

CREDC recruitment brought 530 new jobs to area last year

New and expanding local industries in Clark County created 530 new jobs in southwest Washington in 2004, **Bart Phillips**, Columbia River Economic Development Council executive director, announced today at the first-quarter CREDC investor luncheon.

Phillips added that the average pay for each of these new jobs is \$33,300. The companies who created these jobs invested more than \$17.7 million in the community and supported 230 construction jobs, which had a \$10.6 million payroll. The new construction investments produced one-time sales tax receipts of \$408,300 for local jurisdictions and \$1.8 million to the state. In addition, annual property taxes for local schools and other local jurisdictions were increased by \$311,000.

Leaders of three companies to come to Clark County during the past year cited their reasons for the move.

Rob Bernardi, president/COO of Kokusai Semiconductor Equipment Corporation, brought his formerly Portland-based operations four miles across the Columbia River from Airport Way to Columbia Tech Center because of lower business costs, availability of high tech employees, close proximity to the Portland International Airport and a good attitude on the part of state and local government. Another draw to the area for Kokusai is that there is a cluster of 28 Japanese-based companies in Clark County.

Arjen Sundman, president of Amfit, a company that designs and makes orthopedic foot support devices primarily for health care, said he brought the headquarters of his company to Clark County from Santa Clara, Calif., after a laborious study of scores of west coast sites. Sites ranged from Mexico to northern Washington.

Two major reasons for selecting Clark County were lower living costs, lower wage costs and lower costs of construction. And, beside that, the people are friendly here, Sundman concluded.

One of Oregon's leading residential real estate companies, The Hasson Company, opened its first office outside of Oregon in Vancouver this year. Vice president of Hatton, **Dan Scott**, said the decision was made because his company recognizes that Vancouver is a growing part of the overall metropolitan area.

According to Phillips, a recent survey completed by CREDC showed that the main reasons Clark County was selected over other locations were lower cost of living, close proximity to Portland International Airport, labor force availability, quality schools and easy access to major freeways.

Stacy Mortensen named interim director for Habitat for Humanity

Stacy Mortensen has been appointed interim executive director of the Evergreen Habitat for Humanity. Mortensen had been assistant controller for O'Callahan's Restaurant.

Affiliated with Habitat for Humanity, the local unit works with donors, volunteers and homeowners to develop affordable homes for those in need.

Mortensen had been a board member of the local affiliate. She is a past president of Women In Action and the Fort Vancouver Chapter of the American Business Women's Association. She is a member of Vancouver Toastmasters.

Clark College notifying students of financial aid awards online

Clark College is among the first three institutions in the northwest to have begun notifying students of financial aid on the Internet. The automation has greatly streamlined the process, according to **Alex Montoya**, director of financial aid for the college.

Montoya said that, between July and December 2004, the office processed \$17 million in grants, scholarships, work-study and loans to over 4,400 students. He said over 6,000 students will benefit from the new technology this year.

People

Diane Coey, recently hired C-TRAN controller, has been designated auditor and treasurer for the transit agency, succeeding retiring **Fred Bateman**, in those two internal positions.

News briefs

Group opposing the proposed Cowlitz Casino Resort near La Center, Stand Up For Clark County Citizens is holding a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. this evening in the La Center High School commons. For further information, call **Cindy Goolsby, 263-8752**.

Thursday headlines from at home and around the world:

[State board says Clark County may not tinker with recently adopted growth management plan--Columbian, **Erin Middlewood**](#)

[Oregonian's tax-free status when buying in Washington being challenged by Rep. Deb Wallace \(D-49th\)--Columbian, **Don Jenkins**](#)

[Flap over Winchester rifle brought to Skyview High School as part of a student presentation fizzles--Columbian, **Amy McFall Prince**](#)

[Vancouver Symphony in mood to tango this weekend--Columbian, **Brett Oppegaard**](#)

[Biffle's year ? Racing insiders believe Vancouver racer could be a top-10 Nextel Cup driver--Columbian, **Holly Cain**](#)

[Portland's Yard, Garden & Patio Show opens this weekend--Columbian](#)

[Mayor pushes for livelier city--Oregonian, **Allan Brettman**](#)

[Bush picks Negroponte for intelligence director--USA TODAY](#)

[Car explosion rocks Vancouver apartment complex; none hurt--KATU, **Anna Song**](#)

Thursday on the air

Vancouver State of the City Address—4:30 p.m. CVTV

Oregon at Arizona (live)—5:30 p.m. Comcast, KXL

Oregon State at Arizona State (live)—6 p.m. KEX

Vancouver Planning Commission (live)—6:30 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

Ray Barnes fully mended and on the job. ☼ **Wendy Koop** giving Oakwood a good name. ☼ **Allan Brettman** suavely suited. ☼ **Jeffery Mize** sartorially suave. ☼ **Royce Pollard** irenic. ☼ **Dave Smith** taken with empyrean nostalgia. ☼ **Dana Harroun** providing gentle reminder. ☼ **Thursday**, should get one more good day of sunshine, 54. **Friday**, good weather continues, 54. **Saturday**, clouds coming in, but dry, 55.