



Marion County

OREGON

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Marion County Board of Commissioners Review Successes, Highlight Challenges in State of the County Presentation

Transportation, children and families, public safety and economic development were major themes at this morning's state of the county presentation given by the Marion County Board of Commissioners. Making sure Marion County has a strong and stable financial base during these challenging economic times, while still maintaining efficient programs and services was a key element in today's presentation.

Outgoing chairperson, Commissioner Sam Brentano said that Marion County is the state's fifth most populated county and leads the state in agricultural production. He said we need to have well maintained roads and safe bridges for our citizens and to support farm to market issues. He said the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act will give us some resources to help maintain our roads but with 929 miles of paved roads and 191 miles of gravel roads and 147 bridges, it isn't enough.

He thanked the Marion County Public Works staff for all their work during the recent snow and rain events this winter. In addition, Commissioner Brentano noted that this past year Marion County Emergency Management participated in situational drills in order to be prepared when real disasters happen. He also noted that in April there is a major four-state earthquake exercise that will see a magnitude 9.0 earthquake rocking the Pacific Northwest from Canada to northern California. This drill will require numerous states, emergency management officials, state, local and federal officials to all work together. Marion County will be an active participant in this drill.

Commissioner Janet Carlson noted the spirit of community involvement that helped to make 2008 a very successful year for volunteerism. She said that the "**Call To Action**" mobilized volunteers and mentors throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley. The Volunteer and Mentor Center now has 124 community organizations as partners and over 2300 volunteer connections were made.

She noted this is the third year of Marion County's federal agenda that focused on strategies to prevent, treat and intervene with problems that impact children and their families. In 2008, with the assistance of Marion County's Congressional delegation Marion County received federal dollars for programs such as Family Building Blocks for

home visitations to meth-affected families with children younger than five years of age; to STAR Court mental health treatment and weekend drug testing, focusing on meth-affected teen parents; and for the Children of Incarcerated Parents Initiative and Center for Family Success for parenting classes and wraparound support services. She said programs like these are vital to building a healthy community.

Commissioner Carlson also noted that Marion County passed several key ordinances in 2008 that affected our quality of life. Our noise and off-road vehicle ordinances were revised to address some technical aspects and to address complaints we have received from neighbors concerned about constant noise from ATV tracks near urban areas. Marion County also passed an ordinance that limits backyard burning within the Salem-Keizer Urban Growth Boundary, addressing concerns about air quality, particularly with regard to PVC.

Commissioner Carlson concluded by noting the success of last year's Marion County Fair and expressed enthusiasm about the Oregon 150 celebration the county will be commencing this spring.

New board chair Commissioner Patti Milne began her presentation by complimenting the employees of the county. "2008 was a challenging and unpredictable year," she said. "And meeting these challenges is made easier with the help of our marvelous employees and our generous volunteers. Our employees and volunteers alike have incredible talents and a solid commitment to both Marion County and to the citizens we serve."

Focusing on economic development, Commissioner Milne noted that the Oregon Garden resort opened October 1. The resort, with 103 guest rooms, a spa, salon, lounge and restaurant, is a \$10 million infusion into Marion County. She also said that Sanyo Solar of Oregon, solar panels company, broke ground on their \$80 million, 130,000 sq/ft. building in Salem October 15, intending to begin operations in October of 2009 with the first 150 of a 200 employee workforce.

As Chair of the Public Safety Coordinating Council, Commissioner Milne said that the third annual "***Striking Out Meth in Marion County***," in July was another huge community success, thanks to the participation of many community and business supporters.

She concluded with some words on the Woodburn bombing incident. "In the midst of this horrible dark tragedy, there was an ironic twist: The true meaning of community shined through," she said. "Neighbors and friends opened their hearts and stretched out their hands with love, compassion, comfort and support. People gathered for prayer vigils. Blue ribbons were tied on every tree and banners decorated businesses. Community pride sprang to life. This outpouring of love and support; this outstanding demonstration of community pride, now known as 'Woodburn Proud,' so exemplifies who we are and the community spirit that is a hallmark of each and every town in Marion County," she said.

For more in-depth information on this morning's presentation, the notes from the state of the county presentation may be found on the board of commissioners' web page at <http://www.co.marion.or.us/boc/>.

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