



Oregon Rural Development Council Overview

The Oregon Rural Development Council (ORDC) was established in the early 1990s as part of a national initiative creating State Rural Development Councils (SRDCs) to promote rural program and policy coordination at the state, regional, and federal levels. SRDCs are comprised of representation and leadership from broad-based interests including federal, state, and local government, tribes, nonprofit, educational, and business sectors. Consistent with the SRDC initiative, the ORDC remains politically neutral, serves as a convener to address rural needs and issues, and includes diverse representation. ORDC core values include:

- Inclusiveness
- Non-competition with partners
- Collaboration to solve problems

Since its inception, the ORDC has built a profile of convening events and addressing rural issues work at the local, state, regional, and federal levels. Over the years, the ORDC has helped leverage millions of dollars for infrastructure, economic development, programs, and community projects for rural Oregon.

ORDC Mission & Vision

The Oregon Rural Development Council mission is to “promote rural development by focusing government, private and non-profit resources to assist rural Oregon in building long-term livability.”

The ORDC holds, as a central value, the integration of the working landscape with the social, economic, cultural, and environmental fabric of Oregon. The ORDC is also guided by the following vision:

- Celebrate the successes of rural Oregon in building adaptable, healthy economies, social systems, and environments. Through a dynamic, results-oriented process, the ORDC honors history, respects a sense of place, and is continually learning how to increase prosperity and quality of life throughout rural Oregon.
- Collaboratively partner to provide an open, accessible forum involving community and tribal governments,

private-sector businesses and associations, and state and federal agencies to identify, communicate and solve social, economic and environmental concerns.

- Meet in rural communities to listen and share ideas that capitalize on opportunities and solve problems. ORDC brings educational information addressing community solutions; helps develop community leadership skills; and links communities to information, expertise, technical assistance and funding resources.
- Enhance rural communities' ability to prosper by breaking down and overcoming statutory and administrative barriers. ORDC addresses the root cause of issues by identifying barriers and seeking resolution on local, state and national levels.
- Coordinate intergovernmental collaborative funding processes that listen to, honor, and take action on community priorities.
- Share common issues and opportunities; advocate for systemic change that will benefit rural Oregon.
- Address pertinent issues and actions through a strong committee structure that is built around key issues identified by rural Oregon communities.

Local Forums

ORDC has conducted forums in every county of Oregon. Historically the format included presentations on the local area, highlighting local projects and successes and problem solving to address challenges and target resources. Many state, federal, tribal, organizational, and community partners attended these meetings which brought resources and expertise to the table on behalf of local communities. ORDC was involved with “Needs and Issues” and original State Community Economic Revitalization Teams (SCERT), convening local forums in communities to interface with the broad cross section of state, federal, local, tribal, non-profit, educational, business, and other stakeholders. These meetings helped leverage millions of dollars for infrastructure, economic development and community projects in Oregon during the

1990s. ORDC received a national Rural Impact Award for addressing a regulatory barrier for local renewable energy in Central Oregon through one of these forums.

Partnership Support

ORDC has for many years dedicated funds to support partner initiatives. Examples include funding for a Tribal Tourism Guide created through the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), support for the Business Alliance for Sustainable Energy (BASE) in Central Oregon and renewable energy forums, and support for Rural Development Initiatives' (RDI) Regards to Rural Conference for the past several years. ORDC also has supported continued involvement with national affiliates including Partners for Rural America (PRA) to continue participation with the State Rural Development Council network nationally.

Rural Oregon Days

ORDC has worked with partners to organize Rural Oregon Day more than ten years. Rural Oregon Day has served as a way for rural community residents, leaders, and advocates to raise awareness of rural issues, as well focus on key issues for consideration by the State Legislature and Governor. Rural Oregon Day has had participation from the Governor's office every year with a proclamation and most often as a speaker. In 2006 ORDC and partners, including the Governor's Office of Rural Policy, convened the Oregon Rural Policy Forum in Pendleton as a Rural Oregon Day in the field. Recommendations from the forum included creating a long-range water resources plan for Oregon. The idea was moved forward by Governor Kulongoski and has evolved into the Oregon Integrated Water Resources Strategy adopted in 2012.

Rural Policy Forums

In 2008, ORDC conducted a number of local rural policy forums highlighting issues of water quality on the South Coast and renewable energy in Lake and Klamath Counties. The forums, which included the Governor's office and state Legislative leaders from these areas, included presentations from local leaders about water quality problems in lakes along the south coast and renewable energy project initiatives in Lake County. The Lake County forum served as an opportunity for agencies including USDA Rural Development to market business programs that led to support for local projects in Lake

County. Follow-up by stakeholders, including the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), leveraged resources for replacing septic tanks around Garrison Lake in Port Orford, which was a problem area highlighted at the South Coast forum in 2008. ORDC is interested in supporting future forums.

Western Regional Rural Summit

In 2010, ORDC helped Partners for Rural America (PRA) organize a multi-state regional summit involving a wide range of stakeholders throughout the West. The event brought together USDA Rural Development State Directors, state government, local entities, organizations, banks, tribes, and community representatives throughout the West to focus on strategies on economic development, energy, food systems, and telecommunications. As follow-up, ORDC convened the Oregon Rural Partnership Work Session with partners from local, state, federal, nonprofit, and educational sectors in Cottage Grove which recommended improving information sharing and coordination of resources for rural Oregon.

Contacts

Megan Smith, ORDC Co-chair, (541) 346- 3881, smith@uoregon.edu

Chris Marko, ORDC Co-chair, (503) 228-1780, cmarko@rcac.org

ORDC Executive Committee

Megan Smith, University of Oregon

Chris Marko, Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Vicki L. Walker, USDA Rural Development

Doug Carlson, US Housing and Urban Development

Karen Chase, Energy Trust of Oregon

Scott Ekblad, Oregon Health Sciences University

Lisa Dawson, Northeast Oregon Economic Development District

Heidi Khokhar, Rural Development Initiatives

Annette Liebe, Governor's Office

David Porter, Economic Development Administration (Ex Officio)

Mallory Rahe, Oregon State University

John Audley, Consultant for the Oregon Business Council

Ron Saranich, USDA Forest Service

Greg Wolf, Association of Oregon Counties

Jill Rees, USDA Rural Development (Ex Officio)

Vacant Positions:

Tribal Organization

Traditionally Underserved Community Representative

Philanthropic Organization

