



Lura Powell, Chair
1063 Capitol Way S., Suite 16
Olympia, WA 98504
Phone: (360) 786-0770

News Release

For immediate release: June 2, 2011

11-003

**Contact: Cathy Cochran, Media Relations, Washington Redistricting Commission,
cathy.cochran@redistricting.wa.gov, 360-786-0042**

Redistricting Commission tours Eastern Washington

Olympia — The Washington State Redistricting Commission begins touring Eastern Washington next week with three public forums in the central region area. The first seven forums, held in Western Washington communities, helped the Commissioners better understand the potential effects of changing the boundaries of legislative and congressional voting districts in those regions.

“What we’re hearing at the forums will be incredibly important as we move into the process of actually drawing district lines,” said Commission chair, Lura Powell. “We’ve had fair attendance so far, but I’m hoping to see even more people turn out in our upcoming forums. What you tell us makes a difference. This process will set the district boundaries until the next census, 10 years from now. If you don’t speak up now, the chance won’t come around again for quite awhile.”

Next week’s forums will focus on Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima counties:

- Pasco – Tuesday, June 7 – Columbia Basin College, Gjerde Center (Building H – HUB)
- Yakima – Wednesday, June 8 – Clarion Hotel & Conference Center, Selah Room
- Wenatchee – Thursday, June 9 – Wenatchee Valley College Theater

The forums begin at 6 p.m. with an open house where people can look at maps that show the state’s population changes in each district and talk to map specialists about redistricting. An overview of the redistricting process begins at 6:30, and commissioners will hear public comment shortly after.

A Spanish language interpreter will be present at the forums to help those who prefer to speak in Spanish participate. If you plan to attend a forum and need auxiliary aids or services, including interpretation for languages other than Spanish, contact Heather Boe at 360-786-0770, or e-mail heather.boe@redistricting.wa.gov.

Eastern Washington tour begins

11-003

Page 2

The public's perspective on redistricting boundaries becomes especially critical this year because Washington is gaining another seat in Congress, which means adding a 10th congressional district to the state. The five-member Redistricting Commission has the rest of 2011 to set the new lines for the 10 congressional and 49 legislative districts. Besides taking comments, the commissioners are also encouraging people to submit their ideas of how the district lines should be drawn. A "Do It Yourself" map kit will be available within the next few weeks to make it easier for people to draw and submit redistricting maps.

Those who are unable to join the forum in person can participate via interactive webcast. Go to the Commission's website at www.redistricting.wa.gov and click on the "Attend by webcast" link or the "Get Involved" tab. To read the website content in another language, click on the Google Translate button for a dropdown menu of languages. The translation tool automatically converts the text into one of 59 languages.

The forums in Pasco and Yakima will be taped and broadcast by TVW, the state's non-profit public affairs television network. TVW will also webcast all the forums so that anyone in the state may participate in any forum.

Washington voters established the Washington State Redistricting Commission in 1983 to ensure voting boundaries are established through a fair and bi-partisan process. The Commission includes two Democrats and two Republicans as voting members and a non-voting, nonpartisan chair. Democratic appointees to the Commission are Tim Ceis, Seattle; and Dean Foster, Olympia. Republican members are former U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton, Bellevue; and Tom Huff, Gig Harbor. Lura Powell, from Richland, serves as the Commission chair.

###

Redistricting Commission website: www.redistricting.wa.gov

Census Bureau: <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>