

Free workshop on bonding is CCRider part of award winning agency set for small businesses

Small businesses often face the daunting task of being "bondable." When it comes to working on government contracts in the transportation industry, being bonded is often a requirement. Now, a free six-week workshop will help small business owners in Oregon and southwest Washington find out just what it takes to become bonded and how to expand their existing bonding capacity. The free, 3-hour evening courses begin October 4 at the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs Center, 4134 N. Vancouver Ave. in Portland.

The Oregon Department of Transportation requested the workshop after learning of its successful pilot in Chicago, Dallas and Atlanta in 2010. The Bonding Education Program (BEP), a partnership between the U.S. Department of Transportation/Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, the Surety & Fidelity Association of America, and a host of local stakeholders, consists of educational workshops and bond readiness sessions.

The educational component offers an introductory session and five comprehensive workshops, each providing information related to improving a small contractor's operations –

with a goal of making it easier to be bonded or to increase bonding capacity. A final workshop focuses on networking and next steps.

The bond readiness component consists of one-on-one interactions with surety bond producers, underwriters and other professionals who work with the contractors on a case-by-case basis in assembling the materials necessary for a complete bond application and in addressing any omissions and/or deficiencies that might deter the successful underwriting of a bond.

The classes qualify for Construction Contractors Board license continuing education for Commercial and Residential contractors under the "elective" category. See the Construction Contractors Board Education page for additional information.

Businesses with no bonding and those who want to increase bonding capacity may be interested in this program. Businesses can apply at the Bonding Education Program event website, <http://bep.eventbrite.com/>.

For questions, contact Lily Keeffe, U.S. DOT/Northwest Small Business Transportation Resource Center, 425-248-4222 or lkeefe@snoedc.org.

The NW Oregon Transit Alliance, a five-agency rural transit partnership, received the Oregon Public Transit Division's System Innovation Award at the Oregon Transit Association Conference in Seaside. Convention attendees included over 250 transportation professionals from all over Oregon. The award honors a public transit project that has demonstrated innovative concepts or effective problem-solving techniques not previously applied in the public transit industry.

The five agencies that make up the NW Oregon Transit Alliance are Columbia County Rider Transportation, Sunset Empire Transportation District, Tillamook Transit District, Lincoln County Transit District and Linn/Benton Rural Transit.

The project is a collaborative effort of the five transit agencies to enhance the livability and economic vitality of the communities they service, while preserving their unique character. This is a landmark project for rural public transportation in Oregon, and a model for other communities and transit providers in the rest of the nation.

Funded through a \$3.5 million U.S. Department of Energy General Innovation Fund grant (through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), which is aimed at increasing transit use by commuters and visitors in rural northwest Oregon, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by making public transit options easy to use and relevant to visitors and everyday riders.

The goal of the project is to streamline connections between the Oregon Coast and the I-5 corridor; coordinate routes, schedules; and create a fare structure for travel focused on tourism. All of the tasks are crucial aspects of an integrated approach to creating a seamless regional transit system. The goals of this project are to remove transit barriers between counties, brand and market a regionalized system, and implement innovative partnerships with coastal business communities and the travel industry for long-term operational sustainability.

Additional tasks covered by the project are to improve service coordination and provide

better information systems for public use. As a part of that task the alliance has, through its Consultant, David Evans & Associates, developed site-specific branding that enhances the visibility of the system while lending itself to local ownership and participation.

The final piece is that of developing strategic partnerships, including the creation of a new

non-profit foundation to assist with fundraising and promotion of regional transit programs. As transportation budgets shrink, we expect this model to suit other regions across the country that will need to use their resources in a smarter, greener way.

For further information contact Janet Wright at 503-366-8504.

Vernonia City Council hears about downtown re-zoning

The Vernonia City Council had a light agenda for their September 17 meeting, with no new business, unfinished business, ordinances or resolutions to handle.

The meeting started with council consensus for Mayor Josette Mitchell to appoint Dennis Peters to the Airport Committee.

City Planner Carole Connell gave the council information on rezoning issues, including a plan to rezone three blocks of Rose Ave. and two blocks of Weed Ave. from General Residential to Downtown zone. The Planning Commission will hold a hearing on the zone changes tomorrow night, September 20, at 6:00 p.m. in city hall. The council will hold their hearing on the changes on October 1,

at 7:00 p.m., also at city hall.

Connell also told council that the Planning Commission will meet on November 19 on the proposed parking amendment for the downtown zone.

City Administrator Bill Haack told council he will be searching for a new year-round park host for Anderson Park and reviewing whether the city needs a park host at Vernonia Lake. Haack announced the hiring of Dan Kenoyer as a part-time Building and Grounds Maintenance employee. Haack also told council that the parks will get very little in the way of groundskeeping through the fall and winter due to budgetary constraints.

The next city council meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. on October 1 at city hall.

Forestry Department has set new fire precaution levels

The State of Oregon Department of Forestry announced new Fire Precaution Levels on September 17.

NW-1 district went to Level 2 Partial Shutdown between the hours of 1:00 and 8:00 p.m.

NW-2 and NW-3 districts went to Level 3. Cable yarding systems (motorized) may operate only as permitted and power saws are allowed only at loading sites and on tractor or skidder operations between 8:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. Between 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

there is a partial shutdown.

The full information can be found on the Oregon Department of Forestry website at <http://www.oregon.gov/odf/pages/fire/precautionlevel.aspx>.

Additionally, Longview Timberlands LLC has closed all their property in Oregon to public-recreational entry as of September 13, because of high forest-fire danger. For up-to-date information on their closures, go to www.longviewtimber.com.

Autumn officially arrives on September 22

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