

GEODC Economic Resiliency Newsletters

Background

Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC) was appointed as an intermediary for the State of Oregon Small Business Relief Grants Rounds 2 and 4. GEODC was able to build relationships with the small businesses across the 7 Eastern counties during the grant process. After reviewing profit-loss statements and hearing first hand anecdotes from the owners, the grant process had made it evident that the small business community needed extra support through the pandemic. GEODC decided to put their efforts into supporting the businesses through the pandemic while also helping prepare businesses for future disruptions.

Project Plan

The development of this project first began with the focus on resiliency and mitigation from economic disruptions and natural disasters. GEODC used the case study from, University of Oregon, Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (IPRE), which analyzed the preparedness and capacity for communities to handle disruptions; specifically with the event of the 2017 total solar eclipse. One of the findings for the Eastern Oregon region was “The lack of time and well-known resources available to residents and businesses from governing agencies obstruct their ability to prepare and mitigate effects of disruptive events” and “according to attendees, many regional business owners have not drafted a business continuity plan. Busy day to day schedules present a barrier to the creation of these sorts of plans.”

Using the findings from University of Oregon IPRE and looking at the current situation and effects of the pandemic on small businesses; GEODC developed the Economic Resiliency Newsletters. Initially GEODC wanted to provide business continuity courses for the businesses, but decided the newsletters would be a better option to comply with stay at home orders, provide current resources and information on COVID-19, and ease business owners into disaster preparation mindsets.

Implementation

Initially the newsletters were sent out to GEODC’s database of small businesses and to all the Eastern Oregon chambers/economic development offices to include in their monthly newsletter with a subscription link for businesses to sign up. The newsletters incorporated current resources for COVID-19, business information, and steps to writing a business continuity plan. Over the span of 10 newsletters, small businesses would have a complete continuity business plan. The continuity business plan coursework was used from the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety’s OFB-EZ Toolkit (<https://disastersafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/OFB-EZ-Toolkit-IBHS.pdf>).

The Newsletters have a consistent layout with a short quote for a title, a background photo from scenery in Eastern Oregon and 4 information bubbles:

- Resource Hub
- One Small Thing a Week
- A short memo

- Information on a current event/webinar or survey.

The second page varies each newsletter; but consistently has the worksheet page and a brief on the continuity plan topic, as well as a topic with helpful information and links for businesses on preparation/resiliency. Topics include: weather/hazard checklists, security and data backup, customer marketing, online payment platforms, savings and climate change.

The newsletter currently has 45 subscribers, and each newsletter is posted on the GEODC COVID-19 Resource page (<https://www.geodc.net/covid-19-resources/>). After the 10th newsletter is complete, GEODC plans on restructuring the newsletters into a format that is not time oriented/specific. The restructured newsletters will be a resource to share among the region for small businesses to become informed and prepared on natural hazards and disruptions- creating stronger and resilient communities in Eastern Oregon.

Link to each individual newsletter:

1. https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/GEODC-Resiliency-Newsletter-December_Final.pdf
2. https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/GEODC-Resiliency-Jan-4_Final.pdf
3. <https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/GEODC-Resiliency-Jan-18.pdf>
4. <https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/GEODC-Resiliency-Feb-3.pdf>
5. <https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/GEODC-Resiliency-March-10.pdf>
6. https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/GEODC-Resiliency-April_Final.pdf
7. <https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/GEODC-Resiliency-April-22.pdf>
8. https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/GEODC-Resiliency-May_5.pdf
9. https://www.geodc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/GEODC-Resiliency-June-4_Final.pdf

Example Newsletter:

GEODC

Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation

Proudly serving Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla and Wheeler counties

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

WHAT IS THIS?

Hi, my name is Bree and I am here to assist you for the next 8 months! I am a [RARE Volunteer with GEODC](#), your economic development district. I would like to help you by providing resources, better understanding your needs (so we can work towards solutions), and to help you prepare for future economic disruptions.

I will email you every 2 weeks with:

- Up to date resources
- 1 small thing you can do to prepare your business for economic disruptions
- Other information that may be of interest to you

Subscribe
click here

RESOURCE HUB

I have compiled an array of resources in regards to COVID-19 at the federal, state and local level.

[Click Here!](#)

ONE SMALL THING A WEEK

Join in on the series by disastersafety.org. I will attach one PDF worksheet weekly that you can fill out to build a business disaster plan; this will help you to prepare, respond, and recover for any disruption (could be fire, flood, electrical outage)...

Better safe than sorry!

YOU WEAR SO MANY HATS!

Small business owners always amaze me; you take on so many roles! Another role to add to the list:

Resiliency Planner

Scroll down for more info

Why Economic Resiliency?

Small businesses make up 99% of all businesses and account for more than half of sales and jobs in the United States. Their share of the nation's employment and economy are among several reasons that small businesses are at particular risk to economic disruptions.

In the midst of all of this uncertainty, it is easy to get lost and feel helpless. It is important that we all remember that there will be a time when this is over. The world will get through this, and it will begin functioning once again.

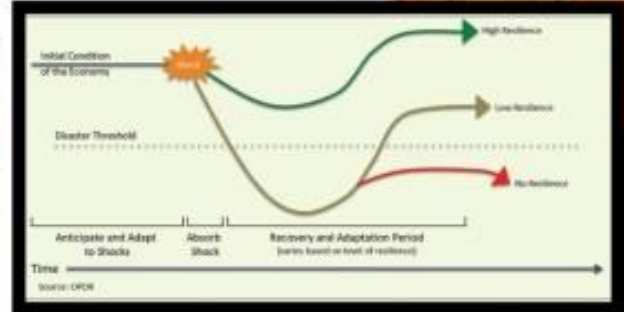
But most importantly, what can we learn from this experience and how can we be better prepared for the next unknowns?

Take one step towards Resiliency

This is a 10 part series of worksheets that will help your small business take the steps needed to keep functioning in the event of a major disaster or a smaller disruption. The goal is to continue to perform your most critical operations, which will help reduce short- and long-term losses to your bottom line. The first step is:

1. Know Your Risks:

You can't plan for disruptions if you don't know the risks your business faces. Consider the greatest risks/threats specific to your business operations.



According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), over 40% of businesses that close their doors due to a crisis never reopen. Of those businesses that do reopen, only 29% are able to survive the following two years.



THREATS	PROBABILITY (0-10)	SEVERITY (0-10)	TOTAL (0-25)
Determine what threats could affect your business functions and operations. Add additional threats that arise in the future (e.g., "what-ifs" table).	Assign each threat with a number (0-10) to indicate the likelihood of occurrence.	Assign each threat with a number (0-10) to indicate the amount of damage it could cause your business. (Consider duration, magnitude, and extent of loss—e.g., loss of critical equipment, loss of a neighborhood, loss of a region, etc.)	Multiply Probability with Severity and enter the total. Place the total in the empty column (0-25) to assess the overall risk. Consider these results with other your business and determine what controls you have in place to reduce potential to increase your risk.

THREATS	PROBABILITY (0-10)	SEVERITY (0-10)	TOTAL
Natural			
Earthquake			
High Wind / Convective Storms / Hail			
Hurricane			
Severe Winter Weather			
Tornado			
Wildfire			
Loss Of			
Communications			
Critical Equipment			
Power (electricity, gas, steam)			
Premises			

[Click here for PDF Worksheet](#)



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I want to hear from you!

How can I better assist you?
[Write your response here](#)

Shoot me an email or call!
I would love to chat with you
and help you through resiliency planning.

SUBSCRIBE
[click here](#)



1. "Small Business Profile." United States Small Business Economic Profile, United States Small Business Economic Profile, 2016, www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/United_States.pdf
2. Fairchild, Gregory B., et al. "Keys to Small Business Resilience in Uncertain Times." Darten Ideas to Action, 2 June 2020, ideas.darten.virginia.edu/keys-to-small-business-resilience-in-uncertain-times