

Benbrook and Associates

Headquarters: Cathlamet, WA
Company Established: 2000
Employees: 1
Primary Business: Consultancy

Benbrook and Associates is a sole proprietorship working to help individuals, organizations, and communities achieve their economic and community development goals. Working primarily with government agencies and civic organizations, Benbrook and Associates takes on projects such as grant writing, planning, demographic or fiscal analysis, training, and organizational development. Typical projects have included economic and fiscal analysis of a new wastewater treatment plan, preparing a grant for replacement of aging docks, and developing a public health emergency response plan.

Sandra Benbrook-Rieder Ph.D., founded the company in 2000 in Renton, Washington. In 2002 she and her husband built a home in Cathlamet, where they plan to retire. "We selected Cathlamet for its rural character, pristine beauty, history and low stress environment. Since much of my work is computer-based and with the availability of the Internet, the location from which I work is not an issue for my clients."

Dr. Rieder's intention from the beginning has been to remain a small company that works with a loose affiliation of other small professional companies. They team up on projects where the combined experience and expertise is needed, and generally select projects they want to work on, rather than actively seeking work. "Since my work with the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (1984 to 1998), I have had a strong interest in working with small, rural communities, and that commitment continues to this day."

Dr. Rieder relies heavily on the Internet for her work that requires research and gathering demographic and government data. By working from home, she has quick access to the data without the cost and time of travel to libraries or agencies. Benbrook and Associates' high-speed access, using wireless microwave technology, has improved service for clients and, with Digital Signature capability, Dr. Rieder is able to conduct various transactions on the Internet as well. Because of the limited availability of other broadband services (i.e. DSL, cable), the cost of wireless broadband service is relatively high compared to urban areas. In addition, accessing the microwave broadband requires line-of-sight to the tower which means access to the broadband is very limited. "I would like to see more competition in the broadband arena in rural communities."

Although Benbrook and Associates doesn't have many employees, local entrepreneurs like Dr. Rieder are a great value to the community. "I sometimes make a joke that I have to work for money to support my volunteer habit." Dr. Rieder is involved in a variety of volunteer "jobs" that may someday generate new businesses. She is working with the Chamber and a team of high school students to start a new business called Youth Works which combines technology savvy kids with older folks who need assistance. Additional projects being considered for Youth Works include development of web pages for local businesses and an eBay commissioned sales business for people who are too busy to auction their own items on eBay.

As a small business owner, Rieder sees the needs of other small businesses in her county and is working with the EDC to develop access to broadband for more the community and to build a business incubator in the community that will include training and coaching to develop and nurture small businesses. "In rural communities, incubators are one of the best tools for growing new businesses and eventually creating new jobs. That is why we are excited about developing one for our county."

Contact Information:

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