

# EMPLOYEE NEWS



Island County Employee Newsletter

September 2025 • Vol. 2, No. 2



## Thunder Run

DEM exercise prepares Island County for a potential disaster disrupting transportation routes ... Page 6

## HIGHLIGHTS

Budget process underway  
Page 2

Employee Updates &  
Milestones  
Page 3

Employee Spotlight - Jeff  
Douglas  
Page 4

Benefits Spotlight - MetLife  
Legal Plan  
Page 5

## Employee Kudos

Probation Officer **Wendy Walter** has been recognized for her outstanding commitment to the job and community. "When confronted with obstacles, Walter looked for and found solutions," said Island County Municipal Court Judge Ron Costeck. "She recognized the gap between court-ordered rehabilitative treatment and the availability of services provided on Whidbey Island. Understanding the value of domestic treatment to the individual and community, and the obstacles presented by a lack of treatment agencies and the prohibitive cost of treatment, she came up with a plan and solution."



A Municipal Court probation officer supervises individuals placed on probation by the court. They monitor compliance with court-ordered conditions, assess offender needs, and help individuals access resources to reduce recidivism and promote law-abiding behavior.



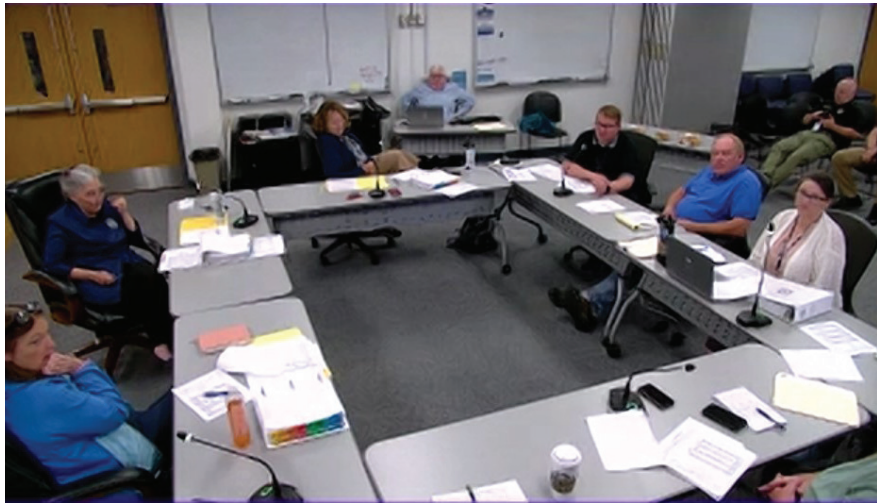
# Budget Process Underway

Due to slowdowns and reductions in tax and grant revenue, we face a challenging 2026 Budget, said **Island County Commissioner Melanie Bacon**, this year's Board of Commissioners chair.

"We won't be able to add some of the new positions or programs we might have liked to invest in to improve our service delivery," Bacon said.

"At the same time, we face a couple of critical large new expenditures, replacement of the electrical system in the Annex and a new jail, and at least some of the initial costs for both will be borne by revenues we would have preferred to spend elsewhere," she said.

"The main focus for the Board of County Commissioners in this budget is to ensure that our regular employees have the personal and professional resources they need to continue providing the quality service our public receives today, and we are scrutinizing every line in the budget to make sure that happen."



## Budget Steps

**Step 1:** Budget Director Issues Budget call.

**Step 2:** Estimates Filed with Budget Director.

**Step 3:** Budget Director Prepares Preliminary Budget.

**Step 4:** Budget Director Files Preliminary Budget with Commissioners

**Step 5:** Commissioners hold Budget Workshops.

**Step 6:** Commissioners File Public Notice of Budget Hearings.

**Step 7:** Public Hearing on Property Tax Revenues.

**Step 8:** Public Hearing on Budget.

**Step 9:** Commissioners Adopt Budget.

**Step 10:** Commissioners Certify Levy to Assessor.

**Step 11:** Submit Adopted Budget to State Auditor's Office.

## Role of the Budget Director

County Budget Director **Susan Geiger** oversees the development, presentation and publication of the county budget. This includes financial forecasting.

Geiger is also responsible for ensuring that the Island County Board of Commissioners has access to timely and accurate financial information in order for them to make the best financial decisions possible.



## REVIEW YOUR DEFERRED COMPENSATION ACCOUNT TUESDAY SEPT. 9

Schedule to meet with Empower representative Mark Knutson in Coupeville or Oak Harbor, or via Zoom for Camano Island.

**CONTACT:**

[mknutson@osaicwealth.com](mailto:mknutson@osaicwealth.com) 360-319-5240



# Employee Updates



## Staff Changes

### NEW HIRES

| <u>Name</u>      | <u>Department</u>    | <u>Position</u>                                 |
|------------------|----------------------|---|
| Nick Hathaway    | Sheriff's Office     | Patrol Deputy                                   |
| Austin Proffitt  | Sheriff's Office     | Patrol Deputy                                   |
| Ashley Case      | Public Health        | Environmental Health Technician                 |
| Damian Cutaia    | IT                   | IT Technician                                   |
| Talia Sturkie    | Prosecuting Attorney | Deputy Prosecuting Attorney                     |
| Mikayla Bell     | Assessor             | Residential Appraiser I                         |
| Mari Doerner     | District Court       | Judge Pro Tempore                               |
| Devon Machuta    | Prosecuting Attorney | Receptionist/Paralegal                          |
| Cheryl Orcutt    | Human Services       | Recovery Navigator                              |
| Ashleigh Eastham | Human Services       | Recovery Navigator                              |
| Joshua Town      | Public Works         | Laborer I                                       |
| Heather Gibson   | Public Works         | Truck Driver II                                 |
| Amanda Alger     | Prosecuting Attorney | Victim/Witness Coordinator                      |
| Elise Adams      | Public Health        | EHSIII - Marine Resources Committee Coordinator |
| Tianna Langdon   | Public Works         | Laborer I                                       |
| Holly Bishop     | Treasurer            | Deputy Treasurer Excise/Mortgage                |
| Mike Podowski    | Planning             | Long Range Planner                              |
| Steve Hanson     | Public Works         | Solid Waste Attendant I                         |
| Kevin McCrae     | Prosecuting Attorney | Chief Civil DPA                                 |
| Scott Sollars    | Public Works         | Solid Waste Attendant I                         |

### POSITION CHANGES

|                        |                  |                          |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Bret Hughes            | Treasurer        | Accountant               |
| Michelle Sanchez-Roman | Planning         | Permit Technician II     |
| Gary Lester            | Public Works     | Solid Waste Attendant II |
| Anna Williams          | Public Works     | Foreman I                |
| Mayta Quezon           | Treasurer        | Senior Excise Tax Deputy |
| Robert Mirabal         | Sheriff's Office | Lieutenant               |
| Scott Fortin           | Sheriff's Office | Sergeant                 |
| Tim Davison            | Sheriff's Office | Detective                |
| Claire Commons         | Human Services   | SUDP Supervisor          |
| Gary Weatherford       | Public Works     | Truck Driver I           |
| Ben Fabrizio           | Public Works     | Laborer II               |
| Sage Sharp             | Sheriff's Office | Corrections Deputy       |
| Deanna Neal            | Public Works     | Solid Waste Attendant II |
| Brent Durley           | Sheriff's Office | Detective                |

## Retirements

| <u>Name</u>   | <u>Department</u>  |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Dave Branch   | Public Works       |
| Joe Uhrich    | Sheriff's Office   |
| Janice Wilson | Treasurer's Office |
| Nick Tuttle   | Public Works       |
| Adam Gonzalez |                    |
| McFetridge    | Sheriff's Office   |

## Milestones

### 35 Years

|            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| Beth Plush | Human Services |
|------------|----------------|

### 30 Years

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| Jan Van Muyden | Public Works |
|----------------|--------------|

### 25 Years

|               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Michael Beech | Planning Dept.     |
| Dawn Thomas   | Treasurer's Office |

|             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| Scott Fague | Sheriff's Office |
|-------------|------------------|

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Bobbi Rodgers | District Court |
|---------------|----------------|

### 20 Years

|                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Lisa McDavid      | Public Works |
| Edison Manglicmot | Public Works |

### 10 Years

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Christopher Peabody | Sheriff's Office    |
| Daniel Burns        | Sheriff's Office    |
| Kyle Peters         | Public Works        |
| Brian Levesque      | Public Works        |
| Keith Lucero        | Facilities          |
| Tayme Rose-Leavitt  | Prosecutor's Office |

### 5 Years

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Jeff Douglas     | Budget & Risk    |
| Courtney Lossiah | Human Services   |
| Jeffrey Lang     | Superior Court   |
| Bethany Wilcox   | Sheriff's Office |
| Scott Works      | Auditor's Office |
| Lisa Padalino    | HR/GSA           |



# Employee Spotlight Q&A

## **Jeff Douglas, Assistant Risk Manager & Safety Coordinator** *for Island County Budget & Risk Management*

### **1. How long have you worked for Island County?**

My wife and I were born and raised in the Southern Arizona sun and heat, so we relocated our family to Whidbey Island for the cooler weather in June of 2020. I started my career with Island County shortly after in August of 2020 as an Appraiser Trainee in the Assessor's Office.

### **2. What is your job with the county, and what does it entail?**

In the role of Assistant Risk Manager, I coordinate the handling of the Tort Claim Process between Risk Management, claimants, County departments and the Washington Counties Risk Pool. I assist the Risk Manager by verifying, investigating, and processing claims against the County. On behalf of Island County departments, I oversee all submitted claims of property damage to County owned property.

As the Safety Coordinator I facilitate the Island County Employee Safety Committee meetings and manage the County's Safety Program. I also analyze data, make recommendations regarding mitigating potential safety hazards, perform safety inspections of County facilities, and prepare an Annual Safety Report for the BOCC.

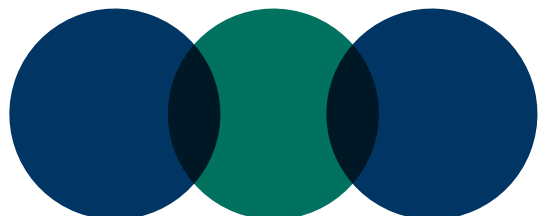
### **3. Who/what inspired you to pursue this career?**

I had no idea that I would land in this line of work. After starting with the Assessor's Office, I was asked to join the

See **DOUGLAS**, continued on page 8



**“**  
*On behalf of Island County departments, I oversee all submitted claims of property damage to County-owned property.*  
**”**



# Benefits Spotlight: MetLife Legal Plan

With the MetLife Legal Plan, you have unlimited access to 18,000+ experienced attorneys to help with a variety of legal issues both simple and complex. From traffic violations, buying or selling a home, digital estate planning and online tax preparation and filing, the plans address legal issues that occur at every stage of your life. For \$20.75 per month, the legal plan provides unparalleled value. For example, the average cost of an attorney is \$391 per hour and preparing and filing your taxes online can cost \$168.

|                               |  |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Money Matters</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debt Collection Defense</li> <li>• Identity Management Services<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• Identity Theft Defense</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiations with Creditors</li> <li>• Personal Bankruptcy</li> <li>• Promissory Notes</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax Audit Representation</li> <li>• Tax Collection Defense</li> <li>• <b>Tax Preparation and Filing</b><sup>10</sup></li> </ul>                          |
| <b>Home &amp; Real Estate</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundary or Title Disputes</li> <li>• Deeds</li> <li>• Eviction Defense</li> <li>• Foreclosure</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Equity Loans</li> <li>• Mortgages</li> <li>• Property Tax Assessments</li> <li>• Refinancing of Home</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sale or Purchase of Home</li> <li>• Security Deposit Assistance</li> <li>• Tenant Negotiations</li> <li>• Zoning Applications</li> </ul>                 |
| <b>Estate Planning</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codicils</li> <li>• Complex Wills</li> <li>• Healthcare Proxies</li> <li>• Living Wills</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powers of Attorney (Healthcare, Financial, Childcare, Immigration)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revocable &amp; Irrevocable Trusts</li> <li>• Simple Wills</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Family &amp; Personal</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption</li> <li>• Affidavits</li> <li>• Conservatorship</li> <li>• Demand Letters</li> <li>• Garnishment Defense</li> <li>• Guardianship</li> <li>• Immigration Assistance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juvenile Court Defense, Including Criminal Matters</li> <li>• Name Change</li> <li>• Parental Responsibility Matters</li> <li>• Personal Property Protection</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prenuptial Agreement</li> <li>• Protection from Domestic Violence</li> <li>• Review of ANY Personal Legal Document</li> <li>• School Hearings</li> </ul> |
| <b>Civil Lawsuits</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative Hearings</li> <li>• Civil Litigation Defense</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disputes Over Consumer Goods &amp; Services</li> <li>• Incompetency Defense</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pet Liabilities</li> <li>• Small Claims Assistance</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Elder-Care Issues</b>      | Consultation & Document Review for your parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeds</li> <li>• Leases</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicaid</li> <li>• Medicare</li> <li>• Notes</li> <li>• Nursing Home Agreements</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powers of Attorney</li> <li>• Prescription Plans</li> <li>• Wills</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Vehicle &amp; Driving</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defense of Traffic Tickets<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Driving Privileges Restoration</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• License Suspension Due to DUI</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repossession</li> </ul>  |

## How to use the Legal Plan

### 1. Find an attorney

Create an account at [members.legalplans.com](https://members.legalplans.com) to see your coverages and select an attorney for your legal matter. Or, give MetLife a call at 800-821-6400 for assistance.

### 2. Make an appointment

Call the attorney you select and schedule a time to talk or meet.

### 3. That's it!

There are no co-pays, deductibles or claim forms when you use a network attorney for a covered matter.

To learn more about this plan, view MetLife's attorney network or grant your dependents access, create an account at [members.legalplans.com](https://members.legalplans.com) or call 800-821-6400 Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (ET). Your account will also give you access to our self-help document library to complete simple legal forms. The forms are available to you regardless of enrollment.

For additional information about this employee benefit and others, contact Island County Human Resources Specialist Joelle Birchmeier at [J.Birchmeier@island-countywa.gov](mailto:J.Birchmeier@island-countywa.gov) or 360-240-5586.



# Island County Department of Emergency Management

# Thunder Run 2025



## Exercise Offers Practice in Event Island Must Rely on Airplanes for Supplies

If Whidbey Island were to be hit by a major natural disaster such as an earthquake, the only means of delivering resources may be by airplane.

Practicing for the possibility that the island could be cut off from the mainland during a disaster, in June the Island County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) took part in “Thunder Run.”

Thunder Run is a large-scale emergency response exercise coordinated by the Emergency Volunteer Air Corps. Using general aviation, volunteers transport food supplies purchased through donations and deliver them to food banks, including on Whidbey, while simulating disaster relief missions.

Food was flown from the Walla Walla and Bellingham International Airport hubs to locations across the state.

Thunder Run is a significant, multi-location, and historically multi-state exercise, said Island County DEM Deputy Director **Eric Brooks**.

Island County’s DEM works each year with Disaster Air Response Teams (DART), which is comprised of pilots who volunteer to help the community in the event of a disaster. At Whidbey Airpark, DEM team members documented the planes and what each one is carried. DART pilots and Island County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) ground crews practiced the handling of critical supplies such as food, water, medicine and other items essentials needed during a catastrophic event.

The goal of the operation is to refine the West Coast General Aviation Response Plan, explained Brooks.

Establishing and operating a Community Point of Distri-



bution were volunteers from CERT, the Island County Auxiliary Communication Service -- a group of ham radio operators who provide emergency communication support for the county -- and the Island County Medical Reserve Corps.

In addition to hams in Island County, radio operators in Skagit, Jefferson, Whatcom and Clallam counties and in Kendall communicated with the Bellingham International Airport hub regarding that airport’s load ability and whether more planes were needed and determining the availability of planes. Stations at Float Haven, on Lake Whatcom, and at Point Roberts communicated about food drops by seaplane, and a station for helicopter drops at the airstrip in Kendall.

By transporting live products, we provide immediate assistance and refine our skills in using General Aviation effectively-when it truly matters, and lives are on the line.





# Public Works Invites Camano Residents to Take Part in Roundabout Discussion

On Aug. 18, Island County Public Works held a community meeting on Camano that drew nearly 80 people interested in learning about plans for two roundabouts on the island.

The meeting, featuring exhibits and staff members prepared to answer questions, was held at the county annex building on Camano Island. The goal was to gather thoughts and ideas to support the design process, according to **Mohammed Al Saffar**, project engineer for Island County Public Works.

The roundabouts are proposed for the intersections of East Camano Drive/East Cross Island Road and East Camano Drive/McElroy Drive. Construction is expected to be completed in 2027 and 2028, respectively.

Public Works staff involved in the project include the Engineering



Division working with consultants from Reid Middleton and KPFF, Al Saffar said.

Discussed during the open house were movement of large construc-

tion, fire and emergency responders, and delivery trucks, as well what the turns into shopping center and exiting the shopping center would look like, said Al Saffar.





#### **DOUGLAS**, continued from page 4

Employee Safety Committee. When the opportunity to apply for the position of Assistant Risk Manager & Safety Coordinator I was excited at the opportunity and applied.

#### **4. What advice would you give someone who is starting their career in this field?**

Be confident in yourself to make challenging decisions that not everyone will always agree with. Trusting your gut and following your instincts while looking at the totality of the situation will help keep you on course. Make sure you have all the information needed to make a decision and avoid jumping to an early conclusion.

#### **5. What are your favorite hobbies or interests outside of work?**

I train in Jiu Jitsu numerous times a week at

Bold Spirit Jiu-Jitsu Academy in Oak Harbor. I enjoy the sport because it has helped improve my health, strength, flexibility, mobility, and the friendships gained are amazing. Recently I began rucking, which is walking with weight on your back. My normal trek includes a 4 mile loop around my neighborhood with a 35 pound pack a couple of times a week.

#### **6. What is something about you that most people don't know**

This is a second career for me. I retired from law enforcement in 2020. We have three French Bulldogs at home. I call them the three stooges because they entertain the neighborhood by barking at everyone that passes by when the front door is open.

- Have a recommendation for a county employee to feature in the Employee News? Email suggestions to [communications@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:communications@islandcountywa.gov).

## Share Your Feedback

The Employee News is about you, those providing invaluable services to the public. Whether your work is behind the scenes or on the front line, this newsletter is about sharing your accomplishments, milestones and events. Your story tips and suggestions are crucial to telling the Island County story.



Designed & Edited  
by Keven Graves



Desk: 360-240-5585  
Cell 360-682-8085



Communications @  
[islandcountywa.gov](mailto:communications@islandcountywa.gov)





# Safety Committee

If you have a safety concern, contact any of the Island County Employee Safety Committee members listed below:

## Elected Representatives and Appointed Members

- **Kayla Perez**, 2025 Employee Safety Committee Chair, 360-678-7853
- **Jeff Douglas**, Safety Coordinator, jdouglas@islandcountywa.gov, Office: 360-679-7373, Cell: 360-322-4493
- **Vacant**  
Alternate – **Magen Gregory**, Magen.Gregory@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7870
- **Joelle Birchmeier**, Human Resources, J.Birchmeier@islandcountywa.gov, 360-240-5586  
Alternate – **Lindsey Hylton**, LC.Hylton@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7991
- **John Becker**, DEM, J.Becker@islandcountywa.gov, 360-679-7370  
Alternate - **Rachel Schwinden**, DEM, R.Schwinden@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-2305

## Administration Building, 1st Floor

- **Amanda Nesheim**, Administration, ANesheim@islandcountywa.gov, 360-240-5540  
Alternate - VACANT

## Administration Building, 2nd Floor

- **Kayla Perez**, Assessor, K.Perez@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7853  
Alternate – **Amber Ludemann**, Assessor, A.Ludemann@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7851

## Camano Administration Building

- **Beth Becker**, Camano Island Facilities, B.Becker@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-8252  
Alternate - **Hanna McBane**, Camano Island Planning, H.McBane@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-8245

## Health Services

- **Mason Parizo**, M.Parizo@islandcountywa.gov,

Alternate - **Paul Shimada**, P.Shimada@islandcountywa.gov, 360-499-4416

## Human Services

- **Mike Etzell**, MikeEt@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7883  
Alternate - **Beth Plush**, BethP@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7882

## Juvenile Detention Center

- **Diana Guernsey**, d.guernsey@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7981  
Alternate - VACANT

## Planning

- **Kevin Bloomfield**, K.Bloomfield@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-8262  
Alternate - **Zach Spooner**, Z.Spooner@islandcountywa.gov, 360-679-7339

## Public Works - Administration

- **Diane Haddon**, d.haddon@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7976  
Alternate – **Anne Nysether**, a.nysether@islandcountywa.gov, 360-678-7979

## Public Works - Parks

- **Morgan Payne**, m.payne@islandcountywa.gov  
Alternate – **Jan Van Muyden**, JanV@islandcountywa.gov, 360-679-7335

## Public Works – Roads

- **Anna Williams**, a.williams@islandcountywa.gov  
Alternate – **Matt Huss**, m.huss@islandcountywa.gov, 7861

## Public Works - Solid Waste

- **John Vance**, j.vance@islandcountywa.gov, 8215  
Alternate - **Glenn Brinkerhoff**, g.brinkerhoff@islandcountywa.gov

## Vacant Position

- Law & Justice Building, Superior Court