

## Economic Development



### WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY STEVENS COUNTY EXTENSION

Stevens County needs a stimulus for economic and community development which is the one of the things Extension does so well.

Economic development is not something that can be charted in a linear fashion. The framework for development must be in place for new ventures to develop and thrive but we can not easily predict how this development will unfold. Who knows what may happen.

#### ***Growing New Entrepreneurs for a Diverse Economy***

The Horizons Program has spurred the creativity of community members for entrepreneurship and education for starting new businesses. The Big Idea Contest in Colville has identified three potential business ideas from unlikely candidates. Each of these ideas are currently being assessed by the WSU Innovation Center to determine the patentability, viability and marketability of the products. There is considerable opportunity embedded in our communities.

The WSU Center for Entrepreneurship and Stevens County Extension are developing a High School Business Plan Competition for 2009.

#### ***New Business Opportunities for Job Creation***

Washington Dental Service (WDS) would not be in Colville if WSU Stevens County Extension had not been involved in the telework program coordinated by Monica Babine and Dee Christiansen with WSU Rural Bridges Program.

Several trips were made to Seattle to attend the meetings and make the necessary contacts for WDS to consider Colville as one of their options. Ultimately it was a team of critical players to complete the deal but there would not have been a deal without Extension.

The estimated Colville payroll and benefits is over 2.3 million dollars.

Rural Bridges focuses on helping rural community leaders to build the capacity to prepare for, create, and attract jobs using the latest information technology. Rural Bridges also helps corporate executives, business owners, and other entrepreneurs evaluate rural communities that might meet their business needs. The results? New, living-wage jobs that strengthen rural communities as well as a new labor pool and reduced operating costs for urban business.

#### ***New Markets for Existing Business: Wood By-products***

When some see small diameter timber in the woods, they see a forest fire hazard or logging leftovers. Vikram Yadama sees an innovative opportunity to bring together science and nature for the economic benefit of Washington land owners. He's been working with Vaagen Bros. Lumber to create this new product.

An assistant research professor and WSU Extension specialist, Yadama is a member of the WSU Wood Materials and Engineering Laboratory team that has pioneered a whole new use for low-value, small-diameter timber. He has helped develop a new composite alternative to wood that is more durable and ideally suited for external applications such as decking and boat docks.

Timber that traditionally had been sold for chip products or pulp at \$20 a ton, now sells as a component for composite materials at \$1,200 a ton. That helps land owners in economically stressed rural areas make extra income. It makes it worthwhile to remove small diameter timber from the woods which lowers forest fire hazards and improves overall forest health.