

# CHAMBER CHAT

SEPTEMBER 2020

## Introducing the Business Sustainer Program

By Silvia Reed

Beyond doubt, this year has been challenging for our economy.

The rules of the game have changed and our businesses have been re-invented. Whether you are a large corporation, nonprofit or a small family business, we know you have switched gears. Whether you are employing hundreds of people (our neighbors) or running your business from your kitchen table, we are proud of you and thank you for allowing your Chamber in and sharing your challenges with us.

In the midst of this pandemic, we have learned that it is vital to work together, contribute and help those who are struggling.

Small businesses are the heart of our community; however, they are struggling to remain active in our local economy. In the past few weeks, we have met with those members who also believe in the power of community. Thanks to their generosity and support of our mission, the Mount Vernon Chamber is launching the “Business Sustainer Program,” a pay-it-forward campaign that allows Chamber members to help fellow members by paying for their one-year membership. **Marla & Company, Walmart,**

*...continued on page 2*



### LEGACY MEMBERS

#### GOLD



#### SILVER



Puget Sound Refinery



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Motivation & Marketing Masterminds:

### Menimeter

Thursday, Sept. 3

10 a.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Menimeter: Create more interactive virtual presentations and meetings with live polls, quizzes, word clouds and Q&As.

## Knowledge NOW

### “Old, NOW & New Normal”

### Strategies for dealing with the COVID experience for world-class athletes and you

Wednesday, Sept. 9

Noon

Presented by: Jim Bauman, PhD – Sport & Human Performance Psychologist

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

## Latino Business Leaders:

### Social Media Marketing Part 2

Tuesday, Sept. 15

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Presented in Spanish by Dr. Ed Jaramillo

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Sponsored by:



## Chamber Virtual Luncheon:

### Candidate Forum

Featuring Skagit County PUD Commissioner

Dist. 1, and County Commissioner Dist. 1 & 2

Wednesday, Sept. 23

11:30 a.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Sponsored by:



## Business Sustainer Program ... cont'd from page 1

and **Draper Valley Farms** were the first ones to say “Yes, we want to help a small business.” Each of these companies are paying it forward and encouraging others to do the same.

If your business is able to help other small businesses, please contact me for more details.

For those who would like to help out, but maybe are not able to pay a full supporting membership for a fellow Chamber member, we are opening other options that will be affordable to all businesses.

If you are a small business who needs the support of this program, please reach out. With the help of our Chamber members, we can help you!

Since we love to highlight the good work that our members are doing, I'd like to end with a quote that I read a few weeks ago at the NextHome Preview Properties – Umpqua Bank sign on College Way, “We are Skagit Valley strong and we will get thru this together.”

To contribute to the Business Sustainer Program or to receive assistance with your company's dues, contact, Business Development and Foundation Director Silvia Reed.

[Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com](mailto:Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com)

Direct: (360) 395-2944

# Mount Vernon Wins the Battle of the Bridge

After last year's inaugural tournament ended in a tie, the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce came out on top in the second annual match up against the Burlington Chamber of Commerce in the "Battle of the Bridge" golf tournament.

Farmstrong Brewing Co. posted this year's winning team of Todd Owsley, Justin Walker, Mike Simson and Wayne McKenney. The Mount Vernon Chamber team and the Skagit Farmers Supply team tied for second. The Mount Vernon team was comprised of Dave Ryberg, Dan Berard, Roger Rogusa and Nate Loving. The Skagit Farmers Supply team included Ryan Nootenboom, Greg Fisher, Matt Dynes and John Piazza.

Mount Vernon won the tournament by 30 strokes.



**Thank you to all our  
Battle of the Bridge  
sponsors. We couldn't do  
it without your support!**

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*Hole-in-One sponsor:*  
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*Closest to the Pin:*  
HomePlace at Burlington  
Memory Care

*Beverage Cart sponsor:*  
Silverado Bellingham  
Memory Care Community

*Hole sponsors:* Aflac,  
Applebee's Grill + Bar,  
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Skagit County, Chandlers  
Group, CPI Plumbing &  
Heating, Dwayne Lane's,  
Farmstrong Brewing Co.,  
Fortiphi, The Garland  
Company, Inc., Harris  
Company, HomePlace,  
SERVPRO of Skagit County,  
Skagit Publishing, Skagit  
Social, Where The Heart Is  
Assisted Living and  
Memory Care

*Tee sponsors:* Banner  
Power Solutions and  
PeaceHealth United  
General Medical Center

*Host:* Avalon Golf Links

# Get to Know Semanko Realty Group

In 2003, Joel and Andrea Semanko and their two sons moved to the Skagit Valley. “It was the best move we could have made,” Andrea said.

Having fallen in love with the Skagit Valley, Andrea was attracted to the idea of helping others to make the same move, forming Semanko Realty Group in 2007 with the mission to become the one of the best resources for real estate in the area.

As designated broker, Andrea has grown the brokerage to have an outstanding reputation of professional excellence, serving both north and south Puget Sound, with more than a dozen real estate brokers.

Andrea says they have “an enviable reputation of professional excellence,” in both Skagit County and the greater Seattle area.

With more than \$60 million in volume and rising, they are a company that is a vital and valued part of the communities they serve. But these numbers in no way tell the whole story.

“When we are selling real estate, we’re selling our heart,” Andrea said. “The Skagit Valley is just an incredible place to live.”

Having a true affinity for Skagit County is one of the reasons Semanko Realty Group decided to join the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce last year.

“We were interested in becoming really vital in Skagit County and creating connections with like-minded businesses,” Andrea said.

While many real estate companies focused on building their brand with “brick and mortar” offices, Semanko Realty Group focused on becoming an early adopter in web technology and virtual service. Understanding how to connect with buyers and sellers on the web has been an integral component of Semanko Realty Group’s success as a company. It is the main reason the brokerage was able to weather the housing crisis of the 2008 and continues to thrive in today’s new COVID-19 landscape.



**Joel and Andrea Semanko**

In 2011, Joel joined the company as a broker and co-owner, adding his energy and considerable abilities to the mix.

“We’ve added some important services to Semanko Realty Group. In the last few years, we secured the contract as a local listing broker for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and have developed a history of success in marketing bank-owned and government-owned properties.” Andrea said.

Most recently, Joel has earned certification as a Certified Divorce Real Estate Expert (CDRE). He is one of only three in Washington state with this credential.

This service allows Joel to work with both family law attorneys and divorcing couples on the sale of what is often the largest asset in the marriage, the house. As a CDRE, he can be called upon by the family courts as a neutral professional real estate broker to help all parties through an often complicated and contentious process of selling their home.

Find Semanko Realty Group online at [www.washingtonqualityhomes.com](http://www.washingtonqualityhomes.com).

# Foundation continues to strengthen Career Connect partnerships

In an ongoing effort to create robust learning opportunities to help prepare youth and adult students for future employment, the Mount Vernon Chamber Foundation is proud to announce its partnership with Cascades Job Corps College & Career Academy.

Earlier this year, our foundation hosted a tour and career panel at PeaceHealth United General Medical Center in Sedro-Woolley. The goal of the tour was to introduce Cascades Job Corps College & Career Academy and Skagit Valley College students to the various career opportunities in the healthcare field.

Although worksite tours are currently suspended due to COVID-19, we continue to deliver learning opportunities, including virtual panels, presentations by industry leaders and virtual tours.

Our new partnership with Cascades Job Corps College & Career Academy will allow Cascades students to participate in these learning opportunities. The trades to be served include Computer Network Technician (Network+), Computer Technician (A+), Security and Protective Services, Certified Medical Assistant, Culinary Arts and Office Administration.



**CASCADES JOB CORPS**  
COLLEGE & CAREER ACADEMY  
— CAREERS BEGIN HERE —



**Puget Sound Refinery**

In June 2020, the Mount Vernon Chamber Foundation became the recipient of the Shell Puget Sound Refinery grant that supports this and other Career Connect Washington learning opportunities, where participants further develop academic, technical, trade and entrepreneurial skills by making them aware of career opportunities in which they are able to earn a good living wage and prepare for our community workforce needs.

If you would like to learn more about our Career Connect and workforce development programs, or to partner with the Mount Vernon Chamber Foundation, please contact Silvia Reed, business development and foundation director, for more information: [Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com](mailto:Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com), Direct: (360) 395-2944



**In February, prior to the mask order, the Chamber Foundation hosted Career Connect students for a tour and career panel at PeaceHealth United General Medical Center in Sedro-Woolley.**

## Ambassadors

**Chair - Marla Chapa**

Skagit Social

**Taylor Bannister**

Lincoln Theatre

**Susan Cooper**

NextHome Preview Properties

**Monica Craig**

CPI Plumbing & Heating

**Ector DeLeon**

Tulip Valley Winery

**Beth Dewey**

Joyous Style

**Leslie Exner**

hibu

**Carol Harris**

PrimeLending

**Katelyn Huffman**

Express Employment

Professionals

**Shelby Janklow**

Fortiphi LLC

**Crystal King**

NW Technology

**Morgan McCauley**

The Bridge at Mount Vernon

**Anya Paxson**

Aflac

**Tammy Reim-Ledbetter**

Alaska USA

**Sherry Ruderman**

Skagit Tradition Realty

**Jerry Shackette**

Friendship House of Skagit Valley

**Lexx Stenson**

Chinn GYN, LLC

**Liz Theaker**

Camp Korey

**Lee Thomas-Palmer**

Logan Creek Retirement

Community

**Katey Von Hagel**

Land Title & Escrow Company

**Clarissa Wong**

Umpqua Bank

## New Silver Legacy member: Weichert Realtors Edge Home Sales



Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce CEO Andy Mayer presents Stacey Salyer of Weichert Realtors Edge Home Sales with a plaque recognizing its Silver Legacy membership. Thank you, Weichert!

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# Member Reveals Positive Return on Investment

Skagit County Servpro is grateful to be part of the Mount Vernon Chamber in 2020. A year ago, the long-time owner sold to our new owner, Paul, who owns additional franchises just south of Skagit County. Now, this small business has more reach and strength to respond to emergencies that might occur in our county. As we built our five-year strategic plan, we made being part of the Chamber a key to achieving our vision.

I personally had seen the green vans but had no idea what services Servpro provided until 18 months ago. I have found this a common theme as we meet people, and so education is key for our marketing team. The Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is one very good way to ensure people know who Servpro is and the breadth of services we provide.

We are members of a number of chambers and associations across two counties. Mount Vernon has been one of the quickest to alter formats when the pandemic hit, providing meaningful information via weekly newsletters regarding state/county happenings, and continuing to promote businesses within our area. It is also very apparent that the guiding board truly feels a sense of “serving” its members – not with words but with true action. The small business benefits and access to discounts on 401Ks, education on using LinkedIn, and the new methods of marketing necessary to navigate our current business world all

meet the specific needs of those they serve. We at Servpro Skagit appreciate the hard work this chamber does to make their support available.

**Joel Pasek**  
**Skagit County**  
**SERVPRO**



## Board of Directors

**Chair - Carol Harris**

PrimeLending

**Vice Chair - David Lukov**

Kern Funeral Home

**Past Chair - Brian Poppe**

HPK Architects

**Treasurer - Rhonda Tingley**

SaviBank

**Member at Large - Bekki Cox**

BC Accounting

**Arden Ainley**

Skagit Valley College

**Viry Delgado**

COA Mexican Eatery

**Peter Donovan**

City of Mount Vernon

**Diane Fox**

All About Hearing

**Bill Henkel**

Community Action of Skagit County

**Brian Ivie**

Skagit Regional Health

**Ben Lazowski**

Valley Shine Distillery

**Jeff McInnis**

U.S. Bank

**Todd Owsley**

Farmstrong Brewing Company

**Duby Petit**

Skagit Publishing

**Celina Rodriguez**

Mount Vernon School District

### STAFF

President/CEO **Andy Mayer**

Business Development and

Foundation Director **Silvia Reed**

Operations Director **Jeremy Kindlund**

Marketing Specialist **Hilary Parker**

Visitor Information Services

**Marinus Rouw**

**Stephanie Fernandez**

# Member Announcements

## Mayor Boudreau Elected to AWC Board of Directors

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) announced that Mount Vernon Mayor Jill Boudreau was recently elected to its Board of Directors.

“Those of us who serve know the power of local government to make people’s lives better,” said Boudreau. “AWC is a respected voice in Olympia and Washington, D.C., and I look forward to serving as a member of the Board.”

Boudreau was elected to the AWC Board during the association’s business meeting on June 25. She serves District 14, which includes 19 cities and towns in Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom counties.

The AWC Board of Directors is the association’s governing body.

## Schols starts podcast to share hope and inspiration

Intrigued by stories of how people overcome life's hurdles, author Kelly Schols, interviews a diverse guest list on his new podcast, Never by the Book. "I've always been curious about why some people overcome hardship while others stay stuck," said Schols. "There are many factors at play, but I believe there is something to learn from everyone's story."

The podcast has a line up of insightful programs including September's episode Escape to Freedom: Courage or Insanity? which will feature Andrew Popa's gripping account of fleeing Communist Romania in the dead of night when he was 19 years old.

Never By The Book Podcast can be found on Spotify, TuneIn, Apple, or Google Podcasts.

## Community Action Helps People Keep Their Homes

Community Action of Skagit County has several emergency funding sources to help people who are at risk of eviction. The Eviction Prevention Program will be active Sept. 2 and will run as long as funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The intention of this emergency funding is to prevent eviction for households who have been financially impacted by the COVID pandemic.

The direct message line for Eviction Prevention Assistance at Community Action is (360) 399-3006. Leave a voicemail with: Head of Household Name, Contact #, Household size, Household income, # of months past due and if they reside in the Mount Vernon City limits. English and Spanish can be accommodated. Basic eligibility requirements are that a renter household is lower income and behind on or unable to pay current rent. There are specific funds earmarked for Mount Vernon residents, and other funds are available for other Skagit residents.

For those who are struggling but not behind in rent, and for those who are unable to access the eviction prevention funding, Community Action has many other resources including help paying energy bills, nutrition and diapers through WIC, legal assistance, help for seniors and disabled adults, Skagit Vets Connect, and information and referral to many other local agencies and sources of help. For more information, go to [www.CommunityActionSkagit.org](http://www.CommunityActionSkagit.org), or call 360 416-7585.





# Welcome New Members

## The Garland Company

Marty McGarrigle  
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Seattle

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## Leading Edge Property Management

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Mount Vernon

[www.edgehomerentals.com](http://www.edgehomerentals.com)

We provide the best and most innovative service to owners and tenants in the Pacific Northwest. The Leading Edge team is aligned with the same positive vision for excellence and support.

## A Little Bit of Home

Anita Seaman  
(360) 420-0259  
601 N 18th Place

Mount Vernon

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## Storied Creative Services

Hilary Parker  
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Bellingham

[storiedcreativeservices.com](http://storiedcreativeservices.com)

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## Weichert Realtors Edge

### Home Sales

Stacey Salyer  
(360) 424-7166  
823 N. 4th St.

Mount Vernon

[www.wredgehomesales.com](http://www.wredgehomesales.com)

Weichert Realtors Edge Home Sales is part of Weichert Real Estate Affiliates. We are locally owned, but as a Weichert affiliate, we are part of one of the leading providers of home ownership services in America and have access to their exclusive tools and systems so we can take great care of our clients.

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REALTORS  
Edge Home Sales

## Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Partner Members

Barron Smith Daugert, PLLC, BEST WESTERN PLUS Skagit Valley Inn & Convention Center, Birch Equipment Rental & Sales, Brigadoon Service Dogs, Budget Towing & Repair, Cascade Job Corps Center, CBMM LLC, Coastal Farm and Ranch, Costco Wholesale, Crawford Garage Doors, D&P Electronic Home Monitoring, Foothills Toyota, Fortiphi LLC, Frontier Communications, Haggen Food & Pharmacy, Hampton Inn & Suites, Herbal Legends Cannabis, Infinity Painting & Home Care LLC, Kern Funeral Home, Landed Gentry Homes & Communities, Life Care Center of Mount Vernon, Loving Farms, Max Dale's Steak & Chop House, Mount Vernon School District, North Coast Credit Union, Northwest Escrow, LLC, PogoZone, Port of Skagit, Public Utilities District 1 Skagit County, Puget Sound Energy, SERVPRO, Skagit Valley Casino Resort, Skagit Valley College, Skagit Valley Hospital and Skagit Regional Clinics, Testing and Commissioning Services, LLC, The UPS Store #5499, The Woods Coffee, Tucker Realty LLC, Walmart, and Williams & Nulle, PLLC CPAs

# Thank You Renewing Members

## 25+ Years

Handy's Heating  
Mount Vernon Carpet One  
Floor & Home

## 20+ Years

Haggen Food & Pharmacy  
La Conner Country Inn  
Tulip Inn

## 15+ Years

Vintage at Mount Vernon  
Williams & Nulle, PLLC, CPAs

## 10+ Years

A-1 Mobile Lock & Key  
PeaceHealth United General  
Medical Center  
Salem Village  
Sierra Pacific Industries

## 5+ Years

Ackermann Electric Co.  
Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton  
Humane Society of Skagit Valley  
JP Automotive  
Legg & Watne, CPAs  
Northwest Propane, LLC  
Umpqua Bank

## Less than 5 Years

192 Brewing Company  
Bella Luce Skin Care  
Blue Lake Property Management  
Pacionis Pizzeria and Lounge  
Right Way Plumbing, Heating,  
A/C Inc.  
Skagit Social  
Sound to Summit Physical  
Therapy  
Stress Free Tax Season, LLC

## Welcome new Chamber member Great Floors



Together with our Chamber Ambassador Lee Thomas-Palmer (left), we visited our new Chamber member Jeff Bell at Great Floors and delivered some presents from our membership.

## Chamber/Visitors Center

### Office Hours

**10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday**

The Visitors Information Center is currently closed on weekends.



**Tune In**  
Chamber Chat  
Wednesday Mornings



8:05 a.m.



8:20 a.m.

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# Upbeat Award: Katelyn Huffman

This month's Upbeat Award Winner is the epitome of joy, the unstoppable force known as Katelyn Huffman. Those who know Katelyn both personally and professionally are hard-pressed to find a time when she wasn't the one cheering others on. Katelyn has been a Chamber member for quite a few years now, and her presence is felt by way of a

warm welcome at luncheons, as well as mentoring new members.

I knew Katelyn prior to joining the Mount Vernon Chamber, and she has reinforced for me why this chamber is like no other. It's an amazing feeling to see someone excited to support her fellow businesses and community members.

– Mandi Rothman,  
Northwest Youth Services



(L-R) Silvia Reed, Katelyn Huffman, Mandi Rothman and Mark Hagen

## BRONZE LEGACY



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Ameriprise Private Wealth Advisory Practice



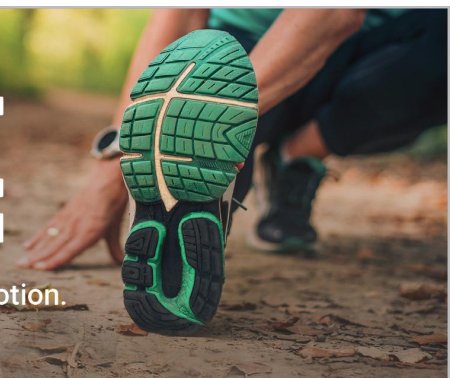
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May 24th, 2020

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