

THE ECONOMIC REPORT

LEDC TO HOST POST COVID ECONOMIC SUMMIT

May 6 — Save the Date: Summit Offers Direction, Tips for Businesses Emerging From End of Pandemic

BY THE LEWIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

In a first of upcoming vital economic presentations, the Lewis Economic Development Council is hosting a Post Covid Summit, offering insight and direction for Lewis County businesses as they prepare for a new business environment as the state and county ease out of the pandemic crisis.

“The Lewis Economic Development Council in serving its members offers this summit to help businesses cope with changing economic trends as the state and county emerge from under the shadow of the pandemic,” said LEDC Executive Director Richard DeBolt. “We’ll focus on busi-



BRIAN BONLENDER
Former Washington
Commerce Director

nesses that need assistance as they ramp up, and also offer guidance for those fortunate businesses that thrived during the past year.”

The event is from 1 to 5 p.m. Thursday, May 6 at the Jester Auto Museum and Event Center, 321 Hamilton Road in Chehalis. The event will be streaming live. An entrance fee of \$150 will be charged for nonmembers of the Lewis Economic Development Council. Members get in free. Seating will offer appropriate social distancing and is limited to 150 people.

Master of Ceremonies will be former Washington Department of Commerce Director Brian Bonlender, who served as director for the state from 2013 through 2019, overseeing more than 300 employees and a biennial budget of about \$1.6 billion. Bolender took the helm of the department during the depths of the Great Recession where he led the country in small busi-

ness export assistance. During his term the state had the top growing GDP in the states, along with assisting in the creation of 500,000 jobs. He also was heavily involved in housing affordability via encouraging new home construction and strengthening international trade relations for the state.

The summit will feature several panels composed of state and local leaders. Topics include supply chain disruptions, the impact of emerging from the pandemic on local businesses, a primer on how to reopen once COVID restrictions are lifted, how to thrive as a predicted coming economic boom comes to Lewis County’s rural economy as businesses and residents depart from predicted recessions in urban areas such as Seattle and Portland.

To sign up for the summit, contact LEDC Office Manager Marrienne Schumacher at 360.748.0114 or email her at marrienne@lewisledc.com.

CHAIRMAN’S CORNER

LEDC Making Positive Changes

BY BEN KOSTICK

Chair of the Lewis Economic Development Council

These are heady times at the Lewis Economic Development Council and for business development as a whole across the county.

As detailed in a story to the left of this column, The Benaroya Company is pushing forward with a massive development just off Interstate 5 in Winlock. They are building a 1.2-million-square-foot regional bulk distribution center for Lowe’s Home Improvement. Along with the distribution center, Benaroya has several large tracts of land at the Winlock site that are being marketed to manufacturing companies that pay high-wage jobs.

Benaroya is a prominent member of the LEDC, committed to an annual membership fee of \$10,000.

Just up the interstate at the Port of Chehalis Industrial Park, another 1.2-million-square-foot Costco Logistics distribution center project was announced at the start of the year.

The LEDC also has a new leader at the helm, as former longtime District 20 state Rep. Richard DeBolt was named as our Executive Director.

DeBolt’s vision, which I will address later in this column, includes the LEDC hosting a Post COVID Summit set for May 6 at Jester Auto Museum and Event Center. We believe as the country, Washington state and Lewis County emerge from the impacts of the pandemic, there will be opportunities for area businesses to take advantage of the new economic atmosphere.

The LEDC is also increasing its size and diversity on the Board of Directors.



BEN KOSTICK
LEDC Chair

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Benaroya’s Winlock Development Poised to Drive Lewis County Growth

Clayco Project Superintendent David Cordray, left, in charge of the construction of the Lowe’s Home Improvement regional distribution center just off Interstate 5 near Winlock, points out details of the 1.2 million square foot project. Next to him is Lisa Goodman, The Benaroya Company marketing director, Lewis Economic Development Council External Relations Eric Sonnenberg, a Clayco project manager, and LEDC Executive Director Richard DeBolt.



Bellevue-Based Company Supports Lewis Economic Development Council at Founder’s Level

BY THE LEWIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

A drive down Interstate 5 just before the Winlock exit is an eye opener. A massive building is quickly rising as seen from the interstate — the largest construction building ever completed in Lewis County.

The site will be a regional bulk distribution center for Lowe’s Home Improvement, serving more than 60 stores in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. The center will provide daily shipments of large appliances and items, from refrigerators to riding lawnmowers to pa-

tio furniture.

Located just adjacent to I-5, The Benaroya Company’s Winlock project is about eight months away from completing the largest industrial building — 1.2 million square feet — in Washington state for 2021. The Lowe’s project will be complete in the fourth quarter of this year. Cost of construction on the 74-acre project is more than \$100 million. Another 250 acres are available for development at the Winlock site in the coming years, with various parcels available to accommodate buildings from 1.4 million square feet to 75,000 thousand square feet (for sale or lease).

Once a proposed electric substation is completed, the Benaroya site will attract hundreds, if not thousands of jobs to the county. Construction jobs alone on the Lowe’s project numbers about 400.



LARRY BENAROYA
Benaroya
Manager

The project has been under development by Benaroya for more than 10 years as industrial growth has extended south from the Seattle metro area. Manager Larry Benaroya said the benefits to locating in south Lewis County are many.

“Lewis County is especially attractive to potential clients due to its centralized transportation hub location, pro-business environment, diverse, skilled, and trained labor base, and low cost of living,” Benaroya said. “We envision this development will be the home to multiple large users totaling 3-plus million square feet of new Class A, job and tax producing industrial facilities, and extremely positive economic impact for Lewis County.”

“Lewis County has been and continues to be immensely helpful in ensuring the current 1.2 million square foot Lowe’s distribution center project stays on track and that future additional development of the site is possible,” Benaroya said.

■ SEE **BENAROYA**, PAGE B2

DEBOLT TAKES THE REINS

I am pleased with the choice of DeBolt as I soon realized during the interview process that we think along the same lines, that we “are on the same page.” DeBolt wants to rebrand the LEDC to reflect a more inclusive approach to teaming up with other area economic entities. I was thinking “Lewis County Inc.” as a possible new brand. DeBolt has put together a varied list of possibilities that the Board of Directors are considering. Look for a new logo to go with the new brand.

His efforts to bring everyone together reflects one of his many strengths in building consensus.

POST COVID SUMMIT

Again, as detailed to the left of this column, the LEDC is hosting a summit on May 6. This new, exciting approach to regularly offer vital information to area businesses is something members of the LEDC should look forward to in the coming months and years.

For the summit, DeBolt is putting together an impressive list of regional and local speakers to address such items as the federal infusions of cash coming

■ SEE **CHAIRMAN**, PAGE B2

Arbor Health Setting New Strides in Diagnostic Imaging

Newly-installed latest technology in CT Scan

We offer the only 3-D Digital Mammography in Lewis County
MRI | Nuclear Medicine | Ultrasound | Digital X-Ray | Echocardiogram

We consistently invest in new equipment, ongoing training for employees and bringing new providers to our community. Our goal is to offer you an expanded array of services so that you can receive compassionate, professional care right here at home.

**Arbor
Health**

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT — JULIE SHAFFLEY

BUSINESS: Commissioner for the Port of Centralia; Owner of Good Health Nutrition Center in Centralia

Q: How long have you been a member of the Lewis Economic Development Council?

A: “I have been representing the Port of Centralia on the LEDC board for five years.”

Q: Why did you join LEDC?

A: “The LEDC is a very important partner in the economic health of Lewis County.”

Q: What is a key for the success of your business?

A: “There are many keys to success in any business. One of the most important keys is to always remember that we are here to serve the customer and the community.”

Q: What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

A: “Supporting and giving back to the community that has supported

my business for many years gives me the most pleasure in volunteering.”

Q: What do you love most about the natural health industry?

A: “I love the natural health industry. It is so rewarding to help people live a healthier, happy life. The science and ongoing research in the health food industry is fascinating and exciting. Since I have owned Good Health for over 30 years, it is my honor and privilege to serve generations of customers in my store.”

Q: How do you define success?

A: “I define success as being genuinely happy in your life and career.”

Q: Who inspires you?



JULIE SHAFFLEY
Owner Good Health Nutrition Center

A: “I am inspired by the people who continue to smile, be happy and optimistic even when their lives have been turned upside down.”

Q: What is one thing, either industry-related or not, you learned in the last month?

A: “The one thing that I have learned recently is that being able and willing to pivot quickly in business is essential.”

Q: What’s the last book you read?

A: “The last book I read was ‘The House of Kennedy’ by James Patterson.”

Q: What is your favorite meal?

A: “My favorite meal is any meal shared with family and friends — the type of food doesn’t matter. I like everything. The company makes the meal.”

Q: What do you do for pleasure outside of running your business?

A: “It’s difficult to narrow down what I

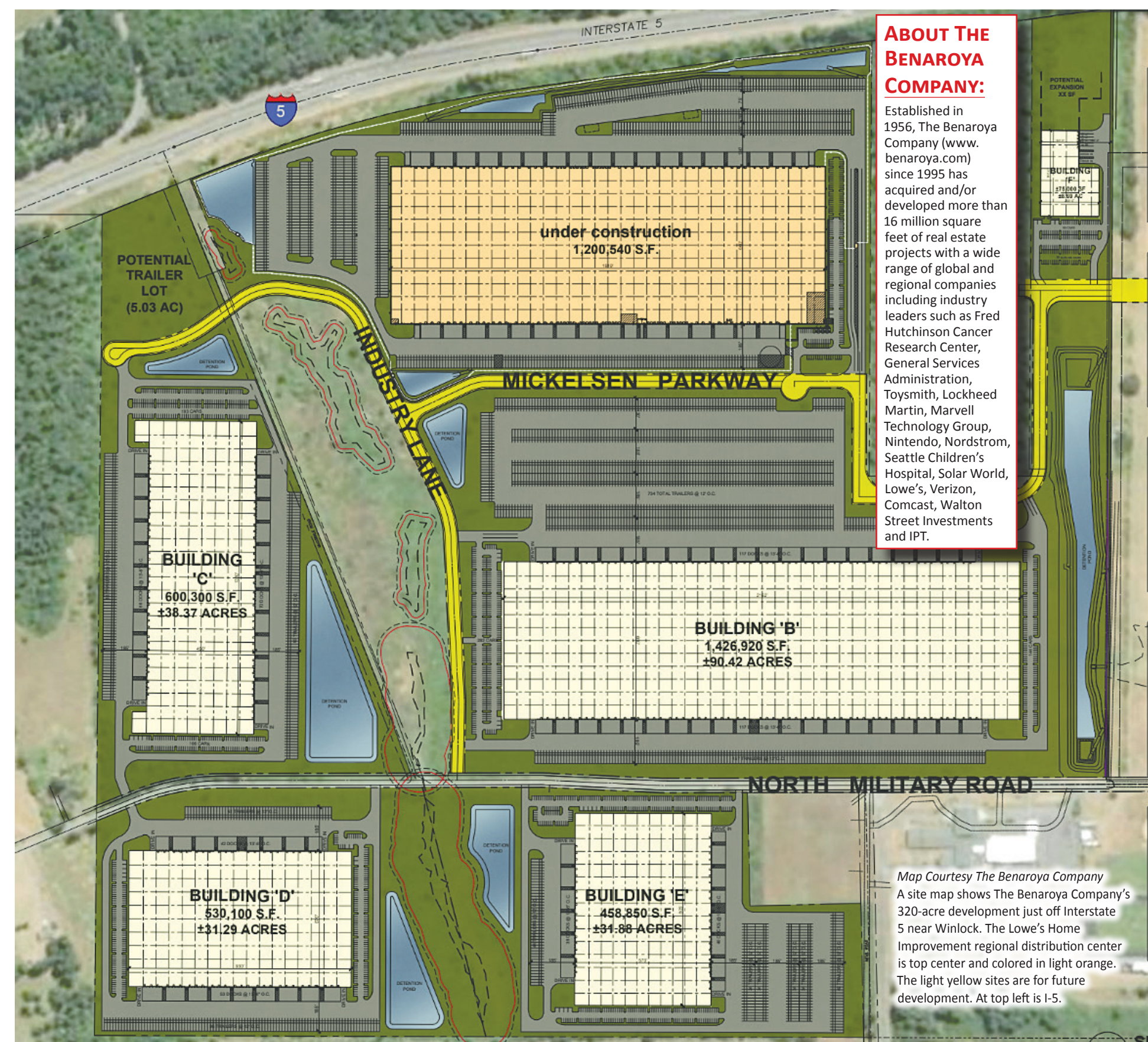
do for fun. I enjoy hiking, photography, clam digging hopefully in the near future, fishing, cooking, playing cribbage, traveling, laughing.”

Q: What is the favorite car you have ever owned?

A: “My favorite car was a 1997 Cadillac Catera. The Catera was manufactured in Germany and tested on the Autobahn. It hugged the road and drove like a dream.”

Q: What is something about you (a fun fact) that not many people know?

A: “People may be surprised that I love adventure. I have enjoyed white water rafting, skydiving, scuba diving in the Northwest and on the Great Barrier Reef, elk hunting in Montana, salmon and halibut fishing in Alaska — I caught a 165-pound halibut all by myself. There are still many more adventures on my to do list.”



BENAROYA:

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The Benaroya Company is a member of the Lewis Economic Development Council at the \$10,000 annual Founders level.

“This project will spearhead economic development for Lewis County for years, not only with the Lowe’s project, but also the other potential sites on the 320 acres under development by Benaroya,” said Ben Kostick, chair of the Lewis Economic Development Council. “We’re honored that Benaroya thought enough of our council to be an active member.”

Lisa Goodman, marketing director for The Benaroya Company, said the company views the council as a vital partner for their Winlock development.

“The EDC provides value by assisting in the recruitment and landing of new businesses to the area, helping to ensure a smooth and predictable development process including permitting, utilities, incentives, and a resource and connector for a variety of community and workforce information” Goodman said.

Goodman singled out Lewis County Commissioners and staff, the Mayor and City of Winlock, the Lewis Economic Development Council, 20th District state

legislators, the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, Worksource Lewis County, Port of Centralia, City of Centralia and Centralia College.

She said the Winlock property — the largest fully entitled industrial site in Western Washington — can accommodate the largest of distribution centers between Seattle and Portland with excellent access to I-5.

One reason Lowe’s felt confident in locating at the Winlock site is Benaroya’s reputation for integrity and reliability. In 2019, Benaroya was involved in the development of the 1.15 million square foot UNFI cold storage regional distribution

facility at the Port of Centralia.

“The completion of UNFI’s 1.15 million square foot state-of-the-art distribution center in just 13 months at their 77-acre Centralia site was made possible by the fast-tracking abilities and pro-business support exemplified by Lewis County,” Benaroya said. “It also positioned Lewis County as a strategic location for industrial development.”

• For more information about Benaroya Pacific Northwest Regional Logistics Center Winlock visit www.benaroyawinlock.com

CHAIRMAN:

Continued From Page B1

our way out of Washington, D.C., supply chain disruptions and give guidance so area businesses can position themselves moving forward as we emerge from the dark clouds of the virus.

REVITALIZING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DeBolt is leading an effort to increase

both the number and diversity of our Board of Directors, something that has long been needed and one I fully support.

Our latest slate of new Board of Directors are Peter Abbarno, 20th District State Representative and partner at Althaus Rayan Abbarno LLP; Alice Menke, an Industrial Broker for Kidder Matthews, who gives the Board much needed representation in the real estate profession; Cindy Sorenson, owner of Sorenson Transportation Inc.; and Chad Taylor, the new owner of The Chronicle and long-time owner of The Silver Agency.

KUDOS TO THE STAFF

Finally, during this past year of transition, I want to thank the LEDC staff for their Herculean efforts of keeping the Council on track during what is best described as difficult times.

Eric Sonnenberg, the External Relations Manager for the LEDC, has kept business at the forefront while keeping a positive, smile-on-his face attitude.

Office Manager Marrienne Schumacher, the glue that holds the entire

council together, can’t be thanked enough for her strong organizational skills and keeping the day-to-day operations running smoothly. She, like Eric, also has a positive approach and a smile on her face as we ask her to do the almost impossible on a daily basis.

Eric and Marrienne have come through this transition time shining bright, as has the LEDC.

• Ben Kostick is chair of the LEDC and owner of Ben M. Kostick CPA Inc.

PROPERTY SPOTLIGHT

273 Maurin Road, Chehalis

- Zoning: Industrial
- Acres: 37.1
- Power: Lewis County PUD
- Water: City of Chehalis
- Sewer: City of Chehalis
- Natural Gas: Puget Sound Energy
- Direct access to Interstate 5 interchange
- Access to rail
- Build-to-suit available



For information on this property and others available throughout Lewis County (or to list your industrial/commercial property for sale), contact Lewis Economic Development Council External Relations Manager Eric Sonnenberg at 208.206.5407 or eric@lewisdc.com, or go to lewisdc.com.

NEWS BRIEFS

Mega-licious by PNW Cookie Co. to Launch on QVC

PNW Cookie Co. won judges over during QVC and HSN's The Big Find product search and appeared on QVC late last month.

Pacific Northwest Cookie Company, located in Chehalis, was founded by Callie Carpenter in 2018 when her brother became gluten and dairy intolerant, according to a company blog. Built by the love of baking and delicious cookies, Carpenter set out to make a vegan, gluten free and soy free cookie so delicious that her brother and even her traditional baking grandmother and mother would love them too.

"I'm so proud to share the Pacific Northwest Cookie Company brand with the QVC family of customers; we're beyond grateful for this amazing opportunity," said Carpenter.

QVC and HSN form one of the world's largest video commerce platforms, reaching more than 90 million homes in the U.S. (380 million worldwide) via broadcast channels and millions more via streaming, web, mobile, and social platforms.

Pacific Northwest Cookie Company is a past winner of the Lewis Economic Development Council Shark Tank and business incubator scholarship from Moonshot out of Flagstaff, Arizona and was

voted "Best of Lewis County, New Business" in 2019.

Port of Chehalis Closes \$2.5 Million Property Sale to McCallum Rock Drilling

Last month the Port of Chehalis announced a \$2.5 million property sale to longtime tenant McCallum Rock Drilling.

The Chehalis-based contractor is expanding operations and expects to double its workforce over the next year, creating more than 100 new jobs in Lewis County, according to a press release.

"McCallum Rock Drilling are recog-

nized leaders in their industry, and they offer some of the highest-paying industrial wages in Lewis County," Port of Chehalis Commission President Mark Anders said. "This property sale is the largest in the port's history and a big win for our local economy. We couldn't be happier that they chose to stay in Chehalis as their business continues to grow."

McCallum Rock Drilling is a full-service rock drilling and blasting contractor that performs services across the western U.S. McCallum Rock Drilling performs all applications of drilling and blasting for large-scale commercial quarries, road and highway construction, residential and commercial development and more.

LEWIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL & STAFF



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The Benaroya Company

Proud Supporters of Lewis County EDC

Drybox is a proud supporter of the Lewis County EDC and the work they're doing to drive economic development in our communities.



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