

# THE ECONOMIC REPORT

A SUPPLEMENT OF *The Chronicle*

## Rich Honored as He Steps Away from LEDC



Photo by Lewis Economic Development Council

Lewis Economic Development Council Executive Director Richard DeBolt, center, and LEDC Chair Ben Kostick, right, enjoy some levity at this past Thursday's board meeting. At left is Dan Rich, a longtime member of the LEDC Executive Board and past Chair. Rich, upon retiring from the LEDC board on Thursday, was honored with a Mr. EDC sash, a royal crown and a dozen roses. Rich is the past owner of Tin Men Supply in Centralia.

### DIRECTOR'S CORNER

## LEDC Busy at Work Supporting New and Existing Businesses

BY RICHARD DEBOLT

LEDC Executive Director

Days at the Lewis Economic Development Council fly by as we are busy going into my fourth month as your executive editor.

We've added new blood to the LEDC board, our finances are solid and continue to rise, membership continues to grow, we're hosting a golf tournament at the end of summer, we've started a new Business Development Center, started work on a speaker series and assisted businesses large and small. And that's just the quick list.

I'm particularly encouraged by the hiring of Dolly Tardiff as our new program manager for our fledgling Business Development

Center. She comes with a wealth of experience helping businesses gained both by her years as the office manager of the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce and also as a long-time owner of a private security business with 14 employees. For more information on Dolly and her new duties, turn to page three of this month's The Economic Report.

I'm also excited about hosting our first golf tournament on Sept. 17 at Riverside Golf Club in Chehalis. Beyond offering a Friday full of fun and golf for our interested members, the tournament is a fundraiser for our new microlending fund to help area small businesses.

We encourage people to sign up early for your four-person team in this best-ball playing format. We also have several options for sponsorship for those businesses and individuals who want to support the LEDC's mission of helping existing and new businesses. If you have any donation items for our golf tournament auction, that would be appreciated as well (contact Lewis Economic Development Council External Relations Manager Eric Sonnenberg at 208.206.5407 or eric@lewisledc.com).

Finally, as pictured to the left of this column, the LEDC board on Thursday had a bit of bittersweet fun as we ushered long-time LEDC board member and former president Dan Rich as he retired from the board after years of service.

While we had fun placing a "Mr. EDC" sash on Rich, as well as a crown and a dozen roses, on a serious note we do want to thank Rich for his tireless commitment to the LEDC over the years. He has been an engaged participant during vibrant discussions and offered solid financial backing. Dan, you've been a pleasure to work with, and again, congratulations on your new crown. May you wear it proud.

Richard DeBolt is the executive director of the Lewis Economic Development Council.



RICHARD DEBOLT  
LEDC Executive Director

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### LEDC Golf Tournament To Fund Micro-Business Lending Program

The Lewis Economic Development Council is hosting a golf tournament in the final days of summer on Friday, Sept. 17 at Riverside Golf Club in Chehalis.

Along with an announcement by the LEDC, the day of golf will help raise funds to power the newly-created micro-lending program, which assists small businesses with low interest loans during trying times such as the end of the pandemic.

This best-ball tournament invites teams of four to sign up. Opportunities for major sponsorship, as well as a hole-in-one sponsorship, are available. For additional information, call LEDC External Relations Manager Eric Sonnenberg at 208.206.5407 or contact him at eric@lewisledc.com.

#### United Learning Center Breaks Ground in Centralia

Supporters of the United Learning Center, a community education collaborative project, celebrated with a groundbreaking ceremony earlier this

month at its future site located at 415 Pearl Street in Centralia, at the corner of Pearl and Maple streets across from The Chronicle.

Funding for the initial stage of construction came from \$3 million from the state Legislature and \$1.9 million via REET funds through the City of Centralia.

The center will offer affordable, full-day early learning for children two to five years old of working families. Project partners are the City of Centralia, United Way of Lewis County, the Discover Children's Museum and the Boys & Girls Club.

A press release from the United Way of Lewis County stated, "In Lewis County, only approximately 25% of children under five years of age have the opportunity to participate in a quality child care program; lack of child care centers playing a large part in this. Center numbers are on the decline, leaving families and children unable to access programs that promote child success.

"Parents of infants and young children all across Washington struggle to find and afford high-quality, licensed child care, often paying more for child care than the cost of college tuition."

When completed, the United Learning Center will provide quality early learning programs for up to 150 children. With scholarships, children will be able to attend at little or no cost to the family.

For the business community, this

increases the availability of employees by providing day care services combined with an education program.

#### Unemployment Drops in Lewis County

Unemployment in Lewis County dipped by 1.1% in May, according to the state Employment Security Department's (ESD) most recent report.

Lewis County now sits at 5.9%, not seasonally adjusted, after hovering around 7% since early this year. That's higher than the state average of 5.3%. The last non-pandemic month of May — back in 2019 — showed a similar level of unemployment in Lewis County, at 5.6%.

Currently, Lewis County is faring better than most of its neighbors. Thurston County sits at 4.9% and Pierce County 5.8%. But Grays Harbor is at 7.6%, Pacific at 7.7%, Wahkiakum at 6.4%, Cowlitz at 6%, Skamania at 5.9% and Yakima at 6.6%.

Seasonally adjusted, the state's unemployment rate of 5.3% falls below the nationwide rate of 5.8%

Jobs in May were up by 8,300 — smaller gains than in the last four months. The biggest swells in employment were made in leisure and hospitality, professional and business services and government, while the biggest losses were in construction, retail trade and manufacturing.

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**BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT — SUE LUOND**

**BUSINESS: RETIRED, WORKED IN FINANCIAL, TITLE AND ESCROW**

*A business partner and I ventured out to open our own Escrow Company 1998 to 2009*

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

**A:** I have been an actual member of LEDC since January of this year, but had attended the open monthly meetings since it began for many years.

**Q: Why did you join the LEDC?**

**A:** I joined as a representative for the Centralia City Council (Luond is the current mayor of Centralia). When I found it was available, I jumped at the opportunity to get involved as this group of local business professionals has helped bring our cities and county new jobs and industries. These are volunteers working to better our area.

**Q: Why do you support the LEDC?**

**A:** The key for the success of the City of Centralia, Lewis County, cities, LEDC and the ports is working together. If even one of these holds out from the joint efforts, it can and will affect projects.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about volunteering?**

**A:** I enjoy volunteering as a way to give back to an area that has been very good to my family.

**Q: How do you define success?**

**A:** Success is giving everything you can do to provide a better product and giving exceptional customer service.

**Q: Who inspires you?**

**A:** God, the One who has given us guidelines on how to live a good gracious life.

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

**A:** The one thing I have learned in the last 30 days is to accept things I have no control of and move on.

**Q: What's the last book you have read?**

**A:** "Heidi." I was given an original copy recently and re-read the book. I first read this when I was a child. I would recommend parents reading this with their children.



Centralia Mayor Susan Luond talks about proposed improvements along Main Street in this Chronicle file photo.

**Q: What is your favorite meal?**

**A:** Thanksgiving — turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, the works

**Q: What do you do for pleasure?**

**A:** Sporting events, all levels

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

**A:** I'm not sure of the year, but in high school I drove a red Buick Skylark

convertible.

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

**A:** I am not above pulling a prank on someone.

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

**Chehalis Industrial Commission a Solid Partner With LEDC**

*Volunteer Group Helped Form LEDC Back in the Early 1980s*

BY LEWIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

This month's Lewis Economic Development Council's Member Spotlight shines on the Chehalis Industrial Commission, a group that helped form the LEDC back in the 1980s.

The Chehalis Industrial Commission was created by a group of Chehalis-based business leaders in the 1950s in an effort to attract decent-paying jobs to the area. The group sold stock at \$50 per share and raised an initial \$50,000. A second stock offering in 1957 raised another \$50,000, giving the Commission enough to purchase 135 acres just south of Chehalis. From there the Commission continued to grow and attract businesses, but needed a marketing arm to help spread the news that Chehalis was open and ready.

That's where the Lewis Economic Development Council entered the picture. Encouraged by the Chehalis Industrial Commission, the LEDC formed in 1983 to "encourage business and industrial growth throughout the county," according to the book "A history of the Chehalis Industrial Commission: A Community-Owned Not-For-Profit (501c3) Group of Friends!" written by local Toledo author Julie McDonald Zander.

For the first decade, the LEDC worked with more than 80 companies

to locate to Chehalis, bringing in about 2,300 jobs. The LEDC also assisted in the expansion during that first decade of more than 300 businesses. By 1969 the Chehalis Industrial Commission had attracted industries employing 557 people with an annual payroll of \$4 million.

Buck Hubbert, the former owner of Tires, Inc. in Chehalis, was appointed president of the Commission in 1994, and serves as chair today.

"We originally bought land and built buildings to bring people to town with good wages," Hubbert said. "And it hasn't changed."

One of the original leaders of the Chehalis Industrial Commission was Gale Shaw, who passed away in 2014. Shaw is described as a visionary and mentor by many he worked with over the years. Hubbert said Shaw was wise beyond his times, but had a simple approach.

"Gail Shaw would say, 'Yes we can, we can do it.' He never told anybody 'no,' but that we would figure it out," Hubbert said. "He would never tell a potential client 'no.'"

Hubbert said the LEDC was formed in part as a marketing arm for the Commission. Hubbert said the LEDC has access to county, state and federal programs that help with funding needs for local business retention and expansion. He said the LEDC is valuable in bringing in clients to Lewis County. Hubbert said he is impressed with new LEDC Executive Director Richard DeBolt.

"Richard is an asset," Hubbert said. "The EDC is in good hands and we're looking forward to the future. It will be a



Buck Hubbert stands up to present the Gail and Carolyn Shaw Industry Award at the Lewis EDC annual meet a few years ago in this Chronicle file photograph.

lot easier with Richard. He will help pre-screen clients."

Hubbert said the Chehalis Industrial Commission continues to thrive. He said the Commission board is talented and engaged, with assistance by Commission President Tom Bradley and Vice President Brian Tornow.

"It's not just me; we've got a good board," Hubbert said.

Hubbert said the Commission can

be "picky" with the businesses it shakes hands with.

"We don't want a chicken farm in the middle of the port," Hubbert said, for example. "We don't sell our land cheaply or to people who can't take care of it and they must provide good jobs."

After all these years, the LEDC and the Chehalis Industrial Commission remain jointly focused on the mission at hand: good jobs and plenty of them.

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# Tardiff Joins LEDC Team; Will Lead Business Development Center

BY LEWIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Dolly Tardiff has joined the Lewis Economic Development Council as the program manager of the newly formed Business Development Center (BDC).

Tardiff was previously the office manager for the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, where she worked on events, memberships, sponsorships and bookkeeping.

"We're fortunate to have someone join our team with so much local experience and knowledge," said LEDC Executive Director Richard DeBolt. "Dolly's new position is key in helping new and existing businesses. In addition,

Dolly is just a pleasure to work with and one of those persons who just gets things done."

Tardiff's duties are wide ranging, she said, sort of a Business Opening 101 program. She can help businesses with obtaining proper licenses, filling out tax identification papers, assistance with L&I requirements, to name a few of her duties.

"Implementing the BDC will help people starting a new business," she said. "I will help give business owners



**DOLLY TARDIFF**  
LEDC Business Development Center Program Manager

the fundamentals in helping them with their startup."

Existing businesses who need assistance are also part of the BDC's mission. "Richard is starting to assemble an impressive team, and Dolly fits the bill as far as the LEDC being able to promote and assist area businesses," said LEDC Chair Ben Kostick, about LEDC Executive Director Richard DeBolt. "I'm excited about the future of this group."

Tardiff grew up in Lacey and moved to Centralia in 1991. She enjoys fishing, camping, gardening, cooking and spending time with family and friends. She also recently joined the race car cir-

cuit after her boyfriend bought a race car.

Since 1992 she has owned Western Washington Management Patrol, a private security business with 14 employees, a position that gives her first-hand experience in running a business. She works her business on evenings and weekends.

"I'm a workaholic," she said. "I can't sit still."

She's excited to head up the BDC, where she'll have plenty to do.

"I just like being in the community and having that one-on-one with the businesses in the community, to make where we live and work a better place and to help it grow," Tardiff said.

## PROPERTY SPOTLIGHT FOR LEASE

### Northstar Road, Chehalis

Property Type: Buildings

Electricity: Lewis County PUD

Warehouse/manufacturing space:  
25,000 square feet

Office Space: 5,000 square feet

Mezzanine (storage, light  
manufacturing, office):  
3,750 square feet

Total: 45,750 square feet

Overhead doors: 10



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@lewisledc.com](mailto:eric@lewisledc.com), or go to [lewisledc.com](http://lewisledc.com).

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