

### **Jerry Watkins, Clark Public Utilities' executive, retires**



**Jerry Watkins**

**Jerry Watkins**, Clark Public Utilities' customer service manager for the past 23 years, has retired and was feted with a reception this afternoon in the Electric Center community room.

In 1988, Watkins designed and successfully implemented the utility's Guarantee of Service Program, still unique in the utility industry. The program designed to help low-income customers pay their electric utility bills.

While Clark Public Utilities was able to maintain a bad ratio debt ratio that was the envy of the industry, Watkins was also able to state truthfully that no customers who were willing to work with the utility ever had their electricity turned off because of financial problems.

Watkins developed other programs for low-income customers and was able to put in place other state and federal low-income support programs in such a way that other electric utilities sought his expertise. He made presentations throughout the United States for other utilities and utility organizations.

### **County vote already greater than expected**

Clark County voters had returned 54,531 mail-in ballots by Friday, representing a voter turnout of nearly 32 percent, according to the Clark County Elections Department.

Officials, who mailed out ballots to approximately 170,000 registered voters at the end of August, had predicted a turnout of about 25 percent.

Political observers believed the turnout was being driven by the C-TRAN .2 percent sales tax measure.

C-TRAN's financial status was devastated four years ago when voters eliminated the state motor vehicle excise tax, which had provided transit agencies in the state of Washington with as much as half their income.

C-TRAN has been helped by bi-partisan support during the current election. Both the Democratic and the Republican Parties endorsed the sales tax increase of two cents on a \$10 purchase.

If approved by a simple majority of voters, the sales tax increase would allow C-TRAN to restore service to La Center, Ridgefield, Yacolt and Washington State University Vancouver and would preserve the agency's existing service.

If the measure fails, bus service could be cut back by 50 percent.

### **Two nights of free entertainment inside Fort Vancouver this weekend**

While free Candlelight Tours are offered annually at the National Park Service's Fort Vancouver National Historic Monument, the 7-to-10 p.m. tours tonight and Saturday, Sept. 17, have a particularly interesting twist.

Tours tonight and tomorrow night recreate an event that occurred on Sept. 13, 1846, when an American ship was wrecked and the British inhabitants of the Hudson's Bay Fort turned to to help.

Living-history actors will also give visitors an insight into other eras in the fort area, from the founding of Vancouver Barracks in 1848 to world War II.

The annual event attracts more than 5,000 people.

### **Share Fair contributors to get a cup of Starbucks**

Contributors to local charities during the Clark County Share Fare, 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 18, at Clark Public Utilities operations center, 8600 NE 117th Avenue, will receive a tax receipt and cup of Starbucks coffee, reports **Jeanne Kojis** of the community Nonprofit Network.

Items being accepted range from cars and bicycles to baby items, clothing and blankets. Almost any items that are clean and in working condition will be accepted, Kojis says. Electronic waste and block foam will also be accepted for recycling, according to Kojis.

The Share Fair is sponsored by Clark County, City of Vancouver, Clark Public Utilities, Nonprofit Network, Starbucks and Waste Connections.

## Calendar

The Children's Home Society of Washington, Southwest Region, celebrates its 18th birthday with a Build-Your-Own-Burger party from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 17, in Wild Oats Market, 815 SE 160th Avenue. Tickets for the event are available in advance and are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Wild Oats will also showcase local farmers, artisans and merchants from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. ☞ Southwest Washington Independent Forward Thrust is the beneficiary of the black-tie, gala grand opening of the Hilton Vancouver Washington and the Vancouver Convention Center Saturday evening at 6 p.m., when guests assemble in Esther Short Park.

## Friday headlines at home and abroad

[Vancouver and its boosters in the regional spotlight--Columbian, Jeffrey Mize](#)

[John Karpinski gets Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board to reconsider its ruling on county's 2004 growth plan--Columbian, Erin Middlewood](#)

[Hilton making 'good strides' despite losses--Columbian, Jeffrey Mize](#)

[Indoor Farmers Market opens at 10 a.m. Saturday and will be open seven days a week, except some holidays, thereafter--Oregonian](#)

[Farmers Market goes under cover--Oregonian, Allan Brettman](#)

[Seattle mayor cancels agreement for monorail--Seattle Times, Mike Lindblom](#)

[Packed meeting highlights Cascade Locks casino controversy--KATU, AP, Joseph B. Frazier](#)

[Bush says Gulf rebuilding will require spending cuts--USA TODAY, AP](#)

[Third day of attacks in Iraq leave another 23 dead--New York Times, Sabrina Tavernise](#)

## Friday on the air

Clark Count Close Up (9/4)—3 p.m. CVTV

Clark County Mixed Use Ordinance Workshop (9/1)—3:31 p.m. CVTV

**Seattle Mariners at Texas (live)—5 p.m. FSN, KFXN**

**Houston at UTEP (live)—5 p.m. ESPN2**

Columbia Crossing(s) & Quayside: New Visions (9/1)—5:31 p.m. CVTV

**USL Playoffs: Seattle at Portland Timbers (live)—7 p.m. KZNY**

Animal Control Hearings (9/14)—7 p.m. CVTV

Telecommunications Commission (9/7)—10 p.m. CVTV

## Town Tabloids and the weather

**Jo Jones** thwarting an opportunity. ☞ **Mike Worthy** opening envelopes sans deposit slips. ☞ **John Aschim** giving assistance. ☞ **Phyllis Hess** accommodating wayward patron. ☞ **Karyn Criswell** showing company off nicely. ☞ **Bruce Paris** welcoming warmly. ☞ **Friday**, cloudy, could become a little damp around the edges, 67. **Saturday**, partly cloudy, 69. **Sunday**, full sun, 76.