

# Courthouse Journal

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Washington State Association of Counties  
Washington Association of County Officials

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## **WSAC Annual Convention features inter-governmental relationships**

Over 225 county officials and affiliate members attended the 96 annual convention in Bellevue last week. President LeRoy Allison opened the meeting and set the tone by awarding certificates of appreciation to counties for stepping up to the plate and helping the state solve its financial problems by providing over \$200 million in assistance since the passage of I-695. He emphasized how proud he was of all counties because they had to cut their budgets due to state budget shortfalls and elimination of the MVET. In spite of those cuts they still continued to provide basic core services to the citizens. Every county was individually recognized.

King County Councilmember and past NACo President Jane Hague did an outstanding job of pinch-hitting for NACo President Javier Gonzales, whose father had unexpectedly been hospitalized the day he was to leave for Bellevue. Hague discussed the efforts of NACo in cooperating with many groups such as the National Governor's Association, the National League of Cities, the U. S. Conference of Mayors and business groups in support of national issues supported by counties.

Ron Sims also addressed the membership and said that it was critical that counties cooperate with each other in seeking new revenues to pay for basic government services. He was eloquent in telling of his trip to Africa when he visited a small town where all semblance of government services had failed and young children were dying of starvation due to a lack of money. He said the lesson he learned from that experience was that there were some things that government must do to protect their citizens and that he wanted to protect basic government services in his county.

Governor Gary Locke made a strong appeal for counties to support Referendum 51 to help retain businesses as well as attract new ones. He said without a solution to the transportation congestion problem Washington's economy would certainly suffer. He also said he was aware of the impact the loss of the I-695 backfill on counties, but even the \$5 million in this year's supplemental budget could not be guaranteed next year. He did say that the state can't just walk away from their responsibility to local governments and that he was asking his staff to work with WSAC, AWC and the legislature in reexamining what services should be delivered by the state and what should be delivered by local governments.

Also attending the convention were both candidates for NACo 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President to be decided at the NACo annual conference in New Orleans next month. Bill Hansell, Umatilla County (Oregon) Commissioner, and Bill Dennison, Plumas County (California) Supervisor, both addressed the members and shared their thoughts about NACo and what they would bring to the job. By tradition, those members attending the meeting in New Orleans will decide who to cast their votes for.

This was certainly one of the most successful annual conventions in a long time. There was a sense of urgency because of the pending county financial crisis. At the same time there was recognition of the need to find common ground for cooperation not only between counties, but also with other local government associations, particularly WACO and AWC. Everyone agreed that the task ahead will not be easy, but it will be almost impossible if local governments do not cooperate in finding solutions to the funding crisis.

# WSAC Legislative Steering Committee Begins Development of 2003 Legislative Agenda

At its June 21 meeting, the WSAC Legislative Steering Committee unanimously agreed to work collectively with WACO and AWC on addressing local government finances and relationships with state government. After much discussion, possible components of a potential common agenda emerged:

- (1) Money
- (2) Revenue Source

- (3) Eliminate/Streamline Programs
- (4) Fund use and Flexibility
- (5) Re-prioritize state spending; focus discretionary funds on public health and safety
- (6) Tax exemptions (identified by WACO)
- (7) Devolve state programs to local level (with money included) where local management is better and cheaper
- (8) WSAC/WACO/AWC identify cost-savings in state budget

These elements and others will be considered by a subcommittee created to develop recommendations to the LSC and to work with WACO and with cities. The subcommittee was given the following theme to use in working with other allies:

The Legislature must choose:

- **Redefine:** If the Legislature is unwilling to adequately fund the current structure of local government, it must redefine the role or structure of counties and other local governments.
- **Reduce:** If the Legislature continues or expands funding cuts, it must reduce of the level of services counties are required to provide.
- **Revenue:** If the Legislature expects to preserve core government services provided by counties it must

provide adequate revenues.

The WSAC Subcommittee will consist of the following eight members: The President and Vice-President of WSAC; (President LeRoy Allison has designated WSAC Secretary-Treasurer Dave Carey to replace him on the Subcommittee.); the LSC Co-Chairs, Chris Endresen of Kitsap County and Leo Bowman of Benton County; Betty Sue Morris, the President of the Western District and Joan Frey, the President of the Eastern District; Dwight Pelz, chair of the Urban County Caucus and Mary Hunt, chair of the LSC Rural Issues Subcommittee.

At the July 25 meeting of the Legislative Steering Committee, the subcommittee will report back with initial recommendations and there will be also be a report from county and city managers with their recommendations.

The full Legislative Steering Committee is holding three more meetings prior the Joint WSAC/WACO Legislative Conference beginning October 1 in Wenatchee. The other meetings will take place July 25 in Yakima, August 15 in Yakima and September 6 in North Bonnevillle, immediately following the fall Western District meeting.

## 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 Wednesday.

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**Due to the upcoming July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday, the Courthouse Journal will be published on Wednesday next week.**

### Assessors' June Meeting Well Attended

President Robert Carlton, Columbia County Assessor, presided over the June Meeting of the Washington State Association of County Assessors last week on Orcas Island. The meetings started with the various committees discussing topics from generating joint support for complex appraisal issues, involvement of Washington's community colleges in appraisal education, the implementation of the two year window upon death in current use, the status of the DNR fire patrol multi-parcel exemption, assessment of wind generating assets, to a recap and review of the Safeway Appeals and the basis of the DOR depreciation tables.

Ray Erland, Clackamas County Oregon Assessor gave a great presentation on "How to communicate effectively with property owners, the media, legislators and taxing districts when ex-

pectations of tax relief vary from reality due to citizens' initiative passed by voters." His presentation had many good ideas ranging from press releases to community meetings. Jackie Haggerty, with the Oregon Court of Appeals discussed how to work for results when you start from disagreement. Matt Coyle, member of the Washington State Board of Tax Appeals told the assessors present his perspective on the changes in their offices since he had been involved with their issues. Matt is retiring this month and was given a standing ovation for his hard work on the behalf of Washington taxpayers.

Dr. Kriss Sjoblom from the Washington Research Council gave the participants an idea about the state of Washington's economy and Ken Dahlstedt, Skagit County Commissioner made an interesting presentation on diking and flood risk in Skagit County. WACO staff made a presentation on bills that

passed the 2002 Legislature of interest to Assessors and the Legislative Committee began discussion of possible legislative proposals for the upcoming 2003 Legislature.

At the Assessors' business meeting President Carlton passed the gavel to Mark Leander, Skagit County Assessor and incoming president. Yakima County Assessor Dave Cook will move up to Vice President and Dianne Dorey, Lewis County Assessor, was unanimously elected Secretary/Treasurer. Next year's June Meeting will be held in Okanogan County and the 2003 September Conference will be held in Spokane County.

Thanks to our host Paul Dossett, San Juan County Assessor and co-hosts, Mark Leander and Keith Willnauer, Whatcom County Assessor for an excellent meeting.

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## Elections, Recording and Licensing

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### Department of Licensing Fee Increases go into effect July 1, 2002

Earlier this year, the 2002 Legislature passed a law (**SSB 6814**) increasing a number of licensing fees. The majority of these changes become effective on July 1.

The Vehicle Application Fee has been increased from \$1.25 to \$5.00 on all original, transfer, reissue, and duplicate title applications. This fee increase is effective with any application or request received on or after July 1, 2002. Moped fees will increase on September 1, 2002.

The other increases effective July 1, 2002 are:

- 1) Vehicle Title transfers increase to \$15.50
- 2) Non-powered unit title transfers increase to \$9.00
- 3) Vehicle add, delete, or change a

lien holder increases to \$9.00

4) Vehicle duplicate title increases to \$9.00

5) Vessel duplicate title increases to \$5.25

6) The fee for a 3-day trip permit increases to \$20.00

Effective September 1, 2002 personal use trailers, travel trailers, mopeds, house dollies, and mobile homes (if licensed) are subject to the \$30 license tab fee and the \$15.00 local option fee if applicable, as authorized by RCW 46.16.021.

Mason County Auditor Al Brotche and Douglas County Auditor Thad Duvall were in Olympia last week discussing a number of issues with the Department of Licensing (DOL) including these fee increases. One thing remains clear, the Legislature passed **SSB 6814**, and DOL is developing the implementation, but it is the county auditors and

their staff that work the counters who will feel the impact of these fees when the citizens of Washington State come in to renew their licenses.

## Chelan County Funds Title III Education Program

Chelan County is using a portion of its Title III money to fund "Chelan County 4-H Youth Forestry Education." The multi-faceted project is designed to expose students in grades 6-12 to forest activities and provide them with experiential learning opportunities related to forest ecosystems, fish, wildlife, and other factors contributing to, or otherwise affecting, forest health. Student participants are largely low income or minority youth.

The program is broken into two phases, the first of which is a summer program that targets students in grades 9-12, and focuses on service learning projects through collaborative relationships with project partners. The second phase is an after-school program that targets students in grades 5-8, and teaches youth about water quality, characteristics of local anadromous fish, forest health and related environmental education. This project, which is sponsored by Chelan County and WSU Cooperative Extension, is an excellent example of partnering between federal, state, and local organizations. For further information on the program, please contact Raymond Faini at WSU Cooperative Extension, at (509) 667-6540.

## Department of Ecology Studies Water Right Ownership

The Washington State Department of Ecology is currently working on a budget proviso from the 2002 session regarding water rights. The following covers the issues involved:

**Background:** **SB 6387** calls for the Department of Ecology (DOE) to "provide to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature, a plan, schedule, and budget for improving the administration of water right records held by the DOE. The DOE shall work with the department of revenue and with county auditors in developing recommendations for improving the administration of water rights ownership information and integrating this information with real property ownership records. The DOE shall evaluate the need for grants to counties to assist with recording and information management

needs related to water rights ownership and title."

**Sponsor:** Senator Jacobsen

**Purpose:** Develop a report for the legislature that provides the following:

- Provide current, convenient and accurate information on property location and associated water rights.
- Facilitates local land use and water management planning for the community.
- Provide data needed for better water management.
- Facilitates locating water in support of water market.
- Assists with property valuation determinations.
- Support local government in their administration of property records.

**Process:**

- Review purpose and background.
- Create informal stakeholder advisory group.
- Weekly meetings held every Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.
- Draft outline of report by July 16, 2002
- First draft of report August 13, 2002
- Review cycles of draft(s).
- Final report October 1, 2002

This is all a precursor to Legislation in the 2003 Session. As the tug-of-war begins over water rights, who owns them, who uses them, the movement in ownership and availability in the water shed, these are going to be important issues. There will be regular Tuesday meetings held at 1:30 p.m. until the deadlines noted above are met. The DOE has already been informed that the counties want no more unfunded mandates. If you would like to be a part of a conference call to these meetings, please contact [mhagen@wacounties.org](mailto:mhagen@wacounties.org).

## Comment Period extended on Model Critical Areas Ordinance

The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development is extending the public comment period for its

draft "Model Code Recommendations for Designating and Protecting Critical Areas" until July 12th, 2002. After negotiations with the state AFW caucus, DCTED revised its draft Model and delayed publication to allow additional public review and comment.

The Growth Management Act requires local governments to designate and protect the functions of critical areas and to include best available science in that process. The Model CAO was designed to offer local governments a guide to effective regulatory and non-regulatory options for protecting critical areas, and was intended to provide consistent statewide review of all critical areas. The next Model CAO draft will be released later this summer.

Copies of the Model can be obtained at: <http://www.oed.wa.gov/info/lgd/growth/>. Comments can be mailed to: Chris Parsons, AICP, Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, P.O. Box 48350, Olympia, WA 98504-8350.

### Grant County Sheriff's Office to receive \$26,572 in federal grant money

The Grant County Sheriff's Office will be upgrading its computer equipment, after receiving a federal grant. The \$26,572 grant was provided by the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance. The grant will fund the purchase of a computerized polygraph machine, a total station used to measure and document crime statistics and several lap top computers.

To be eligible for the grant, the county sheriff's office had to submit their Uniform Crime Reports to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In addition, the agency had to establish an advisory board consisting of a member of the sheriff's office, the prosecutor's office court system, school system, and a non-profit educational, religious, or community-based group active in crime prevention or drug-use prevention or treatment. A public hearing will also be held to encourage public input. To receive the grant the sheriff's office will be required to match about one-ninth of the total block grant funds.

Since 1999, the Grant County Sheriff's Office has received in excess of \$68,000 which they have used to purchase riot equipment, renovate their mobile corrections bus and buy laptop computers for patrol and special operations units. Grant County Sheriff Mike Shay anticipates receiving the funds by late summer or early fall.

### Yakima County Coroner gets a new morgue and announces plans to run for another term

A building on the corner of First Street and Lincoln Avenue that used to be home to a Pizza Hut is now the new Yakima County morgue. The morgue will be open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Along with a new building for the morgue, Yakima County Coroner Maurice Rice recently announced his intention to run for the job again this year. He will file in July for the election this fall. He says he likes to keep active since his 33-year career as a deputy with

the county sheriff's office. Rice also says he hasn't heard of anyone else who might want the 24-hour job devoted to investigating deaths.

### State Law & Justice Council Looking For Direction

The Washington State Law and Justice Advisory Council (WSLJAC) is asking its constituent groups to help shape the Council's future activities. The Council wants to hear your response to the question: "What would it take to make the state's law and justice council of real value to me and my association."

County commissioners, council members, and executives should direct input to their WSLJAC representatives, Grays Harbor County Commissioner Bob Beerbower and Franklin County Commissioner Neva Corkrum, or to WSAC staff Sophia Byrd, who will compile the information and take it to the next WSLJAC meeting July 18.

The 37-member WSLJAC was formed in 1994 and its membership includes citizens, legislators, local and state government representatives. Its mission is to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the statewide law and justice system, balancing local and state perspectives. The Council does this by:

- Fostering collaborative relationships between local Law and Justice Councils, state agencies and the community;
- Exchanging information between local Law and Justice Councils to facilitate integrated planning and program evaluation;
- Providing support and technical assistance at the request of local Law and Justice Councils; and
- Providing a statewide forum for local and state interests to identify and address issues of mutual concern related to the criminal justice system.

### Emergency Management on Convention Agenda

As all levels of government focus more on terrorism issues and emergency management activities, WSAC is attempting to bring relevant information and resources to county officials. For the first time, the WSAC summer convention included two programs related to

emergency management.

On Wednesday, Dave Hodgeboom and Rosanne Garrand of the state Emergency Management Division (EMD), presented an hour-long workshop on low-cost and free emergency management training opportunities for local elected officials. Most of the information presented in the workshop also is available on the EMD website at [www.wa.gov/wsem](http://www.wa.gov/wsem). One training program important for electeds -- basic incident command systems -- can even be accessed online through the website. For more information, or to arrange training activities and exercises in your county, contact Dave Hodgeboom at [hodgeboom@emd.wa.gov](mailto:hodgeboom@emd.wa.gov) or 253-512-7051.

On Friday, a panel representing emergency management agencies from federal, state and county governments discussed "new initiatives and ongoing challenges." Not surprisingly, a great deal of discussion focused on anticipated federal funding for first response planning, equipment and training. EMD Director Glen Woodbury said his agency plans to distribute about \$6 million in federal Justice Department funds to counties this fiscal year with potentially significantly more money available for locals in federal fiscal year 2003.

In response to concerns that some small counties -- even with training and equipment -- may not have adequate personnel, King County Emergency Management Director Eric Holdeman talked about the value of mutual aid agreements among the counties. He encouraged all counties to participate in a mutual aid agreement, which would help ensure timely sharing of resources, including personnel, when a natural or human-caused disaster strikes a single county or a region.

Tamara Doherty, deputy regional director of FEMA, encouraged counties to create "Citizen Corps Councils" of their own design to bring together first responders, volunteer organizations, law enforcement, schools, hospitals, and religious groups to assist and enhance local emergency preparation, prevention and response. Local governments that help organize Citizen Corps Councils

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will be eligible for federal funds to support their work. More than \$200 million is available nationwide. To find out more about the Citizen Corps initiative and how to get your county involved in a

leadership role, check out the "Citizen Corps Guide for Local Officials" at [www.citizen corps.gov](http://www.citizen corps.gov).

Several county emergency management directors attended the convention and were instrumental to the success of

the emergency management sessions. The Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA) is now an official WSAC affiliate and beginning in 2003 will hold its annual convention in conjunction with WSAC.

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## Public Health and Human Services

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### Housing Conference Coming Up

The annual statewide affordable housing conference is being planned and finalized. The conference entitled "Housing Washington 2002: A Little Help from Our Friends" is scheduled for three days from October 30 – November 1, 2002 at the Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel & Conference Center. The Washington State Housing Finance Commission and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development's Office of Community Development (DCTED) in partnership with the Washington Low Income Housing Network and the Blue Mountain Action Council present the annual conference. WSAC is one of the many endorsers of the Conference.

This is the largest and most comprehensive affordable housing conference in Washington State today. The theme for this year reflects the significance of sharing ideas, knowledge and resources. It means relying on each other to achieve our vision where every person in Washington State has the housing they need. Join the many "friends" for three days of interactive workshops, focus sessions, plenary and networking opportunities, as well as special features. Conference extras include an Authors' Corner and Tea, the Annual Friend of Housing Awards Celebration, a Hospitality Suite on Thursday evening, October 31, and an affordable housing tour in the Seattle and South King County areas on Friday afternoon, November 1.

A special rate of \$109 per night has been negotiated for the Hilton Airport Hotel. Phone 206-244-4800 or 1-888-235-4465 for reservations. Be sure to identify yourself as a participant of Housing Washington to receive the special rate.

For more information contact: [www.wshfc.org/conf](http://www.wshfc.org/conf), email – [conf@wshfc.org](mailto:conf@wshfc.org), and phone 1-800-767-

HOME (4663) ext. 773 or 360-357-8044.

### King County Names New Acting Director of Community and Human Services

King County Executive Ron Sims has announced the appointment of Jackie MacLean as the Acting Director of the Department of Community and Human Services. Her appointment will have to be approved by the King County Council.

"Jackie MacLean has shown extraordinary strength and skill in building relationships and finding collaborative solutions to issues," said Sims. "While The Department of Community and Human Services will certainly miss Barbara Gletne, who will leave her post as director July 3, I am confident that Jackie will continue to provide the leadership and dedication that have always been the hallmark of this department," said Sims in making this announcement.

Jackie has been the Manager of the Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division since April of last year. Prior to that, she served for five years as the Division Assistant Manager and before that served as the coordinator and lead planner for the implementation of King County's mental health managed care program. A New Zealand native, MacLean is a graduate of Victoria University and holds a postgraduate diploma from Massey University. She is also an Associate Teacher with the London College in England. MacLean lives in Seattle with her husband and two small children.

King County's Department of Community and Human Services has a total annual budget of approximately \$220 million and a staff of approximately 400. They provide a wide range of human services programs including mental

health, chemical dependency, developmental disabilities, domestic violence, work training, housing, homeless, veterans, child care. They also include the Office of Public Defense.

Other concurrent changes will be the promotion of Amnon Shoenfeld to Acting Division Manager. Amnon has been supervising the Crisis and Commitment Coordinator. Jean Robertson will be taking over all RSN Administrator functions. Jean has been serving as the Assistant Manager to Jackie. FYI, Jean's email is [jean.robertson@metrokc.gov](mailto:jean.robertson@metrokc.gov) and her direct phone is 206-205-1316.

Our congratulations to all – Jackie, Amnon, and Jean.

### Darcie Nielsen Re-Appointed to Affordable Housing Advisory Board

San Juan County Commissioner Darcie Nielsen has been re-appointed by the Governor to the Affordable Housing Advisory Board. Her term of office will run until June 2006. Commissioner Nielsen had originally been appointed to complete an unexpired term, which ran out June 2002. WSAC is delighted that the Governor has re-appointed her to the Board. Rumor has it that the new re-consolidation of the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development may bring enhanced visibility and responsibilities to the Advisory Board which we are confident Commissioner Nielsen can easily handle.

### Drug Sentencing Reform Successful Part of Panel on Cooperative Relationships in Human Services at WSAC Summer Convention

Ken Stark, Director, Division of Alcohol

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# Public Health and Human Services

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and Substance Abuse at the Department of Social and Health Services led a lively discussion of drug sentencing reform and the impacts for the state and counties at the panel on cooperative relationships in human services on Wednesday, June 19 in Bellevue at the WSAC Summer Convention. Ken also kindly served as the moderator for the whole panel and introduced Sheriff Dale Brandland, Whatcom and Glen Kramer, Deputy to the Chief of the Washington State Patrol.

Mr. Stark reviewed the major changes contained in **HB 2338**, drug-sentencing reform which was enacted last session. Of key importance to counties is our involvement in both the statewide groups determining the distribution formula for issuing state funds both on a statewide basis and a competitive grant basis. This group will also serve to review individual or regional county spending plans as they are put together at the county level. In addition, counties are part of the joint legislative drug sen-

tencing grid committee which will review the new proposed 2004 drug sentencing grid as well as make recommendations on treatment programs and ongoing funding formulas. Both county elected officials and county program coordinators will serve on all these groups. WSAC's representative is Commissioner Mike Doherty, Clallam County, and his alternate is Commissioner Herb Baze, Mason County. The Association of County Human Services Chemical Dependency Section appointed Penni Newman, Drug and Alcohol Coordinator, Pierce County, to represent the program coordinators on the groups.

The county legislative authority also appoints several of the representatives to the local groups including the treatment provider and the public defender. The local group also includes the county drug and alcohol coordinator, prosecutor, sheriff, superior court, and drug court representative if there is one. This group will develop expenditure plans to be approved by the county legislative

authority. The plans then go up to the statewide group for review and approval.

Mr. Stark was quite clear in emphasizing the importance of the role of counties in directing both how and where the projected savings will be spent in each county. This entire process will occur over the next several years as the savings is projected to be quite small in fiscal year 2003 but increase by approximately 2005 to the statutory cap for treatment of \$8.25 million per year. We will include future information about these groups and their processes as it occurs. Questions may be referred to WSAC staff, Jean Wessman regarding the human services and treatment side and Sophia Byrd for criminal justice issues.

The next meeting of the statewide groups is scheduled for August 16 from 9 – 3 at the Criminal Justice Training Commission on 192 and First Avenue South in Burien. The first meeting of the Joint Select Committee will be July 11 from 9:30 – 12 in the John L. O'Brien Building, Briefing Room A,

## JULY COUNTY CALENDAR

- 1 Final day for taxpayers to file valuation appeal petitions with the county board of equalization (or within 30 days after the date an assessment or value change notice has been mailed, whichever is later). RCW 84.40.038
- 4 Independence Day - Legal Holiday. RCW 1.16.050
- 8 The county auditor shall notify, in writing, each elective and appointive county official to file with the auditor's office, on or before the second Monday in August, an estimated budget for the ensuing fiscal year, including receipts from sources other than taxation. RCW 36.40.010
- 15 Assessment rolls to be filed with the county board of equalization, by the county assessor. RCW 84.40.320
- 15 The county board of equalization shall meet. Minimum session, three days; maximum session, four weeks. RCW 84.48.010
- 22 Declarations of candidacy shall be filed from the fourth Monday of July to the succeeding Friday, for the September primary election. RCW 29.15.020
- 31 Every county official must report to the Public Disclosure Commission, on an L-5 form, their lobbying activities for the previous quarter (April-June). It is recommended that these L-5 forms be accumulated in the office of the county commissioners and forwarded on behalf of the entire county. RCW 42.17.190  
NOTE: ". . . in-person lobbying by any elected official of such agency on behalf of such agency or in connection with the powers, duties or compensation of such official" need not be reported.
- 31 New construction for which a building permit has been issued shall be valued for assessment purposes as of this date. Such values may be added to the tax roll up to August 31. RCW 36.21.080
- 31 Mobile homes for which building permits have been issued shall be valued for assessment purposes as of this date. Such values may be added to the tax roll up to August 31. RCW 36.21.090

## International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners Conference

Franklin County Coroner Dan Blasdel, President of the Washington Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (WACME), hosted the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (IACME) for the Washington association in Seattle last week. The event drew attendees from fifteen states and from as far as Oaxaco, Mexico, and Ontario, Canada.

The five-day conference included sessions on bioterrorism, death investigations surrounding the events of September 11, forensic anthropology and forensic technology and information systems with speakers from three countries. WACME and IACME also held business meetings for both organizations.

The WACME agenda included reports and discussion on the Sudden and Unexplained Child Death (SIDS) protocols; the forensic pathology specialist program; training; and, legislation. President Blasdel appointed Mason County Coroner Martha Reed and Kitsap County Coroner Greg Sandstrom to work with the Washington State House Children and Family Services staff on coroner confidentiality issues.

Attending coroners, medical examiners, spouses and guests took a break from Seattle's warmest weather to date and enjoyed a boat trip and salmon bake at Kiana Lodge on Tuesday evening.

## New to WSAC Team

Barbara Warden joined the WSAC team on June 1, 2002 as the new Reception/Administrative Support person. She came to Washington via Chicago, Illinois and then Port Charlotte, Florida. She moved here with her mother, Helen, and to be closer to her brother, Ken. Ken has been a resident of Lacey and then Olympia for the past 16 years and works as an Environmental Protection Specialist at Ft. Lewis. When we asked Barbara why she wanted to take the position at WSAC she replied, "The work I do must, in some way, better the community. WSAC fits this criteria to a tea, not only helping the community, but the entire state. I just love the State of Washington and all it has to offer, even

the rain. I love the green so much, that a little rain is all right. My favorite time spent is with people, great conversations, the outdoors, gardens, hiking, and my cat, Mr. Kitty."

## WSAC Board of Directors nominates and appoints members to boards and commissions

The WSAC Board of Directors met at the annual convention in Bellevue last week and made several appointments and nominations for various state boards and commissions. To the County Road Administration Board they appointed Clark County Commissioner Judie Stanton, Grant County Commissioner Tim Snead, and Lincoln County Engineer Bob Breshears. To the Drug Sentencing Committee they appointed Clallam County Commissioner Mike Doherty. To the Green Building Task Force they appointed King County Commissioner Tim Botkin. They also made the following nominations: Transportation Improvement Board, King County Councilmember Rob McKenna, Island County Commissioner Mike Shelton, and Grant County Planning Director Dave Nelson; Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team, Whatcom County Councilmember Dan McShane; and Washington State Board of Health, King County Councilmember Carolyn Edmonds.

President LeRoy Allison appointed a By-Laws Committee to review a by-laws change that would allow an urban county member to represent the State of Washington on the Board of Directors to Western Interstate Region of NACo. This is a recommended change from action taken this spring at WIR. Mike Shelton, Island, will chair the committee. Others on the committee are Jane Hague, King, and Chris Endresen, Kitsap.

## Whitman County Responds: Legal Advertising via the Internet

Whitman County Commissioner Greg Partch asks our readers for a response to the following inquiry:

Here in rural eastern Washington we have only one local daily newspaper (The Moscow-Pullman Daily News) and

one weekly (Whitman County Gazette). The legal advertising does not reach a major part of our population who are not in regions served or of interest to these publications. With the advent of the Internet we could better serve our citizens by making available all legal advertising on the Internet. This would be at no cost or obligation to them to be a subscriber. It would also save the county over \$10,000 annually.

We intend to take this up with our ninth district legislators this summer for possible action in January. If anyone is interested in sharing their thoughts on this issue please e-mail us at: maribethb@co.whitman.wa.us with a cc: to bvogler@wacounties.org.

## Another WSAC Legislative Intern Says Hello

Hello, my name is Dahra Latham and I started work at WSAC last week. As I understand it, WSAC usually has only one intern, but this year there are two of us: for those who met us both at the conference -- Shannon is the tall one.

About me: I grew up mainly in Oklahoma, and went east for college to St. John's, in Annapolis, Maryland. After graduating I spent several years as a teacher, first as an ESL teacher in Turkey and Germany, and later (back in the U.S.), as a remedial skills teacher in a residential program for juvenile offenders. I also worked as finance deputy for the same program. I moved to Seattle in 1995 and worked in the emergency service department of AAA until I decided to go back to school.

I have just finished my second year at UW Law School and am particularly interested in law and economics, property law, and land use issues. When I'm not struggling with legal puzzles, I make jewelry, mosaics, and perfumes, and study poetry. I will be back at WSAC for the legislative session this winter.

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## Upcoming Events and Training

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### Packed House for Financial Management and Budget Courses

The Financial Management course and Budget workshop held last week in conjunction with the annual WSAC Convention were both a huge success. A total of 77 Elected County Officials and staff attended the Financial Management Course. This course was the second core course offering to be held this year as part of the Certified Public Official Program. Special thanks and recognition to the presenters for the workshop: Jay Weber, Executive Director, CRAB, Tom Krippaehne, Moss Adams Advisory Services, Rose Schaller, Washington State Auditor's Office Local Government Specialist, Gayla Gjertsen, City of Tumwater Finance Director and Dan Clements, Snohomish County Director of Finance. Chris Mudgett, Special Projects Manager for CRAB, assisted with program development and served as Facilitator for the workshop. Each presenter provided useful information related to County Finance issues to the participants. While there was no "Silver Bullet" provided to solve the current financing issues we are facing, we were provided with solid background information, which can serve as the basis for future decision-making. The evaluations were very positive with feedback given which will serve as the basis for improvements in the course for future offerings.

On Thursday afternoon we were honored to have Peter Hutchinson, President, Public Strategies Group and Anne Kinney Associate from PSG, conduct a three hour workshop titled "Budget Solutions: Tools for Improving Services While Cutting Spending." While some of the tips were not wildly accepted, we did receive new ideas, which will serve as food for thought as we develop the 2003 budget. The meeting room was filled to capacity with over 150 in attendance. This session followed Peter's morning speech on "Lessons in Leadership". In case you missed the session, the following list includes Peter's lessons:

- Stop whining – it could be so much worse and even so, we would be here to lead
- These are the times we have

and this is what we are here to do, Don't just get by

- Challenge all of the assumptions – reconsider the "why"
- Let go of your dogs early – don't feed the dogs
- In this life we must think no small thoughts – but take big steps – Have big dreams and work on them every day
- Can we play the game some other way – don't choose to play the game on their turf by their rules
- If you are explaining you aren't gaining – once you explain it once you have already lost
- Listen to the people around you, they can keep you from falling flat on your face
- Believe in the people you are there to serve – be passionate – have passion for your work and share your passion with your people
- Things don't have to be perfect for you to be successful
- Focus on the things you can control – use the power of your dreams as the basis for your decisions
- When you are in the dark, things look a lot better than they really are – Go out of the way to make sure you are not in the dark.

The bottom line is--a "LEADER" is someone who goes out and changes things to make things better. Not only were the lessons relevant to all of us in our daily work in County Government, Peter was able to bring them to us with humorous stories about his own professional journey in government and how he learned these valuable lessons.

### Governor's Office of Indian Affairs offers Government-to-Government Training in Olympia and throughout the State

Special training geared to help federal, state and local government personnel better work with American Indian Tribes in Washington State is now being offered by the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs. Gordon James, a professional trainer and former chairman of the Skokomish Tribe, presents the one-day training that covers tribal culture, history, tribal sovereignty and tribal gov-

ernment structure.

The training allows sufficient time for questions and should assist stakeholders in furthering their relationship with Washington State's twenty-eight federally recognized Tribes. After completing the training, attendees should have a much better understanding of Tribes, their people and unique culture, and an enhanced awareness of the importance of multi-culturalism. Each attendee will be provided with a user-friendly reference book to continue furthering their understanding of contemporary native culture.

Training will be offered twice a month in Olympia and once a month somewhere else in the State. The one-day course in Olympia is offered the first Wednesday and third Thursday of every month. Cost is \$75 per person. Please see our web site at [www.goia.wa.gov](http://www.goia.wa.gov) and click on the Government-to-Government Training link to register, and access the complete schedule.

We are holding a class on July 3 at the Department of Licensing, 421 Black Lake Blvd SW in Olympia. Register today!

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## *Courthouse Ramblings*

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Our sincere sympathy goes out to **King County Deputy Sheriff Richard Herzog's** family after the tragic events of June 22 when he was killed in the line of duty. Herzog, 46, a married father of two teen-age daughters, had worked for the sheriff's office for seven years,

nearly four with the police department in Newcastle, a city about 10 miles southeast of Seattle that contracts with the King County Sheriff's Office. Before entering law enforcement, he spent 20 years with the Army Special Forces where had a degree in the Korean lan-

guage and served as a Platoon Operations Sergeant for three remote intelligence-gathering sites in the Korea demilitarized zone from January 1986 to April 1988.

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## *Employment Opportunities*

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**ADAMS COUNTY – Building, Planning and Solid Waste Manager – Department of Public Works.** Adams County seeks a professional with strong leadership and team building skills to manage our Building, Planning and Solid Waste Division of the Public Works. Pay range \$37,252 - \$56,867, including benefits. Minimum qualifications: Bachelor of Arts Degree in planning or closely related field and four years of work experience with two years at supervisory level, or a combination of education and experience deemed equivalent. A valid Washington State Driver's license is required. For additional information and an application packet, please call (509) 659-3276 or visit our website at [www.co.adams.wa.us](http://www.co.adams.wa.us) or write to: Adams County Department of Public

Works, 210 W. Alder, Ritzville, WA 99169. Position open until filled.

**THURSTON COUNTY - Senior Property Control Analyst** - Salary range \$2569/mo. to \$3507/mo. This is a bargaining union position and is currently under negotiation for cost of living increase for 2002. Responsible for the analysis, collection, organization and maintenance of real property records system for the assessment and taxation process. Uses independent judgment in the interpretation of legal property descriptions, legal documents, and technical aspects of work performed. Performs updates and edits to the parcel layer in the County's Geographic Information System (GIS). Works closely with the public and several agencies to interpret and explain property records.

Works under management and review of Account Management Manager for adherence to program standards, performance, and regulatory legislation. This position may be analogous to land segregation and cartography position in other counties.

Minimum Qualifications: Education: High school diploma or GED required plus courses in drafting and math. Courses in real estate law, appraisal and computers is desirable. Experience: Two years of experience in work related to the examination and interpretation of legal property descriptions and instruments of title. Call (360) 754-3800 to have an application mailed to you or for further questions regarding job duties contact Marlene Pool, Account Management Manager at (360) 357-2474. Closing date: June 28, 2002.

# Calendar of Events

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 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, 9–3  
pm SeaTac

September 4–6  
WAPA *Drug Training Program—Icicle  
Inn, Leavenworth*. 15 hrs of CLE.

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 Advi-  
sory Committee (All Day Meeting),  
SeaTac

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 Partner-  
ships*, 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 3–4  
WAPA Newly Elected Prosecutor  
Course—WAPA Conference Room,  
Olympia

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 & 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 Confer-  
ence, 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

## Coroners tout bioterrorism defense role

### Funding for 'first responders' neglects many, conference told

By Tom Paulson, *Seattle PI*, June 13, 2002, [http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/attack/74412\\_bioterror13.shtml](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/attack/74412_bioterror13.shtml)

In the event of a deadly terrorist attack, everyone now recognizes the crucial roles played by firefighters, police, emergency medical crews and public-health officials.

After the anthrax attacks, Congress doled out billions to help states protect against bioterrorism. Washington state received \$18 million to pay for better preparedness, especially focused on "first responders."

The folks who would have to deal with the dead bodies, however, didn't even get an honorable mention.

"Maybe it was wishful thinking," said Dan Blasdel, Franklin County's coroner and president of the Washington Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners. "Nothing's been earmarked for us. ... We don't even know what we should be doing to prepare."

But if there's a smallpox outbreak and deaths, it will be people such as Blasdel who are called upon to take responsibility for the infectious corpses.

"Should we get vaccinated against smallpox?" Blasdel asked, posing this and other questions to his colleagues yesterday. No consensus was reached.

Coroners and medical examiners from around the country are meeting in Seattle this week. They're supposed to discuss how to respond to deaths from bioterrorism -- or even suspicious deaths.

Instead, they've been discussing what to do about being left out of the discussion on terrorism and preparedness in general.

"Our nation's collective security really comes down to the response at the community level," said Dr. Barbara Seiders, manager of the chemical and biological weapons defense section at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, run for the U.S. Department of Energy by Battelle.

The fact that the role of the coroner was ignored in the nation's desire to beef up homeland defense is a symptom of a much bigger problem, said Seiders, a

bioweapons defense expert who addressed the conference yesterday.

Most communities, she added, are not even close to being prepared to respond to a major act of bioterrorism.

Even with all the technical, scientific and defense-related expertise and resources around the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, Seiders said, professionals there were overwhelmed and confused about how to respond to reports of suspicious substances during the anthrax scare.

"There is still no accepted protocol for how to evaluate a potential threat," she said.

If harmless white powder can overwhelm a community with some of the best analytical scientists and people trained for nuclear accidents, Seiders said, think of what will happen if a successful act of bioterrorism actually kills someone.

Or what will happen if a biological weapon starts killing people and nobody notices, said Greg Sandstrom, coroner for Kitsap County.

Many biological weapons have early symptoms that mimic more mundane diseases such as flu. A few out-of-season flu deaths here and there might not look very odd, Sandstrom noted, but enough oddities showing up at the same time across the nation could be a red flag. "We need a tracking system," he said.

Just as public-health officials have called for better disease surveillance nationwide, Sandstrom and his colleagues have been pushing for electronic communications and a shared database for deaths nationwide.

"Right now, none of the coroners or medical examiners in the U.S. can talk to each other -- except by telephone or fax," he said.

Sandstrom has been lobbying Congress for funding. During the end of the Clinton administration, they finally got \$10 million to get it started.

"The money was appropriated, a line item in the budget and everything," Sandstrom said. After former Vice President Al Gore lost the election and a new administration came in, he said, the money just disappeared into the general fund.

Proponents have since scraped up \$300,000 to try to get the ball rolling

again and are hoping to get more funding soon.

Such is the lot of coroners everywhere, Blasdel said. Nobody likes to think about them if he or she doesn't have to.

"Just like terrorism," Blasdel said.

## Locke seeks counties' support for gas tax

### But new poll shows that it's a tough sell everywhere but in King County

From the *Seattle PI* by Margaret Taus, Friday, June 21, 2002

Governor Gary Locke asked county officials from around the state yesterday to support the statewide transportation referendum that goes to voters in November, saying it is "absolutely essential" to a healthy economy in every part of the state.

"I'm well aware of the tough budget choices you're making these days," he told a gathering of the Washington State Association of Counties. "We're all in the same boat together ... and we're all going to have to learn to row together." Referendum 51 would raise \$7.7 billion over 10 years for road and transit projects around the state through a gas tax increase of 9 cents a gallon, higher trucking fees and a 1 percent surtax on car sales. "The days of blaming and transferring to each other responsibilities simply must end," Locke said, as he urged county officials to endorse the measure and educate voters about the need for it. "We can't afford fence-sitters."

Locke is co-chairman of the referendum campaign with former U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton. They face a tough sell. Bill Vogler, executive director of the counties' association, said the organization hasn't made formal endorsements on statewide measures in recent years because of legal constraints on public money. If it did consider Referendum 51, though, "I think it would split our association," Vogler said. A statewide poll by Stuart Elway in March showed the measure passing in King County, but nowhere else. Overall, support was evenly split, with 52 percent in favor and 46 percent against, with a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 5 percentage points. The referendum would

*(Continued on page 13)*

(Continued from page 12)

have to win big in King County for it to pass, Elway said. Seventy percent of all yes votes were from King, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

Those three counties also are trying to pull together a three-county regional transportation package that also would go to the voters, possibly in November. The Metropolitan King County Council recently voted 8-5 to endorse Referendum 51, with several Seattle representatives voting no because they haven't yet seen what the regional package would include. Vogler agreed with the governor that all counties need to consider the referendum's impact. "What happens in King County profoundly affects what happens in Garfield County," he said.

Locke, who served as King County executive before becoming governor, also acknowledged that citizen initiatives have cut deeply into county budgets. He said a state task force is looking at which levels of government -- state, county or city -- should provide what services, and whether some mandated services could be eliminated. Counties rely heavily on property and sales taxes, and many are losing their tax base to annexations and incorporations. The new city of Spokane Valley, for instance, will cost Spokane County in Eastern Washington around \$30 million in revenue a year, Vogler said. Combined with Initiative 747 that limits property tax increases to 1 percent a year, county governments "have to look for other ways of providing service," he said. "Reforming ourselves will not be easy."

## It's time to expand senior citizen tax

*"Guest Opinion" from the Independent, by Representatives Pat Lentz (26<sup>th</sup> District) and Phil Rockefeller (23<sup>rd</sup> District)*

One of the best things the people of Washington ever did was create the senior citizen property tax relief program.

The 3-to-1 public vote that created senior property tax relief in 1966 has been a home-saver for thousands of retirees and disabled persons living on modest incomes. For hundreds of thousands of others, it has meant a little extra money to spend on medications or

other personal needs.

Now, however, many seniors and disabled persons in our communities are actually losing the property tax relief they've depended upon for years.

Consider the plight of an elderly couple we heard from recently. This retired couple, both in their seventies, live in a modest three-bedroom home in Port Orchard. They've gotten much needed senior property tax relief ever since their retirement in the early 1990s. But this year the Port Orchard couple learned that they no longer qualify for tax relief, because their income had crept up to about \$800 over the \$30,000 eligibility ceiling.

As a result, they have to save up the husband's veterans disability checks to pay the additional property taxes.

This couple's experience is being repeated throughout Kitsap County and Washington. In fact, despite the rapidly increasing number of retirees, our property-tax relief program actually helps 13,000 fewer seniors and disabled people statewide than it did five years ago.

Kitsap County has about 600 fewer people in the program than there were in 1997.

This is no time for senior property tax relief to be shrinking. Why is this happening? The main reason is that the eligibility ceiling has not been adjusted for inflation since 1998. This is the longest stretch of time without an inflation adjustment since the senior property tax relief program began 36 years ago.

A solution is obviously overdue, and until the Legislature acts, the problem can only grow worse.

Making an inflation adjustment based on even the most conservative measure of inflation since 1998 would raise the eligibility ceiling for senior and disabled person tax-relief to roughly \$33,000. That is fair in principle and would allow 14,000 more people in Washington to qualify for the property tax relief, including the Port Orchard couple who appealed for help.

Using other measures of inflation would help even more people. There are also other steps we could take to expand the property tax relief program. In 1999, we jointly sponsored a proposal that would allow medical insurance costs and

veterans disability checks to be deducted when calculating eligibility for the property tax relief program. The House of Representatives passed our proposal by a vote of 93-2.

Unfortunately, it did not get a vote in the Senate. But, given the overwhelming support we received from both Democrats and Republicans, we believe the legislature should reconsider these issues as soon as the 2003 session begins.

It is important to understand that expanding the tax relief program will not make the state's budget problems worse. Like all property tax exemptions, the cost of senior tax relief is picked up by other taxpayers.

But the cost is truly minimal. For example, including 14,000 more seniors and people with disabilities in the program would add just \$4 to the average annual property tax bill on a \$200,000 home -- an amount that is for all practical purposes imperceptible.

Yet for that negligible cost we could achieve a huge difference in the lives of all those who would benefit from the relief. For some it could mean the difference between keeping and losing their homes in their retirement years.

When we talked with Kitsap County Assessor Jim Avery, he strongly agreed that property tax relief for seniors and disabled persons should be expanded to help more people. Other leaders we've contacted agree that the time has come to act.

The Port Orchard couple who appealed for help closed their letter with a plea to "do what you can to ease up our golden years." They spoke not only for themselves but for thousands of others in a similar plight. We believe the legislature has a duty to listen and respond. The solutions are near at hand if we have the will and foresight to seize them.