

Congressional delegation comes to Vancouver bearing gifts

U.S. Rep. **Brian Baird** (D-3rd) was the principal perpetrator, and Washington's Democratic U.S. Senators **Patty Murray** and **Maria Cantwell** were adroit accomplices, in snatching out of a languishing Congress just hours before the holiday adjournment this week a reprieve of the federal income tax state sales tax deduction they had shepherded through Congress in 2004.

Baird, Murray and Cantwell shared a news conference in **Jon Creedon's** Vancouver Ford/Hyundai to explain how they accomplished the deed and how federal tax payers in Washington and six other states can take advantage of the deserved tax break.

Their victory is a flat-out minimum \$500 gift to every federal income tax paying family in Washington, as well as to those in six other states where the sales tax deduction is once again allowed.

As an example, for every family that buys a \$40,000 tricked-out Harley Davidson-themed Ford F150 before midnight Dec. 31, the sales tax deduction from the federal tax bill means an additional \$3,500 savings.

The original sales tax deduction act expired Jan. 1, 2006. Without congressional action before the end of the current session, it could possible have ended for a very long time what Baird calls tax fairness.

Federal taxpayers can deduct state income taxes paid in those states where state income tax is the principal state revenue source. For many years taxpayers in states without an income tax and supported mainly by a sales tax could not deduct the sales tax.

Now the federal law ushered in through the leadership of the Washington delegation extends the sales tax deductibility for tax years, 2006 and 2007.

The extension of sales tax deductibility means a great deal to businesses that border on income tax states like Oregon, **Beth Quartarolo**, president of the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, said this morning as she joined Baird, Murray and Cantwell in the news conference.

Local federal taxpayers may take the standard non-itemized deduction, which amounts to between \$500 and \$600. For big ticket items, however, they must use separate federal form and itemize sales tax on big-ticket items, such as automobiles, appliances, televisions, jewelry and home improvements—any item for which they paid sales tax.

According to Baird, members of Congress are beginning to see that the issue is a matter of tax fairness.

Baird and Cantwell have also introduced stand-alone legislation, co-sponsored by Murray, that would make the state sales tax deduction a permanent feature of the U.S. tax code.

Tevis Laspa is Ridgefield's 2006 Outstanding Citizen

Tevis Laspa, former Ridgefield mayor and city council member, has been named Ridgefield's Outstanding Citizen for 2006. Laspa, who served on the city council from 1994 through 1997, was also an interim city manager for the city in 2001.

Laspa was cited for his many community activities, ranging from the Lion's Club to Little League and youth soccer. He is an active member of the Gee Creek Enhancement Committee. Laspa has also worked for passage of Ridgefield School District bond and levy measures, and is an active supporter of the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge.

News brief

Save-A-Lot, a grocery store opening in the Totem Pole Shopping Center in Hazel Dell in early February, will make pre-opening sale contributions to Loaves & Fishes, reports company spokesperson **Jaime Folsom**.



Sen. Patty Murray, left, joined U.S. Rep. Brian Baird, second from right, and Sen. Maria Cantwell, far right, in news conference announcing sales tax deductibility in Jon Creedon's, second from left, Vancouver Ford Hyundai store today. Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce president Beth Quartarolo is in the center.

Save-A-Lot stores specialize in carrying 1,250 of the most frequently purchased grocery items. Loaves & Fishes makes Meals-on-Wheels deliveries in Clark County and other locations in the region.

Calendar

A reception for candidates for chief of the Vancouver police department is from 6 to 7 p.m. this evening in City Hall. One of four finalists will succeed former chief **Brian Martinek**. ☞ An open mike poetry night, led by **Rivkah Loewus**, opens with sign-ups at 6:45 p.m. this evening in the Vancouver Community Library, 1007 E Mill Plain Boulevard. ☞ Identity Clark County is holding a briefing on the results of the Vancouver-Portland Trade Capacity Study at 11 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 14, in Port of Vancouver offices, 3103 NW Lower River Road. The presenter is **Arno Hart**, lead consulting analyst for the study. For reservations, call **695-4116**.

Wednesday Headlines

[Regional transportation planners having to cope with cargo volumes that will double in the next 30 years--Columbian, **Jonathan Nelson**](#)

[Port of Portland to give Vancouver and Clark County some say in future planning, including Portland International Airport--Oregonian, **Bill Stewart**](#)

[Pig that jumped out of semitrailer onto Highway 205 while on way to slaughterhouse now being cared for by Randy and Betty Goggin at local Pigs R Us farm and destined to be a mother instead of ham and bacon--Columbian, **John Branton**](#)

[Bellingham consultant Mike Burgess selected to lobby legislature for Clark County--Columbian](#)
[Wilderness remains a deadly place--Columbian, **Tom Koenninger**](#)

[Weather restricting rescue efforts of climbers lost on Mt. Hood--KATU, AP, **Joseph B. Frazier**](#)

[Elson Floyd, president of the University of Missouri system, named Washington State University's tenth president--Seattle Times, **Nick Perry**](#)

[Clinton and Giuliani are early favorites for White House in 2008--Washington Post, **Dan Balz** and **Jon Cohen**](#)

Wednesday on the air

...Bravo! Vancouver: The Messiah—4 p.m. CVTV

Portland Trail Blazers at Memphis (live)—5 p.m. KXL

Affordable Housing (12/5)—6:30 p.m. CVTV

Clark County Focus (12/7)—8:30 p.m. CVTV

Clark County Planning Commission (12/12)—9 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the Weather

Phil .Batchelor falling into good company. ☞ **Elson Strahan** lending sophisticated touch. ☞ **Walt Evans** catalyzing. ☞ **Lisa Lowe** shrinking. ☞ **Don Russo** schmoozing. ☞ **Steve Morash** busily engaged. ☞ **Wednesday**, mostly rain, 54. **Thursday**, more rain, possible sun breaks, 53. **Friday**, cloudy, more rain expected 41. [Click here for the rest of Pat Timm's current weather information.](#)