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For Immediate Release

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**Jefferson County
Accessible Communities Advisory Committee, (ACAC)**

Port Townsend – Since Jefferson County established an active cross-disability Accessible Communities Advisory Committee, (ACAC) in 2015, the County has received more than \$73,000 in funding for projects focused on raising awareness and acceptance of people with disabilities through education, access and barrier removal.

The local ACAC began in accordance with the Accessible Communities Act and the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment.

Toby Olsen, executive secretary of the Governor's Committee on Disability and Employment in Olympia, originally had the idea that a fund in Olympia be given access to \$100 of every \$450 ticket given out to people in Washington state who park in accessible parking spots without a permit.

Olsen's idea was that every County in the State – through approval from their local Board of County Commissioners – could access grant funding for a range of projects that would develop local initiatives and activities to promote a greater awareness of disability issues and acceptance while supporting involvement and access for persons with disabilities.

The state Legislature passed the Accessible Communities Act, which gave the committees access to the funding. Jefferson County was the first county to receive approval to access the grant funding.

Locally, the ACAC grant is overseen by Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH) on behalf of the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners.

In order to create a local ACAC, Anna McEnery of JCPH pulled together a group of people who have a disability and/or who work in the field, volunteer or are a family member of a person with a disability. Membership has fluctuated, but the following people are currently members of the ACAC: Colleen Faragher-Horwell, Roland Faragher-Horwell, Sarah Grossman, Carl Hanson, Emily Mandelbaum, Mark Mc Cauley, Kim Rafferty, Pat Teal and Shirley Williams.

Most recently the Jefferson County ACAC applied for and received \$48,291.00 in grant funding. The following is a list of local projects that met the objectives of improving awareness, acceptance, inclusion and access for people with disabilities in our community.

- ADA Access at Jefferson County Fairgrounds-Improve Parking Lot
- ADA Access at Jefferson County Fairgrounds-Sidewalk extension
- Project Lifesaver (Tracking Devices) for the Sheriff's Department
- ADA Accessible Main Doors at Public Health (Matching Funds)
- ADA Accessible Main Doors at the Coyle Community Center (Matching Funds)
- Assistive Listening Devices-for the City of Port Townsend (Matching Funds)
- Co-sponsorship of two films connected with disabilities at PT Film Festival

The ACAC members are looking for additional projects for the next grant cycle. If you have an idea or would like additional information about the Accessible Community Advisory Committee, please call 360-385-9410. or send an email to: amcenery@co.jefferson.wa.us.

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