

the Courthouse Journal

W A C O U N T I E S . O R G

March 14, 2008
Issue No. 10

*Inside the
Courthouse Journal*

Budget, Finance & Taxes
Page 2

**Courts, Public Safety,
Law & Justice**
Pages 3-4

**Environment, Land Use
& Resources**
Pages 4-5

**Public Health &
Human Services**
Page 6

**Transportation &
Public Works**
Pages 6-7

Association News
Page 7

Boards & Commissions
Pages 8-9

**Training &
Upcoming Events**
Page 9

Good Things
Pages 10-11

Attachments
Pages 11-16

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

2008 Legislature Adjourns

On Thursday March 13, the Legislature adjourned, sine die. Much of the day was spent adopting the operating and capital budgets and saying goodbye to several House leaders and members.

The budget debate was less about 2008 than the budget outlook for 2009. Although the final operating budget leaves total reserves of \$835 million, the specter of a national recession reducing future revenue led to criticism that the amount was not enough.

Counties, like other stakeholders, had minor victories in the budget. For example, funding for Non-Medicaid mental health services was increased \$6.25 million. The criminal street gang initiative was funded \$1.2 million. On the other hand, funding for Community Transition Coordinating Networks was not included in the final budget. Small increases in funding for indigent defense were excluded.

Several controversial bills died on the floor calendars. Included was **SB 6609** on special agricultural building permits. The bill was bounced back and forth between the houses as neither would concur with the other. Also failing to advance was **HB 1873** on wrongful death. At one point, it appeared that the Senate would concur with the House version of the bill or adopt an amendment with less joint and several liability protections for state and local governments. However, the inability to come to consensus in the Senate doomed the bill for another year. **HB 1727** also died on the calendar as amendments began to pile onto the bar.

Several House members are leaving this year. Those members included Representatives Eickmeyer, Fromhold, McIntire, McDonald, Schaul-Berke, Sump, Lantz and Schindler. However, the most heartfelt goodbyes were given to Representative Helen Sommers who was ending a 36-year career in the House.

Did you know?

Since 1993, the Washington Counties Scholarship Fund has awarded \$125,000 in scholarships to 47 children of county employees in 25 counties and four have even won twice! *Details follow at the end of this edition of the Courthouse Journal.*

If your county or child is not among the winners, have your qualified students apply now for one of the five \$3,000 awards for the 2008/09 school year.

Remember! All applications must be postmarked **no later than April 1** and are available at www.wacounties.org.

Want to post a job announcement on our website ?

Visit <http://wacounties.org/>

And click on the job pages for format & submission details.

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We welcome your suggestions and contributions. The weekly / bi-weekly deadline is noon Wednesdays. Direct inquiries and correspondence to - *The Courthouse Journal*, 206 Tenth Av SE, Olympia, WA 98501

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Stop by for Vogler Farewell!

Don't miss one more chance to chat with retiring WSAC Executive Director Bill Vogler. Join Bill and friends at a Farewell Open House on Friday, March 28, 2008 between 2-5 p.m. at the Washington Counties Building in Olympia.

We couldn't let him leave early on his last Friday in the office! An invitation is attached to this edition of the newsletter. All well-wishers are welcome.

Off-Session Schedule of *the Courthouse Journal* Begins...

The next edition of *the Courthouse Journal* will be published on Thursday, March 27. Until Legislative Session 2009, the newsletter will be distributed **every other** Thursday.

Thank you for your readership!

Budget, Finance and Taxes

Inheritance/Tax Exemption Springs Back to Life

Wednesday, a bill that appeared to be dead in House Rules with the last cutoff, was pulled to the floor calendar and passed the House with a vote of 91-6. **SSB 6851**, concerning the documentation required in order to obtain a real estate excise tax exemption at the time of inheritance, was then immediately sent back to the Senate for concurrence with a House Committee amendment. The Senate concurred and the bill is on its way to the Governor's desk. The law allows a surviving spouse to claim the REET exemption by providing a certified copy of the death certificate and a signed affidavit affirming that the surviving spouse is the sole and rightful heir to the property. The amendment added "domestic partner" to the language.

Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:

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

Bill Information: www.leg.wa.gov

Courts, Public Safety, Law & Justice

Supplemental Budget Funds Law Enforcement

The 2008 Supplemental Operating Budget appropriates \$5 million to the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) for the fiscal year 2009 to assist local law enforcement in verifying the address and residency of all registered sex offenders and kidnapping offenders.

The budget also includes \$1.8 million for nine additional basic law enforcement academies at the Criminal Justice Training Commission. Ten additional academies were funded for 2008. \$750,000 is provided for the implementation of [2SHB 2712](#), Criminal street gangs, and \$306,000 is appropriated for the costs of local law enforcement agencies participating in specialized crisis intervention training.

Human Remains Bill Passes

[E2SHB 2624](#), concerning human remains, passed the Legislature this week and was contingent upon funding of the proposal in the Supplemental Operating Budget. The budget which passed last night appropriates a whopping \$1,071,000 for its implementation. Many surmised that the appropriation would kill the bill in a tight fiscal year. [E2SHB](#) establishes the office of the state physical anthropologist in the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation with a staff of five to deal with non-forensic skeletal remains.

Tribal Law Enforcement

[EHB 2476](#), the bill commissioning tribal law enforcement officers to act as general authority peace officers in Washington State, passed both houses and has been delivered to the Governor for her signature despite opposition by sheriffs in 38 counties. The bill that passed the Legislature was amended by the Senate to require all local law enforcement agencies and sovereign tribal governments to enter into interlocal agreements before the authorization is in effect; tribal provision of proof of certification and insurance to the office of financial management; and that both submit to binding arbitration if an agreement is not reached. The entities must submit to the last best offer of the arbitrator who must consider other interlocal agreements in the state, any model policy developed by WASPC, and national best practices.

WACO Priorities Pass

Three WACO priority proposals have been delivered to the Governor for signature:

[SSB 6297](#), elected prosecutor salaries, passed the Legislature and now ties the salary of a county prosecuting attorney to that of a Superior Court judge and requires the state to pay one half that amount and the county to contribute at least the amount paid in 2008 to the prosecutor's salary. Currently, the state pays half the prosecutor's salary.

[2SHB 2713](#) expands the collection of biological samples for DNA testing to include certain misdemeanor and gross misdemeanors.

[SSB 6933](#) provides for the admissibility of evidence of prior evidence of a sex offense, whether charged or uncharged, under certain circumstances.

[ESHB 1030](#) enhancing the sentence for eluding, passed as well.

Emergency Management – A Focus on Campus Safety

With a focus on recent national and local events on college campuses, the legislature identified the need for each state college and university to update campus plans for emergency preparedness and response procedures. Under the provisions of [SB 6328](#) each institution will annually review the campus safety plans to make suggestions for improvement and enter into memoranda of understandings with local governments that outline responsibilities during campus emergencies. [HB 2507](#), requires a study of expansion of the first responder building mapping information system to higher education facilities. The bill requires the Washington State Patrol and Washington Association of Sheriffs and

Police Chiefs (WASPC) to complete a needs analysis and fiscal impact study that must include an assessment of all public and independent colleges and universities to determine whether campus emergency and critical incident plans are up-to-date, comprehensive and regularly exercised. WASPC must complete an evaluation of the potential risks associated with types of buildings on campuses and recommended buildings that are a high priority for addition to the First Responder Building Mapping Information System and report its findings to the governor and legislature by November 1, 2008. Other emergency management related bills that did not make it through the legislature this year include: **HB 2518**, allowing retired volunteer medical workers from other states, territories and countries to obtain a license if they previously held a comparable health profession license and **SB 5106**, providing for animal emergency operations that did not make it out of the House Public Safety committee.

E-911 Funding for Interim Work

The budget includes \$200,000 for the Military Department to recommend a funding mechanism for the implementation of next generation 911. The Military Department is required to consult with stakeholders, including local governments and report to the legislature by December 1, 2008.

Office of Public Defense

The legislature passed **SB 6442**, the bill related to the Office of Public Defense (OPD). The OPD was established in 1996 to administer state funded appellate defense to indigent criminal defendants. OPD operates a grant program to assist counties with indigent defense needs at trial level, provide training and education for public defenders and operate a program that contracts for representation of indigent parents in dependency and termination proceedings. WSAC supported the bill that removes the sunset clause to allow the agency to continue beyond June 2008 and expands the advisory board to include a representative appointed by WSAC. The bill is waiting for signature by the governor.

Environment, Land Use & Resources

General Land Use/Permitting Bills

SSB 6609 – special agricultural building permits, DID NOT PASS. The Senate did not concur with the house amendments... and asked the House to recede from its position... the House then amended the bill to include both a task force as well as placing a statewide limit of \$75, plus mileage, on the amount that can be charged for specialty agricultural building permits that were pre-engineered and less than 2,500 square feet. The senate never took action on the proposed House Amendment. WSAC thanks all the Commissioners, Council Members and staff for providing information to WSAC and legislators!!!

SB 6892 - Concerning the time limits of school impact fee expenditures. The bill increases the length a jurisdiction can hold impact fees prior to expenditure. Did not pass.

HB 2110 - Allowing all fire protection facilities to use impact fees did not pass.

SHB 2575 - Forming a technical advisory group on fire sprinkler systems in private residences has been sent to the Governor.

E2SHB 3186- Authorizing the creation of beach management district passed and has been delivered to the Governor.

Climate Change

ESSB 6580 - Local Solutions to Climate Change/GMA passed and contains the base components of methodologies, pilot projects, and stakeholder work group. Delivered to the Governor.

Housing

ESHB 1727 – Planning to Ensure Sufficient Land and Densities to Accommodate Growth DID NOT PASS. The bill would have required consultation and cooperation between cities and counties in the adoption of rules and regulations in Urban Growth Areas. This bill still had language in Section 4/Subsection 3 that WSAC OPPOSED.

Annexation

SHB 2482 - Relating to the signature validation process for petitions that seek annexation, has been delivered to the Governor.

HB 2483 - Modifying assessed valuation requirements for the direct petition method of annexation, did not pass.

Natural Resources

The last week of the session has been characterized by budget compromises, negotiations over the few remaining bills in dispute and tributes on the floor to retiring members. Final touches were put on the following bills before they were sent to the Governor:

SB 6607 - Shellfish Protection Districts: The Senate concurred to the House amendments to the bill expanding the class of landowner subject to an assessment cap of \$500. Now all agricultural lands - not just dairy operators - will enjoy this preferential rate. The bill now goes to the Governor but counties and some environmental groups have expressed concern about this state preemption and may request a veto.

HB 2525 permits landowners to take special flood relief measures in times of declared emergencies or when counties declare a chronic flood danger. The bill will allow the Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue emergency hydraulic project approval under these circumstances.

HB 3186 - Allowing counties to establish beach management districts, was passed by both houses; as was **HB 2514** - Orca Whale Protection and **SB 6874** - Columbia River Settlement Account. Various flood relief measures passed which provide immediate relief to those counties hardest hit during the December 2007 storm event. The bills will also provide increased bonding capacity to pay for more flood relief projects and take advantage of federal matching funds, although some local voices in Lewis County have objected to the narrow focus of the federal recovery plan (**HB 3374** and **HB 3375**).

The supplemental state operating budget, **HB 2687**, negotiated between House and Senate budget writers and embodied in a conference report, provided funding for many bills and in some cases, resurrected bills which had failed to meet earlier deadlines. The budget included funding for bills dealing with the following natural resource topics:

Urban Forestry
Greenhouse gas emissions and jobs
Local Farms and Healthy Kids
Climate Change and GMA
Lewis County Watershed projects
Woody Debris removal
Flood recovery
Groundwater data analysis
Surface and groundwater studies
Beach management districts

Neah Bay rescue tug
Columbia River Water Delivery
Outer Coast Marine Resource Committees
Marine Protected Areas
Orca Whale Protection
Recreational Opportunities
Geological survey and unstable slope study
Ruckelshaus Land Use study
Climate Change research

Public Health & Human Services

Regional Support Network Legislation and Budget

After many iterations and lots of negotiation the final version of [SB 6404](#) passed and is on the way to the Governor's desk. The final legislation includes language that allows private entities to bid for an RSN, but the procurement must include a factor for non-profits include a scoring factor for proposals submitted by nonprofit entities; once a decision is made to voluntarily terminate a contract, an entity is prohibited from responding to a procurement to serve as a regional support network for five years and an RSN must give 90-day notice of intent to terminate, but 180 days advance notice of any issue that might cause either party to cancel a contract. The final budget includes \$6.25 million in non-Medicaid funding for RSNs and \$2.8 million for an RSN rate adjustment.

Developmental Disabilities Legislation

DSHS received funding to study the fiscal requirements associated with the early intervention services for children with disabilities and report back to the legislature by November 1, 2008 although [HB 2900/SB 6713](#) which provides for DSHS to contract with counties to provide early learning intervention services for children with developmental disabilities did not pass this year.

[SB 6376](#) and [HB 3078](#), to establish lifelong service programs for persons with developmental disabilities did not make it out of the fiscal committees but the final budget includes language requiring DSHS to work with counties to establish proposed policies for waiver clients for options such as pathway to employment, while waiting for paid employment to be developed. DSHS must report its findings, including fiscal impacts, to the legislature by November 1, 2008.

Other bills we were tracking, [SB 6313](#), that requires public schools and public institutions of higher education to conduct educational activities regarding disability history and people with disabilities and [HB 2903](#) creating an access coordinator for the administrative office of the courts have been delivered to the Governor.

Transportation & Public Works

Tolling

[SHB 1773](#) has been delivered to the Governor. It will move back to the house for concurrence. This legislation establishes the policy framework for the imposition of tolls on state-owned facilities. Either the Legislature or the Transportation Commission (if so delegated) can impose tolls, including variable pricing, on a facility or corridor. All revenue from a tolled facility or corridor must be used only to improve, preserve, or operate the facility or corridor on or in which it is collected

Transportation Improvement Board

Since the early 1990s, counties that wished to transfer a county road to a state highway, or petition for a state highway to become a county road would require Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) approval. This legislation ([SB 6321](#)) proposes to transfer this authority to the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC). WSAC supports. [SB 6321](#) did not pass.

Wetland Mitigation Banking

[SB 6761](#) has been delivered to the Governor. This bill States that the criteria for determining a service area for a wetland mitigation bank must include restricting, with exceptions, the maximum allowable service area to the water resource inventory area (WRIA) in which the bank is located. Most importantly, the Department of Ecology and the appropriate county or city in which the bank is located have final approval for determining the service area for specific banks.

Regional Transportation Investment Districts

SB 6771 – Regional Transportation Investment Districts, did not pass. This bill would have temporarily eliminated the opportunity for a regional transportation investment district to be formed under this chapter and said the participating county or counties shall not submit a ballot proposition to voters prior to November 1, 2009. This bill also had a study component to direct the joint transportation committee to conduct a study that analyzes regional financing of state-owned facilities by regional transportation investment districts.

Association News

National Conference Highlights Partnership Efforts

More than 2,000 elected and appointed county officials brought the concerns of America's counties to the nation's capital as part of the National Association of Counties' (NACo) 2008 Legislative Conference March 1-5 in Washington, D.C. The theme of this year's conference was "Restore the Partnership."

NACo President Eric Coleman, commissioner, Oakland County, Mich., led NACo members during the conference to help strengthen the voice of county government and Restore the Partnership with Congress and the administration.

For decades, county and federal governments have worked together to answer the challenges facing the nation. But in recent years, that partnership has begun to wane. To combat this, NACo has launched the 2008 Presidential Election Project to get each candidate to commit to restoring the federal-county partnership and to address the problems facing counties and their residents.

During the five-day conference, NACo members discussed legislative issues and programs important to counties and communities, met with members of Congress, attended professional development and educational workshops, and heard from nationally prominent political leaders and commentators.

NACo's Board of Directors adopted more than 30 new policy positions at its March 3 meeting, as recommended by the association's steering committees. (See pages 2-3) The board also accepted a series of recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Elections Committee, formed to review the process for electing NACo's second vice president. Coleman created the committee in the aftermath of the contentious 2007 election.

Among the committee's recommendations were:

- reordering the agenda at the annual business meeting to allow for at least 30 minutes to pass between the vote and the announcement of the election results so that delegates who wish to may lodge challenges to the vote, and
- giving second vice presidential candidates an opportunity to address delegates at the opening general session of the Legislative, WIR and Annual conferences.

Conference participants heard from several guest speakers including U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer, U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, Maryland Lt. Gov. Anthony G. Brown, on behalf of presidential candidate Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), and Washington, D.C. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty, on behalf of presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.). Political analysts Paul Begala and Pat Buchanan, Tom Siebel of the Meth Project, and Rep. James Clyburn (D-S.C), House majority whip, also addressed conference participants.

Meanwhile, conference educational sessions dealt with such high-profile topics as immigration and voting reform, climate change and sexual exploitation of children. *Thanks to those many members from this Washington that made the trip to the other Washington to attend the NACo conference and participate on behalf of our counties.*

Boards & Commissions

WACO Representative Needed on MRC

WACO Members have until March 28 to send a letter of interest and a brief resume if they wish to be considered for an appointment to the Municipal Research Council as a WACO representative.

The primary function of the Municipal Research Council (MRC) is to provide cities, towns and counties of Washington State with a comprehensive municipal research and service program which operates as the Municipal Research Service Center. The names of three nominees will be forwarded to the Governor for consideration.

Application Deadline Extended to March 20 for Statewide Boards and Commissions

To apply for any of the following statewide board and commission seats, send your contact information, the name of the position for which you are applying, and a short statement of interest by **March 20** to Michelle Zahrly at mzahrly@wacounties.org.

The WSAC Board will either nominate or appoint representatives according to statute at their March 27 regular meeting.

The following position is available to county department heads or County Commissioners, Council members or Executives:

Local Government Advisory Committee

The Local Government Advisory Committee, advisors to the State Auditor's Office, takes a lead role in setting statewide financial policies, including accounting, budgeting, and financial reporting. The Committee makes recommendations to the Legislature and responds when lawmakers change policies that effect the BARS prescription.

<http://www.sao.wa.gov/LocalGovernment/LGAC/Index.htm>

The following positions are available to County Commissioners, Council members or Executives only:

Ecosystem Coordinating Board –Alternate

Counties are represented by 7 individuals on the "Ecosystem Coordination Board"; Commissioner Kevin Ranker is the lead representative and an alternate is needed in the event he is unable to attend. http://www.psp.wa.gov/EB_about.html

Enhanced 911 Advisory Committee – Eastside Alternate http://emd.wa.gov/e911/e911_advisory_committee.shtml

Municipal Research Council - The Municipal Research Council is a state agency that provides a comprehensive research and services program for the 281 cities and towns and 39 counties of Washington State.

<http://www.mrsc.org/council.aspx#member>

Traffic Safety Commission – Serves at the pleasure of the Governor. Preference for this position will be given for current or past involvement in your local Community Traffic Safety Task Force, a Corridor Traffic Safety project or other efforts to improve traffic safety in your community. The opening was created when Snohomish Councilman Kirke Sievers stepped down from his seat in December. <http://www.wtsc.wa.gov/about/default.php>.

Transportation Improvement Board – County with population of 125,000 or more

The four year term will commence July 1, 2008. <http://www.tib.wa.gov/>

Washington Biodiversity Council – The Council’s primary task for the next year is to implement the recommendations in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, released last December. The Council is interested in eastside representation but this recruitment is open to all 39 counties. <http://www.biodiversity.wa.gov/council/index.html>

Climate Change Advisory Policy Committee

The Legislature passed **ESSB 6580**, relating to mitigating the impacts of climate change through the growth management act, which requires the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to convene an advisory committee to help prepare a report about local government global warming mitigation and adaptation. The report is due January 1, 2011 and must also consider the positive and negative impacts to affordable housing, employment, transportation costs, and economic development that result from addressing the impacts of climate change at the local level.

Three Commissioners, Council members or Executives are needed for the Committee, and must be from a county in a jurisdictional area of a growth management hearings board. The WSAC Board of Directors appoints these members.

Training & Upcoming Events

Washington Counties – [wacounties.org/Calendar of Events](http://wacounties.org/Calendar%20of%20Events)

State Workshop to Discuss Tribal Taxation, Economic Development

Area businesses, local governments and the general public are invited to attend one of the five upcoming workshops, called “Uncovering the Mystery of Tribal Sovereignty – Facts and fiction about tribes, state government, and their taxing authority.”

The Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs, in cooperation with the Department of Revenue and the Association of Washington Business, will lead the workshop, which will focus on Tribal Sovereignty and Tribal activity in Washington State. It is intended to help participants understand the law affecting anyone who does business with tribes and tribal members, or does business on a tribal reservation. Workshops are currently scheduled in the following local areas:

- Tacoma – March 25, 2008 (**morning session full** - *afternoon session still available*)
- Vancouver – March 27, 2008 (**morning session full** - *afternoon session still available*)
- Yakima – April 22, 2008
- Spokane – April 23, 2008
- Bellingham – May 22, 2008

Check-in starts at 8:30 a.m. and the workshops runs from 9 a.m. to noon for the morning sessions. Check-in for the afternoon session on March 25 and 27 begins at 1:30 p.m. and the workshop runs from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

To register for a workshop and get more information call 1-800-647-7706 or visit <http://dor.wa.gov> – click on *Workshops & education*.

Good Things

A- Washington

● Strength ● Mid-level ● Weakness

- **Population (rank):** 6,395,798 (14)
- **Average per capita income (rank):** \$27,346 (10)
- **Total state spending (rank):** \$33,914,746,000 (14)
- **Spending per capita (rank):** \$5,303 (24)
- **Governor:** Christine Gregoire (D)
- **First elected:** 11/2004
- **Senate:** 49 members: 32 D, 17 R
- **Term limits:** None
- **House:** 98 members: 63 D, 35 R
- **Term limits:** None

From Governing Magazine, March 2008

Washington has been a consistent leader in results-based governance. It was ahead of nearly all other states in controlling spending by keeping track of where investments were and were not paying off.

Under Governor Christine Gregoire, Washington's government has, if anything, moved further ahead on this front. Upon taking office, Gregoire instituted a Government Management Accountability and Performance program, or GMAP, which emphasizes periodic public forums during which key players on particular issues come together to problem-solve and report results to the governor and her leadership team. Participants walk away with well-formulated plans, due dates — and often commitments from the governor in exchange for vows for tangible improvements.

All of this has been helpful to Gregoire in negotiating with the legislature over major programs. "Everyone's got pent-up demand," says Wolfgang Opitz, deputy director of the Office of Financial Management, "but she's able to go to the legislature and say 'Here's the payoff in clear terms.'" Meanwhile, the governor and other key staff are communicating results to the citizens in a more complete way than has been the case in the past. The effort includes a regular schedule of town hall meetings and workshops that take place all over the state.

The GMAP mentality has filtered throughout the bureaucracy and is being put to good internal use by many agencies. Offices such as the Department of Personnel are adapting the concept to meet their particular challenges. Statewide monitoring of human resources indicators, including time-to-hire and turnover, is being used to make the state more competitive as an employer in a tight labor market. "Having that tool has been tremendous for me to look across the board at where we are as an employer," says Eva Santos, director of the Department of Personnel.

In a six-month period, aggressive statewide tracking of performance appraisals helped realize a 20 percent increase in the number of employees with up-to-date evaluations. Many agencies used the data to identify and root out sick-leave abuse. And agencies that demonstrate a high level of competency in managing employee performance now are allowed to use

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Money | A- |
| Long-Term Outlook | ● |
| Budget Process | ● |
| Structural Balance | ● |
| Contracting/Purchasing | ● |
| Financial Controls/Reporting | ● |
| People | A- |
| Strategic Workforce Planning | ● |
| Hiring | ● |
| Retaining Employees | ● |
| Training and Development | ● |
| Managing Employee Performance | ● |
| Infrastructure | B+ |
| Capital Planning | ● |
| Project Monitoring | ● |
| Maintenance | ● |
| Internal Coordination | ● |
| Intergovernmental Coordination | ● |
| Information | A |
| Strategic Direction | ● |
| Budgeting for Performance | ● |
| Managing for Performance | ● |
| Performance Auditing & Evaluation | ● |
| Online Services & Information | ● |

this information when making decisions about compensation or layoffs. The rigorous Human Resources Management Confirmation Process ensures that managers take employee performance issues seriously before linking them to rewards.

Bottom line: No state in the nation is better at developing and sharing information than Washington. That doesn't mean it isn't trying to expand its definition of excellence. A case in point is that the governor is pushing for more easily accessible financial data. "Even if I can figure out the right question to ask, I am all too often having them scramble to manually construct the data," she says.

Why? The state's financial information system has some flaws. It doesn't allow for activity-based accounting or costing, and in areas where relatively sophisticated data are available, that data can't always be shared seamlessly across the enterprise because of the decentralized approach the state takes to IT management. The state is slowly addressing these issues as it works toward replacing its remaining legacy computer systems, but any additional speed in this effort would be a boon. "If the accounting data were there, I could get them analyzing instead of compiling and dissecting," says Opitz.

One financial challenge was addressed in 2007 when the legislature approved a constitutionally based rainy day fund for the first time in the state's history. The fund only mandates that 1 percent of general fund revenues will be set aside — a relatively small amount. But it's still a significant step, because despite an exemplary revenue-estimating process, Washington continues to face challenges matching revenues and expenditures. The two-thirds majority required in the legislature to increase taxes has made it difficult for state leaders to raise the funds necessary for balance at times when revenue dips.

For additional data and analysis, go to pewcenteronthestates.org/gpp.

Attachments

NACo and Nationwide - A Partnership That Benefits County Employees

The National Association of Counties' (NACo) partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions began in 1980 when the program was designed exclusively for county employees to voluntarily save for their retirement years.

Since its inception, NACo's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan has grown to become one of the largest supplemental retirement income programs available to county employees. And today, more than 3,000 counties and county special districts participate in the program—that's nearly 400,000 county employees!

How it works

The 457 Deferred Compensation Plan presents a solution to retirement income needs by providing supplemental income. County employees enjoy the opportunity for tax-deferred growth of their money with no current federal income tax so that their funds can grow and compound faster. Withdrawals are taxed as ordinary income.

A few more details

Here are some of the program's management features that compliment NACo's endorsement:

- It's county employee-focused and technology-based so participants have easier access, administration and even more education than before.
- The program offers education resources through Morningstar experts in planning, investment-related education and guidance solutions.
- It's the only retirement program that receives oversight from an advisory committee composed of participating county officials from around the country. The entire committee meets three times per year, as well as through several sub-committees during the year.

- The program receives endorsements by 42 State Associations of Counties.
- An independent consultant conducts two annual comparative tests.
 - The “Competitiveness Test” compares Nationwide’s fixed rates to its top competitors in the 457 industry. Nationwide has ranked number one for the past 16 years!
 - The “Creditworthiness Test” compares rankings given by independent rating agencies. And Nationwide was cited as a strong, stable insurer in its most recent test.
- NACo oversees the annual marketing surveys that Nationwide conducts for the program to determine areas for improvement.
- Seven NACo staff members are dedicated to the growth and success of the 457 Deferred Compensation Program.

One last thought

Nationwide and NACo work together to keep the 457 Deferred Compensation Program competitive and to make sure it is the best complete value for your county employees.

For more information

Visit NACo on the Web – www.naco.org. Visit Nationwide on the Web – www.nrsforu.com. Or call (202) 942-4270.

NACo receives from Nationwide Retirement Solutions payment for NACo’s endorsement and license of its name and logo for use by Nationwide in connection with the NACo Deferred Compensation Plan and related products and services. These funds are used by NACo to enhance programs and services for the benefit of its members.

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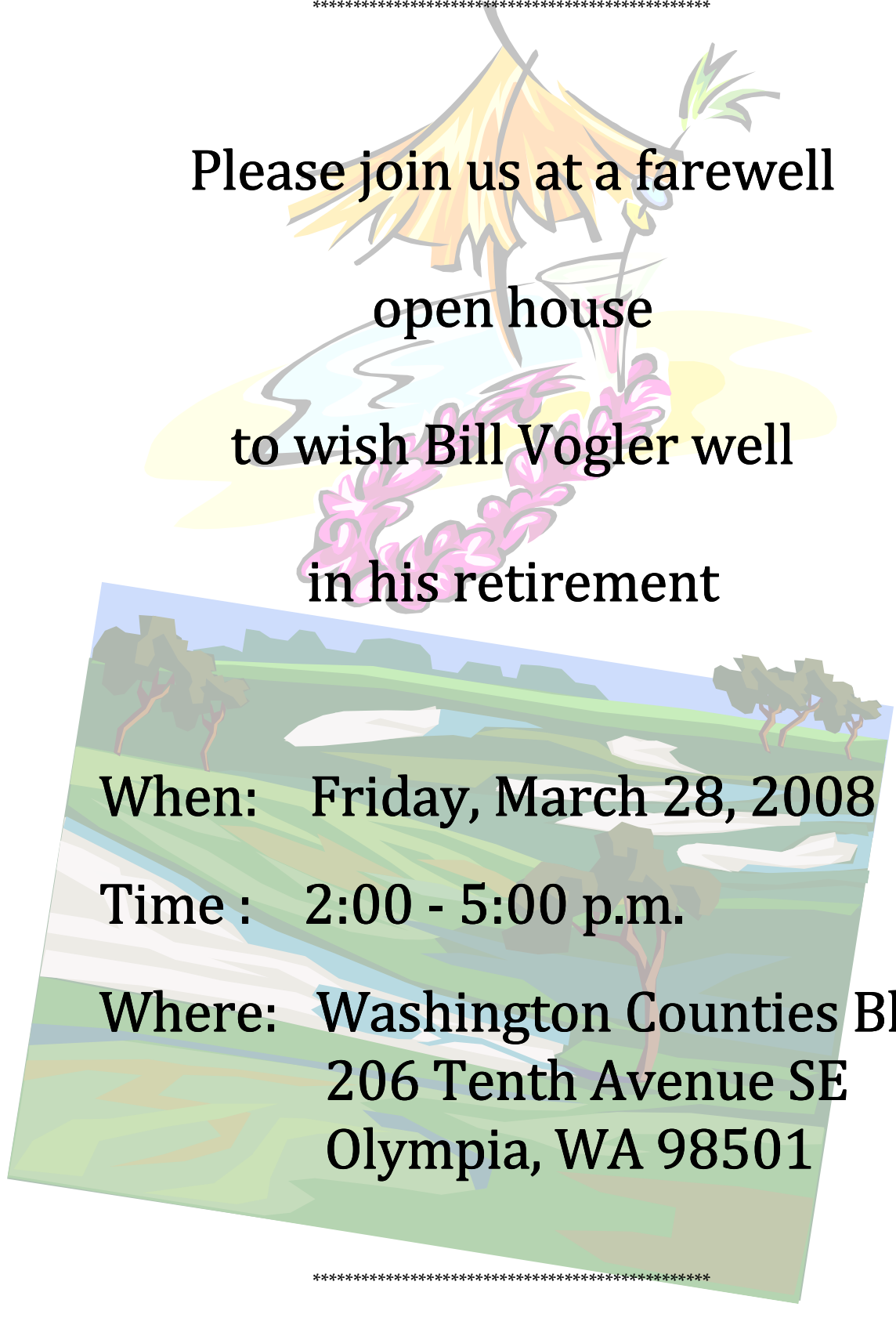
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NRM-2891AO-0705



Please join us at a farewell
open house
to wish Bill Vogler well
in his retirement

When: Friday, March 28, 2008

Time : 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Where: Washington Counties Bldg
206 Tenth Avenue SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Washington Counties Scholarship Statistics

| Name of Applicant | AwardedCounty where parents are employed | Year | Amount |
|------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------|
| Amber Stonecipher | Asotin County | 1998 | \$1,500 |
| | | Total | \$1,500 |
| Sarah L. Small | Chelan County | 1995 | \$1,060 |
| Mitzi Walter | | 2002 | \$1,500 |
| Kelsey Schmidt | | 2002 | \$1,500 |
| Griffin Thornock | | 2002 | \$1,500 |
| Erika Griffith | | 2004 | \$2,500 |
| | | Total | \$8,060 |
| Christopher Sohibert | Clallam County | 2004 | \$2,500 |
| Adrianna Creasey | | 2006 | \$2,500 |
| | | Total | \$5,000 |
| Andre Louis LaPierre | Clark County | 1998 | \$1,500 |
| Daniel Riley | | 2001 | \$1,500 |
| | | Total | \$3,000 |
| Amanda Viebrock | Douglas County | 2001 | \$1,500 |
| | | Total | \$1,500 |
| Jade Nicole Allison | Grant County | 1994 | \$1,030 |
| | | Total | \$1,030 |
| Emily McNeil | Island County | 1996 | \$1,090 |
| | | Total | \$1,090 |
| Miguel Angel Bocanegra | King County | 1997 | \$1,250 |
| John Joseph Mayes | | 1998 | \$1,500 |
| Leanne Josephson | | 1999 | \$1,500 |
| Kathleen Thielke | | 1999 | \$1,500 |
| Tara Martin | | 2000 | \$1,500 |
| Chiho Lai | | 2006 | \$2,500 |
| Gina Tichenor | | 2006 | \$2,500 |
| | | Total | \$12,250 |
| Natalia Chernenko | | Kitsap County | 2004 |
| Katie Porter | 2005 | | \$2,500 |
| | Total | | \$5,000 |
| Trisena Maxine John | Kittitas County | 1998 | \$1,500 |
| Trisena M. John | | 2000 | \$1,500 |
| | | Total | \$3,000 |
| Jeremy Hunter | Klickitat County | 1999 | \$1,500 |
| | | Total | \$1,500 |
| Julie Lynn Clark | | 1994 | \$1,030 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | Lewis County | Total | \$1,030 |
| Candice Jackson | | 1999 | \$1,500 |
| Paula J. Johnson | | 1997 | \$1,250 |
| | Mason County | Total | \$2,750 |
| Ashley Culp | | 2004 | \$2,500 |
| | Okanogan County | Total | \$2,500 |
| Nicole Drake | | 2006 | \$2,500 |
| Tarraah Lavinder | | 2007 | \$2,500 |
| | Pacific County | Total | \$5,000 |
| Jill Orlean Rasmussen | | 1996 | \$1,090 |
| Karina Snidrovska | | 1996 | \$1,090 |
| Jennifer K Sitts | | 1997 | \$1,250 |
| Lydia Yau | | 2003 | \$1,500 |
| Stephanie Ford | | 2003 | \$1,500 |
| Christa Srehle | | 2003 | \$1,500 |
| Anita deMahy | | 2003 | \$1,500 |
| Leslie Sammy-Sacuitne | | 2003 | \$1,500 |
| Angela Voiles | | 2005 | \$2,500 |
| Josiah Ward | | 2007 | \$2,500 |
| | Pierce County | Total | \$15,930 |
| Danny Hagen | | 2005 | \$2,500 |
| Michelle Liebrand | | 2005 | \$2,500 |
| | Skagit County | Total | \$5,000 |
| Annemarie R. Eklund | | 1993 | \$1,000 |
| Michael Aksdal | | 1993 | \$1,000 |
| Maegan Springer | | 1997 | \$1,250 |
| Kelly M. Trowbridge | | 2000 | \$1,500 |
| Chelsea Combest-Friedman | | 2002 | \$1,500 |
| Jaime Robinson | | 2004 | \$2,500 |
| | Snohomish County | Total | \$8,750 |
| Brian S. Boothe | | 2000 | \$1,500 |
| Michaela Rollins | | 2005 | \$2,500 |
| | Spokane County | Total | \$4,000 |
| Brenda Buckner | | 2001 | \$1,500 |
| Brenda Buckner | | 2002 | \$1,500 |
| | Stevens County | Total | \$3,000 |
| Elizabeth Olson | | 1998 | \$1,500 |
| Lindsay Diefenderfer | | 1999 | \$1,500 |
| Lindsay Diefenderfer | | 2000 | \$1,500 |
| Scott Henderson | | 2007 | \$2,500 |
| Jordan Swarhout | | 2007 | \$2,500 |
| | Thurston County | Total | \$9,500 |
| Lacey Thacker | | 1995 | \$1,060 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Wahiakum County | Total | \$1,060 |
| Christina Wolf | | 1996 | \$1,090 |
| Megan Cartwright | | 2001 | \$1,500 |
| Christian Lloyd | | 2001 | \$1,500 |
| Sarah Anderson | | 2007 | \$2,500 |
| | Whatcom County | Total | \$6,590 |
| Total Awards = 63 | | Total | \$108,040 |