



News & Risk Management Review

FALL 2025

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SPECIAL DISTRICTS
ASSOCIATION OF OREGON

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Brent Stevenson, Santiam Water Control District

Next Board of Directors Meeting

November 13th | 9AM | Joint Meeting with SDIS Board of Trustees | Salem

November 13th | 1PM | Salem

Executive Director

Frank Stratton

Services

Awards, Education and Training, Internship Grant, Legislative, Research and Technical Assistance, Scholarship and Grant Fund, and SDAO Advisory Services, LLC

Contact

Main Office

PO Box 12613 | Salem OR 97309-0613

Toll-Free: 800-285-5461

Phone: 503-371-8667

Email: sdao@sdao.com | Web: www.sdao.com

Claims Office

PO Box 23879 | Tigard OR 97281-3879

Toll-Free: 800-305-1736

Phone: 503-670-7066



2025 SDAO MEMBER SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT



Thank you to everyone who joined us at Chehalem Glenn Golf Course for this year's tournament. It was a fantastic day with perfect weather. We really enjoyed spending time with our members and event sponsors.

This event is more than just a day of golf; it's our primary fundraiser for the SDAO Scholarship and Grant Fund. Since its inception in 2015, the tournament has been entirely funded by player registration fees and sponsorships, with all proceeds going towards training scholarships for SDAO members.

This year, the Scholarship and Grant Fund was able to provide over 175 scholarships for members. This fund not only supports attendance at SDAO trainings but is also available for external training opportunities. For example, this fund was able to allow one member to attend an OAWU training and provided a partial scholarship to another member to attend the NRPA Annual Conference.

If you or someone in your district needs financial assistance to attend a training, we encourage you to apply for a scholarship. The application process is straightforward, and our committee reviews applications monthly. For more information, please visit www.sdao.com/sdao-scholarship-and-grant-fund.

Once again, thank you to all the players and sponsors who made this tournament a success. We look forward to seeing you next year!

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UPCOMING TRAININGS AND EVENTS

SDAO RISK MANAGEMENT REGIONAL TRAINING

Learn the top ten ways to keep safety meetings impactful, how to spot and prevent costly claims, and simple steps to boost your district's cyber resilience. Join us for engaging conversations and actionable insights that protect and empower your organization.

- October 21: Medford
- October 22: Coos Bay
- December 9: Seaside
- December 10: Tigard

Time: 9am-12pm

Cost: \$25

For more information and to register, visit

www.sdao.com/risk-management-regional-training-series.

SDAO METRO BREAKFAST

Join us for our October Metro Breakfast featuring a timely update from the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC). As Oregon's public meetings landscape continues to evolve, OGEC will provide insights into recent legislative changes and what they mean for public officials, board members, and local governments.

October 17 | 7:30am | Tigard

In-person and virtual registration is available. For more information, visit our website at www.sdao.com/calendar.

LBL CYBERSECURITY TABLETOP EXERCISE

This tabletop exercise is specifically designed to help K-12, special districts, and local governments strengthen their cybersecurity response, coordination, and resilience in real-world scenarios.

- November 3 | Prineville
- November 13 | Medford

For more information, please visit <https://www.lblesd.k12.or.us/cyber-safety/tabletop/>.

SDIS/PACE BOILER TRAINING

What Will Be Covered:

- Who are the local RCCs?
- Equipment breakdown claims services
- Jurisdictional inspection services and local code requirements
- Data driven risk control and Travelers Risk Control Customer Resource Center
- Engaging with Travelers as a resource

October 30 | 9am-12pm | Bend

Register: <https://cvent.me/ZyZY30>



Mark your calendar for the 2026 SDAO Annual Conference! We will have over 20 training and educational sessions, networking opportunities, our ever-popular exhibitor trade show, awards banquet, and more! The annual conference is also our member districts' opportunity to send a representative to vote at the caucus meeting and Annual Business Meeting.

DATES

February 5: Pre-Conference Sessions and Alliance Meetings
February 6-8: Annual Conference

LOCATION

Seaside Civic & Convention Center
415 1st Ave | Seaside, Oregon

REGISTRATION RATES

Estimated registration rates are below:

- Pre-Conference: \$150 Full Day, \$75 Half-Day
- One Day Only (Friday or Saturday): \$195
- Full Conference (Thursday Evening-Sunday Morning): \$295

HOTEL INFORMATION

Below are the room blocks for the conference:

Best Western Plus Ocean View Resort

Rates: \$110-180/night + tax

Book Direct: 800-234-8439, Press 0 and mention the SDAO Annual Conference

Book Online: <https://bit.ly/BestWesternSeaside>

Book by 5pm on January 5th to receive the room block rate.

Cancellation must be received by 4pm seven days prior to arrival to avoid a one-night charge.

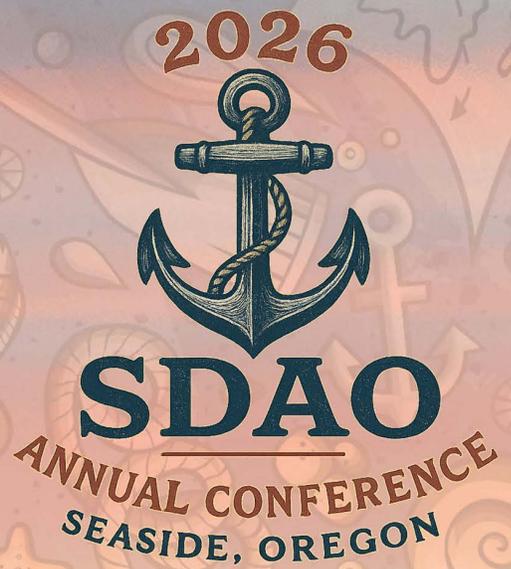
Holiday Inn Express

Rates: \$145-175/night + tax

Book Direct: 503-717-8000 and mention the SDAO Annual Conference

Book by January 5th to receive the room block rate.

Cancellation must be received at least 14 days prior to arrival to avoid a one-night charge.



Inn at Seaside

Rates: \$89-99/night + tax (February 4th and 5th) and \$149-159/night + tax (February 5th and 6th)

Book Direct: 503-738-9581 and mention the SDAO Annual Conference

Book Online: www.innatseaside.com | Group Code: b456003

Book by January 21st to receive the room block rate.

Cancellation must be received at least 48 hours prior to arrival to avoid a one-night charge.

River Inn at Seaside

Rates: \$89-99/night + tax (February 4th and 5th) and \$149-159/night + tax (February 5th and 6th)

Book Direct: 503-717-5744 and mention the SDAO Annual Conference

Book Online: www.riverinnatseaside.com | Group Code: b288066

Book by January 21st to receive the room block rate.

Cancellation must be received at least 48 hours prior to arrival to avoid a one-night charge.

Rivertide Suites

Rates: \$152-242/night + tax

Book by Phone: 877-871-8433 and mention the SDAO Annual Conference

Book Online: <https://reservations.travelclick.com/108649?groupID=4917180>

Book by January 5th to receive the room block rate.

Cancellation must be received by 4pm at least 14 days prior to arrival to avoid a one-night charge.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration information and agenda will be sent to all members, agents, and affiliates on December 1st.

QUESTIONS

Please contact SDAO Member Services at memberservices@sdao.com or 800-285-5461.

www.sdao.com/annual-conference



2025

LEGISLATIVE

SESSION

SUMMARY

**BY: HASINA WITTENBERG, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS STRATEGIES
AND MARK LANDAUER, MJL CONSULTING**

The 83rd Legislative Assembly was comprised of super majorities in both chambers. Speaker Julie Fahey (D-Eugene), who served as House Speaker for her first full long session, along with Majority Leader Ben Bowman (D-Tigard) had a 36-24 edge over the Republicans, led by Republican Leader Christine Drazan (R-Canby). President Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego) served in his second term as President along with first-time Majority Leader Kayse Jama (D-Portland) and had a 18-12 majority over their Republican colleagues who were led by Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles). As a result of their super-majorities, Democrats were in position to pass new taxes, which require a 3/5th majority vote, without a single Republican vote.

BILLS

This session saw a record number of bills introduced during the session. In fact, there were 5 times more bills introduced this session than were passed during the 2023 session (653). Many of the bills introduced this session, over 600, were also introduced as place-holders – thereby leaving most people in the dark about the real intent and actual language that would be revealed later. This led to frustration for legislators, lobbyists, and the public alike. The number of placeholder bills raised concerns about the lack of public transparency.

Testimony was often limited to two minutes and in some cases even sixty seconds. Some consideration was given to limiting the number of bills an individual legislator could introduce. However, that idea was ultimately rejected by members of both parties. Over the entire course of the session 3,466 bills, resolutions, and memorials were introduced, breaking the record for the number of bills introduced dating back to 2001.

Over 1,900 amendments were proposed, the various committees conducted 2,377 public hearings and 2,295 work sessions took place. At one point in the session, Oregon's Legislative Information System (OLIS) essentially melted down due to the volume of public testimony that was being submitted regarding a bill that would have potentially ended vote-by-mail in Oregon. This collapse resulted in the delay of some legislative business. In the end, 640 bills were sent to the Governor for her signature or veto. Of the over 3,400 bills, SDAO tracked just under 700 bills on behalf of our members.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PACKAGE

One of the major issues that faced the Assembly was consideration of a transportation funding package. Inflation sent road costs soaring in recent years and gas taxes have declined due to higher fuel efficiency and the increasing number of hybrid and electrical vehicles. In addition, several instances of mismanagement and poor estimating in the department were uncovered and cast doubt in lawmakers' trust with the department.

Over the interim, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) stated it would not be able to afford to fix state-owned paving projects, except for the federal interstate highway, without new revenue. And without a radical funding fix, ODOT promised “longer road closures, more trash and graffiti, worse winter driving conditions, more potholes, and slower DMV customer service.” Funding in the department had become so dire that the department needed an infusion of general funds just to plow mountain passes this year and said without intervention it would have to lay off nearly 1,000 employees. A bill was finally unveiled publicly about three weeks prior to the Constitutional Sine Die. It was ultimately determined that the measure would raise \$14.6 billion over the next decade.

BUDGET

With a reduction in available resources due to the May forecast, the Legislature could not fund some of their priorities such as eviction prevention assistance. The final legislatively adopted 2025-27 budget comprised of planned expenditures totaling \$37.3 billion General Fund, \$1.8 billion Lottery Funds, \$56.1 billion Other Funds, and \$43.7 billion Federal Funds.

The adopted state budget for the 2025-27 biennium of \$138.9 billion represents a 6.3% increase from the 2023-25 legislatively approved budget. The combined General Fund and Lottery Funds adopted budget for the 2025-27 biennium (\$39.1 billion) is up 11.7% from the 2023-25 legislatively approved level and is a 0.5% increase over the 2025-27 current service level.

SESSION ADJOURNMENT

The session lasted 158 days and adjourned at 11:15 pm on June 27th, two days short of the Constitutional deadline. While lawmakers passed a balanced budget as required, few expected that to be the end of story.

NOTABLE ACTIONS TAKEN THIS SESSION

- Adopted state budget for the 2025-27 biennium of \$138.9 billion, a 6.3% increase from the 2023-25 legislatively approved budget.
- Passage of the largest K-12 budget in the state's history at \$11.4 billion – combined with local revenues (primarily property taxes). Oregon's K-12 schools will receive \$16.7 billion or a 10.5% increase over the previous biennium.
- Made temporary changes to the Recreational Immunity statute passed in the 2024 short session permanent.
- Establishment of permanent funding for wildfire prevention and mitigation.
- Repealed the State-wide Wildfire Hazard Map.
- Approved a higher education budget of \$3.9 billion.
- Stopped large energy users, like data centers, from shifting electrical costs to consumers.
- Required utilities to slow down their rate increases.
- Permitted local governments to regulate concealed weapon permittees from carrying firearms in certain public buildings.
- Removed medical debt from consumer credit reports.
- Prohibited surprise fees for online shopping prices.
- Significant investment in the State's public defense program.
- Invested in affordable summer learning programs.
- Extended a tax benefit to help Oregonians save for a home down payment.
- Capped rent increases in mobile home parks at 6 percent a year.
- Provided 10 weeks of unemployment insurance for striking workers, whether publicly or privately employed.
- Prohibited corporate investors from making medical decisions for patients.
- Outlawed devices that turn legal firearms into machine guns.
- Increased funding to resolve the public defense unrepresented crisis.
- Addressed several areas on housing affordability and development.
- Expanded childcare facility siting in the state.

SPECIAL SESSION

Shortly after the session concluded, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced that it would have to lay off roughly 480 current employees and shutter approximately 12 highway maintenance facilities across the state. ODOT added that another round of layoffs would need to occur in January for them to address their budget shortfall. Shortly after, Governor Kotek instructed ODOT to suspend the layoffs and called a Special Session for August 29th, 2025, to take up a pared down transportation package.

That proposal included:

- 6-cent increase to the current 40-cent/gallon gas tax.
- \$42 increase for the registration of several types of vehicles,
- \$139 increase for titling
- 0.1% increase to the state-wide payroll tax which will be dedicated to transit funding.

Importantly, the Governor has committed to maintaining the 50/30/20 split for the increase in gas taxes – meaning that the state will receive 50% of the new revenue, counties will receive 30%, and cities will receive the remaining 20%. Additionally, the bill will eliminate some tolling language that was enacted in 2017 to mollify some reluctant Democrats and create some accountability requirements for ODOT.

As of press time, the House of Representatives had passed the transportation bill and it is headed to the Senate. The vote has been delayed until several times due to Senator Gorsek's absence.

LOOKING AHEAD

Interestingly, the 83rd Assembly did not pass any referrals to the voters for their consideration in 2026. However, there are more than 40 active proposed ballot measures with more to come. To qualify constitutional measures for the ballot, gatherers will need to collect approximately 156,231 signatures; statutory measures will need 117,173 signatures to qualify. The deadline to turn in those signatures is July 3, 2026. At this time, it is hard to predict what petitions will have the financial backing to have a chance to appear before the voters.

Ballot Measure 113, which was proposed by public unions and passed overwhelmingly in 2022 to prevent lawmakers with 10 or more unexcused absences from running for reelection to the Legislature for a term, prohibited six Senate Republicans from running for re-election in 2024 (although two chose not to run again) and four more will be prohibited from running in 2026 (Daniel Bonham (The Dalles), Cedric Hayden (Fall City), Kim Thatcher (Keizer), Suzanne Weber (Tillamook)). As a result, 1/3 of the current Republican Senators seats will be open.

The only state-wide seats that will be up in November of 2026 are the Governor and U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley's seat. Senator Merkley has already announced that he will seek an additional term. Governor Kotek has not indicated whether she will seek re-election, but all signs point towards a second run.

Watch the SDAO website for the 2025 Legislative Summary which will include a more comprehensive look at this year's session.



NEW LAWS AFFECTING EMPLOYERS

From: Oregon Employment Department

The Oregon Legislative Assembly adjourned at the end of June. We want to call attention to some of the new laws affecting employers.

For a complete list of business legislation passed during the recent session, see the Secretary of State's legislation site at <https://www.oregon.gov/smallbusiness/Pages/legislation.aspx>.

BILLS RELATED TO THE EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

SB 69

Helps employers better coordinate their employee's paid leave by allowing OED to share their employees' benefit amounts. This information lets employers align paid leave with their own leave policies. It also supports clearer communication between employers and employees on return-to-work timelines. This bill takes effect Jan. 1, 2026.

SB 916

Allows striking workers to receive up to 10 weeks of UI benefits after a two-week disqualification. This change starts Jan. 1, 2026. OED has drafted three rule changes related to UI, including updates to implement this law. We invite you to the two virtual listening sessions scheduled for July 31 and Aug. 4 to provide feedback on all three draft rule changes related to this bill. For more information or to register, visit our event page.

SB 859

Supports fairer treatment of employers by allowing OED to waive or reduce penalties and interest on Paid Leave Oregon debts. It also allows OED to write off uncollectible debts, aligning these practices with those used in the Unemployment Insurance program.

SB 1148

Prohibits insurers and employers from requiring employees to use paid leave before short-term disability benefits. This bill applies to policies offered, issued, or renewed on Jan. 1, 2026.

HB 2236

Gives professional employer organizations (PEOs) flexibility in how they report employees for calculating their clients' UI tax experience rates.

HB 2271

Offers a one-time, non-refundable tax credit of up to \$5,000 for calendar year 2025. It applies to employers whose unemployment insurance tax rates drop by at least 2.5 percentage points from 2024 to 2025. The credit helps businesses that missed out on lower rates during earlier pandemic-related relief.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021's HB 3389 froze employer experience ratings at pre-COVID levels from 2022 to 2024 to ease the burden of pandemic-related layoffs. However, some employers would have qualified for lower rates during that period if the freeze hadn't been in place.

Other Bills Affecting Employers

SB 426

Creates liability for property owners and contractors for the unpaid wages of unrepresented (those not represented by a union) employees on construction projects. Effective January 1, 2026.

HB 2248

Formally establishes the Employer Assistance Division within the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). The division provides education, training, and interpretive guidance, including advisory opinions, to employers regarding the laws enforced by BOLI. Effective September 26, 2025.

HB 3187

Changes the laws that prohibit employment discrimination based on age. It will generally be against the law for an employer or a prospective employer to ask an applicant's age, date of birth, or when the applicant attended or graduated from any educational institution. Effective September 26, 2025.

For links to each of these bills, visit www.sdao.com/2025-legislative-session-concludes.



SPECIAL DISTRICTS CONSULTING SERVICES PROGRAM

"FALLING LEAVES DANCE IN THE AUTUMN BREEZE, NATURE'S CONFETTI PAINTS THE GROUND WITH EASE. A SYMPHONY OF COLORS, RUST, GOLD, AND RED, AS SUMMER'S WARMTH SLOWLY RECEDES."

Sarah Adams

By: Shanta Carter, Consulting Services Manager

It has been a very busy season for our Consulting Services team, and we're excited to share what's new. Over the past several months, we've worked alongside districts to deliver trainings, develop policies, and support everyday governance needs. Whether it's clarifying board roles, strengthening internal practices, or simply being available when questions pop up, we're proud to be your partner.

One resource many districts are using is the Oregon Government Employee Handbook Template, created in partnership with HR Answers. It includes required policies for government entities and space to tailor content to your district. If you haven't started your handbook yet, or you're ready for a refresh, reach out to me and I'll help you get moving.

We are happy to announce the launch of our Public Meetings Law training as a new SDAO Consulting Services offering. This training is designed to give boards practical, Oregon-specific guidance on statutory responsibilities, running meetings, executive sessions, and real-world scenarios. We will begin scheduling sessions soon; if you have not done so already, please send us an email if you would like to get on the schedule for this important training.



We're also thrilled to welcome Betty Nielsen as our newest Senior Consultant. Betty brings more than 25 years of financial and administrative leadership, including roles at Oregon State University, Linn-Benton Community College, the University of Oregon, and Willamalane Park & Recreation District. Betty is also a licensed CPA in Oregon and Washington. Her deep experience in budgeting, auditing, and financial leadership will be a tremendous asset to our members.

If your district could use support such as training, policy development, or day-to-day guidance, we are here to help. We look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

Have a service in mind that we don't yet offer? Shoot us an email at consultingservices@sdao.com, chances are we can help. Or tell us what new services you'd like to see. Our goal is always to be of service to our special district members!

Please visit www.sdao.com/consulting-services-program to learn more about the other services we provide.

SDAO LEADERSHIP ACADEMIES

SDAO offers a trio of programs designed to elevate leadership and operational excellence across Oregon's special districts. These academies – SDAO Academy, Board Leadership Academy, and Fire District Directors Academy – serve as vital resources for both emerging and seasoned leaders seeking to deepen their knowledge, sharpen their skills, and better serve their communities.

The SDAO Academy is tailored for special district employees aiming to advance their careers in local government management. With tracks in district management, human resources, and risk management, the program equips participants with the tools needed to navigate complex operational challenges. Beyond personal growth, the academy supports succession planning and helps districts mitigate claims by fostering a culture of informed leadership.

The Board Leadership Academy focuses on providing board members with a comprehensive understanding of governance responsibilities. Participants explore topics such as statutory obligations, risk management, and human resources. The program offers three certificate levels (bronze, silver, and gold) based on completed coursework, allowing board members to tailor their learning journey.

The Fire District Directors Academy is like the Board Leadership Academy but with an added fire service module for directors of fire districts.

Enrollment is free for members, with training costs covered by the individual or district. To learn more, visit our website at <https://www.sdao.com/sdao-programs-services>.

Congratulations

TO OUR RECENT ACADEMY CERTIFICATE RECIPIENT!

SDAO Academy

HEATHER ESTRADA

UMATILLA COUNTY SPECIAL LIBRARY DISTRICT





We are thrilled to introduce a new benefit for SDAO members: free Business Prime from Amazon Business! This exclusive offer is designed to enhance your purchasing experience and provide valuable savings.

Already paying for Prime? No worries! As an SDAO member, you will receive a prorated refund.

SDAO MEMBER BENEFITS

- Free Business Prime (\$3,499 value, unlimited users per account)
- Pre-approved line of credit of \$5k+ with pay by invoice
- Discounts on thousands of essential products within Office, IT, JanSan, and MRO categories

Below are resources to get started with Amazon Business Prime. If you have any questions related to your Amazon account, setting up the benefit, or other related Amazon questions, please reach out to your account executive. SDAO has knowledge of the program but is unable to troubleshoot any issues with the sign-up process or other questions related to doing business with Amazon.

To find a list of districts along with their assigned account executives, visit <https://www.sdao.com/amazon-business-prime>. The list is short, so if you do not see your district on the list, please email **Brooke Torres at torrbroo@amazon.com** for assistance.

ACTIVATION STEPS

Please follow the steps below if your account does NOT currently have Prime:

1. Visit <https://a.co/1AIVmyj>
2. Login to your Amazon Business account
3. Enter this verification code: **666FWV**
4. Navigate to your Business Prime Portal, to view your current membership plan
5. There will be three membership plans listed at the top of the page; select the one that best fits your organization. Activate Business Prime \$0 (or "switch" to a \$0 and receive a prorated refund)

If your account DOES currently have Prime:

1. Follow steps 1 - 4 listed above
2. Instead of selecting a new plan, you will want to click the link "Switch to a different plan"
3. Select the "Medium" plan
4. Finish enrolling in the Free Business Prime Medium plan (this will trigger a pro-rated refund)

For more information and resources, visit <https://www.sdao.com/amazon-business-prime>. If you have any questions, contact **SDAO Member Services at memberservices@sdao.com**.

SERIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

FROM: OREGON GOVERNMENT ETHICS COMMISSION

To help governing body members identify when serial communications violate Public Meetings Law, we've created an FAQ on prohibited serial communications. You can read it or download on the OGECE website at

www.oregon.gov/ogec/Public-Meetings-Law/Pages/serial-communications.aspx

PURPOSE & DEFINITIONS

Governing bodies are required to deliberate and decide matters in open public meetings. The purpose and intent of the Public Meetings Law is that the decisions of governing bodies be arrived at openly and that the public be informed and aware of the deliberations and decisions of governing bodies and the information upon which such decisions are made (ORS 192.620).

Prohibited serial communications occur when the governing body, outside of a public meeting, uses serial electronic written communications (notes, emails, texts), in-person communications, or an intermediary to communicate among a quorum of the members of the governing body for the purpose of deliberating or deciding on any matter within the governing body's jurisdiction (i.e., a matter for which the governing body has the authority to make a decision or recommendation) (OAR 199-050-005(10) & OAR 199-050-0020).

Deliberating includes any discussions or communications that are part of the governing body's decision-making process. A decision-making process may include:

- Identifying or selecting the nature of the decision to be made;
- Gathering information related to the decision to be made;
- Identifying and assessing alternatives;
- Weighing information; and
- Making a decision (ORS 192.610(3) & OAR 199-050-0005(4)).

An intermediary is a person who is used to facilitate communications among members of a governing body about a matter subject to deliberation or decision by the governing body, by sharing information received from a member or members of the governing body with other members of the governing body. An intermediary may be a member of the governing body, a staff member, or any other person who is used to facilitate communications among members of the governing body (OAR 199-050-0005(7)).

SDAO

Vendor Solutions Network

As an SDAO member, you have exclusive access to the Vendor Solutions Network. Vendors listed in this directory offer products and services to special districts and have experience working with government agencies. They also offer discounts and/or benefits to SDAO members. We invite you to explore the directory to discover the wide range of offerings available.

Our directory includes vendors offering the following services:

- ADA Compliance (Website, Apps, Digital Assets)
- Bonds and Borrowing
- Cooperative Procurement
- Consulting Services
- Energy Efficiency
- Grant Writing Assistance
- Health & Safety
- HR Resources
- Insurance Agencies
- IT and Cybersecurity Services
- Mediation and Facilitation
- Purchasing
- Staffing Resources
- Translation Services
- Website Platforms/Hosting

You can check out the directory on our website at www.sdao.com/vendor-solutions-network and discover vendors available to assist you with your district's needs.

Disclaimer: SDAO does not officially endorse any of the participating vendors.

DO WE HAVE YOUR BUDGET INFORMATION?

In late spring, we sent a mailing to all members requesting budget figures and updated contact information for the 2025-26 fiscal year. If your district has not yet returned these forms, please do so as soon as possible.

Districts that did not send us this information by September 1st have received a reminder mailing. Reporting budget figures is a requirement of membership in SDAO and being eligible for insurance coverage with Special Districts Insurance Services.

If you have any questions or are unsure if you have returned your forms, please contact Member Services at memberservices@sdao.com.



UPDATE: SDAO PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW TRAINING

SDAO is pleased to announce that our in-person Public Meetings Law training has been officially approved by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC). We will begin offering this training in the fall.

Designed specifically for district board members, managers, and staff, this training provides practical guidance and real-world examples to help participants navigate Oregon's Public Meetings Law with clarity and confidence. Content is tailored to the unique responsibilities of special districts and will assist governing bodies in maintaining compliance in everyday decision-making. Members of a governing body who attend and complete this training will fulfill the requirement outlined in ORS 192.700.

ONLINE TRAINING UPDATE

Although we are excited about the approval of our in-person training, we are still working with OGEC to secure approval for the online version available through the Vector Solutions platform. This ongoing process has included multiple meetings between SDAO, OGEC, and Vector Solutions. Please note that the current version on the platform is not approved and will be updated to reflect OGEC's requirements. We will keep you informed once the revised training is approved and published.

SCHEDULING IN-PERSON TRAINING

To arrange an in-person session for your district, please contact Shanta Carter at [**scarter@sdao.com**](mailto:scarter@sdao.com)





Providing reasonable, stable rates, and broad coverage to Oregon's public entities

SDIS Board of Trustees

- Chair:** Andrea Klaas, Port of The Dalles
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- Secretary:** David Lindelien, Lane Transit District
- Treasurer:** Stacy Maxwell, Jackson County Fire District 3
- Trustees:** Pete Boone, Tualatin Valley Water District
Nicole Dalke, Springfield Utility Board
Mark Hokkanen, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District
- Emeritus:** Ted Kunze, Molalla RFPD #73

Next SDIS Board of Trustees Meeting

November 12th | 1PM | Salem

November 13th | Joint Meeting with SDAO Board of Directors | 9AM | Salem



PREPARING FACILITIES FOR WINTER WEATHER

BY: GREG JACKSON, SENIOR RISK MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Preparation for winter weather is a critical aspect of facilities maintenance. Regardless of the weather predictions, a proactive approach will save time and money. There are several parts to a good action plan. These include an early autumn inspection of all buildings, an ongoing fall and early winter inspection of the building's envelope, and a plan for during and immediately after storms.

To help prevent frozen pipes, you should keep the heat set to at least 40 degrees Fahrenheit. This temperature may vary depending on the building and how well it is insulated. During a deep freeze, a minimum of 50 or even 55 degrees Fahrenheit may be required for some areas. In extreme situations it may be necessary to open faucets to allow water to drip or run a bit to keep pipes from freezing (or shut off the water and drain the pipes). During severe weather (cold or heavy rain), all unoccupied buildings need ongoing in-person checks, if possible. Of course, personal safety should always be the foremost consideration.

PREPARATION REMINDERS:

- Develop an action plan for facilities management including building checks.
- Develop a map for all water and gas shut off valves.
- Check all drains, scuppers, gutters and downspouts to be sure they are clean.
- Check surrounding trees to be sure there are no damaged trees or branches that may fall due to wind or snow load.
- Check all roof components, including flashing, to be sure everything is secure.
- Shut off and drain outside hose bibs that may freeze and shut off and drain irrigation systems.
- Check supplies of batteries, flashlights and emergency utility shut off tools to be sure they are ready to use.
- Verify generator has been serviced and fueled.
- Check emergency egress lighting to be sure it is in working order.
- Clean storm drains.
- Identify hard to heat areas and develop an action plan for managing freeze potential.
- Exterior wet fire systems should be checked for adequate anti-freeze.
- Don't forget those nooks and crannies where you rarely go but may have water pipes that are exposed to freezing.

- Consider having contracts in place for emergencies:
 - » Roof cleaning for snow and ice.
 - » Parking lot and sidewalk cleaning and plowing.
 - » Contractors to make immediate, after storm repairs to facilities.

BEST PRACTICES FOR WALKING IN THE WINTER

Walking during the winter months in Oregon can be both refreshing and challenging. With the state's varied terrain and unpredictable weather – ranging from coastal rain to mountain snow – it's important to take precautions to stay safe and comfortable. Whether you're navigating icy sidewalks or working in the snow, being prepared can make all the difference.

Here are some best practices to keep in mind:

- Wear appropriate footwear: Choose shoes or boots with good traction to prevent slips on icy or wet surfaces.
- Layer your clothing: Dress in moisture-wicking base layers, insulating mid-layers, and waterproof outerwear to stay warm and dry.
- Stay visible: Winter days are short and often overcast. Wear reflective gear or carry a flashlight if walking near roads or in low-light conditions.
- Watch your step: Be cautious of black ice, especially on shaded sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots.
- Plan your route: Stick to well-maintained paths and avoid areas prone to flooding or snow accumulation.

Here are additional best practices for walking like a penguin in winter conditions to help prevent slips and falls:

- Point feet slightly outward: This increases stability and mimics a penguin's natural stance.
- Take short, shuffling steps: Avoid long strides to maintain balance.
- Keep your center of gravity over your front leg: Lean slightly forward as you walk.
- Keep hands free for balance: Wear a backpack if carrying items, this helps with keeping your hands free for balance and allows you to react quickly if you slip.
- Watch where you're walking: Scan for ice patches, uneven surfaces, or obstacles.
- Walk slowly and deliberately: Rushing increases the risk of slipping.
- Use designated walkways: Stick to paths that are cleared and treated for ice.
- Avoid carrying heavy loads: If you must carry something, keep it light and balanced.
- Stay alert and aware of your surroundings: Especially in changing weather conditions.

Please go to the SDAO Resource Library for additional information and search "winter".

<https://sdaoresourcelibrary.com>

If you have any questions regarding the information above, please feel free to reach out to the risk management department at **riskmanagement@sdao.com** or call us at **800-285-5461**.

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CYBER PREVENTION SEASON

BY: JENS JENSEN, DIRECTOR OF PC CLAIMS

It's always cyber prevention season. With computers and electronics becoming more and more prevalent and integrated into our daily lives, the threat and exposure from computer hackers has grown right along with this. It is always a good time to tune up your cyber practices to reduce the threat of being an easy target to a hacker.

First off, there are several types of hackers out there, and guess what, not all are bad:

- 1. White Hat** – These hackers work for security firms and will attempt to gain access to your systems to determine where weaknesses are. Having a company perform random penetration testing is a good way to determine where any vulnerabilities are.
- 2. Black Hat** – These are the bad guys. They are looking to gain access to your systems to extract personal data, hold your systems hostage, or simply cause a lot of damage rendering you unable to perform your tasks.
- 3. Gray Hat** – These fall somewhere in the middle. Often times these guys will look to see if they can infiltrate your systems just to see if they can do it.

We'll focus on the Black Hats as that is where your exposure rests. When reviewing your systems at work, here are some tasks that should be able to be accomplished with minimal effort, but have maximum results.

- 1. Use Strong Passwords** – Sounds simple enough, but hackers use computer programs themselves to try to determine passwords. Additional complexity makes it harder to get that password. Don't use that same password for every single application or device. Once the hacker gets one, they will try that password everywhere to see what else they can get in to.
- 2. Multi-Factor Authentication** – This will involve having access to another device such as your phone to receive codes to be entered into the application or device to gain access. This helps stop hackers as if they don't have access to your phone, they won't be able to get the code to access your infrastructure.
- 3. Keep Your Software Updated** – Take those updates. Programmers at the headquarters of software you have purchased are also targets of hacking attempts. If a hacker gain access to a computer program you use, they can use this access to get in to your systems. Your systems often recognize software you have purchased as friendly and don't have as many restrictions. Programmers are constantly looking to keep their software safe to use and they do this by providing updates for you to patch your own copies of the software. A word of caution, do determine if that update is actually being sent from the software company and not a hacking device cleverly disguised.

There of course are multiple different ways to increase cyber security at your operation so don't limit yourself to just these suggestions. Hackers generally are looking for soft targets and will move on if they find it takes too much work to get in to your systems.

**SUCCEEDING AS
A SUPERVISOR:
BEYOND THE JOB TITLE**

**BY: DEBORAH JEFFRIES,
HR ANSWERS**

Many organizations promote high-performing employees into supervisory roles without first asking two critical questions:

- **DO THEY WANT TO BE A SUPERVISOR?**
- **DO THEY FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT BEING A SUPERVISOR ENTAILS?**

Too often, people are placed in leadership roles simply because they excelled in their individual contributor jobs. But leading people is a very different skill set. It requires patience, self-awareness, and the ability to build trust. Without preparation, new supervisors can feel overwhelmed, frustrated, and ill-equipped to succeed.

Effective communication remains the cornerstone of great leadership. But today's supervisors need even more than that. They must:

- Build trust by creating psychological safety and modeling integrity.
- Show empathy by understanding and supporting the challenges their employees face.
- Listen actively so employees feel heard and valued.
- Provide constructive feedback that develops skills rather than discourages effort.
- Adapt quickly in a constantly changing workplace.

Unfortunately, many organizations still underinvest in training their supervisors. They buy tools and technology but forget that the daily interactions of a supervisor have more impact on retention, morale, and productivity than almost any perk or policy.

If we truly want workplaces where employees thrive, we must commit to training leaders – not just rewarding technical performance. Great supervisors don't just manage tasks; they inspire, guide, and set the tone for workplace culture.

The truth is that no one is born a great supervisor. Leadership is a skill set, not an innate trait – and it can be learned, practiced, and improved. Even if someone has struggled in the past, it's never too late to turn things around. What matters most is the willingness to learn and grow.

Here are some proven methods for improving supervisory effectiveness:

- Invest in training: Programs designed for new and experienced supervisors provide both foundational skills and fresh perspectives.
- Practice self-awareness: Understand how your behavior impacts others and commit to continuous improvement.
- Seek feedback regularly: Ask employees and peers what's working – and what isn't –then act on it.
- Develop core skills intentionally: Focus on integrity, emotional intelligence, customer service, listening, conflict resolution, decision making and coaching.
- Find a mentor or coach: Learning from others who've been successful in similar roles accelerates growth.
- Apply and reflect: Supervisory skills stick when you practice them daily and take time to reflect on outcomes.

Being an effective supervisor doesn't mean being perfect – it means being committed to learning, adapting, and supporting the people you lead.

Don't let supervisors go it alone. Give them the skills to lead with impact.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Hasina Wittenberg: 503-906-7228
Mark Landauer: 503-906-7238

MEMBER SERVICES

Toll-Free: 800-285-5461
Email: memberservices@sdao.com
Fax: 503-371-4781

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Email: underwriting@sdao.com
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MEMBER CALENDAR

<i>October 17</i>	Metro Breakfast - Tigard
<i>October 21</i>	Risk Management Regional Training - Medford
<i>October 22</i>	Risk Management Regional Training - Coos Bay
<i>October 30</i>	Boiler Training - Bend
<i>November 11</i>	Veterans Day (SDAO Offices Closed)
<i>November 12</i>	SDIS Board of Trustees Meeting - Salem
<i>November 13</i>	SDAO/SDIS Joint Board and Trust Meeting - Salem
<i>November 13</i>	SDAO Board of Directors Meeting - Salem
<i>November 27</i>	Thanksgiving (SDAO Offices Closed)
<i>November 28</i>	Day After Thanksgiving (SDAO Offices Closed)
<i>December 1</i>	Registration Opens for the SDAO Annual Conference
<i>December 9</i>	Risk Management Regional Training - Seaside
<i>December 10</i>	Risk Management Regional Training - Tigard
<i>December 25</i>	Christmas Day (SDAO Offices Closed)