



WCMA News

Volume 18, No. 1, April, 2006

President's Message

We are in the business of making our communities great places to live. In some cases that involves preserving great things that already exist while we try to make it even better. In other cases it means struggling to improve what may currently be quite bleak. In most of our communities it is probably a mixture of the two. It is work that is very complex, challenging, demanding and sometimes exhausting. I hope you find great satisfaction in your work. On those days when that is difficult, remember that things of real value very rarely just happen. I also hope you find some inspiration in the attached transcript and in the news from your colleagues about the many things they are doing to make this country and their towns, cities and counties great places to live. Keep up the great work!

Presented to the Civic Tourism conference, March 16, 2006, Prescott, Arizona

www.civictourism.org

THE GEOGRAPHY OF SOMEWHERE

by Scott Russell Sanders

From reading a book of mine called Staying Put, Dan Shilling knows I believe that Americans gad about too much. Our ceaseless mobility burns up the Earth's dwindling supply of petroleum, destabilizes the climate, enslaves us to tyrannical regimes in the Middle East, embroils us in war, buries more and more of our landscape under pavement, and shatters our communities. I don't wish to encourage any more idle movement. So I would appear to be an odd choice as an opening speaker at a conference on tourism—just how odd, you can decide after you've heard what I have to say.

Too often, tourism is only another form of shopping, treating the whole country as a gigantic mall offering trinkets and distractions for sale. Too often, it is driven by a yen for golfing or gambling, a craving for novelty or scenery, or by simple boredom. If we're going to rove about the continent, burning up oil and jeopardizing our grandchildren's future, we ought to be prompted by larger motives. Can tourism become something more meaningful and rewarding not only to travelers but also to the places they visit and the home places to which they return? I hope so; I believe so; and that is why I traveled from Indiana to speak here today.

When I accepted Dan's invitation, I told him I would explore three main ideas; let me list them now so you will know where I am headed. First, I will consider why so many American towns and cities feel like jumbles rather than communities, without pattern or purpose. Second, I will sketch some of the qualities that give certain places a distinctive, captivating character. Finally, I will propose that, having experienced the integrity, vitality, and beauty of another place, we should return home inspired to foster those qualities in our own communities.

What I'm arguing is that tourism at its best can be a kind of vision quest, in which we journey away from the familiar world to encounter some alien setting, some natural or cultural or spiritual presence that enlarges our understanding, and then we journey home to act out that larger vision in our households, neighborhoods, towns, and cities. As in a mythic quest, what begins as a private search ends up enhancing the life of the tribe. If that sounds like a grand comparison, well, it is meant to be grand, but also attainable and compelling.

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Let me begin, then, by suggesting why so many of our towns and cities fail to provide those who live there, as well as those who visit, with a vibrant sense of place. What it means to lack a sense of place was memorably expressed by the writer Gertrude Stein. On a return trip to the United States after years of living in Europe, Stein visited Oakland, California, where she had grown up. She could find no trace of her childhood home, no durable landmarks at all, leading her to remark that she could not imagine settling down and writing in Oakland, for "there is no there there."

Whether Stein's judgment was fair in the 1930s, when she voiced it, or whether it is fair now, I can't say, since I have never set foot in Oakland. But her judgment strikes me as all too true of many American cities and towns, where any sense of character or coherence has been eroded by the forces of development. Uniform highway design, strip malls, cookie-cutter suburbs, manufactured housing, garish franchise architecture, and box stores surrounded by deserts of blacktop have made our settlements less and less distinct from one another. The mass media contribute to this homogenizing of America by smearing across the land a single, sleazy imagery whose overriding goal is to grab our attention and sell it to sponsors, and whose underlying goal may be to mold our minds into thinking as the owners of the media wish us to think. Chains of radio stations play the same music and recite the same headlines; chains of newspapers print the same articles; chains of bookstores feature the same books; cable and satellite networks beam the same programs from Florida to Alaska. Over the airwaves, on billboards and T-shirts, through computers and phones, the usual products are peddled coast to coast. As a result of these trends, we spend more and more of our lives in built environments or in virtual environments that are monotonous, ephemeral, rootless, and ugly.

Here in the heart of Prescott, it's easy to imagine that I exaggerate. But for every Prescott or Portland or pre-Katrina New Orleans, for every Santa Fe or Sitka, for every Beacon Hill or Greenwich Village or Chinatown there are hundreds of American places

that have lost touch with their past, have cut themselves off from their surrounding landscape, have succumbed to the blight of sprawl; and even in Prescott, if you venture out from the town center, you will see the same corrosive influences at work. Every now and again, here and there, citizens will rise up on their haunches and defend their turf against invasion by Wal-Mart, McDonald's, or some other Goliath; but Goliath never sleeps, never takes no for an answer, never runs out of money or political friends, and eventually the giant gets its way. So the homogenizing of America goes implacably on, street by street, real estate parcel by parcel, restaurant by office by store, and we adjust to this regimentation in the same way that we adjust to rising levels of pollution, congestion, violence, and noise. Over the past half century, we have surrendered to the tyranny of automobiles, as if their care and feeding were the central purpose of cities, and we have allowed our home places to become the colonies of global corporations, which bear no connection to local history, culture, or terrain. The resulting desolate hodgepodge is what James Howard Kunstler has called "The Geography of Nowhere."

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One cannot feel delight or pride in a place, a sense of belonging to a place, or a concern for the well-being of a place, if "there is no there there." So it's not surprising that the erosion of our towns and cities has coincided with a retreat by Americans from civic life. The two trends reinforce one another. Our communities turn into jumbles because not enough people are looking after them, and ever fewer people are willing to look after places that have lost their souls. The retreat from civic life has been documented by Robert Bellah and his colleagues in Habits of the Heart, by Daniel Kemmis in Community and the Politics of Place, and by Robert Putnam in Bowling Alone, to mention a few examples of a growing literature. Whatever the reasons for this cultural shift, in recent decades increasing numbers of Americans have been withdrawing from involvement with local schools, clubs, and cultural institutions; giving up their subscriptions to local newspapers; abandoning main street merchants in favor of chain stores; neglecting to vote in local elections and otherwise ignoring community politics, except to demand lower taxes. The burgeoning megachurches may seem to be an exception to this trend, but they are in fact a symptom of it, for they tend to focus on personal salvation rather than service to one's neighbor, on heavenly bliss rather than earthly renewal.

And as we retreat from civic life, where do we go? Into the cocoon of private consumption, which often necessitates longer working hours and second jobs; into therapy of one sort or another; into drink and drugs and other chemical pacifiers. Year by year, we spend less time outdoors interacting with neighbors or observing nature, more time in air-conditioned cars negotiating traffic or indoors transfixed by the electronic never-never land flickering on screens. Those screens tell us, through relentless advertising, that our pleasure, appearance, comfort, and status matter more than anything else; they tell us that the earth exists to satisfy our cravings; they tell us that we alone, out of all species and all generations, are the ones who count; and the voracious ego in each of us nods in agreement.

Can tourism serve as an antidote to narcissism and homogenization? Can it draw us out of our self-preoccupation and revive our concern for the public realm? Can it help us recover or create a vital sense of place in our communities, whether or not they are tourist destinations? Can it help transform us from consumers into stewards? Those, I believe, are the key questions we have before us here in Prescott. As I said at the outset, much tourism is only a far-flung shopping trip, yielding photographs or floor shows or a winter tan. Except for differences in climate or scenery, one shopping destination scarcely differs from another. Travelers return from such expeditions lighter in the wallet but otherwise unchanged. The kind of tourism that interests me, the only kind I am willing to advocate, would challenge and inspire travelers by providing them with experience of a real place, a distinctive place, a place with its own history, culture, and texture. This is what I imagine civic tourism to be—an immersion of the traveler in the geography of somewhere.

What are the qualities that make a town or city feel not like a generic outpost of the mall of America but like someplace in particular, with its own character and charisma, a place worthy of a tourist's deep engagement and of a citizen's love? To offer a comprehensive list of such qualities would take far more time than I have. So let me sketch a few of the features that distinguish real places from phony ones.

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A real place feels as though it belongs where it is, as though it has grown there, shaped by weather and geography, rather than being imported from elsewhere and set down arbitrarily like a mail-order kit. The connection to geography shows up in building materials, such as the adobe of Arizona and New Mexico, the cedar of Oregon, the limestone of Indiana, or the pine of Georgia and Maine; it shows up in architecture, such as the shady verandas of the Gulf Coast, the passageways linking house to barn in New England, the silos and grain elevators jutting from the prairie horizon of the Midwest, or the steel roofs on the rainy west flanks of the Cascade Mountains; and it shows up in food, such as Boston clam chowder or New Orleans gumbo or Milwaukee beer or Kansas City steak.

A real place is also distinguished by a vigorous local economy, one that draws on resources from the region and on the skills of its own citizens. Key enterprises, from factories to coffee shops, reflect the taste and judgment of the local people who own them, rather than the dictates of distant corporations. Although such an economy may produce goods and services for sale in the global market, it begins by serving the needs of the community, for jobs and healthcare as well as for food, shelter, clothing, and entertainment. Dollars spent in the community circulate there for a spell, instead of being immediately whisked away to some remote headquarters.

Visitors will know they have arrived in a real place when they deal with clerks who do not wear uniforms, when they find in shops well-crafted articles whose makers live nearby, when they discover on restaurant menus dishes they could not order anywhere else. They will know they have arrived in a cherished place when artists choose not

merely to live there but to photograph and paint it, to write and sing of it; when archaeologists and historians delve into its past; when naturalists keep track of the local flora and fauna; and when elders pass on all of this lore to the young. A real place conveys a sense of temporal depth, a sense that people have been living and laboring here for a long time. The traces of earlier generations are preserved in festivals and folkways and habits of speech; in old buildings that have been restored and kept in service; in landscapes that are still devoted to orchards, dairies, woodlots and other traditional uses. While honoring the past, a real place is not trapped there, the way Colonial Williamsburg, Plymouth Plantation, Dearborn Village, and other historical reconstructions are frozen in time. A real place is alive and changing, like any organism, gaining and losing residents, tearing down and building up. Yet there is continuity amid the change. However shiny the new surface of a dynamic city or town, it does not obliterate the deeper layers. New construction harmonizes with earlier architecture. New practices acknowledge older customs. Newcomers learn from old-timers. Although a place like Taos or Tucson is in danger of being smothered by the effects of its own charm, the charm endures, and it has much to do with the layered presence of Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo influence, a tumultuous history stretching back over centuries. In a nation still relatively new, reminders of the past are all the more precious. Visitors stroll the avenues of Oak Park, Illinois, to see among the recent houses a handful of lovingly preserved homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright; they flock to Philadelphia to see, in the midst of flashy newness, the Liberty Bell or the gravestone of Ben Franklin or an eighteenth-century Quaker meetinghouse; they journey to spots in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois to see traces of Lincoln, and they range from Gettysburg to Vicksburg in search of Civil War battlefields. Tokens of the past may be newly-built, such as the arch at St. Louis commemorating Lewis & Clark's journey of discovery, or the reconstructed boats in Green River, Utah, modeled after those used by John Wesley Powell on his descent of the Colorado. We glimpse a past reaching back more than a thousand years in the architecture and lifeways of Hopi pueblos or Tlingit villages, and we sense an even deeper past among the ancient earthworks of the Upper Mississippi and its tributaries, as at Cahokia in Illinois or the Serpent Mound in Ohio. Even when the history is troubling—as it is in the massacre site at Wounded Knee or the slave market of Charleston or the whaling wharfs of New Bedford or the industrial ruins of Pittsburgh—we are better off knowing the history than ignoring it, and each of these places is more engrossing for having preserved a record of its past. The presence of history, good and bad, not only enriches our experience of place, it also reminds us that we who are alive now suffer as well as benefit from the actions of our ancestors, and that our actions, in turn, will affect those who come after us.

Americans need such a reminder now more than ever, as we add nearly half a trillion dollars each year to the national debt our children will have to repay, as we use up natural resources at an accelerating rate, and as we degrade the biosphere.

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A real place keeps us mindful of nature, as it keeps us mindful of history. In the built environment one feels the presence of the living environment—in parks, gardens, bike and pedestrian trails, river corridors, beaches, urban forests, and yards given over to

native plants, and in all the creatures, from crows to coyotes, that share the place with our

two-legged kind. Imagine New York City without Central Park, or Chicago without the lakefront, or Madison without the arboretum. One cannot think of Lexington, Kentucky, apart from the necklace of bluegrass horse farms, or of Moscow, Idaho, without the rolling doeskin hills of the Palouse, or Denver without its view of the Rockies, or San Francisco without the Bay.

Although we can't summon up spectacular settings for our home places, we can make the most of whatever nature gives us. In recent years, Providence has uncovered the rivers that flow through downtown, Louisville has restored the riverfront along the Ohio, Indianapolis has built a string of parks beside the White River, Cleveland has become reacquainted with Lake Erie; and in doing so, each city has reclaimed some of its identity. Even if our home grounds are not blessed with big rivers or great lakes, we can support land trusts and local governments in their efforts to expand the amount of green space in our communities; we can turn abandoned railway lines into trails and turn vacant lots into gardens; we can plant trees along our streets; we can replace our lawns with native shrubs and wildflowers and ferns; we can grow food for birds and butterflies as well as for ourselves; we can create ponds and prairies in our school grounds, enabling children to play safely in patches of wildness; we can limit sprawl, so that open country remains within reach of city dwellers; we can shade outdoor lights and clean up the air and welcome the stars back into our night skies.

A community can also maintain its link to the countryside by feeding itself at least partly from nearby sources—often through farmers' markets, where local produce is sold directly by growers to eaters, instead of being shipped hundreds or thousands of miles. If you were to visit my hometown of Bloomington, for example, depending on the season, you could walk with me among market stalls heaped with corn, fragrant cantaloupes, gourds the size of bushel baskets, eggplants like giant purple tears, and beeswax candles smelling of meadows. You could gather the whole alphabet of fruits and vegetables, from apples to zucchinis, or a bouquet of gladiolas, poppies, lotus blossoms, and phlox. You could listen to musicians playing reggae, rock-and-roll, classical, or Afro-pop. You could sign petitions, register to vote, question political candidates, or volunteer to work for a local cause. And you could watch all manner of people, from grizzled quarriers in bib overalls to executives in suits to college students in cut-off jeans to Tibetan Buddhist monks in burgundy robes, all milling together, their faces radiant with joy, as they fill their bags and arms with bounty. They talk, touch, greet friends, dandle babies, exchange notes and promises; they shelter from the rain under pavilions or tilt their faces to the sun. In those faces you can read the pleasure that draws humans together into villages and cities, the delight in sharing words, food, beauty, and laughter.

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This delight in the company of other people, so evident in farmers' markets, is another quality of captivating places. Unlike the private, often exclusive conviviality of clubs, the conviviality I'm talking about is public, open to people of all ages and classes and descriptions. A vital community provides many gathering spots, from auditoriums and

barbershops and cafes to playgrounds and plazas and parks, where people are free to mix with neighbors and strangers; the more diverse the mixture, the more illuminating the

experience is likely to be. As far back as we can trace human settlement, our ancestors created public spaces for the exchange of goods and ideas, such as the bazaars and courtyards of the ancient Near East or the agorae of ancient Greece. Here in America, town halls and village greens helped shape the ideals of democracy. Insofar as we have kept those ideals alive, we have done so through creating arenas where all citizens can enter and all voices can be heard.

A shopping mall is a poor imitation of these convivial places. True, anyone may enter, but the space is owned by a corporation rather than by the community. It is not designed to bring people together but to separate them from their money. The stores, which may be found in hundreds of other malls, bear no relation to geography. None of the goods for sale was locally produced. None of the food served in the restaurants was locally grown. The recipes, like the window displays and piped-in music, have been imposed from some distant headquarters. There is no freedom of assembly, as you can find out by trying to protest the sale of sweatshop products or fur coats, and there is no freedom of expression, as you can find out by trying to circulate a petition against our nation's latest war. Unlike an open-air market, a shopping mall is cut off from the weather, the seasons, the cycles of daylight and dark; it might as well be a spaceship, for all the connection it has to the community or the planet.

In a genuine gathering space, people from all walks of life may argue and joke and swap stories and admire one another's babies and sympathize with one another's aches, all the while feeling at home. Indeed, such gathering spots extend our sense of home beyond the four walls where we happen to sleep. The true wealth of a community shows up not in the grandeur of private residences but in the quality of libraries, schools, museums, parks, courthouses, galleries, and other public arenas.

It should go without saying that we encounter real places not by gazing through windshields or by gaping at screens but by walking. Alluring places invite us to immerse ourselves, to open all our senses. Sidewalks become more important than streets; parks become more important than parking lots. On foot, we experience the world in three dimensions; we move at a speed that allows us to absorb and savor and reflect. By comparison, the world presented by the electronic media is disembodied, stripped down, anemic. To compensate for that impoverishment, the virtual world must become ever more hectic and sensational if it is to hold our attention. The actual world, the three-dimensional array of sights and textures and tastes and sounds that we find in a vibrant city or town, needs no hype in order to intrigue us.

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What all of us long for, I suspect, is to love the places in which we live and to live in places worthy of love. Surrounded by sham and disarray, we hunger for integrity and authenticity. We wish to dwell somewhere rather than nowhere. The list of qualities that distinguish a real place from a phony one might be greatly extended. But I hope I have said enough to suggest why cities and towns endowed with a rich, deep, coherent sense of

place might inspire visitors to nurture similar qualities back home. By carrying home the

benefits of a journey, we complete the circle, we pass on the gift. Tourism can be truly “civic,” rather than merely another form of private consumption, only if it preserves and celebrates the commonwealth in the place visited as well as the place to which the visitor returns. “Commonwealth” is a venerable word that has fallen out of use in our hyperindividualistic culture. On television, in advertising, from board rooms and podiums, we hear incessantly about private wealth, but we rarely hear about the wealth we share. Yet the well-being of individuals and of communities utterly depends on that shared wealth—clean air and water, fertile soil, good schools and libraries, safe streets, honest government, a fair system of laws, an abundance of public lands, access to the world’s accumulation of knowledge and art, and countless other blessings that we inherit by virtue of our membership in the human family. Insofar as tourism enhances the commonwealth, it is a blessing; insofar as it depletes the commonwealth, it is a curse. Tourism worthy of being called “civic” would show us the lives people lead together in a place, how they cooperate, make decisions, solve problems, enjoy one another’s company, and look after their home ground. It would renew our appreciation for the security that arises from neighborliness and mutual aid. It would encourage us to think about our cities, towns, and countryside as arenas for our common life, and not merely as patchworks of private property. It would remind us that we are responsible for the care of our communities, for the health of the land, and for one another. In short, civic tourism would educate us to become better citizens, first of our neighborhoods and ultimately of our nation and planet.

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If my hopes seem high, perhaps you will understand why, when I tell you that I became a grandfather not quite three years ago. The birth of that child set me thinking even harder about our responsibility to future generations. We have been given much, especially those of us with the freedom to travel, and we should feel duty bound to preserve the sources of those gifts. We should do everything we can to reinvigorate our waning democracy and to heal our damaged land. I realize that a revival of citizenship, with a renewed concern for the commonwealth, will require more than the most virtuous forms of tourism. But I also believe that civic tourism, rightly pursued, might help us turn toward a saner, kinder, more peaceful and equitable world. That is the world I want for my granddaughter, and for all children forever.

Malcolm Fleming, WCMA President
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Six reminders:

1. There is no longer a paper directory of the WCMA members. Instead, it’s readily available in electronic format. Go to <http://wccma.org>. Click on “Membership.” Then click on “Directory.” Type in the person’s last name, the city, or what you know, and

click. Information on the website is only as good as it is provided to MRSC. It's up to you to send information so it can be up to date. Now would be a good time to take a look

and send us any updates or corrections needed. If a correction is needed, please send the information to Donita Mowers at dknutson@mrsc.org. She'll enter the changes as soon as you supply them. Or if all else fails, you can e-mail me the information at rbartels@mrsc.org.

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3. WCMA has an e-mail broadcast ability. The address is wcm@yahoo.com. Being on it is *not* automatic. You have to request being included. If you're not, please use e-mail to contact Donita Mowers at the MRSC office and make a request to be included. Then you won't find yourself missing any of the included messages.
4. There are times when WCMA members are the world's worst at letting us at MRSC know that times have changed. Or that your location, e-mail address, job status, or what have you, has changed and needs updating. And though there are times when we sometimes think we have a degree of talent here, we don't read minds well. And we're the WCMA secretariat. So **PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE** help us out and keep us notified and up to date. Please let either Donita Mowers or me know. Our two e-mail addresses are dknutson@mrsc.org, and rbartels@mrsc.org. And thanks!!
5. **IMPORTANT!** That person here at MRSC that we all rely upon, Donita Mowers, recently was married. So she has both a new last name, and as a result, a new e-mail address. It's no longer dmowers@mrsc.org. To reach Donita, and actually have her receive the message, **THE CORRECT ONE TO DONITA IS** dknutson@mrsc.org.
6. **ALSO IMPORTANT!!** The WCMA website (<http://wccma.org>) is actually hosted by the WCMA website. But it needs its own address to get to it. And as the MRSC website is continually upgraded for better function, a number of limitations occur, or at least some of us who have less knowledgeable about such things may claim that's the case. One of the recent admonitions provided by the MRSC computer guru types is that it's better to enter something onto a website and then gain access that way, rather than try to send a very long attachment on a particular document. That being the case, this issue of WCMA News is being posted on the WCMA website so it won't get classified as "junk" by some of the filter programs out there, which we hear about from time to time and

which gets changed by individual users and user groups from time to time. For that reason, for the first time, this edition is **only** being posted to the website. Just in case

you have any trouble getting to it, please let us know, and we'll try to devine another delivery method. But to review, go to <http://wccma.org>. In the middle of the line at the top, you'll see "Newsletter". Click on it. The first item on the list that comes up should be "• [WCMA Newsletter – April 2006](#)". Click on that and enjoy the latest issue.

*Ron Bartels, Editor, WCMA News
Public Policy and Management Consultant
Municipal Research & Services Center of Washington*

Need Advice or Help?

What to do? Of course! Call a **Range Rider!!** There are four of them! Lots and lots of experience to draw from. They are:

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*Last contact, Al said his e-mail was down.

And now, the news:

Region 1, Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap & Mason Counties
Lynn Nordby, Consultant
lnordby@msn.com or lnorby@MUNI.com

David Timmons, city manager, **Port Townsend**, reports that they just moved into their new city hall addition. Talk about long lead-time, from conceptual design to move took 60 years! David

also reports that the city has finished a new fire station EOC/headquarters. Sidewalk surfers are also enjoying the new city skate park as well.

On the international front, David just returned from a third trip to Croatia (“third time is a charm” he says), which kept him away from last month’s Northwest Management Conference at the Inn at the Mountain in Welches, Oregon. Sorry to have missed the volleyball game.

Lynn Nordby, honorary life member now consulting for MuniFinancial, has been promoted to principal consultant with the firm. In addition he’ll soon join the ranks of daily ferry commuters leaving his residence on **Bainbridge Island** to manage new MuniFinancial offices opening in June in **Bellevue**. Watch your mail for an announcement.

Region 2, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific & Thurston Counties
Mike McCarty, Assistant Director, Operations and Services, AWC
mikem@awcnet.org

Don Morrison, city administrator of **Bonney Lake**, reports that after a five year hiatus, the **Bonney Lake** city council reinstated the position of city administrator and approved his appointment and promotion to that position. He had been the administrative services coordinator there. **Bonney Lake** has been among the fastest growing Washington cities in the past few years (from 9,980 pop. in 2001 to 15,000 today). Current issues and projects include a reorganization of city government, recent completion of a 6 year financial planning model tied to the CIP, creation of a "one stop shop" for citizen service requests/complaints, completion of a non-motorized transportation plan, and work towards a redeveloped downtown (town center) integrated into a civic center (public safety building, library, post office, and proposed new civic center all in the same downtown vicinity). For those wondering where former **Carnation** city manager Woody Edvalson is, he is now the administrative services director/city clerk in **Bonney Lake**.

From **Centralia**, J. D. Fouts, city manager, comes the following:

For the past several years, operations of the **Centralia** fire department and **Lewis County** Fire District 12 (FD 12) have become more closely integrated and coordinated through a number of intergovernmental agreements designed to remove boundaries, improve initial response staffing, improve emergency medical service to citizens and improve training coordination. One of these agreements established a “joint board” composed of representatives from both FD 12 and the **Centralia** city council. The joint board reviewed how a more closely integrated system might provide better service and possibly reduce costs. An advisory group of stakeholders was formed -- stakeholders who had an interest in quality fire and life safety services. In January 2006, the joint board, with support from the advisory group, presented a proposal to further streamline the operations of the **Centralia** fire department and FD 12, which was unanimously accepted. The result is a consolidation of administrative management, and the first step toward a potential full

merger into one department. **Centralia** and **Lewis County** Fire District 12 are now operating under a one year agreement, which provides for common leadership. Jim Walkowski has been hired to serve as the new chief. New recommendations will emerge toward the end of 2006 to set the strategy for the future.

The **Centralia** and **Chehalis** police departments have formed a Twin City Anti-Crime Unit to target street level deliveries of illegal drugs. This partnership is a departure from the previous UNET drug task force, which is no longer operating due to the end of grant funding. The Twin City Anti-Crime Unit is focusing on the problems associated with street level delivery and use of methamphetamine. The team consists of a detective from each department, along with two patrol officers from **Centralia**. The officers will not be tasked with handling the routine calls for police service. However, in addition to drug enforcement efforts, they will work on traffic complaints, warrant sweeps, alcohol enforcement, and other tasks as assigned by the two chiefs of police.

The Fuller's Twin City Skate Park's newest obstacle, coined the "Space Needle", is under construction. When completed, the vertical top of the obstacle will test enthusiasts' ability to cheat gravity. The skate park, located at Rotary Riverside Park in **Centralia**, is the largest free, outdoor, public skateboard west of the Mississippi River.

From **Lacey**, city manager Greg Cuiou sends the following:

Growth and development-related issues dominate the landscape in **Lacey**. On the positive side, Costco, HomeDepot, Best Buy, Sportmens's Warehouse, and a host of other businesses are under construction, guaranteeing a much needed and long sought enhancement to the city's tax base.

As good fortune would have it, significant additional tracks of well-located commercial and retail properties remain available for development. One nearly mile long track of commercial property located along Interstate 5 is attracting significant interest, particularly from Cabela's, the world's largest supplier of outdoor hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping equipment.

Wherever Cabela's locates, it attracts millions of visitors, and often is the number one or two attraction in the state. The City has applied for \$10 million in state matching grant support to help with infrastructure requirements associated with the project. The grant program, referred to as the jobs development fund, is administered by CTED and is highly competitive. Only \$49.5 million is available in matching funds statewide.

Cabela's has advised **Lacey** is their preferred location in western Washington, which is good news. However, we do know that statement and a quarter won't necessarily buy a cup of coffee. We are optimistic, though.

Residential development is at an all-time high. **Lacey** issued nearly 900 single family permits in 2005. We are expecting another strong year. Almost 400 residential permits have been issued year-to-date.

Of course, this rapid growth brings with it associated infrastructure challenges and citizen critics who do not understand the GMA, and regardless, want growth to slow, if not stop altogether.

While we are keeping current with wastewater, transportation, park, and public facility demands, our need for additional state-issued water rights is at a crisis mode. In fact, in May 2005, the city determined it was not able to provide certificates of water availability to its unincorporated

UGA. Since, no new subdivisions have been approved, causing much frustration to land owners and developers.

It has been a long, protracted, frustrating journey on our way to obtaining new water rights . . . 12 years as a matter of fact, since our first water right application was submitted. Along the trip, we've done everything we possibly can to conserve water and maximize the use of available resources. Is there light at the end of the tunnel? Hope so. There has to be. The good news is Ecology is indicating it wants to be helpful. But, then again, a quarter and some optimism also may not buy a cup of coffee.

From Steve Hall, city manager, **Olympia**, we hear that late last month the city council selected a development partner to build a new consolidated city hall. Steve says this is a project they've talked about for 20 years, but have never been able to move it ahead until now. They have political and financial support for about \$20M and are searching for another \$7-8M to meet their needs. Ribbon cutting is set for early 2009!

In February, they made just about everyone in the area mad at them by condemning the former **Olympia** Brewery. They were after the water rights and associated conveyance systems to meet future public growth needs. The current owner had shown an inability to redevelop the site thus placing water rights in jeopardy of relinquishment to the state. Shortly after the condemnation action, they entered into an interlocal agreement with **Tumwater** and **Lacey** to pursue the water collectively and share the water equally.

Downtown is on the cusp of more revitalization with a rebuild of Percival Landing, a new city hall building, and hopefully 100 units of market rate housing. The new DASH shuttle was added in January to provide free transportation from the capitol campus to and around downtown, including the Farmers Market (look for the brightly skittles colored buses)!

From **Yelm**, city administrator Shelly Badger, city administrator:

Earlier this year, mayor Ron Harding ended his first 'State of the City' address with "the city of **Yelm** is healthy and vibrant," and city administrator Shelly Badger agrees, as **Yelm** continues to be full of activity. Here are some "latest and greatest" happenings going on in **Yelm**:

- Its "official" – the city of **Yelm** will soon be the next site of a Wal-Mart Supercenter. On March 10th – a **Thurston County** superior court judge dismissed a last-ditch effort by opponents of Wal-Mart to revive an earlier land-

use appeal after the deadline to file it was missed by a day. **Yelm's** community development director Grant Beck said "Wal-Mart is good to go." The city expects permits to be pulled within 60 days.

- The city of **Yelm** has received a conceptual master site plan application for a 1,200 acre mixed-use development with upwards of 5,000 housing units, to be known as "Thurston Highlands." The project area is located in the southwest

- section of **Yelm**. The city's review and consideration of the development proposal is expected to occur over a period of approximately eighteen months. Development will ensue over the next 10-20 years, upon receipt of the ever "elusive" water rights!
- Due to the population growth in the city of **Yelm** -- staffing increases are eminent. Recently, a second building inspector position was filled, and the next "new hire" will be an engineering technician, also in the community development department. Another sign of growth in **Yelm** will be the upcoming appointments of two additional city councilmembers -- raising the number to seven.
- On a down note -- on March 31st, the Amtech Corporation announced plans for closure of their **Yelm** production facility on or around July 31, 2006. A growing customer base in eastern Washington and Oregon, the opening of a new production facility in **Wapato**, Washington, and the growing residential base surrounding the **Yelm** facility were the primary reasons given by senior management for their strategic decision to close the **Yelm** facility. The city continues to work with its economic development partners to "kick-start" activity in its industrial area and **Yelm-Roy** Prairie Rail line.

Region 3, Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania & Wahkiakum Counties
Lloyd Halverson, City Administrator, City of Camas
lhalverson@ci.cameras.wa.us

Lloyd Halvorsen, Region 3 correspondent and city administrator, **Camas**, supplies the following:

What's new in SW Washington as a long rainy winter starts to turn to spring? Plenty!

First, the economy. There are many signs that the economy is definitely better. Firms in **Camas** report hiring additional employees. The state-published employment numbers for our region are strongly higher, and the official unemployment rate is strikingly lower. Several new, modest sized industrial investments have occurred in **Camas** in the past year, and they include installation of semi-conductor manufacturing equipment. There are signs of new investment in **Vancouver**, and the Portland economy seems hot. New residential construction continues, and

prices for homes and lots in **Camas** have increased sharply in the past 18 months. Seems like the economy drives almost everything. *“It’s the economy, _____!”*

Second, the budget. Related to the economy, the budget is also better. After a “tough patch” in 2002-03, the city budget is now more stable, less austere. Powered by construction and investment, revenues surprised us again last year—in a pleasant way. General fund reserves in the past three years have increased from a low of \$2.2 M to a current \$4.5 M. On a \$13M base, that represents about one-third reserve. As a result of strong revenues and reserves, we will

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likely make some modest, targeted, additional, one-time capital investments in 2006. The state picture is mirrored in our microcosm.

Third, staffing. Three of five union contacts are done, including both “arb groups”. The talks were more like “interest based” than “traditional”; although there are elements of both styles. The rumored effects of aging of the “boomers” are becoming real in our corner of the state. In the past year, we have had many retirements; which in turn set off chain reactions. I ascribe it to the graying of the boomers, and to a “crop” of PERS and LEOFF I employees from the 70’s reaching full eligibility. In filling and refilling some key positions we have found the external labor market to be “thin”. Is this a trend, or an aberration? I sense a trend. My hunch is that this may be the beginning of a trend which will also effect recruitments for professional city managers. *The straws are in the wind.*

Lastly, overseas. A series of professional exchanges with local government officials from Poland, and other “partner cities” activities are a source of continuing interest and satisfaction. In November, with US State Dept. sponsorship, a group of eleven local govt. managers visited the Portland/**Vancouver/Camas** area. Local professionals—including Eric Holmes (**Battleground**), Jon Nelson (Corvallis), Erik Kvarsten (Gresham), and David Lawrence (Hillsboro), took an active part in hosting and discussing professional management with the visitors. In February, a sponsored local official from the Poznan, Poland area visited Washington State. Bob Jean (**University Place**), Greg Cuoio (**Lacey**), Andy Neiditz and Joe Hannan (**Lakewood**), Larry Bauman (**Snohomish**), Mike McCarty (**AWC**) and Rich Yukubousky (**MRSC**) and their associates organized visits to their cities and useful parts of the “internship” for our Polish visitor. The key organizers and wonderful hosts were Bill McDonald of **Dupont**, and his wife Lee. The visitor—Malgrozata Ornoch-Tabedzka--was very happy with her time in Washington State as an official visitor through the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program.

In a related note, some exploration of an ICMA-sanctioned affiliation agreement between the WCMA and a provincial association of local government professionals in Poland is underway. The WCMA board recently authorized the exploration to go forward. For more information, or to express interest in hosting visitors, please call me at (360) 834-6864, or e-mail lhalverson@ci.camass.wa, or contact WCMA Board Member Bill McDonald at Dupont, (253) 964-8121.

From **Longview**, city manager Bob Gregory reports that **Cowlitz County** has experienced a difficult economy since 2000 when **Longview Aluminum** ceased operations and took 1,800

family-wage jobs out of the work force. That sort of event normally affects city budgets, too, and **Longview** has certainly not been immune from difficult decisions in terms of services to the community and maintenance of our infrastructure and fund balances. That all began to change in 2005 when new retail construction and commercial redevelopment “took off.” Now they’re seeing escalating housing prices as people move north from the Portland area, and the local unemployment rate has declined dramatically. That makes for a happier budgeting environment, and they have reason to look forward to more healthy growth in **Longview** during the next few years.

A specific example of the recent good news was our announcement in January that Lyman Lumber has purchased 37 acres in the city’s Mint Farm Industrial Park for the construction of three separate wood products plants and the eventual creation of nearly 500 new jobs. Several other companies, representing diverse employers, are currently exploring the Mint Farm and keeping them busy in the process. Their unique partnership with Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Development Company in developing and marketing the site is paying off, and, combined with other new development at the Port of **Longview**, the community is facing decisions and opportunities that we haven’t dealt with in quite a while.

Another major development in their optimistic economic improvement has been the significant retail development in the city. In 2005, P.O.B. Montgomery completed a complete renovation of the Triangle Center in the heart of the city, resulting in the demolition of an old 200,000 square foot indoor mall and the construction of the new trend “power retail center.” In addition they saw a new Lowe’s Home Improvement store open after a long confrontational community debate over another box retail store. Couple these developments with a significant amount of new residential, commercial, and public buildings including a new regional county jail and the remodel of a middle school, they experienced an increase of almost 15% in sales tax over 2004.

One of the related projects that they initiated last year was an update to the city’s comprehensive plan. **Cowlitz County** is not a GMA county, so they haven’t had to go about that in the same way that many jurisdictions in Washington have, but, in light of the changing growth demands, it’s still been timely and important to the city organization and the community to debate future land uses, development policies, and the like. They have been pleasantly surprised with how their community has engaged with their city staff on this effort and they expect to finish the comp plan update later this year.

Bob reports that on a personal note, it was nice to celebrate completing his first full year as city manager by welcoming three new council members to the city team this year and having Dave Campbell join the management team as the new assistant city manager. Having Dave’s 17 years of experience as a city manager joining Bob as a first time city manager seems backwards, but needless to say, Dave has been a huge asset and Bob is excited about the opportunities they have before them!

They expect you’ll be hearing lots of good things about **Longview** in the future.

From **Vancouver**, city manager Pat McDonnell tells us that in February, the city of **Vancouver** opened the doors to its newest community building -- the Firstenburg Community Center. It was a great day as over 12,000 visitors burst through the doors to get the chance to experience 80,000 square feet of community and recreation space including an indoor leisure pool with spa, a two-court gymnasium, indoor walking track, fitness center, aerobics/dance studio, multi-purpose classrooms, dedicated spaces for teens and seniors and a community room with a full-service catering kitchen. This facility is the centerpiece of expanded city government presence to the 17.6 miles square miles in east **Vancouver** which were annexed into the city in 1997. In 2002, the **Vancouver** approved the use of REET dollars for capital expenses related to the \$21.1

million community center. Then, local benefactors, Ed & Mary Firstenburg, founders of First Independent Bank, donated \$3 million toward the project. The remaining funds were provided through CDBG and the State of Washington. This beautiful new building has been designed with “green” goals in mind. In addition to preserving much of the mature trees surrounding the building, environmentally-sound building principles abound such as the abundant use of day-lighting, use of porous concrete to manage storm water, fir milled from site trees were reused as benches, wall paneling and bleachers -- the list goes on. We are thrilled with this new community center but, more importantly, our residents are thrilled. This will be a facility that will serve **Vancouver** residents for many generations to come.

Region 4, Kittitas, Klickitat & Yakima Counties
Frank Sweet, City Supervisor, City of Selah
fsweet@elltel.net

Frank Sweet, city supervisor, Selah, provides the following:

Selah is happy to welcome our new city attorney, Darin Sprang. Darin comes to us from **Seattle** and brings a background in municipal law. He is a graduate of Washington State University earning his law degree in 2000 from **Seattle** University of Law. Welcome aboard, Darin! We wish former city attorney Bob Noe our best as he begins his work in **Union Gap**.

A lot is happening in **Selah** this spring.

John Maher dba Custom Tile Works, Inc. (CTW) has purchased the Old Fire Hall at 110 West Naches. He plans to remodel the 3,960 square-foot building into a showroom and warehouse to fit CTW needs. The city looks forward to having Custom Tile as a permanent neighbor. Mr. Maher rented the building for twelve months prior to purchasing it from the city.

Other real estate news – Les Schwab Tire Centers of Washington, Inc., is coming to **Selah**. They have purchased property at the southernmost end of the city property on North Wenas and plan to build a showroom, warehouse and service/alignment bays totaling a little over 11,000 square feet. Banner Bank plans to build on property at the corner of North Wenas and North Park Drive

later on this year. Their relocation to North Park will improve access for their customers and be a great addition to this development.

Have you been by Carlon Park lately? You've likely seen all of the activity there as the city, the Greater **Yakima** Girls Softball Association and lots of volunteers prepare the new Carlon Park ball fields for the 2006 season. This complex will host the first tournament of the season on April 28, so time is essential.

After more than ten years in the planning, the Crusher Canyon Project is becoming a reality. If everything goes the way it's supposed to, work on that project will begin sometime in May and continue through the summer. In addition to straightening and raising Crusher Canyon road as it passes Lince school and proceeds to the city limits, the project will reconfigure Hillcrest and

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West Naches to intersect above Lince school. This work will make it necessary to detour incoming traffic around Slade Road to Pleasant Hill. Streets from Hillcrest to 10th will be closed with a detour from 10th over 5th around Hillcrest. Work crews will appreciate everyone's cooperation. Any inconvenience will be worth the result of a wide, convenient street with access to West Naches.

Region 5, Benton, Franklin & Walla Walla Counties
Gary Crutchfield, City Manager, City of Pasco
zunkert@ci.pasco.wa.us

From **Connell**, Art Tackett, city administrator, tells us that **Connell** is gearing up for a two million plus dollar state correction facility project which is slated to break ground in June. As a result of that project there are a lot of tire kickers running around looking for potential development sites within the community. One of the developments that is in the works is a 1300 acre golf course community. Others are RV parks, etc. Needless to say the staff is very busy and expects to be busy for the next two to three years.

The major railroad grade separation project was completed at Columbia Center Blvd, **Kennewick's** highest volume arterial street, running now over 40,000 vehicles per day reports city manager Bob Hammond. This \$13M project realigned the railroad grade for a half mile on both sides of the street, with the railroad now running underneath. Also, the first phase of their water filtration plant upgrade was completed, which doubled the plant's capacity to 15mgd and installed micro filtration equipment as the primary treatment technology. Ribbon cutting events are being scheduled for later this spring in order to thank the many partners including their federal and state legislators that secured the necessary funding for these projects. Sales taxes for 2005 increased as projected at about 4% higher than the previous year, but not without an assertive program that brought in several new businesses, many that furthered **Kennewick's** strength in commercial retail. They also are looking forward to the new Amazon.com in-call service center coming under full operation and a new Toyota dealership being built this next year. Hanford employment dropped by over 1,000 jobs in 2005 due to federal budgeting declines, so the continued growth and associated increase in growth related sales and utility taxes

were very much welcomed. They are presently involved in an investigation regarding deals made in district court with proceeds going to a community service program called “Home Base.” One **Kennewick** assistant city attorney is on administrative leave and a defense attorney’s contract with **Benton County** has been terminated. They expect this to become an item of interest throughout the state with legislation being suggested by Senator Honeycutt and possibly others that would limit the flexibility that prosecuting attorneys have to reach such deals. While not being able to discuss details at this time pending the criminal investigation being conducted by the FBI, when allowed Bob says he’ll be available to share the lessons learned from this with any others that are interested. Of their five open labor contracts in 2004/2005, all but their police officers have been settled. They have scheduled arbitration with the police officers. At the heart of all of these contracts has been the move to a new consumer driven health insurance plan. Most of them have been on the new Lumenos plan for

several months now and as a result the city’s premiums have decreased in 2006, rather than the 15% increase from their traditional plan.

The pace of growth in **Pasco** has not fallen off from the past three years, reports city manager Gary Crutchfield. Although the city probably will not see the 1,000 new dwelling units this year that it realized each of the past three, the rapid residential expansion has generated (finally) substantial retail investments (a welcome improvement to the city’s budget). Despite the extraordinary community growth (read “change”), only one of three contested council seats turned over in December (yes, December – the second recount, by hand, resulted in a five-vote margin for the challenger – a former councilmember and mayor). Pasco’s rental licensing ordinance, contested over the past eight years by the local apartment owners association, will be reviewed by the state supreme court in May and (hopefully) given their seal of approval by year end; the city appreciates the amicus brief submitted by Dan Heid (Auburn city attorney) on behalf of WSAMA, as the licensing concept offers a very effective opportunity to improve rental housing stock throughout the state.

Richland is not resting on its laurels, reports city manager John Darrington. In November, *Seattle Business Monthly* named **Richland** as the best overall city for business in the state of Washington. The magazine ranked 278 cities on such factors as location, tax rates, workforce, crime rate, job growth and median housing cost. In touting **Richland** as the state’s best business site, the magazine also cited **Richland’s** efforts to streamline its process for obtaining building permits and licenses. John says that **Richland’s** top rating did not happen by accident: “Our city council and staff continually focus on enhancing the city’s appeal to existing and new businesses.” This year, **Richland** is poised for additional retail development in four areas, and residential development continues in south and north **Richland**. Major transportation grants will help **Richland** provide better travel along two of its main commuter routes and will further open adjacent areas for retail development, added John. **Richland’s** 2005 completion of improvements to Stevens Drive augmented the city’s ability to accommodate industrial expansion in north **Richland**. Ferguson Enterprises, IsoRay and Lockheed Martin announced plans last year to grow their businesses in the area, adding more jobs and further diversifying the area’s employer base. **Richland** continues to market its Horn Rapids Industrial Park for large

industrial development and to market its riverfront amenities and quality of life attributes in its efforts to increase tourism. A grant from Washington Wine Country will allow the city to promote its three south **Richland** wineries, J. Bookwalter, Tagaris and Barnard Griffin, with placement of a “monument” sign in south **Richland**. John reports two other exciting developments for **Richland**: Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, **Richland’s** “anchor tenant,” is shifting 1,000 jobs to its new, expanded campus in north **Richland**, and Governor Chris Gregoire recently signed legislation granting four-year university status for Washington State University Tri-Cities. “With our community partners in hand and our goals in sight, **Richland** intends to create a new model for conducting business in 2006,” said John.

City manager Duane Cole reports **Walla Walla** has been busy during the first quarter. The city council, after 18 months of staff and consultant work, adopted capital finance charges for development of water and wastewater facilities. This was controversial, but some development

will pay more and other development will pay less, so the result was generally accepted. Most new residential homes will pay a little less. All remodel projects that increase the number of wastewater openings or water spigots will pay fees for the first time. The fees pay for system expansion which includes remodel. The consultant team did a great job with developing and communicating the concepts and formulas.

Staff completed the development of a capital improvement plan document and a long range financial plan during the quarter. Both of these documents were new in recent history to **Walla Walla** and provide a lens through which they can more effectively plan for the future. The long range financial plan suggests the truth of the structural budget problem the city faces. The projections at the end of year four indicate a \$2 million negative cash balance. Duane reports that he has been looking at projections like this for over 25 years now and this is typical in terms of the order of magnitude for the general fund. The projection indicates about a 10% funding problem at the end of year 4 -- so all they need to find is 2.5% per year in increased revenue or decreased expenses. Why should that be so difficult?

Duane also says good things are happening, he hopes, at the local mall, or as some call it the ‘small’. A company is planning to redevelop it and have scheduled a meeting with the planning commission to present their concepts in a work session format. This is exciting since the mall has been underdeveloped for many years. The new plans are spurred on by the development of a new road connection which is a partnership project with **College Place, Walla Walla County, and Walla Walla**. Great things can happen when we work together.

Finally, the **Walla Walla** is ‘boot-strapping’ a projected \$4 million improvement to Isaacs Avenue in east **Walla Walla**. This is the primary connection to the community college and should provide an area for commercial expansion and redevelopment once it is completed. They designed the project through a community involvement effort led by the chamber of commerce. Property owners intervened at the last minute, and the bicycle and pedestrian committee also jumped in. The result was some last minute changes to the design that were accepted, and now they are proceeding.

Duane also comments that he is excited about the conference in Semiahmoo, Blaine, Washington, and as WCMA VP I get to organize the program. If you have any ideas regarding content, let me know. Spring is here, the vines are growing, onions are sprouting, and the wheat fields are very green. Come see us in “**Walla Walla** -- Surprise, Surprise”... (Don’t you think “**Walla Walla** -- Surprise, Surprise” is a nice brand?)

Region 6, Asotin, Columbia, Garfield & Whitman Counties

John Sherman, City Supervisor, City of Pullman

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In **Colfax**, city administrator Emily Adams plans to retire in October. In the meantime, she is keeping more than busy with a variety of challenging projects. Recently **Colfax** was awarded a

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\$600,000 T.I.B. grant for phase I of the Mill Street improvement project. The city was also successful in obtaining funding for a river path project. They are currently looking at a proposal to annex 1,700 acres for developing rural housing. If anyone has standards for providing large lot or small acreage developments within incorporated boundaries, Emily would appreciate hearing from you. They are also hard at work on a visioning process that is being facilitated by the city. They are also continuing to work to obtain funding for historic preservation. It is a very exciting time in **Colfax** and a period of great accomplishment as Emily is nearing retirement. We congratulate her on the great job she has done in **Colfax**.

In **Pullman**, it snowed during the crimson and grey game that marks the end of spring football practice. This is just a reflection of the fact that the whole Cougar sports scene has been in somewhat of a funk this school year. In football, it seems like the Huskies were the only team we could beat in the PAC-10. Same goes for basketball. The Huskies were the only PAC-10 team we could sweep. In short, if we couldn’t have used the Huskies for our doormat, the whole football and basketball season would have been wasted.

Pullman is celebrating the completion of our downtown riverwalk project. The project includes three new pedestrian bridges and a pedestrian plaza in their downtown area. A new five-story building is also in the planning stages for the east end of the downtown area. They have been very fortunate to have had one three-story building and two two-story buildings constructed in the downtown area within the last few years. Downtown housing units have also been installed through remodels in some existing buildings. They are very excited about these positive changes in downtown.

Pullman’s largest private sector employer, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, recently announced they will be adding an additional 300 employees this year. They already have over 900 employees in **Pullman**. They are currently constructing a five-story office building and a conference center that will be open to the public. WSU construction is also going strong through an \$84 million remodel of the Compton Union Building (CUB), the construction of a new 18-

hole golf course, and the construction of building two in the six building biotechnology project. SR 270, between **Pullman** and **Moscow** (Idaho) is also being widened to five lanes this year. Such major projects will cover at least two construction seasons, particularly when you consider that they can't even start on them until it stops snowing over here.

Region 7, Adams, Grant, & Lincoln Counties
Ehman Sheldon, City Administrator, City of Othello
administrator@othellowashington.us

Othello city administrator Ehman Sheldon tells us that in conjunction with the **Othello** park and recreation district, on the third attempt, they successfully passed a \$2.6 million bond to build a new city pool.

Othello and the **Othello** park and recreation district as a partnership have selected a **Seattle** design /build firm. The design phase will be through June of '06 and the construction phase

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through May '07 with an anticipated opening in June of '07.

The **Othello** park and recreation district and the city have entered into a contractual agreement. The park and recreation district agreed to run a \$2.6 million bond and the city agreed to operate and maintain the pool for 20 years. At the end of 20 years the park and recreation district will sell the pool to the city.

Othello has been without a pool for 2 years as the old pool was deemed unserviceable, noncompliant and too costly to repair.

The city also received a \$550,000 PWTF loan to pave a portion of a major truck route in **Othello**. Bids for the project will be issued in May with construction to begin in May.

The annual week long cleanup in **Othello** was again very successful. 138 appliances and 40 yards of yard vegetation were collected.

Region 8, Ferry, Pend Oreille, Spokane & Stevens Counties
Lewis "Griff" Griffin, In transition
l-ygriffin@sisna.com
City of Cheney – News

Paul Schmidt, city administrator, **Cheney**, reports that the city council on March 18, 2006, held a strategy retreat session to formulate an updated vision and strategy plan for the next five years. The city council chose six (6) top priority action items for the updated strategy plan and the #1 item chosen by the council is to prepare a city wide economic development plan. The **Cheney** council felt strongly that more effort on the city's behalf is crucial to the further diversification the local economy. Moreover, the council also took a strong position to initiate efforts to retain

and strengthen existing businesses in the city. Finally, the council also was of a single strong voice in further promoting upcoming events in **Cheney** to help foster tourism and visitation.

On a similar note, Eastern Washington University and **Cheney** officials are currently working on a plan to further promote the upcoming Seattle Seahawks Summer Camp in **Cheney** this summer. With the success the Seahawks had last season, more fans are expected to visit Summer Camp and efforts are underway to take full advantage of the excitement.

The city planning commission will begin public meetings in May to update the **Cheney** comprehensive plan with emphasis on the growth management areas. The five (5) year update of the comprehensive plan is scheduled to be complete early this fall with final approval by the council expected no later than December.

Cheney was a recent recipient of an AWC 2006 Well City Award. **Cheney** has a rich history of an active wellness committee and this past year's effort was exemplary.

Finally, **Cheney** welcomes new Eastern Washington University President Dr. Aldolfo Arévalo who officially began on April 1, 2006. Dr. Arévalo and his wife Nadine have elected to reside in the President's House on the Eastern Washington University Campus in **Cheney**. City officials are pleased with the decision as it further strengthens ties between the Campus and the city as well as provide a symbolic gesture to the students and community alike that **Cheney** is a nice place for the home of Eastern Washington University.

Griff is now living in **Spokane**, and has been beating the bushes with not much response. He sent out the following message on Monday, April 24, 2006:

Hello All,

I'm receiving heat from Ron Bartels, editor of the WCMA News for our non-participation in sending newsletter information from our region. Ron extended the deadline to Apr 21 at 5:00 p.m. but has heard nothing from our group. Please get some verbiage in to Ron today letting him know what is happening in your communities.

The editor then extended Griff thanks for the continued merciless floggings being administered with wet noodles.

One DID come through, this from Dave Mandyke, deputy director, public works and utilities, **Spokane**, reports that Mayor Dennis Hession has formed two multi-disciplinary teams to represent **Spokane** in the Kendall Yards project. The teams will be headed by John Pilcher, director of community and economic development and have team members from planning, building, public works, finance, and legal. These teams have met with the Black Rock Development organization with very positive results. The seventy-five-acre Kendall Yards site was previously a contaminated railroad property on which the clean up was recently completed.

At build-out the site will be home to 2,600 residential units and 1,000,000 square feet of commercial/retail space.

Spokane is in the process of negotiating a contract for the extended use of Joe Albi stadium. This will provide for the replacement of the existing artificial turf and insure the use of Joe Albi Stadium by high school sports for the next ten years.

Roger Flint, director of public works and utilities, who received the 2005 WCMA Award of Excellence for cities of 5,000-or-more has been honored by the American Public Works Association (APWA) as one of the "Top Ten Public Works Leaders of the Year". This very prestigious award will be presented to Roger at the National APWA Conference in Kansas City this fall. In addition, Dave Mandyke, deputy director of public works and utilities has been elected vice president of the Washington State Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA).

Spokane is pushing forward and at the same time looking for ways to expedite the Riverside Extension Project. This \$11,000,000 street project will extend Riverside Avenue from Division

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Street along the south side of the **Spokane** River to the intersection of Trent Avenue and Perry Street in addition to providing a link to Sprague Avenue. This project has received over \$8.5 million of federal funding and additional grants are being applied for. This project will serve as a catalyst for the University District currently occupied by Washington State University and Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute (SIRTI).

Spokane continues to expand its borders through annexation. Over the past two years the city has annexed over 260 acres on the city's South Hill. The Boundary Review Board also just closed testimony on a forty-acre annexation in the northwest quadrant of the city. The Boundary Review board is considering expanding this annexation to four hundred acres. The city council will shortly consider an additional annexation also located on their north side.

Region 9, Chelan, Douglas & Okanogan Counties
Mike Cecka, Management Consultant
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Richard Brinkman, Interim Regional Representative
City Administrator, City of Leavenworth
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Like the log of the boat trip to Alaska last year, Mike Cecka offers more about there being "life after...!"

Mike tells us that he's currently in the last few weeks of an assignment as interim **Chelan County** planning director. This got started last fall with a call from Greg Prothman, who had

recently taken on a management study and interim placement assignment with **Chelan County**. Mike says that since he had begun his public service in 1972 as a planner with this same department, it was an easy call to accept Greg's proposal. A full circle sort of thing, and he's very pleased that he was able to assist. He figured on having to kick off a lot of rust in trying to think and function again as a planner, but it wasn't as hard as he expected. Part of that is attributable to some great staff members there, and part is due, he thinks, to the extent of involvement which city managers must, by necessity, maintain with planning issues. In any event, things have worked out well. They expect to have the new permanent director in place within a few weeks, which means he'll be able to return to house remodeling and spending some time on the boat. No major trips in line this summer, since he's involved in helping plan and organize **Leavenworth's** centennial celebration, which will include big doings on July 4th and September 2. The celebrations should be fun. Drop on by if you have the chance.

Region 10, Island, San Juan, Skagit & Whatcom Counties
Gary Tomsic, City Manager, City of Blaine
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The news from **Bellingham** is

Waterfront Redevelopment. The **Bellingham** and the Port of **Bellingham** have joined forces to redevelop 137 acres of industrial waterfront acquired by the port early in 2005. The 20-year vision: a new city neighborhood with homes, shops, offices and light industry, as well as parks and promenades, a healthy shoreline habitat along **Bellingham Bay**, and a new marina. To make this vision a reality the city agreed to provide extensive new roads, utilities, parks and trails and the port agreed to conduct a comprehensive environmental cleanup of the site and to develop new visitor and permanent moorage. They are in the middle of an extensive public involvement effort to engage citizens in master planning the area. Evaluating the economic viability of different concepts is a key aspect of this work to ensure that they don't paint a vision they can't afford. Malcolm Fleming, **Bellingham** chief administrative officer, suggests, that "As someone smarter and funnier than I once said, 'Vision without funding is hallucination.'"

Greenways Levy. The **Bellingham** city council overcame a deep divide to unanimously approve sending to the voters a measure that would continue a \$0.57 per thousand levy to generate funds for acquiring, developing and maintaining greenways throughout the city. Previous levies in 1990 and 1997 have generated \$27 million for these purposes and enabled the city to acquire over 500 acres of parkland, habitat and trails. If approved by City voters on May 16, the levy would continue at the same rate for 10 years and generate about \$44 million to continue this highly successful program. Although there is broad public support for the greenways program, the council had to overcome differences in the community on a few key points, such as where property acquisitions should be made and the proportion of the levy that should be devoted to acquisition and development of previously acquired parcels.

Park Impact Fee. In February the city council adopted a park impact fee of \$3,892 per dwelling unit to provide parks and related facilities necessitated by new development. This fee is in addition to transportation and school impact fees that the city already imposes.

Museum and Theater Funding. The **Bellingham**-Whatcom Public Facilities District welcomed a report by Steve Brinn, campaign co-chair for the campaign for the arts, announcing that they met a \$3 million fundraising benchmark. “By meeting this fundraising challenge within 10 months, the community has already expressed its support for this initiative”, said Steve Brinn. The local fundraising group came together in 2005 with a mission of raising \$8.6 million to: 1) help fund an endowment covering operating expenses for the new Art & Children’s Museum and an expanded and improved Mount Baker Theatre; 2) contribute to related capital projects and improvements in the emerging arts and entertainment district in downtown **Bellingham**; and 3) fund campaign expenses. “Board members of the PFD intend to be good stewards of the tax dollars provided to enhance our downtown core,” said board president Robin Halliday. “We established a benchmark challenge of \$3 million to be raised by the private sector by March 1st as an important indicator of community support. We applaud the leaders of the campaign for the arts for their personal commitment and their resounding success!”

The Small and Simple Project Grants. This fund provides reimbursements of up to \$2,500 to selected organizations to complete projects beneficial to the entire community. Past grants have supported projects such as downtown special events, neighborhood tree plantings, holiday festivals, art exhibitions, music performances and more.

Party Patrol. A city/Western Washington University coalition is working successfully with to prevent and minimize the nuisance of disruptive parties in neighborhoods. The coalition’s activities include:

- Neighborhood Mediation Project: CCC is working with Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center to set up a trained cadre of neighbors and students to work as co-mediators on conflicts between students and neighbors.
- Late Night Activities: The university is working on a sustainable program to provide on-campus late night activities for students.
- Transitional off campus living orientation for students to transition them to living ‘neighborly’ in a neighborhood.

Bill Verwolf, city administrator, **Lynden**, reports that **Lynden** is entering another busy construction season. This summer they are reconstructing about 1.5 miles of a major truck route through town, building a sewer sub-basin project with trunk mains, pump station, and a force main. Their remodel of an existing building into a police station is nearing completion, and they expect to occupy in May. Their LID to acquire a regional storm drainage detention and treatment facility is moving to completion, which allows development of commercial and industrial property without using productive space to provide the DOE requirements.

From **Blaine**, city manager Gary Tomsic reports that they, too, are entering a very busy construction period that will last until 2009. Phase one of the city's downtown boardwalk project is well underway and will be completed in time for the July 4th celebration. The city, with the financial assistance of the Port of **Bellingham**, let a contract to develop concepts and cost estimates for the construction of a pedestrian overpass which would connect the downtown boardwalk with the port's public boat launching area.

The most important project in the **Blaine** continues to be the wastewater treatment facility. The cost of the project was increased to over \$30 million for a 4mgd MBR facility. A value engineering effort resulted in proposed cost reduction of about \$5 million. The first phase of the project (\$5 million) will begin this summer. The construction of the plant will start next summer. They are anticipating that the project will result in our sewer rates being among the highest in the State of Washington even with low interest loans and some grants.

While the city's projects are getting underway, WSDOT is reconstructing the SR 543 (truck route) from I-5 to the Canadian border. This \$30 million project occurs in the middle of **Blaine** and will continue for two construction seasons. In addition, GSA is planning to begin construction on new Peace Arch border facilities next summer and this work will continue until late 2009.

For the next three years **Blaine** will be under construction! In the end, it will all be worthwhile. Meanwhile, Gary Tomsic, city manager, says, "Look forward to seeing everyone in August at Semiahmoo.

Region 11, Snohomish County

Larry Bauman, City Manager, City of Snohomish

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Mary Swenson, chief administrative officer of **Marysville**, reports that life in **Marysville** continues to be extremely busy. They are exploding with commercial retail development (Mary's not complaining!). Permits currently issued are Costco, Target, Kohl's, Harley Davidson, Holiday Inn Express, and Red Robin. Other permits are also in the works. There are three major shopping centers in process with a total of one million square feet of retail development occurring in 2006 and 2007. One of those, of course, is a Walmart which is currently in the appeal process. Economic development has been a major focus for the city during the past three years, so it is nice to finally see the permits being pulled.

They have several annexations in play that could see the city grow to a population of around 50,000 within the next few years (they are currently at 32,000). This will require planning for additional facilities and employees. It is also requiring them to examine their existing services.

Relationships with their neighbors continue to flourish. There is a great deal of focus on transportation with a North **Snohomish County** Transportation group recently being formed.

Members include **Marysville, Arlington, Tulalip Tribes, Snohomish County** and WSDOT. Their hope is that if they are all on the same page they may be able to agree on projects and actually get them built!

On a final note, the city recently purchased ten acres on Ebey Slough which was formally a mill site. This property is adjacent to their public works facility and near their newly opened waterfront park. This property will fit nicely into their recently adopted vision for their downtown core.

From **Monroe**, Jim Southworth, city administrator, says “Residential growth continues at breakneck speed!” Coming on the heels of several hundred new homes over the past few years, newly proposed annexations will result in another 300-400 new homes for **Monroe** in the next three to four years. These are in addition to a several hundred new “in fill” homes within the city, as well as hundreds in the surrounding area outside of **Monroe’s** UGA. Permit activity has exceeded projections in each of the last three years. In response, the city has added four new staff to the community development and engineering departments.

Monroe Annexes into Fire District #3. **Monroe** and **Snohomish County** Fire District #3 have enjoyed a cooperative, joint operating system for many years. The financial basis of the joint operating agreement was that the city paid the district an amount based on the district’s property

tax levy rate. Because of tax limitations and the uncertainty of both district and city voters approving levy increases, the district and city agreed that the city would annex into the district. Both district and city voters overwhelmingly approved the annexation proposal, providing greater operational and financial certainty for all.

Monroe Parks & Recreation Department created, director hired. To meet the growing recreational needs of a growing community, the city council created a parks and recreation department. Mike Farrell started as the city’s first parks and recreation director in January. He was formerly parks and recreation director at Hobart, Indiana, but has prior experience in this area, including service with the cities of **Sammamish** and **Bothell**.

North Kelsey commercial/town center development. **Monroe** is continuing its efforts to shape its commercial future and community identity with the development of the “North Kelsey Area.” (This is the huge vacant area a half block north of Hwy 2 as you drive through **Monroe**.) Last year the city purchased 23 acres from **Snohomish County**, increasing the city’s ownership to over 70 acres of developable, prime commercial property. The city selected Heartland to broker the property and is currently negotiating with First Western Development and “home improvement boxes” for the first phase development of 35 acres. Construction will start spring, 2007.

Emergency management office. With dissolution of the inter-jurisdictional emergency management agency that previously served **Monroe**, the city formed the **Monroe** emergency management office. Brad Feilberg, the city's previous emergency management coordinator has been appointed emergency management director.

From Mountlake Terrace, new city manager John Caulfield reports that there are many changes occurring there. The first is that John survived his first three months as the new city manager, having started work on January 9, 2006. John reports that he is particularly grateful to Jerry Osterman for the tremendous job he did as the interim city manager.

The **Mountlake Terrace** city council is ready to move forward and begin to address policy issues that will result **Mountlake Terrace** not only becoming an economically viable community capable of providing the key municipal services the community demands long-term, but more importantly an even more attractive community in which to live, work, and play that is well situated for revitalization and prosperity.

The city council in just the first quarter of 2006 has taken action on several key policy issues. First, after a couple of months of deliberation and review, the council updated the community's standards to allow staff to address many of the code violations that exist in the community. These updates will provide their code enforcement staff with the tools necessary to address many of the habitual violations that exist in the community, which in turn will greatly enhance the community's image. This is an effort that began several years ago and with the new tools **Mountlake Terrace** code enforcement staff will be taking a very proactive approach to ensuring

the community's standards are adhered to. Their code enforcement staff will also be incorporating a comprehensive community outreach and education element into the program to ensure the community knows how to address. This effort will be facilitated through their webpage, newsletters, and brochures distributed via utility bills, to name a few.

Second, after several years of deliberation and discussion, the city council on April 3, unanimously adopted interim design standards for the town center commercial corridor located primarily along 56th Avenue West between 228th Street SW and 244th Street SW. The interim design standards are a placeholder to ensure that if mixed use does locate in their town center zone in the near future, the community will have standards in place to ensure the development is one that is architecturally pleasing (their previous standards were not very conducive to redevelopment in the 21st century). They will begin very shortly working with the community to develop a vision and master plan for the whole of town center, which will focus on other design attributes such as types of uses (i.e., retail, commercial, housing, etc.), building height, parking spaces, and density. The city council has made this one of their key goals for 2006 through 2008.

Third, the city council held two workshops/retreats in February 25 and April 1 to discuss their goals for 2006 through 2008. In summary, the council identified five goals along with specific objectives, action strategies and work plan items, which were subsequently adopted unanimously at their April 3 council meeting. The city council has adopted the following goals to provide the path for the future:

- Protect and enhance the city's financial health and stability

- Generate economic development throughout the community
- Review and prioritize capital infrastructure needs and implement projects
- Develop and implement more effective communication and outreach with the community
- Maintain appropriate and essential public services in a cost effective manner

The goals will direct their community toward positive change, will serve as the policy direction for city government, and will serve as the guide for developing the city's 2007/2008 budget. A key goal that council adopted is in the area of communication with the community they serve, which they expect staff to incorporate into how they deliver municipal services (i.e., retooled website, more frequent city happenings, town hall meetings, informational brochures, more press releases, etc.).

The **Mountlake Terrace** city council also approved council operating protocols that they unanimously adopted on April 4 as well, after considerable discussion at their workshop/retreat on April 1. These protocols will serve as a guide to how they interact with each other to conduct the community's business. The council may also consider a policy to impose disciplinary sanctions upon its members for violation of council rules or state law in the near future.

The other bit of key good news in **Mountlake Terrace** is that the city's finances appear better than anticipated. It appears that the city does not have a \$1.0 million to \$1.5 million operating

deficit, which means they can focus on a developing a 2007/2008 proposed budget that maintains our existing level of services. They will be developing a 6-year financial forecast over the next few months to determine if an operating deficit exists in the coming years. The other good news is that the council and community have choices in how to invest some of the one-time financial resources that are available (e.g., street construction, new city hall, improved parks). John reports that he is very optimistic about their future and believes that this community is very well positioned to accomplish some great things.

From **Snohomish**, city manager Larry Bauman reports that the city is looking forward to construction beginning this summer in what is expected to be nearly 450,000 square feet of new commercial retail space. This project, known as **Snohomish Station**, is expected to help reverse some of the "retail bleed" that has been experienced in the community. Major anchors at the center are expected to include a Home Depot.

Strategic Planning is the major staff and council effort at **Snohomish** in 2006. They began an intensive and broadly scoped strategic planning process in April by selecting Berk and Associates as the consultant to manage and support this project.

With community changes to be generated during the next year or two by the development of more than 500,000 square feet of commercial retail space and more than 300 single family and multi-family housing units, this is an opportune time to reassess strategic goals for the

community. The strategic plan they have scoped will involve a community advisory committee, plus two community open house meetings as well as a city council retreat during this project.

Establishing priorities for investments into services and community infrastructure will be key outcomes in the planning process as will a facilities needs assessment to determine how and when staff growth will generate the need for more spaces for city hall, police and public works.

The final products will include a five-year series of action plans that will be folded into each of the annual budgets, listing service and project performance goals that will be reviewed at the end of each budget cycle. The plan is being developed in such a way that it can be updated at the end of the five-year periods. Long-term environmental scans will also be conducted for the 10-year and 20-year planning horizons.

On the capital project front, their “big dig” is the construction of more than \$9 million in new sewer trunk lines. The first two segments to be constructed this summer will serve the western and northwestern areas of the city and urban growth areas. Not unexpectedly, these projects are generating considerable annexation interest, which had previously been dormant in some of these areas.

The city council dedicated our \$2.5 million Riverfront Trail in April. This trail project has been nearly 10 years in the making through master planning, design, easements and construction. In addition to creating a spectacular trail along banks of the **Snohomish** River, it will also preserve

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the bank against what had been ongoing erosion. The next major trail project -- the final in-city segment of the Centennial Trail -- is moving forward into property acquisition phase with the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway. At the same time they continue to support the efforts of the Puget Sound Regional Council and **King** and **Snohomish Counties** that are jointly working on plans for a new trail system running from **Renton** to **Snohomish** along the existing rail corridor.

Region 12, North King County

Mitch Wasserman, City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer, City of Clyde Hill

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From **Carnation** comes the report that Bill Brandon is no longer the city manager there, and that currently Gary Long is serving as interim manager until a replacement can be named.

From **Hunts Point**, Jack McKenzie, town administrator/clerk/treasurer, reports the town is in the final stages of completion of an LID to fund the reconstruction of **Hunts Point** Road at a cost of \$1,550,000.00. There are 94 parcels involved. April 19th was the last day of the prepayment period. They collected \$1,140,000.00, or 70% of the full assessment. They wonder if that is a record or close to it for LID's in the state?

Doug Schulze, city manager, reports that January 2006 brought two new members to the **Medina** city council as well as a new mayor and deputy mayor. There have been a few bumps along the

road of transition, but nothing too serious. One of the hot topics to come out of the various election campaigns was a desire to "streamline" our building and development permit process. During the past two months, we have put together a process to identify what "streamlining our building and development permit process" means and how we might be able to better meet the expectations of our customers. In March, city staff conducted two focus group workshops with a cross section of homeowners, architects and builders to identify problems, develop solutions and create an action plan. A final report will be presented to the city council in May, which will include recommendations for policy modifications as well as proposed and implemented changes to administrative procedures.

The city council has also decided to revisit the tree and vegetation preservation ordinance adopted in early 2004. With slightly more than two years experience using the tree removal and replacement mitigation rules established by the ordinance the pendulum appears to be headed back toward center. The current ordinance requires replacement for removal of significant trees in an amount equivalent to 100% of the total dbh (diameter breast height) of the trees removed for trees 6" and up to 24" dbh and as much as 150% for trees measuring 36" or more dbh. Replacement trees must be a minimum of 2 1/2 inches in diameter. If you've visited a tree farm or nursery recently, you probably know that a tree of this size will cost somewhere around \$400, plus the cost of planting! Now, take out that 40" douglas fir tree and it is going to require roughly 24 replacement trees of the same genus and at least \$10,000.....oh, plus the cost to

take down the existing tree. The cost of tree replacement is certainly a deterrent to removing mature trees, but the problem experienced by those who are not deterred is figuring out where to plant 24 trees on their property. Very few people have taken advantage of the tree fund, which allows for a monetary contribution in lieu of planting on private property in an amount up to 50% of required number of replacement trees.

Dave Ramsay, **Kirkland** city manager, reports that **Kirkland's** annexation represents one of the largest urban unincorporated areas remaining in **King County**. Until the passage of Senate Bill 6686, annexation was financially infeasible. Like many unincorporated areas, **Kirkland's** PAA is a dense residential area with a few neighborhood commercial districts. Revenue in the area doesn't match the cost of providing services -- their last study estimated a \$4.8 million annual deficit in operating costs alone. SB 6686 largely closes that gap and, with a population of about 33,000, the annexation would increase **Kirkland's** population to nearly 80,000.

So does SB6686 and the promise of a larger population appears to make annexation a "slam dunk." Not so. They still have a variety of obstacles and challenges that they need to understand more fully before deciding to proceed. But it's safe to say that that they are closer to moving forward than ever before. Chief among their concerns is the long term financial implications of relying on SB 6686 to close the revenue gap. The legislation provides funding for up to ten years. After ten years (or sooner if the legislature fails to maintain funding) they'll have the same gap that has kept them from proceeding thus far.

Their most troubling long-range obstacle may not be fully resolved before annexation, but they will be either developing a strategy that enables them to move forward or they'll put annexation

back on hold until a more permanent financial solution is available. In the short term, they're gearing up to complete further analysis of the annexation process and financing, meeting with **King County** and designing a community outreach program. They expect the city council to be actively discussing annexation in the next few months with a decision on when (or whether) to move forward before the end of this year. As they like to say around **Kirkland**, "stay tuned"

From **Sound Transit**, Joni Earl, executive director, reports that **Sound Transit** is very busy building the first 15.7 miles of central link light rail from downtown **Seattle** to **Sea-Tac** International Airport. She reports that they started construction in late 2003, and are about 40% complete with the first 14 miles, about 9% under budget and on schedule. The first bid package for the 1.7 mile extension to the airport will be out in the next few weeks. This construction has a little of everything from a "gee-whizz" factor: tunnels, elevated columns, utility relocation, street widening, paving, buildings, etc., and they have big toys for those of you who grew up with Lincoln Logs and Lego's! They are happy to do construction tours if ever there is interest from WCMA members. In addition they continue to build park and rides, transit centers, direct access ramps, commuter rail stations, you name it -- they seem to be building it. And, by the way, it is all about giving people options for not sitting in congestion. They are currently helping over 38,000 people a day get out of their single occupant vehicles.

Sound Transit was also on track to try to go to the voters this year for the next set of investments for the regional transit system, but the legislature and governor changed their course and schedule. Those of you in Puget Sound will hear much more about the integrated efforts between **Sound Transit** and the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) for a joint investment package (roads and transit) in November 2007. Challenges abound and the fun never stops!

Region 13, South King County
Merlin MacReynold, Consultant
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David Cline, interim city manager of Burien, tells us that the \$135 million **Burien** Town Square should be under construction in fall 2006 with the 1-acre Park, new city hall/regional library, and at least 100 of the planned 300 condos opening in 2008. They received the developer's deposit on March 31, 2006, and have planned community meetings in May to show the updated drawing. A new \$70 million hotel is in the works with groundbreaking also scheduled for this fall.

Their transit center is being revamped and will soon be under construction. They are also going to begin revitalizing 1st Avenue South creating a more friendly and safe boulevard for this major commercial corridor. This will also be under construction in the upcoming months.

They are beginning community meetings to discuss the possible annexation of the North Highline area. A signed memorandum of understanding between **Burien**, **Seattle** and **King**

County commits all of them to working together in this area and in their own communities. A possible decision could come later this fall. Fall is going to be a busy time in **Burien**.

Finally, the city is proud to announce that its Maplewild Avenue Southwest repair project has received national recognition as a public works project of the year by the American Public Works Association. For any additional follow-up on these or other issues, please contact David Cline, Interim City Manager 206-248-5515, davidc@ci.burien.wa.us

From **Des Moines**, city manager Tony Piasecki reports that on April 14, 2006, Governor Gregoire came to **Des Moines** and presented the city with a plaque that officially certifies that **Des Moines** Beach Par, the “birthplace” of **Des Moines**, has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is the first time in Washington state history that a sitting governor has presented such an honor to a city.

On May 16th, **Des Moines** voters will go to the polls to decide whether or not to raise their property taxes through a multi-year levy lid lift to provide funds to restore their police department staffing to pre-I-695 levels.

Finally, building continues at a high volume in **Des Moines**, with a record number of building permits and pre-application meetings in 2005 and new record numbers expected this year. They

will see 2-3 mixed use projects in their downtown and a couple of projects on Highway 99 along with several large plats (60-70 lots) going before the city council some time this summer.

And from **Normandy Park**, former city manager Merlin MacReynold reports that he’s “in transition,” and Greg Prothman gave him a great opportunity to work with many jurisdictions over the past few months and it has renewed his commitment and enthusiasm for our profession and local government. So, he has resigned his position with the Prothman Company and after finishing up a couple of projects with Prothman he will be looking full time for the right match. Please feel free to call him or e-mail him me at my home should you have any words of advice and wisdom to offer him. All will be accepted with appreciation: Home telephone is 206-592-0123, e-mail is mgmacreynold@comcast.net.

Region 14, Pierce County

Mark Hoppen, City Administrator, City of Gig Harbor

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From **University Place**, city manager Bob Jean reports that **University Place** is proceeding with its \$167 million mixed use town center project. The city is relocating the library into a mixed use library/condo building on the westside of the project facing onto Bridgeport, the city's main north-south arterial. The city is also proceeding with construction of a federal grant-funded transit center integrated into the retail/residential mixed use phase of the project on the eastside of Bridgeport. The city recently signed a letter of intent with Cambridge Development Group out of New York giving them 6-9 months to complete their preliminary design prior to signing a development agreement this fall. Meanwhile Cambridge has agreed to pay all of the city's

financial carrying costs during their preliminary design option period. Groundbreaking is scheduled for this summer and opening for 2008. Bob said, "We still don't have a university, but when complete we will finally have The Place."

Bob also sent out as an e-mail broadcast on the WCMA website the following:

Just a thought about a possible topic for upcoming WCMA meetings...perhaps a panel discussion and group response? With the likelihood of more jobs with fewer qualified candidates, what is the normative expectation of how we should go about the business of recruiting vs. outright raiding of each others' staff? I know it's not an ethical issue per se, but what's "in bounds" and what's not? Sending a job announcement to a specific individual we might want to know about the opportunity vs. repeated phone calls to the individual? Letting a fellow manager or administrator know if you are going to invite someone to apply vs. "raiding"?

Additionally, what are we doing to address the coming skills shortages? How are we dealing with succession planning and in "next generation" job opportunities...Intern, Assistant To and Assistant positions? What are we doing as managers and administrators to encourage similar thinking amongst Finance Directors, Planning Directors, Public Works/Engineering Directors, etc?

From the counties:

Claire Hauge, OFM Director, Cowlitz County
Immediate Past President, WCAA
HaugeC@co.cowlitz.wa.us

President is Larry Keeton, Chief of Staff, Lewis County
President, WCAA
lmkeeton@co.lewis.wa.us

Claire Hauge, **Cowlitz County**, sends the following:

The Washington County Administrative Association convened for its annual conference in Leavenworth, Washington March 22-March 24, 2006. The turn-out was very good. Present were 26 members representing 17 counties, WSAC, MRSC, the State Auditor's Office and the Washington County Insurance Fund. Several new members joined the regulars and special recognition was given to retiring members: Dan Engelbertson of **Clallam County** and Maureen Morris of WSAC. We'll miss their knowledge and insight but wish them well in their new endeavors.

Wednesday afternoon WSAC staff provided a legislative wrap-up and reports on the state supplemental budget, LEOFF I funding and unfunded mandates. County reports followed with a lively roundtable discussion on the financial issues facing counties, capital projects and innovative programs. The predominant theme seemed to be that the economy and revenues are improving; we're generally better and stronger than we've been in recent years.

Thursday morning Leslie K. Breitner presented a program entitled “Managing for Performance/Performance Based Organizations.” Dr. Breitner is a Senior Lecturer for the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington. Thursday afternoon David Gomez and Doug Cochran of the State Auditor’s Office discussed Initiative 900-Performance Audits. Mr. Gomez is the Economic Vitality and Natural Resources Manager with the SAO and Mr. Cochran, formerly County Administrator with **Yakima County**, is now the SAO Director of Administration. And, Greg Overstreet, Special Assistant Attorney General for Government

Accountability who coordinates the new Public Records Act, discussed the Public Records Act Model Rules (WAC 44-14).

The Annual Conference concluded Friday morning with a business meeting that included election of officers for 2006/2007. President is Larry Keeton, Chief of Staff, **Lewis County**; Vice President is Craig Warner, Chief Financial Officer, **Yakima County**; Secretary/Treasurer is Ben Holland, Director of Admin. Services, **Kitsap County**. Claire Hauge, OFM Director, **Cowlitz County**, will remain on the Executive Committee as Immediate Past President. Gary Rowe, **Skagit County** Administrator will act as WCAA’s representative to the WSAC

Legislative Steering Committee and beginning in January 2007, Donald Krupp, Chief Administrative Officer, **Thurston County**, will act as WCAA’s representative to the State Auditor’s Office on the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC). He takes over from Claire Hauge who is completing a second three-year term on LGAC.

The WCAA fall meeting will be held in Spokane in conjunction with the WSAC annual meeting and the next WCAA annual conference will be held in **Leavenworth**, March 21-23, 2007.

Washington County Administrative Association is an organization of appointed county administrators, regardless of title, whose primary duties are devoted to the general or fiscal management of counties. The primary purpose of WCAA is to promote effective administrative systems, including program management, budgeting, finance and functions that cross departmental lines. Members work to enhance cooperation among counties and to develop a network of professionals that communicate and study county operations. WCAA is an affiliate of WSAC.

Three final notes:

1. The WCMA publication, Compensation and Benefit Survey for 2005, was available (only in hard copy) at the 2005 summer conference at Sun Mountain. It’s still only available in hard copy. There was an error on one page, and copies are now available with a correction. On two other pages, there were lines repeated. Those appear obvious. If you didn’t get one, and would still like one, please let MRSC know that you’d like to receive

a copy, and one will be mailed to you. Or if you'd like a copy of the corrected page, please let us know. Contact Ron Bartels at rbartels@mrsc.org.

2. We have been advised at MRSC to try not to send large attachments by web. Apparently it has to do with overloading the equipment here, and also perhaps something to do with the new spam filters in use, both on the MRSC end, and on your end. We've had a number of complaints in the past about people not being able to open a large attachment, specifically WCMA News. For that reason, this issue is NOT being sent as an attachment to the folks signed up for the mass e-mail broadcast. Instead, the WCMA website is being utilized by having the new issue posted there. And then the mass e-mail facility is being used to let you know that the new issue has been posted to the website. If for some reason you have trouble opening it or obtaining it through the web, please let me know. Send an e-mail to Ron Bartels at rbartels@mrsc.org. And I'm hoping that you'll talk up the fact that it's out there among those WCMA folk in your area. If you hear of someone who isn't aware of it, please call this to their attention. And perhaps tell them how to gain access. The way is:

- A. Go to the WCMA website at <http://wccma.org>.

- B. In the stripe at the top of the page, you'll see "Newsletter". Click on it.

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- C. The page that comes up contains links to all the past issues of WCMA News that were put out in electronic format, as well as the new and current one. That's Volume 18, No. 1, April 2006, the "hot off the press" issue.

- D. If you stumble onto somebody who does not have computer access, please also let me know at rbartels@mrsc.org. We can mail them a paper copy. They should be a member of WCMA.

3. It would be a very good time to have you check out what we have on file as your WCMA membership information. Go to <http://wccma.org>. At the top you'll see "Membership". Click on it. The last item on the list that comes up will say "Directory". Click on that. Put in your last name, and see what it says about you. If ANY OF IT needs correcting, please send either Donita Knutson or me a note showing the correction. Donita is at dknutson@mrsc.org. And I'm at rbartels@mrsc.org. And thanks!

Transitions

Dave Campbell, long time city manager of Chehalis, has resigned there and is now the assistant city manager of Longview.

John Caulfield, formerly deputy city manager of University Place, is now city manager of Mountlake Terrace.

Mike Cecka just can't stay retired. He's currently serving as interim Chelan County planning director.

David Cline is now the interim city manager of Burien. He was formerly assistant city manager there.

Woody Edvalson, former city manager of Carnation, is now the administrative services director of Bonney Lake.

Lewis "Griff" Griffin and Liberty Lake have parted company, but **Griff** has agreed to continue as the WCMA regional representative for region 8, Ferry, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens Counties.

Allen Johnson is now the city administrator of Arlington. He's the former city manager of Kearney, Nebraska, and Great Falls, Montana.

Gary Long, formerly city manager of Burien, is now serving as interim city manager of Concrete.

Mike McCarty, now assistant director, operations and services, of the Association of Washington Cities (AWC), has volunteered to take on the responsibility for region 2 of WCMA now that **Dave Campbell** has moved to Longview.

Merlin MacReynold, formerly city manager of Normandy Park, has separated from that city, worked with Greg Prothman for a period, and is now in transition and looking around for a next prospect. He indicates he'd much appreciate any input to help the effort.

Don Morrison is now city administrator of Bonney Lake. He had been administrative services coordinator there. He's also agreed to help **Mike McCarty** with the news gathering duties of his WCMA region.

Bob Olander, formerly deputy city manager, and then interim city manager, has been named the city manager of Shoreline.

Having finished his stint as interim city manager of Mountlake Terrace, **Jerry Osterman** is back among those on the "retired" list.

C. J. "Jim" Sewell, city administrator of Grandview, has retired.

Scott Staples, city manager of Toppenish is the new city administrator of Grandview.

WCMA Officers and Board Members

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(2005 – 2007)

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2006 Calendar

- **Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Annual Conference**, June 20 -- 23, 2006, Red Lion Grand Hotel, Spokane, Washington
- **Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA) Summer Conference**, August 22 -- 26, 2006, Semiahmoo Resort, Blaine, Washington
- **International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual Conference**, September 10 -- 13, 2006, San Antonio/Bexar County, Texas

2007 Calendar

- **Northwest Management Conference**, March 27 -- 30, 2007, Skamania Lodge, Stephenson, Washington
- **Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Annual Conference**, June 12 -- 15, 2007, Tacoma, Washington

- **Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA) Summer Conference,** August 14 -- 17, 2007. The Marcus Whitman Hotel, Walla Walla, Washington
- **International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual Conference,** October 7 -- 10, 2007, Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

WCMA News is a publication of the Washington City/County Management Association. President, Malcolm Fleming;
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