Chair Stephen Gambee opened the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

1. **Approval of December 9, 2013 minutes**
   Chair Gambee presented the minutes from the December 9, 2013, meeting for approval. Mr. Vincent made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Burrill seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved by those members present: Stephen Gambee, Jay Harland, Art Baden, Curtis Burrill, Bill Thorndike, and Steve Vincent.

2. **Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc. (SOREDI) Update on the Community Economic Development Strategy – Ron Fox**
   Mr. Fox explained that SOREDI was designated in the mid-1980s as the developer, keeper, and reporter on a comprehensive economic development strategy for the region of Jackson and Josephine Counties, under the auspices of the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA), which is a unit of the Commerce Department. Since that time, SOREDI has prepared, maintained, and reported annually on achievements against a set of outcomes listed in the associated work plan. SOREDI receives EDA funds to perform the regional economic development planning. Mr. Fox distributed SOREDI’s 2006 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) annual report (*Submission No. 1*). This document is normally updated every five years, but an extension was made in 2011 because the 2010 census data was not yet available. During the past three years, the EDA has gone through a rigorous process to re-define what the CEDS should contain. The requirements have been published (*Submission No. 2*), but not the accompanying guidelines; however, the EDA continues to approve comprehensive and updated CEDS reports. Mr. Fox distributed the 2014-2018 Northwest Oregon Regional Partnership CEDS (*Submission No. 3*) which was approved on March 13, 2014.
SOREDI is beginning the process of updating its CEDS, including hiring a consultant to do essential background demographic and metric data on the region. Much of that information will come from the 2010 census data and from the American Community Survey. The consultant will be looking at other ways to use the data. For example, median income is simply the gross income of a region divided by the total number of people. That number doesn’t take into account that a quarter of the citizens in Jackson County are under work age, and a quarter are out of the workforce. California State University analyzed similar metropolitan communities along the I-5 corridor, and Boise, and created a different set of metrics to include items like the number of patent issued and other innovative ways to measuring an area’s economy. Once the draft CEDS is created, SOREDI will share the regional information with local public and private organizations, and include a comparison of Southern Oregon to other areas of similar population, rather than comparing the region to San Francisco, Portland, or Seattle. The EDA offers various types of grants, and uses the CEDS in that analysis, which is why a list of various regional and local projects is part of the CEDS. The list does not need to be inclusive; if the CEDS includes broad outcomes and aspirations, projects can be considered even if they are not specifically listed. The existing transportation plan and the workforce readiness strategy will also be included. SOREDI maintains a separate internalized mission goal and objectives with more tactical details on maintaining its understanding and recognition of business opportunities and growth activities such as entrepreneurial development initiatives or business recruitment.

The creation of the CEDS is required of SOREDI by the EDA, and is helpful when applying for EDA or USDA Rural Development grants. It benefits SOREDI by providing a new look at the strengths, limitations, and opportunities of the region. The cost of creating the CEDS is part of the planning agency grant awarded to SOREDI. A CEDS Strategy Committee must be created and will include members of the SOREDI board that meet the necessary criteria. More than 50 percent of the Strategy Committee must be from for-profit organizations, and EDAC members were encouraged to contact Ron Fox if they were interested in participating. After receiving feedback, changes, and soliciting project lists from local jurisdictions and organizations, SOREDI must publish the CEDS document for a 30-day public comment period, followed by a final review by the SOREDI Board, and sent to EDA for approval.

Mr. Fox noted that the EDA is one of the smallest of the federal agencies, is a subset of the Commerce Department, and offers grants to both metropolitan and rural communities, although it is his observation that recently the grants have been more applicable to large regional labor markets. EDA is very much a jobs-oriented organization, with criteria for jobs created, wage enhancements, etc. SOREDI is currently administering a $45,000 EDA grant, with a $25,000 match from Josephine County, to perform a feasibility and business plan for a municipal sewer option for the Merlin area. This is an industrial area currently served by an antiquated sewer system. Josephine County will be able to use the resulting feasibility and business plan to apply for grants for engineering planning, and ultimately to apply for funding for the construction, through the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority, USDA Rural Development, or other programs. There was a brief discussion of the different types of funding available, and it was noted that the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority generally uses bonds, while the EDA offers grants.
Both are necessary, as the jurisdiction or organization needs funds in order to identify the best available solution before it can move forward.

3. **Policy Development of an Outdoor Recreation Economic Growth Strategy**
   Chair Gambee led a discussion on a variety of recreation growth strategies and projects, and asked Mr. Burrill to provide more information about cycling. Mr. Burrill noted that the City of Medford recently approved a Master Plan for Prescott Park which includes mountain bike trails. Bell Helmets, a private company in the cycling industry, is offering $100,000 to be used for new cycling projects on the west coast, Midwest, and east coast. The winning projects will be determined by online voting, and Prescott Park is one of four possible west coast bike projects. The City of Medford has budgeted $100,000, and the additional $100,000 would be a significant amount to get this project moving. The additional funds might be leveraged to receive federal and state dollars.

   Chair Gambee noted that there are many opportunities that are not fully exploited, and Jackson County lacks a tool, process, or method to evaluate the variety of ideas and projects that compete for limited resources. Mr. Hicks stated that a Southern Oregon Sports Commission is being formed to coordinate sporting events, and would be a logical organization to evaluate recreational projects. A discussion was held regarding combining available funds for larger, more significant projects, and doing larger projects every few years, similar to what is done with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Mr. Fox noted the economic benefits gained from the large events in the softball diamonds, and Mr. Burrill spoke about the large numbers of bicyclists who travel long distances for races and other events. Mr. Burrill recommended viewing a documentary available on Netflix titled *Pedal Drive* which shows examples of the right and wrong ways to build bicycle trails on public lands.

   Commissioner Skundrick reported on the meeting held regarding the Gold Hill Kayaking Park, and stated that none of the state or federal agencies said it couldn’t happen. There will still be challenges, but it is a huge step forward. The City of Gold Hill has recognized that it doesn’t have the necessary infrastructure to be the lead on this project, and a steering committee is being organized to set up a 501c4 organization to search for donations, grants, and funding.

   Mr. Hicks spoke about a local company, Atlas Race, which organizes a type of obstacle race. If funding is obtained elsewhere, Atlas will probably follow the money rather than continue to be headquartered here. It was noted that Jackson County has a huge amount of public land, which would be an advantage if the regulations can be worked through.

4. **Review of Committee Member Reappointments**
   The membership terms of Stephen Gambee, Jay Harland, Steve Vincent and Curtis Burrill ended December 31, 2013. Each of these members would like to continue serving on the Committee. Mr. Thorndike made a motion to request the Board of Commissioners reappoint these members for another term, and Mr. Baden seconded the motion. Motion passed with no dissenting votes.
5. **Other Topics**

Mr. Thorndike distributed a document from the Twelfth District Economic Advisory Council (*Submission No. 4*), and noted that the Federal government expects the moderate economic recovery to continue. The government is moving to using a range rather than specific employment targets; the housing sector is not back to normal, and although some improvements have been seen, the weather has been a large negative factor this winter; and inflation has stayed under control. Mr. Fox noted that the Economist magazine reported that self-employed people are not included in employment statistics, which redefines the total earnable income structure, and could be a major factor, particularly with the drop in employment for younger people. Many recent graduates are choosing to become consultants or contract employees, because they don’t believe any job will be long-term. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was redefined last year to take that into account and added $50 billion in attempting to recognize the underground economy.

The Employment Department is meeting with and listening to employers talk about what they need, and what their processes are. He believes the Employment Department also has much more useful data on the economy than other federal agencies. The reality is that the Jackson County job market is different than other areas, and there is not a single solution for every job market.

Mr. Harland reported that the Water for Irrigation, Stream and Economy (WISE) project is going to have a review done of the internal economic impact analysis preformed by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The BOR’s analysis used net revenue (i.e. profit) from pears and grapes rather than gross revenue in its calculations and the difference between net and gross revenue made it appear that the economic impact was much lower than what WISE believes. Also, the internal analysis did not reflect the long-term risks for orchards and vineyards.

Mr. Hicks updated the Committee about the independent governing board who will take over control of Southern Oregon University (SOU) by July 2015. This board will be fully independent, and financial conditions are expected because SOU is in retrenchment. Of the possible outcomes, he believed this was the best one. Mr. Fox expressed concerns about Oregon Institute of Technology’s major investment in a campus in Wilsonville, and that if the Klamath Falls campus was minimized or closed it would be a huge loss to southern Oregon.

Chair Gambee thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

Recorder: /s/ Lynell Dewey

Lynell Dewey

Approved on: June 2, 2014