County response to revenue shortfall taking shape

A Clark County budget and finance team is preparing recommendations for the board of Clark County Commissioners to prevent a deficit in the general-fund budget for 2009 and 2010, reports county administrator Bill Barron.

The group is studying ways to close a potential gap of $12.5 to $18 million between expenses outlined in the two-year budget and the latest revenue projections, following a sharp downturn in the first quarter of 2009.

“This is a sobering exercise,” Barron says. “It recognizes the harsh realities we have just witnessed as well as some signs of improvement, mixed with the potential for a rough ride through 2010.”

Barron says there are likely to be a few big-picture policy decisions for the Board to consider at a work session on Wednesday, May 13, followed by the need for departments to meet new targets for budget cuts.

Ongoing contract negotiations also have the potential to affect the final outcome, Barron says.

Larry the Cable Guy appearing in the amphitheater during fair time

Comedy star Larry the Cable Guy is making a one-night appearance at the 2009 Clark County Fair Tuesday, Aug. 11. For the first time, one of the fair entertainment attractions will be shown in the Amphitheater at Clark County.

Tickets to Larry the Cable Guy go on sale starting tomorrow at all Ticketmaster locations and Ticketmaster.com. Tickets to Larry the Cable Guy start at $49.00. Admission to the fair is also included with this ticket.

Unlike the fair concert series in the grandstand, regular fair admission ticket does not include seating for this special engagement in the Amphitheater.

“We are extremely excited about the opportunity to utilize the Amphitheater in conjunction with the Fair to present such great acts,” says Justin Kobluk, executive director, Clark County Fair.

The Clark County fair runs Friday, Aug. 7, through Sunday, Aug. 16.

Pete Mayer gets state parks and recreation award

The recently hired director of Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation, Pete Mayer, was honored at the Washington Recreation and Park Association annual conference in Spokane last week with a Professional Citation of Merit. The Citation of Merit is the state association's acknowledgment of an individual's contribution to the field of parks and recreation.

The nomination lauds Mayer's "fierce dedication to the field of parks and recreation," and his vision for the profession's future in Washington.

Mayer was the Mercer Island Parks and Recreation director and assistant city manager until accepting the position with Vancouver in April.

SEMI High Tech U takes students to new vistas

For three days next week 30 students from four Clark County high schools will be learning about high-tech careers that most of them probably never imagined as they attend SEMI High Tech U. at Underwriters Laboratory in Camas and Clark College in Vancouver.

SEMI High Tech U, a first in the state of Washington, is an industry-driven math- and science-based career exploration program produced and presented by the non-profit SEMI Foundation in partnership with co-sponsors Underwriters Laboratories, the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC), WorkSystems Inc., the SEMI Pacific Northwest Steering Committee and Clark College, the program’s higher-learning partner.

Students from Battle Ground, Hockinson, Prairie, and Washougal High Schools will are participating. The curriculum includes hands-on experiments that introduce electronics and semiconductor-manufacturing concepts and explain microchip logic, as well as sessions on educational pathways and career planning.
The sessions will be held at the Camas Underwriters Laboratories facility, 2600 NW Lake Rd., Camas, and Clark College.

**Agency on Aging sets conference at WSU Vancouver next week**

The Agency on Aging presents a conference on aging with keynote speaker Bob Blancato from 9 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, in the Administration Building, room 110, at Washington State University Vancouver.

The conference is a forum on the aging population in the urban and rural areas of Southwest Washington. This event is free and open to the public. The number of participants is limited to 200. Register today by email to michekd@dshs.wa.gov or by phone, 735-5752.

**Summer hours save time and fuel**

Clark County Public Works road and parks maintenance staff moved to a new ten-hour-a-day work schedule this week. The Monday-through-Thursday schedule will continue through late September.

According to department operations manager Greg Shafer. This is the second year in which this shift has taken advantage of longer daylight hours and conserved fuel.

“We tried this schedule last summer and found it increased work productivity and also reduced fuel consumption by almost 10 percent,” Shafer said.

**People**

Nancy Nellor Retsinas, an attorney with Nellor Retsinas Crawford PLLC, has been elected chairman of the board of the Children’s Center.

Elected with Retsinas were vice chairman Lisa Hunter Schauer, MacKay & Sposito, Inc., treasurer, Barbara Brace, Umpqua Bank, and secretary Troy Thomas, an Evergreen School District board member.

**News brief**

Columbia Credit Union was awarded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for its Washougal branch, located in The Crossing shopping complex just off Highway 14 in Washougal. Completed in April 2008, the branch is the first LEED Gold Certified financial institution in Clark County, Washington.

**Calendar**

Magenta Theater’s production of Robert Harling’s Steel Magnolias, directed by Dorinda Toner, continues this weekend and next. Showtimes are 7 p.m. this evening and Saturday, May 9, in the Magenta Theater, 606 Main Street. Tickets are $10 to $14 in advance. For ticket information, call 635-4358. Reservations are recommended. Group and senior discounts are available. <> Jeff Williams, Vancouver professional organizer and owner of Simple & Clear, hosts a “Confronting Your Clutter Crisis” seminar and workshop from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 9, in the Firstenburg Center. Cost is $15. For further information, call 487-7001. <> A ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Oak Grove Neighborhood Park, NE 159th Avenue and NE 70th Street, is at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 9.

**Friday on the air**

Seattle Mariners at Minnesota (live)—5 p.m. FSN, KTRO
Salt Lake at Portland Beavers (live)—7 p.m. KPAM
Chief Redheart Memorial (4/25)—6:30 p.m. CVTV
Job Search in Difficult Economy (4/23)—9 p.m. CVTV
Career Transitions (4/23)—10 p.m. CVTV
Resume Writing Strategies (4/23)—11:04 P.M. CVTV

**Town Tabloids and the Weather**