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## **SVC president Tollefson announces his retirement**

By Aaron Burkhalter

MOUNT VERNON — Skagit Valley College President Gary Tollefson announced Monday that he intends to retire in December. Tollefson, 62, met with the school's board of trustees Friday to discuss his Dec. 31 retirement.

He said this year was the right time for him to retire. "We've been through an awful lot, but we've come through it well," Tollefson said. "Things are reasonably settled; we have a balanced budget."

Tollefson's announcement comes a month after he and board trustees closed a \$5.5 million gap in the 2011-12 school year budget by laying off 38 employees and reducing other positions.

Tollefson was appointed president of Skagit Valley College in May 2003. He has been a teacher and administrator at the secondary and post-secondary levels for 30 years.

He took his first job in education at Eisenhower High School in Yakima where he taught East Asian studies.

He said he specialized in modern China and Japan for his undergraduate studies.

Tollefson listed among his proudest accomplishments as college president balancing the budget and the construction of new buildings and new infrastructure at the Mount Vernon and Whidbey Island campuses.

The new Science and Allied Health Building on the Mount Vernon campus recently received the highest rating from the U.S. Green Building Council for environmentally friendly constructions.

Board of Trustees Chair John Stephens said the board will begin the search for a replacement immediately. He said the process could take several months.

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