



**Snohomish County**  
**Office of the Executive**  
**Aaron Reardon**  
*County Executive*

## **Media Advisory–May 21, 2007**

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# COUNTY WILL NOT ACTIVATE THE RIDGE

County Executive Aaron Reardon today announced the County has ended exploratory planning to reactivate the 183-bed Ridge Corrections facility to help ease state Department of Corrections (DOC) prison overcrowding.

Reardon says two months of activation efforts, including property assessment, requests for contractor bids and employee recruitment, have been hampered by an inability to hire personnel to adequately staff the facility.

“Community safety cannot be compromised. We could not reopen The Ridge without a full staff contingent for both the County jail and the Ridge,” Reardon says.

In March, Executive Reardon proposed exploring interim use of the facility to Governor Chris Gregoire to ensure that no offenders are released due to a lack of contracted bed space.

Under the proposal the County would have moved some of its minimum security inmates to the Ridge facility near Arlington and up to 170 DOC community custody violators would be housed in the Snohomish County Jail in Everett.

Strict standards including background checks, psychological testing and polygraphs has made correctional hiring difficult nationwide.

The County and State deployed statewide resources in an attempt to recruit the number of qualified applicants necessary to staff the Ridge. More than 250 recent potential employee referrals to the County resulted in only one hire.

