

Natural Hazard Action Item Proposal Form

Proposed Action Item:	Alignment with Plan Goals:
Increase the resilience of small businesses to natural hazards.	Safeguard Economy
Rationale for Proposed Action Item:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To encourage and equip small businesses to rebuild post-disaster ○ In 2004, there were 1,947 businesses in the Northeast region. Of these, 94%, or 1,821, were small businesses with less than 20 employees. The prevalence of small businesses in the Northeast region is an indication of sensitivity to natural hazards because small businesses are more susceptible to financial uncertainty. When a business is financially unstable before a natural disaster occurs, financial losses (resulting from both damage caused and the recovery process) may have a bigger impact than they would for larger and more financially stable businesses. ○ The professional and business services sector is sensitive to a loss of power from a disaster and to disruptions of physical transmission cables (phone lines, etc.). There may also be a disruption of employees' ability to work as a result of damages/problems at home. If prepared and organized, however, this sector has the potential to have moderate resilience to many disasters. ○ According to research by Dan Alesch, developing business continuity plans with small businesses will help businesses in determining appropriate insurance coverage and plan for future recovery efforts. In addition, business continuity plans allow businesses and their employees to be better prepared for a disaster. Having plans in place may reduce the impact on the business, and will allow employees to continue to work. ○ The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires communities to identify a comprehensive range of actions and projects that reduce the effects of hazards on the community [201.6(c)(3)(ii)], such as actions that educate the public and raise awareness. Teaching businesses to be more disaster resilient will help reduce the impact of a natural hazard on local businesses and will help them to bounce back faster after a natural hazard event. 	
Ideas for Implementation:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage small businesses to develop recovery plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite local businesses to participate in the IBHS disaster-preparedness training hosted by ONHW in the fall of 2007 ○ Develop a program to provide businesses with post-disaster consult and assistance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a regional 'Contact Committee' composed of Union County Commissioners, the La Grande City Mayor, UCEDC, NEOEDD, Eastern Oregon University (Annette Johnson and Tim Seydel), OTEC, and Oregon State Employment. When new businesses enter the region, they may use the contact committee for assistance, help in finding loans, etc. Each person/group on this committee is in a position to offer help, and members are bound to confidentiality. ○ Provide businesses with the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) "Getting Back to Business" guide: it contains important steps for business owners to use when reporting losses, assessing damages, and returning to business. It also contains a list of questions to ask your insurer and a resource list of organizations that can assist in business recovery issues. ○ Provide training sessions with interested businesses; utilize the Institute for Business and Home Safety 'Open for Business' disaster planning toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Open for Business comprehensive disaster planning toolkit is an easy-to-use guide helps business owners reduce the potential for loss should disaster strike, and reopen quickly should they be forced to close. This creates a savings for the business, and also benefits the employees and customers who rely on it. 	

Coordinating Organization:		Northeast Oregon Economic Development District
Internal Partners:		External Partners:
Northeast Oregon Counties' Chambers of Commerce		Eastern Oregon University, Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation, Oregon Rural Alliance, Union County Economic Development Corporation, Baker Enterprise Growth Initiative, Union County Economic Development Corporation, Enterprise Hometown Improvement Group, Economic and Community Development Department Regional Development Officer, Oregon Trail Electric, Grant Resource Enhancement Team, Southeast Regional Alliance
Timeline:		If available, estimated cost:
<u>Short Term</u> (0-2 years)	<u>Long Term</u> (2-4 or more years)	
	Long Term	
Form Submitted by:	RARE Participant	