

Five things you need to know about recent developments in Kittitas County government

by Jim Fossett

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ELLENSBURG – Kittitas County commissioners have been busy over the last few weeks. Here are some briefs to bring you up to date:

1. Growth Management Act

On Monday, July 7, Tumwater's Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board reviews Kittitas County's recent proposal to settle with stakeholders challenging the county's compliance with the Growth Management Act.

Simply put, settlement issues on the table revolve around how the county handles growth in rural areas to protect rural character – and how the county handles water.

With respect to water, County Commissioner **Gary Berndt** said, "We've reached an agreement, dependent on contingencies, to purchase \$2.4 million of existing senior water rights from two companies: Aqua Mitigation and Roth-Clennon Water Bank.

"As a short-term solution we'll lease Roslyn water. The kind of lease we're talking about provides a water availability certificate for up to five years."

Berndt said the primary challenge of the water buy is targeting a source for funding. He said at this writing several options are being considered.

2. ATV's on County Roads

On Tuesday, May 20, commissioners were scheduled to sign a new ordinance allowing certain ATV's to operate on designated county roads.

The ordinance mirrors House Bill 1632, a measure passed in Olympia last year that loosens the laws regulating the use of ATVs.

The new ordinance defines certain equipment requirements, including headlights, tail lamps, stop lamp, reflectors, turn signals, mirror, windshields in certain cases, goggles or face shields, horns or warning devices, brakes, spark arrestors, muffling devices, seatbelts and under consideration is a lights-on policy while operating the vehicle.

The new ordinance also requires safety certification, drivers to be licensed and restricts operation to roads with a 35mph maximum speed limit. All rules of the road still apply, as do enforcement and penalties of those rules.

3. Ellensburg Armory

The \$2.8M Ellensburg Armory renovation came to a close with the issuance of a temporary occupancy permit allowing Kittitas Valley Event Center to book the armory's first event on Saturday, May 17, billed as the Art of Wine Tasting.

Said Berndt, "It took us two or three to finish it but now it's a revenue generator. The armory gives us one more very professional exhibit hall and it gets some of our county staff out of outdated office spaces. The armory also provides Kittitas County Fairgrounds with newer restrooms."

4. Marijuana Ordinance

On Tuesday, May 6, county commissioners

signed Ordinance 2014-04, revising Code 17. This measure pertains to the growth and processing of marijuana on unincorporated lands.

The ordinance awaits the signature of the county prosecutor, who has been charged to evaluate verbiage.

The ordinance addresses where marijuana can be grown and processed and bans retail sales in unincorporated areas.

Still on the table for the county to deal with is the issue of Greener Frontier, a medicinal marijuana collective garden that recently opened on county land just off the traffic circle at Bullfrog Road, between Roslyn and Cle Elum. Commis-

sioners and the county sheriff have said they are evaluating the issue.

5. Teanaway Road

Berndt said the county has a contract with the Washington State Department of Commerce to improve Teanaway Road. Located east of Cle Elum, which for years has served as the major artery serving Teanaway River Valley.

Berndt said the project would be underwritten with the \$5M the county received from the state to mitigate for property taxes lost when the state pur-

chased the 50,000 acres in the Teanaway now known as the Teanaway Community Forest, a first and one of a kind in Washington.

The job has been scoped for improving about 7.9 miles, from SR970 to the Middle Fork Teanaway.

Berndt said county engineers are in the planning stage for this project. He said estimates for the job are less than the \$4.9M the Department of Commerce allowed for the project. He said plans for what dollars are left over after the project is completed are being discussed.

What do YOU think?

Vote in our related Question of the Week on page A4.

Many races uncontested this election year

ELLENSBURG – Candidate filing week deadline and the race is on for Election Year 2014 – but there won't be many surprises come election day. According to Kittitas County auditor **Jerry Pettit** though 35 candidates filed for 21 offices twelve seats are uncontested (not including judges). Five of those are for seats held by key county government officials including assessor, auditor, clerk, prosecuting attorney and sheriff.

Seven incumbents are running for another term. Party-wise the field of candidates leans towards Republican. The hottest race going is

Legislative District 13 – State Senator

Judith Warnick-R

Mohammad Daid-D

State Representative Position 1

Danette Bolyard-R • Tom Dent-R

State Representative Position 2

Matt Manweller-R (incumbent)

Kittitas County Assessor

Marsha Weyand-R (incumbent)

Auditor: Jerry Pettit-D (incumbent)

Clerk: Sarah Keith-D

Commissioner 3

Treasurer

Deanna Jo Panattoni-R (incumb.)

Brett Wachsmith-R

Supreme Court

Justice Position 1: Mary Yu

Justice Position 3: Mary Fairhurst

Justice Position 4

Eddie Yoon • Charles Johnson

Justice Position 7

Debra Stephens • John Scannell

Court of Appeals

Division 3, District 3

Judge Position 1: Stephen Brown