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**Trade & Economic Development  
Committee**

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**HB 2980**

**Brief Description:** Establishing the historic county courthouse grant program.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kessler, Lantz, Hinkle, McCoy, Newhouse, Veloria, Dunshee, O'Brien, Blake, Buck, Hatfield and Chase.

<p><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creates the Historic County Courthouse Grant program.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 2/3/04

**Staff:** Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

**Background:**

The Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) in the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development administers the Washington Heritage Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The Washington Heritage Register includes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American or Washington state history, architecture, archaeology, and culture. The OAHP prepares a comprehensive historic surveys and plans as well as research and evaluation of surveyed resources in preparation for nominations to the Washington Heritage Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Currently, there are 16 courthouses in Washington that are on both the Washington Heritage Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Historic County Courthouse Grant program is established for the protection and preservation of the state's historic county courthouses. The OAHP will administer the program. A county courthouse must meet the criteria for the Washington Heritage Register as well as additional eligibility criteria established by OAHP. The courthouse must continue to be used for county functions. The additional eligibility criteria and grant application process must be established by October 1, 2004.

Grants may be made for courthouse protection and preservation including character defining architectural features, general repairs, system upgrades, and improvements to access and accommodations for persons with disabilities. Grants may not be made for courthouse

maintenance. All rehabilitation work must comply with the federal Department of Interior's standards for rehabilitation.

The OAHP must establish an advisory board. The board must include: two county elected officials appointed by the Washington Association of Counties; two county elected officials appointed by the Washington Association of County Officials; a representative of a statewide historic preservation organization; a representative from a county heritage commission that is a certified local government; a member of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate; a member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; a member of the state advisory council on historic preservation; and up to three at-large members with expertise in architecture, architectural history, construction, construction management, engineering, planning or a related field.

The Historic County Courthouse Account is created in the state treasury. Appropriations by the Legislature shall be deposited in the account and funds may only be spent after appropriation. Expenditures from the account shall be used exclusively to fund the Historic County Courthouse Grant program. No more than 1 percent of the expenditures from the account may be used for administrative purposes. If available funds in the account exceed eligible courthouse grant recipients, other historic county owned facilities, such as libraries, museums and hospitals, may apply for grants using the same criteria.

**Appropriation:** The sum of \$10,000,000 from the state building construction account for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 27, 2004.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2004.