

# Seattle Busin

WASHINGTON'S LEADING BUSINESS

MARCH 2011 • SEATTLEBUSINESS

BROWN PAPER  
TICKETS TAKES ON  
TICKETMASTER

SHOULD WE  
FEAR CHINA?

## NO MORE MRS. NICE GUY

GOVERNOR GREGOIRE  
LEADS THE CHARGE  
TO REMAKE OLYMPIA



>> MEET OUR 2011 LEADERS IN HEALTH CARE WINNERS ON PAGE 32 <<

## the BRIEFCASE

### 1. Washington's "Gold" Hotels

Seven Washington state hotels made it on to *Condé Nast Traveler's* "Gold" list of the 500 best hotels in the world based on a customer survey. The hotels include: Hotel Murano, Tacoma, with a score of 93.8; Hotel 1000, Seattle, 92.1; Fairmont Olympic Hotel, Seattle, 89.5; Inn at the Market, Seattle, 89.4; Salish Lodge & Spa, Snoqualmie, 88.2; Tulalip Resort Casino, Tulalip, 88.1; Four Seasons Hotel Seattle, 87.9.

### 2. Esterline Corp.'s Big Buy

While many Washington companies have been takeover targets, including a spurned \$211 million offer for Fisher Communications from Huntingdon Real Estate Investment Trust, businesses here have also been on the buying side. Bellevue-based Esterline Corp. purchased Eclipse Electronic Systems of Richardson, Texas, for \$120 million.

### 3. Amazon Offers Terabytes in the Cloud

Washington's role as a center for cloud computing continues to grow. Amazon expanded its web-services offering by increasing the size of single files that customers can store and reference by 1,000 times from 5 gigabytes to 5 terabytes. The

move will allow movie studios to store and manage their entire catalog of high-definition files as individual objects. A two-hour movie stored in uncompressed HD format is about 1.5 terabytes. Large sets of human genome data can also be stored and widely shared.

### 4. Microsoft Expands Quincy Data Center

Meanwhile, in what is emerging as an arms race among cloud computing companies to build up data storage capacity, Microsoft is opening a second data center next to its existing site in Quincy. The facility is being built in modular fashion using preassembled components so that new capacity can be added as the need arises.

### 5. Lions Pounce on Seattle

When 15,000 Lions Clubs International members convene in Seattle this July, they'll constitute the city's largest convention crowd in more than two decades. Aside from the direct impact—conventioners and their friends and families are expected to drop \$46 million at Puget Sound-area businesses—there's the indirect benefit of introducing Seattle and the Pacific Northwest to a global market, since 40 percent of participants will be arriving from abroad.

### ( SPOTLIGHT )

## SMARTER CARS SELL BETTER

Airbiquity, Inrix and Microsoft help drive auto sales with software.

Where power, quality and style were once the key determinants of an automobile's success on the market, increasingly it's about the vehicle's computer capabilities. The software and wireless systems provided by companies such as Seattle-based Airbiquity and Microsoft were critical to the voice-controlled Sync computer system that helped to make Ford's new cars so popular. Now the Japanese firms are getting into the act. The all-electric Nissan Leaf will feature a system provided by Airbiquity and Hitachi Automotive Systems to help drivers search for charging stations and plot routes (avoiding slopes, for example) that use less electricity. The Airbiquity technology offers a flexible platform for delivering applications and services on automobile systems. Meanwhile, Toyota recently announced its new Entune navigation system will use data from Kirkland-based Inrix. Inrix uses traffic information drawn from more than 3 million GPS-enabled vehicles and mobile devices to recommend the best routes and to estimate travel times. Inrix says it's adding 15 positions to its 70-person staff to gear up for the Toyota contract.

— Leslie Helm

### ( STATSHOT )

## SEATTLE: BETTER ON ECONOMY, WORSE ON HOUSING

Where the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metro Area's economic recovery ranks among 100 largest U.S. cities.



Source: The Brookings Institution's MetroMonitor: Tracking Economic Recession and Recovery in America's 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas, as of 2010 Q3.