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WASHINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (WEDA)

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Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA)

Celebrates Excellence in Economic Development & Legislative Economic Development Champions with 2025 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 2025 Economic Development Awards on March 26 at their 2025 Winter/Spring Conference in Olympia/Lacey, WA. Professional photos are available upon request.

“WEDA’s Economic Development Awards celebrate outstanding achievement in economic development at the highest level,” said WEDA Board Chair Betty Capestany, who also serves as the Director of Economic Development for Pierce County. “There are leaders across our entire state working tirelessly to grow jobs and strengthen economic vitality in their communities. These awards honor leaders and projects that are excelling in this impactful work.”

Amanda Wallner, WEDA Awards Committee Chair who also serves as Economic Development Manager for the City of Richland added, “We received a record number of impressive nominations from communities across Washington. The nominations reflect a unique array of the breadth and diversity of important work taking place by economic developers statewide. These projects are often complex and require extensive collaboration and creative partnerships.”

WEDA Incoming Board Chair & Legislative Committee Chair, Gina Stark, CEO of Stark Impact Consulting, added as she presented the Legislative Economic Development Champions Awards at a special WEDA Legislative Reception, “WEDA does not honor state legislators every year. During this legislative session, we are facing serious reduction proposals and threats to economic development programs and funding. The WEDA Awards Committee determined that this particular year, it was important to shine light on these legislators’ commitment to our common goals of growing jobs and increasing shared prosperity across our state. The two legislators we are honoring are true Legislative Champions for Economic Development. 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.”

2025 WEDA Legislative Economic Development Champions include *(citations read during the WEDA Legislative Reception by Gina Stark, WEDA Incoming Board Chair & Legislative Committee Chair, below)*:

2025 LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

State Senator Adrian Cortes

As a new Senator from Clark County, Senator Cortes has jumped right in as the Vice Chair of the Business, Financial Services & Trade Committee. And he has stepped right up to prime sponsor WEDA's Associate Development Organization legislation, and to help WEDA protect funding for the economic development ecosystem at an incredibly critical time. As a former Mayor and City Councilmember of the City of Battle Ground, Senator Cortes also understands that good governance and efficient government service delivery can help foster job growth and economic opportunity.

2025 LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAMPION

State Representative Stephanie Barnard

Representative Barnard, the Ranking Minority Member of the House Economic Development Committee, is results-focused champion and friend of WEDA in every sense. Her top legislative priorities are laser-focused on improving her region's economy, strengthening businesses and creating more family-wage jobs. Rep. Barnard helping lead support for and protection of funding for regional economic development, and she is deeply committed to the whole economic development ecosystem.

Among many areas of focus, she has helped enhance economic development through improved access to federal grants. In the 2023 session, she passed the bipartisan Moving Assets Towards Community Health Program (MATCH) Act. This legislation established a dedicated program within the Department of Commerce to facilitate access to federal grant funding for communities. A cornerstone of Representative Barnard's 2024 economic development efforts was the promotion of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), including securing a pivotal allocation of \$25 million in the state's Supplemental Capital budget. As a member of the Capital Budget Committee, Rep. Barnard understands how capital investments can help create and catalyze thousands of jobs, particularly construction jobs. We also honor her unique ability to work across the aisle collegially, and get important things done for our whole state.

2025 WEDA award winners recognized for outstanding achievement in Economic Development include:

2025 EMERGING PROFESSIONAL IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

James Davis

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.

The nomination for James Davis from his boss, Joe Morrison, Executive Director of the Kitsap Economic Development Alliance, shared that James, who has been a member of WEDA's Emerging Leaders group, has been at KEDA for just over two years. A few examples of James' many contributions at KEDA include:

- **Microbusiness Accelerator:** Just three months into his job—and now in its third year—James originated the concept of and secured funding for our Microbusiness Accelerator from the Washington State Microenterprise Association. This "MBA" is a community effort bringing together multiple stakeholders including training managed by a coworking space and entrepreneurship nonprofit (Vibe Coworks/Matchstick Labs) as well as our major area nonprofit and ventures-focused program (Kitsap Community Resources/BE\$T Program). Once this year's "MBA" cohorts are complete, it will have directly

trained 48 entrepreneurs across three years, and impacted hundreds more through talks open to the community;

- **APEX Management:** Part of James’ work at KEDA involves managing the APEX Accelerator. This is no easy feat, as it relates to the highly specific domain expertise of government contracting (particularly federal and DoD-based). With no prior experience in this realm, James took over management of KEDA’s APEX program, launching a second monthly meeting called “Prime Connect” where subcontractors gain exposure to national government primes. James also obtained increased funding for our APEX program which enabled KEDA to hire a second part-time APEX counselor, increasing performance.
- **Obtaining Multiple Grants:** James was key to obtaining two grants KEDA received in the last 18 months, including an Evergreen Manufacturing Grant (\$200,000, which flowed through to local boat builder Inventech Marine for construction of their new 60,000 square foot facility); two grant writer awards in 2023 and 2024 (totaling \$64,517 in aggregate); and most recently, a PSE Powerful Partnerships Grant (\$12,500).

“In addition to all the above, James regularly manages KEDA’s recruitment efforts, addresses power availability concerns related to real estate, runs point on challenges South Kitsap small businesses are having with permitting issues—and so much more. James approaches every challenge with a calm, cool demeanor and no-stress approach, and is regularly thinking up new opportunities with regard to grants or efforts at KEDA that can deploy to increase economic opportunity. James is dedicating his career to economic development, and will sit for his CECD designation later this year,” said Joe Morrison, Executive Director of the Kitsap Economic Development Alliance.

2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Bilan Aden

This award recognizes a person or group of people 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.

This year, the WEDA Awards Committee selected Bilan Aden, Vice President of African Community Housing & Development (ACHD) as the Economic Development Advocate of the Year. In the nomination of Bilan for this award, she is described as a “Visionary Leader and Relentless Advocate for Community Empowerment.” The nomination goes on to say, “Few individuals embody the spirit of advocacy and service as wholly as Bilan . . . Through her unwavering dedication to economic mobility, housing security and small business growth, Bilan has transformed ACHD into a powerful force for community-driven change, serving the African Diaspora in King County and beyond.”

- **A Vision Born from Community Needs:** Bilan’s advocacy is grounded in her deep understanding of community needs. ACHD was created in response to a call for long-term economic development and generational wealth building. Under her leadership, ACHD not only provided emergency support during crises like COVID-19 but also established sustainable initiatives promoting self-sufficiency. During the pandemic, Bilan led ACHD in distributing over \$38 million in rental assistance to keep families housed. Her vision extends beyond crisis response, aiming to redefine economic empowerment for immigrant and refugee communities.
- **Transforming Challenges into Lasting Opportunities:** Bilan’s work has reshaped how ACHD supports small businesses, housing accessibility and food security. She played a pivotal role in launching ACHD’s Small Business Program, which now provides capacity building, technical assistance, micro-loans and grants to over 150 small businesses.

- **An Advocate Who Leads With Heart:** Despite her achievements, Bilan remains community-focused and mission-driven. She has never sought recognition; her leadership is centered on serving others. Her advocacy goes beyond policies and programs—it's about empowering individuals, strengthening families, and creating pathways for economic mobility. She believes in community-led solutions that reflect the lived experiences of those they serve, ensuring ACHD's impact lasts for generations.

“Bilan Aden is more than a leader—she is a fierce advocate for equity, opportunity and justice. She has spent her career breaking barriers, building bridges, and transforming challenges into opportunities for the communities she serves. Her work at ACHD has directly impacted thousands of families, small businesses and aspiring homeowners, ensuring that they have the tools and resources needed to thrive. Through vision, resilience and an unwavering commitment to service, Bilan embodies what it means to be an Advocate of the Year. Her leadership is shaping a brighter, more inclusive and sustainable future, proving that true advocacy is not about seeking power but about uplifting others and creating lasting change,” said Lauren Rosenthal, Communications Manager with African Community Housing & Development who nominated Bilan.

2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR – BUSINESS RECRUITMENT Project High Rock (Summit Truck Body)

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.

The winner of the Economic Development Project of the Year – Business Recruitment award this year is Project High Rock - Summit Truck Body, a project of the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC). Summit Truck Body is a successful manufacturing company that completed their company relocation and expansion into a new 74,000-square foot manufacturing facility and attached headquarters offices that sit on 10-acres of land, in Ridgefield, WA in September 2024. An Employee-Owned company, Summit Truck Body focuses on innovative engineering design to build customized truck bodies with the highest possible uniformity and quality for the specific needs of their customers including dry freight, refrigerated, curtain-side, flatbed, cutaway, and fiberglass reinforced plywood.

The company has seen significant sustained growth over the past five years. According to Jeff Blater, Director of Operations, “Providing a modern headquarters and office for our manufacturing team is a key objective with this new facility in order to continue attracting the best team members who are the cornerstone of our continued success,”

This project began during the COVID-19 pandemic; the land purchase in mid-2021, construction start in January 2023 through to the grand opening in September of 2024. “We persevered through challenges with wetlands, slope and escalating construction costs to make the project a reality.”

CREDC supported Summit in navigating permitting, business licensing and manufacturing machinery and equipment sale tax incentives throughout the project. Summit will add 60 new employees in addition to the 45 current employees that will be transferring from Oregon to the new facility.

2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR – BUSINESS RETENTION/EXPANSION Booz Allen Hamilton – Bremerton Maritime Technology Facility

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.

This year, WEDA awarded two Economic Development Project of the Year – Business Retention/Expansion awards due to the excellent caliber of both nominations.

In October 2024, Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH) opened the Bremerton Maritime Technology Facility in Bremerton, Washington. This initiative has significantly enhanced the local economy and advanced the region's maritime technology landscape. This facility is a testament to BAH's commitment to innovation, workforce development, and community engagement, making it a prime candidate for recognition as a leading business association member, under the leadership of Eric Billies.

The Bremerton Maritime Technology Facility serves as a center of excellence for maritime technology, specializing in unmanned and autonomous vehicle systems, immersive engineering, and rapid integration capabilities. Strategically located in Bremerton to support defense clients addressing emerging threats in the Indo-Pacific region, the 2,200-square-foot facility created 50 new local jobs, offering high-tech opportunities that align with Kitsap County's core defense and technology industries.

From an economic development perspective, the facility:

- Diversifies the local economy by introducing high-tech maritime technology jobs, reducing reliance on traditional sectors like shipbuilding and defense logistics.
- Attracts new investments to Kitsap County, reinforcing the area's role as a hub for defense-related high-tech industries.
- Enjoys the strong backing of the Kitsap Economic Development Alliance (KEDA) community, which recognizes the facility as a pivotal contributor to the region's economic vitality.

2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR – BUSINESS RETENTION/EXPANSION ATI Specialty Metals Expansion, Richland Campus - City of Richland

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.

ATI was commissioned in 1998 as the world's largest electron beam cold hearth furnace, and their Richland operations specialize in melting titanium and titanium alloys to meet customer demands in aerospace, defense and industrial markets. In 2021, the company reached out to TRIDEC, the region's Associate Development Organization, about a competitive expansion project they were working on to double the size of their current facility - a project valued at over \$111M that would bring on 100 new living wage jobs. The project was looking at other states and regions for their expansion and leaning heavily toward the two states where they currently had facilities, North Carolina and Washington. The company currently owned additional land for future expansion that they were farming at the time.

TRIDEC and the City worked hard to compete with North Carolina in what they had offered ATI to entice the expansion in their state. The deal was off by \$4.9M in value. After reviewing the incentives available, power rates, property tax rates and all the tools in our chest, the City couldn't compete. City leadership and the

Council at the time were very forward-thinking and approved a proposal from staff for the establishment of a Targeted Urban Area Tax Exemption (TUA). Standing up a new program of this nature, to abate property tax for 10 years on manufacturing uses, involved a lot of steps and stakeholders but also the patience for the development.

In the end, the City was successful in bridging a large portion of the gap with \$3.7M in funding through the TUA exemption, lower property taxes and power rates; as well as a readily available workforce and a prosperous 25-year relationship with the company that led to a successful announcement of expansion to their Richland facility. This expansion was critical to the increased demand from industry for ATI and was even more critical to the diversification of our workforce, and desire for build-out in our industrial park to meet the needs and intention of the property acquisition from the Atomic Energy Commission in the 1950s.

2025 INNOVATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD

Trades District Project – Business Incubator, Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority

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.

This year, WEDA awarded two Innovation in Economic Development awards due to the excellent caliber of both nominations.

The Trades District is a pioneering economic development initiative that reimagines how communities cultivate business growth, entrepreneurship and long-term economic sustainability. The project features 12 incubator spaces ranging from 1,584 to 2,175 square feet, designed to support a diverse mix of trade-based, retail and service businesses. Rather than relying on a single large-scale business recruitment effort, the Trades District provides flexible, high-quality and affordable space to help businesses launch, expand, and attract investment.

A key factor in the project’s success is its strong partnerships with organizations like the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Hispanic Business Council. These collaborations ensure that entrepreneurs—especially those from historically underserved communities—receive the mentorship, resources and guidance they need to navigate the challenges of business ownership. By combining infrastructure investment with hands-on business support, the Trades District is fostering a thriving and inclusive business ecosystem.

“The Trades District is more than just a collection of buildings—it’s a launching pad for entrepreneurs, a catalyst for local business growth and a long-term investment in the economic vitality of our region,” said Brooke Lammert, Economic Development Specialist at the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority. “We are honored to receive this recognition from WEDA and proud to support small businesses with the space, resources and partnerships they need to succeed.”

2025 INNOVATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD

Clallam Forest Product Innovation Program, Clallam County Economic Development Council

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.

The U.S. Department of Commerce, through EDA, has awarded a \$4.2 million grant to the Clallam County Economic Development Council in Port Angeles, Washington, to support the Clallam Forest Product Innovation Program at the Natural Resources Innovation Center (NRIC). This funding aims to revitalize the local forest products industry, generating new economic opportunities throughout the North Olympic Peninsula. Paired with over \$1 million in local matching funds, the grant will fund several important initiatives, including the redevelopment of the Forks Industrial Park, the establishment of a forestry workforce development program, expanding barging to and from the Peninsula, and efforts to expand forest products manufacturing and the biomass economy. The local partners which contributed to funding include Clallam County government, Oregon State University, Port of Port Angeles, Clallam County EDC, Composite Recycling Technology Center (CRTC), Peninsula College, University of Washington’s Olympic Natural Resources Center, and the City of Forks.

The Composite Recycling Technology Center will develop a mass timber housing solution for the Tribal housing market, using wood sourced from the Makah Tribe. The initiative will assess the feasibility of producing plywood and Oriented Strand Board with advanced vapor and rain barrier technologies to meet Washington state's energy codes, with plans to transport these materials to the California building market. Additionally, the project will test a publicly owned kiln to support three manufacturers in Port Angeles, creating jobs and boosting local production.

Other elements of the Clallam Forest Product Innovation Program include exploring industrial symbiosis opportunities among local forest product industries and developing barging infrastructure at the Port of Port Angeles to unlock both economic and environmental benefits.

“These projects will lay the foundation for innovation and long-term sustainability driven by private sector leaders on the Olympic Peninsula,” said Colleen McAleer, Executive Director, Clallam Economic Development Council.

2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Spokane Inclusive Business Catalyst, Greater Spokane Inc.

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.

Greater Spokane Incorporated (GSI)’s Spokane Inclusive Business Catalyst (SIBC) is a transformative initiative designed to bridge systemic gaps in economic opportunity for underserved entrepreneurs. Since its inception in 2023, SIBC has provided diverse small business owners with the tools, resources, and networks necessary to grow and sustain their enterprises. SIBC is a business accelerator program tailored specifically for historically marginalized entrepreneurs who face barriers to business growth. The program operates in partnership with

trusted community organizations that have deep relationships with Spokane’s underserved business communities. In 2023, AHANA was the first trusted community organization GSI connected with.

Through AHANA’s leadership and partnership with GSI, the SIBC program came to life. In 2024, GSI graduated three cohorts of the SIBC, in collaboration with AHANA, SNAP Financial Access Women’s Business Center, and Aim & Build Consulting & Development. These three cohorts consisted of 23 entrepreneurs, each receiving a \$5,000 matching grant from GSI, totaling \$115,000 in direct investment. SIBC is structured as an intensive four-to-five week program, covering critical topics such as financial management, marketing, business operations, accounting, strategic planning and more. Each session is led by experts that address the unique challenges faced by underserved businesses. Beyond financial support and classroom instruction, SIBC fosters an ecosystem of collaboration and mentorship through the community partner organizations, ensuring long-term success for its participants. The impact of SIBC is already evident. Graduates are experiencing, on average, 70% revenue growth after year one. Many have successfully leveraged their accelerator experience to position themselves for long-term growth. This program stands out as a replicable, scalable model for inclusive economic development. By prioritizing equity and inclusion at every level, SIBC is strengthening the economic landscape of Spokane.

“This recognition from WEDA affirms the importance of supporting inclusive economic opportunities for all entrepreneurs in our community,” said Joey Gunning, GSI’s Strategic Growth Manager. “The Spokane Inclusive Business Catalyst is not just a program—it’s a movement that is transforming the business landscape in Spokane by ensuring that historically underserved entrepreneurs have access to the resources and mentorship they need to thrive. We’re proud to work with our SIBC community partners on this.”

“We are thrilled to celebrate SIBC’s recognition with the WEDA Economic Development Award for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. This honor reflects SIBC’s unwavering commitment to fostering inclusive business environments. As partners, we are proud to collaborate with GSI in empowering multi-ethnic and multicultural businesses,” said Marvo Reguindin, Executive Director of AHANA.

2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD FOR ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY

Southwest Washington Food Hub

This award recognizes economic development organizations/entities/individuals that have made innovative efforts to support economic response and recovery, whether it is a natural disaster recovery, a flood, fire or other significant disaster or perhaps a significant public safety crisis. WEDA will recognize innovative programs, projects and partnerships that are pioneering, groundbreaking and/or novel.

The SW Washington Food Hub provides product aggregation, distribution and market development services to over 30 independent Washington State agricultural producers, within six counties. While the Hub now operates as part of the farmer-owned SW WA Growers Cooperative, the Thurston Economic Development Council, Thurston County WSU Extension, and Northwest Agricultural Business Center provided essential assistance in the formation of the Hub and continue to provide technical and staffing assistance.

The Hub was created in the summer of 2020 as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Regional farmers were in need of new markets after experiencing the sudden loss of vital markets such as restaurants, cafeterias and farmers’ markets. The first program launched by the Hub provided weekly boxes of produce from local farms to out-of-work families, developing a new distribution network over five counties.

“We are honored to be recognized by WEDA as an impactful economic response and recovery program! It was our goal of creating a food system that could be positively impactful on several fronts. The first was to ensure that families and community members had access to quality and consistent food supplies to support them. The

second was to create a mechanism whereby the local ag producers/farmers had assurances of a market that would enable their future operations – supports agriculture sustainability. And the third was to have a regional program that supported more than one community and thereby creating a local food supply chain that supports the region. Today, all three of our economic development and community development goals are being met,” said Tina Sharp, SW WA Food Hub.

Throughout the pandemic, the Hub continued these emergency response efforts, adding service to local food banks, senior & community centers, and social service non-profits, as well as partnering with its workforce development council to utilize the Hub as an ongoing vocational training site for warehouse workers, drivers, and management occupations. While the Hub started out as an economic response and recovery program to help develop new markets for its member farms during a time of crisis, since that time the Hub has continued to innovate, expanding into new markets each year. While sustaining a base market that is consistent year after year and thus providing assurances of consistent markets that allow the farmers to plan, plant, and harvest towards, the Hub also continues to add additional opportunities, growing new revenue streams for its member businesses. In this way, the Hub has been able to support and retain employment in the food production sector, which represents a significant component of the region’s economy, and is one of the top five economic sectors in the Pacific Mountain Workforce region.

One example of the Hub’s innovative market development is its farm to school initiative, which directly supplies school children with the freshest local produce, meats and value-added products, directly from local producers. In 2024, across nine school districts, 11,855 school children accessed fresh produce through the Hub (an estimated 50% of which were at-risk youth who participated in the WA State Free or Reduced Lunch program).

2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD FOR ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY Port of Kennewick Revitalizing Kennewick’s Historic Waterfront

This award recognizes economic development organizations/entities/individuals that have made innovative efforts to support economic response and recovery, whether it is ongoing COVID-19 recovery, a flood, fire or other significant disaster or perhaps a significant public safety crisis. WEDA will recognize innovative programs, projects and partnerships that are pioneering, groundbreaking and/or novel.

When the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed McNary Dam in 1954, slack water pooled behind that structure reducing Clover Island from 160-acres to just 16-acres above the waterline. Barge-building ceased, tall levees restricted river access, and the community’s focus shifted away from its historic downtown. As a result, Kennewick’s waterfront became a tired, distressed area. Port of Kennewick masterplans completed in 2005 and 2021, identified the public’s sustained desire for the Columbia River; for ecosystem restoration, recreation, and economic development.

City of Kennewick designated the neighborhood as a Redevelopment Strategy Area in 2005, and it was federally designated as an Underserved Community Opportunity Zone in 2018. The area is also considered disadvantaged because it meets one burden threshold and the associated socioeconomic threshold. It is also considered a highly impacted community as defined by the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map AND as defined by the Justice40 Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool. Those tools, which evaluate environmental and socioeconomic health risk factors in communities, rank the area high (9 out of 10) indicating that environmental restoration and business and commercial opportunities are significantly important.

To revitalize the area, Port of Kennewick worked with many partners (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, USACE, WA State, Benton County, and City of Kennewick) to transform its Clover Island and

Columbia Drive properties, both located on the Columbia River, by redefining that area as a tourism destination. The port made a significant effort to gain the CTUIR's perspective before any plans were drawn up, and they provided four letters of support for waterfront improvements. The partners' collaborative efforts transformed an eroding, concrete-covered shoreline into stable, sustainable habitat with vibrant upland development, public artwork, a working lighthouse, and recreational amenities. They also removed environmental concerns and created the Columbia Gardens Wine & Artisan Village, added waterfront pathways for expanded public access, constructed a winery-wastewater treatment facility, and created opportunities for commercial and retail businesses. Because of these improvements a restaurant, Ice Harbor Brewing at the Marina expanded to Clover Island, two commercial businesses opened offices, and a tired waterfront hotel changed ownership in 2024, and is now renovating to become a Hilton-branded property.

Said President, Skip Novakovich, Port of Kennewick Board of Commissioners, "We spent many years working to transform the east Kennewick waterfront. We listened to residents and businesses. We engaged the Tribes. We developed community-driven master plans. We sought out partners, and grant funding—all to revitalize a once-vibrant part of town. We created a living shoreline. We restored public access. We increased tourism spending. And we brought new businesses and jobs to our historic waterfront district."

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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.