



## **HIGHLIGHTS for 2009**

Community Council was notified by the Internal Revenue Service that it has been officially determined to be a 501(c)(3) organization. To qualify, the organization must have governance structure and many policies in place. That the status was achieved relatively quickly after Community Council's founding is a tribute to the hard work of its board, membership, and friends.

Community participation and financial support grew. Membership increased from 69 charter members to 163; grant support from 4 foundations/trusts was received; and 54 donors made financial contributions, as compared with 18 in 2008.

The first study, *Enhancing the Educational Attainment of our Region's Children*, was completed under the chairmanship of Roger Bairstow. As many as 70 people took part in the study with a core group of 40 completing the six-month project. Thirty-five experts presented information. The findings, conclusions the committee drew and their recommendations for improvement were presented at a community luncheon and in various other settings and a written report was published.

By adopting the Study Committee's report, the Community Council committed to facilitate the 2-year effort to educate the public and decision-makers and to implement the recommendations. An implementation task force of 15 under the leadership of Judge Robert Zagelow developed a strategic plan and began that effort.

The Program Committee, chaired by Rory McClellan, selected a new study topic: How do we improve our region's economic viability by creating businesses that add value to existing agricultural resources currently not used to their full economic potential?

The 2009-10 study kicked off in December. About 35 people are participating. The study committee is chaired by Steven Woolley.

A group of community leaders completed Walla Walla Regional Vital Signs, Quality of Life indicators website. ([walla2regvitalsigns.org](http://walla2regvitalsigns.org)) Working with designers from Eastern Washington University, the group selected nearly 40 indicators and evaluated the data, briefly describing the meaning of the data in five categories: economy, education, environment, health, household and public safety and assigning a current status to each. A committee will annually review the data and update the interpretive portion of the site.

The marketing committee created visibility for the organization with a brochure and other printed materials, through public meetings and presentations to a number of groups, and through media contact. They are also working on a new website for Community Council.

The Board of Directors and Executive Director are working toward long-term sustainability through strategic planning and its implementation.