



# County Connection

News from the Washington Counties Risk Pool

August / September 2012

## Summer Conference News

The Washington Counties Risk Pool Summer Conference and Annual (Board of Directors) Meeting took place at the end of July (Ocean Shores) in Grays Harbor County. The conference began with roundtable discussions where county representatives had a chance to share information and discuss issues facing the member county governments. At the luncheon later that day, members and staff with more than five years of service with the risk pool were recognized and everyone had a chance to bid farewell to Marilyn Butler (Skamania County), Betty Kemp (Island County), Marge Upham (Clallam County) and Mike Croke (AJGRMS). All have been a part of the Risk Pool for more than twenty years.

As part of the board meeting, elections were held. Bryan Perry (Benton County) was elected to the Executive Committee to fill the remainder of Marilyn Butler's term through 9/30/2013 due to her retirement. Mark Wilsdon (Clark County) was re-elected and Thad Duvall (Douglas County) and Lisa Young (Kittitas County) were elected to the Executive Committee, all three for terms from 10/1/2012 through 9/30/2015.

The office of Vice President was added and the Secretary/Treasurer was modified through bylaw amendments that were approved at the meeting. Mark Wilsdon (Clark County) was elected President, Andrew Lampe was elected Vice President and Steve Bartel was elected Secretary/Treasurer for Py2013.

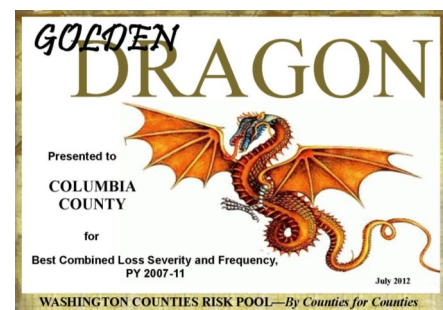


The presidential gavel exchange!  
Steve Bartel passing the gavel to  
President-Elect Mark Wilsdon

## 2012 Dragon Awards

The Risk Pool Annual Dragon Awards for counties with the lowest combined Loss Severities and Frequencies during the most recent 5-year period were presented at the Summer Conference. Congratulations to the counties earning awards this year!

Golden Dragon—Columbia County  
Silver Dragon—Garfield County  
Copper Dragon—Douglas County  
Bronze Dragon—Walla Walla County





## Executive Committee Vacancy

September 18, 2012

Today, County Commissioner Andrew Lampe notified WCRP President Steve Bartel of his resignation from the Executive Committee effective immediately. Andy has been part of the Risk Pool as a Director representing Okanogan County for six years and as a member of the Pool's Executive Committee since March 2009. His departure will leave vacant a position on the Risk Pool's Executive Committee that will expire September 30, 2013.

According to the Pool's Bylaws, a vacancy on the Executive Committee must be filled by the Board at either the meeting during which notification of a vacancy is received or the meeting next following receipt of notification of a vacancy. WCRP President-Elect Mark Wilsdon has decided to address this vacancy during the November, 2012 Autumn (Board of Directors) Meeting.

The Pool's Bylaws provide that the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one Director or Alternate Director to fill each new term and any vacancy in the Executive Committee. Executive Committee members are to be chosen from Directors and Alternate Directors (limited to one committee member per county) to fairly represent the diversity and interests of member counties. Thirteen of the WCRP counties are considered western and fourteen eastern, while six counties have presently selected larger deductibles (\$250-500k), eight medium deductibles (\$50-100k), and thirteen smaller deductibles (\$10-25k).

The remaining Executive Committee Members are...

Term Expires 9/30/2012

Steve Clem (Douglas)  
Randy Watts (Whatcom)  
Mark Wilsdon (Clark)

Term Expires 9/30/2013

Bryan Perry (Benton)  
Steve Bartel (Spokane)  
Drew Woods (Columbia)

Term Expires 9/30/2014

Lee Grose (Lewis)  
Laura Merrill (Pend Oreille)  
Keith Goehner (Chelan)  
Tammy Devlin (Thurston)

Term Begins 10/1/2012 and Expires 9/30/2015

Thad Duvall (Douglas)  
Lisa Young (Kittitas)  
Mark Wilsdon (Clark)

Together, these individuals are and/or represent: four elected and six appointed officials; three from western counties and seven from eastern counties; and four from counties with larger deductibles, three with medium deductibles, and three with small deductibles.

Directors and Alternate Directors that are interested in filling this vacancy on the Executive Committee are encouraged to contact either Nominating Committee Chair Mark Wilsdon at [Mark.Wilsdon@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Mark.Wilsdon@clark.wa.gov) (360) 397-2025 #5 or Executive Director Vyrle Hill at [vyrle@wcrp.wa.gov](mailto:vyrle@wcrp.wa.gov) (360) 292-4495 by October 19, 2012.



Commissioner Richardson presenting a plaque to Marilyn Butler

Marilyn Butler, Risk Manager with **Skamania County**, retired at the end of August. Marilyn served on the Risk Pool Board of Directors from its beginning in 1988 until her recent retirement. She served on the Executive Committee from 1998-2001 and again during 2007-2012. Marilyn was the Secretary/Treasurer in 2009-2010 and President in 2010-2011. Thank you to Marilyn for nearly 25 years of dedicated service to the Risk Pool, you will be missed!

### **Executive Committee**

#### **2011/12 President**

Steve Bartel, Spokane County

#### **2011/12 Secretary/Treasurer**

Mark Wilsdon, Clark County

#### **Other Members**

- Tammy Devlin, Thurston County
- F. Lee Grose, Lewis County
- Laura Merrill, Pend Oreille County
- Steve Clem, Douglas County
- Randy Watts, Whatcom County
- Andrew Lampe, Okanogan County
- Keith Goehner, Chelan County
- Drew Woods, Columbia County
- Bryan Perry, Benton County

### **Risk Pool Staff**

#### Administration

- Vyrle Hill, Executive Director
- Sue Colbo, Accounting Officer
- Stacey Spears, Assistant/Editor

#### Claims

- Susan Looker, Manager
- Candy Drews, Senior Analyst
- Mike Cook, Senior Analyst
- Tammy Cahill, Analyst
- Lisa McMeekin, Representative
- Carli Gochmour, Assistant

#### Member Services

- David Goldsmith, Member Services
- Jill Lowe, Loss Control

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

To receive by email, send your email address to [stacey@wcrp.wa.gov](mailto:stacey@wcrp.wa.gov) or call (360) 292-4490. Have story/photo ideas? Please submit them to the email address above.



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**WASHINGTON COUNTIES  
RISK POOL**

Created by Counties for Counties

## **GPS (Electronic Monitoring) Follow-Up From the April/May Newsletter**

Use the link below to watch a video from KATU television covering Clark County and its use of GPS in county vehicles. The video features **Clark County** dispatcher Bob Moag and Risk Manager (**WCRP President-Elect**) **Mark Wilsdon**.

<http://www.katu.com/news/local/159157845.html>

## **Taylor Bridge Fire Report**

Several Eastern Washington Counties have been hit hard this summer by wildfires. This is an account of just one of those fires, the Taylor Bridge Fire in Kittitas County. Thanks to Matthew Anderson, Facilities Maintenance Director with Kittitas County for providing much of the information in this report.

On Monday, August 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm., the **Kittitas County Sheriff's Office** notified

Commissioner Crankovich that various fires had been ignited in the area. A

declaration of emergency

was suggested to assist efforts to cope with the emergency.

Thirty minutes later, a special emergency meeting was called with reports provided by the Kittitas County Sheriff's office and the Fire Marshall. It was determined that local resources were overwhelmed and a high state of danger to the lives and property of county residents existed.

Activation of the emergency plan and utilization of emergency powers were granted. The Sheriff, Commissioners, Public Works, Community Development





# COUNTY NEWS



Services, Event Center/Fair, Fire Marshal, Human Resources, Treasurer, Auditor and Public Health were authorized to enter into contracts and incur obligations necessary to combat the emergency to protect the health and safety of people and property and to provide emergency assistance to disaster victims. The



Emergency Operations Center opened and communications with State and Federal Agencies accelerated.

The Kittitas County Fairgrounds was quickly activated as an animal evacuation center. Over the course of nine days, the Fairgrounds processed over 450 animals in and out of the Fairgrounds. Barns and pens and buildings were converted to temporary holding pens for a wide variety of animal species. Not long into the evening, the EOC and the Fairgrounds were being flooded with phone calls and people coming forward from the community to help in the aid of the animals. The Fairgrounds also became an impromptu donation center as various forms of feed and supplies began to pour in. Corporate donors also stepped forward and supplied large amounts of feed.

The Fairgrounds held cattle, horses, swine, cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, turkeys, chickens, sheep, goats and even a few ducks. Already on the schedule for the week was the 4-H junior Horse Fair (August 16-August 19th) and Ye Olde' County Fair in the Rodeo Arena on August 18th. The different activities at the Fairgrounds took place in different areas and all three events were able to occur without one

overly impacting the other.

On August 19th, the evacuation zones began to loosen up, and a majority of the animals were on their way home. With the Ellensburg Rodeo Association already contracted to take over the areas around the Rodeo Arena, the task of cleaning and sterilizing the occupied areas became a top priority. After a long week, most of the animals returned home, but with the work week beginning – volunteers were a little tougher to find. Going back to the list of volunteers that was generated early on, one of the names listed indicated that he could produce a crew to do “whatever”. Master Chief Matthew Lasley of the United States Coast Guard was able to round up a crew of 20+ men and women to come over from the US Coast Guard ship *Polar Star* to help the Fairgrounds. Arriving at 8:00 AM and staying until 4:30 PM, the team provided an invaluable service to the Fairgrounds and got everything back on track to be ready for the Kittitas County Fair and Ellensburg Rodeo which began on August 30<sup>th</sup>.



As of 5pm on Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>, Kittitas County Emergency Management had completed approximately 90% of damage assessments from the Taylor Bridge Fire. Assessment teams have confirmed 51 houses or cabins completely lost, 6 houses or cabins with partial damage, and 26 additional properties with other structure loss. These losses total approximately \$8.3 million dollars, according to the Kittitas County Assessor’s property improvement records. Amazingly, the County did not suffer substantial property loss beyond metal guardrails.



# COUNTY NEWS



As of August, 22, nine days after the fire began, 23,450 acres had burned and the fire was 90% contained, and 1,026 personnel had



been involved in managing the emergency. Do you have a hard time imagining the impact a fire of this magnitude had on county resources? One of many public service announcements released by the Kittitas County Sheriff's Office provided information for victims regarding: soil erosion and rehabilitation, dust control, air quality, water quality, septic systems, household hazardous material, animal disposal, solid waste disposal, mental health services, permits for repair and reconstruction, and the continued need for emergency housing.

The Taylor Bridge Fire is contained, but lives have been devastated, county employees are exhausted, and wildfires continue to burn in Eastern Washington. The Risk Pool wishes to recognize the outstanding job that all county employees and volunteers must do to support local communities in their time of extreme need.

## Civil War Re-Enactment

Mike Cook, Senior Claims Analyst, had the opportunity to attend an American Civil War event hosted by the Washington Civil War Association with participation by the Northwest Civil War Council in July. One of the participants in the event was Clyde Carpenter, Risk Manager with **Cowlitz County**. Clyde is with the 20th Maine Infantry Regiment, Company F, and he represents



an original soldier from that unit, Pvt. Elijah Carr. The Washington Civil War Association is a group whose members share a strong interest in the American Civil War. They believe the conflict represents the center piece of American history and has important effects today.

The Association works to demonstrate both military and civilian lives during this time in history. In addition to battle re-enactments there are medical demonstrations that show the terrible aftermath of the war.



Artificial parts and blood from the medical tent

Visitors to these living history events not only view the battle re-enactments, they get a chance to see how soldiers and civilians of the time lived. There are portrayals of the fashion, cooking, music, dances as well as secular and spiritual life of this time period.

The Washington Civil War Association holds re-enactments in several of the Pool's member counties throughout the year including Spokane, Yakima, Chelan and Lewis Counties. For more information about the Washington Civil War Association and future events, see their website: [www.wcwa.net](http://www.wcwa.net).





Here is the latest risk management Question of the Month from the HR Risk Management HELPLINE for WCRP Members' HR Express Update:

## August Question:

*Our company wants to include our employees' home address, home phone and cell phone number in the active directory for the outlook system. This would mean that when an employee sends an email the recipient would be able to see that sender's home address, cell and home phone number. Can a company do this? Is there a law preventing this?*

## Response:

As a general rule, we do not recommend compiling and distributing a company registry of employee home contact information unless each employee included therein has given individual consent to be included in the publication. If you do not obtain express consent from each employee to include their information on the directory your company could face potential liability if, for example, one of the employees turns out to be a stalker and hurts another employee (using information on the list to get to that person), or if one employee just wants to get back at a co-worker they do not like, etc. In addition, employees may complain and become disgruntled (if not file a claim for invasion of privacy) if the employer discloses their home phone numbers and home addresses to co-workers unilaterally and without their permission to do so.

On the other hand, if employees are given an opportunity to voluntarily consent to the inclusion of their home phone number and/or address in a company directory (i.e., with no reprisal, retaliation, etc. if they choose to abstain), and if they give such express consent, then you would be better positioned and protected in going forward with publishing the directory to all employees. That being said, there would be no problem publishing and distributing a phone list of company-provided cell phones, if you provide them, since the cell phones (and thus the phone numbers) are company property and not private information belonging to the employees that is entitled to any protection.

As well, we are not aware of any reason why you could not allow a senior manager to have access to the home phone numbers of their subordinates on an as-needed basis if they need to communicate with their employees for an emergency, though it is unclear why a home address would be necessary. Same goes for the administrative personnel if there is a need to communicate with certain employees at home. Of course, if you are providing a company cell phone to employees, you should be able to reach them on that as well.

## September Question:

*What is the best procedure to follow if an employee refuses to wear safety glasses?*

## Response:

The employer has an obligation to maintain and promote workplace safety. Further, in certain industries, there are health and safety code laws that require employees to don certain protective safety gear and the refusal to do so could result in penalties and fines for the employer. Accordingly, if the organization has a policy and/or requirement that employees wear certain protective safety gear and an employee refuses to do so, the best thing for the employer to do is to approach the situation from a performance management standpoint, that is if the employee is insubordinate and commits a safety violation by his or her refusal to wear safety glasses then the employee should be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the employer's policies and past practices.

For example, we are not aware of any reason why an employer cannot seek to send home (or keep home) an employee who reports to work and refuses to in essence work in a safe manner, if management reasonably believes that the health and safety of that employee or others may be at risk if the employee performs work without the use of the safety glasses. Indeed, an employee who refuses to do so can be counseled, disciplined or even discharged for insubordination if consistent with employer policy and practice.

Under federal and state occupational safety and health laws, employers have a duty to ensure the work environment is safe and healthy, and this would presumably include taking measures to ensure that employees who perform work do so safely with the precautionary gear. In this regard, you can consider consulting with federal or state occupational safety and health agencies – the federal OSHA offers a free consultation service that can assist your organization further in ensuring a safe workplace (see <http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/consult.html>) and many state agencies offer something similar. Further, this response assumes that there is no employment contract or collective bargaining agreement that otherwise governs the issue of disciplinary action in response to the situation that you describe.

*Source:* HR Risk Management HELPLINE for WCRP Members, [www.hrhelpline.com/wcrp](http://www.hrhelpline.com/wcrp), August/September 2012.

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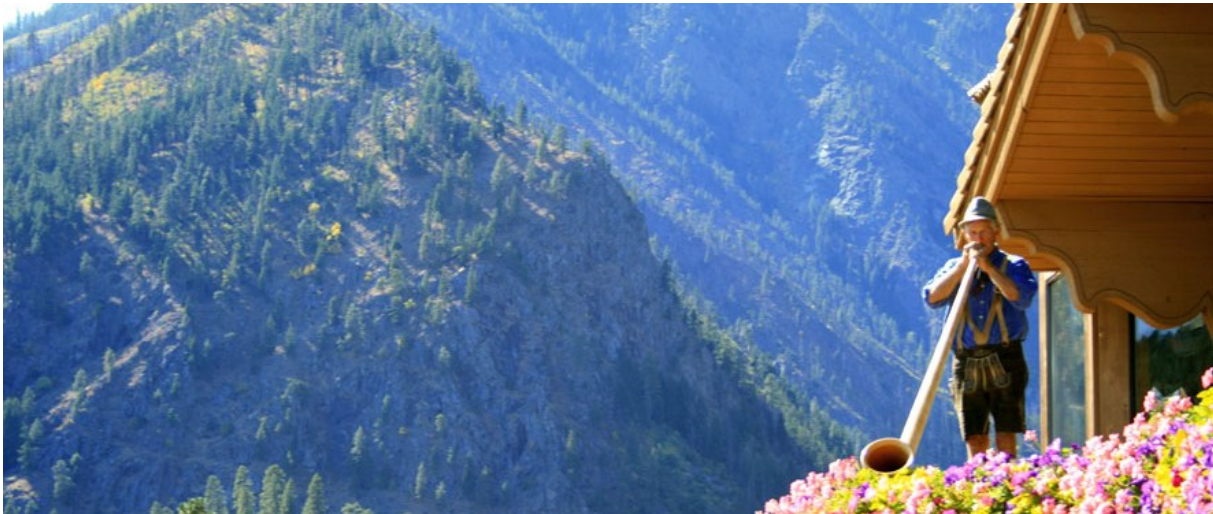


# RISK POOL ANNOUNCEMENTS



The **Biennial Membership Survey** for all designated Risk Pool Directors, Alternates, Risk Managers, Claims Administrators and Safety Officers will be coming to your inbox soon. The survey takes about five to ten minutes to complete and provides valuable feedback and information for Pool staff. Your participation is very important! Results will be shared and discussed at the Autumn Conference.

The **Autumn Conference** is quickly approaching! The conference will take place at the Heathman Lodge in (Vancouver) Clark County, Washington on November 8-9th. The conference flyer and registration link will be published in early October.



The upcoming Pool Year that begins October 1, 2012 (Py2013) marks the 25th year of operation for the Washington Counties Risk Pool! **The Pool's 25th Anniversary** will be celebrated at the Summer Conference July 24—26, 2013 at the Enzian Inn located in Leavenworth, Washington. Leavenworth (pictured above) is a charming town fashioned on a Bavarian theme in Chelan County.



## WASHINGTON PRIMA UPDATE



The Washington Counties Risk Pool recently had the opportunity to provide silver sponsorship for the 2012 Washington Public Risk Management Association's (PRIMA) Workshop. The workshop was held on September 13 at the Blackriver Training and Conference Center in Renton. Dawn Twiddy (**Mason County**), Rich Sill (**Clallam County**), Liz Miser (**Arthur J. Gallagher**) and Jill Lowe (**WCRP staff**) were in attendance. Excellent speakers covered topics from Medical Marijuana to Social Media. Keep an eye out for future workshops offered by Washington PRIMA.