

Attendee Comments from November 12, 2024, SOREDI Board Meeting

- The region has uncoordinated services
 - How do we coordinate them
 - How do we bring awareness of services
- What are the assets of Southern Oregon
- Regional marketing for businesses is needed
 - 2-county region that offers a lot - let's tell that story
- In 1987, economic development was recruitment and development. Now, it's a need for capital & mentorship
- Retention of business is critical. Retain and grow what we have
- If business relocates it's due to:
 - Lack of housing
 - Lack of diversity
- Why does Southern Oregon lose recruitment contracts?
 - We are competing with regions that have more economic developers on city staff
 - Better state incentives elsewhere
- Employers are shifting around the valley instead of bringing in new business
- How can businesses support growth, the needs of their employees and their community
 - Example of Rogue Truck Body providing housing and budgeting for employee development
- We need more sidekicks to work in economic development
- Discover at a grassroots level what economic development means to our community
- What do our jurisdictions need? A well performing ecosystem
- How can SOREDI best communicate to jurisdictions
 - Tell them what people's/businesses next steps are when referred to city/agencies/services/resources
- The 1987 SOREDI formation document. What would it say differently today?
- The role of SOREDI is to coordinate business development among all business development agencies
- SOREDI needs to improve communication to show what SOREDI does
 - 2-way dialogue vs one sided
 - Increase awareness of SOREDI presence
 - Build a brand
- SOREDI needs to be a strategic leader in economic development
- SOREDI is not addressing key eco barriers such as workforce housing
- We need to determine what SOREDI's wheelhouse is.
- Is SOREDI a connector or a strategic leader?
- SOREDI needs to develop 3-4 key KPIs
- SOREDI doesn't support Talent's economic recovery following the fires
- SOREDI trying to be all things to all people is dangerous for the organization
- How does SOREDI guide our region in economic development
 - What is the future of industry

- It needs to be an architect of the future
 - The triangle of business, workforce and education is a key component
 - What are the barriers for SOREDI to do this?
 - SOREDI needs to be direct about what they can and cannot do
- Is there a need to change what SOREDI does?
 - What can we take out/add in?
 - How do we grow to more employees?
 - How do we get a permanent location?
- Launch, Relocate, Prosper (SOREDI tag line) - Key Work
 - Funding
 - Relocation
 - Retention
 - Recruitment
 - Incentives to keep companies here
- SOREDI is the below-the-dirt ecosystem. People don't know it's happening, but it is
- How attractive is SOREDI with Salem and Washington?
- How does SOREDI communicate with League of Cities, elected officials
- All board members send a letter of support for SOREDI to Josephine County commissioners
 - Encourage JoCo commissioners to care about the entire community
- The One Rogue Valley Strategy (CEDs)
 - What's good
 - What's not necessary
 - What's missing
- Missing from the CEDs:
 - How do we go for greatness
 - What is our regional identity
- We are one region! Your win is my win. Let's work together
- What is a traded sector?
 - Should SOREDI be focused on traded sector business?
 - Primary job creation instead of focusing on secondary job businesses
- The region needs a developed economic land assessment so we can attract traded-sector
 - Region Problem Solving (RPS) - needs to be researched
 - Phoenix has land so what's the next step
 - Transportation needs
 - Housing
- Site Selector speaker at 2024 State of the Rogue Valley Breakfast, Paige Webster had good ideas
- Find out why businesses choose a location and why they decide to stay or move
 - Workforce housing
 - Information sharing
 - Funding
 - Access to capital
 - recruitment
 - retention

- collaboration
- getting people to stay in Rogue Valley, which keeps business
- Keep graduates from leaving
- What is an ecosystem
 - What are the gaps
 - We have railway and the I-5 corridor
- There isn't an incubator for research and development (R&D)
 - We need a 10-yr innovation plan
 - Southern Oregon was once at the top but has now fallen behind in innovation
 - Incubators are needed
 - Reference was made to the Ford Foundation Grow Project
 - Entrepreneurs need capital, mentorship and money
- Shady Cove would like an innovation/business event
 - Do each month, rotating to every city
 - Boulder, CO, has an Innovation Crawl event
- Referral Tracking
 - Tracking individuals as they go through the ecosystem
 - SOIH is developing a system
- Multifamily housing is a concern for Cave Junction

Subsequent survey responses:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HfOVQIVxRHhJKP7NNbgs7PDQWq7ThhLd42TQ7f6fe-g/edit?gid=1031400748#gid=1031400748>

- What do our jurisdictions need?
 - Clear communication and understanding of how they can rely on SOREDI to help businesses launch and grow within their communities
 - An open and sharing communication among all groups that are involved in economic development
 - Better understanding of what our community needs when it comes to new business
 - Workforce housing production
 - Community resilience.
 - Infrastructure
 - SOREDI metrics against goal
 - Economic development
 - Public safety and emergency services
 - Create incentives for businesses to expand/move to our area.
 - Workforce development
- What are the gaps in services for the business community?
 - Knowing SOREDI exists and what help SOREDI can provide
 - Who provides what services for assistance
 - Employees who show up for work
 - Flexibility to control benefits to employees who want to work
 - Strategies to retain existing companies
 - Access to capital and financing

- Workforce development
- Labor retention
- Broadband & Technology infrastructure
- Access to capital and funding
- Workforce development
- Business mentorship
- Affordable commercial real estate
- Most pressing regional issues:
 - Start-up capital
 - Childcare for working population
 - Regional brand image
 - Quality employees
 - A regional leader that can act as a facilitator amongst all the groups performing economic development work/services
 - Affordable housing
 - Homelessness
 - Affordable utilities
 - Getting leads with local CEOs
 - Attending trade shows
 - Follow up on site selector recommendations
 - Investment in permanent SOREDI location
 - Wildfire risk and recovery
 - Affordable housing crisis
 - Economic diversification
 - Workforce development
 - Access to capital
 - High cost of doing business
 - Lack of affordable housing
- Ideas for equitable membership structure
 - Both population and contract agreements
- Ideas for Board structure and EC makeup
 - More small business representation such as retail/restaurants for a wider business representation
 - Create a large Advisory Committee and reduce the Board to 13-15 directors, perhaps getting rid of the EC
- Other Ideas for the Long Term Growth & Strategy Committee to consider:
 - SOREDI needs to focus on being a regional facilitator for all groups involved in economic development

Highlighted items reflect suggested Action items