

NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FROM: WASHINGTON COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT  
TOPIC: FREE SUNSHINE WEEK PUBLIC DISCUSSION TO ADDRESS OPEN  
GOVERNMENT

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The Seattle Times and the Washington Coalition for Open Government will present a free public discussion entitled "Your Government: Tried, true and new ways to keep it open and accountable" from 6:00 to 8:30 PM on Tuesday, March 15 at The Seattle Times, Fairview Avenue and John Street in Seattle.

The event is a part of Sunshine Week, March 13-19, a national program spearheaded by the American Society of News Editors <http://asne.org> to promote a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. Participants include news media, civic groups, libraries, nonprofits, schools and others interested in the public's right to know.

A panel of expert speakers will lead the discussion on how citizens can keep government open and accountable to better serve the people of the state, and how technology is empowering more citizens to do so.

King 5 News reporter Owen Lei will moderate the discussion. The panelists will include:

- Mike Fancher, vice president of the Washington Coalition for Open Government (WCOG) and retired executive editor of The Times;
- Matt Rosenberg of Public Eye Northwest, an independent non-profit dedicated to boosting digital civic literacy, building community news creation capacity, and best practices in voluntary government transparency;
- Meredith Mechling, a citizen who waged a successful open-government battle with the city of Monroe, for which she received an award from WCOG;
- Jim Neff, The Seattle Times Investigations Editor

The event is free and open to all, and questions and comments from the audience are welcome. The audience will also have an opportunity to meet with the panelists at a reception following the discussion.

“Citizen vigilance is the linchpin that keeps government open and transparent, and this event is designed to help citizens understand how they can do just that,” Fancher said. “Because of Sunshine Week, citizens will be gathering in events like this across the country to foster government openness and accountability.”

The Seattle Times is a 114-year-old locally owned journalism and community Service Company. Founded in 1896 by Alden J. Blethen, it is a fourth- and fifth-generation family business. The family's flagship newspaper, The Seattle Times, is the largest daily newspaper in Washington State and the largest Sunday newspaper in the Northwest. The flagship Web site, [seattletimes.com](http://seattletimes.com), is the largest local news information Web site in the Northwest. Other Blethen-owned newspapers in Washington are the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, the Yakima Herald-Republic, The Issaquah Press and its affiliated community newspapers: the Newcastle News, the Sammamish Review and the SnoValley Star.

The Washington Coalition for Open Government is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and defending the people's right to know in matters of public interest and in the conduct of the public's business. Members of the coalition represent a broad range of interests, including the news media, public affairs, law, current and retired public officials, business and labor.

For more information, contact the Washington Coalition for Open Government by phone 206-782-0393 or by email at [info@washingtoncog.org](mailto:info@washingtoncog.org), or visit the WCOG Web site at [www.washingtoncog.org](http://www.washingtoncog.org).

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