



# Clatsop Tidings

*A monthly review of County business*

*“Neighbor to neighbor, serving Clatsop County with integrity, honesty and respect”*

May 2010

## County budget maintains all essential services

Despite a still-sluggish economy and flat revenue, Clatsop County’s proposed 2010-11 fiscal year budget maintains almost all existing county services and programs.

The proposed budget was approved by the Clatsop County Budget Committee at a public meeting May 3 at the Judge Guy Boyington Building. The entire document can be viewed on the Clatsop County website, [www.co.clatsop.or.us](http://www.co.clatsop.or.us) under “County Manager.”

The County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the budget Wednesday, May 26 at 6 p.m. at the Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St., Astoria. Separate hearings will also be held at that time for the proposed 2010-11 budgets for the 4-H and Extension Service Special Service District, Road District #1, Rural Law Enforcement District and Westport Sewer Service District. Final adoption of all five budgets by the board of commissioners is scheduled for June 23.

The combined county budget totals

\$52,461,700 – a 6.2 percent decrease from the 2009-10 budget, reflecting a number of factors, including the completion of several grant-funded projects in the current fiscal year, and a reduction in transfers between funds.

The General Fund, which covers basic functions such as public safety, planning, parks and tax-collection, is slated to increase 1.3 percent from 2009-10, to \$17,426,800, thanks in part to better-than-anticipated property tax collections.

As a result, only one county position is slated for elimination due to funding cuts. A deputy post in the Sheriff’s Office, funded by the Oregon Department of Forestry and dedicated to law enforcement in state forest lands, will be cut as a result of the drop in revenue from the timber harvesting on the Clatsop State Forest. The position will be eliminated through attrition and no current employee will be laid off.

“I’m pleased with the job of our county department heads in helping craft a proposed budget that maintains all our vital



functions with the available resources,” County Manager Duane Cole said. “Our good financial position is also a testament to the foresight of the county commissioners in adopting budget policies that emphasize careful spending practices.”

The drop in timber revenue, driven by the recent crisis in the housing market, continues to impact county spending. Last year saw timber revenue drop from \$3.3 million to \$2 million, but with some targeted belt-tightening and judicious use of reserves, the county avoided any major

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## CCF report charts progress on key issues

Clatsop County has made progress fighting some of its most troublesome social ills, but more work remains to be done, according to a study issued by the county’s Commission on Children and Families.

The study, the 2010 Community Comprehensive Plan Update, was presented to and approved by the County Board of Commissioners April 28. It measures the county’s success in fighting child abuse and preventing and treating underage substance abuse in the two years since these two problems were first targeted by the Commission for special attention.

The volunteer Commission on Children and Families serves as the local coordinator of state and federal funding aimed at strengthening families in accordance with the panel’s vision: “Every family in the county will have the health, educational and social support necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children.” In 2008 following an extensive outreach and information-gathering effort, the Commission completed a comprehensive plan that identified child abuse and youth substance abuse as its focus issues for

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### Upcoming County Meetings

**Planning Commission**  
Tuesday, May 11, 10 a.m.  
Judge Boyington Building

**Board of Commissioners**  
Wednesday, May 12, 10 a.m.  
Judge Boyington Building

**Board of Commissioners**  
Wednesday, May 26, 6 p.m.  
Judge Boyington Building

*Times subject to change*

# Increased hunger needs attention, study participants say

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the next five years.

The plan includes provisions for regular updates – the study released last month, the first of those updates, included more contact with CCF’s partner agencies and review of data to check progress on addressing the two key issues and consider possible changes in their strategies. The update was also the first since the CCF was placed under the Juvenile Department earlier this year as part of a reorganization of the county health department.

The incidence of child abuse in Clatsop County, as scored in many measures such as the Recurrence of Maltreatment, exceeds the state average, and abuse prevention has been a top priority of the Commission for several years. The comprehensive plan calls for continued focus on parenting education, including Spanish-language sessions, and continued col-

laboration with other programs like Head Start, CASA, Family Drug Court and the Family Support and Connections program of the Oregon Department of Human Services.

Clatsop County also has higher-than-average rates of alcohol and tobacco use, among youth and adults, although statistics show use falling among teens in recent years, and substance abuse-related youth crime dropping between 2005 and 2009.

But hard liquor remains the drink of choice for minors, and data shows that the home continues to be the most common place for children to gain access to alcohol. Drinking rates are also higher among girls than boys.

In response, the Commission’s prevention programs have included messages directed at both youth and their parents, as well as gender-specific projects including Girl’s Circle. The Reduce Underage

Drinking Task Force, whose partners include local law enforcement, is also active in such efforts as ensuring local retailers don’t sell alcohol to minors.

Input received from community partners, service providers and others during the plan update process indicated that child abuse and underage substance abuse should remain CCF’s key issues, but also highlighted several related issues, from affordable housing to youth activities to health care access, that also require action. In particular, the study found support for increased attention to hunger – requests for food boxes locally has increased 50 percent in the past three years as a result of the recession, giving Clatsop County one of the highest rates of hunger in the state.

For more information on the Commission on Children and Families, go to the Juvenile Department page on the Clatsop County website, [www.co.clatsop.or.us](http://www.co.clatsop.or.us).

# Assessor’s office reorganization will save \$100,000+

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cuts. For the 2010-11 fiscal year, timber receipts are expected to remain flat, and the county has budgeted for only \$1.6 million.

Timber revenue is dedicated to the Special Projects Fund to pay for one-time expenses like major equipment purchases and building renovations. A portion is also transferred to the General Fund to pay for ongoing operations. A total of \$239,000 in equipment purchases are budgeted for 2010-11, but the items have been prioritized and will only be authorized if the county completes the sale of the Carlyle Apartments complex in Seaside, which Clatsop County acquired as a result of a 2008 legal ruling. As a result of the ruling the county was obliged to pay more than \$800,000 for the facility, money that came out of the Special Projects Fund in the 2009-10 budget but which the county plans to recoup through the sale of the property.

Timber revenue poses a challenge in crafting the upcoming year’s budget because county officials must rely on projections of timber sales provided by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Actual sales, and revenue, can vary significantly from those projections, and as a result the county normally is conservative in estimating the amount of money due to come in.

Last year for the first time the county dipped into a special reserve account set up to provide back-up funding for the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) bond. The county issued the 10-year bond in 2003 to pay off the county’s share of the statewide PERS “unfunded mandate” and dedicated state forest revenue to cover the annual payments. A reserve account was set up at the same time to provide funding in the event timber receipts fell short.

Because of the relatively strong General Fund revenue, the proposed 2010-11 budget recommends that the PERS bond

payment come directly from the General Fund, to spare both the Special Projects Fund and the PERS bond reserve.

The proposed budget includes projected savings of \$103,000 in the Assessment and Taxation Office as the result of a management reorganization. Following the retirement of County Assessor Betsy Moes in June, the director’s position will be eliminated and the department will be placed under the administration of the Central Services director, while the A&T deputy director position will take on more duties.

The entire proposed 2010-11 Clatsop County Budget document is available online at [www.co.clatsop.or.us](http://www.co.clatsop.or.us). Copies are also available for view at the Astoria, Seaside, Warrenton and Cannon Beach city libraries.

Copies may also be purchased: \$40 for bound copies, \$18 for unbound and \$10 for copies on disk. For more information contact the Clatsop County Manager’s Office at (503) 325-1000.