Networking/Leadership – Eugene, OR

Eugene, with the Oregon Progress Board and with support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, launched in 2005 an organization called the Oregon Public Performance Measurement Association that brings state and local staff together to share information and improve the practice of performance measurement in Oregon. I currently serve on the executive committee of this group, which is hosting its fifth annual event bringing high profile speakers to present to state and local employees at low cost on issues related to performance measurement. Presentations have included Governing’s Jonathan Walters, David Osborne discussing the Price of Government, and Grading the States’ Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene.

I served on the program committee of the Community Indicators Consortium’s 2009 International Conference held in Bellevue last fall, selecting presenters whose stories would inspire participants to use data to drive change.

Eugene actively supported the development of the Oregon Performance Consortium, helping to support and encourage communities that were new to the Center for Performance Measurement, and trying to figure out how to make the consortium more interesting for participants in an environment where some communities feel they can’t afford to participate in CPM.

As one of the “Trailblazer” communities that has taken part in the National Center for Civic Innovation’s performance reporting project, we continue to share information with the other participants about our experience in developing a citizen-influenced performance report, and have given feedback to GASB about our experience with their Suggested Criteria that will help shape how they proceed as they move into a new phase of work on Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) reporting. This network of communities continues to offer mutual support and inspiration, and the knowledge gained though our interaction has driven much of what’s smartest about Eugene Counts.

Eugene has long integrated measurement into its management of the organization and development and review of the budget. Measures are included in each of the City’s services strategic plans, and the data from those measures are used to guide decision making.

However, Eugene Counts has taken leadership engagement in performance measurement to a new level. The city council’s level of involvement and interest in measurement is unprecedented, and their ongoing ownership of Eugene Counts, its outcomes and measures and the dashboard will help keep then entire organization’s eyes on our performance in the areas that are most related to community members’ priorities. Council’s and the organization leadership’s commitment to using transparently shared data as the foundation for fact-based dialogue about performance is adding real strength to our effort to build a more trusting relationship with the community. In concrete terms, as long as council’s goals and the City’s work is seen as being tied inextricably to the results the community is asking for the and the data we’re using to share progress, measurement will only grow in prominence in our organizational culture.