

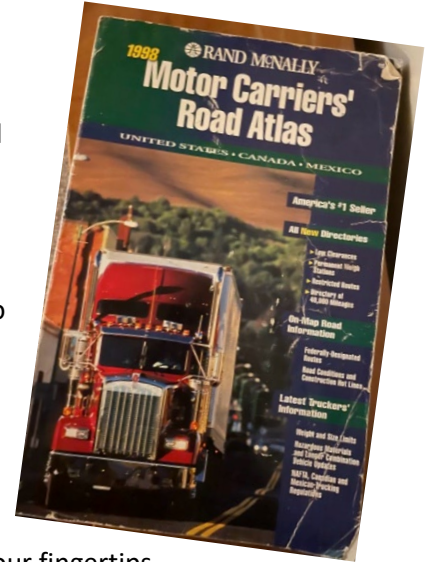
## Road Map Treasures and Waypoints

Notes from Colleen's Desk, August 17, 2023

About 11 years ago a member of my family was heading on a new journey and had chartered his course for some specific training in the Midwest. We had gathered to celebrate his new adventure, with a family meal and send off, at my house.

As my daughter and I were frosting some cupcakes in the kitchen, we began to ponder his exact destination. So, I pulled out our Rand McNally Road Atlas – the 1998 Motor Carriers' edition!

A road map can certainly guide a person to many places and tell a story or two of the places you have been. And this one, dog-eared pages and all, certainly had been on a few road trips. I don't think too many people may even own one anymore, given the digital technology we now literally have at our fingertips.



But on this day, that road map also fortuitously handed us a treasure we could not have ever imagined. As I flipped open the atlas, it opened midway to the state of Missouri to a white letter-sized envelope. Inside was a letter, folded booklet-style with four distinct messages: one to me, and one to each of my three children. I'll just call those waypoints for now and circle back to it shortly. Please pause.

Last week the SOREDI Board of Directors and guests began to visit our regional priorities for the current fiscal year and adjust accordingly, reflecting of course on staff capacity, as well. There are certainly always more great ideas and business needs in the regional marketplace than we can respond to, despite our unabashed enthusiasm.

We rely on the entire ecosystem of business-minded agencies to tackle various initiatives and make referrals to one another. We all work hard to assure a resourceful, timely response, and unduplicated work. If we do not know of a need, then logically it is hard for any of us to respond with services.

Some might say there is a lack of coordinated work and that many businesses do not know what SOREDI does. Or perhaps there is uncertainty between the roles of various agencies serving the business community which creates confusion. Chambers, the SBDC's, downtown associations, private business-service firms, makerspaces, libraries, co-working spaces and more, all play a critical role in our region.

SOREDI heartily stands behind its work and the imperative of any serious effort to create a thriving economically diverse region, anywhere in the world... one that responds to and supports businesses at every level; big, small, entrepreneurial, retail/commercial, traded-sector, existing or new.

There must be a separation of duties to some degree, and that delineation between agencies already exists. The challenge for us collectively is not to redefine the work we do individually, but rather that we lack coordinated, cohesive messaging in the community to report on how we work together to achieve measurable outcomes.

All 15 jurisdictions, SOREDI, and many private sector partners invested in a robust regional roadmap for business and community development in 2019 to create the **2020-2025 One Rogue Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**. The intent in November 2019 was to set the framework to provide a collective score card of outcomes annually. We aimed to consistently track measurable outcomes, meet quarterly with coalition

groups in each of the five defined initiatives, keep taking proactive next steps and mark waypoints for the road ahead. Hold that thought!



Last weekend, I ventured into the Sky Lakes Wilderness to Margurette Lake for an overnight backpacking trip with Rosie. I first consulted my old paper maps (of course!) but upon arrival at the trailhead I activated Gaia GPS on my smartphone.

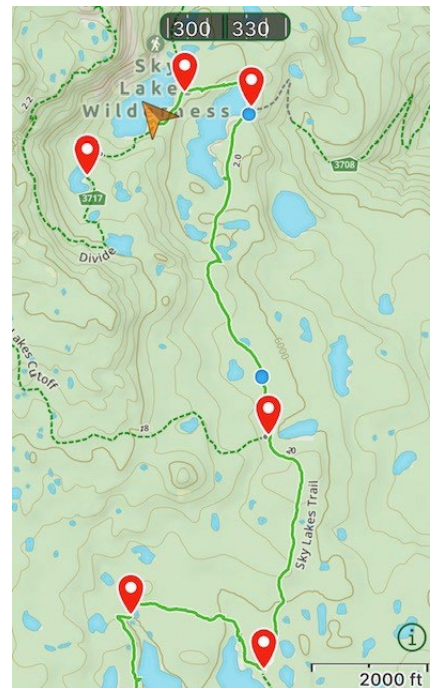
I figured I put down some waypoints for my expected path and track my progress. This all works out fabulously and tells you just how slow you might be walking, and how long you might have stopped to pause; that is, if you actually push the record button!

There are many good reasons to pause on occasion, much like we all personally and/or professionally experienced over the last several years. Sometimes pausing is intentional to get focused on a new prioritized body of work, and other times you just get excited about the path ahead and press forward without much thought. Whether you took time to record right in that moment to share broadly, or needed to come back to reporting it later, does not mean you did not still do something remarkable that is worth sharing now.

SORED I is working on our collective One Rogue Valley report card – after nearly three years of having paused the recording – and looks forward to sharing what we have tracked in snippets, and in robust coordinated measure in early 2024 at our annual breakfast event. Watch for details soon and how you will be able to help us place new waypoints, as needed, on our regional road map.

Let me return to that letter in my Rand McNally Atlas. It was written by my children’s father in early 2009. He passed away in May 2010 after a tragic bicycle accident, severe brain injury and 23-day coma. We read the words he penned as heartfelt sentiments of love and encouragement for our individual pathways in a time that was of complete disruption for him and uncertainly for us.

We just happened to discover those words nearly three years after he wrote them and two years after he passed away. We really needed, on that particular day, an updated roadmap for our lives. Our hearts were still hurting, and yes, that discovery utterly disrupted us. We simply paused.



SORED I is passionate about our work. We look forward to serving our region and sharing where we have sometimes labored to trek as a business-focused agency, and as a region, over the last three years.

If you have a business need, whatever size business you are, whatever the need may be, we are ready to hear from you and help you identify your next step. Please call us – you are in good hands. Together, let’s consult the road map and resume recording.

Sincerely, Colleen Padilla

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