

## **Renton's Employees—You Make Our City Great**

**By Councilmember Don Persson**

Last week I had the opportunity to have lunch with 27 new employees at our new employee orientation. It was a very rewarding experience to see 27 top-notch employees, passionate about their jobs and eager to work for Renton. What is even more significant is that these recently hired people represent a fraction of the 91 additional employees that the City will be hiring this year. That means increasing our workforce by almost 20 percent.

It is important to for me to share the relevance of adding all these additional employees. On March 1, the Benson Hill area was annexed into Renton adding over 17,000 residents and 4.2 square miles to the city. This is the largest annexation in Renton's 106-year history. It was as if, overnight, Renton added a whole new city to its boundaries; a new city that would receive services from us; all this as we maintain our level of excellent service to our current residents.

As a councilmember and the chair of the Council's Finance Committee, it is very important for me to ensure that we are fiscally responsible with this annexation and that we keep our promise of high service levels. We also need to make sure that our employees have the resources they need to serve all 80,000 residents of Renton. That means hiring the employees we need, with the unique skills that are required, and providing training in critical functions.

I am pleased to report to you that, under the leadership of Mayor Law, the City is doing an excellent job. Prior to the annexation, an inter-departmental team developed a comprehensive plan to address all the challenges pertaining to annexation. Each and every department has worked hard to ensure that we provide the highest level of service to our new residents while maintaining quality service for all.

Soon after the annexation, we also held a very successful community meeting in the Benson Hill area. We are now working on plans for a fun-filled community celebration at Cascade Park in June that will include a volunteer work-party, a picnic and other entertainment for families. Most importantly, this event will be an opportunity for us to celebrate this annexation, get to know our neighbors, and build community.

All this would not have been possible without the hard work of our city employees—old and new. Thank you for your tireless efforts to make our city as great as it is. We are truly fortunate to have such wonderful employees and such a vibrant community in Renton and I am very grateful to have the honor to serve you as a Councilmember.