

State of the County 2012 Address

This has been a pivotal year for Lane County. In a word – Innovative.

It has been one of many successes and accomplishments. And tonight, I want to introduce you to Lane County, again.

The Board of Commissioners and County leadership worked together to define Lane County. Who we are. What we value. And what we will focus collectively on in the coming years.

We reflected on the challenges our community faces and what we, as leaders could do to improve Lane County. We evaluated ourselves and what changes we needed to make as an organization to better meet the needs of our residents.

Our journey to define Lane County was developed with a level of collaboration that I am truly proud of. This work is critical to mapping our future and its success was possible only through the dedication of many. I want to thank my fellow Board members, County leaders and staff. We've accomplished something greater than the sum of our parts.

With that, I'd like to reintroduce you to Lane County.

Our Mission: To create a prosperous community by providing collaborative leadership, fair and inclusive decision making and excellent sustainable local government services to our residents and guests.

Our Vision: To be a prosperous community through wise stewardship of human and natural resources. A community that is ambitious in its hopes, creative in its leadership and accountable for the health and welfare of its current and future generation of residents.

We've also defined our Values. This is at the core of what we'll do and how we'll do it. Our values are a pledge to the residents of Lane County who are at the heart of all our actions.

We pledge Integrity. To hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards and maintain consistency in our values and actions.

We pledge Respect. We will strive to create an environment of trust and civility from open, honest, and direct interactions with each other, our residents, and guests.

We pledge to be open and accountable. Lane County is your government. How we do business is your business.

We pledge to engage our community. Community involvement is vital to our success. We commit to inclusive decision-making, building successful partnerships, and fostering opportunities to learn from one another.

We pledge to pursue excellence. We commit ourselves to innovation and creativity, calculated risk-taking, and continuous improvement. We seek to understand our services from the perspective of our customers, residents, and guests and strive to provide the best possible outcomes.

We commit ourselves to diversity. We appreciate and respect individual differences and the rich variety of communities that make up Lane County.

We pledge to be stewards. We invest wisely in our people, systems, and infrastructure. We exercise responsible stewardship in the allocation and efficient use of our public resources.

We pledge to remain empathetic to those we serve. Our ability to understand the experiences of our residents, guests, and employees is essential to providing services that improve the quality of life in Lane County.

Through our Strategic Planning process, we've outlined ambitious goals we expect to reach in the next five years.

We will work to improve the quality of life by reducing property crime by 25 percent in the next five years.

By 2017, we will reduce the rate of fetal/infant mortality in our County by 16 percent. We'll also reduce the rate of substantiated child maltreatment by 20 percent.

In setting our goals, there was much discussion on what Lane County could do to help improve the economy. We want to make it even easier to do business in Lane County.

By the end of 2013, Lane County will create a revolving loan fund of at least \$500,000 to help promote rural business expansion, workforce development, and job creation and retention.

And by 2017, Lane County will transform the existing industrial land in Goshen to support increased levels of development resulting in jobs that pay no less than 150 percent of the median wage.

Lofty? Ambitious? Yes. And yes.

This year has been a transforming year. We often focus on our limitations that are defined by an ever shrinking budget.

But this year, we said “What if?” What if we set aggressive goals that push us toward a better community?

And then we said “Why not?”

We are an organization that has consistently achieved regardless of the odds. While we must make careful decisions – we are embracing a new outlook and a new approach to our challenges.

They won’t define us. They will encourage us to expand our creativity.

We are an innovative organization. And, thanks to our County Administrator Liane Richardson, we’ve elevated our innovative spirit to a whole new level.

Liane tapped our employee talent like never before. She asked every employee what they would do to improve service to our residents and efficiencies in how we provide those services.

More than 1,000 ideas were generated. Among the biggest is a reorganization of our services. We are exploring how to merge Health and Human Services, Youth Services and Children and Families for greater collaboration. We have already implemented one idea that was suggested multiple times: Merging the District Attorney’s Office and the Office of Legal Counsel.

We’re exploring how to streamline a number of our processes including contracting and budgeting.

You’ll hear much more on our innovations in the coming year.

Before we end tonight, I want to thank all our partners and our employees – those who are the frontlines of our service delivery and who keep us operating. Thanks are also due to the many volunteers who care enough to give their valuable free time to supporting the work that we do. Thank you.

We have lofty goals for the next five years. We have a renewed innovative spirit that will keep us creative in our approaches and solutions. We have new commitments to our community identified in our mission, vision, values and goals.

I have a request from all of you. Walk through this journey with us. Celebrate our successes and progress. Keep pushing us to innovate and achieve great things on behalf of those we serve.