

NEWS from BENTON COUNTY

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Levy spearheads funding mental health prevention in county schools

"If a kid is feeling down, it's important they can work their way through those feeling with an adult that they trust in an environment where they are already at," said Mitch Anderson, Director of the Benton County Health Department.

In 2012 Benton County voters overwhelmingly approved the county's operating levy renewal to provide five more years of supplemental funding to support public safety and health services. Following approval of the levy, the Health Department spearheaded a partnership with Trillium Family Services and Benton County School Districts to utilize levy funds to staff mental health prevention activities and a counselor in every school. Trillium Family Services leveraged additional funds to make this project a reality.

"When you put the services where the kids are, you have higher rates of success," said Anderson.

The purpose of mental health prevention and education services in schools and community-based programs is to help children live healthy lives with their families.

Health sector professionals are able to reach a larger population in a more fluid way when they're supporting kids and families in their safe places, rather than requiring them come to an outpatient mental health facility.

Leigh Santy, principal at Garfield Elementary School in Corvallis school district, praises the integration of mental health prevention support

in schools, "Having preventative counseling support and individual counseling support from Trillium has been so impactful for students at Garfield. It has allowed us to be more responsive to the individual needs of students and families."

Within Benton County, the Alsea, Philomath, and the Corvallis school districts are all served by the Trillium Prevention program.

Chiharu Blatt, Valley Community Services Manager with Trillium Family Services, said, "We're able to reach a lot more kids when we're supporting them in their normal routines and safe places. The therapists in the schools are all qualified mental health professionals with a master's level degree or higher.

"We evaluate each school as its own community with varying needs and strengths. Then we determine the most effective services to support that specific community."

Some services sought in schools are behavioral health screenings; counseling for grief, anger management or life transitions; in-class presentations on anti-bullying, health relationships and depression; and consultation on developing therapeutic interventions for schools to use instead of relying on suspension or expulsion.

"At Garfield, we work with students in class, in groups, and individually to develop their skills to be successful students. Having support from Trillium has allowed us to do that so much more effectively," said Santy.



Mental health prevention specialists provide individual check-ins with students, group therapy, educational outreach in classrooms or assemblies, as well as training for school administration.

"A huge success in the first year was starting to get kids that identify and self-refer. In addition to the great success of helping these kids, this shows the presence of mental health professionals in the schools seems to help lower the stigma around mental health and break down barriers to kids taking care of themselves," said Blatt.

Mental health prevention specialists are staffed in all levels of

schools, from elementary to high school.

Steve Kunke, Principal of Crescent Valley High School, highly values the presence of mental health professionals on site, "The support that Trillium Family Services offers students and counselors at Crescent Valley High School is invaluable. Some students benefit through regular, on-going treatment. The needs of other students can be quickly addressed when a crisis occurs.

"The availability of this kind of service often makes the difference between a student staying in school, or dropping out. Having someone

Continued on page 2...

Levy spearheads continued...

on our campus who is so highly trained in the mental health needs of adolescents is reassuring to students, families and staff alike.”

Not only are kids and families supported during the school day, they are supported outside of the classroom.

Before the passage of the Affordable Care Act, children and families insured on public insurance were required to have a referral from the county Health Department in order to receive outpatient therapy. The change in the referral mechanism

has been dramatic.

“Prior to healthcare reform, only parents, doctors and teachers could make a referral for outpatient mental health services. Now that barrier has been removed so parents can simply call and make an appointment,” said Bettina Schempf, Executive Director at the Old Mill Center, a non-profit, outpatient facility that provides outpatient mental health services to roughly 500 children and families in the Willamette Valley.

In a similar preventative program with the Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis, the Old Mill Center teaches kids how to recognize and manage emotions. Within this group, the Old Mill Center has seen a 50% drop in kids

being written up and at risk of being expelled. Additionally, the Old Mill Center behavioral specialists work alongside the Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis staff—typically college students—and provide practical future work force development.

“This is such a needed service in our community. We often consider social determinants of health, but we also need to think about social determinants of learning. When children regulate their emotions better, they can have an easier time learning,” said Schempf.

One of the greatest benefits of the schools working with the health sector is bringing the multiple systems and sectors together to

benefit the children and families living in our community.

“Without the collaboration between the school districts, non-profit social services partners and mental health prevention service providers, our community would be a several steps back because we wouldn’t be as effective in keeping these kids as safe and supported,” said Blatt.

“Because of our partnerships, we’re able to move in any direction we need to support students, parents, families and faculty. The level of care provided in and out of the classroom is 100% fluid and impactful.”

Introducing Commissioner Xan Augerot

At the height of the Cold War, Commissioner Xan Augerot spent her sophomore year in high school living in the U.S.S.R without her family, attending school and working full-time as nanny.

“It wasn’t scary. It was just a different system. That year was hugely formative in how I see the world in shades of gray, not black and white,” reflected Commissioner Augerot.

Born in New Mexico and raised in Washington, at one point Augerot spoke English, Romanian, Bulgarian and Russian. As the daughter of a linguist and an elementary school teacher, Augerot spent most of her youth bouncing between Seattle and Eastern Europe.

“It was hard. I was always the new kid. There is sort a universal experience of being ‘the new kid’ and in Europe I was more of a novelty, but trying to make friends was the same, difficult experience,” said Augerot.

Even within Seattle, Commissioner Augerot bounced around schools. At the time there was voluntary desegregation in Seattle Public Schools. Her parents were of the

philosophical bent that she should gain exposure by attending the primarily African American schools. Along with other white children in her neighborhood, Commissioner Augerot was bussed into the African American school district.

“My education wasn’t hurt by it. The caliber of the schools was great,” said Augerot.

As a byproduct of constantly moving and needing to make new friends, Augerot focused heavily on academics and excelled in school. Additionally, both of her parents were highly educated with doctoral degrees. By the time Commissioner Augerot finished high school, it was a foregone conclusion that she would earn at least one advanced degree.

Commissioner Augerot earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the University of Washington with a focus on comparative economics (B.S.) and marine policy (M.S.).

“My undergraduate work was actually political economics. My interests lay in comparing natural resource systems, and discovering what works better,” said Augerot.

Commissioner Augerot’s first experiences in Oregon were in her early twenties following college. She worked at sea as an interpreter for a United States-U.S.S.R. joint venture fishing company and came in and out of port in Astoria and Newport.

“The Soviet Union wanted a cheap protein to feed its people. We fished a species that was used for the system of orphanages, public institutions, and prisons in Russia. The Americans would catch the fish—because the U.S. was working to Americanize the fishing industry—and then deliver them to the Soviet vessel. The Soviets would head, gut and flash freeze the fish.

“So I worked with the skipper and the officers on the bridge. There were several teaching moments because the Americans didn’t actually know how to find these fish. It really was a crazy and fascinating job.”

Commissioner Augerot’s research interests always laid in comparative Soviet Union-U.S. environmental management. After working at sea for two years, Augerot returned to academia and studied comparative fisheries management during her



Xan Augerot

master’s program. She received the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship and spent a year in Washington D.C.

working with the Senate Commerce Committee on marine policy issues.

Her passion for comparative research in fisheries management eventually led her to earn a doctoral degree at Oregon State University focusing Pacific salmon distribution and management across the North Pacific Ocean. Recruited directly out of her doctoral program, Augerot worked in the conservation sector for over a decade, first at the Wild Salmon Center in Portland and then at Marys River Watershed Council in Corvallis.

Making the transition from management positions with Washington Sea Grant, Wild Salmon Center and Marys River Watershed Council, to elected official could seem like a far leap to some, but it didn't seem that way for Commissioner Augerot.

"When I was at Marys River Watershed Council, the emphasis was on restoration projects collaborating with stream-side land owners. Most people are interested in doing the right thing when it comes to their land and their water. But there are other pressures that make it harder for them to do so.

"That spurred me to thinking that I could bring something to the community. I thought I could do more from a position like this compared to the seat of a non-profit."

In Commissioner Augerot's first month on the job, she has already been in the hot seat. In January, the Benton County Board of Commissioners voted 2-1 to remain in a \$1.4 billion breach of contract class action lawsuit against the state filed by Linn County in March 2016.

"I thought about this issue very differently before I took office," said Augerot.

"I was very challenged by this decision because I believe in the balanced forest management practices currently undertaken on state forest lands. However, there is a pattern over time of erosion of

state-county agreements and joint revenue strategies, to the detriment of the counties and districts. I feel it's appropriate for counties to say 'no more.'"

While this decision surprised a fair number of constituents, it won't come as a surprise that one of the commissioner's primary focus areas is water issues in the county.

"We need to make sure we're thinking about future water quality and quantity issues while we still have water. We need to be thinking about water resources carefully and planning for tighter times," said Augerot.

Another focus area for the commissioner is law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

A comprehensive study of the law enforcement and criminal justice system, including the constraints imposed by the existing courthouse, jail and Law Enforcement buildings, will be completed in the near future. The county will consult with the community and consider potential outcomes within the context of prevalent social factors, such as housing, health, access to social services, and development.

Her third driving focus is land use and population growth. Given the rate of migration into Oregon, we will face increasing pressure on Benton County natural assets and services.

"Our land use and transportation systems, and our housing and health policies are siloed at the local level, but also driven to function this way by state and federal mandate," says Augerot.

"I want to be sure we're thinking across these systems to make sure we're getting the outcomes to retain livability in Benton County."

Commissioner Augerot can be reached at 541-766-6800 or Xanthippe.augerot@co.benton.or.us.

AWARDS AND HONORS



"Get Outdoors Day" receives excellence award

At the annual Oregon State University Extension Association (OSUEA) conference, the Benton County Health Department's School Health Navigation team received OSUEA's Search for Excellence award for "Get Outdoors Day." The OSUEA Search for Excellence program recognizes outstanding education effort, innovation and impact.

Get Outdoors Day is a one-day learning event held each spring at Peavy Arboretum, north of Corvallis. This free, family-friendly event encourages recreating outdoors in a nearby forest and to learn new healthy lifestyle skills in a safe, welcoming atmosphere. Designed to attract mid-Willamette Valley residents, Get Outdoors Day focuses on breaking down barriers of participation (language, food, unfamiliar atmosphere, transportation) for

underrepresented communities.

Today's American kids are less connected to the outdoors than any previous generation and research shows that kids are spending half as much time outside as they did 20 years ago.

"In Benton County, 35% of adults are overweight, including 21% classified as obese and among eighth graders, approximately 12 percent are overweight and 7 percent are obese," said Viviana Gonzalez, School Health Navigator at the Benton County Health Department.

"These statistics clearly illustrate that getting youth and families recreating is increasingly important for community health."

"Additionally, a recently completed community needs assessment identified a lack of outdoor education and recreation opportunities for youth in the mid-Willamette valley.

Continued on page 8...

Three county facilities to receive upgrade

Last fall the Benton County Board of Commissioners approved a proposal to begin the remodel process on three county facilities: Public Service Building on 27th Street; Avery Building on Avery Avenue; and, the Sunset Building on Research Way. All remodel projects will be completed using internal funds, a federal Health Resources and Services Administration grant, and long-term financing over the next three years.

“Work facility challenges have led to staff creativity on solving our space needs through rehabilitation and renovation of current facilities,” said Annabelle Jaramillo, Benton County commissioner.

Beginning last month and lasting through April, the county is renovating 5,000 square feet of currently vacant space at the Sunset Building. Crews will add and remove walls, replace carpet, adjust lighting and add new cubicles provided at no cost from Hewlett-Packard.

The Sunset Building renovation work will be completed at a cost of under \$150,000.

This renovated space will be temporarily used by the Community Development staff from June to December 2017, and ultimately permanently used by the Public Health and Health Department Administration staff beginning in January 2018.

Construction at the Avery Building will begin in June, once Community Development staff makes the temporary move to the Sunset Building.

The Avery Building will undergo drastic renovation to add approximately 5,000 square feet of space as a partial second floor to accommodate space needs within the Community Development, Natural Areas and Parks, and Public Works departments. The additional space is estimated to be able to house these departments for the next 15-20 years.

The renovated Avery Building will feature a new self-help center for the public, interior and exterior painting, new carpet and bathroom updates. The Avery Building renovations will be completed in December at a cost

Avery Building, 360 SW Avery Avenue

Estimated completion date: December 2017



less than \$2 million.

Once Avery Building construction is completed, Community Development staff will vacate the renovated space at the Sunset Building and Public Health and Health Department Administration will move permanently from the Public Services Building on 27th Street to the Sunset Building on Research Way. This move is estimated to occur in January 2018.

“We had to be quite innovative in planning because we have limited funds and significant space needs. We didn’t want to sacrifice employee comfort or become poor stewards of county funds, but we had to find a way to create solutions,” said Josh Wheeler, Public Works director.

“This has resulted in a bit of ‘musical chairs’ for county departments, but we’ve found a mechanism to make this work.”

Beginning in 2018, the Public Services Building will be renovated to be used solely for the Benton Health Center and mental health services. The remodel will expand the Benton Health Center to the complete

building footprint at an estimated cost of \$7.6 million. This replaces a planned brand-new health building projected to cost between \$12 and \$14 million.

Renovation of the Public Services Building will make better use of space, move the lobby area to a central location and improve environmental conditions within the building.

The focal point of the renovation will be the new main entrance and centralized reception area where patients can access all services from the entrance. A separate waiting room for mental health services and space for dental services has been allocated. The exterior will undergo renovation allowing for much-needed modernization.

The new Benton Health Center is expected to be completed in January 2019.

For more information about the building improvements, contact Josh Wheeler at 541-766-6821 or publicworks@co.benton.or.us.

Benton Health Center (formerly Public Service Building), 530 NW 27th Street

Estimated completion date: January 2019



2040 Thriving Communities initial comment phase ends March 6

Last summer, Benton County launched the 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative; a community-driven exploration of what we like about where we live, and how we want our community to be like in the future.

More than 3,000 people provided over 8,200 comments since the initial comment phase began in late July 2017. County residents are encouraged to submit comments online at www.Benton2040.org by Mon., March 6, 2017, when the initial comment phase will conclude.

County staff and 2040 Community Council members conducted a variety of community outreach and engagement activities with individuals and organizations in the county. Facilitated discussions with county staff and council members, referred to as "Listening Sessions," were conducted with over 48 community organizations, neighborhood associations, local agencies, and other local groups, with nearly 400 people participating. An additional 400+ people provided input via the online survey.

In the coming months, the 2040 visioning process will synthesize core values identified from the initial comment phase to address long-term, complex issues.

The purpose of identifying core values is to align the work of government, citizen groups, businesses, and people to help us achieve our visions for the future. The county will begin a second comment phase in late spring to early summer 2017 to ensure the core values accurately reflect the community input provided in the first phase.

"The Thriving Communities Initiative is about helping to focus

where we want to go and how to guide all our efforts," said Ken Kenaston, 2040 Council member and county resident.

"The Initiative will help to coalesce our community vision and hopefully engage all of us."

The 2040 Council is charged by the Benton County Board of Commissioners with:

- Developing a countywide vision statement based on active and diverse community engagement
- Identifying implementation strategies and actions that recognize systems-thinking and policy integration
- Capturing innovative and integrated benchmarks, measurements, and data to assess the initiative's progress
- Collaborating with community partners to integrate the countywide vision statement and implementation actions into their operations
- Working in an iterative, five-year cycle where the vision statement, strategies, and actions are revisited by the council with active community engagement to ensure full implementation of the initiative.

The council meets the first Thursday of every month from 6:00 – 8:00pm at the Benton County Sunset Facility, located at 4077 SW Research Way in Corvallis. The next meeting is Thursday, March 2, 2017.

Interested citizens are encouraged to attend council meetings, and to sign up at www.Benton2040.org to receive meeting reminders and materials, as well as stay updated with visioning process results and the second comment phase.

"What excites me is that the 2040 initiative is working diligently to make the process accessible for all



Photo by: Theresa Conley, 2040 Council member

community members to participate in this important work," said Yazmin Brambila, executive director of Casa Latinos Unidos and member of the 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative council. "As a member of the 2040 council, my hopes are that all voices are heard to create a

vision that positively impacts and is representative of the Benton County community."

For more information about the 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative, please visit www.Benton2040.org or contact Sean McGuire at 2040initiative@co.benton.or.us.

COLLABORATIONS THAT COUNT

County shop maintains 42 fleets

If you're a government agency that owns vehicles, chances are the Benton County shop worked on those vehicles at some point.

The Benton County Motor Pool and Shop performs fleet maintenance for 42 accounts in Benton County. In addition to maintenance, they manage most of the fleets. This means that they keep track of what and when those fleets need maintenance, and reach out to the account liaisons to schedule service appointments. They used to keep track of all the accounts by hand and a paper calendar, but utilization of a software system beginning in 2010 has made management logistics smoother.

The very first fleet management collaboration began with the Alsea School District in the early 90s. The superintendent at the time asked the county to take on the maintenance and management of five school buses. School buses are on the same chassis as trucks, so the team agreed to take on the project.

"The shop is non-profit, so the county benefit is solely offsetting overhead costs. Back then, there was a drive and willingness to help out," said Jim Burke, longtime Benton County Fleet Manager.

"The culture of the team was essential to this collaboration blossoming. We had a vision for what we wanted this partnership to be, and we just put in the time and effort to build relationships and learn how to maintain these different types of vehicles and equipment."

The next account to come on board was the City of Corvallis Parks Department. The county shop started to gain a reputation for efficient service and the in-house shops couldn't compete with the county's turnaround times. Over time, in-house shops realized they couldn't afford to keep a single mechanic busy and there was major cost-saving by allowing the county to manage the fleet.



Once word got around Corvallis about the county shop's reputation, the Corvallis Fire Department came on board. Once the Corvallis Fire Department joined, the other regional fire houses followed suit.

Now the Benton County shop manages the fleets for the Albany, Corvallis, Tangent and Lebanon Fire Departments.

"Once the Fire Departments started talking, the reputation of our level of

service really skyrocketed," said Burke.

Actually, it's become difficult for Burke and his crew to maintain this level of service. Over time industry certifications have become more specialized, and changes in the inspection process has made it more difficult to keep the timely, high-quality service regional partners expect.

Dave MacKenzie, foreman in the county shop, said, "County mechanics were learning how to maintain lawn

mowers, graders, fire trucks, school buses and other vehicles. Jim wanted to recognize them for the extra work they put in as the industry become more specialized.

"He worked to tie promotion to Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications. This helped him recognize his mechanics for going the extra mile, plus it allowed for pay increases."

The Benton County shop was the

first government agency in the Pacific Northwest to receive the Automotive Service Excellence Blue Seal of Excellence. The Blue Seal of Excellence is awarded when all mechanics in a shop have master-level ASE certifications.

In addition to ensuring that his staff earn the master-level certification, Burke has integrated this expectation into hiring practices. All mechanics hired will already have the ASE certification, or they will immediately begin preparing for ASE testing upon hire with the goal of earning the master-level certification.

Burke will retire after almost thirty-one years of service in June. This collaboration that counts will certainly be a lasting legacy at Benton County.

For more information regarding these services, please call the Avery Building reception desk at 541-766-6821.

Benton County Sheriff's Office and U.S. Forest Service collaborate for safer forests

If you commit a crime on forest land in Benton County, there is more than one law enforcement agency that can come down on you. Forest Deputy Schermerhorn with the Benton County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) and Captain Greg Moore with the United States Forest Service (USFS) can tell you all about the host of regulations, statutes and ordinances that can be enforced.

There are 60,000 acres of USFS land inside of Benton County. The USFS has propriety jurisdiction and can enforce federal rules and regulations. Benton County also has local jurisdiction and can enforce local ordinances and state statute.

In a lot of places, this could end up as a turf war. In the Willamette Valley, collaboration across law enforcement agencies is key.

Deputy Schermerhorn said, "We are facing common problems and we have to talk. In addition to USFS, we talk to Bureau of Land Management, private security firms hired by local timber companies, Oregon State University Research Forests, and others. If you communicate with other agencies, then your job is going to be easier."

At least once a month Deputy Schermerhorn and Captain Moore go out together and look at problems happening in the forest.

"We go out and talk about what can be done. The people in our area aren't exclusively committing forest crimes here. They will move around between places in the area, so you have to talk about what can be done and wisely manage the areas," said Captain Moore.

When there is a problem that needs to be addressed, sometimes the USFS has management regulations they can enforce that a Sheriff's Deputy could not. This type of communication and innovative problem-solving creates a productive and beneficial collaboration both for local agencies.

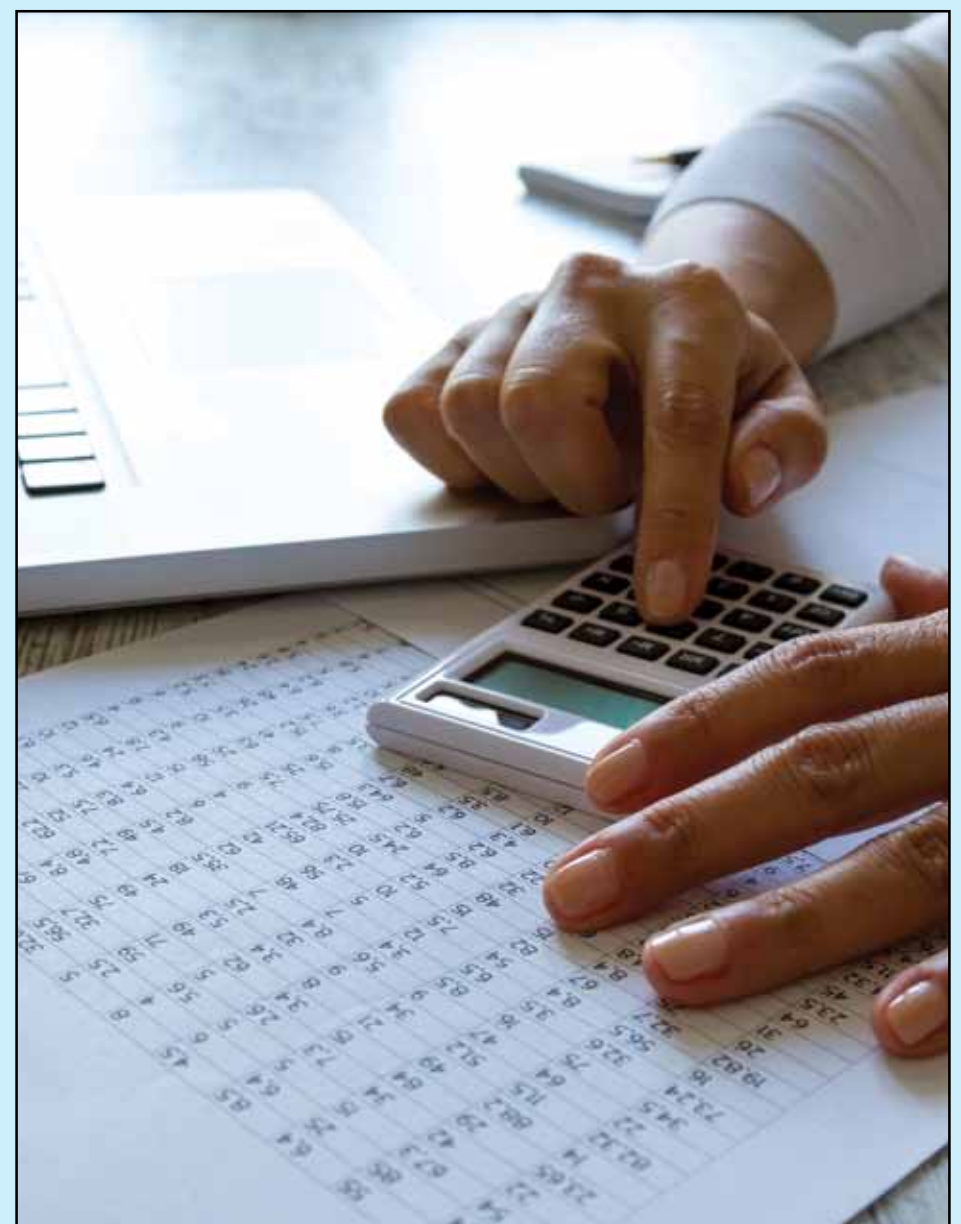
Additionally, the BCSO and USFS collaborate in other areas like public outreach. The two agencies work together to host an annual Marys Peak cleanup, provide educational outreach during fire season, and even coordinate attending the same trainings to ensure cross-agency consistency.

OSU, Benton County collaborate on Alcohol Responsibility Program

Oregon State University and Benton County were selected by the Responsible Retailing Forum as one of six town-gown communities to pilot an Alcohol Responsibility Program that promotes the responsible sale, service, and consumption of alcohol. With funding from the National Institutes of Health, the model aims to assist alcohol retailers and serving establishments in achieving high levels of responsible retailing conduct.

"The Alcohol Responsibility Program is another step in the effort of Corvallis and Oregon State University to address issues of under-age drinking and alcohol abuse in our community," said Jonathan Stoll, director of Corvallis Community Relations at OSU.

The program will be facilitated through the Benton County Partnership, the advisory group to the Benton County Health Department Substance Abuse Prevention Program.



County prepares biennium budget

County staff is working diligently to prepare the 2017-2019 biennium budget. Department directors met with the Chief Operating Office and county Budget Manager beginning the first week in February. The Proposed Budget will be reviewed by the Budget Committee in April and May before being forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for final approval and adoption in June. A complete schedule of Budget Committee meetings, public hearing time and agendas will be published in late March in the Gazette-Times and on the County website.

With a current '15-'17 total budget of approximately \$219 million and 450 employees, Benton County provides a breadth of services through its departments of Assessment, Board of Commissioners, Community Development, District Attorney, Fairgrounds, Records and Elections, Financial Services, Health Centers, Health Department, Human Resources, Information Technology, Juvenile, Natural Areas and Parks, Public Works, and the Sheriff's Office.

To view the county budget visit <http://budget.co.benton.or.us>.

Do you want this newsletter in Spanish?



Benton County wants to make sure county news reaches all our communities. If you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter in Spanish, email pioinfo@co.benton.or.us with "Spanish newsletter" in the subject line. If you're interested in receiving an electronic version of this newsletter in other languages, please email pioinfo@co.benton.or.us with "Translate newsletter" in the subject line.

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AWARDS AND HONORS Continued...

Get Outdoors Day addresses these issues, plus goes the extra mile to involve historically underrepresented communities in this opportunity."

Get Outdoors Day has been held every spring since 2013. The event has been a local success with an average of about 570 mid-Valley residents participating each year, about a quarter of which are non-white and for whom English is a second language, and 60% are new visitors to Peavy Arboretum.

The next Get Outdoors Day is scheduled for Saturday, Jun. 3, 2017.

Benton County marks 4th year of tobacco-free properties

January 2017 marks the four year anniversary of Benton County's tobacco-free facilities and grounds policy. This policy prohibits smoking, vaping or other tobacco use indoors or outdoors on Benton County property. The policy seeks to promote the long-term health and safety of county employees and the public by promoting a tobacco-free environment.

Benton County has been in the forefront of tobacco control policy adoption and helped pave the way for current state laws prohibiting smoking in almost all Oregon workplaces and prohibiting the sale of e-cigarettes to minors.

Commissioner Schuster receives First Citizen Award

Benton County commission chair and longtime community volunteer Anne Schuster received the First Citizen Award for leadership and performance for work above and beyond her profession at the 69th annual Celebrate Corvallis event. The First Citizen Award honors individuals between the ages of 42 and 65 that



participated in a broad scope of activities centered in the Corvallis area for more than three years.

Former Commissioner Dixon honored at Celebrate Corvallis
Longtime Benton County

Commissioner Jay Dixon received the Jim and Ruth Howland award for special achievement at the 69th annual Celebrate Corvallis event. The Howland award, named for Jim Howland, one of the founders of CH2M Hill and his wife, Ruth.