

Let's Keep Connected (LKC)

Tuesday, April 14, 2020 - 11:30am

Speakers:

Brad Attig, Corvallis Foundry (moderator)

Patrick O'Connor, Oregon Employment Department

Mike Vanier, Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP)

Kate Porsche, Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office

Anne Whittington, LBCC SBDC

Key Points:

1. Oregon Employment Department Update
2. Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP) Overview & Update
3. Updates from Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office and LBCC SBDC

Summary:

1. Oregon Employment Department (OED) Update

Patrick O'Connor, regional economist, joined the Town Hall to give participants an update on the economy and unemployment. He has been with the Oregon Employment Department, where he has worked the past 17 years. Patrick covers Benton, Linn, Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties. In this role, Patrick produces county-level employment estimates by industry, unemployment rates and 10-year industry and occupational employment projections for the area.

Patrick shared lots of good stats from OED. These are the highlights:

- Statewide, the weekly initial UI claims filed went from 92,700 for the week ending March 28 to 100,700 for the week ending April 4.
- 269,900 initial UI claims have been filed in Oregon over the past three weeks. During that three week period 123,100 claims have been processed.
- For comparison, net job loss for Oregon totaled 147,800 for the duration of the Great Recession.
- Benton County residents have filed 1,859 initial claims processed the past three weeks. Statewide, 123,100 initial UI claims have been processed in Oregon over that three week period. From January 1, 2020 to March 14, 2020 Benton County had 171 initial UI claims.
- Nearly half (49%) of Benton County's initial claims in the past three weeks have been in accommodation and food services and health care and social assistance.
- More than one quarter (26%) of Benton County's initial claims the past three weeks have been in retail trade, construction and manufacturing.

- The Oregon Employment Department processed more initial UI claims in the first quarter of 2020 than we did for the entire year in 2019.

Patrick emphasized the good news is that everything is in response to the virus. The economy, in terms of employment, was doing really well before the virus hit. While it may take some time, the economy should return to where we were. Many businesses have been put in a “medically-induced coma”, but there will be demand for these things again when we “wake up”.

Q: Do you project that the fact that people are earning more in UI than working will stop them from going back to work when the time comes?

A: There could be an incentive to stay home and stay healthy. However, for now, the extra federal stimulus is set to end July 25. - *Patrick O'Connor, Oregon Employment Department*

The Oregon Employment Department is open, but not to the public. They are [hiring](#).

2. Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP) Overview & Update
OMEP works side by side with Oregon manufacturers to build successful businesses. They draw on their team’s significant depth and breadth of real-world manufacturing experience bringing a thoughtful problem-solving approach to eliminating obstacles companies face. They have satellite offices throughout the state.

Mike Vanier joined us and started the discussion with a Powerpoint presentation. There are 3 main areas that they help with:

- Business Financials and Strategy
- Manufacturing Operations
- Workforce Solutions

They have recently added:

- Business Continuity Support - to help manufacturers develop strategy and execution in their specific areas of need during this uncertain time.

Mike mentioned that current clients are finding success in pivoting their business model to fill current market needs. Retooling for statewide PPE needs has been successful. OMEP’s typical client sales range from 1-30 million, however a majority of these businesses have 50 employees or less. That being said, businesses who are smaller in employee or revenue count can still reach out to OMEP for support.

OMEP is offering weekly educational [webinars](#) and has a list of [COVID-19 resources](#) for manufacturers.

Q: Is OMEP helping manufacturers retool to making PPE?

A: Yes, OMEP is working with a handful of clients in the medical device, apparel design, and machine shop space to create needed PPE that fit local, state, and federal PPE standards. - *Mike Vanier, Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP)*

For more information or manufacturing assistance, people can contact Mike at mvanier@omep.org

3. Updates from Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office and LBCC SBDC

Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office

Kate Porsche, Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Manager, joined the town hall to highlight that her office is continuing to work with the Benton County Commissioners to develop a loan/grant program in Benton County. She excitedly announced that the funding is becoming real, real quick. The program will most likely mirror that of a recent program that the City of Albany rolled out that focused on funds being used as a bridge loan. More information forthcoming on Thursdays Town Hall.

Kate also mentioned that Visit Corvallis updated and revamped the [Complete Benton County Business Guide](#), which is now easily accessible and searchable. To be included, or update information on the Complete Benton County Business Guide, please fill out [this form](#).

LBCC SBDC

Anne Whittington, an advisor with the LBCC SBDC joined us to highlight their upcoming [online classes](#). They have been working hard, assisting local businesses through the SBA and other loan programs. Anne was happy to announce that clients have indicated they are starting to see their EIDL funds come through.
