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Contact: Al Scalf  
Director, Department of Community Development  
Jefferson County  
(360) 379-4450 or [ascalf@co.jefferson.wa.us](mailto:ascalf@co.jefferson.wa.us)

## **Governor Awards Jefferson County for “Smart Community” Accomplishment**

**Port Townsend, WA**— Governor Christine Gregoire, at a reception last evening in Tacoma, honored Jefferson County for creating a livable community, one of six statewide winners from a slate of 24 nominees. The event also marked the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the state’s Growth Management Act.

“Washington has an enviable quality of life that keeps our state competitive in the global marketplace,” said Governor Gregoire. “I am pleased to recognize the important work our communities and their partners are doing to keep Washington a great place to live.”

Jefferson County won the award for “Supporting Agriculture while Protecting Fish and Wildlife Habitat,” culminating with Agricultural Lands legislation in 2004 which provided for rezoning of properties as well as increasing opportunities for accessory uses on designated agricultural lands. Jefferson County was one of the first jurisdictions in Washington State to provide the agricultural community with support for operating farms in line with an amendment made to the Growth Management Act. Also highlighted was a plan of agricultural Best Management Practices put together by Chimacum farmers with help from the Conservation District.

“We were deeply honored to receive this award and want to acknowledge all the hard work numerous partners contributed, including the County Planning Commission and individual farmers that created this positive outcome,” said Al Scalf, Director for the County’s Department of Community Development. “Of the six award winners, we had the largest number of partners to help make this happen.”

Starting in 2002, Jefferson County launched a multi year effort to maintain and support ongoing and existing agriculture by enacting a local ordinance in support of plans to allow for accessory uses to agriculture while at the same time protecting fish and wildlife habitat. It was a true balance struck between economic and ecologic values, the “right to farm” consistent with concerns to maintain fish and wildlife habitat.

One of the judges commented that the County “worked with all stakeholders for a workable solution—not an easy task.” Another judge commented that this agricultural legislation “should be used by other counties.”

"As the tale goes, a decade or so ago Jefferson County was perceived around the state as a growth management renegade," quipped DCD Senior Planner Josh Peters and lead for the agriculture project. "Now we're considered something of a model on a number of community planning fronts."

Other winners included the cities of Bainbridge Island, Redmond, Bremerton and Woodinville, along with the King County Housing Authority. Washington is often cited as having the best and most comprehensive planning laws in the nation. Twenty-nine of Washington’s 39 counties now carry out comprehensive plans to better prepare for growth and protect the environment.

For more information, visit [www.co.jefferson.wa.us/commdevelopment](http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/commdevelopment) and [www.governor.wa.gov](http://www.governor.wa.gov).

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