

Snohomish County Executive
AARON REARDON



Priorities in Action



Latest News & Upcoming Events

Friday, May 27, 2011

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 **Memorial Day is chance to remember ultimate sacrifice**

Each year we observe Memorial Day as a day of remembrance for those who have given the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. It is a time to reflect upon the freedoms we are blessed with as Americans, and the cost of securing and keeping those freedoms.

It is also a reminder that we owe a great debt not only to the women and men who have sacrificed their lives, but to all those who have answered the call to service.

Earlier this week, I had the privilege of signing a proclamation on behalf of those who have served and are serving currently in our Armed Forces for the NAACP of Snohomish County's second annual National Day of Honor. During that celebration, our Veteran's Assistance services and employees were recognized for their work with veterans living and working in Snohomish County.

Approximately 65,000 veterans live in Snohomish County. Our Veterans Assistance Program, funded through sales taxes, serves an average of 3,200 indigent and low-income veterans a year with emergency vouchers for rent, food, utilities, transportation, burial and medical expenses.

We also have a number of initiatives underway to provide greater assistance to indigent and low-income veterans in the form of housing, treatment and support services. One example is the Filbert Road Transitional Housing Project, which will provide nearly 15 units for veterans in need of transitional housing.

Another is our Veteran Services 101 program, a community training for social service providers, community colleges, DSHS and other agencies who work with veterans.

These are critical services that assist veterans living and working in Snohomish County.

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How are we

I wish each of you a safe, wonderful Memorial Day.

Sincerely,



 **Reardon: Volunteer services instrumental to community well-being**



County Executive Aaron Reardon with Cliff Pearson, a recipient of the Presidential Volunteer Service Award, at Catholic Community Services annual RSVP luncheon. (Photo by RSVP's John McAlpine)

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon addressed more than 150 volunteers earlier this week as part of Catholic Community Services' annual RSVP luncheon.

In total, more than 300 volunteers were honored during two luncheons, including four who were recognized with the national Presidential Volunteer Service Award, given to those with more than 4,000 hours of lifetime volunteering.

“In so many ways, it's volunteers who make sure the work we must complete actually gets done,” Reardon said. “Especially in today's

doing?

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Sincerely,

economic climate, where finances for programs has become tighter and tighter, volunteers are relied upon more and more.”

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) knows this is the truth. Earlier this year, the program learned its federal funding had been cut by nearly 20 percent.

“Nationally, some programs have been devastated by this,” said Paulette Jacobson, the local RSVP director. “We are extremely grateful that our county funding has stayed the same.”

RSVP volunteers provide “Service as a Solution” by matching their skills with the needs of more than 116 nonprofit agencies in Snohomish County. The program matches people 55 years and over with meaningful volunteer opportunities in their community.

RSVP volunteers provide hundreds of community services, including tutoring children in reading and math, helping police and fire departments and serving in community food banks and senior centers.

For more information on this program, call 425-257-2111, ext. 3374.

Mtn. Loop Hwy. reopened at Waldheim Slide

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon applauded Public Works crews earlier in the week for finishing major emergency repairs to stabilize Mountain Loop Highway at the Waldheim Slide.

Both lanes were reopened Thursday for the first time since the road was closed in December, wrapping up the majority of a project much heralded by local residents and weekend travelers.

“Our road crews have worked diligently to reopen a road that is not only used by permanent residents in the area but also day trippers heading off to some of the best recreational destinations in Snohomish County,” Reardon said. “We understand access to these jewels is important, especially when families are relying on local outings due to a tough economy.”

Mountain Loop Highway is considered one of the best scenic routes in Snohomish County and offers access to U.S. Forest Service lands, the Big Four Ice Caves and more.

In March, crews began concerted efforts to fix the road and stop the ongoing slide, which had caused one lane and part of a second lane to collapse into the river below. Preliminary cost estimates for repairs were \$1.5 million to \$2 million. To date, the county has spent nearly \$800,000



Aaron Reardon

on emergency repairs.

In mid-May, the Federal Highway Administration, which is supplying funding for the repairs, asked Snohomish County crews to stop work for consideration of an environmental review process. Satisfied with the county's plans to make environmental improvements along with road repairs, Federal Highways approved work to continue last week.

Ongoing maintenance, laying of asphalt and other minor repair work will continue, but vehicles will be able to use both lanes, which now are laid with gravel. Signage in both directions urges drivers to still be cautious. There may be intermittent closures of one lane during the work-week, while crews finish up some of the emergency work.

Additional restoration and mitigation work will take place in the near future after all environmental permitting is complete.

With Mountain Loop Highway at the Waldheim Slide now open, travelers should make sure other locations are open due to snow and ice still in the area. The gate at Deer Creek is still closed due to heavy winter snow accumulations and is anticipated to stay that way at least until mid-June, depending on snow levels in the next few weeks.

Arson investigation leads to possible charges

A joint effort between the Snohomish County Fire Marshal's Office and the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office has led to potential charges against two juveniles believed to have started a May 5 arson at Whitehorse Community Park near Darrington.

"The willful destruction of Snohomish County's park facilities will not be tolerated," said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. "Such a malicious crime hurts the community members who use our parks."

Specifically, two juvenile boys, ages 15 and 16, were recently taken into custody following an investigation into the fire that caused nearly \$10,000 in damages to a shed housing baseball equipment belonging to the Darrington Junior Athletic Association.

According to police and fire reports, the boys allegedly sprayed a flammable substance on the shed door, which was then ignited with a hand-held flame. In addition to the shed, also damaged were pitching machines, helmets, balls, rakes and powdered lime.

The case is now being reviewed by the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney's Office for potential charges.

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