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NEWS RELEASE

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Subject: Chelan County Port investments bring many benefits

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At their regular meeting March 21, Chelan County Port commissioners heard progress reports from representatives of several of its economic development partners, including cities, chambers and other county organizations regarding investments the Port has made in projects benefiting local communities.

Allison Williams, Executive Services Director for the City of Wenatchee, thanked the Port for its commitment to provide match of up to \$260,000 for the Orondo Street moorage and parking expansion. She told commissioners the city is receiving more than it had expected from the state Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation, so the Port's commitment will be reduced. Commissioners authorized Port executive director Mark Urdahl to sign an interlocal agreement with the city to provide matching funds up to \$200,000. Williams said the city plans to begin the project this spring.

Chelan County PUD community and intergovernmental relations director Jeff Smith detailed some of the recommendations of a working group which has been asked to advise the PUD on industrial power rates. He said the 12 group members represent the largest industrial interests in the county; along with the Port they include Alcoa, Central Washington Hospital, Yahoo!, and manufacturing and tree fruit industry-related businesses. Smith said these industrial customers are the economic engine for the county, as well as the largest energy consumers, and want to help the PUD achieve a balance between costs and services. He distributed a list of guiding principles the industrial rates working group has compiled and noted that it would be an important document in countywide strategic planning. These guiding principles will be discussed by the PUD at an upcoming study session.

Michael Steele, executive director of the Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce, expressed his appreciation of the Port's contribution toward the chamber's marketing, promotions and office operations. These include publication of a visitor's guide, maintaining a year-round visitor center in Chelan and part-time visitor center in Manson, and support of the wine and ag-tourism industry clusters that contribute significantly to the Chelan Valley economy. Steele said the Chelan visitor center served more than 20,000 tourists last year and the web site *lakechelan.com* logged more than

131,000 unique visits. “The successful operations of the chamber depend on community partnerships with entities like the Port,” he said.

Speaking for the Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce, president Hank Manriquez and director Nancy Smith echoed Steele’s message. “We’re grateful for our partnerships with the Port and Chelan County in increasing our tourism outreach,” Smith said. “For us, tourism is the key to our economic development. Much of our business relocation comes because the business owner has visited Leavenworth with his or her family, and decides to move here.” She presented commissioners with a thick portfolio of news articles from national media featuring the Bavarian Village over the past year, noting that *Sunset Magazine* named the town among its top ten winter getaways.

Manriquez reiterated the Leavenworth chamber’s promotion of the wine and ag-tourism industries and requested that the Port’s plug-in hybrid electric Prius again be demonstrated during the Leavenworth Wine Festival. He told commissioners of his testimony before a state legislative committee, requesting that a statewide ag-tourism department be formed as part of the Community, Trade and Economic Development office. “We’ve been working on this for five years,” he said. “Now lawmakers are beginning to realize that ag tourism is an effective way to bring new people into the state.”

Leavenworth city councilman Rob Eaton also praised the Port of Chelan County for its investments throughout the Wenatchee Valley. Updating commissioners on the status of Iccle Station, a new Amtrak stop at the outskirts of Leavenworth, Eaton said, “The Port was the first on board with a financial commitment to this project. Economic development director Ron Johnston-Rodriguez worked with me from day one, incubating a mission statement and goals. Now the project is enjoying broad-based support – statewide, in the community, and from Amtrak and Burlington Northern Santa Fe.”

Eaton said the city has obtained 44 percent of the funding necessary for construction of a platform and covered shelter. The city has applied for a regional mobility grant, which Wenatchee Senator Linda Evans Parlette is reported to be championing in the state transportation budget, and is pursuing a federal grant through U.S. Senator Patty Murray. A capital campaign will be launched in May to raise \$100,000 to complete the platform and improve the access road to the station.

“One major goal of the project is to get tourists from out of state into Washington, to increase spending here,” he said. He noted that Whitefish, Montana, has benefited from \$5.7 million dollars in direct spending from tourists arriving via Amtrak. Port Commissioner Craig Larsen expressed his appreciation for the Port’s economic development partners, stating, “I’m very pleased to see the progress that has been made, the cooperation that exists within our communities, and the momentum that has been generated by these groups, and it looks very much like the best is yet to come.”

Wenatchee attorney Bob Parlette spoke to the Port commissioners about a proposed walking and bicycle trail between Leavenworth and Wenatchee, citing many benefits. He noted that Chelan County commissioners and the City of Leavenworth have joined the Port in passing resolutions of support for the trail, and that the Icicle Fund has made a \$150,000 grant to the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust for project coordination. Parlette said the favored route would be along the Wenatchee River, on old railroad grades and wagon trails. Because the corridor would pass through the Port's 60-acre, former mill property in Peshastin, which the Port has declared surplus and indicated is available for sale, Parlette asked commissioners to make a commitment to allow the trail to pass through the mill site property

Commission president Mike Mackey told Parlette the Port was supportive of the trail and would have its legal counsel explore the various means available to ensure that the property will incorporate the trail. "We'll need to see how a trail will fit in with what we do with the property," he said. "We recognize the value of a trail, and from day one our plans have included protection of the riparian areas along the Wenatchee River." He asked counsel and Port staff to prepare a report for the April 11 commission meeting.

In other business, Port commissioners:

- * authorized Pangborn Memorial Airport manager Pat Moore to sign a purchase and sale agreement with C & O Nursery to acquire property across Grant Road from the airport;

- * authorized director Urdahl to sign a grant application package to the Federal Aviation Administration requesting \$1.8 million for property acquisition, engineering and design, revision of the airport master plan, and expanded security fencing for the boarding area. Commissioners for the Port of Douglas County, co-owner of the airport with the Port of Chelan County, have signed the application;

- * accepted the report from economic development director Johnston-Rodriguez that the City of Chelan is being considered for an experimental project in rural "telework" (information technology work performed outside of a central office) as part of Washington State University's Center to Bridge the Digital Divide;

- * learned from Confluence Technology Center manager Laura Jaecks that the Greater Wenatchee Area Technology Alliance (GWATA) recently videoconferenced with scientists at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, who are guiding GWATA in developing a regional technology resource directory;

- * directed Port staff to negotiate a short term lease with Design Salt for space in Port Industrial Building #9, a facility located in Olds Station that also leases a portion of the space to Sinclair Systems International, Inc. Design Salt, which packages and distributes high end adventure travel products under the Cocoon label, is nearing the end of its lease in Port Industrial Building #1. That

space will then be leased to the North Central Technical Skills Center for its expansion of the automotive classes. Design Salt has indicated its desire to stay in Wenatchee, and their lease of space in IB#9 will allow them to continue operations while they search for a long-term home.

* approved an agreement with Envision Technologies and Webb Accountancy to lease the current administrative office of the Port District, located at 125 Easy Street. Envision Technologies chose this particular Port facility because of its combination of office space, telecommunications capabilities and because this site will allow the construction of a relatively small, line-of-sight telecommunications tower, linking the site to Badger Mountain. The Port is relocating its present offices to its Building #3, the former North Central Regional Library service center on Olds Station Road. According to properties director Dayle Rushing, staff expects to be in its new quarters by July 1, 2007. The new facility will also include space for potential incubator tenants;

* discussed needed amendments to the Joint Operating Agreement with the City of Chelan for co-ownership of the Chelan Airport, but took no action; and

* approved a request of Wenatchee Valley College to terminate an existing orchard lease between Pangborn Memorial Airport and the College Foundation in favor of a new lease for a smaller orchard block for the College's continued use.

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