

Peninsula touted as destination

Mapmaker seeks Seattle visitor traffic

BY JENNIFER JACKSON
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PORT HADLOCK — The year 1982 was a milestone in Dan Youra's career — that's the year he made his first map to show tourists how to get to the North Olympic Peninsula over the newly rebuilt Hood Canal Bridge.

This year, with car ferry service to Port Townsend curtailed, Youra is using more advanced methods to help tourists bridge the gap between the Quimper Peninsula and Whidbey Island.

Youra is the owner of a business that focuses on getting tourists from the Seattle area to come over to the west side of Puget Sound.

Based in Port Hadlock, he is going full speed ahead to reach prospective visitors using methods that go beyond guidebooks.

"The latest is that I can set up businesses with text messaging programs," Youra said.

"When customers are traveling, they can punch in a code and get alerts that tell them about discounts and coupons, all from a cell phone.

"It's instantaneous."

He also uses videos, Web sites and print.

Maps for 25 years

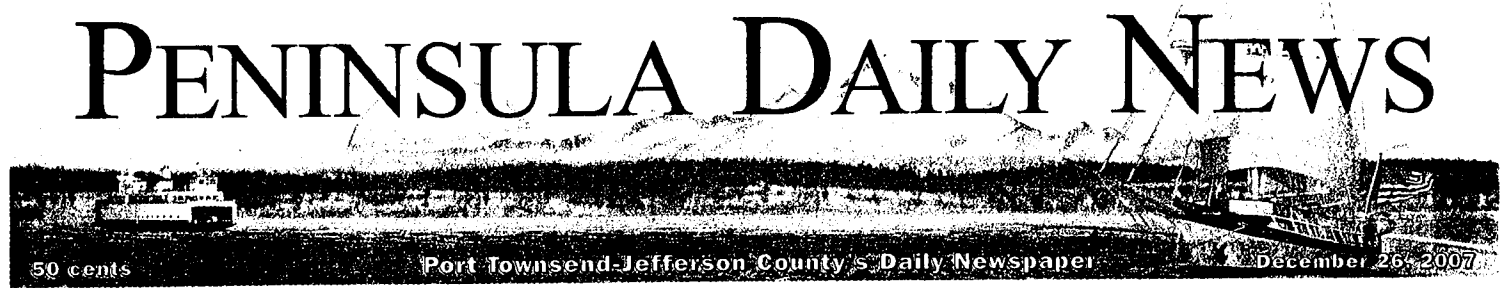
Youra has published Olympic Peninsula maps for 25 years.

During that time, he has established extensive relationships throughout the state, he said, which stand him in good stead to get information out on his current campaign.

Since the Seattle to Port Townsend passenger ferry started Dec. 13, Youra has been busy making videos of the ferry for his Web site, www.TextPT.com and also on YouTube.



Youra



Tourism: Funneling transportation

CONTINUED FROM A1

And he sent PDFs — portable document files — to 45 of the main hotels in Seattle touting the convenience and cost.

"The new ferry is so super," Youra said.

"It's only \$6.70 round trip for the 90-minute run. Where else are you going to get a deal like that? It's like going on a cruise."

The ferry run is scheduled to end Jan. 6.

Spokane Exposition

Youra originally came to Washington state in 1971 and worked in Olympia in the state library department, a job that included being in charge of the communications office at the Spokane Exposition.

The job also included making videos, which set him on his current path, Youra said.

After moving to Port Ludlow, he set up his own business, publishing his first map of the Olympic Peninsula in 1983.

He published his first magazine, *Olympic Peninsula*

Guide, in 1984, and in 1986, was awarded the contract to publish the official guidebook for the Washington State Pavilion at the Vancouver World's Fair.

In 1990, he started publishing Northwest ferry guides, including British Columbia, and in 1995, put the information on a Web site, ferryguide.com.

"It was one of the first Web sites on the Peninsula, and had all the ferry schedules for Puget Sound, then the United States," Youra said.

Site expanded

The site expanded to encompass ferry travel in Europe, Canada and Australia.

Youra said the site is "considered a significant source of information for people who use ferries."

Locally, it's not unusual for tourists in Seattle to want to take a ferry over and tour the North Olympic Peninsula for a day, if they could be back in Seattle in time for dinner.

Tourists are also daunted

by the logistics of getting to the ferry dock in Seattle and finding transportation on the other side, Youra said.

Offered a day trip to the mountains in a bus that picks them up at the hotel, most opt for the more simple trip, Youra said.

"We could funnel a lot more tourists over here if we could our transportation act together," Youra said.

"My answer is to do the best I can in getting out information that is accurate about what's going."

Better cooperation

Youra also sees a need for better cooperation and communication between the public sector — the nonprofit groups that run museums, for instance — and private sector, including shops, hotels and restaurants, to reach prospective tourists.

Getting people to work together is another of Youra's interests — he started the Port Ludlow Chamber of Commerce to get lodging tax funds out into the county, and was

its first president.

Youra has also kept the Olympic Peninsula Travel Association going.

Started in 1933, the association was the first Peninsula-wide tourism promotion agency, Youra said, and dates back to the year when the loop road around the Peninsula — now U.S. Highways 101 and 12 — was completed.

When the association stopped operating as a non-profit, Youra took it over and continues to produce the directory and map.

He's also just been elected chairman of the Jefferson County Tourism Coordinating Council, which represents Port Hadlock, Port Ludlow, Brinnon, Quilcene and the West End.

The council is putting together a marketing campaign to get people to promote visiting Jefferson County in the off-season, Youra said.

"It's a wonderful place to come and relax," Youra said.

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