

Free market research workshops set for Columbia Co. businesses

The Columbia County Economic Team is partnering with the Oregon MicroEnterprise Network to provide free market research services to Columbia County's small businesses. The program, called MarketLink, is funded by a grant from the Small Business Administration and is targeted to businesses with one to five employees. The program is designed to provide information to local businesses regarding:

- Local and national trends impacting their businesses, and competitive data and analysis relevant to their business.
- Data on market size, distribution channels and opportunity for different industries.
- Strategies for developing new business through sales lead identification and targeting new markets.

To help launch the new program, both the South Columbia County and Clatskanie Chambers of Commerce will host a one-and-a-half-hour workshop. Ryan McLaughlin from the Oregon MicroEnterprise Network will lead an interactive discussion to help businesses understand their customers, learn from their competition and develop a community-oriented marketing plan to grow revenue. At the workshop, Mr.

Economy remains in slow growth

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billion, which is a very slight increase of \$3.3 million over the previous forecast in December. Still, general fund revenues for 2009-11 will end up about \$1.1 billion below the "Close of Session" forecast issued as the legislature adjourned in 2009.

"The prolonged plunge in personal income taxes, particularly those related to nonwage forms of income, accounts for most of the decrease," Potiowsky told the legislature in his report.

Corporate profits have risen rapidly throughout much of the current biennium, as have the tax collections associated with the rise, Potiowsky noted. The projected total revenue from corporate income taxes for the biennium is \$9.7 million above the Close of Session forecast.

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McLaughlin will also explain how qualifying business owners can apply to receive free and confidential customized research through the MarketLink Program.

The South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce will host a morning workshop in St. Helens on Tuesday, March 15, from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. at the Best Western Oak Meadows Inn (585 S Columbia River Hwy, Saint Helens).

The Clatskanie Chamber of Commerce will host an evening workshop on Tuesday, March 15, from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the Clatskanie River Inn (600 E Columbia River Hwy., Clatskanie).

"We are excited to be partnering with Oregon MicroEnterprise Network to bring this additional resource to help Columbia County's small businesses reach more customers, and encourage all interested business owners to attend one of the workshops on March 15," said David Stocker, CEO, Columbia County Economic Team.

Web-based tools for business-friendly resources

Governor John Kitzhaber unveiled Oregon Advantage on February 24, a web-based resource to help new and existing business owners grow their companies and create jobs in Oregon. The new web site provides direct access to financial and development services.

The "Oregon Advantage" web portal – accessible from the Governor's web site – illustrates the numerous competitive advantages Oregon offers companies worldwide. The website houses a comprehensive list of business-friendly resources available at various levels of government, and offers a way for businesses to connect with experts in their lo-

cal area regarding their business needs.

"We know Oregon is open for business," said Governor Kitzhaber. "Oregon Advantage now lets the rest of the world know as well. These resources allow new and existing Oregon companies to get to work quickly and efficiently, providing jobs across the state."

The streamlined web resources are hosted by Business Oregon, the state's Business Development Department, at www.oregon4biz.com, and are also accessible through the Governor's web site at governor.oregon.gov. New and updated content includes:

- The Oregon Advantage: a web portal communicating critical information about Oregon's competitive business environment, linked to a searchable database of available certified industrial properties, and an intake form where site selectors can directly communicate with Oregon's national recruitment manager.
- More Business Support: A

list of organizations at the local, regional, state and federal level that offer economic development resources to Oregon companies.

• Grow Your Business: Additional updated content is available in this section that communicates the services and tools available from Business Oregon to help existing Oregon companies grow their business here in Oregon.


For existing companies, these web-based resources make it easier to see what tools are available to help them grow. For site selectors looking for ideal business location, it provides a single location to get all the information they need.

"We have a one-stop shop where site selectors from around the world can quickly see why Oregon is a great place to do business," said Business Oregon Director Tim McCabe. "While the bulk of our efforts are focused on helping existing Oregon companies grow their businesses, we also want new companies to move here and employ Oregonians."

— CORRECTION —

The headline on the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation article (The Independent, page 5, Feb. 17, 2011) should have emphasized Citizen Service Before Self Honors.

The Independent apologizes for any resulting confusion.




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