



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 18, 2017

Contact: Codi Spodnik (541) 773-8946

**Industry Tour of Ashland Area Businesses
Announced by SOREDI**

Medford OR – SOREDI members are invited to attend the next Industry Tour, which will feature a peek behind the curtain of Oregon Shakespeare Festival Production Center, Blackstone Audio, Darex and Cropper Medical/Bioskin, with lunch and a tour of Caldera Brewery. This exclusive members-only event is designed to give participants the opportunity to learn about the diversity of businesses based in this two-county region. While touring these interesting locations, participants often learn about hidden employment opportunities and have the ability to network with other SOREDI members.

The tour begins at 8:00 am with coffee and a light breakfast at Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites, including a quick tour of their stylish facility. One of the largest independent audiobook publishers in the United States, Blackstone Audio will be the first stop on the tour. Blackstone offers five in-house recording studios, where vocal artists record audio books that are offered to the library market and directly to consumers through their e-commerce site. In addition to their own label, Blackstone publishes titles for well-known publishers such as Hachette, HarperCollins, BBC and Disney Press. Next, guests will visit the OSF Production Center in Talent. Guests will be able to get up close to the costumes, props and sets. Professional artisans and technicians have been laboring over these items for months in order to bring the stage to life. The third stop of the day will be Caldera Brewery. In addition to crafting award-winning brews, Caldera also offers hand-crafted root beer, ginger ale, lemon lime soda and hibiscus rose petal iced tea. Caldera's newest facility also boasts a restaurant where guests will stop for lunch. Next on the tour schedule is Darex, a fourth generation family-owned company and home of the Drill Doctor. Darex has been producing high quality tools and providing exceptional customer service in Ashland for over forty years. The final stop on this tour of Ashland area companies, Cropper Medical/BioSkin designs and manufactures compression supports, orthopedic braces and human performance gear for the orthopedic, sports medicine and recreational sports markets around the world. This Ashland company has invented a unique compression fabric that is both lightweight and breathable. Guests on the tour will get to see their photo library of the professional athletes that prefer these products. The bus will return you to your car at Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites by 3:00 pm.

"Many positive things have come out of the SOREDI Industry Tours," says Kathy Trautman, Business Development Manager at SOREDI. "One example is the formation of the Business Education Partnership Committee." Trautman continues, "In addition, internships for students have come about as a result of educators touring local businesses and learning what great careers are available right here in our region. We are committed to providing a stronger workforce pipeline in Southern Oregon. These Industry Tours are just one of many initiatives we take on to help fill that need for regional businesses."

The tour will take place from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, Thursday, September 21. Participants will meet at 8:00 am at Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites, 2525 Ashland Street in Ashland. The cost to SOREDI Members is \$40. These tours are members-only events, made possible by co-sponsors BlueCross BlueShield and US Bank. Lunch at Caldera Brewery is included.

About SOREDI: SOREDI is a private, membership-based, non-profit organization, governed by a board of directors. Its seven-person staff is charged with local business expansion and new business recruitment efforts, financial assistance to start-up companies through its business loan fund, and management of Enterprise Zones in Jackson and Josephine Counties. The agency was formed as a regional economic development agency in 1987. Learn more at <http://www.soredi.org>.