

Farm

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the developing rights. They're essentially extinguished."

The state Department of Ecology, the county and the state Recreation and Conservation Office provided grant money to pay for the \$1.4 million easement, said Molly Goren, the Farmland Trust's communications director.

Easements allow a farm owner to convey certain rights of the property without selling it, Fay said. It also allows a farmer, who has so much of their savings and equity tied into the land, realize some of that equity without selling their land.

Bob's Corn also employs nine full-time workers and around 200 seasonal employees, Bob Ricci said.

Their country store opened for the season Aug. 1 and their first picking of corn takes place around Aug. 8. Sunflower events start Aug. 18, and the corn maze and pumpkins are available Sept. 13.

The Washington Farmland Trust has conserved hundreds of acres of farmland in recent years, including the 270-acre Bailey Farm near Snohomish in 2015 and the 260-acre Reiner Farm near Monroe in 2018.

Sarah Ricci said they are using their proceeds to add infrastructure to the farm.

"If we build a building, it has to support the farm," Ricci said. Farmland Trust officials will meet with Bob and Sarah annually.

Once a dairy farm known as Ricville Farms, Bob's Corn

and Pumpkin Farm is known for their corn maze and pumpkin patch. Bob said he hasn't designed the 12-acre corn maze yet, but the theme will focus on farm preservation.

"I knew I would never sell it or develop," Bob said.

Linda Neunzig, agriculture coordinator for Snohomish County, said the conservation of Bob's Corn is huge for agriculture in the county.

"It's really about protecting our farmland and keeping our industry economically viable," Neunzig said.

She noted the contiguous nature of Bob's Corn and its location near existing farms - Caruso Farm, Chinook Farm, and Skylight Farm.

"It creates that fabric of a farm after farm that works together," Neunzig said.

Countywide BIPOC Chamber of Commerce could become a reality

By PERRIS LARSON contributing writer

In the making for over a year, a virtual meeting was held on July 27 to discuss the need and possibility of establishing a Chamber of Commerce centered around women and the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) community in Snohomish County.

It was hosted by SnoCODE, a partnership between the Economic Alliance Snohomish County, Leadership Snohomish County, the government of Snohomish County, as well as nonprofits.

The meeting took place over Zoom, with over 50 people attending to discuss why a BIPOC Chamber of Commerce is important for the community. According to the Black SnoCo's Directory, there are 145 Black-owned businesses in Snohomish County and there are 11 certified women and minority owned businesses in Snohomish County according to the SBA's Federally Certified Women and Minority Owned Business Directory.

Garry Clark, the CEO and president of EASC explained that there was overwhelming support for the effort to create the new chamber of commerce, but there needs to be more conversation on strategy and a plan for long-term funding.

"I think the goal long term is to build a full team of people that can be navigators for parts of the community that are underserved or under-represented," said Clark.

For the BIPOC community, especially small businesses owned by BIPOC individuals, there are systemic, institutional barriers that SnoCODE is determined to break down. But in order for those barriers to be eradicated, a group

effort must be made. "Just take a look at any ground breaking or ribbon cutting in Snohomish County, and hopefully you will see an eclectic group of people, but more times than not, you don't," said Clark. "So I think we have to be intentional about our efforts."

In 2022, racial minorities owned 15.1 percent of businesses in Washington State according to the U.S Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the state of Washington has 92,772 BIPOC owned small businesses.

This is not the first time a chamber for minorities has been attempted in Snohomish County. In the past, there was an all-volunteer attempt to create a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Snohomish, but it never got up and running.

The concern for this BIPOC chamber is to make sure that this is actually viable. With the first meeting concluded, the next steps to make the BIPOC Chamber of Commerce a reality is to collect data and statistics to support the idea. However, when it comes to collecting data, Clark believes, "It is a bit unnecessary. We see it bearing fruit when we have government grants that can't reach certain communities because there is no connection, no trust."

The hope is that the chamber will be built under EASC, and in order to get the effort off the ground and viable, EASC believes \$300,000 in funding will be needed. Not only do they wish to hire staffers, but the point of the chamber will be to provide a certain level of service to the community.

"We look forward to learn-

ing more about the BIPOC Chamber of Commerce and certainly see the need in supporting Black Business Owners and businesses of other historically marginalized communities," says Dr. Janice Greene, President of the NAACP Snohomish County.

City of Snohomish Mayor Linda Redmon attended the virtual discussion. Redmon reminded the participants that while progress regarding representation in Snohomish County has been made, Snohomish has had a reputation of not being incredibly welcoming to minorities.

Only a few days prior to the meeting, Redmon had heard from an individual that they didn't feel safe in Snohomish as a minority member of the community.

"Will people want to be a part of our business community if they are part of those less represented communities with that reputation in place?" Redmon asked the group. "How does anybody demonstrate that they are as welcoming as they want to be when they are not from the represented groups?"

The City of Everett said in a statement that it looks forward to participating in the effort.

"Everett is home to a wonderfully diverse business community that reflects the rich diversity of our community. We are constantly seeking better ways to support our small business community with our limited resources. Partnering on a county-wide effort to support BIPOC businesses makes sense for long-term financial stability. We look forward to participating in outreach efforts in the coming months to ensure that the support given to BIPOC business owners is appropriate and sustainable."

Snohomish Lions giving grants

SNOHOMISH — The next Snohomish Lions Club Community Grant application deadline is Sept. 1. The service club's grants are for special projects and programs by local organizations they

would not usually be able to take on independently. The club's service area encompasses the Snohomish School District's boundaries.

To apply for a grant, go to www.snohomishlions.org

and click on "grants and scholarships." To ask questions try 425-610-8297 or send an email to lions@snohomishlions.org

By mail, send to P.O. Box 93, Snohomish, WA 98291

Fire kills turkeys, burns equipment

SNOHOMISH — Fire District 4 responded to a property fire overnight Aug. 3 in the 14500 block of Westwick Road which resulted in the turkeys dying in their struc-


ture and destruction of farm equipment housed in an adjacent shed, the district said. Part of the turkey flock was able to get out of the pen.

Firefighters were able to

stop the fire from spreading to the house.

The estimated damage is more than \$30,000 total, Snohomish Fire said.

— Tribune staff



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Crossword Solution

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