

Governor Inslee - Taking Steps to Reduce the Carbon Footprint

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By Mike Colbrese

President Mark Wright gaveled the meeting open and provided opening remarks. He apologized for not being in attendance the last two weeks. “One of the hardest days for any journalist is covering the funeral of fallen law enforcement or fire personnel, which is where I was the first week. At the end of the funeral I realized that this was someone I didn’t know but wished I had.” He said that last week he had been in Park City, Utah with other Rotary club presidents to work toward raising 50 million dollars a year to eradicate polio through Rotary’s Polio Plus Program. He indicated that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is providing a matching grant and saluted Club member **Steve Crane** for his work in DC.

He then welcomed **Rabbi Daniel Weiner** and **Virginia McKenzie** to the podium. Rabbi Weiner provided the Inspiration of the Day by reminding us that we are each stewards and debtors to our land and our country and we will be stronger and remain strong by doing so together.

Virginia, picking up on the theme of Governor Inslee’s commitment to reducing each person’s carbon footprint, led the club in singing “This Land is Your Land” accompanied by **Burr Stewart**.

President Wright welcomed all guests and then asked **Kim Moore** to introduce four prospective members. Mark followed by introducing Consul General Brandon Lee of Canada.



Connie Miller introduced the club’s newest member **Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady**. Born in Kursk, Russia, her father’s family were educators and her mother was a pediatrician, and Tatyana began her professional life in service to children. Tatyana always considered it critical to develop in her students a calling for teaching – a desire and readiness to work with children during and after their formal classes. Due to her commitment to service and because of her meeting with a Bellevue Rotarian, Dick Spady, Tatyana cofounded Rotary club “Kursk” in 1998. Tatyana joined her American

husband in Seattle in 2007, continuing to write books in education, at this time 20, started the *Russian-American Education Forum*, an online journal, and became

Adjunct Professor at SPU. Tatyana's classification is Education and her proposers are David Woodward and Rob LoBosco.

President Mark invited Seattle Rotary Service Foundation board member **Jeff Borek** to the podium. Jeff reminded the club members of their commitment to the future of our community through their contributions to the foundation, which is actually two separate commitments. He reported that the club is three quarters of the way through fundraising efforts and that the funds are necessary for the club to continue to make a difference in our community.



President Wright introduced Beth Takekawa to speak about news from the Wing Luke Museum, one of Seattle's treasures. Beth indicated that the museum sprung out of a desire to capture the stories and art from 26 different national origins. Tragically, Wing Luke, who was the first elected official of color in Seattle and was elected in 1960 to the city council, was killed in a 1965 airplane crash. The seed money to start the museum was taken from the money left over from a collection to find the site of the crash. The museum moved to its new home in 2008 and is operated and owned by the Asian communities. Affiliated with the National Park Service, the museum has received

an award for its high school youth program and received an award in 2015 for the Wing Luke civil rights unit. She closed by encouraging everyone to visit during this 50th year celebration. "Just come and see how far we have come."

Mark then brought Greg Hanscom to the stage. Greg, the Executive Editor of Crosscut and KCTS 9, introduced Washington's Governor, Jay Inslee, who was accompanied by his wife Trudy. There followed an extremely interesting and information-filled dialogue between Governor Inslee and Hanscom. It began



with Governor Inslee artfully dodging any comments about the preceding evening's State of the Union address. When asked how confident the Governor is about the state legislature passing legislation regarding policies for energy, Governor Inslee indicated that he was very confident because he believes the legislature is starting to understand that such legislation will improve economic and health conditions in the state of Washington. "This is not just about polar bears." He went on to say that Washingtonians will continue to do what needs to be done for Washington to remain the number one place to do business. Explaining that Washington has been the leader each time there has been a transition, he remarked that his optimism is based on the state's ability to

commercialize and monetize technology. Two past transitions - aerospace and changing from analog to digital - demonstrated the Governor's belief that Washington will continue to be a leader during the future phases of change. He went on to state that the next transition in the world economy will be away from carbon based fuels, "because the world knows if we do not do so our lives are jeopardized."

Hanscom pointed out that the legislature has not favored cap and trade or carbon tax legislation; however, governor Inslee pointed out that in the past we have used graphs to chart what was happening during the transitions, but now we have huge disasters such as mudslides and wildfires that are having a major impact on the desire to change. He went on to state that the economic opportunities are being led by Washington businesses, including a carbon fiber plant and a polysilicon plant for solar panels that are leading the way in improving the employment picture. His third point was that the legislature has had a change in the majority which will have a positive impact on legislation. When Hanscom indicated that there is concern about proposed legislation because of potential loopholes, the Governor responded that a major focus of this legislation is to not lose jobs. Therefore, there will be exemptions for energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries, which is what the rest of the world has done. "This will work," the Governor stated, "because when I was in the US House in 2009, we were able to make these changes."



The Governor went on to explain that the legislation creates a three-billion-dollar investment fund for Washington, helping businesses transition to new systems by putting a tax on carbon pollution, which in turn decreases healthcare costs, and allows homes and businesses to be more energy efficient. "Those who live close to the I-5 corridor have a two to ten times higher risk of coming down with cancer." He explained that the bill will include relief for those of low income and that he has been working with people of color as he has in the past to address these issues. He encouraged people to understand that change such as this works best when it happens in the state legislature and not through the initiative process. "This state has passed legislation to reduce the carbon footprint but there has been no legislative action to enact that law. It's time for the legislature to take that action." He explained that past proposals for a carbon tax didn't necessarily mean that the public received anything from that. What his proposed legislation would do is provide clean air, better health, and a reduction in energy costs. He favors this investment strategy over a regulatory system where standards are imposed and then must be monitored for compliance.

During a brief question and answer period the Governor explained that business cannot solve the carbon pollution issue because it does not protect what we own together - our atmosphere. "Every single country except one is in favor of limiting carbon pollution,"



he said, and indicated that we cannot wait any longer. He also expressed his appreciation that a capital budget passed just recently. When asked about the tax on national and state parks the Governor indicated that the state will need help from congress to protect our national parks and that funding has been increased for state parks. When asked about state mental health institution standards the Governor indicated that the state has not been paying its workers enough and we are

slowly building back the staffing levels that are needed in our state institutions. An increase in wages has helped.

Hanscom closed by thanking the Governor, followed by a rousing applause from the attendees.

President Mark thanked each of the program's participants, and indicated that next week's meeting at the Westin will include a program regarding police reform in Seattle presented by former Seattle Police Chief Norm Stamper.