Ridgefield is the fastest-growing city in Washington State according to the U.S. Census Bureau. It’s also been named the smartest city in the state, and the fourth-safest city in Washington. The city has cleaned up the Lake River waterfront, and is constructing a railroad overpass to that development site. The City of Ridgefield has engaged the community in a brand and identity exercise to ensure it handles growth with respect for its citizenry. By these, and many other measures, Ridgefield is a happening place that has its proverbial act together.

And while all that growth is evident in the rise of residential areas sprouting up around the city and development near the I-5 junction, Frank Shuman, president and one of the founders of the two-years new Ridgefield Main Street Program, (RMS) was inspired to act because he believed one key Ridgefield area had been largely left out of this rising tide – its downtown.

“I was starting to see that the downtown was lagging behind everything else that was going on in Ridgefield.”

Frank Shuman, President, Ridgefield Main Street Program

With $900,000 recently awarded to the port for its Pioneer Street Railroad Overpass Project through a U.S. Department of Transportation Railroad Safety Grant, the way is cleared for completion of the final phase of the project. The Port of Ridgefield developed the rail safety grant application, which was then submitted on behalf of the Washington Department of Transportation. The port was in competition with 56 other applicants from around the country for a piece of the $10 million available. Railroad Safety Grant funding is administered through the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, of which Washington State Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler is a member. She helped secure funds for the Railroad Safety Grants Program during the passage of the 2016 omnibus appropriations bill. Port of Ridgefield CEO Brent Grenning said he is honored by the amount of the award as well as the work so many people put into making the award a reality. “This project has many friends, without which we wouldn’t have received this grant award, including Congresswoman Herrera Beutler, the Washington Public Ports Association, Washington Department of Transportation and our longtime project partner, the City of Ridgefield,” Grenning said.

The grant award is for the final phase of a three-phase rail overpass project that will allow safe passage to and from the port’s waterfront property and downtown Ridgefield. Herrera Beutler voiced her enthusiasm for the grant award to the port. “The Port of Ridgefield should be applauded for spearheading this project that improves the livability, safety and opportunity for growth in our community,” Herrera Beutler said.

The final phase of the Pioneer Street Rail Overpass project is currently in the design and permitting stage; construction is expected to commence summer 2017, and completion is anticipated by the end of 2018.

The Ridgefield Main Street Program has established itself as an advocate for downtown Ridgefield. RMS board members (L-R) Judy Hinz, President Frank Shuman, and Sandy Schill pictured here in downtown Ridgefield, are part of the team leading the charge for improvements.
As the article about the Ridgefield Main Street Program in this issue points out, the launch of that organization was fueled by an observation that while the rest of Ridgefield was going gangbusters with growth and development, our downtown was at risk of being left behind. As the owner of two downtown Ridgefield businesses, I have a pretty good lens from which to view our downtown’s full potential. Just as what is its full potential, you might ask? To me, it’s reinvigorating downtown’s role as the heart and soul of our community.

Downtown should be where you find locals running ‘mom and pop’ shops and business owners who care about this community. It’s a gathering place where people connect with each other and who feel more connected to this special place. City-sponsored festivals and events have been a great first step.

Downtown should also be a place where innovative, flexible and customer service-minded entrepreneurs are supported and thrive. I believe that with the help of the Ridgefield Main Street Program and I think they are doing a fantastic job, downtown Ridgefield can reach its full potential.

Our downtown can’t compete head-to-head with big box stores that will inevitably spring up around Ridgefield, or those in Salm-on-Creek. But downtown businesses that create positive customer connections, make merchandise shifts to meet consumer demand, and offer an ambiance that appeals to a new demographic will have a loyal clientele that appreciates that downtown is a place they don’t receive elsewhere.

At the port, we’re working to create a first-class waterfront. To complement our waterfront, I’m hopeful we can grow our own first-class downtown, too.

“Stuff is happening,” Shuman said. “The overpass will be another year.”

“Without enough money we can’t pay a manager. And we can’t get more funding without a paid manager.”

But Shuman sees the need for urgency in RMS’s work. “We need to move fast to get out ahead of the superstores and the casino,” he said. He believes more people will come to Ridgefield due to the Cowitz Casino’s presence when the La Center facility opens next year. He also noted the Port of Ridgefield’s Pioneer Street Rail Overpass project, with a 2018 completion anticipated, will attract development to the port’s waterfront property. “It’s not a bad thing to be at the end of the road – a destination place,” Shuman said. “But we need to push forward to get to the next level – if we don’t push through it will be another year.”

“Stuff is happening,” Shuman said. “The overpass will change everything, and we can’t be on our heels, sitting around waiting for it to happen. We need to get ahead of it.”

To volunteer, learn how to donate or for more information about Ridgefield Main Street visit www.ridgefieldmainstreet.com.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach is a unique preservation-based economic development tool that enables communities to revitalize downtown and neighborhood business districts by leveraging local assets – from historic, cultural, and architectural resources to local enterprises and community pride. It is a comprehensive strategy that addresses the variety of issues and problems that challenge traditional commercial districts.

**1. Organization**

Involves building a Main Street framework that is supported by business and property owners, bankers, citizens, heritage preservationists, entrepreneurs, public officials, chambers of commerce, and other local economic development organizations. The goal is to work together to renew downtown. A strong organization provides the structure and stability to build and maintain a long-term effort.

**2. Promotion**

Creates excitement and vibrancy downtown. Street festivals, parades, retail events, and image development campaigns are some of the ways Main Street provides education on what downtown is and encourages customer traffic. Promotion involves marketing an inviting image to shoppers, investors, and visitors.

**3. Design**

Enhances the look and feel of the commercial district. Historic buildings and facades, street furniture, signage, visual merchandising and lighting all improve the physical appearance of the downtown as a quality place to shop, work, walk, invest in, and live. Design improvements result in a reinvestment of public and private dollars to downtown.

**4. Economic Restructuring**

Involves analyzing current market forces, businesses, and long-term solutions. Re-creating new businesses, creatively converting unused space for new uses, and sharpening the competitiveness of Main Street’s traditional merchants are examples of economic restructuring activities.
CELEBRATING 5 YEARS!

WHERE: The Waterfront at Port of Ridgefield, 5 West Mill Street, Ridgefield, WA

Don your life vest, sense of humor and spirit of adventure to participate in Ridgefield’s fifth annual Big Paddle on Saturday, June 4, 2016. This family-friendly event to celebrate the river is held annually in honor of National Trails Day.

Start your day at 7 a.m. with a pancake breakfast in downtown Ridgefield and then head to the port for a two-hour interpretive tour by canoe, kayak or paddleboard on the quiet waters of Lake River. Or, take a relaxing, recreational one-hour tour later in the day. Whichever you choose, you’ll glide along the banks of the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge and perhaps catch a glimpse of the many varieties of mammals and birds that make their home in the refuge.

Non-paddlers will enjoy Paddler’s Village, with live music, an obstacle course, scavenger hunt, beer & wine garden, food carts, and event opening and closing ceremonies. Trails on the port’s waterfront lead into the refuge, so bring your walking shoes! (See walking trail on parking map, below.)

If you’re a paddler, head on down to the port’s boat launch with your own kayak or paddleboard, or rent one from Ridgefield Kayak. Call (360) 727-4520 or visit www.ridgefieldkayak.com.

FOOD & REGISTRATION
No fees or registration are required for entrance to the event or for the activities, with two exceptions:

1. Registration is required for the two-hour interpretive paddle (beginning at 9:30 a.m.). Register on the City of Ridgefield’s website: www.ci.ridgefield.wa.us/community/page/first-saturday-and-big-paddle, or register at the event. A fee of $5.00 plus a $1.67 online registration handling fee will be assessed.

2. Registration is also required for the one-hour recreational paddle. Register online at www.ridgefieldkayak.com or call (360) 727-4520.

The only other cost at the event is for a paddle or boat rental. There are NO fees.

For more information about the schedule of events, visit www.ci.ridgefield.wa.us/community/page/first-saturday-and-big-paddle or contact the City of Ridgefield by calling (360) 887-3557.

VENDORS
To apply to be a vendor at Paddler’s Village visit www.ci.ridgefield.wa.us/community/page/first-saturday-and-big-paddle or contact the City of Ridgefield by calling (360) 887-3557.

ATTENTION RIVER- USERS!

Port representatives made a trip to Washington D.C. in mid-March on an annual sojourn with the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association to learn, lobby and express appreciation for project support. Founded in 1934, PNWA advocates for federal funding of the region’s navigation projects to improve economic efficiency and environmental sustainability.

The Port of Ridgefield is a member of PNWA. Port Commission Chair Scott Hughes and Vice President, Innovation, Nelson Holmberg made the trip.

This year the schedule included attending informational seminars, updating Congressional leaders on the Port’s dark fiber infrastructure project, and meeting with Congressional staff and elected officials to voice the need for dredging the mouth of Lake River.

Time was also spent in U.S. Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler’s office to voice appreciation for the effort the congresswoman, as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, put forth in securing funds for the Railroad Safety Grants Program. The Port received $400K recently from that fund for the final phase of the Port’s Pioneer Street Rail Overpass project.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE VISITS TO LEARN ABOUT DISCOVERY CORRIDOR

An inquiry about the Discovery Corridor to the Port of Ridgefield from Jakeaught, a Washington Department of Commerce staffer from the CERB program, led to a meeting and tour of Ridgefield with around 25 people on March 4.

CEEB is a state board focused on economic development through job creation in partnership with local government.

Included in the daylong session were representatives from CERR, the Washington Department of Health, port and City of Ridgefield, CREDC, WSU, Clark College and others.

“It was a really good meeting,” said Port CEO Brent Greming. “In addition to helping the state agency folks learn more about the growth and opportunity in the Discovery Corridor, it provided a venue for all of us in attendance to learn what our regional partners are doing, too. That we’re all talking to each other was impressive to the DOC.”
PORT LAUNCHES PARTNER PRESENTATION PROGRAM

STAYING IN THE LOOP:
PORT LAUNCHES PARTNER PRESENTATION PROGRAM

Pride, optimism shape economic potential
BY BRENT GRENING, CEO

If you’re relatively new to Ridgefield and North Clark County, the number of changes in the Discovery Corridor may be taken for granted. Freeway exits for Ridgefield, Battle Ground and Salmon Creek weren’t here just a few years ago. Neither was the cluster of healthcare—we’re positioned around Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center and The Vancouver Clinic. Research and higher education have an established presence now, and plans are set to expand even further. Entertainment and recreational amenities are also becoming part of the area’s lifestyle—not to mention Ridgefield emerging as a regional employment hub—with over 4,500 jobs in a city of 6,500 people.

“The Discovery Corridor is the leading edge of economic opportunity in Clark County.”

The Discovery Corridor is the leading edge of economic opportunity in Clark County. Residential development was the first wave of growth to move up the Corridor. Road and utility improvements came with it. Together, the opportunity for jobs and economic development was created.

Our economic potential and viability was on full display at a recent community meeting of state and local agencies held in Ridgefield. Twenty-plus citizens also joined the conversation. The pride and optimism expressed for the Discovery Corridor was impressive. It shows a deep commitment to keeping this place special while moving it to its full potential. This spirit is what makes the people here so unique—and the future of the Discovery Corridor so exciting.

In an effort to be informed about the ongoing activities of our community partners, the port embarked on a new Partner Presentation program. Held during the Innovation section of the port’s second monthly commission meeting—every fourth Wednesday—the program offers port commissioners, staff and audience members some insight into the goings on of local and regional organizations.

Nelson Holmberg, the port’s vice president, innovation, introduced the Partner Presentations program late last year to the port.

“For the port to promote innovation and to help forward the idea of others for the benefit of Ridgefield citizens, business owners and visitors, it’s important for us to have an understanding of the good work our community partners are doing,” Holmberg said.

To date the port has heard from community partners Max Ault, director of business development with Columbia River Economic Development Council; Tim Dawdy of Clark County Fire & Rescue; Rob Krause, district engineer from Clark Regional Wastewater District; and Frank Shuman, president of the Ridgefield Downtown Association. In a departure from the typical partner programming, on March 23 the Port Commission heard from Ridgefield resident and retired planner Alan Malone, who introduced the concept of a business incubator development for Ridgefield constructed primarily of used shipping containers.

"While the shipping container development concept was not in line with the original intent to hear from our community partners, if our Port Commission meetings can be a platform for introducing innovative projects for the betterment of Ridgefield—and we become a convener of ideas—we’re all for it," said Brent Grening, port CEO.

Clark Regional Wastewater District
Krause spoke at the port’s January 28 meeting, updating the Port Commission on the Ridgefield wastewater system expansion progress and completion timelines. He indicated the pumping and conveyance system for the current project phase will wrap up around June of this year, with further expansion slated to meet anticipated and planned development such as Clark College’s Ridgefield satellite campus.

Ridgefield Main Street Program
Shuman presented to the Port Commission on February 24, providing an overview of RMS’s structure, goals and efforts and activities of the relatively new organization thus far (for more information about RMS, see the article on page 3).

Shipping containers as business incubator
Malone, a retired U.S. Air Force colonel whose second career was as a certified planner, presented information he gathered on The Las Vegas Downtown Container Park as a development concept for Ridgefield.

He showed photos of the retail and restaurant business incubator, constructed on a site in downtown Las Vegas that had been designated as blighted. The park utilized 45 used shipping containers and 45 Xtreme Container Cubes—Xtreme Manufacturing’s line of multi-functioning construction cubes—which can be configured into any possible portable structure.

"I was so excited I’ve been talking about it ever since," Malone said.

For more information about the Port of Ridgefield’s Partner Presentations program, contact Holmberg by email NHolmberg@portridgefield.org or call (360) 887-3873.

时事通：一个平台，引入创新项目

Clark Regional Wastewater District
Krause在1月28日的会议上向市议会更新了RMS的进展和完成时间线。他表明泵送和输送系统的建设阶段将在今年6月左右完成，随后的扩展阶段将根据预计的未来增长来规划。

Ridgefield Main Street Program
Shuman在2月24日的会议上向市议会介绍了RMS的结构、目标和努力以及该相对新组织的现状（有关RMS的更多信息，请参阅第3页的文章）。

Shipping containers as business incubator
Malone，一位退休的美国空军上校，第二职业是认证规划师，介绍了他在拉斯维加斯市中心集装箱公园的信息，这个公园利用了45个使用的集装箱和45个Xtreme Container Cubes——Xtreme Manufacturing的多功能建筑模块，这些模块可以配置成任何可能的便携式结构。

"我很兴奋，我一直在谈论这件事," Malone说。

有关有关Ridgefield的Partner Presentations项目的更多信息，请联系Holmberg通过电子邮件NHolmberg@portridgefield.org或致电(360) 887-3873。