

---

# Building OUR **NEXT** Economy



## Regional Prosperity Economic Development Plan

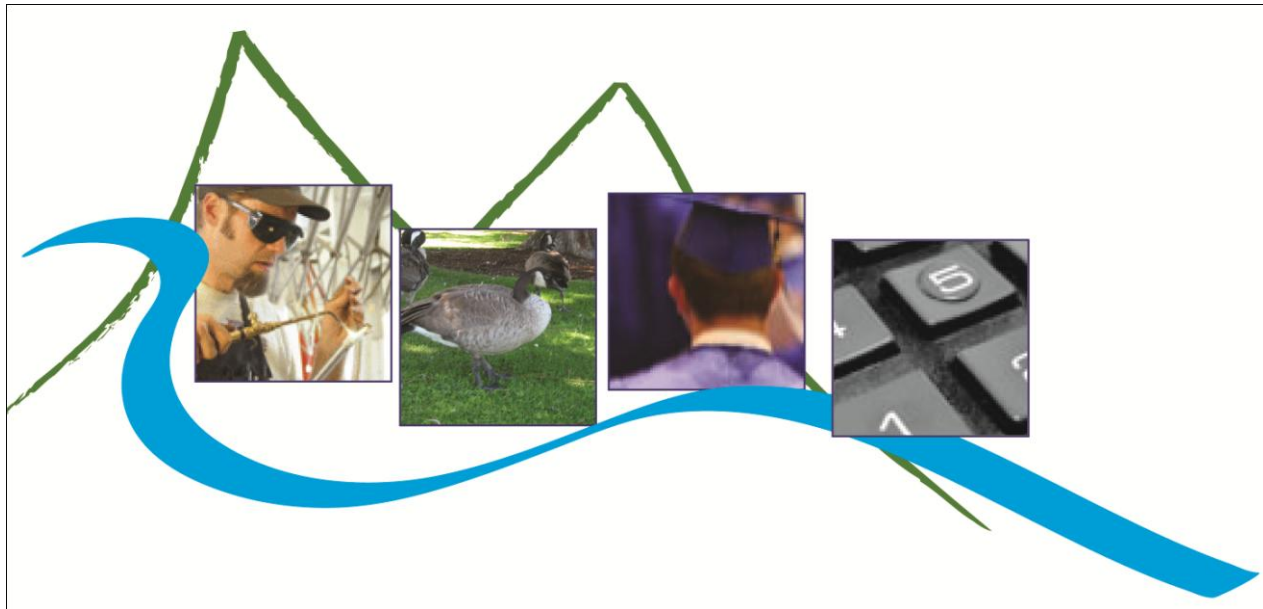
Jon Ruiz, City Manager, Eugene

Gino Grimaldi, City Manager, Springfield

Jeff Spartz, Lane County Administrator

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>WHY DO WE CARE?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>HOW WE GOT HERE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OUR NEXT ECONOMY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LAUNCHING US INTO THE NEXT ECONOMY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>9</b>



## WHY DO WE CARE?

The citizens of the Eugene-Springfield metro area have felt the burden of the financial crisis more so than in other counties and other states. The decline in local jobs, is putting a strain on city, county and state budgets and programs. The Eugene-Springfield metro area unemployment rate in July 2009 was 12.5%, a 6-percentage point increase over the last year, which is slightly higher than the state unemployment rate of 11.9%. The decline in the availability of local jobs has put increased pressure on social services. The number of cases in the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program for our local district has increased 18.5 percentage points over the past year. The number of applications for low-income housing in Lane County in 2008 increased 13 percentage points compared to the previous year. These programs are indicative that the economic crisis has significantly impacted our local economy and that the need for a regional, long-term strategy for not only economic recovery, but also economic prosperity is strong.

## HOW WE GOT HERE

The region's Joint Elected Officials, the City Councils of Eugene, Springfield, and the Lane County Commissioners, were seeking a way to respond to our economic crisis. The JEO put forward challenging goals:

“By 2020, create 20,000 net new jobs in the chosen economic opportunity areas; reduce the local unemployment rate to, or below the state average; and increase the average wage to or above the state average.”

The elected officials also put forward a few guiding principles to help focus and steer strategies towards those that would be most compatible with the assets and

values of the region. Resource challenge, science and knowledge based, globally interdependent, innovation driven.

The JEO formed a technical advisory group (TAG) composed of key business leaders and critical area partners who had a passion for our regional community, and was requested to develop recommendations on how to move our economy forward. This group crafted a set of strategies that the region should focus on to influence the economic development of the region. The strategies were then tested and discussed at a *Regional Economic Summit* held in November 2009. With over 300 participants, the *Summit* provided a broad community response to where our region needs to go and offered insights into the initiatives that government leaders need to embark on.

## PRINCIPLES

The elected officials from our region set a goal for the region to work towards, as well as a few guiding principles that were used to help focus the strategies towards those that would be compatible with the assets and values our region boasts.

**Healthy Living** – Championing businesses and entrepreneurs that promote a healthy, safe, and clean community while enhancing, protecting, and making wise use of our natural resources.

**Smart Growth** – Encourage a culture of entrepreneurship and re-investment into our local community.

**Be Prepared** – Develop the region’s physical, social, educational, and workforce infrastructure to meet the needs of tomorrow.

**Local Independence** – Promote local businesses and entrepreneurs that lead our area to a higher level of economic independence and resilience.

**Regional Identity** – Create a stronger economic personality that celebrates our region’s attributes and values.

“There are some that will say the goals are too big. That we won’t be able to both decrease unemployment and increase median income... There are some that will continue to say we won’t be able to work together as jurisdictions. I think that what we have today and as we move forward, is proving that that isn’t the case. That there is a commitment to doing all of those kinds of things.”

- Jon Ruiz, City Manager, Eugene

“Members of our communities are in need. Housing prices have fallen and we've seen unprecedented levels of unemployment. Those with jobs are not seeing the growth opportunities once available through their employers. We need economic development policies that address these concerns and we need to work together to create an economy that provides those good jobs now.”

**Lane County  
Commissioner Pete  
Sorenson**

## OUR NEXT ECONOMY

### STRATEGIES FOR THE NEXT ECONOMY

The TAG recommended a set of high-priority strategies for the region. These strategies create the vision for how governments, businesses, and community members can work together to help the Eugene-Springfield metro area achieve economic sustainability. This set of strategies were tested at the *Regional Economic Summit* and proved to be successful in establishing a framework for decision-making for community partners within Eugene, Springfield, and Lane County.

### GROWING LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

Our region should take initiatives that support the growth and development of local businesses that generate quality jobs. We recognize the crucial role existing area businesses play in sustaining the health of the local economy and in creating job opportunities. Efforts should be directed at supporting the operating needs of local businesses as well as meeting their needs for expansion and growth.

### CREATIVE ECONOMY

The Eugene-Springfield metro area needs to work towards providing easier and faster access to resources for start-ups and new ventures. We need to enhance and connect facilities, networks, and services within our region to encourage the creation of new ventures, and the growth and development of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

### TALENT FOR TOMORROW

We need to appeal to the next generation of “knowledge workers.” We need to look for initiatives that will help us train, attract, and maintain a competitive workforce that meets emergency industry needs, stimulates business development, and highlights the vitality and appeal of our region. Fostering a dynamic partnership between education, industry, and workforce development to forecast and meet the training needs of area businesses is crucial for our region’s citizens and businesses.

We recognize the importance of a skilled workforce for the prosperity of the region. By expanding access to academic and occupation training for all Lane County residents, with special focus given to lower-skilled and lower-wage workers, we can expand the ready workforce in Lane County.

“A talented workforce is the key to our region’s economic success. Building programs, partnerships and a regional culture that values learning and entrepreneurial spirit and creativity will help us grow, and attract innovative talent to our region.”

Richard Lariviere,  
University of Oregon  
President, from his keynote address at the *Regional Prosperity Summit*.

---

## BASIC NEEDS OF BUSINESS

In order to meet the very basic needs of any business, we need to prepare the infrastructure, land, and workspace to provide for future growth. Initiatives should strengthen the coordination between infrastructure, planning and investments, land use, and economic development goals to create attractive and modern business locations.

---

## LIVE THE GOOD LIFE

Our area boasts the physical beauty, and natural and recreational amenities that create a lifestyle that few would contest. We need to promote the region's quality of life that attracts people to the area and builds on our dynamic community. Our region's economic quality of life benefits from the staying power businesses have because their employees choose to live and grow in our community.

---

## KEY INDUSTRIES

We can continue to support the development of sectors that have built a strong economic foundation for our community and have complemented our region's quality of life, such as:

- Transportation/Manufacturing
- Wood Manufacturing
- Health Care
- Construction

The region should also focus on developing our innovative culture to support the emerging opportunities within our local economy, such as:

- Health/Wellness
- Advanced Manufacturing (technologically rich, innovative manufacturing)
- Software
- Clean Tech / Renewable Energy
- Biomedical

---

## LAUNCHING US INTO THE NEXT ECONOMY

The *Regional Prosperity Summit* gathered leaders from business, government and the community and honed in on the critical initiatives that will launch our region into the next economy.

## NETWORKS, NETWORKS, AND MORE NETWORKS

Networks are needed for several types of information. A stronger network of financiers will help to bring more innovative ideas to market. As more entrepreneurs are trying to sell their services and products, a network of marketers will be useful. As the new businesses begin to grow, a network of mentors are needed to help those new businesses through their growth stages. A “Birth to Three” network for entrepreneurs will create an environment for the entrepreneur where they can get the help they need when they needed.

- Create a *Birth to Three* network where entrepreneurs, business owners/managers can go for mentorship in the major areas of running a business, such as financial management, marketing, production, leadership, etc.

## THE HEART OF LANE BUSINESS

The most common recommendation from the *Regional Prosperity Summit* was a one-stop resource center for all things business. An entrepreneur could come to this information hub, both physically and virtually, and receive troubleshooting assistance on financing, marketing, or leadership, connections to other agencies and department, enrollment into business trainings, and an enrollment into an appropriate network for ongoing support. This business assistance center acts as the expert in regional resources for entrepreneurs and business owners of all kind. It is the heart to Lane County business development.

- Create a business assistance center where entrepreneurs, business owners/managers can go, whether virtually or physically, to get information and assistance related to business management and growth within our region.

## A LEARNING COMMUNITY

*Summit* participants expressed the needs to improve the basic and applied skills of young people in the region as they prepare to enter the labor force. Active partnerships between the business community and local schools were suggested with a focus on work experience through internships and mentorships. This type of business-to-school partnership represents a real opportunity to provide young workers-to-be with valuable economic life skills.

- Improve the basic and applied skills of young people in the region as they prepare to enter the labor force. This effort must begin with school readiness for kindergarten, ensure high school graduation, include vocational/technical training, and internships and mentorships, and provide paths to higher education.

“Economic recovery and our very future, depends on a strong, healthy education system. We are proud of the quality of students produced in our metro area and we must continue to creatively focus on developing our future workforce right here at home.”

**Springfield  
Mayor Sid  
Leiken**

## A FOCUSED REGION

Our regional values need to drive the creation of our regional economic identity. Marketing a regional identity will increase our area's ability to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage in a global marketplace. Our identity influences the regional behavior in the marketplace and describes our community's values to businesses and talent around the world. A regional identity will help us align our strategies, our resources, our partnerships, and our assets for economic success.

- Create a regional economic identity, capitalizing on assets that will identify our region as a significant economic center.

## NEW PARTNERS

New investment coming to the region will be an important complement to the growth of local business in providing for the region's future economic health. A sustained effort to reach out to prospective investment, respond to their questions and needs, and successfully recruit new businesses to the area is an important part of a sound economic development strategy. Many of these efforts are already in place. The region also has an important partnership with the State of Oregon to address national and international markets.

- Develop and sustain a business expansion, attraction and retention program with emphasis on traded-sector companies. Sustain and expand the economic recruitment efforts in place for the region. The partnership with the State of Oregon should also be further fostered and developed. The regional identity (addressed in the previous initiative) will be used to refine and focus the efforts.

## URBAN VITALITY

The distinctiveness of a region and a community is an important asset in retaining talent and businesses, as well as attracting new talent and investment. The region has always been fortunate to have many such "place-based" assets in its outdoor recreational amenities and great variety of natural features. The emergence of the creative economy has created new interest in urban downtowns as entertainment and cultural centers. Both Eugene and Springfield, as well as many of the smaller communities in the region, recognize the importance of supporting and enhancing vitality in their downtowns. Building downtowns as places to live, work and play will support the retention and expansion of the existing business community and be a significant asset to attract new investment.

- The Cities of Eugene and Springfield should continue and enhance their efforts to promote downtown vitality through development and redevelopment. Other Cities in the region should also look for

"Our region is blessed with tremendous assets and a wealth of local ingenuity, and this Summit is an opportunity for us to work together to best capitalize on those assets and develop creative strategies and actions to move our economy forward."

Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy, from her opening remarks at the *Regional Prosperity Summit*.

opportunities to enhance core commercial and downtown areas as part of their economic development strategies.

- Inventory and assess adequacy of industrial land availability in support of expansion, attraction and retention in conjunction with comprehensive land assessment process.

---

## A REGION WORKING TOGETHER

One common thread of feedback from the *Regional Prosperity Summit* was the positive direction that our government leaders are taking by pulling our communities together to act as one economic region. Moving forward as one region, not several, will create a positive inertia that will move us forward into the next economy faster than if we work alone. Our next economy will be stronger and more resilient by moving forward together.

- Create a Regional Prosperity Council that acts as the guiding coalition for the implementation of the regional strategy; initiates and presides over an on-going conversation on topics such as demographic shifts, applications of emerging technologies and best practices in supporting the strategy.

“Collectively, we move towards that which we believe to be true. If we believe we will be able to reap prosperity in this region, decrease unemployment, increase median income, we are encouraged and hopeful that we will move in that direction.”

■ *Jon Ruiz, City Manager, Eugene*

## TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS:

Dave Hauser, Eugene Chamber of Commerce

Caroline Cummings, Eugene Chamber of Commerce

Dan Egan, Springfield Chamber of Commerce

Natasha Boska, Springfield Chamber of Commerce

Jack Roberts, Lane Metro Partnership

Tim Duy, University of Oregon

Shawn Winkler-Rios, E-Dev

Sue Kesey, Springfield Creamery

Nancy Bigley, Outback Steakhouse

Ann Marie Mehlum, Summit Bank

Chuck Forster, Lane Workforce Partnership

Robin Onaclea, Lane Workforce Partnership

Leroy Marney, President Lane, Coos, Curry, Douglas Counties, Oregon State Building Trades Council

Jon Ruiz, City Manager, Eugene

Gino Grimaldi, City Manager, Springfield

Jeff Spartz, Lane County Administrator