

NEWS RELEASE

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Washington Coalition for Open Government
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THE WASHINGTON COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED THREE CITIZENS FOR THEIR WORK ON OPEN GOVERNMENT ISSUES

Tacoma---Four Washington citizens were recognized by the Washington Coalition for Open Government on Saturday, March 14 at the organization's annual Open Government Conference in Tacoma. The four were honored with the organization's Key Award which is given throughout the year to people who have done something notable for the cause of open government within the past 12 months.

Gene Pollard, a member of the King County Public Hospital District No. 4, asked for help from WCOG Board member and attorney, Kathy George, when he thought his board was about to take an illegal vote. George intervened and the voting process was changed to comply with the OMPRA.

Former Montesano Vidette Editor Steven Friederich has spent his career using the state Public Records Act to peel away the layers of local government in Grays Harbor County. During the past year, his public records requests helped reveal county contractors were playing video games at the county workplace; followed investigations into city employees wasting thousands of hours of productivity watching videos and surfing the internet; employees watching porn on city-owned equipment; and the facts behind the termination of a popular public works supervisor. Friederich even stood his ground when the mayor of Montesano wanted to know how supposedly confidential documents were being leaked to him and promptly filed a records request regarding the mayor's investigation into the "leaks" at city hall.

Althea Paulson and Bob Fortner of Bainbridge Island filed suit against the city in September 2013 claiming the city and Councilman Steve Bonkowski, Ward, and then-councilwoman Debbi Lester failed to turn over public records that had been requested under the state's Public Records Act. They sought emails council members sent and received on their personal email accounts. The city's Governance Manual stipulates that council members use their city provided email accounts, and to forward any city related emails sent to them on private accounts to the city for retention.

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.