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State grants open for border businesses

Blaine businesses may soon see some state relief, thanks to a new Washington State Department of Commerce grant program aimed at small businesses along the U.S./Canada border. Businesses have two weeks to apply for the grants starting Monday, October 4.

“We appreciate the support of the governor and legislators in our many efforts to support communities disproportionately impacted by Covid-19,” department of commerce director Lisa Brown said in a statement. “While recovery is going well for some businesses, many continue to face daunting challenges. It’s very uneven at this point. A strong, equitable recovery requires us to focus on those who still face barriers to getting back on their feet.”

The Border Business Relief Program is part of the Working Washington grant series the state started to help businesses with the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Up to \$50,000 in grants will be given to businesses impacted by the border restrictions; have revenues less than \$5 million in 2019; and are located in specific counties including Whatcom County, according to a department of commerce news release on the grants.

Grants will be considered if businesses contain one or more of the following:

- The business relies on a significant amount of in-person interaction with customers (i.e. stores or nail salons)
- The business is located within 20 miles of the U.S./Canada border
- Industries with the most amount of impact from the closure (i.e. retail, tourism, recreation and entertainment)
- 2019 revenue
- 2019-2020 loss of revenue and/or additional expenses to run business safely during the pandemic
- Businesses in rural or low-income communities, and/or owned by a historically underserved population (i.e. veteran, minority, women or LGBTQ+)

The department of commerce will also base grants on if the business has received a Working Washington grant before.

(See Grants, page 5)

Officials plead Biden for help with Point Roberts

BY PAT GRUBB

In back to back appeals, both U.S. senator Patty Murray and governor Jay Inslee have asked President Joe Biden to personally intervene and allow the border in Point Roberts to be open to vaccinated Canadians.

First up was Patty Murray who spoke on the senate floor September 23 and called on the Biden administration to open up the Point Roberts border to non-essential traffic.

“I’m here on the Senate floor today to

WSDA eradicates fourth nest in east Blaine



▲ Washington State Department of Agriculture eradicated the fourth Asian giant hornet nest found in east Blaine on September 23. The nest contained 776 worker hornets and one queen, making it the second largest nest eradicated in the U.S.. Read more on page 15.

Photo courtesy of WSDA

Woodberry gets the green light from city council

BY GRACE MCCARTHY

Blaine City Council unanimously voted to give final plat approval to Woodberry, a gated subdivision that will house 29 single-family homes just south of Fire Station 62 on Semiahmoo Parkway.

With plat infrastructure over 80 percent complete, the city of Blaine’s community development services (CDS) and public works department recommended council give final approval during their September 27 meeting. Council voted 6-0, with councilmember Garth Baldwin absent.

“I think it’ll be a great fit for the Semiahmoo community,” said Brady Mayson, who Cascade Engineering Group hired to develop the subdivision.

The 10-acre subdivision will have craftsman-style farm homes on lots averaging 9,000 square feet. Homeowners with dogs have the option to put a three-rail cedar fence around their property, Mayson said, which is a change from most Semiahmoo homes that aren’t allowed to have fencing. Mayson described the subdivision as “quaint” and “classic,” and said he hopes it will be similar to the Heronswood Com-

munity he developed on Shintaffer Road.

Next on Mayson’s agenda is to obtain building permits. With these, construction could start as soon as November. He expects Woodberry to be complete in the next two years.

The subdivision will also have a trail, private roads and a stormwater facility maintained by the homeowner association, CDS director Stacie Pratschner said during the meeting.

Mayson filed the application for final

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This Week's FLYER Rite Aid

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Point Roberts...

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no one can explain to me what evidence is being used to support these continued border restrictions," Murray continued. "So I'm here on the Senate floor today to make sure that President Biden and his administration understand me. At the very least, we need an emergency exemption from these restrictions for the Point Roberts community – and that exemption is long overdue."

Other than the senate stenographer, it's not clear who else heard Murray's five-minute ap-

peal. Other than a few passersby, the portion of the senate visible in the background was bereft of senators or other listeners.

Inslee's letter to the President followed the next day. He wrote: "As I have communicated in letters to Secretaries Antony Blinken and Alejandro Mayorkas this summer, the harms and economic depredations experienced by these communities grow more dire with each month – and each monthly extension of these blanket restrictions. As the Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce wrote on Wednesday, September 22, 2021, that community alone is in a 'desperate' situation as 85 per-

cent of their economy depends on commercial activity by Canadians that is now impossible."

Inslee goes on to ask President Biden to work with his staff and Cabinet and consider the following options to improve the situation and address the needs of border communities in Washington:

- A targeted exception for the Point Roberts community that would allow fully-vaccinated Canadians to enter Point Roberts, just as fully-vaccinated Americans may travel to Canada by land.
- Identifying options to at least partially reopen the U.S.-Canada land border, with a general re-

opening of the border remaining our ultimate goal.

Inslee then asked the President to provide clarity behind the administration's decision-making process: "Additionally, I reiterate the request made by myself and the governors of Alaska, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, and Vermont to Secretaries Blinken and Mayorkas for additional information on the long-term strategy regarding these restrictions. It would be highly valuable to understand what specific metrics are being evaluated in determining the status of the land border, what obstacles must

be resolved to make possible intermediate steps to provide relief, and how the state and federal governments may work together to resolve those obstacles. In the continued absence of this information, states and communities will experience deepening and permanent hardship with little to no insight on how to improve their circumstances."

But just like the proverbial tree falling in the forest, if no one was there to hear it fall, did it really fall? Will the President actually hear the sound of their voices? Will Point Roberts ever experience release from an economy-crushing border closure?

ON WITH THE SHOW!

MOUNT BAKER THEATRE IS NOW OPEN WITH LIVE PERFORMANCES.

This season is kicking off with a variety of live events on the Mount Baker Theatre Mainstage and musical performances in the Walton Theatre Listening Lounge. We've gathered an eclectic selection that is sure to have something for everyone!

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 DEC 9 STARS MAGIC	 JAN 2 SCIENCE THEATRE 3000 LIVE	 JAN 13 JOAN OSBORNE	 JAN 20 INTERNATIONAL GUITAR NIGHT	 JAN 22 PINK MARTINI	 FEB 3 Small World	 NOV 11 FRAN LEBOWITZ
 MAR 11 BLACK VIOLIN	 MAR 12 The Wailin' Jennys	 MAR 13 JAZZ	 MAR 24 TRIVENI	 APR 29 Menopause The Musical	 MAY 8 Amy Tan	 MAY 27 CHRIS BOTTI
 LOOKOUT SESSIONS			 SEPT 30 STEVE FORBERT	 OCT 21 Luca Stricagnoli	 NOV 4 KARLA BONOFF	 NOV 13 LOUDON WAINWRIGHT

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