

the Courthouse Journal

WACOUNTIES.ORG/WACO

Washington Association of County Officials

July 30, 2010

Issue No. 19

Permission required to
Re-print language from
the *Courthouse Journal*

*Inside the
Courthouse Journal*

WACO Spotlight
Pages 3-4

Budget, Finance & Taxes
Pages 4-6

Good News
Pages 6-7

Association News
Pages 7-9

**Training &
Upcoming Events**
Page 9

Attachments
Pages 11-13

Welcome Back! The Courthouse Journal Comes Home to WACO

This past month the Washington State Association of Counties opted to produce an online publication called "The Insider" and discontinue their participation in the Courthouse Journal. Since 2000 the Journal has been a joint publication of WACO and WSAC but it originated in WACO 40 years earlier and is a wonderful chronicle of WACO's past.

The picture pages and Ramblings were something every county official savored on a monthly basis. It seems incredible now that county government could survive with a publication that was "snail-mailed" across the state every four weeks.

We expect the fact that counties will have two newsletters available to them will only improve the quality and timeliness of the information they need. We also expect to have fun changing a few things and enhancing others. Our plans include articles and columns that will better acquaint WACO members with the issues and each other.

So, it's time for your input. Please let us know what you would like to see in our future publications.

Washington Counties Building Dedicated 25 years ago!

Governor Booth Gardner was on hand, as were various other state officials, and over 100 county officials, colleagues and friends, for the July 24 dedication of the Washington Counties Building, the new joint headquarters facility of WACO and the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC). *See photos from the August 1985 edition of the Courthouse Journal on page 10.*

Speakers included Governor Gardner; WACO President Jim Rabideau, Franklin County Prosecutor; WSAC President Vernon Marll, Columbia County Commissioner; and WACO and WSAC Executive Directors Fred Saeger and Jim Metcalf, respectively.

Following formal ceremonies, the visitors toured the new building and refreshments were served.

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

<http://wacounties.org/>

the Courthouse Journal

Published weekly (during
Legislative Session) and Bi-
weekly (other than Session) by
the

**Washington Association of
County Officials**

(WACO) wacounties.org/waco

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

WACO - (360) 753-7319 / Fax
(360) 664-2812

Debbie Wilke
Executive Director

James McMahan
Deputy Director

Robin Chase
Financial Operations Manager

Bob Carlton
Research Associate

Kathleen Houts
Administrative Assistant

The 9,292 square foot building also houses the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, the County Road Administration Board, and the Washington Public Utility Districts' Association.

Reminder to Affiliate Presidents and Legislative Chairs: 2011 WACO Priorities due August 23

By James McMahan, WACO Staff

Each year, WACO compiles and advances a package of legislation to the State Legislature on behalf of its members. This package of legislation, known as the WACO Priorities, is composed entirely of recommendations submitted by the seven WACO affiliates – each affiliate can submit up to two legislative proposals each year. Those proposals are due to the WACO office by August 23 for the 2011 WACO Priorities Package.

Following the August 23 deadline, the WACO Legislative Committee will meet by conference call on September 1 to review the proposals and advance the package to the WACO Board for further review and consideration. The final package will be presented to the WACO membership during the 52nd Annual WACO Conference – October 5-8 at the Lodge at Suncadia in Kittitas County.

For more information, please visit the WACO website at www.wacounties.org/waco and click on '2011 WACO Legislative Recommendation Forms' or simply call the WACO office.

WACO Conference Registration Discounts Still Available

By James McMahan, WACO Staff

While the deadline has come and gone to receive the biggest conference registration discount that WACO offers, it's not too late to register and still save money. **Registrations for the 2011 WACO Conference (October 5-8 at the Lodge at Suncadia in Kittitas County) received by August 28 will receive a \$50 discount off the full conference registration fee of \$350.**

Registrations received after August 28, 2010 will be charged the full conference registration fee of \$350.

WACO recognizes that it can take several days to get a check delivered. Therefore, for the purposes of determining the conference registration discounts, we will consider the date that we received your registration form the date that you are registered for the conference, not the date that we receive your check. In other words, we will honor your \$300 conference registration check as long as we receive your registration by August 28.

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 - click on the Conference tab.

If you will be staying at the conference hotel, you can make those arrangements now as

Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:

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

Bill Information: www.leg.wa.gov

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 is 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 for download from the WACO website at www.wacounties.org/waco - click on the Conference tab.

Mark Your Calendars: Newly Elected Officials Conference is December 8 & 9 in Olympia

By James McMahan, WACO Staff

As you are aware, WACO partners with WSAC (the Washington State Association of Counties) every four years to host a Newly Elected Officials Conference for Assessors, Auditors, Clerks, Coroners, Prosecutors, Sheriffs, Treasurers, and Commissioners/Councilmembers newly elected to office.

The next Newly Elected Officials Conference is scheduled for December 8 & 9, 2010 at the Red Lion Hotel in Olympia.

While this conference is geared to the needs of newly elected officials, current officeholders are welcome, in fact encouraged, to come as well. The ability for a newly elected official to meet and learn from current officeholders will be the difference between a successful conference and a great conference, so please mark your calendars if you are available to attend and 'pay it forward.'

More information coming soon!

WACO Spotlight

King County Clerk Barbara Miner

When I started work in the King County Clerk's Office back in 1988, the majority of the 6th floor of the Courthouse was filled with court files. We did not have enough room to fit them all in their allocated open shelving space so many of them were stacked at the end of a file row on the floor or in window cells. Through my tenure here in the office and my time as the County Clerk, things have changed very dramatically. I'm Barb Miner and I have been King County Clerk since June 1, 2000.

Back in the late 80s, clerk's offices around the country started investigating the idea of electronic court files and electronic filing. We jumped in and started exploring the idea as well. By the mid 90s we were full blown into a technology development project and by the year 2000 we implemented an electronic court records system. It took over two years to convince the superior court judges here in King County that the electronic system was as good or better than paper files and during that time we ran dual systems – both paper and electronic. But by the year 2003 we were no longer keeping the paper files – only electronic. In the year 2007 we were honored to receive an *Innovations in Government Award* from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University for our Electronic Court Records program. It was a very rewarding experience to accept the award on behalf of all of the fabulous staff in my office who had made this project such a success.

Just recently in Washington State, other County Clerks have made the transition to no longer keeping the paper files – only electronic. A handful of Clerks accept electronic filings, as we do here in King County. Many more than that, including King County, have their county’s court records available electronically on the web. There is much about the Clerks’ business that lends itself to technology innovations. And here in King County we have successfully capitalized on many of those innovations. Over the implementation time of these electronic systems, we have saved the taxpayers of our county over 10 million dollars in reduced staff costs and other savings. We are a much more efficient and effective operation and I am proud of that.

I am fascinated with operations and the way that my office can run like a fine tuned engine, shooting on all cylinders. It’s also fascinating, though upsetting, to see the wheels fall off at times. It’s also amazing to me to have been in this job since 2000 and been with the Clerk’s office since 1988, yet I still learn new things all the time. I have a few over 200 employees here in the Clerk’s office, spread over 3 courthouses. To keep this ship running in ship shape, it takes a lot of brains and brawn working together toward the same goals. I have a great management team. We spend a lot of time working to make sure things happen automatically, based on policy and procedure, so that we don’t waste time creating new wheels every day. We can’t afford it.

King County is the 12th largest population area in the nation. We have everything here from the very rural to the very urban and all the problems and case types associated with these extremes and everything in between. The Superior Court here features 53 judges and 12 commissioners; they make up my most organized customer group, right up there with the Bar Association. They keep me on my toes, as do my colleagues in the Clerks’ Association. My job is a fascinating set of challenges and rewards that keep me engaged all the time. Do other people have easy jobs? What would that be like?

Budget, Finance and Taxes

“And Now the Rest of the Story”

By Robert Carlton, WACO Staff

You all might remember Paul Harvey and his introduction line to his next news story. It was his signature trademark where he would give you a lead-in “teaser” that he would use to get your interest perked, and then he would follow, usually after a commercial, with “the rest of the story.” This style of reporting news served Harvey well for years, and he was the only one that reported news in quite this way. It was effective, concise and very successful as his ratings remained high all of the years of his very successful career. He made you stay tuned, and you could hardly wait to hear “the rest of the story.”

For all you good folks out there that are struggling with ever decreasing resources and tighter budgets, we need to get the word out to the public about the “rest of the story.” Right now, many are contemplating trying to ask the public to give them more resources, usually through some type of Lid Lift. If you follow the media reporting of these requests, the public usually responds with scathing comments on how wasteful government is and how government needs to “cut the fat” out of their operation. Folks, where I spent a large chunk of my career years, there never was any fat. I am so sick of hearing that term “cut the fat” that at times I want to scream. But guess what, that is what the Public perceives, and we have tacitly allowed that attitude to grow and fester because we have not told them the “rest of the story.”

Remember when I-695 passed, and the Courts threw it out, and the Legislature put it back in place with the implied promise that they would backfill the lost funds? Most counties got some money, but not as much as they had gotten before the initiative passed. But even then, for counties that had a large sales tax base, most did not feel the crunch. Primarily smaller counties with little or no sales tax or business base took a disproportionate “hit” off that one. Smaller counties struggled, but continued to provide services, just as Eyman said they would. And the Public was ecstatic.

When Eyman's Initiative I-747 passed that limited government to 1% growth plus new construction, we all groaned and gnashed our teeth and made a ruckus that it would cripple government services. They passed it anyway, and guess what? The courts threw it out, and the legislature called a special session and reinstated it. The sky did not fall. Buses ran, police were on the streets, firemen fought fires, ambulances took people to hospitals and life went on, pretty much as before. Government went on as before and patched streets, libraries ordered books and the people thought "Aha, I told you so." Government did an excellent job of proving to the Public that they were right all along by continuing to provide services. Cuts were indeed made; it is just that they were made internally where the Public couldn't see it, and more importantly, couldn't feel it. It continued to be "business as usual" as far as the Public was concerned.

And then something funny happened, but it happened in stages, and a lot of it got lost in the shuffle. Government, because of its nature, tends to own and run a rather large fleet of vehicles. Most of these vehicles run or burn some type of petroleum product, usually gas or diesel. Well, remember when gas was \$1.30 to \$1.40? It is now \$2.90 to \$3.10. The price doubled over a span of months, went higher, and settled back at a price double to what we had all been paying and stayed there. Not only the gas, but the oil that lubricates the engines also doubled. If you own or run a fleet of vehicles, like government does, this had to have a very negative effect on your bottom line expenses. But we were mostly silent on this fact and it is now mostly forgotten. But that was the actual start or precursor to the crisis.

Then the entire housing market collapsed because of bad loans, and the downward spiral really got some momentum. We maybe could have survived that, but at the same time this happened, interest rates on money tanked to virtual new lows, and people quit buying and the sales tax you relied upon to fund government ceased to come in.

I suspect that a lot of counties started digging into reserves to fund services when gas doubled. What we did not and could not know is that those reserves would not be able to be replenished. We lost the higher rate of return on investments, and by having to spend down reserves, it was a double whammy. Now we have less reserve funds garnering less interest. In the past, we had been able to stretch those tax dollars quite a bit farther with interest on investments. And all of a sudden it's gone. And the spiral has increased even more.

The money then quit coming in. Not only did we lose sales tax revenue, we also lost funds from recording of property transfers. I'm not sure that we are losing money yet on property tax collections. In all likelihood the banks and lenders still appear to be paying the property taxes on foreclosed properties, at least for now and as far as I'm aware. But counties have been forced to respond to the Public by lowering property values in a large number of counties. It may well be merited to do so, but once again it acts like a choke chain in slowing government's ability to heal. Levy rates have started to creep back up to the point that some may be facing proration issues on levys as early as this fall.

The latest attacks on government for the most part have been focused on salaries and benefits. The Public now demands that county employees feel their pain by having hours cut, positions eliminated and health care insurance costs passed on to employees. It is about the only thing left in counties to cut. How this will help any type of economic recovery escapes me, but it appears to be where we are headed. You know, government jobs usually paid less than the private sector but at least they were steady, and you weren't subject to layoffs. It would seem that now attacking these employees is just good sport, even though in many counties these same employees are not making the county median income, and would qualify for a Senior Exemption if they could apply.

The Public appears to care less that during the boom years counties were adding parcels to the rolls due to new construction at a rate counties never imagined would occur. Now we have all these new parcels that have increased the workload while we have trimmed and curtailed employees needed to administer them. And not one word has been mentioned about that.

Personally, because of my farm background, I tend to think in plain terms. And I think now we are being catapulted toward what will become the "shear pin effect" on local government. We will continue to expend so much energy trying to turn the wheel of government and provide services to the public with ever decreasing resources that we will shear the pin on the gears that drive government. Government will then become ineffective. Government does not need to have a total failure to fail; it just needs to become ineffective to fail.

Now... "the rest of the story." Somehow, some way, we need to make the Public keenly aware as to what has been happening, and to make them aware of just how close to the edge some counties and offices really are. There will always be a small group of members of the voting public who will never be satisfied as long a government still exists. Forget about them. Instead, focus your energy and your resources on people that will listen to both sides of an issue before forming an opinion. Take them through the timelines of the events detailed above and make them aware of impacts that have occurred in your individual offices and counties. Please, don't take it for granted that they already know, because they probably don't. I'm afraid that we will all need to become salespeople to the Public in defense of all the respective offices. I also know that it is no picnic trying to "sell" government to the Public, but we owe it to them to at least try. Tell them "the rest of the story," while you still can.

Good News

Persistence Reconnects Long-Lost Relatives

By Jeremy Pawloski, The Daily Olympian, 7/23/2010

After a transient was struck and killed by a car on Martin Way in March, three months passed and no one stepped forward to claim the man's body.

All Thurston County Coroner Gary Warnock knew was that the dead man's name was Harry James Smith, 43.

"We just basically had his name, date of birth and Social Security number," Warnock said. "That's it."

But the idea of allowing Smith to be cremated as just another unclaimed body didn't sit well with the coroner. So at the beginning of July, Warnock decided to make an extra effort to contact Smith's family.

Using the dead man's Social Security number, Warnock found out that Smith served in the Navy from September to December in 1984, then enlisted in the Marine Corps in April 1985, serving until 1987.

Warnock also found out from Smith's Social Security number that he was born in 1966 in Chester, PA., to Gerald and Patricia Constantine Connors. Using this information, Warnock contacted newspapers in the Chester area to see if there was any interest in running a story on Smith, to see if his relatives could be located.

The Delaware County Daily Times in Pennsylvania ran a short story on Smith on Saturday, July 3. The story included contact information for Warnock so that anyone who knew Smith or his family could call the coroner. A cousin of Smith saw the story and contacted Smith's stepfather. The stepfather called Smith's sister, Angela Ugrotto, 38, of Wilmington, Del. Ugrotto then called Warnock to claim her brother's body.

Had Warnock been unable to find a family member to claim the body, he would have tried to see whether Smith could have been buried at a national cemetery because he was a veteran. If burial at a national cemetery was not permitted, Smith's remains would have been given to a local funeral home, Warnock said. Funeral homes around Thurston County have different protocols for burials of unclaimed, indigent remains.

Ugrotto said in a phone interview Wednesday that she is grateful Warnock went above and beyond the call of duty to locate her brother's relatives. "Thank God for Gary. If he hadn't been persistent and did his job, really, we would never have known," Ugrotto said. "I can't thank Gary enough for what he did."

Ugrotto said that over the years, her family had lost touch with Smith, who had chosen to live a transient life and had problems with substance abuse. "It's been about eight years since we physically saw him," she said.

She said the last time she had spoken with her brother was about four years ago, when he called from Provo, Utah. She said the family wired him money and a bus ticket to come home, but he never used it. The family had no way of getting in touch with Smith, and had no way of finding out that he had died, had it not been for Warnock's efforts, she said.

Ugrotto said the family gave Smith a proper funeral, and he is now buried in Broomall, Penn., in a plot next to his mother.

Warnock said Thursday that unclaimed bodies are not uncommon in the coroner's office – currently there are five.

Kittitas County 2010 Budget Earns Special Recognition

by James McMahan, WACO Staff

The Washington Finance Officers Association (WFOA) announced this week that the Kittitas County 2010 Budget has earned the WFOA Distinguished Budget Award. The Distinguished Budget Award is claimed to be the highest form of recognition in fiscal planning and budgeting within the State of Washington.

The budget document is judged on meeting program criteria covering policies, operations, financial planning and communications. In order to earn this award, the budget documents are critiqued by no less than two reviewers who have rated the document as meeting or exceeding a proficiency level. Kittitas County officials will be presented a plaque and certificate of their award at the 55th Annual WFOA Conference in Vancouver this September.

Congratulations to Kittitas County Auditor Jerry Pettit and his finance team!

Association News

Lawsuit: Merrill Lynch Sold King County "Toxic Junk"

By Chris Grygiel, the Seattle PI, 7/20/2010

King County is suing investment giant Merrill Lynch, saying it knowingly sold the government "illiquid junk" tied to "toxic" subprime mortgages just before the economy collapsed - costing taxpayers tens of millions of dollars.

The lawsuit filed Friday in U.S. District Court in Seattle is the latest attempt by King County to recover money it lost because of market turmoil during the Great Recession. Earlier this year a federal judge said the county could try to get back \$18 million that evaporated because of a complicated Wall Street venture that fell apart.

The Merrill Lynch suit claims the investment bank chose "to elevate its thirst for profits above all else - over its duties to its clients and over its obligation to tell the truth." King County says Merrill Lynch misrepresented the risk and nature of what were supposed to be conservative money market investments.

Between July 27 and Aug. 2, 2007, the lawsuit says the company sold more than \$100 million of "prime commercial paper" to the county. "Commercial paper" consists of notes sold by banks or companies to quickly raise cash. Those sellers promise to pay back investors the face value of the notes - plus a small rate of return - at a later date.

King County, which initiated the transactions with Merrill, says it bought the commercial paper on behalf of its \$4 billion investment pool, which holds money collected by the county, school districts and other agencies through property taxes and other means until the funds are needed for spending. The county invests the cash to earn interest for the agencies. The county and Seattle Public Schools are the two largest contributors.

According to the lawsuit, the investments in question came from entities known as Mainsail II and Victoria Finance. Mainsail was formed in the Cayman Islands in March 2006, the lawsuit says, and was backed almost entirely by risky mortgages. King County says just three weeks after Merrill sold it \$50 million worth of Mainsail commercial paper, the enterprise began to collapse. The next month - September of 2007 - credit rating agencies placed Victoria on a negative credit watch and later downgraded it to "junk" status.

"Losses from these supposedly low risk money market investments are in excess of \$60 million," the lawsuit says. "Simply put, the risks embedded in this commercial paper, and the assets underlying it, were dramatically mispriced...Merrill was aware of the toxic nature of the assets underlying the paper; King County was not."

William Hardin, a spokesman for Bank of America Merrill Lynch, said "we've just received the action and are reviewing it."

Bank of America bought Merrill Lynch in 2008, the same year the state treasurer for Maine reached an agreement with Merrill Lynch over its exposure to Mainsail II.

King County's budget is in crisis because of declining tax revenues due to the down economy. After cutting \$150 million over the past two years, the county is expecting a deficit of \$60 million next year. Since criminal justice agencies -- such as the Sheriff's Office, the county's courts, jail and probation services --- eat up about 70 percent of the \$630 million general fund, they face the brunt of the cuts.

Voters to Decide if Benton County Seat Should Move

By John Trumbo, Tri-City Herald, 7/20/2010

It took more than four years and a whole lot of wrangling, but retired judge Fred Staples' petition drive to have Benton County voters decide if Kennewick should be the county seat will be on the Nov. 2 ballot.

County commissioners agreed Monday to put the question on the ballot after finding Staples had presented enough petition signatures. Commissioners Jim Beaver and Max Benitz Jr. supported the resolution, with Leo Bowman out of town on county business.

The ballot proposition, which will be titled "Removal of County Seat," will ask voters if Kennewick should replace Prosser as the seat of county government.

Staples filed 23,633 signatures on his petitions, which was well over the 13,684 needed to qualify for the ballot. State law required valid signatures equal to at least one-third of the number of votes cast in the November 2009 election, when 41,050 votes were cast.

Staples first suggested in 1984 the county seat should move from Prosser to Kennewick because most of the county's employees were working out of Kennewick. But a public vote that year fell short of the required 60 percent supermajority. Disappointed but not daunted, the retired Superior Court judge redoubled his efforts with a new petition drive in 2006. Staples, who will write the ballot argument favoring the county seat move, insists relocation is needed because the county seat should be where the population center is in the county. He also says the county seat already has in effect been moved because most county offices are in Kennewick.

"It is vitally important that the people of Benton County have an opportunity to decide where the county seat is going to be located," said Benitz, whose District 2 includes Prosser. He noted that the county seat has been in Prosser for 107 years and that the courthouse is a focus of community pride and listed on the National Historic Register.

Commissioners have hired a consultant from Seattle to prepare a cost analysis on what the financial impact would be of moving the county seat. The analysis, which is required by law, will consider the cost for the county, the cities of Prosser and Kennewick, and the financial effect on county employees who will see their place of employment move 36 miles to Kennewick.

The county sheriff, assessor, auditor, treasurer and clerk maintain offices in Prosser at the courthouse complex, while also keeping offices at either the county annex on Canal Drive in Kennewick or at the Benton County Justice Center on Grandridge Boulevard.

A League of Women Voters study done in 2008 found that about 80 percent of the county's employees were working in Kennewick. Benitz said at a commission meeting in March that even if all the county offices in Prosser moved to Kennewick the county would have to maintain the courthouse as a public building.

County Administrator David Sparks told commissioners last month when they were choosing a consultant to help them answer questions about relocating the county seat that this was a first in Washington. "We know of only one other county in the nation that has done this, and it's in Georgia," he said.

The consultant, Entrix, expects to have its report ready for the commissioners in mid-August. It also will prepare a voters pamphlet with answers to frequently asked questions about the issue.

Skagit Judge: Canadians Must Pay Washington State Sales Tax

By Kate Martin, Skagit Valley Herald, 7/17/2010

Recent changes in Canada's tax system do not entitle Canadians to a sales tax exemption in Washington state, a Skagit County judge ruled today.

Skagit County Superior Court Judge Michael Rickert ordered the state Department of Revenue to tell retailers that the exemption originally intended to address tax issues on the Washington-Oregon border won't apply to Canadian shoppers.

Attorneys representing Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham had argued that British Columbia residents should not get the exemption, but Rickert expanded the ruling to include all Canadians under a similar taxation system to avoid inconsistencies and confusion at the cash register.

The two local government jurisdictions feared the loss of a major source of tax revenue, given the significant impact of cross-border retail activity in Whatcom County.

The case will be expedited to the state Court of Appeals. Rickert said he wanted the case to bypass the Skagit County appeals system because the issue was too important to let it languish in lower courts.

"Let's face it, this country was founded on tax issues," Rickert said. "We got tired of King George."

Training & Upcoming Events

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

County Training Institute – www.countytraininginstitute.org

UPCOMING CTI TRAINING:

THE LEGAL SIDE OF PERSONNEL

September 16, 2010 – Spokane

9am to 4pm

Enduris Office

5709 W Sunset Hwy Suite 105

Spokane, WA 99224

**(Continued from Front Page - Actual Photos from
The Courthouse Journal August 1985 Edition)**



WACO President Jim Rabideau, Franklin County Prosecutor, addressed the crowd at the July 24 Washington Counties Building dedication. Beside him stands Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) President Vernon Marll, Columbia County Commissioner. In the background, left to right are Jim Metcalf and Fred Saeger, WSAC and WACO Executive Directors, respectively.

Governor Booth Gardner was guest speaker at the Washington Counties Building dedication, and shares a light moment with county officials and other guests. Behind Governor Gardner, left to right are Vernon Marll, Fred Saeger, and Jim Rabideau.

The new building is located at 206 10th Avenue SE, Olympia. County officials and other interested parties are invited to come by and take a look at the new energy-efficient facility. Three conference rooms are available for affiliate meetings.

Attachments

Cle Elum Offers History, Art and Delicious Food

By Sharon Wootton & Maggie Savage, Contributing writers, The Daily Olympian, 7/25/2010

The wheelbarrows marched up the tree, each one set on the next in a slightly out of plumb line-up of rusty brown, blue, red and yellow. Stephen Ristine's whimsical tower is just one reason to stop in Cle Elum, off Interstate 90 east of the Cascades.

The collection started a couple of years ago with his family's wheelbarrows – "I just had a wild hair," he said – but climbed to new heights when people dropped off more. Garage sales netted additions.

"I just tell them that their wheelbarrow would be number 17 if they'd let it go for a buck," Ristine said. His longest ladder allowed the placing of the 21st wheelbarrow. There are two more waiting their turn but Ristine first has to get a longer ladder. "If I had enough, I could make a wheelbarrow arch to the next tree, like a rainbow."

History Remains Prevalent

Cle Elum's a mix of small downtown, some residential areas and a determinedly rural character. Coal and railroads were instrumental in the initial growth of Cle Elum before a disaster changed the town's landscape. A 1918 fire wiped out 29 blocks of mostly wood structures, destroying 30 business and more than 250 homes. Residents rebuilt, often with brick.

The easy 4.7-mile Coal Miners Trail runs from Cle Elum through Roslyn and on to tiny Ronald, with benches every quarter-mile. The trail often goes over a honeycomb of mine tunnels and past old building sites, offering a glimpse of the area's mining history.

As for the town's railroad history, in its heyday the Milwaukee Railroad ran through South Cle Elum and the competing Northern Pacific through Cle Elum.

The restored 122-foot-long 101-year-old South Cle Elum Depot is now a museum and small café, with interpretation signs outside and a good view of Mount Peoh. Inside, artifacts include a telegraph office, oil cans for steam engines, blacksmith tongs, and a diorama of a train crossing a trestle.

There's also easy access to the John Wayne Pioneer Trail and Iron Horse State Park, the latter a 100-mile stretch on the original Milwaukee Railroad roadbed.

On a recent visit, Iron Horse Inn B&B owners Mary and Doug Pittis' granddaughter Abigail Grace, with her red hair in pigtails and wearing a delighted expression, was on the floor repairing her train of brightly colored blocks. Sitting down for breakfast choices of apple zucchini muffins, fruit bowl, omelet and delicious ricotta cottage cheese pancakes, we soaked up more railroad ambience from shelves of large-scale trains and Milwaukee Road tableware place settings, including oval peacock plates once used in dining cars.

The inn – once temporary housing for railroad crews and four cabooses – has much more memorabilia scattered throughout the house. Outside the inn is a railroad crossing that warned vehicles of trains on the Milwaukee Road Line, Coast Division. The renovated cabooses, named after railroads, are novel overnight accommodations, a history-and-TV-microwave combination.

Delicious Delights

But Cle Elum is more than its history. Downtown Cle Elum's surprises are worth a short walk, especially if you're hungry for something special.

The Cle Elum Bakery, in business for 103 years, is owned by Ivan and Claudia Osmonovich. Ivan hails from Croatia. One draw is the torcetti, an Italian pastry that is a twisted biscuit. A customer once shipped three-dozen to Russia. Also popular is Dutch crunch, with rice flour on top providing the crunch. It's usually sold out by the end of the day. Or try the cinnamon crisp, an 8-inch oval cousin to an elephant ear that's baked instead of fried.

If you want lunch, The Bakery House around the corner serves soups, salads and sandwiches.

The main culinary attraction is Glondo's Sausage Co. & Italian Market, both for its unusual offerings and the wonderful smell when you walk in. It's owned by Charlie (also the mayor) and Randine Glondo.

"We don't use junk meats. We use our own recipes, no nitrates, no filler and make it in small batches," the mayor said.

It's mouth-watering just to read the large chalkboard menu with its three dozen cheeses, including England's Huntsman and Gloucester yellow (a cheddar) and blue Stilton's cheese in bands like a layer cake.

Even more unusual (and expensive) is Fontina Val D'Aosta (cow's milk Italian cheese), made since the 12th century and now \$20 a pound; and Chimay (\$23.63 a pound), made by monks and beer washed with a smell akin to, well, sweaty socks. Also on the board are about 18 fresh or cured meats, including Salsiccia, cinnamon-flavored port sausage (fry it with cabbage); bratwurst, a mild German sausage with pork (boil it with beer and onions and serve on a bun), and kielbasa from a 50-year-old recipe.

Also consider blood sausage (link sausage of pig's blood, diced pork fat and other ingredients), Swedish potatoes and Easter sausage. Popular choices are jerky pepperoni, dry salami, and head cheese, an Italian sausage of meaty bits of the head of a calf, pig, sheep or cow. It's made in small batches and cured for months, then seasoned, combined with a gelatinous meat broth and cooked in a mold. When it's cool, the sausage is thinly sliced.

It sounds like an acquired taste.

Back in history mode, we visited the Cle Elum Telephone Museum next to the public restrooms. It started in 1966 when Pacific Northwest Bell deeded the building to the local historical society. The museum packs a lot into limited space, tracing the history of the telephone and exhibiting displays of manual and telephone exchange panels. Cle Elum's last call on the three-bank exchange on Sept. 18, 1966 ended the "Number, please" era.

The gem may be the working innards of a relay exchange mechanism. Dial a number on one phone, watch the pieces move that leads to a ring from a second phone.

Another interesting site is the 1914 Carpenter House Museum and Art Gallery with its third-floor ballroom and High Country artists displays.

Railroads and telephones, food and art, Cle Elum is worth a stop. Travel writers Maggie Savage and Sharon Wootton are authors of "Off the Beaten Path: Washington."

Cle Elum

What: A town of fewer than 2,000 off Interstate 90, east of Snoqualmie Pass. The Native American name means swift waters. Who's who from Cle Elum: John Bresko, in 1921, was the first to start organized skiing west of Denver; freestyle skier Patrick Deneen, U.S. Olympic Team skier, 2010 Winter Olympics; and astronaut Dick Scobee, killed in the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion.

**EDITOR' NOTE: As you know, the Washington Association of County Officials' 52nd Annual Conference will be held at the Lodge at Suncadia in Cle Elum, Washington, October 4-8. How fortunate for us that this article was printed in the Daily Olympian newspaper recently. It gives you a look at the wonderful sights and sounds and "places to see" in Cle Elum while you are there for our conference!*

...and last, but not least...

A Stroll Down Memory Lane

For sale

The Clallam County Treasurer's office will accept sealed bids until Friday, October 26, at 10:00 am, 1984, on the following item:

IBM System 34 computer

Serial number: 15707

Model Number: E35

Type: 5340

Prospective bidders may view the computer at the Clallam County Courthouse, 223 E 4th Street, Port Angeles, in the Central Services Department, Room 20 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

