THURSDAY, 02.16.12

EVERETT, WASHINGTON

50¢ (HIGHER IN OUTLYING AREAS)

Red flags for Reardon's run

Records show county exec used public resources to raise campaign cash

By Scott North and Noah Haglund Herald Writers

EVERETT — Campaign and office records show Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon spent 2011 making extensive use of taxpayer resources to run for his third term in office.

Reardon set aside 124 work hours on his county schedule for campaign work, and made he was purportedly managing

See a timeline of the investigation and an illustration of how The Herald put the facts together. Page A2

roughly 1,000 calls to campaign staff and those who gave money to his re-election. That amounted to 43 hours spent dialing for dollars from his county phone while county business.

A Herald examination also found that Reardon had frequent meetings with his key fundraising consultant during work hours — appointments set up by his county-employed assistant and listed as "staff meetings" on his public calendar.

Office holders are prohibited from using public resources for political campaigns. Doing so vio-



Aaron Reardon

law and Snohomish County's ethics code, and can lead to steep fines.

lates state elections

Before and after the election, Reardon, a Democrat, has insisted that no public resources

were used in his campaign and that he only used his county phone for

election-related calls "when I had to reschedule meetings." He has repeatedly refused to answer further questions, saying he is awaiting results of a Washington State Patrol investigation, launched a few days before the November

Investigators are trying to determine whether Reardon, who is

See **REARDON**, Page A2

That's 1 grand roll-out



The Boeing Co.'s 1,000th 777 aircraft rolled out of the jet maker's factory in Everett late Tuesday. The twin-aisle airplane was towed to another bay in the factory where it will continue to be worked on for a few days. Boeing plans to deliver the 1,000th 777 in early March to Emirates airline.

Development moratorium put on mill site

The Everett City Council voted on the restriction to give time to consider what's best for the Kimberly-Clark location.

> By Debra Smith Herald Writer

EVERETT — In an effort to protect a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," the Everett City Council adopted an emergency six-month moratorium on any development at the Kimberly-Clark mill site.

The unanimous decision came without warning to the public late Wednesday night after an executive session.

Afterward, Mayor Ray Stephanson said the city wanted to keep a lid on the moratorium to keep any last-minute permits from being filed with the city.

"The development of our waterfront is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Everett, and the city intends to ensure that it approaches future land-use decisions as well prepared as possible to make the best decision for the city's future," he said in prepared remarks.

City attorney Jim Iles told the council the measure was introduced to prevent "undesirable land uses" from cropping up at

the mill site.

No one specified just what those undesirable land uses might be.

Kimberly-Clark was one of Everett's largest employers, and most of the hundreds of people who worked there no longer do. The mill is expected to be fully closed by the end of March. Kimberly-Clark Corp. was in negotiations to sell its pulp and tissue mill on the

See **EVERETT**, Page A4

Upbeat Boeing waits for **Obama**

Boeing's recent success

provides the president with a backdrop for his message on encouraging manufacturing.

> By MICHELLE DUNLOP Herald Writer

EVERETT — When President Obama arrives Friday at the Boeing Co.'s factory here, he'll see a manufacturer on the upswing,

What to expect:

The president's

mean some de-

See where and

when to expect

disruptions. A7

lays and closures.

visit on Friday will

with jet orders galore new employees coming in the door every

week. It's precisely the picture of success president has been promot-

ing: an American manufacturer hiring workers at home rather than sending jobs

Obama started a three-day political trip, which includes eight fundraisers, Wednesday in Milwaukee, Wis., where he toured Master Lock, a manufacturer that has brought jobs back to the U.S. from China.

Manufacturing is coming back," Obama said. "The economy is getting stronger."

Here in the Puget Sound region, Boeing is booming, having added 8,361 jobs in Washington last year. Those jobs are in support of the company's plan to increase aircraft production at the company's widebody jet site in Everett and the single-aisle 737 assembly facility in Renton.

In Everett, where the president will tour the 787 line and deliver a

See **OBAMA**, Page A7



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Hold the lettuce

Dying to get in: A man who was enjoying a Triple Bypass Burger, which includes 1.5 pounds of beef and a dozen bacon slices, at the Heart Attack Grill in Las Vegas, is now recovering after suffering, yes, a heart attack while at the restaurant. The restaurant, famous for its 10,000-calorie meals, serves free meals to those who weigh more

than 350 pounds (Page A3). Regular customers can also get a special punch card: For every 10 Triple Bypass

Burgers you buy you get your choice of an actual triple by-

pass or free catering for your memorial service.

Plays a mean game of chess, too: A U.S. astronaut, Daniel Burbank, commander of the International Space Station, shook hands Wednesday with

Robonaut, the station's new humanoid robot."The first human-humanoid handshake in space," Burbank noted (Page A4). Robonaut then sang "Bicycle Built for Two" and informed Burbank that he was having difficulty with the pod bay doors.

Don't know much about history: On this day in 1868, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks was organized in New York City (Today in

History, Page A4). Next door, the Odd Fellows slapped their foreheads for not taking the Elk name when

it was available. —Jon Bauer, Herald staff



Classified C7 Crossword . . . H4

Business A6 Comics H4 Dear Abby. . . . H5 Horoscope . . . C7 H&G **H1** Lottery **A4**

Obituaries. . . . **B4** Opinion. **B7**



46/39, **B8**



Reardon: Evidence of misuse of resources

From Page A1

married, spent taxpayer money on an affair with Tamara Dutton, a county human services employee who also was his classmate at Mariner High School in the 1980s.

Dutton, of Bothell, has refused on-the-record interview requests from The Herald.

Dutton has previously spoken with Seattle media, and did so again on Valentine's Day to say she estimates Reardon spent about a few thousand dollars of county money on their affair. Much of that, for a trip to Chicago in 2010, was repaid within weeks by the Democratic Leadership Council.

As details of their reported affair grab attention, those who monitor government, political campaigns and work for those seeking office are taking note of how Reardon blended his personal political campaign with his public duties.

Among the records released so far is evidence that Reardon frequently and consistently used county resources for his political campaign.

It should be well understood by politicians that taxpayers do not provide a piggy bank of public money to use in re-election campaigns, said Ron Dotzauer. Dotzauer, of Snohomish, for decades has been a go-to political consultant for Washington Democrats who aspire to higher office.

"It is against the law in the state of Washington to use public facilities or public equipment for campaign purposes," Dotzauer said. "That is not appropriate. And it is illegal."

If Reardon used public resources to get re-elected, Dotzauer said, "it's going to cost him money." And it's expensive to run for public office.

Reardon paid Seattle political fundraising consultant Colby Underwood \$41,000 to work on his campaign. Underwood helped Reardon take in almost \$400,000 in donations.

Emails show that "inoffice staff meetings" were
scheduled to accommodate
meetings with Underwood,
who is well-known in state
and county political circles
and, standing nearly 7 feet
tall, is hard to miss.

He was often seen coming and going from meetings with Reardon in the executive's office on the sixth floor of the county building.

Cellphone records show that Reardon exchanged about 500 calls and texts with Underwood via the county-issued cellphone – roughly 10 hours of talking time – in the run-up to the election.

In December, after his county phone records were released to The Herald, Reardon made multiple phone calls to a Herald reporter. While he didn't address documented calls to Dutton, he sought to explain his relationship with Underwood.

Reardon said he and Underwood were discussing a project that could produce electricity from methane gas at the old Cathcart Landfill. Underwood is chief business officer for a Seattle company called Blue Marble Biomaterials.

Underwood's work as a paid campaign employee had nothing to do with those meetings, Reardon said. "My dominant relationship (with Underwood) is regarding his role in alternative energy," Reardon said.

Underwood did not respond to phone calls and emails seeking comment.

County council members and other elected officials, including some who have used Underwood to assist their own campaigns, said they'd never heard of Blue Marble Biomaterials or any projects being in the works for the old Cathcart dump.

A public records request filed in December regarding Blue Marble and Underwood has provided no record of any discussions. Reardon's office did hand over a 13-page promotion packet produced by the company, much of it already available on the company's

website.

Comparing Reardon's county office schedule with his county cellphone records show more than 50 times listed as "in-office staff meetings," when Reardon actually was making campaign-related phone calls. Records show 43 hours were spent on such calls.

At times, up to 50 phone calls would be made in quick succession during these meetings, each often lasting under two minutes. Many of the calls were made to Seattle-area professionals, lobbyists and other contributors. Through Sept. 20, Reardon raised \$52,105 from Snohomish County donors, compared with \$167,475 given by those from outside the county.

On Nov. 8, 2011, Reardon beat state representative Mike Hope, R-Lake Stevens, for the \$150,000-per-year county executive position. The nasty campaign involved a Reardon junior staffer spending time on a Friday afternoon using county email to dig up a decade-old Mill Creek Police report involving Hope. He fielded phone calls from Reardon while pressing the city to release the records.

County cellphone records document calls made to Reardon donors, including the Amalgamated Transit Union, the Consumer Fireworks Safety Association, the Broadband Communications Association of Washington and the Washington Aggregate and Concrete Association.

Misuse of public resources on election campaigns is something that the state Public Disclosure Commission investigates, but only after receiving complaints.

The commission has no active investigation into Reardon's 2011 campaign, spokeswoman Lori Anderson said.

She asked if The Herald would provide the records assembled for this story. The newspaper, which generally considers reporters' notes as confidential, declined.

"We're always interested in looking at evidence that people uncover," Anderson said. "After reviewing it, we would have to look at whether we'd file our own complaint if somebody else hadn't filed one."

State law provides for fines of up to \$10,000 for campaign violations. Penalties often escalate if someone has been investigated by the PDC before, she said.

The commission has investigated Reardon twice before. Last June, he was fined \$750, with all but \$250 suspended, for failing to properly disclose who paid for out-of-town travel in 2009. He also was investigated in 2003 in connection with a campaign committee; nothing came from that probe.

Several Reardon campaign contributors said their calls with the executive were about county matters, and the focus was on legislation in Olympia, or area business opportunities.

Joe Quintana, a Seattle lobbyist, wrote Reardon's campaign a \$250 check. Records show two calls to Quintana last year from Reardon's county cellphone: one under a minute, made during a Reardon calling blitz, the other a few days later and about five minutes

long.

Quintana said he's confident the longer call was about one of his clients. He said the pitch to contribute to Reardon's campaign came not on the phone but from somebody who asked him to attend a fundraising event in Seattle.

"I thought he was the best candidate," Quintana said.

Others whom Reardon called didn't send him money.

That list includes the National Rifle Association Political Victory Fund, the Washington State Chiropractic Association and a state lobbyist for police unions.

However, two short Reardon calls in early June to the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters brought \$1,600 in contributions — the maximum

allowed under state law.

The calls from Reardon were for campaign contributions, said John Little, who oversees the political work for carpenters in five states.

"The county exec last year ran for election. We supported him. We wrote him checks," he said. "That would be the extent of my contact."

Washington State Patrol investigators appear to be focusing on Reardon's spending while on out-of-town trips. They also obtained call records for the county-owned cellphone Reardon carries, plus his office schedules and thousands of his emails.

The Herald built timelines and databases from those records, and results were compared with campaignfinance reports.

Reardon's government phone bills detail about 10,000 calls and text messages in 2011. Only the numbers dialed, not whom the executive was talking with, are listed. Numbers were matched to people. Not every person contacted was cooperative, so gaps remain in the Herald database.

State Patrol detectives have interviewed some of Reardon's closest employees.

Brian Parry, a former Reardon campaign manager who now works as one of his executive directors, on Tuesday confirmed that he'd recently met with detectives and said the questions he was asked were "pretty vanilla." He also said detectives were leaking information.

People who know how the county's computer system works also have been questioned.

One former county tech employee, who spoke with reporters on the condition that his name not be used, said he told detectives about numerous personal email exchanges between Dutton and Reardon. Computer workers discovered the messages about five years ago when they were asked to copy Dutton's emails as part of an investigation into an unrelated workplace complaint.

The messages documented Reardon and Dutton coordinating their workouts and lunches, and ended with her apologizing for being jealous, the source said.

It isn't clear whether the messages were somehow preserved. In response to recent public disclosure requests, the county has released only a couple of email messages between Dutton and Reardon, the oldest dating to August 2005. All appear to be work-related.

State Patrol investigators recently asked the state auditor's office to examine Reardon's travel records, something auditors routinely do each year. They found "no reportable conditions," but they did identify minor purchasing-related issues they brought directly to the attention of county

The auditor's work attracted the attention of two of Reardon's close political allies from the so-called Road Kill Caucus in the state Legislature.

On Wednesday, the state auditor's office released a Feb. 9 letter it sent state Sen. Brian Hatfield, D-Raymond, and Reardon's close friend, Sen. Steve Hobbs, D-Lake Stevens. The pair wanted word on whether state auditors had found anything in their examination.

Next to his wife, Hobbs is the person Reardon talks with most. In 2011, the pair were on the phone about 90 hours, records show.

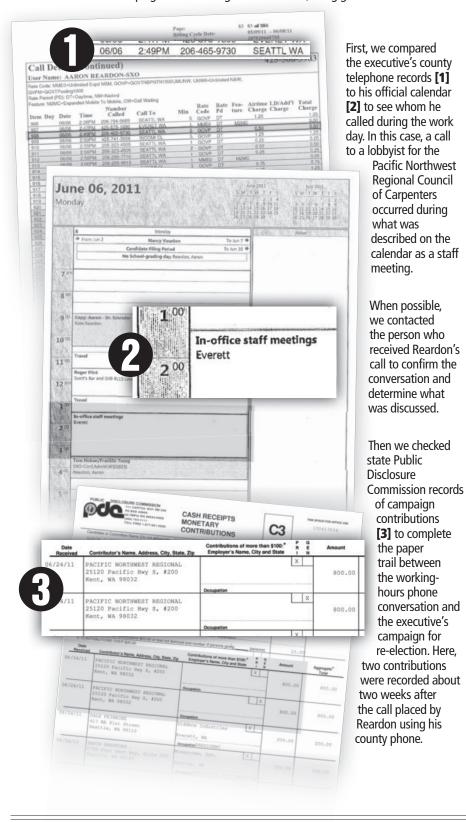
Hatfield was once Reardon's roommate when they served in the Legislature. He said he planned to meet soon with State Patrol Chief John R. Batiste to find out how an ongoing investigation was revealed to reporters in November.

"Let's figure out what happened..." Hatfield said. "I think it threatened future whistleblowers."

Noah Haglund: 425-339-3465, nhaglund@heraldnet.com.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

This is an example of how we found evidence that Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon conducted campaign business on government time, using government resources.



TIMELINE

The Reardon investigation

Key events during the investigation of Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon.

Nov. 3, 2011

The Washington State Patrol confirms rumors of an investigation into Reardon's travel using public money. Reardon calls a press conference. He insists he's done nothing wrong and is the victim of a political smear. Few details are released.

Nov. 8, 2011

Reardon defeats his general election opponent, state Rep. Mike Hope, R-Lake Stevens, to win a third four-year term. Reardon not only triumphs at the polls, he wins the race for campaign cash.

Nov. 15, 2011

Records obtained by The Herald show the investigation began in late October after a female county employee went to the County Council chairman. She claimed to fear Reardon.

Nov. 16, 2011

The woman, Tammy Dutton, decides to speak with The Seattle Times. She alleges that Reardon, who is married, took her on county business trips as part of a long-running affair. She is not named in the story.

Nov. 17, 2011

Seattle Weekly names Dutton and publishes information from people who claim to have found evidence of an affair. Dutton and Reardon had been romantically linked for months on a website that popped up during the political campaign. Records show the State Patrol seeking three years of Reardon records.

Nov. 18, 2011

Reardon leaves town after the election, reportedly to go rock climbing in Southern California, where he owns a second home. While still on vacation, he sends an email to The Herald denying misconduct but ignoring questions about his relationship with Dutton.

Dec. 3, 2011

Records for Reardon's countyissued cellphone become public as part of the State Patrol investigation. They show Reardon making hundreds of calls to his campaign staff, in violation of campaign laws. Reardon insists there is no wrongdoing.

Dec. 6, 2011

Close examination of nearly 10,000 calls and text messages in 2011 show repeated contact between Reardon and Dutton. A Herald analysis also shows that 20 percent of Reardon's calls in 2011 were to members of his political campaign.

Jan. 27, 2012

Records related to the Reardon investigation are sought by many reporters and government watchdogs. By late January, more than 5,400 pages of his emails have been released. Most relate to his work at the county.

Feb. 3, 2012

Attack ads Reardon aimed at Hope are finalists for a national award.

Feb. 14, 2012

Dutton provides KING-TV an on-camera interview about her relationship with Reardon. She also provides The Seattle Times with records the newspaper says further support her claims of Reardon using public money to advance an affair that began in 2005.

Herald staff





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Reardon aide dug up dirt

County executive's staffer mingled his work day with campaign-related business

By Scott North AND NOAH HAGLUND Herald Writers

EVERETT — Aaron Reardon didn't need to dirty his own hands in unearthing embarrassing information about his opponent in last

year's Snohomish County executive race.

He had placed somebody on the county payroll who frequently devoted his time and office resources to campaign-related activities.

Reardon hired Kevin Hulten in

January 2011 to fill an executive analyst position on the county executive's office team. Hulten, 33, of Granite Falls, was assigned to monitor state and federal legislation and to help Reardon connect with constituents.

Hulten also networked with

three people who participated in an effort to get campaign sanctions against state Rep. Mike Hope, R-Lake Stevens, the Seattle cop running against Reardon. Combined, Hulten traded more than 200 phone calls and text messages with the trio and devoted at least

four hours of time talking with them, close to half of that during work hours.

County phone records show that by year's end, the only county employee Reardon spoke on the

See **AIDE**, Page A5

Former mill leaves a mess behind

Contamination including dioxins in waterway will have to cleaned up

> By BILL SHEETS Herald Writer

EVERETT — For decades, the Kimberly-Clark plant provided countless jobs in Snohomish County and paper products to millions of people.

Now that it's closed, the plant is leaving behind another, not-sopositive legacy.

Dioxins — toxic substances thought to cause cancer in humans - have been found in the waterway next to the plant at a level 15 times higher than what the state considers safe. The dioxins in sediment under the water are a result of the bleaching process in making

On land, some petroleum contamination has been found at the 66-acre plant site and under what is now a parking lot south of the plant. Oil companies used parts of the current plant site and the parking lot for petroleum storage and distribution during much of the 20th century.

Under state law, at some point it has to be cleaned up. Kimberly-Clark officials say pollution was one reason a potential buyer of the plant balked at the deal last year. The sale could have saved nearly half the 700 jobs on the site.

Without a buyer, Kimberly-Clark closed the plant last month, saying it's difficult to make a profit in the pulp and paper business. The property is up for sale. Most of the pollution was deposited in the bay well before Kimberly-Clark bought the plant in 1995. But under state law, the present owner of a property is liable for the cost of cleanup.

> See MILL, back page, this section



The Kimberly-Clark mill site as seen from the air. The site and the nearby waterways are contaminated and will have to be cleaned up.

Mill's legacy

- Take a look at the Kimberly-Clark site as it is now and see what's next, Page A3
- The closure of the mill ends a chapter in Everett history. Hear the stories of the people who worked there at **Heraldnet**. com/thelastsmokestack.



How long will the cleanup effort take?

The time, money and effort required to clean up after former pulp-and-paper mills similar to Everett's Kimberly-Clark plant can vary, depending on conditions, officials with the state Department of Ecology say.

An example of a successful cleanup can be found not far from Everett.

A lumber mill, and later a pulp mill, operated in Anacortes from the late 1800s through 1978. As with the Everett plant, the operation was owned and operated for

many years by Scott Paper and later acquired by Kimberly-Clark.

After the pulp mill closed, the property was used for other industrial purposes. The plants left behind extensive contamination from dioxins, woodwaste, petroleum and industrial chemicals.

The Port of Anacortes obtained a state grant to pay for half of the \$35 million cost. The port and Kimberly-Clark paid for the rest, said Seth Preston, a spokesman for the Ecology Department.

The waterway next to the plant

was cleaned up over a five-year period ending last May.

The northern part of the site is now a public park, Preston said.

By contrast, the state is still wrestling with a former Georgia Pacific plant site on Bellingham Bay. That site, more than 200 acres, is much bigger than the affected areas in Everett or Anacortes, and contains mercury and several other pollutants. Cost of the cleanup, which has yet to begin, is estimated at \$90 million.

-Bill Sheets, Herald writer

Celebrations.. **B4** Classified **D1**

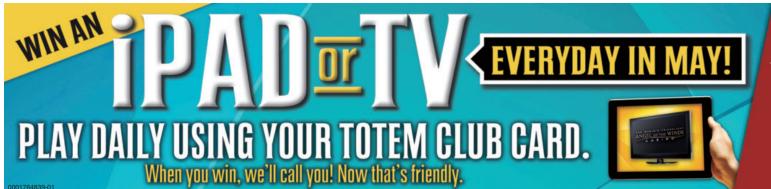
Crossword ... **E4** Dear Abby. . . . **E5**

Horoscope ... **E4** Lottery A2 Movies **E5** Obituaries.... B7 Viewpoints . . . **B1** Vitals..... **E5**

Estimable 60/42, **B10**

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Aide: Campaign and county work mingled

From Page A1

phone with more frequently than Hulten was Brian Parry, an executive director who has long been part of Reardon's inner circle.

Many of the conversations between Reardon and Hulten occurred during the work day, as the junior staffer communicated with people who were digging up 11-year-old police reports that later appeared in negative ads run by Reardon's campaign.

Reardon is under investigation by the Washington State Patrol for official misconduct involving alleged misuse of public funds. For six months, he has refused multiple interview requests from The Herald.

On Friday, results of what the patrol investigation has found so far were sent to Island County prosecutors for review.

Reardon has not scheduled a meeting to speak with detectives, patrol spokesman Bob Calkins said Saturday. In a prepared statement, Reardon's attorney said that's because of scheduling conflicts.

Detectives also want to talk with Hulten, and have been trying to interview him since at least January.

Hulten "was given ample opportunity to speak with us," Calkins said. "Ultimately he was given a date certain to talk with us, and he did not meet that deadline."

During election season, Hope accused Reardon of using Hulten for campaign purposes, something Reardon and Hulten denied repeatedly to the media.

The Herald's review of more than 35,000 county phone records shows a pattern in which Reardon and Hulten communicated frequently during the same time periods when both were calling and messaging key figures involved in the executive's campaign:

■ On May 13, Hulten made workday campaign calls regardingcomplaintsagainst Reardon's election opponent. These included calls to the state Public Disclosure Commission; to Hulten's friend, John Chambers of Seattle, who helped dig up Hope's police disciplinary records; and to an Olympia attorney who was pressing the disclosure commission to find Hope in violation of campaign laws.

On Aug. 5, Seattle police released the details of Hope's 2001 suspension for his poor conduct during a Mill Creek traffic stop, in which he was a passenger in a girlfriend's car.

Just before 11:30 a.m. that work day, Hulten began exchanging a series of phone calls and texts with Chambers and the Bothell lawyer who had advised Chambers on the public records request. The conversations continued into the evening.

Reardon spent part of the noon hour speaking with his campaign manager and his strategic consultant. By 2 p.m., Reardon was on the phone with a Nashvillebased media expert hired to create anti-Hope ads.

On Sept. 8, Hulten used a false name while filing a public records request with Mill Creek police for reports on Hope. The next day, starting during the noon hour and continuing into midafternoon, Hulten repeatedly sent Gmail messages to a police records clerk, writing that he was on deadline and needed to let his "boss" know when he'd get the report. Reardon's phone records show that he called Hulten as these messages were being sent.

By month's end, when questions surfaced about Reardon's use of Hulten as a campaign operative, the pair logged some of their longest calls of the year. It is against state law for anyone to campaign using on-duty government staff, county equipment and other public resources.

Hulten refused to speak with reporters, but sent an email April 18 defending his campaign work.

"I am an individual as well as a county employee and I have a right to exercise my political beliefs as I see fit," Hulten wrote. "Did I support the re-election of Aaron Reardon? Did I volunteer for Democratic causes outside of work? You are damn right

Hulten asserted that his conduct didn't violate state and county laws that prohibit electioneering on the public dime, and claimed phone records county don't prove that electionrelated work was done on county time or with county equipment.

As a non-hourly employee, Hulten said, his workweek often exceeds 40 hours. And, he said, his schedule was sufficiently flexible for him to take personal time for campaign activity as he saw fit, even while he was at his county desk.

Time and resources

The county executive's office relies on little except an honor system to prevent work duties and campaign boundaries from blending.

When asked, Reardon's office produced no policies, logs or other records of any effort to monitor how time spent working for taxpayers was kept separate from campaign activities.

The state Public Disclosure Commission enforces campaign laws and has the authority to levy steep civil fines. The commission plans its own review of campaign activity pending results of the State Patrol investigation.

In general, any state investigation into improper use of public facilities would include examining "research that is turned over and then used by the campaign," particularly if there are suggestions it was gathered using staff time or government telephones, commission spokeswoman Lori Anderson said.

Election guidelines posted on the commission's website — make it clear that employee time during work hours and government telephones are strictly off limits to political campaigns.

At the same time, the state wants no role in dictating county employees' work schedules, leaving it up to the county to decide the rules.

Deputy County Executive Gary Haakenson said he supervises Hulten, but not so closely that he monitors "him sitting at his desk, and

"I've never found him engaged in campaignrelated activity," Haakenson

At the same time, Haakenson said he was unaware that phone bills and call reports documented Hulten's workday contact with people who were investigating Hope and filing campaign complaints. Some of those conversations occurred using Hulten's county desk phone.

Reardon and state Sen. Steve Hobbs, D-Lake Stevens, are close friends and political allies. Before Reardon hired Hulten in January 2011, Hulten spent four years as a legislative aide for Hobbs.

In response to a public records request, the county released phone bills detailing roughly 25,000 calls and text messages involving Hulten in 2011. Hulten objected to the release, arguing privacy violations.

Until The Herald asked to see the Reardon staffer's government phone bills, county officials were unaware that Hulten had arranged for calls to his county cell phone to be routed to his personal iPhone. Hulten also uses the device for two personal cell phone numbers as well as Web-based voice messaging.

Every call and text wound up being listed in the county's phone bills. Haakenson said he's convinced that the county wasn't charged extra for Hulten's personal phone service.

On March 19, Hulten wrote Tim Ford, the state Attorney General's Open Government ombudsman, asking for an opinion on whether the phone records should become public.

But Hulten did not tell Ford that the inquiry concerned himself. Hulten wrote that Reardon's office was struggling with a records decision regarding an unnamed county employee.

Hulten also told Ford the records documented conversations with multiple attorneys "related to ongoing legal matters that tangentially relate to the county."

Two key figures in Hulten's efforts to track down damaging information about Reardon's opponent are attorneys: Chambers' lawyer Adam Matherly and Olympia defense attorney William alleged improper gifts and campaign shenanigans involving a nonprofit group Hope formed.

Hulten and Ferrell traded nearly 90 messages and phone calls between April and September, the first on the day Ferrell filed his initial complaint. Ferrell declined to comment on his contacts with Hulten or the Reardon campaign.

Through Haakenson, Hulten acknowledged that the county bills show that calls were placed to a Public Disclosure Commission investigator using Hulten's cell phone.

The Public Disclosure Commission logged information on each call made during work hours on March 31 and April 7. Issues raised in both were later featured in Ferrell's complaints against

The state's log shows the caller identified himself using the name of Hulten's brother, a young Seattle lawver. Neither Hulten nor his brother would answer questions about who placed the

"Kevin says that both calls were made on his personal cell phone and they were placed during his lunch and during an afternoon break," Haakenson said. "I see no further reason for inquiry into those calls."

Campaign dispute

Links between Reardon's campaign and Hulten's job became an election issue on Sept. 27.

On that day, Hope angrily claimed Hulten had been bringing campaign complaints and seeking records under the alias of "John Chambers.'

The suspicions were based on records showing that Chambers in April had supplied state campaign regulators with Hulten's address and cellphone number as contact information.

Reardon defended Hulten. In interviews, he said he had questioned the new member of his team and reported seeing genuine surprise regarding the activities alleged by Hope.

On the same day Reardon said he had grilled his aide, Hulten spoke with the Chambers' attorney for more than an hour from his county desk phone, records show.

Early the next morning, Matherly, who is in solo practice in Bothell, released a statement on Chambers' behalf. describing how Matherly had been retained in June as legal counsel to help on records requests regarding Hope.

The attorney's statement provided credible evidence that Hope was wrong in suggesting that Chambers didn't exist. But Matherly didn't disclose that he and Hulten are acquainted.

In 2011, Matherly and Hulten had traded at least 45 phone calls and text messages, starting in March and continuing through September. Nearly a quarter of those calls and texts had come the day in August when Hope's discipline records were released by Seattle police.

Contacted for this story, Chambers, who works in a Seattle bank, referred questions to Matherly. Matherly declined to answer questions.

Public records suggest that Hulten and Chambers worked together in seeking the Mill Creek police reports, which later were featured on Reardon's campaign Web page and used in attack advertisements against Hope.

When Hulten sought records in Mill Creek, he supplemented his request with copies of Chambers' Sept. 6 filing and portions of Hope's personnel file. He also initiated his request using a false first name -Stephen K. Hulten.

The Reardon staffer has repeatedly rebuffed the Herald's requests for an explanation. Computer metadata contained in the Mill Creek police reports show that Reardon's campaign used the same files that were released to Hulten and Chambers on Sept. 9.

Hulten had spent parts of that afternoon sending Mill Creek messages from his Gmail account, telling the clerk he was under deadline and facing questions from his boss. Phone records show he was simultaneously fielding phone calls from Reardon.

Hulten now says he didn't speak with Reardon; that his boss' calls instead were picked up by voice mail.

Public resources

The State Patrol investigation into Reardon's use of county resources began in October after a county social worker and high school classmate of Reardon told county officials he had spent taxpayer money on business trips where the pair met for trysts.

Patrol detectives obtained Reardon's appointment calendar, thousands of his emails and government cell phone bills detailing roughly 10,000 calls and texts.

An earlier analysis by The Herald found Reardon using his county phone to call and exchange text messages hundreds of times with key campaign staff and contractors.

Reardon also spent the equivalent of a workweek dialing up donors for campaign dollars when his schedule showed him holding a series of "in-office" meetings with staff.

Patrol spokesman Calkins declined to provide details about the scope of the Reardon investigation. Detectives made no recommendation regarding charges. Calkins said that shouldn't be interpreted as suggesting no charges are warranted. It's up to Island County Prosecutor Greg Banks to decide.

The County Council called for Reardon to put himself on administrative leave until the case is resolved. Reardon is sticking to his public schedule.

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