



Governor honors Hoquiam, GH 2020

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Sidewalk effort, 2020's vision plan recognized

Two Grays Harbor civic improvement efforts have received special recognition by Gov. Chris Gregoire in her 2010 Smart Communities Awards for creating livable communities.

In announcing awards for 11 communities throughout the state, the governor singled out the City of Hoquiam for its residential sidewalk partnership program and the Grays Harbor 2020 Vision and Action Plan for building a sustainable Grays Harbor. Both received judges' merit awards.

"As Washington recovers from this downturn in the economy, the work of local governments and their partners in creating vibrant, quality communities is vital," Gregoire said in a statement. "The leadership of these award winners helps to make Washington a great state in which to live and do business."

Grays Harbor 2020 started as a community outreach effort to "create a shared community vision for the future, and a road map for getting there." Between 2007 and 2009, more than 70,000 residents from every corner of the county shared their ideas for making Grays Harbor a better place to live and work, said Ron Pinnick, community coordinator.

The result has been an action plan and a shared vision about what will make Grays Harbor a more livable community in the future. About 30 regional organizations, including government offices, companies and non-profits, have been charged with making the vision's goals a reality within the next few years.

The Hoquiam Residential Sidewalk Partnership also started as part of a community vision effort, Hometown Hoquiam, that had more than 223 citizens participate.

The program created new sidewalks where none existed and replaced what were determined to be deteriorated, dangerous sidewalks. The city started a program working with homeowners to replace sidewalks in front of their homes, where the city pays for the labor and the homeowner pays for the concrete (approximately \$10 per lineal foot).

"Hoquiam is an older city and many of the sidewalks were 100 years old," said Mayor Jack Durney, who noted the award is the second for the sidewalk project in the past two years.

The project not only improved safety but property values, Durney said, vowing to keep it going with city support.

"It's an important part of our Hometown Hoquiam effort to improve our community," Durney said. "I'm very proud of this award."

Pinnick said the awards are a sign that people outside the county are taking notice of the efforts being made to improve Grays Harbor and make it a more sustainable community.

"It's really a great feeling to get the award now that we're almost three years into the project," he said. "It's been truly a public-private partnership and a grassroots effort that made it possible."

The awards will be presented June 16 at the Washington State Association of Counties joint district meeting in Grand Mound or at the June 24 meeting of the Association of Washington Cities in Vancouver.

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