



January 6, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

REISSUE WITH ADDED FEATURES

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**ALAMEDA COUNTY LAUNCHES NEW BUDGET WEBSITE**

*Project Encourages Deeper Understanding of County Finances and Priorities*

Alameda County has launched a new Budget Website that breaks down the many aspects of the County's Annual Budget of \$2.7 billion. The website is designed to draw the public's interest and encourage closer examination of how the County finances a broad range of programs and services for its 1.5 million residents – and supports a workforce of more than 9,000 employees.

The new Budget Website, available at <http://budget.acgov.org/>, is the outcome of a long-term effort to support government efficiency and increase civic participation in local government. "We are continually taking steps to enhance our budget document and process to make them more accessible and easier to understand. Our goal is to provide new ways to keep residents interested and engaged with the County," said Keith Carson, President of the Board of Supervisors and Chair of the County's Budget Workgroup.

County Administrator Susan S. Muranishi and Information Technology Director Tim Dupuis are leading the efforts to make the County Budget more accessible to County residents. The website accomplishes this goal by breaking down the annual budget in ways that appeal to users with a wide range of interests.

"The County's annual budget is the window to the investments that Alameda County, based on the decisions of our elected Board of Supervisors, makes in the community on behalf of our residents," Muranishi said. "This project is part of our long-term effort to facilitate deeper public understanding of our priorities as a County and to encourage more public participation in the budget process."

The new Budget Website includes a short video overview that provides key facts about the County and its budget – including population figures, a Budget-at-a-Glance review, and the County's program priorities, how the budget supports community-based organizations, and the County's key accomplishments from the past fiscal year.

The Budget Website shows details of the County's Final Budget for 2013-14, the County's spending plan for the current fiscal year. The website will be frequently updated as information relevant to Alameda County's current financial picture is produced and as new County Budgets are adopted.

The website features a message from Muranishi, the County's Chief Executive who is charged with carrying out the Board of Supervisors' budgetary and policy decisions. It also features Muranishi's letters to the Board during the 2013-14 Budget Adoption process in June 2013. These letters delineate key elements that influence the fiscal outlook, inform the Board during their budget discussions and articulate goals for the coming year.

Included as well is an easy-to-navigate Budget Overview that allows the user to review Budget appropriations by program, budget balancing strategies, total available financing by funding source, and an overview of discretionary revenue. For those who wish to drill deeper, the website includes links to a multitude of documents, including all 567 pages of the County's Final 2013-14 Budget.

"Over the years the County has made tremendous strides in making our budget and budget process more transparent and accessible to the public," said Dupuis, the County's IT Director. "But let's face it: a Budget Book that is more than 500 pages can be daunting to the average reader. Through this website, we are taking a logical next step toward expanding the public's interest and knowledge about our Budget."

To further enhance the County's award winning website, a new "About Us" video has been launched and available at <http://www.acgov.org/about/>. The video highlights unique features about Alameda County that make it an attractive place to live, work, and do business. Alameda County offers open space, recreation, confluence of innovation and business opportunities, wineries, world class universities, cultural diversity and more.

The County received a national "2013-Best of the Web" award from the Center for Digital Government for having a website that is easy to use and provides information in a clear and concise way. Alameda County's Open Data Sharing Initiative was also recognized in December 2013 by the National Association of Counties (NACo) at its Large Urban Counties Innovation Symposium. The Open Data Sharing Initiative leverages technology and citizen engagement to provide a more transparent and open government. "We are pleased that our commitment to citizen engagement through the use of technology is igniting innovation locally and creating a national model for others to follow," said Keith Carson.

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