There is a lot happening in Thurston County, and we want to hear from you. Our upcoming coffees give you the opportunity to talk about issues of concern, ask Commissioner Romero questions about the county, and share ideas.

**Yelm**
April 20th, 10am—11am
Yelm Coffee Talk
Blue Bottle Café—309 E. Yelm Ave

**Lacey**
April 20th
2pm—3pm
Lacey Coffee Talk
Olympic Crest Coffee—4211 Pacific Ave.

We are all acutely aware of the severe recession Thurston County, Washington State, the United States, and the world are in right now.

Like other county governments, Thurston County is experiencing precipitous declines in property tax and sales tax revenues.

The County expects sales tax revenues in 2009 to fall 22% below those revenues received two years ago in 2007.

Thurston County eliminated 80 positions (6.5%) in January of this year to help minimize the effect of these circumstances.

However, the County must cut an additional $5.4 million from its 2009 budget in order to make certain the County can cover its operating costs in the first quarter of 2010.

This represents a 7.5% cut from the County’s $76 million general fund budget. This will affect virtually every part of County government.

Tough cuts have already been made to non-mandated programs such as Women, Infant and Children (WIC) and Parks and Recreation.

Preserving Safety
A lot of attention has recently been brought to the three quarters of the County’s General Fund budget that is devoted to criminal justice. Sadly, there is no way to balance the budget without cutting some services.

It is certainly not our preference to cut services and programs that County citizens rely upon. We sincerely wish it were not necessary.

The consequences of this recession are staggering to our communities, and we are doing everything possible to ensure the public’s health and safety remain a priority.

Getting through these challenging times will require that we all work together to find lasting solutions to our economic problems.

**Public Hearing**
This coming Monday, April 13th. The commissioners will be accepting comments on the proposed budget amendments at a public hearing.

**What:** Public Hearing on Budget Amendments
**When:** Monday, 4/13 5:30pm—8:30pm
**Where:** Courthouse—2000 Lakeridge Dr. SW Building #1, room 152

As I move into my 4th month in office a lot has happened. The County has a new direction with two new commissioners. Besides hosting coffee talks and working on budget amendments, we implemented a County reorganization that improves efficiency and streamlines departments.

Cutting out layers of county government has allowed us to go from 13 departments down to 8. For example, Development Services is now a part of the newly created Resource Stewardship department.

I have also been appointed to many committees and boards. They include:

- Animal Services
- Fair Board
- Intercity Transit
- Nisqually River Council
- Nisqually Watershed Planning Unit
- Puget Sound Partnership Salmon Recovery Council
- Red Wind Community Contribution Committee
- Solid Waste Advisory Committee
- Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Thurston Regional Planning Council Transportation Policy Board
- WA Co. Risk Pool
- WA Assoc of Counties Coastal Caucus
- WA Assoc of Counties Legislative Steering Committee
- Thurston County Board of Health

Each of these entities have very exciting things going on. For instance, on Intercity Transit we are talking about obtaining hybrid buses with economic stimulus money.

On Animal Services, the residents of Thurston County have expressed an interest in a dog park, and we are working with other jurisdictions to make that a reality.

I recently attended an all day retreat with the Nisqually River Council where we discussed a 15 year Stewardship Plan that will focus on community involvement, biological diversity, tourism opportunities and promoting water monitoring and conservation programs.

Even with a busy schedule, my number one priority is still my constituents. Please feel free to contact our office at 360-786-5747 or email: romeros@co.thurston.wa.us

To unsubscribe to this list please send an email to: paribel@co.thurston.wa.us