

**Three Rivers Community Roundtable
Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)**

<http://www.my3rivers.org/>

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Three Rivers Community Roundtable Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

INTRODUCTION

Mike Schwenk, Chair

The Three Rivers Community Roundtable (CRT) was created in April 2001. Its creation came from a series of three public meetings involving 150 people conducted during the preceding 6 months. Based on a similar community planning process conducted in the early 90s and the positive changes resulting from that effort, the theme of this more recent activity was to once again create a vision of our preferred future for the decade ahead. This time however, the implementation of the plan would take a different form.

The CRT was conceived not as another economic development organization, but rather to serve as a forum where community leaders come together to communicate, coordinate, integrate, and facilitate their respective strategies for achievement of the regional vision. The CRT serves as the steward of this vision and holds itself accountable to the public by reporting annually on progress toward realizing that vision.

A simple economic development model has been used to provide the framework upon which the vision was built (see Figure 1). This model recognizes the importance and interdependence of starting new businesses, keeping and growing the ones we have, and recruiting new industry. The success of these relies heavily on the business climate and quality of life in our region. The vision drives these five elements with particular emphasis on technology, education, water, and "connectivity," which together become our competitive differentiators and the things that make our region great.

This Annual Report of the CRT presents the consensus regional vision developed by the participating community leaders and their respective "focus groups." It provides, in summary form, the vision's sub-elements, projected 10-year goals, measures of success, and past-year accomplishments for each of these groups. As you will discover, there is much to celebrate in the advancement of our community. There is still much to do, and we see an exciting future ahead.

The effectiveness of the CRT lies in the willingness and intentions of community leaders to share their viewpoints, to seek consensus on the overall vision, and to engage with one another while working toward the desired economic future of our community. Consistent with this community spirit and motivation, the CRT participants are pleased to provide this report.

The Community Roundtable would like to acknowledge the contribution of Battelle for the preparation of this Five Year Summary.

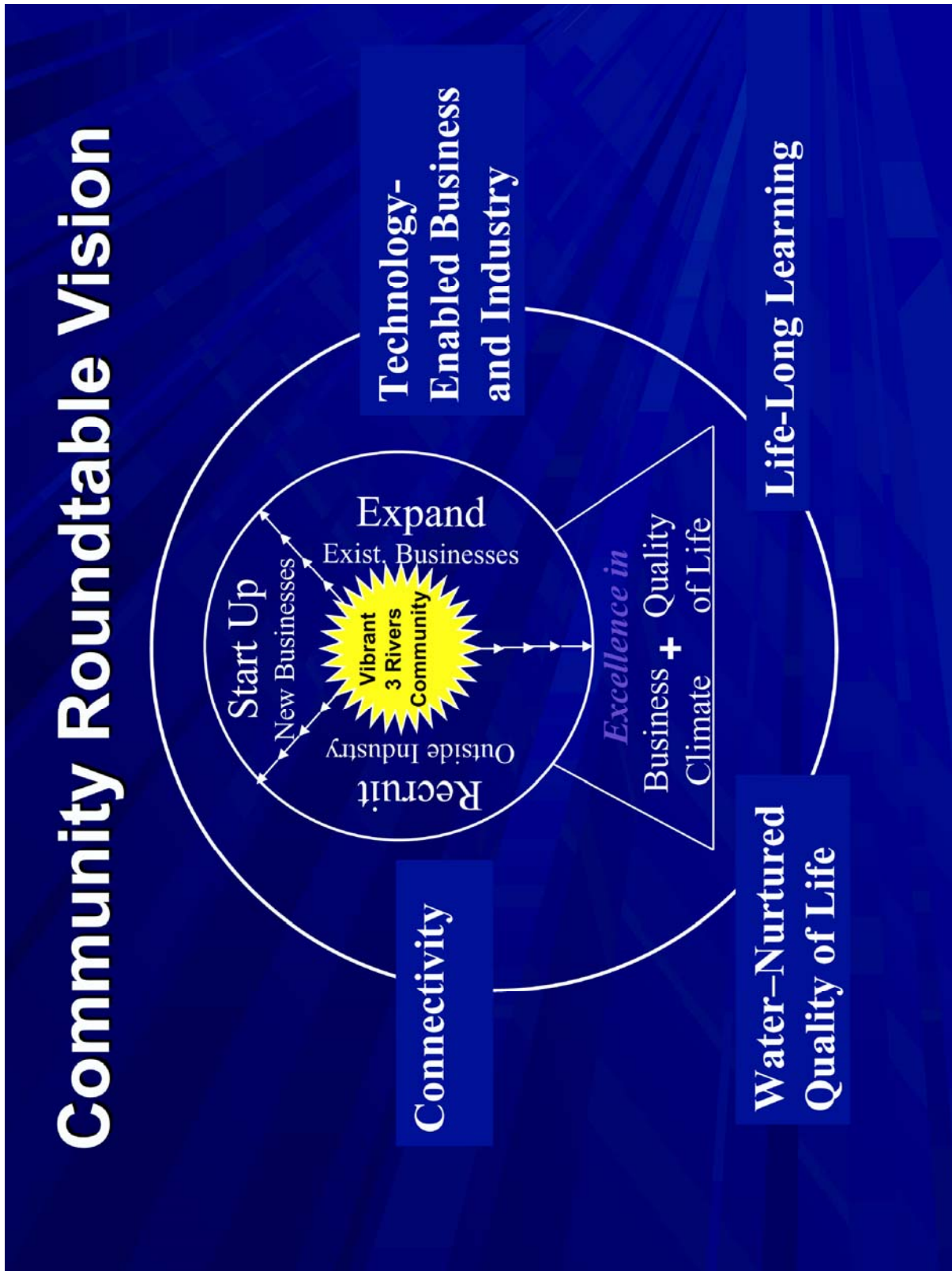


Figure 1. Three Rivers Region Economic Development Model

THE THREE RIVERS REGION: A SHARED VISION

The Three Rivers region is a family-friendly place where quality living is achieved through energetic people, advanced technology, and a vibrant waterfront.

A Combined Mission

The Community Roundtable (CRT) was created to encourage, enable and bring together the Tri-Cities community in a self-sustaining coalition to discuss, coordinate and be a catalyst for initiatives that strengthen and improve the well-being and future growth of the Tri-Cities region.

Technology-Enabled Business and Industry...

With a focus on starting new businesses, growing existing ones, and attracting new industry, jobs are readily available for citizens of every skill level. From the high-tech entrepreneur to the food-processing specialist, from the health care provider to the legal and business professional, and from the retailer to government and school staff, the Three Rivers region builds its job base by infusing technology into every single enterprise. As the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) and other research entities infuse new technologies into the community, the Three Rivers region is a place where those who desire to be on the leading edge choose to locate. New materials are manufactured based on the latest breakthroughs in nanoscience; bio- and micro-technologies break barriers to enable chemical production from agricultural feedstock; and microbial science is applied to environmental restoration. Sustainability is practiced as part of the model community. The Three Rivers region has become known for its energy efficiency and environmental stewardship.

New industry migrates and disperses more evenly throughout the Pacific Northwest, including into the Three Rivers region. Aerospace, distribution centers, computer hardware, and software are real contributors to local payrolls. Even the federal presence is transformed as the Department of Homeland Security, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health establish major programs through investments at the Hazardous Material Management and Emergency Response (HAMMER) Training Center and PNNL. All of this is coupled with dramatic advances in new alternative energy technologies pilot-tested by Energy Northwest.

Agribusiness builds upon its phenomenal history of being the leading private sector industry in the region as it supplies diversified fruits, grains, and specialty produce. Capitalizing on good water supply, ideal climate, and excellent soil conditions, it expands into new technological frontiers via the world-class Bioproducts, Sciences, and Engineering Laboratory at Washington State University Tri-Cities (WSUTC). Sophisticated value-added processing, alternative bio-engineered products, and new crop development are commonplace. Ancillary businesses abound, such as manufacturers of farm-enhancing equipment, integrated global positioning field mapping with chemical and nutrient application, disease and pest-resistant crop development, and ultra-advanced irrigation systems. Building on the example of the Pasco

Processing Center, state-of-the-art infrastructure systems attract and support high-tech agribusiness. The Three Rivers region is recognized as “the place to do business,” which is more than evident by our internationally acclaimed wine industry.

Life-Long Learning...

Behind the technology-driven basis of the community rests its people. In particular, a people inspired to educate its citizens from cradle to grave. The focus on education and training begins during the earliest years of life to ensure every child has the mental development necessary to enter school willing, able, and receptive to the opportunities presented. Learning continues throughout the schooling process in a seamless system designed to guarantee every child’s success. It culminates with alternative learning pathways for the adult choosing to pursue professional or technical training, higher education, or general enrichment. In the Three Rivers region, education is a holistic system. And it is the root that nurtures all other success.

Exceptionally well-qualified staff means high-caliber schools, innovative teaching approaches, and broad community support. Because of this, the best and brightest workers are attracted to the Three Rivers region as the place to have their children educated. Best of all, because of the emphasis on quality education and the very exciting nature of the technology-driven economy, students stay locally to continue their education. Whether taking advantage of the two-year, four-year, or even Ph.D.-granting capabilities at the Washington State University/Columbia Basin College (CBC) system, or the local industry-relevant training for ensuring an internationally competitive workforce, they are able to stay and work in an enriching environment. An environment which attracts students from elsewhere to come for their graduate and even post-graduate education.

Water-Nurtured Quality of Life...

From the time of Ice Age floods until today, the Three Rivers region is all about water. The existing landforms and geography derive their existence from water. That people ever settled here was because of abundant water. That the community prospered first in agriculture and later from Hanford is because of available water. Once again, taking advantage of technology, the community practices recycle and reuse of water for domestic and industrial purposes. As use efficiencies increase, demands for additional water are dramatically curtailed. Advances in technology also result in new ways of applying and conserving water for irrigated agriculture.

The river shore is a 22-mile aquatic playground of family-friendly activities. Tourists and business travelers from around the world flock to the shores to enjoy the same amenities it provides the community’s citizens. Among these are the new Cultural Complex and gateway to the Hanford Reach National Monument, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Overlook, and the Washington Wine Country Visitor Center. All of this is a key factor in the huge success of the Regional Convention Center, whose expansion is already on the drawing boards. And interestingly, the river shore is a major reason young adults and retirees remain in the Three Rivers region given the wide variety of

affordable places to congregate, socialize, and recreate. From all of this emerges unique retail and dining establishments. Whether looking for boutique shops or upscale shopping districts, or enjoying a variety of cuisine in pleasant surroundings, the Three Rivers region has it all.

Connectivity...

The Three Rivers region understands that connectivity plays a vital role in economic development. Strategic roadways, waterways, airways, and railways make the region a transportation hub. Such connectivity gives the region's agricultural products a competitive advantage on their way to domestic and overseas destinations. And it makes for convenient and affordable business and pleasure travel to all destinations. Superior bandwidth is a different kind of connectivity, as it transports knowledge to and from the region and underpins the entire technology agenda. Another form of connectivity, the community-built affiliations with political, educational, financial, social, and cultural influence centers of the region and nation, creates a backbone and rich resource base to tap for growth. All this is done to be part of the world scene to be able to reach out and invite in.

The end result, at long last, is a vibrant region. By caring for ourselves through our health care system and active living lifestyles, and by caring for our safe clean environment, we have built an enduring place that brings out the best in all its' people, while respecting and nurturing the land it occupies

Three Rivers Community Round Table (2006)

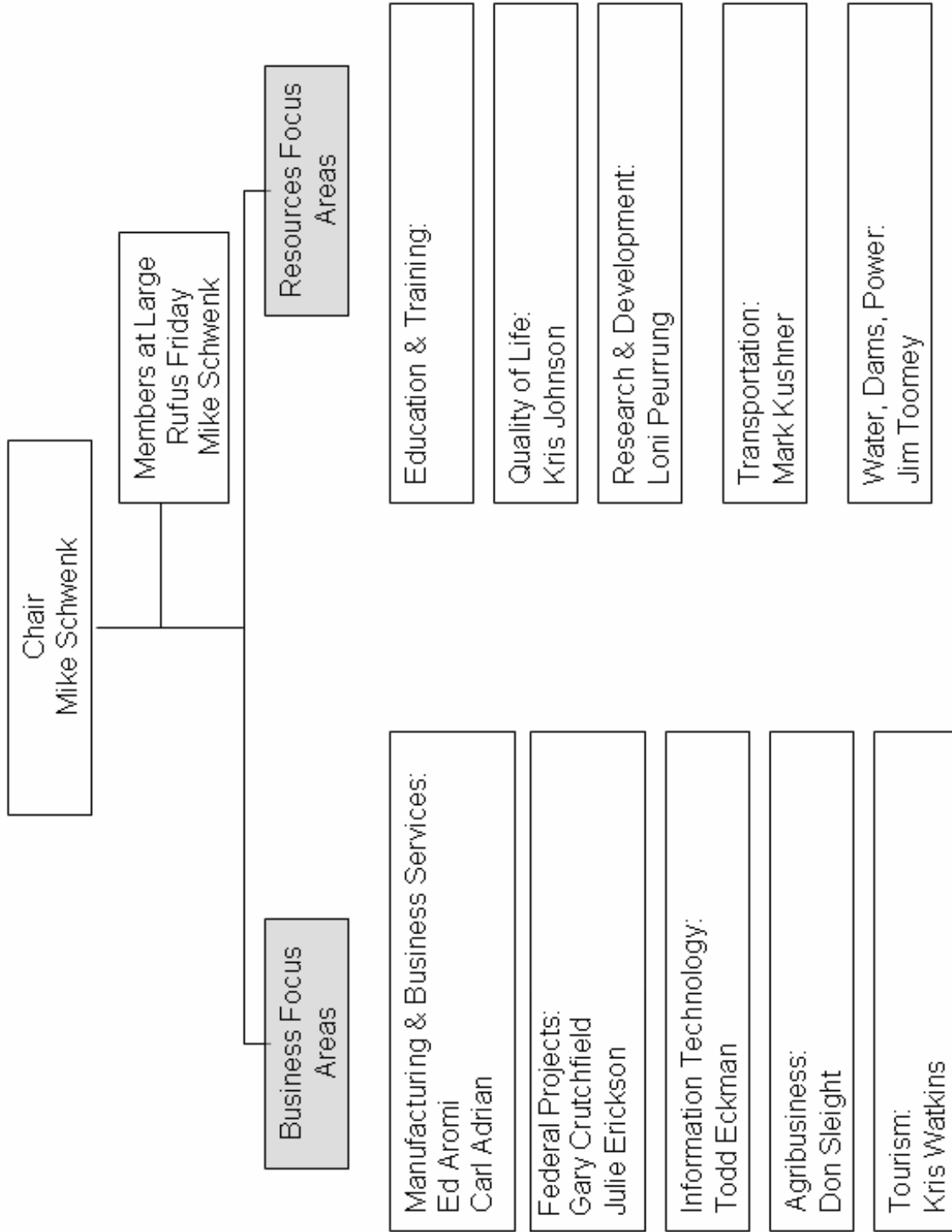


Figure 2. 2006 Champions and Community Roundtable

2006 CRT FOCUS AREA CONTACTS

Business Focus Areas

Agribusiness

Don Sleight
Phone: (509) 735-6461
Email: donsleight@agrinorthwest.com

Federal Projects

Gary Crutchfield
Phone: (509) 545-3404
Email: crutchfieldg@cipasco.wa.us

Information and Technology

Todd Eckman
Phone: (509) 376-2696
Email: todd_s_eckman@ri.gov

Manufacturing and Business Services

Ed Aromi
Phone: (509) 375-0683 , ext 221
Email: edward.aromi@CH2M.COM

Carl Adrian
Phone: (509)735-1000
Email: cadrian@tridec.org

Tourism

Kris Watkins
Phone: (509) 735-8487
Email: kris@visittri-cities.com

Resources Focus Areas

Education and Training

Quality of Life

Kris Johnson
Phone: (509) 736-0510
Email: krisjohnson@tcacc.com

Research and Development

Loni Peurrung
Phone: (509) 375-2878
Email: loni.peurrung@pnl.gov

Transportation

Marc Kushner
Phone: (509) 943-9185
Email: mark-bfcog@transedge.com

Water, Dams, and Power

Jim Toomey
Phone: (509) 547-3378, ext. 30
Email: je2oomey@portofpasco.org

CRT FOCUS AREA VISIONS

Agribusiness: The Three Rivers region builds upon its history as the leading private sector industry to set a national example in new value-added agriculture processing, alternative and new crops, and alternative bio-source energy.

Federal Projects: The region is known as a place where solutions to the critical national problems of clean abundant energy, homeland security, and environmental management are solved.

Information Technology: A community with a growing and sustainable information technology industry that supports local and regional businesses.

Manufacturing and Business Services: The Three Rivers region enjoys a vital, high-value, technology-led export sector economy.

Tourism: The premier tourism and convention destination in eastern Washington.

Education and Training: A community system of learning and education that prepares students for fulfilling and productive lives, and significantly improves the region's quality of life and economy.

Quality of Life: A community enjoying a high quality of life for its diverse people:

- A variety of first-class **recreational** activities appealing to all ages.
- A **health care** system promoting healthy lifestyle and providing quality medical care for everyone.
- A sense of **security** prevailing in all neighborhoods/areas.
- **Social services** focusing on positive childhood experiences, prevention of social injustice, and serving the needs of the elderly.
- A community **education system** preparing students for productive lives and supporting life-long learning.
- **Art and entertainment** providing vibrant, frequent, and appealing leisure activity for our diverse people.

Research and Development: Regional R&D partnerships stimulate innovation, increase economic diversity, and improve the area's business infrastructure and quality of life.

Transportation: There is a progressive and efficient multi-modal transportation system that contributes to economic development and sustains a high quality of life.

Water, Dams, and Power: There are sufficient committed water resources to meet the economic and quality of life needs of the region.

AGRIBUSINESS

Vision for Agribusiness

The Three Rivers region builds upon its history as the leading private sector industry to set a national example in a new value-added agriculture processing, alternative and new crops, and alternative bio-source energy.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

Agribusiness has seen some great success in the last five years. The annual Washington Wine international trade expo has been around for four years now and the 2005 event generated over \$5.0 million in Washington state wine exports, an increase of at least 43% over 2004. The event, held in the Tri-Cities, hosts some 150 foreign wine buyers and wine and food writers. Such exposure has contributed immeasurably to growing global awareness and interest in the distinctive wines of Washington State, and continues to have the full support of TRIDEC and the agriculture community.

Along the lines of promoting Washington wine, we continued involvement with the development of the Red Mountain Viticulture Area as a wine-specific industrial development and tourist destination.

Joined with TRIDEC, the Department of Ecology and others to continue to discuss the Columbia River Initiative, which will have significant impacts on how water from the Columbia River is used.

Continuing to host potential new food processors in their exploration of the Tri-City area as a potential place for expansion or new development.

Proceeding to explore the issues and opportunities surrounding the possibility of producing biodiesel and ethanol in the region.

FEDERAL PROJECTS

Vision for Federal Projects

The region is known as a place where solutions to the critical national problems of clean energy, homeland security, and environmental management are solved.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

The last five years have been fruitful in the area of Federal Projects. Among many things, PNNL was awarded a major U.S. Customs contract for what is known as the Radiation Portal Monitoring Project.

LMSI won an Air Force contract for Systems Development and provided support to FBI, INS, and CDC.

PNNL and WSU collaborated to build the Bioproducts, Sciences, and Engineering Laboratory. This partnership will allow DOE & PNNL researchers to perform bio products research in a collaborative environment & will allow an opportunity for WSU students to interact with PNNL researchers in this area.

In the small business arena, DOE RL issued the River Corridor contract that required 30% of the contract value to be performed by Small Businesses.

PNNL secured two major grants from the National Institute of Health for work in the biosciences.

Border agents are continuing to be trained in the ability to identify and deter smuggling of weapons of mass destruction at the HAMMER facility.

GridWise is a PNNL project to reduce stress on the nation's power grid, and thereby providing more reliability and security in electricity distribution.

Energy Northwest continues to build a more diversified portfolio of energy generation for the Northwest in the areas of wind, biomass and thermal generation.

PNNL was selected as the leader of the National Visualization and Analytics Center for the Department of Homeland Security.

HAMMER trained emergency support personnel from across the nation and then played a key role in their deployment to the FY04, 05 & 06 national emergencies including all the Hurricane responses.

The National Guard Civil Support teams from around the nation are training at HAMMER to enhance their skills in identifying and mitigating chemical, biological, and nuclear threats.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Vision for Information Technology

We envision a community with a growing and sustainable IT industry that both supports local and regional businesses as well as expands our capability to attract regional and national enterprises.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

Information Technology is a fast-paced industry that is continually changing. The past five years have seen many positive impacts to the community including a Federal Grant of \$750,000 to the SWIFT Cyber Corp. This funding was used to provide open access broadband connections from Pasco to Richland, Kennewick to Prosser as well as connections to several local schools.

Progress continues to be made on PNNL's Northwest Gigapop Project – Connecting research institutes in the Tri-Cities to Seattle, Spokane and in the future to Boise, Pullman, etc. PNNL also obtained a commitment for a point-of-presence in Seattle for DOE's next-generation research network, UltraScience Net.

Tri-Cities has gone wireless including CBC, Tri-Cities Airport, Clearwater Ave., PNNL & LMIT campuses, major Hanford facilities and more. Included in this accomplishment is the fact that CBC was the first totally wireless community college campus in Washington State. In addition to public WiFi services we have seen great improvements in cellular coverage created by healthy competition with current and future plans for broadband mobile services.

Expansion of both public and commercial IT offerings to outlying communities such as West Richland, Prosser and Finley allowing health care, government, schools and small businesses to enjoy the benefits of broadband resources. In short we now have increased bandwidth availability throughout the region with connectivity to the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Attracted and leveraged IT service providers in support of both business and residents alike to include continued growth of PUD fiber/wireless networks, multiple voice/video/Internet offering from traditional phone companies as well as cable and wireless providers making the our region a “connected” place to do business.

Supported successful recruitments of multiple high-tech businesses to the area including Amazon.com and Clearwire Broadband. Recent efforts include working with Dell Corporation and Holder Construction Company representatives to develop a regional benefits portfolio to attract national datacenter opportunities.

MANUFACTURING & BUSINESS SERVICES

Vision for Manufacturing & Business Services

The Three Rivers region enjoys a vital, high-value, technology-led export sector economy.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

Benton and Franklin counties continue to lead the state in overall growth. Manufacturing and business services have seen that growth has brought many new jobs to the region over the past five years. In that time we accomplished the following:

The location of Ferguson Enterprises in Richland's Horn Rapids Industrial Park, was an \$18M investment and produced 90 jobs.

Announced the location of a 250,000 sq. ft. bonded warehouse for the wine industry in Prosser, this created 50 jobs.

Announced location of Advanced Biometrics, Inc. in Kennewick, creating 15 jobs.

Amazon.com selected the former Wal-mart in Kennewick as the site for a new 400-person customer service center. The company had filled 150 of these positions by the end of calendar year 2005.

Assisted Infinia Corporation (formerly Stirling Technology Company or STC) with their site selection and relocation project. A new 30,000 sq. ft., \$3.2 million facility in the Vista Field area allowed Infinia to consolidate and grow its business and workforce from approximately 55 employees to over 80.

Two new Walgreens; Super Wal-Marts in Richland, Pasco, Kennewick; GI Joe's and Home Depot chain stores join retailers in the area.

J Lieb Foods, Inc. purchased the Welch's Kennewick Plant.

NewEdge, International Marketing Research Co., expanded to Seattle and broke ground on new facility.

AngelouEconomics worked with the community to develop marketing and development plans for the Richland Research District. The area is intended to attract high-tech companies and includes WSU Tri-Cities and PNNL.

TOURISM

Vision for Tourism

We envision the Tri-City Region as the premier tourism and convention destination in Eastern Washington.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

Tourism to the Tri-City Region has continued to grow over the last five years. For example, visitation increased during 2004. Within Benton and Franklin Counties, travel and tourism spending grew to more than \$278 million. In our region, tourism now employs 3,950 people and generates \$22 million in state and local taxes

The Three Rivers Convention Center a, 75,000 sq. ft. regional facility was completed. In Richland, construction was completed on an 82-room Holiday Inn Express, a 120-room Courtyard by Marriott, and a 50-room boutique style hotel announced plans to build at Columbia Point. In Kennewick, a 110-room Best Western Inn & Suites, and a 64-room Wingate Inn was added. Pasco also completed construction on an 85-room AmeriSuites.

Secured \$1.4 million for improvements at Sacajawea State Park.

Hanford Reach National Monument designated. Columbia Point South selected as location for Heritage & Visitor Center to open in 2009.

Branded and began promoting Washington Wine Country. Dozens of new wineries have opened and others expanded. Columbia River Wine Expo established; became the Washington Wine Expo. Masterplan in development for Red Mountain Viticultural Area. Walter Clore Wine & Culinary Center began construction.

Completed a 5-year commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Including the Wanapum Village Project, and rehabilitation and expansion at Sacajawea State Park.

New long, term standard shoreline leases were negotiated with the US Army Corps of Engineers. Shoreline levees lowered. Bateman Island cleanup & revegetation completed. Bridge to Bridge, River to Rail master plan developed. Children's Playground of Dreams rebuilt, while the Water Playground, Sturgeon Cove Playground, Commercial Cruise-Boat dock, and Lewis & Clark Interpretive Overlook built.

Tourism Promotion Area assessment implemented and Water Shuttle feasibility study launched.

Sports have become an increasingly important part of the Tri-Cities tourism market. The area now hosts annual state and regional high school and collegiate level championships, tournaments, and other activities bid for and secured by the Visitor and Convention Bureau's Tri-Cities Sports Council.

EDUCATION

Vision for Education

A community system of learning and education that prepares students for fulfilling and productive lives, and significantly improves the region's quality of life and economy.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

Education has seen significant change over the last five years, especially in the area of higher education.

Columbia Basin College completed construction on two new buildings for their Washington Institute for Science Education (WISE) program. Another building is proposed to be break ground soon.

The Success by Six Program was developed to help our children prepare for school by giving them the basic skills they need to excel in the classroom.

WSU in conjunction with PNNL, broke ground on a new Bioproducts, Sciences, and Engineering Laboratory on the WSU Tri-Cities campus in Richland.

Legislation was passed that allowed WSU Tri-Cities to become a four-year institution.

Several local school districts have held successful bond and levy campaigns for school improvements and new facilities. Pasco built 2 new elementary schools, 1 new Middle School, and is breaking ground on a new High School. Richland renovated Carmichael Middle School and is in the process of renovating Richland High and Hanford High Schools. Richland also built William Wiley Elementary in West Richland and is in the process of building a new Jason Lee Elementary, White Bluffs Elementary, and Enterprise Middle School (both in West Richland).

QUALITY OF LIFE

Vision for Quality of Life

We envision a community enjoying a high quality of life for its diverse people.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

The Tri-Cities Area enjoys a very rich quality of life. Successes in this area over the last five years have continued to build upon that richness.

Health Care in the region has seen the completion of an Imaging Center and an upgrade of Emergency Facilities at Kadlec Hospital; the dedication of a new pediatric wing at Kennewick General; the evolution of Lourdes Health Network to seven facilities; and an increased number of physicians, surgeons, and health care professionals in the region

The Richland Public Facilities District broke ground on the Hanford Reach Interpretative Center.

Benton Franklin United Way reached its campaign goal of over \$4.0 million. The funds raised support countless service organizations throughout the Tri-City Region.

River shore enhancement projects have begun bringing the community back to embracing the river by lowering levees and adding parks and pathways along the river.

There is new commercial and residential construction on Columbia Point in Richland.

Clover Island has had improvements; including a new Port of Kennewick building.

A new indoor football team, the Tri-Cities Fever, has made the Tri-Cities its home.

Completed the Sacagawea Heritage Trail.

The Richland and Tri-City Area Chambers have merged to form the new Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce.

WSU Tri-Cities has been named a four-year university by the state.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Vision for Research & Development

Regional R&D partnerships stimulate innovation, increase economic diversity and improve the area's business infrastructure and quality of life.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

Research and Development has had a very successful five years.

Battelle established a new \$150-million venture fund, called Battelle Ventures, to invest in seed-stage or early-stage companies in life sciences, homeland security, IT, materials, and energy.

The Washington Technology Center received a grant from the Economic Development Administration (matched by WTC) to set up angel investing networks in under-represented parts of the state, including the Tri-Cities.

Through the support of Congressman Doc Hastings, Congress allocated \$200K to create a long-range conceptual plan and a marketing plan to accelerate development of the Richland Research District.

\$13.1M was secured from the State of Washington for the Bioproducts, Science, and Engineering Laboratory. This facility is a \$24M joint venture between Washington State University (WSU) and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL). The two organizations broke ground on the facility in 2006. This research institute is located on the WSU Tri-Cities campus and will provide new educational facilities and expanded opportunities for collaborative research and higher-education programs.

PNNL licensed several technologies to local companies including Integral RFID and IsoRay.

TRANSPORTATION

Vision for Transportation

We envision a progressive and efficient multi-modal transportation system that contributes to economic development and sustains a high quality of life.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

As the region's population continues to increase, transportation becomes an ever growing issue. Over the last five years we have made great strides in improving transportation in the Tri-City / Walla Walla Area.

Walla Walla County jurisdictions and the City of Richland secured federal funding for US 12 and SR 240 in the federal transportation budget and both projects received millions more in the recent state gas tax increases.

Received congressional funding for the Kiona/Red Mountain interchange at I-82 to serve the Red Mountain Area, I-182 Road 68 interchange, and funding for the Hanford Reach National Monument

Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) received a positive vote from the community to increase funding after the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax was removed by a state vote. BFT has built a new facility in Kennewick, expanded their service to Finley, and upgraded their fueling station.

Progress was made on various road improvements such as north Stevens Drive/SR240, County Road 397 (Intertie), and railroad under/over passes in Prosser, Kennewick and Pasco.

A Transportation Bill was passed by congress. The bill spans six years and amounts to \$287 billion or \$3 million a year for locals. The Benton Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) was influential in developing this six year Bill.

The Tri-Cities airport obtained improvements in Delta service, convinced United Airlines to add daily service to Denver, and facilitated reduced Horizon fares to Seattle. The air terminal was renovated and updated. The airport also added Allegiant Airlines to their roster, offering non-stop flights on Sunday's and Thursday's to and from Las Vegas at affordable rates.

Continued improvements to the Sacagawea Heritage Bike/Trail system.

Began construction of the multi-million dollar Railex/Union Pacific Railroad project in the Wallula area. Project will move agriculture products from Washington State to the East Coast.

WATER, DAMS AND POWER

Vision for Water, Dams and Power

There are sufficient committed water resources to meet the economic and quality of life needs of the region.

Five Year Summary (2001 – 2006)

Water and power are major issues in any community, but when you look at the dams and hydropower of the Tri-City region those issues become even more significant. The leaders of this community continue to keep their finger on the pulse of these issues and as a result we reap the benefits of low-cost power and a more than adequate water supply for our world-class agricultural products. Over the last several years we have seen many accomplishments in the area of water, dams and power.

Facilitated forums with Washington State Department of Ecology for organizations actively participating in the Columbia River Regional Initiative (CRRRI) to communicate their activities and plans.

Facilitated the “Just Save It” campaign with local community utility providers, encouraging residents to save electricity.

Facilitated communications on a variety of court actions involving water usage, biological opinion, dredging, etc.

Provided a forum for parties that are actively participating in water and power issues to communicate activities and plans.