

CHAMBER CHAT

NOVEMBER 2021

Seven Years of Good Luck!

By Andy Mayer

Seven years apparently is significant in a number of ways, such as luck (usually not the good kind), astrology and even complete cellular renewal, according to some. I'm not sure which of those is true, but I can say that seven years passes quickly. It doesn't seem that long ago when I began my role as President/CEO of the Mount Vernon Chamber, but it has been seven years. Those years have been quite interesting, certainly challenging at times, and very rewarding to me. I am happy to say that in that relatively short period of time the Chamber has accomplished a great deal, and I feel fortunate to have been a part of it.

I credit our success to the Chamber Board of Directors, our very able staff, our community partners, and you our members, without whom we wouldn't exist. Thanks to the Board's strategic leadership, the goals for our organization are clear. Our staff has run with that direction and strengthened our programs and grown our membership, while greatly increasing its diversity. We've invested in our people, our systems, and even our equipment, so that nothing slows us down.

I believe we are at the end of a cycle and at the beginning of one characterized by renewal. It may not be cellular, but I do think it will be significant. Despite all the disruption Covid has caused, it has taught us to quickly understand and address the needs of our members and the community. That clarity and nimbleness will carry us through the next seven years. It will be less a matter of luck and more one of looking for opportunities and creating solutions. I'm excited for another seven years doing that. After all, I'm a Pisces, who are thought to be creative and imaginative. I'm imagining a vibrant future together!



GOLD



SILVER



Puget Sound Refinery



Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce
(360) 428-8547
mountvernonchamber.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Marketing Mastermind: Mapping Your Customers' Journey, Part 2

Thursday, Nov. 4

10 a.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

This month, the Mastermind continues its examination of the customer journey. Audrey Burrell, director of sales and marketing at the La Conner Channel Lodge, will be talking about how your business collects leads, converts clients, and creates raving fans. This is an opportunity to get marketing ideas for your business that you may have never thought about!

Knowledge NOW: Challenges to Leading a Multi-Generational Workforce

Wednesday, Nov. 10

Noon

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Chris Phillips, director of the City of Mount Vernon, share insights and actionable takeaways for working with our changing multi-generational workforce.

Latino Business Leaders: Empezando su Nueva Empresa/Starting Your New Business

Tuesday, Nov. 16

6-7:30 p.m.

via Zoom

Presented in Spanish and English

[Register here](#)

Once you have decided to start your business, together with Kathy Bastow, WWU Small Business Development Center, we will explore:

- Risks and Rewards of different business types
- Pros and Cons of different business entity types
- Various sales channels (on-line, brick and mortar, wholesale, retail)
- Exploration of business licenses, permits & fees
- Exploration of administrative tasks necessary for running a business including filing taxes, city, state and federal reporting.

Sponsored by:



Chamber Membership Luncheon:

Biz Buzz

Wednesday, Dec. 8

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

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Jingle into the holidays with our speed-networking Biz Buzz! Get your elevator speech ready as you connect with fellow Chamber members. Sponsored by:



Save the Date!

2021 Chamber

Awards

Jan. 26, 2022

Chamber partners with Hiring Our Heroes

In response to our current workforce crisis posing challenges to the business community, the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce its new partnership with Hiring Our Heroes, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation that helps to place veterans, service members transitioning out of the military and military spouses into jobs in the civilian workforce.

Hiring Our Heroes (HOH) operates on two tracks: First, matching active-duty service members who are about to transition out of the military with companies looking to fill supervisory or management roles, and second, matching military spouses with work opportunities.

Transitioning service members participate in the HOH program, which provides a fellowship to introduce them to civilian employers. During the 12-week program, these potential employees are matched to an employer and work four days a week in their business at no cost to the employer. At the end of the 12 weeks, the employer can make a job offer.

The Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Fellowship Program (MSFP) is a first-in-class initiative that connects military spouses to paid six-week fellowships that provide professional training,

HIRING OUR HEROES

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FOUNDATION

networking and hands-on experience.

While the Mount Vernon Chamber Foundation's Experience Work Project focuses on placing students into jobs at the beginning of their career journey, HOH focuses on positions at supervisory and management levels.

"As employers face challenges finding qualified employees in the current job climate, our partnership with Hiring Our Heroes will provide an exciting opportunity to tap into a hiring pool with both talent and experience," said Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce CEO Andy Mayer.

For more information and to get connected with the HOH program, contact Business Development and Foundation Director Silvia Reed at 360-395-2944 or Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com.

Chamber Connections opening new group in January

A second Chamber Connections group will be forming in the new year. Connections is the Chamber's own networking referral group, which formed its first group in March.

The group is designed to allow members to get to know each other and their businesses at a deeper level. In essence, group members become knowledgeable ambassadors for each other's businesses and are able to provide qualified referrals.

The group has been generating leads for its members, and perhaps more importantly, is helping to strengthen relationships among members.

The new Connections group will meet Thursdays

at noon, starting in January. Membership in the group is limited to one person per business category.

Categories are selected by the member based on the membership directory. Meetings will take place twice a month via Zoom.

As spots are filled, interested individuals will be placed on a waiting list. A few openings are still available in the Tuesday 9 a.m. group as well.

To apply for Chamber Connections or for additional information, contact Business Development and Foundation Director Silvia Reed at 360-395-2944 or Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com.

Get to Know Plumeria Breezes Travel

Dreaming of that tropical vacation, but not sure how to put all the pieces together in today's world with extra Covid-related regulations?

Travel agent Monique Brigham is uniquely qualified to help.

Brigham, owner of Plumeria Breezes Travel in Sedro-Woolley, has seen an uptick in demand for travel in recent months, and keeping abreast of travel requirements adopted due to Covid-19 is part of her job.

Helping people untangle other Covid-related travel problems, like illness or cancellations, are also part of her job.

"In the last year I've spent a lot of time on hold for other people," Brigham laughs.

Brigham has spent 12 years in the travel industry, meshing her love for travel and her knack for getting things done.

She started her journey toward becoming a travel agent after a layoff in 2009. Her husband suggested she try her hand in the travel industry, and after sitting on the idea for about a month, while watching plenty of the Travel Channel, she decided to go for it. By May of 2010, she had opened her agency as an outside agent for a large firm in California.

The next month, she was called back to work from her layoff. Because her husband, too, suffered a layoff at the beginning of 2010, she decided to go back to that job, while continuing to work as a travel agent part-time. In 2015, she transitioned to full time with the travel agency, sharing a space with the Sedro-Woolley Chamber of Commerce.

In an age where you can book a trip from your phone, Brigham says booking online can have its downfalls.

"It's easy to do things online – until it's not," she cautions, which is why having a travel agent on your side pays off in the long run.

"I help out through all the red tape and nonsense."



Brigham can also help find available hotel rooms that don't appear on travel websites and add amenities you wouldn't otherwise get by booking for yourself, she says.

And, she adds, "You're paying the travel agent commission whether you realize it or not."

Once you are on your trip, Brigham is just a phone call away if a problem arises. She tells the story of one client whose connecting flight to Costa Rica was delayed, meaning her 5 p.m. arrival time was pushed to midnight.

"I was able to assure my client a shuttle driver would be there at midnight instead of five o'clock," Brigham says. That kind of peace of mind while traveling is priceless.

Even though Brigham's business takes people on adventure vacations and wellness retreats all over the world, keeping your travel spend with a local travel agent means you're also supporting the community. Brigham is involved in the Relay for Life and giving back to the local business community.

"If you're shopping online for travel," Brigham reminds us, "you're not shopping local."

To learn more about Plumeria Breezes Travel, visit plumeriabreezestravel.com.

Member reveals positive return on investment

NW Technology has been a member of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce for three years and although we've been a part of that welcoming community, it's sometimes difficult to build those deeper relationships when your office is in another county. So, we jumped at the chance of joining a more focused format called Chamber Connections.

What a great experience it's been, and with the additional time to hear each member explain more in depth about their industry it has been incredibly beneficial. Not to mention being able to have the time to really clarify what NW Technology offers. These deeper conversations don't typically occur during a social event and can't be summarized in a one-minute elevator speech.

Chamber Connections has depth, and from the first meeting members started referring each other. It's also a great way to make those contacts that can then develop into a relationship and strong community partner, one business at a time, even if you're not located nearby.



Crystal King
NW Technology

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

Children of the Valley Run for the Kids fundraiser takes place Nov. 27 - Dec. 5.

Children of the Valley's second annual Run for the Kids Race will be a hybrid event. The first day of the event kicks off in person at the Skagit Airport on Nov. 27 (weather permitting). Join others at the Port of Skagit nature trails from 9-11 a.m. that day to complete your run/walk on the designated course or complete your mileage anywhere at any time until Dec. 5.

Children of the Valley is an organization providing after school support to children within our community. COV provides a safe, supportive environment for elementary students most in need in order to receive daily academic and personal support, mentorship and daily fun enrichment activities.

To sign up for the race, visit

<https://runsignup.com/Race/WA/Burlington/COVRunWalk>.

Skagit County Veterans Day Parade takes place Nov. 13

The City of Burlington's annual parade takes place on Saturday, Nov. 13, at 11 a.m. along Fairhaven Avenue in Burlington, ending in the heart of the city at Maiben Park. To kick off the start of the parade there will be a flyover of heritage planes piloted by Greg and Alan Anders of the Skagit Heritage Flight Museum (weather permitting). There will also be scheduled activities before and after the parade.

SVC Park Ranger Academy seeks volunteers

Skagit Valley College Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy (PRLEA) is now accepting volunteers for role players to help law enforcement students enact real-life scenarios as part of their comprehensive 750+ hour, 18-week training program. Volunteers could be cast as robbers, intoxicated drivers, campers, dog owners and even archeologists.

The academy prefers volunteers to be 18 years old; however, volunteers under 18 can participate with a parent. Volunteers are needed between 8 a.m.-12 p.m. or 1-5 p.m. on the following days: Monday, Nov. 22; Tuesday, Nov. 23; Wednesday, Dec. 1; Monday, Dec. 6; Tuesday, Dec. 7; Monday, Dec. 12; Tuesday, Dec. 13; and Wednesday, Dec. 14.

Interested or have questions? Call Program Coordinator Jennifer Knezek at 360.416.7919 or email academy.assistant@skagit.edu.

Thank You Renewing Members

30+ Years

Cascade Natural Gas
Hawthorne Funeral Home,
Crematory & Memorial Park
KAPS Radio 660 AM & 102.1 FM

20+ Years

Birch Equipment Co., Inc.
Dimensional Communications,
Inc.
Landed Gentry Development
Inc.
Mount Vernon School District
North Coast Credit Union
Washington Bulb Co., Inc.

15+ Years

KBRC 1430AM
Skagit Acres

10+ Years

K & L Media, Inc.

5+ Years

Alaska USA
Bay Baby Produce, Inc.
Children of the Valley After
School Program
Ode To Learning

Less than 5 Years

Cascadia Eye
Mount Vernon Grocery Outlet
Mountain Pacific Bank
PAVÉ Jewelry & Design
Sound Beverage Distributors,
Inc.
U.S. Bank- Riverside Dr.

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



October's Multi-Chamber After Hours took place at COPIA on the Boulevard in Burlington.



Chamber CEO Andy Mayer presents a Silver Legacy plaque to Julia Phillip (center) of Julia Phillip Realty.



The Chamber dropped by member business Archer Halliday, PS, this month. Thanks for your support!



The Chamber's Silvia Reed, Chamber Ambassador Tammy Reim-Ledbetter paid a visit to Northwest Natural Care owner Mathew Friedlander

Welcome New Member

Skagit Landing Restaurant & Catering

Josie Urbick

(360) 419-5333

15426 Airport Dr., Ste. B

Burlington

www.skagitlanding.com

Enjoy Skagit's finest food with friends and neighbors at the freshest farm-to-fork experience in the Valley at our restaurant location or catered at your location.

SHOP LOCAL & WIN!

Holiday Shop Local promotion begins Nov. 26



Applications due by Nov. 11 • See page 11 for details

Upbeat Award winner Craig Chambers

Previous Upbeat Award winner Morgan Curry from Skagit Gleaners chose the October recipient, Craig Chambers of the United Way of Skagit County. Here's what she had to say about him: "Craig is a forward-thinking, passionate individual who seeks social justice for under-served members of our community. Although he is a recent transplant to Skagit County, Craig has embraced our community – he is an active member of Leadership Skagit class of 2022 and serves on the Board of Directors for EDASC, among other activities.

"In his short time as the Executive Director of United Way, he has already spearheaded grassroots efforts that directly fill a need for United Way's Bold Goal, such as taking over operations



L-R: Andy Mayer, Morgan Curry and Craig Chambers.

of the Diaper Bank of Skagit County – ensuring that every family has access to basic needs like diapers."

BRONZE LEGACY



ORTHOPEDICS & SPORTS MEDICINE

For more information, visit:
skagitregionalhealth.org/orthopedics



MOVE WITHOUT HESITATION

A healthy body is a body in motion.





Thinking about
Video Production
for your business?

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



Holiday Shop Local Campaign

Dear Chamber member,

The Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to supporting local businesses. We are partnering with the Mount Vernon Downtown Association and are proud to announce the 2021 Holiday Shop Local Campaign. The campaign will launch **November 26 and continue through January 31 with the grand prize drawing on February 1.**

We are looking for partners to promote shopping local. Involvement includes fantastic marketing opportunities for your business such as an ad in the Skagit Valley Herald, online and social media promotion, a consumer incentive punch card program, and more. Please return this flyer with your business information, \$25 and a raffle prize valued at \$25 or more to Jeremy Kindlund at the address listed below.

Not a member of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce? You are still able to participate in this great program and promote your business.

For more information please contact Jeremy Kindlund, Operations Director

Via email – Jeremy@MountVernonChamber.com

Phone: (360) 428-8547

301 W Kincaid St.

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Participation requirements -

- \$25 payment
- Raffle Prize (Value of \$25 or more)

Participation benefits -

- Consumer incentive punch card program: customers receive a punch for every \$5 spent at participating businesses. When the punch card is full (10 Punches at \$5 each, \$50) they can be used as an entry into weekly & grand prize drawings for fantastic raffle prizes. Each partnering business will be listed on back of the punch cards, poster, and ads.
- Shop Local Poster
- PDF copy of flier with partnering businesses listed can be distributed to your customers via email or print off to put in bags, etc.

Please provide the information below, \$25 and the raffle prize to Jeremy Kindlund at the Chamber office no later than November 11.

Business Name: _____ Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Description of Raffle Prize: _____

_____ Raffle Prize Value: _____

THE SKAGIT VALLEY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
TITLE SPONSORS PEOPLES BANK AND WHIDBEY COFFEE
PRESENTS



Festival OF TREES

TREE STROLL AND ONLINE AUCTION

NOVEMBER 4 - NOVEMBER 28
FIRST STREET IN DOWNTOWN MOUNT VERNON

View and bid on beautifully designed trees
displayed in downtown storefronts.



ONLINE AUCTION SPONSOR

Peoples Bank

TITLE SPONSORS



DL DWAYNE LANE'S
SKAGIT SUBARU

TREE STROLL SPONSOR

FOR FURTHER DETAILS, VISIT
SkagitFestivalofTrees.org



Event proceeds benefit the Family Birth Centers at Skagit Valley Hospital and Cascade Valley Hospital