

Courthouse Journal

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Washington State Association of Counties
Washington Association of County Officials

April 12, 2002
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AGO Issued on Counties-Cities-Port District-Public Disclosure Act-Public Records

On April 10, 2002, the Attorney General's Office issued an Attorney General's Opinion (AGO 2002 No.2) that answered two questions posed by Senator Tim Sheldon. These questions dealt with the applicability of public records sections of RCW 42.17 to associations comprised of counties, county officials, cities, and port districts. Those questions are:

1. Are the Washington State Association of Counties and the Washington Association of County Officials subject to the public records provisions of the Public Disclosure Act, RCW 42.17.250 through 42.17.348?
2. Are the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington Public Ports Association subject to the public records provisions of the Public Disclosure Act,

RCW 42.17.250 through 42.17.348?

The AGO notes that while associations comprised of counties or local public officers are not "agencies" as defined in RCW 42.17.020, they could in certain circumstances be found to be "functional equivalents" of agencies for purposes of applying particular portions of the Public Disclosure Act. The AGO goes on to say this would be greatly dependent on the facts of a particular case and that the answer to these questions would depend on a case-by-case analysis that would take into account the purposes of the public records provisions of the Public Disclosure Act and the nature of the particular organization.

Copies of the full Opinion were e-mailed to all County Offices this week.

Scholarship Update

The selection process begins. ..

The Washington County Scholarship Fund received 210 applications for the 2002-2003 awards. Five awards of \$1,500 each will be announced in early May. The preliminary review will be completed in late April and the final selection will be made later that work. Good luck to all!

New WAC Rules Amendments for Chapter 458

A CR-101 Hearing was held on April 10 2002 to update the following Washington Administrative Code (WAC): 458-53-030, Stratification of Assessment Rolls – Real Property, WAC 458-53-050, Land Use Stratification, Sales Summary and Abstract Report, WAC 458-53-140, Personal Property Ratio Study, and WAC 458-53-090 Department Generated Sales Studies. These rules now

reflect current changes to the Statutes. There were a couple of comments from Kitsap and Thurston Counties asking for clarification to the definition of residential hotels/condominiums. The new Rules reflect those concerns.

Written comments on and/or requests for copies of the drafts may be directed to: Mark Mullin, Tax Policy Specialist, Legislation & Policy Division, State of Washington Department of Revenue, P.O. Box 47467, Olympia, WA 98504-7467; phone (360) 570-

6112; FAX (360) 664-0693; email: MarkM@dor.wa.gov.

Upcoming Events and Training

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.

Direct inquiries and correspondence to *The Courthouse Journal*, 206 Tenth Avenue SE, Olympia, WA 98501-1131.

WACO STAFF

Phone (360) 753-7319
FAX (360) 664-2812

Debbie Wilke, *Executive Director*
Michelle Hagen, *Deputy Director*
Christina Bridston, *Programs Coordinator*
Brenda Bamford, *Financial Operations Manager*
Kathie Houts, *Administrative Assistant*

WSAC STAFF

Phone (360) 753-1886
FAX (360) 664-2812

Bill Vogler, *Executive Director*
Paul Parker, *Assistant Executive Director*
Maureen Morris, *Deputy Director for Urban Counties*
Sophia Byrd, *Policy Director, Law & Justice*
Jean Wessman, *Policy Director, Human Services, Juvenile Justice, Housing*
Jackie White, *Policy Director, Transportation and Land Use*
Vicki Kirkpatrick, *Policy Director, WSALPHO Administrator*
Tom King, *Associate, Research, Telecommunications*
Jim Potts, *Housing Outreach Coordinator*
Ginni Peppert, *Secretary*
Tom Robinson, *Timber Coordinator*
Cynthia Sachs, *Policy Analyst*
Beth Dubey, *Accounting & Business Asst.*

Crime Victims Awareness Day

The Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) Crime Victims Compensation Program is hosting a day to “Bring Honor to Victims” on April 23. The event will take place at the Labor and Industries Auditorium in Tumwater at 7273 Linder-son Way SW from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This year’s speakers will include State Senator Jeralita Costa; Eve Santos, Deputy Director of Labor and Industries; Rick Mathers and Associates; King County Sheriff Dave Reichert; and, Si Sarton, who will make a presentation on self defense.

The topic will be an overview of criminal investigative analysis and an analysis of the OJ Simpson murder case: an investigator’s point of view – why we never give up on an investigation until the case is solved. Please note that the presentation materials may be graphic.

There is no registration fee and advance registration is not required. The auditorium is located one half mile east of I-5 at exit 101 on Airdustrial Way in Tumwater. Please contact Jill Short at 1-800-762-3716 for more information.

Governor's Vetoes to Human Services Sections of the 2002 Supplemental Budget

The Governor made a number of vetoes to the human services portions of the 2002 Supplemental Budget. These primarily occurred within the Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Economic Services sections of the Department of Social and Health Services. One other applicable veto occurred to the Institute for Public Policy at The Evergreen State College.

Mental Health:

Section 204 (1)(h) would have capped RSN administrative costs at 8%. While all the RSNs are currently under this cap, such a proviso would have required us to reduce our providers' administrative costs as well as potentially limit our own when additional administrative requirements occur such as the federal Balanced Budget Amendment, which is anticipated sometime this year. WSAC asked for this veto.

Section 204 (1)(k) would have required DSHS and CTED to develop a proposal to create a structurally and functionally independent mental health ombuds program. Currently the ombuds and quality review teams are administered through the RSNs under requirements contained in the contract with the state Mental Health Division. There was no funding appropriated to either department for developing the proposal or administering its implementation and operation. In addition if such a separate system was developed, there was no funding planned for the RSNs to continue to meet administrative, information, and liaison requirements. WSAC asked for this veto.

Section 204 (4)(c) froze the current bed allocation at the two state hospitals and required a bed allocation study. The Department is currently undertaking a study that includes the need for all kinds of residential beds including state hospital beds as well as community inpatient beds. However, the Governor vetoed the section based on the implementation of the new bed allocation in the current contracts, which still remains problematic to some RSNs.

Section 205 (1)(a) required monthly

reports from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to the Legislature. The Governor found this to be excessive. There is some concern by the Legislature over the federal and Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) audit results, which indicate the need to improve the quality of program data, strengthen program management and clarify eligibility practices. The Governor has indicated he will require DSHS/DDD keep the Legislature fully informed of any changes in these areas.

Section 207 (1)(e) would have required the Economic Services Administration to reduce funding for the Employment Security Department in order to fund drug and alcohol treatment for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The Governor felt this reduced their flexibility in meeting program costs if the TANF caseload continues to increase. WSAC through the Chemical Dependency Section of ACHS supported the retention of this proviso.

Section 608 (11) would have appropriated \$60,000 for additional studies by the Institute for Public Policy at The Evergreen State College. These studies included research of at-risk youth programs in order to recommend to the Legislature the criteria, processes and institutional arrangements under which proven best practices and cost savings could be identified. This would include savings to detention at the local level. WSAC supported the bill underlying this proviso.

In addition to the vetoed provisos, the Governor indicated his concern with two sections that he did not veto due to their cost impact to the budget. One of these is the section in the Mental Health Division budget dealing with reductions to the RSN reserves. While recognizing legislative interests, he has directed DSHS to work with the RSNs to identify and best address any unintended consequences from liquidating the reserves as provided. Several counties expressed their concern over this proviso.

And finally, he addressed another proviso that engendered a lot of interest both from counties and other groups. This proviso addresses the use of cash state supplement payments in serving persons with developmental disabilities. The Governor notes vetoing this proviso

would jeopardize the agreed upon service expansions in the legal settlement with ARC. He directs DSHS to work with clients, client advocates, and service providers to develop a plan that best implements these changes and program expansions.

If there are any questions about any of these issues, please contact Jean Wessman, WSAC Staff at any time.

Counties Impacted by Revised Industrial Stormwater Permit

As the result of a legal settlement stemming from a lawsuit by environmental groups, the Department of Ecology is preparing to revise and reissue stormwater permits for about 1,200 industrial facilities in Washington. The "industrial stormwater general permit" describes measures that industrial facilities must take to keep their stormwater runoff from polluting streams and aquifers. Environmental organizations felt the 2000 update to the permit was not stringent enough and sued to force changes.

Some of the revisions called for in the draft permit include:

- Facilities owned or operated by counties, cities and other local governments are not exempt from obtaining the permit.
- Stormwater sampling, analysis and reporting is required.
- Mixing zones (the area where discharges and streams merge) are defined.
- Compliance with water-quality standards is required.
- Light industry must either apply for a stormwater permit or prove they don't need it.

The department will accept public comments on the draft permit from March 29 through May 17. People may submit comments in writing via fax or mail (see below), or verbally at one of six public hearings. All of the hearings will begin at 1:30 p.m.

Tacoma on Monday, May 6, at Bates Technical College auditorium, 1101 S. Yakima Ave.

Mt. Vernon on Tuesday, May 7, at Dept. of Social & Health Services, Skagit & Snohomish rooms, 900 E. College Way.

Spokane on Thursday, May 9, at Spokane Co. Cooperative Extension, Rm. B, N. 222 Havana.

Yakima on Friday, May 10, at Dept. of Ecology, 15 W. Yakima Ave.

Bellevue on Monday, May 13, at Dept. of Ecology, 3190 160th Ave. S.E.

Vancouver on Tuesday, May 14, at Dept. of Social & Health Services, DCS Conference Rm., 5411 E. Mill Plain Blvd. (Town Plaza Mall).

Information about the permit is

available on Ecology's Web site at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/ or by contacting Keith Johnson (360-407-6442 or kjoh461@ecy.wa.gov).

Written comments may be mailed to Keith Johnson, Department of Ecology, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, Wash., 98504-7600, or faxed to him at 360-407-6426. Comments must be received by Ecology no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, May 17.

State Orders Mandatory Water Meters

The Washington State Department of Ecology has begun ordering as many as 1,000 water users to begin measuring withdrawals from various rivers and reporting the results. The regulations affect government agencies, industries, cities, irrigation districts and farms in 16 river basins considered critical to salmon and other endangered fish. The 16 river basins include the Cedar-Sammamish; Chambers-Clover; Duwamish-Green; Elwa-Dungeness; Nooksack; Puyallup-White; Quilcene-Snow; and the Snohomish in Western Washington and the Upper & Lower Yakima; Naches; Methow; Middle Snake; Okanogan; Walla Walla; and Wenatchee in Eastern Washington.

The first notices were sent April 1 to agencies who already meter water. Agencies like Cities, PUDs, irrigation districts and large farms. As many as 1,000 users are to be notified by the end of the year. The program will bring the state into compliance with water-rights rules adopted by the Legislature in 1993. The Legislature last year (2001) approved \$3.4 million to help users buy and install meters.

Supreme Court Rules on Water-Right Regulations

The state Supreme Court ruled 5-4 last week to stiffen water-right regulations. The ruling reaffirmed a 1997 legal opinion by state Attorney General Christine Gregoire that said housing projects requiring more than 5,000 gallons per day – enough water for about six homes – need water-right permits. The Court ruled that a developer can't drill multiple wells for a subdivision as a way of avoiding the need for a state water-

right permit. In its decision, the state's high court said: "The Legislature did not intend unlimited use of the exemption for domestic uses, and did not intend that water appropriation for such uses be wholly unregulated." The case heard by the state Supreme Court involved a 20-lot housing project near Yakima.

Road Management and Abandonment Plan Rule (RMAP)

A recent Road Management and Abandonment Plan WAC rule requires private property owners to maintain foresting roads. The rule is having wide reaching effects on the property rights of landowners across the state. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC 222-24-0550) was written by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources in July 2001. The rule stems from 1999 Legislation, **ESHB 2091** (Chapter 4, Section 204, 1st Special Session), and asks the Forest Practices Board to follow the recommendations of the "Forests and Fish Report" and establish permanent rules to protect animal habitat and natural resources.

The new RMAP Rules state that any road that has been used for forest practice or fire suppression on state and private forest land since 1974 must be improved and maintained to new standards within 15 years. Roads must be raised, graded and graveled. In addition, landowners must develop detailed maps showing all water lands and identify potential problems that would interfere with animal habitats, including fish. If the roads cannot be brought up to standard, property owners must make them impassible to four-wheel drive vehicles including their own.

The current rule applies to landowners with more than 500 acres of forested land, but by the year 2003, landowners who own from 2 to 500 acres of land will also be required to comply with the new law.

Elections, Recording and Licensing

New DNR Recording Fees

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been given budgetary authority to raise their fees on the recording of plats, surveys, short plats, boundary line adjustments and any other recording requiring a surveyed map. They can do this under the authority of WAC 332.150.030. The fee increase they are proposing to adopt is \$20. This would make the state fee on recording plats and surveys \$46. In December 2001 the fee increase was approved by the DNR Board in concept, but because the fee exceeded the 601 limitation, a proviso was adopted in the supplemental budget passed by the 2002 Legislature. The fee increase will now be approved by the DNR Board by Resolution.

A Status Paper regarding the fee increase was distributed to all Auditors in attendance at the WSACA Recording Conference in February 2002. DNR intends to hold a public hearing on the new fee in conjunction with the May 7 meeting of the DNR Board. The current proposal is to have the new fee go into effect June 13, 2002. This was suggested by a number of Auditors so it co-

incides with the fee increase associated with the affordable housing fee increase. Written comments can be sent to DNR regarding adoption of the emergency WAC Rule and a WACO representative will be attending the May 7 Board Meeting to keep you informed on the issue.

DNR is considering a mailing to notify all the surveyors and engineers in the state of the new fee structure. They also hope to provide county officials with an information sheet for distribution to the public when they ask what the fees will be used for.

Re-issuance of Vessel Registration Numbers

County auditors have been advised recently by the Department of Licensing that vessel owners whose vessel registration number contains the letters "I", "O", and/or "Q", will receive a special notice from the Department (DOL) this year as part of their renewal notification process.

DOL is in the process of replacing all vessel registration numbers that contain these letters in order to bring our state's vessel registration into compliance with the U.S. Coast Guard regula-

tions. The letters "I", "O" and "Q" are not allowed within vessel registration numbers because they can easily be confused with ones or zeros, making identification of vessels difficult for marine law enforcement officers.

Affected vessel owners will receive a special renewal notice in early April, 2002 requesting owners to voluntarily obtain a new vessel registration number when they renew their vessel license this year. In addition, new vessel numbers will automatically be issued whenever change in ownership occurs for affected vessels. Next spring all remaining affected vessels will be issued new numbers.

The cost for vessel owners is limited to purchasing and replacing all or part of the three-inch-high registration number located on both sides of the vessel. Vessel owners will be required to replace all or part of the letters/numbers on their vessel by July 1, 2003 when registration is renewed to avoid citation.

If you have any questions, please contact DOL's Customer Services Unit at (360) 902-3770, Option 5 or e-mail at titles@dol.wa.gov.

General Government and Miscellaneous

Fine Points of Post Retirement Employment

In 2001, the Legislature passed **ESSB 5937**, which expanded the number of hours PERS, TRS, and SERS employees could work without suffering a reduction in pension payments. This Legislation was passed after the Legislature looked a number of studies showing that a significant portion of individuals in key job classes would be retiring in the next five years. Legislators hoped that expanded re-employment would reduce the talent drain in state and local government.

Both employees and employers are finding that their are a number of nuances to the re-employment process that must be observed. Failure to do so can result in significant financial penalties for the re-employed retiree. The Department of Retirement Systems outlines some of these requirements in a question and answer format at: www.wa.gov/drs/member/5937faq.htm

Among the issues addressed are the

different hour limits for each retirement system, the prohibition against guaranteeing re-employment before actual retirement, and the requirement to not work for any retirement system employer for a full month following retirement.

County Representative Sought for Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team

With the retirement last December of King County Councilmember Louise Miller, there is an opening for a county official on the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team. The Action Team includes several state agency directors, a city and tribal representative, and three non-voting federal representatives.

The Action Team adopts the Puget Sound Water Quality Management plan, to guide state, local and private action that will improve the health of the waters of Puget Sound.

Contact Paul Parker or Bill Vogler by April 22 to express your interest in this gubernatorial appointment. The WSAC Executive Committee will recommend three names to Governor Locke for his consideration.

Position open on conservation district work group

SSB 6572, election of conservation district supervisors, creates a work group on conservation district elections with one member from the Washington State Association of Counties. Bill Varney, President of the Washington State Association of County Auditors, chairs the work group.

The work group shall conduct a review of conservation district election procedures and prepare recommendations for changes and improvements to the procedures. The report shall be completed by December 15, 2002.

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The legislation was necessary because of an inadvertent change in statute. The AG courts ruled that the election of conservation district supervisors was not proper under the old law and said that they had to hold regular elections similar to all other state and local elections. Be-

cause the districts did not have the funds to pay for the elections the counties ended up paying for them. The work group is tasked with addressing these and other problems.

Any member of WSAC interested in serving on the work group may submit their name to the Association office and

the names will be considered by the Executive Committee for nomination. The Speaker of the House and President of the Senate will then make the final decision on who will be appointed to the work group.

Employment Opportunities

ASSET/LIABILITY MANAGER—CLARK COUNTY, VANCOUVER, WA. (\$4,296-\$6,070/mo). Supervises and coordinates Treasurer's Office cash management, investment and debt management programs. Manages the cash flow liquidity needs; monitors and analyzes potential bond calls; prepares financial schedules, notes, presentations and reports. Coordinates customer service effort toward the county departments and junior taxing districts for cash management, investment and debt services; monitors internal controls around investment purchases, sales and safe-keeping; monitors and reports debt service activity requirements. Bachelor's degree in accounting, business or public administration or related field and four years increasingly responsible accounting, banking, investment and debt management experience. Detailed position information and applications available at <<http://www.co.clark.wa.us/>> www.clark.wa.gov and Clark County HR, 1013 Franklin Street, Vancouver, WA. (360)397-6018; TDD (360)397-6032. Equal Opportunity Employer

EXPERIENCED PROGRAMMER/ANALYST to provide technical expertise to users and staff members in the areas of development, business administration, database and website development. Must have a BS/BA in computer-related field and three years of related experience; or any equivalent combination of education and experience, which would provide the applicant with the necessary skills, knowledge and ability to perform essential functions of the position. Experience in a programmer/analyst mode utilizing Visual Basic, C, C++, Java, HTML (or code generator), SQL - PL/SQL, and project management software preferred. Development ex-

perience using Oracle Tools is desirable. \$51,625.60 to \$59,779.20, DOQ.

Benefits include paid vacation and sick leave, medical for employee and dependents, and excellent retirement plan. County pays for continuing professional training as it relates to each position.

Visit our website at: www.kitsapgov.com/jobline where application packets may be downloaded or contact Kitsap County Personnel at 614 Division St., MS-23, Port Orchard, WA 98366-4676 or (360) 337-7185, ext. "0." Application deadline is 4:30 pm April 26, 2002. Kitsap County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR - SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON. Salary: \$70,000-\$95,000 Requires a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration, Business Administration or related field and five years experience in government administration, financial management, human resource management or related areas or any equivalent combination which provides the required skills, knowledge and ability to perform duties and responsibilities of the position. Master's in Business or Public Administration preferred.

County Administrator works under the direction of the three member Skagit County Board of Commissioners and is responsible for: implementing Board policies, carrying out Board directives, overseeing achievement of Board goals and objectives, regularly reporting to the Board and keeping the Board timely advised regarding all strategic, legal, policy, labor relations, public safety, agency relations, community relations, operational and financial matters which could materially affect the County, and other matters as directed by the Board.

Applicants should submit a letter of interest, resume and completed application to the Skagit County Personnel Department at 700 South Second Street, Room 101, Mount Vernon, WA 98273. The application form may be obtained from at our website www.skagitcounty.net <<http://www.skagitcounty.net>> or by calling our Job Line 1-800-548-7957. Application deadline is Friday, May 3, 2002, by 4:30 p.m.

ASSISTANT OR ASSOCIATE PLANNER-ISLAND COUNTY (COUPEVILLE, WA) PLANNING & COMM. DEVEL. seeks a F/T highly motivated land use planner with superior customer service skills to aid the public on planning and development issues and applications. Main duty will involve review of applications for developing Proposals, in accord with Zoning, Critical Areas, SEPA, and all other assoc. land use & Env. Laws. Requires BA in Planning or related field, basic knowledge of planning, zoning, subdivision, land use law, WA GMA, SEPA, one (1) year of related work exp. (Associate Planner requires two (2) years of related work exp.), and strong analytical, comm., & Customer Service skills. Closes 4/19/02 Island County Application required. App. and info. can be obtained at www.islandcounty.net/hr. or call (360)679-7372, from So. Whidbey, (360)-321-5111 ext. 7254 from Camano (360) 629-4522 ext 7254. EOE

YAKIMA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT—Planner (Three Positions), Annual Salary Range: \$36,404 to \$52,185. Yakima County is seeking three Planners to join an organization known throughout the State of Washington for its leadership and innovation in

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Employment Opportunities

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urban, rural and environmental planning issues. Hiring Range is up to \$37,530 DOQ. (Greater hiring salary requires a pay policy exception). Planners will be assigned staff reports, technical and field work related to subdivision, zoning, critical areas and environmental project reviews, public assistance and comprehensive planning research. The Planner position requires a Bachelor's Degree in Planning and one year of planning experience, including internships. Masters degree may substitute for experience. Specific assignments will depend on the skill set and experience of the candidates. Check out the County's website at www.co.yakima.wa.us or www.visityakima.com for more information. Filing Deadline: Friday, May 3, 2002, Yakima County Human Resources, 128 N. 2nd Street, Courthouse Room 412, Yakima, WA 98909, telephone 509 574-2220. Email: human.resources@co.yakima.wa.us.

KITSAP COUNTY, SENIOR DEPUTY CORONER. Performs technical work to investigate all deaths within the

County, determine cause of death and locate and notify next-of-kin. Requires two years of college courses in anatomy and physiology, bachelors degree desirable; and two years experience in quasi law enforcement, emergency services, medicine, health services, or related field involving investigative work; or any equivalent combination of experience and education that provides the applicant with the desired skills, knowledge and ability required to perform the work. Previous supervisory experience is preferred. This is an at-will position that serves at the pleasure of the Kitsap County Coroner. Salary: \$21.55 to \$27.51/hr. **Closes: 4/19/02.** Call (360) 337-7185 for an application packet or download from our website: www.kitsapgov.com.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WENATCHEE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL has an opening for an Executive Director. Salary range is \$55,000 - \$72,000 per year depending on qualifications, attractive benefits package. Requirements include but are not limited to a completed application

and résumé and a valid state issued drivers license. This position also requires a minimum of five years of planning experience beyond the trainee level and a degree in physical and/or regional planning, civil engineering, geography, or a closely related field. Applications and job descriptions available at Douglas County Transportation & Land Services, 470 Ninth N. E. East Wenatchee, WA 98802, (509) 884-7173, Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. or on our internet site: www.douglascountywa.net. This position is open until April 23 at 5:00 p.m. WVTC does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, treatment or employment in its programs or activities. ADA accommodations available upon request. Equal Opportunity Employer

Courthouse Ramblings

Clark County Assessor **Ben Gassaway** has announced that he will not seek a

seventh term. Ben plans on spending lots more time with his wife June and

their 22 grandchildren. We wish Ben a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Calendar of Events

April 23

Basic Contract Training, sponsored by the WA Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (WAPA), Rodeway Inn, Leavenworth, 8:00 - 4:30 p.m.

April 25-26

WSAC Eastern District Meeting, Sun Mountain Lodge, Winthrop

May 1

Certified Public Official (CPO) *Public Meetings, Public Disclosure and More: Do You Know the Rules?* Ellensburg—Cost: \$50 CPO Credits: 2 (Elective Course)

May 2

CPO *Public Meetings, Public Disclosure and More: Do You Know the Rules?* Davenport—Cost: \$50 CPO Credits: 2 (Elective Course)

May 3

CPO *Public Meetings, Public Disclosure and More: Do You Know the Rules?* Richland—Cost: \$50 CPO Credits: 2 (Elective Course)

May 6–10

Washington State Association of County Auditors' Annual Conference, Red Lion, Port Angeles

May 8

CPO *Public Meetings, Public Disclosure and More: Do You Know the Rules?* Mt. Vernon—Cost: \$50 CPO Credits: 2 (Elective Course)

May 9

CPO *Public Meetings, Public Disclosure and More: Do You Know the Rules?* Tacoma—Cost: \$50 CPO Credits: 2 (Elective Course)

May 10

CPO *Public Meetings, Public Disclosure and More: Do You Know the Rules?* Kelso—Cost: \$50 CPO Credits: 2 (Elective Course)

May 15–17

ACHS, Spokane

May 20–23

Washington State Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs' (WASPC) Spring Conference, WestCoast Wenatchee Center Hotel, Wenatchee

May 22–24

WIR, Yellowstone County, Billings MT

June 15

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators certification testing, 8:00 a.m.–noon, Room 2605, Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham, OR.

June 16–19

Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado

June 17

WSALPHO Meeting in conjunction with WSAC Summer Convention, Bellevue

June 17–20

Washington State Association of County Assessors' Annual Conference, Rosario Resort, Orcas Island

June 18

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

June 18

CPO *Financial Management: Understanding County Government Financing*, Bellevue—Cost: \$120, CPO Credits: 4 (Core Course). An additional elective course will also be offered at the Summer convention, topic TBD

June 18–21

WSAC Summer Convention, Bellevue

June 18–21

Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Annual Conference, Yakima

June 19–21

Washington State Association of Prosecuting Attorneys' (WAPA) Summer Training Program, Campbell's Lodge, Chelan

June 22–26

National Sheriffs Association's Annual Conference, Tulsa, Oklahoma

June 24–28

Washington State Association of County Clerks' Annual Conference, Best Western Suites, Walla Walla

June 24–28

Washington State Association of County Treasurers' Annual Conference, Lakeway Inn, Bellingham

July 9–12

Northwest Regional Election Conference 2002, Jantzen Beach Doubletree Hotel, Portland

July 12–16

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

July 17–19

ACHS, Clark County

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Calendar of Events

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July 24

CPO *Washington Counties Risk Pool—Leadership Skills in Response to Current Issues*, Spokane—Cost: Free to Risk Pool Members, \$50 non-members, CPO Credits: 4 (Elective Course)

August 22

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

September 10–13

City/County Planning Directors, Lake Chelan

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

October 1

CPO *Personnel/Human Resources—Understand the Laws; Maximize Your Personnel System*, Wenatchee—Cost: \$120, CPO Credits: 4 (Core Course)

October 2

CPO *The Class-Act County Government Official—Building Courthouse Partnerships*, Wenatchee—Cost TBD, CPO Credits: 2 (Elective Course)

November 14

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

November 18–21

Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs' (WASPC) Annual Fall Conference, Red Lion Hotel at the Quay, Vancouver

November 20–22

ACHS, Seattle

December 5

WSALPHO Meeting, SeaTac

December 10–13

CPO *Newly Elected Officials Training—Understanding Your New Job at the Courthouse*, Olympia—Cost: TBD, CPO Credits: All newly elected officials **must** attend to become certified.

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

June 22–25, 2004

WSAC Summer Convention, Sheraton Tacoma, Pierce County

July 16–20, 2004

NACo Annual Conference Maricopa County, Phoenix, AZ

October 4–8, 2004

WACO/WSAC Joint Legislative Conference, WestCoast Grand Hotel at the Park, Spokane

2005 MEETINGS

July 15–19, 2005

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

Legislature handcuffs counties

From the Bellingham Herald (Opinion), Monday, April 8, 2002

GOVERNMENT: Unfunded mandates force local governments to provide essential services without dollars to pay for them.

When it came to the state budget, the keyword from both sides of the aisle this session was "cut."

As is their propensity, the Republicans wanted deeper cuts than the Democrats. This editorial board applauded that. The problem is that "smaller government," the counterpart of "fiscal responsibility," took a back seat and that ugly cousin named "unfunded mandate" took control of the wheel.

The outcome is fiscally strapped counties that are still mandated to provide the same essential services - without funding.

Fresh from attempting to balance the budget with a combination of cuts and irresponsible quick fixes, the legislators get to go home and start campaigning.

Counties are left to figure out how to squeeze water from a stone.

Counties provide essential services for the state, largely acting as a local branch of state government in many ways. For example, counties provide court services for the state - people are not charged with a crime by Whatcom County, they are charged with committing a crime against the state of Washington.

Yet, Whatcom County pays for the jail, pays for the prosecutor, pays for the Public Defender's Office and pays the judge (whose salary was recently increased by the state whether the county liked it or not.) Defendants have a legal right to a speedy trial and if they don't get adequate legal services, they can be released or even sue the county.

Furthermore, while the state made budget cuts with one hand, legislators also passed additional "get tough" laws for certain crimes.

That's just one example of how the county's hands are tied when the state

Legislature passes the buck - or, actually, withholds the buck but passes the responsibility.

Initiative 695, which eliminated the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax and created \$30 car tab fees, was thrown out in court, but legislators passed their own version of it. That gutted transportation funding as well as dealt harsh blows to law enforcement and public health funding. When he realized the economy was anything but rosy, Gov. Gary Locke reneged on a promise to "backfill" the funding lost when MVET was repealed. Locke made the right choice.

The Legislature gave the people what they voted for with I-695 (which failed in Whatcom County) and Locke backed it up.

The wheels were set in motion.

None of this should come as any surprise to anyone who truly understood I-695 and the impacts of the Legislature's decision to eliminate the MVET.

Counties will suffer and now we'll start to see how. Unlike cities, counties can't charge B&O tax. The state has no income tax. That leaves counties dependent on sales and property tax. They don't want to raise either, particularly at a time when so many people are struggling to make ends meet.

Whatcom County Executive Pete Kremen says we're in better shape than most because while other counties lived high on the economic boom, Whatcom County remained frugal and put away reserves that we can tap until 2005. But it will take more than that.

This year, the county is asking every department to make a 2 percent reduction and to prepare for 4 percent reductions in 2004 and 2005. Between now and the 2004 budget, county officials will have to prioritize programs for targeted cuts.

The county will also have to examine ways to become more efficient. Its health insurance costs for its self-insured program have risen more than 100 percent in just a few years. The county may want to look at participating in a multi-county plan. The county will also have to look at regionalizing services in general.

Cuts in state funding don't necessarily translate into cuts in state services.

They often translate into headaches for

local governments, who are left to cobble together the best solutions they can find.

In Whatcom County, we already don't have enough sheriff's deputies, corrections officers or jail space. We lack an adequate number of planners to complete reviews required by state law and have had trouble filling engineering positions because the salary offered was too low. County employees have had ongoing grumblings about low pay increases. There's not a whole lot of room for cutting.

So while legislators are starting their stump speeches talking about all the cuts they made in Olympia, go ahead and ask them how they feel about unfunded mandates.

Technology Opens Communication Doors at Courthouse

By David Lester, from the Yakima Herald-Republic on Sunday, April 7, 2002

The technology superhighway will soon replace the interstate between Sunnyside and the Yakima County courthouse.

This long-distance express will allow Lower Valley residents to obtain permits, apply for licenses, or have building plans reviewed via a computer link at a proposed service center in Sunnyside. Families of jail inmates from the Lower Valley -- accounting for 42 percent of local prisoners in county custody -- also will be able to use the same system for what is known as video visiting. Yakima County will become the first in the state to use video visiting. Families and attorneys still would be able to meet in person. But use of the video option would save time, money and parking.

This system is based on the same type of computer and communications technology that has made video conferences common in business and government circles. "We are trying to enable people to save some money by not having to come to the courthouse and stand in line," said George Helton, head of technology services for the county and the architect of the system. "The idea is better service at a lower cost."

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A Lower Valley service center, most likely to be located at the Sunny-side Law and Justice Center on Homer Street, will also be equipped with document cameras and digital signature pads to complete applications for permits. "People can push a button and a video operator will pop up on the screen," added Helton. "It's really that easy."

Other communities could be added to the system later, officials said.

The hardware that makes "cyber-permitting" possible uses the existing wireless radio network linking Lower Valley police departments to the courthouse. While the service center idea was the driving force behind expanding service, the jail visiting system will be installed first, likely within a month, officials said. That's because the city of Seattle wants the option of long-distance visual visiting available to families of Seattle offenders who would be held under a bed rental contract with Yakima County. The Seattle City Council is expected to vote Monday to authorize a contract be signed with the county for up to 50 Seattle prisoners initially.

Yakima County is pursuing a much-publicized new jail that will be built and operated on revenue from renting jail beds to Seattle and other cities in the Puget Sound region. The estimated \$45 million jail will be financed through the sale of bonds that will be paid off from bed rentals. To be included in the bond is an estimated \$750,000 for the computers and other equipment needed to offer video visiting.

Seattle officials want video visiting as a way for families to avoid the three-hour drive to Yakima, said George Allen, chief of staff for Seattle City Councilman Jim Compton. "If it wasn't an option, I don't think the council would have thought much about the idea of locating inmates in Yakima," he said. The county plans to accomplish long-distance visiting through a microwave station in Moxee that will pipe the video signal and audio through fiber optic lines to a central communications building in Seattle. The fiber network is operated by a nonprofit consortium of 16 public utility districts. From there, the King County Internet links all cities in that county. Under a rental contract, cities that house prisoners in Yakima would

have to buy their own computers and cameras to provide video visiting for families. A prototype for video visiting already is being tested at the county Department of Assigned Counsel on North Third Street. Department attorneys are hired by the county to represent those charged with crimes who lack funds to pay an attorney.

Director Dan Fessler has a small camera mounted on his office computer that provides him video contact with the jail. The picture fills about a quarter of a 17-inch computer screen, and officials have been satisfied with audio quality during in-house tests. Fessler said public defenders as well as private attorneys often face a difficult task of arranging visits with clients around their own schedules as well as the jail's. Opportunities for direct visits are limited to less than two hours in midmorning and about three hours each afternoon when the jail isn't locked down for shift changes and meals. "The windows of time available tend to correspond with when we are in court," Fessler observed. "You throw those together and you have a major issue about getting convenient access."

said the video visiting could relieve some of the access problem for routine visits. Meeting face to face will still be necessary for some conferences. "I think it would be valuable. That is the best word I can use to describe it," said Fessler. "Before I could characterize it better, I'd have to see how it works and experience it." Because they work for the county, Fessler and his deputies would be the only defense attorneys able to use the system. Private attorneys defending jailed clients would still have to rely on personal visits.

Corrections Director Ken Ray said the new jail is being designed to provide computer terminals in each inmate housing unit. Inmates would not be able to initiate video visits, but would be notified by corrections officers they have an incoming visit. Ray said terminals in the housing units relieve jail administration from having to assign corrections staff to escort inmates to and from visiting rooms. Access in the existing jail is less convenient, however, because the building's long corridors deny officers the ability to monitor every housing unit at all times.

Accounting for the Dead

By Jesse A. Hamilton, from the Yakima Herald-Republic on Sunday, April 7, 2002

We live in a diverse community, and the people of Yakima County would surely define life here in a thousand different ways. But Maurice Rice is the only guy around who really knows -- down to the last person -- how this county's residents die. As coroner, part of his job is the compiling of an annual report about untimely deaths. It's something like a business might create -- a collection of statistics and tallies. But his includes categories like "crushing injuries," "acute alcohol poisoning" and "carbon monoxide suicide."

His 2001 summary is out now, and it includes some interesting numbers, some good and some bad. For instance, among the bad news, more people died of accidental drug overdose than in any previous year. A total of 17 people took too much of a drug -- sometimes of multiple drugs -- and were killed by the dose. Also unusual about that was the fact that most of the deaths were from prescription drugs -- not so much of the usual heroin or other hard-drug deaths. Oxycodone, a potent painkiller, killed three, all women. Tricyclic antidepressants, used to treat depression and chronic pain, killed two. Benzodiazepines, a sedative often used to treat anxiety, killed two. Verapamil, a chest-pain and high-blood-pressure drug, killed one. And historically abused morphine killed two. The year before, only four deaths were caused by prescription drugs.

But these numbers don't explain important questions like "How?" or "Why?" Did the victim do it on purpose? Was the drug dangerously contaminated? Was it a medication mix-up? "Sometimes people don't mean to overdose," said Beth Dannhardt, the executive director of Yakima's Triumph Treatment Services. Especially, she added, with street drugs. "The potency is unknown. The source may change, and the potency may change. Sometimes they're cut with other drugs, and that's not advertised." But she's not surprised to hear about the trouble with prescription drugs. "We see it all the time." There's

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little a pharmacist like Darin Loose at Longs Drugs can do about prescription abuse, though. When a customer comes in with a doctor's prescription, he said, "We assume they got it for a legitimate purpose." They dispense the amount the doctor requested, and they caution customers to follow directions, he said. His advice for responsible users is this: "You don't share your prescription with anybody else, and you keep track of it. Make sure you know where it is, so it doesn't get into the wrong hands." And the rest is out of a pharmacist's hands.

Sometimes, inevitably, the pills will kill. Coroner Rice often has no idea what's behind the deaths. His job starts when he gets a call -- usually from police. He goes to a home. He picks up a body, and takes it to the morgue. Then he sends some drawn blood and urine to a toxicologist. That's who tells him what the person took. Unless somebody finds a suicide note, it becomes an accidental death by drug overdose on his report. This year, only two overdoses came with notes.

Rice's 2001 report wasn't all gloom, though. Traffic deaths were dramatically down. And cases of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) fell from 11 in 2000 to one in 2001 -- the lowest Yakima County number since records began. While such small numbers can't be said to be very statistically significant, both

the traffic and SIDS drops sounded like good news to some.

For Mary Hart, that statistic means SIDS education programs have been worth it. She's the director of the maternal/child health program at Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital. "Our averages seem to be going down, which is exciting," she said. In Yakima County, the numbers of SIDS cases -- which are children younger than a year old who die suddenly without trauma or infection -- have reached the high teens before. Having only one in 2001, she said, makes it seem that programs like Back to Sleep are successes.

Back to Sleep teaches new parents to keep babies on their backs for sleep, which reduces the likelihood of SIDS.

Gerri Miller, who coordinates the Child Death Review team through the county Health Department, said it's been hard to convince people that babies won't choke while on their backs -- a longtime belief. "We're still kind of fighting that." Another thing medical experts teach is to avoid giving babies soft bedding. But if you really want to get Hart's nursing ire up, smoke near a baby. "It so affects his little lungs," she said. "It's really important that the family members who smoke (do so) outside, and not around the baby." The education will continue, though she's happy to see the number so low. Ultimately, she said, "We have to watch over time. One

year doesn't tell you anything."

Of course, law-enforcement professionals would like to see the number of traffic deaths follow the 2001 trend.

There were 24 -- the lowest number in more than a decade. The next lowest was the year before, in which 33 died. The worst recent year was 1996, which saw 62 deaths. As has been seen in the past, about half of the 2001 drivers who died had been drinking. And three quarters of those who died were men.

Rice, on call all day and all night, gathered most of them, as he does for all unnatural, unexpected or unwitnessed deaths. He responded to one man who was electrocuted last year and one who'd fallen from a horse. Three were killed in off-road vehicles. Three others drowned. As always, there were dozens who had been killed -- by others or by themselves. Most of them were men.

Those 2001 numbers are pretty far behind Rice now. In his 24-hour, seven-day-a-week job, he's already more than three months into this year's numbers.

With a hanging, overdoses and car accidents last weekend, Rice already has plenty of work for his little morgue -- which occupies part of a former Safeway on First and B streets -- to handle. He would be the first to admit, if there are three things Yakima County residents can count on, it's taxes, death and, if that death was unexpected, running across Maurice Rice.