



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 5, 2009**

**Haggen Family 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration Expanding with Support  
from Port of Bellingham and Bellingham Chamber of Commerce**

[Bellingham, Wash.] With many local residents experiencing tough times due to the recession, the Port of Bellingham and Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce & Industry are combining forces to offer a “fun stimulus.”

The two organizations are expanding the annual **Haggen Family 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration** this year to include live bands and children’s activities at Bellingham’s Zuanich Point Park before the evening’s fireworks display. All events will be free.

Thousands of people annually view the **Haggen Family 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration’s** fireworks. Haggen has been the primary sponsor of the Bellingham fireworks display, one of the largest in the state, since 1995.

“While the Port of Bellingham and Bellingham Chamber are working hard to revitalize our local economy, it became apparent that some local residents may not be taking family vacations as usual this summer,” said Jim Darling, the Port of Bellingham’s executive director. “Since the Bellingham Chamber and Haggen have sponsored a great Fourth of July fireworks show that already draws people to Zuanich Point Park, the Port offered its support in expanding the day’s entertainment and encouraging people to spend the day enjoying their waterfront.”

In addition to welcoming the community to this expanded event, the Port and Chamber also are partnering with the local tourism industry to encourage them to invite visitors to Whatcom County to join in the festivities. Locally hotel reservations are significantly lower than usual due to the tough economic times and the Port and Chamber believe this event might encourage visitors to spend the holiday weekend in our community.

This year's **Haggen Family 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration** will include local bands performing from 1- 9:30 p.m. A Kids Zone will feature a variety of free activities , vendors selling food and crafts and a beer garden. The fireworks show will start at approximately 10:30 p.m.

“We are pleased to announce that the annual **Haggen Family 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration** tradition will proceed as planned,” said Ken Oplinger, president/CEO of the Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber. “Recently, Seattle’s announced the cancellation of the longstanding 4<sup>th</sup> of Jul-Ivar’s show. However, with Haggen’s generous support, we again will have a great fireworks display.”

The Port of Bellingham is supporting the event by providing Zuanich Point Park and the Squalicum Boathouse, covering a portion of event expenses and assisting with logistical support for the day’s events. Sponsors, vendors and bands are being sought to further expand the Independence Day celebration

For more information about sponsorships, band opportunities and accompanying recognition, Sheila Connors, Director of Marketing and Events and the Bellingham Chamber, (360) 734-1330.

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