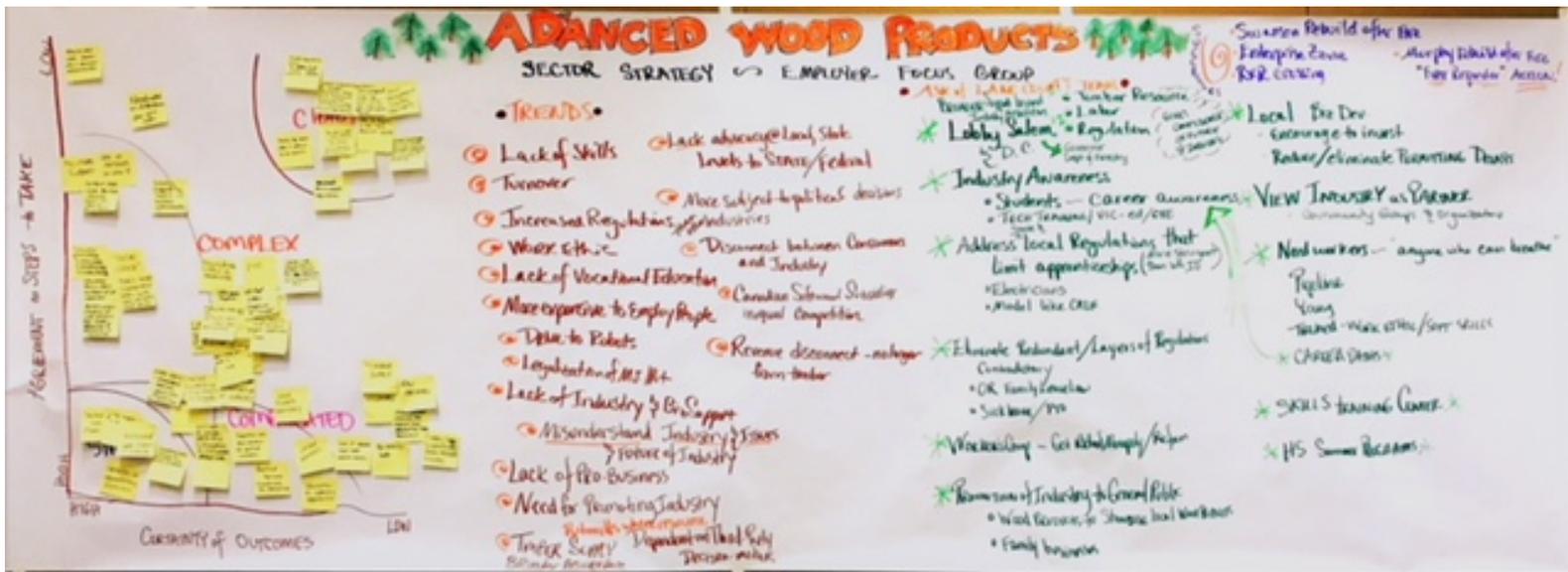


**Lane County Sector Strategy Team Meeting
December 19, 2017
Meeting Notes**

Advanced Wood Products (Courtney Griesel and Sarah Means)

Courtney provided a summary of the Advanced Wood Products Industry Convening that took place on November 28. This was an opportunity to bring advanced wood products management leaders together in a room for facilitated dialogue. These leaders are dealing with manufacturing processes ranging from supply, innovation and testing, and workforce issues, etc. During the meeting, the facilitator had the industry leaders break out into small groups and identify barriers to their success. The responses were then charted (see below).



The industry leaders were then asked to identify action items. As noted on the chart, there are some big asks as well as some very tangible asks. Following the convening, four key focus areas were identified. These areas represent where working groups can be formed: Advocacy and Regulation; Industry Appreciation and Promotion; Workforce Development; and Technical Assistance. Sarah provided more detail on the four key areas and time was given for individuals to sign-up to participate on a working group. The work groups will be provided with draft strategies and actions as a starting point.

Each working group will be chaired by an expert in the topic area. Committee Chairs will meet together after the first of the year to discuss the tasks ahead and plans for implementation for individual workgroup meetings.

- Advocacy and Regulation: Commissioner Sid Leiken, Lane County
- Industry Appreciation and Promotion: Kari Westlund, Travel Lane County
- Technical Assistance: Mary Craighead, Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- Workforce Development: Tony Scurto, Lane ESD

Tech Sector Updates (Matt Sayre)

In 2015 when we started this work, there were 418 tech companies – there are now 443. We are seeing continued growth not only in the diversity of the tech sector but also in the total number of tech companies. Highlights of the last 90 days or so include:

- Hosted a delegation of tech companies for an Oregon Football tailgate (*Courtney Griesel provided the update*): Lane County as well as the cities of Springfield and Eugene were very involved with this initiative. 20 companies attended the tailgate. This was part of a larger initiative where companies were taken to sites for expansion, office space, open land; introduced to talent and other local employers; winery tour; etc. We really pulled out all the stops but did so in a way that was low cost due to local business support.
- Connected to resources around the state and one another: Due to its membership base, TAO has the ability to leverage its bulk buying power for health insurance coverage. They were able to craft a plan that has Providence as the underlying carrier. All of the companies that have switched in the last 90 days have saved money. Matt doesn't believe this is unique to TAO – possibly something that the Food and Beverage Sector can leverage as well.
- Elevate Lane County (*Heidi Larwick provided the update*). This is a school to work program that provides opportunities for middle school and high school students with career connected learning. Students participate in job shadows, internships, industry tours, etc. The program is really about getting students into the workplace so that they can experience what happens outside of the classroom. In addition, we help educate the teachers so that they can bring knowledge back to the classroom. Last summer, 12 teachers participated in summer externships. Within the next school year we will increase CTE and Information Tech/Computer Science curriculum by 600% across Lane County.
- Apprenti (*Jessica McCormick provided the update*): Apprenti is the first federally recognized and registered tech apprenticeship in the nation, and Oregon is the second state to implement this program. Lane County is the first region in the state to pilot the program. Last week we gained a lot of momentum with Governor Brown's visit. She was able to speak with local industry representatives on their workforce needs and how the Apprenti apprenticeship program can help. The candidate portal where apprentices complete a three hour on-line assessment was launched about a month ago. To date, 111 individuals have signed up for the assessment. Of those, 31 are women, 21 are veterans, and 51 are minorities. We are hopeful that the Apprenti program can help individuals find a pathway to a career in tech. The program involves 14 – 22 weeks of front loaded full-time training, followed by one year of paid on the job training with a local employer. Palo Alto Software, Concentric Sky, and IDX Broker have all signed contracts committing to hire apprentices. Four other companies have given a soft yes.
- In March of this year, our community was recognized as the first Mozilla Gigabit City on the West Coast. Fast forward six months later - Mozilla announced \$83,000 in grants to five educational technology projects in Eugene and Springfield that leverage gigabit Internet speeds to make a positive impact. The five organizations are: Integrated Arts; Lane Arts Council; NEDCO; Redefining Women in Tech; and Lane STEM.
- Ride Sharing: TAO has partnered with both the Eugene Chamber and the Springfield Chamber on advocating for ride sharing in our community (the city of Eugene handles for-hire transportation services for the city of Springfield). Comprehensive and robust transportation regulations need to be enacted so that ride share companies can operate in our area.

Food and Beverage Sector Updates (Micah Elconin)

Micah noted that he was hired on July 1st to be the Food and Beverage Sector Strategist. Historically, food and beverage has been a difficult sector for economic development. He spent the first month meeting with anyone he could from the industry – ended up meeting with 23 members who he then recruited to serve on the Food and Beverage Advisory Board. The industry is excited about this work. As shown on the chart below, the industry is continuing to grow:

Lane Food and Beverage Manufacturing	2013	2016	Growth
# of companies	138	157	13.77%
# of employees	3,300	3,865	17.12%
Total Wages	\$131 million	\$169 million	29.01%

Micah said the industry is not in critical care – it is very strong. The best thing we could do short-term is to figure out how to celebrate our strengths and successes in a more meaningful public way. One way Micah is tackling this is through a bi-weekly newsletter that is sent out to 366 subscribers. He has also set up quarterly industry Happy Hours with great attendance at the first two.

There are a few specific projects that are emerging. The industry is very excited about figuring out how to create more collaborative relationships to share and/or create resources for infrastructure to support their businesses. Micah completed an assessment and outcomes include: pooled purchasing; shared distribution; shared production space; co-marketing; and service provider referrals. Through the asset assessment and also in conversations with the Advisory Board, Micah says the larger identified need is a food products development center. He’s hearing from larger companies that they have to send samples of their products to places such as Portland, Seattle, and Minneapolis for testing. Mid-sized companies are dealing with compliance of the federal Food Modernization Safety Act which set new safety standards and small companies are constantly looking for mechanisms to support initial product development, recipe scaling, and nutritional analysis. There are resources that exist around the state to serve some of these needs already but Micah sees a larger opportunity for us to connect the dots as well as layer in a few additional pieces of the pie and leveraging local universities, etc. to satisfy that need.

Another need is workforce development. There are already two universities in the area focused on this. Lundquist College of Business at the U of O is taking a very strong stake in in food and beverage industry as a part of the larger U of O Food Studies Program. They are having a Food and Beverage Business Career Fair on 2/8/17; launching a Food and Beverage Business Club in 2018, and offering a Food Business Course in spring 2018. Lane Community College has a Culinary and Hospitality Program and an Advanced Manufacturing Program. Micah is working with the manufacturing program to develop Food and Beverage specific courses. Micah also joined LCC’s Culinary and Hospitality Advisory Board. Manufacturing Day was a great opportunity to connect students with food and beverage companies. Nearly 200 Lane County high school students toured local companies.

Micah is also working on a project specific to organic Hazelnuts. Many of the small growers are struggling – there is not really a solution for small scale processing that is sustainable at this point. Micah has been working with the growing coalition to help them coordinate next steps in addition to developing a financial model.

Construction- Aggregate Updates (Stan Pickett)

This workgroup really started because the industry was requesting it. The overall goals for the group are:

- Create industry awareness for younger workers;

- Identify/problem-solve workforce issues related to recruitment of an emerging workforce;
- Discuss how to make connections with Lane County Middle/high Schools, Lane Community College, and collaborations with local workforce agencies.

Stan noted that one of the biggest needs for the industry is workforce. Sand and Gravel Tours started about five years ago and continue to have great participation from students. Presentations are also given at high schools to introduce, inform, promote, and create awareness of construction-aggregate opportunities.

Stan said the construction-aggregate industry faces many of the same challenges as the advanced wood products industry – workforce development, industry regulations, appreciation and promotion, technical assistance, etc.

In 2018, school presentations will include reaching out middle school students so that when they get to high school, they can start taking CTE classes, etc. The group is hoping to piggy back on Elevate Lane County when that comes around for the construction-aggregate industry. The other big issue the industry will be tackling is the BOLI/Apprenticeship process in an effort to make it easier for students and young adults to get into and move through that program.

Next steps

- Chairs for the Advanced Wood Products will meet in early January and then workgroup meetings will start happening.
- Invite for next Lane County Sector Strategy Team convening will go out end of February/early March.