



WASHINGTON STATE
**Governor's Office of
Regulatory Assistance**

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2009

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Message from the Director

The Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) makes it easier to do business in Washington State. In fiscal year 2009, through our Information Center, Regional Assistance, Small Business support and Technology Integration projects, we expanded and improved the information available to citizens and businesses. We focused on improving the systems for environmental permitting and expanded our work to support small businesses through the interagency small business liaison program. As part of the Governor's response to the federal economic stimulus program, ORA worked closely with funding agencies, permitting agencies, and project applicants to make sure that project review and permitting occurred in the most efficient ways possible. This work continues in fiscal year 2010 and supports the Governor's core economic recovery principles of aligning goals, leveraging resources, and creating strategic alliances with the private sector, non-profits, local governments, and state agencies.

During the 2009 legislative session, the legislature updated the statute that controls ORA's operations and priorities, RCW Chapter 43.42. The revised statute directs ORA to provide specific information and timeline estimates when managing a fully coordinated project or using the Cost Reimbursement program. The new provisions emphasize transparency and accountability in our operations and require the office, in its biennial report, to specifically address improvements for the state's regulatory systems. To address this requirement, we have created the ORA Regulatory Improvement List which is more fully described in the Strategic Initiatives section of this report.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and find the information in it useful. Please contact us with your ideas for how to make regulatory systems work better.



Faith L. Lumsden
Director
Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance

Office Overview

The Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance helps people navigate through regulatory systems and, working with our partners, we improve those systems so they produce better results. You can view ORA's mission, vision, and values by visiting:

<http://www.ora.wa.gov/about/mission.asp>. View ORA's organizational chart here:
<http://www.ora.wa.gov/contact.asp>.

The office works closely with environmental permitting agencies and with agencies that regulate small business. The office also responds to directives and executive orders from the Governor, including Executive Order 06-02 on Regulatory Improvement and 09-03 on Capital Stimulus Project Streamlining. These Executive Orders can be viewed by visiting:

<http://www.governor.wa.gov/execorders/default.asp>.

Strategic Plan and Organizational Goals

ORA's updated strategic plan is based on two overarching goals:

1. Assist our customers
2. Improve the regulatory system

To accomplish these goals, the office has developed a range of objectives and strategies that reflect the collaborative structure of the organization and the innovative approaches we consistently promote. The Strategic Plan and/or ORA's operational work plan are updated as needed to incorporate special initiatives or new responsibilities.

View ORA's strategic plan here: <http://www.ora.wa.gov/documents/StrategicPlan.pdf>.

Mission Performance: Highlights

Assist

Eastern Washington Veteran's Cemetery. In May 2009, the Eastern Washington Veteran's Cemetery broke ground. It is sited near Medical Lake, in an area where the aquifer that supplies water for residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural uses is declining. The Cemetery needed a sustainable water supply. The Department of Ecology asked ORA to facilitate and work with the Washington state departments of Veterans Affairs, Ecology, Health, Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, and Social and Health Services; the US Army Corps of Engineers; and the City of Medical Lake to develop a plan that included overarching agency and local government support.

Using reclaimed water from a City of Medical Lake facility became a viable option, but generated a number of water resource, habitat and shoreline permitting issues. These issues needed quick resolution, and ORA helped create the collaborative problem solving forum that produced the answers. The result is high level use of the Medical Lake reclaimed water facility and a new cemetery that honors our military veterans while responding creatively to the surrounding area's need for water conservation. The construction of this project is expected to bring over 100 jobs to the area, and the cemetery will employ a team of eight staff when fully operational.

George's Wine Shoppe. ORA received an urgent call for help from a business needing to connect with the Liquor Control Board (LCB). The wine shop owner had moved an existing store to a new location and planned his grand opening but had not received an updated liquor license. With help from his local city economic development department and the LCB, the grand opening came off as planned. ORA then worked with the LCB to have them establish a small business liaison position. The new LCB small business liaison is now part of a team of small business experts from our key regulatory agencies that works with ORA to address process and system issues encountered by small businesses.

ORA Information Center. During fiscal year 2009, the ORA Information Center assisted 1,808 permit applicants, business owners, and prospective business owners directly through telephone calls or emails. They assisted thousands more through the Online Permit Assistance System and Permit Handbook websites, both maintained by Information Center staff. The Information Center also developed new permit information fact sheets, including a Docks and Piers fact sheet, to help applicants quickly understand the requirements for local, state and federal permits. The Center was also instrumental in providing online guidance for recreational miners who need to complete a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) for their projects. The Information Center consistently receives positive feedback for helping customers produce complete applications for environmental permits and helping business owners understand the requirements for opening or operating a business in Washington State.

Improve

Permitting for Economic Stimulus Projects. In early 2009, as federal and state economic stimulus projects were just beginning to take shape, Governor Gregoire issued executive order 09-03. The order directed ORA and state agencies to coordinate early, especially with local and federal agencies, to ensure that environmental permitting issues related to economic stimulus projects were identified and resolved early in any required review process. For ORA, this was not new work, but the importance of moving state and federal funds quickly into the economy added urgency. The office quickly strengthened existing relationships and networks with state permitting and funding agencies, and built new relationships with many local governments. We connected widely with agencies and local jurisdictions, especially those receiving funding for infrastructure projects. The agencies did a great job with their own selection processes, so there were very few permitting issues to address. To date, no project has lost funding due to delays associated with permit processing. The focus ORA helped bring to a streamlined process for economic stimulus projects will provide a strong foundation for future improvement efforts that help move projects through the complex local, state and federal permitting processes.

Green Shorelines for Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish: Communication and Coordination Workshops. “Green Shorelines” is a term applied to preserving or restoring natural shoreline habitat. One key Green Shorelines challenge is communication and coordination between the many local, state and federal agencies, and interest groups involved. In spring 2009, ORA and a collection of partner agencies hosted a series of four workshops focused on expanding the options and possibilities for “greening” the shorelines of Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish.

By helping organize and host the workshops, ORA began to build a network that can coordinate and communicate across multiple agencies and jurisdictions without specific assistance from our office. To understand this need, consider that development along Lake Washington’s shorelines is regulated by thirteen local jurisdictions, three state agencies, and three federal agencies. Lake Sammamish has a similar regulatory framework. In addition, numerous private citizens, businesses, non-profit organizations, and non-regulatory agencies such as Tribes, the King County Conservation District, and the Salmon Recovery Council for Water Resource Inventory Area Eight (8) also advance particular issues.

Specific workshop outcomes included clarifying existing incentives for Green Shoreline projects both through the permitting process and non-environmental options such as open space tax programs. In addition, participants proposed and prioritized a number of incentives for restoring shorelines that still met the interests of lakeside homeowners. ORA and the workshop partners will coordinate future efforts to promote certain of these incentives including those directed toward permit streamlining and education/outreach to property owners.

The partners for these workshops included the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed planning group, City of Seattle, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Puget Sound Partnership, and Department of Ecology. More information about the Workshops can be found at the following website:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/events/greenshorelines.html>.

Comments from some of the participants regarding what they found most useful about the workshops include:

- “Excellent workshop – one of the few I have gone to recently where I have come away with tangible info. Good range of speakers covering different perspectives.” - Regulatory staff from 3rd Workshop.
- “I am so pleased that you are focused on working together to promote the green shorelines plan. I also believe that you’ve identified two main areas: cost and the permitting process.” - Property owner from 3rd Workshop.

Docks and Piers. Understanding what permits are required for building a new dock or pier can be confusing. The ORA Information Center receives approximately 150 questions a year from property owners, consultants, and contractors on this topic alone. In response to this high volume of calls as well as input from local jurisdictions, ORA produced a “Docks and Piers” fact sheet. This fact sheet explains local, state, and federal requirements in a single document with an easy

to use step-by-step format. Local jurisdictions, who are often the first stop for permitting, are finding this document a useful tool for assisting applicants.

Strategic Initiatives

Integrated Project Review and Mitigation Tool (iPRMT)

ORA is currently managing development of the Integrated Project Review and Mitigation Tool (iPRMT), an online pre-application and permitting tool designed to:

1. Help applicants prepare better applications;
2. Speed up application review; and
3. Improve environmental outcomes.

The project has focused on transportation and public works projects, building on lessons learned from the Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee (TPEAC), the State Department of Transportation Multi-Agency Permit (MAP) Team, and ORA's experiences coordinating major permitting projects.

Over the course of the past year, ORA and its iPRMT partners completed a beta-version of the tool that helps applicants fill out their applications and submit materials for an online pre-application conference. Agencies communicate using the tool's online collaboration features to provide guidance and feedback to the applicant, who can then revise the online information to prepare and submit a complete application.

The tool was developed in partnership with Clark County, the City of Vancouver, and the Washington State Department of Transportation, with support from the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington State Association of Counties. Additional key State and federal partners include the:

- National Marine Fisheries Service;
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Washington State Department of Ecology;
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife; and
- Washington State Department of Information Services.

In the coming months, ORA will add new local jurisdictions as beta-testing partners and will begin to expand use of iPRMT into the Puget Sound region. As we do this, we will also refine the user interface, i.e., how the system looks on a computer screen and how it leads applicants through the application process, so applicants and agency reviewers statewide will easily be able to use the tool.

For more information about the iPRMT initiative, please visit:
<http://www.ora.wa.gov/regulatory/projectreview.asp>.

Regulatory Improvement List

If you have a regulatory improvement idea, what do you do with it? How do you capture it in writing, determine if it is feasible, find a sponsor for the idea, and track its progress? This is a challenge ORA faces every day with ideas suggested by ORA staff as well as ideas submitted from our partners and customers.

To deal with this challenge, ORA developed a new process for tracking and monitoring improvement ideas, you may view the process and flow chart here: <http://www-dev.ora.wa.gov/regulatory/default.asp>. The process feeds a database known to ORA as the Regulatory Improvement List (RIL). In order to get onto the list, an idea must fit into one of four categories:

1. A statute or rule change;
2. A change to policy or procedure that can be done administratively;
3. An idea about new or improved education or public information materials; or
4. A technology system improvement.

There are many good ideas, not all of which are feasible or affordable. There are also ideas that are not appropriate for ORA to advance because they deal with personnel issues, undercut key statutory principles, benefit only a small group to the detriment of many, or are outside the scope of ORA's responsibilities. These ideas are filtered from the RIL. Other ideas, even if not currently feasible or affordable are tracked and ORA will continue looking for ways, working with our partners, to promote or implement them. We also use the RIL to highlight issues and resolve conflicts where feasible, record ideas for future consideration, and consolidate or coordinate ideas where appropriate.

You may view summary reports for the regulatory improvement list here: <http://www.ora.wa.gov/regulatory/default.asp>. The office has only recently put the full RIL process into place, but is already beginning to see patterns that may help us meet our statutory mandate for making recommendations on system improvements and measuring overall system performance.

First, the list of improvement ideas largely focuses on policies, procedures, information, and website improvements; all items that can be accomplished through administrative changes. This may result from the fact that most ideas to date have been identified by ORA staff in the course of their day to day duties. Nevertheless, one assessment of overall system performance could be tied to whether improvement ideas continue to focus on administrative actions or whether over time there is a shift toward ideas for more significant change in rule or statute.

The office does not have enough experience with the RIL process to draw conclusions about overall system performance, but will continue to monitor the issue.

We are pleased to report that conflicts identified by the office have been resolved during the course of our standard work practice. You may refer to the Program Performance section of this report for examples of projects where ORA was called on to facilitate communication or problem solving.

Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA)

In January 2009 ORA released a substantially revised and updated JARPA form for use throughout the state (see <http://www.epermitting.wa.gov/>). Local, state and federal agencies worked with ORA to improve the usability and efficiency of the JARPA form and process.

Key usability improvements include:

- Updated questions and information requirements to meet today's regulatory requirements;
- Easier to understand questions and greater use of "plain talk" language;
- Improved question sequence and logic flow;
- Increased space for applicant information and applicant answers; and
- Updated help and guidance information (instructions, checklists, contacts, etc.).

The JARPA is used by local, state, and federal agencies for permits that deal with water or wetland areas. In addition, the JARPA form is built into the Integrated Project Review and Mitigation Tool (iPRMT) system. ORA will continue to manage updates, as needed, to the JARPA form.

Grants to Local Governments for Electronic Permit Tracking

In 2008, ORA ran a grants program that provided approximately \$175,000 to six local governments to help improve their electronic permit processing systems. Regrettably, due to state budget constraints, grants were not awarded for Fiscal Year 2009 and were not funded for the 2010 and 2011 biennium.

ORA checked in with the 2008 grant recipients to hear how their new systems or programs were working. We provide two typical responses here to highlight the innovative uses of technology and long term benefits supported by the 2008 grant program.

The City of Port Townsend developed the Active Permits Map using software purchased with state grant money. The map shows the location of all active land-use and building permits, and allows users to easily check on a highlighted parcel and retrieve data specific to the project. Although the map was designed with the public as the main user, City staff in all departments have found it extremely helpful. The city expects the online information to decrease phone calls and front counter visits by citizens and permit applicants. Tyler Johnson, the Port Townsend GIS

Coordinator wrote that the City has “received a very favorable response” from citizens and that city staff are “excited to be able to add further functionality to the online map over time.”

The City of Longview’s Community Development Department can now provide certain online permitting services to its customers. Permit status and inspection results are also accessible online, and inspections can be logged from the field by their inspectors. These capabilities greatly increase efficiencies for the Community Development Department, and provide 24-hour information to their customers. The Department Director and Building Official for the City, John Brickey wrote: “Technical advancements of this type are difficult to achieve for smaller jurisdictions with limited budget resources. The grant Longview received ... made it possible to realize our goal of online permitting and make a positive difference in our community.”

Program Performance

Introduction

In 2009, the office responded to 1,808 requests for information or assistance at the ORA Information Center and provided more in-depth assistance to 101 projects statewide. Of the larger projects where in-person services were provided, 76 involved environmental permitting. The other 25 projects involved education and training (often tied to environmental permitting requirements), community outreach, and small business support. These projects are in addition to the strategic initiative projects highlighted in the previous section of this report.

The agencies involved spanned the entire reach of state regulatory agencies. For environmental permitting, the key agency ORA works with is the Department of Ecology. The Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources also are key state partners for project work. Federal partners the office worked with closely in 2009 include the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. We also worked closely with local governments statewide.

For economic development and energy project assistance, ORA partnered frequently with the Department of Commerce. For small business assistance the office works closely with the team of small business liaisons from the Departments of Labor and Industries, Revenue, Employment Security, Licensing, Commerce, General Administration, the Secretary of State’s office, the Office of Women and Minority Business Enterprises, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Liquor Control Board.

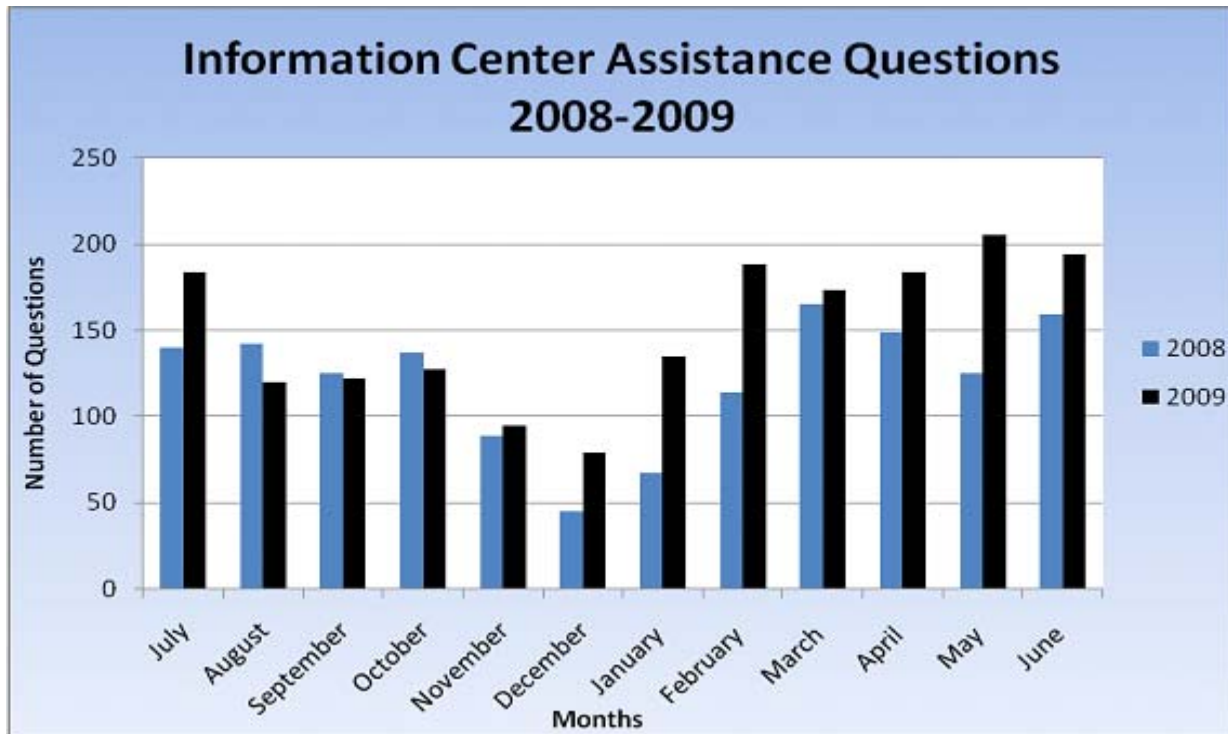
Information Center

The ORA Information Center works continually with private citizens, consultants, local governments, and others who need assistance understanding or complying with the regulatory requirements for business licensing and environmental permitting. To assist these customers, Information Center staff in 2009, working with ORA Regional Leads, developed or improved

upon fact sheets to explain regulatory processes related to docks and piers, biodiesel production, aquatic permitting, and a number of other regulatory processes displayed on schematic flow charts.

The information, communication, internal and external coordination and tracking systems the Information Center develops and maintains make it an integral part of ORA's operations.

Contacts to the Information Center. The following chart compares Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009 figures and shows an upward trend in contacts to the Information Center. We believe this trend reflects ORA's stronger outreach efforts to local governments, and an increased awareness statewide of the services offered by the ORA Information Center. Some local jurisdictions have noted they now include contact information for the ORA Information Center in their permitting information or on their websites and they refer permit applicants to ORA for assistance with state and federal permitting needs. Unofficial polling of customers confirms strong appreciation for the timely responses, well researched answers, and professionalism exhibited by Information Center staff.



Regional Assistance

ORA has five regional staff located across the state who provide assistance to a wide variety of customers each year. This assistance includes coordination and facilitation of pre-application meetings, facilitated project coordination, permitting advice for applicants working on complex projects, and assistance to partner agencies on special projects. In some areas of the state, Regional Leads begin assisting customers very early in the planning stages of projects and

continue to conclusion of the project. We show a few examples below of the services and projects ORA Regional staff were engaged with during the 2009 fiscal year.

Statewide

- **Renewable Energy Sources** – ORA continues to be involved in a number of renewable energy projects across the state, many of which have complicated permitting requirements and processes. Examples include:
 - Tidal energy projects;
 - Anaerobic digester projects;
 - Geothermal heat pumps;
 - Biodiesel plants;
 - Ethanol plants;
 - Solar farms; and
 - Using biomass or agricultural waste to produce energy.

Northwest Region

- **Smokey Point Master Plan** – ORA has facilitated ongoing discussions involving state and federal agencies, the City of Marysville and local property owners on an advance planning and permitting project for the 675 acre Smokey Point master plan area. The key objective is to develop an integrated approach to permitting and mitigation for the entire area resulting in a more efficient permit process and a more effective environmental outcome.
- **Anaerobic Digesters** – Two anaerobic digester (renewable energy) projects in the Northwest Region received assistance from ORA: the Qualco Digester in Snohomish County, and the Farm Power Digester in Skagit County. Qualco is now operational, and Farm Power will come online later in 2009. ORA assisted with pre-application meetings, facilitated discussions between regulatory agencies and project applicants, and facilitated meetings focusing on new Solid Waste Handling regulations.
- **Tidal Energy Projects** – The two tidal energy projects being proposed for Washington State are both in Puget Sound. They are Snohomish Public Utility District’s Admiralty Inlet project and the US Navy-Puget Sound project proposed for a site adjacent to Marrowstone Island. Both have received extensive assistance from ORA’s Northwest region. This includes multiple, large informational meetings; smaller, technically-focused meetings; and coordination with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. If successful, these projects will be the first of their kind in marine waters in the United States.
- **Additional Projects** –
 - Anacortes Gems LLC Hotel Development
 - Bangor Submarine Base 2nd Explosives Handling Wharf
 - Blue Heron Slough Mitigation Bank
 - Skagit River Hydrokinetic Project
 - Everett Riverfront Development
 - Hydrokinetic Policy Workgroup
 - Sound Transit East Link
 - Port Gamble Development

Central Region

- **Williams Pipeline** – ORA staff in Central Washington are coordinating environmental permit application and review issues associated with a new natural gas transmission corridor proposed by Williams Pipeline. The proposed corridor largely parallels an existing corridor along the southern border of the state. This project, commonly referred to as the Blue Bridge Natural Gas Pipeline, would expand the availability of natural gas to Washington and British Columbia.
- **North Central Washington Prescribed Burn Council** – ORA staff helped the North Central Washington Prescribed Burn Council understand permitting needs and environmental issues associated with prescribed burning. The end result, achieved through collaborative efforts with the regulators was better smoke management, enhanced habitat, and reduced fire fuel in the landscape.
- **Additional Projects**
 - City of Rock Island Wastewater Treatment Plant
 - Yakima County Gap-to-Gap
 - Louis Gibson Mine
 - Sleepy Hollow Quarry
 - Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board
 - Condit Dam
 - Beautiful Buena
 - Okanogan County Shoreline Master Plan
 - Morgan Septage Lagoon

Eastern Region

- **Spokane River Whitewater Park** – This whitewater park, proposed for the Spokane River, is the first of its kind in Washington State. ORA is serving as a key state agency contact, working with agency staff to improve communication and collaboration, provide consistent agency feedback, clarify feedback as-needed, and facilitate communication among the applicant, interested parties, local government, and state and federal agencies.
- **Bar Regional Bio-Industrial Park** – ORA conducted a pre-application meeting for this project and continues to provide assistance on specific permitting issues relating to water resources, wetlands, and air quality. ORA also provides feedback on economic stimulus components as-needed. At a recent Washington State Department of Commerce feedback session, the applicant noted that he believes ORA’s involvement has shortened his permitting process by one year’s time.
- **Economic Development Efforts** – ORA Eastern Regional staff often work with regional economic development staff at the local and state level. Some of the activities include working with potential facilities in determining site capabilities and limitations prior to land purchase, clarifying and documenting permitting timeframes, and acting as liaison between state agency representatives. Staff also coordinate with local economic development representatives to identify possible assistance.
- **Additional Projects**
 - Hunters Water District Water System Improvements
 - Columbia Bluffs Development
 - Dayton Wastewater/TMDL
 - Easterday Feedlot
 - Spokane Hutterian Brethern Reservoir and Shorelines

- Sabey Corporation Data Center
- Alcoa Aluminum
- City of Quincy and Data Centers

Southwest Region

- **Regional Equestrian Center (REQ)** – ORA staff continues to work with the public facilities district and interested private parties regarding the REQ proposed facility in Lewis County. The REQ has struggled with regulatory requirements, and ORA staff is proactively assisting the REQ with permitting requirements of the various proposed sites.
- **Anderson Island** – ORA staff coordinated cross-agency permitting to replace an underwater power cable that failed and caused all residents of Anderson Island to lose power. ORA staff served as a communication hub for coordinating agency response and permitting.
- **Mary’s River Lumber Company Mill** – ORA staff organized an emergency permitting meeting regarding stabilizing the river bank in front of Mary’s River Mill in Montesano. Following the meeting, ORA coordinated with various agency personnel to facilitate the timely issuance of emergency permits to stabilize the bank. All emergency permits were issued.
 - **Additional Projects**
 - Shin-Etsu Handotai, Ltd (SEH America)
 - Concrete Technologies
 - Oregon Liquefied Natural Gas (OLNG)
 - Chinook Ventures, LLC
 - Grays Harbor Biofuels
 - Grays Harbor T1 Dredge Project
 - SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project

Small Business Support

ORA continues to support business owners by enhancing Washington’s award winning business website, www.Business.wa.gov. The website focuses on the primary needs of business owners by providing more centrally located information; more information specific to their particular industries; and assistance if they realize they are in trouble.

Information Business Owners Need - An example of more centrally located information is the joint tax video developed in fiscal year 2009 by Washington’s taxing agencies and coordinated by ORA. The video is being translated to Spanish during the summer of 2009 to accommodate business owners whose primary language is Spanish. Small Business Development Centers around the state are using the video as they support small business owners.

Based on feedback from visitors of Washington’s business website, a “What’s New” page was added in fiscal year 2009 to the website’s front page. Important information for businesses is added to this page each week. New information that has long term relevance is placed permanently on the website.

Collaboration with Partner Agencies - To further refine information and assistance available to small businesses, ORA collaborates regularly with small business liaisons from the following regulatory agencies to provide “no wrong door” service:

- Department of Labor & Industries
- Department of Revenue
- Employment Security Department
- Office of Women & Minority Business Enterprises
- Department of Commerce
- Secretary of State’s Office
- Department of Licensing
- Veterans Affairs
- Liquor Control Board
- General Administration

Website Usage - ORA tracks and measures web visits and customer satisfaction with the business portal so continuous improvements can be made in the most important areas. Business Portal web visits and customer satisfaction ratings have been tracked for more than two years. Web visits in calendar year 2008 total 542,680 and average 49,335 visitors per month. The highest usage is during the month of January because all businesses must file some type of business taxes in January.

Customer Satisfaction with Website - The customers who are generally most satisfied with the information on the website are prospective business owners, with an average satisfaction rating of 74%. They have told us they find the information provided about starting a business very helpful.

The average customer satisfaction rating from existing business owners is lower, at 62%. They continue to tell us they are somewhat satisfied with the current information available on the website, but they expect integration improvements to continue. For example, existing businesses would like to see additional coordinated online services and industry specific information available on the site.

- **New Information** – The following additional information was added to the website during the past year to help business owners search for information they need:
 - Corporation search tools to see if they are properly registered;
 - Construction contractor look-up to make sure contractors are properly licensed and bonded;
 - Look-up tools for contractors to verify that sub-contractors are properly licensed and up-to-date on their workers’ compensation premiums;
 - Look-up tools to know if a business is licensed and paying taxes;
 - Search capability to see if a taxpayer is delinquent in their taxes and had a lien filed against their business; and
 - Information about limited protection trademarks provided to business owners.

ORA will continue small improvements to integrate and personalize the Business Portal as existing resources allow, but will postpone major new initiatives until new resources become available.

Best Practices for Local Government Permitting

Although local governments can and do share information to learn from each other, no single jurisdiction can easily step forward to manage a statewide conversation about improving local government permitting. There are currently 281 cities and 39 counties in Washington. Each of these entities may have slightly different codes, processes, and permit requirements. The Legislature directed ORA to work with local governments to help improve development permitting processes.

In 2008, ORA conducted outreach to local governments and to business and industry groups to capture best practices. Six common themes related to local government permitting emerged and they are summarized in the 2008 Annual Report. The full study report and examples of each best practice can be found at: <http://www.ora.wa.gov/resources/government.asp>.

In 2009, ORA narrowed its focus and concentrated on developing materials, such as the Docks and Piers fact sheet, which can help local governments understand state and federal permitting requirements for commonly needed permits. We also continue to promote use of the ORA Information Center and the ORA website directly to local governments.

Outreach and Education

ORA provides a wide range of information to existing and new stakeholder groups about our services. The office educates these groups about effective ways to manage a project that requires multiple permitting or licensing approvals. We promote our services and work to tailor our presentations to their needs. ORA participated in approximately 56 outreach or education events during the 2009 fiscal year. Examples include:

- Washington Planner Forums
- Association of Counties and Association of Cities annual meetings and conferences
- Port or public facility district events
- American Public Works Association events
- Small Business roundtables
- Unified Business Identifier Conferences
- Economic Development group events
- Department of Commerce, Commerce Connections, and ARRA Energy Grant Application seminars and events

Outreach to Business Owners – ORA partnered with many agencies to conduct formal outreach events to approximately 650 small business owners, in Tacoma and Spokane during spring 2009. ORA used a new approach for this outreach that provided business education about survival in tough economic times, contracting with the government, and using online tools available through www.Business.wa.gov to meet regulatory requirements. These sessions were the third annual outreach events to small business owners.

Working in Water Workshops – ORA coordinated two Working in Water workshops: one with the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board, and one with the Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council.

E3 Washington – ORA participated in conferences in Pasco and Ellensburg and assisted with designing and facilitating the conference in Yakima. E3 Washington works with public and private organizations to develop a comprehensive statewide plan balancing environment, education, and the economy.

Mine Inspections Costs and Supply and Demand – ORA staff assisted the Department of Ecology in assessing actual costs for conducting mine inspections under the Metals, Milling and Mining Act. ORA then assisted at a policy level Sand and Gravel Workshop looking at policy issues related to planning and permitting for the aggregates industry.

SEPA Training – ORA worked with the Department of Ecology to design and present local government SEPA training. Two sessions – Basic and Advanced – were conducted in Wenatchee and the Tri-Cities in March 2009.

Cost Reimbursement

ORA entered into no new cost reimbursement agreements during fiscal year 2009. The office is currently working with the Williams Pipeline Company to put in place a new agreement that will cover ORA, Ecology, and possibly other state agency work on the Blue Bridge Pipeline project.

Pursuant to the revised statutory requirements, any new agreement will include a work plan with:

- The estimated number of weeks for initial review of the project;
- The anticipated number of revision cycles;
- The estimated number of weeks for review of subsequent revision submittals;
- The estimated number of billable hours and the rate per hour of employee time; and
- A process for revising the agreement if necessary

New cost reimbursement agreements must identify the tasks of each agency and the maximum costs for work to be conducted under the agreement. Upon request, ORA will verify that agencies have met the obligations contained in the cost reimbursement work plan and agreement.

End of Report

For additional information about ORA, visit our website at: www.ora.wa.gov or contact Faith Lumsden, Director, at 360-902-9823 or faith.lumsden@gov.wa.gov.