New Tax Laws Will Affect You!

The Washington State Department of Revenue will present the upcoming change in local sales tax coding at the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Membership Luncheon at the Best Western CottonTree Inn on Wednesday, June 27, from 11:30 am to 1 pm. The sales tax changes are intended to “level the playing field” between in-state and out-of-state retailers, help Washington Businesses compete with online businesses, and allow cities and counties to recover sales taxes from out-of-state retailers.

The changes in sales tax coding will take place on July 1, 2008, but the Department of Revenue wants to give retailers the year to prepare for the shift from origin- to destination-based sourcing. The sourcing change stems from legislation enacted this year that conforms Washington’s sales tax system to the national Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement (SSUTA). The SSUTA seeks to preserve the economic vitality of brick-and-mortar businesses by reducing the effects of price competition from out-of-state retailers that do not charge sales tax.

The changes in sales tax coding will affect the way local sales tax is coded. Businesses currently code local sales tax to the city or unincorporated county from which the product is shipped. Fifteen months from now, they will begin coding local sales tax to the destination of the delivery. This change only affects shipments from one local jurisdiction to another within Washington State. The coding is used to determine which city or county will receive the local share of the sales tax. It does not affect shipments to out-of-state customers, nor purchases when customers take possession at the selling location. The legislation provides businesses grossing less than $500,000 per year with up to $1,000 in tax credits to offset any necessary changes to their accounting and point-of-sale systems or the free use for two years of a third-party certified service provider that can handle the coding and file the sales tax return for the business.

Join us at the June Membership Meeting for a complete explanation of the changes by a Department of Revenue representative. Call the chamber office to RSVP 360-428-8547, karenm@mountvernonchamber.com or register online.

FEMA Flood Proposal

On Thursday, May 24th, more than 250 people gathered at Burlington Edison High School for a town hall meeting to hear about a FEMA proposal that could raise the 100-years Flood Plain 8-9 feet.

The effects of these dramatically increased flood levels would have severe and adverse repercussions for local businesses and residents. Areas that were never considered to be a flood risk would suddenly be in the flood plain and areas that are currently within the flood plain would be considered at even higher risk. Those businesses and residences that were never required to have flood insurance would consequently be required to carry costly flood insurance. Furthermore, those that currently have flood insurance would see significant increases in premiums due to the higher risk rating. Future development and growth for our community could slow down or disappear as areas once considered suitable for building would now be considered to be high risk and be more expensive. The downtown cont’d on page 3
Who’s That Member? Frontier Bank

Each month, the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce will randomly select a member to feature. This is a great way to get to know some of the diverse and interesting businesses in our community.

Frontier Bank, “The High Touch Bank,” is the largest commercial bank headquartered in Western Washington, and offers a wide range of financial products and services. It was established in September 1978 and the Mount Vernon Office opened in September 1999. This office represented the 23rd branch office for the bank. The employees of the Mount Vernon Frontier Bank have over 91 years of banking experience to help with all your banking needs.

The employees of Frontier Bank love where they work. Many of them, over two-thirds, are among the bank’s shareholders, which provides a sense of ownership and dedication to customer service and bank growth. In addition, Frontier Bank is proud to be a part of Skagit County, where, as they say at the bank, people are friendly and still excited about the wonderful growing area of opportunity!

In today’s high-tech banking world, Frontier Bank remains a “high touch” bank, successfully maintaining the friendly service that has fueled its sky-rocketing growth, which began in 1978. Various banking services are offered meeting the needs of both businesses and consumers. Frontier offers checking, savings, certificates of deposit, safe deposit boxes, loans, mortgages, reverse mortgages, trust services, investment services, cash management services and more.

Frontier Bank continues to celebrate its many successes because of its numerous customers who support the bank with their business. They promote the bank by referring other customers and new shareholders to utilize Frontier’s many services. Frontier Bank has been the recipient of many awards and honors throughout the years. Awards have been granted because of its financial successes. Also, recognition awards for community service have been granted to the bank throughout the years.

As members of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, the employees at Frontier Bank are most appreciative of the opportunities provided by the Chamber to meet new and existing businesses in the community.

The Mount Vernon Frontier Bank is located at 119 East College Way and can be reached at 360-848-1200.

The Myths of Innovation

The Myths of Innovation
By Scott Berkun

Each month, the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce scouts a book to help you improve your business and work life. These books are available for loan at the Chamber office to all Chamber members. Take time to read and learn!

In The Myths of Innovation, best-selling author Scott Berkun takes a careful look at innovation history, including the software and Internet Age, to reveal how ideas truly become successful innovations—truths that people can apply to today’s challenges. Using dozens of examples from the history of technology, business, and the arts, you’ll learn how to convert the knowledge you have into ideas that can change the world.

• Why all innovation is a collaborative process
• How innovation depends on persuasion
• Why problems are more important than solutions
• How the good innovation is the enemy of the great
• Why the biggest challenge is knowing when it’s good enough
New Member Hospitality Wagon Keeps Rollin’ Along!

Every month our Mount Vernon Chamber Ambassadors deliver gift baskets filled with items from contributing businesses to the new Chamber Members! They have been very well received by our new members and we would like to continue having the baskets “overflowing” with items. Would you like to have the opportunity to greet our new members and be one of the first to welcome them? This is a great opportunity to market your business and create contacts within the community. Contact the chamber office for details and “Get on the Hospitality Wagon”!

Thanks to these Chamber Members and the Ambassador team for making new members feel welcome!

Identity Theft – Are you in compliance?

Washington’s Attorney General, Rob McKenna, has stated: “Identity theft is one of the fastest growing scams in America…” The problem is especially serious in Washington. “Identity theft is the biggest threat consumer’s face in Washington State.” And, “Consumers aren’t the only ones hurt. Today, more and more businesses are seeing their bottom lines affected by identity theft.” www.atg.wa.gov

Ms. Betsy Broder, Chief of the Identity Theft Division of the Federal Trade Commission states in their video, “Deter, Detect, Defend,” that the cost to businesses is 50 billion dollars a year. www.ftc.gov

The Gramm, Leach, Biley Safeguard Rule calls for businesses to ensure the security and confidentiality of customer information; protect against any anticipated threats or hazards to the security or integrity of such information; and protect against unauthorized access to or use of such information that could result in substantial harm or inconvenience to any customer. To comply with these directives (and avoid thousands of dollars in fines from the FTC), businesses must specify an information security officer to be responsible for implementing safeguards, have a written plan describing how customer and employee data will be protected, and have a mandatory employee meeting on identity theft and the protection available.

Unfortunately, whether you have already been a victim yourself, or know someone who has, or not; identity theft is a dangerous reality in our time, both for your business and your family.

As a business, you can easily reach compliance. Contact your attorney about the proper legal forms and the designation of an information security officer. Also, Chamber Member Mike Bosteter with Pre-Paid Legal at 360-724-0560 is now providing businesses and institutions with a free identity theft protection package, the “Affirmative Defense Response System,” which can help you avoid direct identity theft damage to your business and to comply with the regulations in the recent FACTA and GLB anti-identity theft laws to avoid fines for non-compliance.

By Michael Bosteter, Pre-Paid Legal Services

FEMA cont’d from page 1

revitalization of Mount Vernon could be slowed or possibly even stopped. Overall, it appears that nothing good could come from FEMA’s proposed new flood levels.

Local Cities and the County are in disagreement with what FEMA officials have indicated would be a significant increase in the 100 year flood level. FEMA is relying on their own study, one which includes what many consider to be unreliable data from a handwritten report that was completed in the early 1920s! The County, on the other hand, recently hired an independent engineering firm to perform its own study on flooding on the Skagit River. Without FEMA’s 1920s-era data, the projected flood plain is much lower. Cities and the County have been asking FEMA to consider the study preformed by the independent engineering firm or to at least consider reevaluating their own study, a study which is clearly flawed. Nonetheless, FEMA has been unwilling to budge from their position to date.

Join the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce in our effort to develop a reasonable solution to the flood issue. You can contact Representative Rick Larson, Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and ask them to intercede on our behalf to have FEMA remove the unreliable data (known as the Stewart Report) from the data they are using to determine flood levels on the Skagit River. In addition ask them to work with FEMA to take into consideration the study that was preformed on the County’s behalf by the independent engineering firm.

– Mark Hulst, Dally’s Auto Body

Tune In

Chamber Executive Kristen Whitener addresses the Skagit Valley every Thursday morning with Chamber activity updates. KAPS 660AM 8:20 AM KBRC 1430AM 8:40 AM

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Networking, Barbeque, and a Sweet Summer Night for SYP

Join the Skagit Young Professionals on July 5th for an outdoor barbeque adventure! From 6 to 8 pm, The Lunch Box will be serving their signature burgers for $3 in Pine Square while young professionals from all over Skagit County create valuable business connections to last their careers. This event, sponsored by Business Bank, will feature games, door prizes, a beer garden, and lots of networking, so RSVP today!

The Lunch Box is located in Pine Square and has been in business for 6 1/2 years. Owner Cathy Adelman cooks up homemade food, including her amazing cinnamon rolls, from 7 am to 3 pm Monday through Friday. Every Friday during the summer, The Lunch Box serves burgers, potato salad, baked beans, a cookie, and a drink for only $5 outside their restaurant. Stop in for a coffee and some hometown charm today!

Business Bank is a locally owned full-service bank, designed to serve small to medium sized businesses and professionals. A team of highly skilled, experienced and successful banking professionals has been assembled by Business Bank to meet your needs. Each is specialized in their role and dedicated to providing the highest level of service, they know how a bank can work for you. Team members provide a broad range of financial tools combined with local, timely decisions on loans and other banking products, demonstrating a respectful approach to each client. Finding the right financial product(s) and delivering the best service while meeting each client’s goals are at the forefront of every team member’s vision. From day to day banking to more sophisticated financial services, Business Bank and its staff are here to serve your business and you.

The Skagit Young Professionals is a group created by the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce with the mission “To create and foster an environment in which young professionals in Skagit County can develop into the future leaders of our community.” To RSVP to this event, please email karenm@mountvernonchamber.com.

If you are interested in hosting an SYP event at your business, or sponsoring an SYP event, please contact Amelia Cook at the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, 360-428-8547 or ameliac@mountvernonchamber.com.

Modernized Banking

Have you stopped to think about how many checks you write each month? Until last year, I was writing 15 checks, addressing 15 envelopes, and paying $5.85 in postage each month. We all know that postage rates are on the rise, but did you know that there is time-saving technology only a few mouse clicks away? Most banks now offer Online Bill Pay for personal and business customers. This is a wonderful technology that will save you time, money, and headaches for the rest of your check writing lifetime.

Once a payee has been added to your list, paying your monthly bill is as easy as entering an amount, selecting a date, and clicking submit.

In addition to Bill Pay, a technology called Remote Deposit Capture (RDC) is now being implemented by most banks. RDC allows a business customer to make deposits to their bank account by running checks through a scanner in their own office. Now trips to the bank are only necessary for deposits of cash, thereby saving businesses time, money, and the risk of having employees drive across town to make deposits each day. Along the same idea, have you ever thought of having your bank come to you every day? Instead of making your way through six traffic lights on College Way or through what seems like five thousand cars on Burlington Boulevard, with Mobile Banking the bank comes to you to pick up your deposits, eliminating your daily trips to the bank. With convenience there often is a cost, but these technological advances and customer service innovations will allow you more time to do what you do best…..running a successful business. For those who enjoy the social interaction and free coffee that comes with making trips to the bank, we look forward to seeing you!

Jeremy McCullough
Business Bank
Congratulations to Teresa Pugh and Synergy Salon and Day Spa, the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year! Teresa was awarded the prize for Mount Vernon at the Business of the Year banquet on May 17. The Chamber recognized Synergy Salon’s commitment to the community through a multitude of charity and community organizations, as well as Synergy Salon’s impressive growth and agility of response to business challenges in the past 12 years. Synergy Salon and Day Spa provides hair, nail, skin, and body care at a chic building on Burlington Boulevard.

The Skagit County Business of the Year award was awarded to Bunnies by the Bay in La Conner, a business producing premier baby gifts and one-of-a-kind plush bunnies. Started 21 years ago, Suzanne Knutson, Krystal Kirkpatrick, and Jeanie Ming-Hayes have grown the business to supply bunnies and other specialty sewn items wholesale around the world. Congratulations, Bunnies by the Bay!

Synergy Salon and Day Spa wins MVCofC Business of the Year!

A grand opening and community celebration is set for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 16, 2007 at Skagit Valley Hospital’s $92 million expansion project.

The 220,000 square foot expansion at the hospital’s Mount Vernon campus features:

- Three stories, plus full basement
- New Emergency/Trauma unit with 23 private patient rooms, including two trauma rooms, two major medical rooms and two triage rooms
- New Family Birth Center with 21 private rooms for labor, delivery and recovery, plus two dedicated Caesarian section rooms
- Expanded space for surgical services, including six spacious operating rooms and room for two more in the future
- More space for critical care patients, featuring a 31-bed unit of universal rooms to flex with the needs of acutely ill patients
- All private patient rooms

The architect on the project is Kaplan, McLaughlin, Diaz of Seattle and the general contractor is Hoffman Construction Company of Seattle. Excavation work started in August 2005. The project is paid for by a $62.1 million general obligation bond issue approved by voters of Public Hospital District No. 1 in 2004, hospital revenue bonds and reserves.

Skagit Valley Hospital, which opened in 1958, is located at 1415 E. Kincaid in Mount Vernon.
Welcome New Members

Ameriprise Financial – Colin Sands
905 Warren Street
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 336-8965
www.ameripriseadvisors.com/colin.m.sands

Financial Services
Customer Service Bootcamp
Andy Porter
440 Nelson Street
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
(360) 809-0661
www.customerservicebootcamp.com

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96 East College Way
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 428-2838
www.hrblock.com

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Bill Forney
1302 Cleveland Ave.
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 202-9614
www.improvtech.com

Milton’s Auto Service
Tom Milton
1226 Riverside Drive
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 428-0121
www.miltonsautoservice.com

Automotive Service & Repair
Poulsbo RV
Mike Pewitt
517 Jacks Lane
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
www.poulsborv.com

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Mount Vernon City Library
Muscular Dystrophy Association

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1410 Virginia Street
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www.letip.com
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Kay Robertson is Eager to Help
Upbeat Award Winner

Carolyn Lloyd-Whitney of People’s Bank passed the Upbeat Award for the month of May to Kay Robertson of Land Title Company. Here’s what Carolyn had to say about Kay:
“I have known Kay Robertson for many years and I have had the pleasure of working with her in business and at community events. She is the most positive and upbeat person I know, she always has a smile on her face and is eager to help in any way she can. Kay is very deserving of this award.”
Congratulations Kay Robertson!

Board Chair Carrie Case and Kay Robinson of Land Title Company.
Mark Your Calendars

June 14-16 – Dirt Cup at Skagit Speedway. Drivers compete for $145,000 purse, racing at 7:30. Visit www.skagitspeedway.com for more info.


June 16 - Skagit Valley Hospital Open House and Community Celebration. Ribbon cutting at 9 a.m., formal ceremony at 10:30 a.m. and time capsule unveiling at 1 p.m. Tours and refreshments 9a.m-3p.m. www.skagitvalleyhospital.org

June 16 - Skagit Valley Lightning Semi-Pro Football – Playoffs! www.svlighting.com

June 20 - Learn about Protection, Prevention, and Correction of UV Induced Aging - Free Seminar 5:30pm-7pm. Call 360-416-6735 and RSVP at North Cascade Eye Associates.

June 23 - Native Springs Open House, 10am-5pm during LaConner Summer Street Festival! Drop in or call 360-708-8313 for more information. www.nativesprings.com

June 27 - Membership Luncheon - Streamlined Sales & Use Tax. Get answers to your questions about the new Sales & Use Tax Agreement @ Best Western CottonTree Inn, 11:30am-1:00pm. RSVP to 360-428-8547 or karenm@mountvernonchamber.com or Register On-Line.00 Market Street

June 29 - July – Oklahoma! Presented by the NW Actors Repertory Theater of Mount Vernon @ the Sedro Woolley Civic Auditorium 7:30pm. Call Bruce Weech @ 360.941-0003 or go to www.nwactorsrepetorytheater.com for more info.

July 5 – Skagit Young Professionals, 6-8pm @ The Lunch Box, Downtown Mount Vernon. Call 360-428-8547 for more info or RSVP karenm@mountvernonchamber.com

July 12 – Chinook Enterprises Open House & BBQ – Hands Across The River After Hours Event! Relax and Enjoy Great Food, Networking, Fun and Prizes! RSVP to dmaxwell@chinookenterprises.org or call 360-428-0140.

August 17 – Hands Across the River Golf Tournament @ Avalon Golf Links presented by the Mount Vernon and Burlington Chambers of Commerce. If you would like to form a team or sponsor a hole call 360-428-8547.

Announcements

The Skagit Valley Business 2 Consumer Expo is filling up fast! This event promises to be the largest trade show Skagit County has ever seen, so reserve your booth space now! Contact Karen at 360-428-8547 for more information, and mark your calendars for September 14, 15, and 16 at the Skagit County Fairgrounds.

Peterson International Music School Summer Day Camps 2007. Please call 360-336-0809 or visit www.pimsusa.org for more information and to print out a registration form.

Guesthouse At The Quarry is now open! B&B that accommodates up to 4 guests in beautiful surroundings. For more information contact Peggy Flynn, 360-466-5075 or 360-840-4005

Hampton Inn & Suites announces new General Manager, David Weston. As general manager, Weston will direct all areas of the hotel’s operations, including guest services, sales and marketing efforts and hotel administration. For more information go to www.burlingtonsuites.hamptoninn.com or call (360) 757-7100.

Skagit Valley Hospital Foundation partners with Washington Bulb Company to offer “BellSong” Tulip Bulbs in support of cancer care. Now through September 20th, each 10-bulb package is $10. Proceeds will benefit the Regional Cancer Care Center Capital Campaign. For a brochure or more information contact the Skagit Valley Hospital Foundation at (360) 416-8376 or go to www.skagitvalleyhospital.org.

Upcoming Business Resource Center Workshops

Business Workshops

Business Planning & Management ...............6/13
Marketing, Pricing, Advertising ................6/27
Recordkeeping & Taxes .........7/11 & 7/12
Business Improv ........................................6/28 & 6/29
Introduction to QuickBooks ................7/17
QuickBooks II ........................................7/31

Computer Workshops

Getting Started w/Internet & PC.............6/26 & 6/28
Introduction to MS Word ..............7/16 & 7/18
Introduction to Access.........................6/26
Intermediate Access .........................7/10
Introduction to MS Excel ..............6/25 & 6/27
Intermediate MS Excel ................7/9 & 7/11

Continuing Professional Education

Effective Hiring: Recruitment, Interviewing & Selection ..................6/28
Lean Office .............................................6/25
Introduction to Lean Manufacturing................6/26
Kaizen & Kaizen Event Implementation ..................6/28
SS & the Visual Workplace ........6/29
Fundamentals of Caregiving...........6/9-6/30
Flagging & Traffic Control Certification..7/9 & 7/11

Tap into Skagit Valley College’s 75+ years of experience providing high quality workforce training and professional development. Content from all degree and certificate programs can be customized and delivered to your staff, including supervision, customer service, conflict management, human resources, non profit management, lean manufacturing, MS Office applications and more. Let us know what you need! Call 360-416-7873.

The Skagit Valley College Business Resource Center is YOUR RESOURCE to meet workforce training needs. Some of our professional development training includes:

• Toolkit for Supervisors and Managers
• Communicate Like a Pro
• Small Business Management
• Conflict Resolution
• Human Resource Certificate
• NonProfit Management Certificate
• Computer Applications Training

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