

The Pierce County Planning and Land Services Department (PALS) will furlough employees and close its development center for nine days over the rest of this year in response to recent budget cuts.

The first closure will occur this Friday, May 1.

PALS Director Chuck Kleeberg said building inspectors, plan examiners, permit technicians and code enforcement officers will be affected by the furloughs. Members of AFSCME Local 120 negotiated the nine-day furlough in order to avoid a large number of layoffs. Also participating will be unrepresented planners and managers in the department.

The department's budget was cut by \$500,000 last month as part of a move to trim County spending by \$8 million.

Besides this Friday, here are the rest of the closure dates for the development center, which issues building permits, reviews building plans and provides other services:

Friday, May 1  
Tuesday, May 26  
Friday, June 12  
Monday, July 6  
Friday, August 7  
Friday, September 4  
Monday, October 12  
Wednesday, November 25  
Thursday, December 24

The closure dates were spread over the course of the year to avoid more disruption than necessary. Most of the dates extend existing holidays. A few are related to historically low customer volumes.

“We understand that any closure of the department affects our customers, and we regret any inconvenience this might cause,” Kleeberg said. “We hope that publishing the list of closures now will help our customers better avoid a frustrating trip to the Development Center.”

The Development Center is located in the Pierce County Annex, 2401 S. 35<sup>th</sup> St., Tacoma. Other services in the Annex will be available on these dates, including those provided by the County Auditor and the County Assessor-Treasurer.

The Planning and Land Services Department has had its staff reduced by 43 in the last 18 months due to the decline in the housing market.

“New housing starts in the County today are just 25 percent of what they were in 2007,” said Kleeberg. “While other sectors of the construction industry are still relatively strong, residential development is a big part of fee revenue for the County.”

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