

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Legislature says yes to public facilities district in Lewis County**  
***Alexander bill is path to securing revenue toward building REQ Center***

Encouraging news for Lewis County came tonight from the House of Representatives, which passed **Rep. Gary Alexander's** legislation to create a county public facilities district. The vote completes the Legislature's work on [House Bill 2388](#), which now goes to the governor for her consideration.

"This bill is about creating new economic opportunities, about finding a new way to restore prosperity to communities that have been hit hard by the loss of 600 family-wage jobs," said Alexander, R-Thurston County.

"Lewis County's situation is well known within the Legislature. The county's leaders are intent on diversifying the economy of their area, and I'm confident they will make good use of this new tool."

Alexander introduced his PFD legislation three days into the 2007 legislative session, in response to the sudden closure of the TransAlta mine north of Centralia in late 2006.

"The Southwest Washington Regional Equestrian Center being proposed for Lewis County's I-5 corridor would be a big boost in so many ways, from increasing tourism to potential agribusiness and education opportunities," Alexander explained. "A high level of private investment is lined up, and a PFD has the bonding authority and access to revenue needed to help put the pieces together."

House Bill 2238 was passed by the House five weeks ago. The Senate passed it April 10 after making changes. The two chambers worked out their differences with an agreed-upon amendment which both passed today.

The REQ Center, a domed arena estimated to cost around \$60 million, would host major rodeo and bull riding events, as well as other equestrian events and music concerts. Centralia businessman Larry Hewitt, head of the REQ Center group, says the facility would include a learning center to provide a continuing education facility for equine and agricultural sciences.

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