



**Tom Brian**  
**Chair of the Board of County Commissioners**  
**2006 State of the County Address**

In a county like ours, there are many things we could talk about that time does not permit today. What I will share with you today are those things I feel are the most important successes of 2005 and the most important projects the county will focus on in 2006.

My view of county government is *first* we need to deliver daily, bread-and-butter services effectively and at a reasonable cost. We should always strive to do better and be smarter about service delivery.

And while delivering the basic services, we also have to have a vision about the building blocks we need to put in place to help create the kind of community we want to be in the future.

In thinking about my remarks today, I was struck by the many changes and transitions occurring around us. Many of us felt this personally with the passing of Tom Hartung. It was a privilege to work with Tom in the Legislature and on so many projects in the community. His love for Washington County was reflected in his long career of public service first on the Beaverton School Board, then as a distinguished member of the Oregon Legislature, and also by his involvement in numerous projects and issues spanning well over 40 years.

And, of course, there are retirements. Last year marked the retirement of Jack Reardon, who for many years oversaw and was responsible for the amazing success of Washington Square. At the end of 2006, my good friend and colleague Commissioner John Leeper will retire from the Washington County Commission. I have no doubt that we will have John's robust participation and leadership for the full year, if we can just draw him out of his shell a little!

We can only hope men and women of equal dedication will step up and serve as these incredible citizens have in our community.

Like other employers, Washington County has begun to feel the effects of the aging of the Baby Boomers, yours truly included. Long-time County Administrator Charlie Cameron retired as of December 31. Three other department heads are about to retire. In another couple of years, several of our department heads will reach retirement age.

These and other transitions were anticipated and planned for. For example, Bob Davis has stepped in as interim administrator with full authority and the Board's full confidence

to ensure the wheels of county government continue to move forward as we search nationally for a permanent administrator. Bob has been deputy county administrator for about 20 years. He knows our system and how we get things done.

Whom ever our permanent administrator is, he or she will face challenges presented by a county ready to top 500,000 in population, and that is growing at a rate of about 1,000 per month. We have an increasingly diverse citizenry *and* economy and an increasingly complex operating environment that barely resembles the Washington County of 20 or 30 years ago. Once a rural and suburban bedroom community, Washington County has emerged as an engine for economic growth and development in Oregon. We have retained a strong rural and agricultural base while becoming a world center for high tech and apparel.

I believe a major contributor to this county's success is our on-going commitment to cost-effective services and attention to the building blocks I spoke of earlier.

Now let me highlight three such building blocks for 2005 and three initiatives for 2006.

### **Accomplishments in 2005**

As I've mentioned in the past, these kinds of undertakings do not fit neatly in a calendar year. They are almost always multi-year projects. They all have their periods of emphasis.

#### Investment Agreement with Intel

In 2005, one of our major accomplishments was successfully reaching an agreement with Intel for a \$25 *billion* Strategic Investment Program. While paying full property taxes on their land and buildings, just like we do on our homes and businesses, state law allows us to reduce property tax on their highly specialized, extremely expensive equipment. This equipment has a very short service life and our agreement with Intel provides a necessary incentive for them to stay, re-tool and continue their world leadership in the high tech industry right in our back yards through the year 2025.

Of course, this also retains a great community partner that provides over 16,000 jobs, is the state's largest tax payer and stimulates a substantial, beneficial effect on our local economy through jobs.

We also acknowledge that Washington County enjoys the benefits from several world-class businesses that choose to keep their businesses in Washington County. Nike, Columbia Sportswear, ESI, Tektronix and Leupold & Stevens are examples of just how fortunate we are. These companies are the foundation of Oregon's most productive economic development cluster and they are all here in Washington County.

#### Commuter Rail

Another accomplishment is the advancement of commuter rail. We finally gained favor with the Federal Transit Administration on the 14.7-mile route linking Wilsonville to

Beaverton. Through the incredible work of our entire congressional delegation, especially Senator Smith, Senator Wyden and Congressman Wu, Congress allocated \$15 million and gave us a green light to submit our Full Funding Grant Agreement to secure the remaining \$27 million. Final engineering is nearly complete and we have ordered the rail cars. We anticipate starting construction this year and expect to take passengers on their first rides in 2008.

This is another example of a project that would not be possible without the collaboration of TriMet, our cities, chambers, legislators, the Oregon Department of Transportation, private railroads and many others.

#### Additional Transportation Improvements

Of course there is a lot more to our transportation story than commuter rail. We also received \$10 million in federal funding to initiate a project to connect I-5 to 99W near Sherwood. Again we are deeply grateful to our congressional delegation for successfully finding the means to fund the beginning of this important project.

We are nearly finished with the current list of projects in the Major Streets Transportation Improvement Program, also known as the MSTIP, which is a voter-approved levy dedicated to Washington County roads and arterials. We have just completed a new list that will construct projects between 2007 to 2012. We did this with the help from the cities and citizens. This is a local approach to funding transportation projects that is unique to Washington County. It has been supported since 1986 by the voters and has yielded over \$350 million for local funding for modernizing our county road system. Of course the needs are far greater than the money we have, but the program has made a significant difference in funding our local arterial system.

My colleague Commissioner Roy Rogers deserves much credit for his leadership in the area of transportation. Roy represents Washington County on Metro's Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and he serves as chair of the Washington County Coordinating Committee, where our collaborative efforts are forged for improving countywide transportation capacity.

#### Expanding Recreational Areas

A final highlight for 2005 is the funding of four outdoor recreation sites, something this county has sorely needed.

The first is the creation of the L.L. "Stub" Stewart State Park. This is a long-time dream come true.

Located three miles north of Highway 26 along Highway 47, Stewart State Park will be Oregon's first new, full-service park in over 35 years. And, of course, it will be the first state park in Washington County.

In partnership with the Oregon State Parks Department and others, our State Legislature allocated \$8 million for construction and development in the 2005 legislative session.

This and another planned authorization of \$3 million in the 2007 legislative session will be enough to complete all phases of construction of the park in 2007, about five years ahead of original projections. Weather permitting, Phase I of the park, its entry area, day-use facilities and perhaps some trails, could be open for use later this year.

The second recreation project is the Banks-to-Vernonia linear park. Again, a multi-agency effort will complete the last leg of the trail into the community of Banks, which views this project as their number one economic development investment. They will become a trailhead for the 26-mile linear park that connects Banks and Vernonia and bisects a corner of Stub Stewart State Park along the way. It is expected to attract large numbers of hikers, runners, cyclists and equestrians. Commissioner Andy Duyck deserves much of the credit for this. It would not have happened were it not for his untiring work.

The third area is the addition of more than 30 acres of forested land atop Mount Williams near Beaverton. It was purchased through the coordinated actions of Washington County, City of Beaverton, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, the Trust for Public Land, Oregon State Parks and Metro. Here, Commissioner Dick Schouten led the effort on this significant project.

The county's latest venture connecting people to their environment is the 27-mile "Westside Corridor Trail." It will connect Portland's Forest Park on the north with the banks of the Willamette River near Wilsonville. It will become the spine to the western portion of the region's urban trail system. It runs through the dense middle of the county's population providing access to other trails and nature areas.

### **Priorities for 2006**

Looking ahead, I can say with certainty that 2006 will be a year of challenges, but more importantly, a year of opportunity.

#### Long-term Water Supply

Our first major project I want to mention is the development of long-term water supply for the Westside of the region. Clean Water Services, of which the County Board of Commissioners is the Board of Directors, has studied this idea for about three years. Now we are prepared to move forward rapidly. In partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, local cities and water providers, Washington County, through Clean Water Services, is spearheading a 50-year water supply project. The most likely alternative at this point is raising Scoggins Dam and enlarging Hagg Lake.

In recent years we have received congressional authorization for the Bureau of Reclamation to work with us, and we have received partial funding for the preliminary analyses and environmental impact statement, which will be completed this spring and the subject of several public hearings.

The driving force behind this effort is our understanding of the need for an expanded water supply within the next decade, and a supply for the next 50 years. Our residents, our businesses and the agricultural community of the Tualatin River Basin all need a clean, reasonably priced and reliable water supply. This source will also provide important environmental benefits for the Tualatin River and its tributaries.

Currently, the region's major water supply is Bull Run I and II. Washington County buys about one-third of its water from Bull Run. We believe the next major water source should be on the Westside. Diversifying supply will substantially reduce the risks associated with an earthquake, drought or volcanic events that could otherwise cripple water supply to the region. This region is served by two river basins and we should exploit that advantage by diversifying our water supply.

In the next few months we will know much more about the best size for the impoundment, its cost and how to coordinate this resource with others. We will also explore acquiring Hagg Lake and Scoggins Dam from the Bureau of Reclamation so our region and all of its users have greater control over their water future.

#### Tourism 2015

A second significant priority for 2006 is deciding whether to proceed with the implementation of the Tourism 2015 strategy.

Even though we lack having a Grand Canyon or Disneyland, Washington County does have a lot to offer visitors and residents.

We have an outstanding and rapidly expanding wine industry. We are creating a network of parks, trails and natural areas that will accommodate outdoor activities. Studies have also shown that we occupy a potentially lucrative birding, or bird-watching, niche. Our community has also established itself as a nationally known youth sports center, drawing thousands of people from across the country for a wide diversity of sports events.

For the last 18 months, the Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau, chambers of commerce, other business leaders and Washington County have been working on a strategic plan to capitalize on tourism – it could add \$260 million and 1,600 jobs to our local economy. I want to thank and congratulate the Convention and Visitors Bureau for their leadership and for being the catalyst for what I think is an important and exciting building block that will diversify and strengthen our economy while producing more recreational and outdoor activities for our residents as well.

In concert with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the chambers of commerce, the county has agreed to assume a leadership role in pulling together the pieces necessary to take advantage of the opportunity before us. We are engaging the lodging industry, our wineries, nature groups and sports-related entities, all of whom have expressed interest and support of this effort.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau study and report recommends an increase in the lodging tax to fund the effort. However, before we take that step, there must be a clear consensus among lodging, business leaders and tourism professionals on the strategic plan, and assurances that any new funding will be invested effectively to produce results that stimulate increased hospitality and tourism trade in the county. I think we can get there. This is an opportunity we should not miss.

### Urban Services

Perhaps the most challenging set of issues to take up for 2006 is to discuss and seek agreement on the future of urban services delivery, governance options and Urban Growth Boundary expansion in Washington County. The county intends to use the process of updating its strategic plan as a forum to facilitate this important discussion.

This year, we have seen in more than one area of the county how explosive the issue of providing for urban services can become. It is a complex problem: How do we share the costs of providing the public services needed for our community's long term quality of life and economic health while protecting a property owners' right to have their say on the governance of the community in which they wish to live?

The process of getting these issues *right* is not for the faint of heart. There is no singular "right" answer, nor are there simple solutions. And what we do with these discussions, how we resolve these issues, will affect this county's quality of life, and our economic viability for decades to come.

Washington County's situation is unique because out of 500,000 people only 300,000 live in cities, about 20,000 live in a rural setting and 180,000 live outside of cities, but inside the Urban Growth Boundary. And more growth is in our future. Metro's latest numbers tell us we will likely have another 400,000 over the next 25 years.

The key question in my view is, "how shall we best create, and serve, quality, sustainable communities and neighborhoods? Communities we want to live in and work in and return to?"

For some, the best answer will be to annex to a city. To others, it may be forming their own city. Others may want to explore the creation of a community service district and, for some, status quo or minor modifications may be sufficient.

Since the county adopted its County 2000 Plan, a lot has changed in our world and these changes have brought some uncertainty, confusion and strained relations. We have had the evolution of our special service districts—such as Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, Tualatin Valley Water District and Clean Water Services—into large, sophisticated service providers. We have also seen changes in our tax system and fee structures by Measures 5 and 50. Our land use laws have changed and are still in flux. And public attitude towards government at all levels has changed. All of this has changed citizen's perspective on governance and dramatically effected how cities and counties can govern and deliver services.

It is time now for an honest conversation with citizens, neighborhoods, businesses, special service districts, cities and the county for the purpose of charting a course that is mindful of these changes. The goal will be to reach consensus on an updated plan and framework that shows us how to grow, how to proceed toward quality, sustainable communities, long term.

We all need data about the costs of services, projections of revenue and many other answers for stakeholders and citizen groups. We must test our traditional approaches against current-day realities and our vision for the future.

Because it involves the design of this place in which we live, and who will deliver what services, where, I expect this process to produce lively discussion that will continue for perhaps two or three years.

And it will be difficult.

What we have working in our favor here in Washington County is our tradition of collaboration between the public and private sectors and our citizens. Our relationships have produced tremendous results in the past and we should accept no less in the future.

And knowing our mayors, community leaders and other stakeholders, there isn't another group of men and women with whom I would rather be engaged for this effort. We will create *this* building block together, and it will shape Washington County over the next 20 to 30 years.

Now let me close with an early head's up on two items of critical importance to our community. The first is the Public Safety Levy and the second is the Library Levy, both of which will be on our November ballots. And again, a collaborative effort is underway to shape the renewal of these two levies, and you will hear much more about them in the months ahead.

Allow me to thank our federal and state legislative delegation, the Oregon Department of Transportation, TriMet, Metro, the cities, special service districts and others who partner with us in the public's interest. You have heard me reference partnership and collaboration a lot this morning. But I will tell you, virtually nothing big, nothing important, has been achieved in Washington County without these constructive relationships.

I also want to thank my colleagues on the Board of Commissioners: Andy Duyck, John Leeper, Roy Rogers and Dick Schouten. It is a delight to work with these gentlemen. Even when we are arguing (I mean, debating!), I would not trade them for any other commissioners in the state. And most of all, thank you all for being here, and for being active in our community.