

News from your Pierce County Councilmember

Roger Bush - District 3

Serving the communities of

Ashford, Eatonville, Elbe, Elk Plain, Frederickson, Graham-west, Harts Lake, Lacamas, Roy-east, Spanaway-east and South Hill.



Committee Assignments

Chair

Emergency Preparedness Committee

Chair

Economic and Infrastructure Development Committee

Member

Community Development Committee

Member

Public Safety and Human Services Committee

To contact Councilmember Bush

Phone: 253-798-6626

Email: rbush@co.pierce.wa.us

Pierce County Council Office

930 Tacoma Ave. S.

Room 1046

Tacoma, WA 98402-2176

Phone: 253-798-7777

FAX: 253-798-7509

1-800-992-2456

November '07 Update

Your County Council Emergency Preparedness Committee takes its work very seriously.

Earlier editions of my update newsletters have shared information with you about major issues such as roads and traffic congestion, parks and recreation, and public safety. The county and your councilmembers also invest countless hours working on many other activities that directly affect how we work and live. This update is a potpourri that highlights some of those issues.

Last year the County Council created a new committee to coordinate emergency planning efforts with courts and other county departments, school districts, fire districts, private health-care providers and other jurisdictions. I believe this is a critical function of county government and I was, therefore, pleased to be named chair of the new Emergency Preparedness Committee. Details about some of what we have accomplished to date and our plans for the future are outlined in this update newsletter.

Also inside, you will find additional information about how we're working to assist veterans, support local farmers and seniors, and protect kids and families. You also can learn how to volunteer with Pierce County's Medical Reserve Corps and find employment with county government.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Bush". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Your County Councilmember

See page 2 for emergency survival kit information



Emergency preparedness: Serving you in times of disaster.

Since launching the Emergency Preparedness Committee last year, the council has invested both time and money to ensure that county government can serve its citizens during times of both natural and man-caused disasters.

One of the first goals was to develop a continuity of operations plan to create a succession of authority in the event of a disaster, whether it might be a pandemic flu outbreak or flooding that disrupts not only families but the public services needed to protect all of us.

As an example, our Health Department, working to meet a predicted future Pandemic Flu outbreak, purchased and stockpiled treatments of anti-viral medication for both “first responders” and other Pierce County citizen needs.

The Department of Emergency Management has developed a program to educate families on how to organize and maintain enough food, water and other supplies for a three-to-five day emergency. In addition, families are encouraged to create a personal family disaster plan that includes emergency phone numbers and meeting locations for all family members.

Other work that involved strengthening many of the county’s river levees has already saved lives and untold property damage that would have been caused by last year’s floods.



Our new Emergency Operations Center is scheduled for completion in March 2008. The 12,000-square-foot facility will house up to 100 EOC staff members per shift to serve and protect area citizens.

New Pierce County-Tacoma Emergency Operations Center will be online in March.

As the name of the facility suggests, Pierce County’s new EOC will be a secure state-of-the-art center designed to serve the people of our area in times of either natural or man-made disasters. Services offered through the center and the trained staffers who operate it will include:

- 24/7 alert and warning of impending disasters.
- Enhanced regional and statewide response capability.
- Quick deployment of EOC mobile operations command and communications vehicles, personnel and other assets.
- Real-time, secure video-conferencing between officials in Pierce, King and Snohomish counties, plus state officials and

the governor’s office.

- Backup to emergency 9-1-1 and law and fire dispatch capability.

In addition to its basic function, the EOC also will serve as a multi-use, high-tech, training, meeting and media center. There’s an old quote, from an unknown public official, that says: “An EOC is a place where uncomfortable officials meet to make unpopular decisions, based on insufficient information, in too little time.” Perhaps, but our new Emergency Operations Center will certainly make the decision-making process easier and more certain to protect those of us who live in Pierce County.

Emergency survival kit

Various government agencies are charged with responding to community disasters. However, citizens may be on their own for hours, even days, when a disaster strikes. It is recommended that you should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for three-to-five days. Survival experts suggest that the following emergency kits should be stored both at home and work, plus at your children’s school:

- Dry or canned food and drinking water for each person
- A manual can opener
- First aid supplies and first aid book
- Copies of important documents, such as birth certificates, licenses and insurance policies
- “Special needs” items for family members, such as medications, infant formula and eye glasses
- A change of clothing
- Sleeping bag or blanket
- Battery powered radio
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Whistle
- Waterproof matches
- Toys, books, puzzles, games
- Extra house keys and car keys
- List of contact names, plus local and out-of-state phone numbers
- Food, water and supplies for pets



Working to save family farms and open space.

In the decade between 1987 and 1997 Pierce County lost more than 80,000 acres of prime farmlands. I and my colleagues are committed to reversing this trend.

In adopting the Farming Assistance, Revitalization and Marketing (FARM) program, funding it in this year's budget with \$178,000, we are working to stop the loss of more family farms in our county. The Washington State University's Pierce County Extension office will administer the program. The FARM program establishes four ways to get the job done.

- Creates a "farmbudsman" to be a full-time farming advocate who will work to help farmers with the regulations and red tape of the county's permitting process.
- Establishes a 798-FARM assistance hot line to put farmers, restaurants and the general public in touch with appropriate support agencies.
- Expands the Farm Advisory Board to include representatives from the county's Planning and Land Services Department and Office of Economic Development, plus WSU Extension and the Pierce Conservation District.
- Creates the Food and Farms Connection program to put farmers in touch with consumers by marketing locally grown produce and providing contact information for local farms.



Connecting seniors and farmers benefits both.

Another county program, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, has worked to the benefit of both groups. Funded by the county, U.S. Department of Agriculture, state of Washington, and Pierce Conservation District, the program offers \$40 vouchers to qualified older adults for use at authorized farmers' markets and roadside stands.

This year the program served over 2,400 qualified seniors and, in the process, helped local farmers as well.

To determine if you are eligible to participate in future programs, please contact the Pierce County Aging and Long Term Care office at 798-3807.

County jobs available.

Some interesting job openings are now available in county government. Good pay and good benefits for positions as corrections officers in the Sheriff's Department, engineers in the Public Works and other departments, plus registered nurses are open for those interested. For more details and information call 798-7480.

Volunteers wanted: Join the Pierce County Medical Reserve Corps.

The Pierce County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is an organization that uses teams of volunteers to help respond to local disasters. The focus is medical emergencies, but anyone can volunteer. For more information about joining the MRC, please contact Justin Schumacher at 253-798-7675. Or email him at jschumacher@tpchd.org.

Supporting our county veterans.

More than 100,000 veterans make their home in Pierce County. Sometimes these vets need our help and it's an obligation we cannot ignore.

While the federal government is responsible for providing basic services, the state of Washington requires each county to set up a fund for indigent veterans and their families. Pierce County's budget to meet this year's projected services was just over \$700,000. As usual, it wasn't enough to

meet the demand for needed utilities, cooked meals, hot showers, or rent vouchers.

To cover our needs in 2007, the Council voted an additional \$100,000 into the Veterans Assistance fund budget. We also added \$25,000 for a study to examine what it will take to provide a permanent fix to the challenge of serving our local veterans. I'm confident we can do even more in this coming year.



Pierce County Council

930 Tacoma Ave. S., Room 1046 • Tacoma, WA 98402-2176



Councilmember
Roger Bush
Pierce County Council
District 3

November '07 Update

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tacoma WA
Permit No. 820

Protecting kids and families.

Two new county ordinances are designed to help protect kids and families. The first modifies the definition of adult bookstore to **require a visual screening of adult materials** to prevent minors from viewing such publications. The ordinance applies not only to convenience stores but conventional bookstores that sell adult publications.

A second new ordinance has been labeled SOAP, which stands for **Stay Out of Areas of Prostitution**.

The idea behind this new law is to ban prostitutes and their customers from designated areas. Specifically, the measure allows

sheriff deputies to arrest men and women who judges previously have ordered to stay out of the designated areas, even if they are not soliciting new customers or looking for prostitutes.

City jurisdictions - including Tacoma, Lakewood and Fife - have enacted similar ordinances and report up to 80 percent reductions in prostitution-related arrests and complaints. Although the new measure is only one tool in the fight to combat prostitution, the Sheriff's Department is looking forward to achieving similar results in the county.

I appreciate hearing from you because it allows me to do a better job of serving you. Please feel free to contact me anytime:

Phone 253-798-6626 or email rbush@co.pierce.wa.us



Pierce County

Telephone Help Lines

Senior Assistance:	253-798-4600
Health Department:	253-798-6500
Domestic Violence:	253-798-4166
Parks and Recreation:	253-798-4176
Illegal County Dumping:	253-798-4636

Pierce County Departments

General Information:	253-798-3200
Assessor/Treasurer:	253-798-6111
Auditor:	253-798-7427
County Council:	253-798-7777
County Executive:	253-798-7477
Prosecuting Attorney:	253-798-7792
PALS information (Planning and Land Services):	253-798-7200