OREGON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

McMinnville ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Co-Chair Senator Johnson and Co-Chair Representative Jenson and members of the Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

I am Jody Christensen – the Executive Director of the McMinnville Economic Development Partnership and the current President for the Oregon Economic Development Association, also referred to as OEDA.

OEDA is the statewide association for economic development professionals – we currently have over 85 member organizations. OEDA advocates, educates, and collaborates around strategic economic development practices.

Over many years, Business Oregon and OEDA have collaborated on numerous valuable projects including our statewide training, seminars, and program delivery. Today, I want to share with you two recent projects - first, is our partnership on the STEP grant which will allow us deliver important technical export services training for economic development professionals in rural communities. Another important partnership is on the TEAM Oregon Food Processing initiative.

The TEAM was formed in 2010 as a result of a survey that identified food processing as an industry sector that our members felt was emerging and would be enhanced with collaborative efforts. The TEAM, supported by Business Oregon, has over 30 members from rural and urban organizations. We have quickly become known as the leading experts around the food processing industry including supply chain and co-packing opportunities.

I would like to take a moment to talk about the Business Oregon resources that have been accessed in my community in Yamhill County. You may have seen the recent video lottery commercial featuring one of our companies, Betty Lou's Inc. – this story is a stunning success for our community, but I am here to tell you that the Business Oregon team was and continues to be a critical partner in the company's growth. At every point and at every juncture, Business Oregon stood at the ready with resources and technical support. Betty started 30 years ago in her home kitchen. Today, she employs over 180 full time employees in three shifts. I saw her last week and she shared with me that they are exceeding their own expectations of growth.

Several other projects are in the works to expand in McMinnville – Projects Skywalker, Farmer, Citrus and Flame – we accessing Business Oregon's programs including low interest financing, technical expertise, export connections and other resources.

In addition, I wanted to share with you that my organization The McMinnville Economic Development Partnership's Board of Directors recognized Business Oregon as our Partner of the Year.

I could spend more time telling you about the importance and valuable relationship OEDA, MEDP and other organizations have with Business Oregon , but I know you are about to hear from Gary Smith from Construction Equipment Company - his story is where the rubber meets the road.

I ask that you continue to support Business Oregon and its program that have been instrumental in success projects all over the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Jody Christensen
Oregon Economic Development Association
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