

NEWS RELEASE
February 22, 2005

MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: Mason County Receives Rural Health Works Grant

Mason County was one of three counties nation-wide to receive a National Association of Counties "Rural Health Works" Technical Assistance grant. The purpose of the grant is to understand the economic impact of the local health care sector on the larger Mason County economy. Mason General Hospital is our fifth largest employer. If we consider our other health service providers like our physicians, dentists, mental health counselors, drug and alcohol counselors, home health workers, Public Health, and rehab facilitates; then the economic impact is considerably higher. The Rural Health Works grant should help us more fully understand and realize this economic potential. Community engagement is a critical component of this assessment and planning process. Four short one hour community meetings will be scheduled in April through June to ensure that our community is well engaged, informed, and listened to throughout the process. In preparation for this project, we will be collecting information from local businesses, health care providers, hospital, and other sources. An example of needed information includes where local employers spend their employee health insurance benefits. Partners in the grant are Mason County Department of Health Services, Mason General Hospital, Mason Matters, Economic Development Council, and CHOICE Regional Health. The results of the project will be used by the county to assist in the update to the County Comprehensive Plan.

For additional information, you may contact Steve Kutz at 360-427-9670, Ext. 260, or Kim Klint at ext. 543.

BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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