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## BUILDING A SMART COMMUNITY WITH SMART PEOPLE, PLACES & THINGS

Few would argue that technology is re-shaping the world at a break-neck pace. If one is to believe the speakers at a recent Port of Ridgefield commission meeting, then people, businesses and communities that embrace the tools of this current and future reality are more likely to enjoy greater economic prosperity, increased productivity, and an enhanced quality of life. Advanced infrastructure is necessary to access these tools, and thoughtful placemaking further expands on the elements that foster quality of life and connection to place. Combined, these concepts converge as the basis for building a smart community.

**Smart People**

In the Winter 2017 issue of Port Works, (Visit the newsletter section of the port’s website) we presented an article based on a 2015 Brookings Report that revealed the Portland-Metro area, of which Ridgefield is included, is one of only 19 metro areas in the world deemed a “knowledge capital.” Commonalities of these 19 areas are that they have talented workforces

and elite research universities; these cities are also among the wealthiest and most productive in the world, according to the report, and are less dependent on traditional manufacturing. Instead, these cities are more invested in the business of technology, including the development and sales of systems that collect and analyze data for use by industry, government, and the non-profit sector.

Port CEO Brent Grening believes this new reality underscores the premise that creating a climate in Clark County that fosters an educated workforce and entrepreneurship are critical pieces of the infrastructure pie necessary to create a healthy economy and a smart community.

“Communities that are innovative and embrace the new ‘now’ and don’t shun science, technology, or the productive use of data will be better positioned to capitalize in our knowledge economy,” he said.

Grening is a believer that Ridgefield is well-poised in this arena.

“We have a great K-12 system, a progressive community college investing in north Clark County, an active partner and growing research university in

**SMART COMMUNITY, PAGE 2**

## PORT OF RIDGEFIELD RAIL OVERPASS PROJECT STILL ON TRACK

Over the last several years, the Port of Ridgefield has been working on the Pioneer Street Rail Overpass project, which will allow safe and expedient auto and pedestrian passage between Millers’ Landing – the port’s 41 acre

mixed-use waterfront development site – and downtown Ridgefield.

Phases 1 and 2 were completed in 2013 and 2014 respectively. The last and final phase, due to start this summer, has been pushed back a bit

to the fall of 2017 or so as it awaits approval by the Washington State Department of Transportation and Burlington Northern, the rail line operator.

**RAIL OVERPASS, PAGE 4**



This rendering shows the completed Pioneer Street Rail Overpass. The approach roads from the north and east have already been constructed by the port. The last and final phase of the project is the construction of the overpass span, anticipated to start this fall.



## OPPORTUNITY IS KNOCKING

BY SCOTT HUGHES, COMMISSIONER

You may have noticed by now that there's a theme to this issue of our newsletter, and it's that smart people, places and things make for a smart community.

And while I'm a port commissioner, my wife and I also own two businesses in downtown Ridgefield. So when thinking about this concept of being "smart," my perspective naturally turns to fostering that ideal through successful entrepreneurship.

One thing I do know that distinguishes the fate of an entrepreneur is the ability (or inability) to recognize – and seize – an opportunity when it appears. A new opportunity has come knocking on the door of our community, and its name is Ilani.

The casino has reported that more than 10,000 people are spending time at its facility each day. It's reasonable to assume those people aren't all from North Clark County. That means there are a lot of people driving by Ridgefield every day, and probably folks coming from the north, too.

Anecdotal conversations tell me that some area businesses are already noticing an uptick at their cash registers, as increased traffic brings increased business. But are all businesses taking proactive steps to benefit from this new economic potential? Are we lifting the proverbial hood on our current business model and tuning it up if necessary to capitalize on this "gift horse?" Are there new businesses that could spring forth to meet the demands of this new market? Is the market limited to tourism-related opportunity, or is there some other way to serve the needs of Ilani or its customers?

You don't have to be an entrepreneur to benefit from an economically-stronger Ridgefield. When more jobs are created for locals, and when more services and amenities exist – we all win.

It's time for out-of-the-box, smart thinking. Ready. Set. Go.

### SMART COMMUNITY, FROM PG 1

Washington State University-Vancouver. The pump is primed for our success."

#### Growing-our-Own Entrepreneurs

In addition to the educational infrastructure available here, entrepreneurship in Clark County is getting a boost from a couple of enterprising men with experience and passion for mentoring a specific kind of start-up business. At an early May port commission meeting, business consultant Pete Fry, and David Barcos, founding member of The Bridge Incubator in Vancouver, (TheBridgeIncubator.com)



brought their vision of "what could be." Mentorship energy, they say, should be focused on "seed stage" businesses that have an opportunity to derive revenue from outside the region.

"The Columbia River Economic Development Council is chartered with the more traditional, two-legged stool approach to economic development that includes retaining and attracting business," Fry said. "Our concept is to mentor, or 'fertilize,' our seed stage businesses."

To that end the duo is seeking funding for a new membership-based organization that would offer time and resources to work with entrepreneurs across a broad spectrum of businesses. Existing businesses and institutions would pay in to allow for investment in Clark County start-ups via grants – a model similar to that of an organization in Iowa at

"People have learned that while they can make money in Portland, if they operate in Clark County they can keep it."

Business Consultant Pete Fry

which Fry worked.

"We saw a billion dollars in economic impact and 1,500 new jobs in Cedar Rapids, much of it due to our efforts," said Fry.

With a Washington tax structure more favorable than that of neighboring Oregon, Fry thinks investment in fostering a start-up business climate in Clark County will reap rewards for the county and its

entrepreneurs.

"People have learned that while they can make money in Portland, if they operate in Clark County they can keep it," said Fry.

#### Smart Places & Spaces Designed with Intent

According to the Project for Public Spaces website, placemaking inspires people to collectively

"...we're positioned to build spaces that enhance the livability and environment of this place we call home."

Port Commissioner Scott Hughes

reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of a community. The organization's messaging said that placemaking should strengthen the connection between people and the places they share, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

For Port of Ridgefield CEO Brent Grening, digging into placemaking strategy is at the forefront of development plans for two port-owned properties in Ridgefield: Discovery Ridge – 30 acres at 45th and Pioneer streets, and Millers' Landing – a 41 acre waterfront site on Lake River.

To that end, port representatives have met with several area firms that work in the realm of placemaking, endeavoring to get a sense of what



each of them has to offer the port in its aim to develop both of these properties for the highest benefit to the Ridgefield community.

"Placemaking aligns with the port's values and supports our triple bottom-line mission," said Port Commissioner Scott Hughes. "We believe people come first. If we keep that in front of us, we're positioned to build spaces that enhance the livability and environment of this place we call home."

Grening believes any development project starts with quality design at its center, coupled with an experience that embraces the Northwest culture and is "authentic Ridgefield."

"Our aim is to engage the user in the feeling of the place, while reinforcing and promoting the unique

aspects of the area."

In the port's work to identify key placemaking elements, commissioners and staff have learned there are a variety of attractors that make places work for the people they serve. They include mixed-use, live-work, and flexible work spaces; recreational options like walking trails; food and dining options; arts, culture and entertainment choices; beer and wine venues, medical services and socializing spaces.

"Tying these elements together with engaging design on our two development sites takes careful planning and quality-minded development partners," Grening said.

The port's discovery process surrounding placemaking comes at a critical time. Rapid residential growth is pushing the need for goods and services to satisfy the demands of a fast-growing population. Pressure is on the port to develop one of its sites quickly, but Grening and the commissioners insist on staying true to their course.

"We are patient and purposeful," said Port Commissioner Joe Melroy. "We have the chance to build smartly on each of these properties and create places that contribute to the community now and into the future. We don't want to blow the opportunity with which we've been entrusted."

"We have the chance to build smartly on each of these properties...We don't want to blow the opportunity with which we've been entrusted."

Port Commissioner Joe Melroy

**Smart Things**

At a port commission meeting held at the Ridgefield Community Center in late May, the commission and other attendees heard from ISoftStone. ISoft is a global company that self-describes as a technology consulting firm that partners with its clients to bring best-in-class digital transformation services to improve business process and performance.

Prior to introducing the speakers, Grening spoke of the port's current effort to develop a dark fiber network, pointing out that smart infrastructure and high-speed digital connections are at the heart of a community's ability to benefit from new technology.

"As the internet of things, or IoT emerges, huge amounts of data from sensors on millions of devices can be collected, the information of which can improve people's lives," Grening said.

Port Commissioner Scott Hughes supported Grening's comment, noting that connecting all of the "things" that produce helpful data will be necessary, and doing so over copper wire is not feasible. "We are talking fiber," he emphasized.

**What is a Smart Community?**

ISoft presenter Michael Mallahan opened by acknowledging there is no universal definition for a

"smart community," but their firm defines it as the effective integration of mechanical, digital and human systems for the good of its citizens.

"A smart community uses technology to connect these elements. Together they can provide community-wide benefits and positive outcomes,"



Mallahan said.

Some examples cited by Mallahan and co-presenter, Greta Knappenberger, include self-driving vehicles, traffic flow improvements, smart municipal energy and water systems that help businesses and citizens conserve resources and save money, and data that can decrease response times for emergency workers.

"There are systems in place around the country that can let you know if your toilet is running, or your garage door has been left open, but you have to connect all the various devices or 'things' to collect the information to make it a useful tool," Knappenberger said.

#### Smart Infrastructure Supports a Smart Community

"Smart infrastructure is the cornerstone of economic development. We refer to it as the fourth industrial revolution," Knappenberger said. "It includes robotics, artificial intelligence and 3-D printing, all of which will revolutionize how infrastructure is built."

She said communities that don't have all of these things in place yet don't need to panic.

"You can leverage the infrastructure you do have by doing more with it."

At the meeting's close, Grening emphasized the

"If we bring fiber-optic connectivity to our area, we will foster business opportunities... That helps build our local economy."

Port CEO Brent Grening

port's intent in focusing on smart infrastructure to help build a smart community.

"If we bring fiber-optic connectivity to our area, we will foster business opportunities to create products and services for that technology space. That helps build our local economy."

## BIZ BRIEFS

### PORT TRAIL SIGNS HELP KEEP DOGS ON LEASH

Many people love dogs. But some people, well, don't. The reasons may range from a childhood or adult run-in with a violent dog, or those that just don't relish an exuberant canine slobbering on their clean clothes. And even dog-lovers don't always want their own pooch in a tangle with other dogs. Whatever the reason, off-leash dogs on the port's waterfront trail were causing angst for some trail-users.

In response to this concern, port officials recently posted signs asking dog-owners to



respect others on the trail by leashing their animal when other people are present.

The good news? People are responding positively.

"We appreciate the cooperation by the public," said port CEO Brent Grening. "The waterfront is an amenity for everyone. User awareness and response is making the waterfront trail experience more enjoyable and relaxing for a greater number of users."

### REFUGE TRAIL EXPANDING

In partnership with the port and City of Ridgefield, the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge continues to expand its trail system to add to the port's family-friendly waterfront trail development.

The Carty Lake Trail is currently under construction; it's expected to open in summer 2018. This new trail will provide a free, year-round walking loop for wildlife viewing on Carty Lake and Lake River.

Beyond that area, a seasonal trail with a \$3 daily entrance fee will allow access to the Cathlapotle Plankhouse, the Oaks to Wetlands Trail System, and the Refuge Office. By fall of 2018, walkers will be able to connect back into downtown Ridgefield via Main Avenue, for a five-mile loop trail system through the Refuge, city and port.

Until the Carty Lake Trail is open, walkers can access it starting from the Main Avenue Refuge entrance for a 2.2 mile total out-and-back experience.

Visit [www.fws.gov/refuge/Ridgefield](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Ridgefield) for more information.

# SMART PEOPLE + SMART PLACES + SMART THINGS = SMART COMMUNITY

**Smart PEOPLE**

- Educated & Highly Skilled
- Entrepreneurial Talent
- Tech-Savvy Leadership

**Smart PLACES**

- Design with People in Mind
- Broadband Anywhere
- Smart Infrastructure
- Enhanced Safety & Security

**Smart THINGS**

Provide:

- Energy & Water Conservation
- Transportation Efficiency
- Smart Buildings
- Internet of Things (IoT)

**Smart COMMUNITY**

- Enhanced Citizen Services
- Streamlined Government
- Environmental Quality Assurance
- Cost Savings



## ON THE LEVEL

### Our Future: Smart People, Places, Things

BY BRENT GRENING, CEO  
If the first half of the year is an indication, 2017 will be the year of smart people, places and things. The convergence of these three elements won't be a flash-in-the-pan, but will be trending into the future.

Let's start with smart people. Ridgefield and Vancouver School Districts are making substantial investments in the Discovery Corridor – including VSD's new iTech Prep high school building at Washington State University-Vancouver. Clark College is working to make its North County campus a reality, and WSU-Vancouver wants to move ahead on planning a new life sciences building. That's a lot of infrastructure to support creation of smart people; a talent pool for area employers and for growing-our-own entrepreneurs.

Meanwhile, our port's work with light-ready fiber optic infrastructure creates a path forward to smart infrastructure: Think roads providing real-time data to cars and drivers, helping to move traffic more smoothly. Many communities are already using digital sensors to operate public utilities more efficiently – a way of getting more value for less money.

Then there's the internet of things or "IoT" – a network of billions of sensing devices that allow for autonomous vehicles and the like. These things are coming. Economically-speaking, smart people, places and things create opportunity.

Local entrepreneurs are now working to create businesses, products and services in this environment. Entrepreneurship and risk-taking are critical elements in growing a local environment that can adapt and create value in a rapidly-changing economy. By supporting local businesses we will build a robust business culture as part of our community development strategy.

The Discovery Corridor is poised to benefit if we understand, pursue and implement systems to develop smart people, places and things.

## NEW WDFW BUILDING ON TIME & UNDER BUDGET

The Port of Ridgefield and the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife are co-hosting a grand opening ceremony to celebrate the completion of the WDFW's new Region 5 headquarters building in Ridgefield. The event will feature a flag-raising by a local Boy Scout troop and remarks by representatives of various agencies, after which cake and coffee will be served. Tours of the new building will be available.

The Port of Ridgefield project was successfully completed on-time and under budget; 100-plus WDFW personnel moved into the building in early July.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1PM- FLAG-RAISING  
by local Boy Scouts of America Troop # 310

1:15PM – REMARKS

1:30PM - CAKE & COFFEE

Building Tours: 1:30PM-3PM

This event is open to the public. All are invited to attend, and seating will be available. If you need special assistance please contact the Port of Ridgefield by calling 360.887.3873 or email [WBaldwin@portridgefield.org](mailto:WBaldwin@portridgefield.org).

# You're Invited!

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE  
NEW REGION 5 HQ BUILDING

## GRAND OPENING

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26 @ 1PM  
5525 S. 11TH ST., RIDGEFIELD, WA  
RSVP BY TUESDAY, JULY 18  
[WBaldwin@PortRidgefield.org](mailto:WBaldwin@PortRidgefield.org)



## PORT PAYS TRIBUTE TO ALLENE WODAEGE

Whether one calls her Allene or the "Queen," by any name, longtime Ridgefield resident Allene Wodaeye's contributions are extensive. With over 50 years of volunteer and work commitment to the community, few would argue that Allene's vision and efforts have made Ridgefield a better place.

To honor her for all that she has given to her community, the Port of Ridge-

field had a stone bench created with an inscription that pays tribute to Allene. So on May 10, directly following a port commission meeting, port officials surprised Allene by taking her to view the bench waiting to be unveiled at the new port waterfront kiosk near the Refuge entry. The inscription on the stone reads, "Allene Wodaeye: a love of community, schools and nature ..we walk in

her footsteps."

"Allene has been a supporter of the environment and the port for many years," Port CEO Brent Grening said. "She's a regular fixture at our meetings, and is not afraid to let us know what's on her mind. We value her leadership, insight, friendship and her pride in Ridgefield, and this was a way for us to say 'thank you.'"



Port commissioners flank Allene Wodaeye as she sits on the bench made in her honor. L-R: Scott Hughes, Joe Melroy and Bruce Wiseman.

"Allene Wodaeye: a love of community, schools and nature... we walk in her footsteps."

It's written in stone.



Allene Wodaeye and Port CEO Brent Grening sit on the new bench that honors Allene's many contributions to the community.

### RAIL OVERPASS, FROM PG 1

Design and permitting is completed for Phase 3. The City of Ridgefield has already approved the port's plan, which is the construction of an overpass span. The gently-graded span will tie the previously constructed overpass approach roads – one between Division and Mill Streets and the other at the foot of Pioneer Street – to complete the railroad overpass.

Brent Grening, CEO for the port, believes completion of the Pioneer Rail Overpass is important in attracting a development partner for the port's waterfront site.

"We've known that getting easily and safely to and from our parcel would be important for the success of a development project on the site, as well as encouraging downtown Ridgefield investment," said Grening.

Grening also noted that the port is seeking a developer who is aligned with the commission's goal of returning the property to a jobs-producing site, but stressed it is also important that a developer be respectful of the community's interest in accessing this uniquely beautiful,

natural asset.

"The proximity of Millers' Landing to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, trails and Lake River recreation makes this property a special place; the port wants to do this right, with a developer that understands our mission," Grening said.

Funding for the \$11.3 million overpass project has come from several sources. In 2015 the port secured \$7.8 million in state funding, and last year the port was awarded \$900,000 from a U.S. Department of Transportation Railroad Safety Grant. The remaining dollars for the project were provided by the port and others.

Construction for the final phase of the overpass project is expected to commence this fall, with completion anticipated by the end of 2018.

Upon completion of the Pioneer Rail Overpass, the two existing rail crossings in Ridgefield – one at Division Street and the other at Mill Street – will be closed, although Division Street will be opened in the event of an emergency.