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MODERN USE FOR HISTORIC FARM

EFFORTS HAMPERED
BY SLOW INTERNET
SPEED

With the Lewis River as a backdrop, Ridgefield resident David Morgan stands on his family's property, Plas Newydd Farm. Morgan is the third generation to manage the family's farm since the land was purchased in 1941. Soon, he hopes to put some of the farm's 1,700 acres to use as a wetlands mitigation bank. Limited broadband capacity is slowing him down.

At first glance, the rural outskirts of Ridgefield don't seem to be a place where there's a need for state-of-the-art, high-speed broadband services. Here, the adventuring driver or cyclist will find the landscape dominated by vast expanses of pastureland, the occasional home or horse barn, and seasonally active or dormant farm vehicles. Beyond the bucolic scenery, however, there's a business on the cusp of launching a new, investment-intensive operation that's being crippled by the less-than-optimal internet and data connection speeds currently available in some parts of North Clark County.

An excursion beyond Ridgefield's northern city limits

"We are not
running at the speed
of modern business."

David Morgan, Managing
Partner, Plas Newydd LLC

to the end of Lancaster Road yields a large, crisp-white, 1850s Southern Colonial-style house perched above a wide expanse of emerald lawn fronted by towering evergreen trees. The house, which is on the National Register of Historic Places as the Columbia Lancaster House, overlooks the Lewis River and the 1,700 acres that comprise Plas Newydd Farm, (Plas Newydd is pronounced *plas newith*; it's Welsh for "new place"). The stately home now serves as the headquarters for Plas Newydd LLC and its 12 employees.

Since 1941, the farm has operated under the ownership of the Morgan family. Ridgefield resident David Morgan is the managing partner of Plas Newydd LLC today. The reins of the company were passed to him nine years ago

HISTORIC FARM, PAGE 2

WDFW BUILDING ON SCHEDULE

Move in day in a new building in Ridgefield is just a few months away for the 100-plus employees of the regional headquarters of the Washington Department of Fish &

Wildlife. The port is constructing the building on port property at South 11th Street; WDFW will lease it from the port for a minimum of 10 years.

"Despite record snow and rain, we

are on schedule," said Laurie Olin, the port's vice president of operations. "We're grateful to our contractors who have been working hard to get us to completion by our June deadline."





OUR I-5 BRIDGE

IT'S TIME FOR THE NEXT PITCH

BY JOE MELROY
COMMISSIONER

Each spring I umpire youth baseball. So maybe that's why it strikes me (pun intended) that discussion of the need for a new Columbia River Bridge on I-5 merits the use of a few baseball analogies.

For example, some people might see the earlier, bi-state attempt to develop the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) as a "strike" – a perfectly thrown pitch that we just plain missed.

Others might see the failed CRC as a "ball" – a badly thrown pitch that deserved to be ignored.

You can call it as you see it, but no matter how you do, it's time for the next pitch for the replacement of this substandard bridge. Why? Because our state and regional economies are being negatively impacted by chronic traffic congestion at this I-5 choke point.

Washington will need to work on this with Oregon. It's time for local leadership to step to the plate now. Who's it going to be? Clark County voices raised objection to a new I-5 bridge a few years ago. Therefore Washington and Oregon governors and legislators will need to see there is local political will to move this project forward.

To that end, our port commission, in concert with the two other ports in Clark County, recently issued a joint resolution to voice support for a new bi-state conversation to replace this bridge.

Are we going to connect with a thriving Portland-Metro area and the greater region? If we want more business on our side of the river, we need an I-5 bridge that can do the job.

So let me give it to you straight – local leadership needs to step up to the plate because it's time to play ball!

HISTORIC FARM, FROM PG 1

from his father Rhidian Morgan. Before that, David's grandfather, Aubrey Niel Morgan, ran things. Early on the farm was supported by dairy farming, cattle ranching and sustainable forestry.

With changing times, Plas Newydd is changing, too. Today, limited and certified logging is the only original farm function in existence; dairy farming and cattle ranching have been replaced by leases for cattle grazing and duck hunting. Soon, with a look to the future and a nod to the Morgan family's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, Plas Newydd is heading in a new direction.

"All of our businesses need to be connected to be successful in our modern world."

Brent Grening,
CEO Port of Ridgefield

Wapato Valley Mitigation and Conservation Bank

Since 2008, the Morgan family has been discussing the concept of restoring some of its cattle grazing land for use



This stately home is perched atop a hill overlooking Plas Newydd Farm. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places as the Columbia Lancaster House. It now serves as the headquarters for Plas Newydd LLC and its 12 employees.

as a wetlands and habitat mitigation bank, which would serve to reestablish important natural habitat in the lower Columbia River region.

Mitigation banks are necessary when a development project is to be constructed on environmentally-sensitive land. In these cases, developers are required to "mitigate" for project impacts by restoring wetlands functions. They can do this by creating their own wetlands or by purchasing credits. This national program helps to maintain the overall health of the country's watershed ecosystems, while allowing economic development projects to move forward.

In 2013, Plas Newydd embarked on the effort in earnest, with a plan to restore nearly 900 acres to its historic ecological health as fish habitat under the name Wapato Valley Mitigation and Conservation Bank.

Now, after four years, and with as many as 10 full-time staff scientists on the project, Plas Newydd hopes to have its wetlands and conserva-

tion bank plan approved by year end. With approval in hand, the farm will then embark on the work to restore the bank portion of the property. It can also begin to recover its investment by selling mitigation and conservation credits.

"The bank certification process and planning to restore 876 acres is very involved, with a huge upfront investment. We hope to begin seeing a return on our dollars next year," said Morgan.

The need for speed

The data collection and analysis work for this Plas Newydd undertaking requires a great deal of internet bandwidth. With the addition of the science and engineering team to the working farm, terabytes of information are processed regularly with highly-technical tasks: Wetlands and habitat productivity baselines are necessary to assess the current and future health of the aquatic and land-based flora and fauna in the bank area. Additionally, there is a regular need to use GIS and GPS to develop topography maps, send large design files, photos and video, data, maps, and more back and forth between agencies, remote contractors, or staff.

With no DSL available and just one landline serving Plas Newydd, the farm is limited by the 18-20 MBps wireless internet connection it receives from Scappoose, just across the Columbia River in Oregon.

The wait time to send or receive a large file can be up to 20 minutes, with someone waiting at each end. And that's on a good day.

"When there's heavy rain or wind, our signal is not stable and it degrades, which sometimes causes us to lose our connection and we have to start all over again," Morgan said.

Off-site file back-up is challenging, too – Morgan currently hand-delivers a back-up data drive to a Vancouver storage center, instead of simply uploading the files to a remote server.

"We need at least 100 MBps to download and upload files. At the lower speed available now, we can't conduct business like the rest of the world."

Yield on investment at risk

The financial opportunity for Plas Newydd is not insignificant: According to the Ecosystem Marketplace website, which publishes newsletters, breaking news, original feature articles and major reports about market-based approaches to conserving ecosystem services, the annual transaction value for wetland mitigation credits is over \$1 billion nationally – a share of which, Plas Newydd hopes to capture. But slow internet speeds may put a crimp on things.

Morgan says their future clients will be running industrial complexes, and will have an expectation of high speed technology availability.

"Their perception of our business will affect the sale of conservation credits. The wetlands banking business is a competitive market, and with modern broadband speeds, we'd have a competitive advantage."

Morgan said it is ironic that while the Wapato Valley project is one of the largest habitat restoration projects and wetland mitigation bank proposals in the state of Washington, state-of-the-art business communications aren't available to Plas Newydd farm.

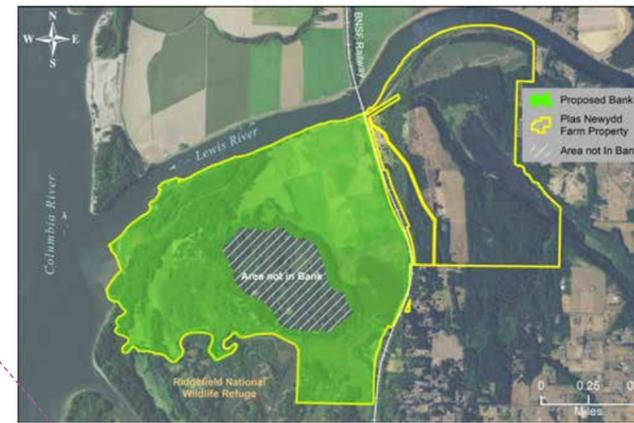
"We are not running at the speed of modern business. If I were siting this restoration business, I'd want a one gigabyte connection as my baseline. It's the piece of infrastructure I need the most."

Option to move team out of Ridgefield

Morgan acknowledges it was a choice to shift from consistent farming to high-speed internet-dependent conservation work. An option for Plas Newydd is to move its employees to a location in the Portland-Vancouver Metro area, where faster upload and download speeds are available.

Morgan worries, however, that moving the operation out of the Ridgefield area would not only be challenging for Plas Newydd's staff, who need to be close to the field work they do, but would also be detrimental to Ridgefield's local economy.

"When I work at home in Ridge-



Plas Newydd LLC, through its Wapato Valley Mitigation and Conservation Bank, is undertaking restoration of 876 acres of its 1,700 acres to serve as a wetlands and habitat mitigation bank. This map outlines the farm and the bank area.

field I tend to buy all my things here. If we moved the office, my staff and I will be less likely to feed the Ridgefield economy."

Where the port comes in

Due to his business's demand for faster internet speeds, Morgan has been closely watching the Port of Ridgefield's effort to develop broadband infrastructure, which would allow private internet providers to serve Ridgefield's port district constituents and others in Southwest Washington. While funding is needed and there are other hurdles to overcome, port representatives are adamant Ridgefield needs the service.

"Plas Newydd Farm is just one business that needs this key-critical infrastructure," said Port CEO Brent Grening. "All of our businesses need to be connected to be successful in our modern world. That's why the port is pursuing this project."

Grening is also highly-supportive of Plas Newydd's undertaking.

"The business they're developing is a shining example of a business that serves the local economy and also tends to the environment. We need to help them where and how we are able, and infrastructure development is what we do," he said.

The Farm's Future

For David Morgan, upgraded broadband services can come none-too-soon. He emphasized that the success of the farm's wetland bank is essential, as it will allow Plas Newydd a future as a financially-viable farm.

"This is a legacy project for my family with its emphasis on a responsible, ethical land standard. We want to insure the farm's long-term sustainability with the hope my family can keep the land in perpetuity."

"If we moved the office, my staff and I will be less likely to feed the Ridgefield economy."

David Morgan,
Managing Partner,
Plas Newydd LLC

For more information about the Wapato Valley Mitigation and Conservation Bank, visit the Plas Newydd Farm website at PNFarm.com

CONNECTIVITY:

The potential to connect in an easy and effective way. In addition to land, labor, capital, and technology, connectivity is a new factor influencing production & prosperity.

Source:
2016 Global Connectivity Index



Ridgefield/Discovery Corridor



Portland-Vancouver Metro Area



Global

LOCAL PROSPERITY

"For Ridgefield and the Discovery Corridor, it's all about connectivity. If we don't connect to the outside world – both physically and digitally – we jeopardize our economic future."

Brent Grening, CEO



ON THE LEVEL

Getting infrastructure right...

BY BRENT GRENING, CEO

As Ridgefield and North Clark County grow and data transmission explodes – physical and digital connectivity are front burner issues. It’s true here at home. It’s true in Olympia. It’s true in Washington DC.

Livability, education and economic prosperity depend on connectivity – roads and digital fiber optic networks are essential to a growing economy.

“...the need for connectivity is beyond debate.”

When it comes to building public infrastructure there’s always room for rigorous debate on projects, priorities and funding mechanisms. But the need for connectivity is beyond debate.

People and data have to move. Congestion is more than a nuisance – it’s a signal that our people and economy are not working at full potential. It’s a sure sign we’re not as competitive as we could be. Failing to be competitive hurts business, it hurts wages, and it hurts people.

Infrastructure is connectivity. If we don’t stay connected we all lose. Yes, building public infrastructure is expensive. But lack of connectivity, loss of opportunity, and a weak economy are more expensive and harmful to our quality of life.

So, the port with your support is working on this. We’re looking at public and private funding and public/private partnerships to cost-effectively build modern infrastructure. We must get infrastructure right, because without state-of-the-art infrastructure we can’t build a state-of-the-art economy to support a state-of-the-art community.



VOLUNTEERISM IS ALIVE AND WELL NEW ROTARY CLUB COMPLETES FIRST RIDGEFIELD SERVICE TASK

There is a new Rotary club in town, and it is already making an impact on Ridgefield.

Nelson Holmberg, vice president, innovation for the Port of Ridgefield, and his wife Susanne, were the driving forces behind getting the new club started.

“We saw a need for a Rotary service club in the Discovery Corridor, so we jumped in to figure out how to make it happen. Then a lot of folks stepped forward to help,” Nelson Holmberg said. “I’m happy to report that volunteerism is not dead.”

The Rotary Club of Three Creeks was chartered in October last year, serving Ridgefield, Salmon Creek, Hazel Dell, Felida and La Center. Club members have been working to identify hands-on opportunities to help in the communities served.

For its first project, on a Saturday in mid-March, seven members of the club along with kids, spouses and friends helped Clark County Fire and Rescue install smoke detectors in floating homes at the McCuddy’s Ridgefield

Marina. Members and friends of the new Rotary Club of Three Creeks conducted the club’s first community service project in March. At that time, with the assistance of Clark County Fire and Rescue, volunteers installed smoke detectors in some of the floating homes at McCuddy’s Marina in Ridgefield.

Back row (l-r): Chuck Green, Tina Pash, Steve Pash and Tom Straight; Middle row: Shakai Merida, Oscar Merida, Kristi Straight, TJ Straight, Jerod Rhinehart and Jim Selby; Front row: (l-r): Susanne Holmberg and Kelley Campbell

Marina.

After receiving training and instructions, the group of 14 volunteers installed smoke detectors in about a quarter of the homes in the marina. The smoke detectors and training provided by CCF&R were funded by a grant; there was no charge to the floating home residents for the smoke detectors or for installation.

“Smoke detectors save lives,” said Susanne Holmberg, president of the Rotary Club of Three Creeks. “The event was fun and informational, and we look forward to providing more service to our communities.”

The Rotary Club of Three Creeks meets at 5:30 p.m. the first and third Thursday of each month. First Thursdays are at Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center; third Thursday meetings are at Northwest Smile Designs on NE 179th Street in Ridgefield.

For more information about the Rotary Club of Three Creeks visit rotaryofthreecreeks.weebly.com, or [facebook.com/rotaryofthreecreeks](https://www.facebook.com/rotaryofthreecreeks).

WHAT DO PORT'S BRING TO THE STATE ECONOMY?

The Port of Ridgefield is one of 75 ports that are members of the Washington Public Ports Association. WPPA recently developed economic development information to help citizens and business owners understand the impact our ports have on Washington State:

Ports Create & Support Jobs

- 71,300 Direct port tenant jobs
- \$76,200 Average Benefits & Compensation for port tenant workers

Industrial & Commercial Lands

- 36,700 Direct Jobs
- \$73,100 Average Benefits & Compensation for port tenant workers

Tourism & Boating

- 4,400 Direct Jobs
- \$48,700 Average Benefits & Compensation for workers in tourism & recreational boating

Commercial Aviation & Airports

- 16,300 Direct Jobs
- \$71,300 Average Benefits & Compensation for port tenant workers

Marine Terminals

- 3,300 Direct Jobs
- \$103,200 Average Benefits & Compensation for port tenant workers

Maritime

- 10,600 Direct Jobs
- \$95,600 Average Benefits & Compensation for port tenant workers

WISDOM RIDGE CORPORATE CENTER

- At S. 11th Street in Ridgefield, Washington
- FOR SALE or Land Lease
- Planned & Entitled Property
- On I-5 Between Portland & Seattle

Break Ground Today...

OCCUPY in
6 MONTHS



OVERVIEW

- 112,569 sq. ft. light industrial building opportunity
- Fully-Served Site
- Single or Multi-Tenant Use

7.5 ACRES MOL

- Expansion Potential: 3.5 Acres nearby for sale; provides ancillary building space if desired
- Offered for sale at \$6.49/ft. (Approx. \$1.8 million)

For more details, visit the port website : portridgefield.org
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