

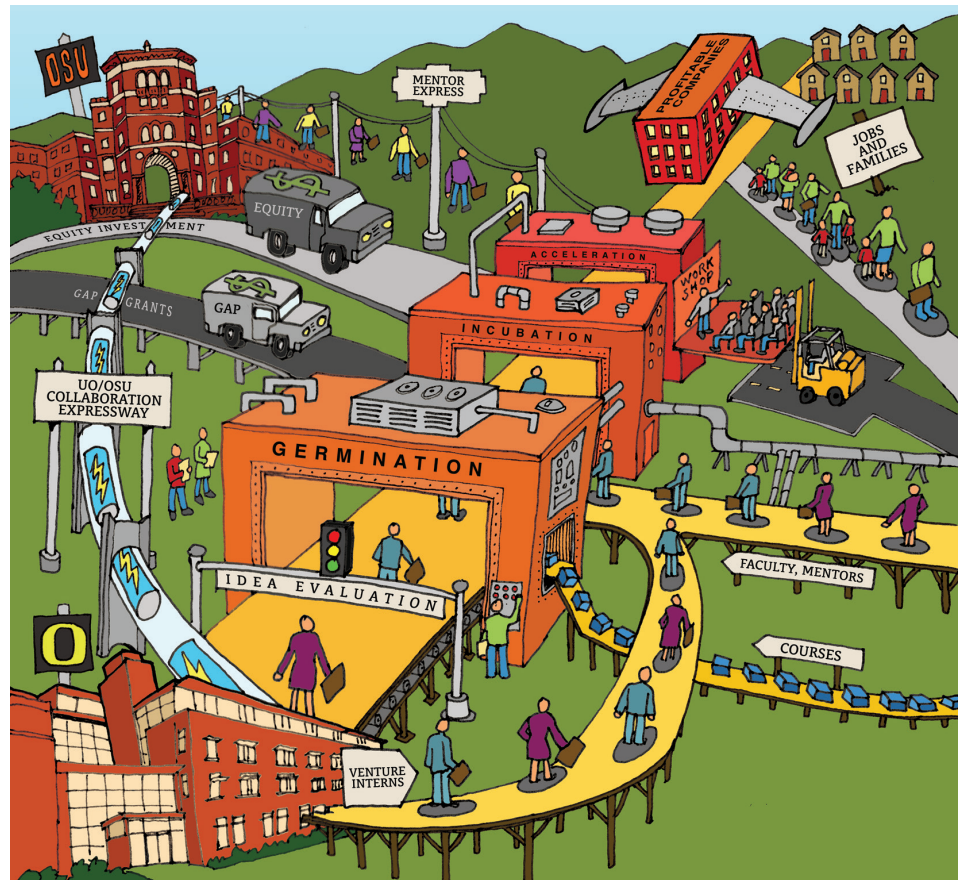
# Leveraging the Power of Community to Expand the Region's Economy

*“Over the years, many have bemoaned the loss of manufacturing jobs overseas, but our greatest opportunity lies in our ability to come up with the ‘next big thing,’” says Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Springfield. “Our ideas are our most valuable asset, and innovations in science and technology represent Oregon’s greatest potential for economic growth.”*

The thoughts expressed by Senator Beyer are embodied in the newly minted Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network (RAIN), approved by the legislature this year. To move the initiative forward, Governor John Kitzhaber appointed Mayors Julie Manning of Corvallis and Kitty Piercy of Eugene as co-conveners of this dynamic new effort to leverage the resources of local governments, higher education, entrepreneurs, and the communities of the South Willamette Valley in a concerted effort to bolster the regional economy.

The cooperation between the diverse communities in the Southern Willamette Valley to create a region-wide economic development program is unprecedented. RAIN represents the state’s first formal network of business leaders, state and local governments, and higher education coming together to accelerate the formation and growth of new businesses. This bold effort to align resources is a wonderful example of how cooperation between communities can lead to great things.

The South Willamette Valley has no shortage of innovators and entrepreneurs. It is home to two great universities, highly respected community colleges, cities and towns



– each with their own character – ranging in size from several hundred to hundreds of thousands of residents, numerous chambers of commerce, and thousands of successful entrepreneurs who can serve as mentors for emerging enterprises. This wealth of ideas, diverse workforce, capital and available business mentors working together with a common cause, has the potential to accelerate the transformation of our resource-based economy into the knowledge-based economy necessary to compete in the 21st century.

RAIN is designed to end the exodus of promising companies and talented entrepreneurs from the cities and towns in the South Valley. RAIN also leverages the area’s business community as a source of mentors

and investment, and higher education and government as sources of talent, education and incentives. Ultimately, the success of RAIN will be felt in all communities in the region.

## For more information about RAIN, contact:

### Jamie Damon

Regional Coordinator,  
South Willamette Valley  
Office of Governor John Kitzhaber  
jamie.damon@state.or.us  
541.346.8626  
720 E 13th Ave, Suite 304  
Eugene, OR 97401-3753



**RAIN**  
REGIONAL ACCELERATOR  
& INNOVATION NETWORK