WACO “Think Tank” Deemed a Success

What do you call a room full of county officials faced with over two-dozen heavy-duty legislative issues who can reach a consensus and finish the meeting an hour early? Some might call it a “pipe dream” but we call it the “WACO Think Tank.”

The meeting was rated an A+ for productivity after twenty-two WACO members representing the WACO Board of Trustees and each of the seven affiliate groups weighed the pros, cons, and viability of each agenda item and whittled the list of possibilities down to six in record time on Monday in Olympia. WACO President Barbara Cory lead the session.

After an excellent presentation and discussion of the state budget and economic forecast by Victor Moore, Director of Management Services for the Administrator for the Courts, the “Think Tank” utilized a very structured agenda to get all the issues “on the table.” From here, each of the top legislative proposals will be further developed, documented and forwarded to all county officials for their input. The WACO Board will also review the proposals in August. The ultimate goal of the group is to bring the proposals to the table with the Washington State Association of Counties and the Association of Washington Cities for joint consideration in late summer.

Special thanks go to the participants of Monday’s experiment: Skamania County Prosecutor Brad Andersen; Cowlitz County Assessor Dean Takko; Grays Harbor County Auditor Vern Spatz; Kitsap County Prosecutor Russ Hauge; Grays Harbor County Treasurer Ron Strabbing; Pierce County Prosecutor Gerry Horne; Pacific County Sheriff John Didion; Skagit County Assessor Mark Leander; Skamania County Clerk Rena Hollis; Chelan County Clerk Siri Woods; Grays Harbor County Sheriff Mike Whelan; Grays Harbor County Prosecutor Stew Menefee; Clark County Auditor Greg Kimsey; Kitsap County Coroner Greg Sandstrom; Thurston County Coroner Judy Arnold; Jefferson County Auditor Donna Eldridge; Jefferson County Assessor Jack Westerman; Benton County Treasurer Darwin Parker; Bill Dubay for King County Assessor Scott Noble; WASPC Executive Director Larry Erickson; and WACO and WAPA staff.
An Invitation from Douglas County…

You are cordially invited to join with us in the celebration of re-dedication of the remodeled Douglas County Courthouse and its new Annex. We extend our warmest regards and look forward to joining with residents and friends of Douglas County as we discover together our County Seat of 2002 and reflect on our history of the original design and completion of 1905. We request your presence as one of our honored guests, speakers, elected officials of past and present, department heads, employees or citizens, as we gather to view the present, reminisce of the past and plan for the future of our County.

If you, the citizens and friends of Douglas County, cannot join with us in this day we have set aside to gather, we invite you at any time to view our County’s achievement. This is your Courthouse; we encourage you to come and experience the product of your effort and tax dollars.

**Douglas County Courthouse**

Friday, the Twelfth of July,

Two Thousand and Two

One O’clock PM

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**WSAC Western District Meeting Agenda in Development**

WSAC staff is working with the officers of the WSAC Western District to develop the agenda for that meeting, scheduled to take place on September 5 and 6, 2002. The theme for the meeting will be focused on economic development. Other sessions will address service delivery by counties and the status of county efforts on critical areas protection.

Any Western District members with ideas for topics that ought to be included should contact Clark County Commissioner Betty Sue Morris, San Juan County Commissioner Darcie Nielsen, Kitsap County Commissioner Jan Angel or WSAC Assistant Executive Director Paul Parker. A draft agenda and more details about the Western District meeting will be sent out soon.

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**Budget, Finance & Taxes**

NACo working with Department of Interior on PILT

In a series of recent meetings with the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), the National Association of Counties (NACo) is trying to improve working relationships between federal land managers and county officials. One of NACo’s priorities is to obtain full funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which is administered by DOI’s Bureau of Land Management. As we all know, any cuts to PILT result in a tax-shift to private property owners in public lands counties.

NACo presented Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton with more than 150 letters from PILT-entitled counties across the country pleading with President George W. Bush to reconsider his stance on the issue. These counties were dismayed earlier this year by the Administration’s proposed $45 million cut to the program for 2003, and by its testimony opposing the PILT and Refuge Revenue Sharing Permanent Funding Act, which would automatically fund both the PILT and Refuge Revenue Sharing programs at their full authorized levels every year.
Federal Support to Identify and Reduce Officer Stress
In 1992, the U.S. Congress authorized the Law Enforcement Family Support program to assist in reducing the harmful effects of stress experienced by law enforcement officers and their families. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) was given administrative responsibility for the program.

To date, NIJ has awarded 34 grants, totaling more than $3 million, which meet these objectives. The awards have focused on expanding knowledge about the development, implementation, and coordination of services; the feasibility and efficacy of specific program elements and approaches; and the causes, consequences, and nature of officer and family stress.

The subsequently developed services and studies have included critical incident stress debriefing and management techniques, peer support services, police organizational change and well-being, stress management training methods, police psychological services referral networks, police chaplaincy services, rookie stress counseling, and spouse academies.

For more information about NIJ’s program, visit http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/clefs/welcome.html.

An Easy-To-Track Mandate Expense – Postage for Inmate DNA Tests
As counties continue to bill the state for “unfunded mandates” they should be aware of a new cost that may be easy to track. That cost is the postage for mailing DNA sample cards from the county jail to the state toxicology lab. 

SHB 2468 (Laws of 2002, Ch 289) requires DNA samples from all convicted felons, and provides that instead of using the costly blood-draw method to obtain a sample jails may use a less-expensive buccal swab sampling method. Initially the state toxicology lab will provide county jails with the new testing kits, valued at about $2 each. But the state won’t pay the postage for sending the required DNA information to the fox lab.

Because of the new requirement to submit DNA samples from all convicted felons (currently DNA is required for just some felons), jails may, at first, have large numbers of samples to send to the lab. To reduce postage costs, the sample cards may be “batched” for mailing.

Credit for the “heads up” on this postage issue goes to Thurston County Commissioner Diane Oberquell.

Welcome Emergency Managers as New WSAC Affiliate
The WSAC Board of Directors has accepted the Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA) as a new county family affiliate. WSEMA represents local emergency management officials throughout the state.

Beginning in 2003, WSEMA members will be listed in the “Directory of County Officials in Washington State,” published annually by WACO and WSAC. For the remainder of this year, you may wish to consult the WSEMA member list and contact information attached to this week’s Courthouse Journal. This document will appear as a separate attachment in the Journal e-mail.

As with other WSAC affiliates, WSEMA will hold some of its meetings in conjunction with WSAC. They will formally join the WSAC convention and district meetings beginning in 2003, but some members attended the WSAC 2002 convention and plan to attend the fall meetings as well. This “networking” opportunity with elected officials as well as county engineers, planners and public health officials is one reason WSEMA has been eager to become an affiliate, according to WSEMA President Sam Lorenz, the emergency management director in Grant County.

WSEMA’s annual convention this year is scheduled for September 24-27 at Ocean Shores. Other county officials and staff interested in this event should contact WSEMA President Sam Lorenz at 509-762-1462, gcem@atnet.net or WSAC staff Sophia Byrd at 360-753-1886, sbyrd@wacounties.org.

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.
Association of County Human Services (ACHS) To Meet in Vancouver
July 17 – 19

ACHS will hold its July meeting from July 17 – 19 at the Homewood Suites Hotel, Hudson's Bay Conference Room in Vancouver, Washington. On Wednesday, the Chemical Dependency Section will meet. On Thursday, the Developmental Disabilities Section meets and on Friday, the Mental Health Section will gather.

The Chemical Dependency Section will meet from 9:30 – 4:00. In the morning the ACHS Roundtable Discussion will occur followed by work group reports. The work groups include ADA-TSA, treatment completion, prevention, and drug sentencing reform. In the afternoon, Fritz Wrede, the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) will bring the group up to date on HIPAA status and necessary adaptations to the TARGET data system. Pam Lund, the Associate Director of Worksource will be a guest presenter and Central Office will provide general updates. These will include information on the Department of Health’s tobacco strategies, contract provisions, and drug sentencing reform.

The Developmental Disabilities Section meets Thursday from 9:30 – 4:00. In the morning there will be a follow-up on the parent coalition meeting, changes within the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and county concerns about service numbers and outcomes, and the DDS technical assistance contract. In the afternoon, Division Director Linda Rolfe will join the group and discuss the implementation of the changes to the State Supplemental Payment program (SSP) required in last session’s budget along with information on state policy as required by Secretary Braddock, and potential eligibility changes to Birth to Three.

The DD Section will break in the morning at 11:30 for the Business Meeting with new information on the cross-system crisis response work group and the usual treasurer’s report.

On Friday, the Mental Health Section will convene at 9:30 and run until 4:00. In the morning, the Mental Health Division will join the Section for discussion on ready for discharge/liquidated damages work that has been underway in relation to the state hospital census, the JLARC Children’s Study, and timelines for Expanded Community Services (ECS), the community alternative to state hospitalization plan. In the afternoon, there will be an update on SIG IV, and the Mental Health Weekly Article in Vol. 12, No. 24 entitled “Fiscal Woes, State Policies Strangle Washington County Systems”. For those who don’t have this, we’ll try and have copies available.

On an additional note, the Washington State Association of Counties staff will spend about 15 minutes in each section discussing the upcoming legislative session and the Association’s plan for facing this state and local fiscal crisis. We would appreciate it if each of you took a few moments to think about ideas you have for how your county might do business differently, both in the sense of reducing government and/or changing the structure and function of local government to operate more effectively.

See you all in Vancouver.

Whitman County Responses: 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.

Municipal Research Services Center makes a move...

Municipal Research Services Center (MRSC) is relocating to new offices July 29, 2002. There new address is: 2601 Fourth Avenue - Suite 800, Seattle, Washington 98121-1280. New phone numbers are (206) 625-1300, toll-free (800) 933-6772, and fax (206) 625-1220.
Thank you, Chris! A big thank you to Christina Bridston, WACO Programs Coordinator, for twenty-five years of service to WACO members. Since July of 1977, Chris has kept information flowing, planned sensational conferences and kept them running smoothly, and spent thousands of hours “on the hill” in pursuit of better government. In addition, she keeps her co-workers laughing, especially when she tries to convince them she took the job right out of the seventh grade!

*Snohomish County Clerk Pam Daniels was recognized by the Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC) at the association’s 96th Annual Conference in Walla Walla recently when she received WSACC’s most prestigious award, the “County Clerk of the Year.”

In the words of other county clerks, “Pam has worked tirelessly and successfully as the Director of Legislation – coordinating efforts, testifying and making things happen! Pam’s contributions to the WSACC Board: various committees on the state level including Access to Justice, Washington State Bar Association, and Juvenile Corrections Integration; youth court issues; and her many community contributions that make her presence felt at many levels.” “Pam has spent countless hours driving to and from Olympia through horrendous traffic, spent many nights away from home and worked many weekends to get our (WSACC) legislation passed.” “Pam always seems to have an upbeat attitude an is always willing to help another county clerk.”

The WSACC bylaws describe the “Clerk of the Year” as “an award presented to an individual member of the Association for his/her representation, service, training, and willingness to assist ‘beyond the call of duty,’ having made significant contributions to improving the service of the Association.” The award is made after a vote of the members of WSACC and was initiated in 1984.

After six terms in office, Pend Oreille County Assessor Steve Thompson will retire at the end of 2002. “It’s time to do something else,” Thompson said. “If you’re paying attention something inside of you tells you when it’s time.” Thompson said he plans to do more reading and skiing and might take up golf. In addition, there’s plenty of work to do at the family ranch in the Skookum Creek area. Steve is an Illinois native who was raised in Pend Oreille County and lived there most of his life. He went to work in the assessor’s office in 1967 and was elected in 1978.

Former King County Deputy Executive Pat Steel, 57, died on July 7 of complications from polycystic kidney disease. Pat served King County as Deputy County Executive, Budget Director, and most recently as Director of Construction and Facilities Management. She served four county executives representing both parties. She started with county government as a psychiatric social worker in the juvenile court system. She never lost her passion for juvenile services and worked over the years to improve services. During her 32 years of service, Pat became a key trouble shooter for the county.

She is survived by her daughter, Sara Wilson, of Sammamish; her son Jeb Steel, of Seattle; her brother Sandy Bracelin of Palm Springs, California; and her former husband John Steel of Seattle.

Grant County Assessor Don McDowall recently had surgery, is doing well and is back at work part-time.

Over the years, officials of many county districts and boards used Thompson’s expertise to help them with tax levy and related questions. Steve was always willing to work with them. We will all miss you Steve!

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Good Things
MASON COUNTY – Assessor’s Office - GIS Technician. $2,657 - $3,153 month. Responsible for geographic data management, overlay, network, topographic analysis, map and report design, composition and plotting. Minimum Qualifications: Formal training in computer-aided drafting and design or 3 years experience in survey or cadastral mapping. Experience with ESRI ArcView and AutoCAD map software preferred. Must possess valid Washington state drivers license. Closes July 15, 2002 at 5 p.m. County application required and available at Mason County Human Resources, 411 N. Fifth St., Shelton, WA 98584; or call (360) 427-7265.

THURSTON COUNTY - Assessor’s Office - Senior Appraiser. $2,694 - $3,681 monthly salary range (currently under negotiation for cost of living increase). A high school education or equivalent is required. A college degree and/or courses in economics, mathematics, real estate, finance, marketing, business, or cartography are highly desirable. Qualified applicants will have experience in one or more of the following areas: real property appraisals, real estate sales, building construction, market research and analysis, market modeling, or statistical analysis. Knowledge of cartography (mapping) and legal descriptions and skill in the use of word processing, spreadsheet, or statistical software packages is considered highly desirable. Request application from Gene Widmer, Thurston County Assessor’s Office, 2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Olympia, WA 98502. Phone: 360-786-5564. Email: widmerg@co.thurston.wa.us

ISLAND COUNTY – Planning & Community Development - Development Services Manager. Island County (Coupeville, WA) seeks a F/T highly motivated person to manage the department customer outreach program, intake of permits, review of land-use permits, coordination between divisions and other County and State Departments. We are seeking a person with a strong customer service/management background and who possesses strong motivation skills and an ability to develop positive working relationships with the public. Land-use permits involve review of applications for development proposals, in accordance with Zoning, Critical Areas, SEPA, and all other associated land use & environment Laws. Requires a degree in business, management, planning or related field, customer service experience, knowledge of planning, zoning, subdivision, land use law, WA GMA, SEPA, five (5) year related work experience and strong analytical, communications & Customer Service skills. Closes as soon as qualified applicant is found. Island County Application required. For application and info www.islandcounty.net/hr or Call (360) 679-7372 ext. 7254, EOE
Calendar of Events

July 12–16
NACo Annual Conference, New Orleans Parish, New Orleans, LA

July 17–19
ACHS, Clark County

July 24

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 5-6
WSAC Western District Meeting, Bonneville Hot Springs Resort, Stevenson

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 18-19
County Treasurers’ Legislative Conference, Summit Inn, Snoqualmie

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

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 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 10-12
Washington State Association of County Auditors’ Annual Conference, Sun Mountain Lodge, Winthrop

June 16-20
Washington State Association of County Treasurers’ Annual Conference, Davenport Hotel, Spokane

June 23-27
Washington State Association of County Clerks’ Annual Conference, Silverdale Hotel, Silverdale

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