



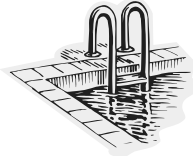
# County Connection

News from the Washington Counties Risk Pool

January/February 2011



Vyrle Hill



## Poolside

with Executive Director  
**Vyrle Hill**

This column, as readers of past issues recall, is intended to share a few tidbits regarding the Pool and its administration. Please take time to read these newsletters entirely for many other worthy Pool happenings.

**Operational:** Although calendar 2011 only recently began, Pool Year 2011 is now more than one-third old. Twenty two years of operations are as they say “in the books” with annual financials that again reflect balances better than ever before. More about this later...

The Washington Counties Risk Pool grew from the fifteen counties recognized as its initial members August 18, 1988 to twenty eight during Py2003. Then, its membership remained constant until Kitsap County terminated its membership and withdrew from the Pool at the end of Py2010. Now, the Pool consists of twenty seven Washington counties.

The Pool’s success to some extent has resulted from the combined efforts of the board-retained professionals (actuaries, auditors, producers/brokers and insurers) and its dedicated staff. But the kingpin of the Pool’s success remains the contributions and involvement of the member counties’ elected and appointed officials and their employees serving as the Pool’s directors and alternate directors and as its officers and committee members. This most certainly sets the Washington Counties Risk Pool apart from most of the other pools. Regardless, all those involved with the Pool’s operations can be very proud of its accomplishments and success.

There are a few Pool contacts, e.g. directors, alternate directors, etc., to whom we’ve recently had to say goodbye due to their departures from their respective counties. We extend our special

thanks and wish for them the very best that life has to offer – we’ll miss them! Included are:

Prosecuting Attorney Steve Lowe – represented Franklin County (and earlier as a Benton County deputy prosecuting attorney) as director or alternate director from July 1989 through December 2010. During his board tenure, Steve served three terms (9 years) on the Executive Committee. He presided over the Pool as its Py2003 President following a term as its elected Secretary-Treasurer (Py2002);

Risk Manager Mark Abernathy - represented Kitsap County as director or alternate director from July 2002 through September 2010. During his board tenure, Mark served one plus terms (3.75 years) on the Executive Committee. Mark presided over the Pool as its Py2009 President following a term as its elected Secretary-Treasurer (Py2008);

Prosecuting Attorney Ed Holm – represented Thurston County as alternate director from Py2004 through December 2010;

Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Ione George - represented Kitsap County as alternate director for most of Py2009 and Py2010;

County Commissioner Ross Gallagher – represented Mason County for Py2010 as director;

Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Monty Cobb – represented Mason County for Py2010 as alternate director; and

Safety/Training Officer Melissa Turner – represented Clallam County for Py2010 as alternate director.

And we would like to acknowledge the recently elected officials from the Pool’s member counties. We congratulate them, and we welcome them to the county family, especially the Washington Counties Risk Pool. The new elected officials by WCRP Member County are:

Adams: *None*;

Benton: Brenda Chilton (Auditor), Shon

*(Continued on page 4)*



# TRAINING & EVENTS



## Lexipol Workshop

Instructor Janet Perez, Lexipol NW Regional Coordinator, will conduct two four-hour workshops to help you use Lexipol effectively and efficiently with a minimum of staff hours. The first two hours will provide you with the tools you need to adopt your manual efficiently and rapidly. The second two hours will focus on updates and Daily Training Bulletin administration. The workshop will conclude with an overview of current policy issues and trends.

Tuesday, March 8, 2011—Moses Lake  
Wednesday, March 9, 2011—Tacoma  
10 am to 3 pm,  
lunch on your own from noon to 1 pm.

**Register today at:**  
**[www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info) and click on Training**

### Executive Committee

#### 2010/11 President

Marilyn Butler, Skamania County

#### 2010/11 Secretary/Treasurer

Steve Bartel, Spokane County

#### Other Members

Tammy Devlin, Thurston County

F. Lee Grose, Lewis County

Rose Elway, Grays Harbor County

Steve Clem, Douglas County

Randy Watts, Whatcom County

Andrew Lampe, Okanogan County

Keith Goehner, Chelan County

Jay Winter, Walla Walla County

Mark Wilsdon, Clark County

#### Risk Pool Staff

##### Administration

Vyrle Hill, Executive Director

Sue Colbo, Auditing/Accounting Officer

Claire Thompson, Assistant/Editor

##### Claims

Susan Looker, Manager

Candy Drews, Senior Analyst

Mike Cook, Analyst

Tammy Cahill, Representative

Lisa Daly, Assistant

##### Member Services

David Goldsmith, Member Services

Jill Lowe, Loss Control Coordinator

To access *County Connection's* e-version, go to [www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info)

To receive by email, send your email address to [claire@wcrp.wa.gov](mailto:claire@wcrp.wa.gov) or call (360) 292-4480. Got story/photo ideas? Please submit them to the email address above.



Published by

**WASHINGTON COUNTIES  
RISK POOL**

Created by Counties for Counties

## There are openings available in the COLLISION INVESTIGATION WORKSHOP

Understanding collision investigation information is critical in responding to and properly handling automobile claims. Risk managers, prosecuting attorneys, claims administrators and supervisors will leave this workshop with a better understanding of the methods used to identify, collect and analyze evidence. Spokane County Detective David Thornburg is a respected and certified presenter in the collision investigation arena. During this workshop, you will learn the methods used to identify, collect and analyze evidence:

- The Crash Investigation or "Haddon" Matrix—documenting the Human, Vehicle and Environmental (HVE) factors in a collision.
- Collision Photography
- Cold & Hot Shock (lamp analysis)
- Event Data Recorder (EDR), also known as the "Black Box"
- Determining speeds from skid marks

Friday, April 29, 2011  
9 am to 3 pm, lunch provided  
Spokane County Risk Manager's Training Room

**Register on-line at**  
**[www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info) and click on Training**



# TRAINING & EVENTS



**WHAT:** Washington Counties Risk Pool 2011 Spring Conference (and Board of Directors Meeting)

**WHEN:** Wednesday—Friday, March 23-25, 2011

**WHERE:** Lodge at Suncadia, located 80 miles east of Seattle, is a 6,400 acre luxury all season mountain resort, adjoining the Cle Elum River corridor with 1,200 acres of pristine forest, adjacent to the 2.2 million acre Wenatchee National Forest. The area provides endless recreation opportunities including golf, hiking, biking, fishing, boating, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, indoor and outdoor swimming, and a fitness center. The Glade Spring Spa includes 14 treatment rooms and outdoor salt soaks. Pets are welcome, with advanced reservations and additional cost.

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:** Log onto the WCRP homepage (<http://www.wcrp.info>) and click on the “Events & Training Calendar” link in the upper left column, then onto the “Online Registration Form” in the middle. From the “Events” drop-down, select “2011 Spring Conference and Board of Directors Meeting” and fill in the applicable boxes. Driving directions and other details will be provided after completing your online registration.

**LODGING (if needed):** A block of overnight rooms at the Lodge has been set aside for Wednesday and Thursday nights at the OFM per diem rate (\$77 + T&F). Phone toll free 866-904-6300 and specify the group rate for Washington Counties Risk Pool. The block will remain available until Monday, February 21, 2011.

**SCHEDULE:** The conference schedule includes:

**Wednesday, March 23rd**

11:30 am—5:00 pm - Seminar for Newly Elected Officials: WCRP Introductory Overview (with lunch) (separate invitation)

5:45 pm—8:00 pm - Training for newer WCRP Directors/Alternates/Designees (with dinner)

**Evening (Others):** Nothing formal planned—ON YOUR OWN

**Thursday, March 24th**

9:00 am—11:45 am - Roundtable—County Claims Administrators and Risk Managers (2 CLE credits)

Noon—1:15 pm - Luncheon, with Legislative Update

1:30 pm—2:15 pm - Roundtable continues

2:30 pm—5:00 pm - Spring 2011 Board of Directors Worksession

**Evening:** Nothing formal planned—ON YOUR OWN

**Friday, March 25th**

9:00 am—Noon (est.) - Spring 2011 Board of Directors Meeting (1 CPO Elective credit)

(Continued from page 1)

Small (Commissioner), John Hansens (Coroner) and Steve Keane (Sheriff);  
 Chelan: Vicki Griffin (Assessor), Kim Morrison (Clerk) and Brian Burnett (Sheriff);  
 Clallam: Selinda Barkhuis (Treasurer);  
 Clark: Peter Van Nortwick (Assessor), Scott Weber (Clerk) and Tony Golik (Prosecuting Attorney);  
 Columbia: *None*;  
 Cowlitz: Beverly Little (Clerk), Michael Karnofski and James Misner (Commissioners), Mark Nelson (Sheriff) and Kathy Hanks (Treasurer);  
 Douglas: Steve Jenkins (Commissioner) and Nona Haberman (Treasurer);  
 Franklin: Matt Beaton (Auditor), Shawn Sant (Prosecuting Attorney) and Josie Koelzer (Treasurer);  
 Garfield: Ben Keller (Sheriff) and Karen Roosevelt (Treasurer);  
 Grays Harbor: Rick Hole (Assessor), Herb Welch (Commissioner) and Daniel Burns (Coroner);  
 Island: Mary Engle (Assessor), Debra Van Pelt (Clerk), Kelly Emerson (Commissioner) and Ana Maria Nunez (Treasurer);  
 Jefferson: Scott Rosekrans (Prosecuting Attorney) and Tony Hernandez (Sheriff);  
 Kittitas: Obie O'Brien (Commissioner) and Deanna Panattoni (Treasurer);  
 Lewis: Warren McLeod (Coroner) and Jonathan Meyer (Prosecuting Attorney);  
 Mason: Jerry Lingle (Commissioner) and Michael Dorcy (Prosecuting Attorney);  
 Okanogan: Charleen Groomes (Clerk) and Jim Detro (Commissioner);  
 Pacific: Lisa Ayers (Commissioner) and Scott Johnson (Sheriff);  
 Pend Oreille: Alan Botzheim (Sheriff) and Terri Miller (Treasurer);  
 San Juan: Patty Miller and Jamie Stephens (Council Members) and Rob Nou (Sheriff);  
 Skagit: Will Reichardt (Sheriff);  
 Skamania: Timothy Todd (Auditor), Bob Anderson (Commissioner) and Adam Kick (Prosecuting Attorney);

Spokane: Vicki Horton (Assessor), Al French (Commissioner) and Rob Chase (Treasurer);  
 Thurston: Steven Drew (Assessor), Jon Tunheim (Prosecuting Attorney), John Snaza (Sheriff) and Shawn Meyers (Treasurer);  
 Walla Walla: Debra Antes (Assessor), Richard Greenwood (Coroner) and John Turner (Sheriff);  
 Whatcom: *None*;  
 Yakima: *None*.

**Financial:** As noted earlier, the Pool's financial position continues to improve and is the strongest it has ever been. Below are some of the more significant highlights:

**Operating Income:** \$1.8 million was realized during Py2010 (59% increase from Py2009) with the nearly million dollar (13.4%) reduction in the independent actuary's estimate for the Pool-only layer's claims reserves substantially contributing to this improvement. Of even greater significance is the nearly \$6.8 million in Operating Income realized in the past five years.

**Total Assets:** Grew \$3.2 million (9%) during Py2010 and \$17.8 million (85%) during the past five years to \$38.9 million. Current assets increased \$3.1 million (9%) during Py2010, while non-current assets increased \$0.1 million (12%).

**Claims Reserves:** The combined total for all Pool-retained claims reserves increased to \$14.0 million, up 7% from Py2009 and 35% during the past five years. The total includes \$6.1 million (down 13% from one year ago and 37% in the past five years) for losses in the Pool's self-insured retention layer; \$7.0 million (up 37% from one year ago) for losses for the (automobile/general liability) "corridor" program's aggregated stop losses; and \$0.9 million (down 2% from one year ago but up 22% from five years ago) for unallocated loss adjustment expenses. *NOTE: The corridor program only began four years ago. Its occurrence coverage maximum increased to one million dollars in Py2010, up from half a million dollars during the program's first three years. The program's occurrence coverage minimum remained the greater of the applicable member's deductible or*

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# POOL NEWS



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\$100,000.

**Net Assets (aka "Members' Equity"):** Grew \$2.0 million during the past year and \$9.4 million during the past five years to \$10.2 million as of September 30, 2010. Of the total, \$5.8 million is classified as "Restricted Net Assets" - \$1.0 million to satisfy the solvency provisions of WAC 82.60.03001 and the remaining \$4.8 million to address the 98% confidence level requirements in the Pool's Underwriting Policy. Another \$0.2 million is invested in a real property recovery and \$1.0 million in Capital Assets (net of debt). The \$3.2 million residual is "Non-Restricted" and available for use as the board directs.

**Claims:** 769 claims (and lawsuits) were added to the Pool's claims-related database during Py2010. This raised the to-date total (Oct 1988 – Sep 2010) of third-party liability claims submitted by WCRP member counties to 17,238. With 16,800 of the claims designated as *closed*, only 438 claims remained classified as *open* at year's end. Still, the Pool's independent actuary estimates another 440 claims could be filed for covered occurrences from all WCRP years through September 2010. That would bring the estimated ultimate claims total to 17,678.

Even though nearly 40% of the claims are resolved without any payment, more than \$178.2 million has been paid addressing the Pool's claims to-date. 38% of the amounts paid (\$67.3 million) are deductibles (being reimbursed by the applicable member counties. 4% (\$6.8 million) was covered under excess insurance policies and reimbursed by the applicable commercial insurers. The remaining 58% (\$104.1 million) represents the "risk shared" portion of the joint self-insurance coverage (being) paid from "pooled" funds – \$49.6 million retained by the Pool itself and \$54.5 million reimbursed by its commercial reinsurers.

Year-end estimates to resolve the *open* claims totaled nearly \$43.2 million. In addition, the independent actuary estimated another \$46.2 million may be needed to resolve the ultimate claims. Estimates distributing these

outstanding claims liabilities reflect \$28.0 million from member counties as deductible reimbursements and \$61.4 million from "pooled" funds – \$13.2 million from the Pool and \$48.2 million reimbursed by its commercial reinsurers.

**Executive Director Contact:** I am always available to respond to member inquiries. Please feel free to share your comments, suggestions and criticisms; for it is only from knowing what our client partners are thinking and experiencing that we can better serve you. Direct these to Vyrle Hill – WCRP Executive Director, 2558 R.W. Johnson Road S.W., Suite 106, Tumwater, WA 98512-6103; OR phone: 360/292-4500 extension 101, 360/292-4495 direct, 360/292-4501 facsimile, or 360/480-2116 mobile.

As a final note, I'd like to add my thanks to everyone for the prayers, condolences and thoughts of sympathy associated with my Mother's late-year illness and passing. Sherri and I are truly appreciative.

## Save Gas—Save Money—Reduce Emissions!

Tacoma Power tracked the time that 87 vehicles spent idling between May and December 2010. The baseline results showed that 60 percent of the time each vehicle was on, it was idling. Their goal was to reduce that by 10 percent by the end of 2010, and they did it!

"The reduction seemed ambitious," said Interim Fleet Services Manager Jon Edick. "But our drivers did it. Their efforts have proven they are more than up to the challenge of making a serious impact on emissions."

During the tracking period, employees cut fuel consumption by 5,914 gallons. That translates to a savings of more than \$17,000 and 58 metric tons of greenhouse gases—the equivalent of removing 10 passenger vehicles from the road.

### Great Idea! Great Result!

(from Ubits, a publication for employees & retirees of Tacoma Public Utilities)





# MEMBER SERVICES



**David Goldsmith,**  
Member Services  
Manager

## **Property Program Task Force Completes Work**

At the fall conference, the Board of Directors formed a Property Program Task Force to review the property program offered as a joint purchase product and to determine if it is time to evolve the program into a WCRP insured program, one in which the Pool would adjust lower valued claims (within a Self Insured Retention level) and assist the excess carrier in adjusting higher valued claims.

In the months of December and January, Member Services staff visited with other Pools that have a Pool-insured program and discussed how they were funded, what they saw were the benefits of a Pool-insured program and any drawbacks they experienced. Additionally, the Producer worked with the current commercial insurer to determine what a Pool-insured program would look like in terms of cost savings over the existing policy (credits for a SIR of \$50,000, \$100,000 and \$250,000) as well as providing loss runs for the last five years.

From this discussion and information, a Pros and Cons talking paper was developed for task force members. This paper highlighted potential advantages and disadvantages that a Pool-insured program would provide the membership, the upside and downside risks involved with developing said program, and a cursory evaluation of what such a program would entail.

In a 'cyber-meeting' the Task Force reviewed

the information and discussed the information developed. The results of the Property Program Task Force will be presented to the membership at the Spring Conference at Suncadia.

## **Orientation for Newly Elected Commissioners, Council Members, Prosecuting Attorneys, and Sheriffs**

Prior to the formal Spring Meeting at Suncadia and by invitation, Pool staff will be conducting a half-day seminar to orientate newly elected officials (members of the legislative authorities, sheriffs, and prosecuting attorneys) on what membership in the WCRP means to them and their respective organizations. The seminar will focus on the history of the Pool, its legal authority and obligations, membership responsibility and obligations, operations of the Pool including claim handling and adjusting, risk management at the local level and other topics pertaining to this insurance product cooperative known as the WCRP.

The goal of this orientation is to educate those newly elected officials on what membership in the WCRP means, and provide them with a solid foundation from which to draw upon the services of the Pool and assist the Pool in carrying out its mission.





# MEMBER SERVICES



**Jill Lowe**, Loss Control Coordinator

## On-Line Training

Most of us have had experiences with on-line training. Was it extremely interesting or slightly boring? Was it convenient? Was it expensive? Was it too generic to give any real answers or did it hit right on target? For most of us the answer lies somewhere in-between.

A recent study published in Vol. 96. No. 1 of the Journal of Applied Psychology found that on-line training could be considerably more effective than lectures, films, reading materials and videos. However, the study also found that less engaging training was not as effective when attempting to improve safety in more dangerous jobs.

"The primary psychological mechanism we can offer as an explanation for these results is something called the 'dread factor,'" the study's lead author, Michael Burke of Tulane University, said in a press release. "In a more interactive training environment, the trainees are faced more acutely with the possible dangers of their job and they are, in turn, more motivated to learn about such dangers and how to avoid them."

The Risk Pool offers several on-line training options for members. As budgets and

departments get thinner, the on-line training options make better fiscal sense.

We are a partner with the County Training Institute who offers an on-line Risk Management class. This

class was developed by and features: Harry Green, Lewis County, Randy Watts, Whatcom County, Jennifer Hills, King



County and yours truly. (Can we talk privately some time about how I freeze up on camera?) You can access this class by going to the County Training Institute website [countytraininginstitute.org](http://countytraininginstitute.org). You will earn 4 CPO Core credits and the cost is \$65.



We have also partnered with LocalGovU which offers over 100 on-line classes in human resources, corrections, technology, safety and law enforcement just to name a few. These classes will cost \$10 per class per person or can be purchased at a lower



price if purchased in bulk. The most often used program is the Defensive Driving class which costs just \$3.25 per person.

One of the greatest selling points of on-line training is the reasonable cost. Of course the ability to take each class at a time that suits your individual needs is also a major selling point. Many employers take advantage of on-line training for workers who might have modified duty needs.

While on-line training does not offer the classroom dynamic of interactive discussion, it meets many needs of county employees. Simply click on the Washington Counties Risk Pool website at [www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info) and click on training. Visit the LocalGovU and CTI websites and you'll find on-line training that most certainly will fit your counties needs.



# Helpline NEWS



**Here are the latest Questions of the Month from the HelpLine for WCRP Members' HR Express Update:**

**January Question:**

*What is the advised best practice for maintenance of HR-employee relations' investigative notes once an investigation is completed? Is it better to maintain all supporting documentation in the HR Manager's files indefinitely or to maintain all supporting documentation in the appropriate employee(s) HR "confidential" file(s)?*

**Response:**

When conducting an investigation into an incident in the workplace, including harassment, discrimination, altercations or other incidents, etc., documents related to the investigation, including notes, witness or other statements, summaries, etc., should be placed in a confidential investigative file, which should be maintained separately from any employee's personnel file.

If, at the conclusion of an investigation, the employer determines that disciplinary or other corrective action is warranted, whether against the accused or even a witness (if the investigation reveals the witness was involved, for example), such disciplinary documentation should be placed in the respective personnel file of the employee against whom it was issued (with a copy placed in the investigative file as well).

Source: HELPLINE for WCRP Members, [www.hrhelpline.com/wcrp](http://www.hrhelpline.com/wcrp), January 2011

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**February Question:**

*We are a Monday-Friday medical office. We had a bad snowstorm and closed our office for an entire day. Do we have to pay our employees because we decided to close the office?*

**Response:**

First note the employer cannot penalize exempt employees for employer-mandated closures of less than one week. This means that the employer must pay exempt employees for any days missed when the employer closes for less than one week due to inclement weather. Absent a governing contract to the contrary, non-exempt employees can be unpaid. Also note, the employer can require all employees to use accrued paid time off benefits during a business-mandated closure if it is consistent with company policy and past practice, although this can result in negative employee relations issues, particularly for employees who may have wanted to use their accrued paid time off benefits at another time (and again exempt employees must be paid with or without the use of paid time off benefits).

For this reason many employers give employees the option to use paid time off benefits during a business-mandated closure. There is a US Department of Labor Opinion Letter on this subject at [http://www.dol.gov/whd/opinion/FLSA/2005/2005\\_10\\_28\\_46\\_FLSA.htm](http://www.dol.gov/whd/opinion/FLSA/2005/2005_10_28_46_FLSA.htm), which we encourage you to review for more information.

Source: HELPLINE for WCRP Members, [www.hrhelpline.com/wcrp](http://www.hrhelpline.com/wcrp), February 2011

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# TRAINING & EVENTS



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## **February-March, 2011**

**Conducting Excellent Performance Evaluations** will be offered in 7 locations throughout the state. You may register online at [www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info) and click on the Training link.

## **March 23-25, 2011**

WCRP 2011 Spring Conference and Board of Directors Meeting, the Lodge at Suncadia, Cle Elum, WA. Those attending the Board Worksession and Meeting will receive 1 CPO Elective credit. **Right of Way Issues** training (2 CLE credits) will be offered during the Conference Roundtable. Topics included in the training are model franchise agreements, handling roadway claims, and conducting investigations in the right of way. See page 3 for more information about the conference, training, and Board meetings.

## **April 28, 2011**

**Collision Investigation**, Spokane County. See page 2 for more information about this workshop.

## **May, 2011**

**Employment Law Do's and Don'ts** training will be offered twice. This class will provide a more in-depth analysis of the legal issues presented during the Management and Supervisory Training course. You may register online at [www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info) and click on the Training link.

## **May-June 2011**

**Management & Supervisory Training** will be offered five times during the months of May and June, in Spokane, Yakima, Chelan, Lewis, and Skagit counties. You may register online at [www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info) and click on the Training link.

## **July 20-22, 2011**

WCRP 2011 Summer Conference and Annual Board of Directors Meeting, Marcus Whitman Hotel, Walla Walla, WA.

## **November 2-4, 2011**

WCRP 2011 Autumn Conference and Board of Directors Meeting; Campbell's Lake Chelan's Waterfront Resort, Chelan, WA.

**You can get more information, access driving directions,  
and register for classes and events at:**

**[www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info)**