

Ocean Protein upgrades controls

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company wants to share that news with the community. "These are business people with a passion for Grays Harbor, and they are really good at their job as fishermen and really good at building a fish meal processing plant from the ground up. But, they are not necessarily communications experts, so they asked us to help them do better with that aspect of the business."

Ocean Protein found Happonen Communications through Washington Manufacturing Services, working in conjunction with the GHEDC. (See story on WMS inside.)

Aaron Dierks, General Manager of Ocean Protein, expresses gratitude for the help received from the GHEDC.

"When we started this project and got it going we didn't know about the EDC. We came in and started building and going it alone; we weren't even aware of the services available," Dierks said.

"They provided a lot of assistance that first year when things were bad and ORCA was coming down hard. Roger Milliman helped get me through the process of how the regulations work," he said. It was also the GHEDC that recently suggested looking at public relations firms to help spread the word about the improvements made. "I really can't say enough good stuff about the help the GHEDC has provided; they have been great," Dierks said.

The past winter was spent making upgrades to a state-of-the-art odor control system that Dierks is confident will work. A significant amount of research went into the process of

choosing this new technology, including a trip to Europe and visits to a number of fish meal plants on that continent. "We looked at a couple of different designs for additional control, reviewed the pros and cons and settled on this one that is just coming into industrial use," he said. The "non-thermal plasma technology" uses a high voltage electrical field, similar to lightning, which generates free radicals. The free radicals oxidize odor compounds into an inert gas.

"It's more environmentally friendly as we don't have to use chemicals or burn natural gas," Dierks said.

Happonen Communications has been busy preparing for a community campaign which will coincide with the beginning of Ocean Protein's peak season in May. More than 60 people work at the plant during peak season. A new video and a new website for Ocean Protein are nearing completion.

"We will use that video to go out into the community through civic organizations and other speaking engagements, and bring people into the plant for presentations, along with open question and answer sessions, so people can see the real story," Happonen said.

Also, an economic impact study has been commissioned to look at the community benefits from Ocean Gold, Ocean Cold and Ocean Protein, including how many people are employed and the impact on the local tax base, as well as the multiplier effect of these jobs in the community.

Ocean Protein is also very active in sponsoring a variety of community events, and are looking at opportunities to do more of that and show they are not just a business, but a part of the Grays Harbor community which is bringing a time-honored heritage into the 21st century.



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506 Duffy Street
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360.532.7888

e-mail: info@ghedc.com
www.ghedc.com

Spotlight on industry

Ocean Protein integral link in fishing industry cycle

Grays Harbor has a long heritage of ties with the fishing industry. Now, a trio of Grays Harbor companies with Ocean in their name are continuing that heritage in a green way.

First the fish are processed by Ocean Gold in Westport, and soon they will be stored and additionally processed at Ocean Cold Seafoods' new cold storage facility being constructed in Westport. And in Hoquiam, Ocean Protein takes the remnants of that process and creates valuable products from what used to be considered waste.

"What Ocean Protein is allowing all of the Ocean companies to do is take what was previously discarded and turn it



Ocean Protein implements state-of-the-art technology to manage its sophisticated odor controls.

into a viable commodity – it's a process that uses the whole fish," said Heidi Happonen of Happonen Communications. Products created include a fish meal powder used in aquaculture for farmed fish as well as feed for livestock, and creating things such as fertilizers and Omega 3 for vitamins.

"While new here, this is a global market and this company is creating local jobs that had been going out of the country," Happonen said.

Happonen Communications is the firm hired by Ocean Protein to help get their story out to the local community. After a bumpy start, things

have improved at the fish meal processing plant, and the

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New chairman aims to lead EDC into the future

The Grays Harbor Economic Development Council is pleased to welcome John W. Mitchell as the new Chairman of the Board. Mitchell takes the helm from Dennis Long, CEO of Bank of the Pacific, who served two terms as Board Chairman. Mitchell is the President/CEO and Leader of Grays Harbor Community Hospital (GHCH).



John Mitchell

"John comes to our board with some prior economic development experience, having served as a board member and chairman of the Economic Development Council in Pueblo, Colo., prior to coming to Grays Harbor," said Michael Tracy, GHEDC President.

"This prior experience is an asset, especially when combined with his three years experience here," Tracy said.

Mitchell said he is in a unique position to literally see

economic development in action from his hospital office atop one of the area's highest hills. "From here I can look down and see how the economy works...the industrial base where the money is generated, the retail and service areas, and the communities where people live. It helps me visualize how it all works," Mitchell said. This overview is something that is often lost in larger urban settings, he noted.

This grasp of the issues is one of the reasons why Tracy is excited about Mitchell's tenure at the lead. "He understands economic development," Tracy said.

Mitchell set three goals for his term as Chairman. The first is to recruit at least one new business during the year. The second is to focus some attention on county processes that may need to be improved. Third, he would like to think outside the box and lay the groundwork for some future project.

He would like to see a new business land here with at least

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California trip yields significant leads

Sometimes it can pay to take the show on the road.

The beneficial timing of two separate events in one region helped the Grays Harbor EDC partner with Washington state to accomplish two significant marketing outreach efforts with one trip.

At the top of the agenda was the Team Washington trade mission to Southern California April 7-9, followed by the Locations Expo in Santa Monica April 10-12.

Team Washington was coordinated by the state's Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) as part of the Governor's New Washington Program. "The idea was to bring the state's Economic Development Councils (EDCs) together as a team and then call on places where we think we could have a highly successful rate of enticing companies to consider expanding their operations to Washington," explained George Sharp, Marketing Manager for CTED.

This type of state outreach effort was one that first was tried and found to be effective 20 years ago, Sharp explained. With input from EDCs across the state, CTED first identified markets of interest and which industries to target.

Southern California was selected as a location where our state holds significant advantages for companies looking to expand or relocate. Advantages include an overall lower cost of doing business, lower cost of energy, lower Worker Compensation rates, no personal income tax, and attractive real estate prices.

CTED then researched identified target industries, doing data base searches of national directories. The Governor's office sent 1,600 letters to companies in the region, followed up by letters and phone calls from CTED.

Prior to departure, the Team had scheduled more than 30 appointments for the 20 people converging on the area. More than 14 EDCs elected to participate. "The trip was very worthwhile," said Michael Tracy, President of the Grays Harbor EDC. Of the five companies that the group Tracy was with called on, three showed interest not only in our state, but specifically in the Grays Harbor area. "These companies are industries that complement existing Grays Harbor industries," Tracy said.

The state's efforts at priming the contacts was exceedingly helpful. "These were people who were looking for-

"I wasn't sure how the Team Washington trade mission to Southern California would turn out, but it went well beyond my expectations."

**-- Michael Tracy
President, Grays Harbor EDC**

ward to meeting with us and were interested in talking to us about expanding to Washington in general, with keen interest in Grays Harbor County. I wasn't sure how it would turn out, but it went well beyond my expectations," Tracy said. Follow-up plans include providing requested materials and telephone calls.

The next stop was in near-by Santa Monica, site of the annual Locations Expo. This is the fourth time GHEDC and Grays Harbor Tourism worked the trade show booth sponsored by the WA State Film Commission. The show is geared to directors, producers and others who decide where to shoot movies, television shows, commercials, and documentaries.

"This is a great venue where we have a chance to raise the visibility of Grays Harbor to industry decision-makers," said Tracy. "Attracting a film crew has clear economic benefits – it can bring a significant amount of outside money to our area in the way of accommodations, food and supplies."

Washington has instituted some incentives to entice filmmakers, and Tracy reported that these efforts are increasing interest in Washington. "The state's rebate makes us more competitive."

The team met with a number of producers, directors and site location personnel expressing interest.

For instance, he explained one person wanted to film in the Amazon jungle, but the costs were proving prohibitive. "Instead, we convinced them to take a look at our rainforest, and this is one of four specific leads we are following up on."

office," Mitchell said. "I am not an expert in that process; my strength is seeing both sides of an issue and seeing if there is anything that can be done to create understanding so that everybody agrees on the issues," he said.

Mitchell hopes to find a way to address the frustration felt on both sides of the desk – one with business customers trying to get their project through, and the other with any hurdles staff may face, whether it's resources or understanding of what they need to do their job.

"Everybody wants to feel inspired. If we can find a way to work these things

through with better understanding and appreciation, the end result is things get done better."

This strength is one Mitchell has employed with great success at the hospital, Tracy said. Since Mitchell began at GHCH, the organization has seen patient satisfaction improve by 22 percent and improved employee satisfaction. The hospital achieved numerous quality improvements, including a Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval; improved state ranking from 46th to 13th; and a Surgical Department ranked 5th in the state.

EDC uses various tools to help local businesses

While there is much to be gained in attracting new businesses to our community, the Grays Harbor EDC remains focused on the important task of helping existing businesses grow and expand, as well as face any challenges

that may arise.

Roger Milliman, Director of Business Development for the Grays Harbor EDC, explains four of the main tools available to assist local industries.

Washington Manufacturing Services (WMS)

WMS is a non-profit program with the goal and objective of helping manufacturers in the state of WA remain competitive in their industry.

WMS offers a variety of classes and consulting services to help manufacturers improve their process by implementing lean manufacturing principles. The GHEDC coordinated a Lean Workshop training by WMS at Satsop Development Park in May 2007, attended by 10 companies.

WMS also has an expansive consultant data base with experts in just about any area a company may need (accounting, marketing, IT, communications, public relations, lean, and others). The companies provide their work through WMS at a discounted rate. Michael O'Bryon is the WMS Project Manager for this area. "I go in, talk with the customer and analyze their needs and find a service provider who can handle the job." This assistance helps eliminate confusion for a company in the consultant search process and also provides quality service at lower than rack rates. Locally, WMS helped Westport Shipyards find a consultant to revamp their telephone network and redesign their IT network. Ocean Protein found a public relations firm to help them. Ocean Protein, Ocean Gold and Ocean Cold have recently retained an economist to perform an economic impact and cluster study. Milliman is available to help companies contact WMS to determine if there are services available to meet their needs.

Procurement Technical Assistance Center for Olympic Peninsula (PTAC)

GHEDC provides the services of a state-wide PTAC network for the seven counties of the Olympic Peninsula. PTAC started more than 20 years ago, and the goal is to help companies navigate the complex path of working with the government.

Free workshops and free assistance are offered for businesses seeking to contract with federal, state and city government. Milliman conducts outreach training sessions to present PTAC to businesses and train them in the process.

"There is a lot to learn. We teach not only the concepts but the strategy and help companies set realistic expectations," he said.

Milliman also assists businesses interested in PTAC by helping them with the proper registration into a match system through which they receive e-mail notifications of possible projects. "It's a tremendous marketing tool that costs only \$135 per year." Milliman also provides pro bono PTAC consulting with companies that need help with any of a number of government contracting issues, such as how to fill out certifications and registrations or work through the fine details of filling out a bid to a government agency. PTAC can also help firms identify the best places to look for government contracts.

To find out more about PTAC, contact Milliman at the GHEDC office, (360) 533-4039.



Business Vitality Program

In partnership with the WA Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), the GHEDC regularly contacts and communicates with manufacturing and industrial clients in Grays Harbor County. The next periodic business survey is slated for 2009. The brief survey provides a benchmark for the long-term, but more importantly it can help identify resources that may be needed by a particular company. "It allows us to understand where we or CTED might be able to help with a potential business expansion, whether there's a need for capital, expertise for physical expansion, identifying building and equipment tax incentives, the addition of skilled workforce or skills training," said Milliman. "We have more activity in expansion for the first quarter of 2008; we have identified five expansion projects and we are currently working with one retention project." The activity level is slightly higher than normal. "We believe it is testimony to the fact that Grays Harbor, with our resources-based economy, is in a transition, using emerging technology for new products," Milliman said.

Small Business Development Center

In September 2007, the addition of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) proved to be a welcome added resource to Grays Harbor, Pacific and Mason Counties. Business Advisor Erik Stewart is available to assist entrepreneurial new business start-ups as well as help existing small businesses improve their operations.

New companies often need assistance with crafting a business plan or obtaining a bank loan for needed capital, prime areas for Stewart's help. The services are complementary to those provided by the GHEDC, explained Milliman. While the EDC tends to focus primarily on manufacturing and industry, the SBDC, located at Grays Harbor Community College, is a great resource for retail and commercial enterprises. Funded by Washington State University and the U.S. Small Business Administration, all SBDC services are free and confidential.

Because his services are offered in a three-county region, the best way to meet with Stewart is by appointment; people can call (360) 538-2530 or e-mail him at eriks@wsu.edu.

EDC Board

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50 employees, he said. But, he also understands that the ultimate location decision lies in the hands of the businesses looking at the area.

The key is in finding out how the GHEDC can make it easier for a business to land in Grays Harbor. "Michael and I have been talking about seeing what the EDC could do to assist with the building permitting process that is seeming to create a lot of frustration between businesses and staff in that