



Work Session Summary Minutes

OREGON

Chamber Small Business Support Program Completion Reports

November 5, 2024. 1:30 PM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem

5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Kevin Cameron, Colm Willis, and Danielle Bethell.

Board's Office: Matt Lawyer, Chris Eppley, Alvin Klausen, and Trevor Lane.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

Community Services: Sarah Coutley, and Kellie Weese.

North Santiam Chamber: Mollie Richardson.

Stayton and Sublimity Chamber: Carmèlle Bielenberg.

Woodburn Chamber: John Zobrist.

Salem Chamber: Tom Hoffert.

Silverton Chamber: Stacy Palmer.

Jefferson Chamber: Patti Ball.

Keizer Chamber: Corri Falardeau.

Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

Focused on first-year completion reports of the Chamber Small Business Support Program. Seven out of eight chambers presented their projects. The Jefferson Area Chamber organized a trade fair and a Heroes Day, increasing community engagement. The Kaiser Chamber launched Leadership Kaiser, attracting new members. The North Santiam Chamber developed a new website to boost local business visibility. The Salem Area Chamber hosted a Lead Small Business Series, addressing critical business needs. The Silverton Chamber faced challenges with their digital tour but plans a holiday savings tour. The Stayton and Sublimity Chamber improved their website and added a text messaging app. The Woodburn Area Chamber enhanced their Business Resource Center, hosting various events and seminars.

Outline

Jefferson Area Chamber of Commerce Report

- The chamber was reborn after COVID with 22 members, up from two during the pandemic.
- A grant allowed the chamber to host a trade fair and job fair for high school students and the general public.

- The trade fair included presentations from new businesses and a community Facebook page for job opportunities.
- The chamber also funded flower baskets and banners for Main Street and organized a Heroes Day festival.

Kaiser Chamber of Commerce Report

- Launch of Leadership Kaiser:
 - Last held in 2012, was revived with a new curriculum and sponsorships.
- The program brought in 15 graduates and nine new chamber members.
- Participants visited local businesses and learned about community history and government operations.
- The program included a community project at Simonka's Place, planting succulents for a new garden.

North Santiam Chamber of Commerce Report

- Aimed to create a significant online presence to promote events and businesses.
- Website includes a directory of local businesses and links to community resources:
 - Funded by a grant and developed by a local company, Oregon Legacy Builders.
- The website is expected to help with membership recruitment and promoting local businesses.

Salem Area Chamber of Commerce Report

- Discussed the Lead Small Business Series:
 - The series was designed to support emerging entrepreneurs and extremely small businesses.
- It included topics like business financing, HR best practices, and mental health for small business owners.
- It was held in English and Spanish to ensure accessibility to the community.
- The chamber plans to continue the series quarterly.

Silverton Chamber of Commerce Report

- Uniquely Silverton digital tour:
 - Aimed to drive traffic to local businesses during the fall and winter months.
- The tour had 36 participants but did not generate the expected revenue.
- Learned the importance of having accurate photos and descriptions of businesses.
- A second tour, Peppermint Passport for the Holidays, is planned to drive traffic during the holiday season.

Stayton and Sublimity Chamber of Commerce Report

- A website and text messaging app project:
 - The website was updated to be more user-friendly and include a text messaging app for members.

- The app allows members to opt in to receive notifications about networking events and advocacy issues.
- Technology enhancements were added to the boardroom for better meetings.
- The website and app are expected to be completed by January 1.

Woodburn Area Chamber of Commerce Report

- The Business Resource Center:
 - Provides resources and support for local businesses, including seminars and a library.
- The center has hosted various events and breakout sessions for local businesses.
- The chamber is facing a potential relocation due to changes in the building lease:
 - Will continue providing resources and support for local businesses despite the relocation.

General Discussion and Closing Remarks

- The importance of mental health resources for small businesses.
- The commissioners offer to help with mental health outreach and youth engagement initiatives.
- The youth wage program is a potential area for improvement and increased engagement.

Action Items

- Explore partnership opportunities between the chambers and the county's public health division to enhance mental health awareness and support for small business owners.
- Provide the chambers with contact information for the county's public health youth programming advisory board to facilitate engagement and input.
- Follow up with the Workforce Partnership to discuss ways to improve marketing and engagement for the youth wage grant program.
- Invite the Workforce Partnership to present on the youth wage grant program at the chambers' networking events.

Adjourned – time: 2:47 p.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary White