



# QUARTERLY REGIONAL NEWSLETTER

## STRIVING TO DEVELOP A STABLE AND DIVERSE ECONOMY IN THE TRI-COUNTY AREA

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### Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) Update

**Trail Information:** The *Kettle Falls to Colville Non-motorized Trail* Committee met with Stevens County Commissioners and the Stevens County Public Works Director, Jim Whitbread, in February. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss trail possibilities on the county roads between the two cities. The use of county roads presents one large obstacle: the inconsistent (and lack of) right-of-ways. To remedy this, unaffordable and time consuming land acquisitions would be required. Due to this hindrance, the Trail Committee made the decision to focus its efforts on the 395 corridor vs. county roads. The Stevens County Commissioners and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) expressed support for this route and the Trail Committee's many efforts.

The *Ferry County Commissioners* have acquired the abandoned rail corridor between Republic and Danville. The Commissioners are forming a committee to discuss the future use of the corridor and they have invited the public to submit applications to participate in said committee.

**Public Transportation:** *Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program:* Stevens County is waiting for results on funding for the Intercity Bus Program. Hopefully news will come by April of this year. This route would be funded by the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 (f) program, in partnership with Greyhound. The proposed public transportation service would run round trip from Kettle Falls to the Spokane Intermodal Center. The fees are estimated at about \$10.00 one way.

**Public Transit:** The NEW RTPO applied for a planning grant through WSDOT for a public transportation feasibility study. The grant award should be announced in April as well.

**Federal Stimulus Transportation Package:**

**County Funds:**

*Stevens County*

Williams Lake/Cedonia/Addy Road - Pavement Preservation, BST Pavement – \$980,276.00

Court St. Bridge in Chewelah - Bridge Replacement - \$350,000.00

Kettle Falls Pedestrian Improvement - Sidewalk, Define Access Points, and Drainage Enhancements - \$43,174.00

*Ferry County*

Bridge Creek Top East - Crush, Prelevel, BST Pavement - \$370,000.00

*Pend Oreille County*

Deer Valley Road MP:7.84 to 9.55 - Reconstruct Pavement - \$471,000.00

**WSDOT Funds:**

*(Stevens, Pend Oreille, and Ferry Counties)*

- US 2/Jct SR 211 to Newport - Paving - \$7.8 million
- US 395/Spokane Co Line to Loon Lake - Paving - \$2.4 million
- US 395/Loon Lake to Immel Road - Paving - \$9.0 million
- SR 206/JCT US 2 to Bruce Road - Paving - \$0.8 million
- SR 20/US 395/SR 26 - HAR Sites Upgrade - \$0.25 million
- US 195/Steptoe to SR 271 - Rumble Strips - Centerline - \$0.09 million
- SR 902/Medical Lake to I-90 - Rumble Strips - Centerline - \$0.05 million

## Republic Public Development Authority Torboy Industrial Park

The Republic Public Development Authority (RPDA) was created by the City of Republic in 2003 with the intent of creating and retaining jobs in the Republic and Ferry County area. The RPDA consists of a 7-member board and meets regularly to discuss projects. In 2006, the RPDA completed a Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) funded Feasibility Study to identify potential sites for a light industrial park. The #1 site identified was the 14.5 acre Torboy Department of Transportation gravel pit site. In 2007, the RPDA received a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) for \$96,458 to purchase the property and begin site work. Meanwhile, Kinross Gold generously sold the RPDA industrial buildings for the amount of \$1.00. The RPDA was able to revise the RBEG scope of work to include dismantling and moving the building to the site.



During the week of March 16, members of the Republic Public Development Authority, City of Republic, and Tri County Economic Development District travelled to a CERB board meeting in Olympia to request

additional funding. The CERB Board awarded the RPDA a \$280,000 loan/grant combination to erect the building, install sewer and water, and make the Torboy site tenant-ready. The RPDA is working with two businesses that are interested in locating on the site. One business will lease space in the building and plans to wholesale bagged landscape materials, creating 6-12 new jobs in the Republic area. The other business plans to purchase a portion of the property, while utilizing the RPDA's water and sewer system, to manufacture outdoor fireplaces. This business will create approximately 8-12 jobs.

The RPDA currently has another USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant application being reviewed for \$71,300 to do additional work on the site. The RPDA expects to hear if they will be awarded the USDA RBEG funding within the next month.

### Employee Training Needs Survey

The Adult Education Consortium (AEC) of Stevens County is presently conducting a survey to determine the training needs of the local workforce.

Give your input on the types of classes that could be offered to help you, as an employee, get and retain a job OR, if you are an employer, the types of skills your employees or potential employees need to succeed in the workplace.

You can find the survey at:

<http://stevens.wsu.edu/Degree/degreesfirst.htm>



## From Our New Stevens County AmeriCorps Member

**I am glad to say** that my first SERVES training was enjoyable. I walked away with information and advice that will help me during my AmeriCorps service, and afterward. I also met many amazing and motivational people.

**My first class, *Effective Communication Skills***, was taught by Tracy Flynn. This energetic session was filled with role playing, lecture, group work, and personality self assessment. This session taught me that communication starts with listening first, then comes body language, and finally, responding. It also showed me what "work personality" I have and how to work with other work personalities.

**Next, in an effort** to further improve my communication skills, I decided to go to the *Communication for the Courageously Wise* workshop, which was presented by Gayle Elliott. She explained and gave examples of different manners of speaking and we discussed how and when they were used in our lives. We learned about the "4 horse-men" (criticism, defensiveness, stone walling, and contempt). We were also trained to recognize our triggers and create steps to help people understand how we feel and why we react.

**The next day**, I decided to take a class which would help me improve my interviewing skills. *Worksource Job Hunter-Interviewing Techniques* was taught by Juan Alvarado. This session gave me ideas to make myself stand out and be more notable in my interviews. He also gave good tips on appearance and attitude.

**Each workshop** was extremely valuable. It was a terrific and comfortable learning experience!

- Mary Kate Willford



## AmeriCorps Members Attend “Commotion at the Ocean”

March 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>: AmeriCorps members attended the “Commotion at the Ocean” Northwest Festivals and Events Conference in Ocean Shores, WA. The conference is an annual event sponsored by the Washington and Oregon Festivals and Events Associations. They learned non-profit management techniques, financial management, risk management, strategic planning, sponsorship recruitment and retention, volunteer management, etc. They also learned how events and festivals impact the tourism industry and the impact the tourism industry has on the community. If you want to contact any of the AmeriCorps members to discuss more of what they learned at the conference, feel free to contact them at:

- Ferry County - **Jacob Tresham** 509-775-2769
- Stevens County - **Mary Kate Willford** 509-684-4571
- Pend Oreille - **Amanda Parsley** 509-447-5569



### Briefly: Rural Opportunities Loan Fund

The Tri County Economic Development District & the Rural Opportunities Loan Fund (ROLF) have been providing financial assistance to small businesses since 1984, utilizing both state and federal funding. ROLF serves ten counties, including Adams, Asotin, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Whitman, and rural Spokane counties. ROLF provides business financing only to borrowers that do not qualify for traditional loans.

#### Required Info:

- A completed Rural Opportunities Loan Fund application.
- Fifty dollar (\$50.00) non-refundable loan application fee.
- Supporting documentation, including:
  - Business plan (details outlined in application)
  - Business & personal financial information, including tax returns
  - Description and current valuation of collateral offered to secure loan

#### Guidelines:

##### Loans can finance the purchase of:

- Land/other real estate
- Working capital
- Equipment

##### Loans cannot be used for:

- Refinancing (unless the refinancing is necessary for the business to remain or become viable)
- Illegal purposes
- Making payments on existing debt; this includes payments on other loans

This is an Equal Opportunity Program. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law. Complaints of discrimination may be filed with the USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20250

### Pend Oreille County Economic Development Council (EDC)

The Pend Oreille Economic Development Council (EDC) held their annual meeting on Friday, March 20, 2009 at the Cusick Community Center.

On the 20th, Joe Onley, Chairman of the EDC Board for the past five years, submitted his resignation from the organization. From his closing remarks:

“...it has been remarkable...an honor and privilege to serve as the Chair of the Pend Oreille County Economic Development Council...May the force be with you...your work is important. Thank you for the honor of working with all those that care about Pend Oreille County.”

New officers were elected for the coming year and are as follows:

- Lonnie Johnson** — Chairman
- Terry Knapton** — Vice Chairman
- Bob Shanklin** — Treasurer
- Anthony Newcomb** — Secretary

Many thanks to Joe Onley for his years of service and congratulations to the newly elected officers!



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## “Free Obama Money Too Good to be True”



Grant money from the Obama stimulus package (the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) to start a business or buy a car is exactly that, too good to be true. Beware of on-line con artists attempting to take advantage of those desperate for relief from the current economic crisis. Phony websites touting billions of dollars going unclaimed are popping up and the public needs to be made aware of the scam.

For more information about on-line grant scams, please read a full article, written by msn.com contributor Herb Weisbaum, at: [www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29643680/from/ET/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29643680/from/ET/)



For information on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov), [www.recovery.org](http://www.recovery.org), [www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=204335,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=204335,00.html), [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).



The Federal Government *does*, in fact, award billions of dollars in grants annually but the majority of these grants are designed to help fund research, non-profit charity work, or education.



If you are looking for help with your business, or are in need of government assistance and benefits, there is ample information available from many trustworthy websites; here are a few: [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov), [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), [www.govbenefits.gov](http://www.govbenefits.gov), [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)

