

# ***Meridian Plaza***

[www.MeridianPlazaBellingham.com](http://www.MeridianPlazaBellingham.com)

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

## **Bellingham, Washington—Supporting Small Business with Progressive Initiatives**

By Evan Calbi

Bellingham, in the northwest corner of Washington, has served as an industrial center for over a century. After a series of initiatives in the last few years, the waterfront city has grown from its roots as a manufacturing port. The changes range from a 100% municipal commitment to green power to a new, state-funded technology development center that will train workers and support small businesses.

“Within the city, and the city leadership, there is a population that is supportive of progressive initiatives. There is a lot of interest,” says Andrea Hood, who works in Bellingham’s environmental resources division.

In 1963, the pulp and paper company Georgia-Pacific purchased a 137-acre parcel on the water in downtown Bellingham. After more than 30 years at the site, G-P began closing down its operations in 1999. The city and port of Bellingham purchased the land in 2005, and began implementing a plan for a new waterfront development that includes mixed-use neighborhoods, a state-of-the-art marina, public parks and trails, and shopping promenades.

The area’s focus on new jobs and support of small businesses extends from the city’s college campuses to the Mayor’s office. Recently, Bellingham Mayor Dan Pike proclaimed Tuesday, Sept. 29 “Mom & Pop Store Day,” as a gesture of support to the small businesses in the area.

Western Washington University, whose first class matriculated in 1899, has long supported the business community in Bellingham. The College of Business and Economics’ Center for Economic Vitality offers no cost, business counseling and technical assistance to businesses in Whatcom County. In 2007, the center assisted local businesses in saving or creating 750 jobs. The same year, they helped clients obtain over \$23 million in loans and new investments.

“The new initiatives in Bellingham have added to what is already an inviting climate for small business,” says Michael Hackman, founder and chief executive officer of Hackman Capital Partners, LLC, an investor in a joint venture that acquired Meridian Plaza on Telegraph Road, a newly renovated 24,000 square-foot retail center two miles north of downtown Bellingham.

Located at the intersection of Meridian Street and Telegraph Road, Meridian Plaza is directly across from Bellis Fair Regional Mall. With 150 stores and daily shopper traffic in excess of 35,000 people, Bellis Fair is a hugely successful mall that attracts shoppers from both the surrounding area and Canada. The location is 23 miles from the busiest border crossing between Canada and the United States, and many of the mall’s shoppers are from Vancouver, a city with a population of four million.

“In the 2009 ‘Best States for Business’ rankings, *Forbes* listed Washington as the second best state in the country to do business,” says Hackman. “The developments in Bellingham are a clear indication that the city will remain competitive in encouraging economic growth while pushing for a more sustainable future.”

—30—



Meridian Plaza ([www.MeridianPlazaBellingham.com](http://www.MeridianPlazaBellingham.com)) is owned by AZNL-Meridian, LLC, and is asset managed by Hackman Capital Partners, LLC. Meridian Plaza has space available for lease at 117-193 Telegraph Road (at the intersection of Telegraph Road and Meridian Street) in Bellingham, WA. For leasing information, visit [www.MeridianPlazaBellingham.com](http://www.MeridianPlazaBellingham.com) or contact Erin Sundean ([erin@thebedfordgroup.com](mailto:erin@thebedfordgroup.com)) with The Bedford Group, Inc., (360) 647-0100.