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Snohomish County Creates Digital Alliance with Microsoft

Agreement will increase access to broadband, develop digital workforce, and modernize IT

EVERETT, Wash., June 8, 2020 – Today, Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), becoming the first county in Washington State to execute a Digital Alliance with Microsoft. This public/private partnership helps advance technology improvements and skills building through a number of initiatives, including expanding rural broadband, targeting workforce skills development, and modernizing IT and data infrastructure.

“We know that jobs in the Puget Sound region depend on access to broadband and training in high tech skills,” said Executive Somers. “I know that joining forces with Microsoft will give our county the best possible partner to advance our workforce development programs and provide our students with opportunities for hands on experience. Snohomish County will continue to be leaders in innovation.”

“As Microsoft enables digital transformation from the most intimate rural communities to the most connected urban centers, we look for ways to provide innovative solutions for a changing world,” said Carol Workman, General Manager, Microsoft State and Local Government at Microsoft Corporation. “The agreement provides tools for organizations and individuals to expand economies, provide opportunities, and realize potential. Our collaboration with Snohomish County allows us to deploy our global expertise to a diverse and growing region of Washington.”

“Snohomish County is united in its push to create more jobs and provide new tools to residents, particularly in our rural areas,” said Snohomish County Council Chair Nate Nehring. “We appreciate Microsoft’s collaboration and their willingness to help us improve our technological readiness.”

Snohomish County will deploy Microsoft 365 and provide employees best practices for using Microsoft Teams to collaborate across the County. The County will also begin digital transition to Microsoft Azure as it modernizes its IT and data infrastructure.

In addition, Snohomish County will work with Microsoft to hold the County’s first “YouthSpark DigiCamp,” which is a high-tech camp that provides students first-hand experience with the latest technologies. Also, in an effort to address the County’s rural broadband challenges, Microsoft will promote access to their Airband ISP Program, a free initiative providing benefits to Internet Service Providers serving rural areas, such as special pricing on TV White Spaces equipment, telecom infrastructure, software solutions and more.

The Snohomish County Digital Alliance is the County's first major strategic collaboration with a high-tech firm. This represents the start of another public-private partnership, allowing Snohomish County to better use private sector expertise for complex economic development needs.

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