

SOREDI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 3 – 5 pm

SOU/RCC Higher Education Center, Room 322, Medford

	Member	Entity		Member	Entity
X	Ausland, Aaron	Ausland Group	X	Gibson, Lowell	Nice Badge
	Ayers, Jessica	City of Medford (ALT)	X	Glover, RJ	Boise Cascade
X	Bailey, Dr. Rick	Southern Oregon University	X	Hall, Dustin	Cummins
	Bartalini, Karen	Providence	X	Hyatt, Paula	City of Ashland
	Biller, Brittni	Grants Pass/Josephine Chamber (ALT)		Johnson, Kelley	City of Central Point
	Bochart-Leusch, Jessica	Cow Creek Tribe (ALT)		Lemhouse, Greg	Tribal One (ALT)
X	Bristol, Sara	City of Grants Pass	X	Meyer, Alan	Pacific Power
X	Browning, Taneea	City of Central Point (ALT)	X	Miller, Kaycee	Rentec Direct
X	Coppersmith, Terri	Plexis Healthcare	X	Molloy, Josie	Grants Pass & Josephine Chamber
	Cubic, Aaron	City of Grants Pass (Staff)	X	Pickens, Jeanne	Rogue Credit Union
X	Doan, Ron	Cow Creek Tribe		Pinnell, Bob	City of Eagle Point
X	Dotterrer, Dave	Jackson County		Spansail, Sarah	City of Medford
X	DuBose, Chris	First Interstate Bank		Vincent, Steve	Avista
X	Eagles, Breanne	Moss Adams		Walsh, Dr. Sue	SOU (ALT)
	Fahey, Nick	Southern Oregon Sanitation	X	Weber, Dr. Randy	Rogue Community College
	Farm, Judy	Tribal One	X	Weiss, Harry	City of Medford (Staff)
	Fischer, Tom	Coldwell Banker Commercial		West, John	Josephine County
Members Present: 19			Members Absent: 9		Member Vacancies: 0

	SOREDI Staff		Guests	Entity
X	Padilla, Colleen - Executive Director		Tarantsey, Marta	Business Oregon
X	Browne, Amy – Operations Manager	X	Slattery, Sandra	Ashland Chamber of Commerce
	Roper, Terrill - Disaster Recovery & Resiliency Liaison	X	Hansen, Eric	True South Solar
X	Bohl, Carrie – Business Support Coordinator	X	Cavener, Jamie	True South Solar

Welcome

President DuBose opened the meeting at 3:05pm – Quorum present. President DuBose thanked Dr. Weber and Dr. Bailey for hosting this Board of Directors meeting.

Business Presentation

President DuBose introduced and welcomed our first guest presentation, Eric Hansen, Owner and CEO of True South Solar

In 2000, the solar industry was small. Europe was ahead of the US market already starting grid markets. In 2010, when solar companies were starting to penetrate the market in Southern Oregon, Hansen decided to start True South Solar, a company solely focused on Southern Oregon. During the start up process, he inadvertently knocked on SOREDI's door when looking for the SBDC for help developing the business plan, located next door. He thanked SOREDI for getting him going in the right direction! He also thanked the SBDC for his start up guidance, RCC for the preparation to get his electrician's license, and SOU for his liberal arts education.

There are currently thirty staff members (with the Best Jobs Ever!) focusing on how to serve the community well and how to make Southern Oregon a "net zero" area. Solar power has the potential to produce enough power for Southern Oregon to sell. How could that affect us economically? What would that kind of solar power mean to put a dent in climate change here in Southern Oregon?

Hansen lives in a net zero home and has benefited from net metering, receiving credit for the power his home has produced. Industrial size batteries are designed to store any excess power to reduce high-demand charges.

True South is currently working toward large battery installs for commercial projects such as schools, community centers, and resilience outposts. Typically, consumers receive their cash payback in 5-10 years and the system is engineered to last for 40-50 years.

Why are jobs at True South the best jobs ever? The technology at True South is green power and green jobs attract young people. More and more young people are getting into trade industries.

Questions?

Meyer – Pacific Power will be off of coal by 2029, which is currently used less than 50% in Oregon. There hasn't been a price increase in the last ten years, but inflation has brought the 15% increase.

Miller – Their home is currently powered by Tesla batteries, installed by True South. How is the battery evolving? Will the Tesla battery technology be an investment for the next two decades or what direction is it going for the consumer?

Hansen – Batteries are a solid utility but they are expensive. Though they are the only Tesla dealer in the valley, they don't push the value proposition hard for batteries and want consumers to choose. The future of battery technology is unknown and has been advancing quickly.

Padilla – what would have helped you progress quicker/what would currently help you to further your success in Southern Oregon?

Hansen – During startup, it would've been good to know more of the small business issues that would come up and how to manage them. How to have a growth strategy? Supportive guidance getting through those first couple of years. It would be good to have an outreach to help new businesses.

Meyer – Does True South do deep-well pumping using solar technology? Yes, they do.

Regional Presentation

SOU – Vision for the Future, Dr. Rick Bailey, President of Southern Oregon University

The Chinese character for “Crisis” integrates the two characters “danger” and “opportunity”. This is a good description of recent changes at SOU. What led to these changes was the discovery that tuition revenue was not keeping up with the increased costs over the last fifteen years. The flood of federal funds that came in during the pandemic masked that they were already under water.

Dr. Bailey was commissioned to make significant cuts to the budget so that the new fiscal model represents Revenue \geq Cost. Four key areas will make that happen: managing costs, reimagining grants, leveraging philanthropy and diversifying revenue.

Managing costs has been difficult because people were affected. But everyone agreed that SOU couldn't put more financial weight on the backs of students.

Innovative ways SOU is changing the revenue model:

1. Leveraging philanthropic investments – 2 of SOU's biggest gifts ever have been in the last 12 months. SOU is now leveraging philanthropy to invest in people, not the institution.
2. Reimagining Grants
 - a. Incentivizing grants
 - b. Dedicated support for scholarship development and post-award management
3. Aggressively pursuing entrepreneurial revenue projects
 - a. Cascade Complex replacement project
 - b. Solar options for electricity
 - c. Creating a University District with the City of Ashland
 - d. Workday Training Center for the Southern Oregon region

Path Forward

1. With these changes, it's important to focus on SOU's people: Selfcare, morale, healing, workload
2. Trusting relationship between all stakeholders in the community
3. Culture Shift where decisions are based on $R \geq C$, there is a time value of decisions, action is prominent with expectations, milestones and metrics, and aspirations are governed by the budget process.

Of the 130 university president job openings available to Dr. Bailey at the time, SOU was the only one he applied for because he knew it was a special school. SOU is already getting national attention and both SOU and RCC have become the poster child for higher education innovation.

Questions?

Glover – Thanked Dr. Bailey for treating university education like business. His perspective is that universities keep talking about more, more, more and everything they want to add is cost-negative. He was pleased to hear that SOU has several questions to be answered before the answer is yes, along with how it will be measured along the way and what will happen if they don't meet the mark.

President DuBose – What is the long-term solution on enrollment?

Dr. Bailey – He considers enrollment and retention the same. Dr. Weber addressed how RCC enrollment is now working with SOU to help create an education path for students with specific requirements for that pathway. SOU is now partnering in K-12 schools in a new way by being proactive with superintendents, sharing information about high school students, and connecting with Portland public schools. Fall '23 enrollment numbers had a significant increase as compared to one year ago.

Oregon has 43rd ranking in US of students going from high school straight to college. This shows a high number of students not being served and where the opportunity exists.

Meyer – What kind of degree programs at SOU do you see in the technical world?

Dr. Bailey - Students are now saying they are planning to do a number of things over their career. SOU can focus on the skillsets students need to succeed in any path they are currently in.

Hyatt noted how encouraging it is to hear of the partnerships throughout the valley between K-12, RCC and SOU.

Ashland Diversification Study

Sandra Slattery, Ashland Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

In 2021, the CARES grant was awarded through SOREDI to the Ashland Chamber of Commerce for the development of an Economic Diversification Strategy. This is the most extensive research of the Ashland economy conducted in many decades. Slattery thanked EcoNorthwest, Dr. Bailey at SOU, and Adam Hanks, who helped them develop the scope of work. They were able to tie it into the [One Rogue Valley CEDS](#) strategy as well. Slattery complimented the Grants Pass Chamber for starting business retention surveys for SWOT analysis. That same format was used to do this study. The full study is available [here](#) on the Chamber's website.

The greatest opportunities that emerged from the study are divided into four pillars:

1. Diversify tourism
2. Rediscover downtown
3. Foster Business Growth
4. Expand Talent Pool

Next Steps for the implementation phase include an action plan involving Ashland and Regional partners, business owners across all sectors, public/private organizations and non-profits, SOU and RCC, and local government.

Questions?

Dotterer – Public sector collaboration is key. Presenting to the State that these issues are really important is top priority. Land-use code is in response to State law and not something developed here in Southern Oregon. Is Ashland looking at expanding the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to accommodate new businesses?

Slattery - Changes are happening at the City and State level that haven't happened before. Expanding UGB would benefit the City.

Dotterer – Central Point and Phoenix each recently expanded by 400 additional acres.

Action Items

Consent Agenda - Quorum present to approve March 14, 2023, minutes. Secretary/Treasurer Lowell Gibson presented them to the Board of Directors for approval. Hyatt moved to approve. Dr. Weber seconded. Motion passed.

Bylaw Amendments Information – Secretary/Treasurer Lowell Gibson Presented the Bylaws Amendment Summary for informational purposes. The proposed Bylaws Amendments will be sent in the Board packet to be reviewed for a vote at the May 9 Board of Directors meeting.

Executive Director Report

Wildfire Recovery – PIER (Planning, Infrastructure, Economic Recovery) rules have been released and are under review by the Selection Committee, of which Padilla is a part. Public Q&A session tentatively set for June 1. Application timetable and funding expected in August.

Puck's Doughnuts and Jahnke heating are two businesses that rebuilt post-wildfires.

Enterprise Zone Program

There is a strong advocacy to support this program for renewal in 2025. In our region, recent annual filing statistics:

- 31 current clients
- 834 current jobs supported by EZ
- 352 jobs increase since application with an increased payroll of \$17,541,482.

Industry Tour

Next Industry Tour Thursday, May 18, featuring the Rogue Valley International Airport, Million Air, and Mercy Flights International

REV Chats

These are collaborative monthly meetings with Chambers, Rogue Workforce Partnership, and county commissioner(s) to inform, coordinate, collaborate and increase regional synergy and economic vitality.

The current team project is to consider joint ownership/management of the former Southern Oregon Business Conference. Planning in early stages now for April 2024. We are hopeful to hold the first event at Rogue X.

Regional Innovation Hub

Amy has stepped up in Kim's absence. Two feedback sessions coming up in Ashland at the Catalyst and in Grants Pass at the Hive.

The Southern Oregon Innovation Hub group has drafted an initial focus for a regional innovation hub that could increase the effectiveness of existing entrepreneurship support organizations, create new opportunities for collaboration, and offer new programs and projects that directly support the region's innovators and entrepreneurs.

Bowl-a-rama!

We are looking forward to this fun event of bowling and tacos! Be poised to provide assistance. Tom is calling! 36 teams available with sponsorship opportunities.

Questions?

Miller – Commended and thanked members of the REV chat for coming together like they are.

President DuBose asked of the group to let he or Padilla know of any topics of interest for future presentations. He then welcomed members to share important items from their business/area.

Round Table

- **President DuBose** – SOREDI is looking for a Loan manager. The position is posted. Do you know of anyone? Let SOREDI know.
- **Hyatt** – The spotlight on Ashland today was encouraging. In Ashland, we are motivated to lean into the challenges and to work with community partners to face these challenges. As city councilor, Hyatt was inspired to be a representative of this community that has such great leadership and expressed gratitude and availability to lend a hand wherever needed.
- **Weiss** – The new superintendent of Rogue X 2024 is making good progress. Medford is in the process of establishing biannual goals. What's different this time is that the council has asked staff to prepare more long-term and big-ticket items such as water, South Stage Road crossing, a housing bond. They are still working on these deliverables, but the vision is very long-term with ambitious needs.
- **Weber** – Two highlights he wants to present. 1. The impact of healthcare and our ability to try to respond. The Board approved adding a 2nd nursing cohort, which will grow RNs in our area by 75%. 2. For early childhood educators, RCC is looking to add a Spanish-speaking cohort. RCC must stabilize enrollment, being the fastest declining enrollment in Oregon. There is a participation issue in Oregon so we need to produce people who make decent incomes. The good news is that for each term this year, enrollment is up year over year. They are focusing on the pipeline which has caused the growth to be up 32% and 22% respectively.
- **Glover** – White City construction is underway to move the distribution of Boise to White City. He noted and commended the proactiveness of conversations today acknowledging there is a need to change at university and city levels. It is so important to carry this message to Salem. The Governor's office can say no way, whereas the county can say yes. They have consolidated their Phoenix location to White City and expanded into Phoenix.

Padilla noted that Project Fiber is still trying to make a positive \$200M investment for a sustainable product in White City.

Dr. Bailey suggested the topic of industrial development for the business conference.

Dotterrer is impressed with what Phoenix is doing with their rebuild efforts. How do we get to yes to get things happening?

- **Miller** - Rentec continues with their hiring challenges. Only 20% of interviewees have even showed up to the interview. These are manager level positions, too. They are seeing more applications than a few months ago, but having no-shows at interviews is more prevalent.
- **Glover** noted that from entry level to manager positions, only 50% show up at interviews. They have found that it's necessary to have 100 applicants to get 50 possible candidates. Boise has had the experience of paying for the drug test and the applicants not showing up for the interview or first day on the job.
- **Coppersmith** announced her retirement and will be moving off the SOREDI Board as well. June 20, the first day of summer, is her first day of retirement.
- **Bristol** noted that businesses also need to assess how they treat applicants as well. Wearing her RCC hat, she noted that they are following up on Learn More to Earn More to focus on short-term certificate and GED programs where students can take college classes at the same time, free of charge.
- **Gibson** – The BRE Committee in Grants Pass just wrapped up a survey that is typically done every three years. It is a report card on how we do as a community. Because of the pandemic, it has been six years since the last survey. On May 2, there will be a presentation of the findings. Chuck Rund is compiling the data. The question they are answering is more focused on now, instead of surviving the pandemic. Gibson believes the survey results to be the purest form of private sector data on how we're doing. What do we have to do to keep our businesses happy? They hope to find the answer to this question so that they can proactively respond to the business community.
- **Meyer** – Pacific Power is currently doing solar power at the Boys & Girls Club in Kerby, and potentially at the RCC Redwood Campus if the grant is secured.

New Business

None

Adjournment

President DuBose thanked the speakers Eric Hansen, Dr. Rick Bailey and Sandra Slattery for informing us of pertinent happenings in their respective areas. He also thanked committee members for attending and contributing to the discussions. He congratulated Coppersmith on her upcoming retirement. Next month's meeting date and location was noted. Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm

Upcoming BOD Meeting

May 9, 2023, Margaritaville Hotel, the Board Room

Upcoming SOREDI Foundation event:

June 8, 2023, 5-9pm SOREDI Foundation Bowlarama – Lava Lanes