

# NEWS from BENTON COUNTY

At Your Service...Every Day since 1847



August 31, 2011

Benton County, Oregon

Volume 3, Issue 3



## Road crews find creative ways to do more with less

Benton County Public Works Department road crews widened the section of Scenic Drive from Valley View Drive to Springhill Road.

Road crews often use asphalt grindings from other road projects to complete jobs like this one, which saves Benton County money. In many cases this practice makes projects possible that otherwise may not

be affordable. The grindings used for the Scenic Drive project came from the state's Highway 20 project between Corvallis and Albany.

The process employs milling machines to remove the asphalt from a location, to be hauled to the site of the county project. There, the grindings are spread out creating an appearance of a gravel

road. Heavy equipment then works day and night to place and process the grindings on the road and widen the shoulders. The county returns to place a chip seal over the grindings as well as the final surfacing.

Using the grindings is sustainable, less costly and provides structural integrity to the road surface.

"Without these kinds of resources, we wouldn't be able to do these projects," Public Works Director Roger Irvin said. "Maintaining 460 miles of county road is an expensive proposition and we have had to be creative in how we approach these projects so that we can have good roads throughout the county on a limited budget."



## Salvaging the 99 Express

The 99 Express bus service connecting Adair Village to shopping, medical and other opportunities in Corvallis first rolled out of the station late in 2010, paid for with state grant funding.

The funding stream, however, was reduced by the state. Benton County used cost savings realized by the program to keep the service operating through the summer.

The county approached Adair Village and made an offer to continue providing and maintaining the buses, if the city could cover fuel and driver wages. A grant from the city of Corvallis – with a 50-percent match from Adair Village – will help keep the service running.

Service between Adair Village and Corvallis – currently four trips per day, five days a week – will remain unchanged.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Adair Village, as well as for the city of Corvallis support, to make sure this service continues," Public Works Director Roger Irvin said. "We believe it is an important service to connect folks in rural parts of the county who may encounter barriers to running errands, attending doctor's appointments or taking advantage of leisure-time activity outside their home communities. Benton County will continue maintaining the buses used to provide that service."

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# A message from the Board of Commissioners



Linda Modrell



Jay Dixon



Annabelle Jamarillo

The Benton County Board of Commissioners and Budget Committee have crafted a biennial budget that is a transition to restructuring the way the county does business in the future.

With some adjustments, we have been able to remain on sound fiscal footing due to a long history of prudent management. At the same time, a changing world requires us to rethink how we do business. We are exploring opportunities to gain further efficiencies, using technology and involving partners while evaluating which services we can continue offering effectively.

Our current budget includes some necessary workforce reductions. County government is a service organization. The largest expense in offering services is a skilled workforce. Benton County will have approximately 30 fewer jobs than

last biennium. Most of those positions were held vacant by department directors anticipating the need to reduce staff.

To continue offering the current level of services, in the face of increasing business costs, we rely in part upon you, the voters. You provided resources to maintain public safety and health services to the community by passing the Health and Public Safety Levy in 2007.

This meant restoring 24-7 law enforcement coverage and renting jail space to house inmates in other counties to offset the limited capacity of our current jail. The District Attorney's Office can focus more resources on prosecuting street crimes and crimes involving child victims.

Health Services include mental health and community health, which amount to early intervention and prevention that keep people out of hospital emergency rooms. When the levy passed, the Board of Commissioners promised that collection amounts would be reduced by any revenue from federal forest payments. The amount levied for this biennium will average 77 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value, which is less than the maximum allowed.

All of these factors have brought us to a \$183 million two-year budget to fund county services. As we provide needed services through the next biennium, we will continue to look for more cost-effective and efficient ways to serve you, every day. We hope that this newsletter is useful in helping you to understand the budget, the challenges we face, and, most importantly, how your money is invested in the community.

# How did we get here?

It is no secret that government agencies and private businesses at all levels are being challenged in this economy. The key to a brighter future for Benton County is for leaders to address the big problems of today with efforts that help ensure the organization is well positioned for the future.

While, compared to many other government agencies, Benton County has remained on solid fiscal footing due to years of responsible financial management, the county is facing many challenges and it is taking the necessary steps to address them. The basic issue is that current revenues (property taxes) do not match current expenses (in a service-driven organization these are primarily employment costs).

Employee benefit costs continue to increase. Health insurance rate increases were 5.5 percent for 2011-12. Health insurance continues to go up for everyone in both the public and private sectors. Retirement benefit costs also increased.

The other side of the issue is revenue generation. Voter-approved Measure 50 effectively capped property tax revenue growth to 3 percent. That doesn't keep up with the 4- to 5-percent total payroll expense increases Benton County anticipates in the coming years due to the factors listed

above.

To brace for this reality Benton County has made some tough decisions. Most employee groups will not receive cost of living adjustments this year, including elected officials. Benton County has eliminated positions, approximately 7.7 percent of its workforce, through attrition and carefully planned workforce reductions.

This is only the beginning. The county currently has reserve funds available, but those won't be able to sustain current service levels for long. So, additionally, Benton County is seeking collaborative and cost-saving initiatives that will allow continuing offering services more efficiently and at lower costs. The county also is looking at investments to reduce cost of service.

Benton County leaders anticipate more adjustments will be necessary for the next several biennia. Today's difficult choices, though, should smooth out the level of reductions that will be necessary in the future, as these changes impact both the employees of Benton County and those who depend on its services. Fewer employees typically mean fewer services.

The goal is to offer a more consistently sustainable level of services for the people of Benton County.

# Costs of a safe community



The Benton County Sheriff's Office operating budget includes general, capital improvement, adult corrections, courthouse security and local option levy funds.

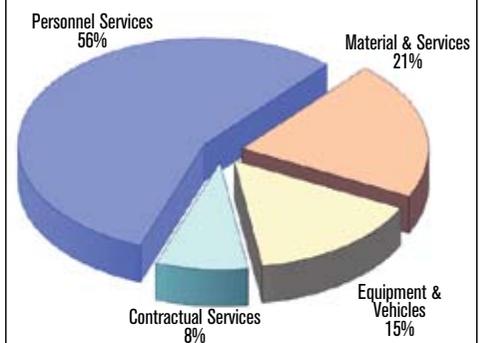
As fellow tax payers and stewards of public funds, the Benton County Sheriff's Office is committed to ensuring fiscal accountability and providing citizens with the best service possible with the funds that are allocated.

Every tax dollar is put into action by funding personnel to provide law enforcement and public safety services in the community as well as the other specific and necessary costs to keep Benton County residents safe from crime.

Those costs – which include in-depth professional training, safety equipment

(such as uniforms, body armor, radios, vehicles and more) and contractual services for handling dispatch and evidence – ensure deputies can do their jobs in a safe and professional manner.

## 2012 Operating Budget By Category



## 2012 Percentages by Category

Source: 2012 Period 1 GL Detail Report (including 001, 108, 119, 123, and 300 funds)

2012 Budget	
Personnel Services	8,681,635
Materials and Services	3,249,667
Equipment & Vehicles	2,360,088
Contractual Services	1,238,720
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,530,110</b>

## News from Benton County

Published quarterly and distributed in The Gazette-Times, The Democrat-Herald and other mailer publications, as well as at Benton County office locations and events. Publication is created by Public Information Officer Rick Osborn. To subscribe for an electronic copy via e-mail, please contact us at [pioinfo@co.benton.or.us](mailto:pioinfo@co.benton.or.us).

Board of Commissioners	766-6800	Human Resources	766-6081
Public Information Officer	766-6082	Community Health Centers	766-6835
Assessment Department	766-6855	Juvenile Department	766-6810
Commission on Children and Families	766-6751	Natural Areas and Parks	766-6871
Development Department	766-6819	OSU Extension Service	766-6750
District Attorney	766-6815	Public Works	766-6821
Elections	766-6756/766-6277	County Clerk/Records	766-6831
Fairgrounds	766-6521	Sheriff's Office	766-6858
Health Department	766-6835	Tax Collection	766-6808

## Where do county resources come from?

### Operating and Capital Grants

State and federal government grants fund services mandated by those same government bodies. Community corrections, road repairs and mental health treatment are among those. Benton County also receives grants for projects such as bridge repairs.

### Charges for Services

These include all fees for services such as building permits, patient care and others. When a person accesses a service that benefits them but not necessarily the general public, they are asked to contribute a portion of the costs. This is true when a building permit is issued, a patient seeks treatment at a county-operated health center, when someone pays admission to attend the Benton County Fair, filing or acquiring property records from the county and other transactions. This category includes Medicare, Medicaid and Oregon Health Plan payments for services, but the bulk consist of internal services among county departments. Internal services consist of motor pool use, information technology, human resources and more. Internal services - money spent by one county department for another's services within the budget - account for more than half of the charges for services, and are not new revenue.

### General Revenue

Property tax, federal forest payments, levy funds and franchise fees from solid waste and cable operators are general fund revenues. Property taxes account for approximately 88 percent of general

revenue for the county this biennium. The local option levy generates about 23 percent, or \$10.2 million, of the property taxes for the biennium.

### Dedicated Balances

Dedicated balances are funds used to carry on services into the new biennium that are restricted by contract or law to be used for specific purposes. Some examples of these might include grant funds for a specific project that are carried over from one year to the next.

### Unrestricted Balances

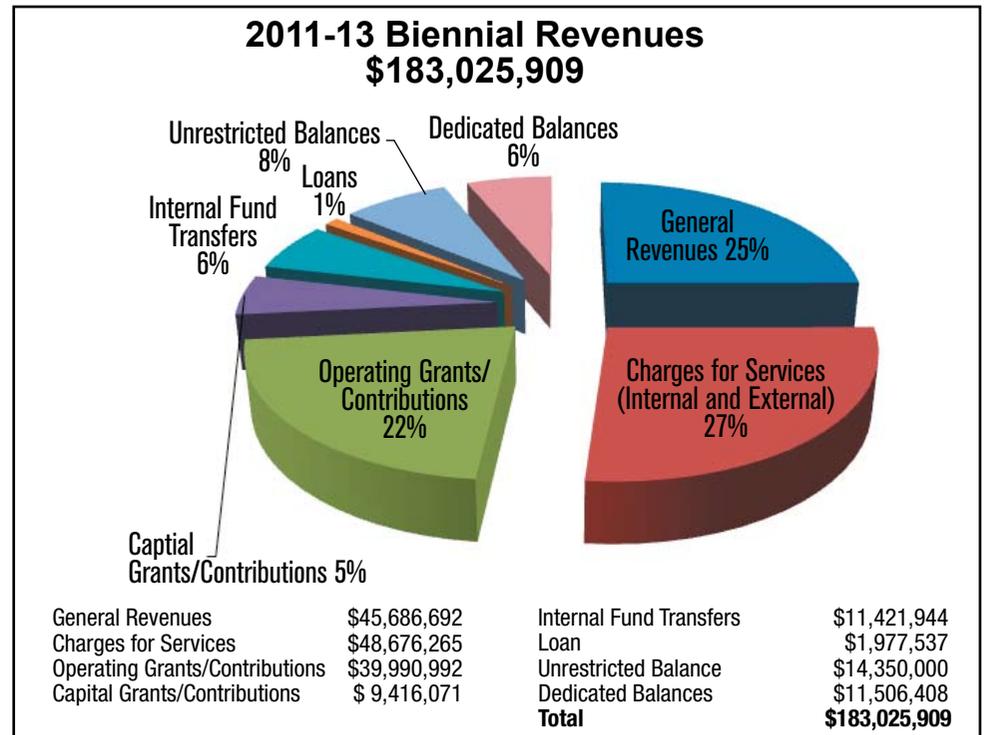
Unrestricted balances, similar to dedicated balances, are funds moved forward to carry on services into the new biennium. These funds can be used for any legal purpose, and do not carry any restrictions. Often, these are general revenues moved forward to finance general activities in the next biennium.

### Loans

This accounts for any funding received from internal or external loans for projects. Typically this is an infrequent revenue stream for Benton County.

### Internal Fund Transfers

This occurs when money is moved from one fund to another to help pay for a service or activity within the county. Typically this happens when general revenue is moved into another fund - designated for a specific purpose - to support that county program area. When these transfers occur, the county is required to show where that money was allocated.



## Where are public resources invested?

### General Government

General government services include effective human resource management, budgetary and financial management, as well as statutory tax collection for cities, service districts, schools and the county.

### Health Services

**Health Department** - The Health Department focuses on monitoring and controlling preventable diseases, providing family planning help and assisting those with mental health issues. The department also provides crisis intervention and treatment, substance abuse treatment, developmental disabilities services, restaurant inspections and environmental services related to water, sewer and solid waste. **Community Health Centers** - A healthy county is a functioning community and the Community Health Centers provide health care to all. Services include chronic disease management, urgent care, well baby and children's exams, dental services, preventive care, medications and mental health treatments, all using an innovative team-oriented approach.

### Public Safety and Justice

**Sheriff's Office** - We all want to feel and be safe at home and out in the community. The Sheriff's Office protects and serves the public by providing law enforcement, operating the jail, providing parole and probation services, emergency management planning and preparedness, animal control and other services.

**District Attorney's Office** - Keeping criminals off the street also keeps the public safe. While criminal prosecution is a primary focus, the District Attorney's Office also provides child abuse intervention, child support enforcement and victims assistance services.

**Juvenile Department** - Some youth need a push

in the right direction. The Juvenile Department helps at-risk youth get their lives back on track through counseling and rehabilitation, operating service/work crew programs and supervising youth offenders. The department actively engages in outreach to prevent juvenile crime, kids dropping out of school and substance abuse.

### Property and Transportation

**Community Development** - With the perspective of thoughtful growth, the Community Development Department oversees land use planning. The Building Division assists residents with advice and information on building codes and safe development that will protect the county's built and natural environments.

**Assessment** - The Assessment Department, through up-to-date training and working with a high level of professionalism, assesses properties based on sales data of comparable properties to provide property tax values.

**Public Works** - A prosperous and healthy county is always on the move. Public Works provides road maintenance and surveying; maintains county facilities; manages and maintains the county fleet; and provides transportation opportunities for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

### Community, Culture and Education

Many opportunities that county residents enjoy and take advantage of are supported with county resources. These include the Benton County Fair and Rodeo, Oregon State University Extension and 4-H, Veterans Services and the Commission on Children and Families. The county also acts as a pass-through to the Benton County Museum.

### Information Technology

Information management is vital to effective county government. The Information Resource

Management Division maintains up-to-date electronic systems and assists employees in using them.

### Trusts

Benton County manages assets received through bequests or agreements requiring trust arrangements. These trusts also include special accounts related to maintaining properties acquired through tax foreclosures.

### Governance

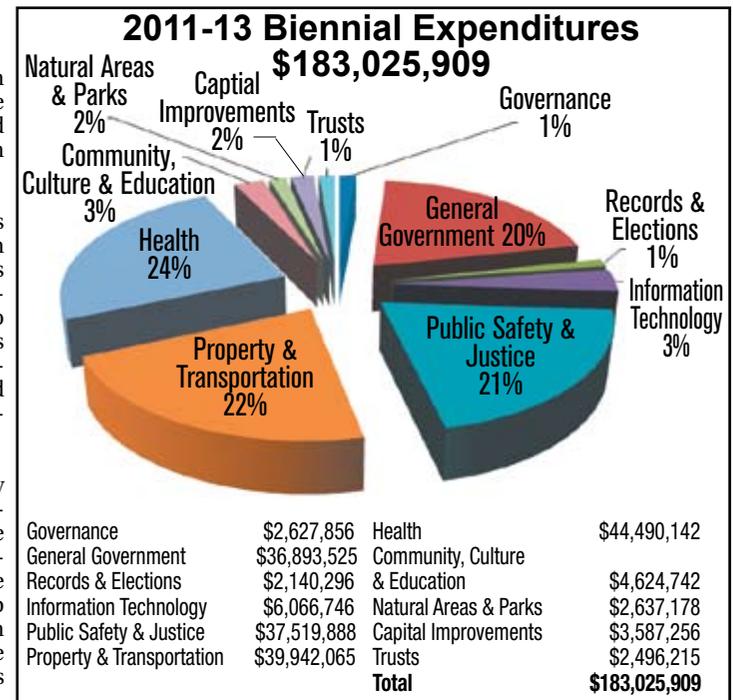
A functioning society needs a solid governmental framework. The Board of Commissioners provides governance and policy leadership for the greater Benton County community. The Board's office provides both external and internal public information and legal counsel services for departments.

### Natural Areas and Parks

Benton County believes in responsible stewardship of the land now and for the future. The Natural Areas and Parks Department manages the county's natural areas and recreation parks. These include Beazell Memorial Forest, Fitton Green Natural Area, Fort Hoskins Historic Park, Adair Park and Salmonberry Campground on the Alesa River.

### Records and Elections

Property and other vital document recording



services are provided by the staff in the Records Office. Additionally, the county must provide open and efficient elections. The Elections staff helps candidates, cities and other jurisdictions with appropriate filing and reporting documents, as well as accurately counting ballots for regular and special elections.

### Capital Improvements

Benton County maintains resources for acquiring, constructing or improving property; large multi-year technology initiatives; or other projects.

# Fairgrounds goes solar



When Benton County sees an opportunity worth pursuing, especially when it is good for the environment and saves money, it jumps at the chance.

That was the case when Benton County Public Works Department and Fairgrounds leadership teamed up to secure a \$491,000 grant to construct a solar array at the Benton County Fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds Foundation also stepped up to secure \$120,000 with private fund-raising efforts to build the livestock building and education center that supports the solar panels on the roof and houses the related education center.

The project is a shining example of ways Benton County works to reduce its carbon

footprint and operate in a more fiscally sustainable manner. The array is projected to offset electricity use at the Fairgrounds by 25 percent, directly impacting the Benton County budget. That amounts to approximately \$6,000 per year in savings.

The array and education center – designed and assembled by SunWize, a local employer – provides an opportunity for people of all ages to learn about solar power production. Through the investment of public and private funding – and very little coming from the Benton County general fund – the community also will get a livestock building that will house adult and 4-H community activities for years to come.

## Benton County Calendar of Events

### September 5

- Benton County offices closed in observance of Labor Day.

### September 7

- Heeling Free Dog Obedience Class, 6 to 7 p.m. at Guerber Hall at the Benton County Fairgrounds. For more information, call 541-752-9078.

### September 11

- Benton County Sheriff's Office Chili Cook-Off, benefitting The Sheriff's Foundation and Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis STARS Program, scheduled from noon to 4 p.m. in the Floral Courtyard at the Benton County Fairgrounds. Admission is \$5 and children younger than 5 get in free. Fire trucks, marine patrol boats and much more will be on display.

### September 14

- Heeling Free Dog Obedience Class, 6 to 7 p.m. at Guerber Hall at the Benton County Fairgrounds. For more information, call 541-752-9078.

- Benton County Community Forum to discuss transportation and youth activities issues in Adair Village, scheduled from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Adair Clubhouse.

### September 17

- SeptemBEER Fest, 2 to 10 p.m. at the Benton County Fairgrounds Auditorium, put on by the Heart of the Valley Homebrewers and Linn Benton Food Share.

- Philomath Booster Club Monte Carlo Casino Night, 6 to 11 p.m. in Guerber Hall at the Benton County Fairgrounds.

- Ability Awareness, scheduled 10 a.m. to noon at Riverfront Park in Corvallis. Participants can experience the challenges wheelchairs present to access.

### September 18

- Meeting and End of LLS-AKC Dog Match,

scheduled from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Guerber Hall at the Benton County Fairgrounds.

### September 21

- Heeling Free Dog Obedience Class, 6 to 7 p.m. at Guerber Hall at the Benton County Fairgrounds. For more information, call 541-752-9078.

### September 28

- Heeling Free Dog Obedience Class, 6 to 7 p.m. at Guerber Hall at the Benton County Fairgrounds. For more information, call 541-752-9078.

### October 1

- Kids Day for Conservation, scheduled all day in the Benton County Fairgrounds Arena.

### October 5

- Vista and Vineyards painters, scheduled 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Benton County Fairgrounds.

### October 6

- 4-H Information Night, scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Fairgrounds.

### October 18

- Forest Expo, scheduled from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Benton County Fairgrounds Arena.

### October 19

- Forest Expo, scheduled from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Benton County Fairgrounds Arena.

### October 20

- Forest Expo, scheduled from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Benton County Fairgrounds Arena.

### October 22

- WAG Dog Agility Trial, scheduled 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Benton County Fairgrounds Arena.

- Oregon Fall Poultry Swap and Sale, scheduled from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Guerber Hall at the Benton County Fairgrounds. For more information, call 541-990-7501.

### October 23

- WAG Dog Agility Trial, scheduled 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Benton County Fairgrounds Arena.

# Collaborations in health reduce delivery costs

Benton County Health Services – which comprises the Health Department and Community Health Centers – have two separate but complementary missions focusing on health in Benton County. Through partnership and shared efficiencies they are able to fulfill those missions in a more cost-effective manner.

The Health Department focuses on community health through broad-based activities such as restaurant, pool and hot tub inspections; monitoring and controlling preventable diseases; providing crisis intervention and treatment; substance abuse treatment; developmental disabilities services; and environmental services related to water, sewer and solid waste. The Community Health Centers are geared toward individual patient care, providing a service integrated approach to treat those who need medical care. CHC services include disease management, urgent care, well baby and children's exams, dental services, medications, mental health treatment and much more.

While they maintain their status as two separate departments within the county, they share many resources, such as office space, by co-inhabiting the Public Service Building on 27<sup>th</sup> Street in Corvallis. There, some of the core administrative functions such as accounting and financial analysis are conducted using shared staffing. This reduces the number of staff necessary for day-to-day overhead operations in each department, saving money for the county. Both benefit from the overhead services such as human resources, information technology and other core business functions provided to all departments within the county.

They also are able to work together to provide services. Many of the mental



health services offered by Benton County are handled by both departments sharing resources. There are other ways they can collaborate. Public health trends are relayed to CHC staff members, who also provide input to the Health Department, creating a two-way flow of communication. The Health Department is better prepared and aware of emerging public health issues and the CHC is ready for any potential patient cases they encounter related to outbreaks in the community.

Staff members in both departments have embraced the challenge to meaningfully change the way we think about and deliver services. Our future is one where the community has complete access to a full spectrum of services from prevention, environmental impact and engaging at-risk populations to direct service delivery that combines primary care, mental health, oral health and care coordination within the broader community. This is a more cost-effective and visionary way to do business.

This helps Benton County Health Services work more effectively to achieve a "Triple Aim" of healthy population, extraordinary patient care and reasonable costs.

# Building provides county stability

Sometimes it takes an upfront investment to generate financial benefit in the future. That is the way the Benton County Board of Commissioners approached the decision to purchase an office building on Research Way.

The building – which currently houses the Siuslaw National Forest offices – was acquired for 3.3 million, taking advantage of favorable real estate purchase conditions in Corvallis. In addition to moving Benton County operations out of rented space around Corvallis, it will generate a new revenue stream for the county by providing space that can be leased to outside agencies. The bonds will be paid off in 10 years.

Purchasing the 38,000-square-foot facility – complete with storage space and ample parking – will allow the county to divert the \$300,000 it currently pays for annual leases

into a building it owns. Leasing excess space to outside agencies is expected to raise another \$185,000 per year that will go into paying off the building. Subsequently, it will become a revenue stream. The county then will be able to allocate more of the money currently spent on leases to service delivery.

A larger building allows the county to place many of its core services in closer proximity to each other, creating opportunities for efficiencies and improved customer service and convenience.

As Benton County, the city of Corvallis and other partners continue discussing possible co-location downtown, the building also provides the county an asset it could sell later to help pay for construction of a new location.

Benton County expects to move into the building early in 2012.