

**Date: August 2, 2005****Contact: Jeff Rasmussen at****(360) 577-3020 or (360) 431-1001****Meth Tax Ballot Measure; 0.2% Local Sales and Use Tax****Dedicated to Attack Problems of Drug Abuse and  
Drug-Related Crimes**

The Board of Cowlitz County Commissioners took action at a public hearing this evening, August 2, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. to place a proposition asking voters to authorize a 0.2% local sales and use tax on the September 20, 2005 primary ballot. The measure, which includes an 8-year sunset clause and exemptions from groceries, medical services, and automobile sales and leases, will allow for 100% of the proceeds to be shared by Cowlitz County and the cities of Castle Rock, Kalama, Kelso, Longview and Woodland.

The Board of Cowlitz County Commissioners received and reviewed the submittals of the Cowlitz County Meth Initiative Planning Committee, the Cowlitz Meth Action Team (CMAT), the Cowlitz County Sheriff and City Police Chiefs Association, and the input of Cowlitz County citizens through a process that started in March 2005. To wrap up the Plan's input process, the Commissioners recently finished a series of 13 public forums held around the county and an additional 40 presentations at service clubs and various organizations. The tax would add \$0.02 on each \$10.00 purchase that would equate to approximately \$25.00 per person yearly. The tax increase would raise a total of about \$2.3 million per year to attack problems of drug abuse and drug-related crimes.

"We've listened and we have acted. The result will be up to the citizens of Cowlitz County and their quest for a more peaceful environment," said Commissioner Kathleen Johnson.

The Board of Cowlitz County Commissioners spending plan (attached) includes portions of the County Sheriff and City Police Chief's proposed Street-Level Enforcement Team at a cost of \$1 million dollars. The team includes 9 new police officers representing the county and the cities of Kelso, Longview and Woodland, a deputy prosecuting attorney and 3 clerks dedicated to the courts and police. The plan also includes \$440,000 annually to fund drug treatment programs and \$550,000 in drug education and prevention programs. The second year of the plan shifts \$100,000 from the Criminal Justice section to Education and Prevention.

Chairman of the Board Jeff Rasmussen says, "If the tax increase is passed, we'll have a law enforcement team ready, new drug treatment programs and new education and prevention programs. We can't fight this without all three program areas."

**Cowlitz County  
Meth Initiative Plan**

<b>Section 1. Criminal Justice</b>		<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>A. Jail Beds for City Prisoners</b>	4,285 additional Jail Bed Days	\$270,000	\$270,000
<b>B. Sheriff &amp; Police Chief's Proposal</b>	(9) Law Enforcement Officers, (1) Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, (1) Clerk - Law Enforcement Records Specialist, (1) Deputy County Court Clerk, and (1) Clerk - Clerical Support	\$1,068,000	\$968,000

<b>Sub Total - Criminal Justice</b>	–	<b>\$1,338,000</b>	<b>\$1,238,000</b>
<b>Section 2. Treatment</b>			
<b>A. Enhanced Mandatory Drug Testing and Treatment Services (inc. Engagement) for Criminal Defendants</b>	Create Family Dependency Court and Expand Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts	\$240,000	\$240,000
<b>B. Adult and Juvenile Voluntary Intensive Outpatient Treatment (inc. Engagement) and Detox Services</b>	Services only available to those showing proof of County residency of at least 6 months	\$200,000	\$200,000
<b>Sub Total - Treatment</b>	–	<b>\$440,000</b>	<b>\$440,000</b>
<b>Section 3. Education &amp; Prevention</b>			
<b>A. Prevention, Intervention, Out-of-School, and At-Risk Programs</b>	Programs to be developed in coordination and collaboration with schools and community-based organizations.	\$400,000	\$500,000
<b>B. Cowlitz Meth Action Team (CMAT)</b>	Coordinator, Contracted Grant Writing Services and Meth Watch Program	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>Sub Total - Education &amp; Prevention</b>	–	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$650,000</b>
<b>Section 4. Accountability</b>			
<b>A. Citizens Oversight Committee &amp; Performance Audit and Outcome Measurement</b>		\$10,500	\$10,500
<b>Sub Total - Accountability</b>	–	<b>\$10,500</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>
<b>Total</b>	–	<b>\$2,338,500</b>	<b>\$2,338,500</b>
<b>Funds Available</b>		<b>\$2,340,000</b>	<b>\$2,340,000</b>