

PRESS RELEASE

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City of Lake Stevens Receives Well City Honor

Richland - The City of Lake Stevens was recently notified it would be recognized by the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) with the AWC WellCity Award, for its outstanding worksite wellness program.

Lake Stevens was one of 34 Washington cities and towns recognized by AWC for its workplace health program. Steve Edin, Lake Stevens' wellness coordinator, and his wellness committee received recognition at the association's 24th annual AWC Employee Health Academy in Richland, WA.

The AWC WellCity award will be presented to Lake Stevens' delegates at AWC's 76th Annual Conference in Spokane, this June.

Thirty-three other cities and towns also received the award:

Anacortes, Arlington, Battle Ground, Bonney Lake, Bothell, Bremerton, Burien, Cheney, Colville, Concrete, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Fife, Issaquah, Kirkland, Lacey, Lakewood, Longview, Lynnwood, Marysville, Mill Creek, Oak Harbor, Olympia, Pullman, SeaTac, Tacoma, Toppenish, Tukwila, Vancouver, Washougal, Wenatchee, Woodland and Yakima.

The AWC WellCity Award recognizes cities and towns that demonstrate best practices in employee health promotion. An AWC WellCity must meet the minimum criteria in each of nine WellCity standards. The WellCity standards cover policies and procedures, leadership support, wellness committee, internal and external resources, needs assessment, worksite environment, operating plan, mix of program activities and evaluation.

"Health care costs hit Washington cities and town hard over the past decade, rising 200% from 1998 – 2008. Municipal leaders across the state are taking action. Today more than 200 Washington cities offer worksite wellness programs to help control the direct and indirect costs of poor health." says Mike McCarty, AWC Acting Executive Director.

"Well designed, worksite wellness programs help reduce employee health risks and health care costs. In Washington State, city employees with strong wellness programs average \$300 per year less in health care claims than those without wellness programs. Employees who engage in wellness programs have been successful in reducing their health risk factors which leads to a reduction in cost," says Gayla Gjertsen, AWC's Director of Insurance Services.

"Other benefits of employee wellness programs include improved morale, increased productivity, reduced use of sick leave, reduced workers' compensation claims, and reduced health care utilization and costs," says Gjertsen. "Wellness programs such as Lake Stevens' help the city operate more efficiently and contribute to maintaining affordable health care coverage for all AWC Trust-insured cities and employees."

AWC is a private, non-profit corporation serving Washington's 281 cities. AWC's Employee Benefit Trust provides health benefits to over 16,000 city employees in Washington.