

Seattle Rotary Hosts Leadership Tomorrow Grads to hear regional forecast presented by LT alum Chris Mefford

Totem Report January 4, 2017

By Dann Mead Smith

Our member and Leadership Tomorrow executive director **Jan Levy** introduced our featured speaker, **Chris Mefford** who is a 2008 Leadership Tomorrow grad and founded Community Attributes in 2005. She also asked the large contingent of Leadership Tomorrow alumni to stand before Chris took the stage.

Chris gave a presentation on the Puget Sound regional economy for 2017 focusing on:

- What's happening in the economy
- We are a statewide economy
- Quality of life is our greatest economic asset
- Trade, import capital or decline



He started with some interesting statistics:

- Washington has 7.3 million residents and 3.4 million jobs
- 41% of those jobs are in King County with 58% in the three county region of King, Pierce and Snohomish
- 2/3 of our state's general fund budget is driven by sales and property taxes which is a lot of reliance on two main revenue sources
- The current statewide unemployment rate is 5.2% and only 4% in the Seattle area

He emphasized that we are a regional economy within a state economy and so much of our local resources are based on state policy.

He is predicting a continued strong economy with a continued employment growth (especially in Bellevue and the UW area) and low unemployment. He stressed the importance of economic development and continued growth in trade and importing capital to grow our economy with the need to address income inequality and affordable housing.

Our region's two key clusters continue to be aerospace (Boeing still has a big backlog) and high tech (with Microsoft being the cornerstone) including tech jobs within other industries outside of tech itself.





President-elect Mark Wright opened our first meeting of 2017 joking that he and President Cathy share the love of adventure with her climbing Mt. Vincent in Antarctica over the Holidays and he sledding down a “really big hill in Spokane.” **Cindy Runger** delivered the invocation that was focused on “hope” as we started a new year, and **Skip Rowland** who did a great job with the Star Spangled Banner, acapella style!

Among our guests were a Rotarian from the Helsinki club and three generations of **Blazeys** as Jay's father and grandfather attended the meeting!

Wendi from the Bellevue Breakfast Club encouraged us to attend a special fundraiser, Lunch with the Queen (of Katwe) on January 17th at Noon in Bellevue. More details at www.firstmovechess.org

We were introduced to two new members to kick off 2017: **John Kilpatrick** introduced us to the Consul General of Canada **James Hill who is serving for the first time in the USA after a long career overseas**; and **Kim Moore** introduced **Rebecca Hellman who runs a boutique financial services company in Seattle**.



Rob LoBosco recognized all our **Gold Star Proposers** who have proposed new members for our club this Rotary year.

Mark told us how easy it was to use the club's website and encouraged us to make our two Rotary contributions via the site today as he introduced **Jim Duncan** who gave us an update on the **Seattle Rotary Service Foundation and The Rotary Foundation campaigns** at the end of 2016. We are 61% of our goal with gifts to our club's service foundation which supports our projects here and 45% of our goal to support the Rotary Foundation which supports projects around the world and provides matching grants for our projects. The goal is 100% participation with donations of at least \$400 to the Service Foundation and a suggested gift of \$100 to the international foundation. Jim said make “two gifts and we change the world.”

Corinne Cavanaugh encouraged us to attend the **2017 District Conference in Portland on April 21-23** which she described as a “three day summer camp for civic-minded business leaders.” Mark mentioned how much he has enjoyed the district conferences he has attended and that he will be at this year's for “networking, fun and encouragement.”

President Cathy came up at the end of the meeting and said we are at the half way point for our Rotary year and how excited she is for the next six months and that we have a great opportunity to grow our club membership. She talked about her “very white Christmas” as she summited the 16,000 foot Mt. Vincent with an international team that put her at the “top of the bottom of the world.” She said mountaineering is like Rotary with “its collective success being people at the heart of both.”

She closed the meeting showing an **inspirational video by Matt Harding** of him dancing with people around the world that demonstrates the “value of diversity and shared humanity.” I encourage you to watch this “global tour of our brothers and sisters around the world” as Cathy described it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvTbw4mSzAU>