

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

March 16, 2010

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** City Manager

Prepared by: Mark van de Kamp, Management Analyst II

**SUBJECT: 2010 CENSUS UPDATE**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council receive a presentation about the 2010 Census and outreach efforts that City staff has been coordinating within the community as a Census Partner.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The national census is taken every 10 years, as required by the United States Constitution, and April 1, 2010, is Census Day. The count includes people of all ages, ethnic groups, and citizens and non-citizens, regardless of legal status, and all census information is confidential.

Every year, the Federal government allocates about \$400 billion to states and communities based, in part, on census data. Census data guides planning for new hospitals, roads, schools and more, and determines the allocation of community development block grants and other funding essential to many communities, including the City of Santa Maria. Nearly every facet of local government is affected by an accurate picture of its residents.

On April 9, 2009, the Council adopted a resolution affirming the City's support of Census 2010 and encouraging community participation for a complete and accurate count. This presentation is another in a series of community outreach efforts.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Forms and reminder notices for the 2010 Census are arriving in mailboxes across Santa Maria and across the nation. The questionnaires should be arriving this week. The Census Bureau has prepared for the process during the past year, by opening an office in Santa Maria, hiring hundreds of local Census employees, walking streets to confirm addresses, printing the questionnaires, and urging household participation.

The major change for this, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Census, is that the Census Bureau will no longer use a long form. The 2010 Census will use only a short-form asking 10 basic questions, such as name, gender, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship, and housing tenure. A poster-sized copy of this form is on display in the Santa Maria Public Library.

Educating our residents about the Census process and its importance is one of the City's essential responsibilities as a Census Partner. Hard-to-count populations who, according to the Census, include migrant farm workers, young people, the homeless, and others, are more likely to mail back their completed Census questionnaires when people that they personally know and trust share the facts about the Census and dispel concerns they may have about confidentiality. Residents need to know that the Census is not concerned about an individual's immigration status. What matters most is that all adults and children are counted as members of our community because everyone in the community stands to benefit from the resources and funding made possible by a complete Census count.

If Santa Maria is undercounted, then our community will not receive its fair share of funding. The Census Bureau estimates that every person missed in the count translates to a loss of \$1,400 to \$2,000 in local funding.

The City began a partnership with the Census Bureau one a year ago to assist in local outreach efforts. Staff coordinated a Complete Count Committee open to all community members and groups interested in promoting the 2010 Census. Four meetings have been held – more than any other City in the County – which cumulatively drew nearly 60 different people representing diverse community groups. Those in attendance were asked to carry key Census messages to their community groups, co-workers, employees, families and friends.

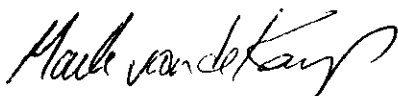
The City also is cablecasting Census information on its government public access Channel 23 (Comcast) through Santa Maria Community Television, spreading awareness through posters aboard SMAT buses and at City facilities, and has Census information on the City Web site and in the Recreation Guide.

Fiscal Considerations:

Many millions of additional Federal dollars could flow into the Santa Maria community, or be allocated elsewhere, depending on the accuracy of the count. Census 2010 data also will generate demographic information that the City may use to apply for grant funding. Staff provided nearly 5,000 address records to the Census Bureau through the City's participation in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) and the New Construction Program that previously were not accounted for by Census personnel. If all residents at those addresses are counted, Census officials indicated these additional addresses could result in an additional \$35 million in Federal funding to the community each year.

Impact to the Community:

The higher the community's participation, the more Federal funding will be allocated to the community. The accuracy of the Census will be of significant use to businesses, entrepreneurs, schools and many others.



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