

## Ron Arp says we like living here

BY RON ARP Amplify Group



Ron Arp

Southwest Washington needs business growth to match its talent base, says **Ron Arp**. We need a new strategic plan to drive growth coming out of the recession.

There is an interesting phenomenon that happens when business executives and professionals settle here. They prefer to stay here - even if their original job disappears. They launch a new career, decide to commute or start a new enterprise.

What is the magnetic force preventing these executives from packing their earthly possessions and heading to their next ladder-climbing gig across the country or in the world? How does their geographic home somehow trump their career on their personal priority list? What is it that makes them want to stay here?

The nearly universal response is, "We love it here!"

This response is spoken regardless of lifestyle. Loft or acreage. Entertainers or solitude. Outdoor recreation or indoor activity. Family or none. Private or public school. Advanced degree or not.

There is just one problem. We don't have enough jobs here for our workforce.

Currently, we have enough jobs for about three-fourths of our working population. We send some 60,000 residents on a daily commute to Oregon despite the onerous Oregon income tax. Hundreds of others commute elsewhere.

We need bedrooms and boardrooms. Being a bedroom community is not sustainable.

If we want to achieve workforce equity - that is, have the equivalent of a job for every worker - we'll need to attract or generate about 100,000 positions over the next decade.

We have been fortunate in recent weeks with the news of Fisher Investments bringing more jobs to the region and with S.E.H. America announcing plans to further expand here. These companies generate excellent family-wage jobs.

One can only wish tremendous success for other companies hitting their growth stride, such as Papa Murphy's, nLight Corporation, Agave Jeans and dozens of emerging businesses.

There is something even larger at stake than securing jobs for our people.

Development has been the engine of economic progress. However, we need a stronger and more solid business foundation to weather the natural ebb and flow in development. By some estimates, about 40 percent of our economic activity in the past decade is purely a result of development.

Attracting businesses here does not happen overnight. We already have well-intentioned organizations working on the challenge, such as the Columbia River Economic Development Council and the promising new organization Greenlight Greater Portland.

Business recruiting often requires business and government working collaboratively for months to pave the way. We also must overcome certain limitations such as our antiquated state Business and Occupation Tax based upon gross receipts rather than profits. There is also the consideration that other states offer attractive financial and relocation incentives.

Nevertheless, now is the time to move our collective recruiting efforts into high gear as businesses - regional, national and international - consider relocating to areas with a ready workforce.

Arp is president of Amplify Group, a communications and PR firm in Brush Prairie, Washington. He can be

reached at [rarp@amplifygroup](mailto:rarp@amplifygroup).

### Share Gold tournament coming

The 8th Annual Share Golf Classic will be played Saturday, Sept. 19, at The Cedars Golf Club, 15001 NE 181st St. Event details are as follows: registration opens at 10 a.m., driving and putting contests at 11 a.m. and shotgun start at 1 p.m.

The fee is \$400 for four; individuals \$100; includes green fees, cart, dinner and tee prize. For further information, go to [www.sharevancouver.org](http://www.sharevancouver.org).

### Community Pride Design Awards is coming to a close

The Community Pride Design Awards program is accepting nominations for outstanding projects that demonstrate quality development and enhance our community. Projects completed from 2008 to June 30, 2009, are eligible. The deadline to submit a [nomination form](#) is July 31, 2009.

On November 13, a public ceremony will be held to recognize the award-winning projects. More information can be found at the web site: [www.clark.wa.gov/commdev/prideawardsN.html](http://www.clark.wa.gov/commdev/prideawardsN.html). For further information about the program, please contact **Désirée de Monyé**, 397-2375 ext. 4165 or by emailing [desiree.demonve@clark.wa.gov](mailto:desiree.demonve@clark.wa.gov).

### News brief

A newly designed website for the **Jeanne Harris** campaign for reelection to the Vancouver city council goes live today. The site [www.jeanneharris.com](http://www.jeanneharris.com) aims to expand Harris's connection with the community and to find out what's on the hearts and minds of the community.

### Calendar

The Vancouver City Council meets in workshop session at 4 p.m. today. The council will discuss second-quarter financial results and will discuss the waterfront community project. <> The Vancouver City Council meets in regular session at 6 p.m. today. <> Clark County commissioners meet in regular session at 9 a.m. Tuesday, July 28. <> The Clark County Republican Candidates forum is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 28, in the Clark Public Utilities community center, 1220 Columbia. <> Port of Vancouver USA Board Commissioners regular meeting, Tuesday, July 28, 9:30 a.m., Commission Room, Port of Vancouver administration building, 3103 NW Lower Road. For information call **693-3611**. <> Waddell and Reed and Big Al's invites you to enjoy some food at their summer luau with fellow chamber members on Tuesday, July 28, 5 to 7 p.m., Big Al's, 16615 SE 18th Street. Cost is \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members. Pre-registration closes at noon Tuesday. For more information, call **694-2588**.

### Monday on the air

**City Council Workshop (live)—4 p.m. CVTV 23**

**Portland Beavers at Salt Lake (live)—6 p.m. KKAD**

**Toronto at Seattle Mariners (live)—7 p.m. FSN, KFX**

Vancouver City Council (7-20)—7 p.m. CVTV 23

Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners (7-14)—9:30 p.m. CVTV 23

Vancouver Code Enforcement Appeal Hearings (7-23)—11 p.m. CVTV 23

Clark County Land Use Hearings (7-23)—11:30 p.m. CVTV 23

### Town Tabloids and the Weather

**Denny Heck** adding another candle. <> **Ryan Hart** taking charge. <> **Bud Weis'** dance card filling up. <> **David Dicesare** collecting. <> **MarCine Miles** adding up. <> **Monday**, sunny, 72-99. **Tuesday**, sunny 71-102. **Wednesday**, sunny, 68-102.