

Media Advisory – Oct. 16, 2008

Contact: Christopher Schwarzen

Office: 425-388-3883

Email: Christopher.Schwarzen@snoco.org

Reardon advocates for calm, realistic budget approach

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon urged county leaders again Thursday to establish realistic revenue assumptions for 2009 and to take swift action in passing a budget.

“We’re ready to assist the County Council in creating a baseline for projected revenues from which a balanced budget can be written quickly,” Reardon said. “It’s never a good policy, nor is it responsible, to just throw darts at a moving target.”

Council members said Thursday that a suggested shortfall appeared to be edging near \$30 million, just two days after announcing a \$20 million mark. Council members said the figure could get worse but that they would need additional analysis first.

“Their numbers fluctuate as much as the Dow Jones Industrial Average these days,” Reardon said. “This can be done in a calm, reasoned manner.”

Just weeks ago, the Council requested all departments and elected officials present across-the-board reduction proposals at 7-percent and 9-percent levels. Reardon said Thursday such cuts interfere with a department’s ability to offer public services.

“There are cases where a program is very successful and if cut across the board, it no longer performs to the benefit of the public,” Reardon said.

Reardon again urged the Council to approve a budget quickly, adding that the process needs to be “humanized” so as to take into account the more than 3,000 people holding county jobs.

“Our employees deserve a realistic assessment of the difficulties ahead, but also enough time to make decisions should they be impacted by reductions,” Reardon said.

###