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GRADUATION



PHOTO BY JULIE KEEFFE

Students from Chief Sealth High School celebrate at their graduation ceremony Saturday, June 16, at Memorial Stadium.

Tsunami Debris Danger

Governor: federal help needed with Japanese flotsam

By Rachel La Corte
The Associated Press

OCEAN SHORES, Wash. (AP) — Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire announced Monday a state plan to address tsunami debris that reaches the state's coast from Japan but stressed that federal help is needed.

"We don't have the resources at the state level to do what we're going to have to do here," she said at a news conference at a beachside hotel in Ocean Shores.

Gregoire said she and other western states have reached out to the federal government letting officials know that they will be seeking financial assistance, but so far have not received a response. She said the state is working with U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell in trying to secure funds.

Gregoire noted that the Department of Ecology has been approved to use \$100,000 from its litter cleanup account for tsunami debris removal. However, a "steady dribble" of tsunami debris is expected over the next few years that will require more money, though she said the cost of the cleanup is unknown.

"We are prepared to do whatever it takes to keep our beaches and our coastal communities clean and safe," she said.

Gregoire announced a "Clean Shoreline Initiative" to be led by state's top emergency management leader Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, and to include the state Department of Health, Ecology and other agencies.

"Everyone will be part of the solution," Lowenberg said.

Gregoire said the debris is not yet at a level where she needs to call out the National Guard or seek money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"We really don't know what to expect right now," she said. "I can't declare an emergency until I actually have one on my hands."

Public Defenders Overworked

State Supreme Court sets news standards for indigents' attorneys

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — For the first time, Washington's Supreme Court is setting limits on the number of cases that public defenders can handle — an effort to improve the quality of legal representation for some of the 200,000 poor people prosecuted in the state every year, but one that could increase costs to local governments at a time of tight budgets.

By a vote of 7-2, the justices

said lawyers who represent indigent defendants generally should handle no more than 150 felony cases per year or 300 to 400 misdemeanor cases, and even fewer when the cases are complex. The caseload standards will take effect in September 2013 to avoid imminent hits to local budgets, Chief Justice Barbara Madsen said in announcing them Friday.

"Innocent people are convicted if they don't have an adequate defense," said Joanne Moore, director of the state's

Office of Public Defense. "There's been a lot of information in the past few years that many attorneys who are providing public defense are burdened by very high caseloads, and they haven't been able to give the proper amount of attention to their public defense cases."

The high court also took another step Friday to help people who can't afford legal help, adopting a rule that allows non-lawyers with certain levels of training to give legal advice in civil matters, such as selecting

and completing court forms, and reviewing and explaining pleadings.

Recent lawsuits in Washington have highlighted the problem with public defender caseloads.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Washington is suing the cities of Burlington and Mount Vernon, saying that those cities jointly contracted with two part-time lawyers to represent indigent defendants in misdemeanor cases.

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2006 Otto Zehm Shooting Settlement

Spokane mayor apologizes for police killing of disabled man

By Nicholas K. Geranios
The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Six years after Otto Zehm died at the hands of Spokane police, Mayor David Condon has delivered a hand-written letter of apology to Zehm's mother.

Condon met with Ann Zehm, 84, last week to deliver his letter.

"You, and our community, waited for too long for resolution in this matter," the letter said. "For me, blame was clearly misplaced in this case, and I fear that compounded the pain for you and many others."

Otto Zehm, who was white, was 36 in 2006 after he was mistakenly accused of theft and beaten, hog-tied and Tasered by police in a convenience store. Zehm, a mentally disabled janitor who had committed no

crime, died two days later without regaining consciousness.

The Zehm case reverberated through city politics for years. It was a factor in Condon's victory last year over Mayor Mary Verner, and several city officials tied to the case have been fired.

The written apology was part of a mediat-

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