



## Office of the Performance Auditor: 2007 Annual Report

In July 2007 the Performance Audit Division was transferred from the Auditor's Office to County Council and became the Office of the County Performance Auditor as part of revisions made to the Snohomish County Charter. The office structure and function continues to operate independently and promotes effective, efficient and accountable county government through performance audits.

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In 2007 the Office of the County Performance Auditor completed three audits and three follow-up audits. Performance audits enhance county operations as recommendations are implemented. The Criminal Warrants Audit brought together eight elected offices and departments to address the complex and expensive problem of failures to appear in both District and Superior Courts. The Hiring Practices Audit has already brought about improvements in hiring practices countywide. And the Park Maintenance Audit has leveraged important improvements in the Parks Department that will be critical as our county grows. Reviews of our past audit work showed that significant positive change related to ER&R Usage, Code Enforcement, and the Department of Emergency Management has been achieved. We are proud to facilitate an effective, efficient, and accountable Snohomish County and appreciate this opportunity to serve the public.

### Office of the County Performance Auditor, 2007

- 1 Performance Auditor: Kymber Waltmunson
- .5 Management Auditor: Connie Barndt
- 4 part-time temporary interns
- \$159,639 budget
- 3,811 total hours of work
  - 3128 staff work hours
  - 773 intern work hours

### Performance Audit Committee (PAC)

The PAC met twice in 2007 to establish the 2007/2008 audit workplan. Suggestions for audit topics are received from citizens, county employees, elected officials, and other sources. In addition, the PAC reviews each audit report prior to release to ensure appropriate audit processes were followed.

#### Members of the 2007 PAC

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Council District 1 Appointee:	Paul Blowers
Council District 2 Appointee:	Deborah Wright
Council District 3 Appointee:	Joe Runte
Council District 4 Appointee:	Wayne Kaske
Council District 5 Appointee:	Ed Husmann
Executive Appointee:	Reginald Gillins
Executive Appointee:	Open

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## Performance Indicators

### 6 Reports Issued

	Audits	Audit Follow Ups	Total
Completed	3	3	6

#### Audits

Criminal Warrants  
Hiring Practices  
Park Maintenance

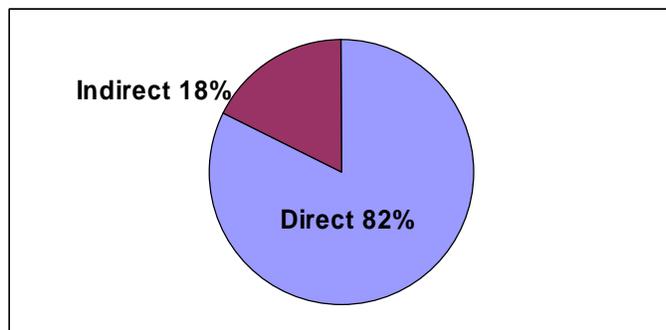
#### Audit Follow Ups

ER&R Usage  
Code Enforcement  
Dept. Emergency Mgt.

### 97% of Recommendations Pursued (none contested)

Audit	# Recs	# Addressed "Closed"	#In Progress "Open"	Withdrawn (W) or Contested (C)	% Pursued
ER&R	13	11	2	0	100%
Code Enforcement	62	49	10	3 (W)	95%
DEM	17	12	5	0	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>97%</b>

### 82% Direct Time



### Full Compliance (2006) Peer Review

The Office received a "Full Compliance" rating from the Association of Local Government Auditors (ALGA) peer reviewers in 2006. The next peer review will be conducted in 2010.

### 90% Audit Customer Approval Rating

Post-audit surveys of audited departments resulted in a high overall approval rating.

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## 2007 Report Summaries

### **Audits:**

#### **Criminal Warrants**

- Described the nature and extent of the criminal warrant issue.
- Recommended reducing:
  - ✓ time and dollar resources spent on warrants;
  - ✓ failure to appear rates;
  - ✓ backlog of outstanding warrants;
  - ✓ time from warrant order to warrant entry; and
  - ✓ data entry redundancies.
- Identified 17 policy options to accomplish recommendations.

#### **Hiring Practices**

- Identified and communicated areas of risk, resulting in quick mitigation.
- Recommended:
  - ✓ identifying HR as the hiring “process owner”;
  - ✓ implementing a comprehensive set of controls to ensure effectiveness;
  - ✓ developing recruitment plans;
  - ✓ implementing an exit interview program;
  - ✓ monitoring the time it takes to fill positions; and
  - ✓ exploring eligibility registers to improve efficiency.

#### **Park Maintenance**

- Identified ways that park maintenance can ensure that they are achieving results and efficiency.
- Immediate reporting of audit issues facilitated quick implementation of recommendations.
  - ✓ In order to prepare for new acreage, recommended improvements that will assist Parks to:
    - set their course;
    - plan strategically using reliable data;
    - ensure strong personnel and culture;
    - schedule and supervise maintenance work;
    - protect assets;
    - evaluate park maintenance performance;
    - refine their systems; and
    - report accomplishments.



## **Remaining 2007-2008 Workplan**

*Project detail is subject to change following initial analysis during pre-audit surveys. Workplan will be reviewed and updated by the Performance Audit Committee and Council in June/July.*

### **1. Electronic Payments-FIELDWORK PHASE**

Does the county have adequate development, implementation and management processes in place to ensure effective receipt of e-payments and credit card payments?

Are sufficient controls in place to minimize risk to the county?

### **2. Assessor Controls-PRE-AUDIT SURVEY PHASE**

Are there sufficient systems in place to ensure that the Assessor's objectives and laws/regulations are met?

Are these systems effective?

### **3. Duplicated County Services-PENDING**

Are there any services/activities inefficiently duplicated within Snohomish County government?

Could any of these services and/or activities be consolidated?

### **4. Human Services Contracting/Grants-PENDING**

Is the Human Services Contracting Process efficient, effective, and equitable?

Is the county meeting its responsibilities as a grantee/grantor?

### **5. Follow Up Reports-PENDING**

Were recommendations made in the audits addressed?

During this period, a formal follow-up report will be completed for the Criminal Warrants Audit.



## **Open Recommendation Reporting**

Each January the Performance Auditor will revisit past audits to determine if recommendations that remained open at the date of the Follow-Up Report and have not been reported as closed in a previous Annual Report have been addressed.

### **ER&R Usage Audit (Equipment Rental and Revolving fund)**

Three recommendations were open at the ER&R Usage Audit's last review in August 2007. ER&R shopkeepers have developed processes ensuring that they get the lowest price for purchases. Two recommendations remain open pending implementation of the Executive's Equipment Use Policy and will be reviewed for completion in January 2009.

#### **Recommendation 2** - Economic Analysis

*ER&R should develop an objective process including an economic analysis to determine whether it is more cost efficient for departments and offices to own a vehicle outright or to rent through ER&R. Department and office input should be sought in the development of this process. Documentation of this analysis should be available for all department and office owned vehicles.*

An economic analysis has been developed as part of a revision of the executive's Equipment Use Policy, but the policy has not yet been approved and implemented.

#### **Recommendation 9** - Department Policies and Procedures

*The Executive should ensure that planned revisions of Executive Order 04-02B eliminate references to the creation of policies and procedures by individual departments. The Executive and the Sheriff's Office agreed that Executive Order does not apply to separately elected officials who have their own policy. References directing "offices" should be removed.*

This issue has been resolved as part of a revision of the executive's Equipment Use Policy, but it has not yet been approved and implemented.



## Code Enforcement

27 recommendations were open at the Code Enforcement Audit's last review in August 2007. Addressed recommendations include:

- a procedure manual has been developed;
- performance evaluations have been implemented;
- judgments are now recorded with the Auditor's Office;
- technical expertise has been formalized;
- a process is in place to ensure timely transfer to collections;
- certificates of noncompliance have been discontinued per current code;
- a citation process and penalty schedules have been developed;
- the effectiveness of the VCA has been evaluated;
- appeal fees have been determined;
- leadership has improved communications;
- data entered into AMANDA has improved;
- receivables have been identified clearly for tracking purposes; and
- judgments and penalties are effectively tracked and promptly billed.

Five recommendations remain open and five will be resolved pending the 30.85 SCC update. These open recommendations will be reviewed again in January 2009.

### **Recommendation 6** - Track performance measures

*The Code Enforcement Division management should partner with staff to consistently track the chosen measures.*

Performance measures have been identified but no mechanism has been developed to consistently track and manage those measures.

### **Recommendation 29** - Review cases more than 6 months old

*We recommend that management review cases quarterly that have been open more than six months to determine how to resolve them as quickly as possible.*

The backlog of open cases is being addressed, but there is not yet a system to ensure that cases are reviewed before they build up again.

### **Recommendation 54** - Agreement with Sheriff to provide authority for CE

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division enter into an agreement with the Sheriff's Office to collaborate on targeted cases to increase authority of Code Enforcement Officers and to increase their safety in the field.*

A formal agreement has not yet been executed, but meetings with the sheriff's office are ongoing.



**Recommendation 58** - Hold periodic meetings with Health District

*The Code Enforcement Division should hold periodic meetings with Snohomish County Health District to collaborate on code enforcement cases that require health department attention.*

Code Enforcement plans to schedule meetings and solidify processes to improve collaborations with the Health District.

**Recommendation 61** - Utilize data reports to inform decision making

*The Code Enforcement Division management should identify data reports that they would like to review monthly, arrange to receive those reports and regularly act on the findings.*

Code Enforcement has identified reports that they would like to receive, but the AMANDA administrator has not been able to implement these requests due to other priorities.

**OPEN PENDING UDC UPDATE (30.85):**

Code Enforcement has done work to address the following recommendations. They will be resolved when the UDC updates are adopted.

**Recommendation 9** - Educational tools for violators

*Code Enforcement Officers should bring brochures, copies of pertinent code language (e.g., definition of junkyard) and other educational information with them into the field and provide them to violators for educational purposes.*

**Recommendation 13** - Increase communication with complainants

*The Code Enforcement Division should make communication with complainants a priority. Policy should be developed which reflects this priority.*

**Recommendation 15** - Survey of complainants

*We recommend that the Code Enforcement Division conduct a random survey of complainants in order to generate baseline data about how the code enforcement process is perceived and identify areas for customer service improvement.*

**Recommendation 16** - Informative code enforcement brochure

*An informative brochure that discusses the county's enforcement process could be developed as a community outreach tool.*

**Recommendation 22** - Code enforcement process information for violator

*Develop one clear, succinct and informative enforcement document that describes the code enforcement process to violators once philosophy is identified and policy is written.*

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## DEM

Six recommendations were open at the Department of Emergency Management Audit's last review in November 2007. DEM has taken a leadership role in helping to develop a countywide Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Five recommendations remain open and will be reviewed again in January 2009.

### OPEN:

#### **Recommendation 8** - Full implementation of NIMS requirements

*DEM should make every effort to be in full compliance with NIMS by September 2006. This will include full implementation and documentation of NIMS requirements in relation to:*

1. ICS
2. Public Information System
3. SOGs
4. Mutual Aid Agreements including updating current agreements and new agreements with:
  - a. Independent EOCs in Snohomish County
  - b. Stakeholders
5. After-Action Issue Implementation
6. Inventory Community Response Assets (personnel, teams, facilities, equipment, and supplies) including:
  - a. Snohomish County assets
  - b. Regional assets
  - c. Nonprofit assets
  - d. Public sector assets

Public Information System – 2008 business plan and interlocal agreements set full implementation by January 2009.

Mutual Aid Agreements – Informal agreements have been made, and a number of formal agreements have been drafted.

After-Action Issue Implementation – Of the three recent emergencies, an after-action meeting has been held for one. Reports and other processes are planned to ensure consistency.

Inventory Community Response Assets – 2008 business plan sets completion by January 2009. Software has been identified and there is a plan for entry of available assets.

#### **Recommendation 10** - Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

*DEM should undertake a thorough update of the CEMP, including the ESFs. This should include attention to:*

1. RCW, NIMS, and EMAP compliance
2. Consistent CEMP format and clarity
3. Disseminate to and educate all designated partners
4. Include hazard-specific and public awareness and education annexes

The updated CEMP is in draft form and has been disseminated for comment. The terrorism annex has been written and the catastrophic and flood annexes are currently being written. DEM reports that the CEMP has been informally accepted by the state, but they plan to submit the document for formal approval as a package that includes the terrorism, catastrophic, and flood annexes.

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### **Recommendation 11** - Drills, exercises and training documentation

*DEM should ensure that appropriate documentation is in place for training that they provide. This should include:*

- 1. Specific goals and objectives*
- 2. Assessment of constituency training needs*
- 3. Participant lists*
- 4. Course evaluations*

Specific goals and objectives and assessment of constituency training needs have not yet been completed. A new training manager will be hired soon to address these issues.

### **Recommendation 12** - Training plans and logs

*DEM should develop and document training plans and training logs for each DEM staff person.*

Staff training plans and logs are not yet complete but are on the 2008 workplan.

### **Recommendation 17** - Grant Reporting

*DEM should implement continuous monitoring processes including methods for ensuring that:*

- Grants are closed out timely*
- Grant objectives are being met*
- Grant reporting requirements are submitted as required*

Continuous monitoring processes are in progress and will continue to be implemented.