

# After the coronavirus pandemic is over

## Preparing for the economic recovery of our business community

By Kevin Leahy

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We are entering the next phase of what we all hope will be a smooth transition to reopen our businesses in the phases laid out by Gov. Kate Brown for the State of Oregon, but we know from experience and especially the past two months that there is nothing smooth about any of this.

At CEDR and the Clatsop SBDC, we have gone from, and in many cases are still working on, a “response” to “recovery” strategy, especially as it relates to navigating the complexities, regulations and processes regarding the SBA EIDL (Economic Injury Disaster Loan), PPP (Payroll Protection Plan) and State of Oregon unemployment programs.

Progress is being made each day in small steps that we hope will soon become at a running pace for our businesses who so desperately need help.

I cannot stress enough the importance and strength of the collaboration we have with our economic development partners. Regionally this includes the Governor’s North Coast Regional Solutions team, Oregon Small Business Development Center Network, Business Oregon, Col-Pac, SBA, Sen. Betsy Johnson, Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, and their very engaged and committed field staff.

A special thank you and call-out to Sen. Johnson, who is never too busy to take a call, field a request, give me direct input, and has such respect that just saying her name “Betsy” makes everyone stand

up and pay attention, something she has earned over her many years of being a passionate (that is an understatement!) advocate for her constituents throughout District 16.

I would also like to thank our local economic development partners; the cities of Astoria, Cannon Beach, Gearhart, Seaside, Warrenton, Clatsop County, the Port of Astoria, Sunset Empire Transportation District, the CEDR Board of Directors and the over 60 private sector members of CEDR who support the work we do.

Being part of Clatsop Community College gives us a special “lens” not common in the world of economic development, and combined with what I consider a world class team at the Clatsop Small Business Development Center, uniquely positions us to set a very high bar as we represent and support the business community of Clatsop County. There are twice weekly covid-19 cabinet meetings with the CCC leadership, led by President Chris Breitmeyer, which I participate in.

Other critical covid-19 response/recovery efforts:

- **Clatsop SBDC business advising**, free and confidential. We have served over 160 business covid-19 clients since early March, more than we advised for the entire year in 2019.

- **Clatsop SBDC training webcasts** that break down SBA loan programs, HR, sector specific updates, workshops related to QuickBooks training, and much more. 800 participants over the past several weeks! Currently all are free, and can be accessed via our website at [bizcenter.org/centers/clatsop-sbdc/our-classes](http://bizcenter.org/centers/clatsop-sbdc/our-classes) to view “on demand”, when you have the time, or even better to register and participate in “real time” live sessions.

- **SBDC directors meetings**: Our statewide network of 19 Centers in each corner of the state associated with the 17 Community Colleges and two universities is now meeting on a weekly basis with each center director and state SBDC leadership. The SBDC serves as the business response and assistance organization within each of the communities we serve in Oregon.

Covid-19 updates are vetted and posted daily on the home page of the SBDC. Go to [bizcenter.org](http://bizcenter.org) and covid-19 is on the home page on a big and bold banner. Click on that for anything covid-19 related from a business guidance standpoint.

- **CEDR has organized a monthly business meeting** for many years with the city and county managers, including our Tillamook County neighbors of Manzanita and Nehalem. Since the Pandemic started, we have weekly meetings that starts with Clatsop County updates, and each City and other partners share updates, questions and concerns that face everyone, and end with a solutions driven mindset to bring back to our elected officials for discussion, clarity and decision-making.

- **CEDR is a member of the North Coast Regional Economic Recovery Team**, the Economic Development Partners group, and



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At the Clatsop Small Business Development Center,

## We are here to help you.

Our services are designed to help business owners and operators in all stages from start-ups and businesses in their first year, to mature business looking to grow.

As an entrepreneur, your path to start, run, and grow a business is likely to be filled with a variety of challenges that you’ll need to overcome to avoid costly setbacks or even failure. The journey can sometimes be overwhelming and risky- but you don’t have to do it alone. The Clatsop SBDC’s team of professional business advisors are available to help you navigate your way to success!

For more information visit [bizcenter.org/clatsop](http://bizcenter.org/clatsop)



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the North Coast Regional Economic Recovery Planning Subcommittee. Included also are our partners at the Astoria-Warrenton, Cannon Beach and Seaside Chambers of Commerce, ADHDA, Seaside Visitors Bureau, and other members mentioned earlier in my article.

Recent work was receiving input from our business owners related to proposed reopening guidelines from the governor’s office on the sectors of retail, restaurants, child care and personal services. We summarized those over 60 responses to Regional Solutions Coordinator Jennifer Purcell, who submitted our local input to the governor. We like being a “squeaky wheel”!

- **CEDR sits as a core member of the Clatsop County Cooperators leadership**, providing weekly economic-recovery updates on covid-19 work, challenges and progress with member that are focused on public health and safety, cities, school districts, law enforcement, military, special districts, chambers. It has been very productive to share economic updates with this group while getting feedback on public health, emergency operations, and reopening framework planning.

- **CEDR/Clatsop SBDC has been a host and participant in a Business Zoom Forum** with ADHDA, Astoria-Warrenton Business Forum, Cannon Beach Chamber Virtual Breakfast meeting, and worked with the City of Seaside on the \$250,000 grant program for businesses in the community.

Thank you to CEDR Board subcommittee members who spent quality time reviewing each of the 135 applications.

We are all working tirelessly to prepare our businesses for the “new normal” for the hopefully short-term period ahead. Each and every business in our county inspires us to do the best job possible. We have been in your shoes as small business owners, and know that in everything we do, we are stronger together.