



Working Together to Build a Vital Economy

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June 10, 2010

Dear Snohomish County Leader:

A true measure of a community's economic vitality, as witnessed from past economic downturns and this current one, comes from its ability to weather adversity, spring back to its collective feet, and move – if not leap frog – ahead with vision, intelligence, confidence and determination.

We must not take our economic future for granted, but instead rally to take full advantage of the current economic shift to embrace and drive change now. We invite you to become part of **Project Concentrus**, an initiative lead by the Economic Development Council of Snohomish County and the Everett Area and South Snohomish County Chambers of Commerce to reinvent our systems for providing business services, advocacy and economic development programs for the purpose of increasing economic vitality across the County.

What is economic vitality? It is the “life-giving force” underlying our County's economic base. Economic vitality is economic development plus all the other important business service, business advocacy, workforce development, small business assistance and entrepreneurial development, and community development activities. All of these play an integrated role to add vitality to the economic life of the entire County -- our many cities, towns, and Indian tribes.

If Snohomish County is to thrive, **we must come together as a single unit to envision and build our future together.** Our County has 13 chambers of commerce and multiple downtown business associations for our 20 cities and towns. We can no longer afford the risk of a multitude of business groups diluting important individual or collective effectiveness. This is precisely what Project Concentrus is all about – amplifying our collective voice and impact, where the whole will be much greater than the sum of the individual parts, while continuing to respect and serve special needs and perspectives of the parts in the mix.

Snohomish County is poised for greatness, but we will only get from good to great if we step up together. The County's three principal business service, advocacy and economic development organizations, the Economic Development Council of Snohomish County, South Snohomish County Chamber of Commerce and Everett



Area Chamber of Commerce, together represent 75,000 employees working for more than 1,000 businesses and other organizations. Project Concentrus plans to be inclusive beyond this framework to engage all economic vitality voices so we can be more effective at protecting existing jobs and businesses, and attracting and home-growing new jobs and businesses for the future.

Four central purposes guide Project Concentrus:

1. Work together to grow the number and quality of jobs and increase family wages throughout the County.
2. Exert greater influence on public policy at all levels of government by speaking with a unified, inclusive voice for all of Snohomish County
3. Enable both a deeper and wider network for business leaders to explore and put to work innovative solutions to the problems facing our County.
4. Become a respected, authoritative voice for Snohomish County on economic vitality.

Some may say we have a solid economic base, so why change? The median household income tops \$65,000. More than 380,000 of us are employed somewhere in Snohomish County. Roughly 28% of us have a bachelor's degree or higher, and we have the United States' leading exporter, Boeing, with hundreds of small and medium businesses adding jobs. But, are we poised for sustainable growth given the competing global factors of this day and age?

We believe our County is at risk of losing ground, and that no one else will fight to keep good jobs here and vigorously advocate for new opportunities as strongly as a single voice representing all of Snohomish County. Project Concentrus will lead us to that voice, and as well be committed to opening access to greater resources for smaller business and entrepreneurs, and spending money in a more cost-effective way through administrative consolidation, increased use of technology, and smarter organizational strategies.

It is up to us to grow our economy while protecting our special quality of life. That is our legacy – handed down from past generations and carried forward for our children and grandchildren. We urge you to read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document to learn more about Project Concentrus, and visit the Internet blog (<http://www.projectconcentrus.wordpress.com>) to follow our progress on a daily and weekly basis.

As one of Snohomish County's valued leaders, ***we invite you to get involved*** in the process by participating in upcoming meetings, work sessions, and surveys. Help us create one economic vitality voice for all of Snohomish County.

Sincerely yours,

Rick Cooper
The Everett Clinic
Project Concentrus Chair &
Board of Directors Chair
Snohomish County EDC

Cathy Reines
First Heritage Bank
Board of Directors Chair
Everett Area Chamber
of Commerce

Stan Finley
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