Niagara Bottling Grand Opening Celebration

On October 23, Niagara Bottling hosted a much anticipated grand opening and open house for their new state-of-the-art bottling plant in Frederickson. Pierce County Executive Pat McCarthy, along with other elected officials, welcomed the company to Pierce County.

Family-owned and operated since 1963, Niagara Bottling is the largest private label bottled water supplier in the U.S. The company is known for its innovation – they have led the nation in reducing the weight of both water bottles and caps, and are using recycled plastic and innovative packaging.

Andy Peykoff Sr., Founder and Chairman, and Andy Peykoff II, President and CEO for Niagara, spoke highly of the strong partnership their company seeks with the communities where they operate and reiterated that Pierce County is what they were looking for in a ‘good fit.’ They praised government leaders and those in attendance for their role in helping with the project.

Company officials also touted Pierce County’s ability to meet quick permitting demands and how well everything worked. Recognizing the need for quick processing timelines for the project, the County assembled a team of top notch reviewers and worked closely with the company’s design professionals.

Niagara’s Economic Development and Government Relations officer, Derieth Sutton, expressed her feelings by asking the group, “A year ago did any of us realize we’d be as far along as we are today? Wow!”

“The process of helping the company reach the decision to invest in Pierce County was extremely competitive and a team effort,” said Denise Dyer, Director of the Pierce County Economic Development Department. Dyer added “We would not have pulled this off without the leadership of Susan Suess of the Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County, and the teams from Tacoma Water, Tacoma Power, Puget Sound Energy, Workforce Central and a dedicated permit review staff.”

After presentations and comments, elected officials and company owners joined for a formal ribbon cutting and the group was treated to a tour of the facility. At just over 311,000 square feet, the facility features the fastest bottling line in the world. At full speed, the line can produce 1,800 bottles a minute and up to 110,000 bottles an hour!

As part of the welcome, Pierce County Executive presented company owners with a proclamation declaring October 23, 2014 “Niagara Bottling Day.”

Welcome Niagara!
Data Can Do Wonders for Your Business

Did you ever wish you had a map that shows where your customers are located? Do you want a quick and easy way to get a package of demographic information to market a new development? Have you ever wondered what are the economic impacts of companies in your industry? Pierce County’s Economic Development Department may be able to help. Senior Economic Development Specialist Rob Allen is a Certified Community Researcher who specializes in helping companies find data they can use to better understand their markets and plan for future growth.

Allen has experience working with data from State and Federal statistical agencies, as well as from a number of private sources. In addition, he also uses geographic information systems (GIS) to present data on maps, and uses IMPLAN to estimate the economic impacts of industry changes.

An example of how he has helped companies make location decisions includes a sporting-goods retailer that was looking at the Pacific Northwest as an area to expand. They were having difficulty finding GIS information on traffic routes in the area. Allen was able to help them find the information they needed, and went a step further by providing information on the location of competitors in the region and the numbers of hunting and fishing licenses in each county within the state. Several months later the company opened its first Northwest store in Pierce County.

“In the early ’90s, the job involved helping people get access to the data. The Internet changed all that. Today we’re swimming in data. Now it involves helping people formulate the right questions, sort through the noise to find data that’s helpful, and provide the context that turns data into information,” says Allen.

In addition to helping businesses find the information they need, the Department also works with non-profit organizations and other government agencies looking for help with data and analysis.

If demographic data and analysis services would be helpful as you plan your business’s future, contact Rob at rallen3@co.pierce.wa.us or 253-798-6915.

Safeguarding Your Point-of-Sale System


With the variety of security breaches in the news lately, securing your sales in the retail environment is always a ‘top of mind’ topic. A recently held presentation by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Secret Service provided these helpful hints on safeguarding your point-of-sale system:

- “Insider” thieves cause the most harm. Seventy percent of thefts occur within 30 days of when termination notice is given. The key is to change or remove passwords or otherwise restrict employee or past employee access to sensitive data.
- Be sure to perform background checks, including criminal and credit on new hires to sensitive positions. An employee’s credit crunch may spill over to the workplace. Past criminal activity may signal the possibility for a repeat performance.
- Enforce separation of duties. Having one person wear too many hats can result in fewer eyes conducting oversight. Separating duties spreads responsibility and accountability.
- Monitor logins, especially remote logins at off hours. Beware of those bragging about their ability to “take down” the system whenever they want to. Disgruntled employees can damage systems. They are not interested in financial gains, just wreaking havoc.
- Vendors, contractors, and sub-contractors. When outsiders are permitted access to your system be sure the access is controlled and limited; create a portal with boundaries.

- New devices such as smart phones and tablets can offer new avenues for intrusions. For company devices, be sure staff downloads (applications) conform to the organization’s purposes.
- Supply Chain vulnerability can result in counterfeit products produced. Knock off software can contain imbedded viruses or code intruders can activate at a later date. Know your vendors.
- Know that you cannot ever achieve 100% protection for any length of time. Provide the best ‘perimeter’ defense you can; develop a plan to respond to intrusions and limit the damage.
- Invest in programs that can protect infrastructure. Turning off HVAC systems can fry servers; door access codes can be compromised or even disabled.

For more details and a complete list of resources, visit the U.S. Secret Service website at http://www.secretservice.gov.
Doing Business in Pierce County - Safety In Motion (SIM) Flight Center

Pierce County is home to businesses large and small and all are appreciated for their contribution to the County’s economic well-being. The Pierce County Economic Development Department and its partners work together to encourage and assist small, entrepreneurial firms to thrive and grow. In each newsletter, we feature one of these companies.

Part II - Safety In Motion (SIM) Flight Center
As you begin to read about this company, Safety In Motion (SIM) Flight Center, it may seem somewhat familiar. In our Spring issue, we featured a company called Spencer Aircraft, Inc. In that article, it began with Rod Wetherbee’s story of looking for an airport location to house the flight school he always wanted. But there was a catch as he had to buy the aircraft parts distributor (Spencer Aircraft) located in the same building. This article is part two of that story, the flight school.

In July 2010, Safety In Motion (SIM) Flight Center officially opened for business on Pierce County’s Thun Field to bring quality flight training to the Pacific Northwest. The 10 week program includes a combination of traditional classroom/aerial training along with a Full Motion Flight Simulator to prepare future pilots with the advanced skills necessary to fly in the most demanding situations and environments. Using the Redbird FMX full motion flight simulator, pilots can practice flying in practically any location in the world and in all weather conditions and situations difficult to reproduce in an actual aircraft. The simulator can also be rented by the hour to pilots looking to improve their skills. The training helps pilots learn the avionics and complex systems in their current aircraft or experience what it may be like to fly in their future aircraft.

Wetherbee is quick to add that becoming a pilot isn’t just for career path pilots wanting to become airline pilots; many individuals fly for business and pleasure and SIM is there to help them as well.

In 2011, Rod became the sole owner of SIM and the company is on solid footing as it seeks new ways to attract those interested in a career or in just learning how to fly a plane for personal pleasure. Given the proximity to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the school is well situated to help veterans pursue a career in aviation. The company is currently working on becoming VA approved to provide better service to military veterans, along with seeking relationships with various educational institutions and airlines to offer training assistance to career path pilots.

Dedication to the students is obvious in how training is offered. SIM will custom tailor any course to fit the student’s needs and timelines. Flight training can be scheduled anytime with any one of several experienced, friendly flight instructors. Finding quality, experienced instructors is a challenge for all flight schools. SIM depends on lead instructor Shawn Pratt to evaluate and hire the best.

Shawn was introduced to flying by his father who would rent float planes to fly the family around their home in Sitka, Alaska. While serving in the U.S. Navy, Shawn got back into flying and soon acquired his Commercial Certificate with airplane single-engine land, seaplane and multi-engine ratings, Flight Instructor (Gold Seal) with Instrument and Multi-engine ratings, and Ground Instructor Advanced/Instrument. Shawn has been heavily involved in aviation education and management since the late 1990s. He has helped develop and teach aviation training programs for numerous high schools and colleges ranging from Virginia to Washington State.

To learn more about this Pierce County company, visit its website at www.simflightcenter.com or call 253-840-5758.

Did You Know?

That our very own Rob Allen was part of a team that recently received a Pierce County “Standing Ovation Award” for outstanding work performed with the Pierce County Agriculture Program?

The Standing Ovation Awards Program recognizes Pierce County employees in four categories (Innovation, Leadership, Partners in Service, and Sustainability) who have gone above and beyond their normal job duties. The Partners in Service category recognizes employees who build relationships, develop outstanding service to customers inside and/or outside the Pierce County organization.

Pierce County’s Agriculture Program provides a single point of contact for agricultural producers when they run into land-use or regulatory issues. Program staff also help producers connect with regulators and agriculture experts outside of Pierce County government. In addition, the program applies county resources to help with marketing the industry and connecting consumers to local farms, ranches, and products.

The purpose of the program is to keep farmers farming and sustain agriculture as a viable industry in Pierce County.

Examples of their outstanding work include the Farm Forums, interactive farmer-to-farmer forums, and the development of the Puget Sound Fresh app.

Congratulations to Rob and his colleagues for their outstanding work!

Partners in Service Award Winners:
- Diane Marcus-Jones
- Sharon Predoehl
- Rob Allen
- Kyle Schmidke
- Lillian Allred
- Alexandria Teague
- Ryan Dicks
- Jared Erickson
- Megan Hutton
- Gregg McLellan
- Jeremy Acree
Need a loan for your business?

Pierce County offers loan programs through a variety of sources to businesses located in or expanding in Pierce County. All loans are made in partnership with bank financing.

Your business may be eligible to receive gap financing to assist in funding a variety of purposes such as:

- Permanent working capital
- Equipment acquisition
- Inventory purchase
- Land and/or building acquisition
- Start-up costs

For information, contact:
sheree.clark@co.pierce.wa.us
253-798-6916