

Snohomish County Executive
AARON REARDON



Priorities in Action



Latest News & Upcoming Events

Friday, February 1, 2008

www.snoco.org

 **Reardon urges push forward in State of the County Address**

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon challenged county elected officials and staff Wednesday to equip citizens with the tools they needed to create change.

Reardon addressed the Snohomish County Council and public during his fifth State-of-the County address and his first since being elected to a second term.

In front of a full audience, Reardon highlighted the strength of Snohomish County's economy despite a national downturn. During 2007, more than 22,500 new jobs were created here, representing a rate of growth more than four times that of the state of Washington.

Unemployment also has held steady at just more than 4 percent, with median incomes remaining second in Washington State only to King County.

"We are building a thriving and safe community that promotes families, educates children, reduces the vulnerability of those at risk, protects open space and provides infrastructure to support planned growth," Reardon said during his address.

But challenges do exist, added Reardon before launching into a list of initiatives that will be carried out during this year and the next term.

Housing and homelessness

Looking to tackle homelessness and housing issues together, Reardon earlier this month convened the Housing and
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How are we doing?

Did you know that you can track how well the County is meeting its performance goals?

The SnoStat system tracks how well the County is delivering services, the costs of those services, and the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Simply visit our [SnoStat website](http://www.snoco.org/SnoStat).

Homelessness Policy Oversight Committee. Working with community partners to address the need for affordable housing and ending homelessness, the committee will suggest long-term strategies that will soon after be turned into action.

Reardon also has directed the county's Human Services Department to change the way funding for affordable-housing programs is prioritized to ensure resources are aligned with goals.

"Among the greatest challenges facing Snohomish County families today is the need for affordable housing," Reardon said.

Agriculture

The creation last year of the Agriculture Sustainability Project will help establish a long-term community vision for the future of farming. County staff is working directly with urban residents – the farmers' customers – to make sure they understand why farmland preservation is a must for this county.

The goal, Reardon says, is to create a community-wide vision of what agriculture in this county should look like during the next century.

"The final product will be a community-based business plan for our local farmers and the county to improve the productivity of our farmlands and profits of our farmers," Reardon said.

Alternative energy

The county is on target to convert its diesel fleet to B20 biodiesel by 2010 and will increase its use of biodiesel by converting to B40 fuel – a more efficient and cleaner version – by 2014.

This year, the county also will break ground on drying, storage and heat-exchange facilities at the Cathcart maintenance shop, using methane released from the Cathcart landfill for power. In addition, the county will purchase a seed crusher with help from state and federal funding sources.

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Contact me:

3000 Rockefeller Ave.
M/S #407
Everett, WA 98201

Phone: 425.388.3460
Fax: 425.388.3434

Or, [send me an email](#).

And please be sure to [visit me on the web!](#)

Sincerely,



Aaron Reardon

“Already an innovator in biofuels, our county is poised to become a state and national model,” Reardon told the audience. “Snohomish County is establishing itself as a leader in clean energy development and use.”

Climate change

Efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve traffic flow on county roads reduced fuel usage by more than 200,000 gallons and carbon-dioxide emissions by more than 4 million pounds in 2007.

Since 2005, the county’s Public Works Department also has increased fivefold the amount of materials recycled, which otherwise were bound for a landfill, to more than 18,000 tons.

“Alone, our efforts to improve recycling resulted in additional revenues of more than \$2 million in 2007 to support county services,” Reardon said.

This year, the county will complete an assessment of emissions from both county government and countywide sources, looking for ways to reduce those emissions and lessen the region’s overall carbon footprint.

In addition, a climate-change task force, put together by the Executive’s Office, will routinely meet during 2008 to offer suggestions on how to better fight global-warming’s impacts.

Inclusion

Acknowledging that the face of Snohomish County continues to diversify, Reardon requested a full-time inclusion manager in his 2007 budget.

“The previous council’s refusal to support this progress was a disappointment to me and to this community,” he said Wednesday. “I thank this council for their willingness to bring this issue forward again.”

In his address, Reardon urged the council to schedule a new bill that would create an inclusion-manager position for a hearing and to vote on the measure before the end of March.

A copy of the speech can be found [here](#).

 **Snohomish County's homeless numbers down**

Early results in the annual Point in Time homeless count show a potential drop in the number of people in Snohomish County without a permanent place to stay.

During last week's count, more than 180 people spent part of a frigid evening gathering data on Snohomish County's homeless population. This year's total – still incomplete – was 1,819, compared to 2,666 in 2007.

Yet, county officials say they're reluctant to declare homelessness here in decline following three years of successive gains. During 2006, there were 2,626 people counted as homeless. The year before, about 2,500 people claimed they did not have a home.

“We need to look at how these numbers break down and who is most affected by homelessness in Snohomish County,” said County Executive Aaron Reardon. “That will help us determine the best way to find permanent homes for those in need.”

Numbers for 2008 initially can be divided into two categories. Those staying in shelters and transitional housing the night of the count totaled 987. Another 832 were without a place to stay. Of those, 87 were children.

[More](#)

 **Public invited to join February Have a Heart rally**

Looking to increase awareness of issues impacting children, Snohomish County will celebrate February as “Have a Heart for Kids Month.”

Along with the designation, Snohomish County again will sponsor an annual rally honoring more than 180,000 children living in the county.

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The rally, scheduled for 4 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 13 at the county's Courtyard Plaza, 3000 Rockefeller Avenue in Everett, has become a tradition for child advocates throughout the region. Following scheduled speakers – including County Executive Aaron Reardon and Winnie Corral, chairwoman of the Snohomish County Children's Commission – rally participants will march to the steps of the Snohomish County Courthouse, form a large heart and shout, "We Value Kids."

"As a father, I recognize the importance of protecting and developing the needs of Snohomish County's children," Reardon said. "This is an opportunity for us all to take stock of our efforts, so as to ensure our children's future in this county is bright."

The joint resolution comes in response to a recommendation made by the Snohomish County Children's Commission, the first commission in the state mandated to serve as advisors on issues of health, safety and welfare of children.

[More](#)

DUI/Traffic Safety Task Force seeks award nominations

The Snohomish County DUI and Traffic Safety Task Force is accepting nominations for its annual awards ceremony to be held in March.

Awards are given to honor individuals and organizations for their work in raising awareness of traffic safety. In the past, the county has recognized a range of individuals, including police officers, school crossing guards, crash-scene witnesses, senior citizen volunteers and victim panel speakers.

Specifically, the task force is seeking to honor achievements in varied fields, including education, treatment, media, transportation, medicine, corrections, politics, art and community organizations.

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Nomination forms can be found by going to www.snoco.org and entering the search term "DUI Task Force." Forms must be received by 5 p.m. Feb. 15. They can be mailed to 3000 Rockefeller, M/S 305, Everett, WA 98201, faxed to 425-388-7223 or e-mailed to Tracy McMillan, Snohomish County DUI Task Force Coordinator, at Tracy.McMillan@co.snohomish.wa.us.

The award ceremony will be held Monday, March 17 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Everett PUD Auditorium, 2330 California St.

For more information, contact McMillan at Tracy.McMillan@co.snohomish.wa.us or call 425-388-7200.

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