

the Courthouse Journal

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Washington Association of County Officials
Washington State Association of Counties

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More on Scholarships

Last week we reported on the five winners of the 2003 Washington Counties Scholarship Fund, as well as the two runners up. This week we would like to mention those who made the final cut for consideration. We hope they will all apply again next year!

Jamie D. Albert, daughter of Linda (Skagit County Health Department) and Grant Albert.

Richard Buchanan, son of Lucille Carrea (Whatcom County Juvenile Probation) and Robert Buchanan

Chelsea Combest-Friedman, daughter of Cheryl Combest (Snohomish County Health District) and Robert Friedman

Thomas Destefano, son of Joe (Spokane County Juvenile Court) and Stacey Destefano

Monica Dust, daughter of Duane (Spokane County Maintenance) and Marsha Dust

Nicholas Fosse, son of Elaine (Pacific County Prosecutor's office) and Todd Fosse

Justin Johnson, son of Tracy Goldsmith (Cowlitz County Assessor's office) and Danny Johnson and Mary Johnson

Shayla Kagele, daughter of Shannon (Grant County Public Works) and Douglas Kagele

Patrea Kangiser, daughter of Therese Larson (Pierce County Corrections) and Joel Kangiser

Christina Koehn, daughter of Conrad (Whatcom Public Works Engineering) and Jeanne Koehn

Michelle Liebrand, daughter of Howard (Skagit County Health Department) and Marilyn Liebrand

Michael Maxfield, son of Gwenn (Island County Public Works) and Dennis Maxfield

Kirsten Meier, daughter of Sharon (Grays Harbor County Commissioners' office) and Monty Meier

Genevieve Menino, daughter of James (Walla Walla County Waitsburg Area Dist. 2) and Rebecca Wilson

Kara Monsen, daughter of Jeffrey (Whatcom County Public Works) and Diane Monsen

Jonathan Punohu, son of Kathy (Pierce County Human Services) and Nathan Punohu

Leslie Somerstein, daughter of Elaine Kraft (King County Executive's office) and Lee Somerstein

Sara Sonnen, daughter of John Sonnen (Thurston County Development Services) and Maryann Sullivan

Alexander Stewart, son of Lester (Snohomish County Superior Court) and Kathryn Stewart

Anne Wetle, daughter of John (Stevens County Prosecutor) and Terri Wetle

Rachel White, daughter of Jack (Lewis County Public Works) and Maria White

Alicia Williams, daughter of Dick (Walla Walla County Maintenance) and Mary Williams

Daniel Zertuche, son of Cheryl (Thurston County Prosecutor's office) and Daniel Zertuche

WACO Affiliate Conferences

Assessors to Meet in Okanogan

Scott Furman, Okanogan County Assessor, will host the Washington State Association of County Assessors (WSACA) for their June Conference. The meetings will take place at the Cedars Inn Conference Room in Okanogan on June 16-18. For the first time the WSACA June Conference will include setting legislative priorities for the 2004 Session.

The great agenda put together by Assessor Furman offers a field trip to the

Brewster Earthstation/Verestar site on Monday June 16. Tuesday, June 17, will include committee meetings for the Timber, Education, Ratio, Computer Technology, Open Space and Assessment Standards Committees. The Executive Board Breakfast will be held Wednesday morning along with the Legislative Committee meeting and legislative priority setting for 2004. The Conference will conclude with the Assessors Business Meeting scheduled for Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. This meeting will include committee reports and an update on the Fall Conference in the Tri-Cities.

Auditors' Conference to be Held in Winthrop

The Washington State Association of County Auditors will be holding its Annual Conference, June 10-13, at Sun Mountain Lodge in Winthrop.

On Tuesday, June 10, county auditors will hold their legislative meeting followed by a legislative awards dinner at 3-Fingered Jack's in Winthrop.

Wednesday, following welcoming ceremonies, the day will be dedicated to training led by Gene Sharatt. The President's reception for Grays Harbor County Auditor Vern Spatz will be held that evening.

On Thursday the group will start off the day with State Auditor Brian Sonntag as the guest speaker, and then transition to keynote speaker Dr. Kenford Nedd. Dr. Nedd's topic for the morning and afternoon will be "How to Jump Start Your Brain and Memory Pressure." The late afternoon will be reserved for breakout sessions for auditors as well as chief deputy auditors. True to Winthrop's old west flavor, dinner Thursday evening will be a chuck wagon dinner. Friday morning will wrap up the conference with the WSACA business meeting and election of new officers.

Treasurers to Meet in Spokane

The Washington State Association of County Treasurers (WSACT) will be holding its Annual Conference during the week of June 16 at the newly refurbished Davenport Hotel, in Spokane. Conference co-hosts are Spokane County Treasurer Linda Wolverton and Lincoln County Treasurer Linda Fisher. Presiding over the meeting will be Kathy Turnbull, San Juan County Treasurer.

This year, the treasurers will hear

some nationally recognized speakers who are giving technical workshops on bonds/arbitrage, investments and the state of the economy. Other workshops will address such issues as ethics; counterfeiting, check fraud and identity theft; excise and real estate; foreclosure, bankruptcy and seizure of property; special assessments; levies; the history of the constitution; security of data; and a range of other topics.

In addition to a very full educational agenda, the treasurers will be enjoying several social activities, including the President's reception at the Davenport Mansion at Saint George's School and a banquet featuring the funny and witty "Fallen Angels", a Noel Coward reader's performance by the Spokane Civic Theatre.

NACo Steering Committees

It's that time of year again! The nomination process for the National Association of Counties (NACo) Steering Committees is now under way. As a steering committee member you are responsible for debating and creating national policies and priorities affecting counties and serve as NACo's front line in their grassroots efforts. Committees meet at the NACo legislative and annual conferences and one other time during the year. You are responsible for your own travel.

This year, NACo has instituted a new web-based process to simplify the application/nomination process. However, you **must** call WACO or WSAC if you are interested in continuing to serve on a committee or if you are interested in being newly appointed. NEW members will be asked to fill out a Grassroots form which can be obtained from WACO or WSAC. Let us know as soon as possible if you are interested and to gain approval by NACo's president. Contact Chris Bridston, WACO staff at (360) 753-7319 or Ginni Peppert, WSAC staff at (360) 753-1886.

There are 11 steering committees which are: Agriculture & Rural Affairs; Community & Economic Development; Environment, Energy & Land Use; Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs; Health; Human Services & Education; Justice and Public Safety; Labor and Employment; Public Lands; Telecommunications & Technology; and Transportation.

The Courthouse Journal

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

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Barbara Warden, Meetings / Secretary
Beth Dubey, Accounting & Business Asst.
Tom Jensen, Technology Project Staff
Nicole Simpkinson, Special Projects

Budget, Finance and Taxes

Federal Funds May Help Cushion Expected Downturn in Revenues

This week budget negotiators got their first good news in memory, when the federal tax bill directed about \$300 million to Washington over the next two years. Negotiators had been worrying about the June state revenue forecast update, which is likely to show a loss of up to several hundred million for the next two years. This means they may not need to make further cuts in the budget this year.

Legislative supporters of increased funding for small counties and two years of funding for public health are optimistic that they will see positive results in the final budget. In the mean time, the situation for dedicated state revenues and local voter approved revenues remains the same as reported last week.

WSAC's Retro Rating Program Offers Significant Benefits to Members

Retrospective Rating (Retro) Plans are an optional program offered by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to allow employers to recapture a portion of their workers compensation premiums. Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) offers a Retro Plan that rewards member counties and special districts for maintaining a safe workplace and controlling workers' compensation costs. The lower the group's claims costs, the higher the refunds.

Since the Retro Rating Program began in 1986, members have received more than \$4.4 million in refunds from the Department of Labor and Industries—an average of 17% of the group's standard premiums—and have achieved another 6% savings in reduced standard premium costs. That is over \$6 million retained by members.

Member Services

As the Retro Program continues to grow, it continues to implement changes that will facilitate even greater savings for participating members. Beginning

April 1, 2003, the program instituted a performance-based refund that rewards members that actively and successfully manage claims costs. Other services from which our members benefit include:

- *Protection of Group Participation.* Retro Program members have established a reserve fund with premium refunds to protect against the possibility of future premium assessments.
- *Training.* The Retro Program dedicates 5% of annual refunds to safety and prevention training. Law Enforcement Safety is scheduled for late 2003.
- *Conferences.* The Retro Program offers two conferences each year to members at no additional fee. Each conference offers members an opportunity to network and share ideas, participate in training, as well as hear industry experts discuss current labor and industries issues.
- *Program Coordinator.* Washington State Association of Counties employs a Retro Program Coordinator to liaison between member agencies and the Department of Labor and Industries. The Coordinator provides current news updates and serves as a resource for member questions.
- *Policy Library.* The Retro Program manages a library of safety and accident prevention policies, and other resource materials available to all Retro Program members.

Members continue to have their individual per hour premium rates set by the State Department of Labor and Industries, based on their unique experience.

Membership

Our membership is growing. Today, we represent 26 of Washington's counties and health districts. If you are interested in learning more about WSAC's Retro Program, contact Nicole Simpkinson, Retro Coordinator at (360) 753-1886.

Return to Work Programs Make Positive Impacts on Employees and on Employer Costs

Valley Medical Center Occupational Health Services sponsored a workshop on early return to work programs in Renton on May 22. The workshop was well attended by private and public employers, as well as several Labor and Industries retrospective rating groups, including WSAC's Retro Program Coordinator.

Early return to work programs provide temporary accommodation for workers injured on the job to return to light duty or modified jobs sooner than they could return to their full duties. As a result, these programs offer a number of significant benefits to employees, as well as to employers.

Employees

- Speeds the worker's return to productive activities
- Increases the worker's self-esteem
- Mobilizes the worker and speeds medical recovery
- Allows the worker to maintain a relationship with the employer
- Demonstrates commitment to employee's health and well being

Employers

- Dramatically reduces time-loss costs, impacting future industrial insurance premiums
- Maintains the skills and productivity of a trained worker
- Cuts costs associated with hiring and training new or temporary personnel
- Provides a resource for light duty tasks that may not otherwise be completed

Demonstrates commitment to employee's health and well being

A panel of local employers shared their experiences and success stories with designing and implementing early return to work programs. In one example, Renton School District realized approximately \$270,000, or a 75% reduction in total cost of claims, and 50% reduction in total claims filed in the

Budget, Finance, and Taxes (continued)

first four years of its return to work program. Two years after transitioning to local administration of the program, and emphasizing accident prevention, the school district reduced annual legal costs over 90% from \$16,000 to \$1,500. Assistance in developing a return to work program is available through WSAC's Retro Rating Program and through the Department of Labor and

Industries. If you would like more information on how this program can benefit your county, please contact Nicole Simpkinson, Retro Coordinator at (360) 753-1886.

Elections, Licensing and Recording

Local Records Grant Program

Secretary of State Sam Reed announced the 2003 - 2005 Local Records Grant Program designed to preserve and protect the records of local government in Washington State.

The Washington State Archives Local Records Grant Program supports local public records management and preservation efforts. Grants are funded with fees collected by county auditors. This is a competitive grant program; the

number of grant applications and the requested level of grant funding generally will exceed the total award amount available per grant cycle. The grant program project duration will be from January 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005.

"Preserving government records is a vital part of our democracy," said Secretary of State Sam Reed. "The grants program will assist local government agencies in protecting our valuable legal and historical records."

Last year, this pilot program provided

\$100,000 in competitive grants to seven local government agencies to improve management of their public records.

Applications for the 2003 - 2005 grant program are due August 1, 2003. The Local Records guidebook and application can be downloaded at www.secstate.wa.gov/archives.

General Government Issues

Health Care Benefits for Retirees of Local Government Employers

A recent inquiry has sparked interest in a bill that passed in the 2002 Session. **ESSB 5777** allows those who retire before they are eligible for Medicare coverage to access coverage through their employer on a self-pay basis. The legislation took effect January 1, 2003. However, if a political subdivision was unable to structure a health plan to meet the requirements of the act by January 1, 2003, additional time of up to one year is allowed. All political subdivisions must implement this act by January 1, 2004.

Currently, many local government employees have health insurance coverage through the state Health Care Authority if their employer contracts with the state Health Care Authority for

such coverage. Under certain conditions, local government employees covered by the state Health Care Authority may continue their participation in the insurance plans of their employer after they retire or are disabled. Such retired or disabled employees are responsible for paying their own premiums, but the premiums charged must be developed from the same experience pool as active employees.

The 2002 legislation deals with employees not covered by the state Health Care Authority and who have no other right under state law to continue to participate in the insurance plans of their employer after they retire. The legislation allows retired or disabled local government employees not covered by the state Health Care Authority to continue participation in a health plan of

their employer. The bill allows local jurisdictions to charge retirees for the full cost of health plan participation, but does not require that they do so.

If you have questions regarding this legislation or how to implement the act, please contact the Washington Counties Insurance Fund at 360-586-0466.

Training and Upcoming Events

<i>Training or Workshop</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Information</i>
MAY 2003			
Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys - District Court Training	SeaTac	May 29 - 30	(360) 753-2175
JUNE 2003			
CPO Training - Risk Management: Striking a Balance Between Control and Chaos	Allmendinger Campus, Puyallup	June 5	(360) 753-1886
Conservancy Board Workshop	Ellensburg Inn, Ellensburg	June 12	(360) 753-1886
Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners' Conference and Training	Spokane	June 18 - 19	www.wacme.org
CPO Training - Risk Management: Striking a Balance Between Control and Chaos	DoubleTree Valley Hotel, Spokane	June 24	(360) 753-1886
CPO Training - Building County MUSCLEPOWER in These Challenging and Frustrating Times	DoubleTree Valley Hotel, Spokane	June 24	(360) 753-1886
JULY 2003			
CPO Training - RESOLVE Conflicts and Build Relationships (WCRP Sponsored Elective Course)	Spokane	July 30	(360) 753-1886
SEPTEMBER 2003			
WAPA Special Assault Training Program	Leavenworth	September 3 - 5	(360) 753-2175
WAPA Juvenile Training Program	Leavenworth	September 7 - 9	(360) 753-2175
CPO Training - Ethical Dilemmas: Integrity as a Tool for Successful Public Officials	SeaTac	September 30	(360) 753-1886
NOVEMBER 2003			
CPO Training - Making a Difference in County Communications: Speak and Write More Confidently	TBD	November 6	(360) 753-1886

Training & Upcoming Events (continued)

June County Calendar

- 1 Property taxes still not paid to the county treasurer, as of this date, are subject to a delinquency of 12% per annum on the total tax, as well as a penalty of 3%. RCW 84.56.020
- 1 Exemption on exempt food stuffs and unprocessed timber must be furnished to the county assessor by this date. RCW 84.36.150
- 1 By this date, the county auditor shall have searched available records and will then notify the county legislative authority if any special purpose districts located wholly or partially within the county appear to be inactive. The auditor shall also provide in the notifications, a list of all special purpose districts located wholly or partially within the county that for three consecutive years before the notification have failed to file required annual statements with the county auditor. RCW 36.96.020
- 30 On or before this date, the Department of Revenue sets stumpage values for July through December of the current year. RCW 84.33.091

Courthouse Ramblings

Please note that e-mail addresses have changed for some County Prosecutors and the staff at Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys-Support Enforcement Project (WAPA-SEP). Those changes are listed below:

Colleen Fenn, Columbia Co Prosecutor is now: cfenn@wapa-sep.wa.gov

James Von Sauer, Ferry Co Prosecutor is now: jvonsaue@wapa-sep.wa.gov

Fred Johnson, Wahkiakum Prosecutor is now: fjohnson@wapa-sep.wa.gov

Linda Langston, WAPA-SEP is now: llangsto@wapa-sep.wa.gov

Wally Murray, WAPA-SEP is now: wmurray@wapa-sep.wa.gov

Glenda Reed, WAPA-SEP is now: gcreed@wapa-sep.wa.gov

LaRoche New WASPC President

Douglas County Sheriff **Dan LaRoche** was named president of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and

Police Chiefs at the association's Spring Conference in Spokane last week. Stevens County Sheriff **Craig Thayer** is Vice President.

The slate of officers also includes President-Elect Jim Sharf, Everett Police Chief and former Snohomish County Sheriff, and Tumwater Police Chief Mike Vandiver who is the WASPC treasurer. They will serve WASPC for the coming year.

Calendar of Events

	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Information</i>
2003 MEETINGS			
Western Interstate Region (WIR) Annual Conference	Reno-Sparks, NV	May 28 - 31	www.naco.org
Washington State Association of County Auditors' Annual Conference	Sun Mountain Lodge, Winthrop	June 11 - 13	(360) 249-4232
Washington State Association of County Assessors' Conference	Okanogan	June 16 - 18	(360) 336-9370
Washington State Association of County Treasurers' Annual Conference	Davenport Hotel, Spokane	June 16 - 19	(360) 378-2171
WAPA Summer Conference	Chelan	June 18- 20	(360) 753-2175
Association of Washington Cities Annual Conference	Red Lion Grand Hotel at the Park, Spokane	June 18- 20	(360) 753-4137
Washington State Association of County Clerks' Annual Conference	Silverdale Hotel, Silverdale	June 23 - 27	(509) 427-9431
WCIF Board of Trustees	DoubleTree Valley Hotel, Spokane	June 24	(360) 586-0466
WSAC 97 th Annual Summer Convention	DoubleTree Valley Hotel, Spokane	June 24 - 27	(360) 753-1886
NACo Annual Conference	Milwaukee, WI	July 11 - 15	www.naco.org
Association of County Human Services (ACHS)	Vancouver	July 16 - 18	(360) 786-5585
IACREOT Conference	Denver, CO	July 29 - August 3	www.iacreot.com
WCIP Board of Directors Rate Setting	Wyndham Gardens, SeaTac	August 21	(360) 586-0466
Washington State Association of County Assessors' Fall Conference	Red Lion, Kennewick	September 8 - 11	(360) 336-9370
County & Regional Planning Directors/City Planning Directors Joint Conference	Campbell's Resort, Chelan	September 9 - 12	www.geocities.com/wsacrpdc
WSAC Fall Eastern District Meeting	Marcus Whitman Center, Walla Walla	September 11 - 12	(360) 753-1886
Association of County Human Services (ACHS)	Moses Lake	September 17 - 19	(360) 786-5585
WCIF/WCIP Insurance Advisory Committee 2004 Renewal Meeting, WCIP and WCIF Board of Directors	WestCoast Hotel, SeaTac	September 18	(360) 586-0466
WACO/WSAC Joint Fall Conference	DoubleTree Hotel, SeaTac	September 29 - October 3	(360) 753-7319
WCIF Board of Trustees	DoubleTree Hotel, SeaTac	October 1	(360) 586-0466
WSAC Fall Western District Meeting	DoubleTree Hotel, SeaTac	October 2	(360) 753-1886

Calendar of Events (continued)

WCIF/WCIP A.C.E. Committee Meeting	Yakima	October 15	(360) 586-0466
L & I Retro Fall Meeting	TBD	October 16	(360) 753-1886
WASPC Fall Conference	Campbell's Resort, Chelan	November 17 - 20	(360) 486-2380
Association of County Human Services (ACHS)	Seattle	November 19 - 21	(360) 786-5585
2004 MEETINGS			
NACo Legislative Conference	Hilton Washington & Towers, Washington, DC	February 27 - March 2	www.naco.org
WSAC Spring Eastern District Meeting	Campbell's Resort, Chelan	April 8 - 9	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Spring Western District Meeting	Heathman Lodge, Vancouver	April 22 - 23	(360) 753-1886
WASPC Spring Conference	Yakima Convention Center, Yakima	May 24 - 27	(360) 486-2380
National Sheriffs' Association	Seattle	June (TBD)	www.sheriffs.org
WSAC 98 th Annual Summer Convention	Pierce County, Sheraton, Tacoma	June 22 - 25	(360) 753-1886
WAPA Summer Conference	Chelan	June 23 - 25	(360) 753-2175
NACo Annual Conference	Maricopa County, Phoenix, AZ	July 16 - 20	www.naco.org
County & Regional Planning Directors/City Planning Directors Joint Conference	Campbell's Resort, Chelan	September 14 - 17	www.geocities.com/wsacrpdpd
WACO/WSAC Joint Fall Conference	Spokane	October 4 - 8	(360) 753-7319
WASPC Fall Conference	Shilo Inn, Ocean Shores	November 15 - 18	(360) 486-2380
2005 MEETINGS			
NACo Legislative Conference	Marriot Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, DC	March 3 - 4	www.naco.org
WASPC Spring Conference	WestCoast Wenatchee Center Hotel, Wenatchee	May 23 - 26	(360) 486-2380
WSAC 99 th Annual Summer Convention	WestCoast Hotel at Columbia Center, Kennewick	June 13 - 16	(360) 753-1886
WAPA Summer Conference	Chelan	June 22 - 24	(360) 753-2175
NACo Annual Conference (City & County of Hawaii)	Honolulu, HI	July 15 - 19	www.naco.org
County & Regional Planning Directors/City Planning Directors Joint Conference	Campbell's Resort, Chelan	September 13 - 16	www.geocities.com/wsacrpdpd
WACO/WSAC Joint Fall Conference	Ocean Shores	October 3 - 7	(360) 753-7319

Calendar of Events (continued)

WSAC 100 th Annual Summer Convention	TBD	June TBD	(360) 753-1886
NACo Annual Conference	Denver, CO	July 21 - 26	www.naco.org
2007 MEETINGS			
NACo Annual Conference (Sponsored by the counties in the Metropolitan Richmond Area)	Richmond, VA	TBD	www.naco.org