

## **Update with EDC**

**May 3, 2021**

**1:32 p.m.**

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Erik Martin, Richard DeBolt, Katie Conradi

Guest(s): Susan DeLaire, Claudia Yaw, Edna Fund, Nic Scott

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Richard DeBolt was sad to announce the Post-COVID Economic Summit has been postponed until September.

Richard said that because of the government stimulus and the unemployment benefits, there has been a supply shortage because of the lack of people working. There has also been a large disconnect between manufacturers, distributors and the suppliers. The LEDC has noticed a lag in workforce. There was a recent job fair in a county to the south of Lewis County that only had 1 person attend. There is an abundance of jobs at the distribution centers.

Richard said the state Legislature had a good capital budget for this year's session and the budget includes funding for the PUD substation in Winlock. The groundbreaking has already begun and there will be more options for skilled jobs. Richard did say the governor did not sign the Distressed Communities' Fund during this last session, but he has a call to the Governor scheduled next week to address his concerns.

Richard met with Department Commerce about a TIF (Tax Interest Finance) tool. This takes the place of fees and infrastructure needs can be met in different ways. He is trying to pilot a regional blanket TIF. Commissioner Pollock said in the past, there were issues with TIFs and wanted to know how this would be different. Richard said that there has to be proof the TIF can be paid. The model used would have tighter requirements. The revenue model would only be used if voted for by the Board of Commissioners. This would be a more conservative tool to use for future projects as TIFs impact the growth.

The grain terminal facility has received new monetary allocations from the latest budget session. Richard said it is a valuable tool having the grain terminal facility and the opportunities it will provide.

Richard is currently working with his Board to have a guiding document to help the EDC function for the next two years. This will be a living document to be updated as needed.

Richard said there are uncertainties about COVID-19 due to possible rollbacks. The Lewis EDC have created a fund for local business owners and have raised \$9,000 to help with issues as they come forward.

There are several infrastructure opportunities for Lewis County with the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds. The Lewis EDC had a "Dig Once" program and this is to help with projects. The idea is to maximize multiple construction projects in one area at the same time.

There have been multiple areas of interest in building in Lewis County ports. The interested party from Hillsboro, Oregon, is multi inter-faceted in that they include housing and shopping. The EDC does not focus on retail. The EDC focuses on manufacturing and with manufacturing, retail business will come. They partner with the Chamber of Commerce to utilize resources and create alliances.

Richard said that he appreciates the opportunity to speak to the Commissioners. The annual banquet will be in August. Commissioner Stamper said he appreciates Richard DeBolt for his work and support for businesses in Lewis County.

Adjourned 2:07 p.m.