VIDEO OF THE WEEK

The city’s 2020 Census campaign has been awarded the "Best In House Diversity and Inclusion Campaign" by PR NEWS CSR & Diversity Awards. Watch the video that was part of the materials submitted to the awards committee.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Chalk Your Walk

Have you posted your "Chalk Your Walk" artwork? Artists are encouraged to post it to social media and tag it with #ChalkRentonOut.

There are two days left. Tomorrow’s theme is "Concrete Comedy." Share a joke or bring a favorite meme to life. Sunday’s is Mother’s Day and to honor mom, the theme is "Show Moms Some Love!"

And if you haven’t yet, the Hyatt Regency Southport is hosting “Chalk at Hyatt’s Dock!” through Sunday. Artists are invited to decorate Hyatt’s dock and get 10% off at Dock and Drink.

COVER STORY

Working to develop a vibrant downtown

The downtown is the scene of two major infrastructure projects, the Wells-Williams Conversion and Downtown Utility Improvement. Both are long-needed projects that further advance of vision of downtown Renton as a welcoming destination for residents and visitors.

We know large projects like these are never easy. The past months have been difficult. The patience and cooperation from both merchants and shoppers have been very much appreciated. When complete, two-way traffic on Wells and Williams, the downtown core wayfinding project, and improved infrastructure will advance our vision of downtown Renton as a vibrant and welcoming destination for residents, visitors, and businesses.

Completed Well Avenue South looking north across South Third Street.
This Week in Renton

Here’s an update on the two projects:

Temporary clock tower relocation

The Downtown Utilities Improvement project is upgrading existing city systems for water, wastewater and stormwater drainage. These improvements will support current business and residential uses and future development needs in the downtown core.

As part of the project, the iconic clock tower at South Third Street and Burnett Avenue South will be relocated on Wednesday, May 12. It will be moved a few yards south in the same parking lot for approximately two to three months. A crane will be positioned in the parking area behind the clock tower and swing it to its new location. Businesses will be open and directional signage will be in place. We have updates on our social media channels as we move closer to the move date.

Sidewalk work underway

The Wells-Williams Conversion Project is installing sidewalks on the north side of South Third Street, first at Williams Avenue South, then at Wells Avenue South. The installation is being closely coordinated with affected businesses. The project is using a new type of concrete to avoid what would have been several weeks of sandblasting. There is a tradeoff as the concrete pouring is weather-dependent. It also typically takes about three days to cure instead of 24 hours.

This week the new intersections have opened and Wells and Williams remain one-way streets. You’ll see additional signage as a reminder, but please drive with care.

Park free in the garage and downtown

Contractors for both projects are working to minimize parking impacts as much as possible. The city is offering free parking for up to 10 hours in the centrally located City Center Parking Garage (655 S. 2nd St).

Several downtown public parking lots offer free parking and convenient access to businesses. Additionally, there are several designated short-term parking spots near shops and restaurants for picking up orders.

BLM artwork to be made into postcards

Last year’s initial Black Lives Matter Art Walk featured many local Black artists displaying powerful messages for several weeks. Now, 12 paintings are being turned into postcards.

The project is funded by a grant from Renton Municipal Arts Commission. Artists: Charde Brown, Ibis the Artist, Charles Conner, Jonarra Swanson, LeShawnn Gamble and Trenise Williams will be featured.

The cards will also include the artist’s name, description of the work and a link for information about commissions or statement. The postcards will also have the slogan: “Renton, Washington, where equity, equality and diversity are valued.”

“One of the reasons we really wanted to create the postcards is to continue to project the message,” said Franchesca Vargas Smith, the organizer of last September’s art walk. “Just because your feed on Instagram or Facebook went back to normal, there is still an issue, and we still have to work together to make a change.”

The postcards will be placed at various locations throughout downtown Renton and are available for free.

Census campaign earns national award

The city’s 2020 Census campaign has been awarded the “Best in House Diversity and Inclusion Campaign” by RINNES CSR & Diversity Awards.

The campaign was started in response to results from the 2010 Census. They showed Renton was one of the most under-reported cities in the country. In 2020, the city wanted to use a grassroots effort that explained the importance of self-reporting to our residents.

The Renton clock tower is moving (TEMPORARILY)

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This Week in Renton

The plan included citywide training for front-line staff, development of the Renton Complete Count Committee and recruitment and training of Census Ambassadors. But when COVID-19 hit, we had to scrap that plan. That did not deter our Census Ambassadors. They texted, called and used Facebook. When it was permitted, they combined their census outreach with events that provided relief to those hit hardest by the pandemic.

As a result, the city's response rate went from one of the lowest in the country to 75.1%, which was one of the highest in neighboring cities with a similar ethnic and socioeconomic breakdown to Renton. The city coordinated the campaign, but it was the effort by our residents that ensured its success.

Renton Regional Fire Authority

Apply for RRFA Citizen Advisory Panel

Renton Regional Fire Authority is seeking volunteers to serve on their Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP). CAP members represent the Renton community and provide valuable feedback that helps shape fire service.

Metal and Styrofoam collection on May 15

The first of three recycling events will be Saturday, May 15, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Renton Technical College North Parking Lot (NE 6th Place and Monroe Avenue NE). This event will collect scrap metal, large appliances and Styrofoam. Eligible metal items include auto parts, lawn chairs, water heaters, lawn mowers, bikes, iron and steel. Please remove all wheels and nonmetal parts, and drain oil and fluids from auto parts and mowers.

We will not accept television sets, computers, car chassis, refrigerators, dishwashers or microwaves.

Styrofoam accepted includes peanuts and bubble wrap, bagged packing peanuts and clean white block Styrofoam. Look for #6 or EPS inside the recycle symbol.

Our other events are June 12 (mattresses, box springs, cardboard and tires) and September 18 (Styrofoam and documents for shredding).

COMMUNITY

Need and low turnout puts need level at 85%

Bloodworks Northwest has declared a “Code Red” alert to combat the ongoing blood shortage affecting local hospitals and trauma centers across our region. They have seen a sustained increase in patient demand for blood. That combined with low donor turnout means only 85% of the blood needed per day to save lives is available. Now is the time to give.

Make your appointment online or by calling 1-800-398-7888.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

Governor announces two-week phase pause

The governor on Tuesday announced a two-week phase pause on movement in Healthy Washington: Roadmap to Recovery reopening plan. The pause will keep counties in their current phase until the end of the two-weeks, each county will be re-evaluated.

The decision was made in consultation with the Department of Health. It reflected current data suggesting Washington’s fourth COVID-19 wave has plateaued.

ENVI RONMENT
Business grants

Deadlines are approaching for these COVID-19 grants for businesses.

• The Washington Immigrant Grant is available for immigrants who are not eligible for federal financial relief or unemployment insurance. Apply by May 15 and possibly receive a $1,000 one-time direct payment.

• The Small Business Association (SBA) Shuttered Venue Operators Grant has over $16 billion in grants for shuttered venues, to be administered by SBA’s Office of Disaster Assistance.

• The SBA has also released updates to the Restaurant Revitalization Fund Guide. Funding is for restaurants, bars and other similar places of business that serve food or drink. The application process will be opening soon.

• The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families provides direct support through the Spring 2021 Child Care COVID-19 Grant to licensed childcare providers. Grants of $6,500 are available for eligible private pay providers. The deadline to apply is May 20.

If your small business is behind on commercial rent, our economic development staff is working to analyzing the scale of commercial arrears on the Eastside so they can develop a remedy. They could use your input via their online survey.

If you need help, we have one-on-one support through (re)StartUp425.

More vaccine supply makes it much easier to get vaccinated

King County vaccinations are now reaching more vaccine, and many locations have available appointments. Everyone 16 and older is eligible for vaccination, and vaccination is free for everyone regardless of insurance, citizenship, or immigration status.

Visit King County vaccine for the latest information on how to get vaccinated in King County. The following hotlines are available:

- WA State COVID-19 Assistance hotline: 1-800-525-0127 or 1-888-856-5816 (then press #), 6 a.m.–10 p.m. Monday, 6 a.m.–6 p.m. Tuesday–Sunday.
- King County COVID-19 Call Center: 206-477-3577, 8 a.m.–7 p.m. For language interpretation, say your preferred language when connected.

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Armondos Pavone (center front) is flanked by the 2021 Renton City Council. Ruth Pérez and Council President Randy Corman are seated in the front row. Standing: Valerie O’Halloran, Ed Prince, Council President Pro Tem Ryan McIrvin, Kim-Khánh Văn, and Angelina Benedetti.

May 3, 2021 Meeting

• Meeting documents (approved committee reports, motion sheets, and council committee meeting calendar)
• Council meeting video
• Committee of the Whole video
• Approved Minutes (April 26, 2021 meeting)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Renton City Council meets via Zoom. For information on viewing or participating in a council meeting, go to rentonwa.gov/council. Past meetings are available at rentonwa.gov/youtube.
EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Virtual Talk: Getting involved with the Farmers Market

Carrie Olson, farmers market coordinator, and Teresa Nishi, volunteer coordinator, will explain what’s in store for the 2021 Renton Farmers Market and how you can get involved. This Zoom meeting takes place on May 11, 2-3 p.m.

The market will celebrate 20 years of providing the freshest fruit and produce, flowers and specialty items, including breads, honey, wine and craft hard ciders. It will open on June 1 and will run through September 28.

Register at rentonwa.gov/register to reserve your spot for this and all 2021 Virtual Talks. For help, call 425-430-6633.

Age-Friendly Renton Virtual Talks is a free virtual series with various topics, presenters and engaging conversations held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 2-3 p.m.

Beyond the Stage: Key to Change

Wednesday, May 12, 7-8 p.m., enjoy an evening with Dr. Quinton Morris and virtual performances by students. Key to Change serves racially and economically diverse students in South King County. They focus on providing access to world-class music education, mentorship and leadership skills that propel them to lifetime success.

Register at rentonwa.gov/register.

Beyond the Stage is a free, virtual series featuring local and PNW artistic creators. Reserve your spot and “zoom” online with friends and community members. Monthly dates/times will vary.

Kindness Crawl 2021

Join the Renton Chamber of Commerce for Kindness Crawl 2021 on Saturday and Sunday, May 15 and 16.

The “crawl” is a celebration of small businesses and our community’s kindness. Register for the free Kindness Raffle featuring prizes from local businesses and organizations encouraging kindness. The event also features a VIP option for a goodie bag & extra raffle tickets. There are also options to purchase individual raffle tickets or donate to the Chip-In Fundraiser.

Renton Career Fair

On Wednesday, May 19, from 1 to 5 p.m., various organizations will be ready to meet via text chats or chat-to-video sessions as part of the sixth annual Renton Career Fair.

This annual event aims to “Unite Talent with Opportunity,” so dress for success and have your resume ready.

Visit gorenton.com/careers for information and free registration. The Renton Career Fair is hosted by Renton Technical College, WorkSource, Renton Chamber of Commerce and City of Renton.
This Week in Renton

Summer day camps

The city’s Recreation & Neighborhoods Division has joined with long-time recreation partners to bring back Summer Day Camps. Camps are offered by Cartooniversity, Play-Well Teknologies, STREAM Team, Coyle Outside, Renton Rowing Center, Seattle Ultimate Frisbee and Skyhawks. All will follow COVID-19 safety guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Washington State Health Department.

Register at rentonwa.gov/register. Search “camps.”

Skyway Resource Center

Next Friday, May 14, from 3-5 p.m., Renton Innovation Zone Partnership continues its community support in this free drive-through multi-service event at Campbell Hill Elementary.

Resources available include baby supplies, household items, food boxes and frozen family meals. There will be information for housing, medical and health insurance, childcare, preschool consultation and developmental screening, WIC and First Steps, ORCA LIFT cards, and free academic and career trade training.

CALENDAR

Daily, Senior Meals, free, drive-thru sack lunch pick-up. Limited quantities. Mon.-Fri., 11:30 a.m., Renton Senior Activity Center, 211 Burnett Ave. N.

Mondays, 1-7:30 p.m., Sustainable Renton free drive-through grocery store at St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, 1700 Edmonds Ave. NE.

Weekly, bi-weekly, 6 p.m., Renton Live! online connection promoting business, nonprofits and activities within the greater Renton community. Find the link on the Renton Live Facebook page.

Library resources and events, ongoing. Filter by event, program, and location. Online.

May 12 – Deadline to register for Virtual Scout Night & Drive-Thru Graduation, presented by Renton Police and Renton Fire.

May 15-16, Sat. & Sun. Kindness Crawl 2021 presented by Renton (Chamber of Commerce. A weekend celebration of our local small businesses and the kindness in our community. Registration for the Crawl, and enter the raffle with prizes from downtown businesses.

May 15, Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Recycle Event at Renton Technical College (North Parking Lot, NE 6th Place and Monroe Avenue NE). This event will accept metals and Styrofoam. This event will take mattresses, tires and cardboard, and the September event will take Styrofoam and paper for shredding.

May 19, Wed., 1-5 p.m. Renton Virtual Career Fair. FREE virtual career fair hosting a wide variety of organizations with text-based chats or chat-to-video sessions. Visit gorenton.com/careers for more information. Hosted by Renton Technical College, WorkSource, Renton Chamber of Commerce and City of Renton.