



# County Connection

News from Washington Counties Risk Pool

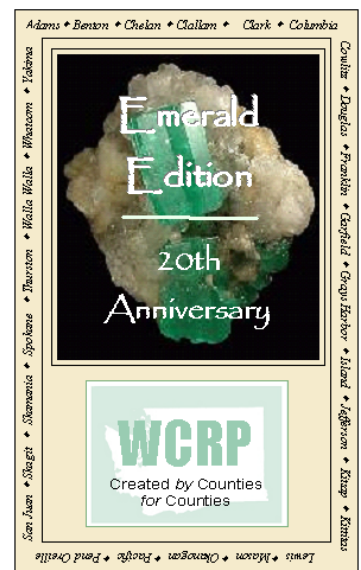
September 2008

## COUNTIES CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF INSURANCE POOLING



Photo ~ Claire Thompson

County representatives gathered at the Icicle Winery for relaxation during the Summer Conference 2008. Presidents, from left: Vyrle Hill (92-93), Mike Shelton (95-97), Randy Watts (05-06), Rose Elway (2005), Claude Cox (91-92), Ron Zirkle (99-00), Neva Corkrum (93-94), Steven Clem (06-07), David Goldsmith (01-02), and Keith Goehner (07-08). Not present for the celebration: Bill Vogler (88-90), Shirley Van Zanten (90-91), Frank Bishop (94-95), Dick Dixon (97-98), Mary Jo Cady (98-99), Si Stephens (00-01), Steve Lowe (02-03), Leon Long (03-04) and Craig Vejraska (2004).



### Officers, Executive Committee Members Elected to serve during 2008-2009

New Risk Pool officers were elected and four seats on the Executive Committee were filled at the Annual WCRP Board Meeting in July.

Mark Abernathy, Kitsap County Risk Manager, was elected President, and Jay Winter, Walla Walla County Human Resources/Risk Manager, was elected Secretary/Treasurer for 2008-2009.

Tammy Devlin, Thurston County Risk Manager, and Lee Gross, Lewis County Commissioner, were elected to three-year

terms to run from October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2011.

Keith Goehner, Chelan County Commissioner, and Rose Elway, Director of Management Services & Budget for Grays Harbor County, were reelected, also for three-year terms through September 30, 2011.

Executive Committee members are chosen from Board Directors and Alternates, limited to one committee member per county. Pool bylaws require that Executive Committee members represent the diversity and interests of member counties, east and west, large and small, and elected and appointed officials.

Acting as a Nominating Committee, the

Executive Committee selects at least one nominee per position. Nominations are also accepted from the floor.

Also serving on the Executive Committee through September 30, 2009 are: Steve Clem, Douglas County Prosecuting Attorney, Randy Watts, Whatcom County Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, and Mark Abernathy, Kitsap County Risk Manager.

Serving through September 30, 2010 are: Marilyn Butler, Skamania County Administrative Services Director, Steve Bartel, Spokane County Risk Manager, Neva Corkrum, Franklin County Commissioner, and Jay Winter, Walla Walla County Personnel/Risk Manager.



Mark Abernathy, Kitsap County Risk Manager and 2008-2009 President Elect

## CHANGE ISN'T COMING--- IT'S HERE

### The Risk Pool goes to Hollywood

I'll bet you heard it here first. In 2010, Warner Bros. Pictures is expected to

release a movie based on the Richard Russo's book, "The Risk Pool", starring Tom Hanks and directed by Lawrence Kasdan. The Risk Pool story is based upon a "maliciously funny" tale of the son raised by a loutish and rockheaded father who is a barfly, petty thief and gambler. According to one synopsis, the name of the book (and movie) stem from the following definition:

*"Risk pool — a term which describes the kind of insurance shelter available to high-risk drivers at swingeing cost that keeps its secrets and its derelicts covered."*

How's that for respect? Did you even know swingeing was a word?

### The Last 10 Years

A continuing challenge for the Washington Counties Risk Pool and its members is to educate the public officials we work for (or with) regarding the Pool's mission and successes. In 1998, ten years ago, the Pool operated on an \$850,000 annual budget and had 10 employees.

Last year, the Pool's operating budget was a little more than twice the 1998 level. So what is the difference from ten years ago?

Membership has grown from 25 to 28 counties. The reported worker hours by the member counties has grown by thirty percent.

The Pool added a property insurance program with a \$500 million all-peril policy limit. Currently, 27 of the 28 member counties are enrolled in the property program.

Staff now works out of a new office building in Tumwater. We don't operate out of a defunct bank anymore.

The Risk Pool now fully supports loss control and training programs to assist its members to prevent or reduce the frequency and severity of losses. During the last year the Risk Pool provided training on topics such as claims administration, supervisory skills, public re-

cords, jail liability, driving, collision investigation, and hosted regular roundtables to promote networking among the membership.

We own and operate a risk management database that allows members to electronically report claims and analyze the type and nature of their losses.

Members are provided onsite feedback from the Risk Pool member services group regarding risk management and loss control practices.

Member equity is at record levels. The Washington Counties Risk Pool is in the strongest financial position in its 20-year history.

The Risk Pool has done this without a change in the number of employees. Last year, we still had just 10.

### What is left undone?

Our member counties will face unparalleled financial challenges in the next few years. Expenses are outpacing revenues in nearly all areas. Rate stability, for both the liability and property programs, must be a primary goal for the Washington Counties Risk Pool and its members.

How do we get there? We must all participate and get involved in the Pool's strategic management objective of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the WCRP business organization.

### Hollywood has it wrong.

So are we here to provide an insurance shelter to cover derelicts and keep secrets? I think not. The Pool's mission is to provide comprehensive and economical risk coverage, reduce the frequency and severity of losses, and decrease the costs incurred in the managing and litigation of claims. If we get that right, we add to the stability to the costs of providing services to the public.

### **Executive Committee**

#### **President**

**Keith Goehner**, Chelan County

#### **Secretary/Treasurer**

**Mark Abernathy**, Kitsap County

#### **Other Members**

**Diane Oberquell**, Thurston County

**Toni Gilbert**, Clallam County

**Rose Elway**, Grays Harbor County

**Steve Clem**, Douglas County

**Randy Watts**, Whatcom County

**Neva Corkrum**, Franklin County

**Jay Winter**, Walla Walla County

**Marilyn Butler**, Skamania County

**Steve Bartel**, Spokane County

#### **Risk Pool Staff**

##### Administration

**Vyrle Hill**, Executive Director

**Sue Colbo**, Auditing/Accounting Officer

##### Claims

**Susan Looker**, Manager

**Mike Cook**, Analyst

**Candy Drews**, Analyst

**Tammy Cahill**, Representative

**Claire Thompson**, Assistant

##### Member Services

**David Goldsmith**

**Jill Lowe**, Loss Control Coordinator

**Vacant**, Editor/Events

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

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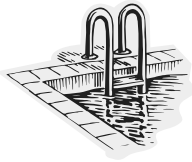
Published by

**WASHINGTON COUNTIES RISK POOL**

Created by Counties for Counties



Vyrle Hill



## Poolside

with Executive Director  
**Vyrle Hill**

This column has been reserved for me as the Pool's Executive Director to share a few tidbits with the readers of Pool's newsletter. Please take a little more time, however, to read about the other Pool happenings reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

**Celebration Time:** The Washington Counties Risk Pool will, at month's end, conclude its twentieth year providing its member counties with 3<sup>rd</sup>-party liability coverage. The Emerald (20<sup>th</sup>) Anniversary, actually August 18<sup>th</sup>, was celebrated during the Pool's Summer Session and Annual Meeting held July 30 – August 1 in Leavenworth, WA. Now, on to the future... we're presently processing the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Joint Self-Insurance Liability Policy for delivery later this month to the Pool's 28 member counties, along with copies of the coverage binder for the jointly-purchased Washington Counties Property Program for the 27 participating counties.

In addition, we recently exercised the authority granted by the Board of Directors earlier this year and purchased the suite and the fractional share of another in our headquarters building located at 2558 R.W. Johnson Road SW in Tumwater that the Washington Counties Insurance Fund had initially purchased and occupied. This acquisition, coincidentally coinciding with the completion of the Pool's second year operating in the Mottman Plaza headquarters, will assure that the Pool's operating space needs are addressed well into the future. And until the space is actually needed by the Pool, it's being leased to a private party and generating income for the Pool.

**Pool Service Recognitions:** The continuing involvement by the Pool's member counties and the unbridled service from their designees has had much to do with the Pool's successes to-date. Individuals are recognized for their services to the Pool and the Board of Directors using 5-year intervals. Those recognized during the recent Annual Meeting included:

**20 Years** – Clallam County's Marge Upham, Grays Harbor County's Rose Elway and Skamania County's Marilyn Butler;

**15 Years** – Benton County's Melina Wenner joins Franklin County's Neva Corkrum and Steve Lowe, Walla Walla County's Jay Winter and Island County's Betty Kemp;

**10 Years** - Clallam County's Toni Gilbert, Cowlitz County's Clyde Carpenter and Skagit County's Gary Rowe join Cowlitz County's Claire Hauge, Mason County's Lone Siegler, Whatcom County's Randy Watts, Yakima County's Ron Zirkle and Garfield County's Dean Burton; and

**5 Years** – Chelan County's Keith Goehner, Douglas County's Steve Clem and Thad Duvall, and Pacific County's Bryan Harrison join Grays Harbor County's Bob Beerbower, Thurston County's Tammy Devlin and Diane Oberquell, Adams County's Linda Reimer, Lewis County's Harry Green, Skamania County's Debra Van Camp and Kitsap County's Mark Abernathy.

**2008-09 Officers and Executive Committeepersons:** Congratulations first to Kitsap County Risk Manager Mark Abernathy and Walla Walla County Personnel/Risk Manager Jay Winter who were elected the Pool's President and Secretary/Treasurer respectively for Py2009 (2008-09) during the August 1<sup>st</sup> Annual (Board of Directors) Meeting. Our special thanks to Chelan County Commissioner Keith Goehner (President) and to Mark Abernathy (Secretary-Treasurer) for their leadership and guidance during Py2008.

Congratulations are also extended to

Keith Goehner and Grays Harbor County Management Services and Budget Director Rose Elway for their reelections and to Lewis County Commissioner F. Lee Grose and Thurston County Risk Manager Tammy Devlin for their elections, all for 3-year terms commencing October 1<sup>st</sup>. They will join Douglas County's Steve Clem, Franklin County's Neva Corkrum, Kitsap County's Mark Abernathy, Skamania County's Marilyn Butler, Spokane County's Steve Bartel, Walla Walla County's Jay Winter and Whatcom County's Randy Watts to comprise the Pool's Py2009 Executive Committee.

### **Other Significant Annual Meeting Highlights:**

26 member counties were represented for the August 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting. All 28 were present during the prior afternoon's Board Workshop.

The third quarter financial reports revealed Net Assets (Members' Equity) of \$6.37 million, an increase of more than \$1.0 million this year and more than \$0.6 million from the same period a year ago. Also, the Assets to Liabilities Ratio reported to the Office of Financial Management (State Risk Manager) of 1.80 remains basically unchanged from the 1.79 closing Py2007 ratio and the 1.82 ratio from this same period last year.

Mike Croke and Elizabeth Miser with Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc., the Pool's insurance broker, presented quality renewals for the liability reinsurance and "following form" excess insurance programs, and for the property insurance program. The Board approved their recommended liability program renewal, which reflected a 3% reduction in premium even with our composite exposures growing by 2%.

*Poolside*, continued on Page 5...

## WCRP STAFF NEWS

### Loss Control

I recently spent two weeks with my daughter in England and Spain. I'd been looking forward to and saving for this trip for four years. Visions of quaint villages and sidewalk cafes filled my thoughts.

On departure day, I remembered how stressful and hard it can be to travel. Prior to those quaint villages, castles and sidewalk cafes, there was the trip to the airport, a ten hour flight to England and getting to our hotel. All of this was encountered with too much luggage, lack of escalators in the underground and no elevator to the fourth floor of the hotel.

Fortunately, I was with my daughter. We know each others strengths and weaknesses and we were both able to come through for each other to make difficult times much easier. Well, I had the credit card and she is really adept at figuring out transportation.

In the nearly two years that I've worked with the Risk Pool, I've gotten to know many of you well. Those of you that I work with on a regular basis already seem to know my strengths and weaknesses as I might be getting to know yours. I count on your input to help me understand how I might help your county, and you provide that input competently and passionately. Thank you for that.

Every day we deal with issues that need answers. The issues may vary in urgency but, generally, they don't vary much by county, and our ability to address the issues impacts our daily stress level. Fortunately, we have tools right in the palm of our hands for working on solutions such as the ACE-funded HelpLine for employment-related concerns (see page 5), or the Risk Pool reference library, providing policies for issues such as public records, law enforcement and human resources. More importantly though, we talk to each other frequently and nearly always find someone who has already addressed an issue

that we are tackling.

I believe that the Risk Pool's greatest strength is our ability to work with and help each other. Our members have provided me great policies for the on-line reference library, and you respond quickly to questions of how you have handled certain issues. I look forward to working with each of you, and want to thank you in advance for the help that I know you will be providing me. Stay tuned for our 2008/2009 training schedule. It should be a great one.

**Jill Lowe**

Loss Control Coordinator

### Member Services

#### County Briefings Concluded

After thousands of road miles over the course of nearly 5 months, the annual briefing to the 28 member counties of the Washington Counties Risk Pool (WCRP) is concluded. In addition to visiting with the member counties, we also had audiences with Wahkiakum, Klickitat, Asotin

and Whitman Counties to talk about the WCRP and the products and services we offer.

We believe this effort was successful on several fronts. First, it allowed Vyrle and me the opportunities to meet on the home turfs of the member counties. You just can't replace a one-on-one experience in a member's jurisdiction. Secondly, we believe it was equally educational to the member counties in terms of understanding the uniqueness of the programs offered, our pricing structure, our financial health and how their specific jurisdiction plays an integral part of this co-op.

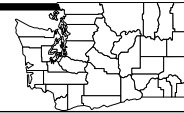
The free flow of information and questions underscored the understanding that the legislative bodies of the WCRP membership have with their insuring entity. Both Vyrle and I thank you for being such gracious hosts to our travels and look forward to hitting the road next year.

(For more Member Services News, please see page 6.)



*Photo ~ David Goldsmith*

*Jill Lowe, Tim Chace, Loss Control for Arthur J. Gallagher, and Ione Siegler, Mason County Risk Manager, during a follow-up meeting to discuss a Risk Exposure Assessment. Tim and Jill have now met with all 28 counties to discuss their Risk Exposure Assessment reports. A draft report is being compiled which will be presented to the Risk Management Committee in mid-October. It is anticipated that the completed report will be presented at the Fall meeting in November. Jill and Tim will then make arrangements with several counties for more in-depth meetings to be held over the next three years. Thanks go out to every single county. We appreciate your timeliness and perseverance in filling out the assessments. Everyone provided great information that will be used for loss control and underwriting purposes.*



## HR *HelpLine* Available

**D**id you know that WCRP members can access a 24-hour hotline to address personnel and HR management issues?

*HelpLine*, provided through the Pool's reinsurance carrier ACE, employs knowledgeable legal counsel and practitioners to answer questions, discuss situations and point you to other resources.

By far, the most expensive claim the Pool handles is one involving personnel. Not only are these expensive, but time consuming and disruptive to the organization. *HelpLine* can help get early counsel before an issue becomes a claim. It's free to users and may save your county a lot of money. Please take advantage of this service!

## The Employer HELPLINE Includes:

Toll-free (phone) and website (email) access to employment law attorneys from a national law firm.

Personalized answers and legal advice to your organization's *unique* HR and employment law questions. All communications are documented and are strictly confidential with attached attorney-client privilege.

Answers no later than the end of the next business day. There is no limit to conversation time nor is there a limit to the amount of questions you can ask.

Responses to 50 types of human resource and employment law issues, from Wage/Hour or FMLA questions, to complicated harassment or termination situations. You don't have to be in crisis to benefit from these proactive resources!

## Online Support & Resource Center:

Access the Online Compliance Resource Center that includes federal and state news/regulation changes updated daily, state by state regulation comparison charts, over 90 sample human resource policies, important HR forms & posters and other valuable center support tools.

## Monthly HR *Express* Updates & HR Alerts:

Keep your organization informed of continuously changing state and federal workplace regulations...direct to your email box! Each HR *Express* Update also includes popular Questions of the Month, Case Digests of the Month, and breaking HR news/alerts.

### Each participating county has assigned personnel who can access *HelpLine*:

COUNTY	CONTACT	CONTACT
Benton	Melina Wenner	Sarah Perry
Chelan	Cathy Mulhall	Katie Small
Clallam	Marge Upham	vacant
Clark	Francine Reis	Kathy Bartlett
Columbia	Drew Woods	Lisa Heinrich
Cowlitz	Jim Zdilar	Nadya DeGrande
Douglas	Steve Clem	Jim Barker
Franklin	Ryan Verhulp	Rosie Rumsey
Grays Harbor	Marilyn Lewis	Anne Sullivan
Island	Larry Larson	Betty Kemp
Jefferson	Lorna Delaney	David Alvarez
Kitsap	Penny Starkey	Jacquelyn Aufderheide
Kittitas	Alan Crankovich	Lisa Young
Lewis	Archie Smith	Harry Green
Mason	Greg Hering	Ione Siegler
Okanogan	Nanette Kallunki	Stephen Bozarth
Pacific	Bryan Harrison	Jon Kaino
Pend Oreille	Tom Metzger	Chris Mylar
San Juan	Adina Cunningham	Pamela Morais
Skagit	Billie Kadrmas	vacant
Skamania	Debi Van Camp	Marilyn Butler
Spokane	Steve Bartel	Steve Kinn, Cathy Malzahn
Thurston	Tammy Devlin	Chris Curtis
Walla Walla	Jay Winter	vacant
Whatcom	Daniel Gibson	Karen Goens
Yakima	Paul McIlrath	Larry Peterson
*****		
WCRP	Vyrle Hill	Susan Looker, Jill Lowe

### *Poolside*, continued from Page 3...

The Board also approved renewal of the property program with two enhancements – the addition of a “green construction” endorsement and an increase of \$50 million to \$250 million in the earthquake and flood sub-limits. And though last winter's storm resulted in losses far exceeding the premiums paid, Lexington's final composite renewal rate increased by less than 2%, and that includes the two enhancements. Not bad... great job Mike and Liz!

Also approved by the Board were: a) revisions to the Strategic Plan, b) the Joint Self Insurance Liability Policy for Py2009, including language clarifying the coverage for claims from Public Records Act violations, c) the Annual Budget with an Administrative (Operational) Budget of \$1.775 million and Py2009 (staff) Salary Schedule, and d) the liability and property (premium) assessment allocation formulas, reporting and invoicing timelines, and payment terms and conditions.

**Executive Director Contact:** Please share your comments, suggestions, and most definitely your criticisms... direct these to Vyrle Hill – WCRP Executive Director, 2558 R.W. Johnson Road SW, Suite 106, Tumwater, WA 98512-6103; OR phone: 360/292-4495 or 360/480-2116 (mobile); OR fax: 360/292-4501.



# POOL NEWS



## Member Services, cont.

### WCRP Funds LEXIPOL

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) recently communicated that it would be endorsing LEXIPOL ([www.LEXIPOL.com](http://www.LEXIPOL.com)) for use in meeting its policies accreditation requirements. WASPC has determined the LEXIPOL system to be a tool for the development, maintenance and training on policies, procedures and best practices contained within each jurisdiction's policy and procedures manual.

If you haven't heard of LEXIPOL you soon will, once your Sheriff has an opportunity to review this program and what it offers. As one Sheriff put it, "After years of struggling with the legal and practical aspects of keeping our Department's Policy Manual updated and legally defensible, we have finally succeeded. LEXIPOL has produced a policy manual for the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department that meets our needs today and into the future."

-Sonoma County Sheriff Bill Cogbill  
The law enforcement arena of county governments is an area ripe for claims and litigation. Without exception, in a case dealing with the law enforcement community, the first questions asked by the plaintiff's attorney are, "What is the department's policy concerning X?" and "Was the officer trained on this policy?" The LEXIPOL system answers both questions by providing the most current references of Federal and State statutes, case law and best practices, in addition to its daily training module. This is what LEXIPOL says they are and what they have to offer:

LEXIPOL- is a provider of risk management resources for public safety organizations. Services include web based policy and procedure manuals that contain solid, realistic, ongoing and verifiable training.

#### Features of the LEXIPOL System

Comprehensive court tested policies written by legal and law enforcement professionals  
Policies are focused on officer

safety and risk management in a useful and easy to understand format

Constant updating in keeping with our philosophy of continuous improvement

Release notes with each update detailing the reason or need for changes

100 percent web based with 24/7 access (No software to buy or maintain)

We use secure encryption technology to assure security and integrity of your content

Easy to use web interface allows complete control of updating, editing and publishing of the policy manual

Color coding identifies origin of all content (federal, state, best practice)

Several levels of support including policy guides, a User's Forum with a complete knowledge base and live support

Compatible with all major accreditation organizations

Fully integrated Daily Training Bulletins assure personnel are fully familiar with important policies

Flexible editing tools allow for complete customizing of any DTB or policy content

The model policies contained within the LEXIPOL system have been specifically developed for the State of Washington and are completely amenable to be tailored by local variations and customs. In addition to law enforcement, LEXIPOL will soon be adding a corrections module.

Because of the importance of this as a Risk Management tool, the Board of Directors of the Washington Counties Risk Pool is offering to pay for the annual subscription fee provided that the participating jurisdiction purchases the accompanying training module. To 'sweeten the pot' so to speak, the Pool will offer the annual subscription fee 'upfront' once the jurisdiction decides to sign up, thereby significantly reducing upfront expenses.

LEXIPOL has made a very attractive offer to WASPC members and with the Pool's financial incentives, the cost to any one jurisdiction is minimized and may actually be offset by current efforts in policy development and training already budgeted for.

We encourage you to look over the LEXIPOL system and share this information with your Sheriff. We believe your Sheriff will also find this an excellent tool to stay up to date on policies and procedures and the training required.

**David Goldsmith**  
Member Services Manager

There's a lot of good stuff on our website! Check it out at [www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info)



# TRAINING & EVENTS



## FALL CONFERENCE AT GREAT WOLF LODGE

### Conference Schedule:

Wednesday, Nov. 5:

1:15 - 2:30pm: Course review for Introduction to Underwriting

2:30 - 4:30pm: Examination offered for Introduction to Underwriting

Thursday, Nov. 6:

9 - 11:45am: Claims Admin. and Risk Management Roundtable

Noon - 1:15pm: Lunch

1:15 - 2:30pm: Property Program (Claims) Training

2:30 - 5:00pm: Board of Directors Work Session

Friday, Nov. 7:

9 - Noon: Board of Directors Meeting

### Hotel Information:

The Great Wolf Lodge is located at 2050 Old Highway 99, SW, Grand Mound, WA 98531, adjacent to I-5 at Exit 88 between Centralia and Tumwater. The lodge is an eight-story, northwoods-themed resort with a two-story Grand Lobby and features 398 guest rooms, various amenities and a 78,000 square foot indoor entertainment area. 60,000 square feet of the entertainment area is dedicated to the largest indoor waterpark in America that includes six waterslides, a 65 foot tunnel tube, three pools, hot tubs and sundecks, and a treehouse waterfort. You can check out their website at: [www.GreatWolf.com/Grandmound/](http://www.GreatWolf.com/Grandmound/). We have a block of rooms reserved for our group. For reservations, please call 1-800-640-WOLF (9653). Our Group Code is 0811WACOUN. The group rate will be available until October 5th.

Bring your swimsuit and plan to have a really great time!





## KNOWING HOW TO CONTROL AND SETTLE YOUR FILE: *Bloor v. Cowlitz County, et al.*

The county was part of a drug task force. It was joined with Wahkiakum County (insured by Canfield), and cities Kelso and Longview (insured with WCIA). The drug task force found a meth lab. They failed to inform the health department the house was contaminated. The Bloors purchased the house without notice of the contamination. They were not told by the realtor, the seller or the health department. The county health department quarantined the property after the sale. The new owners sued the seller, the real estate agent, the real estate company and the drug task force. The defense for Kelso and Longview was handled by attorney John Justice of Law, Lyman, et al. Chief Civil Prosecutor Ron Marshall for Cowlitz County handled the county's defense. Wahkiakum County was to contribute toward settlement and defense costs.

We lost our summary judgment motion to dismiss the drug task force on the Public Duty Doctrine. We set up mediation. We agreed to pay  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a combined authority of \$100,000 for the drug task force. WCIA was to pay  $\frac{1}{2}$  and the other  $\frac{1}{4}$  was to be paid by Wahkiakum County. We were joined at the mediation with attorneys for the sellers and the realtor. Our codefendants were given legal advice the judge would dismiss them out of the lawsuit or they would have little dollar exposure on any award. The matter was to be heard by Judge Hunt of Lewis County. The plaintiffs did not request a jury. Our codefendants came to the mediation with \$25,000. The case did not settle at mediation. The judge did not dismiss any of the defendants.

### Other Claims News:

As reported by the Associated Press from The Daily Herald Co., on August 17, 2008:

#### Prosecutor wins \$3 million suit for firing

After 11 days of testimony, a King County jury has ruled that Pierce County owes fired deputy prosecutor Barbara Corey \$3 million. The jurors found the Pierce County prosecutor's office wrongfully terminated Corey and defamed her reputation in 2004. The jurors also found the office acted maliciously and with a reckless disregard for the truth in terminating its then third in command. The jury award for Corey was \$1.5 million for the damage to her reputation, \$750,000

for noneconomic damages, \$700,176 for economic damages related to the defamation and false light claims and \$124,994 for loss of wages because of her wrongful termination—for a total of \$3,075,170. Corey now works as a criminal defense and appellate attorney in Pierce County.

John Miller and Sandra Bobrick, two private lawyers who represented Pierce County in Corey's lawsuit, said they were evaluating the ruling and will explore their options, including an appeal. Mike Panagiotu, longtime director of Pierce County's Risk Management and Insurance Department, said he couldn't recall the county losing an employment case by way of a jury's verdict. He's been with the county for 32 years.

Corey said she was grateful to the

award against the prior seller was \$341,000 including attorney fees. The award against the realtor was \$242,000. This did not include the defense attorney costs at the time; we believe they were \$50,000 - \$75,000 for each defendant. The drug task force was only responsible for part of the award. We were responsible for 1/3 of approximately \$94,000. Our codefendants continued to follow the advice of their counsel. They appealed the award. I met with Ron Marshall and John Justice. We agreed to pay the entire \$94,000. We also got Canfield, the insurer for Wahkiakum County, to agree to our plan. Our county paid \$23,608. This stopped our legal costs and we are not exposed to the interest (1% per month) owed while the matter was under appeal. I believe the sellers' interest was \$3,400 per month. The realtor's interest was \$2,400 per month. If the appeal failed, we would receive 2/3 of the \$94,000 back, plus 1% interest. This is about \$600 per month.

\*\*\*\*\*

We just received word the court denied the appeal. This means we get back 2/3 of the \$94,000 we paid plus interest. Chief Civil Prosecutor Ron Marshall is doing the paperwork to get our money back with interest!

This is an example of knowing when to settle and how to control your file.

**Susan Looker**  
Claims Manager

*Submitted by Mike Cook, Claims Analyst*

jury. "I couldn't be happier and more thankful," she said. "I hope to put this behind me somehow."

Pierce County prosecutor Gerald Horne said he was disappointed with the verdict, but said he still felt his firing of Corey was the right thing to do.

#### The Pool's Mission:

- To provide comprehensive and economical risk coverage,
- To reduce the frequency and severity of losses, and
- To decrease costs incurred in the managing and litigation of claims.