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Can we compete?





Spokane enjoys 4.5 percent growth rate

SPOKANE—Greater Spokane grew by 4.5 percent, adding 10,200 new jobs between October 2005 and October 2006. Pharmaceutical manufacturer HollisterStier Laboratories is planning a \$30 million expansion, which will add approximately 100 workers to its current roster of 400 employees. Kaiser Aluminum is planning a \$30 million upgrade to its rolling mill in Tientwood, where a \$75 million expenditure is already underway. Meanwhile, a 54,000-square-foot warehouse expansion is planned for Haskins Steel. HollisterStier and Haskins received tax incentives from Spokane's Community Empowerment Zone, which has spurred over \$71 million of new capital investment, creating 1,202 anticipated new jobs.



Palouse high-tech industries on track for growth

MOSCOW, Idaho—High-tech industries in the Palouse Knowledge Corridor, which includes Pullman, will see considerable growth by 2015, according to a workforce analysis from the Latah Economic Development Council in Moscow. The study shows that the area's advanced manufacturing workforce is expected to grow by 31 percent, three times faster than the national average, through 2015. The Palouse region's biotechnology workforce is expected to grow by 12 percent. Meanwhile, information technology occupations will grow by 35 percent, well beyond the national average of 25 percent.

Dayton-Walla Walla rail link to be rehabilitated

DAYTON—The Washington State Department of Transportation will spend \$5.3 million to rehabilitate 39 miles of rail between Dayton and Walla Walla. The line is primarily used to transport seed peas, seed corn and beans processed at Dayton's Seneca Foods Corp. plant, in addition to grain and commercial products. The Blue Mountain Railroad, the Port of Columbia's short-line operator, can load barges at Wallula's Northwest Grain Growers storage facility. Wallula also has connections to the Union Pacific and BNSF railroads for nationwide shipping.



Columbia BioEnergy launches biodiesel refining operations

CRESTON—Columbia BioEnergy has become the first fully permitted biodiesel refinery in eastern Washington. The Lincoln County-based firm is launching operations using vegetable and soybean oils. The plant is hiring 10 employees immediately. Almost any kind of vegetable oil can power a diesel engine if the oil is properly processed. Animal manures, forest or logging residues, food packing wastes and even municipal wastes can also become biodiesel. More growth is expected in Washington's biodiesel industry. A new law requiring 2 percent of diesel and 2 percent of gasoline sold in Washington be biodiesel or ethanol by December 2008 was enacted in 2006.