

**ORANGE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**ACTION AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT**  
**Meeting Date:** February 16, 2010

**Action Agenda  
Item No.** 3-a

**SUBJECT:** Presentation of the North Carolina 2009 Ernest B. Messer Award  
to Orange County

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**DEPARTMENT:** Aging

**PUBLIC HEARING:** (Y/N)

**ATTACHMENT(S):**  
Award Notification Letter-January 13, 2010

**INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
Jerry Passmore- 245-2020

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**PURPOSE:** To receive the North Carolina 2009 Ernest B. Messer Award from Dennis W. Streets, Director of the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services.

**BACKGROUND:** The Messer Award recognizes a community that has excelled in addressing the needs of its older residents. Orange County through its Department on Aging is a recipient organization for the 2009 Messer Award. This award is named for Ernest B. Messer, a champion for aging in the North Carolina General Assembly and former assistant secretary for aging for the NC Department of Health and Human Services between 1981 and 1985.

Orange County, the first North Carolina County with a public department on aging, has the unique honor of receiving the Messer Award for the second time. The County received the 2004 Messer Award for establishing the County Master Aging Plan: A Public-Private Partnership for 2001-2005. Barry Jacobs, then Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, accepted the award for the County's leadership in passage of a bond for and planned construction of two state-of-the-art multipurpose senior centers, and for the startup of the County's first adult day health program.

The 2009 Messer Award recognizes Orange County and the Department on Aging for fostering community partnerships and creative programming through an inter-disciplinary team of professionals who champion person-centered, holistic care of older residents. Programs highlighted by the award are:

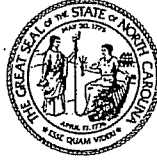
- (1) A dedicated County Aging Information Hotline staffed by professionals who, if needed, can follow up with a home visit or office appointment at a senior center;
- (2) A strong commitment to public awareness of aging services by the publication of an annual Community Resource Guide, a quarterly *Senior Times* newspaper, and producing an award-winning weekly community access television show, "In Praise of Age";

- (3) A large, dedicated, volunteer program providing critical services like tax assistance;
- (4) Strong public-private partnerships to expand senior programming and provide financial support; and
- (5) An efficient transportation division transporting older adults to necessary services and enriching opportunities.

In addition, the Messer Award recognizes Orange County's two senior centers operated by the Department on Aging for the strong emphasis on wellness for seniors across the age continuum. This includes the adult day health program located in the Central Orange Senior Center.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** None

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** The Manager recommends that the Board accept the North Carolina 2009 Ernest B. Messer Award for Orange County and the Department on Aging.



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Division of Aging and Adult Services**

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Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor  
 Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

Dennis W. Streets  
 Director

January 13, 2010

Jerry Passmore  
 Department Director  
 Orange County Department on Aging  
 P.O. Box 8181  
 Hillsborough, NC 27278

Dear Mr. Passmore:

I am writing to inform you that Orange County Department on Aging is the 2009 recipient of the Messer Award, along with the Shepherd's Center of Greater Winston-Salem. As you know, the Messer Award recognizes a community that has excelled in addressing the needs of its older citizens. It is named in honor of Ernest B. Messer, a champion for aging in the General Assembly and former assistant secretary for aging for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Your Department on Aging and the Shepherd's Center of Greater Winston-Salem share the distinction of being organizations that excel in serving our older population.

On behalf of the Division of Aging and Adult Services, I congratulate you and the Orange County Department on Aging on this honor and look forward to presenting the award to you and your Department in the near future. Please contact Mary Edwards of the Division at your convenience, and we will arrange an appropriate time and place to present the award to your organization.

Again, it is a privilege to present this award to your exemplary organization and to formally recognize your many contributions to Orange County and the aging community in North Carolina.

Sincerely,

Dennis W. Streets

Attachment