

Media Advisory – March 30, 2009

Contact: Christopher Schwarzen

Office: 425-388-3883

Email: Christopher.Schwarzen@snoco.org

County moves forward with budget reductions

Snohomish County will begin making reductions to eliminate a General Fund shortfall through two ordinances approved Monday morning.

The ordinances, submitted by Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon to the County Council last week, address the need to reduce the General Fund budget by about \$6.75 million. The two ordinances place a hiring freeze on most county positions while reducing the pay of non-union-represented and management-exempt employees by 4.25 percent through 11 furlough days.

The county's largest union – the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) – is considering a similar reduction through a combination of furlough days and reduced work-week hours.

Assuming approval of the AFSCME plan, the estimated reductions should be enough to eliminate the need for General Fund layoffs in 2009, barring any new and unexpected drop in county revenues.

“I thank the Council for taking swift action on the plan we submitted,” Reardon said. “I also thank all countywide elected officials for helping craft the plan going forward.”

Reardon met repeatedly with Snohomish County elected officials during the past two weeks to apprise them of a current drop in expected revenues for 2009 as well as to solicit ideas on how to curb expenses.

The ordinances submitted to the Council were based on those meetings.

“In these uncertain times, we must be decisive and act quickly,” Reardon said. “We must do all that we are able in order to address the impacts of this recession. We must also be prepared to come together once again if necessary.”

There are about 2,900 county employees overall and about 1,750 who are AFSCME members. Another 235 are management-exempt or non-represented.

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