

Wednesday, July 9, 2025



### **It's time to put Jobs first.**

Layoff notices and business closure are coming across my newsfeed daily. From Intel's downsizing to ODOT's pink notices to dozens now being let go from PGE. Powin's closure equals the loss of 245 jobs, not to mention 1000+ jobs lost due to Wells Fargo branch closures. I am sure I am not alone in my growing anxiety about what's happening to our regional and state workforce.

In the near term, we can and should expect them to impact consumer confidence with dampened economic activity across our region. However, we can and will weather this near-term storm by addressing the long-term health and stability of our economy with solutions that are already in front of us.

We need our elected leaders to head back down to Salem to negotiate a smart and comprehensive funding plan for ODOT. We need to ensure our state allocated CHIPS dollars are being invested wisely to bolster our semiconductor workforce. And we need to continue to lean into the diversification of our economy including energy production, transmission and storage, manufacturing and healthcare.

To put it differently, we want our legislators to take seriously the need to right-size their investments in quality jobs - also known as Economic Development. As my colleague at Greater Portland Inc, Monique Claiborne, wrote in her recent Op-Ed to the Oregonian "Economic development isn't a "nice to have." It's the foundation. Without growth, no amount of budget balancing will add up or deliver the safe streets, strong schools, clean parks and fast emergency response Oregonians want."

I've said this many times - including in our June newsletter - but I am saying it again here. In a state whose general fund is overly reliant on income tax - 82% this last biennium - we **MUST** care about job creation and retention. And with 73% of that general fund going to health and human services and education -- if you care about those critical services -- you, too, must care about jobs. And when we see mass layoffs from both the private and public sector, it is inevitable that there will be a shrinking pool of dollars to invest in the coming biennium.

Now is not the time for policymakers to hold out on bold investments in the economy. Kudos to Senator Janeen Sollman who **provided a remonstrance on economic development** and challenged her colleagues to stop biting around the edges and instead bring forward significant economic development programs that can supercharge our economy and ensure we stay competitive and attractive for investment.

As a state and a region, we shy away from direct conversations about Economic Development, afraid that folks will perceive us as 'corporatists' or apologists for capitalism. **Here's the reality: economic development investments are critical to how we create job growth.** And job growth means Oregonians can pay their rent and mortgages, pay their monthly bills, and save for their children's future. There is no such thing as a stable Oregon economy without private sector growth. That doesn't mean we throw Oregon values out the door. It means we align those investments with our values. But again, we must also right-size them. We are no longer in a place where small programs to test the water will solve the looming crisis.

It's time to think big. Take bold action. And I am here for it.

Let us know how Westside Economic Alliance can lean in on these solution-drive conversations.

*Elizabeth*

## WEA News and Notes



**NW Natural®**

### NW Natural Supporting Women in the Skilled Trades

WEA board member and annual partner NW Natural is proud to partner with Oregon Tradeswomen, a state-certified apprenticeship-readiness program dedicated to opening doors for women in the construction trades. By helping women build rewarding, high-wage careers, Oregon Tradeswomen is playing a key role in strengthening our region's skilled workforce and supporting economic stability.

This year, NW Natural continued its active support by engaging with job seekers at Oregon Tradeswomen's annual Career Fair, where students tried fusing polyethylene pipes and learned about working with liquefied natural gas. NW Natural also hosted more than 20 students from the current Oregon Tradeswomen cohort at their Sherwood Training Center for a hands-on day of simulator training, field staff demonstrations, and career exploration.

"Oregon Tradeswomen is truly grateful for NW Natural's partnership," said Trytten Essing, communications manager at Oregon Tradeswomen. "Their ongoing support gives students and jobseekers a unique chance to discover essential energy careers that offer living wages and meaningful community impact."

### Clean Water Services Advisory Commission (CWAC) Applications

Clean Water Services' Board of Directors is seeking applicants to serve a four-year term on its **Clean Water Services Advisory Commission (CWAC)**. The 15 members of CWAC review major policy issues and programs related to the management of water resources in the Tualatin River Watershed and make recommendations to the Board. The Clean Water Services Board also serves as the Washington County **Board of Commissioners**. Recruitment for four CWAC positions includes:



- **District 2 Representative:** Applicants must live in Washington County Commission District 2, which includes Bethany, Cedar Hills, Cedar Mill, Helvetia, Raleigh Hills, Rock Creek and portions of Beaverton and Hillsboro.
- **District At-Large Representative:** Applicants must live in Washington County.
- **Agricultural Representative #1:** Applicants for this position must own, manage or work for an agricultural business or organization that operates within Clean Water Services' boundaries.
- **Builder/Developer Representative #2:** Applicants for this position must own, manage or work for a home builder or developer that operates with Clean Water Services' boundaries.

More information about CWAC, including who currently serves on the Commission, frequency and length of meetings, etc. can be found [here](#).



## **Governor Kotek Launches Housing Accountability and Production Office (HAPO)**

In a step toward addressing Oregon's continuing housing crisis, Governor Tina Kotek recently launched the Housing Accountability and Production Office (HAPO). Created through Senate Bill 1537 and jointly led by the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and the Building Codes Division (BCD), this new office will support local governments and developers in meeting critical housing production goals.

HAPO is designed to streamline housing development across the state by providing technical assistance, enforcing housing laws, and serving as a centralized hub for coordinating state resources. It will help ensure that housing units at risk of delay or cancellation can move forward more efficiently, while also researching and guiding strategies to meet Oregon's long-term housing needs.

The office will be jointly managed by Joel Madsen and Tony Rocco. Madsen is an accomplished leader in the housing sector. Most recently, he was the Executive Director of a regional housing authority that promoted and administered affordable housing solutions across a five-county service area, including rural and urban counties. Madsen has served on many boards and task forces, including Governor Kotek's 2023 Housing Production Advisory Council. Rocco has worked in the local construction industry over the past 20-plus years, including time as a laborer, a licensed contractor, an Oregon certified home inspector, a small business owner and operator, and various regulatory roles with the Oregon Building Codes Division, part of the Department of Consumer and Business Services.

To learn more about HAPO's work and resources, visit their website [here](#).

## **WEA Board Member Worksystems Inc. continues great work in Washington County to Improve the Regional Workforce**



Washington County is partnering with Worksystems by continuing to invest in two key workforce development initiatives:

1. The **Career Start Program** offers short-term workforce preparation training, subsidized work experiences, and career coaching for participants in Washington County's

Supportive Housing Services program who have experienced homelessness and want to explore career pathways and employment opportunities.

2. **Pre-apprenticeships** expand the construction talent pool by equipping people with the skills needed to succeed and stay in Registered Apprenticeships. Funding from the county allows these programs to continue right in our community.

Worksystems co-invests more than \$1M to extend the reach of these and other programs on the westside. This co-investment significantly amplifies the County's impact, providing an efficient, high-return use of public dollars.

## Westside Scramble is Around the Corner



*There's No I in Team at WEA!*

Bring your friends and teammates  
for WEA's summer scramble as  
we celebrate Oregon sports.

📍 The Reserve Vineyard & Golf Club

📅 Monday, July 28

🕒 12:30 PM Start

🚩 Activities

Putt with Regional Elected Leaders |  
Lunch, Dinner and Beverages | Photo  
Booth | Find The Bobbleheads  
Scavenger Contest

🏆 Great Prizes | Hole In One Contest  
Wear sports themed gear





# *Be an All Star!*

## *Want to play or get involved?*

Reach out to Dani about sponsorships and teams of four.  
[danielle@westsidealliance.org](mailto:danielle@westsidealliance.org)

## *Thanks to Our Presenting Sponsor*

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