

# the Courthouse Journal

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

October 16, 2008  
Issue No. 25

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Courthouse Journal*

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

## Register Now for Upcoming WSAC Annual Conference

Time to Register for WSAC Annual Conference November 11-14 at the Yakima Convention Center. Online registration is open for the annual gathering at [http://www.wacounties.org/wsac/wsac\\_conference.asp](http://www.wacounties.org/wsac/wsac_conference.asp). See article page 5.

## Spokane Conference Highlights WACO's 50 Years!

The elegance of The Davenport Hotel and Tower set the stage as the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO) celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference October 6 to 10. Skagit County Assessor Mark Leander presided over the conference.

Each of the nearly 200 county and state officials who attended would be hard pressed to name a favorite event. As the opening gavel fell on Wednesday's session, Spokane County Commissioner Bonnie Mager welcomed the group to Spokane following the posting of the colors by the Spokane County Sheriff's Honor Guard and an inspiring rendition of the National Anthem by Pacific County Clerk Virginia Leach.

The initial session was high-spirited and energetic thanks to keynote speaker John Curley. Curley has won numerous Emmy's and is best known as host of Seattle's television show, *Evening Magazine*. His message to county officials was "recognition" – the expansion of all our horizons, experiences and networks that can be achieved by simply taking the time to truly "recognize" the people we come in contact with on a daily basis.

The laughter continued at lunch with comedian John Keister, who, with his quick wit, brought the humorous side of living and parenting in Washington to everyone. John was the host of Seattle's late night television show *Almost Live*. Special guests included Don Stapley, President of the National Association of Counties (NACo); Senate Democratic Caucus Leader Senator Lisa Brown; Senator Margarita Prentice, Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair; Ways and Means Committee members Senators Karen Fraser, Brian Hatfield, Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Phil Rockefeller, and Mark Schoesler; Senator Chris Marr; Representative Gary Alexander; State Court Administrator Jeff Hall; Spokane County Commissioner Bonnie Mager; WSAC Secretary-Treasurer Stevens County Commissioner Merrill Ott; WSAC Executive Director Eric Johnson; and, members of the Senate Ways and Means Staff.

## ***the Courthouse Journal***

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**Job announcements & links to County Employment pages at:**

<http://wacounties.org/>

The afternoon opened with an address by NACO President Don Stapley that was well received. Stapley is a Supervisor from Maricopa County in Phoenix, Arizona. During his presidency it is his goal to further initiatives to restore the federal/county partnership in providing medical benefits to inmates of county jails; to encourage “green government” by moving more to ecologically sound building methods and transportation in county fleets. He also hopes to begin “a civilized dialogue” on the issue of immigration.

WACO was extremely fortunate to have the Senate Ways and Means Committee meet in conjunction with the conference as part of its Property Tax Meetings in various locations around the state. Senator Prentice chaired the Committee while Kittitas County Prosecutor Greg Zempel assisted by moderating the discussions. This is a “first” for WACO and the Committee and it proved to be an especially interesting discussion. The subjects included property tax and related issues with time allowed for WACO members to make brief presentations on a variety of topics including jails, the archives, the impact of non-supplanting language in local taxing options, property tax statements, fiscal impacts of courts rules, updates on low income property tax deferrals, and even the success story of Senate Bill 5990, which provides for collection of offender obligations by county clerks.

At the Wednesday business meeting, Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman, chair of the Nominating Committee, reported for the committee and introduced the slate of candidates to be considered. Each spoke briefly to the membership. Jefferson County Clerk Ruth Gordon presented an updated Code of Ethics for consideration by the members, which was adopted.

Jefferson County Treasurer Judi Morris, WACO President-Elect, reported for the Legislative Committee and asked each of the seven affiliate representatives to speak for the proposals developed by the group they represent. Questions and discussion of each proposal followed. Adoption of the package was tabled until the Friday morning business meeting to allow for a full discussion of certain measures.

It was “Back to the 50s night” at Wednesday evening’s reception to honor WACO President Mark Leander. Not since 1958 when WACO first met, have so many poodle skirts come out of storage or so many letter sweaters come out of mothballs. The gala event was made even more-so by the surprise appearance of “the King” himself. Elvis does indeed live and proceeded to “rock and roll” for over two hours. Elvis moved through all the gyrations that upset so many concerned parents so many decades ago. It must be reassuring to those same parents that rock and roll did not spell doom for their teenage children who





now inhabit county courthouses and now faithfully serve the public. The décor and food were a perfect complement to an evening that really “rocked!”

Tuesday and Thursday were devoted to separate affiliate meetings and trainings. The Washington Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (WACME) took full advantage of the time and offered two days of training. Spokane County Medical Examiners Drs. Sally Aiken and John Howard presented Elder Abuse and SIDS, respectively, while Dr. Katherine Taylor, King County Forensic Anthropologist and Dr. Guy Tasa, State Physical Anthropologist discussed their respective responsibilities followed by Dan Read, an FBI photographer on Forensic Photography. The two days also

allowed time for many committee meetings and joint meetings between affiliate groups and with state agencies.

San Juan County Prosecutor Randy Gaylord assembled some energetic and willing WACO walkers and runners in the pre-dawn and damp hours of Thursday morning for a brisk jaunt through Riverfront Park and awarded each with (what else!) a souvenir flashlight!

Thursday evening’s banquet would have been quite subdued after celebrating the ‘50s if WACO Executive Board members Judi Morris and Barb Wagner had not decided to join the ranks of the “bald.” Lack of hair has been a long standing joke among the male Board members. At one point, both Judi and Barb emerged for a picture wearing “bald” wigs for a photo op. The move spurred laughter in the audience and President Leander quipped that newly-elected Secretary-Treasurer Randy Gaylord would be missing some of his hair after a few years on the Executive Board. President Leander shared many of his personal thoughts on the past year and extended his heartfelt thanks to those who served with him before numerous awards were made and the new officers sworn to serve.



#### **Public Service Awards:**

At the annual banquet on Thursday evening, several county officials who will retire at the end of 2008 were recognized. They included Wahkiakum County Clerk Barbara Blix, 14 years in office; Yakima County Prosecutor Ron Zirkle, 7 years in office; Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer Ken Madsen for 8 years in office; and Skagit County Assessor Mark Leander for 14 years in office. Grant County Prosecutor John Knodell was also recognized for serving 19 years in office. Knodell has been elected to the Grant County Superior Court Bench.

#### **Certified Public Official:**

Island County Treasurer Linda Riffe was awarded a certificate by Mason County Treasurer Lisa Frazier for successfully completing all the educational requirements of the Washington Counties’ Certified Public Official (CPO) Program.

#### **Distinguished Service Award:**

In 1985 the WACO Board of Trustees created the Distinguished Public Service Award to recognize retired and former county officials who have made contributions to county government and their communities that are truly outstanding. Retired Skamania County Clerk Lorena Hollis was presented the award by King County Clerk Barb Miner and Stevens

County Clerk Patty Chester who had nominated Hollis for her dedication and service to the county clerks' association, WACO and her contributions to the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center and Skamania County.

#### **New WACO Board Officers and Board Members:**

Grant County Superior Court Judge Elect John Knodell swore the newly elected leadership of WACO into office: President Judi Morris, Jefferson County Treasurer; President-elect Barb Wagner, Benton County Assessor; Vice President



Mike Harum, Chelan County Sheriff; Secretary-Treasurer Randy Gaylord, San Juan County Prosecutor. The group also included Trustee-at-Large Position 2, Whatcom County Assessor Keith Willnauer, representing counties with populations from 125,000 to 500,000; and, Position 4, Jefferson County Clerk Ruth Gordon, representing counties from 12,000 to 40,000.

The conference closed with the continuation of the business meeting where the financial report was given, resolutions and memorials adopted, and the 2009 Legislative Package was adopted. A local option sales tax for emergency preparedness was removed from the package at the request of the sheriffs' association prior to adoption.

The success and great attendance at WACO's 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was largely attributable to the generosity of several member groups and other sponsors. WACO wants to thank the assessors, auditors, coroners and medical examiners, clerks, prosecutors, sheriffs, treasurers, Key Bank, Bank of America, Washington Counties' Insurance Fund, Washington Counties' Risk Pool, and Manatron, Inc. Supporting Sponsors include US Archiving and Imaging Services and DSI Digital Scanning and Imaging. Special thanks go to Doug MacDonald of US Archiving. Doug engineered and manned a raffle and used book sale to benefit the Washington Counties Scholarship Fund. The endeavor netted nearly \$800 and left everyone with a lot of great reading!

#### **Future WACO Conferences:**

September 28-October 2, 2009 at Semiahmoo Resort at Blaine  
October 4-8, 2010, The Lodge at Suncadia, Cle Elum  
October 3-7, 2011, The Heathman Lodge at Vancouver

As the week concluded, the words of Davenport Hotel historian Tom McArthur, who briefly introduced everyone to the "hotel with a soul" and recounted its history and colorful past earlier in the week, came back to us. He said founder Louie Davenport wanted "this to be a place where we enjoyed our stay, be glad we came, and eager to return." And so we are -- thank you, Spokane!

#### **WACO's New President Comments**

What an exciting way to start a new year as president of WACO – celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> year as an association!

Debbie, Kathy, Bob, Robin and Ginni Peppert outdid themselves putting on an excellent conference. We all had a chance to honor Mark Leander for the great job he did as President and to wish him well into retirement.

One of the highlights was the Ways and Means Committee meeting at the Davenport, giving our membership an opportunity to bring pressing issues to the committee's attention. Senator Prentice was very pleased with our presentations and the forum.

As we move into this new year, the WACO Board will address the hiring of a new Deputy Director, updating the WACO personnel policy and continuing the work with WASC and AWC on combined legislative strategies.

The Board looks forward to serving you and appreciates your input on issues before us.

~~Judi Morris, WACO President

## Register Now for WSAC Annual Conference

WSAC Members and Affiliate Members are making plans now to attend the Annual Conference November 11-14 at the Yakima Convention Center. Online registration is open for the annual gathering at [http://www.wacounties.org/wsac/wsac\\_conference.asp](http://www.wacounties.org/wsac/wsac_conference.asp).

The conference kicks off with a Round Robin of Yakima winery tasting rooms on Tuesday evening, November 11. Yakima County is increasingly being placed on the map for their award winning wines, beautiful winery destinations and resorts and viticulture. Sample a few of the award-winning grape concoctions while catching up with old friends during the Opening Taste Tour.

A variety of sessions and speakers are scheduled to assist counties with such pressing issues as budgets, keeping up with IT innovations, open government tips, meeting new statewide Climate Change targets, the future of farming, new jail models, and more. In addition WSAC has teamed up with the Association of County Clerks of the Board/Council and WSU Extension to bring two outstanding national speakers on the topics of motivational leadership & communication and multi-generational workplaces. And WSAC members along with County Engineers and Public Works Directors will dig into transportation issues with Joint Transportation Committee members during an in-depth round table discussion.



New to this year's conference are offerings from the County Training Institute (CTI). CTI will bring the renowned Pacific Institute to Yakima as well as host a Budget & Finance course led by Clark County's high demand Glenn Olson.

Thursday evening's banquet will be an opportunity to bid farewell to the many WSAC members who are retiring and leaving office this year. There will also be many chances on the agenda to network, engage in policy discussions, gather new ideas and find new resources through the Exhibitor Fair. We hope to see you in Yakima next month!

Thanks to our Conference Sponsors:  
Washington Counties Insurance Fund, Gold Sponsor  
Waste Management, President's Reception Sponsor  
Washington Counties Risk Pool  
Nationwide Retirement Solutions  
Les Schwab Tires

## **WACO Adopts Code of Ethics**

The following was adopted by the WACO Membership on October 7, 2008, in Spokane, Washington.

“It is the duty of every county official to fulfill his/her responsibility to serve the public good with integrity, respect, courage, compassion and diligence.

It is the further duty of each official to foster a shared spirit of service among public employees of his/her office; to act so as to enhance public trust in local government; to implement ethical and efficient business practices; and to faithfully abide by the oath of office, laws and regulations, applying them impartially in all situations without fear or favor.

Officials must protect the public’s best interest and keep safe all government resources, not allowing their use for political purposes or personal gain. Neither contributions to a political fund nor service in a political campaign should be required of any employee.”

## **WACO Adopts 2009 Legislation Package**

The WACO general membership adopted their 2009 Legislative Package in Spokane on October 10.

The highlights of the package are grouped by affiliate, each of whom are allowed to bring forth two bills, and are listed below.

### **Assessors:**

Achieving the goal of Annual Revaluation for all the counties by 2014.

Improve Ballot Title Information.

### **Treasurers:**

Amend several statutes that were not revised with the passage of **SB 5732**, Chapter 105, 2007 Laws, which allows county treasurers to receipt property taxes paid before February 15, updates an archaic statute for the use of a “stamp” and amend statutes allowing for refunds of taxes.

Propose legislation to require that all property taxes are current and due through the full current year when a Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) Affidavit is processed.

### **Auditors:**

Modify the date on which a special election may be held.

Remove language from RCW 29A .48.010 requiring Auditors to send a ballot request form or official ballot to inactive voters prior to each election.

### **Sheriffs:**

Support the recommendations of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) to develop possible legislation and policies that will most effectively increase the amount of funding provided to law enforcement for boating safety activities, emphasize the activities related to law enforcement; and increase the overall efficiency of the Boating Safety Program (BSP) (contingent upon WSSA approval).

### **Prosecuting Attorneys:**

Apply the restriction against unfunded mandates to local governments to non-constitutionally mandated court rules.

Expand the court authority to enjoin harassing public records requests.

**Clerks:**

Amend miscellaneous county clerk fees in order to make them consistent with the fee schedule passed by the Legislature in 2005: amend the language in the statute from “paper” to “document” to reflect court business which is transacted electronically; and, clarify statutory authority.

Limit the responsibility of county clerks in certain actions and appropriately place it with the parties to the action by amending certain statutes: 1) direct the petitioner in an action to dissolve a public utility district to give notice of hearings; and 2) require the state, rather than the clerk, to publish notice of dependencies

**WACO General Support:**

Safeguard the Local Government Archives Records Account and repeal the authority granted in the State Capital Budget to transfer funds from the Account for support of the Washington State Heritage Center by amending **HB 2765**, Chapter 328, Laws of 2008, sections 6005, 6006, 6010; RCW 40.14.024; RCW 36.22.175; and RCW 36.18.010 thereby removing the authority given by the legislature for Local Government Records Account monies generated for the support of the Local Government Records Division in the State Archives and the Digital Archives to supplement shortfalls in the planned construction and operations of the Washington State Heritage Center when revenues generated in RCW 36.18.010 and 43.107.128 are insufficient to meet the debt service payments on the certificate of participation.

Join with the National Association of Counties (NACo) and urge members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation and the United States Congress to pass **HR 5698**, the Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act of 2008.

Secure legislation to allow local government association staff to participate in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS).

Support legislation to allow members of Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) Plan 1 to earn an additional benefit of two percent of their average final compensation for each service credit year of membership service in excess of thirty years to a maximum of ten percent.

**Nominations Sought for WSAC Secretary/Treasurer**

In preparation for the election of officers at the 2008 annual meeting, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) is seeking nominations for the position of Secretary/Treasurer of the Board of Directors. This position is a member of the WSAC Executive Board and upon subsequent annual elections will assume the position of Vice President, President, and Past President.

Pursuant to Article 5.6 of the Association Bylaws, candidates for the office of Vice President (this year, Stevens County Commissioner Merrill Ott) must reside on the opposite side of the Cascade Mountains from the candidates for the office of President (this year, Mason County Commissioner Lynda Ring Erickson). Hence, WSAC is seeking nominees for Secretary/Treasurer from Western District members this year.

WSAC Members wishing to be a candidate for Secretary/Treasurer should send WSAC Executive Director Eric Johnson a statement of interest by October 24 for publication in the Courthouse Journal prior to the meeting; Candidates should also make arrangements to be nominated for the position during the opening ceremonies at the Annual WSAC Conference in Yakima on Wednesday, November 12, 2008 at approximately 8:30 a.m. Nominations will be accepted from the floor as well.

As described in Article 5.9, the Secretary/Treasurer shall:

- (a) Keep the minutes of meetings of the members and the Board, and minutes which may be maintained by committees of the Board;
- (b) See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law;
- (c) Be custodian of the corporate records of the Association;

- (d) Keep records of the post office address of each member and Director and of the name and post office address of each officer;
- (e) Have a report of the Association's fiscal affairs prepared for each regular general membership meeting;
- (f) Chair the Audit Committee;
- (g) Perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him or her by the President or the Board.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact WSAC Executive Director at 360-753-1886 or [ejohnson@wacounties.org](mailto:ejohnson@wacounties.org).

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

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### **Governor Orders More Budget Cuts**

As a result of declining revenues, the Governor asks for additional budget reductions. In August, she asked for a freeze on hiring, new personal service contracts, equipment purchases, and out-of-state travel. Those efforts are supposed to save \$90 million this biennium. On September 18, she asked the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to find an additional \$240 million in savings to offset declining revenues. This week she asked for an across the board 1 percent reduction to unspent general fund appropriations. Exempted from the 1 percent reductions are basic education, debt service, small agencies, election costs, instructional and financial aid of higher education, general fund pass through dollars in the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, Department of Revenue collection programs, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and veterans institutions, DSHS Children's Administration and direct public safety expenditures. The affected state agencies will identify the specific one percent cuts in the next couple of weeks.

### **King Elections Director may Move from Appointed to Elected Position**

*by Keith Ervin, Seattle Times, October 14, 2008*

If voters decide Nov. 4 they want to elect the King County elections director, they won't have to wait long to exercise that right.

Passage of Charter Amendment No. 1 would lead to a February vote to pick the first elections director.

First introduced by former state Rep. Toby Nixon as Initiative 25, the measure is a response to the contested 2004 governor's race, when King County's sloppy handling of some ballots led two independent advisory groups to recommend that the elections director be elected.

In Washington's 38 other counties, elections are managed by an elected auditor or elections director. In King County, the county executive appoints the elections director. Under King County's complicated two-step process currently in effect for citizen-initiated charter amendments, voters were asked last November whether they wanted to put Amendment 1 on this November's ballot. Fifty-seven percent voted yes.

"I think that the people made it very clear when they overwhelmingly passed Initiative 25 that they want this office to be directly accountable to the people and not buried in the county administration," Nixon said.

But Becky Cox, Denise Smith and Virginia Gunby, members of a League of Women Voters of King County committee that reviewed the proposal, oppose direct election of an elections director, saying the position requires specific experience and skills. An appointed director — unlike an elected director — can be immediately replaced by the county executive in the event of poor performance, the women wrote in the county voters' pamphlet.

During the I-25 debate last year, Metropolitan King County Council member Bob Ferguson, D-Seattle, who supported the concept of electing the elections director, opposed the initiative on grounds that the first director shouldn't be elected in a special February election without a primary to narrow the field of candidates.

The voters-pamphlet statement in favor of the amendment was written by Nixon and council members Reagan Dunn and Jane Hague, all Republicans.

Another measure on the Nov. 4 ballot, Charter Amendment No. 4, was proposed by the King County Charter Review Commission to give the County Council authority to establish by ordinance professional qualifications for elections director and assessor, which is an elected position.

Keith Ervin: 206-464-2105 or [kervin@seattletimes.com](mailto:kervin@seattletimes.com)

## **Benton County to Vote on Criminal Justice Tax Measure**

*by Ross Courtney, Yakima Herald-Republic, October 13, 2008*

Voters in Benton County must decide Nov. 4 whether to authorize a sales tax increase to pay for more law and justice services.

County commissioners are asking voters to approve an additional two-tenths of 1 cent sales tax to pay for extra police officers, sheriff's deputies, court clerks, prosecutors, correction officers and other positions.

That works out to 2 cents for every \$100 spent. The measure requires at least 50 percent approval to pass.

This is the second attempt at a criminal justice sales tax measure. It failed in 2007, with a vote of 48 percent in favor to 52 percent against.

County officials expect the permanent tax increase to generate \$5.1 million per year to be split among the sheriff's office, courts and police departments throughout the county.

The Prosser Police Department would receive about \$70,000.

The department may use the money to hire another police officer, bringing its force to 12, said Chief Pat McCullough.

The city of Prosser is adopting a 2009 general budget that may leave some positions vacant, though no one has suggested layoffs, certainly not in the police department, McCullough said.

Meanwhile, the measure will mean more patrols in the unincorporated areas in the western end of the county, said Sheriff Larry Taylor.

Currently, one deputy covers Benton City to the county line near Grandview. Passage of the tax measure may mean a smaller beat for that deputy or help covering it.

"That's what I'm certainly hoping for," Taylor said.

Countywide, the sheriff's department plans to use the money to hire four patrol deputies, as well as two detectives and corrections officers and a clerk.

County leaders say the money is needed to keep up with more crime. The number of criminal cases at Benton County Superior Court has more than doubled in the past 10 years. More than 70 percent of the county's general budget goes to law enforcement and justice services.

Part of the money, about \$1.1 million, will go to mental health and chemical dependency treatments, including programs at a proposed consolidated crisis response center for Benton and Franklin counties.

Commissioners for both counties are considering opening the 24-hour facility to provide assessment, treatment and referral. Currently, those services are scattered at different locations.

Taylor says it would help law enforcement by giving officers in the county a place to take people other than jail.

## **Assessors Approve PILT Funding Procedure**

The Washington State Association of County Assessors took action during the WACO Conference in Spokane October 9 in establishing procedures to administer DNR lands. The procedures were approved and adopted after being presented to the full body by the Assessment Standards Committee.

This marks a big step forward in trying to implement a bill passed in 2005. The bill is **SB 5396**, which approved PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) on certain DNR acquired lands. In 2008, the Legislature added language to the Supplemental Operating Budget **ESHB 2687** that created a requirement for DNR to submit a report to the legislature detailing rates and acres in each county, and the resulting value of the state general fund obligation.

At this time, the bills only affect DNR lands that are classified as Natural Area Preserves or Natural Resource Conservation Areas. These lands appear in 28 counties in the State of Washington, and comprise 125,438 acres. (This figure evidently does not include an additional 957 acres in Mason County recently added and referred to as the Hamma Hamma Balds area.)

The Assessors voted on four major areas of administration procedures for these lands, and they are listed as follows.

1. Supply a spreadsheet to DNR for the 2007 and 2008 Tax Years.
2. The valuation of the properties for PILT purposes will be 50% of Market Value based on a land only basis. This follows procedures that are now followed in most of the counties that operate under a Public Benefit Rating System.
3. Provide the data to DNR by October 31, 2008.
4. Subsequent forms for succeeding years will be sent by February 15.

With these procedures in place, it will hopefully culminate in the payment to counties by DNR of the PILT monies. The process has now stretched over almost three years in trying to arrive at a workable procedure. Hopefully, now with the Assessors having presented the plan, the stage is now set for PILT to be paid to the counties in the close, if not near, future.

The essence of the plan is simple. Take the Land Only value separated from the Timber value and establish a Market Value. Take 50% of that value and apply the local consolidated code area levy rate (less the State Levy portion). Add to that amount for Weed Patrol Assessment (if any) and arrive at a grand total amount due and present the bill for payment. This money when received will then be apportioned out by the County Treasurer to all taxing entities located within each code area. This should result in a "win/win" situation for most parties. The public will benefit by having critical resource lands protected. The counties will receive some money back to bolster the tax base that has been severely eroded in some counties by agency land acquisition. The taxing district budgets that were impacted by these lands being taken off the tax rolls will be receiving some monies. DNR will then have a process in place where they can reliably predict and plan for PILT payments. Perhaps the most important reason of all is that a procedure has been established that can be used to apply and encompass future lands removed from the tax rolls of counties.

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## ***Courts, Public Safety, Law & Justice***

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### **Message from the Washington Military Department Seeking Input for All Hazards Preparedness Strategic Plan**

The Washington Military Department is leading statewide collaboration efforts to develop the *Washington Statewide All-Hazards Preparedness Strategic Plan*. This plan is the first statewide strategic plan to address all aspects of emergency preparedness, including preparation, prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery.

The *Strategic Plan* draft development will continue through mid-December, facilitated by the State Preparedness Working Group (SPWG). The SPWG is a team of stakeholders from federal, state, local, and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations. Your contribution to the *Washington Statewide All-Hazards Preparedness Strategic Plan* is important and will increase our overall ability to achieve a disaster resilient Washington.

**Please help us better understand statewide priorities and objectives for emergency preparedness by completing a 15-20 minute checkbox-format online survey at this link:**

<https://fortress.wa.gov/mil/surveys/surveys/TakeSurvey.asp?SurveyID=35M5n3L099IKG>

The survey will be open until December 15, 2008 but we encourage earlier responses.

Point of Contact: Jill Bushnell, Strategic Planning Manager, Washington Military Department, (253) 512-8110, [jill.bushnell@mil.wa.gov](mailto:jill.bushnell@mil.wa.gov)

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## ***Elections, Licensing & Recordings***

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### **Proposed Digital WACs On-Line**

The Secretary of State's Office has filed the proposed Washington Administrative Code rules (WACs) for final adoption with the Code Reviser. All of the related documentation including the response document to the proposed rules, final language and explanation of the effective dates is available for your review at [www.secstate.wa.gov](http://www.secstate.wa.gov).

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## ***Environment, Land Use & Resources***

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### **Snohomish County Prevails in Supreme Court**

In 1995, Snohomish County adopted their comprehensive plan. As part of that plan, the designated a narrow strip of land commonly known as "Island Crossing" as urban commercial and included the land in Arlington's urban growth boundary. This case involves the designation of agricultural lands and urban growth boundaries. The decision provides a good history of the case as it wound its way through the courts and it provides additional guidance to local governments about the importance of the record. The decision can be found at

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/opinions/?fa=opinions.disp&filename=803951MAJ>

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## ***General Government Issues***

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### **Counties Now Have Access to .ci.wa.gov and .co.wa.gov Domain Names**

Cities and Counties in Washington now have the option of using the .ci.wa.gov and co.wa.gov domain namespaces for their websites and e-mail. This domain was previously only available to state agencies, boards, and commissions.

The Washington State Department of Information Services (DIS) is offering this option through a partnership with AWC. DIS manages the .wa.gov address for the United States General Services Administration (GSA), who prior to 2003, did not allow city or county governments to use the .gov namespace.

For a one-time fee of \$120 (additional changes or work after the initial setup will be billed at a rate of \$60 per hour):

Counties may acquire *namecounty.co.wa.gov* (*i.e.* thurstoncounty.co.wa.gov).

For a County domain name, please contact David Morris ([davidm@dis.wa.gov](mailto:davidm@dis.wa.gov)) for more information.

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## Transportation & Public Works

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### Initiative 985 – The Impacts Will Be Felt Statewide

Initiative 985 (I-985) has been characterized as a ballot measure related to traffic congestion relief. As a result, many believe that the impact of I-985 is limited to Puget Sound counties. While it is true that almost ninety percent of the state's traffic congestion problems exist within King, Pierce and Snohomish counties, the impact of I-985 cuts across the state. How I-985 affects all counties:

- ***I-985 makes traffic congestion management and reduction the primary goal of transportation.*** As stated earlier, traffic congestion is a problem in the Puget Sound and parts of Clark and Spokane counties. However, for the remaining 32 counties, safety and preservation of the existing transportation infrastructure are the problems. What impact this significant change in state policy will have on the next state transportation budget and project list is not yet known.
- ***I-985 will redirect taxes, funding, and local fines that are collected from taxpayers statewide to fund activities that exist only in a few counties.*** I-985 redirects fifteen percent of the 6.5% state sales tax on motor vehicle sales; 0.5% of all state transportation capital funding (e.g. RAP, CERB, PWTF, etc.); certain excess toll revenues; and revenue generated from local traffic safety camera infractions to a congestion relief account. The account can be used only for opening carpool lanes, synchronizing traffic lights, emergency road side assistance, and increasing roadway capacity and lanes to reduce congestion.
- The redirection of state revenue from the general fund to the congestion relief account will increase the state's budget woes. In 2009-11 biennium, I-985 will increase the estimated \$2.8 billion deficit by another \$256 million. ***This will likely make it more difficult for counties to compete for scarce funds for our priorities – law and justice and public health funding.***
- Requires all cities and counties to synchronize all traffic lights on arterials without any clarity on how this new mandate would be funded. While the traffic congestion account targets funds to reimburse counties for this requirement, it also places an emphasis on funding the most heavily congested areas first. ***Since all counties must immediately comply with this requirement, it is likely most counties will have to front load these costs and wait for state compensation.***
- It sets a terrible precedent of converting city and county revenue into state revenue. Under I-985, that portion of traffic infractions from automated traffic safety camera programs that can be deposited into city or county general funds are taken for the congestion relief account. Although no county currently has such a program, ***I-985 effectively eliminates this source of local funds to solve local traffic safety problems.***

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## Association News

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### WSAC Announces New Finance Director

The Washington State Association of Counties recently announced the appointment of Karlyn Parten, CPA, as Director of Business and Finance for the Association.

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

- Chief Financial Officer, Department of Information Services
- Chief Business Analyst, Department of Information Services
- Audit Manager, Washington State Auditor's Office
- Contracted Accounting Services, Lewis Public Transportation Benefit Area
- Accountant/Budget Analyst, Lewis County Auditor
- Accounting Coordinator, Washington Homecare
- Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, University of Washington
- Associate of Arts, Seattle Central Community College

Karlyn joins the WSAC staff on October 22nd and will provide oversight of a variety of administrative services and business operations including finance and accounting, human resources, payroll and benefits, information services, and the WSAC Financial Services Corporation.

## **Gary Rowe, P.E., Appointed First Managing Director of the Washington State Association of County Engineers**

Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) Executive Director Eric Johnson and Grant County Public Works Director/County Engineer and Washington State Association of County Engineers (WSACE) President Derek Pohle are pleased to announce the appointment of **Gary Rowe, P.E., to the position of Managing Director for the Washington State Association of County Engineers**. This appointment is effective November 1, 2008.

Since 2002, Gary has served as County Administrator for Skagit County and has nearly 25 years in leadership, management, and administrative experience in County Government in Washington State.

Gary is a respected and effective advocate on many public works, transportation and natural resource issues affecting Washington's 39 Counties. He has a solid background in local, state and federal transportation and public works policy, county budget, and serving elected officials. His experience includes:

- Skagit County Administrator
- Jefferson County Deputy County Administrator/Central Services Director
- Jefferson County Director of Public Works
- Jefferson County Director of Public Services
- Professional Civil Engineer
- Puget Sound Partnership, Ecosystem Coordination Board, Member
- Skagit Watershed Council Board of Directors
- Past President, Washington State Association of County Engineers
- Past President, National Association of County Engineers

It is important to recognize the work of two Past Presidents of the Washington State Association of County Engineers who were instrumental in developing and supporting the establishment of this position:

- Ross Dunfee, PE, Benton County, Public Works Director/County Engineer
- Kent Cash, PE, Cowlitz County, Public Works Director/County Engineer

Please join WSAC and WSACE in welcoming and congratulating Gary on his appointment as the first Managing Director for the Washington State Association of County Engineers.

### **Additional Information**

**Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC)** mission is "To help improve Counties' capacity to serve their citizens." Created in 1906, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) has worked to advocate for local government needs and support critical county services for a century. WSAC members include elected county commissioners, council members and executives from all of Washington's 39 counties. Each year WSAC works with statewide elected officials and members of the Legislature to promote positions that help counties serve their citizens.

More information can be found at <http://www.wacounties.org/wsac/>

The mission of the **Washington State Association of County Engineers**, as an affiliate member of the WSAC, is to enhance leadership effectiveness by providing more opportunities for professional development, building professional

relationships, and advocating stewardship of the environment and infrastructure with which we have been entrusted, for the benefit of present and future generations.

More information may be found at: <http://www.crab.wa.gov/wsace/>

#### Contact Information

Eric Johnson, Executive Director at [ejohnson@wacounties.org](mailto:ejohnson@wacounties.org) or 360-753-1886.

Derek Pohle, WSACE President at [dpohle@co.grant.wa.us](mailto:dpohle@co.grant.wa.us) or 509-754-6082.

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## Training and Upcoming Events

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

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## Attachments

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### Coroner Moves to Dismiss Suit

*by Jeremy Pawloski, The Daily Olympian, October 16, 2008*

An attorney for Lewis County Coroner Terry Wilson has filed a motion to dismiss a lawsuit filed by a woman who wants to change the legal ruling of her daughter Ronda Reynolds' 1998 death by gunshot wound from a suicide to a homicide.

Reynolds' mother, Barbara Thompson, thinks Wilson mistakenly ruled that Reynolds' death was a suicide, and she has filed a motion for judicial review.

A 1987 amendment to state law says that the accuracy of a coroner's determination is subject to judicial review. Thompson's petition is the first time that the accuracy of a coroner's decision has been challenged under the amended state law.

Reynolds, a former state trooper, was found dead by her husband with a gunshot wound to her head Dec. 16, 1998.

Wilson initially ruled her manner of death "undetermined." He changed that determination three times — first to a suicide, then back to undetermined, before settling on suicide May 30, 2002.

The motion to dismiss Thompson's legal action argues the following:

- **That** the court can offer no remedy that would assist Reynolds' mother. "As a Washington court has no authority in law (to) order a coroner to change his opinion as to the cause, mode, or manner of a death; and as a Washington court cannot in law order a death certificate to be altered as to cause, mode or manner of a death; therefore a Washington court cannot grant any meaningful remedy to Petitioner," reads the motion.
- **That** the courts lack jurisdiction in the matter of a coroner's determination of someone's cause and manner of death.
- **That** Thompson lacks standing to bring a legal proceeding against the coroner.

The motion also alleges that the 1987 amendment to state law that allows the accuracy of a coroner's decision to be challenged is unconstitutional.

David Fine, one of the attorneys representing Lewis County in the case, said a hearing on the motion has been requested for early November.

The coroner has until Oct. 29 to submit the record he used in ruling that Reynolds' death was a suicide. Thurston County Superior Court Judge Richard Hicks in September ordered Wilson's attorney to submit the entirety of that record.

Fine said the motion to dismiss Thompson's petition for legal review will not affect the county's compliance with that order.

Thompson has hired forensic experts who contest Wilson's determination that Reynolds' death was a suicide.

Jeremy Pawloski covers public safety for The Olympian. He can be reached at 360-754-5465 or [jpawloski@theolympian.com](mailto:jpawloski@theolympian.com).



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<b>Invested over 30 years</b>	<b>\$92,015<sup>(B)</sup></b>

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## Financial Management County Budgets November 13, 2008

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Through lecture and small group discussion and activities, participants will learn more about county government finance and budget. The field of local government is a challenging one. It requires current job knowledge and constant skill refinement in order to provide the public with the best service possible. This training will provide beneficial information and you will leave better equipped to meet the demands of your position.

### TOPICS:

- County finance basics including roles and responsibilities, legal requirements and financial terminology
- County budget basics including planning and forecasting, preparation and administration
- County revenue sources, restrictions and techniques for forecasting

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

County elected officials, department heads and senior management staff. This course is offered as a "Core Course" for the Certified Public Official Program (CPO). All county officials are encouraged to attend any CPO course that meets your individual training needs even if you do not plan to pursue a CPO.

### INSTRUCTOR:

Glenn Olson has been conducting budget training classes for local governments since 1999. He is a lifetime Washington resident with an undergraduate and graduate degree from Western Washington University. He spent 15 years in the Governor's Office of Financial Management overseeing budget forecasts. He became the Budget Director for Clark County in 1997, and since then he has also served there as the Development Director, the County Administrator, and the Chief Information Officer; he is currently serving as the Deputy County Administrator. Mr. Olson has served as a gubernatorial appointee to the Washington State Public Works Board (Chair), the Select Committee for Pension Policy, and the Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters Plan 2 (LEOFF2) Board.

### REGISTRATION AND FEES

The workshop registration fee is \$60 per person, which includes refreshments and workshop materials, lunch will not be provided. Please register at <http://countytraininginstitute.org/calendar/index.htm>.

### LOCATION AND WORKSHOP HOURS

*This is a special workshop with condensed hours offered in conjunction with the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) Annual Conference.*

#08F-8833

11/13/2008

1:30 A - 5:30 P

Red Lion Hotel, Yakima

### CERTIFICATION CREDITS

This course qualifies for four Core Certified Public Official (CPO) credits.

Washington State Association of Counties

204 Tenth Ave SE

Olympia, WA 98501

Please visit [www.countytraininginstitute.org](http://www.countytraininginstitute.org) for more details