

NEWS from BENTON COUNTY

At Your Service...Every Day since 1847



March 2015

Benton County, Oregon

Volume 7, Issue 1

Health Department's Hartstein honored for prevention work

Story by Heather Turner

Oregon State University College of Public Health and Human Sciences

Benton County Health Policy Specialist and Oregon State University College of Public Health and Human Sciences Master of Public Health student Sara Hartstein has been honored by the Oregon Health Authority for her efforts in tobacco control—a testament to her decision to continue her education in light of an already successful career in public health.

The Joe Weller Guardian Award is given to those committed to mentoring new tobacco control advocates. Hartstein was honored with the award at the Place Matters conference hosted by the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section of the Oregon Health Authority in November. The conference addresses the growing chronic disease epidemic in Oregon and

risk factors and conditions that drive it.

"It is an honor," Hartstein said, "however, I would not have received this award had it not been for my health department support system and community partners who have worked hard over the years to protect people from secondhand smoke, prevent people from starting tobacco and help people quit."

Initially a tobacco prevention and education program coordinator, Hartstein has expanded her responsibilities to also address other topic areas through a policy, system and environmental approach. Among her many achievements in tobacco prevention, Benton County continues to be a state leader in advancing systems and policy solutions that reduce tobacco use and other related chronic disease. She wrote and led advocacy efforts for the 2013 Benton County tobacco-free facilities policy, which includes all parks, natural

areas and the fairgrounds. She also worked to update county and city ordinances and adopt tobacco retail license systems in the late '90s.

Hartstein's efforts also have helped organizations such as Samaritan Health Services, Linn-Benton Housing Authority and Oregon State University implement similar smoke-free policies, and she has been instrumental in securing funding to implement the Mid-Valley and Coast Tobacco Prevention Initiative funded through the Oregon Health Authority's Community Prevention Program and Strategies for Policy and Environmental Change.

"My main goal is to continue to build and strengthen our partnership among public health and our Coordinated Care Organization," Hartstein said. "Coordinated efforts among public health and health care have the potential to positively impact



Sara Hartstein (Photo by Jason Hsu, OSU College of Public Health and Human Sciences)

health outcomes for our communities in a way we haven't seen before."

In addition to working at the Benton County Health Department, in 2008

Continued on Page 3

Community Health Centers: 'Like a network of friends'

To Lindsey Batchelder, good health means the world is at her fingertips. Anything and everything is possible.

"And when you don't have your health, none of that is possible," Batchelder said.

When Batchelder first moved to Corvallis from Florida, she didn't know anyone and her closest relative was 600 miles away. She was looking for a new start after a long-time relationship ended, and she had fallen in love with Oregon on a previous visit.

"It's so stunningly beautiful here," Batchelder said.

She lives in South Corvallis, and enjoys walking along the river at Willamette Park. Still it took her a long time to feel grounded in her new home. Batchelder suffers from depression, and she has a heart condition. She began experiencing panic attacks and anxiety. When she was looking for a doctor, someone told her about the Community Health Centers. That's how she found that help was just a phone call away.

"I called them up and I came in to see them," Batchelder said.

She wasn't working at the time, and staff at the Health Centers helped her enroll in the Oregon Health Plan.

Batchelder sees Rob Nebeker, MD, psychiatrist and medical director of the Mental Health Division

for Benton County. Batchelder describes him as friendly and serious at the same time. She said he's also very thorough in balancing all the different medications for her conditions.

"I enjoy going to see him," Batchelder said. "He is so careful to look through all the sources of information and the studies."

In addition to mental health care, Batchelder also has access to primary



A client visits with a Community Health Centers staff member.

care, dental and pharmacy services as a Community Health Centers patient. Having these services together is more than just convenient. Batchelder said her care team is like having a network of friends she can

count on.

"It's helped me enormously," she said.

Patients can meet with the pharmacy team to learn about their medications, and prescriptions can be filled on-site at the Benton Health Center. Health navigators are also available to assist patients in obtaining financial assistance to pay for their medicine.

Community Health Centers offer

behavioral health services at all four clinic locations. Linking mental health with primary care is what's best for patients, Nebeker said.

Community-based mental health services for people with major mental illness are also available through the Benton County Health Department. These services include assessment, individual and group therapy, case management, medication management, psychiatric treatment and crisis intervention.

Studies have shown that patients thrive when they have access to wrap-around services like those provided at the Community Health Centers.

"It's truly the best option for patients," Nebeker said.

Behavioral health services are available at all four Community Health Centers.

For an appointment, call 541-766-6845 for adults and 541-766-6038 for children.

Visit Us Online! www.co.benton.or.us

County begins budget process

The proposed Benton County budget for the 2015-17 biennium is scheduled to be released on April 14, and several Budget Committee meetings will follow as part of the process for adopting a financial plan for the next two years.

As the only Oregon county to prepare a two-year budget, this will be the county's sixth biennial budget document and will cover the period from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2017.

Oregon Local Budget law requires the proposed budget to be reviewed in public sessions by the Budget Committee, which comprises the three-member Board of Commissioners and three citizen members appointed by the board. The six-member panel will meet with department heads and consider comments from the public. At the end of their review, the committee approves a budget and sets the maximum property

tax rates for each year of the biennium.

A summary of the approved budget then is published and the Board of Commissioners is required to conduct a final public hearing before officially adopting a budget for the new biennium. The Board of Commissioners can modify the budget approved by the Budget Committee within limits, but cannot increase the tax rate set by the Budget Committee. The official meeting notices, including dates and agendas, will be published in late March.

Following is a tentative schedule of meeting dates and descriptions (all meetings are scheduled in the Benton County Sunset Building, 4077 SW Research Way, in Corvallis):

- **5 p.m. on April 14:** Library Services County Service District presentation, public hearing, deliberations and approval;

- **5:30 p.m. on April 14:** County Budget presentation;
- **6:30 p.m. on April 16:** County Budget department reviews;
- **6 p.m. on April 23:** County Budget department reviews;
- **5:30 p.m. on April 28:** County Budget department reviews;
- **5:30 p.m. on April 29:** County Budget department reviews and public hearing;
- **4 p.m. on April 30:** County Budget Committee deliberations;
- **5:30 p.m. on May 4:** County Budget Committee deliberations and possible approval; and
- **5:30 p.m. on May 6:** County Budget Committee deliberations and approval, if necessary.

The following schedule is planned tentatively for the budget committees of

the five annual service district budgets operated by the county. Typically these small budgets are reviewed and approved in a single meeting. Official meeting notice of times and locations will be published in late April. Following are the set times and dates for those meetings:

- **5:30 p.m. on May 7 in Alsea (location TBD):** Alsea County Service District and Alsea Human Services County Service District;
- **7 p.m. on May 7 in Alpine (location TBD):** Alpine County Service District; and
- **5:30 p.m. on May 21 at the Benton County Sunset Building:** South Third and Cascade View county service districts.

The Board of Commissioners is expected to conduct the final public hearing and consider the budget for adoption on June 16.

Benton County mechanics recognized for excellence

The Benton County Public Works Fleet Division recently received notice that it will continue to carry National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence Blue Seal of Excellence Recognition status.

In doing so, the county is one of only four public agencies in the state – which includes the city of Hillsboro fleet, city of Eugene Public Works fleet and Eugene Water and Electric Board fleet – to maintain that designation. Benton County first applied for and received the designation in 2005, and has held it ever since.

All of Benton County's technicians are master certified through ASE. To add to this, the county has four Emergency Vehicle Technicians who are master certified in that specialty and the rest of them are a couple of tests away from holding the master level certification. Every mechanic in Benton County's shop is certified as a school bus technician by the Oregon Department of Education.

In addition to maintaining and repairing vehicles used in county operations – which include public works vehicles, the county fleet and Benton County Sheriff's Office patrol cars – the county also partners with other agencies, providing mechanic services for more than 45 other external customers. Those include Oregon State University, Corvallis Fire Department, Albany Fire Department, Lebanon Fire Department, Corvallis Parks and Recreation, Alsea School District, Monroe Fire Department, Albany Public Works and many others. Many of those agencies also partner with the county for several other public works-related needs.

"The Blue Seal requires that you have



technicians certified in every category of work you perform and all of our mechanics are master certified for ASE," Fleet Manager Jim Burke said. "This team has stepped up to prove they are qualified to perform the work that our customers require."

County proceeds on roundabout project

Benton County Public Works is making progress leading up to construction of a roundabout at the intersection of West Hills Road and SW 53rd Street in Corvallis.

Right-of-way acquisition was completed in the fall and currently utility companies are relocating facilities to outside the construction impact area. Fill on the west side of the project is expected to start in the spring, depending on weather, with major construction to occur in the coming summer.

Between March and May 1, county crews will be installing erosion control and advance warning signs, relocating a muti-

use path and installing culverts under that same pathway. Roads will remain open in that area while that work is completed.

Construction is scheduled from May 1 through June 24. Beginning May 15, West Hills Road will be closed at the intersection with SW 53rd Street until construction is complete. 53rd Street, though, will remain open to traffic at all times, but limited to one lane of traffic through the construction area. Temporary traffic delays should be expected. Those who use West Hills Road at that intersection will need to find alternate routes, and the county may post a detour route if it is determined to be necessary.

Deadline for construction completion is tentatively set for July 24, and all roads should be opened to traffic at around that time if everything goes according to schedule. County crews are scheduled to finish putting up signs, striping the intersection and other final tasks between Aug. 3 and Sept. 1.

The project, in the works for many years, was approved for a \$648,000 budget by the Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Construction currently is estimated under that budget, at a cost between \$375,000 and \$425,000.

Trying to understand the budget? There's an app for that

When the 2015-17 biennium proposed county budget is released on April 14, a new online application will provide the public an interactive tool to view the proposed operating and capital budgets.

Using an application developed by Socrata, Inc., the proposed budget and budget history will be viewable in a graphical and interactive format. Major capital project locations will be displayed on a map along with a project overview.

The application will align with the organization of the traditional budget document, but give the public some levels of detail difficult to convey in the PDF display of the document. The combination of the traditional PDF of the document and online application should provide an improved level of understanding of the budget plan for the next two years of county operations.

The application also will be used by the Budget Committee during its review of the proposed budget. Additional information will be available closer to the scheduled release date. Those interested in current budget information and past budget documents can go online to <http://www.co.benton.or.us/budget/index.php>. For more information about Socrata, those interested can go online to <http://www.socrata.com/>.

Q and A: County is charting path's future

Benton County Public Works Director Josh Wheeler was interviewed to discuss the history and process behind the Albany to Corvallis multi-modal path concept. The county's conditional use permit application was denied by the Planning Commission, but the Board of Commissioners is committed to creating a safer transportation venue for bicyclists and pedestrians than the narrow shoulder of Highway 20. Benton County will be working with the community to identify a feasible solution and route that will accomplish this goal, with the least possible impact on landowners. Following, you will find the question and answer segment with Wheeler:

- **How long has this project been in the works and what is the reason for pursuing it?**

The project has been in the works for approximately 10 years through various concepts, feasibility studies, environmental studies and preliminary designs. The cities of Corvallis and Albany are continuing to expand and the only major link between them is Highway 20, which is only becoming more congested. To plan for future population growth and

consider the environmental impacts and health of the residents, a multi-use path that allows bicyclists and pedestrians to commute or recreate provides a solution. With reductions in highway funding and the safety issues along Highway 20, the likelihood for additional lanes is very low. Safety solutions and improvements will need to occur before that can happen.

- **Does the county have any partners in this project?**

The cities of Corvallis and Albany, Benton County and Oregon Department of Transportation all have been working together on this. The portion within Corvallis has been completed. The city of Albany is moving forward on its piece and now the county is trying to find a way to connect those two loose ends.

- **What was the process that was used for identifying the proposed location of the path?**

Since the path is anticipated to be used for commuting as well as recreation, the desire was to create the most direct link possible between the two cities. Using existing roadway networks was either not direct enough or too dangerous. A basic feasibility study was completed early in the

process to look at many scenarios including highway right-of-way, railroad right-of-way and private land. Challenges with different routes included safety concerns, floodplain issues, wetlands, needing to acquire land or easements and potential buildings in the way of the path alignment. No route provided a perfect scenario. The goal was to pick the route with the least impact to the community and provide the greatest opportunity for bicyclists and pedestrians to commute safely.

- **This project has been going on a long time. How has it been funded?**

A number of different funding mechanisms have been used, including various grants. Some examples of these are Statewide Transportation Improvement Program funds, Flex Funds and ConnectOregon grants, all of which were applied for through the state. As with most grants, there are stipulations regarding where and how they can be spent. These stipulations can include location of the project. For example, some funds must be used for projects that exist inside an existing right-of-way and others must be used outside of a right-of-way. In addition, certain types of local match contributions may be required as

part of the grant. Benton County's local match contributions come from either general fund dollars allocated to the project or road fund money. There are restrictions on which of those funds can be used for different parts of the project, as well.

- **What are the next steps?**

Public Works staff and the Board of Commissioners will be looking at options and will continue to seek a way to create a path from the North Albany area to the north side of Corvallis. This will take a great deal of community discussion and we are excited to continue engaging the public to find the best way to proceed with accomplishing this community goal. We will hear community suggestions and do a thorough analysis on all legitimate options to reach a final product that benefits the safety needs of the community, eases congestion and lowers air pollution along Highway 20.



Josh Wheeler, Benton County Public Works Director

Benton County DA earns prestigious award

Benton County District Attorney John Haroldson was presented with the Oregon State Bench and Bar's Edwin J. Peterson Professionalism Award.

This prestigious award is named after Edwin J. Peterson, who was the 39th Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court, serving from 1983 to 1991. He was the first – in 2003 – to win the award that carries his name.

Haroldson is the first district attorney ever to be awarded this honor. He was elected to the office in 2008 following his appointment in 2007 by Gov. Ted Kulongoski. Prior to his appointment, Haroldson had served as Chief Deputy District Attorney since 2002 and began his prosecution career in 1988. He was presented with the award in December 2014.

The award is intended to provide an incentive to all members of the bar to achieve the highest levels of professionalism. Therefore, consideration is given to all lawyers regardless of years of practice, including those in public or government practice, legal services lawyers,

solo and small firm practitioners, those who are not engaged in a litigation practice and members of diverse groups within the profession. To be eligible for the award, a nominee must be an active member of the Oregon State Bar who:

- Consistently demonstrates integrity, honesty and willing compliance with the letter and spirit of the law and is of the highest ethical standard;
- Promotes the efficient resolution of disputes and transaction completion, treating all others with courtesy and dignity;
- Fosters the respect and trust of other lawyers, clients, members of the community and the justice system;
- Encourages professional conduct on the part of other lawyers; and
- Demonstrating the importance of pro bono service to the bar and the community by making it an integral part of professional life in the bar.

Haroldson has distinguished himself as a prosecutor, having been recognized by the Oregon Crime Victims Assistance Network

and the Oregon Humane Society for excellence in the field. He is a member of the Oregon and Washington state bar associations. He serves as adjunct faculty for Willamette University School of Law and the National College of District Attorneys. He joins elite company by winning this award. Others to receive recognition include Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum.

"This is a prestigious award with a short list of prior, but very distinguished, recipients," Haroldson said. "It's worth noting the lifetime achievements of the prior recipients to fully appreciate the magnitude of this recognition."



John Haroldson, Benton County District Attorney

Hartstein *Continued from Page 1*

Hartstein began taking courses – one class per quarter – toward earning an MPH degree with a focus on international health. She plans on graduating in 2015.

"I chose the MPH-IH program because it has an approach to public health that I thought would best expand upon my previous experience," she said. "Although I may not work internationally for some time, the critical public health lens can be applied in every setting, including here in Benton County."

She hopes to add to her skillset and expand her thinking about social and political factors that determine health on a global scale.

"Studying in the CPHHS has added depth to my ability to do the work required in this position," she said. "I would strongly encourage students – no matter their MPH track – to take international health classes, especially those that encourage students to think critically and consider the larger social, economic and political factors that influence health."

County recognized for water conservation efforts

Water conservation is a priority for Benton County, which operates several public service districts throughout the county that provide water utility services in rural communities.

Each of the districts operates in accordance with a water conservation and curtailment plan, as required by the Oregon Water Resources Division of the Oregon Health Authority. County water districts are proactive in monitoring and implementing actions identified in that plan.

County-operated service districts that provide utility services include Cascade

View County Service District, Alsea County Service District, Alpine County Service District and South Third Street County Service District. Though each of those districts is a separate legal and financial entity from the county, they all have taxing authority and are operated by Benton County. The governing body for each district is the Benton County Board of Commissioners.

As a matter of routine, the county monitors and logs water levels in each well for each district every two weeks. Water level is the indicator used of the aquifer

levels that triggers different stages of the water conservation plan. When the plans were developed, water levels were checked and a baseline was calculated based on the original water levels compared to the well logs when they were developed.

Current levels are measured against those baselines. When those levels drop by 25 inches, steps are taken to curtail use and promote water conservation. Water management, conservation and curtailment plans can be found online from the individual service district websites, at <http://www.co.benton.or.us/pw/utilities/index.php>.

Benton County has been designated by the Oregon Water Resources Department as an Outstanding Performer for both the Cascade View and Alsea county service district water systems based on operations, compliance and not violating existing rules.

"With help from Scott Krueger at Benton County Environmental Health, Bob Miller, our certified operator for the districts, has done a great job in meeting the requirements for this designation," Benton County Public Works Director Josh Wheeler said.

Commissioner Dixon highlights accomplishments

Benton County Board of Commissioners Chair Jay Dixon highlighted several county achievements and offered a brief glimpse into the future during his 2015 State of the County address.

Dixon first delivered the comments recently in a breakfast meeting of the Corvallis Chamber of Commerce. He highlighted the county's strong fiscal position, with 10 percent of the biennial budget going into reserves. The county's current reserve is \$20 million. He also mentioned the county's strong Aa3 bond

rating as evidence that Benton County is on strong footing, particularly compared with many other counties around the state.

Economic development and contributions to a strong business environment supported by everyday county operations was another theme. The county maintains 461 miles of road and 103 bridges that help support rural transportation and businesses, contributes to economic development activities and provides an infrastructure that helps the local economy succeed.

In his remarks, Dixon noted that strong partnerships within Benton County and regionally help to drive healthy outcomes in the county. In 2014 Benton County again was recognized as Oregon's healthiest county by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

He also highlighted the importance of public safety as it relates to a healthy community and economic development. Dixon particularly focused on limited capacity for programs and holding incarcerated individuals in the Benton County jail, as well as its inadequacy in

dealing with mental health issues among those who are admitted.

A complete text of the 2015 State of the County is available online at <http://www.co.benton.or.us/boc/soc2015.pdf>.



Jay Dixon, Benton County Board of Commissioners Chair

Foster named Fair and Rodeo Queen

Adrienne Foster has been named the 2015 Benton County Fair and Rodeo Queen.

The 19-year-old grew up in Corvallis with her two sisters and three brothers, graduating from Philomath High School in 2013. Adrienne – the daughter of Ernie and Julie Foster – spent her childhood occupied with sports, playing musical instruments and riding horses.

Over the years Foster has been most closely involved with horses. She started participating in 4-H in the fourth grade, mostly competing in the horse gaming events in which she qualified for state multiple times. She also competed on the Philomath High School equestrian team and brought home a gold medal from the state meet her freshman year.

Foster currently works as a Certified Nursing Assistant with Willamette View and is enrolled at Portland Community College working toward a degree in radiology. Meeting great people and being able to help others are just two reasons she loves her job.

This year, Foster will proudly travel around Oregon representing Benton County at

many different public events. Her lovely 12-year-old mare Zoey will accompany her to parades and rodeos all over the state. The things she is looking forward to most this year include visiting local schools, traveling and being a positive role model to the community.

In her free time, Foster enjoys riding horses, eating sushi, snowboarding and spending time with friends and family.

She is thankful for the opportunity to represent her home, Benton County, and hopes to see everyone at the 2015 Benton County Fair and Rodeo, which is scheduled for July 29 through Aug. 1.



Adrienne Foster, Benton County Fair & Rodeo Queen

Plaque to commemorate past Benton County sheriff

The Benton County Board of Commissioners has scheduled an event to commemorate the service of former Sheriff Diana Simpson.

The commissioners will be unveiling a plaque in Simpson's honor at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10, on the Benton County Courthouse lawn. Simpson is the first elected female sheriff in the State of Oregon. She was first elected in November 2006 and re-elected in 2012. She retired in June 2013.

Starting in the Parole and Probation Division of the Benton County Sheriff's Office, Simpson served Benton County for 32 years. She was promoted to Undersheriff in 2002.

Under her watch as sheriff the office improved policies and procedures, leading to a higher level of professionalism which was reflected in fewer citizen complaints. Prior to Simpson's service as sheriff, the

office received at least 40 complaints a year and now it's down to seven or fewer each year. The Sheriff's Office also twice earned state accreditation, proving it meets industry standards and best practices in its operations.

Following the plaque unveiling, there will be a reception in the Benton County Board of Commissioners meeting room, 205 NW Fifth St., in Corvallis. Both events are free and open to the public.



Diana Simpson