

**NORTH BEND TOWN HALL MEETING
AND
LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST
May 2nd and 3rd, 2013
SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

INTRODUCTION

The Community Outreach Subcommittee of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) held two meetings in North Bend on May 2 & 3, 2013, at the Mt. Si Senior Center located at 411 Main Ave. South in North Bend.

The local planning partners were staff from the Mt. Si Senior Center and Pushing Boundaries. We would like to make special mention of the outstanding support we received from B.J. Libby, Executive Director of the Mt. Si Senior Center and Tricia Lazzar, Executive Director of Pushing Boundaries in Redmond. BJ Libby not only graciously allowed us to use her facility but also donated coffee and rolls for the Leadership Breakfast. We were pleased to have over 75 individuals attend our meetings; participants represented a diverse cross section of the community including people with disabilities, family members, service providers, and elected officials.

The following report represents a summary of the issues discussed with suggested actions and resources provided. Also included are the results of the completed evaluation forms. Your feedback will be used to improve our outreach planning process in future meetings.

Barry Long, Chairperson of the Community Outreach Subcommittee facilitated the meetings. Participants selected the discussion topics which defined the meetings' content. The areas of concern identified were 1) transportation, 2) emergency preparedness, 3) low income housing, 4) the digital divide, 5) employment, 6) the school to work transition and 7) voter access. During the course of our meetings other topics were discussed and are included in the report.

TRANSPORTATION

Participant Comments and Concerns

Katie Miller with the Snoqualmie Tribe who primarily works with elders and senior citizens, said the biggest barrier is transportation. Eighty percent of the area is unserved by Seattle Metro or Access, the paratransit service. For example, there is no easy way to get to the Veterans hospital or out of the Valley.

Email comment prior to meeting: Geographically, this area is fairly isolated and getting anywhere on public transit takes planning, time, and effort. My concern is that Metro is cutting back some routes and the local consensus is the routes are already quite limited and cutting back would create some additional hardship.

Ryan Warner with the Washington State Department of Transportation explained that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that paratransit service be provided within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of a fixed route. The challenge is when transit operators need to pare down the budgets, they change and reduce routes and that has a direct impact on where and when paratransit services are available. Reducing services is not just a Metro issue but it is affecting transit companies all across the state.

Jason Beloso, Project Manager of Grants for Special Needs Transportation with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) explained that the WSDOT offers a competitive statewide grant

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program. Applications for the 2013-2015 biennium have been scored and 110 projects were approved for a total of over \$38 million in funding. These grants 1) improve public transportation within and between rural communities, 2) provide transportation services between cities, 3) purchase new buses and other equipment, and 4) provide public transportation service for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Snoqualmie Valley Transit (SVT) received \$500,000 in the last grant cycle to provide a demand response service to the general public and persons with special needs in East King County including areas east of North Bend through the Snoqualmie Valley and north to Monroe in Snohomish County. SVT was awarded a new grant and will hear their award amount sometime in June.

Jason also works on transportation services for veterans and admits that it is a very complex problem. Many veterans are homeless and others may live in areas underserved by accessible transportation services. WSDOT is working with transit agencies, service providers and stakeholders in communities across the State to provide specialized transportation options for veterans.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) awarded four grants in Washington State this year focusing on building the capacity of the 211 information system - one call one click centers to better assist veteran callers with transportation concerns. The goal is to ensure veterans can get from point A to point B without having to make multiple calls and multiple trips.

One person commented that with the existing access to transportation, whether it is with a volunteer, a social agency, fixed route or paratransit, riders need to understand who to contact, the eligibility requirements, the service area and hours of operation. A lot of information needs to be gathered in order to use these services. The other major concern is the time it takes to get to your appointment and back to the community.

Elmer Sams, Mt Si Senior Center President and Councilmember Kathy Lambert were recognized for their efforts and support in getting additional funding for SVT to re-open the lower valley bus routes.

Patricia Bauccio shared that she was able to use a van pool system to commute to work. Many businesses pay part or all of the transportation costs if their employees use public transportation and sometimes this includes van pool services. It is also important to know that people with mobility impairments can join a van pool and Metro will arrange for an accessible van.

schools transport their students in the school to work transition programs to various worksites because of the limited service offered through Seattle Metro and Access. More money could be allocated to job training services if schools could rely on public transportation.

Sno-Valley transportation services do not operate on weekends and service ends at 8:00 PM. People who need transportation services are not able to socialize, worship or work on weekends if they need transportation.

B.J. Libby added that Saturday transit not only requires a bus, a driver and consistent ridership; it requires someone in the office and other support systems. Resources could be allocated but people have to let them know what they need. The Snoqualmie Tribe and the Mt. Si Senior Center are partnering together to gather information on transportation needs. A survey is going to be sent to every house in the Sno-Valley area to determine who needs the bus and where they want to go. This information will be used for planning routes and

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establishing operating hours. It is important to compete and return the survey if you want to have your needs heard.

Hillary Rossi works with para transit riders who consistently arrive 90 minutes early to work before their shift starts. This makes their work day a lot longer and may even shorten their ability to work because of the long commute time.

Ryan Warner explained that under the Federal Transit Administration guidelines transit agencies have a 30 minute window - it is 15 minutes on either side of the time you are given for pickup. You can download a series of topic guides that provide a good explanation of on-time performance, scheduling practices, paratransit no-shows and other topics at <http://dredf.org/ADAtg/OTP.shtml>.

Resources and Suggested Actions

Amy suggested that mobility centers be established in several brick and mortar locations around the valley. The mobility centers would be staffed by paid individuals or volunteers who are knowledgeable about the various transportation systems. The centers would assist customers in finding the best method to reach their requested destination. These centralized information centers would be where people would go to learn about transportation and other local programs such as emergency preparedness, job opportunities, and free or low cost services available in the community. Examples of the transportation resources available follows.

- **Seattle Metro Surplus Van Program** – Organizations can receive vans that are retired from service. The application process is closed for this year. You need to contact the councilmember in your area to get an application. Each councilmember has 3 vans annually they can donate to organizations within their district. A similar program is available in the Olympia area. The application process is fairly easy too. To find out who your King County Councilmember is, you can go on the King County website, <https://www.kingcounty.gov/council>.
- **Snoqualmie Valley Transportation** – (425) 888.7001. SVT hours of operations are Monday through Friday 6:00 am – 7:00 pm. The cost is \$1.00 one-way. The service is not just for seniors, persons aged 13 years and older can ride unsupervised. Persons aged 12 and under must have adult supervision.
- Sno-Valley Senior Services offers transportation to seniors and people with disabilities of all ages:
- **Hyde Shuttle** – (425) 333.4099 or (877) 415.3632. The Hyde Shuttle serves seniors throughout the Sno-Valley, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. The service is free for seniors and people with disabilities of all ages. Donations are welcome. At least 24 hours notice is required to schedule a trip.
- **Sno-Valley Shuttle** – (425) 333.5554 or (425) 888.7001. Call the Shuttle for transportation around the Snoqualmie Valley, Monday through Friday from 6:00 am – 8:00 pm. Rides are 50 cents each way or 25 cents for seniors.

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- **Access** – (866) 205.5001. You must complete an application to become eligible for services. Once accepted, you can get rides for any purpose on a wheelchair accessible van. Service is limited to pick-up and delivery within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of an established Metro bus line.
- Transportation specifically for health care appointments include the following:
- **Volunteer Transportation** – (800) 282.5815. Volunteers use their own vehicles to provide transportation for people 60 years of age and older, to and from medical appointments on the Eastside and in Seattle. They highly recommend that you schedule your appointments to avoid the rush hour traffic. A donation of \$6.00 is suggested. To arrange a trip call at least 1-week in advance.
- **Eastside Friends of Seniors** – (425) 369.9120. Volunteers offer “door-through-the-door” transportation to healthcare appointments and back home. Other services are also available. See their website at <http://www.eastsidefriendsofseniors.org>.

Examples of Best Practices include the following:

- Mason County Transit in Shelton Washington operates an After School Activity bus line. During the school year Mason County Transit converts school buses by placing a magnetic sign on the bus indicating it is available for general ridership. These buses serve four of their longer commuter routes. Another best practice is their operation of a volunteer driver program for persons age 60 and older for whom it is too difficult or impractical to use regular transit service, due to age or physical limitations. The program provides transportation for shopping, banking, medical appointments etc. In 2011, they had 7 volunteers serving 82 customers. The volunteers traveled 5,200 miles, volunteered 2300 hours and made 1,300 trips. To learn more about these best practices visit them online at www.masontransit.org.
- Pay Your Pal is federally funded program operated through the Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (SNOTRAC). Program eligibility requires you to have a disability, live in rural Snohomish County and not near a bus stop. Qualified individuals identify a volunteer driver who is willing to provide transportation. Drivers are reimbursed for their mileage at 30 cents per mile. Rides are not restricted to certain hours or days. Riders are responsible for ensuring the driver and vehicle have appropriate insurance and that both are safe. To find out more information you can call the SNOTRAC Program Coordinator at (425) 265.2226 or visit them online at www.snotrac.org.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Participant Comments and Concerns

Lucille Walls with the Alliance of People with disAbilities asked that the Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment develop a White Paper on Sheltering in Place. There is a tendency for people with disabilities to think they have to leave their homes and in 80% of the cases they need to stay in the shelter of their home. Guidance needs to be developed for first responders to know the importance of sheltering at home. There are some really good reports on disaster planning and sheltering in place that I will send to Toby Olson.

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Jason Beloso added that he has been working on emergency disaster planning for special needs or vulnerable populations. A conference was held recently on this subject and all 350 seats were taken; we even had 175 people on the waiting list. It did not address sheltering in place but when it comes time to evacuate, there are a lot of misconceptions or false expectations out there. People think that they can just call Metro and Metro will come or another transit agency or even a third party provider will come to your door and take you to a shelter. Organizations and transit agencies need to pre-plan how evacuations will be executed. Transportation providers need updated Memorandums of Understanding allowing them to provide service outside of their jurisdiction in the event of an evacuation. There is a lot of coordination around this topic and sheltering in place is just one of the many pieces. As a follow-up to the conference I am working with a few folks to figure out what the next steps should be. It could be White Paper. Part of the goal is to integrate the disaster planning for vulnerable populations into the larger transportation plans at the local and regional levels. To some degree we are also looking at integrating transportation planning at a statewide level.

We also need organizations and agencies to offer cooling centers when we have a heat wave. The Senior Center is a good example but it is not open on weekends. Sometimes it is even hotter in North Bend than it is in Seattle. It would be nice to have some visual identification on a building to let people know that it is a official Cooling Center.

Cooling Centers are a temporary air-conditioned public space set up by local authorities to deal with the health effects of a heat wave. They are open to all people of all ages and are usually sited at several locations throughout a city. Cooling Centers are meant to prevent hyperthermia, especially among the elderly and disabled without air conditioning at home. Centers provide shade, water and sometime medical attention, along with referrals to social services as many of the people who need assistance from these centers are homeless. Some natural places to go in periods of high heat are local libraries, senior centers, malls, and community centers. Often times during heat waves, these facilities operate with extended hours. For more information on Cooling Centers you can call 211 or contact King County Disaster Information.

Emergency Housing – The Snoqualmie Valley Winter shelter, operated by the North Bend Community Church, is the only homeless shelter in North Bend. It closed its doors in March and will reopen in the fall as the cold weather returns. In the mean time it offers meals to the community on Monday and Friday. If you want to volunteer or need more information, you can contact Michael or Michelle Walter at (425) 888.2711. The Church is located at 146 East 3rd Street in North Bend.

Note: If you search homeless shelters for North Bend on the internet, it directs you to 11 shelters all outside of the area with the closest one being 21 miles away.

B.J. Libby announced that the Mt Si Senior Center has become an official emergency shelter. The gas line and new energy efficient hot water tanks have been installed along with a new emergency generator. Paula Edwards, the Program Director and B.J. have recruited two volunteers who will be event managers if we have an emergency and need staff coverage 24-7. The Senior Center is also on the food delivery list and will be serviced during an emergency situation. B.J. also recognized the Snoqualmie Tribe for providing training so all SVT and senior center staff are up to date on 1st Aid/CPR/Blood Borne Pathogens and the proper use of a fire extinguisher.

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The Center is in the early stages of setting up protocols for an emergency situation. We are working with the Red Cross to arrange more training for our staff and volunteers. We have identified volunteer cooks who have food handler's cards who are willing to come to the shelter and assist. We are connecting the dots but it is going to be a very detailed process. We are finding our partners and starting the discussion on what we need to be fully operational. Fuzzy Fletcher, Director of Emergency Management for the Snoqualmie Tribe gave a presentation to our seniors on all kinds of emergency tactics.

Jason Beloso added as a federal emergency manager we encourage communities, counties, and the State to be as self-sustaining as possible. It used to be that you needed to be self-sustaining for 72 hours. After Katrina, the new guideline is a week. Self-sustaining means having food supplies, water storage, medications, pet supplies, emergency generators, family notification processes etc. In a major regional disaster communities may be isolated, especially in our area where bridges are our major connectors between communities.

Fuzzy Fletcher suggested that emergency planning needs to be done as a collaborative process for the whole valley. When an emergency occurs, border lines and boundaries really don't make a difference when it comes to a major disaster. Pre-planning needs to occur for the whole valley. In a real disaster, transportation, food, housing and watering would need to be addressed for the larger community.

Dave Spicer commented that he heard really good things today regarding disaster planning. Putting little things together one step at a time over time can develop a comprehensive and effective plan. I do want to add that the City of Snoqualmie and North Bend both have emergency operations centers. Snoqualmie's is at the fire station off Parkway and I believe North Bend is at the Public Works Department. Snoqualmie is going to be taking over the services of the North Bend Police so we will be working jointly for emergencies. We need to do a better job about communicating with the public about these changes and about our emergency planning process.

Fuzzy added that individuals who take medications need to have a 30 day supply on hand in case of an emergency. Most insurance companies allow you to refill your prescriptions every 25 days instead of 30. By using this process you automatically build up a supply and in seven months time you have an extra month of pills. You will need to rotate the medications so they do not go out of date. If you don't have prescription insurance, you can do the same if you purchase your medications in the same manner.

Wes Brosman added that in all of the emergency plans being developed, please don't forget to include how you plan to reach out to the hard of hearing, deaf and deaf blind populations. You need to ensure that your message systems are accessible to everyone. All announcements coming from the state or the emergency broadcasting system need to be captioned.

Resources and Suggested Actions

It was recommended that every citizens talk to their public officials and request that we have a valley-wide disaster exercise to implement our plan to find out what works, what doesn't and where we need to improve. Examples of resources include the following:

- **What is 2-1-1** – Washington Information Network 2-1-1 – (WIN 2-1-1) is an easy to remember three-digit telephone number assigned by the Federal Communications Commission for the purpose of providing quick and easy access to information about health and human services. WIN 2-1-1 exists to

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make people's lives better; to enhance community resiliency; to identify and break cycles of need, and to help organizations, foundations, businesses, individuals and government more efficiently distribute resources. It maintains a statewide database of community resources that can be searched. their website address is <http://win211.org>.

- **King County Public Health - Vulnerable Populations Action Team (VPAT)** has been working collaboratively with Seattle and King County community based organizations since 2006 to ensure that no one group is more impacted than another in an emergency. VPAT helps service providers get prepared, stay prepared and be ready to respond to their clients' needs during times of disaster. VPAT offers training and assistance to community-based organizations (CBOs), provides emergency information to residents through a communications network, and advocates on behalf of vulnerable populations for greater consideration in emergency preparedness. Robin Pfohman is the VPAT Program Manager. Her office is located at 401 5th Ave, 13th floor, Seattle, WA 98104 and her phone number is (206) 263.8759. To find out more information on VPAT and other disaster planning programs visit their website address at <http://www.kingcounty.gov>.

The Department of Justice has been quite active in emergency preparedness in the past year, and they've produced "An ADA Guide for Local Governments: Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities" See <http://www.ada.gov/emergencyprepguide.htm>.

Individual planning for emergencies is a personal responsibility. As an individual with a disability or having a family member with a disability, it was recommended that you register with your local fire department. Letting first responders know about your individual needs should be part of your individual emergency planning process. There are many websites that provide tips for individuals with disabilities on how to prepare for emergencies and natural disasters. Below you will find a few to help you start your search.

- American Red Cross – <http://www.redcross.org>
- Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network – www.cepintdi.org
- Disability.Gov – www.disability.gov
- Easter Seals (s.a.f.e.t.y. First program) – www.easter-seals.org
- Federal Emergency Management Agency – <http://www.fema.gov/plan/>
- National Organization on Disability/Emergency Preparedness Initiative – www.nod.org/emergency
- Northwest ADA Center – www.nwadacenter.org
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disability: Emergency Preparedness Toolkit – www.hhs.gov/od/disabilitytoolkit/index.html

LOW-INCOME HOUSING

Participant Comments and Concerns

Comment from email before meeting: My concerns are finding affordable rental units that are also accessible for the growing number of homeless families with children with intellectual disabilities. We do have a housing project underway that is anticipated to be completed around December 2014. It is called the Low Income

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Housing Institute Bellevue Project. We have three units in the 57 unit building which will be located at 204 111th Ave. NE in Bellevue. We have a great program with the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) called The Housing Access and Services Program (HASP). This program helps individuals with disabilities access Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. For more information about the HASP program, contact your Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) case manager or Katherine Festa, Housing Coordinator, King County Developmental Disabilities Division, (206) 263.9053. Her email address is katherine.festa@kingcounty.gov.

We have a few parents that are actively working with Life Enrichment Options (LEO), a non-profit housing organization that benefits Issaquah residents with developmental disabilities to secure a house in the valley. They operate two homes serving 10 individuals. It doesn't cover the current need because the number of individuals with developmental disabilities in our local schools is consistently growing. To learn more about the LEO program, visit <http://kingcounty.gov>, enter LEO in the search bar, and look for the PDF. It takes a Community to Build a Home.

Mt Si Senior Center owns and operates the Sno-Ridge Apartment complex – a low income senior housing facility with 39 units. Currently they have 18 people on their waiting list and generally, vacancies only occur when people die. To qualify for the housing, you need to be 62 years of age or older and head of household. Other people who are younger are able to live in the facility as long as the head of household meets the age requirement. People looking for housing options visit the Center almost daily. Many people explain that they are trying to find less expensive rentals because they have been priced out of their current facility. The apartments are able to update their units and install accessible features like a roll-in shower if the renter has a prescription from their physician. If you want more information contact Howard at (425) 888.2793.

Barry Long added that individuals with disabilities may qualify for a tax credit if they improve their home's accessibility. Installing ramps, widening doorways, lowering or modifying kitchen cabinets or installing a lift are examples of improvements that could qualify under medical expenses. You can find out more information by reading the IRS Publication 502 or talk with a tax account.

Wes Brosman added that if you operate a business out of your home, you may also qualify for The Small Business Tax Credit which is for small businesses that in the previous year, earned a maximum of \$1 million in revenue or had 30 or fewer full-time employees. The credit is 50 percent of expenditures over \$250, not to exceed \$10,250, for a maximum benefit of \$5,000. The credit amount is subtracted from the total tax liability. The credit is available every year and can be used for a variety of costs such as:

- the removal of barriers, in buildings or vehicles, which prevent a business from being accessible to, or usable by, individuals with disabilities;
- the purchase of adaptive equipment or the modification of equipment;
- sign language interpreters for employees or customers who have hearing impairments;
- readers for employees or customers who have visual impairments; and
- the production of print materials in accessible formats (e.g., Braille, audio tape, large print).

King County Housing Authority's (KCHA) Section 8 waiting list is closed and the issuance of vouchers has been suspended. It is recommended that you check the waiting list at the end of each month for an update. Their website address is <http://www.kcha.org/housing>. You can also check the eligibility requirements to make sure you qualify for the program. If you have questions, their contact number is (206) 214.1300

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Seattle Housing Authority offers the Housing Choice Voucher program and they too have a very long waiting list. The current waiting list was created by lottery in spring 2008, and it was made up of 4,000 households. The list remains closed and will not open until all of the households on this list have been served. To learn more about this program and other housing assistance programs visit their website at <http://www.seattlehousing.org>.

Imagine Housing is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit affordable housing developer. They are building a housing complex called Timber Falls at Snoqualmie Ridge. Once completed, Timber Falls will offer 160 apartments and town-home style homes for individuals and families earning 60% of the area's median income. Residents will need to demonstrate an income or subsidy source that is 2.5 times the monthly rent and all residents will undergo credit and criminal background checks. All apartment buildings, the community building and the site are handicapped accessible. Construction will start in 2014 and leasing is expected to begin the spring of 2016. If you want more information or updates, check out their website at: <http://imaginehousing.org/what-we-do/future-properties/>.

Resources and Suggested Actions

- **Master Builders Care Foundation (MBCF)** - is a philanthropic arm of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties. The Foundation provides building resources and expertise to nonprofit service organizations dedicated to housing individuals and families in need. MBCF has three primary community service programs: HomeAid Master Builders Care, Rampathon and Painting a Better Tomorrow. The Homeaid Master Builders Care facilitates the construction or renovation of facilities for charitable organizations whose purpose is to provide housing and assistance for the temporarily homeless. In 2010 they worked with the Compassion House, in Issaquah. Rampathon celebrated its 20th Anniversary on May 18, 2013 and built 16 ramps at 15 locations throughout King and Snohomish counties. Each May, one Saturday is selected where over 300 volunteers gather to build accessible ramps so others gain freedom, independence and the ability to enjoy life to its fullest. Painting a Better Tomorrow is an annual fall event where members and friends of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties commit one Saturday to paint and make minor cosmetic repairs to homeless shelters and nonprofit agencies through the counties. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.masterbuildersinfo.com> or you can call Jay Schupack, MBCF Executive Director at (425) 460.8829.
- **Home Depot Foundation** offers grants up to \$5,000 to registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S. that are using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their community. More competitive grant proposals will specifically identify projects for veterans and will include housing repairs, modifications, and weatherization work. Grants are given in the form of a Home Depot gift card for the purchase of tools, materials, or services. The Foundation will be accepting grant applications from February 1 – August 13, 2013. For more information on their charitable programs and how to apply, visit their website at <http://homedepotfoundation.org>.
- **The NAMI website** has some excellent information on housing and they set four criteria for appropriate housing; affordability, independence, accessibility and housing free from discrimination. There is also a publication entitled "Housing Tool Kit" which provides information to help the public mental health

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community meet the housing needs of people with mental illnesses. Go to www.nami.org to find out more information.

- Another resource for understanding your housing rights is the **Washington State Human Rights Commission (HRC)**. They offer technical assistance and educational workshops. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you can file a complaint by talking with an investigator at (800) 233.3247. For more information about HRC and their services check out their website at <http://www.hum.wa.gov>.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Participant Comments and Concerns

This community does not have a free broadband service. Having free internet access is really important for persons with disabilities. 80% of the non-disabled use email and in contrast only 40% of the disability community uses email. The number of internet users continues to increase and it should be more affordable. The cost of the internet should be going down not escalating upward. The internet needs to be affordable and accessible. It should not be a service only the rich can afford. There are a lot of ways to get free equipment and software but there are no resources for free internet in your home.

People can go to Starbucks or McDonalds and have access to free Wi-Fi. You can also search on the internet for hotspot locations in your area. The North Bend Bar and Grill, Gordy's Steak and BBQ Smokehouse and the Valley Camp Retreat Center are free Wi-Fi locations. Local libraries, senior and community centers may offer free usage of computers and the internet. The North Bend Library even offers free computer classes.

Resources and Suggested Actions

- **Comcast** offers discounted rates for seniors, veterans and persons with disabilities. You need to contract your local provider because discounts vary by location.
- **TechSoup** is a 501(c)(3) group which connects your nonprofit, charity, or public library with technology products and solutions and provides the learning resources you need to make informed decisions about technology. Their learning resources are free and available to all users. Once registered and qualified with TechSoup, nonprofits and libraries can access donated and discounted products and services, including high-quality refurbished hardware and software from partners like Microsoft, Adobe, Cisco, Intuit, and Symantec. If you want to learn more about this organization, go to their website <http://www.techsoup.org> or you can call their main office in San Francisco at (415) 633.9300.
- **Washington Access Fund** provides low interest loans for the purchase of assistive technology devices and services through the Assistive Technology Loan and the Business Equipment (Telework) Loan programs. The Washington Access Fund also provides a low-cost rental program for closed circuit magnification systems (CCTVs). Their toll-free phone number is (877) 428.5116. To view their website and learn more about their programs go to <http://www.washingtonaccessfund.org>.

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- **Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP)** provides assistive technology resources and expertise to all Washingtonians with disabilities to aid in making decisions and obtaining the technology and related services needed for employment, education and independent living. WATAP is part of the University Of Washington Center for Technology & Disability Studies and is guided by a consumer-majority advisory council. You can contact WATAP toll-free at 1.800.214.8731 or visit their website at <http://watap.org>.
- **Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP)** helps low-income households afford telephone services. Access to a telephone is considered a basic necessity – allowing you to call emergency 911; get medical and social services; and connect with employers, community, family and friends. WTAP helps by discounting wire line phone service. If you're not able to get a traditional phone, WTAP also provides access to a no-cost community voice mail. WTAP **does not** help with cell phones. More information on eligibility and how WTAP can assist you is available on their website at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/wtap>.
- **Washington State Lifeline Wireless Plan** was designed to give low-income Washington State residents access to emergency services and employment through free/reduced cost phone service. Residents can opt for a free cell phone and wireless service as part of the Lifeline program. Qualified Washington State residents receive 250 **FREE** Voice Minutes per month and Text Messaging at 1 Minute per Message. There are no contracts, no deposits, and no credit checks. Additional minutes are available for an added cost. Data plans are not available at this time but will be available soon. If you are interested in this service go to their website at <https://www.yourtelwireless.com>.

EMPLOYMENT

Participant Comments and Concerns

Comment from email prior to meeting: Employment is certainly an issue for everyone, disabled or not. We are definitely improving work options by partnering with rotary, school-to-work programs, and becoming more visible in the community, but again, geography and transportation are certainly limiting factors.

Starting August 1, 2013, free benefit planning services will be available through Plan to Work. If you are an SSI or SSDI beneficiary or both, you can call Plan to Work to learn more about how earnings can affect your state and federal benefits. This is a free service operated through a grant from the Social Security Administration. Their toll-free number is (800) 497.9443 or you can visit them online at www.plantowork.org.

Resources and Suggested Actions

- Ryan Warner with the Washington State Department of Transportation suggested contacting the **Job Accommodations Network (JAN)**. JAN is the leading source for free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. JAN helps persons with disabilities enhance their employability, and shows employers how to capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace. Assistance is available both over the phone and on

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line. Their toll free number is (800) 526.7232 (VOICE), (877) 781.9403 (TTY) or visit their website at askjan.org.

- **WorkSource** has 7 sites in King County to serve you. The two closest WorkSource locations to North Bend are:
 - Rainer Office which is located at 2531 Rainier Ave. South, Seattle, WA 98144. Their telephone number is (206) 721.6000
 - Redmond Office located at 7735 178th Pl NE, Suite C, Redmond, WA 98052. Their telephone number is (425) 861.3700

WorkSource offers many programs and services that assist customers with their resume, interviewing skills, basic computer classes and job matching. You can also check out them out by going to www.gotoworksource.com and click on WorkSource Office.

- **Northwest ADA Center** help you find answers to your ADA employment questions and possible solutions to accommodation issues. You can call them toll free at 1.800.949.4232 or visit their website at nwadactr@u.washington.edu.
- **Health Care for Workers with Disabilities (HWD)** allows individuals with disabilities to work, earn money, increase their personal assets and still qualify for Medicaid. You can apply for HWD by calling (206) 272-2169 or (800) 871-9275 to leave a message with a specialized medical team member. HWD staff checks their direct message line twice daily. You can also apply on line at <http://hrsa.dshs.wa.gov/eligibility/hwd.htm>.

Example of a Best Practice: In an outreach meeting in Sequim we learned about a collaborative effort to improve job opportunities for people with disabilities. Tim Bruce with the Clallam County Health and Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Program formed a group including 31 employers who hired workers with a disability; members of their Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board; and representatives from the local WorkSource. They meet with the employer community and provide education on what it means to hire individuals with developmental disabilities. To learn more about this program you can contact Tim Bruce at (360) 417.2428 or by email at tbruce@co.clallam.wa.us.

SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION

Participant Comments and Concerns

Kim Baker with the Snoqualmie Valley School District expressed concerns regarding the available funding for their Transition Learning Center. Special Ed students are not getting enough time in job training because of the minimal transportation services. If funding was increased more students would be able to work and adequate transportation services would be available. A parent wrote a grant and the school district received an additional

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\$25,000 to purchase and operate a van. The grant will not cover major repairs so additional money is needed to keep everything operational.

As a teacher we spend a significant amount of time training our students on how to use Metro and Access services. The routes in our area are very limited. Being an independent bus rider is a great skill to have but if the bus doesn't meet your needs, should we continue these efforts? We need to be creative and find new ways to move students from school to their work sites. I am impressed by the parent who took the initiative to write a grant!

VOTER ACCESS

Participant Comments and Concerns

Cristina Labra with the Washington State Secretary of State Office announced that she had a signup sheet for anyone who is interested in receiving the voter's pamphlet in an accessible format. People who don't have access to a computer can listen to the voter pamphlet on a CD. As a service organization, you can request as many copies as you need for your customers.

B.J. asked if the Mt Si Senior Center could be an official voting site. Cristina referred B.J. to the King County Elections Department. Elections are administered at the county level. The King County elections office is located at 919 SE Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057-2906. Their office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Other Programs and Services

- The Accessible Communities Act provides resources for counties to promote better disability awareness and encourages counties to establish an Accessible Community Advisory Committee (ACAC). ACACs can promote greater awareness and accessibility through grants available through the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE). GCDE is in the process of developing an Accessible Community's website that will provide technical assistance to local governments and to the general public. It will also include examples of best practices and a searchable database of local public accommodations. For more information contact Debbie Himes at 360.725.9511 or email her at dhimes@esd.wa.gov.
- CaptionCall - uses voice recognition technology and a transcription service to quickly provide written captions of what callers say on a large, easy-to-read screen. It works like a regular telephone – simply dial and answer calls as usual – speak and listen using a phone handset like always. The captioning service is free. Captioning is provided by CaptionCall and paid through a fund administered by the Federal Communications Commission. To find out more about this service you can call 1.877.557.227 or you can visit their website at <https://www.captionacall.com>

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- GCDE Membership Applications – GCDE is currently recruiting to fill vacancies on the GCDE in 2014. The Committee is made up of 27 members appointed by the Governor to serve 1-3 year terms. Applications are accepted throughout the year, but only applications received by **August 31, 2013**, will be considered for 2014 appointments. For more information contact Debbie Himes at 360.725.9511 or email her at dhimes@esd.wa.gov.
- Pushing Boundaries' Executive Director Tricia Lazzar explained that Pushing Boundaries provides intensive exercise therapy that strengthens and supports people living with paralysis, and their families, to maximize health and improve quality of life. There is a fee for the exercise therapy program. They also operate a support center. They have compiled a lot of resource information that has been customer driven to assist individuals in locating information and services relative to their specific disability. The goal is to share this information with the entire community whether you are a customer of the facility or not. Pushing Boundaries is located at 4162 148th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98052. Their phone number is (425).869.9506 and the website address is <http://www.pushing-boundaries.com>.
- Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) will be held at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington July 28 through August 2, 2013. YLF is designed for students with disabilities that are incoming high school juniors, seniors who want to be or are leaders in their schools and communities. This program is funded through donations from state agencies, non-profit organizations and private sector donors so we are able to offer this Forum at NO COST TO STUDENTS OR PARENTS! For more information about 2015 forum contact Debbie Himes at 360.725.9511 or email her at dhimes@esd.wa.gov.

Meeting Evaluations and Comments

Evaluations were reviewed and tabulated. Responders rated questions dealing with the meeting content, staff and facility. Overall 82 % of the responders gave the meeting a highly satisfied rating followed by 18% rating of satisfied. Written comments included:

- Great way to hear and share concerns
- Well moderated
- Good issues and discussion
- Need more time

Report Distribution – Everyone who signed in will receive a copy of the written report. The city, county and state elected officials and the Members of the Governor's Committee will also receive a copy of the report.

Respectfully submitted by:

Subcommittee Chair

Vice-Chair

GCDE Staff

Barry Long

Cathy Warms

Melinda Johnson