

## Being Thankful

*A few reasons for holiday cheer*

BY VBJ STAFF

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*Got no check books, got no banks. Still I'd like to express my thanks -  
I got the sun in the morning and the moon at night.  
- Irving Berlin, from "Annie Get Your Gun"*

Similarities abound between the U.S. in 1946 when Irving Berlin penned his lyrics for the musical, "Annie get your gun," and our country today. Money is tight, unemployment is up, uncertainty abounds.

But like Berlin's indefatigable heroine, there is much for which we are thankful and little that can bring us down. Here are a few examples:

- **The expansion having taken place at both Southwest Washington Medical Center and Legacy Salmon Creek** – two projects that both help deliver quality service to patients and create the need for additional healthcare professionals to deliver that service.
- **The expansions at two Clark County institutions of higher education.** The opening of the Clark College Columbia Tech Center facility last September and a new Electrical Engineering building on tap for WSU Vancouver allows our best and brightest to consider the option of studying at home rather than taking their talents elsewhere.
- **Public works projects** such as the Ridgefield/I-5 junction overpass, the West Vancouver Freight Access project continuing to open up additional industrial land and the just-approved Waterfront Access project clearing the way for \$1.3 billion in private investment for riverfront development. All these projects are helping to keep our neighbors working and provide the infrastructure to attract new businesses.
- **Emerging agri-businesses** in the area such as Community Supported Agriculture farms and an exploding local wine industry, with over three-dozen CSAs and more than a half-dozen wineries in Clark County today.
- **Retail development** taking off in mid-county with the completion and continued addition of restaurants, boutiques and entertainment at Battle Ground Village.
- **The generous spirit of Southwest Washington's business community.** If it's tough for the for-profit businesses in these challenging times, think of the odds that nonprofit organizations continue to be up against. That's why community giving is so important. A quick total of five nonprofit events we have attended in the past year raised over \$1.5 million for their organizations.
- **The ongoing effort to update Fort Vancouver Regional Library facilities,** with a new Main Branch now under construction in downtown Vancouver, as well as an already-completed Battle Ground branch and a new East Vancouver facility adjacent to the Firstenberg Center scheduled to open in mid-December.
- **The promise of hundreds of new jobs** with silicon wafer manufacturer SEH America's expansion to the former HP campus in Vancouver.
- And last, but certainly not least: **Black Friday,** which for many in the retail sector can be the difference between a profitable or unprofitable year. Given the economy, many businesses are going into this weekend with much different preparations and expectations than in previous years. For these mostly-independent companies, their Thanksgiving hopefully will come later this week.

Indeed, we have all of these examples and more for which to be thankful. But as a business community, we have something else – a resource more valuable than any new initiative, project or date on the calendar.

We have each other with whom to do business. **VBJ**