

NEWS RELEASE

January 5, 2015

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

DAVID TIMMONS AND PORT TOWNSEND CITY COUNCIL RECEIVED KEY AWARDS FROM WASHINGTON COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

City Manager David Timmons, along with the Port Townsend City Council, has been selected by the Washington Coalition for Open Government (WCOG) to receive its Key Award for implementing a new Public Comment System that will greatly enhance the ability of citizens to participate in city government decision-making.

In 2009, Timmons selected the Granicus software system for use by the City Council. Since then, the agendas, meeting materials, and video recordings of City Council meetings have been viewable on the city's website. Now, Timmons has started to add Granicus' *Citizen Participation Suite* to further expand the public's access to city government.

Key features of the city's new Public "[eComment](#)" system are:

- Helps focus citizen comments to items currently on the agenda;
- Provides a convenient means for citizen input for those who find it difficult to attend meetings;
- Encourages more informed comments by providing a one-stop shop for viewing background information on agenda items such as staff reports and maps or photographs;
- Is a convenient online system for citizens to reach all seven Council members simultaneously;
- Provides a method for increased civic engagement in the democratic process through electronic media;
- Allows electronic citizen comments to be part of the public record in accordance with Washington open government laws;
- Enables the City Clerk's Office to track, maintain and archive electronic comments;
- Provides the City Council with an easy-to-read, organized report of Public eComments prior to each meeting.

In 2015, the city plans to expand the system to allow even greater participation by residents, who will be able to submit, and vote on, their own ideas and provide feedback on current city projects and initiatives.

Washington Coalition for Open Government board members presented the Key Award to Timmons and the Port Townsend City Councilors during the City Council meeting on January

5.

“David Timmons has decided to implement a new Public Comment System that will greatly enhance the ability of citizens to participate in city government decision-making,” WCOG member Tom Thiersch wrote when he nominated Timmons to receive the Key Award. Timmons, when asked about WCOG’s decision to present him with the Award, declined to take sole credit and asked that the Council also be named as recipients.

Join WCOG and help in the non-partisan fight for transparent government and open public participation. 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.