



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **New Vision Selects Entrepreneurial Friendly Cities *Four Yakima County Cities Receive Special Designation***

***Yakima, Washington (September 7, 2011)*** - - New Vision, the Yakima County Development Association, announces the selection of four Yakima County cities – Grandview, Sunnyside, Tieton and Zillah – that will be designated Entrepreneurial Friendly Cities. The Entrepreneurial Friendly Cities (EFC) Initiative is designed to support small businesses in Yakima County’s rural cities and help them advance strategies that aid home town businesses.

According to David McFadden, New Vision President, “We were very pleased with the applications and commitment of the four cities. They all bring strong community support and the passion to help entrepreneurs succeed in their cities.” The four cities will work closely with New Vision to develop a small business support center in each city, and they will also recruit and train small business counselors that can help and mentor local companies. An added bonus of the EFC designation is that New Vision and University of Washington – Heritage Partnership are supporting the cost of hiring a college intern to help kick-start the program. The interns will be tailoring their duties to the needs of each city.

As part of the application process, each of the EFC has formed a steering committee, developed a strategic plan, and talked with local business owners. Sandi Fein, Chamber Director for Zillah comments, “Zillah is really excited to participate in this program. Even the application process has been helpful so far to encourage coordination between the City, Chamber and the business community.”

The EFC will also be responsible for recruiting SCORE counselors and providing a location for a business support office. Our office is working closely with the Yakima Valley SCORE Chapter, Heritage University, and the Yakima Valley Community College to support the EFC initiative. These

partners have been great resources throughout our entrepreneur initiative and we could not move this new program forward without their active involvement.

While each of the cities has unique goals and strengths, many of the small cities are facing similar challenges, such as how to draw more visitors (or customers) into their communities to support a retail base. Our goal through the EFC initiative is to broaden the safety net for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Yakima Valley. By developing satellite business assistance centers we hope to bring important help to companies closer to where they operate and live.

The Entrepreneurial Friendly Cities Initiative is a new program for New Vision, and we decided to work with a smaller number of cities first before trying to bring every rural city into the fold. This allows our organization to evaluate results in each designated city, work out any implementation bugs, and ultimately determine how to scale up these services for other interested communities within the region. “The momentum in Grandview inspired by our recent downtown revitalization has provided the infrastructure to attract new business and help existing business succeed”, added Brad Smith, Grandview Chamber of Commerce. “The Entrepreneurial Friendly Cities designation helps provide us additional resources to us keep moving in the right direction. We are really looking forward to enhancing existing services for our local businesses”.

We are excited about the EFC initiative. Through effective partnerships we are building capacity in our rural cities to help entrepreneurs and small businesses succeed. For most of our smallest cities retaining and growing these firms is their lifeline to the future.

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**About New Vision, the Yakima County Development Association:** New Vision is a countywide economic development association that works to attract and grow business within the Yakima Valley. Founded in 1985, the association has helped dozens of companies expand within the region. Companies receiving New Vision help have created over 3000 new jobs these firms have a \$400+ million dollar annual economic impact on the regional economy.