

Snohomish County Executive **AARON REARDON**



Priorities in Action



Latest News & Upcoming Events

Friday, December 21, 2007

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FEMA to offer residents flooding help

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has added Snohomish County to its recent Individual Assistance disaster declaration for the December 2007 storm and floods, providing funding and support for residents suffering personal property damages.

FEMA and state representatives recently toured Snohomish County with the Department of Emergency Management and Emergency Services Coordinating Agency staff, assessing damage totals. As a result, county residents with damages will now be able to apply for assistance. Typically, FEMA provides a variety of supplemental assistance programs.

“We are very pleased the federal government has stepped up to the plate to assist the residents of Snohomish County, and appreciate the effort and support of our Congressional delegation to obtain much needed assistance,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. “This is welcome news for people who suffered tremendous losses from flooding. This is the best gift many will receive this holiday season.”

John Pennington, Director of DEM said, “This disaster assistance is welcome news and a direct result of hard work and partnership with our emergency management partners throughout the County.”

FEMA has set up a toll-free number (1-800-621-FEMA) so that individuals and households may begin to apply for assistance immediately. Residents also may register online at www.fema.gov.

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Strong relationship leads to finalized deputies' contract

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon signed a three-year contract today with the Snohomish County Deputy Sheriff's Association, finalizing a collective-bargaining agreement, which covers deputies and sergeants through March 31, 2010.

The agreement – which covers almost 250 deputies, including 30 sergeants – signals the continued good will between the deputies' association and the county.

“This contract is an example of the good relationship that this office has with our law enforcement,” Reardon said. “But mostly, it’s about allowing our deputies to do their job without anything else on their minds except fighting crime and protecting the public.”

Beginning April 1, 2008, affected employees will receive an additional 3-percent salary increase as well as another 3-percent increase April 1, 2009.

“I think every guy on the force is excited to know that this process is completed,” said Deputy Adam Fortney, president of the Snohomish County Deputy Sheriff's Association. “It’s great to know that the process took less time than in the past and that things are looking positive as we move forward.”

Also in the contract is an increase in life-insurance amounts, from \$50,000 to \$60,000 for each deputy.

Federal bill spurs county improvements

More than \$2 million in critical federal funding for transportation improvements and a biodiesel initiative has been secured by Snohomish County, in large part from the support of Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, as well as Reps. Rick Larsen and Jay Inslee.

continued

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On Wednesday, a federal “Omnibus spending bill” was passed by Congress, providing funding to Snohomish County beginning in 2008. The bill is expected to be signed by the President.

Included in the package is money for Snohomish County’s top federal legislative agenda items: the Granite Falls alternative route project, Highway 2 safety improvements and a biodiesel initiative geared toward reducing Snohomish County’s carbon footprint.

“In a highly scrutinized appropriations process, Snohomish County comes out a big winner,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. “I thank our Washington State delegation, particularly Sen. Murray’s leadership on transportation, for the fact that our roads will be safer and our air will be cleaner.”

A total of \$1.029 million will be available to help construct a two-lane, two-mile alternate freight route for gravel and logging trucks now driving through Granite Falls. The bypass will improve freight mobility, reduce congestion and improve public safety.

Last year, more than 4.5 million tons of aggregate was trucked through downtown Granite Falls to points throughout northwest Washington, causing major congestion, safety and pollution problems.

Funding totaling \$344,365 will be available for a biodiesel initiative, helping Snohomish County reduce its impacts on climate change. Since 2006, the county has worked with local farmers and researchers to plant seed crops that can be converted to biodiesel. Such biodiesel would allow the county to increase the number of vehicles in its fleet using the alternative fuel.

The federal appropriation will allow Snohomish County to generate demand for the production of more than 1,000 acres of canola, become an active partner in biofuel business development and invest in the necessary infrastructure to make biodiesel a sustainable agricultural industry in the county.

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Aaron Reardon

Additionally, \$637,000 will allow the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in partnership with Snohomish County, to fund U.S. 2 safety improvements between Snohomish and Skykomish. Since 1999, more than 40 deaths have occurred on U.S. 2 between this section of the highway.

A U.S. 2 development plan created by the WSDOT includes nearly 60 projects designed to improve safety and capacity along the 50-mile stretch, and this funding will allow those projects to begin.

The U.S. 2 money is necessary, Reardon said, as this busy highway has not benefited from either the Washington State nickel or the 9.5 cents gas-tax packages.

Snohomish County river projects garner funding

Snohomish County will combine \$1 million in state salmon-recovery funds with \$235,000 in funding, labor and materials to improve fish habitat and aquatic resources found throughout the Snohomish and Stillaguamish River systems.

The \$1.1 million is part of more than \$60 million in grants being awarded statewide by the Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board, which provides money for habitat protection and restoration projects.

Snohomish County has secured \$585,000 for two projects within the extended Snohomish River watershed. Another \$525,619 will help two projects on the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River.

Specifically, \$300,000 will be used to begin planning how and where to improve 400-acres of tidal marshlands within Smith Island. The future improvements will provide key habitat for salmon. The restoration work includes breaching dikes, building set-back levees, filling a drainage ditch network and connecting a number of tidal channels to Union Slough. The county will contribute \$55,000 to the project.

[More](#)



Summit to address benefits of employer-assisted housing

Snohomish County is partnering with local and national organizations to help local business address the challenges of workforce housing in the county.

A Snohomish County Workforce Housing Summit will be held Tues., Jan. 15, 2008, from 9 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. at the Lynnwood Convention Center in Lynnwood, Washington.

The summit is being coordinated by Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon and is sponsored by Freddie Mac – one of the nation’s largest investors in residential mortgages – Snohomish County, BECU, United Way of Snohomish County and HomeSight.

The summit will showcase successful employment and quality-of-life initiatives designed to help local employers enhance employee recruitment and retention. Participants will hear about the benefits of offering an employer-assisted housing benefit to their workforce and can learn from local employers who currently offer the benefit.

“Anytime we can assist local businesses in helping their employees gain homeownership, it’s a win-win all around,” Reardon said. “Homeownership ensures better company retention and happier employees.”

By engaging in a forum of ideas, innovations and best practices, employers will walk away with a better understanding of how to offer practical benefits to their employees. Programs with proven workforce-housing benefits will be discussed, as well as examples and case studies that address employee retention, rewards and recruiting.

The summit is a great networking opportunity because it will bring together organizations and businesses dedicated to affordable housing solutions.

For more information or to register, please visit www.chcs.com/homesight. Local employers are invited to attend. Seating is limited.

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