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Microsoft Brings TechSpark to Rural Counties across the US

On a recent trip back to his home town in Wisconsin, Brad Smith, President and Chief Legal Officer of Microsoft, experienced the reality of rural life and emerging technologies. He was blown away that over 50% of his



home town didn't have access to broadband. When he returned home to Seattle he started to research where

technology companies are obtaining their engineers and developers. He found that most of these employees come from areas that have access to broadband, such as Silicon Valley, Seattle, and other larger cities in the US. While more people from the rural areas of the country are more likely to go into a non-technology related field. This is when TechSpark was created.

TechSpark is a new civic program that aims to foster economic opportunity for all Americans. To do this, there are 10 regions across the US. They are focused around rural areas that have limited exposure to technology and broadband. There are five pillars of TechSpark which aims to close the technology gap between the rural areas and cities across America.

According to Microsoft's TechSpark factsheet:

- The US has nearly 500,000 unfilled computing jobs
- This number is expected to be over 1.7 million jobs by the end of next year.
- Last year, only 42,969 computer science students graduated with bachelor's degrees.
- There are 7.3 million fewer jobs in the United States

today for people with a high school degree or less than there were in 1989. At the same time, 6 million jobs in our country go unfilled due in large part to a shortage of skilled workers.

- 23.4 million Americans who live in rural communities lack access to the economic, educational, and health opportunities broadband provides.

To help with these statistics, TechSpark has five areas that they will continue to work on.

Digital Transformation. Microsoft in partnership with local organizations, will work with businesses in traditional industries to develop their own digital technology advances and foster business growth.

Digital Skills and Computer Science Education.

Programs like Technology Education and Literacy in Schools Program

(TEALS) bring computer science education to more high schools. TEALS

is an industry-wide effort that brings



Lisa Karstetter, Manager TechSpark Washington and GCEDC Board Member, with the break outs to start brain storming what interests everyone has and to start thinking about career paths in technology and STEM.

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Grant County All Ports Meeting August 3rd

The Grant County All Ports meeting will be held on August 3, 2018 at the Port of Ephrata. The Grant County Economic Development Council has been hosting this annual meeting since 2015. The goal is to bring together all ten of the county's port districts to be able to talk and learn about the needs of our local communities.

This year the agenda will include; an update about the Grant County PUD's infrastructure and new rate schedules, how the Foreign Trade Zone #203

works and who can benefit, and a presentation from the Washington Department of Commerce.

"Grant County is in a unique situation where we have multiple port districts. So by bringing them together the EDC is better able to help foster discussions of county wide importance," commented Brant Mayo, Grant County Economic Development Council's executive director. "We look forward to having all the ports together and the discussions that will come of it."



5-Year Capital Campaign Assessment

The Grant County Economic Development Council has sent out a survey to the investors of the council to gather feedback on the Building Prosperity Campaign. 2018 marks the fifth year of the campaign and the Grant County EDC has been able to reach many of the goals originally set by the investors in 2014.

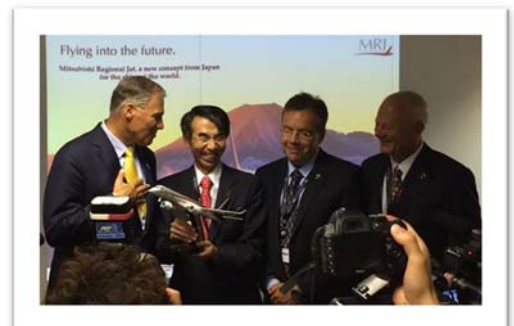
Initiative I: Existing Business Development. In 2014 and 2015 the Grant County EDC worked with SGL Automotive Carbon Fiber on a Washington WorkStart grant, which



SGL Composite Employees who benefited from the WorkStart Grant.

helped to provide training to existing and new employees. Due to the WorkStart grant, 59 employees were trained, 44 of whom were new employees. In 2015, the EDC worked along side AstaReal, to help with their first expansion. By helping set up meetings between the City of Moses Lake, The Port of Moses Lake and Washington State Department of Ecology, they were able understand the permitting process and how it would effect the water, waste water and air quality before the expansion.

Working to expand export in the county, Allan Peterson, has been able to help multiple companies in the area with an out bound trade mission to Asia. So far, Eckenberg Farms and Cascade Organic Flour have both expanded employment due to these efforts.



Washington Governor Jay Inslee with Mitsubishi and the Port of Moses Lake announcing their intent to do their flight testing at the Port of Moses Lake.

Initiative II: Business Recruitment and Attraction. In 2014 and 2015 three business opened their doors for operation, resulting in 355 new jobs into the area. The EDC worked with Amway/Nutriline starting in 2010, AstaReal starting in 2012 and Mitsubishi in 2014.

Initiative III: Retail and Services Development.

The Grant County *Continued on Page 3*



computer science engineers from Microsoft and other companies together with classroom teachers to team-teach computer science during the school day. Quincy High School has been working with TEALS for the last four years. Now they are offering two regular classes and two advanced classes. A DigiGirlz event was held at CBTech this spring, with 90 girls attending from the Moses Lake area. They were exposed to different career paths, met with professional women from the Grant County area,

and were able to learn code in a computer lab.

Career Pathways. Microsoft will partner with high schools, community colleges and other institutions to expand learning environments, by providing greater access to technology tools, training and other resources. This will enable people to acquire the skills and connect with jobs that require less than a traditional four-year degree.

TechSpark Cont.

Rural Broadband. Microsoft will invest and partner with telecommunications firms in specific regions to expand broadband coverage to targeted rural areas. Microsoft has already donated \$200,000 for the build out of fiber to the City of George.

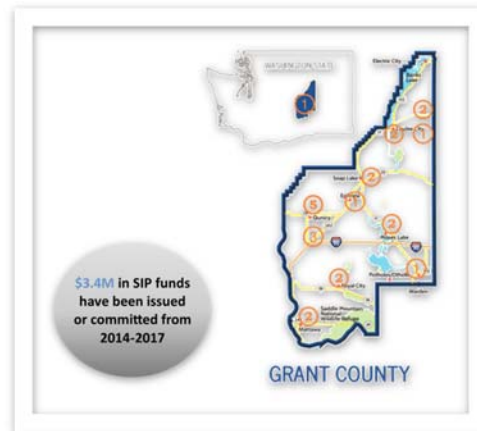
Support for Nonprofits. Microsoft Philanthropies has pledged to increase its financial and technology support for non-profit groups in each region.

5-Year Capital Campaign Assessment Cont.

EDC along with the Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce, and county real estates have been representing the county for six years at the annual retail convention, RECon in Las Vegas, Nevada. Because of these efforts, we have been able to make connections with many developers and retail establishments over the years. Since 2012, fifteen new retail establishments have located in Grant County.

Initiative IV: Infrastructure

Development. As administrator of the Strategic Infrastructure Program, the Grant County EDC has worked with our communities to provide \$3.4 million in SIP funds from 2014-2017. In Washington State, rural counties are allotted 0.09% of the sales tax from the area to be used for economic development. Grant County has elected to set up a committee comprised of locals appointed by the county



Locations of where the SIP Funds have been issued or committed.

commissioners to review projects from the municipalities that will provide public infrastructure and create jobs.

The Grant County PUD is committed to providing fiber to the entire county. Currently, 70% of the county is connected, while the remaining 30% is in very rural areas that require long distances to connect the homes.

The PUD has asked the EDC to collaborate by helping to provide demographic information so that the PUD is able to make decisions of how the buildout will proceed.

Initiative V: Communication and

Investor Relations. Staff is constantly working to serve the community and carry out the vision of the investors. By bringing in experts for community forums such as the All Ports Meeting, Annual Banquet and our newly Economic Forum staff is bringing value and information to the community and EDC investors.

The Grant County Economic Development Council has sent out a survey to the investors of the council to gather feedback on the Building Prosperity Campaign. 2018 marks the fifth year of the campaign and the Grant County EDC has been able to reach many of the goals originally set by the investors in 2014.



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Founders Circle (\$75,000+ up)

ASPI Group
City of Moses Lake
City of Quincy
Grant County
Grant County PUD
Port of Moses Lake
Port of Quincy

Platinum Division (\$50,000-\$74,999)

Central Terminals LLC
Columbia Basin Herald
Microsoft Corporation
Samaritan Healthcare
Washington Trust Bank
Oath:

Gold Division (\$25,000-\$49,999)

Chemi-Con Materials
Confluence Health
Genie Industries
Hayden Homes
McKinstry Co., LLC

Silver Division (\$15,000-\$24,999)

AKZO Nobel
City of Ephrata
CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
Port of Ephrata
Port of Mattawa
REC Silicon

Bronze Division (\$2,500-\$14,999)

Accredited Appraisals
Agri/Com Appraisals
Alsted Real Estate
Aviation Technical Services
Basic American Foods
Barrett Business Services, Inc.
Belle Enterprises Inc.
Big Bend Community College
Central Bonded Collectors
City of Electric City
City of George
City of Royal City
City of Soap Lake
City of Warden
Clear Risk Solutions
Coldwell Banker Tomlinson Ranch & Home
Columbia Basin Development League
Columbia Basin Job Corp
Columbia Basin Railroad
Columbia Electrical Supply
Columbia Glass Inc.
Columbia Northwest Engineering
Consolidated Disposal Service, Inc.
Dano Law Firm, PS
Express Employment Professionals

Bronze Division Continued

Gary Mann Real Estate
General Dynamics—OTS
Guild Mortgage Company
Horizon Credit Union
Housing Authority of Grant County
Hub International
Inland Cellular
Inland Tarp & Liner, LLC
ITC Services, Inc.
J & M Electric
JR Newhouse Co., PLLP
Key Bank
Lad Irrigation Co., Inc.
Lamb Weston, BSW
Landau Associates, Inc.
LC Farms, Inc.
Lenroc Company
Linage Logistics
Live Nation-Gorge Amphitheatre
Mardon Resort
Martin Morris Agency
Million Air Moses Lake
Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce
Moses Lake Community Health Center
Moses Lake School District
National Frozen Foods
Northland Communications
Northwest Farm Credit Services
Polhamus Heating & Air Conditioning
Port of Coulee City
Port of Hartline
Port of Royal Slope
Port of Warden
Quincy Foods
Rock Steel Structures
SGL Automotive Carbon Fibers
Skaug Brothers, Inc.
Skone & Conners
Total Employment & Management (TEAM)
Town of Coulee City
Trask Insurance Inc.
Umpqua Bank
Western Pacific Engineering
Western Polymer Corporation
Windermere K-2 Realty
WorkSource Central Basin
Zip Truck Lines, Inc.

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