

# TEAMWORK

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## TACOMA'S HOTEL MURANO EARNS TOP HONORS

The prestigious magazine **Condé Nast Traveler** has rated Tacoma's **Hotel Murano** as the nation's sixth-best hotel. The 319-room hotel, popular with business visitors to the city, was known as the Sheraton Hotel before it was remodeled last year at a cost of \$24 million and reopened during the summer of 2008 as the Murano.

The magazine's 93.5-point rating was based on voting by more than 25,000 readers who assessed hotels around the world on food and dining, location, overall design, rooms and service. The Murano — one of five hotels in Washington, Oregon and Tennessee owned by Portland-based Provenance Hotels — also placed 72nd among the world's top 100 travel venues.

A reason the hotel received a high rating is the international glass art collection that differentiates the hotel from others, says Manager Mark Van Cooney. "Our curator traveled the world to hand-pick 50 glass artists and feature their works in our hotel. In addition, we have been fortunate since opening to receive local, national and international articles written about our hotel that really helped to spread the word."

An additional reason is that the hotel's major focus is personalized service, Van Cooney adds. "We combine the friendliness of Tacoma with the professional and efficient qualities of a high-end New York hotel. And we are fortunate to have regular customers who come back and are extremely loyal to our hotel," he says.

Provenance Hotels is planning to continue to upgrade the Hotel Murano facilities. The owners of the hotel have signed a preliminary agreement to buy the adjoining Bicentennial Pavilion, a popular venue for conferences and meetings, from the City of Tacoma for \$2.24 million. They plan to tie the facility more closely to the hotel and spend "a couple of million dollars" over five years on structural and cosmetic repairs.

## WASHINGTON STATE FEATURES HIGH ON RANKINGS

In calculating its 2010 State Business Tax Climate Index, the non-profit non-partisan research organization **Tax Foundation** finds Washington State to be one of the top 10 best states when it comes to business taxes.

The foundation scores each state on a combination of indexes based on corporate, individual income, sales, unemployment and property taxes. The result is a score of zero (worst) to 10 (best). On this basis, Washington scores 5.81 for 2010, compared with 5.94 for 2009. Other states' scores range from 7.42 to 3.6. Not unexpectedly, Washington receives the highest rating in the nation for income tax, but the lowest for sales tax. Good scores on the other taxes boost it to ninth position overall.

- Washington state weighs in at number 2 on **Forbes** magazine's latest ranking on the best states for business, which measures six vital business categories — costs, labor supply, regulatory environment, economic climate, growth prospects and quality of life. Our state is rated best in the nation on growth prospects and features in the top five on labor supply, regulatory environment and economic climate.

## HEAD COUNT AT PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY HOLDS STEADY

Enrollments at **Pacific Lutheran University's** Business School, which offers bachelor and masters degrees, have held steady in spite of the economic downturn. That situation is welcome news to PLU's Business School Dean Jim Brock, who feared the recession might make it more difficult for students to afford university studies.