

WCCMA Summer Conference  
- Staying the Course -  
**“Saving Dollars and Improving  
Services in Lean Times,  
Leading Practices in  
City/County Cooperation”**  
Thursday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011



***Who We Are:***

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- **INTER-AGENCY COOPERATIVES**
- *Who, What, Why, When and Where?*



- \* **Who and What** is GEM?
- \* **Why** are Interlocal Agreements and interagency cooperation important?
- \* **When and Where** is inter-agency cooperation being practiced?



## **Who and What is GEM?**

**GEM** – stands for **G**rounds, **E**quipment and **M**aintenance, and is the official name of our Southwest Washington Inter-agency Cooperative. It consists of about 20 public agencies in and around SW Washington and Oregon.

GEM began in 1993 with the sole purpose of saving tax-dollars through the sharing of resources and facilities associated with public works maintenance and operations activities.



## **GEM's Mission Statement:**

**“Providing a cost efficient result to  
the community by sharing resources  
and facilities”**

# GEM VIDEO





- **Who are we? Members currently include: WSDOT, Clark County, multiple cities, Clark PUD, C-TRAN, numerous School & Port Districts, and several Oregon agencies.**
- GEM Agreement requires formal board adoption
- GEM meets on a quarterly basis to share ideas, successes and efficiencies.
- GEM has an interactive website that members can access to share information.
- Annual Snowball meeting held to discuss snow including equipment and materials.





## **GEM's first meeting: April , 1993**

Attended by the Cities of: Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver & Washougal, along with Clark County



## **GEM – Current Member Agencies**

Clark County

Washington State Dept of Transportation

C-Tran Transit Agency

Clark Public Utilities

Clark Regional Wastewater District.

Port of Vancouver

Port of Camas-Washougal

Evergreen School district

Vancouver School district

Battle Ground School District



## **Plus the cities of:**

**Vancouver**  
**Washougal**  
**Woodland**  
**Ridgefield**  
**Town of Yacolt**

**Camas**  
**BattleGround**  
**LaCenter**  
**Portland**



**WHY? . . . .**

Should an agency participate  
in inter-agency cooperation?





Does your agency have equipment or want to obtain equipment that could be more cost effective to own if more agencies used it?



## -Example

City of Camas and City of Washougal purchased a street sweeper together, utilizing it in both cities, sharing maintenance and operating cost.





Does another agency  
have equipment that your  
agency would like to use?





- **Drainage System Maintenance Project – Vancouver, WA** – As members of GEM (Grounds, Equipment and Maintenance), which is a regional interagency cooperative, Three local governments – Clark County, the city of Vancouver and Clark Regional Wastewater District worked together to clear a plugged culvert before the onset of rainy weather.
- The culvert, which runs under Northeast 99th Street between Highway 99 and Northeast 25th Avenue, was at least 90 percent filled with sediment.
- Scott Wilson, Clark County Public Works operations superintendent, said the county wanted to clear the culvert without pushing sediment into a pond north of Northeast 99th Street, but it lacked the equipment to get the job done.
- Enter the city of Vancouver, which has a flusher truck that can pump up to 80 gallons a minute. The city also provided two vacuum trucks that, when used with a county vacuum truck and a fourth one from Clark Regional Wastewater District, were able to suck up the sediment as it was flushed from the culvert.
- “They were able to pull out at least a hundred yards of sediment,” Wilson said. “This is something we would have never been able to handle ourselves in-house.”
- The mini-fleet of four vacuum trucks made about 25 runs to an Orchards disposal site during the two-day operation. Wilson said the county will pay the city for its labor and equipment and will provide some type of service to the sewer district, such as paving, as noncash compensation.
- “Everybody was very supportive,” he said. “They wanted to jump in to help out.””

**GEM**



- Clark PUD mainbreak under Clark County road. City of Vancouver provided their milling machine and operator, Clark County provided dump trucks and Clark PUD provided traffic control.



*Are there occasions when you or others in your agency would like to get reliable help with technical problems quickly, from experts at minimal or no cost?*



Inter-agency meeting in Regional Training Center auditorium  
– our quarterly networking meeting



Is there some type of service that your agency performs that could be used by another agency?

Is there some type of service that your agency could benefit from?



NWRTC – Est.  
2001 for  
regional L&I  
Safety Training  
Services

Partnership for a Stormwater Decant Facility -  
Through partnerships and the WDOE grant, Clark County was able to build one of the largest decant facilities in the State of Washington for less than one-third the cost (2001). And through partnerships the County will continue to save money on capital improvements at the decant facility.





## **Grant Award!**

In 2001, through the Centennial Clean Water Fund Grant process, the Department of Ecology gave Clark County, the City of Vancouver, and Washington State Department of Transportation \$206,000 towards building phase II of their multi-agency Decant Facility.



**GEM**  
Southwest Washington  
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Recent Purchases for Vancouver's  
Surface Water Fleet





Whatley Decant Facility under construction





Clark County's Whatley Decant Facility – as it looks today





**Would** it be useful to have an agreement in place for emergency events, like ice storms, floods, windstorms?



## -Example

City of Camas had a sewer back up with potential for claims. They called the City of Vancouver with no delay to bring in their TV pipeline inspection van to find the source of the problem.



## -Example

During 2008 snow event, Clark County was low on salt for making brine and was able to purchase salt from the City of Vancouver to continue snow/ice operations until their salt delivery came in.





## **Inter Local Agreement's – Why have them?**

Having an Interlocal Agreement already in place, & ready to go, speeds up the process when we need to provide services between agencies.



## **Example –**

City of Vancouver seeking help with peak summertime crack sealing operations.

# Combined sales of Surplus items





**Where** is Interagency  
Cooperation being  
practiced today?

# GEM AT WORK-Joint operation for PUD at Klineline park.



# COV Paving NE 99<sup>th</sup> St off ramp for WSDOT





- I-5 Off-ramp at NE 99<sup>th</sup> St (City of Vancouver

# COV Milling for Washougal



- Other Examples –
- City of Camas cleaned catch basins for Clark County, to help meet a program deadline;
- Clark Regional Wastewater District assists Clark County with TV-ing some of their storm lines;
- City of Vancouver's drainage crew assists the County with TV-ing some of their storm lines;
- City of Vancouver assists Battle Ground with a collection system study with a 12 month loan of five sewer flow monitors



***“Embrace change. It’s going to happen whether you like it or not”***

Odette Pollard, *Writer*



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**Questions ?**

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