

# the Courthouse Journal

[WACOUNTIES.ORG](http://WACOUNTIES.ORG)

February 13, 2009

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Washington Association of County Officials  
Washington State Association of Counties

**Scholarships Available:** Here comes Spring – and a student’s fancy should be turning to – the Washington Counties Scholarship Fund! The application period is now open to qualifying children of county employees. Five \$3,000 scholarships will be awarded. A scholarship application is attached. All applications must be postmarked no later than April 1, 2009. Complete information is available at <http://wacounties.org/>.

*Don't miss this opportunity!*

## WSAC LSC Agrees Not to Oppose Potential Substitute Bill on Open Public Meetings

WSAC Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) has agreed not to oppose a potential substitute version of **HB 1676**, a bill championed by Attorney General Rob McKenna, State Auditor Brian Sonntag and Representative Lynn Kessler.

WSAC LSC expressed its appreciation for the many changes to the proposed bill resulting from negotiations with representative of cities, schools, ports, and libraries, as well as Attorney General McKenna, other representatives of the AG’s office and the State Auditor’s Office. We extend our thanks to both Attorney General McKenna and State Auditor Sonntag for working with WSAC and others on finding common solutions that will work for both local government and their respective offices.

WSAC LSC voted not to support the bill because of the double standard in the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). WSAC LSC believes that the OPMA should be applied equally to all legislative authorities, those at the local level, as well as the Washington State Legislature. Moreover, WSAC LSC highlighted the hypocrisy in the legislature for seeking greater transparency and penalties to local government for violations of the OPMA, which we accept and agree with, while the legislature itself exempts itself from the Open Public Meetings Act.

The proposed substitute bill as drafted contains a series of elements including: permission to tape executive sessions; a requirement to tape executive sessions if a legislative authority intentionally violates the open public meeting act; an advisory committee to provide advice on model rules, required training and the development and deployment of training materials.

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

<http://wacounties.org/>

## ***the Courthouse Journal***

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(WACO) [wacounties.org/waco](http://wacounties.org/waco)

and the **Washington State Association of Counties**

(WSAC) [wacounties.org/wsac](http://wacounties.org/wsac)

We welcome your suggestions and contributions. The weekly / bi-weekly deadline is noon Wednesdays. Direct inquiries and correspondence to - *The Courthouse Journal*, 206 Tenth Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501

**WACO** - (360) 753-7319 / Fax (360) 664-2812

**Debbie Wilke**, Executive Director

**James McMahan**, Deputy Director

**Robin Chase**, Financial Operations Manager

**Bob Carlton**, Research Associate

**Kathleen Houts**, Administrative Assistant

**WSAC** - (360) 753-1886 / Fax (360) 753-2842

**Eric Johnson**, Executive Director

### **Policy**

**Scott Merriman**, Deputy Director

**Rashi Gupta**, Policy Director

**Josh Weiss**, General Counsel/Policy Director

**Brian Enslow**, Policy Director

**Brad Banks**, Policy Analyst

**Jeff Killip**, WSALPHO Managing Director

**Linda Powell**, WSALPHO Admin Assistant

### **Operations – Finance & Technology**

**Karlyn Parten**, Finance Director

**Barbara Warden**, Finance Specialist

**Justin Kerrihard**, Technology Manager

### **Operations – Member Services**

**Michelle L. Nelson**, Communications/Member Services Director

**Sarah Bright**, Member Services Coordinator

**Beth Dubey**, Member Services Assistant

### **Program Contractors**

**Neil Aaland**, Columbia River Basin Project & Puget Sound Partnership

**Tom Robinson**, Timber Program Manager

**Gary Rowe**, WSACE Managing Director & Integrated Permitting and Mitigation Project (IPRMT)

**Tonia Sugarman**, County Training Institute (CPO) and L&I Retro Project Manager

## **WSAC Bylaws Review Committee Holds First Meeting**

WSAC President Lynda Ring Erickson convened the first meeting of the WSAC Bylaws Review Committee and immediately handed the reins to the two Committee Co-Chairs and WSAC District Presidents, Kitsap County Commissioner Josh Brown and Skamania County Commissioner Paul Pearce.

Joining these WSAC members on the Committee are:

- Cowlitz County Commissioner Axel Swanson
- Jefferson County Commissioner Phil Johnson
- Island County Commissioner Helen Price Johnson
- Pend Oreille County Commissioner Laura Merrill
- Yakima County Commissioner Kevin Bouchey
- Spokane County Commissioner Todd Mielke

Committee staff support is provided by Eric Johnson and Karlyn Parten.

Meeting materials, WSAC bylaws, examples of bylaws from other organizations, and current draft revisions are posted on the WSAC website for interested WSAC members to follow the proceedings. The current WSAC Bylaws are available at:

<http://www.wacounties.org/wsac/WSAC%20BYLAWS%2006.22.08.pdf>

The WSAC Bylaws Review Committee is meeting just prior to each Legislative Steering Committee meeting. The tentative plan is to have work done throughout 2009, with the following milestones:

- Bylaws Committee Report to the WSAC Board of Directors in March
- Bylaws Committee Report to the WSAC Board of Directors in May
- Bylaws Committee Report to the WSAC Membership in June at the Joint District Meetings
- Bylaws Committee Report to the WSAC Board of Directors in September
- Consideration of any proposed changes by the WSAC membership in November at the Annual Conference

This work fulfills one of the 2009 objectives for the Association - a comprehensive review of the WSAC Bylaws. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Pearce, President Ring Erickson or WSAC Executive Director Eric Johnson.

## **Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:**

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

**Bill Information:** [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)

## **Gov. Gregoire appoints Department of Agriculture Director**

Gov. Chris Gregoire today announced her appointment of Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Sunnyside, as director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

"I am honored that Dan has accepted this position," Gregoire said. "As a farmer and state legislator, Dan brings a wealth of experience to the Department of Agriculture and understands the important role agriculture plays in our state's economy, culture, and our future. I'm looking forward to his success in maintaining and expanding markets, protecting the quality and outstanding reputation of our agricultural products, and ensuring our agriculture families and business remain profitable and productive."

Rep. Newhouse is a graduate of Washington State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Economics and completed an Agriculture and Forestry Leadership program. He currently operates a 600 acre farm in the Sunnyside area, where he grows hops, tree fruits, grapes and alfalfa.

Currently serving his fourth term as a state representative, Newhouse is a past county board member and county president of the Washington State Farm Bureau. Newhouse has also served as president of the Hop Growers of Washington and the Hop Growers of America.

"I am excited about this opportunity to bring a farmers perspective to this agency, as well as a diverse point of view to the governor's cabinet," Newhouse said. "My commitment is to do what I can to ensure that we, as a state, provide an opportunity for agriculture to be a successful industry."

Gregoire has directed Newhouse to focus on developing strategies to expand international markets for our state's agriculture products. The governor has also asked Newhouse to work with the state's Department of Ecology to identify new water sources for Eastern Washington communities, farmers and fish.

"Dan is a great person who is a strong leader in the state's agriculture community," said Valoria Loveland, former Department of Agriculture Director. "He is familiar with the legislative process and very aware of the issues our state's famers, producers, and processors face, and is a perfect choice to lead the department."

"To have Dan selected from the field of highly qualified candidates for this position is a great honor, and strongly illustrates our governor's commitment to agriculture and rural Washington," said Ann George, administrator of the Washington Hop Commission.

Washington's Department of Agriculture is charged with assuring the safety of the state's food supply, ensuring the safe and legal use and disposal of pesticides and fertilizers, protecting the state's natural resources, and facilitating the movement of Washington's agriculture products in domestic and international markets.

Newhouse lives with his wife Carol and their two children, Jensena and Devon on their family farm. His appointment takes effect February 18. He will be paid an annual salary of \$122,478.

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# Budget, Finance and Taxes

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## Fiscal Health Package update

The three primary bills are:

1. **SB 5432** moves the conservation futures, mental health/developmental disabilities, and the veterans outside of levy limit. The bill also changes the EMS levy to simple majority and removes the non-supplanting language from the six-year levy lid lift. The Senate Government Operations Committee held a hearing on **SB 5432** on February 12, 2009. President Lynda Ring-Erickson testified on behalf of WSAC. The committee went into executive session right after the hearing and passed the bill out of committee to the Ways and Means Committee. The committee will hold a hearing on **SB 5433** next week.
2. **SB 5433** removes the non-supplanting language from the 1/10 mental health sales tax, removes the non-supplanting language from the 3/10 public safety sales tax and the non-supplanting language from the six-year property tax levy lid lift.
3. **SB 5960** removes the voter approved requirement to the 3/10 public safety sales tax; adds fire protection as an eligible expense; removes the non-supplanting language and creates a utility tax for the unincorporated areas of the county. Please contact the committee members to support these bills and pass them out of committee.

We have asked the Senate Ways and Means committee to hold hearings on **SB 5432**, **SB 5433**, and **SB 5960**. Please call your members on the Ways and Means Committee and ask them to vote yes on the bills.

## Property Tax Related Bills

Forty-five bills have been dropped so far this session dealing in some form with Property Tax, with the first cutoff date rapidly approaching. By and large, Current Use Bills have been the single most prevalent bills. Everything from attempts to redefine what Current Use should include, **HB 1232**, **SB 5817**, **HB 1508**, **HB 1733**, **HB 1815**, **SB 5792**, **HB 1979**, plus a bill relating to the Current Use Removal Provisions, **SB 5424**. It is probable that some changes will be incorporated and probably passed to some degree in the Current Use statutes. Whatever policy changes occur, it is still going to be up to the Assessor to place a Current Use Value on these lands. Traditionally in valuing these Farm and Ag Lands, either "Cash Rents" or "Net Return to a Landlord" were then capitalized using the Property Tax Component and the Interest Rate component that is furnished to all counties. It may well be more problematic trying to arrive at these values for what may become "service" oriented activities.

Next up are bills dealing with Annual Revaluation, **SB 5099**, **HB 1056**, and **SB 5368**. Of these, either **SB 5099** or **SB 5368** has a chance of progressing. We can only hope that even in the current economic climate people will realize how important this issue has become.

The next batch deals with what is commonly referred to as "Burden of Proof" bills. These are **HB 1523**, **SB 5965**, and **SSB 5179**. The first two are straightforward, but have to be scrutinized more carefully to determine the actual intent of the bills. Succinctly, if the State should choose to diverge from the current position of "clear, cogent and convincing" to the lower standard of "preponderance of evidence," this could conceivably lead to the highest shift of the property tax burden from business to homeowners that this state has ever seen. We would in fact mimic what happened in California several years ago. Business in general has been strongly supportive of this change. Assessor related and appraisal-related staff have strongly and vigorously opposed this and will continue to do so.

Not necessarily in order of importance, but the removal of words "Essential Government Services" as proposed in **HB 1526** and **SB 5641** has gotten a lot of folks to sit up and take notice. The WACO Board has taken the position to oppose both these bills.

That will do for now, these are probably the hottest of the hot.

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## ***Environment, Land Use & Resources***

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### **Washington Invasive Species Council Holds Strategic Plan Implementation Workdays**

The Washington Invasive Species Council held two strategic plan implementation workdays this fall in Parkland and Pasco. The Council completed a strategic plan in June of 2008. The workdays focused on “who, what, and how” to implement the top five recommendations from the strategic plan to prevent and control invasive species. The results of the workday sessions serve as the foundation for implementation work underway by the Council. Currently, the Council is:

- developing an impact assessment tool to prioritize a short list of invasive species for immediate Council attention
- working closely with Oregon to develop a regional logo and “800” number
- taking posters and educational materials to home and garden shows
- developing the scope of the baseline assessment and looking for options to fund the assessment
- working with the Biodiversity Council on the development of a biodiversity scorecard that includes invasive species
- developing new content for the Council web-site and the framework for the information clearinghouse.

Washington’s counties are represented on the Invasive Species Council by Franklin County Commissioner Bob Koch and Dana Coggon with the Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control Program.

More information on the Invasive Species Council, its new strategic plan, and the workdays can be found at:  
[http://www.rco.wa.gov/invasive\\_species/default.htm](http://www.rco.wa.gov/invasive_species/default.htm).

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## ***Training & Upcoming Events***

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

**County Training Institute** – [www.countytraininginstitute.org](http://www.countytraininginstitute.org)

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## ***Courthouse Ramblings***

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Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney **Gerald Horne** plans to retire in August, with a year remaining on his term. The 68-year-old told The News Tribune of Tacoma he’s eager to spend more time with his grandkids after 45 years in state and federal justice systems. Horne says he hopes Deputy Prosecutor Mark Lindquist will be named to replace him.

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# Attachments

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## 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)

Designed in cooperation with an Advisory Board of local government purchasing officials, U.S. Communities pools the purchasing power of public agencies, achieves bulk volume discounts on behalf of public agencies, competitively solicits quality products through a lead public agency and provides a purchasing forum for public agencies nationwide.

You can obtain information on how to contact all U.S. Communities suppliers by telephoning (866) 472-7467 or by sending an email to [info@uscommunities.org](mailto:info@uscommunities.org)

U.S. Communities | 2175 North California Blvd., Suite 550, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

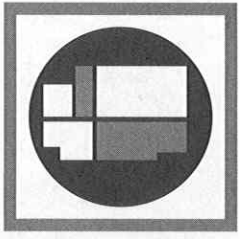
(866) 472-7467 | [info@uscommunities.org](mailto:info@uscommunities.org)

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"Results from our internal customer satisfaction survey show that our customers want two things from Purchasing. First save us time in the procurement process and second save us money. When Kansas City, Missouri uses a U.S. Communities contract we save both time and money for our customers."

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



WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES  
and  
WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY OFFICIALS



Telephone (360) 753-1886  
Fax 753-2842

Telephone (360) 753-7319  
Fax 664-2812

February 13, 2009

**TO:** Applying Student

**RE:** The Washington Counties Scholarship Application  
Five \$3,000 Washington Counties Scholarships

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To be considered, you must submit the following:

- *A signed and completed scholarship application.*
- *A **separate** sheet listing activities, honors and awards.*
- *Two letters of recommendation which must be signed.*
- *A personal statement (limit 300 words).*
- *A sealed transcript of your most recent grades.*
- *NO PICTURES, PLEASE.*

Completed applications must be **postmarked no later than Wednesday, April 1, 2009**. Awards will be made **in early May of 2009 for the 2009/10 school year**.

Send your completed application to:

**The Washington Counties Scholarship Fund  
206 Tenth Avenue SE  
Olympia WA 98501-1311**

Good Luck!

**WASHINGTON COUNTIES SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

2009/10 Scholarship Application

*Five scholarships in the amount of \$3,000 each will be awarded to eligible children of county employees and elected officials by the Washington Counties Scholarship Fund on behalf of the members of the Washington Association of County Officials (WACO) and the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC). Recipients must be full-time students in a baccalaureate degree, associate degree, or vocational/technical certification program. Eligible students are defined on the reverse side of this form.*

**I. Please type or print clearly:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

County of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

High School Attended: \_\_\_\_\_ Cumulative GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

College most recently attended (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Cumulative GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Year in school for 2009/10:     Freshman     Sophomore     Junior     Senior     Certification

Names of Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent(s) employed by County: \_\_\_\_\_

County where Parent is employed: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Please list the following on a separate sheet:**

- School and Community Activities/Involvement (include dates)
- Honors and Awards (include dates)

**3. To complete your scholarship application**, you must submit **two** letters of recommendation which must be signed; a personal statement discussing your academic goals and expectations (limit 300 words); and a **sealed** transcript from the high school or college you are currently attending. The packet must be postmarked and mailed no later than Wednesday, April 1, 2009. We suggest that you submit the required materials as a group. If letters or recommendations arrive separately, it is your responsibility to ensure that they are received by the deadline. If the packet is incomplete by this deadline you will be eliminated from consideration. Letters of recommendation should be from individuals who are particularly aware and supportive of your academic and leadership capabilities as well as your accomplishments to date and must be signed. Your overall score will be lower if all portions of the application are not complete. The highest number of points is assigned to your personal statement; you should compose it with this in mind. **NO PICTURES, PLEASE.** Forward your materials to the Washington Counties Scholarship Fund c/o Washington Counties Building, 206 10th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501. Please note that applications will not be retained nor returned by the Committee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## DEFINITIONS

**Eligible Applicants** are "children of county employees (including children of all elected officials) who are full-time students in a baccalaureate degree, associate degree, or vocational/technical certification program." (*Bylaws of the Washington Counties Scholarship Fund, Article II, Section 1.*)

**"Eligible Children...DOES NOT INCLUDE** children of the following:

- a. Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) Executive Committee;
- b. Washington Association of County Officials (WACO) Executive Officers and most recent Past President.
- c. Members of the Scholarship Fund Investment Committee and Selection Committee.
- d. Substantial Contributors, defined as being a member contributing \$1,000 or more in a consecutive two (2) year period.
- e. Other disqualifying individuals as defined by the IRS Code." (*BYLAWS OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTIES SCHOLARSHIP FUND, Article II, Section 5.*)

**Full-Time Student** is defined according to the criteria for "full-time" as defined by the institution being attended. **Children** as defined by the IRS are "dependent" and does not include emancipated children, spouses, or grandchildren of county employees.

## 2009/10 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION EVALUATION POINTS

<b>*Category</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Honors, awards, leadership	15
Personal statement	25
Personal initiative and family	10
Community and/or school involvement	15
Recommendations	<u>10</u>
	75

\* These are guidelines only...

*Grade point average is not always a deciding factor*