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Whatcom County to Receive State Grant for Shooting Range Upgrades

OLYMPIA – The Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission will receive a symbolic check Thursday for a grant from the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) for improvements to its Plantation Range, a public shooting range.

IAC Assistant Director Neil Aaland will present a giant check to commissioners at their meeting at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, in the Bellingham Senior Activity Center, 315 Halleck St., Bellingham.

Whatcom County will use this \$50,000 Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program grant to replace most of its 13-year-old target carrier system and the lighting at its public shooting range. The new target carrier system is capable of meeting the training needs of the 26 law enforcement agencies that use the range. It will provide a wider range of training opportunities, increased reliability, and decreased maintenance.

The Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program provides funding to acquire, develop and renovate firearm ranges and archery training and practice facilities. IAC has awarded \$2.5 million in grants for 71 projects statewide since the grant program began in 1990. Grant recipients have contributed another \$3.4 million or 57 percent of the total project costs. Money for the grants comes from \$3 of each concealed pistol license fee.

“National statistics estimate about 40 million Americans shoot each year, translating into at least one firearm in about half the homes in the United States,” Aaland said. “In Washington, an estimated 7 percent of the population shoots. This grant program provides a vital source of funds to help renovate shooting ranges, which are an important recreational activity for many people and an important resource for our law enforcement officers.”

The Whatcom County project was the top ranked project competing for funding in this grant program statewide. The county will contribute \$50,000 in matching funds, equipment, and labor.

The IAC was established in 1964 to finance recreation and conservation projects throughout the state. For more information on the agency or its grant programs, visit the Web site: www.iac.wa.gov.

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