

PRESS RELEASE
MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 4, 2003

Subject: Future Fairgrounds Advisory Committee

The Mason County Fair has been a tradition for generations. In 1963 the Fairgrounds began operation at its present site on State Route 101.

Over the years the Fairgrounds has become a vital part of the community hosting a wide variety of events nearly year around. In 2002 it is estimated 300,000 visitors attended events at the Fairgrounds.

The present Fairgrounds site is leased by Mason County from the Port of Shelton. The lease will expire on December 31, 2013 and the Port has stated they will not extend it. Thus, if the Fairgrounds is going to continue in the future, Mason County must find another site.

For many years Mason County has significantly subsidized the operation of the Fairgrounds. The 2003 County budget projects Fairground expenses will exceed revenues by \$207,495.

The new financial reality brought about by voter initiatives 695 and 747, means that the County must find a long term way to operate the Fairgrounds on a breakeven basis in the future.

The County recognizes that the Fairgrounds is a product of years of volunteer service and untold contributions of community organizations. Therefore, the Mason County Commissioners are proposing to establish a Future Fairgrounds Advisory Committee to provide recommendations regarding what role should a Fairgrounds play in Mason County's future. Should it primarily host a fair, summer season events only, or also be developed as a year around convention facility?

If you are interested in serving on the committee, applications can be obtained from the Mason County Commissioners' office, 411 North 5th Street, Shelton or call 427-9670, ext. 419. Applications will be solicited to February 28, 2003.

Ron Henrickson
Mason County Administrator