

SKAGIT



BUSINESS GUIDE 2023



**Silfab Solar
brings clean
energy, jobs to
Skagit County**

Top 10 stories of 2022
EDASC
• Economic Development
• Programs
• Events
• Finances

Investor Directory



Port of Skagit



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***Working Together for the
Greater Good of the Skagit Valley***

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

The first time I heard the following quote, it was in a song by Huey Lewis and the News, “The more something changes, the more it stays the same.” I later discovered it had deeper origins that go back to Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, a French journalist from the 19th century. In either instance, the spirit of the quote is simply this: Many things remain consistent even as change happens all around us. And as we look at our Skagit community and EDASC family, this is also true.

Over the past year we have said goodbye to several long-time EDASC board members: Tom Keegan, Skagit Valley College; Scott Holley, Eddyline Kayaks; Mike Nelson, Dakota Creek Industries; Phil Stephenson, PACCAR; Heather Hernandez, Skagit Publishing; and Alice Takehara, People’s Bank. And in the not-so-distant past we bid farewell to Lisa Janicki, Skagit County Commissioner; Lennart Bentsen, Brensel Hospitality Consulting; Tammy Masalonis, McGregor Benefits; and Patsy Martin, Port of Skagit.

We are thankful to all of them for their work and commitment to EDASC and Skagit County. We are honored to have had them be present to help advise and guide us for many years, and we wish them nothing but the best. As these changes occur, new members have filled their places. An energized board greets 2023 with new faces and a few familiar faces as well. The common thread for all is a passion for our community and visionary leadership to achieve new heights.

Our EDASC team has also seen change but continues to find ways to engage our community and provide connection points, opportunities, and leadership for our business community. Our team is working in multiple forums to support and inspire local business development as well as important social justice issues. You can see their efforts at the county level with the economic recovery plan: expanded jobs board, workforce summits, and employee wellness programs. They are collaborators on the Skagit Housing Consortium, Skagit Tourism Bureau, and the JEDI learning series. They are working with our Latinx community and assisting them with business development and expansion. It is an exceptional group making sense of all the change that is around us.

I leave you with this thought: Change will always be with us. It allows us to grow and experience a world we may never know if change were not present. It is these experiences that move us forward to face new challenges and more importantly see new opportunities.

With much gratitude,
Chris Johnston
 EDASC Board Chair



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LETTER FROM THE CEO

As we wrap up 2022 – EDASC’s Golden Jubilee year – and begin 2023, it is an honor to once again highlight the past year and give some hints for this new year in the Skagit Business Guide and at Economic Forecast Night. EDASC continues to grow and progress as an organization and in the work we accomplish in the community we serve. Our programming supporting existing and new businesses has expanded to meet needs in workforce, housing, and entrepreneurship with a primary goal of building generational wealth.

It is EDASC’s responsibility to help foster and manage sustainable, responsible growth well-suited to who we are in Skagit County, preserving our natural beauty and promoting a healthy, diverse, equitable economy into the decades to come. EDASC values its unique mission of facilitating the collaboration among business, government, education and non-profits to promote opportunities for all.

Please allow me to express our heartfelt gratitude to all EDASC Investors, public and private, large and small. You enable us to do the work that is so important to the long-term future of our businesses that provide a livelihood to owners and employees, and to our communities themselves. We are ever grateful to the EDASC Board of Directors for their dedication, and I could never adequately thank the amazing professionals and stellar human beings who make EDASC hum every day.

Thank you for joining in this Alliance, partnering with EDASC to achieve these important goals!

Sincerely yours,

John Sternlicht, CEO



EDASC is always looking to strengthen ties with regional organizations. For example, Brian Surratt (second from right) of Greater Seattle Partners visited with EDASC staff in December 2022 and had an opportunity to tour part of Skagit County with CEO John Sternlicht as his tour guide. Pictured are, from left, Economic Development Manager Aaron Weinberg, John Sternlicht, Brian Surratt, and Bilingual Business Advisor Jorge Estefan.

Mission Statement

EDASC carries out business attraction, retention and expansion, and collaborative engagement to achieve a prosperous, sustainable and equitable community while maintaining Skagit County’s natural beauty and quality of life.

MEET THE 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Silfab Solar Inc. brings clean energy, jobs to Skagit County



Silfab Solar Inc. hits the mark as an ideal manufacturer for Skagit County not only as a clean energy business but also for its job creation potential. The Burlington facility opened in 2021 and currently employs 250. Its goal is to employ as many as 400 as it ramps up its production of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels.

When attracting new businesses to Skagit County, it's imperative that they are the right fit, says EDASC CEO John Sternlicht.

"We, as a county, are looking at impact when a business locates here," Sternlicht said. Impacts range from the business's physical footprint to workforce needs to energy and water consumption.

Equally important is a business ethos respectful of natural resources – being part of the "blue-green" economy that considers environmental impact and sustainability.

Silfab ticks that box as well.

"At Silfab Solar, our mission is to make a difference in the world by reducing carbon emissions and improving access to clean energy with every module we make," said Silfab Solar's Executive Head of Sales & Marketing Geoff Atkins.

Choosing Skagit

When Silfab Solar first came to Washington state in 2018, the company located just north of Skagit County in Bellingham. With an increasing demand for solar panels across the United States, company leadership recognized

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it was time to grow again but their original Bellingham space couldn't accommodate that growth. The Port of Bellingham's Director of Economic Development Don Goldberg made the introduction between Silfab and EDASC.

Sternlicht said it wasn't a matter of enticing Silfab Solar to locate in Skagit County. Silfab's executives had already decided that.

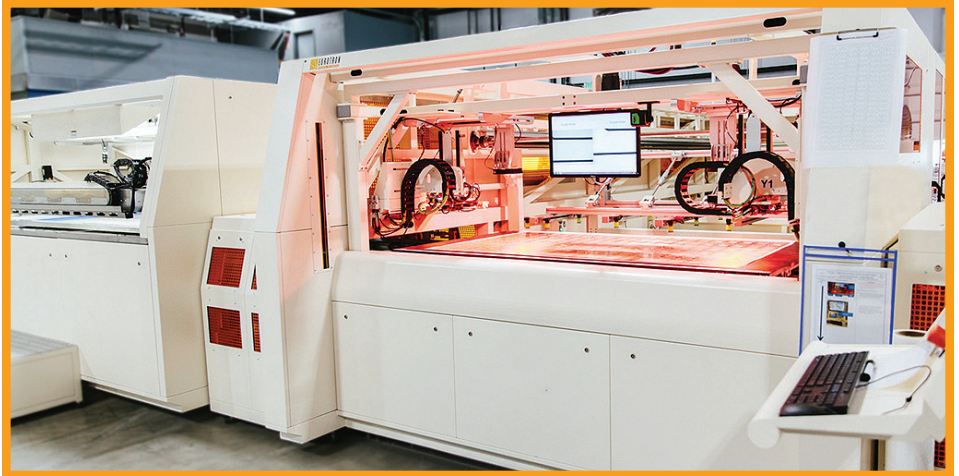
"The Skagit County location was ideal in terms of efficiency for sharing resources (with the Bellingham location), training and logistics," Atkins said.

Where Silfab needed EDASC's help was in facilitating some of the nuts and bolts of getting settled in their Burlington location, including an introduction to the right people at PSE to help repair an on-site transformer.

With that repair completed, the Port Drive location was ready for operation.

The fully automated, ISO-certified production line is state of the art. Company engineers are constantly innovating to improve the equipment and the process.

While the production lines are automated, "We still need a lot of human support," said Silfab Regional Human Resources Manager Samantha Calkins.



Ramping up production and people

While primarily a production facility, the Burlington plant also houses a research and development team working on both product and manufacturing process innovations, along with human resources, finance, and administration personnel. Within the next year, the company plans to bring online an additional 200,000 square feet of production.

"As Silfab Solar continues to expand, we are looking for talented employees in all departments, including production operations," Atkins said.

"Prior production line experience is not a prerequisite for these jobs as full training is provided, and we do have a wonderful diverse group of employees with several long-term Spanish speaking employees as well," Calkins said.

The production line runs in 12-hour shifts, which, Calkins said, many employees end up liking because they work fewer days total in a month compared to a traditional 40-hour work week. (If you're looking for numbers, that's 15 days compared to 21 days.) The company pays a portion of health benefits for both the employee and family members, which is another perk employees find attractive.

"We often hear from employees, 'I can't find this any place else,'" she said.

Silfab has been involved with EDASC's workforce development events, such as last August's job fair, as well as consulting with Bilingual Business Advisor Jorge Estefan, as they continue their hiring efforts.

"EDASC has been very helpful in terms of promoting employment and business opportunities throughout the community," Atkins added.

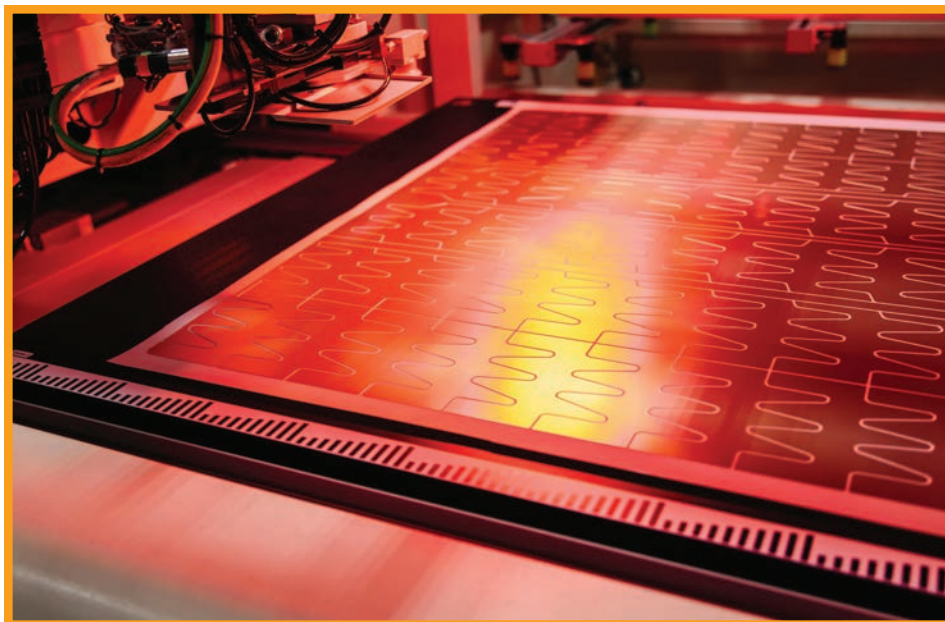
Focus on clean and green

With a mission to reduce carbon emissions and improve access to clean energy, Silfab is continually thinking about how their facilities can reduce waste, minimize chemical use and recycle as much as possible.

Step onto the Burlington production floor and one will see it's modern and clean, and there are no harsh chemical smells in the air.

Atkins said Silfab doesn't use ozone-depleting substances in its facilities or perfluorocarbons in its panels.

In terms of recycling, all ribbon and



• introduction •
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Economic Development 101

What is economic development? We at EDASC are asked that question frequently.

In short, it is the intentional practice of improving a community's economic wellbeing and quality of life. A lot goes into economic development, much of it behind the scenes as we work confidentially with local, domestic, and overseas businesses.

EDASC breaks down its work

into three pillars. These are business attraction, business retention and expansion, and capacity building. The processes by which we tackle these initiatives are numerous and complex.

Though the pandemic altered the way we've worked in recent years, it also reinforced what we already know about economic development.

That is, the bulk of economic development consists of cultivating and caring for existing businesses and growing grassroots businesses. While

business attraction might be what most people think of (and hear about) when it comes to economic development, expansion of existing businesses counts on average for over 90% of job growth nationwide. That being said, business attraction also brings vital new opportunities into the economy for contracts, jobs, and spending.

Read the next three Economic Development 101 articles to learn about how EDASC executes economic development in Skagit County.

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EDASC serves as go-to organization for companies looking to move to Skagit County

In addition to smaller businesses and grassroots startups, EDASC in 2022 began facilitating the development of two green energy projects designed to add capacity to the local power grid.

The projects represent substantial capital expenditure and would support many local construction jobs. They also fall under one of EDASC’s target sectors of green energy.

EDASC is often the first point of contact for businesses exploring opportunities to invest and establish operations in Skagit County. Along with identifying potential locations, EDASC staff provide support identifying funding sources, navigating permitting and regulatory processes, making necessary and beneficial connections, and researching and facilitating support services. EDASC works in close partnership with Skagit County, cities,

towns, ports, local brokers, utilities, banks, law firms, and the Washington State Department of Commerce.

At any given time, EDASC has about a dozen companies in the pipeline at various stages of interest. Most of those companies may not end up here, but that’s expected. Business attraction is usually a marathon instead of a sprint.

“Business attraction requires a time investment,” Sternlicht said. “You may be forging a relationship with someone not even in the market to do anything. Some of those leads eventually turn into businesses landing here.”

Business attraction leads can materialize in many ways. Sometimes companies – like canoe manufacturer Mocean Canoes in 2020 – simply reach out directly to EDASC for site selection help. EDASC’s website plays a vital role in this stage, offering robust property search tools for site selection, whether as a first impression of the area or assisting existing residents such as Mocean.

EDASC’s online property locator includes a map offering comprehensive census data, including information on labor force, wages, consumer spending, talent pool, housing prices, transportation, energy infrastructure, telecommunications, broadband availability, educational institutions, and more.

Other times, EDASC may be introduced to a business by an economic development colleague, which was the case in 2021 when EDASC was introduced to Silfab Solar, a solar panel manufacturer, by Bellingham colleagues.

Silfab Solar expanded to Burlington in 2021 and plans to employ about 400 here to double its manufacturing capacity over the existing plant in Bellingham.

Silfab Solar was a perfect fit for Skagit County, falling under another of

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Developing healthy businesses key to retention, expansion efforts

As part of its business retention and expansion work, EDASC in 2022 placed an emphasis on connecting employers with its vast network of workforce development partners. For instance, Economic Development Manager Aaron Weinberg often connected businesses with the county’s local high school skills center, the Northwest Career & Technical Academy, to form creative partnerships with education and industry.

“Workforce development was a key component of EDASC’s 2022 workplan,” Weinberg said. “And we are fortunate to have a cadre of partners dedicated to addressing employers’ workforce needs.”

Through its business retention and expansion efforts, EDASC focuses heavily on developing a healthy environment for those who are already here as well as those not yet here. Business retention and expansion

is EDASC’s bread and butter as the vast majority of job growth occurs in existing businesses. Annually, EDASC takes part in about 1,200 business retention and expansion activities.

Business retention and expansion requires strong planning and expertise, something EDASC is happy to provide in many forms.

EDASC works with local businesses of all sizes to ensure a healthy and thriving community. For instance, it may work with small businesses to help navigate zoning barriers or support larger businesses like Eddyline Kayaks’ Burlington relocation in 2020, Scratch and Peck’s expansion in 2021, and Armor Marine’s expansion in 2022.

Maritime growth has also been a point of emphasis in Skagit County, offering one of the most competitive locations in the Pacific Northwest for sustained and future maritime growth. With jobs in this sector providing secure family wages, EDASC has done much over the past several years to foster domestic expansion and international cooperation.

In 2022, EDASC began working with the City and Port of Anacortes,

as well as the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, to develop the city’s strategic plan guiding economic development. EDASC had also previously partnered to develop the Anacortes Maritime Strategic Plan, a blueprint for guiding development of the city’s maritime industry.

EDASC has also hosted multiple international delegations of maritime business leaders and partnered in a regional Joint Innovation Program to win a grant to develop new clean-energy hydrofoil ferries locally.

EDASC has worked with large companies like PACCAR Technical Center and Hexcel to assist with workforce training and expansion, and with medium-sized companies like Chinook Enterprises for growth opportunities.

EDASC is also constantly helping small businesses with workshops, no-cost advising, and more. The new Equitable Economic Development program started in 2022 provides business support to Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs as well as other groups of underserved people looking to start or grow their businesses.

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EDASC fosters healthier, more resilient community through capacity building

To have a healthy and stable economy, a community must have enough residences to prevent housing prices from escalating out of reach, a current problem of Skagit County and the surrounding region.

EDASC in 2022 continued facilitating a countywide effort to address this complex issue through the Skagit Housing Consortium, formed through a collaborative effort among government, nonprofit, and business leaders to help our community address housing availability and affordability. The consortium consists of dozens of broad-based Skagit residents interested in solving the housing dilemma constructively. The consortium is working toward 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in 2023.

This work is one facet of capacity building, which involves actions EDASC

can undertake or support to make the community stronger and more prosperous.

EDASC takes a holistic approach to capacity building, which is a nontraditional approach for economic development organizations. This means EDASC also looks at education systems, government, childcare, transportation, inclusion, equity, and more.

This approach fosters a healthier community and creates a more resilient one during economic downturns.

One example of this holistic approach is EDASC's involvement in improving access to childcare and early learning services, topics most people do not associate with economic development. A parent worried about who is going to take care of his or her child cannot be as focused at work. It's an issue that affects everyone and is therefore an economic development issue. Further, in its survey of all Skagit businesses, EDASC found that childcare

availability was among the top five challenges mentioned. Therefore, EDASC partnered with the Population Health Trust in 2022 to address access to childcare for the Trust's COVID Recovery Plan.

Another example of EDASC's capacity building work includes the launch of the Skagit Tourism Bureau, a new organization formed to promote Skagit County worldwide as a travel destination. The organization helps bring visitors from all over the world to enjoy Skagit County, thereby bringing more spending and tax dollars into the county. EDASC fostered the organization in 2022, and now provides office space to its staff.

Capacity building can be broken into two categories: human infrastructure and physical infrastructure. Human infrastructure includes programs that help people, thus contributing to a

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EDASC Top 10 of 2022



EDASC celebrates its 50th anniversary

EDASC, originally incorporated as the Skagit County Development Association in 1972, celebrated its 50th anniversary in fine style with a party at McIntyre Hall in August, drawing more than 150 Investors and friends of EDASC. Guests interacted with EDASC partners invited to display at the event, including Labor & Industries, Genuine Skagit Valley, and Startup Grind, heard an EDASC update from the CEO, watched video greetings from congressional representatives Suzan DelBene and Rick Larsen, and had the opportunity to catch up with acquaintances. See photos from the event on page 55.

Bilingual Business Advisor joins EDASC staff

Jorge Estefan joined EDASC as its bilingual business advisor in May 2022. His role is to connect with the Latino community, as well as other underserved communities, to establish and grow their businesses. Estefan is a former EDASC board member and graduate and facilitator of Leadership Skagit. Read more about the Equitable Economic Development program on page 16.

EDASC facilitates and administers Skagit Housing Consortium

EDASC began serving as the facilitator, and will be the fiscal and administrative agent, for the newly formed Skagit Housing Consortium. The nonprofit is designed to bring together all sectors interested in addressing the housing shortage to explore best practices nationwide and learn more about potential solutions. Partners include governments, nonprofits, builders and brokers, hospitals, utilities, and residents dedicated to constructive means of addressing this multifaceted issue. Ultimately, the incorporators intend for the Skagit Housing Consortium to be a self-sustaining organization.

EDASC CEO John Sternlicht receives honor from IEDC



John Sternlicht was awarded the Honorary Life Member designation from the International Economic Development Council in September 2022. The honor recognizes Sternlicht for furthering the profession of economic development as well as being a teacher and inspiration to others in the field. Sternlicht served on the IEDC board of directors for three terms, and he was awarded the Fellow Member designation in 2017 for significant contributions to the economic development profession.

EDASC works with pair of new green energy companies

EDASC began supporting a pair of green energy storage companies in 2022 as they look to open facilities in Skagit County. The projects would add capacity to the local power grid, generate substantial capital expenditures, and create many local construction jobs. They also fall under one of EDASC's target sectors of development.

EDASC supports businesses impacted by floods

EDASC in early 2022 connected with about 30 businesses that had reported damage from the late 2021 flooding of the Skagit River. EDASC staff walked businesses through flood relief options, including grant and loan programs, and connected them to the available resources. In late 2022, EDASC worked with the Washington State Department of Commerce to develop guidelines and provide outreach for another round of flood grant relief.



EDASC Top 10 of 2022

Economic Forecast Night presents four noted economists

Economic Forecast Night provides a year-in-review and look ahead at economic trends shaping Skagit County and the world’s economy. In 2022, the virtual event, sponsored by Chmelik Sitkin & Davis P.S. and Banner Bank, presented four keynote speakers: Dr. Lisa Brown, director of Washington Department of Commerce, speaking on Pandemic Recovery & Housing; Dr. Laurie Trautman, director of WWU’s Border Policy Research Institute speaking on Border Restrictions, Supply Chain & Trade; Dr. Anneliese Vance-Sherman, regional labor economist for the Washington Employment Security Department speaking on Labor & Employment; and Dr. Vange Ocasio Hochheimer, associate professor of economics at Whitworth University speaking on Inclusive Economic Growth & Recovery.

EDASC nets three new Signature Investors and innovative grant opportunities

In 2022, EDASC welcomed new Signature Investors. Signature Investors are those at the \$5,000 Gold Level and above. Among the new Signature Investors for 2022 are Draper Valley Farms/Perdue, Silfab Solar and HF Sinclair. See page 31 for the full list of Signature Investors and government supporters. In addition, EDASC applied for and was awarded two competitive grants, from the Northwest Business Development Association and Umpqua Bank, for its work supporting the small business community.

Partnership with RAIN brings ‘Venture Catalyst’ and grant to Skagit County



EDASC and RAIN, the Oregon-based Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network, have partnered

to bring a “Venture Catalyst” to Skagit County, thanks to American Rescue Plan Act funding made available by the Skagit County Commissioners as part of EDASC’s Economic

Recovery Plan for the county. In this role, the Venture Catalyst will help foster the region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem and support entrepreneurs through their business’ growth. The Venture Catalyst started the contract position in January 2023. In addition, RAIN, Island County EDC and EDASC partnered on a successful grant application for over \$1 million to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem and local nonprofits.



Focus on workforce development pays dividends

The Skagit County Economic Recovery Plan developed by EDASC received funding from Skagit County in 2022, allowing EDASC to implement a number of workforce-related projects, including expansion of the Skagit Job Board, funding for in-person job fairs in 2022 and 2023, and the Skagit Workforce Summit to build relationships between educators and industry to develop a pipeline of skilled workers. The funding also allowed EDASC to offer a mental health and wellness app called Nivati to employers to provide licensed professional counseling, fitness and nutrition services to employees, and benefiting employers with increased retention and employee productivity.



Hexcel Production Supervisor Brad Adams (L) and intern-turned-employee Marquis Pressley (R) spoke at the Workforce Summit.

EDASC has heard the call from employers around the county for more skilled workers. In partnership with Northwest Career & Technical Academy (NCTA), Career Connect Washington, and Skagit Valley College, EDASC hosted the Skagit Workforce Summit in November 2022. The Summit brought together representatives from businesses and educational institutions to form workforce development partnerships.

More than 80 business leaders gathered to hear from the educators. Speakers stressed the importance of engaging students prior to high school, so those students interested in career and technical education can start the coursework in high school and begin making connections to industry.

Everything from project-based learning in the classroom and field trips to launching a career while students are still in school is on the table.

NCTA Program Director Mitch Everton has been focused on creating learning-based work opportunities, such as internships and apprenticeships, with local employers and NCTA seniors. He's been doing regular outreach in the region and many of these employers are eager to make connections with the young adults graduating from high school.

An internship case study

Hexcel Corp. is one of those businesses motivated to develop its workforce pipeline through local school systems. Working with Everton, Hexcel Production Supervisor Brad Adams

designed a pilot internship program for the aerospace contractor. The internship was structured keeping in mind the interns' school schedule, and over eight weeks two interns worked a total of 40 hours in 2-1/2-hour blocks twice a week.

Throughout the internship, which took place in the students' final quarter of high school, they rotated throughout the shop, learning different facets of the work from seasoned employees.

Adams said he's found students learn best when they partner with current employees who are excited to teach them.

Maquis Pressley was one of the Hexcel interns. He said his mentors at Hexcel were welcoming and prepared him to do the work that he is now doing as an employee of Hexcel.

"We put him right to work," Adams said. "He's been doing a lot and doing a great job."

The support Pressley received as an intern as well as experiencing the company culture helped him decide to stay with Hexcel when he was offered a job.

"Hearing the employees talk [positively] about the company helped me decide to work here," he said.

After its initial success, Adams said Hexcel is looking to double its internship program from two to four participants in the spring of 2023.

Flexible, for employers and students

Everton said this initial internship model can be used as a template for other businesses ready to start their own internship program. However, he also recognized the schedule and format will need to adjust to the needs of the business and school schedules. For some industries, such as construction, a summer internship may be a better option.

Internships allow students to learn both the hard skills necessary for the job and develop the soft skills important to being highly employable, such as working with a team, being on time, and asking questions, Everton said.

And training employees right out of school gives employers the opportunity to instill the kind of work and safety habits they want in employees – with less chance they have already learned bad habits.

After the Workforce Summit, about 50 employers attended follow-up events in December to connect with programs in the schools to start building their own workforce pipelines.

If your business is interested in getting involved with education to develop workforce solutions, contact EDASC Economic Development Manager Aaron Weinberg at aaron@skagit.org.





Leadership Skagit welcomes local professionals at all levels

Leadership Skagit has been nurturing homegrown leaders for nearly 20 years and will celebrate its 20th graduating class in June 2023. In that time, more than 500 individuals have been participants of Leadership Skagit, helping to fill our communities with leaders at all levels – people who become board members for local organizations, serve as elected officials, run nonprofits and lead businesses.

Laura Cailloux, Leadership Skagit’s curriculum director, has been with the program since before its launch. She served as curriculum chair on the original volunteer committee and says Leadership Skagit was among the first such programs to begin developing the next generation of community leaders.

“It is important to understand why community leadership programs were founded,” Cailloux says, “to create a safety net of knowledgeable and skilled leaders so communities weren’t reliant on just a few people filling the majority of leadership positions.”

As we as a society begin to recognize the need to welcome more diverse viewpoints and lived experiences, the work Leadership Skagit has been doing to include a lens of equity, diversity and inclusion has become all the more important.

This year’s class is the most diverse in terms of ethnic diversity and community affiliations, creating a real-world laboratory for participants to practice the skills they are learning. Cailloux notes the curriculum includes emerging

ideas in leadership, such as learning collaborative leadership skills for situations with no known solution and making space at the decision-making table for a diverse group of stakeholders.

Throughout the nine-month program, participants work toward a capstone project that puts their leadership skills into action. Past group projects have ranged from trail building to creating a park bench from recycled plastics to opioid awareness and Narcan training.

When making the business case for Leadership Skagit, Cailloux wants employers to know the skills participants are learning are easily transferrable to their work life.

“Community leadership skills are the same skill sets necessary in business organizations,” she said, naming listening, communicating clearly, and building trust within teams.



BUSINESSES CAN GET INVOLVED WITH LEADERSHIP SKAGIT

Your business can connect with Leadership Skagit with a monetary donation or the gift of your time and talent.

BECOME A SPONSOR. Support the program’s goals by sponsoring Leadership Skagit as a whole or sponsoring one of the monthly Challenge Days. All sponsors have the opportunity to speak to the group and receive recognition via EDASC and Leadership Skagit channels. Contact leadership@skagit.org for sponsorship information.

VOLUNTEER. The Leadership Skagit curriculum committee is always looking for professionals from within the community to assist in a number of ways. Contact Laura Cailloux for more information: Laura.Cailloux@skagit.edu.

“And if the organization expects employees to engage in the community they will immediately tap into a broad network.”

The 500-plus Leadership Skagit alumni in that network are engaged and rely upon one another to get work done, Cailloux says. “Overall, we are a more resilient community with the capacity to take on future challenges because of the depth and collaborative relationships of our community leaders.”

Equitable Economic Development: Making connections to underserved communities

With the arrival of Jorge Estefan to the EDASC team as its bilingual business advisor in May 2022, he began the work to develop a plan to meet not only the needs of the Latino population of Skagit County but all underrepresented communities.

The vision for the program is to develop a business ecosystem that supports, fosters, incentivizes, and promotes entrepreneurial and small business growth among underserved communities to create more equitable opportunities, improve quality of life, and create generational wealth. It is important to stress that the business support EDASC has traditionally provided continues as ever. This new focused effort is designed to bring the same level of opportunity, even if different avenues are required, to all parts of the Skagit business economy.

Those considered underserved may be experiencing barriers to success because of gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation or identity, physical or developmental ability, geographic remoteness, previous incarceration, or other issues.

Much of Estefan's work focuses on developing new avenues for success for entrepreneurs by providing individualized business counseling and technical assistance, assisting entrepreneurs in developing business strategies, identifying resources, and creating classes or workshops in Spanish or English as needed. More than 20% of the Skagit population identifies as Hispanic or Latino/a.

Estefan takes on these tasks with his trademark energy and optimism. Many solopreneurs and small business owners just need someone to see their potential, someone to encourage them, he said, especially if they aren't native English speakers.

He knows this well as he is originally from Mexico City and moved to the United States 12 years ago.

"Your confidence really gets beat up when you come to a new country," he said, which is why he knows it's so important to have the encouragement of someone who has shared the experience.

Estefan, who earned a degree in business administration and marketing from the Universidad Panamericana in Mexico City, has a background in retail and marketing and most recently worked as a real estate broker before joining EDASC. Those experiences, especially working for himself in real estate, gave him a ground-level understanding of the perseverance it takes to be an entrepreneur.

He says a lot of what he does for his advising clients is to connect them with resources that will help take their



business to the next level, whether that be applying for a contractor's license or creating a business plan to use in accessing funding.

Recently, he assisted an entrepreneur to get the necessary permits from the health department to open her business Aguas Express y Mas in Mount Vernon.

"Thank you very much for your help. You relieved me of some stress. I appreciate it a lot. Thanks to you and EDASC," said owner Leticia Palacios Maciel.

Estefan has found his work at EDASC to be meaningful and rewarding, and it allows him to do what he does best.

"I'm good at connecting with people," he said. "I help them get to where they want to be."

Estefan can also help larger employers with strategies to connect them to the Latino workforce in Skagit County.

As a resource and connector for entrepreneurs and employers alike, Estefan's work directly ties to EDASC's goals of creating a more prosperous, sustainable, and equitable community.

"When our community members improve," he said, "our entire community improves."

To reach Estefan, contact him at jorge@skagit.org or 360-336-6114, ext. 100.

Move to 501(c)(3) status opens door to new funding sources



BY AUDRA RAMERMAN
Director of Finance & Administration

In fiscal year 2021 more than 10% of our funding came from grants. EDASC became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2020 and this new tax status opened the door for us to apply for grants and other public or private allocations available only to IRS-recognized 501(c)(3) organizations. Some of the benefits we have received in the past

two years have been low or no-cost products and services that have reduced ongoing operating costs and one-time expenses. In addition, we have been awarded several grants for critical disaster funding including an EIDL grant, a forgivable PPP loan and other CARES funding, and targeted economic development program grants. These provided cashflow and financial security when our fundraising events were canceled, and other revenue sources suddenly became uncertain. In 2023 we are looking forward to seeking more grant funding to continue to diversify our revenue sources and expand offerings of no-cost economic development programs for Skagit County.

EDASC is in good financial health with a solid balance sheet due to our sound financial practices with oversight from the Board of Directors and Finance & Audit Committee members. Year-end financial statements are reviewed by Larson Gross CPAs. Data in this article is based on the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2021.

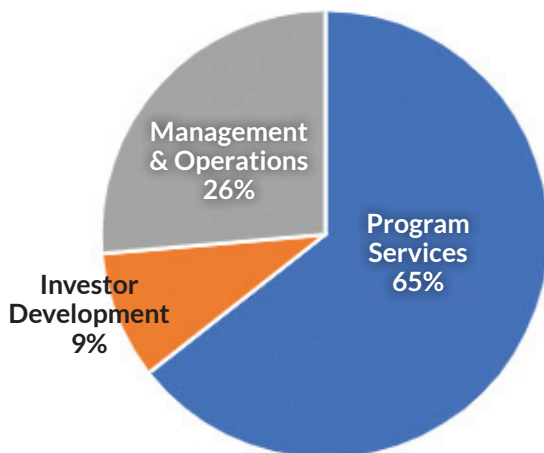
EDASC is a countywide public-private partnership with 56% of funding

coming from public sources, 33% from private sources, and 11 % from grants. Public revenue sources include Skagit County, Port of Skagit, Port of Anacortes, local cities and towns, and the state Department of Commerce.

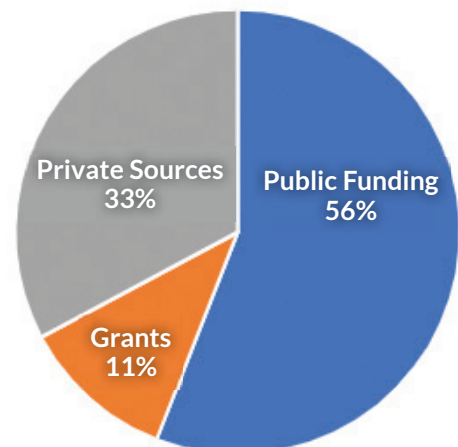
Private sources are comprised of Investors, sponsors, and Leadership Skagit tuition. Focusing just on Investors, Signature Investors (23) account for 8% of total Investors and represent 50% of investment, while Small Business, Silver, Team, Nonprofit and Sole-Proprietor Investors (204) account for 82% of total Investors and contribute 50% of investment. Leadership Skagit tuition and sponsorships are a mix of public and private sources and account for less than 10% of total revenue.

EDASC expenses are focused on program delivery with 65% of all spending allocated toward economic development activities, 26% toward operations support and general administration, and only 9% of expenses designated for fundraising and Investor relations.

2021 EXPENDITURES



2021 FUNDING SOURCES





City of Mount Vernon Mayor Jill Boudreau (center left) invited city, county and state elected officials to help her break ground on the Library Commons project.

Mount Vernon Library Commons breaks ground on ‘catalyst’ for downtown economic development

The Mount Vernon Library Commons project took a big step forward in September 2022 when more than 200 community members gathered with city, county and state officials for a groundbreaking ceremony.

The groundbreaking marked a major milestone for the project that began as an idea in 2017 and has grown to become a \$53 million community center featuring not only a library but also a commercial kitchen, public meeting spaces to accommodate up to 250 individuals, and a 270-space parking structure with 76 EV charging stations and nine EV bike charging lockers.

“Having this project come to fruition, to break ground – it’s monumental,” Mayor Jill Boudreau said in an interview with EDASC.

Boudreau and city leaders believe this “catalyst project” has the potential

to elevate downtown Mount Vernon’s visibility and stoke its economic growth.

“Mayor Boudreau talks about this being the largest economic development project ever in Skagit County,” noted EDASC CEO John Sternlicht. “The impact on not only Mount Vernon but also greater Skagit County will be significant. Community amenities and meeting places attract tourists and residents alike, generating greater spending and productivity. And I get a huge reaction from Seattle, Portland, and Vancouver folks when I mention the 76 EV charging stations!”

Boudreau explains that enticing private development downtown has had its challenges. Two major drawbacks have been the threat of flooding and the lack of parking. With the completion of the floodwall project in 2018, that concern was put to rest. Now, parking will be addressed with the Library Commons.

Developers typically balk at the idea of providing parking as part of their infrastructure improvements due to the cost, Boudreau said, so the additional parking will ease hesitancy to build.

“If we as a city invest and take care of that parking, in effect, it removes that expense from developing in downtown Mount Vernon,” she said.

The city is hopeful the investment in parking infrastructure will entice developers to bring both housing and lodging downtown.

The EV charging station, which is slated to be the biggest public charging station in the United States, is also expected to be a draw for travelers along Interstate 5, who can stop downtown to charge their vehicle, shop, dine and, ultimately, stay – all fostering economic development.

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Why L&I? Small business liaisons here to help



L&I representatives were part of EDASC's 50th anniversary celebration.

When and how employers can reach out to Labor & Industries

When employers (like you) read “L&I,” there’s a good chance you do a little internal groan. The requirements and regulations around Labor & Industries can feel like a lot to take in.

The good people at L&I realize that, and they have two messages for employers: First, yes, they know this is not your favorite topic, and, second, they really, truly are here to help you navigate through the many programs that fall under the L&I umbrella.

The ground covered by L&I is vast and varied, says Celia Nightingale, the manager of L&I’s Small Business Office. Essential employer functions L&I oversees are safety and health, wage and hours laws, workers compensation insurance and injury claims, and contractor registration.

With such a broad range of oversight, she says it’s no wonder employers feel intimidated.

“I think the other piece of the intimidation employers feel is related to the consequences of not complying,” Nightingale said.

She acknowledges that it’s a hard hit for employers who are fined when they didn’t realize they were out of compliance (and would have complied had they known), which is why it’s vitally important for employers to proactively seek out that information.

Nightingale says it’s also important for employers to understand L&I is the enforcement arm of workplace laws. “The laws that we are administering are laws passed by the legislature, not [rules created by] L&I.”

It is assumed employers know the mandatory regulations written into the law, Nightingale said, but unless you’ve got the time and inclination to dive into reading the applicable Washington Administrative Codes (and who does?), employers need to find another way to stay informed.

L&I’s small business staff offer resources, including the people, tools

and trainings employers need to stay in compliance with state law. The office’s role is education and not compliance, so employers need not fear getting fined for bringing up a concern.

“We do not want people learning about L&I law through compliance actions,” Nightingale said. “For example, a much preferred way to learn about safety and health requirements is to have an L&I consultant come in.”

Scheduling a consultation with one of their experts is an excellent place to start, she said. These consultations are no-cost – and confidential. Findings are not reported to compliance officers or to a company’s competitors. If violations are found, L&I works with employers to figure out solutions and a timeline to get the business into compliance. This offers businesses an opportunity to fix problems before they might be inspected, when L&I won’t have the latitude to give employers time to correct issues.

Nightingale said she has been nothing but impressed with her safety and health colleagues at L&I: “There are some really smart and helpful people



In partnership with the Department of Labor & Industries for employer outreach and education.

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LIBRARY COMMONS

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The Library Commons project is notable not only for its mega EV charging station but also for its many green and climate-resilient features. Mount Vernon-based HKP Architects designed the building using passive house concepts and the Commons is the first civic space in the state to use passive house design.

Passive house design focuses on energy efficiency and reducing the structure's ecological footprint. The Commons also incorporates resilient design features to help it weather climate change and natural disasters.

As a green-built civic space positioned to serve a growing community that will provide an economic catalyst to downtown, the Library Commons project is positioned to serve the community for decades to come.

"I think we've been able to provide generational services for the community – investing in that next generation is so exciting," Boudreau said. "It's also going to grow the economy and businesses and tax revenue around it."

Lydig Construction is the general contractor on the Library Commons project. Construction is slated to be finished in late 2023.

Library Commons funding did not include property taxes

Funding the Mount Vernon Library Commons, thus far, has come from 17 funding sources, Boudreau said.

"And to do it, at this point, without any property tax increase is unheard of," Boudreau said.

In fact, neither the floodwall nor the Library Commons projects required a

property tax increase.

Among the major funding sources for the Library Commons is \$2 million from a congressionally designated appropriation by Congresswoman Suzan Del Bene, \$1.7 million from a HUD section 108 loan, a \$4 million state capital grant, \$3 million in grants from the Washington State Department of Commerce, \$1 million from Skagit County and \$1 million from the Mount Vernon Library Foundation.

The City is continuing to seek funding support through grants to close the gap on the last \$6.5 million needed to fully fund the project. Mayor Boudreau encourages those interested in supporting the project to donate through the Mount Vernon Library Foundation.

L & I

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who are eager to share their expertise. They are truly experts."

L&I's website (lni.wa.gov) is a wealth of information for employers as well. For instance, if you are a new employer who needs to prepare to meet paid sick leave requirements, L&I has sample language for optional sick leave policies as well as spelling out mandatory provisions, such as a written notice to employees regarding sick leave law and monthly notice of sick leave accrual.

The website also provides information regarding minimum wage and overtime laws, and the small business staff who are available to help you understand what those laws mean for your business.

Workers' compensation insurance also falls under the L&I umbrella.

"L&I's workers' comp group is effectively an insurance agency," Nightingale explains. It employs actuaries to set rates based on history and predictive modeling of the nature of the work, the frequency of injuries in that line of work, and the severity of those injuries (among other criteria).

Employers submit quarterly premium payments to cover these costs. If a business falls behind in the payments, the small business liaisons can help get the business on a path to repayment.

L&I also covers the injury claims process. Having a basic understanding of this process, before the unexpected happens, can offer peace of mind to employers. Again, L&I offers a multitude of information on its website, at "Injured Worker? What You Need to

Know" (accessed from the home page). L&I has a Preferred Worker program, and a Stay at Work program, which can help fund wages, training and other needs affiliated with an employer bringing an injured employee back to work in a light duty job.

There's so much more to what L&I does – from food truck inspections to contractor licensing. To get a full picture of L&I's programs and services, visit its website, lni.wa.gov. Check out the "Business" section on the home page to get started, and also check its array of trainings offered at its online Workshops and Training Center (located on the home page footer). To reach the Small Business Office, email SmallBusiness@lni.wa.gov or call 1-800-987-1045.

Skagit Valley College helps businesses upskill employees



Skagit Valley College Angst Hall

Considering the increasing challenge with recruiting and retaining employees, businesses are seeking creative and innovative strategies to stay competitive. Partnering with Skagit Valley College (SVC) and investing in customized training for your employees may be the answer. Considering the impact of training, as well as potential resources in your community, customized training can help your business stay profitable during this challenging time.

Impact of training

Incorporating employee training can have direct impacts on your business that can maximize productivity and help you stay competitive. Beyond skilling up employees and increasing productivity, training can have direct

impact on employee retention. As many know, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) reported that on average it costs a company six to nine months of an employee's salary to replace them. In addition to this cost, turnover rates impact company culture, productivity, and overhead that many businesses cannot risk. A 2022 survey by SHRM reported that more than three-quarters of employees (76%) say they are more likely to stay with a company that offers continuous training. The ability to retain critical employees during an extremely competitive market can have crucial impact on the success of your business and SVC is here to help.

Customized training

SVC offers a variety of short- and

long-term training, workshops, coaching, and courses that may benefit your business. Whether it's upgrading the skills of current employees or training new employees, building hard skills or enhancing soft skills, SVC has something for you. Instructors are subject matter experts with extensive industry experience, who can provide companies of all sizes with a complete range of high-quality customized training solutions.

Job Skills Program

The Job Skills Program (JSP) grant funded by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges provides funding to qualifying companies to substantially offset the

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TRAINING

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cost of larger-scale employee training. These JSP projects allow businesses to invest in longer-term customized training from SVC, with greater potential impact on their employees and profitability. With these projects, businesses are able to implement a customized training plan that lasts from one to two years.

Businesses are responsible for providing a dollar-for-dollar match for the project, which could include cash match or wage match. For example, a company can meet that match by tracking employees' salary and benefits who have participated in training. If that amount meets the total project amount, there is no additional expense for the training.

Chinook Enterprise staff members who have participated in Job Skills Program training.

JSP Project Highlight

Chinook Enterprises, a social enterprise in Skagit County, partnered with SVC on a job skills program grant project in 2022. After assessing needs, Chinook Enterprises invested in a year and a half project to train employees of all levels on topics such as enterprise resource planning evaluation and implementation, team leadership, communication styles, conversational English and Spanish, and Microsoft programs.

Chinook Enterprises CEO Nikki Wegner said, "Partnering with Skagit Valley College and Impact WA to receive the JSP grant means that a small non-profit like Chinook can

benefit from world-class consulting and training for our staff members who benefit." Nikki shared this training increases employee's capacity to fulfill Chinook's mission "to provide improved services to our customers, meaning more individuals with disabilities access employment and community inclusion."

Skagit Valley College can support your business in fostering a learning culture and develop innovative ways to motivate employees as they develop as professionals. This approach will directly impact the experience of your employees and the success of your business. Find out more at www.skagit.edu/customizedtraining, emailing customizedtraining@skagit.edu, or calling 360.416.7638.

SILFAB

continued from pg. 7

aluminum frame waste is recycled, as are older panels and components nearing the end of their useful life.

No doubt, Silfab's values around reducing waste are shared by many of the individuals who are likely to adopt solar energy in their home or business. Even though Washington state is just below the average for sunny days each year, PV panels work on cloudy days as

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

continued from pg. 9

EDASC's target industries, said EDASC CEO John Sternlicht.

"Manufacturing is our biggest wealth producer in Skagit County," Sternlicht said. "These sectors of clean energy and manufacturing, whether for aerospace, maritime, or clean tech, fit well within our business ecosystem, offering family-wage jobs and high multipliers for indirect local spending."

Business attraction is also about finding the right businesses for the area. EDASC actively seeks appropriately sized marine, aerospace, composites, advanced manufacturing, and clean technology companies, as well as agriculture-related opportunities because they fit the business landscape, create family wage jobs, and enhance our overall economy.

While new businesses could be seen as increased competition for existing

ones, EDASC Economic Development Manager Aaron Weinberg said that usually isn't the case. "New businesses generally help existing ones by bringing in new suppliers, customers and other business opportunities," he said.

"While the Pacific Northwest may not be the largest state for solar usage, homeowners and businesses are certainly green-minded and embrace renewable energy options, as well as looking for ways to reduce their energy costs," he said.

Sternlicht added, "The level of cooperation even among competitors here in Skagit is impressive ... and unusual."

In addition, bringing new blood into the local business landscape helps diversify the Skagit economy, making us more resilient in the face of inevitable downturns in a single industry sector.

New companies tend to fill gaps in local supply chains and bring new skilled workers and professionals to the area. All these benefits make business attraction a desirable and necessary staple of economic development.

CAPACITY BUILDING

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stronger workforce.

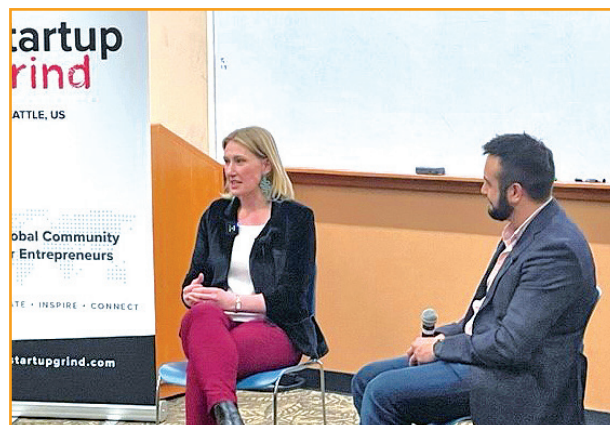
EDASC has its own ongoing services that fall under this category. Leadership Skagit, for instance, is a community leadership training program for emerging and current leaders. It has produced over 500 graduates since 2004, creating a network of servant leaders who are informed, inclusive, and connected.

EDASC is also involved in workforce and human development. EDASC and its partners such as Skagit Valley College, the Northwest Workforce Council, WorkSource, the Northwest Career & Technical Academy, Western Washington University, and the Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing and Technology work together to proactively solve workforce challenges. In addition, EDASC provides strong partnership and support for early learning, Skagit STEM, apprenticeship opportunities, and more to meet the demand of all employees and businesses.

The second category, physical infrastructure, ensures the proper infrastructure is available for businesses, workers, and community members to thrive. Broadband, prepared industrial sites, and other capital improvements fit this category. Housing availability and affordability also fall under this category. Since physical infrastructure requires long-term planning, funding, and patience, EDASC works with local governments to project needs expressed by businesses and residents and explore methods to meet those needs, particularly with reference to developing infrastructure for properties suitable for business development.

EDASC's approach to capacity building ensures Skagit County is better equipped for a sustainable, prosperous, and enduring future.

EDASC welcomed Startup Grind, the world's largest startup community, to Skagit County in November 2022. Amelia Cook, owner of Goodwinds Composites in Mount Vernon, was the guest speaker at the event. Startup Grind events are designed to give startups the education and opportunities they need to build, grow, and scale their companies. Look for more events in 2023.





Unleash the power of your company's marketing and HR partnership

Finding top manufacturing talent in today's talent-driven market

Amid the economy-wide workforce shortage, manufacturing companies struggle to fill open positions. A recent study by Deloitte reveals a continued perception gap: even as domestic manufacturing is viewed as increasingly important to the economy, public perceptions of manufacturing are outside the current reality. For instance, many Americans need to be aware of the increasingly high-tech nature of manufacturing, improving employee productivity and providing cutting-edge, transferable skills.

This perception gap is likely contributing to the current shortage of applicants, and manufacturers are waging war for talent globally and, more importantly, at the hyper-local level.

We believe there's an increasing need for marketing and HR to work together toward building a mutually beneficial relationship where driving engagement with both candidates and customers is vital.

A successful collaboration between marketing and HR can enhance critical areas in the organization, such as:

- **Brand Messaging** – Recruiting talent is becoming increasingly like acquiring customers. Building a cohesive brand message that resonates with consumers, employees, and candidates is critical.
- **Organizational Culture** – The organizational culture and company values should be the core components of every company's brand.
- **Social Media** – Marketing is the best team to help HR adapt to social media. Just as marketers

leverage social media to reach consumers and drive brand awareness, HR teams can utilize social channels for modern recruitment marketing.

- **Onboarding** – Marketing and HR can partner up to ensure the onboarding process of new hires is seamless and efficient.

While marketing and HR are separate departments, working in a union ensures that organizations attract the best candidates and keep them. The partnership of these two business functions has a long-lasting effect in driving a company's brand forward.

Learn how Impact Washington - NIST MEP can help your organization create a Talent Relationship Marketing Strategy to improve your business performance, create a motivating work environment, increase employee retention, and gain prospects' attention. Contact info@impactwashington.org | 425.438. 1146

ABOUT IMPACT WASHINGTON - NIST MEP

We are the State's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) — a federally recognized resource that offers business consulting and training services to assist manufacturers in growing and becoming more competitive. Services include business consulting, workforce development, targeted technical assistance, cybersecurity, supply chain improvements, and more. Our sole goal is to help companies become more productive and efficient, so businesses and communities thrive.



PART OF THE



Impact Washington supports the needs of small- and medium-sized manufacturers. To learn more about Impact Washington's services, visit impactwashington.org or contact them at 425-287-6808 or info@impactwashington.org.





Emerging opportunities at the Port of Skagit

Each year brings new opportunities – emerging opportunities – at the Port of Skagit. A successful 2022 brought about several private development and expansion projects to Port properties, and 2023 will bring even more investment into our community.

The Port recently completed a Historic Building Feasibility Study of the SWIFT Center, to analyze the possible adaptive reuse of the historic buildings at the former Northern State Hospital campus and associated costs of such an endeavor. The Port took local ownership of the property in 2018 and has invested \$2.4 million to-date cleaning up legacy environmental contamination, conducting deferred maintenance, and opening the property to public use in connection with the adjacent Skagit County Northern State Recreation Area. The feasibility study will help the Port refine plans for

redevelopment of the campus and will help identify and build the partnerships needed to maximize the potential of this property.

In 2023, infrastructure development will begin on the industrial property known as Watershed Business Park.

This property was purchased by the Port in 2018 and is located south of Peterson Road near the Port's Skagit Regional Airport and Bayview Business Park properties. The Port's 2023 capital budget includes design work for infrastructure and stormwater for



Phase I, a 56-acre parcel located at the eastern end of the property. This property is a critical investment in our community that will support innovation and research and development in important sectors of our economy, including value-added agriculture.

In La Conner, the Port conducted a visioning exercise with community input to determine the next chapter of the 13-acre commercially zoned property in the center of the La Conner Marina. Redevelopment of this portion of the marina has been in the Port's long-range planning since 2007, to see this underutilized property effectively contribute to the Port's mission and the year-round economy of La Conner, while prioritizing marine trades and maritime industries.

Ports are the only public agencies whose primary purpose is economic development. Investing in public



infrastructure to help businesses expand and create jobs, constructing an open access broadband network to improve digital access and equity, re-envisioning assets to drive commerce and bring a better return to

local taxpayers – these are just a few of the ways the Port of Skagit fulfills its mission of working together for the greater good of the Skagit Valley.



SIHRMA 2022

Continuing its commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, EDASC was proud to sponsor the Skagit Island Human Resource Management Association's fall workshop featuring Leadership Whidbey trainer Jeff Natter presenting "A Taste of JEDI."



SBDC: You are the expert on your business, but SBDC is the business expert



Your Washington SBDC advisors

Are you a business owner who is struggling to make money?

Do you work all the time, but you just can't seem to get ahead?

Kristina Hines, a business advisor with the Washington Small Business Development Center (SBDC), can help.

Kristina works with business owners in just about any industry and at any stage of business development to help them achieve their goals.

SBDC clients have this to say about working with Kristina:

"Kristina has been a blessing. I was so lost on how to do things and she has guided us every step of the way. I never knew this kind of free assistance was out there."

"Any time and every time I've reached out to the SBDC I have gotten sound advice and been able to up my game in the retail/manufacturing/wholesale markets."

"Having a mentor has kept me on track with my planning, informed me of the steps I should and should not be taking, and generally helped me feel like I'm not alone, wondering how to make my dream a reality. I'm very grateful to Kristina and SBDC!"

"Honestly, I really just needed someone to explain business things to me in normal terms and double check that I was doing everything right. My SBDC team was SO HELPFUL and kind in meeting with me to talk me through all my many questions to make sure things went smoothly. I so appreciate them!"

Kristina is one of more than 35 Washington SBDC business advisors working in communities across the state to provide no-cost, confidential, expert technical assistance to small business owners and entrepreneurs who want to start,

expand, or buy/sell a business.

SBDC advisors help business owners:

- improve their business systems
- understand financial records and spreadsheets
- make data-driven decisions
- locate free or low-cost resources to support business growth
- reduce costs/increase revenue
- create a succession plan to preserve assets

The Washington SBDC is hosted by Washington State University (WSU) and is administered through a cooperative agreement between WSU and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Funding is provided by WSU, other institutions of higher education, economic development associations and civic and business groups. These community-based funds are then matched on a one-to-one basis with federal money from the SBA.

When a business owner works with one SBDC advisor, they have access to the expertise and experiences of our entire network. They also have advisors in network who are native Spanish speakers.

SBDC business advisors are passionate about helping small businesses succeed. SBDC advisors can't do the work for you, but can support you every step of the way.

You are the expert on your business, but SBDC is the business expert.

To find out more, you can go to wsbdc.org or call 833-492-7232.



Top 20 Skagit County Employers

EDASC in 2022 compiled a list of the top employers in Skagit County. Research was conducted through outreach to businesses, organizations, and institutions in Skagit County for an estimated number of current permanent full-time employees in Skagit County.

1. Skagit Regional Health, **1,640**
2. Mount Vernon School District, **850**
3. Janicki Industries, Inc., **760**
4. Sedro-Woolley School District, **750**
5. Skagit County, **600**
6. Marathon, **500**
7. HF Sinclair, **495**
8. Draper Valley Farms, **455**
9. Paccar Technical Center, **425**
10. Swinomish Casino & Lodge, **379**
11. Burlington Edison School District, **375**
12. Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, **316**
13. PeaceHealth United General Medical Center, **290**
14. Hexcel Corp., **283**
15. Legend Brands, Inc., **265**
16. Pacific Woodtech Corp., **255**
17. City of Mount Vernon, **225**
18. Northwest Educational Service District 189, **215**
19. City of Anacortes, **205**
20. Sierra Pacific Industries, **205**

**Data reflects permanent full-time employees; collected summer 2022.*

Nonprofit Partner Spotlight: Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship



U.S. Congresswoman Suzan DelBene visited the EDASC office in July 2022 to recognize EDASC partner the Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship (CIE) for its work, awarding the organization \$180,000 in federal funding to expand its services.

CIE's mission is to help people in marginalized communities with limited resources to start a business, earn a living, and build generational wealth. The success of its Comadres program providing entrepreneurial support for Latinas in Skagit County gained the attention of DelBene, who was able to secure one-time federal funding for the organization, which also serves the Olympic Peninsula and the Palouse region.

"The pandemic highlighted the disparity in business, finance and employment for women and people of color. CIE's efforts are helping to bridge that gap," EDASC CEO John Sternlicht said.

Comadres helps Latinas quickly explore their business idea, providing access to education and resources for small business, and connects participants to other women launching businesses. Isabel Sanchez, who participated in the first cohort of Comadres, said the women "co-mothered" each other by supporting one another through the eight-week class and beyond to provide encouragement in launching their businesses.

Participants who successfully complete the course and demonstrate a viable business idea are eligible for a \$500 seed grant to help with startup costs.

EDASC and CIE are natural partners, Sternlicht said, as the organizations share similar missions and visions for their work and offer business advising to underrepresented populations.

Learn more about the Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship at www.cie-nw.org.

SIGNATURE INVESTORS

Diamond



Emerald



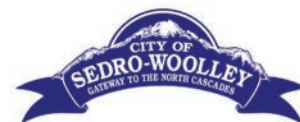
Platinum



Gold



Public Partners



INVESTOR INFO

EDASC Investor levels and perks

Join the 250 Investors already supporting local economic development



Signature Investors

EDASC Signature Investors – those who invest at least \$5,000 annually – recognize the importance of ensuring ongoing support for economic development activities. Signature Investors receive bonus perks on top of those received by Investors.

- Special recognition at all EDASC events
- Preferential placement in the EDASC Business Guide
- Logo placement on EDASC's home page
- Complimentary tickets to Economic Forecast Night & Investor Appreciation events
- First to know about special EDASC events and projects
- Prominent listing in EDASC online investor directory



Investors

As an EDASC Investor, your annual investment will fuel innovative and collaborative economic development. Along with ensuring a sustainable Skagit County economy while preserving what we love, Investors receive perks as a special thank you from EDASC.

- Exclusive recognition in EDASC Skagit Business Guide
- Networking and sponsorship opportunities
- Discounts on EDASC workshops and events
- Complimentary tickets to EDASC's Investor Appreciation event
- Access to periodic research, resources and opportunities
- Listing in EDASC's online investor directory
- Unlimited job postings to EDASC's Skagit Job Board

Become an EDASC Investor

Interested in becoming an EDASC Investor? Contact EDASC's Economic Development Manager Aaron Weinberg at aaron@skagit.org or 360-336-6114. Investor information is also available online at skagit.org.

INVESTORS

AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

Agriculture & Forestry

Janicki Logging & Construction Co., Inc.

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Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
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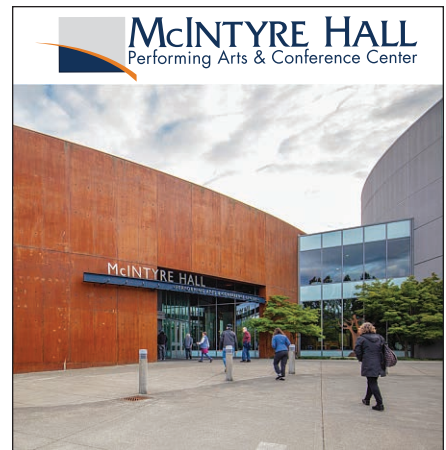


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***Fast Facts:* Construction**

Companies in Skagit: 569

**CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS
Companies in Skagit: 194**

**The Skagit County construction industry has
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Penny Roodzant

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www.farmsrongbrewing.com
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vanessa_blair@foodservices.com
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Vanessa Blair

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www.samishbay.com
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Skagit Valley Food Co-op

Team

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(360) 542-5010
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Tony White

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Emily Baker

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Small Business Investor

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(360) 610-9022
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Kirt Rohrs

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skiyouranch@gmail.com
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Chris Barker

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EDASC 50th Anniversary



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Government

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Team
2060 Powerhouse Drive
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Cafinance@adamsai.com
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Jessica Loree

City of Anacortes

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Matt Miller

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Port of Anacortes

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www.portofanacortes.com
Dan Worra

Port of Skagit

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Sara Young

Samcor Incorporated

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Janet Castilleja



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The Port offers abundant opportunities on beautiful property overlooking Fidalgo and Padilla bays, including the world-class Cap Sante Marina, public parks and waterfront access, marine terminals, commercial facilities, a regional airport, and more.

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Anacortes, WA 98221
(360) 293-3134
Executive Director:
Dan Worra
portofanacortes.com

Port of Skagit



Port of Skagit

2023 EDASC Business Directory—Port of Skagit profile

Port of Skagit serves as an economic development engine for Skagit County by concentrating on our mission, **Working Together for the Greater Good of the Skagit Valley**. The Port owns and operates four main enterprises that are home to nearly 100 businesses and more than 1,600 jobs.

Skagit Regional Airport: Located on Bayview Ridge, Skagit Regional is a general aviation airport that supports business and generates job creation throughout our community. US Customs & Border Protection Services were added in 2019 to accommodate international flight arrivals, providing even more opportunity for economic development.

Bayview Business Park: With a nearly constant 100% occupancy rate, Bayview Business Park is home to more than 40 diverse and valued businesses. While most of the companies focus on general, marine and aerospace manufacturing, there are also 20 businesses within the value-added agriculture sector.

La Conner Marina: Opened in 1970, the La Conner Marina was built to be a jobs producer in alignment with the Port's mission. Today, the La Conner Marina is home to a thriving maritime industry cluster with marine-related businesses and manufacturers, and is a popular destination for recreational boaters and commercial fishers.

SWIFT Center: The Sedro-Woolley Innovation for Tomorrow Center, is the former Northern State Hospital campus. The vision for SWIFT is to become a destination mixed use campus accommodating education, research and development, manufacturing, hospitality, and commercial venues all within the historic character and great public spaces of the Center.

Port of Skagit
15400 Airport Drive
Burlington WA 98233
360-757-0011 | www.portofskagit.com
Executive Director: Sara K. Young

Skagit Council of Governments

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Kevin Murphy

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Kate Williams

Skagit Public Utility District

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www.skagitpud.org
Shannon Patino

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Andrea Fichter

Town of Hamilton

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Mandi Bates

Town of La Conner

Public

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(360) 466-3125

mayor@townoflaconner.org

www.townoflaconner.org

Ramon Hayes

Town of Lyman

Public

PO Box 1248

Lyman, WA 98263

(360) 826-3033

info@townoflyman.com

<http://www.townoflyman.com/>

Eddie Hills

WorkSource Skagit / Employment Security Department

Non-Profit Investor

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Mount Vernon, WA 98273

(360) 230-1044

Teresa.davis@esd.wa.gov

<https://worksourcewa.com/>

Teresa Davis

EDASC 50th Anniversary





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(360) 336-1947
jong@cascadeface.com
www.cascadeface.com
Jonathan Grant, M.D.

Cascadia Eye

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www.cascadiaeye.com
Darcy Anderson

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www.hawthornefh.com
Kirk Duffy

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www.HildeFamilyDentistry.com
Jason Hilde

PeaceHealth United General Medical Center

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cjohnston@peacehealth.org
www.peacehealth.org/united-general-medical-center
Chris Johnston

Riverside Health Club

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riversidehealthclub.com
Karen Westra

Skagit Regional Health

Gold

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(360) 814-2370

bivie@skagitregionalhealth.org

www.skagitregionalhealth.org

Brian Ivie

Village Concepts Country

Meadow Village

Small Business Investor

1501 Collins Road

Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

(360) 941-7189

Davidgb@Villageconcepts.com

David Bricka



Skagit Regional Health is an integrated health care system providing advanced, quality and comprehensive services to the people of Skagit, Island and Snohomish counties. The system includes Skagit Valley Hospital in Mount Vernon and Cascade Valley Hospital in Arlington, both offering acute and emergency care. The system features more than two dozen clinic locations providing primary, specialty and urgent care, including the new Station Square clinic, which opened in January 2023.

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<https://corporate.comcast.com/>
Vincent Buys

Dimensional Communications

Small Business Investor

1220 Anderson Road
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ryanh@dimensional.net
www.dimensional.net
Ryan Hagman

Sierra Microproducts

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ZiPLY Fiber

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jennifer.harvey@ziPLY.com
<https://ziPLYfiber.com/>
Jennifer Harvey

Fast Facts

Information Technology

Companies in Skagit: 41

Employment: 283

Average Salary: \$75,918



ZiPLY Fiber is a local internet service provider dedicated to bringing ultra-fast, reliable fiber internet to Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. Formed in 2020, ZiPLY Fiber is reimagining internet by providing some of the fastest speeds available alongside refreshingly great customer experiences. In addition to connecting homes and businesses across a rapidly expanding network, ZiPLY Fiber is focused on bringing fiber internet out to rural areas that have been historically underserved by internet companies.

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steve@aspenpowercatamarans.com
www.aspenpowercatamarans.com
Steve Graf

Bayview Composites LLC

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13593 Bayview Edison Road
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Breedt R & D Skagit

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Andries Breedt

Chinook Enterprises

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Nicolette Wegner

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Leslie Smith

Eddyline Kayaks

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David Carlson

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Andrea.Petrich@HFSinclair.com

www.hfsinclair.com

Andrea Petrich

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La Conner, WA 98257

(360) 466-3629

isaaco@laconnermaritime.com

www.laconnermaritime.com

Isaac Oczkewicz

Legend Brands, Inc.

Small Business Investor

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Burlington, WA 98233

(360) 757-7776

m.neu@legendbrands.com

Legendbrands.com

Marcia Neu

PACCAR Technical Center

Emerald

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phil.stephenson@paccar.com

www.paccar.com

Philip Stephenson



Hexcel Corporation is a leading advanced composites company that manufactures and markets lightweight, high-performance structural materials, including carbon fibers, reinforcements for composites, prepregs, honeycomb, matrix systems, adhesives and composite structures. Hexcel's product lines are applied across a variety of markets which spurs a constant drive for innovation and cost-competitive production. This culture of innovation allows it to embrace the exploration of new ideas, to challenge the impossible and succeed beyond expectations.

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(360) 757-7212 | hexcel.com
Plant Manager: Dave Carlson

315998-1

The advertisement banner features a collage of images: a commercial airplane in flight, a military helicopter, a futuristic car with motion blur, and a small aircraft. The Hexcel logo and "75 Years" anniversary text are in the top left. A dark blue banner at the bottom contains the title "Lightweighting & Beyond" and a paragraph of text.

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Debbie Eaton

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Fast Facts

Manufacturing

Companies in Skagit: **188**

FOOD MANUFACTURING

Companies in Skagit: **35**

**BEVERAGE AND TOBACCO
PRODUCT MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **15**

TEXTILE PRODUCT MILLS

Companies in Skagit: **7**

**WOOD PRODUCT
MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **13**

CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING

Companies in Skagit: **7**

**PLASTICS AND RUBBER
PRODUCTS MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **5**

**NONMETALLIC MINERAL
PRODUCT MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **7**

**FABRICATED METAL PRODUCT
MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **25**

MACHINERY MANUFACTURING

Companies in Skagit: **9**

**COMPUTER AND ELECTRONIC
PRODUCT MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **5**

**TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT
MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **24**

**FURNITURE AND RELATED
PRODUCT MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **8**

**MISCELLANEOUS
MANUFACTURING**

Companies in Skagit: **29**

EMPLOYMENT: 5,933

AVERAGE WAGE: \$75,800

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Mike Nelson

La Conner Maritime Service / Smiley's Pro Service

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isaaco@laconnermaritime.com
www.laconnermaritime.com
Isaac Oczkewicz

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Dan Averill

Seattle Yachts

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Peter Whiting

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Traci Stark

INVESTORS

NONPROFIT

Nonprofit

Anacortes Chamber of Commerce

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Jessica Kiser

Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County

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Ron McHenry

Burlington Chamber of Commerce

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Stephanie Rees

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Liz Theaker

Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship

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mike.skinner@cie-nw.org
www.cie-nw.org
Mike Skinner

Children's Museum of Skagit County

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432 Fashion Way
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www.skagitchildrensmuseum.net
Cate L. Anderson

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Bill Henkel

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Jonathan Kline

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Gabriel Neuman Neuman

Helping Hands Food Bank

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Rebecca Skrinde

Home Trust of Skagit

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Jodi Dean

La Conner Chamber of Commerce

Non-Profit Investor
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Our vision is of a thriving historic downtown Mount Vernon, where all are welcome in the clean, safe, appealing heart of commerce and culture, a place where the community comes together with pride.

223 S. 1st Street, Suite B
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 336-3801
info@mountvernondowntown.org
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Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce

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Andy Mayer

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Jodi Broughton

North Puget Sound Carpenters Local 70

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Kristy Spray

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Sedro-Woolley Chamber of Commerce

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Leigh Ann Benson

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Maddy MacKenzie

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Tina Tate

Skagit Island Human Resource Management Association

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Donovan Cook

Skagit Valley Family YMCA

Non-Profit Investor
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c.see@skagitymca.org
www.skagitymca.org
Charlotte See

Skagit Valley Tulip Festival

Non-Profit Investor
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311 Kincaid Street
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(360) 428-5959
cindy@tulipfestival.org
www.tulipfestival.org
Cindy Verge

Skagit Watershed Council

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(360) 419-9326
rbrocksmith@skagitwatershed.org
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Richard Brocksmith

United Way of Skagit County

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Mandi Rothman

Volunteers of America

Non-Profit Investor
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Daustin@voaww.org
www.voaww.org/drc
Donnell Austin

Washington Vocational Services

Non-Profit Investor
111 SE Everett Mall Way
C100
Everett, WA 98208
(425) 774-3338
slesh@wvs.org
www.wvs.org
Sue Lesh

Leadership Skagit

As part of the curriculum, Leadership Skagit participants form groups and partner with a local nonprofit to address a need in the community.



INVESTORS

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Professional Services

Barron Quinn Blackwood

Team

300 N Commercial Street
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squinn@barronlaw.com
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Jacque Beamer

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Christy Lyon

Chmelik Sitkin & Davis P.S. is a leading Northwest Washington regional law firm that represents businesses, municipal governments, and community associations primarily in Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan and Island Counties but throughout the State of Washington and Alaska. Clients expect that our attorneys will provide timely, cost-effective and sound advice in all areas of business, business transactions, representation of municipal governments, land use issues, representation of general and subcontractors, employment and labor issues, real estate and development issues, and environmental cleanups.

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Andy Law

HKP Architects



HKP Architects has been providing architectural services to the Pacific Northwest since 1952. Founded on the values of honesty, simplicity, and service —our firm is highly respectful of our many long-term relationships with our clients and communities. Our work shows remarkable consistency over the past seven decades, and we remain dedicated to providing architectural design that is high-value, environmentally responsible, and sensitive to its site.

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and Brian Poppe



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John Bouslog

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Shelah Inman

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Judy Williams

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Norman Dahlstedt

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Erik Pedersen

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Mark Scalzo

**Land Title and Escrow
Company of Skagit County**

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Clay Learned

Nickel Bros Inc.

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Nickel Bros Inc.
Neil Prasad

RE/MAX Territory NW

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www.skagitvalleyrealestate.com
Wilma Louia

Real Estate Unlimited

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**Windermere Real Estate /
Anacortes Properties**

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Nate Scott

**Windermere Real Estate /
Skagit Valley**

Small Business Investor
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Mount Vernon, WA 98273
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jjscott@windermere.com
www.windermereskagit.com
Josh Scott

**Fast Facts
Real Estate**

Companies in Skagit: 131

REAL ESTATE

Companies in Skagit: 114

RENTAL AND LEASING SERVICES

Companies in Skagit: 17

EMPLOYMENT: 490

TOTAL HOUSING UNITS:

55,293

(according to U.S. Census data)

**The 2022 annual median price
for homes in Skagit County was**

\$543,000



INVESTORS

REPAIR & MAINTENANCE



Repair & Service

All Phase Heating and AC, Inc.

Small Business Investor
230 Lila Lane
Burlington, WA 98233
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Birch Equipment Rentals & Sales

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Alex Gravley

Pacific Party Canopies, Inc.

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Jill Shipman

FLOWERS INVESTORS



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Retail

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Judd & Black Appliance

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tstoneham-judge@juddblack.com
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Brecky Bihary

Fast Facts

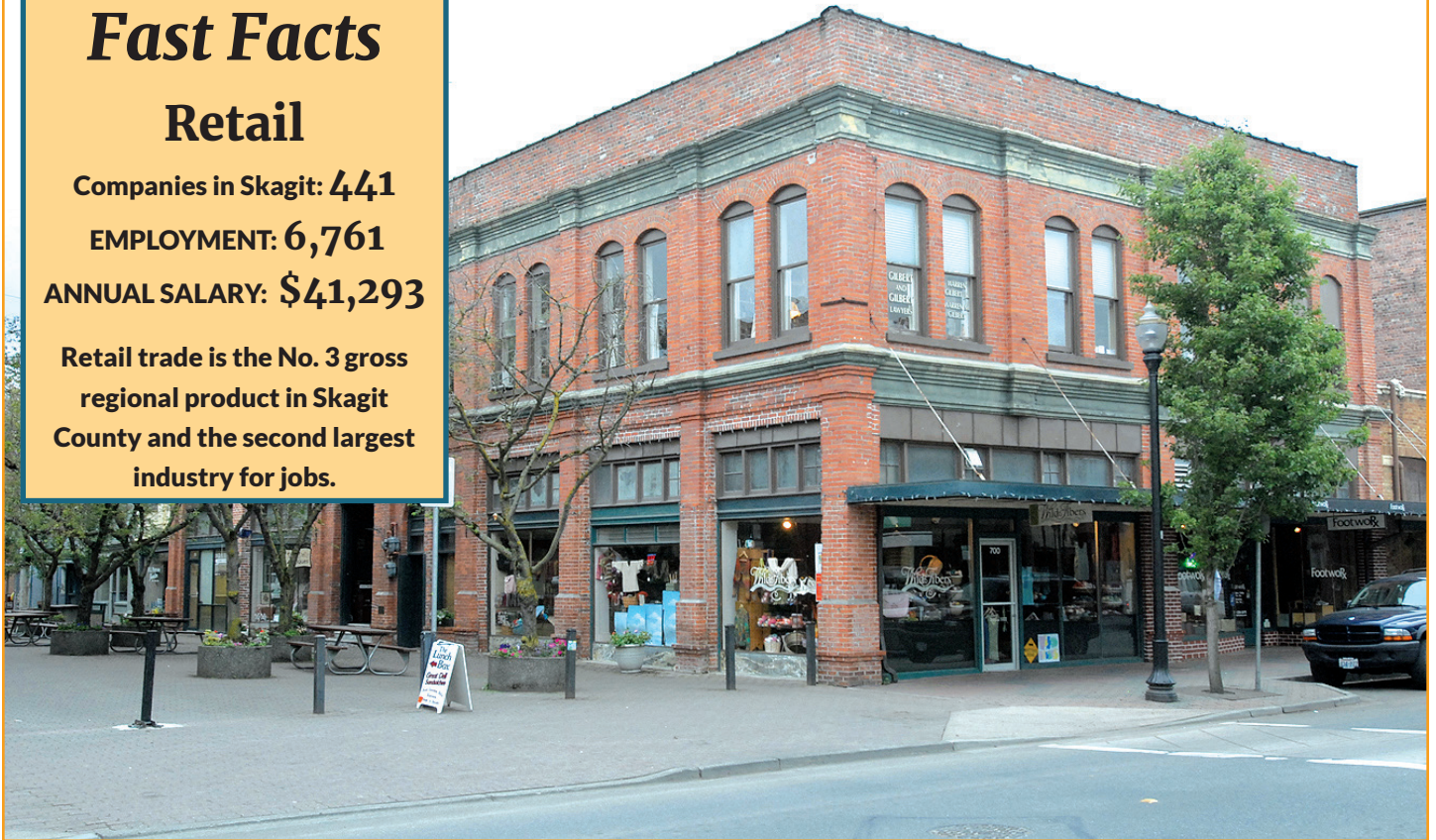
Retail

Companies in Skagit: **441**

EMPLOYMENT: **6,761**

ANNUAL SALARY: **\$41,293**

Retail trade is the No. 3 gross regional product in Skagit County and the second largest industry for jobs.



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Doyle Guffie

Silfab Solar

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Lorraine Hoefler

Strauss Jewelers

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www.straussjewelers.com
Lynn & Barbara Strauss

WCP Solutions

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Adam Bieghler

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Transportation

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Dale O'Brien

Skagit Transportation, Inc.

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Daniel Boffey

Fast Facts

Transportation

Companies in Skagit: 92

EMPLOYMENT: 1,227

**AVERAGE ANNUAL
WAGE: \$54,488**

Did You Know?

Skagit County has three airports: Skagit Regional Airport, Anacortes Airport, and Concrete Airport

Anacortes is the terminus for the Washington State Ferries route serving the San Juan Islands.

The Port of Anacortes, a natural deep-water seaport, is conveniently located near Port of Bellingham, Port of Everett, Port of Seattle, and Port of Tacoma.



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P: (360) 757-4433

Executive Director: Dale O'Brien

E: dobrien@skagittransit.org | skagittransit.org

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Fixed Routes • County Connector • Everett Express • Dial-A-Ride • Vanpool

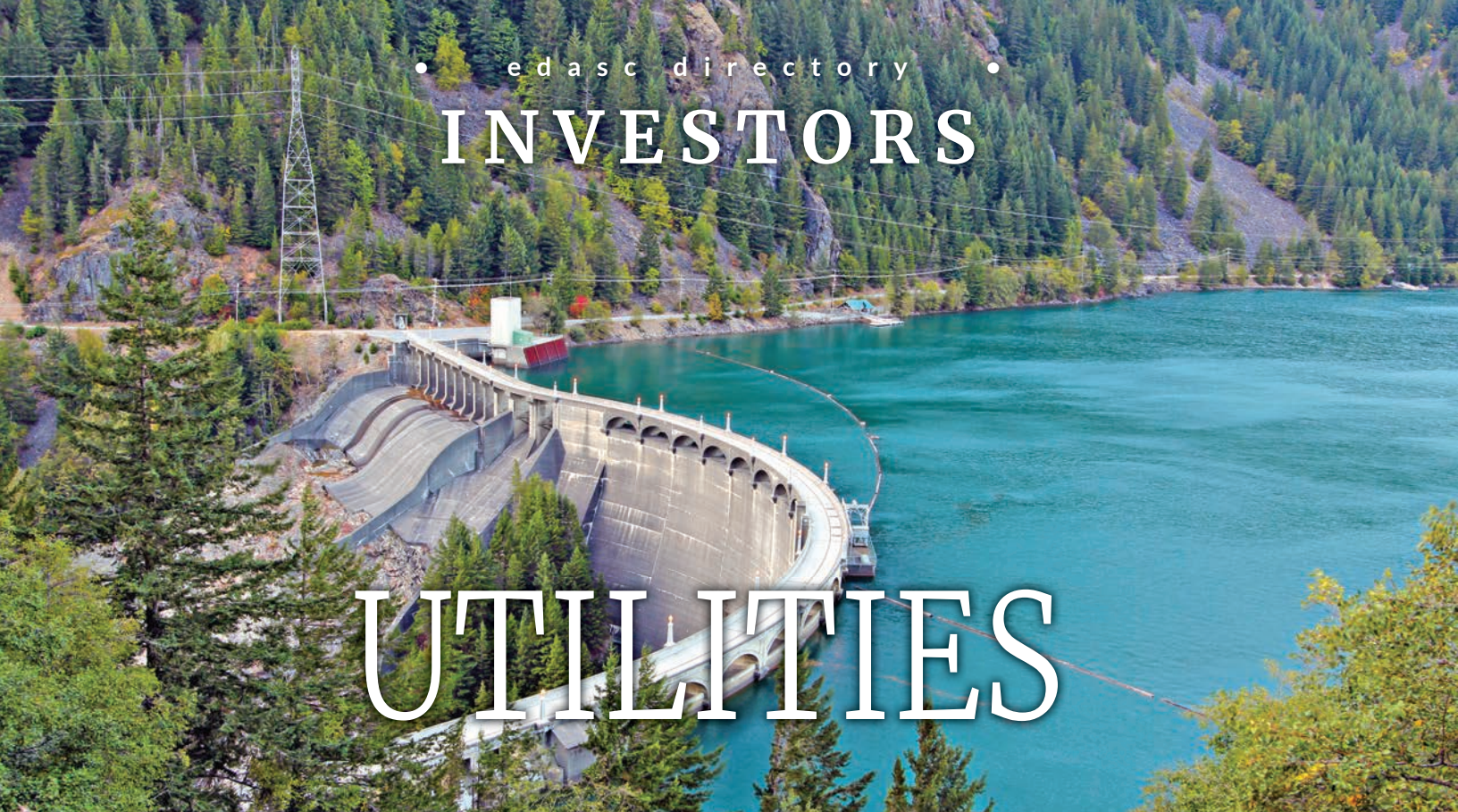


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INVESTORS

UTILITIES



Utilities

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Travis Alvord

Puget Sound Energy

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www.pse.com
Robert Knoll

Republic Services

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Pinky Vargas

Skagit Public Utility District

Public
1415 Freeway Drive
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 848-4436
patino@skagitpud.org
www.skagitpud.org
Shannon Patino

Fast Facts

Utilities

Companies in Skagit: 10

Employment: 240

Average Annual

Wage: \$100,592

EDASC Silver Investor Cascade Natural Gas distributes natural gas in Skagit County to Mount Vernon, Anacortes, Burlington, La Conner, and Sedro-Woolley.

EDASC Public Investor Skagit Public Utility District Operates the largest water system in the county

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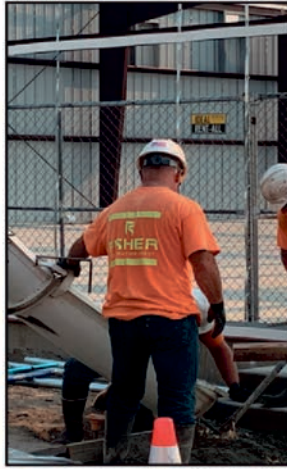
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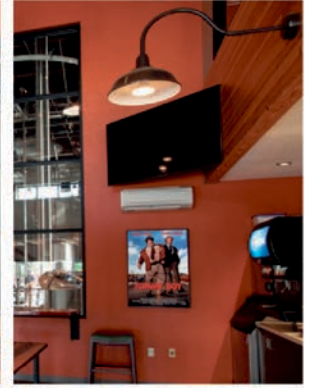
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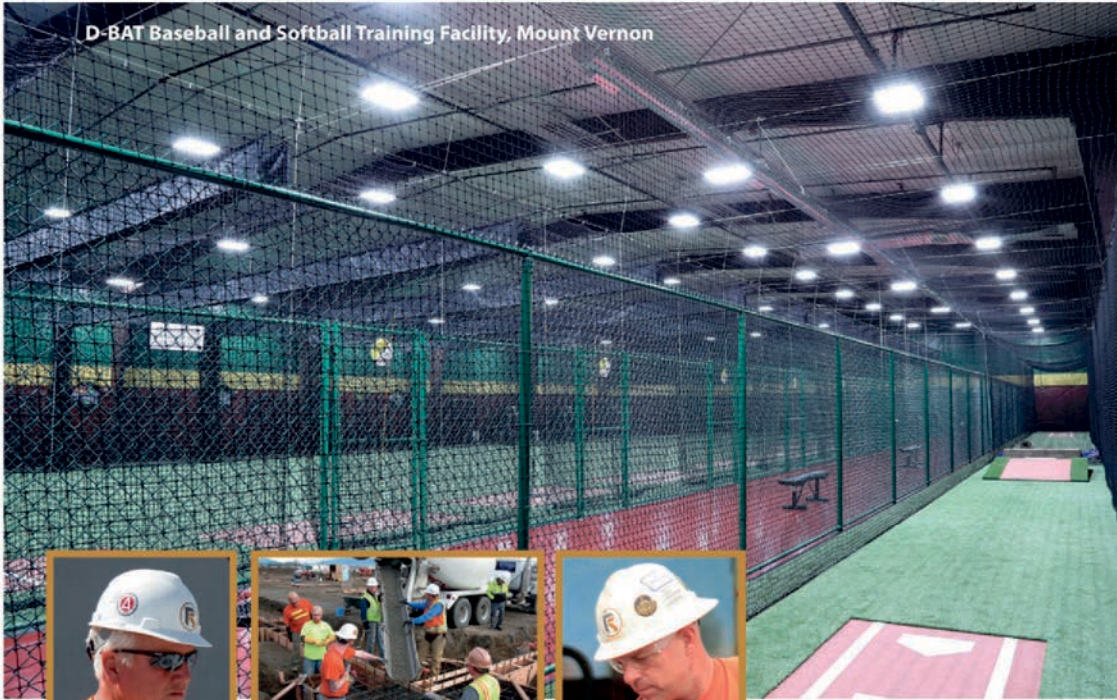
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