Reardon: Boeing was the only choice for Pentagon's new refueling tanker

On Friday morning, I stood shoulder to shoulder in celebration with the women and men who will make the U.S. Air Force's next refueling tanker. It was a good feeling knowing that Thursday's Pentagon decision to contract its tanker with The Boeing Co. will protect the lives and safety of our U.S. military.

It also further supports what I have said for years: The only airplane that has consistently and reliably served the U.S. military without fail is the Boeing 767.

For generations, our local workers have been building trusted, reliable airplanes. Their craftsmanship has not only saved lives overseas but it has also protected the lives of our citizens back home as well.
As Pentagon officials said Thursday, "Boeing was a clear winner."

Our U.S. military can again be confident that their safety and tactical support will come from the same American workers who gave their predecessors the reliable tools to protect this country since World War II.

Snohomish County can focus on expanding its aerospace industry, which supports tens of thousands of jobs in the region. We must look toward securing the future replacement for the 737, commercial aviation's most popular plane ever.

Today, Boeing employees should be proud of the work they do, as should Snohomish County residents. We represent the qualities that make America great.

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Population growth shows Snohomish County place worth living

Recently released data from the 2010 U.S. Census shows Snohomish County's population has grown nearly 18 percent since the last official count was taken in 2000.

The official number for 2010 is 713,335 residents versus 606,024 people in 2000.

While Snohomish County maintained a steady population increase during "boom years," statistics show that more people moved to the county during the recent financial downturn.

"Our greatest growth came during the years of the Great Recession, a direct result of our fiscal discipline and ability to make infrastructure improvements during that time," Reardon said. "When you consider our quality of life, natural environment and the fact that we’re a lower cost county in terms of taxes and fees than other counties, it’s obvious that Snohomish County is in a class all its own."

A leader in global aeronautics and home to a U.S. Naval base, Snohomish County is a major employer in the state and across the nation. It also boasts world-class attractions such as the Everett Events Center – home to hockey’s Everett Silvertips and the national champion Stealth Lacrosse team – and the Tulalip Resort and Conference Center. Access to the Cascade
Mountains, saltwater and more than 10,000 acres of county owned park land also make Snohomish County a place worth living.

City development also is improving quality of life. Everett remains the county’s largest city, but the city of Marysville is now the 15th largest city in the state – home to more than 60,000 residents – and the city of Lake Stevens has more than quadrupled in size during the last decade.

"It’s easy to see why people want to live, work and play in Snohomish County," Reardon said. "We bring together the best of many worlds."

To view U.S. Census data, click here.

 Legislative watch: Aerospace training

Two companion bills (Senate Bill 5674 and House Bill 1846) that would create an aerospace training student loan program have each passed out of their respective policy committees and are approaching floor votes.

Both are supported by Executive Aaron Reardon and would increase student opportunities at the Washington Aerospace Training and Research Center, located at Paine Field and administered by Edmonds Community College. The training and research center, created in part through Executive Reardon’s efforts, provides degree and certification programs in high-demand fields relevant to the aerospace industry.

"Offering additional ways to finance job training is a must to maintain enough qualified workers for our growing aerospace industry," Reardon said. "Both bills would allow more students to graduate and hit the floor working – a definite plus for this region as well as the state."

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