



**Washington State Auditor
Brian Sonntag**

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

June 18, 2004

County Council, Whatcom County, Washington

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Whatcom County, Washington, as of and for the year ended December 31, 2003, as listed in the table of contents. These financial statements are the responsibility of the County's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our financial audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Whatcom County, Washington, as of December 31, 2003, and the respective changes in financial position and cash flows, where applicable, thereof, for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

The Management's Discussion and Analysis on pages 11 through 20, and budgetary comparison information on pages 57 through 59, are not a required part of the basic financial statements but are supplementary information required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. We have applied certain limited procedures, which consisted principally of inquires of management regarding the methods of measurement and presentation of the required supplementary information. However, we did not audit the information and express no opinion on it.


Our audit was performed for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Whatcom County's basic financial statements. The accompanying financial information listed as combining financial statements and supplemental information on pages 65 through 157 is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. The combining financial statements and supplemental information has been subjected to auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, are fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

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Independent Auditor's Report continued

The information identified in the table of contents as the Introductory and Statistical Sections is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements of the County. Such information has not been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Sonntag". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and the last name "Sonntag" clearly distinguishable.

BRIAN SONNTAG, CGFM
STATE AUDITOR