



## *FINANCIAL TIMES*

*WA ST CONSERVATION  
COMMISSION*

*05/15/2014*

Welcome to the first issue of the WSCC Financial newsletter! We hope to bring you a monthly newsletter in order to provide you with updated information to better serve your needs. Each month we will focus on one or two items that we are receiving multiple questions on to provide better service to the districts.

### **Cost Share Rates**

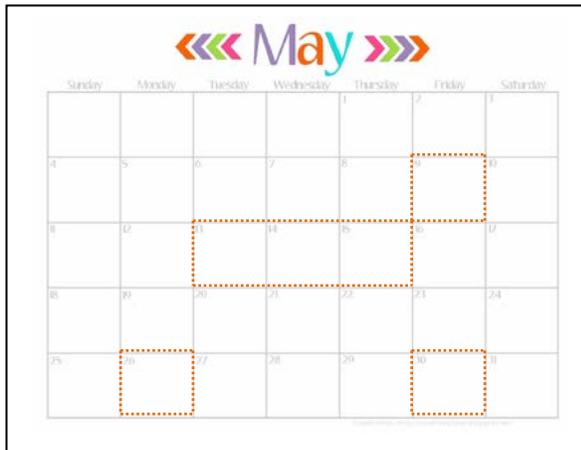
WSCC has given districts the authority to establish their own cost share rates per a board motion up to 100%. Once the board has approved the rate and sent it in to the Commission, this rate is to be applied to all cost share applications the district enters into. The financial staff cannot approve a cost share application for reimbursement that is above the rate the board approves.

That being said, the district does have the ability to change the cost share reimbursement rate midyear. To do this, the board must pass another motion to change the rate and resubmit it to WSCC. This must be done prior to entering into the cost share agreement with the landowner in order to ensure proper district policy is followed.

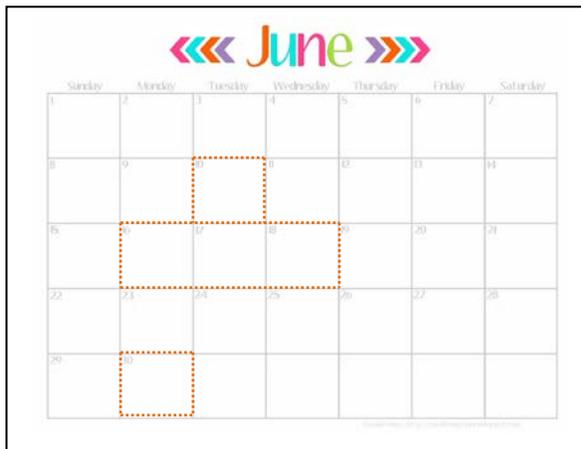
Please be advised that changing rates can leave the floodgates open to potential complaints. For example, if you give one landowner a 75% reimbursement rate for his project and then another landowner comes in for a similar project and is given a 100% reimbursement rate an issue could arise. This could create a public relations mess for the district as landowners can communicate and the issue of different rates can arise.

WSCC guidance for cost share rates would be to stay with the established rate for the entire fiscal year. If a district wishes to make changes, please wait until the next fiscal year. This is easier from a bookkeeping standpoint as well as a public relations one.

## Upcoming Important Dates



- May 9<sup>th</sup>: Monthly vouchers due
- May 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>: WSCC Commission meeting and strategic planning session, Wahkiakum
- May 26<sup>th</sup>: WSCC Office closed in observance of Memorial Day
- May 30<sup>th</sup>: Annual Report due to the Auditor's office
- May 30<sup>th</sup>: Updated Long Range and Annual plans due to WSCC office



- June 10<sup>th</sup>: Monthly vouchers due
- June 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>: WADE Conference, Leavenworth
- June 30<sup>th</sup>: Close of FY14

Click for the link to our calendar on our website: <http://scc.wa.gov/grants-finance/forms/>

## Reminders

### 20/21 Meeting Reimbursement

When requesting reimbursement for the 20/21 meetings, please voucher for the costs under a new grant labeled 20/21 and follow all of the normal vouchering procedures. Reimbursement will be made up to \$500 and the funds will be amended into the grant based on actual expenses. Please note only hotel, per diem and mileage will be reimbursed. Salaries are not eligible.

### Annual Report

The District's Annual Report needs to be sent electronically to the Auditor's office. The reports and schedules must be filed using SAO's online system. WSCC no longer requires a copy sent to our office as we will get the submittal list directly from the Auditor's office. Please note any late submittals will lead to an audit. The deadline for submittal is May 30, 2014.

## In The News

### Embezzler gets one year, three months in prison

BY JEREMY PAWLOSKI

Staff writer May 6, 2014

A judge sentenced a local woman to one year and three months in prison Tuesday for stealing over \$90,000 combined from a local equestrian group and a local government agency where she was formerly employed.



Robin Chase, 47, had earlier pleaded guilty to two counts of first-degree theft for stealing about \$13,000 from the Washington Association of High School Equestrian Teams; and about \$79,000 from her former employers at the Washington Association of County Officials, or WACO.

During Tuesday's sentencing hearing, Chase's attorney, Geoffrey Cross of Tacoma, pleaded for a work release sentence, noting that his client suffers from manic depression and stage 4 cancer.

In handing down the prison sentence Tuesday, Thurston County Superior Court Judge Anne Hirsch noted that there are many people who suffer from serious illnesses, but that does not cause them to go out and commit financial crimes.

Chase was charged with stealing from her former employers at the Washington Association of County Officials in 2012. Her thefts from that organization included about \$6,000 from the association's nonprofit scholarship fund, which is paid for by donations from county employees and elected officials.

Chase's theft from WACO was discovered by the Washington State Auditor's Office. The findings of that audit were released in 2012. Chase is responsible for an additional \$10,000 in restitution for the cost to state to perform the audit, Thurston County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Mark Thompson said.

Thompson said in court Tuesday that Chase's thefts allowed her to take "her daughter all up and down the coast to horse shows." He added that the thefts were perpetrated from a period covering about 2007 to 2012.

Beverly Matney, state chair of the Washington Association of High School Equestrian Teams, said in court Tuesday that Chase's thefts nearly crippled her organization, and affected children's ability to participate in equestrian events.

An audit found that Chase's unauthorized debit card transactions from the equestrian team association were used to purchase airline tickets on two occasions, for online testing services for her daughter and purchases from local retailers, court papers state.

Thompson said in court that he gave Chase about six months prior to sentencing to see if she could pay off more than the \$10,000 in restitution she has already paid. If Chase

## In The News (cont.)

paid a substantial amount of restitution, he said he was prepared to recommend work release, but that did not happen.

Thompson recommended a two-year prison sentence for Chase during Tuesday's sentencing hearing.

There was one sliver of good news during Tuesday's sentencing hearing - Monty Cobb, policy director for WACO, said his board had voted to give its half of the \$10,000 in restitution that Chase had paid to the equestrian group. Cobb said WACO hopes to recoup its losses when Chase pays her court-ordered restitution, but in the meantime, it wanted to help the equestrian organization.

Matney's eyes welled up with tears and she hugged Cobb after he made the announcement.

"We are so grateful," Matney told Cobb.

Thompson said he was impressed. He added that Chase's thefts greatly damaged the equestrian organization's ability to function.

"That was a wonderful compassionate gesture," Thompson said of Cobb's announcement.

*Jeremy Pawloski: 360-754-5445; jpawloski@theolympian.com*

Read more here: <http://www.theolympian.com/2014/05/06/3120156/embezzler-gets-one-year-three.html?sp=99/101/112/876/#storylink=cpy>

## Question of the Month

**Q ~ In the CPDS system, in the practice tab under the funding tab there is an “awarded amount” column. What do I put there?**

**A ~ Nothing! The financial staff will fill in this section once the funding is awarded to the district. This will allow us to sort the available projects to determine what funding is still needed.**

Also, when you identify the CPDS project name as completed, be sure to enter the completed date as well. This is another field we use to sort for available projects.

Please feel free to submit questions you would like answered for our next newsletter. Send all submissions to [cwoods@scc.wa.gov](mailto:cwoods@scc.wa.gov).

## Meet Your Financial Staff

You might have noticed recently the financial staff has been playing a bit of musical chairs with duties to try and fill in while some of our team members were out. We hope the level of service provided to the districts have had little interruption during this time. But alas; we now have a full financial staff back in action!

Our goal is to provide you with top notch service here within the financial section. We always strive to process grant vouchers within 3 business days and get your money back to the district as quickly and efficiently as possible. With that being said, we have more grants than we have ever had before with the districts. The financial staff has a total of 200 grants we manage for our 45 conservation districts monthly. To combat the growing needs, we have hired another full time financial staff team member bringing our total to four. This is the first time in over seven years we have had four dedicated financial staffers! Without further ado, please meet your WSCC Financial Staff.

### Debbie Becker

*Director of Budget, Grants and Accounting*

[dbecker@scc.wa.gov](mailto:dbecker@scc.wa.gov)

360.407.6211

- Oversight of:
  - WSCC Budget
  - WSCC Accounting
  - WSCC Grant Programs
- WSCC Human Resources
- WSCC Agency Operations
- WSCC Fiscal Notes



### Aquila Bernard

*Fiscal Analyst*

[abernard@scc.wa.gov](mailto:abernard@scc.wa.gov)

360.407.6205

- Grants:
  - Non Shellfish
  - TSP
- WSCC Agency Accounting
- WSCC Accounts Payable
- WSCC Accounts Receivable



## Meet Your Financial Staff (cont.)

### Karla Heinitz

Program Specialist

kheinitz@scc.wa.gov

360.407.6212

- Grants:
  - Shellfish
  - Crep CS
  - PIP
- WSCC Contracts
- Legislative Bill Tracking
- Fiscal Notes
- Livestock Program
- Cost Share Program Expert



### Melissa Livingston

Fiscal Analyst

mlivingston@scc.wa.gov

360.407.6200

- Grants:
  - Livestock TA
  - CREP TA
  - Engineering
- CPDS Help Desk
- WSCC Inventory
- WSCC Archiving
- Receipt Books



## Meet Your Financial Staff (cont.)

### Courtney Woods

Program Specialist

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360.407.6114

*Part Time – 7:30-12:30*

- Grants:
  - Irrigation Efficiencies
  - Category 1
  - Implementation
- WSCC Agency Accounting
- WSCC Accounts Payable
- WSCC Accounts Receivable



## Picture of the Month



*Congratulations to Aquila! She graduated from Saint Martin's University on May 10<sup>th</sup> with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance!*

Please feel free to submit pictures for our next newsletter. We love to showcase your hard work! Send all submissions to [cwoods@scc.wa.gov](mailto:cwoods@scc.wa.gov).