

the Courthouse Journal

WACOUNTIES.ORG

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Courthouse Journal*

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

Almost Time for Washington Counties Scholarships!

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 2010-2011 school year in a baccalaureate program, associate degree program or vocational/technical certification program.

The application will be attached to the **FEBRUARY 12th** Courthouse Journal and complete information and applications will be available on the web at <http://wacounties.org/waco/>.

We encourage all students to apply!

5th Annual NACo/Nationwide Scholarship

This spring, four high school seniors will earn \$2,000 for college from the NACo/Nationwide Scholarship. Winning applicants will have written a short essay describing why it's important for a public sector employee to start saving early for retirement.

This is the fifth consecutive year that Nationwide and NACo have teamed up to encourage high-school seniors to think about retirement.

Why spur students who haven't even started full-time work to think about retirement? Three reasons – by applying for the scholarship the students:

1. Must consider the financial impact of their decisions about college and their career and realize it is never too soon to start thinking about saving for retirement.
2. Begin to recognize the value perspective in turbulent financial times when often difficult decisions are required.
3. Identify specific actions that help prepare for a financially successful future.

To be eligible, applicants must be graduating high school seniors who are legal U.S. residents -- their parent or grandparent must be enrolled in and contributing to the

Job announcements & links to County Employment pages at:

<http://wacounties.org/>

the Courthouse Journal

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Washington Association of County Officials

(WACO) wacounties.org/waco

and the **Washington State Association of Counties**

(WSAC) 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 Av SE, Olympia, WA 98501

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NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. In addition, the student must enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study no later than the Fall term of the 2010–2011 school year at an accredited two- or four-year college.

In addition to these qualifications, applicants will also be asked to answer a question (in 500 words or fewer) on why it is important for a public sector employee to start early when saving for retirement.

The application and entry must be submitted on line no later than January 31, 2010. The NACo/Nationwide Scholarship is just one of the services arising out of a 30-year relationship between Nationwide and the National Association of Counties. As provider of the NACo deferred compensation program, Nationwide regularly reports to the NACo Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee on industry trends, updates statistics on the program and provides ongoing education on retirement issues. NACo receives from Nationwide Retirement Solutions payment for NACo's endorsement and license of its name and logo for use by Nationwide in connection with the NACo Deferred Compensation Plan and related products and services. These funds are used by NACo to enhance programs and services for the benefit of its members.

For more information about the scholarship

All of the information about eligibility, judging criteria and notification process are on the NACo and Nationwide Web sites. For more information, go to www.naco.org/retirementscholarship or www.nrsforu.com/scholarship.

Counties Featured on TVW This Week

WSAC members Commissioner Josh Brown, Kitsap County, Commissioner Todd Mielke, Spokane County, and Commissioner Steve Stuart, Clark County, were interviewed on the TVW show "The Impact" this week. The segment focused on county budget shortfalls and legislative proposals dealing with county flexibility.

To view the 14 minute video clip visit

<http://www.wacounties.org/wsac/news2.asp>.



WSAC would like to thank the three Commissioners for their participation and clarity in representing counties and the Association's legislative priorities, as well as TVW for their interest in and support of Washington's counties.

Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:

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

Bill Information: www.leg.wa.gov

Budget, Finance and Taxes

Eighteen Days into the 2010 Leg Session and Where are the Property Tax Bills?

Eighteen days and counting until the first cutoff date which is rapidly approaching on Tuesday, February 2, and there are few bills that directly affect property tax. We have [SHB 1597](#) which is more administrative in nature, but does have a few items such as extending the Senior Citizen renewal from 4 years to six years, and also increases the number of years you can recapture in property taxes from 3 to 5. It also creates an exemption for one Hospital. [SHB 1950](#) would require that Change of Value Notices sent by Assessors would need to be sent to all property owners, even if their value had not changed from the prior assessment year. This is a mixed bag, because 18 counties currently send notices to everyone already. Those that have not have all cited postage costs and Public furor over spending money to send a notice when there is no change in value. The real issue is preserving the taxpayers right to appeal a value, even if the value did not change. How would a taxpayer know when and how to appeal if they so choose? This bill may be shelved if a new bill directly addressing preserving the taxpayers right to appeal can be introduced into the system.

There did seem to be a small flurry of bills trying to address Church Property used for Farmers Market events. [HB 2402](#), [SB 6653](#), [HB 2439](#) [SB 6335](#), all tried to address the issue. Also in that same mix was [HB 2474](#) and [HB 2819](#) dealing with Exempt (Church generally) property used by and for nonprofit organizations for community activities or allowing for expanded use of Church property.

[HB 2501](#) deals with the cessation of PILT Payments to the county if a county chooses to allow grazing on lands managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

There were and continue to be attempts to gain more information for the voting public on ballot titles and voter pamphlets. [HB 2702](#) dealing with more Ballot Title Information did not receive a hearing in the State Government and Tribal Affairs Committee, but the Senate version [SB 6689](#) is scheduled for a hearing Monday, February 1 at 10:00 AM in the Government Operations and Elections Committee. In that same venue, [HB 2578](#) and [SB 6216](#), would require that the amount of rate increase be stated on the ballot. Washington State is a "budget based" property tax system since inception. That means that a taxing district is supposed to submit a budget request amount based on public hearings that determines the amount of money they reasonably need to perform their duties, and not on the maximum amounts they can legally levy. Any sole reference to the rate on a Ballot Title must be secondary in nature to the dollar amount. The dollars simply have to come first. [HB 2578](#) seems to have also stalled in the State Government and Tribal Affairs Committee, while [SB 6216](#) passed out of Government Operations and Elections with a "do pass" recommendation and is on the second reading calendar in Rules.

Property rights and restrictions also surfaced with [HB 2668](#) which would require an assessor to lower the property valuation if affected by a ground water extraction moratorium, and to also lower the levy amounts for everyone by a commensurate amount. This would force Assessors to reduce dollar amounts requested by taxing districts if so affected. So far, no hearing scheduled in House Finance, and the clock is ticking.

Two bills aimed at allowing Senior Citizens to deduct their Medicare Supplement premiums from the disposable income calculation seem stalled. Both [HB 2756](#) in the House, and [SB 6193](#) in the Senate lack hearing dates at this time. Another aimed at raising exemption income levels by \$5,000, [SB 6215](#) is awaiting a hearing in Senate Ways and Means.

Another Senate Bill, [SB 6723](#) would study the feasibility of eliminating the tax on personal property. Sounds good until you realize that Wind Turbines are Personal Property. Also, Personal Property as a component of State Assessed Utility Value is a substantial number. At this time it would be doubtful that the counties could withstand this huge reduction in their tax base. Since uniformity on most tax issues is required by the constitution, it would be difficult at best to single out only some Personal Property from taxes.

If there is a “hot button” topic, **SB 6766** may well fall into that category. It deals with the collection of Fire Patrol Assessments on private property. This bill premise has gone through many meetings prior to the Leg session, and probably still is not something that most feel they can live with.

Courts, Public Safety, Law & Justice

Spring 2010 Rural Law Enforcement Technology Institute Application Deadline Extended

For the eighth year, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is sponsoring a Rural Law Enforcement Technology Institute. This technology institute will be held May 2-7, 2010, in Coronado (San Diego), Calif., and is targeted for the command staff/supervisory personnel of rural and small law enforcement agencies containing fewer than 50 sworn officers. Law enforcement personnel will learn about and discuss technology initiatives and issues affecting the rural and small law enforcement community. Participants will receive information and assistance on existing and developing technologies, work through problems relating to technology implementation, and exchange technology lessons learned that are important to the rural and small law enforcement community.

As part of the program, participants are required to give a brief (no more than 15 minutes) PowerPoint presentation on a technology issue that their department has encountered or is in the process of implementing (e.g., implementation of a crime mapping program, new communications system or automated booking station). The presentation can be either issues to be dealt with or a lessons-learned format, depending on whether the program has been completed, and must be submitted on CD-ROM with the application.

There is no registration cost and all travel, food and lodging expenses are paid. However, only 35 individuals will be selected to attend. Previous attendees of the NIJ Rural Law Enforcement Technology Institute or the NIJ Technology Institutes for Law Enforcement or Corrections are not eligible to attend.

For a copy of the application form go to:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/training/rural-institute.htm>

The deadline for submitting an application is February 8, 2010. Applications not received by that date and/or applications submitted without a CD-ROM containing the PowerPoint presentation will not be considered. The application and PowerPoint CD-ROM should be mailed to the following address:

Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center, ATTN: Rural LE Tech Institute, 101 Bulldog Lane, Hazard, KY 41701.

For additional information, please contact Scott Barker, Deputy Director-Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center, at (866) 787-2553 or e-mail ruletc1@aol.com.

Courthouse Ramblings

WACO extends its deepest sympathies to WACO President **Barbara Wagner**. Barb’s mother Maxine Van Lanen passed away this week. Funeral services will be held in Kennewick on Tuesday. We will keep Barb and her family in our thoughts and prayers.

General Government Issues

2010 Legislative Session - First Cutoff Looming

WACO affiliates are working hard as the clock runs on the first cutoff. All bills must be out of the policy committees by Tuesday, February 5, but the House has imposed its own first deadline of February 2. The calendar that follows shows the calendar dates that relate to specific legislative days and notes session deadlines and floor action.

2010 Session Cutoff Calendar

January 11, 2010	First Day of Session
February 2, 2010	<i>House Policy Committee deadline.**</i>
February 5, 2010	Last day to read in committee reports in house of origin, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees. <i>House Appropriations committees deadline.**</i>
February 9, 2010	Last day to read in committee reports from House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees in house of origin.
February 16, 2010	Last day to consider bills in house of origin (5 p.m.).
February 23, 2010	<i>House Policy Committee deadline.**</i>
February 25, 2010	<i>House Appropriations committees deadline.**</i>
February 26, 2010	Last day to read in committee reports from opposite house, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.
March 1, 2010	Last day to read in opposite house committee reports from House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.
March 5, 2010	Last day to consider opposite house bills (5 p.m.) (except initiatives and alternatives to initiatives, budgets and matters necessary to implement budgets, differences between the houses, and matters incident to the interim and closing of the session).*
March 11, 2010	Last day allowed for regular session under state constitution.

* After the 54th day, only initiatives, alternatives to initiatives, budgets and matters necessary to implement budgets, messages pertaining to amendments, differences between the houses, and matters incident to the interim and closing of the session may be considered.

*** The House of Representatives has established additional deadlines (not contained in the traditional cut off resolution) to facilitate the work of its additional appropriation committees.*

The Governor has 5 days, excluding Sundays, to take action on any bill passed by the Legislature, provided adjournment does not occur within those 5 days.

Training & Upcoming Events

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

County Training Institute – www.countytraininginstitute.org

Permit Process Training Course Available

County staff and elected officials are invited to the following training opportunities provided by the Washington Cities Insurance Authority, a partner of the County Training Institute:

Washington Cities Insurance Authority

presents

Managing the Permit Process

A Practical Approach to Permit Handling and Liability Reduction

Featuring:

Michael C. Walter, Keating Bucklin and McCormack, Inc. P.S.

Grant K. Weed, Weed Graafstra Benson, Inc. P.S.

Topics:

Please join us as our panelists provide guidelines and risk management tools on:

- General information Requests
- The Pre-Application Process
- Applying for the Permit
- Internal Circulation and Review of the Permit Application
- Lawful Conditions and Fees
- Permit Issuance
- Dealing with Mistakes

Audience:

Planning and Permit Staff Responsible for Intake, Review and Issuance of Permits

Cost:

WCIA Members Free/ Non-Members \$135.00

Cancellations due 2 days prior. No-Shows will be billed \$50.00

Dates and Locations:

9:00 am to 3:30 pm

(Lunch on your own)

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Federal Way City Hall- Patrick Maher Room
33325 8th Avenue South Federal Way, WA 98003

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Cowlitz County PUD Building- Auditorium 961 12th Ave Longview, WA 98632

Wednesday, April 7, 2010

City Shops Room 110
2700 Duportail, Room 110 Richland, WA 99352

New date: Wednesday, March 3, 2010
Snoqualmie City Hall, Council Chambers
38624 SE River Street
Snoqualmie, WA 98065

Registration:

- Please go to our website www.wciapool.org and click "training schedule."
- Click until you get to the month of the training and then click on the title of the training.
- Next click "sign up."
- First time registering on line? Click "First Time Online Registration" and complete the Participant Form and create a user name and password to use to register for future trainings.
- Registered before? Enter your personal user name and password
- Forgot your password? Click the link below the log-in section

If you have any questions, please contact Member Services Assistant, Maria Orozco at mariao@wciapool.org or 206-575-6046 ext. 241.

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)

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

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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.