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Wellness Initiative distributing community-wide health survey

Washington County Wellness Initiative Inc. is a grassroots collaboration seeking to strengthen and transform the public health infrastructure through community-based action.

As part of their Health Resources and Services Administration Rural Health Network Development Planning Grant project, WCWI is distributing a Community Health Needs Survey. The assessment will aid WCWI in focusing on ways to build capacity, coordinate care, and increase access to health care for Washington County communities.

“The Community Health Needs Survey is one of four surveys that will be used to obtain feedback about the current availability and quality of health care from the community,” said M’Liss Jenkins, WCWI Coordinator. “Our local health care providers and workgroups, greatly rely on information from the community to identify health care needs and to improve the services available.”

Everyone who completes the survey will be eligible to receive up to \$200 in Braum’s gift cards. The survey is available at www.wcwiok.org by clicking on the “Community Assessment” link. Surveys can be completed online or completed using the paper version and returned to WCWI, P.O. Box 3812, Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74006 or the Bartlesville Public Library at the Reference Desk.

In addition to the Community Needs Survey, WCWI is also distributing surveys to the providers currently listed in the Free and Low-Cost Healthcare Resource Guide, WCWI Workgroups, Primary Care Providers, and WCWI Sector Representatives.

These surveys will be focused specifically on the needs and contributions of these groups. To follow-up on the group-specific surveys, WCWI will conduct four focus groups during the first few months of 2015. The data received from these surveys and focus groups, along with the information from the Community Needs Survey, will be utilized to create the 2015 Community Needs Assessment.

Washington County Wellness Initiative Inc.

The residents of Washington County came together in January 2004 to talk about community needs and concerns.

Forty-five individuals attended the first meeting from various community sectors including concerned citizens, businesses, government, social services, schools, law enforcement, neighborhoods, faith community, youth serving organizations, health care and tribal.

The group identified areas of concern which included access for adult indigent health care, lack of affordable health care, lack of adult counseling and mental health issues, need for employee health/wellness programs, lack of affordable housing, lack of dental care, lack of transportation, high costs of medications, need for youth prevention programs, late/no prenatal care especially in the Hispanic population, as well as, medical/health literacy issues among Hispanics, need for advocacy on health issues, daycare for teen moms, children not getting immunized, and the need to educate voters on current issues.

In an effort to respond to these concerns, the group formed the WCWI with a mission to strengthen and transform the public health infrastructure in Washington County. The WCWI is an Oklahoma Turning Point Coalition formed as part of the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Office of Public Health Innovation, Oklahoma Turning Point Community Partnerships initiative. WCWI has grown to a diverse group of 190 public health partners.

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For more information, contact Sheree L. Hukill, HRSA Grant Project Director at 918-629-9742 or email sheree.hukill@iconceptsinc.com.

- See more at: <http://examiner-enterprise.com/living/features/wellness-initiative-distributing-community-wide-health-survey#sthash.G3maKgrs.dpuf>

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Transit system stays vital



[image](#)

By Emily Droege

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A national transportation consultant made a stop in Bartlesville earlier this week and met with several city leaders and employers to discuss the vitality of the community's low-fare bus system.

With operating costs climbing, the CityRide Circuit transit program is staying on the road on a month-to-month basis. The service began in 2012, with support from community organizations and local businesses.

During his visit, Chris Zeilinger, assistant director of the Community Transportation Association in Washington, D.C., discussed how a public transit system like CityRide Circuit is essential to the overall community.

“It makes a load of difference by the people who are using it. It can be used by all kinds of people,” said Zeilinger while visiting the Examiner-Enterprise. “You don’t have to be in a special program. You don’t have to have a special need. All you do is get on the bus and ride.”

“One of the things that helps make Bartlesville a special place is that it has a whole range of working people at every income level. I think there’s a lot of economic health in the community, so that’s impressive.”

The fixed-route bus service currently operates from 7 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, making hourly loops and a dozen stops on both the west and east sides of town. Each ride costs only 25 cents, with children 12 and under traveling free.

“Another thing that really impressed me was to see firsthand that, even though the CityRide Circuit is on a very limited service, it’s really making a difference in a number of people’s lives,” said Zeilinger. “If I lived here, I would want to see it continue.”

According to the transportation coalition, it takes \$5,000 each month to keep CityRide Circuit moving. As a result, members have started a \$20,000 fundraiser campaign to maintain the service while long-term revenue sources are developed. The fundraiser response has totaled more than \$8,000 thus far and donations can be made at www.crowdrise.com/savecityridecircuit.

Zeilinger commented that the month-by-month fundraising by the community is “nothing short of remarkable.”

“It speaks to a desire in the community that this is important, otherwise they wouldn’t be doing it month after month, year after year and even now,” he said.

Washington County Transportation Coalition member Lee Stephens added that “with the success of the pilot project in 2012 and 2013, we thought people would be interested, if not eager, to expand the bus service and provide sustained funding.”

“I guess we were a bit naive. We have run into barrier after barrier. Through 2014 we have had to scramble month by month to keep the circuit going, and now we will have to keep doing that in 2015 until sustained funding can be found,” said Stephens.

If generous community donations continue to fund the service through the end of the year, WCTC members will continue pressing for long-term funding solutions with a goal of expanding the transit service to a two loop system.

“As we talked with leaders in the public, business, charitable and private sectors of Bartlesville, they agreed our city needs a transit system and they like what we are proposing. Yet, they still lack the will to make it happen through sustained funding,” said Stephens. “Chris made it clear that most cities the size of Bartlesville provide public transportation as a city service. And the Angelou Report for which we paid a lot of money pointed out this is area where we are lacking.”

Nearly 60 individuals and families ride the bus each day, with ridership peaking at 2 p.m. The current service extends as far west as Oak Park to Madison Avenue on the city’s east side. The stops also include social service agencies, retail and grocery stores and health facilities.

During his three-day visit, Zeilinger rode the CityRide Circuit and talked with riders about the benefits of the current system and what improvements could be made in the future.

“CityRide Circuit found a cross-section of the community, not a segment, that has transportation desires that its meeting and it’s doing a very good job at that,” he said. “From a user angle, without a doubt, there are folks in

Bartlesville who would make effective use of the CityRide Circuit if it went to more of the community and also had more frequency.”

Zeilinger explained that there’s well-documented evidence nationally and locally that young employees entering the workforce who are choosing to drive less than those of previous generations due to lifestyle or economic preferences.

He added that within the local workforce there are a “surprising number of people without cars.”

“There’s about 17 percent here where the number of working age adults in the household is greater than the number of cars in the household,” he said. “When I see a city this size and the number of people without cars or without ready access to a car and trying to work, that’s a transportation challenge.”

Based on his research, Zeilinger added that public transportation is one of the best anti-poverty programs because it allows employees in the lower end of the income scale to stay in the workforce and thereby contribute to a city’s tax base and society.

For more information or to support the cause, go to www.cityridecircuit.org or Save CityRide Circuit at Crowdrise or visit the CityRide Circuit Facebook page. Financial donations can also be sent directly to Cimarron Transit, 2101 N. 14th, Suite 129, Ponca City, OK 74601 and memo ” CityRide Circuit.”

- See more at: <http://examiner-enterprise.com/living/features/transit-system-stays-vital#sthash.VYM7739s.dpuf>