State running dry

Economic pressures erode the capacity to fund public programs

BY KATHIE DURBIN
Columbian staff writer

When the Legislature convenes in Olympia on Monday, its agenda will be short on vision.

Never mind green jobs or health care reform. This session is all about how to balance the state’s budget in the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Last week’s flooding, which cut off large swaths of Washington from the state capital and forced interstate commerce for days, provided a dire lead-up to what promises to be a grim 60 day session.

With a projected $6 billion budget deficit looming, it was a reminder that unexpected developments could throw a monkey wrench into lawmakers’ efforts to bridge the growing gap between revenue and the state’s progressive agenda.

PREVIEW, Page A6

E-mail storm buffets State Department

BY MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press writer

WASHINGTON — Many “reply all” flackos result in mere embarrassment, but American diplomats have been told they may be punished for sending mass responses after an e-mail storm nearly knocked out one of the State Department.

Introduction regulations for e-mailing

“Prisons are becoming less and less of a sacred cow.”

Strapped states rethink policies on prisons

BY DAVID CRAWLEY
Associated Press writer

NEW YORK — Their budgets in crisis, governors, legislators and prison officials across the nation are making or considering policy changes that will likely remove tens of thousands of offenders from prisons and parole supervision.

Collectively, the pending and proposed initiatives could save states millions of dollars, and those savings could be enormous.

Thousands of inmates could be released from prison after the states cut back on non-violent drug cases and parole violations.

“Overcrowded” prisons will be released

Outright releases, including those of violent career criminals, are becoming the norm in a growing number of states.

“Prisons are becoming less and less of a sacred cow.”

Jollota will call it quits after 20 years

Longtime Vancouver councilwoman says job has lost its luster

BY JEFFREY MIZE
Columbian staff writer

Pat Jollota, as she enters her 20th year on the Vancouver City Council, says the job is no longer fun.

Jollota celebrated her 72nd birthday Monday by attending the first council meeting of 2009. This year will be her final in office since she doesn’t intend to run for re-election.

“We used to just get things done,” she said. “Now it seems like our council memory span is about three days, and we have to go over these things again and over these things again.”

In 2006, Jollota had a malignant tumor removed from her colon and missed several months of council meetings during her recovery.

That kind of changes your outlook,” she said about cancer. “After 20 years, I think I accomplished a lot in Vancouver. The councils I’ve served on, we have made wonderful things happen, but I don’t want to get to the point where they have to wheel me into council meetings.

And I’ve kind of wanted to get a life,” she added. “I have 500,000 miles and a passport.”

Jollota said she has no plans to move.

“I love Vancouver,” she said. “That’s why I ran for council. They would really have to screw it up for me to move away.

Jollota’s decision could trigger intense competition for a rare open seat on the seven-member council. The last time that happened was in 2003, when three candidates filed for the opening created when former Councilwoman Jeanine Lipton’s decision to challenge Mayor Royce Pollard.

Possible candidates for Jollota’s seat include Jack Burkman, a former council-

CITY COUNCIL, Page A7
Several county projects in hands of Legislature

**Gov. has proposed delays**

The 2009 Legislature will likely delay several Clark County projects.

Gov. has called for a delay of several state projects. But has declined to delay projects in Clark County.

*For those who have been delayed, let’s try to get them back on track.*

Other things open for limited class size; increases in transportation, revenue from the state.

Some projects will be delayed. The governor has not yet decided which.

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