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The Insider

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We all care about the weather, but not that much

The Bellevue Chamber of Commerce unveiled a surprising statistic at its packed economic breakfast recently: Business leaders on the Eastside are more worried about the weather than the mortgage and credit crisis.

But it turns out the survey result — which garnered a sprinkling of laughter from attendees — was actually a result of incorrect tabulation.

In fact, 42 percent of 162 business leaders who responded to the November survey ranked the weather as one of the least important factors affecting their 2009 outlook.

Eastside execs actually ranked the economy, the mortgage crisis and slumping home sales as the top three factors affecting their outlook — not the weather.

At least, said Wayne Ottum, the Chamber's chief operating officer, "It gives everybody a laugh."

— KIRSTEN GRIND

An espresso stand fights R-rated rivals with a PG rating

One coffee company has taken the high road on a stretch of highway south of Everett that's dotted with stands where baristas wearing next to nothing serve coffee through drive-up windows.

Gourmet Latte's location on Evergreen Way beckons customers with a "Family Friendly" message on its roadside marquee as a way of standing out among some nearby competitors. Those include the Grab-N-Go Bikini Hut and Java Juggs, which advertises "naughty lingerie baristas."

Gourmet Latte put up its family-friendly sign after some customers said they had inadvertently driven up to one of the other stands with their children, only to get an unwanted eyeful.

Gourmet Latte has nine locations, all staffed by fully clothed workers. Owner Karissa Bresheare said her business has been strong, despite competition from bikini-clad baristas.

"The more stands that convert over to those trashy bikini-type of espresso stands, it seems like the less stands are available for customers looking for coffee and a nice friendly barista that wears clothes," Bresheare said.

— GREG LAMM

Boeing is mum this year on its community fund financials

As a tax-exempt group, the Boeing Employee Community Fund of Puget Sound is required to disclose how much it receives in contributions, as well as how much it spends on grants.

Boeing has readily released those numbers, until now. Boeing Vice President Fred Kiga said he would not release the figures because their disclosure could harm relations with the company's Machinists, who are just coming off a 57-day strike.

Kiga indicated that contributions to the fund were down.

Eventually, the numbers will be reported in tax returns and released to the public in about a year.

— CLAY HOLTZMAN

Proximity helps UW land a bigger deal with Nike

When dozens of protesters on Nov. 20 objected to the University of Washington's new apparel and marketing contract with **Nike Inc.**, one detail was overlooked: the size of the new deal.

The new, 10-year contract, valued at nearly \$35 million but with incentives to go as high as almost \$39 million, is a major increase over the previous 10-year deal worth \$10.7 million.

So how did Husky Athletics, burdened with several losing programs, negotiate a deal three times larger than its past contract?

It helps that Nike, with \$18.6 billion in revenue last fiscal year, is based 172 miles down Interstate 5, in Portland.

"There certainly is something to being in someone's back yard," said Leslie Wurzberger, associate athletic director for marketing at the UW.

— CLAY HOLTZMAN