



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office

For immediate release – Friday, April 9, 2004

Aaron Reardon
County Executive

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**Reardon to hold “Community Conversations” in
Everett, Lake Stevens, Mountlake Terrace, Stanwood
and Lynnwood on priority-based budgeting**

County Executive to citizens: *Tell us what Snohomish County
government budget priorities should be*

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today announced that he will host a series of “Community Conversations” – one in each Snohomish County Council District - where citizens’ views on priority-based budgeting will be instantly collected and tabulated.

“We want to know what core priorities people are willing to spend their tax dollars on,” Reardon said. “Since the day my administration took office, we have worked to build a new way to write our County’s spending plan. We have to do this because, in our worst-case scenario, the County must close a \$16.6 million deficit in 2005.

“Our goal is to focus County resources on what citizens really want so people know they are getting value for their tax dollar – and the Community Conversations will help us make those decisions.”

The meetings – all of which begin at 7 p.m. - will be held in:

- Everett – Thursday, April 15
Everett Station
Weyerhaeuser Room
3201 Smith Avenue
Snohomish County Council District 2
- Lake Stevens and East Snohomish County – Thursday, April 22
Lake Stevens High School
2908 – 113 Avenue NE
Snohomish County Council District 5

- Mountlake Terrace – Thursday, April 29
Mountlake Terrace Library
23300 58th Avenue W
Snohomish County Council District 4

In addition to the three scheduled Community Conversations, meetings will also be held in Stanwood, Snohomish County Council District 1; and in Lynnwood, Snohomish County Council District 3.

Reardon said the sessions have been dubbed Community Conversations because those attending will have the chance to talk directly to the County Executive and participate in an exercise that asks them to identify their core budget priorities. Aiding the County Executive's presentation will be the Everett-based Strategic Listening Institute, which is recognized nationally for counseling clients on various forms of strategic listening.

The Institute is providing a technology that will instantly tabulate and display citizens' views in response to questions posed by Reardon. The Institute's CEO, Roger Pawley, said, "This is a process that helps leaders like the County Executive listen to everyone who attends, not just the most vocal."

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