

Welcome to our monthly newsletter. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, *Teamwork* is only being distributed electronically. Our print edition will resume when appropriate.

EDB awards \$490K in Vitality Grants

From safeguarding employee benefits to covering overhead, [Economic Development Board Vitality Grants](#) totaling \$490,000 are helping Pierce County small businesses weather the COVID-19 storm.

The program, launched in early September, offered funds to small for-profit businesses located in Pierce County impacted by the pandemic. A total of 438 applications were received from across 23 municipalities. More than half came from restaurants, retail and service industries, small-business segments especially hard-hit by the pandemic. In October, the EDB awarded \$5,000 grants to 98 businesses—51 percent owned by women, 44 percent minority owned and 9 owned by veterans.

“As a newer startup, our company was already operating on a shoe-string budget,” said Kirsten Reynolds, founder and CEO of [Restyle Clothing Company](#), an upscale consignment store offering clothing and home décor. “These funds come at a time when it’s extremely hard to keep the doors open and bills paid. We hope to pull through this pandemic and continue to grow. This support will help us move forward.”

For Alex Trettin, president of travel-management company [Travel Leaders](#), the Vitality Grant means making things easier on his staff and agents as the travel industry strives to reopen and rebound. “This grant goes right to our employees,” he said. “It will be used directly for health care during this pandemic to ensure our staff can maintain their well-being. I want to say a huge ‘thank you’ to everyone coordinating local, state and federal COVID relief efforts.”

The Vitality Grant was funded by \$580,250 in federal CARES Act dollars provided through the [Washington State Department of Commerce](#). Grants totaling \$90,250 were also awarded to 14 Pierce County community organizations.

Visit the [EDB website](#) to learn more.

TPU offers relief for Tacoma small businesses

If you’re a small Tacoma business or nonprofit hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, you may qualify for assistance with your [Tacoma Public Utilities](#) bills. But you should act fast. *The application deadline for the Tacoma Small Business Utility Assistance Grant is Nov. 6.*

To qualify, businesses must:

- Operate from a brick and mortar building within city limits
- Have an open TPU account
- Employ 50 or fewer employees

Funds may be applied to charges incurred since March 17, 2020.

BRIEFS

Last call: Major Employers List 2020

Don’t miss your chance to be included in the EDB’s most requested resource. November 20 is the deadline for submitting your FTE numbers for the **2020 Major Employers List**.

Submitting your info is fast and easy!

1. Complete a quick [survey](#) to submit your FTE information.
2. Respond to the email you received requesting your FTE count. Simply click “reply” and provide your FTE count and contact information.
3. Forward the email you received to the right person in your organization who can provide the current FTE count.

Check out more information on the [EDB website](#). If you have questions, please contact Jacqueline Moffo, EDB Vice President for Business Development, at 253.383.5889 or Jacqueline@edbtacomapierce.org.

Virtual Washington State Biz Fair November 10, 2020

The **24th Annual Washington State Biz Fair** is still a go, still free of charge and still a great opportunity to learn from experts how to start or grow a small business or build resiliency. But like most other events, this year’s event will be held virtually.

The virtual format brings added bonuses. With more effective ways to connect, attendees will have ample opportunities to expand

“I want to thank the City of Tacoma for providing \$750,000 in CARES Act relief funds to assist our customers,” said Michael Catsi, TPU Economic Development Manager.

For more information and to apply, visit the [TPU website](#) or call the TPU Business Solutions Office at 253-502-8606.

Weigh in on Port of Tacoma's strategic plan

Work is underway to develop a new [Port of Tacoma](#) Strategic Plan, and your voice will help steer the way. Business and community input is key to the Port's vision for the future—one that best meets the needs of all Pierce County citizens and ensures the region's continued economic vitality.

While in-person workshops and community open houses were part of the original plan, things changed. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the Port Commission to find other ways to gather critical community input.

“We had to completely re-think the way we were doing this, but we're proceeding,” said Port of Tacoma Executive Director Eric Johnson.

To learn more about the developing strategic plan, visit the online [open house](#), which runs through November. While you're there, take the brief online survey. Quality of life begins with a job, and the survey is a chance for workers and business leaders to weigh in on the Port's role as an economic engine for Pierce County.

According to Johnson, the Port of Tacoma Commission expects to finalize a draft of the plan by January 2021 and make a decision on adoption in February. A print and online plan should be available in March.

Dine local, get a discount, support local restaurants

A new program is bringing COVID-19 assistance to 300 full-service restaurants in Pierce County, and deep discounts for diners during two weeks in November.

In early October, the Pierce County Council allocated \$7.5 million in CARES Act funding to create the [Restaurant Rally](#) program to encourage diners to eat out and keep local restaurants open amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Nov. 8-19, 2020 (excluding Friday and Saturday), participating restaurants will offer a 30 percent discount to dine-in and take-out patrons, and compensate restaurant owners 50 percent of gross sales.

Subject to available funds, approved businesses are eligible to receive \$5,000 to \$90,000. Applications for the program closed Oct. 29.

Now it's time to do your part. About 300 restaurants are participating. Find a [participating location](#) near you.

COVID-19 info calls move to Wednesdays only

[COVID-19 Business Information and Resources Webinars](#) continue to be a great resource for the most current information about the pandemic and economic recovery in the South Sound, including breaking news as it happens. Since the pandemic hit in March, 72 webinars have been held, reaching more than 10,000 participants. As of

resources and network, engage via chat with presenters and exhibitors, and have access to all the seminars, exhibitors and networking groups for three months following the event.

For more information and to register, visit the Washington State Biz Fair website at [bizfair.org](#).

Data tells economic recovery story

Get the latest on the impact of COVID-19 across the state. The **Washington State Dept of Commerce** recently launched an economic recovery [dashboard](#) loaded with economic and demographic data, including state and county employment numbers, sales by sector and more.

Information is easy to access on the site and available in multiple formats.

Governor lauds manufacturers' COVID-19 response

Previous issues of *Teamwork* spotlighted several regional manufacturers that shifted gears in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, quickly changing production processes to produce high-demand products. The Washington State governor's office recently gave a shout-out to some of them—including Pierce County's own [Tool Gauge](#), [Heritage Distilling Co.](#) and [GlobalTech Plastics](#)—offering high praise for their ingenuity, agility and innovation.

“I am so grateful for these Washington companies for stepping up to help Washingtonians,” Governor Jay Inslee said. “This shows what can happen when the people of our state come together to help protect each other and slow the spread of this disease.”

Read the full article on the governor's [website](#).

Tacoma makes Best Places to Live List (again)

It's no surprise to us that Tacoma once again ranks in the top 100 of greatest places to live in the U.S., according to [Livability](#). The [2020 Best Places to Live List](#)

November, webinars are now held now once a week, on Wednesdays at 11:00am Pacific Time.

Hosted by the [Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County](#), [Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce](#) and the [Kitsap Economic Development Alliance](#), the series offers everything from critical health department updates, to the latest on grant and loan programs, to practical insights from businesses, organizations and elected leaders. To date, more than 70 calls have been held.

Join in at zoom.us/j/843841095.

Along with the Wednesday webinars, a full menu of COVID-19 resources are always updated and always available on the [EDB website](#).

Commerce expands export voucher program

A grant from the **U.S. Small Business Administration** will help Washington State small businesses grow through exporting. The \$1.35 million grant, part of the SBA's [State Trade Expansion Program \(STEP\)](#), is the largest amount awarded from a total \$19 million to 48 states.

A portion of funding expands the **Washington State Department of Commerce Export Voucher Program**, which reimburses eligible export expenses up to \$6,000 to qualifying small businesses to help expand their international sales.

For a full list of qualifying expense and eligibility information, visit the Washington State Department of Commerce [website](#).

WEDA gears up for 2021

We've been driving the point home these last few months: Economic development is critical, and we must take steps to protect it.

The [Washington Economic Development Association \(WEDA\)](#) is putting the finishing touches on its 2021 legislative agenda, which outlines WEDA's strategy for retaining, expanding and recruiting jobs and investment across Washington State. The agenda focuses on the most critical actions lawmakers can take to retain and grow living wage jobs, foster vibrant communities and spark investment in the state.

WEDA is a strong, recognized and consistent voice in Olympia for sound economic development policy year in and year out. Between the COVID-19 pandemic and outcome of the November 3 election, WEDA's role in the upcoming legislative session will be crucial.

Stay tuned. We'll share more in an upcoming issue of *Teamwork*.

Dept. of Ecology nets national award

Kudos to Rob Reuter, lead engineer with the **Washington State Department of Ecology**, who was recently awarded the 2020 P2 Champion Award. The honor, presented by the [National Pollution Prevention Roundtable](#), recognized Reuter's accomplishments to stop pollution before it's created.

A big part of that work involved assisting Tacoma-based [Founder's Choice](#). The family-owned producer of kitchen and bath cabinetry and related products is in the middle of a 25,000-square-foot expansion to

includes the cream of the crop of small to mid-sized cities. Tacoma's robust economy, job growth and bountiful development are just a few reasons the city made the cut.

Check out Tacoma's [ranking data](#).

EDBTacomaPierce.org



Join our mailing list

bring manufacturing capability from overseas. The Department of Ecology, [Impact Washington](#) and [City of Tacoma](#) helped the company access a [Lean and Green grant](#) to help reduce waste in the company's manufacturing process.

© Copyright 2020 Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County

Teamwork is a service of the EDB, a non-profit corporation focused on recruitment and retention of primary businesses in Tacoma and Pierce County. Telephone: 253-383-4726. Website: edbtacomapierce.org