

Snohomish County Executive **AARON REARDON**



Priorities in Action



Latest News & Upcoming Events

Friday, October 24, 2008

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Council scraps biennial budget, proceeds with layoffs

The Snohomish County Council voted 4-1 Wednesday in favor of an emergency ordinance returning the county to an annual budgeting process. The move followed a letter signed by the Council Chairman on Tuesday that told departments to begin notifying employees of potential layoffs.

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon said Wednesday there's no reason a budget can't be finished by Nov. 5 now that the County Council has scrapped biennial budgeting.

In previous years, the Council has averaged 53 days to pass an annual budget following an executive's proposal. The Executive Recommended Budget was delivered 49 days ago on Sept. 4.

"There is no reason for paralysis and no benefit from delays," Reardon said Wednesday, echoing statements made last week in testimony before and letters to the Council.

Reardon again called for the budget to be passed following the Council's Nov. 5 budget hearing.

During the Council's public meeting last Thursday on budget revenues, Reardon advised Council to inject humanity into the process of making staffing cuts and to quickly pass a budget.

Following Reardon's recommendations, the Council told county departments Tuesday to move forward with reductions proposed in the Executive Recommended Budget and additional cuts proposed by departments at a 9-percent level. On Wednesday, departments began notifying employees in positions that will be eliminated under the Council proposal.

Reardon noted that until the budget is finalized, uncertainty will remain. "The council has taken an important first step, but I'm

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urging them to press forward quickly and pass the budget,” Reardon said. “Our employees and county residents need to know with certainty what cuts in service will occur and how they will be impacted.”

The current Council schedule provides for the budget to be adopted at the end of November.

In an Oct. 15 memo to Council, Reardon said, “The business-as-usual approach of waiting until late November to pass a budget – giving employees only a month’s notice of a potential layoff – is unacceptable.”

The county’s Human Resources Outplacement Services group has been activated to assist employees. However, some employees and elected department heads have been reluctant to participate in these services without direct action on the 2009 budget.

“Only with an approved 2009 budget can we begin to return normalcy and stability to our government operations and instill a renewed confidence in our county residents and employees,” Reardon said.

Parks Department seeks advisory board members

The Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department is seeking citizens willing to serve as appointed members of the Parks Advisory Board.

“This is a great opportunity to work closely with the county on the purchase, planning, development and operation of parks, trails, open space, natural areas, facilities and recreation programs,” Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon said.

The Parks Advisory Board assists the Parks Department in reviewing and recommending policies relating to parks properties, facilities and programs. The board is made up of 11 members, five residing within and representing their County Council districts, and six at-large members who may reside anywhere within the county. Board members serve four-year terms, are nominated by the County Executive and appointed by the County Council.

Members are expected to attend board meetings, serve on

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Sincerely,



Aaron Reardon

committees, represent their communities and participate in park dedications, community meetings and special events.

There are currently five vacancies. Three are at-large positions. One position represents Council District #3 (Edmonds, Lynnwood area), and one position represents Council District #5 (Lake Stevens, Snohomish and Skykomish Valley area).

Those interested in serving, who have questions or want more information should call Snohomish County Parks at 425-388-6621.

County draws awareness of breast cancer campaign

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon recently declared October as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, except for non-melanoma skin cancers, and is the second leading cause of cancer death, exceeded only by lung cancer. The chance of developing invasive breast cancer at some time in a woman's life is about 1 in 8. More than 178,450 new cases of female invasive breast cancer are diagnosed annually, resulting in more than 40,000 deaths.

Breast cancer also affects men, resulting in another 450 cases annually, representing 1 percent of all breast cancers.

To draw awareness and to urge early detection through the use of mammography, the Snohomish County Diversity Council is sponsoring a "Passionately Pink for the Cure" event. Employees are encouraged to wear pink on October 28, join in the "Lunch and Learn" with a guest speaker from Susan G. Komen for the Cure and take part in the "Men in Pink" fashion show at 12:30 p.m. Executive Reardon will be one of the participants.

New off-leash dog park opens Nov. 1 at Willis Tucker Park

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon and other community leaders will dedicate a new off-leash dog area Nov. 1 at Willis Tucker Community Park, located at 6705 Puget Park Drive, Snohomish.

Constructing a dog park was part of Reardon's Community Infrastructure Development Initiative (CIDI) approved in 2006. The program funded a variety of parks and public works projects designed to have immediate, positive impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and communities. The 4.5-acre site at Willis Tucker was eventually selected as the location for the off-leash park.

Festivities begin at 11 a.m. with a canine costume contest at the park's amphitheatre, followed by a ribbon cutting at 11:45 a.m. Dogs are then free to fetch, run, meet and greet till dusk when the park closes.

Snohomish County Animal Control will be available with information on licensing. Snohomish Off-Leash Dog Group (Sno-DOG) will provide information on volunteer opportunities and Dog-On-it-Parks will have agility equipment to test a pet's abilities.

For more information on this new park or others within the county parks' system, go to www.snocoparks.org or call 425-388-6600.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my electronic newsletter.

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You may also contact me directly by phone at 425.388.3460.