

BUSINESSES, PORTS AND LEGISLATORS HOLD RURAL JOBS SUMMIT IN OLYMPIA

Since the election last fall there has been increased political awareness of the need to address rural economic development. To that end, WPPA partnered with the Association of Washington Business (AWB) to develop a "Rural Jobs Summit" in Olympia on Saturday, March 4. AWB hosted the event, and facilitated the day.



Alissa Shay, Port of Grays Harbor

Sixteen legislators attended the event, along with over sixty additional business, port, EDC and agency attendees from across Washington. A panel of legislators from rural districts started the program, and additional presentations focused on the current economic situation facing rural communities. Two port staff - Alissa Shay from the Port of Grays Harbor and Pat Jones from the Port of Chelan County - joined EDC staff from Adams and Yakima counties to present ideas and suggestions for rural job creation.

Photos courtesy of Brian Mittge, AWB

Common themes revolved around the need to improve and expand the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), increase the kind of capital budget investments that the state provided in 2012, and expand rural broadband availability. Senate Majority Leader Mark Schoesler of Ritzville noted in his opening remarks, "One hundred years ago my family farm had to have the railroad to survive. Today we need that connection with broadband; that's the new railroad."

As the five-hour event drew to a close, there was agreement from all of the participants that this discussion needs to both grow and continue. WPPA will include a rural economic development session at the WPPA Spring Meeting at Suncadia Resort May 17, 2017. For more information about the discussions that occurred during this summit contact Eric Johnson or James Thompson at the WPPA office.



Diahann Howard, Port of Benton

WPPA SPOTLIGHT

PORT TOWNSEND SCORES! MARITIME TRAINING PROMISES A STRONG WORKFORCE FOR THE STATE

Washington's maritime industry is crucial to the state's economy. But a gap in the workforce threatened the state's maritime industry. The industry relies on trained systems technicians, but these workers were in critically short supply. As a consequence of the shortage, local businesses were forced to train their own workers, hire technicians from out of state, or turn down offers of work. If Washington wanted to maintain its competitive edge, it needed trained maritime workers.



In response to this need, the Economic Development Council for Jefferson County ("Team Jefferson") requested

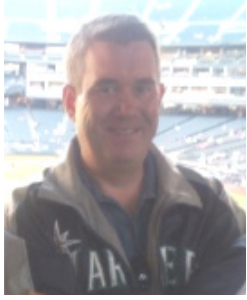
funding for a marine vessel systems curriculum at Port Townsend's Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding ("NWSWB").

The State Department of Commerce responded to Team Jefferson's proposal by granting \$100,000 to launch a new systems technician training program at NWSWB.

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FROM ERIC JOHNSON

FAST BALLS, CURVE BALLS & CHANGE UPS



Every batter sometimes gets a curve ball that hangs over the plate. When you get one of those, you swing hard. About a month ago I got the equivalent of one when my friend and colleague Kris Johnson – Executive Director of the Association of Washington Business – called me and asked,

“Do you think it’s a good idea to organize a Rural Jobs Summit?”

I swung hard at that pitch. The Saturday before last I participated in the result, which is described in this edition’s cover story. Kudos to AWB for kicking this off, and I sincerely hope that we have created some momentum around a policy area that sure needs it.

I want to share some of the things that I took away from this event. First of all, there are many people who care about this issue who do not live in rural areas. Some of the legislators who seem most invested in helping are actually from Seattle, Shoreline and Kirkland. Another thing I learned is that we have been putting our political efforts into the things that rural areas need, and which, if done properly, actually work. CERB, targeted capital investment, broadband infrastructure and increasing the state’s ability to target key sectors are all things that matter and they have all been WPPA priorities. Finally, rural leaders and legislators are passionate about their communities, but they are not very unified into a common approach.

As the day wound down and everyone was leaving, I had a conversation with Alissa Shay from the Port of Grays Harbor; one of the port staff who presented ideas that day. She made a very insightful observation. She said something like, “It’s too bad that most of what we talked about was just keeping the small programs that we have. No one brought up any new big or creative ideas.”

Her comment has been on my mind ever since. We need to keep our small programs intact, but it would be nice to create a big new one once in a while, too. With policy-makers focused on education almost exclusively, we need to keep reminding them that a diverse and healthy rural economy needs to be one of our biggest priorities too.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Meeting

May 17-19, 2017
Suncadia Resort, Cle Elum

Finance and

Administration Seminar

June 14-16, 2017
Semiahmoo Resort, Blaine

Directors Seminar

July 13-14, 2017
Adrift Hotel & Spa and
Chinook School, Long Beach

Commissioners Seminar

July 24-25, 2017
Alderbrook Resort, Union

PORT TOWNSEND MARITIME TRAINING

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The NWSWB program promises to help Washington’s workforce remain connected to the maritime industry, which directly contributes over 69,000 family-wage jobs and \$37 billion to the State’s economy.

NWSWB has been around for 35 years and works closely with the maritime industry’s demands. It trains workers in the skill-sets they need to enter the marine trades workforce.

NWSWB offers intensive hands-on training in topics such as basic electrical, marine diesel engines, propulsion, steering and controls, marine plumbing, and now its curriculum will include vessel systems.

Vocational training is a key ingredient in building a thriving local economy. The new systems technician program is expected to become an important, sustainable component of Port Townsend Bay’s marine industry. It will support port operations and local marine businesses by providing newly trained systems technicians.

The Port of Port Townsend hires many NWSWB graduates to work in its yard. The Port’s Executive Director, Sam Gibboney, commented that “The new Marine Systems Curriculum is highly relevant to the work going on in the Port today.”



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Accountant

Skamania County PUD No. 1

Marina Office Assistant – LaConner Marina

Port of Skagit

Port Auditor / Treasurer

Port of Walla Walla

Senior Manager, Planning

Northwest Seaport Alliance

Airport Manager

Port of Bremerton

Executive Director

Port of Coupeville

Executive Director

Port of Friday Harbor

Senior Accountant

Port of Seattle

Airport Duty Manager – Airfield Operations

Port of Seattle

Sr. Manager Communications – Aviation Marketing

Port of Seattle

Contract Administrator – Construction

Port of Seattle

Director, Engineering

Port of Tacoma

Senior Real Estate Manager

Port of Tacoma

Assistant Director, Facilities

Port of Tacoma

If you would like information on any of these positions, visit <http://washingtonports.org/washington-ports/employment-opportunities/>