

National sustainable business conference in town June 14

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The 9th annual Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) Conference will be held in Bellingham June 14-17 at Western Washington University, and will bring dozens of renowned speakers from across the United States and more than 600 business owners, government officials and network leaders from business networks similar to Sustainable Connections.

“Bellingham and Whatcom County will once again be on the national stage for innovative business and economic development, along with leaders from all over North America, as BALLE brings its national conference to town,” Derek Long, Sustainable Connections’ executive director, said in a press release.

Bellingham was chosen as the conference site because it showcases how local, sustainable businesses can build economic vitality, according to the release.

In 2007, the Environmental Protection Agency named Bellingham the No. 1 green power community in the nation. In 2008, the Whatcom Transit Authority was the nation’s leader in increased ridership growth and in 2010, and the research firm Civic Economics ranked Bellingham and Whatcom County No. 2 in the nation for the vitality of local, independent retailers.

As part of the conference, themed “Place Matters,” Sustainable Connections will host tours to showcase innovation in farm-to-table practices, green building and local manufacturing.

The conference, which will be hosted by Sustainable Connections, will feature 80 speakers, including journalist and “The Shock Doctrine” author Naomi Klein. There will be 16 main-stage events and off-site celebrations, 24 breakout sessions and four regional living economy tours.

Those interested in attending must register by June 10. The cost is \$485 for Sustainable Connections members and \$595 for non-members. Single day prices are also available, as are discounted rates for groups and BALLE network leaders.

To register or for more information, visit www.livingeconomies.org/conference-2011.