

Courthouse Journal

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Washington State Association of Counties
Washington Association of County Officials

May 3, 2002
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Inside the Courthouse Journal

**Environment, Land Use &
Resources**
Pages 2 - 3

**General Government
And Miscellaneous**
Pages 3 - 4

**Upcoming Events
and Training**
Page 4

**NACo Steering
Committees**
Page 4

Courthouse Ramblings
Page 5

Calendar of Events
Pages 5 - 6

**Employment
Opportunities**
See Pages 7 - 10

Governor Puts CTED Back Together Again

Governor Gary Locke this week directed the state Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) to operate as a single state agency.

"Given the budget situation, maintaining two separate offices in the current configuration is no longer practical," Locke said in a press release. "After considering a number of options, I concluded that maintaining CTED is the best way to preserve the state's ability to fulfill its mission in community and economic development."

For two years, CTED has operated as two separate entities, the Office of Trade and Economic Development (OTED) and the Office of Community Development (OCD), each with its own director. A bill that would have for-

mally split the multi-function agency failed in the last legislative session.

At the governor's request, Martha Choe will serve as CTED director, overseeing all the department's divisions, programs and functions. Choe has been serving as OTED director. Busse Nutley, a former county commissioner, will leave her position as OCD director.

The new organizational re-merger is effective May 31. Under the consolidation, both OTED and OCD will continue their distinct functions and programs under one director, and each office will be assigned a new deputy director. There will be no changes to the way divisions are currently organized within the agency.

Letter from the WSAC President

(Submitted by LeRoy Allison, President & Grant County Commissioner)

One of the pleasures I have had as President of WSAC has been the opportunity to get to know county commissioners, councilmembers and executives from across the state. I always have been struck by the similarities among counties despite our geographic and demographic differences. Each of you have stories to tell about the problems that your county faces and the successes that your county has had. Yet, despite the similarities, the differences can also pose tremendous challenges for us to work together as an Association.

Through my attendance at various meetings with the National Association of Counties (NACo), I can tell you that the similarities and differences extend from sea to shining sea. I can only imagine how challenging it would be to preside over NACo. I am honored and excited that Santa Fe County Commissioner

Javier M. Gonzales, the President of the NACo, will be joining us at our Summer Conference.

Mr. Gonzales is the youngest NACo President ever as well as the first Hispanic to serve in that position. Elected to serve on the Santa Fe County Board of Commissioners in November 1994, Santa Fe County voters elected Gonzales to serve a second consecutive term in 1998. As a member of the Santa Fe County Board and NACo's leadership team, he has taken a strong interest in helping counties address the challenges associated with such pressing issues as public safety, economic development and health care.

As a businessman, he has taken many of his everyday experiences and applied them to his public service. In the early 1990's, Gonzales successfully co-founded La Voz Broadcasting, Inc., which is New Mexico's largest Spanish language radio station. He serves as

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

the corporation's Chief Financial Officer. Commissioner Gonzales shares my interest in natural resources issues and has focused much of his effort on building local-federal relationships, including management issues in the national parks and federal lands.

His commitment and dedication to public service is a family tradition. His father, George Gonzales, also served as a Santa Fe County Commissioner and later was elected mayor of the City of

Santa Fe in the 1960's.

I look forward to hearing from Javier how counties in New Mexico and across the country are working with other levels of government and reinventing themselves to meet the new challenges we face today. It is very important that all 39 counties of this state attend the summer convention. Please join us at the WSAC Annual Convention, June 18-21, in Bellevue.

Environment, Land Use & Resources

Effort to Update State Energy Strategy Seeks County Input

The Department of Community, Trade and

Economic Development is looking for a county representative to assist legislators, staff from the Energy Policy Program, and others in updating the state energy strategy. The workgroup is expected to meet about six times and the work product may result in legislative recommendations. The workgroup will begin meeting in late May and conclude by the end of the year.

Among counties, cities, the energy industry and environmental groups, Representative Jeff Morris (D-Skagit County) and Senator Karen Fraser (D-Thurston County) will be participating in the workgroup. Please contact Paul Parker at WSAC to indicate your interest in participating. If you would like more information on the scope of the task, contact Tony Usibelli in the Energy Policy program at 360-956-2125 or tonyu@ep.cted.wa.gov.

Senate Environment, Energy & Water Committee to Look at Columbia and Snake River Issues

On May 6 and 7, 2002, the Senate Environment, Energy & Water Committee will be holding work sessions to learn about Columbia and Snake River issues. A Joint Hearing with the Senate Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines Committee will take place on Monday, May 6 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. to consider the topic of water and fish management on the Columbia/Snake River System. Bob Lohn, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service and Larry Cassidy, Northwest Power Planning Council will speak to the Committees.

The following morning, from 8:30 - 10:30 am, the Committee will work on the topics of Water Dispute Resolution in the four Northwest states and litigation on regional environmental issues. A Tuesday afternoon session from 1:00 to 3:15 p.m. will focus on Energy Generation and Transmission. Steve Wright, Administra-

tor, Bonneville Power Administration will be presenting that information.

The work sessions will be concurrent with the meeting of the Legislative Council on River Governance, a Council of legislators from the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Corps Proposes Increased Local Match for Flood Control

The Corps of Engineers is proposing to increase the local sponsors' (usually city or county) match for repair of flood control works. A notice of proposed rule change was published in the Federal Register, Vol 67, No. 38/Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2002, Page 8748.

For levees in the Corps PL 84-99 program (levees not built by the Corps but accepted into this program) the county share for repair work may increase from 20% to 25%. However, for Corps authorized and constructed levees and flood gates, the county share for repairs may increase nothing to 25%, which could potentially be a huge expense if a large flood causes extensive damages. If the local sponsor cannot come up with the money, then legal issues such as liability for private property damage and loss of national flood insurance eligibility arise.

The comment period has recently been extended by 60 days. Written comments can be sent to HQUSACE, ATTN: CECW-OE, 441 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20314-1000. Note that the address listed in the Comment extension publication is WRONG and "441 G St., NW" is right.

Comments can be emailed to: robert.k.grubbs@usace.army.mil Subject lines for emailed comments should read "33 CFR 203 Comments from...."

(Continued on page 3)

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.

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Conservation Groups Seek ESA Protection Only for Wild Fish

Conservation groups last week petitioned the federal government to consider only wild salmon for protection by the Endangered Species Act to avoid the legal pitfalls of lumping them with hatchery fish.

The action was intended to protect Pacific salmon from the court ruling that temporarily removed Oregon coastal coho from the threatened species list last year and prompted petitions to drop protection for more than a dozen other salmon runs.

The effort to restore dwindling populations of Pacific salmon throughout the West was thrown into an uproar last September by a ruling by U.S. District Judge Michael Hogan in Eugene. Judge Hogan found that the National Marine Fisheries Service erred in protecting only wild Ore-

gon coastal coho as a threatened species, when it had included hatchery fish in the same population segment known as an evolutionarily significant unit, or ESU.

Conservationists succeeded in restoring Oregon coastal coho to the threatened species list while they appeal the ruling, but a number of farm and business groups then petitioned NMFS to drop Endangered Species Act protection for 15 different salmon and steelhead runs.

NMFS has since begun a systematic review of 24 of the 26 protected salmon runs in the West that have hatchery and wild fish in the same ESU.

U.S. Supreme Court Rules in "Takings" Case

This week the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the right of local government to restrict private land use for environmental

reasons. It said the property owners could be compensated for land-use restrictions, but they did not have to be compensated. The case involved a land-use lawsuit in Lake Tahoe, Nevada. The court ruled against landowners seeking compensation for money lost in a development moratorium needed to prevent polluting Lake Tahoe. Property owners sought payment on constitutional grounds (the Fifth Amendment's provision that private property shall not "be taken for public use without just compensation). The decision reaffirmed that compensation for regulatory takings can be valid, but is not always required.

General Government and Miscellaneous

Eastern District Proposes Strategy for More State Funding

Much discussion about budgets and mandates, a great lecture on the development of the Columbia Basin hydroelectric power system, great food, sunny skies and friendship were the highlights at the Eastern District WSAC meeting at Sun Mountain, April 25 and 26. Thanks to host Okanogan County for proposing Sun Mountain as a meeting site and getting those great lodging rates!

County finances dominated discussions at the conference and resulted in passage of two resolutions that have been forwarded to the full membership for consideration at the Summer Conference. Those resolutions are attached to this issue of the *Courthouse Journal*. One proposes that counties weekly bill the state for jobs that counties do on behalf of the state for which funding is not received. The other asks that state parks – a key to tourism and economic development in Eastern Washington – not be closed.

As in the Western district meeting two weeks earlier, Eastern District Commissioners also shared information about the tightening fiscal straits in their respective counties and their responses. Many of the same themes were noted on both sides of the state, especially the need for all coun-

ties to work together and to work with all stakeholders—the Legislature, cities, county personnel beyond the commissioners, etc.—to come up with solutions.

At the business meeting, members selected Asotin County for the District Meeting next spring. The fall 2002 Eastern District meeting is scheduled in conjunction with the Joint WSAC/WACO Legislative Conference in Wenatchee during the week of September 30 to October 4. The exact day of the fall Eastern District meeting within that week will be determined at a later time.

In other Eastern District business, Douglas County Commissioner Mary Hunt was selected as Eastern District at-large representative to the WSAC Board of Directors. She takes the position that had been Walla Walla County Commissioner Dave Carey's prior to his election as WSAC Secretary-Treasurer last fall.

Budget and finance continued to be the focus during Thursday afternoon with presentations county liability for human services and criminal justice services and with presentations on transportation funding and costs. As in the Western District, Friday sessions focused on water resources issues but with a distinctly Eastern Washington flavor. Dr. Dan Ogden, a political scientist who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Columbia River hydro system in 1949, gave a fascinating talk on that

topic. Jim Rhoads, an activist challenging the decision to remove Condit Dam on the White Salmon River, followed him.

West Puget Sound Chapter of IAAO Holds Spring Seminar

The West Puget Sound Chapter of the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) held their 2002 Spring Real Estate Seminar in Tumwater on Friday, April 26. Linda Owings-Rosenburgh, Clallam County Assessor, served as moderator and Patricia Costello Thurston County Assessor, gave opening remarks.

The seminar contained information on 1031 tax deferred exchanges, appraisal of contaminated properties, Sing Log Homes, small plat development and a legislative update by a representative of WACO. Also attending the seminar was Lewis County Assessor Diane Dorey.

NACo's Deferred Compensation Program Beats the Competition: NRS Joins Forbes 400 List

NACo's deferred compensation program, administered by Nationwide Retirement Solutions, placed first among its competitors for its return on the fixed annuity option offered to county employees. In a

(Continued on page 4)

General Government and Miscellaneous

(Continued from page 3)

study, conducted by the firm of Buck Consultants and released in January 2002 (the release was delayed due to the events of September 11, 2001), NRS' contractual requirement that it equal or exceed the lowest test results of the top one-third of selected carriers was confirmed.

The NACo program is the largest deferred compensation program in the country for county employees. The analysis conducted as part of this study reviewed the fixed annuity option offered by NRS and its eight largest competitors. The report was released at the fall/winter meeting of NACo's Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee, held earlier this month in Dublin, Ohio. This study has been performed every year since 1989 and the

NACo program has always come out on top. The competitiveness study is only one feature of NACo's deferred compensation program that distinguishes it from others.

As a result of NACo's Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee, the NACo program is the only one in the country that receives oversight and advised by county participants. Further, on an annual basis, a committee composed of representatives of NACo (members and staff) and NRS meet to review program progress and issues in order to be responsive to the program's more than 380,000 county participants.

While the NACo deferred compensation program ranks first amongst its competitors, Nationwide Financial, the NRS parent company, has earned the distinction of joining 2002 Forbes Platinum 400 list.

"I am pleased to share with you that Nationwide Financial was recently placed on The Forbes Platinum 400 list in its first year of eligibility for the recognition. The Forbes Platinum 400 list ranks the "Best Big Companies in America" by reviewing the profitability, five-year growth rates, and projected earnings of publicly traded corporations with revenues of at least \$1 billion," said Jerry Jurgenson, president of Nationwide Financial.

For the past three years, Nationwide Financial has been ranked on the Forbes Global 500 list. The Forbes Global 500 list includes corporate America's most powerful companies, and rankings are a composite score based on four measures: sales, profits, market value and assets.

Upcoming Events and Training

Calling all Clerks! Scholarship Available for Summer Conference of WACCCs

It's conference time again. There is a conference scholarship available this year for members of the Washington Association of

Commissioner/Council Clerk(s). The conference is scheduled in Bellevue, June 18-21, 2002. This will be a full scholarship for up to \$500 to cover registration, travel, and lodging expenses. Application forms may be obtained through Vickie Mus-

grove, Cowlitz County Commissioners Office: 207 4th Avenue North, Kelso, WA 98626, Phone: (360) 577-3020 or E-mail: MusgroveV@co.cowlitz.wa.us. Application deadline is Friday, May 10, 2002.

NACo Steering Committees

NACo Steering Committee Nominations Open

It is that time of year again! Nominations for the National Association of Counties (NACo) Steering Committees are open. As a NACo steering committee member, you are responsible for debating and creating national policies and priorities affecting counties and serve as NACo's front line in their grass roots efforts. Commit-

tees meet at the NACo legislative and annual conferences and one other time during the year. You will be responsible for your own travel.

Please call WACO or WSAC for nomination forms. Please be as thorough as possible in completing the nomination and grass roots forms and send it back to us by June 7, so we can meet the NACo deadline and gain approval by NACo incoming president Ken Mayfield. NACo

will announce your appointment in September.

The 11 steering committees are: Agriculture and Rural Affairs; Community and Economic Development; Environment, Energy and Land Use; Finance and Intergovernmental Relations; Health; Human Services and Education; Justice and Public Safety; Labor and Employment; Public Lands; Telecommunications and Technology; and Transportation.

Courthouse Ramblings

We were sorry to learn of the death of **Herman O. "Chick" Arnold**, former Island County Assessor, who passed away April 13 of complications from surgery for a broken hip. He passed away in Brazil,

Indiana, where he and his wife had moved to be closer to family. Chick was a 30-year veteran of the U.S. Navy and after retiring in 1970, went to work in the assessor's office. He was elected as assessor for

three terms, from 1982 until 1994, when he retired. Chick's wife, Frances, preceded him in death on October 2, 2001.

Calendar of Events

May 6–10

Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys-Support Enforcements (WAPASEP's) Annual Conference, Red Lion Hotel at the Quay, Vancouver

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 9

WSAC *Timber Workshop*, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Snohomish County City-County Administrative Building, Everett

May 10

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

May 10

WSAC *Timber Workshop*, 9:00 – noon, Washington Counties Building, Olympia

May 15-17

WAPA *Support Staff Training Program* – Icicle Inn, Leavenworth. Administrative Assistant & Victim Witness Tracks, 15 hrs CLE

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

May 29

WSAC *Timber Workshop*, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., Ellensburg Best Inn

May 30

WSAC *Timber Workshop*, 9:00 a.m. – noon, Spokane County Human Resources Dept., Spokane

May 30-31

WAPA *District Court Training Program* – Holiday Inn, SeaTac. 15 hours of CLE

June 10-13

International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners and Washington Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners Joint Conference, West Coast Hotel, Seattle.

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

July 24

CPO *Washington Counties Risk Pool—Leadership Skills in Response to Current Issues*, Spokane—Cost: Free to Risk Pool

(Continued on page 6)

Calendar of Events

(Continued from page 5)

Members, \$50 non-members, CPO Credits: 4 (Elective Course)

June 19-21

WAPA *Summer Training Program* - Campbell's Lodge, Lake Chelan. Civil & Criminal Tracks, 15 hours of CLE.

August 22

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

September 4-6

WAPA *Drug Training Program* - Icicle Inn, Leavenworth. 15 hrs of CLE.

September 8-10

WAPA *Juvenile Training Program* - Icicle Inn, Leavenworth. 15 hrs of CLE.

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 Hotel & Convention Center, Wenatchee

September 30-October 4

WACO/WSAC Annual Conference - WestCoast Hotel & Convention Center, 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

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.

December 12-13

WAPA Winter Meeting and Banquet - Crowne Plaza Hotel, Seattle.

2003 MEETINGS

May 19-22

WASPC Spring Conference, WestCoast Grand Hotel, Spokane

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

November 17-20

WASPC Fall Conference, Campbell's Resort, Chelan

2004 MEETINGS

May 24-27

WASPC Spring Conference, Yakima Convention Center, Yakima

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

November 15-18

WASPC Fall Conference, Shilo Inn, Ocean Shores

2005 MEETINGS

May 23-26

WASPC Spring Conference, West Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel, Wenatchee

July 15-19, 2005

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

Employment Opportunities

KITSAP COUNTY - Collections Supervisor, Public Works/Wastewater. Salary: \$22.64 - \$28.90/hr, \$47,091.20 - \$60,112.00/yr. Opening Date - April 22, 2002 - Closing Date - May 31, 2002. Applications are available in the Personnel office or at www.kitsapgov.com. The following items are required: 1) Kitsap County Application form. 2) Supplemental questionnaire. 3) If technical school or college level education is to be considered, attach copies of transcripts or certificate/diploma. Verification of education must be received by time of appointment. 4) Application must be received by the personnel office or postmarked prior to May 31, 2002.

General Statement: An employee in this position plans, organizes, and supervises the work of assigned employees in the operation and maintenance of wastewater and storm water collection systems and solid waste facilities for Kitsap County. Work assignments are received with general and limited technical instruction and require considerable independence in the selection of courses of action and resolution of complex or unique problems within the framework of department policies and procedures under limited direction. Work is reviewed by supervisor for effective operation of assigned functions and evaluated through conferences, reports and results obtained.

Minimum Qualifications: High School Diploma, or GED, vocational training in sanitary, chemical engineering, biology, environmental sciences, or closely related field preferred, and five years of progressively responsible work experience in the operation and maintenance of a primary or secondary wastewater treatment plant or in wastewater or storm water conveyance system maintenance repair and replacement, including two years of supervisory or lead responsibility; or any equivalent combination of experience and education which provides the applicant with the desired skills, knowledge and ability required to perform the work.

Must possess a Washington State Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with Endorsement "N" for the operation of related equipment including certification to operate vehicles with air brakes. Must possess a valid Washington State Wastewater Collection Specialist II Certification, Flagging Certification Card, and current Washington State Industrial

First Aid Certification. Prior to employment, a selected applicant must provide a driving record abstract from the Washington State Department of Licensing.

Note: In accordance with federal regulations and Kitsap County Drug and Alcohol Policy and Procedures, no applicant will be allowed to work in this position for Kitsap County until he/she has successfully passed urine drug testing. In accordance with WAC 296-62-07150 and WAC 296-62-09027, medical evaluations, to include the ability to use a respirator and audiometric testing, will be conducted on successful applicants prior to employment. A criminal background check through law enforcement agencies will be conducted on all successful applicants prior to their being appointed to this position.

KITSAP COUNTY - Manager - Equipment Services Division, Public Works - Roads & Engineering. Salary: \$24.97 - \$31.88/nr, \$51,937.60 - \$66,310.40/yr. Opening Date: April 22, 2002 - Closing Date: May 24, 2002. Application packets are available in the personnel office or at www.kitsapgov.com. The following items are required: 1) Kitsap County Application form. 2) Supplemental Questionnaire. 3) If you would like your technical school or college-level education considered, please attach copies of transcripts or certificate/diploma verification of education must be received by time of appointment. 4) Application must be received by the personnel office or postmarked prior to May 24, 2002.

General Statement: Plans, organizes, and manages all operations of the equipment services division to assure the efficient and timely maintenance and replacement of the majority of county-owned vehicles and road construction and maintenance equipment and the development of adequate rental rates to cover maintenance, operation and replacement costs. Includes overseeing the operation of the County's mechanical shops, central stores and sign manufacturing shop as well as underground fueling facilities throughout the County. Work assignments are received with little or no technical instruction and require the selection of course of action and resolution of complex or unique problems with considerable latitude for independent judgment to develop procedures, systems and establish priorities working within the framework of established ad-

ministrative guidelines. Work is reviewed by the Director for compliance with established policies and objectives and is evaluated through reports, conferences, and results obtained.

Minimum Qualifications Technical training in fleet management, or closely related field, and five years of progressively responsible experience in large fleet/equipment management, including specification writing with a government agency, with two years of supervisory or lead responsibilities is required; or any equivalent combination of experience and education which provides the applicant with the desired skills, knowledge and ability required to perform the work.

Must be able to meet all traveling requirements of the position. If utilizing a personal or County owned vehicle in the performance of County work, must possess and maintain a valid Washington State Driver's License and the appropriate amount of automobile insurance.

Prior to employment, a selected applicant must provide a driving record abstract from the Washington State Department of Licensing.

GRANT COUNTY - Deputy Prosecuting Attorney - Salary \$42,800 plus; DOE/DOQ. Grant County is seeking a motivated individual for Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. Position will be responsible for providing extensive research and writing for the appeals process and to assist in prosecuting persons charged with crimes, with opportunities to try cases in court.

Ideal candidate will have excellent written and verbal communication skills, presentation skills, organization skills, solid legal skills and a desire for criminal trial practice. Previous in-court prosecution, research and writing experience strongly preferred. Member of the Washington State Bar Association required. Also requires valid Washington State driver's license with no restrictions. Position located in Ephrata.

Grant County offers a generous benefits package. See our website at www.grantcounty-wa.com for more information. Send cover letters, resumes and writing examples to: Grant County, Human Resources, PO Box 37, Ephrata, WA 98823. Open until May 31, 2002, or until filled. EOE.

(Continued on page 8)

Employment Opportunities

(Continued from page 7)

WHATCOM COUNTY - Public Works, Bellingham - Engineer/Sr. Engineer – Structural design (1 position) and Engineer/Sr. Engineer – Road Design (2 positions). Salary Range: Engineer: \$18.94 - \$24.72/hr., DOQ and Sr. Engineer: \$20.60 - \$26.89/hr., DOQ. Both levels require a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or related engineering field. Engineer level requires 2 yrs. experience in a similar engineering position and must possess a valid E.I.T. certificate at time of hire & throughout employment. Sr. Engineer level requires 4 yrs. experience in a similar engineering position and must be registered as a P.E. in the State of Washington. We offer excellent employer-paid medical, dental & vision benefits for employee and family. Generous vacation & sick leave package, average 12 holidays/yr., and WA State Retirement system (PERS). Optional deferred compensation plans & Flex 125 available. Closing date 5/13/02. For more details & to request required application packet contact Whatcom County Human Resources, Bellingham, WA, (360) 676-6802 or visit www.co.whatcom.wa.us. EOE.

PIERCE COUNTY - Public Works & Utilities Department - Civil Engineer 2 - Program Development (Job #2493) - \$53,352 - \$68,348 Annually. Closes: May 17, 2002. Perform advanced engineering duties associated with corridor studies and associated environmental documentation; project scoping and cost estimating; project prioritization; grant application preparation; and other related civil engineering work pertaining to transportation issues and projects. Requires three years of progressive responsible experience related to the position and either a four year degree with major course work in civil engineering or closely related field or substituting for the degree, registration as an Engineering-In-Training with the State of Washington. Experience using AASHTO and Washington Design manual or similar publication/manual is highly desired. Experience with AutoCAD, Land Development Desktop 2000, Stormshed, GIS or other related engineering software program is desired. Union membership is required within 30 days of employment. Application may be obtained at the Pierce County Personnel Dept., www.co.pierce.wa.us/jobs, or (253)798-7480 or TDD (253)798-

3965. EOE

THURSTON COUNTY - Dept of the Auditor - Licensing/Recording Manager. Salary Range -\$3,941 to \$5,255 per month. Closing Date: May 10, 2002. (Pos. No. 130030, Spec. No. 0153) This position has overall supervisory responsibility for the Licensing and Recording functions of the Thurston County Auditor's Office. This is a management position that oversees the processing of vehicle and vessel licenses and titles; and the receipting, indexing, securing, retrieving, and imaging of all recorded documents. This position plans, develops procedures, assigns work, manages training, prepares budgets, and monitor performance. Supervisory responsibilities include 10 full-time staff, temporary personnel, and coordination with 8 sub-agents located throughout the county. This position administers approximately one-third of the Auditor Office's General Fund budget, plus two separate funds for maintenance and operation of recording and licensing systems and equipment.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in accounting, business, public administration, or related field of management.
- Four years of work related experience in the licensing and titling of vehicles and vessels and/or three years of work related experience in records administration and management, including two years of supervisory/management responsibilities.
- Must have knowledge of computer, word processing software and databases
- Thurston County Licensing and Recording Certification (must obtain within one year of hire)
- Must be bondable

Desired Skills:

- Knowledge of state, federal, and local laws, policies, rules, and regulations governing licensing and titling of vehicles/vessels and recording of documents.
- Knowledge of principles and practices in records management, cash handling, record keeping systems, personnel administration, cross training, information systems, and internal auditing.
- Ability to interface with large data processing systems, plan work flow, delegate and supervise day-to-day work activities, and administer contracts with sub-agents.
- Ability to communicate effectively,

both verbally and in writing, with customers and staff.

Selection Process: To be considered for this position, submit an official Thurston County Employment Application form, along with a current resume, and a cover letter. Must be submitted or postmarked by the closing date. Selected candidates will be contacted for an interview. Contact person: Barbara G. Sandahl, Chief Deputy Auditor (360)-786-5588. This position is not covered by a bargaining unit/union and will not be considered for job share.

THE WASHINGTON STATE SENATE OFFICE OF SENATE COMMITTEE SERVICES

is currently recruiting to fill multiple positions as legal counsel for various standing committees of the Washington State Senate. Committee assignments may include Agriculture and International Trade; Economic Development and Telecommunications; Environment, Energy, and Water; Higher Education; Judiciary; Labor, Commerce, and Financial Institutions; Natural Resources, Parks, and Shorelines; or State and Local Government.

Senate Committee Services assists Senators in developing and evaluating alternatives to achieve their policy objectives. These are full-time, non-partisan positions, exempt from civil service. Duties and

Responsibilities:

In supporting committees of the Washington State Senate, duties and responsibilities of legal counsel include:

- Providing non-partisan staff support to Senators.
- Conducting legal, policy, and fiscal research and analysis.
- Drafting and analyzing legislation and related legislative documents.
- Presenting legislation and policy issues to committees of the Senate.
- Monitoring and evaluating implementation of legislation by state and local government agencies.

Responding to inquiries on a wide variety of policy and budget issues related to the committee assignment areas.

Desirable Knowledge, Skills, and Qualifications:

- A Juris Doctorate is required and membership in a state bar association is

(Continued on page 9)

Employment Opportunities

(Continued from page 8)

desirable for these positions.

- Working knowledge of legislative process derived from experience working in a legislative or public policy making organization or setting.
- Candidates must be pro-active, creative, service-oriented, and have excellent analytical, writing, problem solving, and oral presentation skills.
- Demonstrated research, analytical, and organizational skills.
- Proficiency in multiple computer software applications, including word-processing software, presentation applications, and on-line research.
- Candidates must be willing to work long, irregular hours and be capable of handling the complex and difficult situations that a fast-paced, results oriented, high pressure legislative environment offers.
- Substantive knowledge of issues related to one or more of the committees listed above is desirable. Among the related issues for each committee are:

Agriculture and International Trade

Committee - Food inspection and safety; pesticide regulation; agricultural conservation; agricultural research programs; environmental compliance; water resources; land use; domestic animals; agricultural finance; marketing agricultural products; international trade agreements; and other facets of international trade.

Economic Development and Telecommunications

Committee - State and federal economic development programs; state and local tax incentives; growth management; wireless towers; utility rights of way; telemarketing; privacy of electronic information; and state and federal telecommunications regulations.

Environment, Energy and Water

Committee - Air quality; marine safety; pipeline safety; water resources and water quality; watershed planning; energy generation and transmission; conservation and renewable energy; regulation of hazardous materials; and state and federal environmental regulations.

Higher Education Committee - Public and private higher education; degree program evaluation; workforce training; vocational education; telecommunications and distance learning; tui-

tion, fees, and financial aid.

Judiciary Committee - Civil law, including family law, probate, corporations, Uniform Commercial Code, and tort reform; criminal law with an emphasis on penalties and sentencing, drunk driving issues, and domestic violence; laws affecting the courts; and law enforcement.

Labor, Commerce, and Financial Institutions Committee - Labor law; worker's compensation; worker safety; employment standards; unemployment compensation; employment training; housing and construction law; licensing of professions; business regulation, particularly financial institutions and the insurance industry; gambling and horse racing issues.

Natural Resources, Parks, and Shorelines

Committee - Fisheries; salmon recovery; wildlife management; state lands management; forestry; shoreline management; and outdoor recreation.

State and Local Government - Municipal finance; state auditing and purchasing practices; election law; powers of cities, counties and special purpose districts; campaign finance law; public works processes; public disclosure; and the initiative process.

Salary: Based on experience and education, with a likely range between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Application Procedure: Interested applicants should submit: (1) a brief letter of interest describing specific qualifications for the position; (2) a current resume detailing experience and education; and (3) at least three references with current telephone numbers. Please send to: Stan Pynch, Director, Senate Committee Services, PO Box 40466, Olympia, Washington 98504-0466

Applications should be submitted as soon as possible, and must be received no later than May 31, 2002. Interviewing and selection will begin immediately. Phone contact: Judy Rus at (360) 786-7417. The Washington State Senate is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

SAN JUAN COUNTY seeks a Plans Examiner/Building Inspector. Requires 2 yrs. college, with 3-5 yrs. exp. as a journeyman in the building trades & ICBO cert. as a Plans Exam. and/or Bldg. Insp., or any equiv. combination. Must have thorough knowledge of the UBC, UPC, UMC and State Energy Code. Requires basic work-

ing know. of the Uniform Fire Code.

Must be able to read & understand ordinances, blueprints, construction plans, specifications, engineering data, & be able to perform basic structural calculations. Requires computer data entry skills, basic business language skills, & the ability to learn related computer programs. \$16.70 - \$21.14/hr. + benefits. For complete description/qualifications, contact: Admin. Services, (360) 378-3870 or www.co.san-juan.wa.us. Closes 5/31/02. Equal Opportunity Employer.

SAN JUAN COUNTY seeks a Public Works Director. Requires a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering & 5 years of progressively responsible engineering & mgmt. experience involving a variety of assignments associated with public works activities or an equiv. combination. Must possess a WA Professional Civil Engineer License, & a valid driver's license. \$71,145-\$90,021/year + benefits. For complete description/qualifications, contact: Admin. Services, (360) 378-3870 or www.co.san-juan.wa.us. Closes 5/22/02. Equal Opportunity Employer.

WHATCOM COUNTY in Bellingham, WA, is seeking a proven manager for the position of **Detention Manager** in Juvenile Court Administration. This position administers a 30-bed, secure detention facility and a variety of alternative correction programs. Supervises 16 full-time and approximately 15 part-time staff members. Qualifications for this position include requirement of a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Sociology, Human Services or related field and five years of progressively responsible related experience including three years of supervisory experience. A Master's degree is preferred. Whatcom County offers excellent benefits including employer-paid medical, dental & vision benefits for employee and family. Benefits include attractive paid leave provisions, including three weeks vacation to start, an average of 12 holidays per year, and sick leave. County employees participate in the Washington State Retirement system. The County offers a match of up to 2% of salary for optional deferred compensation plans. Employees may, at their option participate in a flexible spending plan and long-term disability plan. Application pe-

(Continued on page 10)

Employment Opportunities

(Continued from page 9)

riod closes 5/21/02. Cover letter, resume and required application packet must be received in Human Resources by the closing date. For application materials contact Whatcom County Human Resources, 311 Grand Ave., Suite 107, Bellingham, WA, or call (360) 676-6802. For detailed job announcement visit our website at [www.co.](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us)

[whatcom.wa.us](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us) or call the jobline at (360) 738-4550. Equal Opportunity Employer.

OKANOGAN COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS has an opening for an Assistant County Engineer. Full time with benefits. Beginning Salary: \$4,050 to \$4,923 month DOE. A Civil Engineering Degree with a Professional Engineer License is required.

Duties include managing the engineering division including road construction. For further information and applications, contact the Public Works Department, 1234-A Second Avenue S, Okanogan, WA 98840, (509) 422-7300. Applications will be taken until May 24, 2002 at 4:00 p.m.

News Clippings

Council: Oks District Court Consolidation

Rob Tucker: The News Tribune

The Pierce County Council discarded its 40-year-old district court system Tuesday and replaced it with a lower-cost model.

The council voted 5-1 to adopt a revised court reorganization plan that closes two of four district court offices, centralizes administration in Tacoma, cuts at least six court staff members and makes all eight district judges run for election countywide this fall.

The reorganization of the system, which handles lower-level criminal and civil cases, will save at least \$335,400 annually, officials said.

Council members also warned of more budget cuts to come, especially in the county's criminal justice system, which makes up the largest share of the county's \$217 million general government budget.

"At the end of this year," said council chairman Harold Moss, "we will have laid off an awful lot of people and reduced a lot of programs."

The county employs more than 3,000 people. In anticipation of a \$6 million decline in property tax revenue next year, council members said they must reduce the size of government. Initiative 747, which passed last year, limits increases in regular property tax collections.

Councilwoman Jan Shabro, who represents parts of south and east Pierce County, cast the lone dissenting vote. Councilwoman Karen Biskey, who represents the Gig Harbor and Key peninsulas, was vacationing out of the country.

Council members had the choice of reducing court expenditures now or waiting until 2007, after a full four-year election cycle had passed.

The plan approved Tuesday will be effective in January. The judges, however, will oversee the details.

The plan calls for the following:

- The Buckley, Eatonville, Gig Harbor and Tacoma judicial districts and their four independent courts will be consolidated into one countywide judicial district with one court administration based in Tacoma.
- The district court offices in Buckley and Eatonville will close and three staff members there will lose their jobs. The two part-time judges in those courts will become full time. They may move to what is now called the Tacoma District satellite court at South 96th and South Hosmer streets, or to a newly created satellite court in South Hill or elsewhere.
- The Gig Harbor court's judge will scale back to part time in Gig Harbor and serve part time elsewhere - in Tacoma, Hosmer or a new satellite court. There still may be a Gig Harbor office, but it will no longer be independent and will lose at least one of five staff members.
- The five elected district judges who sit in Tacoma will remain there. Two court commissioners at the Hosmer satellite court will lose their jobs.

The Buckley and Eatonville judges stood firm against reorganization Tuesday.

Judge Paul Treyz of District Court 3 in Ea-

tonville called the council reorganization plan "arbitrary and capricious."

Richard DeJean, judge of District Court 4 in Buckley for 37 years, said he doubted the county would save money when his and Treyz's positions become full time, each with \$113,524 annual salaries and support staff.

Other critics at Tuesday's hearing complained of the loss of local control and the inconvenience of driving to a Tacoma-based court. One opponent questioned the council's legal position.

"Courts must be able to operate independently without the legislative body pulling the rug out from underneath them," said Kevin Underwood, a Gig Harbor attorney.

But attorney Jeff Day of Puyallup said consolidation gives the district court the flexibility to move judges around to meet demand. He said part-time courts still can be created in East Pierce County.

"The law's the same," he said. "We're not four independent nations in Pierce County."

05/01/2002

State Help Needed on Mental Health

Funding Cuts Take Human Toll in Pierce County

The News Tribune

A staggering mental health disaster is erupting in Pierce County - and the state is doing nothing to help ease the crisis it helped create. It could be up to Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg to sue the state and force it to ease at least some of the county's growing burden.

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Since state mental health budget cuts began last year, they have taken - and will continue to take - a stark human toll in the county. Just ask Terry Henderson. As The News Tribune's Sandi Doughton reports today on Page One, Henderson, who suffers from bipolar disorder, fears he'll be back on the streets after his group home in Tacoma closes at the end of this month.

Or ask Darlene Davies, a clinical assessor at Greater Lakes Mental Health Care in Lakewood. Davies had to recently refuse treatment to a man with bipolar disorder and a history of suicide attempts because he didn't appear to be on the edge of a mental meltdown.

Henderson and Davies are just two of the persons affected by the current mental-health emergency. Throughout the county, mental health workers and their patients are bracing for the worst crisis in decades.

The county's costs of operating Puget Sound Behavioral Health in Tacoma - the former Puget Sound Hospital purchased by the county two years ago - may have made the county less able to respond to the current crisis. The county lost \$10.8 million during the first 18 months of ownership, but has since recouped almost \$4 million of its initial loss.

The major factor in the current crisis is the drastic reduction in state money for the county's health care needs. Last year, Pierce County got \$46 million in state funds to care for more than 18,000 low-income, mentally ill people. But the state unwisely slashed funds to urban counties in order to boost mental health funding in rural areas.

Pierce County, which contracts with non-profit agencies to provide mental health services, must slash more than \$22 million over two years from its mental health budget.

Equally alarming are state plans to eliminate 122 beds at Western State Hospital, 90 of which are reserved for Pierce County patients. Pierce County already has more than its share of persons suffering from mental illness because patients released from Western State tend to stay in the area.

If the proposed reduction in beds goes through, many of the patients currently being treated at the hospital will inevitably join the ranks of homeless persons on the streets of Tacoma, Lakewood and elsewhere.

This has prompted Ladenburg to consider filing a lawsuit against the state to force it to allocate more funds to keep the beds. A successful lawsuit would be helpful, but it would be at best only a partial answer to the mental health challenge the county is currently facing.

A complete answer won't be available until the state recognizes the full extent of Pierce County's problem and is willing to provide enough money to help those who have already fallen - or are about to fall - through the cracks.

04/28/2002

Budget Cuts Crippling Care Reductions in Services, Treatment Access Concern Local Caseworkers, Mentally Ill

Sandi Doughton: The News Tribune

As long as he can remember, Terry Henderson has had a hard time getting his mind right. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder - the condition once called manic-depression - he spent several years shuttling between the street and mental hospitals before landing at Tacoma Congregate Care a year ago.

At the modest group home in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood, the 48-year-old Henderson's meals are prepared and staff members remind him to change his clothes and take the medications that help tame his chaotic thoughts.

But the home is shutting its doors at the end of the month because of state and county budget cuts. Managers are scrambling to find another place for Henderson to live, but he fears that, as beds at group homes become scarcer, he might eventually end up back where he was: panhandling, sleeping in abandoned cars and spiraling into black depression.

"I've been doing so well here. It's almost like a dream that it's going to close," he said, sitting on the edge of his narrow metal bed. "I don't want to be homeless again."

Henderson's predicament reflects an ongoing upheaval in Pierce County programs for the mentally ill.

Mental health managers say the combination of inadequate funding and the impending closure of wards at Western State Hospital in Lakewood is threatening the safety net that helps keep psychotic and delusional people off the streets, out of jails and living more normal lives.

In the past year, mental health caseworkers who had their hands full juggling 25 patients have seen their loads swell to as many as 45. Beginning this spring, money for group housing - such as Tacoma Congregate Care - is being cut 50 percent by the county.

The county has eliminated or sharply scaled back programs for mentally ill drug addicts, children and the elderly. Staffing for a telephone crisis line that fielded 24,000 calls last year was slashed. Fewer staff members will respond to emergencies, like a disturbed teen threatening to take a razor blade to his wrists or a homeless woman ranting on the street corner.

To save money, mental health clinics also have started closing their doors to all but the most severely disturbed patients.

"I've been here 30 years, and this is the worst I've seen it," said Ron Lewis, executive director of Good Samaritan Behavioral Healthcare in Puyallup. "The working poor, the homeless, people with no insurance - they are just going to fall through the cracks."

The money crunch has spawned bitter feelings in the mental health community.

The county blames the state for the cuts and is threatening to sue the Department of Social and Health Services over ward closures at Western State. The nonprofit agencies that do the hands-on work with Pierce County's mentally ill are angry with the way the county has divvied up the smaller pie.

At the bottom of the pile are the people like Henderson who will get less care and supervision - with potential impacts on the

(Continued on page 12)

News Clippings

(Continued from page 11)
community at large.

"People will wind up out on the streets, in the ERs, in the jails," said Doug Hilleren, owner of Tacoma Congregate Care. "And when these people aren't supervised and don't take their meds, that's when they get in a dangerous condition."

Shrinking funds, sicker patients -
Last year, Pierce County received \$46 million in state funds to care for more than 18,000 low-income, mentally ill people. The county contracts with nonprofit agencies to provide services ranging from classes in anxiety management to personal counseling and home visits from caseworkers.

The goal is to help patients manage their illness so they can be as independent as possible - living on their own, for example, or holding a job.

The most disturbed patients are hospitalized, either voluntarily or through civil commitment.

For shorter stays, the county runs its own mental hospital, the 43-bed Puget Sound Behavioral Health on Pacific Avenue in Tacoma. Western State, a 762-bed facility operated by DSHS, specializes in longer-term hospitalization and also houses people considered criminally insane.

For the current two-year budget cycle, the county estimates it must pare more than \$22 million from a budget that totals about \$130 million, including some federal and grant money.

The main reason for the cuts is that the state is reducing the amount it pays urban counties so it can boost funding in rural areas, said Fran Lewis, who oversees Pierce County's mental health programs.

For the three main nonprofit health agencies in Pierce County, it all translates into a 25 percent cut.

Since last fall, the agencies have laid off about 120 employees, many of them case managers like Julie Crossland, who still has her job.

A five-year veteran at Good Samaritan Be-

havioral Healthcare, Crossland works to shepherd her two dozen clients through life. They meet with her regularly in her office and she also visits them at home, checking the refrigerator to see if they have food, making sure they're taking their medication and showering regularly. She probes for signs of depression or hopelessness. She helps them find apartments, navigate the food stamp bureaucracy and apply for jobs.

Since the budget cuts began in the fall, five new patients were added to Crossland's caseload. She has also found herself dealing with a higher proportion of profoundly troubled people, because those with less serious conditions aren't accepted into the program anymore.

"The people I'm seeing need more time," she said. "They need more help."

But Crossland doesn't have time to give everyone extra attention now, and she worries that some patients might slip into a crisis before she notices.

"They could have a major depression, a manic episode," she said. "It happens all the time."

Getting in the door -
Thousands of other people won't qualify for help at all.

Most of the money for public mental health programs comes from Medicaid, the federal-state assistance program for low-income people. But nearly a third of low-income mentally ill people aren't covered. The working poor make too much money. Some of the sickest people, including a high proportion of the homeless, aren't capable of filling out forms and waiting in lines at government offices.

In the past, Pierce County's mental health programs served those people anyway. Now, the doors are closed to them. People with milder mental problems also are being excluded.

"The resources aren't there anymore for anyone but the most severe cases," said Terri Card, vice president of Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare in Lakewood.

Darlene Davies has the job of turning peo-

ple away.

As a clinical assessor at Greater Lakes, she evaluates people who come to the center for help to see whether they meet the new criteria. More than half don't.

"I used to like my job a lot more than I do now," she said.

She recently refused a man with bipolar disorder and a history of suicide attempts because he didn't appear to be on the brink of a meltdown.

"We would have helped him without a question two or three months ago," she said. "He left here feeling really hopeless."

Without early intervention, such people are more likely to reach a breaking point where they require hospitalization - a much costlier alternative, Card said.

Christine Geyer still qualifies for care because her delusions and psychotic periods have been severe enough to send her to Western State several times. But even for her, services are being reduced.

The 28-year-old woman lives with her roommate, Tedi Henkel, in a Lakewood apartment complex where they're learning how to deal with daily life. Counselors from Greater Lakes provide training in cooking, finances and other skills that most people take for granted - like riding the bus and coping with a trip to the supermarket.

Mental health workers used to staff an office at the complex around the clock to dispense medication, soothe residents' worries and help solve problems.

Now, the night shift will be left vacant. "Night is a really scary time for me," said Geyer, who often wakes up with nightmares and a pounding heart. To calm her fears, she would walk to the office for reassurance or a dose of anti-anxiety medicine.

"All I can do now is call the crisis line," she said. "It's not the same as having someone there to talk to you."

And fewer people are available now to answer the hot line.

Disappearing hospital beds -

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

As bad as the budget cuts are, even more alarming is the state's plan to eliminate over the next two years 122 beds at Western State - 90 of which are reserved for Pierce County patients, said Lewis, the county mental health chief.

State officials say they're continuing a trend that has been going on for the past two decades: moving people out of mental institutions and back into the community.

Lewis agrees it's a commendable goal. But unless counties get extra money to pay for alternative housing and programs for people displaced from Western State, some mentally ill people are sure to join the ranks of the disheveled, incoherent pan-handlers who wander the city streets.

Western State already is so crowded it's often impossible to get even dangerous patients admitted, Lewis said.

Recently, a young man who was threatening his family had to spend three days in a local hospital before he could get a space at Western State.

Pierce County has an unusually high mentally ill population because patients from other parts of Washington often stay here when they're discharged from Western State, Lewis added.

The mental health community is haunted by the story of the psychotic man who fatally stabbed a retired firefighter near the Kingdom in 1997. A former Western State patient, the man had recently been released from jail. King County and the State of Washington agreed to a \$55 million settlement with the man's family.

"I don't want to frighten people," Lewis said. Few mentally ill people ever become violent, she explained, but if more are dumped onto the streets, the public will be affected, and the patients will suffer, too.

"It's an economic problem," Lewis said, "and it's a humanitarian problem."

The county is considering a lawsuit against the state to block the Western State closures. In the 1980s, the county won a similar suit, forcing the state to allocate more money for the mental hospital, said Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg.

"I don't see why we wouldn't win again."

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* Staff writer Sandi Doughton covers health, medicine and science. Reach her at 253-597-8516 or sandi.doughton@mail.tribnet.com.

April 28, 2002

Pierce County's Hospital Blamed for Mental Care Funding Woes

CRITICISM: Agencies Contend Cost Of Operating Puget Sound Behavioral Health Siphoning Cash From Other Programs

Sandi Doughton: The News Tribune

Budget cuts always cause pain, but the turmoil in Pierce County's mental health community also is tinged with suspicion and confusion over the tangled finances involved.

The biggest chunk of money for mental health programs is funneled to the county by the state. County officials say the state is shrinking that chunk - hence the need for the local cuts.

But the numbers don't appear to add up neatly, and for that reason, many community mental health workers say there's another explanation: the mental hospital the county bought for \$2.4 million after its owners went bankrupt nearly two years ago.

The county's critics suspect the hospital costs so much to operate that it's draining money from other programs. County officials flatly deny it.

"The frustration is that we bought the mental hospital and got in the business of getting it up and running at the same time the state cut the funding allocation," said Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg. "That's what's really hurting the service providers, not the hospital."

But according to financial reports filed with the state Department of Health, the hospital, Puget Sound Behavioral Health, lost \$10.8 million in the first 18 months of county ownership.

During that period, the cost to hospitalize a patient for one day was nearly \$1,000. In

King County, the average per-day cost for mental patients is \$540.

Nearly \$4 million of the hospital's initial losses have been recouped, and the facility is expected to operate in the black this year, said Fran Lewis, the county's mental health director.

The county's costs would have been much higher, she said, if it had paid to hospitalize the patients elsewhere.

Leaders of Pierce County's three largest nonprofit mental health agencies are skeptical of the county's explanation, as well as the optimistic financial forecast for the hospital. They have asked for an independent audit of the mental health budget.

"We want to know where the money went," said Dick Towell, president of Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare. There's a discrepancy between the amount of money the state pared from the county's mental health budget and the size of the cuts the county passed on to community organizations.

The state cuts total \$2 million, or about 2 percent of the county's state funding. The county says it's making \$22 million in program cuts. For the community agencies, that adds up to a 25 percent budget reduction.

Lewis says the deeper cuts were necessary because state funding will continue to drop over the next several years. Also, the county boosted payments to the nonprofit agencies at the end of last year, then had to revoke the raise because the cost was higher than expected, Lewis said.

Towell counters that the cuts weren't on the horizon until the hospital started bleeding money.

Formerly called Puget Sound Hospital, the hospital in Tacoma's McKinley Hill neighborhood was a bargain the county couldn't pass up, Lewis said.

Its psychiatric ward is one of the few places other than Western State Hospital in Lakewood where mentally ill patients can be hospitalized - and the state is planning to close several wards at Western over the

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

next few years.

The money to buy the hospital came from a mental health reserve fund. The county also tapped the fund to cover some of the hospital's initial losses, but Lewis said that didn't reduce the amount allotted to community programs.

Mental health programs don't affect the county's general budget because all of the money comes from the state and federal governments.

Lewis said the hospital lost so much money for three reasons:

It took several months for the county to phase out the hospital's surgical services and other unprofitable operations.

The hospital took in patients from Western State after last year's earthquake damaged buildings there. The state reimbursed the county for only part of the costs.

The county made what Lewis admits might be a \$2.6 million mistake when it decided to apply for a new federal billing certificate rather than use the old hospital's existing account.

Lawyers said a new certificate would protect the county from legal claims against the old hospital, but the process took 18 months - during which the hospital couldn't collect any government payments.

County and federal negotiators are wrangling over possible back payments, but the county may never get reimbursed.

Now that the hospital is certified, it's beginning to turn a profit, Lewis said.

She also pointed out that despite any losses, the county now owns a facility appraised at \$18 million.

April 28, 2002

Court Consolidation One Step Closer To a Done Deal

By Rob Tucker, from The News Tribune, May 2, 2002

PIERCE COUNTY: Final vote on reorganizing district courts could come after council hearing today.

The Pierce County Council on Monday moved closer to eliminating two district courts and scaling back a third court. The

council's three-member Rules and Operations Committee unanimously agreed to send a court reorganization plan to the full council for a hearing and possible vote today.

The plan would eliminate two district courts that serve east and south Pierce County and make a third District Court on the Gig Harbor Peninsula part time. The committee's revised version also would cut up to eight of those courts' administrative jobs and would make judicial elections countywide, instead of districtwide. Under state law, the council must adopt court reorganization by May 1 or wait until 2007, after a full four-year election cycle has passed.

Council members said they must reorganize now to save money. They anticipate a \$6 million decline in property tax revenue next year due to Initiative 747, which limits increases in regular property tax collections.

Voters within county judicial districts now elect judges. Three judges serve areas around Gig Harbor, Eatonville and Buckley. The fourth judicial district, with five elected judges sitting in Tacoma, covers the urban areas around the city.

All four district courts handle lower-level criminal and civil cases, small claims and traffic citations, among other things.

A majority of the County Council wants to consolidate District Court administration in Tacoma and in a nearby satellite court at South 96th and South Hosmer streets, just outside the city. The move would save \$300,000 or more, county officials said, and would occur in January.

Under the plan, as amended on Monday:

- District judges must run for election countywide, possibly beginning this fall.
- The Peninsula will have a part-time satellite court instead of a full-time, independent court. The Buckley and Eatonville district courts will close and their may be moved to the Hosmer court, but a judge could hold court occasionally in rented space in outlying areas.
- All judges would serve full time, at a salary of \$113,524, and share the en-

tire District Court caseload. That includes the two judges from Buckley and Eatonville, who are now part time. To make up for the cost, the county would lay off up to eight outlying court employees or two court commissioners in Tacoma.

District Court suffers from inefficiencies now because of uneven caseload distribution, council members said. Each of five judges in Tacoma handled 9,900 case filings last year; the three outlying district judges handled far fewer - 5,322 on the Peninsula, 1,494 in the Eatonville, and 1,257 in Buckley.

Monday's meeting drew opposition from community officials and citizens alike - even a representative of the 176-member Ohop Grange. Peninsula residents submitted 500 signatures on petitions opposing consolidation.

Critics questioned the county's calculations of savings and argued that rural people would be inconvenienced if they had to drive to Tacoma to contest a traffic ticket.

"The courts should be convenient for the locals," said Louise Van Eaton, "not for people who commit crimes in our area and don't want to return to our area for court."

The four judicial districts originated in 1962, and population centers have changed dramatically since then. Consolidation allows the District Court to move judges to more heavily populated areas where the need for judges is greater, Councilman Pat O'Malley said.

Lyle Quasim, chief of staff for County Executive John Ladenburg, said the executive supports the amended plan. But Councilwoman Jan Shabro, who represents east and south Pierce County areas, said she wants to look for other ways to save money, like cutting more jobs in Tacoma District Court.

Political Parties Won't Give Up War On Blanket Primary

From the Columbian, April 26, 2002, by David Ammons

Washington's major political parties, still hoping to scuttle the state's blanket primary

(Continued on page 15)

News Clippings

(Continued from page 14)

that allows all voters to choose party finalists, announced Thursday they are appealing a U.S. district judge's decision in favor of the popular system. The Republican, Democratic and Libertarian parties filed notice of appeal with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

The case is expected to take until next year to resolve longer if it goes all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and the state expects to run this year's primary just like always, said Senior Assistant Attorney General James Pharris.

Party leaders said they fully expect to prevail, relying heavily on a Supreme Court decision that threw out a copycat primary system in California. The high court, in a 7-2 opinion handed down in 2000, ruled it unconstitutional to force the California parties to allow outsiders to help pick their nominees.

The system pioneered in Washington 67 years ago allows all voters to choose their favorite candidate for each office on the primary ballot. Voters do not register by party.

U.S. District Judge Franklin Burgess, who sits in Tacoma, threw out the parties' chal-

lenge last month. He said the parties haven't demonstrated they are hurt by the blanket primary.

He also took pains to say Washington political history and the way it uses the primary are quite different from the California system the high court struck down.

Pharris said Burgess' "good, strong order" gives the state and Grange attorneys strong footing in the appeal. The Grange sponsored the initiative that the legislature adopted in 1935.

State Grange President Terry Hunt ripped the parties' decision to appeal.

"We don't understand why the parties insist on pursuing this unpopular and futile effort to change our primary system," he said. "The people of this state want the right to choose their own candidates."

If the state wins, "We can be a model for other states who want to give primary elections back to the people," Hunt said.

Grange attorney James Johnson of Olympia said he's confident the courts will allow Washington to keep its time-honored system.

"With this defeat, it will be 'three strikes and you're out' for the political parties," he said, referring to challenges the parties lost in the state Supreme Court in 1936 and 1980.

But the parties said they have a strong U.S. Supreme Court ruling that should spell victory this time around.

"Our lawyers believe the U.S. Supreme Court was crystal clear and that Judge Burgess was wrong, factually wrong," said Republican state Chairman Chris Vance. "We are confident we will prevail."

State Democratic Chairman Paul Berendt, commenting after last month's ruling, said, "We believe the courts will agree with us and grant us our constitutional rights."

Attorney General Christine Gregoire, a Democrat, and Secretary of Sam Reed, a Republican, had called on their parties to back down and not pursue the appeal.

Washington has some of the most competitive campaigns in the country and both major parties are well served by a system that engages voters and produces good nominees, they said after winning last month's ruling.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. E2002-1
BEFORE THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

WHEREAS, severe economic conditions exist in many counties located in Eastern Washington, and;

WHEREAS, tourism is a major source of revenue for many of those counties, and;

WHEREAS, the State of Washington has proposed the closing of Washington State Parks, and;

WHEREAS, a disproportionate number of those parks - being eleven (11) of the thirteen (13) parks tentatively identified for closure - are located in Eastern Washington, and;

WHEREAS, the closure of these parks will deprive many low to moderate income families the use of the facilities that assist in binding the family unit, and;

WHEREAS, the State of Washington has failed to explore other options, such as the reduction of land acquisition programs and reduction of State Park administration to balance the State Parks budget, and;

WHEREAS, the reduction of available parks is contradictory to the effort to expand tourism as an important element of the economy to the State of Washington;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Washington State Association of Counties requests these parks be left open to avoid the financial impact on those counties where the parks are located, impact on the financially disadvantaged families located in Eastern Washington, and the loss of tourism infrastructure to the economy of the State of Washington, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Eastern District forwards this resolution for adoption by the full membership of the Washington State Association of Counties.

RECOMMENDED this ____ day of April, 2002

Joan Frey, President
Eastern District, Washington State Association of Counties

PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO: E2002-2

**BEFORE THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

WHEREAS, the budgets of local government are under continuous pressure from state mandates and the transference of state responsibilities to local government; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature continuously asks for lists of unfunded mandates for them to consider; and

WHEREAS, we all agree that education of the Legislature and Governor's office of the vital role local government plays in the delivery of services to the citizenship of the state of Washington is vital to achieving solutions; and

WHEREAS, by quantifying the true cost of delivering these vital services we are taking a substantial step forward in this education process;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED all counties in the Eastern District of the State of Washington implement a process by which the state is billed weekly for the services they mandate but do not fund, to include but not be limited to, booking of state prisoners, incarceration of state prisoners, indigent defense, processing of state-required permits, and delivery of state-required services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the State of Washington be asked to respond to the bills received indicating which mandated services they are going to pay for or which mandates they intend to repeal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Eastern District forwards this resolution for adoption by the full membership of the Washington State Association of Counties.

RECOMMENDED this _____ day of April, 2002

Joan Frey, President
Eastern District, Washington State Association of Counties