

the Courthouse Journal

WACOUNTIES.ORG

*Washington Association of County Officials
Washington State Association of Counties*

February 9, 2009

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Courthouse Journal*

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WSAC's 2009 Legislative Rally

This year's WSAC Legislative Rally started on Wednesday, February 4, with a gathering of the newly elected County Commissioners and Councilmembers, who discussed the challenges and issues faced during their first month in office, learning about risk management in county government operations and service delivery, and hearing from two WSAC members who are former state legislators, Thurston County Commissioner Sandra Romero and Spokane County Commissioner Todd Mielke. Commissioner Mielke provided an entertaining and valuable tour of the Capitol to top off the day's introduction to the legislative process.

The next day, the Legislative Steering Committee readied members for discussions on the hill about WSAC's legislative priorities. Members spent the afternoon in appointments before heading to the Governor's Mansion for the Legislative Rally Reception.

WSAC President, Mason County Commissioner Lynda Ring Erickson, thanked the Governor and First Mike for welcoming WSAC members, legislators and guests into the Governor's Mansion. There were a large number of legislators in attendance this year.

Governor Gregoire, who had just returned from a trip to Washington D.C. to witness the President's reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, spoke about the ability of state and local governments to come out of the economic crisis better prepared to deliver the services and programs to meet the needs of our communities.

Governor Gregoire shared her thoughts and knowledge on the federal stimulus package. While most are hopeful that the Stimulus Package will pass Congress soon, the Governor explained that there were some 70 funding silos and many strings attached.

Explaining her own state stimulus package, the Governor spoke of an unemployment benefit boost, a transportation package that would complete 200 projects in two years, and investment in shovel-ready projects.

The next morning, WSAC members invited Legislators and their staff to a hosted latte cart on the hill.

**Job announcements & links to County
Employment pages at:**

<http://wacounties.org/>

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We welcome your suggestions and contributions.
The weekly / bi-weekly deadline is noon
Wednesdays. Direct inquiries and
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Thanks to all of the WSAC members who made the trip to Olympia for this year's Rally. The discussions were productive and the time that you spent with your legislators was immensely beneficial.



WSAC President Lynda Ring Erickson introduces Governor Chris Gregoire at the 2009 Legislative Rally Reception at the Governor's Mansion

Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm>

Bill Information: www.leg.wa.gov

Courts, Public Safety, Law & Justice

Attorney General McKenna calls on Congress to restore critical crime and drug enforcement funds

OLYMPIA— Attorney General Rob McKenna joined 50 Attorneys General in sending a [letter](#) Wednesday urging Congress to restore federal funding for crime and drug enforcement efforts.

“State, county and city law-enforcement agencies have already taken multiple budget hits due to the economic downturn,” McKenna said. “The proposed federal funding cuts further erode funding that helps keep our communities safe from drug addiction and gang violence.”

In Washington, the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) allocates Byrne-JAG funds to 19 multi-jurisdictional narcotics task forces that serve 29 of 39 counties. Drug fighting activities include work in local communities to investigate and prosecute mid-to-upper level drug trafficking.

Nationally, a 67 percent funding cut from last year to the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants (Byrne/JAG) program has already forced law enforcement agencies to shut down multi-jurisdictional drug and gang task forces, as well as drug treatment programs.

The Attorneys General want fiscal year 2008 funds restored through supplemental appropriations, and adequate funding levels in fiscal years 2009 and 2010. If Byrne/JAG funding is not restored, police and prosecutors will be laid off.

Byrne/JAG is currently the only source of funding available for multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement, including methamphetamine initiatives, and is critical for drug courts, law enforcement information sharing, gang prevention, and prisoner re-entry programs.

Even with cuts to other Byrne-JAG supported programs and an influx of \$1.5 million from the state general fund, narcotics task forces supported by CTED are facing a \$1.8 million shortfall.

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Medical Costs for Jails in House Rules

[House Joint Memorial 4000](#), which will ask Congress to support Restoring the Partnership between Federal and Local Governments, is in House Rules Committee which meets on Monday at 1:00 pm. HJM will request that Congress reinstate health benefits to persons incarcerated in county jails who have not yet been tried and found guilty. The initiative came from the National Association of Counties (NACo) last year and will be introduced in the 111th Congress. WACO members are urged to contact Speaker Frank Chopp and members of the House Rules Committee to ask them to “pull” [HJM 4000](#) to the House Floor for a vote.

Elections, Licensing & Recordings

Huff wins election director's race

King County Elections Director Sherril Huff won a decisive victory over five challengers in the county's first vote to choose an elections administrator. See link below for full story.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2008704494_webelex04m.html

Archives Bill Moving

HB 1374, the WACO bill to remove the authority of the Heritage Center Account to tap Local Government Archives Account funding, appears to be moving. Kittitas County Auditor Jerry Pettit, who serves as Chair of the Archives Oversight Committee, spoke in support of **HB 1374** which will restore \$4 million in this biennium and halt all future transfers to the Heritage Account. The House Capital Budget Committee appeared sympathetic to the cause of locals and has the bill set for Executive Session on Monday, February 9. The county auditors and WACO still support the \$2.00 surcharge to fund the Heritage Center Project, which is estimated to be 62% of all Center Revenues.

Association News

WSAC Executive Board to Host Eastern District Round Table

One of the 2009 goals of the WSAC Executive Board is to visit Association members in counties and regions throughout the state. The Board desires to engage WSAC members in thoughtful discussions to understand the issues facing counties and the creative solutions being designed and implemented throughout our state.

The WSAC Executive Board is hosting the first such event for Eastern Washington District members at a Roundtable on Wednesday, February 25, at the Moses Lake Convention Center from 1:00 - 4:00 pm. The agenda will include updates on legislation, discussion on policy issues facing counties, and sharing of information on strategies dealing with revenue and expenditures.

This meeting follows the Columbia River County Commissioners Policy Advisory Committee Meeting held from 10:00 am. - noon, also at the Moses Lake Convention Center. Our hope is you can join us for this afternoon roundtable also.

The Moses Lake Convention Center is located at 1475 Nelson Road N.E. in Moses Lake. RSVP to Eric Johnson at ejohnson@wacounties.org or Sarah Bright at sbright@wacounties.org.

Throughout the year, the WSAC Executive Board wants to solicit your thoughts on your Association and how we can continue to deliver the programs and services that are beneficial to you, your staff, and your citizens. As a reminder, your 2009 WSAC Executive Board members are:

- Mason County Commissioner Lynda Ring Erickson (President)
- Stevens County Commissioner Merrill Ott (Vice President)
- Snohomish County Councilmember John Koster (Secretary/Treasurer) and
- Douglas County Commissioner Mary Hunt (Past-President)

We look forward to seeing you at Roundtable events - and hearing from you!

Training & Upcoming Events

Washington Counties – [wacounties.org/Calendar of Events](http://wacounties.org/Calendar%20of%20Events)

County Training Institute – www.countytraininginstitute.org

The Washington Counties Risk Pool is offering five Public Records Act and E-Records training classes to all employees of our member counties free of charge. Employees of municipalities outside the Risk Pool may attend for a fee of \$50. The classes will be held in February 2009 and will be taught by Ramsey Ramerman. Ramsey is an attorney who specializes in helping local governments meet their obligations under the Public Records Act and other open government laws. He currently serves as the local government representative on the governors "Sunshine Committee".

Class attendees will be provided a short overview of the requirements of the Public Records Act however the focus of the class will be on responding to public records requests and managing your electronic records. Attendees will receive sample municipal Public Records Act Policies including policies governing how internal emails and other electronic records should be managed. The classes will last 3 ½ hours starting at 9:00 a.m. to allow for travel time. The class dates and locations are as follows:

- Wednesday, February 18, 2009, Kittitas County (Ellensburg)
- Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009, Spokane County (Spokane)
- Wednesday, March 4, 2009, Clark County (Vancouver)

The class flyer is attached. To register for any of the four classes, please click on the following link.

http://216.216.119.251/event_reg_publish.cfm

Please note: 3.5 CLE credits have been approved for this class.

Homeland Defense Journal in conjunction with Government*Horizons Inc. Training Workshop™

Managing Workplace Violence

**A 2-day Workshop on Implementing a "Detect, Prevent and Protect" Strategy
To Implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Program**

April 27-28, 2009 | Scottsdale, AZ

For details on all security training - go to www.HomelandDefenseJournal.net

Courthouse Ramblings

Representative Mary Skinner Remembered

After a lengthy battle with cancer, former state Representative Mary Skinner passed away Thursday, February 5, 2009 in her home in Yakima. She was 63. Mrs. Skinner was surrounded by her family when she passed.

Mary Skinner was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1994. She served for seven terms, including the last two as vice-chair of the House Republican Caucus, but announced last May she would not seek re-election and would retire from office when her term expired.

The daughter of migrant workers, Mrs. Skinner graduated from Central Washington University and spent the majority of her life in Yakima, always a tireless volunteer in many community groups and activities.

The House of Representatives passed a resolution honoring her and her work earlier in the session.

Joint services celebrating her life and the life of her husband, Dr. Henry Harlow "Hal" Skinner, Jr., who passed away January 17 at the age of 88, are pending through Keith and Keith Funeral Home in Yakima. A joint memorial scholarship fund is being established in honor of the Skinners.

Condolence cards may be sent to:

Mary Skinner family
420 Aero View
Yakima, WA 98908

Good Things

Ron Sims to be Nominated as HUD's Deputy Secretary

Visionary urban leader tapped to serve during time of crisis & opportunity

Feb 2, 2009

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama today announced he intends to nominate Ron Sims, County Executive of King County, Washington, to become the Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As the Deputy Secretary, Sims will be charged with managing HUD's day-to-day operations, a nearly \$39 billion annual operating budget and the agency's 8,500 employees.

Sims has earned numerous accolades and a national reputation for his environmental stewardship, aggressive reforms of government, and for willingness to make the tough choices necessary to ensure that American tax dollars are spent wisely.

"Ron's track record as an innovative leader with an exciting vision for the future of our nation's communities make him the perfect Deputy Secretary candidate as we tackle the nation's housing crisis amidst the biggest economic downturn in decades," said HUD Secretary, Shaun Donovan. "His experience at the helm of a large urban government provides a critical perspective and his collaborative approach to problem-solving has prepared him to effectively lead HUD's operations as the agency charts a new aggressive course."

"I am thrilled and honored that Ron has agreed to be considered for this role," added Donovan. "He is the perfect person to help HUD return to national leadership on metropolitan planning. Together, we will work with President Obama to ensure HUD is doing all it can to help the nation's communities recover from today's economic realities and to better position them for the future."

Sim's nomination requires confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Almost Time for Washington Counties Application Period!!

County elected officials and employees who have students in their families take note! The Washington Counties' Scholarship Fund is offering five \$3,000 awards to dependent children of county employees who will be enrolled full-time during the 2009-2010 school year in a baccalaureate program, associate degree program or vocational/technical certification program. On Monday, February 16, the complete information and application packet will be mailed to every county official, and information will be available on the web at www.wacounties.org. We encourage all students to apply!

Attachments

Welcome to the U.S. Communities Purchasing & Finance Agency

(U.S. Communities) website <http://www.uscommunities.org/>

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), jointly sponsor the

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities)

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Ray Burnett,
Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies
Kansas City, MO.



The Public Records Act And E-Records

Presented by
Ramsey Ramerman

- ✓ Overview of the Public Records Act
- ✓ What E-Records are subject to disclosure?
- ✓ Tips to help make finding and producing E-Records easier
- ✓ All about metadata and when you have to produce metadata to requesters
- ✓ Steps to build a Public Records Act policy that maximizes transparency while minimizing the burden on your county

Class Dates & Locations

Wednesday, February 4, 2009, Thurston County (Olympia)
Thursday, February 5, 2009, Skagit County (Mt. Vernon)
Wednesday, February 18, 2009, Kittitas County (Ellensburg)
Thursday, February 19, 2009, Spokane County (Spokane)
Wednesday, March 4, 2009, Clark County (Vancouver)

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