



Washington State
Association of
County Engineers

2020

The background of the cover is a photograph of a two-lane asphalt road curving into the distance. The scene is captured at sunset or sunrise, with a warm orange and yellow glow on the horizon. The road is flanked by dry, grassy fields and low hills in the background. The sky transitions from a pale blue at the top to a soft orange near the horizon.

Annual Report

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Managing Director Report

To say the year 2020 did not come with challenges would be the understatement of the century. The SARS COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to its knees in mid-March. A government-mandated, two-week stay-at-home order has turned into over ten months of rolling openings and closings of commerce and society, forcing us all to reshape how we work, live, learn, and play. Children now accompany us to work meetings, water-cooler talk is between you and your pet, and slippers have become acceptable work attire.

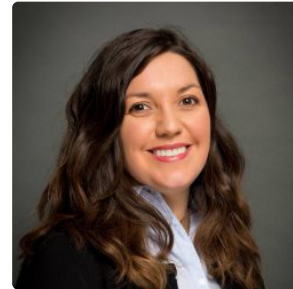
As the world anxiously awaits a return to “normal”, the pandemic has forced us to reexamine a great deal – our values, how to adapt in ever-changing environments, and the health and safety of society. We have debated who is an “essential” employee, and what role government should play in times of crisis.

The answers are clear as mud, and the debate will certainly ensue. But as I reflect on the past ten months one point has become absolutely clear to me – public sector employees are indeed essential, particularly in these difficult times. And county governments play not just an essential role, but a critical one - from transportation, to public safety, to public health, county government is the backbone to society. You may not be on the front lines, but without you things would quite literally come to a grinding halt ... or perhaps a more apt term in the transportation sector would be, a rolling stop.

Counties are the heart of the state’s transportation network. We maintain nearly 60 percent of roadways in the state, and 45 percent of the bridges. We are crucial to commerce, serving that critical “first-mile” for product to get to market. We oversee important transit systems that allow Washingtonians to move freely about, and we work every day to ensure our roadways are safer and more efficient for our citizens. We are constantly working to improve the environment around us and will continue to work towards sustainable infrastructure solutions in our future.

This past year has not been easy, but I am so proud of the work we have accomplished. There are still great challenges and heartache ahead, but there are also many reasons to be optimistic and hopeful. Never have I been as convinced as I am about the importance of our roles in the public sector. They may not be glamorous or high profile, but they are critical to a well-functioning democracy and society.

Thank you for your public service. Here is to a healthy and safe new year.



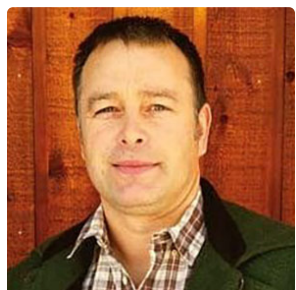
Jane Wall
Managing Director

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Managing Director

2020 Board of Directors



PRESIDENT
Scott Lindblom, P.E.
Thurston County



PRESIDENT-ELECT
Josh Thomson, P.E.
Okanogan County



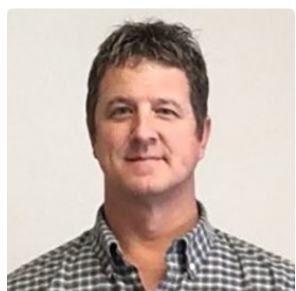
**SECRETARY/
TREASURER**
Letticia Neal, P.E.
Pierce County



PAST PRESIDENT
Eric Pierson, P.E.
Chelan County



**WESTERN DISTRICT
REPRESENTATIVE**
**Doug McCormick,
P.E.**
Snohomish County



**EASTERN DISTRICT
REPRESENTATIVE**
Scott Yaeger, P.E.
Adams County



**NACE DIRECTOR-AT-
LARGE**
**Andrew (Drew)
Woods, P.E.**
County Road
Administration Board



NACE PRESIDENT
Scott McGolpin P.E.
Santa Barbara
County, CA



In 1906, seven county engineers met in North Yakima to organize the Washington State Association of County Engineers (WSACE). An earlier meeting of a few county engineers occurred in Ritzville in 1904.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Washington State Association of County Engineers, as an affiliate member of the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) is to enhance leadership effectiveness by providing more opportunities for professional development, building professional relationships, and advocating stewardship of the environment and infrastructure with which we have been entrusted, for the benefit of present and future generations.



OUR VISION

WSACE's vision is to be an organization of County Public Works professionals respected, both locally and nationally, for leadership and stewardship addressing the infrastructure and service needs of society.





Administration & Finance

2020 brought good fiscal news to the Association. A dues increase, cancellation of the annual conference, and limits to travel, has resulted in better than expected revenues and savings for the year. This, combined with the pandemic and uncertainty surrounding county budgets, WSACE members voted to revise the newly adopted membership dues increase during its 2020 annual meeting. Dues increases will now be more spread out over the next three years, instead of all at once.

WSACE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES - ACTUAL VS. BUDGET IN SUMMARY

(For the Current Ending Period)

| REVENUE | TOTAL BUDGET | ACTUAL 12/31/2020 | VARIANCE (UNFAVORABLE) |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Membership Dues | 175,000.00 | 175,201.00 | 201.00 |
| NACE Dues | 15,300.00 | 15,500.00 | (200.00) |
| Corporate & Affiliate Dues | 907.00 | 900.00 | (7.00) |
| Conferences | 52,500.00 | 44,500.00 | (8,000.00) |
| Contract Services | 20,000.00 | 54,274.38 | 34,274.38 |
| Interest Earnings & Other Misc Revenues | 400.00 | 430.18 | 30.18 |
| Total Revenue | \$264,107.00 | \$290,805.56 | \$ 26,698.56 |
| OPERATING EXPENSE | | | |
| Contract Services | 202,820.00 | 205,768.43 | (2,948.43) |
| Conferences | 65,000.00 | 36,724.36 | 28,275.64 |
| Meetings & Travel | 12,723.00 | 2,186.19 | 10,536.81 |
| Other Professional Services | 2,704.00 | 2,595.35 | 108.65 |
| General Operating Expenses | 19,520.00 | 18,140.89 | 1,379.11 |
| Total Operating Expense | \$302,767.00 | \$265,415.22 | \$ 37,351.78 |
| Changes in Net Assets | \$38,660.00 | \$25,390.34 | \$64,050.34 |

COMBINED DUES 2020 ACTUAL

| COUNTY | WSACE DUES | NACE DUES | TOTAL DUES |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Adams County | \$ 4,841 | \$275 | \$5,116 |
| Asotin County | \$ 2,676 | \$275 | \$2,951 |
| Benton County | \$ 3,992 | \$825 | \$4,817 |
| Chelan County | \$3,557 | \$550 | \$4,107 |
| Clallam County | \$3,590 | \$550 | \$4,140 |
| Clark County | \$9,114 | \$1,100 | \$10,214 |
| Columbia County | \$2,534 | \$275 | \$2,809 |
| Cowlitz County | \$3,708 | \$550 | \$4,258 |
| Douglas County | \$4,987 | \$275 | \$5,262 |
| Ferry County | \$3,010 | \$275 | \$3,285 |
| Franklin County | \$ 3,616 | \$550 | \$4,166 |
| Garfield County | \$2,429 | \$275 | \$2,704 |
| Grant County | \$6,886 | \$550 | \$7,436 |
| Grays Harbor County | \$3,299 | \$550 | \$3,849 |
| Island County | \$ 4,082 | \$550 | \$4,632 |
| Jefferson County | \$2,879 | \$275 | \$3,154 |
| King County | \$10,228 | \$1,375 | \$ 11,603 |
| Kitsap County | \$7,573 | \$1,100 | \$8,673 |
| Kittitas County | \$3,139 | \$275 | \$3,414 |
| Klickitat County | \$3,842 | \$275 | \$4,117 |
| Lewis County | \$4,569 | \$550 | \$ 5,119 |
| Lincoln County | \$5,116 | \$275 | \$5,391 |
| Mason County | \$4,041 | \$550 | \$ 4,591 |
| Okanogan County | \$4,523 | \$275 | \$4,798 |
| Pacific County | \$2,603 | \$275 | \$2,878 |
| Pend Oreille County | \$2,857 | \$275 | \$3,132 |
| Pierce County | \$14,626 | \$1,375 | \$ 16,001 |
| San Juan County | \$2,480 | \$275 | \$2,755 |
| Skagit County | \$4,293 | \$550 | \$4,843 |
| Skamania County | \$2,296 | \$275 | \$2,571 |
| Snohomish County | \$13,329 | \$1,375 | \$ 14,704 |
| Spokane County | \$9,580 | \$1,100 | \$10,680 |
| Stevens County | \$5,018 | \$275 | \$5,293 |
| Thurston County | \$6,931 | \$1,100 | \$8,031 |
| Wahkiakum County | \$1,987 | \$275 | \$2,262 |
| Walla Walla County | \$3,661 | \$550 | \$4,211 |
| Whatcom County | \$5,568 | \$825 | \$6,393 |
| Whitman County | \$4,972 | \$275 | \$5,247 |
| Yakima County | \$6,568 | \$825 | \$7,393 |
| | \$195,000 | \$22,000 | \$217,000 |

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

- Annual dues increased \$40k in 2020, put in place to correct 3 previous years of loss.
- Contract services revenue more than doubled from last year; 211 hours of staff time were billed to DOT, up almost 50% from 2019 billed hours. This agreement is in place through June 2021.
- While total conference revenues were down from budgeted due to no Annual Conference, the Professional Development Conference brought in more than \$10k compared to last year.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

- Management/Admin includes 1.25 FTE and a small overhead fee of 12% from WSAC.
- Conference expenses were down from previous years.
- Travel expenses for the year were a little over \$2k, far less from previous years and \$10k less than budgeted.
- General operating costs have remained stable over the last 4 years.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

(For the Current Ending Period)

| ASSETS | 12/31/2020 |
|---|-------------------|
| Cash & Cash Equivalents | |
| Commencement Bank | 128,224.05 |
| Total Assets | 128,224.05 |
| LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS | |
| Accounts Payable | 61,708.93 |
| Net Assets | 66,515.12 |
| Total Liabilities & Net Assets | 128,224.05 |

2020 Accomplishments

2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2020 Legislative Session convened January 13, 2020. A “short” supplemental session, it lasted 60 days, ending March 12, 2020, four days before Governor Inslee issued his first stay-at-home order due to the outbreak of the SARS COVID-19 virus. It was not until the final weeks of session that the virus came into focus as a potential national emergency. Most of the 60-day session operated like any other typical one – it started at a dizzying pace that never let up.

Significant focus in the transportation world was on budget shortfalls. Initiative 976, passed in November 2019, rolled back various local and state car fees, resulting in a short-term \$450 million hole, with longer-term impacts in the billions. The Initiative was immediately challenged in the courts, but the Legislature operated under the assumption it would be upheld; thus, cuts ensued.

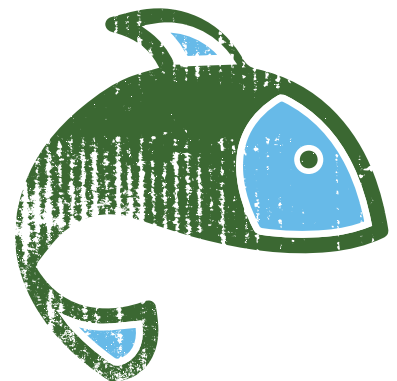
Notably, the County Road Administration Board’s Rural Arterial Program (RAP) saw a \$3.1 million cut, based on legislative assumptions of “anticipated underruns” in the program. While the cuts were said to be “short-term” and “one-time,” the unanticipated revenue shortfalls resulting from the global pandemic make restoration of these cuts unknown at this time.

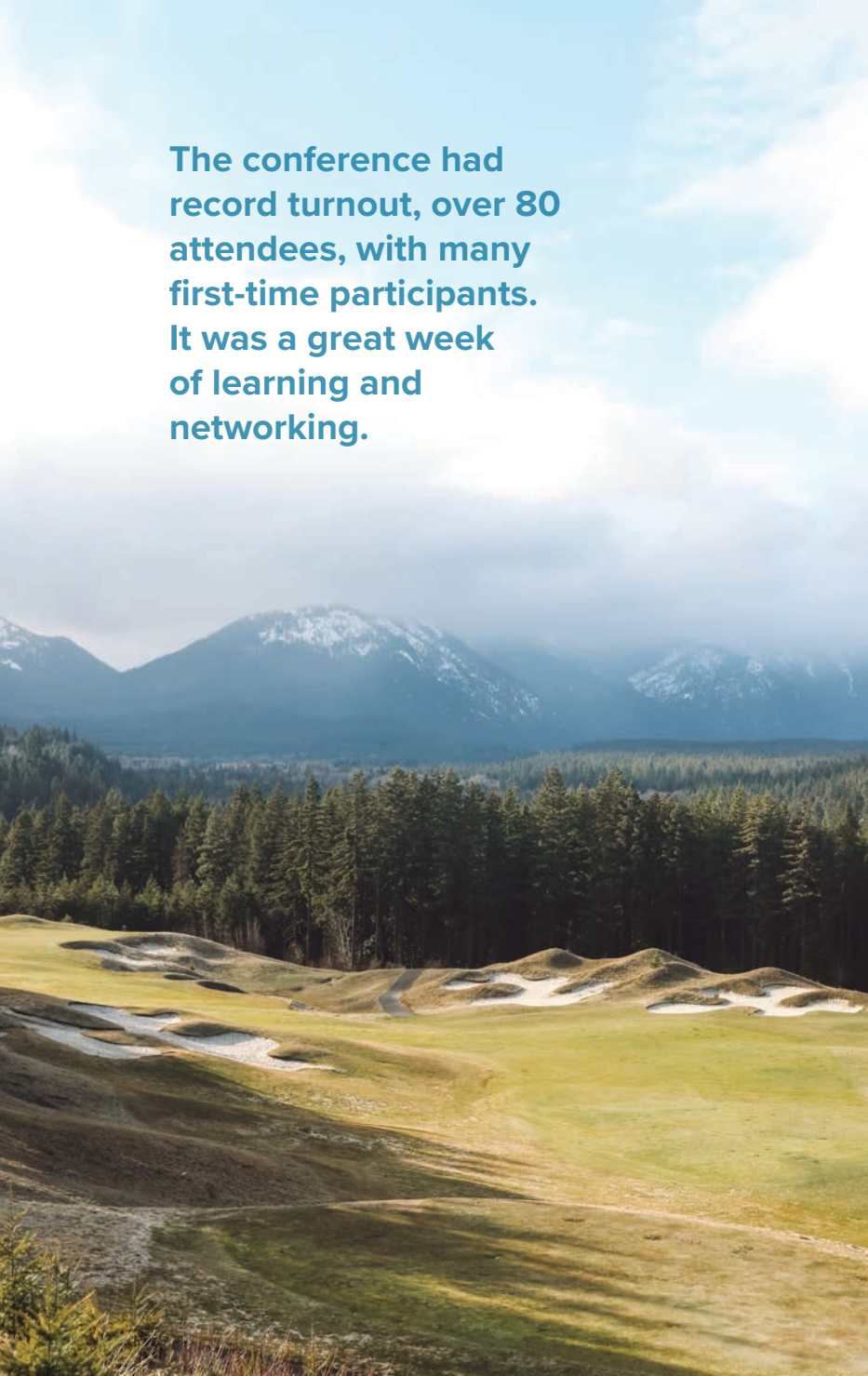
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FISH BARRIER REMOVAL

While the transportation budget was a disappointment, there were bright spots in the 2020 session. The final capital budget directed the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board to develop a comprehensive statewide culvert remediation plan that must work in conjunction with the state approach to fully satisfy its fish barrier removal injunction mandate. The comprehensive plan must be consistent with the principles and requirements of the injunction and must achieve coordinated investment strategy goals of permanent injunction compliance.

This proviso was a big win for local governments who have advocated for a watershed, statewide approach to the culvert issue. While no funding was associated with the proviso, our hope is this direction will help lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive approach to addressing fish blocking culverts.





The conference had record turnout, over 80 attendees, with many first-time participants. It was a great week of learning and networking.

Professional Development Conference

The 2020 WSACE Professional Development Conference took place at the Suncadia Resort in Kittitas County, February 5-7, 2020. The year's theme, "Law School for Public Works," brought together county engineers, public works directors, and their staff to hear from legal experts on liability, risk, and the legal issues counties face related to public works. We heard from the Washington County Risk Pool, county prosecutors, and private sector attorney's specializing in municipal law. The conference had record turnout, over 80 attendees, with many first-time participants. It was a great week of learning and networking.

Annual Conference

WSACE's annual June conference, which was to take place in Lake Chelan, was cancelled due to the SARS COVID-19 pandemic. The membership met virtually to conduct our annual business meeting where we adopted our 2021 annual budget and new officers were sworn in. With the pandemic in mind, WSACE members voted to revise the newly adopted membership dues schedule in anticipation of reduced county budgets. Dues increases will now be more spread out over the next three years, instead of all at once.



COUNTY ENGINEER COVID-19 CHECK-IN MEETINGS

WSACE began holding regular virtual check-in meetings in mid-March when the Governor issued his first stay-at-home order. Those weekly meetings now occur monthly. They have proved to be a valuable source of information sharing among the group as we all navigate working remotely.

COUNTY REVENUE STUDY

WSAC received \$1,142,000 in funding in the 2019-2021 transportation budget for transportation studies. Each biennium counties receive a portion of the state fuel tax to support studies of our choosing. For the 2019-2021 WSAC directed \$100,000 of this funding towards a County Revenue Study to analyze the current state of county transportation funding, identify emerging issues, and identify potential future alternative transportation fuel funding sources to meet current and future needs.

WSACE hired the firm Berk and Associates in mid-winter 2020 to conduct the study. A final report was issued on September 1, 2020 and was a key resource in the building of WSACE's 2021 legislative agenda.



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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY ENGINEER'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Set to take place in Orange Beach, Alabama, in April, 2020, the 2020 NACE conference was cancelled due to the SARS COVID-19 pandemic. A small, virtual meeting was held in its place to elect new officers.



2021 Legislative Agenda Setting Process

WSACE oversaw a collaborative and robust legislative agenda setting process in anticipation of the upcoming 2021 legislative session.

A subcommittee of the WSACE Board was created to inform the process and provide recommendations to the WSACE Board and membership. The committee met multiple times through the summer and fall of 2020. As a part of its work the subcommittee sent out a survey to the WSACE membership in mid-summer and used that membership feedback to inform its priorities process. The County Revenue Study also proved to be an invaluable resource for the committee. The WSACE Board formally adopted its legislative agenda during its November Board meeting.

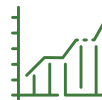
THESE RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:



1

Prioritizing preservation and maintenance activities and programs

Counties believe the maintenance and preservation of our transportation system should be the foremost priority of transportation investments statewide.



2

Targeted increases to the Rural Arterial Program (RAP) and the County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP):

\$100 M to CAPP & \$140 M to RAP



4

Surface Transportation Program fund swap

Counties propose swapping our suballocation of federal-aid highway funds for state transportation funds. Such an exchange allows counties to undertake local projects with state funds, rendering the projects subject to applicable state and local, rather than federal, requirements. A swap such as this allows Counties to save resources and time on their STBG, allowing for the more efficient use of federal and state funds.



3

Increase the county share of the gas tax:

As owners of over 50% of the transportation system, Counties support that any increase to the State Motor Fuel Tax, a Road Usage Charge, or similar system designed for funding transportation, Counties should receive a proportionate share of any increase.

2020

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