



## ***WCOG Honors Freedom Foundation's Matthew Hayward with Open Government Key Award***

Olympia – A successful effort to promote greater transparency in contract negotiations with public agencies was recognized recently by The Washington Coalition for Open Government.

Matthew Hayward, a state coordinator with the Freedom Foundation, received a Key Award for his part in urging Lincoln County Commissioners to unanimously decide to require open access to collective bargaining negotiations involving the county. The three-member commission was also recognized with a Key Award last fall for its September 2016 decision to conduct collective bargaining negotiations under the terms of the state Open Public Meetings Act, allowing access by the public and, by extension, employees other than the negotiators.

Hayward said he had urged Lincoln County government officials to embrace a policy of openness for public negotiations because of the inherent interest of taxpayers. He is also working with officials in other Washington counties to follow Lincoln County's example. "We hope there will be many more who adopt this practice," he said.

WCOG presents The Key Award to recognize individuals and organizations that using or further the state's Open Public Meetings Act or Public Records Act. Hayward received his Key Award at the Freedom Foundation offices in Olympia on May 16, 2017 from Toby Nixon, WCOG president.

"We appreciate the Freedom Foundation's long and steadfast support for open government in Washington," said Nixon, who noted that the organization is one of several civic groups that maintains a representative on the WCOG board. "This is also a recognition of Matthew's outstanding effort and key contribution to the public's right to know what is done with tax money."

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.