

NEWS RELEASE
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Washington Coalition for Open Government
6351 Seaview Avenue NW
Seattle Washington 98107-2664
www.washingtoncog.org
Phone: (206) 782-0393 Fax: (206) 623-4474

EVERETT DAILY HERALD'S REARDON COVERAGE WINS RECOGNITION FROM THE WASHINGTON COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

The Daily Herald of Everett and three newsroom members have been honored with Key Awards by the Washington Coalition for Open Government for stellar investigative reporting that led to the resignation of former Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon last year.

The tenacious and long-running coverage was the work of reporters Scott North and Noah Haglund and city editor Robert Frank. The awards, presented September 5 in The Herald's newsroom, are given to recognize individuals or organizations that have made notable contributions to open government.

"The Herald deserves recognition because its work demonstrates the power and the necessity of open access to public records," said WCOG President Toby Nixon. "The newspaper overcame a number of significant obstacles to get at the truth and at one point went to court to force disclosure of key public records."

The Herald team revealed how two key Reardon aides used fanciful fictitious identities, shell companies and online personas to attack political opponents. Among other things, the aides orchestrated a campaign to bombard county officials with public records requests while hiding their official positions with the Reardon administration.

Reardon resigned several days after The Herald unmasked the aides' activities. One of the aides, Kevin Hulten, was sentenced last month in Skagit County for tampering with evidence in a criminal investigation related to the scandal.

WCOG was founded in 2002 by a group of individuals representing organizations with a broad spectrum of opinions and interests but all dedicated to the principles of strengthening the state's open government laws and protecting the public's access to government at all levels. WCOG stands for the principle that transparency and public participation are essential building blocks of good government.

Membership is open to the public. For more information contact WCOG at 6351 Seaview Avenue NW, Seattle, WA 98107-2664, on the web at www.washingtoncog.org, or call (206) 782-0393. -30-