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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **KITTITAS COUNTY TOURISM CONTINUES TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES AND NONPROFITS**

**ELLENSBURG, WA – February 24, 2021** - The Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce oversees the three tourism campaigns in the county; My Ellensburg, Discover Cle Elum and Central Washington Outdoor.

Over the last year, the tourism department has worked with over 250 tourism-related business partners, including the hospitality, retail and restaurant industries to promote Kittitas County and the small businesses that make it so resilient; serving as a marketing arm that communicates directly and strategically to tourists.

The tourism department has communicated business updates, reopenings, ways to support from home, and resources for travel planning to over 100,000 social media followers; generating over 730,000 users to the tourism websites. This number is up 21% from 2019, despite the pandemic.

The Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce has distributed \$1,091,906.93 during the COVID-19 pandemic to help businesses in our county who need extra support. Of the 221 businesses who received grant funding, 102 of them are tourism-related.

"Our small businesses are the heartbeat of our collection of communities," said Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce Director of Tourism and Events Madison Ford. "They have continued to demonstrate creativity and resiliency more than ever before, helping Central Washington serve as a leading example for the rest of the state and beyond. We foresee a prosperous future for not only Kittitas County as a whole, but also each business and the hard working people behind them."

The county tourism department also helps manage the lodging tax process. In 2021, the Consolidated LTAC (CLTAC) group recommended funding \$219,244.99 to 19 organizations for 23 events. Of the 19 organizations, 5 were businesses, and 14 non-profits.

The Kittitas County LTAC also awarded \$216,918.00 for 5 municipality-owned small-scale grant projects. The County granted \$116,918 over the original allotment to support the local community.

The tourism department is involved with the Washington State Recreate Responsibly Coalition, the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust the National Heritage Area Advisory Committee, the Washington State Recreation Forum, Kittitas County Public Health, and the US Forest Service, as well as other tourism partners on a national scale to ensure traveler messaging promotes educated and responsible visitation with a focus on supporting our businesses.

For more information, please visit the Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce website at [www.kittitascountychamber.com/tourism-visitor-information](http://www.kittitascountychamber.com/tourism-visitor-information) or contact the Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce Director of Tourism Madison Ford at [madison@kittitascountychamber.com](mailto:madison@kittitascountychamber.com) or call (509) 925-2002.

**About the Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce:** The Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce is the largest business support and development organization in Kittitas County, and one of the largest in Central Washington. With 498 members representing every business sector, the Chamber and its committees oversee county-wide tourism promotion and economic development initiatives and a range of business support tools including publications, web services, seminars and even leadership development for a new generation.

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