

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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Inside the Courthouse Journal

••• 2 •••

Public Health and County
Emergency Preparedness

Federal Office for Domestic
Preparedness Offers
Training

••• 3 •••

Boards & Commissions

NACo Needs Info About
Security Costs for Counties

••• 4 •••

Updates on Courthouse
Holiday Closures

••• 5 •••

Courthouse Ramblings

Employment Opportunities

2002 Meetings
and
Conferences

See Page 3

Who's In Charge If Commissioners Are Incommunicado?

As counties begin to pay closer attention to their emergency management responsibilities, local elected officials are considering some very important questions. Such as, "Who is in charge if the responsible public officials are not available?"

Recently a Benton County deputy prosecutor, in reviewing state law, noticed that RCW 42.14.040 makes provision for the "line of succession" and who acts as the county board of commissioners, but only if board members are unavailable due to enemy attack. This statute does not seem to apply if commissioners are unavailable for reasons other than enemy attack. Benton County's question: How to properly address and provide for other, non-attack scenarios that could render commissioners unavailable?

In a response that might be of assistance to other jurisdictions as well, Thurston County provided at least one option that is authorized for non-charter counties. Thurston has relied on the authority to develop a comprehensive emergency management plan (CEMP), pursuant to Chapter 38.52 RCW. Thurston's CEMP ordinance includes a "continuity of government" provision.

The ordinance provides: "When, as the result of an emergency or disaster, the number of county commissioners needed to act falls

below a quorum, the following provisions shall govern the continuity of the Board of County Commissioners: (1) Any or all available county commissioners shall have full authority to act jointly in all matters as the Board of County Commissioners. (2) In the event that no county commissioner is available pursuant to provision (1), then those elected county officials as listed herein as are available for duty shall jointly act as the Board of County Commissioners and shall possess by majority vote the full authority of the Board of County Commissioners until such time as one or more county commissioners become available. The "elected county officials" referenced herein shall consist of the following county officials: assessor, auditor, clerk, coroner, prosecuting attorney, sheriff and treasurer."

Under Thurston's ordinance even one commissioner can function as the Board under provision (1), assuming the others are not "available." The term "available" is not defined and according to a deputy prosecutor its functional meaning is usually developed at the time of an event. For example, after the emergency management director issued a disaster proclamation following the Nisqually earthquake, two commissioners were able to be contacted and convened for an emergency meeting to adopt a resolution addressing the disaster.

Commissioners To Help Develop County/ Tribal Summit

At the request of Governor Gary Locke and Attorney General Christine Gregoire, county commissioners will be among a group of stakeholders planning a "county/tribal criminal justice summit."

County participants, named by the WSAC

officers, are Yakima County Commissioner Jim Lewis representing Eastern Washington counties and Clallam County Commissioner Mike Doherty representing Western Washington counties. Kitsap County Commissioner Chris

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Endresen will serve as an alternate for the Western Washington position.

The governor and attorney general have already developed a general sense of what a "summit" could accomplish

through the theme "Working Together for Public Protection." They are looking to a number of stakeholders, including county officials, to develop the details for a meaningful agenda. The goal, according to the governor's invitation, is to

come together in a spirit of cooperation and work toward resolving common issues.

The planning group will meet several times over the next few months. A date has not yet been set for the summit.

Public Health and County Emergency Preparedness

The recent concern around anthrax as a bioterrorism agent and increased concern about other potential biological threats has caused the public health community and the counties

within which they work to consider the adequacy of current law, emergency preparedness plans, and mutual aid agreements.

The Department of Health convened a workgroup to look at the issues of the legal authority of the health officer and how that is carried out plus mutual aid agreements between the state health department and local health jurisdictions. Thurston County Commissioner Diane Oberquell represents WSAC on the workgroup. Representatives from local health, WSAC staff, county prosecutors, the State Board of Health, the Attorney General's Office, as well as the Department of Health also participate. The Attorney General's Office is reviewing the RCWs and case law to look at the adequacy of the laws surrounding the power of the Health Officer to control commu-

nicable disease and to protect the health of citizens.

At both the first meeting of the above-mentioned workgroup and at the recent Local Board of Health Leadership Workshop, participants suggested that counties should review their Emergency Preparedness Plans to ensure that local health departments were adequately represented in the plans. They should also ensure that plans adequately addressed the potential of a significant disease outbreak such as a bioterrorism event and clearly articulate how such an event is to be handled.

Additionally, counties should include public health in any mutual aid agreements initiated with other counties. It is important to include your local health department/district in the development of mutual aid agreements.

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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Federal Office for Domestic Preparedness Offers Training

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) is the lead U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) component for the development and delivery of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) terrorism response training to the nation's state and local public safety personnel. This training is directed at a broad spectrum of emergency management personnel, including fire, hazardous materials (HazMat), law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), public health, emergency management, and public works agencies.

Courses highlighted this month are: "WMD Hazardous Materials Technician Training Course (Live-Agent)" and "Incident Response to Terrorist Bombings."

"WMD Hazardous Materials Technician Training Course (Live-Agent)" is a training course in the composition, action, identification and de-

contamination of WMD agents that have the potential for use in a terrorist incident. This course also includes training in the preservation of evidence at a crime scene, an overview of the transnational and domestic terrorist threat, and a series of practical exercises involving equipment and methods of operations at a WMD terrorist incident.

This training course culminates with a hands-on training exercise in the Live-Agent Training Facility, where the hazardous materials technician performs tasks learned in the previous instruction in a chemical warfare materials contaminated environment. The course is 26 hours and is delivered over three days. The target audience for this course is hazardous materials responders and HazMat certified law enforcement personnel.

"Incident Response to Terrorist Bombings" is a technical-level opera-

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

tions course designed to provide basic training in weapons of mass destruction (WMD), with a focus on explosives and incendiary devices as terrorist weapons. The course offers a unique blend of classroom presentations and covers commercial and military explosives, improvised explosive devices and readily available explosive formulations that have been used or could be used by terrorists.

This course is a train-the-trainer format in that qualified instructors are certified to teach the four-hour awareness-level course. Participants must be an active member of a fire, law enforcement, emergency medical agency, or serve in another position with responsibility for providing emergency response at the local or state level. Participants must also have sufficient time remaining in their current position or similar position within their agency to apply the skills

and knowledge acquired during this training.

To learn more about other training courses available from OJP and how to arrange for delivery to your agency, please contact: Gabrielle Meszaros-Parada at <mailto:meszaros@ojp.usdoj.gov> or go to the ODP website, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/ta/training.htm>.

Boards and Commissions

Position Opens on the County Road Administration Board

The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) has one new county vacancy that needs to be filled. Councilmember Bob Imhof of Whatcom County has resigned from the Board and it will be necessary to appoint a board member

to complete Councilmember Imhof's term which will expire on June 30, 2002.

RCW 36.78.040 requires that this position be an elected county member representing a county of a population size of 125,000. The only restriction is

that no more than one member of the Board shall be from any single county.

Anyone interested in serving on the County Road Administration Board should contact Bill Vogler or Jackie White at (360) 753-1886.

NACo News

NACo Needs Info About Security Costs for Counties

The National Association of Counties (NACo) Task Force on Homeland Security has been discussing county security issues and priorities with federal Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge and members of Congress. NACo hopes to secure federal funds to help offset counties' increased emergency management activities since the terrorist attacks September 11.

In response, federal officials are asking NACo to provide specific examples of financial investments counties are making in homeland security, as well as financial hardships counties are experiencing as a result of heightened security.

NACo research staff will conduct a detailed survey in the next few weeks to help quantify the security needs of counties nationwide. In the meantime, NACo is requesting that county officials (including WSAC members) provide information about the situation in their

home counties. Complete answers to NACo's questions might not be attainable at this time, but they would appreciate any information that can be provided.

Please respond to the following questions with an email to NACo's associate legislative director Stephanie Osborn at sosborn@naco.org or fax to 202-942-4281, and a copy to WSAC staff at sbyrd@wacounties.org or 360-753-1886.

- Is the county experiencing added law enforcement and public safety costs post-September 11 associated with homeland security? If yes, please provide an estimated dollar amount and indicate the time period. If yes, are the costs associated with: Increased security at federal or state facilities? Overtime pay? Increased volume of calls to 911? Other? As a result of shifting resources, is there evidence in your community of an increase in crime?
- Is the county experiencing increased

public health and/or emergency medical costs post-September 11 associated with homeland security? If yes, please provide an estimated dollar amount and indicate the time period. If yes, are the costs associated with: Responding to actual public health emergencies? Responding to hoaxes? Investing in ramped-up public health preparedness? Other?

- If the county has made budget adjustments to compensate for increased costs associated with homeland security efforts in law enforcement, public health or any other area, where have the cuts or adjustments occurred? What projects or programs are affected? What purchases or projects will be delayed or canceled?
- In the longer term, does the county plan to make additional capital investments in emergency preparedness? If so, estimate the cost. In what programs, projects or equipment will you invest?

2002 Meetings and Conferences

January

11 WACO Board of Trustees' Meeting, Washington Counties Building,

Olympia, 8:00 a.m.

14 Legislative Session Begins

14-18 Medicolegal Death Investigator Training Course, Central Washington University, Ellensburg.

16 Association of County Human Services (ACHS) Meeting, Olympia

30 Legislative Rally and Tri-Association Legislative Reception (WACO, WSAC and Association of Washington Cities), St. Martin's Pavilion

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

ion, Lacey, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. (WACO/WSAC meetings and affiliate meetings January 29 - 30 – check individual schedules.)

31 Training - Ethical Dilemmas: Integrity as a Tool for Successful Public Officials, Phoenix Inn & Suites, Olympia, with credit toward Certified Public Official (CPO).

February

7 Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO) Meeting, Olympia

11-13 Washington State Association of County Auditors' Recording Conference, Red Lion Inn, Wenatchee.

March

1-5 National Association of Counties' (NACo) Annual Legislative Conference, Washington Hilton and Towers, Washington, D.C.

20-22 Association of County Human Services (ACHS) Meeting, Tacoma, Pierce County

TBA Washington State Association of Sheriffs' and Oregon State Association of Sheriffs' Annual Joint Meeting, Walla Walla.

April

7-13 National County Government Week.

11-12 WSAC Western District Meeting, Rosario Resort, San Juan Islands, San Juan County

23-26 Washington State Association of County Clerks' and Superior Court Administrators' Joint Conference, Ridpath Hotel, Spokane.

24-26 Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' (WAPA) Annual Spring Training Program, Icicle Inn, Leavenworth.

25-26 WSAC Eastern District Meeting, Sun Mountain Lodge, Winthrop

May

6-10 Washington State Association of County Auditors' Annual Conference, Red Lion, Port Angeles.

15-17 Association of County Human Services (ACHS) Meeting, Spokane

20-23 Washington State Association of Sheriffs' & Police Chiefs' (WASPC) Spring Conference, WestCoast Wenatchee Center Hotel, Wenatchee.

22-24 National Association of Counties' (NACo) Annual Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference, Billings, Montana.

June

10-14 International Association of Coroners' and Medical Examiners' Annual Conference

16-19 Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado.

17 Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO) Meeting, Bellevue (in conjunction with the WSAC Summer Convention)

17-20 Washington State Association of County Assessors' Annual June Conference, Rosario Resort, Orcas Island.

17-23 International Association of Clerks, Records, Election Officials and Treasurers' (IACREDIT) Annual Conference, Kansas City, Missouri.

18-21 Washington State Association of Counties' (WSAC) Summer Conference, Best Western Bellevue Inn and Bellevue Hilton, Bellevue.

18-21 Association of Washington Cities' (AWC) Annual Conference, Yakima.

19-21 Washington State Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' (WAPA) Summer Training Program, Campbell's Lodge, Chelan.

22-26 National Sheriffs' Association Annual Conference, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

24-28 Washington State Association of County Clerks' Annual Conference, Best Western Suites, Walla Walla.

24-28 Washington State Association of County Treasurers' Annual Conference, Lakeway Inn, Bellingham.

July

9-12 Northwest Regional Election Conference (Washington, Oregon and other states), Red Lion Jantzen Beach, Portland, Oregon.

12-16 National Association of Counties' (NACo) Annual Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana.

14-18 National District Attorneys' Association (NDAA) Annual Summer Conference, Bismarck, N.D.

September

10-13 Washington Finance Officers' Association (WFOA) Annual Conference,

30-10/4 WACO/WSAS 1st Annual Joint Conference, WestCoast Wenatchee Hotel, Wenatchee.

October

13-16 International Association of Assessing Officers' (IAAO) Annual Conference, Los Angeles, California.

November

18-21 Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs' (WASPC) Annual Fall Conference, Red Lion Hotel at the Quay, Vancouver, Washington.

December

TBA Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' (WAPA) Annual Winter Meeting, Crowne Plaza, Seattle.

Updated List of Courthouse Holiday Closures

A number of county courthouses will observe modified work hours on December 24, 2001. The closures are allowed in individual counties either through employee contracts,

comp time or annual leave. If your courthouse is not listed here and it will be closed or will close early please contact WACO

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

staff at 360/753-7319 or email bsandahl@wacounties.org.

The following courthouses will be closed, or will close early, on December 24:

Columbia County	Closed
Franklin County	Closed
Grant County	Closed
	(Superior Court/Clerk's Office will be open from 8:00 to noon)

Grays Harbor County	Closed
Kittitas County	Closed
Klickitat County	3:00 p.m. Closure
Lincoln County	Closed
Okanogan County	2:00 p.m. Closure
Pend Oreille County	2:00 p.m. Closure
Wahkiakum	12:00 p.m. Closure
Whatcom County	Closed
Whitman County	12:00 p.m. Closure

Courthouse Ramblings

Hopes for the major leagues are dashed! **Chelan County Clerk Siri Woods** had surgery on her right shoulder last week. Within a day or two after the surgery, she spent a day shopping, played Martha Stewart getting ready for the holidays,

and then... the pain pills wore off. She's doing fine, but taking things a little easier. We wish her a quick recovery so she can resume her normal unbelievable schedule.

Stevens County Treasurer Celeste Gillispie is retiring from office today (December 14), after serving as treasurer for the past eight years. Celeste first started work with the county as a deputy

treasurer in 1971, and in 1976 she was promoted to work as a realty excise deputy. Shortly after that, she took a hiatus to spend time with her two daughters and went back to the county in 1979. She was appointed to the treasurer's position when former treasurer Fred McCurdy resigned in 1993. Celeste and her husband, Roger, are relocating to Coeur D'Alene. We wish them the best.

Employment Opportunities

Lewis County Programs Analyst II - Salary: \$3,525.92 - \$4,208.42 per month. Closing: December 21, 2001 at 5:00 p.m. The position is for an IT Programs Analyst. Duties: project management, application, program development, long/short term program planning. Requirements: BS in Computer Science and 2 years experience with program development. Strong SQL, and Access data base experience required. Unix, Informix a plus. Apply to Lewis County General Administration Department, 360 NW North Street, Chehalis, WA 98532. Telephone: (360) 740-1408. Complete package available at <http://www.co.lewis.wa.us>. Lewis County is an EOE.

Lewis County Maintenance Technician II - Salary: \$2,557.83 - \$3,052.83 per month. Closing: December 21, 2001 at 5:00 p.m. This is a skilled position performing a wide variety of maintenance duties requiring a good working knowledge of various trade skills such as

carpentry, electrical, HVAC and controls, plumbing, welding, painting, etc. The individual in this position may be required to carry a pager and respond to emergencies outside of regular work hours or to work irregular shifts. Requires 4 years carpentry/electrical/construction/maintenance experience in a lead or journeyman capacity. A complete job description and application packet are available at www.co.lewis.wa.us or may be obtained from Lewis County General Administration Department, 360 NW North Street, Chehalis, WA 98532. Telephone: (360) 740-1408. Lewis County is an EOE.

Health and Human Services Director, Whatcom County Health and Human Services Department, Bellingham, WA. Hiring range: \$66,468 - \$83,484 / Annually, DOQ. We offer excellent employer-paid medical, dental & vision benefits for employee and family. 3 weeks vacation/yr. to start. Average 12 holidays/yr. WA State Retirement system. Optional deferred comp, long term disability and Flex 125. This position manages multi-location, multi-service public health programs including Envi-

ronmental Health (food surveillance and investigations, public water quality, hazardous materials contamination, shellfish activities, enforcement of regulations related to sewage disposal systems and solid and biomedical waste collection, storage and disposal), Community Health (communicable disease, immunizations, maternal/infant health, STD/HIV/AIDS, and WIC/nutrition services), and Human Services (substance abuse, developmental disabilities and mental health program facilitation). This position requires a Master's degree in public health or public health administration or a related field **AND** 6 years progressively responsible related experience **including** 3 years of management/supervisory experience. Resume & cover letter must be received in Human Resources, 311 Grand Avenue, Suite 107, Bellingham, WA 98225, by January 15, 2002. For a detailed job announcement regarding this position, contact Whatcom County Human Resources, Bellingham, WA, (360) 676-6802 or visit our website at www.co.whatcom.wa.us. Equal Opportunity Employer.