

CHAMBER CHAT

JANUARY 2021

Happy New Year!

I am excited that we are in the new year, even if it will be a lot like the old one for a while. And I'm very happy that 2020 is finished. It will go down as one of the worst ever. However, for all of us, personally and for the Chamber, there were a few things we learned in 2020 that will help us as we move forward.

First of all, we have learned that there is nothing like being together – in person. Hanging out with a friend or attending an event with a lot of people are important ways we connect. We took them both for granted. It is good that we've had Zoom to continue Chamber programs, but it definitely isn't the same. On the flip side, we all reached out to family and old friends to check on them – we realized what is important to us. We also learned that we could do much more by working together. That was demonstrated over and over in the way the Skagit County chambers, EDASC and others shared information and programs, while supporting each other during this past year. Finally, we realized the importance of local. We learned how interconnected we are. The restaurant or shop owner who is struggling is our neighbor and friend, as are the people who are not working, or are struggling just to get by. We all depend on each other.

I do wish you a Happy New Year, with the strongest of desires that in 2021 we start to return to life more as we knew it. But let's not forget the lessons we have learned and use them to foster an awakening for the benefit of our entire community. I appreciate your support and commitment, and look forward to working (and being!) with you in 2021.

– **Andy Mayer, President/CEO**



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Whole-Self Health Fitness Classes

Starting Tuesday, Jan. 5, the Chamber, along with Urban Fitness, Riverside Health Club and the Skagit Valley YMCA will be offering three weekly fitness sessions to help you move your body and clear your mind. The workouts are tailored to the office, so no need to change into workout gear to take part.

Tuesdays, starting Jan. 5: [Register here](#)

Thursdays, starting Jan. 7: [Register here](#)

Mondays, starting Jan. 11: [Register here](#)

Marketing Mastermind: Listening to Your Customers with Surveys & Focus Groups

Thursday, Jan. 7

10-11 a.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

You aren't a mind reader, so how do you know what your customers, clients or stakeholders want and need? At January's Marketing Mastermind we will discuss using surveys and focus groups as a way to ask the kind of questions that give you actionable information.

Legislative Send-Off

Friday, Jan. 8

9-10 a.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Hear from your elected officials from the 10th, 39th and 40th districts before they head (virtually) to Olympia for the legislative session.

Knowledge NOW: How to Audit & Create an Effective Website Game Plan

Wednesday, Jan. 13

12-1 p.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Presented by Mitch Britt, Bold Eye Media

Learn how to grade your small business website and create a game plan to optimize it.

Member Orientation

Tuesday, Jan. 19

1 p.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Come learn about how your Chamber membership benefits your business. Our membership orientations are not limited to new members; any active member can attend as well as those businesses who may want to know more about the Mount Vernon Chamber and how we can support their businesses.

Advanced Business Communications Series How to Sell Using NLP

Session 4: Thursday, Jan. 21

1-2:30 p.m.

Presented by Master NLP Trainer Paul Webb

via Zoom

\$50 per session

[Register here](#)

NLP – The Sales Masters Course Continued – How To Ask For The Sale ... Handle “I Want To Think About It” with the Ease of a Professional Salesperson. As you practice these techniques over these six 2020-21 workshops, you'll start to notice how comfortable and easy the techniques become – again ... NLP at its Best!

Chamber Virtual Luncheon: 2020 Awards Celebration

Wednesday, Jan. 27

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

We'll be celebrating the people who have made a difference in the Chamber and our community in 2020. Don't miss this special event.

Sponsored by:



Member reveals positive return on investment



“As a member of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, I believe that our business has grown quite a bit thanks to the Latino Business Leaders classes as well as the networking opportunities that the Chamber offers. This has helped us connect and learn from each other. What I like best is that the Mount Vernon Chamber helps both small and large businesses.”

Angelica Guerrero, Fiesta Party Rentals



Shop Local & Win!

Congratulations to Debbie, one of our weekly Shop Local winners! She won a gift from WildFibers. There's still time to get on our growing list of winners: The Shop Local program runs through Jan. 31. Spend \$5 and you'll get a "punch" on the Shop Local & Win punch card. When you've reached 10 punches, a total of \$50, return the card to Tri-Dee Arts or Skagit Running Company to be entered into a weekly prize drawing as well as the grand prize drawing on Feb. 1, 2021. All the fabulous prizes are provided by the Shop Local participating businesses. For a complete list of participating businesses, visit:

www.mountvernonchamber.com/2020-shop-local-promotion/

Tune In
Chamber Chat
Wednesday Mornings

102.1 KAPS Country
8:05 a.m.

KBRC
Classic Hits 1430 AM
8:20 a.m.

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Get to Know Bayside Specialties

Bayside Specialties has been doing business as a promotional products retailer for nearly 40 years – that’s a lot of promotional pens! But it’s also a lot of experience and expertise in procuring the best quality promotional products at the fairest prices.

Darrell Hooper started Bayside Specialties in 1983 and his wife Stephanie joined the business full-time in 2004. Their focus is helping their customers filter through all the noise in promotional products and business gifts to find the right product.

“We want them to be proud of what they’re handing out,” Darrell says.

Have a specific mug you’re looking for? Call Bayside, give Darrell the specifics and he’ll do the research to find the style, color and price point that you’re looking for. This saves time and money for the businesses that work with Bayside, Stephanie points out, because they aren’t paying an employee to spend hours searching online.

The Hoopers guarantee the products they sell. They have long-term relationships with their suppliers, who deliver high-quality products with timely turnaround.

Pens and t-shirts are the most popular products, and mugs, tote bags and office supplies are all popular. The Hoopers point out that promotional products have a lot of staying power for a low cost per impression.

“There’s a lot of value in printed products,” Stephanie said. “Businesses can be in hundreds of places at once.”

The Hoopers say they know there are a lot of online options for promotional products and many may seem less expensive than what



Bayside Specialties' Darrell and Stephanie Hooper.

Bayside offers, but Darrell cautions people look out for hidden costs – often wrapped into the freight charge for shipping the products.

“We’re not serving our clients well if we don’t share that information with them,” Darrell says.

The Hoopers say during this time of social distancing they miss the friends they’ve made at the Chamber over the years. The couple is active in other chambers and nonprofits in the Valley and love to see the smiles of the people they know.

“We’ve never thought of chamber meetings as networking,” Stephanie says. “We think of it as a chance to see our friends that we’ve made through the Chamber.”

Check out everything Bayside Specialties has to offer at baysidespecialties.com

Member Announcements

Chinook Enterprises welcomes Nicolette Wegner as its new Chief Executive Officer

Chinook Enterprises is pleased to announce that Nicolette Wegner is the new Chief Executive Officer for Chinook Enterprises. Wegner brings a wealth of experience to the position, having served most recently as associate director at Trillium Employment Services based in Tacoma and board chair of Community Employment Alliance (CEA), a statewide consortium that advocates for employment opportunities on behalf of people with disabilities.

"Nikki's leadership could not have been more perfectly timed," said Board Chair Barbara Leander. "We have full confidence that Nikki is the right person to lead Chinook through 2021 and beyond."

Servpro to offer free CE course for insurance agents

Servpro's Everett location will be hosting a free continuing education course for insurance professionals. The class will be held online Jan. 27, 2021, starting at 9 a.m. sharp, and is worth 3 credit hours. Class size is limited to 35. For reservations contact Tessa Long at tlong@servproeverettwa.com or call 360.243.8313.

SVC participates in Running Start Scholarship Pilot Project

Skagit Valley College (SVC) is pleased to announce that the College has been awarded \$32,270 for a one-year pilot program designed to assist SVC's Running Start students by the Washington Student Achievement Council.

The SVC Running Start Pilot Scholarship will support student success by covering the cost of books, course materials, and/or student fees for eligible students during the 2020-21 academic year. If a student is enrolled in a workforce program, the scholarship can also cover the cost of tools, lab and course fees, and work clothes. The program is designed to help low-income families and improve access to Running Start. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, and who have a GPA of 2.0 or higher, are eligible for the scholarship.

For more information about Running Start, visit www.skagit.edu/runningstart or email outreach@skagit.edu. To apply for the scholarship or to learn more about eligibility, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y6qvmpy9>.

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Senior Care focus of latest EWP industry panel

In December, professionals from the senior care industry served as panelists for the Experience Work Project's (EWP) most recent Industry Focus session. The panel was part of an ongoing series in the Chamber Foundation's workforce development and Career Connect efforts.

Autumn Wade from HomePlace Memory Care in Burlington and Morgan Macauley from The Bridge at Mount Vernon, both Chamber members, presented to Skagit Valley College and Cascade Job Corps Center nursing, RN and CNA students about the state of the industry, how COVID-19 has changed operations and a long-range forecast for the industry.

Wade and Macauley discussed resources for students considering working in senior care as well as the kinds of hard and soft skills employers in the industry are looking for. They also shared their advice for creating a career path in the industry.

The next industry focus panel will take place in February when Pioneer Human Services presents to human services and substance abuse use disorder counseling students.

The Chamber Foundation's workforce development and Career Connect programs are funded by the Opportunity Grant Program/Northwest Workforce Council, Skagit Valley College and Shell Puget Sound Refinery. For more information and partnership opportunities, please contact Business Development and Foundation Director Silvia Reed (360) 395-2944 / Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com.

LATINO BUSINESS LEADERS

NEW SESSION

STARTS FEBRUARY



WATCH "YOUR CHAMBER THIS WEEK" FOR DETAILS OR
CONTACT SILVIA REED AT (360) 395-2944

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Foundation Director **Silvia Reed**

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Marketing Specialist **Hilary Parker**

Visitor Information Services

Marinus Rouw

Stephanie Fernandez

December Highlights



Caliber Home Loans is presented with the Bronze Legacy Award.



Special delivery to Chamber Ambassadors for their December meeting. L to R: Chamber Operations Director Jeremy Kindlund with Jerry Shackette, Morgan Macauley and Ector DeLeon.

Happy 90th Birthday to Susan Cooper!

The Chamber wants to wish a very happy birthday to Susan Cooper who celebrated her 90th birthday in December. Susan is a Chamber member, Chamber Ambassador and a Visitors Information Center volunteer. Thanks for all you do for the Chamber, Susan!



Thank You Renewing Members

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Upbeat Award: SICBA's Shannon Henderson

Shannon Henderson from the Skagit Island County Builders Association (SICBA) is the latest recipient of Upbeat Award, and, as her friend and nominator Katelynn Huffman puts it, is someone who is just that – always upbeat!

Here's what Katelynn had to say about Shannon: "When I first started attending Chamber luncheons, she was someone who would always welcome me to her table and introduce me to others. Her energy and enthusiasm always stood out and made her my go-to friend at any event. She has attended Express events, volunteered at multiple chamber events, attending business after hours, ribbon cuttings, supported local businesses, she was a Mount Vernon Chamber Ambassador, Burlington Chamber Volunteer of the Year in 2018, and represents SICBA in the most professional manner."



Shannon Henderson, Jeremy Kindlund and Katelynn Huffman.

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