

PRESS RELEASE



County Council

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Mike Cooper
Dave Gossett
John Koster
Dave Somers
Brian Sullivan

Webcasting County Council Meetings Begins

Beginning this month, all meetings of the Snohomish County Council will be broadcast or webcast on the Internet. Residents can now watch county public hearings and council committee meetings any time by visiting the county website, www.snoco.org, and searching for **“Council Webcasts.”**

M/S #609
3000 Rockefeller Avenue
Everett, WA 98201-4046
425-388-3494
FAX 425-388-3496
TTY/TDD 425-388-3700

“This service is an important step in increasing public access to and understanding of county government,” said County Council Vice-Chair Mike Cooper. Before his election to the council last year, Cooper was a strong advocate of increasing government transparency in his previous role as chair of the recent county Charter Review Commission.

The new service is provided by San Francisco-based Granicus, Inc., a provider of government webcasting and public meeting management solutions to nearly 400 other government agencies in 38 states. Snohomish County is the second largest in population, after King County, of the 14 other local governments in Washington to offer this webcasting service.

“This is a great new service that allows everyone to easily follow the nuts and bolts of the legislative process from home or business computers,” said Councilmember Dave Gossett.

“The new software enables the council to link webcasts with the county’s formal public meeting records – minutes, agendas, or staff reports – creating a single, unified source for the public to retrieve information,” said Councilmember John Koster.

An integral component of this webcasting capability is its integration into the legislative processes of county government. By building streaming indexing into the minutes annotation function of public meetings, the Granicus product allows county staff to quickly and easily cross-link their official public documents with the streaming audio or video, through an integrated process that saves them time and money.

“After content has been published online,” said Councilmember Brian Sullivan, “users can simply keyword search the videos or documents to find a particular policy item or they can “jump to” various points in the broadcast by clicking on minutes or agenda items that interest them in the public record.”

All the council’s public hearings and committee meetings will be broadcast live using cameras that were built into the Jackson Board Room, the council meeting room, when the new county administration building was constructed several years ago. The cameras are fixed and do not require operators.

The Granicus product can be used to deliver public service announcements, including critical information in an emergency. The system can also provide on-demand training opportunities for county employees. The system has a one-time installation charge of \$54,000 and a \$2,100 monthly subscription fee.

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CONTACT: Fred Bird
Council Public Information Officer
425-388-3873; Cell 206-200-2514
fred.bird@co.snohomish.wa.us