

CITY OF HALSEY
PO Box 10, 100 West Halsey St., Halsey OR 97348

PH: (541) 369-2522
FAX: (541) 369-2521
TTY: (800) 735-2900

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SB5524

Joint Ways and Means Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

To the Members of the Committee:

The City of Halsey has directly benefited from the **Rural Opportunities Initiative (ROI)**. In a very short time it has had a **real impact** on our community, bringing an essential service to Halsey that we have not had access to in the past. It is flexible, innovative and effective, and we are writing to ask you to find the funds necessary to continue the program.

For a small town like Halsey, economic development isn't about wealth. It is about building a healthy, energetic and resilient community. It is about having a few more people who can work locally instead of commute. It is about enabling our citizens to better support their families, and it is also about being able to go out to dinner or get a haircut without driving to another city.

A little over a year ago, eight small cities from rural Linn and Benton County applied for an ROI grant together, intending to use this program to work together *regionally*. The strong partnership that has emerged as part of this experience will last beyond our work with RAIN. **We will do together what each of us could not afford to do alone.**

With the help of the Regional Opportunities Initiative and this partnership, Halsey has hosted multiple events for entrepreneurs and classes for small business owners in our community center. We've had two new entrepreneurs seeking physical space to take their businesses to the next level. We have a new entrepreneurial business growing on a lot on the corner of Hwy 99 and Hwy 228 that had been empty and weed filled for over ten years. It employs six local people. We have also created a "Business Development Toolkit" full of local resources to put in the hands of anyone interested in starting up or needing resources to support their business.

There is no Economic Development Director for rural Linn County. Large, urban centers can afford to offer economic development services and resources that small, rural communities often cannot.

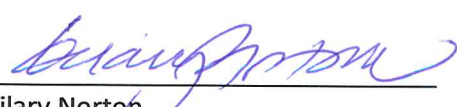
The ROI doesn't just level the playing field. It enables small communities to take a "Grassroots" approach to economic development. We work with local entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial businesses to help them get the support and resources they need to take their ideas to the next level. It grants needed resources to help small rural communities build *ourselves*.

We urge you to fund the Rural Opportunities Initiative, to ensure that rural communities across Oregon continue to have access to this essential resource.

Yours Respectfully,



Jerry Lachenbruch
Mayor



Hilary Norton
City Administrator