Senior Meals New Website Launched

The Senior Meals Program launched a new website during November 2011 to provide more direct access to a wider variety of program information to the program’s consumers. The site can be accessed at www.LaneSeniorMeals.org.

Café 60 Dining Rooms welcome adults who are age 60 or older, of any income level, and who are not homebound. The Senior Meals Program operates 11 Café 60 Dining Rooms around Lane County. Senior Meals encourages anyone who would enjoy making new friends over a tasty lunch to contact them for more information.

Meals on Wheels is the part of the program in which caring volunteers deliver nutritious meals and regular safety checks. The Senior Meals Program provides Meals on Wheels in Eugene, Springfield, Creswell, Cottage Grove, Florence, Junction City, Oakridge and Veneta.

For more information about the Senior Meals Program, please contact Sandy Karsten at 541-682-4378.

www.LaneSeniorMeals.org
I must confess that the 2011 LCOG Appreciation Dinner brought forth some additional emotions for me. After fussing with thirty of these events, I was very much aware that this was to be my last—at least as Executive Director.

As I have thought about it and chatted with people who were there, I have concluded that the January 26 event went very well. The social time before the dinner was well-attended, and the conversations were lively. It struck me that these community leaders, of a variety of political stripes and hailing from different corners of the region, were only infrequently in the same room with one another. And yet, they brought to their conversations a common civic service experience.

The facility was well suited to our needs and the dinner, itself, was great. Kudos to the LCC Culinary Arts Program.

A short video, portraying the diverse activities of the council of governments, kicked off the program and served as the opening act for the award presentations. The Appreciation Dinner was presided over by LCOG’s Board Chair and Eugene Council member Chris Pryor.

I was pleased again this year to joint-venture with Jack Roberts and the Lane Metro Partnership in the presentation of a Regional Award of Merit for Economic Enhancement, this year to Feeney Wireless. Such success stories need to be recognized and celebrated. Awards for special contributions to the wellbeing of the regional community were also given to Brooke Cottle, an active citizen volunteer with the Bethel School District, Brenda Wilson, Intergovernmental Relations Manager at the City of Eugene, and Mayor Bob Hooker of the City of Creswell.

All in all, it was a very pleasant evening for me. And because it was the last Appreciation Dinner before my retirement at the end of June, I found myself recalling bits and pieces of previous Dinners. There have been, over the years, so many fine individuals surprised at our Dinners by being recognized for outstanding contributions. Some, of course, are no longer with us while others continue to go the extra mile in service to their communities. To all of the honorees over the years and to the hundreds of officials, staff members and citizens who have worked to make our part of the world better, I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation. Individually and collectively, you have made the task of this council of governments easier.

Let me end this penultimate Director’s Desk column by answering the question that is being asked of me with increasing frequency: Hey...are you countin’ the days, yet? No, I’m not. It is sometimes hard in a planning agency to avoid stumbling when the issue at hand involves a project or activity beyond the six-month time horizon. But the organization should not have to be burdened with a “lame duck” CEO, so I am trying to avoid the perils of a “glide path” mindset. As I said at the Appreciation Dinner, I am still on the clock. I really don’t know precisely what will be written in the retirement chapter of my life. There are many things that I would like to do, and may be able to accomplish without the “day job” taking quite so much time. For now, I am not counting the days—“there will be time enough for counting when the dealin’s done.”
Community Leaders Honored at LCOG Dinner

Approximately 100 elected and appointed officials and active citizens from across Lane County attended the LCOG’s annual Appreciation Dinner, marking LCOG’s 66th year of service on January 26. The Dinner and awards program were held at LCC’s Center for Meeting and Learning and presided over by Chris Pryor, Eugene Councilor and LCOG Chair. The event also included the unveiling of LCOG’s services video.

Eugene City Manager Jon Ruiz presented Brenda Wilson with the 2011 Outstanding Public Employee Award. Ruiz noted a long list of projects that have benefited from Wilson’s capable leadership, including the multi-agency United Front advocacy effort directed to the federal government.

Brooke Cottle, an active citizen volunteer with the Bethel School District, was praised for her dedication to the betterment of the district through her energy and determination. She was specifically praised for her efforts in the formation of the Bethel Education Foundation, for a “massive makeover” of Willamette High School, and for the creation of the Kilcullen Memorial Garden, honoring slain Eugene officer Chris Kilcullen.

Feeney Wireless, a growing national company headquartered in Eugene, was the recipient of an Award of Merit for Economic Enhancement, presented jointly by Lane Council of Governments and the Lane Metro Partnership Executive Director Jack Roberts. Feeney’s founder, Bob Ralston, accepted the award on behalf of the company.

The annual award for Outstanding Elected Official was given to Creswell Mayor Bob Hooker by Florence Mayor Phil Brubaker. Hooker was praised for building partnerships with public and private organizations and for the creative use of the University of Oregon-AmeriCorps Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) program. Hooker was cited, not only for service to his own community, but for his work on behalf of the region as Chair of the Lane Area Commission on Transportation. Mayor Hooker also serves on the LCOG’s Executive Committee.
Dan Betschart
SENIOR LOAN OFFICER

Dan received his degree in Business Administration from Chico State in 1984, and began his lending career in the traditional commercial/retail banking environment at First Interstate Bank in San Francisco. In 1987, he joined Silicon Valley Bank in their Technology Division. In 1990, he relocated to Eugene upon accepting a position with Centennial Bank.

For the past 20 years, he has focused on government loan programs, beginning at Cascades West COG in 1992. Dan joined LCOG in 1998 and is now part of the economic development team helping small businesses within Lane County to take advantage of the various federal, state and local government loan programs.

For more information, please call Dan Betschart at 541-682-3359 or e-mail dbetschart@lcog.org.

LCOG Loan Program Assists BMW Auto Dealership

Northwest Automotive Investment Group (BMW of Eugene) used an SBA 504 loan to move its existing BMW auto dealership across town to a better location in Eugene. The new site provides improved access, greater visibility, an expanded sales lot and a newer and larger building. All of these factors are expected to offer an improved shopping experience for customers.

The SBA 504 loan of $500,000 was leveraged by a loan from BMW Financial Services in the amount of $700,000. The project will help BMW of Eugene to save its existing 17 jobs in this difficult economy and to create at least one additional job. The project also met numerous public policy goals.

Stan Mayhew, President, BMW of Eugene
Updated Keep Us Moving Website Launched

An all-new interface to the popular Keep Us Moving website was unveiled last November, with more features and a streamlined look. The site is accessible at [www.keepusmoving.info](http://www.keepusmoving.info).

The most prominent new feature for users is the addition of a dynamic map on the front page which graphically represents current projects that impact users in the Central Lane MPO area. Users can find project information by clicking on the map, or find mapping data by clicking on the project link from a list.

Each project now has more data than ever for users, as content from the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (MTIP) is accessed and delivered, along with information exclusive to Keep Us Moving. Users can find information on traffic impacts, work schedules, funding sources, and contacts for each Keep Us Moving project.

The Keep Us Moving website was completely rebuilt onto a Drupal framework, allowing multiple editors and a host of data delivery features. Keep Us Moving was built and is maintained by LCOG, in partnership with point2point solutions and local jurisdictions.

For more information, contact Megan Banks at 541-682-7413.

Building Safer Communities Grant

A partnership of the City of Creswell, Creswell School District and Lane County Sheriff’s Office received a Building Safer Communities grant from Oregon’s Alliance for Community Traffic Safety. Grant funds will be utilized for safety programming in the elementary, middle, and high schools. Elementary and middle school activities focus on bicycle safety with trainings, patrols and “Thanks for being a Helmet Head!” recognitions. The grant will also allow the Every 15 Minutes Program to be brought to Creswell High School. Every 15 Minutes is an elaborate experiential learning program which aims to teach teens about the dangers of driving while impaired and/or texting. Pleasant Hill High School recently conducted the program and created an excellent video documenting the project. The video is available for viewing on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8HpyzeVAEA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8HpyzeVAEA).
Senior & Disabled Services - Florence Focus

Florence Senior & Disabled Services serves residents of western Lane County, from just west of Walton to the Pacific, including those living in and around Florence, Dunes City, Mapleton, Swisshome, and Deadwood. The office is co-housed with the Florence Department of Human Services at the Central Coast Resource Center, 3180 Hwy 101. Staff includes Case Managers Brian Wells and Cecilia Perez; Eligibility Specialists Melinda Dietz and Rosemary Lauria; Senior Connections Area Coordinator Kristine Sirmans; part-time Experience Works Participant Walter Blake, who assists with support duties; and Program Supervisor Glen Phillips, who also serves the Cottage Grove office.

Kristine has many roles. She coordinates Older Americans Act volunteer services for those age 60+, including transportation to medical appointments, for errands, grocery shopping, getting to the congregate meal site, etc., and providing companionship for those needing it. These services are provided by volunteers with the Senior Companion, Elder Help, & Medical Escort Volunteer programs. She also coordinates Family Caregiver Respite services and is the Aging & Disability Resource Center representative. She provides options counseling for those needing help navigating the complex world of supportive services as independence ebbs. She also authorizes Meals on Wheels for those needing that service to maintain well-being in their homes.

Florence has a number of facilities providing long-term supportive care for area residents. They include Regency Florence, the area nursing facility; Spruce Point Assisted Living and Memory Care; Elderberry Square Community; and several adult foster homes. Residents pay privately or are funded through the state Medicaid program. Brian and Cecilia assess Medicaid applicants’ care needs and financial eligibility and authorize Medicaid payment (in part or in whole) for eligible residents. They similarly authorize in-home supportive services for those needing help to remain in their homes. In-home services are provided by agencies such as New Horizons or ADDUS or through Homecare Workers registered with the Oregon Home Care Commission’s Registry & Referral Service.

Melinda and Rosemary provide assistance to aged and disabled residents seeking assistance through Medicaid (Oregon Health Plan), Medicare Savings Programs, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps). They carry quite large caseloads and manage other office services. Melinda manages Homecare Worker enrollment and payment functions, and Rosemary manages information & referral and intake appointment scheduling.

Florence S&Ds receives referrals from and coordinate services with numerous local agencies and service providers and concerned neighbors, friends, and relatives. The office can be reached at 541-902-9430. Kristine’s extension is 7830 and Rosemary’s is 7831. Those using cell phones can call more directly by dialing 1-541-682-7830 for Kristine or 1-541-682-7831 for Rosemary. They are here to serve. Office hours are 9-12 and 1-4, Monday-Friday, excluding holidays.
Jay Hebert
INTAKE SERVICE CASE MANAGER

Jay graduated from Humboldt State University in Humboldt County, California in 1989 and worked as an Eligibility Worker and Lead Worker for the Dept. of Human Services in Humboldt County. He then transferred to the State of Oregon Klamath Falls in 1995 where he worked as a Human Service Specialist, an Intake and ongoing Case Manager, Lead Worker, and then as a Supervisor. He left Klamath Falls and went to work for the Tigard Seniors and People with Disabilities office as an Intake and ongoing Case Manager and Lead Worker in the Tigard, Oregon. Jay transferred to LCOG in March 2010 and works as an Intake Service Case Manager.

He has enjoyed the years of helping clients and families in crisis by getting them the help they need and making a difference in their lives.

Jay can be reached at 541-682-7418 or chebert@lcog.org

Baby Boom Hits Eligibility

While there is some disagreement as to the precise beginning and ending dates of the post-war baby boom, the United States Census Bureau defines a baby boomer to be someone born during the years 1946 through 1959. In 2011, more than 7,000 people turned 65 years old every single day and they were the first wave of baby boomers to retire. This is also the wave that is impacting the eligibility caseload counts at LCOG S&DS. The number of Medicaid and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly call food stamps) recipients has increased significantly.

In 2011, the LCOG S&DS eligibility department began receiving transfer-in cases at the rate of 90+ per month. The transfers are coming from Self Sufficiency offices throughout Eugene and Springfield. Since SNAP recipients age 60 and Medicaid recipients age 65 are served by S&DS, it is clear that this trend will continue as the baby boomers reach these ages.

Caseloads continue to increase for other reasons related to a person’s age. Not all workers entitled to Social Security are eligible to begin receiving benefits at age 65. However, they are eligible for Medicare benefits at age 65 and many are referred by Social Security Administration to apply for Medicare Savings Plans administered by Medicaid. S&DS is experiencing a steady increase in the number of these applications from workers who have low paying jobs and no health insurance available through employers. Additionally, the Oregon Health Plan continues to add applicants by drawing from an established reservation list; any of those selected who are age 60 through 65 are referred to our office.

Even though S&DS is experiencing this increase in our caseload counts, there is still much more to be done to help our seniors. An astonishing 6 million seniors are going hungry in the United States, and nearly 40 percent of Americans aged 65+ live on less than $21,000 per year. Help is available, but most seniors aren’t using it. Just one-third of older people eligible for SNAP, receive benefits. Other age groups participate at roughly twice that rate.

See Baby Boom page 8
Why do so few seniors apply? Many don’t know it exists, or are too embarrassed or proud to ask for help—even though their taxes support it. To reduce hunger among seniors, there is a need to increase their participation in SNAP. That means raising their awareness and, even more importantly, reducing the stigma of asking for help. Increased technology has helped by introducing electronic benefit transfers using a card versus issuing actual food stamps, and people may now complete online applications from their homes. Outreach through local senior centers and LCOG S&DS’s Aging and Disability Resource Center are helping to inform the elderly of benefits available. Additionally, Eligibility Specialists have the ability to conduct SNAP program presentations to different groups such as senior housing resident meetings, and welcome the opportunity to do so if as often as needed to assist the seniors of Lane County.

Nobody Should Have to Live with Abuse

YOUR ELDERLY NEIGHBOR - There’s an older adult neighbor you’ve chatted with at civic meetings and block parties for years. When you see her coming to get her mail as you walk up the street, you slow down and greet her at the mailbox. She says hello but seems wary, as if she doesn’t quite recognize you. You ask her about a nasty bruise on her forearm. Oh, just an accident, she explains; the car door closed on it. She says goodbye quickly and returns to the house. Something isn’t quite right about her. You think about the bruise, her skittish behavior. Well, she’s getting pretty old, you think; maybe her mind is getting fuzzy. But there’s something else—something isn’t right.

As older adults become more physically frail, they’re less able to stand up to bullying and or fight back if attacked. They may not see or hear as well or think as clearly as they used to, leaving openings for unscrupulous people to take advantage of them. Mental or physical ailments may make them more trying companions for the people who live with them.

Tens of thousands of seniors across the United States are being abused: harmed in some substantial way often by people who are directly responsible for their care. More than half a million reports of abuse against elderly Americans reach authorities every year, and millions more cases go unreported. It is estimated that for every case of elder abuse reported, another 12 or 13 are not. Accordingly there’s a great need for people to report suspected abuse.
WHERE DOES ELDER ABUSE TAKE PLACE? Elder abuse tends to take place where the senior lives: most often in the home where abusers are apt to be adult children; other family members such as grandchildren; or spouses/partners of elders. Institutional and community based settings especially long-term care facilities can also be sources of elder abuse.

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE - Abuse of elders takes many different forms, some involving intimidation or threats against the elderly, some involving neglect, and others involving financial exploitation. The most common are:

PHYSICAL ABUSE - Physical elder abuse is non-accidental use of force against an elderly person that results in physical pain, injury, or impairment. Such abuse includes not only physical assaults such as hitting or shoving but the inappropriate use of drugs, restraints, or confinement.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE
In emotional or psychological senior abuse, people speak to or treat older adults in ways that cause emotional pain or distress.

Verbal forms of emotional elder abuse include intimidation through yelling or threats, humiliation and ridicule, and habitual blaming or scapegoating.

Nonverbal psychological elder abuse can take the form of ignoring the elderly person, isolating an elder from friends or activities, and terrorizing or menacing the elderly person.

SEXUAL ABUSE - Sexual elder abuse is contact with an elderly person without the elder’s consent. Such contact can involve physical sex acts, but activities such as showing an elderly person pornographic material, forcing the person to watch sex acts, or forcing the elder to undress are also considered sexual elder abuse.

NEGLECT OR ABANDONMENT BY CAREGIVERS - Elder neglect, failure to fulfill a caretaking obligation, constitutes more than half of all reported cases of elder abuse. It can be active (intentional) or passive (unintentional, based on factors such as ignorance or denial that an elderly charge needs as much care as he or she does).

FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION - This involves unauthorized use of an elderly person’s funds or property, either by a caregiver or an outside scam artist.

An unscrupulous caregiver might:
• misuse an elder’s personal checks, credit cards, or accounts
• steal cash, income checks, or household goods
• forge the elder’s signature
• theft of medications
• engage in identity theft

Typical rackets that target elders include:
• announcements of a “prize” that the elderly person has won but must pay money to claim
• phony charities
• investment fraud
• healthcare fraud and abuse
Carried out by unethical doctors, nurses, hospital personnel, and other professional care providers, examples of healthcare fraud and abuse regarding elders include:

- not providing healthcare, but charging for it
- overcharging or double-billing for medical care or services
- getting kickbacks for referrals to other providers or for prescribing certain drugs
- overmedicating or under medicating
- recommending fraudulent remedies for illnesses or other medical conditions
- Medicaid fraud

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ELDER ABUSE - At first, you might not recognize or take seriously signs of elder abuse. They may appear to be symptoms of dementia or signs of the elderly person’s frailty—or caregivers may explain them to you that way. In fact, many of the signs and symptoms of elder abuse do overlap with symptoms of mental deterioration, but that doesn’t mean you should dismiss them on the caregiver’s word.

Nobody Should Have to Live with Abuse.

To report elder abuse, please call Senior and Disabled Services in Lane County at 541-682-4038. To find the phone number for your local office you can go to [www.oregon.gov/DHS/localoffices/index.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/localoffices/index.shtml)
Regional Transportation Plan Adopted

The Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) adopted the updated Regional Transportation Plan at their December 2011 meeting. The Plan recommends how to invest more than $2 billion in anticipated federal, state, and local transportation funding in the region for the next 25 years. It deals with all the regional parts of the transportation system—roads, bike paths and walkways, and plane, train, and bus services. Every four years, LCOG works with the cities of Coburg, Springfield, and Eugene, Lane County, the Oregon Department of Transportation, Lane Transit District, Point2point Solutions, and the Willamalane Park and Recreation District to update the Plan as part of our federal requirements as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

The update extended the planning horizon to 2035 and updated the Roadway, Transit and Bicycle/Pedestrian project lists, financial forecasts, and other elements. A new interactive map on the MPO website made it easier to review regional transportation projects.

The public outreach went beyond the usual to include two open houses (one each in Springfield and Eugene), emails to over 2500 recipients, posters and articles in English and Spanish on 115 LTD buses, posting about 250 flyers in English and Spanish more than 60 community gathering places, a MetroTV calendar item that aired 25-30 times per week, and a speakers bureau that made presentations to about 320 people in 14 key groups. Nineteen members of the public submitted comments and the Citizen Advisory Committee made recommendations.

With the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan in the bag, work has started to scope the next update that will extend the plan to 2039.
City of Veneta and LCOG Staff Collaborate on New Fern Ridge Service Center

The Oregon Business Development Department, with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds, recently awarded the City of Veneta a $1.5 million grant to build a combination facility to house a full service resource center and a food bank. The new building will replace an aging facility that is too small and unable to meet the increased demand for food and meal services. The City of Veneta, a community of just over 1700 households, serves as the civic and commercial hub for the rural Fern Ridge area, which includes the unincorporated areas of Alvadore, Crow, Elmira, Noti, and Walton. This area’s population grew by a strong 75% from 2000 to 2010, and demand for social services has kept pace with this growth. Love Project Food Pantry, for example, experienced a 21% increase in demand for food services from 2008 to 2010. The proposed Fern Ridge Service Center (FRSC), a 7,200 square foot one story building, will provide more than triple the space of the existing center, better positioning it to meet the growing needs of the Fern Ridge Area.

LCOG staff is completing an Environmental Review which is required for any project built with federal funds, working in conjunction with City of Veneta staff. The City owns the two lots that will be used for the project and although they are currently vacant, they were utilized as part of a lumber mill operation from the 1930s through the mid 1950s. More recently one lot housed an auto repair business. Due to this history, both Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments were conducted. LCOG staff is completing the latest environmental assessment following HUD guidelines to be sure that there are no negative environmental impacts associated with the construction project.

The environmental assessment examines a number of areas of potential impact including historical resources, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and floodplain issues. Hazardous materials, toxic waste, noise, air quality are considered carefully and these and other potential impacts are documented and a determination is made. This Review ensures that the new building will have minimal negative impacts while maximizing positive social and environmental benefits.

The new facility will be both energy-smart and cost effective, supporting the environment and long-term sustainability. For example, efficient refrigeration and freezer facilities will replace many individual refrigerators and freezers that are not energy efficient and a commercial kitchen with energy efficient appliances will be in operation. The building will have many windows to encourage the use of more natural light—windows that likely will have the ability to work with the HVAC system to open automatically, reducing the overall use of the system, in turn reducing electric consumption. Veneta and the surrounding communities place a high value on the essential resources the current facility provides. Building the new facility has been a high priority in the area and the local community raised matching dollars which will make the successful completion of the project a reality.