

## The Final Days of the Legislature....

*by Dave Earling*

As many predicted, the Legislature did not finish the general session by April 26th and a special session has begun. Legislators have several knotty problems to resolve -- substantial problems which some speculate could lead to a second special session, perhaps until June when they will receive the state's second quarter economic forecast

Not the least of their problems is reaching agreement on a plan to fully fund education as mandated by the Supreme Court decision in the McCleary case. Along with negotiating a long-needed statewide transportation plan, balancing the state's general fund budget, and the Capital Construction budget. As I said, they have "several knotty problems".

Reports indicate good progress is being made on some fronts. In others, negotiations are much more problematic, sometimes because of basic philosophical differences between Republicans and Democrats. Generally the general fund budget will need to be moved before a transportation or capital budget can be dealt with.

Our local Legislators in the 21st and 32nd Districts are working hard on several important fronts which could benefit Edmonds. The Senate is proposing a million dollars for the Edmonds Senior Center. The House proposes funding for a badly needed new roof for the ECA gymnasium.

Our parks have two important funding proposals under consideration: one for partial funding for the city's purchase of the Civic Play Field from the School District and the other for rehabilitation of the fishing pier.

Finally, both the House and Senate proposals contain \$10M to begin the long-awaited effort to upgrade our two-mile portion of Highway 99, as well as funding for an analysis of alternatives to begin dealing with the safety issues related to train/ferry/SR 104 traffic at the at-grade railroad crossings on Dayton and Main Streets.

On the need-to-watch-closely side, the Legislature has passed ESB 5923, mandating deferred impact fees on new single-family construction. This means delays in collecting fees which are traditionally collected by the city at the time of permitting. Beginning in 2016, this action will delay the receipt of some permit-related revenue.

While the Legislature is considering restoring to cities liquor taxes they reduced over the last few sessions, the proposal is to return the taxes over an 8-year period. If it were to pass, again, this would create a delay in the receipt of revenues..

As part of the state's general fund negotiations, a portion of those negotiations which could impact all of us is considering more revenue (new taxes) to balance the budget. The biggest challenge for the Legislature deals with how to meet the Supreme Court's McCleary decision on the full funding of education. This is a huge challenge that the Legislature will have to deal with.

As you can see, while much of the session is over, much still needs to be accomplished. As a city, we are well positioned on several fronts to improve our community, enhance transportation, expand our parks, take the first steps in developing our Senior Center and add a new much-needed roof to the ECA. Important legislative negotiations are now key and we will continue working with our Legislators until adjournment.