

## **First of Several Statewide Redistricting Meetings Tuesday in Aberdeen**

### **Local News**

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Olympia-The Washington State Redistricting Commission is hosting a series of public forums to gather input they will use in redrawing the boundaries of voting districts across the state. The public's input is vital to the process. "Washington is one of the few states that has opted for a fair, bi-partisan process in redistricting," said Committee chair, Lura Powell. "Our laws help to ensure that redistricting is just, but the only way for fairness to happen in reality is if people weigh in and give us their thoughts and suggestions for what the districts should look like in the end." Public input becomes all the more critical this year, as Washington gains another seat in Congress, requiring the formation of a 10th Congressional district. The five-member Redistricting Commission has the rest of 2011 to set the new lines for the 10 congressional and 49 legislative districts.

The state has grown by more than 14 percent in the past decade, and nearly all the districts will likely need to gain or lose population to meet the legal redistricting requirements. Several factors play a part in where the boundaries may be drawn, including: \* Each district must have nearly equal numbers of people. \* District boundaries should encompass land areas that adjoin one another and are as compact as possible. \* As closely as possible, district boundaries need to follow local political subdivisions and areas where people share a common interest, such as race or ethnicity. The first redistricting public forums are scheduled to occur within the next few weeks at the following locations: \* Aberdeen: Tuesday, May 17, Grays Harbor College HUB, 1620 Edward P. Smith Drive \* Olympia: Wednesday, May 18, John A. Cherberg Building, 304 15th Ave., Senate Hearing Room 1 \* Vancouver: Thursday, May 19, Hilton Vancouver Hotel, 301 West 6th St, Discovery Ballroom ABC \* Renton: Monday, May 23, Renton, Renton Technical College cafeteria, 3000 NE 4th St. \* Bellevue: Tuesday, May 24, Red Lion Hotel Bellevue, Evergreen Point Room, 11211 Main St. \* Everett: Wednesday, May 25, Everett Community College, Jackson Conference Center, 2000 Tower St. All forums begin at 6 p.m. with an open house and presentations. Public comment will be heard from 7 to 9 p.m. TVW, the state's non-profit public affairs television network, will webcast all the forums so that anyone in the state may participate in any forum. Instructions for webcast participation will be available on the Redistricting Commission website before the forums begin. Visit the website at [www.redistricting.wa.gov](http://www.redistricting.wa.gov) for more information. To request auxiliary aids or services, including translation, for the forums contact Heather Boe at 360-786-0770, or e-mail [heather.boe@redistricting.wa.gov](mailto:heather.boe@redistricting.wa.gov). 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 the Commission chair.