



SEPTEMBER 2010

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Anacortes, WA 98221
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www.anacortes.org

THE ANACORTES COMMUNICATOR

The Newsletter of the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce

Volume 20 / Issue 09

calendar

- Thursday, September 2** 11:45 am
Ambassador Lunch Meeting
Chamber Office
- Tuesday, September 7** 3:00 pm
Marketing & Promotions Division Meeting
Chamber Office
- Thursday, September 9** 3:45 pm
Governmental Affairs Division Meeting
Chamber Office
- Thursday, September 9** 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
Business Connections Lunch
Anacortes Lutheran Church
- Friday, September 10** 4:30 – 6:00 pm
Business After Hours
Navigating the Future
Port Warehouse
- Tuesday, September 14** 2:45 pm
Membership Division Meeting
Chamber Office
- Friday, September 17** 10:30 am
Finance/Executive Meeting
Chamber Office
- Tuesday, September 21** 3:45 pm
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber Office
- Thursday, September 23** 4:00 pm
Economic Development Division Meeting
Chamber Office
- Tuesday, September 28** 9:00 am
VIC Meeting
Chamber Office

business connections lunch

Networking is on the menu

Vacation is over and it is time to get back into the game! Summer doesn't mean we stop marketing, but there can be a definite dip as we focus our time on enjoying our beautiful surroundings. The chamber wants to rev up your marketing efforts.

Join us for the Business Connections Lunch on Thursday, September 9 at 11:30 am at the Anacortes Lutheran Church (22nd and O Ave.). This luncheon is designed to introduce you and your business to up to 21 other members in a short time frame. It's networking "speed dating"-style.

Bring marketing material, a positive attitude and your polished one-minute elevator speech (what you want people to remember about you and your business).

The Business Connections Lunch is sponsored by **Manpower** who leads in the creation and delivery of services that enable their clients to win in the changing world of work. Contact Manpower today at (360) 757-4536 to see what they can do for you!



Here's what your peers are saying about the Business Connections Lunch:

"I have attended many Anacortes Chamber events. The business connections lunch has been great for referrals. I am able to learn what your business actually does. As business owners we sometimes assume that everyone knows all the services that we offer. The quick commercials have helped me pass on and receive proper referrals. It is fun and affordable marketing that gets your message out to a room of people."

Tammy Masalonis—McGregor Benefits

"The Anacortes Chamber of Commerce Business Connections Lunch provides a unique opportunity to meet new business people in town. Each lunch has been responsible for at least one new appointment; attending the lunch (see Business Connections continued on page 6)"

cornerstone members



TESORO Puget Sound Refinery

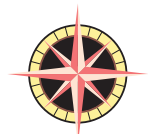


business after hours

Navigating The Future

This month's business after hours will follow the Navigating the Future Senior Resource Fair at the port warehouse on Friday, September 10 from 4:30–6:00 pm. The event will be co-sponsored by **Rockfish Grill/Anacortes Brewery** and catered by **Adrift**. Please note the date and time change.

Not only will this be our usual after hours mixer, but also be extension of the resource fair, with many of the vendors showcasing their products and services. Please RSVP to the chamber.



NAVIGATING THE FUTURE





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a message from the director

As I write this in mid-August, summer continues in full swing. Commercial is busy, with challenging traffic and a lot of folks out walking the streets. Hopefully this has translated into positive results for your business. Two of our beautification elements have been evident this season to mixed results. The banners took quite a beating in May from high winds. We have endeavored to stay on top of them as summer progressed—thanks to Anchor Signs and their lift truck for continuing to straighten and adjust. We will be inventorying in November and replacing selected banners as needed for next year. On the plus side, the flower baskets recovered nicely and look great. This is largely due to city employees, who provided daily watering and much TLC. Thank you Parks & Rec!

I wanted to take a few moments to review two studies that were recently completed. The first was an intercept survey that was conducted in July—you can review results elsewhere in this newsletter. The idea of such a survey came out of a conference that I attended earlier this year in Port Townsend. It was suggested that chambers undertake an intercept every 2–3 years, with the goal of getting independent opinions from folks in the downtown. It was decided by our Marketing & Promotions division to take the opportunity to also determine tourism-related

information. Based on the results, there were a number of interesting conclusions. First, roughly ½ of our visitors generate in-state, which validates our marketing focus over the past couple of years. Many of the people shopping in our stores live in La Conner, the Islands, or Oak Harbor—over 20% of respondents shop here at least monthly. On the whole our downtown core generates positive comments—visitors like its look and feel, the shops, restaurants, flower baskets, and location. A consistent “dislike” for tourists was the lack of WALK signals—many felt that crossing the street was not safe. Finally many people were drawn to the downtown because of business—either they work there or seek professional services. This is a contingent that could potentially respond to appropriate marketing and promotional efforts by local businesses. We will be reviewing this survey in our various divisions over the next few months and will incorporate these results into continuing efforts.

The second study involved an updating of our Economic Development metric. You can read a synopsis of the results in our Key Business Trends update on the website under the Relocation Tab (Doing Business). The report summarizes activity through the first half of the year (Sales/Use tax receipts and Hotel/Motel tax receipts are delayed from DOR

and reflect data through May). Briefly, Sales & Use payments to the city have bounced back somewhat and are up 17% over 2009 levels, a positive development. Hotel/Motel tax is down \$7K from a year ago—this may reflect that lack of a refinery turnaround this year. Housing sales are up 56% year-over-year and are almost back to 2008 levels. The average selling price held steady at approximately \$350K—this is a healthy development for our real estate industry. Building permits were up 13% over 2009. Relocation packet requests were up 19%. Transient boat nights at the Boat Haven were up 30% and trailer boat launches up 6%. Based on these statistics, it would appear that our local economy is trending back toward more normal totals.

Be assured that the chamber remains totally focused on helping local businesses succeed. I greatly appreciate your continued support. If there is anything that I can to assist, please don't hesitate to contact me. Have a wonderful fall season.

—Mitch Everton



Changes/updates in Small Group Market in the State of Washington

Per WA Bill ESSB 6538, effective October 1, 2010, the small group market will include “groups of one” such as sole proprietors. An individual must have been employed by the same employer for at least 12 months prior to application for small group coverage and verify that at least 75% of his or her income is derived from the business. Submission of Tax form 1040 is required as proof.

The WA State Health Care Authority has launched the “Health Insurance Partnership” (HIP) to provide healthcare access for low-wage workers. The HIP offers a premium subsidy to eligible employees, based on their family income. Small employers (with 1–50 employees) can enroll in HIP if they do not currently offer health insurance coverage to their employees, and if at least 50% of their employees are low-wage. HIP will begin ac-

cepting applications in September 2010 for health insurance coverage effective January 1, 2011. Funds are limited and applications will be processed on a first come, first served basis.

For more information or assistance regarding the above changes/updates, please call Alice Bohnker, Alice Bohnker Insurance at 360 588 8302.



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school district update

What's new in Anacortes schools?

Opening day of school is just around the corner and Anacortes School District is busy preparing to make 2010–2011 a pivotal learning and growing year for students and staff.

First, I wanted to thank Fidalgo Island residents for their tremendous support and generosity in overwhelmingly passing last year's school levy with one of highest approval percentages in the State of Washington. Our community not only provides support to educate our students, but holds us accountable to see that each student leaves our schools not only College/Work Ready, but with the necessary skills and knowledge to compete in a global economy.

This continuing support is enormously important, as the district has faced significant challenges over the past few years, focused primarily around declining enrollment and school funding cuts from the state.

Despite these challenges, the district continues to push forward to ensure students are meeting our goals of becoming School Ready, Transition Ready and College/Work Ready. To that end, we are fortunate to have staff members who have worked hard to pursue and obtain grant funding that has allowed us to maintain/expand valuable programs for our students. Two of note:

• **School Ready Project**

Over the last three years, the district has benefitted greatly from a grant from the Gates Foundation for \$500,000 focused on the implementation of programs, staffing and resources to reach our School Ready goals. As a result of the efforts and expertise of our staff, the Gates Foundation has committed to two additional years of funding, which will be used to continue our programs and provide in-depth training and resources on “best practices” with our pre-school through grade three

teachers

• **Teacher/
Principal
Evaluation
Grant**

The district was awarded one of four state grants and began its work with a two-day conference in early August where the Governor's Office and Superintendent for Public Instruction gave us our charge to create a new evaluation model for the state. Our teachers and principals embrace this challenge and are committed to developing a model that improves instruction and student achievement.

Thank you Anacortes for your continued generosity and support of our staff and students.

—Chris Borgen, Superintendent



In our continuing effort to entice visitors to Anacortes in the shoulder season, the chamber is producing the Anacortes Oktoberfest – Beer on the Pier on Saturday, October 9.

Working closely with the Anacortes Brewery we expect to fill the historic port warehouse with up to 30 northwest brewers, making this new event one of the largest in the state. Thanks to the following members for sponsoring this inaugural event:

Keg Level:

ANACORTES INN



Stein Level:

- Barrett Financial, Ltd.
- Cap Sante Inn
- Coldwell Banker Island Living
- Donatello Flowers & Gifts
- Upstage Boutique and Men's Store
- Whidbey Island Bank

Friend of the Festival:

- Steve & Linda Wilhoit

details

Saturday, October 9
12:00 – 6:00 pm
Pier One, Port of Anacortes
(1st and Commercial Ave)

TICKETS

ON SALE NOW!!!

\$20 advance

(online or at the chamber)

\$25 at the door

Includes tasting cup and six tokens

Go to www.anacortes.org
to check out the growing list
of northwest breweries!

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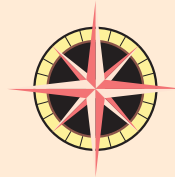
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Oyster Run 2010

The 29th Annual Oyster Run will take place on Sunday, September 26. Many of the riders come for the entire weekend, filling up hotels, restaurants and retail establishments. The Oyster Run is the largest of the Northwest motorcycle events and is on the 2010 Lightning Customs' Major Biker Rally List.



NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

A Resource and Information Fair for Seniors

Friday, Sept. 10th
11:30 am to 3:30 pm

Retirement... Where Life Begins!

Wendy's delegation visits Anacortes

Trident Seafoods hosted the executive vendors of the Wendy's Corporation in August. The group of over 60 people from all over North America spent one morning touring local businesses, with an afternoon and evening off to explore the Pacific Northwest. Chamber staff assisted with organizing tours with John Dumas of Puget Sound Rope and Robert Lund of Dakota Creek Industries. We would like to thank chamber member Peggy Flynn (flynn+associates), chamber board member Matt McKay (HR Strategies), and port staff member, John Hachey for acting as tour guides. Gere-A-Deli was also instrumental in ensuring the group enjoyed Pacific Northwest fare and Rockfish Brewery for pouring our own local brew.



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Intercept Survey Results

The survey was conducted July 19-23 between 3rd & 10th Streets. Potential respondents were approached randomly and asked to provide a ZIP code, which was used to determine whether they were a resident or non-resident. Residents were then asked questions relating to length of residency, reason for their downtown visit, likes/dislikes about the downtown core, and what other business they would like to see. Visitors were asked tourism questions related to length and frequency of visit, reason for visiting, how they heard about Anacortes, likes/dislikes about downtown, and what other business they would like to see.

200 responses were obtained. Residents and non-residents were each roughly 50% of the total. 32% of residents were visiting the downtown for work/professional reasons, 25% for shopping, 15% for dining, and 10% for the post office. Residents liked downtown

shops, the small town feel, the historic look, and the friendly people. They disliked the lack of convenient parking, storefront vacancies, the lack of water access, inconvenient store hours, the need for more shops, and the general run-down appearance of many of the storefronts. They would like to see clothing and shoe stores, a large retail store, shops and activities for young people, and a bakery.

Approximately half of non-residents were comprised of tourists and half involved those from outlying areas (principally La Conner and the Islands) who use Anacortes for shopping. This group liked the shops, restaurants, small town feel, historic look, cleanliness, the flower baskets, proximity to water/marina, and the friendly people. They disliked the lack of walk signals, empty storefronts, lack of building upkeep, and the need for more shops. Their desired businesses largely mirrored those of residents above.

Land-Use Applications— Proposed Changes

There are proposed changes to the land-use application process that are winding their way through city review. The gist of the changes would be to introduce a professional hearing examiner, who would take the lead role in approving applications. Many cities in WA have gone this route, with a goal of streamlining the process and encouraging economic development. Briefly:

Applications are currently reviewed for completeness, the public is notified and invited to comment, responses are reviewed by city staff, staff prepares a recommendation on the application to the Planning Commission, who then holds a public hearing and makes a recommendation on the application to the City Council. The Council's decision is appealable to the courts.

The proposed change would keep much of the process in place, with the following changes. The Planning Commission session would result in non-binding comments and recommendations to the applicant to consider going forward, which would also be considered by city staff in their review. The application and city comments would then go before a professional Hearing Examiner, who would issue a formal decision on the application. This decision would be appealable to the City Council.

The net effect would be a professional review, with input from the Planning Commission and an appeal process to the City Council. There would still be public input and city staff involvement but the process would be considerably more straightforward than at present.

We encourage you to call or e-mail City Council members to express your support for the proposed change. Contact information is available on the chamber's website under governmental affairs.

Chamber Cheers

This year's *Chamber Cheers* – *It's A Wonderful Life in Anacortes* will celebrate our beautiful community as we honor the commitment of our leaders. The committee has been busy planning an evening full of surprises you are sure to enjoy.

Promotion though sponsorship is available at various levels, this helps keep our ticket prices low—\$40 per person for a full dinner, a commemorative photo and dancing.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, November 6th, 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm at the Historic Port of Anacortes Warehouse.

Once again we will be selecting a recipient for the **Community Service Excellence Award**. Be thinking about which chamber member goes above and beyond to make *A Wonderful Life in Anacortes*. Also, we would like to start collecting pictures of members in action – not just at our events, but being people in the community. Please submit those so we can showcase them at the event.



A community within a community!



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Business Connections

Continued from page 1

has grown my business by 38% over the last two years."

Barry Harter
Central Payment Corporation

"The business connections lunch has been very beneficial for my company and developing new business in Anacortes. At the Business Connections lunch last fall a chamber member that I have known for a year or so was at my table and he had no idea what I did professionally. He caught me after the meeting to discuss how my company may be able to help his. Later we met and it has become a very mutually rewarding business relationship. This is the second time I have developed business directly from my involvement with this event. I would encourage all members regardless of their business type to attend and talk up what they do."

Matt McKay
HR Strategies Consulting
and People Development

Navigating the Future

Join us at the Port Warehouse on Friday, September 10th, 2010, from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm for our Annual Navigating the Future Senior Resource Fair! This free fair is designed for anyone over the age of 50 who is looking for information on the Anacortes community. There will be business professionals to help answer your questions on financial investments, medical clinics, legal issues, alternative healthcare, real estate, senior living communities, and much, much more. There will also be representatives there to answer your questions on what the local community offers in the way of recreation, service organizations, volunteer opportunities, advocacy programs, support groups and again, much, much more.

new members

MOLTO BENNE

(360) 293-9389
910 11th Street, Suite A
Anacortes, WA 98221
Taki Kissas
Restaurant

MARITIME'S MARINE CENTER

(360) 293-7333
2901 T Avenue, #7
Anacortes, WA 98221
<http://www.maritimesmarinecenters.com>
Lisa Selfridge
Marine Sales & Service

THE RENT LADY

(360) 299-2353
1319 8th Street
Anacortes, WA 98221
<http://www.therentlady.com>
Linda Ann Lipke
Property Management

ISLAND INTERNAL MEDICINE

(360) 293-4343
912 32nd Street, Suite A
Anacortes, WA 98221
<http://www.islandinternalmedicine.com>
Missy Dubuque
Health Clinic

The resource fair is designed to fill a need in Anacortes and the Island communities, to build awareness for our residents, and to help seniors find out about all the wonderful services and opportunities the area offers for help and involvement. You would be surprised how many of last year's participants discovered what our beautiful town has to offer by attending the fair!

Whether you're looking for information to serve your private needs or wants, or if you're a local business person wanting to expand your knowledge on what is available locally, join us!

member renewals

- All About Honeymoons & Vacations
- American Gold Seafoods
- Anacortes Dental Care—David L. Olausen
- Anacortes Eagles #249
- Anderson's General Store
- Chinook Enterprises
- Fidalgo Animal Medical Center
- Heron House Guest Suites
- Lynne M. Lang Accounting & Business Services
- Northwest Computer & Network Solutions
- Opulence Salon & Day Spa
- Robin Pestarino
- Raymond James Financial Services, Inc.
- Rockfish Grill/Anacortes Brewery
- Samish Indian Nation
- Ship House Inn
- Skagit Symphony
- Sound Computing Solutions
- State Farm Insurance
- Trident Seafoods Corporation

thanks...

Thanks to the following members for donating to the July Business After Hours:

- Opulence Salon & Day Spa
- Port of Anacortes
- Anacortes Arts Festival
- Novus Auto Glass
- Read Me A Story
- Barrett Financial, Ltd.
- Fidalgo Pool & Fitness Center
- Chandler's Square – A Retirement Community
- EDASC
- An-O-Chords Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society
- Shell Puget Sound Refinery
- Anacortes Clean!



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New entertainment venue

Chris Terrell (left) and Mark Edson introduce a new entertainment venue this weekend with a Saturday afternoon show at “The Heart of Anacortes,” an outdoor stage on the corner of 4th Street and “O” Avenue. During a period of economic struggle in this region, Terrell and Edson have invested in dramatic facility improvements in and around **How It Works**, the graphics and design company established here in 1994. Project elements range from remodel of the How It Works interior to construction of Heart of Anacortes stage and public restrooms. Also operating under the How It Works umbrella will be **Northwest Images**, a virtual gallery that will feature regional art and photogra-



phy. Look for the Heart of Anacortes to become an important draw in the arts and entertainment community.

Anacortes Boat Show

Set your course for the Anacortes Boat Show, October 1-3 from 10:00-5:00 at the Cap Sante Boat Haven. This free show will feature at least 75 floating boats, ranging to 65 feet—new and pre-owned power and sailing yachts. Upland tents will be in place with a variety of marine services. The show highlights the Anacortes brokerage community. It’s a great opportunity to take a stroll and see what’s new and exciting in the boating world.



brown bag series

Retirement Plans

Jeffery Pleet — Edward Jones

Friday, September 10

12:00 noon, chamber office

You’re invited ...

As a business owner, you probably have your hands full minding day-to-day activities. Are you taking advantage of the financial strategies and tools available to help you run your business more effectively?

Join us for our free **Financial Solutions for Business Owners** seminar to learn more about:

1. Retirement plans that work for any size business
2. Strategies for building, creating value for and protecting your business
3. Recent legislation that can impact your business

Law Talk

Law Office of Alan Souders

Friday, September 24

12:00 noon

chamber office

Attorneys Alan Souders and Darcy Swetnam will be presenting the conclusion to the Law Office of Alan R. Souders, Employment Law Series.

They will discuss important areas of employment law currently affecting small business owners, employers, and employees. They will also make available in template form the key provisions needed in most employee manuals.

For either Brown Bag Lunch
RSVP to the chamber office
at 293-7911



Arts Festival Exhibitor honored

The chamber is proud to partner with the Anacortes Arts Festival in selecting block award winners. This year one of our winners, Jeffrey Zigulis of Camano Island, was not only a block winner, but also received the Creativity Award from Cindy Morton. Jeffrey’s ceramic masks are truly one of a kind.

chamber officers

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Matt McKay *HR Strategies*

Andie McMakin *Summit Park Covered Storage*

Heather Miller *Read Me A Story*

John Pope *Tesoro Refining & Marketing Co.*

Joe Schlundt *Shell Puget Sound Refinery*

Erik Schorr *Anacortes Kayak Tours*

Rick Star *Rockfish Grill*

Chamber Staff

Mitch Everton *Executive Director*

Stephanie Hamilton *Program & Events Director*

Mary Talosi *Visitor Information & Operations Director*

Danielle Schmidt *Office Coordinator*

Kristi Daniels & Crystal Johnson *Licensing Sub-Agents*

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vic (visitor information center) statistics

	July 2010	July 2009		July 2010	July 2009
Visitors	2052	2917	Relocation Requests	15	17
Phone Calls	731	649	Web Visits	12,621	13,077
Information Requests	18	28	Web Page Views	46,213	46,501

Thank you, volunteers!

Visit us on the web at www.anacortes.org



Anacortes
Oktoberfest
BEER ON THE PIER

Saturday, October 9th
12 pm to 6 pm

at the
Historic Port Warehouse
1st & Commercial

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www.anacortes.org

