

Public Information Plan 2006

Engaging and Informing Citizens

Lane County anticipates a substantial budget deficit beginning fiscal year 2007-08 and extending through the next decade. The shortfall of resources is on top of reductions during the past two decades, which have diminished the capacity of county government to provide safe, healthy and viable community conditions.

In order for Lane County Government to enhance citizen understanding of resource issues identified by the Board of Commissioners, task forces, and citizen surveys, the Board is considering an expanded public information initiative during the next six to 10 months. The basis for public information initiatives is contained in Lane County's Strategic Plan as well as Lane County Strategic Objective Number 2.

Objective 2: Engage and inform citizens about Lane County Government services.

Communications a Key Responsibility for Lane County Government

In recognition of the valuable role communication plays in representative government and public institutions, the Board of Commissioners adopted the first public information plan in 1997 and an updated plan in 2002. Since then, Lane County relied heavily on media and Website information to inform the public.

Because Lane County faces serious funding and service challenges in the coming years, Lane County has a responsibility to intensify efforts to reach the community with information.

Mass media, personal media, and electronic/digital communications enable citizens to get information from many different sources. Many feel deluged with hundreds of messages each day. Many of those messages are ignored or filtered out. Therefore, many large institutions communicate with their constituents, clients and stakeholders using many different channels and methods. Without an intense level of communication, the public lacks critical information it needs for understanding, responding to issues, and making decisions.

The following plan will provide a high-profile, broad scope of information to the public.

PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN

Goal

To Engage and Inform Citizens about Lane County Government Services

Objective

To increase the public's awareness and understanding of Lane County Government services, programs and funding status by December 31, 2006.

Basic Strategies

- Planning, management and coordination of information to the public and media outreach (internal and external)
- Message and creative development to communicate effectively with the public
- Community Outreach (in-person presentations to individuals, groups and other agencies)

TACTICS

Planning, management and coordination of information to the public and media outreach (internal and external)

Use existing PIO/IGR structure to provide:

- Plan management and coordination
- Communication with Lane County employees
- News story development/news conferences
- Op-eds
- Editorial Board meetings
- Talk radio/TV
- Internet Site
- Metro TV presence (get costs)
- FAQs, info

Message and creative development

- Message planning, timeline strategy, community feedback, consulting (six months)

- Visuals
- Public service announcements and paid advertising
- 5 - minute video
- Printed materials

Community Outreach

- Separate strategies for urban and rural
- Organize informational meetings
- Identify groups (Chambers, granges, neighborhoods and civic)
- Schedule presentations
- Outreach events and materials
- Feedback strategy

A Strategic Communications Team (formed in accordance with guidelines in the Lane County Strategic Objectives) will keep the Lane County Board of Commissioners informed of the plan's progress each six weeks and through weekly updates by the Public Information Officer.

MEASUREMENT

Lane County has many informal and some formal survey results indicating a very low level of public awareness about Lane County programs, services and budget situation. Ideally, an annual or periodic survey of public perceptions, awareness, and priorities would help the County more effectively track the results of its information efforts. Cost of a formal survey runs \$10,000-15,000.

Lane County Public Information Timeline
 January 24, 2006

Task	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Planning/Strategies												
Manage plan implementation												
Plan messages												
Finalize timeline & strategy												
Develop consistent theme & visuals												
Create strategies to engage citizens												
Develop engaging feedback opportunities												
Share messages with county staff												
Consulting services												
Employee Communication												
Distribute existing materials												
Include articles in Fast Lane												
Keep staff informed in timely manner												
Hold interactive/cascading meetings												
News Media												
Respond to media inquiries												
Provide regular story ideas/tour opportunities												
Meet with editors/reporters												
Place op-eds and commentaries												
Coordinate news conferences												
Schedule appearances on talk programs												
Web Communication												
Create content												
Provide feedback loop												
Put content online												
Update FAQs												
Update with new information												

Coding: Green represents work done by existing PIO/IGR structure. Blue represents work done by consultants. All work will be under the supervision of the Strategic Communications Team.

