the Courthouse Journal

WACOUNTIES.ORG

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Washington Association of County Officials
Washington State Association of Counties

WACO Conference Registration Now Open

by James McMahan, WACO Staff

On May 14, all WACO members received an email containing the registration information necessary to attend the 2010 WACO Conference (October 5-8, 2010 at the Lodge at Suncadia). WACO is very excited with the conference agenda for this year and looks forward to seeing many of you there.

Please take advantage of our early registration opportunities - if you register (complete with payment) prior to July 17, 2010, WACO will apply a $75 discount to your registration fee. This early registration discount enables us to make your $275 registration fee for the 2010 conference the same amount as the 2009 and 2008 conference registration fees. A $50 discount applies to registrations received between July 18, 2010 and August 28, 2010. Registrations received after August 28, 2010 will be charged the full conference registration fee of $350.

If you have any questions or have trouble registering for the conference (including requests to have conference registration forms sent to you again), please contact WACO's Kathie Houts at (360) 753-7319 or khouts@wacounties.org. You can also look up conference information on the WACO website at www.wacounties.org/waco.

If you will be staying at the conference hotel, you can make those arrangements now as well. Make your conference hotel arrangements by calling the Lodge at Suncadia at 1-866-904-6301. When you call, please know that there are two different room rates in our WACO room block, one for WACO exhibitors and one for WACO members. To ensure that you are in the correct room block, let the Suncadia representative know you are with WACO and give them the promo code of "Wagner." Space in the WACO room block is limited, so we recommend that you book early to ensure your room availability.

WACO Exhibitor Hall Registration Now Open

by James McMahan, WACO Staff

Registration for the 2010 WACO Conference Exhibitor Hall is now open as well. If you are, or know of, an organization interested in being an exhibitor for the 2010 WACO Conference Exhibitor Hall, please contact James McMahan, WACO Deputy Director at jamesm@wacounties.org or (360) 753-7319.

The WACO Exhibitor Hall Invitation is also available at the WACO website at www.wacounties.org/waco - on the "WACO Conference Exhibitor Hall" link.

WACO is offering a $150 discount on the registration fee and a 25% discount over the standard Suncadia lodging rates for exhibitors who sign up prior to June 9, 2010.

Job announcements & links to County Employment pages at:

http://wacounties.org/

the Courthouse Journal

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(WACO) wacounties.org/waco

and the **Washington State Association of Counties**

(WSAC) wacounties.org/wsac

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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Forensic Anthropology Services Now Available at No Cost

Dr. Katherine Taylor, Forensic Anthropologist for the King County Medical Examiner has announced that through a federal grant, forensic anthropology services are now available at no cost to all Coroners, Prosecutors, Medical Examiners and Sheriffs. Dr. Taylor urges all to take advantage of this unique opportunity!

King County Medical Examiner's Office has received federal funding through the state to make available forensic anthropology services to all counties in the state of Washington AT NO CHARGE TO THE COUNTIES. The grant runs from April 1st to September 30th (with hopes, but no guarantees, of extending to the end of the calendar year). This includes King County ME facility support of anthropology services (dental x-raying, medical x-raying, photography, water maceration, microscopic examination etc). Now is the time to bring out cold cases and unidentified remains to get them analyzed and into the national databases. Of course, services also include current cases of skeletal remains, unidentified remains, skeletal trauma, buried bodies, human vs. nonhuman determination, etc.

Counties should not hesitate to contact the King County Medical Examiner's Office if they need assistance, in any way, with forensic anthropology services.

Contact information: King County ME 24/7 main line: 206.731.3232, Kathy Taylor, Ph.D. Forensic Anthropologist, Office: 206.731.3558, Cell: 206.423.0641, Pager: 206.645.0347.

Siri Woods Retires

Siri Woods announced today that she will not seek reelection, but will retire at the end of the year after thirty-three and a half years as the Chelan County Clerk.

Woods took office in July of 1977 when Lawrence Leahy was the only Chelan County Judge and Dick Whitmore was the County Prosecutor. Financial and clerical processes were all completed using pen and ink and typewriters. There was no copy machine in her office, but there was a shared copier in the Auditor's office one floor down. Documents had to be preserved permanently then as now, but then were microfilmed in her office and the film was developed in the basement.

Today all processes are done electronically primarily because Woods led the state by lobbying the State Legislature and working on committees with the Secretary of State and the Supreme Court to enact laws and court rules that permitted the electronic capture and storage of documents, electronic signatures on documents, electronic filing of documents and the collection of criminal obligation by clerks of court rather than by a state department. Changes orchestrated by Woods have saved the taxpayers of Chelan County

Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:
http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm

Bill Information: www.leg.wa.gov

hundreds of thousands of dollars and have allowed for streamlining of business and use of personnel over the years. She has worked with Eagle System of East Wenatchee, a vendor in California and the Washington State Archives and is the first clerk in the state to have documents on line at the Clerk's website and at the Washington State Archives.

Before becoming clerk, Woods served on nine jury trials as a juror and decided she would like to head the operations of the Clerk of Superior Court. One of the first changes she made was to implement the first one-day, one-trial system in the state so that jurors would no longer be on call for a three month period and serve on up to nine trials as she had done.

Woods graduated from the prestigious National Institute for Court Management in Washington D. C. and received her fellowship personally from Chief Justice Warren Burger. She was one of only 552 people in the United States to have completed the program at that time. She has served as president of the Washington State Association of County Clerks and the Washington Association of County Officials. She is the only person in the state to have been voted to be the Court Administrator of the Year two years and to be voted County Clerk of the year two different years as well. She was also recognized by the Washington State Bar Association and the National Judicial College.

For the past twenty years Woods has been appointed and reappointed by the Chief Justice of the Courts of Washington to serve on the Supreme Court's Judicial Information System, Data Disseminations and Data Management Committees. These committees regulate how data is shared between the courts and other justice agencies and how equipment is allocated to local courts. She has also worked with lawmakers, media representatives, professors and politicians on committees concerned with Access to Justice and rights of privacy of citizens' information.

She saw Judge Leahy retire and has since seen Judge Cone, Judge Van Sickle and Judge Wardell come and go during her tenure. She currently serves with Judge John Bridge, Judge T. W. Small and Judge Lesley Allan.

Woods plans to enjoy her retirement with her husband Dick and her dog, Barkley, who is pictured on her Court website. In January, they will move from Wenatchee to Raymond, Washington to be near their only daughter and son-in-law. She plans to enjoy sewing, quilting, reading, gardening and visiting with her kids.

Retiring Assessor Backs Former Employee

by Michelle McNiel, World staff writer, May 26, 2010

Chelan County Assessor Russ Griffith will retire at the end of this year after 20 years in office.

Chelan County Assessor Russ Griffith

Griffith said Tuesday that he will not be seeking a sixth term because one of his former employees, Vicki Griffin, has decided to run for assessor.

Griffin has not made a formal announcement, but confirmed Tuesday she will be running.

Griffith, 63, a Republican, initially announced earlier this month that he would be running for re-election.

Another challenger, Dave Oliver, a property appraiser for the Assessor's Office, has also said he will run for the position.

Griffith was first elected in 1990, after a bizarre election in which the incumbent — five-term Assessor Jim Sizemore — was killed in a horseback riding accident on primary election night.

Griffith went on to win the general election.

Since then, Griffith has run unopposed in four successive elections.

He said the fact that he would have challengers this year did not affect his decision not to run.

The assessor said the office, which he called "my baby," is at a critical juncture. It is in the process of switching from four-year to annual assessments and recently implemented a new computer system after replacing a decades-old one.

He said he considered running for one more term because "I wanted to make sure that everything was OK, that we got through this smoothly."

But he said he believes Griffin, who was his "right-hand" for 12 years at the office, would do a good job.

He said she resigned about a year ago to work for the company that installed the office's new software system.

"I am more than willing to support her 100 percent," he added.

The first annual property assessments will be mailed out at the end of this year. So Griffith said he will be able to see that through before retiring.

"I feel good about what I've done," he said. "I've really worked hard at helping the taxpayers of Chelan County. But it's really going to be hard to leave it behind."

Griffith said he still has an orchard in the Entiat Valley and plans to continue working that. He also serves as a volunteer firefighter and is active in his church.

"I feel good about retirement," he said. "When I first decided to run, my wife and I agreed that I would not serve for longer than 20 years."

Budget, Finance and Taxes

Perhaps the Time Has Come

Below is an article from the latest Wall Street Journal. As you read through the statistics, it becomes quite obvious that government in all areas of the United States is hurting, and hurting badly. Spokane County is no different. Ralph Baker, Spokane County Assessor is prominently quoted in the article below with his approach and partial solution to staffing cuts.

Faced with fewer employees (appraisers) to handle an ever increasing workload, Ralph has been actively lobbying for the use of oblique angle photography, or pictometry as it is know in the trade, as a way to stretch labor resources further.

The rationale is very simple. Through the use of these high quality scalable photos, staff can compare existing building footprint drawings without having to have a physical on site inspection. There will be those instances where a follow-up visit needs to occur, but it will almost certainly allow staff to perform checks on a vast majority of the properties by viewing the photos.

Detractors of the process decry their use claiming that government in being invasive and using spy technology to look at their property. But, I ask you, which is less invasive? An on site physical inspection with people traipsing on your property, or staff viewing an aerial photo in the office?

If we take it as spying and invasive, then we better make sure that all airline windows are completely shuttered when planes fly over, otherwise someone might look out their window and "see" their property which they claim is an invasion of their property rights. I think you will find that the airspace over homes does not belong to, nor can it be controlled by, the property owner.

Hats off to Ralph Baker for realizing that in this environment, office resources are scant and quite frankly positions lost will probably never be filled. The advantage to pictometry is that it doesn't get sick, it doesn't quit, and you don't have to provide Health Insurance or Retirement Benefits or fight over raises. Hopefully, Ralph Baker is forging the way so that others can follow.

Please see the article below.

The Wall Street Journal

by Conor Dougherty

State and local governments are continuing to cut jobs and spending as they struggle to close budget gaps, according to a report by the National League of Cities.

The report, released Monday, included a survey that showed three out of four cities said they faced worsening budget woes over the past year, with seven in 10 cutting jobs and capital projects in response.

The report underscores how a retrenchment in the government sector, combined with higher taxes, is weighing on the economic recovery just as the private sector has begun adding jobs and showing other signs of a turnaround.

Cutbacks "are a concern for the recovery," says William Fox, an economics professor at the University of Tennessee who focuses on state budgets. "But states are doing the right thing—states' responsibility is to balance their budgets."

The plight of state and local governments matters greatly to the broader economy. The nation's 89,000 cities, school districts and other local governments are big employers and spenders. The state and local government sector employs about 20 million people, representing 15% of the jobs in the U.S. State and local governments spend or give out about $2.2 trillion a year, everything from gas to fill up police cars to health insurance for their employees.

Cutbacks in state and local government spending subtracted half of a percentage point from U.S. gross domestic product in the first three months of the year, and various economists expect that drag to continue. GDP expanded at a 3.2% annual rate in the first quarter. Macroeconomic Advisers, a St. Louis forecasting firm, projects that curbed state and local government spending will shave 0.2 percentage points off 2010 GDP.

Monday's report suggests that city budgets still face a long road to recovery. About half of the survey's respondents suggested that city services will need to be cut over the next two years.

States collected $686 billion in tax revenue in 2009, down 11.4% from the year earlier. Despite the improving economy, the phasing out of the federal stimulus program through 2011 will force many governments to make fresh cuts in the coming months as assistance begins to wane. State budget gaps are projected at some $160 billion over the next two years, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

State and local governments have cut 234,000 jobs between April and their peak employment in late 2008, including 6,000 last month.

For instance, Spokane County, Wash., has cut positions throughout its government over the past year, including an 11% cut—yielding $250,000 in savings—in the County Assessor's office. Seven of the department's 54 positions were lost to attrition last year, including five appraisers.

County Assessor Ralph Baker says those jobs are gone for good, as his office has replaced many of its appraisers with an aerial-imaging program that allows his office to gauge property values using pictures instead of more costly and time-consuming site visits.

"There are people out there that could use those seven jobs, I'm sure," he says. "But the citizens would object if I opted to try to fill positions rather than take advantage of technology that would let us do it cheaper."

In many places, the funding shortages are leading to tax increases that have crimped consumer spending. Some 29 states raised their taxes or fees in the fiscal year ended 2010, raising an additional $24 billion in revenue, including $11 billion in personal income taxes, according to the National Governors Association and National Association of State Budget Officers.

Write to Conor Dougherty at conor.dougherty@wsj.com

Training & Upcoming Events

Washington Counties – wacounties.org/Calendar of Events

County Training Institute – www.countytraininginstitute.org

Grants Management Workshop in Burien, WA - June 21-22, 2010

The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission and Grant Writing USA will present a two-day grants management workshop in Burien, June 21-22, 2010. In this class you'll learn how to administer government grants and stay in compliance with applicable rules and regulations. This training is recommended for grant recipient organizations across all disciplines.

Multi-enrollment discounts and discounts for Grant Writing USA returning alumni are available. Tuition payment is not required at the time of enrollment.

Tuition is $595 and includes Grant Writing USA's 450-page grant management workbook and reference guide. Seating is limited, online reservations are necessary.

For more information, contact Cathy Rittenhouse, Grant Writing USA, 1-800-814-8191, cathy@grantwritingusa.com. Or Rachelle Parslow, WSCJTC, 206-835-7346, rparslow@cjtc.state.wa.us.

Good Things

Scholarships Lead to Success

Clallam County Auditor Patty Rosand proudly reports on the current status of a past Washington Counties Scholarship winner from Clallam County. Four years ago, Adrianna Creasey was awarded a WACO scholarship. She recently graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in Business. The striped cord is for scholastic honors and the gold cord is summa cum laude. She is the daughter of Stanton and Carol Creasey, both Clallam County employees. Her younger sister, Olivia, received a WACO scholarship this year.

It's always nice to know what becomes of the scholarship recipients!

Pictured to the left: Adrianna Creasey

Franklin County Clerk Earns Volunteer Award

Michael J. Killian, Franklin County Clerk and Clerk of Superior Court and Navy Reserve 1st Class Yeoman, received the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal from Vice Admiral Bruce W. Cligan on May 15 at the Navy Reserve Operation Support Center in Spokane. Criteria for the award: awarded to US service members performing substantial volunteer service to the local community above and beyond the duties required as a member of the military. Such volunteer service must be made in a sustained and direct nature toward the civilian community, must be significant in nature to produce tangible results and must reflect favorably on the military service and the US Department of Defense.

Killian was recommended for this award for his years of volunteer work with Pasco High School on the translation and interpretation advisory committee, judging DECA programs and senior boards, and supporting the business intern

program by mentoring students at the clerk's office and reviewing students' business plans. Killian is alum of Pasco High School.

Killian recently re-enlisted in the Navy Reserve after a 13-year break in service and has been awarded numerous personal decorations during his military service. Nice work, Mike! Congratulations!

Courthouse Ramblings

* * * * * * * * * *

Lincoln County Prosecutor **Ron Shepherd** has announced he will not seek reelection to a sixth term. Ron has held the position since he was appointed in January 1989. He is the longest serving prosecutor in Lincoln County's history.

Ron was named a deputy prosecutor in July 1978 and will have served Lincoln County well for over 32 years when his current term ends.

* * * * * * * * * *

Garfield County Sheriff **Larry Bowles** submitted resignation to the board of commissioners last week Monday, writing that it was a "medical retirement" recommended by his physician. He served through the end of May. He will have served his county for 16 ½ years.

Attachments

Welcome to the U.S. Communities Purchasing & Finance Agency

(U.S. Communities) website http://www.uscommunities.org/

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), jointly sponsor the

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities)

Designed in cooperation with an Advisory Board of local government purchasing officials, U.S. Communities pools the purchasing power of public agencies, achieves bulk volume discounts on behalf of public agencies, competitively solicits quality products through a lead public agency and provides a purchasing forum for public agencies nationwide.

You can obtain information on how to contact all U.S. Communities suppliers by telephoning (866) 472-7467 or by sending an email to info@uscommunities.org

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Ray Burnett,
Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies
Kansas City, MO.

Washington Secretary of State SAM REED

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 1, 2010

Contact: Brian Zylstra, Deputy Communications Director, (360) 902-4173

2010 Election: Candidate Filing Week opens June 7

The 2010 election season will officially open with the beginning of Filing Week on Monday, June 7, when hundreds of candidates throughout Washington officially launch their campaigns.

Candidates can file for office by using the Internet, in-person filing or submitting the declaration of candidacy via mail.

"There will be many congressional, legislative and judicial positions up for election this year throughout Washington, and many of these races will have multiple candidates, which is exciting for voters and good for democracy," said Secretary of State Sam Reed.

Reed, the state's chief elections officer, encourages more local leaders to file for office.

"Although many races have two or more candidates, some positions might have only one," Reed explained. "We need more local leaders to run for public office. Doing so not only is another way of giving back to their communities, it gives voters more choices. If you have passion for a certain issue, put that passion to good use by running for office."

Among the key races in Washington this year are the U.S. Senate office held by Patty Murray; all of the state's congressional seats, including an open seat in the 3rd Congressional District; all 98 of the state House positions; and 25 state Senate seats.

In addition, three of State Supreme Court offices (Position 1, held by Jim Johnson; Position 5, held by Barbara Madsen; and Position 6, held by Richard Sanders) are up this year. Numerous Court of Appeals offices will be on the ballot, as well as Superior Court Judge positions in Clark, King, Pierce and San Juan counties.

"The U.S. Senate race promises to be very interesting, and there will be a closely contested battle for the 3rd congressional seat that Brian Baird is vacating," Reed said. "When you factor in all of these races, it promises to be a pretty exciting and closely watched election year."

Although Filing Week runs June 7-11, candidates have had the option of submitting their Declaration of Candidacy form and filing fee via mail since May 21. Candidate names will be posted beginning June 7.

In-person filings will be accepted during regular business hours June 7-11 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Office of Secretary of State's conference room on the second floor of the Legislative Building in Olympia. The in-person filing deadline is 5 p.m. on June 11.

An increasingly popular way to submit a Declaration of Candidacy for office is online at www.vote.wa.gov. Filings will be accepted after 9 a.m. on June 7, until 4 p.m. on June 11. The secure filings may be submitted at any hour of the day or night this way. Of the 332 candidates who filed with the Office of Secretary of State in 2008, 180 candidates filed electronically, or about 54 percent.

Candidates must file with the Office of Secretary of State if they are running for a federal or statewide office, a legislative seat in a district that is in more than one county, or a multi-county judicial district.

Candidates running for a legislative seat in a single-county district, a single-county judicial district or other office wholly within one county must file with their county elections office.

For a list of County Auditor Offices, please visit www.secstate.wa.gov/elections.

Candidates may withdraw, in writing, through June 17 at 5 p.m.

Under the Top 2 Primary system adopted by citizen initiative in 2004 and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2008, the Declaration of Candidacy form allows candidates to self-describe their political preference, but this will not mean that the person is nominated by or supported by a party.

The form will allow up to 16 characters to provide the name of the party a candidate prefers. Candidates cannot include profanity or imply or state that they are nominated or endorsed by a political party or that a party approves of or associates with them.
The regulations don't prevent candidates from trying to include additional information about themselves, such as "Anti-war Dem" or "Pro-life G.O.P," "Evans Republican" or "Jackson Democrat." But Reed said he hopes candidates will simply list the actual name of a political party and not try to jam in personal or political information.

"Washington voters expect those who run for office to take the elections process seriously," Reed said. "The good news is that hardly any candidates last year used silly names in stating their party preference, and I hope no candidate will make a joke of it this year."

After Filing Week concludes, the Office of Secretary of State will conduct a lot drawing to determine the order of candidates for each race on the 2010 ballot.

Candidates are free to publicize party endorsements, their incumbency or other descriptions in their campaigns and in voters' pamphlet statements, but Reed said the actual ballot will be free of this material.

The party information will be displayed on the ballot as:

John Smith (Prefers Democratic Party)
Jane Doe (Prefers Republican Party)
Michael Martin (States No Party Preference)

Parties are no longer allowed to fill any vacancies, because there are no more major party tickets in a Top 2 Primary. All candidates are treated the same. A race can be reopened for a special filing period if nobody files during the regular filing period.

In the Primary Election, voters choose their favorite for each office without regard to party, and the top two vote-getters advance to the General Election. The Top 2 Primary is a winnowing election to narrow the field for the November General Election, and not a nominating election. Parties may hold their own nominating conventions to pick a favorite for each office. That information won't go on the ballot for the state-run primary or general elections.

Filing fees for offices with annual salaries of $1,000 or more are 1 percent. For instance, it costs $421.06 to file for a legislative race.

The Primary Election is August 17. All counties but Pierce County are voting entirely by mail, and ballots must be postmarked by August 17. The General Election is November 2.