

Courthouse Journal

W W W . W A C O U N T I E S . O R G

Washington State Association of Counties
Washington Association of County Officials

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**WSAC
Summer
Convention
on the Internet!**
www.wacounties.org

Counties respond to 695 backfill cuts

Last week the House passed their version of the budget, which resulted in a reduction of \$8 million more than the Senate in 695 backfill for counties. That budget cut in half those counties that lost less than 2% of their of their current expense fund when MVET went away, (King, Pierce, Snohomish, Clark, Kitsap and San Juan). Some of these counties are now responding by announcing probable cuts in county services.

Kitsap County commissioners have said they may need to cut eight deputies if the House budget is passed into law. Kitsap will lose

\$488,000 and Kitsap officials say that is not fair. Kitsap has recently passed the one-tenth of a percent local option sales tax and adopted a higher current expense levy causing the calculation of their loss to be determined after they had taxed their citizens more for criminal justice services. Otherwise, their losses from 695 would have been greater than 2 percent resulting in nearly \$480,000 more backfill funding. See the attached newspaper article from the Bremerton sun.

King County, which will lose \$2.77 million
(Continued on page 2)

Transportation agenda gridlock in Olympia

The Governor proposed a \$17.2 billion transportation plan (see attachment) this Wednesday in order to "jump start" negotiations with legislators. The Governor stated that he was hopeful his plan would unclog the gridlock caused by so many different legislative agendas. County representatives were invited to meet with the Governor earlier this week to give their input on his draft proposal. County representatives clearly stated that the regional package needs to provide immediate relief in

some areas and that the governance should be simple and accountable to the public. Counties currently meet constitutional requirements for a regional transportation plan and are poised and ready to act.

The second week of special session has been unproductive in resolving any of the differences. While some members aren't convinced that the resolution is more taxes in order to solve the transportation problems
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WSAC's 95th Annual Summer Convention just around the corner

Transportation and natural resources are two of the three main topics that will be addressed at the WSAC 95th Annual Summer Convention in Yakima.

Douglas MacDonald, new Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation, has been confirmed as keynote speaker for the Wednesday luncheon. MacDonald, who took over the helm just last month, has pledged to make a "commitment to improving Washing-

ton's transportation systems by working in collaborative and accountable partnerships with public officials, communities and citizens."

The convention will begin with a plenary session featuring transportation issues - where we stand and where we are headed. Additional sessions on transportation related issues are scheduled throughout the convention agenda.

Former Pierce County Executive and
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Counties respond to 695 backfill cuts

(Continued from page 1)

in the House budget, has announced that they will be required to cut four deputy prosecuting attorneys in the domestic violence, felony filing and mainstream trial units. They will also be forced to cut 14 officers and detectives in the Sheriff's office. In the Superior courts they will make cuts in Drug Courts and will see increases in criminal case backlogs. See attached handout that King County gave to their legislators.

The House budget breaks the promise made to all counties in the 2000 Supplemental Budget that the 695 backfill would be ongoing and increased by the 601 inflation factor. While only six

counties will see reductions in the amount received last year, all counties will lose the growth factor. The average increase of criminal justice costs in all counties has historically been 8-10 percent per year.

So all counties lose under the House proposal. While the loss of \$8 million is significant, particularly to the six counties losing the largest amounts, the more significant issue is the broken promise. In the 2000 budget, counties and cities collectively lost over \$100 million in criminal justice funding. They accepted this loss based upon a promise that permanent ongoing funds would be provided in future biennia and most importantly it would grow by the annual inflation factor. This was the only way to keep up with inflation and try to provide some growth in future revenues. The counties would not have agreed to the budget last year without this promise.

In addition, in the 2001 Supplemental Budget, the Legislature terminated

the Task Force on Local Government Finances. This was expected to help find a solution to long-term financing needs for counties and cities. Again, the Legislature went back on their word.

If the House budget passes, it is clear in the future that the Legislature will look to cut local government criminal justice funding because there is no language that promises future funding. Even if cuts are made in the 695 backfill, under I-601 the expenditure lid must be reduced by the amount of the cut. In other words, the only benefit to the state in cutting local funds is to put the money into the state reserve, which is estimated to be \$750 million.

All members of WSAC and WACO are urged to call members of the Legislature again and ask them to honor the promise. Fund all counties, not just some counties, at the same level as last year and give you the annual inflation factor. Urge them to support the Senate budget, which provides full funding.

The Courthouse Journal

The *Courthouse Journal* is published weekly by the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO) and the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC).

We welcome your suggestions and contributions. The weekly deadline is noon Thursday.

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Transportation

(Continued from page 1)

without first applying efficiency measures, others are working hard to have a tax package on the November ballot. The Legislative Transportation Committees introduced twenty-seven bills based on the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation and not one of those bills has made it to the Governor's desk. In the meantime, the four committees representing members from both sides of the aisle and rotunda are still attempting to hammer out unresolved issues in order to get a transportation package out of the legislature. The legislature is still grappling with how to solve the revenue questions on the transportation package and how to resolve the differences on the efficiency/accountability package. The major policy issues that need to be

resolved are:

- Gubernatorial authority over the Secretary of Transportation
- Statewide revenue package
- Regional revenue package
- Environmental Streamline Permit Process and other efficiency issues such as contracting out and prevailing wage

The four working committees of appointed Senate and House Transportation Committee members are: Environmental Permit & Streamlining, Revenue committee, Regional Issues, and Accountability, Efficiencies & Governance. This week there was very little progress made towards a final transportation package. Perhaps next week will be productive.

For questions or comments, please contact Jackie White (WSAC staff).

WSAC Summer Convention

(Continued from page 1)

WSAC member, Doug Sutherland, Commissioner of Public Lands will be joining us on Friday morning to share his perspectives on natural resources in Washington. Following his remarks, we will take a look at how counties are responding to the natural resources issues facing them - including water resources and water quality.

The third major theme of the Summer Convention program is budget and

finance. A pre-convention workshop, "Beating the Budget Blues," will arm beginning and seasoned elected officials and public administrators with the tools to confidently make good budget and financial decisions. An informational flyer will be sent out next week to WSAC and WACO members and affiliates.

Visit the WSAC website for more information, www.wacounties.org. If you have any questions or concerns, contact Kim at the WSAC office, (360) 753-1886 or kzydek@wacounties.org.

Senate sends SMA exemption language back to the House

By a close 25-23 vote, the Senate has sent ESSB 5378 back to the House for consideration. It is hoped, and perhaps by some expected, that the House will continue to make progress on a compromise that has in it something for everyone. The striking amendment still under discussion by House negotiators would be the policy accompaniment to about \$9 million or more in the budget for implementation in the first group of counties and cities (King, Pierce, Snoho-

mish, Kitsap, Clark and Thurston) to complete updates to critical areas ordinances, GMA comprehensive plans and shorelines master programs.

The policy piece includes the following:

- coordinates and extends timelines for revision of critical areas ordinances, GMA comp plans and new shorelines master programs (dates extend from December 2003 to December 2007, depending on the county);
- exempts agricultural land and practices from the new rules;
- allows counties with 80 percent or more of the land base in natural resource use, preservation or open space to use alternative compliance methods to meet the goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act;
- takes further steps toward proce-

Retirement Planning Workshop offered at WSAC convention

America's demographics have changed. People are retiring earlier and living longer. This good news means that long-lived folks will need to accumulate even more money than in past decades for their eventual retirement. And this means an impact on counties.

As one of the nation's largest employers, county governments must acknowledge that people in the county workforce are eventual retirees. The people who make local governments hum today are the very people in need of financial planning know how for a secure tomorrow.

WSAC, in conjunction with the National Association of Counties, is offering a workshop at the Summer Convention on retirement planning called "Grow Your Nest Egg."

This workshop is aimed at county officials and those who administer county retirement plans, such as county human resources administrators and personnel directors. The sessions are presented by NACo and members of the International Foundation for Retirement Education (InFRE). InFRE's certified trainers are seasoned financial educators and workshop leaders with "train-the-trainer" backgrounds. Participants will share what has and has not worked and "best practices." Customized workbooks for attendees to take back home and use as a resource are included.

Although this education program is underwritten by NACo's Deferred Compensation Program funds, the workshop does not endorse a particular plan. Instead it covers the basics of retirement and financial prep work and the role of county officials and plan administrators in helping the county workforce make

sound retirement plans.

The workshop will cover the roles and responsibilities of the counties toward retirement education and the benefits of conducting it, and what employees expect from counties and many other topics, including:

1. How to motivate employees, why employees don't participate: fears, misunderstandings, etc.;
2. How to utilize financial service providers to help deliver education;
3. Setting goals, saving, investing, preservation of assets: The retirement planning process.
4. Developing and monitoring employees' own implementation plans.
5. Educating employees about key

concepts, including the value of pre-tax, understanding the longer term issue of inflation risk vs. short term market risk., the time value of money, etc.

As part of on-going retirement education campaign, several types of generic materials will be developed for later distribution within county workforces. These include presentations and workbooks for those within five years of retirement and for all other employees and officials; posters with educational messages; retirement education articles for use in county newsletters; statement stuffers with educational messages; and brochures on the value of planning for retirement.

Wetlands rules changing

The Bush administration recently announced that it will toughen regulation of wetlands-threatening activities such as construction of drainage ditches. On the other hand, the US Army Corps of Engineers is retreating from the regulatory arena of isolated wetlands, leaving their regulation in the hands of the Department of Ecology.

The Environmental Protection Agency said it will require an Army Corps of Engineers permit for a broader range of activities that contribute to the loss of wetlands, which include marshes, swamps and bogs. The agency, which took the action with the corps, said these activities can include mechanized land clearing, ditching and stream-straightening.

The EPA announced its stance by

endorsing a regulation that is opposed by mining and home-building groups. This is a new version of the Tulloch Rule, which was proposed under President George Bush in 1992 and finalized under President Bill Clinton in 1993. The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled in 1997 that it was too broad, and that decision was affirmed in 1998 by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

Meanwhile, despite the US Supreme Court ruling against Corps' jurisdiction on isolated wetlands, Ecology is bound to regulate their use under state law. The Department is consulting with affected parties, including counties and cities, to determine how to approach its responsibility regarding wetlands in non-navigable waters.

Conference on local-tribal relationships

The Washington State Association of Counties is co-sponsoring a conference next week with Western Washington University titled "BUILDING BRIDGES: Strengthening Washington's Tribal-Local Government Relationship."

The Conference begins the evening of May 11 with an evening presentation

by either Billy Frank, Chairman, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission or Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes and Doug Sutherland, Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands. A question and answer session will follow.

Saturday includes panels on "States, Tribes, and the Washington Centennial

Accord", "Local Governments, Tribal Governments: Building Bridges through Regional Watershed Planning", and "On-Reservation Land Use and Regional Infrastructure."

To register, call 360-650-7754 or e-mail Karen.Hendrickson@wwu.edu

Cost of the conference is \$30.

Getting warmer? Climate change symposium explains why

A half-day symposium titled "Climate Change and the Pacific Northwest: What Can and Should Local Governments Do?" will be held on Thursday, May 10, 2001, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Seattle Center, Alki Room. This workshop is especially designed for elected officials and top city and utility managers from across the State of Washington to learn more about what climate change means for the Northwest and what actions local gov-

ernments can take to address it.

The event is co-sponsored by King County, the City of Seattle, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and the Northwest Council on Climate Change. Discussion will include:

- The future of the Northwest climate;
- The consequences for local governments;
- A summary of the science behind these predictions; and

- A review of some of the actions local governments in Washington can take, and are taking, to prepare for this different world, as well as to lead efforts toward a better future.

Attendance is free and lunch is provided, but please register in advance by contacting Lindsay Halm, <lindsay.halm@metrokc.gov> or 206-296-8735.

Ecology seeks comment on draft listing policy for impaired water list

The Department of Ecology has developed new guidance on how to collect and assess information for impaired water bodies. The evaluation policies were developed to identify only

those waterbody segments for which there is good documentation that water quality standards are not being met. Waterbodies with standards violations because of natural conditions will not be

proposed for listing.

The policy can be found at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/303d/2002/index-2002.html>. Comments on the draft guidance are being accepted until May 18, 2001 and should be sent to Nora Jewett, njew461@ecy.wa.gov, 360-407-6479.

Transportation bills other than the BRCT package

SB 5733 – An act relating to county road construction projects has been signed into law. April 19th the Governor's took positive action on this important bill to many of our counties. Current law permits counties to utilize day labor to construct or improve county roads that are limited to no more than the annual county road construction budget or a specific dollar amount. The percentage and the dollar amount vary depending on the total annual county road construction budget. This bill will allow

the annual limit to be increased by 10 percent in counties with a population of less than 50,000 people.

SHB 1394- Clarifying the use of county road funds in salmon recovery projects was concurred by the House last week and is now on the Governor's desk for his consideration. The Senate Transportation Committee amended this bill before passing it out of committee. The amended bill narrows the county road funds to be expended for just fish passage barriers and limits the amount of county

road funds that could be used beyond the right-of-way. As amended, the county road dollars that can be expended for this purpose are limited to one-half of one percent of a county's annual road construction budget and must not exceed twenty-five percent of the total cost of activities related to fish barrier removal on any one project. In addition, the language clearly states that the local legislative authority makes this determination.

Please contact Jackie White, WSAC staff, for more information or comments.

Elections Law - 2000 Lessons

The Government Lawyers Bar Association is holding a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Seminar on Elections Law, Tuesday, June 5, in the General Administration Building auditorium, in

Olympia. The seminar will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m., providing six CLE credits. Topics will include "What Really Happened in Florida," "Bush v. Gore," and "The future of the Washington

State Primary." Cost is \$50 for GLBA members, and \$70 for nonmembers, in advance. For further information, please call the Elections CLE Coordinator at (360) 705-8388.

Trent receives national award as Top Ten Public Works Leader

Pierce County's John Trent has been named one of America's Top Ten Public Works Leaders of 2001. The award was to be announced today at an American Public Works Association regional conference in Everett.

Trent, director of Public Works and Utilities, will receive the American Public Works Association award at a Washington State Chapter luncheon May 22 in Seattle. He and the other recipients will be recognized at APWA's annual conference Sept. 9-12 in Philadelphia.

"All of us in Pierce County are extremely proud of John Trent for receiving this prestigious award," said Execu-

tive John Ladenburg. "It is gratifying to know that Pierce County Public Works is being led by one of the best directors in the nation."

Trent, who resides in Gig Harbor, received the state chapter's Public Works Leader of the Year award last year. He is a former president of the National Association of County Engineers.

"His leadership and professional expertise have resulted in improvements in transportation, stormwater management, wastewater treatment management, solid waste management, and infrastructure planning," said state chapter president Al Grieve of Lynnwood, who

nominated Trent for the national award. "Members of the Washington State Chapter feel that John's record of public works service represents the best of our profession."

Trent joined Pierce County as assistant public works director in 1986, coming from Pacific County, where he was public works director and county engineer. He was given additional responsibilities as county engineer in 1987 and promoted to public works director in 1990. He assumed his present position when the departments of Public Works and Utilities were merged in 1993. He oversees a \$236 million budget and staff of 510.

Surgeon General reveals plan to prevent suicide

U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher declared suicide a serious public health problem and unveiled a national campaign to prevent suicide, which now claims more U.S. lives than homicide. Suicide is the eighth-leading cause of death in the United States. More than 650,000 people attempt suicide each year with 30,000 people dying. For young people, the rate has tripled since 1952 making it the third-leading killer of youth aged 10-24. There are three suicides for every two slayings and suicide kills twice as many people as AIDS.

The Campaign to prevent suicide calls for a broad-based community wide approach to early intervention, counseling and other services. It also calls for

insurance coverage of services to treat mental-health conditions and substance abuse. A majority of suicides occurs among people suffering from these disorders. The Surgeon General's report focuses on suicide causes, as well as intervention for people at risk of attempting it. Factors leading to suicide are complex and can include schizophrenia alcohol abuse, job loss or loneliness.

The Report recommends adding more suicide-prevention programs in schools, college, jails and in the workplace. It also recommends encouraging doctors and nurses to ask at-risk patients about the presence of firearms, drugs and other lethal weapons in their homes. It further recommends using public-

service announcements like those on car seats, smoking and the dangers of drinking while pregnant.

The program is modeled after a successful Air Force program, which emphasizes early intervention and support services. By 1998, the suicide rate in the Air Force (which accounted for nearly one-fourth of all deaths among active duty personnel from 1990-94) dropped from 16.4 suicides per 100,000 members to 9.4.

Surgeon General Satcher said, "If the general public understands that suicide and suicidal behaviors can be prevented, and people are made aware of the roles individuals and groups can play in prevention, the suicide rate can be reduced".

Federal Grant Programs for Behavioral Health announced

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has provided the following information about federal grants that are currently available in the behavioral health area:

Grants Available to Prevent Youth Violence (Join Together, 4/9/01) - The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is awarding \$5 million in grants as part of its Collaborative Community Actions to Prevent Youth Violence and Promote Youth Development. See the website at <http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/content/2001/sm-01-009R.html>. Non-profits, colleges, Indian tribes, faith-

based organizations and law-enforcement agencies are eligible to apply for the funding. According to SAMHSA, 35 grants will be awarded. Cooperative agreements for implementing community collaborations for youth violence prevention will be awarded on two levels: developing community collaborations, and well-established collaborations to enhance and expand existing services. For complete details, contact Dr. Malcolm Gordon at 301-443-7713.

'Snapshot' Guide Details SAMHSA Grant Opportunities (Join Together, 4/14/01) - The 2001 annual guide from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

provides information on all of its grant opportunities for addiction services. Called Snapshot, the publication details all SAMHSA's planned 2001 Guidance for Applications from the Centers for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Substance Abuse Treatment. Included are eligibility criteria, project descriptions, funding priorities, information about anticipated announcements, and receipt and award dates for each grant. The guide includes an overview of how SAMHSA's grant process works, offers tips on how to get started in grant writing, lists what an application packet should

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contain and provides tips on successful strategies in submitting applications. Snapshot is available free of charge. For a copy, send an e-mail request to snapshot@samhsa.gov mailto: snapshot@samhsa.gov. In addition, copies can be downloaded from the SAMHSA website <http://www.samhsa.gov>.

Funding for Building Mentally Healthy Communities (Join Together, 4/14/01) - Grants are available for programs that target prevention and treatment services to meet emerging and urgent mental health needs of communi-

ties. Funding is available through the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) under the new CMHS Targeted Capacity Expansion program. See <http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/content/2001/sm01-007.html>. The program consists of two components. In the first area, \$5 million is available to fund projects aimed at prevention and early intervention services for children and adolescents. The second part of the program will award \$9 million for local service expansion, including the following priority populations: individuals with co-occurring mental illness and addiction, homeless adults and families, adults in

the criminal justice system/jail diversion programs, and youth in the juvenile justice system. In addition, \$2.5 million will be awarded for programs targeting reductions in racial/ethnic disparities in mental health or access to mental-health services. Under the program, 35 grants will be awarded, averaging \$400,000 per year for up to three years. The grant competition is open to cities, counties, and tribal governments and their agencies. The deadline for applications is May 21. For an application kit, call the CMHS Clearinghouse at 800-789-2647.

Good Things GIS in Pacific County

The Geographical Information System (GIS) administrator in Pacific County, Mark Scott, is well on the way to having all of his new county data on the Internet by the end of the year. Scott's maps show everything from the location of fish to watersheds, average incomes, home values and locations of sex offenders.

Law enforcement and the fire de-

partment in Pacific County are finding the maps to be extremely helpful in pinpointing exact locations and hastening their work. The maps facilitate police officers in seeing "every road, every tree, every rooftop," Scott says. And his maps will be in every fire truck and ambulance so that those in need will see much quicker response times.

According to Scott, the most important information that he has mapped is the tax assessment database file. There is a digital image of the 35,000 parcels located in the county with owner, ad-

dress, land value, land use, zoning, school district, precinct number, levy district, fire district, emergency management district, township, range and section. Being able to visualize this information on the Internet later this year, people will be able to have county information at their fingertips to "be able to get a feel for regulations about lots and restrictions, wetlands and shorelines. . . . It's a phase out of the paper age and into the digital age. . . ." Scott said.

(The information from this article is from the Chinook Observer.)

2392 Joint Task Force eliminated

HB 1314, the Supplemental Operating Budget, was signed by Governor Gary Locke recently and eliminated the Joint Task Force on Local Governments. The group was comprised of legislators and local government officials and was created by **HB 2392** in the 2000 Legislative Session. It ceased to exist on March 30, 2001. Both WACO and

WSAC had asked Governor Locke to veto that section and allow the "2392 Task Force" to continue its work.

The task force was composed of Grays Harbor County Prosecutor Stew Menefee, Lewis County Treasurer Rose Bowman, Douglas County Commissioner Mary Hunt, Kitsap County Commissioner Chris Endresen, city represen-

tatives, four legislators, and one member from the Office of the Governor.

HB 2392 charged the group with the study of the delivery of government services, allotment of revenues, and the distribution of various fines and forfeitures. An interim report with findings and recommendations was presented to the Legislature in January of this year and a final report with proposed legislation was to have been submitted by January 1, 2002.

U.S. Census dictates new coroner position

Washington State statute directs that counties with populations of over 40,000 residents elect a county coroner. Recently released U.S. Census numbers put Stevens County in that category. Okanogan County would have been faced with same prospect with only 436 more residents.

Census figures state Stevens County now has 40,066 people living there. Prosecuting Attorney Jerry Wetle will get to relinquish his duties as ex officio coroner after the 2002 general election

when a prosecutor is normally elected. If Stevens County should ever dip below 40,000 again, the county legislative authority can continue the office of coroner by resolution, or otherwise, the coroner will complete the term of office to which he/she was elected.

County populations are determined by the census every ten years or by an estimate given by the State Office of Financial Management (OFM). OFM is required to determine the estimate annually by April 1 and to file a certificate of

that estimate with the Secretary of State by July 1 of each year.

Statute also provides the county coroners may not practice law or be employed by or own an interest in a funeral home or mortuary. County charters may provide for an appointed medical examiner in lieu of a county coroner. Counties with populations over 250,000 may have a medical examiner system by a vote of the people. Washington currently has 15 coroners, 6 medical examiners and 18 prosecutor/coroners.

State Board needs County Public Works Director

The state Public Works Board has an opening for a county public works director to represent counties as a "public works manager" as provided in RCW 43.155.030. The state Public Works Board reviews and recommends local infrastructure projects for low-interest state loans from the Public Works Trust Fund.

State law requires the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) to submit three nominees for this position to the governor. To be considered as a nominee for this position by the WSAC board of directors, please contact WSAC staff member Sophia Byrd at 360-753-1886 or sbyrd@wacounties.org. More information

about the Board, its membership, meeting dates, etc., is available at www.crab.wa.gov/pwtf.

Snohomish County Public Works Director Peter Hahn currently serves in this position and will complete his second four-year term on June 30. He is not eligible to serve another term.

Sex Predator Housing Bill stalls In House

The Senate passed [SB 6151](#), sex predator less restrictive alternative residential and sentencing changes, back over to the House earlier in the Special Session. The House also has the other bill, [HB 2168](#), which deals with Department of Corrections work-release facilities and Juvenile Rehabilitation group homes. In the Senate version of [6151](#), the 36-bed facility will still be on McNeil Island, but the first 9 of the 36 persons are phased in over the next year and the balance spread out after that. All Pierce County land-use regulations are preempted by the state. A Joint Select Committee is established which includes local government to work on the "fair share" distribution criteria. The Committee would terminate next year. The second part of the bill deals with future secure community residential facilities, which are intended to be spread around the state in some sort of equitable fashion utilizing the recommendations of the Jt.

Select Committee. The third portion of the bill enhances sentencing requirements for sex offenders with the intention of gradually reducing, if not shutting off, the flow of those civilly committed to the Special Commitment Center.

The House has some concerns with the Senate bill and certain House Republicans and Democrats have been negotiating with Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg on an alternative plan which would put between 15 – 24 predators in the facility over the next three years. Attorney General Christine Gregoire has concerns with the smaller number and the Senate doesn't want to change their bill. Gregoire states that she can't negotiate something that is inconsistent with what her client says they need, the state Department of Social and Health Services.

Ladenburg has indicated that if the legislature passes the bill that suspends local land-use laws and allows the 36-bed facility, he will sue the state. He has

also indicated he will intervene in the federal case between the state and sex predators. He has indicated to state Representative Dave Mastin that he and the mayors of Tacoma, University Place, and Lakewood, would agree to 5 predators per year for the next three years, if the state used those years to find other communities in which to place these facilities in the future. Co-Speaker Frank Chopp has been talking to Ladenburg about 24 predators, but Republican Co-Speaker Clyde Ballard apparently won't accept that number.

Gregoire indicated that she wasn't the one who chose McNeil as the site, but that legislative leaders chose to put it there. She also indicated that they were the ones who decided not to suspend local land-use laws anywhere else, i.e., in Walla Walla.

At this point it looks like the earliest the bill will be considered in the House may be next week.

(The bulk of this story comes from an article in the Tacoma News Tribune dated 5/3/01 written by Joe Turner.)

Elections Blanket Primary

The House Select Committee on Elections held a public hearing on Thursday afternoon to take testimony on a number of proposals that address the way in which primaries in Washington could be conducted. County auditors from around the state attended the hearing: Suzanne Sinclair, Island County; Corky Mattingly, Yakima County; Dave Bowen, Kittitas County; Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County; Norma Brummett, Skagit County; Kim Wyman, Thurston County; Al Brotche, Mason County; Vern Spatz, Grays Harbor County; Karen Flynn, Kitsap County; Greg Kimsey, Clark County; Bob Bruce, King County Records and Elections, and Keri Rooney representing Pierce County.

Representative Dave Schmidt, Co-chair of the House Select Committee on Elections, stated to the audience that leadership in both the House and the Senate are committed to passing legislation addressing this issue. Secretary of State Sam Reed and the county auditors testified in support of a proposal that is known as the "Washington Primary," PSHB 1551. This proposal, according to the auditors, would be the least confusing to voters. The ballot will look exactly the same to the voter as it does now. Under the Washington Primary, the top two vote getters from the primary will proceed onto the general election ballot, regardless as to what party the candidates are. The costs associated with PSHB 1551 would be commensurate to conducting the primary under the blanket primary system.

The other proposal the auditors tes-

tified on, SHB 2240, would allow for a party check off on the ballot or the voter could vote an unaffiliated ballot. The parties would have to adopt a rule whether the unaffiliated ballots would be used to determine the party nominee. The auditors testified that this could be deceptive to the voters and would anger the public. A similar process was used for the presidential primary election in 2000 where one political party chose not to use any unaffiliated votes and the other party chose to use only a portion of the votes. County auditors reported that the public was incensed that their votes did not count for anything and that taxpayer dollars were being wasted. SHB 2240 also appears to be extremely costly to the counties and a number of counties are unsure as to whether their tabulating systems could tabulate votes under the proposal.

Interim State Elections Director named

Secretary of State Sam Reed has named John Pearson as the interim director of elections for Washington State. John is currently the senior assistant director of

elections. He will assume the appointment effective May 14, and will serve in that capacity until a new elections director is hired. John has worked for the elec-

tions division for many years and is an excellent resource for county auditors and their election staff. Gary McIntosh, the current director of elections, will be leaving his position to pursue other interests.

Migrant Farmworker Housing planned in Chelan County

A 300-bed tent camp for cherry pickers and their families is being planned at Wenatchee River County Park. The camp would operate for 28 days sometime in the period between July 1 and August 15 depending on harvest dates. The state Office of Community Development (OCD) is expected to sign a contract with the Chelan County

Commission early next week, said County Commissioner John Hunter.

The camp will be fenced off from other public campsites in the park and the state will provide portable toilets, showers, laundry and cooking facilities according to Ray Price, Assistant Director for Housing in OCD. Our own Jim Potts has been instrumental in coordinat-

ing some of these housing arrangements and continues to work out in the counties to help develop additional sites for possible housing.

Between 14,000 and 17,000 workers harvest cherries each year, but because so many orchards are in rural areas, migrant workers have a very difficult time finding housing.

Coming Events

May 7-9
Washington State Association of County Auditors Elections Conference, Yakima

May 11
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee, Washington Counties Building, Olympia

May 16-18
ACHS Meeting, Walla Walla

May 21-24
WASPC (Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs) Spring Meeting, Sheraton Hotel, Tacoma

May 23-26
WIR Conference (Western Interstate Region), County of Hawaii, Hilo, HI

June 3-6
GFOA (Government Finance Officers

Association) Annual Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 10-14
International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada

June 11-13
Wa State Assn of County Assessors Annual June Conference, Olympia

June 12
Beating the Budget Blues Workshop, in conjunction with WSAC Summer Convention, Yakima, 8:30 am - 4 pm

June 12-15
WSAC Summer Convention, West Coast Gateway Hotel, Yakima

June 12
WCIF (Washington Counties Insurance Fund) Board Meeting, in conjunction with WSAC Summer Convention,

WestCoast Gateway, Yakima, 4:30 pm

May County Calendar

May 1 - Application for forest land designation is approved unless the county assessor has notified the applicant in writing of the extent to which it is denied. RCW 84.33.130

May 1 - Open space farm and agricultural land application is approved unless the county assessor has notified the owner. RCW 84.34.035

May 28 - Memorial day observed - Legal Holiday. RCW 1.16.050

May 31 - The county assessor shall have completed the duties of listing and placing valuations on all property. RCW 84.40.040

Employment Opportunities

SENIOR PLANNER, WATER RESOURCES, Lewis County Community Development. Salary: \$37,578 to \$44,851. Closes May 11, 2001 at 5:00 pm. This Senior Planner functions as a project planner for major studies related to the development and/or revision of watershed plans, fish & wildlife habitat restoration programs, shoreline master programs and permit applications, comprehensive plans, critical areas and resource lands ordinances issues, Endangered Species Act/Clean Water Act issues, water rights issues, salmon recovery activities, and other water-related county policies and programs. Job description and complete application packet available at the Lewis County Com-

munity Development Dept, Public Service Building - 1st floor, 350 N Market Blvd, Chehalis, and at www.co.lewis.wa.us or by calling (360) 740-1232. Lewis County Employment Application, Authorization to Release Information, Resume and Cover Letter must be received in the Community Development office by 5:00 pm, May 11, 2001.

EQUIPMENT ANALYST 2, WASHINGTON STATE DNR, Washington Dept. Natural Resources is recruiting for a candidate to help us manage our equipment inventory and vehicles. The position pays \$2878-\$3682 per month. For more details go to <http://www.wa.gov/dop/>

bulletins/31054ocr.htm or contact Toni Palzer at (360) 902-162 or toni.palzer@wadnr.gov.

SENIOR PLANNER, YAKIMA COUNTY. Annual Salary Range: \$38,411 to \$55,061. The Yakima Valley Conference of Government (YVCOG) is seeking a high energy individual to be a part of the team. The person chosen to fill this position will establish an excellent working relationship with YVCOG member jurisdictions and will advise and assist members in successful community development processes including comprehensive land use planning, land use regulation, and infrastructure funding. The Senior Planner provides day-to-day current and long-range land use planning assistance to smaller cities and supports the

YVCOG transportation planning program. The Senior Planner also prepares Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other funding applications on behalf of member jurisdictions. Requires equivalent to a Bachelors Degree in Planning or a related field and three years of progressively responsible current planning experience. Knowledge of WA State land use and environmental law, ability to speak and understand Spanish, ARC/INFO and ARC/VIEW software experience, and AICP certification is desirable. Apply to: Yakima County Human Resources, 128 N 2nd Street, Courthouse Room 412, Yakima, WA 98909, Phone: (509) 574-2220, e-mail: human.resources@co.yakima.wa.us. Visit the website at www.pan.co.yakima.wa.us. Closing date: May 24, 2001.