



CITY OF
FLORENCE

The background of the cover is a photograph of a hexagonal-patterned concrete wall. Each hexagonal cell contains a different piece of broken, colorful glass in shades of green, blue, and yellow. Through the wall, a building with a sign that reads "EVINRUDE BILLS AUTO OUTBOARD MOTORS" is visible. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a clear blue sky.

City of Florence Economic Development Annual Report 2023 - 2024



CITY OF FLORENCE OREGON'S PREMIER COASTAL COMMUNITY



City Services Delivery

Sustain and improve the delivery of cost effective and efficient services, including public safety, to the Florence community and visitors.



Livability & Quality of Life

Sustain and improve the City's livability and quality of life for Florence residents and visitors.



Economic Development

Sustain and improve the City's economic development program and efforts towards enhancing the Florence economy, including housing, business development, and increasing living wage jobs.



Financial & Organizational Sustainability

Sustain and improve the City's financial position, City-wide policies, and infrastructure to support current and future needs.



Communication & Trust

Sustain and improve the City's communication program and strengthen community trust.

www.ci.florence.or.us



Welcome & A Year in Review

The City of Florence Economic Development Staff serves as a bridge between local businesses, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits and the resources available in Florence, Lane County, the Oregon Coast, and the State of Oregon. Many accomplishments are done in partnership with City of Florence Staff, among volunteers, in cooperation with our greater regions and with policy guidance from the Florence City Council. This network all works together for the betterment of Florence's economy, both now and in years to come.



In recognition of Economic Development Week, the City of Florence publishes an Annual Report that celebrates the economic development initiatives and investments that the City of Florence has made in the economy and the business community in the last year. The Week is sponsored by the International Economic Development Council to increase awareness of local programs that create jobs, advance career development opportunities, and improve the quality of life in communities everywhere.

When reviewing the year since May 2023, there were three clear themes in the projects undertaken by the City of Florence:

- **Workforce Development – Housing & Child Care Support**
- **Economy & Entrepreneurship**
- **Connection & Collaboration**

Florence's economic growth is an ongoing effort, and we are continuously working to improve our economic climate. All of our projects take a team of dedicated Staff, volunteers and partner organizations. Thank you to this economic development ecosystem for positioning the City of Florence as Oregon's Premier Coastal Community.



Workforce Development



Quality Information, Informed Choices Labor Market Information

State of Oregon • Employment Department • www.QualityInfo.org

Florence Fact Sheet

Prepared by: Henry Fields, Workforce Analyst
 Contact: henry.l.fields@employ.oregon.gov; (541) 359-9178
 Date: 4/10/2024

Florence, OR
More in Lane County, OR; Eugene-Springfield, OR Metro Area; Oregon; United States

9,384
 Population

5.5 square miles
 1,696 people per square mile

Census data: ACS 2019 5-year estimates



More Information:
<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US4126050-florence-or/>

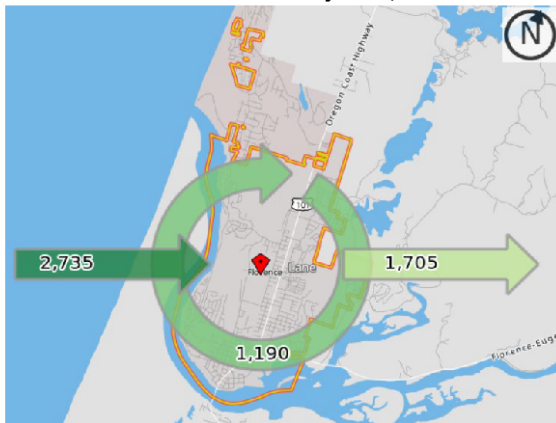
Lane County Population Trends							
	2000	2010	2023	Change 2000-10	%	Change 2010-23	%
Coburg	969	1,040	1,475	71	7%	435	42%
Cottage Grove	8,445	9,705	11,095	1,260	15%	1,390	14%
Creswell	3,579	5,030	5,823	1,451	41%	793	16%
Dunes City	1,241	1,305	1,454	64	5%	149	11%
Eugene	137,893	156,295	177,339	18,402	13%	21,044	13%
Florence	7,263	8,465	9,832	1,202	17%	1,367	16%
Junction City	4,721	5,430	7,427	709	15%	1,997	37%
Lowell	880	1,045	1,261	165	19%	216	21%
Oakridge	3,172	3,205	3,235	33	1%	30	1%
Springfield	52,864	59,425	63,078	6,561	12%	3,653	6%
Veneta	2,762	4,565	5,261	1,803	65%	696	15%
Westfir	280	255	261	-25	-9%	6	2%
Unincorporated	98,908	96,245	96,833	-2,663	-3%	588	1%
Lane County	322,977	352,010	384,374	29,033	9%	32,364	9%
Oregon	3,421,399	3,837,300	4,291,525	415,901	12%	454,225	12%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Portland State University

Demographics	Florence	Lane County	Oregon	US
Total population	9,384	382,218	4,229,374	331,097,593
Under 18 years	14%	18%	20%	22%
18-24 years	7%	13%	9%	9%
25-54 years	25%	37%	40%	39%
55-64 years	14%	13%	13%	13%
65+ years	40%	20%	18%	17%
Median age	57.7	40.1	39.9	38.5

Source: US Census 2022 5-year ACS table S0101

Inflow/Outflow Commuters in 2021 Selection Area: Florence City Limits, All Jobs



Labor Force and Income	Florence	Lane County	Oregon	US
Median household income	\$57,568	\$65,157	\$76,632	\$75,149
Percentage of population 16+ in labor force	41%	61%	63%	64%
Percentage below poverty level in last 12 months	12%	16%	12%	13%

Source: US Census 2022 5-year ACS table DP03

Educational Attainment	Florence	Lane County	Oregon	US
Population 25 & over	7,438	264,813	2,999,096	226,600,992
Non-HS graduate	10%	7%	8%	11%
High school graduate	23%	23%	23%	26%
Some college	32%	27%	25%	20%
Associate's degree	10%	10%	9%	9%
Bachelor's or higher	25%	33%	36%	34%

Source: US Census 2022 5-year ACS table S1501

Workers Employed in Selection Area	3,925
Employed in Selection Area but Living Outside	2,735
Employed and Living in Selection Area	1,190
Workers Living in Selection Area	2,895
Living in Selection Area but Employed Outside	1,705
Living and Employed in Selection Area	1,190

Source: OnTheMap, LEHD Census

Employment and Wages by Industry, Annual Average 2022

Industry	Florence*				Lane County			
	Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Wage	Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Wage
Total	452	5,247	\$324,265,553	\$61,800	14,813	155,250	\$8,448,969,735	\$54,422
Natural Resources and Utilities	3	32	\$3,300,978	\$103,156	359	3,726	\$241,284,429	\$64,757
Construction	45	168	\$8,287,457	\$49,330	1,308	8,273	\$513,944,630	\$62,123
Manufacturing	11	25	\$930,115	\$37,205	602	14,705	\$900,730,339	\$61,253
Wholesale Trade	6	15	\$1,045,708	\$69,714	580	6,101	\$419,619,615	\$68,779
Retail Trade	73	846	\$27,543,975	\$32,558	1,261	20,309	\$764,719,207	\$37,654
Transportation and Warehousing	6	81	\$4,259,692	\$52,589	277	4,596	\$249,116,035	\$54,203
Information	11	67	\$2,526,072	\$37,703	387	2,067	\$174,680,861	\$84,509
Finance and Insurance	23	114	\$6,890,122	\$60,440	570	4,315	\$348,238,472	\$80,704
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	26	78	\$2,704,443	\$34,672	677	2,763	\$129,508,561	\$46,872
Professional and Business Services	44	146	\$7,540,925	\$51,650	2,188	18,384	\$1,144,541,714	\$62,257
Educational Services	7	216	\$10,981,917	\$50,842	337	14,448	\$853,015,793	\$59,040
Health Care and Social Assistance	60	2,450	\$216,707,911	\$88,452	2,846	27,992	\$1,713,081,206	\$61,199
Leisure and Hospitality	68	733	\$17,928,104	\$24,459	1,266	17,940	\$437,229,241	\$24,372
Public Administration	9	120	\$8,805,129	\$73,376	128	4,097	\$335,345,544	\$81,851
Other and Unclassified	60	156	\$4,813,005	\$30,853	2,027	5,534	\$223,914,088	\$40,462

*Florence Urban Growth Boundary

Source: Oregon Employment Department, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Workforce Development — Housing

Economic development encompasses the multifaceted process through which a region, country, or community enhances its overall economic well-being and quality of life for its citizens. It involves a spectrum of initiatives, policies, and activities aimed at fostering sustainable growth, reducing poverty, and improving living standards. Two important aspects that must be addressed in workforce development are housing and child care.

The Florence City Council has provided policy direction on several fronts to address increasing the available housing in Florence. That direction includes reviewing and updating City Code and Plans, creating incentive programs, and working in partnership with other organizations to create housing opportunities. For Economic Development, there has been progress in the areas that follow.



Housing Implementation Plan (HIP) Project:

From 2022-2023, the City of Florence and a dedicated committee worked on the HIP. The project was funded through a Department of Land Conservation and Development technical assistance grant to identify housing development strategies and update City codes to address state statutes and rules. The Florence City Council adopted the HIP in April 2023. Since then, City Staff have continued the process into Phase 2B – Transitional Housing Code 2023-2024. On March 4, 2024, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1, Series 2024, “An ordinance adopting legislative amendments to the Florence City Code Title 10, to support missions, emergency shelters, and transitional housing, associated with phase 2 of the Housing Implementation Plan project and reduce lot dimensions for medium density single unit detached dwellings.”

Learn more online at www.ci.florence.or.us/planning/housing-implementation-plan-project.

Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE) Program:

Since December 2021, the City of Florence City Council has had a Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption program. MUPTE is a state-enabled housing incentive program that allows for cities across Oregon to exempt property tax on residential improvements of approved multi-unit properties for up to 10 years. Although the State of Oregon enables this program, each municipality has the opportunity to shape the program to meet its own goal by controlling program requirements, criteria, and program caps. More information is available at www.ci.florence.or.us/economicdevelopment/multi-unit-property-tax-exemption-mupte-program.

Since March 2022, the City of Florence has approved two MUPTE Applications, representing over 92 units of housing to be built without the financial burden of residential property tax for the first 10 years.

“The MUPTE program not only remains a critical piece of the puzzle for the ongoing, long-term success of Shore Pines but its importance has only intensified over the duration of the project. Due to large interest rate increases over the last two years, over \$1 million in costs have been added to the project budget, necessitating an increase to the property’s permanent loan. This loan increase would not be possible if NHA was not able to demonstrate lower operating costs and a healthy financial outlook for the property, made possible in large part by the tax exemption received through this program. With that in mind, NHA shares its gratitude to the city for its collaboration to ensure Shore Pines inclusion and good standing in the MUPTE program.”

– Clayton Crowhurst,
Senior Housing Developer
Northwest Housing Alternatives

- **Northwest Housing Alternatives**, <https://nwhousing.org>, Shore Pines at Munsel Creek
The project team was able to complete construction and receive temporary certificates of occupancy for the East building on November 30, 2023, and the West building on December 29, 2023. Since construction completion, both buildings have been fully occupied as of March 2023, residents are settling in, and local service providers are establish case management relationships with many households on site.
- **Our Coastal Village**, <https://ourcoastalvillage.org>, Oak Manor Apartments
Our Coastal Village started construction on April 10, 2023, completed Buildings A and B on March 27, 2024, and completed Buildings C and D on April 28, 2024. The full project is expected to be completed by June 30, 2024.



Additional Developments:

City of Florence Staff also supports these current housing developments and their progress:

- **Our Coastal Village**, <https://ourcoastalvillage.org>, in process — a potential affordable housing project co-located with a child care facility
- **Homes for Good**, <https://homesforgood.org/>, in process — Quince Street Florence

Workforce Development — Child Care

According to the 2020 Census, there are approximately 642 children ages 0-5 years in the Siuslaw region. Currently, there are about 114 child care slots for this age group. A majority of those slots are not full day, nor available every day of the week. Of the 114 total child care spaces, only 69 of those are licensed and provide full day care. There are currently no centers in the area that accept children under 2 years of age. Regional communities outside of Florence have even fewer options for child care.

Child care is part of the critical infrastructure supporting our economy and a key underpinning to economic development strategies. Local government, business owners, employers, and community partners have identified child care as a key issue and cited the need for additional capacity to address the issue. Additionally, access to childcare is an equity issue. According to a Harvard Business Review survey, 26% of women who became unemployed during the pandemic said it was due to a lack of childcare.

The **Florence Childcare Collaborative** formed in 2022 under the leadership of Onward Eugene Childcare Strategist Holly Mar Conte. The work has included a Lane County Child Care and Preschool Survey, applying for grants, direct assistance to child care facilities, and work on an employer tool kit. Mar Conte presented on child care to the Florence City Council in August 2023, <https://www.ci.florence.or.us/council/city-council-work-session-74>.



Additional work in the child care sector includes:

- **Lane Small Business Development Center and Quality Care Connections' Early Child Care Business Accelerator Program** — cohorts in 2023 with a West & South Lane Program planned for Florence and Cottage Grove in Fall 2024, <https://www.lanecc.edu/community/resources-community/quality-care-connections/early-child-care-business-accelerator-program>.

- **County Child Care Efforts** — Lane County coordinated a submission for the **EDA Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program** to develop a strategic plan to engage the county’s prime-age workforce fully into the economy and support current local efforts to increase access to child care, improve wages, and create industry for our workforce. The City of Florence and the Siuslaw Vision (<https://siuslawvision.org>) wrote partner letters in support of the effort. While unsuccessful, the coalition is looking into next steps.
- **Parent Speak** — Siuslaw Family Connections has started a regular event to support and instruct parents, <https://www.siuslawfamilyconnection.org/activities>
- **Child Care Coordinator Roles** — Siuslaw Vision, Onward Eugene, and local partners are working together to increase hours dedicated to Florence-area child care efforts. The Vision is looking to hire a 20-hour per week Connections Coordinator to support child care capacity building for the Siuslaw Region. Separate from that, the partners are pursuing opportunities with RARE/AmeriCorps to bring on a full-time position for the next year.

“Child care is the one sector that all the other sectors of the economy depend on.”
 — Bettina Hannigan,
 President/CEO, Florence Area Chamber of Commerce

These partner organizations and more support local child care efforts:

Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County
 Bright Beginnings Christian Preschool
 Business Oregon
 Catholic Community Services of Lane County
 City of Dunes City
 Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
 Collaborative EDO
 Early Childhood Cares
 First Step Florence
 Florence Area Chamber of Commerce
 Florence Area Community Coalition
 Florence Food Share
 Florence Senior Center
 Goodwill Industries of Lane and South Coast Counties
 Head Start of Lane County
 Helping Hands Coalition
 Kiwanis Club of Florence
 Lane Small Business Development Center
 Lane Transit District
 Lane Workforce Partnership
 Link Lane
 Nurturely
 Oregon Coast Visitors Association
 Oregon Employment Department
 Onward Eugene Child Care Sector Strategist
 Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association
 Oregon Sea Grant
 Oregon State University Extension Service Lane County
 PacificSource

PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center
 Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad
 Quality Care Connection
 Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN)
 Rotary Club of Florence
 Siuslaw Family Connection
 Siuslaw Outreach Services
 Siuslaw Public Library District
 Siuslaw School District
 Siuslaw Vision
 South Coast Development Council
 Three Rivers Casino Resort
 Travel Lane County
 University of Oregon
 United Way of Lane County
 WorkSource Lane



Economy & Entrepreneurship

At its core, economic development entails the creation of opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and investment. This often involves promoting innovation, linking to resources, and enhancing productivity across various sectors of the economy. In Florence, economic efforts promote small businesses and enable an environment for entrepreneurship.

The Florence Four — Business Resource Newsletter

Since 2021, the City of Florence has published an email newsletter to send out four resources, pieces of important information, or events for local businesses to grow their business, support their employees, and learn more about our community. The Florence Four has 1,189 subscribers ranging in age from 18 to 65+. More than 40% of subscribers are highly engaged. The most recent newsletters have included content from the City of Florence, Onward Eugene, RAIN, Lane Community College, Travel Oregon, Business Oregon, the Small Business Administration, Connected Lane County, and WorkSource Oregon, as well as scholarships, grants, trainings, and more. To access The Florence Four, visit www.ci.florence.or.us/economicdevelopment/subscribe-florence-four-weekly-business-newsletter.



Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN) Catalysts

RAIN Catalysts' team of entrepreneurs helps communities build inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems and economies. Since 2015, the City of Florence has contracted with RAIN to continue developing and scaling the RAIN Catalysts Rural Entrepreneurial Program in the City to help startups and small businesses launch and thrive. The Florence RAIN team consists of South Lane Venture Catalyst Ellyn Mole and Florence Entrepreneur-In-Community Jade Rehder. Additionally, City Manager Erin Reynolds serves on the RAIN Catalysts Board of Directors. RAIN welcomed a new CEO, Rachel Jagoda Brunette, in Spring 2024. Learn more about RAIN and its programs at <https://www.raincatalysts.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/raincatalysts.org>.



Florence Area Chamber of Commerce:

The City of Florence continues to contract with the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce to provide tourism marketing, visitor information, and events management services. City Staff serves as an ex-officio member of the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce Board and regularly attends the networking and entertainment events held throughout the year, including the 117th annual Rhododendron Festival. According to the Chamber's 2023 Annual Report to the Florence City Council, from 2019 to 2022 (last available data), West Lane County tourism dollars rose from \$147 million to \$320 million. Watch the update from June 19, 2023, <https://www.ci.florence.or.us/council/city-council-meeting-246>.



Transient Lodging Tax (TLT):

The City of Florence collects a 4% tax on all short-term lodging accommodations. This revenue goes to directly support the Florence Events Center, the Florence Visitors Center, and annual events like the Rhododendron Festival, the Florence Wine & Chowder Festival, and the Fourth of July celebrations.

Over the last four years, the City has seen an increase in collections of TLT as tourism has stabilized after the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The City estimates to receive \$1,172,900 over the 2023-2025 biennium.

Arts and Economic Prosperity Study

Between May 2022 and May 2023, Florence participated in the Arts & Economic Prosperity Study 6 conducted by the Americans for the Arts, <https://www.americansforthearts.org/>, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing arts and arts education. Florence's final AEP6 report measures the economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations on local jobs, income paid to local residents, revenue generated to local and state governments, spending by organizations and audience, and tourism. Read the whole report through Florence Regional Arts Alliance, <http://www.fraaoregon.com/aep6-study/>.

- **Economic Activity** — Arts and culture created \$7.3 million in economic activity in Florence, including spending by nonprofit arts and culture organizations combined with attendee spending. The arts generated more than \$1.5 million in local, state and federal tax revenue.
- **Tourism** — 11,911 visitors attended arts and cultural events in Florence and spent an average of \$119 per event. Local attendees spent an average of \$55 per event. Cultural tourists help our community.
- **Employment** — The arts industry supported 118 jobs in Florence during the survey period.
- **Expenses** — Audience spending at arts and culture events in Florence was more than \$4.9 million. This number includes spending at restaurants, lodging, transportation, childcare, but not include ticket costs.
- **Value of Volunteers** — A total of 470 volunteers donated a total of 35,379 hours to the 15 participating nonprofit organizations, estimated at \$1.1million value.
- **Bottom Line** — Arts and culture organizations in Florence contributed \$2.3 million to our local economy. The arts mean business and helps our community thrive.



Art Exposed ReVision Florence — Public Arts Committee:

The Florence Public Arts Committee continues to operate the **Art Exposed Rotating Outdoor Art Gallery**, <https://bit.ly/FlorenceArtExposed>, like it has since 2018. There are currently eight Art Exposed locations in the Old Town area: Veterans Memorial Park, River Roasters, Rain Garden, Interpretive Center East, Gazebo Park Plaza, Gazebo Park Planter aka Secret Garden, Maple Street Park, and the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce Lawn.



Now, a fourth round of art is in the process of installation on Highway 101. Through a Call for Art at the end of 2023, the Florence Urban Renewal Agency and City of Florence Public Arts Committee sought vibrant, large-scale public art to go on the Oregon Coast Highway as part of Art Exposed ReVision Florence 2024-2026. Artists were encouraged to submit unique sculptural pieces that demonstrated extraordinary creativity, which were then reviewed by the Public Arts Committee. Final selections of artwork will be installed in six locations on Highway 101 between the Siuslaw River Bridge and the intersection with Highway 126.



Economy & Entrepreneurship

— Development

The City of Florence is committed to providing resources to local businesses to support their success. Florence has key regions set up to promote economic growth and encourage business growth, retention, collaboration, and education.



Enterprise Zone Management:

The City of Florence manages its Enterprise Zone designations with Business Oregon, <https://www.oregon.gov/biz/>, the Economic Development Agency for the State of Oregon. Enterprise Zones allow qualifying businesses to receive 3-5 years of property tax exemption on sites and building improvements. The Enterprise Zone freezes businesses' tax rate at the level it was before the property's value was increased with improvements.

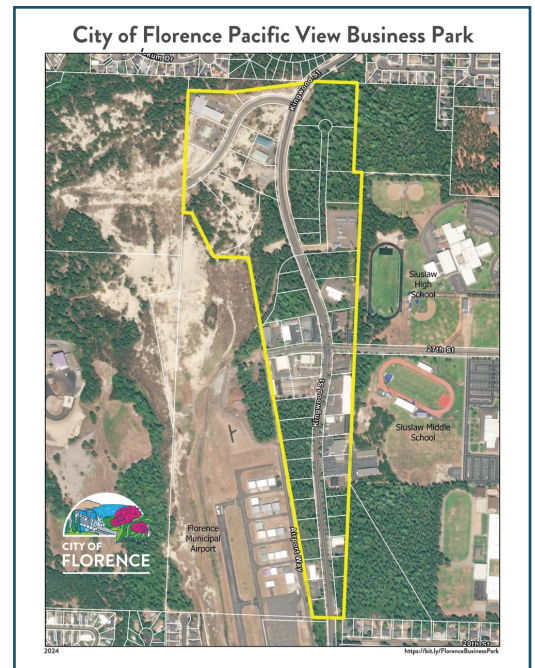
Both new and existing businesses can qualify for the City of Florence's three Enterprise Zones and their benefits. In exchange for tax exemption, qualified businesses are expected to increase employment and, for a five-year exemption, compensate new hires at a higher wage than the County average rate. Currently, two businesses qualify for these benefits, with one due to sunset out of the program in 2024. More information is available at www.ci.florence.or.us/economicdevelopment/florence-enterprise-zone.

Pacific View Business Park:

Economic Development Staff continues to market the City of Florence's Pacific View Business Park. The Business Park provides space for offices, service businesses, light manufacturing, research and development facilities, assembly, packaging, warehousing, and supportive uses. Through both selling and leasing, depending on the lot, the high-quality land with utilities in and ready for development, the goal of the Business Park is to help the City attract family-wage jobs that will serve the entire community. More information is available at <https://bit.ly/FlorenceBusinessPark>.

- 58 lots total were created with 11 remaining that are available for sale and 6 lots available for lease
- Lot sizes range from 12,000 square feet to 129,000 square feet
- Prices are negotiable with the City of Florence

City staff works with Collaborative Economic Development of Oregon (EDO), <https://collaborativeedo.org/>, and the South Coast Development Council, <https://www.scdcinc.org/>, to market the Business Park on Oregon Prospector, <https://www.oregonprospector.com/>, and LinkedIn.





Quince Street Site Redevelopment Project:

Since September 2021, the Florence Urban Renewal Agency (FURA) has been working with Braun Development, a Hotel Developer, to develop an 86-Room, 4-Story Microtel Moda by Wyndham on the south end of the property.



In 2018, the Florence Urban Renewal Agency purchased the property as an opportunity to gain control of the Quince Street property and its future development opportunities. The goal of the ownership and eventual development of the site has always been to support the City-owned Florence Events Center and its needs to host larger, more regional events and conferences. According to Braun, schematic and civil design are complete and the project has received land use and design approval. Additionally, the traffic impact study has been completed and submitted, and the general contractor has been selected. The schedule from groundbreaking to first guest occupancy is projected to be 14-15 months.

In addition to the Hotel development, the City received a Recreational Trails Grant from the State of Oregon for \$115,000 to develop a portion of the Siuslaw Estuary Trail and a Parking area off Highway 126. This project is part of a larger plan to create a Siuslaw Estuary Trail throughout the whole Estuary, starting at the FURA-owned Highway 126 property abutting Munsel Creek to the east, along the Quince Street property, and making its way throughout Old Town to the Exploding Whale Memorial Park on Rhododendron Drive. The overall goal of the trails system is to connect to Heceta Beach Road at the north end of town. The project is currently under review by the Florence Planning Commission,

In 2023, FURA finalized the partitioning of the Quince Street property. The property now consists of three parcels: the Hotel property at the south end; the Siuslaw Estuary Trail property on the east side, which encompasses the full length of the original property; and the north property, which will be the next phase for the FURA Board determine the goals for development and the plan for soliciting developers.

More Information on the Quince Street development can be found on the Florence Urban Renewal Agency's website at www.ci.florence.or.us/urbanrenewal/quince-street-property-development.

Connection & Collaboration

The City of Florence works in collaboration with entities all across Oregon to support economic development. This includes:

- **Cascades West Economic Development District** — Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties
- **Lane County Policy Team and the Community & Economic Development Department**
- **Oregon Coast Visitor's Association** — Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, Lane, Douglas, Coos, and Curry Counties
- **South Coast Development Council** — Lane, Douglas, Coos, and Curry Counties
- **South Valley/Mid Coast Regional Solutions Team** — Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties

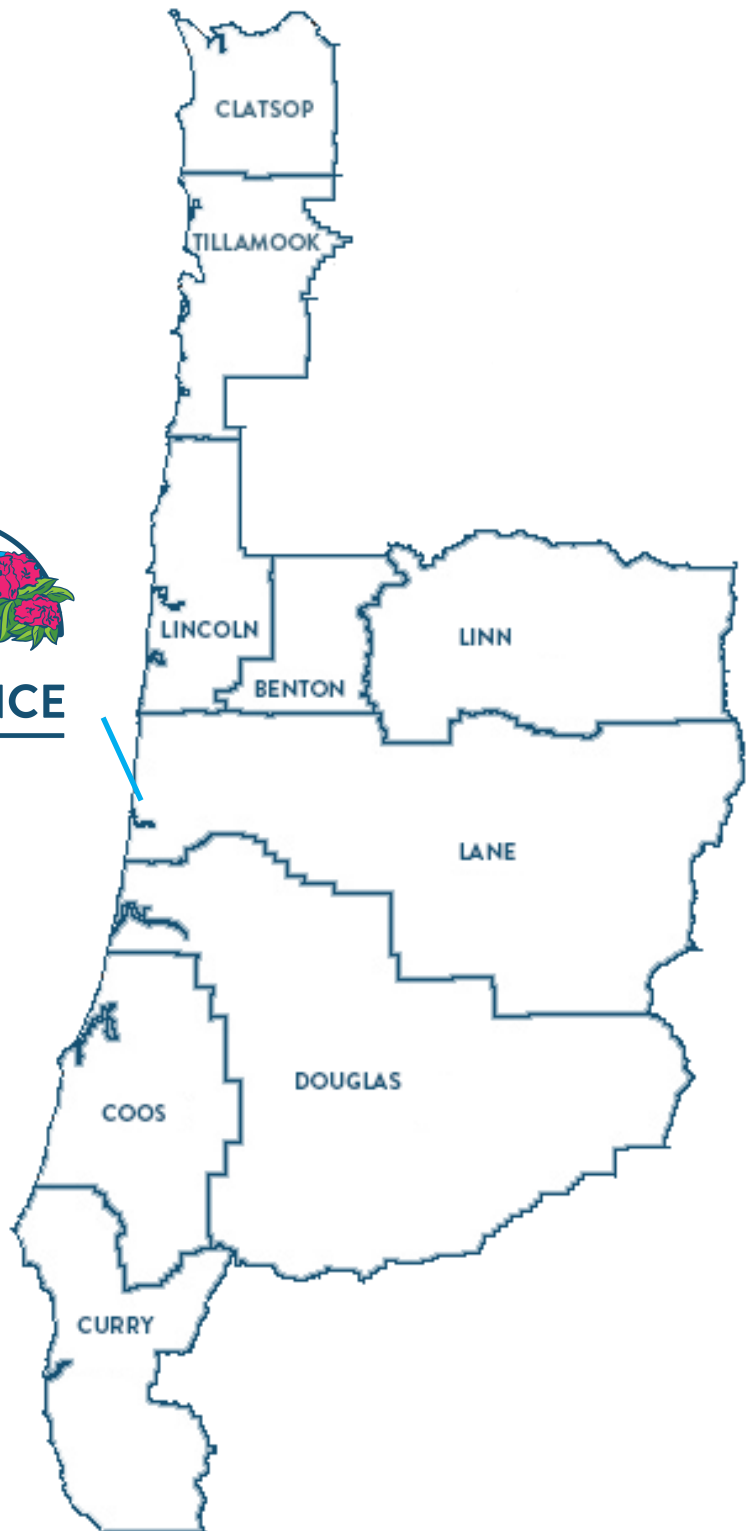


Working with others to share news, resources, grant opportunities, and more is a huge part of the Economic Development role at the City of Florence. From helping keep Florence City Council informed of local business updates to working with regional partners on training and events, Connection & Collaboration happen every day at Florence City Hall.

Florence Economic Development Task Force:

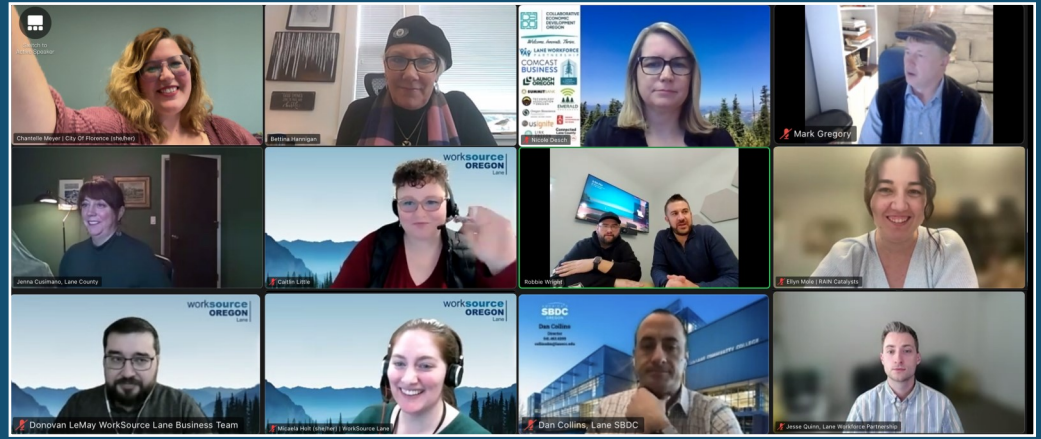
Since March 2020, economic development partners from across the region have met on a bi-weekly basis to coordinate economic efforts and work towards mutual goals. The Task Force is comprised of 12 different agencies that are involved in different aspects of Florence's economic success.

In 2020, with assistance from Rural Development Initiatives' Business Retention and Expansion program, the Task Force was able to identify three main concerns in the business community on which the Task Force will continue to collaborate on solutions. These three concerns are: business financial literacy and tech challenges, business communication and outreach, and workforce development and education.



Members of the Task Force:

City of Florence
 Collaborative EDO
 Florence Area Chamber of Commerce
 Hyak
 Lane Community College
 Lane County Community & Economic Development
 Lane Small Business Development Center



Lane Workforce Partnership
 Oregon Coast Visitor's Association

RAIN Catalysts
 WorkSource Lane
 WorkSource Oregon

Lane County Community Collaborative

The Lane County Community Collaborative represents a dynamic group of economic development stakeholders from across Lane County. This collaborative aims to optimize our efforts and resources by working together to address the diverse needs of our community. Through this collective endeavor, we aim to create a positive ripple effect, propelling our region towards prosperity and shared growth. These meetings serve as a platform for engaging discussions, meaningful connections, and fostering a culture of collaboration, paving the way for innovative solutions and empowering collective action.

Key functions of this group are Regional Coordination – Efforts & Resources; Knowledge Share; and Relationship Building. More than 50 people regularly attend this monthly meeting, hosted by the Lane Workforce Partnership. Learn more at <https://www.laneworkforce.org/sector-strategies/community-collaborative/>.

South Coast Development Council

The southern Oregon coast is home to approx. 110,000 residents, four counties, 12 cities, seven port districts, the Coos Bay Rail Line, and the only commercial airport on the Oregon coast. The South Coast Development Council, Inc., <https://www.scdcinc.org/>, is a regional economic development organization and private non-profit that exists for the purpose of fostering communication, collaboration and partnership among the various collateral public and private entities on Oregon's South Coast; and promoting economic development, job creation, business retention and expansion, encouraging new investment, and enhancing the economic vitality of the region. SCDC serves the southern half of the Oregon coast from the City of Florence to the Port of Brookings-Harbor, working to enhance partnerships and provide no-cost technical assistance to retain, expand, and attract living wage companies and industry to coastal communities.

In January 2024, the SCDC welcomed Lexie Woodward as the new Executive Director, added a new Economic Development Technician, and began the hiring process for a Business Incubator Manager.

Connection & Collaboration — Events



Rhododendron Festival — May 18-21, 2023

The Florence Rhododendron Festival is the second-oldest flower festival in Oregon, just one year younger than the Portland Rose Festival. Thousands come from around the world to celebrate every year on the third weekend in May.

Learn more at <https://florencechamber.com/rhododendron-festival/>



Siuslaw Awards — July 21, 2023

The Florence Area Chamber of Commerce hosted the prestigious 15th Annual Siuslaw Awards at Three Rivers Casino Resort. Each year, businesses are awarded in several categories including excellence in customer service, innovation, community service, and business of the year.



Lane County Policy Team Visit — August 4, 2023

Members of the Lane County Policy visited Florence to talk to City Staff about Economic Development, Emergency Management, big upcoming projects, policies, electric vehicles, the Lane County Climate Action Plan, and more. This was a chance for the Lane County Policy Team to introduce themselves and their offices and talk about federal, state, and regional funding.



Holiday Happy Hour — December 6, 2023

The City of Florence, RAIN Catalysts, and the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce planned the Holiday Happy Hour Business Networking Night at the Florence Events Center. This was a chance for Florence's business community to meet with other entrepreneurs and regional economic development partners.



Community Collaborative & Industry Luncheon — April 10, 2024

Collaborative Economic Development Oregon and Lane Workforce Partnership's inaugural luncheon brought together nationally recognized leaders with local industry & community stakeholders, to elevate regional economic competitiveness.



Coastal Career Fair — April 25, 2024

The Coastal Career Fair was an effort of the Florence Task Force. More than 33 businesses from Coos Bay to Newport brought upwards of 50 job listings for local candidates, ranging from health care to child care, education to senior living, recreation to office work. The goal was to get regional partner support for Florence businesses needing to hire before the tourist season.





Conclusion & What's Next

While Economic Development Week is just seven days of the month, May marks one of the first months of the Florence Tourist Season. This means a jump into seasonal activities such as the 117th annual Rhododendron Festival, Old Fashioned Fourth of July, and the City of Florence Community Block Party, as well as the many recreational opportunities in the area.

City of Florence Economic Development Staff are currently working on website page refreshes for Economic Development and the Art Exposed Rotating Art Gallery, along with grant work, training, and further coordination with regional partners. This also includes extensive work in the Child Care Sector.

Economic development is critical to the success of our region, and this report provides an overview of the progress the City of Florence has made in this area. Our region has a rich history and unique assets, which we continue to leverage to increase investment and create opportunities for businesses and residents alike. It's one of the many things City Staff does to keep Florence A City in Motion. Learn more at <https://www.ci.florence.or.us/economicdevelopment>.







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