

# Business Matters *Sponsored By Zolezzi Insurance Agency* *A Better Brand of Insurance Service*

## Milestone Achieved in Oregon's Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment (BEAD) Rollout

The Oregon Broadband Office is pleased to announce the BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II (IPv2) approval by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The 5-Year Action Plan, Initial Proposals Volumes I and II, and the public comments that shaped them are Oregon's strategy to invest \$689 million from BEAD funding to provide access to affordable, high-speed, reliable broadband to all Oregonians.

"Oregon is committed to ensuring that all people across our state have access to affordable and reliable high-speed broadband internet," Governor Kotek said. "Today's announcement from NTIA is an exciting development in our steadfast efforts to bridge the digital divide and ensure positive social, civic, economic, and educational outcomes for Oregonians."

Now that Initial Proposal Volume II has been approved, Oregon will receive the necessary funding allocation to administer the program and can start the subgrantee selection process.

At the end of 365 days, Oregon must have the BEAD Final Proposal approved by the NTIA to receive the balance of the \$689 million and award the funds to the subgrantees. The approved subgrantees will carry out the work of building the infrastructure necessary to provide broadband access to unserved (no internet access or under 25/3 Mbps) and underserved (access under 100/20 Mbps) locations identified during the BEAD Challenge Process.

For more information about the Oregon Broadband Office, visit [www.broadband.oregon.gov](http://www.broadband.oregon.gov).

## Growing Oregon's Economy is the Path to Addressing Urgent Priorities

**Salem, OR** – The Office of Economic Analysis' June 2024 Revenue Forecast indicated that Oregon's economy is continuing to stabilize and provided legislators with important information about funds available for investment. Senate Majority Leader Kate Lieber (D – Beaverton & SW Portland) released the following statement in response: "Oregonians' hard work is paying off. This stable economic forecast is welcome news, especially given the urgent challenges we are facing. If we're going to make the necessary investments to address the drug crisis, homelessness, affordable housing, education funding, and more, we need to keep growing our economy."

"Senate Democrats want to see Oregonians' wages keep going up, more opportunities for working families to move to Oregon communities, and local job creators expanding operations across the state."

## Business Oregon Awards \$3 Million to County Fair Operators to Relieve Pandemic-Related Revenue Losses

Business Oregon announces \$3 million in grant funding awarded to 34 County Fair Operators in Oregon that experienced significant revenue losses due to statewide shutdowns per health mandates that affected Oregon during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the 2023 legislative session per HB 3410 Section 9 and 10, Business Oregon was allocated \$3 million to provide this grant assistance. This funding is only eligible to be used for the significant loss of earned revenue or the sale of goods and services including admission/ticketing, charges for services, rentals, permits and fees, merchandise, food and beverages, and contracted services and performances experienced by County Fair Operators. County Fair Operator is defined as a county fair board, fair association, or fair district that operates a county fair. The grant amounts awarded were determined equally based off the number of eligible applicants. The awards ranged from approximately \$30,000 - \$94,000 each, depending on how much revenue each county lost. Below is the list of awarded County Fair Operators.

- County of Baker; Baker County Fair Board
- Benton County Fair Board
- Clackamas County Fair and Event Center
- Clatsop County Fair Board
- Columbia County Fair Board
- Coos County Fair Board
- Crook County Fair Board
- Curry County Fair Board
- Deschutes County Fair Board
- Douglas County Fair Board
- Grant County Fair Board
- Harney County Fair Board
- Jackson County Fair Board; Agency of Jackson County
- Jefferson County Fair Board
- Josephine County Fair Board
- Klamath County Fair Board
- Lake County Fair Board
- Lane County Fair Board
- Lincoln County Fair Board
- Linn County Fair Board
- Malheur County Fair Board
- Marion County Fair Board
- Morrow County Fair Board
- Friends of the Multnomah County Fair, Inc.
- Polk County Fair Board
- Tillamook County Fair Board
- Umatilla County Fair Board
- Union County Fair Board
- Wallowa County Fair Board
- Wasco County Fair Board
- Washington County Fair Board
- Wheeler County Fair Board
- Yamhill County Fair Board
- Oregon State Fair Council dba: Oregon State Fair & Exposition Center

Visit [www.oregon.gov/biz](http://www.oregon.gov/biz) to learn more about the County Fairgrounds Operational Support program.

## Legislature Begins Accountability Hearings for Employment Department Delays

**Salem, OR** - In the past several months, legislators have heard from constituents experiencing benefit delays and slow phone times from the Oregon Employment Department, and took action during May legislative days to examine issues more closely and hold the agency accountable. These hearings were organized as a joint effort between the Chair of the House Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards, Representative Dacia Grayber (D - SW Portland & E Beaverton), and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business, Senator Kathleen Taylor (D - SE Portland & Milwaukee).

OED leadership was called upon to provide details on its plan to get caught up on backlog volume, in order to improve customer service and claim resolution times. OED will be returning to the legislature to testify again in September, and report on their progress. "Losing employment can throw a person's life into uncertainty, and most people do not have enough savings to afford rent or a mortgage for several months while they find a new job," said Representative Grayber. "OED must do everything in its power to get Oregonians the clarity and help they need to get back on their feet, and I appreciate OED's communication and willingness to urgently tackle the work ahead of them."

Funding administrative staff for unemployment programs falls to the Federal Department of Labor, which is currently only providing ~70% of what is needed to fully staff the program. This has led to demand for benefits far exceeding the level of staff available to process claims in a timely manner. OED employees have been working significant overtime to compensate, and a major technology migration to manage claims has improved processing efficiency once early bugs were fixed. Despite these efforts, Oregonians in urgent need of their benefits are waiting hours to receive information on the phone, and the most complex claims can take up to 12 weeks to be adjudicated.

"Our fellow Oregonians facing unemployment deserve timely and efficient assistance during these challenging times," said Senator Taylor. "It is crucial we work together to ensure that the Oregon Employment Department fulfills its duty to provide the necessary support for those in need."

In the recent 2024 legislative session, the State Legislature passed HB 4035, introduced by the House Revenue committee chaired by Representative Nancy Nathanson (D - Eugene), which increased available state funds to the OED in order to offset needed Federal funding. That hiring push has already gotten underway, but OED says it will take time to see the impact. In the meantime, it has reduced available phone hours to provide staff more time to process claims, which has shown promising early results.

When OED returns in September, they are expected to provide an update on how new staffing levels have impacted their backlog and resolution times. If the agency is not making enough progress on its own, both the House and Senate committees are prepared to coordinate on additional legislative support in the 2025 session.

## Lane County to Auction 6 properties in July

Lane County is conducting a sealed-bid auction of real property now through 11:00 a.m. PST on Monday, July 22, 2024. Bids will be opened at 11:00 a.m. on July 23, and winners will be notified by telephone and email. The opening of bids will be livestreamed on Lane County's YouTube channel.

Included in the auction are lots located in Springfield, Florence, Triangle Lake, Fall Creek and Pleasant Hill. The Springfield property includes a single-family home, one Florence property includes a manufactured home, and the remainder are vacant lots. The properties up for auction range from a \$3,500 minimum bid to a \$150,000 minimum bid.

The properties have minimum bid amounts and will not be sold for less than the minimum bid. The properties will be sold on an as-is basis using a quitclaim deed, which passes any title, claim or interest in the property to the buyer without making any representations regarding other claims or liens.

Payment must be made with cash, cashier's checks or certified back checks payable to Lane County. No personal or business checks, debit and credit cards or financing will be accepted. A 20 percent deposit of the minimum bid amount is due within 24 hours of the bid opening. The remaining balance, plus a \$100 recording fee, is due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 31, 2024.

For more information including a complete list of auction terms, property descriptions and registration information, visit

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