

W. S.C.

Agenda Cover Memorandum

Agenda Date: JUNE 7, 2006
To: Board of County Commissioners
Department: County Administration/Public Information
Presented By: Melinda Kletzok
Subject: Update on Public Information Initiative: "Lane County Working for You"

I. DISCUSSION:

The Board of County Commissioners will review recent progress made in Lane County's Public Information Program, which is designed to implement a key element of the Lane County Strategic Plan. In order to help citizens become knowledgeable about County government services, programs and budget, the Board authorized an enhanced effort in January 2006 and asked that staff provide updates on the progress of the program periodically throughout the year.

II. ISSUE/PROBLEM:

The Board has focused considerable attention on the gaps in citizen awareness and understanding of the key issues jeopardizing the sustainability and stability of Lane County Government. The need to fill those gaps in awareness has been articulated by numerous community task forces, surveys and the news media. The Board adopted public information and outreach as one of its key strategic objectives more than seven years ago, and has reiterated the priority of effective communications on numerous occasions since. It has deliberately expanded the capacity of its public information program, beyond earned media and website materials, in order to make information more accessible, timely and relevant to citizens, voters and property owners in Lane County. The Board has made a priority of reviewing and analyzing the public information efforts through regular progress reports in order to determine their effectiveness and impact.

III. DISCUSSION:

The following is a brief synopsis of the key milestones achieved since the last report made to the Board on April 26, 2006:

- A citizen survey was conducted prior to the full roll-out of the initiative. The survey assessed public awareness and knowledge levels of County government programs and services. Results of that survey are attached and show respondents are not familiar with Lane County's services, but are satisfied in general with the County. Where there were poor ratings for responsiveness or fiscal prudence the respondents generally had less contact with the County. This suggests lack of contact, and awareness, results in poorer ratings. Results are attached to this report. A follow-up survey will occur in late 2006 to test the initiative's effectiveness.
- Employee Survey Feedback Results were shared with employees via Inside Lane (Intranet). The feedback indicated employees wanted to know more about the budget and about other departments. A work session will be scheduled in June or July to explore the most effective and creative ways to reach various employee groups. The work session will include departmental and union representatives.
- The Working for You initiative is in full swing with radio, TV and print public service announcements (PSAs). The PSAs showcase Lane County employees and their delivery of public health, safety and public services. Meetings with the general managers of television, radio and newspaper media outlets resulted in a schedule of placement that includes matching donations from the stations. Employees received Intranet previews of the public service announcements prior to their public airing.
- A Working for You Internet site presence has been finalized and the technical arrangements to load it to the County's home page are in process.
- Community Outreach is ongoing. To date there have been nine community presentations with a total audience count of 260. Another 25 presentations are in the scheduling process.
- A Working for You Fair was held at Valley River Center Mall on June 3. There were _____ visitors to the interactive display that featured fun activities from more than 13 county departments including useful resources, playful exhibits for kids and chances to win great prizes. The county hosted the event so citizens could experience up-close the many services that impact their lives on a daily basis.
- Signage – banners and posters – have been printed and are in use around the county at events, news conferences and in departmental lobbies. Lane County is researching the possibilities of vehicle

- signage. An e-mail appropriate Working for You graphic was created and distributed to all employees for use in their email signatures.
- Lane County Working for You video is nearing completion
 - Metro TV Frequently Asked Question format is in production. This format include 12 spots featuring County representatives answering questions frequently asked by the public about Lane County government.
 - News outreach includes: Valley River Center Working for You Fair, DYS Culinary Arts Catering at Lexus, DYS Culinary Arts Demo Days, Delta Highway Project, Fatal Contact Movie (Pandemic), Mumps news conferences. There were two RG stories from D.A. (Failure to Appear; No brakes on car theft in Lane County). KMTR featured a story focusing on the state of the public health. A DYS veterinary program news event is planned for Sunday, June 11. KEZI is working on a traffic safety story related to why Lane County has one of the highest fatality rates in the state.
 - There have been two editions of the new employee publication “Working for You”

Upcoming events and products include:

- Metro TV programming will feature county leadership visibility in responding to frequently asked questions about county government (June)
- Lane County video featuring employees in service to community (June)
- New Internet presence for Working for You (June)
- Continuing community outreach, news and media placements (Ongoing)

I. IMPLEMENTATION/FOLLOW-UP

The Strategic Communications Team will provide another update on the progress of “Lane County Working for You” in 6 – 8 weeks.

**Lane County Public Information Initiative
 Summary of AMR Research
 Prepared by CAWOOD
 May 22, 2006**

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY: 405 Lane County voters were interviewed on the phone by Advanced Marketing Research from April 7 – 15 to determine their level of awareness of and satisfaction with County services. The random sample was drawn from voting records. CAWOOD prepared this analysis as part of its work on the Lane County Public Information Initiative.

No demographic group was over or under sampled, providing an overall confidence level of 95%. Within each demographic category, sub-sets with 80 respondents have a confidence level of 90%.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS: Overall, respondents were not very familiar with Lane County's services. When asked to name a specific service, over one-third could not name one. When respondents did name services, not all were services provided by the County. And, some key services, like the District Attorney's office, were not mentioned at all. It should also be noted that only one-third of respondents reported contacting the County in the past year. Lack of contact may indicate lack of awareness.

Respondents reported greater satisfaction with the County in general than with specific services or attributes of the County. Some 36% indicated their level of satisfaction with the County was excellent or good. Only 12% rated the County overall as poor or very poor, 43% gave the County an average satisfaction rating.

This chart reflects the level of satisfaction with more specific items:

Item	Excellent/ Good	Fair	Poor/ Very Poor	Don't Know
Public health	40%	30%	14%	17%
Public safety	37%	34%	17%	12%
How hard employees work	33%	29%	19%	20%
Responsiveness to public	28%	39%	42%	12%
Spending money responsibly	17%	32%	36%	15%

Two areas stand out: one is the poor rating for the County's responsiveness to the public and the other is poor marks for spending money responsibly.

Interestingly, of those who had contact with Lane County (130 respondents) in the past year, almost three-quarters were extremely satisfied (43%) or satisfied (30%) with that interaction. This suggests that lack of contact, and therefore awareness, results in poorer ratings overall.

In general, polls across the country indicate that citizens are not pleased with how government spends its money. Though the responses to this survey are likely indicative of this general sentiment, they should not be dismissed. It is a real perception.

Though only one-third of the respondents indicated contact with the County in the past year, it is likely the contacts were higher than reported due to the pervasiveness of the County services, e.g. elections, assessment & taxation, Lane Events Center, parks, roads. Respondents may just not have recognized that they had interacted with the County.

Familiarity with the services that Lane County offers

20% of respondents indicated they were familiar or extremely familiar with the County's services, 37% of respondents were somewhat aware, and 41% were not very familiar with the County's services. One percent didn't know or refused to answer the question.

Men and women, as well as owners and renters, mirrored the overall sample. As might be expected, newer residents were less familiar with County services (6%) compared to those who had lived in the County for more than 20 years (23%). Voters under 24 years of age were less familiar (54%) with County services than those who were over 60 (38%). East Lane voters were less familiar (49%) than any other district. Greatest familiarity was expressed by voters in West Lane (29%) and Springfield (25%).

Identify three to five services that Lane County offers (no prompts)

34% of respondents were not able to name any service. 17% could name one service; another 17% could name two services; 22% named 3 services; 10% named between 4 and 6 services.

Services mentioned most often include:

- 27% Sheriff
- 16% Parks
- 16% Public health
- 14% Human/social services
- 12% County roads

Between 9 to 5 percent of respondents mentioned: Courthouse, assessment & taxation, building permits, County dump/waste management or senior services.

Respondents also identified non-County agencies: 20 respondents said FOOD for Lane County; 12 said LTD (buses, transit); 8 said L-COG; 5 said LCC.

Men, homeowners and people over 60 named the Sheriff more often than any other group. Parks were identified most often by those in the North and South districts, as well as by those who've resided in Lane County for less than 10 years and those less than 34 years of age. Public health was named by all groups at about the same level, with the least familiarity among the Springfield district, and those who have lived in Lane County less than 10 years. All groups, in a pattern consistent with the overall response, identified social services and County roads.

Respondents' awareness of services offered by Lane County (prompted)

- 86% Search & Rescue
- 77% Building code compliance
- 74% Childhood disease immunizations
- 68% Disaster emergency preparedness
- 67% Inspection of restaurants, sanitation
- 65% Infectious disease control
- 56% Mental health treatment for at-risk youth
- 51% Funding for city street improvements
- 46% Energy assistance for low-income seniors
- 29% Public swimming pool and hot tub inspections
- 2% None of the above (this was not read as an option)
- 2% Didn't know or refused to answer

Specific demographic responses were not recorded for this question.

Rating specific Lane County services (prompted): Ratings are converted to grades for ease of use.

Item	A	B	C	D	F	DK
Overall	5%	31%	43%	8%	4%	9%
Responsiveness to public	5%	23%	39%	13%	7%	12%
Public health	10%	30%	30%	9%	5%	17%
Public safety	9%	28%	34%	13%	4%	12%
Spending money responsibly	4%	13%	32%	18%	18%	15%
How hard employees work	11%	22%	29%	12%	7%	20%

To analyze response by demographic groups, the chart is converted to excellent, average, poor and don't know. Here's that chart:

Item	Excellent	Average	Poor	DK/Refused
Overall	36%	43%	12%	9%
Responsiveness to public	28%	39%	20%	12%
Public health	40%	30%	14%	17%
Public safety	37%	34%	17%	12%
Spending money responsibly	17%	32%	36%	15%
How hard employees work	33%	29%	19%	20%

Overall ratings were highest among these groups: those living in Lane County less than 10 years (49%), North district (47%), renters (45%), and South district (44%). Poor ratings were more likely from West district (21%) and those over 60 years old (18%).

Excellent ratings for being responsive to the public were given more frequently by these respondents: North district (36%), Springfield District (35%), people here less than 10 years (36%). These respondents rated public responsiveness as poor more often than other respondents: West district (28%), Men (26%) and people over 60 years old (25%).

Ratings for public health were generally consistent among all demographic categories.

Relative to public safety, respondents in the West district were least satisfied (25% poor, 29% excellent) with people in Springfield (43%), and the North and East districts with 41% each being most satisfied. People over 60 years old rated public safety lower than other groups (25% poor).

With respect to spending money responsibly, groups were consistent in excellent ratings. Average ratings were given more often by those in the South district (41%), renters (42%), and those less than 34 (42%). Poor ratings were recorded most often by people in the West district (46%), East district (42%), and those over 60 (43%).

On how hard employees work, renters gave excellent marks most often (45%), as did those who lived in Lane County less than 10 years (44%) and those less than 34 years of age (40%). West district gave more average responses (39%), as did people over 60 years of age (36%).

Contact with Lane County in past year

Two-thirds reported having no contact with the County, with one-third reporting contact. Of the one-third, 19% interacted about building permits, 14% interacted with the Sheriff's department, and 10% reported interactions with assessment and taxation. The Courthouse and public health were contacted by 9%. All other departments were contacted by less than 3% of those having contact with the County.

Demographic categories that reported having contact with the County are too small to be statistically significant.

Satisfaction with interactions

Almost three quarters were extremely satisfied (43%) or satisfied (30%) with their interaction. 16% reported being less than satisfied (10%) or not at all satisfied (6%).

Those most satisfied with their interactions included these groups: Renters (91%), South district (84%), those living in County less than 10 years (83%), Springfield (83%), and less than 34 years of age (82%). Dissatisfaction was highest among those over 60 years of age (25%) and the West district (22%).