

90% Happens Locally
2026 Visual Arts Competition power point supplement

Slide 1: Title

Slide 2: Intro

Slide 3: Whitman County consists of 4 cities, 13 towns, 10 unincorporated towns and one ghost town.

The four cities are

- Colfax (the county seat),
- Pullman
- Palouse
- Tekoa

The 13 towns are

- Albion
- Colton
- Endicott
- Farmington
- Garfield
- LaCrosse
- Lamont (The smallest with a population of 76)
- Malden
- Oaksdale
- Pine City
- Rosalia
- St John
- Uniontown

The ghost town is Elberton with a current population of 15, disincorporated in 1966. The only original buildings are a church and cemetery.

Slide 4: The ten Unincorporated towns are

- Belmont
- Diamond
- Dusty
- Ewan
- Hay
- Hooper
- Johnson
- Steptoe
- Thornton
- Winona

Some of these communities have schools, e.g., Steptoe, and some e.g. Johnson, are part of a larger school district like Pullman.

Slide 5: The cities and towns of Whitman County have mayor-council governments. The four cities in the county have 7 city councilors while the towns have 5.

The mayor is the chief executive of the city and oversees city departments and implements laws.

Do you know how many council positions are in your city?

Do you know who your mayor is? Francis Benjamin

Mayors and council members serve four-year terms, but not all are elected in a single year. For continuity of government only half of a council is elected at one time.

Slide 6: In large cities, like Pullman, the city is divided into districts or wards, based on population. The boundaries of these wards are adjusted 10 years after the census. Council members are elected to represent their ward by the residents of the ward. Only half of the council is up for election at the same time

Mayors are elected by all the residents of the city and serve for four years.

Slide 7: In Whitman County we have three elected county commissioners, that serve a five year term. Elections of members are staggered so there are always incumbents.

Can you name any? Art Swanack, Tom Handy, and Chad Whetzel

Slide 8: The county is responsible for four essential services, in addition to overseeing state policies at the local level.

- Law enforcement-sheriff and county jail
- Public health-immunizations, health clinics and mental health services
- Infrastructure maintenance-roads, bridges, public buildings, construction permits, parks
- Community welfare (social services)-child welfare, housing and food assistance for elderly, disabled and low income.

The county also collects and distributes property taxes, conducts elections.

Slide 9: In addition to the county commissioners, nine other county offices are elected. Unlike the commissioners these serve four-year terms, and all appear on the ballot at the same time.

- County Assessor determines how much property is worth to determine taxes
- County Treasurer sends out tax bill and collects property taxes, then distributes the money to state, schools and local governments

- County Auditor keeps property records, conducts all elections and issue licenses such as marriage licenses
- County Clerk keeps all the paperwork for the county courts
- County Sheriff chief law enforcement officer also in charge of the county jail
- County Coroner investigates suspicious and unattended deaths to determine cause of death
- County Prosecuting Attorney represent government in court, also is the attorney for the county and provides legal advice to the county
- Superior Court Judges handle serious crimes and civil cases like divorce, custody and lawsuits
- District Court Judges deals primarily with minor crimes, such as shoplifting, and traffic tickets

Slide 10: (Last slide) Some commissions/boards that exist outside established city or town boundaries: school boards, hospital districts, fire districts, port district and more. These boards are governed by members that are elected.

There are 13 school districts in Whitman County. These school districts serve multiple towns and cities. For example, Pullman school district serves students from Albion and Johnson as well as Pullman and students from Malden and Pine City attend school in Rosalia.

There are two Public Hospital Districts in Whitman County: District 1a in Pullman Regional Hospital and District 3 Whitman Hospital in Colfax.

The Port District oversees facilities on the Snake River (Port of Almota, Central Ferry and Boyer Park and Marina). They provided broadband (fiberoptics) communication through the county. Built infrastructure for industrial development and revitalization of brownfields (contaminated parcels) for repurpose and other economic development projects around the county.

Now that you know more about your local government, who would you talk to:

- Arrange a parade-city public works
- Build a firepit in your yard-fire department city or fire district
- Snow removal policy-city public works
- Get married-county Auditor
- Set off fireworks outside of the city- county
- Increase funding for school sports- school board