

# Skykomish Update

Coming in the July Issue  
**The Great WSDOE Sellout**



Cate Riley

## Skykomish - It's time to embrace prosperity or become a 'footnote', frozen in time, forgotten by history.

### from Tyranny to Freedom

As the new millennium dawned, peoples worldwide cast-off the political tyranny and economic devastation wrought by decades of repressive communist rule with its centrally planned, government commanded economies.

In the few short years that followed... More wealth has been created than at any time in recorded human history... The direct result of free peoples employing 'Market Economics.'

### Illusive Prosperity

**During this time of unprecedented global expansion, Skykomish continued its long downhill slide into economic malaise and depression.**

Why have we suffered such an unenviable fate amidst a cornucopia of plenty?



Certainly, we've had no shortage of meetings, 10 year plans, visioning documents, committees, boards, financial assistance, grants or economic development seminars.

### The Rules of Capital

1. Capital goes where it receives a fair return as measured by profits, interest earned, appreciation and cash-flow.
2. Today's global financial markets allow capital to move where it wants... digitally, 24/7 at the speed of light. Even the mightiest of governments no longer hold sway.
3. Attempts to restrict or over-regulate this flow meet with failure. The benefits are simply too compelling for the marketplace to ignore.
4. Investors quickly maneuver around even the most challenging of roadblocks. They simply allocate capital to friendly markets and deny it to all others.
5. The more illiquid the investment the greater importance investors attach to stability, predictability and the rule of law.

### Henry Ford by Dieter Benz

Henry Ford created Greenfield Village next to the world's largest industrial complex 'River Rouge' in Dearborn Michigan.

They brought entire buildings, a farm and factories like Thomas Edison's Menlo Park, the Wright Brothers' factory and Henry's original workshop as well as his first factory. Daniel Webster's house is there and so is a full-size replica of Philadelphia's Independence Hall.

Henry built a mammoth museum filling it with cars, trucks, trains, farm machinery, airplanes and even an electric generating plant. It was a sight to behold, as millions from all over the world have done.

On my last of many visits, I was surprised as many of the exhibits were nowhere to be found or were tucked away, forgotten in dusty corners.

They had been replaced with glitzy contemporary exhibits, obviously designed to appeal to children...and children there were. It was like being back in the 4th grade.

I was so perplexed that, upon returning home, I contacted the Museum. They explained: People don't visit museums or historic places like Greenfield Village as they once did.

The museum and village had to find new customers and they succeeded... School children. They come from all over by the bus load.

**The Museum and Village made a strategic decision: Change, adapt and prosper, rather than stand-fast, whither and die.**



Today you can tour the Village on foot, in a horse drawn coach, Ford Model T, Model A or 'Woody' station wagon.

They built a 1900 circa pavilion. Visitors can sit, stroll, listen to the calliope or ride the merry-go-round with their children.

You can enjoy lunch and dinner in an authentic 18th century restaurant, roadhouse or tavern.

They've established a thriving wedding/event centre, booked far in advance, replete with an early American church and the historic Dearborn Inn ('state of the art' inside) just steps away.

**What was dying has now been re-born to serve generations into the future.**

### Skykomish

At the very moment the world was abandoning Communism, Skykomish chose to embrace this dying, bankrupt doctrine.

No, it wasn't part of some diabolical plot, but rather an all too common human response to change... Fear.

Acceptance of the belief that government would save us, while we sat around, schmoozing, looking busy, attending endless meetings and seminars, has proven self destructive.

### The Sales Pitch

By 1985, Sky's economy was showing signs of stress following the decline in railroad and logging operations.

King County Landmark and Heritage's (KCLH) appearance on the scene was a miracle... 'a knight in shining armor' coming to the rescue...or so it seemed.

They promised to be a valuable ally in rebuilding the town's Historic Commercial District economy, if only the Town would enter into an 'Inter-local Agreement' binding its fate to KCLH promises and authority.

### The Free Lunch

We did get a few freebies: The community centre, visitors' kiosk, the school's covered playground and a Masonic Hall paint job.

Unfortunately, as expensive as these were for outside taxpayers, none improved the Historic District or any other facet of Sky's economic life. By all accounts, we are in a deep depression.

As we speak, yet another of our few remaining businesses is packing-up, getting ready to move to greener pastures.



This latest casualty, the Maloney General Store building, is coincidentally the BNSF Railway's most recent Sky real estate acquisition. The Town and KCLH are very excited.

KCLH... Long on promises and exciting opportunities, is short to none on delivery.

We've paid a high price for freebies.

### Manna from Heaven

The Skykomish Hotel was purchased by present owners, Skykomish Hotel Llc in September 2000.



Plans called for a \$1,200,000 (non-inflation adjusted) historic renovation designed to transform this 'white elephant' into 'state of the art' bed and breakfast suites with ground floor retail.

The completed project would require a full-time staff of 18, becoming a major contributor to Sky's employment, tax base and economic rebirth.

Hotel owners asked for nothing in return. The Eagle everyone had been praying for had just landed.

The project, of course, did not go forward and the Hotel has now sat empty for the past 7 years.

### What Went Wrong?

#### I. Skykomish ignored the 'Rules of Capital'

We met with King County Landmark and Heritage (KCLH) prior to the purchase to learn about historic renovation rules, regulations, guidelines, procedures and incentives that would guide and govern this project.

They painted an exciting, positive, helpful, assistive picture... selling their expertise and lead role in their relationship with the Town.

We retained one of the 3 architectural firms KCLH recommended. They were great... preparing 'As builts', performing engineering studies, proposing floor-plans and estimating costs.

We retained an acoustic engineering firm to identify, quantify and propose solutions to noise issues from railway and Fire District 50 operations. They too did a superb job.

The first Skykomish Hotel Disaster began in late fall 2000. As the ink was drying on Hotel closing documents, a distinct chill was felt in the air coming from KCLH and the Sky Design Review Board.

Sky voted against approving our roof replacement choice. When questioned by architects...How was this possible, given that Sky's own 'Design Review Guidelines' permitted these materials and colours, **the Board arrogantly responded that it did not have to explain its decisions.**

KCLH voted against allowing window replacement, making it impossible to achieve a sleeping decibel range of 28-40 dba, versus the present 127 dba.

One board member stated she thought we would 'have more business if we advertised that the building had its original single pane windows'.

KCLH even insisted the building be heated with coal-fired steam, just like the old days. Yes, this sounds too absurd to be true, but... it too is captured on DVD.

Their crazy, silly demands continued unabated until we, the architects and engineers lost faith in the Town's Design Review Board, Town Council and KCLH... their abilities and most certainly their stated intentions.

KCLH had nothing to offer but impoverishment and misery for our town. Their promises to us were equally empty.

Claims of expertise were grossly inflated. Staff was naive, arrogant, of ill intent and deceitful. KCLH Board appeared loaded with politicians on a mission to impose Communist rule in Sky.

The incentives they had so proudly touted were hollow, no value whatsoever. Their entire program was a sham, nothing but smoke and mirrors.

**Repunzel in Reverse:** Remember the fairytale where Repunzel spins straw into gold? How many in our community would be willing to invest any amount, let alone over \$1,525,000 (Purchase price+ renovation) in a town that was literally trying to turn your gold into straw?

**2. Sky hitched its wagon to the wrong star.** KCLH with its political agenda masquerading as Historic Preservation, has locked Sky into a rigid, frozen interpretation of history that has proven disastrous.

## Real Consequences

During the 7 years the Hotel has been closed, citizens and Town government have lost well over \$1,000,000 in payroll and tax revenues. The loss to King County also has been substantial, not to mention indirect, ancillary damages.

**Town Council along with King County Landmark and Heritage has visited a plague upon our community.**

Following KCLH's leadership role in the 2001 Skykomish Hotel disaster, the Town Council voted them and their Inter-local Agreement out, but...

Present Town Council, lethargic, uninformed and ill prepared, invited KCLH back. Council has become dependent upon WSDOE, KCLH and the BNSF.

They sit silently at the council table, para-

lyzed like stone gargoyles, waiting for instructions from the very agencies they are charged with monitoring. It is sad and disheartening to watch.

**The BNSF Environmental Cleanup is the most important event in the history of Skykomish,** yet at this crossroads in time, Town Council has in effect, ceded control to outside interests, each with their own agenda.

You don't have to look far to see the devastation. The Historic Commercial District is in shambles. The entire economy lay prostrate, crying out for salvation as a few stragglers and groupies desperately try breathing life into the long moribund Chamber of Commerce.

Buildings sit empty. People continue to flee and even the few businesses remaining open, appear to be struggling.

## Latest Opportunity... Squandered

Sky Hotel owners recently retained a Monroe general contractor to begin interior renovation. He's been around for decades, maintaining friendly relations and familiarity with all agency codes.

We notified the Town, requesting permission to place a dumpster. A positive response was expected, as the town has had 7 long years to contemplate the consequences of its earlier effort to sabotage the Hotel renovation and confiscate owner's property rights.

The 2nd Skykomish Hotel Disaster has now occurred. Instead of being assistive, the Town appears to have been busy sharpening weapons in preparation for the next round.

## Economic Development?

Mayor Mackner quickly shot off a letter stating an interior demolition permit was required when it simply was not... once again conveying an attitude of obstruction and obfuscation.

Large, illiquid investments like real estate, require trust in the 'rule of law', confidence that the rules are fair, will be consistently applied in a compassionate manner and the certainty they won't be re-

written in the middle of the game.

Council's allowing the Mayor to run wild, while it continues to create and adopt burdensome rules, regulations, policies, ordinances and inter-local agreements serves but one purpose: To alert investors that **Sky remains an unfriendly place to invest capital or conduct commerce.**



## Town Council's Role

**Nothing happens without Council's approval or acquiescence.** They alone are charged with policy making and the Town's finance... not the Mayor, not Design Review, not KCLH, not WSDOE and not BNSF.

Everyone else may run for cover when the going gets difficult, but Council remains 'on the point', like it or not.

## Risky Business

This is of course no laughing matter for Sky citizens and property owners.

**Without employment opportunities and tax base from healthy businesses, homeowners must continue to pay more of the property tax burden, and are increasingly being called upon to shoulder the skyrocketing cost of keeping our ailing school district on life-support.**

Town officials and 'fellow travelers' who have no vested stake in the consequences of their actions, thought they were going to get yet another crack (yes, they really should put the crack pipe down) at dictating 'crazy, coo-coo, wacked-out ideas'.

**After 7 years of financial drought, there's still no recognition that 'The Rules of Capital', not selfish, narrow, provincial interests, will be the driving force behind economic development and prosperity in Sky.**

# Skykomish Needs Your Help

Sky Hotel owners continue to remain unreceptive to political extortion and confiscation of their property rights by a few Communist holdovers with their usual groupies and bamboozled old timers in tow.

Screwing us again isn't an option.

## Choices

1. The Skykomish Hotel can remain closed. To achieve this goal, citizens need do nothing. Your Town government has once again already succeeded on your behalf. The general contractor has been notified of the project's cancellation.

2. The historic renovation of the Hotel could proceed... offering employment opportunities and substantially contributing to Sky's desperately needed tax base... helping our community move forward.

**This option requires action by you!**

## Sky is in Trouble

We are besieged from within, shackled by the very chains we have placed upon ourselves.

First we believed KCLH would save our town's economy. Instead, they brought destruction.

Now we're counting upon WSDOE along with BNSF and KCLH for resur-

rection. All we must do is attend a few more meetings, eat a few more cookies and wait a bit longer.

We shed our responsibilities along the way and mislaid our common sense as we came to believe that good things could only come from government.

**We've lost the spirit that built America** and forgotten what happens when the fox is placed in charge of the hen house.

As always, we alone remain responsible for and in charge of our destiny. **We must learn to partner with others to achieve our goals instead of allowing others to assume our roles and determine our future.**

There is no doubt that Sky will survive. Development is coming steadily and inextricably up the valley.

The question is what kind of town will we become... more suburban sprawl or a special place, preserved within our beautiful Cascades... A place that incorporates history, creates a sustainable, environmentally friendly 'green' economy and discovers its way into what promises be an exciting, but challenging future?

Will Sky citizens take this latest threat seriously?

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## Demand Change

Not everyone has the time or inclination to become involved, but... Please take a moment, consider the issues and Send Town Council a Message.

For those who are able to do more... Talk to your neighbours. You're not alone.

Begin attending Council meetings. You'll quickly discover that your Mayor and Council are an embarrassment to all who take pride in calling themselves Americans. **Let's stop mocking those who have sacrificed and died to preserve and protect our right to self-determination.**

Demand that Town Council begin representing our interests, honour the past and protect our pathway to the future.

There isn't much time left.

**We only get one chance to save our town.**

## It's up to You!

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Send Skykomish Town Council a message. Place an X in the box of your choice, cut on perforated line, place in a stamped envelop and mail to SKYKOMISH TOWN COUNCIL, POB 308, SKYKOMISH, WA 98288-0308... Or deliver directly to Town Hall.



**YES.** I support a healthy, environmentally friendly 'green' Skykomish economy. Remove the Design Review Board and King County Landmark and Heritage from the equation, finally allowing the historic renovation of The Skykomish Hotel to proceed without further incident or delay. Economic development requires more than talk. It's time to say YES to Prosperity and Success!



**NO.** I'm very pleased with the way you are once again kicking the Skykomish Hotel's butt from here to kingdom come as part of our Economic Development program. I can't wait for the sequel 'Historic Crucifixion' to begin. Your dynamic leadership remains an inspiration to all. Keep up the good work!

Councilmembers: Darrel Joselyn #1 • Charlie Brown #2 • Bill Gould #3 • Lorna Goebel #4 • Henry Sladek #5

