

THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

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Appliance Depot hopes to extend reach into Whatcom County in 2011

KIE RELYEA - THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

BELLINGHAM - Coming off their most successful year since opening in 2005, the people behind Appliance Depot plan to reach out to new customers in Whatcom County - and to people who may see themselves not as green so much as frugal.

"Everybody understands thrift. Everybody understands waste," said Duane Jager, executive director of Appliance Depot.

A project of ReUse Works, the nonprofit in Bellingham offers job training to low-income residents who are entering the job market, works to extend the life of appliances that would otherwise go to the landfill, and encourages reuse.



In its center at 802 Marine Drive, two trained technicians repair and test donated appliances that are then sold to consumers.

Appliance Depot appeals to consumers who like the idea of reusing to help the environment or are looking for major appliances - washers, dryers, rangers, refrigerators and freezers - at half the cost of new, according to Jager.

"Our cost is our best feature for sure," he said.

The appliances come with a 90-day warranty.

People going through the job-training program don't repair the donated appliances. They clean them, strip them for parts, or help with recycling efforts, Jager said.

Here's how 2010 shaped up for Appliance Depot:

- Fixed up, then sold 1,150 appliances for reuse - or about 25 percent of the old appliances that were donated. Sales of the restored appliances support its job-training program.
- Stripped the remaining 3,150 machines for salvageable parts before recycling them. Between reuse and recycling, Appliance Depot diverted more than 390 tons of appliances for its reuse and job-training efforts.
- Provided job training for 45 people. Supported six employees with living-wage jobs and benefits.
- Learned that it would not receive city of Bellingham funding for 2011 for its job-training program. It had received \$10,000 or \$11,000 a year for four years.

"We're making it now without any outside funding," Jager said.

- Experienced an 11 percent increase in sales revenues of appliances, up to \$209,100. Given the state of the economy, "we're happy we got 11 percent growth," Jager said.

He attributed that to consumer frugality during the poor economy.

Jager hopes to see sales revenue rise by another 10 percent this year. Another goal is to appeal to consumers outside of Bellingham; twice as many people come from here as other parts of the county, according to Jager.

"We really want to reach into the county," he said. "We're still not top of mind countywide."

CONTACT INFO

Learn more about Appliance Depot at reuseworks.org, visit its Bellingham center at 802 Marine Drive or call the organization at 360-527-2646.

REUSE FOR ART

Appliance Depot is looking for artists to turn appliance parts into art for its third annual Appliance Art Revival on June 4.

The event is a fundraiser for the nonprofit, which promotes the role of art and reuse in a sustainable local economy, organizers say.

The artwork will be displayed in May at Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro, which is the host and sponsor for this year's event. The pieces will be auctioned off and the revenue shared between artists and Appliance Depot.

Artists can get appliance parts for free at Appliance Depot, 802 Marine Drive in Bellingham.

Art entry forms are due April 1; finished pieces due May 1.

For more information or an entry form, contact Kelli Carter at 360-527-2646 or info@reuseworks.org.

Reach KIE RELYEA at kie.relyea@bellinghamherald.com or call 715-2234.

Read more: <http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2011/02/10/1861297/appliance-depot-hopes-to-extend.html#ixzz1Dg7c2Xzh>