

# Courthouse Journal

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Washington State Association of Counties  
Washington Association of County Officials

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Issue No. 9

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## County Clerks Convene in Everett

Snohomish County Clerk Pam Daniels hosted the Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC) last week in Everett as President Betty Gould, Thurston County Clerk, presided over the WSACC 95<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Conference.

On Monday, Snohomish County Council Chair Dave Somers welcomed the group to Snohomish County and was followed by Superior Court Judge Joseph Thibodeau who also spoke. Both provided unique perspectives regarding the county, the courts and the challenges. Some of the special guests and speakers that day included the Honorable Brian Sonntag, State Auditor; Court Administrator Mary McQueen; State Archivist Phil Coombs; and WACO Executive Director Fred Saeger.

Tuesday was devoted almost exclusively to technology. Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman demonstrated Thurston County's pilot electronic recording program and Kim Morrison, Deputy to Chelan County Clerk Siri Woods, presented a session on electronic filing of court documents project that Chelan County is developing. King County Deputy Clerk Barb Miner explained King County's approach to electronic filing as well. The Judicial Access Browser System and on-line domestic violence forms were also demonstrated. The day featured a wide range of vendors who offered state-of-the-art hardware and software to implement electronic filing, imaging, and storage.

The education sessions included Assistant Attorney General Scott Blonien on Inmate Litigation; Attorney Karl Teglund with an update of the Clerks' Judgment Manual; Rosemary Namit of Bank of America on fraud and bankruptcy; Wayne Blair with the Equal Justice Coalition; Steve Stentz of Star Tech on data management and grant writing; retired federal auditor Larry Lufkin on child support; and Eva Culwell and Bob Carlberg from U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

Host Pam Daniels planned a week complete with social events and sports as well. The Thursday lunch featured Senator Jeralita Costa

of the 38<sup>th</sup> Legislative District who spoke on privacy issues. The Clerks also enjoyed an evening of baseball with the Everett Aquasox; a whale watching dinner cruise and a VIP tour of the Boeing Plant. In the afternoon they boarded the frigate USS Ford at Everett Naval Base.

The Honorable Supreme Court Chief Justice Gerry Alexander acted as Master of Ceremonies for the Thursday evening banquet, the highlight of the week's festivities. Senator Jeri Costa was recognized for her support of the Clerks' Association along with Senator Jeanine Long and Representatives Mary Lou Dickerson, Patricia Lantz, Brian Hatfield and Joe McDermott, who were not present.

Skamania County Clerk Rena Hollis was awarded "Clerk of the Year" for her outstanding service to WSACC in the past year. In addition to acting as the Director of Communications, Rena has volunteered countless hours on special committees and association communications and records. The "Clerk of the Year" award is highly coveted in WSACC. It was initiated in 1984 and is awarded after a vote of the entire group.

Legislative awards were given to Grant County Clerk Ken Kunes for his representation of the clerks before the legislature; Chelan County Clerks Siri Woods for her tenacity, and Thurston County Clerk Betty Gould for her advocacy on behalf of the county clerks. 2001 Legislative Chair Dean Logan, Kitsap County Clerk, distributed locally produced \$5.00 bills to commemorate the fee for filing of warrants for unpaid taxes that was increased after forty years this session.

The Chief Justice installed officers for the coming two years. They are: President, Kitsap County Clerk Dean Logan; Director of Committees, Jefferson County Clerk Marianne Walters; Director of Communications, Skamania County Clerk Rena Hollis; Director of Education and Conferences, Cowlitz County Clerk Teri Neilsen; and, Director of Legislation, Snohomish County Clerk Pam Daniels. Chelan County Clerk Siri Woods was elected to another term as WACO Representative.

# News in Brief

## Two Long-time Commissioners Pass Away

Two former county commissioners have recently passed away, B.G. Brown, Jefferson County and Loren Moos, Lincoln County. Moos died June 13<sup>th</sup> and Brown died July 1st.

Moos was elected in 1972 and served twenty years retiring in 1992. Brown was also elected in 1972 and lost his reelection bid in 1992 to a Democratic challenger. Commissioner Glen Huntingford now holds that position. Both Brown and Moos were active in WSAC serving on the Legislative Steering Committee and Board of Directors.

## 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).

Suggestions and contributions welcome. Weekly deadline is noon Thursday.

Direct inquiries and correspondence to *The Courthouse Journal*, 206 Tenth Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501-1131.

### WACO STAFF

Phone: (360) 753-7319  
Fax: (360) 664-2812

Fred Saeger, *Executive Director*  
Debbie Wilke, *Deputy Director*  
Christina Bridston, *Programs Coordinator*  
Brenda Bamford, *Financial Operations Manager*  
Barbara Sandahl Reeves, *Research Associate*  
Kathie Houts, *Administrative Assistant*

### WSAC STAFF

Phone: (360) 753-1886  
Fax: (360) 753-2842

Bill Vogler, *Executive Director*  
Paul Parker, *Assistant Executive Director*  
Maureen Morris, *Deputy Director for Urban Counties*  
Sophia Byrd, *Policy Director Law & Justice*  
Jean Wessman, *Policy Director Human Services, Juvenile Justice, Housing*  
Jackie White, *Policy Director Transportation & Land Use*  
Vicki Kirkpatrick, *Policy Director, WSALPHO Administrator*  
Tom King, *Associate, Research, Telecommunications*  
Sally Harrington, *Business and Investment Manager*  
Kim Zydek, *Administrative Secretary*  
Ginni Peppert, *Secretary*

## Chelan County Board Appoints New Commissioner

The Chelan County Board of Commissioners have appointed Buell Hawkins to the Board replacing Esther Stefaniw who passed away in early May. Hawkins, a co-owner of a tractor dealership in East Wenatchee, was one of three finalists for the job. The other two were attorneys, one from Manson and the other from Abercrombie.

Minutes after his appointment, Commissioner Hawkins took his seat on the Board and began his official duties. He has been attending board meetings for the past month and he said, "It was very important to me that if I was blessed to get this appointment that I would pack my share of the load from the start."

## Journal technology moves forward...

WACO and WSAC have decided to move into the new millennium by becoming e-mail savvy. A joint decision was made to begin e-mailing *the Courthouse Journal* as of August 1. Obviously, if a county office does not have an e-mail address, we will either fax it or send a hard copy so that everyone still continues to receive their copy.

If we do not currently have your e-mail address, please see that we get it by August 1. E-mail addresses can be directed to [gpeppert@wacounties.org](mailto:gpeppert@wacounties.org) or [khouts@wacounties.org](mailto:khouts@wacounties.org).

## Commissioners Endresen and Hunt to Co-Chair Legislative Steering Committee

WSAC President Mike Shelton has named Kitsap County Commissioner Chris Endresen and Douglas County Commissioner Mary Hunt the co-chairs of the 2001-02 Legislative Steering Committee of the Washington State Association of Counties, maintaining the tradition of co-chairs from each side of the Cascade Range. The Legislative Steering Committee is responsible for proposing a Legislative package to the membership at the annual Legislative Conference and takes positions on legislation for the Association during the Legislative Session.

The full membership of the Legislative Steering Committee will be announced later this month.

## State Archivist Passes Away

State Archivist Phil Coombs passed away July 4, 2001, while sailing Puget Sound with his family on holiday. A memorial service will be held in honor of Phil's life at Olympia Gardens Funeral Home on Littlerock Road this Saturday, July 7, at 2:00 p.m. He will be greatly missed by those of us who had the privilege of working with him.

Phil is survived by his partner Linda, as well as his children from a previous marriage. Cards may be sent to the family in care of the Office of the Secretary of State, PO Box 40220, Olympia, Washington 98504-0220.

## Farewell Open House

Mason County Commissioner Mary Jo Cady announced that she has accepted a position with Washington, D.C. based Community Transportation Association of America as the CTAA Regional Manager for Washington State. She will be based in Olympia.

A farewell Open House will be held on Friday, July 13, 2001, from 3-5 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse Building 1, 411 North 5th Street, Shelton, Washington. Everyone is welcome to attend.

## Okanogan County Relocates Several Offices

In Okanogan County, several county offices have moved into the newly remodeled Virginia Grainger School. The Okanogan County Sheriff's office, county commissioners, planning department and building department will be housed in the building and county commissioners held their first meeting in their new digs on June 25.

## Island County Courthouse Renovations

Island County has a new justice center that is connected to the county annex building across the street by a second-floor sky bridge. For the first time in 30 years, the prosecutor's office and the sheriff's office are in the same building. There is also a \$2.5 million renovation of the old courthouse underway which is expected to be completed before Christmas, to be followed by a remodel of the annex building next year.

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## EPA Schedules Workshops On TMDL Development

The Environmental Protection Agency is conducting informational workshops to share information on the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for total dissolved gas and water temperature on the mainstem of the Columbia/Snake River. The workshops will include an opportunity for participants to informally comment on the temperature model. Many groups, including the Western Governors' Association, are expected to participate.

The goal of the process is to understand the sources of total dissolved gas and temperature loadings and to allocate those loadings to meet state and tribal water quality standards. EPA notes that the complexity of the governance system is profound, involving Federal agencies, state agencies, Tribes, private entities, and Public Utility Districts (PUDs). No single agency or Tribe can assert its jurisdiction and achieve a successful out-

come. For example, total dissolved gas travels across international borders, through tribal and state jurisdictions, and is increased by passage over federal, PUD, and private dams. Its one commonality is that it is harmful to fish and aquatic life at certain percentages of saturation. Temperature exceedances are perhaps even more complex in assessing causes and solutions.

The geographic scope of this effort includes the mainstem Snake River from river mile (RM) 188 to its confluence with the Columbia River. For the mainstem Columbia River, the TMDL will reach from the Canadian Border to the Astoria Bridge at the river mouth.

In addition to US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10, the TMDL Partners include the Washington Department of Ecology, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Idaho Department of Environmental

Quality, and the Columbia Basin Tribes.

The first workshop will be July 23, 2001, at 9:00 AM, Bigfoot and Sasquatch Rooms, Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Green St., Spokane, Washington. The second workshop will be July 24, 2001, at 9:00 AM, Commission Room, Port of Portland, 2<sup>nd</sup> & Everett St., Portland, Oregon.

Check the website, [www.epa.gov/r10earth/columbiainstemtmdl.htm](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/columbiainstemtmdl.htm), for more timely materials as they are developed.

If you plan to attend one of these workshops, please RSVP by July 16, 2001, to Teresa Kubo in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Oregon Operations Office at (503) 326-3280, or by e-mail at [mailto:kubo.teresa@epa.gov](mailto:mailto:kubo.teresa@epa.gov). More specific information and directions can be provided to you then.

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## Warmer, Drier Weather To Continue, Says NASA

While change may be on the way, the Pacific is still dominated by the strong, larger-than-El Niño/La Niña pattern called the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO), according to the latest satellite data from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. The PDO is a long-term ocean temperature fluctuation of the Pacific Ocean that waxes and wanes approximately every 10 to 20 years. "This continuing PDO pattern of the past three years signals more of the unusually dry conditions that have afflicted the North American west coast," said JPL oceanographer Dr. William Patzert.

The new satellite image, available at <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/images/earth/pacificocean>, also shows a pulse of warm water traveling toward South America, a reminder that another El Niño is due in the next year or so. El Niños generally return every two to seven years; the last one occurred in 1997. The strength of El Niño's next appearance could depend on how much the PDO dominates ocean circulation and temperature patterns over the next few years.

For now, the latest data show that the entire Pacific basin continues to be dominated by the strong and stable

PDO's characteristic pattern. "Given the three-year persistence of the PDO pattern, there will be a tendency to produce impacts similar to the past two summers with continuing drought and heat in the West," said Patzert.

"In some parts of the West, this long-lasting drought has created considerable pain. In the Pacific Northwest, water supplies are dangerously low and temperatures should be up, which will exacerbate the energy crisis and, like the summer of 2000, we are set up for a very busy summer and fall fire season," said Patzert.

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## Counties, Cities & Public Utilities Co-Sponsor Energy Conference

WSAC has joined with the Association of Washington Cities and the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance to co-sponsor "Taking Back Our Energy Future" on August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> in Yakima. The Conference will focus on managing through the evolving energy situation as an energy consumer and an energy provider. (Many cities provide energy, but no county does.) It is an excellent training opportunity for building operators and employees with responsibility for energy efficiency.

Plenary sessions address the topics:

- Drought, Water, Fish and Energy
- Energy Prices
- Energy Codes
- Winter Blackouts

Breakout sessions include the topics of energy conservation methods, budgeting during energy cost uncertainty, and water and wastewater system impacts.

Registration for the Conference is \$95. Brochures including the registration form have been sent to many county offices, but if you didn't get one or can't

find it, you can access a registration form on the webpage for the Association of Washington Cities: [www.awcnet.org](http://www.awcnet.org). Click on "Training", then "August", then "Registration Form".

## Oregon farmers will appeal to 'God Squad' for water

A law firm representing Klamath Basin farmers, who have been denied irrigation water to protect threatened and endangered fish, filed a formal petition yesterday to convene the "God Squad" to overrule the Endangered Species Act. The Pacific Legal Foundation, based in Sacramento, sent the petition to Secretary of Interior Gayle Norton, who chairs the Endangered Species Committee, and Commerce Secretary Don Evans. Nicknamed the God Squad because it has the power to weigh economics against the survival of a species, the committee is made up of seven Cabinet-level officials chaired by the Interior Department secretary.

"This is a predicament of the government's making, and government needs to fix it," said David Haddock, who prepared the petition on behalf of

two Klamath Basin water districts. The committee was added to the Endangered Species Act by Congress in 1978 after a tiny fish called the snail darter stopped construction of a dam in Tennessee. The panel has considered the fates of the snail darter, the whooping crane and the northern spotted owl, and has gone ahead with a federal project just once. In 1991, the committee approved some timber sales despite threats to the spotted owl. The exemption was ultimately dropped amid allegations of illegal lobbying. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation considered calling for an exemption to the Endangered Species Act before deciding in April it could not provide water to 90 percent of the farms. The farms are on 240,000 acres served by the Klamath Project, a federal irrigation project.

The bureau ruled the water was

needed to sustain endangered sucker fish in Upper Klamath Lake, the irrigation project's main reservoir, and threatened coho salmon in the Klamath River. The panel was never convened.

Todd True, a Seattle-based lawyer with the Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, said asking the committee to intervene would not solve the Klamath Basin crisis.

"The problem in the Klamath Basin is not the Endangered Species Act, and seeking an exception from the act is not going to solve the problem," True said. "The problem is decades of overuse of water and a federal water project that is simply out of scale to what that basin can sustain and not suffer an ecological collapse."

### Good Things...

## Spokane County Implements Automated Marriage Licenses

At the most recent annual conference of the county auditors, Spokane County Auditor Vicky Dalton, shared the following information with the group. We thought it should be included in the *Courthouse Journal's Good Things* section. Vicky graciously submitted the following article:

"In Spokane County, marriage forms are now printed by a computer program. The information about the couple is typed in once. The computer automatically produces the four standard documents, with all of the information printed in the appropriate field.

This new in-house program:

- Saves staff time and reduces data entry errors;
- Improves the collection of information from the bride and groom;
- Ensures the legibility of the completed documents; and
- Dramatically reduces the number of marriage licenses returned that are missing information.

Although typing this information adds a few minutes during issuance, considerable staff time has been saved due to reduced errors. In the past, the couple

and the clergy filled in preprinted forms manually. So many errors occurred that one employee spent nearly half of each day mailing back certificates for corrections, such as missing signatures, incomplete addresses.

Now the couple and clergy are responsible for only the signatures and the clergy's address. The clergy are especially thrilled that they no longer must scrutinize the contents of the marriage certificates."

Vicky also invited other county auditors to use this new software – free of charge! If you are interested in using her program, please give her a call.

## Coming Events

July 13-17

**NACo Annual Conference**, City & County of Philadelphia

July 17-20

**WCRP Annual Summer Conference**, WestCoast Grand Hotel at the Park, Spokane

July 18-20

**ACHS (Association of County Human Services) Meeting**, Port Angeles

July 19-20

**CRABoard Meeting**, CRAB Offices, Olympia

August 27-30

**Washington State Association of County Assessors' Annual Conference**, Enzian Inn, Leavenworth

September 9-12

**International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) Annual Conference**, Miami, Florida

September 10-11

**Washington State Assn of County Treasurers' Legislative Meeting**, Summit Inn, Snoqualmie Pass

September 19-21

**Washington Finance Officers Association Annual Conference**, Wenatchee

September 19-21

**ACHS Meeting**, Ellensburg

September 27-28

**WSAC Eastern District Meeting**, East

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Wenatchee

October 1-5

**WACO Annual Conference**, Port Ludlow Resort & Conference Center

October 11-12

**WSAC Western District Meeting**, Long Beach

October 18-19

**CRABoard Meeting**, CRAB Office, Olympia

November 14-16

**ACHS Meeting**, Silverdale

November 12-15

**WASPC Annual Fall Conference**, Doubletree Hotel, Pasco

November 14-16

**WSAC Fall Legislative Conference**, Silverdale Hotel on the Bay, Silverdale

November 14

**WCIF Board Meeting**, in conjunction with WSAC Fall Legislative Conference, 10 am - 12 pm

## Washington Counties Insurance Fund/Self Insured Medical

Executive Director Kitty Wallace reports that the WCIF recently left a long association with Regence Blue Shield and began self insuring its indemnity medical plans. The move to self insurance established a new entity known as Washington Counties Insurance Pool (WCIP) and was accomplished by interlocal agreement with approval by the State of Washington Office of Risk Management. This ambitious effort to contain the cost of medical insurance included major revisions to the group's prescription drug program which was approaching 30% of overall claims costs.

Wallace reports that the decision to

self insure through WCIP so far has proven to be an excellent one. Service by the third party claims payer is a great improvement over the previous fully insured program. Average claims turnaround is 10 days and, more importantly, prescription drug and medical claims data is available to the plan administrator (WCIF/WCIP) within 14 days of payment. Savings in first year administrative costs alone are in excess of one million dollars.

Many fully insured products (Group Health, dental, life, vision) remain available through the Washington Counties Insurance Fund (WCIF) which is governed by a board of 14 county commis-

sioners. The self insured pool (WCIP) is governed by a board of ten directors; six county commissioners and four representatives from non-county member employers.

Believing that few counties are equipped to operate autonomously in today's benefits environment, the WCIF Board of Trustees invites all Washington counties to join the employee benefits trust fund and self insured pool. Please call Kitty Wallace at 360-586-0466 for more information or email [kwallace.wcif@wacounties.org](mailto:kwallace.wcif@wacounties.org). Detailed benefits information is available at [www.wcif@wacounties.org](http://www.wcif@wacounties.org).

## Employment Opportunities

### **General Repairer/Department of Natural Resources**

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources is currently recruiting for a GENERAL REPAIRER in our Olympic Region, Forks WA. Website address for job announcement contains all the necessary details on the job and how to apply: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/bulletins/31134oc.htm>

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### **Whatcom County Facilities Management, Bellingham, WA**

has an opportunity for a Facilities Technical Specialist for Electrical/Electronic. We provide a full employer-paid benefits package, including medical, dental and vision coverage for employees, spouses

and eligible dependents. State retirement and deferred compensation plans available, generous vacation, sick leave and holiday benefits. This position requires a HS diploma or GED and 5 years of industrial electrical/electronic systems experience, including HVAC electrical background. Hiring range: \$16.07-\$17.35/hr, DOQ. Application period closes 7/18/01. Application packet available at Human Resources, (360) 676-6802, Bellingham, WA. For details, call jobline (360) 738-4550 or visit our website at: [www.whatcom.wa.us](http://www.whatcom.wa.us). EOE.

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### **County Engineer/Public Works Director-Island County (Coupeville, WA)**

is a FT position. This is a Department Head position. Duties include but not limited to: planning, organizing, coordinating and directing the activities and operations of development review, engineering, roads, solid waste, surface water, capital improvements and E.R.&R. to ensure the effective design, construction, operation and maintenance of the County's infrastructure and fulfilling the statutory requirements of RCW 36.80 and other regulatory functions as specified in the Island County Code. Requires Professional Civil Engineer registered and licensed under the laws of the State of Washington. BA in Civil Engineering with course work in public admin., business admin or a related field. Open until filled. Island County Application required.

Call (360) 679-7372 EOE  
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### **Chief Deputy Auditor-Island County Auditor (Coupeville, WA)**

has a full time opening. Duties include but not limited to: responsible for chief administrative assistant to the Auditor and acts as County Auditor in his/her absence. Coordinates the formation of and adherence to the policies and procedures for accts. payable, payroll, budgeting financial reporting and archival mgmt. of all records as required by statute. Responsible for the production of the County Annual Report. BA in Accounting and finance, CPA certificate highly desirable. 5 yrs. In a supervisory position and 2 yrs. in an Accountant position. Prior experience in a government or regulatory agency highly desirable.