



Snohomish County Council

NEWS RELEASE

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County Council Announces “Priorities in Government” Strategy for ‘05 *Sets Goal For Lean, Results-Oriented Budget*

Snohomish County Council Chair John Koster today announced the first public steps in implementing a new way of budgeting for Snohomish County. Koster announced the council will hold two public meetings next month to discuss “priorities of government” (POG) based-budgeting with experts in the field scheduled to address the council and the public on the topic.

On April 2nd, the public is invited to join council members and other invited elected officials in a half-day retreat on Priorities of Government. The meeting is at Everett Station from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The meeting will include presentations from Bob Williams of the Evergreen Freedom Foundation and Brian Sonntag, State Auditor. Also invited is Marty Brown, Governor Locke’s budget director who spearheaded the state’s effort last year.

“Snohomish County is in the same boat as Washington State when they adopted the priorities based method of budgeting last year,” stated Koster, “With the highest unemployment in the state, our local economy is fragile and we must take steps to ensure that we protect it by making sure government works efficiently and within its means.”

The second meeting will be April 7th at 1:30 p.m. when Peter Hutchinson, known nationally as the guru of POG, will make a presentation to the council. Hutchinson is with the Minnesota based Public Interest Group. That meeting is in the Council’s Jackson Board room on the 6th floor of the County Administration Building.

“The Executive challenged us in his state of the county speech to provide a transparent set of benchmarks and priority-base our spending,” continued Koster. “In order to accomplish that, we must utilize existing resources while focusing on our priorities, instead of simply increasing spending over the previous year.”

Under the Priorities of Government model, government agencies are challenged to determine if their budgets are meeting the policy priorities of government and if their programs are being effective. It’s a far more challenging method of budgeting than struggling to maintain existing budgets by adjusting for inflation or case load.

The first special meeting has been called for Friday, April 2, 2004 from 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM. The Council will announce further details of the half-day retreat as soon as the final agenda and speakers are confirmed. Invitations will be extended to all elected officials as well. The retreat will be open to the public.

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