

Cityvision

THE ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON CITIES MAGAZINE

VIRTUAL HARVEST

Navigating the rewards and risks
of technological change



WINTER 2022
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CITYVISION MAGAZINE VOL. 13 / NO. 4

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Some of you holding this copy of *Cityvision* might be wondering why we're spending a whole issue looking at technology. City leaders don't necessarily need to know everything about technology. After all, we're elected to be experts on our communities, our constituents, and the needs of our cities. So where does tech come in?

The fact is, changes in technology cause changes in our communities, for better and for worse. Those changes affect the way we connect and communicate with each other, how we travel, how we shop, and many other aspects of our communal lives. Understanding those changing dynamics can help us better understand the present and anticipate the future. In my view, I see cybersecurity, broadband for rural and underserved communities, and the appropriate provisioning of online city services to citizens and businesses as key technology challenges for us.

Over six years ago, when the White House launched the Smart Cities initiative, it was born of the recognition that communities could improve the lives of their residents by improving the collection and interpretation of data. Seattle was part of the Smart Cities initiative from the beginning, partnering with the University of Washington to better understand and innovate

in the areas of communications, public safety, climate resilience, and beyond. Since that time, the initial federal initiative's public profile may have dimmed, but its key goals and insights have been adopted and adapted by numerous other nonprofit and for-profit organizations: ideas, tools, and awards for "smart cities" abound worldwide.

This issue offers stories and advice pertinent to what cities in Washington are facing today. You'll learn how some communities are using technology as a tool for economic development as well as what we all need to do to protect ourselves from cyber threats. My hope is that these stories will help us all as we serve our cities and towns across the state.

Kent Keel

Councilmember, University Place



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Cityvision

Winter 2022



▶
Jenny Rojanasthien of
the Wenatchee Valley's
NCW Tech Alliance

**CULTIVATING
TECHNOLOGY,**

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Citybeat

Tech Effluencers

Snoqualmie's upgraded water reclamation facility is a win-win winner.

PROBABLY THE ONLY THING worse than an aging sewage treatment plant is an aging sewage treatment plant that catches fire.

That's what happened in 2015 in the sludge-drying facility at the City of Snoqualmie's water reclamation facility (WRF), where biosolids from wastewater are treated and processed into salable compost. On the bright side, the fire sparked a \$12.8 million renovation to the facility that won a 2021 Environmental Best Practices Award from the Washington state chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA).

"We had antiquated technology," says Snoqualmie public works project engineer Jeff Hamlin, who notes that the system wasn't robust enough to keep up with the city's triple-digit growth.

"Starting back in the late '90s, we were a city of about 1,500 people. Now we're a city of almost 15,000. So in 20 years or thereabouts, we've essentially grown an order of magnitude."

All that growth translated into a whole lot of wastewater that needed processing, overloading a system that was straining the city's budget.

"The old system would essentially run [the sludge] through these gas dryers, which were not very efficient, using enormous amounts of gas, lots of water for cleanup, lots of electricity," says Hamlin. "You can think of

CONTINUED ON P.12 ▶



Access Supplied

Stymied by private providers, Anacortes builds broadband of its own.

BY LAURA FURR MERICAS

EIGHT YEARS AGO, when Anacortes residents were asked what they wanted most from their city, the response was almost universal: broadband internet service.

“We thought it was going to be as simple as talking to the incumbent [providers] and saying, ‘Please invest resources in our community to help provide your customers better internet offerings,’” says the city’s administrative services director, Emily Schuh. But due to Anacortes’s small size (population: 17,000) and its location (on Fidalgo Island), the incumbent providers declined.

So Anacortes became an internet service provider itself. The city built its own high-speed fiber-optic network, installing its first customer in March 2020; now Access, the city’s municipality-owned broadband network, serves around 1,000 residents and businesses in three pilot areas, offering high-speed internet access (with symmetrical upload and download speeds

from 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps) for between \$39 and \$149 a month. With 40 percent of all internet users in the pilot project area subscribing to the service—netting upward of \$58,000 in revenue each month—the city has begun to expand its fiber network with the goal to be in every neighborhood so that potential users throughout the entire city can sign up.

“Initially, we thought that it was a valuable offering to our hospitals, to our teachers and students, to people who are teleworking, and then Covid hit all these years later,” Schuh explains, noting that the service has also helped bring new business to the Port of Anacortes. “It became more of an everyday conversation. We really view broadband as essential infrastructure. It’s not an extra anymore.”

The city dived headfirst into the internet waters in 2017, when Anacortes contracted Northwest Open Access Network (NOANet) to engineer the fiber backbone

that would support a city-owned broadband network. Then it developed a unique business plan and financial model that would allow the city to build, own, and operate Access as its own ISP, requiring an investment of \$13 million over five years.

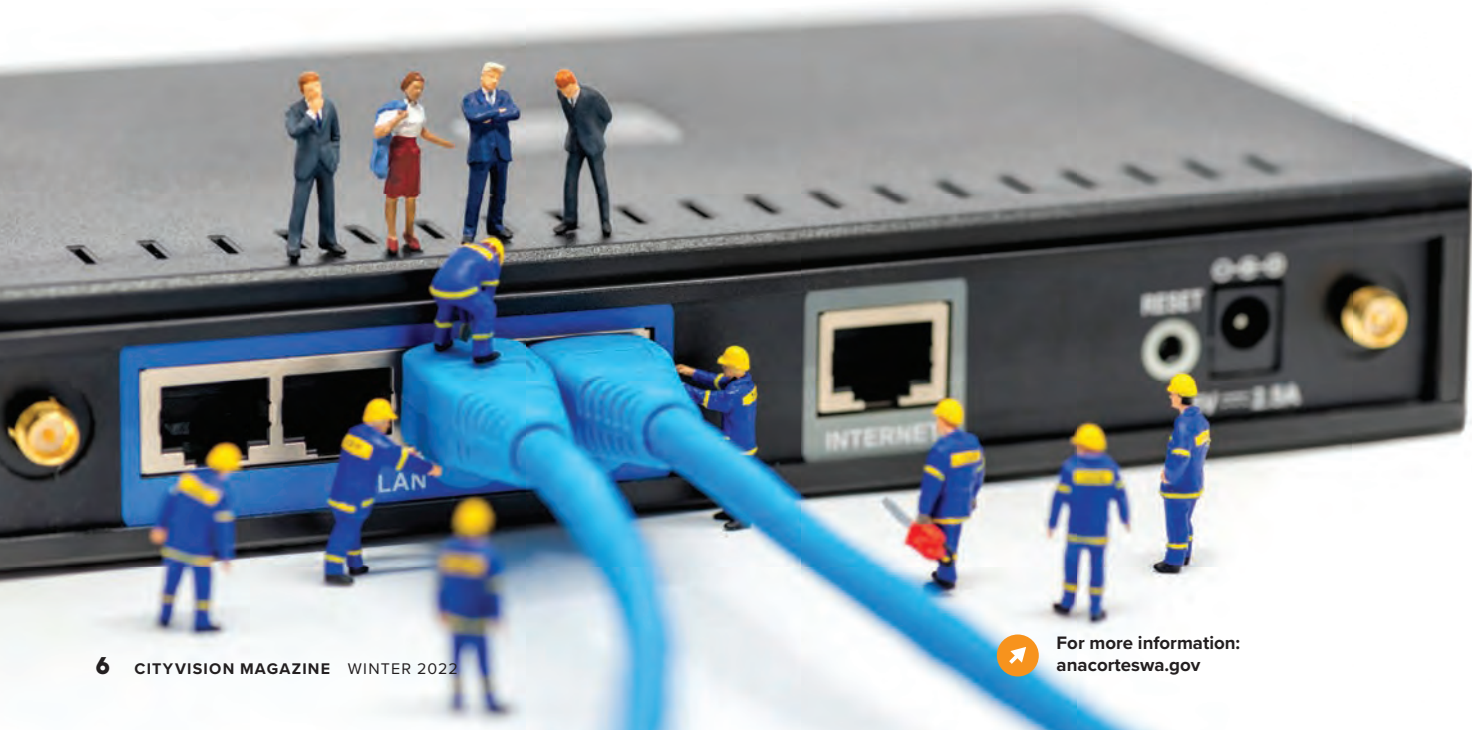
“Building a fiber network or creating an internet service provider can’t be just a good idea from an employee; you really need the champion to be your elected officials,” Schuh says. “Having the buy-in from our mayor and councilmembers really helps to provide the kind of long-term support for overcoming hurdles.”

The biggest hurdle that Schuh and Access’s team of 10 currently face is that they can’t get Access into homes fast

“WE REALLY VIEW BROADBAND AS ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE. IT’S NOT AN EXTRA ANYMORE.”

enough—1,500 residents who have signed up for the service are still waiting for the fiber expansion to arrive in their neighborhoods. And the feedback from those currently online with Access mostly has been positive.

“Our customers love to work with a provider who knows their neighborhood,” Schuh says. “We check in after we’ve put a customer in service, and people really like the ability to talk to somebody local.”



APPLE SEEDS

The recent Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act promises substantial funding for renewal and revival in Washington state.

The numbers below reflect White House estimates of the Evergreen State's share of total allocations.

\$4.7B

FOR HIGHWAYS

\$1.79B

TO IMPROVE PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

\$882M

TO IMPROVE WATER
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENSURE
CLEAN, SAFE DRINKING WATER

\$605M

FOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND REPAIRS

\$100M+

TO HELP PROVIDE BROADBAND
COVERAGE ACROSS THE STATE TO AT
LEAST 241,000 WASHINGTONIANS

\$18M

TO PROTECT AGAINST CYBERATTACKS

\$71M

TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION
OF AN ELECTRICAL VEHICLE (EV)
CHARGING NETWORK

\$385M

FOR AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

\$39M

TO PROTECT AGAINST WILDFIRES

Source: whitehouse.gov

SLICE
OF LIFE

SEEK, AND YE SHALL FUND

How federal pandemic recovery aid is helping cities expand parks and rec programming

BY LAURA FURR MERICAS

OVER THE SUMMER, tapping into the state's \$4.4 billion American Rescue Plan Act allocation, the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) partnered with the Washington Recreation & Park Association (WRPA) and AWC to create a \$12 million grant program for local parks and recreation initiatives designed to help youth (ages 4 to 21) reengage with nature—and each other.

“A lot of kids missed the school year again; they missed out on the opportunities to interact with other kids,” says AWC's Jacob Ewing, a legislative and policy analyst who worked closely with the OSPI on the project. “With parks and rec programs and the ability to get kids outside, it gives them a chance to be kids again.”


Since June 2021, the program (Summer Experiences and Enrichment for Kids, or SEEK) has disbursed \$2 million to fund 32 municipal parks and rec initiatives, from Anderson Island (purchasing kayaks and life jackets for kids to use paddling around a community that's only reachable by ferry) to Seattle (creating career exploration programs for high schoolers who had been cut off from traditional counseling resources). Smaller cities without official parks and rec departments, like DuPont, used SEEK funding to partner with outside providers like the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA or hire part-time staff to introduce more outdoor programming. Bainbridge Island used \$3,400 in SEEK funding to purchase two e-bikes that have been added to the Metro Park & Recreation District's Gearbank, a public repository of outdoor gear that includes everything from tents and backpacks to mountain bikes and all-terrain wheelchairs, available to locals and visitors for a small rental fee.

“Bainbridge is a small island, and most folks come thinking navigation by bike will be pleasant and easy,” says Sue Barrington, the Active Adult and Arts & Culture Manager for Bainbridge Island. “Because of our very hilly terrain, they quickly find out this is not the case.”

As do island kids, who Barrington hopes will be enticed to take an electric-assisted spin uphill for the first time on the Gearbank's new e-bikes.

“[Bainbridge Island] was able to quickly start up programs and use these dollars to benefit the youth and kids in their area,” says Ewing. “They got the electric bikes to help make things more inclusive and to make recreation accessible to kids.”

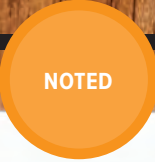
Bainbridge is one of 144 parks and rec programs that have submitted applications for \$10 million in SEEK funding that will be awarded in 2022, requesting support for a local marketing campaign that will promote the use of its new SEEK-funded e-bikes and all of the city's Gearbank amenities.

“It's finding ways to engage underserved communities in different ways,” adds Ewing. “The trend I'm seeing is that people are looking for new and innovative ways to connect with members of the community that they might not traditionally have reached.” 



For more information:
wrpatoday.org/seek-fund-details

WINTER 2022 CITYVISION MAGAZINE 7



HOME RULE AUTHORITY

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

ARTICLE XI—COUNTY, CITY, AND TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATION

SECTION 11 POLICE AND SANITARY REGULATIONS. Any county, city, town or township may make and enforce within its limits all such local police, sanitary and other regulations as are not in conflict with general laws.

The first Legislature drafted state statutes creating classes of cities, which provided all cities authority to pass laws for the general welfare of their residents—as long as they didn't conflict with state law, called "preemption."

This is a direct grant of home rule authority that exists without the need for state legislation or permission to implement. "Home rule" is the right to govern locally on issues of local concern.

REVISED CODE OF WASHINGTON

TITLE 35—CITIES AND TOWNS

TITLE 35A—OPTIONAL MUNICIPAL CODE

RCW 35A.01.010

Purpose and policy of this title—**Interpretation.**

The purpose and policy of this title is to confer upon two optional classes of cities created hereby the broadest powers of local self-government consistent with the Constitution of this state. Any specific enumeration of municipal powers contained in this title or in any other general law shall not be construed in any way to limit the general description of power contained in this title, and any such specifically enumerated powers shall be construed as in addition and supplementary to the powers conferred in general terms by this title. All grants of municipal power to municipalities electing to be governed under the provisions of this title, whether the grant is in specific terms or in general terms, shall be liberally construed in favor of the municipality.

For more on the history of how the courts have interpreted home rule in Washington, check out "Home Rule" vs. "Dillon's Rule" for Washington Cities" by Hugh Spitzer (Seattle University Law Review, 2015).

Despite the home rule powers granted by the state constitution and statute, these powers weren't always recognized by Washington's Supreme Court. In 1967, the Legislature acted to clarify this authority by passing the Optional Municipal Code.

RCW 35A.11.020

Powers vested in legislative bodies of noncharter and charter code cities.

The legislative body of each code city shall have power to organize and regulate its internal affairs within the provisions of this title and its charter ...

[...] Such body may adopt and enforce ordinances of all kinds relating to and regulating its local or municipal affairs and appropriate to the good government of the city ...

[...] The legislative body of each code city shall have all powers possible for a city or town to have under the Constitution of this state, and not specifically denied to code cities by law.

In addition, and not in limitation, the legislative body of each code city shall have any authority ever given to any class of municipality or to all municipalities of this state before or after the enactment of this title, such authority to be exercised in the manner provided, if any, by the granting statute, when not in conflict with this title.

Within constitutional limitations, legislative bodies of code cities shall have within their territorial limits all powers of taxation for local purposes except those which are expressly preempted by the state as provided in RCW 66.08.120, *82.36.440, 48.14.020, and 48.14.080.

This sentence was a direct message to the courts that because, arguably, these powers already existed, it was not the Legislature's intent to limit home rule authority by specifically listing areas to exercise that power.

To read more about the power of local decision-making, check out AWC's report at wacities.org. You have it, use it: Home Rule in Washington.

Passed two years before the Optional Municipal Code, RCW 35.22.570 also gave first-class charter cities all of the powers granted to all classes of cities, including code cities when they became law.





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2022 City Legislative Priorities

Cities are home to **65%** of the state's residents, drive the economy, and provide the most accessible government. The continued success of cities depends on adequate resources and local decision-making to best meet the needs of our shared residents.

Washington's 281 cities ask the Legislature to partner with cities and take action on the following priorities—because strong cities make a great state.



Ensure basic infrastructure funding

Provide flexible state and federal dollars through programs like the Public Works Assistance Account to help cities finance basic infrastructure such as drinking water and wastewater.

Basic infrastructure is the key to our robust state economy and protecting our environment. Nearly **\$900 million** in local infrastructure projects are currently halted due to lack of funding. State investment in local infrastructure is critical to ensuring reliable, equitable, safe, and affordable service to support our residents, businesses, and environment.



Pass a transportation package

Adopt a new transportation revenue package that emphasizes maintenance/preservation funding and provides an equitable level of local funding and additional long-term, sustainable revenue options for cities.

City streets accommodate **26%** of all vehicle miles traveled and cities are responsible for many aspects of the transportation system beyond local streets. This includes sidewalks, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, some aspects of state highways, stormwater infrastructure, and other utilities. Cities largely fund these needs locally with only **13%** of funding coming from the state and **8%** from federal sources. Pass a statewide transportation package that addresses local transportation needs to keep our state moving.



Protect Transportation Benefit District funding authority

Support expanded local authority for Transportation Benefit Districts (TBDs) so cities can continue using the sales tax funding tool beyond the current time limitations.

Cities largely fund their transportation systems locally. In fact, **79%** of funding comes from local sources, such as Transportation Benefit Districts. TBDs are a crucial funding tool for critical transportation needs. TBD revenue authority must continue as a sustainable funding source for ongoing transportation needs.

AWC's advocacy is guided by the following core principles from our Statement of Policy:

- Local decision-making authority
- Fiscal flexibility and sustainability
- Equal standing for cities
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Strong Washington state partnerships
- Nonpartisan analysis and decision-making

Contact: **Candice Bock**
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THE
QUESTIONWHAT IS A TECHNOLOGY THAT YOUR CITY
ONCE USED, BUT NO LONGER DOES?

I have been on council since 2006. One technological change that I've seen is the ability to read water meters by radio instead of relying on meter readers checking each one in person.

—NEIL JOHNSON
Mayor, Bonney Lake



Back in 1997, our city council meetings used analog overhead projectors with transparencies. That technology has been replaced with digital projectors and PowerPoint slides.

—JOE MARINE
Councilmember, Mukilteo



If you were a secretary in the 1970s, you learned to type on a manual typewriter. You thought life was great when you received an electric typewriter. A few years later, you felt blessed to use a word processor. After that, you thought the heavens were smiling upon you when computers arrived!

—CLARA R. JIMÉNEZ
Councilmember, Toppenish

TRAININGS

CITY ACTION DAYS

JANUARY 27 | ONLINE

There's no better way to engage in the legislative process than at City Action Days! Held annually during the legislative session, this popular event allows you the opportunity to interact with colleagues as you educate statewide decision-makers about city legislative priorities.

HEALTHY WORKSITE SUMMIT

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Citybeat

Tech Effluencers *continued from page 5*

a wastewater treatment facility kind of like a big digestive tract," he adds, explaining how the process uses bacteria swimming in aerobic oxidation ditches to consume and convert biosolids into a viscous byproduct that, after being treated and dried, yields literally tons of nontoxic, nutrient-rich biosolids.

After the 2015 fire, all that sludge, with nowhere to be processed, ended up in the landfill at a cost of \$26,000 a month, underscoring a need to rebuild better, as quickly as possible. In phase one of the project, completed in 2017, the city worked with RH2 Engineering to upgrade the WRF's ultraviolet


"IT'S ANOTHER REVENUE GENERATOR WE SELL AT A DEEP DISCOUNT, OBVIOUSLY, BUT YOU KNOW, THAT GOLF COURSE WOULD DIE WITHOUT IT."

disinfection, backup power, and industrial control systems. The award-winning phase two included the construction of modern aerobic digesters, an aeration system, a state-of-the-art biosolids processing plant, and an operations and control center

with 3,400 square feet of office space for staff with a flexible configuration for future growth. To manage the more ambitious second phase, RH2 relied on biweekly meetings with city engineers and contractor Prospect Construction, as well as a digital file-sharing system, to tweak the design and keep the project on track.

Completed on schedule in April 2020, Snoqualmie's v.2 WRF, the largest construction project in the city's history, is projected to save \$4.2 million in operating costs over the next decade via reductions in staffing and in the consumption of energy and natural resources. Not to mention hauling costs, which dropped from \$26,000 to \$4,500 a month once the plant went online; as well, treated water that doesn't recharge the Snoqualmie River is diverted to irrigation clients (like the Golf Club at Snoqualmie Ridge, home of the Boeing Classic) for a small fee that helps offset operating costs.

"It's another revenue generator we sell at a deep discount, obviously, but you know, that golf course would die without it," says Hamlin. Those living downwind from the facility also appreciate another perk: Thanks to enclosed biofilters that process ripe off-gassing from the plant's digesters, the city's wastewater treatment process is now odorless. And then there's the ultimate bottom line.

"We appreciate the hard work of the engineers, contractors, and city staff who collaborated on this award-winning project," says Matt Larson, Snoqualmie's mayor. "Its innovative design, cost savings, and environmental best practices will benefit our residents for years to come." 

—Emily Alhadef



For more information:
snoqualmie.gov

Mark your calendars



5 great conferences

City Action Days
January 27, 2022

Healthy Worksite Summit
March 9-10, 2022

Labor Relations Institute
May 4-6, 2022

AWC Annual Conference
June 21-24, 2022

Member Expo
October 12-13, 2022



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Cityscope

Q&A

Virtual Reality

Fife Mayor Kim Roscoe on why counter service and face-to-face meetings still matter in an increasingly digital world

INTERVIEW BY EMILY ALHADEFF

Before you became mayor, you served on Fife's planning commission and city council. What attracted you to local government?

It goes back to when we moved into our house in the late 1990s. When we moved in, the land behind the house, which is now Dacca Park, was pumpkins and lettuce. The seller had indicated that it was zoned like green space. At one point I went into city hall just to ask, "What are the plans for that property?" A councilmember, Barry Johnson, was



Fife Mayor
Kim Roscoe

campaigning and came by my house and said, “Hey, there’s a position open on the planning commission.” So I think the funny way to put it is that I got into local government because of the lettuce and the pumpkins just beyond my backyard.

How has technology changed the way local government does business during your tenure, especially since the start of the pandemic and the onset of virtual council meetings?

Virtual meetings are a really nice thing to offer to residents. Some of the folks that show up to comment can do that from home—without having to get in the car and be somewhere at 6 o’clock and then potentially sit through an hour of our meeting to get to the place where they can either provide comments on a specific agenda item or just provide comments in general.

CONTINUED ON P.16 ▶

Q&A

Did any other technology come into play?

Toward the end of 2020, the city launched a new procurement program through [the city's bank] portal. The program allows employees and supervisors the ability to approve purchases online and in real time. It has reduced the costs and time spent paying for a variety of business-to-business goods and services, particularly during the pandemic. Our website's interactive voice response capability lets citizens make payments using their mobile devices. And during the Covid-19 closure, the community development department, in tandem with the finance department, implemented an online building permit submission and payment system called SmartGov.

What's one thing that hasn't changed?

Our previous city manager and our current interim city manager are still very focused on customer service at the counter. I don't think that the council ever wants to prohibit or discourage someone from coming to the counter. If we're making investments in the technology, we hope people utilize them, but we never want to be in a position where someone can only use the technology.

Do you have any tech-related concerns?

Virtual meetings are tricky... If we keep that as an option moving forward, we may see folks at our meetings that we wouldn't see normally. The fear for me is that folks

“THE FEAR FOR ME IS THAT FOLKS WILL START TO LOG ON WHO AREN'T ACTUALLY RESIDENTS AND WHO DON'T HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE CITY OF FIFE—WHO ARE LOOKING MORE FOR A STAGE TO STATE A PURPOSE.”

will start to log on who aren't actually residents and who don't have a vested interest in what's going on in the city of Fife—who are looking more for a stage to state a purpose.

Any basis for that concern?

We had a group take over one of our hotels for the homeless back in December 2020. There was a lot of social


media attention to that. It was frightening. When you have that online format available for folks, I do think people abuse it. There's a website where you can sign a petition for something going on in a city that you don't even understand. So that's my biggest fear around this part of technology, where we are opening ourselves up to allowing or welcoming or encouraging discourse from folks that don't have a vested interest as a business owner or a resident of the city of Fife.

So one challenge seems to be not letting the chatter of social media and the internet, which gives the whole world a voice, drown out the concerns of local residents.

As an elected official, we first answer to our voting public. Our neighboring jurisdictions and the country and the world, they

all matter. But this is local politics, nonpartisan elected city council officials. We can't have this huge scope creep on what we're responsible for and still get the job done of being responsible to our city.

What's something important that you've learned in your years in local government?

There are those folks that want to be in politics because they have strong beliefs, and they want to represent people that have strong beliefs. Then I think you have people that just are charismatic and have fulfillment in being in a leadership role and pulling folks together to make decisions. I would say that I'm more just about showing up and doing the work. I do think that government is of the people for the people. I didn't think I'd end up in politics, but now that I'm here, I'm going to do the job with value integrity and transparency. 



Fife Mayor Kim Roscoe

BY THE NUMBERS

Fife

Cityvision looks at how Fife strives to keep a human focus in an increasingly IT-defined world.

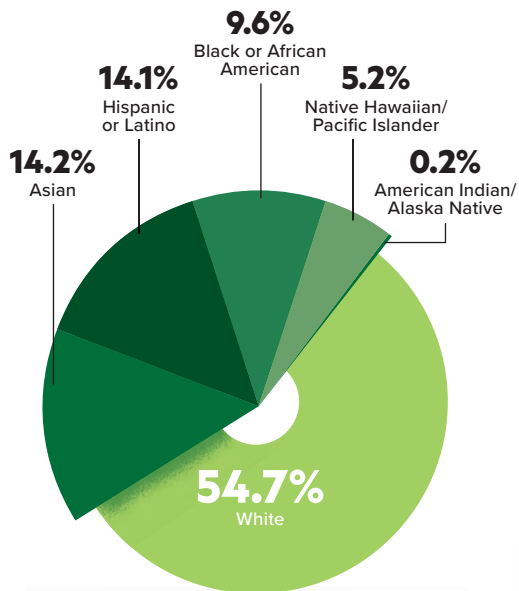
POPULATION

POPULATION DATA FROM THE 2010 US CENSUS, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED



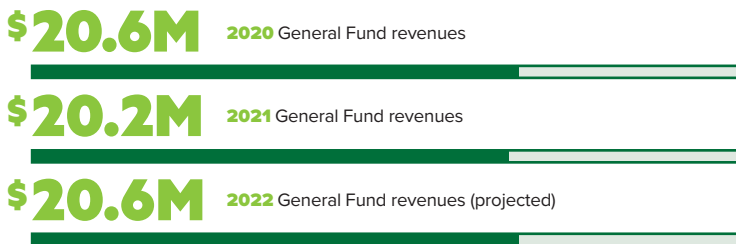
SOURCES: CENSUS.GOV

DEMOGRAPHICS



SOURCE: CENSUS.GOV

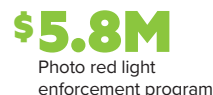
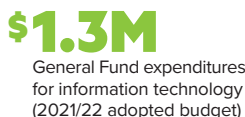
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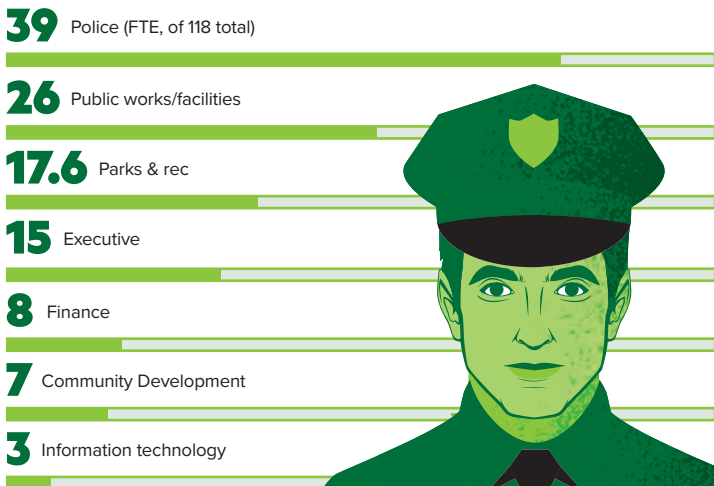
SOURCE: CITY OF FIFE

TECH CONTEXT

SOURCE: CITY OF FIFE



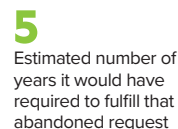
PEOPLE PORTIONS



SOURCE: CITY OF FIFE



BROKEN RECORDS



SOURCE: CITY OF FIFE



FROM BITCOIN MINING

to mealworm farming, cities in
the once-sleepy Wenatchee
Valley attract innovative
investment for future growth.

CULTIVATING

By Devon O'Neil

TECHNOLOGY

Downtown Wenatchee along
the Columbia River, with the
Cascades rising beyond



When Mayor Frank Kuntz was growing up in Wenatchee, he used to walk to elementary school through a pair of apple orchards—a commute not that uncommon in a city known as the Apple Capital of the World. Kuntz was an average Wenatchee kid—the sixth of nine in his family—in an average American town. His dad was an attorney; his mom, a homemaker. Wenatchee’s population at the time was 17,000—less than half of what it is now. Bitcoin mines had yet to be invented. Robots moving fruit around a warehouse might as well have been a story line in *The Jetsons*.





Wenatchee mayor and
longtime resident Frank Kuntz

As technology took hold, this sleepy recreational paradise at the confluence of the Columbia and Wenatchee rivers—where people spend summers relaxing on Lake Chelan and winters skiing at Mission Ridge Resort, 30 minutes from downtown—began to change. And as Kuntz, youthful-looking in middle age with short, graying hair and a warm smile, says, “You’d rather have a community growing instead of shrinking.”

Kuntz is 58 now, a successful CPA and in his third term as Wenatchee’s mayor. In recent years, like many of his colleagues in other municipalities, he’s watched the entire Wenatchee Valley and much of North Central Washington pivot toward technology: recruiting and hosting data centers worth hundreds of millions of dollars, supporting agriculture streamlined by automation, welcoming digital currency mines that use impossibly complicated algorithms to mint virtual specie. It used to be that people from smaller towns like Quincy, 35 minutes southeast on Highway 28, commuted to Wenatchee for work. Now, Wenatchee residents clog that same road driving the opposite way to work in Quincy-based data centers owned by the likes of Microsoft, Yahoo, Vantage, and H5—whose lucrative property taxes have helped to build new schools and city buildings in a region riding a tech-fueled wave of prosperity. “It’s totally backward from what it used to be,” Kuntz says.

More precisely, the opportunities derive not just from one *technology industry*, as it were, but from many coexistent business sectors all deploying their own versions of cutting-edge tactics and innovations. But when it comes to the wow factor of how far Wenatchee has evolved from what it was when Kuntz was a boy to what it is today, no competing example compares, in the mayor’s eyes, with the factory that moved to town three years ago.

The Diamond Foundry, a manmade diamond manufacturer, takes tiny diamonds and places them in a reactor to build much larger diamonds that are recognized as real by the Federal Trade Commission. It is the world’s first zero-carbon-footprint diamond maker, valued at \$1.8 billion and backed by, among others, Leonardo DiCaprio. Six years after its founding in the global tech epicenter of San Francisco, the company leased three acres and a building from Stemilt, a leading apple and pear grower and legacy business in the valley. Its new MegaCarat foundry aims to quintuple production in Wenatchee by the end of 2022, up to 5 million carats per year.

“Think about it,” marvels Kuntz. “We’re growing diamonds in downtown Wenatchee. That’s a big difference from growing apples.”

BUT THE TRANSFORMATION is actually not that surprising, if you consider all of the ingredients available and necessary to produce diamonds. Most of North Central Washington is hydro powered by the Columbia River, which splits Wenatchee and East Wenatchee as well as Chelan and Douglas counties and which also provides irrigation for the crops that have anchored the region’s economy for generations. “The same things that are good for apples are also good for technology,” Kuntz says. “Cheap power, a whole bunch of water, and high-speed internet via a really good fiber optics network—you need all of that to grow a good apple and get it shipped across the country and world, and you need all that for a good data center, too.”

Businesses pay less for real estate or office space in the valley than they would in metropolitan centers, and, though maybe



not as much now that remote work has become ubiquitous, they also reduce costs by tapping a cheaper labor pool. This means that start-ups trying to stretch their dollars as much as possible get a lot more overall bang for their buck than they would in a traditional tech headquarters on the rainy side of the Cascades.

The Wenatchee Valley also cultivates a wealth of institutional support behind the scenes, from both municipal and private agencies intent on growing the region’s tech presence. One of the most active is the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority (CDRPA), a first-of-its-kind collaboration governed by six commissioners representing Chelan and Douglas counties. CDRPA, which bills itself as the valley’s “principal economic development agency,” finds and develops commercial infrastructure (including tracts once deemed undevelopable), networks with cities and state agencies, issues tax-exempt financing through industrial revenue bonds, secures grants, and recruits businesses to the



Jenny Rojanasthien of the
NCW Tech Alliance

“
**THEIR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION
IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO US, BECAUSE
IT DEMONSTRATES THEIR FAITH AND
CONFIDENCE IN THE WORK THAT WE DO.**
”

—JENNY ROJANASTHIEN NCW TECH ALLIANCE

Wenatchee Valley—most notably giant data centers that host servers for global tech brands. “Our number one goal is to support our local businesses that are already here and make sure they’re healthy and growing,” says CDRPA Economic Development Director Ron Criddlebaugh, who notes that the Port, as the associate development organization for both counties, serves as the Washington State Department of Commerce’s “boots on the ground” serving Wenatchee Valley communities. “Then we focus on business recruitment.”

Perhaps the primary catalyst responsible for the valley’s punching above its weight, however, came from the nonprofit sector. Founded in 1999 as the Greater Wenatchee Area Technology Alliance and rebranded as the NCW Tech Alliance in 2021, this incubator and economic development force now serves Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Grant, and Okanogan counties. It plays myriad roles in fostering a robust tech



Virginia Emery with some of her Wenatchee Valley–bred product

sector, from marketing the area to hosting educational events and providing technology resources for entrepreneurs. And it's funded by organizations in the private and public sectors, including the municipalities in which it operates.

The City of Wenatchee gives \$20,000 a year to the Alliance and is one of the organization's most significant backers, if not one of its richest. "Their financial contribution is really important to us, because it demonstrates their faith and confidence in the work that we do," says Alliance Executive Director Jenny Rojanasthien from a soundproof phone booth at the Mercantile (the Wenatchee coworking space where she lights the region's tech fuse), noting that the nonprofit's mission—to help connect people with technology resources—hasn't changed since its inception 22 years ago. "We started because we wanted to educate the business community, primarily, on why the adoption of tech would be a benefit for the future."

Rojanasthien was the general manager of a \$19 million-a-year Target store in Wenatchee before being hired in 2015 as the Tech

“

WE SAW A LOT OF VALUE IN BEING CLOSER TO CUSTOMERS, AND CHELAN COUNTY HAS SOME OF THE MOST AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY IN THE COUNTRY.

”

—VIRGINIA EMERY FOUNDER, BETA HATCH

Alliance's first paid employee. At the time, the organization's operating budget was less than \$80,000, and it produced 10 events annually to promote tech. Within four years, the Alliance had three full-time employees, an operating budget of over \$300,000, 45 events on the calendar, and a sponsorship from Microsoft.

As it and the regional tech scene grew, the Alliance also served as a facilitator by creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors to network, learn, and connect. The thought was that if North Central Washington were to be known as a tech hub, it needed local investors to support the start-ups that the Alliance and others were courting. In 2017, Rojanasthien helped form the Flywheel Angel Network (FAN) and launch the Flywheel Investment Conference, an annual event where start-ups compete for an investment award provided by FAN's fundraising efforts. Not surprisingly, she learned, most potential tech investors in rural Washington aren't *aware* that they are potential investors. Rojanasthien saw an opportunity.

"The SEC regulates who can be an angel investor," she says. "You have to make \$200,000 as an individual or \$300,000 as a couple, or have a million dollars in assets outside of your primary home. We've done a good job of recruiting a lot of angel investors who are new to investing." Over four years, the network has raised \$675,000, with participation from Wenatchee to Leavenworth. "We have retired schoolteachers in our network who wrote their first checks and are excited to be in the start-up space," Rojanasthien says.

The Flywheel Investment Conference, meanwhile, attracts entrants from across Washington state with a six-figure prize (the winner in 2021 received \$150,000, with the runner-up taking home \$50,000)—and the promise of invaluable visibility among a crowd of influencers that continues to grow each year. "By bringing these companies here," Rojanasthien says, "we believe the byproduct in 15 years will be a lot more companies wanting to be here or start up here."

THE LIST OF TECH FIRMS that wield global relevance from North Central Washington is already long and wide-ranging. You'll find everything from Legwork, a Wenatchee start-up that builds dental marketing software and has landed on *Inc. Magazine's* list of the fastest-growing private companies in America the past three years; to AgTools, a homegrown, highly sophisticated platform that helps cut farmers' losses due to wasted food; to PetHub, a tech-driven pet ID company with a rapidly growing following; to Moses Lake-based Stoke Space Technologies, which manufactures reusable rockets to deliver satellites into orbit.

When asked what she says to prospective companies that are considering either starting in or relocating to the Wenatchee Valley, Rojanasthien says, "I sell them first and foremost on the fact that there's a community here that wants to see entrepreneurs be successful."

Few community members personify that better than Virginia Emery and Beta Hatch, the biotech and engineering company that Emery founded in SeaTac in 2016. Emery, a self-described "insect entrepreneur" with a PhD, introduced a new way to grow mealworms en masse as a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable animal food (everything from chickens to fish) and fertilizer. "But along with all the challenges of scaling a manufacturing business in a very expensive place," she says, "we

DISTANCE LEARNING

Q&A KEN ZUCKERBERG

Ken Zuckerberg, vice president of training at ComPsych Corporation, talks about navigating the challenges of remote working.



Are introverts more successful at working from home than extroverts?

Personality is not necessarily the biggest predictor of whether someone's going to be successful in a remote environment versus an in-person environment. A bigger factor is your physical life circumstances.

What do you mean by that?

Practical considerations trump [personality]. Some people have an environment friendly to working from home. If they don't have the right space in their home—it's loud, it's crowded, and the internet connection is lousy—those kinds of practical considerations are way more important. If, for example, I have to pick my kids up from school at 3 o'clock, I'm going to really value the flexibility of [working from] home near the school, whatever my personality is.

How can managers help employees who might be worried about the isolation of working remotely?

One big thing we talk about in our training programs is that

overcoming the concern of isolation requires more proactivity than you maybe ever had. You've got to proactively figure out: what days am I going to connect with certain coworkers?

That sounds easy enough. But it can be hard to be proactive. How can employees and managers not let this get lost in the shuffle?

I think the big thing is scheduling it, just telling yourself relationships and connectedness are not going to happen organically. You can schedule working lunches with people—you know, let's have lunch at our desks and chat about the week. The other way—and this is something that we specifically talk about with managers—is to schedule a certain amount of time at your department meetings and team meetings for conversation that's not related to work. "We're going to go around the room, and everybody gets 30 seconds to tell us how they're feeling today and what's going on in their life." It's the kind of thing that in an in-person environment you never would have scheduled, because it just happens.

CONTINUED ON P.27 ▶



Cashmere Mayor Jim Fletcher

saw a lot of value in being closer to customers, and Chelan County has some of the most affordable electricity in the country.”

After looking for a space, Beta Hatch moved into a former fruit juice factory in Cashmere, a second class city of 3,000 between Wenatchee and Leavenworth. Cashmere is a polar opposite of the municipalities *Forbes* recently touted as the nation’s top five emerging tech cities (Tampa, Miami, New York City, Austin, San Francisco)—a community of quiet, leafy streets surrounded by mountains, with a city government that employs 11 and runs on a \$4 million budget. “We still are a small town, a place where you know what’s going on,” says Mayor Jim Fletcher, a retired business consultant who has lived in Cashmere for 26 years. “We don’t have the hustle and bustle of Wenatchee or the tourism of Leavenworth. But I can go out my door and hop on a bicycle and ride up a mountain trail.”

Still, as Beta Hatch has proved, that doesn’t mean it’s not suited for a cutting-edge company. Emery, who lives in nearby Leavenworth, has raised more than \$30 million since 2016 through private investments as well as state and federal grants (and, in 2019, \$135,000 from the Flywheel Investment Conference, where she took first place). Intent on scaling up rapidly, this past August she announced a \$10 million investment to kick-start an expansion of the Cashmere factory from 40,000 square feet to hundreds of thousands (if not close to a million, she hopes) by 2023. Among other implications, the expansion promises to yield a property tax windfall for the regional site selected by Beta Hatch, which could make Cashmere a small-town tech story unto itself.

Beta Hatch cultivates “billions if not trillions” of inch-long mealworms at its factory at any given time, and it relies heavily on

robots to tend to them. It captures heat waste from a bitcoin mine's computers next door—there are two bitcoin mines in town, both of which pay hefty utility taxes, Fletcher says—using the excess energy to keep its bugs warm, and it nourishes them with compost waste from local apple manufacturers. Though Cashmere's nimble government isn't a game-changer, it does make permitting simpler and swifter, Emery says, which aids her efficiency.

"I think there's a huge opportunity in tech for the Wenatchee Valley because it has very affordable and reliable energy, exciting colocation of data centers, plus potential customers in fruit producers," adds Emery, a rock climber who named the company after her passion ("beta" is a term climbers use for the strategy to attack a difficult move) and personally chose to move to Cashmere from Seattle to have easier access to mountain crags. "We want to be in a great place to live that has a strong labor market and the ability to retain talent, and these are all things that we love about this valley. The Wenatchee Valley could be the future hub of controlled-environment agriculture."

BACK IN THE VALLEY'S HEART, City of Wenatchee Executive Services Director Laura Merrill, who took her job in February 2020, just before coronavirus exploded, says Wenatchee has seen a surge in sales tax revenue over the past two years despite pandemic disruptions. The city has maintained its staff (194 full-time employees) and a \$34 million general-fund budget. It is still the valley's urban center, home to the regional hospital and its primary retail nexus. And, signaling its commitment to a diversified future, the city is still contributing \$20,000 a year to the NCW Tech Alliance. "We know technology is our friend, and whenever the opportunity arises, we try to embrace it," Merrill says.

Kuntz, who's been Wenatchee's mayor since 2012, believes the pandemic has not only helped infuse new tech jobs and spending but also provided further stability to a region once solely reliant on agriculture and tourism. "I think you want people to live in your community who have disposable income and want to spend their time here, and quite frankly, during Covid our region has been sort of a net winner in terms of people moving to this area and wanting to get out of urban areas—and bringing money with them and hopefully bringing businesses and jobs," Kuntz says.

So Kuntz makes it a point to show up every year at the Flywheel Investment Conference and personally welcome the attendees, despite not being a techie himself. "It's as much about supporting tech as it is about the people who come from all over the Pacific Northwest—tech-driven business owners and entrepreneurs—to spend three days in Wenatchee," he says. "They start thinking about what a great community we have and how they might be able to bring a portion of their business to Wenatchee. I can't get that in any other way."

While Kuntz misses the Wenatchee of his youth, when he would stroll through orchards to get to school, as mayor he understands that fostering technology and innovation, and the growth they bring, is what will put the entire Wenatchee Valley on a sustainable trajectory for the future.

"We're always going to be growing apples and pears and cherries in this community, and I'll always be excited to have them here," he says. "But Beta Hatch and Microsoft are great, too. This is about long-term vitality." **C**

Any advice for managers and hiring directors about onboarding new employees who will be working from home rather than the office?

From my perspective, the biggest onboarding challenge is asking yourself, "How am I going to help this new employee build the kind of relationships at the workplace that will make him or her successful?" You can't get anything done at work without relationships. And relationships are harder to build when you're new and you're not meeting people face to face.

So how can managers help with relationship-building?

There's no black-and-white answer to that question, but there are a couple of suggestions that I offer to people: maybe scheduling that the first five minutes of every meeting to be about nonwork stuff. The other thing I suggest is, even in remote environments, [that you need to create] opportunities for in-person get-togethers. Even if it's once a year, twice a year, the rest of the relationship can be a lot more successful in a remote environment.

What about when you need to have tough conversations?

If you're unsure how your intent is going to be perceived, just clarify it. "Before I even start this conversation, I want to tell you what my intent is here.... I just have some feedback that I think is important to share." The flip side of that, if

you're on the receiving end, is to try to get in the habit of assuming positive intent in people ... overcoming that risk of misunderstanding and misinterpreting people's intent.

Any considerations when it comes to monitoring the emotional well-being of remote employees?

The thing about mental health is that coming into an office can help. Sometimes we ourselves don't know that we're struggling with mental health issues. We benefit from having friends, coworkers pointing things out to us. You notice potential mental health concerns among your colleagues a little more easily when you're seeing them in person. I think in remote environments noticing that stuff can be a little bit harder.

Anything managers shouldn't do when they're concerned about an employee's mental health?

I think sometimes there's a risk that leaders try to put too much on their own shoulders. For example, you might see that someone's really struggling with isolation and loneliness, and you're concerned about them. So, you start acting more like their therapist. That's not a good role to play, even though you have good intentions. You want to be an expert in the resources that your organization offers, such as an Employee Assistance Program, to help people with things like therapy or other support that they might need.



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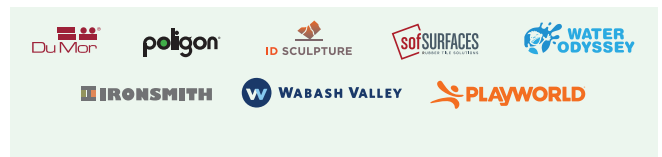
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— CITY 101 P. 32 ▶

30 MANAGING CYBERSECURITY DURING THE GREAT RESIGNATION
32 KEEPING PASSWORDS PRIVATE **34** COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY IN A DIGITAL AGE



Patch Game

Software updates are one of the most critical IT functions that can get lost without adequate cybersecurity staffing, as explained by Fred Langston, a Seattle security expert with Critical Insight:

“Because the bad actors know that most organizations do not patch faster than 30 days, and a huge number do not patch well at all, it’s open season for the nation-states and their criminal advanced persistent threat (APT) groups to literally lay waste to wide swaths of industry and government.

Our current approach to address these threats is failing in epic fashion right before our eyes. IT and security operations must adopt the concept of an incipient security event that requires a Level 1 incident response. The inconvenience of an Exchange outage over a weekend due to a patch is insignificant in cost and impact when compared to a cyberattack on that same Exchange server that takes down every system on your network.”

URGENT UPDATES

The Great Resignation’s impact on cybersecurity issues

JAKE MILSTEIN CRITICAL INSIGHT

WE ALL KNOW PEOPLE who have left their jobs in the past year. They might be friends, family, coworkers, or even the person reading this article. The *Harvard Business Review* calls it “a tidal wave of resignations.” In July 2021 alone, 4 million American quit their jobs, resulting in a record-breaking 10.9 million open jobs at the end of that month.

No matter the various reasons for people leaving their jobs, the organizations they depart, big and small, are left with holes. When an employee leaves, they don’t just take with them the functions of the job; they also take the institutional knowledge they accrued, as well as the investments made in their training and development. And some of that loss is the only institutional cybersecurity knowledge of the organization.

To take a few area examples, I know of a hospital that has a cybersecurity team of 30 people—or at least, they have 30 slots on their team. Last I heard, they had 20 open positions coming into fall 2021. Another hospital had its CISO leave. An IT director for a somewhat rural city left, and finding a replacement is now estimated to take six to nine months. The IT manager for a port had an employee quit at the beginning of the pandemic and has been looking for a security analyst for more than a year, but they keep losing candidates to higher salaries at bigger agencies and organizations.

The cybersecurity talent gap

Even before the pandemic, knowledgeable security personnel were not plentiful. In 2017, articles with titles like “Cybersecurity has a serious talent shortage” were predicting 1.5 million unfilled positions by 2020. In the wake of the pandemic and Great Resignation, the actual shortfall is now much worse. The Biden

administration is trying to do something about it, but the wave of job-changing is not letting up.

When the IT and security folks (sometimes that’s the same person) leave their jobs, it creates gaps in security operational tasks. Here’s a real-world example: An IT director was diligent about implementing patches on a monthly schedule. They would take down the appropriate assets on the network late at night and do the patching they needed to do. But then that person left. The organization knows it needs to do the patching, but who will do it? And can they get away with patching less regularly? (Hint: The answer is no.)

The bad guys know

The criminals are onto us, of course. They know about the skills gap, they know about the talent gap, and they know people are leaving their jobs. And they are taking advantage of it. Criminals are watching patches get released and then going out to attack organizations that don’t apply the patches quickly.

For the non-IT folks, here’s an analogy: Let’s say there’s a lock on your front door, and the manufacturer recalls it because you can open it with a blank key. But you ignore the recall notice or just don’t get around to replacing the lock. A criminal who has seen the recall notice walks your neighborhood looking for that lock. They spot yours and know they can use the blank key to open your door.

It used to be that criminals didn’t go after vulnerabilities quickly. That changed, and now some patching needs to be done urgently (for more, see “Patch Game,” at left). But without the staff to do the work, who does it?

Patching is just one thing that doesn’t get done when there’s a dearth of security personnel. Other things that fall



by the wayside include audits, employee security training, upgrading defenses, monitoring for attacks and attackers in the system, and updating preparedness documents. One organization had a well-documented call tree of whom to alert in case of a cyberattack, but half the people on the call tree had left the organization.

The consequences

You know the consequences of bad cybersecurity hygiene. Even organizations with good security postures have fallen victim to ransomware attacks. The year 2020 saw 304 million ransomware attacks worldwide, which was a rise of 62 percent year over year.

The solutions

Organizations that had decided to do all of their cybersecurity in-house are now facing the new reality that they can't find the employees. Others that never had big staffs are recognizing the need for better security. For both types of organizations, they can choose two paths: automation or outsourcing. There's a plethora of companies that promise to fix cybersecurity problems with software alone, and they certainly can help. But someone must be watching the alerts on that software, so the talent gap potentially remains.

Other organizations are looking to outsource their people problem with a partner to whom they can hand off 24/7 monitoring, get help with vulnerability scanning, and get help with incident preparedness. Especially until the Great Resignation trend works itself out, turning to managed and professional cybersecurity service firms can help reliably fill those gaps and improve outcomes. **C**

Jake Milstein is the chief marketing officer at *Critical Insight*, a Bremerton-based information security company that provides systems assessments, vulnerability testing, planning, regulatory compliance, and other IT and cybersecurity services.

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The Password Is ...

Most password managers do more than just remember your kids' birthdays and former pets' names—they also include a password generator. These tools allow users to quickly create highly secure passwords. And since these computer-generated passwords are saved within the password manager, there's no need to commit them to memory.

DEFENDING THE GATES

An inexpensive password manager can help keep city accounts secure.

AWC STAFF

At AWC's recent Member Expo event, we spoke with Jim Kilmer, a division director with The OPAL Group. He gave an overview of practical steps cities can take to increase their cybersecurity. In the excerpt below, edited for length and clarity, he discusses password managers—an important and relatively inexpensive tool that city leaders can consider.

I T'S VERY IMPORTANT FOR people to realize that cybersecurity is not a monolithic thing. There is no magic box with blinking lights on it, no matter how expensive, that is going to 100 percent protect you from all cybersecurity threats. Looking at it from that perspective, every little thing you can do helps. And there are a lot of little things, and very inexpensive ones, that particularly nontechnical users can do.

Password managers are one of the big ones. It's a category of software that is very easy to use, so much so that when you start using it, you will have no idea how you survived up until this point without it. It's a piece of secure software that will keep all of your passwords in an encrypted vault and then autofill them into your browser or into your applications when you need to log in. It will allow you to create a very complex password that's unique to every site you log in on.

If one site is compromised, the cybercriminals can use your email address and the password from that site to test thousands of other sites to try and get in. That's called a sideways attack, and it is one of the big ways that account for information being compromised these days. So the key is to have unique and secure passwords for every site you use.

But the human brain is just not wired

to remember hundreds of passwords for all the systems we have to access these days. That's why it is very common for people to reuse passwords or reuse variants on passwords. It's a common practice, but sideways attacks are what make it so dangerous.

Some common password managers that we see are: 1Password, Dashlane, and LastPass. These cost on average between \$3 and \$5 per user per month. So for \$60 a year per user or less, you

THE HUMAN BRAIN IS JUST NOT WIRED TO REMEMBER HUNDREDS OF PASSWORDS FOR ALL THE SYSTEMS WE HAVE TO ACCESS THESE DAYS.

can give your employees access to one of these password managers and make yourself measurably more secure.

And as an added bonus, this is something they can also use in their personal life. They can use it for their own banking and credit cards and tax records, and everything else they might want to have accounts for.

And it measurably increases your security. Studies have shown that folks using password managers are hacked at a fraction of the frequency of people who are just trying to remember their passwords or have them on a Post-It note under their keyboard. [C](#)

Jim Kilmer, Jr. is a partner and division director for The OPAL Group, which provides a variety of information technology solutions and services.



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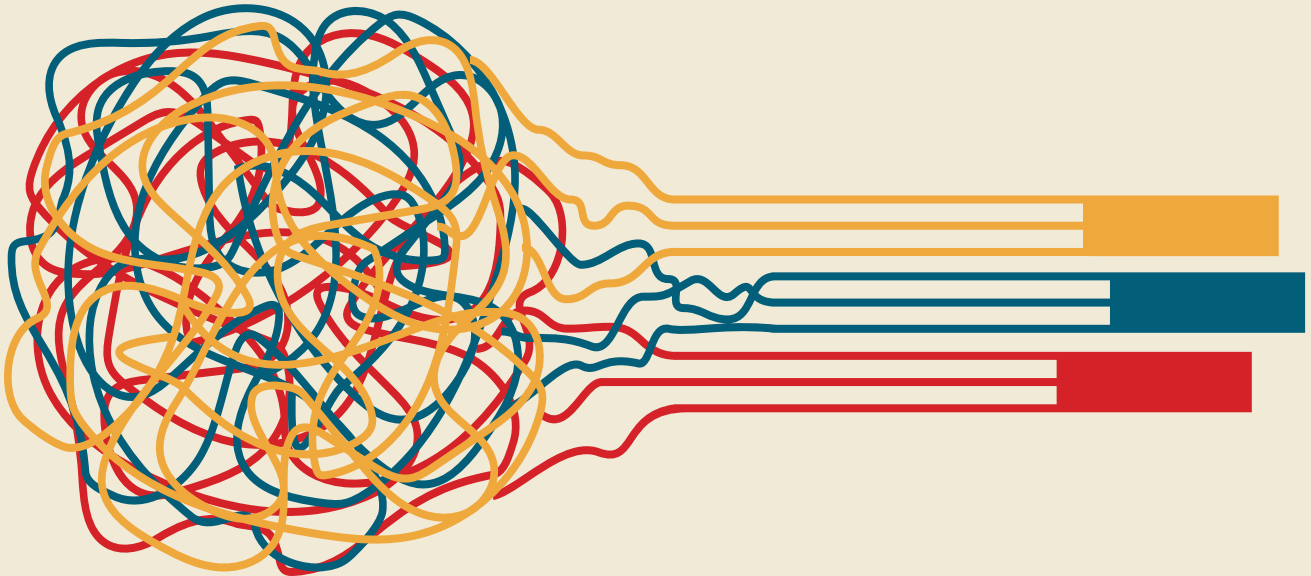


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CLEAR IS KIND

The importance of strategic communications for meeting your community's needs

CHRIS GUIZLO THE FEAREY GROUP

CLEAR IS KIND. UNCLEAR IS UNKIND.

This quote from author Brené Brown often comes to mind when I think about communications strategy. Though it's geared toward how senior leaders should communicate to their teams, its key message also applies to how organizations, especially municipalities, should approach communicating with your key audiences.

Let's face it: communicating the city's daily movements to a public that sees small snippets of the impact in their daily life is a big challenge. When it's an issue that directly impacts a resident, they will say that you never informed them or gave them an opportunity to weigh in.

Encountering these individuals is inevitable, so it's important to make sure that your city has a strategic communications plan that utilizes

traditional and nontraditional methods to elevate your community voices and encourage them to come to the table.

It starts with messaging

The workings of city government are complex to most people and can discourage the public from paying attention to the operations of their city. Most of the time, it comes down to the city not putting out clear and consistent messaging across all of its communications channels and members of its staff.

When considering an issue, it's easy to jump straight to the language of a policy fix. At the same time, you should be convening the relevant internal stakeholders to think through the communications messaging about the policy as well. It's the perfect time to build out a communications messaging map to outline:

- What does the city believe on this issue? Where are we starting this policy from, and how will it impact our residents?
- What is the key message we want them to take away? This is a one- to two-sentence message that should be heard in any external or internal conversations on the issue.
- Who are the key audiences? This includes both internal and external stakeholders. They should be receiving and using the same messages.
- What are the secondary messages that support your key message? Your overall key message should be supported by three to four message pillars that are backed up with specific data or policy language.

A communications messaging map allows you to simplify the policy process and show how the city is approaching every issue while keeping community input at top of mind.

Working with messengers in the community

As mentioned, a key part of any communications effort is identifying your target audience. Often, we simplify



CITY 101

IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR CITY HAS A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN THAT UTILIZES TRADITIONAL AND NONTRADITIONAL METHODS TO ELEVATE YOUR COMMUNITY VOICES AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO COME TO THE TABLE.

that to say we want to reach residents or business owners. It's great to have a wide audience goal, but it is also important to think about who can help you reach those audiences and who the community leaders are that speak to those audiences directly. Leaders of community nonprofits, neighborhood associations, local youth, leaders of communities where English is not the first language, etc., are just as important to include as key audiences in all of your messaging.

In including them, your goal should not be exclusively focused on persuasion or recruiting them to support your efforts. Rather, focus on educating them about proposed changes, providing the supporting messages that back the city's position, and asking how you can help them inform their communities of the changes and, most importantly, how they can have their voices heard.

Engaging social media

Another key component of your messaging strategies should continue to be social media. But don't think of this as a one-way microphone for the city to use to reach key audiences. Instead, it should be thought of as what it is, a social platform. It's a two-way mechanism residents can use to get involved, provide feedback, and start important conversations with their city.

Additionally, any information posted on social media should be educational, not only to inform the initial reader but also to encourage them to share it on as a resource for other interested community members to participate in the discussion at hand.

Communicating in a crisis

Building a clear messaging strategy, engaging community leaders, and utilizing social media all help show the community that you are interested in not only informing them but engaging

them in the process of city business. Building this trust is critical, because in times of crisis our usual methods of communications can break down. But if you've done the above work during regular times, you help set the stage for a strong crisis response because your community knows:

- Where they can find city information and resources.
- How they can ask questions and provide input during a crisis.
- Which community leaders outside of city government are likely able to answer questions or provide resources.

Setting up these feedback mechanisms and partners is also critical after a crisis, because you need to know how much damage has been done and what reputation repair efforts are needed in what parts of the community.

Tell your story

No matter if you are communicating a policy, promoting an upcoming community event, or experiencing a crisis situation, a unified communications strategy is essential for reaching your key audiences. This is more than just telling your side of the story. It's about educating the community, allowing them to engage in the process, and finally empowering them with resources to share what's going on with their circles of influence. At its best, a unified communications strategy helps create a more informed and engaged public. **C**

Chris Guizlo is vice president of *The Fearey Group*, a Seattle-based firm specializing in public relations, digital media, public affairs, and crisis communications.



Map Quest

Whenever your city is introducing new policies that affect the community at large, they need to hear from you, loud and clear. Convening internal stakeholders to create a communications messaging map can be crucial for effective community engagement. Here are four main elements to consider:

- **The city's position:** Why is the city acting? Why now? What problems is it trying to address? How will the community be affected?
- **Key message:** What do you want the community to learn? How can you make sure the takeaway sticks? When do you need to start delivering the message?
- **Key audiences:** Whom does the city need to reach? What are the best methods for reaching them? How do you ensure that everyone receives a consistent key message?
- **Secondary messages:** What specific additional data or language supports the key message? How should these secondary messages be delivered? To whom? When?

Cityscape

Outgoing Buckley Mayor Pat Johnson with the computer desk that stands to remain as a mayor's office fixture



Fond Farewell

Buckley's longest-serving mayor says goodbye to a favorite piece of tech.

AFTER MORE THAN THREE DECADES of public service—including 14 years as a councilmember and 16 years as the City of Buckley's mayor—Pat Johnson has seen technology come and go, from mimeographs to fax machines and dial-up modems to Zoom council meetings. When she left the mayor's office for good at the end of December, Johnson took her favorite piece of old-school tech with her: a Rolodex stapled with hundreds of business cards collected over the decades.

However, she did leave one big gift for Buckley's next mayor: the computer desk she purchased with her own money after she began her first term. The desk replaced an outdated 1940s-era precursor that lacked the ergonomics required for long hours behind a PC equipped with a broadband connection—still something of a luxury in 2006, when only 42 percent of Americans had access to high-speed internet from home (compared to 93 percent today).

"Technology has complicated our lives, but it's also made things easier and freed up more time," says Johnson, who after four terms retired as Buckley's longest-serving mayor and its

first elected female mayor. "I remember doing stuff on the internet with dial-up, and now we're talking about getting internet off of satellites. That's going to be huge not so much for cities like Buckley, but you get just a few miles out of town, and there's no cell coverage. There's a lot of technology that we're right on the brink of that's going to make things better and save taxpayers money.... I'm excited for what's coming down the road, things we haven't even thought of yet."

As for that now-dated "modern" computer desk, before she turned out the lights on December 31, Mayor Johnson signed her name, alongside her years of service, on the inside of the main drawer, where she left a message for her successor: "Good luck! I'm always here if you need some guidance, or just a shoulder to cry on."

"I can't use it in my house, so I'm just leaving it," Johnson says of her bequest. "After 16 years, it's got a few dings here and there, so it's very mayoral."

As is the plaque she left on a bare shelf, inscribed with a favorite motto: "A small town is like a big family: Not everybody gets along, but we take care of each other." **C**

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