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Nine eastside communities recognized by Harvard for innovative online services

A set of pioneering online services developed by nine eastside communities to more efficiently deliver traditional municipal services has been named by Harvard University as a finalist for the school's prestigious Innovations in American Government Award.

The services offered by the eCityGov Alliance, provide convenient, one-stop internet access to such services as building permits, recreational opportunities, and property information.

The services are the nation's first, cross-boundary web portals.

"This is a tremendous honor for the eCityGov Alliance," said John Backman, the Alliance's executive director. "We believe we are setting a new standard for local government service for citizens and businesses, and this recognition underscores that belief."

The Alliance founding communities include Bellevue, Bothell, Kenmore, Issaquah, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Sammamish, Snoqualmie and Woodinville. The Alliance also provides services to an additional 20 communities in the greater Puget Sound region.

Seventeen other government initiatives from around the country were named as finalists along with eCityGov Alliance for the Innovations in American Government Award. The award was founded in 1986 as part of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Of the 18 award finalists, seven will win \$100,000 prizes. The winners will be announced in September in Washington, D.C. at a dinner celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Innovations in American Government Awards.

The eCityGov Alliance was founded in 2001. The Alliance started with a total population of 300,000; today, Alliance services can be accessed by more than a million citizens.

The eCityGov Alliance services include:

- MyParksandRecreation.com
- MyBuildingPermit.com
- NWProperty.net
- NWMaps.net

“The City of Snoqualmie is the fastest growing city in the state, but without the cost effective online services provided by the eCityGov Alliance we would not be able to afford the cost of meeting the growing expectations of our community,” said Bob Larson, City Administrator, City of Snoqualmie.

Backman said, “By sharing the costs of the web service portals, even the smallest city can afford to put their services on-line. New members can be added quickly because the business and technical standards have already been established”.

Because the service is jointly managed by members, the web portals are continually being updated, Backman said. The most recent enhancements include an innovative parks search function for MyParksandRecreation.com and online permit inspection scheduling through MyBuildingPermit.com

On the web, eCityGov Alliance services can be accessed at www.eCityGov.net.

More information on the Innovations in American Government Awards can be found at www.innovations.harvard.edu