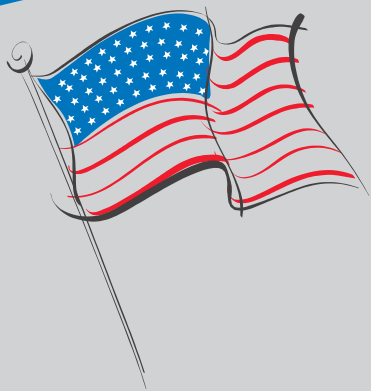


Issue 6
November
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Regional Connections

Newsletter of Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments



Benton County Veterans Services

The Benton County Veteran Services office in downtown Corvallis helps veterans, their dependents, and their survivors apply for benefits from both the U.S. and the State of Oregon Departments of Veteran Affairs (VA). The Veterans Service Officer also acts as an advocate for those who apply.

Services include: helping applicants complete forms for disability pensions, education benefits, VA home loans, and help with claims appeals.

Benton County contracts with the OCWCOG to operate the program, which benefits seniors and disabled veterans that might participate with other programs offered through the COG.

For more information, contact Don Johnson at (541)758-1595.

The Regional Connections newsletter began distribution in the Spring of 2010, as a way for OCWCOG to provide more information to our member jurisdictions about current COG projects and updates regarding ongoing programs. We also see the newsletter as a way for our member jurisdictions to learn more about how the COG works and who some of the key behind-the-scenes people are. In each issue we try to highlight staff members and individuals who volunteer their time on various COG efforts.

We hope you are enjoying the newsletter. If you have any suggestions for projects or community efforts that you would like to see profiled, please email tconley@ocwcog.org.

Money Management Program to Begin This Fall

The COG will begin to offer a Money Management Program in Benton County as the first step in providing this service to the entire OCWCOG area. The Money Management Program was developed in 1981 by the AARP Foundation. Easter Seals of Oregon is the State sponsor of the program and responsible for managing the expansion, training and oversight of each local program.

The Money Management Program uses trained volunteers to help low income older adults and people with disabilities that need help with paying routine bills, managing a budget, or keeping track of financial papers, taxes and other financial matters. Without this support, some of these individuals may be in danger of having utilities shut off, facing eviction, or becoming the victim of financial abuse and exploitation.

Program safeguards insure that participants are protected from loss as a result of working with the volunteers and the program will maintain strict and professional confidentiality regarding all personal and financial information.

Our program will offer two services to participants. The first service that will be developed is

the Bill Payer Service, which will help individuals to pay regularly occurring bills, balance a checkbook and reconcile bank statements.

The second service, to be developed later this year, is a Representative Payee Service. This service will be for people who do not have the ability to manage their federal benefits such as Social Security or federal disability income benefits.

The Program Coordinator is Milt Donelson and he can be reached at 541-812-2597 or mmp@ocwcog.org.



STF Funding Ensures Access to Transit

The Special Transportation Operating Fund (STF) program was established to help seniors and individuals with disabilities access medical, vocational, shopping and other essential services. OCWCOG helps implement the program by distributing vouchers for local transit providers and in some cases, for fuel. The exact program varies in each county.

During FY10-11, COG received grants of:
\$8,500 - Linn County
\$4,700 - Benton County
\$4,500 - Lincoln County

With those funds, COG was able to provide:

- 6,488 rides in Benton County to 143 clients
- 8,834 rides in Linn County to 273 clients
- 344 rides in Lincoln County to 49 clients

In some cases, not all of the grant was spent to provide the rides listed above. For example, when Corvallis Transit became free, the demand for vouchers in Benton County decreased by over 50%.

Additionally, Linn County provided \$6,835 in STF funds for \$5 fuel vouchers, allowing clients to use private vehicles for medical and non medical appointments. For this unique Linn County program, clients must be in the car, sign for the gas and show I.D. to guarantee the program is operated appropriately .



Join in the excitement **Thursday, November 10th** as the Willamette Innovators Network (WiN) gives the region's community leaders who want to help make economic change happen (you?) an opportunity to mix with new ideas, research, technologies, and innovative business models – new ways of doing the business of business!

OCWCOG's economic development strategy looks to this WiN event to promote important economic development game changers -

- Fueling innovators' willingness to make their changes happen [here](#)
- Recharging enthusiasm
- Sparking new connections
- Identifying and removing barriers

Want to be a part of economic change in action?

Now in its third year, WiN 2011 is a free, regional event held at OSU's LaSells Stewart Center and Alumni Hall in Corvallis.

Drop in during the afternoon and you'll find a broad display of innovative businesses and research, inspiring success stories, and a unique setting for policy makers to engage with the innovation community. The 5:30-8 pm "Ignite Corvallis" is staged to bring out creative energy in all.

Details emerging daily at - www.willametteinnovators.com.

Coordinated Care Organizations: The Future of Healthcare

The Oregon Health Plan is an example of how our state has been innovative in managing the Medicaid benefits for Oregonians. Driven by rising costs and declining revenues, Oregon is once again taking a bold step into the future by developing Coordinated Care Organizations or CCO's. The CCO model is being discussed through statewide work groups, the Oregon Health Authority and in many regional discussions that involve the partners necessary to create a regional CCO for the Medicaid and Medicare business in Oregon.

The development of CCO's in Oregon is based on the fiscal reality that we as a State are in the difficult position of managing health care inflation in an economy that is not growing jobs and revenue for the State. The new CCO's will need to manage a smaller bucket of funds right out of the starting gate. The constraint on the budget has helped to create a concept that is called a global budgeting process. Global budgeting will put all the health care funding into a single contract and ask that the CCO's manage

the budget and set priorities for quality care throughout the region.

A CCO will also be looking at how to develop a medical home or a medical team concept to help members of a CCO receive the best care at the least cost. A focus on prevention and early intervention will play a prominent role as well as helping members manage chronic health conditions effectively with the support of a health team, including health navigators.

In our region, OCWCOG is playing a role with our health provider network, along with the county health departments (representing the health clinics that they manage) as well as mental health and public health services. Our expertise in long term care and Medicaid will help in developing a system that we hope will better address the needs of older adults and people with disabilities in the region of Linn, Benton and Lincoln Counties.

Ralph Reid Jr.—One of a Kind



Ralph Reid Jr. often described himself as a curmudgeon. But those who had the opportunity to work with Ralph know his direct and riveting questions were based on Ralph's commitment to his community and an intense interest to capture information, hear every point of view, assess difficult public policy issues and pursue a logical, straight-forward course of action. Ralph was committed to help make a difference by "keeping at it...a step at a time."

A native Oregonian, Ralph received a degree from OSU in mechanical technology in agriculture and for many years was a long-haul trucker. Ralph and his wife Carol called Albany home for 50 years.

Ralph was elected to the Albany City Council in 1994 and served for more than 16 years before bone cancer required him to step aside in April.

Ralph served as President of the Albany City Council and served on committees that dealt with finance and municipal court, public safety, public works, and legislative issues.

Ralph's long list of community involvement included service on the Hospital Facility Authority, Linn-Benton Loop Commission, Albany-Millersburg Joint Water/Wastewater Management Committee, Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation, Willamette Criminal Justice Council, Linn County Fair & Expo Advisory Committee, and the National League of Cities Transportation Committee.

A very large number of seniors and people with disabilities knew Ralph as a long-term volunteer driver for the Albany Call-A-Ride paratransit program who, with a smile and a good story, drove them to countless appointments. He volunteered alongside his wife Carol, who has served many years as a volunteer dispatcher for Call-A-Ride.

Ralph Reid Jr. passed away on September 11. We will not soon forget Ralph, his commitment to helping his neighbors and the mischievous twinkle in his eyes when he honed in on the heart of a public policy issue.

Staff Highlight: Michael Patteson

Michael Patteson, currently an Administrative Assistant for the Senior and Disability Services Department, was born in Albany, Oregon in 1957. He is a West Albany High School graduate. Before OCWCOG, Michael worked at Roth's and at a local stereo store where he became a partner in the business.

Michael entered OCWCOG as a part-time clerical specialist. After four years with OCWCOG, he began assisting with the development of Oregon Access. Oregon Access is a client tracking database for workers. Such a database was not available before, and over the two years it took to develop it, Michael frequently traveled to Salem and throughout the state for trainings.

What Michael enjoys most about his job is "assisting people with making their ideas happen." He also enjoys the variety of his

work and that it could never be boring. Outside of work he enjoys working with computers - from taking them apart to managing computer software. Michael "enjoys putting together the logic of how computers and their software work."

This November; Michael will have devoted 27 years to OCWCOG.

Michael is greatly appreciated for his hard work and dedication.



Inside the COG: CAMPO's Technical Team

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) plays an important role in CAMPO programs and activities by providing guidance and technical assistance to MPO staff and the Policy Board.

Made up of professional staff of member jurisdictions and appointed by the Policy Board, the TAC provides direction on the development of CAMPO's annual work program and budget, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the 3-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and any other CAMPO initiative.

Current TAC members include:

- City of Adair Village: Drew Foster
- City of Corvallis: Jim Mitchell
- City of Philomath: Randy Kugler
- Benton County: Roger Irvin
- Oregon Department of Transportation: John deTar
- City of Albany Transit System: Chris Bailey

Currently, the TAC is reviewing and updating classifications for major roadways in the CAMPO area, prioritizing projects for inclusion in the RTP and providing technical advice on current projects such as improvements to West Hills Road.



Lincoln County Workforce Housing Study

In 2007, concerned members of the Lincoln County community prepared *At Home in Lincoln County: A Ten-Year Housing Plan for Lincoln County With A Special Focus on Chronic Homelessness*. Besides taking a close look at issues related to homelessness in Lincoln County, the document noted that “the county is facing a workforce housing crisis,” and it included several “steps that can be taken to address the county’s workforce housing supply.” Among the listed steps was the development of a countywide housing needs assessment.

That call for a housing needs assessment led to the Lincoln Community Land Trust (LCLT) contracting with the Council of Governments to conduct the Lincoln County Workforce Housing Needs Assessment. The result of the work is a document that is the basis for:

- An understanding of the economic and social conditions that affect the affordability and availability of suitable housing for the workforce households in Lincoln County;
- A consideration of trends that affect housing affordability and availability in Lincoln County; and,
- Data and analyses to inform elected leaders, developers, lenders and the public as they work to address Lincoln County workforce housing issues.

Households with incomes of 60 to 120 percent of the Lincoln County median family income (MFI) were considered to be workforce households. Based on data from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, those workforce households had incomes between \$31,550 and \$63,101. An estimated 28 percent of all households in Lincoln County, or 5,506 households, have incomes in that range.

Affordable housing was defined as housing that costs less than 30 percent of household

income. Households that spend 30 percent or more of their income for housing costs are considered to have a “housing cost burden.”

A major finding of the assessment was that housing affordability declined substantially between 1989 and 2009, and the percentage of households with housing cost burdens increased. During the 20 year period, the percentage of renter households with a housing cost burden increased from about 40 percent to 55 percent. Approximately 33 percent of homeowner households had a housing cost burden in 2009, which was up from 23 percent in 1989.

Several housing related organizations in Lincoln County are working to alleviate issues that high housing costs can create for individual households and the community in general. This housing needs assessment will provide a common knowledge base for efforts to address the affordability problem and improve overall livability in the community.

If you have questions related to OCWCOG’s work on this housing needs assessment, contact Scott Wilson at 541.924.8473.



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Cascades West Council of Governments is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider and Employer

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