February's announcement of a $423.4 million reduction in the general fund revenue forecast for the 2007-2009 biennium underscores the state's precarious fiscal condition. Even before this forecast, budget analysts anticipated a shortfall of nearly $1 billion for the next budget period.

The President's Luncheon is scheduled for March 13 at the Lutheran Church — 2100 “O” Avenue. Once again, Mayor Dean Maxwell will be presenting a State of the City. Mayor Maxwell plans to focus on the city’s significant 2007 project completion list, the ambitious 2008 project goals, energy conservation and the collective efforts to reduce energy consumption and reduce the municipal carbon footprint. He plans to also discuss water and the regional system as well as the significance of that system. He will also give a budget update and touch on the threats we face with an under-funded Washington State Ferry System and WSDOT.

This lunch is sponsored by Whidbey Island Bank and will be catered by Avenue Catering — all for only $15. Please RSVP to the Chamber 293-7911.

This month's Business After Hours is hosted by Trident Seafoods and sponsored by ALLDATA SHREDDING. Trident Seafoods is a value added seafood processor that distributes throughout the US and internationally; they have 200 employees. As the premier information destruction firm in the Pacific Northwest, ALLDATA SHREDDING provides secure, confidential destruction solutions to fit your needs.

This BAH is also the poster unveiling event for the Waterfront Festival; the committee has been hard at work designing a great poster for 2008 — come and check it out! Mark your calendars for March 20 @ 5:30 pm and remember to RSVP to the Chamber — Trident is located at 1400 4th Street.
It is at about this time each year that people begin asking whether the rain will ever stop. It will, trust me. In the meantime, we look forward to Spring, better weather, and cleaning up the yard (on second thought, maybe the rain’s not so bad…). We are in the midst of a host of projects at the Chamber. I am very encouraged by the progress being made at each of our divisions. A quick update:

- **Economic Development/Governmental Affairs.** The ED committee continues to tie together industry profiles in compiling the Futures Project. The draft report will be completed and available for review later this year.

  The GA committee has established a variety of conduits for providing members with important legislative information, including a monthly conference call with the Association of Washington Business and Anacortes City Council updates. These are being fed into a newsletter column. Plans call for expansion to the Web site.

- **Marketing & Promotions.** Jim Clarke has put together a powerful group of experienced marketing executives to review our strategic marketing plan.

  Inherent in this review is the potential to leverage member and Chamber marketing, looking to co-ops and other marketing programs to extend reach. The beautification committee has been key to two developments: we will see new vibrant eight-foot banners on uptown light poles in April and we now have a fully lighted arch. Thanks to Zee Hogan and Island Electric for their effort in getting this done.

- **Membership.** We are making progress on our goal of 500 members by the end of the year. We added 13 new members in January and several so far in February. Our member count currently stands at 435. This Division will continue to organize that effort, as well as promote and improve Member benefits.

- **Trades.** This newest Division has a two-fold purpose. The first is creating a sense of community in the business district.

  This will translate into a number of events, probably with a summer focus, as well as extended operating hours during key periods. The second purpose is in taking advantage of promotional opportunities with Ferry, Harbormaster, and Trawler Fest Welcome bags. Participating merchants can provide materials, which will be distributed to passengers, incoming boaters, and attendees, enticing them to stop in town. More on this shortly.

A couple of other quick updates:

1. I will be distributing Canadian tourist Welcome signs over the next month. If you would like a decal for your window, please contact the Chamber office;

2. We are producing new video for our Web site and the Visitor Center, replacing our current ten-minute video with ten shorter, punchier pieces that can be viewed separately. We will have these up on web shortly—thanks to the Utedas at KWLE and Jim Thompson from the high school for their work on this.

Thanks as always for your continued support—you make all of this possible. Any comments or questions, please contact me at 293-7911 or meverton@anacortes.org.

### Business Consultation Offered by EDASC

*The Chamber of Commerce is partnering with the Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC) to offer consulting services to our business community.*

Traci Harstad, the head of the Business Retention and Expansion program at EDASC, has agreed to use the Chamber offices once a month to work with business owners to find solutions to obstacles that may be preventing their continued growth and survival.

Call the Chamber or Traci at EDASC (336-6114) directly to schedule an appointment.

The services that EDASC provides are free and confidential.
Member Profile: Wise Owl Opportunities

Computers play an integral role in just about every aspect of business, especially in the field of accounting. Wise Owl Opportunities is able to combine the expertise of Lauri’s accounting & administration background with Rick’s technical mastery to provide a one-stop solution for your office.

Wise Owl stands out from the rest in its commitment to Anacortes; through their ongoing volunteer work with the Anacortes Senior Center, community service via AARP’s free tax help and their bi-weekly computer column in the Anacortes American. “We believe giving back to our community is vital,” states Lauri. “There’s always room for education.”

Wise Owl is also committed to saving you time and frustration by getting your computer system working quickly and efficiently and avoiding trial and error with one-on-one and classroom training.

Our goal is to help you SIMPLIFY. We’ll develop an easy-to-handle computer system, determine the best way to manage your records, show you how to keep them that way, then help you determine the easiest way to get the information you need for making sound business decisions.

Heather Miller

Heather Miller is one of the new Board members joining us this year. Over the past year she has been active in the Chamber on the Beautification Committee, the Marketing & Promotions Division and the Chamber Ambassadors. She will be chairing the new Retail Division that is starting this year.

Heather joined the Chamber two years ago through Read Me A Story, a children’s book and toy store that she and her husband, Matt, opened four years ago. The business has grown since they opened and is now getting ready to go online at ReadMeAStoryonline.com in April. The store has books, toys and clothes for newborns through teens — and even some things for adults!

In opening the store, Heather put together all her past experiences. Growing up, her family ran three gas stations and a travel agency in Connecticut. After completing her MBA in Finance at George Washington University in Washington, DC, she worked for Southland (7 Eleven) as a field manager before having children. When she first moved to Anacortes she got a real estate license and worked for Century 21, which later merged with Windermere.

Heather and her family moved here nine years ago from Virginia where Matt was stationed in the Navy. They have decided to make the Northwest their permanent home. She has a son, Alex, age 14 and a daughter, Brittany, age 12, who both attend Anacortes Middle School.
The Waterfront Festival in May is a Chamber produced community event. As you’ve undoubtedly heard, the Waterfront Festival Committee is busy working to put “the water back in the festival” with new events and features.

We are looking for Chamber members to work in the Information Booth, help with the free boat rides and assist on the brand new Walking Tour of a Working Waterfront. All you need to do is call the Chamber, tell us what area you are interested in and we’ll find a slot for you. In the past many of our Chamber member volunteers wore their company insignia and promoted their business while partnering with our beloved festival.

There are many opportunities for our members to get involved. In order to ensure a fun-filled and smoothly run event, we also need volunteers — it’s a great way to connect with your community.

Our project to light the front side of the arch (visible from 12th Street) is complete.

The sign is fully illuminated and visible. Accent LED lights have been installed on the perimeter. The lighting is very energy efficient (50,000-60,000 hour estimated life).

Special thanks to Board Member Zee Hogan (Maison et Jardin and Boudoir) and to John & Denise Tibbles at Island Electric for their assistance in getting this done.

SPONSORS

The staff and board of the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce would like to thank our generous sponsors for contributing to the Waterfront Festival.

OVERALL/POSTER SPONSOR:
Shell Puget Sound Refinery

FLEET SPONSORS:
Skagit Valley Herald
Trident Seafoods, Inc.

ADMIRALTY SPONSORS:
Dakota Creek Industries
Island Hospital
Mark Nilson Mortgage Consultant
Samish Indian Nation
Tesoro Refining & Marketing Co.

VICE ADMIRALTY SPONSORS:
Anacortes Family Medicine
March Point Cogeneration
Viking Moving Services, Inc.

COMMODORE SPONSORS:
Anacortes American
Anacortes Yacht Charters
Gere a Deli
MacGregor Publishing Company
Pacific Party Canopies
Puget Sound Energy
Sebo’s
Skagit State Bank
Whidbey Island Bank

CAPTAIN SPONSORS:
Anacortes Marine Electronics
Camelot Coffee
Horizon Bank
People’s Bank
Upstage Boutique & Men’s Store
Williams & Nulle CPA, PLLC

FRIEND OF THE FESTIVAL:
Calico Cupboard
Cap Sante Inn
BrandPromise Seminar

Internationally recognized brand expert, noted author, and Chamber member Duane Knapp will be offering a BrandPromise Training seminar on March 26 from 9:30-3:30 at the Majestic. The cost is $200 per person, which includes all materials, a continental breakfast, and a gourmet lunch. These seminars are perfect for business owners, front-line associates, retail or corporate managers and executives. Space is limited to 25 attendees. Please contact the Chamber office at 293-7911.

TOURISM MARKETING

by Steve Berentson

Spring is just around the corner, so efforts are well underway to grab our share of attention as tourists begin to consider their 2008 adventures.

As mentioned in previous issues of the Communicator, the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce continues to partner with Washington State Ferries (WSF) to promote the international run between Anacortes and Sidney, British Columbia. Once again this year the Chamber will take a leadership role in creating a March 30 “event” to kick off the spring run.

An important element of the international ferry promotion will be the airing of a 30-second TV commercial on KOMO-4. This campaign, part of a matching dollar co-op program established with Washington State Tourism, will run for six weeks from April through mid-May.

In addition to promoting the ferry, the TV spot features general tourism elements including images of local shops, restaurants and recreational activities. As always, the Chamber Web site is prominently displayed.

Off to the printer is the revised 2008 version of our eight-panel tourism brochure, featuring a montage of cover images in place of a single photograph. A run of 120,000 brochures will include 10,000 created as self-mailers for tourism “shoppers” who request information about our community. Last year the Chamber mailed approximately 5,000 information packets from “leads” predominantly generated by magazine ads. The majority of the brochures are distributed statewide (and into British Columbia) by Certified Folder Display Service.

Also underway are efforts by the Chamber’s Marketing and Promotions Division to develop a long-term plan. Look for details about this group’s work in upcoming issues of the Communicator.

Anacortes Real Estate EXPO

The first Anacortes Real Estate EXPO will be held at the Northwest Educational Service District Building at 1601 R Avenue, Anacortes, March 8th, 11 am - 4 pm; free to the public.

Exhibitors will provide information about the latest trends in home design and construction, remodeling tips, home improvement projects, pest control, preparing your home to sell, the buying/selling process, moving tips, home equity loans, credit reports, the home inspection process and much more.

Exhibitors will be offering show specials, providing complimentary seminars and demonstrations throughout the day. REALTORS® will be available to provide you with information on the current value of your home and show you how to search the MLS (Multiple Listing Service) from your home computer. If you would like more information on the event, call Jean (360) 941-3734, or email info@JeanGroesbeck.com.

Salmon Derby

The second annual Salmon Derby will be held in Anacortes on March 29-30. This great event drew over 750 anglers last year, raising $24,000 for local scholarships. Any members interested in participating, please contact Jay Field at Village Pizza.
**ALPHA APPRAISAL**  
12404 Windward Way  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Contact: Joan Fossum, SRA  
Phone: (360) 293-0731  
Fax: (360) 299-3645  
Email: joan.fossum@comcast.net  
Residential real estate appraisals.

**ANACORTES YOUTH DYNAMICS**  
2410 J Avenue  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Contact: Jade Barth  
Phone: (360) 293-3509  
Email: jbarth@yd.org  
http://www.yd.org  
Youth organization.

**CAMERON’S LIVING ROOM DINING**  
3401-A Commercial Avenue  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Contact: Cameron Morris  
Phone: (360) 299-4567  
Fax: (360) 299-4527  
Email: cameron@cameron’s.com  
http://www.cameron’s.com  
An eclectic American cuisine with European influences using fresh local ingredients in a warm elegant yet casual atmosphere.

**CAPTAIN JACK’S**  
619 Commercial Avenue  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Contact: Elisabeth Freeland  
Phone: (360) 588-1890  
Fax: (360) 588-1890  
Smoothies, espresso, ice cream, soups and pirate theme.

**CORE KINETICS PILATES**  
1003 8th Street  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Contact: Carolyn Watson  
Phone: (360) 296-4345  
Email: corekinetics@comcast.net  
http://www.corekineticspilates.com  
Private and small group instruction.

**CUTTING EDGE BUILDERS, INC.**  
4503 Queen Anne Way  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Contact: Tim Tollesson  
Phone: (360) 298-0777  
Toll-free: (877) 246-4586  
Email: m.tollesson@comcast.net  
http://www.1cuttingedge.com  
Custom home builder. All phases of construction, high-end interiors & design.

**CRUISE PLANNERS**  
2201 NE Parker Road  
Coupville, WA 98239  
Contact: Chris Davenport  
Phone: (360) 678-7412  
Fax: (360) 678-7438  
Email: cdavenport@cruiseplanners.com  
http://www.5StarCruisePlanners.com  
Full service travel agent specializing in cruising worldwide.

**HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS HOTEL & SUITES**  
1008 Goldenrod Road  
Burlington, WA 98233  
Contact: Danielle Callendar - General Manager  
Phone: (360) 755-7338  
Fax: (360) 707-2111  
Email: hiburl@cnw.com  
http://www.hiexpress.com/burlingtonwa  
Complimentary breakfast, indoor pool & spa, refrigerator, microwave, meetings.

**HOME FITNESS AND HEALTH LLC**  
1301 37th Street  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Phone: (360) 293-7553  
Fax: (360) 293-7553  
Email: don_spruling@msn.com  
Personal training and health services.

**NORTHWEST RIGGING**  
2901 T Avenue, #4  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Contact: Andy Schwenk  
Phone: (360) 293-1154  
Fax: (360) 293-1337  
Email: nwrig@cnw.com  
http://www.northwestrigginginc.com  
Yacht rigging of all kinds, cable railing for houses.

**NOVUS AUTO GLASS**  
2219 Commercial Avenue  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Contact: Ron Larson, John McCain, Rocky Storm  
Phone: (360) 293-8647  
Fax: (360) 588-1058  
Email: anacortesnovus@verizon.net  
http://www.novusshield.com  
Retail/Service. Auto Glass and Repair.

**JOHN PROSSER CRB, WINDERMERE REAL ESTATE/ANACORTES PROPERTIES**  
3018 Commercial Avenue  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Phone: (360) 202-3891  
Fax: (360) 293-4049  
Email: jprosser@windermere.com  
http://www.johnprosser.com  
Real Estate Sales. Specializing in residential and commercial real estate in Anacortes.

**SI EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**  
10900 NE 8th Street, Ste 900  
Bellevue, WA 98004  
Contact: Chad Baransky  
Phone: (425) 450-1340  
Fax: (425) 450-1348  
Email: cb@siemployeebenefits.com  
http://www.siemployeebenefits.com  
Insurance brokerage specializing in providing cost effective group medical benefits.

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**Member Renewals**

- Peoples Bank
- Portals LLC.
- PUD #1 of Skagit County
- Puget Sound Energy
- Reisner Distributor Inc
- Richardson Architecture
- Salvation Army
- San Juan Lanes/Storks Restaurant
- Scott Milo at the Framemaker
- Scott Richards Insurance, Inc.
- SeaBear
- Secret Harbor
- Sheely’s Floral & Gifts
- Simmonds Glass
- Skagit State Bank
- Smith, Ron & Associates
- Store Grocery, The
- Tracys
- Upstage Boutique & Men’s Store
- Vintage Investments, Inc
- Washington Federal Savings
- Wells Fargo & Co
- Wells Fargo Investments-Ragen MacKenzie
- Whidbey Island Bank
- Windermere Real Estate

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**Thank You!**

Thank you to the following businesses for donating door prize at the January Business After Hours. This is a great way to promote your business and make a new friend.

- ALLDATA Shredding
- Darwin Anderson
- Cap Sante Inn
- Chandler’s Square Retirement Community
- Earth Bound Used Books
- Friends of the Forest
- Insights
- Lowman House Suites
- Mark Nilson Mortgage
- Jonathon Petrich/Waddell & Reed
- Read Me A Story
- Star Bar
- Upstage Boutique & Men’s Store
I moved to Anacortes in 1982 to become involved in a viable community searching for a rewarding life. Working at Boomers Landing Restaurant until 1993 helped me meet many of the amazing and devoted citizens on the Island. Brenda, my loving wife, and I had the opportunity to buy Axelson’s Cafe, now Cafe Burlington in 1993, and we spent eleven exhilarating and action-packed years serving the Northwest with unique hospitality and culinary creations.

Being a miraculous survivor of cancer, the Cafe sold in 2004 and I shifted my focus to a new career with Central Payment Corporation helping local business owners with Electronic Payment Services. Since this transition, my life is more focused on volunteering for the Burlington Lutheran Church, Fidalgo Island Rotary, Chambers of Commerce, SICBA, Skagit Valley BNI Chapter, and local business community.

I love being with people and discovering their needs and desires. Life should be about “Giver’s Gain!” Over time I have learned that if you give you shall receive. Being able to effectively listen is the key to a successful life. The greatest thing you can do for any individual or any group in your day is to help them find the best. As an Electronic Payment Services Consultant, I help business owners realize that credit and check card processing plays an important role in their bottom line. Evaluating and analyzing each businesses credit card situation allows me to help them on a level that can make a difference. Feeling blessed to serve the community in whatever way possible is my goal. If you would like help in your business; please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Christmas shopping was down, not because there weren’t as many shoppers, but because the stores discounted products drastically thereby reducing the amount of sales tax collected by the state.

AWB does not believe Washington will have as deep a recession as other states; Boeing and MicroSoft are still doing well. However, the days of the robust housing market are over and as things get back to normal, Olympia will feel an increased dip in revenue.

Scott Richards Insurance has become a member of the Advantage Group, placing them in the Top 100 Property and Casualty Independent Agencies in the nation, resulting in improved access and service for clients.

Candy Cooper of Allied Realtors has been installed as President-Elect for the North Puget Sound Association of Realtors for 2008.

Nate Scott informs us that Windermere is celebrating its 20th year in business in Anacortes—the first fourteen years under John Prosser and the past six under Nate.

The Store is undergoing a significant remodel, including new racks, lighting, and product introductions. Wine tastings will be held every three weeks. The Deli will dovetail onto the Wine Shop remodel by introducing an expanded line of imported and domestic cheeses. The Bakery will share in the excitement by developing new items...both savory and sweet.

AMBASSADOR PROFILE:
Barry M. Harter, Central Payment Corporation

“A legislators must control spending now,” says Association of Washington Business president Don Brunell. “We have repeatedly warned of the dangers of unsustainable state spending. To help manage this shortfall, lawmakers must preserve a minimum balance of $1 billion. And we urge a return to the Priorities of Government budget discipline used during the last recession.” According to AWB, the challenge is that everyone knows this is coming and they are still passing out policy bills that will not be funded.

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**VIC Statistics**

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!
Visitor Information Center

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**Primary Representative**

As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, each member company has the right to participate in Chamber events and to vote in electing members to the Board.

As such, each company appoints a representative, typically the owner or a member of senior management, as their primary liaison with the Chamber. This individual, entered as the “Primary Contact” in ChamberMaster, votes on behalf of their company and is the primary recipient of Chamber notices.

Each company has the ability to change this designation at any time and can also name other subsidiary contacts. If you have questions on this process, please contact Mary Talosi at the Chamber office (293-7911).

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**TRAWLER FEST is coming!!**

**May 20-25**

The Retail Division of the Chamber is busy putting together programs to help our members capture the interest of the Trawler Fest participants. Look for further information via email and in next month’s newsletter.

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**March 20**

Try five restaurants for $20

Tickets @ the Chamber

This is the last Taste of this season. This event usually sells out, so get your tickets early.