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## **Important Developments in Last Six Months:**

This edition of the "Kitsap TRENDS" reports on some very important developments that have occurred over the last six months. They contribute to making Kitsap County even a more attractive place to live and work.

## **Norm Dicks Government Center:**

The "Norm Dicks Government Center" was dedicated in October 2004. Not only is it a very important element of the plan to revitalize Bremerton, but it also is truly a center of government that facilitates even closer coordination of local government activities. The effectiveness of Kitsap County's municipalities is one of its competitive advantages. And, the Government Center, which now includes the local offices of its namesake, Congressman Norm Dicks, reinforces the ability of local government to play a constructive role in the County's growth.

## **Kitsap Conference Center:**

The Kitsap Conference Center is an attractive, and functional, addition to Bremerton's "Harborside" development. A Hampton Inn hotel next to the Conference Center opened in the Fall of 2004. The next major element to improving the city of Bremerton's waterfront is the construction of 200 condominium units overlooking the marina, which is itself slated for expansion.

## **Waterfront Condominiums:**

Construction of the "first phase" of the condominium project will begin in mid-2005. When the final phase of the project is completed, this development will add an important residential element to Bremerton's revitalization, as well as over \$100-million to the city of Bremerton's and Kitsap County's tax base. The condominium project will include a \$2-million city-owned plaza that will enhance public access to the waterfront.

## **Olhava Master Plan Development:**

2005 will also be an important year for the Olhava Master Plan Development in Poulsbo. Joining the strikingly beautiful Olympic College branch campus will be Wal\*Mart, Home Depot and Office Max stores.

## **Kitsap County Enjoys High-Speed Internet Access:**

Most of Kitsap County now has high-speed Internet access. Business and residential customers have a number of options to tie into broadband service. The Kitsap Public Utility District/NOANET fiber optic backbone now extends the full length of the County. And, Port Orchard will be connected to this system in 2005. Other major suppliers of high-speed service include Comcast's cable service and DSL connection through QWEST and Sprint. In early 2005, the Ferry System made wireless access available on the Seattle-Bainbridge Island route, which carries 2.4 million passengers annually.

## **Strong Employment Growth & Low Unemployment:**

The County has shown strong employment growth and relatively low unemployment. In the first nine months of 2004, employment in the County grew by 6,300. With a workforce of roughly 105,000, this is a considerable increase. The employment rate, during 2004, ranged from 5.1% to 5.8%.