

Hot off the presses

Did you get your copy of the City's 2007 Annual Report? The report, which is jam-packed with highlights and information on U.P.'s successes during the past year, was mailed to all residents in February. Copies are also available at City Hall and via the City's website, www.CityofUP.com.

Food for Thought

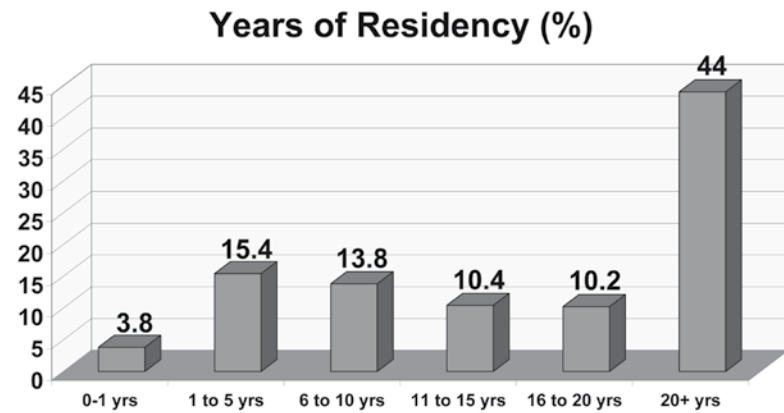
Mark your calendar for April 23 when a representative of the Department of Revenue will speak at our Food for Thought workshop about the change in sales tax reporting that takes effect July 1. Watch your mailbox for more information!

How well do you know your customers? How well do they know you?

Last July, all U.P. residents received a copy of a citizen survey in their Headlines newsletter asking for feedback on a number of issues related to City services, including code enforcement, public safety, parks and recreation, and much more. Nearly 650 residents took the time to complete the survey, resulting in a response rate of +/- 4 percent, which is deemed an acceptable return rate for survey projects.

The results of the entire survey are available through the City's website and reveal not only those areas of government that citizens believe are working and those that need improvement, but thanks to a series of demographic questions, also provide a quick snapshot of who lives in U.P.

It may surprise many businesses to learn that nearly a third of the survey respondents have lived in U.P. for 10 years or less. That information should serve as an important reminder that whether yours is a new business or a U.P. institution, never simply assume that people know the products and services you offer. Make sure you are continually marketing your business to let people know that you offer what they need right here in U.P.



UP Economic Development Office
3715 Bridgeport Way
University Place, WA 98466

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TACOMA, WA
PERMIT NO. 235

Talking UP is a quarterly publication from the City of University Place Economic Development Office.

Mariza Craig, Economic Development Director
Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant



CITY OF UNIVERSITY PLACE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Spring 2008

Talking UP



"We're always striving for excellence."

Mayor Bird

A candid conversation with Mayor Linda Bird

City Councilmember Linda Bird was elected Mayor of University Place by the members of the City Council in January. As she begins her new term as Mayor, we asked her to share her thoughts on a number of economic development topics affecting the City.

Q: What are your goals for Economic Development in U.P. during your term?

A: I have three main objectives: I would like to see us increase our sales tax revenue; help our existing businesses prosper; and increase the variety of businesses that can provide products and services to our residents.

Q: Various studies over the years have revealed that University Place suffers from significant sales leakage (dollars spent on products and services in other municipalities.) How do you think U.P. can reverse this trend?

A: First of all, we need to attract the kinds of businesses that our residents have told us they want, and we need to make sure we create a business-friendly environment

for new and existing businesses. That's why our Economic Development staff is continually searching for programs and services to help our businesses survive and thrive, programs such as the Food for Thought luncheon training series and our business coaching and mentoring services. Those are key elements of keeping sales tax revenue in the community.

Q: University Place saw more than \$1 million in new and redeveloped commercial properties in 2006. What does this say about the city's potential for future economic growth?

A: First of all, I don't think many people are fully aware of the amount of positive development we've experienced during the last few years. I remember times when there were a lot of vacant spaces around town. Now, you might see one or two here or there, but I think that is part of normal busi-



ness turnover. We are essentially a land-locked municipality and have limited opportunities for industrial growth so that is why projects such as the redevelopment of our 27th Street Business District and the development of Town Center are so important. They are the best opportunities we have to increase the amount of business and commercial space we have in the city.

Continued on pages 2 & 3

In this issue...

- **A candid conversation with Mayor Linda Bird**
- **Second Annual Mayor's Golf Tournament**
- **You spoke, we listened**
- **Hot off the presses**
- **Food for Thought**
- **How well do your customers know you?**

We welcome your comments and suggestions for this newsletter. Please let us hear from you. Call us at (253) 460-5442 or email mcraig@CityofUP.com.

A candid conversation, continued

Second Annual Mayor's Golf Tournament

The opening of Chambers Bay Golf Course in UP last year presented a great opportunity for then Mayor Gerald Gebring to host the City's first Mayor's Invitational Golf Tournament. With more than 29 teams participating, coming from as far away as Walla Walla, the event proved to be a great success – and one which should continue!

This year the Mayor's Invitational will be held the last weekend of the summer, Saturday, Aug. 30, 2008.

Watch for information on opportunities for you to be involved! Sponsorships will be available, and donations to the "goodie bag" provided to participants will also be sought.

For more information, please contact Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant, Economic Development Department, at (253) 460-5442.

Q: You mentioned Town Center. There has been a lot said and written about that project lately. Is there anything you would like to add to the discussion?

A: I'm glad you asked. I know that people are concerned about the length of time it is taking to complete this project but it is important to note that these types of delays are not unheard of for a project of this scale. I do think that perhaps we were a little too overly optimistic at the start and that may have led to some misconceptions. The public meetings we held in January were important, however, because they helped us see the need to make sure the public is more aware of what is happening at each stage of the project.

So we now have several mechanisms in place to make sure that happens, including our new Developer Selection Committee, which includes members of the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Committee, all of whom are residents of U.P., as well as other public information components (see box on page 3.) We can always do better – and we're trying.

Q: Some people have noted that Gig Harbor's Town Center is already up and running, yet U.P.'s Town Center is still trying to find a developer.

A: Comparing our Town Center to Gig Harbor's is like comparing apples and oranges. Unlike Gig Harbor, which was led by a private developer, our project is much more complicated because the public entity of the City of University Place is leading the development effort. Gig Harbor did not operate under the same constraints that we are dealing with because we have a huge public component to our project, a component that must be complete before the retail portion can begin.

The good news is that all the public improvements – the multi-modal facility and the plans for the civic buildings – are on time and on budget. I know that is hard for people to understand because for the longest time if you drove along Bridgeport all you saw were

cranes and dirt, since most of the work was taking place below grade. But at this point the garage is nearing completion and we hope to begin construction on the library this summer, with the goal of finishing that component by the fall of next year.

Q: Are you concerned that with the recent economic downturn, U.P. may have "missed the boat" in terms of recruiting retailers to Town Center?

A: The national retail experts we have spoken to tell us they still feel there is plenty of market potential here. The local experts are a little more skeptical. The announcement about the U.S. Open at Chambers Bay, however, has really changed everything.

Q: You mentioned the U.S. Open. The numbers regarding its impact on University Place – indeed all of Pierce County – are staggering. What are your thoughts?

A: To be honest, I think a lot of us are still trying to grasp the impact of it and get our heads around the numbers which are reported to be in the neighborhood of \$100 million generated in spending. I know that the prospect of an event of this magnitude may be a bit unsettling for people who have been here a long time, but the potential in terms of revenue is truly exciting. Of course, we will need to be ready to provide services and make sure that any preparations that are made do not negatively impact our neighborhoods because we are still primarily a residential community.

Q: Do you think Town Center will be ready by 2015 when the Open occurs?

A: I'm not sure it will be 100 percent complete, but it is certainly a good goal to shoot for. In the meantime, the U.S. Amateur Open, scheduled for 2010, will be a good dry run for us and an opportunity for all our existing businesses to begin to think about how they can capitalize on the opportunities afforded to us by these major events.



The stunning vistas of Chambers Bay will be the backdrop for the United States Golf Association's Amateur Open in 2010 and the U.S. Open in 2015. These events are estimated to pump millions of dollars into the local economy.

Q: You have said that despite the recent setbacks with Town Center, University Place is moving forward.

A: I certainly don't want to overpromise and I know that there have been days during the last few months when it was easy to feel as though we were moving backwards instead of forwards, but I hope the public understands the need to be patient. Despite what some may think, we (the City and City Council) have not been "going it alone," so to speak. We have been working with qualified consultants since the beginning of the project and are now beefing up our team.

It may not seem so to some, but we have in fact made tremendous progress – not just with Town Center but with all our economic development efforts. I think people sometimes forget what Bridgeport Way looked like 10 years ago and the limited shopping we had. The changes that have taken place did not occur overnight. We want to create a viable retail base that enhances our community, not one that detracts from it, but doing it right will take time.

You spoke, we listened

In an effort to respond to citizens' requests for regular updates on the status of Town Center, the City has established a special Town Center web page that can be accessed at www.CityofUP.com/TownCenter/TownCenterNews.asp.

The page includes a number of additional links related to the project, including:

- Information on the Selection Advisory Committee and its members.
- A copy of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for potential developers that was sent out Feb. 4.
- Frequently Asked Questions.
- Webcams and photos.
- Current news releases and communications related to the project.
- A questions and comments section.
- Schedules for **Coffee with Council** (held on the last Wednesday of each month from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the Senior Community Center, 2534 Grandview Drive W.) and **Cookies with Council** (held on the last Tuesday of each month from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Meeting Room, 3715 Bridgeport Way W.)
- A virtual tour of the development.



UPComing Events

If you're planning an event that you'd like us to include in our UPComing Events section, please email the information including date, time and location to katemcdermott@msn.com or fax to (253) 566-5658.

On-going—

UP City Council Meetings:

1st and 3rd Mondays of each month.
7 p.m. City Hall. 3715 Bridgeport Way W. Suite B1 (Windmill Village).

UP Economic Development Committee Meetings:

3rd Thursday of every month.
7:30 a.m. 3715 Bridgeport Way W.
Town Center Gallery

27th Street Business

District Association:

Please contact Becky Metcalf at (253) 460-5442 for more information.

UP Chamber of Commerce Wake UP meetings:

Last Friday of every month at 8 a.m.
U.P. Presbyterian Church, 8101 27th St. W.
Please call the Chamber of Commerce at (253) 627-2175 for more information.

Home-Based Business Forums:

1st Wednesday of every month. 8 a.m. Town Hall Meeting Room, Windmill Village, 3715 Bridgeport Way W. Please contact Becky Metcalf in the Economic Development Office at (253) 460-5442 for more information.

Small Business Administration's Business Assistance Center Training Sessions:

The SBA offers a number of training workshops on topics of importance to the small business owner. For a complete listing of upcoming workshops,

please call the Small Business Administration at (253) 680-7770.

City of University Place Holiday Closings:

Please note that the City of University Place offices will be closed on Monday, May 26 in observance of Memorial Day.