



NEWS RELEASE



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Umatilla County earns national achievement award for Community and Economic Development Innovation

WASHINGTON – Umatilla County has been recognized with an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that enhance services for residents.

NACo recognized Umatilla County's Regional Capacity Building Initiative in the category of Community and Economic Development. This effort is a unique public private partnership between Umatilla County and Eastern Oregon Business Source. The program's mission is to inspire, support, teach, and encourage organizations to collaborate, cross-pollinate, and increase capacity through goal setting and funding strategy. Target benefactors include: cities, non-profit entities doing city work, and internal county departments. The intent is to bring more dollars into the region and to expand county programs while lessening the pressure on the general fund.

Umatilla County's work in community and economic development is an outgrowth of a broader initiative which the county established in partnership with Eastern Oregon Business Source, according to Commissioner George Murdock. Said Murdock, we started with a professional development program which proved very successful. Our partnership with Eastern Oregon Business Source then expanded into a joint effort to collaborate with employers across the county regarding their needs in terms of employee skills and attributes. This led to more engagement with economic development and the development of a School to Careers program. More recently, this partnership has further expanded into providing training in grantsmanship for government entities throughout the county. Commissioner Bill Elfering, who oversees community development, along with Tamra Mabbott, who works in land use planning and economic development and I all share a similar vision with Susan Bower when it comes to the county's role as a catalyst for expanding regional horizons.

NACo President Bryan Desloge said, "Counties overcome complex challenges, provide essential services and constantly do more with less. We applaud these Achievement Award-winning counties for outstanding efforts to improve residents' quality of life."

Nationally, awards are given in 18 different categories that reflect the vast, comprehensive services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice, county administration, information technology, health, civic engagement and many more.

NACo will recognize award-winning counties at its 2017 Annual Conference and Exposition July 21–24 in Franklin County, Ohio.

Started in 1970, NACo's annual Achievement Award Program is designed to recognize innovative county government programs. Each nominee is judged on its own merits and not against other applications received.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. Learn more at www.naco.org