

News Release  
April 3, 2020

## **BLAINE COUNTY COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE LAUNCHES CENSUS EFFORT**

Bi-lingual postcards will be appearing in Blaine County post office boxes this week urging all residents to participate in the 2020 census.

The census has been taken every 10 years since 1790 and plays an important role in the allocation of federal program funds and the distributions will last for the next ten years. The data collected will have a huge impact on state and local budgets including funding for roads, hospitals, schools, health care. Not only does the census determine the distribution of congressional seats as well as local boundaries such as for the legislature, school and commission seats, but the census is actually much more about ensuring that each state gets its fair share of federal funding – much of which is based on formulas that use census data.

Blaine County Commissioner Angenie McCleary points out that that the US Census does not mail to post office boxes. “Blaine’s response rate as of April 1, is 10.2%, mostly online responses. The Idaho response rate is 41.8%.” Sun Valley Mayor Peter Hendricks added that “we have a ways to go.”

A person not counted in 2020 is a person “lost” for the next ten years. Census data is used as a baseline for decision-making and money is allocated based on updated annual population estimates using births and deaths. 95% of federal grant dollars to state and local governments in 2017 were allocated by formula or \$580 billion dollars to state and local governments. Basically, the census determines how tax dollars are spent over the next ten years. And for every person who isn’t counted, it will cost Blaine County potentially tens of thousands of dollars. Researchers have projected that each Idahoan brings \$1473 to the table, if counted.

Co-chair of the Complete Count Committee, Herbert Romero, emphasized that the census will not ask you for your social security number or if you are a citizen. “Everyone is counted in the census. There are no barriers and data is not made available to ICE or local police.” Romero pointed out that census data is bundled, not represented individually, and huge fines and jail time threaten anyone who might be tempted to use the census data against Blaine residents. He said, “the census is safe, important, and easy to complete. Go to [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov). You may be asked for a code number, but you don’t need to put in a code if you don’t have it.”

The postcards are an effort by the Blaine County Complete Count Committee, which is co-chaired by Blaine County Commissioner Angenie McCleary, Sun Valley Mayor Peter Hendricks and community leader Herbert Romero. The postcards are funded by Blaine County and the cities of Ketchum, Sun Valley, Hailey and Bellevue.

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