

CREATING A LANDSCAPE FOR ADVOCACY

BY TODD MATTHEWS



“ we need to get down to each blade of grass, each individual member and grow them so our grassroots are much stronger ”

"Legislators said that it was good to hear from somebody one-on-one. They hear from lobbyists all the time..."

Two years ago, small-business owner Dan Powell noticed a trend that was starting to hurt his business. Powell, president of Star Moving Systems in Tacoma, was meeting job-seekers who served in the National Guard and military reserves, were trained to drive trucks in Iraq and Afghanistan, and were looking for work after deployment. At the time, there was a shortage of truck drivers with Commercial Driver Licenses (CDL's) required by the Washington State Department of Licensing. Many truck drivers who had been deployed found that, after a year or more overseas, their CDL's had expired and they lacked the paperwork to go back to work.

"As I understand it, military training is very extensive and the equipment is comparable to our tractor trailers," recalled Powell.

He voiced his concern to the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber. He met with Gary Brackett, manager of business & trade development at the Chamber who is also a point-person on military issues, and Mike Weinman, a consultant hired by the Chamber to advocate the government on issues affecting the business community. Last year, the trio traveled to Olympia to meet elected officials. Legislators heard their case and as a result a budget proviso required the appropriate state agencies to study this issue. "We planted a seed down in Olympia," Powell said. The issue will be in the Chamber's TEACH agenda (see page 17) for the 2010 legislative session and it has also been adopted as a legislative priority by the Property Partnership's Washington Defense Partnership.

"Dan Powell going down to Olympia was huge," said Weinman. "Legislators even said afterward that it was good to hear from somebody one-on-one. They hear from lobbyists all the time. But having that time with an actual business owner has an impact."

Weinman, who spent 13 years as a district director for Congressman Norm Dicks before becoming an independent consultant, would like to meet more people like Powell—Chamber members who contact him to discuss issues and are willing to join him on the advocacy front. During a recent meeting, he described a strategy aimed at fostering more people like Powell. He pulled out a yellow notepad and began to draw a tall, single blade of grass.

"Everybody talks about grassroots," he explained. "But we need to get down to each blade of grass, each individual member and grow them so our grassroots are much stronger when we talk to elected officials."

As Weinman sees it, everything begins with a seed—that is, the Chamber provides information to its members through its website, blogs, newsletters and e-mails in order to make a connection. That leads to the base of the blade of grass—a time when Chamber members begin to take action by signing online petitions or sending e-mails to elected officials to let them know they have a concern, for example. As the blade grows, so does the individual's involvement; he or she attends a Chamber event where they can learn more about a particular issue, joins a group that will meet with elected officials and will eventually feel comfortable picking up the phone and contacting a legislator or public official.

Weinman said some Chamber members are already involved at this level, but he would like to see more.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

“I don’t think businesses are apathetic,” he explained. “I think they are extremely busy and concerned about growing their own businesses.”

Chamber members who become involved on the advocacy front have the ability to shape one item in particular—the organization’s annual state legislative priorities, more commonly known as the TEACH agenda (Transportation, Economic development and energy policy, Accountability, Community development and work force training, and Health care). These priorities, which determine the Chamber’s agenda in Olympia when the legislature convenes, are established by the Chamber’s Public Affairs Council. The council consists of government relations representatives from local businesses and organizations such as Intel, Key Bank, Puget Sound Energy, Simpson Investment Company, University of Washington Tacoma, Port of Tacoma and Tacoma Goodwill. They share the issues important to their businesses and customers and compile an agenda that is reviewed, modified and approved by the Chamber’s Board of Directors.

Looking ahead, a draft version of the 2010 TEACH agenda includes issues such as supporting additional funding of the Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) model for job creation, backing incentives for alternative energy production to reduce carbon impacts, controlling costs of workers’ compensation and preserving capacity in the higher education system so workers can train or retrain to enter the job market as the economy improves.

But Chamber members don’t have to wait for the next legislative session to get involved. Issues arise throughout the year, according to Weinman.

One example of this is Tacoma’s so-called B & O “claw back” policy.

“Tax credits were given to businesses in a certain area of Tacoma if they guaranteed they would employ a Tacoma resident for five years,” Weinman explained. “Halfway through, because of the economy, businesses have had to lay off those people. Well, the City, and especially the Finance Department, decided because [some employers] didn’t fulfill all those years, [they would] have to pay all that money back.”

In October, Weinman and a group of small-business owners met

with Tacoma City Council members to argue that businesses

already hurt by the lackluster economy would further harmed by this attempt to collect incentives offered in more economically robust times. Council members agreed. They directed the City’s Tax and License to hold off on its aggressive collection plan until the Council had more time to study the program.

So what are the first steps for Chamber members to get more involved in advocacy work?

“Contact the Chamber,” said Weinman. “Depending on what issue it is, we can either take it to our Public Affairs Council or one of our committees to work on it and take action.” ←



Juvenile Diabetes Strikes One Child Every Hour

Help us move research into reality

www.jdrf.org



dedicated to finding a cure

TAX HELP WANTED

By Todd Matthews





Will a revision to Tacoma's B & O Tax policy be enough to boost the city's small-business environment?

Marty Campbell was well aware of Tacoma's Business and Occupation (B&O) Tax long before he was elected to Tacoma City Council last year. As the long-time owner of two small Tacoma businesses, Buzzard's Discs and Stadium Video, Councilmember Campbell, like every business owner in Tacoma, was required by the City of Tacoma and the State of Washington to report his quarterly earnings and pay B&O Tax. Last year, according to Campbell, he wrote checks totaling \$1,200 to cover B&O taxes for both businesses. It wasn't his biggest business expense, but "particularly for small businesses, little amounts like that matter," he said over coffee at AMOCAT Cafe in Tacoma. "That's \$1,200 I could have put into more product, a few more hours for employees, or a little more advertising."

Beginning Jan. 1, small business owners see some B&O Tax relief.

Last November, the Tacoma City Council voted to modify a nearly-60-year-old ordinance that has governed how City Hall collects revenue through its B&O Tax. According to Danielle Larson, operations manager in the city's tax and license division, if you are a business owner who earns \$75,000 in gross sales last year, you are required to pay B&O taxes (in 2009, the figure was \$72,500). That so-called "threshold" will be raised to affect only business owners who earn \$250,000 or more in gross sales. It's a move that is expected to benefit approximately 4,900 business owners who fall below that threshold. It's great news for business owners. But it left the City looking for how to make up for what is projected to be \$1.4 million in lost revenue next year as a result of the change.

"I think it's worth doing," said Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland recently from her office on the 12th floor of City Hall. "It almost

“...raising the threshold is an idea that has received much attention in 2010 from City Council's government performance and finance committee.”

seems counterintuitive to do something like this in tough economic times, especially when (cities) are trying to fight for (tax) dollars. But I think our small businesses need relief as well."

For years, Tacoma has been dogged by the B&O Tax. Nearby cities such as Fircrest, Lakewood and Fife, which don't have B&O Tax ordinances, have benefited from Tacoma's extra fee on business owners. Why locate your business in Tacoma and pay the B&O Tax when you can duck the fee by locating outside the city limits? "By Tacoma having this B&O Tax, essentially you are giving all these other communities around it a tax exemption, or at least that's the perception," observed Mike Weinman, a consultant hired by the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber to educate government on issues affecting the business community. Weinman said the tax has created the perception that Tacoma is not a friendly place for business.

Councilmember Campbell knows some businesses have located outside Tacoma because of the B&O Tax. He points to (but doesn't name) a large construction firm that he claims recently re-located to Fife for that very reason. Their B&O Tax was typically \$400,000 per year, according to Campbell. "That's a pretty big number," he said. "I can understand why they would make a decision to re-locate outside Tacoma when they can save \$400,000 a year. To a large construction company, being located off one I-5 exit versus another exit doesn't make a difference." Another factor for the construction company, said Campbell, is passing along the B&O Tax to its customers. (note: Campbell said his two businesses already earn more than \$250,000 in gross sales, so raising the threshold would not exempt him from paying B&O Tax). "When that construction company figures a bid, they figure the B&O Tax right into the bid," he explained. "If they weren't paying a B&O Tax, what you would see is the bid would be slightly lower, which would make them a little more competitive. We want our businesses to be competitive."

Continued on page 17

WILL I SURVIVE?

TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES STRIVING TO "STAY AFLOAT"

BY TODD MATTHEWS



Owning your own small business has never been easy.

Start-up costs, long hours, and the odds of surviving long-term are usually enough to give aspiring entrepreneurs pause. The recession has only made the decision more complicated: Will the lack of consumer confidence affect my bottom-line? Can I get a bank loan anymore? Is it crazy to be a small-business owner in this economy?

Elizabeth Frisino, Chair of the South Sound chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), is someone who can help answer these questions. Frisino and her team of SCORE counselors meet face-to-face with prospective and established business owners in Pierce, Thurston, and Lewis counties to offer advice.

When I met Frisino inside the Small Business Center on the downtown Tacoma campus of Bates Technical College, I was surprised to learn that SCORE counselors have been busier than ever despite a recession.

According to Frisino, who has been a SCORE counselor for three years, between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010, South Sound SCORE counselors conducted 580 counseling sessions – an increase of 31 percent from October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009.

Face-to-face counseling sessions with new clients is up 16 percent; follow-up sessions with those clients is up 59 percent

“We're getting a lot more people who have been laid off or lost their jobs, and they think, 'What now?'”

(meaning clients are serious about starting their businesses). Online counseling has also spiked: online sessions with new clients are up 45 percent, and 300 percent for follow-up clients.

“We're getting a lot more people who have been laid off or lost their jobs, and they think, 'What now?’” Frisino told me. “We see a lot more people come in with the idea of replacing the job they lost with either opening a new business themselves from scratch, potentially buying a business, or franchising.”

So what advice does she have for small-business entrepreneurs in this recession? Strangely, it's not much different than the advice she gives during boom times. She breaks things out into two camps: people thinking of opening their own business, and people already in business and trying to outlast the economic downturn.

For the first group, it all boils down to the “Five C's of Credit”:

Capacity – You're better off if you have more experience in the industry in which you plan to start your business;

Character – A credit score of 650 or higher shows lenders you can be trusted with their money;

Contribution – How much cash or equity can you bring to the business? If you're looking for a loan, banks want 20- to 30-percent equity contribution;

Cash Flow – In addition to the business-generated cash flow, a start-up business owner will probably need an additional source of money during the first year of operation;

Collateral – The more debt-free assets that can be pledged to back a loan, the better.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

For people already in business and just trying to outlast the recession, here are Frisino's tips:

- » Make sure that you offer a competitive advantage versus your competition;
- » Watch your cash flow carefully;
- » Develop a business plan if you don't have one;
- » Be flexible and make your business plan a living document to be changed as business conditions dictate;
- » Use low cost E-marketing to reach your customers.

"It's not an easy environment," said Frisino. "But it's not impossible if you have a good idea, a well thought out business plan, you've done proper research of the market you want to be in, you understand the fundamental of that market, and you have equity." ←

Continued from page 10

The construction company isn't a perfect example; after all, it makes more than \$250,000 in gross sales and therefore would still pay B&O taxes after the city raised its threshold. But it does illustrate how any business, large or small, weighs its decision to set up shop in Tacoma in light of the tax.

So why not just abolish the B&O Tax? It's not so easy.

According to Campbell, revenue collected from the B&O Tax comprises almost 20 per cent of the city's general fund budget. The city collected approximately \$42 million in revenue through B&O taxes in 2007; approximately \$44 million in 2008; and approximately \$40 million in 2009. The money is used to pay for a variety of services such as street repairs, libraries and emergency services such as police departments and fire departments. "I would love to say 'bye-bye' to the B&O Tax, but that would be irresponsible," said Campbell. "It would be like saying we're not going to take property tax anymore. Home owners would say, 'Woo-hoo! Great!' But don't bother to call the police. And if you have a fire, buy bigger garden hoses. Ultimately, our bottom-line is we need to ensure we have the same level of service."

"This has been in place since the 1950s," explained Strickland. "We've had several different city councils and mayors come through this building since then. There have been different efforts to [change the B&O Tax] but it's never been completely done away with. Even when you had a council that had three or four members who were definitely very strong pro-business, they still didn't take steps to eliminate it. That tells me obviously there is some value there and the whole idea of giving it up completely is very daunting." Still, raising the threshold is an idea that has received much attention in 2010 from City Council's government performance and finance committee. "Overall, I think most of the councilmembers are onboard with this," added Strickland. Indeed, the ordinance was approved unanimously on Nov. 30.

For Weinman, the B&O Tax revision is a great first step toward addressing the issue: "I think the city really needs to get out there and tout, 'We're cutting taxes on small businesses!' Is the Chamber for that? Absolutely. It lessens the financial impact on small businesses, especially those that are just starting out, and changes the perception so that Tacoma is a good place to do business." ←

CLEARING THE AIR

BY TODD MATTHEWS





“...cap-and-trade and cap-and-dividend legislation has produced splits within the business community.”

In the business world, many perspectives emerge on carbon emissions legislation.

If you want a better understanding of the carbon emissions debate currently being waged in Washington, D.C., you would be well served to visit the former ASARCO site in Ruston. For 83 years, ASARCO represented everything that was good for Ruston, nearby Tacoma and Pierce County: hundreds of family-wage jobs; millions in tax revenue; even the site itself was somewhat scenic -- situated on a hillside overlooking shimmering Commencement Bay and offering a portrait-perfect view of Mt. Rainier, it was easy to look beyond smokestacks that polluted the air.

Indeed, there was a strong economic argument for keeping ASARCO here. Decades later, however, someone was left holding a large bill to clean up the site. The price for allowing ASARCO to operate had not been accounted for.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), approximately 15 million tons of toxic slag were used as fill material; in one example, slag was dumped into Commencement Bay in order to extend the facility's shoreline. In 2006, an agreement was reached between the federal government, ASARCO and a developer for clean-up costs estimated to reach \$28 million.

Stories like ASARCO's are being played out in mines and mills across the country. Many argue businesses with large carbon footprints operate without accounting for the long-term costs associated with pollution tied to their lines of work.

They point to a United Nations report set to be released this summer, but leaked to *The Economist* in February, which shows that if 3,000 of the world's biggest companies were forced to pay for the damages they cause to the environment, it would cost those companies \$2.2 trillion, or approximately one-third of their profits.

That has made getting a handle on toxic emissions such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide through legislation a sensitive task.

Still, two bills proposed within the past year have received a great deal of attention.

Last May, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced the American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) Act, better known as the 'cap-and-trade' bill. The bill creates a permit system for carbon dioxide emissions. Under this plan, a limited number of permits would be issued, and those permits would be bought and sold on the free market. Supporters say that by putting a cap on climate change pollutants and forcing businesses to pay for those pollutants, the bill would reduce carbon emissions recorded in 2005 by three percent in 2012, 20 per cent in 2020, 42 per cent in 2030, and 83 per cent in 2050.

Last December, Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced the Carbon Limits and Energy for America's Renewal (CLEAR) Act, better known as 'cap-and-dividend' bill. Like the cap-and-trade bill, this bill aims to reduce carbon emissions recorded in 2005 by 83 per cent in 2050. But it does so by using a different tactic.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

Instead of purchasing permits on the free market, businesses such as oil companies and coal manufacturers would buy permits from the federal government at auction. The money raised would be returned to Americans in dividends that could be used to offset rising energy prices anticipated after businesses pass the cost of purchasing permits along to consumers.

According to Jim Lazar, a consulting economist and senior advisor at the Regulatory Assistance Project, it's not the first time climate regulation bills have been introduced in Washington, D.C.

But this time it's different. "President Barack Obama campaigned on a platform that included regulating greenhouse gases," he notes. "It should come as no surprise that legislation is being pursued."

Lazar has given presentations on cap-and-trade and cap-and-dividend to a variety of environmental and business groups, including the Olympia Economics Club in January. He has observed that cap-and-trade and cap-and-dividend legislation has produced splits within the business community. "To the extent that businesses are aware of their self-interest, they are following these bills," he says.

One factor for division is regionalism.

In Washington State, says Lazar, cap-and-dividend is an easy sell because the state is powered overwhelmingly by hydroelectricity. It's a different story in places like Missouri, North Dakota and Georgia, where coal dominates. "There's an undercurrent [to the CLEAR Act] that's important," he explains. "Because Washington state is mostly hydroelectric and the rest of the country is mostly coal, our dividends would be greater than our costs. This is very favorable for the state Sen. Cantwell represents."

As an example, he compares a paper mill in Grays Harbor, Wash. to a paper mill in Augusta, Ga. "Northwest paper mills are enthusiastic about cap-and-dividend, for example, because it will give them a competitive advantage," he says. In Lazar's example, the paper mill in Grays Harbor gets its power from hydroelectricity; greenhouse gas emissions aren't a factor. The paper mill in Augusta, however, is powered by coal and will need to pay for permits.

Still, the U.S. Climate Action Plan -- a lobbying group backed by business heavyweights such as DuPont, Ford Motor Company, Shell, Chrysler and Johnson & Johnson -- has introduced a "Blueprint for Legislative Action" that is closely aligned with the cap-and-trade bill.

They like the free-market-less-government-regulation aspect of the bill. But Janeen Heath, Sen. Cantwell's Deputy Press Secretary, argues businesses are also lining up behind the cap-and-dividend bill. "In general, businesses have told us that they are particularly interested in the CLEAR Act because it establishes straightforward rules of the road with which they can plan, invest and run their business," says Heath. "In doing so, the CLEAR Act refrains from picking winners and losers and instead provides the right incentives for a smooth transition to our clean energy future."

Grant A. Nelson, Government Affairs Director at the Association of Washington Business in Olympia, says his group is still studying the issue. "Individual members may have taken positions on the proposed federal bills, but I am unable to articulate at this present time what those specific positions may be with respect to the bills as a whole, or individual components.

"Our position on any state or federal cap-and-trade or cap-and-dividend legislation will be dependent on how those proposals align with our principles," adds Nelson.

He says those principles involve energy costs, availability and reliability; competitiveness with other states and nations; not penalizing businesses who have made significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions already; ensuring a level playing field within and outside of industry sectors; and emission allocations and auctions.

What's next for these pieces of legislation? Last summer, the House approved a cap-and-trade bill. It still needs the Senate's approval. The cap-and-dividend bill was only introduced in December. It is still working its way through the Senate. ←

TACOMA'S CREATIVE STREAK

BY TODD MATTHEWS

When you think of Tacoma, do you think of a place for creativity?

Downtown's cluster of major museums seems designed for artgoers. You can always catch an art-house film at the independent Grand Cinema. If you need to coax your creativity a bit, you could always tip back a pint of beer at Tacoma's own Harmon Brewery.

But is Tacoma a place for the so-called 'creative class' of young professionals? Four years ago, the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce Foundation set out to answer that question affirmatively, through an effort known as Creative Tacoma. The goal? Reshape the city so it caters to the 'creative class,' a term coined by economic development expert Dr. Richard Florida.

According to Florida, businesses today are choosing where to locate -- not based on incentive packages -- but because the area offers the talent they need to compete successfully in a global environment. To grow and prosper, adds Florida, a city must have a high concentration of "creative workers" in a variety of fields -- technology, research and design, arts and culture, and professional and managerial occupations -- and provide opportunities for education and training for this creative class of workers.

In early-2006, Florida was invited to speak at the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber's annual meeting. The visit had a

“The CCLP would ensure Tacoma had the environment necessary to attract the creative class”

profound impact on the Chamber long after Florida departed.

A group was formed to launch a pilot project that would attempt to grow a creative class in Tacoma. Florida returned to Tacoma to to teach a two-day seminar, which spurred the Creative Cities Leadership Project (CCLP) -- the first of its kind in any U.S. city

The CCLP would ensure Tacoma had the environment necessary to attract the creative class.

Did it work? One CCLP team focused on fostering local talent at a young age. The Vision Center at Church of the Living God in Tacoma worked with the national organization INROADS to connect area youth with internship opportunities. Another CCLP team compiled extensive research on the feasibility of an arts incubator in Tacoma. And another team focused on something practical and creative in its own right -- a map of the Hilltop neighborhood that showcased 13 ethnic restaurants, neighborhood bars and small-food businesses that might appeal to young professionals.

But CCLP's two biggest achievements are still thriving today. The first is Love Tacoma, a grassroots effort aimed to create a fun environment for young professionals and creative types who are already here or considering a job opportunity in Tacoma. In this economy, a steady pay check is great. But what is there to do after work?

That's where Love Tacoma fits. More than 500 people have signed up through the Love Tacoma Web site to receive announcements on upcoming events. The group tapped the resources of some local businesses who already employed young creative types. Rusty George Design stepped forward and built a Web site for free. BCRA Design contributed free services to create a logo for the group; and Print NW offered to produce cards and flyers for free.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

Its inaugural event was held in the summer of 2007 with an event called "Chill at Pacific Grill." More than 150 people flocked to the downtown bar and restaurant for cocktails and socializing. By evening's end, the group had traction. Since then, Love Tacoma has hosted the "Hipster Boutique Tour," which gathered 15 young women for a walking tour of downtown Tacoma's small-business clothiers. "Swiss Kiss" was held at a pub near the University of Washington Tacoma downtown campus; the pub's owner provided free appetizers and created three signature cocktails for Love Tacoma attendees. The "MLK Nosh" sent Love Tacomans on a dining crawl of the restaurants and bars on Martin Luther King, Jr. Way in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood. And there was the "Feed Your Head" night, with browsing at King's Books, and a trivia contest at Doyle's pub.

Today, a planning group meets monthly to keep Love Tacoma alive. "Our intent is to create social networking opportunities for people in Tacoma," says Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber Metropolitan Development Director Chelsea Levy, a member of the planning group. At press time, the group planned June's event at the Tacoma Art Museum, Workz Cafe as part of the Third Thursday art walk; hello, cupcake downtown was on board to provide cupcakes. In July, the group will meet at Primo Grill in the city's bustling Sixth Avenue Business District. In August, the group will meet at Katie Downs on Ruston Way's waterfront. And a "Link and Drink" pub crawl of downtown bars and restaurants located along the Link light rail line is tentatively planned for a Love Tacoma Extra in August.

"Love Tacoma is a great brand," says Levy. "It's something that people who live in Tacoma can really relate to. The group has evolved over time and has worked to maintain the philosophy of meeting new people and going to new and different places in Tacoma."

The second successful outcome of the Creative Cities initiative that is still active today can be traced to CCLP's "Green Tacoma" team and its goal to create a "Green Alliance" of local merchants that would support, promote and build awareness for environmentally friendly businesses and organizations that offer green products and services. The thinking was this: If Tacoma could be known as a hub for green products and services, it would foster the energy

to draw cutting-edge businesses that would appeal to the creative class of workers. "Green Tacoma" has evolved into TacomaACTS, a business alliance that works to expand the region's green economy through encouraging and supporting sustainable business development and advocating for the green business sector.

Its goal is to make Tacoma-Pierce County a leader in economic growth and support a green economy. TacomaACTS sustainable business certification program has helped monitor business's carbon footprints through a calculator designed specifically for Pierce County by TacomaACTS and Cascadia Consulting. Quarterly reports and follow-up interviews will culminate in a report, and customized recommendations for cost-saving GHG reductions will be provided to each represented business. TacomaACTS has also partnered with WorkForce Central and Dr. Alan Hardcastle of Washington State University on a study of sustainable economy initiatives.

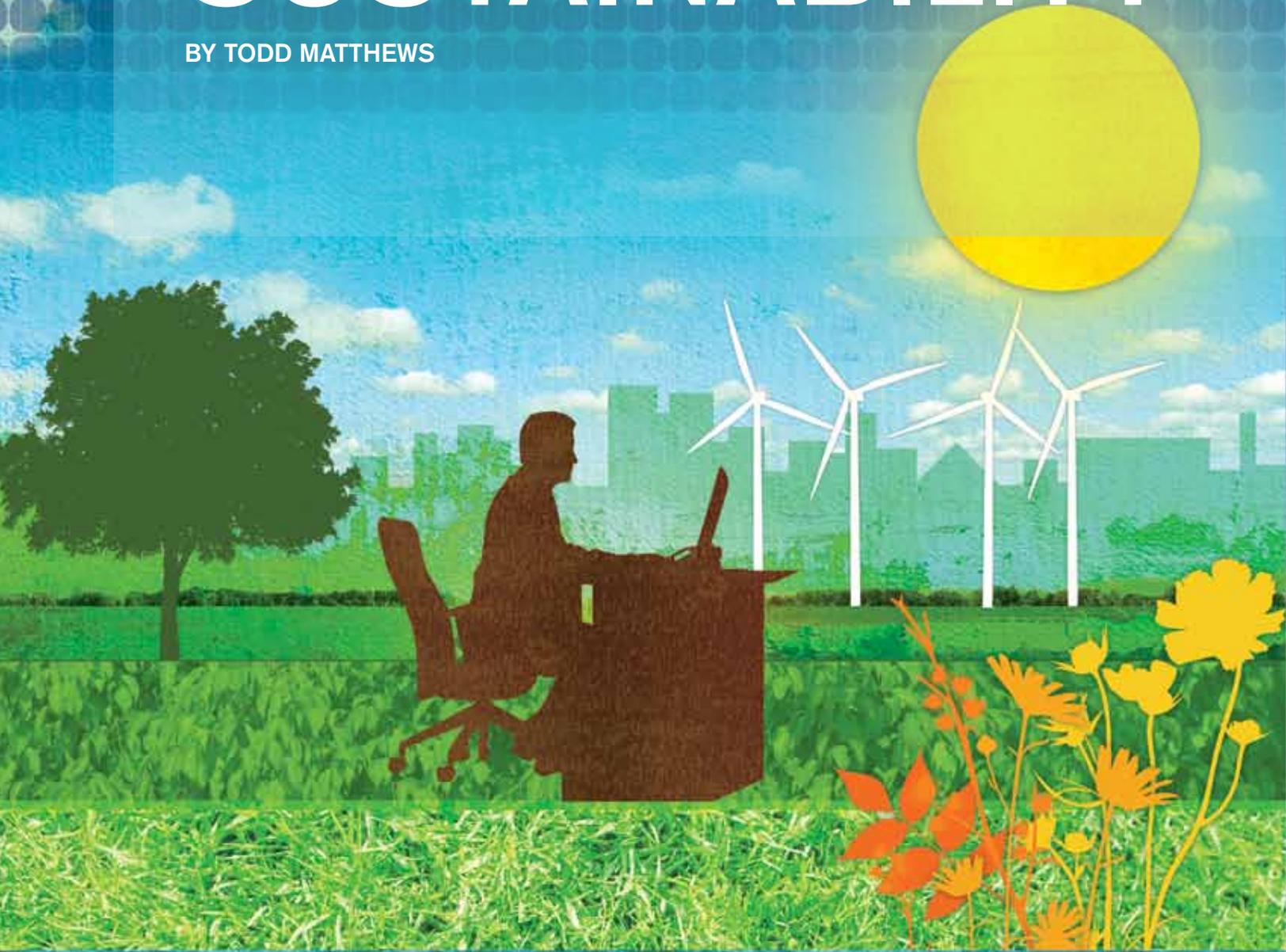
In June, TacomaACTS hosted "Green Drinks," a regular social networking event similar to Love Tacoma and for people who work in the environmental field. Green Drinkers enjoyed Fish Tale Organic Amber Ale and met TacomaACTS' new Executive Director, Stephanie Gowing who started on May 17

Through these two programs -- Love Tacoma and TacomaACTS -- the Chamber hopes to keep Tacoma's creative streak alive. ←



BIZ CASE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

BY TODD MATTHEWS





EBALLIANCE
ENVIRONMENTAL BUSINESS ALLIANCE
TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY

In a tough economy like ours, many business owners are focused on one thing: surviving the current situation.

When customers have closed their wallets and cut back on their spending, it's easy to empathize with a business owner who has put aside a "big picture" goal, such as "going green," to address what seem like more pressing and basic goals – making payroll and keeping the doors open.

However, it doesn't have to be an either/or situation. The advocacy group known as the Environmental Business Alliance (EB Alliance) is a partnership between the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, Go Local Tacoma, and the City of Tacoma that aims to help Pierce County businesses improve their environmental performance and increase their profitability. According to Kristi Lynett, the manager in the City of Tacoma's Office of Sustainability, EB Alliance is following-up the climate action plan created in 2008 by the City of Tacoma's "green ribbon task force."

"I think a lot of the impetus for the Alliance was the City of Tacoma's climate action plan, which emphasizes business sustainability as one aspect of reducing our carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions," says Lynett. "That's how we got started talking about business sustainability."

For a business owner, the benefits of the Alliance begin when they pledge to (a) use a carbon calculator to determine their business' current greenhouse gas emissions; (b) work to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions; (c) work to improve its performance in water conservation, recycling, and stormwater pollution prevention; and (d) periodically inform EB Alliance of its progress so the Alliance can celebrate accomplishments with the entire community.

Advantages? Sometimes "Some businesses might be more inclined to have strong values about being sustainable and

being sustainable and being friendly to environment," says Patricia Lecy-Davis, President of Go Local Tacoma, a group that supports local independent business owners. "Some businesses will want to learn how to save money and create a larger bottom line. Even other businesses might be in it for the exposure and marketing that comes with being showcased in the EB Alliance."

The pledge might seem like a big commitment for a typical business owner, but it's done with the help and expertise of the Alliance, which has as its bedrock three major components.

First, the Alliance will educate businesses on the simple and effective ways they can reduce their impact on the environment. Alliance partners will help businesses who want to: collaborate reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by completing a carbon calculator that easily estimates a business' carbon footprint based on basic usage data, such as the energy use in their building or how their employees commute to and from work. The Alliance also helps businesses who wish to participate in a free and confidential on-site assessment by Alliance partner Citizens for a Healthy Bay (CHB).

"Through our Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tacoma (BEST) program, we conduct free, confidential on-site environmental assessments to help local companies learn about cost-saving, sustainable business practices in areas such as energy conservation, water conservation, recycling and waste reduction, stormwater pollution prevention and employee commute reduction," says CHB Executive Director Bill Anderson.

"CHB staff members visit participating businesses to learn about their practices in each of these areas. We then provide the business with written recommendations describing opportunities for improvement. If the business decides to implement some or all of our recommendations, we provide free technical assistance to help them each step of the way."

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

The second component involves the EB Alliance creating events and educational seminars that put business owners in touch with local experts in the area of sustainable business practices.

The last component is promoting and marketing businesses that choose to participate in the Alliance and reduce their environmental impact. “We use our Web site and our quarterly *Tidings* newsletter to encourage businesses to join the Alliance and to promote the actions of participating businesses as they work to improve their environmental performance,” says Anderson. “Businesses that have participated in the BEST program have benefited through reduced garbage, water and energy bills, community recognition for their environmental efforts and improved employee morale.”

Businesses will also be promoted on EB Alliance's Web site and resource partners' websites. “We want to recognize your business

when you show progress,” adds Lynett. “If you are showing improvement, we are going to promote you. It's not only saving money through resource and utility bill reduction. It's also bringing in more customers because we are marketing you as someone who is benefitting the local community.”

In the end, EB Alliance could help the average Pierce County business owner achieve what seems like a daunting task in this recession – increasing their profitability while improving the environment. ←

If you would like to get involved with the Environmental Business Alliance, please visit eb-alliance.org or email Kristin Lynett at Kristin.Lynett@cityoftacoma.org for more information.

Continued from page 10

Another example, could be: the City plans to design a new office building and they're interviewing architects. You might hear these kinds of questions: What is your experience with life cycle cost analysis of alternative HVAC systems? Can you quantify the potential energy savings from the use of an air-barrier envelope design? What is the experience of your proposed team members using third-party building certification programs?

And then, the City begins the interviewing process of contractors to build it. Here are questions that could be presented to potential firms: How have you managed the LEED certification process to assist with achieving the desired certification level? How does LEED compare with Green Globes or BuiltGreen for sustainability? What are the qualifications of your proposed commissioning team?

If you currently do business with the City – your environmental actions will be subject to consideration in the best interests of the greater good. Price of services or product

may no longer be the determining factor to firm selection - there are now many other considerations.

You can find more details on these all of these actions at <http://www.cityoftacoma.org> (look for the link under “Public Works” then “Global Warming”).

Over the coming months the Chamber and your local government will be developing means of outreach to help our local businesses understand and adopt green practices as well – watch for these announcements as they become available. And don't be afraid to ask questions of both the Chamber and the Council – that is part of why they exist. ←

^{1,2}(Kristi Lynett, Sustainability Manager, City of Tacoma's April 2011 “Tacoma-environews” bulletin).

WILL 2010 BRING ECONOMY RECOVERY?

BY TODD MATTHEWS



“ The PCEI points to two relatively positive developments in 2010: Single-family housing and retail activity. ”

The Pierce County Economic Index attempts to answer the question on everyone's mind.

The most recent recession, which began in December 2007, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research, has left business owners, their employees and job-seekers asking the question: When will the economy turn around?

It's a familiar question for Douglas E. Goodman, Ph.D., and Bruce D. Mann, Ph.D., economics professors at the University of Puget Sound. Since 1975, they have produced the Pierce County Economic Index (PCEI), an annual report that forecasts how the local economy will perform. Drs. Goodman and Mann presented the new PCEI during the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber's Horizons 2010 Economic Forecast.

The economists forecast, as the U.S. economy shakes off the recession in 2010, Pierce County will be slow to follow, especially during the first six months. Local unemployment will rise as high as 9.75 percent before it begins to taper. It won't be until the latter half of 2010 when Pierce County's economy will show signs of life. Even then, it doesn't mean we will be celebrating. “For the year as a whole, the drag of the first half of the year will more than outweigh the second-half recovery,” note the economists.

With 2010 underway, it makes sense to look with the PCEI to see what we can anticipate for the local economy by year's end. Particularly interesting is how four issues – the Port of Tacoma's struggles, the departure of Russell Investments, a possible rebound in residential housing sales and retail spending – will play out.

THE TIDEFLAT'S STALLED ENGINE

If the PCEI proves correct, the Port of Tacoma probably won't reap benefits. The recession has been tough on the Port. Last summer, it announced container volumes were down about 15 percent from 2008, and the number of automobiles shipped decreased 35 percent. Similarly, NYK Line scaled back its plan to build a 168-acre terminal.

Their new year will be even harder.

According to the PCEI, container volumes will drop 15.4 percent from 2009. “2010 will see a further decline for the Port . . . as major carrier and service string adjustments made in 2009 will now be felt over an entire year,” note Goodman and Mann.

THE RUSSELL MOVE

Russell Investments' decision last year to move to Seattle sent a chill through the South Sound region. The company is downtown Tacoma's largest private employer, and the move will mean 1,000 fewer people working and shopping in its central business district.

Surprisingly, the PCEI doesn't seem overly worried about Russell's departure. “The benefits of the national recovery, increased trade flows, some new military construction spending and a recovering housing market will be enough to offset the negative effects of Russell Investments moving out of the area,” note Goodman and Mann.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

The biggest challenge to leasing of office space in Pierce County?

Seattle's nearly 20 percent vacancy rate for Class-A office space. "The most significant challenge will be competition from the north," write the economists. "Some available space in Tacoma's central business district will provide competition for King County. The space vacated by Russell Investments will be attractive, as will the new Pacific Plaza development."

So by year's end, the space available could be a challenge to commercial real estate brokers.

Continued from page 4

In August 2009, Razorfish surveyed 1,000 "connected" consumers and discovered:

97 percent had researched a brand online

- » 75 percent had posted a product or brand review
- » On average, these connected consumers had spent \$150 online in the past 6 months
- » Nearly all had visited a community site such as Facebook, Yelp or LinkedIn

So as you consider advertising in 2010, think about how your target audiences are changing – and how your advertising may need to change, too. ←

Is there any good news?

The PCEI points to two relatively positive developments in 2010: Single-family housing and retail activity. First Time Home Buyer tax credits, bargain prices and a recovering economy all point to a spike in activity. According to the PCEI, by the time you read this article single-family housing sales should be revving up. Goodman and Mann forecast the Housing Index will grow by 24 percent during the first half of 2010. The third and fourth quarters will see growth by 10 percent and six percent respectively, cumulatively boosting the PCEI's Housing Index by nearly 10 percent over 2009.

Spending in Pierce County is also a thin silver lining. According to Goodman and Mann, \$5.2 billion will be spent in Pierce County in 2010 (a \$100 million increase over 2009). However, the economists caution "inflation will more than wipe out the dollar gains in 2010." ←



Juvenile Diabetes Strikes One Child Every Hour

Help us move research into reality

www.jdrf.org



dedicated to finding a cure

SOUTH SOUND VISION 2029

BY TODD MATTHEWS



RENDERING COURTESY OF GRANT ARCHITECTS-LEMAY MUSEUM.

Which major development projects will shape Tacoma and Pierce County over the next 20 years?

Tacoma earned the nickname “City of Destiny” more than a century ago. But whatever destiny was in store, it has always been intangible. In Tacoma's early history, Northern Pacific Railroad's decision to make the City its western terminus for transcontinental service all but guaranteed it would be the largest city in Washington state. However, changing industries shifted that title to Seattle.

Today, a handful of projects are far enough along in the development pipeline that they could be destiny-changers. What will the South Sound region look like in ten or 20 years? Which current development projects will have the biggest economic impact and change the face of not only Tacoma, but also Pierce County? If I could predict the future, I would be in another line of work. But here are a few of my “best guesses” as to which projects will affect how Tacoma and Pierce County look by 2029.

No other project will have more impact on the South Sound region than the nine-acre, \$100 million LeMay Car Museum in Tacoma's Dome District. You could point to the impact tourism will have on the local economy, as museum officials estimate 500,000 people will visit the museum and pump \$34 million into local coffers. You could also point to the interactive features visitors will enjoy. Slip behind the wheel of a stock car in the museum's Speed Gallery for the virtual experience of racing laps at well over 200 miles per hour. Step into the History and Culture gallery, where a 360-degree theater-in-the-round will project images of speeding cars in motion. There will also be an interactive exhibit where visitors can design their own automobiles. The most visible impact will be the museum's physical presence on Tacoma's skyline. As visitors traveling on

Interstate 5 approach the Tacoma Dome, they won't be able to ignore the main pavilion's glass shell rising from the edge of the lush green expanse of an outdoor show field. It's a stark contrast to the Dome District's gritty and industrial feel today.

“ Even the design plans unveiled earlier this year are dreamy and futuristic ”

Even the design plans unveiled earlier this year are dreamy and futuristic: Inside the museum, flesh-colored wooden beams raised four-stories high curve and stretch like whale ribs across a collection of vintage automobiles; and the grand entry hall includes a floor-to-ceiling glass facade that presents downtown Tacoma's skyline and the Murray Morgan Bridge in a neat, postcard-perfect panorama.

You won't have to wait until 2029 to enjoy the museum. After many years of planning and fund-raising, museum officials announced recently construction would begin this fall on the first phase of the project: A \$58 million, 165,000 square-foot project that will include parking, car collector center, vehicle storage, administration offices, research library and classrooms, banquet facilities, and restoration education center. Later phases will include 90,000 to 250,000 square-feet of multi-level retail that could include cinemas, cafes, restaurants, and shopping; and a 250,000 square-foot main pavilion with six galleries, main lobby, and banquet facilities for up to 800 people.

It is clear this is one project that will drive the City's future.

Hope floats on Dock Street these days as one development company says it is close to purchasing land for -- and breaking

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

ground on -- a Marriott Residence Inn on downtown Tacoma's waterfront. According to a presentation to Tacoma City Councilmembers earlier this year, the three-part, \$40 million project calls for the 96-room Marriott, a 128-room Hilton hotel by 2015, and an office building (also by 2015). When the entire project is completed, it will boast 5,700-square-feet of waterfront retail space.

If the Bellingham-based developer, Hollander Investments, can pull this off despite hurdles it would be a nice jolt to a stretch of downtown that already has the Museum of Glass, a waterfront esplanade and park, and a small core of residents. Throw in tourists, office workers, and retailers, and this stretch of downtown is poised to become one of Tacoma's finest new urban neighborhoods.

Finally, a futuristic look at Tacoma and Pierce County wouldn't be complete without including one major wish-list item that won't be completed by 2029, but is still overdue and needed.

Link light rail service between the airport and Tacoma would send more tourists to Tacoma's museums, restaurants, and other downtown amenities. Last year, voters approved a ballot measure that called for an extension from Sea-Tac Airport to Federal Way, and preliminary review and property acquisition to clear the way for a line from Federal Way to Tacoma. It's a long way off, but it would be nice one day to step off an airplane and onto a speedy light rail train headed south, instead of just north. ←



RENDERING COURTESY OF MURPHY VAREY, PS.

COMMUNITY TEAM FIGHTS CANCER

THREE MEDICAL CARE PROVIDERS, A PHILANTHROPIST, AND ONE COMMON FOE

BY TODD MATTHEWS



THIS FEATURE ARTICLE HAS BEEN PROUDLY SPONSORED BY R4 PRINTING.

The Carol Milgard Breast Center is a huge departure from former mammography services in Tacoma and Pierce County, both in its physical appearance and business partnership.

It is a collaboration of TRA Medical Imaging, MultiCare Health System, Franciscan Health System, and the Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation. The four entities have teamed up with one goal in mind—consolidate state-of-the-art mammography services in order to shorten the time it takes for patients to receive their screenings and diagnoses.

“The idea was that when she enters the center, she's here for screening and routine services, and it's one of any number of appointments during the course of her day,” explains Program Director, Marcy Parsons. “She might be here on her lunch break or on her way to get her kids. We tried to make sure the screening was held in a private, comfortable environment, but also made good use of the patient's time. They're here, they get their exam, and then they are off and on their way.”

ONE DOCTOR'S VISION, A COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT

That goal was not achieved overnight.

The center opened in February, but its genesis dates back to 2005. At the time, TRA radiologist Dr. Khai Train had a vision of putting most of the regional mammography services under one roof. He saw an inconvenience most mammography patients and radiologists knew too well: patients moved from one doctor's office to another for their services (to be sure, not every patient is female; according to the American Cancer Society, approximately 2,000 men were diagnosed with the disease in 2008, and 450 died). There was one location for the mammogram, another location for a follow-up visit, and yet another place for a biopsy. “Dr. Tran really thought we could do better by consolidating services into one center,” explains Milgard Breast Center Executive Director Alexis Wilson, a nurse with more than 25 years of experience in the healthcare industry, and a breast cancer survivor. “He went to the two



hospitals and said, 'Why don't we bring everything into one center, realize economies of scale, and realize higher services we could provide?'" He also went to the Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation. Milgard's wife, Carol, was a Tacoma philanthropist and 30-year breast cancer survivor. Gary passed in July 2005; Carol passed in May 2007. Considering Carol's experience with breast cancer, and the Milgard Family Foundation's history of community service, assisting in the creation of the center made sense.

“ It was an opportunity to pool our resources, provide breast health services, and fight breast cancer. ”

In the end, MultiCare and Franciscan committed \$6 million each, and the Milgard Family Foundation pledged a total of \$5 million, \$1 million per year for the first five years. The two hospitals and TRA provided state-of-the-art equipment. Today, MultiCare and Franciscan own the center, and TRA provides staff and business management. According to Marketing Coordinator, Tawnya Lichtenwalter, 150 to 200 patients visit the center each weekday.

Why did two competing hospital heavyweights, Franciscan and MultiCare, agree to enter this business venture? “There really has been a spirit of collaboration between these two entities, which have historically competed in Pierce County,” says Wilson. Although mammography screenings are not huge revenue producers for hospitals, there was initially some concern over who would receive referrals for surgery or biopsy. But they were quickly dismissed. “I think it really speaks to the leadership on the part of both hospital systems that this was in

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

the best interest of the community. That is what has guided this project.” MultiCare spokesperson Todd Kelley agrees.

“It was a way for us to work together for a common cause,” he says. “It was an opportunity to pool our resources, provide breast health services, and fight breast cancer.”

A FULL-SERVICE CENTER

Mammography screenings are still offered in Gig Harbor (MultiCare Gig Harbor Medical Park and St. Anthony Hospital) and Lakewood (TRA Medical Imaging), but the Carol Milgard Breast Center has become the hub in Tacoma and Pierce County. Patients who visit the Gig Harbor and Lakewood locations and require further care are referred to the Center, where eight radiologists provide a wide range of services. The first and second floors are where services such as digital

mammography, stereotactic breast biopsy, breast ultrasound, ultrasound-guided breast biopsy, breast MRI, and bone density tests occur. The third floor is home to a community education room that Lichtenwalter envisions will be opened up to doctors region-wide who wish to hold breast disease conferences and seminars. The Center is less than six months old, but there are already plans to grow its mission.

“We want to offer breast imaging services to anyone in the Pierce County area regardless of their ability to pay,” says Wilson. “We don't want any woman not to receive services because she is afraid she can't pay.” To that end, the Center recently created the Carol Milgard Breast Health Society. Today, Wilson and staff are actively raising money and offering founding memberships in order to get the program off the ground. “We look forward to the Carol Milgard Breast Health Society becoming a large philanthropic entity within the breast center.” ←

YMCA BUILDS STRONG BODIES

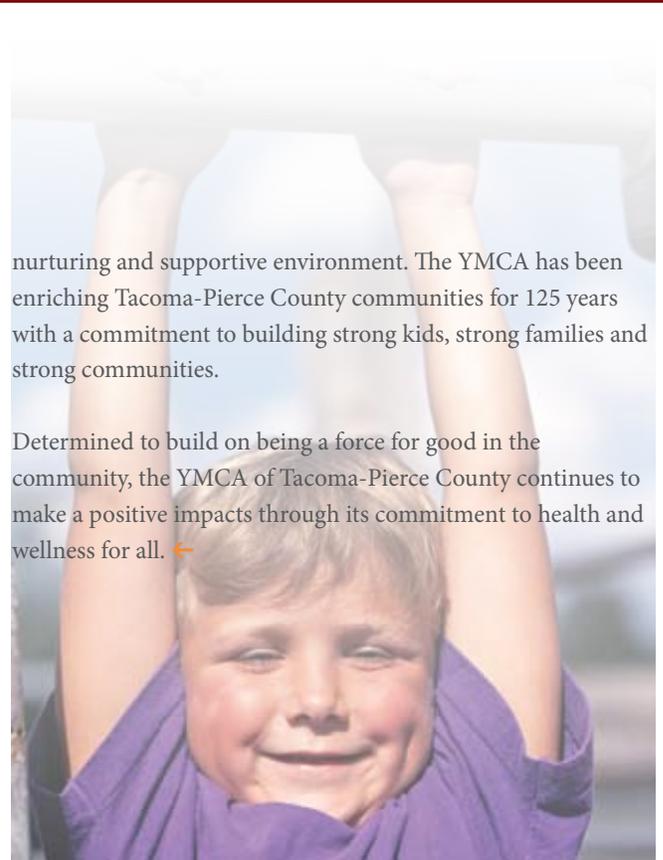
By Jenna Tharp
YMCA of Tacoma-Pierce County

Pierce County's health needs are significant and with more than 100 community organizations relationships such as MultiCare Health System and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, the YMCA continually works toward creating a healthier community.

The YMCA of Tacoma-Pierce County empowers kids and families to make wise and healthy choices through its fitness classes, outdoor retreats, Family Fun Nights and more, and provides kids and families with worry free, fun activities in a

nurturing and supportive environment. The YMCA has been enriching Tacoma-Pierce County communities for 125 years with a commitment to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

Determined to build on being a force for good in the community, the YMCA of Tacoma-Pierce County continues to make a positive impacts through its commitment to health and wellness for all. ←



RE-RIGHTING THE WASL: PART ONE

By Todd Matthews

It is safe to say no other issue in the state's educational system has been more divisive than the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Last year's Schools Superintendent race was decided over it.



“It's the idea that we would have some measure of standards.”

Then-incumbent Terry Bergeson supported the WASL; challenger Randy Dorn opposed it. Dorn won the election. In a press conference earlier this year, Dorn spoke in a passionate tone about how the WASL would be revamped.

“I had a campaign promise that I will replace the WASL and make it a better tool so that teachers, parents, and students can improve their student learning,” said Dorn. “Some people say that I may be moving too quickly. To be honest with you, we should have moved four or five years ago to what we are moving to today.”

That doesn't mean the WASL has been scrapped.

“The assessment itself can't change too much,” notes Washington Education Association (WEA) Director of Communications David Phelps. “It's been approved by the U.S. Dept. of Education for No Child Left Behind purposes. Dramatically changing the way students are assessed would require Washington to go through a new Federal improvement process. It would take a great deal of time, money, and personnel to go through this process again. OSPI [the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction] does not want to do that.”

Instead, Dorn is changing the WASL to the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) in grades three through eight, and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) at the high school level. Both will assess student's reading and writing skills (math and science will be revamped at a later date). High school students will be required to pass the HSPE in order to graduate. Further, Dorn will shorten the tests, shorten the written responses, return scores more quickly (two weeks or less), utilize computer testing and scoring, provide more diagnostic information showing strengths and weaknesses,

and minimize costs. According to the OSPI, MSP and HSPE will be introduced in spring 2010.

Will these new tests satisfy people who either supported or opposed the WASL?

“It's not the WASL we're wedded to,” explains Gary Kipp, who spent 20 years as a high school principal and is now Executive Director of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP). “It's the idea that we would have some measure of standards.” Kipp says as long as revisions to the WASL still measure basic education standards established 15 years ago by the Legislature, he supports the plan.

Stephen F. Mullin, President of the Washington Roundtable, a non-profit, public policy organization representing Washington State's major employers, says, “We need to be assured that the changes proposed in no way reduce the rigor required. Whether it's called the WASL or an end of course assessment, I don't think we're hung up on the name so much as the purpose. I think we're talking about nuanced changes.”

But Juanita Doyon of Mothers Against WASL worries renaming the WASL doesn't address what she sees as a larger issue: exit exams don't work. “The business community wants the test,” she says. “As long as Randy Dorn supports the test as a graduation requirement, the business community will be happy.”

“Our hope right now is that the alternatives to the WASL or the exit exam would be improved and there would be local control,” she adds. “If a student has everything else in place, the local school district should be able to grant a waiver of the exit exam and award the diploma.”

Continued on page 28

Continued from page 10

Before the tests are introduced next spring, Doyon and her group will be working hard on the issue; at press time, they were expected to meet with Dorn to voice their concern over the exit exam requirement. "We will be working to ensure that whatever test comes about, the parents will have the right to opt students out of it if they find it appropriate."

As to one argument that it's unfair for students not to graduate even though they complete all their coursework but fail the exit exam, Kipp sees it differently.

"I've talked to principals whose kids are doing fine on the WASL, but they are not graduating because they failed a class," explains Kipp. "You could say, 'Well, it's just that one class.' You could twist that argument around. It's like taking a play out of a baseball game and saying that play is the deal-breaker and forgetting all about the rest of the plays that went into the game. To isolate the WASL as something different than all the rest of the requirements is a poor argument."

For a closer look at the WASL's impact on students and the controversy surrounding it, please watch for Part II of "Re-Writing the WASL" in our September 09 issue of the Chamber E-Newsletter. ←



RAINIER DENTAL



Dale L. VanDerschelden, D.D.S. & Associates

Tacoma
5003 Tacoma Mall Blvd., Suite 103 (Next to Chuck E Cheese)
Office Hours Mon-Tues 9-6 • Wed-Thurs 9-8 • Fri 9-4 • Sat 9-3
253-759-3366

Also in Sumner: **253-891-9100** and Bonney Lake **253-826-8800**

Mention this ad and receive \$100 off any dental treatment!

PIERCE COLLEGE 
possibilities. realized.



- Associate/Transfer degrees
- Professional/Technical degrees
- Continuing Education

www.pierce.ctc.edu



Pierce College Fort Steilacoom
9401 Farwest Drive S.W.
Lakewood, WA 98498
(253) 964-6500

Pierce College Puyallup
1601 39th Avenue E.
Puyallup, WA 98374
(253) 864-8400