

WASHINGTON STATE
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

106 MAPLE PARK
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

March 12, 1968

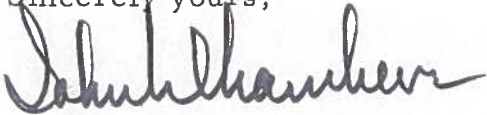
Mr. J. M. Thomas, Executive Editor
Mr. Elwyn A. Nellis, Managing Editor
The Yakima Herald
114 North Fourth Street
Yakima, Washington 98901

Gentlemen:

The enclosed copies of the County News-Digest contain this
Association's tribute to Lee Crossen.

Thank you very much for permission to use portions of your
February 8 editorial. In a very real way it made our tribute
more meaningful.

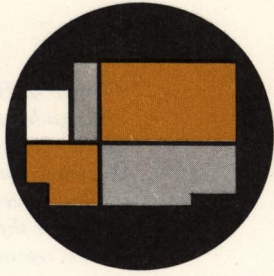
Sincerely yours,



JOHN L. CHAMBERS
Executive Secretary

JLC:LVJ

Enclosures



**WASHINGTON
STATE
ASSOCIATION
OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**

The County NEWS-DIGEST

VOL. 35, No. 6

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1967

UNIVERSITY CONFERENCES ON INCREASE

The availability of Federal funds through the Higher Education Act has brought at least two universities—one private and the other public, into closer contact with local public officials.

Pacific Lutheran University, located in suburban Pierce County, has just concluded a third in a series of conferences concentrating on regional problems. Featured at the first conference were county representatives from New York's Westchester county, Dade County, Florida, and the combined county-city of Davidson-Nashville, Tennessee. The second conference continued on the same theme of urban problems with a look at Minneapolis, Washington, D. C., and San Francisco. The third and last conference concentrated on the forms of local government in Washington and dealt with considerations of county home rule charters.

While the Tacoma institution was involved in its programs, Western Washington State College, located in Bellingham, Whatcom county seat, was planning a conference for early April.

Doctor Richard Feringer, Director of the Office of Continuing Studies at Western Washington, indicates that the goal of their conference is to provide a "neutral forum from which crucial and sensitive issues can be examined with no bias." The conference will, unlike the Pierce County meeting, draw upon officials from counties in the four-county region of Whatcom, Skagit, Island and San Juan.

Funds for the programs are being administered through the new state Planning and Community Affairs Agency. University officials have made it very plain that they are not trying to tell local officials how to do their jobs, rather, the emphasis is to serve an integrating role as well as bring outside resources into the area which might not normally be available for local officials.

NACO SETS WESTERN MEETING FOR SEATTLE IN MARCH

The meeting of the National Association of Counties Western Region is scheduled in Seattle, March 24 through 27. The program will include case studies exploring the problems and solutions of air and water pollution as well as solid waste disposal. County officials planning to attend the three day conference need not be concerned about spending much time in areas which don't affect their jurisdiction. The individual workshops

will be divided into urban and urban-oriented sessions in all phases of the subjects. Each session will be directed to the magnitude of the problem rather than attempt to cover the subjects too generally.

Registration for the conference is \$35. Registration can be sent directly to the NACO office, 1001 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, D. C.



JUSTICE COURTS - PROGRESS & PROBLEMS

During the past year and one-half, eighteen new counties have come under the 1961 Justice Court Act, an Act which eliminates the method of supporting the court on the basis of fee and places judges on a salary basis. The number of counties under the new Act is now 24.

In a recent survey taken by the Administrator of the Courts, one of the major factors for counties converting to the new system has been the fact that the court costs are paid before any distribution is made to eligible funds. With the exception of perhaps one county, all justice courts which have been under the new Act for at least one year have shown a greater amount of revenue over expenditures.

There is a good possibility that a number of counties to come under the 1961 Act will continue to increase. The disposition of court revenues has already been given as a major cause, but still another consideration is the fact that the Legislature may make the Act mandatory for all counties. Since the passage of the law in 1961, bills have been introduced during the past three sessions with

the most recent bill passing the House by a 79-15 majority. It seems likely that further such moves will be made.

Among the 15 counties which still operate under the fee system is an Eastern Washington county which created the review committee to study the courts. The deputy prosecuting attorney assigned to chair the committee made an extensive study of the other counties throughout the state under the 1961 Act. The committee recommended after their study that the county not convert to the new system. One of the factors in their decision was the unnecessarily large number of justices provided their county under the new Act. They considered the number excessive to their needs and felt that the volume of business could not support that number.

Counties which have come under the 1961 Justice Court Act are as follows: Asotin, Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Ferry, Franklin, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla and Whatcom.





THE COUNTY NEWS-DIGEST

Official publication of the Washington State Association of County Commissioners and its affiliates: The Washington State Association of County Engineers, The Washington State Association of County and Regional Planners, The Washington State Association of County Park Boards and Departments.

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OPPORTUNITY



Thurston County. Newly formed regional planning council has three openings for planners. Planner III, \$10,020-11,460; Planner I, \$7,740-9-180; Planning Technician, \$6,420-7,836. For additional information on qualifications contact T. A. Jenkinson, Director of Planning, Thurston County Courthouse Annex, Olympia, Washington.

King County. Platting engineer to head Platting and Subdivision Section of the King County Road Department. Salary \$10,620-11,940. Professional land surveyor license and familiarization with platting procedures required. Contact Jean DeSpain, county engineer, King County Courthouse, Seattle.

Clark County: Administrative assistant to the Board of County Commissioners. The equivalent of a university degree, and four years of progressively responsible experience in public business administration in the fields of budgeting, purchasing, personnel management, and administrative analysis are sought. Salary range: \$856 to \$1,041. Apply to Clark County Commissioners, Vancouver, Washington.

AG

ATTORNEY
GENERAL
OPINIONS

The validity of the 1968 Clallam County budget was challenged on the grounds that the final budget was in excess of departmental preliminary requests. The following informal opinion was for Nathan Richardson, Clallam County prosecutor:

In reply to your letter of November 3, 1967, the law does provide that taxes levied by the county are not to exceed the amount specified in the preliminary budget. However, it is clear that the preliminary budget is not the budget submitted by the county auditor to the board of county commissioners under RCW 36.40.040 . . . RCW 36.40.050 provides that after submission of the preliminary budget by the auditor to the board of county commissioners, " . . . the board shall thereupon consider the same in detail, making any revisions or additions it deems advisable."

Obviously, then, the legislature did not mean that the county commissioners were restricted in the levying of taxes, to those which might be necessary to fund the budget in the form submitted to the county commissioners by the county auditor. Such an interpretation would make meaningless RCW 36.40.050, expressly authorizing the county commissioners to add to the budget. Thus, the budget in the hands of the county commissioners, prior at least to their holding a hearing on it, is still a "preliminary budget."

COMING EVENTS

- Feb. 29-March 1, Central District meeting, Wenatchee
- March 14-16, Annual Road Clinic, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho
- March 24-27, National Association of Counties Western Region meeting, Seattle
- April 5-6, Planning Association of Washington, Wenatchee
- April 10-11, Eastern District meeting, Clarkston
- April 10-12, APWA Spring meeting, Longview
- April 16-17, Western District meeting, Ocean Shores
- April 21-24, Northwest District National Recreation and Parks Association Conference, Spokane
- May 15-17, WSACC and affiliates annual convention, Port Angeles
- May 22-24, Urban Arterial Traffic Improvement Workshop, sponsored by ITE and AAA, Edgewater Inn, Seattle

Charles L. Huggins, Spokane, wrote this article at the request of the County Planning Directors. In preparation of the 22 county planning conference, the article represents a composite of the major planning issues.

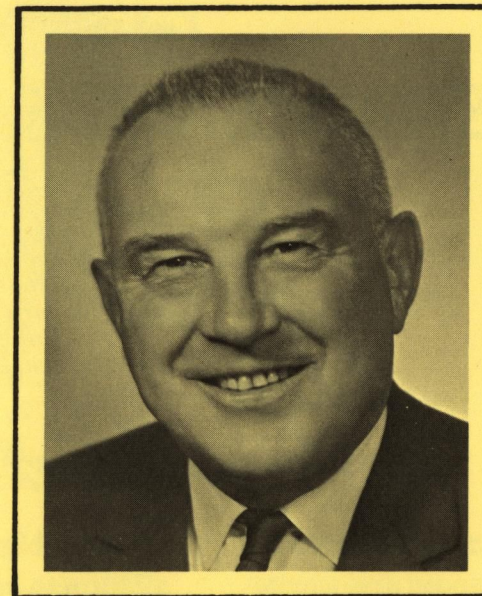
The Washington State Association of County Planning Directors started functioning as an informal organization about eight years ago as Planning Directors began to attend meetings of the Commissioners' Association with their Commissioners. The Planners group achieved affiliate membership in 1966 and in 1967, the Association developed and adopted formal by-laws providing for scheduled meetings, election of officers, and a method for expressing policy.

One of the most striking changes in county planning during the past ten years has been the increase in counties employing full-time professional staffs. In 1950 there were at most six counties with planning staffs and according to our current roster, there are now twenty-two counties with professional planning departments.

Common Concerns

County planners in Washington State share as their most common concern the problems of urbanization of land around and near cities and towns of their counties. As one fellow planner expressed it in his response to my inquiry: " . . . the problems confronting the (Planning) Board are rapidly becoming 99 and 44-100% urban in nature . . ."

Some of the daily problems facing county planning boards and demanding immediate and systematic long-range solutions are: How to develop from a network of rural roads of inadequate right of way and earlier haphazardly located platted roads to an urban arterial system coordinated with city and state arterials; where to locate schools that will now serve an enrollment of 90% bussed students and should ultimately be conveniently located to serve a walk-in population; how to channel residential development which is footloose because of the septic tank and the easily formed water district or company; how to cope with developments that may range in a given area between 1/5 acre lots and five-acre tracts into relatively compact neighborhoods with economical urban services; what to do about the increas-



A TRIBUTE TO LEE CROSSEN

The death of Lee Crossen February 6 ended a most distinguished public career.

Reared in Oregon, Mr. Crossen came to Yakima in 1929. Beginning as a reporter with the Yakima Dailies, Mr. Crossen later served as city editor. He was managing editor when, in 1947, he purchased and became publisher of the Selah Valley Optimist. The Optimist was sold in 1961.

In 1951 Mr. Crossen was appointed to a vacancy on the board of county commissioners. Twice, in 1955-56 and 1959-60, he served as chairman of the board.

Mr. Crossen's public life was not limited to county government. He was campaign chairman for Gov. Arthur B. Langlie's successful bid for re-election in 1948. Governor Evans appointed him to serve on the first Washington State Law Enforcement Officers' Training Commission in 1965. He

was a member of the County Road Administration Board from its inception.

Mr. Crossen was also active in civic, professional and fraternal organizations; among them the Red Cross, United Good Neighbors, Washington Newspaper Publishers Association, Eagles, Elks, and Lions. He served as an officer of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Yakima.

For many sessions of the Legislature Mr. Crossen was a familiar and effective spokesman for local government. He was the first chairman of the WSACC Legislative Steering Committee, a position he held until his death.

In tribute to Lee Crossen, a speech he wrote in 1964 is reprinted here. This statement tells much of the man, and more of his deep commitment to the people's right of open scrutiny of government.

GOVERNMENT & THE PRESS

*A favorite phrase used by Lee Crossen . . . was, "He's a good citizen."
... Ironically, Lee would have been quick to deny that he had done any-
thing to earn that title for himself.
... But it will be a long, long time before his thousands of friends forget
Lee Crossen, who was every inch a "good citizen."*

—(YAKIMA HERALD, February 8, 1968)



The first thing to remember is that you, as a public official, and the newsman are working for the same people—those who read newspapers, listen to radio, watch television, and vote. Basically, both are sales jobs. Success of the newsman depends upon his ability to capture attention and build confidence with the public. That is exactly what you are trying to do. So you and the newsman are in the same boat, working for the same people and with a common goal—the betterment of conditions in your county. It follows that you both will be more effective if you make an honest effort to understand each other's problems. Mutual respect between public officials and reporters will pay dividends with the public. I am naive enough to think that an informed public will make pretty good decisions at the polls.

The easiest way to keep the public informed is through the news media. Make it easier for the newsman to do his job. Let him share in your tasks. You will find that the reporter will respect your confidence. And be sure you respect *his*. Many a public official has been saved from serious mistakes by tips from newsmen who have sources of information that could not be available to the official.

The big bugaboo of public relations—of all human relations for that matter—is rumor. You will be surprised at what you will learn about yourself and your motives after a few months in public office. Every news office is flooded with these rumors. Nine times out of ten they are made of wholecloth. If the news handler is not informed, he may give credence to some wild tale that is detrimental not only to you, but to the people you represent. It is virtually impossible to reverse certain types of published material. If the newsman knows you and has a working knowledge of county government, he probably will blue pencil the rumor himself. At least, he will give you an opportunity to present your side of the case. He has a public duty just as you have, and he is vitally interested in the integrity of his reports. Help him keep the record straight.

But do not expect a good relationship with the press to protect you from any and all criticism. When responsible elements in the community take after you for something you have failed to do, news media are obligated to make a report to the public. And there is plenty of room under a good press relationship for honest differences of opinion.

What to do if you are treated unfairly (and you will be, occasionally)? Keep your temper. Get the facts. Put them together in the best package you can and make it available to the public. Avoid counter-charges based on personalities. Maintain your dignity as an official elected to represent the people. If the attack is too flagrant, sue somebody.

In Yakima County, the commissioners have what we call the "open door" policy. It is literally that. We do not close the doors. Newsmen are welcome to come and go as they see fit. We believe that public business should be done in public. Secrecy leads to speculation and misunderstanding. It is better to keep the house in order from day to day. Alert reporters have ways of finding out what is going on. There is much less chance of misunderstanding when the reporter knows the background. This system prevents the premature breaking of news, and it protects the reporter when the information reaches him through another source.

We make a practice of listing the names of persons who appear at meetings in the courthouse. This helps with identification and gives the reporter other checkpoints if he needs them. Our appointment schedules are available to all newsmen. We give out advance in-

formation when news values are involved. We encourage reporters to take part in informal discussions of county affairs and procedures. The more they know about the job the more likely they are to write intelligent reports.

Yakima commissioners feel that public acceptance of our \$2,500,000 courthouse construction project was due largely to free and open discussion of every phase of the planning. Reporters watched every development, and the public was fully informed on what we intended to do and how the bills were to be paid. There was no shock. Nothing disturbs a voter or a newsman more than thinking someone is trying to fool him. This was pointed out by our Civil War president 100 years ago. The principle still stands.

This does not mean that you must have a ready answer for any and all questions. You have the right to withhold comment until you have the facts and know the circumstances. There are times when a simple "I don't know" is the only honest answer.

It is well to keep in mind that there are three basic types of information in the press: news reports, editorial opinion, and paid advertising. You will have occasion to deal with all three.

"In county government, he studied, learned by mistakes and by his own experience and that of others. He could talk roads with a farmer, or state finances with the governor. He would brief a beginner on the complexities of the Legislature or a piece of legislation, and he could brief a lawmaker on what the people wanted or would accept."

—(YAKIMA HERALD, February 8, 1968)

A news report is just what the words imply—a report of what occurred, who was there, what was said, and what the situation seemed to be, and the conclusions, if any. Accuracy is the prime element of a news report. But even accuracy is subject to what we call news judgment. You will be amazed at times that reporters emphasize some insignificant fact and virtually ignore what you consider of greater importance. This will happen less often if the reporter is well versed in the workings of county government. Competent reporters will appreciate correction of gross errors and an explanation of your point of view, but it is best to avoid knit-picking and whining in your relations with the press. Some people are more newsworthy than others, just as some men are more attractive to women than others. Nobody seems to know why. If you are cooperative and straightforward, you probably will get the treatment you deserve over a period of time. In any event, don't attempt to tell the editor how to run his business.

Editorials, letters to the editor, and analytical articles, known to the trade as "think pieces," are the opinions of the writers—no more, no less. Some editors carry great influence, while others merely fill space.

If you feel that a "think piece" is far off base and the county's program is being harmed, go to the editor and talk the thing over. Most editors will listen, and often you will learn something yourself. Think twice before

you hitch up a typewriter and attempt to blast somebody out of the water. Even a mediocre editor has a distinct advantage over the county commissioner in a printed word argument. If nothing else, he controls the means of distribution, and you have to play his game. Personalities and circumstances sometimes alter this observation, and each case is a separate problem. Some of you undoubtedly had editorial support when you were elected, and some of you were elected in spite of editorial opposition. You must know how to handle the situation or you wouldn't be in office.

Paid advertising offers the opportunity to tell your story in your own way, within the bounds of libel and decency. This method is seldom a factor except during campaigns. It is available to you as long as you can pay cash in advance.

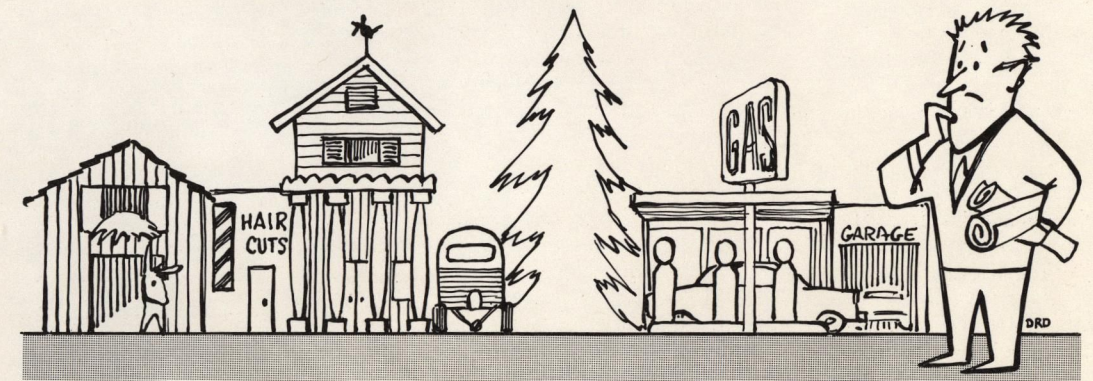
I have purposely omitted any thoughts on what to do when you are whipsawed between competing news agencies, political groups, and rival communities. I realize that in the 39 counties in Washington there are at least 139 special situations. You will learn about these through the good old American system of trial and error—the best teacher there is.

In general, keep your house clean, open county records to the press, adhere to the laws governing the operation of the office, and use your best judgment. No one can do more. The news people are obligated to report what happens.

County Planning Director, has written the NEWS-DIGEST. Huggins is currently a member of the Washington State Association of County Planners. For this article he sent inquiries to various county planning directors to determine what they considered the most serious problems facing the counties today. The following are some of those views throughout the state.

Feature...

GROWTH PROBLEMS CHALLENGE PLANNERS



ingly popular mobile homes, prohibited outside of commercial area courts in many cities and resented to a point of obsession in many suburban areas; how to handle the zoning conflicts of an area in transition from farms or acreage tracts with farm animals to suburban lot development where animals are regarded as a nuisance; how to foresee and prevent drainage problems and water pollution; how to preserve open space and acquire land for parks and recreation in the path of urbanization; and, how to plan for large capital expenditures where tax resources are limited to the point they may not even be meeting operating costs.

Trends In Planning

Perhaps the most significant shift in county planning procedure over the last ten years has been the emergence of multi-jurisdictional regional agencies. These take many forms in terms of the composition of their membership, the services provided and the staffing. Of the counties now employing professional staff, all but two (Island and Grant), are either members of a regional planning agency or employ a joint staff with other agencies within the county. The regional agencies range from simple coordinating conferences with no budgets to the Puget Sound Governmental Conference with over forty staff positions and a yearly budget of over a half million dollars.

The regional agencies have been activated in response to the necessity for planning across jurisdictional lines (a necessity perhaps more sharply perceived by the Federal Government than some local areas). In some cases, involving joint staff arrangements, the individual jurisdictions could not reasonably have afforded professional staff departments. Federal requirements and opportunities have also had the effect of stimulating planning programs insofar as most federal aid programs for capital improvements of all types require a continuing general planning program. Many county and regional planning projects in recent years have been undertaken with "Urban Planning Assistance" funds, and the planner has become expert in "Grantsmanship". More than one jurisdiction has at various times been dependent upon such funds for the majority of their planning program.

Sophisticated mathematics and computer technology have begun to be applied to plan formulation in the major metropolitan areas. In the last few years chiefly through the federally supported transportation studies, there has arisen both hopes of more thorough and definitive studies but also fears that the concepts programmed into the computers may be less reliable than the machines.

In the more mundane day-to-day operations of zoning and subdivision administration innovations have also appeared. Zoning ordinances are shifting more and more towards flexibility in administration, for example: performance standards in place of specific permitted uses; "contract" zoning allowing special conditions of performance and site (and off-site) improvements; zoning adjustment hearings handled by a salaried adjustor rather than a lay board.

In the area of residential planning, "Planned Unit Development" and "cluster" design, both older concepts elsewhere, have recently been applied increasingly in Washington suburban subdivisions.

Aesthetics, pure and simple, are more frequently and candidly the basis of specific zoning regulations and zoning decisions, as well as subdivision approval.

Although we operate under uniform state legislation, practices vary tremendously from county to county, and I cannot hope to have covered even the most important trends in county planning around the state in such a news article. Perhaps individual directors can in this publication from time to time expand in detail upon significant events in their own counties.



GOVERNOR APPOINTS URBAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

It is a well-known fact that the rural Washington of yesteryear is rapidly becoming a highly urbanized state. Seventy per cent of Washington's citizens now live in urban areas. Ninety-seven per cent of the migrants to Washington during the 1950's became urban residents. All of the 39 counties will be greatly affected by this boundless phenomenon.

A large number of governmental and private agencies have developed programs designed to meet the new urban problems that are rapidly becoming critical in nature.

In November of 1967, Governor Dan Evans, through an Executive Order, created the Urban Affairs Council "to bring together leading citizens, city and county governmental officials, and state government professionals to pinpoint present and future problems which are inherent in Washington's urban growth; to ascertain activities of private and public agencies vis-a-vis the solution of urban problems; to identify the gaps; and to prepare a definite report for the Governor of Washington on precise solutions (legislative and otherwise)—with priorities—that should be undertaken." The report will be submitted to the Governor next Fall.

Secretary of State Lud Kramer was appointed UAC chairman by the Governor. Eighteen lay citizens, seven county and municipal government officials, and six governmental administrators were named to the council. Sam S. Reed is executive director of UAC.

The UAC will be seeking information of county efforts to solve urban problems. The Council hopes each county will participate in this attempt to collect data of existing programs.



MEYER RESIGNS FOR CHARTER POST

Paul Meyer, WSACC assistant executive secretary for the past three and one half years, resigned to become executive secretary of the King County Freeholders. The work will involve assisting the fifteen freeholders in drafting a charter.

Meyer, 31, is a native of Grays Harbor County. He attended the University of Washington and holds a master's degree in public administration.

Meyer's resignation from the Association became effective the same day he began work for the Board of Freeholders.

GROWING LIABILITY NEEDS PROMPT STUDY

In 1961 the Washington State Legislature removed the tort immunity of state and local government. With the immunity no longer protecting governmental agencies, the need for higher limits of liability insurance has become apparent.

With the diverse services counties are providing, from operating airports to catching dogs, the possibility of loss is enormous. The standard \$100,000/\$300,000 policy is no longer adequate to cover county operations.

One of the most widely used methods of eliminating the gaps that may exist in county liability is the use of the "Umbrella Policy." In insurance parlance, the "Umbrella Policy" floats above all primary policies (the basic \$100,000/\$300,000), thus extending the terms and conditions of the primary policy upwards to the limits of the "Umbrella." The insuring company provides its attorneys to handle litigation arising from claims.

The Association has asked Dow-Laney Co., insurance broker for the Washington counties' group medical plan, to study the risk management procedures of the counties. From the Dow-Laney study should evolve an indication of the best and most economical method of handling the risk of loss; whether it be self-insurance, reduction of hazards, commercial insurance, or a combination of these methods.

The counties might collectively purchase an "Umbrella Policy" for the obvious savings in premiums. Local insurance companies providing preliminary coverage would not suffer any loss in revenue, because an umbrella policy would overlay primary insurance.

The cost of the umbrella policy would depend upon a number of factors. First would be the operations to be covered. Hospital or airport insurance would require greater coverage at higher premiums than protection for a county park. The size of the county and population would be another factor. Dow-Laney is considering coverage ranging from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000. In some instances it might be advisable to increase coverage to \$10,000,000.

It is anticipated that the study will be completed prior to fixing the 1969 budget.

YAKIMA VACANCY FILLED

The Yakima Board of County Commissioners have appointed Mr. Les Conrad to represent commissioner district No. 1. Mr. Conrad fills the vacancy created by the death of Lee Crossen.

ALONG THE RIGHT OF WAY

- Snohomish commissioners have appointed **Vernon Johnson** as the county's first budget director. He will aid nearly 25 county departments with budget preparations.
- **Clarence E. Coley** has been appointed county sheriff by the Lincoln County commissioners. He succeeds **Ed Atwood** who resigned to become U. S. Marshall for Eastern Washington.
- **W. A. Morow**, a former county commissioner in Grays Harbor County, passed away recently.
- **Arlie Thompson**, Pacific County Assessor, died recently when he fell while working on his property near Raymond.
- **Pat Gallagher**, Pierce County Commissioner, was elected chairman of the Puget Sound Governmental Conference at one of the recent meetings.
- **Jack Rogers**, Kitsap County Commissioner, was appointed as vice-chairman of the Mass Transit Committee of the National Association of County Officials.

OEO & COUNTIES

Approved in December by President Johnson, the Edith Green amendment, known by the name of its sponsor, opens up a new status for county government in relation to the administration of the local Community Action Programs under the Economic Opportunity Act.

Representative Green, an Oregon Congresswoman, has, through her amendment, provided counties with the choice of actually administering the community action program if they chose to.

In the past, a community action agency had to be a public or private nonprofit agency which did not give any opportunity for counties to direct the program. In testimony before Congress prior to passage of the amendment, the National Association of Counties indicated that one of the principal reasons local elected officials were less than enthusiastic for the program was loss of control of a program which they felt should be responsible to the citizens through the elected official.

Under the Green amendment, local government has the option of establishing itself as the Community Action Agency or to redesignate the existing agency.

An accompanying requirement if the program is to be administered by the county and other local governmental agencies is that a Community Action Board must be constituted which is represented by one-third of public officials, one third to represent the poor, and one-third to be major groups and interests in the community.