Grant County Digital

SWOT Assessment

December 18, 2018

INTERNAL FACTORS

STRENGTHS (+)

- Countywide agency to facilitate broadband
- Forging stronger relationships with community broadband partners
- Better data on both broadband access and economic impacts of current situation
- Well financed

WEAKNESSES (–)

- Grant County Digital is a new organization with no track record of success
- We are a small, frontier community with limited human capital
- Inexperienced at pursuing federal broadband funding

EXTERNAL FACTORS

OPPORTUNITIES (+)

- Federal funding for rural broadband has never been higher
- State is organizing assets to assist rural communities
- Greater recognition that it takes a village
- Greater flexibility in delivery models

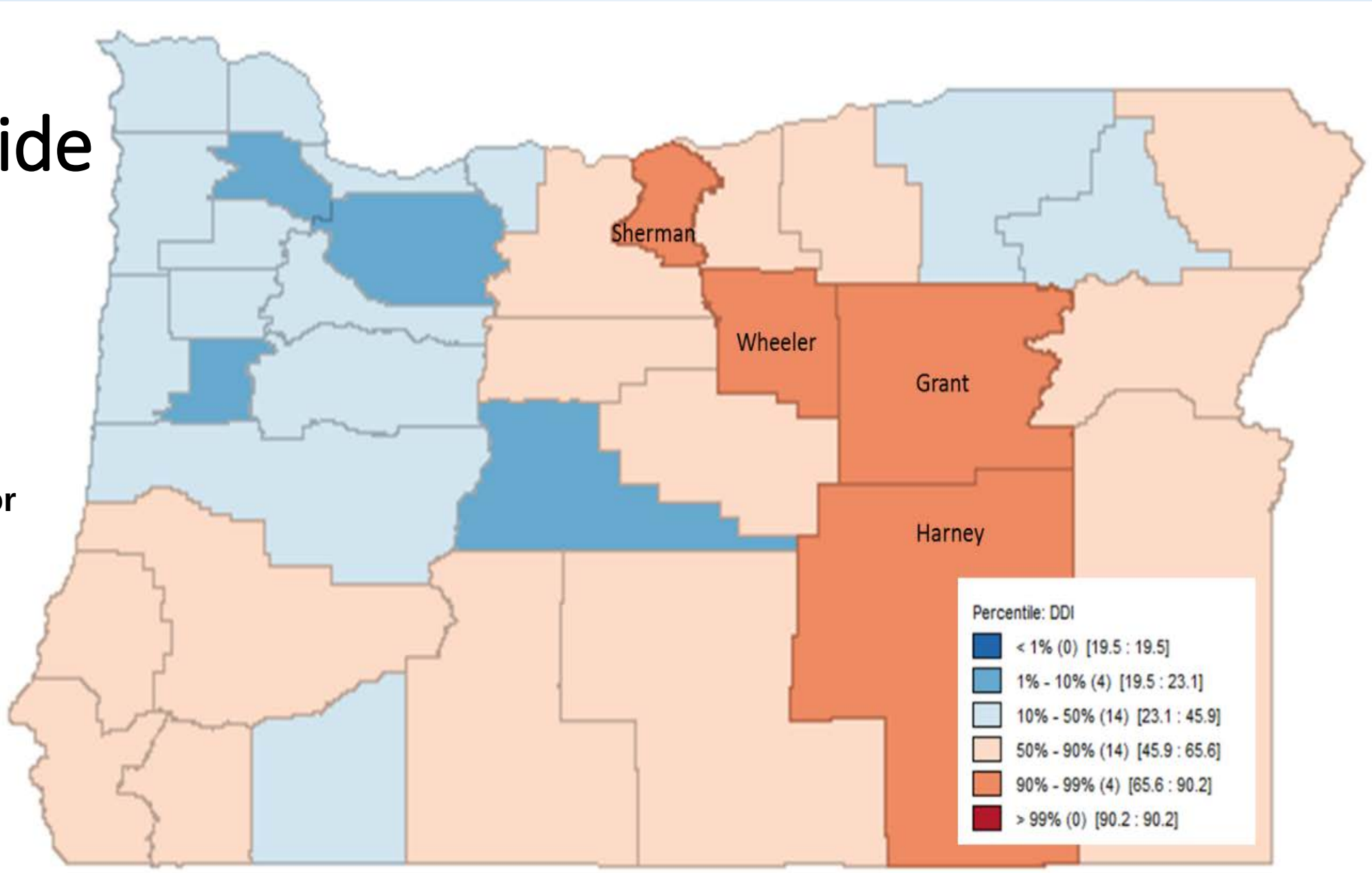
CONSTRAINTS (–)

- Federal policy is still disconnected from realities on the ground
- Grant County's geography and terrain
- Declining economy is a double-edged sword (need is high / market capacity is low)
- We need more public support / education

Oregon's Digital Divide

Grant County has the **second highest DDI rank in Oregon** (68.27) behind Wheeler County (90.17) which **ranked tenth in the nation for poorest internet connectivity**

Grant, Wheeler, Harney and Sherman counties ranked in the **bottom tenth percentile** in Oregon on the DDI Index



Digital divide index (DDI) is a county-level index score (from 0 to 100) measuring the digital divide across both INFA and SE characteristics. The higher the DDI number, the larger the digital divide.

Closing the divide…

Grant and Wheeler only counties in eastern Oregon that **lack a long-haul broadband carrier** traversing county

OSU acquiring fiber along US 20 through Burns (led by Jon Dolan, Assistant Vice Provost, Infrastructure and Operations | Information Services | OSU)

John Day received $1.8M through House Bill 5006 into law on August 15, 2017 **to construct 85 miles of publicly owned fiber** from Burns through John Day to Prairie City.

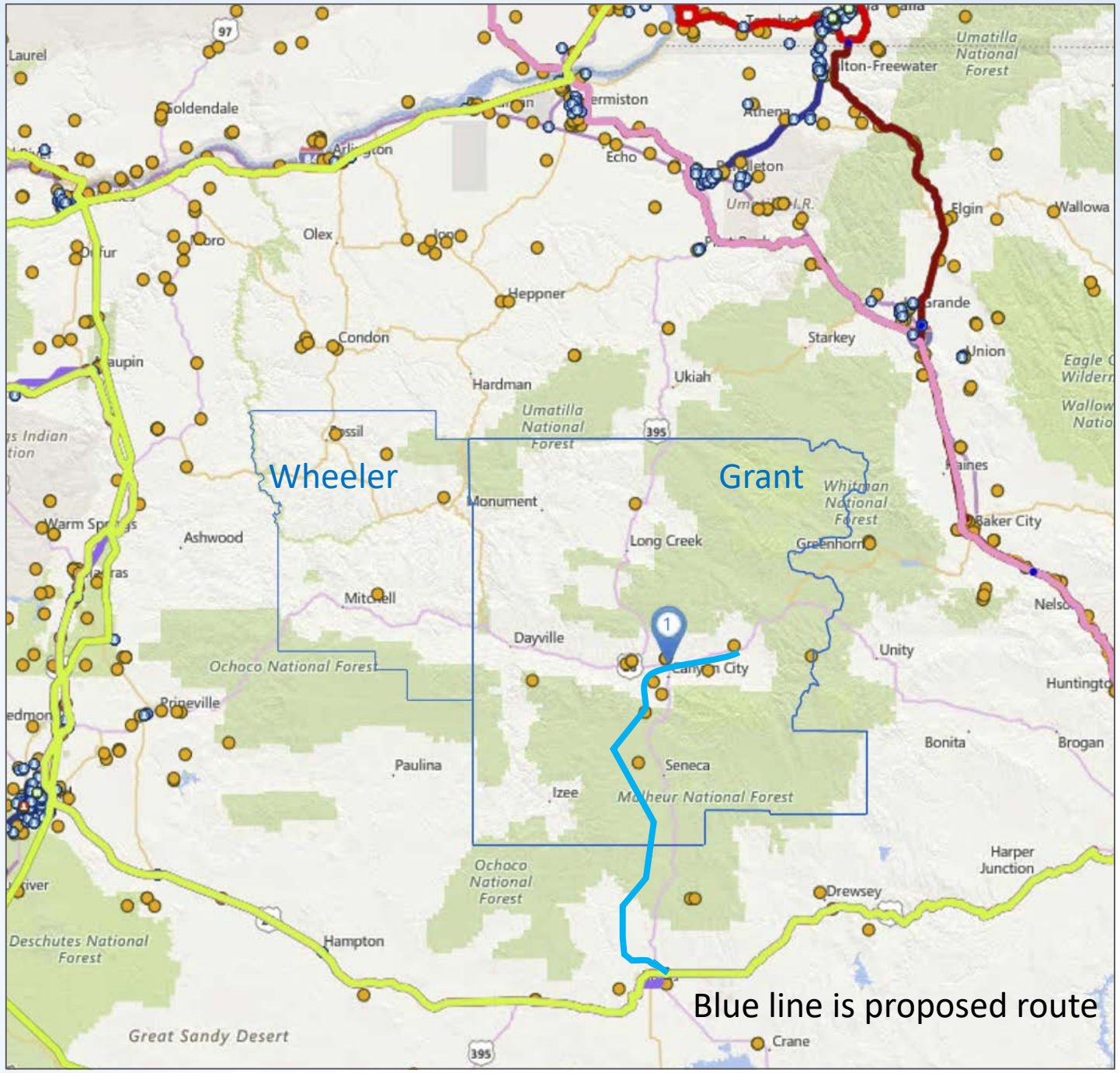
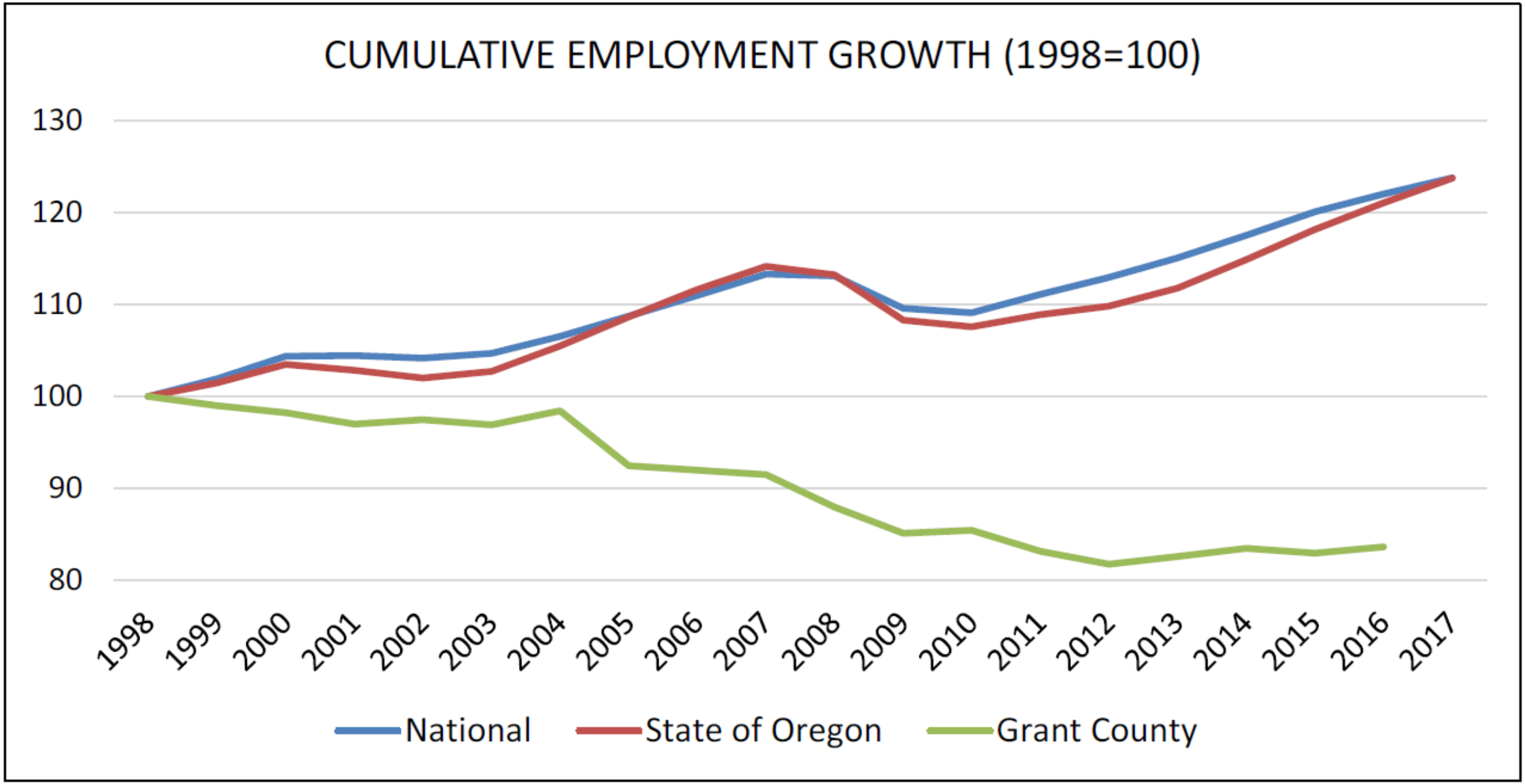
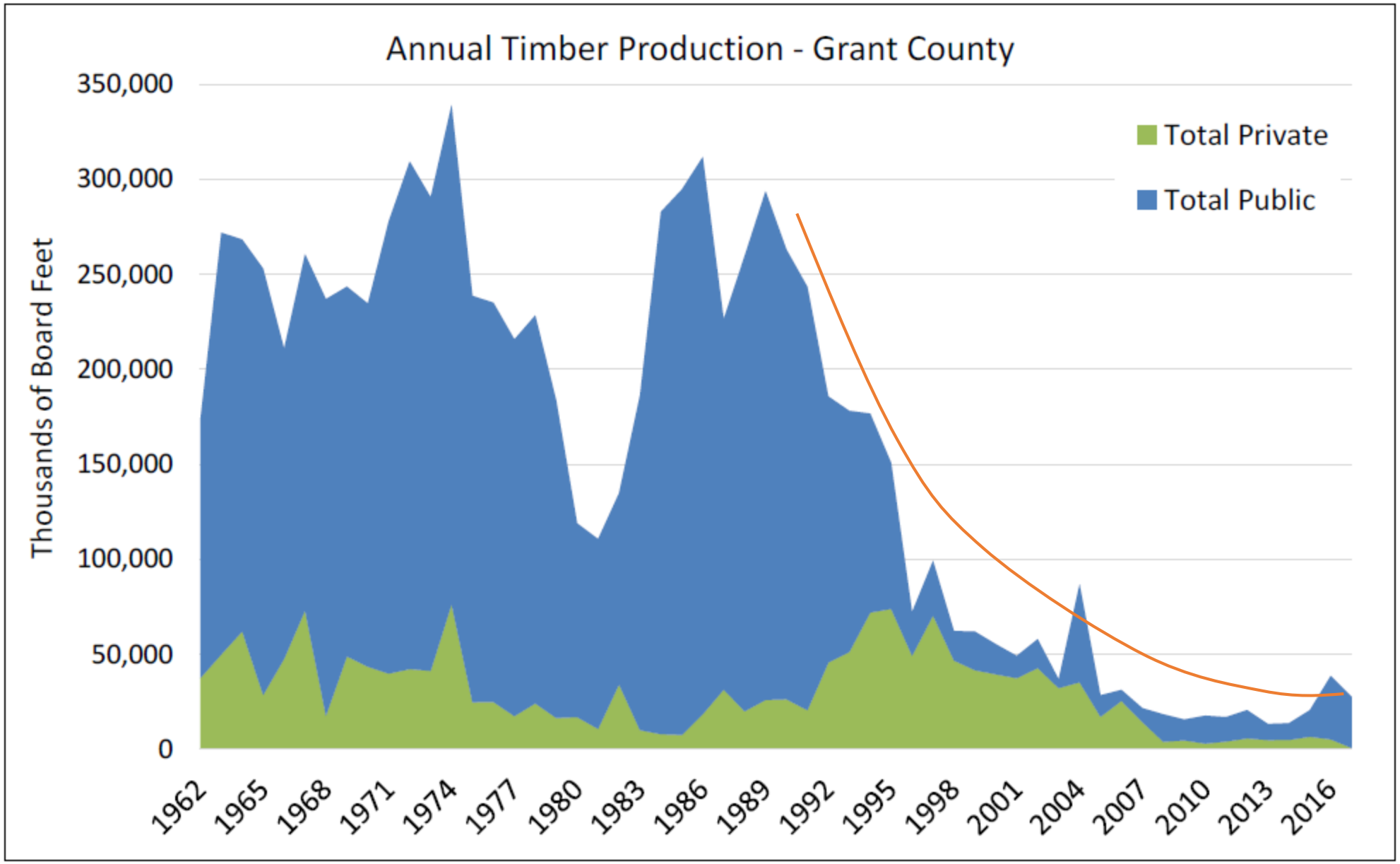


FIGURE 2.06: COMPARISON OF EMPLOYMENT GROWTH SINCE 1998

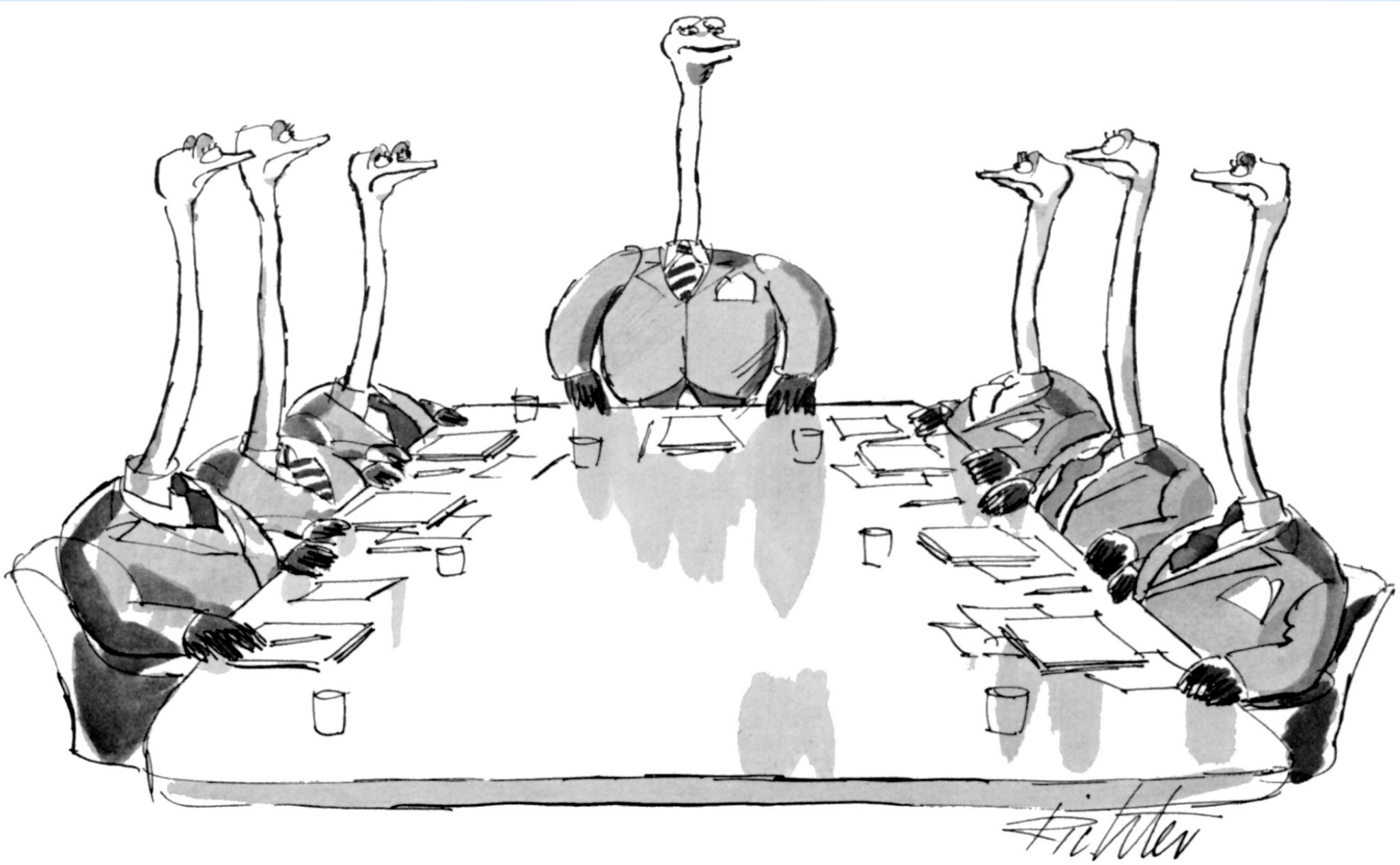


SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

FIGURE 2.13: ANNUAL TIMBER PRODUCTION IN GRANT COUNTY (1962-2017)



SOURCE: Oregon Department of Forestry



"The motion has been made and seconded that we stick our heads in the sand."

Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed

Jared Diamond (2005)

Root causes: human impact, climate change, friendly trade partners (lost incentives), hostile actors (competition), political/economic/cultural factors

Four primary decision failures:

- Failure to recognize a problem (creeping normalcy)
- Failure to adapt (or choose not to) once they do recognize a problem
- Adaptations are not effective
- Adaptations are effective, but are implemented too late

John Day's Strategy for Growth

Target Demographics

1. Digital commuters
2. Active retirees
3. Young, working families

Differentiated Capabilities

- Digital marketing/re-branding
- Recreational amenities
- Competitive broadband
- Housing/ community development

Cost Structure Alignment

- Investments that fuel growth
- Align costs with capabilities
- Cut "non-strategic" spending
- Dedicated and secure funding
- Monetize existing assets

Reorganize for Growth

- Identify strategic partners
- Engage local stakeholders
- Build internal capacity

Adapted from Strategy& *Fit for Growth* model

Four Major Investments

1. **Fiber-to-the-Home** (Grant County Digital)
2. **Housing Development District**
3. **Recreational Amenities**
4. **Innovation Gateway**
   - Reclaimed water facility / treatment plant
   - Commercial-scale greenhouses
   - Academic campus and research park
   - Botanical gardens