

Snohomish County Executive
AARON REARDON



Priorities in Action



Latest News & Upcoming Events

Friday, November 21, 2008

www.snoco.org

 **County's Focus on Farming Conference tops 500 attendees**

More than 500 people attended Thursday's 5th annual Focus on Farming Conference at the Lynnwood Convention Center.

Early registration numbers already had surpassed last year's early registration numbers for the conference and walk-ins Thursday pushed numbers beyond 500 participants.

Titled "Breaking New Ground," this year's conference featured renowned speakers David Montgomery, author of "Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations," and Bob Gore, director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, who initiated the annual conference with local farmers in 2004, opened this year's conference with a state of agriculture in the county. He stressed the importance of protecting farmland and treating farming as a business.

"We must continue to build up farming as a viable economic opportunity in Snohomish County," Reardon said after the conference. "Today's attendance shows us how important the farm is to society and this community."

Gore said farming is always at risk of disappearing yet production in Washington increased by 23 percent in 2007 – the third record year in a row. Local and international demand continues to grow for Washington crops.

During the afternoon lunch, prepared with locally grown and produced food by top regional chefs, Montgomery spoke of the need to study the historical use of soils and how modern farming techniques are eroding good soil.

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“We’re doing the same things today that ancient civilizations did, which undercut their long-term viability,” he said, adding that more money should be spent on subsidies for conservation practices such as no-till farming.

Montgomery, a 2008 MacArthur Fellowship winner, is a doctorate-level professor at the UW Department of Earth & Space Sciences, where he studies the evolution of topography and the influence of changing landforms on ecological systems and human societies. His most recent studies have taken him around the world, only to discover that humanity’s most necessary natural resource is most likely its soils. Yet, current mechanized agriculture has eroded much of the land, putting humanity’s future at risk.

Participants also enjoyed top-notch sessions on successful farming, new techniques and lucrative advice from regional experts, ending the day with a wine-and-cheese tasting featuring local vintners and producers.

The annual conference held each November continues to grow in attendance, and participation comes from a broad sector, including new rural residents with an interest in farming, government agencies and individuals interested in food, sustainability and regional agriculture.



County preparation limits flood damage

Snohomish County will report nearly \$500,000 in damages and costs related to flooding last week on the Skykomish, Snohomish and Pilchuck river systems. No damages were reported along the Stillaguamish River.

Damages were reported throughout the county along the Skykomish, Snohomish and Pilchuck rivers but were limited in scale due to early preparation and quick response to rising waters by Snohomish County’s Department of Emergency Management (DEM), Public Works and other municipal departments.

“Pre-planning and preparation for this flood season have been a top priority for Snohomish County,” said County Executive Aaron Reardon. “These low damage estimates are proof that work has paid off.”

More than \$300,000 in damages and costs were absorbed by governing organizations including Snohomish County, Monroe, Snohomish, Diking District 13 and the Snohomish County Public Utility District. One homeowner reported damages worth about

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Sincerely,

Aaron Reardon

\$150,000, while business damage due to flooding was reported at about \$2,500.

Damage estimates from residents, businesses, utilities and local municipalities are collected to determine whether an area has qualified for state or federal disaster assistance.

To qualify for public assistance, Snohomish County must meet a threshold of approximately \$2.7 million in damages to roads, public buildings and infrastructure. The threshold is based upon a county's population estimate.

Homeowners and businesses that suffered damages but did not report to the DEM are encouraged to do so after contacting their individual insurance provider. The DEM can be reached by calling 425-388-5060.

County offers free waste disposal for flood victims

Snohomish County will offer individuals free waste disposal of flood-damaged household goods at county solid waste facilities.

County Executive Aaron Reardon proposed the fee waiver Friday, and the County Council approved the measure Monday.

"This is a chance to help our residents get back on their feet as quickly as possible," Reardon said. "Providing these vouchers for waste disposal is something we can do to lessen the impact."

Fees will be waived for flood-damaged residential waste at county transfer stations in Arlington, Everett and Mountlake Terrace and at county drop boxes in Granite Falls, Snohomish, Sultan, Oso and Gold Bar beginning Tuesday, Nov. 18. The free collection will end Monday, Feb. 16, 2009.

Residents first need to obtain a voucher before taking materials to the transfer station or drop box. A separate voucher is needed for each load. Drop boxes have a 5-cubic-yard limit per load. Commercial and business waste will continue to be charged regular disposal fees.

Items accepted for disposal include: household furnishings, furniture, spoiled food, carpeting, water-soaked plasterboard and appliances (except refrigerators and freezers). Paint and small quantities of household hazardous waste also will be accepted with vouchers at all solid waste facilities. Generally, paint and household hazardous waste is only accepted at the county's Household Hazardous Waste

facility in Everett. Hazardous waste must be kept separate from other garbage. Metal should be separated for recycling.

Customers who suffered substantial flood damage may want to call a garbage hauler for rates on large drop-off containers. The cost of these containers and their transport is not covered by the voucher.

Free disposal does not include demolition debris, yard debris, wood waste, concrete, rock, soil and animal carcasses larger than 10 pounds.

Vouchers can be obtained at the following locations:

- Darrington Sheriff's Substation, 1115 Seeman St., Darrington
- American Red Cross, 2530 Lombard Ave., Everett
- Snohomish County Sheriff, Community Information, 4th Floor, Courthouse, 3000 Rockefeller, Everett
- Gold Bar Sheriff's Substation, 107 5th St., Gold Bar

- North County Sheriff's Precinct, 15100 40th Ave. NE, Marysville

- South County Sheriff's Precinct, 15928 Mill Creek Blvd., Mill Creek

- East County Sheriff's Precinct, 14000 179th Ave. SE, Monroe

- Stanwood Sheriff's Substation, 8727 271st St. NW, Stanwood

For information on solid waste facility locations and hours of operation, call the Solid Waste Division at 425-388-3425 or go to: [www.snoco.org/Departments/Public Works/Divisions/SolidWaste/Facilities](http://www.snoco.org/Departments/Public_Works/Divisions/SolidWaste/Facilities).

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.