

THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



HEAT WAVE



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

A little boy beats the heat by jumping into Lake Washington at Mathews Beach. Temperatures soared in the runup to the Fourth of July holiday, with a record-setting 93 degrees posted Monday. But the hot-streak is set to break by Thursday, which is predicted to be a perfect day for outdoor celebrating.

Federal Attorney Cuts

Public defender offices face closure from sequestration

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The lawyers who represent poor people charged with federal crimes across the country say they already face an unfair fight when they head into court against the resources of the Justice Department — and that's only going to get worse if draconian budget cuts occur as planned next year.

As a result of the automatic cuts known as sequestration, federal public defender offices have recently been told they must reduce spending by 14 percent for fiscal year 2014, on top of the roughly 9 percent suffered this year.

The result, the lawyers say, will be drastic layoffs for public defenders, expensive case delays and costly appeals — all for nothing, as pricier private attorneys are expected to step in to fill the void at government expense.

"Absent some immediate action, federal defenders will begin the process this summer of laying off between a third and half of their staff," said a memo prepared by several federal public defenders. "They will begin closing many offices. The cuts will result in irreparable damage to the criminal justice system, and paradoxically, greater expense to the taxpayer as indigent defendants are increasingly assigned private counsel."

Congress provides about \$1 billion for the representation of poor people charged with crimes. The money is split evenly between federal public defender program, which was established in 1970, and private attorneys, who are generally paid \$125 an hour to represent defendants who can't be represented by the public defenders because of conflicts of interest or other reasons.

Because the right to counsel is a constitutional guarantee, the federal defenders have no control over their workloads. When someone is charged and needs a lawyer,

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Magnuson Park Citizen Comment

News the a fenced-off area is radioactive shocks local residents

The Staff
Of The Skanner News

Public-comment period has been extended to July 26 for comments on the cleanup of Magnuson Park radioactive contamination.

The extension was requested by state Rep. Gerry Pollet and his citizens' group, Heart of America Northwest.

Comments on the contamination and cleanup may be sent to: cindy.ohare@navy.mil and ching-pi.wang@ecy.wa.gov.

The proposed plan is available for review on The Skanner News website, www.theskanner.com.

Pollet says significant questions have been raised about the levels of radioactivity which would remain in park soils and about the lack of investigation of Lake Washington sediments and groundwater.

He also says the Washington State Department of Ecology says it is planning a public meeting to answer questions and take public comment in July.

Pollet's 46th Legislative District includes Magnuson Park.

High levels of radioactive contamination were identified in the park in 2010, but the public was not notified of the contamination. In March, the Navy informed local elected officials that it planned to start a cleanup using an expedited process which bypasses normal public review and comment.

The Department of Ecology, which has oversight authority for the cleanup, was not informed until mid-April of a

cleanup which the Navy planned to start in May.

The extension of the comment period, which was due to close on June 27, comes after dozens of citizens, Heart of America Northwest and Pollet requested more time for public comments due to a lack of access to documents needed to inform comments as required by law.

Pollet said that the Navy is proposing to leave contamination in soil and storm drains at levels hundreds of times higher

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Gov. Inslee Signs \$33.6 Billion Budget

Government shutdown averted by last-minute agreement

By Rachel Le Corte
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Gov. Jay Inslee signed a new two-year budget on Sunday, averting a government shutdown that state officials had been planning for in case the new spending plan wasn't in place by the end of the weekend.

The \$33.6 billion operating budget was

the key item among more than a dozen bills signed by Inslee, just a day after the Legislature adjourned for the year after two over-time legislative sessions.

"We've done some good things in tough times, and I'm glad we found compromise so that the work of the state of Washington will continue," Inslee said before signing the budget.

His signature came just hours before the

end of the current budget cycle. Thousands of state workers had been warned last week that they could face temporary layoffs because much of state government would need to shut down if a budget plan wasn't in place by midnight Sunday.

It's been more than 20 years since a governor signed a budget this late in the

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