

Media Advisory – May 20, 2008

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Snohomish County garners variety of honors

Public Works, County Executive among those receiving awards

Snohomish County and individual departments recently were honored by various organizations and nonprofits for a number of projects.

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Snohomish County government received accolades from the international ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability for its work on sustainability and working toward reducing county impacts on climate change.

ICLEI, a membership association of local governments worldwide committed to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and advancing sustainability, tracks members' progress toward their emission-reduction goals through five milestones: conducting a greenhouse-gas-emissions inventory, setting an emission-reduction goal, designing a climate action plan, implementing that plan and then monitoring and re-evaluating it periodically.

Snohomish County has completed a greenhouse-gas-emissions inventory and is developing a plan for adapting to climate change, in part by reducing local greenhouse-gas emissions 20 percent below year 2000 levels by 2020.

Much of this work is being done by Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon's Green Ribbon Climate Task Force, composed of business, government and nonprofit leaders.

Emissions inventories were conducted and have been coordinated through the county's Planning Department.

"Snohomish County is one of an elite group of local governments who have shown the leadership it takes to achieve the level of greenhouse-gas-emissions reductions that the world's scientists say we need," said Michelle Wyman, executive director of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability.

County officials were presented with the award during the recent ICLEI Local Action Summit in Albuquerque, N.M.

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Snohomish County also has received the Washington State Recycling Association's "Most Innovative Recycler of the Year" award.

In 2007, Snohomish County, which operates the Evergreen State Fair, worked with a local startup company, Standard Biodiesel in Arlington, to convert used concession-stand grease into fuel for onsite use.

This was used to highlight the county's move to using more environmentally friendly fuel sources. The county has been assisting farmers who are experimenting with various seed for biofuel production and is currently planning to produce its own biodiesel in the near future.

Canola grows best in the Snohomish River Valley and the canola acreage has grown each year. In 2008, the county expects to collect about 500 acres, which will be dried using a grain dryer heated by local landfill gas.

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Snohomish County Public Works Department recently received one of the American Public Works Association's 2008 National Project of the Year awards for its work on the South Slough Bridge #91 project. Public Works was honored in the "Less Than \$2 Million" category.

The bridge replacement proved a unique challenge for the county's Public Works team as the original concrete arch structure had been built in 1918 and was less than 20 feet wide, causing safety concerns because of narrow travel lanes.

Because of the bridge's historical value, however, the county's creative design allowed for the existing arch foundation to be retained while still widening the bridge deck to 28 feet between curbs. The bridge also was completed in 17 months – rather than the typical multiple years such projects take – and for \$5 million below expected costs.

This is the second year in a row that Public Works has received a national award from the APWA for bridge work. Officials will receive the award in August during the APWA's annual conference.

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Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon was honored by Housing Hope with its Housing Hero Award, which was given at the nonprofit's annual Stone Soup Dinner. Recipients are selected by the Housing Hope board of directors.

Reardon was selected for his efforts to publicly and actively elevate the issue of affordable housing in public arenas since September 2007, Housing Hope officials said.

"Aaron Reardon has become a champion for affordable housing and has provided political leadership to address the significant needs of local residents with housing cost burdens," reads Housing Hopes' summary of why Reardon was selected.

Reardon has worked to preserve homes for mobile-home park residents in Lynnwood, has facilitated credit enhancement through the county for three housing developments in south Snohomish County and has recommended funding for the Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County to prepare a proposed 10-year affordable housing plan.

Most recently, he convened the Housing & Homelessness Policy Oversight Committee, which is charged with finding solutions to ending homelessness and increasing affordable housing in Snohomish County.

The committee meets monthly and is made up of leaders from local and state government, the housing and real-estate industry, educators, nonprofit executives, business leaders and members of the faith community.

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