

County Government 101

**An Overview of Local Government from the
County Perspective**

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Acknowledgements**

County Government 101 has been a multi-year project with the goal to improve the knowledge of local government – Counties in particular. There are several unique aspects of Counties – they are created by the Idaho Constitution and serve as both an arm of the State of Idaho as well as serving its residents independently. I hope the reader finds the information to be beneficial in their understanding of some of the very basic tenets of County Government. I have included a generic “County Government 101” powerpoint to present an overview of County Government.

Several individuals and organizations have been crucial to the completion of the project. I honor and acknowledge their leadership, knowledge and kindness to me during this project. My fellow Gem County Commissioners have supported and encouraged me throughout my Master’s degree. Without their support, I would not have been able to weave my education and work together as I have done. Dr. Witt has been a tremendous mentor and I have enjoyed working with her on this and other projects. Dan Chadwick and Tony Poinelli represent all we could hope to become as public servants – ethical, honorable and principled individuals who believe in the value and hope County Government provides. Jacob and Noah Sherrer could likely give this presentation as well as I, given the number of public hearings, meetings and events they have had the privilege of attending. I humbly thank them all.



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COUNTY GOVERNMENT 101

The goal of County Government 101 is to increase the media and general public's knowledge of County Governments.

The purpose of County Government 101 is to educate the public as to the purpose, benefit and structure of County Government. Often, as students, we studied the federal government as well as the structure of the state government. We learned how a bill becomes a law and that there are three branches of government. We learn the requirements to be President and the number of members of Congress and Supreme Court Justices.

However, at no point, is local government discussed or taught in any detail or depth. This course will allow you to begin the journey learning about how and why it is important to know and understand your County Government. County Government has existed prior to the formation of our Country. In fact, every one of our countries' founders was a County official. They understood the importance of the government closest to the people being the most effective and efficient.

First, take a test to see how much you already know about County Government. Do not worry if you do not know the answer to the questions or if you have not even thought about the question or the answer. By the end of this program, you will have learned the answer.

(Take Pre-Test)

Information which is included in the Course Overview in Italics is for the instructor(s) or facilitator. The text typically shares why this information has been included and why it is considered important by the writer.

Do not think you should know all the information contained in this program. Work with your other elected officials and department heads within your County to provide this presentation to the members of the public.

Also discuss the technical nature of some of the vocabulary. Be careful to not talk to "techno-talk". Also encourage participants to stop you and ask for definitions if they are not familiar with specific words or if there are words with double meanings – levys (budget related) v. levees (earthen barriers); make sure participants are aware of your meanings. Also, please do not use the acronyms that are frequently utilized unless they are fully and clearly explained and participants are familiar with them.

Day 1 – Overview of County Government

This day will focus on a brief overview of County Government. There will be some aspects which are specific to each County, and other pieces of information are uniform across the State. Remember to encourage questions from the participants; this will be the best avenue to disseminate information and also to determine the interests of your participants.

Pre-test

Overview of Course

Distribute the overview of the course by Topic/Days

Introduction of Current County Elected Officials

Many residents do not know all County Elected Officials. Introduce the County Elected Officials who are present and allow them to briefly introduce themselves further (if they so desire.)

Distribute list with Names, Addresses, Telephone Numbers and Email information for all County Elected Officials.

(You may want to include Legislative Elected Officials contact information as well. As participants progress through the course, there may be a desire to communicate with leaders at other levels of government. You also may wish to provide a list of all of the elected officials within the County. This includes City Elected Officials, School District Trustees, Highway District Trustees and any other special taxing district elected officials.

Interrelationship of Counties to Federal government, State government and City governments & other local independent taxing districts

This is an extremely important discussion point. Many residents do not distinguish between the different levels of governments and the different types of responsibilities. For example, the Federal Government is responsible for Defense while Counties are responsible for Landfills.

Discussion of Federalism

Familiarize yourself with the topic of federalism and how it is important in today's world. (State's rights etc.) You may have to curtail this discussion as it can take on a life of its own.

Idaho Constitution establishment of Counties (v. voluntary nature of cities)
Article 18, Section 6 – Idaho Constitution

This is an important point to discuss. Counties are created by the Constitution. Cities are created by a vote of the people. Cities can be unincorporated by the will of the public. Counties cannot. Counties can be eliminated only after they are combined with another County. Every person resides in a County but not every person resides in a city.

Idaho Code Title 31 – County Law (also in many other areas of Code)

Discuss the importance of Idaho Code and how it drives most of the decisions of County Government. While Idaho Code Title 31 is known as the County Law, there are many other areas of the Code which impact Counties. The Idaho Code is written by the Idaho State Legislature and the Counties are required to comply with it. Other Idaho Code Titles of interest to Counties include Title 1 (courts), Title 18 (crimes), Title 19 (criminal procedure), Title 20 (juveniles and jails), Title 63 (property taxation) and Title 67 (open meeting law, land use planning). [Note: this is not an exhaustive list of Titles but only a sample.]

Provide a list out all taxing districts within the County

Discuss the taxing districts for the individual Counties. This list will be different for each County and community. Some examples include highway districts, cemetery districts, library districts, recreation districts, irrigation districts etc. County Governments do not have oversight for any entity with the word “District” in its title. Also discuss the governing board (and election) for each of the respective taxing districts.

Resources

Distribute copies of Budgets

This is optional to distribute at this point or the night of “Budgets”. I prefer to distribute in advance in order for the participants to review the budgets in advance as opposed to flipping through them the night of that discussion. However, there is also the risk that participants will leave the budgets home and not have them the night discussed.

Distribute Organizational Chart

The organizational chart is important to give participants an idea of the range of departments and services provided by County Government. It should be used to list departments and staff numbers, but not necessarily names. A telephone directory (Department telephone numbers would also be helpful.)

Required Services/What Counties Do/What Counties Do Not Do

Due to the requirements placed upon Counties by the Federal and State government, there are many required services. This discussion includes those services that Counties are required to provide and cannot eliminate. This puts County Elected Officials in a difficult position, especially the Commissioners, when they are forced to allocate funds to specific programs or projects in which the community does not support.

The Oath of Office

Every County official, whether elected or appointed, must take the oath of office prescribed by Idaho Code Section 59-401, that states:

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm, as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Idaho, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of (insert office) according to the best of my ability."

Discussion of Ethics – Attorney General’s Idaho Ethics in Government Pamphlet

The discussion of Ethics has purposely been put at the very beginning of this course. Ethics should be part of every decision made in County Government. The importance of Ethics cannot be overstated and should be reviewed through this presentation.

Questions

Should have questions throughout the presentation, but always conclude with this option. Provide information regarding the next meeting and potential meeting locations (if different). Discuss any restrictions on food or beverages the facility may have during the course of the presentations.

Day 2 - County Commissioners

Three Branches of Government in One

Executive – Manager and Administrator

Legislative – County Ordinances

Judicial – Quasi

 Planning & Zoning

 Various Appeals (Special Use Permit/Conditional Use Permit)

 Board of Equalization

Discuss the uniqueness of the position of County Commissioners. This is the only office in the country, at all levels of government, to possess the responsibility of all three roles/branches of government.

Role of a Commissioner – Individual v. Board

Discuss the importance and reality that an individual board member has NO authority except as a member of the Magistrate Commission, Health District board member and other boards & commissions. Thus one Board member cannot commit the resources or make decisions on behalf of the County.

All Commissioners serve on other independent boards because of their office/title as Commissioner. When they are serving on these other boards, they relinquish their responsibilities to their respective County and assume their fiduciary responsibilities to that Board.

*After discussing the role of the individual Board member, then discuss the role of the Board. The Board sets policy and exercises its authority as a **single** body, operating in public meetings preceded by notice. This is extremely important. Public meetings and notice will be discussed later as well. Once a decision is made, it is also important the entire Board support the decision; even if the decision was made on a 2-1 vote.*

Who reports to County Commissioners?

This information will also vary by County. You can list the departments here and then cover them in greater detail later.

Who does not report to the Commissioners?

Other elected officials

Discuss that other elected officials do not report to the Commissioners, but rather are independently elected officials. This is different from a City in that department heads (such as the Chief of Police) serves at the pleasure of the Mayor. The ability to remove another elected official rests with the voters through either a recall process or at the next election.

It is important to clarify that the County Commissioners are different from the other County Elected Officials in one very important duty. All elected officials have their constitutional and

statutory duties; they manage their offices and have their administrative duties. The Commissioners have all of these as do the other “row” offices [“row” offices are all County Elected Officials other than the Commissioners]; however, in addition, the Commissioners set the policy for the County. The Commissioners may or may not take input from the other County Elected Officials when setting policy.

Idaho Open Meeting Law

Discuss the importance of the Idaho Open Meeting Law. Go through the Attorney General’s pamphlet and discuss how it impacts the workings of the County.

Discuss the importance of transparency in government and to the public. However, there are documents which are protected from disclosure. These are extremely limited and should be used as appropriate.

Executive Session

Idaho Code Section 67-2345(1)-(4) (EMPHASIS ADDED)

67-2345. Executive sessions -- **When authorized.** (1) **An executive session at which members of the public are excluded may be held, but only for the purposes and only in the manner set forth in this section. The motion to go into executive session shall identify the specific subsections of this section that authorize the executive session. There shall be a roll call vote on the motion and the vote shall be recorded in the minutes. An executive session shall be authorized by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the governing body.** An executive session may be held:

(a) To consider **hiring a public officer**, employee, staff member or individual agent, wherein the respective qualities of individuals are to be evaluated in order to fill a particular vacancy or need. This paragraph **does not apply to filling a vacancy in an elective office** or deliberations about staffing needs in general;

(b) To consider the **evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of**, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, or public school student;

(c) To conduct deliberations concerning **labor negotiations** or **to acquire an interest in real property** which is not owned by a public agency;

(d) To consider **records that are exempt from disclosure** as provided in [chapter 3, title 9](#), Idaho Code;

(e) To consider **preliminary negotiations involving matters of trade or commerce** in which the governing body is in competition with governing bodies in other states or nations;

(f) To communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal options for **pending litigation**, or controversies not yet being litigated but imminently likely to be litigated. The mere presence of legal counsel at an executive session does not satisfy this requirement;

(g) By the commission of **pardons and parole**, as provided by law;

(h) By the custody review board of the Idaho department of **juvenile corrections**, as provided by law; or

(i) To engage in communications with a representative of the public agency's **risk manager** or insurance provider to discuss the adjustment of a pending claim or prevention of a claim imminently likely to be filed. The mere presence of a representative of the public agency's risk manager or insurance provider at an executive session does not satisfy this requirement.

(2) Labor negotiations may be conducted in executive session if either side requests closed meetings. Notwithstanding the provisions of section [67-2343](#), Idaho Code, subsequent sessions of the negotiations may continue without further public notice.

(3) The exceptions to the general policy in favor of open meetings stated in this section shall be narrowly construed. It shall be a violation of this act to change the subject within the executive session to one not identified within the motion to enter the executive session or to any topic for which an executive session is not provided.

(4) No executive session may be held for the purpose of taking any final action or making any final decision.

Discuss each of the exclusions and when they would be appropriate for use – and also when they would not be appropriate for use. (Example: purchase of real estate is provided for, but not the sale of real property.)

What is Notice & Why are Agendas important

Discuss the difference between providing Notice and what is an Agenda. (See below for clarification)

NOTICE:

- 5 Calendar-days posted in 3 locations (one of which is where the Commissioners meet) the public is likely to see the notices
- 24 hour notice for special/executive meeting
- Emergency meetings require best effort to notify

AGENDA:

- Required for all meetings

RECORDS:

- ALL meetings must have minutes (who is present, what was included in the general discussions, motions (who makes the motion and the subsequent vote). These minutes are prepared by the Clerk's office as the Elected Clerk is the "Clerk of the Board of Commissioners". The duty may be performed by a Deputy Clerk however.

EXCEPTIONS:

- Executive sessions
- Administrative functions (such as signing claims)
- Statutory – Medical Indigency – Idaho Code Section 31-874

What is the Difference between a Meeting and a Hearing?

Discuss the important distinction between a meeting and a hearing. (See below). This is especially relevant in land use. Comprehensive plans revisions have both meetings and hearings.

*A meeting is a “spectator sport”
A hearing is a “participatory sport”*

Types of Hearings

Ordinances

Fee increases (greater than 5%)

Indigent

Land Use

Board of Equalization

Legal Responsibilities of the County Commissioners

Discuss the numerous legal responsibilities of the Board for and to the County. County Commissioners are required to be well versed in all laws and statutes as well as make training available to staff on these topics. Additionally, only the County Commissioners can sign contracts and bind the County for payment of funds.

Open Meeting laws

Executive Session (already discussed)

Public Disclosure

Nepotism statutes

ICRMP (Idaho Counties Risk Management Program)

Claims (i.e. payment of invoices)

Tort Claims

Risk Management

Compliance with the State laws

Federal Law Compliance

ADA – Americans with Disability Act

FLSA - Fair Labor Standards Act

FMLA – Family Medical Leave Act

Civil Rights – Harassment, Discrimination etc.

ADEA – Age Discrimination in Employment Act

PDA – Pregnancy Discrimination Act

HIPAA – Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act

Board Responsibility – Federal law or Idaho Code defines responsibility

Tailor this list to your specific responsibilities on behalf of your County. These are a brief listing of Board responsibilities. Additionally, the State of Idaho has numerous Boards and Commissions which require a representative from IAC. These positions are typically filled by County Commissioners.

District Health Boards

Epidemiology

Communicable Disease Control (track, investigate & manage outbreaks)

Health Education (Diabetes, tobacco cessation, asthma, cancer, falls (seniors))

Physical Health (Immunizations, WIC, School Health, HIV/AIDS case mgt)

Environmental Health (food establishment, septic, public water, solid waste)

Public Health Preparedness (all hazard preparedness, strategic nat'l stockpile)

Regional Mental Health Boards

Regional Economic Development Districts (EDA)

Community Action Partnership

Local & Regional

Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D)

Local Economic Development Boards

Soil & Conservation District Boards

Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC)

Emergency Communications

Juvenile Justice Council

Other Boards (within the County)

Mosquito Abatement District

County Hospital

County Fair Board

Weed Board

(Regional/state)

ICRMP

Gem Plan

Idaho Association of Counties Board of Directors (IAC)

Idaho Association of Counties Standing Committees

Health & Human Services

Intergovernmental Affairs

Justice and Public Safety

Public Lands

Transportation

Legislative

Capital Crimes Defense Fund

Natural Resources Litigation Fund

Pre-Litigation (Indigent)

National Association of Counties Board of Directors (NACo)

Western Interstate Region Board of Directors (WIR)

Agriculture and Rural Affairs

Community and Economic Development

Environment, Energy and Land Use

Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs

Health

Human Services and Education

Justice and Public Safety

Labor and Employment
Public Lands
Telecommunications & Technology
Transportation

Clerk of the Board – County Clerk

Discuss the relationship between the Clerk and the Commissioners. The elected Clerk is the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners and is responsible for keeping and maintaining the official record of the meetings. The Clerk also prepares the agendas for the Board meetings and prepares any notices which may be required.

Partnerships and Relationships

It goes without saying that the most important partnerships the Commissioners have is with the fellow elected officials within their County. If there are not good working relationships within the Courthouse it is extremely difficult to operate. Ultimately, the public trust is eroded.

The Commissioners have partnerships and relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. They meet with the Mayors and City Councilmembers of their respective cities as well as the Legislators who represent their Counties. Additionally, the Commissioners meet and communicate with the federal delegation and their field officers. These partnerships are extremely important and cannot be overstated.

In addition to the partnerships and relationships the Commissioners have with the other elected officials; they maintain working relationships with members of the other boards and commissions on which they serve.

Additionally, Commissioners are the voice of the County and are active in community affairs and should be available to civic leaders and the public at large.

Questions

Day 3 – Property Tax Process

The goal of tonight’s presentation is to answer questions and identify any misunderstandings from the public regarding property taxes. This will be an excellent opportunity to clear up misunderstandings regarding how the process works.

Who is in charge of the Property Tax process?

Most people believe the County is in charge of the property tax process. While the County elected officials follow the process and procedures, it is actually the Legislature who is in charge of the property tax process. The Legislature outlines and defines the property tax process. The Assessor works closely with the State Tax Commission in order to ensure compliance with these laws and rules. The Treasurer collects the taxes due and owing ALL of the taxing districts within the County—all following the rules and procedures outlined by the Legislature.

What Is Assessed?

It is the Assessor’s responsibility to assess the value of all real property and personal property in the County. Title 63 of Idaho Code spells out the process the Assessor is required to follow. The Assessor keeps and maintains a plat map of all parcels in the County. The Assessor is also required to maintain a record of ownership of these parcels. [These ownership records are not to be confused with the official recordings of ownership maintained by the County Clerk.]

Definitions to be clarified

- Market value
- Assessed value
- Date assessments are made and why
- Levy

Clarify and ensure participants understand the difference between market value and assessed value (5% +/-); and that a fee appraisal for purchase or refinance is not the same as an assessment. Sales data are used by the Assessor’s Office in setting valuations. However, auctions, foreclosures and short-sales are not typically included as they are not considered “arms-length” transactions--which by definition are those with a willing buyer and a willing seller both on equal footing.

The goal of the assessments is to ensure the process is based on uniformity and equity. The State Tax Commission sets recognized appraisal methods and techniques which the County Assessor is required to comply with.

January 1 of each year is the point in time in which the values of the parcel are assessed. Some Counties do further trend analysis by month.

Rolling Assessment Schedule

Discuss that every parcel is physically assessed every five years (if not more often). This requires the Appraisers (staff members in the Assessor's Office) to visit each parcel in the County. Follow up with the discussion of trending and how that works for the other four years.

Assessments are calculated each year. This process occurs on a year-round basis, but values are set effective January 1. Assessment notices must be available to property owners in late spring. The property tax "roll" – the listing of all property tax parcels, ownership and value is presented to the Board of Commissioners on or before the fourth Monday in June.

A common misconception is that if a County budget is to increase, then the assessment values increase as well. This is inaccurate information. Discuss the interrelationship between the assessed value and the levy (which is set in September).

How Property is assessed

Discuss what assessments are based upon. Ex: The condition of the house for the year in which it was built – an average 1950 house NOT a house in average condition which happens to be built in 1950.

Board of Equalization (Show IAC Board of Equalization Manual)

The Board of Commissioners also acts in the capacity of the Board of Equalization. The Board of Equalization is separate from the Board of Commissioners in function and title. The Board of Equalization hears appeals from the public regarding the assessed value of their property. This can be land and/or improvements on their residential, agricultural, industrial or commercial property. Utilities (such as Idaho Power and the railroads deal only with the State of Idaho and the County is not involved in the assessments of those assets). The Board of Equalization does not focus on individual parcels, but rather ensures that the entire category is in balance County-wide. The assumption, based upon the law is that the Assessor's office is correct in their assessments. This assumption is based upon the ratio studies conducted by the State Tax Commission at the conclusion of the run.

Board of Tax Appeals

Should the applicant believe the Board of Equalization erred in their determination; the Applicant has the opportunity to appeal to the Board of Tax Appeals. The information presented at the initial hearing is considered, but unlike court cases, additional information is added to the record at every step. Members of the Board of Tax Appeals are appointed by the Governor.

Personal Property Tax

The Assessor's Office is also required to assess personal property within the County. Personal property includes: construction equipment, business furniture, fixtures, transient personal property such as road-building equipment and certain types of manufactured homes (titled but not on a foundation) are a few of the more common examples of personal property.

Levy

The County Commissioners set the County levy based upon the budget they have determined and set for the budget year. This occurs in September. There will be much more discussion on levies and how they function next week during the discussion on the budget. They are important in the property tax process discussion because they are required in order for the Treasurer to know how much in taxes to collect.

The Board of County Commissioners also review other taxing districts budgets for compliance with the 3% property tax cap, but they have no oversight over these other independent taxing districts. There is a common misconception the Commissioners can require the other districts to alter their budgets. This is inaccurate.

Treasurer's Office - Collecting taxes

The Treasurer's office collects taxes throughout the year, but taxes are due December 20 and the following June 20. These collection dates are for the prior years' taxes. The Treasurer's Office mails Tax Notices out the first part of November. This process is called the "tax drive." The collection of taxes is the final step in the property tax process. Taxes are calculated by using a simple formula. The Treasurer collects taxes and fees on behalf of all of the taxing districts within the County. Per the Idaho State law, the County does not charge an administrative fee for such assistance. It is important to recognize the amount paid to the County is not retained by the County.

$$\text{Assessed Value} * \text{Levy Rate} = \text{Taxes}$$

Partnerships and Regulatory Oversight
Idaho State Tax Commission

Questions

Day 4 – Budgeting

The County budget looks complicated depending upon the forms and outputs the particular County uses. As with the Property Tax process, there are many misunderstandings regarding the budget process and priorities. Remind participants to have their copies of the budget available for discussion. Go through the power point slides and then spend time with participants going over and explaining the budget before them.

Budgets

Timeframes

- 1st Monday in May
- 3rd Monday in May
- 1st Monday in August
- 3rd week of August
- October 1

Discuss the timeframes the County uses to arrive at the adopted budget. State law requires budget forms distributed internally to other County elected officials and department heads by the first Monday in May. These budget requests are due back to the Budget Officer (i.e. elected Clerk) by the 3rd Monday in May. In some Counties, it is the Clerk (and Clerk's Office staff) which create the budget; in other Counties the Commissioners are much more involved in the determination of revenue allocation and expenditures. The 1st Monday in August is when, by Code, the final draft is due to the Commissioners with the Commissioners finalizing the budget for publication prior to the 3rd week of August. The budget hearing must be held on or before the 1st Tuesday following the first Monday in September. The budget year runs from October 1 through September 30. Once the budget has been advertised, the property tax portion cannot be increased. The amount can always be decreased.

3% budget cap

Explain the 3% budget cap. The maximum amount the County budget's property tax portion of the budget can increase. Use the balloon analogy if necessary. The most important piece of this discussion is that the 3% cap relates only to the property tax portion of the County budget.

Levy Limits

Discuss what a levy limit is, and how the levy limits impact the particular County fund. Fund levy limits are different than the 3% budget limitation (or cap). Ensure that participants understand this difference. This may or may not be a major factor when funding the County budget.

Revenues – types

Personal Property Tax

Discussed last week

Property tax

Discussed last week

Fee for service

Fee for service represents fees which should be paid by the individual receiving the benefit and should not be the responsibility of tax payers as a whole. Examples include planning and zoning fees or other use fees.

Court Fees/Fines/Forfeitures

Court fees, fines or forfeitures are paid as a result of an individual participating the Court system. Court fees are used to fund the Courts. Fines are levied by the judge in varying amounts and forfeitures are frequently found in drug cases.

State Revenue Sharing

Sales Tax

Counties receive a portion of the state's sales tax as part of the revenue sharing program. The formula is provided for in Idaho Code and is based upon population, business inventory replacement and a set amount per County. Sales tax revenues can be used to offset expenses in any fund within the County budget. Sales tax revenues can be a sizeable portion of a County's budget.

Agricultural Replacement

This is a constant amount which will not ever increase.

State Highway User Taxes

This is a portion of the gas tax portioned out from the state based on a formula which takes into account the number of motor vehicles registered in the County and the number of improved road miles.

Liquor funds

A portion of liquor funds are allocated to Counties to assist with funding the justice fund and junior college tuition payments.

Tobacco Tax

A portion of state tobacco taxes are allocated to the Counties to assist in funding the juvenile probation departments in each County.

Federal Funds

Many of the Federal Revenue Sharing funds are distributed to Counties through the State. Often the State retains a percentage of these dollars as an administrative fee.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

The federal government does not pay property taxes and there are some Counties are over 90% federal lands Counties. PILT was designed to help off-set the lack of revenues. The provision of services is still required on federal lands and yet these Counties have no ability to raise corresponding revenues. All Counties which have federal lands receive PILT. These funds are formula driven.

Secure Rural Schools (SRS) – formerly known as Craig-Wyden

Secure Rural Schools was established in 2001 in response to the federal

government's severe restriction on timber harvests. Prior to 2001, Counties received 25% of the timber receipts from the timber harvested in their Counties. These funds were used to fund road & bridge projects in the County and to provide additional funds to the school districts within the County. As the federal deficit and budget issues continue to be an issue, the long-term viability of this revenue source is in doubt. Counties in Idaho stand to lose approximately \$30 million dollars as a result.

Discuss the various types of revenue which the County uses to fund operations. Go through the revenue section of the budget. There may need to be special attention given to the discussion of PILT and Secure Rural School. Also discuss how some of the revenue streams can only be utilized for specific expenditures (ex: lottery funds for junior college tuition). Also discuss enterprise funds (such as landfills). Enterprise funds operate exclusive of property tax dollars and generate the funds necessary to operate with user fees.

Expenses – types

Required expenses (aka Unfunded Mandate list)

The federal government as well as the State government requires Counties to provide a number of services for which Counties do not receive any or adequate funding for said services. Discuss the list with participants and how they limit the decision making authority of the County Commissioners in setting the budgets as well as limiting the funds which members of the public would like their tax dollars being used. Conversely, requiring tax dollars be spent on activities that either the Commissioners or public do not wish dollars to be spent upon.

Levy limits (by fund)

Hand out Maximum Levy Rates by Fund

The Legislature, through Idaho Code, sets the maximum amount the County can levy for each fund. The Budget Officer (Elected Clerk) verifies the levy and the State Tax Commission also verifies the calculations.

By fund

Counties divide their budgets into various funds which are outlined in Idaho Code. Certain departments or expenditures are to be paid out of specific funds. These funds are “siloed” and fund dollars are not to be transferred between the funds unless specifically authorized by the Board of Commissioners. Additionally, there are maximum levy rates for these funds which prohibit additional dollars from being allocated to these funds. Examples of “funds” are: general (or current), justice, fair, and solid waste.

Divisions of Each Fund

Personnel

Personnel (staff and benefits) are often the most expensive portions of a County budget. Include the number of staff members and be prepared to discuss how budget reductions have impacted the number of staff members. Also, discuss the benefits package offered by the County and how it compares with the benefits package of other entities and businesses.

Maintenance & Operations vs. Capital Expenditures

The philosophy of maintenance & operations v. capital expenditures is extremely important to discuss. During budget reductions, many individuals look to cut capital expenditures (one-time costs) as opposed to looking at overall M&O reductions (on-going savings). Discuss the philosophy of the respective County.

L-2s

Go through calculations on screen. Explain the maximum amount the County (or applicable taxing district will be able to add to the property tax portion of their budget.)

Differences in Revenue Sources by city v. County v. state

The state of Idaho dictates funds are distributed differently to Counties than cities. Often, because the Counties perform required services the state dictates which programs receive funding and from which revenue source. However, cities often also receive funds but without the strings attached. Examples include traffic violations and court fines.

Partnerships and Regulatory Oversight

State Tax Commission

Questions

Day 5 – Clerk’s Office

The functions of the Clerk’s office are extremely varied and different. The Clerk is the keeper of the Record and, as a result, oversees much documentation and records. List the function of the Clerk: Auditor, Recorder, Elections, Budgeting, Clerk of the Court, and Clerk for the Commissioners.

Elections

Elections are extremely complicated and important. If possible, it is imperative that your elected Clerk or Elections Clerk give this portion of the presentation.

Elections are one of the most important aspects of a democracy. Transparency and accuracy are critical.

Precincts

Precincts are found in each County and are the building blocks of the election process. Precinct people or block captains exist for each precinct representing the respective party. Precinct committee-members are also instrumental in the replacement of elected officials if positions become vacant.

Timeframe of Election Cycle

Handout from Secretary of State’s Office the elections calendar. Discuss the timeframes and deadlines and why and how they are important.

Write-In Candidates

Explain that write-in candidates must be registered with the Clerk’s Office in order to be considered a valid candidate. The Clerk must verify the candidates’ qualifications. Thus, “Mickey Mouse” votes are not even tabulated.

Absentee Ballots/Absentee Balloting

Discuss the process and advantages of absentee balloting; especially focusing on the security aspects versus Election Day voting.

Vote by Mail

Discuss how Vote by Mail differs from Absentee voting. Discuss the benefits, costs and risks.

Election Day

Discuss what is necessary to conduct an election; qualifications of electors, polling locations (and ensuring they are ADA compliant); poll workers (the number per polling location, necessary training); the number of ballots needed; identification proof; poll books; testing the equipment to tally the votes; voting machines; write-in candidates; closed primaries as

compared to open primaries and the impact on voters.

Consolidated elections

Discuss the law, which taxing district it applies to, and who it does not. Discuss the challenges of differing boundaries.

Recording/Records Storage

Discuss the importance of records and who it is important to. (Title Companies, Genealogy etc.) Discuss how expensive it is to maintain and also show your favorite records in the County (old Commissioners' Minutes, Immigration records etc.)

Auditor

The Clerk also performs auditing functions for the County. In this function, the Clerk is the Budget Officer and monitors and ensures individual departments or elected officials do not exceed their approved budgets. The Clerk also makes sure the books of the County are "in balance". The Clerk works closely with the Treasurer to ensure this is occurring.

Miscellaneous Responsibilities

Marriage Licenses/Passports

The Clerk's Office is the only office in the state which issues marriage licenses. Additionally, the federal government (via the Post Office) has severely restricted the locations for citizens to obtain passports. The Clerk's Office is responsible for knowing and following the numerous requirements and regulations to accept applications for these official documents.

Idaho Public Records Manual

The Public Records Manual is distributed at this point because it is often the Clerk's Office which receives a Public Records request. However, each elected official is "the keeper" of different records and is responsible for complying with the requests.

Discuss what is a public record and what is not a public record (just about everything is). Personnel records are not nor are some legal documents.

Accounts Payable/Claims

Verify invoices

Reconcile with budget (line-items)

Discuss the process the County utilizes when paying their bills. Some Counties utilize checks and some use warrants. Please be knowledgeable about which your County uses and how they are different.

Accounts Receivable

The Clerk's Office should balance daily with Treasurer's Office. This is part of the checks and balance found within Counties. The Clerk's Office prepares the claims for payment, the Commissioners approve the claims and the Treasurer makes sure there are funds to cover the checks/warrants. Neither the Clerk nor the Treasurer can decide not to pay a bill, only the Commissioners can do that.

Partnerships

Secretary of State

Idaho Historical Society

Questions

Day 6 – Sheriff’s Office

The Sheriff’s Office is one of the most, if not THE most visible elected office in the County. Because of its visibility, the Sheriff’s office typically receives a substantial portion of the public comments regarding the operations of its office and employees including road deputies and jailers.

Sheriff – Chief Law Enforcement Officer for the County

The Sheriff, along with the Prosecuting Attorney, is the chief law enforcement officer for the County. He/she is responsible to ensure citizens are safe through the investigation of crimes and the detention in the County jails of persons who may be a danger to society. Additionally, the Sheriff is responsible for dispatch, jail operations, patrol duties and service of civil process. Some Sheriffs function solely as an administrator, whereas others, because of the size of their departments are on the road with their deputies performing the same duties as any other employee.

Sheriff’s Deputies v. Police Officers

Cities are not required to have their own law enforcement, but often they do. Frequently, cities contract with the County to provide this service as it is cost-effective and consistent across the city boundaries. Discuss with participants what occurs when an individual violating the law crosses jurisdictional boundaries.

Peace Officer Standards Training (POST) and what does it mean for the County?

While the Sheriff is not required to be POST certified, each sheriff’s deputy must be and cannot act as a peace officer until the deputy is certified. This includes the role of the detention officer. Address the range of topics covered at the POST Academy including the law, methods of arrest, investigation, etc., and how this training impacts the job the deputies do. Also, discuss the implications to smaller Counties when an individual is attending POST particularly as it relates to staff coverage needs and a person not able to fill a shift while in school.

Emergency Communications

Include a tour of the County dispatch center, a review of the number of dispatch staff, length of shift, types of calls received and types of calls dispatched. This discussion also should include the POST training requirement for dispatch services and the cost of providing the service including the use of the emergency communications fee of up to \$1.25 on land lines and cell phones (see below).

Dispatch is the hub of information for the Sheriff’s Office. Encourage participants to listen while dispatching is occurring. Review the types of equipment used and the different jurisdictions which utilize the Sheriff’s Dispatch. Discuss the knowledge needed (geographic, medical, stress etc.) Also discuss the level of service provided by the County. (Basic 911; Enhanced etc.) Also discuss the future of dispatch services.

Another very important topic is the funding of the E911 services. Some cities contend they

should not need to assist with the funding of Dispatch due to the issue of double taxation. Ensure the participants understand the additional level of services which are required by the voluntary nature of cities. (infrastructure) Additionally, discuss the \$1 fee which is added to telephone bills in the State of Idaho (landlines & cell phones) and that these funds help, but do not fully fund the equipment. State law prohibits the inclusion of payment for personnel or benefits. Also, discuss next generation of Dispatch needs and the costs involved. Also, discuss the inability of Dispatch to accept texts.

Criminal Investigation

The Investigations division is important because these are the individuals doing the follow-up and putting the pieces of the crime puzzle together. Discuss the types of cases the investigators are involved with (without breaching any confidentiality or impacting any current investigation). Discuss the process the investigators utilize when receiving a tip from the public. If Crimestoppers is active in your community, discuss how this entity interfaces with the Sheriff's Office.

Road Deputies (sometimes known as Commissioned Deputies)

Staffing levels, length of shifts, miles driven per month and civil service of process are key issues for a Sheriff's Road Deputies.

The Road Deputies are often, the most visible employees of the County. Discuss the types of calls they are called to including the types of traffic stops and the types of arrests. Often these will vary dramatically. Discuss the cameras and tape recorders and the purpose for their use. Deputies often are required to serve legal/court papers on parties to litigation and will be required to seize property in order to satisfy certain types of property tax debt.

Relationship with City & Police Chief

This is an important discussion, which depending upon questions or how the previous topic was answered; this may be covered. Different jurisdictions work together in different manners. Discuss the working relationship between the city and County.

Waterways

Waterways are a program between the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and Bureau of Reclamation and those Counties which have "waterways" within their boundaries. This may not be a relevant topic for your County. However, for those Counties that do have waterways, the use of "marine" deputies is an important component in the operation of the sheriff's office.

Backcountry/Forest Service/BLM

Many County Sheriffs have operational agreements with state and federal agencies for providing law enforcement services on remote public lands. This will depend on the type of terrain and the presence of the other agencies within the County. Backcountry work is typically done in concert with the forest service in our mountainous regions. The Bureau of Land Management is also a partner in the desert regions of the state.

Search & Rescue

Search and rescue is done in most Counties with assistance from volunteers and also the Idaho Mountain Search & Rescue. It is a necessary component of the Sheriff's Office, which hopefully, does not have to be utilized on a frequent basis. It is utilized in our rugged and mountainous Counties most frequently.

Dive Teams

An important discussion point is the distinction between a Rescue Dive Team and a Recovery Dive Team. Most citizens believe rescue teams are housed in each County. IF a County has a dive team, it is most likely a recovery team. Discuss the training requirements and the physical rigors for participation on this team.

Other Specialty Teams

Your Community/County may have access or the need for other specialty teams. Discuss them at this point.

Questions

Idaho State Police
Idaho Sheriffs Association
Idaho Transportation Department
Bureau of Reclamation
U. S. Forest Service
Bureau of Land Management.

County Jail

The County jail is one of the most important operations that a County Sheriff can provide. However, not all Counties have jails, so arrangements for transport must be made by sheriffs to provide this service. Topical coverage should include staffing requirements for a jail, hours for shifts, number of inmates, classification of inmates and costs of housing inmates including how meals and medical care are provided.

Counties in Idaho voluntarily comply with the Idaho Sheriffs Association Jail Standards. This results in jail inspections by independent teams of County officials including sheriffs and County Commissioners. Operation of jails is such a high risk, liability exposure area that the Idaho County Risk Management Program is critically involved to ensure that jails are safe and secure

in their operations. Certification and compliance are critical; and while Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Arizona is in the news that is not a model Idaho should necessarily follow.

Civil Duties

The County sheriff is required by Idaho law to operate the Idaho sex offender registry program, and issuance of concealed weapons permits and drivers licenses. A County sheriff's office can provide specific numbers on each of the issues addressed in this section.

Jail

If the County operates a jail, work with the Sheriff to determine if it is possible to take participants on a tour of the facility. Ensure there are answers to the following questions. These answers should be provided to participants during the tour and not as part of a PowerPoint presentation.

Number of staff

Hours of shift

Number of inmates

Number of meals

Cost to house inmates (on a daily basis)

Requirement to provide medical care

Requirement to provide dental care

Special Diets

Medicaid benefits cancelled if incarcerated and the costs to the County

Offenses of inmates (*typically felonies with sentences less than 1 year; in excess of 1 year are sentenced to the state correction facilities*).

Jail Inspections

The jails are inspected on a quarterly basis by the County Commissioners. Additionally, there are annual inspections by the Idaho Sheriff's Association (ISA) which determine if the Jail Standards outlined in Idaho Sheriffs Association Jail Standards have been complied with. The ISA issues a report outlining if the jail is in compliance.

Sheriff Joe – Maricopa County, Arizona

Many citizens herald the actions and activities of Sheriff Joe as exemplary. However, as a result of his actions, there have been numerous lawsuits filed against the County for civil rights violations. The Sheriff has his own staff of attorneys just for fighting these lawsuits. Additionally, he has been investigated by the federal government for various offenses. His actions have caused significant legal issues for Maricopa County.

Partnerships

Idaho State Police

POST
Idaho Transportation Department

Questions

Day 7 – Legal

Prosecuting Attorney

Discuss that Idaho law designates the Prosecuting Attorney, along with the County Sheriff, as the chief law enforcement officer in the county. The Prosecuting Attorney must be a lawyer licensed to practice law in Idaho. The Prosecuting Attorney is responsible for filing all criminal charges in all felonies and in misdemeanors where the state or county agencies initiate the charges. The Prosecuting Attorney also is responsible for initiating juvenile petitions and actions. The Idaho Attorney General has no authority over the Prosecuting Attorney's decisions on whom to prosecute.

Discuss the difference between criminal and civil cases. The Prosecuting Attorney also is responsible for representing the interests of the counties in civil cases and specifically is required to represent the Board of County Commissioners. Civil cases include planning and zoning as well as personnel actions of county personnel.

Public Defender

The United States' Constitution requires that an attorney be appointed to represent someone who is charged with a crime and for which jail time is a possible outcome. The Idaho Legislature has designated counties as the responsible entity for funding the public defense system in Idaho. Counties may either establish a public defender's office, contract with attorney/attorneys for the service or rely on the courts to appoint someone as a public defender.

Juvenile Detention and Probation

Discuss how the juvenile detention and probation system are a responsibility jointly shared by Idaho's court system and counties. Generally the judges and Boards of County Commissioners reach agreement on the make-up of the system in each county and the staffing requirements. Hiring and firing should be done jointly. Access to services for juveniles is a critical component of this system. Idaho's system is based on the three-pronged approach (accountability, community safety and education.) Idaho's Peace Officers Standards and Training Council provide the education, training and certification for Idaho's juvenile detention and probation officers.

Coroner

The County Coroner is a named county elected official in Article XVIII, Section 6 of the Idaho Constitution, but no definition is given as to who or what the County Coroner is or is supposed to do.

One must go to the statutes in order to give substance to the responsibilities of the County Coroner. The basic duties are prescribed in chapter 28, title 31, Idaho Code and require the County Coroner to conduct inquests when required, bury or otherwise dispose of unclaimed bodies, and account for and turn over to the county treasurer any property found belonging to the deceased person. No cremation is authorized in Idaho without the approval of the county

coroner.

In chapter 43, title 19, Idaho Code, the coroner must investigate and determine the manner and cause of death, when circumstances warrant it, such as in the case of a suspected suicide, homicide or any other death unattended by a physician or when the death is otherwise suspicious in nature. Only the County Coroner or County Prosecuting Attorney may call for an autopsy.

While there are no substantive qualifications to be a County Coroner, Idaho Code Section 31-2810 requires that each county coroner must complete twenty-four (24) hours of continuing education every two years. This requirement is monitored by the Idaho State Association of County Coroners and is paid through the collection of a fee on each certificate of death issued by the state of Idaho.

Partnerships

Idaho Supreme Court
Attorney General's Office
Juvenile Justice Training Council
Department of Juvenile Corrections
Department of Correction

Questions

Day 8 – Court System

Idaho has a unified court system that consists of seven judicial districts with district and magistrate courts in each. The Idaho Supreme Court sets the rules for the operation of the courts. The Idaho Judicial Council provides the method for selection of district court judges and local magistrate commissions govern the selection of magistrate judges.

District courts are courts of general jurisdiction and have responsibility for criminal felony cases and all types of civil cases.

An Administrative District Judge (ADJ) is appointed in each judicial district and can issue orders for local practice rules including rules related to juvenile probation and adult misdemeanor probation. The ADJ also is responsible for managing the relationships between the appointed trial court administrator and the elected County Clerks of the Court and Board of County Commissioners including the issue of shared employees.

Magistrate courts are courts of limited jurisdiction that have responsibility for misdemeanor cases, preliminary actions in felony cases, juveniles, guardian and child protection actions, mental health cases and limited jurisdiction over several types of civil cases including domestic relations, small claims and limited dollar lawsuits.

Archives

District Court archives contain the records of all actions of every court in every judicial district and generally managed by the clerk of the court in each courthouse in the state. These records contain highly specific and incredibly historic information about both criminal and civil cases filed in each county. When counties run out of room for storage of these records, the courts and counties look to the State Archives in Boise for assistance in protecting and maintaining these records.

Juvenile Probation and Detention

Juvenile probation and detention are handled locally in each county. The staff for each of these areas usually are county employees (some are on contract) and are jointly hired by the ADJ and the Boards of County Commissioners. These are truly shared employees who serve at the pleasure of either the courts or the counties. Staff for these services must be trained and certified by POST.

Discuss the number of juvenile offenders at the detention facility and the number from the County

Probation and detention services include counseling, education, substance abuse treatment, accountability, family services, mental health services and any other service a court deems appropriate for the particular juvenile.

Adult Misdemeanor Probation

Unlike juvenile probation services, the Boards of County Commissioners in each county are solely responsible for the hiring and supervision of adult misdemeanor probation officers. However, the ADJ will set the rules for supervision of probationers and the fee to be collected to support the provision of these services. Adult Misdemeanor Probation officers also must be POST trained and certified.

Felony Probation

Felony probation services are provided only by the State of Idaho under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Probation and Parole which is found in the Idaho Department of Correction. Felony probation officers are POST certified and often work closely with misdemeanor probation officers. Felony probation officers follow the rules of supervision established by the courts.

Partnerships

Idaho Supreme Court
Idaho State Historical Society/State Archives
POST

Questions

Day 9 – Social Services and Emergency Services

Counties are involved in providing the safety net of society. One of these programs is the Indigent program.

Indigent Program

Discuss the program that Counties assist their residents with medical bills when they are unable to pay for them per Idaho Code. Discuss the formula which determines if an individual is eligible for assistance (cash flow basis; ability to make payments over 60 months). Also discuss the difference between Medicaid and the Indigent program.

Provide a copy of the Indigent Application to participants. Provide sample information and request the participants to complete the application. Remind the participants the application was approved by the Legislature, Health & Welfare with consultation with Idaho Association of Counties.

Discuss a typical indigent case and go through the process of interviews, what information is needed to make the decision, what are the reasons a Board of Commissioners might deny the application.

Discuss a typical Catastrophic (CAT) case. Discuss the County deductible (which is paid with property tax dollars) and the balance of the claim paid by the State of Idaho's CAT fund (which is paid with general fund dollars).

Discuss the requirement that the County provides for non-medical indigent services and what that process is and how it differs from the Indigent medical process.

Mental Health

Discuss the role Counties play in the provision of Mental Health. This includes in the Indigent fund (but not the CAT fund); the Sheriff's Department (patrol) and the jail. Discuss the difference between voluntary commitments as well as involuntary commitments.

Board of Community Guardians

As we have discussed, Counties provide the safety net for society. There are individuals in our communities who have no family to assist them with their finances. The purpose of the Board of Community Guardians is to provide a volunteer from the community who works with the court system to assist individuals who have been declared a ward of the state with their financial affairs.

Public Administrator – Treasurer’s Office

The Treasurer administers an estate should an individual pass away without living family members. The Treasurer is responsible for cataloging and disposing of the assets. Again, a requirement placed upon the County by the State.

Emergency Services

Emergency Management

Each County is required to staff an Emergency Manager who works closely with the Sheriff’s Office as well as the Board of County Commissioners. These individuals work very closely during incidents, disasters or even the planning of such. The County has an Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) which outlines how the County (and thus the individuals within the County) responds to different types of incidents which may occur. Some of these events include: fires, earthquakes, hazardous materials spills etc. The Emergency Operation Plan works in concert with the All-Hazard Mitigation Plan which outlines the individual hazards found within the County. The Emergency Manager is well versed in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) which describes the “command structure” of communication and outlines who is in charge during an incident. The Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, in concert with the other Commissioners, declares an official emergency on behalf of the County.

Discuss an example of an incident which the participants will be familiar with. Discuss the different components, participants and how well the incident was “resolved”.

Ambulance Service or an Ambulance District

Discuss the ambulance service which is provided in the County. There are either ambulance departments funded within the County budget or a separate ambulance district. There may be contract providers, fire departments or individual cities which may also provide the service.

Discuss the number of calls per month as well as the range of calls. Discuss the number of personnel required to provide the service. Also discuss the levels of service (basic, advanced, paramedic) and the requirements for the level found within the County.

Partnerships

Idaho Association of Counties
State Catastrophic Fund
Idaho Health & Welfare
Hospitals
Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security
Idaho Bureau of EMS Licensing

Questions

Day 10 – Development Services (Planning and Zoning) and Transportation

Counties are obligated to comply with the Idaho Land Use Planning Act, which establishes a planning and zoning process. There are several significant components of the process that are found in Idaho Code. Counties have the option of creating a separate planning and zoning commission to carry out these responsibilities and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners or the Board of County Commissioners may perform all of these functions without creating a commission.

Comprehensive Plan

Each County must adopt a comprehensive plan that considers at a minimum property rights, population, school facilities and transportation, economic development, land use, natural resources, hazardous areas, public services, facilities and utilities, transportation, recreation, special areas or sites, housing, community design, agriculture, implementation and national interest electric transmission corridors.

Planning and Zoning

Once the comprehensive plan process is completed, the County must then create appropriate zoning and subdivisions ordinances that establish permissible activities within the zones created. Often, the ordinances will include issues related to design review of structures and subdivisions.

Building Department

To carry out the regulatory responsibilities under the zoning and subdivision ordinances, many Counties create a building department. It usually is funded by fees collected for building permits and inspections. The building department is often required to enforce the uniform building code (this process is commonly called “code enforcement”). In “down” economies, fees may be insufficient to fund the operation of the building department.

Counties also may partner with cities to provide for these types of services.

Public Hearings

Public hearings are required for the adoption of zoning and subdivision ordinances as well as the comprehensive plan. These hearings require the taking of testimony, submission of documents and the creation of a record. The planning and zoning commission as well as the Board of County Commissioners act just like judges when conducting these hearings.

Hearing Process

“Due process” is important to these hearings. An applicant always speaks first and last. In between, the staff or members of the public are entitled to present testimony and evidence. Once all evidence is collected, the commission will make a decision based only on the record created during this process. No contact can be made with the Commissioners other than through the hearing process. Otherwise it will be considered “ex parte” and may require the whole process to start over. Discuss what ex parte communication is and how it can impact the process. Give

examples.

Legal Notice

Notice is required for these functions and usually requires publication at least once in a newspaper. The statutes will define the number of publications required. Some Counties require more notice than is required in statute.

Special Issues in Development Services

CAFO

Combined Animal Feeding Operations require special ordinances to manage large dairy and feedlot operations that involve thousands of animals. Cows, pigs and chickens generally are regulated under these ordinances.

Oil and Gas Exploration

A relatively new phenomenon in Idaho, which is regulated by Idaho's Oil and Gas Commission that consists of the Governor, Attorney General, State Controller, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Secretary of State. However, there are local land use issues that require local regulation as well.

Water Quality and Quantity

Both issues are implicated in CAFO and oil and gas exploration regulation and are both a state and County concern. These issues are also important in general planning and zoning issues.

Questions

Transportation

Transportation is an often misunderstood component of local government. There are two different models for the delivery of services for roads and bridges. The first option is a County department. Using this model, the Board of County Commissioners oversees and directs the Department head. The second model is the highway district model. The highway district model has an elected board and is an independent unit of government from the County. Arguments in favor of the County department include a close working relationship with the Development Services/Planning and Zoning department. Both departments working under the Board of County Commissioners should have the same goals and direction. An argument supporting the districts is that through the districts, local control reigns paramount. Some districts encompass only 15 miles or so and their service to those residents would be extremely high.

Funding

- Fuel Tax (federal)
- Fuel Tax (state)

Property Tax Secure Rural Schools (SRS)

The funding for roads is typically based upon use taxes. Traditionally, as you utilize more fuel, thus travelling more, you would be paying more in the fuel taxes. This trend is changing due to the number of hybrid and electric vehicles on the roadways. There are still impacts on the transportation system from these vehicles and yet, there are not funds to support the system. The federal gas tax and state gas tax are distributed using a formula. Several factors contribute to the allocation.

Discuss the difference between County road, city road and state highways

The discussion differentiating between the different roadway SYSTEMS in our state is extremely important. Currently, cities, Counties and the State all can operate in the same physical area and yet have different objectives, methods of operation and equipment. This becomes evident during snow/ice storms and the different methods of combating the elements. If you have an example (state highway is also main street in the downtown of city. Discuss how those services are delivered. Also, if there are MOUs (memorandum of understanding) in place to work together or share equipment, discuss this as well.

Functional Classification System

Discuss the levels of the functional classification system (arterials, collectors and local roads) and the definition of each per the local ordinance. Also discuss the impacts the various designations have on Planning and Zoning as well as the roadway system.

Road & Bridge

Discuss the types of roadways in the County

Number of roads

Number of bridges

Number of culverts

Discuss the equipment needed to operate

Discuss the cost of one mile of grading

Discuss the cost of one mile of chip sealing

Discuss the cost of one mile of paving

How long does it take to plow in the winter? Discuss the number of miles the County maintains and plows. Keep in mind the number of passes the snow plow must make in order to clear the roadways (at least 2 – one per lane which doubles the mileage.)

Each of these figures is important in that they can provide an idea why their road isn't plowed or paved as quickly as they might want. It also provides insight into the costs to repair the roadways.

Transportation challenges in the County

These challenges could relate to the cost of oil to the inability to build a key roadway to the need

for bike paths. Additionally, federal regulations and requirements significantly increase the costs associated with building or improving new roadways.

Funds which have traditionally been used for roads and road systems are now being utilized for transportation systems. These include pathways, bike paths and sidewalks. Most Counties however, do not spend their scarce resources on public transportation options (now being renamed as “mobility” options).

Challenges in the Future

*These are going to vary from County to County. This is an excellent time to survey your participants to see what **THEY** view as challenges.*

Partnerships

Local Highway Technical Advisory Council (LHTAC)
Idaho Transportation Department

Questions

Day 11 – Miscellaneous County Departments

There are many services which Counties are required to provide or perform. Today's presentation delineates which are mandated and which are optional services that have been viewed as being valued by the Community and worthy of public tax dollars.

Solid Waste/Landfill

Each County is required to provide for the maintenance and operation of a solid waste disposal system. This may mean that the County owns and operates the landfill; they may contract with another County for the disposal of the refuse; or the Commissioners may contract with a private provider. Talk about what system is utilized within your County.

The provision of solid waste department is critical for a County to ensure that refuse and waste is disposed of properly and completely. This life/safety function is often taken for granted and ignored.

Landfill vs. Transfer Site

A transfer site provides for residents the opportunity to dispose of their refuse at one location and then the refuse is transferred to another location; otherwise known as a landfill. A landfill is the location in which the refuse is deposited or buried.

Certification by Health District

Each region is part of a Health District. The respective health districts inspect the transfer sites and landfills across the state for compliance. The state through the Department of Environmental Quality has adopted rules which instruct the health districts and counties on what compliance is.

Weed Department

Discuss the Noxious Weed program of the County and provide participants copies of the Noxious Weed booklet. Discuss the importance of working to eradicate noxious weeds from the County and the individual responsibility of landowners to combat noxious weeds. Discuss which weeds are noxious weeds and which are not.

Also discuss the impacts of noxious weeds on the local economy and state economy.

Snowmobile

The snowmobile fund is designed to collect funds for the creation and maintenance of snowmobile trails. These are often interlocking extensive systems for snowmobilers in the backcountry.

Junior College Tuition reimbursement

Junior College taxing districts exist in three areas of the state—College of Southern Idaho, College of Western Idaho and North Idaho College. These three institutions are junior colleges and local taxpayers support these institutions with their property tax dollars. These are independent taxing districts. Students who reside outside of these taxing districts are assessed an additional fee for residing outside the area. Counties pay \$500 per semester (\$50 per credit hour) up to \$3000 lifetime assistance. There is no limit to the amount of dollars Counties are required to provide. As more and more students return to obtain more education, Counties are finding this particular program to be extremely expensive and do not have an ability to control costs.

Motor Vehicle Registration

Motor vehicle titling and registrations are processed by the County Assessor. This is a function of the State of Idaho which is performed by the County Assessor's office.

Non-Mandated Services

These are the “non-mandated” services. Each County provides different services. This is a brief list. Please add the other services that are provided. These may include animal shelters, senior services, historical society, museum, community action programs and economic development organizations.

Fair & Fairgrounds

Discussion of difference between the Fair & Fairgrounds

Most Counties have fairground and thus a County fair. Discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with this facility. Some of these challenges include the statutory nature of the fair board which is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, but also exists separate and complete from the County. These competing loyalties can create problems with liability and direction.

The difference between the fair and the fairgrounds can be slight, but important, depending on how each County views it. The fair is a specific EVENT which occurs for a specific time period each year. The fairgrounds are the location in which the fair is held, as well as many other events throughout the year. It is important when budgeting for the Commissioners and the Clerk to make this distinction and to ensure that the expenses are being allocated to the appropriate fund. These are typically two different funds with two different levy limits. It is because of the levy limits that this allocation is so critical.

Extension Office

There are a number of services which are provided by the extension program found in most Counties. Because this is a service which is not required, there are some Counties that have discontinued the availability of the program. This program does not exist independent of the University of Idaho, which is the land grant institution for the State of Idaho.

Discuss the partnership with the land grant university (the University of Idaho) and the programs offered. Extension programs are extremely different and varied and include the following:

Homes & Gardens

- Gardening
- Pest Management

Youth/Family Healthy Living

- 4-H
- Family & Consumer Issues
- Master Gardeners/Master Food Preservation
- Family Finance
- Aging & Retirement
- Water Treatment/Septic Systems

Animal Sciences

- Beef
- Dairy Other Animals

Crop Production

- Crops
- Irrigation
- Pest Management

Farm & Ranch Management

- Business Management/Marketing
- Small Farm/Ranch
- Farm Structures/Machinery

Environment & Forestry

- Climatology
- College of Natural Resources
- Water Quality
- Forestry

Community Development

- Horizon's Economic Development Center

Idaho Counties, in cooperation with the University of Idaho house Extension Offices. This is a program, which in recent years, has suffered many cutbacks and all Counties do not have individual extension educators. Additionally, each office may not provide or have access to all of the programs outlined herein. Different parts of the state have different needs and the Extension program attempts to meet these needs.

The most visible program is often the 4-H youth development program, which is open to kindergarten through 12th graders. 4-H programs encompass the traditional animal projects to leadership to cooking to computer technology to GPS skills.

Parks and Recreation

Most Counties do not have a parks department as typically this is a function performed by the State of Idaho, cities or independent recreation districts. However, there are some Counties which have chosen to perform these services on behalf of their constituents.

Building & Grounds

Building and grounds, while not specifically called out in Idaho Code, speaks to the care and maintenance of the County facilities. There is an expectation of the public to the care and maintenance of the public facilities.

Which are NOT County Departments?

Cities

School Districts

Irrigation Districts

Canal Districts

District Health Boards

Cemetery Districts

Sewer Districts

Herd Districts

Community Action Partnership (CAP)

Partnerships

Idaho State Parks & Recreation

University of Idaho

District Health

Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign

Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Bureau of Land Management

Questions

Day 12 – Volunteer Opportunities/Conclusion

This is the last day with your participants. After discussing all the services the County provides to its citizens, this is the opportunity to emphasize all the possibilities in your County in which residents can volunteers. The following list is a partial list of the Board and Commissioners that a County might need volunteers to staff. Please add additional opportunities found within your County. Discuss the importance of citizen participation in the governance process. Discuss each of these Boards/Commissioners so interested citizens may know the opportunities and process in order to participate.

Sheriff's Reserve
Sheriff's Posse
Citizen's Emergency Response Team (CERT)
Planning Commission
Zoning Commission
Community Guardians
Fair Board
Hospital Board

Follow-up on any issues or topics which may have outstanding questions or issues.

Discuss any outstanding issues which may have come up during the Class.

Post-Test

This is the same test which was given at the beginning of the Class. The expectation is that participants will know the answers to questions which they did not at the beginning of the Class.

Discussion regarding misconceptions regarding County Government and Government in General

This may or may not be a lengthy discussion. There will be opportunities to “do” things better for the County. Hopefully, those lessons will have been learned as well.

Graduation

Handouts/Links

(In Order of Discussion)

List of Elected Officials with Contact Information (Attached)

Pre-Test/Post-Test – “What do you Know About County Government” (Attached)

Idaho Code Title 31 – Counties and County Law

<http://legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title31/T31.htm>

List of Taxing Districts within County – (This will be different for each County)

County Ordinances – (This will be different for each County)

County Budget – (This will be different for each County)

Organizational Chart – (This will be different for each County)

Required Services/Mandated Services (Attached)

Oath of Office (Attached)

Idaho Ethics in Government – Idaho Attorney General

<http://www.ag.idaho.gov/publications/legalManuals/EthicsInGovernment.pdf>

Idaho Open Meeting Law – Idaho Attorney General

<http://www.ag.idaho.gov/publications/legalManuals/OpenMeeting.pdf>

Idaho Code Title 67 – Executive Session

<http://legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title67/T67CH23SECT67-2345.htm>

Board of Equalization Manual

<http://www.idcounties.org/vertical/Sites/%7B971BB846-EA97-469D-BEEA-D69CC59B07F3%7D/uploads/%7B66015D29-D0D9-4C4B-A84E-E595B111E9E1%7D.PDF>

Maximum Levy Form – State Tax Commission

http://tax.idaho.gov/pubs/EPB00092_04-14-2011.pdf

L-2 – State Tax Commission - http://tax.idaho.gov/forms/EFO00081_03-16-2011.pdf

Election Calendar – Secretary of State (changes every year)

<http://www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/2012cldr.htm>

Public Records Manual – Idaho Attorney General

<http://www.ag.idaho.gov/publications/legalManuals/PublicRecordsLaw.pdf>

Indigent Application –

<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=AoP2LhonfO4%3d&t=284>

Noxious Weed Booklet - <http://www.idahoweedawareness.com/>

Volunteer Board Application (Attached)

Other Sources of Information/Activities

Idaho Association of Counties CEO Handbook –

http://www.idcounties.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={87780828-1239-4F94-81B5-20B6E1023A79}&DE={2AE278E4-165E-4D8B-AE6D-9A034F574E91}

NACo County Leadership Handbook (Attached)

“Keys to the Courthouse” – AgriLIFE Extension (Texas A&M System)

“County Works” (an on-line game) – NACo

