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Mayor FitzGerald's State Of The City Address March 10, 7 PM

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Census 2010

Everyone Counts In Lakewood

United States
Census
2010

by Dottie Buckon

What do the twenty roads repaired and resurfaced in 2009, Lakewood public and private school students, and first time homebuyers have in common? They all benefit from the City of Lakewood's status as an "Entitlement Community." The federal government bestows this designation annually on a formula basis. One of the principal components of the formula is population. A city must have a population of 50,000 or more persons in order to qualify as an Entitlement Community and the population count is based upon the decennial census report. Lakewood's total population has decreased by approximately 10,000 persons each of the past three decennial census periods. Lakewood's 2008 population estimate is 50,704 (source C.W.R.U. NEOCANDO database). Our community is very close to falling below the 50,000 population mark.

What will happen to our Entitlement Community status if Lakewood's population falls below 50,000? Should the final census report reveal that our population is below 50,000, Lakewood would be eligible for only one more year of full federal entitlement funding. The fund allocation would be decreased by 50% in year two and all funding would cease in year three. This change would affect Title I school funding as well as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) used for a variety of City initiatives including park improvements, street reconstruction, commercial and vacant property revitalization, childcare scholarship assistance, services for older adults, and low interest loans. CDBG grants also support a number of important programs conducted by community organizations including the Beck Center, Lakewood Christian Service Center, Lakewood Alive, and North Coast Health Ministry.

What can we do as a community to ensure that everyone in Lakewood is counted? First, every resident must complete and return the census questionnaire that will be mailed in March. Next, remind your neighbors, friends and family to return their forms then help spread the census message through your church, community organiza-

tion, school or business via web sites, newsletters, emails or Facebook communications. You can also get involved in local census promotion activities.

Completing the census form is easy, important and safe. The ten question form can be completed in about ten minutes and it is available in over fifty languages and Braille. The ten minutes you spend in completing the form will also make a big difference in the future of our community from a funding perspective and representa-

tion for our area in the U.S. House of Representatives. By law, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot share any census information with any individual or organization including federal and law enforcement agencies.

If you are interested in working on local census efforts email HumanServices@lakewoodoh.net or call 216.529.6685. For more information about the 2010 census, go to 2010census.gov.

Remember, Everyone Counts in Lakewood!