

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Regional Building Permit Practices to Simplify**

(Portland) Building permit procedures are stepping closer to consistency in the tri-county area thanks to the efforts of the Tri-County Building Industries Service Board. Yesterday the board approved filing proposed administrative rules that will result in a standard method of calculating permit fees, minor electrical and plumbing installation permit program, and forms and processes for use in the 27 jurisdictions in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties.

“The board’s actions go a long way to streamline current practices, coordinate services and increase efficiency in government,” said the board's chairman, Multnomah County Commissioner Lisa Naito. “We have made tremendous strides in our first 12 weeks of work. The proposed rules promise predictability and consistency in permitting procedures region-wide.”

The proposed rules will be forwarded to the secretary of state for public hearing April 18, with implementation dates in July and October. They define:

- A consistent way to calculate fees for mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, manufactured home and building permits for single family and commercial structures.
- A new regional permit program for minor electrical and plumbing installations in the tri-county region that will be administered by the Tri-county Service Center.
- Forms and processes that will become standardized in the tri-county area. Work that is currently in progress will standardize all permit applications. All form and process changes will be up to board approval.

Board member and Beaverton City Councilor Forrest Soth noted, “The wonderful collaboration among all the players from business, industry, government and the public have made this process a success from the get-go.”

Jim Ferris of Red’s Electric, a Portland area electrical contracting company, concurs, “I’m impressed by the level of commitment invested by both government and industry to solve these problems. Getting there isn’t always going to be easy, but it’s worth it. So far our efforts will make doing business in the tri-county area much easier.”

The Tri-county Building Industries Service Board, with representation from the construction industry, developers, labor, government and the public, was created by the 1999 Legislature to bring consistency to building permit practices in the tri-county region. At that time, contractors and developers found little consistency among area building permit offices; having to conduct business 27 different ways was not only confusing and frustrating, but inefficient and expensive. In addition to the board, the legislation also created a Tri-County Service Center to carry out its programs. The state Building Codes Division is currently developing the center at 123 NE Couch in NE Portland, which it plans to open July 1.