

SKAGIT



BUSINESS GUIDE 2024

GOVERNMENT
SUPPORT

MENTORS

ACCESS TO
CAPITAL

INCLUSION

ENTREPRENEURS

TRAINING

WORKFORCE

Mapping the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem



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LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

We know a healthy, thriving community requires a delicate balance of nutritional necessities from several resources. The social determinants of health have many factors, including health behaviors, clinical care, environment, and social and economic components that point to healthy outcomes. A more recent vital conditions framework calls out reliable transportation, sense of belonging, civic muscle and humane housing as indicators of a healthy community. In either model, it is clear the need for community involvement on multiple levels is essential. As I finish my term as EDASC Chair, I can't help but marvel at the impact of EDASC on many, if not all, of these areas to create a thriving Skagit community.



EDASC navigated the COVID pandemic with grace. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of EDASC in 2022 amid the final chapters of the pandemic. We recognized EDASC as convenor and collaborator facilitating public and private partnerships. This includes launching the Skagit Tourism Bureau, the Skagit Housing Consortium, the Job Board, and the Skagit County Recovery Plan. We also celebrated the history and legacy of EDASC as a critical connector in creating relationships both in business and fellowship.

I am especially energized by the work of EDASC in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. EDASC has led work in this area with the Latino Business Retention and Expansion program. They were an organizer of the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) series. And most recently, the EDASC Board has completed a charter that will support our commitment to future DEI endeavors in our communities.

Lastly, I would like to recognize the many board members past and present. These individuals have inspired me and challenged me all in the same moment. I am confident in EDASC's future by being in their presence. It has been my pleasure to serve alongside them, laugh with them, share stories of success and hopefulness, collaborate, and maybe most importantly envision a prosperous, sustainable and equitable community while maintaining Skagit County's natural beauty and quality of life.

With Eternal Gratitude,
Chris Johnston
Outgoing EDASC Board Chair

LETTER FROM THE CEO

As productive as 2023 was for EDASC, 2024 promises to be even more so! EDASC's work focusing particularly on inclusive entrepreneurial support really took off and will expand significantly in 2024, hence our emphasis on this work as this year's cover story. In addition to our traditional work on business recruitment, retention and expansion, EDASC's efforts to convene and collaborate in vital areas of workforce development, housing, and child care have brought together many different groups allied around a particular purpose. This is at the core of the unique role EDASC fills.

We could not accomplish what we do without the generous and devoted supporters in the private sector, as well as the county, cities and towns, ports, and others that invest in our work. In addition, EDASC has worked diligently to find additional sources of revenue from grants and contracts.

EDASC strives to maintain the highest standards of nonprofit management. Our board and staff, who are the heart of EDASC and do tremendous work (I could not possibly thank you enough!) are justifiably proud of our clean audit and even more so that we have just been named by the International Economic Development Council as the first Accredited Economic Development Organization in the state of Washington and, in fact, all of the Pacific Northwest! This accreditation further confirms that we in Skagit County are carrying out economic development at the highest levels of competence and achievement. And we couldn't do it without you and your partnership.

I thank you for your support of EDASC and our work, and for the great honor of serving as EDASC's CEO. As I begin my 10th year here in the summer of 2024, I am prouder than ever of all we have been able to accomplish. To our outgoing Board Chair Chris Johnston, deepest gratitude for your leadership, friendship and service. To incoming Board Chair Amelia Cook, I am so looking forward to continuing our partnership in service to the people of Skagit County.

Sincerely yours,

John Sternlicht

CEO



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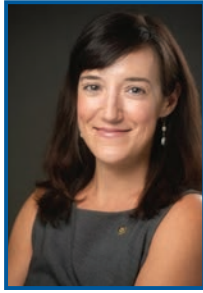


Cover image by Naama Sternlicht

MEET THE 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Amelia Cook
EDASC Chair
Goodwinds Composites



Nikki Wegner
EDASC Vice Chair
Chinook Enterprises



Nathan Wolfe
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Matt Roetcisoender
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Brian Gentry
Landed Gentry Homes



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Ryan Sakuma
Sakuma Bros Farms



John Dumas
Port of Anacortes



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SaviBank



Amy Hong
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Swinomish Tribal Senate



Kristen Keltz
Skagit Tourism Bureau



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Port of Skagit



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Mandi Rothman
United Way of Skagit County



Peter Donovan
City of Mount Vernon



Liz Stout
Dakota Creek Industries



Dr. Chris Villa
Skagit Valley College

Get to know the EDASC staff

John Sternlicht
CEO

With EDASC since 2015

Responsibilities: Guide the overall direction of EDASC, executing on the strategic plan, managing the staff and operations. Serve as the voice and representation of economic development in the community.



Shaun Gibbs

Economic Development Manager, Business Recruitment, Retention & Expansion

With EDASC since 2023

Responsibilities: Connect with existing businesses to support their growth and competitiveness. Work to attract new businesses and investment to Skagit.



Audra Ramerman
Director of Finance and Administration

With EDASC since 2017

Responsibilities: Create a fiscally strong and sustainable organization that has the resources to fully execute our mission for the enrichment of Skagit County.



Ellen Hiatt

External Relations Specialist
With EDASC since 2023

Responsibilities: Manage the Leadership Skagit program, and work to connect local businesses with EDASC, aligning their community relations goals with sponsorship opportunities.



Aaron Weinberg
Economic Development Manager, Strategic Projects
With EDASC since 2019

Responsibilities: Spearhead EDASC's strategic projects, including the organization's Economic Recovery Plan, workforce development initiatives, and child care needs assessment.



Matthew Johnson Money
Business Operations Specialist
With EDASC since 2022

Responsibilities: Support and coordinate EDASC programs while providing administrative support to the organization. This work contributes to the growth and development of Skagit County's economy.



Jorge Estefan
Economic Development Manager, Equitable Economic Development
With EDASC since 2022

Responsibilities: Supporting entrepreneurs and small business owners from underserved communities, particularly focusing on the Latino community.



Hilary Parker
Communications Manager
With EDASC since 2022

Responsibilities: Tell EDASC's story by sharing our programs and services through words and pictures via newsletters, social media and this annual Skagit Business Guide.





Mapping the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Just as eelgrass and clams, juvenile salmon and shore birds, are all part of the natural estuary ecosystem found at Padilla Bay, Skagit County’s small businesses are part of an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Like any ecosystem, the components of that network thrive when all components are healthy.

That’s why EDASC embarked on a two-year journey along with RAIN Catalysts at the start of 2023 to map the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Skagit County and nurture the entrepreneurs and small businesses that comprise it.

In its first year, “RAIN has been actively assessing the needs of entrepreneurs in Skagit County and is creating fertile ground for them to prosper,” EDASC CEO John Sternlicht said.

It is estimated that around 99% of all Skagit County businesses are small businesses, and many of those are defined as microenterprises, having five or fewer employees. That’s where much of the focus lays for EDASC and RAIN’s

work in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, says RAIN Venture Catalyst Jonathan Carpenter Eells. Carpenter Eells works alongside Jorge Estefan, EDASC’s Equitable Economic Development manager, to deliver support to entrepreneurs and small businesses.

“

It turned out to be a fantastic program to connect us with all of the support that EDASC and RAIN provide in this area.

— Jessica Schwab, Skagit Woolen Works

RAIN (Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network) is a nonprofit organization that focuses on reducing barriers to entrepreneurship by connecting people, programs, physical assets, and capital in rural and underserved communities. Like EDASC, RAIN’s services are offered at no cost to the entrepreneurs. For this first term, the cost of the program is underwritten by Skagit County through ARPA funding.

As defined by RAIN, an entrepreneurial ecosystem includes a set of interdependent “factors and actors,” such as government, training, investment capital, and markets for goods, working in concert to enable a supportive and productive environment for entrepreneurs.

“The entrepreneurial ecosystem is all of these components, from the actual entrepreneurs themselves to the partner



Fostering the entrepreneurial ecosystem: RAIN Catalysts and EDASC hosted entrepreneurs and local leaders at White Branches tea room in Mount Vernon to discuss the results of the entrepreneurial ecosystem scorecard.

organizations, to stakeholders who are working or living within the community – those champions of small business,” Carpenter Eells said.

By many definitions Skagit County is considered rural and thereby those rural communities are identified in economic development circles as being underserved. With both EDASC’s Equitable Economic Development program and RAIN, the focus is on serving those exact communities. Much of Estefan’s work focuses on the Hispanic and Latino community in the county, which is nearly 20% of the total population. Other underserved groups include women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and veterans, among others.

Estefan sees many Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs who are eager to get established but find language to be a barrier. Even though they likely speak English, they often feel more comfortable learning in Spanish. A simple English to Spanish translation won’t always offer the clarity entrepreneurs need to fully understand what they’re being presented. This is where Estefan comes in to offer technical assistance or provide a referral to other Spanish-speaking service providers

throughout the county and the state.

Vista Landscaping and Construction LLC owners Pablo Silva and Maura Vasquez say they are grateful to have had Estefan’s guidance navigating some of the more technical requirements of owning a business, such as obtaining a UEI number from the federal government.

“There is a lot of help [for businesses], but sometimes they don’t speak Spanish. When we want to understand clearly, we go to Jorge,” Vasquez said.

Along with startups, EDASC and RAIN can help more established businesses take the next steps in their growth. Carpenter Eells said that many of the small businesses

he has worked with over the past year are existing businesses looking to scale to some degree, often adding employees or square footage, or moving into a brick-and-mortar location.

Skagit Woolen Works is one example of a startup that was ready to launch into a growth phase. The microenterprise got involved with RAIN’s “Destination Creation” course last spring. The support and avenues for growth the owners

“

A lot of this is creating capacity.

That’s the true partnership.

Jorge Estefan, EDASC

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Small Business Spotlight



Anna Hosick-Kalahan and Jessica Schwab



Pablo Silva, Maura Vasquez and EDASC's Jorge Estefan

Skagit Woolen Works

Skagit Woolen Works co-owners Jessica Schwab and Anna Hosick-Kalahan know wool: They're textile artists and both have worked in wool processing mills in the past.

So, when they decided to open their own mill to process local wool, the plan seemed clear. However, the duo soon realized they would need additional revenue streams to make their business truly profitable.

As it turns out, Schwab's neighbor, Jonathan Carpenter Eells, was just starting in his new role as the RAIN Venture Catalyst at this time, and he encouraged her to attend one of RAIN's training courses designed to help give small businesses a jump start.

Schwab said she wasn't sure if she really had time to devote to the classes, but when she heard the business would have the opportunity to apply for a Small Business Innovation Fund grant for participating, it was enough to sweeten the deal.

The "Destination Creation" course gave Schwab practical guidance to apply to her business plus introduced her to the resources both RAIN and EDASC can provide.

"I had heard of EDASC, but I didn't know what they offered or how they could help me," Schwab said. "The folks at EDASC have such amazing enthusiasm for what we were doing. It felt really affirming have people say what you're doing is really cool."

Today, Skagit Woolen Works is diversifying its revenue stream with the introduction of pellets made from waste wool that can be used by gardeners as soil amendments. They've also collaborated with other artisans on products that use materials from both vendors, such as throw pillows with covers designed by a textile artist and the batting supplied by Skagit Woolen Works.

Vista Landscaping and Construction, LLC

After working in the agricultural fields of Skagit Valley for 20 years, Pablo Silva and Maura Vasquez decided to start their own business, Vista Landscaping and Construction.

Both Silva and Vasquez came to the United States from small villages in Mexico and spoke the native language of Mixteco instead of Spanish. When they came to the Skagit Valley, they learned both Spanish and English.

Today, they own a thriving business in Oak Harbor, serving both residential and commercial customers in the Oak Harbor and Anacortes areas.

Vasquez said their experiences coming to a new country created the mindset of being open to learning new things, which has helped them to continually grow their business skills. Last spring, she attended the Spanish-language access to capital sessions with RAIN. Their business applied for and received a Small Business Innovation Fund grant, which helped them purchase needed equipment for the business. Next, Vasquez plans to learn QuickBooks so she can take over their bookkeeping.

Silva says they appreciate having the resources through EDASC to help them continue to grow. And having EDASC's Jorge Estefan, also a native of Mexico, to help them to find business resources has been perhaps the most valuable.

"We were so happy to meet Jorge," Silva said. "It was good to find him. He could understand us, and we could understand him. It makes us feel more comfortable."

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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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Targeted business recruitment ensures growth matched to county's economic, quality-of-life goals

The Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County (EDASC) works to further enhance and grow the Skagit County economy through targeted business recruitment.

Many times, EDASC is the first point of contact for businesses exploring opportunities to invest and establish operations in Skagit County. To facilitate these opportunities, EDASC offers a suite of services that include identifying potential locations, accessing funding sources, navigating permitting and regulatory processes, making necessary and beneficial connections to local stakeholders and programs, and researching and facilitating support services that can further support a business recruitment project. To find success, EDASC works in close partnership with Skagit

County, our cities, towns, ports, local brokers, utilities, banks, law firms, economic development partners and the Washington State Department of Commerce to ensure a company can easily access resources and relocate to our communities.

In Skagit County, our recruitment efforts tend to focus on small to medium-sized enterprises, termed “gazelles,” or fast-growing newer businesses, and the occasional larger business development opportunity. While EDASC intakes these “leads” directly or from partners and colleagues at Commerce, we also seek to proactively target right-sized and suitable companies in marine, aerospace, composites, advanced manufacturing, and clean technology industries, as well as agriculture-related opportunities that fit the business

landscape, create family wage jobs, and enhance our overall ecosystem. To properly manage recruitment efforts, focused industry-specific outreach is key, as is targeting various geographic areas and opportunities for foreign direct investment from areas in Canada, Europe and along the Pacific Rim.

In 2023, EDASC worked more than 75 business recruitment opportunities that accounted for over 200 touches. This work included both proactive outreaches to targeted companies and inquiries that were passively generated. This increased activity allowed EDASC to host several potential companies, either in person or virtually, that were exploring relocation options in Skagit County.

One site visit to the area was from a foreign direct investment project from

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Connecting businesses to resources at core of retention, expansion efforts

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) is a core pillar of any economic development organization interested in growing and maintaining a community's economy.

The lion's share of new capital investment, tax revenues and job creation derives directly from work with existing companies that are interested in growing and sustaining opportunities. At the Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County (EDASC), we focus heavily on BRE by proactively reaching out to businesses of all sizes to better understand their work, the barriers and gaps they face, what is going well, and how we might be able to assist them as we connect them to vital resources, programs, experts and assets.

In 2023, EDASC was able to connect with more than 450 businesses in Skagit County, ranging from small to medium-sized enterprises to large

corporations, and this work accounted for more than 1,000 touches in which we facilitated connections to various resources.

Over the last year, many businesses in Skagit County voiced concerns around accessing the necessary workforce and filling roles with available and talented staff. As our economy emerged from a state of shock from COVID closures, returning to a state of relative normalcy, the need to hire was a priority for many companies. To support this process, EDASC hosted three job fairs for Skagit County businesses, which helped to connect employers to potential employees. During the third and fourth quarters, EDASC started to see a shift in workforce demands among businesses, as many positions had been filled and openings started to consolidate.

Other concerns from businesses in the county centered around succession planning and potential opportunities to sell their businesses to new ownership

or to employees. A number of long-standing owners, after surviving the onslaught of COVID, wanted to move on to other opportunities or enjoy retirement. At EDASC, we were able to connect these businesses to partners like the Small Business Development Center and Impact Washington, as well as professional services, which have the expertise to assist these businesses as they prepare their financial statements for a potential sale. EDASC also supported efforts to identify new owners for businesses and connect interested parties to available resources and opportunities for acquisition.

In parallel to one-on-one business support through BRE and supporting the foundational pieces of the countywide economy, BRE work largely focuses on the overall health of industry sectors. Over the last year, we have focused heavily on exploring the needs and opportunities that

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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 for Skagit County and the surrounding region.

EDASC in 2023 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 entities and residents interested in addressing the housing dilemma constructively.

This work is one facet of capacity building, which involves actions EDASC can undertake or support to make

the community stronger and more prosperous and resilient.

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, child care, 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 child care and early learning services, topics most people do not associate with economic development. Parents worried about who is going to care for their child cannot be as focused at work. It's an issue that affects everyone, keeping many out of the workforce, and is therefore also an

economic development issue. EDASC plans to complete a child care needs assessment of employers and publish a report in 2024.

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 as well as bringing the region to the attention of many more individuals and businesses. EDASC continues a close relationship with this organization.

Capacity building can be broken into two categories: human infrastructure and physical infrastructure. Human infrastructure includes programs that

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EDASC Top 10 of 2023



Entrepreneurial support a key initiative in 2023

With 99% of Skagit County businesses being small businesses, supporting entrepreneurs is an important element of economic development in our region. A prime example of that support is the partnership between EDASC and RAIN.

This spring, the organizations partnered with the Island County Economic Development Council to launch a training program for entrepreneurs in early 2023 providing training on accessing capital and destination marketing in both English and Spanish. A total of 105 Skagit businesses participated in the training, with 38 of them receiving a combined \$322,000 in competitive grants. EDASC's RAIN Catalyst Jonathan Carpenter Eells met with and supported hundreds of entrepreneurs in Skagit County while performing outreach and data gathering to develop a scorecard identifying the county's strengths and weaknesses when it comes to supporting entrepreneurs. EDASC's RAIN program is made possible by ARPA funds awarded by the county commissioners.

EDASC also brought three half-day conferences geared toward small business to the county in 2023. In April, EDASC welcomed the Greater Seattle Business Association, the nation's largest LGBTQ+ chamber of commerce, to discuss marketing to LGBTQ+ customers and creating a welcoming environment for all, whether employees, customers or visitors. In October, the Skagit Small Business Conference connected business owners to state agencies, with content presented one day in English and the second day in Spanish. November's Entrepreneurial Expo, part of the Washington State Department of Commerce's Global Entrepreneurship Month, provided small business owners with training and information on timely topics related to state government agency requirements and services.

Silfab Solar continues explosive growth in Skagit County

In 2021, Silfab Solar, headquartered in Ontario, Canada, chose to expand its U.S. operations from Bellingham and lease a large secondary facility in Burlington, Washington, with the assistance of EDASC. Their Burlington location, once fully upgraded with electricity from Puget Sound Energy, has quickly outgrown its predecessor and continues to exceed expectations from the company. Today, Silfab Solar is operating at almost full capacity in Burlington, with a headcount expected to near 400 full-time employees later in 2024, operating three module assembly lines with space and utility capacity to add a fourth line. What is more impressive is that Silfab Solar continues to grow within the United States, providing the opportunity for careers within the clean-energy space, not to mention American-made products.

Disaster relief funds disbursed to Skagit businesses

EDASC and the Washington State Department of Commerce provided 31 Skagit County small businesses with \$1.8 million in disaster relief funds. The grants covered losses from disasters as far back as late 2021, such as the major Skagit River flooding, the king tide floods that impacted La Conner late last year, freezing events, fires and more. EDASC advised on the programs, and provided technical assistance, communications and fund disbursement.

Mental health & wellbeing pilot program serves 40+ employers

EDASC in 2023 ran a Mental Health & Wellbeing Pilot Program providing no-cost virtual counseling to nearly 500 employees at over 40 small businesses. The program was run through a web platform called Nivati, enabling employees and business owners to schedule fast one-on-one counseling sessions, view hundreds of videos on a variety of topics including fitness, mental health, sleep, and more. Each user received six free hours of virtual counseling. The program was made possible by ARPA funds awarded by the county commissioners.

Continued focus on workforce development

EDASC continued its workforce development initiative, connecting employers with support services, developing pipelines in collaboration with local education, and more. One of the highlights of the year was EDASC's annual Skagit Workforce Summit, which brought together about 80 employers to connect with local academic institutions to forge new relationships and develop workforce pipelines. EDASC also held three in-person job fairs, connecting Skagit employers with job seekers. EDASC continues to host the Skagit Job Board on its website, a free perk to all EDASC Investors.



Leadership Skagit marks 20 years

Leadership Skagit graduated its 20th class in June 2023 and kicked off its second 20 years of community civic leadership development in September with one of the biggest classes ever. Behind the scenes in 2023, EDASC staff worked to update and streamline the program's application process and learning materials to make it more user-friendly, accessible, and sustainable. Leadership Skagit alumni are taking up the charge of organizing a 20th anniversary celebration for May 2024 and are also working to secure additional scholarship funding to ensure the program is accessible for our entire community for years to come. Leadership Skagit is a program of EDASC in partnership with Skagit Valley College, which provides the innovative curriculum.

Introductions make the difference

After hearing of financing needs connected to acquiring an undeveloped piece of property, EDASC facilitated an introduction between the Skagit Valley Family YMCA and CFDI lender Craft3. As a regional community development financial institution, Craft3 can work with businesses to come up with funding solutions that might not be achievable with a traditional bank. In this case, Craft3 was able to provide a loan to the YMCA to purchase 25 acres of undeveloped land to expand their summer camp, significantly growing the camp's waterfront access to Lake Sixteen. As a result, more kids will be able to attend camp in this scenic rural area. Read more about this creative funding partnership on pages 18-19.

EDASC Top 10 of 2023

EDASC facilitates L&I outreach

EDASC offered a slate of learning opportunities in partnership with the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), starting in Q4 of 2022, to educate small business owners about the ways in which L&I can help them navigate the myriad regulations the department oversees. Over the course of 2022-23, EDASC presented six learning opportunities in both English and Spanish on topics as varied as workers' rights to employment laws to workplace health and safety. EDASC will continue its work with L&I in 2024-25.

New action toward employer-based child care

EDASC began working with child care organizations, providers, Population Health Trust, and businesses in late 2023 to understand our business community's child care needs, including what benefits are offered and what barriers exist preventing employers from providing child care benefits to their employees. EDASC convened a meeting of business leaders and child care advocates in June 2023 to begin the discussion, and in 2024 plans to gather comprehensive data by surveying Skagit businesses in partnership with the State Department of Commerce, Childcare Aware, NW Center for Child Care Retention & Expansion, and Population Health Trust.



Spotlight on EDASC staff

In 2023 EDASC welcomed two new staff members, Economic Development Manager for Business Recruitment, Retention & Expansion Shaun Gibbs and External Relations Specialist Ellen Hiatt. Both have brought a wealth of experience to their roles and have helped increase EDASC's capacity to serve Skagit County businesses.

In October 2023, EDASC's Director of Finance & Operations Audra Ramerman was recognized as the SWAN Woman of the Year for Community Engagement. Ramerman started with EDASC in 2017 following progressive leadership roles in private and publicly traded global manufacturing companies for 18 years. She then decided it was time to make a significant change and find ways to use her skills for her local community, which led her to join EDASC. In addition, Audra currently serves on the boards of the Friendship House and Skagit Valley YMCA.



Timely connection ensures greater community access to YMCA camp



EDASC helps businesses in a number of ways, most of which are all about connection.

Connection to people, programs and resources. The recent success that Skagit Valley Family YMCA had in obtaining a loan to purchase property to expand Camp Anderson is a great example of the importance of timely connections. Without those connections, this important project would not have been able to move forward.

The camp, on Lake Sixteen, southeast of Mount Vernon, was purchased by the YMCA in 1958 and began hosting campers in 1959. About 50 campers come to the day camp each week over the course of eight weeks during the summer.

“It’s been a great tradition for Skagit families,” said Skagit Valley Family

YMCA CEO Dean Snider.

Golden opportunity

During the pandemic, the owner of a 25-acre parcel of land adjacent to Camp Anderson approached the YMCA with an offer to sell the property to the nonprofit. It was a golden opportunity, especially because the property would greatly increase the camp’s lakefront access.

With development near and around the lake creeping closer, Snider knew this was the Y’s chance to expand the camp, set aside more waterfront land and provide camp experiences to more kids and families in Skagit County.

“We wanted to own that land so that we could preserve Camp Anderson as a wilderness-type experience for kids, and so we could grow the camp and make it accessible to more kids,” Snider said.

So, the YMCA set out to find

someone who could either purchase the land for the Y or help with a loan.

EDASC makes a connection

When those avenues weren’t producing any promising leads, Snider thought to turn to EDASC CEO John Sternlicht. Snider was introduced to Sternlicht and EDASC when he first arrived in Skagit County. Sternlicht encouraged Snider to enroll in the Leadership Skagit program in his first year leading the Skagit YMCA. Immediately, Sternlicht showed that EDASC serves as a resource for expansion of nonprofit organizations as well as for-profit businesses.

After a meeting with Sternlicht and Economic Development Manager Shaun Gibbs, they introduced Snider and the YMCA to Craft3, a regional community development financial institution (CDFI) working in Washington and Oregon.

Sternlicht had been working to get Craft3 involved in a Skagit project for some time.

“As soon as Dean started describing the need, Craft3 came to mind and I was hopeful this project would be a good collaboration because of the YMCA’s mission and the people they serve,” Sternlicht said.

As a nonprofit with a mission to serve communities with less access to capital and to be more flexible and inclusive in their lending requirements than a traditional bank or credit union, Craft3 could do what other lenders couldn’t – lend money for undeveloped land.

Snider said the YMCA’s desire to expand access to a greater number of Skagit County kids resonated with Craft3’s community-focused mission.

“Craft3 was very excited to partner with the Skagit Valley Family YMCA to help with their financing needs. The Y’s commitment to health, education and social impact programs in the community resonated with us,” said Craft3’s Reed Mayfield, senior business lender. “Craft3 has a mission to improve lives across the Pacific Northwest by providing responsible capital for businesses, homeowners, nonprofits and communities.”

Craft3 lends to businesses, nonprofits and Tribal organizations, investing in projects that address the climate crisis, systemic racism, and economic disparities in rural and Tribal communities. Craft3 is often able to lend to entrepreneurs and organizations that have challenges accessing capital.

Reed said the Camp Anderson expansion will allow the YMCA to double its capacity to serve the kids of Skagit County as well as preserve and steward the land, both of which support Craft3’s mission.

Getting referrals like the one from EDASC helps build relationships in the community, Reed said, which can create a ripple effect, drawing more

capital to other community projects. With this introduction to Skagit County, he hopes Craft3 will have more opportunities to partner with businesses and organizations on other impactful projects.

Next steps

The YMCA’s board approved the Craft3 proposed loan for the land in June. With the loan agreement now in place, development of a new master plan for the camp is under way. Snider is working with other YMCA camps around the country as well as local organizations to brainstorm possibilities, elicit ideas, develop best practices and to envision how the new property can enhance its camp opportunities in the future.

Craft3’s involvement with the Skagit Y is the first step of many, according to Snider. With this loan as gap funding that propels Camp Anderson into new programs, new features and new camp experiences, the YMCA can now develop its vision of a local, multi-generational, multi-use property with a certainty it could not have previously envisioned, he said.

To that end, the YMCA has already received \$250,000 in pledges toward improvements, including a new dock, which is already in the design phase. Additionally, through its advocacy with state legislators and conversations with others interested in seeing Camp Anderson flourish, other property improvement projects are on the horizon.

“Camp Anderson has been fabulous for 70 years,” Snider said. “We can’t wait to grow it to be a broader, more inclusive, more accessible experience for more Skagit kids, families and other campers over the next 70 years.”

EDASC helps businesses find pathways to capital

Startups and small businesses looking to level up often need an infusion of funds to continue their forward momentum, and their individual needs are as unique as their selling propositions.

Helping businesses find the right pathway to access capital is one way in which EDASC’s economic development managers can help entrepreneurs and business owners. They are acquainted with people and organizations that specialize in both traditional and alternative lending solutions and can help make those introductions.

While the options are numerous, here is a handful of creative funding options:

Work with a Certified Development Company

A Certified Development Company (CDC) is a nonprofit corporation set up to contribute to the economic development of its community or region. CDCs work with the Small Business Administration (SBA) and private-sector lenders to provide financing to small businesses.

The Northwest Business Development Association (NWBDA) is a CDC and one of EDASC’s partner organizations. NWBDA works with the SBA to organize, package, process, and fund the 504 loan, which is often a go-to solution for small businesses looking to grow. To learn more, visit www.nwbusiness.org.

See if an ITIN loan is right for you

The Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is a tax-processing number issued by the

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CAPITAL

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IRS to ensure that people – including undocumented immigrants – pay taxes even if they do not have a Social Security number and regardless of their immigration status.

Many lenders have developed programs to use the ITIN as a vehicle for securing a personal loan, which can be used by entrepreneurs looking to fund their business.

Some regional financial institutions that offer ITIN loans are WECU, USBank and Wells Fargo.

Get connected with a CDFI or CDE

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) finance microenterprises and small businesses, nonprofit organizations and more. They often have more flexibility than a traditional lender, such as a bank.

CDFIs often have a social or cultural imperative, which means some CDFIs might be a better fit for your business or organization than others. Be sure to do your research and remember that EDASC can help.

EDASC often recommends CDFIs Business Impact NW and Craft3. Search for others via the Opportunity Finance Network: www.ofn.org/cdfi-locator.

Banks certified as a Community Development Entity (CDE) may also be able to help. As a CDE, Heritage Bank, for instance, provides funding for new construction or improvements on Commercial Real Estate projects in economically distressed areas.

Equitable Economic Development program meeting the needs of entrepreneurs

Jorge Estefan joined EDASC in May 2022 as the bilingual business advisor and has worked over the past year and a half to develop EDASC's Equitable Economic Development program. Through the program, Skagit County's Latino community and other underserved communities can receive tailored assistance to establish and grow businesses.

Estefan, now EDASC's Equitable Economic Development manager, listens to the needs of entrepreneurs furthest from opportunity and connects them with the appropriate resources, technical assistance, and organizations that can meet those needs.

"By providing these resources, we aim to overcome language barriers, cultural barriers, economic barriers, and systemic and historic discrimination," Estefan said.

Estefan has taken the time to connect with the Latino business community to gauge the needs of entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Many need technical assistance to navigate digital governmental and business platforms as well as a basic understanding of avenues to access capital, he said. He offers both personalized help to businesses as well as workshops to provide education and

assistance in these areas.

Among the highlights from 2023, Estefan had 169 interactions with small business owners, 48 of those interactions with people looking to start a business. Additionally, he established partnerships with other businesses, organizations, and agencies to expand the business assistance ecosystem for Latino business owners.

As the Equitable Economic Development program moves into 2024, a number of new initiatives will provide more opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to gain the knowledge they need to start and grow their businesses. Among those new offerings is a partnership with the My Own Business Institute (MOBI) at the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University. The MOBI online curriculum will be offered in conjunction with in-person technical assistance and mentorship from business professionals from the community. The first cohort will be presented in Spanish, with the English language version to follow.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for all entrepreneurs in our county," Estefan said.

BUSINESSES ASSISTED	ASSISTANCE TO ENTREPRENEURS	WORKSHOPS AND MEET-UPS	SMALL BUSINESS CONFERENCE
			
169 Business interactions	48 Entrepreneurs assisted	7 Events	2 Days

Port of Skagit supports small business tenants, value-added agriculture

The mission of the Port of Skagit is “Working Together for the Greater Good of the Skagit Valley.” It’s a broad mission, and one that is accomplished with an extensive effort of creative leadership, innovation and a diverse group of businesses operating on Port properties. From large-scale manufacturing and emerging technologies to value-added agriculture and artisan trades, the Port’s talented business tenants help create opportunity and resiliency in our local economy.

By contrast to the larger Port tenants with more than a hundred employees and a footprint to match are the small businesses, delivering goods and services to customers with a neighborly professionalism that our agricultural valley is known for.



We all know the phrase “know your farmer” and **NW Local Meats** provides ample opportunity to do just that. NW Local Meats is a farmers’ cooperative that represents 80 small farm businesses across five counties and employs 20 processing staff and four retail staff at their facility on Westar Lane. They find immense satisfaction in providing farmers with a platform to showcase their products in the marketplace and fostering a sense of community that supports growth and prosperity in local agriculture. While operating a small business often means that some of their items aren’t readily available, the quality of their

merchandise, the local sourcing and the relationships they’ve built with customers and farms outshine any challenge. In what other retail establishment can you find a detailed map on the wall with 80 pushpins, each representing a dedicated farmer who is providing quality products to our community. For NW Local Meats, it’s about transparency, trust and knowing the faces and places behind the products you bring home to your family.



Also located in the Port’s Bayview Business Park is **Water Tank Bakery**, which has taken its locally sourced efforts to the next level. Owner Rachael Sobczak and her 12 employees take great pride in everything they do – from providing good jobs and advocating for the local food system, to making bread with Skagit Valley grain grown within 13 miles of their bakery and milled right next door at Cairnspring Mills. Despite the long hours of mental and physical labor invested in their work, especially during their initial growth period, the team at Water Tank Bakery makes it possible to support local farmers, millers and bakers while supplying our community with delicious breads and cookies featuring grain grown and milled here.

To learn more about the Port of Skagit’s work in value-added agriculture and supporting small business, visit www.portofskagit.com.

You are the expert on your business, but we are the business experts



Are you ready to take your business to the next level?

If your business goals for 2024 include increasing profits, expanding to new markets, streamlining your business systems or planning for future growth, the Washington Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is here to help.

The Washington SBDC has been providing expert, no-cost, confidential business advising to small business owners in Washington state since 1980 and is part of the country's oldest and largest technical assistance programs for small business success.

When a business owner works with one SBDC advisor, they have access to the expertise and experiences of our entire network of 40+ advisors. More than a quarter of our advisors are fluent in Spanish. At least one advisor is fluent in Mandarin, and we are committed to finding translation services or interpreters so that language is not a barrier to service.

In Skagit County, the primary SBDC advisor is Kristina Hines, who has been a business advisor since 2020. Kristina can assist business owners in just about any industry and at any stage of business development.

In response to a survey in July 2023, SBDC clients had this to say about working with Kristina:

"Without Kristina Hines and the SBDC I don't think I would have been able to open my small business alone. She was instrumental in helping me get a loan and traverse all the red tape that comes from getting a start-up off the ground! The SBDC is an invaluable service for start-ups and continuing businesses!"

"The SBDC and my advisor, Kristina Hines, have been an incredible resource for advice, guidance and tools for growth and success in my business. [The SBDC is] a sounding board

of experience, with the ability to pull in expert tools like market research to build my foundation for SBA grant and loan applications. They have been the wind in my sails!"

"Kristina was extremely helpful with a wide range of questions regarding business start-up. She was an excellent resource and very approachable and easy to work with. She even helped me with making meaningful community connections to further my business development."

Connect today with Kristina or another SBDC advisor for assistance with a wide range of business challenges, including the following:

- reducing costs/increasing revenue
- improving business systems
- understanding financial records and spreadsheets
- making data-driven decisions
- accessing free or low-cost resources to support business growth
- creating 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.

You are the expert on your business, but we are business experts. We look forward to helping you build your business, make more money, and contribute to your community.

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



State continues to expand its free training and education programming

The Entrepreneur Expo presented by the Washington State Department of Commerce and hosted by EDASC had approximately 40 people in attendance.

In business, knowledge is power, but it can also be difficult to access, especially for startups and small businesses. Washington's Small Business Education and Training Center at MyStartup365.com is designed to provide that knowledge in an easy-to-use environment that is available around the clock at no cost.

One of the newest additions to the site is the Web Academy, which joins four other free educational academies – Entrepreneur, Creatives, Restart and Mastering Financials. Like its predecessors, the Web Academy provides a range of tutorials to help you understand the power of websites, learn more about the build process and available tools, and learn how to select and work with a design firm within nearly any budget. The new site can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/the-web-academy>.

Already have a brand new website? No worries. MyStartup365.com has plenty of other resources to guide you through every phase of your business – from startup to exit. For businesses just getting started, there's the

state's Small Business Playbook, which was written by small business owners who've been through the process of starting and running a business. There's also a handy Disaster Planner to help you prepare for the inevitable, whether it's the "Big One" everyone keeps hearing about or something that is far more routine but just as disruptive to your operations.

For businesses ready to grow, you'll find ScaleUp, an online series of courses that will help you sharpen your skills, plug gaps in your growth strategy, and take you to the next level. And if you're still in the research phase, check out the SizeUp tool, which allows you to run endless scenarios about your business, the competition and the market.

Wherever you are in your business lifecycle, you'll find something to help you at MyStartup365.com.



Washington State
Department of
Commerce

Clean audit of fiscal year 2022 reflects commitment to excellent financial stewardship

BY AUDRA RAMERMAN

Director of Finance & Administration

This year began on a strong fiscal foundation, as demonstrated by the successful audit of our 2022 financials with no findings. This clean audit reflects our commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and excellent financial stewardship. It also instills confidence in our stakeholders, board of directors, and Investors, assuring them that their investments in our organization are being managed with integrity.

In 2023, we continued our strategic efforts to diversify our revenue sources, a move that not only strengthens our financial position and resilience, but also allows us to deliver even more value to our community.

Our success in securing contracts with our economic development partners, including with the Washington Department Labor & Industries for small business outreach, and our execution of the Skagit County Commissioners’

Economic Recovery Plan, has been pivotal. These contracts are in addition to the ongoing support from our cities, ports, towns, and Skagit County, as well as through the 0.09 funds, Department of Commerce, and our local Investors.

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. Data in this article is based on the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2022, as audited by Wersen CPAs. EDASC is a countywide public-private partnership with 63% of funding coming from public sources, 35% from private sources and 2% from grants. Public revenue sources include Skagit County, Port of Skagit, Port of Anacortes, local cities and towns, Skagit PUD and others, as well as the state Department of Commerce.

Private sources are comprised of Investors, sponsors, and Leadership Skagit tuition. Focusing just on Investors,

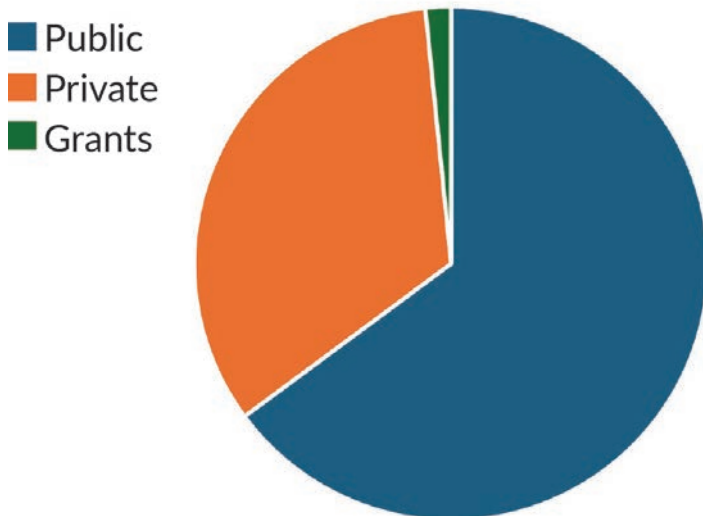
Signature Investors (20) account for 11% of total private Investors and represent 59% of investments, while Small Business, Community*, Equity*, Nonprofit and Microenterprise* Investors (155) account for 89% of total Investors and contribute 41% of investments.

“The dollar amounts and the number of investors are both vital to our success,” EDASC CEO John Sternlicht said, “as they demonstrate broad-based partnership and significant financial support.” Leadership Skagit tuition and sponsorship are a mix of public and private sources and account for less than 10% of total revenue.

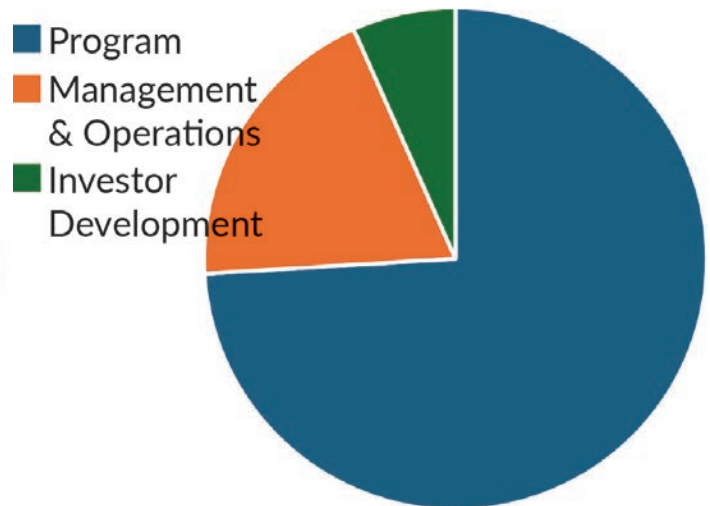
EDASC expenses focus on program delivery with 74% of all spending allocated toward economic development activities, 19% toward operations support and general administration, and only 7% of expenses are designated for fundraising and investor relations.

*Investment levels renamed, see updated Investor page 32.

2022 Funding Sources



2022 Expenditures



BUSINESS ATTRACTION

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western Canada planning to develop an advanced manufacturing facility focused on hydrogen fuel cells. This project would create significant but manageable employment opportunities and capital investment over a 10-year period, while securing a future clean tech industry in the valley. While we are still waiting to hear about the future of this project, inquiries of all sizes continue. We have seen immense interest from businesses in cleantech, aviation and aerospace, value-added agriculture, clean energy, maritime, and advanced manufacturing.

To further drive recruitment efforts, we will continue to target outreach to companies in specific industries to enhance our economy, and to ensure that projects fit the available lands, facilities and resources available in Skagit County without unduly burdening the community. Additionally, many of these targeted outreach and recruitment efforts were directly informed by our work in business retention and expansion, supporting those existing industries through the potential attraction of much-needed businesses and industry segments that might fill gaps in local supply chains and bring new skilled workers and professionals to the area. For example, EDASC partners closely with the Port of Skagit and WSU Extension to better understand what gaps exist in our

agricultural community and what areas we might target to further strengthen this industry.

To better present Skagit County to potential business recruitment leads, site selectors and brokers, EDASC plans to continue the development of an available lands database and increased digital assets, while actively connecting with property owners to explore the potential for development. We will continue to develop and update marketing collaterals, reimagine marketing efforts, and populate sites and facilities databases to further market opportunities in the county. All this fits well with current EDASC resources such as data tools 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.

While we work to prepare for potential interest and inquiries that represent varying levels of job creation, wages and capital investment, these projects can take years to complete and can change directions quickly when encountering potential barriers. It is crucial that EDASC continues to partner to ensure business recruitment efforts can succeed and further enhance the Skagit County economy.

RETENTION & EXPANSION

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exist in agriculture and value-added ag, aviation and aerospace, advanced manufacturing, maritime and boat building, wood and forest products, and opportunities in our energy sector. This focus allows EDASC to spend valuable time with industry stakeholders and public partners to identify gaps and barriers that might hinder the retention and growth of valuable living wage industries in Skagit County.

While we connected with industry stakeholders throughout Skagit County, we found that many companies are interested in growing and creating additional living wage jobs and capital investment. Many face barriers, however, with access to adequate utilities, concerns around regulations and zoning policies, and a lack of available warehousing and production facilities. To mitigate these barriers, EDASC is working diligently to address these concerns and spearhead solutions with countywide partners and has begun discussions with key stakeholders to focus on solving these issues.

In 2024, EDASC plans to develop a working group comprised of strategic partners to fully analyze some of these barriers and create paths forward to lessening their impacts and enhance the overall competitiveness for existing firms in Skagit County to continue our growth.



CAPACITY BUILDING

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help people, thus contributing to a 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 more than 550 graduates since 2004, creating a network of servant leaders who are informed, inclusive and connected. EDASC and alumni as well as the community at large look forward to celebrating the 20th anniversary of Leadership Skagit in 2024.

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, Career Connect Northwest, 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 and utilities 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. This also forms a significant part of the CEDS, or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, currently in process led by the Skagit Council of Governments.

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

Leadership Skagit Alumni Summer Gathering



MAPPING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM continued from pg. 9

Jessica Schwab and Anna Hosick-Kalahan found through the course proved to be more impactful than they had imagined it would be.

“It turned out to be a fantastic program to connect us with all of the support that EDASC and RAIN provide in this area,” Schwab said.

Entrepreneurial Impact Scorecard

Last fall, RAIN rolled out the Entrepreneurial Impact Scorecard to get a baseline of the strengths and challenges for Skagit County’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. The scorecard was distributed to stakeholders, who were asked to rank some specific statements regarding the vitality of the ecosystem. Stakeholders will be asked to re-take the scorecard in 2024 to see where improvements have been made.

The scorecard results were reported in January, and among those findings with “high agreement” among those surveyed is that “Experienced entrepreneurs exist in our ecosystem.”

High marks were also received for use of public space for entrepreneurship activities and the support of the local economic development organization, EDASC.

One area receiving mixed response is adequate mentor support for entrepreneurs within the county.

Carpenter Eells notes that the scorecard results are merely perceptions of those who took the survey, and not always the full picture. In some cases, resources might exist that just aren’t getting enough attention. Awareness can be increased through greater communication, speaking opportunities or referrals.

Carpenter Eells says it’s important to take the long view of this work to foster the health and vitality of an



entrepreneurial ecosystem.

“Keep in mind that it’s a very long-term process. From one quarter to another quarter, there might be good movement, but the reality is that it’s about getting the ecosystem and those symbiotic relationships to continue working over time.”

Mapping the ecosystem

One of the ultimate outcomes of the partnership between EDASC and RAIN is documenting the entrepreneurial ecosystem as a whole, including an extensive list of entrepreneurs and partner organizations.

The collective nature of working with partner organizations, such as RAIN, creates a whole greater than the sum of its parts, EDASC’s Sternlicht said. “Partner organizations allow us to help more businesses at one time.”

Part of EDASC’s model is to work cooperatively with those partner organizations to ensure individuals seeking assistance get the most appropriate help, be that from an organization such as the Small Business Development Center, a lender, or government entities.

One of the benefits of cataloging this entrepreneurial ecosystem is the ability for the business owners themselves

to reach out to each other and begin making even more vital connections to strengthen their business and the ecosystem.

“There is value connecting with other local, really tiny businesses like ours who don’t have a team of people, and say ‘Hey, how do you guys do this?’” Skagit Woolen Works’ Schwab said.

The goal, says Carpenter Eells, is not only to identify the players in the ecosystem but also really “activate” them to come out of their silos and work collaboratively.

Those collaborations might be a simple conversation, teaming up for events, or other programmatic partnerships. Each touchpoint helps to build the web of interconnectedness within the ecosystem.

As the assets of Skagit County’s entrepreneurial ecosystem are mapped, EDASC and RAIN identify the gaps where programs or services are still needed. Wherever there are gaps, EDASC and RAIN can work to fill them by bolstering an existing program or helping to create a needed resource.

“I think one of the gaps [to fill] is making sure people are prepared with a business plan and an understanding

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MAPPING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM continued from pg. 27

of the operations and administration of the business in order to be successful,” Estefan said.

EDASC is rolling out a new training to address this knowledge gap for aspiring entrepreneurs through a partnership with the University of Santa Clara. The My Own Business Institute (MOBI) offers a series of courses to help entrepreneurs launch their business or gain new skills for an existing business. EDASC is offering its first session in Spanish beginning in March.

Another gap for entrepreneurs is finding capital to expand their business. The Economic Development Council for Island County, along with EDASC and RAIN, received grant monies from

the Washington State Department of Commerce’s Small Business Innovation Fund (SBIF) to help businesses take those next steps. Last spring, interested small businesses participated in a series of business-building “boot camp” workshops, presented in both English and Spanish. Participants then had the opportunity to apply for a competitive business development grant, with 62 of the more than 230 participating entrepreneurs receiving grants.

Pablo Silva from Vista Landscaping said his business used the grant monies he received to buy equipment to help expand his services.

Skagit Woolen Works also received a grant, which has helped the owners to hire a firm to design and roll out packaging for a new product line of wool pellets to use as a soil amendment.

“Without [the grant], I don’t think we would be able to get it off the ground,” Schwab said.

Being involved in growing entrepreneurial support in 2023 has been gratifying for EDASC’s Estefan. The more he interacts with the community, the more he sees the needs of an aspiring group of business owners. He says his collaboration with Carpenter Eells is moving the needle for the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

“A lot of this is creating capacity,” Estefan says. “That’s the true partnership. That’s why we have RAIN here to create that ecosystem, so people know who to go to.”

Read more about EDASC’s Equitable Economic Development program on page 20.

Inclusion is good for business; make sure your marketing reflects it

In April 2023, EDASC hosted the Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA), the nation’s largest LGBTQ+ chamber of commerce, for an afternoon of education and discussion around inclusion.

“Business is the equalizer that brings us together,” GSBA President & CEO Ilona Lohrey said.

The GSBA recognizes inclusion broadly, she said, not just for those identifying as part of the LGBTQ+ community. One example she cited is the organization’s women/minority business owner programs, which are open to all whose business is certified woman or minority owned or could be.

“We constantly need to make sure we’re relevant – and that means being inclusive,” she said.

Chris Marcacci, director of membership and programs for GSBA, emphasized the importance of messaging that welcomes LGBTQ+ patrons to your business.

“Being welcoming in your business isn’t just about hanging up a rainbow flag,” he said. “You have to expand this message to your language. If you don’t say it in your marketing, people won’t feel like you’re prepared to be welcoming.”

Not only customers but also potential employees will notice those efforts, he said. “You need to let people see themselves as employees or customers.”

Joey Chapman, GSBA’s membership director, added that when businesses do use inclusive words and images, they must then “be ready to welcome folks who look like that.”

Lohrey stressed that allyship is an action, not just a state



of being.

“No movement has ever succeeded without allies,” noted EDASC CEO John Sternlicht.

One LGBTQ+ member of the roundtable said her partner has felt unsafe or unwelcome showing affection in their community. Another participant mentioned that mixed-race couples are also often the recipients of unwelcoming actions.

These lived experiences are not always perceived by community members outside of minority groups and is a reminder that while our communities may feel like they generally do a good job of being welcoming and inclusive, work remains to be done, said Sedro-Woolley Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Monique Brigham.

Inclusion efforts boil down to teaching people to accept different communities, Lohrey said.

“When we don’t, that’s what keeps us separate.”

Workforce Summit highlights education-to-employment pipeline

Local academic institutions can help address your business's workforce needs. That was the message heard by about 80 in attendance at EDASC's Skagit Workforce Summit that took place in September 2023 at the Northwest Career & Technical Academy in Mount Vernon.

The day's agenda featured presenters from the State Employment Security Department, Northwest Career & Technical Academy, Career Connect Northwest, Skagit Valley College, and Western Washington University. Local business speakers were also woven into the program.

Many students finishing their high school or college degree are ready to go to work, said the speakers, and pathways exist connecting those students with local businesses.

For instance, the Northwest Career & Technical Academy has been partnering with local businesses to create internship opportunities that work for both the students and employers. The program has been successfully gaining interest from the business community, and this year 30 students participated in hands-on internships at about a dozen companies.

Representatives from some of those businesses, including Hexcel, T BAILEY, TRICO Companies LLC and Aspen Power Catamarans, spoke as part of a panel at the Workforce Summit.

Emma Rawls, from steel manufacturing company T BAILEY, INC., said her company found their three interns ready to work, gaining their welding certification within weeks and they also demonstrated the soft skills necessary to be good employees.

"They were showing up on time, and if they weren't showing up on time, they were letting us know ahead of time," she said.

Chris Kiel, president of general contractor TRICO Companies, said his firm saw the need to invest in its future workforce.



"It was about looking at talent in the area and making the decision that if we expected the workforce to grow here ... we had to participate in it from the very beginning," he said. "I encourage you to get involved because the rewards back to us far outweigh anything we can give."

Getting students interested in these career tracks early on is vital to creating successful internships and job placements, said Career Connect Northwest's Jenny Veltri. If children don't have exposure to the varied careers available to them when they are younger, they might not develop the interest and aptitude to begin focusing their studies.

"The sooner we can start students really thinking about how to connect education with what they want to do for the rest of their life, the better, because it will affect their pathway," she said.

Internships allow students to bridge theory learned in class with practice they get on the job, said SVC's Brittney Maruska. And employers get "a chance to shape the workforce" when they work with interns.

"The overall goal of the college is to grow our own," she said.

Maruska also highlighted the college's Customized Training and Job Skills Programs, providing businesses with training opportunities with dollar-for-dollar match incentives.

Students studying at the university

level are another resource for businesses. Students within the MBA program at Western Washington University complete a capstone course where teams of students serve as consultants to area businesses looking to solve a specific problem, said WWU's Lucas Senger.

A student capstone project developed the idea of value-added products now offered by Bow Hill Blueberries. Today, customers can find Bow Hill Blueberries' products at their local Haggen and other retail outlets.

"The question [for employers] is 'Where do we find good people?'" Senger said. "The answer is: They're right here."

Businesses can also connect to WWU's Career Services Center to advertise jobs or internships, as well as also hold tabling events to get face time with students or conduct interviews on campus.

"We can help ... employers get in the door, get to know those students," said WWU's Career Services Center Executive Director Mindy Pelton. "Do the internship, do the micro internships, so employers are preparing those students, so that when they get in the door they're going to stay."

The Workforce Summit is part of EDASC's Economic Recovery Plan and was funded through ARPA money awarded by Skagit County and its commissioners.

Top 20 Skagit County Employers

EDASC 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.

Business (prior rank), FTEs

1. Skagit Regional Health (1), 2,386
2. Janicki Industries, Inc. (3), 1,287
3. Mount Vernon School District (2), 995
4. Skagit Valley College (22), 950
5. Skagit County (5), 691
6. Sedro-Woolley School District (4), 600
7. HF Sinclair (7), 530
8. PACCAR Technical Center (9), 525
9. Marathon (6), 500
10. Draper Valley Farms (8), 440
11. Island Hospital (21), 380
12. Burlington Edison School District (11), 327
13. PeaceHealth United General Medical Center (13), 318
14. Hexcel Corp. (14), 283*
15. Legend Brands, Inc. (15), 280
16. City of Mount Vernon (17), 260
17. Northwest Educational Service District (18), 254
18. Pacific Woodtech Corp. (16), 250
19. Silfab Solar (23), 230
20. City of Anacortes (19), 221

*This data reflects permanent full-time employees; collected fall/winter 2023.
(*) denotes 2022 data.*

SIGNATURE INVESTORS

Foundational



Progress



PeaceHealth

Prosperity



Public Partners



INVESTOR INFO

Invest in Skagit County Prosperity!

SIGNATURE INVESTORS

Demonstrating a full commitment to the task of ensuring the foundation for a prosperous county remains strong for all, Signature Level Investors are given special recognition at EDASC events all year long, reaching nearly 3,000 business and community leaders annually. They are given special status on skagit.org's home page and receive prominent placement in our investor directory listing and event banner*. They also receive free tickets to the Economic Forecast Night event, attended by several hundred prominent officials and business leaders.

Signature Level

Exclusive invitation to quarterly economic development roundtables. Economic Forecast night tickets. Banners at EDASC workshops, seminars, symposiums, et.al.

Enterprise, Advancement & Foundational also reach nearly 3,000 subscribers in multiple newsletters every month and receive prominent home page placement on our website, for nearly 13,000 annual views.

ENTERPRISE INVESTOR	\$20,000
ADVANCEMENT INVESTOR	\$15,000
FOUNDATIONAL INVESTOR	\$10,000
PROGRESS INVESTOR	\$7,500
PROSPERITY INVESTOR	\$5,000

Community Level

Receives website recognition. Listing in Skagit County Business Guide.

COMMUNITY INVESTOR	\$2,500
EQUITY INVESTOR	\$1,000
VENTURE INVESTOR 100+ employees	\$750
SMALL BUSINESS INVESTOR 10-99 employees	\$500
NON PROFIT/MICRO-ENTERPRISE	\$200

Contact Ellen Hiatt, ellen@skagit.org (360) 483-4894 to learn more.

EDASC is a 501(c)3 federally registered non-profit. EIN 91-1724682.
Your investment may be tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.
Please consult your tax professional.

*EDASC's investor banner, displayed at events, is updated annually mid-January.



What do I get for my investment? Maybe the real question is

'Do I support the activities of EDASC?'

And I do.

My company invests in EDASC

because the work they do benefits all

of our businesses.

Mark Hagen, CEO
Express Employment
Professionals



It's not like we get more customers to buy trucks when we invest in EDASC.

We invest because we want a healthy and prosperous

community for our workers to live

in. It helps our recruitment, among many other reasons.

Phil Stephenson, General Manager
PACCAR Technical Center

skagit.org/investors



INVESTORS

AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

Agriculture & Forestry

Janicki Logging & Construction Co., Inc. *Small Business*
 103 N. Township St
 Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284-1243
 (360) 856-2068 | info@janickilogging.com
 www.janickilogging.com | Mike Janicki

Northwest Agriculture Business Center *Non-Profit*
 PO Box 2924 | 419 South 1st St, Ste 207
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273-7924
 (360) 336-3727 | Mike@agbizcenter.org
 www.agbizcenter.org | Michael Peroni

S & B Farms, Inc. *Small Business*
 18154 W. Stackpole Rd
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273-6500
 (360) 424-5850 | jenn.sbfarms@gmail.com
 Jenn Smith

Sakata Seed America, Inc. *Small Business*
 11857 Bay Ridge Dr
 Burlington, WA 98233-3613
 (360) 336-9727 | sleanos@sakata.com
 www.sakatavegetables.com | Sonya Leanos

Sakuma Bros. Farms, Inc. *Small Business*
 PO Box 427 | Burlington, WA 98233-0427
 (360) 757-6611 | ryans@sakumabros.com
 www.sakumabros.com | Ryan Sakuma

Scratch and Peck Feeds *Small Business*
 872 N. Hill Blvd
 Burlington, WA 98233-4640
 (360) 746-6812
 steve@scratchandpeck.com
 scratchandpeck.com | Steve Reed

Sierra Pacific Industries *Small Business*
 14353 McFarland Rd
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273
 (360) 424-7619 | Lhouston@spi-ind.com
 www.spi-ind.com | Lydia Houston

Skagit Farmers Supply *Equity*
 PO Box 266 | 1833 Park Ln
 Burlington, WA 98233-0266
 (360) 757-6053 | ryann@skagitfarmers.com
 www.skagitfarmers.com
 Ryan Nootenboom

Skagit Organics *Small Business*
 16915 SR 20 Unit B
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273-6922
 (360) 627-1555 | skagitorganics@gmail.com
 skagitorganics.net | Matthew Friedlander

Washington Bulb Company, Inc. *Small Business*
 16031 Beaver Marsh Rd
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273-9295
 (360) 424-5533 | leo@wabulb.com
 www.tulips.com | Leo Roozen

Q & A with Blake Vanfield, Genuine Skagit Valley



Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

In October of 2013, Washington State Department of Commerce designated Skagit Valley as an Innovation Partnership Zone (IPZ) focusing on value-added agriculture. The IPZ facilitated public and private industry partnerships between the Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Port of Skagit, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County, researchers at Washington State University, Skagit County, City of Mount Vernon, Skagit Valley College, Northwest Innovation Resource Center, farmers, and entrepreneurs. The Genuine Skagit Valley (GSV) initiative was born of this collaboration to enhance the Skagit Valley's agricultural region's perception and reputation as a premier, preferred, and distinctive point-of-origin brand. In the spring of 2021, the Port of Skagit was granted federal trademark registration for the Genuine Skagit Valley Certification Mark. That same spring Skagit County approved a resolution in support of the program. Currently GSV supports over 100 Skagit growers, food producers, and organizations allied to agriculture.

What products or services do you offer,

and where do you see the company's future market?

As a place-based marketing initiative, Genuine Skagit Valley offers collective marketing and branding services to farmers and food producers via use of its federally registered certification mark. As a community builder, GSV works to connect members in order to strengthen networks within the food and ag sector. The program's future market sees worldwide recognition of Skagit-grown agricultural products.

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

Through place-based marketing, Genuine Skagit Valley heightens consumer awareness of, and connection to, authentically local Skagit farms and farm products. Over 80 commercial crops are produced on 90,000 acres of the last remaining agricultural valley in the Puget Sound Region. By promoting our distinctive farm-raised flavors, culture, and heritage to the region and the world, we aim to sustain farming for generations to come.

Can you describe any partnerships or collaborations that have been essential

to your business's growth? (i.e., EDASC, other businesses, etc.)

Because GSV is an initiative formed by the Innovation Partnership Zone, its foundation is collaborative. The strength of building a brand ultimately rests with the cooperation of stakeholders and engagement of the community and products by which it envelopes. GSV certainly is grounded in the philosophy of "a rising tide lifts all boats." With that said, one of our most notable partnerships is with the Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC) which has administered the program since 2019. NABC was awarded the initial USDA funding that launched the GSV initiative and has provided invaluable support over the last five years.

NABC
northwest agriculture
business center
BRINGING THE FARM TO MARKET
AGBIZCENTER.ORG

SKAGIT GENUINE VALLEY

CELEBRATING AGRICULTURE
GENUINESKAGITVALLEY.COM

Photo: Colby Mesick

INVESTORS

ARTS & TOURISM

Arts & Tourism

Anacortes Arts Festival *Non-Profit*
 505 O Ave | Anacortes, WA 98221-1735
 (360) 293-6211
 aafdirector@anacortesartsfestival.com
 anacortesartsfestival.com
 Meredith McIlmoyle

Avalon Golf Links *Small Business*
 19345 Kelleher Rd
 Burlington, WA 98233-8500
 (360) 757-1900 | avalon@avalonlinks.com
 www.avalonlinks.com | Ron Hass

Cap Sante Inn *Micro-Enterprise*
 906 9th St | Anacortes, WA 98221-4121
 (360) 293-0602 | marklione@msn.com
 www.capsanteinn.net | Mark Lione

ContoursFx *Micro-Enterprise*
 217 S 1st St
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273-3802
 (206) 619-8977 | contoursfx@gmail.com
 www.contoursfx.com | Brecky Bihary

**Fairfield Inn & Suites
 By Marriott Burlington** *Small Business*
 9384 Old Hwy 99 N. Rd
 Burlington, WA 98233-6815
 (360) 757-2717 | sandy.kish@marriott.com
 www.marriott.com/otsfs | Sandy Kish

Fidalgo Bay Resort *Small Business*
 4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd
 Anacortes, WA 98221-9624
 (360) 293-5353 | valeri@fidalgobay.com
 www.fidalgobay.com | Valeri Teela

**Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton -
 Burlington WA** *Small Business*
 1860 S. Burlington Blvd
 Burlington, WA 98233-3226
 (360) 757-7100
 mattg@hotelservicesgroup.com
 https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/
 mvvblhx-hampton-suites-burlington/
 Matthew Greenwood

Majestic Inn & Spa *Small Business*
 419 Commercial Ave
 Anacortes, WA 98221 | (360) 299-1400
 gm@majesticinnandspa.com
 www.majesticinnandspa.com
 Travis Sherman

**McIntyre Hall -
 Performing Arts Center** *Non-Profit*
 2501 E College Way
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273
 (360) 416-7727
 nida.tautvydas@skagit.edu
 www.mcintyrehall.org | Nida Tautvydas

Museum of Northwest Art *Non-Profit*
 PO Box 969 | La Conner, WA 98257
 (360) 466-4446
 stefanoc@museumofnwart.org
 www.monamuseum.org | Stefano Catalani

Scott Milo Gallery *Micro-Enterprise*
 420 Commercial Ave
 Anacortes, WA 98221-1519
 (360) 293-6938 | gallery@scottmilo.com
 www.scottmilo.com | Katherine Khile

Swinomish Casino & Lodge *Prosperity*
 12885 Casino Dr | Anacortes, WA 98221
 (360) 299-1607
 jschwinden@swinomishcasino.com
 www.swinomishcasinoandlodge.com
 Jumada Schwinden

Q & A with Swinomish Casino & Lodge

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

The story of Swinomish Casino & Lodge starts with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community opening a small bingo operation in 1985. This community of Coast Salish peoples descends from groups and bands originating in the Skagit and Samish River valleys and the surrounding coastal areas and islands.

After five years of running an esteemed bingo hall, the tribe began negotiations for a gaming license in 1990 and signed a gaming compact with the state of Washington on December 21, 1992. Built directly next to the bingo hall, Swinomish Casino opened its doors to the public on July 15, 1994. We officially became Swinomish Casino & Lodge in 2012 with the addition of our 98-room luxury hotel.

What is your long-term vision for your business, and how do you plan to achieve it?

Swinomish Casino & Lodge is the sole revenue source for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community services and members. The casino's success provides services and resources to tribal members that would otherwise be unavailable. Tribal elders

receive monthly benefits, including trips to keep them active and involved with the community. The generated revenue is also used to build housing on the reservation for tribal members and provide free daycare, medical, and dental services. We strive to continue increasing revenue to benefit the tribe and all team members. To accomplish this, we keep current guests engaged with frequent events and promotions and attract new business with recent additions to the property.

Last year, we welcomed sports betting to the property with Unibet Sportsbook at Swinomish. With interest in sports betting consistently rising since it was legalized in March 2020, we were eager to bring this style of gaming to guests, beginning with eight sports betting kiosks in April 2023. Construction on the Unibet Sportsbook at Swinomish Lounge concluded in September, with a well-attended grand opening on October 2.

In addition, a new coffee stand, Driftwood Delights, opened outside the event center in August. Offering a variety of handcrafted espresso drinks, teas, baked goods, and more, the stand gives guests and team members alike a convenient way to treat themselves without wasting time in a long drive-thru line.



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Q & A with Ron McHenry, Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County, President & CEO

How have the Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County evolved since being established in 1997?

Like many fledgling organizations, Skagit Clubs had successes and struggles in the early years. Consistency and stability came, but until 2015, just four Clubs existed. Since then, the organization has evolved to include six new dedicated school sites in Burlington, Concrete, and Mount Vernon, and most recently, opened our first Club Discovery Center Preschool & Early Learning Community.

What programs and services are offered by the organization?

What most people know or think about our Clubs is that we are a safe space for kids to go when school is out. That is true. Child Safety is our #1 Priority, and we accept all kids and teens where they are to ensure they feel welcomed. But Clubs are so much more than that. We will serve more than 100,000 snacks and meals each year. Beyond simply providing tutoring and homework help, curriculum-based, structured programs that are intentional for enrichment occur daily. There's so much going on, the best way to understand the scope and scale is to reach out for a personal tour

of your nearest Club location.

What is the mission and values of the organization?

Our mission is to inspire all young people and empower them to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible adults in their community. Our mission is how we make decisions. Our values guide how that mission is implemented - Fun, Respect, Integrity, Community, and Acceptance.

What might surprise someone who doesn't know your organization?

Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County is one of the largest in the country per capita. We are a nationally recognized leader in measured outcomes of our Club members, especially in Physical/Emotional Safety, Drug/Alcohol/Marijuana/Smoking/Vaping Abstinence, Healthy Food Consumption, and Conflict Resolution. Our students attend school more often and outperform the general student population in Reading and Math.

What are you most proud of?

The work that staff and volunteers do daily



in our Club sites - they are committed to doing whatever it takes to advance the lives of those we serve. The engagement of our Board of Directors, who have earned top honors nationally since 2015. The incredible partnerships of our county, cities, school districts, and many other community-based organizations. Skagit is a special place; we want to keep it that way.

SKAGIT RAISES GREAT KIDS.



Boys & Girls Club of Skagit County Q&A profile is proudly sponsored by HF Sinclair.

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460282-1

INVESTORS

CONSTRUCTION & CONSTRUCTION-RELATED



Construction & Construction-Related

Carletti Architects P.S. *Small Business*
116 E Fir St, Ste A
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-2964
(360) 424-0394 | peter@carlettiarchitects.com
www.carlettiarchitects.com
Peter Carletti

Chad Fisher Construction LLC *Equity*
15900 Preston Pl
Burlington, WA 98233-3501
(360) 757-0580 | info@cfisherco.com
www.cfisherconstruction.com
Chad Fisher

Dahl Electric, Inc. *Small Business*
521 E Victoria Ave
Burlington, WA 98233-1241
(360) 755-1145 | rod@dahlelectric.com
www.dahlelectric.com | Rod Dahl

Fisher Construction Group *Small Business*
625 Fisher Ln | Burlington, WA 98233
(360) 757-4094 | info@fishercgi.com
www.fishercgi.com | Dan Powers

Foss Heating & Cooling *Small Business*
4103 Old Highway 99 South, Unit B
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-9016
(360) 336-1517 | alex@fossheating.com
www.fossheating.com | Alex Gravley

Lake Erie Trucking *Small Business*
13540 Rosario Rd
Anacortes, WA 98221-8411
(360) 293-7332 | William Wooding

Lakeside Industries, Inc. *Equity*
PO Box 729 | 11497 Havekost Rd
Anacortes, WA 98221-0729
(360) 398-1427
rich.owens@lakesideindustries.com
www.lakesideindustries.com | Rich Owens

Landed Gentry Homes & Communities *Equity*
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Q & A with Jim Spane

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

Victor Spane set the standard for quality and innovations when he founded Spane Buildings in 1945. His techniques were so notable that he was awarded several patents.

MISSION: To build the finest and highest quality buildings in the industry, providing our customers with choice, value, and superior customer service. To conduct business with the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness. To develop and retain leaders in the industry with a passion for excellence and exceeding customers'

expectations. To achieve enough profit to finance the growth of our people and our community. To constantly attract new customers and continually build lifelong relationships with repeat customers. To demand continual improvement our ourselves and our process.

SAFETY: We are fully committed to the health and protection of every employee and client. Safety FIRST!

WORK ETHIC: Spane Buildings is no stranger to putting in our best work. Our company expects the highest quality and understands the concept of accountability. We work to serve the community.

INTEGRITY: At Spane Buildings, integrity at a professional level reflects how we work as a company, we only expect the best. Being honest

through our work reflects the flawless standard we hold our craftsmanship to.

GENEROSITY: Being a local business, Spane Buildings understands the importance of community upliftment. We purchase high quality materials from local businesses and give back to the community every chance we get.

KNOWLEDGE: Our knowledgeable and skilled staff can ensure that we will provide excellent customer service with a personal touch.



Q & A with TRICO Companies

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

TRICO was formed in 1979 with several partners including Jack Schwartz as a Structural, Mechanical and Civil contractor. TRICO primarily serviced regional Civil projects across the Skagit Valley, with notable early projects including the widening of Riverside Drive, College Way, construction of the Burlington mall and tens of thousands of miles of underground utilities throughout the county and beyond. We also served regional oil refineries in their shut downs and expansions through the 1990's. Brian Wolfe and Jack Schwartz knew each other from their days working together at Snelson Anvil and in 1992 Brian came on as a partner and solely purchased TRICO in 1995. TRICO continued to be a heavy Civil contractor until 2009 when we added vertical construction to our portfolio. Nate Wolfe, Bruce Berglin, and Brian formed TRICO Companies LLC in 2012 to continue building the TRICO contracting portfolio and introduce new ownership into the company. Today, Nate Wolfe (took on role of CEO at the beginning of this year), Chris Kiel (President), Andy Connor, Jason Solie and Brad Philips serve as principals and as our core leadership team. We have grown from a predominantly civil construction company into a full-service, Design-Build General Contractor with multiple verticals including Commercial, Civil, Food Processing, Manufacturing and Service.

What products or services do you offer, and where do you see the company's future market?

TRICO is a full-service Design-Build General Contractor and construction company that delivers innovative, timely, creative and cost-effective solutions enabling our clients to successfully grow their business. We provide expertise and resources, serving a variety of industries from food processing and cold storage plants to manufacturing facilities, industrial, commercial and professional office buildings to civil site development.

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

Outside of a traditional "mission" we have a three-part Focus, Purpose and Passion that drive everything from the projects we pursue, how we recruit, how we interact with each other, and how we give back.

BUILD MEANINGFUL PROJECTS: We focus on projects that will have meaningful impact both for the business customer and the community. Whether this is within the food-processing and manufacturing industries or with the construction of fire stations, hospital and medical facilities or



the Skagit Valley Family YMCA, TRICO looks at the full value and impact of the building we help construct.

INVESTING WHERE WE LIVE, WORK AND PLAY: At TRICO we take great pride in our unwavering commitment to "Investing Where We Live, Work, and Play." As a construction general contractor, our dedication extends beyond the building; it encompasses the very communities we are a part of. We firmly believe in the power of construction to not only shape physical spaces but also to foster vibrant connections. Our commitment is threefold: building businesses, building community, and empowering individuals. We actively engage in initiatives and with organizations that support local businesses, stimulate healthy growth, and uplift our communities. At TRICO, we view construction as a catalyst for positive change, and we are dedicated to not just building successful structures, but nurturing environments where our customers, our employees and the community can thrive and prosper together. We have a long history of Philanthropy, donating both time and money back to our communities.

IMPROVE THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE WE TOUCH:

- We have an internal campaign of "Become More" and foster a culture of training and elevating individuals to get to the next level, to train our replacement, to better ourselves as individuals which betters our teams as a whole
- Training, education, mentorship and promotion from within.

- TRICO Tech for ongoing training and investment in our employees. Helping them grow both within their current role, and grow their skills for future roles
- Twice Annual All-Hands Safety Training – showing our commitment to safety for our employees, our sub-contractors and our jobsites.

This also guides how we interact with and deliver for our customers, recognizing that they put a deep trust in us to help grow their business, to make the most of the investments they are making.

What is your target customer demographic, and how do you cater to their needs?

We serve a diverse range of clients and customers across a range of project size from smaller-scale repairs or building service, to Design-Build construction of \$40M+ facilities. Our Service Team works on renovation or restorations and tenant improvements, our Commercial Team delivers medium to large-scale medical, commercial, and civic projects, to our work in civil, food-processing, value-add agriculture and manufacturing. All of these customers share a desire to work collaboratively with a dedicated team that delivers on a promise to "Thrill the Customer." At the root of these relationships is collaboration. To deliver the best outcomes, we focus on working with customers who bring us in early, leveraging the deeply strategic approach to construction called the Design-Build process.



2024 INVESTOR PROFILES

Q & A with Chad Fisher Construction

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

Chad Fisher and his family have worked for generations to build a better life and future for families and businesses in Skagit County. As a commercial contractor, Chad helped his father build one of the leading construction firms in the Pacific Northwest. In 2010, Chad founded a new company - Chad Fisher Construction - with his sons, Dan and Duke Fisher.

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

Chad Fisher Construction (CFC) believes hard work, honesty, and integrity are required when working with clients. Our team strives to maintain our "signature quality" in service, quality, and project completion. We are committed to building lasting relationships with our clients and partners and giving back to our community. CFC will always follow through with what we pledge to deliver, with no exceptions.

Describe your company culture and what you value most in your employees.

Our culture is deeply rooted in treating

everyone - employees, subcontractors, and clients - like family. Our employees uphold this belief by treating everyone with respect. And their industry knowledge is incredible!

How do you encourage a healthy work-life balance among your employees?

Family and employee health come first, and work is second. CFC has always committed to working closely with our employees to create a healthy work/life balance. We operate an open-door policy to listen to our employees' needs to continue developing a solid foundation for everyone.

What steps do you take to ensure the quality of your products or services?

From pre-construction services to project



completion, CFC provides a single point of contact for all responsibility and communication at every step. We carefully follow an effective, systematic process for monitoring and managing all factors to ensure that a project flows smoothly.



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Hansen's Furniture, Mount Vernon



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Janicki, Hamilton



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Sarah.finkbeiner@lautenbachrecycling.com
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Sarah Finkbeiner

Martin Marietta Materials *Small Business*
20411 East Hickox Rd
Mount Vernon, WA 98274-7731
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ira.taylor@martinmarietta.com
www.martinmarietta.com | Ira Taylor

Miles Sand & Gravel Company *Equity*
PO Box 280
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-0280
(360) 757-3121 | Ryan.Lemos@miles.rocks
www.miles.rocks | Ryan Lemos

Quantum Construction, Inc. *Small Business*
12761 Quantum Ln
Anacortes, WA 98221-8364
(360) 293-0656 | mikeb@quantumci.com
www.quantumci.com | Mike Baldwin

Ravnik & Associates, Inc. *Small Business*
PO Box 361 | 1633 Lindamood Ln
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(360) 707-2048
JRAVNIK@RAVNIK.NET
www.ravnik.net | John Ravnik

Skagit Aggregates LLC *Small Business*
PO Box 398 | Clear Lake, WA 98235
(360) 826-3077
office@skagitaggregates.com
skagitaggregates.com | Steven Dahl

Skagit Readymix *Small Business*
14658 Ovenell Rd
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-8232
(360) 661-1021
GregH@Smokeypointconcrete.com
Skagitreadymix.com | Gregory Hall

Skagit/Island Counties Builders Association *Non-Profit*
15571 Peterson Rd #A
Burlington, WA 98233-3625
(360) 757-6916 | Wayne@SICBA.org
www.sicba.org | Wayne Crider

Spane Buildings, Inc. *Small Business*
1611 Buck Way
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-2596
(360) 424-1505 | jim@spane.com
spane.com | Jim Spane

Strandberg Construction, Inc. *Small Business*
2018 R Ave | Anacortes, WA 98221-2537
(360) 293-7431
nels@strandbergconstruction.com
www.strandbergconstruction.com
Nels Strandberg

TRICO Companies, LLC *Prosperity*
15066 Josh Wilson Rd
Burlington, WA 98233-9646
(360) 899-2444
chriskiel@tricompanies.com
www.tricompanies.com
Christopher Kiel

Wilson Engineering, LLC *Small Business*
805 Dupont St, Ste 7
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 733-6100
info@wilsonengineering.com
www.wilsonengineering.com | Andy Law

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FAST FACTS

TOTAL # OF COMPANIES IN SKAGIT: 596

CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS
Companies in Skagit: **201**

HEAVY AND CIVIL ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION
Companies in Skagit: **33**

SPECIALTY TRADE CONTRACTORS
Companies in Skagit: **362**

AVERAGE TOTAL EMPLOYMENT: 4,314

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE: \$78,319

*Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA - Second quarter 2023 preliminary

INVESTORS



EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Educational Services

Burlington-Edison School District

Non-Profit

927 E Fairhaven Ave
Burlington, WA 98233-1918
(360) 757-3311
CPearson@be.wednet.edu
<https://www.be.wednet.edu/>
Chris Pearson

Career Connect NW, hosted at the Northwest Educational Service District 189

Non-Profit

1601 R. Ave | Anacortes, WA 98221-2276
(360) 299-4068 | jveltri@nwesd.org
<https://www.nwesd.org/career-connect-nw-region> | Jenny Veltri

La Conner School District #311

Non-Profit

PO Box 2103 | 305 N 6th St
La Conner, WA 98257-2103
(360) 466-3171 | wnelson@lc.k12.wa.us
www.lcsd.wednet.edu | Will Nelson

Middle Way

Acupuncture Institute *Micro-Enterprise*

321 W. Washington St, Ste 334
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 336-6129 | linda@mwai.edu
www.mwai.edu | Linda Ballantine

Mount Vernon School District

Non-Profit

124 E. Lawrence St
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-2914
(360) 428-6181 | ivivanco@mvsd320.org
mountvernonschools.org | Ismael Vivanco

Sedro-Woolley School District

Non-Profit

801 Trail Rd
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284-9302
(360) 855-3500
mmickelson@swsd101.org
<https://www.swsd.k12.wa.us/>
Miriam Miralles Mickelson

Skagit Valley College

Prosperity

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(425) 405-1715 | pepitre@wsu.edu
www.everett.wsu.edu | Paul Pitre

Q & A with Skagit Valley College

When did Skagit Valley College start offering bachelor's degree programs and why?

Skagit Valley College offered its first bachelor's degree – bachelor of applied science in Environmental Conservation – in the fall of 2014. Read more about it online.

What types of bachelor's degree options does Skagit Valley College offer?

We currently offer two types of bachelor's degrees: bachelor of applied science (BAS) and a bachelor of science (BS). We offer BAS degrees in Management, Healthcare Management, and Environmental Conservation. In the fall of 2023, SVC launched its BS in Computer Science. This fall 2024, Skagit will offer a BAS in Advanced Manufacturing and Design.

How long does it take to complete a bachelor's degree?

The BAS programs in Management, Healthcare Management, Environmental Conservation, and Advanced Manufacturing and Design are intended to take about two years. Students entering the programs already have an associate's degree

or equivalent to a freshman and sophomore year of a baccalaureate degree. Then, they complete their junior and senior year at SVC. The BS in Computer Science is a four-year degree.

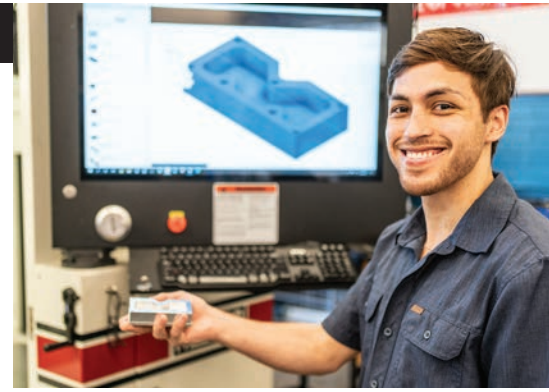
Are the bachelor's degree programs designed for working adults?

The programs are open to any students who meet or exceed the entry requirements. The personal and professional demands are factored into course and program offerings, with the intention of supporting their academic and professional advancement while balancing the needs of their personal lives and other commitments. Depending on the program, hybrid, in person/on campus, and entirely online may be an option.

What new bachelor's degree options are being developed and when will they be offered?

The BAS in Advanced Manufacturing and Design is launching this fall 2024. Sign up for a program briefing or learn more online at skagit.edu/bachelors.

If I'm interested in getting a bachelor's



degree at SVC, how do I get started?

The best way to get started is to attend a program briefing, sometimes referred to as an information session. There, attendees will meet faculty, learn about courses and the program, employment opportunities following graduation and information on how to apply to the program. You can sign up for a program briefing online at skagit.edu/bachelors.





SVC | Skagit Valley College

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 245 E. George Hopper Rd
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 www.larsongross.com | Kelli Visser

Q & A with SaviBank

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

We opened as Business Bank, serving Skagit County on April 11, 2005, with the idea of a locally owned community bank that would serve local businesses and professionals.

The corporate headquarters is located at the Blackburn Branch in Mount Vernon. We currently have 10 branches and 2 loan production offices in Skagit, Whatcom, Island and San Juan counties.

What products or services do you offer, and where do you see the company's future market?

We offer a wide range of business and consumer products with competitive rates, business and consumer credit cards, and consumer loans. We're also a preferred lender with the Small Business Administration (SBA).

SaviBank understands how much a community relies on its local branches; from businesses handling their deposits and obtaining cash supplies, to economic development, to residents who prefer to bank in-person.

How would you describe your company's

mission or core values?

OUR VISION

Provide customers with the best community banking experience.

OUR MISSION

Exceed our customers' expectations and establish long-term customer relationships. Be the place to bank.

Provide a challenging, inclusive, and diverse employment experience, quality compensation and career path opportunities for our employees.

Be a safe and sound financial institution with positive relationships with our regulators.

Do you have any future expansion plans, and how will they align with your business philosophy?

We recently built a new facility in Anacortes, which we relocated to in December 2023. The new building provides full-banking and drive-through services and administrative offices to better serve the community.

Can you share some success stories or notable achievements your business has had in the community?



We are very active in our communities. Multiple employees have spent countless hours volunteering at a variety of community events/fundraisers, and SaviBank is heavily involved with many nonprofit organizations in our communities. In November 2023, a group of our employees organized a Family Needs Drive that raised over \$3,000 and collected many basic needs items for families in need.



Helping Skagit thrive one business at a time.

Your business is important to us and this community. That's why it's our mission to bring long-term success to our clients and this community. It's who we are down to the core. That means using our financial expertise to find ways to support your business and help you reach your financial goals.

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Burlington	360.707.2272	1020 S Burlington Blvd	Mount Vernon College Way	360.336.0102	1725 E College Way
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Friday Harbor	360.370.7980	232 A Street, Suite 2	Sedro-Woolley	360.755.3496	203 Ball Street

Q & A with Matt Roetcisoender, VSH CPAs

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

At VSH, our mission is to be more than just a financial partner; we're a solution for clients seeking the services and sophistication of a large firm while cherishing the continuity, responsiveness, and personal attention of a smaller firm. Our core values revolve around a people-first approach, embracing a balanced life, continuous improvement, and a commitment to excellence. We value collaboration and prioritize our team, clients, and community, fostering a culture of innovation.

What products or services do you offer, and where do you see the company's future market?

VSH is not just an accounting firm; we're an advisory-first partner dedicated to helping businesses and their owners thrive. Our services include Business Valuation, Exit Planning, Client Accounting and Advisory Services, SALT, Transfer Pricing, International Tax and Advisory, Business Tax Planning and Compliance, and Audit & Assurance. We cater to various industries, focusing on construction, manufacturing, distribution,

technology, and professional services. Our vision is to lead in advisory services, guiding businesses through complex landscapes.

What is your target customer demographic, and how do you cater to their needs?

We specialize in growing businesses and their owners, primarily in the mid-size range and large companies with sophisticated tax and assurance needs, including those with multistate and international operations. Our tailored approach ensures that we understand the unique challenges of both domestic and international companies, providing them with the expertise and support they require for seamless global operations.

How do you stay innovative and stay ahead of the competition in your industry?

Innovation is in our DNA. We stay plugged into the profession, regularly speaking on industry platforms where our leaders pave the way. As an EOS-run firm, we invest in our advisors to stay ahead of industry trends and deliver cutting-edge solutions. Our strategic partnership with BDO



Alliance USA adds an extra layer, making us a strong alternative for large businesses. We focus on advisory, not just compliance, keeping us ahead in the ever-evolving business landscape.



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Matt Roetcisoender, CPA, CVA
Partner-in-Charge

vshcpa.com



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Burlington, WA
360.707.4290



Certified Public Accountants

Q & A with Wycoff Insurance

What products or services do you offer to meet the needs of your clients?

Wycoff Insurance offers a comprehensive range of insurance services to meet diverse client needs, including life, home, auto, specialty vehicles, farms and commercial accounts.

Tell us the history of your business.

Established in 1972 as an independent and locally owned agency, situated in downtown Mount Vernon. Wycoff is known for its high-quality service and community involvement. Owners Donnie Keltz, Bill Feeney and Chris Eisses, along with their dedicated team, work tirelessly to provide personalized insurance solutions aligned with clients' needs and budgets. Wycoff agents can efficiently compare quotes from multiple companies, ensuring clients get the best coverage at competitive prices.

What might surprise someone who doesn't know your business?

Beyond their professional commitments, Wycoff Insurance is deeply engaged in the Skagit Valley community, participating in clubs, events, coaching youth sports and serving on nonprofit

boards. Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Wycoff Insurance welcomes residents to schedule appointments or drop by for discussions about their insurance coverage at 501 S. 2nd Street, Mount Vernon, or by calling 360-336-2112. Learn more at WycoffInsurance.com.



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Q & A with Wallace & Associates

Tell Us About the History of your business and how it got started:

Wallace & Associates Insurance co-owners, Eric Dykstra and Josh Top, have each been serving customers for decades from their offices beneath the spinning Wallace & Associates sign on Fairhaven Avenue in Downtown Burlington. They follow in the footsteps of founder Norm Wallace who established the business back in 1945 and was joined by his brother George Wallace in 1957 who worked at the firm for the next 60 years!

What Products or Services do You Offer:

As an independent, multi-line agency, Eric, Josh, and their team of associates get to offer choice to their clients. "We provide insurance for all kinds of needs," explains Dykstra. "Families, farmers, contractors, business owners, and so on. We pride ourselves on not being a one-size-fits-all agency." Dykstra and Top are proud of their company's history and the fact that the Wallace & Associates business model still stands tall going on 80 years.

Describe Your Company culture and what you value most in your employees:

The company has deep roots in Skagit and so

do Eric and Josh. Both grew up on local dairy farms, (and yes, the founding Wallace was part of the Wallace Potato Farm Legacy, too). Eric and his wife raised their kids right here in the Valley, and Josh is in the middle of raising his ten, seven, and one year old with his wife at their home in Bayview. Our other associates are an extension of Team Wallace and we all pride ourselves on helping customers choose the right policies for their specific needs. We treat our clients like neighbors and friends. And we are always happy to meet in person or answer the phone when they call.

What lessons have you learned in the course of running your business:

Competitors, especially online only services, are easy to sign up with but can fall way short of expectations when you need to process a claim. Both Eric and Josh say getting to know their clients and helping them through a claim is a favorite part of their business. "Clients know us, and they know they can call us day or night if needed in an emergency," says Dykstra. There are no auto reply texts, automated calls, or speaking with a person working out of the country when you choose Wallace & Associates.



Top L-R: Raschel McLeod, Hannah Vander Lei, Donna Bridgman. Bottom L-R: Eric Dykstra, Tina Grammer, Josh Top

How Do Folks contact you:

Wallace & Associates are right here in the heart of Skagit Valley and ready to help. Their office is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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Q & A with WECU

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

WECU was founded in 1936 by a group of Bellingham Teachers who pooled their money together in a shoebox to start the credit union. They stored the shoebox in the closet of the Roeder School building in Bellingham. Over 87 years, WECU has grown to more than \$2.5 billion in assets and more than 150,000 members.

What products or services do you offer, and where do you see the company's future market?

WECU is a full-service credit union offering checking, savings, and loans for both consumers and businesses. In 2023, WECU opened two financial centers in Skagit County after only having a physical footprint in Whatcom County for over 85 years. Now that WECU is in Skagit County, we're focused on serving these communities with the same level of attention and focus that we've given Whatcom County throughout our history.

Describe your company culture and what you value most in your employees.

Because our focus is on serving our member-

ship and not just our bottom line, the culture is rooted in service. Serving our members first, our employees second, and our bottom line third.

Can you share some success stories or notable achievements your business has had in the community? (How do you engage with the community?)

WECU gives, volunteers, and shows up in person (because that's what a neighbor does). Last year, WECU donated over \$400,000 to local nonprofits, our employees volunteered more than 20 times with nonprofits, and we sponsored several local events. These events in Skagit County included the Mount Vernon Riverwalk Concert Series, Skagit County Fair, Berry Dairy Days, Anacortes Waterfront Festival, and Sedro-Woolley Loggerodeo, to name a few.

Do you have any future expansion plans, and how will they align with your business philosophy?

With the recent expansion into Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley, WECU is committed to meeting the needs of Skagit County's consumers and businesses.



Alina Coonc, Business Banking Loan Officer II
Brenden Jones, Business Banking Loan Officer III

What are some traditions or rituals that are unique to your company culture?

WECU's cultural rituals revolve around giving and volunteering. The internal group, Team WECU, orchestrates employee volunteer events, fostering a sense of community service. Additionally, the annual United Way fundraising campaign during the holidays is a cherished tradition, demonstrating employees' strong engagement and commitment to making a positive impact.



“

We love WECU. Banking with them has been so easy and convenient for our company. Knowing we can continue to grow with the support of a credit union is huge; we're much more comfortable knowing we are in good hands!

JULIA KLEINENDORST

CFO/General Manager,
Natural Way Chiropractic

GET TO KNOW **THE BUSINESS** SIDE OF WECU

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Julia Johnson

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John Dumas

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Kevin Murphy

Small Business

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Skagit County Commissioners Office

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www.skagitpud.org | George Sidhu

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andrea@concretewa.gov
<http://www.townofconcrete.com/>
Andrea Fichter

Public

Q & A with Port of Skagit

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

The Port of Skagit was created in 1964 by a vote of the people, who recognized the need for an entity that would serve the economic needs of Skagit County by helping to create jobs in the natural resource fields of agriculture, wood products, fisheries and mineral extraction. Our focus has broadened over the years, and today the Port's essential purpose is to contribute to the economic vitality of Skagit County through the development of facilities and infrastructure that support local commerce, trade and tourism.

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

The Port of Skagit's mission is "Working together for the greater good of the Skagit Valley." The Port of Skagit leads efforts and provides economic and transportation infrastructure to promote the growth of a strong economy in Skagit County while valuing the area's natural assets and quality of life.

Describe your company culture and what you value most in your employees.

The Port of Skagit prioritizes our staff team and the culture we have built over the years. Part of building that culture was developing our "Promise" to our community and to each other. We promise excellence in public service and leadership within a business landscape that inspires success and enhances the quality of life in Skagit County.

What inspired you to start this business, and what keeps you motivated to continue?

The Port of Skagit is one of 75 Port Districts in Washington State, all of which have a State mandate of job creation. Ports are the only public agencies whose primary purpose is economic development.

Can you share some success stories or notable achievements your business has had in the community?

The Port of Skagit has a strong focus on Value-Added Agriculture and has invested significant resources in infrastructure and business recruitment to support the local agricultural industry and economy. It is rare for a Port district to have such a strong presence in the agricultural industry, but there is tremendous potential here in the "Magic Skagit" to capitalize on value-added opportunities through publicly-owned infrastructure.

What steps do you take to ensure the quality of your products or services?



Maximizing the job producing potential of our industrially zoned land in Skagit County is a key strategy in our effort to promote prosperity and create opportunities in the Skagit Valley. The Port of Skagit is known for its ability to meet the needs of current and prospective tenants to empower their success and plan for their growth, by implementing strategies that employ creative solutions, strategic planning and strong partnerships.

Can you describe any partnerships or collaborations that have been essential to your business's growth? (i.e., EDASC, other businesses, etc.)

A large part of the Port's success is directly related to our strategic partnerships, public and private. The Port of Skagit works hard to leverage funding opportunities for projects that will enhance job creation and business growth in our community. Working with organizations and agencies at the local, state and federal levels has led to the completion of infrastructure projects that support rural broadband deployment, marine manufacturing, airport operations, agriculture and more.

Do you have any future expansion plans, and how will they align with your business philosophy?

The Port is working on long range plans at several properties, including the development of Watershed Business Park on Bayview Ridge, commercial redevelopment and community waterfront space at La Conner Marina, and adaptive reuse of the SWIFT Center property in Sedro-Woolley. More near-term is the expansion of The Granary at the Port of Skagit, which includes the addition of

conveyance, grain dryers and more live grain storage at the existing facility to meet the current and future demand for growers in the Skagit Valley.

What are some traditions or rituals that are unique to your company culture?

We have staff meetings twice a month with our entire Port team to share updates—both personally and professionally—which gives us a great opportunity to stay up to date on projects, recognize accomplishments, and celebrate special happenings within our Port family.

Can you share stories or examples of how your company's culture has positively impacted your business?

We have a culture at the Port of Skagit where we strive to "find a way to say Yes." This includes how we interact within our team to support one another, and how we serve our business tenants and community. The right answer is rarely the easy answer, and the Port team works diligently to find the Win-Win scenario that will provide the most prudent use of Port resources and a positive outcome for our Port businesses.



Port of Skagit



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It's all at the Port of Anacortes

Ideally situated between Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia, the Port of Anacortes supports jobs, environmental health, and quality of life in our community today and for the future.



1,000 SLIP MARINA

with **115+** dedicated guest slips, surrounded by a 1-mile esplanade

3

deep water SHIPPING BERTHS

1,100

JOBs on port properties

24/7

operations at ANACORTES AIRPORT

\$67M

in environmental CLEANUPS



Questions with John Dumas, Port of Anacortes, Interim Executive Director

What makes the Port of Anacortes unique?

The Port of Anacortes is a dynamic public port with a strategic location on Fidalgo Island in Skagit County, Washington. Serving as a key gateway to the San Juan Islands and British Columbia, the Port offers diverse properties and facilities tailored to meet the needs of various tenants. Its naturally deep-water harbor makes it an ideal hub for a variety of shipping, logistics, and marine industries. The Port also offers a regional airport and world-class facilities and services at its award-winning Cap Sante Marina.

What types of properties and facilities does the Port offer?

Whether it's waterfront properties for maritime industries or industrial spaces for manufacturing and logistics, the Port provides a wide range of options for businesses. Port facilities include space for manufacturing, warehousing, seafood landing and processing, bulk and breakbulk cargo

handling, dry dock, commercial boat ramp and low-cost public launch, an RV park, and public event space at Seafarers' Memorial Park.

What advantages do tenants and customers enjoy at the Port of Anacortes?

Port tenants and customers benefit not only from its strategic location and facilities but also from the region's high quality of life. Surrounded by natural beauty, the Port supports opportunities for outdoor events and activities, and the city of Anacortes offers a welcoming community atmosphere.

How does the Port contribute to economic development in the region?

Recognized for its commitment to sustainable practices and environmental stewardship, the Port plays a vital role in supporting economic development for the region, with over fifty tenants generating a year-round average of over one thousand jobs. Businesses that call the Port home

enjoy a collaborative community that values both economic vitality and ecological responsibility.

With a focus on economic development, sustainability, and community connections, the Port of Anacortes is an attractive destination for businesses seeking a well-connected and environmentally conscious home.



Town of Hamilton *Public*
 PO Box 528 | Hamilton, WA 98255-0528
 (360) 826-3027
 hamilton.wa.mayor@gmail.com
 https://www.townofhamiltonwa.com/
 Mandi Bates

Town of Lyman *Public*
 PO Box 1248 | Lyman, WA 98263-0248
 (360) 826-3033 | info@townoflyman.com
 http://www.townoflyman.com/
 Eddie Hills

Town of La Conner *Public*
 PO Box 400 | La Conner, WA 98257-0400
 (360) 466-3125
 mayor@townoflaconner.org
 www.townoflaconner.org
 Marna Hanneman

WorkSource Skagit / Employment Security Department *Non-Profit*
 2005 E. College Way
 Mount Vernon, WA 98273-2310
 (360) 230-1044
 teresa.davis@esd.wa.gov
 https://worksourcewa.com/ | Teresa Davis



SKAGIT COUNTY FAST FACTS

POPULATION:
 131,000 as of July 2022

4 CITIES:

Anacortes
 Burlington
 Mount Vernon
 Sedro-Woolley

4 TOWNS:

Concrete
 Hamilton
 La Conner
 Lyman

TOTAL EMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS (2021)

3,580

Skagit County Government
Serving with Pride, Working for You

Serving our Community

Protecting the Environment

Supporting our Local Businesses

The Skagit County Commissioners are proud to support a strong and engaged workforce as the number one priority in the Skagit County Strategic Plan. Apply to join our team today!

Career opportunities posted on governmentjobs.com/careers/skagitwa

467913-1

Care to keep you healthy.

Be well

Skagit Regional Health

SkagitRegionalHealth.org/BeWell

467807-1

HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Health Care & Social Assistance

Cascade Facial Surgery and Aesthetics, PLLC *Small Business*

1600 Continental Pl, Ste 103
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-5607
(360) 336-1947 | jong@cascadeface.com
www.cascadeface.com
Jonathan Grant, M.D.

Family Care Network *Small Business*

709 W Orchard Dr, Ste 4
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 318-8800 | jobs@fcn.net
<https://familycarenetwork.com/>
Gretchen Kaufman

Hawthorne Funeral Home & Memorial Park *Small Business*

1825 E. College Way | PO Box 398
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-0398
(360) 424-1154 | kirk@hawthornefh.com
www.hawthornefh.com | Kirk Duffy

PeaceHealth United General Medical Center *Progress*

2000 Hospital Dr
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284-4327
(360) 856-6021
cjohnston@peacehealth.org
www.peacehealth.org/united-general-medical-center
Chris Johnston

Riverside Health Club *Small Business*

2225 Riverside Dr.
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-5403
(360) 424-4200
karen@riversidehealthclub.com
riversidehealthclub.com | Karen Westra

Skagit Regional Health *Prosperity*

PO Box 1376
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1376
(360) 814-2370
bivie@skagitregionalhealth.org
www.skagitregionalhealth.org | Brian Ivie

Village Concepts Country Meadow Village *Small Business*

1501 Collins Rd
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
(360) 941-7189
Davidgb@Villageconcepts.com
<https://villageconcepts.com/communities/village-concepts-of-sedro-woolley-countr>
David Bricka

INVESTORS

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology

Comcast

400 Sequoia Dr
Bellingham, WA 98226-7133
(360) 595-5947
vincent_buys@comcast.com
<https://corporate.comcast.com/>
Vincent Buys

Prosperity

Dimensional Communications

Small Business

1220 Anderson Rd
Mount Vernon, WA 98274-7615
(360) 424-6164 | ryanh@dimensional.net
www.dimensional.net | Ryan Hagman

Sierra Microproducts

Small Business

506 30th St, #4
Anacortes, WA 98221-2896
(360) 298-6746
sean@sierramicroproducts.com
www.sierramicroproducts.com
Sean Gallagher

ZiPLY Fiber

Equity

426 E Casino Rd | Everett, WA 98203
(866) 699-4759
jennifer.harvey@ziply.com
<https://ziplyfiber.com/> | Jennifer Harvey

INVESTORS



MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing

**Aspen Power
Catamarans, LLC** *Small Business*
11656 Knudson Rd
Burlington, WA 98233-3629
(360) 668-4347
steve@aspenpowercatamarans.com
www.aspenpowercatamarans.com
Steve Graf

Bayview Composites *Small Business*
13593 Bayview Edison Rd
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(360) 466-4160
arte@bayviewcomposites.com
https://bayviewcomposites.com/
Arturo Espinoza

Chinook Enterprises *Non-Profit*
2026 N. LaVenture Rd
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-5807
(360) 639-8834
nwegner@chinookenterprises.org
www.chinookenterprises.org
Nicolette Wegner

**Dakota Creek
Industries, Inc.** *Community*
P.O. Box 218
Anacortes, WA 98221-0218
(360) 293-9575
lstout@dakotacreek.com
www.dakotacreek.com | Liz Stout

EDCO, INC. *Small Business*
14508 Ovenell Rd
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-8266
(360) 410-9239
leslie@edcometalfabricators.com
www.edcometalfabricators.com
Leslie Smith

Goodwinds Composites *Small Business*
1829 Railroad Ave
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-4959
(360) 588-4785 | amelia@goodwinds.com
www.goodwinds.com | Amelia Cook

Hexcel Corporation *Equity*
15062 Steele Rd | Burlington, WA 98233
(360) 757-7212
david.carlson@hexcel.com
www.hexcel.com | Dave Carlson

Q & A with Chinook Enterprises

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

We are a non-profit designed to operate as a business, but with a social mission: supporting full participation in community life for people with disabilities or other barriers. Full participation must start with successful employment. Chinook Enterprises collaborates with local businesses, government contractors, non-profits, and educational institutions, contributing to workforce development with an equity lens. Choosing Chinook means supporting community empowerment and self-sufficiency. As a model for inclusive business practices, Chinook makes a positive impact on individuals with disabilities and local communities. Through its dedication to economic inclusion and community support, Chinook champions a more equitable and empowered workforce.

What products or services do you offer

Chinook Enterprises is comprised of three divisions, Commercial Grounds & Landscaping Maintenance, Manufacturing & Assembly, and Community Employment Services. Chinook's commercial grounds & landscaping maintenance is where it all began, providing large scale land-

scape maintenance services since 1980. This division continues to be a reliable and valuable source of integrated work for people with disabilities. Our production division delivers quality-certified manufacturing and assembly solutions to customers in key sectors, such as aerospace, marine, and alternative energy, including Boeing. Excelling in quality and on-time delivery, we are award winning and hold Premier Bidder status. In Community Employment, government agencies partner with us to provide support services to qualified job seekers including job placement, training, and retention services along with community inclusion services. In 2023, we aided 230 job seekers in discovering opportunities with excellent employers, guiding them through the process of seeking, trying out, securing, and/or sustaining employment.

Do you have any future expansion plans, and how will they align with your business philosophy?

Facing overwhelming demand, Chinook plans a strategic expansion, with the improvement and addition of 3,000+ square feet. This expansion is pivotal to enhancing manufacturing capabilities, accommodating growth, and increasing the



workforce by adding an additional 25 employees in 2024 and 2025. As Chinook extends its Production division, encompassing Manufacturing and Assembly, a multitude of advantages ripple through our local and state economy all while fueling our mission of hiring individuals with disabilities or barriers to employment



Chinook Enterprises is a non-profit supporting full participation in community life for people with disabilities or other barriers. Full participation must start with successful employment.

- Employment Services
- Commercial Grounds & Landscape Maintenance
- Award-Winning Manufacturing and Assembly

2026 North LaVenture Road
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
360-428-0140
www.chinookenterprises.org
chinookenterprises.getjobs
chinook_enterprises

SCAN ME

Q & A with Dave Carlson, Hexcel Corporation

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

Hexcel Burlington is one of 22 Hexcel manufacturing sites around the world. Hexcel's Burlington, WA facility started in 1990 originally at the request of Boeing to put an "Engineered Core" facility in Washington state to support their local composites operations. The Port of Skagit and Skagit county put together a compelling case for Hexcel to establish operations here. Since the operation began in 1990, we have grown considerably with four building expansions and a customer base that spans the globe.

What products or services do you offer, and where do you see the company's future market?

Hexcel Burlington's focus is providing our customers with high quality HexWeb® Engineered Core parts and sub-assemblies to "drop in" to their composite layups. We make these parts from a variety of Hexcel raw materials such as our HexWeb® Honeycomb, HexWeb® Acousti-Cap® Sound Attenuating Honeycomb and our HexPly® Prepregs. With the Aerospace industry making a strong post-pandemic rebound and air travel increasing every

year, customer backlogs reaching out ten+ years, and a much higher content of our lightweighting materials on new aircraft we anticipate a very strong future not just a company level but also here in the Skagit Valley.

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

Hexcel sees our purpose to help propel the future of flight, energy generation, transportation, and recreation through excellence in advanced material solutions that create a better world for us all. We have four core values; we strive to be an industry leader and a responsible steward of resources – both human and natural. These values guide our actions, reflect our culture, and drive our performance. They are,

INNOVATION – We embrace the curiosity to explore ideas, the passion to challenge the impossible, and the conviction to succeed beyond expectations.

RESPONSIBILITY – We work with uncompromised integrity on behalf of our shareholders, employees, and customers. We strive to be good citizens in the communities in which we live and work.



ACCOUNTABILITY – We are accountable—to customers, shareowners, the community, suppliers, and ourselves for achieving superior performance by expecting excellence in everything we do.

ONE HEXCEL – We thrive on the contributions each person brings to the Company by valuing diversity, developing talent, fostering teamwork, and rewarding success.



Lightweighting & Beyond

The world continues advancing and requires lighter structures to reduce emissions without sacrificing strength and durability. For 75 years, Hexcel has met those challenges and today is a global leader in advanced composites technology, propelling the future of flight, energy generation, transportation and recreation through innovative, high-performance material solutions.

For more information, visit us at www.hexcel.com

Q & A with Legend Brands

What is your target customer demographic, and how do you cater to their needs?

Legend Brands solves problems – from everyday issues to flooding disasters – by providing cleaning and drying equipment and chemicals for facilities, professional cleaning and restoration professionals, plus better cleaning solutions for consumers and high-performance automotive parts for enthusiasts.

We're not satisfied to match the competition – all of the brands in the Legend Brands family surpass the level of innovation and quality of competitive products.

What steps do you take to ensure the quality of your products or services?

For the 44 years since its founding, our primary product line, Dri-Eaz equipment, has always been engineered, assembled and serviced in our Burlington, WA plant. We take pride in encouraging employee initiatives for improvement, and we maintain a team-based approach to planning and decision-making. That enables us to ensure a level of quality that builds and maintains high customer loyalty.



How do you stay innovative and stay ahead of the competition in your industry?

As a long-time industry leader, Legend Brands fosters opportunities for employees to be engaged with customers, by participating in conferences and trade shows, spending time in the field to learn about customers' problems, and teaching certification classes that help customers grow professionally. All of these customer contacts help Legend Brands' employees gain cutting-edge insights for the development of new innovations.





SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN NORTHWEST WASHINGTON

SUPPLYING SMALL BUSINESSES WORLDWIDE

Building quality products in Burlington, WA for 44 years!




LegendBrands.com 15180 JOSH WILSON ROAD | BURLINGTON, WA 98233 | 360-757-7776

468383-1

Q & A with Team Corporation

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started

Since 1954 Team Corporation has specialized in the design and manufacture of hydraulic vibration test systems. Our systems have been used for pre-launch testing on NASA's Apollo and Saturn programs, Orion / Artemis program, James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), and the soon-to-be launched Sierra Space Dream Chaser – the world's only commercial space plane.

What products or services do you offer?

We design, manufacture, and support vibration testing systems and components. A vibration shaker system is a machine that typically vibrates up and down or side to side. Placing a product on the machine and shaking it helps engineers determine if the product is designed well enough to perform as intended in real life conditions.

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

As pioneers and innovators within the vibration testing industry, Team Corporation is driven to push the limits of test system engineering and performance. Our mission is to fuel our customers'

success, striving to help them exceed their testing and development goals.

What is your target customer demographic, and how do you cater to their needs?

Team Corporation works together with leading organizations across various industries, including aerospace, defense, automotive, electronics, and oil field. Customers appreciate our highly customized, high-performance test systems, and their inherent performance advantages.

How do you engage with the community?

Over the years, Team has regularly volunteered crews to help with the cleanup, and overall beautification of Jack Doyle Memorial Park, and more recently, Whitmarsh Park. Team has participated in the EDASC annual golf tournament. In 2023, Team hosted a holiday toy drive. We are currently sponsoring the Mount Vernon High School Robotics Team.

If you'd like to learn more about Team Corporation, please visit: <https://teamcorporation.com>



Team



Team

VIBRATION TEST INNOVATION



11591 Watertank Road
Burlington, WA 98233

teamcorporation.com
360.757.8601

A member of the **N|V|T** GROUP



HF Sinclair:

Proudly fueling life in the Pacific Northwest

Puget Sound refinery has been part of the Skagit County community for 66 years. It's a place where generations of area neighbors have found jobs, built careers, supported families, and strengthened their communities.

Now with a new name and a big green DINO, HF Sinclair Puget Sound refinery (PSR) continues to be a Skagit County business where its people work in a safe and environmentally responsible way to "Make the products that make life go", providing essentials for modern and future life.

LIVING THEIR VALUES

Living the One HF Sinclair Culture underpinned by its core values of Safety, Integrity, Teamwork, Ownership, and Inclusion, HF Sinclair Puget Sound refinery's more than 600 employees and contractors work each day to "Proudly Fuel Life in the Pacific Northwest."

GETTING TO KNOW HF SINCLAIR

HF Sinclair is an evolving energy company with an enduring family of brands providing fuel and specialty products that are essential to modern and future life. Headquartered in Dallas,

Texas, the independent energy company produces and markets high-value light products such as gasoline, diesel fuel, jet fuel, renewable diesel, and other specialty products.

HF Sinclair owns and operates refineries located in several states around the Southwest U.S., the Rocky Mountains, in other neighboring Plains states, and the Pacific Northwest with Puget Sound refinery. HF Sinclair also supplies high-quality fuels to more than 1,500 branded stations and licenses the use of the Sinclair brand at more than 300 additional locations throughout the country - including a growing number in Whatcom County and other areas of Washington.

In addition, subsidiaries of HF Sinclair produce and market base oils and other



specialized lubricants in the U.S., Canada, and the Netherlands, and export products to more than 80 countries. Through its subsidiaries, HF Sinclair produces renewable diesel at two of its facilities in Wyoming and also at its facility in Artesia, New Mexico.

PUGET SOUND REFINERY

HF Sinclair's Puget Sound refinery can process approximately 145,000 barrels of crude oil per day, of both Canadian and Alaskan North Slope crudes. The geographic location of the refinery allows HF Sinclair to reach customers in the PNW, including British Columbia, and service the major international air and seaports in the region. Employees are on site every day of the year to make sure things are operating safely and reliably as they take that crude oil and make it into products we need.

To help power personal vehicles, freight trucks, commercial planes, boats and more, Puget Sound refinery employees produce multiple types of gasoline, diesel fuel, propane, jet fuel, butane, and petroleum coke. PSR employees also produce two chemicals - nonene and tetramer - that are used in a



workforce development, environmental stewardship, safety, health, or emergency preparedness.

“HF Sinclair and all its employees have Heart and Energy for the communities where we operate,” said Petrich. “We are proud to partner with Skagit County nonprofits that align with our business mission and values whose staff, boards, and volunteers work each day to make important strides in the county where we operate.”

PSR is also one of the largest taxpayers in Skagit County, helping support critical services in our community as well as proud members of EDASC and all county Chambers of Commerce.

CAREERS

With more than 500 current employees in Skagit County and thousands more across the United States and Canada, there are many opportunities for each employee to Step Up and Stand Out in their careers. The company looks to foster opportunities for employees to learn and grow every day, investing millions in development programs, which enable employees at all levels to enhance their skills and grow professionally. The company also encourages employee-led Employee Resource groups as a valuable way to support the needs of all employees and to celebrate individual differences.

Visit [Careers.HFSinclair.com](https://careers.hfsinclair.com) to search for and apply for open positions.

variety of plastic products for packaging, automotive components, pipes, and other applications.

LONG HISTORY IN SKAGIT COUNTY

Puget Sound refinery has been operating in Skagit County since September of 1958. The company has evolved over the years, including time owned by Texaco, Shell, and HollyFrontier. The new parent company, HF Sinclair, was formed after HollyFrontier acquired Sinclair Oil in March, 2022.

While the name may be different than in the past, much of the Puget Sound refinery team remains the same - some of whom are the second or even third generations to work at PSR – people who are focused on safely producing the products people in Skagit County and elsewhere need to get where they need to go.

SAFETY

Safety is the company’s number one value and employees live that value each day. “Nothing is more important than the safety of our employees, contractors, and community members”, said Andrea Petrich, external relations advisor. “Everyone receives safety training from their first day on the job and safety is a priority every day on the job.”

PSR site maintains its own in-plant fire, hazmat, medical, and spill response teams with roughly 145 employees who volunteer their time to be part of these teams. Puget Sound refinery Emergency Response teams also frequently partner with other Skagit County responders

for training and drills. In addition to site emergency responsibilities, their emergency response team engages with the community through events such as the annual Anacortes Fourth of July parade.

SUPPORTING THE SKAGIT COMMUNITY

PSR is one of Skagit County’s largest employers with employees who are highly involved in their communities as coaches from baseball to robotics, Leadership Skagit participants, volunteer firefighters, board members, school Parent Teacher Association members, and more.

In addition to individual employee support, Puget Sound refinery partners with dozens of nonprofits each year with missions and programming that focus on science, technology, engineering, math, career technical education,



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 8505 South Texas Rd
 Anacortes, WA 98221-3630
 (360) 506-4156
 andrea.petrich@hfsinclair.com
 www.hfsinclair.com | Andrea Petrich

JTK Engineering *Small Business*
 380 Pease Rd | Burlington, WA 98233
 (360) 245-4262 | tamas@jtkeng.com
 www.jtkeng.com | Tamas Bencsik

La Conner Maritime Service / Smiley's Pro Service *Small Business*
 920 W. Pearle Jensen Way
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 isaaco@laconnermaritime.com
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 Isaac Oczkewicz

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 Samantha Calkins

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 Garrett Lehman

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 www.teamcorporation.com
 Debbie Eaton

TruckVault *Small Business*
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 Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284-0734
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 donf@truckvault.com
 www.truckvault.com
 Don Fenton

Economic Forecast Night, February 2023



INVESTORS



MARINE

Marine

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Steve Graf

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www.dakotacreek.com | Liz Stout

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/ Smiley's Pro Service** *Small Business*
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Isaac Oczkewicz

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Anacortes, WA 98221-0409
(360) 293-2197
daverill@reisnerdistributor.com
www.reisnerdistributor.com | Dan Averill

Seattle Yachts *Equity*
3116 V Pl, Ste A
Anacortes, WA 98221-2887
(360) 299-0777
peter@seattleyachts.com
http://seattleyachts.com | Peter Whiting

Transpac Marinas, Inc. *Small Business*
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(360) 293-8888
tracis@transpacmarinas.com
www.transpacmarinas.com | Traci Stark

INVESTORS

NON-PROFIT



Non-Profit

Anacortes Chamber of Commerce

Non-Profit

819 Commercial Ave, Ste F
Anacortes, WA 98221 | (360) 293-7911
jstickles@anacortes.org
www.anacortes.org
Jessica Kiser

Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County

Non-Profit

3302 Cedardale Rd, A-100
Mount Vernon, WA 98274
(360) 419-3723
rmchenry@skagitclubs.org
www.skagitclubs.org | Ron McHenry

Burlington Chamber of Commerce

Non-Profit

PO Box 1087 | Burlington, WA 98233
(360) 757-0994
steph@burlington-chamber.com
www.burlington-chamber.com
Steph Rees

Camp Korey

Non-Profit

18620 Main St #806 | Conway, WA 98238
(360) 416-4120
ltheaker@campkorey.org
campkorey.org | Liz Theaker

Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship

Non-Profit

1111 Cleveland Ave. Ste #105
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-4229
(206) 235-6029
mike.skinner@cie-nw.org
www.cie-nw.org | Mike Skinner

Children's Museum of Skagit County

Non-Profit

432 Fashion Way
Burlington, WA 98233-3240
(360) 757-8888 | cate@skagitcm.org
www.skagitchildrensmuseum.net
Cate L. Anderson

Community Action of Skagit County - Mt Vernon, WA

Non-Profit

330 Pacific Pl
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-5427
(360) 416-7585
billh@communityactionskagit.org
www.communityactionskagit.org
Bill Henkel

Concrete Chamber of Commerce

Non-Profit

PO Box 743 | Concrete, WA 98237-0743
(360) 853-8784
chamber@concrete-wa.com
www.concrete-wa.com | Valerie Stafford

Friendship House

Non-Profit

PO Box 517 | 1002 S 3rd St
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-0517
(360) 336-6138 | Jonathan@skagitfriendshiphouse.org
www.skagitfriendshiphouse.org
Jonathan Kline

GSBA

Non-Profit

400 E Pine St, Ste 322
Seattle, WA 98122-2300
(206) 363-9188
gabrieln@Thegsba.org
http://www.thegsba.org/
Gabriel Neuman

Helping Hands Food Bank

Non-Profit

PO Box 632
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284-0632
(940) 232-1349
Reboccas@helpinghandsfoodbank.org
www.helpinghandsfoodbank.org
Rebecca Skrinde

Q & A with Burlington Chamber of Commerce

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

The Burlington Chamber of Commerce was established in 1961 to promote and protect the members of our association. In November 2012, the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Burlington opened the Burlington-Skagit County Regional Byway Center, the Visitor Information Center. Burlington's Visitor Information Center (V.I.C) and destination marketing entity Visit Burlington WA are valuable tourism resources providing visitors, and locals, with lodging, local maps, attractions, history, businesses, and community events.

What products or services do you offer, and where do you see the company's future market?

As a V.I.C and Chamber of Commerce, we support businesses in Burlington and tourism to Skagit. We play a vital role in connecting tourists to everything Burlington. We connect visitors to lodging, outdoor recreations, shopping, food, and breweries/wineries in our area. We are a resource of maps/brochures made available by our partnership with local business members and state

organizations. We see our future as more than an information center, but as a center for experiences.

What is your target customer demographic, and how do you cater to their needs?

Our target demographics are people located more than 50 miles outside of Skagit County. Though we work closely with our local community, our goal is to inform travelers outside our area about Burlington's lodging, business, events, and community and to inspire them to explore our area. The lodging tax we received has allowed us to consistently expand our marketing reach and target individuals and businesses outside our community, connecting them to services provided in Burlington.

Can you share some success stories or notable achievements your business has had in the community? (How do you engage with the community?)

A point of pride for us at the Visitor Information Center is our FREE festival for all attendees, Berry Dairy Days. Every year our lodging tax award and the local support of businesses and



volunteers allows us to organize a 3-day festival to celebrate our agricultural history. In 2023, some 18,000 people attended our festival events including the Grand Parade, Vendor Fair, Smoke & Grill competition and much more. Learn how you can support: www.berrydairydays.com



Tourism, business, and community meet at...

www.visitburlingtonwa.com

Home Trust of Skagit *Non-Profit*
612 S. First St
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-3811
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felicia@hometrustedskagit.org
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Q & A with CSD Attorneys at Law

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

CSD Attorneys at Law was founded in 1984 by Steve Mura, who later became a Whatcom County Superior Court judge. In 1987, Frank Chmelik joined Mr. Mura after having obtained extensive trial experience as an officer in the U.S. Army JAG Corps and as an associate at a Seattle law firm. In 1998, after Jon Sitkin and Richard Davis joined the firm, the name Chmelik Sitkin & Davis P.S. was adopted.

In 2023, the firm changed its name to CSD Attorneys at Law P.S. While our name has changed, our highest priority remains our commitment to providing high-quality and cost-effective representation to our clients.

What services do you offer?

CSD Attorneys at Law has a statewide practice based in Bellingham, Washington. We principally represent municipal governments, businesses, and the people who own and manage them. Our team of fifteen (15) experienced attorneys provide our clients with high quality advice in a responsive and efficient manner.

The firm's practice areas include litigation,

business law, municipal law, real estate and land use, construction law, employment and labor law, condo and homeowners' associations, bankruptcy and creditor's rights, environmental law, and estate planning and probate.

What is your target customer demographic?

CSD Attorneys at Law acts as general counsel for most of our clients. We look to form relationships with our clients that last for years and, in some cases, decades.

Describe your company culture?

At CSD Attorneys at Law, we treat others more fairly than we treat ourselves. Our culture is reflected at all levels of the firm, which has cultivated trust with our clients, comradery among our attorneys, and harmony within our office.

What steps do you take to ensure the quality of your services?

CSD Attorneys at Law has built a reputation for responsiveness, professionalism, and quality service. We believe that the sum of our parts is stronger than our individual components. Ac-



cordingly, our firm has a strong team environment which leverages the institutional knowledge that only comes from decades of legal experience in our numerous practice areas.



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Q & A with Terry Horat. , DeWaard & Bode

Tell us about the history of your business and how it got started.

The original Kredit DeWaard store opened in 1941 in Lynden, Wash., and sold everything from tires to home appliances throughout Whatcom County. In 1946, Kredit retired and Rube Bode joined his brother-in-law, Jake DeWaard, to form DeWaard & Bode. Over the years, the company's focus shifted to selling and servicing major appliances and has grown to become one of the largest independent appliance retailers in Whatcom and Skagit counties with 2 stores in Bellingham and one in Burlington.

How would you describe your company's mission or core values?

Our mission and core values at DeWaard and Bode are driven by our culture of honesty, integrity, and an unmatched commitment to our customers. These values help us provide exceptional service and build long-lasting relationships with our customers.

Describe your company culture and what you value most in your employees.

DeWaard & Bode is a local, family-owned and

operated business and our culture is deeply connected to being a family-first company. Whether it's our employees and their families or our customers and theirs, we take care of people first. We value that our employees take the initiative to go above and beyond for our customers. It's why we try our best to go above and beyond for them as an employer and we are proud to have so many employees be with us for 10, 20, and 30+ years.

How does your company stay involved with the local community?

Each month, DeWaard & Bode donates to a local non-profit in Whatcom, Skagit, or Island counties. We also host multiple fundraising events throughout the year and consistently give back to the communities where we live and work every day. When you shop here, it makes a difference.

What products and services do you offer and where do you service?

We have one of the largest selections of major home appliances North of Seattle and carry all major brands plus premium luxury brands. Serving Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties, we offer professional delivery, installation, and our



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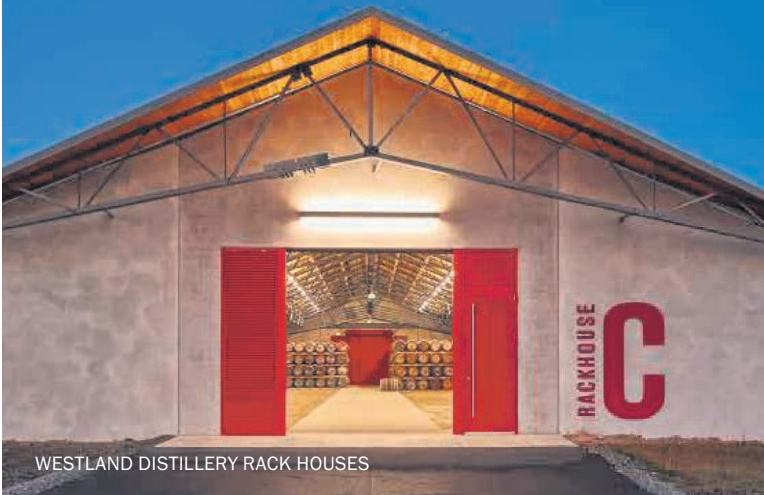
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