



# County Connection

News from the Washington Counties Risk Pool

May/June 2014



## POOL NEWS



### **Summer Conference and Annual Board of Directors Meeting Update**

We look forward to seeing many of you at the 2014 Summer Conference in Spokane at the Davenport Hotel July 24 - 25. The deadline for registration is June 25th. Below is the activities agenda.

Activities	Date	Time
<u>Claims Administrator/ Risk Manager Roundtable</u>	07/24/2014	9:00 am
<u>Recognition &amp; Awards Luncheon</u>	07/24/2014	11:45 am
<u>Annual (Board of Directors) Meeting</u>	07/24/2014	1:45 pm
<u>Evening Social and Dinner</u>	07/24/2014	5:15 pm
<u>Annual Meeting</u> (continued)	07/25/2014	9:00 am



### Earning Your Certified Public Official Certificate?

By attending the Board of Director's Meeting on Friday, you will earn 1 elective credit.

Searching for a policy or form? A keyword search tool is provided within the Sample Policy Library to further assist you. If you have any documents to share, forward them for uploading the document in the Library.  
Debbie@wcrp.wa.gov

### **SAVE THE DATE!**

**Autumn Conference—November 12-14, 2014, The Hilton Hotel (Vancouver)**

**Spring Conference— March 25-27, 2015, Semiahmoo Resort (Blaine)**

**Summer Conference—July 22-24, 2015, Marcus Whitman Hotel (Walla Walla)**

**Autumn Conference—November 11-13, 2015, Skamania Lodge (Stevenson)**



## ESB 5964 - Effective July 1st

### WCRP Executive Committee

- Py 2014 President  
Tammy Devlin, Thurston County
- Py 2014 Vice-President  
Andrew Woods, Columbia County
- Py 2014 Secretary/Treasurer  
Keith Goehner, Chelan County
- Other Members  
Thad Duvall, Douglas County  
Robert E. Koch, Franklin County  
Dean Burton, Garfield County  
David Alvarez, Jefferson County  
Lisa Young, Kittitas County  
F. Lee Grose, Lewis County  
Lisa Ayers, Pacific County  
Steve Bartel, Spokane County

### Risk Pool Staff

#### Administration

- Vyrle Hill, Executive Director
- Sue Colbo, Accounting Officer
- Stacey Spears, Admin. Asst.
- Debbie Larsen, Office Assistant

#### Claims

- Susan Looker, Manager
- Mike Cook, Senior Analyst
- Joe Campeau, Senior Analyst
- Holly Fierro, Clamis Analyst
- Lisa McMeekin, Representative
- Leslie Lubrano, Claims Assistant

#### Member Services

- David Goldsmith, Specialty 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:

[Debbie@wcrp.wa.gov](mailto:Debbie@wcrp.wa.gov) or call (360) 292-4493. Have a story or photos to share? Please submit them to the email address.

Published by

**WASHINGTON COUNTIES  
RISK POOL**



Created by Counties for Counties

July 1<sup>st</sup> is going to be here before you know it. Other than being three days away from fireworks, hotdogs and homemade ice cream, what is the significance of July 1<sup>st</sup>? This legislative season the Legislature enacted and the Governor signed ESB 5964, Open Government Trainings Act (Laws of 2014, ch. 66). This law will become effective July 1<sup>st</sup> and concerns training public officials and employees regarding public records, records management, and open public meetings requirements. The law mandates that within 90 days, every member of the governing body, whether newly elected or already serving, within a public agency must complete the training requirements. The training time is anticipated to be minimal and is being offered on-line at no cost. This act is expected to reduce liability.

Municipal Research and Services Center, MRSC, has developed a webpage providing everything you need to know about the act. The Attorney General's Office has developed a fact sheet that is especially helpful with a comprehensive list of training resources. Click on the following link for the MRSC website <http://insight.mrsc.org/>



Show commitment to your county and community; strengthen your professionalism and competency as a leader by participating in the Certified Public Official Program. Participation in this program allows county officials to organize their professional development around critical skills necessary to achieve excellence in their organizations. Many of the workshops are offered in conjunction with regional association conferences or affiliate meetings. By completing 16 core and 16 elective credits, you will earn your certificate.

Available now on-line is training for Open Public Records Act and Risk Management. You can go to the website, [www.countytraininginstitute.org](http://www.countytraininginstitute.org), to download the information and register.

If you would like to check on the status of your credits, contact Debbie at [Debbie@wcrp.wa.gov](mailto:Debbie@wcrp.wa.gov) or 360-292-4493.

# The Claims Process and Investigation

Holly Fierro, Claims Analyst

Claims adjusting is the process of determining coverage, legal liability, and claim value. It is important to provide prompt, fair and equitable service in investigating and paying claims against the member that are covered under the joint self-insurance policy. An effective claim settlement process should be designed to control costs and assure that covered losses are fairly reimbursed. Once made aware of a claim, it is vital that a prompt investigation be conducted. Investigation is time-sensitive; the “investigative trail” goes cold quickly. Since the investigator didn’t see the loss occur, they rely on others to obtain facts. To a great extent, the amount of information obtained in an investigation depends on what the people involved remember. Obtaining witness names and contact information assist the claim representative in making prompt contact with the witnesses. Prompt contact is important because the facts are fresh in the minds of witnesses and those involved in the incident and they have not had a chance to talk to and be influenced by others. A prompt investigation to determine the extent of the entity’s liability helps control the claim and get it settled within the claim phase.

Washington State law applies pure comparative negligence to tort claims. Courts weigh the defendant’s negligence against the claimant’s. If both parties cause injury, then a percentage of negligence is attributed to each. Without a full investigation, it is almost impossible to determine the amount of negligence to assess on each party, and that makes a claim difficult to settle and defend. To help with the investigation process, it is important to preserve the scene and take photographs. Unless the continued presence creates a safety hazard, the scene should be preserved, as it may have played a part in the incident and assists in determining if there is a negligent third-party. In many instances, it is important to conduct a full investigation even if a claim hasn’t been made; anticipating one could be or will be made.

A timely investigation may also help determine causes of injury or damage that can be controlled or eliminated and helps to avoid overcompensation or payment of fraudulent claims. A claims representative can only come to an appropriate decision to settle or defend a claim through a proper investigation.



Below is a message from Washington State Auditor Troy Kelly about the passing of Mike Murphy. The email was sent to Vyrle Hill Thursday, June 12, 2014. Vyrle adds that “Mr. Murphy was a Grays Harbor County Commissioner when the Washington Counties Risk Pool was formed in 1988, supported Grays Harbor’s membership and participation, and remained a ‘pooling’ and WCRP supporter throughout the years.”

Dear Colleagues:

Today, we lost a trusted colleague and beloved friend with the passing of Mike Murphy, our local Government Liaison and member of my Executive Committee. His family informed us that Mike, 72, died of an apparent heart attack early this morning.

I offer my condolences and support to Mike’s wife, Cheryl Duryea, their family and all the members of Mike’s “other family” - everyone at the State Auditor’s Office, where Mike has worked for the past 18 years.

Mike, born in Elma, Washington, was a dedicated public servant and an avid outdoorsman and sportsman.

Mike served as Grays Harbor County Commissioner for many years. He served as chairman of the State Liquor Control Board and was twice a candidate for Commissioner of Public Lands. Mike played a key role in the local and national campaign of a number of Washington political figures, including Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson, Booth Gardner and Bon Bonker.

He was a past president of the Washington State Association of Counties and helped found what would become Venture Bank.

As our Local Government Liaison, Mike provided our office unmatched credibility with hundreds of local governments whose leaders were familiar with him personally or through his excellent reputation as someone who intimately understood the challenges of their jobs.

Above all, Mike was a good guy and a good friend. My family and I and all his current and past colleagues at the State Auditor’s Office and in public offices and public service organizations around the region will miss him dearly.

Troy Kelley  
Washington State Auditor

