

# Union County Economic Development Corporation

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## Minutes January 28, 2010

Monthly Meeting: 6:00 p.m. at UCEDC Office, 102 Depot Street, La Grande Oregon  
Meeting Facilitator: John Howard, President  
Board Reporter: Janis Bozarth, Administrative Assistant  
Executive Director: Mike Sanford  
Members Present: John Howard, Howard Perry, Mark Davidson, Bill Rosholt, Mike Poe, Gary Lillard, Robert Strobe, Dale Case  
Absentees: Tim Seydel, Bill Whittemore, Steve Anderson, Jeff Puckett, Jim Mollerstrom  
Visitors: Valerie Franklin

Prior to the start of the meeting, John introduced Mark Davidson who made a presentation to representatives of Anderson Perry & Associates, who sponsored the Veterans Train for the Wallowa-Union Railroad, and Horizon Wind Energy, who sponsored the Santa Train for the Wallowa-Union Railroad. Mark reported that the Santa train carried 400 children from Elgin and 300 children from Minam, and the Veterans train carried several hundred veterans. Both rides raised a considerable amount of contributions for the local food bank.

### INTRODUCTION

John introduced Valerie Franklin, Project Manager for Horizon Wind Energy. Valerie was present to talk about the proposed Antelope Ridge Wind Farm, and about the possibility of a letter of support from UCEDC. Horizon Wind would like a letter to the editor of the La Grande Observer indicating their support for the project. She explained they've been experiencing some PR challenges with a major one being a recent article in the La Grande Observer voicing the City of Union's opposition to the project. She explained the proposed project and how it would impact the county in terms of dollars and jobs, permanent jobs and indirect jobs. She shared information that came out of an Economic Impact Study that Horizon Wind prepared. She explained the importance of having supporters come out and show their support, because for the most part those who are opposed to the project are more vocal.

Questions were posed to Valerie by members of the Board. Mike Poe asked how public opinion enters into their decisions. How would a letter to the editor of the newspaper help? Valerie replied that this project is more complicated because of the terrain, the different types of habitat, different communities that Horizon needs to work with and, in addition to all that, the City of Union has come out opposing the project. If the State only gets calls from people who are angry and oppose the project and not from supporters, the permitting process will be tougher. Valerie stated that a letter to the editor is preferable, versus a letter to the state, because many more will see a letter in the newspaper. Things they want to present to the public include creation of jobs, energy independence, and economic development.

Mark Davidson discussed how the project could benefit the County and how the money could be spread throughout the County. The project could double the value of the tax rolls in Union County, and will not require sewer or water services, etc.

Bill Rosholt explained that he doesn't feel UCEDC is against a support letter. He just feels UCEDC would like to write its own letter. The support is there for the project. The Board asked that Valerie share the Economic Impact Study with them, so they would have this information available to them when putting together their support letter. John asked if anyone objected to a support letter and, if not,

he would appoint a committee to draft a letter for Board approval to be signed by the UCEDC President. Valerie asked if Horizon Wind could review the letter and offer comments prior to the letter being submitted for publication.

After Valerie left the meeting, additional discussion followed regarding the project. Mark expressed his feeling that the project would have a positive economic impact on the community. There are times when the corporation needs to go out on a limb and take some risk and, if the corporation isn't willing to take a risk on this project considering the benefit that it would have, then UCEDC would need to question their role. Mark was asked if it would hurt his position as a Union County Commissioner to take a position on this project, and he replied that there would be no conflict of interest. To summarize, there could be 25 direct permanent jobs and additional indirect jobs; the project would provide a short-term economic benefit; and the project would provide an additional tax benefit. Many of the UCEDC members who support the wind farm project are businesses that benefit from the project.

***Howard Perry moved that a committee be appointed to draft a letter for Board approval in support of the Antelope Ridge Wind Farm Project and the positive benefits to the committee. The committee would be comprised of Mark Davidson, Robert Strobe, Dale Case, and Mike Sanford. Seconded by Robert Strobe. Motion carried.***

Mark stated that he has heard from a downtown businessman that there is another businessman calling around trying to find businesses that are in support of the Wind Farm, the purpose to get a business group put together to act as an advocacy. If anyone knows of anyone interested in being involved in this group, they should call Jeff Hines from HNS Construction/USA Rock

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

John Howard called for a motion to approve the December minutes. ***Mark Davidson moved that the December minutes be approved. Seconded by Robert Strobe. The motion carried.***

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **NWIA Round Table Supply Chain Report** – Mike Sanford

Mike reported that the Round Table session he attended was extremely productive. He made some good contacts. He feels there are some businesses in La Grande that will be good prospects for UCEDC to send packets to.

### **Forensics Lab and Water Lab Updates** – Mike Sanford

Mike reported that he called Cort Dokken, the facilities man for the State Police. They are still enthused and excited about locating the lab in Union County. Mike has scheduled a call next week with Randy Wampler. He also met with Dave McMinniman, the Lieutenant from the patrol office, at the Business Park to show him the sites. He expressed excitement in incorporating their patrol office into the building. Mike is waiting for some numbers from him on what their needs for space will be.

### **Strategic Plan Specific Focus** – Mike Sanford

Mike reported he had put into the board notebooks a copy of the Business Cultivation Plan and the Business Recruitment Plan prepared by Steve Anderson. Mike reported they plan on expanding the business meetings to include non-members of UCEDC. Robert asked if the Board would be spending some time on how to separate the other components of the strategic plan. John Howard recommended this item be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

## REPORTS

### **Finance Committee** – Mike Poe

Mike Poe reported that partner revenues seemed to be slow coming in. Janis and Mike will check on the partner commitments. Mike Sanford reported that the computer used by Janis and Violet had died while he was on vacation. Quotes were received from three different sources. The quotes were all in the range of \$600. After polling the E-Board, a new computer was ordered from Computer Alternatives. Howard did suggest that Mike might want to call Andy Perry to see if Anderson Perry had any computers sitting around that they would be willing to donate

### **Property Committee** – Dale Case

Dale reported that the property team had not met. Mike Sanford reported that UCEDC had been notified by the City of La Grande that their certification of the Business Park expires in February. The renewal process itself is very simple, but UCEDC's wetland delineation expired in 2008 and, because there are new federal regulations for wetland delineation, they cannot renew the old one. A new one will need to be done. However, there may be some grant dollars available through Business Oregon. Howard said he would also check at Anderson Perry to see what is involved and possibly Anderson Perry may be able to make a donation. The actual site work cannot be done until May or June because it's hard to get a good delineation when there are no plants growing. Howard Perry explained the wetland delineation process. There are two spots in the Business Park that were previously designated as wetlands. The reason updates are required is that conditions change. Wetlands can go away and then sometimes they can expand.

### **Communications/Marketing** – Gary Lillard

Gary reported the committee had not met since the last meeting. Mike reminded the Board that they did have copies in the notebooks of the reports the committee had recently prepared on Business Cultivation and Business Recruitment. John Howard reported on one item that is a spin-off of the Marketing Committee – video marketing. Some of the members met and looked at some videos that the City of Boise and Grande Ronde Hospital had done. The videos looked good and gave the members some ideas. John indicated they would be meeting again in another week. There appears to be interest in pursuing this. John said he would send an e-mail link to Board members so they could see what has been done by other groups. They will have another report at the next meeting.

### **EOU** – Tim Seydel

No report.

### **Membership** – Bill Rosholt

Bill reported that membership letters are still being sent out. Bill did say that the committee is looking at the membership list and the contact committee and making some changes there.

### **Administrative Report** – Janis Bozarth

November minutes were sent out to the membership.

The financial reports were prepared for Mike Poe and copies were put in the Board notebooks.

The membership list was updated through December. Renewing members for November and December were Remax and Ranch N Home Realty.

### **Executive Report** – Mike Sanford

Mike reported they had received a request for proposals for a Veterans' Home. The contact committee met and reviewed the RFP and discussed the project. At first, they thought the project was a good fit for the County, but the key component was proximity to a Federal Department of Veterans' Administration Medical Center and our Veterans clinic did not qualify. They did take a look at the project and submitted questions. One thing that did come out of the meeting was that they should take a good look at what to do with the Business Park and meet with representatives from the hospital about possibly changing the focus of the Business Park and change the zoning to allow some medical

uses. Mike reported that UCEDC has a meeting this next week with David Blair and Cathey Cathey from Wyden's office. David is a field rep for Wyden, but he acts as their project development person. Friday is the Eastern Oregon Rural Alliance Meeting at EOU.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Committee Assignments** – Mike Sanford

Mike introduced a revised committee assignment list. He reported that Steve Anderson has said he wants to recruit a few additional members for the communications/marketing committee, preferably some non-Board members. Robert reported the City had appointed Jim Mollerstrom to replace Janet Hume-Schwarz on the UCEDC Board and his name needs to be put on the committee list where it shows "New City Appointment."

*Robert moved that the committee list be approved. Seconded by Gary Lillard. Motion carried.*

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No Executive Session.

## **FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Bill commented that this was the first board he has sat on where the names of individuals making motions were listed in the minutes. Some discussion followed on this and the decision was made not to change how the minutes were being prepared.

Mark said that there would be a special meeting of the County Commission the following night to consider purchase of the trails unit timber interest that Forest Capital owns.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Janis Bozarth, Administrative Assistant

### **Note:**

**Next Board Meeting:** Thursday February 18, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.  
UCEDC Office at 102 Depot St.

**Executive Meeting:** Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 7:30 a.m.