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## **Agenda Cover Memorandum**

**Agenda Date:** MARCH 15, 2006

**To:** Board of County Commissioners

**Department:** County Administration/Public Information

**Presented By:** Melinda Kletzok

**Subject:** Update on Public Information Activities and Initiatives

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**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 has been reinforced 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:**

Subsequent to the last discussion of the public information initiative with the Board, a strategic communications team composed of county department leaders has convened to guide the week-to-week progress of the initiative. The following is a brief synopsis of the key milestones achieved:

- Public Information Initiative 2006 Plan and timeline completed. The plan includes enhanced activities and tactics to reach employees and the general public (January)
- External communications expertise has been retained to help plan, develop, produce and deliver a comprehensive, sustained, multi-year communications initiative. (February)
- Key messages, themes, graphics, signage, slide shows, handouts and correspondence have been developed and produced to begin outreach to employees and community leaders. (February)
- A preview of the themes, messages, graphics and communications timeline has been provided to the management team as well as all county employees. (March)
- Elected city officials who comprise part of the Public Safety Task Force have been briefed on the scope and depth of the initiative. (March)
- Public rollout of the initiative to begin with signage on public transit vehicles featuring Lane County employees, as well as print media advertising. (April)
- Outreach to urban and rural community leaders and groups through face to face meetings and presentations. (April)
- New Metro TV on-screen graphics and content developed to give greater profile to county leadership responding to frequently asked questions. (April)
- New Lane County video featuring employees in service to the community (April)

A complete schedule listing all of the communications activities, including those produced in-house and those developed with consultation from external experts, is attached as an appendix for the Board's reference.

### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION/FOLLOW-UP**

The Strategic Communications Team will continue to provide periodic updates to the Board.



