

the Courthouse Journal

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

July 3, 2008
Issue No. 18

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

County Clerks Meet in Asotin County

The Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC) visited Clarkston in search of more of the sunshine and warm hospitality than they enjoyed in 2000 and they were not disappointed. Asotin County Clerk Linda Hough and her staff hosted WSACC's 102nd Annual Conference last week for clerks and staff from 32 counties. Superior Court Judge William Acey gave a humorous perspective on the history of the region following a welcome from Asotin County Commissioner Doug Mattoon.

WSACC President Kathy Martin, Walla Walla County Clerk, kept the group on track during four days packed with presentations, legislation, committee reports and discussion of a myriad of issues. Supreme Court Justice Mary Fairhurst informed and entertained as she spoke on issues relating to the Court but finished with the Fairhurst family "Birthday Song" for clerks celebrating another milestone. Speakers John Bell, Administrative Office of the Courts; Mo West, Justice Information Network; and Becky Miner and Elaine Hale of the Washington State Patrol addressed the sharing and dissemination of data that is so critical to the justice system. June Timmons reported on the operation and status of the Digital Archives in Cheney.

Thursday a half-day session on "Managing Across Generations" was presented by Connie Poulsen, the Director of Leadership and Management Education for Peninsula College Port Angeles. The session was designed to give attendees insight into the events that have shaped each generation and how that forms attitudes about work. It included practical ideas on how to attract, motivate and keep great employees of all age groups and be a more effective manager.

Thursday evening was a unique combination of fun, games, good company and well-earned awards and the banquet was fitting to the conference. Jefferson County Clerk Ruth Gordon was awarded the coveted "Clerk of the Year" for her outstanding service and dedication to WSACC. The Lewiston Civic Theater presented a medley of short plays featuring comedy, history and even lively music from the speakeasy era of the 1920s. Special guests were retired Wahkiakum County Clerk Phyllis Wika and former King County Clerk Ken Helm and his wife Connie.

The evening was complete when the long-standing tradition of a racing competition was held. For many years Kitsap County Clerk Dave Peterson has organized and

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The Courthouse Journal

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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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conducted races involving cars, boat, planes and anything else that moves. Many entries are handmade or extreme makeovers. Even more interesting than the race itself were the rules. They are developed, adopted and directed by Peterson himself and may vary from year to year.



Washington State Association of County Clerks 102nd Annual Conference, Clarkston, Washington June 26, 2008

Counties Participating in the L&I Retro Program Receive a \$337,482 Refund for Reducing Worker's Compensation Claims

Retrospective Rating (Retro) Plans are optional programs offered by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to allow employers to recapture a portion of their workers compensation premiums. WSAC offers a Retro Plan that rewards member counties for maintaining a safe workplace and controlling workers' compensation costs. The lower the group's claims costs, the higher the refunds. This year, WSAC distributed \$337,482 back to the 26 counties that participated in the 2004 retro rating year. A 3 x 5 foot check was presented to all County Commissioners in Counties received a refund at the Joint District Meeting in June.

Participating counties receiving a refund included:

Adams	\$9,255	Mason	\$26,090
Asotin	\$5,436	Okanogan	\$19,810
Columbia	\$3,320	Pacific	\$5,640
Douglas	\$10,309	Pend Oreille	\$9,857
Ferry	\$4,670	San Juan	\$7,331
Franklin	\$12,232	Skagit	\$51,865
Garfield	\$2,598	Skamania	\$16,050
Grays Harbor	\$30,453	Stevens	\$10,666
Island	\$12,707	Thurston	\$23,190
Jefferson	\$18,355	Wahkiakum	\$3,322
Klickitat	\$8,002	Walla Walla	\$10,432
Lincoln	\$12,036	Whitman	\$19,536

Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:

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

Bill Information: www.leg.wa.gov

Congratulations and thank you to all County staff who work hard to keep our Counties safe. For more information about joining the Retro Pool or County Workplace Safety Alliance, please contact Tonia Sugarman, L&I Retro Program Consultant at (360) 586-4219 ext 128 or tsugarman@wacounties.org.



Presentation Proposals Needed for 2008 WSAC Annual Conference

WSAC is now soliciting proposals for presentations from outside speakers and organizations for its 102nd Annual Conference, November 11-14, 2008 in Yakima County. Specifically, WSAC is seeking:

- One-hour long presentation sessions on current policy areas affecting Counties across Washington
- Issues that will or may be addressed by the 2009 Legislative session
- Interesting and engaging speakers who customize information to County elected officials and department heads

To submit a proposal, send:

- no more than a one-page overview of your topic and presentation content
- name(s), title(s) and contact information for each presenter
- format for presentation (single speaker/panel, content delivery time, Q&A time, PowerPoint, handouts)
- Submitter name and contact information, if different from presenter(s)

to Michelle Zahrly, Communications & Member Services Director, WSAC at mzahrly@wacounties.org

Proposals are due Monday, August 4 at 5 p.m. Those selected for inclusion on this year's agenda will be asked to submit more detailed information at that time. For more information, call Michelle at (360) 586-4219 ext. 112 or talk to the WSAC Policy Director familiar with your issue area.

Thank you to the many County staff, partners, affiliates, state agency staff and others who each year contribute to our conference program. We appreciate your time and enthusiasm to bring relevant topics for further discussion to our members.

Environment, Land Use & Resources

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 16, 2008 - 08-165

More Tire Piles Across the State to be Removed

OLYMPIA – The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) has awarded a contract to a team of companies to continue cleanup of tire piles in Washington. Tire Disposal and Recycling, a Portland-based business, and L&S Tire Company, from Lakewood and Spokane, will remove approximately 630,000 tires from 47 sites under the \$1.2 million contract.

Fifteen of those tire pile sites are located in the northwest counties of King, Kitsap, Skagit, and Snohomish. The other 32 identified tire pile sites are scattered across the state from Clallam Bay to Grays Harbor to Moses Lake. (Link to list of site locations: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/news/2008news/2008-165.html#TireCleanups>.)

Storage of 800 or more scrap tires requires a state license as well as a solid waste handling permit. Ecology uses funds from the Waste Tire Removal Account established by the Legislature to clean up unauthorized tire piles in the state. Funding for the program comes from a \$1 fee charged on each new replacement vehicle tire sold in Washington. Ecology continues to work closely with county health districts to identify existing unauthorized tire piles in the state.

Tire cleanup efforts under this latest contract will start this summer and are expected to continue through 2009. Tires will be removed and hauled to processing facilities in Portland, Lakewood, or Spokane and separated for reuse, recycling or disposal.

“We continue to make progress cleaning up this public health and safety threat, one tire pile at a time,” said Laurie Davies, manager of Ecology’s Solid Waste Program. “These piles can become breeding grounds for mosquitoes, nesting places for rodents, and present fire hazards.”

In 2005, Ecology identified 54 tire pile sites in the state containing 3 million tires (refer to the 2005 report at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0507043.pdf>). Today the total number of sites across the state totals 140 tire piles that contain 5 million waste tires. These tire piles are located in 27 counties across the state.

Under contracts for Eastern Washington and southwest areas of the state, cleanup has been completed at 44 waste tire sites, removing 3.6 million tires. Ecology officials expect to complete the cleanup of the remaining 96 waste tire piles across the state by the end of 2010. These cleanup efforts are expected to cost a total of more than \$8 million from the specific fund for clean-ups.

“Increased enforcement of existing laws and more emphasis on recycling will help reduce the need for clean up of future tire piles,” said Davies. Prevention efforts involve collaboration with Washington State Patrol, police departments, fire departments, county code enforcement, county public health, and other environmental compliance agencies.

Media Contacts: Kathy Davis, media relations, 360-407-6149; Laurie Davies, Solid Waste Program, 360-407-6103

For more information: Ecology’s Tire Cleanup website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/tires/>
Ecology’s website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>

Skagit County Approves Resolution to Address Climate Change

Commissioners sign resolution establishing program and task force on sustainability and climate change

SKAGIT COUNTY – On Tuesday, June 24, 2008, the Skagit County Board of Commissioners signed a resolution establishing a program and task force for sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The resolution addresses projected impacts on Skagit County citizens and infrastructure, caused by severe weather, rising temperatures, and rising sea levels as well as the cost of fossil fuel, which has risen dramatically in recent months.

“Many counties throughout the nation are reducing global warming pollution and becoming more energy efficient due to programs like these,” said Skagit County Commissioner Sharon Dillon.

The resolution calls for Skagit County to create an inventory of county government’s operational greenhouse gas emissions and implement policies, programs, and operations to achieve significant, measurable, and sustainable reductions.

It also calls for Skagit County employees to conserve electricity and fossil fuel, reduce paper consumption, and plastic bottle use.

A 12-member Climate Action and Sustainability Taskforce will be appointed by subsequent resolution. The citizen taskforce will assist and advise Skagit County officials on how to satisfy the county’s commitment to the resolution.

For further information, contact:

Dan Berentson
Communications Director
360-419-3461

[Related: Download the Resolution](#)

<http://www.skagitcounty.net/Common/asp/default.asp?d=Home&c=General&P=press/063008.htm>

Public Health & Human Services

Cheryl Strange Joins WSAC Staff

WSAC Executive Director Eric Johnson and Association of County Human Services (ACHS) President Jackie Henderson are pleased to announce the appointment of Cheryl Strange to the position of Policy Director – Health and Human Services.

Cheryl joins WSAC staff with an outstanding educational background and set of professional experiences including:

- Director, Health Services Operation, Department of Corrections
- Assistant Director, Mental Health Division, DSHS
- Program Manager, Division of Developmental Disabilities, DSHS
- Director of Medical Services, Behavioral Health Resources
- Mental Health Nurse –Therapist, Providence, St. Peter Hospital
- Masters of Public Administration, Seattle University
- Bachelor of Arts, The Evergreen State College
- Associate of Technical Arts, Nursing, South Puget Sound Community College

Cheryl joins the WSAC staff on August 4 and will provide staff support to the Association of County Human Services and WSAC in these policy areas:

- Developmental Disabilities
- Mental Health
- Chemical Dependency
- Housing
- Public Health

Please join WSAC and ACHS in welcoming Cheryl to the “county family.”

Association News

WSAC’s Member Services Coordinator, Ginni Peppert, Announces her Retirement

Nearly everyone associated with WSAC knows Ginni Peppert. Members, affiliate members, partners, stakeholders, exhibitors, NACo staff (and the list goes on) have relied on Ginni as the first contact and source of reliable and timely information for the past 14 years.

When a conference room was needed at the last minute, a form was missing, or a deadline was approaching Ginni answered the call, solved the problem and did it with a smile. Ginni’s last call for WSAC will be taken on July 18, when she ends her long run at the Association to begin her retirement.

“To me personally, as both a former WSAC member and now as your Executive Director, I can tell you that her energy, her commitment to service, and her true and genuine admiration for our WSAC members will be greatly missed,” said Eric Johnson.

Ginni started her WSAC employment as a one-week temporary employee in 1994. In addition to providing administrative services, she has become a travel planning pro (coordinating multiple schedules and zipping members to NACo meetings around the country) and is the primary event planner for the Association. Ginni has been known to single handedly negotiate a guaranteed hotel rate four years into the future while at the same time wrestling a second complimentary hospitality suite and reduced meeting room fees from the sales staff.

Ginni says her future plans include completing neglected projects around her home, traveling to exotic locales, taking long walks and enjoying time with friends.

Please join all of WSAC in taking this time to thank Ginni (gpeppert@wacounties.org) for her service to WSAC, our members, our staff and our affiliates. She will be missed by all who have worked with her and interacted with her over the years. Best of times in your retirement, Ginni!

Many County Commissioner, Council and Executive Seats Up for Election This Year

The 2008 filings for County Commissioner, Councilmember and Executive positions, which closed June 6, are attached to the Journal. There are a large number of seats being challenged or vacated this year.

Elections are changing. In addition to the statewide top-two primary ruling affecting all races, Pierce County is implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for the General Election this year as a result of a charter amendment that the voters approved in November, 2006. RCV will be used only for the assessor-treasurer, county executive, the four council

members who are up for election this year and the county sheriff. In 2010, RCV will be used for the auditor's position and the three county council races. No other offices will be affected. This will be a first in Washington State.

Best wishes to those of you who are running!

King County Clerks Elect Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC) President

King County Clerk Barbara Miner was recently elected president of the Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC) at their 102nd Annual Conference in Clarkston. She has been the King County Superior Court Clerk/Director of the Department of Judicial Administration since 2000. Miner has been very active with WSACC and has held the positions of Director of Legislation and Director of Committees/Vice President and served on many statewide and county wide committees related to clerk and court issues. Miner has worked in local government for 24 years, 20 of those years in the King County Clerk's Office.

Other officers elected include: Vice President, Cowlitz County Clerk Roni Booth; Secretary, Lincoln County Clerk Peggy Semprimoznik; and Treasurer, Benton County Clerk Josie Delvin. President Miner will appoint the Legislative and Education Chairs.

Feds and State Change Mileage Reimbursement Rate as of July 1

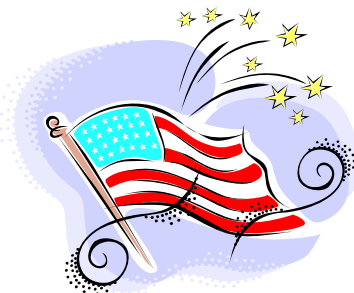
Due to the high cost of gasoline prices, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced last week it has increased the allowable mileage rate for the last six months of 2008 from \$0.505 per mile up to \$0.585 per mile. The State of Washington has decided to match the IRS rate to reimburse employees for the costs they incur when using their own vehicles on state business.

The state change, effective **July 1, 2008**, adopts the increased reimbursement rate for privately owned vehicle (POV) mileage set by the U.S. Treasury Department, as allowed by RCW 43.03.060. **Subsection 10.90.20** (<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/10.90.htm>) – **Reimbursement Rates for Lodging, Meals and Private Vehicle Mileage** has been revised to reflect the new mileage reimbursement rate.

Boards & Commissions

Sheriff Elfo Appointed to Criminal Justice Training Commission

Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire recently appointed Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo to a six-year term on the Criminal Justice Training Commission. Elfo took office in January of 2003 and oversees a staff of 200. The Commission is charged with providing training to all law enforcement, corrections and public safety professionals in the state.



Happy July 4th - Be Safe!

Training & Upcoming Events

Washington Counties – wacounties.org/Calendar of Events

Introducing Situational Leadership for the County Training Institute

Leadership Workshop

Do you and your employees want to be more confident, capable, and successful in your jobs? Would you like to save yourself time by building skills and attitudes that allow people to be more self-reliant?

Sign up now for Situational Leadership, based on principles from *The One Minute Manager* by best-selling author Ken Blanchard

Situational Leadership will help you

- + Improve communication;
- + Save time by empowering your people; Develop others' self-reliance; and
- + Retain your most talented employees.

July 29, 30, 31, 2008

Wenatchee

8:30 to 4:30

Delivered by Blanchard trained and certified instructors

**FREE
Training opportunity**

Register today at

www.countytraininginstitute.com

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www.countytraininginstitute.com
for information regarding upcoming courses**

SITUATIONAL
LEADERSHIP

July 10-11, 2008

Presented by the Clark County and the City of Vancouver, Washington

**Southwest Washington Sustainability Conference & Trade Show: Climate, Commerce, Community --
A Call to Action**

Hilton Vancouver Washington

301 W. 6th Street, Vancouver, WA 98660

Join other professionals, key decision makers and leaders dedicated to the region's social, economic and environmental sustainability at this important two-day conference designed to provoke thought, solutions and action. The conference features a dynamic list of nationally-recognized speakers, including Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Bob Willard, Jerome Ringo, William Calvin and more. Breakout sessions include: triple-bottom-line corporate strategies, green building, economic development, renewable energy, climate change, transportation, social equity and consumer responsibility. Interactive sessions will provide further opportunity for brainstorming and networking. Register at www.brownpapertickets.com by June 20 for early rates of \$275. See www.cityofvancouver.us/conference for more information.

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Governor's 2008 Economic and Workforce Development Conference
The Next Washington: Growing Jobs & Income in a Global Economy
September 3 - 4 • Lynnwood Convention Center

REGISTER NOW:
www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/economy/conference

Connect with innovators from across the state to move Washington forward
Join us at this year's Economic and Workforce Development Conference to network and brainstorm how to drive economic development locally in a global economy.

Learn new strategies, discuss hot topics, listen to best practices, and make important connections to help move your community forward. The conference program features:

- An update from Gov. Chris Gregoire on *The Next Washington*
- Recognition of 2008 Economic and Workforce Development Award recipients
- Cutting-edge workshops on industry clusters, Innovation Partnership Zones and the green economy
- Compelling breakout sessions to help your organization thrive in a global economy

REGISTER NOW:
www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/economy/conference

September 3 - 4, 2008
Lynnwood Convention Center



 **CTED** | Community, Trade and Economic Development
Governor's Economic and Workforce Development Conference
PO Box 42525
Olympia WA 98504-2525



Courthouse Ramblings

Our sympathies go to the family and friends of retired Walla Walla County Clerk **Roberta Lucas**. Lucas held that office from 1956 until 1974. She was 94 years old and passed away in College Place.

Attachments

Jefferson County Clerk Wins Statewide Honor

By Erik Hidle, Peninsula Daily News

Jefferson County Clerk Ruth Gordon is the 2008 Washington State Clerk of the Year.

Gordon, who has served since 2006, said she was surprised by the decision of the Washington State Association of County Clerks board of directors last month.

"This is pretty cool because I have only been in office for three and a half years," Gordon said on Wednesday.

"Usually, you have to have been in the position for a bit longer.

"It's a nice compliment to receive this."

Gordon said she didn't know what prompted the award, but felt that hard work and community involvement had something to do with it.

"I have really thrown myself into my work," Gordon said. "I work really hard, and I take my job very seriously.

"I also join committees who are doing work that really does matter."

Gordon serves on eight committees, including the Washington Coalition for Open Government, the Gender and Justice Commission, Board of Judicial Administration Best Practices Committee and the Jefferson County Democrats.

Gordon wondered if humor played a part in her receiving the award.

"There is a quality to being a clerk that is very serious," she said.

"But I also try to bring a light-hearted quality to the job, and I try to make it as fun as possible."

She also credits her staff.

"I study this job hard," she said. "But I owe my success to the people around me.

"I am very fortunate to have such a great staff in this office."



Gordon is attempting to get that staff a little more room.

She wants to move the clerk's office to a larger area, on the southwest side of the ground floor of the Jefferson County Courthouse that is now partially used by the county assessor's office.

She pushed the idea during a meeting with the three Jefferson County commissioners on Wednesday.

"Our location now is just too tight," she said.

"Downstairs would make for a much better location, even if we have to give up a great view to do it."

Gordon said that, not only would moving her office downstairs create more space for her and her staff, but also it would also open space for a jury assembly area and provide a more private area for the law library – which currently shares space with the Superior Courtroom.

Gordon, whose term ends in 2010, said she isn't declaring her candidacy yet,

"But I don't really anticipate anything changing here," she said. "I am starting to feel comfortable here, and I like my job."