

Local Prineville economic development program launches

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

In April, Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) will make significant progress toward a dedicated, local program to lead economic development for Prineville and Crook County. The effort is a partnership between EDCO, the Prineville/Crook County Chamber of Commerce, Crook County, the City of Prineville, and local businesses. The partnership is the result of more than two years of collaborative community discussion, preparation, and funding efforts. Modeled after a similar partnership EDCO and Redmond Economic Development, Inc. forged more than four years ago for the Redmond community, the new Prineville program extends the EDCO Board of Directors'™ vision to deliver optimal economic development with a strong regional effort combined with local resources closely tied to their communities.

“We believe that EDCO has had a great relationship and track record with this part of the Central Oregon region over the past two and a half decades, but the Redmond model demonstrates that the combination of regional and local resources is the best way to do economic development,” said Jean Wood, EDCO President. “We are very excited about this new partnership.”

In March, two of three critical financial milestones were met when Crook County and the City of Prineville each approved their 2007-08 budgets providing combined public funding of \$50,000 for the first year. The third goal - to raise a minimum of \$10,000 for first year funding and \$34,000 over three years from private business contributions - was recently achieved by the Prineville/Crook County Chamber of Commerce. Spearheading the effort were Executive Director Diane Bohle and Vice-Chair Bryan Iverson, also a member of the EDCO Board of Directors. These resources will be combined with a \$50,000 grant awarded to the effort by Les Schwab Tire Centers in mid-December.

The next action step is official approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between EDCO and the Chamber, which is scheduled for the April 4th board meeting of the Chamber. In the meantime, EDCO will publicize the position in preparation for hiring a full-time professional economic development manager for the new program and finalize location of the new office in Prineville. Other steps to be taken include formation of an 11-member Advisory Board by the Chamber and selection of a local hiring panel for candidate interviews. It is expected that interviews will be held toward the end of April and selection made by the first week of May.

As with the Redmond Economic Development program, the effort is focused on producing tangible results for the community and local economy. Metrics for measurement include a target number of new, traded-sector jobs, taxable capital investment, number of companies which were provided substantive assistance and completion of strategic projects that help improve the community's business climate or ability to attract and retain industry. Efforts of the program are focused on helping both local existing companies as well as new employers recruited to the community.

For more information about the new program and position, visit <http://www.edcoinfo.com/.docs/pg/10282>

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