Prepare now to take advantage of crowds at Waterfront Festival

There is no place like Anacortes to celebrate this region’s colorful maritime heritage, and thousands will take that opportunity once again this year as guests at the 2006 Waterfront Festival.

News of this free, family-friendly festival has been spread far and wide. A marketing campaign includes distribution of the commemorative Festival poster, made possible this year by long-time event promoters/volunteers Mike and Sue Keller. Featured on the 2006 poster is a photograph of the W.T. Preston, one of the city’s tourist attractions. Mike took the photo of the Preston “at work” on Lake Washington in 1981.

First on the Festival “menu” of activities is the annual Kickoff Dinner sponsored by the Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC), the Port of Anacortes and the Chamber of Commerce (see details, page six).

Saturday morning activities at the Captain Sante Boat Haven start at 9 a.m., with a full slate of weekend activities running until gates close Sunday at 6 p.m.

Business Connections Luncheon

Let’s get ready to network! Start preparations now to promote your business at the Business Connections Luncheon scheduled Thursday, May 11 at the Salvation Army, 3001 “R” Ave.

For those who are new to the “Connections” concept, this quarterly luncheon is designed to give local business people a chance to talk about their services and/or inventory. It is an action-oriented event from which you will emerge with new contacts, as well as information about your business neighbors.

Come prepared to tell your story, and if you would like a bit of an edge, invest another $10 to host a “talking table” with an opportunity to display merchandise or marketing materials.

The luncheon is modestly priced at just $10, a fee that includes lunch and an invitation to present one-minute “info-mercials” about your business. As always, participants in the Business Connections event exchange business cards and “lead sheets” before moving to another table to start the process all over again.

RSVP today to the Chamber office at 293-7911. Cancellation of an RSVP must be made 24 hours in advance to avoid full billing.

Port Commissioner Keith Rubin (left) with 2006 commemorative poster artists Sue and Mike Keller.

Grab the kids and grandkids for an exciting day of food, music and fun, ranging from free boat rides to a show featuring pirates and exotic birds. Don’t miss the vendors, the Car Show or the activities in the Children’s Area. Bring your appetite and be prepared for a parade of talented entertainers.

Purchase your commemorative shirts from the Chamber today, and make your staff proud participants in “Festival Friday.”

May 20 and 21, with Kickoff Dinner May 19

May 4
Ambassador Club Luncheon
Star Bar Café 11:45 a.m.

May 5
First Friday Gallery Walk
6 - 9 p.m.

May 6
Garden Fair at the Majestic
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

May 9
DDA Board 4 p.m. at the Chamber

May 10
Finance/Executive Committee
10 a.m. at the Chamber

May 11
Business Connections Luncheon
11:30 a.m. at Salvation Army

May 16
Board Meeting 3:45 p.m. at the Chamber

May 19
Waterfront Festival Kick-Off Dinner

May 25
Small Business Awards
5:30 - 7 p.m. – Skagit Valley College, McIntyre Hall

May 30
VIC meeting 9 a.m.

Volume 16 / Issue 5

Calendar

May 20 & 21
Waterfront Festival

May 25
Small Business Awards
5:30 - 7 p.m. – Skagit Valley College, McIntyre Hall

May 30
VIC meeting 9 a.m.

Chamber Mission
The Anacortes Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to improving the business and community life of Anacortes.
Member Profile

Birch Equipment

Whether your yard is overgrown, your home needs improvements or you just want to learn to run an excavator – come join the Birch Equipment staff on the first two Saturdays in May for ‘Home & Garden How To’ events, being held May 6 from 9 a.m. – noon at the Birch Anacortes Store, and May 13 from 9 a.m. – noon at the Birch Bellingham Store.

Ten learning stations will be set up to demonstrate equipment use, teach valuable home & garden improvement knowledge and give attendees hands-on experience operating any equipment used inside and outside the home.

Birch home & garden experts will be on hand for any questions. Stations will include lawn care, compaction, airless paint sprayers, carpet cleaning, skidsteer loaders, and mini-excavators among others. Also, prize drawings will be held and light breakfast foods will be provided.

Birch Equipment has been operating since 1972 and is 100 percent locally owned. With more than 145,000 pieces of equipment, Birch has the largest inventory in the northwest corner, so come by and learn what you can do to make your home and garden shine.

Anacortes Manager is Jordan Mellich, who has worked here for the past 15 years. “One of the biggest misconceptions about our business,” said Jordan, “is that we only serve contractors. We do that, but we serve homeowners, too, with retail merchandise including equipment accessories and even kids’ toys and clothing. Our rental equipment ranges from wallpaper steamers to airless paint sprayers, from pressure washers to lawn thatchers and excavators. We consider ourselves a one-stop shop.”

For more information contact: Birch Anacortes Store – 8876 S. March Pt. Rd. - Anacortes. 293-7788; Birch Bellingham Store – 1619 Kentucky Street - Bellingham, WA 98226, (360) 734-5717. Email: info@birchequipment.com.

A Message from the Interim President

Our Chamber of Commerce has been through a great deal of change since early last summer. We recognize and appreciate that everyone associated with the Chamber has been affected by this sea of change.

However, through this time the Chamber continued to meet its commitments and provide service to its membership. In large part, that was due to the volunteers in the Visitor Information Center, the hard work of our Department of Licensing (DOL) employees, and the enormous effort by our Office Manager, Sue Keller and our Special Events Coordinator, Stephanie Hamilton. We also acknowledge the work of the all-volunteer Chamber Board, under the leadership of Pam Allen in 2005 and Bill Berry in 2006. They have stayed focused to keep the Chamber moving forward.

This period of change is not yet over, and in fact is really just beginning. While the Chamber has long been recognized for its excellence in producing special events, operating the wonderful Visitors’ Information Center and its work in managing the Anacortes office of the DOL, among other things, we have only just begun the journey of improving the business climate in Anacortes. Significant and important work thus far has been accomplished by the DDA board and its members and the Chamber’s own Economic Development Committee. Our board wants to be a leader in advancing the message and improving the environment for the business community in our city.

As we look for our new Executive Director, our search committee has set its standards high. We are looking for someone who wants to lead the Chamber into this next phase of change. He or she will continue the strong traditions of the Chamber and provide the leadership in balancing business growth with the quality of life we cherish here in Anacortes.

We thank each of our members for their continued patience and understanding while we chart these new waters, and we sincerely thank everyone who has contacted us asking how you can help through this phase. We need help in others ways as well, and are still in need of volunteers to work at the Waterfront Festival. If you are interested please contact the Chamber office at 293-7911.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at voliver@islandhospital.org or at 360-299-1300, Ext. 2411 on any Chamber matter.

Vince Oliver,
Acting Board President/Executive Director

Update your business information

It may not have been among your New Year’s resolutions, but this is a good time to review and update information regarding your business.

Check our printed materials as well as the Chamber website at www.anacortes.org to confirm that our information regarding your business is still current.
Garden Fair
at the Majestic
Saturday, May 6
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Support the Planter Pot Project

Destination Downtown Anacortes
Revitalization effort continues

As most Anacortes Chamber members know, DDA is patterned after the “Main Street” program of the “National Trust for Historic Preservation.” This pattern has been in place for many years and has proven itself across the country as a successful model for downtown revitalization.

The basic outline of the program is called “The Main Street Four-Point Approach to Commercial District Revitalization,” and the four points are: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring.

DDA is organized in such a way that the Organization component is handled by the DDA Board, and there are separate committees for the remaining three components. The DDA committee that has been most visible in recent months is the Design Committee, the group involved in the Arch project from beginning to completion.

A brief paragraph outlining the responsibilities of the Design Committee is provided on the Main Street website (www.mainstreet.org), and reads as follows:

“Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets - such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets - is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer.”

The description continues: “Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.”

Bob Hyde is chairman of the Design Committee and is joined by committee members Cynthia Richardson, Art Shotwell and Dave Sem.

Terminal project will feature business opportunities

State ferry officials delivered an update on plans to improve the Anacortes terminal, reporting to a Chamber of Commerce audience details including retail opportunities when the terminal is complete in 2008.

At the April 12 President’s Luncheon, WSF Program Manager Gary Baldasari said he and the rest of the project team are excited about a multimodal terminal that will be designed with a “gateway” theme in mind. Anacortes is a special project, he said, because of variables including proximity to Canada, security issues and a heavy mix of tourists among ferry passengers.

Baldasari also reported all customs screenings for the Anacortes/Sidney international run would take place in Sidney, meaning travelers can simply disembark and go their own ways once they reach Anacortes.

WSF will hold additional local meetings and will work with the city and interest groups with regard to public access to neighboring beach and wetlands. WSF will also seek local art in association for the renovation/construction project.

In addition to details regarding the $119 million project, the business audience learned that the MV Elwha will likely be out for about six months for driveline repairs at Todd Shipyards. Another ferry has been assigned the international route.

Small Business of Year nominees

The Small Business Person of the Year Awards ceremony will be held Thursday, May 25 from 5 – 7 p.m. at McIntyre Hall at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon.

Here are the nominations for the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year Awards, all great businesses which easily met or exceeded nomination criteria: The Rockfish Grill & Anacortes Brewery; San Juan Rehabilitation and Care Center, Fidalgo Care Center; La Vie en Rose French Bakery; Penguin Coffee.

Call 293-7911 by Monday, May 22 for reservations to this county-wide business event. Full dinner, $35.

Garden Fair at the Majestic
Saturday, May 6
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Support the Planter Pot Project
Special Thanks to...

Thanks to the following for door prizes and other contributions:

**President’s Luncheon**
- Star Bar Café
- Scott Richards Insurance
- Mark Nilson Mortgage Consultant
- ALLDATA Shredding
- Skagit Speedway

**Business After Hours**
- Digital Art Moments
- Lighthouse RV Park & Mini Storage
- James Anderson, PS
- Mark Nilson Mortgage Consultant
- ALLDATA Shredding
- Art Smart
- Portalis
- Soroptimist - Cynthia Hill
- Piston Service

**Beautification - Basket Sales Donations**
- ABC Yacht Charters
- Gere-A-Deli
- Left Bank Antiques
- Scott Richards Insurance
- Non-members
- Anacortes Chiropractic
- Dave's Anaco TV & Appliance

Caught in the Act of Doing Business

Caught in the Act of Doing Business recently at Cap Sante Boat Haven were Assistant Marina Manager Wes George (left) and James Lindsey of Bayshore Office Supply. With the 2006 Waterfront Festival and boating season just around the corner, the action will pick up quickly at the Port of Anacortes marina.

Sister Cities Celebrate International Ferry

Pictured above on an observation deck of the MV Elwha are about half of those in an Anacortes contingent that visited Sidney, B.C. for the April 2 opening of the Anacortes/Sidney run. Included in the group were Chamber members, Anacortes Sister Cities Association members, Anacortes Mayor Dean Maxwell, Port of Anacortes official John Hachey and EDASC Director Don Wick.

Anacortes well represented at Sidney event

About 50 local citizens and officials represented Anacortes April 2 at ceremony marking the inaugural sailing of the ferry between Anacortes and Sidney. In addition to Anacortes and Sidney mayors, top Washington State Ferries (WSF) Director Mike Anderson attended the ceremony, reiterating the state’s commitment to the international run. A photograph of a “Mountie” with RVs coming off the MV Elwha will be used to publicize a 50 percent reduction in rates for RVs. This campaign is being conducted in partnership between the Chamber and WSF.
New Members

Northern Lights Casino
Slots, table games, restaurant, bingo, poker, Live Pro Boxing, off track betting, banquet rooms, RV park, live comedy.
Mindy Walton
12885 Casino Drive, Anacortes
360-293-2691
www.swinomishcasino.com

Skagit Speedway
Sprint car race track. Great family entertainment under the stars.
Steve Beiter & Andy Hunter
4796 Old Hwy 99 N.; P.O. Box 911
Burlington WA 98233
360-724-3567
www.skagitspeedway.com

Star Bar Café
Downtown Anacortes restaurant with wonderful atmosphere featuring light breakfast, sensational dinners and Sunday Brunch.
Farah Ally & Lara Dunning
416 ½ Commercial Avenue, Anacortes
360-293-2120

Member Renewals

Anacortes Highliner Charters
Soroptimist International
Harry McGrath, Jr.
Anacortes Kiwanis Sunrisers
Anacortes Farmers Market
Seaside Autobody & Accessories
San Juan Islands Blinds & Shutters
Anacortes Automotive
Cap Sante Marine, Ltd
Airporter Shuttle/ Bellair Charters
Lowman House Suites
Laws/Craig Real Estate Group
Creative Cabinets
Ace Hardware
Anacortes Printing
RE/MAX Realty Associates
Teriyaki Time
Island Express Charters, Inc

Business After Hours

Digital Art Moments and Gere-a-Deli partner to present April After-Hours

Business After Hours guests toured the new Digital Art Moments and participated in a ribbon-cutting celebration before walking a few steps to share refreshments at the Gere-a-Deli restaurant on April 20.
Tony and Karla Locke welcomed guests to their new business, showing off “Almost Famous” local photographers and a full line of digital photography services.
On hand to greet guests in “part deux” of the After Hours was deli owner Laurie Gere.

City Council member Nick Petrish (center) presided over a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Digital Art Moments, 512 Commercial Avenue. Flanking him are owners Tony and Karla Locke.

Gere-a-Deli delights were on the menu as April After Hours guests enjoyed refreshments and door prizes. Events Director Stepanie Hamilton gave away T-shirts.
VIC Statistics

Thank You, Volunteers!
March 2006

- Visitors 986 (1,281 - 2005)
- Phone Calls 487 (419 - 2005)
- Information Request 198 (172 - 2005)
- Relocation Request 16 (33 - 2005)
- Web Sessions 30,443 (20,767 - 2005)

Chamber Officers

Executive Board
President
Vince Oliver / Island Hospital
President-Elect
Robin Pestarino / AllData Shredding
Treasurer
Nate Scott / Windermere Real Estate
Immediate Past President
Pam Allen / Anaco Inn/Anaco Bay Inn

Board of Directors
Chris Borgen / Anacortes School District
Zee Hogan / Maison et Jardin
Mike King* / City of Anacortes
Pat Meyer / Viking Moving Services
John Pope / Tesoro Refining & Marketing Co.
Peter Steffen / ABC Yacht Charters
Bob Elsner* / Port of Anacortes
Dave Storkson / San Juan Lanes & Stork's
Nels Strandberg / Strandberg Construction
Carol Van Iterson / Horizon Bank
Graeme Wilson / Cap Sante Marine
Thomas Wood* / Shell Puget Sound Refinery
Michael Stolmeier / Smugglers Villa Resort

* Ex-officio

Staff
Interim Executive Director
Cory Hunter
Membership Services
Office/Visitor Center Coordinator
Sue Keller
Events Coordinator
Stephanie Hamilton
Licensing
Sub-agents
Kristi Daniels
Crystal Ashford
Sara Jones
Newsletter Editor
Steve Berentson

Waterfront Festival Kickoff Dinner

Join the fun at the 2006 Anacortes Waterfront Festival Kickoff Dinner on Friday, May 19 at the historic Port of Anacortes Pier One warehouse at the foot of Commercial Avenue. This event, held the night before the opening of the two-day festival at Cap Sante Boat Haven, is co-sponsored by the Port, the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC). Call (360) 336-6114 for dinner details or reservations.