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Reardon makes business competitiveness top priority *Says landing second line of Boeing 787 Dreamliner critical for region*

In his annual state-of-the-county address, Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon called Tuesday for a coordinated regional effort to shore up investor confidence and increase competitiveness in order to protect existing jobs and attract new businesses.

Specifically, Reardon targeted the much anticipated second line of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Reardon urged business and government leaders in the Puget Sound to identify what companies such as Boeing need to continue expanding in the region despite the current economic crisis. Those who follow the Boeing Company closely know that based upon the volume of orders and projected orders of the 787, a second line will have to be established.

“Securing the second line of the 787 is critical for our region,” Reardon said Tuesday, addressing the Everett Rotary Club. “We must do all that is necessary as a region and state to make certain that the second line of the Boeing 787 is built here in the Puget Sound.”

Existing businesses want to expand and new businesses want to locate in a region that willingly supports long-time employers, Reardon said, stating that losing the second line of the 787 due to a lack of regional competitiveness undermines this effort.

“Our efforts to maintain the second line of the 787 are mission critical to this region’s ability to land the next generation of the Boeing 737,” he added.

Reardon highlighted several efforts in Snohomish County to assist Boeing and other companies, including using federal stimulus dollars to complete a backlog of needed transportation projects such as the Alaskan Way Viaduct in Seattle and Highway 2, to expedite research and development for new energy technologies, and to create thousands of jobs as a result of those efforts.

In addition to regional competitive efforts, Reardon announced Snohomish County will continue its successful efforts to take necessary local actions that in the past have landed companies such as Bayer, Goodrich, Comcast and Korry Electronics. It will soon complete an assessment of land available for new business centers, large-scale companies and industrial parks, as well as continue efforts to reduce red-tape that businesses find prohibitive and costly.

Reardon also said the county will help small-business owners by creating an online business assistance center, which will provide better access to valuable technical and investment resources that local owners need to be successful. The goal is to connect local business owners with each other and available resources, allowing them to act as a business cluster while increasing their market share in each respective sector.

“In addition to new resources for local business, we already have begun identifying new opportunities to continue the reform of our permitting and regulatory environment,” Reardon said, adding that this will further reduce startup costs, keep businesses in business, stimulate economic growth and appeal to new commercial development as well as the stagnant homebuilding industry.

“Last month, along with the chairman of the County Council, I signed a joint resolution announcing our intent to move forward with an economic summit and promote legislation to stimulate our local economy,” Reardon said. “We are working with stakeholders to identify immediate actions to make county government a better business partner.”

Reardon will present his state of the county again Tuesday, Feb. 3, before the Everett Area Chamber of Commerce. The speech is open to the public and will begin shortly after 7:30 a.m. at the Everett Golf and Country Club, located at 1500 52nd Street SE.

To read a copy of the speech, go to:

<http://www.co.snohomish.wa.us/documents/Departments/Executive/StateOfCounty1.27.09.pdf>

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