

# the Courthouse Journal

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**December 22, 2005**  
**Issue No. 34**

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*Washington Association of County Officials  
Washington State Association of Counties*

## Governor Gregoire to Keynote WSAC Legislative Rally

**All County Commissioners, Council members, Executives, Administrators and Key Management Staff** are invited and encouraged to attend WSAC's annual Legislative Rally on Thursday, January 19 in Olympia.

The day begins with WSAC's Legislative Steering Committee meeting from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. followed by a Legislative Luncheon at the Ramada Inn Governor's House. Governor Gregoire will join WSAC members to discuss her legislative agenda and Attorney General McKenna (invited) will share his Meth Initiative and Liability Reform.



The folks here at the Washington Counties Building hope this newsletter finds you reveling in the joy of the season with family and friends. When we count our blessings, you are at the top of the list. We feel fortunate indeed to work for the dedicated county officials of Washington State.

2005 has been filled with many successes because of you, our members.

From 2:00 – 5:00 WSAC members will head to “the hill” to call upon legislators to discuss issues facing county government and our citizens. WSAC members should call immediately to set up meetings with legislators.

The day is capped with a Legislative Reception back at the Ramada Inn Governor's House. WSAC members are encouraged to invite their members to the reception and for dinner as well.

Registration materials were e-mailed December 13. If you did not receive your materials, please contact Ginni Peppert at 360.753.1886 or [gpeppert@wacounties.org](mailto:gpeppert@wacounties.org).

Numerous challenges have been met successfully because of the strength you lend to WACO and WSAC. 2006 and the coming years will, no doubt, have some of the same challenges and many new ones. The solutions to these challenges are marked indelibly with the ingenuity of our county officials. We thank you for your dedication and know that the public is well served because you love what you do and it shows!

This holiday season the WACO and WSAC staff are wishing you blessings of good health, and hope that you enjoy the warmth of your family's love and laughter with good friends. We look forward to serving you in 2006.

**Want to post a job announcement on our webpage?**

E-mail your info to [bwarden@wacounties.org](mailto:bwarden@wacounties.org)

**What information do you need to include in your e-mail?**

Visit [Employment Opportunities](#)

## The Courthouse Journal

Published weekly (during Legislative Session) and Bi-weekly (other than Session) 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 Wednesday.

Direct inquiries and correspondence to *The Courthouse Journal*, 206 Tenth Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501 or [wacounties.org](http://wacounties.org).

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## WSAC President Request Your Input

Dear WSAC Members:

This past week I have been visiting some counties seeking their feedback on three initiatives that I believe would help WSAC improve communications and services to our members. I plan on trying to continue these visits during my term as President and will be asking each of you to consider what WSAC can do for you.

I have suggested three areas that may improve communications and provide services to our members. First, I have thought that we should re-visit the decision of two years ago to eliminate the summer meeting. My thoughts are that we could combine the spring district meetings into one meeting alternating between the east and west sides of the state with the first day being devoted to the district meetings and the last day and a half being a joint meeting.

The second area that I would like to consider is the way the Legislative Steering Committee develops policy and then who gets to serve on the Committee. My thought is that we could create several sub-districts, three or four on each side of the state, and they would have a meeting to discuss legislative issues that would be forwarded to the Committee. In addition each sub-district would select up to two members who would then be the voting members of the Legislative Steering Committee. This would give representation to all counties and help streamline the Committee by making it smaller, but more focused on what the member counties want. It would also help give each county a

say in the development of the Association's annual legislative priorities.

The final suggestion is that we create a group of members to act as an advisory committee that would look at ways to protect and enhance our agricultural economy. This is one of the top WSAC priorities in 2006. My thought is that we should look at how we can institutionalize this into an on-going priority for the Association. Agriculture is one of the top two employers in the state and it generates the most money of any sector of our economy. I believe WSAC could be an effective advocate for a strong agricultural economy and it would help every county in our state.

I realize some of these ideas may change the way we do things, but sometimes change is good. I don't have all of the answers, but I really would like your input on these suggestions. Obviously some of these ideas need approval of the Board of Directors (the summer meeting) and in the case of the sub-districts we will probably need a by-laws change. But most importantly, we need your support to be successful.

Please let me know what you think of these changes, and if you have other ideas of how to make your Association better let me know.

Yours Truly,



President

**NOTE: Legislative Committee schedules and agendas can be found at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm>**

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## ***Budget, Finance and Taxes***

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### **Sales Tax Streamlining to be Executive Request Legislation**

Legislation to implement sales tax streamlining will be executive request legislation in the 2006 session. Under sales tax streamlining legislation, taxes would be distributed (or "sourced") to the jurisdiction where the purchaser receives the goods or services. Counties and low sales tax cities

generally benefit from this change.

Mitigation for negatively impacted cities has stalled previous efforts to enact sales tax streamlining. However, with winning and losing cities resolving to work together in seeking full mitigation from the Legislature, that obstacle has been removed.

A copy of the proposed legislation is not yet available for review. The Department of Revenue had

previously indicated that mitigation funding would be limited to \$25 million annually, which would not fully mitigate negatively impacted jurisdictions. The Tri-Association (WSAC/WACO/AWC) will meet on January 26 and is expected to support legislation that will include full mitigation. As a result, mitigation and other technical issues are still being discussed. It is anticipated that a draft will be available the first week of January.

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## ***Elections, Licensing and Recording***

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### **Local Records Grant Recipients Named**

At their meeting in Vancouver, Washington, on October 3, 2005, the Archives Oversight Committee reviewed applications for the 2005-2007 Washington State Archives Local Records Grant Program. The committee recommended full or partial funding for 47 of the 60 submitted grants, totaling \$483,214

in support. Secretary of State Sam Reed sent notification letters to grant recipients in mid-November.

The grants will support a range of records management projects, including digital imaging to facilitate public access, security microfilming to protect essential records, and records inventories to identify essential and/or archival records. Eighteen of the sixty grant

applications were submitted through the new Express Grant program, a "fast-track" application process for agencies with jurisdictions smaller than 20,000 people. Sixteen of these, totaling \$68,102, were recommended for funding.

Please see attachment 2005-2007 Local Grant Recipients-Records (.xls) for a detailed listing.

## Environment, Land Use and Resources

### New Grants Available to Help Coastal Counties

#### NEWS RELEASE -

December 16, 2005

*(Tom Goodman, National Association of Counties (202) 942-4222, [tgoodman@naco.org](mailto:tgoodman@naco.org) and Michelle Pico, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, (262) 695-0462, [michelle.pico@nfwf.org](mailto:michelle.pico@nfwf.org))*

Washington, D.C. – December 16, 2005 – The National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Foundation), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Community-based Restoration Program, are pleased to announce the creation of a new grant program targeting marine habitat restoration in coastal counties.

The Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative will provide financial assistance on a competitive basis to innovative, high quality county-led or supported projects that support wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration projects.

"NACo is very pleased that our new partnership with the Foundation and NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program will bring additional resources to coastal counties," said Bill Hansell, NACo president. "Our nation's coastal environment provides tremendous ecological and economic benefits. Many counties are struggling to restore these resources that have been damaged by human neglect and numerous natural disasters. Counties across the country are taking the lead to restore

our coastal resources, and NACo is proud that this new program will bolster county-led efforts."

The Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative is currently accepting applications for its first annual grant awards. The program will disburse grants in the range of \$25,000 to \$100,000. Grants that are community-based in nature and include partnering with NOAA will be given special consideration, as NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program is providing major financial support.

"NOAA seeks to efficiently target and fund high priority restoration efforts that will best serve both local communities and local habitats. NOAA is very interested in taking an ecosystem approach to addressing marine and coastal management issues, and we know that partnering with community-based organizations will be key to our success. Therefore, NOAA is excited to be able to provide this funding opportunity, and partner with the Foundation and NACo in advancing all of our missions," said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service.

"Partnership building and empowering local communities is at the heart of the Foundation's approach to conservation," said Foundation Executive Director Jeff Trandahl. "Through this new program the Foundation is working with the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program and NACo to take this model to our nation's coastal watersheds. By targeting restoration projects that are generated by local governments we are targeting the highest

conservation needs of these coastal communities."

The deadline for applications is February 24, 2006. Grants will be awarded in mid-May 2006. For more information and to access the full RFP and application instructions, visit <http://www.nfwf.org/programs/ccri.cfm>.

The National Association of Counties is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. NACo provides an extensive line of services including legislative, research, technical, and public affairs assistance, as well as enterprise services to its members. NACo acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties and provides them with resources to help find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face. More than 2,000 of the nation's 3,066 counties, representing over 80 percent of the U.S. population, are NACo members. For more information visit [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a nonprofit organization established by Congress in 1984 and dedicated to the conservation of fish, wildlife and plants, and the habitat on which they depend. The Foundation creates partnerships between the public and private sectors to strategically invest in conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. The Foundation awarded over 7,000 grants to more than 2,600 organizations in the United States and abroad and has leveraged – with

## ***Environment, Land Use and Resources (continued)***

its partners – more than \$300 million in federal funds since its establishment, for a total of more than \$1 billion in funding for conservation. The Foundation is recognized by Charity Navigator with a top 4-star rating for efficiency and effectiveness. Ninety-two cents of every dollar contributed to the Foundation is directed to on-the-ground conservation projects, with five cents supporting management and administration of the Foundation's multi-million dollar grants program and three cents funding partnership development and fundraising. For more information visit [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org).

The NOAA Restoration Center Community-based Restoration Program is a financial and technical assistance program that promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to restore fisheries habitat. NOAA CRP works with organizations and government to support locally-driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas. NOAA CRP funds habitat restoration projects that (1) offer educational and social benefits for citizens and their communities, and (2) provide long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. Since 1996, more than 900

projects in 26 states have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners. For more information, visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

### **Governor's GMA Package Progresses**

Governor Gregoire's Land Use/GMA package continues to change. First, two items have been removed from further consideration at this time due to significant unresolved issues:

- Pre-existing uses in Critical Areas
- GMA Appeals

There are four draft bills still being worked on. WSAC staff continues to work with the Governor's staff and stakeholders to review the package and press forward on these four remaining legislative proposals:

- Best Available Science
- GMA Update Timelines
- Accessory Uses on Agricultural Resource Lands
- Eminent Domain

The Governor is still planning to proceed with the Agriculture Pilot, but as a budget proviso.

AWC and WSAC are discussing with the Governor's staff and stakeholders the possibility of linking together four items in a study - Critical Areas, Best Available Science, Pre-Existing Conditions, and Timelines. The manner in which the package is proceeding presents compartmentalized solutions with potential unintended consequences, and a piecemeal solution.

To date, efforts to reach agreement on how (and what) to address Best Available Science (BAS) Legislation have stalled. Our intent is to clarify what BAS is, how it should inform local government policy makers, and how it's applied in local GMA plans and regulations. Efforts to craft changes to GMA update timelines – including Critical Area Ordinances, slow growing jurisdictions have not been agreed upon either. Finally, local governments and property rights interests share a common concern for how BAS is applied, if at all, to existing permitted and legal land uses in both urban, rural and agricultural settings. Collectively, these issues need to be integrated in a solution. More to come!!!

## General Government Issues

### Pension Bailout: Olympia to Tap State Budget Surplus

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS (Published in *The Olympian*, December 11, 2005)

Washington's graying government work force expects to get a comfortable pension when retirement rolls around in the next decade, but the state pension system faces a "time bomb" — a \$4 billion unfunded liability.

In recent years, lawmakers have financed pensions on the cheap, skipping payments and relying on Wall Street investments to keep the system relatively healthy. It was a painless, if imprudent, way to help balance state and local budgets during the post-Sept. 11 recession that hammered Washington state. Now that the state economy has rebounded and a robust \$1.45 billion surplus is projected, Gov. Christine Gregoire and lawmakers have decided to contribute hundreds of millions to chip away at the problem. "This is simply something we have to face," said Senate budget Chairwoman Margarita Prentice, D-Renton. "There is no excuse." Budget writers say this has the added benefit of taking money off the table so that lawmakers won't be tempted to spend it on expensive new appropriations this winter. "This is where we park the money," Prentice said with a wink. Anything done this winter to whittle away at the \$1 billion pension bill due in the upcoming two-year budget cycle will greatly ease the job of writing that new budget, the governor added.

#### *Paying the Piper*

The state and local governments provide pensions for their workers

— cops and firefighters, teachers and college professors, prison guards, clerk-typists, caseworkers, park rangers, liquor store clerks and so on. Teachers, public employees and firefighters and law-enforcement have separate state-run systems. Employees pay a small percentage of their salary into the system, and the state, cities and counties also contribute. The state and local governments each pay roughly half of the government's bill.

Investment income also helps keep the systems afloat. The state Investment Board currently manages nearly \$50 billion in pension assets — stocks and bonds, T-bills, private equity and real estate. The fund averages 8 percent per year — way more in some boom years, but less in bear markets. The current one-year rate of return is more than 17 percent.

The pension system is considered sound, and Wall Street bond-rating houses like the state's commitment to paying down the un-funded liability. That gap has now hit \$4 billion. It's a fluid number, representing changing assumptions, such as the age of people when they retire and the performance of the investments. The number shrinks when Wall Street is sizzling and grows again when performance lags. On paper at least, the Legislature has long committed to plunking regular contributions to pay down the projected liability. Actual performance hasn't been stellar, though.

#### *'History of Underfunding'*

The state actuary's office regularly advises the governor and lawmakers about contributions needed to get the unfunded liability paid off. During

the past four years, as the state weathered a recession, lawmakers politely smiled and then skipped \$350 million in payments and suspended a scheduled \$147 million "gain-sharing" payment. Gain-sharing lets current and future retirees share in extraordinary market performance.

Total state pension contributions in this two-year budget cycle will be \$360 million. The next budget will be more than \$700 million higher — an eye-popping \$1.1 billion, including the unfunded-liability payment. Analysts at a special Senate hearing this past week on the pension problem said Olympia has a history of underfunding the system, at one point driving up an unfunded liability of \$6 billion. One study showed that between 1973 and 1991, the Legislature fully appropriated the actuary's request just once. "I'm afraid the only thing you can do is pay up," analyst Erik Sund told grim-faced senators. They have company. Nearly every state worries about budget-busting pension obligations. State and local governments collectively are short \$292 billion, making them "ticking time bombs" as the work force begins retiring, said Stateline.org, which tracks state government issues. Since 2001, the states have had to close budget gaps totaling \$235 billion, and pensions were a budget-balancer.

The Government Performance Project, sponsored by Pew Charitable Trusts, said huge numbers of state employees will be eligible for retirement by 2015. Washington is one of the Top 5 states for expected retirements in the next 10 years, the survey said. The pension issue has

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## General Government (continued)

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grown in public visibility, with some high profile companies reducing or eliminating pensions. Congress and the White House have taken up the issue.

### *Olympia's Response*

The governor and the Legislature's top budgeteers, Prentice and House Appropriations Chairwoman Helen Sommers, D-Seattle, have informally agreed to set aside hundreds of millions for pension. The only question is how high to go. "We start with the number \$176 million and go from there," said Gregoire's budget director, Victor Moore. That's the most recent unfunded-liability payment that lawmakers skipped. Sommers, who has been the hawk on the issue for most of her 34 years in the House, is promoting a \$300

million Pension Stabilization Trust Fund. Prentice is in the \$200 million to \$300 million range, and the governor would accept that. The money would be appropriated into a dedicated reserve fund, sometimes called a lockbox. The trick is to put money into the pension system without greatly changing governments' contribution rates. Cities and counties have already written their 2006 budgets and couldn't absorb a big pension jolt, said Bill Vogler, head of the Association of Counties, and Jim Justin of the Association of Washington Cities. The state has a big surplus at the moment, but local governments do not. Moore said the \$176 million contribution will be phased in over three years so as not to burden local governments too

much.

Key legislators from both parties and the Gregoire administration say the pension buydown is prudent for another practical reason as well: It takes the big chunk of the state surplus off the table, making it unavailable for ballooning the budget with other spending. Democrats raised taxes and cut some spending requests last spring and don't want to repeat that when they write the next budget, when a shortfall of \$700 million already is projected. By coincidence, that's the same number as the pension increase.

# Calendar of Events

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Information</i>
<b>For your convenience training and workshops are bolded.</b>			
<b><u>DECEMBER 2005</u></b>			
<b>CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY</b>	WA Counties Bldg CLOSED	December 26	
<b><u>JANUARY 2006</u></b>			
<b>NEW YEARS HOLIDAY</b>	WA Counties Bldg CLOSED	January 2	
WSAC Urban County Caucus	Mercato's Ristorante, Olympia	January 4	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	Ramblin' Jack's Restaurant, Olympia	January 4	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	January 5	(360) 753-1886
WA State Sheriffs' Association Breakfast Meeting	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	January 9	(360) 753-7319
Legislative Session Begins	Olympia	January 9	<a href="http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm">http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm</a>
NACo President/Executive Meeting	Washington, D.C.	January 10 - 13	
WACO Board of Trustees Meeting	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	January 11-12	(360) 753-7319
Association of Human Services (ACHS) Meetings	AmeriTel Hotel, Olympia	January 18 - 20	(360) 753-1886
WA Counties Insurance Fund/WCIP Board Meeting	Radisson Hotel, SeaTac	January 18	(360) 586-0466
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	January 19	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Rally Luncheon	Ramada Inn – Governor's House, Olympia	January 19/Noon	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Rally Reception	Ramada Inn – Governor's House, Olympia	January 19/5:30p	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Board of Directors Meeting - 8:00 a.m. - noon	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	January 20	(360) 753-1886
WA State Association of County Auditors' Licensing Conference	Comfort Inn, Tumwater	January 23-24	(360) 753-7319
WA State Association of County Auditors' Legislative Conference	Comfort Inn, Tumwater	January 25-26	(360) 753-7319
WA State Association of County Clerks' Legislative Conference	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	January 25-26	(360) 753-7319
WSAC/WACO/AWC Tri Association Meeting	Red Lion, Olympia	January 26	
WA State Association of County Assessors' Legislative Conference	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	January 31-February 2	(360) 753-7319
<b><u>FEBRUARY 2006</u></b>			
WSAC Urban County Caucus	Mercato's Ristorante, Olympia	February 1	(360) 753-1886

## ***Calendar of Events (continued)***

WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	Ramblin' Jack's Restaurant, Olympia	February 1	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	Red Lion Hotel, Olympia	February 2	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Urban County Caucus Dinner	Mercato's Ristorante, Olympia	February 15	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	Ramblin' Jack's Restaurant, Olympia	February 15	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	February 16	(360) 753-1886
WA Association of County Auditors' Finance Conference	North Bonneville Hot Springs Resort, North Bonneville	February 28-Mar.2	(360) 753-7319

### **MARCH 2006**

WSAC Urban County Caucus	Mercato's Ristorante, Olympia	March 1	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	Ramblin' Jack's Restaurant, Olympia	March 1	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	March 2	(360) 753-1886
NACo Legislative Conference	Washington, D.C.	March 4 - 8	<a href="http://www.naco.org">http://www.naco.org</a>
Legislative Session Ends – Sine Die	Olympia	March 9	<a href="http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm">http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm</a>
WCIF/WCIP Board and Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) Meeting	Spokane	March 16	(360) 586-0466
Washington County Administrative Association - Annual Business Meeting	Enzian Inn, Leavenworth	March 22 - 24	(360) 577-3065 Claire Hauge, <a href="mailto:haugec@co.cowlitz.wa.us">haugec@co.cowlitz.wa.us</a>
WA Association of County Auditors' Recording Conference	Leavenworth	March 27-28	(360) 753-7319

For Future dates - <http://wacounties.org/Calendar/Calendar%20of%20Events-WEB.pdf>

\* Info and registration on all Certified Public Official (CPO) Training - <http://www.cpoprogram.org/>

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## Attachments

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### Little juror still needs to work on his ABCs

By Sharon Altaras, World staff writer,  
Published Tuesday - December 6, 2005

At age 3, Jaise Walter has been called for jury duty more times than some adults. "He's pretty smart, everyone thinks so," his mom, Deanna Walter of Wenatchee, said Monday. "But I don't think he's worthy of jury duty."

Walter said a summons came in the mail Saturday, asking her toddler to appear at Chelan County Superior Court on Jan. 20. He also was asked to appear at Chelan County Superior Court when he was 18 months old, Walter said. At that time, Walter said, she told officials her son's age.

She and her husband, Joe Walter, have been called for jury duty, once each. Walter said the mixup may stem from a Washington identification card she got for Jaise (pronounced "jayce") when he was 9 months old. A Department of Licensing worker entered his birth year as "'02" — which ended up coming out as 1902, she said, adding that those records have since been updated. "There is a glitch somewhere," said Nancy Munson, Chelan County's jury administrator for the past 15 years.

Potential jurors are selected

randomly from voter registration records, driver's license and identification card records and could be called for duty once per year, she said. Jurors must be at least 18.

Munson could recall just one other time an underage person was summoned in Chelan County, and said it likely was Jaise. But for Walter, one question remains: What to put in the section of jury summons to explain why Jaise can't serve: "Do I put, 'needs babysitter?' 'Poor attention span?' 'Needs snacks?' she asked, tongue in cheek. "The upside is that this time he's potty trained," Walter said. "Next time maybe he'll be in school."

### Chelan County Looking for Coroner After Fino Resigns

By Michelle McNeil and Sharon Altaras,  
World staff writers Published Tuesday -  
December 6, 2005

WENATCHEE — Chelan County Coroner Gina Fino announced Monday that she will resign and move to Olympia to be with her husband. Fino will stay on until Chelan County appoints someone to fill the remainder of her elected term as coroner, which expires at the end of 2006. In addition to serving as Chelan County's coroner, she has performed autopsies on a contractual basis for Douglas, Okanogan and Grant counties since 2000. "I'll miss the ability to see things from start to finish because in a smaller community it's a little bit easier to get a handle on the bigger picture," Fino said Monday in a phone interview. She said she plans to move to Olympia. Her husband, Chris Halsell, is a surveillance coordinator for the state Department of Health. While in Olympia, Fino,

41, will continue her private forensic pathology practice and provide autopsy services for Washington counties on an as-needed basis, she said. Before coming to Chelan County, she served as an associate medical examiner for King and Snohomish counties.

During her tenure here, she performed almost all autopsies for criminal investigations in North Central Washington, including that of Chelan County Sheriff's deputy Saúl Gallegos in 2003. "The Saúl Gallegos case was a very difficult case, a very labor intensive case," Fino recalled. "It was also very difficult to have to watch the members of the (sheriff's) department investigate the death," she said, adding that "to work through all those emotions with everybody was quite a challenging process." Fino was appointed by county commissioners in September 2001, after coming to Chelan County in May 2000 to work as a forensic pathologist with then-Coroner Jerry Rappé. Rappé had launched his own nationwide search to find his replacement. He retired later that year because of failing eyesight and Fino was appointed to finish out the final two years of his four-year term. She originally filled the position as a Democrat, which was the party Rappé belonged to. A year later she switched to the Republican Party, becoming the county's first Republican coroner in 40 years. "The parts of the job that I like the least are the political parts," Fino said Monday adding that she'd rather investigate deaths and talk to families than work out a budget. Fino ran unopposed for a four-year term in 2002.

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## ***Attachments***

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In 2003 and 2004 Chelan County came under fire from the state Auditor's Office for the way it paid Fino. The Auditor's Office found that the county's contracting with Fino to provide autopsy services, in addition to paying her salary as coroner, violated the state's conflict

of interest laws. So the county changed the way it paid Fino in order to comply.

The Chelan County Republican Party must now give county commissioners a list of three possible replacements for Fino. Commissioners will then choose

someone to fill the remainder of Fino's term.

Both articles were published in the The Wenatchee World Online -  
<http://www.wenworld.com>  
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Phone: 509-663-5161, Fax: 509-662-5413