



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Codi Spodnik (541) 773 - 8946

SOREDI Hosts Dinner with Mayors and Leaders to Promote Regional Unity and Collaboration

Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc. (SOREDI) successfully held its first biannual Crown Dinner on August 3, 2018 at the Eagle Point Golf with the region's highest elected officials attending, representing 14 of 15 Southern Oregon jurisdictions. The next Crown Dinner is already scheduled for March 1, 2019 at Climate City Brewing in Grants Pass. As the regional voice for economic development in Southern Oregon, SOREDI recognized the need to bring the various and diverse jurisdictions together to share ideas and implement strategies to help SOREDI embark on its vision for Southern Oregon to become the most business friendly region on the west coast. The agency has consistently received feedback from consultants, local stakeholders, and other agency partners regarding the need for a consistent and unified regional message.

SOREDI's Executive Director, Colleen Padilla states "we know we are too small to gain traction with prospective outside companies and professionals who are seeking to relocate here without coming together in a unified effort that emphasizes our common strengths and benefits of the region." Padilla goes on to say that the agency is "wildly serious about business development - whether it's helping existing companies prosper, a new company relocate, or an entrepreneur start up a new venture - and we need to collectively implement strategies that convey we are in it together."



Pictured left to right: Steve Vincent, SOREDI Board President; SOREDI Vice President, Terri Coppersmith and her husband, Ralph Coppersmith

According to Mayor Gary Wheeler, City of Medford, who endorsed the concept presented by SOREDI for a bi-annual gathering of top officials, "Mayors are an important resource that can be utilized in the strategic planning for the economic future of our region."

Mayor Darin Fowler, City of Grants Pass also emphasized the same point by saying “It is long overdue and vital that the mayors of our region meet to work together to market our area as a destination for tourism and adventure seekers.”

Mayor Hank Williams, City of Central Point in his endorsement also noted “In economic development ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’, which is why it is essential for the mayors of Southern Oregon to partner in promoting the cultural, geographic and artistic aspects of our region.”

Southern Oregon is a Crown with many amazing assets, amenities and citizens. Padilla notes that “each of our communities is a multi-faceted jewel in the Southern Oregon crown. Without any one jewel, we are not a complete crown. We need each other to shine brightly to outside companies and professionals who are considering our region, and radiate our collaborative business friendly spirit.”

Representatives from Asante, Master Brand Cabinets of Grants Pass, and Plexis Health Care based in Ashland, also presented on their companies, associated payroll, and constraints affecting the successful operation of their businesses long-term, including the lack of affordable and workforce housing and inability to fill many open positions with skilled workers. Collectively, the three companies represented nearly 6,350 employees in the region. SOREDI President Steve Vincent and Vice President Terri Coppersmith (Ralph) pictured were also in attendance.

Mayor Chris Luz or Phoenix, Councilor Dennis Slattery of Ashland, and Jackson County Commissioner Rick Dyer heartily supported SOREDI’s proposal for all 15 jurisdictions to start by issuing a region-wide proclamation supporting their vision to become the most business friendly region on the west coast. Another idea offered by Commissioner Lilly Morgan of Josephine County, which gained consensus among the group, was to craft a region-wide strategy and specific tactics to address the housing crisis and then collectively take the concerns to Salem.

“We are absolutely thrilled by the response of our highest elected officials to move forward on a joint proclamation and come together in a big way for Southern Oregon,” says Colleen Padilla.

While a few elected officials will term out before the next Crown Dinner in March of 2019, Mayor Pam VanArsdale of Rogue River reiterates in her post-event comments a sentiment felt by many “it was a great dinner and refreshing to see so many of the area jurisdictions come together and hopefully understand that what benefits the region, benefits our individual cities.”

About SOREDI: SOREDI is a private, membership-based, non-profit organization, governed by a board of directors. Its eight-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 <https://www.soredi.org>.