

# Courthouse Journal

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## County Officials Told Criminal Justice and Public Health Assistance Not Likely to be Funded

Over 300 county officials were in Olympia this week to fight for criminal justice and public health assistance. They joined another 400 city officials during the joint legislative reception Wednesday night at which many legislators also attended. The main theme was the need for continued criminal justice and public health funding. However, the majority leadership has said that there is little chance for continued funding. There was little change in their position in spite of heavy pressure from both county and city officials.

Senator Lisa Brown, Chair of Senate Ways & Means, attended the noon luncheon on Thursday and said counties should not hold out false hope that there would be any relief for either criminal justice or public health assistance. She did say, however, that there was

a good chance that the E-911 wireless tax bill might pass. She indicated she would support local taxing authority for counties; however, she also pointed out that it would be most difficult to pass any tax bill because of the super majority requirement of I-601. While she would vote for tax increases, she didn't think a super majority would vote for such tax increases, thus requiring a referendum clause in any tax bill. In another positive statement, Brown said she would support extending timelines for both the growth and shoreline management acts. She also said she would work to protect counties from any shifts of state mandates to them and would try to protect the most vulnerable citizens from cuts in programs.

## Legislators Wrap Up Budget Hearings

This week the House and Senate Budget Committees held the last round of budget hearings. So far, legislators seem to hate everything they hear. The county story shared the stage with personal stories of social service cuts, tuition increases, job losses, and elimination of the State Library and the State Film Office. Legislators also show little enthusiasm for any state revenue proposals. Most members want to avoid tax increases, and a slightly different majority hates increased gambling revenue.

Legislators have started to say that certain cuts are off the table; unfortunately, cuts to county assistance for criminal justice and public health are still on the table.

The current schedule calls for the revenue forecast update on February 19 to coincide with the legislative deadline for bills to make it out of the house of origin. The Senate will probably unveil its budget proposal shortly after the forecast update. The last time the Legislature faced a fiscal crisis of this magnitude, they struggled to find a majority for any mix of solutions. It is not clear how the budget chairs can patch together a proposal that will meet with the approval of a majority of their colleagues.

# County Revenue Bills to be Heard

Legislation to grant utility tax authority to counties will be heard in the Senate State and Local Government Committee (**SB 6593** on February 6) and in House Local Government Committee and Housing Commission (**HB 2659** on February 5). The companion measures would

give counties an option to levy a county-wide tax of up to 1% by council vote or up to 3% by a vote of the people. The revenues are dedicated to criminal justice, public health and human services.

A proposal to grant counties an additional one tenth of a cent of voter ap-

proved sales tax will be heard by the Senate State and Local Government Committee (**SB 6636** on February 4). The new revenue would be dedicated to criminal justice. Sixty percent of the revenue raised would go to the county; the other 40% would be distributed to the county and the cities based on the population within cities and unincorporated areas.

## New Property Tax Bills

**HB 2724** changes the church property tax exemption. The bill says that to be exempt, the property must be exclusively used for church purposes,

but allows for an exemption for a residence located on church property. This exemption is determined by the Exempt Section of the Department of Revenue's Property Tax Division. **HB 2731**, the Assessors' priority bill calls for a review of current exemption at least once every six years. This bill has a hearing in the House Finance Committee on Monday, February 4, at 3:30 p.m. **HB 2743** allows for the use of agricultural lands not currently being farmed as sites for recreational activities, including playing fields for sports played on grass. **HB 2747** requires a fiscal impact statement for initiatives to the people certified for

the ballot under RCW 29.79.230. **HB 2750** provides a limited property tax exemption for incidental use of facilities of artistic, scientific or historical organizations to allow them to better raise additional revenues from the public to be self-sustaining for their exempt purposes. **HB 2770** is another Assessor priority bill relating to truth in taxation. The bill would require ballot titles to compare dollar amounts to prior dollar amounts in both monetary and percentage change terms. **HB 2784** and **HB 2785** would reduce delinquent property tax interest and penalties.

### The Courthouse Journal

The Courthouse Journal is published weekly by the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO) and the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC).

We welcome your suggestions and contributions. The weekly deadline is noon Thursday.

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## Hotel-Motel Tax Changes

**HB 1531**, which exempts hotel rentals of more than 30 days duration from hotel-motel taxation, will be heard in the House Finance Committee on February 4. Also on the committee's schedule is **HB 2713**, which would make significant changes to the hotel-motel tax law. Under **HB 2713**, elected officials could spend hotel-motel tax proceeds only on items approved by the local industry advisory committee. Tour-

ism-related activities are defined to include only activities that result in an overnight lodging stay. Localities would be prohibited from banking more than 25% of any year's revenue. The lodging industry will promote these changes, arguing that their industry is in distress and that local officials have abused the tax. If these changes adversely affect your county, you need to let your House members know about your concerns.

## County Treasurer Activities

Nineteen counties were represented at the Treasurers' business and legislative meeting this week in Olympia. Most met with their legislators while in town and attended the Legislative Reception, Wednesday evening. State Treasurer Mike Murphy met with the group one morning and updated them on current topics in his office; the treasurers reviewed all legislation introduced thus far of impact to their offices. Senator Georgia Gardner was the guest speaker during a luncheon on Wednesday.

On Monday, Treasurers' Legislative Chair Rose Bowman (Lewis County), and Ron Strabbing (Grays Harbor

County), attended the Senate State and Local Government Committee hearing to testify on three bills: favorably on **SB 6466**, the Treasurers/WACO administrative cleanup bill; favorably on **SB 6437**, requiring county treasurers to distribute funds to all taxing districts who have their own treasurers by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month; and informatively on **SB 6559**, authorizing port districts to pay claims or other obligations by check or warrant. Ron Strabbing testified in favor of **HB 2467**, the companion bill to **SB 6437**, before the House Local Government and Housing Committee on Wednesday.

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## County Treasurer Activities

(Continued from page 2)

The Senate bills have all passed out of

committee to Rules. **County Treasurers who have legislators on the Senate Rules Committee: Please call and ask**

**them to pull SB 6466 to the Floor Calendar and encourage your Senatos to vote yes.**

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## Fire District Warrants

**SB 2169**, authorizing a fire district with an annual operating budget of

under five million dollars to issue its own warrants upon agreement with the

county treasurer, passed out of the House Local Government and Housing Committee and resides in the House Rules Committee.

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## Legislative Mini Conference Held January 29 and 30

The county auditors held their annual Legislative Mini Conference on January 29 and 30 in Olympia. The conference kicked off on Wednesday morning with introductions from WSACA President Bill Varney and a legislative overview and discussion period led by WSACA Legislative Chair Suzanne Sinclair. Suzanne also took the time to thank B.G. Sandahl, WACO staff, for her hard work and dedication on behalf of the Auditors' Association and presented her with a beautiful arrangement of flowers. B.G. is leaving WACO to become the chief deputy auditor for the Thurston County Auditor's office.

Cathy Pearsall-Stipek reported on National Association of County Recorders and Clerks (NACRC) activities, and State Elections Director Dean Logan reviewed the Secretary of State's 2002 Legislative Package. Luncheon speaker Representative Sandra Romero gave the group pointers on meeting with legislators and seeking ways to solve issues through legislation. After adjournment, the county auditors headed to the Capitol to meet with their legislators and communicate the growing funding crisis that counties are facing in the coming biennium. The day wrapped up with a brief sojourn to Saint Martin's Pavilion, in

Lacey, for a Legislative Reception sponsored by the Washington State Association of Counties, Association of Washington Cities, Washington Association of County Officials, and the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

On Thursday morning the auditors met to hear reports from the Licensing, Recording, and Legislative committees and report on legislative contacts made the day before. The auditors then adjourned to downtown Olympia for the annual Legislative Rally Luncheon, where Senator Lisa Brown spoke to county officials from across the State.

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## Two-Year Vehicle Licensing

**SB 6494** was heard in the Senate Transportation Committee on January 29. The bill would establish a two-year vehicle licensing program. The changes to the statute would double the fees payable to the state, but as it is written would **not** double the filing fee that

county auditors collect or the fee that subagents collect. Grays Harbor County Auditor Vern Spatz, Jefferson County Auditor Donna Eldridge, Mason County Auditor Al Brotche, and Mason County Licensing Supervisor Jackie Burnett all gave excellent testimony in support of a

two-year vehicle licensing program, but asked the committee to amend the bill to include the doubling of county and subagent filing fees to be consistent with those of the State. Committee chair, Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, said she would be willing to work with the auditors and subagents to increase the filing fee, but doubling the fees was not a possibility.

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## Courts

**SB 6401**, the County Clerks' cleanup bill, and **SB 6417**, filing of wills, both moved out of the Senate Judiciary Committee this week and are in the Senate Rules Committee. County clerks are urged to contact their members on the Rules Committee and asked that the bills be "pulled." A Rules "pull" is an affirmative vote to move the bill. The

Senate Rules Committee requires two "pulls" to get a bill to the floor for a vote.

**SB 6402**, collection of inmate legal financial obligations, is still in the Senate Human and Corrections Services Committee. **SB 6458**, jury fees, is still in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Both are WACO priority bills. County clerks are urged to contact Senator Hargrove and members of the Human Services Committee, and Senator Kline and mem-

bers of the Judiciary Committee, and ask them to pass the respective bills out of committee. **SB 6402** will have an amendment (language change) that the clerks have agreed to, so ask that **SB 6402** pass with the amendment.

**HB 2459**, related to changes in children's programs and services as a result of budget reductions, warrants careful scrutiny by each county to determine the extent of the impacts locally. **HB 2459** is in the House Appropriations Commit-

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## Death Investigations

**HB 2795**, protecting drug and alcohol tests by the State Toxicologist, is being heard in the House State Government Committee on Thursday, Febru-

ary 7, at 6:00 p.m. **HB 2795** is a WACO priority bill and a request of the Washington State Patrol. **HB 2795** will make toxicology reports confidential and con-

sistent with the confidentiality of the same in the coroners' and medical examiners' offices.

**SB 6745**, a bill relating to death certificates, was introduced this week under the sponsorship of Senator Mary Marga-

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## Death Investigations

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ret Haugen. **SB 6745** allows the Department of Health to establish fees for preparing sealed files and for opening sealed files by rule (Washington Administrative Code [WAC]) rather than by

regulation. Counties must charge the same as the state. **SB 6475** also directs local registrars to charge a surcharge of \$1.00 for each fee charged for a certified copy and when no copy is made. This new surcharge is to be transmitted into a fund for the sole purpose of implement-

ing a web-based electronic death certificate registration system. The surcharge expires on July 1, 2006, and does not affect local revenues or the Death Investigations Account.

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## Law and Justice

**SB 6404**, requiring the county sheriff or his deputies to attend session of

district court, passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee this week. **SB 6404** promises tremendous fiscal and resource impacts to county sheriffs, so the movement of the bill comes as some-

what of a surprise. It remains on the "Mandates Watch List" attached to this newsletter.

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## Transportation Overview

The Governor's 10-year statewide transportation plan, **SB 6347/HB 2542**, will serve as the platform for budget development in the House and Senate over the next several weeks. The \$8.5 billion plan includes over \$6 billion in new state highway investments, \$646 million in ferry capital projects, and \$580 million for rural mobility and special needs transit grants. The revenue to support this proposal is a nine cent gas tax that is phased in over three years, a three cent diesel surcharge, a 1.5% sales and use tax on new/used automobiles (phased in), and a 20% gross vehicle weight surcharge increase on trucks and

motor homes. The Senate heard this bill this week, with a long line up of witnesses primarily urging the Committee to pass a similar measure into law. Some of the debate centered on whether the statewide package would be sent to the voters or be voted within the legislature.

As reported in last week's *Courthouse Journal*, for counties, the proposal is a mix of dedicated programs, eligible programs, and a continuation of current gas tax distribution. **Please note there is no additional gas tax distribution for either counties or cities in this proposal.**

Below is a list of new dollars:

- \$238M Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (on-going)
- \$45M County Corridor Congestion Relief
- \$50M Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB)
- \$10M School Safety Enhancement Program

The Senate Transportation Committee also heard **SB 6350**, allowing use of county road funds for state highway improvements. Current law does not allow a county to use county road funds for the purposes of state highways (RCW 36.75.035). **SB 6350** would remove this provision from the Act. This bill is a request by Skagit County.

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## Governor Signs Efficiency Bill

This week, Governor Locke signed into law the efficiency and accountability bill (ESHB 2304). ESHB 2304 incorporates some of the recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Committee on Transportation (BRCT). The signed bill includes null and void language to protect counties from an unfunded mandate. Specific to counties,

the bill contains a modified provision of the benchmark recommendations that were considered last session. In addition, the bill contains a section that requires counties to comply with new maintenance "standards of good practice" that will be developed by the County Road Administration Board. The fiscal note on this provision esti-

mates the costs to counties to be \$4.3 million. At the House Transportation hearing, WSAC staff testified requesting an amendment to place a provision that would link new revenue with the new requirement. Only a portion of WSAC's amendment was adopted by the House but the Senate Transportation Committee passed ESHB 2304 with WSAC's full amendment. Please contact Jackie White, WSAC staff, for more information

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## Street Utility Fees

The Association of Cities is advocating for additional taxing authority to address their local transportation needs. **HB 2700/SB 6649** authorizes

cities to impose street utility fees, allows both counties and cities to increase their vehicle license fee for transportation purposes up to \$50, and increases the local option gas tax for both cities and counties from 10% to 20%. Cities located in a county that have not imposed

a local option gas tax by July 1, 2004, may levy the tax within the city boundary. The Senate Transportation Committee considered this bill last week, and the House is scheduled to hear this bill February 6.

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## Regional Bills

Both the Senate and House adopted regional bills and will now confer on both bills in order to agree on

elements of both bills that will be acceptable to both houses. There are many similarities, yet the differences between the two bills are significant policy decisions that must be dealt with in order for a statewide measure to be considered.

Attached is a brief comparison of the two measures.

Please contact Jackie White, WSAC staff, for more information.

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## HB 1087/HB 2518 – Giving Health Districts the Same Civil Fine Authority as County Health Departments

**HB 1087** was heard in the House Local Government Committee last week. **HB 2518** is scheduled for a hearing next Monday. **HB 2518** is the exact same bill as **HB 1087**, but has Rep. Edwards as the prime sponsor. WSAC supported this bill last session. It pro-

vides health districts the authority to levy civil fines for violations of environmental health laws such as illegal dumping. County health departments have that authority through county government. Health districts, however, are forced to use the much more costly law-

suit process to try and gain compliance with the law when the violator refuses to comply. This bill would create consistency in compliance efforts across all local health jurisdictions and would result in significant cost savings to health districts.

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## HB 2596/SB 6588 – Food Service Rules

Both **HB 2596** and **SB 6588** had hearings this week in House and Senate Agriculture Committees. While it is time for the state food code to be updated (it's been about 10 years since it

was updated—before E-coli, even), the bills in their current form are not acceptable because they preempt the authority of local government to address food safety issues locally. Local public health

officials testified at both hearings and provided some very real examples of why preemption would prevent them from being responsive to local needs and prevent them from having the flexibility to respond to individual situations locally.

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## HB 2862 – Restricting Smoking in Public Places

**HB 2862** is similar to a bill introduced by the Restaurant Association and the anti-tobacco advocates last session. The bill would prohibit smoking in public places that allow minors; in addition to restaurants, it also includes bowling alleys and skating rinks. It does not affect establishments that do not al-

low minors. If a restaurant has a bar or lounge in which they wish to allow smoking, the bill calls for very specific ventilation requirements that ensure that the smoke from the bar or lounge is exhausted directly outside, without recirculation of air to nonsmoking areas. The bill allows existing facilities until Janu-

ary 1, 2005, to comply. This year the Restaurant Association has not indicated that they will support **HB 2862**. **HB 2862** has not yet been scheduled for a hearing, so unless it is added to a House Health Care Committee agenda next week, it won't survive cutoff.

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## House Health Care to Hear HB 1549 – Limiting Minors' Access to Tobacco

**HB 1549** has been introduced each session for the last several years. **HB 1549** protects minors' access to tobacco products by prohibiting self-service displays of tobacco. All in-store

tobacco products must be sold from behind the counter or from within locked display units. It does not apply to retailers who sell tobacco products exclusively or to sales from within premises

where minors are prohibited by statute. Last session several youth testified on the ease with which kids are able to steal tobacco products because they often enter the establishment in a group, and while one or more are distracting the clerk, others take the cigarettes. The hearing in House Health Care is scheduled for Tuesday, February 5 at 1:30.

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## House Local Government & Housing to Hear HB 1448

On Monday, February 4 at 1:30, House Local Government & Housing will hear **HB 1448**. **HB 1448** is a holdover from last session and would authorize local governments to restrict or

prohibit smoking in public places. In essence, this bill would remove preemption of local government to locally address smoking issues. Because some counties have wanted the authority to

regulate exposure to tobacco, WSAC has historically supported this bill giving them that option.

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## Human Services, Juvenile Justice and Housing

The third week of session was highlighted by hearings on **HB 2598** and **SB 6594**, the two bills implementing the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Equitable Distribution of Secure Community Residential Facili-

ties. WSAC took a series of positions on the two bills both in opposition and support at the January 18, 2002, Legislative Steering Committee. They were pleased at the inclusion of limited immunity from liability extended to local law

enforcement, counties and cities, as well as a number of other changes to the original legislation. These include requiring a written agreement between the state and county memorializing the

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## Human Services, Juvenile Justice and Housing

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terms and conditions agreed upon for siting and operating the state facility. Among WSAC's remaining concerns are reaching agreement on the language regarding minimum standards for siting and operating that relate to public safety that allows for local involvement. They remain concerned about the limited list of risk-potential facilities and assurances of mitigation funding. Additionally, they would like the legislature to consider revisiting the size of the facilities in favor of more cost-efficiency through operating larger facilities.

Councilmember Gary Nelson (Snohomish), Commissioners Jeff Rasmussen (Cowlitz), Kevin O'Sullivan (Thurston), and Dan Wood (Grays Harbor), testified at the two hearings along with WSAC staff. Gary Reiersgard, Senior Planner, Snohomish County, also testified at the House hearing. They all did an excellent job in presenting the counties' concerns. Dan Wood is especially to be commended for his visual aid that demonstrated the difficulty of siting these facilities in a typical town—in this case, Montesano. In the Senate there was interest from the Committee in reaching a compromise on the minimum standard language, and the Chair, Senator Hargrove, is working with county representatives on the issue.

Another bill of special interest to counties is **HB 2574**, which establishes a children's system of care demonstration pilot project. This would memorialize the existing project ongoing in Clark County and require the reporting of the project evaluation by Portland State University to the legislature. It also strengthens the requirements for DSHS to work with the county and assist them in expanding their ability to coordinate services. The bill was heard on January 31 in the House Children and Family Services Committee. Despite Secretary Braddock's written support for the project, the DSHS Children's Administration unexpectedly testified with concerns. They vaguely noted they were greatly concerned over the potential loss of state control, as well as the potential legal and funding questions and barriers which were so complicated they would require a great deal of time to study before they could possibly support such a wild notion as a coordinated system of care for children. The Committee noted that they seemed to have the same concerns every time any kind of bill came up that encouraged blending and coordination, and they never got down to brass tacks of explaining what the real problem was and attempting to have the legislature deal with it.

From last year, the House Finance Committee held a hearing on **HB 1972**, San Juan County's bill to authorize their use of an additional .05% of the REET

for affordable housing. The hearing became a testimony to excruciation as some of the Committee members asked the same questions for over an hour basically coming down to their belief that the bill would actually raise the cost of housing in San Juan. This occurred despite the excellent and well-informed testimony from Commissioners Rhea Miller and Darcie Nielsen of San Juan. The Commissioners noted that they were asking for the authority to put the question to a public vote and let the community decide. They also noted that they had had an overwhelming majority of the voters support their earlier efforts imposing the 1% additional REET for a conservation land bank.

Both the House Judiciary and the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committees held hearings on **HB 2367** and **SB 6589**, advance directives for mental health. There is strong support for these bills from the advocates, consumers, the Washington Protection and Advocacy Services, and long-term care ombuds. WSAC signed in in support of the bill after hearing from several of the RSNs. The state Mental Health Division also supported the bill with concerns about the area of revocation of a directive and the interface with the Involuntary Treatment Act, which are being clarified in amendments to the original bills.

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## Week Four Spells Cutoff

The cutoff out of the policy committees arrives on February 8. The human services, juvenile justice and housing committees all have a large number of hearings and executive sessions scheduled as they attempt to finish their work. Some of the bills of interest to counties have already moved on, including the drug sentencing reform bills (**HB 2338**, **SB 6361**), the Clark County pilot bill (**HB 2574**), and the affordable housing bill (**HB 2060**). Others remain in the original committee pending executive action. These include the two bills

implementing the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Equitable Distribution (**HB 2598**, **SB 6594**), the San Juan REET bill (**HB 1972**), the bill prohibiting health care facilities from requiring employees to perform overtime work (**HB 2601**), and the bill limiting the liability of providers of treatment to high-risk offenders (**HB 2672**). This final bill, **HB 2672**, is scheduled for public hearing on February 7 in House Judiciary at 6:00 PM and for a vote on February 8 at 1:30.

Another bill of interest requires leg-

islative approval of federal waivers to the medical assistance program (**HB 2461**, **SB 6716**). This bill is in response to the DSHS waiver proposal, which authorizes DSHS to establish premiums and co-pays and reduce optional service groups and benefits. The Senate bill is scheduled for public hearing in Senate Health & Long-Term Care on February 7 at 3:30. It has already been heard in the House Health Care Committee and should be passed out of committee shortly. This waiver could directly impact the number of medicaid eligibles on which much of our funding for mental health is based.

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## GMA Timeline Bill Still on the Senate Floor Calendar

WSAC and the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) are advocating for amendments to the cur-

rent statutes that now require all Growth Management Act (GMA) planning jurisdictions to review and update, if neces-

sary, local GMA plans and development regulations by September 2002. **SB**

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## GMA Timeline Bill Still on the Senate Floor Calendar

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**SB 5841** would establish new deadlines beginning in 2003 for critical area ordinances, and 2004 for comprehensive plans over a four-year period. The Senate passed **SB 5841** late last session, but the House did not take action. This session the Senate placed the bill directly

on the floor calendar with the intention of passing it quickly to the House. **HB 2676** was introduced this week, sponsored by each member from the House Local Government and Housing Committee. The bill staggers the timeline for counties and their cities from 2004 thru 2007 and requires the plans to be updated every 10 years thereafter. This bill is scheduled for a hearing before the House Local Government and Housing

Committee this Wednesday, February 5 at 6:00 pm. That same evening, **HB 2846**—a bill that removes the requirement to comply with the buildable lands provisions unless the State funds at least \$2.5 million—will also be heard.

Please contact WSAC staff, Jackie White for questions or comments.

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## Storm Over Surface Water Management

During last year's session, bills were introduced to change how counties charge surface water management fees, eliminating stormwater fees based on runoff characteristics. This session one of those bills, **HB 2076** by Rep. Roach (R-King County), has again been heard in Committee.

The thrust of the opposition to stormwater fees based on runoff characteristics seems to be based on two issues: (1) perceived inequities for landowners with a high percentage of impervious surface who do not want to pay more than landowners with a relatively smaller percentage of impervious surface, and (2) the perceived inequity be-

tween rates among different counties. Other issues raised allege lack of an appeal process for landowners, and lack of accountability among counties for what the stormwater fees they collect pay for.

King, Clark and Pierce Counties all indicated opposition to the bill. WSAC staff indicated that seven counties have surface water management programs, and all would be impacted. If counties were not allowed to base their stormwater fees on runoff characteristics, they would have to develop other methods such as property area, which might create further inequities. High-density commercial development would then pay less than low-density rural areas.

The business sponsors of **HB 2076** indicated a desire to address the perceived inequities through means other than a prohibition on impervious surface and runoff characteristics. WSAC and affected counties will attempt to develop a proposal that provides equity but continues to allow counties to assess fees based on runoff characteristics. Counties also are concerned that legislation not require use of unreasonable or unquantifiable means for assessing stormwater fees, or criteria for assessing fees that would take unreasonable staff time to assess.

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## Small Step Toward GMA Rural Economic Development Possible

Legislation clarifying that small-scale businesses are allowed to be sited and expanded in the "limited areas

of more intensive rural development" in GMA-planning counties received a positive response in the House Local Gov-

ernment and Housing Committee this week. Staff from both WSAC and the Association of Washington Cities testified in support of **HB 1395**. The sponsor, Rep. Eickmeyer (D-Mason County), indicated he recommends that the definition of "small-scale business" be deleted from the bill.

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## GMA Concurrency Bills Scheduled for Hearing

The House Local Government and Housing Committee will hear bills expanding GMA concurrency on Monday, February 4 at 1:30 p.m. Under current law, the GMA requires levels of services that are concurrent with new

development, or have plans for concurrency within six years. **HB 2580** would extend the concurrency requirements to include level-of-service standards for law enforcement, which would be coordinated with the relevant local law en-

forcement agencies. **HB 2581** would extend the concurrency requirements of GMA comp plans to include level-of-service standards for fire protection, and **HB 2519** requires concurrency planning for parks.

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## Two More Approaches to GMA and Economic Development

**HB 2697**, sponsored by Rep. Reardon (D-Snohomish County) and **SB 6057**, sponsored by Senator T. Sheldon (D-Mason County), are scheduled for hearing next week. Both bills require GMA comprehensive plans to include an economic development element. **SB**

**6057** goes further and requires performance measures be adopted to annually review progress toward accommodating the population and employment growth projections. **SB 6057** also requires adoption of new countywide planning policies to accomplish, among other things, a bal-

ance between jobs and housing.

**HB 2697** will be heard in House Local Government and Housing at 6:00 p.m. on February 5. **SB 6057** is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. the same day in Senate Economic Development and Telecommunications.

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## Shorelines Bills Scheduled for Hearing

Two pieces of legislation on shoreline management are scheduled for hearing at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 4. HB 2305, sponsored by Rep. Hatfield

(D- Pacific County) exempts agricultural activities on agricultural land from shoreline management rules. HB 2623, sponsored by Rep. Grant (D- Walla

Walla County), directs the Office of Financial Management to calculate a new dollar threshold for what constitutes development requiring a "substantial development permit" and to adjust the threshold for inflation every five years. The current dollar amount is \$2,500.

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## House Natural Resources Committee Moves Timber Substitution Bill

On January 29, the House Natural Resources Committee amended and sent to Rules Committee **SHB 2307**, sponsored by Rep. Doumit (D-Wahkiakum County), by a vote of 8-3. The bill revises rules put in place over a decade ago that prevent timber companies owning land in Washington and exporting logs overseas from bidding on

timber sales from state or county owned land, allowing them to "substitute" state logs for their own. The Timber Counties have asked that the substitution rules be eliminated in order to allow more bidders for state trust land timber sales, increasing competition and generating more dollars for the trust.

The substitute bill contains a new

provision that phases down the substitution restrictions over 10 years. For the first five years, 25% of the state and local government timber sales volume would be offered to all domestic processors. In year five, this would be increased to 38% and in year 10, 50%. This should generate more timber trust revenues if it is enacted.

Reps. Doumit, Rockefeller, Buck, Eickmeyer, Jackley, McDermott, Orcutt, and Upthegrove voted yes; Reps. Sump, Pearson and Ericksen voted no.

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## Forest Conversion Legislation Moves Forward

Counties were required to adopt ordinances setting standards for those Class IV forest practices regulated by local government by December 31, 2001. The county-adopted regulations are to meet or exceed those set by the Forest Practices Board, and upon adoption, the DNR will transfer jurisdiction

of Class IV General forest practices to the county.

Thus far, only four counties have met the requirements and several others are in process. **HB 2399** and **SB 6258**, respectively sponsored by Rep. Rockefeller (D-Kitsap County) and Sen. Ken Jacobsen (D- King County), would ex-

tend the deadline for this action to 2005. Both bills have moved from committee and await action in Rules. The bill was moved out of the House Natural Resources Committee this week. A companion bill, **SB 6258**, has also been heard in the Senate Natural Resources, Parks and Shorelines Committee.

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## Still Waiting on Water Legislation

Still waters? No, the Joint Executive-Legislative Committee continues to meet and work toward developing water legislation. Discussions with legislators indicate that slow progress is being made. Drafts on specific topics are be-

ing circulated to municipal suppliers and agriculture. While there appears to be a general consensus for a funding package, there is no agreement on how to raise the needed \$1 billion or more.

Meanwhile, individually sponsored

water bills are trickling into the process. Several are scheduled to be heard in the Senate Environment, Energy and Water Committee on February 7 and 8. The measures include **SB 6755**, preventing relinquishment of water rights authorized for instream use, and **SB 6737**, coordinating implementation of watershed plans.

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## Parks Bills Abound

With the support of WSAC, the Legislature last session enacted **SHB 1836**, creating a Task Force on Local Parks and Recreation Maintenance and Operations. During the summer and fall, the Task Force analyzed the future needs for parks maintenance and operations and recommended funding sources. Counties were represented on the Task Force by Craig Larsen, Director of the King County Park System and President of the WSAC Parks Affiliate, and by Dave Veley, Director of Yakima County Parks and Recreation.

The Task Force has made four recommendations that are before the Legislature in separate bills:

**1. HB 2557 and SB 6330:** Amend Chapter 35.61 governing Metropolitan Park Districts (MPDs) to make it practical for cities and counties, or a combination of them, to create MPDs. Both bills have moved to Rules.

**2. HB 2559 and SB 6333:** Provide cities and counties the option of increasing the local sales tax for parks and recreation maintenance and operations.

**3. HB 2558 and SB 6331:** Amend the conservation futures tax legislation to allow a portion of it to be used

for parks maintenance and operations.

**4.** Increase the state sales tax by one-tenth of one percent to fund parks maintenance and operations.

**SB 6334**, a recommendation to allow a portion of the local Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) for parks maintenance and operations, was not agreed to by all task force members, but is also before the Legislature. So are bills **SB 5104** and **HB 1627**, allowing counties to increase conservation futures revenue and dedicate a portion to salmon recovery efforts.

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## Water Rights Bill

**S B 6279** had a hearing on Thursday morning in the Environment, Energy & Water Committee. The intent of the bill is to improve the administration of real property records related to the sale of water rights. With its current language, the bill would provide assistance to county auditors in maintaining records from revenues derived from the existing real estate excise tax applicable to the sales of water rights separate from land sales. It further requires real estate excise tax affidavits to provide for identifi-

cation of sales limited solely to the sales of a water right or an interest in a water right. The counties would have to separately identify the proceeds of taxes collected on these sales when forwarding the proceeds to the state treasurer. The state treasurer is then required to create a water rights records account from which all proceeds must be spent on improving the administration of state and local information regarding the title to and ownership of water rights and improvements to county real property records as it relates to appurtenant water rights. From the money appropriated, the Department of Ecology (DOE) could make grants to

counties to assist with recording and information management needs related to water rights ownership and title. A proposed amendment would require the DOE and the Department of Revenue to work with county auditors and assessors toward improving the administration of water rights ownership information and integrate the information with real property ownership records. A report regarding the implementation of the bill and recommendations for administrative and legislative actions to improve records and information management regarding water rights ownership is due back to the legislature by January 1, 2003.

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## County Auditor Legislation

### Elimination of Punch Card Systems

The House State Government Committee heard testimony on a number of election bills requested by the Office of the Secretary of State. Both Karen Flynn and Susan Sinclair testified on **HB 2335**, updating vote recording and reporting. One of the provisions of the bill would require the elimination of punch card voting systems by the year 2007.

Currently, there is pending federal legislation that would require the elimination of punch card systems by the year 2004. The decision by the Secretary of State to include the provision to eliminate punch card systems in the bill is based on the premise that those states who have been proactive in the process

of elimination of such systems will be first in line for federal funding to purchase new optical scan tabulating systems.

Both Karen and Suzanne testified in support of the bill. However, Suzanne said that if federal funding was not available, then the state must provide for alternative funding for counties. Bill Vogler, executive director of WSAC, also testified that the counties cannot assume these costs if federal funding is not available and asked the committee for a null and void clause on the bill. It appears that at this time **HB 2335** will be amended to include the null and void clause. The Senate companion bill, **SB 6322**, has passed out of the Senate State and Local Government committee and

has been sent to the Ways and Means committee.

### Other Bills of Import and Interest

Kim Wyman testified in the Senate Judiciary committee on **SB 6519**, which specifies when voting rights for felons may be restored. Kim did not support or oppose the bill; she merely suggested a number of technical amendments to the bill that the committee may want to consider. Kim also testified in the Senate State and Local Government committee on the WSACA priority bill, **SB 6529**, modifying the time period for holding elections to fill vacancies. Kim explained that this bill is picking up two sections of the RCW that were inadvertently left out of a bill run by the auditors last year.

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## Discharge Papers for Veterans

**HB 2453** relates to exemptions from public inspection and creates a new class of documents for the county auditor. **HB 2453** states that discharge papers of

veterans filed (recorded) at the county auditor's office "...may be released only to the veteran filing the papers or anyone else designated in writing by the veteran

to receive the papers." All documents recorded now with the county auditor are public records and open to all those who wish to inspect them. **HB 2453** is in the State Government Committee.

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## Improved CERB Funding Moves Forward

**T**he Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) is the state's only economic development infrastructure program. It is a successful program that leverages private investment at a 20:1 ratio. The average CERB investment per job is only \$2,700.

Interest earnings from the CERB loans, and a portion of interest from the Public Works Trust Fund—up to \$1.9

million annually—are the foundation of a legislative proposal for a permanent fund source for CERB. Interest from both accounts currently accrues to the general fund. **HB 2425** and **SB 6543** both shift this interest from the general fund to create this CERB funding source. The other fund source would be a one-time infusion of \$5 million from the transportation package, if enacted.

Although most CERB funds are received by ports and cities, it is a powerful tool for economic development, especially in smaller communities. **HB 2425** has moved from the House Trade and Economic Development Committee to Capital Budget, where it is scheduled for hearing at 1:30 p.m. February 4. Island County Commissioner Mike Shelton testified in support of **SB 6543** on Wednesday this week.

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# 2002 Directory of County Officials

We're sure you'll be pleased with the new, easy-to-read, spiral-bound format.

Your 2002 directories are on their way! If you haven't already re-

ceived your copy, you can expect to see it in the mail within the next week.

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## Supporters State the Case for E-911 Bill

**HB 2595**, providing funding for wireless enhanced 911 services, drew a noteworthy crowd of supporters at its first hearing on January 30 in the House Finance Committee.

More than 50 individuals, many of them representing citizen interest groups, signed up in favor of the bill, which would establish the same tax on wireless phones as currently exists on wireline phones—50 cents per month for the county and 20 cents for the state. This “tax parity” will help stabilize E-911 revenue and ensure E-911 service for emergency calls made from wireless phones.

A panel of WSAC and WACO officials, a 911 director, and a wireless company representative gave compelling testimony in support of the measure. Thanks to Douglas County Sheriff Dan LaRoche, Pacific County Commissioner Jon Kaino, Thurston County E-911 Director Jim Quackenbush, and Cingular Wireless lobbyist Steve Gano for their well-researched comments and their persuasive answers to the committee's probing questions. Special thanks to Representative Don Cox, R-Colfax, for sharing a personal story that put a human face on the need to upgrade E-911 service to better respond to calls made from cell phones.

Representative Jeff Morris, D-Skagit County, is the prime sponsor of the bill and also spoke strongly in favor of it.

**HB 2595** and its Senate companion,

**SSB 6034**, are a legislative priority for WSAC. Other groups that endorse the legislation and showed their support in the House hearing are: wireless service providers Cingular, Qwest, Verizon, and VoiceStream; the Washington State Emergency Management Association, Association of Washington Cities, the American Heart Association, the Washington State Grange, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Washington State Fire Commissioners Association, Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs, Washington Ambulance Association, Washington Coalition of Domestic Violence Programs, Washington State Medical Association, NAMI-Washington, Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs, and Washington Council of Firefighters.

Currently, when people in Washington state call 911 from a wireless phone, no location information or call-back number is displayed to the E-911 call center. The lack of information delays emergency services, and in some cases emergency responders are unable to provide assistance because the caller simply cannot be located. The new revenue from this bill will help counties implement the call-back and location features.

Supporters reminded Finance Committee members that the current legislation simply extends to wireless phones the concept of Enhanced 911, which voters overwhelmingly adopted in 1991.

In Washington state, 36% of 911

calls currently come from wireless phones, and this percentage continues to grow. Many people now use a wireless phone as their only telephone and have disconnected the wireline phone at their home. For this reason, achieving tax parity between wireline and wireless phones is essential to the continued stable funding of the E-911 system. The bill is especially important for small counties, which depend on assistance from the state portion of the E-911 tax for the ongoing operation of wireline service as well as implementation of wireless service.

Even after the successful hearing January 30, there is still much work to be done to move this bill through the legislative process. County officials are urged to continue contacting their representatives on **HB 2595** and their senators on **SSB 6034**. The Senate bill passed out of the Ways and Means Committee last year but is not yet scheduled for another vote in that committee. Specifically, county officials should encourage House Finance Committee Chairman Jeff Gombosky and Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairwoman Lisa Brown to schedule the bills for executive action.

County officials also are encouraged to share factual information with the local media, perhaps as a letter to the editor, in a visit with the editorial board, or on a local radio show. A detailed fact sheet is attached to this *Courthouse Journal*. For more information, please contact WSAC staff Sophia Byrd at 360-753-1886 or [sbyrd@wacounties.org](mailto:sbyrd@wacounties.org).

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## What Do You Want to Learn About in Your WSAC District Meetings?

Believe it or not, the Spring District Meetings are just around the corner. The Western District is meeting at Rosario Resort in San Juan County on April 11 and 12; the Eastern District is meeting on April 25 and 26 at Sun Mountain Lodge in Okanogan County.

Western District President Betty Sue Morris and Eastern District President Joan Frey are interested in what topics WSAC members would like to cover at the meetings. Please contact them directly or contact Paul Parker at WSAC with any ideas by February 8.

Mark the date now! Due to the travel distance to each location, most commissioners and councilmembers will want to arrive on Wednesday evening, which should allow for an early start time on Thursday morning—probably about 8:30. WSAC will be sending out registrations for the two meetings around February 15.

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# Senator Shin Pays Tribute to America

Senator Paull Shin attended the joint legislative reception and shared the poem below with several members and staff. Senator Shin was orphaned during

the Korean War and was adopted into an American family. He has spent his most of his career as a professor in higher education. He wrote this poem a couple

days after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11. He said every time he saw the pictures, it brought tears to his eyes and inspired him to write this poem.

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## *America*

By Paull H. Shin  
Washington State Senator  
21<sup>st</sup> District

*America, your name is New Land  
Land of opportunity,  
Land of enduring hope,  
Admired by the nations,  
Desired by its people.*

*A symbol of freedom,  
An answer to liberty,  
Sheltering those defeated by oppression,  
Beckoning those burdened with despair,  
Gathering all in a passionate embrace.*

*In your magnificence,  
You offer hope,  
In your splendor,  
You provide opportunity,  
Too often misrepresented,  
Too easily misunderstood,  
Strong and mighty,  
Yet humble in spirit.*

*Who dare to threaten,  
Who dare to attack,  
To inflict pain and suffering,  
What caused these tears I see,  
Flowing from your eyes?  
Flooding the streams and rivers,  
Into the cities and homes.*

*The ends of the world would not  
be too far,  
My life not too precious,  
To defend and sustain  
Your unprecedented honor  
Until justice rings true  
Throughout the land.*

*The New Land—your name is America,  
Land of blessings,  
Land of prosperity,  
Protected by the seal,  
“In God We Trust.”*

*Just as peace and tranquility  
Follow a storm,  
And a radiant sunrise  
Clears the darkness,  
Restoration begins as we unite.*

*You reign in our hearts,  
Now stronger than ever,  
Drawing all nations  
To marvel at your grace.*

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## Courthouse Ramblings

Commissioners have named Ron Zirkle as the acting Yakima County Prosecuting Attorney until they name a replacement for Jeff Sullivan, who left office January 31. Sullivan served 27 years as prosecutor, and is taking a position with the U.S. Attorney's of-

ice in Seattle. Zirkle has been chief civil deputy and has been in the prosecutor's office for 21 years.

\* \* \* \* \*

This month, the state of Washington sold \$253 million in construction bonds, including the first \$25.9 million for renovation of the Legislative Building, Olympia's main capitol structure. The State Finance Committee, State Treasurer Mike Murphy (chair), Governor Gary Locke, and Lt. Governor Brad

Owen awarded the construction bonds—as well as a separate sale of \$338 million in motor vehicle fuel tax bonds—to fund state highway projects. Of the roughly \$91 million cost to renovate the Legislative Building, \$82 million will come from tax-exempt general obligation bonds sold by the State Treasurer's office. The renovation project is expected to take a little more than three years.

# Localities could lose state funds

## Legislature 2002: Under shortfall, Locke, lawmakers might hang on to \$100 million

January 27, 2002

Joseph Turner; *The News Tribune*

As the Legislature tries to get out of its own budget bind, it might end up putting the squeeze on local governments and their ability to deliver services to their communities.

At issue is the \$100 million a year the state now gives to cities, counties and public health departments to offset part of the money they lost when the Legislature and Gov. Gary Locke abolished the state car tax.

Although prodded by voter approval of Initiative 695, it was Locke and legislators who actually repealed the car tax after a superior court judge tossed out the initiative. The repeal eliminated \$800 million a year in tax collections.

Half of that money went to state highways and ferries, one-fourth to transit agencies and the remainder to cities, counties and health departments. For the past two years, the Legislature has been giving municipal governments roughly \$100 million of the \$200 million they lost.

But that could end with the state now facing a \$1.25 billion hole in its own two-year, \$22.8 billion operating budget.

Locke has proposed eliminating that assistance to local governments, money the lawmakers refer to as "backfill." That would put cities and counties in much the same situation as transit agencies, which got state funds in 2000 but have since been left on their own.

Pierce Transit, which lost 40 percent of its revenues when the car tax went away, cut bus routes and used its savings to get through the past two years. But now the agency is asking voters to approve a 0.3 percent increase in the sales tax to replenish all the revenue it lost. The election is Feb. 5.

Cities and counties may soon find themselves doing the same thing.

"We're looking for alternatives on backfill," said Sen. Lisa Brown (D-Spokane), chairwoman of the Senate's budget-writing committee. "But given how big the (state budget) problem is, I

think it's going to be very hard to preserve that funding.

"I don't see how we do it," she said.

Rep. Helen Sommers (D-Seattle), Brown's counterpart in the House, agreed.

That kind of talk has local officials worried - especially since voters further restricted tax collections by passing I-747 in November. That measure limited the growth in property tax collections to no more than 1 percent a year without a public vote.

While there is some talk that small cities and counties might have to disincorporate or merge with a neighboring municipality, that outcome doesn't seem probable.

More likely is a reduced level of state support, new taxing authority for counties, making cities raise money through existing taxes - or some combination of those. The budget problems for local governments vary widely.

Health departments

This is no time to cut funding for health departments - not in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and subsequent anthrax and smallpox virus scares, said Phil Watkins. He is the lobbyist for the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.

"Public health departments are the first line of defense against any possible bioterrorism attack," Watkins said. "They work with the medical community to recognize the symptoms of anthrax and smallpox so if there were an attack, we'd know early enough to do the necessary inoculations to protect the rest of us."

The Legislature replenished roughly 90 percent of the money health departments lost when the car tax was repealed. But under Locke's budget proposal, backfill would continue to the end of the year, then stop.

Watkins said the health department would lose about 40 percent of its general fund budget if the state canceled the \$2.87 million payment the agency was expecting for next year. That's because the agency also would lose \$700,000 in matching funds from the federal government and other grants, he said.

That money pays the salaries of 45 employees - nurses, prevention specialists, counselors and support staff.

Brown said the fate of health departments depends partly on how much money Congress decides to give states to deal with anti-terrorism programs.

"Any place where the feds come up with money, we're going to take advan-

tage of it," she said.

Rep. Barry Sehlin (R-Oak Harbor), the top Republican on the House budget committee, said he's more inclined to continue the level of state funding for health departments.

"Backfill money is crucial to public health," he said.

Cities

No city is more interested in what the Legislature does than Edgewood, the Pierce County community that became a city in 1996.

If the state ended backfill, the city of 9,200 would lose one-third of its operating revenues. That possibility has given rise to talk of dissolving the city or merging with a neighboring town.

"We're not in a position that we have to do that," said Edgewood Mayor John Powers.

The city was expecting a state payment of \$928,000 next year to balance its operating budget of \$3.5 million. That's roughly what the city pays Pierce County for six deputies, a detective and a chief to provide police services.

But the city also has squirreled away \$2.5 million in savings - money it had hoped to spend on a city hall and other projects. That savings could be used to get the city by for a few years while it works on trying to attract business to enlarge its tax base and makes budget cuts, Powers said.

Ultimately, the council might have to ask voters to choose between further service cuts and higher taxes, he said. But Powers said the state is obliged to help cities like Edgewood. The council - along with other cities - is asking the Legislature to maintain full backfill funding.

When Edgewood became a city, it relied heavily on a 20-year-old program that helped cities that don't collect much sales tax because their residents shop in other communities. Under that program, called sales tax equalization, the state gave cities such as Edgewood, Lakewood and University Place a portion of the car tax to boost their revenues.

Powers said the fact that the Legislature abolished the source of that money doesn't mean it abolished its obligation to help those governments.

The state replenished an average of 37 percent of the money cities lost when the car tax was repealed.

Since cities have the authority to im-

*(Continued on page 13)*

(Continued from page 12)

pose local taxes - either by a council vote or a public election - the chances of larger cities such as Tacoma and Seattle getting additional state funding is less likely. Counties

Many of the state's 39 counties would be in worse shape than Edgewood if backfill were eliminated. The Legislature replaced an average of 53 percent of the money counties lost when the car tax was repealed.

Some counties received much more because the impact on them was so much greater. They include Garfield, Columbia, Wahkiakum, Asotin and Ferry counties. All but Wahkiakum are in Eastern Washington.

Those counties may come in for special consideration by the Legislature, said Brown, Sommers and Sehlin.

Counties, which were created by the Legislature, don't have the option of disincorporating. If they can't function with less money, their only option would be to merge with another county.

But that would do no good, said Bill Vogler, executive director of the Washington State Association of Counties.

"Putting two counties together just creates a bigger poor county," Vogler said.

Larger counties, such as King and Pierce, want the Legislature to give them authority to levy some of the taxes that cities do.

Senate Bill 6593 and House Bill 2659 would let a county council or county commissioner impose a 1 percent utility tax. If local officials put the new tax to a public vote, they could impose a tax as high as 3 percent on electricity, water, telephone, sewer, garbage and other utilities.

Such a tax would be countywide. Consequently, a 1 percent county utility tax would raise the total utility tax in Tacoma to 7 percent because the city already collects a 6 percent tax.

Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg said he wants the county to have that flexibility.

"I particularly would support a situation where we'd go to the ballot to fund the criminal justice system," he said. "That's where we're hurting."

Courts, prosecutors, sheriff's deputies and other criminal justice programs amount to almost 80 percent of the county's operating budget, he said.

A 1 percent countywide utility tax would raise \$15 million a year in Pierce

County and about \$42 million a year in King County.

Vogler said he doesn't think it's likely the Legislature would give county council's the authority to collect any utility tax without a public vote - if at all.

"I'd rather keep the backfill in place," Sehlin said.

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\* Staff writer Joseph Turner covers state government. Reach him at 253-597-8436 or joe.turner@mail.tribnet.com.

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#### SIDEBAR: STATE HELP FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Table shows how much money each local government is scheduled to receive from the state next year to replace some of the money lost when the Legislature abolished the state car tax. Under Gov. Gary Locke's budget proposal, cities and counties would receive no money for next year and health departments would get half of the amount shown.

#### COUNTIES / AMOUNT (in dollars)

Pierce / 1,284,087  
King County / 2,720,716  
Thurston County / 1,061,579  
Kitsap County / 480,178  
Mason / 930,959

#### CITIES

Fircrest / 397,653  
Tacoma / 1,425,908  
Edgewood / 928,639  
Lakewood / 3,043,171  
University Place / 1,946,231  
Federal Way / 484,190  
Lacey / 147,512

#### HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Tacoma-Pierce / 2,870,392  
Seattle-King / 9,681,772

Source: State 2001-03 operating Budget

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## Cooperative Purchasing: the Keys to Saving

Reprinted by permission of the National Association of Counties (NACo) Financial Service Center.

By Steve Swendiman, Managing Director of FSC, NACo

The advent of Internet buying has created an image of huge savings through electronic purchasing. Most of the advertising on television, in magazines and on billboards gives the impression that traditional ways of buying goods and services have been replaced by electronic commerce. But local governments still need to procure goods and services through competitive bidding. So how can your county get in on the savings revolution spawned by the Internet?

Cooperative purchasing, which combines the buying power of distinct groups of purchasers, is not a new concept. Local governments have been joining buying cooperatives for decades. Usually, these cooperatives take the form of a regional buying group or a product-specific buying group. Regional groups often buy fuel, automobiles or regional services together. Product-specific groups might include hospitals or health clinics. A few groups offer counties the opportunity to piggyback on national contracts for office supplies, computers, furniture, general and electrical supplies and other common consumable items used by all governments.

One of NACo Financial Services Center's most successful programs is the US Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (GPA). This program provides nationally bid governmental contracts to all local governments and captures the buying power of over 8,000 public entities. A steering committee composed of professional public purchasing managers provides the oversight and day-to-day policy review for the program.

Cooperative purchasing provides a number of advantages for most counties. Because a bid is completed by one agency on behalf of many agencies, the time and cost of bidding is substantially reduced for the group members.

Significant pricing discounts can be achieved, as manufacturers and suppliers recognize the volume sales the group represents. Since the vendors do not have to re-bid the contract in each jurisdiction, they can factor in savings on the product offers that would have gone into staff resources used to respond to bids.

A cooperative can demand more that pricing considerations. For example, enhancements like free delivery, guaranteed fill rates, performance requirements and volume incentives can be included in the contract. Since 1996 this program has saved local governments over \$300 mil-

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)  
lion through discounted purchasing.

To the extent that vendors are capable of providing electronic ordering and fulfillment systems, counties can receive incentives for using electronic ordering. Counties may also be able to reduce or eliminate their warehousing systems, as just-in-time buying assures that vendor is providing the warehousing function and the guaranteed delivery of products.

The Government Purchasing Alliance provides contracts for office supplies, furniture, computers and software, electrical and general supplies. Each contract was bid and awarded by a large local government on behalf of all local and state governments in the nation. Now, how do you participate in this program?

Getting Started: Step 1: Contact vendor; Step 2: Sign and fax piggyback agreements (provided by each vendor); Step 3: Start placing orders

The pricing discounts, delivery and service conditions, and the contract terms are available to any local government that is allowed to piggyback on a national contract. Since all contracts are discretionary, counties determine how much they want to use the program. There are no membership fees or charges to the county.

How much can your county save? In 2000, Fairfax County, Virginia saved over \$800,000 on office supplies. Tony DeLong, Presiding Commissioner from Stone County, Missouri, stated, "With just one purchase from the NACo Financial Services Center office supplies program, I saved my county more than the NACo membership dues for an entire year! Now I know why they say "Counties Save with NACo." Large and small counties alike report significant savings, streamlined purchasing and reductions in administrative requirements when using the GPA.

**Editor's Comment:** Office supply savings are considerable and usually beat the State of Washington's Central Stores prices by 2-10 percent. They also offer 1-2 day delivery in most areas of the state.

## Free Retirement Planning for NACo's Deferred Compensation Participants

Choosing the right retirement plan investment options for meeting individual goals is difficult for county employees even in the best of times. In today's volatile market it's even more challenging.

Nationwide Retirement Solutions joined forces with Morningstar to simplify retirement plan decision-making with an education and advice initiative for all of its public sector entities, including its NACo clients of all sizes. Investment guidance and enhanced education services will broaden the company's current education capabilities at no cost to the counties that offer its retirement plans.

"Participants in the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Program will have access to sophisticated planning tools and resources as a result of this relationship," said Karen Eisenbach, senior vice president of marketing and education for Nationwide Retirement Solutions. "This summer, for the first time in the industry, tools that gather personal information and provide personal retirement asset allocations will be made available to every participant at the same time, with no extra costs. As the market share leader, we are the only deferred compensation company in the public sector that could offer this kind of service on such a grand scale."

The first online tool of the new initiative, Morningstar® ClearFutureSM, is an online investment education, research, asset allocation and guidance service for all levels of investors. The asset allocation tool, which takes about 20 minutes to complete, gathers detailed financial information from participants to provide asset allocation suggestions for their deferred compensation plans. It offers personalized goal planning, takes into account outside assets, offers retirement income analysis and includes an advanced "bear market simulator."

ClearFutureSM also provides participants with reports on specific investment options and additional articles and interactive tools to build upon Nationwide Retirement Solutions' leading educational capabilities.

"Our agreement with Nationwide Retirement Solutions combines the top retirement provider in the public sector deferred compensation market with the top investment education, independent retirement advice and research provider," said John Rekenhaller, president of online advice for Morningstar Associates, LLC. "Both Nationwide Retirement Solutions and Morningstar want to make it easy for county employees to plan for and reach their retirement goals, and we are both focused on providing innovative tools and outstanding customer service. The combination of our two companies translates into tremendous value for the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Program."

Combined with the current advanced education offerings of NRS, Morningstar® ClearFutureSM provides participants in the NACo program with the best overall guidance and education package available in the industry today. The companies intend to expand their offerings to other advice and education initiatives after the initial launch of ClearFutureSM. For more information on the NACo Deferred Compensation Program visit us at [www.nrsforu.com](http://www.nrsforu.com) or call us at 1-877-NRS-FORU (1-877-677-3678).

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## FACTS FOR 2002 WIRELESS 911 LEGISLATION

- Over 2 million people in Washington State, or 40% of the population, owns a wireless phone.
- Most of these wireless phone owners say they purchased their phone for safety. The importance of wireless phone service was recently highlighted by the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Today, 36% of 911 calls in the state are made from wireless phones
  - Projected to be 50% within a few years
  - 75% within 7 years
- Wireless 911 Calls
  - 911 centers do not get any location information.
  - Only in a few cases do they get the phone number of the wireless phone, so they can call back if the call is disconnected.
- FCC has recognized the importance of Enhanced 911 service for wireless phone users
  - Has required that wireless carriers be capable of providing the service for their subscribers.
- It is the responsibility of the counties to order the service.
  - Need additional funding in order to implement this service.
- The existing 911 system is funded by 911 excise taxes totaling 70 cents on wireline phones.
  - Wireless phone users currently pay 25 cents per month.
  - This tax does not generate enough revenue to implement and support wireless 911 service.
- HB 2595 would establish wireless 911 taxes at parity with wireline 911 taxes.
  - Authorize counties to increase the local wireless 911 tax up to 50 cents.
  - Establish a state wireless 911 tax of 20 cents.
- Cost of implementing Wireless Enhanced 911 Services and funding wireless portion of existing 911 system is estimated at \$23 million statewide annually.
  - About \$5.5 million of this would be paid to the wireless carriers for the service.
  - Remaining funds would pay telephone companies costs, 911 center equipment costs, state 911 office administrative costs, and operational costs at the counties.
- Estimated that this tax would generate \$23 million annually
  - \$16.6 million a county level.
  - \$6.6 million at state level to be used to assist small counties.
- Tax would benefit all 39 counties, both urban and rural.
- Critical that Enhanced 911 service be implemented for wireless phone users, so all citizens in the state have equal access to 911 regardless of the type of phone they use to make the call for help.
  - Phase I of service has been available for 4 years.
  - Actual location of wireless phone users available this year.
  - 42 other states have already established excise taxes to fund wireless 911 service, and are proceeding with the implementation of the service.
  - Washington State has fallen behind the rest of the nation.
  - It is time for Washington State to make wireless 911 service a priority, and establish the funding mechanism which is necessary to implement this important service.

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# Coming Events

February 7

WSALPHO Meeting, Ramada Inn  
Governor House, Olympia

February 8

WSALPHO Board of Director Meeting  
& PHIP Jt. Steering Committee,  
Olympia, location to be determined

February 15

WSAC Legislative Steering Committee,  
Washington Counties Building, Olympia

March 1

WSAC Legislative Steering Committee,  
Washington Counties Building, Olympia

March 1-5

NACo Legislative Conference,  
Washington Hilton & Towers Hotel,  
Washington, DC

March 14

WCIF/WCIP Boards/Insurance  
Advisory Committee, (All Day  
Meeting), SeaTac

March 15

WSAC Legislative Steering Committee,  
Washington Counties Building, Olympia

March 20-22

ACHS, Tacoma, Pierce County

March 21

WA Counties Risk Pool Meeting

April 4

Retro Pool Meeting, Best Inn/RV Park,  
Ellensburg

April 11-12

WSAC Western District Meeting,  
Rosario Resort, San Juan Islands, San  
Juan County

April 25-26

WSAC Eastern District Meeting, Sun  
Mountain Lodge, Winthrop

May 22-24

WIR, Yellowstone County, Billings MT

May 15-17

ACHS, Spokane

June 17

WSALPHO Meeting in conjunction with  
WSAC Summer Convention, Bellevue

June 18

WCIF Board in conjunction with WSAC  
Summer Conference, 10:00 a.m. – noon,  
Bellevue

June 18-21

WSAC Summer Convention, Bellevue

July 12-16

NACo Annual Conference, New Orleans  
Parish, New Orleans, LA

July 17-19

ACHS, San Juan County (or NW WA)

August 18

WCIP Board/Rate Setting Session, 9:00  
a.m. – 3:00 p.m. SeaTac

September 12

WSALPHO Meeting, Spokane

September 18-20

ACHS, Leavenworth

September 19

WCIF/WCIP Boards/Insurance  
Advisory Committee (All Day Meeting),  
SeaTac

September 30 - October 4

WACO/WSAC Annual Conference,  
WestCoast Wenatchee Hotel, Wenatchee

November 14

WCIF Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m. – noon,  
Eastern Washington Location

November 20-22

ACHS, Seattle

December 5

WSALPHO Meeting, SeaTac

## 2003 MEETINGS

June 24-27, 2003

WSAC Summer Convention, Spokane

July 11-15, 2003

NACo Annual Conference, Milwaukee  
County, Milwaukee, WI

September 29 - October 3, 2003

Joint WACO/WSAC Conference,  
Doubletree Hotel Seattle Airport

## 2004 MEETINGS

July 16-20, 2004

NACo Annual Conference Maricopa  
County, Phoenix, AZ

## 2005 MEETINGS

July 15-19, 2005

NACo Annual Conference, City &  
County of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI

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# Employment Opportunities

**LEWIS COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGER.** Salary: \$43,606 - \$44,973 per year. Job description and complete application packet available at: [www.co.lewis.wa.us](http://www.co.lewis.wa.us) or you may contact: Lewis County Solid Waste, 1411 S. Tower, PO Box 180, Centralia, WA 98531. Office: (360) 740-1451 or FAX (360)

330-7805, email: [clpartee@co.lewis.wa.us](mailto:clpartee@co.lewis.wa.us). Incomplete application packets will not be considered. Lewis County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

**METROPOLITAN KING COUNTY COUNCIL CHIEF OF STAFF.** Closes: February 14, 2002. Salary: \$92, 705.00 – \$115,776.00. The chief of staff works for the Chair of the Council, Council leadership, and all Councilmembers to strategi-

cally manage policy and political issues facing the Council and King County. The Chief of Staff is responsible for the overall management and administration of the clerk, governmental relations, communications and administrative functions of the legislative branch. The chief of staff is also responsible for monitoring the independent agencies of the council, consisting of King County Civic Television and the offices of the auditor, Board of Appeals,

hearing examiner and ombudsman/tax advisor. This position reports to the council chair, but is responsive to all thirteen Councilmembers and provides support to their personal staff.

The chief of staff position requires extensive experience (a minimum of five years) working with and for elected officials in a visible, fast paced political environment. The ideal candidate will have

*(Continued on page 17)*

## Employment Opportunities

(Continued from page 16)

knowledge of King County Government, regional and suburban cities governments and the major regional issues they are facing. Experience with policy and political strategies, accountability systems, business practices, performance measures, media, public relations, negotiations/mediations, supervision, drafting and reviewing legislation, extensive analytical skills and excellent written and oral communication skills. A Bachelor's degree is required.

Please submit a letter of interest, King County Council application, and resume should be submitted to the attention of the Employment Committee of the Metropolitan King County Council no later than 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 14, 2002. Please call (206) 296-1688 to request a full job description and application.

**HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATOR FOR SKAGIT COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT.** Assures that developmental disabilities, mental health and chemical addiction treatment services are available to Skagit County residents. Plans and develops programs and services in the above areas via sub-contracted providers. Oversees contract development, management and monitoring of sub-contracted providers as well as managing and monitoring state contracts. Assures that services are top quality, best practice. Provide information to the community regarding availability of services Salary Range: \$3,729.86 to \$3,997.00 per month. Visit our web site: [www.skagitcounty.net](http://www.skagitcounty.net) Closes 4:30 pm 02-20-02.

**COUNTY FAIR PROGRAM MANAGER OKA-**

**NOGAN COUNTY.** Okanogan County is seeking a highly skilled and motivated individual to oversee the operation of the County Fairgrounds and Agriplex facility. The County Fair Program Manager is expected to plan and coordinate all activities of the County Fair and other special events conducted on the fairgrounds including the Agriplex facility. The position will supervisor a part-time secretary and seasonal maintenance worker. Typical duties include working with the Fair Advisory Board in the organization, planning and supervision of the County Fair. The position also oversees program and budget planning and implementation. Other duties include a full range of administrative support assistance including receptionist services, and clerical work of an accounting nature related to maintaining cost accounting records for the County Fair budget. Applicants must have three years experience in fair and fairground management or other parks and recreation facility management with working familiarity with fairgrounds facilities and fair operations, or a combination of education and experience which provides knowledge, skills and abilities sufficient to successfully perform the duties of the job. The salary range is from \$2,678 to \$3,255 per month DOQ. Interested persons are invited to request an application packet from the Okanogan County Department of Human Resources at 123 5<sup>th</sup> Ave North, Okanogan, WA. 98840. A completed application with cover letter and resume must be received by the Department of Human Resources no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday, February 22, 2002. For further information, or to request an application packet call Dan Powers, HR Director at (509) 422-7104. [dpowers@co.okanogan.wa.us](mailto:dpowers@co.okanogan.wa.us) Okanogan County is an equal op-

portunity employer. [www.okanogancounty.org](http://www.okanogancounty.org)

**STATE OF WASHINGTON FIXED INCOME PORTFOLIO MANAGER.** The Office of the State Treasurer (OST) seeks a *Fixed Income Portfolio Manager*. The Fixed Income Portfolio Manager is part of a 5 person investment team which manages several portfolios of state and local government funds totaling \$5 to 8 billion. Primary responsibility of this position is to manage the longer sector of the state's portfolio, approximately \$1 billion. *Desirable Qualifications:* BA in finance, business admin., economics or closely allied field; 2 years exp. in fixed income portfolio mgmt.; strong quantitative, analytical and personal computer proficiencies; good communication skills, "team player" approach. Total return experience is a plus. *Competitive salary DOQ.* Application Deadline March 1, 2002. *For application information,* visit our website at: <http://www.wa.gov/tre>, or contact Jeanne Ray, Personnel Officer, OST, POB 40200, Olympia, WA 98504-0200; phone (360) 902-9009; email: [jeanne@tre.wa.gov](mailto:jeanne@tre.wa.gov). *An Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/D/V*

**ASSISTANT PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR.** Kitsap County Public Works - Road Division. \$64,105.60 - \$81,806.40/annually (2001 Salary Rate). Plans, organizes, and manages the activities of the Road Division of the Public Works Department including the administration and management of the functions of Engineering Services, Transportation/Traffic Operations/Maintenance, and Road Operations/Maintenance, to achieve goals within budgeted funds and available personnel. Oversees the development of divisional workloads and staff assignments, reviews progress and makes recommendations,

directs changes in priorities and schedules as needed to assure work is performed in a timely and efficient manner according to appropriate guidelines, procedures, and legal regulations. Provides leadership and direction in the development of short and long-range plans, goals, and objectives for assigned operations. Makes recommendations regarding the development of capital improvement projects and priorities in annual and long-range capital improvement programs. Administers contracts associated with improvements to road and transportation facilities. Provides division and County representation on various committees and before special interest and community groups. May serves as the County Engineer. Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or closely related field, and five years of progressively responsible professional/administrative experience in planning, design, operation and construction of public works facilities, including two years of supervisory or management responsibilities; or any equivalent combination of experience and education which provides the applicant with the desired skills, knowledge and ability required to perform the work. Registration as a professional Civil Engineer in the State of Washington is desirable. (Required if designated as County Engineer). For additional information and application materials, please visit our website @ [www.kitsapgov.com](http://www.kitsapgov.com) or contact the Kitsap County Personnel Department, (360) 337-7185, ext. 0. All application materials must be received by 4:30 pm on March 1, 2002.