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AGENDA DATE: Tuesday, August 18, 2009
TO: Board of County Commissioners
DEPARTMENT: County Administration
PRESENTED BY: Christine Moody, Sr. Management Analyst
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: REPORT/DISCUSSION: County College Fall, 2009

I. MOTION

NONE, discussion item only.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to discuss with the Board the final plans for County College for Fall, 2009. The course will begin Thursday, September 17, 2009 and run through November 19, 2009. It consists of 10 classes of approximately 3 hours in length and is free to any Lane County resident who attends. There is an application process and a background check required from each participant for the safety of all participants and due to the nature of some of the tours provided.

County College will be a highly interactive program and participants get the chance to be part of unique activities and informative sessions each week. They'll also tour County facilities, providing a hands-on experience in County government operations.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

The idea for County College originated out of Management Team (Department Directors and County Administrator) training in December, 2008. From that training, a committee was formed and consists of the following active members.

Christine Moody, Sr. Management Analyst (Committee Chair)
Danni Urbatzka, Property and Tax Manager
Matt Laird, Land Management Division Manager
Patricia Hailey, Accounting Analyst
Amber Fossen, Information Officer
Alex Gardner, District Attorney

Steve Davis, Sergeant
Sascha Cosio, Program Specialist
Liane Richardson, County Counsel

The committee identified services that could be covered in the training and researched other County Colleges (also known as Citizen Academies) across the nation to see the models that have worked. Original questionnaires were sent out to staff working in each service area to work toward forming curriculums. Some of the questions originally posed included:

Describe one significant success you have observed or participated in that you think Lane County should be proud of?

What are the three most significant problems facing your service today?

If you were trying to communicate your service to a community member in 1-1.5 hrs, what three main points would you want to make sure they knew & understood when you were done?

What is the hardest aspect of providing this service that the public doesn't know about or understand? What, if anything, does the public misunderstand about your service?

A training was then held for presenters from each service area. The qualifications for the trainers was that they be dynamic, entertaining, and be willing to do more than the regular lecture that someone might expect to receive at a training on a government service. The ideas brought forward by the trainers have been exciting and the committee believes these will help educate the public in a whole new way about what Lane County services are and how they are relevant to a citizen in their daily lives.

Interactive activities that are being developed to occur in the sessions planned include:

- * Tour of Short Mountain Landfill
- * Mock Planning Commission meeting in which participants make the decision
- * A tour of the Juvenile Justice Center
- * A juvenile case presentation where the class takes on role of counselor.
- * Vote on and prioritize the critical issues for children, youth & families (the information will then be used by the Dept of Children & Families to update their own priorities & strategies)
- * Introduction to Child Abuse investigations in Lane County including a tour of the facility.
- * A tour of Elections – on election night (provided there is a November

election)

- * Behavioral Health overview including walking through a mental health situation from start to finish.
- * See a mock Women & Children (WIC) interview and learn why those interviews and home visits are so important.
- * Quiz on "which food is the healthiest"
- * Tour the Communication Center for the Sheriff's Office
- * View equipment used by the Sheriff's Office
- * Take one house through the property tax system including property classing, market data exercise, and then do the tax calculator to show the impacts of Measures 50 & 5.
- * Learn about the self-help areas in Assessment & Taxation and Deeds and Records.
- * Possible virtual tour of Animal Services.
- * Pick the Pit Bull Card Game
- * Learn how to prepare for an Emergency and the basics of Search & Rescue
- * Budget prioritization exercise and possibly Budget Monopoly game.
- * Discuss volunteers and advisory committees and how to get involved.
- * Information programs on the Road System and Lane County Parks.
- * Overview of services provided by the District Attorney including Victim Services.

In addition there will be a general overview of County government. That session will begin with a video produced by the Association of Oregon Counties which shows information on county government in general, and then participants will learn specifics about Lane County and what makes us different.

As part of preparation for this class, I have also been in contact with Eric Schmidt, at the Association of Oregon Counties and he will likely attend the first session of the College. He is not currently aware of any other Counties holding this type of event, but is excited about the ideas we've presented and will keep in contact with us through the project.

It was also brought up by an individual commissioner during an interview for this project that each commissioner may want to attend a couple of the classes and provide the introduction. Direction from the Commissioners on whether this is something they are interested in, will help us finalize the syllabus. We currently have a 5 minute welcome to each class set aside for possible commissioner involvement.

B. Policy Issues

No new policy issues, as this is in response to existing Board Goals.

C. Board Goals

The Board of Commissioners adopted Lane County Goals in Board Order 08-8-19-2, one of which was the following:

C. *Build public trust through intensive communication and engagement.*

The County College project directly supports this goal and will help Lane County “define ourselves, tell our story, show how County government is relevant.”

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

A specific budget was not developed for County College in the FY 09-10 budget process. We are working to make it run as inexpensively as possible. The large majority of presenters are exempt personnel – meaning they do not receive overtime pay and there is no additional compensation due to them for their work on the County College.

The direct expenses are estimated at \$2,700 and are detailed below:

Advertising - \$1,500 estimate

This will put a display add in the following newspapers: Register Guard, Springfield Times, West Lane & Tri-County News, Siuslaw News, Cottage Grove Sentinel, Creswell Chronicle, Dead Mountain Echo, McKenzie River Reflections, and Eugene Weekly.

Printing Costs & Materials - \$500 estimate

This is for name tags, posters, applications, etc. Each participant will also receive a binder & a pen as well as copies of any printouts and possibly a few other small items. They will also receive a graduation certificate, which will be presented to them if they attend at least 8 of the 10 sessions. Graduation will be planned before the Board of Commissions in mid-December.

Snacks & Beverages - \$450 estimate

While many of the academies researched chose to serve a full dinner to the participants, for this first County College we propose to serve just snacks and beverages during a break mid-way through the class. The snacks offered will be both sweets and healthy snacks. Beverage will likely consist of water and perhaps coffee.

Background Checks - \$250 estimate

For the safety of the participants and due to the nature of some of the tours into areas of the public safety system, a simple background check will be run on all successful applicants. The cost is \$10 per check. This amount assumes 25 participants in the class.

A request is made to use either part of the Board of Commissioner's Outreach funds granted in the FY 09-10 budget process, or part of the General Expense \$25,000 contingency which is historically used for various small projects such as this throughout the year. If the contingency option is chosen, a Board Order will be written by budget staff and put on the consent calendar for a future date.

E. Analysis

Research done on the concept of the County College has been positive. The idea has been modeled from Citizen Academies held by local police and sheriff's offices (which Lane County also holds each year). In general, there is an ongoing gap in the education of residents on what services local government provides to them and why those services are important. Government is perceived in general as an institution that is distant and unaccessible. High School civics classes fail to teach citizens that their local government is actually their most accessible government, and how to be involved.¹ Many after high school courses are directed towards would-be politicians, rather than citizens. The County College/Citizen Academies idea is intended to try and bridge the gap and tell the stories behind the services.

Surveys done by other jurisdictions running similar programs have found that participants are overall positive about the experience, learned things they didn't know before, were more likely to participate in advisory committees and generally became more involved in county affairs. Lane County will also track this information following the 2009 County College in an effort to measure our performance.

We are hopeful that County College will occur each year between September – November and that the information will then spread through the community by each graduate acting as an ambassador to his/her friends and neighbors. This idea will be revisited following the Fall 2009 course.

¹ **Local Government Citizen Academies: Is Knowledge Power?** Adam Scott Marcus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Submitted to Department of Urban Studies & Planning for Master in City Planning, June 2007

F. Alternatives/Options

1. N/A

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

The course will begin Thursday, September 17, 2009. The deadline for applications is Friday, September 4, 2009.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

Support the County College project by:

- 1) Providing the financial resources; and
- 2) Each commissioner participate by attending 2 meetings where they will greet attendees as they arrive and then provide a 5 minute welcome at the beginning of the class.

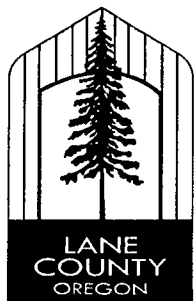
VII. FOLLOW-UP

A Graduation Ceremony for participants attending at least 8 of the 10 sessions will occur before the Board of Commissioners in early to mid-December, 2009.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- A. County College Flyer
- B. County College Application
- C. Subjects to be covered in Fall, 2009 County College

Head back to school at -



County College

Learn about LANE COUNTY GOVERNMENT SERVICES and how they are relevant to you!

10-Session Curriculum

Thursday evenings 6 to 9 p.m.

Application Deadline: September 4, 2009

Classes Begin: September 17, 2009

Subjects include:

Property Taxes, Lane County's budget, Increasing Community Safety through crime-free Youth, Emergency Management, Search & Rescue, Public Safety, Public Health, Animal Services, Road Maintenance, Behavioral Health, Waste & Recycling, Community Involvement, Services to Children, Youth and Families, Land Management, Elections/Deeds & Records, and Parks.

County College is an interactive program that focuses on educating residents about the services the County provides every day. Elected officials and county staff will host unique and informative sessions designed to give residents a hands-on experience in county government operations. Take the Class! Be informed and involved! Join other residents who help keep our community strong by participating in county affairs.

FREE TO LANE COUNTY RESIDENTS!!



For more information:

Call 541-682-4203

Or go to:

www.lanecounty.org/CAO/County_College.htm



County College

CLASS APPLICATION, Fall 2009 (Please attach additional pages as needed)

| | | |
|--|-----------------|------|
| Name: | | |
| Mailing Address: | | |
| City: | State: OR | Zip: |
| Home Phone: | Business Phone: | |
| E-mail Address: | | |
| How many years have you lived in Lane County? | | |
| Personal History: Please tell us a little about yourself (i.e. accomplishments, interests, community involvement): | | |
| Please tell us what you hope to learn as a participant of County College and how you anticipate using the information: | | |
| Are you a current or past member of any Lane County advisory boards? If yes, please list: | | |

Applicant Personal Commitment

If selected, I will devote the time necessary to meet graduation requirements by attending at least eight (8) of the ten (10) sessions. Once graduated, I will act as an ambassador by sharing my knowledge with other Lane County residents. I understand that photographs of the class will be taken and give my permission for Lane County to use these for whatever purpose(s) deemed appropriate. The photographs will become the property of Lane County with the understanding there is no remuneration.

Applicant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please send or fax your completed application to:

Lane County Administration
ATTN: County College
125 E. 8th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401
Fax: 541-682-4616



NOTE: For the safety of participants, a background check will be completed on all participants. Successful applicants will be contacted for additional information prior to the beginning of the first class.

County College
Fall, 2009 Subjects

- Property taxes
- Lane County's budget
- Increasing community safety through crime-free youth
- Emergency management
- Public safety
- Services to children, youth and families
- Public health
- Animal services
- Road maintenance
- Behavioral health
- Waste and recycling
- Community involvement
- Land Management
- Deeds & Records
- Elections
- Parks
- Search and Rescue
- Victim Services
- County overview
- Search & Rescue