



Jim Sipprell of Lilliwap returns his ballot Monday to a drop box in Hoodspert. More than 5,400 ballots had been received by the county election office as of Monday night. *Journal photo by Lloyd Mullen*

## County creates diversion program

By Kirk Boxleitner  
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Like many regions across the country, Shelton and Mason County's law enforcement and legal systems have faced an ever-increasing number of incidents affected by substance abuse, mental health disorders and extreme poverty, so several elements of the county and city government have teamed up to craft a more effective systemic response.

"This community has already worked together for the past several years to create more opportunities to deal with these problems as they continue to affect individuals who intersect with our law enforcement," said Abe Gardner, program coordinator for Mason County Public Health. "As our officers in the field encounter these individuals, simply not dealing with these issues is not an option."

House Bill 1767, passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor last year, established a law enforcement grant program to expand alternatives to arrest and jail, and the Washington Health Care Authority awarded nearly \$900,000 to the Mason County Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (MCLEAD) program.

MCLEAD represents a partnership among the Public Health Department and the sheriff's, prosecutor's and public defender's offices, and the city government

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## Smooth start to voting in Mason County

By Justin Johnson  
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The first week of general election voting was brisk in Mason County.

As of Monday night, more than 5,400 ballots had been received by the Auditor's Office.

That's about a 12.5% turnout of the county's more than 43,000 registered voters in just a few days.

The county's ballots were sent to the Tacoma Postal Processing Center on Oct. 13 and most were delivered by Oct. 15, according to Mason County Auditor Paddy McGuire.

"We had a lot of ballots come back over the weekend and turnout is strong," McGuire wrote in a Monday night email to the *Shelton-*

*Mason County Journal*. "Things have gone smoothly so far."

McGuire wrote that uncertainty was his office's biggest challenge during the run-up to voting.

"We have not known whether our building would be open to the public and planning without knowing how things would be has been tough," McGuire wrote. "We were blessed to get two grants. One from the CARES Act and one from the Center for Tech and Civic Life that have given us the resources to remodel our space and build a new public lobby, and do outreach to tell folks about how things have changed."

"We are also having to run a presidential election with less staff

than we would normally have because of distancing requirements in our ballot processing room."

McGuire wrote that the county is emptying the drop boxes daily and processing early ballots.

"We empty the drop boxes daily, batch the ballots into groups of 50 and then they go to signature verification, where a staff member trained by the Washington State Patrol checks the signature on the envelope against the voter registration card," McGuire wrote of the process once a ballot is received. "If they match, the envelopes are opened and the ballots, inside the secrecy sleeve, are removed in a

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## 'A real champion for people'

### Shelton community leader battling COVID

By Gordon Weeks  
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Shelton resident Ricardo De Bosque is known throughout Mason County's Spanish-speaking community as "The Don," an honorary nickname for a man esteemed as a long-time leader and the leader of a household.

The Mexican immigrant is the bilingual family and student support coordinator for the Shelton School District. When he was named the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's 2010-2011 Regional Classified Employee of the Year, the award noted, "His colleagues describe Ricardo as the person the entire Spanish-speaking com-

munity turns to with their questions about health care, schooling, housing, employment, immigration, guidance for errant teenagers and so much more."

"He's an amazing man," said his son, Ricardo Del Bosque Jr. "People look up to him very much."

After the coronavirus forced the Shelton School District to close its doors in March, Del Bosque continued to deliver food to Spanish-speaking families in need in Mason County.

His son said he believes that's how he contracted the coronavirus.

Del Bosque is battling for his life in a Seattle rehabilitation facility. The disease caused him to have a stroke. He spends most of his time on a ventilator so he can breathe. He can't speak.

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Ricardo Del Bosque, the bilingual family and student support coordinator for the Shelton School District, is infected with the coronavirus, possibly caught while delivering food to Spanish-speaking families in need in Mason County. He suffered a stroke and is on a ventilator at a Seattle rehabilitation facility. *Courtesy photo*

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# Leader: 'Will need to learn how to eat, talk and walk again'

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"Going forward, he will need to learn how to eat, talk and walk again, which is shocking," wrote his daughter-in-law, Nicole Del Bosque. "To go from an energetic, hardworking 59-year-old to this state is a testament to how ugly this virus is."

Del Bosque was put on a ventilator Aug. 19 at Mason General Hospital.

"He was having trouble breathing, having trouble saying words and talking, and having pain in his chest," his son said. "He didn't want to go, but my mom persuaded him."

Mason General transported him by ambulance to a multi-care facility in Auburn, where he received a tracheotomy, so he could breathe; he was then moved to Swedish Hospital in Seattle. On Sept. 24, he had a stroke.

After the stroke, he was moved to a rehabilitation facility in Seattle, where he remains.

"It's been very hard because his mind is very active," said his son. "He's always very active ... Our entire family has been very distressed."

Del Bosque's entire family includes eight younger siblings — most of whom followed him to the United States — eight children and stepchildren by two marriages, and the Spanish-speaking community.

De Bosque is "a man who rose from injured former undocumented worker to the best source for migrant family's help in Shelton," his daughter-in-law wrote.

"It's a blessing to have him in the community and school district," said Del Bosque's boss, Shelton School District Superintendent Alex Apostle.

"He's a real champion for people," Apostle said. "He has a huge heart ... He is someone we count on."

Born in 1961, Del Bosque began his professional career as a police officer in Saltillo, Mexico.

Seeking to leave his dangerous job at the border, he and his brother crossed the border illegally into Texas. Intrigued by the forest industry, he came to Shelton, where he worked in construction until he was injured. His vocational counselor suggested the education field; a construction employer sponsored him to get a work visa and helped him get permanent residency and then citizenship.

The Shelton School District hired Del Bosque to be a para-technician. In 2006, he became the bilingual family support liaison. He's also director of the district's family resource center.

Del Bosque's daughter-in-law wrote Del Bosque hosts festivals to collect back-to-school supplies for students in need, helps hundreds ap-



**ABOVE:** Ricardo Del Bosque wears a face mask while delivering food to people in need this summer in the Shelton School District. His son says he took the pandemic seriously, and urged people to wash their hands and not congregate. Nevertheless, he was infected by the coronavirus. **RIGHT:** Del Bosque as a youth. *Courtesy photos*



it seriously," he said. Del Bosque's wife, Debra, is staying with her stepson in Seattle and visits every day. He can move some parts of his body. He points to words on a chart to communicate. He's been on a ventilator for nine weeks.

"It's a struggle to wean him off, but he's recently made a bit of progress where he's awake and breathing on his own power for several hours a day," wrote his daughter-in-law.

"I know he'll recover," said his son.

The family has set up a GoFundMe site, which can be found by typing in "Ricardo Del Bosque" or "Shelton, WA," to collect donations for costs incurred by the disease. As of Wednesday morning, the amount donated is \$15,113. Donations can also be made to an account at Our Community Credit Union.

ply for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and arranges pro bono medical work for sick and uninsured students.

De Bosque's son said his father took the pandemic "very

seriously" and daily followed the number of new positive cases in Mason County.

"Dad always encouraged people to stay safe — 'Don't go, don't congregate, wash your hands' — he always took

the **YMCA**

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