



GREATER KITSAP CHAMBER

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Bremerton and Silverdale Chamber Boards Approve Final Details of Merger

The Boards of Directors for the Bremerton and Silverdale Chambers of Commerce met on Friday, June 17, 2022, to approve the final details of their planned merger. Beginning July 1, 2022, the two Chambers will move forward under the name of the Greater Kitsap Chamber. The new Chamber will be more than 600 members strong and is the largest Chamber on the Kitsap Peninsula.

A Chamber Merger Task Force, comprised of board members from both Chambers, as well as a member representative from both Chambers, have been working since January on the organizational aspects of the new Chamber, though merger talks between the two chambers have been around since the early-1990s. The Task Force includes Kathleen Arndt of SERVPRO of Kitsap County, Tiffany DeSaveur of US Bank, Susan Larsen of Land Title Company of Kitsap County, Dave Montoure Co-Owner of KettleFish, and John Morrissey of Kitsap RV.

“It became very apparent throughout the pandemic that the Chambers were much more effective when they were united,” shared Morrissey, also the current board chairman of the Bremerton Chamber. “So, naturally, the next step was to discuss how to maintain this unity into the future. Out of those conversations came the idea to permanently merge into one entity.”

“It was a perfect storm of sorts, these last several years, with COVID forcing us to really examine the work we do for local businesses, with the realization that we could work smarter and be stronger as one Chamber,” shared David Emmons, President/CEO of the Chamber. “It has really been a long time coming, and we are excited for the work ahead of us as we continue our strong tradition of providing support and education for businesses throughout Kitsap County.”

Task Force member Susan Larsen shared, “Change can be exciting, but it often comes with some anxiety - especially since we have had to live through constant change over the last few years. As a business community we have had a continuous conversation of ‘hoping things get

back to normal.' This merger comes from the realization that our business environment has been permanently changed and it's time to work together to create OUR new normal. The Task Force was diligent in creating a framework which would allow the opportunity to evolve our businesses, transition into a new business climate, and still allow the traditions of both Bremerton and Silverdale to move forward."

The Greater Kitsap Chamber will maintain their presence in both the Bremerton and Silverdale Communities with offices on Pacific Avenue in Downtown Bremerton and in the Kitsap Mall. Both locations also serve as Visitor Centers for the area and are key players in the growing tourism industry in the county.

"There's really been so much interest in us coming together, and it's been interesting and gratifying to see it all come to fruition," said Dave Montoure, co-owner of KettleFish and current Silverdale Chamber board chairman. "From supporting local business, to economic development, to tourism, the Greater Kitsap Chamber is poised to become a regional hub for development and success in our county."

Membership for businesses currently with the Bremerton or Silverdale Chambers will continue as they always have, with current members becoming Charter Members of the Greater Kitsap Chamber. "There's nothing extra our members need to do to continue with us – they should renew as they always do and we'll take care of the rest," explains Irene Moyer, Director of Member Relations. The Chambers both recently rolled out new membership programs in anticipation of the merger, and new businesses wishing to join as Inaugural Members of the Greater Kitsap Chamber should contact Moyer at irene@silverdalechamber.com.

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