

PRESS RELEASE

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Senior & Disabled Services to Close Offices One Friday Per Month through December

As a result of budget reductions, the S&DS Offices in Eugene, Cottage Grove and Florence will be closed on the following days (the third Friday of the month, July through December):

Friday, July 17th
Friday, August 21st
Friday, September 18th
Friday, October 16th
Friday, November 20th
Friday, December 18th

Please Note: This does not apply to the Senior Meal Sites or Meals on Wheels programs. All Senior Meal Sites and Meals on Wheels programs will maintain their normally scheduled hours/days of service.

Explanation:

Like many human services agencies, Senior & Disabled Services, a division of Lane Council of Governments, is directly impacted by the budget decisions of the State Legislature. The budget approved on June 29th by the State Legislature included a 6 month hiring freeze and a cost of living freeze for agencies such as Senior & Disabled Services. Thus, the funding Senior & Disabled Services receives from the State Department of Human Services to operate its local offices in Eugene, Cottage Grove and Florence will be reduced accordingly.

In an attempt to avoid personnel cuts, S&DS/LCOG Management has been exploring cost-saving measures apart from layoffs. Lane Council of Governments Directors did not receive a COLA on July 1st and will not receive merit increases this year. Additionally both unions, the Lane Council of Governments Employees Association and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), have agreed to take cost-saving measures for the next six months. The Employees Association, which represents most Lane Council of Governments staff and eleven S&DS staff, will forego a COLA until January 2010. The SEIU, which represents the majority of S&DS staff (about 84 positions) agreed to move to the Health Reimbursement Account currently used by the LCOG Employees Association and also agreed to the following:

- Effective July through December 2009, all SEIU-represented staff will take one furlough day per month, with an associated 3.5% cut in pay.
- The furlough day will be the third Friday of the month and the S&DS offices in Eugene, Cottage Grove and Florence will be closed that day.
- The first furlough day is scheduled for Friday, July 17th.

At this time, the State Department of Human Services has only issued "bridge funding" to S&DS, enough for July and August. DHS expects to complete full budget calculations by August, which will determine the amount of funding S&DS receives for the remaining months of the new two-year cycle, July 2009 through June 2011. Once DHS provides more complete budget information, Labor/Management meetings with both unions will resume to discuss further amendments, if needed.

For More Information, Contact: Kay Metzger, Director, Senior & Disabled Services, Lane Council of Governments, at 682-4432 or by email at kmetzger@lcog.org.