

WSACE PRESEDENTIAL NEWSLETTER
January 2008

This is a much overdue newsletter since the last newsletter that was posted in September 2007 – it is also once again long. Please scan quickly to find items of interest to you and your county if you don't want to take the day to read in it's entirety. I now have a new appreciation for Ross' ability at the scribe.

WSACE MANAGING DIRECTOR POSITION RECRUITMENT UPDATE

Since the last newsletter, the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) Board of Directors approved the position on September 21, 2007, and forwarded a recommendation for approval to the full membership. The full membership adopted a position supporting, and otherwise authorizing, the position on November 16, 2007. Even though the act of approval was very benign, process from inception to fruition was not. The only public comment offered by either the Board of Directors or the full membership was "It's about damn time (that this position be implemented)."

In December, an advertisement for the position was published by the WSAC in the Seattle, Spokane, Olympia, and Vancouver papers, in addition to several websites. The advertisement period closed in early January. Regrettably, the position description and job announcement were not posted on our own website! Based on the responses received by WSAC/WSACE, a decision has been made to refocus our recruiting strategy. Our first step will be to post the position description and job announcement on the WSACE website for easy access by all our members. The staff at the WSAC and the WSACE Executive Board will also be making efforts to individually contact people that we believe would be successful in the position.

As a reminder, the position will initially serve a dual role – half-time as the Managing Director of the WSACE and the other half-time as the manager of the statewide Permit Streamlining Program that is being coordinated by the WSAC on behalf of the Governor's Office. This dual role will in-place until the Permit Streamlining Program gets off the ground – estimated at approximately two years. After that period, the job will serve exclusively as the Managing Director of the WSACE.

For a complete description of the position purpose, the partnership with the WSAC, how the position will be administered, and how the position will be funded, click on the following link [September 2007 Presidential Newsletter](#).

If you are interested in exploring the opportunities of this position, please contact any of the members of our Executive Board or the WSAC Deputy Executive Director at the following numbers:

Kent Cash, WSACE President
Derek Pohle, WSACE President-Elect

360-414-5566
509-754-6082

Brian Stacy, WSACE Secretary-Treasurer	253-798-7257
Ross Dunfee, WSACE Past President	509-786-5611
Eric Johnson, WSAC Deputy Executive Director	360-753-1886

TIMBER COUNTIES LEGISLATION

In the last newsletter I highlighted the efforts that were being made by the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition and by a number of County Commissioners, most notably Commissioner Paul Pearce from Skamania County, to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Act. This act provided funding to 27 of the 39 Washington State counties as a backfill for lost timber revenue.

In the last two weeks of the 110th Congress, the House of Representatives passed a modified version of a five year extension that was attached in the tax portion of the Energy Bill. Unfortunately, the tax portion of the bill was eliminated in the Senate, including the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Act, with the revised Energy Bill finally passing both houses.

There will continue to be efforts to formulate a bill that will assist the Rural Timber Counties with the belief that at least a one year extension for 2008 is possible in the first few months of 2008.

Our friend from Columbia County Drew Woods pointed out what Senator Wyden from Oregon said, *“No budget. No funding for our veterans. No county payments. No fix for the looming tax hike on the middle class. It’s been all politics all year with no real accomplishment. Nothing. Zero. Zilch. This place is dysfunctional.”*

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Reid Wheeler has been retained again by the WSAC to provide legislative review and comments services during the session. Reid’s “Updates” and excel formatted “Legislative Summary Reports” are very thorough and helpful. Reid had, and will continue to, forward these updates to all of the Association membership on regular intervals. Reid has done a great job of capturing important legislation and very tricky language in the past years. You can access the current updates from the WSACE websites under [Bill Tracking](#).

What You Can Do Now...

Reid has provided the following suggestions for responding to specific proposed legislation:

- Review the Legislative Summary Report, read the full text of the bills that interest you, and get back to Reid with your comments, thoughts, and suggestions.

- Promptly respond to information requests for the WSAC that he sends you from time to time. The WSAC need the information to properly present a case to the Legislature.
- Talk to your commissioners or councilpersons about both the good and the bad bills and encourage them to speak with the WSAC staff and their legislators.

This year, Julie Murray, WSAC Policy Director, will be coordinating finances and tax issues for the WSAC and will be handing the transportation issues to the WSAC Deputy Executive Director, Eric Johnson. Please contact Eric with any assistance you may need.

Worth Noting

SB 6347 – (From Reid’s update) Purports to provide for the elimination of day labor limits on counties with a population of less than 22,000 (12 counties according to 2007 data). However, a close reading appears to remove the ability to complete any day labor at all for those counties less than 22,000. The proposed legislation also removes the cost of materials from the day labor calculations. The bill is obviously flawed as is currently written.

It is my understanding (Kent) that the intent was to assist those counties with a population of less than 22,000 by removing the day labor limits entirely, even though the current language doesn’t reflect this. If the bill gets a reading this session, it is my understanding that the language would be modified to reflect the intent.

Notwithstanding, *those counties that have a population of less than 22,000 need to contact their commissioners and legislators regarding SB 6347 and oppose the current language and offer recommended language.*

Attached is a link to a letter submitted by Lincoln County requesting assistance with day labor limits. [Lincoln County letter](#).

Bidding Limits

Reprinted from an e-mail forwarded by Julie Murray, WSAC Policy Director, on January 2, 2008.

The cities and the fire districts want to jointly pursue three bills and I want your input on them before we sign up to be included in the legislation:

- Increase the bid limit for purchases of supplies, materials and equipment (non-public works contracts) to \$15,000. You might remember that we just increased our limit from \$2,500 to \$5,000. We are still the lowest of the bunch. However, cities and fire are at \$7,500 and haven’t been raised since 1990. They want to take a run and we can just tag along.
- Increase the bid limit for purchases, materials and equipment (non-public works contracts) when using the vendor list process (RCW 39.04.190) to \$75,000. That limit hasn’t been raised in a long time.

- Increase the bid limit for public works projects to \$75,000. We currently are at \$10,000 and the last increase was in 1989. This proposal won't affect day labor limits; that's too political to touch.

The ports and others are also pursuing an increase in the limited small works and small works rosters. They will increase the limits from \$35,000 to \$75,000 for limited small works and \$200,000 to \$350,000 for small works roster. We will support this bill, but not take the lead on it.

The dollar figures are what they are going to be. We came to these figures because they are the highest on the books for at least one or two other public owners and reflect what the limit should be if the limits had been indexed to inflation (CPI for supplies, materials, etc.) and construction inflation for public works (WSDOT's construction inflation index).

Please contact Julie or Eric at the WSAC as soon as possible if you have any comments for a potential bill reflecting the above.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The Professional Development Conference is scheduled for January 30 to February 1, 2008, at Skamania Lodge in Stevenson, WA. We are fortunate that the conference is at capacity and unfortunately cannot accept additional registrations. A copy of the agenda for those attending can be found at the following link: [Professional Development Conference](#)

WSAC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

A warm thanks to each of you who pledged donations to the WSAC Scholarship Fund. The Association quickly met our goal of \$1500 in pledges. Please forward your pledges payable to the WSACE and reference the WSAC Scholarship Fund on the memo line.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WSACE Board of Directors Meeting

January 30, 2008 (10:00 AM – 1:00PM)
Skamania Lodge

2008 WSACE Professional Development Conference

January 30- February 1, 2008
Skamania Lodge

2008 NACE Conference

April 18-23, 2008

