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WEDA 2022 Winter Conference
& Legislative Reception
March 2-3, 2022 | Olympia, WA

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WASHINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (WEDA)

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Contact Information for Award Winners and Photos Available Upon Request

Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA)

Celebrates Excellence in Economic Development & Legislative Economic Development Champions with 2022 WEDA Economic Development Awards

Washington – The leaders of Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA), Washington’s only trade association laser-focused on economic development, awarded their 2022 Economic Development Awards on March 2 at their 2022 Winter Conference in Olympia, WA. Professional photos are now available upon request.

“WEDA’s Economic Development Awards celebrate outstanding achievement in economic development at the highest level,” said WEDA Board Chair Gary Ballew, who also serves as Vice President of Economic Development for Greater Spokane Inc. “There are leaders across our entire state working tirelessly to recover and grow jobs and strengthen economic vitality in their communities. These awards honor leaders and projects that are excelling in this important work.”

Bruce Kendall, WEDA Awards Committee Chair who also serves as President & CEO of the Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County added, “We received impressive nominations from communities across Washington. The nominations reflect a unique array of the breadth and diversity of strong work taking place by economic developers in Washington. These projects are often complex and require extensive collaboration and creative partnerships. We were also pleased to once again present awards in two new award categories established last year, for the Economic Development Award for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and the Economic Development Award for Response & Recovery.”

WEDA Incoming Board Chair & Legislative Committee Chair, Alisha Benson, CEO of Greater Spokane, Inc. added as she presented the Legislative Economic Development Champions Awards at a special WEDA Legislative Reception, “WEDA does not honor state legislators every year. In fact, it has been a few years since we have done so. Over the past year and during this legislative session, we have experienced incredible support for our Legislative Agenda and our Top Priorities. The WEDA Awards Committee determined that this particular year, it was time to shine light on these legislators’ commitment to our work to recover and grow jobs and increase

shared prosperity across our state. The six legislators we are honoring have made extraordinary efforts on behalf of our state's work to recover and grow jobs. They are true Legislative Champions for Economic Development. And we all know that when there is strong, inclusive economic development work taking place across our state and in communities, that communities are healthier and safer, and that families and workers are better off."

2022 WEDA Legislative Economic Development Champions include *(citations read during the WEDA Legislative Reception by WEDA Incoming Board Chair & Legislative Committee Chair, Alisha Benson, CEO of Greater Spokane, Inc., below):*

2022 LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

State Senator Sharon Brown

Among her many proactive efforts for economic development, Senator Brown has been a tireless advocate for tax increment financing and revitalization financing for many years. Her leadership in support of the Tri-Cities community in the clean energy sector and for funding to support DELTA (STEM) High School has been tremendous. She has joined WEDA as a speaker at conferences including in Prosser in recent years, and she has been a strong, bipartisan champion for WEDA's priorities.

2022 LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

State Senator David Frockt

Senator Frockt helps write the Capital Budget as the Vice Chair of the Ways & Means Committee, so he has helped create and catalyze thousands of jobs through the state's capital budgets, particularly construction jobs. He led the Senate's Special Committee on Economic Recovery following the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. Senator Frockt also prime sponsored the TIF for Jobs bill, which as we all know was a historic success for our State. Senator Frockt should also be honored for his unique ability to work across the aisle collegially, and get important things done for our state.

2022 LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

State Senator Mark Mullet

Senator Mullet serves as the Chair of the Business, Financial Services & Trade Committee, and in this capacity and in general, he has been a champion for economic development and job growth every day. He was a pivotal leader in getting the TIF for Jobs bill signed into law, a significant success for our State. Senator Mullet has also championed WEDA's funding requests, securing a historic restoration in regional economic development funding, global trade funding and he is currently working hard to secure funding for technical assistance for small businesses. He has made great efforts to consistently join WEDA at our meetings including enduring traffic for out-of-town events and despite his leadership role on the Senate Floor.

2022 LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

State Representative Matt Boehnke

Representative Boehnke is a bipartisan, results-focused champion and friend of WEDA in every sense. He has been an incredible advocate for growing our state's manufacturing job base, including the passage of significant legislation in 2021 which laid needed foundations to double manufacturing jobs. He has been a sponsor or co-sponsor of multiple priority bills for WEDA, including the TIF for Jobs bill, a historic success for our State, and he is chairing a supply chain caucus this session. Representative Boehnke has made great efforts to consistently join WEDA at our meetings including our conference last summer in Spokane, and countless Zooms!

2022 LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

State Representative Noel Frame

Representative Frame serves as the Chair of the Finance Committee, and in this capacity, she is a strong champion for small business and inclusive economic development. She has helped lead a Small Business Roundtable which has met through the COVID-19 crisis to focus on solutions and pragmatic policy to support struggling small businesses. She helped author the Shovel Ready Sites bill this session and is championing a significant package of proposals to help small businesses recover and grow, which includes all of WEDA's funding requests. Representative Frame makes an authentic effort year-round to listen and engage with diverse interests statewide, and she strives for principled-driven solutions that make real impact.

2022 LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

State Representative Cindy Ryu

Representative Ryu serves as the Chair of the Community & Economic Development Committee, and in this capacity, she is a tremendous champion for small business and inclusive economic development every day. She has helped lead a Small Business Roundtable which has met through the COVID-19 crisis to focus on solutions and pragmatic policy to support struggling small businesses. She has led her committee to work as a team to support a significant package of proposals to help small businesses recover and grow, and she is currently working hard to secure funding for technical assistance for small businesses. She has made great efforts to consistently join WEDA at our meetings including countless Zooms, and she has consistently invited WEDA to present to the Community & Economic Development Committee.

2022 WEDA award winners recognized for outstanding achievement in Economic Development include:

EMERGING PROFESSIONAL IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Jennica Machado

The Emerging Professional Award is given to a person who has made a significant contribution to his/her community, is a promising future leader in the industry, or who has become an integral member of his or her community, creating significant support for economic development.

“Just a few months after Jennica was hired as Thurston County Economic Development Manager, the COVID pandemic arrived. Despite being new to the position, Jennica proceeded to serve as the County lead for Thurston Strong, our regional response in support of impacted workers and businesses. Due, in large part, to her leadership, our team was able to secure and distribute over \$20 million in response and recovery resources. Her attention to detail, understanding of stakeholder needs and professionalism was instrumental to this achievement. This achievement in leadership manifested itself by infusing the \$20 million into the critical sectors of childcare, small business, arts/culture, nonprofits and BIPOC businesses – directly impacting over 3,000 businesses.

Jennica has also created and convened the Thurston County Broadband Action Team and in ensuring that workforce development is a strong component of economic development strategies. Jennica exemplifies the statement that by working together, in a unified manner, great things will happen to create a quality and sustainable community,” said nominators Jason Robertson and Michael Cade.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

TIF for Jobs Campaign: Association of Washington Cities, Gordon Thomas Honeywell & NAIOP Washington, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association

This award recognizes a person or group of people outside the field of economic development who made a significant and/or innovative contribution to an economic development project or program during the past year. This award recognizes that economic development professionals must rely on a whole host of others in

order to be successful. These are sometimes the “silent heroes” of economic development who have contributed significantly to advancement of the economic development profession or were involved in a significant project in a creative way.

“In 2021, one of WEDA’s Top Legislative Priorities was to: *Foster Catalysts for Job Recovery & Growth*, and we came away with a huge win with the passage of the TIF for Jobs bill. Washington State was one of only two states in the nation without some sort of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) tool, and we are finally the 49th thanks to a tremendous team effort. We had outstanding legislative leadership and commitment to getting the bill passed, with nearly 100 organizations in our broad-based coalition,” said Teresa Brum, Deputy Director of Economic Development for the City of Vancouver and WEDA Board Member/Awards Committee Member.

“Another major variable in the successful passage of the TIF bill was the robust and trusting partnership of the leading organizations which drove the advocacy, held countless meetings, reviewed and negotiated legislative language and never gave up on this complex piece of legislation. WEDA is honored to present the Economic Development Advocate of the Year award to the Association of Washington Cities represented by Candice Bock, Director of Government Relations; NAIOP Washington State, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, represented by Travis Hale, NAIOP’s President Elect for 2023 and Briahna Murray, Vice President of Gordon Thomas Honeywell.”

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR – BUSINESS RETENTION/EXPANSION

The Small Business Flex Fund

This award celebrates the successful creation or completion of a creative, economically significant, and/or model project in a community or region. The project could be one that has retained jobs, was particularly difficult to achieve, was extraordinarily competitive, had multiple partners or contributed to community well-being.

The COVID-19 pandemic wrought economic turmoil across Washington’s smallest businesses and nonprofits, but for many businesses owned by individuals from historically excluded communities, the pandemic exacerbated economic inequities that have existed for generations. Together, Washington State Department of Commerce, the National Development Council, and DH built a campaign to promote the novel Washington Small Business Flex Fund and provide access to flexible, working capital to business owners who have been traditionally underbanked or denied access to affordable loans.

The Flex Fund is designed to serve historically underbanked communities. As a core operating principle, the Flex Fund partners with Community Development Financial Institutions, or CDFIs, as lenders – existing nonprofits who have been serving underserved communities for decades. The Flex Fund also provides at-the-ready technical assistance support with financial literacy, document preparation, language services, business plan writing, credit score consultation, and other administrative needs to increase an applicant’s chances of hearing ‘yes’ to their loan application. Washington’s Flex Fund has had the best conversion rate compared to similar programs in other states (like New York and California), at one loan funded for every 11.9 applicants - with other states closer to one loan per 18 applicants. This means more capital in the hands of businesses that need it most.

INNOVATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD

Pierce County Business Accelerator Program

This award recognizes that not all economic development projects are alike. In fact, there are frequently projects that happen or programs that are developed that do not include the “deal” that economic developers typically consider as a success. WEDA will recognize innovative programs, projects and partnerships that are pioneering, novel and groundbreaking. WEDA recognizes that communities and individuals are doing state-of-the-artwork to further the field of economic development. It may be the attraction of a world-class event that

made a significant economic impact on a community, an atypical alliance of groups who may have never worked together before or the creation of a program that significantly improves a community's ability to attract investment.

"I'm proud to accept this award for our business accelerator program on behalf of Betty Capestany and our Economic Development team, the people of Pierce County, and our partners - the Black Collective, Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Korean Women's Association, Mi Centro, Tacoma Urban League and the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce. Together, we are providing opportunities for entrepreneurs of color to start or expand their businesses. We know the program has been a success, but it's great to get this validation at the state level. We are also getting inquiries from across the country from those who want to emulate it!" said Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR – BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

Marcon Metalfab – John Michener, Port of Bellingham

This award celebrates the successful creation or completion of a creative, economically significant, and/or model project in a community or region. Factors that may influence the selection include the extent of the economic impact this project has on the community, the development of partnerships, innovation, originality, whether the project or program can be duplicated as a "best practice," and whether the project or program appears to be cost-effective.

John Michener met the Marcon Metalfab owners in 2013 when they were looking for a metal fabrication company to buy in Whatcom County. With nothing available, they went quiet. John believed Marcon would be a great addition to the local economy, so he stayed in touch and checked in from time to time as he visited other British Columbia based companies.

In 2019 Marcon was again ready to look at an investment in the US and this time they wanted to create their own facility. Having already established a good relationship, John worked diligently with the company decision makers; meeting with them a number of times at their Delta, B.C. location and then throughout Whatcom County showing them prospective sites. As this was going on, the Global Pandemic hit including a whole new level of business and border restrictions. Undeterred, John continued to work with Marcon, setting up meetings with the County Executive, cross border letters of entry were signed, visas applications made, multiple new steps done that allowed the work to continue.

In September of 2020, the company closed on an existing 50,000 Sq. Ft. building, including land for future expansion, and began the process of outfitting it. John continued to help as they ran into a couple of permitting issues. In March of 2021 the company opened for business. To date they have invested \$11.5 million in land and building, equipment and working capital. As of the end of 2021, there were 24 people employed with plans to add an additional 8 new positions within the next 2-3 months. The average wage of their workforce is \$28/hour which translates to an annual payroll of \$1.85 million dollars.

Said Don Goldberg, Director of Economic Development for the Port of Bellingham, "As a community we are proud of the work John performed to bring this dynamic company and the number of well-paying jobs that came with it to Whatcom County. By maintaining the relationship with Marcon over a number of years and then assisting them with all issues of setting up in the United States, John was instrumental in helping the company gain the certainty the needed to go ahead and make the investment they did."

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

BackingSmallNCW

This award recognizes economic development organizations/entities/individuals that have made strides in improving the diversity, equity and inclusion within their work, communities or organizations. WEDA will recognize innovative programs, projects and partnerships that are pioneering, groundbreaking and/or novel.

The North Central Washington Economic Development District (EDD) leads BackingSmallNCW, along with the Chelan-Douglas Regional Port Authority, Okanogan County Economic Alliance, Downtown Strategies, New Growth Innovation Network and the federal EDA, with a theme of “*Strong inclusive economies begin with hometown pride.*” The objective of the project is to strengthen North Central Washington’s economy through grassroots initiatives to create resilient, thriving, inclusive communities. The mission is to build equitable systems for local businesses and communities that create a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable economy by strengthening, supporting, and celebrating entrepreneurship, rural and urban community development, racial equity, and food access. This will be an ongoing project for several years in order for the NCWEDD to reach, connect and assist the many small, rural communities in North Central Washington.

“Thank you for this incredible honor and to all of our #NCWEDD partners. Without the collaboration and support of these organizations #BackingSmallNCW would not be possible,” said Alyce Brown, Executive Director, North Central Washington Economic Development District.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD FOR ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY

#Shop.Eat.Spend.Kitsap

This award recognizes economic development organizations/entities/individuals that have made innovative efforts to address the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. WEDA recognizes innovative programs, projects and partnerships that are pioneering, groundbreaking and/or novel.

According to the nomination from Joe Morrison, Executive Director of the Kitsap Economic Development Alliance, “Kitsap is known for its unique and charming small towns. Those towns draw visitors from all over the region, making tourism one of our key industries. Like all towns, Kitsap’s main streets have struggled mightily under pandemic restrictions. We knew that the 2021 holiday season was going to be “make it or break it” for many of the small shops, galleries, coffee shops, pubs, and restaurants that are the life blood of our communities. Helping those small businesses stay profitable and viable during the second year of the pandemic was needed now more than ever.

KEDA initiated [#ShopEat.SpendKitsap](#) during the pandemic to support our Kitsap small businesses. As a result of this campaign, KEDA has developed a much stronger working relationship with the local business community, the local chambers, and the main street associations. This shared goal and working together and building a sense of community will continue to help keep our local economy strong. KEDA continues to build on the success of the SESK campaign.”

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About the Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA)

As Washington State’s *only* trade association laser-focused on economic development, WEDA is committed to recovering, retaining, recruiting and expanding jobs and re-investment in Washington State. WEDA members include economic development organizations, cities, counties, ports, tribes, businesses, education/workforce and community-based organizations that prioritize economic development.