



SKAMANIA COUNTY
PO Box 436 – Stevenson, WA 98648 - 509-427-5110

EDC Progress Report 1st Quarter - 2016

Business Startup Informational Calls, Visits and Packets Distributed:	11
Referrals to SCORE for business counseling:	6
Business Retention (ongoing):	31
Business Relocation:	2
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Commercial Site Inquiries/Referrals:	6
Retail Space Inquiries/Referrals:	5
Street Vendor/Referrals:	1
New Companies Located	2
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EDC Micro Loans	
Total Loans to Date:	65
Amount Loaned to Date:	\$935,780
Loans Year to Date:	0
Amount Loaned Year to Date:	\$0
Current SCEDC Revolving Private Loans:	11
Current Delinquent Loans:	2
Loans in Process:	2
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WIF Loans/Grants	
Total Loans to Date:	35
Amount Loaned to Date:	\$4,768,369
Total Grants to Date:	22
Total Amount Granted to Date:	\$1,603,637
Loans Year to Date:	0
Amount Loaned Year to Date:	\$0
Amount Granted Year to Date:	\$0
Current WIF Revolving Public Loans:	6
Current WIF Revolving Private Loans:	12
Current Delinquent Loans:	1
Loans in Process:	0

March progress summary:

- **CEKC** - Attended monthly CEKC meeting. It was held at the Underwood Community Center (UCC) for the first time. CEKC approved another Skamania County business venture as a project. Robbie Banks-Onthank sold her coffee shop and is starting a new business called Believe Center. It is “a place to believe for adults with developmental & intellectual disabilities”. Several other Skamania County projects operating under CEKC’s non-profit umbrella attended. We held a celebratory luncheon for Denny Newell who is retiring from Klickitat County Economic Development Dept.

- **Connect Mid-Columbia** - MCEDD hosted a Connect Mid-Columbia meeting in The Dalles to discuss transportation issues in the Gorge. Not sure if anything was accomplished but a lot of agencies were in attendance (ODOT, WSDOT, City of Stevenson, Gorge Commission, Bingen, Insitu, Hood River, Mid-Columbia Council of Governments, Goldendale Chamber, Ports of Klickitat, Hood River, & Cascade Locks...). One of my takeaways: A ton of attention is being paid to the new federal transportation bill that specifically lists projects in National Scenic Areas as a qualifier for FAST Act Grants (projects over \$250 million). Replacement of the Hood River Bridge is the only thing that would qualify for this funding but it seems like WSDOT or ODOT need to be the lead agency on that project and not the Port of HR.
- **OIB/WIB Economic Development Funding** - Staff for Senators Murray and Merkley have been working hard on the last \$1.9M of OIB/WIB funding. They organized a conference call with the directors of USFS' State/Private Forestry Accounts. There is a potential account to pass the funding through them called Rural Development, Forestry and Communities. The authority is still on the books and it is in a program that may make sense for the origination of resources. Unfortunately there is a restriction on utilization of the funds that has a requirement that the funding ties directly to forests/forest products. The call was to discuss how flexible could we be in tying the funding to our typical loan and grant programs and their requirements. Sounds like there is quite a bit of flexibility. We have sent examples of what OIB/WIB have done in the past to see if those would be work. We are awaiting results from the Forest Service.
- **CEDS** - The 2016 CEDS list for the Washington side of the Gorge (Skamania County projects in bold):
 - 1 Columbia Gorge Regional Airport Aircraft De-icing Area
 - 2 John Dav Pool Pumped Storage Hvdro
 - 3 **Wind River Business Park Water/Wastewater**
 - 4 DIP Cornerstone
 - 5 **Rock Creek Cove EA**
 - 6 **Stevenson Wastewater Plan Update**
 - 7 **Russell Avenue Upgrade**
 - 8 Airport Terminal Building Design
 - 9 Klickitat County Broadband
 - 10 **Stevenson Town Plaza**
- **USDA** - Met with Marti Canatsey - the Skamania County representative from USDA at her Yakima office. I brought questions from different agencies and businesses regarding USDA grants and loans (School District, Cities, Port, food co-op, WR Biomass, UCC...). There is too much to list but hopefully we can find funding for some local projects. Marti has been with USDA a long time, knows how to get things done and is very willing to help in any way she can. Meeting with Karen Douglass next week to go over funding options for pool, track, locker room remodel, and other projects.
- **South Central Workforce Development Council (SCWDC)** - Attended the first Business Engagement Team meeting in Yakima. This was an organizational meeting with about 15 different

agencies attending. I carpooled with a Klickitat County representative. There were only three agencies representing business interests (Skamania EDC, Klickitat Co. ED, and New Vision economic development agency from Yakima). The rest of the agencies are workforce development focused (Job Corps, Workforce Councils, Community Colleges, human service agencies, People for People, Vocational Rehabilitation...). This is requiring a completely different mindset for them. The effort will initially require a monthly effort to get it up and running.

- **Wind River Nursery Site** - We organized a tour of the Wind River Nursery Site for a couple prospective new ventures out of Olympia. John McSherry drove us around the Nursery and we looked at available property and buildings. They would like to do biochar research and organic fertilizer product development, deployed in combination with multi-acre test plantings of four specific hardy perennial fruit crops (plus other spp. testing). Following the tour we met with a representative of Wind River Biomass Utility. It was a good day and we'll keep you informed on developments. We're worried about getting the WR Biomass project moving forward. They are applying for a USDA REAP grant/loan.
- **Annual Luncheon** - Feedback we've received regarding the luncheon has been positive. Rachael Horn of Aniche Cellars really enjoyed the experience. Her preparation for the talk forced her to reflect on her business in a way she hadn't before (she discusses wine details but not business details). Senator Cantwell's staff was very happy with how everything turned out. They were shocked the Senator was willing to take questions. Guess it is rare and only with groups she feels comfortable with. Superintendent of Schools, Randy Dorn, was a bit of a wild card. Our idea was to start integrating "Community Development" into the economic development discussion. Some would argue they are one and the same but most don't think of them as related. Thank you for attending and participating in the event! For those who missed the event – don't worry, Garret is giving dance lessons at the next Board meeting.
- **Other:**
 - Stevenson Quiet Zone was celebrated with a ribbon cutting and toy train whistle blowing. It's taken 22 years – congratulation to everyone who worked on this project!
 - Attended the Interpretive Center's annual dinner as a guest of Representative Norm Johnson (along with Doug McKenzie).
 - Attended Greater Portland Inc's last business development meeting via conference call. Julie from the Port of Skamania attended in person.
 - The OIB/WIB Vitality Plan is going through the final drafts with input from the Gorge Commission and their attorney. I believe our half of the document is complete.
 - OneGorge met in Stevenson. Oregon Representative Mark Johnson updated the group on issues relevant to the Gorge. The Ports of Hood River and Cascade Locks need to get the bridges listed as part of the National Highway System.
 - Kari attended Skamania County's shoreline workshop. If you have any property along the shoreline you should be engaged in this project. We will continue to be involved as it impacts a lot of the development within the County.

February progress summary:

- **Community Kitchen – Wind River Middle School** - Met with school Superintendent Karen Douglass and the District’s food service director for a tour of the WR Middle School kitchen. The idea is to utilize the kitchen as a community kitchen. The School District would entertain a proposal from the EDC to manage a kitchen as long as it doesn’t cost them anything. There would be a cost to get it to rentable condition since it has been cleaned out of all utensils and doesn’t have a freezer or stove. While researching equipment costs I heard the Old School Grill is going to open their kitchen for rental. Will look into it – if that is a viable option for residents seeking a commercial kitchen then it wouldn’t make sense to move forward with the school option.
- **Gorgeous Night Out in the Capitals** - Attended the Gorgeous Night out in Salem on February 3rd and Kari and I both attended the Olympia event February 9th. The Salem event drew more legislators compared to Olympia. This was expected since it was the third annual event in Salem and the first in Olympia. There was also a Farm Bureau Banquet the same night in Olympia. There were dozens of Gorge businesses and agencies represented. The legislators were pleased with the event and look forward to growing it in years to come.
- **Community Action Team – CEDS List** - We’re working on completing the CAT list for CEDS list consideration. It is taking longer than usual as we are setting up Agora Platform users and getting them trained. Eventually projects can be put on Agora anytime between CAT meetings. Then it would only be a matter of prioritization – much quicker process. We set up and trained a representative from the County this week. We are able to bill MCEDD for our efforts regarding Agora. There is a push to add transportation projects so they can be compiled for regional significance.
- **Red Carpet Committee** - The Red Carpet Committee met to discuss two possible events. One event would be for relatively new Mt. St. Helens Monument Director, Tedd Huffman and GPNF Supervisor, Gina Owens. Another event would be to welcome Ben Klebba (Phloem Studio) and Tom Meade (Skamania Acupuncture) to Stevenson. This may expand to include others who have opened businesses within the last year. The Port is considering some sort of open house at the waterfront since almost all of the businesses there are relatively new. It has been a challenge to coordinate Mt. St. Helens Monument Director, Tedd Huffman and GPNF Supervisor, Gina Owens’ schedules. It looks like it will be some time during the week of May 9th or on the 17th. Mose is transferring to the Vancouver office so we may include his replacement in the meet and greet. Another event is being set up in April to welcome new business owners.
- **Possible Courthouse Plaza Plans** - Three concepts for a plaza area in front of the County Courthouse have been designed by Rock Cove Design of Stevenson. The designs were on display at the annual Chamber dinner and an open house was held January 28th (~80 people attended). The Stevenson Business Association (SBA) is looking for comments and impressions at the following survey: <http://ci.stevenson.wa.us/stevenson-park-plaza-survey/> BNSF contributed \$50,000 to start the fundraising effort.
- **Main Street Program** - The Stevenson Business Assoc. has contracted with Matthew Klebes (The Dalles Main Street Director) to create a Stevenson Main Street Program. This will be a new non-profit organization with special tax benefits once it becomes a state recognized Main Street program. “The Main Street tax credit incentive program provides a Business & Occupation (B&O) or Public Utility tax (PUT) credit for private contributions given to eligible downtown organizations. Once your business’ donation request is approved by the Department of Revenue, you are eligible for a tax credit worth 75% of the contribution to your downtown revitalization organization.” The Courthouse Plaza will be a major effort for this organization.

- **Audit Firm Update** - The audit proposal from Schiller & Company was reviewed and approved by the EDC Board for the 2015 audit. Met with Tim Schiller, CPA in Vancouver to see his operation and discuss the audit. They will be sending an engagement letter and a list of items for us to get organized. Talked to Michael Plymale about changing auditing firms. He was surprised but willing to work with us on a transition.
- **Small Business Administration (SBA)** - Attended a roundtable discussion with SBA's chief loan officer and administrator of SBA's Office of Capital Access. We do not often have access to SBA's leadership in Washington DC. The meeting was held in Portland and included a wide variety of micro lenders, economic development agencies, and other alternative lenders (Craft3, Mercy Corps, Council of Governments from all over Oregon, and several I had never heard of). Central messages to SBA: The bureaucracy and paperwork requirements are more than some of the programs are worth. SBA's local representative has agreed to come out and present at an EDC function (PubTalk, brown bag lunch, or special meeting).
- **OIB/WIB Economic Development Funding** - The Scenic Area economic development funding did not make it into the President's budget. We sent a formal request to Senator Murray's office. We have also been working with MCEDD, Oregon Senators Merkley and Wyden, and DC Lobbyist Michelle Giguere. The biggest issue isn't the dollar amount but the process of getting the funding through a federal agency. It has historically gone through the Forest Service but the FS says they don't have a mechanism of passing economic funding through (so they have been opposing the appropriation). MCEDD doesn't want the money to go through another federal agency such as USDA because it might impact funds already coming to them.
- **OneGorge** - Jim Laraway and I attended a OneGorge meeting in Cascade Locks 2/24. Port of Hood River provided an update on FAST Act and NHS Designation for the HR Bridge. The Mayor of Hood River, Paul Blackburn, gave a legislative update on Inclusionary Zoning. The Dalles City Councilor, Dan Spatz, spoke about a new education and workforce collaborative. David Roth discussed issues with Gorge-wide youth athletic leagues.
- **ADO Meeting** - Attended the annual ADO Best Practices meeting in Olympia. Commerce went over several of their programs and gave updates on state issues. Economic Gardening program may be beneficial to a couple of our local businesses. Several EDCs presented programs they are using with success. Mason County described their experience of large employers closing and losing over 500 jobs in their county.
- **Annual WEDA Conference** - Attending the annual WEDA Conference in Olympia this week. The WEDA conference is similar to the ADO meeting but in greater detail. Governor Inslee discussed transportation, education, and commerce initiatives. Commerce created a new forest product sector and hired former legislator Brian Hatfield. They are creating new programs which may be good for our region. Had dinner with State Representative Norm Johnson. I'll also be attending the Interpretive Center Annual Dinner as one of his guests (along with Doug McKenzie).
- **South Central Workforce Development Council (SCWDC)** - We are working with SCWDC to create industry sector partnerships. David Bennett has agreed to be on the construction sector partnership. The goal is to develop programs which fill skill and technical gaps in the construction trades. Please thank David for representing Skamania County business. It's part of our effort to garner attention and programs from Yakima. The EDC is supporting SWWDC's (Vancouver Workforce) \$3 million grant request for special manufacturing training. SWWDC would create a mobile lab and bring it to manufacturers in Skamania County. WSDOT has a Pre-Apprenticeship &

Supportive Services Grant opportunity. Informed SCWDC about the grant so we can get locals qualified for road construction employment.

- **EDA Representative – David Porter** - Scott Anderson invited David Porter from the EDA to visit and discuss funding for a strategic plan. I was at the ADO meeting in Olympia so Kari attended with City Councilor Amy Weissfeld, MCEDD Director Amanda Hoey, Port staff, and Scott Anderson. Amanda doesn't believe EDA would fund a strategic plan unless we knew exactly what we wanted - it's also not a project on the CAT list. If this project doesn't work there may be other technical assistance programs we can seek funding for. I will be following up on desired outcomes.
- **Other**
 - The tenant at Old School Grill is moving to the former Carson bank. We will be checking with the property owner about commercial kitchen opportunities at Old School Grill.
 - County resident James Kennedy plans on running for County Commissioner and asked us to coordinate a debate. It's a little early but we'll revisit.
 - Met with realtor Jim Joseph and a couple contemplating buying a business in town.
 - A School Board member asked if we could attend a National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition meeting in Washington DC. I told him we didn't have the budget for that trip but to let us know if there are other ways we could support.
 - New owner of Timberlake Campground came in to learn about our resources and ask about a specific permit.
 - The Port of Cascade Locks continues to discuss raising the tolls on the Bridge of the Gods. There will be a few more opportunities to submit comments.
 - Working with a Stevenson resident on a business plan.
 - Handed out a few new loan applications, but none have been returned yet.
 - Met with two new parties interested in the Old Colonial hotel.
 - Responded to a marijuana grow operator's inquiry regarding manufacturers' machinery & equipment sales and use tax exemption. It appears anything related to the marijuana industry is not eligible for any state excise tax deductions, exemption, and preferential rates.
 - The EDC has been listed as a reference for the DOE's Remedial Action Grant program. We've been notified that WA State Legislators may call to ask about the program. This is a very valuable economic development tool – we would like to see continued funding of these grants.

January progress summary:

- **Impact Washington** - Met with Kristin Kautz from Impact Washington to discuss a 2016 contract. Impact Washington is a federally funded non-profit that works with manufacturers to improve, increase competitiveness, and thrive. They will pay the EDC for making introductions, setting up workshops, and arranging for participation in our PubTalks. They are also a very good resource for new business development.
- **MCEDD** - Attended another Agora Platform meeting at MCEDD's office with representatives from CEKC. We're under contract with MCEDD to make sure Skamania County agencies use Agora to advertise their projects (CEDs list projects at the very minimum).
- **Community Action Team** - Community Action Team held their quarterly meeting. County Engineer, Tim Homann, and new Scenic Area Planner, Alan Peters, attended for the first time. Forest Service District Ranger, Mosé Jones-Yellin, also attended. The following projects have been funded or substantially completed since the last quarter: Carson test well (\$116,000 grant), Stevenson quiet zone, Cascade Avenue upgrades, and WRIA 29. New projects include boat

launch dredging, County ADA compliance upgrades, North Bonneville LED street lights, Port irrigation replacement, Rock Creek Cove property environmental assessment, Wind River/Hwy 14 interchange, Russell St. upgrades, and Stevenson Town Plaza. We discussed how the projects and lists will be kept on Agora's digital platform (as required by MCEDD).

- **Workforce Development Business Engagement** - Three staff members of South Central Workforce Development Council visited Skamania County to discuss employers' workforce needs. Individual meetings took place at Skamania Lodge, Silver Star Industries, Stevenson/Carson School District, and LDB Beverage. Community open lunch took place at La Casa with almost 20 people in attendance. From Workforce Business Administrator Dave Fonfara, "Thank you for your outstanding effort in organizing the South Central Workforce Council Business Outreach Program in Skamania County. Rick, Justin and I were extremely impressed with the events of the day and the enthusiasm of the community. We will be following up with a preliminary report on how to move forward with tangible programs supporting workforce development that address employer needs in the next couple of weeks. I also plan to call you next week for your thoughts, input and direction".
- **WIB/OIB Economic Vitality Plans** - Met with Gorge Commission Director, GC Planner, Lynn Burditt, and MCEDD to review the Economic Vitality plans again. The EDC is down to four deliverables that I hope to have completed by next week. We expect to have WIB and OIB Economic Vitality plans ready to present to our respective Boards by June.
- **Wind River Nursery** - Initial medical marijuana grow permit was denied by the state because the leased property is adjacent to Forest Service land. County is dividing the property into different lots to create a 100 foot buffer between the leased property and Forest Service property.
- **Website Update** - Met with Scott Anderson who was representing WebRock Design. It does not appear they could develop a WordPress site within the cost of our first proposal. We examined other options such as using Wix, Weebly, Squarespace, or Jimdo. Sync Interactive has completed an estimate that we are going to discuss next week.
- **Business Process Improvements** - Spoke with Greg Smith of Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center and Gregory Smith & Company about improving loan processing. He manages about 150 loans and none of them are delinquent or in default. He has graciously offered to help us review our loan programs and processes. We are meeting first with his office staff and loan processor to review all of their agreements, policies, procedures, and other documentation. Greg also said he will stop by our office this spring to discuss further details.
- **Representative Gina McCabe** - Representative Gina McCabe held a Stevenson town hall meeting last week at the Hegewald Center. About 25 people were in attendance despite the icy weather and competing Port meeting. Residents were able to vent and talk about anything they wanted. Topics included Forest Service lands and management, health care, workforce, County processing parking tickets from State Parks, and a variety of other topics. Gina described her first year in office as well as bills she is working (veteran employment, voyeurism in the 2nd degree, sexual abuse prevention, disability notification for E911). She is also encouraging participation for the Gorgeous Night in Olympia (2/9). She is offering tours of the capital including the inner workings.
- **Connect Mid-Columbia** - MCEDD hosted a regional transportation meeting with representatives from WSDOT, ODOT, public agencies, Regional Planning Council, and others. The primary purpose of the meeting was to "enhance the Mid-Columbia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) with a more robust conversation around our regional

transportation priorities and needs”. Between the different states, counties, and Ports there are several different transportation initiatives underway. One item we need to work on is having the County’s transportation projects on the CAT list. WSDOT pointed out that they were surprised not to see County transportation projects on the list. We’ll be working with the County to make sure their projects are identified and listed.

- **SCORE** - SCORE held QuickBooks training at the EDC office (picture attached). Four local businesses attended which worked out well. Mentor Darrell Roberts has scheduled three days at the EDC through the end of January. Jim Laraway is almost through the mentoring program. Wind River Biomass met with SCORE this week. The Constant Contact email marketing training sessions have been cancelled due to lack of registrants.
- **Mill A and Willard Water Systems** - We met with Bob Roe to discuss needs for the Mill A and Willard Water systems. Mill A could use several miles of water line replaced. We discussed possible USDA assistance after they take care of some other issues regarding water rights. Willard water system needs a telemetry system (water level monitoring and management). They may seek a loan through the EDC for this equipment.
- **Umpqua Bank Grant** - EDC received a \$1,500 grant through Umpqua Bank’s Giving Program to support a Skamania County Youth Development Program. Just over \$1,200 will be used to provide new uniforms for the High School volleyball team. Keep an eye out for a picture of Sandy, Kari, and some of the volleyball team in next week’s Pioneer.
- **Other**
 - Presented an EDC quarterly report to the City of Stevenson Council.
 - The Port of Cascade Locks is discussing a toll increase at their next Commission meeting.
 - Attended Gorge Tech Alliance (GTA) luncheon. Discussion revolved around pros and cons to Office 365 and Google Apps (Office 365 seems to be winning converts from Google Apps). We’re trying to gain some recognition at GTA functions with the ultimate goal of filling vacant office space.
 - Backwoods Brewing has begun moving tanks and equipment into their new Port space.
 - Timberlake Campground is being sold to a couple from California. They will be taking over in February.
 - Meeting scheduled next week at the Wind River Middle School to look at possible commercial kitchen.
 - Trying to get a representative from SBA’s Portland office to visit and possibly give a presentation.
 - Met with several people regarding new businesses (efficient power generation, Gorge newsletter, and juice bar).
 - Doug McKenzie will be replacing Bob Hamlin as the County’s Board representative.
 - Red Carpet Committee meeting this month. Couple events we’ll be discussing include welcoming Phloem Studio, and hosting a meet and greet for the relatively new Forest Service Supervisor and Mt. St. Helens Monument manager.
 - The principal planner for the Gorge Commission, Terry Cullen, is resigning as of 1/19. He has taken a position with the City of Bellevue. Ray Joseph is picking up most of Terry’s work.
 - Attended a Saving Skamania County meeting. They are applying to be a CEKC project so I was there to explain the process and answer any questions.

- Met with Alex Hays, Skamania County Manager of Cultural Events and Recreation.
- CPA firm Schiller & Co. is looking at our last audit and financials. They have not given us an estimate yet but they said they have several former clients of our current auditor.
- CEKC board meeting was held via teleconference due to weather. Saving Skamania County application will be entertained at the next meeting.
- Working with CEKC and MCEDD on additional AGORA training. We plan on holding an AGORA training session in conjunction with the next CAT meeting. We submitted the required AGORA quarterly reports to MCEDD.
- Still struggling with the quarterly ADO reports through Salesforce. Working with Commerce on the issues.
- Met with Tom Price of Skamania regarding his idea for a boiler powered weed killer. He is looking for a mentor/partner.