

# ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

## RETREAT AGENDA

BOCC Retreat  
January 31, 2014  
Solid Waste Operations Center  
1207 Eubanks Road  
Chapel Hill, NC

**8:15 – 8:30** Welcome/Continental Breakfast

8:30 – 8:45 Facilitator (Rod Visser) – Introductions/Ground Rules  
(See Memorandum - Proposed Ground Rules for January 31, 2014 Retreat)

8:45 – 11:45 1. **Budget/Capital Investment Plan/Bond Referendum**

8:45 – 9:00 Budget Drivers/Revenue Estimates/Fund Balance  
Estimates (Clarence Grier – Presenter & Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board obtains a comprehensive understanding of the County's projected revenue estimates and anticipated budgetary impacts on Fiscal 2014/2015.

9:00 – 10:00 Budget Goals Fiscal 2014/2015 (Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board identify those Budget Goals for Fiscal 2014-15 about which the Board has consensus.

**(10:00 – 10:15)** BREAK

10:15 – 11:15 Capital Investment Plan - Fiscal 2014/2015 Changes - Additions & Deletions 2014/2015 (Paul Laughton & Michael Talbert & Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board obtains a full understanding of projects included in the Capital Investment Plan for Fiscal 2014/2015, the financial impact for Fiscal 2014/2015, and provide direction on any changes to the Capital Investment Plan for Fiscal 2014/2015.

11:15 – 11:45 Bond Referendum - Debt Capacity, Property Tax Impact, Bond Rating (Clarence Grier – Presenter & Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board review possible Bond Referendum timelines, amount of a referendum, Board practice of utilizing a Task Force and provide direction to staff.

**11:45 – 12:15**

LUNCH

12:15 – 2:00 2.

**Goals for Strategic Communications Plan**

12:15 – 12:45 Presentation (Todd McGee, Director of Public Relations – NCACC)

12:45 – 2:00 Discussion/Plan Outline (Todd McGee & Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board review & discuss a County Strategic Communications Plan outline and provide direction to staff.

**2:00 – 2:15**

BREAK

2:15 – 3:00 3.

**Economic Development Incentive Guidelines**  
(Steve Brantley- Presenter & Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board review & discuss Economic Development Incentive Guidelines and provide direction to staff.

3:00 – 4:00 4.

**Poverty – County’s Role – Direction**  
(Nancy Coston and Tara Fikes – Presenters & Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board discuss the update on Poverty and provide direction to staff.

4:00 – 4:15

Wrap-up

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Orange County Board of Commissioners  
Michael Talbert, Interim County Manager

**FROM:**  Rod Visser, Facilitator

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Ground Rules for January 31, 2014 Retreat

**DATE:** January 23, 2014

I recommend that the Board of Commissioners plan to conduct its January 31, 2014 retreat while observing a set of "Ground Rules for Effective Groups" developed and articulated by Roger Schwarz. I was first exposed to this systemic approach to improved group process in 1994 while attending a course at the Institute of Government taught by Roger and a number of his colleagues on the faculty at the Institute. I have found these ground rules to be highly useful throughout both my professional and personal life.

The following ground rules (which Roger has revised and consolidated over the years), and the core values underlying those ground rules, are adapted from: *The Skilled Facilitator: A Comprehensive Resource for Consultants, Facilitators, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches, New and Revised Edition* by Roger Schwarz, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2002.

### **Core Values Underlying Ground Rules**

- valid information
- free and informed choice
- internal commitment
- compassion

### **Ground Rules for Effective Groups**

1. Test assumptions and inferences.
2. Share all relevant information.
3. Use specific examples, and agree on what important words mean.
4. Explain your reasoning and intent.
5. Focus on interests, not positions.
6. Combine advocacy and inquiry.
7. Jointly design steps and ways to test disagreements.
8. Discuss undiscussable issues.
9. Use a decision-making rule that generates the level of commitment needed.

For those with the time and inclination, you can learn more about the core values, ground rules, and the general facilitation approach I try to use at the following website:  
<http://rogerschwarzassociates.poweredbyeden.com/files/106/8403.pdf>

cc: Donna Baker, Greg Wilder

**ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
RETREAT**

**RETREAT DISCUSSION ITEMS ABSTRACT**

**Meeting Date:** January 31, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Board of Commissioners' Retreat Discussion Items

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**DEPARTMENT:** County Manager/Finance &  
Administrative  
Services/Economic  
Development/Social  
Services/Housing, Human  
Rights & Community  
Development

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

No
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**ATTACHMENT(S):**  
As noted in "Background" section

**INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
Michael Talbert, 245-2300  
Clarence Grier, 245-2450  
Steve Brantley, 245-2325  
Nancy Coston, 245-2800  
Tara Fikes, 245-2490

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**PURPOSE:** To review and discuss several topics of interest to the Board and to accomplish the objectives associated with each item.

**BACKGROUND:**

**1. Budget/Capital Investment Plan/Bond Referendum**

**Budget Drivers/Revenue Estimates/Fund Balance Estimates (Clarence Grier –  
Presenter & Rod Visser)**

**Objective:** That the Board obtains a comprehensive understanding of the County's projected revenue estimates and anticipated budgetary impacts on Fiscal 2014/2015.

Staff currently anticipates the FY 2013-14 General Fund budget to be approximately \$192 million. Although this is a preliminary approximate amount of the budget, staff is aware of several major budget drivers that will need to be addressed as we formulate and finalize the budget.

## Revenues

For Fiscal Year 2014 - 15, staff anticipates that property taxes (real and registered Motor vehicles to increase in value approximately 1.5 percent, which will generate approximately \$2.6 million in additional property tax revenues for the upcoming budget year. This increase reflects the expected increase in the property collection rate (89% to 98%) for registered motor vehicles due the new property tax collection requirements and system implemented by the NC Department of Revenue.

Staff also anticipates that all other General Fund revenues (Licenses and permits, Charges for services, Intergovernmental, Investment income and miscellaneous) will remain about the same without any significant increases or decreases in the projected revenues for FY 2014-15.

Staff preliminarily anticipates needing to allocate approximately \$5.9 million of unassigned fund balance to balance the General Fund budget without a property tax rate increase for the fifth consecutive year.

## Expenditures

Staff anticipates that General Fund Expenditures for the FY 2014-15 Budget year to be \$192 million. FY 2014-15 Budget drivers for expenditures include the following:

Health Insurance Increase	\$	350,000
Retirement contribution rate decrease	\$	(50,000)
Expenses for Employees budgeted only partially through year	\$	638,348
Compensation Adjustments	\$	2,000,000
Education Adjustment for Projected Growth	\$	817,250
Increase in pay as you capital	\$	868,810
Net increase in debt service	\$	601,083

This is a preliminary list of known budget drivers. As the FY2014-15 Budget is formulated, staff will develop a truer picture of the final recommended budget and provide an update in the later part of May 2014.

Staff will provide any other information at the meeting, and the Board can discuss issues related to this item as necessary.

*Attachment 1-a – 2014/2015 Projected Budget Funding Issues*

## Budget Goals Fiscal 2014/2015 (Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board identify those Budget Goals for Fiscal 2014-15 about which the Board has consensus.

This discussion allows the Board to discuss priorities for the upcoming fiscal year and determine goals about which the Board has consensus.

Staff will provide any other information at the meeting, and the Board can discuss issues related to this item as necessary.

*No Attachments*

### **Capital Investment Plan - Fiscal 2014/2015 Changes - Additions & Deletions 2014/2015 (Paul Laughton & Michael Talbert & Rod Visser)**

**Objective:** That the Board obtains a full understanding of projects included in the Capital Investment Plan for Fiscal 2014/2015, the financial impact for Fiscal 2014/2015, and provide direction on any changes to the Capital Investment Plan for Fiscal 2014/2015.

The attached Capital Investment Plan (CIP) pages consists of Fiscal Year 2014-15 projects only, as currently listed in the FY 2013-18 CIP. The CIP includes County Projects, School Projects, Proprietary Projects (Water & Sewer Utilities, Solid Waste, and SportsPlex), and Special Revenue Projects (from Article 46 Sales Tax proceeds). Each year, the County produces a CIP that establishes a budget planning guide related to capital needs for the County, as well as the Schools. The Board of County Commissioners approves funding of Year 1 CIP projects only, and then evaluates annually the entire CIP to include year-to-year changes in priorities, needs, and available resources. Staff will present an overview of these projects, and inform you of any changes that have occurred in the current fiscal year (FY 2013-14), that will have an impact on funding listed in FY 2014-15 (ex. The Board approved financing of the Culbreth Middle School Science Wing in FY 2013-14 for the total amount of the project totaling \$4,971,676, instead of over a three year period as currently listed in the Fiscal Year 2013-18 CIP. The \$3,854,042 reflected in FY 2014-15 for this project will no longer be needed to be listed in FY 2014-15).

Staff will provide any other information at the meeting, and the Board can discuss issues related to this item as necessary.

*Attachment 1-b – Approved Orange County Capital Investment Plan – FY 2014-15*

### **Bond Referendum - Debt Capacity, Property Tax Impact, Bond Rating (Clarence Grier – Presenter & Rod Visser)**

**Objective:** That the Board review possible Bond Referendum timelines, amount of a referendum, Board practice of utilizing a Task Force and provide direction to staff.

Over the past few months, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners has discussed the need for a future bond referendum to fund County and school long-range capital needs.

The anticipated general obligation bond referendum (bond referendum) and issuance of general obligation bonds is currently estimated to be approximately \$100 million over a period not to exceed 20 years. At current municipal bond interest rates, the total combined debt service is estimated to be \$6.7 million annually. This would represent 4.18 cents on the current property tax rate.

The components of the bond referendum have not been formalized, and the Board of County Commissioners will begin discussions of the potential components of any referendum over the next few months.

The County's tax supported debt is comprised of the following debt obligations:

	<u>Total</u>
General obligation bonds	\$ 86,205,000
Installment financings	127,885,269
Capital leases	<u>1,746,233</u>
 Total	 <u><u>\$ 215,836,502</u></u>

The total debt service on the above financings (principal and interest) totals \$272.3 million.

Orange County's current bond ratings are as follows:

- S&P - AAA
- Fitch - AAA
- Moody's - Aa1 positive outlook

If the bond referendum is approved in its entirety by the voters during FY2015-16, and the general obligation bonds are sold at a staggered period of every two years commencing the Spring of 2016 in the following increments (for illustrative purposes only), the average annual debt service would be as follows:

	<b><u>Average Annual Debt Service</u></b>
\$40,000,000 in Fiscal year 2015-2016	\$ 2,688,628
\$30,000,000 in Fiscal year 2017-2018	2,016,471
\$30,000,000 in fiscal year 2019-2020	<u>2,016,471</u>
Total	<u><u>\$ 6,721,570</u></u>

Additionally, as the County extinguishes its current debt obligations and finances projects included in the current capital investment plan (Attachment 1), the tax effect of the full amount of the potential debt service on the estimated \$100 million of general obligation bonds would be paid in FY 2020-2021, which could hypothetically require a property tax rate increase of 3.78 cents on the current property tax rate. Additionally, the General Fund Budget would have to grow to approximately \$221 million to remain within the County's debt policy. This projected tax increase would not include any future other operating expenditure increases and/or any future operating expenditure increases related directly to the new facilities and schools being built.

Debt capacity would increase beginning with FY 2023-2024.

Staff will provide any other information at the meeting, and the Board can discuss issues related to this item as necessary.

*Attachment 1-c – Tax Effects of a Potential General Obligation Bond Referendum*

## 2. Goals for Strategic Communications Plan

Presentation (Todd McGee, Director of Public Relations – NCACC)

Discussion/Plan Outline (Todd McGee & Rod Visser)

**Objective:** That the Board review & discuss a County Strategic Communications Plan outline and provide direction to staff.

Board members have recently noted the need to develop a strategic communications plan for the County. The County last pursued a communications plan in 1999 with the development of a draft plan (see Attachment 2-b).

Utilizing Attachments 2-a and 2-b as starting points, and reviewing example plans from other jurisdictions (Attachment 2-c through 2-f), this discussion provides the opportunity for the Board to provide direction on the development, goals and framework of a strategic communications plan.

Staff will provide any other information at the meeting, and the Board can discuss issues related to this item as necessary.

*Attachment 2-a – Proposed Outline - Orange County Board of Commissioners Strategic Communications Plan*

*Attachment 2-b – Proposed 1999 Orange County Board of Commissioners Strategic Communications Plan*

*Attachment 2-c – 2003 City of Hickory, North Carolina Communications Plan*

*Attachment 2-d – June 2009 City of Clayton Communications Plan*

*Attachment 2-e – 2006 City of Red Wing, Minnesota Communications Plan*

*Attachment 2-f – Prince William County Communications Strategic Plan - 2005-2007*

**3. Economic Development Incentive Guidelines (Steve Brantley-Presenter & Rod Visser)**

**Objective:** That the Board review & discuss Economic Development Incentive Guidelines and provide direction to staff.

The Board and staff have discussed for some time the need for guidelines or a policy to provide a framework for County economic development recruitment and retention activities. Recent economic development efforts such as the Morinaga America project and others have highlighted the need for this framework to guide both staff and the Board. Staff has developed a presentation to prompt discussion and direction from the Board. Staff has also provided two summaries of current economic development incentives policies in North Carolina – one detailing policies from multiple North Carolina counties and the other highlighting policies from several North Carolina cities/towns.

Staff will provide any other information at the meeting, and the Board can discuss issues related to this item as necessary.

*Attachment 3-a – Powerpoint Presentation - Discussion of Orange County's Economic Development Incentive Policy*

*Attachment 3-b – Summary of Incentive Policies in 28 North Carolina Counties*

*Attachment 3-c – Summary of Incentive Policies in 12 North Carolina Municipalities*

**4. Poverty – County's Role – Direction (Nancy Coston and Tara Fikes – Presenters & Rod Visser)**

**Objective:** That the Board discuss the update on Poverty and provide direction to staff.

This item provides the opportunity to discuss poverty in Orange County, the County's current efforts to address poverty, and consider other potential options to address the needs of those in poverty in the County.

Staff will provide any other information at the meeting, and the Board can discuss issues related to this item as necessary.

*Attachment 4-a – Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2013-2014*

*Attachment 4-b – FY 2014 HUD Income Limits and North Carolina and Orange County “Out of Reach” Data Sheets (Source - National Low Income Housing Coalition)*

*Attachment 4-c – Major Orange County Programs for Low-Income Families*

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** There is no direct financial impact associated with discussion of these topics. There are no action items requiring formal Board decisions.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** The Manager recommends the Board discuss the topics listed and provide appropriate direction to staff.

**General Fund  
2014/2015 Projected Budget Funding Issues  
No Property Tax Increase**

	2014/2015
<b>Revenues - Original Budget (FY2014-2015)</b>	<b>\$ 182,543,381</b>
<b>Expected adjustments</b>	
Property Tax Growth.....	\$ 2,566,219
Sales Tax growth.....	\$ 1,300,000
Licenses and permits - No material change.....	\$ -
Charges for Services - No material change.....	\$ -
Charges for Services - Average collection rate .....	\$ -
Intergovernmental - No Material Change.....	\$ -
Investment Income - No Material change.....	\$ -
Miscellaneous Income - No Material change.....	\$ -
Fund Balance Applied Exces above 17%.....	\$ 5,680,580
<b>Total expected adjustments to revenues</b>	<b>\$ 9,546,799</b>
<b>Estimated preliminary revenues for FY2014-2015</b>	<b>\$ 192,090,180</b>
<b>Expenditures - Original Budget (FY2014-2015)</b>	<b>\$ 187,733,499</b>
<b>Adjustments</b>	
Health Insurance Increase.....	\$ 350,000
Retirement contribution rate decrease.....	\$ (50,000)
Expenses for Employees budgeted only partially through year.....	\$ 638,348
Compensation Adjustments.....	\$ 2,000,000
Education Adjustment for Projected Growth.....	\$ 817,250
Education adjustment 48.1%.....	\$ -
Net increase in debt service.....	\$ 601,083
<b>Total expected adjustments to expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 4,356,681</b>
<b>Estimated preliminary expenses for FY2014-15</b>	<b>\$ 192,090,180</b>
<b>Budget Over/(Short)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Potential Property Tax Rate Impact to Balance Budget</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Cents</b>

**APPROVED - Orange County Capital Investment Plan- Plan Summary  
Fiscal Years 2013-18**

	<b>Fiscal Year 2014-15</b>
<b>Appropriations</b>	
<i>County Capital Projects</i>	6,978,510
<i>Special Revenue Fund (Article 46 Sales Tax)</i>	
<i>Economic Development</i>	1,339,293
<i>Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools</i>	823,664
<i>Orange County Schools</i>	515,628
<i>Proprietary Capital Projects</i>	
<i>Water &amp; Sewer Utilities</i>	5,536,000
<i>Solid Waste</i>	2,623,992
<i>Sportsplex</i>	1,175,000
<i>Schools Capital Projects</i>	
<i>Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools</i>	7,019,146
<i>Orange County Schools</i>	1,969,429
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,980,662</b>
<b>Revenues/Funding Source</b>	
<i>Transfer from General Fund - County</i>	1,176,510
<i>Transfer from General Fund - W &amp; S Utilities</i>	350,000
<i>Transfer from General Fund - Schools</i>	3,780,722
<i>Solid Waste Fund Balance</i>	722,069
<i>Sportsplex Fund Balance</i>	225,000
<i>Recycling - 3R Fee</i>	214,055
<i>Lottery Proceeds</i>	1,353,811
<i>Register of Deeds Fees</i>	80,000
<i>Grants &amp; Contributions</i>	300,000
<i>Article 46 Sales Tax Proceeds</i>	2,678,585
<i>Financing:</i>	
<i>Debt Financing - County Capital</i>	5,422,000
<i>Debt Financing - W &amp; S Utilities</i>	5,186,000
<i>Debt Financing - Solid Waste</i>	1,687,868
<i>Debt Financing - Sportsplex</i>	950,000
<i>Debt Financing - Schools Capital</i>	3,854,042
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,980,662</b>

**APPROVED - Orange County Capital Investment Plan- Plan Summary  
Fiscal Years 2013-18**

	<b>Fiscal Year 2014-15</b>
<b>Appropriations</b>	
<b>County Capital Projects:</b>	
Northern Human Services Center	2,000,000
Southern Orange Campus (Future Planning)	400,000
HVAC Projects - Geothermal	52,500
Roofing Projects	179,010
Information Technology	500,000
Register of Deeds Automation	80,000
Energy Bank	50,000
Viper Radio System	500,000
Communication System Improvements	122,000
Conservation Easements	250,000
Eurosport Soccer Center Phase II	145,000
Lands Legacy	2,400,000
Millhouse Road Park	100,000
New Hope Preserve/Hollow Rock Public Access	200,000
<b>Total County Projects</b>	<b>\$ 6,978,510</b>
<b>Special Revenue Fund (Article 46 Sales Tax)</b>	
<b>Economic Development:</b>	
Debt Service on Infrastructure	789,293
* Buckhorn EDD Phase 2	
* Buckhorn-Mebane EDD Phase 3 & 4	
*Efland Sewer Flow to Mebane	
*Eno EDD	
Infrastructure (Utility Service Agreement w/ Mebane*)	50,000
Collaborative Outreach	20,000
Small Business Loan Pool	200,000
Collateral Materials	20,000
Innovation Centers	100,000
*"Launch Chapel Hill" Incubator	
Agricultural Economic Development	60,000
Business Investment Grants	100,000
Total Economic Development - Article 46 Sales Tax	<b>\$ 1,339,293</b>
<b>Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools:</b>	
Technology - Student Access Computing Devices	411,832
Property Repairs Identified in Facilities Assessment	411,832
Total Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	<b>\$ 823,664</b>
<b>Orange County Schools:</b>	
Technology - 1:1 Initiative (District-wide)	515,628
Total Orange County Schools	<b>\$ 515,628</b>
<b>Total Article 46 Sales Tax</b>	<b>\$ 2,678,585</b>

		<b>Fiscal Year 2014-15</b>
<b>Proprietary Capital Projects</b>		
<b>Water &amp; Sewer Utilities:</b>		
Buckhorn-Mebane EDD Phase 3 & 4		350,000
Efland Sewer Flow to Mebane		3,436,000
Eno EDD		<u>1,750,000</u>
<b>Total Water &amp; Sewer</b>		<b>\$ 5,536,000</b>
<b>Solid Waste:</b>		
Environmental Support		100,592
Sanitation		1,894,812
Recycling Operation		214,055
Landfill - C & D		<u>414,533</u>
<b>Total Solid Waste</b>		<b>\$ 2,623,992</b>
<b>Sportsplex:</b>		
<i>New Facilities Projects:</i>		
Major Expansion - Phase 1		950,000
Pool wall reglaze		125,000
Tilt up Panel (exterior wall system)		<u>100,000</u>
<b>Total Sportsplex</b>		<b>\$ 1,175,000</b>
<b>Schools Capital Projects</b>		
<b>Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools:</b>		
<i>Long Range Capital:</i>		
Pay-As-You-Go Funds		2,325,144
Lottery Proceeds		839,960
Culbreth MS Science Wing Addition		<u>3,854,042</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 7,019,146</b>
<b>Orange County Schools:</b>		
<i>Long Range Capital:</i>		
Pay-As-You-Go Funds		1,455,578
Lottery Proceeds		<u>513,851</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,969,429</b>
<b>Total School Projects</b>		<b>\$ 8,988,575</b>
<b>Total Appropriations</b>		<b>\$ 27,980,662</b>

	<b>Fiscal Year 2014-15</b>
<b>Revenues/Funding Source</b>	
<i>Transfer from General Fund - County</i>	1,176,510
<i>Transfer from General Fund - W &amp; S Utilities</i>	350,000
<i>Transfer from General Fund - Schools</i>	3,780,722
<i>Solid Waste Fund Balance</i>	722,069
<i>Sportsplex Fund Balance</i>	225,000
<i>Recycling - 3R Fee</i>	214,055
<i>Lottery Proceeds</i>	1,353,811
<i>Register of Deeds Fees</i>	80,000
<i>Grants &amp; Contributions</i>	300,000
<i>Article 46 Sales Tax Proceeds</i>	2,678,585
<i>Financing:</i>	
<i>Debt Financing - County Capital</i>	5,422,000
<i>Debt Financing - W &amp; S Utilities</i>	5,186,000
<i>Debt Financing - Solid Waste</i>	1,687,868
<i>Debt Financing - Sportsplex</i>	950,000
<i>Debt Financing - Schools Capital</i>	3,854,042
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b><u>\$ 27,980,662</u></b>

Tax Effects of A Potential General Obligation Bond Referendum

FY	Existing Debt Service	FY 2013-19 CIP Debt Service	New County Jail Debt Service	Total Debt Service	Cumulative Decline	#1 Debt Service Bond Issuance	#2 Debt Service Bond Issuance	#3 Debt Service Bond Issuance	Cumulative Net Increase (Decrease)	Tax Rate Effect of Increase	Total Debt Service With GO Bond	Required General Fund Budget Based on Policy
2014	\$ 25,066,625	\$ 1,110,517	\$ -	\$ 26,177,142							\$ 26,177,142	\$ 174,514,277
2015	\$ 24,130,718	\$ 2,917,862	\$ -	\$ 27,048,579	\$ 871,438	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 871,438	0.5423	\$ 27,048,579	\$ 180,323,862
2016	\$ 22,873,042	\$ 3,384,582	\$ -	\$ 26,257,625	\$ (790,954)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (790,954)	(0.4922)	\$ 26,257,625	\$ 175,050,832
2017	\$ 21,757,731	\$ 5,511,083	\$ -	\$ 27,268,814	\$ 1,011,190	\$ 2,688,628	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,699,818	2.3025	\$ 29,957,442	\$ 199,716,282
2018	\$ 22,348,509	\$ 5,469,506	\$ -	\$ 27,818,015	\$ 549,201	\$ 2,688,628	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,237,829	2.0150	\$ 30,506,643	\$ 203,377,620
2019	\$ 21,597,223	\$ 4,916,823	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 28,547,322	\$ 729,307	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ -	\$ 5,434,406	3.3820	\$ 33,252,421	\$ 221,682,804
2020	\$ 20,946,777	\$ 4,116,705	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 27,096,757	\$ (1,450,565)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ -	\$ 3,254,534	2.0254	\$ 31,801,856	\$ 212,012,371
2021	\$ 20,341,251	\$ 4,101,043	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 26,475,569	\$ (621,187)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 6,100,383	3.7964	\$ 33,197,139	\$ 221,314,261
2022	\$ 19,601,039	\$ 4,084,275	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 25,718,588	\$ (756,981)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 5,964,589	3.7119	\$ 32,440,158	\$ 216,267,721
2023	\$ 15,081,427	\$ 4,068,424	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 21,183,126	\$ (4,535,462)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,186,108	1.3605	\$ 27,904,696	\$ 186,031,307
2024	\$ 10,569,721	\$ 4,053,467	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 16,656,463	\$ (4,526,663)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,194,907	1.3660	\$ 23,378,033	\$ 155,853,551
2025	\$ 7,393,843	\$ 4,038,382	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 13,465,500	\$ (3,190,962)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 3,530,608	2.1972	\$ 20,187,070	\$ 134,580,469
2026	\$ 4,777,679	\$ 4,021,169	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 10,832,123	\$ (2,633,377)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 4,088,193	2.5442	\$ 17,553,693	\$ 117,024,623
2027	\$ 6,206,401	\$ 4,005,874	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 12,245,550	\$ 1,413,426	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 8,134,996	5.0626	\$ 18,967,120	\$ 126,447,466
2028	\$ 1,351,613	\$ 3,989,452	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 7,374,339	\$ (4,871,210)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 1,850,360	1.1515	\$ 14,095,909	\$ 93,972,730
2029	\$ 1,308,491	\$ 3,467,922	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 6,809,688	\$ (564,652)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 6,156,918	3.8316	\$ 13,531,258	\$ 90,208,386
2030	\$ 1,257,283	\$ 3,008,043	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 6,298,601	\$ (511,087)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 6,210,483	3.8650	\$ 13,020,171	\$ 86,801,140
2031	\$ 1,206,075	\$ 3,008,043	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 6,247,393	\$ (51,208)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 6,670,362	4.1512	\$ 12,968,963	\$ 86,459,756
2032	\$ 1,154,868	\$ 2,688,483	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 5,876,626	\$ (370,768)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 6,350,802	3.9523	\$ 12,598,196	\$ 83,987,971
2033	\$ 814,253	\$ 2,167,971	\$ 2,033,275	\$ 5,015,499	\$ (861,127)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 5,860,443	3.6471	\$ 11,737,069	\$ 78,247,124
2034	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,033,275	\$ -	\$ (5,015,499)	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 1,706,071	1.0617	\$ 6,721,570	\$ 44,810,467
2035	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,033,275	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 6,721,570	4.1830	\$ 6,721,570	\$ 44,810,467
2036	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,033,275	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,688,628	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 6,721,570	4.1830	\$ 6,721,570	\$ 44,810,467
2037	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,033,275	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 4,032,942	2.5098	\$ 4,032,942	\$ 26,886,280
2038	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 4,032,942	2.5098	\$ 4,032,942	\$ 26,886,280
2039	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	1.2549	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 13,443,140
2040	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 2,016,471	1.2549	\$ 2,016,471	\$ 13,443,140
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 249,784,568</b>	<b>\$ 74,129,626</b>	<b>\$ 38,632,225</b>	<b>\$ 354,413,319</b>	<b>\$ (26,177,142)</b>	<b>\$ 53,772,560</b>	<b>\$ 40,329,420</b>	<b>\$ 40,329,420</b>	<b>\$ 108,254,258</b>		<b>\$ 488,844,719</b>	

**PROPOSED OUTLINE**  
**ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

**Purpose/Introduction:** Board

The purpose of the Orange County Board of Commissioners' Strategic Communications Plan is to promote more effective communication between and among the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and Orange County citizens. Public access to government and freely shared information are cornerstones of the democratic process and thus the plan should simplify access to the Board and to the workings of Orange County government. The plan should also establish guidelines, policies and vehicles for accomplishing the Board's goals for effective communication.

**Plan Principles and Goals:** Board

To reinforce the County's goals and strengthen connections to the Citizens of Orange County

- Enhance communications between the Board and citizens;
- Enhance the ability of Board and citizens to access information;
- Provide information to the public clearly, concisely, and in a timely, reliable, and helpful manner;
- Utilize the widest possible variety of communications methods and vehicles;

**Communications Team:** Department Staff, Manager & Others

The establishment of a Communications Team to enhance accountability and provide a mechanism for coordinated County-Wide Communications.

**Target Audiences:** Board & Communications Team

- Citizens
- Employees
- Businesses
- Media
- Visitors
- Tourists

**Communications Tools:** Board & Communications Team

- Multi-Media
- Newspapers
- Cable TV
- Radio
- Website
- Social Media
- Public Forums
- Direct Mail
- Special Events

**Strategies (Action Plan):** Communications Team

**Media Relations Policy:** Communications Team

**PROPOSED**

**ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

The purpose of the Orange County Board of Commissioners' Strategic Communications Plan is to promote more effective communication between and among the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and Orange County citizens. Public access to government and freely shared information are cornerstones of the democratic process and thus the plan should simplify access to the Board and to the workings of Orange County government. The plan should also establish guidelines, policies and vehicles for accomplishing the Board's goals for effective communication.

**OVERVIEW**

The Strategic Communications Plan seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- Enhance communications between the Board and citizens;
- Enhance communications between Board members and the rest of County government, including employees;
- Enhance the ability of Commissioners and citizens to access information;
- Provide information to the public clearly, concisely, and in a timely, reliable, and helpful manner;
- Utilize the widest possible variety of communications methods and vehicles at the lowest possible cost;
- Develop a plan for coordinating information during a crisis;
- Provide more direct means for the Board to shape the County's message.

These objectives will be accomplished by utilizing the following communication elements: cable television, press releases and media relations, direct telephone access, internet site, intranet, and other communication devices. In addition, the County will have a communications plan for crisis management. The communications plan will address both ongoing media and public relations issues, as well as proactive strategies for addressing fast-breaking and/or potentially controversial issues in a timely manner.

As part of the County's Strategic Communications Plan, the staff will develop for Board approval a single, unified style for all County communications efforts to establish the County's "identity" in communication vehicles. There will be a brief style manual for publications and other written materials and a design standard for the County's Web site and other communications methods.

Under the general direction of the BOCC, the County's communications efforts will be coordinated through the office of the County Manager and the office of the Clerk to the Board. All communications from Orange County will follow adopted County policy.

## A. CABLE TELEVISION

### 1. Televising of County Commissioners meetings

A primary communications goal for the 1999-2000 fiscal year is the televising of County Commissioner meetings. This is to be accomplished via public access cable television, perhaps on a tape-delayed basis.

### 2. Public Service Announcements and Meeting Information

Public service announcements prepared by the County should be made available to run on cable television during the regular viewing week, and in those cases when Board meetings either are delayed or end early. Agendas for upcoming BOCC meetings and monthly meeting calendars should also be provided to the cable television channel for prompt and complete airing.

### 3. Monthly Cable Program

Content for the County's monthly public information show should complement other communication methods used by the County. The content should be coordinated with the Manager and the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, in order to function as part of a coherent communications strategy.

## B. PRESS RELEASES AND MEDIA RELATIONS

While the descriptions in this section deal specifically with press releases, the general principles articulated can be utilized for other communication methods.

### 1. Types of Press Releases

Certain types of events and milestones should automatically merit the issuance of a press release by Orange County. Topics that, should receive such treatment as standard operating procedure include:

- a. Events and openings (e.g. Efland-Cheeks Community Park)
- b. Achievements and awards (e.g. awards for financial reporting)
- c. Major hirings (e.g. hiring of department heads)
- d. Health and safety announcements (e.g. outbreaks of rabies or hepatitis)

As part of the distribution, these releases will be posted on the County's Web site.

Content for other press releases should be coordinated with the Manager, Clerk, and the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, in order to function as part of a coherent communications strategy.

## 2. Generating and Crafting Releases

a. Interactions between County staff and the media should be coordinated through the Manager's and/or the Clerk's office. The County should discontinue the practice of individual department heads or staff members issuing press releases on behalf of the County, with specified exceptions concerning matters of public health and safety. However, staff members who have ideas for specific releases may give them to the Manager or the Clerk.

Press releases on matters dealing with County programs and policies as adopted, revised and/or acted upon by the Board should originate in the Clerk's office (Information Specialist). Press statements on matters dealing with implementation of these programs and policies and/or County operations should originate in the Manager's office (Management Analyst). Commissioners who have ideas for specific press releases may give them to the Chair of the Board. As is the case with all press releases, these releases should relate directly to adopted County policy.

b. Based on county schedules, and in consultation with the Manager and the Clerk to the board, the two staff members responsible for writing press releases (Management Analyst and Information Specialist) should divide up these assignments and be sure coverage is provided. They should also develop and implement a method for apprising the Manager and Commissioners monthly, in advance, concerning the automatic releases to be issued.

c. For events that require more than a simple, straightforward notice, and when there is time, every effort should be made to increase the attractiveness of press releases to members of the news media, as for example, adding a human interest "peg" or "hook" to attract attention.

d. The staff should develop and implement methods for addressing fast-breaking and/or potentially controversial public relations issues in a timely manner. If such proactive - communications methods are put into place, the County can be in a position to anticipate these situations and respond with an appropriate message quickly and effectively when dealing with matters of a controversial or fast-breaking nature.

## 3. Strategies for Expanded Coverage

The Information Specialist and the Management Analyst should develop and implement a plan to obtain expanded media coverage. Any such plan should ensure that at least the following elements are accomplished:

a. These two staff members should foster relationships with members of the media who cover Orange County, including phoning them to offer assistance or to ascertain what information might be most helpful.

b. The County Commissioners should be notified in advance, when possible, of press briefings involving the Manager or department heads. This would allow the media easy access to decision-makers and might lead to expanded coverage.

c. The two staff members should seek additional avenues for coverage. For example, they could ensure that meetings by the Board of Commissioners and County advisory boards are included in the weekly "bulletin boards" published by local newspapers.

## C. DIRECT TELEPHONE ACCESS

### 1. Direct line

A direct telephone number will be established that will receive questions, comments, suggestions, requests and complaints from citizens. This number should be located in the office of the Clerk to the Board, and should be answered at all times during regular business hours.

The Clerk will develop and implement a procedure for these calls that will include such things as a reasonable but specific response time, a method for keeping Commissioners apprised of the nature of citizens' concerns, how the number will be advertised, and who should answer the telephone. The Clerk should take into account such factors as knowledge of county government, pleasant telephone manner, and whether the person can be helpful when talking with callers who have limited English proficiency.

### 2. Automated Alternatives

The County's automated telephone system should be augmented to include an option that provides direct access to the office for the Clerk to the Board. Further development of County telephone resources should include simplifying public access to post-5 PM voice mail for County employees.

## D. INTERNET SITE

### 1. Accessibility to County Commissioners

Provision of e-mail addresses for Commissioners, and a listing of phone numbers and mailing addresses on the County Web site, combine to make them readily accessible to citizens and others. In addition to photographs, other information about members of the Board, such as brief biographical data, could also be added.

### 2. Improved Provision of Information

Any improvements to the Web site should ensure that at least the following elements are accomplished:

a. Current information is provided in a timely manner. There should be a dependable schedule for the appearance on the site of key information (e.g. the monthly calendar of events) and for updating that information (e.g. changes in meeting times and dates).

- b. The site is dynamic, visually appealing, and engaging. For example, there could be additional photographs that would reveal the character of Orange County or a "crawl" whereby breaking news or updated information might be highlighted.
- c. The agendas of various County advisory boards are posted prior to their scheduled meetings.
- d. County departments get individual Web pages posted at a reasonable pace.
- e. Other appropriate additions are made, including a Youth Voices area.

### 3. Process for Improving the Web Site

- a. Administration of the site's content should be shifted, at least temporarily, from the Information Systems (IS) Department to the Clerk's Office, with IS continuing to provide technical support. This will free the IS staff to concentrate on more pressing issues, such as continued office automation, database administration and Y2K issues.
- b. Commissioners' reactions to the current Orange County Web site, and their ideas on what might be added, should be solicited. This would help shape a direction for further efforts at improving the site.
- c. Subsequent to consultation with the BOCC, the staff should develop and implement a systematic plan to improve the information provided on the Web site.

## E. INTRANET

### 1. Board Access

The BOCC should have complete access to the County's Intranet, as well as have a site on the Intranet that serves the Board.

### 2. Improved Provision of Information

The staff should develop and implement a plan for augmenting the information included on the Intranet. Some additions to consider include the following:

- a. The Manager could develop and implement a plan to post appropriate lists of pending items, such as those that are periodically distributed to the Board as part of a Manager's Memo. The Intranet could also be used for the posting of summaries that project agenda topics for an upcoming month.
- b. The Intranet is the logical place to develop a County calendar of community events, wherein a directory is established listing everything from park dedications to dinners and "roasts" sponsored by service organizations to local appearances by state and national legislators.

## F. OTHER COMMUNICATION DEVICES

### 1. Citizens' Guide

The staff should develop for Board approval a citizens' guide to accessing the public process. This will take a citizen step-by-step through such matters as the ground rules for a public hearing, a rezoning, and a special use permitting process. The emphasis will be on helping an individual, neighborhood or citizens' group to improve its understanding of the public process and how to navigate it.

### 2. Meeting Protocols

Presentations at BOCC meetings should be improved to ensure that the public may see displays and view pertinent information along with the Commissioners. It is important to make sure that Commissioners' meetings are intelligible to citizens in attendance. The Commissioners may also wish to obtain information or advice concerning additional strategies to improve communications at meetings or hearings, both for the citizens in attendance and for the television audience.

### 3. Information Inserts

The staff should develop for Board approval appropriate information inserts for tax bill and tax abstract mailings, as well as for monthly automobile tax mailings. The content for the inserts should complement other communication methods used by the County, and should be coordinated through the Manager's office and/or the Clerk's office.

### 4. Communication with County Employees

a. The staff should develop a plan for Board approval to enhance Board communication with County employees. This plan could include a column written by the information specialist on behalf of the Board in the employee newsletter, *Orange Alive*, detailing recent decisions and policies of particular interest. Since County employees are ambassadors for the government, sharing information with them will also further public outreach.

b. The plan also could include a Board site on the Intranet that provides an interactive forum whereby employees could pass along questions, suggestions, comments, and concerns, either anonymously or with identification.

## G. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The County Manager's office and Clerk's office should formulate for Board approval an action plan for communications between and among county departments, other governmental agencies, the media, and the public in times of crisis, such as natural disasters, evacuations and other emergency situations.

# 2003 Communications Plan

Developed by the  
City of Hickory, North Carolina  
Public Information Office



The 2003 City of Hickory, North Carolina, Communications Plan is a tenacious plan intended to enhance communications between the City and its citizens, as well as with the metropolitan area, state and nation. This blueprint includes communications goals and plans that will build upon current success in the City of Hickory. The Communications Plan will guide the City until 2006, and will be administered through the Public Information Office.

## **2003 Communications Plan City Of Hickory, North Carolina**

### **Introduction**

City of Hickory leaders took the initiative in 1997 to create a full-time Public Information Office. For about 10 years prior to 1997, the City Clerk spent half her time as a Public Information Officer, but as PIO duties increased, it was impossible to do both jobs, and City visionaries created a full-time Public Information Office.

The main mission of the Public Information Office is to provide and develop a progressive public information program in the City of Hickory. The PIO distributes educational information to the public through a monthly newsletter, news releases to the media, a weekly radio show, neighborhood meetings, the government channel, annual report, speaking engagements, website, and various other forms of communications.

The Public Information Office is part of the City Manager's Office, which is key in making this office an effective tool in City government. Successful communication must always be supported by the top of an organization in order for it to flow through the organization, as well as disseminate throughout the City via citizens, and the news media.

The City of Hickory adopted a Communications Plan in 1998 and items in the Action Plan, including creating a citizen academy (Neighborhood College), are complete or on going. The 1998 plan was the first Communications Plan for the City, and the 2003 Communications Plan builds upon the strengths of the original plan. As the City embarked into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, communications has become one of the most important tools of City government. Citizens are attending neighborhood and business association meetings and working with city task forces, boards, and commissions. The City is talking about local government to local civic clubs and college and high school students, and there is an interest in local government that has not been seen in decades. Citizens are truly interested in City programs, activities, and projects. Citizens have shown a commitment to local government by pitching in and helping the City develop programs, policies and even a new land use code.

It is extremely important for the City to continue to open lines of communications to its external customers (38,000 citizens), as well to its internal customers (675 employees). The 2003 Communications Plan will be a blueprint for the Public Information Office for the next three years. Like technology, communication tools change frequently making it important for the Communications Plan to be constantly updated and improved as ideas emerge.

## **Image, Identity and Perception**

Hickory has been known as a progressive City since its incorporation in 1870. In its 133 years, Hickory has been on the cutting edge, proven by being the first in North Carolina to adopt the Council-Manager form of government in 1913, to being named the Best-Balanced City in the 1950s, and winning many awards, including All-America City Awards in 1967 and 1987. In 1999, *Reader's Digest* named Hickory as being one of the best 10 places in the United States to raise a family, and other accolades include being a "Entrepreneurial Hotspot" in the US by *Nations Business* magazine, and by being named one of the top cities for "Quality of Life," by *Business North Carolina* magazine.

These positive images of Hickory ring true, and from these accolades, the perception and reality is that Hickory is a great place to raise a family, start a business and provides the quality of life desired by all people.

Since the end of 2001, Hickory has faced some challenging economic problems and the national media chose to spotlight the Hickory area and its high unemployment rate. Hickory made national news because of its closings of textile manufacturing plants, and job cuts in the furniture industry, as well as lay-offs in the fiber-optics industry. Like the majority of news stories, the entire story is not told, and Hickory was portrayed as a ghost town. Despite the economic downturn, Hickory continues to thrive and unemployment numbers are down and it is hoped that the worst has reared its head and only good things can happen from now on.

Positive news releases, articles in local and state publications, as well as local coverage on how Hickory is combating the unemployment problem will not be able to overshadow the national media's report, but it is hoped that local and state citizens will learn and believe that Hickory will continue to be a strong, progressive and visionary city.

The goal of the Communications Plan is to continue to enhance the City's image, and identify ways to communicate with local, state, and national citizens that Hickory provides not only the best of essential services, but offers quality services to citizens that far exceed cities our size or larger.

A key thing to remember is that the Communications Plan cannot completely overcome the identity of the City organization, but a strong Communications Plan can enhance the City's image. In an age of sound bites and snapshots in written media and on television and radio, the citizens' perception of a service, event or issue will become their reality. The Communications Plan will guide the information flow so perception, reality and fact all melt into one idea.

## **Target Audiences**

In order for a City to enhance its communications efforts, it is thought that everyone touched by City services should be targeted. Communication efforts of this type are too

general to have much impact at all. It is necessary to identify target audiences and then develop communication strategies for each of these groups.

Key target audiences have been identified by the City and are broken out as follows.

### **Primary Target Audiences:**

- ✍ Citizens of Hickory – Targeting the 38,000 residents of Hickory is essential to the success of the Communications Plan. By keeping our residents in the highest level of communication, we will create an ownership sense for them and this will help with communicating with other audiences.
- ✍ Media – The media is an extremely important audience to target because their coverage of meetings and projects reach a significant number of target audiences. Six newspapers, three radio stations, and six television stations communicate with the PIO on a regular basis - this is the mainstream media outlets, but many other media venues exist that target the non-English speaking residents, and they too will be important to reach. The relationship with the PIO and the media is vital because messages they disseminate could enhance or harm the City's image.
- ✍ City of Hickory employees – There are about 675 City of Hickory employees serving in a variety of roles. The majority of employees communicate with citizens on a daily basis. It is important not to forget our most valuable resources – our employees. This target audience can also enhance or harm the City's image.

### **Secondary Target Audiences:**

- ✍ Citizens of the Hickory Metropolitan Area – The Hickory Metro is the fourth largest metro in the North Carolina. The 350,000 metro has become the hub of Northwestern North Carolina. These citizens work, shop, dine and attend entertainment venues within the city. They are not residents of Hickory, but they are impacted by the actions of the City. Hickory's economic health is linked to its regional role and the commercial activities involving citizens outside the City limits.
- ✍ Tourists – The thousands of tourists visiting the Hickory each year bring in many pre-conceived notions of the image of Hickory. Targeting this group is necessary to bring about global image changes for the City. The growth of the tourism industry in Hickory has added millions of dollars to the tax base and should be continually enhanced. In 2000, \$184 million dollars were added to the tax base, and that number will increase, especially due to the increase of marketing for conventions and shows in the Hickory area.

## **Goals**

When addressing the goals of the Communications Plan, one word comes to mind – perception. The Communications Plan for Hickory is presenting strategies to the target audiences that will change, develop or enhance their perceptions of services, issues, and projects in the City of Hickory.

The overall goals for the Communications Plan are to:

- ✍ Educate citizens of Hickory about its government processes, programs, activities, and yearly goals and objectives.
- ✍ Enhance lines of communications between citizens and the City.
- ✍ Find new avenues to educate the public on City activities.
- ✍ Use the City's best resource – its employees- to help educate the public on city activities.
- ✍ Continue to build strong relationships with the media, which will enable them to be partners in the communication process with target audiences.
- ✍ Find ways to reach out to the citizens in the metropolitan area.
- ✍ Enhance the image of the City for tourists and business travelers.

## **Action Plan**

A Communications Team will form and meet on a quarterly basis to review, discuss, amend and help implement the Communications Plan. Suggested members of the Communications Team will be the City Public Information Officer, Quality Director, Neighborhood Coordinator, City Clerk, Library Marketing Coordinator, Recreation Marketing Coordinator, Fire Public Information Officer, and an HPD, Information Services, and a Public Services representative.

The strategies that form the Communications Plan are intended to drive the program for the entire City. In this vein, it is essential that all departments understand their roles in this endeavor. Individual departments will handle many elements of this plan with the Communications Team coordinating all efforts.

The following strategies, divided per the target audience's specifications, are being recommended as the core of the 2003 Communications Plan.

### ***Citizens of Hickory***

1. *City Council Circular* – The *City Council Circular* is published on a monthly basis. Some summer months are combined because many organizations, commissions and boards are not meeting as much in the summer months. *The City Council Circular* began in 1998 as a way to inform City Council, Board and Commission members, and neighborhood and business organizations, about activities occurring in the city. The mailing list began at 654 in 1998, and in April 2003, the mailing list included about 4,200 citizens.

Not counting staff time, it costs about \$1,900 a month to print and mail the *City Council Circular* to the current mailing list. Citizens who receive the eight-page publication enjoy reading it and say that it keeps them current on projects and activities in the City. It is important to continue publishing the *City Council*

*Circular* and in an effort of saving money and getting hip with the current trends, a future plan is to send the *City Council Circular* via email.

Action Plan:

- ☞ July - September 2003 – Ask those who currently receive the *City Council Circular* if they would like to receive the publication via email. Information will be provided in the *City Council Circular* about how to receive the publication via email. The PIO will coordinate with Information Services on the logistics of this happening.
- ☞ October - December 2003 – Review the implementation of the new email service and make any necessary changes.
- ☞ January – July 2004 – Continue marketing the advantages of receiving the *City Council Circular* via email, in hopes of cutting expenses by a least \$100.
- ☞ Fiscal Year 2003-2004 – Work with the e-government team and Information Services on creating an e-list that would send the *City Council Circular* to those who request it via a form on our website.
- ☞ Fiscal Year 2004-2005 – Develop a questionnaire for the *City Council Circular* users to measure the publication's effectiveness.
- ☞ Fiscal Years 2004 – 2006 – Investigate ways to develop an e-newsletter that would be sent out to all who request it, but target it for local businesses and citizens.

Predicted cost of *City Council Circular* - \$22,800 per year (includes printing, postage and mailing service and does not include staff time).

2. Annual Report – Hickory has made many strides in its Annual Reports over the last three years. It's FY 1998-1999 annual report, shaped like a checkbook, won a Silver Circle award by City-County-Communications Marketing Association (3CMA) for its creativity. In the 1999-2000 Annual Report, the City developed it into a keepsake by including a timeline of the City's 130 years of accomplishments. The 2000-2001 Annual Report reflected upon the prior two decades with one Mayor and the moving on with a new Mayor in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition to these themes, the annual report was the financial report of the citizens each year.

The City of Hickory's 2001-2002 Annual Report, "Mapping Triumphs One Day at a Time," got citizen and media attention. Citizens enjoyed the annual report and found it useful. It might not have been the city financial pie charts and accomplishments that excited them; it could have been the City map and explanation of the street system. But, no matter what the reason, citizens were talking about the map Hickory combined with its regular annual report information (letters from the Mayor and City Manager, accomplishments, goals, financial audit reports). The annual report was also labeled a success by the media, and was even given a "Thumps Up" on an editorial page of the local paper.

It is important to continue developing an attractive, reader-friendly publication each year that includes financial information, as well as accomplishments and future goals.

**Action Plan:**

- ✍ July - September 2003 – Gather information and photos from all departments on achievements and goals met in Fiscal Year 2002-2003. Review Annual Reports from fellow cities, as well as brainstorm on how to develop a new, refreshing Annual Report for the City of Hickory. The idea for this annual report is to bring back the calendar format.
- ✍ October – November 2003- The City receives its final audit report from the prior year in October. Once these numbers are received, include a brief synopsis of the budget year. Now that all the information needed is compiled, pull all sections together by writing, editing and proofing. The goal is to have the Annual Report at the printers by mid-November.
- ✍ December 2003 – Mail the Annual Report to all Hickory water customers, which is about 18,000 households. It is also important to mail the Annual Reports to area, state and national officials that represent the City of Hickory.
- ✍ July - September 2004 – Gather information and photos from all departments on achievements and goals met in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. Review Annual Reports from fellow cities, as well as brainstorm on how to develop a new, refreshing Annual Report for the City of Hickory.
- ✍ October – November 2004- The City receives its final audit report from the prior year in October. Once these numbers are received, include a brief synopsis of the budget year. Now that all the information needed is compiled, pull all sections together by writing, editing and proofing. The goal is to have the Annual Report at the printers by mid-November.
- ✍ December 2004 – Mail the Annual Report to all Hickory water customers, which is about 18,000 households. It is also important to mail the Annual Reports to area, state and national officials that represent the City of Hickory.
- ✍ July - September 2005 – Gather information and photos from all departments on achievements and goals met in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. Review Annual Reports from fellow cities, as well as brainstorm on how to develop a new, refreshing Annual Report for the City of Hickory.
- ✍ October – November 2005- The City receives its final audit report from the prior year in October. Once these numbers are received, include a brief synopsis of the budget year. Now that all the information needed is compiled, pull all sections together by writing, editing and proofing. The goal is to have the Annual Report at the printers by mid-November.
- ✍ December 2005 – Mail the Annual Report to all Hickory water customers, which is about 18,000 households. It is also important to mail the Annual Reports to area, state and national officials that represent the City of Hickory.

Predicted cost of Annual Reports - \$16,000 per year (includes printing, postage and mailing services and does not include staff time).

3. Utility Bill Stuffers – In January 2001, the City of Hickory launched its new utility bill. For many years, the City sent out postcard bills, but moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by sending out letter-sized bills with return envelopes. This new mailing format has also become a new PIO tool because it is able to add an 8 1/2 by 11” piece of paper to the mailing. The new utility bill has become a new avenue to convey information to all citizens and is an asset to the Public Information Office. Since July 2002, the City has inserted a flyer in the bill with information about city issues or concerns (for example, status of water availability and conservation suggestions, library activities, and litter sweep).

Action Plan:

- ✍ August - September 2003 – Market the new stuffer format to City staff and agree on the name of the publication. So far the name is *City Snippits*. With the help of all departments, find tidbits of information to put on the stuffer that would benefit all citizens of Hickory, not just a small segment of the population.
- ✍ October - December 2003 – Put together topics that will fill the newsletter for until December 2004. Do this by meeting with fellow departments and by explaining what information can be used for *City Snippits*. The publication should be printed and published a month ahead of schedule and go over deadlines with departments. For example, the February issue will go out in the four January billings. This means that the February issue must be printed no later than the last week of December. This will be an ongoing project throughout each month, but establishing possible topics for the publication will make it an easier process.
- ✍ January 2004 – Publish first *City Snippits* and have to the Collections Department by the last week of December.
- ✍ October – November 2004 – Develop a *City Snippits* calendar for 2005.
- ✍ January 2005 – Measure the effectiveness of *City Snippits* by meeting with departments and finding out what, if any feedback they have gotten from the publication.
- ✍ October – November 2005 – Set calendar for calendar year 2006, and again measure the effectiveness of *City Snippits* by meeting with departments and finding out what, if any feedback they have gotten from the publication.

Predicted cost of utility bill insert - \$7,200 per year (includes printing and does not include staff time).

4. Neighborhood College – The PIO began Neighborhood College in 1998 as a way to educate citizens about its local government. A secondary reason for holding the citizens’ academy was to increase interest in City government and educating citizens about City government and get them to serve on one of the City’s 14 boards and commissions. In 2002, 35 of the 90 graduates either serve on a board or commission or are president or really active in their neighborhood or business association. It has been a successful program and won the prestigious Savvy award from 3CMA in 2001 for its community visioning process.

Action Plan:

- ? July 2003 - Begin seeking applications for the sixth Neighborhood College Class
- ✍ September – December 2003 – Hold the sixth Neighborhood College class.
- ✍ July 2004 –Begin seeking applications for the seventh Neighborhood College Class.
- ✍ September – December 2004 – Hold the seventh Neighborhood College class.
- ✍ July 2005 –Begin seeking applications for the eighth Neighborhood College class.
- ✍ September – December 2005 – Hold the eighth Neighborhood College class.

Predicted cost of Neighborhood College - \$2,500 per year (includes a notebook, class materials, speakers, use of Piedmont Wagon, and banquet and does not include staff time).

5. City of Hickory Website - The City developed a website in 1998 and as citizens become more web savvy; there has been an increase in use. The website is an excellent communications tool that the PIO can use to post news releases, publications, meeting schedules, utility and construction projects and even late breaking news. Changes in technology occur daily; therefore it is possible that items on the Action Plan will be added or deleted depending on the latest advances. The PIO will work closely with the e-government team to accomplish the following plans established thus far.

Action Plan:

- ✍ July – December 2003 –Help launch the ability to pay utility bills online through website, which is [www.hickorygov.com](http://www.hickorygov.com).
- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 - On a weekly basis, update the Public Information page with the latest news releases, meetings, road and utility projects.
- ✍ Fiscal Year 2003-3004 – Investigate creating an e-list that would send news releases to e-users who want to stay updated on City news.
- ✍ July 2004 – June 2006 – Measure the effectiveness of the PIO webpage on the Hickory website. Through a survey online, find out what customers like and dislike and find ways to make the PIO page more effective.

Predicted cost of website – No direct costs out of PIO budget except for staff time.

6. Government Channel – For more than three years, the PIO has posted information on the government channel. The majority of the information is job opening and upcoming public events. Most of the information is in script form, but when a video is available, the cable company will play the video on a regular basis. For example, the City's Public Services video and the 1999 All-America City presentation was shown on the government channel for months.

After talking with various citizens from different segments of the City, it seems that many people are tuning to television and getting a majority of their news from the local cable newscast, as well as the government channel. The PIO would like to find

new avenues to utilize the government channel and team up with Catawba County and possible other municipalities within the county in producing videos about government services.

**Action Plan:**

- ✍ Fiscal Year 2003 – 2004 - Begin talking with the local cable television company about producing monthly videos about the City of Hickory and its services. In addition, contact local video companies that would be interested in filming a 15-minute video once a month, this includes getting cost estimates on producing videos. There will be no cost to putting it on the government channel because that was one of the negotiations made with the cable company, but it will cost to produce a video. In addition, meet with Catawba County and other municipalities in the City to see if they would like to partner in this venture.
- ✍ Fiscal Year 2003 – 2004 - Find a video company and begin meeting with departments to find out what topics should be discussed throughout the year. Set a yearlong calendar of topics and work with departments by helping them write scripts. Also, set a schedule with departments and the video company to ensure that deadlines are met.
- ✍ July 2004 – Produce the first video for production in August 2004. For example, the first video could be on the city's structure, how it is operated and some history about the Council-Manager form of government. The production could also include information about the City as a whole.
- ✍ August 2004 – Air the first government video.
- ✍ August – December 2004 – Continue to improve and enhance videos throughout the year.
- ✍ January 2005 – Evaluate the project and see if it is getting positive feedback. If so, continue and make a calendar of programs for the next year.
- ✍ August 2005 – If video becomes a successful tool, set calendar for 2006.

Predicted cost of producing the videos - \$6,000 per year (not including staff time).

7. Brochures and various publications- It is important to showcase new programs and activities in the City. This can be done in various ways, but one quick, easy and affordable way to promote a project or activity is through a brochure. In the past, the PIO has developed brochures for the planning department, airport, and public art program. Many departments have their own public relations resources available and the PIO can assist them or work together with them to help other departments market their programs. It is important to continue to offer this service to all City departments and the departments with experience can help the departments that need assistance.

**Action Plan:**

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Remind departments that when necessary, brochures can be developed by the PIO.
- ✍ January – March 2004 – Update the City Services guide that includes numbers and explanations of city services and in this edition include a section on the City's boards and commissions.

Predicted cost of producing brochures – Depends on the number done and if departments have money within their departments to produce the brochures. Would roughly estimate \$1,500 per year (not including staff time). The service guide will cost roughly \$1,500 to print (not including staff time).

8. Special Promotional Events – There are numerous events happening in the City each year that bring citizens to a core area of the City. Several of the events are Oktoberfest, Hickory Alive, Hickory Holiday Parade, and the Chamber of Commerce Business Expo. These events allow the City to tell its story to thousands of people. In the past, a booth has been set up during Oktoberfest and the Business Expo. This gives the PIO an opportunity to answer questions from the public, as well as distribute city publications and/or promotional items. The Hickory City Council, Fire and Police departments, as well as the Community Relations Council and the Youth Council have participated in the Hickory Holiday Parade for the past four years. This continues to put the city and its boards in a positive light.

#### Action Plan:

- ? July 2003 – October 2005 – Work with the committee that is putting together the 2005 North Carolina League of Municipalities conference that will be in Hickory in October 2005.
- ✍ July - September 2003 – Plan for Oktoberfest and the Chamber of Commerce Business Expo. The Oktoberfest booth will be at no cost because of the City's involvement in the festival. In past years, the Waste Reduction Task Force shares the booth and helps recycling during the festival. The PIO will use promotional items already ordered and distribute city publications. The Chamber Business Expo is an excellent opportunity to meet with top business officials in the entire Hickory area. The cost is about \$300 for a booth and during this event promotional items, as well as City publications are distributed to top business leaders.
- ✍ October 2003 – Participate in Oktoberfest and the Chamber Business Expo.
- ✍ November – December 2003 – Work with the Hickory Jaycees to get the City involved in the holiday event. Make arrangements to have the Mayor and City Council, and Fire and Police Departments, and the Piedmont Wagon in the parade. More departments can participate in this community event, and in November the PIO will ask department heads to consider participating in the parade.
- ✍ February 2004 – June 2004 – The City works with the Hickory Jaycees in the annual Hickory Alive concert series. The City is in the background, but can get positive press by ensuring that City's recycling cans are at the weekly events, as well as Union Square is in touch-notch shape. The concert series is on Fridays in May and June on Union Square.
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Predicted cost of participating in special events – Roughly \$300 a year (for Chamber Expo booth) and the majority of these events main costs is staff time. When setting up displays existing information and promotional items are given out and those items are paid for out of the PIO departmental supplies.

9. Emergency Communications – In the City’s Emergency Plan, the PIO plays a vital role in helping inform the citizens on events occurring in the city.

**Action Plan:**

- ☞ October 2003 – Meet with local PIO’s in order to keep a strong relationship in case an emergency would occur. During these meetings, discuss local issues and share ideas that would help during a crisis situation. See if there is an interest to meet more than once a year.
- ☞ Fiscal Year 2003 - 2004 – Review Emergency Communications Plan, especially with the police and fire departments. Work with the police and fire department in holding a refresher for all.
- ☞ October 2004 – Meet with local PIO’s in order to keep a strong relationship in case an emergency would occur. During these meetings, discuss local issues and share ideas that would help during a crisis situation.
- ☞ Fiscal Year 2004 – 2005 - Work with Hickory Fire Department, Hickory Police Department, Hickory Airport, and area emergency organizations that hold an emergency disaster drill at the airport once every three years.
- ☞ Fiscal Year 2004 - 2005 – Review Emergency Communications Plan, especially with the police and fire departments. Work with the police and fire department in holding a refresher for all.
- ☞ October 2005 – Meet with local PIO’s in order to keep a strong relationship in case an emergency would occur. During these meetings, discuss local issues and share ideas that would help during a crisis situation.
- ☞ Fiscal Year 2005 - 2006 – Review Emergency Communications Plan, especially with the police and fire departments. Work with the police and fire department in holding a refresher for all.

Predicted cost – Staff time only.

## ***Media***

1. News Releases – Media outlets are always looking for stories to report on. In addition to covering meetings, and Council actions, news outlets are also looking for feature, informative and personal interest stories. This is why news releases are valuable tool for the distribution of information to the media and eventually to the public. The media in Hickory is very supportive of using our releases and we should continue to forward informative and news worthy releases to these organizations.

**Action Plan:**

- ☞ July 2003 – June 2006 – Send at least 200 news releases out per year (about 16 per month and/or four a week).

Predicted cost – Staff time, paper and office equipment.

2. Reporter's Handbook – With a high turnover rate of area reporters, editors and publishers, it is necessary to develop a handbook that can be quickly updated and distributed to new reporters. This publication will include City Council members' photos, bios, and phone numbers. This packet will also include photos and information on the City Manager and the Assistant City Manager's. It will also be important to include the city's organizational chart, an

Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – September 2003 – Call fellow 3CMA members to see if any have this sort of booklet and see what is the most informational and affordable. Also, talk with the City Managers Office and Department Heads about what they would like to see in the handbook.
- ✍ October - November 2003 – Develop a Reporter's Handbook. Finish the handbook and give to current reporters (old and new). Have several handbooks available for new reporters, editors or publishers.
- ✍ December 2003 – June 2006 – Update the handbook when necessary on changes, such as Council Member changes, department head changes, etc.

Predicted cost – Staff time, paper, notebooks and office equipment.

3. Fact Sheets – Before a controversial or complex project or issue, provide the media with a fact sheet that will help them understand an issue. The PIO will work with the particular department over the issue.

Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Put together fact sheets on an as needed basis.

Predicted cost – Staff time, paper, and office equipment.

4. "Get Hip to Hickory" – Since 2001, the PIO has done a weekly radio show on WHKY (1290 am). The 15-minute radio show has been effective in many ways, including informing citizens on late breaking news from the city. In addition to the weekly show, many City departments have been on the show for an hour, and discussed everything from fire safety to new recreation programs. Continue as long as it continues to be a win-win for both parties.

Also, do "Hickory This Week" on WNNC/WXRC/WIRC at least once a month.

Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Continue "Get Hip to Hickory," as long as WHKY will allow this segment.
- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Have city guests appear on "First Talk," (this show is 8-9 a.m. on weekdays) to discuss city projects and programs in depth.

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 - Be the guest on “Hickory This Week” on WNNC/WXRC/WIRC at least once a month.

Predicted cost – Staff time.

5. Viewpoint Magazine - Since February 2003, Viewpoint Magazine has been printing a column called “Hickory – Working Around the Clock for You.”

- ? July 2003 – June 2006 – Continue as long as the magazine will allow the column to appear.

- ? July 2003 – June 2006 – Look for other opportunities in various other media outlets to send columns to.

Predicted cost – Staff time.

### ***City of Hickory Employees***

1. The Post – The internal newsletter is a great way to keep employees up to date on city awards, issues and events, as well as include information on fellow co-workers. In the last few months, the Post has become extremely important because co-workers have been able to read first-hand about the changes in the City’s insurance companies. The bottom line is that educating co-workers via the employee newsletter creates 675 ambassadors who can in turn help educate our citizens about our organization.

#### Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 - Send out a monthly employee newsletter.
- ✍ July 2003 – Meet with Post team to review publication and to investigate ways to continue improving it.
- ✍ January 2004 – Meet with the Post team to review publication and to investigate ways to continue improving it.
- ✍ July 2004 – Meet with Post team to review publication and to investigate ways to continue improving it.
- ✍ January 2005– Meet with Post team to review publication and to investigate ways to continue improving it.
- ✍ July 2005 – Meet with the Post team to review publication and to investigate ways to continue improving it.
- ✍ January 2006– Meet with Post team to review publication and to investigate ways to continue improving it.

Predicted cost - \$6,500 a year (printing and mailing to retired employees and does not include staff time).

2. *City Council Circular* – Send the *City Council Circular* to department and division heads. These employees can then send the *Circular* to employees within the departments. In an earlier goal, the team will investigate turning the *Circular* into a

magazine, and if that is the case, the same will apply and the publication will be sent to all department and division heads.

Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Send the *City Council Circular* to department and division heads and supervisors or any other employees that request a copy.

Predicted cost – Under *City Council Circular* goal.

3. Email – When something big is going to happen in the city, for example, when a new airline agrees to come to the airport, send an email to all co-workers and ask those who have employees without email, to pass the message. This way, when employees are asked about city announcements, employees will be able to inform citizens.

Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Email all city co-workers when an event occurs that is important for everyone to know about.

Predicted cost – Staff time.

4. Speaker's Bureau – Citizens groups and business organizations are always looking for speakers. All departments have something interesting to talk about and that is a great way to promote our City.

Action Plan:

- ✍ January 2004 – May 2004 – Talk with City Departments on what topics they can discuss to civic organizations, and to neighborhood and business groups. Many departments already speak to various groups and the main goal of this project is to have a list of everyone who is available to speak, as well as have a master list to market to the public.
- ✍ June 2004 – June 2006 - Market the City's Speaker's Bureau to local organizations through the media and City publications.
- ✍ January 2005 – Update Speaker's Bureau list and send out letters to organizations reminding them of the speakers and programs the city provides.

Predicted cost – Staff time and paper.

### ***Hickory Metropolitan Citizens***

1. Chamber of Commerce – Work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote Hickory in the metropolitan area, and visitors who visit each year.

Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Continue to stay active in the Chamber and attend reception meetings on a regular basis. Attending meetings and getting to know new people, inside and outside the city, enable citizens and/or business leaders to get the broader picture that Hickory is the center of the 350,000 metropolitan area.
- ✍ January 2003 – December 2005 – Continue to send brochures, and city information to the Chamber. The City literature is displayed in the Chamber's lobby and citizens and visitors pick up the information.

Predicted cost – The City’s Chamber membership paid by City Manager’s Office and staff time.

2. Out of county media – Continue to send news releases to media in Caldwell, Alexander and Burke County when something the City is doing effects the entire metropolitan area.

Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Send news releases to metropolitan media outlets on a regular basis.

Predicted cost – Staff time and paper, office equipment.

### ***Tourists and Business Visitors***

1. Conventions Visitors Bureau – The CVB helps promote Hickory across the state and nation. A new video was produced and is being show to organizations that are thinking about holding a conference in Hickory.

Action Plan:

- ✍ July 2003 – June 2006 – Work with the CVB to promote the City through the new video, as well as providing City publications that may entice a visitor or to come to Hickory.
- ✍ July 2003 – October 2005 – Help begin planning of the North Carolina League of Municipalities conference that will bring about 2,000 government officials to Hickory for three days.

Predicted cost – Staff time.

2. Chamber of Commerce – Work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote Hickory to the metropolitan area, and visitors who visit each year.

Action Plan:

- ✍ Provide the Chamber with city brochures, annual reports, publications and informational books that tourists and business visitors would pick up and read while visiting the City.

Predicted cost – Staff time and existing publications.

The City of Hickory is the hub of Northwestern North Carolina and the center of business and commerce for about 350,000 people. According to 2003 North Carolina Planning figures, about 38,000 people live within the city limits. It is merely impossible to make personal contact with all of these citizens, but by working closely with all media outlets and by developing cost-effective methods of communicating with Hickory households, accurate information will be available to citizens.

The City of Hickory adopted a Total Quality Management philosophy in 1991. Providing quality service with an emphasis on customer service, process improvement and organizational efficiency is what guides the day-to-day operations of City staff.

The increasing role of communications in government is enabling us to further expand our customer service to citizens, visitors and businesses.

The Public Information Office is an essential tool in government that is the conduit to its citizens. These actions and goals for the next three years will help the office flourish and embark into a new level of communications in local government.

# **CITY OF CLAYTON**



## **Strategic Communication Plan**

**JUNE 2009**

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# CITY OF CLAYTON STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The world-class services provided by the City of Clayton build community pride, attract new residents to our neighborhoods, encourage business development, draw visitors to the community and attract capable employees, who are the backbone of the City's strong service levels.

Providing quality services with an emphasis on customer relations is the principle that guides Clayton's employees during their day-to-day operations. Providing professional and coordinated communication is essential to quality customer service.

## **II. COMMUNICATIONS TEAM**

The establishment of a communications team and this Strategic Communication Plan were in response to a directive by the City Manager. The establishment of a communications team enhances accountability and provides a mechanism for the coordination of all the City's communication efforts.

### **Communications Team Members**

*Gary Carter, Economic Development*  
*Dennis Davenport, Police Department*  
*Janet Eiserle, Parks & Recreation Department*  
*Jason Jaggi, Planning & Development Services*  
*Judy Kekich, Administration*  
*Paul Mercurio, Fire Department*  
*Danielle Oettle, Finance Department*  
*Gary Scheipeter, Public Works Department*  
*Sarah Umlauf, Parks & Recreation Department*  
*Darren Young, Parks & Recreation Department*  
*Robin Zlatic, MIS Department*

## **III. PLAN PRINCIPLES and GOALS**

### **Principles**

- This communication plan focuses on the expectations of the community.
- It supports and reinforces the City's goals to strengthen connections with citizens of Clayton, the region, the nation, the world.
- The intent of this communication plan is to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach.

- This communication plan introduces a process for communicating timely, accurate and useful information to residents in a coordinated professional fashion.
- It establishes a commitment to a two-way flow of information, which enhances community problem solving, both internally and externally. It is as important to receive feedback and gather information as it is to provide it.
- This plan reflects and reinforces the Vision established by the City.

### **Goals**

With this plan, the City strives to:

- improve staff interaction with all target audiences
- identify, create and budget for adequate resources to provide the most powerful communication strategy
- maintain visibility regionally, nationally, globally
- generate commerce
- enhance the City's image with tourists and business travelers
- develop a strong relationship with the media.

### **IV. PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

The new strategic communication plan is intended to serve as a guide to achieve the communication goals of the City in 2009 and beyond. Like every plan, it is an evolving document that will be updated as circumstances change and goals are achieved. This communications plan is based on criteria established by:

- action steps in Vision 2013: Build a Bright Future (a collaboration between elected officials and City staff) which stress the importance of communicating with community and engaging citizens
- the City's performance measurement scorecard that rank municipal services that are set by the International City Managers Association
- feedback provided by the results of the 2009 citizen survey
- input provided by forty-three frontline City employees, who responded to an internal survey that asked how and with whom they interact with the public and how often
- research conducted by members of the Clayton Communications Team.

### **V. TARGET AUDIENCES**

Identifying and prioritizing target audiences are key components of a communication strategy. Each strategy is composed to create the most effective process for reaching its target audience(s).

#### Primary Target Audiences

- Citizens
- Clayton businesses

- Daytime population
- City officials and employees

Secondary Target Audiences

- School District
- Media
- Visitors
- Tourists
- Government entities

**VI. COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

Elevating the community’s awareness of accomplishments by each City department connects the perception with the reality.

The following is an inventory of the communication tools utilized by the City of Clayton. Identifying the audience(s) and evaluating each of these tools helps to maintain or improve its effectiveness.

1. City Website [www.ci.clayton.mo.us](http://www.ci.clayton.mo.us)

Description	The City’s websites is the communication tool that reaches the greatest number of people and target audiences. The website saves staff time – every question answered, form and application downloaded from the website represents one less phone call, email or letter that must be fielded by staff freeing staff time and saving tax dollars. (In 2007, Clayton’s website received 92,216 visits; in 2008, the number had grown to 108,397 visits.)
Audience	All audiences
Evaluation	Based on the benchmarks from the annual citizen survey and the online employee survey conducted by the communications team, upgrading the City’s website to make it more user-friendly and serviceable is a major priority. Employees indicated that online survey forms, a frequently ask questions section, improved site map and online payments features should be added. At 338 pages, Clayton’s site has grown and requires more and more work to keep its content consistent and up-to-date.
Recommendation	Contract with a new content management system vendor to upgrade the City website. Where possible, coordinate the design with other components of the City’s communication strategy and include interactive software features and a user-friendly editing program.

## 2. CityViews

- Description:** The City's bi-monthly newsletter is mailed to (approximately 9,600 copies) 2,000 Clayton businesses and approximately 7,600 residential households. Feedback from the annual citizen survey indicates that the newsletter is the primary source by which citizens obtain information about community services and activities. The survey administrator ETC Institute indicated that the newsletter provides consistent updates to the residents, who have come to rely on the newsletter as their source of information about the City – it is an important contributor to the City's high survey ratings.
- Audience:** The citizens of Clayton are the primary target audience.
- Evaluation:** The newsletter provides information about major issues being addressed by City officials and highlights the accomplishments and special achievements by various City departments and staff members. It features outstanding citizens and provides notices about elections, meetings and events.
- Recommendation:** It is recommended that the City maintain the current format and continue to publish the newsletter.

## 3. New Technology

- Description:** New communication tools that are functions of the website and through the Internet have the potential to reach broader audiences. Examples include YouTube, Twitter, Blogging, Select Link (emergency alert program) and E-Subscribe.
- Audience:** All primary and secondary audiences
- Evaluation:** The City's website currently has limited interactive or multi-media functionality. Select Link and the E-Subscribe services are currently used but could be expanded to reach a broader audience. YouTube and Twitter offer the ability to communicate from third-party websites and could contain informational material or regularly posted news and updates.
- Recommendation:** Expand the ability of the website to include additional multi-media and interactive capabilities. Expand the

subscribers of the E-service and Select Link notification systems through increased promotion. Experiment with YouTube and/or Twitter to determine the effectiveness of these new media.

#### 4. Citizen Survey

**Description:** The citizen survey is mailed to randomly selected Clayton households annually. The overall objective of the research is to monitor the community's opinions and expectations about services the City provides.

**Audience:** The citizens of Clayton are the primary target audience, City officials and staff are secondary audiences.

**Evaluation:** The questions are carefully drafted to elicit specific information that help elected officials and City staff better serve the community. City staff and elected officials then evaluate survey results, develop the appropriate response and allocate resources.

2009 marked the first year in several years that the City conducted a citizen survey. The City is using the 2009 survey results to evaluate service performance measures. This process helps the City internally gauge its progress in the delivery of services, compare its performance to other municipalities and develop goals for the future.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the City continue publishing annual citizen surveys and reporting the results.

#### 5. Clayton Connection

**Description:** The weekly e-mail to over 1,200 readers provides updates on City events, activities and meetings, special announcements and emergency alerts.

**Audience:** The messages are received by subscribers to Clayton Connection.

**Evaluation:** Feedback about the e-mail updates is positive. However, to make them more effective, the City must implement a recruitment campaign. Requests to subscribe online will be published in all brochures and print material distributed by the City.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the City continue to issue the weekly updates and work to increase the list of recipients to the current system by including subscription information in as many City issued resources as possible. Alternatives to the current system will be studied to determine if they would be more user-friendly and cost effective. E-newsletter software should also be considered as a feature in the new website.

## 6. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

**Description:** The City's current customer care system used by Public Works employees is a data base and tracking system that intakes residential and business inquiries and complaints with subsequent follow-up from City departments.

**Audience:** Residential and business citizens

**Evaluation:** The system should track residential and business inquiries and complaints with subsequent follow-up by staff. It should be geo-coded, web based and accessed by residents, businesses and staff.

**Recommendation:** Review various customer care/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programs with a focus on an Internet portal feature for residents and businesses.

## 7. Government Access Channel 10

**Description:** The government-access television channel broadcasts informational slides with dates and times of events and meetings, City Hall closures and emergency alerts to Clayton Charter Cable TV subscribers.

**Audience:** The citizens of Clayton who subscribe to Charter Communication cable access.

**Evaluation:** It is possible to maintain full-time television programming via the government access channel. However, the current system will only support the video component of audio-video files. New fiber optics must be installed to upgrade the system to broadcast audio-video files. The Communications Team understands the potential of this medium and continues to study the viability and cost effectiveness of expanding the programming capabilities.

There are several variables when considering a system upgrade:

- Charter fiber must be brought into City Hall – the cost: approximately \$16,000.
- Broadcasting and editing equipment may need to be upgraded and/or purchased.
- Staff would need to be assigned and trained to use the editing and broadcasting systems.
- Charter Communications future as a viable cable provider is in question, given their current financial circumstances and bankruptcy issues.

Recommendation: The Communications Committee determined that in light of Charter Communications unstable financial situation, the cost to install the new Charter fiber optics may not be a fiscally responsible expenditure at this time. Should Charter Communications be purchased or dissolve, the future of the City's free government access station is currently unclear. The committee determined the best course of action at this time is to wait until the future of Channel 10 is more apparent.

## 8. Automated Voice Message Alert System

Description: The "Crime Phone" is a community notification system used to inform subscribers of criminal activity, crime prevention information, emergency information and instructions, and status updates on arrests and clearances. The system offers community notifications via automated voice recordings for those preferring a phone call versus an email notification.

Audience: The primary target audiences are City residents and businesses.

Evaluation: This subscriber based technology sends "Crime Phone" messages to specific neighborhoods, wards or the entire City. The City incurs a cost for each call placed through this service. The system could be expanded to allow all departments to send automated voice messages as an alternate subscription method of email notifications.

Recommendation: While determining the usefulness of current subscription service technology for departments other than the Police Department, the Communications Team will research the use of newer technology, such as Select Link.

## 9. City's Annual Report

- Description:** The annual budget report provides budget details for the new fiscal year and illustrates the City's strong financial footing.
- Audience:** City officials and employees and the citizens and businesses of Clayton.
- Evaluation:** The annual budget report and financial summaries are published to provide transparency in government fiscal operations and to account for public funds. The budget document and periodic financial summaries are effective in communicating the City's finances.
- Recommendation:** It is recommended that the budget document and periodic financial summaries continue to be made available to the public on the City's website and at City Hall.

#### 10. News Releases

- Description:** Prepared publicity items that provide breaking news about the City. Releases are emailed or faxed to local and national print publications, television and radio stations.
- Audience:** The primary audiences are local and national media sources and ultimately the general public.
- Evaluation:** The releases share relevant and exciting news. Depending on the media source, a national reach can help with economic development.
- Recommendation:** Continue to issue releases to media locally and nationally.

#### 11. Public Forums

- Description:** Forums for open discussion where participants have an opportunity to express opinions and give input. These forums include neighborhood and Ward meetings, Town Hall meetings and meetings with business and special interest groups. Community leaders, City officials or staff members host or attend these meetings to conduct training and to provide pertinent information.
- Audience:** Clayton citizens, businesses, subdivision associations and special interest groups.
- Evaluation:** In addition to the regularly scheduled Board of Aldermen and other committee meetings (all open to the public),

special public forums facilitate information exchange and encourage resident engagement. The forums include the Sunday Coffees in Wards I and II, meetings with subdivision associations and personal safety classes. They provide an informal venue for sharing information and discussing current topics directly related to activities in that particular area or neighborhood or other challenges before the Board.

Recommendation: Continue to conduct special forums and Town Hall meetings to promote public involvement and citizen input. Continue to include questions in the annual citizen survey that request citizens' opinions and input about staff interaction with citizens.

## 12. Brochures, Maps and Booklets

Description: Various print pieces including the Clayton Retail Guide, the Parks and Recreation Activities Brochures, City map, other material published by the Parks and Recreation, Police and Fire Departments and Locating a Business in Clayton. The Clayton Retail Guide contains listings of all retail businesses, restaurants, hotels and personal services. It is distributed widely by the City, Clayton Chamber, hotels, retail businesses and from regional hotels and visitor centers. The CBD map provides in a three-dimensional design and identifies the location of office buildings, hotels, public parking and public facilities. The Citywide map and a map of the St. Louis metropolitan area are on the reverse side. These maps are also widely distributed and used by hotels, retail businesses and St. Louis County to help direct visitors to various locations in Clayton.

Audience: The Parks and Recreation brochures focus primarily on informing Clayton residents and members of The Center in Clayton. The other material is distributed to the general public.

Evaluation: The Guide was created to stimulate business and is regarded as an important economic development tool.

In the annual citizen survey, the Parks and Recreation brochure was ranked second among the sources by which citizens obtain information about City activities and is a valuable resource.

Hotel employees, retail businesses and St. Louis County employees find the CBD/Citywide map a valuable resource for directing visitors to various locations in Clayton.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the City continue to publish the Clayton Retail Guide, Parks and Recreation brochure, CBD/Citywide maps and personal safety material published by the Police and Fire Departments.

### 13. Direct Mail/Written Correspondence

**Description:** Besides official City business, direct mail is generally used by City staff to inform residents and businesses about activities or projects.

**Audience:** Clayton residents and businesses, Clayton School District, vendors and other governmental entities.

**Evaluation:** Letters are mailed to residents and businesses in areas where activities are planned allowing them time to prepare for the upcoming activity.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the City continue to include written correspondence as a communication tool.

### 14. Other Print Material

**Description:**

- In conjunction with written correspondence, door hangers are used to alert residents of Public Works activities in a particular neighborhood.
- Banners are used to identify and define particular areas and neighborhoods or to announce details about special events.
- Posters are generally used in conjunction with banners to promote special events.

**Audience:** Door hangers are used to inform Clayton residents of neighborhood activities; banners and posters to inform the general public.

**Evaluation:** The Public Works Department finds the use of door hangers in conjunction with written correspondence an efficient, effective and thorough communication process.

Because there are times during the year when a proliferation of decorative, lamppost banners are on

display, the Communication Team is reviewing, and plans to make changes, to the Banner Policy.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City continue to use door hangers, posters and banners.

#### 15. Message Boards

Description: Message boards are used primarily to inform the public of activities that will affect vehicular traffic. Periodically, they are used to announce major events, i.e., the Saint Louis Art Fair and the Taste of Clayton.

Audience: The general public.

Evaluation: The Public Works Department finds that message boards are more noticeable than any other form of communication and are the best method for alerting commuters and visitors of traffic situations related to street construction and special events.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City continue to use message boards.

#### 16. Special Events

Description: Special events provide entertainment and a gathering place for the Clayton citizens and visitors from around the region.

Audience: The general public.

Evaluation: Events bring visitors to Clayton, which helps promote Clayton businesses. The events bring visitors that might not come to Clayton for any other reason. They help establish a positive image for the City and create visibility for the businesses. Events such as Musical Nights in Oak Knoll Park establish goodwill between the City and its citizens.

Recommendation: Because Clayton is known for its impressive special events calendar, it is recommended that the City continue conducting major special events such as the Saint Louis Art Fair and Taste of Clayton as well as community-oriented events.

## **VII. STRATEGIES**

This plan offers strategies to improve the communication experience for all Clayton customers, to create awareness of the City’s world-class services and to help promote commerce and economic development.

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### Implementation:

PRIORITY 1: work begins immediately with results within six months to twelve months

PRIORITY 2: work begins immediately with results expected in twelve to eighteen months

PRIORITY 3: implemented annually

ONGOING

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### ***1. Municipal Website***

#### ISSUES

- Major changes are needed to make the City’s existing website more intuitive and interactive.
- Increasing demands for more sophisticated web content make it harder for web editors to keep up with the current trends requiring more time, training and resources.

GOAL: Increase and facilitate accessibility to information and services by maintaining and improving a municipal website that is comprehensive, intuitive, and interactive.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Solicit vendor proposals to revamp the City’s existing website.
2. Improve the site by using the new interactive website software.
3. Develop a management plan to ensure every page is accurate and fresh.
4. Publish periodic online surveys to solicit opinions on how the site should be improved.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

- MIS, Communications Coordinator, department web editors

PRIORITY— upgrade: Priority 1; maintenance: ongoing

## **2. New Technologies**

### ISSUES

- Staying abreast of and implementing new technologies and web standards help the City expand its communication reach and effectiveness.

GOAL: Broaden the City's communication reach by using a diverse set of communication tools and technology.

### STRATEGIES

1. Evaluate existing communication tools and their capacity to reach target audiences.
2. Use seminars, webinars and training to learn about updates to existing communication tools and new technologies.
3. Establish new methods for reaching the largest portion of our target audiences.
4. Evaluate current communication efforts with daytime population and use new technologies to enhance the flow of information to this audience, such as Select Link.
5. Working with the MIS Department and the new marketing consultant, the Communications Team will determine the effectiveness and target audiences reached by Select Link, Twitter and YouTube.

### RESPONSIBILITY

- Communications Coordinator, Communications Team

PRIORITY: 1

## **3. Government Access Channel**

### ISSUES

- Clayton's cable Channel 10 has potential but is being underutilized. The channel currently displays informational slides with dates and times of events and meetings, City Hall closures and emergency alerts. The Communication Team understands the potential of this medium and continues to study the viability and cost effectiveness of expanding the programming capabilities.

GOAL: Maintain a government access channel that provides timely information, interesting programs and encourages viewing. Expand its capacity and programming capability.

### STRATEGIES

If it is determined that the installation of new fiber optics is cost effective and the City's cable provider Charter Communications has regained its financial stability:

1. Determine cost to install fiber optics that will expand the cable channel's capacity.
2. Coordinate with the City's MIS Department and Charter Communications on implementing an upgrade.
3. Issue a Request for Qualifications from videographers to create informational videos.
4. Solicit vendor proposals for expanded programming.
5. Include programming directed toward visitors who stay in Clayton hotels.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

- Communications Coordinator, MIS Department

PRIORITY—upgrade: Priority 2; maintenance: ongoing

### ***4. Marketing***

#### ISSUES

- Creating an effective marketing strategy will enhance the customers' perception of the City and the services it provides.

GOAL: Working with the new marketing consultant, improve customer awareness of existing City services and establish a marketing plan that promotes Clayton as the best place to live, work, play and do business.

#### STRATEGIES

Working with the new marketing consultant:

1. Assess City-provided services.
2. Identify marketing potential.
3. Create and implement a strategy that promotes Clayton as a destination and world-class service provider.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

- Communications Office, Economic Developer

PRIORITY: 2

### ***5. Economic Development***

#### ISSUES

- Economic development is essential to ensure the continued health of Clayton businesses, City finances and the quality of life for its residents.
- Economic development activities allow Clayton to compete with other cities throughout the nation and world for business locations.

GOAL: Establish an economic development plan for Clayton thereby increasing the economic vitality of the City.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Create new community profile for marketing purposes.
2. Create marketing material targeted to specific industry sectors and site locators.
3. Survey existing businesses for current level of satisfaction of doing business in Clayton.
4. Implement an incentive policy with a related application and review procedure.
5. Promote special events.
6. Implement a business retention program.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

- Economic Developer, City Planning, Communications Coordinator

PRIORITY: 2

### ***6. Intergovernmental Communications***

#### ISSUES

- Improving communications with other municipalities, St. Louis County and the Clayton School District strengthens partnerships with these entities.

GOAL: Maintain a consistent line of communication with the various governmental entities and the School District.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Police Chief, Fire Department personnel and other selected City staff meet regularly with school district officials and principals to discuss needs and issues.
2. Establish active relationships with representatives at Washington University, Fontbonne University and Concordia Seminary for information sharing, recruitment and internships, and mutual aid agreements.
3. Provide educational services and emergency management information for the School District and private schools and institutions of higher education in Clayton.
4. Develop internal departmental protocols to monitor required governmental reporting and correspondence.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

- The Police and Fire Departments play a significant role in communicating with other governmental agencies as well as the School District. It is, however, a shared responsibility of all City departments.

PRIORITY: 2

### **7. Monitoring**

#### ISSUES

- Monitoring is essential to ensure that the City's Communication Strategy is meeting the needs of the community.
- Evaluating and modifying the City's existing communication tools and strategies keeps them in sync with and responsive to the needs and expectation of the community.

GOAL: Maintain a communication strategy with Clayton citizens that adapts to their needs and expectations using the feedback from the annual citizen survey.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Continue to include questions in the annual citizen survey requesting citizens' opinions and input about communicating and interacting with the City.
2. Announce 2009 survey results capitalizing on the incredibly positive results. Where improvements are needed, explain specific measures the City will take to better its performance.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

- Communications Coordinator, Communications Team

PRIORITY: 3

### **8. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)**

#### ISSUES

- Good customer service strengthens the City reputation, public perception and relationship with Clayton citizens.

GOAL: Provide consistent and professional interaction with customers and the media.

#### STRATEGIES

1. Ensure that accurate information is provided to the community and the media.
2. Establish a coordinated interdepartmental communication effort/Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) program.
3. Develop Customer Care standards and training program to improve the quality of customer interaction and create a seamless communication experience for the customer by providing material/programs that facilitates thorough and quick response.

4. Incorporate communication procedures and the required reinforcement training into Human Resources materials and job descriptions.

RESPONSIBILITY

- Communication Coordinator, Communication Team

PRIORITY: 1

**9. Citizen Engagement and Participation**

ISSUES

- An effective outreach program establishes goodwill.
- An informed public translates into positive attitude from the community.

GOAL: Maintain a proactive program to keep the community informed of opportunities for interaction and information sharing.

STRATEGIES

1. Consistently publish information about meeting locations and schedules on the website, in weekly Clayton Connection emails, in CityViews newsletter and to the media when applicable.
2. Coordinate with Ward and neighborhood meeting organizers to ensure that appropriate staff members are on hand.
3. Implement a program where dedicated speakers are available to make presentations on various topics; publish a brochure about the program.

RESPONSIBILITY

- Department Directors, Communications Coordinator

PRIORITY: ongoing

**10. Print Material**

ISSUES

- Making information readily available enhances the public perception of transparency.
- Proactively distributing information will increase the citizens' awareness, which in the case of material from Police and Fire will help protect them, and reduce the amount of time spent responding to questions.

GOAL: Provide and promote the availability of information from all departments.

## STRATEGIES

1. Identify key publications from all departments to distribute at community events.
2. Work with Clayton Parks & Recreation and other community agencies to distribute print material.
3. Refine material such as the Locating a Business in Clayton booklet by including Ward, Zoning and Citywide maps.

## RESPONSIBILITY

- Communication Coordinator, Communication Team

PRIORITY: ongoing

### ***11. Design Consistency***

## ISSUES

- A consistent look, design and message help establish recognition and branding.

GOAL: Ensure consistency in the appearance of City communications.

## STRATEGIES

Working with the new marketing consultant:

1. Ensure consistency and quality of content and appearance of Citywide and departmental communications material.
2. Create a clear and identifiable look for all communication.
3. Establish guidelines for the use of City logo.
4. Monitor and revise guidelines in the Banner Policy to regulate.

## RESPONSIBILITY

- Communication Coordinator, Communication Team

PRIORITY: ongoing

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

This document is designed to provide the communication analysis, concepts and strategies to ensure our target audiences receive necessary information. It provides opportunities for greater involvement by residents. It creates the foundation for more ambitious communications strategies in the future.

This project could not have been completed without the efforts of the Communication Team and other frontline staff members. Thanks to the members of the Communications Team for providing their insight and help with research, analysis and writing this strategy.

## Appendix A:

### **Media Relations Policy**

The following procedures and standards will be used by all departments as applicable to media relations within the City of Clayton. Refer questions to the Communication Coordinator.

1. **Spokesperson.** In most cases, there will be one spokesperson designated for responding to each media inquiry. For Citywide inquiries, the spokesperson will most often be the City Manager or the Communication Coordinator. For department-related issues, the spokesperson will most often be the Department Director. The spokesperson will work directly with the Communication Coordinator to ensure that information for specific media issues is communicated appropriately.
2. **Primary City Contact.** The City Manager and the Communication Coordinator will serve as the primary source of City information, providing background information about City issues, projects and services.
3. **Responsiveness.** Priority attention will be given to all media inquiries. Every effort should be made to meet the media's deadlines and ensure that all information released is accurate. Accuracy of information takes precedence over media deadlines. If another priority prevents an immediate response, a courtesy call should be made to the reporter confirming the information being requested and advising when the City's response will be made.
4. **Non-routine Media Requests.** These types of requests should be forwarded to the City Manager or Deputy City Manager prior to response. These may include responses that require the interpretation of policy, employee information or emergency situations.
5. **Sensitive and Controversial Issues.** These issues often become headlines for the news media. Sensitive and controversial issues pertaining to internal operations of the City should be immediately forwarded to the City Manager or Deputy City Manager to prepare for and respond to media inquiries.
6. **Public Records Requests.** Public records requests from the general public or media must be made in writing in accordance with the City's Request for Public Records policy. All public records requests will be forwarded to the City Clerk immediately upon receipt.
7. **News Releases.** News releases will be prepared and issued by the Communication Coordinator as newsworthy information becomes available or as events occur.
8. **News Conferences.** News conferences will be held at the direction of the Mayor or the City Manager to announce or respond to an issue of significance or controversy. The City will respond with a united voice pertaining to facts, information, rules and emergency or crisis procedures in a manner consistent with the established policies and rules of the City.

- a. News conferences will be planned in advance and coordinated by the Communication Coordinator
- b. A spokesperson for the news conference will be or selected by the Mayor.

**9. Emergency Public Information.** The City may experience emergency situations, which require the dissemination of critical information to the public and news media. Public information is critical to alerting citizens of an impending emergency, directing and informing them during the emergency, performing rumor control and assisting them in the recovery process. In the event of a disaster or major emergency the City will activate an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to manage the overall event and a Public Information Center to disseminate emergency instructions and related information.

As detailed in Section XI of the city's basic Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), the Director of Emergency Management will designate an Emergency Public Information Center (EPIC) when activation of the EOC occurs. A Public Information Officer (PIO) will then function as the chief spokesperson and be responsible to manage Public Information Center actions in a coordinated fashion with the EOC, as well as federal, state and county officials.

The Mayor is designated as the city's primary PIO. A function that will be supported by trained city staff.

***Communications Protocols: Responding to Media Inquiries***

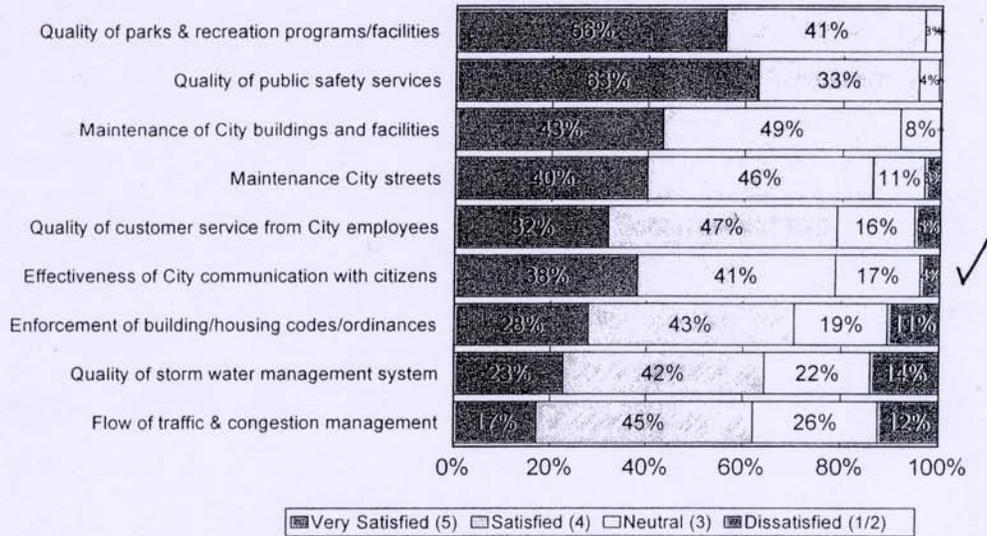
The following protocols should be adhered to when City staff and representatives respond to media inquiries. Direct questions to the Communication Coordinator

- 1. City Employee and Representative Responsibilities and Guidelines**  
It is the responsibility of City employees to immediately notify their supervisors or department directors of significant events or issue;
- 2. Department Director Responsibilities and Guidelines**
  - a. It is the responsibility of department directors to immediately notify the City Manager or Communication Coordinator of significant events and issues that occur within their departments that may be of major interest to the general public.
  - b. The Department Directors may be asked to respond under their purview.
- 3. Media Contact Guidelines**  
Department Directors
  - a. Ask about the story's focus, the reporter's deadline and the story publication date;
  - b. Respond only to media inquiries within your purview;
  - c. Administrative staff should give priority to phone calls from reporters.
  - d. Media inquiries should be responded to within two to four hours of receiving the request;
  - e. Do not make judgmental comments about official City policy;
  - f. Do not offer legal opinions on City policies or activities;
  - g. Do not discuss City employees or personnel actions;
  - h. Do not speculate about what action the City will take;

- 4. The Communication Coordinator Will Prepare News Releases**
- a. The City Manager has the overall authority and responsibility for the dissemination of public information. The Communication Coordinator will work with the City Manager as necessary when releasing information to the public and the media;
  - b. The Communication Coordinator will maintain a media contact list;
  - c. News releases will contain contact information for the Communication Coordinator and other City staff as designated;
  - d. News releases will be distributed by e-mail when available (by fax when e-mail is not available) to appropriate broadcast and print media

### Q1. Overall Satisfaction With City Services by Major Category

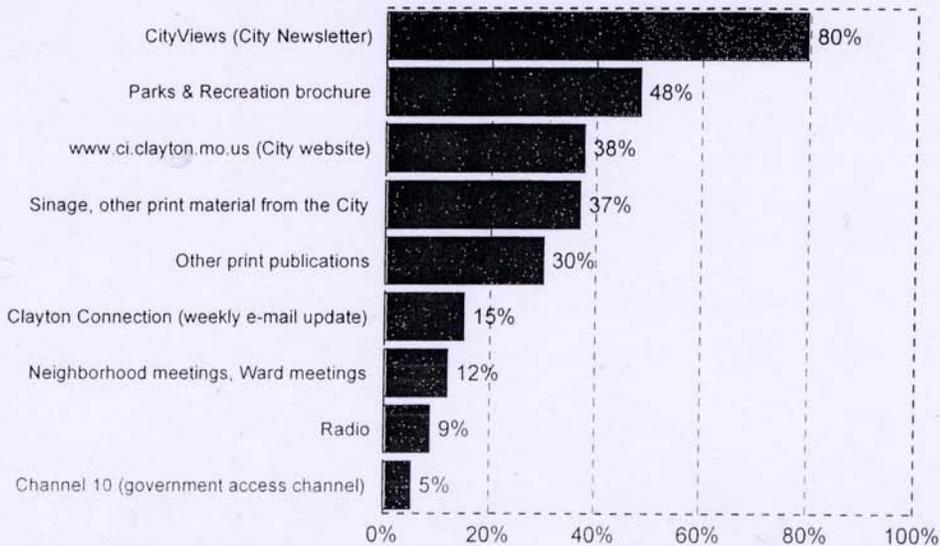
by percentage of respondents who rated the item as a 1 to 5 on a 5-point scale (excluding don't knows)



Source: ETC Institute DirectionFinder (March 2009 - Clayton, MO)

### Q25. Primary Sources of Information about Activities and Services in the Community

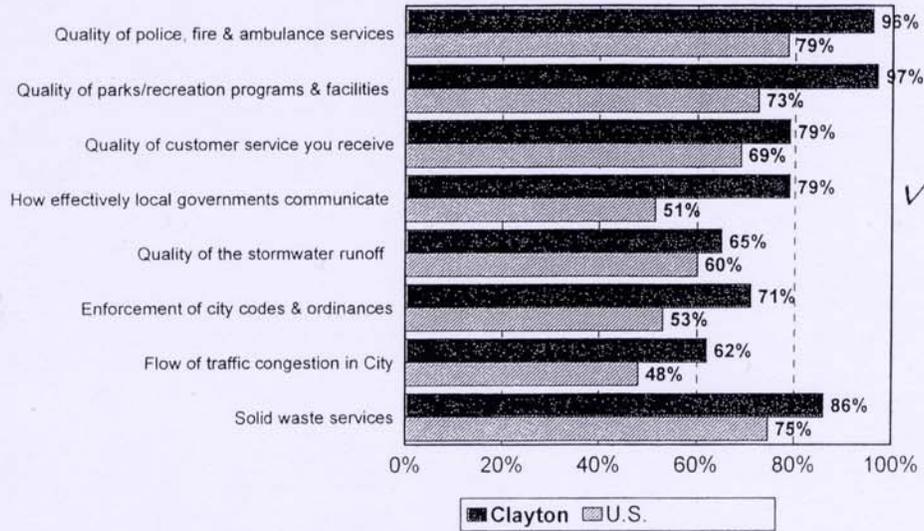
by percentage of respondents (multiple responses were allowed)



Source: ETC Institute DirectionFinder (March 2009 - Clayton, MO)

## Overall Satisfaction with City Services: City of Clayton vs. U.S.

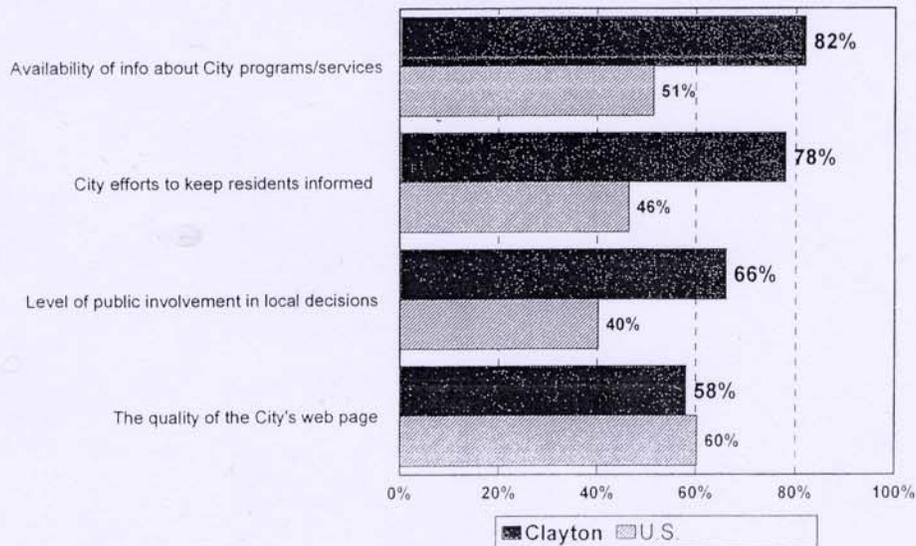
by percentage of respondents who rated the item 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 was "very satisfied" and 1 was "very dissatisfied" (excluding don't knows)



Source: ETC Institute Survey (2009 Clayton Citizen Survey)

## Overall Satisfaction with City Communication: City of Clayton vs. U.S.

by percentage of respondents who rated the item 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 was "very satisfied" and 1 was "very dissatisfied"



Source: ETC Institute Survey (2009 Clayton Citizen Survey)



**City of Red Wing, Minnesota**  
**Communications Plan**



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## City of Red Wing Communications Plan

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### **I. Project background and methodology**

In 2006, seeing a need to view a holistic picture of its recent communications efforts, and evaluate room for improvement, the City of Red Wing opted to complete a comprehensive communications plan.

The plan provides a helpful “snapshot” of where communications for the City of Red Wing are today. After conducting a thorough audit of existing methods and focus groups involving Red Wing residents, city administrators, city staff, and elected and appointed officials, the results in this plan present an accurate picture of where the city is today, and where it could take communications in the coming years.

The communications plan document will provide a number of recommendations for improving marketing and communications over the next 2-3 years, some of which can be implemented with limited or no additional city funding.

The Red Wing communications plan was completed using the following process:

- Conducting a thorough audit of the city’s current communications practices and a comprehensive review of its elements (newsletter, web site, media relations, television, logo use, e-mail use, etc.). This exposed any gaps that exist and revealed the city’s many strengths in public communications.

- Gauging the effectiveness of the city's current communications practices with focus groups, including city residents, Red Wing City Council members; and Red Wing internal staff members and city department heads.
- Presenting a draft plan to city staff to ensure accuracy and receive recommendations for changes.
- Delivering the finalized communications plan to the City Council for feedback and approval.
- Following up in 9-12 months with follow-up interviews regarding effectiveness of city communications with residents, staff, and elected officials.

### **Focus group questions**

The following questions were asked of each focus group, with slight variations based on focus group members. Most interactions lasted from 30 to 60 minutes.

- 1.) In your opinion, which is the most-effective communications method the city presently uses? Why? What do you hear from residents?
- 2.) Which is the least-effective communications method being used? Why? What do you hear from residents?
- 3.) Residents look to the city newsletter as a primary source of city information. Are there parts of the city newsletter that could be improved or expanded?
- 4.) Would you describe the city's relationship with the *Republican Eagle* newspaper as excellent, good, fair, or poor?
- 5.) How would you rate the new city web site, on a scale of 1 to 10? What are some ways the city could encourage more people to use the Red Wing web site to obtain information?
- 6.) Cable television has been used by the city to televise council meetings for years. Has television been an effective medium for communicating city information?
- 7.) What are some additional ways you feel the city could communicate with residents?
- 8.) For your particular city department, what are your greatest resident communication needs? How do most people find out about your department's news?
- 9.) Is there a "grapevine" in the city, and if so, how does the city fare in these conversations?
- 10.) Anything else you'd like to add about City of Red Wing communications efforts?

### **II. Outcomes statement**

The goal of the Red Wing Communications Plan is to provide the city with a guide to maximize effective communications with current and future residents and businesses. Accordingly, the plan will provide guidance on how to inform and empower all

stakeholders to become more engaged members of the community. The plan will also provide realistic timeframes for accomplishing these goals in the coming months and years.

### **III. Communications philosophy**

The City of Red Wing is committed to developing and maintaining an interactive partnership with all segments of the community. This can only be achieved through ongoing and meaningful communication among and between citizens, elected officials, city boards and commissions, businesses, community-based organizations, and employees.

The city is further committed to a proactive approach to communications, seeking to identify issues as they develop and promote a dialogue about them with relevant target audiences. The role of communications is to provide timely information on city programs, services, and activities and develop feedback opportunities to ensure that our efforts meet the community's needs.

City departments are encouraged to contact communications staff when there is an issue that needs to be communicated such as service changes, new projects, citizen involvement initiatives, positive success stories, milestones and hot issues. It is crucial to understand that this includes news that can be perceived as negative and to communicate these issues and the rationale behind them. Communications staff will help evaluate the situation, who may be impacted or be interested, establish outcomes, develop key messages and identify the best communication tools to use.

Effective communications will...

- Help policy-makers and constituents cooperatively formulate and achieve common goals.
- Support the city's philosophy of providing quality services to all customers equitably, in a responsive and caring manner.
- Strengthen the city's image and build support for municipal programs.
- Enable residents to take full advantage of city services.
- Educate and enhance citizens' understanding of issues facing the city.
- Promote understanding of, and compliance with, city ordinances.
- Reinforce a sense of openness that encourages citizen participation in local government.
- Foster a sense of community among Red Wing residents.
- Foster cooperative relationships with other units of government, business and civic groups, and organizations active in Red Wing.
- Encourage communication among customers, community groups, council members, and city employees.

## IV. Communications objectives

- 1.) Develop and maintain communications materials and programs to provide information to citizens, businesses, and other audiences regarding city programs and services, council policies, ordinances, city improvement projects, and developments that affect them.
- 2.) To effectively use local and regional news media to communicate with target audiences.
- 3.) To identify potential issues and develop a specific communications strategy for dealing with them.
- 4.) Develop a crisis communications plan that clearly identifies how and by whom information will be disseminated to the city's elected officials, the public, the media, and other target audiences in the event of a crisis.
- 5.) Provide feedback mechanisms so city customers may comment about City Council actions, city staff, city services, and programs.
- 6.) Actively participate in telecommunications opportunities (such as public access) available to the city and implement programs that are economically feasible and practical.
- 7.) Promote effective internal communications through regular exchange of information and programs that enable city employees to perform their jobs more efficiently, cooperatively, and with a greater sense of satisfaction.
- 8.) Promote effective government-to-government communication through regular informal meetings with the County Board, School Board, and the Prairie Island Tribal Council.
- 9.) Work with community groups, neighborhoods, the business community, and various organizations in communicating news and information to target audiences.
- 10.) Designate a Communications Coordinator to achieve the objectives outlined in the Communications Plan.

## V. Target audiences

The City of Red Wing's key target audiences for the communications plan are:

- **Current residents** (Inform them, keep them engaged in the city, make them feel like they are "stakeholders" of the city and deserve to be kept "in the loop.")
- **Current business owners** (Show them support for locating in Red Wing, inform them of local ordinances, ensure they are receiving accurate information to help their business thrive in the city.)
- **Prospective residents** (Recruit them to live in the city and help them become a productive part of our community.)
- **Prospective business owners** (Recruit them to locate in the city and improve municipal tax revenue. Red Wing can recruit new businesses by showcasing its

user-friendly city services, great location, tourist attractions and any applicable development incentives.)

- **Residents and government officials in bordering cities** (Maintain a positive reputation for Red Wing, help build bridges between communities for mutual benefit, and encourage intergovernmental partnerships.)
- **Business owners in bordering cities** (Engage the Red Wing Chamber membership, actively promote what is happening in Red Wing.)
- **State and federal legislators, other government officials, including Goodhue County.**
- **Other members of general public in the region** (Portray a positive image of Red Wing to the greater area, which has limited knowledge of your amenities and activities.)
- **City employees and elected officials**
- **Business associations and civic groups**
- **News media**

## **VI. Communications Audit:**

### **Key findings and common themes**

#### **Current communications practices: Listing/partial summary/examples**

*Current* newsletter (monthly)  
 City web site – [www.red-wing.org](http://www.red-wing.org)  
 Cable television  
 Collateral materials  
 Promotional posters  
 Local media  
 Assistance to mayor and council in media relations  
 Phone system and voice mail  
 Advertising  
 Other

#### **Current communications practices: Details**

The City of Red Wing presently uses the services of the Assistant Council Administrator for its communications work. There is an additional part-time Communications Coordinator who works on communications issues 14 hours per week, as well as one FT and two PT employees for the local government access channel.

This arrangement at times can present a challenge for the Assistant Council Administrator, who is also responsible for many city management-related activities. The addition of a part-time staff person (Communications Coordinator) in 2005 has been helpful in this regard.

Here is a summary of the city's current communications vehicles and practices:

**Current city newsletter:** Published on a monthly basis. 16-20 pages. Contains information from most city departments as well as community-oriented stories from local agencies and residents. Articles typically cover "need-to-know" data for residents such as council action summaries, city events, and guidelines on snow removal, tree trimming, garbage collection, etc.

Information is compiled by the Communications Coordinator and Assistant Council Administrator. The newsletter is distributed to all households and businesses in Red Wing.

**City web site:** The current Red Wing web site offers information about city departments, council meetings, and some community events. The main navigation menu includes the categories: "Visiting; Doing Business; Living in Red Wing; City Government; City History; and Event Calendar." There are also menus for "Important Links" and an "Urgent Message." A new content management system web site was developed in 2003 to allow minor changes to be made by clerical support staff in each department/division.

**Cable television:** The city's Channel 6 cable television channel includes programming such as: live and taped meetings of the Red Wing City Council, Advisory Planning Commission, Airport Board, Port Authority, Library Board, Harbor Commission, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and the Sheldon Theatre Board.

Channel 6 features the monthly *News Notes* show. This program covers a variety of city-related topics.

**Collateral materials:** Red Wing publishes brochures and flyers to inform residents about upcoming events and helpful city information from departments and divisions. A Resident Guide is also produced annually and distributed to all residents and businesses. Direct mail pieces are also used in certain situations to communicate with specific groups or citywide.

**Local media:** News releases to the media (non-public safety) concerning key issues are currently written by staff. Final editing and distribution is done by the Assistant Council Administrator. Columns are submitted to the *Republican Eagle* intermittently by the Assistant Council Administrator on behalf of the Council Administrator and other staff.

**Assistance to mayor and council in media relations:** Assistant Council Administrator is responsible for updating the Council Administrator, mayor and council members on topics that may receive press coverage, and offering guidance for interviews.

**Phone system and voice mail:** Often the first impression of the city, the phone system, voice mail, and the phone skills of people answering calls must not be underestimated in a communications strategy. A new phone system has been installed within the past year – staff reports this has worked well to connect callers with “live people.”

**Advertising:** Ads are placed on local radio stations and in the local daily newspaper.

**Other:** The city uses other media resources as appropriate. These include: legal notices, advertisements, letters to the editor, guest columns, and guest appearances on cable and other programs.

## VII. Focus group results:

*Several key themes emerged during the formation of this plan, following focus groups held with the Red Wing City Council, board and commission members, residents, city administrators, and city staff members. The main themes discovered include:*

**Getting good news published in the paper will help buffer “bad” stories because the media will tend to give the city the benefit of the doubt and be less negative when pursuing a story.**

**The design of the *Current* makes it readable and inviting. It may be too long, however, and could instead direct people to the city web site.**

**The *Current* newsletter is the city’s most effective communication piece, but cannot stand alone. In particular, a monthly publication from the city is not “fresh” enough and needs to be supplemented by other means.**

**“Everyone is a sentinel for the city regardless of which department you work for or where you live. People think you are the city (when you are an employee).”**

**While reaching a large number of residents on a frequent basis, the *Republican Eagle* newspaper gets mixed reviews for its accuracy and coverage of key events and important city issues. The relationship with the paper could be improved upon.**

**City should consider purchasing advertising space in *Republican Eagle* more regularly to ensure certain messages reach residents.**

**Develop better relations with the media and distribute more news releases to proactively drive the news and receive more coverage. Currently there is enough**

news, but it's not always positive. Some department directors said they prefer getting no coverage at all.

Channel 6 has had a dramatic improvement in the past few years.

The frequency in which information reaches citizens needs to improve.

As more citizens look to the Internet for information, the Red Wing city web site must continue to be a focus. 2/3 of households have a computer, 98% of those have web access.

There is a need to reach a "critical mass" of easily accessible web-based information.

Web site needs to be interactive with the ability to pay bills, etc.

The web site is in need of major changes, if not a complete overhaul.

E-mail and electronic newsletters can be effective tools if used correctly.

A considerable number of focus group participants said they watch city meetings and events (or at least parts of them) on cable television.

*Current* needs to include listings of all city meeting times each issue (including all boards and commissions).

Board and commission members want to meet with city council annually.

Resident focus group included comments regarding responsiveness of city officials to resident phone calls and concerns. There was concern that responses are not timely.

Customer service cannot be forgotten as an important tool in resident communications. Are those answering the phone at City Hall well informed about topics?

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## VIII. Results of 2005 citizen survey

Decision Resources citizen survey results (questions related to city communications).

Other than voting, do you feel	YES.....	59%
that if you wanted to, you could	NO.....	38%
have a say about the way the City	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	3%
of Red Wing runs things?		

How much do you feel you know	A GREAT DEAL.....	5%
about the work of the Mayor and	A FAIR AMOUNT.....	53%
City Council -- a great deal, a	VERY LITTLE.....	41%
fair amount, or very little?	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	1%

From what you have heard or seen,	EXCELLENT.....	4%
would you rate the job of the	GOOD.....	65%
Mayor and City Council as excel-	ONLY FAIR.....	17%
lent, good, only fair, or poor?	POOR.....	2%
	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	12%

IF "ONLY FAIR" OR "POOR," ASK: (N=58)

48. Why do you feel that way?

UNSURE, 14%; DON'T LISTEN, 21%; POOR COMMUNICATION, 17%; LOSING JOBS, 10%; JAIL ISSUE, 3%; POOR SPENDING, 12%; POOR PLANNING, 10%; CONFLICT WITHIN THE COUNCIL, 7%; SCATTERED, 5%.

How much first-hand contact have	QUITE A LOT.....	11%
you had with the Red Wing City	SOME.....	24%
Staff -- quite a lot, some, very	VERY LITTLE.....	45%
little, or none at all?	NONE AT ALL.....	19%
	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	0%

What is your primary source of information about Red W:  
City government and its activities?

RADIO.....	8%
WEBSITE.....	2%
LOCAL NEWSPAPER.....	53%
CABLE TELEVISION.....	12%
CITY NEWSLETTER.....	19%
DIRECT MAIL.....	2%
WORD OF MOUTH.....	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	1%
SCATTERED.....	1%

81. If you could choose the best way for you to receive information about your City government and the issues facing the community, what would it be?

TOWN HALL MEETINGS.....	4%
WEBSITE.....	2%
CITY NEWSLETTER OR OTHER MAILINGS.....	34%
LOCAL NEWSPAPER.....	49%
E-MAIL.....	1%
CABLE TELEVISION.....	6%
WORD OF MOUTH.....	1%
RADIO.....	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	0%

The City publishes a newsletter, "The Current," sent to each home.

82. Do you receive this newsletter? (IF "YES," ASK:) How much of the "Current" do you usually read -- all of it, most of it, some of it, not too much, or none of it?
- |                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| NO.....                 | 5%  |
| ALL OF IT.....          | 45% |
| MOST OF IT.....         | 33% |
| SOME OF IT.....         | 12% |
| NOT TOO MUCH.....       | 2%  |
| NONE OF IT.....         | 2%  |
| DON'T KNOW/REFUSED..... | 0%  |

IF "YES," ASK: (N=278)

83. How would you evaluate its format or appearance -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?
- |                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| EXCELLENT.....          | 34% |
| GOOD.....               | 59% |
| ONLY FAIR.....          | 6%  |
| POOR.....               | 1%  |
| DON'T KNOW/REFUSED..... | 0%  |
84. How would you evaluate its content -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?
- |                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| EXCELLENT.....          | 26% |
| GOOD.....               | 64% |
| ONLY FAIR.....          | 8%  |
| POOR.....               | 2%  |
| DON'T KNOW/REFUSED..... | 0%  |

85. Would you make any changes or improvements to "The Current" to make it more useful? (IF "YES," ASK:) What would they be?

UNSURE, 3%; NO, 83%; GENERAL INFORMATION, 3%; CITY COUNCIL MINUTES, 2%; CURRENT NEWS, 3%; COMMUNITY EVENTS, 3%; SCATTERED, 3%.

86. Which one action have you undertaken most often after reading "The Current?" (READ LIST, ROTATE)

VISIT A PARK OR CITY FACILITY.....	4%
ATTENDED EVENT.....	12%
SIGN UP FOR CITY ACTIVITY.....	2%
REQUESTED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.....	1%
SHARED INFORMATION IN CURRENT WITH SOMEONE ELSE.....	21%
CUT OUT ARTICLE OR PHONE NUMBER.....	14%
VISIT THE CITY'S WEB SITE.....	0%
SOMETHING ELSE.....	0%
COMBINATION.....	21%
NONE (VOL.).....	19%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	5%

Does your household subscribe to cable television?	YES.....	65%
	NO.....	35%
	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	1%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=194)

88. How often do you watch Local Government Access Channel 6 - daily, weekly, every other week, monthly, or less often?	DAILY.....	7%
	WEEKLY.....	36%
	EVERY OTHER WEEK.....	15%
	MONTHLY.....	12%
	LESS OFTEN.....	29%
	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	2%

89. How often do you watch City Council, Board or Commission Meetings on Channel 6 -- frequently, occasionally, rarely, or not at all?	FREQUENTLY.....	19%
	OCCASIONALLY.....	44%
	RARELY.....	21%
	NOT AT ALL.....	15%
	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	1%

90. Which of the following programs on Channel 6 do you watch most frequently? (READ LIST, ROTATE)

COUNCIL MEETINGS.....	6%
NEWS NOTES.....	20%
INSIDE RED WING'S WATER SYSTEM.....	7%
RECYCLING.....	6%
SHELDON CENTENNIAL.....	10%
DIVERSITY FESTIVAL.....	5%
SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS.....	3%
SCHOOL PROGRAMS.....	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED/NONE.....	43%

Do you have access to the Internet at home only, at work only, at both home and work, or at neither place?	HOME ONLY.....	29%
	WORK ONLY.....	5%
	BOTH HOME AND WORK.....	31%
	NEITHER PLACE.....	34%
	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	1%

IF "YES," ASK: (N=197)

92.	Have you or any member of your household accessed the City of Red Wing's website for information about city services, news, and events?	YES.....34% NO.....65% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%
IF "YES," ASK: (N=66)		
93.	Did you find the site easy to use?	YES.....92% NO.....3% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....5%
94.	Were you able to find the information you were looking for?	YES.....82% NO.....12% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6%
95.	What additional information or features would you like to see on the website?	
UNSURE, 21%; NO, 53%; CITY EVENTS, 8%; CITY SERVICE INFORMATION, 9%; SCATTERED, 9%.		
5.	How would you rate overall job the City does in communicating with residents -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?	EXCELLENT.....14% GOOD.....59% ONLY FAIR.....22% POOR.....3% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

## IX. Recommendations: Communications Process

*Given the themes and key findings derived from the focus groups and the communications audit, CityImage makes the following recommendations for improving and enhancing communications in the City of Red Wing over the next 2-3 years:*

### Main recommendations

1. Devote more time and resources to communicating the city's message
2. Improve and promote the city web site
3. Ensure the city's brand is solid and used consistently in all communications
4. Enhance the city's business communications practices
5. Gain more exposure for the city in the *Republican Eagle*. The paper must be viewed as the city's strategic communications partner.
6. Increase frequency of timely city information going to residents
7. Increase use of television to feature more City of Red Wing information
8. Create additional citizen outreach opportunities
9. Increase the city's emphasis on quality customer service and face-to-face communications
10. Identify potential issues and develop strategies for dealing with them.
11. Develop a crisis communications plan to identify how information will be disseminated to target audiences

- 12. Provide feedback mechanisms so city customers may comment about council actions, staff, services, and programs**
- 13. Promote effective internal communications within the city organization**
- 14. Work with other community organizations and groups to communicate with target audiences**
- 15. Other recommendations**

### **1.) Devote more time and resources to communicating the city's message**

- **TOOL #1: ADEQUATE STAFFING.**  
The City Council has repeatedly identified communications as a priority each year for the past several years. The city has shown its commitment by staffing a Communications Coordinator position at 14 hours/week for the past 18 months. This person assists the Assistant Council Administrator, who, in many ways, functions as a Communications Director.
- While this arrangement works well from a communications standpoint, a concern is that the Assistant Council Administrator is currently unable to pay necessary attention to other duties in that job description. As the title "Assistant Council Administrator" implies, this person is also responsible for city management functions. This leads to situations where communications can suffer due to a pressing city management issue, or visa versa.
- To solve this issue, we recommend increasing the hours of the part-time Communications Coordinator to 30 hours/week. This would enable the Assistant Council Administrator to shift certain responsibilities to the Communications Coordinator and concentrate more on management issues as well as communications at a strategic level.
- **TOOL #2: CITY STAFF COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING.**  
Staff preparation for media interactions is essential. All city representatives should be given the basics on how to develop key messages, answer questions, and conduct an interview. Messages received by the press and residents need to be consistent across all departments. To quote one employee – "Every time we talk about Red Wing, we need to say the same thing and get the same feeling."
- In October 2004, the Assistant Council Administrator developed and distributed a helpful guide to working with the media, establishing "rules of engagement" for interview situations, news release guidelines, and other valuable resources. Perhaps a "quick reference" card could now be created for employees' use.

### **2.) Improve and promote the city web site**

- **TOOL #1: WEB SITE UPGRADE NEEDED.**  
There was near-unanimous agreement among focus group respondents that Red Wing's web site needs an upgrade. The main complaint was that information is

hard to find and navigation requires several “clicks.” This irritates web users, who are accustomed to sites that are set up more intuitively.

- The city’s web site often represents Red Wing more than any other medium. It is the city’s most public face because it’s always “on” and available to the widest audience. Prospective residents, developers and business owners often consult city web sites to obtain information and assess the city’s image, so it’s incumbent upon the city to present the best-possible face online.
- With an added emphasis on web communications, the city must ensure the web site, especially its home page, receives constant updates. Visitors to the site think nothing has changed if the appearance of the home page does not differ from week to week. Updates can be made by a dedicated staff person, designated staff in each city department and/or an external consultant.
- Once the city’s new site is upgraded, it will be essential to benchmark web traffic to see how updates, marketing, and redesign have increased the use of the site. This evidence may help the city add web upgrades in future budget years as data is collected on the most popular pages and desired changes.
- **TOOL #2: ENCOURAGE AND ENABLE GREATER CITIZEN WEB USE**  
While the last resident survey said only 2% consider the web their primary source of City of Red Wing information, this may be due to the site’s current structure and content. There is little doubt the city web site will become the place to obtain the most timely city information.
- While a certain percentage of citizens do not have Internet access and still require hard-copy materials, the trend is definitely toward more online information. The city could investigate adding a web kiosk at City Hall to serve its “non-web” residents, or encourage web use at the public library.
- Aggressively promote the city web site! The city web site’s URL (address) should be prominently displayed in every city publication, on city stationery, on Channel 6, and on city vehicles (police, fire, public works, other vehicles), where it does not overwhelm other graphics or become distracting. The Red Wing Chamber of Commerce and other organizations could also promote the city’s URL as an information resource.
- Look for ways to offer e-commerce on the web site to give residents more access to city services online, such as recreation programs. This will take coordination with Red Wing Community Education. Citizens could also pay utility bills online, rent city facilities, obtain permits and licenses, etc.
- **TOOL #3: ADD WEB STREAMING**  
We strongly recommend that Red Wing consider adding web streaming services to its site. This gives residents a new way in which to watch council meetings –

either live or via archives. Archived meetings allow residents to select exact agenda items to watch with no need to “fast forward” through a DVD or videotape in search of a quote or discussion on a specific topic. Pricing for this technology has become more affordable in recent years.

### **3.) Ensure the city’s brand is solid and used consistently in all communications**

- **TOOL #1: CONSISTENT LOGO USE.**  
Branding is critical to the success of any communications effort. Without a consistent brand representing the image of the city, residents and businesses can become easily confused when they receive city information, interact with a city official, or see a city vehicle in their neighborhood, etc. An Identity Manual was created in 2003. An update is needed to include signage and vehicle graphics.
- **TOOL #2: CLOSE LOOPHOLES IN LOGO USE.**  
The City of Red Wing has an excellent logo, which has been trademarked (a wise decision). Red Wing also appears to have used the logo consistently in its publications, on stationery, and on business cards. There appears to be gaps in logo use, however. All city departments must be held accountable for adhering to the guidelines in the Identity Manual and using proper approval procedures for all materials displaying the city’s brand.

### **4.) Enhance the city’s business communications practices**

- **TOOL #1: ATTRACT PROSPECTIVE BUSINESSES AND INFORM CURRENT BUSINESSES**  
Red Wing should dedicate additional resources to beefing up its business and development information on the city web site. These web pages would be heavily promoted and geared to current and prospective businesses, as well as developers. The key is to make doing business in Red Wing easy and convenient. Features of these web pages would include available commercial space and land updates, maps, permit information, contact names and numbers. (Tacoma, Wash. uses a similar approach – [www.tacomospace.com](http://www.tacomospace.com)).
- **TOOL #2: PRODUCE E-NEWSLETTER FOR RED WING BUSINESSES.**  
Tag-teaming with the enhanced business web presence would be an electronic newsletter to all businesses and interested parties with the latest development news. The e-newsletter could be sent out as needed (monthly?), and also when there are late-breaking developments or situations, such as new developments or special alerts.
- The business e-newsletter would reach key people in organizations. The city would develop a database of key business e-mail addresses and distribute them accordingly. Businesses not on the city’s original distribution list, interested

developers and residents could also sign up to receive this e-newsletter by checking a box online.

- **TOOL #3: INCREASE COMMUNICATIONS WITH CHAMBER**  
Some of the focus group responses indicated that the present city relationship with the Red Wing Chamber of Commerce could benefit from more frequent communications and cooperation. Any strategy to attract new businesses and redevelopment projects in town needs to include a strong city-chamber partnership.

**5.) Gain more exposure for the city in the *Republican Eagle*. The paper must be viewed as the city's strategic communications partner.**

- **TOOL #1: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING A "DAILY" PAPER.**  
The presence of a "daily" paper (four days per week) in a city the size of Red Wing offers incredible opportunities for communications with citizens. Most cities with Red Wing's population must rely on a weekly paper with reporters who likely have little journalistic experience. According to the most recent Decision Resources citizen survey, 53% of residents say their top source of city government information is the *Republican Eagle*.
- **TOOL #2: REGULARLY INTERACT WITH EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.**  
The editor and publisher of the *Republican Eagle* should be invited to City Hall and given a briefing on city events at least quarterly (preferably monthly). Journalists proactively given access to issues and stories feel involved in the process and are more likely to see the city's side of the story. Conversely, those who begin writing a story only after they see it appear on an agenda, or react after receiving a call from an angry resident, are more likely to write from an "anti-city" standpoint.
- **TOOL #3: ENHANCE REGULAR COLUMN IN PAPER.**  
To give the City Council a more human face, a City Council column could be established in the *Republican Eagle* newspaper – complete with a photo of the author. This would encourage residents to see council opinions on a variety of issues, without the direct endorsement of the city government. Constituents deserve to hear the opinions of their elected officials and this would be a great way to accomplish this goal. This would supplement the columns currently being done by staff.
- **TOOL #4: INCREASE NUMBER OF NEWS RELEASES.**  
Generate and submit at least four news releases per month, and send them to media outlets other than the *Republican Eagle* such as the *Star Tribune*, *Pioneer Press* and television stations in the Twin Cities. The city could also write and submit editorials and feature stories for consideration.

News releases and fact sheets pertaining to any crisis situation or hot issue

should be developed and distributed to the news media, mayor, and City Council, as well as to city departments and divisions and possibly in coffee shops. The City Council chambers will be designated as a news conference site for news media personnel should a news conference become necessary during a crisis situation.

- **TOOL #5: ENSURE CITY MESSAGE IS CONSISTENT.**  
If a city employee writes something for submission to the local paper or even a trade publication, it is very important that the Assistant Council Administrator or Council Administrator read staff columns or information before it is published. When a city employee writes views in a publication, they will be interpreted as those of the city government.

## **6.) Increase frequency of timely city information going to residents**

- **TOOL #1: CONTACT EACH CITIZEN MONTHLY.**  
To remain engaged with Red Wing residents, it's important that the city make contact with each citizen, in some way, at least once per month. This is presently being accomplished with the nationally award-winning *Current* newsletter, but other communications vehicles (such as an enhanced web site and more constructive coverage in the *Republican Eagle*) are needed to supplement this periodical.
- **TOOL #2: ADD WEB UPDATE NOTIFICATIONS TO WEB SITE.**  
Add GovDelivery (or a similar service) to your web site. Residents could sign up to be notified when the city web site (and a specific page they request) is updated. Cities such as Burnsville, St. Louis Park, and St. Paul have this service. This method helps the city inexpensively keep in touch with citizens who have expressed a greater level of interest in city matters.
- **TOOL #3: INCREASE DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSLETTERS.**  
Set up distribution points for the *Current* newsletter at locations throughout the city including city facilities, the county library, coffee shops, convenience stores, grocery stores, churches, and other sites where residents frequently congregate. In addition, the city could produce a one-page "News from the City" publication on a more frequent basis for posting if desired. A version of this could be enlarged to post in the three existing kiosks.

## **7.) Increase use of television to feature more City of Red Wing information**

- **TOOL #1: PROMOTE CHANNEL 6.**  
We strongly advocate a promotional campaign to drive residents and other community stakeholders to cable television. The city must strive to increase the amount of citizens who view this programming. One step, printing a program schedule for placement in the *Current*, has already taken place.

- Some ideas include: creating a name and slogan for Channel 6, holding a trivia contest (requiring that people view certain programs for clues); and having a greater public presence at events (camera crews at community concerts and games, advertising in local arena, bumper stickers, window clings, T-shirts, buttons, etc. for city staff, etc.). Make Channel 6 a “big deal” around town so people start talking about “what was on Channel 6 last night.”
- **TOOL #2: PROMOTE NEWS NOTES PROGRAM.**  
The city currently produces a monthly television program called *News Notes*. We would strongly recommend producing a semi-monthly television show, featuring city administrator or city spokesperson highlighting council decisions, developments, and positive stories in Red Wing.
- **TOOL #3: STREAM CHANNEL 6 LIVE ON THE WEB.**  
If the city adds web streaming to its web site, Channel 6 programming could be streamed live on a 24/7 basis, so those without cable could watch programs as well as public meetings. This would increase viewership on Channel 6 and enable those without cable or satellite television to watch as well.
- **TOOL #4: PRODUCE OTHER PROGRAMMING.**  
In addition to producing *News Notes*, the city could produce a Red Wing promotional video and air it on Channel 6, stream it on the web, and distribute it to prospective developers on a DVD.
- It has also been suggested that a “pre-game” show could air prior to city council meetings to preview the agenda and provide background information on agenda items for viewers.

## **8.) Create additional citizen outreach opportunities**

- **TOOL #1: HIT THE ROAD WITH RESIDENTS.**  
Sponsor a bi-annual bus tour of Red Wing for interested citizens. Residents would see new developments, redevelopment projects, and be given on-site briefings by city staff members.
- **TOOL #2: DEVELOP AN AMBASSADOR PROGRAM.**  
Develop a resident “ambassador” program to help promote positive aspects of the city, both inside and outside Red Wing. City commissioners, interested senior citizens, and other active residents could be trained to function in this role. City staff at all levels should also be encouraged to think of ways to advance the city’s standing in the community and feel they are “ambassadors” for Red Wing.
- **TOOL #3: DEVELOP A CITIZEN EDUCATION PROGRAM.**  
Many cities have found that a citizen education program or “academy” works well to engage residents who are interested in how local government works. In short, it’s an excellent way to communicate with residents outside of traditional

methods. A possible name for this program could be “Red Wing University.”

- Citizen academies are typically set up via weekly evening meetings over a few months. Each gathering covers a different department, and citizens get to speak with department heads and staff members. These academies are often where future commission and council members cut their teeth in city government (preferable to “fighting city hall” and deciding to run for office).
- **TOOL #4: ENSURE COMMUNITY EVENTS ARE PUBLICIZED.**  
Adequately promote city events in a variety of ways to boost turnout and encourage resident involvement. This would include the newsletter, press releases to local media, cable television, web site, churches, and posting flyers in key, high-traffic community locations.
- **TOOL #5: FIND WAYS TO EMPOWER RESIDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY.**  
The city must find a way to reach out and communicate with residents who have limited English-language skills. However, some communities have found such materials to be ineffective and have relied on other communications methods that take cultural preferences into consideration.
- **TOOL #6: CITY COUNCIL SHOULD MEET WITH BOARD AND COMMISSION MEMBERS ANNUALLY.**  
This was a specific request from the board and commission member focus group. It’s a good way to keep in touch with citizens who are involved in city government and already operating in an advisory role to the council.
- **TOOL #7: USE METHODS SUCH AS A SPEAKER’S BUREAU AND COMMUNITY EVENTS TO SPREAD CITY MESSAGES**  
A speaker’s bureau is often an effective method for communicating messages in a professional and organized manner. The city could compile a list of city staff members who are available as speakers for community and school groups, along with topics they can discuss.

In addition, the city should continue to support events that foster a sense of community in Red Wing by facilitating formation of block clubs for events such as National Night Out, providing block party kits to residents who wish to organize neighborhood events, and arranging visits by police and fire personnel (along with other city departments), to block parties and neighborhood events.

The city should also participate in events such as River City Days, Memorial Day services, and the Holiday Stroll.

- **TOOL #8: USE COLLATERAL MATERIALS**  
Ongoing use of the annual Resident Guide, brochures, flyers and direct mail pieces should be encouraged.

## **9.) Increase the city's emphasis on quality customer service and face-to-face communications**

- **TOOL #1: EXAMINE THE CITY'S CUSTOMER SERVICE PRACTICES.**  
For many residents, the only contact they'll have with a city official is a brief interaction on the phone or a short encounter at a city-sponsored event. It is therefore critical that city employees undergo customer service training on an annual basis.
- Consider implementing a "secret shopper" program where random employees and departments are called, or approached at City Hall, or at an event, with various questions to see how they perform. The goal of this type of program would be to continue with improvements in service delivery and to help determine service needs.
- Customer service is directly tied to the city's overall image, and this affects Red Wing's ability to communicate effectively with its residents. As a result, the city should require all departments to make customer satisfaction cards available to all clients. Each department would be responsible for ensuring this information – to be compiled through customer satisfaction cards and the city web site – was collected, returned to the city administration, and placed in a report (perhaps quarterly) for benchmarking purposes. This would ensure greater accountability to recognize good service delivery, help identify needed training and give employees an incentive to improve customer service.
- For interactions where handing a card to a customer might seem inappropriate (police pulling someone over, street plowing), the cards could be sent out at random within 10 days. This has been done successfully in other cities.
- **TOOL #2: MEET MORE RESIDENTS PERSONALLY.**  
Maximize opportunities for city officials to interact personally with residents. Such as events as National Night Out allow for informal conversations that personalize city staff and build an approachable image. "Red Wing University" would provide another opportunity to get to know citizens. The Council Administrator believes "face-to-face communication is the most powerful," and we agree.
- **TOOL #3: ASSESS CITY'S VOICE MAIL PROCESS.**  
Take a look at the city's voice mail system periodically to ensure it's working properly and being used in a professional manner. Customers dislike being placed on hold, disconnected, or transferred from department to department. Develop helpful and promotional on- hold messaging.

## **10.) Identify potential issues and develop strategies for dealing with them.**

- **TOOL #1: IDENTIFY ISSUES PROACTIVELY AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY.**  
The City of Red Wing is committed to a proactive communications approach when dealing with potential issues. Effective communications can help prevent an issue from becoming a crisis, and, at the same time, promote constructive dialogue in the community.

The city recognizes that policy issues, development proposals, city council decisions, and various actions related to conducting the city's business sometimes have the potential to become controversial and/or spark debate or disagreement among various constituencies (e.g. residents, business groups, etc.). Often, issues can escalate simply because there is a lack of accurate information about them in the community.

### **11.) Develop a crisis communications plan to identify how information will be disseminated to target audiences**

- **TOOL #1: DEVELOP A CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.**  
In the event of a crisis situation involving city government, the interests of Red Wing's elected officials, the public, the media, and city staff are best served by timely dissemination of accurate and up-to-date information related to the crisis.

A crisis situation in a municipality, or any organization, can result from a variety of occurrences. A crisis may revolve around:

- People (scandal, injury, death)
- Products (safety, contamination)
- Process (fire, explosion, labor strike, operational error)
- Issues (environmental situation, investments)
- Security (theft, vandalism, extortion)
- Natural disasters (flood, tornado, etc.)
- A nuclear emergency at the Prairie Island Power Plant

The City of Red Wing should evaluate its communications practices related to emergencies and develop an Emergency Preparedness Manual that stipulates procedures to be followed in the event of a crisis.

Emergency situations involving multiple casualties, extensive property damage and/or significant environmental damage also may require implementation of the policies and procedures outlines in the Emergency Preparedness Manual.

Examples of possible occurrences include: public conveyance accident, buildings involved in collapse or explosion, or a natural gas or flammable liquid incident. None of the procedures described in this communications plan shall supersede the provisions of the city's Emergency Preparedness Manual, nor shall they impede police and fire personnel from carrying out communications activities normally associated with performance of their duties.

## **12.) Provide feedback mechanisms so city customers may comment about council actions, staff, services, and programs**

### **TOOL #1: DEVELOP CUSTOMER FEEDBACK MECHANISMS:**

Effective communications must be a two-way process. This means that the city not only sends information to its target audiences, it also actively solicits feedback on programs, services, and issues.

The city will develop and maintain various methods for receiving customer comments/requests for service. These methods will be regularly evaluated and additions/changes will be made to improve effectiveness. Feedback mechanisms include surveys, public hearings/meetings, comment cards, and special events. The city also has a voice mail system allowing citizens to leave a message for any member of the city council or city staff at any hour.

## **13.) Promote effective internal communications within the city organization**

### **TOOL #1: DEVELOP AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY.**

Through daily interaction with the public, employees represent the City of Red Wing. Customers who have positive experiences when dealing with city employees will have a positive image of the city, while negative experiences will foster a negative image.

Employees need to be prepared for the important role they play. The city is committed to internal communications efforts that provide employees information they need while encouraging two-way communications within all levels of the city.

In addition, the city will provide employees with training and programs that reinforce the city's organizational philosophy of helping to provide the best municipal services in a cost-effective manner, as well as educational opportunities so employees may improve their knowledge, skills and abilities. The city also will support employee committees and programs designed to recognize staff for superior performance and service to the city.

## **14.) Work with other community organizations and groups to communicate with target audiences**

### **TOOL #1: WORK WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS TO REACH TARGET AUDIENCES.**

Communications resources in Red Wing are not limited to those provided through city publications/programs and the news media. Numerous community groups and organizations represent communications networks, both formal and informal. Examples include schools and school groups, churches, block clubs, neighborhood associations, and business/service organizations.

As resources permit, the City of Red Wing will work with community groups to

convey information to various target audiences. The city's efforts may include educational programs, providing speakers for groups, participation in, and support of, community events, notices and news releases. The city will compile who are available as speakers for community and school groups, along with topics they can discuss.

## 15.) Other recommendations

- **Consider shortening the *Current* newsletter.**  
As the city turns more of its communications focus to the city web site, we recommend shortening the length of the monthly *Current* newsletter to 8 or 12 pages, rather than its current 16 to 20. Readers are often hesitant to tackle a long newsletter, and some information may not reach residents. Instead, with an enhanced web site, the *Current* can direct citizens to the city's web site for updated information and more details. A shorter newsletter will also free up staff time to work on other communications strategies.
- **Enhance citizen access to information about recreational opportunities.**  
While recreation classes are offered through Community Recreation (joint board with the Red Wing School District), and some of this information is included in the *Current*, there is a need to develop a brochure on parks and city recreation facilities. A suggestion was made to create a promotional brochure for the parks and Colvill Courtyard, which can be used for weddings, graduation parties, and other events.
- **Enhance radio coverage.**  
Hopefully it will be possible to continue the weekly Monday morning discussions on KCUE with the Council Administrator. Be sure to send news releases, meeting agendas and other coverage ideas to KCUE and KWNG. One option to consider is buying airtime on the radio (60 second ads, perhaps called the "City Minute"). These ads would direct people to the city web site – or a phone number - for additional information on a variety of topics such as new developments, upcoming city events, snow emergencies, etc.

Tuesday a.m. following CC meeting chats on the radio, I have a few ideas:

- Brand your air time with a catchy title like "City Conversations" or "City Beat" or "City Focus" or something
- Cover hot topics from CC meetings as well as seasonal topics such as road construction, events, promoting public meetings, fall/spring clean up, etc.
- Cover fewer topics but go into more depth with how each one impacts residents/businesses
- Record a promo one week to air throughout the week to plug a hot topic that will be discussed the following week
- Reference Channel 6 like, "Here's what you missed if you weren't tuned in to channel 6 last night..."

- **Pursue partnerships with Goodhue County and Red Wing School District.**  
With Red Wing serving as the county seat for Goodhue County, there are natural opportunities to partner with the county on communications (web site information,

newsletter stories, television, etc.) This potential for collaboration also includes the Red Wing School District. Explore possible ways to share resources rather than having agencies duplicate efforts.

- **Acknowledge the presence of a “grapevine” in the city.**  
One city council member said he could visit two restaurants in town and learn what was going on in Red Wing. By working to improve communications vehicles (web, newspaper, television, radio, citizen’s academy, etc.), the effect of the “grapevine” on public perception will decrease.
- **Assess and improve the city’s photography stock.** One of the key elements of an effective communications strategy is a strong library of quality photography. For example, the present City Council photos on the web need to be taken by a professional and posted in color.
- **Community surveys.** A community survey should be conducted by a professional research organization every other year as a means of measuring satisfaction with city services and programs and gaining information on city issues and the city’s future direction.

Surveys are also used by individual departments to measure performance for numerous city services. Other informal surveys are developed as needed. The Communications staff will serve as an advisor to departments to help create effective surveys that yield useful information.

## X. Communications Plan Tools

*To be used a quick-reference guide for use of each communications vehicle (2006-2008).*

### City web site

- Upgrade existing city web site to be more user-friendly.
- Develop RFP for a new web site. RFP could be issued in 2006 and executed in 2007.
- Develop new web site and place online by June 2007.
- Benchmark web site traffic before and after web site upgrade to measure results and determine frequently visited pages.
- Aggressively promote city web site use by advertising URL in city publications, on city vehicles, on Channel 6, etc. Encourage other organizations to promote city web site as well.
- Add web update notification (GovDelivery) service to new web site (2007/2008).
- Add a web kiosk at Red Wing City Hall to provide more resident access. (2008).
- Encourage Internet use at local libraries.

- Examine ways to offer e-commerce on site (enable residents to pay utility bills, rent city facilities, obtain permits and licenses, etc.). E-commerce should be included in new web site RFP. Coordinate online recreation program sign-ups with Red Wing Community Education. (2007).
- Add web streaming of public meetings such as City Council. Enable residents to view meetings live or with “video on demand” archive. (2008).
- Examine potential of adding live web streaming of Channel 6 to increase viewership of this resource. (2008).
- Ensure new web site works as an economic development tool in support of the Port Authority. Site should include resources for businesses interested in relocating to Red Wing and information about available parcels, local regulations and contact names for developers.

### **Media relations**

- Continue to track number of news releases sent to news media. Ensure number of releases increases over time to an average of four each month. (2006 onward).
- Subscribe to press clipping service to monitor effectiveness of communications methods. (2006 onward).
- Submit monthly columns in *Republican Eagle* written by council administrator, department heads, city attorney, and elected officials. (2007).
- Begin monthly meetings with *Republican Eagle* editor and/or publisher. (2006).
- Pitch positive news stories to local, regional newspapers and Twin Cities television stations.
- Develop a crisis communications plan that clearly identifies how and by whom information will be disseminated to the city’s elected officials, the public, the media, and other target audiences in the event of a crisis. (2007).
- Hold media training for frontline staff members (key message development, how to conduct an interview, handling interactions with journalists – “rules of engagement”). (2007 and annually).
- Produce media kits for major issues (contains fact sheets, renderings, photos, etc.)

### **Current city newsletter**

- Produce *Current* newsletter monthly- consider shortening length to 8-12 pages.
- Print 1,000 more *Current* newsletters and distribute in additional locations throughout city. (2007).
- Compare four-color pricing for the *Current* to allow the addition of color photography. (2006).
- Develop a version of the newsletter with highlights suitable for posting in kiosks.

### **Cable television**

- Implement promotional campaign for Channel 6. (2007).
- Begin development of Channel 6 “brand” for marketing purposes. (2007).
- Promote News Notes program on Channel 6. (2006 and onward).
- Produce other local programming such as Red Wing promotional video to be shown on television and via web streaming. (2007).

### **Citizen involvement**

- Conduct a bi-annual bus tour of Red Wing to show residents developments, redevelopment projects and other city-related work and facilities. (2007).
- Host open houses and “town hall” meetings (ongoing).
- Initiate a citizen ambassador program to promote positive aspects of the city. (2007/2008).
- Develop a citizen education program or “academy” named Red Wing University. (2007/2008).
- Develop methods to inform and empower residents with limited English language reading and speaking skills.
  - Meet with leaders from ethnic communities to brainstorm solutions. (2007)
- Schedule meetings between City Council and board/commission members (annually).
- Examine city customer service practices. (2007).
  - Use “secret shoppers” to monitor responsiveness and service.
  - Develop and distribute customer satisfaction cards for residents.
  - Post a similar customer service survey on the city web site.
  - Send out cards at random to individuals who have interacted with police department to ensure quality feedback.
- Encourage staff to attend such community events as National Night Out in order to interact more with Red Wing residents and build positive relationships. Each city employee should attend at least one community event each year. (ongoing).
- City Council hold one meeting each summer in Central Park and follow the meeting with a citywide picnic with games for kids.

### **General communications practices**

- Consider possible expansion of Communications Coordinator position to 30 hours/week (2007).
- Design and implement business e-newsletter with goal of monthly distribution (2007 or 2008).
- Do a formal assessment of the city’s photography stock. Ensure outdated photos of employees and city scenes are removed. Have additional photos taken as needed. Take photos of the city in all four seasons for use in publications and on the web. (2006-2007).
- Evaluate internal communications strategy for city employees. (2007).

- Conduct follow-up focus group interviews to gauge effectiveness of communications plan. (mid-2007).
- Meet with Goodhue County officials to discuss possible communications-related partnerships. (2006 and ongoing).
- Meet with Red Wing School District officials to discuss communications-related partnerships. (2006 and ongoing).
- Meet with Red Wing Chamber of Commerce to discuss communications-related partnerships. (2006 and ongoing).
- Meet with Prairie Island Tribal Council to discuss communications-related partnerships. (2006).
- Schedule a joint council-board/commission summit to discuss relevant topics (2007).
- Create new “on-hold” recording with city information. Assess voice mail system to ensure its working and is user-friendly. (2006-2007).
- Produce door hangers and direct mail pieces for major projects promoting website for more information. (2006 and ongoing).
- Produce a Red Wing Annual Report with information on significant projects, decisions, etc. for the past year. (2007 and ongoing).
- Produce a Kids Activity Book with interactive mazes, games related to city services, trivia. Distribute annually as an insert in the newsletter and through the newspaper. (2007).
- Include messages on utility bills along with the city’s web site URL. (2006 and ongoing).
- Consider alternative advertising methods (billboards, vehicle “wrap-around” ads, movie theater ads, display booths at community events). (ongoing).

## **XI. Methods for communications plan evaluation**

The value of any communications plan is determined by how effectively it is implemented. In order to produce measurability for the Red Wing Communications Plan, the following evaluation methods are recommended:

### **Place an ongoing communications survey on the city web site.**

This will produce timely feedback throughout the year, allowing the city to update its communications practices based on real-time input. Key questions could also appear in the city newsletter each issue to help guide communications efforts. Could use consultant services such as Decision Resources for survey.

### **Subscribe to a news clipping service.**

This service would provide reports on both print and video (broadcast television) news coverage. Receiving this information allows the city to examine all Red Wing-related coverage on a weekly basis and make necessary adjustments to media strategy.

### **Monitor web site statistics.**

A monthly review of web statistics is an effective way of evaluating success, particularly

if the city will be making improvements to the site and promoting it more aggressively. This will also include statistics on viewership of city council meetings and other cable television programming.

**Message analysis.**

Asking the following questions on a quarterly basis will help the city evaluate its communications practices.

- Did the target audiences receive the messages? This can be answered by monitoring the frequency of news coverage, publication and mailing of city newsletter, consistency of web site updates, etc.
- Did they understand the messages? Was positive resident feedback received?
- Were the messages persuasive? For example, did residents and others attend publicized meetings? Did media coverage involving citizens accurately reflect the city's viewpoint?

**Focus group follow-ups in 12-16 months.** Following up with those who participated in the 2006 focus groups will help assess how the city's communications efforts improved throughout the remainder of the year and what remains to be upgraded in 2007-08.



# Prince William County



## Communications Strategic Plan

Fiscal Year 2005 to 2007

**Prince William County**  
**Communications Strategic Plan**  
**FY2005 - 2007**

**Introduction..... 1**

**Mission..... 1**

**Cable Television..... 2**

**Citizen Participation..... 4**

**Emergency Communications ..... 5**

**Employee Communications ..... 6**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Prince William County Communications Office is housed in the Office of Executive Management. The Communications Director answers directly to the County Executive. This office is responsible for cable television broadcast and franchise oversight, citizen participation, emergency communications, employee communications and public information. These tasks provide the staff with the means to provide County government information to employees, citizens and the media.

The Communications Strategic Plan reflects the framework for the products produced by the Communications Office and supported by the Prince William County budget. This plan is a living document that is updated annually. The success of the Communications Office is measured by service levels published annually in the Fiscal Plan.

## **MISSION**

The Communications Office informs and educates the community, employees and elected officials about Prince William County government programs, services and activities. We accomplish this by encouraging citizen involvement.

The Communications Office provides effective, timely, accurate communication and information services to the community, elected officials, employees and the media while adhering to Prince William County's vision and values.

## **Cable Television Goal**

**The Communications Office will provide its audience with useful and understandable television programming relevant to Prince William County and oversee the cable television franchise agreements.**

**Strategy 1** – Provide live and delayed broadcasts of Prince William Board of County Supervisors meetings.

1. Perform preproduction tasks related to live broadcast of Board of County Supervisors meetings.
2. Staff the Control Room for the entire length of the Board meetings in order to cover the filming of the meeting.
3. Perform post production tasks related to the filming of the Board of County Supervisors meetings.
4. Provide copies of the meetings to guests and fulfill other requests for video copies of the meeting.
5. Program Channel 23 to broadcast reruns of the Board meetings.

**Strategy 2** – Produce cable television segments for broadcast on Channel 23.

1. Consider a broad range of programming showcasing County government programs and services.
2. Work with County government department representatives to produce television segments that help to get information to the community about their programs.
3. Produce Public Service Announcements to get the word out in a quick, clear concise manner.
4. Produce cable television segments that support the County Government's Strategic Plan

**Strategy 3** – Produce bulletin board messages for viewing on Channel 23.

1. Use the bulletin board as the primary media for Channel 23 information.
2. Solicit information from County Government departments and agencies for posting on the Channel 23 bulletin board.
3. Develop background slates that reflect the message on the slate, for example, use the Police patch as a watermark on Police messages.
4. Keep messages current.

**Strategy 4** – Produce five-minute television segments for broadcast on Headline News.

1. Work with County Government departments and agencies to produce segments for broadcast on Headline News.
2. Produce segments that also can be used on Channel 23.

**Strategy 7** – Perform routine tasks related to the operation of Channel 23.

1. Plan and set up shoots for future shows.
2. Work as a team to assign shoots and editing.
3. Maintain production equipment.
4. Program Channel 23.

## **Cable Television Goal (continued)**

**Strategy 5** – Respond to customer inquiries regarding cable television service.

1. Work with cable television subscribers to resolve customer service issues with the provider.
2. Act as liaison between the members of the Board of County Supervisors and the cable television companies.

**Strategy 6** – Negotiate and oversee cable franchise agreements with providers.

1. Work with the County Attorney's Office to negotiate new and renew existing cable television franchise agreements with local providers.
2. Monitor the operation of the County's cable television franchise agreements and insure that providers perform within the terms of the agreements.

## **Citizen Participation Goal**

**The Communications Office will provide its audience with opportunities to become involved in, engaged in and knowledgeable about their role in Prince William County government in the community.**

**Strategy 1** – Provide two sessions of the Community Leadership Institute (CLI) each year to educate enrollees about their County Government.

1. Encourage enrollment from all districts in the County.
2. Provide a program that engages County departments and agencies with members of the community.
3. Encourage CLI graduates to volunteer with the County Government or with non-profit agencies in the community.

**Strategy 2** – Provide an annual CLI Alumni event to encourage involvement in the community and to keep them informed.

1. Present a program that allows graduates to network and learn from each other.
2. Provide information about County Government current events.
3. Seek information from the graduates regarding ways to improve service to the community.

**Strategy 3** – Provide a “Speakers Bureau” to community groups upon request.

1. Accept requests from community groups for speakers.
2. Determine the appropriate staff person to provide the service and make the necessary arrangements.
3. Provide any necessary equipment to complement the presentation.

## **Emergency Communications Goal**

**The Communications Office will provide its audiences with information before, during and after an emergency situation.**

**Strategy 1** – Increase the Communications Staff’s knowledge of emergency communications methods.

1. Attend Local Emergency Planning meetings monthly.
2. Attend regional training through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC).
3. Attend recommended classes offered by the Federal Emergency Management Association and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

**Strategy 2** – Develop a publicity campaign to inform the Prince William County community about emergency preparedness for a variety of emergency situations

1. Maintain and update emergency information on the County’s Internet Web site.
2. Create and publish written materials for distribution to the community.
3. Produce local television segments about a variety of emergency situations.
4. Employ the marquee to get messages to the community.
5. Prepare or obtain a variety of press release to be ready for different situations.

**Strategy 3** – Develop and maintain standard operating procedures for the Communications Staff during an emergency situation.

1. Research best practices of other agencies and jurisdictions.
2. Write step by step procedures relative to Prince William County Communications staffing.
3. Maintain and update procedures to incorporate any changes at the federal, state, regional or local level.

**Strategy 4** – Develop and maintain standard operating procedures for the Communications Staff following an emergency situation.

1. Research best practices of other agencies and jurisdictions.
2. Write step by step procedures relative to Prince William County Communications staffing.
3. Maintain and update procedures to incorporate any changes at the federal, state, regional or local level.

**Strategy 5** – Increase County employees’ knowledge of what to do in an emergency situation.

1. Assign a staff member to the employee risk management emergency team.
2. Use all methods of communication to provide emergency information to employees.
3. Participate in training drills.

**Strategy 6** – Develop and maintain an excellent working relationship with other jurisdictions in the Washington Metropolitan Region to handle any regional emergency.

1. Attend and participate in RESF-14 meetings and conference calls with MWCOG members.
2. Attend and participate in NVRC Public Information Group meetings.
3. Participate in regional publication campaigns.

## **Employee Communications Goal**

**The Communications Office will provide employees with information about employee services, benefits, activities and issues.**

**Strategy 1** – Provide employees with timely information about benefits, organizational development, fellow employees, and general County government.

1. Produce a biweekly publication, Communiqué, and distribute it to all employees.
2. Post Communiqué on MyDesktop, the County government's intranet.
3. Employ the tools of MyDesktop to get information to employees.

**Strategy 2** – Provide employees with the tools they need to perform their jobs through the intranet.

1. Work with the Office of Information Technology to ensure that policies and procedures are available on MyDesktop.
2. Make templates and instructions for routine County correspondence and memorandums available on MyDesktop.
3. Post important dates and deadlines on MyDesktop.
4. Use Splash pages to catch the attention of employees for new, important, timely information.

**Strategy 3** – Provide employees with emergency information.

1. Use all sources of media to notify employees of government closings and delayed openings.
2. Encourage employees to subscribe to the e-notification system to receive text information via cell phones, email, and pagers.
3. Inform employees through employee orientation and Communiqué of the methods used to provide emergency information

## **Public Information Goal**

**The Communications Office will provide its audiences with information about the County government's programs, services and activities.**

**Strategy 1** – Maintain a quality working relationship with local and regional media to effectively deliver County government information to the community.

1. Respond to all media requests for information in a timely manner.
2. Distribute news releases announcing government programs, services, and events via fax and email to all regional media.
3. Hold media briefings prior to public meetings to inform reporters of upcoming issues.

**Strategy 2** – Produce a community newsletter to deliver County government information to each home in the County.

1. Solicit input from all County agencies for inclusion in the citizen newsletter.
2. Compile and publish appropriate information for distribution at least three times each year.
3. Conduct a survey of residents to determine if they are receiving the information they need.

**Strategy 3** – Maintain PWC-Info, the County government's 24-hour automated telephone system.

1. Work with County government departments and agencies to develop and maintain automated telephone messages.
2. Conduct an analysis of existing messages to determine continued validity.
3. Publish and updated listing of all messages in the citizen newsletter.

**Strategy 4** – Respond to requests for County government information.

1. Provide information via email to requests for information from the County government's Web site.
2. Staff the information desks in the McCoart and Ferlazzo buildings to respond to in person requests for County government information.
3. Respond to mailed requests for County government information.

**Strategy 5** – Update and maintain the content of the County government's Web site.

1. Work with County departments to provide current, accurate information on the County government's Web site.
2. Review published pages for accuracy and timeliness.
3. Participate in the Web management group activities.
4. Provide assistance to agencies and departments to create and publish Web pages.

**Strategy 6** - Coordinate and assist departments in planning and hosting special events.

1. Coordinate and host events as directed by the Board of County Supervisors.
2. Coordinate and host events for employees.
3. Assist departments in planning and hosting special events and programs.

**Strategy 7** – Provide communications support to the Board of County Supervisors.

1. Research and write speeches and remarks for elected officials.
2. Provide liaison services to selected boards, committees, and commissions.
3. Produce and distribute information about the work of the Board of County Supervisors.
4. Respond to requests from elected officials and their aides for County government information.
5. Assist elected officials and their staffs in public relations matters.

# Discussion of Orange County's Economic Development Incentive Policy

Presented to  
Orange County Board of County Commissioners

January 31, 2014  
Orange County Economic Development





# General Comments

## Benefits of a Local Incentive Policy:

- Increases the County's competitiveness to attract desirable business projects that will stimulate economic activity, diversify the County's tax base & create new jobs.
- Helps our business retention and recruitment when a company's new location or expansion is in competition, and at risk to select another location outside the county.
- Serves as the County's required "local match" for the typical State discretionary grant that North Carolina is also offering to the prospective company.



# General Comments

- Offsets competitive disadvantages. Many of our surrounding counties, such as Alamance County, have a number of competitive advantages (lower cost land, lower property taxes, higher unemployment, abundance of existing industrial parks and empty available buildings) that offer real cost advantages to a business.
- Helps Orange County attract investments of all types in order to build up a critical mass, or cluster, of targeted businesses within our 3 Economic Development Districts.



# General Comments

- Nationally, state and local incentives have become a normal expectation in the highly competitive site selection industry and among site consultants and companies.
- Incentive negotiations are fierce among competing states and counties, and must be acknowledged as one determining factor weighed by many of the high-caliber business investment projects that Orange County might seek to attract.



# Orange County Incentive Policy

- Orange County currently has an **unwritten county incentive policy**, with **internal guidelines**, that has been quoted for several recent economic development prospects (industrial & headquarters) considering our community since 2011.
- Grant is calculated as a **percentage of the annual property tax valuation** of the project's capital investment (up to 75%), and **for a multi-year term** (up to 5 years).
- **Performance-based** grant that has protective **claw-back provisions** in a written inducement contract between the County & company.
- The BOCC first approved this incentive in 2011, and again in 2013, for two industrial projects that selected Orange County.



# Completed Incentive Contracts

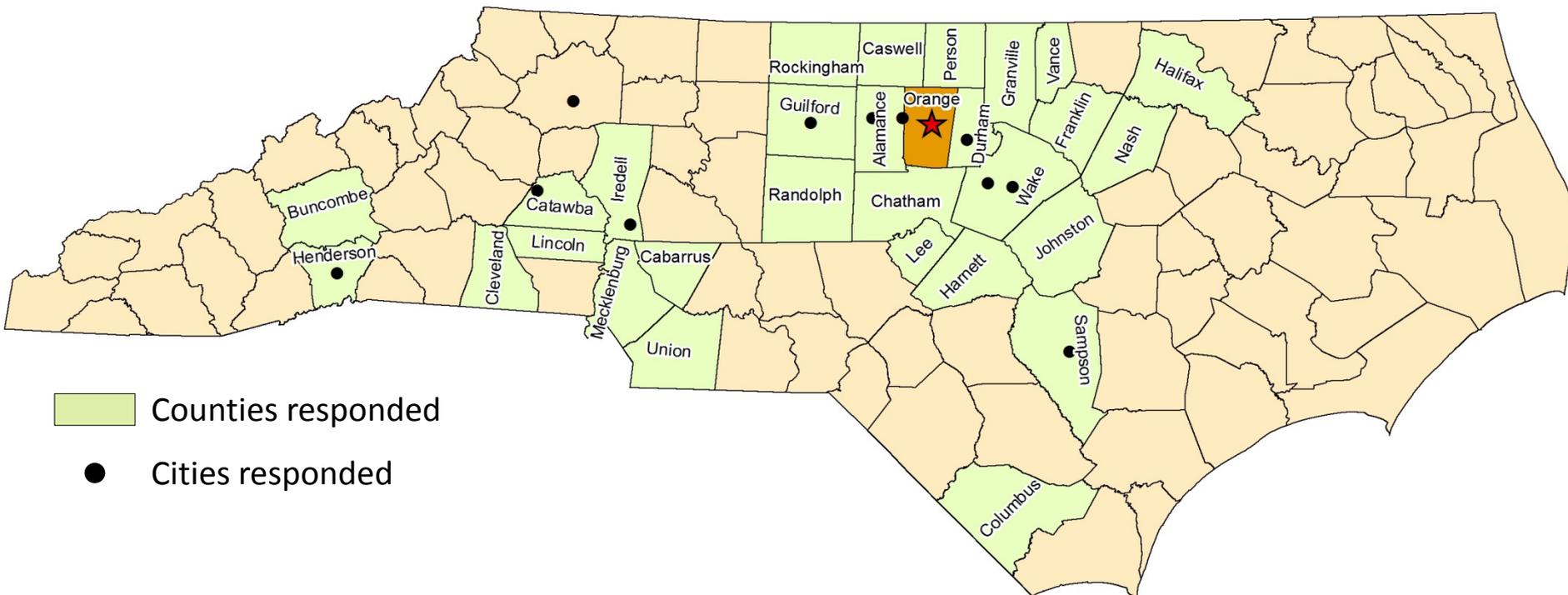
<u>Company</u>	<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Orange County Incentive Approved</u>
<b>AKG North America</b> (2011)	<i>Expansion</i> \$3 million & 90 jobs	\$100,000 (\$20,000 paid annually over 5 years)
<b>Morinaga America Foods, Inc.</b> (2013)	<i>New</i> \$48 million & 90 jobs	Up to \$1,545,000 (Up to \$309,000 paid over 5 years)

*Incentives are calculated from annual tax value of capital investment.*



# Survey of Local Incentives

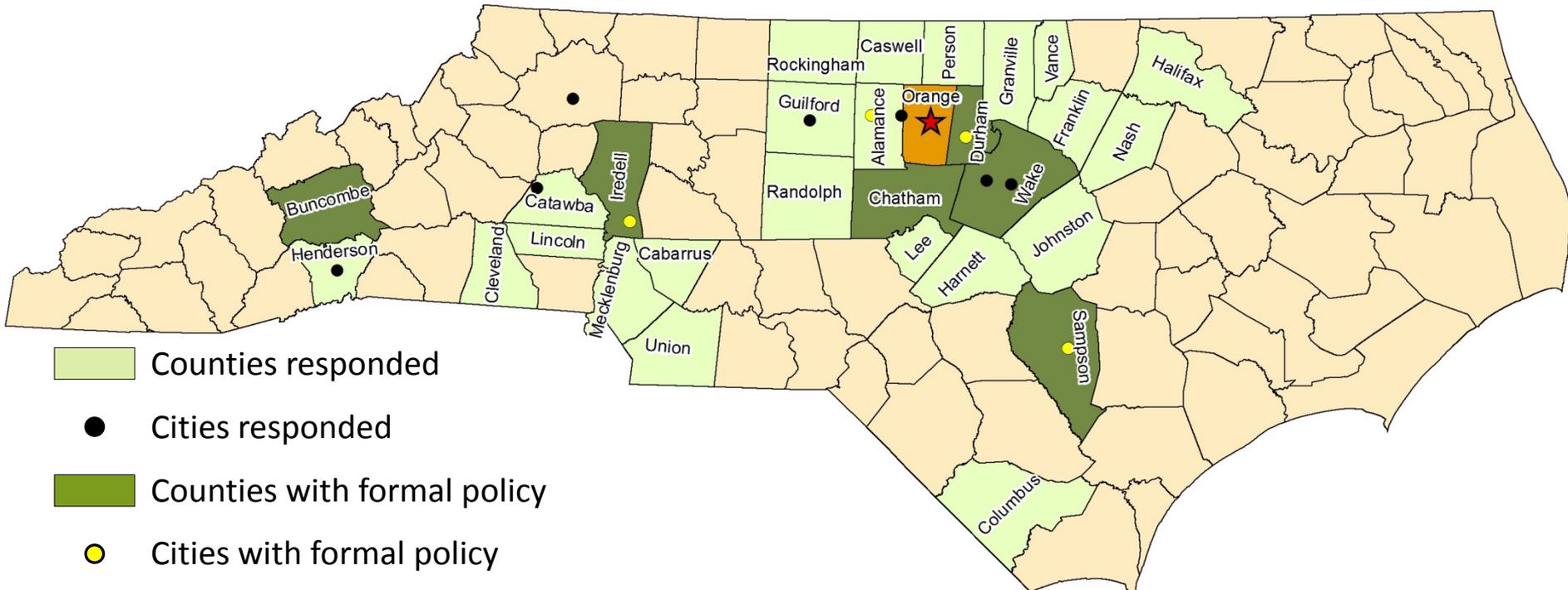
Orange County Economic Development surveyed 40 competing N. C. locations (28 counties & 12 municipalities).





# Most Local Incentives are General & Unpublished

Only 6 of 28 counties and 4 of 12 municipalities have written, formal incentives policies; the majority have unpublished guidelines & broad latitude to confidentially determine grants.





# Survey Highlights

- Most North Carolina counties have some type of **“performance based”** incentive policy for business recruitment and retention.
- Majority of the 40 surveyed counties & cities review projects on a case-by-case basis to determine their incentives. **Majority have informal guidelines.**
- Value of inducement agreements **range from a low of 50% of taxable value on the investment, up to 100%**. A few counties (Durham County) & towns (City of Mebane) set their incentive as a percentage (1% - 5%) of the project’s capital investment, instead of calculating a % of the taxable value.
- Most common terms offered are **up to 5 years**. Some offer 7 – 10 years.
- Minimum guidelines for \$ investment and job creation vary, and some municipalities award higher grants in their designated economic zones.



# State Discretionary Incentives

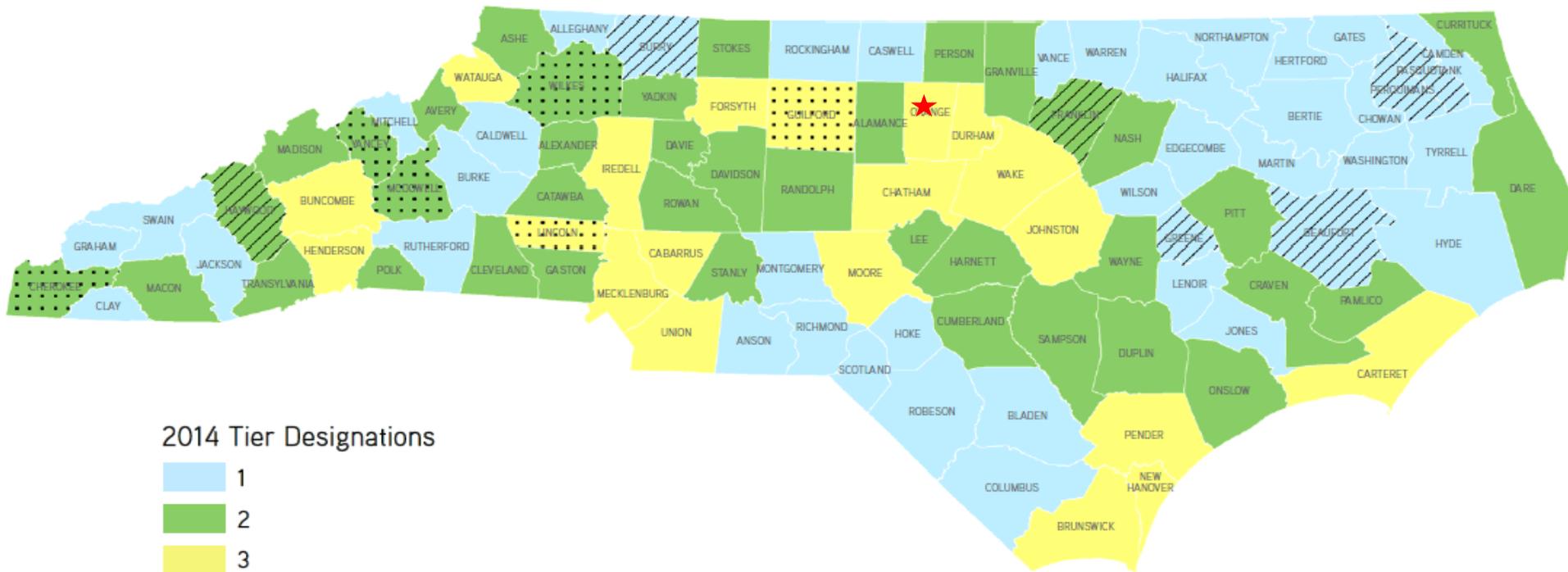
The State of North Carolina generally offers a prospective company either of two discretionary grant incentive programs based on the project's estimated job creation & capital investment commitment during the firm's first 3 to 5 years of operation. These performance-based grants vary in \$ value according to each N.C. counties' economic ranking as a Tier 1, 2 or 3 county.

- **One North Carolina Fund** – Awarded most frequently, according to a range of \$1,000 to \$5,000 per job to be created by the company in the first 3 years of operation. Requires a “local match” incentive of equal value by the N. C. county being considered by the business.
- **Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG)** – A significant grant reserved for the State's largest projects that promise to create 200 or more new jobs. The JDIG grant is a reimbursement of up to 75% of the company's employee withholding taxes, for up to 12 years.



# N.C. County Tier Designation

Per capita income & unemployment rates determine a County's tier ranking.



### 2014 Tier Designations

- 1
- 2
- 3

### Tier Change From 2014

- down
- up



# A Competitive Disadvantage

Current Project	<u>"Tier 3" County</u>	<u>"Tier 2" County</u>	<u>"Tier 1" County</u>
N. C. County:	<b>Orange, Durham &amp; Guilford</b>	Alamance & Granville	Vance & Caswell
Value of N. C.'s "JDIG" Incentive:	\$4,500,000	\$7,300,000	\$8,500,000
		<b>+\$2,800,000</b>	<b>+\$4,000,000</b>



# Recommendation

- Orange County Economic Development recommends BOCC approval for a general set of internal, non-published guidelines at the current formula (up to 75% of an investment project's taxable value) and term (up to 5 years) that has proven to be successful.
- This method maximizes the County's ability to review each business prospect's desirability for our community, determine an appropriate inducement agreement that is competitive within our region, and ensure confidentiality with our inducement agreement during the project's competitive recruitment process.
- With each project, the Economic Development director and County Manager would first discuss an appropriate incentive, and then present to the BOCC in closed session for further evaluation.

# Summary of Incentive Policies in 28 North Carolina Counties

Last updated: 1/21/2014

Attachment 3-b

Location	Type of Policy	Value	Term	Performance Grant Requirements
<b>Alamance County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	3 to 5 years	The amount of a grant is negotiable, but based primarily on the capital investment associated with the project. Terms and conditions for grant payments are also negotiable based on the particular needs of the client and requires a written performance agreements between the Company and the local government unit(s). Other local incentives may include utility upgrades/extensions and/or rate incentives, expedited regulatory processes, and/or various fee/charge waivers for site/building development costs.
<b>Buncombe County</b>	Formal Written Policy	Grants can be up to 85% of project's taxable value.	up to 5 yrs	Must meet investment and job creation thresholds (see guidelines to breakdown)
<b>Cabarrus County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Grants can be up to 85% of project's taxable value.	up to 3 yrs	Grant requires a minimum of \$1.5M capital investment
<b>Caswell County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	Unknown	Unknown.
<b>Catawba County</b>	Internal Guidelines	The size of the annual grant may be up to 100% percent of the net increased property tax revenue generated by the project.  An additional 10% and/or an additional year of incentive grant funding will be given to projects that locate in a vacant or underutilized building listed in the vacant buildings inventory list and which have been vacant for a minimum of one year.	up to 10 yrs for Industrial projects / up to 3 yrs for Non-Industrial projects that pay less than County's median industrial wage	Net minimum increase capital investment of \$1.5M or more measured by an increase in the property tax assessment; create a minimum of 20 jobs that pay wages at or above the county's median industrial wage.
<b>Chatham County</b>	Formal Written Policy	Case-by-case according to size of project.	up to 5 yrs	Grant allocation is calculated on a point system
<b>Cleveland County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Grants can be up to 60% of a project's real and personal property tax valuation.	up to 5 yrs	Unknown.
<b>Columbus County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	up to 5 years	Grant requires a minimum of \$250,000 in capital investment.

Location	Type of Policy	Value	Term	Performance Grant Requirements 119
<b>Durham County</b>	Formal Written Policy	Grants can be up to 2.25% of project's capital investment. Grants for very large projects can be 5% of capital investment. \$1,000 per job for 200-500 jobs created, \$1,500 per job for 501-1,000 jobs created, \$2,000 per job for +1,001 jobs created.	up to 10 yrs	Grant requires a minimum investment of \$50 million in capital for new projects, and a minimum of \$30 million for expansion projects, or create a minimum of 200 new full-time jobs
<b>Franklin County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Grants range up to 3% of project's capital investment.	up to 4 yrs	Unknown.
<b>Granville County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	3 to 5 years	Unknown.
<b>Guilford County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case; grants can be up to 74% of project's taxable value.	up to 5 yrs	Grant requires a minimum of \$5 million for a new facility with 25 jobs, and a minimum of \$3 million for existing facility with 25 jobs.
<b>Halifax County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to project's size.	up to 5 yrs	Unknown.
<b>Harnett County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Grants are up to 80% of project's taxable value. Possible incentives based upon number of jobs created at an average salary level of 110% of the avg weekly wage.	up to 7 yrs	Terms vary with investment level.
<b>Henderson County</b>	Unwritten Guidelines	Case-by-case, grants are up to 100% of project's taxable value; dependent upon number of jobs created or retained.	up to 5 years for non-industrial and up to 6 years for industrial projects	Grant requires a minimum of \$1.5 minimum in new real or business personal property.
<b>Iredell County</b>	Formal Written Policy	Case-by-case, grants can go up to 100% of project's taxable value.	up to 5 years	Grants require a minimum of \$3 million new capital investment
<b>Johnston County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case (grants can reach 90% of real property tax value, and up to 50% for personal property/machinery)	up to 7 years for real property & up to 5 years for machinery	New projects usually require a minimum investment of \$5 million in real property and \$1 million in personal property/machinery & equipment.
<b>Lee County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	up to 5 years	Grants require a minimum of 25 new full-time jobs, \$20M in new investment or \$5M for expansion.
<b>Lincoln County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Grants range from 65% to 95% of project's taxable value.	up to 5 years	No wage standard & no minimum job creation.
<b>Mecklenburg County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Grants range from 50% to 90% of project's taxable value.	3 to 5 years	Minimum investment based on sector and job creation, and based upon location - inside or outside "Business Investment Program (BIP)" designated zones.

Location	Type of Policy	Value	Term	Performance Grant Requirements 120
<b>Nash County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	up to 5 years	Grants require a minimum of \$5 million in new investment and 50 new jobs.
<b>Person County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	up to 5 years	Unknown.
<b>Randolph County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	3 to 5 years	Unknown.
<b>Rockingham County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	up to 5 years	Unknown.
<b>Sampson County</b>	Formal Written Policy	Case-by-case according to size of project.	3 to 5 years	Grants require a minimum of \$2 million for a new facility with 25 jobs, and a minimum of \$1 million for an existing facility with 15 new jobs
<b>Union County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Grants can be up to 2.35% of project's capital investment.	up to 5 years	Grants require a minimum of \$3 million for a new facility with 10 new jobs, and a minimum of \$2 million for an existing facility (no job min).
<b>Vance County</b>	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	up to 5 years	Unknown.
<b>Wake County</b>	Formal Written Policy	Case-by-case, up to 2.25% of the project's capital investment.	up to 8 years	<p>New or existing companies may be eligible for new investments that exceed \$100 million.</p> <p>Existing businesses may be eligible for new investments which exceed \$50 million, provided that existing taxable assessed valuation exceeds \$75 million in the year the grant agreement is approved.</p> <p>For companies creating a minimum of 350 new full-time jobs paying 200% (or double) the current Wake County average wage, the threshold for new investment would be \$50 million. At least 50 new full-time jobs must be created.</p> <p>Special consideration may be given to corporate, regional, or divisional headquarters projects for Fortune 500 companies and large international companies.</p>

## Summary of Incentive Policies in 12 North Carolina Municipalities

Last updated: 1/21/2014

Attachment 3-c

Location	Type of Policy	Value	Term	Performance Grant Requirement	Notes
City of Burlington	Formal Written Policy	Grants are quoted equal to 1% of the total investment of new or expanded tax base.  The City will provide +0.5 % higher incentive to corporate headquarters if the project employs at least 50 or more new full-time employees, and the building designated as the headquarters.	up to 5 yrs	Investment for a new industry requires \$8 million minimum taxable value in buildings and/or equipment.  Investment for an existing industry requires a \$1.5 million minimum taxable value in building expansion and/or equipment.  No incentives are being recommended for commercial/retail-type businesses at this time, but could be explored in the future if deemed necessary.	<a href="http://www.ci.burlington.nc.us/index.aspx?NID=756">http://www.ci.burlington.nc.us/index.aspx?NID=756</a>
Town of Cary	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	Unknown	Unknown.	<a href="#">Wake County incentives.pdf [page 28]</a>
City of Clinton	Formal Written Policy	Case-by-case according to type of project.	3 to 5 yrs	Grant requires a minimum of \$1 million for a new facility and new 15 jobs. An existing facility must invest a minimum of \$500,000 and create 10 jobs.	<a href="#">Sampson County Incentive Policy</a>
City of Durham	Formal Written Policy	Case-by-case; grants average 2.25% of the project's capital investment; single grant is capped at \$2,000,000.	up to 10 yrs	Grant % and terms vary dependent upon project type and location/designated development areas.  Minimum capital investment and job creation vary based upon location and designated development areas.	<a href="#">Durham City Incentives Policy</a>
City of Greensboro	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case (grants can be up to up to 80% of a project's taxable value.)	up to 5 yrs	Grants for a new facility require a minimum \$7 million investment and 20 new jobs. Grants for an existing facility require a minimum of \$3 million and 20 new jobs.	<a href="#">Greensboro &amp; Guilford County Incentives.pdf</a>
City of Hendersonville	Unwritten Guidelines	Discretionary incentive for water and sewer extensions/improvements (\$1,000 per job up to a maximum of \$50,000)	Unknown	Project requires cost sharing by Henderson County and the industrial client.	<a href="http://gohendersoncountync.org/dyn.php?page=incentives.php">http://gohendersoncountync.org/dyn.php?page=incentives.php</a>
City of Hickory	Internal Guidelines	Grants can be up to 100% of a project's taxable value.  Existing industry incentives are reviewed Case-by-case	up to 10 yrs	Industrial & Non-Industrial projects: a min of \$1.5M new capital investment with 20 new jobs.  Commercial Development Revitalization Area projects: a min of \$500k new investment.	<a href="#">City of Hickory Incentives Guidelines.pdf</a>
Town of Hillsborough	Formal Written Policy	Grants can be up to 75% of a project's taxable value	up to 5 yrs	Median wage/salary for the new employees must equal or exceed the median for Orange County.	<a href="http://www.ci.hillsborough.nc.us/sites/default/files/HillsboroughEDPolicy-Final2_0.pdf">http://www.ci.hillsborough.nc.us/sites/default/files/HillsboroughEDPolicy-Final2_0.pdf</a>
City of Mebane	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case; grants are set between 1% - 3% of the project's capital investment, and are historically between 1.5 % to 2.5%.	3 to 5 yrs	Grants have included straight cash payments, reducing land cost, offsite road, water or sewer costs; and have in the past waived all building permit, zoning, plan review, water connection and sewer connection fees. Each project is evaluated based on investment, water and sewer usage, type of industry, average wages and number of jobs.	[Details provided by Chris Rollins, Asst. County Manager, via email on 1/9/14]
City of Mooresville	Formal Written Policy	Case-by-case; grants can be up to 100% of project's taxable value.	up to 5 yrs	Grant requires a minimum of \$3 million in new capital investment.	<a href="http://www.edcmooresville.org/incentives-resources/">http://www.edcmooresville.org/incentives-resources/</a>
City of Raleigh	Internal Guidelines	Case-by-case according to size of project.	up to 5 yrs	A project must create new jobs that meet or exceed the County's average wage, and make an investment in machinery, equipment or real property.	<a href="#">Wake County incentives.pdf [page 35]</a>
Town of North Wilkesboro	Internal Guidelines	Grants can be up to 90% of a project's taxable value.	up to 10 yrs	Industrial & Non-Industrial projects: Grants require a minimum of \$1.5 million in new capital investment.  Commercial Development Revitalization Area projects: Grants require a minimum of \$500,000 in new investment.	<a href="#">Town of North Wilkesboro Incentives.pdf</a>

## Attachment 4-a

**Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2013 - 2014**

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>133%</b>	<b>138%</b>	<b>150%</b>	<b>200%</b>	<b>300%</b>	<b>400%</b>
1	\$11,490	\$15,282	\$15,856	\$17,235	\$22,980	\$34,470	\$45,960
2	15,510	20,628	\$21,404	23,265	31,020	46,530	62,040
3	19,530	25,975	\$26,951	29,295	39,060	58,590	78,120
4	23,550	31,322	\$32,499	35,325	47,100	70,650	94,200
5	27,570	36,668	\$38,047	41,355	55,140	82,710	110,280
6	31,590	42,015	\$43,594	47,385	63,180	94,770	126,360
7	35,610	47,361	\$49,142	53,415	71,220	106,830	142,440
8	39,630	52,708	\$54,689	59,445	79,260	118,890	158,520
For each additional person, add	\$4,020	\$5,347	\$5,548	\$6,030	\$8,040	\$12,060	\$16,080

## FY 2014 Income Limits

US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Durham-Chapel Hill Metropolitan Statistical Area  
(Durham, Orange, and Chatham Counties)  
Median Income: \$65,700

Number of people in the household	1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people	7 people	8 people
Income Level = 30% area median income	\$13,800	\$15,800	\$17,750	\$19,700	\$21,300	\$22,900	\$24,450	\$26,050
Income Level = 50% area median income	\$23,000	\$26,300	\$29,600	\$32,850	\$35,500	\$38,150	\$40,750	\$43,400
Income Level = 80% area median income	\$36,800	\$42,050	\$47,300	\$52,550	\$56,800	\$61,000	\$65,200	\$69,400
Income Level = 100% area median income	\$46,000	\$52,550	\$59,150	\$65,700	\$70,950	\$76,200	\$81,500	\$86,750
Income Level = 115% area median income	\$52,900	\$60,450	\$68,000	\$75,550	\$81,600	\$87,600	\$93,682	\$99,726

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The 80% and below income information is provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Additional income data information estimated by Town staff.

<http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il2014/2014summary.odn>

Income limits as of 12/18/2013

## North Carolina

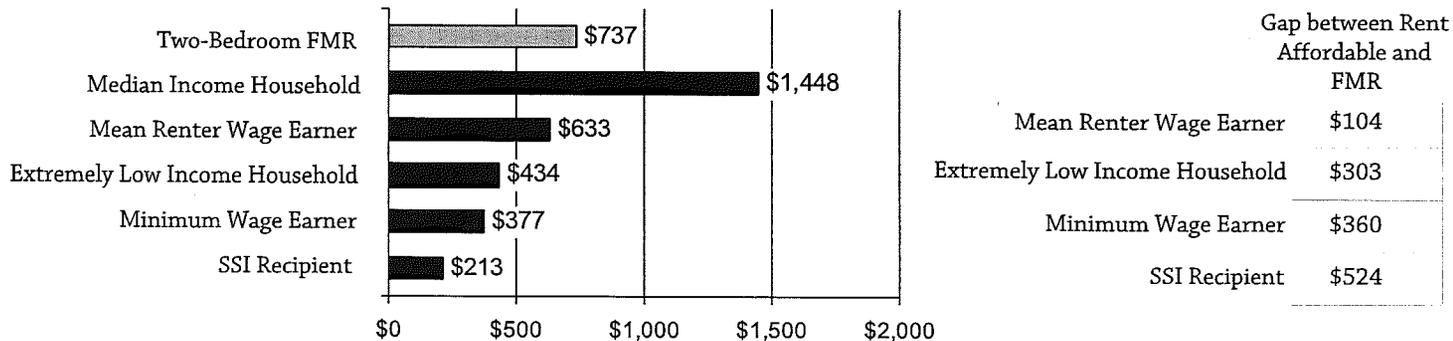
In North Carolina, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$737. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities – without paying more than 30% of income on housing – a household must earn \$2,457 monthly or \$29,481 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of:

**\$14.17**

In North Carolina, a minimum wage worker earns an hourly wage of \$7.25. In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment, a minimum wage earner must work 78 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or a household must include 2.0 minimum wage earners working 40 hours per week year-round in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable.

In North Carolina, the estimated mean (average) wage for a renter is \$12.17. In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment at this wage, a renter must work 47 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or, working 40 hours per week year-round, a household must include 1.2 workers earning the mean renter wage in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable.

**Monthly Rent Affordable to Selected Income Levels Compared with Two-Bedroom FMR**



North Carolina	FY13 HOUSING WAGE	HOUSING COSTS			AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI)				RENTER HOUSEHOLDS				
		Hourly wage necessary to afford 2 BR FMR	Two-bedroom FMR <sup>1</sup>	Income needed to afford 2 BR FMR	Full-time jobs at minimum wage needed to afford 2 BR FMR	Annual AMI <sup>2</sup>	Rent affordable at AMI <sup>3</sup>	30% of AMI <sup>4</sup>	Rent affordable at 30% of AMI	Number (2007-2011)	% of total households (2007-2011)	Estimated mean renter hourly wage (2013)	Rent affordable at mean wage
North Carolina	\$14.17	\$737	\$29,481	2.0	\$57,918	\$1,448	\$17,376	\$434	1,180,376	32%	\$12.17	\$633	1.2
Combined Nonmetro Areas	\$12.66	\$658	\$26,329	1.7	\$50,037	\$1,251	\$15,011	\$375	317,360	29%	\$9.34	\$486	1.4
<b>Metropolitan Areas</b>													
Anson County HMFA	\$11.73	\$610	\$24,400	1.6	\$42,100	\$1,053	\$12,630	\$316	3,049	31%	\$10.35	\$538	1.1
Asheville HMFA	\$14.94	\$777	\$31,080	2.1	\$53,900	\$1,348	\$16,170	\$404	46,457	30%	\$10.87	\$565	1.4
Burlington MSA	\$13.50	\$702	\$28,080	1.9	\$51,700	\$1,293	\$15,510	\$388	18,818	31%	\$10.58	\$550	1.3
Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord HMFA	\$15.25	\$793	\$31,720	2.1	\$64,100	\$1,603	\$19,230	\$481	189,365	33%	\$15.43	\$802	1.0
<u>Durham-Chapel Hill HMFA</u>	<u>\$16.13</u>	<u>\$839</u>	<u>\$33,560</u>	<u>2.2</u>	<u>\$67,700</u>	<u>\$1,693</u>	<u>\$20,310</u>	<u>\$508</u>	<u>73,168</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>\$17.77</u>	<u>\$924</u>	<u>0.9</u>
Fayetteville HMFA	\$14.37	\$747	\$29,880	2.0	\$52,000	\$1,300	\$15,600	\$390	49,804	42%	\$11.99	\$624	1.2
Goldsboro MSA	\$11.75	\$611	\$24,440	1.6	\$54,000	\$1,350	\$16,200	\$405	17,391	37%	\$10.21	\$531	1.2
Greene County HMFA	\$11.73	\$610	\$24,400	1.6	\$51,400	\$1,285	\$15,420	\$386	2,127	30%	\$8.49	\$442	1.4
Greensboro-High Point HMFA	\$13.48	\$701	\$28,040	1.9	\$54,500	\$1,363	\$16,350	\$409	85,666	35%	\$11.64	\$605	1.2
Greenville HMFA	\$13.54	\$704	\$28,160	1.9	\$57,600	\$1,440	\$17,280	\$432	28,662	44%	\$9.06	\$471	1.5
Haywood County HMFA	\$13.87	\$721	\$28,840	1.9	\$54,800	\$1,370	\$16,440	\$411	6,700	25%	\$9.79	\$509	1.4
Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton MSA	\$11.73	\$610	\$24,400	1.6	\$51,100	\$1,278	\$15,330	\$383	36,534	26%	\$10.10	\$525	1.2
Hoke County HMFA	\$12.04	\$626	\$25,040	1.7	\$50,300	\$1,258	\$15,090	\$377	4,046	27%	\$7.39	\$384	1.6
Jacksonville MSA	\$15.85	\$824	\$32,960	2.2	\$48,800	\$1,220	\$14,640	\$366	24,648	43%	\$10.06	\$523	1.6
Pender County HMFA	\$12.02	\$625	\$25,000	1.7	\$57,500	\$1,438	\$17,250	\$431	4,319	21%	\$9.07	\$472	1.3
Person County HMFA	\$12.44	\$647	\$25,880	1.7	\$58,200	\$1,455	\$17,460	\$437	4,222	27%	\$8.45	\$440	1.5
Raleigh-Cary MSA	\$16.88	\$878	\$35,120	2.3	\$75,300	\$1,883	\$22,590	\$565	132,947	32%	\$12.58	\$654	1.3
Rockingham County HMFA	\$11.75	\$611	\$24,440	1.6	\$51,000	\$1,275	\$15,300	\$383	10,485	28%	\$9.69	\$504	1.2
Rocky Mount MSA	\$12.19	\$634	\$25,360	1.7	\$55,300	\$1,383	\$16,590	\$415	21,743	37%	\$10.67	\$555	1.1
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News MSA *	\$21.85	\$1,136	\$45,440	3.0	\$73,300	\$1,833	\$21,990	\$550	1,829	20%	\$8.97	\$466	2.4
Wilmington HMFA	\$15.69	\$816	\$32,640	2.2	\$62,700	\$1,568	\$18,810	\$470	44,316	34%	\$11.09	\$577	1.4
Winston-Salem MSA	\$13.04	\$678	\$27,120	1.8	\$59,500	\$1,488	\$17,850	\$446	56,720	30%	\$11.81	\$614	1.1
<b>Counties</b>													
Alamance County	\$13.50	\$702	\$28,080	1.9	\$51,700	\$1,293	\$15,510	\$388	18,818	31%	\$10.58	\$550	1.3
Alexander County	\$11.73	\$610	\$24,400	1.6	\$51,100	\$1,278	\$15,330	\$383	2,750	21%	\$7.80	\$406	1.5
Alleghany County	\$11.73	\$610	\$24,400	1.6	\$41,000	\$1,025	\$12,300	\$308	1,197	25%	\$6.04	\$314	1.9

\* 50th percentile FMR (See Appendix A).

1: FMR = Fiscal Year 2013 Fair Market Rent (HUD, 2012). 2: AMI = Fiscal Year 2013 Area Median Income (HUD, 2012).

3: "Affordable" rents represent the generally accepted standard of spending not more than 30% of gross income on gross housing costs

4: The federal standard for extremely low income households. Does not include HUD-specific adjustments.

### **Orange County Programs for Low-Income Families**

**Medicaid:** Orange County has approximately 12,200 individuals who receive medical services valued at \$104 million annually. These funds are paid directly by the state to qualified providers such as doctors, hospitals, pharmacies and residential facilities to support these individuals. Most of the services are provided to children, elderly persons, and people with disabilities. Eligibility limits vary for different target populations. Children in households with income below 200% Federal Poverty Level are eligible for either Medicaid or Health Choice. Although a few adults with children are included based on the Work First income limits, the only other adults who are eligible for coverage are either disabled or elderly.

**Food and Nutrition Services (FNS):** Orange County has approximately 6,600 FNS households receiving an estimated \$19 million in benefits annually. These benefits are paid directly by the state to approved grocery markets in the community. Households must be below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level to receive assistance.

**Work First Cash Assistance:** The TANF program provides cash payments to about 300 families in Orange County with children in the home under age 18. The amount of assistance is based on income but the eligibility limit is very low.

**Low Income Energy Assistance:** These funds provide one-time energy payments during the winter and crisis intervention payments throughout the year. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (\$524,890) provides one-time payments that are targeted to vulnerable adults during the first two months of the program and then to other low income families with any remaining funds. In FY2012-13, the program provided energy assistance to 1,018 families. Crisis Intervention Program funds are available to pay heating and cooling costs to prevent health issues related to the weather. Last year 2,661 families received energy assistance through this program.

**Child Care Development Fund:** Orange County receives \$4.1 million for child care subsidies. These funds support more than 600 children monthly. Family income must be below 75% of the state median income and parents pay fees based on their income.

**Emergency Assistance:** This program provides payments directly to vendors on behalf of families in crisis. Funds can be used to pay for rent, utilities, medication, or other emergent needs. In the first six months of FY2013-14, approximately 1,050 payments were made on behalf of Orange County families.

**Housing Assistance:** The Orange County Housing Authority administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. The program's primary purpose is to provide rental assistance to low-income families with affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Assistance is provided in the form of a voucher that is used to rent housing units in the private market. Families earning up to 50% of the area median income are eligible for the program. Currently, approximately 600 families utilize housing vouchers in the County. There are approximately 1,630 individuals on the waiting list.

Additionally, the Town of Chapel Hill administers 336 units of low-rent conventional public housing units located at 13 sites (12 in Chapel Hill and one in Carrboro). Families earning up to 50% of the area median income are eligible for this program although there are some units available for families earning up to 80% of the area median income. Currently, approximately 296 families are on the program's waiting list.