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Executive Director Report



Duane Wollmuth
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**SEWEDA Collaborates with Port of Walla Walla
and Walla Walla Community College in
Developing Southeast Washington's
Renewable Energy Businesses**

In Issue #3 (May 18, 2010) of our quarterly SEWEDA newsletter, I wrote about the “Three C’s” of successful economic development- Communication, Collaboration and Creativity. In today’s world, each of these economic development fundamentals continues to grow in importance as we strive to correct our economic downturn.

Collaboration, in particular, is of paramount importance as funds for economic development programs diminish, or in some cases, disappear entirely. With this in mind and our 2011 emphasis on expanding our region’s wind and other renewable energy resources, we have taken the steps necessary, along with the Port of Walla Walla and Walla Walla Community College, to form an alliance to brand and promote Southeast Washington (Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, Whitman and Walla Walla Counties) as a center for renewable energy resource development.

A letter of understanding between the Port of Walla Walla and SEWEDA has been agreed upon to form a new alliance called the Southeast Washington Renewable Energy District (SEWRED). Funding for SEWRED will be shared equally by SEWEDA and the Port of Walla Walla. Walla Walla Community College, a key part of this alliance and the region’s renewable energy resource development, will contribute to the partnership with in-kind contributions.

One of the first actions we have taken to promote the region’s resources and foster the development of business, will be participation by SEWRED in the upcoming American Wind Energy Association 2011 Wind Energy EXPO in Anaheim, California May 22-25. One of the major objectives of participating in this trade show is to identify business leads for relocation, or expansion, to our region. We will also strive to raise awareness of our region’s extensive wind resources and the rapidly developing cluster of wind energy businesses. With one of the west’s (and the country’s) premier wind technology educational programs located at Walla Walla Community College’s Clarkston and

(Continued)

Executive Director Report (cont.)

Walla Walla campuses, and the existing large wind farm developments that already exist or are being constructed in the region, there are a plethora of opportunities for expanding the wind energy supply-chain and services in southeast Washington. The SEWRED alliance members strongly feel that the region's more than 2,000 existing or planned wind turbines in the five counties, clearly warrants the attention of the many local and regional businesses who have the resources to become involved in servicing and supplying wind construction and operating companies. Moreover, the number and size of the wind farms that have developed in the five counties involved in SEWRED over the past ten years is now large enough to garner the attention of many of the industry's largest wind energy companies. Whether it is the opening of a satellite office in our region, or the relocation of substantial existing operations from elsewhere in the U.S., we believe we have the wind assets, educational resources, and current wind farm operations necessary to warrant further wind business development in any of our five counties.

The SEWRED alliance has also recently collaborated with Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (NW SEED) to apply for a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) to fund a Business Opportunities in Wind Energy initiative (BOiWIE). The BOiWIE initiative will focus on researching and further understanding the growing number of job and business opportunities in wind energy as this industry continues to expand in southeast Washington. If awarded, the USDA RBEG project will fund this research, as well as a series of workshops within the SEWRED region to pass along the research findings to area residents and small business operators. The research itself will consist of surveys of wind energy developers and operators in the five counties, and additional analyses of wind energy clusters in other areas of the country (e.g., mid-west, Texas, California) that are further evolved than those in Washington State.

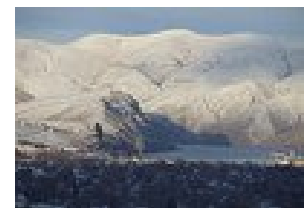
Asotin County



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Economic Development In Asotin County

We got through the holidays and with winter all around us, we are so lucky to live in such a wonderful Valley. I am excited to start off the New Year with lots of tasks to get accomplished. I have listed below some of SEWEDA's goals and the action being taken to meet the goals identified for Asotin County.



The **Business Development** goal includes the Recruitment, Start-up and Retention and Expansion of businesses. In recruitment I continue to actively seek businesses to locate to Asotin County. I have recently made telephone contacts with several businesses in the state of Oregon, and mailed them a recruitment packet and video to introduce them to the area and what we have to offer. I also continue to pursue the leads that come in from Washington State Department of Commerce. For those who are interested, SEWEDA provides FREE start-up assistance and has a number of great partners to help you through this process. Visit our website at www.seweda.org for a wide variety of resources.

I continue to meet with local businesses to see if we can help in any way with expansion efforts or just retaining what they have. We address issues that they as business owners are challenged with by utilizing our partnerships and resources that we have here in our region.

Asotin County (cont):

The **Tourism** goal addresses the development of visitor trade throughout the region. I continue to work closely with local partners to promote the area. With the Port of Clarkton's new amphitheater and recreational dock completed, we will be looking to generate additional recreational river activity. I am excited to see what new water activities we can bring to the Valley. I am also working with partners to enhance the experience for visitors that come in on the cruise ships to welcome them as they arrive in Clarkston and encourage them to return.



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The **Workforce** goal is to increase the availability, skill level, and productivity of the region's workforce. We are partnering with Workforce Development and accessing some of their Incumbent Workers Training Dollars. There have been a few businesses here locally that have been able to take advantage of these training funds. I am on the Career Training and Education Committee at Asotin High School and am excited about the things our students are learning in our school programs. The use of our Solid Works program in Clarkston and Asotin High schools are outstanding. I am also working on trying to find some intern programs so that these students get the hands on training they need. With that, we are getting ready for the High School Business Plan Competition that has \$10,000 available in prizes.



Asotin High School Students took home \$3000 last year; let's see if we can top that! This competition is in partnership with WSU and will take place on April 22, 2011. We have received lots of exciting business plan entries from both of the High Schools and wish all of the students the best of luck.

The **Capacity Building** goal is to develop the region's ability to plan for prosperity. I continue to work with partners to facilitate the alignment of planning efforts and delivery of business support services. And I continue to develop and foster relationships with other organizations, businesses, and agencies that have interest in economic development.

The **Community Development and Infrastructure** goal is to encourage development, maintenance, and operations of facilities, utilities, and services necessary to support economic development. I attend City, County, Port, and other regional or state meetings with infrastructure agenda items to advocate on behalf of Asotin County business interests. I also serve on the Community Development Committee for the City of Clarkston.

Asotin County has a lot of exciting projects underway and I look forward to keeping you engaged in what's taking place in economic development and the impact it is having on our county. Our downtown is looking wonderful and we have so much to be proud of. Be sure and let the local merchants know how much we appreciate them helping to improve the looks of downtown Clarkston. The Snake River Boat Builders just returned from Germany's largest boat show and are excited about what this opportunity has to offer. We are also trying to tap into the wind development that is taking place in Garfield County by identifying and locating resources that are available in this area to help during the construction phase and we are working to make those connections happen.

Late in 2010, I was selected to serve on the Board of Directors for the new Lewis Clark Valley Chamber of Commerce. This is going to be a very exciting task and I look forward to working closely with the Chamber to assist with enhancing all the great and positive things they have going on.

Several new businesses have recently opened in Clarkston. We extend a warm welcome and wish them the best of luck. The following new businesses are:

- *Discount Mini Storage – Bridge Street
- *Daily's Bakery, Deli, Espresso – Sixth Street
- *Goo Roos Market Place & Yoga Studio – Sycamore Street
- *Tishada's Thai House – Bridge Street
- *North Pole Ceramics & Gifts – 13th & Bridge St.

Columbia County



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SEWEDA Welcomes Claudia Nysoe Columbia County Managing Director

When I moved back to Dayton two years ago, I told my husband that the position of Chamber of Commerce director seemed like the most interesting job in town. So here I am! And interesting it is.

I started my married life 38 years ago in Dayton after I married Dayton native Dain Nysoe. I enjoyed the small town, farm life while Dain worked at Green Giant. We moved to Port Orchard Washington almost 30 years ago so Dain could be Bremerton Chamber of Commerce Director.

I started my new position with the Dayton Chamber of Commerce just over a month ago and have been trying to come up to speed ever since. We are very busy preparing for the annual fundraiser, Brix & Brew which is scheduled for March 11 at the Seneca Activity Center. Other local events on the horizon are the popular All Wheels Weekend, a new event, Mule Mania, and Christmas Kickoff, to name a few.

I look forward to my partnership with The Port of Columbia and my role with SEWEDA. As my involvement with the community continues I am energized for the opportunities and rewards for growth the future holds for us all.

Garfield County



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Pomeroy Chamber of Commerce Holds Annual Award Banquet

The annual Awards Banquet for the Pomeroy Chamber of Commerce will be held Saturday, March 12th beginning at 6:00 pm at the Spinner's Maple Hall in Pomeroy. The evening will entail a silent auction, catered dinner, games, presentation of the Citizen of the Year, Lifetime Achievement and Business of the Year awards, as well as music, dancing and a raffle year's theme is "When the Stars Come Out" in honor of the Chambers new look and real "stars" of the Chamber, the membership. This year's award recipients are: Citizen of the Year, Fire Chief (retiring) Larry Bunch; Lifetime Achievement, Rev. Howard Neal and Geri Koller; and Business of the Year is Meyer's Hardware and Fine Gifts. The honorees will be recognized at the banquet with a short biography and a plaque. Tickets for the banquet are \$25 and may be purchased at US Bank, Sterling Savings, Bank of Whitman, Pomeroy Pharmacy, Meyer's Hardware and Clippers, all in Pomeroy. For more information, or for donations to the silent auction, contact Chamber President, Alesia Ruchert, 509-843-1104.



Garfield County (cont):

SEWEDA to assist Pomeroy Chamber with Promotions

In an effort to diversify promotional efforts, Garfield County Managing Director Alesia Ruchert has partnered with the Pomeroy Chamber of Commerce in two marketing endeavors: redesign and launch of the Chamber website and underwriting for radio advertising with IdaVend on the am band. These two initiatives have already produced results as the newly launched website is experiencing an average of 213 hits per month, and special advertising for Pomeroy events through IdaVend have brought renewed interest from shoppers in the region. This was recently reflected in a report released by Washington States Department of Commerce on the Taxable Retail Sales growth for 2010 which showed Garfield County ranked #1 for growth, with an increase of almost \$3M.



“With the decrease to the ADO’s from the State and the tightening of my promotions budget, I just decided that I wanted to put what funds I had available into our local market and into local endeavors to promote Pomeroy and Garfield County,” Ruchert commented, “It is so encouraging to see that despite rough economic times, people are still venturing into their own backyards for shopping and entertainment, and that my community is benefiting from it.”

Go to www.pomeroychamberofcommerce.com and check out the newly redesigned website (by Mercury Media Productions) and tune into 1350 KRLC on the am dial to hear some great ads for Pomeroy businesses!

Whitman County



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Business Activity on the Palouse

It has been a busy winter in the Palouse with lots of activity. Small businesses opening, hotels breaking ground, wind energy moving forward, Avista Smart Grid and lots more excitement.

Avista Smart Grid Project

Avista was awarded \$19 million in federal matching funds for a total of \$38 million for a Smart Grid Project in Pullman and Albion. Avista is installing smart technology to provide electric customers with greater reliability, shorter outages and the opportunity to monitor energy and use it more efficiently at less cost. Advanced meters coupled with an automated system to restore outages and manage better efficiency will make Pullman and Albion the regions first Smart Cities.

Starting in March (2011) approximately 13,000 electric and 5,000 gas customers in Pullman and Albion will have their meters upgraded to the new, digital meters. The installation will take approximately 90 days.

In 2012, a voluntary pilot project will provide tools such as in-home displays that will allow customers to monitor their electric usage. They will be installed in 1500 homes.

Enhanced web tools will be available that will allow customers to monitor their ongoing energy use by logging into their Avista Utilities account. For additional information log on to: www.avistautilities.com

Whitman County (cont):

Washington State University Business Plan Competition: April 22-23, 2011

SEWEDA and the Port of Whitman are excited to be participating again this year in the competition. SEWEDA, WSU and Avista together have contributed \$10,000 towards the High School Division and the Port is contributing \$15,000 for the Open Division.



In the High School Division, there are teams from Pullman, Palouse/Garfield, Asotin and Clarkston High School. It should be a very exciting competition.

New Hotels in Pullman

Washington State University and Hilton Hotels have signed an agreement to build a 120-150 room Embassy Suites Hotel. In addition there will be a 12,000 sq. ft. conference center and restaurant. WSU has sold 7 ½ acres to Hilton for the project. Construction is to start this spring and the opening is expected in the spring, 2013.

Hampton Suites has broken ground for a 93 unit complex on Bishop Blvd. Completion is set for 2012.

Whitman County Mayors Roundtable

SEWEDA, Avista and the County Commissioners will host the Mayor's Roundtable on Thursday, March 10th in Palouse. The agenda includes Pat Mason of the Municipal Research and Services Center of WA to discuss issues around public records management, open meetings and conflicts of interest and more. Joining us by phone will be Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna. This will be a special night for the mayors.

Grocery Store in LaCrosse

Plans are moving ahead for a new grocery store in LaCrosse. A building has been purchased and given to the community and is now being renovated. Next is to find a grocer- interested, contact the city of LaCrosse at (509) 549-3330.

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