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WASHINGTON COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT PRESENTS KEY AWARD TO CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EVERETT

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Washington Coalition for Open Government will present a Key Award on September 16 to a group of Everett activists who have been encouraging the Everett City Council to establish more open and transparent processes and to increase opportunities for citizen involvement.

The council voted, in its first meeting of 2010 and with little public notice or involvement, to change its regular meeting time from evening to morning, which would have made it difficult for many private citizens to attend council meetings. A loosely-organized group of citizen "government watchers", including Everett realtor Barb Lamoureux, rallied to oppose the change, circulating a petition calling for a special election on the issue. Because of this opposition, in February the council reversed the decision and changed back to evening meeting times. The group, which is now calling itself "Citizens for a Better Everett", continued to advocate for other changes in council procedures to facilitate citizen involvement, including presenting an 11-page package of suggestions to the council. On June 16, the council approved formal written rules and procedures for how it does its business – one of the last cities in Washington State to establish written processes to insure transparency in council business and opportunities for citizen involvement.

WCOG presents its Key Award to individuals and organizations, including public officials and agencies, who have done something notable for the cause of open government. Citizens for a Better Everett was nominated for the award by WCOG President Toby Nixon, on the basis of news reports about the group's activities.

"Washington Coalition for Open Government seeks to educate the public about their rights to access public records and meetings, and to use those rights to become more involved in their government," said Nixon. "This group in Everett has shown that threats to opportunities for public involvement can be protected by swift action, and improvements can be realized by persistence and doing the legwork to identify best practices and work with government officials to get them implemented. We encourage others throughout Washington to follow their example!"

Previous Key Award recipients during 2010 include Redmond accountant Ed Clark, Mercer Island activist Ira Appelman, Monroe activist Meredith Mechling, Pierce County Executive Pat McCarthy, the News Tribune of Tacoma, Everett School Board member Jessica Olson, former Stephenson school board member Gloria Howell, and former Skamania County prosecuting attorney Brad Andersen.

Washington Coalition for Open Government (WCOG) is an independent non-partisan non-profit organization founded in 2002 by a group of individuals representing organizations with a broad spectrum of opinions and backgrounds, all dedicated to the principles of strengthening the state's open government laws and protecting the public's access to government at all levels.

For more information, contact Washington Coalition for Open Government, 6351 Seaview Avenue NW, Seattle, WA 98107-2664, on the web at [www.washingtoncog.org](http://www.washingtoncog.org), or call (206) 782-0393.