

Date: April 19, 2011
To: LCOG Board of Directors
From: Cathy Hamilton
Re: Communications Planning Update

Next Thursday, I will be joining your Board meeting to discuss the LCOG Communications Plan. We are nearing the final phases of this planning effort, and the primary purpose of the meeting will be to review with you the process we've undertaken, to whom we've spoken, and the elements you can expect to find in the communications plan. We will not be reviewing the full plan, as several stakeholder interviews remain.

First, I'd like you to consider whether you agree with the following statement about LCOG and its role, at least at a very high level:

"Lane Council of Governments is a membership organization dedicated to convening local government entities. By working together, we gain efficiency and effectiveness at a regional level."

Problems the Communications Plan Will Address:

It is our assessment that the perceived communications problem has more to do with missed opportunities or unfulfilled potential than any particular objection to the communications efforts LCOG undertakes.

The most effective and easily implemented communications plans cut right to the chase, identifying the problems clearly, and recommending specific, actionable solutions.

To those ends, we have developed the following listing based on individual meetings with staff and communications committee members, conversations with the Executive Board members and the Executive Management team, and analysis of the survey put forth to members.

During our meeting, I will seek to confirm this list, or to modify it for accuracy. I will also incorporate any additional items that you put forth. Please take a few moments to review and reflect upon this list in advance.

- LCOG's spectrum of services is not known or understood -- even by those who know the organization best.
- Because LCOG is many things to many people, it is hard to describe what the agency does to the typical person.
- LCOG members largely consider LCOG to be a meeting they attend, or dues they pay.
- Those who serve as LCOG Board members understand at a high level, and on a project-by-project basis what LCOG does, but do not feel they understand the full scope of LCOG's offerings or activities.
- The staff of member agencies know a narrow sliver of the services LCOG can provide, but only those in their particular realm of expertise.
- Members do not have the information or resources they need to justify the cost for LCOG membership.
- Members lack the basic information they need to reach out to other members and to LCOG staff for support or networking.
- Membership turn-over (because so many on the Board are elected officials) makes it challenging to be fully effective and to adequately inform Board members about projects and routine services.

Should you wish to discuss this in more detail, or in advance of the meeting, I welcome your call or email: 541-338-0549 or cathy@verbmarketingpr.com.

