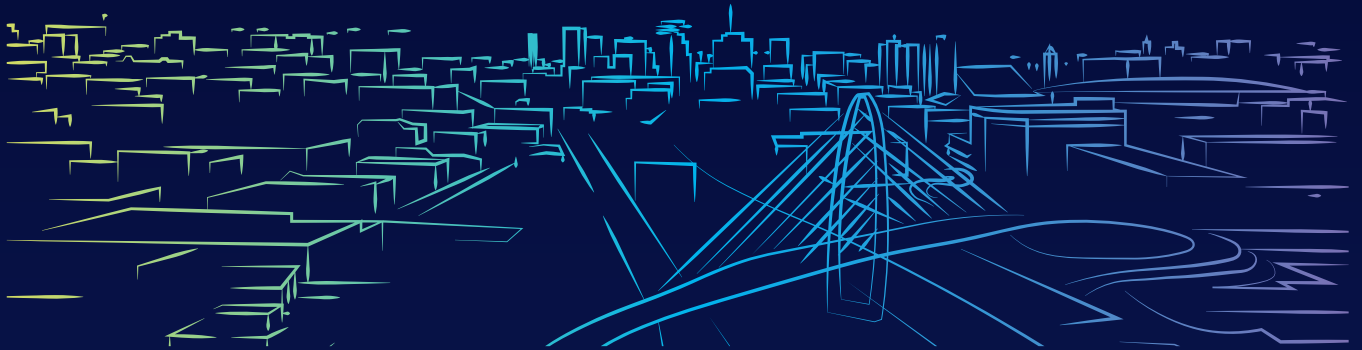


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THE FUTURE  
TODAY

THE SPOKANE REGION'S BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE 2023-24



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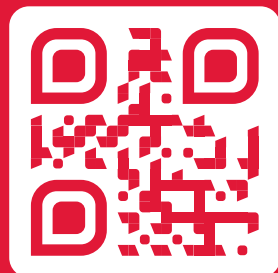
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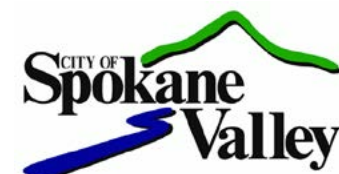
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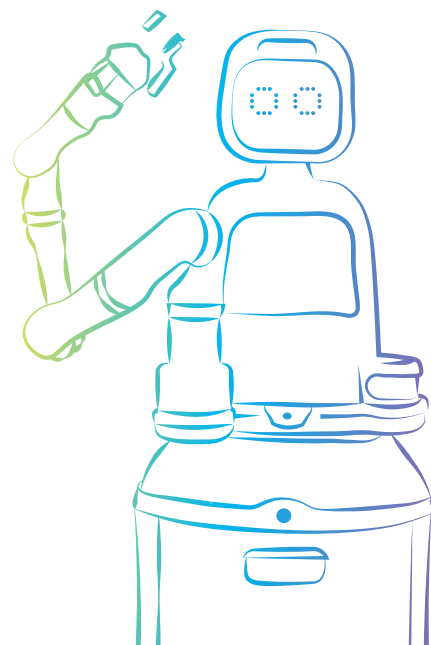
Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI) is the Spokane region's business development organization, leading transformative business and community initiatives to build a robust regional economy.

GSI is a non-profit 501C6 with a 501C3 foundation.

This publication is made possible through a partnership of GSI and the Spokane Journal of Business.

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# CREATING THE FUTURE TODAY

# W

elcome and thank you for choosing to read our 2023-24 Connect Magazine: Creating the Future Today. This year's magazine theme ties to our five-year community campaign, Believe Spokane which was launched alongside 32-member partner organizations at the beginning of this year. The goals of the campaign are focused on opportunities, strategies, and initiatives that build a thriving economy through growth, equity, and agility. Together, we have the opportunity to create real change toward a better future for our community.

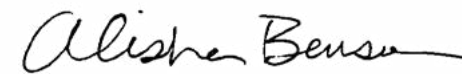
Throughout this publication, we share stories that shine a light on local projects, people, and organizations doing amazing work each day to shape our community for tomorrow. From having the necessary infrastructure in place, to launching new programs to address workforce shortages, to local businesses using new technologies as solutions to help fill gaps, and creating equitable economic opportunities, what we do now matters.

These stories are just a few of the ways our community is stepping up. The work is incremental day to day, but strategy and collaboration are important as we partner and convene to navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

We're proud to work with amazing local businesses and organizations across the Spokane region and know that when the economy does better, so does our business community. This helps create more employment opportunities, supports the health of local industries, sustains small businesses, increases entrepreneurship activity, and attracts new investments and jobs to the region.

Creating a vibrant Spokane region is at the heart of what we do and we're proud to partner with you.

**TOGETHER WE'RE GREATER.**



ALISHA BENSON  
CEO, Greater Spokane Inc.



CARLA CICERO  
GSI Board Chair and  
President & CEO, Numerica Credit Union



# THE NEW ESSENTIAL UTILITY ACCESSIBLE BROADBAND



**ARIANE SCHMIDT**  
*Executive Director,  
Spokane Regional Broadband  
Development Authority BROADLINC*

No one could have imagined just a few short years ago how important broadband, and the ability to access high-capacity Internet, would become for our households, businesses, and anchor institutions for basic community vitality. One lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the stark realization of how much the Internet is a part of our daily lives.

Those who had reliable Internet could live at home, work at home, learn at home, and have community at home. Those without had even a deeper sense of isolation than just physical quarantine.

Broadband has become the new modern essential utility. Not unlike clean water, waste management services, and electricity, broadband ensures household opportunity and resiliency. Now that we are out of the pandemic, individuals and communities alike have decided this issue is important enough to work alongside one another in a common desire to create resiliency for the future.

The federal government has released massive amounts of funding dedicated to broadband with its first focus on rural, unserved communities. This by no means ignores the impact of broadband accessibility in our urban cores. It does, however, highlight that the absence of infrastructure for broadband compounds barriers for individuals with a lack of disposable income and the digital literacy that can be addressed once the service is made available.

In 2021, the Spokane County Commissioners had the foresight to know broadband was on the horizon and would only get bigger. As part of their \$101 Million American Rescue Plan (ARP) allocation, they set aside \$10 Million for an unprecedented allowance of federal match funding dedicated to broadband. They also directed funding to several key broadband-focused projects. As the rest of 2022 unfolded, they realized the cities, businesses and nonprofits within Spokane County also collectively viewed broadband as a joint priority in their 2022 Council of Governments. The movement in public broadband throughout the county culminated in the creation of the Spokane Regional Broadband Development Authority BROADLINC in December 2022. The Commissioners realized that they wanted publicly funded broadband infrastructure assets to remain public assets. Not unlike roads and bridges on which everyone can travel, they wanted the new digital highways to be accessible to multiple internet service providers (ISPs) and affordable and sustainable to end users. BROADLINC was formed with this end in mind.

BROADLINC has been influential at the state and federal level in policy creation so that broadband serviceable locations (BSLs) now exist in Spokane County. BROADLINC followed the recommendation used throughout Washington state to analyze the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Fabric Map location points against local Emergency 911 data to determine what addresses were missing. The result was over 22,000 points in Spokane County alone and over 100,000 points across the state. The FCC accepted all the request points for Spokane and is still reviewing the points for the rest of the state. This revision resulted in the 1.2 billion dollars of funding coming to our state in Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) funding starting in 2024.

BROADLINC continues to work with tribes, counties, cities, and the Washington State Broadband Office (WSBO) to comply with funding regulations and at the same time meet the unique needs in our community as well as the communities throughout the state. This includes the Spokane Broadband Action Team (BAT) which is an advisory group composed of hundreds of business members and dozens of organizations helping to inform the strategic initiatives for projects in unserved communities.

Funding for broadband projects is coming from multiple sources in areas that before never touched Internet-hospital-home, mental health and behavioral health telehealth access, remote learning, and workforce opportunities to all work together.

What lies before us is the ability to turn “snow days” into “virtual days” when every student has access to attend remotely. We can enable patients to be monitored safely from their homes rather than requiring unneeded, costly travel to medical centers. We can offer the ability for families that want to live in a rural environment to bring remote careers to small towns, thus preserving vibrant communities.

This Digital Divide is the difference between having Internet access and navigating the Internet well. These same elements exist in our urban core where infrastructure may exist, but individuals may need a helpful hand to come alongside to assist them in understanding how to make their disposable income go a little further, or how to get a computer to run their business. Digital Navigators can turn language and culture barriers into the next step to digital literacy.

I could not be more hopeful for the path ahead.

“*Spokane is positioned to build a twenty-first century economy that works for everyone by investing fully in the green jobs of the future and infusing climate resilience into our collective DNA. Together we are building a future where everyone can THRIVE!*”

**BRIAN G. HENNING, PH.D.**  
*Gonzaga Climate Center*



# MORE THAN A HELPER — MOXI ROBOTS EMPOWER NURSES, DELIGHT PATIENTS



**BRADD BUSICK**  
Senior Vice President &  
Chief Information Officer,  
MultiCare



**ALEX JACKSON**  
Senior Vice President  
& Chief Executive, Inland  
Northwest Region, MultiCare

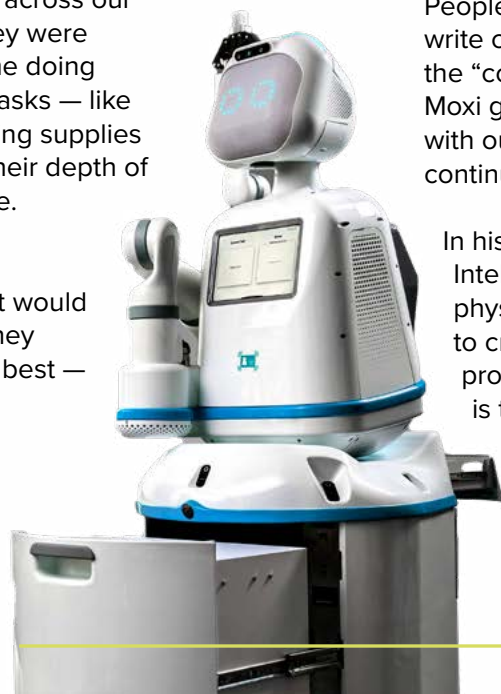
**H**ealth care is the ultimate team-based industry — doctors, nurses, and other professionals must collaborate to deliver safe, seamless care. In 2023, MultiCare Health System was the first health organization in Washington state to welcome a new kind of teammate — an autonomous mobile robot named Moxi.

Equipped with a set of wheels, a robotic arm and flashing heart eyes, Moxi robots scoot down the hallways of select MultiCare hospitals, including MultiCare Deaconess Hospital, performing routine tasks that often take our nurses and other clinical team members away from the bedside.

While Moxi robots are undoubtedly novel, the choice to implement them was based on necessity. Health systems from coast to coast, including MultiCare, face staffing shortages, particularly for registered nurses (RNs). Between 2020-21, more than 100,000 RNs dropped out of the workforce, according to a Health Affairs Forefront article, exacerbating a shortage that existed pre-pandemic.

Beyond mitigating this growing workforce gap, MultiCare is also committed to addressing challenges RNs face on the job that can lead to burnout. Over the course of 52 listening sessions held with 1,000 nurses across our system, we learned they were spending too much time doing mundane, nonclinical tasks — like hunting for and gathering supplies — that don't leverage their depth of knowledge or expertise.

Our RNs needed an innovative solution that would free up their time, so they could do what they do best — direct patient care.



That's when MultiCare turned to Moxi. Created by the artificial intelligence company Diligent Robotics, Moxi removes the burden of rote, non-patient-facing tasks for our nurses and other clinical team members. For example, Moxi gathers and delivers medications, lab specimens, personal protective equipment (PPE) and other items.

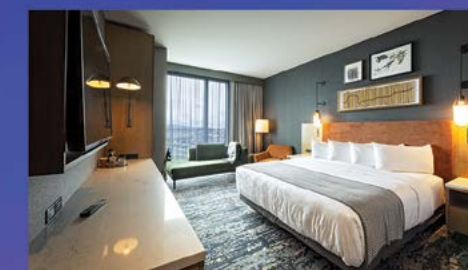
Part of the secret of Moxi's success at MultiCare is that we have not approached it with a set-it-and-forget-it attitude. Our nurses and team members are constantly brainstorming new ways we could use Moxi — for example, programming it to move telemetry equipment (devices that monitor heart rhythms) from one place to another.

While Moxi was designed to help nurses, the robot has been a hit with patients and visitors, too. People often want to pose for selfies with Moxi and write comments in our patient care surveys about the "cool robot." In more ways than one, use of Moxi gives us a competitive advantage that aligns with our culture of expanding access to care and continuously improving quality of care.

In his book "Deep Medicine: How Artificial Intelligence Can Make Healthcare Human Again," physician Eric Topol writes that AI has the power to create more opportunities for health care providers to connect with patients — and that is the lasting value that Moxi brings to our health system. Not only do our clinical team members benefit from thoughtful adoption of AI like Moxi robots; our patients deserve it.

**The results speak for themselves:**  
In the three and a half months that MultiCare has piloted Moxi robots at select hospitals, they have made **9,955** deliveries, saving our staff members **4.92M** steps and allowing them to focus on the complex clinical care they are trained to provide

# WE SET OUT TO BE THE BEST.



But we forgot the part where being the best casino resort in the Northwest means more guests wanting more action, more jackpots, more big-name entertainment, more pedicures, and more Chilean sea bass with carrot ginger puree. Then one day, we looked up and realized: "Hey team, guess what?"

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# DRIVING COLLABORATION

*Building the Bioscience Ecosystem of the Future*

The positive outlook for life science innovation in the region is supported by a strong, collaborative community. This key finding from a recent study commissioned by five community organizations is paired with the caveat that strategy alignment and focused action among stakeholders is the needed element to catalyze life science growth in Greater Spokane and the Inland Northwest.

Evergreen Bioscience Innovation Cluster was formed as a non-profit for just that purpose, and it has made great strides in connecting the existing pieces in the ecosystem; from its launch in June 2022 to the preliminary designs for a bioscience innovation building in June 2023 and Cushman & Wakefield's (C&W) study of life science growth potential in the Inland Northwest (the study) finalized the following July.

These milestone achievements are in addition to continual community engagement through Evergreen Bio's Collaboration event series focused on keeping cluster strategy true to the voice of its members, creation of active innovation teams to carry out priority projects identified through said events, and building out the cluster's founding membership to increase Evergreen Bio's resilience in driving collaboration.



**KATRINA ROGERS**  
CEO, Evergreen Bioscience  
Innovation Cluster

*Spokane has a real opportunity to act as a relief valve for companies experiencing growing pains in Seattle. Alignment of vision, strategy, and execution from life science community stakeholders is key to success.*

CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD  
NW life science ecosystem report

## Looking to the Future: Collaboration for Infrastructure

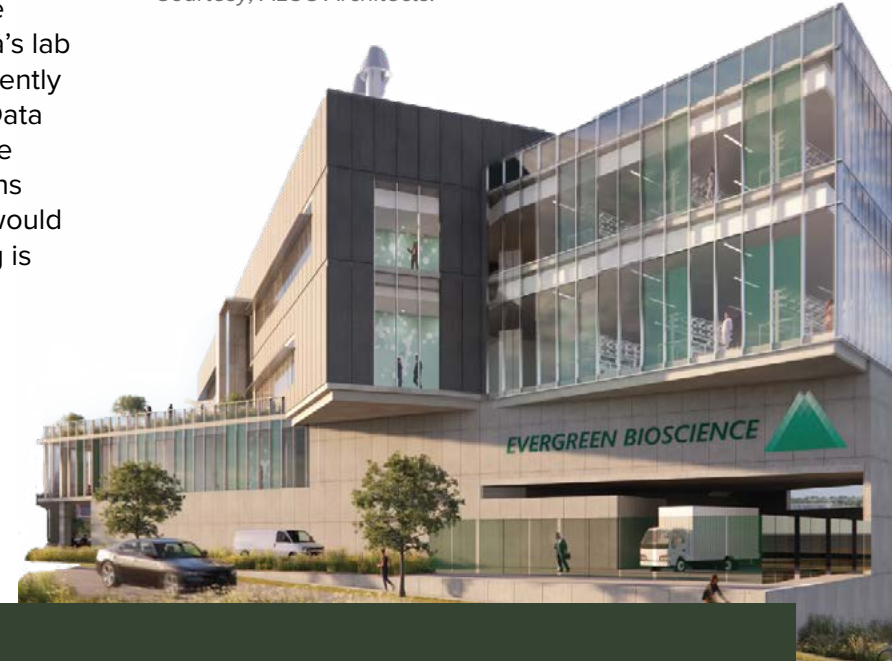
A bioscience innovation center can bring together key stakeholders in a shared space that encourages growth through collaboration. ALSC Architects captured this sentiment from Hub Innovation Team leaders and members who attended the project visioning meeting for the Evergreen Bioscience Innovation Building (EBIB).

With a current plan for ~100 lab spaces, the EBIB is envisioned to also address the area's lab space shortage that the study finds "is currently a constraint within the Inland Northwest." Data supporting stakeholders' shared view of the need for a building like the EBIB strengthens applications for federal grant awards that would bring it into existence. Despite this, funding is not guaranteed.

The study's finding that entire-community involvement is a precondition to realizing the Inland Northwest's life science growth potential aligns with grant programs' requirement that applicants demonstrate active stakeholder participation.

For Evergreen Bio, that means inviting all life science companies to support its efforts in driving collaboration through membership, time, expertise, or all of the above.

*Rendering of the preliminary designs for the EBIB, a building to provide needed infrastructure for life science growth. Courtesy, ALSC Architects.*



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**Commissioner Mary Kuney**  
Chair, Board of County Commissioners



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## EVERGREEN BIO MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS

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East West Summit

Feb – Jul 2023  
Life Science Asset  
& Landscape Study  
commissioned to analyze  
region's life science  
competitive advantages,  
opportunities, & weak  
points; study report  
submitted by C&W to its  
client organizations

Apr – Jun 2023  
**\$200K**  
Evergreen Mfg Growth  
Grant awarded, funding  
used to develop  
preliminary designs of  
the EBIB

“ Supporting vibrancy  
and growth in Spokane's life science  
sector requires targeted efforts from the  
entire community. ”

C&W LIFE SCIENCE  
Asset & Landscape Study report

Visit [EvergreenBioInnovation.com](http://EvergreenBioInnovation.com)  
to get involved or ask questions



## LIFE SCIENCE ASSET & LANDSCAPE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Bottom Up & Top Down

Many emerging life science hubs first find traction with catalyzing growth within the entrepreneurship ecosystem and then attracting inbound expansion projects from established life science companies.

### Facilitate Speed to Market for Inbound Companies

Attracting projects from national life science companies will require existing infrastructure to facilitate speed-to-market considerations—most will highly weight site and talent readiness in their evaluations of potential cities.

### Increase Funding, Resources, & Support for Startups

Focusing on reducing operational friction and cost barriers for bioscience startup ecosystem is a key lever for industry growth—emerging life science hubs have done this through funding, workforce development, subsidized lab space, university partnerships, and specialized mentoring support.

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# SHAPING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY THROUGH GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

From a commercial contractor's perspective, there are numerous—and, on the surface, somewhat self-serving—benefits to pursuing government contracts.

Because they tend to be larger, more long-term endeavors, these types of projects provide a steady stream of work and income over multiple years, making revenue and project backlogs more predictable across the entire contracting chain.

This is especially true in times of recession or economic uncertainty when private funding becomes scarcer and infrastructure spending starts to heat up.

We at Bouten Construction Company have found that government contracts can mean more sophisticated projects. The building of a life sciences facility, for example, enables us to develop specialized expertise.



**NICK GONZALES**  
Vice President,  
Bouten Construction

That expertise improves our reputation and positioning for future work, offers the potential for securing related follow-on projects, and provides opportunities both for growth and for the extension of successful relationships. When you perform well on high-visibility projects like these, it's a competitive advantage when marketing to new clients and partners.

But there's more to government contracts than Bouten's bottom line.

The scale, complexity, and stability of government projects enable commercial construction firms like ours to magnify benefits through their trade partner networks and channel advantages toward their communities—creating positive ripple effects in local economic activity and community assets.

This is a big deal for our trade partners because it opens up opportunities to collaborate on major public projects that may be outside their normal scope of work, allowing them to develop experience and gain exposure to new contracting agencies. This has the added benefit of expanding the trade partner pool in a way that directly benefits owners, providing them not only with greater expertise but also with more accurate estimating.

Government contracting also ensures full and fair opportunities for small businesses, minority-owned firms, and those in historically underutilized business zones.

*Continued on page 18*

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Spokesman - Review



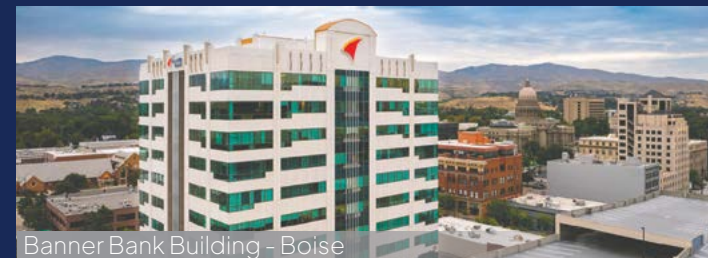
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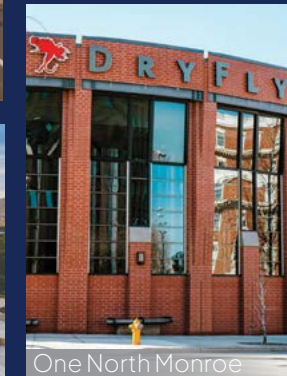
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With more and more of our clients seeing the benefits of promoting economic inclusion and participation, Bouten has been hosting informational meetings for trade partners and design consultants promoting awareness of—and certification by—the Washington State Office of Minority & Women’s Business Enterprises. While some just need help navigating the process, others are learning about the program for the first time.

They provide economic growth through local hiring and spending. Both general contractors and trade partners need local equipment, materials, and labor, which in turn creates jobs and revenue for related businesses in the community and throughout the region. What’s more, these kinds of investments also have a direct impact on the livability and connectivity of neighborhoods.

There are community benefits as well. Government construction projects bring an infusion of investment and upgrades to infrastructure, facilities, and services.

At Bouten, we’ve found that government contracting not only contributes to our own growth, but also creates jobs and promotes equitable opportunities across our entire industry. It’s good for us, it’s good for our clients and trade partners, and it’s good for our communities.

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“ The NW I-90 Manufacturing Alliance (NIMA) is a regional industry group focused on growing advanced manufacturing in the inland Northwest, in alignment with THRIVE Spokane. Their annual conference was held in Coeur d’Alene in May with record attendance. The Alliance is utilizing a \$200,000 state grant to create a manufacturing institute at East Valley HS, directly supporting THRIVE Spokane goals of education and skill development. NIMA leadership is also involved with innovation cluster development for manufacturing. ”

MARK NORTON  
NW I-90 Manufacturing Alliance  
 



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# STRONG PARTNERSHIPS ARE THE BACKBONE OF SOLVING TALENT SHORTAGE

“Every student is unique and different, and every student should have the opportunity to choose the career field at which they are the very best.”

ERIN VINCENT  
LaunchNorthwest

PIA HALLENBERG *Owner, Content by Pia*

One of the keys to the continued growth of the Spokane region is a strong, educated workforce that’s so flexible it can respond to the needs of employers providing solid jobs for the community.

Greater Spokane Inc’s (GSI) Education and Talent Alliance (ETA) is a group of business, K-12, and higher education leaders, and representatives for local non-profit organizations. The co-chair of this diverse group is Superintendent of Northeast Washington 101 Rob Roettger, who said it can surprisingly be a challenge to get everyone in the group on the same page.

“The goal of GSI is to increase the proportion of Spokane County residents with post-secondary degrees to 60 percent by 2025,” Roettger said. “For me, as a superintendent, the goal is to get K-12 students to graduation with options for where they go from there.”

The ETA works in partnership with GSI’s Career Connect Northeast to provide students real-world learning experiences such as internships. Strong partnerships are built around the table when the ETA gets together, and it’s also an opportunity to learn from leaders in different community groups.

“I used to attend these meetings as a superintendent in the Cheney School District,” Roettger said. “One challenge for me now as co-chair has been how to set specific goals for such a diverse group of people. We know what the work is. We have goals around career connection and early learning, and goals around business development – now how do we do it all, together.”

One of the community partners at Roettger’s big table is LaunchNorthwest, an organization that is focused on providing support and opportunities for students and their families in the Inland Northwest.

“I talk about LaunchNorthwest in two ways: I talk about the scholarship we offer and this secret sauce that we want to provide wrap-around services for kids and families from birth to job attainment,” said LaunchNorthwest Associate Director Erin Vincent.

In March, LaunchNorthwest was awarded an \$850,000 grant by the Washington Student Achievement Council to fund mentorship programs at six Spokane County High Schools. This grant is the foundation for the Coordinated Community Mentoring Program that’s launching this fall.

“That program focuses on the post high school commitment,” Vincent said. “And that may not be going to college. Every student is unique and different, and every student should have the opportunity to choose the career field at which they are the very best.”

LaunchNorthwest is also going to provide a Promise Scholarship to Spokane students in greatest need. Local fundraising is ongoing through Innovia, which is the umbrella organization of LaunchNorthwest.

Speaking of wrap-around services: an often overlooked part of workforce development is access to childcare. Without a good childcare option, it is impossible for parents to maintain sustainable careers. To help shed some light on that issue – and find good solutions for the future – Colleen Condon, co-lead of the Inland Northwest Early Learning Alliance, is also part of the ETA.

“There is no easy way to say this: Spokane is a childcare desert and I’m afraid that it’s going to get a lot worse soon,” Condon said. She is the owner and director of Lilac City Early Learning Center and knows the childcare business like the back of her hand. “Childcare was in crisis before COVID, but with the pandemic came American Rescue Plan Act dollars to support us. And they are now running out.”

At her own childcare center, Condon said she gets between 12 and 25 calls a day from parents looking for childcare. She added that many childcare centers are closing or being sold.

“I’m just getting into this work with GSI and the Education and Talent Alliance,” Condon said. “At some point in time, businesses need for their employees to have childcare – we need to find a mechanism where businesses can partner with childcare providers.”

Condon is hopeful that by working with the ETA she will be able to help form a bridge between businesses and childcare providers.

“Our childcare providers are experts at what they do, and they run very good businesses,” Condon said.

“Maybe businesses can create independent partnerships with childcare centers, and contract for some of the spots. GSI will be a great partner in creating that connection.”

ETA co-chair Roettger said there are a lot of resources in the greater Spokane area, and he’s excited to get people who work on similar challenges together in one group.

“Coordination is key,” Roettger said. “Working together is the best way to create better opportunities for our entire community.”

GSI is in a unique position to fulfill the role as a forum for different organizations working toward the same goal: a better community for everyone who lives here.

“The staff at GSI are phenomenal partners and their expertise around education and career pathways is a huge benefit to us,” Vincent said. “GSI already knows how to work with K-12 and businesses – we simply couldn’t do this without them.”

“Working together is the best way to create better opportunities for our entire community.”

ROB ROETTGER  
Northeast Washington 101



**A** cornerstone of Greater Spokane Inc.'s (GSI) Believe Spokane campaign is the development of strong, cross-sector partnerships between higher education, business, and government. In June, GSI led a multi-agency coalition that was awarded a \$150,000 National Governors Association (NGA) grant to create new career pathways for under-employed skilled workers.

The NGA funding will create a Learning and Employment Record (LER) bridge program. What's a LER? It's a digital wallet or resume – a bit like a portfolio – that verifies a worker's certificates and education as they progress in their career.

Inez Olive, Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) Associate Director of Workforce Programs, wrote the successful grant application.

“By using LERs, learners and workers can maintain and share detailed, verified, and secure records of their skills, educational experiences, and work histories in digital files, allowing individuals full autonomy over their records,” Olive said. “The standardized data language of LERs also helps employers uncover hidden talent that better match their workforce needs, supporting a more equitable approach to hiring.” GSI's Dr. Christi Harter, VP of Education and Talent, is building the community of practice. We are leading the work around developing partnerships for skills-

## NEW TOOL TO SUPPORT SKILLS-BASED HIRING

PIA HALLENBERG  
Owner, Content by Pia

based hiring,” Harter said. “The LER is one tool. It's an app, a web-based tool.”

Easy access to one's credentials makes applying for work much more straightforward, especially in the skills-based job arena, where certifications often are earned over time and at different schools.

“Because of the workforce shortage, we know our businesses are looking for a different way to hire, and skills-based hiring is a practice across the nation,” Harter said. “We were one of only ten states who received that National Governors Association grant, which Walmart funded.”

Harter said the LER can be compared to a LinkedIn profile, but there is one huge difference:

“When using this learning and employment record, it's verified. That means the organization providing that credential has already verified it,” Harter said.

The summer 2023 bridge program is a collaboration between Providence Health and Services and Eastern Washington University.

EWU will work with 100 students already enrolled to help them succeed in college when classes start this fall.

“Eastern Washington University has been very intentional around this,” Harter said. The aim is to keep the students engaged from the time they enroll until they begin attending classes in the fall. “The idea around that is to minimize what is called ‘summer melt’ where students sign up but never actually go to college. Or they do go but don't succeed as college students.”

Students who move through the summer program at EWU are awarded a merit – or a badge – for passing each level of instruction, and they can keep track of their progress in the LER.

“The Providence component is that the students get an opportunity to do a job shadow with Providence,” Harter said. “Providence can then connect students with a volunteer opportunity much like an internship program.”

Other states are creating a registry for all certificates and licenses at the state level, but GSI and its partners decided on a different approach.

“We decided to go out to the businesses and ask if they are interested,” Harter said. She has participated in more than 50 collaborative meetings with partner businesses and universities as she created this community of practice.

“This is also about the businesses and improving the process for them,” Harter said. “What we have now is a much quicker and simpler solution than tracking down and verifying information from many different organizations.”

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**AMY EDDY, M.D.**  
UW School of Medicine '10  
Internal Medicine Residency Director,  
Spokane Teaching Health Clinic



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National Governors Association site visit for skills driven states grant, August 30, 2023.  
L-R, Dr. Donald Smith, Dr. Annelies Goger, Dr. Inez Olive, Laura Ward, Amanda Winters,  
Meg Lindsay, Dr. Christi Harter, Sarah Gibson, Alisha Benson

## SPOKANE INCLUSIVE BUSINESS CATALYST



**JOEY GUNNING**  
Strategic Growth Manager,  
Greater Spokane Inc.

On Saturday, July 29, a profound moment in Spokane’s entrepreneurial history unfolded as we celebrated the graduation of our inaugural Spokane Inclusive Business Catalyst (SIBC) cohort. The evening was nothing short of inspirational, infused with hope and an overwhelming sense of achievement. Together, we witnessed the graduation of nine entrepreneurs of color, each successfully completing the accelerator program – a triumph made possible through our collaborative partnership with AHANA, Spokane’s Multi-Ethnic Business Association.

The inception of SIBC was guided by a vision identified in Greater Spokane Inc.’s (GSI) Believe Spokane campaign, aimed at increasing economic vitality with a focus

on economic development and talent attraction and retention. Strategies in the campaign were developed to (among other things): (1) solidify critical services to support small and underserved businesses; and (2) implement equity-minded tactics to focus on targeted populations to ensure none are left behind.

To achieve these goals, we turned to our community partner, AHANA, whose steadfast dedication played a pivotal role in creating a platform where entrepreneurs of color could access vital resources, mentorship, and support. Classes included an HR Presentation, Strategies for Business Growth, Psychological Principles in Business, and more. During the graduation, as participants shared their personal stories and reflections, it became undeniably clear that the SIBC program had a profound impact on the graduates and the greater entrepreneurial community. In addition to the training and resources the cohort participants received, funds raised from the Believe Spokane campaign were used to provide the graduates with \$5,000 microgrants to help them accelerate their growth. The goal is for graduating businesses to increase revenues by 25% after the first year and 50% after the second year.

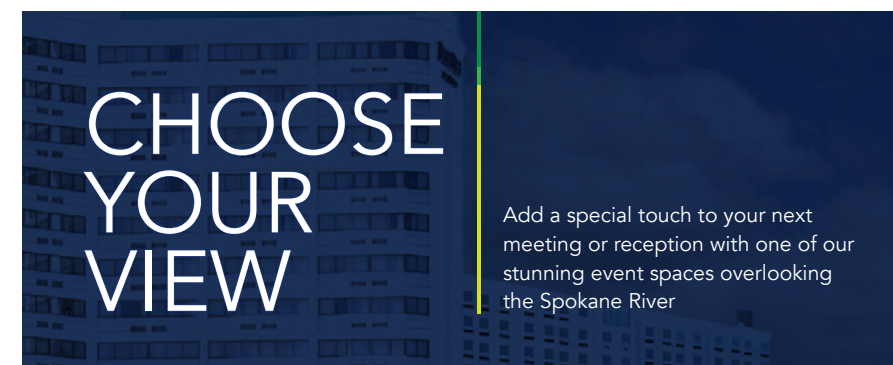
The SIBC program also seamlessly aligns with our region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, THRIVE Spokane, goals of: (1) creating vibrant and inclusive communities; and (2) building the capacity of an ecosystem of support by and for BIPOC business owners. Through our collective efforts in nurturing and empowering BIPOC business owners, we are building an environment where every individual has an equal opportunity to flourish and contribute to the growth of our community.

At GSI, we firmly believe that diversity and inclusivity are not just ideals but essential pillars for a prosperous community. The SIBC is a shining example of how collaboration and inclusivity can drive economic growth while fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. The achievements of the graduates surpassed expectations, and their resilience is truly commendable. We’d like to thank AHANA for their unwavering dedication to creating a more inclusive and vibrant business community, and we are privileged to be part of this transformative journey.

Looking ahead, we are committed to building on the success of the first SIBC cohort and extending the program to include other underrepresented populations and communities.

**For questions or to learn more, please reach out to Joey at:**  
[jgunning@greaterspokane.org](mailto:jgunning@greaterspokane.org).

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**Thank you GSI for your ongoing support of our business community + its members!**  
Kiemle Hagood is an Active + Proud Supporter of Greater Spokane Inc.



# BELIEVE SPOKANE CAMPAIGN FOCUSES ON JOB CREATION AND TALENT ATTRACTION

PIA HALLENBERG Owner, Content by Pia

**A**s the Spokane region continues its climb out of COVID recovery, it's becoming clear that here - just like everywhere else - the pandemic has changed a lot of things. Work patterns changed: many never returned to the offices they occupied before the pandemic, and others stopped working altogether. The roles of core community organizations like Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI) also shifted.

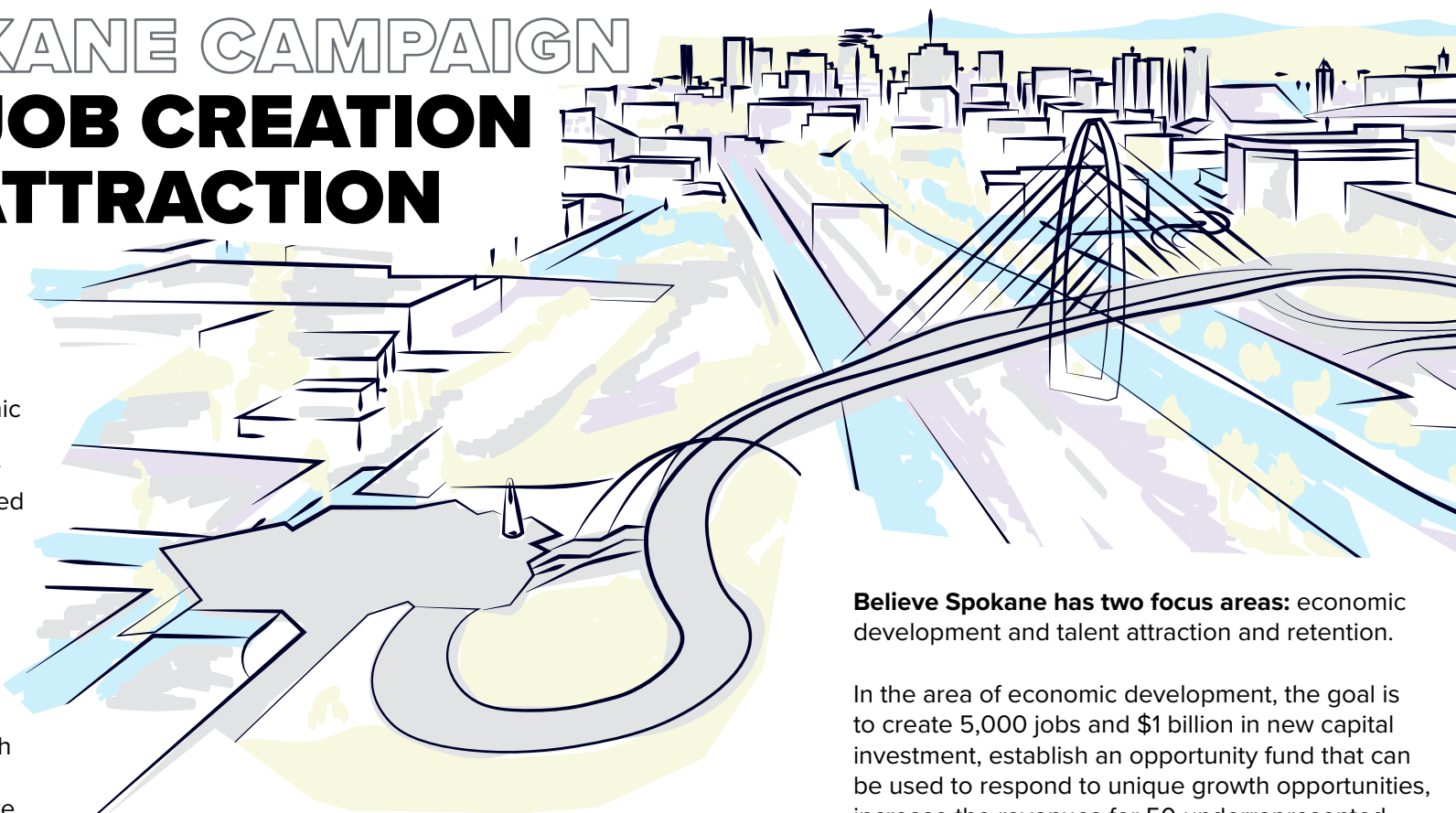
Traditionally, the work of GSI is focused on economic development, and GSI is also the advocacy arm for business development, education, and talent retention. In partnership with the Department of Commerce, GSI represents businesses in Spokane County. Now, there is more.

"Coming out of COVID, there was an additional expectation of us meeting more needs of our community," said Lisa Poplawski Lewis, GSI VP of Development and Partnerships, "and we knew the needs of our community were a little different now than five years ago."

Addressing these needs led to the launch of Believe Spokane, a five-year campaign laser-focused on growth, equity, and retaining the agility of the Spokane region to ensure a continued upward trajectory for the local economy.

**“**It is the right time for an initiative like this, and we share the collective belief that we need to think of what comes next.**”**

JOEL GILBERTSON  
Providence



Believe Spokane is a bold five-year plan that reaches far beyond the usual work of GSI, and to be sustainable, it needed a funding source rooted in the community.

"The goal was initially to try and raise \$3 million in pledges to cover the next five years," Lewis said. "We know we have work to do. If we raise more than that, we can accelerate that work."

At the end of the first quarter of this year, Believe Spokane had raised just over \$3 million in pledges from local businesses to space across the entirety of the campaign.

"The community totally stepped up and supported us," Lewis said, adding that she went 'hot and heavy' after the pledges early on. "I really wanted to make that happen, and it feels really good to say we met that \$3 million goal." Lewis added that independent funding for Believe Spokane is critical because government grants and other external sources come and go.

"We want this to be sustainable here in Spokane, with our business partners who have pledged to support us," Lewis said. "We check in with them, we ask them if we are on the right track - this is a very collaborative undertaking."

**Believe Spokane has two focus areas:** economic development and talent attraction and retention.

In the area of economic development, the goal is to create 5,000 jobs and \$1 billion in new capital investment, establish an opportunity fund that can be used to respond to unique growth opportunities, increase the revenues for 50 underrepresented businesses by 25 percent in year one, and 50 percent in the second year, as well as connect 100 underrepresented companies with resources that can help them grow and prosper.

On the talent attraction and retention side, the goal is to establish community partnerships that can provide 300 internships for post-secondary students, provide upskill training and support for 100 underserved businesses, connect 5,000 students with a career pathway experience and establish additional business and education partnerships to develop 30 percent more career pathways to post-secondary education and employment.

Among many donors, Providence pledged its support of Believe Spokane early on.

"We have a longstanding partnership with GSI, and it was easy for us to get behind Believe Spokane," said Joel Gilbertson, Chief Executive, Central Division at Providence and co-chair of Believe Spokane. "It is the right time for an initiative like this, and we share the collective belief that we need to think of what comes next."

He added that the pandemic brought a tremendous disruption of talent supply, not just in health care but everywhere.

**BELIEVE  
SPOKANE**

**“**Believe Spokane is about being intentional and ensuring all businesses continue to benefit from GSI's work.**”**

CARLA CICERO  
Numerica Credit Union

"These challenges are bigger than what we can handle on our own," Gilbertson said. "The pandemic underscored that not everyone felt like they had a place in our community. It further exposed systemic societal challenges, like homelessness."

He added that equity in economic development is especially important in the future.

"It's the old saying about how rising all the boats together benefits all of us," Gilbertson said. "Are there strong schools? Is housing available and affordable? Can individuals see a place for themselves in our community - we need to work on all that."

Gilbertson's co-chair, Carla Cicero, President and CEO of Spokane Valley-based Numerica Credit Union, agrees.

"Every business in our community benefits from the work that GSI does, no matter how big or small the business is," Cicero said. "Believe Spokane is about being intentional and ensuring all businesses continue to benefit from GSI's work."

Cicero added that raising \$3 million is just the beginning; ongoing funding is needed to continue this vital work.

"I see Believe Spokane as a call to action," Cicero said. "I want to encourage all business leaders to learn more about the campaign and how they can partner with GSI."

Visit [BelieveSpokane.com](http://BelieveSpokane.com) to learn more.

# THE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL'S IMPACT ON OUR REGION



**BEN KRAUSS**  
Project Director, IDC  
and Program Director, WERE

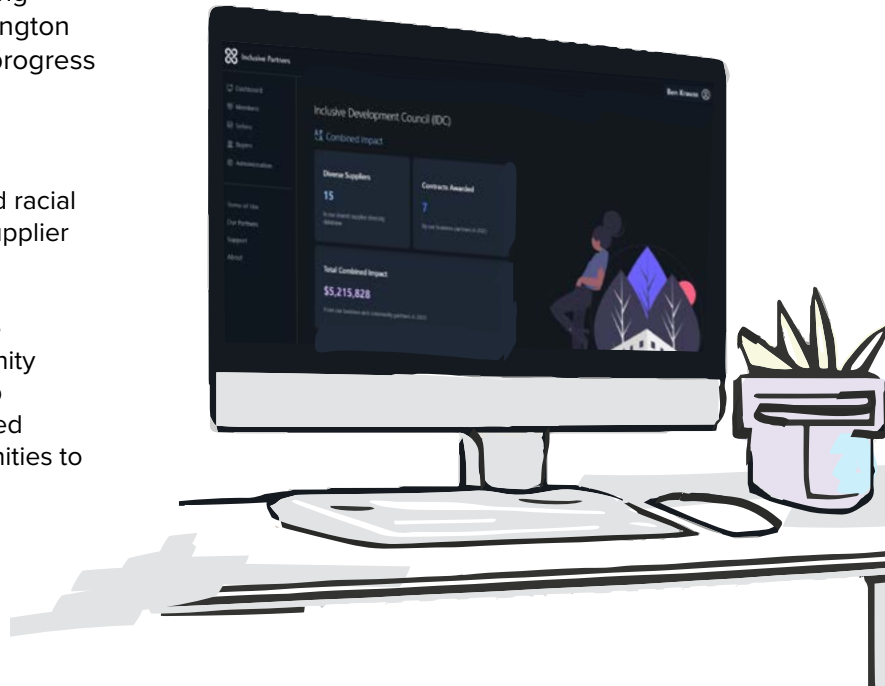
The origins of the Inclusive Development Council (IDC) arose out of the commitment of the Partners for Inclusive Growth and Prosperity to support a vision of equitable economic growth and wealth creation opportunities. The Partners for Inclusive Growth and Prosperity was co-created by the leadership of Avista, Washington Trust Bank, The Cowles Company, and Pearson Packaging Systems. As part of the support of the Washington Employers for Racial Equity commitment to progress and business growth, the IDC engaged in three focus areas:

- 01 Supplier diversity** to increase diversity and racial equity among contractors, vendors, and supplier networks.
- 02 Talent development** to increase the active participation of Spokane's diverse community members in civic and corporate leadership opportunities and to collaborate with trusted leadership members from diverse communities to increase the pipeline of emerging leaders.
- 03 To increase access** to capital and improve financial pathways for diverse communities.

The focus of the work in 2023 is supplier diversity and statewide partnerships. This has resulted in the co-creation of a Supplier Diversity Playbook, intended as a guide for companies to create and sustain a supplier diversity program. The most significant initiative is the creation of the Supplier Diversity Web Platform. This system is designed to foster equitable and inclusive regional economic growth by enhancing supplier diversity and facilitating connections between corporations and underrepresented, diverse businesses. This web-based platform was created to support increased transparency, buyer-seller relationships, and performance tracking of supplier diversity initiatives. In the project pilot phase, corporate buyers from Avista, Washington Trust Bank, The Cowles Company, and Pearson Packaging Systems will be able to see diverse suppliers.

Diverse suppliers in turn will be able to see business opportunities with these corporations and sell their goods and services. The goal is to create a platform that connects buyers and sellers.

Screenshot of the Supplier Diversity Web Platform



A commitment to collaboration and partnerships has always been foundational to the essence of the Inclusive Development Council. This partnership initially manifested with the creation of the Inclusive Development Council in the Greater Spokane area, connecting with the Washington Employers for Racial Equity (WERE), based in Seattle. In 2023, staff from the Inclusive Development Council joined WERE as staff. The result has been greater coordination and collaboration statewide, with an eye on fellowship and building a strong foundation for sustained statewide success.

If you have any questions about the Inclusive Development Council or Washington Employers for Racial Equity, please contact Ben Krauss at [bkrauss@greaterspokane.org](mailto:bkrauss@greaterspokane.org).



Member Frank G., Owner of Thunder Road Guitars. Paid for participation.

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# 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUMMARIZED

The Washington State Legislature finished its business adjourning the 2023 Regular Legislative Session on April 23. Democrats, emboldened by November election results and large majorities, focused their efforts on housing, vehicular police pursuits, narcotics possession, gun violence prevention, and abortion.

### Housing

Democrats and many Republicans alike found common ground to support the passage of HB 1110 or the “middle housing” bill. “Middle housing” aims to describe housing that is neither single family nor an apartment building - rather duplexes, triplexes, 4-, 5-, and 6-plexes, as well as backyard Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The bill overrides local zoning laws that currently limit most cities to single-family homes and requires cities to allow middle housing in the name of density. The controversial bill exposed the friction between state and local lawmakers on land use issues; affordable and housing density is an issue that will most certainly be back in 2024.

### Police Pursuits

The legislature rescinded some of the law concerning vehicular pursuits by law enforcement. SB 5352 would allow police officers to engage in a vehicular pursuit when there is reasonable suspicion (previous law’s evidentiary standard was probable cause) to believe that an individual in the vehicle has committed violent crimes, sex crimes, in process of an escape or while driving under the influence (DUI) or drugs or alcohol. Police officers are still not be allowed to pursue individuals in a vehicle if suspected of a property crime, even if reasonable suspicion is established.

### Drug Possession

Governor Inslee called a one-day special session on May 16th to pass a new drug possession law the legislature failed to pass during the regular session. The issue dates back to 2021 when the Washington State Supreme Court overturned the state’s felony drug possession law in State v. Blake and legislators adopted a temporary misdemeanor policy that would have expired July 1, 2023.

The “Blake fix” bill sets the penalty for possession of controlled substances as a gross misdemeanor with a maximum confinement time of 6 months for the first two convictions and any fine for any conviction is capped at a maximum of \$1,000. It also creates a system for pre-trial diversion into treatment and requires mandatory early conviction vacation if a person can prove that they have completed treatment or have “substantially complied” with the recovery navigator program or similar services for six months. Importantly, the bill also criminalizes the public use of drugs.

### Firearms

The legislature passed 3 bills aimed at preventing gun violence. New laws banning the sale of certain semi-automatic rifles, one imposing a 10-day waiting period on firearms purchases, and one clearing the way for lawsuits against gun makers or sellers in certain cases.



**JIM HEDRICK**  
Owner, H2  
Government Relations,  
and Lobbyist, Greater  
Spokane Inc.

Washington’s new law prohibits the future sale, distribution, manufacture and import of more than 50 types of guns, including AR- and AK-style rifles. The measure does not bar the possession of the weapons by people who already have them. The bill concerning lawsuits against gun manufacturers and sellers requires them to exercise reasonable controls in making, selling, and marketing weapons. The new law concerning the 10-day waiting period requires all gun buyers to show they have taken gun safety training.

### Abortion

As a direct result of the US Supreme Court’s Dobbs decision, reproductive rights played a large part in legislature this year. In response to a Texas court case to remove Mifepristone from the market, a medication used to induce abortion during the early part of a pregnancy, the legislature took “unprecedented action” to purchase a 3-year stock-pile of the drug.

The legislature also passed HB 1469, the “Shield Law” to prohibit the issuance of out-of-state subpoenas seeking information related to abortion & reproductive health care services, prohibit out-of-state criminal investigations & arrests seeking communication and other evidence related to abortion & reproductive health care services, and prohibiting the governor from extraditing any person for out-of-state charges regarding reproductive health care services. And the legislature passed HB 1155 dubbed the My Health, My Data Act, allowing consumers the right to access, delete, and withdraw consent from the collection, sharing, or selling of their consumer health data.

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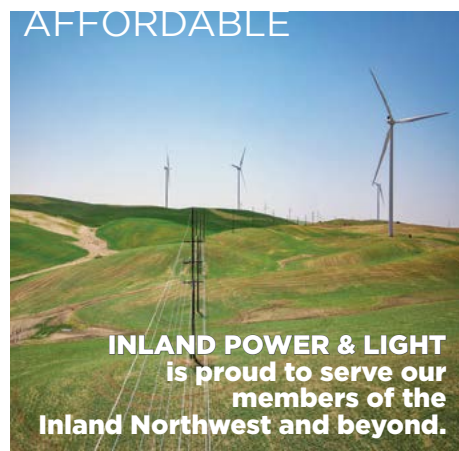
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## A REGIONAL INTERNSHIP NETWORK

Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI) is collaborating with 10 regional colleges and universities and more than thirty local businesses to create an internship network in Spokane that creates career pathways for college graduates.

This started as an effort to give those educated in Spokane, careers to stay in Spokane and has opened doors for more possibilities.

This summer, we launched a survey to engage businesses and to determine the need and capacity for internships in the Spokane region.

Survey results include:

- Almost 90 survey responses from a wide variety of industries.
- More than seven in 10 businesses are struggling to find employees to fill positions.
- More than eight in 10 businesses are interested in a network that connects industry with universities/colleges.
- Seven in 10 businesses are interested in participating in a workshop to create successful internships.

We then convened representatives from higher education, and other regional chambers of commerce to learn more about internships from the university lens. Each institution approaches internships differently which is a benefit as interns will have opportunities based on their individual needs.



**MATTHEW HIMLIE**  
 Career Pathways Manager,  
 Greater Spokane Inc.

In August, 30 businesses and higher education institutions worked with GSI to build relationships between the two groups. Specific business needs were identified to help start or improve an internship program. The work will shift to a student focus in early 2024, when current and future interns, businesses, and internship coordinators will gather to help build relationships between students and potential employers while also providing personal and professional development for the students.

For more information or to get involved, email us at [info@greaterspokane.org](mailto:info@greaterspokane.org).

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# NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT HELPS FILL WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

PIA HALLENBERG *Owner, Content by Pia*

For the last six years, Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI) has used its legislative advocacy to support passage of a Nurse Licensure Compact, which would allow nurses licensed in other states to immediately start working when they arrive in Washington rather than go through expensive and time-consuming recertification.

“We are very pleased that this has finally come to fruition,” said Stacia Rasmussen, Life Sciences Spokane Business Development Manager for GSI. “We as a state had other compacts for tech and other licensees, but we did not have one for nursing.”

Rasmussen said that nursing unions have historically been reluctant to support compacts because they would allow nurses from other states to fill jobs during a labor dispute. The other side of that coin is a national nursing shortage, which makes filling any nursing job difficult.

“This has been a sticking point for a long time,” said Jake Mayson, GSI’s Public Policy Director. “It has been a priority of Greater Spokane Incorporated for 20 years or more. We are so pleased we were finally able to help make this happen.”

Nursing is one of the top licensed jobs military spouses have when they move to Fairchild Air Force Base.

“Service members come in from all over the country, and they bring their spouses with them, and some of the spouses have nursing licenses from other states,” Rasmussen said. “In the past, they had to wait for the certification to go through. Now they can go right to work.”

Captain Teri L. Bunce, USAF, Chief Public Affairs Officer of the 92nd Air Refueling Wing at Fairchild, said the compact greatly benefits Fairchild’s families.

“We have worked on this for at least ten years, and Fairchild helped provide the context for why this is really needed,” Bunce said.

*“In the case of the big events, we couldn’t just supplement with nurses from neighboring Idaho, because we didn’t have a compact.”*

STACIA RASMUSSEN  
Greater Spokane Inc.

She helped service members and their families testify via Zoom at the legislative hearings in Olympia that helped pass the compact.

Mayson said the testimony had a huge impact.

“GSI can show up and say here this is a problem, but that does not have the impact that having families that are living the issue testify,” Mayson said. “Hearing from those who are practicing in the community, saving lives, was huge.”

Forward Fairchild is an established community partnership between GSI and Fairchild Air Force Base, which brings together community organizations with leadership at the base, making it easier to work on issues such as the nurse licensure compact.

“This is directly mission-related,” Bunce said. “In the military, we are forcefully relocated every three to five years. That means families have to pick up and leave their communities, move to new states and new territories.”

If the service member’s spouse is a lawyer, teacher, or nurse, they may have to wait months to get licensed in the new state.



“That leads to lost wages, and that second income is truly important to our families,” Bunce said. “I worked really closely with GSI’s Jake Mayson to help make this happen, and we appreciate the help from GSI.”

The new nursing compact will also help active-duty nurses keep their competencies while stationed in Washington.

“Without a valid license here, you couldn’t do your rotations,” Bunce said.

She added that the family stability of service members is crucial to national security.

“Service members have to be in shape to be called upon with a moment’s notice,” Bunce said. “They can’t be fully available on their mission if they are stressed about childcare or a spouse who can’t get a job. Physically they may be there, but mentally they are not available.”

A couple of years ago, the biggest issue for Fairchild Air Force Base was the lack of affordable housing, Bunce said. Together with Mayor Nadine Woodward’s office, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers, and GSI, Bunce said Fairchild successfully lobbied for the Department of Defense to reassess the housing allowance given to service members here.

“We were in such a tight spot that we got the evaluation to increase the amount of housing allowance mid-year; that is something that never happens,” Bunce said. “We feel very supported by GSI and the Spokane community.”

Next on Bunce’s list of licensures is to make a compact work for teachers.

“We are hoping that with GSI’s help, we can make that happen,” Bunce said. “We are grateful this finally worked out and there is still a lot left to do.”

# THE FUTURE OF POLICYMAKING



**TIM PECKINPAUGH**  
Partner, K&L Gates LLP and  
Federal Lobbyist, Greater Spokane Inc.

Inherent in our representative democracy is making policy that best serves the public good.

Policymaking is even more important today with our complex society and dynamic global economy. Everyone in the Spokane region benefits from policy decisions that promote well-functioning infrastructure, education to train new workforce, a growing economy to provide financial security for our families, and a strong national defense to protect us from potential adversaries.

The benefits of public policymaking stem from effective advocacy. Much has changed since our Constitution first safeguarded lobbying along with the free exercise of religion and the freedom of speech, the press, and the right to assemble.

As a policy practitioner myself, the two most important changes I have noticed are the advent of new technologies and the polarization of politics. Effective advocacy, essential to advancing the public interest, will need to adapt to these changes.

New technologies such as the internet and social media have revolutionized how we obtain and share information. This is especially true for policymaking. When I was a congressional staff aide more than 30 years ago, snail mail from constituents was the most effective way to communicate and advocate with elected representatives. I recall that the most sophisticated and well-funded lobbying campaigns would inundate Capitol Hill with thousands of postcards from constituents to drive public policymaking. Today effective lobbying is based on instantaneous and pervasive communication through online platforms.

The new generation of policymakers, such as congressional staffers, also consume information differently. Instead of dense policy briefing papers, they respond better to snappy visuals, videos, and podcasts. Successful lobbyists will need to deploy these new technologies to get their message across to affect policymaking.

Likewise, policy advocacy will need to adapt to fundamental changes in our political ethos. While I find it personally distasteful, the reality is that today's politics has become balkanized with the public and their elected leaders grouped into rigid ideological camps. Spurred by today's mass communications, the public seems to crave sharp edges and provocation in our political discourse. This also moves the center of political gravity to the extremes on both sides with a hollowing out of the middle.

I hope this brand of politics is a passing fad. But for now, effective advocacy needs to adjust to our polarized electorate. I am not suggesting that lobbying should emulate this style of politics. However, those seeking to affect the making of good public policy need to understand divided and partisan politics and adapt their messages and tactics accordingly.

It will be a challenge not to get pulled into the vortex of polarization, but hopefully, smart lobbyists can assist efforts to search for durable policy solutions that better serve the body politic.

In the end, despite new technologies and divisive politics, the personal touch may still be best. Most elected leaders want to do the right thing and make policy that advances the broader public interest. Hearing directly and personally from their constituents and their lobbyist advocates is still the most effective way for legislators to learn and make good policy.

A face-to-face personal conversation with a policymaker on reasonable and balanced policy outcomes is still the most impactful way to influence policy -- and perhaps may help restore civility in politics.







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 <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">\$1.4B</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">VISITOR SPENDING</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 5px 0;">The \$1.4 billion in visitor spending means that approximately \$3.9 million was spent EVERY DAY on average by visitors in Spokane County.</p> <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">16.6%</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 0;">INCREASE OVER 2021 ↑%</p>	 <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">17,426</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">TOTAL JOBS</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 5px 0;">The total number of jobs sustained by tourism including indirect and induced benefits, accounts for 5.3% of all jobs in Spokane County.</p> <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">6.6%</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 0;">INCREASE OVER 2021 ↑%</p>	 <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">\$219M</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">STATE &amp; LOCAL TAXES</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 5px 0;">The \$219 million in state and local tax revenue received in 2022 would be enough to pay the salaries of over 3,500 elementary school teachers in Spokane.</p> <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">10.6%</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 0;">INCREASE OVER 2021 ↑%</p>	 <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">\$1,045</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">HOUSEHOLD TAX RELIEF</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 5px 0;">Each household in Spokane County would need to be taxed an additional \$1,045 to replace the visitor-generated taxes received by state and local governments in 2022.</p> <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">9.1%</p> <p style="font-size: 10px; margin: 0;">INCREASE OVER 2021 ↑%</p>
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\*Sources: Longwoods International, Tourism Economics



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# TURNING STRUGGLES TO SOLUTIONS ONE BILL AT A TIME

PIA HALLENBERG *Owner, Content by Pia*

Among the organizations especially challenged by the pandemic were the local blood banks. Not only did they have to meet incredible demands while hospitalizations peaked, but they also lost a lot of donors who preferred to stay away from any medical facility.

The result was devastating.

“Going into the pandemic, we had 100,000 donors – today we have 20,000,” said Jennifer Hawkins, Regional Director of Vitalant, the region’s blood bank.

As if that wasn’t enough of a challenge, Hawkins couldn’t train phlebotomists quickly enough.

New trainees would go through all the training they needed – including working blood drives and doing supervised work with donors at Vitalant’s walk-in locations - and then be submitted for certification.

“Sometimes it would take more than 12 weeks before they received the certification, and in that period of time, they could not touch a needle,” Hawkins said. “So, coming out of training, we couldn’t use them. Sometimes we lost them because we couldn’t find 40 hours per week for them. It was horrible.”

Hawkins hit roadblock after roadblock as she tried to push for an exemption for phlebotomists at blood banks so they could immediately start working after their training ended.

Hawkins connected with Jake Mayson, the Public Policy Director at Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI), who shared that GSI was already working on similar issues.

“I heard about Jennifer’s struggle through mutual connections in our bioscience initiative,” Mayson said.



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Going into the pandemic, we had 100,000 donors — today we have 20,000.

”

JENNIFER HAWKINS  
*Vitalant*

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OCCUPATIONAL SNAPSHOT REPORT MAY 2023

**REGISTERED NURSES**  
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“Once they connected, Jake and Jennifer worked hand in hand to get to this outcome,” Rasmussen said. “It was a great collaboration.”

Hawkins agreed.

“It’s been a very long road for us,” Hawkins said. “It was GSI who picked up our case and helped us get it fixed.”

The shortage of phlebotomists directly impacted the region’s low blood supply: without appropriate staff, Vitalant couldn’t hold all the blood drives requested even if donors were lined up and eager to donate.

“We are so excited that now we can finally staff up,” Hawkins said.

Vitalant covers a 900 square mile area with more than 40 hospitals, and to meet hospital demand, more than 200 donors have to give blood daily.

“What we need now is donors,” Hawkins said. “Let’s face it, most of our donors are Baby Boomers and are beginning to age. We need the 50 and younger crowd, the Gen Xers, and younger people to pick up the baton from their parents and grandparents.”

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WASHINGTON'S ECONOMY TOGETHER

*Predicting the future is impossible, but planning for it is imperative.*

What will Washington's economy look like in 10 or 15 years? Will the state's younger residents be able to connect with rewarding careers? Will employers struggle to find qualified workers? How will people get to work? Will they be able to afford houses in the communities they want to call home? Will parents have access to affordable child care?

If the last few years have taught us anything, it's that nothing is certain. To ensure the economy's ongoing strength and strategic growth, Washingtonians must come together to plan a compelling vision for its future.

The Association of Washington Business and the Washington Roundtable have joined with local partners throughout the state to launch an ambitious initiative to lead the way. The two organizations are engaging Washingtonians in building a long-term economic vision to guide the state for years to come.

The plan, called Washington in the Making 2040, will include thoughts and ideas from thousands of Washingtonians gathered through a series of town hall meetings and extensive surveying.

During nearly two dozen town hall meetings held across the state earlier this year, attendees discussed the challenges and issues facing their communities. In city after city, from Stevenson to Spokane and Mount Vernon to Kennewick, common themes emerged, including the high cost of housing, lack of affordable child care, and difficulty finding qualified employees.

## Washington in the Making™ 2040



**KRIS JOHNSON**  
President & CEO,  
Association of Washington Business



**STEVE MULLIN**  
President,  
Washington Roundtable

A large-scale online survey sought insights from residents in every corner of the state. The survey asked a variety of questions: What are the three biggest issues facing your community or organization today? How would you rate your community's K-12 system in preparing students for their next step? What's your top infrastructure concern in your community? What trends do you think will affect you and the state of Washington over the next 15 years? How would you like your community to look in 2040? The two organizations also surveyed chambers of commerce members and interviewed CEOs from around Washington.

Throughout the fall, the data from all these efforts will be compiled and analyzed to identify key pillars, or areas of focus, and create a state economic analysis report that can be shared with legislators and policymakers. The final plan will include projects and strategies that will chart a path to lasting prosperity for every region and community in the state.

Ultimately, Washington in the Making 2040 will result in a shared vision that builds a better tomorrow. It will be a vision for Washington, built by Washingtonians. A vision that we can work toward with purpose and determination rather than simply reacting to external events and forces of change. And it will be a vision that inspires people and communities by giving them hope and opportunity.

For updates on the plan's progress, visit [awbinstitute.org](http://awbinstitute.org).



*We opened the Spokane School of Improv in January, providing opportunities for individuals to discover their creativity, build their self-confidence, and learn new skills. Through our innovative curriculum, we teach active listening, collaboration, and adaptability. We also teach how to improve customer service, sales, communication, and other important business skills. Through improv, we inspire personal and professional growth that impact our students and the broader Spokane community.*

**JIM MOHR**  
The Blue Door Theatre

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ANDY COLLEY  
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”  
BRIAN NEWBERRY  
Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho



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### LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ʔa stúlix™ (ah stoo-lee--wh / greeting the land / Salish),

We are honored to acknowledge that the Greater Spokane Incorporated office and the various locations of convening for business and events are located on traditional and sacred homelands of the Spokane Tribe. We also acknowledge that the Spokane region we serve spreads across the traditional and sacred homelands of the Confederated Tribes of Colville, Kalispel Tribe, and Nez Perce Tribe. These lands hold indigenous cultural DNA and we are honored and grateful to be here on traditional lands. We give thanks and respect to the legacy of the original peoples, tribal leaders and elders, and their descendants. We pledge to honor their stewardship and values, lem lmtš (lehm lumt-sh / abundance of gratitude / Salish).

On behalf of all Greater Spokane Inc. staff, board of trustees, and our member partners, thank you.

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# FROM 1974 TO 2024



**GARY BALLEW**  
VP of Economic  
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On June 18, 2024, the Spokane region will host the International Economic Development Council's (IEDC) Future Forum. This will be the first time in the history of the organization that an IEDC conference is hosted in the Pacific Northwest. The conference will be a great opportunity to highlight the amazing things happening in our region on a national stage.

The 50th anniversary of Expo '74 provides the perfect backdrop as Spokane was the smallest city to host a world fair and gives opportunity for us to discuss the transformative nature of economic development happening in our region.

Economic Development is a transformational practice. Our communities are changed with each business we assist or talent we help to develop. While the transformation is slow and sometimes difficult for those outside the industry to perceive, occasionally, a project creates transformational change that propels a community forward by leaps and bounds. This was Expo '74 for Spokane, leaving its mark not only in Riverfront Park, but also gave root to the University District and the North Bank.

To learn more or get involved in the 2024 IEDC Future Forum, contact Joey Gunning at [jgunning@greaterspokane.org](mailto:jgunning@greaterspokane.org).

Why have such a conference in Spokane when most traditional economic development occurs east of the Rockies? When you look at most major economic development announcements they happen in the eastern part of the United States, like Boeing moving manufacturing to South Carolina, Tesla going to Texas and Micron going to upstate New York. That's changing, and the hosting of the last two Future Forums in the West signifies this shift.

This is actually our second time hosting the conference. Spokane was slated to host in 2021, but due to the response to the Covid pandemic we had to pivot to a virtual format. IEDC asked us if we wanted another shot at hosting in person in 2024 and we jumped at the chance.

Hosting will give our community the opportunity to spotlight Spokane and some of its important milestones such as the Catalyst Building and the 5 Smartest Blocks, the development of the North Bank for sports and entertainment venues, industry growth such as advanced manufacturing in Spokane Valley from the City of Spokane Valley to Coeur d'Alene, and the 50th anniversary of Spokane hosting the World's Fair, Expo '74.

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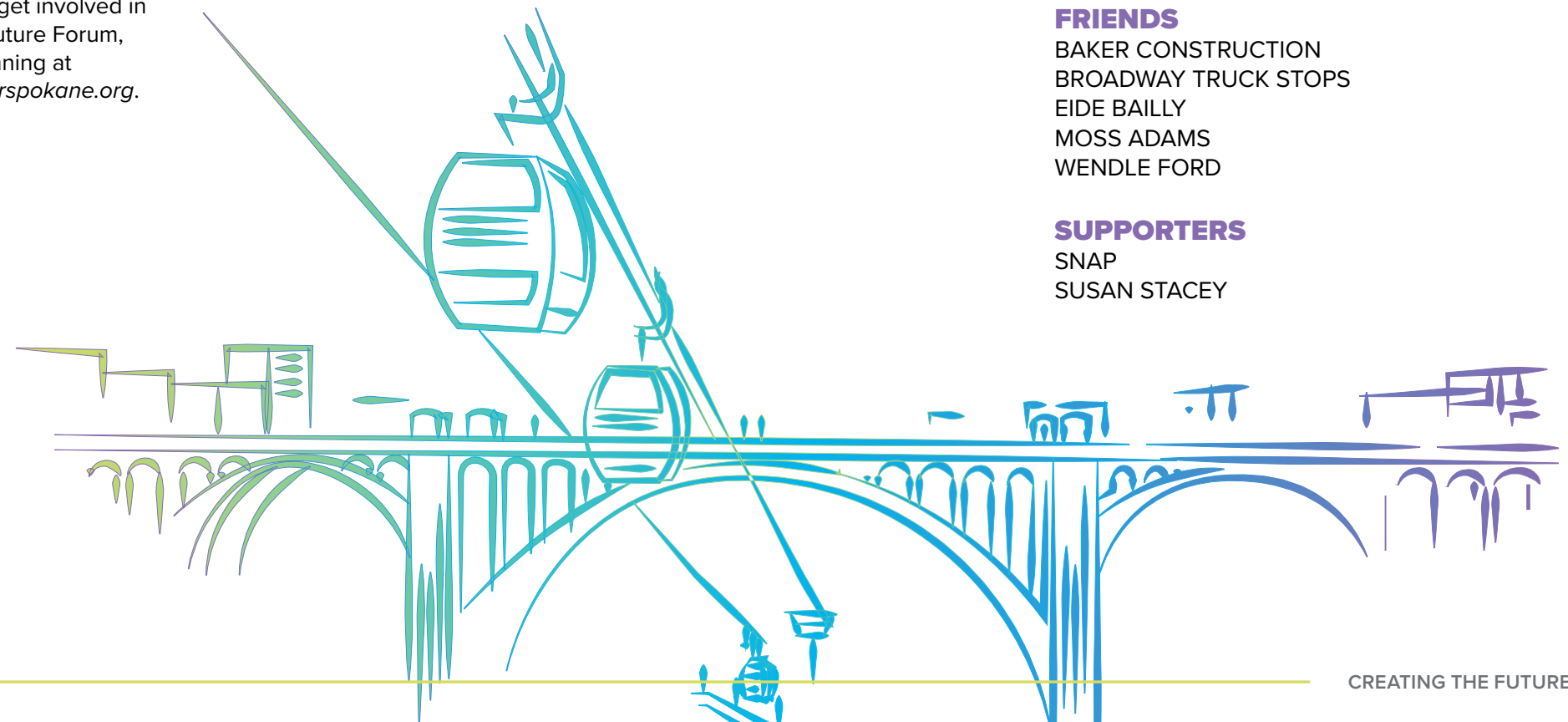
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PLAN TO GET TO THE AIRPORT **AT LEAST 2 HOURS BEFORE YOUR FLIGHT BOARDS.**



LOCATE PARKING AND TRANSIT TO THE TERMINAL



CHECK LUGGAGE



PROCEED THROUGH THE TSA CHECKPOINT



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