

Chair Kropf, Honorable Vice Chairs, members of the committee: My name is Eric Bush. I am the Emergency Management Coordinator for Grant County. Grant County is a very large, rural County with a population of only about 7200. The County is mostly comprised of public lands and has a very limited tax-base. For the last few decades regulatory restrictions on access to natural resources have devastated the local economy.

Grant County relies on tourism's limited contribution to our small service sector. Many people travel to Grant County to recreate, but provide no direct contribution our local government resources, while demanding significant services. Approximately 35% of our citizens are age 65 and older. Twice as high as the national average. This demographic consists of responsible home owners who reliably pay taxes, but struggle to make ends meet on fixed incomes.

Our Courthouse was built in 1952 and it is in dire need of replacement. There has never been any significant renovation to our courthouse. It is the only facility in the County that houses the State Circuit court, County Court administration, County Treasurer, County Clerk, County Assessor's Office, the Oregon Department of Water Resources, our District Attorney's office, county planning department and local Justice Court.

The building retains its original mechanical systems as well as lighting, plumbing, windows and electrical.

Our most immediate concern is providing public and staff a safe environment in which to conduct the peoples' business. The courtrooms, office spaces, entry and exit points were not designed with today's environment in mind. Simply said, almost every aspect the building is unsafe for staff and the public.

In summary our situation, economically, geographically and culturally is very different that other parts of the state with a higher population density. As the EMC the courthouse is the single largest vulnerability I found in the context of ensuring we have continuity of government in the eventuality of a natural or man-made disaster. I hope you will take time to consider the resources that are available at the State level and understand our desperate need and requirement for a functioning infrastructure.