



Northwest Economic Council

WHATCOM COUNTY

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Hatching a Plan to Help Save an Industry

The Lummi Shellfish Hatchery is an unassuming facility-not particularly large or fancy. But the role it will play in support of an industry in serious distress recently got a whole lot bigger. With help from Northwest Economic Council Executive Director Nancy Jordan and Sally Harris, Northwest Services Manager for the International Trade and Economic Development division of CTED, the hatchery is on track to receive funding from the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) for a feasibility study in advance of a major expansion.

This is great news for West Coast shellfish growers who have had to contend with a dangerously low supply of the seed used to grow clams, oysters and geoducks. Among other issues, a virulent bacterium has diminished harvest levels, which has led to layoffs and nothing short of a state of emergency for growers dependent on seed stocks for their livelihood.

The feasibility study will address site selection for a new geoduck hatchery and beach enhancement for oyster and clam stocks. Lummi Shellfish Operations Manager Lizzie Oberlander says the tribe considered an expansion for some time before making a connection with the Northwest Economic Council and CTED.

"They were helpful in prioritizing our needs and helping us figure out which aspects of the proposal were strongest and which to focus on," Oberlander says. "We knew this was a regional issue that would benefit not only us but people throughout the state and the West Coast."

The tribe inquired about funding options through CTED, which led Harris and Jordan to explore and successfully pursue this CERB grant.

"CERB is about creating private sector jobs and investment through public infrastructure," says Harris. "We're always looking at projects and asking, 'Is this a fit for CERB?'"

Harris points out that this type of funding is available only to cities, counties,

As we summarized recently at our well-attended annual meeting, the BWEDC has been involved in a year-long process to develop a long-term strategy and action steps for implementation. Through this process we've also forged a new brand identity and become the Northwest Economic Council - Whatcom County.



We're grateful to BrandStrategy, Inc. founder and Chairman Duane Knapp, who led us through a disciplined process to assess our current community perception, develop a BrandPromise® and create a Brand Blueprint that will guide our efforts going forward.

As the designated Associate Development Organization for Whatcom County, we're committed to expanding economic opportunities across all sectors, partnering with other entities to pursue a regional economic development strategy, and continuing to provide expertise and exceptional service to this business community.

We look forward to unveiling a new graphic identity, being designed by Ferndale-based ioCreative, and we're curious to hear your thoughts on the new identity package. Please send us an [e-mail](#) if you'd like to comment. You can find more on the results of our work with Duane at our current address, www.bwedc.org, and learn more about BrandStrategy, Inc. at www.brandstrategy.com.

From Where We Sit

Many would say that times are bleak, but we see plenty that's good about our local economy. A great example is the Lummi Shellfish Hatchery. The hatchery, which has operated on the Lummi reservation since 1970, is making plans for a much needed expansion. A feasibility study, funded in part by the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), will pave the way for growth that will benefit not only the tribe, but dozens of shellfish growers throughout the state and along the West Coast. This is a local project with huge regional reach.



Then there was the good news about an expansion for Puglia Engineering's Fairhaven Shipyards. The company plans to hire about 90 new employees this year as it expands into a larger space and prepares a second dry dock for operation. Fairhaven Shipyards will use the space next to the Bellingham Cruise Terminal vacated by Arrowac Fisheries to accommodate administration offices and an estimating/planning center, with future plans for expanded valve and machine shops. With the arrival of a new dry dock from China, the company will be able to service more and larger vessels. And that means more jobs, says company President Neil Turney.

ports and tribes for the creation of infrastructure. "The feasibility study is only one part of the process; the next piece is the construction," she says.

Currently, the Lummi hatchery is a critical supplier of shellfish seed for about 75 growers. Most are in Washington, with a handful in California, Alaska and British Columbia. Oberlander says the hatchery is different from others because it sells most of its seed stock instead of growing it out to market size.

"We're not farmers," she says. "We're a hatchery."

The expanded growing facility will provide more room to produce the lucrative geoduck seed, support current employment levels and generate some new jobs. The enhanced beach areas, where oysters and clams grow naturally, will help support 200 or more oyster and clam diggers.

Merle Jefferson, the tribe's Director of Natural Resources, says the hatchery has been self-sustaining from the beginning.

"It covers the cost of the employees and all expenses and while some years are good and some are bad, it produces for our members," he says.

Jefferson says the expansion will help improve water quality for production, reduce utility costs and help mitigate some of the risk that comes with producing any sort of crop.

The funded feasibility study should be completed by the end of the year, after water testing during each season, and construction should be underway in 2010.

"Everyone around here is excited about being able to grow more and the additional enhancement on the Lummi beaches," says Oberlander. "I'm personally excited about how much seed we'll be able to provide to growers who need it."

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The Northwest Economic Council - Whatcom County is a non-profit partnership of private and public entities organized to create collaborative opportunities that support the long-term vitality and stability of the

We also see a business community reaping the benefits of some innovative public/private teamwork. Businesses are seeking information and resources to help weather the storm and finding them through a host of recent workshops, seminars and forums. Healthy attendance at the Alternative Finance Seminar, the local Export Seminar during Trade Week and the ongoing City Technicians: "Business Wellness Check" training series reflects a savvy business community eager to access available tools and resources. Be sure to check out our calendar for upcoming events.

In 2008, we saw a dramatic shift in the national business climate and began to feel the effects locally. Yet, many businesses continued to make strides. We saw an uptick in the number of start-ups looking for assistance, established businesses seeking alternative funding and other resources, and companies outside the area looking to come in. And that, in conjunction with activities summarized in our [Annual Report](#), set the stage for a very dynamic year in 2009.

New Posts

We're celebrating our 25th Anniversary this year, and among the many changes marking the end of our first quarter century are some on our Board.

After four dedicated years of service as Chairman, Ray Trzynka has stepped down. Peggy Zoro, Wells Fargo Bank Senior Vice President and fellow Board Member, says of her friend, "Ray is a community leader known for his authenticity, honor, integrity and his skill at building and sustaining business and community relationships. It has been an honor to work in partnership with him over an extended period of time on a variety of community projects to the point that I know exactly what he likes to eat for breakfast. I consider Ray a friend and a valued colleague. He has my deepest admiration and respect."

Thank you, Ray, for all you've done for this organization and this community.



Ablly filling his shoes as Board Chair is Board Member Bruce MacCormack. Bruce is a retired Senior Advisor to the Service Industry Group of IBM, Corp. who operates his own consulting company, Cascadia Consulting LLC and also serves as Chair of the Bellingham Angel Group. He's a board member of the Whatcom Museum of History and Art and a member of the Rotary Club of Bellingham and the British Institute of Management. Bruce has served on the Economic Council's Executive Committee and the Communications and Member Relations Advisory Team.

In order to honor and preserve the institutional knowledge held by the talented people who've dedicated themselves to this organization, we've also established a new Executive Committee seat: the Chair Emeritus, currently held by Past Chair Peggy Zoro.

Watch for more announcements about our Board of talented men and women who devote their time and energy to the worthy goal of economic opportunity for all of Whatcom County!

Collaborate, Contribute, Create

Becoming a member of the Northwest Economic Council - Whatcom County gives you access to the partnerships that create economic opportunity. We've restructured member rates to accommodate businesses of every size, and we welcome participation at every level. We hope you'll work with us by becoming a member, joining an advisory group or sponsoring an event. Your participation is crucial to our success.

Whatcom economy.

We operate with the support of CTED,
Whatcom County, the City of Bellingham and
the Port of Bellingham

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about the benefits of membership in your Economic Council.

Coming Up...

For a list of upcoming events please visit our [website](#) and don't miss:

Business Wellness Check: Marketing your Business in Challenging Times,
April 16, 2009

Mount Baker Theatre, Walton Room

The Future of Business: Green Jobs and Sustainable Industries in the 21st Century, April 17, 2009

Whatcom Community College

Washington Latino Business Association Trade, Travel & Real Estate Conference, May 14, 2009

Silver Reef Casino

Washington State Agency Seminar-Westside Event,

April 23, 2009

Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center.

Service Highlight

The Northwest Economic Council's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) was established more than 20 years ago through a grant from the federal Economic Development Administration. The funding is intended to support the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) program, through loans to existing county businesses. RLF loans are particularly targeted toward the manufacturing sector because of the diverse employment base the sector generates, but any private, for-profit concern will be considered.

Loans are typically made in amounts ranging from \$30,000 to \$75,000. Below-market, fixed interest rates are standard, and funds may be used for fixed assets such as equipment and real estate and/or working capital. All loans must be approved by the RLF Committee, which represents a cross-section of community businesses, lenders, minorities and elected officials.

Among the top criteria the committee considers is whether the loan is likely to generate new jobs for Whatcom County residents. The committee also looks at whether the applicant's business will significantly improve the tax base and serve as an asset to the community through relationships with other businesses and diversification of the employment base.

The RLF is about creating jobs and supporting the kinds of businesses the community has said it wants to see. For more information, please visit our [website](#) or call John Michener at 360-676-4255.