

the Courthouse Journal

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Washington Association of County Officials
Washington State Association of Counties

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Next Week is THE Week! It's Scholarship Time!

Applications for Washington Counties Scholarships will be available online by February 17, at <http://wacounties.org>.

Since the first awards in 1993, 56 children of county employees have been awarded over \$100,000! At least five more deserving students will receive \$2500 again this spring. Please make the information available to all the officials and employees in your county.

Eligible children must be dependents of county employees and must be

enrolled full-time in a baccalaureate, associate degree, or technical/vocational program during the 2006/07 school year. Students will have until April 1 to apply. Grandchildren, spouses and county employees are not eligible according to the bylaws of the program.

The Washington Counties Scholarship Fund is kept going and growing through the generosity of the county family. It is a joint project of WACO and WSAC.

WSAC and WACO Bill "Watch Lists"

Despite "cutoff" coming and going, WSAC and WACO are surprised at the number of bills still being considered and passed from both their originating committee and fiscal committee. Nearly 100 bills remain for WACO and WSAC members and staff to monitor and track. Many more bills are lurking!!!

WACO and WSAC staff are preparing for hearings, contacting our elected officials, commissioners, council members, and key staff to be ready to come to Olympia to testify or call legislators when requested.

Be watching for specific email alerts that require immediate action. Individual associations are producing their own "Watch Lists" crafted for their membership. If you have any questions –

please contact your WSAC and WACO staff.

If you want up to date information please visit the Washington State Legislature Home Page at:
<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature>

**All bills must be out of
their house of origin by
5:00 p.m. on Tuesday,
February 15 or they are
dead for this session.
Please check the status of
bills you care about and
take the appropriate
action.**

Want to post a job announcement on our webpage?

E-mail your info to bwarden@wacounties.org

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

Visit [Employment Opportunities](http://wacounties.org/employment)

The Courthouse Journal

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

Direct inquiries and correspondence to *The Courthouse Journal*, 206 Tenth Av SE, Olympia, WA 98501 or wacounties.org

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Ferry County Voters Authorize Use of Conversation Future Funds

During the 2005 session of the Legislature, a bill was passed to authorize Ferry County to use their conservation futures funds on a one-time basis for any general government purpose subject to a vote of the people. This week by a vote of 54-46% the voters agreed to use the funds for the county general fund.

Ferry County has struggled for years with an inadequate tax base and last year they received an emergency funding request from the Governor's budget to help them meet their obligations. In return they were required to submit to a management audit conducted by the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. The conclusions of the report were that the county could not meet their current obligations without a major change in the way they were funded. As an interim step they recommended they be allowed to use dedicated funds for the current expense fund. This resulted in the vote on the conservation futures fund.

A total of \$280,000 was in the fund and may now be used on a one-time basis in the general fund. This will certainly help the county; however, the management report concluded that they would need \$1.1-1.3 million annually to permanently restore adequate funding to the county.

REMINDER: WSAC Offers Scholarship to County Leadership Institute

This is a reminder that the WSAC Board of Directors has offered a full scholarship to the County Leadership Institute (CLI) at New York University's Robert Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. This is a joint effort the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the University. CLI is a rigorous program that helps elected officials of county legislative authorities exercise leadership to address the complex challenges facing counties. This will be the third class offered and up to 30 officials from across the country will attend. The program takes four days and will be offered May 31-June 3, 2006.

WSAC will nominate interested members to NACo, which will make the final decision. The tuition of \$995, which will be paid by WSAC, includes four nights lodging at a hotel in New York City, breakfast and lunch for four days (Wednesday-Saturday); one dinner, and access to the various social events. Fellows are responsible for their own air travel, taxi/subway fares and incidental expenses during the four days.

Last year three WSAC members were nominated and NACo selected Kitsap County Commissioner Jan Angel to attend. Commissioner Angel has reported on her experience at the last Annual Conference and to the Board of Directors. She would be pleased to answer any questions from interested members.

Any interested WSAC member may submit his/her name for consideration to WSAC no later than February 24.

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

Budget, Finance and Taxes

Streamlined Sales Tax Hearing

On Wednesday, February 15, the House Finance Committee will hear **SSB 6594** to adopt the Streamlined Sales Tax Agreement. Although **SSB 6594** passed out of the Senate unanimously, it faces a tougher road in the House. We encourage counties to contact their House members to remind them about the need to pass **SSB 6594** this year to bring Washington in full compliance with the agreement to level the playing field for Washington businesses and help county finances.

Contact your Legislators in Support of 3/10th Sales Tax for Criminal Justice & Levy Lid Lift Flexibility

The Legislature has advanced these WSAC priority bills for flexibility with the sales tax and six-year voter approved property tax lid lift authority granted in 2003. Some legislators remain opposed, and we have more work to do.

HB 2988 and **SB 6789** were introduced to eliminate the non-supplanting language and the requirement that thirty percent of the new sales tax proceeds be spent on criminal justice purposes. **HB 2988** is in the Rules Committee awaiting further action. WSAC is working with House members to amend the legislation to restore the criminal justice spending requirement because its elimination was met with strong bipartisan opposition. Its Senate companion, **SSB 6789**, was amended in the Senate Ways & Means Committee to restore the criminal justice spending requirement, but expand the definition of criminal justice to

include costs for existing police officers, pension liabilities and inmate health care costs. **SSB 6789** also restores the non-supplanting language for criminal justice spending. We urge counties to contact their members to support **SSB 6789**, which is moving towards the floor calendar.

HB 1446 and **SSB 5333**, which would repeal the non-supplanting requirements in the six-year voter approved property tax levy lid lift and allow additional local taxing districts to use the six-year authority, are currently in the Rules committees. Again, we urge counties to contact their members in support of these pieces of legislation.

Farmer Tax Exemptions March On

SHB 2424 passed out of the Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 7. The bill would exempt from retail sales tax diesel fuel to a farm fuel user for non-highway use.

While in committee, the bill was amended to also exempt aircraft fuel used by farmers. The bill is now in Rules and will soon be on the Senate calendar for final passage.

SHB 2457, legislation to exempt from retail sales and use tax used farm machinery and equipment, repair services and replacement parts for such items, was amended in the House Finance committee to exempt only replacement parts for farm machinery and equipment. Although this amendment reduces the impact on local governments, the legislation still would reduce local revenues by \$2.2 million annually. The bill is on the House floor calendar for action.

Tax Increment Financing Legislation Resurrected

The Senate passed (46-1-2) **SB 5325**, a tax increment financing proposal opposed by WSAC. **SB 5325** would allow local governments to finance public improvements using not only the increased local property tax revenues, but also increased sales and use tax revenues from the increment area and a state match of local revenues, up to \$1 million per year, per project, deducted from state sales and use tax revenues. **SB 5325** would allow taxing districts imposing only 60 percent of the regular property taxes within the increment area to approve a project. WSAC's position is that the threshold must be that taxing districts imposing at least 75 percent regular property taxes must agree to the project and formation of the increment area. Please contact your Representatives to oppose **SB 5325**.

Tax increment financing legislation that WSAC can support is **HB 2673**. This bill requires local governments to opt into the program before any its tax revenue can be dedicated to tax increment financing. **HB 2673** is scheduled for House floor action.

House Passes Property Tax Breaks for Veterans

This week the House passed two pieces of property tax legislation to assist veterans with their property tax obligations. The first bill is **HB 2439**, which provides an exemption from real estate excise taxes to members of the armed forces who are required to relocate due to military orders, if the selling price of the property is no more than eight percent greater than the price paid for it. The fiscal impact of the

Budget, Finance, and Taxes (continued)

legislation is minimal.

The second bill is **HB 2432**, which freezes the assessed value of a home and provides excess and regular property tax relief for veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, with a 100 percent service-connected disability and an income of \$70,000 and below. The legislation also excludes military disability income and special monthly compensation payments from the income used to determine eligibility for the senior citizen and disabled persons property tax relief program.

Forest Patrol Assessments

SB 6403, forest fire assessments, is dead. The bill to study the issue, **SB 6603**, wildfire prevention, is in Senate Rules.

REET Automation Bill

SB 6577, modifying the electronic administration of the real estate excise tax and revising the fees, and its companion bill, **HB 2879**, are in their respective Rules Committees. Please call Rules committee members and ask that the bill be pulled to the floor calendar.

Mobile Homes

HB 2719, authorizing the conditional cancellation of delinquent property taxes on mobile homes, is in the House Rules Committee. If the bill gets on the House calendar, we need to make sure that the amendment the treasurers agreed to with the proponents, is added.

Distraint of Personal Property

SSB 6441, changing the law related to judicial orders concerning distraint of personal property, has passed the Senate.

Elections, Licensing and Recording

Primary Date Change Set for Hearing in the House (WACO/Auditors' Priority)

ESB 6236, moving the primary date to the third Tuesday in August, passed the Senate last week and has been scheduled for hearing in the House State Government Operations and Accountability Committee on Wednesday, February 15, at 1:30 p.m. It would be great if all of the auditors would try to be at the hearing to show their support!

Elections Bills Status

Bills have to be out of their house of origin by 5:00 p.m. on February 14, or they are dead for the session.

HB 2477, making technical changes to election laws, passed the House this week. The companion bill, **SSB 6235**, is in Senate Rules.

EHB 2478, clarifying laws on ballot measures, passed the House this week.

SHB 2479, ensuring equipment

accessibility for voters with visual impairments is on the House calendar awaiting passage. The companion bill, **SSB 6242**, is in Senate Rules.

SHB 2532, providing for election audits, is in House Rules.

SHB 2594, providing assistance to non-English speaking voters (now a study), is in House Rules.

SHB 2694, eliminating Saturday counting of ballots, is on the House calendar. The Senate version, **SB 6421**, the preferred version by the auditors, is in Senate Rules. (Auditors' priority bill) Please call Senate Rules Committee members and ask for the bill to be pulled to the floor calendar.

SHB 2695, modifying absentee or provisional ballot notice, is in House Rules, and the companion bill, **SSB 6423**, is in Senate Rules. (Auditors' priority bill) Please call Rules Committee members and ask for a

pull to the calendar.

SHB 2753, allowing electronic voter registration is in House Rules.

SHB 2843, modifying absentee ballot envelope content, is on the House calendar.

HB 3041, modifying voter registration timelines, has passed the House.

SHB 2594, providing assistance to non-English speaking voters, is in House Rules.

SB 6422, modifying election recount provisions, is in Senate Rules. (Auditors' priority bill) Please call Senate Rules Committee members and ask for the bill to be pulled to the floor calendar.

Environment, Land Use and Resources

Accessory Uses on Agricultural Resource Lands

SHB 2917/SSB 6575: These bills clarify the types of small-scale commercial activities counties may allow on agricultural lands to provide supplemental income to farmers while preserving agricultural lands. These bills reinforce that local governments may adopt regulations to allow flexibility for farm owners to locate small scale business on their property that provides additional income without consuming prime agricultural land. This business can be agriculture or non-agriculture related, as indicated by local land use code.

These bills add language that local governments may allow small-scale nonagricultural activities compatible in size, scale, and intensity with, and will not interfere with, the agricultural use of the property and neighboring properties. Examples of nonagricultural activities would be operating a small hair salon out of the family home or constructing a building to house a small-engine repair shop in the area already developed for buildings and residential uses. Conversion of agricultural land for nonagricultural accessory uses is only allowed in the general area already developed for buildings and residential uses.

As amended in the House and Senate, the bill limits the conversion of land for agriculture and non-agricultural use to one acre. The Senate substitute refers to crop land, the House bill refers to agricultural land. The goal is to reconcile the language to read agricultural land.

GMA Timelines and Updates

SHB 2814/SSB 6427: These companion bills give small and

slower-growing counties and cities an extra three years to review and update their comprehensive plans and development regulations, including critical area ordinances.

The legislation applies to 15 counties and 105 cities with update deadlines in 2005, 2006, or 2007 that are:

- Cities with populations under 100, or less than 5,000 with 10-year growth rates of 17 percent or less
- Counties with populations under 50,000 and 10-year growth rates of 17 percent or less.

Best Available Science

SHB 2815/SSB 6569: These bills offer guidance and assistance to local governments in identifying applying science to their local rules by:

- Informing how to demonstrate that Best Available Science (BAS) was included, and how to document any other information that may have been used as a basis for critical areas policies and regulations including other items besides science;
- Improving state assistance to local governments by bringing state-developed guidance through peer review. This guidance material would be optional for local governments to use as they develop their policies. The guidance would not constitute minimum standards. Local governments who choose to use state-developed guidance for critical areas identification and protection have safeguards from appeals;
- Clarifying hearings board procedures by directing that the boards develop and adopt a rule

for obtaining advice from science experts.

The two bills have significant differences. The Senate version includes a WSAC supported phrase "as potentially impacted by future development" in reference to uses in critical areas. Each version adds that Hearings Board procedures and criteria for retaining scientific and other experts be developed in consultation with cities and counties. Each has passed to Rules Committees, after Executive Action was taken by both the House Appropriations and the Senate Ways and Means committees with do pass recommendations.

Eminent Domain

SHB 3017/SSB 6701: The current law allows a state or local government to sell land previously condemned if it determines that the property is no longer necessary for a public purpose, but does not require sale to the previous property owner.

Section 1 of the bill is drafted to assure citizens that state and local agencies and property owners understand the Washington Constitution, Article I, Section 16, generally prohibits the use of eminent domain to take private property for private use. This section has been removed from the house version.

Section 2 of the bill would require the state or local government to notify the owner of the property at the time it was condemned of the decision to sell, and would give the property owner ninety days to exercise the right of first refusal to purchase the property. The right of first refusal requirement would exist for 10 years after completion of the eminent domain proceedings.

Environment, Land Use and Resources (continued)

A new section in the house version prohibits the state, cities and counties from taking private property solely for the purpose of economic development. "Economic Development" means the acquisition or use of real property to increase tax revenue, tax base, employment, or economic health.

The House bill was amended to include an effective date of July 1, 2007 and direction to OFM to conduct a study with recommendations to the legislature by December 1, 2006 on the definition of economic development and the right of repurchase. The House Capital Budget Committee took executive action and the Senate bill is on the Senate floor Calendar.

Columbia River Issues

SSSB 6581 / SSHB 2860: The Department of Ecology is directed to aggressively pursue the development of water supplies to benefit both instream and out-of-stream uses. To support development of new water supplies, the Department of Ecology is to work with stakeholders to develop a Columbia River water supply inventory by November 2006 that is to be updated annually and is to look at existing studies.

A Columbia River Basin Water Supply account is created in the State Treasury and may be used to assess, plan, and develop new storage, improve or alter existing storage

facilities, and implement conservation project or other actions designed to provide access to new water supplies in the Columbia for both instream and out of stream uses.

New water supplies that are developed and secured through new storage are to be allocated as follows: 2/3 to out of stream use; 1/3 to instream flows through the state trust water rights program to benefit fish and wildlife.

The development of water supplies is to focus on the following areas: the Odessa subarea aquifer; municipal water supply; water for interruptible rights and new municipal, domestic, industrial and irrigation needs; and water for the Yakima basin.

Voluntary Regional Agreements can be used to establish conditions under which water may be withdrawn. A voluntary agreement can be used as an alternative track for receiving water. Conditions are removed to allow the ten million dollars that was appropriated in last year's budget to be spent on water supply development. Other provisions include:

- The definition, use and allocation of conserved water;
- Consideration of, and ways to address, issues related to regional equities and dewatering; and
- The collection and publication of data related to current water use in the mainstem of the Columbia.

These bills provide strong legislative direction that the state must pursue a program of developing new water supplies for a balanced set of needs, including meeting growing water demands by farmers and cities, as well as securing sufficient river flows during the periods that are critical for restoring salmon runs. Water supplies secured through the development of new storage with funding from the newly created Columbia River basin water supply account is allocated two-thirds for out of stream appropriations and one-third to be used to enhance instream flows.

The second substitute bill authorizes voluntary regional agreements that set conditions for granting new water withdrawals from the Columbia River. These agreements must ensure that there is "no negative impact" on mainstream flows during July and August, a season critical for fish passage, and that these regional efforts be harmonized with locally-based watershed planning in the area.

During 2006, the Department of Ecology is to convene stakeholder groups to review and provide recommendations to the Legislature on two topics: (1) addressing whether interregional water transfers undermine the economic health of the water-sending areas; and (2) exploring the use of water "banks" to

General Government Issues

Chief Financial Officer Flies

HB 3019, clarifying that it is the county auditor in a non-charter county and the financial officer designated in a charter county who

serves as the ex-officio deputy state auditor for purposes of accounting and reporting, passed out of the House with a vote of 97-1. The bill has been referred to the Senate

Government Operations and Elections Committee. Auditors are encouraged to contact Senator Kastama, the committee chair and request a hearing.

Courts, Public Safety, Law & Justice

County Clerks' Bills Moving
SSB 6670, the fix to court fees passed last session, is on the Senate Floor calendar for a vote of that body. SSB 6670 does not increase or decrease fees, but makes the application of fees consistent. HB 1471, authentication of documents, is lingering in Senate Rules Committee but is not subject to cutoff. It has taken 125 years to get to the point of changing the relevant statutes so a few days may not be critical but it is always best to keep pushing! HB 1471 is critical to doing business with today's technology.

Law and Justice

2SHB 2805, missing persons, is still waiting for that magic moment when it gets "pulled" from House Rules to the floor calendar. The second substitute gives WACO the direction to support interested groups so they can build on all of the work done by

a Task Force convened in 2003 by then-Attorney General Christine Gregoire, that charged the coroners and medical examiners, along with the Forensic Investigations Council, with developing an education component to gain voluntary participation of jurisdictions. The substitute has "null and void" clauses for sections containing a missing persons' website and an interface with the state patrol if funding is not provided. The hope of all local government groups and victims' groups is that the state will step up to the plate and meet the voluntary contributions of the locals to build an effective process for locating missing persons and locating human remains. Please contact House Rules members and urge a "pull."

Meth Bills on the Move

SB 6484, a narcotics bill that funds

enforcement areas in the three corners of the state, still needs two "pulls" in Senate Rules before it comes up for a vote of the body while SB 6239, Attorney General Rob McKenna's bill to restore Byrne Grant and JAG monies, just needs one more "pull." It establishes three pilots as well. County Sheriffs say both bills are necessary in order to develop a coordinated statewide strategy to attack meth and other illegal drugs. Please contact your Senators on Rules and ask their help.

HB 3004 establishes a pilot registration project for methamphetamine dealers and users in Snohomish County only. HB 3004 was "pulled" to the House Floor from Rules last night.

HB 2448, Representative Campbell's bill to levy an excise tax on the possession of illegal drugs and alcohol, is in House Rules Committee.

Courthouse Ramblings

We express our deepest sympathy to the friends and family of former Klickitat County Auditor **Diana Housden**, who passed away on Friday, February 3. Diana had been sick for quite some time, which caused her to resign her position as auditor, effective December 31, 2005. She worked at the Klickitat County Mental Health Department and the county extension office before joining the auditor's office, where she became the elections administrator. Diana was appointed as Klickitat County Auditor when Nancy Evans retired, in 1996. She was an active member of both the Auditors' Association and WACO and will be sorely missed by all who knew her. Services will be held

Saturday, February 11, at 1:00 p.m. at the New Life Assembly of God Church, in Goldendale. Memorial contributions may be made to the Humane Society or the American Heart Association.

Congratulations to **Tim Davidson** who was appointed as the new Cowlitz County Coroner this week by county commissioners. He will replace Mike Nichols, who just retired after serving as coroner since 1998. Tim has served as deputy coroner for over five years and has 19 years of law enforcement experience and training in crime team investigation. He will run for the unexpired term in the November general election.

Skagit County Assessor and WACO Vice President Mark Leander and his wife Barbara have been in our prayers all week as they awaited the outcome of tests Mark was undergoing at the University of Washington for a brain tumor. Barbara reported to Mark's office today that they are both in good spirits and ready to begin a highly successful treatment plan as soon as possible. Mark is expected to have intensive treatment in the next ten weeks and will be hospitalized for 4 to 5 days for each of the initial treatment sessions. He's had some visitors and still loves to laugh. We wish him the speediest recovery.

Calendar of Events

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Information</i>
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For your convenience training and workshops are bolded.

FEBRUARY 2006

WSAC Urban County Caucus	Mercato's Ristorante, Olympia	February 15/6:30-9	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	Ramblin' Jack's Restaurant, Olympia	February 15/6:30-9	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Executive Committee	Potofino's, Olympia	February 15/6:30-9	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Past Presidents Breakfast	Budd Bay, Olympia	February 16/7:30 am	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	February 16/9:30-1	(360) 753-1886
WA Assn of County Auditors' Finance Conference	North Bonneville Hot Springs Resort, North Bonneville	February 28 – March 2	(360) 753-7319

MARCH 2006

WSAC Urban County Caucus	Mercato's Ristorante, Olympia	March 1/6:30-9	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Rural Issues Sub-committee	Ramblin' Jack's Restaurant, Olympia	March 1/6:30-9	(360) 753-1886
WSAC Legislative Steering Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	March 2/9:30-1	(360) 753-1886
NACo Legislative Conference	Washington, D.C.	March 4 - 8	http://www.naco.org

Legislative Session Ends – Sine Die

Olympia

March 9

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm>

ACHS	Port Townsend	March 15 – 17	(360) 586-4219 ext 106
WCIF/WCIP Board and Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC)	Spokane	March 16	(360) 586-0466
Washington County Administrative Assn - Annual Business	Enzian Inn, Leavenworth	March 22 - 24	(360) 577-3065 Claire Hauge, haugec@co.cowlitz.wa.us
WA Counties Bldg Partnership & Scholarship Committee	WA Counties Bldg, Olympia	March 23/ 1 – 3 pm	(360) 753-1886
WA Assn of County Auditors' Recording Conference	Leavenworth	March 27 - 28	(360) 753-7319

APRIL 2006

WA Counties Insurance Fund ACE	Yakima	April 12	(360) 586-0466
WA Municipal Treasurers' (WMTA) Annual Conference	Campbell's Lodge, Chelan	April 12 - 14	
WSAC Spring Western District	Lakeway Inn, Bellingham	April 20 - 21	www.wacounties.org/wsac

17th Annual National County Government Week

April 23 - 29

WA Assn of Prosecuting Attorneys' Spring Training

Red Lion, Yakima

April 26 - 28

(360) 753-2175

Attachments

Senate Approves Attorney General McKenna's Sex Offender Bills

Olympia - The Washington State Senate today approved a bipartisan package of sex offender bills developed by Attorney General Rob McKenna and his office's Sexually Violent Predator Unit.

"These bills will give law enforcement important tools to help protect our children and our communities," McKenna said. "I appreciate the support and cooperation of the members of the Senate and am looking forward to working with House members to ensure these important bills become law."

SB 6460, requested by McKenna, creates mandatory prison terms for crimes committed with sexual motivation, including a minimum one year for class C felonies, double enhancements for second-time offenders and a clarification that enhancements can be added to misdemeanors as well.

SB 6406, requested by McKenna, makes second degree assault of child with sexual motivation a "strike" under the state's "Two Strikes, You're Out" law for sex offenses.

SB 6407, requested by McKenna to increase the penalty for possession of child pornography from an unranked felony to a Level VI with a minimum one year of prison time, was incorporated into **SB 6172**.

SB 6405, requested by McKenna to strengthen the sex offender registration statute by requiring more frequent registration for the most dangerous offenders, was incorporated into **SB 6519**, which requires level III sex offenders to register every 90 days.

SB 6410, requested by McKenna to make permanent statewide residency restrictions approved by the Legislature in 2005, which prohibit sex offenders from living within 880 feet of a public or private school, was incorporated into **SB 6325**.

SB 6409: SSOSA/SSODA sentencing alternatives for otherwise qualifying sex offenders are only available if the offender affirmatively admits he or she committed the crime charged. SSOSA/SSODA unavailable if the offender enters an Alford plea (Alford plea has the same effect as a guilty plea, but all the offender admits to in an Alford plea is that the State has sufficient

evidence to convict the offender; the offender does not admit guilt).

SB 6775: Allows personnel at places where children congregate (e.g. community centers and schools) to bar level 2 and 3 child sex offenders from coming onto the property. Any violation will result in prosecution for the new felony crime of Criminal Trespass Against Children.

Attachments (continued)

Mary Tedesco, 76, County's Greeter, Gatekeeper

by Sharon Pian Chan, *Seattle Times*



Mary Tedesco, receptionist for King County Executive Ron Sims, insisted he greet her every day with a kiss on the hand.

King County Executive Ron Sims called her "Ms. T." Former Governor and King County Executive Gary Locke called her "Mary T." On her answering machine, she called herself "the beautiful Italian."

Until last July, everybody called Mary Tedesco. For 32 years, she was the face of King County, receptionist at the executive's office. She had served all six executives since the post was created.

Mrs. Tedesco died of heart failure on Saturday. She was 76.

Perfectly coifed, beautifully dressed, Mrs. Tedesco was the woman who picked up the phone when anyone called.

She answered when Presidents George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan called to congratulate County Executive John Spellman on his election as governor. She welcomed presidential hopeful John Kerry to the office.

But the man she kept a picture of at her desk was Fabio, model and

international man of mystery, who, when he came by, chatted with her in Italian.

"Whether you were an office holder, billionaire, millionaire or penniless, she treated everybody the same," Sims said. "That's what made her unique."

Sims greeted her every day with a kiss on the hand. It was the only way she would let him into the office when he was a County Council member, and it was the only way she would let him in when he became executive.

"She was the gatekeeper and the greeter," said Locke, another former executive who became governor.

A child of Italian immigrants, Mrs. Tedesco was the fifth of seven children, born on Columbus Day on Day Street in South Seattle. Her father laid bricks for Seattle roads, then became a vegetable farmer near Tukwila.

Mrs. Tedesco graduated from Foster High School, and she met her future husband, Gino, at a dance in Renton. Gino Tedesco opened a small grocery in Northgate, then the family moved to Kenmore, where he opened Gino's Thriftway on Juanita Drive. When he sold the store — now a QFC — Mrs. Tedesco found herself with idle hands.

According to her daughter Mary Jean "Teddy" Tedesco Fleming, Mrs. Tedesco called King County and said, "Do you need people to answer phones for the elections department?"

She worked in elections for a few years, then Spellman, the county's first executive, hired her to become the office's receptionist. While the Kingdome was being built, she scaled the ribs of the dome on a rope.

Mrs. Tedesco arrived at work at 7 a.m. every day, taking the bus in

from Kenmore. "And Lord help you if that bus was crowded," Sims said. "We increased the service and put an articulated [longer] bus on that route just for Mary. ... The Tedesco route, that's how we referred to it."

On her days off, she zipped around town in an Alfa Romeo that she and her husband bought on a trip to Italy in 1977. He died in 1991. They co-founded St. John Mary Vianney Catholic Church on the Eastside. The two were 50-year Huskies season-ticket holders, 30-year Seahawks season-ticket holders, and season-ticket holders to the Sonics games.

But the county, "that was her life," her daughter Teddy Fleming said. Mrs. Tedesco is survived by daughters Mary Jean "Teddy" Tedesco Fleming of Bothell and Mila Tedesco Cornell of Kenmore; brothers Tony Scoccolo of Normandy Park and Armondo Scoccolo of Newcastle; sisters Violet "Chickie" DiPietro of Bellevue and Eda Mastandrea of SeaTac; and many nieces and nephews.

Viewing will begin at 10 a.m. Friday, followed by an 11 a.m. service at St. Brendan's parish, 10051 N.E. 195th St., Bothell. Contributions can be made to King County Medic One.