

Scot Walstra retiring from NW Natural after 25 years



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Scot Walstra, director of business development for NW Natural/Clark County District, is retiring from the gas company's Clark County office after 25 years of service to pursue other opportunities.

Today is Walstra's last day with NW Natural. Walstra joined the company in 1980 as a distribution worker in gas operations. He joined the Clark County marketing staff in 1994, and was appointed director of business development in 2001.

Walstra, active in economic, community development and volunteer initiatives, said he is looking forward to exploring new business and development opportunities.

State's unemployment rate lowest in six years

Washington's unemployment rate for January dipped to 4.7 percent, the lowest rate since December 1999 and 0.5 percentage points lower than December 2005's revised rate of 5.2 percent, reports the state Employment Security Department.

The employment rate is based on a survey of Washington households, which indicated that total seasonally adjusted employment grew by 13,600 in January. Total employment statewide was just over 3.1 million. Total unemployment was 155,000, down 18,400 from December.

\$155,000 Legacy Health System grant goes to Clark County Children's Center

Legacy Health System this week will present Clark County Children's Center with a \$155,000 check to address specific problems of children whose health has been injured by the production or second-hand effects of methamphetamines

Legacy's three-year grant will help the Children's Center establish a program to train therapists in neuro-behavioral techniques, train caregivers of meth-exposed young children in coping and teaching skills, and increase the numbers of hours for psychiatrists to address the high acuity neuropsychiatric needs of clients. This type of specialized treatment program, including training, currently doesn't exist in southwest Washington.

"We hope this grant will provide long-term benefits to children and families in this community," **Kari Stanley**, Legacy's director of community relations, said of the first Legacy Health System grant in Clark County since Legacy Salmon Creek Hospital opened late last year.

The Clark County Children's Center, founded in 1989, provides mental health services for children and families. Currently the center serves 1,300 children, 93 percent of whom are impoverished.

Dave Christensen headlines first Lunch with The Challengers

Dave Christensen, whose current incarnation is yacht builder, founder and president of Christensen Shipyards Ltd., is the first speaker in the Lunch with The Challenger series being presented by The Club at the Historic Reserve at 11:45 a.m. Thursday, March 2, in the Red Cross Building, 605 Barnes Road.

Christensen began his Vancouver business career in 1955, founding Christensen Homes. He went on to form Pacific Coast Fabricating Company before building mega-million dollar yachts.

The public is invited. Call **906-1101** for required reservations for the \$20 luncheon.

Mediation training begins this week

A high-intensity, 40-hour course in basic mediation is being offered by Vancouver Mediation Services, beginning Thursday, March 2, reports **Nancy Pionk**, mediation services manager. The course, for which there is no charge, concludes Saturday, March 11.

Application forms are available by email from nancy.pionk@ci.vancouver.wa.us. For further information, call **619-1148**.

News briefs

Applications for auditioning for the Junior Symphony of Vancouver are being accepted for auditions that will occur Thursday, March 16. Players who are accepted will perform in the junior symphony's June 17 fundraising concert in the Columbia Performing Arts Center. Auditions are open to young musicians from southwest Washington and Oregon. For further information, call **996-4084**, extension 5.

Calendar

The first in a series of planning workshops by Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation is at 6:30 p.m. this evening in Alki Middle School, 1800 NW Bliss Road. Public input will help shape open space planning. The second meeting in the series is at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, in the Luepke Center, 1009 E McLoughlin Boulevard. For further information, call **Michelle Kunec, 619-1144**. ☞ The Vancouver Salary Review Commission, which recommends the salaries of the mayor and city council members, meets at 6 p.m. this evening in the second-floor offices of the city Human Resources office, 610 Esther Street. ☞ Clark County commissioners meet in an informal session at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, in conference room B in the Public Service Center. ☞ The Cowlitz Casino Forum, sponsored jointly by the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce and Identity Clark County, is at 11:45 a.m. Wednesday, March 1, in the Heathman Lodge. The forum is open to the public. Admission is \$30. For further information, call **694-2588**, or register online by going to www.vancouverusa.com.

Tuesday headlines from at home and around the world

[County semiconductor industry gets \\$1 million tax break from legislature--Columbian, Kathie Durbin](#)

[House transportation bill has millions for I-5 improvements--Columbian, Kathie Durbin](#)

[Ridgefield council to rethink ordinance that bans construction on holidays--Columbian,](#)

[Jose Paul Corona](#)

[Conference to explore autism--Columbian, Margaret Ellis](#)

[La Center considering mixed-use plan--Cami Joner](#)

[Cost of charity soars--Columbian, Julia Anderson](#)

[NBA chief says Blazers belong in Portland, with or without Paul Allen--Oregonian, Jeff Manning and Helen Jung](#)

[Casino opponent wins court ruling--Oregonian, Allan Brettman](#)

[Police show get of woman suspected of using stolen credit card in Vancouver--KATU](#)

[At least 75 dead in string of attacks in Iraq--New York Times, Edward Wong](#)

[Stocks drop on Google, economic growth concerns--USA TODAY, Reuters](#)

Tuesday on the air

Red Cross Real Heroes Breakfast (2/17)—4 p.m. CVTV

Firstenburg Center Grand Opening—5:31 p.m. CVTV

Vancouver Planning Commission (live)—7 p.m. CVTV

Everett at Portland Winter Hawks (live)—7 p.m. KCMD

Town Tabloids and the weather

Greg Weeks providing the correct answers. ☞ **Myk Heidt** looking for volunteers. ☞ **Susan Tissot** promoting **Lillian Pitt** lecture. ☞ **Becky Archibald** graciously accepting key. ☞ **Celinda Rupert** recommending Goldwell Color. ☞ **Maggie Huffman** checking the spelling. ☞ **Tuesday**, heavy rain, 50. **Wednesday**, rainy, 47. **Thursday**, rain letting up, mostly cloudy, 48.