

CENSUS COMPETE COUNT COMMITTEE

January 14, 2010

10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Bluske, Chair; Noreen Kuroski; Va Thao; Peter Eide; Dean Ruppert; Doug Mormann; Linda Stone; Pam Semb; Mary Meehan-Strub; Charlie Handy; Tom Faella; Jason Gilman; Nancy Proctor; Jim Ehram; Donald Bina; Joe Barstow; Tim Acklin; Carrie Cooper

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Chuck Spiker

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gerald Huber; Gloria Doyle; Mary Ellen Prinsen; Kelly Kramer; Christine McArdle Rojo; Connie Eide; Audrey Kader; Larry Kirch; Shelly Miller; Jeff Brudos; Travis Parish; David Paudler

OTHERS PRESENT: JoAnn Kileen; Ardell Ladd

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Jeff Bluske called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

PURPOSES, GOALS & TIMEFRAMES:

DISCUSSION ON WHAT THE PURPOSES AND GOALS OF THIS COMMITTEE ARE:

One concern is for multiplexes, have to know how many apartment/units – if the Census is given only one address for the multiplex then only one survey will be sent to that address to service all the units when multiple surveys are needed.

Another big concern is that property owners don't live at the address; their property is rented or leased. Tax and assessment system is so multipurpose that we are using it as a collection point for all address information, and used by many local and state agencies.

Also receive requests from Census for map amendments changing municipal boundaries by annexations. This affects redistricting as population is moved around affecting how County Board Supervisory districts are apportioned as well as senate and Legislative Districts.

Tax and assessment information is so multi-purpose now that we use that for a collection of address information.

HANDOUTS WERE PASSED OUT OUTLINING DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE CENSUS BUREAU – "How Are Census Data Used?" – "50 Ways Census Data Are Used" as well as a letter from Thomas Mesenbourg, Acting Director US Census Bureau and a sheet outlining dates for Complete Count Committees to be aware of.

GOALS include:

Main Goal is to increase the county mail back response of the short form survey.

Getting the word out locally about the US Census and how important it is that people fill out their survey right away after receiving it.

Timeframes: Letters will be sent out the first part of March telling people that it will be coming. Middle of March is when surveys are mailed out. Data collected is effective April 1, 2010. Form will come addressed to address NOT a person. Important message to people so they know it will not have their name on it and do not throw it out thinking it is junk mail. Census has a hard time getting names attached to addresses because people move around too much.

Calendar attached to back page of handout from Jeff with guidelines on where we should be as a committee at different times in the next few months.

WHO'S AFFECTED BY GOOD CENSUS COUNT:

EVERYBODY is affected by a good Census count. Local Municipalities and Government bodies receive Federal Aid based on these counts. If people are not counted then that affects the amount of aid that municipality receives for such things as elderly service, emergency services, road maintenance, emergency food and shelter Title 1 grants to educational agencies (school districts across the nation) Head Start Programs; WIC Program; Public Transportation and many other services.

Data also help private sector as well as state and federal governments determine where jobs and job programs are needed. Census data help potential home owners research property values, median income and other demographic information about a particular community. Corporations use population data for market research to determine locations for commercial enterprises, such as food stores, pharmacies, and other essential services.

BARRIERS – LANGUAGE, AGE, IDENTITY:

Elderly and minorities that don't speak or read English very well are a good example of barriers; as well as people with sight problems as they are possibly not aware of what they are receiving. Both the elderly and minorities that don't speak English are sometimes distrustful and evasive when "strangers" ask them personal questions. They may not want to answer the door to "strangers".

People want to know WHY the Census needs this information. Explain what and why the information is important. Explain that the count needs to be accurate for our communities to receive the grants and aid that they need.

People don't understand the questions on the survey, whether due to language barrier or just plain not understanding the question.

The short form questionnaire is the only one being sent out – the long form is sent out in the years in between the decennial.

Survey format: The first person in the household will have 10 questions to fill out – each person after that will have 7 questions. Average family will take about 10 minutes to fill out.

Information collected is just for Census purposes – individual information does not go out to "outside" sources. Not shared with the IRS or Immigration or other governmental agencies. You will not be asked for your SS#. Do not give out your social security number.

Census workers can be fined up to \$250,000 and a prison term if they reveal information given to them for Census purposes.

Large portion of Hmong population does not speak English. There will be a translator hired that speaks both Hmong and Spanish. Census forms are coming out in four languages; unfortunately, Hmong is not one of them.

Census information gives us what we need to know about what America needs as far as funding that communities receive – Each man, woman and child is given a value of \$6,461 – when you miss people, regardless of their immigration status, it is a big concern. If they live in your community they use your resources.

Forms of group housing: Technical and University dormitories, assisted living sites, Salvation Army, Domestic Abuse Shelters, homeless is a problem – the key question when counting the homeless is do they CONTINUOUSLY stay at this shelter or this area?

What happens when people absolutely refuse to answer the questions on the survey? Census tries 6 times to send somebody out – usually somebody different every time. If they fail after 6 attempts, the Census worker will go the neighbor and ask how many people live in that house or apartment or mobile home or whatever.

2010 areas in County that had very poor response – City of La Crosse, Town of Burns and Town of Washington.

Membership/Subcommittees/Community:

Employment by the Census was discussed briefly.

Only 40% of the jobs filled for census work.

A test for which there is a PRACTICE test on line at census.gov will need to be taken before employment. Starting pay is from \$11-15/hour. Crew leaders are paid more than others.

Timeframe of employment: Hours are flexible as you need to go out when people are home. Start after the 1st of April up until July.

Census Promotional Items Distribution Ideas:

Shirts, hats and bags were handed out to committee members to wear or display in public places that will get people asking questions about the Census.

Student reps to wear on campus – Business reps to wear at local businesses – Chamber of Commerce.

Good idea to contact IT department and add something about Census to our website. Linda Stone will take care of this.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None requested.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & MEETING DATES

No consensus on date or time, realize that not everyone can make every meeting.

Jeff will make up Agenda for next Meeting that will be sent out electronically to save money on postage.

Chuck Spiker called and asked to be taken off the Committee. Tim Acklin will replace Larry Kirch. Connie Eide taken off. Mary Ellen Prinsen taken off. Karl Green will replace Mary Meehan-Strub

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:59 A.M

***Disclaimer:** The above minutes may be approved, amended or corrected at the next committee meeting. Annette Kirchhoff, Recorder*