



1452 Hudson Street, U.S. Bank Building, Suite 208, P.O. Box 1278 , Longview, WA 98632
Phone: (360) 423-9921 | Fax: (360) 423-1923
sprague@cowlitzedc.com

In the Loop

To: CEDC Board of Directors, CEDC Members and Interested Parties

From: Ted Sprague, CEDC President

Date: 5/21/09

DURING TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES, 85% OF COWLITZ COUNTY LABOR FORCE EMPLOYED!!!

This is the deepest recession to hit the United States and Cowlitz County in decades and yet citizens are still employed, families are continuing to vacation and people are still shopping. We obviously have fallen from the record setting sales and home prices of a couple short years ago, but didn't we all know that that type of exuberance would not last forever? The run up of housing prices and residential building in places such as Phoenix, Las Vegas and Miami reminded me of the business model used to show how a website or on-line sales of just about anything could make you a billionaire in the late '90's. Neither was sustainable for the long term. The nature of any economy is cyclical and highs and lows are to be expected.

At the Economic Development Council we are in a unique position to gauge the anecdotal temperature of the economy. While it is true we do not have as many leads or prospects as we may want (*we never do*), the pipeline is beginning to fill. Significant capital investment and job creating projects are investigating options for locations in Cowlitz County. We should consider ourselves fortunate to have the infrastructure, partnerships, workforce and leaders in place to accommodate those that are looking for the right place to be profitable and employ our skilled and available workforce. Cowlitz County is still that place!

COMMUNITY SURVIVORS MEETING REVIEW
BY MARY BROWN

There was a great amount of interest in the Community, Trade and Economic Development sponsored, “Community Survivors 5” held at Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound, WA over May 18th and 19th. In addition to the obvious excitement of this event being held at an indoor water park it was truly informative. The meetings gave attendees a firm grasp on the current economic climate and what can be done to improve relationships within a community to foster economic development.

Speaker Maureen Collins-Williams, from the University of Northern Idaho, talked about creating opportunities and an environment for entrepreneurs to thrive. Entrepreneurship is a fast growing field accounting for a great deal of job creation. She stressed communities need a support system to foster their development. Time was also given for a short recap on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and what streams this money is going to flow down. Lindsey Woolsey, Senior Policy Associate for the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, and Mike Brennan, Economic Development Specialist for the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, spoke on the importance of creating firm connections with the local Workforce Development Councils and developing new programs to aid local workers. This is an area of strength already present in Southwest Washington with our strong connection to the SW WA. Workforce Development Council. Speaker Tom Hudson of Collins Woerman spoke of creating community-based strategies, which means involving the community in every step of the decision making process when determining what is best for an area.

In addition to the lecturers, attendees were also treated to a game of community planning and strategic decision making. No, no, *Risk* was not being played; attendees were not trying to take over other countries through warfare. Tables were instead asked to make decisions for a region to better their future and in the end they were able to see how their decisions affected the outcome of the fictional community.

Community Survivors reeled in about 75-100 economic developers throughout the states of Washington and Oregon who returned to their areas with a better understanding of new strategies of economic development.



May 21, 2009

SENATOR MURRAY DELIVERS \$26.6 MILLION IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUNDING TO COMPLETE 20-YEAR COLUMBIA CHANNEL DEEPENING PROJECT

On May 13th it was announced, U.S. Senator Patty Murray a senior member of the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, that the Columbia River Channel Deepening project will receive \$26.6 million to complete work to deepen the Columbia River navigation channel under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The funding, which will go to the Army Corps of Engineers, was not included in the Administration's original list of ARRA projects that would receive funding, which was released on April 28th. However, following that announcement, Murray spoke with Obama Administration officials about the critical economic impact completion of the project will have, including more than 40,000 jobs in the region that depend on maritime commerce and the huge overall economic impact the vital economic thoroughfare has in the Northwest.

"This is a big victory for our state and the entire Northwest," said Senator Murray. "After years and years of work, we are now on the verge of ensuring the Columbia River remains the economic engine of the Northwest. A deeper channel will enable us to accommodate the modern fleet of larger ships which will help save jobs and keep our state's goods moving. Funding the completion of this effort is exactly the kind of project the Economic Recovery Act was designed to support."

The funding is expected to be enough to complete the project. The majority of the funding will go to blasting to remove basal rock near St. Helens, OR, at river mile 88.

Many of today's trade vessels are larger ships that are constrained by the current authorized depth of 40-feet in the Columbia River navigation channel. In order to better accommodate those vessels, the navigation channel needs to be deepened from 40 to 43-feet. This will enable ships to access and serve the regions ports, businesses, farmers, and other critical markets. Much appreciation and thanks need to go to Senator Murray for her leadership in obtaining this critical funding. The impact of channel deepening is most certainly being felt with the EGT grain elevator project at the Port of Longview and several other expansions being contemplated along the river.

1452 Hudson Street, U.S. Bank Building, Suite 208, P.O. Box 1278 , Longview, WA 98632
Phone: (360) 423-9921 | Fax: (360) 423-1923
sprague@cowlitzedc.com

ICE WORKSHOP: ESTABLISHING IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE PRACTICE AS A CRITICAL STEP TO A PROFITABLE BUSINESS

Employers can no longer think of I-9's as just paperwork. ICE raids, which have now happened twice in Washington, are becoming more common, and the responsibility for violations is shifting more and more to the employer. The costs of non-compliance can be disastrous to a company; not just monetary, but the loss of skilled workforce. This workshop from Washington Manufacturing Services will help employers gain an understanding of the importance of establishing an immigration compliance practice that is a critical step to making their businesses profitable.

Attendees of past workshops learned valuable information that will save their companies \$230,000 on average. According to one attendee, *"I would recommend that employers and their HR person attend this workshop because even though we think we are in compliance, there are many areas of the I-9 that are taken for granted. This was an eye opener and a very, very beneficial workshop."*

The workshop will take place June 15 at Clark College, Vancouver from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Please contact the CEDC for more information or to reserve your space, visit the Washington Manufacturing Services web site at <http://www.wamfg.org> or call (425) 438-1146 x107.

KELSO-LONGVIEW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNOUNCES ANNUAL WINNERS

Our community is filled with excellent businesses, business people and educators. The Chamber recently took the time to recognize some of those that had exceptionally good years. Congratulations to all the winners!

Small Business of the Year — Fatcher-Henry Group

Large Business of the Year — Lower Columbia College

Business Person of the Year — Gian Paul Morelli, executive director of the Columbia Theater for Performing Arts

Excellence in Workforce Education, business — Columbia Analytical Services

Excellence in Workforce Education, individual — John Krause, LCC associate vice president for career and student services