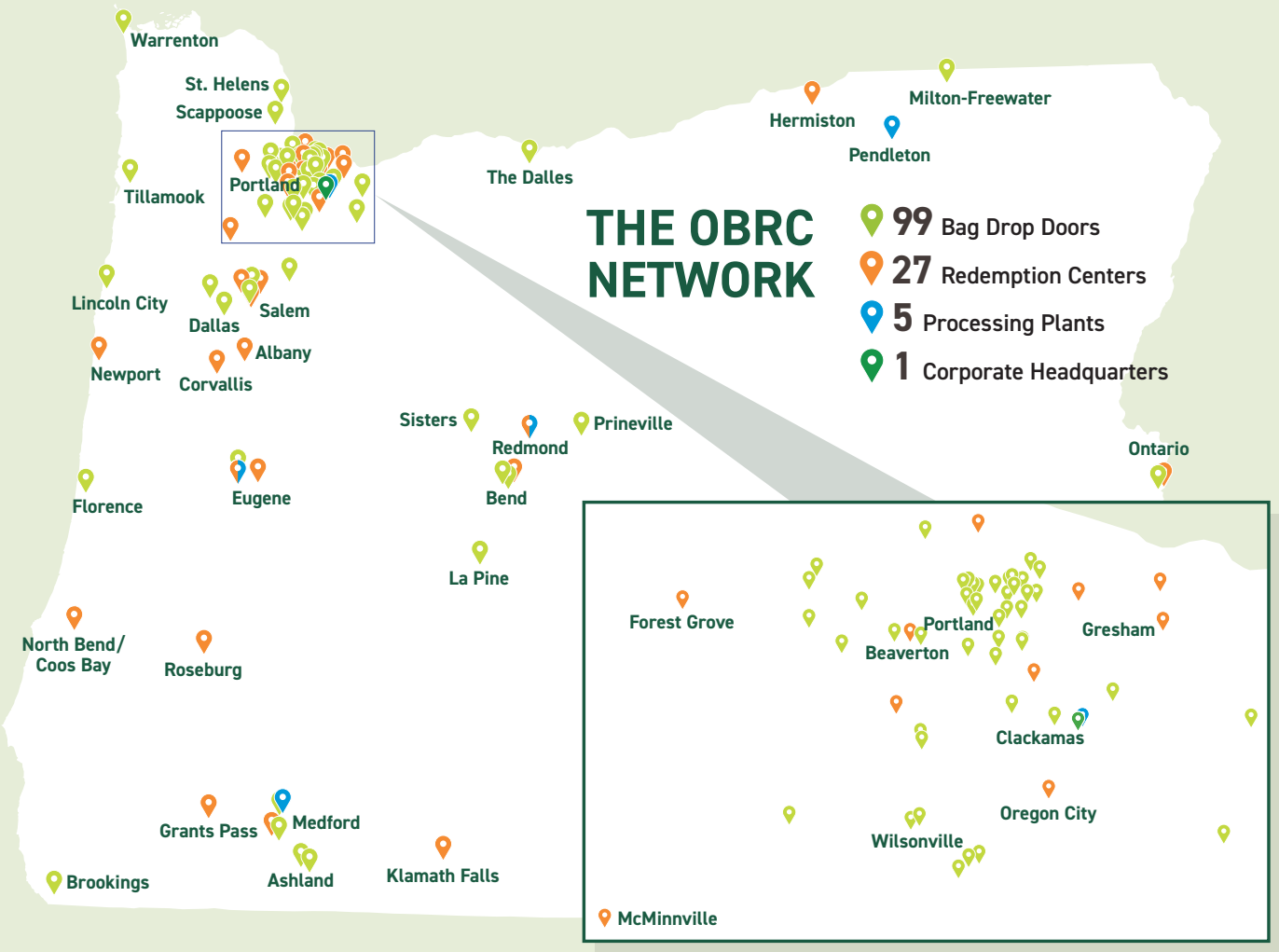


2023/2024 NETWORK EXPANSION REPORT



SB 1520 (2022) requires that Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative, as the operational steward of Oregon’s Bottle Bill report annually to the Legislature regarding the Cooperative’s success in expanding consumer convenience and access in the previous year. The Cooperative is also required to report on plans to expand access and redemption options in the current year, including alternative redemption partnerships to support individuals who rely on container returns on a daily basis.



NEW 2023 LOCATIONS INCLUDE:

Ashland • Brookings • McMinnville • Portland (2) • Prineville • The Dalles

2023 EXPANSION OF REDEMPTION CENTERS

2023 brought the first full year of operation at the **North Bend/Coos Bay** BottleDrop Redemption Center (opened in December 2022). The facility has been very popular with both retailers and consumers and has already increased container redemption in the area. Total container returns in the area have more than doubled since the year prior to the Redemption Center opening, and there has been a 350% increase in the number of Green Bag account holders who have signed up to take advantage of the bag drop option.

In September 2023, OBRC opened its 27th BottleDrop Redemption Center in **McMinnville**, which is the first BottleDrop Redemption Center in **Yamhill County**, fulfilling a longtime network access priority and a longtime community priority for local officials in the area. The McMinnville Redemption Center has also been a very active facility, with redemption rates increasing by more than double compared to the pre-Redemption Center era. In just the first few months of operation, Green Bag accounts in the area have already increased by 25%.

2023 EXPANSION OF GREEN AND BLUE BAG DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

In addition to the Redemption Center deployments, OBRC also expanded access to the Green and Blue Bag programs in partnership with retailers in key areas of Oregon:

Prineville: In March, OBRC opened a bag drop site at Erickson's Thriftway in Prineville, providing bag access in an important Central Oregon community. This BottleDrop Express site became the first bag drop site in Crook County.

The Dalles: May brought the deployment of a bag drop site in partnership with The Dalles Fred Meyer. Expanding bag drop-off access in the Columbia River Gorge was a very high priority for OBRC and was made possible because of the Legislature's leadership in approving SB 1520 (2022). It has been an extremely popular and busy bag drop site, serving residents throughout the Columbia River Gorge.

Ashland: Ashland saw an expansion in services with its second bag drop location in May, in partnership with the Ashland Food Cooperative. This Dealer Redemption Center joins the BottleDrop Express site at the Ashland Shop'n Kart, which opened the previous year, in providing return options and convenient access for Ashland-area residents.

Brookings: In June, the South Coast received its first bag drop location at the Brookings Fred Meyer, another longtime access priority for the BottleDrop network.

In addition to expanding in new communities like Prineville, The Dalles, and Brookings (and adding a bag drop location in Ashland), the BottleDrop network also expanded bag drop sites in partnership with retailers in **Portland**, adding two additional drop sites in the city during 2023.



“Combining far better recycling outcomes with peak consumer convenience means a win for the environment and precious time saved for our residents. It’s exciting to see the most modern technology and the most convenient container return options right here in McMinnville. The Green Bag program is incredibly easy for consumers, and the Blue Bag program for nonprofits is a fundraising powerhouse.”

– McMinnville City Councilor Zack Geary



INCREASED INDUSTRY COOPERATION

The beverage industry is proud to serve as the steward and operator of Oregon's Bottle Bill. OBRC's distributor members are the heart and soul of the Cooperative, and the Co-op was pleased to welcome new members during 2023. OBRC began the year with 301 members and participants and ended 2023 with 332 members and participants (a 10% increase). Industry participation and cooperation helps unlock access in key areas, which ensures the most streamlined and seamless container return experience possible for Oregonians.

EXPANSION PRIORITIES FOR 2024

While the BottleDrop network approaches a reality that is much closer to full build-out than in previous years, there are still a number of access priorities for the Cooperative in 2024 and beyond. Significant investments in state-of-the-art counting and processing equipment will unlock improved consumer access in **Eugene, Oregon City, and Redmond**. Each of these high-traffic facilities will be enhanced with new Material Sortation Units, which allow for StreamCount AI devices to be installed in the front-of-house. Previously deployed at the Northeast Glisan, North Bend/Coos Bay, and McMinnville Redemption Centers, the StreamCount AI system uses a neural network and artificial intelligence software to rapidly count containers as they pass by on a conveyor, saving customers significant time. What might have previously taken 20 minutes for a customer at a reverse vending machine can now be completed in a minute or two on the Stream Count AI. This will be far more efficient for customers, reducing lines and improving throughput at these key Redemption Centers.

Further, the equipment upgrades at these facilities will also allow for patented SmartCount AI devices to process Green and Blue Bags in the back-of-house, which is the fastest counting equipment in OBRC's system. This will facilitate extremely efficient bag processing at these facilities, helping customers receive refunds for the containers in their Green and Blue Bags as quickly as possible.



The southeastern corner of the state, while sparsely populated, is also a future expansion priority. OBRC was pleased to see Rimrock Recycling, an all-volunteer recycling operation serving **Harney County**, selected by the BottleDrop Fund at the Oregon Community Foundation to receive a significant grant supporting their services. OBRC is interested in exploring the potential expansion of this partnership to gauge the viability of a future BottleDrop Express site and/or an alternative redemption partnership in the area.



“Oregon’s Bottle Bill has been a big part of our state’s environmental and recycling legacy for decades. I have been a strong advocate for the expansion of easy return options like this in Central and Eastern Oregon, and I’m thrilled to see the progress.”

– State Senator Lynn Findley

In addition to Redemption Center upgrades improving access for customers, OBRC continues to eye additional communities in Oregon for the deployment of new Green and Blue Bag drop-off access. To be clear, expansion in these communities requires having local grocery retailers that are interested in partnering to provide bag drop-off services, so expansion is subject to some factors outside of the Cooperative's control. If retail partners are available and interested, OBRC would like to see bag drop off access added in **Hood River, Madras, Pendleton, and Port Orford** (likely through the deployment of BottleDrop Express sites).

ALTERNATIVE REDEMPTION PARTNERSHIPS

PORTLAND **The People's Depot:** OBRC was thrilled to see significant progress made in 2023 by nonprofit partners providing alternative redemption access for people who rely on container redemptions as a daily source of funds. The People's Depot, operating in Portland's Central Eastside, provided critical alternative access in the area, redeeming more than 7 million containers during 2023 (up from 4 million containers the prior year, a 75% increase!). The People's Depot is operated by "canners" (daily redeemers of beverage containers) and provides employment opportunities and vocational rehabilitation, as well as a sense of community. It also provides several additional wraparound services in partnership with other nonprofits serving vulnerable people in the area and takes pressure off of retailers in Portland's central core.



EUGENE **Everyone Village:** 2023 brought the deployment of a new alternative container redemption partnership in Eugene. OBRC was thrilled to work with Everyone Village, a city-sanctioned safe rest village for unhoused residents. The Co-op provided reverse vending machines to facilitate the Village's container redemption program; it also supported the partnership with funding for a vocational rehabilitation program connected to the effort. Everyone Village's residents are able to earn wages and build job skills by operating the program, and they serve vulnerable residents redeeming containers in the Eugene area, building relationships with individuals and introducing them to the services and housing options available at the Village.



OBRC and Everyone Village are exploring an expansion of this partnership to either provide additional alternative redemption access through remote access points around the community, or by supporting a shuttle service for Everyone Village to transport canners to their site to take advantage of the redemption services available there. These conversations are in-progress and include representatives from the Lane Transit District who have interest in the program.

"I have strongly advocated for the bag drop program to be expanded along the south coast. With the Coos Bay BottleDrop Redemption Center opening in December, and this bag drop location now opening in Brookings, consumer convenience is taking a huge leap forward."

– State Senator David Brock Smith

Oregonians can be proud of their Bottle Bill and what it does for the environment, for our community, and for our economy. And the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative is proud to serve as the industry steward and operator of the Bottle Bill, providing a system that processes every container returned for the highest-quality recycling right here in Oregon and the U.S.



LEARN MORE:

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