

Lambert proposes cost savings with new labor policy

In response to continuing challenge with the King County budget, Metropolitan King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert this week proposed policies that prioritize cost savings for labor, which is the largest expense category in King County's budget.

"Currently, our labor contracts are for terms up to six years, which results in county employees receiving raises during economic recessions when most citizens are forced to cut back," said Lambert. "With more than 80 percent of King County's labor force represented by unions, it is important to build flexibility and responsiveness into our labor contracts."

"Tough economic times call for a reasoned, logical approach to budgeting that focuses on finding savings rather than finding new money, especially in a time of recession," Councilmember Lambert added. "With these significant budget cuts throughout the past two years, we need to prioritize our labor policies in order to support our hard-working employees and continue to serve our citizens while reducing labor costs."

The legislation adds three requirements for King County's labor bargaining authority, which is vested in the Executive's Office by the King County Charter, the county's constitution:

Current policy requires a 2-percent minimum annual cost-of-living adjustment, regardless of whether the Consumer Price Index rises by that much. The proposed policy change lowers the minimum to zero percent while maintaining the maximum at the current 6 percent.

The motion requires new labor contracts to include a reopener clause in the event that county revenues are projected to remain flat or to decline in the next calendar year.

The proposal also outlines broader labor expenditure savings strategies during a recession, to include: No cost-of-living adjustment; Increase employee contributions for health care benefits; No step increases; Reductions in wages and salaries; Unpaid furlough days.

"An important objective of this labor policy is to minimize reductions in the level and quality of services to the public in times of declining revenue," Councilmember Lambert added. "Ultimately, this will help bring balance between labor and management staffing and resources, prevent more layoffs by saving on labor costs, and reduce the need to raise more tax revenue."

Safeway in Duvall remodels store

By Natalie Anderson

If you have happened to pull into the parking lot of the Duvall Safeway recently, you have probably noticed that the building is being repainted, but, as those familiar doors slide open, you have undoubtedly seen that a new paint job is not the only change under way.

"We are switching to a lifestyle system," explains manager Roger Jones.

A lifestyle system is one that focuses more on the comfort of the customer and making the shopping experience as easy as possible.

It seems as if almost everything is being enhanced and even a few new features are being added. Soon, Safeway will have a full service seafood counter, a full service butcher block meat case, and six self-checkouts are already in use.

Other areas in the store are being expanded to offer more. These areas

include the deli, the bakery, and the floral department. The produce section is also being expanded and will have more organic choices. After all of these changes, the remodeled store has still more to offer. The store will be adding 25 to 30 new union jobs.

The remodel has taken weeks and countless man-hours, but the job isn't done yet; it is expected to be finished sometime in March. Everything being done to the store, from its newly painted walls to its shiny new self-checkouts, can be credited to the town of Duvall.

"The people of Duvall have been so good to us," Roger says, "and we're glad to make these changes for them."

So, the next time you find yourself running low on milk, see for yourself all of the great changes being made at Safeway.

Letter to the Editor

"Operation Crayon"

My name is Abby Tumbleson and I am a student at Tolt Middle School. I am a junior member of the Star Guild which participates in fundraising in support of Seattle Children's Hospital.

I am collecting new packs of Crayola brand crayons for the Child Life Department. In 2005, Children's held their first "Operation Crayon" and collected over 500,000 packs of crayons. Each patient receives their own pack of crayons during their hospital stay. The supply is finally running out. I hope to collect at least 200 new packs for the hospital. If you would like to help, please drop off new packs of Crayola brand crayons at the drop boxes located around town from March 4th to March 18th.

I have drop Box locations at Duvall Ixtapa, EF Print & Copy Center and Northwest Art Center.



Local Yard & Garden

Our Pacific Northwest late winter weather has been mild, and our temperatures so warm, it has made these past few weeks feel like the beginning of Spring! If you have lived and gardened in the valley for very long, you will likely note that it is not wise to get a jump on Spring too soon! March can still bring cold weather, so be mindful when planting vegetable and bedding plants. Don't plant too early. Plan to cover and protect new starts from the cold.

Here are some good tasks you can accomplish while you wait for the weather to warm up:

1. Clean up garden beds, carefully weed, and make sure you mulch the newly weeded areas as soon as possible. We all have busy schedules and little time to spend in the yard. This is what I do when I have only 1 hr. a day to work. Weed for 45 minutes and mulch/compost the area you weeded the last 15 minutes. Mulching will discourage early spring weeds from resprouting.
2. Check your lawn for moss and purchase appropriate moss control products for the job. Plan to buy, rent or borrow a thatcher for cleaning the dead moss from the lawn. I find that neighbors who share the rental of the thatcher on a weekend afternoon get the job accomplished in half the time.
3. Sharpen hand pruners and loppers. Clean them with steel wool and a bit of oil. Replace parts where necessary.
4. Tune up lawn mower, replace or sharpen blades, change oil. You'll be happy you took the time when the lawn really starts growing!
5. Check your wheelbarrow tire and handles. Clean metal tubs with wire brush and spray rusted areas with a good rust preventative paint.
6. Inspect your rakes, shovels, forks and hand tools. Check your hoses and replace worn (ran over with the car) flat ends and washers where necessary.
7. Start pruning your fruit trees and shrubs, grapes, berry and bramble plants. Prune to remove all dead, diseased and broken limbs. Dormant season pruning (before the flowers and leaves emerge) is the best time to prune most fruit producing trees and shrubs.

This column is written by Liz Schwartz, our local garden expert at Duvall True Value Hardware.

My Local Computer Tech Guy



Should I upgrade to Windows 7?

When choosing whether or not to upgrade your operating system (or any application) the first decision to make is do you need to upgrade. Does the new program include features that would be beneficial to you or that you would like to use (sometimes having the newest software is reason enough). For a list of the features included in Windows 7 go to Microsoft's Windows 7 web site <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows7/products/home?os=nonwin7>. You may also consider whether or not your current operating system is adequate. Are you happy with what you are using? Another important factor is whether or not your hardware will run the new application. Microsoft has a free Windows 7 upgrade advisor <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/upgrade-advisor> that you can download and install to help determine whether or not your computer will work with Windows 7. Microsoft also includes a list hardware specifications <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/products/system-requirements> but I suggest exceeding those requirements in processor speed and RAM. While a slower computer will run Windows 7 you may not be happy with it. You do have the option of turning off some of Windows 7's graphical features to improve performance on slower systems. Also, the amount of RAM in your computer can usually be increased and doing so will often lead to better performance whether you upgrade or not. Finally, should you decide to upgrade you will want to be sure to back up all of your data before installing the new operating system.



Send your computer questions to:
ikata@yahoo.com.
(Please Include "Tech Guy" in subject line.)

For all of your IT needs please call
Ikata Computers at 425-408-2519.



Duvall-Carnation Police Blotter

Sun. Feb. 28, 10:43p.m. Duvall, 15100 block of 276 PL NE, Theft-From Mtr Vehicle-Misd, Citizen called to report a vehicle prowling which had occurred overnight. A window was smashed and items were taken. Police are investigating.

Sun. Feb. 28, 9:46a.m. Duvall, 26700 block of CHERRY VALLEY RD, Theft-From Mtr Vehicle-Misd, Citizen called to report his truck had been prowled within the last two hours and items were taken. Police are investigating.

Sat. Feb. 27, 10:20p.m. Duvall, 26500 block of NE 145 ST, Suspicious Circumstance, Residence said they observed a male running through their cul-de-sac. We contacted 3 juvenile males in the area who said they were playing "Fugitive."

Sat. Feb. 27, 10:19p.m. Duvall, 14000 block of MAIN ST NE, Theft of Other Property Attempt, Officer found two vehicles behind Safeway. occupants were loading pallets into their vehicles getting ready for an exciting Saturday night bonfire. Police informed them that taking things without permission was called theft. Saturday night ruined with possible theft charges coming their way.

Sat. Feb. 26, 10:21p.m. Duvall, NE BIG ROCK RD / NE 279, Traffic Accident/Injury, Single vehicle

accident where the driver lost control and took out several trees in the median on Big Rock road and damaged trees of a residence. Driver complained of head injury and was transported by aid. driver cited for negligent driving, 2nd degree.

Sat. Feb. 26, 1:01p.m. Carnation, 32000 block of E MORRISON ST, Welfare Check, After a minor car accident at a residence. A daughter wanted Officer's to try and contact her mother to make sure she was ok. Officers were unable to locate mother. Daughter did not want contact from officers and left the scene. She did not answer her phone when officer attempted to contact her.

Tue. Feb. 23, 7:13p.m. Carnation, 4500 block of TOLT AVE, Disorderly Conduct, Several intoxicated patrons of a local eating establishment got into an argument over the appropriate way to speak to women. Heated discussions turned into shoving. Police arrived and intervened.

Tue. Feb. 23, 2:51p.m. Carnation, 4800 block of TOLT AVE, Harassment, Citizen reported she is being harassed at her work place by a patron who seems to have mental health issues. She requested that police document the incidents. Officer investigated the matter and advised of how to apply for an anti-harassment order.