

## Tualatin Chamber Advocates for Businesses

BY ANNELEAH JAXEN, CEO, TUALATIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

One of the most serious commitments we make at the Tualatin Chamber of Commerce is making sure that we advocate for, defend, and protect the best interests of Tualatin businesses. We take our job seriously, and we intend to see them strong and supported. We want them to thrive. So when we began learning more about the House Bill 2017 that allowed tolling in Oregon... and ODOT's already working plan to make it happen in 2024, we decided to begin educating and advocating in every way possible. The Tualatin Chamber "Business Advocacy Council" will launch a new website on Monday, October 24, that will focus on the latest news and plans on the Oregon Tolling issue.

The site, [www.oregontollingupdates.com](http://www.oregontollingupdates.com), is designed as a one-page newsletter with three sections. The first section will be a compilation of recent news articles; the second section will have tolling committee updates and rosters, and the third section will have PowerPoint presentations and short video clips. The page will also have ideas, links, and contact information for how to voice your opinion or get involved. The intention is to have a one-stop shop for education and information on the current facts of the plans to put a toll on every freeway in Oregon.

As is true everywhere in our state, our Tualatin businesses are having challenges recruiting and retaining employees, which causes them various losses. Loss of hours they can remain open, loss of revenue, loss of customers. And now, to add to this already impossible situation, our state has decided that the only way they can control the congested freeways is to charge us for driving on them. For Tualatin, this couldn't be a more disastrous idea. Approximately 80% of the employees who work in this town commute here by freeway. The

impacted workforce is only one of the complex problems with the tolling plan. What about the drivers who will avoid the toll by driving on side streets and neighborhood streets, making them more congested and dangerous? One of Tualatin's streets that are most used to divert from the freeway goes right by Meridian Park Hospital. How will ambulances get through? Our industrial area businesses face shipping and trucking issues. Businesses that have parts delivered have extra expenses for those parts to be delivered.

And has anyone stopped to examine the unintended consequences of what tolling may do to an already damaged post covid society? People will be working and shopping from home and refraining from venturing out into the world because it costs too much. Oregon has an abundance of natural beauty, and the state used to have unadulterated freedom. Even the state seal has a Latin phrase to describe the beauty and freedom here – Alis volat propriis – "She flies with her own wings." Well, she will fly until they figure out how to toll the skies – quality of life is not being considered – and the quality of life was what made Oregon such an incredibly beautiful place to live. Tolling will impact us in ways we cannot completely predict, and we must wake up and speak up.

Please join us to stay informed at [www.OregonTollingUpdates.com](http://www.OregonTollingUpdates.com).



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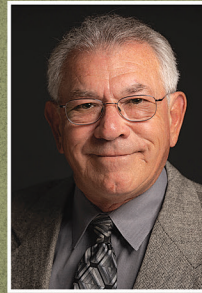
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The Tualatin Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for 2022-2023 would like you to know that we are committed to your business support and success.

Whether we are bringing business education, networking, community events, or information and advocacy on tolling issues and government affairs, we are behind you.

Please invest in the Tualatin Chamber of Commerce because we are investing in you.