Open Enrollment: Check Out the Changes

It’s that time of year again: Open Enrollment. While it may seem a little daunting to review materials and scope out the various options, it is a very important step for all of us to take; and time is limited as Open Enrollment closes October 5th.

This is the only time of the year you have to make changes in your plan to meet your needs. In fact, change is a common theme this year for many aspects of Open Enrollment.

During this time:

→ You review options and consider changes
→ There have been changes such as co-pays, premiums and in-plan physicians.
→ New this year, you can change or revise your benefit choices as many times as you’d like before Open Enrollment ends
Another change is with the Enrollment Wizard used to access plan information in the ESS system. There has been a program update so the Wizard function navigates a bit differently this year.

With all these changes, be sure to allow yourself extra time to review the plan and use the system. If you wait until the end of Open Enrollment, you and other procrastinators could get slowed with so many people in the system.

For a look at all the changes, be sure to visit the newly redesigned Human Resources Department webpage and the Open Enrollment information page. There you can find a list of benefit coordinators who can help with any questions you might have. There is also a benefits help email available: BenefitsHelp@co.monterey.ca.us.

You will be seeing a lot of information coming to you via email about the enrollment process. Be sure to check it out so you have all the information you need for this event.

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Surplus Offers Sale and Donation Day

For the second time in a month, the County has offered not only a surplus sale to the public, but a donation event allowing local non-profit agencies to take unneeded county items at no charge.

This week’s sale on Wednesday brought a big crowd shopping for office equipment and furniture; the days total sales topped $1,000.

Following the sale, on Thursday, surplus staff held a Non-Profit Donation Day event for local charities and community groups. There are restrictions on organizations receiving these county-owned goods. Participants had to provide current proof of their organization’s non-profit or 501(c) 3 status in order for them to be eligible to receive free items.

The Donation Day event drew representatives from 12 area non-profits agencies and at the end of the event, the County was able to provide equipment and supplies to help groups such as Dorothy’s Place, Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz, Turning Point, Peacock Acres, Friends of the Marina Library and Public Guardian. Donated items include chairs, cabinets, shelving units, file
folders, binders, copier toner, bookcases, tables and more all going to help these organizations and their good works.

For some of these groups, being able to access County surplus might be the only way they are able to obtain this type of equipment. Contracts and Purchasing Division staff, which oversee surplus, estimates the value of the items the County was able to share with local charities at approximately $10,000.

There has been an overabundance of items in the surplus warehouse recently following staff moves such as Public Defender offices shifting from modulars into the Administration Building at the end of last year and the District Attorney’s Office recently moving from modular offices back into the East West Wing.

Employee Giving Wraps; Final Event Pairs Art and Food

The Employee Giving Campaign wrapped up September 7th. Thanks to all who took part in both the fun activities and selecting charities to support through payroll deduction.

There won’t be a final tally on campaign numbers for another month, but there is news about one of the last department events.

The Treasurer-Tax Collector’s Office, along with the Assessor and Clerk-Recorder’s Offices, put together a Confections and Crafts Sale on the final day of the campaign last Friday. They had a great turnout, wrapping up the giving program on a high note. The sale, featuring both handcrafted food and artwork, as well as other fundraising activities, raised more than $1,000 for campaign charities.

More than a dozen department staff donated 60 items for the sale, including handmade jewelry,
original artwork, knitted blankets, scarves, washcloths, baby quilts, hair ties and aprons.

There was also a silent-auction for two themed baskets: ‘Made with Love,’ filled with handmade goodies, and ‘Movie Night,’ which featured movies, chocolates, popcorn and candy.

Congratulations to the staff, artisans and bakers who worked together for a great cause.

Arts/Crafts Donations:
Alma De La Torre
Ruth Mora
Mari Beraz
Frances Scheiber
Gloria Perez
Dawn Leon
Susanne King
Adam Joseph
Joy Willett

Silent Auction Baskets:
Darlene Bagwell
Jackie Goetz
Melissa Rico
Joy Willett
Alma De La Torre

Event Team:
Darlene Bagwell
Jackie Goetz
Adam Joseph
Melissa Rico
Joy Willett