

## MAJOR EMPLOYERS ADD THOUSANDS TO PAYROLL IN 2017

The trend we've seen since 2014 continues. Pierce County job numbers are on the rise across industry sectors.

The EDB's **2017 Major Employers list**, spotlighting companies with more than 100 full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees, identified **248 qualified employers** compared to 214 in 2016. Employers listed this year represent **166,348 jobs**—a bump of more than 4,600 jobs from last year.

The top spots look familiar. **Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM)**, the **State of Washington**, **MultiCare Health System** and **CHI Franciscan Health** have held the lead since 2012. **Tacoma Public Schools** lands at No. 5 on this year's list.

The EDB welcomed several notable new additions to this year's list, including **Associated Materials**, **Digestive Health Specialists**, **New Sound Transportation**, **PNJ Machining**, **Yusen Logistics** and cybersecurity company **Infoblox**, one of the fastest-growing companies in the region.

### Health care doing well

Health care and senior services lead the way among private employers in Pierce County, employing more than 20,200 FTEs. Companies within this sector with 100+ employees grew by nearly 15 percent over last year. MultiCare Health System and CHI Franciscan Health continue to post strong employment counts. The organizations collectively employ around 14,000 FTEs.

As Pierce County continues to address the increased need for expanded behavioral health services, it's not surprising this health care segment experienced considerable gains in 2017. Lakewood-based **Greater Lakes Mental Health** is among the top 10 private employers that showed rapid growth. The company offers a range of mental health services, and serves more than 10,000 individuals in Pierce County each year at multiple locations. We'll be keeping a close eye on this health care segment in 2018, as CHI Franciscan and MultiCare collaborate to open a new 120-bed behavioral health hospital, expected to treat 5,000 patients annually and create 300 hospital jobs.

### Numbers worth noting

Several other companies saw major boosts in 2017, including Frederickson-based **Northwest Door**. The manufacturer has experienced double-digit annual growth over the last several years, and the ability to hire qualified workers right here in Pierce County helped make that happen.

"We could never have achieved a sustained growth rate over this period of time without access to a great, local pool of talent," said Northwest Door President Jeff Hohman. "As Pierce County grows, so does our talent pool. And we are fortunate to have resources like the many fine returning vets coming through JBLM."

With a staff of more than 220 full-time employees, the company evolved from humble beginnings in 1946 as a garage door installation company to a global manufacturer of an expansive range of high quality residential and commercial garage doors.

### New this year...a spotlight on mid-sized companies

Sixty businesses that responded to this year's call for data have fewer than 100 full-time employees, the EDB's typical cutoff for major employers.

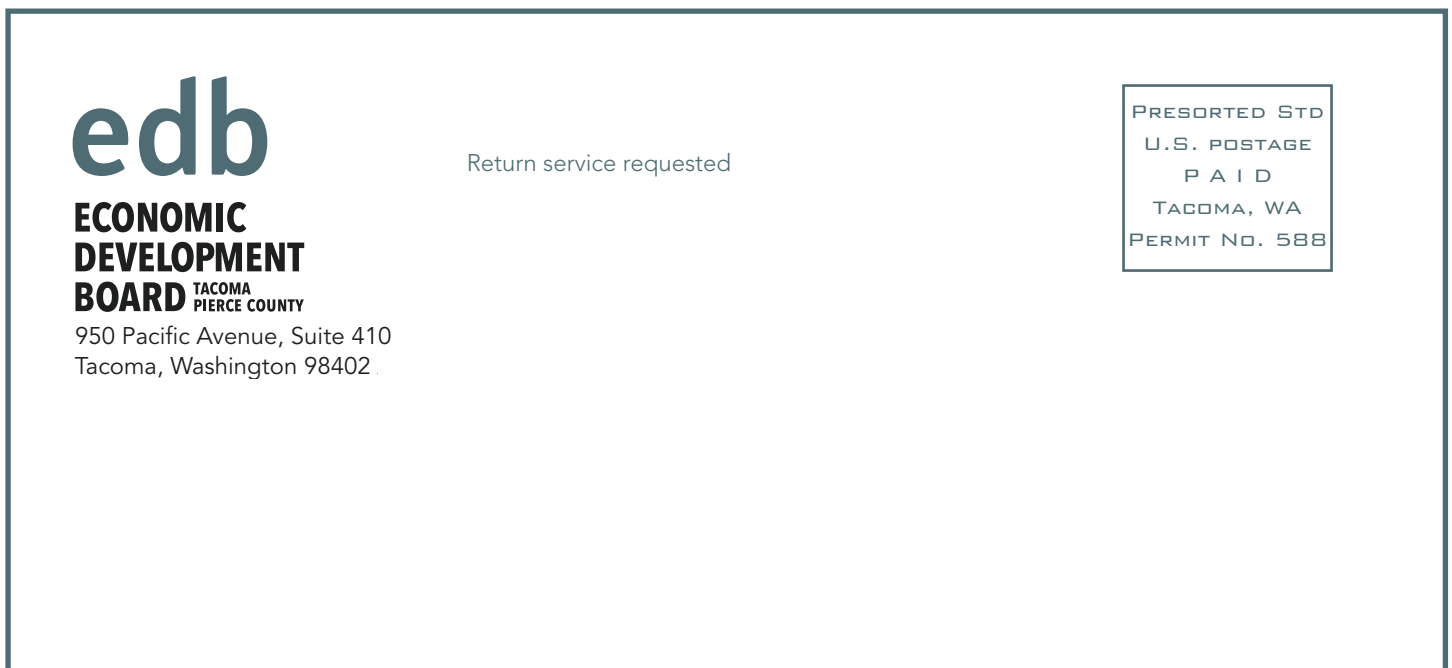
“Whether holding steady or heading to the 100+ list, these firms are important players in the Tacoma-Pierce County economy and employ thousands of people across all industries,” said Maddie Merton, EDB vice president for retention.

Notable on this list are **BCRA**, an architectural and engineering services firm; bottled-water manufacturer **Niagara Bottling**; and **SeaTac Packaging**, designer and manufacturer of bags for transporting food, agricultural products, animal feed and more, which is in the midst of a major expansion.

A few other highlights to note:

- ▶ Distribution and logistics in Pierce County are booming and remain important employment sectors in the local economy. Not surprising, **Amazon** is the largest distribution employer in the county. Its DuPont and Sumner distribution centers together employ 1,400 full-time employees.
- ▶ The construction sector is holding its ground, with its employment base remaining steady compared with 2016. **Northwest Cascade** and **Absher Construction** saw a surge in 2017.

Looking ahead to 2018, expect to see some new faces, along with some spikes in FTE numbers among existing



major employers. **NewCold** is opening an automated cold-storage warehouse on South Orchard and could hire up to 100 employees. When completed, the new **UPS** distribution warehouse on the Tacoma Tideflats is expected to employ between 800 and 1,200. Stay tuned.

View the full list at [edbtacomapierce.org/2017majoremployers](http://edbtacomapierce.org/2017majoremployers). And check out **The News Tribune**'s coverage of the 2017 Major Employers List at [bit.ly/TNT2017majoremployers](http://bit.ly/TNT2017majoremployers).

**RESERVE YOUR SPOT FOR THE 2018 EDB ANNUAL MEETING.** Registration is open for the **2018 EDB Annual Meeting!** Plan to join us Thursday, March 8, 2018, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at the **Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center**. Help us celebrate 2017, hear the latest about local economic development, and find out what's in store for 2018 and beyond.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Contact the EDB for details at 253.383.4726. You can buy your table and reserve your spot at [edbtacomapierce.org/march8](http://edbtacomapierce.org/march8). Advance registration and payment required.

*Teamwork is a service of the EDB, a non-profit corporation focused on recruitment and retention of primary businesses in Tacoma and Pierce County, Washington, USA.*

950 Pacific Avenue, Suite 410 / Tacoma, Washington 98402 / 253.383.4726