



NEWS RELEASE

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COVINGTON HONORED FOR MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE

Covington, WA – At its 2012 Annual Conference, the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) awarded Covington the Municipal Excellence Award in economic development for its Destination Covington event. AWC presented the award to Covington's Mayor Margaret Harto and Covington Economic Development Council (CEDC) member Jim Hutchinson at an awards breakfast on Thursday, June 21.

The City of Covington, Covington Chamber of Commerce and CEDC developed the Destination Covington concept to be proactive and innovative in their approach to cultivate economic development opportunities in a shaky economy.

"We had a recession we were still trying to come out of and development had come to a standstill," explains CEDC Co-Chair Jeff Wagner. "CEDC felt that it was time to let the development community know that we were still looking for new partners."

Over 60 invitees attended Destination Covington which featured presentations by CEDC, the city's economic development department, Eric Hovee and Associates, and a testimonial by Costco. Attendees also received a folder with data and information about Covington. The event was funded in part by \$5,000 appropriated by the City Council. However, with costs extending beyond that amount, the city sought sponsorships by local partners that ultimately contributed another \$3,700.

"Destination Covington was a great way to showcase to our Chamber membership and prospective members all of the great things the City of Covington has to offer," shared Covington Chamber of Commerce Chairperson Tamara Paul.

The event, held in October 2011, allowed community leaders to focus on relationship building and personal contact with property owners, brokers, developers, retailers and others. The success of the event was marked by attendee feedback and the resulting inquiries and meetings with potential developers. Attendees Bob and Cheryl Costagna of John L. Scott and Brand Properties stated, "Other municipalities in the area could take a page from [Covington's] book. Good to see a small community can come together to make big changes."

The Covington Economic Development Council will continue their unique outreach efforts with a business breakfast that is currently in the planning stages. Details of the breakfast will be forthcoming.

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Questions should be directed to Covington's Community Development Director Richard Hart at rhart@covingtonwa.gov or by calling (253) 480-2441.

The AWC Municipal Excellence Awards recognizes innovative municipal projects that significantly improve the quality of life for citizens, establish partnerships, and build community support. The Municipal Excellence Awards are presented to cities that have demonstrated outstanding achievements in promoting community excellence. The competition recognizes a community's achievement and encourages other cities to develop similar programs.

The Covington Economic Development Council acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council by facilitating and encouraging economic development opportunities in Covington. Half of its members are appointed by the City Council and the other half are appointed by the Chamber of Commerce.

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