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Betty Sue Morris uses C-words to describe contentious issues



Fellow commissioners Marc Boldt and Steve Stuart present flowers and accolades to Betty Sue Morris after her State-of-the-County Address today. Stewart stands beside Morris.

Columbia River Crossing. Casino. In her seventh and final State-of-the-County address, Clark County commissioner **Betty Sue Morris** today served up C-words to describe what she called the two most contentious issues in the county's near future.

Columbia River Crossing. Morris called for prudence in selecting transit options and for equity in financing them. Thus far, Oregon is not paying its fair share, Morris said. Regarding tolls, Morris pointed out that Clark County commuters would pay as much as \$5 to cross the Columbia River twice a day. She said tolls should take into account the ability of persons to pay; there should be a lesser toll for those least able to pay. or, she said, a credit on Oregon income tax for those commuting to jobs in Oregon.

The ultimate decision of light rail or rapid transit bus will be made by Clark County's transit system, C-TRAN, according to Morris. C-TRAN will also make the decision of how far north high capacity transit will go, Clark College or 39th Street.

In either case, voters will hold the final decision if they are required to vote on sales tax increases to cover C-TRAN transit costs.

The other contentious issue is the proposed Cowlitz Indian Tribe's casino at the La Center junction.

The three-member board of county commissioners is working on a new memorandum of agreement between the county and the tribe to replace one that has been invalidated by the state growth management board.

Morris said the very fact that the county is working toward an agreement with the tribe has become contentions. Morris said whether the county and the Cowlitz Tribe has an agreement plays no part in the decision to be made by The Department of the Interior on whether the tribe's La Center property becomes trust land.

The commissioner noted parenthetically that none of the three commissioners wants a casino near La Center or anywhere in Clark County. An industrial park, she added, would be a better use of the land.

But, Morris declared, if the casino is going to be in Clark County, we want the best possible enforceable agreement to cover costs to the county, including payments in lieu of lost taxes, infrastructural improvements, and services.

A third C-word, *creek*, as in Three Creeks, describing an urban area of nearly 70,000 people, is also viewed with alarm by some. The area comprising Lake Shore, Salmon Creek and Hazel Dell already is served by urban services and needs to take charge of its own destiny, Morris said. The county is selecting members for a Three Creeks advisory commission for that purpose.

The county is in good shape financially, Morris said, predicting that the county would be in good financial shape now and for the budget years 2009-2010, if it budgets prudently.

In the audience that packed the ballroom in the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay were Morris's husband, **Bill**, son **Bill**, and 93-year-old mother **Muriel Fowler**.

Morris, concluding a more than 20-year-career in public service, said that this time next year she and husband Bill will be heading for Australia and the Australian Tennis Open.

Volunteers receive 2008 Spirit of Clark County Awards

Clark County commissioners Friday presented Spirit of Clark County Awards to **Florence Wager, Art**

Stubbs, the First Children's Dental Health Day, and the Clark County Agricultural Guidelines Committee during the annual State-of-the-County address Friday.

Created in 2001, the Spirit Awards acknowledge the special efforts and extraordinary contributions of the county's many volunteers.

Wager received a Spirit Award for her work in helping create parks, trails, bikeways and fitness programs.

Stubbs received a Spirit Award for his dedicated support of projects promoting water quality protection and storm-water education.

The First Children's Dental Health Day received a Spirit Award that honored 162 volunteers who provided needed dental services to nearly 300 uninsured children during a free clinic last February.

Members of the Clark County Agricultural Guidelines Committee received a Spirit award for developing implementation guidelines supporting changes to the county's Habitat Conservation Ordinance.

Calendar

Eugene Ionesco's *Exit the King*, directed by **Llewellyn Rhoe**, is playing at the Main Street Theatre, 606 Main Street, at 8 p.m. this evening and tomorrow evening, Feb. 9, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 10. Admission ranges from \$10 to \$24. For further information, call **695-3770**. <> The Puget Sound Blood Center is conducting a blood drive from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. tomorrow, Feb. 9, in the Vancouver SDA Church parking lot, 9711 NE St. Johns Road. <> The Salmon Creek Kiwanis Club presents its fourth annual "An Evening with Misty River" at 7 p.m. tomorrow, Feb. 9, in Skyview High School, 13900 NE 1239th Street. Misty River is a four-woman group performing bluegrass, Celtic and just plain American music. Admission is \$15. for further information about Misty River, go to www.mistyriverband.com. For further information on the concert, call **Ron Deibert, 699-1234**.

Friday on the air

Portland Blazers at Detroit (live)—5 p.m. CSN, KXL

Animal Control Hearings (1/23)—7 p.m. CVTV

State of the County (2/8)—7:30 p.m. CVTV

Tri City at Portland Winter Hawks (live)—7:30 p.m. KKAD

Clark County Board of Health (1/23)—9 p.m. CVTV

Vancouver Land Use Hearings (2/7)—10 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

Susan Tissot putting on good show. <> **Donna Cross** showing up in the craziest places. <> **Bill Barron**, needing no introduction, gets one anyway. <> **Marc Boldt** claiming lunch degree from WSU Vancouver. <> **Vern Veysey** showing signs of very good health.<> **Friday**, mostly rainy, 44-47. **Saturday**, light showers, 49-53. **Sunday**, gnarly and rainy, 40-49.