



# County Connection

News from the Washington Counties Risk Pool

September - December 2015

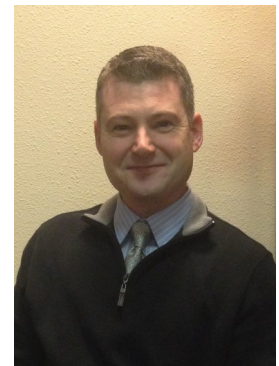


## POOL NEWS

### **Washington Counties Risk Pool Announces the Selection of a New Executive Director**

The Directors and Officers of the Washington Counties Risk Pool are pleased to announce the selection of Derek Bryan as the Pool's next executive director. Last month, the Board selected Derek to be the next executive director and lead the Pool in the future. Then, the Executive Committee last week authorized President Young to execute an employment agreement with Derek that reflects his WCRP employment commencing January 1st.

Derek comes to the Pool from the Association of Washington Cities where he has been successfully leading AWC's property & liability risk management pool, a membership of over 100 cities, towns and special purpose districts. Derek has extensive insurance and risk management experience in both the private and public sectors, having held positions in claims, litigation and management at various insurers and risk pools including Mercury Insurance, Travelers, Nationwide, and the Southwest Washington Risk Management Insurance Cooperative. A graduate of Washington State University, Derek was raised on a farm in the Columbia River Gorge in Klickitat County and currently lives in Tumwater with his wife Shawna, and their two daughters, Abby (14) and Shelby (12). He enjoys the outdoors, spending his free time fishing, hunting, camping, golfing, and completing various home remodeling projects.



Derek will replace outgoing Executive Director Vyrle Hill, who will be retiring June 1st after 11 years overseeing the Risk Pool. Prior to becoming the Pool's Executive Director, Mr. Hill spent 30 years in several capacities with Pacific County, the final 20 as its first county administrative officer, and served as the county's director appointee for the Risk Pool from its inception.

Derek's first workday will be January 4, 2016. He and Vyrle plan to work together to make this leadership transition as seamless as possible.

### **SAVE THE DATES!**

*2016 Spring Conference and Board of Directors Meeting: March 23-25, TRAC Facility (Pasco, WA)*

*2016 Summer Conference and Annual (Board of Directors) Meeting: July 20-22, The Davenport Grand Hotel (Spokane, WA)*

*2016 Autumn Conference and Board of Directors Meeting: November 30 - December 2, The Great Wolf Lodge (Grand Mound, WA) **NOTE:** This is a date change*



Vyrle Hill

# POOLSIDE

with Executive Director **Vyrle Hill**

As past *County Connection* readers are aware, this column is intended to share a few Pool-related tidbits. We suggest as well that you read about many other worthy happenings reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

Most are aware that the 2015 calendar is giving way to 2016. But how many also realize that WCRP ended its 27<sup>th</sup> operating year recently? Yes, the Washington Counties Risk Pool, which was established as “an association of member counties independent of all other associations of which counties are members,” ended its first operating year as of September 30, 1989. And though cases remain requiring final resolution, and annual reports must be prepared and submitted before the past year can be closed officially, the Risk Pool’s years of operations have left much to be proud of and thankful for and even more to look forward to during Year 28 and the years that follow.

**Operational:** Some of the Pool’s success has certainly resulted from the combined efforts of the professionals (actuaries, producers/brokers, investment advisors, etc.) that the Board of Directors chose to retain; from the insurers the Board selected to partner with; and from its dedicated and professional staff. But a key that has set WCRP apart from most other pools is the contributions and involvement of its Member Counties’ appointees – their officials (elected and appointed) and employees – serving as directors or alternate directors, a few as officers, or as county claims administrators and risk managers, and as committee members. Without this extraordinary giving of expertise and time, the Washington Counties Risk Pool most certainly would not be what it has become. NOTE: A few recognitions appear within the *Changing Guard* article in this newsletter.

**Claims:** The Pool’s database of 3<sup>rd</sup>-party liability claims and lawsuits at year end (September 30, 2015) reflected 20,276 total cases having been submitted during the Pool’s 27 operating years. That equates to an average frequency of slightly more than 32 cases submitted per million worker hours (“MWH” as reported by the member counties in composite), and furthers the downward trend in frequency from the 45/MWH experienced during the Pool’s initial five operating years. And while we expect that the independent actuary’s yearend report will project a few hundred more cases to be filed ultimately for occurrences during this operating period, we also expect that the frequency-to-date will remain below 32.5/MWH. Additionally, only 322 cases were considered “open” at yearend, a year-over-year reduction of 37 or 10%.

Nearly \$241M have been paid by the Pool and another \$57M are reserved for these cases, even with more than 40% of the cases being resolved without any payments being made. That equates to an average severity of more than \$0.47/MWH, which is up from the \$0.37/MWH from the Pool’s initial five operating years. Of the \$241M paid by the Pool, member counties have reimbursed/are reimbursing (for their deductibles) nearly \$100M (41%) and insurance recoveries/being recovered total nearly \$78 million (32%). The remaining 27% (nearly \$64 million) constitutes the “pooled” funds paid-to-date.

**Financial:** The Pool has been enjoying its strongest financial position ever during recent years. And while we had hoped to provide a yearend summary, we simply cannot at this time. The independent actuary’s reserving estimates must be used for yearend computations, and we haven’t yet received the actuary’s projections. We do anticipate that the new reporting requirement for disclosure of pension liabilities will impact the Pool’s Net Position some; the extent is still being computed. Hopefully we’ll be able to share a yearend summary within the next published newsletter.

Continued on page 3

**Executive Director Contact:** Readers' feedback is appreciated... knowing the memberships' and partners' desires, experiences, thoughts, etc. helps with determining how we might better serve. Direct your responses to; Executive Director, 2558 R.W. Johnson Road S.W., Suite 106, Tumwater, WA 98512-6103; OR telephone: 360/292-4500 extension 101, 360/292-4495 (direct), 360/292-4501 (facsimile), or 360/480-2116 (mobile).

**Closure:** My WCRP tenure has spanned significant parts of four decades, from the Pool's pre-formation days in the latter 1980s until now; that is, absent a 1-month "retirement preview" at the conclusion of my 30-year county administration career. I trust my WCRP contributions and service have been as beneficial to the association and its membership as working for the Pool and with the member counties has been for me. I extend my most sincere appreciation for being allowed the opportunity to serve as WCRP Executive Director these past eleven years, and for the members' representatives trusting me to generally administer this unique and very special service organization. **To you all** – the member counties and their numerous WCRP-related appointees; the several independent consultants selected by the Board; the State's oversight officials; and especially the Pool's staff, **my warmest and heartfelt thanks!** Holiday greetings and New Year's wishes for you all, and my promise to continue serving you into the future, at least until my employment agreement expires.

## POOL NEWS

### **AGRiP Advisory Standards Recognition**



The Washington Counties Risk Pool recently completed the rigorous re-application for AGRiP Advisory Standards Recognition. Executive Committee members David Alvarez and Keith Goehner along with Executive Director Vyrle Hill and Member Specialty Services Representative David Goldsmith received an

acknowledgement plaque at the AGRiP Fall Forum in October. The Recognition program is an internal, self-audit exercise that encourages pools to:

- Review current practices and procedures
- Train up-and-coming pool leadership and facilitate collaboration among pool staff
- Review the content and documentation of internal policies
- Meet best practices standards developed by pooling peers

*The Pool's headquarters recently underwent a minor remodel and expansion. Senior Claims Analyst Mike Cook is getting settled in his new office.*





**David Goldsmith, Member Specialty Services**

# MEMBER SERVICES



## ***WCRP Fall Conference***

“County Jails in the Crosshairs” was the topic of a half-day workshop put on by WCRP in conjunction with the WSAC County Leaders Conference. One could tell the topic was relevant by the full room and engaged participants through all three workshop sessions.

The first session looked at the issue from a national perspective with speaker Manuel ‘Manny’ D. Romero, a jails and prisons consultant. Manny’s presentation reviewed recent studies and statistics concerning local jail liability. Manny’s research and presentation reinforced what the Pool is experiencing in terms of the types of cases and the underlying causes. Following Manny, Kitsap County Chief of Corrections Ned Newlin, who will soon be the Jail Services Liaison for WASPC, acknowledged that local jails are following the national trends on issues of liability. Ned spoke about the pending voluntary accreditation program for jails and the need for additional academy training for correction officers.

A panel of local government officials including a County Commissioner, a jail commander serving under a Sheriff, a jail commander serving under the county legislative authority, a jail medical/mental health service director, a civil deputy prosecuting attorney/risk manager, along with Manny and Ned discussed jail liability issues from a number of perspectives. The panel agreed that it takes a collaborative approach with jail staff, the court system, mental health professionals and health providers to address jail populations and subsequent issues which can lead to increased liabilities. Regardless of the size of the facility; the standards of care, custody and control remain the same.

Finally, audience members had a chance to discuss what has worked, what hasn’t worked and topics that need to be addressed. The information gathered will form the basis for future risk management planning in an effort by WCRP to reduce the number and severity of claims arising from the county jail system.

The Pool thanks each presenter and each participant for their contribution to the workshop. Attendees indicated that this was a worthwhile endeavor and a good foundation from which to build a targeted risk management program.

## ***Property Management System Update***

Watch for more information coming soon regarding the new Property Management System known as AMP. The data from PIMS has been transferred to the new program and the Pool is working to schedule an initial training session using a webinar format, and setting up access for members. We appreciate your patience through this transition!





**Jill Lowe**, *Loss Control Coordinator*

# LOSS CONTROL NEWS

## ***Introduction to Underwriting Course***

On Friday, September 11, John Chino, Area Senior Vice President of AJG provided an “Introduction to Underwriting” course review for nine county Pool appointees and WCRP staff. The majority of John’s students are working on their Risk Manager Advanced Certification. Providing this course review is one of several ways that AJG provides loss control services for the Washington Counties Risk Pool and its members. John is well known for his passion in teaching, and the following remark from one of his students attests to John’s abilities:

*The review was very good and very helpful. I’m sure I would not have passed without it. To be honest, I thought I understood the basic concepts of underwriting well enough that I would pass the test without a lot of actual studying (hubris!). Without the review that would have been a serious miscalculation on my part. There were a lot of questions that focused on details specific to the insurance industry (“What does an underwriting assistant do?” I think I got that one wrong in any case). I never would have answered any of those questions correctly without the review. Please tell John he did a great job.*

## ***Lexipol Workshops***

Nearly 130 representatives of Lexipol users gathered in six regional workshops taught this December by Janet Perez and Mike Griffiths of Lexipol. What is Lexipol? It’s a knowledge management system for law enforcement, custody and fire services organizations. Lexipol provides policies based on federal and state law that users then rewrite to match their culture and procedures. Finished policies are “published” and daily training bulletins, based on policy, are sent via email to employees to read and analyze.

Janet is a Support Specialist and Mike is the Chief Technology Officer at Lexipol. The focus of the workshops was to get agencies on a publishing fast track for the law enforcement and custody manuals. Attendees received streamlining strategies on handling updates, DTB administration and as mentioned, getting those pesky policies published. Updated policies and procedures and on-going training is an effective way to reduce liability which is why the Washington Counties Risk Pool Board encourages the use of Lexipol.

In attendance at the workshops were representatives from 16 member counties. Special thanks go to Cowlitz, Spokane, Skagit, Kittitas and Franklin Counties and SCORE for hosting the workshops.



# LOSS CONTROL NEWS

## ***2016 Management & Supervisory Training Schedule***

### **Management & Supervisory Training 101** (2-day class)

February 24-25 – Whatcom County

February 29 – March 1 – Franklin County

March 2-3 – Pend Oreille County

### **Management & Supervisory Training 201** (2-day class)

March 8-9 – Thurston County

March 10-11 – Clallam County

March 15-16 – Walla Walla County

March 17-18 – Okanogan County

### **Managing 365**

April 7 – Kittitas County

April 11 – Spokane County

April 13 – Benton County

April 18 – Skagit County

April 21 – Mason County

**Thank you to the counties listed above for hosting classes.**

WCRP's classes do not have a registration fee for member counties' attendees! Members can register for classes in any location. For more information or to register for a class, see the WCRP webpage at [www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info) and click on the Training tab. Class descriptions can be found under the More Information link. Registration is quick and easy, just click on the registration link and fill out a short form.

## ***2015 PRIMA Institute***

Patti Phillips (Adams County), Tom Reyes (Clallam County) and Jill Lowe (WCRP staff) attended the 2015 PRIMA Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico in November. PRIMA Institute is a comprehensive risk management education program designed for those new to public sector risk management or for seasoned risk managers who want to sharpen their skills and gain insight into current and future management techniques. By attending the Institute, Patti has now met the Basic Certification requirements as Adams County Risk Manager.

The Institute workshops began at 7:30 a.m. and ended between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. There wasn't any time for exploring the area during the day so Patti, Tom and Jill toured Albuquerque's Downtown via a Ghost Walk. The temperature during the walk was in the low 30's which we think explains why they didn't run into any ghosts...





# WCRP BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Featuring Cathy Mulhall

## WCRP Officers/Executive Committee

- Py 2015 President  
Lisa Young, Kittitas County
- Py 2015 Vice President  
Keith Goehner, Chelan County
- Py 2015 Secretary/Treasurer  
Andrew Woods, Columbia County
- Other Members  
Clyde Carpenter, Cowlitz County  
Steve Clem, Douglas County  
Robert E. Koch, Franklin County  
Jill Johnson, Island County  
David Alvarez, Jefferson County  
Lisa Ayers, Pacific County  
Steve Bartel, Spokane County  
Tammy Devlin, Thurston County

## Risk Pool Staff

### Administration

- Vyrle Hill, Executive Director
- Sue Colbo, Accounting Officer
- Stacey Spears, Administrative Asst.
- Trish Todd, Office Assistant

### Claims

- Susan Looker, Manager
- Mike Cook, Senior Analyst
- Joe Campeau, Senior Analyst
- Holly Fierro, Analyst
- Lisa McMeekin, Representative
- Sally King, Assistant

### Member Services

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

To receive this newsletter by email,  
or if you have a story or photos to  
share, contact us:  
[trish@wcrp.wa.gov](mailto:trish@wcrp.wa.gov)

Published by



WASHINGTON  
COUNTIES  
RISK POOL

Created by Counties for Counties

[www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info)

**Official work title:** County Administrator for Chelan County

**Number of years working for the County:** I've worked for the County for just over 25 years. I started here in 1990 as the accountant in the Auditor's Office. In 1996, I transferred to the Financial Coordinator position in the Commissioners' Office. This position was created so that I could assist the Commissioners during the budget process and train to take over as County Administrator upon the retirement of the then current Administrator. I was promoted to my current position of County Administrator in 1997.

**What drew you to your current career?** I really enjoy my job. It's a mix of several disciplines: accounting, personnel, and risk management. There is rarely a dull moment in this ever changing environment. But, this is what keeps me engaged even though I've been with the County my entire career.

**Description of family:** I've been married to my husband Jerry since 1996. We have 2 wonderful children: Emily is 22 and lives in Seattle and works for Boeing after completing her degree at the University of Idaho; and Josh is 15 and just started at Wenatchee High School. We became foster parents in 2014 and have enjoyed having several children in our home over the past year. Although we haven't had any permanent placements to date, we're looking at that possibility in the near future.

**How did you meet your husband?** Jerry and I met in an H&R Block tax class in 1991. He was learning how to file his own business taxes and I was getting a refresher to volunteer to file taxes at the senior center. Our first date was studying for our final at Pizza Hut. He still brags that he scored higher than me on the final exam.

**Where did you grow up?** I grew up in a military family, so we moved around quite a bit. We lived in Washington DC, Germany, Denmark, Virginia and Washington State. My mother was born and raised in Denmark, only coming to the US after marrying my father. So it was wonderful to be stationed in Denmark. We all learned the language and got to know our relatives.

**What do you like to do when you aren't working for the county?** My favorite non-work activity in the summer and fall is camping. We get out in the woods (or beach) any chance we get. It is truly the best way to relax.

**Have you taken any major trips during the last five years?**

I was able to travel to Denmark for 3 weeks this summer with my daughter Emily. We stayed with family and friends. We visited castles, Tivoli Gardens, Legoland, a Viking village, Fanø (a small island off the west coast) and Ribe (a 1000 year old town). It was wonderful reminiscing with old friends and eating the wonderful Danish food! We stayed in the house where my mother was born and saw the church where my parents were married. It was a fun way to show our family history to my daughter.



# POOL NEWS

**Changing Guard:** Several of the member counties' appointees, e.g. directors, alternate directors, etc. exited the Pool's family during the past year due to departures from their respective member counties. We extend our sincere thanks to all for their Pool service and support and wish them the very best in their futures – we will miss them dearly! Departed are:

Safety/Training Coordinator Bryan Perry – represented **Benton County** as both alternate and director and both county claims administrator/risk manager for seven years (2008-15);

General Services Director Scott Pineo – represented **Skamania County** as alternate director for three years (2012-15);

Manager of Recreation Jennifer Jackson – represented **Skamania County** as alternate director briefly (2015);

Personnel/Risk Manager Lucy Schwallie – represented **Walla Walla County** as alternate director briefly (2014-15) and both county claims administrator/risk manager for three years (2012-15);

Chief Civil DPA Terry Austin – represented **Yakima County** as alternate director for three years (2013-15); and

WCRP staffer Jeri Woods (Claims Assistant).

*Yet departures create opportunities for replacement appointments and thus new relationships. Several contacts were added to the Pool's family via appointments of their respective counties during the past year that need to be acknowledged. Additions are:*

Personnel Manager Lexi Wingfield – representing **Benton County** as director and as county risk manager;

Safety/Training Coordinator Sandra Maine-Delepierre – representing **Benton County** as alternate director and as county claims administrator;

Prosecuting Attorney Mark Nichols – representing **Clallam County** again as alternate director;

HR Analyst Tammy Sullenger – representing **Clallam County** as alternate director;

Risk Manager Jennie Bowman – representing **Garfield County** as alternate director;

County Commissioner Vickie Raines – representing **Grays Harbor County** as director;

Records & Risk Manager Jordyn Giulio – representing **Douglas County** as alternate director;

County Commissioner Gary Stamper – representing **Lewis County** as alternate director;

Prosecuting Attorney Mark McClain – representing **Pacific County** as alternate director;

Confidential Secretary Amanda Bennett – representing **Pacific County** as county claims administrator;

Prosecuting Attorney Adam Kick – representing **Skamania County** as director and both county claims administrator/risk manager;

Human Resources Debi Van Camp – representing **Skamania County** as alternate director and county risk manager;

HR/Risk Manager Sheila Eslinger – representing **Walla Walla County** as alternate director and both county claims administrator/risk manager;

HR Assistant Manager Nan Kallunki – representing **Whatcom County** as alternate director;

Prosecuting Attorney Joseph Brusich – representing **Yakima County** as director;

Chief Civil DPA Don Anderson – representing **Yakima County** as alternate director; and

WCRP staffer Sally King (Claims Assistant).



# A TALE OF TWO PHONES

By: Marilyn Rivers | September 14, 2015 Marilyn Rivers is director of risk and safety for the City of Saratoga Springs. She chairs the PRIMA Institute for the Public Risk Management Association and is chairperson of the RIMS Standards and Practice Council. She was named Public Risk Manager of the Year by PRIMA in 2007. She can be reached at [marilyn.rivers@saratoga-springs.org](mailto:marilyn.rivers@saratoga-springs.org).

I used to get laughed at when I emptied my pockets and brought out two phones. “Two phones? What’s the matter, one not enough?”

In the past, I might have had to explain the jest. Not so much now with the headlines in the press related to the sports and political arenas.

Risk professionals are a two phone commodity. They separate life and work. It’s schizophrenic really, but ever so intelligent.

They understand the principle that work phones are owned by the employer they work for. They contain emails, appointments, files and notes of everything that is expected of you in your work life. The totality of that work experience is owned by your employer.

That means it might pay to hesitate before hitting the send button on a text telling your boss or client where to get off next.

I’m often amazed when a phone gets subpoenaed and the person I need to take it from looks at me like a crazed caged animal. “Phone? You want to take my phone?!”

Yes, really, but you do understand it’s really not your phone? You get to keep it in your possession, stroke it, charge it and use it for as long as your services are needed. Your phone is paid for by your employer. That means they get to review your monthly usage and analyze your effectiveness in managing that work tool.

Puppy videos, you say? Hot weekend at the beach? Sassy dialogue with a co-worker? Yup, those texts, calls, pictures and videos on that work phone of yours belong to your employer.

Cries of “personal ... invasion of privacy ... violation of your civil rights” fall on deaf ears for your employer. Lose your job, lose your work phone and often lose your lifeline to reality.

Our phones have become a part of who we are and how we relate to society. They are appendages that never leave our possession and reflect who we are as people, what each of us contributes good or bad to society and how we often measure our existence.

The word “personal” means yours and yours alone. It means you don’t have to share because you’re totally responsible – figuratively, monetarily and morally for that little device you hold close to your ear.

A perusal of my personal phone will find hundreds of pictures of my family in various stages of life, my personal email, texts on a myriad of hot topics and my calendar. My personal phone like yours is a reflection of a personal life.

An IT gent once offered to link my work and personal phones to which I yelled – “STOP” – scaring the life out of him.

I’m not interested in lightening my pocket, streamlining my communication processes or merging my life. I’m interested in the boundaries established by the continents I call my communication devices. I’m protective of the world I want and need to call my own.

Two phones come to life and live a life of their own, regardless of which pocket they reside in. Learn the difference so that you may survive the public scrutiny of your world.

# FALL TRIPPING PREVENTION

*Adapted from the Association of Washington Cities, Risk Management Service Agency*

Fall may be a noun for the weatherman this time of year, but for risk management, it's definitely a verb. With the weather changing and the days getting shorter, here are the top five reasons people tend to trip in the fall.

1. **Damaged sidewalks:** It's no surprise that this is always #1 on the list. Believe it or not, people are less likely to trip on a severely damaged sidewalk than they are on one with just a slight gap or lip, which may be out of compliance with standards, but not immediately noticeable. Fix damaged sidewalks as soon as possible.
2. **Water:** We hate to break this to you if you moved here within the last few months, but it does rain here. Rain makes the ground wet, which makes our shoes wet, which gets tracked inside onto hard floors and makes them wet. If you can wipe the floor up every time it's walked on, great! If not, start with a "wet floor" sign at the entrance of your courthouse, or wherever the wet spot or spill is, until you can get to it – preferably within a few minutes.
3. **Icy mornings:** If water is #2, then it makes sense that when water sits too long and freezes, ice would secure the #3 spot on our list. Keep stairs and walkways clear of debris, snow and ice.
4. **Poor lighting:** The days are getting shorter, and if you're a bat or a cat you probably couldn't care less about being able to see in a dark stairwell, a parking lot, or when entering county buildings. For everyone else, a trip and fall in an area with no lighting where there should have been, or broken lighting where there already is, can result in an injury. Install lights where it's clear that they're needed, and please remember to replace the existing burned out lightbulbs!
5. **Interior defects:** Broken tiles, lifted and uneven thresholds, and loose carpeting helps round out the list at #5. People generally don't stare down at the floor when they're walking, they expect a smooth stroll through your building, free from a landmine of trip hazards.



***There's lots of interesting information on the WCRP website. Check it out at:  
[www.wcrp.info](http://www.wcrp.info)***