



# Annual Report 2011

OFFICE OF THE PIERCE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Working

to improve lives

through

innovative and passionate

public service.

I am proud of the work we're accomplishing on behalf of Pierce County's 800,000 residents. County managers and staff have accepted my challenge to be innovative so we can keep providing quality services, even with fewer resources.

As you will see in this report, we are prioritizing the investments that make our communities better places to live, work and play. We are working to attract jobs, enhance recreational opportunities and protect our environment, while also addressing key components of our society's safety net, such as family homelessness.

These are challenging times, but good and efficient customer service remains a top priority. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.



*Pat McCarthy*  
Pat McCarthy  
Pierce County Executive

## Who We Are

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3,000-plus county employees, serving:

- 800,000 residents
- 23 cities and towns
- Unincorporated areas and communities such as Graham, Frederickson, Longbranch, Midland, Parkland, South Hill, Spanaway, Summit, etc.
- 1,700 square miles, from Key Peninsula to Mount Rainier
- Urban and rural areas

Growing demand for services.

Pierce County's population continues to grow, which means the need for services is going up while the revenues that pay for those services—primarily sales taxes and property taxes—have declined substantially. County leaders have made strategic decisions to cut spending in ways that protect core services.

Here is a look at the total county budget, which includes all federal and state grants, utility revenues, etc:

### Total County Budget

2008	\$ 881 million
2012	\$ 802 million

### General Fund

2008	\$ 286 million
2012	\$ 274 million

The General Fund gets the most attention because it is the most discretionary account. Approximately 78 percent of the \$274 million General Fund is dedicated to public safety programs. Here is a breakdown of where that money goes:

### Public safety/judicial (2012 budget)

Sheriff	\$ 61.4 million
Corrections Bureau	\$ 51.5 million
Prosecuting Attorney	\$ 27.1 million
Juvenile Court	\$ 19.3 million
Assigned Counsel	\$ 16.1 million
Superior Court	\$ 14.1 million
District Court	\$ 12.3 million
Emergency Management/Other Miscellaneous	\$ 3.4 million
Clerk of the Court	\$ 5.1 million
Medical Examiner	\$ 2.4 million
MCE, Prevention, Special Projects, Capital Improvements	\$ 2.6 million
<b>Approximate Total</b>	<b>\$215.3 million</b>

The General Fund gets most of its funding from property and sales taxes. But Pierce County only receives a portion of each.

**Property Tax:** Using the 2010 average value of \$241,763 for the South Hill area as an example, that calculates an average 2011 property tax of \$3,065 for that area. Here is where those tax dollars went:

State	\$ 550
Local Schools	\$ 1,260
Fire District, Library, Parks, Port	\$ 527
Pierce County	\$ 311
County Road District	\$ 416

**Sales Tax:** In an urban area where the sales tax rate is 9.4 percent, the tax on a \$10 purchase is 94 cents. Of that amount, 12 cents goes to Pierce County. The rest goes to the state, transit agencies and the zoo.

Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive  
County-City Building • 930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 737  
Tacoma, WA 98402 • Phone: 253-798-7477  
E-mail: pccexecutive@co.pierce.wa.us • Info: www.piercecountywa.org/exec





## Responsible Management

**Public safety:** My office coordinated the voter-approved plan to consolidate our patchwork 911 emergency communications system into a seamless platform. South Sound 911 will create efficiencies and make first responders and the public safer.

**Building permits:** The Planning and Land Services Department improved its online system to make it easier to apply for a building or land-use permit and then track its progress. We also streamlined the application review system to make the process fast and predictable.

**Budget:** For 2012, a majority of unions agreed (as of presstime) to forego a cost of living adjustment, saving \$5 million. Since 2008, we have reduced county staffing by 14 percent and annual county spending by approximately \$80 million.

**Buy local:** I signed an agreement with Tacoma-based Chuckals Office Supply that saves taxpayers money while supporting local jobs.

**Facilities:** We sold the vacant West Precinct property for \$1 million to a Lakewood church that will use it as a community center. This is a win-win: county taxpayers no longer will pay for the upkeep of a vacant building, and Lakewood residents will have access to new community resources. I am also exploring options for the vacant Puget Sound Hospital building and the former District Court facility on Hosmer Street.



## Quality of Life

**Sprinker:** When I came into this office, I inherited an aging ice rink that was housed in a building on the verge of being closed. My team identified funding that paid for a \$6 million renovation, including a new rink, refrigeration equipment and roof. More than 300,000 visitors pass through the doors each year, and we just guaranteed the rink's survival for years to come.

**Sustainability:** County government is greener and leaner. Among other accomplishments, we have reduced energy usage by 13 percent and purchased our first three electric vehicles.

**Investments:** Thanks to an excellent partnership with the state Recreation and Conservation Office, we received numerous grants to build or improve parks, playgrounds and open spaces throughout the county.

**Homelessness initiative:** We contracted with Associated Ministries to address family homelessness by creating a central intake system for families to quickly find shelter, thanks to a partnership with the Gates Foundation and others.

**Trail dedication:** We dedicated the trail at Ashford County Park to Pierce County Sheriff's Deputy Kent Mundell, who was ambushed and killed while responding to a domestic disturbance in 2009.



## Economic Development

**Aerospace:** I serve as co-chair of the Pierce County Aerospace Cluster Team, which seeks to maintain and grow the industry presence in the area. Boeing and nearly 100 suppliers in the county employ thousands of our residents.

**Positive signs:** We are working on permits with the new owner of Cascadia, the planned community in East Pierce County that expects to resume building this year. In addition, Carlisle Construction expects to open a building materials plant in the Frederickson area this year.

**Military:** Pierce County is a key participant in the consortium of entities addressing traffic and other growth issues around Joint Base Lewis-McChord. We are proud of the thriving military presence here and will do everything we can to accommodate the growth.

**U.S. Open:** Planning and construction began for the 2015 championship at Chambers Bay. This is one of the most amazing economic opportunities in the history of Pierce County, as it will be the equivalent of hosting a Super Bowl.