Focus on Farming Conference scheduled for Nov. 15

For the ninth consecutive year, Snohomish County will host its nationally recognized Focus on Farming Conference with more than 500 participants expected.

The conference, scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 15, will again be held at the Comcast Arena in Everett, including a 17,000-square-foot trade show, offering farmers a look at the latest equipment models, samples and demonstrations.

With the theme “Feeding Our Future,” the one-day conference takes into consideration all types of farming, whether organic or conventional, livestock or row crops, large or small.

“Providing a forum for farmers to exchange ideas, learn new methods and find better ways to do business is a must to keeping agriculture alive, not just in Snohomish County but across the nation,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, who launched the first conference at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe with a host of local farmers.

“Quality education to sustain current farmers and attract new farmers to our region is a critical component in securing the next generation’s local food supply,” he said. “What started out locally has grown to become an opportunity for every farmer who wants to participate.”

With an added track this year, participants have a chance to focus on one of seven areas – specialty crops, livestock, nursery/greenhouse, business of farming/marketing, local grains; new/beginning farmers; small equipment – or pick from among all the sessions.

Keynote speakers will be interspersed throughout the day and include Colin Archipley of Archi’s Acres, which offers combat veterans meaningful training and employment in crop production; chef Ann Cooper, a celebrated author, chef, educator and enduring advocate for better food for children in local schools; and Joe Rogoff, Whole Foods Market Pacific Northwest Regional president.

Focus on Farming wouldn’t be what it is today without its gourmet lunch prepared by local chefs with local products. This year will be no different. The evening again ends with a wine-and-cheese tasting offering local fares.
Sponsorships are available as is space to exhibit in the trade show. For more information or to register for the conference, click here.

FAA awards county $5.3 million for Paine Field work

Snohomish County has been awarded a $5.3 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) Airport Improvement Program to rebuild part of the general aviation runway at Paine Field.

This project is necessary to meet FAA design standards and has been identified as a top priority for the county airport. FAA grants are an important source of funding to maintain the airport, which has a $14 billion contribution to the state economy. Snohomish County has received nearly $100 million in FAA grants for Paine Field during the past 50 years.

“We appreciate the support we receive from the FAA and our Congressional delegates for these grant awards,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. “Continued improvements at the airport are critical to the ever-growing aerospace industry that calls Paine Field home.”

The grant provides 90 percent of the funding for the project to upgrade runway 16L-34R, which was constructed 25 years ago and is in need of repairs to meet FAA standards. Runway 16L-34R is the 3,000-foot runway used by general aviation aircraft at Paine Field. More than 650 of these small aircraft are based at the airport.

A portion of the perimeter road system also will be replaced to protect the approach slope to the runway. The actual construction will occur during the summer of 2013.

Reid Middleton Inc. of Everett is the engineering consultant for design and management of the project. IMCO Construction from Bellingham was awarded the contract for construction, which is expected to take about three months.

Public input sought on affordable housing needs

Snohomish County invites residents to provide input on local community needs for affordable housing, public facilities, infrastructure and service projects to be funded with federal grant funds for 2013.

Snohomish County, in cooperation with 19 cities and towns within the county, receives approximately $5 million in federal funds each year under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Shelter Grant programs. The grant funds support local affordable housing, public facility, infrastructure, and service projects that benefit low-to-moderate income people and neighborhoods in Snohomish County.
The use of these grant funds is guided by a five-year 2010-2014 plan, which establishes goals based on the community’s needs.

Each year, Snohomish County, as lead agency of the consortium, is required to develop an Annual Action Plan for use of these funds. The 2013 Annual Action Plan will cover the period between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014.

Two meetings to provide information and receive input are scheduled for Thursday, October 18. The meetings will be held in Public Meeting Room 1 of the Robert J. Drewel Building, 3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett. The first meeting is at 9:30 a.m., and the second meeting is at 6 p.m.

Snohomish County also will accept written comments. Comments can be sent Sue Tracy at sue.tracy@snoco.org or Snohomish County Human Services Department – OHCD, 3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S 305, Everett, WA 98201.

County solicits applications for development funds

Snohomish County is accepting applications for affordable housing, public facility and infrastructure projects from nonprofit organizations, for-profit developers and government agencies.

An estimated $3.5 million in federal and local grant funds is anticipated to be available for the 2013 program year, which begins July 1, 2013. Projects must benefit low- and moderate-income people or neighborhoods in Snohomish County.

Details of eligibility and other program requirements are included in the application materials. Applications must be completed and returned to the Snohomish County Human Services Department by 5 p.m. on Friday, October 12, 2012. Incomplete applications or applications received after that date and time will not be considered.

Applications are available by clicking here. For additional information, contact Dean Weitenhagen, the county’s supervisor for Housing and Community Development, at dean.weitenhagen@snoco.org or 425-388-3267.

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If you would like to send me your comments and feedback, or if you would like to unsubscribe, simply reply to this message.

You may also contact me directly by phone at 425.388.3460.