

# CHAMBER CHAT

OCTOBER 2021

## Stuck in Covid, Again

*By Andy Mayer*

I'm glad that I don't work for the Lodi Chamber of Commerce. They had to overcome the Creedence Clearwater Revival song "Stuck in Lodi Again." It appears that they've done well addressing that challenge, by the way. Our challenge is quite different. Maybe it's easier, although it doesn't feel that way because we are back to being stuck in Covid, again. Some of you who enjoy in-person meetings and events and use them to make connections and to get business are having a tough time. The Chamber can help you meet both of those needs, though only some of it will be in-person for the time being.

Why not join us for our Biz Buzz networking session on Oct. 27? You will meet some people that you don't know, which will immediately expand your pool of potential customers. Are you aware of our **Ambassador Committee**? It is filled with fun and outgoing people who will become a new network for you. Have you been to any of the **Ribbon Cuttings** that we've had recently? It's surprising how many new businesses there have been. Ribbon Cuttings are a nice way to meet some people (in-person) and become acquainted with a new business or one that is changing hands. Are you familiar with our **Referral Groups**? They are essentially leads groups without the rigid structure that some similar programs have. We will start a new group if you're ready. If you're interested in important issues and legislative activity, check out our **Government Affairs Committee**. Here's another possibility, which I know you haven't considered – how about volunteering in our

*continued on page 3...*



**GOLD**



**SILVER**



**Puget Sound Refinery**



Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce  
(360) 428-8547  
[mountvernonchamber.com](http://mountvernonchamber.com)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Marketing Mastermind: Mapping Your Customers' Journey

Thursday, Oct. 7

10 a.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Do you know the steps on your customers' journey from prospect to closed sale? Marketing Specialist Hilary Parker walks the Mastermind through the steps with engaging exercises so you come away with a better understanding of how to market to your customers throughout their journey.

## Knowledge NOW Office 365, Sharing Between Applications

Wednesday, Oct. 13

Noon

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Learn how to share text, data, charts and other objects between Office 365 applications. For example, have you ever wondered "How do I embed a chart from Excel into a Word document?" Brian Williams of Let Us Show You Learning has the answer for you!

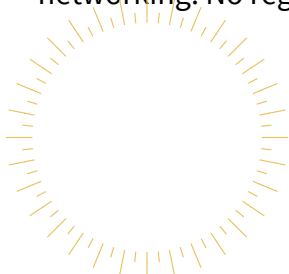
## Multi-Chamber After Hours

Thursday, Oct. 14

4:30-6 p.m.

COPIA on the Boulevard  
1174 S. Burlington Blvd.

Join us as we gather with the other Skagit County chambers for an afternoon of networking. No registration required.



## Latino Business Leaders

Tuesday, Oct. 19

6-7:30 p.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Businesses don't plan to fail; they fail to plan! Explore the initial planning phases of a business before spending any money on start up by first determining if the business idea has a good chance of success and if it will meet your personal and professional needs and goals. Presented by Kathy Bastow of the WWU Small Business Development Center. Sponsored by:



## Membership Orientation

Thursday, Oct. 21

Noon

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

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.

## Chamber Membership Luncheon:

### Biz Buzz

Wednesday, Oct. 27

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

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

It's time for our speed-networking Biz Buzz! Get your elevator speech ready as you connect with fellow Chamber members. Sponsored by Skagit Gleaners.



## Latino chamber members featured in statewide business conference

SCORE, the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors, is hosting its Washington State Biz Fair online on Oct. 12, and the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is presenting one of the conference sessions.

Chamber board members Viry Delgado of COA Mexican Eatery and Jesse Lopez of Infinity Restorations & Painting are panelists for the session, conducted in Spanish as part of the Expert Roundtable in the Diversity & Inclusion track during the conference. The Chamber's Business Development Director Silvia Reed is the moderator. She will interview Delgado and Lopez, who will share how their businesses not only survived but thrived during the pandemic. Both panelists are also part of the Chamber's Latino Business Leaders program.

Both Delgado and Lopez reinvented and expanded their businesses during the pandemic. By late 2019, Delgado knew she would be moving her restaurant, so when the pandemic hit she decided to stay the course and move forward with her plans to expand to a larger space. Lopez used the down



**Viry Delgado**



**Jesse Lopez**



**Silvia Reed**

time to train his team and move from primarily painting work to renovations. Both have seen their business increase over the past months.

The Chamber's expert roundtable presentation "Surviving and Thriving during the Pandemic" with Delgado and Lopez takes place at 1 p.m. with opportunity for attendees to take part in the Q+A portion.

The SCORE Biz Fair takes place from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 12. The conference includes tracks on Setting Up Small Businesses, Digital Marketing and Success in Business with Employees, among others. Register for this free event at [www.bizfair.org](http://www.bizfair.org).

## Stuck in Covid, but not at a loss for involvement

*...continued from page 1*

**Visitors Center?** You'll learn about what we do from the inside. Maybe you'll get the opportunity to recommend yourself! Finally, along the lines of marketing and promotion, update your page on our website, **MountVernonChamber.com**. Some of you can even add video. The site gets quite a bit of traffic. And if someone makes their way a couple of layers in to find your page, it is because they are looking for what you offer. My suggestion

is that you take advantage of the opportunity.

So, let's get unstuck together. We may still be dealing with Covid, but it doesn't have to paralyze us. We can still do what we need to do, in our businesses and in our lives. Please try some of my suggestions above. And if you come to the Chamber office, we might play some CCR. You can pick the song.

# Get to Know Ken's Hairstyling

Gary Molenaar is Mount Vernon born and raised and takes pride in being the second-generation owner of Ken's Hairstyling in downtown Mount Vernon.

But he didn't see himself as a barber when he started studying criminal justice and political science in college.

"I was headed in a completely different direction," Molenaar says.

He had his sights set on becoming a juvenile probation officer, but those plans changed when his father, Ken, died suddenly of a heart attack at age 49.

The younger Molenaar switched gears and went to barber school, and took over his dad's business in 1984. He's been cutting hair for 37 years now and doesn't have any regrets.

"I wouldn't have gotten to know so many people if I hadn't been a barber," he reflects.

Working downtown, Molenaar has seen the business community ebb and flow over the years. He recalls the exodus of shops from downtown when the mall opened, and his father's decision not to leave downtown at that time.

"He decided to stay put, and now it's turned out to be a good thing."

Today, Molenaar takes heart knowing downtown businesses have been hanging tough during the pandemic thanks to strong local support.

"We survived the storm," he says of Ken's Hairstyling.

Recently, he welcomed his wife Rhondi to the shop. She had been working at another salon in town that closed. She has a loyal following for



cuts, color and perms, and is often booked out a month in advance, Molenaar says.

He also sings the praises of long-time barber Jerry, who's been with Ken's for 20 years now. The longevity at Ken's Hairstyling isn't relegated to the stylists; many of the shop's customers began going to Ken himself, some having been around since the shop opened in 1958.

"I don't want to think of myself as old, but it's turned into a generational business," Molenaar says, adding that he now cuts the hair for some of the grandkids of the shop's original clients.

Creating relationships with his clients, he says, is his biggest joy working as a barber.

He's also proud to be a small business owner in the town he grew up in. As a way to give back to his community, Molenaar has been a member of the Mount Vernon City Council since 2008.

To schedule an appointment at Ken's Hairstyling, call (360) 336-3335.



# Member reveals positive return on investment

"I have been part of different chambers of commerce and Mount Vernon is by far my favorite!

"The first thing I noticed is everyone is very welcoming to new members and what they bring to the table.

"Throughout the pandemic the Mount Vernon Chamber has done an awesome job keeping everyone connected by running well-attended virtual networking events.

"To top that all off Silvia loves to make sure that every member connects with other business to reveal the true power of a business network."



## Mitch Britt

**Owner/Lead Web Strategist**

**Bold Eye Media**

## Partner Members

Barron Smith Daugert, PLLC, Best Western PLUS Skagit Valley Inn, Birch Equipment Co., Budget Towing & Repair, CBMM LLC, Coastal Farm & Ranch, Costco Wholesale, Crawford Garage Doors, D&P Electronic Home Monitoring, Foothills Toyota, Fortiphi, Haggen Food & Pharmacy, Hampton Inn & Suites, Herbal Legends Cannabis, Infinity Painting & Renovations, Kern Funeral Home, Landed Gentry Homes & Communities, Loving Farms, Max Dale's Steak and Chop House, Mount Vernon School District, North Coast Credit Union, Northwest Escrow, LLC, PogoZone, Port of Skagit, Puget Sound Energy, Skagit Public Utility District 1, Skagit Valley Casino Resort, Skagit Valley College, Skagit Regional Health, Tacos Tecalitlan, Testing and Commissioning Services, LLC, Walmart, Williams & Nulle, PLLC, CPAs

**PRINTING & MAILING  
SOLUTIONS  
FOR YOUR BUSINESS**

From design concept to  
finished product,  
we're here for you  
every step of the way!



**SKAGIT PUBLISHING**  
empowering the community

**DIMENSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, INC.**

40 Years of Innovation, Craftsmanship and Customer Service



Your Single Source for Telephone, Data,  
Audio/Video, Networking Systems and Services

1220 Anderson Road • Mount Vernon, WA 98274 • 360.424.6164 • Dimensional.net

## Board of Directors

### Chair - David Lukov

Kern Funeral Home

### Vice Chair - Brian Ivie

Skagit Regional Health

### Past Chair - Carol Harris

PrimeLending

### Treasurer - Rhonda Tingley

SaviBank

### Member at Large - DUBY PETIT

Skagit Publishing

### 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

### Robert Knoll

Puget Sound Energy

### Jesse Lopez

Infinity Painting & Renovations

### Flora Lucatero

Children of the Valley

### Todd Owsley

Farmstrong Brewing Company

### Tammy Reim-Ledbetter

Alaska USA

### Dr. Amanda Rentschler

Roosevelt Dental Center

### Jon Ronngren

Mount Vernon School District

## STAFF

**Andy Mayer** President/CEO

**Silvia Reed** Business Development and Foundation Director

**Jeremy Kindlund** Operations Director

**Hilary Parker** Marketing Specialist

**Marinus Rouw**

Visitor Information Services

## Member Announcements

### Skagit Regional Health breaks ground on Station Square clinic

Members of the Public Hospital District No. 1 Board of Commissioners, the Skagit Region Health executive leadership team and Mount Vernon Mayor Jill Boudreau, gathered on Aug. 20 for the ceremonial ground breaking of a primary care and urgent care clinic slated to open in late 2022. The clinic will be called Skagit Regional Health – Station Square, named after the development where the clinic will be located, just west of I-5 near the Kincaid Street exit in Mount Vernon. Urgent Care, a lab and X-ray will occupy the first floor of the three-story facility. The second and third floors will be dedicated to primary care, including behavioral health and midwifery.

### Sen. Murray meets with SVC students on legislation to make community college tuition free

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray recently visited Skagit Valley College to meet with students and staff to hear how tuition-free community college would help them and the local community. Sen. Murray's America's College Promise Act legislation will ensure that first-time students and workers wanting to re-skill can enroll in a community college to earn a degree or credential for free. The act creates new federal-state partnerships that provide two years of tuition-free access to community or technical college programs and significant tuition and fee grant aid for two years at an eligible four-year historically Black college or university or minority-serving institution.

### Port of Skagit Receives \$2 Million in Funding for Fiber Optic Construction

The Port of Skagit was awarded a \$1 million loan and a \$1 million grant through the Community Economic Revitalization Board to continue its work to bring fiber optic infrastructure to eastern Skagit County. This low-interest Rural Broadband Program loan along with the grant from the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund, will support the East County Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) Construction Project. This project consists of FTTP construction of aerial fiber in Concrete, Lyman, Hamilton and Marblemount. Construction is expected to be complete by the end of 2022.

# Thank You Renewing Members

## 30+ Years

Chinook Enterprises  
Draper Valley Farms  
Kern Funeral Home  
Pape Machinery AG and Turf  
Skagit Farmers Supply &  
Country Store  
Skagit Regional Health  
Skagit Valley College  
Washington Federal

## 25+ Years

CPI Plumbing & Heating  
Handy's Heating  
Louis Auto Glass

## 20+ Years

Budget Towing & Repair  
Costco Wholesale Burlington  
#662  
Farmhouse Inn Restaurant  
Haggen Food & Pharmacy  
Peoples Bank  
Tulip Inn

## 15+ Years

University of Massachusetts  
Global

## 10+ Years

Barbara Paul-Mayer,  
Acupuncturist and Herbalist  
Coastal Farm & Ranch  
Dick's Restaurant Supply  
Harmsen & Associates  
McGregor Benefits  
Sign Pro of Skagit Valley  
State Farm Insurance - Brad  
Methner

## 5+ Years

Fisher Construction Group  
J.C.'s Pawnshop Inc.  
Perla's Insurance Services  
VSH Certified Public  
Accountants  
Washington Vocational  
Services

## Less than 5 Years

Skagit Gleaners  
Tucker Realty LLC  
Weichert Realtors Edge  
Home Sales

# Ambassadors

## Chair - Marla Chapa

Skagit Social

## Mitch Britt

Bold Eye Media

## Susan Cooper

NextHome Preview Properties

## Ector DeLeon

Tulip Valley Winery

## Sarah Eckenrode

CPI Plumbing & Heating

## Leslie Exner

hibu

## Juan Carlos Galban

Skagit Autoworks

## Carol Harris

PrimeLending

## Katelyn Huffman

Express Employment

Professionals

## Crystal King

NW Technology

## Joel Pasek

SERVPRO

## Blake Rawlins

Guardian Northwest Title &

Escrow

## Tammy Reim-Ledbetter

Alaska USA

## Sherry Ruderman

Skagit Tradition Realty

## Liz Theaker

Camp Korey

## Phil Thornley

Primerica

## Clarissa Wong

Caliber Home Loans

## Tulip INN



- FREE Expanded Continental Breakfast
- FREE Local Calls & Voice Mail
- FREE Hi-Speed Internet
- Kitchenettes • Air-conditioning
- Corporate & Senior Rates
- In-room Coffee/Tea • Cable TV w/ HBO
- Restaurants & Shopping Nearby
- Truck Parking

360 428-5969

1 800-599-5969

www.tulipinn.net



2200 Freeway Dr., Mount Vernon

Take I-5 Exit 227 (College Way), go West and then North on Freeway Dr. (across from Walmart)



PUGET  
SOUND  
ENERGY



# The Chamber Hits the Road



September's Multi-Chamber After Hours took place at Abbott's Alley in Sedro-Woolley.



Jess and Jenny Sanders, 911 Driving School



Angie Sherwood, Sherwood Community Services



Hugo Prado and Jeremy Smith of PNW Energy Services

## Welcome New Members

### Skagit-Island Human Resource Management Association

Agnieszka Samsel  
Mount Vernon  
[sihrma.org](http://sihrma.org)

We are an affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management. We provide educational and professional development opportunities to human resource practitioners, consultants and students.

### Blackstone's Academy of Driving

Elizabeth Pitner  
(360) 982-2910  
3302 Cedardale Road  
Mount Vernon

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

We are a DOL approved testing center that offers lessons and testing in English and Spanish with students ranging from teens to adults. Our driver's education offers a flexible program, innovative techniques and fresh methodologies.





# Ribbon Cuttings



EDASC



Ismaflow Boutique



Mount Vernon Grocery Outlet



Sisters Espresso

## HIRING?



GET YOUR JOB NOTICED ON THE  
CHAMBER JOB BOARD @  
[MOUNTVERNONCHAMBER.COM](http://MOUNTVERNONCHAMBER.COM)

Log in to your Chamber account or contact Jeremy Kindlund for  
information: 360.428.8547 or [jeremy@moutnvernonchamber.com](mailto:jeremy@moutnvernonchamber.com)





# Everybody wins when we Shop Local

Congratulations to Robyn, winner of the grand prize drawing for the summer Shop Local campaign, and thank you to everyone who participated as a merchant or a shopper. Merchants, be looking for information on holiday Shop Local campaign soon or contact Jeremy Kindlund, [jeremy@mountvernonchamber.com](mailto:jeremy@mountvernonchamber.com) to sign up.



## BRONZE LEGACY



### ORTHOPEDICS & SPORTS MEDICINE

For more information, visit:  
[skagitregionalhealth.org/orthopedics](http://skagitregionalhealth.org/orthopedics)



# MOVE WITHOUT HESITATION

A healthy body is a body in motion.





Thinking about  
**Video Production**  
for your business?

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

**AERIAL/DRONE VIDEO**

**EVENT/STREAMING  
VIDEO**

**COMMERCIAL  
VIDEO**

**Affordable video production  
for your online advertising  
and business needs.**

**Exclusively serving  
Skagit and  
Island Counties.**



**CONTACT US: 1-360-483-5684 or [info@SunridgeMedia.com](mailto:info@SunridgeMedia.com)**



# Washington State Bag Requirements

For Retailers, Grocers, Restaurants, and other Businesses



**NO**

**Single-use Plastic Carry-out Bags**

**Effective**

**October 1, 2021**



**8¢ charge**

**Large Paper Carryout Bags**

Made with 40% recycled content.  
Charges must be retained by the business.

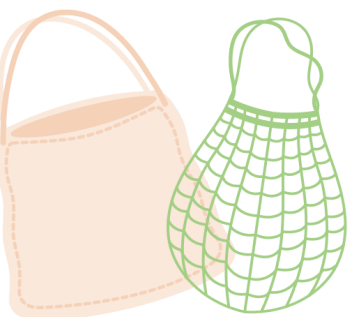


**8¢ charge**

**Thick Reusable Plastic Carryout Bags**

Made with 20% recycled content and a minimum of 2.25 mil thick film. Charges must be retained by the business

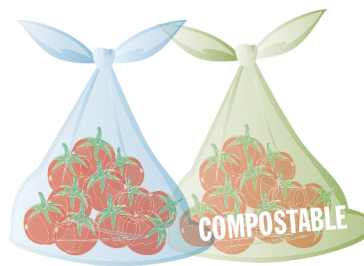
**Other bags ALLOWED:**



**Durable Reusable Bags**



**Small Paper Bags**



**Produce, Meat, Bulk Foods, Bakery Goods, etc.**



**Flowers, Drycleaning, Newspaper Bags, etc.**



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

**(360) 407-6000 | [bagban@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:bagban@ecy.wa.gov) | [Ecology.wa.gov/Bag-Ban](https://ecology.wa.gov/Bag-Ban)**

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-742-9874 or email at [bagban@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:bagban@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

If you speak a non-English language, free language services are available. Call 360-742-9874.