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## CTED REORGANIZATION OFFERS OPPORTUNITY

Rogers Weed, the new Washington State Community Trade & Economic Development Director, took the opportunity last month to layout CTED's new direction under his leadership. Rogers, a former Microsoft Executive, brings private sector framework to the position of Washington State's governments lead business champion organization. Rogers spent two days in Mason County meeting with various stakeholder groups that included attendees from both the public and private sectors.

As the director, he laid out principles that will guide the agency to help our economy.

- 1) Government does not create most jobs - businesses do. Over 80% of our state's economy comes from private sector activity. Businesses contribute over half of the revenue the state collects each year. We must have a tight connection to the private sector to be successful.
- 2) Government does play a key role in shaping the state's business climate. The policy created in Olympia has a major impact on almost every aspect of the state's business climate from the tax rates for business to the level of education and training in the workforce.
- 3) Strong economies require strong communities. Companies will not grow and thrive in communities where adequate social services do not exist, where people lack food and housing, where there is not sufficient transportation infrastructure or where there is not an appropriately trained workforce.
- 4) A strong, vibrant business community benefits us all. Where do our governments get the money to build and maintain these strong communities? They get it from taxes paid by citizens and businesses. And those taxes are based on income generated by employment and commerce. The more successful businesses are in our state, the more employment and commerce there will be and the more money there will be to invest in our communities.
- 5) Government should not pick winners and losers. In general, government should avoid policy that backs specific companies or even specific technologies when designing economic policy. The more specific policy gets, the more likely the state is to pick wrong and do more harm than good.
- 6) Retaining our state's current businesses and promoting their growth should be our first priority. In a business, it is almost always easier and cheaper to drive growth from existing customers than it is to attract new ones. As a state, we should be sure that we are taking care of our existing companies and driving loyalty in them in addition to the work we undertake to attract companies.
- 7) Always be opportunistic. Planning is important and it's always good to have a plan. But it's also important to realize that the world is changing rapidly and not to "fall in love" with your plan and miss an opportunity.

Over the next few months, we look forward to reporting to you how these principles will be developed in recommendations to the Governor's Office and the Legislature.

**Written by Matt Matayoshi with EDC of Mason County**