block Grants

\$130,000 distributed in rural small business grants. **12 businesses served.**



Small Business Grant Recipients. Top L-R: Tailholt Coffee, Rogue River; Forage Coffee, Medford. Bottom L-R: Heavenly Sweets Bakery, Grants Pass; El Paraiso, Ashland and Medford.

Pandemic Grants: \$6,830,302
451 Businesses Served

Wildfire Response

\$120,000 EDA Technical Assistance Grant awarded to SOREDI to hire a Disaster Liaison to serve impacted businesses and provide support to Phoenix and Talent.

- \$205,000 in small business grants awarded in partnership with the United Rotary Clubs of Southern Oregon. **65 businesses served.**
- \$97,200 in grant awards by the SOREDI Foundation. **41 businesses served.**

Wildfire Grants: \$302,200
106 Businesses Served

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Ashland Awarded Grant for Business Diversification Strategy



The Ashland Chamber of Commerce was a 2020 CARES ACT Fund \$150,000 grant recipient, via SOREDI. The Chamber contracted with Eco Northwest to create an economic diversification strategy — the most significant analysis of Ashland’s economy in decades. The resulting study, with hundreds of responses from business owners and community leaders, launched a series of action plans in four distinct pillars, including Foster Business Growth, Expand the Talent Pool, Diversify Tourism, and Rediscover Downtown.

According to Executive Director Sandra Slattery, “The study engaged multiple community and regional partners, and numerous business owners (like Branson’s Chocolate, left) who have identified specific goals to accomplish economic growth and resiliency for the short and long term. We especially appreciate the willingness and ongoing partnership we have with SOREDI beyond receiving the grant, and look forward to significant progress.”



Skout, Ashland

Third generation restaurateur Lisa Beam (her grandparents owned North’s Chuck Wagon), along with her husband, Tom, saw an opportunity to align with their customers’ broader demographic and took advantage of SOREDI gap financing early in the pandemic. A changed menu and an improved facility with roll up doors, paired perfectly for a special EDA 1% interest COVID response loan program, leading also to a new business name: Skout (formerly Sesame Kitchen). The couple has partnered in many such restaurant ventures such as Pie & Vine, Falafel Republic, and Burrito Republic in Ashland. In 2023, they also purchased the former Yellow Basket location in Central Point for a future makeover.



Business Development 1.1 and Placemaking 5.2



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Mycorrhizal Applications Breaks Ground in White City

What if there was a naturally occurring product that could deliver nutrients to plants and enrich the surrounding soil, while also purifying the air?

Mycorrhizae [mai-kuh-rai-zee] may not yet be a household word, but the locally grown fungi are rising in popularity around the globe. Mycorrhizal Applications was founded in 1995 in Grants Pass, Oregon, and uses the sustainably harvested fungi in products for plant health. The Mycorrhizae deliver nutrients to plant roots, decreasing the need for fertilizers, while the fungi simultaneously place carbon back into the ground, rather than the air.

As the company was acquired by Valent BioSciences and continued to grow, a search for another facility began, eventually expanding Mycorrhizal Applications into White City.

Partners: Business Oregon, Jackson County

SOREDI was able to assist with the land search and connect the company with city officials and other important partners who made the expansion a success. Mycorrhizal Applications has continued plans for growth, including product launches into lawns and farming, as well as an initiative to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Valent BioSciences President and CEO Salman Mir commented, “We have enjoyed a strong partnership with the community and look forward to expanding our business and fostering new relationships.”

Business Development 1.3 and Placemaking 5.4



Jaymes Tadlock
Business Development
Loan Manager

“I get to work with the communities we serve in our region, problem-solve, assist in project management, and see regional businesses succeed!”



Mycorrhizal Applications' Groundbreaking

SOREDI was created in 1987. Today, the organization is a liaison between the private and public sectors, and serves the entire region for three primary purposes: 1) to respond to and court companies seeking to expand in Southern Oregon, 2) to make outreach calls and provide resources to existing companies who create primary jobs in the region, and 3) to assist smaller companies in their quest to start their businesses here through gap financing.

In fewer words, SOREDI helps businesses LAUNCH, RELOCATE, and PROSPER.



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Bowl-A-Rama Supports Creation of Disaster Fund



Grange Co-op team sports matching bowling shirts.

In June 2023, the SOREDI Foundation held a successful and memorable Bowl-A-Rama fundraiser, to support current and future Foundation projects. This inaugural fundraiser included generous regional business sponsorships from Lava Lanes and Umpqua Bank. Twenty teams and nearly 100 individuals participated, raising nearly \$25,000.

The SOREDI Foundation became its own 501c3 entity in 2021 and is a separate entity operating independently of SOREDI (501c4), but supported by SOREDI staff. SOREDI gifted nearly \$25,000 to the Foundation to seed the effort.

Board leadership included three SOREDI Officers - Chris DuBose, President; Tom Fischer, Vice President; Lowell Gibson, Secretary/Treasurer; along with Marla Mitchell, Karla Clark, James Monroe, and Steve Vincent, and Colleen Padilla as Executive Director.

Conversations to create a sister foundation began in 2018 with the goal of creating a mechanism to receive tax-deductible contributions for student scholarships and grants to entrepreneurs.

Student scholarships, awarded in a 2019 SOREDI Quest high-school competition, were transferred to the Foundation following its formal creation. Quest, which highlighted local businesses and future workforce opportunities through a digital scavenger hunt and presentation with top high school teams, included 10 business sponsors, and over \$5,300 in scholarship awards to local students.

The SOREDI Foundation also aims to connect entrepreneurs with robust resources to help them in their start-up business journey, through pitch contest awards and grants.

Following the wildfire disasters, it also became clear that our region needed to create its own business disaster fund for nimble, quick response to future one-off events and unexpected disasters.

The SOREDI Foundation distributed nearly \$100,000 in 2021 to over forty businesses impacted by the 2020 Labor Day fires. Pivotal contributions were received from Umpqua Bank, Rogue Credit Union, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Boise Cascade, Pacific Power, and Tribal One.

Supporting student career pathways, entrepreneurs, and disaster relief.
www.soredifoundation.org



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Gap Financing Program Heartily Serves Small Businesses

SOREDI's loan program helps provide financing for small businesses with limited access to capital. The revolving loan program is restricted funding and was seeded by mostly the federal government dating back to 1994. An administrative transfer is made quarterly from the loan program to support staff capacity. Loans are fixed rate and fixed term with no early payoff penalties. Interest may be higher than traditional financing due to the inherent risk associated with smaller businesses.



Pot Rack, Jacksonville: Erika Bishop, owner, applied for gap financing under former loan program manager Noland Alston (retired) in August 2020. Erika's former stints as a Food Network executive and industry marketing specialist paired well with the retiring owners' desire to run the business as they had for decades, and retain five jobs, despite the precarious timing of the pandemic.

The Oregon Cheese Cave, Phoenix: This small shop on Main Street in Phoenix is growing quickly in cheese platter accoutrements and custom order bulk sales to local restaurants. With a heart for Phoenix following the wildfires, owner Melanie Picard realized an opportunity to grow from just 300 s/f to 1100 s/f with assistance from SOREDI's Micro Loan Program for loans \$50,000 and less. This financing allowed the growing entrepreneur to purchase new coolers and create one-two part time jobs.

New clients served:

- 3 Rivers Firearm Training LLC - Hugo
- Skout - Ashland
- Bohemian Bar & Bistro - Grants Pass
- BrickVine Restaurant - Jacksonville
- Clean Air Protectors, LLC - Medford
- Crossfit Ana - Medford
- Crossfit the Den - Medford
- Gypsy Blues Bar - Medford
- The Oregon Cheese Cave - Phoenix
- Perfect Nails #11 - Medford
- The Pot Rack Inc. - Jacksonville
- Ready Ride/I-Secure - Grants Pass
- The Scrub Hub - Medford
- Weekend Beer Co - Grants Pass

New Loan Clients:	14
Amount Lent	\$2,404,645
Loans Paid Off	17
Amount Paid Off	\$1,666,655
Total Lent Since Loan Program Inception	\$22.3 million



Terrill Roper
Business Development
Loan Manager

"I really enjoy business outreach—learning what a business does and how they do it. If there's a need, I like looking at ways SOREDI can help."



Boise Cascade

Tourism Spurs New Hotels, Capital Investments

We live where people vacation. We also live where tourism has become a significant industry in Southern Oregon, resulting in a plethora of hospitality and service jobs. The great outdoors, over 100 boutique wineries, a wild and scenic river, and performing arts facilities in both counties continue to amplify tourism. Led by Travel Southern Oregon (TSO), the tourism initiative in the CEDS has historically not been a key focus for most economic development districts.

\$132.5m Hotel Development

Unlike many others, Southern Oregon Zone Sponsors approved hotel development as an eligible activity for enterprise zone property tax abatement incentives. Since July 2020, five new hotel developments have emerged in response to the region's burgeoning tourism draw, representing \$89 million in expected new capital investments. Four other authorized hotel developments filed or completed their annual exemptions, representing minimally \$33.5 million in new capital investments.

Total Investments Authorized:

\$132.5m representing 893 rooms. Of the nine hotels authorized, six are in operation and three are yet to break ground.

- Holiday Inn Express, Medford, 91 rooms
- Eagle Point Chalets, Eagle Point, 8 rooms
- Everhome Hotel, Medford, 114 rooms
- Hampton Inn, Grants Pass, 101 rooms
- Hilton Home 2 Hotel, Medford, 122 rooms
- Margaritaville Hotel, Medford, 111 rooms
- Marriott Fairfield Inn, Medford, 92 rooms
- Springhill Suites, Medford, 132 rooms
- Woodsprings Hotel, Medford, 122 rooms

\$60,000 Grant to Travel Southern Oregon

2020 CARES ACT funding was passed through to TSO for a regional marketing campaign to attract shoulder season visitors for wine tours and more.

Support Letters Written by SOREDI for Grant Funding, with Tourism Components

- Children's Museum of Southern Oregon
- City of Medford
- Holly Theatre
- Medford Airport
- Oregon Caves
- Travel Ashland
- Wine County Lane/Travel Medford



Margaritaville Hotel - Medford, Eagle Point Chalets - Eagle Point, and Hampton Inn - Grants Pass

Tourism 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4



United Rotary Clubs Partner with SOREDI in Wildfire Response



After the 2020 wildfires, many small businesses struggled to replace tools and inventory. Impacted businesses included home-based sole proprietors, and small downtown mom and pop shops, as well as a few larger companies. Helping small businesses get back some of what was lost became the goal of initial wildfire grants—made possible by a partnership between the United Rotary Clubs of Southern Oregon and SOREDI. Within a few months, grants were awarded to nearly sixty small businesses, including Talent’s Flywheel and Biscuits & Vinyl, and Phoenix’s Green Frog Lawn Care. Nearly \$200,000 was raised by the generosity of local Rotarians and companies. The SOREDI Foundation followed with \$97,200 in grant awards made to 41 businesses.

Flywheel, Talent

This business was at an all-time revenue surge, 30% up in September 2020, right before the unimaginable Almeda Fire. Flywheel received a grant to purchase tools from the United Rotary Clubs of Southern Oregon while operating from their mobile unit which now serves as great roadside signage. In addition, they received a \$7,500 SOREDI Foundation grant. The company broke ground on its new shop in May 2022 and opened by mid-November.

Biscuits & Vinyl, Talent

Suffering a total loss, this Talent company was able to find a new place and get back up and running, receiving a \$3,500 SOREDI Foundation grant to help purchase new inventory.

Green Frog Lawn Care, Phoenix

Many landscape companies suffered significant losses in the 2020 wildfires and received grant assistance through the SOREDI Foundation. This Phoenix sole proprietor received a \$3,000 grant to help purchase new equipment.

Business Development 1.3.1 and Placemaking 5.2.3

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Placemaking Grants in Small Cities Build Community

SORED I Supports Communities with Sub-Grants

The Economic Development Administration provided SOREDI with a \$400,000 supplemental planning grant in response to the pandemic for staff support and technical assistance. Pairing needs with the One Rogue Valley Strategy, SOREDI sub-granted \$30,000 to Rogue Retreat to serve houseless populations in both counties, and allocated \$70,200 in small placemaking grants to nine rural communities.

Placemaking 5.2 and 5.3

- **Butte Falls** assisted two local businesses with electrical upgrades. Cascade Mountain Spring Water, in the Butte Falls Industrial Park, bottles water for the Pacific Northwest and beyond; the increased electrical capacity will enable their future expansion. The Butte Falls RV Park, in the downtown corridor, added meters for four hook-ups, used by forest workers, loggers, and visitors.
- **Cave Junction** installed video-conferencing equipment in their council chambers.
- **Eagle Point** purchased picnic tables for outside the Eagle Point museum.
- **Gold Hill** installed video-conferencing equipment in its city hall.
- **Jacksonville** installed phone upgrades in the city hall, allowing remote work options and better response times to citizen inquiries.
- **Phoenix** and **Talent** used their combined funds for a collaborative market study respective to their section of Highway 99. The project was in partnership with the Ashland Food Coop, and the study's goals were to identify gaps in service and highlight potential sites for new business development and expansion.
- **Rogue River** supported the Rogue River Community Center's food distribution construction project.
- **Shady Cove** purchased benches and trash cans for the business corridor.

Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO) in Cave Junction

also received an allocation, from unused funds. \$3,000 was contributed to ADA improvements in the Rough and Ready Botanical Trail system, located along the Illinois River.

Tourism 4.4.2



Mayor Martell, Cave Junction.
The Town of Butte Falls.
Jacksonville City Hall, Jacksonville.



Abigail Skelton
Project Manager

"I enjoy getting to interact with business owners, knowing that their products add to beautiful Southern Oregon's economic vitality."

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