

Seattle and NW Washington

SPOTLIGHTS

EPA Announces Grant Funding

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has selected the Rural Community Assistance Corporation as one of the nine winners of a six-year grant to support a regional Environmental Finance Center. Through the Environmental Finance Center, local communities will be able to access technical expertise to identify solutions for financing environmental activities.

Environmental Finance Centers are institutions work directly with state and local governments, tribes, utilities, and communities and offer a variety of assistance including creating or improving:

- infrastructure financing plans;
- capacity building for public-purpose water and other environmental infrastructure systems;
- green jobs and green business products and services;
- resilient, secure, and sustainable environmental
- computer-based and other financial and outreach tools for watershed and water system management;
- public-private partnership models for environmental services, infrastructure, and projects;
- training on environmental equity and justice;
- drinking water and wastewater utility water conservation, energy efficiency, management, and capital planning;
- and innovative financing for interstate, state, regional, and local air pollution reduction efforts.

This week's announcement means winners will operate grants during the years 2016 to 2021. The first EFC grants covered the years 2009 to 2015.

These grantees will provide environmental finance technical assistance in 44 states and 6 U.S. territories. Work is underway to identify an additional grantee to support communities in the remaining states of Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Colorado.

While the exact amount of the awards depends on final congressional budget action, the President's budget for FY 2016 requests a total of \$2 million for this award.

The awardees EPA selected through a competitive grant process are:

- University of Southern Maine – Portland, Maine
- Syracuse University – Syracuse, New York
- University of Maryland – College Park, Maryland
- University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- Michigan Technical University – Houghton, Michigan
- University of New Mexico – Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Wichita State University – Wichita, Kansas
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation – Spokane, Washington
- California State University, Sacramento – Sacramento, California

More information is available at <http://www2.epa.gov/envirofinance>.

Board of Natural Resources Considers Timber Harvest Goals

The Board of Natural Resources yesterday opted to develop a plan to work through a backlog of timber that was not harvested as scheduled from state-owned forests in western Washington under a 2005-2014 planning cycle known as the sustainable harvest calculation. At the same time, the board will move ahead to calculate the volume of timber that can be sustainably harvested from state-owned forests

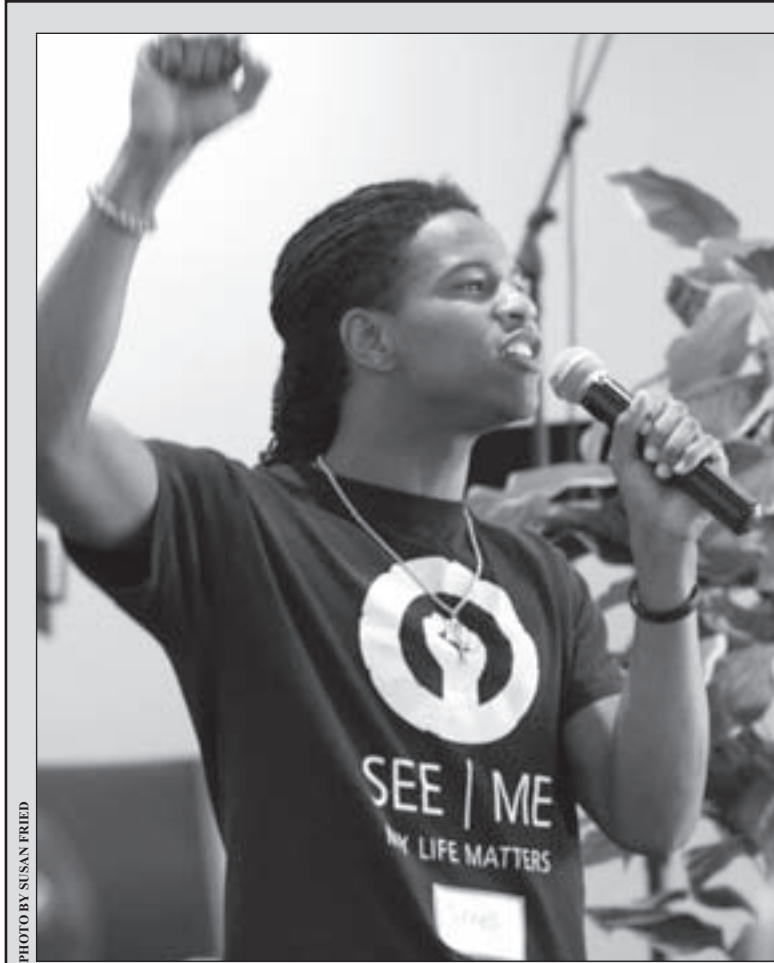


PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Restorative Justice

Jerrell G. Davis talks about his participation in Freedom School and its impact at young people at "Breaking the Cycle," a Town Hall Conversation about restorative justice, Aug. 19 at the Emerald City Bible Fellowship Church. Several hundred people showed up to discuss creating an alternative to detention that utilizes restorative justice principles and results in a new, holistic and healing juvenile justice model.

between 2015 and 2024. The calculation, as well as the blueprint for working through the harvest backlog from the previous decade, would be subject to public review under the State Environmental Policy Act.

Every ten years, as required by law, the board calculates how much timber can be sustainably harvested from state-owned forests over the next ten-year period.

DNR uses this sustainable harvest calculation to guide its management of revenue-producing activities, such as timber harvests on state forestlands, while maintaining its legal commitments to maintain wildlife habitat and clean water. State law also requires the board to devise a plan to sell any timber that was not harvested — the arrearage — during the previous planning decade.

Revenue from the timber harvests is used to build public schools and universities and support public services in many counties. In Fiscal Year 2014, state trust lands of all types, including forest, agricultural and aquatic lands, produced more than \$265 million in revenue for beneficiaries.

Washington Healthplanfinder Announces Premium Change

Washington Healthplanfinder today announced that current Qualified Health Plan and Qualified Dental Plan customers must pay their monthly premium payment directly to their insurance company beginning Sept. 24. Washington Healthplanfinder will no longer accept premium payments after Sept. 23.

After Washington Health Benefit Exchange Board staff conducted a thorough analysis of Washington Healthplanfinder's process of accepting customer premium payments — known as premium aggregation — the Exchange Board voted in December 2014 to remove the functionality from the system.

As a result, insurance carriers will handle all health plan related payments, as they do in the outside market.

Washington Healthplanfinder has accepted health and dental premium payments since its launch Oct. 1, 2013, although customers have always had the option to pay their insurance carrier directly. Nearly 20 percent of customers currently pay their carriers directly.

The Exchange and carriers are encouraging customers to start paying their insurance company directly ahead of the Sept. 23 deadline. Washington Healthplanfinder will cease to take customer payments at 5 p.m. on Sept. 23.

Any financial help such as tax credits and cost-sharing reductions that customers receive will not be affected by this change. Customers who have questions about paying their monthly premium payments should contact their insurance company directly.

Since Washington Healthplanfinder Business is legally required to aggregate premiums, small businesses that use the Exchange marketplace will not be affected by this change. Employers may continue to pay their monthly premiums at www.wahealthplanfinder.org.

For more information about the payment change, including a list of payment methods accepted by each insurance company, visit www.wahbexchange.org/payments, or click here for detailed frequently asked questions.

View the Community Calendar and regularly updated News Briefs for Seattle and Portland at

THE SKANNER.com

SEATTLE COMMUNITY CALENDAR 2015

Saturday, August 29

KIDS CLOTHING/TOY SWAP AT KINGS BOOKS: Items include clothes, toys, books, gear (carrier seats, mats, high chairs, etc.) Ages 0-6. You may bring items to swap or drop off. Swap starts at noon sharp. Kings Books, 218 St. Helens Ave., Tacoma.

WIZARDS FESTIVAL AT COUNTRY VILLAGE: There will be magical fun all day long! Wizard shows, wizard guests, fantasy authors and magical vendors. 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Country Village Shops, 23718 Bothell Everett Highway, Bothell.

GO GREEN GAMES! The one-day event will be all about the environment, having fun and learning cool ways kids can help protect it. Bounce houses, garbage truck demonstrations, games, music,

food and drink and much more. 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Meridian Habitat Park, 14422 Meridian E. Puyallup.

Sunday, August 30

SEATTLE SUPERHEROES RUN: Start/Finish is located on the waterfront. Come as your favorite superhero. Amplified sound for music and announcements. Step-off time for 5k run is 9:30 a.m. Magnuson Park, Race Center, 7400 Sand Point Way NE.

Friday, September 4

KIDS CARNIVAL: Themed family swim includes games, activities, prizes and family fun: Children under 6 must be accompanied in the water by an adult within arm's reach. \$5.25 adults, \$3.75 youth/seniors. 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Mounger pool, 2535 32nd Ave. W.

THE SKANNER.com

If you have an event you want to share with the community, email it two weeks in advance to The Skanner at info@theskanner.com

Thursday, August 27

DANCING TIL DUSK: Free live music to dance to: big band swing, salsa, zydeco, blues and much more. The event starts with a beginner lesson at 6 p.m. Then continue dancing until 9:30 p.m. Bell Street Park, 2251 3rd Ave.