



Capitol Update

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NEWS

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State Senate's September Assembly to be Staged in Spokane

Olympia News and Notes

State Revenue Forecast Jumps by One Billion Dollars

Just last month, state budget experts were concerned about a more than \$700 million projected budget deficit for the 2007-09 biennium. On June 15, that projected budget deficit was wiped away with the adoption of the latest forecast of general fund revenues.

Meeting in Olympia on June 15, the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council approved the latest quarterly projection of general fund revenues which calls for almost \$1 billion in increased revenue for the state budget over the next three fiscal years. Specifically, for the last year of the current 2005-07 biennium, revenues are expected to rise by an additional \$524 million and for the upcoming 2007-09 biennium, revenues are forecast to be up by another \$435 million.

The increase over three years of \$959 million reflects exceptionally strong revenue growth since the last general fund revenue forecast in February 2006. The state's chief economist, Dr. Chang Mook Sohn, states that although housing activity is slowing down, construction and sales are still stronger than was forecast four months ago.

Governor Gregoire stated that she is pleased with the stronger revenue growth but warned that the new forecast must be viewed with caution due to risks from rising oil prices, instability in the Middle East and higher inflation.

State Senate's September Assembly to be Staged in Spokane

The state Senate's Facilities and Operations Committee voted 4-3 during a conference call Tuesday, May 30 to hold their September Assembly Days in Spokane. On a straight party line vote, majority Democrats voted to hold Senate committee hearings and caucus meetings on September 25 and 26 in the Lilac City instead of the state capitol. Part of the reason for the switch of locations was due to continued construction work on the John A. Cherberg Building which houses the Senate's committee hearing.

Prior to 1993, the state legislature routinely held committee assemblies throughout the state in order to bring state government issues and concerns closer to the public. During the 1993-95 economic downturn, interim assemblies were reduced from three to two times a year and held only in Olympia. Republican members of the Facilities and Operations Committee opposed bringing the legislative committee meetings to Eastern Washington's largest city because it will cost the state \$33,000 for the change in venue.

Olympia News and Notes

University Place councilmember **Stan Flemming** (D) recently announced he will run for the state legislature this fall for the open House position in the 28th District (Lakewood, University Place, Steilacoom) made vacant by the retirement of **Representative Gigi Talcott** (R). Flemming previously held the seat for one term, having been elected in 1992 but defeated in 1994. A graduate of the **University of Washington** (B.S. Zoology) Flemming is a family medicine physician and served as the first mayor in University Place. **Troy Kelley**, an Army Reserve officer and small business owner has already announced he will run in the Democratic primary for the 28th District seat.

Charley Bingham of Fox Island has been appointed to a term on the **Higher Education Coordinating Board** (HECB) effective May 3, 2006, ending June 30, 2010. Mr. Bingham is the retired executive vice president of Weyerhaeuser Company. He is a board member of Puget Energy, the Arts Fund and the Evergreen Forest Trust. He is also a member of the Governor's **Washington Learns Steering Committee**.

Mineko Hasegawa a UW student and daughter of state **Representative Bob Hasegawa** (D-11th) was recently crowned 2006 Japanese Community Queen at a ceremony at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue. The program, which crowned its first queen in 1960, is dedicated to the growth and development of young Japanese American women. Mineko will receive more than \$7,000 in scholarships and a round-trip ticket to Osaka, Japan for the Kobe Festival. A triple major at the UW in political science, communications and English, Mineko is an aspiring journalist who has written for The Daily and the North American Post, a Japanese American community paper in Seattle.

The Olympia City Council has approved a proposal to rename the stretch of 14th Avenue where the State Capitol and four other buildings are located after retired state **Senator Sid Snyder**, a Democrat who was part of the Legislature for more than 50 years, including serving as Senate majority leader until November 2003. If approved, the state's General Administration division would change the 14th Avenue street signs from Capitol Way west to the Legislative Building to **Sid Snyder Avenue**. No home addresses would be affected.

Former Republican candidate for governor **Dino Rossi** has formed a group to lobby the Legislature on business issues. Former state **Senator Dan McDonald** also is involved in the "Forward Washington Foundation" to help shape tax policy and improve the climate for business. Rossi told the Yakima Chamber of Commerce he'll continue to speak out on political issues. He says the state is headed for what he calls a fiscal train wreck, moving in one year from a \$1.6 billion dollar surplus to a projected deficit of more than \$700 million. Rossi says he'll decide next year whether to run again for governor.