Mix and Mingle Summer Barbeque

Let’s celebrate summer at this month’s membership meeting. Typically at this time of year getting chamber members to come inside and formally network is a challenge. So, we decided to have some fun instead.

Join us on July 9 at 11:30 am in the beautiful How It Works yard (1014 4th Street) for a summer barbeque and chamber potluck! Deception Café & Catering will grill us up some burgers and hot dogs with all of the fixings and provide a drink for only $5. And we’ll all share our favorite salads and sides potluck style (some ideas: fresh sliced watermelon, couscous salad, chips and salsa). We’ll have a scattering of tables and chairs, but you’ll most likely want to BYOC or B (bring your own chair or blanket). This will be a casual time to get to know your fellow members in a beautiful setting. Please RSVP to the chamber!

Coldwell Banker—Island Living

Please join us on Thursday, July 16 for the business after hours at Coldwell Banker Island Living, 3110 Commercial Avenue. The staff and agents want to show you around their new offices.

“At Coldwell Banker Island Living we understand that buying or selling a home entails making decisions that go beyond the property itself. We provide our valued clients a complete picture of the real estate market, the community and the buying and selling process, as well as our concierge services, which include everything from staging tips to discounts on moving,” says owner Jean Groesbeck.

Please RSVP to the chamber for the after hours, which begins at 5:30.

annual survey

The results of our annual survey are in. We received approximately 80 replies covering a wide variety of issues, ranging from general business challenges to our events, services, and overall impressions. We use this information to evaluate the programming we offer and to tailor our chamber to member needs. To encourage response, we also offered an incentive to respondents this year. Our winner, Bette Thompson of Anacortes Clean! will receive a free membership at renewal.

Thank you to the businesses that took the time to complete the survey—we appreciate your comments and will use the information constructively. There were a number of valuable insights provided through this year’s review. Specifically:

Biggest challenges in the coming year?
The biggest challenge in prior surveys was finding and retaining a qualified work-

(SURVEY continued on page 2)
force. That shifted in the current survey to attracting customers in a difficult economy, along with related revenue concerns. Not surprisingly, the changed economic landscape is reflected in this response.

How can the chamber help?
The response to these challenges was three-pronged: (1) marketing Anacortes effectively/consistently; (2) business referrals; and (3) networking opportunities. Survey response to our new branding efforts was positive—we are presenting the town in a refreshing light, though our brand promise will require additional work. The new Web site and the work done in the Visitors Center have provided an effective referral source for many members. Continuing network opportunities through monthly events was appreciated.

Initiative priorities?
In ranking a number of initiatives in order of priority, referrals were rated #1—providing a source of additional revenue in a challenging economic environment was a clear advantage. Tourism promotion/marketing, economic development, and operation of the Visitors Information Center followed.

Are functions timely?
85% of respondents felt functions fit into their schedules, allowing them to make various of the events—breakfasts, lunches, or after hours.

Are President Luncheons relevant?
82% of respondents found the luncheon speakers relevant. Additional topics of interest: networking/sales, customer service, business development, health & wellness. We will consider these suggestions in booking future speakers.

Opinion of the newsletter?
Many respondents like the paper copy and would prefer an electronic newsletter. As such, we will look hard over the next several months at offering both—those members who would like to continue to receive paper would continue to see it in their mailbox every month. Those who would prefer the e-version could opt out. It was clear from the responses that members would like to see the newsletter continue on a monthly basis.

Was the Save Our Ferries effort valuable?
Most members felt that the ferries effort was either of direct value to their business or indirectly beneficial to the community. On a more general note, there were a number of comments relating to a more active Governmental Affairs effort by the chamber—we are working on this and will continue to roll out new initiatives over the next year (please see our HR legislative update on page 5).

Is the Buy Close By program valuable?
Most respondents felt that the buy local effort either directly benefitted their business or was of overall value to the business community. There was a feeling that the program is not sufficiently visible—we will also work on this over the next several quarters.

Is the Web site valuable?
Most respondents felt that the Web site was of value to their business and/or that the site is much improved with the recent release. This is a significant source of referrals to linked businesses and the cornerstone of our marketing efforts.

Is ChamberMaster valuable?
Many of the respondents don’t use ChamberMaster and asked for follow-up assistance. We will be contacting these businesses over the next few weeks. If you would like to be added to this list, please contact the chamber office.

Have you read the Futures report?
Respondents were evenly split: half had read the report and half had not. We encour-

— Mitch Everton
Executive Director
member profile

New Beginnings Bibles, Books & More

Every business exudes the passion and personality of its owner. This is especially true of New Beginnings in Old Town Anacortes. Since purchasing The Living Word Christian store just ten months ago, Sandy Westad has overseen a miraculous transformation (pun intended). “I knew the retail store was only part of the plan; there was something special about this space.” Once purchased, her husband and Christian friends threw in their talents to paint, build shelves, and give the space a makeover.

The “something special,” as it turns out, was in the back room. Nearly half of the store was hidden behind arched wooden doors. Sandy knew that the back room had a different purpose: it was intended as a gathering place. Her Christian Crew got busy. The beautiful architecture and lofty ceiling were revealed with new paint. Furnishings were donated, and free WiFi was added. Appropriately, the back room was recently named “The Living Room.” Sandy explains, “The store and the gathering space are part of the total vision for New Beginnings.” The Living Room is open all day (come in and use the free WiFi!) and used by several Christian groups for prayer, studies, and meetings. “It’s free!” Sandy notes. To offset the cost she accepts book donations for her expanding used book section.

And while books and Bibles are the heart of her business, she recently added a consignment section for local Christian artisans and authors that features note cards, jewelry, handbags, drawings, photographs, and more!

Concerned about the economy, Sandy states “We need to do whatever we can to help each other.” In that spirit she has opened The Living Room for a Businessowners’ Prayer Gathering on Tuesdays at 8:00 am. “In my world, prayer isn’t presenting a laundry list of needs to God; it’s seeking Him first — and all things shall be added.”

New Beginnings is located at 716 Commercial Avenue. It is open Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday from 10 am to 5:30 pm, and closed Sundays and Tuesdays.

Ferries Update

A State Ferries head David Moseley was in town for the quarterly Ferry Advisory meeting on June 11. Our take on the meeting:

WSF proposed two alternatives to the legislature in December. Alternative A basically maintained current service, at a high continued cost; Alternative B gradually cut service, saving money in the process. The Governor’s initial budget adopted the second alternative and was the impetus for the proposal to eliminate the Sidney ferry run.

The final plan adopted an “A(minus)” scenario, funding
• Existing service levels; and
• Only “essential” capital projects, while
• Deferring many projects.

Moreover, there was conditional legislative support for three key operational strategies: vehicle reservations, transit enhancements, and a fuel surcharge, the savings from which could be used to offset operating deficits.

On the capital side, the legislature committed to replacing the Port Townsend ferries and larger boats as they become obsolete. This translates to a 64-car ferry in 2010, another in 2011, and one in 2012. Two larger, 144-car ferries are slated to come on line in 2014, one of which would be a backup boat. Under this plan, there would then be no additional boats until 2029.

The service implications are significant: there are currently no viable replacement boats in the ferry fleet to replace units that go out of service—if a boat goes down, there is simply a gap until it is repaired. Under the WSF long-term plan, this service level will continue for at least another five years. As such, the vulnerability of the Sidney run will continue as well. In addition, after the first five boats launch, the long-term plan posits a 15-year span with no capital improvement to the fleet. It is difficult to see how this scenario will ever be viable.

Finally, the legislature was unable to address long-term ferry funding in the session. Legislative commitments in the plan are not fully funded. There is a $127M operation gap and a $936M capital funding gap over this period. Primarily due to the vessel construction needs in the last six years of the plan, the full funding gap is approximately $3 billion.

We asked Mr. Moseley what we as a ferry community could do to assist. His response: WSF lacks a secure long-term revenue source. Until that is identified and in place, ferry issues will continue.

Additional questions or comments may be directed to moseled@wsdot.wa.gov.
Promoting Anacortes to Whidbey NAS

An emerging chamber initiative is to forge closer ties to the Whidbey Naval Air Station community. There are approximately 2,000 officers serving at the base, of whom around 5% live in Anacortes. These officers and their families typically cycle through Whidbey every three years, coming from a variety of points elsewhere in the country but centered on training facilities in Florida, Mississippi, and Texas. Currently little or no information regarding Anacortes reaches these transfers prior to making a housing decision.

Our focus is to form a users group among Whidbey families living in Anacortes. This group would personally contact transferring families and direct them to a new Web site, currently under development, which would provide a wealth of information about our local housing market, schools, things to do, and natural beauty. The hope is that these folks will see Anacortes as a logical alternative and will settle in town, buying houses and enrolling their kids in our schools.

The chamber hosted a kick-off lunch on June 16. The Mayor welcomed the guests; Chris Borgen, our schools superintendent, then updated everyone on district developments. Thanks to the following members for providing door prizes for the luncheon. With your generosity every attendee left with a prize!

- Anaco Bay Inn
- Anacortes Clean!
- Bayside Specialties
- Birch Equipment Rental
- Cap Santé Inn
- Chapman University
- Classic Image
- Coldwell Banker Island Living
- CompuMatter
- Curt Oppel, John L. Scott Real Estate
- Donatello Flowers & Gifts
- Elisabeth’s Cottage by Sea
- Fidalgo Pool and Fitness
- KP Studios
- Marina Inn
- Marine Guard Yacht Security
- Native Springs
- New Beginnings Bible Bookstore
- Opulence Hair Salon
- Upstage Boutique & Men’s Store
- Viking Moving Services

Leadership Skagit

Leadership Skagit is a nine-month training program run through the Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC). The program has been in place for a number of years and draws upon a wealth of local talent—it’s an excellent venue to hone leadership skills and to network with colleagues.

The chamber board decided this year to offer a scholarship to an interested member. In applying, the recipient agrees: (1) to complete the class or, failing to do so, return the stipend; and (2) to update membership on the program and its accomplishments upon completion of the term. Tuition this year is $1,350, of which the participant is required to cover at least 10%. Hence the scholarship value is $1,215.

This year’s recipient is our incoming Board President, Mike Trafton (Bank of the Pacific). We look forward to getting his impressions next year.

Bellissima Italian Restaurant “dressed up” recently with the installation of a pair of beautiful, custom neon signs. Pictured here are owner Marianne Mach and general manager Tyler Mach. The restaurant is located at 904 Commercial Avenue. Food’s delicious, atmosphere divine.

Soroptimist International of Anacortes’ newly renovated thrift shop

Grand Opening

Soroptimist International of Anacortes’ newly renovated thrift shop
Monday, July 13
4:00–7:00 pm
Corner of 3rd and O Ave
Join in for a tour and refreshments.
There will be no sales available that evening.
HR Legislation

Kris Tefft, general counsel at the Association of Washington Business recently provided a recap of human resources legislation that passed the legislature this session. These measures will become law on July 26.

In general, it was a long session—105 days. 2,696 bills were introduced and a record 602 were passed, with a handful vetoed by the Governor. The primary focus was the budget and need to fill a projected $9 billion gap.

HR legislation passed encompassed the following:

Unemployment Insurance: the legislation boosted weekly benefit checks to a $155 minimum, effective in May. The increased amount generated from existing trust fund monies and did not involve a tax increase. Other legislation extended UI benefits to individuals who have exhausted state and federal extended benefits, providing an additional 13 weeks of benefits.

UI Conformity: legislation brought the State’s insurance fund into conformity with federal law, adjusting tax rates to slow the growth in the UI trust fund to maintain a responsible reserve level. Employers with stable employment over the past three years and/or minimal lay-offs should see a reduction in UI taxes. Overall ESD estimates that employers will pay $23 million less in taxes next year and $340 million less over the next six years.

UI Voluntary Quits: In a previous court decision, it was decided that UI could be granted to a worker who voluntarily quit their job for “compelling personal reasons.” This created a very permissive environment, open to interpretation. Passed legislation reinstates a statutory list of specific good-cause reasons to voluntarily leave work and still qualify for benefits (takes effect on Sept. 6). It also adopts a federal “quit to follow” provision allowing benefits upon a voluntary quit to move with a spouse or domestic partner who relocates out of the local labor market.

Family Leave: This act was originally passed in 2007, with no money attached and no agency to oversee it. 2009 legislation delayed the start of October 2012, leaving funding and oversight unaddressed.

Bathroom Bill: Under this new law, businesses must allow customers to use their restrooms under certain conditions. First, (1) the retail establishment must comprise at least 800 square feet; and (2) the restroom location must be safe for the customer to use and must not pose a security risk. Assuming these two conditions are met, if a customer provides written evidence of an eligible medical condition (Crohn’s, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel disease, etc.), they must be allowed to use the facility. Also, if three or more employees are working at the time of the request, any customer must be allowed access. Businesses refusing requests face warnings and eventually a nominal fine.

Buy Close By Program Update

To support the continuing marketing of our Buy Close By program, the chamber is selling discount cards through the chamber office. A number of the program participants are also selling cards through their stores. They may be used to purchase a wide range of goods and services at a reduced cost. Current offerings include free steaks at Anacortes Meats, a free photo session at KP Studios, free eye brow waxing at Ryan Chanel, and many other special deals at merchants city-wide (the full listing is available at www.anacortes.org). The program is designed so that each card quickly compensates its $15 cost. Response thus far has been brisk—in general purchasers are feeding back that it’s a great deal.

All proceeds are used to purchase additional marketing. The intent is to continue with a bi-weekly ad campaign through year-end. The retail committee will also consider additional ideas to bring shoppers out and to capitalize on the Holiday season. Please stop by the chamber office and buy a discount card—your purchase helps your fellow members.
Barbara Atterberry

Anacortes Ambassadors are some of the friendliest and most energetic people that Barbara has ever met. Each month she looks forward to meeting with this focused and dedicated team and considers herself blessed to be associated with this group.

Growing up in New Jersey, Barbara never imagined that she would be drawn to Northwest Washington. After attending college in Florida, Barbara accepted a position with a Seattle based company and she discovered the abundance of the area. At that time she met lifelong Anacortes resident Robert Atterberry and he introduced her to this beautiful community.

Together they have two spectacular children, Ross and Sarah, who keep them busy along with their two businesses, Avenue Catering and Bob’s Chowder Bar & BBQ Salmon located at 3320 Commercial Avenue. The Atterberry family loves food, loves being together and loves bringing their food to you.

Living here brings “so many opportunities to embrace life, it’s like being on a great adventure.”

Thanks to the following members for donating to the door prizes for May’s President’s Luncheon:

- Bayside Specialties
- Native Springs
- Rockfish Grill/Anacortes Brewery
- Walgreen’s Drug Store
- Wise Owl Opportunities

Thanks to the following for donating to the May Business After Hours:

- Arbonne—Kae Eagling
- Bank of the Pacific
- Bohnker Insurance Services
- Cap Sante Inn
- Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center
- Mark Nilson Mortgage
- Pacific Design Screenprinting
- Rockfish Grill/Anacortes Brewery
- Wise Owl Opportunities

A new member has joined the Anacortes Ambassadors!

A-1 CERTIFIED CLEANING SPECIALISTS
(360) 293-4174
820 Red Robin Lane
Oak Harbor, WA 98277
Duane Lee
Carpet Cleaning

ARBONNE INTERNATIONAL,
KAE EAGLING, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT
(206) 718-5380
kaedesign@comcast.net
1701 10th Street
Anacortes, WA 98221
http://www.arbonne.com
Kae Eagling
Skin Care
Referred by Mark Nilson Mortgage

BAYSIDE SPECIALTIES, INC.
(360) 707-5422
bayside7@verizon.net
Burlington, WA 98233
http://www.baysidespecialties.com
Darrell & Stephanie Hooper
Promotional Marketing

BOB’S CHOWDER BAR & BBQ SALMON
(360) 299-8000
barbara@avenuecatering.com
3320 Commercial Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221
Barbara Atterberry
Restaurant

CANOE ISLAND FRENCH CAMP
(360) 468-2329
info@canoeisland.org
Canoe Island, WA 98280
http://www.canoeisland.org
Connie Jones
Youth Services

COAST AVIATION, LLC
(360) 708-9797
peter@coastaviationllc.com
4010 Airport Road, Hangar 1
Anacortes, WA 98221
http://www.coastaviationllc.com
Peter Bell
Scenic Air Tours

DEBBIE’S SEAFOOD
(360) 708-3918
krabher@earthlink.net
910 11th Street, Suite B
Anacortes, WA 98221
Debbie Siff
Seafood
Referred by Anacortes Meats

EVANS FUNERAL CHAPEL & CREMATORY, INC.
(360) 293-3311
info@evanschapel.com
1105 32nd Street
Anacortes, WA 98221
Bob Evans
Funeral Service

FIDALGO ISLAND ROTARY CLUB
(360) 299-9390
valtravelq@hotmail.com
PO Box 125
Anacortes, WA 98221
http://www.fidalgorotary.org
Val Tibbetts
Service Club

THE CAT’S MEOW
(360) 588-9900
michele@meowanacortes.org
803 4th Street
Anacortes, WA 98221
http://www.meowanacortes.org
Michele Onorato
Cat Adoption Center

THOMPSON’S GREENHOUSE
(360) 856-2147
thomspagh@wavecable.com
6412 State Route 9
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284
Brenda Thompson
Nursery/Greenhouse

WASHINGTON STATE KITCHENS
(800) 935-5524
erinbelmore@yahoo.com
13619 Mukilteo Speedway D5, #314
Lynnwood, WA 98037
Erin Belmore
Construction
Ribbon Cuttings in June

Mitch Everton, Mayor Dean Maxwell, owners Matt and Heather Miller, and co-workers Margie McPhee and Courtney Powell celebrate the new location of Read Me A Story at 1005 9th Street and the store’s 5th anniversary.

Sarah Atterberry with dad Robert Atterberry, Mitch Everton, Mayor Dean Maxwell, Barbara Atterberry and Nick Moss celebrate the opening of Bob’s Chowder Bar and BBQ Salmon at 3320 Commercial Avenue. This is a full-circle moment for the Atterberrys, as their family used to own a realty office at that location in the 1980s.

New face at the chamber

Danielle Codara

There is a friendly new face at the chamber; we would like to introduce Danielle Codara as an office coordinator working with us this summer on loan from Work Source. She is taking over vendor relations for Shipwreck Day as well as various chamber duties. Danielle is currently enrolled in college where she plans to pursue a degree in business administration.

Danielle has lived in Anacortes since middle school after moving here from California. She was very involved in the town activities having been a girl scout and playing volleyball throughout middle school and high school.

After high school Danielle moved back to California again to live in Palo Alto where she met her husband, Damien and gave birth to Aubree Grace. They decided to move back to Anacortes and raise their daughter in a place where the trees are green, the water is crystal clear, and the faces are always familiar.

Welcome to the chamber, Danielle.

Call for Nominations: Monthly “AnaCourtesy” Customer Service Award

After nudging from a few of you, we have decided to begin awarding a monthly honor to members who go above and beyond their normal duties and provide excellent customer service. The award—“AnaCourtesy” (thanks to Dave Lervik, Lervik Engineering for coining that phrase)—will be given to an employee of a member business who is “caught in the act” by a fellow member. If you witness an amazing act of customer service, please contact the chamber with the person’s name, their business name and describe your experience. Once a month a team led by Barry Harter, Central Payment Corporation, will sift through the nominations and pick that month’s AnaCourtesy winner.

The award holder will receive a lovely certificate, a picture in the chamber newsletter, and a basket of member provided goodies.

We hope by rewarding excellent customer service our entire community will benefit.
Executive Board

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Thank you, volunteers!
Visit us on the web at www.anacortes.org

Chamber of Commerce

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Anacortes, WA 98221

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603 Commercial Ave.  Anacortes, WA
360-293-4669  printshop@bayshoreoffice.com

Find your treasures at Shipwreck Day
July 18th
8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Downtown Anacortes

Over 250 vendors with souvenirs, riches, antiques, and goods to explore.

Following Shipwreck Day is the 1st Annual Working Boat Races
Starting at 4:00 pm on Pier 1 on the Guemes Channel.

Thank you, volunteers!
Visit us on the web at www.anacortes.org