

Pend Oreille County is organized on June 10, 1911.

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On June 10, 1911, Pend Oreille County commissioners are sworn in and the new county is organized in Newport. Pend Oreille is Washington's final county, formed from the eastern portion of Stevens County.

Residents of the eastern portion of Stevens County signed petitions and lobbied the state legislature to have the county divided, both because population in that portion of the county had grown rapidly, and because it took residents of the eastern county several days to reach Colville (the county seat) to conduct official business. The 1911 state legislature agreed, passing legislation to create a new county, Pend Oreille, with little or no hesitation. On March 1, 1911, Washington Governor Marion B. Hay (1865-1933) signed the legislation into law. On June 8, 1911, the law creating Pend Oreille County went into effect.

Even before Pend Oreille was officially organized, the commissioners of the new county designated an existing building in Newport as the county courthouse, and made arrangements to construct a vault and a jail. *The Colville Examiner* reported that the lower floor of the building would be used as the courtroom, and the upper floor for county offices. Newport was serving as the temporary county seat until the issue could be put to vote in 1912. At that time, Newport defeated three other contenders (Cusick, Usk, and Ione), making the designation permanent. On August 20, 1915, the cornerstone of the permanent county courthouse was placed during formal ceremonies.

The first county board of commissioners, appointed by Governor Hay, included

- Dr. George W. Sutherland (1856-1949) (Newport)

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The three commissioners elected Sutherland their chairman. They then appointed the following county officials:

- Dr. John Hiatt (1870-1921) (Metaline Falls), coroner
- Dr. Walter Scott Wallace (b. 1885) (Newport), county physician and health officer
- Harry W. Reading (b. 1884) (Metaline Falls), prosecuting attorney
- Edward D. Purchase (b. 1878) (Locke), assessor
- Benjamin F. Gardiner (b. 1872) (Tiger), sheriff
- Harold H. Murray (b. 1879) (Ione), auditor
- Earl K. Parks (b. 1877) (Cusick), superior court clerk
- R. M. Veil (Ione), engineer
- Ezra E. Reid (b. 1856) (Newport), treasurer
- Hester C. Soules (1876-1950) (Calispel), superintendent of schools

The Colville Examiner noted that all three commissioners and all appointed officials, with the exception of Reid, were Republicans.



Main Street, Newport, 1900s

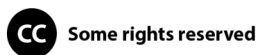
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Sources: Tony Bamonte and Suzanne Schaeffer Bamonte, *History of Pend Oreille County* (Spokane: Tornado Creek Publications, 1996); *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, "Pend Oreille County -- Thumbnail History" (by Laura Arksey) <http://www.historylink.org/> (accessed February 25, 2011); Newton Carl Abbott and Fred E. Carver, compiled by J. W. Helm, *The Evolution of Washington Counties* (Yakima: Yakima Valley Genealogical Society and Klickitat County Historical Society, 1978), p. 60, 154; *The Colville Examiner*, March 18, 1911, p. 3; *Ibid.*, May 13, 1911, p. 1; *Ibid.*, March 4, 1911, p. 1; *Ibid.*, June 17, 1911, p. 1; *Olympia Record*, April 20, 1911, p. 1.

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