

the Courthouse Journal

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

Stevens County Sheriff Nominated for U.S. Marshal

*by Thomas Clouse, The Spokesman-Review,
6/17/2010*

The President has nominated Stevens County Sheriff Craig Thayer to serve as U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Washington.

President Barack Obama has nominated Stevens County Sheriff Craig Thayer to serve as U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Washington, which encompasses most of the state east of the Cascade Mountains.

The announcement came today, along with the nomination of the Knoxville, Tenn., police chief for a similar post in Tennessee.

"These law enforcement professionals have demonstrated a selfless dedication to public service through their careers," Obama said in a news release. "I am grateful for their willingness to serve and protect the American people."

Thayer is currently serving his 16th year as Stevens County Sheriff. He began working for that department in 1972 and he holds a law degree from Gonzaga University. He also is past president of both the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and the Washington State Sheriffs' Association.



Assessors' Elect New Officers at their 113th Conference

by Bob Carlton, WACO Staff

June 14 through 17 found the Assessors Association sequestered in Chehalis, Washington for their Annual Conference. The group had voted earlier as a cost saving measure for counties to reduce their summer meetings from two down to one. And, normally on election years, they only had one meeting in June. In the future, the only summer meeting will in all likelihood occur in June.

Job announcements & links to County Employment pages at:

<http://wacounties.org/>

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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The new Assessors officers are as follows: Terry McLaughlin, President, Cowlitz County Assessor; Jim Ruud, Vice-President, Douglas County Assessor; Cindy Portmann, Secretary/Treasurer, Snohomish County Assessor; and immediate Past President, Dave Anderson, Adams County Assessor.

The Assessors also elected new District Chairs. They are as follows: Eastern District, Chris Miller, Columbia County Assessor; Central District, Rachel Siracuse, Ferry County Assessor; Puget Sound District, Dave Mattens, Island County Assessor; and Western District, Pam Rushton, Clallam County Assessor.

Co-hosts Lewis County Assessor Dianne Dorey and Thurston County Assessor Patricia Costello did a masterful job of keeping the meetings moving and scheduling events in close proximity to the nearly new Holiday Inn Express in Chehalis. Everything from a guided tour of the Historic Train Station and the McKinley "Stump," to the new Veterans Museum was offered. And, as a finale, the Banquet Dinner was at the 1937 vintage restored "Red Barn" near Chehalis. This writer would highly recommend that if you have any historical military interest, or anyone in your family or group of friends does, arrange to tour this military museum. The folks involved in this museum have on display artifacts literally from the civil war on, including vehicles and even a light tank. You would be well rewarded to make the trek to Chehalis and view this facility.

The keynote speaker of interest was James P. Richmond, Special Deputy Prosecutor. Richmond represented Thurston County Assessor Patricia Costello and Thurston County in her suit against the Great Wolf Lodge. For those who like to follow such things, it is Case Number C08-5562BHS. To refresh your memory, U.S. District Court Judge Benjamin Settle decided in favor of Costello and simply stated that the Tribes arguments against taxation did not overcome the following.

1. That the Assessor is required to assess and value property.
2. That the Assessors original determination of value is presumed to be correct.
3. That the Tribes did not present evidence to support their claims.
4. The Tribes' arguments have not overcome the Thurston County Assessor findings by "clear, cogent and convincing evidence."

This was a huge win, not for just Thurston County, but for all counties in the state, and for all 50 states for that matter. Richmond did a masterful PowerPoint presentation that lead us through all the steps in this complex case. Once again the basic tenets of what Assessors do have been held up to public scrutiny, and once again it has been reaffirmed that Assessors are doing their job correctly. With that, however, comes the ever increasing threat of those who wish to change and weaken the laws regarding the presumption of correctness, and the standard of clear, cogent and convincing evidence.

Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:

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

Bill Information: www.leg.wa.gov

The Assessors also voted to adopt two potential legislation changes to be presented at the WACO Conference in October at the Suncadia Lodge in Cle Elum. The first in priority is a simple language to delete reference to the 1983 Timber Role in reference to Levy setting for School Bonds and M & O's; and second, Ballot Title Information.

A site and date was also selected for next year's Assessor summer meeting; that will be June 20-23 at the Davenport Hotel Tower in Spokane, Washington.

A "Whole Bunch of Experience" Leaving County Clerks' Offices

Recently a reporter from an Okanogan County Newspaper commented to us, ""that's a whole bunch of experience in two adjacent counties that we will be losing." She was speaking of the retirements of Okanogan County Clerk Jackie Bradley who has served since 1972 and Chelan County Clerk Siri Woods who was appointed in 1977. That's 71 years!

Obviously, she knew nothing of the pending retirement of Asotin County Clerk Linda Hough. Linda took office in March of 1997 but had nine years experience in the office already. The grand total is very close to 100.

When Bradley leaves office, she will be handing off the distinction of "longest serving" WACO member to Whatcom Dave Mc Eachran. McEachran has served since 1975 and has filed for another term.

WACO's Longest Serving County Official Plans Year-End Retirement

County Clerk Jackie Bradley plans to retire at the end of her term on Dec. 31.

She was appointed Aug. 12, 1972, and has won re-election ever since. Before that, she worked in the treasurer's office. Bradley said she has been ill but is on the mend and wants to do some fun things, such as lounge in her home pool.

"Not that this hasn't been fun," she said. "I've enjoyed it immensely." Bradley said she's had a great staff and enjoys working for county residents.

She said she plans to keep on working for county residents through various organizations. She belongs to the Okanogan Kiwanis Club, Okanogan Valley Soroptimist Club and Okanogan Grange, and is county chairwoman for the Democratic Party.

She also is state deputy for Grange and chairwoman of the Okanogan County Pioneer Association, which stages the annual Pioneer Picnic in Conconully.

Charlene Groomes has announced her candidacy for the clerk's position as a Republican. Bradley said she wants to wait and see who files before deciding if she'll endorse anyone.

She declined to give her age.

Longtime Clerk Going Out with a Smile

by Michelle McNeil, Wenatchee World, 6/14/2010

When Siri Woods walks into the office and says "I was thinking about something last night," her staff knows to look out. "Everyone goes "Oh no, not again!" " Woods said, laughing.

During her 33 years as Chelan County clerk, Woods has introduced a whole lot of new ideas into the office, everything from comfortable chairs to the latest technology. She is credited with not only revolutionizing the court clerk's job in the county but statewide. And after more than three decades, she's still enthusiastic about her job.

So it's a good time to step down, she says. "I'll be 68 this summer," she said in an interview earlier this month. "I still feel good. I'm having fun. I figure that's a good way to go out." Woods will not be seeking a ninth term this fall. Instead, she will retire on Dec. 31 and plans to move to Olympia to be closer to her daughter.

She is the second-longest serving county clerk in the state's history, and is third among all current elected county officials statewide. "She's worked really hard not only for Chelan County but our entire state," said Debbie Wilke, executive director for the Washington Association of Counties, who has worked professionally with Woods since 1978. "She's the only clerk who's been elected clerk of the year twice because of her outstanding achievements. She's really dedicated to the public and to county government."



Siri Woods, Chelan County Clerk

Woods was appointed clerk in May 1977 to fill a vacancy. At the time, Woods handled payroll, bookkeeping and other clerical work for the Mission Ridge Ski Area. She had no experience in law or court matters. But after being called to serve as a juror in nine jury trials in a three-month span, she threw her name into the mix — along with 26 other interested candidates.

She said no one should have to serve that often. Woods said that when she was appointed, the Superior Court Clerk's office had recorded every court action in big leather-bound books. Clerks had to go up and down the stairs all day to make copies in the Auditor's Office, which had the Courthouse's only copy machine at the time.

"Even though I saw things I didn't like, I made a promise that I wouldn't make any changes for the first year," she recalled. Even the simplest changes were hard on the court staff. For instance, when she switched from having one receipt book to loose-leaf receipts for court fines, employees feared the paperwork would be lost.

But, one by one, she started overhauling things. She replaced the military-style green metal desks and uncomfortable metal chairs for her staff. She bought electric typewriters with correcting tape for all her clerks. She bought a copy machine.

The office was crawling toward the technology age. Then it was time to tackle the flawed jury system. She proposed and implemented a system where someone would only serve on a jury once in a year. She also instituted a call-in system, where people could call and listen to a recorded message to see if they would be needed, rather than having to come into the office.

Woods set up the message phone in her office, and said people in the court system fretted that no one would call and, as a result, there would be no one to serve on juries. But the fears were unfounded.

Her ideas for limiting jury service and having a call-in system were implemented statewide.

Woods said she has led the state in introducing new technology into the court system, mostly with ideas she picked up at national meetings and conventions. She has taken the office from all handwritten records — the clerk's office is charged with preserving all Superior Court records — to now all electronic documentation. She is in the process of giving away the office's rows of filing shelves, where paper records were once stored. Hers was the first clerk's office in the state to scan its documents.

One other accomplishment that Woods is particularly proud of is collecting court fines. She suggested that court clerks would be more effective at collecting fines than the state, which previously did it. The catch was that all counties in the

state had to agree to it. She said she went on a statewide “dog and pony show” and was successful in getting all counties on board, and the state law was changed in 1996 to allow it.

“I always accuse Siri of never sleeping,” Wilke said. “She’s always calling me and saying “Do you know what we should do?” She’s constantly coming up with ideas for doing things differently.”

Woods said “the fact that I can implement change” is the reason why she has stayed in the job so long, “If you sat here and did the same thing every day for 30 years, I don’t think I could have done it,” she added.

Even as she prepares for retirement, Woods rattles off ideas for change that she would still like to still see happen. For one thing, she would like to see all uncontested divorces handled online, rather than in court. She also wants all courts in the state to have online records accessible to the public.

She doesn’t plan to bow out of court issues completely. She said she will keep tabs on legislative hearings in Olympia and will continue to testify on issues that she is passionate about. She also plans to do more quilting, a hobby she has come to love.

“I’ve known her since 1978, and she’s still traveling at the same speed she always has,” Wilke said. “I don’t know that she’ll ever slow down.”

Now Accepting Applications for the 2010 WACO Distinguished Service Award

by James McMahan, WACO Staff

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 WACO Distinguished Service Award. This award was created in 1985 to recognize retired or former county officials who have made outstanding contributions to county government and to their communities. WACO members may nominate any former WACO member whether or not they are from the same county.

In addition to being a former WACO member, consideration will be given to innovations and contributions that the nominee has made within their county; participation in WACO; various committees and organizations in which they were involved (local, state, association or national levels); affiliate participation; and community service. There is a point system consisting of 10 points for each category, and 40 points are needed to qualify for the award. More than one award may be presented in a given year.

A WACO Distinguished Service Award nomination form is available for download on the WACO website (www.wacounties.org/waco).

Completed forms must be mailed back to WACO, 206 10th Avenue, SE, Olympia, WA 98501, marked AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE, no later than SEPTEMBER 1, 2010.

Qualifying nominations will be reviewed by the Award Selection Committee. Award winner(s) will be honored during the 52nd Annual WACO Conference, at the Lodge at Suncadia, in Kittitas County, during the WACO Banquet the evening of Thursday, October 7, 2010.

Nominations from previous years must be re-submitted in order to be considered again this year.

All nominations are confidential.

Now Accepting 2013 WACO Conference Bids

by James McMahan, WACO Staff

WACO is now accepting bids to host its 2013 Conference. WACO conferences rotate between the eastside and the westside of the state each year, and the 2013 conference will be on the westside.

Each WACO conference generates between \$60,000 and \$90,000 in gross revenue to the conference hotel and approximately \$8,000 in sales tax revenue (assuming a 10% local sales tax rate).

If you are interested in having the 2013 WACO Conference in your county, please start working with your local vendors to prepare a proposal for submission to WACO by August 31, 2010.

For your convenience, we have posted a document to the WACO website (www.wacounties.org/waco) that outlines the facility requirements for a WACO conference, as well as a quick explanation of the site selection process.

Please note that proposals will only be considered if they have a letter of endorsement of at least one WACO member from their county (we want you to want us to come). As such, please be advised that as the WACO office continues to receive calls and inquiries from local venues, we will be referring those inquiries to their respective county officials. Introduction/presentation of qualified 2013 proposals will be made during the Wednesday (Oct 6, 2010) WACO Business meeting at the 2010 WACO Conference, and selection will take place by ballot beginning that same day. The winning bid will be announced during the Friday (Oct 8, 2010) WACO Business Meeting.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email. We're here to help

General Government Issues

Some Montana Humor and the Economy

L. Harold Blattie, Executive Director of the Montana Association of Counties, recently told his legislators that there is some similarity in the state addressing its revenue shortfall and a cattle rancher.

He stated: "In times of drought, the rancher has four alternatives:

1. Cut the fence between you and your neighbor (State just takes local funding)
2. Let your herd completely graze the pasture off to the point where the cattle get hungry and break the fence down in order to get to some food. (Residents end up at the county demanding services when the state no longer provides funding)
3. Cut the size of the herd (State reduces the size of state government)
4. Acquire additional pasture (Increases in taxes and fees)

Association News

New Justice-Related Grant Available

Local solicitations have been released for the Byrne JAG Program from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The JAG Program provides local governments with funding to support a variety of program areas including law enforcement, courts, prevention, education, corrections, treatment, planning and evaluation. Applications are due June 30. For more information, contact: [Kati Guerra](mailto:Kati.Guerra@bja.dhs.gov) • 202.942.4279

Pacific County Law & Order

by Pacific County Sheriff John Didion

It was a simple ceremony complete to the type of emotion only a small town could express. Aged veterans providing the color and honor guards. Flag and rifle salute given with pride and dignity. The single bagpiper bringing Amazing Grace into the gathering of family and friends. A final bugle call of Taps.

We said goodbye to Sheriff Herb Newton last Friday at a graveside service in the Menlo cemetery. Herb had lived a long, service-filled life here in Pacific County and I was privileged to have worked for him as a deputy sheriff. In fact Newt, as the Sheriff was known to just about everyone, hired me as a reserve officer in 1975 and a fully-commissioned officer in 1978. I owe him a lot.

In those early years of my career, professional life was slower paced. It wasn't quite Mayberry, but pretty close. Just like Andy, Newt knew just about everyone. Relationships meant everything, mutual respect was expected from all of us. As a rookie deputy I was still driving fast and running code to bar fights hoping to arrive before everyone quit. Newt slowed me down a little in his quiet way and probably prolonged my career.

The Sheriff wasn't imposing physically or loud in any way. He was always in control, though; calm and professional. His greatest strength was the way he treated people. Newt really loved to help others. He demonstrated his passion every day on the job, responding to calls with the South Bend Volunteer Fire Department, or by just helping a neighbor.

Newt reminds me of retired Thurston County Sheriff Gary Edwards. Gary once told me that if one of his deputies drove past a farmer bucking hay that he wanted him to stop if he wasn't busy and help him. He wanted his officers to really be part of their communities. Newt certainly was and expected us to be, as well. It drove home for me that the real reason that we were out there was to serve in any way that we could.

As the funeral procession wound its way to the cemetery, Raymond and South Bend officers stopped traffic at the intersections so we could pass. Each officer rendered a salute as we proceeded through. I'm sure that Newt returned each one with appreciation and humility. He was old school and a true American lawman. Rest in peace. The family is planning a community memorial service later on this month.

(Note: Sheriff Newton was first appointed Pacific County Sheriff in 1976 and then served until he retired in 1986. WACO extends its sympathies to Sheriff Newton's family and friends.)

Good Things

Scholarship Book Drive Moves Forward

Like to read when you are out of town? Do you have a collection of books sitting in your basement, garage, attic, den, etc. that has been there for ages waiting for disposition? Doug MacDonald of USArchive & Imaging Services (USAIS) will be coordinating a Book Drive Sale at upcoming affiliate conferences as well as at WACO's Annual conference October 4-8 at Suncadia lodge in Cle Elum. All proceeds of these incredible book sales go to the Washington Counties Scholarship Fund. USAIS will again be donating a large supply of books but also ask each of you to donate those once "must reads" to this cause. They are looking for hardbacks, paperbacks, children's books and even media (DVDs and CDs). When attending your affiliate conferences, your book donations would be much appreciated for the sales.

Doug has already sold books at the Assessors Conference in Chehalis and the Treasurers Conference in Bellingham this week, and will be at the Clerks Conference in Richland next week as well as the Auditors Conference in Moses Lake. Time to get going...word has it that the Auditors are ahead in scholarship donations right now!

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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"Results from our internal customer satisfaction survey show that our customers want two things from Purchasing. First save us time in the procurement process and second save us money. When Kansas City, Missouri uses a U.S. Communities contract we save both time and money for our customers."

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

