

**MOUNT VERNON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**

Vol. No. 10 • Issue No. 7 • January 2012

**Chamber NEWS
CHAT**

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**THE MOUNT VERNON
CHAMBER
of COMMERCE**

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Chamber Chat News is designed by
Guy D. Corp of grafixCORP • grafixCORP.com

Mission:

As a regional Chamber we serve and promote our members and proactively encourage economic growth. We support members by providing information, training, networking opportunities and advocacy.

Prospering Business in 2012

To continue to offer businesses the finest programs and services based on their specific needs, effective January 1, 2012, the Chamber Board of Directors approved a new Member Value Package program which matches specific membership benefits with membership premiums. These Member Value Packages have a wide variety of benefits for businesses of all sizes and types. They offer opportunities for members to maximize their benefits and save money while getting consistent exposure for their business throughout the year. We look forward to serving you better through these new Member Value Packages in 2012 and helping to strengthen your business.

Please feel free to contact Karen Mills, VP Member Services with any questions at 360-428-8547 or karenm@mountvernonchamber.com.



"The Mount Vernon Chamber is a valuable partner in helping your business grow and prosper. Joining the chamber creates a stronger business community, vibrant economic growth and sustained quality of life."

– April Axthelm, Axthelm Construction,
2012 Board Chair

Unemployment Tax Rates Plummet in 2012

In the past couple of years, the Employment Security Department didn't have much good news to share about unemployment taxes – but that's finally turning around. In 2012, unemployment rates will decline in all 40 rate classes, by an estimated average of 13 percent.

If your business had no layoffs in the past four years – putting you in rate-class 1 – your tax rate will plummet by 71 percent (from 0.49 percent in 2011 to 0.14 percent in 2012). The most you'll pay on an

employee for the entire year is \$53, compared to \$182 in 2011.

Businesses whose layoff experience puts them at the top end of the rate structure also will enjoy a rate reduction in 2012 – albeit smaller. Even businesses that are moving into higher rate classes due to recent layoffs may experience lower tax rates if they move up only a few rate classes.

Altogether, businesses will pay \$207 million less in unemployment taxes in 2012.

LEGACY MEMBERS

Platinum Member:



Gold Member:



Silver Members:



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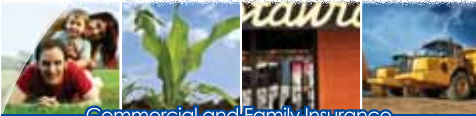
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Who's that Member?

MEMBER PROFILE

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.

Zig Zag & Ragz Z Clowns



Alyse Axford and Cameron Stewart started Zig Zag & Ragz Z Clowns in 1999. When it comes to clowning around it would be tough to find a more serious pair with their education and experience. Being educated in the art of clowning by Ringling Bros. Clowns allows for an enjoyable experience for everyone.

Their list of entertainers includes: clowns, the Easter Bunny, Mr. and Mrs. Claus and April Z Elf. The list of services goes on to include face painting, balloon art- both large and small, singing telegram, magic, games, and improv. There are many different types of events that Zig Zag & Ragz Z Clowns can accommodate such as any kind of party, company picnics, festivals, block parties or any type of event you can imagine. The singing telegram is an exceptional service that includes writing a personal song with information that you provide.

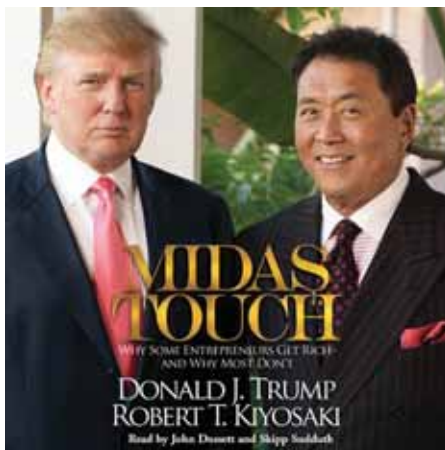
What better way to show someone how special they are than to have a song written for them and given a personal performance.

When asked what she likes most about this area Alyse said that she enjoys the mountains especially when they are covered in snow. My Favorite Things and Skagit Valley Gardens are the businesses that she admires most in Skagit County. She really enjoys the unique feel for these businesses and the fact that they carry items you can't find elsewhere. Alyse has a quote that she would like to share with everyone: "Enjoy a smile and laugh every day."

So, the next time you are having a party you can contact Zig Zag & Ragz Z Clowns at (360) 336-1089 or visit their website zigzag-ragz.com for very special event.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Each Month the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce calls on *The Tattered Page* to scout a book to help you improve your business and work life. This month's book is available at the *Tattered Page* at 514 S. 1st St. in Downtown Mount Vernon.



Midas Touch: Why Some Entrepreneurs Get Rich – And Why Most Don't Donald Trump and Robert Kiyosaki

In the tradition of their number-one blockbuster *Why We Want You to Be Rich*, the all-star team of best-selling authors Donald Trump and Robert Kiyosaki reunites to teach listeners what it takes to be successful and influential entrepreneurs in *Midas Touch*.

What makes some business owners wildly successful? What separates the entrepreneurs who build businesses from ones who just seem to create more work for themselves? How, exactly do the world's most prominent business builders seem to hit home run after home run? The answer: They have the Midas Touch.

The theme of the book is the hand of Midas. The book talks about the thumb and 4 fingers, giving each one a theme and characteristics. The characteristics are of course business traits our authors feel are necessary to a person's business success.

The 5 fingers are as follows:

- The Thumb: Strength of character
- Index Finger: F.O.C.U.S
- Middle Finger: Brand
- Ring Finger: Relationships
- Little Finger: Little things that count

Donald Trump and Robert Kiyosaki believe the world needs more entrepreneurs. For the first time, two of the world's most successful and influential entrepreneurs will share their own Midas touch secrets. Secrets that will both inspire you to find and fulfill your passion as well as provide you with the hands-on guidance you need to be successful. Through their real life stories of success, failure, perseverance and purpose, you'll discover how they do it and whether or not you have what it takes to drive your own entrepreneurial success.

The Tattered Page
used bookstore, movie & book repair
Book of the Month Sponsor

Chamber and Visitor Information Center Moving

The Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce has accepted an offer from the City of Mount Vernon for an ideal office location in the old Smith Barney office at the entrance of our downtown. This office space will allow the Chamber to secure a long term lease in a very visible location. The Board of Directors is excited about this move and 2011 Board Chair Paul Pickering with Max Dales Steak House said "The City came to the Chamber during a time when the Board was looking for a long term opportunity where the Chamber can focus on serving its member in a professional, visible location" the Chamber will take possession of the new space in January 2012 after the City completes some tenant improvements.

The new address is 301 W Kincaid St. Mount Vernon WA, 98273.



For more information please contact Mount Vernon Chamber CEO Kristen Keltz (360) 428 8547.

Biz Buzz – It's like Speed Dating Business Style!

Don't forget to RSVP for the January 25th Biz Buzz Luncheon. The event is sponsored by the Skagit Valley College Business Management Club. Prepare your 1 minute speech, bring lots of business cards and flyers to pass out, and get ready to develop new business relationships at this highly attended event. This is one of the best ways within the chamber to meet new people, get the word out about your business, and develop leads. Give your business extra exposure by bringing a door prize. Please consider bringing non-perishable food or toiletry donations to help support local food banks. The event starts at 11:30am, lasts until 1:00pm, and is located at the Best Western CottonTree Inn Convention Center at 2300 Market St. in Mount Vernon. To RSVP go to MountVernonChamber.com or call (360) 428-8547.



Event Sponsor

Welcome New Board Members

The Chamber would like to welcome our new board members for the 2012 year:

Cory Ertel, Puget Sound Energy

Carol Lawson, State Farm Insurance

Bruce Thomson, Solid Project Services

David Lindsey, Action Pages

Also, a big thank you to the outgoing board members finishing their 3 year term:

Councilman Mark Hulst, Bavarian Autohaus

Patt Woods, Sound Cedar Lumber Service

Tammy Custer, Liberty Tax

Thank you all Board Members for your contributions to the Chamber and the local business community.

Future Leaders of Skagit County!

Join Today!

Kristen Keltz
360.428.8547



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TUNE IN

Chamber President/CEO Kristen Keltz addresses the Skagit Valley every Wednesday morning with Chamber activity updates.



8:20 AM



8:40 AM



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DID YOU KNOW?

Respondents were more likely to want to purchase goods or services from a small business that is a chamber member.

63%

44%

were more likely to rate it favorably than study respondents who were not told of the chamber affiliation.

Credit: The Schapiro Group

FUN FACT of THE MONTH

Your fingernails grow faster in winter.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members

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Rick Trelstad
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Mount Vernon, WA 98273
www.DavisAnchor.com
Marine Manufacturing*

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Travis Green
(360) 416-4979
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www.officedepot.com
Business & Professional Services

Mount Vernon Curves
Penny Bridges
(360) 336-3375
403 S First St
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
www.curves.com
Health Club

Platinum Legacy Membership Renewal



RENEWING MEMBERS

Thank you to these Members who have continued their Membership Support.

A big thank you goes out to these members who know the true value of chamber membership and renew each year. We value your support and acknowledge that we wouldn't be able to provide all of the services we do without you.

20+ Years
Mountain Glen Retirement Center

10+ Years
Budget Towing & Auto
Cascade Job Corps Center

5+ Years
Avalon Links, Inc
Cascade Cosmetic Surgery & Skin Care
Preview Properties Skagit-Susan Cooper
Vintage at Mount Vernon

Under 5 Years
Biddix Trucking School, LLC

En2Grate, Inc.
I Love Skagit
Junior Achievement Lefebur Turf Farm
Northwest Computer & Network Solutions
Sahara Pizza
Thousand Trails Mount Vernon
Tulip Valley Winery

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Airporter Shuttle Helping Save Birds of Prey

Ferndale, Washington – Airporter Shuttle is now a proud participant in Sea-Tac Airport's Raptor Management Program, helping save birds of prey and aircraft from potentially dangerous air strikes. The program is a partnership between the Port of Seattle and Skagit Valley's Falcon Research Group. As part of the Port's Wildlife Management Program, wildlife biologist Steve Osmek and staff monitor and trap raptors (hawks, owls, eagles, falcons, etc.) and transport them to Skagit County aboard Airporter Shuttle buses, where Bud Anderson and volunteers at Falcon Research Group measure, tag and release the birds into the beautiful wilderness of the Skagit Valley.

Skagit Valley College receives \$334,000 in Air Washington grant

Skagit Valley College (SVC) will receive \$334,000 over the next three years to focus on the training needs of the aerospace industry. These funds are SVC's portion of a \$20 million Air Washington grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor to a statewide consortium of community and technical colleges, led by Spokane Community College. The consortium will research, design, develop, and implement comprehensive education, training, and services necessary to meet Washington's aerospace workforce demands in manufacturing, assembly, electronics, and composites. SVC will concentrate on composites training at the Marine Technology Center in Anacortes, with its state-of-the-art composites lab.

Business Bank welcomes two new board members

Business Bank, a locally owned community bank, based in Skagit and Whatcom Counties is pleased to announce the election of two new members to the bank's Board of Directors. Jay Duffy, an owner and President of JJMD, Inc., dba Bob's Burgers & Brew in

Burlington, Tulalip and Everett has joined the Board of Directors. Jay is a local graduate of Mount Vernon High School. He continued his education at Pacific Lutheran University and the University of Washington with a degree in BABA Accounting. Jay lives in Mount Vernon with his wife Katherine. Chet T. Lackey is an Attorney with Belcher Swanson Law Firm, P.L.L.C. in Bellingham. Chet graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History, and the University of Puget Sound Law School with a Juris Doctorate. He was appointed Attorney and Counselor at Law in November 1975 and specializes in General Law. Chet lives in Bellingham with his wife Clara.

HealthQuest programs provided by Skagit Valley Hospital

Screening to Detect Peripheral Arterial Disease, Elevated Cholesterol and More The Skagit Regional Heart & Vascular Institute offers this community screening for all adults over age 18, held on Tuesday mornings. The cost is \$35. Call 360-629-6481 to schedule an appointment. Cholesterol, Diabetes and Blood Pressure Screenings Full Lipid Profile: 12-14 hour fast required, water and prescribed medications only, no coffee or tea. No alcohol 24 hours prior. Results include total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides, and glucose (blood sugar) levels and are mailed to your home. Fee: \$15 (cash or check payable to SVH only). For information call Skagit Valley Hospital at 360-814-2424 or 360-629-6481. No appointment or pre-registration is required.

Bone Density Screening This is a non-invasive, painless scan of one hand. Results are available immediately. Fee \$10 (cash or check payable to SVH). No appointment is required. For information call Skagit Valley Hospital at 360-814-2424 or 360-629-6481. January 25 (Wed) 7:30-9 a.m.

Vitamin D Level Screening This screening is not recommended for

patients on anticonvulsant medication. Fasting is not required. The cost is \$35 (cash or check payable to SVH). For information call Skagit Valley Hospital at 360-814-2424 or 360-629-6481. No appointment or pre-registration is required. January 25 (Wed) 7:30-9 a.m.

Skagit Valley College Board of Trustees approves plan to pursue offering the college's first-ever baccalaureate degree

During its regular meeting on November 8, the Skagit Valley College (SVC) Board of Trustees approved plans for SVC to pursue offering the college's first-ever baccalaureate degree, a Baccalaureate of Applied Science (BAS) in Environmental Conservation. During a study session on November 8, the Board learned about the application process from Laura Cailloux, SVC's Dean of Workforce Education and Dr. Claus Svendsen, SVC's Environmental Conservation Department Chair. Then, during its regular meeting agenda, the Board voted unanimously to seek approval to offer the new degree.

Logan Creek fund raiser for children

The excitement of giving has grown! In mid November Logan Creek Retirement Community began a donation jar to raise money to purchase brand new coats for local children. Residents, staff, visitors and families have donated throughout the month and to date Logan Creek has provided brand new coats to several families. Recipients of the coats have included children being served by our local Children's Administration and the families that have been adopted by the Mount Vernon Fire Department for the 2011 Christmas Holiday.

Sponsorship Opportunities

- Newsletter Inserts - \$75 - 550 businesses per month.
- Newsletter Sponsorship - \$500 - \$1,500 - 6,600 copy annual distribution.
- E-Chat Sponsorship - \$75 - Over 900 weekly e-mail distribution
- Website Sponsorship - \$25-\$100 monthly- Over 300 website pageviews daily.
- Membership Luncheon Sponsor - \$250 - Logo visibility, 5-min. presentation, banner, distribute flyers.
- Breakfast Biz-Buzz Sponsor - \$150 - Logo visibility, 5-min presentation, banner
- Skagit Young Professionals Event Sponsor - \$150 - Logo visibility, 5-10 min presentation, distribute flyers.
- Million \$ Putts & Pints Tournament - \$50 - \$2,500 annually - Summertime networking with over 150 golfers and attendees.

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Business Happy Hour & Open House at Mount Vernon Carpet One Floor & Home

Join the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, February 9th at Mount Vernon Carpet One from 5:00-7:00pm. There will be lots of opportunities to network, so make sure you have plenty of business cards. Don't forget your door prizes to give your business extra exposure. Mount Vernon Carpet One is located at 400 W. Fir St. in Mount Vernon of course!



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Open House

← SECOND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH →

Stay in the Know with Weekly Legislative Updates

There will be a weekly legislative phone call on Mondays starting January 9th at 8:30am continuing throughout the legislative session. The calls will include an AWB briefing, and then a discussion with a member of the legislative delegation. This is a great way for you to stay connected and give your opinion on matters that affect all of us. The Main Number for these calls is- 425-456-2500

or you can use the toll free number- 888-228-0484. You will then need to input the following information: Meeting ID- 1961 and Password-1937.



CHAMBER EVENTS CALENDAR

Every Saturday and Sunday in January starting the 7th – Bald Eagle Festival

January 9 - Ambassador Committee Meeting

January 10 - Chamber Board of Directors Meeting

January 11 - Business & Industry Division Meeting

January 25 - Chamber Member Orientation- Update on new Tiered Dues

January 25 - Biz Buzz Networking Luncheon

Feb 7 Mount Vernon Marketing sub-committee meeting

Feb 7 Skagit Young Professionals After Hours

Feb 8 Business & Industry Division Meeting

Feb 9 Business Happy Hour and Open House at Mount Vernon Carpet One Floor & Home

Congratulations Year End Award Winners

Five Awards were handed out at the December 8th Holiday Mixer & Awards at Skagit Valley Gardens. Pictures of the award winners are below.

Not pictured: Katie Senff, tulees who won the Rising Star Award. Congratulations to all the 2011 winners!



Kimberly Self of Therapeutic Massage accepts the Making a Difference Award from Paul Pickering, 2011 Board Chair.



Julie Speck of Junior Achievement and American Family Insurance Paul Genest Agency accepts Ambassador of the Year Award.



Gary Lorenz of Skagit Valley Gardens accepts the Legacy Award.



Mike Yeoman of KAPS Radio 660 accepts the Bernie Award.

2012 Skagit Eagle Festival

The Concrete Chamber of Commerce presents the 2012 Skagit Eagle Festival beginning January 7 and continuing every Saturday and Sunday throughout the month. This is the second year the Concrete Chamber has hosted the event in its new four-week-end format, offering a wide range of recreation, education and entertainment options that celebrate the annual return of the eagles to the Skagit River Valley. A mainstay of activities is offered every Saturday and Sunday, including eagle-watching stations provided by the US Forest Service and staffed by specially trained volunteers; river rafting and float trips available from several compa-

nies; fish hatchery tours where visitors learn about the salmon that attract the eagles to the area each year; and wine-tastings and related events offered at local vineyards.

Event information can be obtained online at www.skagiteaglefestival.com or by calling the Concrete Chamber of Commerce at (360) 853-8784, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., or sending email to chamber@concrete-wa.com.



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