

Media Advisory – Sept. 3, 2008

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Human Services director confirmed by council

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon congratulated Ken Stark on his confirmation Wednesday as the county's Human Services director.

Stark was appointed to the position by Reardon in June following a national search that included more than 25 applicants. Stark came to the county after working as the director of Gov. Chris Gregoire's Mental Health Transformation Project. He has a long history of work in human-services-related fields.

The County Council unanimously confirmed him Wednesday for the position.

"I have no doubt that Ken's approach to human services is what this county needs," Reardon said. "He'll continue to find better and more efficient ways of providing services to Snohomish County's residents just as taxpayers expect."

Since 1975, Stark has worked in the private and public sector, mostly overseeing or administering alcohol- and substance-abuse programs, including programs in King County and the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). He brings a results-based approach to the county's Human Services Department, Reardon said.

Stark earned a master's degree in education from Seattle University in 1979 and a master's in business administration from City University in 1981. Prior to his work for the governor, which began in 2005, he served a year as deputy assistant secretary of the Health and Rehabilitation Administration for DSHS.

Before that, he spent 16 years as DSHS' director of the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse and one year as administrator of the King County Assessment Center, which refers clients to various alcohol and drug treatments. In addition, Stark also has worked as administrator of the private-based Riverton Hospital Careunit and was president and director of First Step, a for-profit, outpatient chemical-dependency treatment program.

"As an Executive Office appointee, I appreciate the council confirmation vote and look forward to working with the council members and community stakeholders in providing quality services to residents of Snohomish County," Stark said.

Among the many honors that he has received, Stark received the 2005 governor's Distinguished Management Leadership Award and the 2003 Service Award from the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors.

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