REFLECTIONS, WELL WISHES AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Ted Sprague

2017 was a year of growth and change at the Cowlitz Economic Development Council and for Cowlitz County. Our communities saw many successes welcoming new businesses small and large. At the CEDC, we continue to encourage growth of our existing businesses with expansion of facilities, equipment, staff and products. In addition, we continue the fight for employment and business opportunities, appropriate and timely permitting, quality of place, and increased legislative engagement. One highlight of the year was our successful Legislative Forum that we participated with the Kelso/Longview Chamber of Commerce. To have all six legislators representing Cowlitz County made for a thrilling and informative evening.

At the staffing level we grew with the addition of Lindsey Cope, our Community Engagement Director, Sarah Reeser with AmeriCorps, and we welcome back Mike Karnofski as a volunteer consultant.
Economic development is a marathon, not a sprint and for 2018 we have many of the same goals from previous years that we continue to strive to achieve. We are excited and are looking forward to work towards improved and diversified business recruitment, business start-up expansion and retention, high quality of place, workforce development, and organizational leadership. We are also thrilled to rebrand, and jump start the 40 for 2020 and to work closely with tourism, small businesses, downtowns and our Chambers.

We want to thank you all for your partnership and participation. It takes all of us to continue to grow as a community. Let’s make 2018 a year to remember! Happy New Year!

- Ted, Scot, Paul, Lindsey, Mike, Joelle and Sarah

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SQUAREPEG CONSULTING

We are excited to introduce a new member to the CEDC: Square Peg Consulting, founded by Frank McShane. Many of you may know Frank from his work as COO of Cascade Networks and his previous role as President and COO of Longview Fibre (now Kapstone). Prior to coming to Longview in 2004, Frank led the PNW Supply Chain practice for Ernst & Young in Seattle.

As the name implies, the purpose of Square Peg Consulting is to help companies accelerate their growth through using data to make the best decisions about:

- Putting the right people in the right jobs
- Determining which processes yield the best results
- Identifying which products or services will generate the most cash.

Please welcome Frank and Square Peg to the Council and look for an initial call to introduce his company.
YOUR BUSINESS: HOW TO START THE YEAR OFF RIGHT

Lindsey Cope

If your business or organization operates on a regular-year basis you have probably been swimming in budgets and year-end items since September. You have gathered your numbers, had the year-end officer meeting, and hopefully sighed a breath of relief to enjoy the last few days of 2017. We all have the best of intentions to make the next year the best we have ever seen. Studies have confirmed that smaller, more manageable steps are the key to establishing long term success. What can your business or organization to do make 2018 your best year yet? We have gathered a brief list for you to take some of the guesswork away!

1. If you have not already, establish a reasonable operating budget. This is a wonderful time to reflect on where your money went last year and what worked. Did you see results from your marketing efforts? Did you bleed money in unexpected areas? Proper budgeting can help you focus, forecast expenditures and see yearly patterns.

2. Review your pertinent policies for relevance and possible money savings. Chances are the idea of reviewing your insurance policies, internet provider, or accountant seems tedious, but every few years you should reassess. This can uncover holes in your policies, help you spot liabilities, possibly save you money or create an upgrade for the same amount you are already paying.

3. Utilize community resources. Lower Columbia College offers reasonably priced continuing education for yourself or your staff, the Association of Washington Business, local Chambers, and we, at the CEDC, all have experts available for very little or no cost to help you with everything from budgeting, marketing, branding, tax incentives, real estate, import/export, banking, human resources, public relations and staffing.

4. Familiarize yourself with the newest laws and incentives. Did you know that the mileage rate, minimum wage and paid sick leave have all had changes starting January 1? Don’t be left behind trying to play catch up.

We look forward to watching you all grow and thrive in the New Year. Let us know how we can help you make this your best year yet!

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