

# THE ECONOMIC REPORT

A SUPPLEMENT OF *The Chronicle*

## Speaker Offers Message of Hope

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

## Grateful for a Glass Half Full and About to Overflow

*With Thanks to a Spirit of Cooperation in Lewis County*

BY RICHARD DEBOLT

*Economic Alliance of Lewis County*

With Thanksgiving upon us, I hope you all are enjoying family, friends, food and football on TV as we all take a pause from our daily grind.

The past 10 months since I took over as Executive Director of the Economic Alliance of Lewis County has been a whirlwind.

We changed our name this summer from the Lewis Economic Development Council to The Alliance to cement our direction moving forward. The name change means that we continue our mission to assist in retaining and building up local businesses, as well as helping to recruit new businesses to Lewis County. At our core we are committed to bringing in quality companies that offer family-wage jobs.

But with the name change to The Alliance, we add a layer of cooperation. Our goal is to bring all the various groups and leaders together to work for our common mission of brightening our economic future.

And the community has responded. I am heartened to see politicians, business leaders, those running the various agencies across the county and others of influence coming together in a spirit of cooperation for our greater good. Together we are so much stronger, so much more able to push forward with various opportunities, from securing state and federal grants to landing quality businesses to Lewis County.

I do want to point out a few specific areas of cooperation.

The Lewis County government, from elected officials to staff, have shown a willingness to put in the extra work to get things done. Their commitment will serve Lewis County in a positive direction as the county moves through a growth phase.

I also am grateful for the members of The Alliance that support all we do, and specifically to my Board of Directors. They collectively have provided much support in leading our efforts at The Alliance. The Board is composed of mostly business owners who are extremely busy minding their own businesses. Yet they take time for our monthly meetings, for emergency

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RICHARD DEBOLT  
*Economic Alliance of Lewis County*

BY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

Bruce Vincent, a Montana logger who battled through the decline of the timber industry during the Timber Wars to become a national spokesman for working with oppositional environmental groups, was the guest speaker earlier this month at a forum sponsored by the Economic Alliance of Lewis County.

Vincent's talk "With Vision There Is Hope," was well received by the audience at the Centralia Train Depot. Lewis County Treasurer Arnie Davis called the talk "one of the best I have ever heard."

Vincent started his talk describing his third-generation family logging operations in Libby, Montana. He asked where are we now in reference to logging, how did we get there, and what did we

learn. His talk was aspirational as he offered reasons for hope.

Vincent is a sought-after speaker and regularly testifies on resource issues before Congress. He has appeared on various news shows such as "60 Minutes." He has been named Timberman of the Year in Montana and as the National Forest Activist of the Year, and received the inaugural President Preserve America Award from President Bush.

His recently completed book, "Against The Odds," highlights his life journey and identifies a path forward for rural America.

In his talk in Centralia, he explained the timber industry in the 70s and 80s was a "collision of visions." He said the

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Bruce Vincent leads a talk of hope before Lewis County leaders and sponsored by the Economic Alliance of Lewis County.

## Senter Named New Port of Chehalis CEO

BY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

The Port of Chehalis is proud to announce that Lindsey Senter, the internal candidate recently selected by Port of Chehalis Commissioners as the incoming CEO of the Port of Chehalis, has formally accepted her contract during a regular Port of Chehalis business meeting.

Senter replaces outgoing Port of Chehalis CEO Randy Mueller, who has accepted a position to lead the Port of Ridgefield as their incoming CEO.

"We were very pleased with the top three candidates that we interviewed. All of them had significant strengths

— different, but significant," said Port of Chehalis Commissioner Mark Giffey, speaking on his own reasons for choosing Senter.

He continued: "My reason I went with Lindsey as our choice was basically that she had some very good answers to two particular questions. One was how she expressed that, while she works for the port commission, her real job is to invest the taxpayers' money to create economic opportunities for them. ... That realization of who you're working for ... was impressive."

The second question, Giffey added, was one of transparency.

"How she spoke about our processes and investing funds in an open public way — her openness to a public forum — that's what we're all about," Giffey said. "The citizens voted in 1986 to tax themselves, based on the hope for better job



LINDSEY SENTER  
*Incoming CEO of the Port of Chehalis*

opportunities. Understanding who you work for and why is important."

When asked about his own decision to choose Senter to lead the Port of Chehalis, Port Commissioner Mark Anders highlighted his first-hand observations of Senter's past performance with the Port of Chehalis.

"She's a known commodity," Anders said. "She came in as a bookkeeper and rose well beyond that, taking over operating functions at the port and various projects. ... Every time a new challenge came up, Lindsey stepped up to the plate."

While Anders acknowledged what he called Senter's "steep learning curve," he underscored his own belief in Senter's abilities.

"One of my biggest impressions of Lindsey is that she understands the things she doesn't understand and she'll ask for help from the right people, to make the right decision, and take the

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## Lowe's Distribution Center Opens in the Winlock Industrial Park

*Massive Warehouse Employs 116 People and Serves 30 Stores*

BY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

Penske Logistics, in partnership with Lowe's Home Improvement, has officially opened the new 1.2 million square foot distribution facility in Winlock's industrial park.

At the time of the facility's grand opening Nov. 2, the facility had 116 total employees and was serving 30 Lowe's stores, with plans to expand service to 63 stores by the end of 2022.



Leaders gather at the Lowe's Distribution Center in Winlock for the official ribbon-cutting and grand opening of the business.

"We're really proud to have the Lowe's-Penske partnership here in Western Washington, in beautiful Winlock, Washington, which for many of us, we did not know what Winlock was six or eight months ago. We do now and we're very very appreciative of the great sup-

port we've gotten locally," said Peter Bayer Jr., senior vice president of distribution for Penske Logistics, at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the facility.

The project was developed by

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## Skilled Repairs for Trucks and Semi-Trucks

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BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

# DALE MERTEN- BUSINESS: TOLEDOTEL



DALE MERTEN  
ToledoTel

**Q: How long have you been a member of the Economic Alliance of Lewis County?**

A: Seven years.

**Q: Why did you join The Alliance?**

A: I joined ToledoTel 17 years ago, and immediately saw great opportunities for Lewis County. I have served on many boards during my career. I know that committing your time, effort and experience is key to a successful organization and I want to offer all I can for The Alliance as I see the EALC well positioned to seek success for all of Lewis County.

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

A: The most important key factor of success for ToledoTel is our staff. We hold daily all hands on deck staff meetings at 8 a.m. (in person or remote). We discuss what's on the calendar for new installations, new construction, service calls, sales opportunities, who needs help to complete the task, etc. My staff knows they have the freedom to suggest new products, the need for new tools or equipment and suggest new or better ways of doing what we do every day. Everyone enjoys these meetings. We all do our best to make them fun. Oh, the occasional Karaoke night really goes a long way!

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

A: The opportunity to meet other

volunteers and build on our individual ideas and energy to do great things for Lewis County.

**Q: What do you love most about your industry?**

A: I have been in this industry for 44 years. In all that time, I really don't think there has been one day that I didn't learn something.

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

A: There are many components to this. I think being married to my wife Tina, for 42 years has been a wonderful success. Personal success for me is to be known as a leader, a visionary, a communicator, a friend, and someone that cares and mentors others to help achieve their vision of success. Success for ToledoTel, to me, means providing tremendous customer service, and being the best broadband in south Lewis County.

**Q: Who inspires you?**

A: The people I work with everyday are some of my best inspirations. This industry is constantly changing and they have ideas and solutions that make me think.

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

A: I think I learned about 50 things last week! ToledoTel is working with

Lewis County on obtaining a \$23.5 million dollar grant through the State Broadband Office to build a fiber optic cable network over approximately 250 square miles in the Winlock area. The grant process is new and changing almost daily. Though we clearly have a plan and the experience to complete the task, the whole process is a moving target.

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

A: Honestly, I read hundreds, sometimes thousands of pages of industry information containing the latest rules and regulations from the FCC or Congress every week. My reading for pleasure is kind of like my computer/technical efforts at home, I do that all day. I would rather ride my horse when I get home. Having said that, I do read Western Horseman, The Quarter Horse Journal and Rotary Magazine every month.

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

A: Steak and taters.

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

A: Tina and I live on a small ranch in Toledo, I ride horses. I enjoy training others and their horses how to shoot guns while riding their horses (it is a competitive sport almost worldwide). I snow ski, hunt, fish, camp (usually with horses), I play guitar, mandolin, sing, I love to work in our shop creating chaps, spur straps, working

on woodcraft projects and then sometimes when I have worn myself out for the day, I'll binge on some Netflix.

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

A: My first car, a 1974 Chevy 3/4 ton 4x4 Cheyenne Super pickup that I bought new 3 weeks before I turned sixteen. Wow, it was hard to see it parked in my parents driveway and not be able to drive it down the road! I grew up working on my uncle's farm and when I was about 11 I decided I wanted a Chevy 4x4. So I worked at my uncle's farm, the neighbors farm, anybody's farm. I picked berries, moved irrigation pipe, drove tractors, combines, bean pickers, worked in the hayfields and did whatever came along. I saved every dime. When my friends were buying burgers and shakes I saved my money.

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

A: I competed in the 2002 Winter Olympics! I took third place in a new event that was sponsored by the State of Utah and the International Olympic Committee— Cowboy Mounted Shooting. I was also televised world wide riding my horse Zan, while playing guitar and singing "The Vaquero Song" written by Dave Stamey.



Economic Alliance Executive Director Richard DeBolt heads up a bus tour of various companies with his Board of Directors in Early November.

## The Alliance Takes Board on Sightseeing Tour

The Economic Alliance of Lewis County hosted its Board of Directors on a tour of several key businesses during its monthly meeting in November.

"We try at least on an annual basis to have an informative tour for our Board of Directors during one of our monthly meetings," said Alliance Executive Director Richard DeBolt. "The tour was eye opening as we saw how AR-15s are made at Zev Technologies to how Cardinal Glass makes its product. I'd like to thank Twin Transit for its cooperation in getting us to several companies throughout Lewis County during the tour."

The tour included ToledoTel, Cardinal Glass, Zev Technologies and the new Lowe's Distribution Center.



Twin Transit buses were used in the tour of various companies in Lewis County, including this stop at ToledoTel where the group took in lunch.



The Economic Alliance of Lewis County Board of Directors takes in a tour of Cardinal Glass as part of its monthly meeting.

### ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY & STAFF



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**VINCENT:**

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public just wanted to “save the forests” and stop clearcutting. He said the regulations on timberland went down the path of preserving stands of trees. The forest looked good, but without man-made or natural thinning of the forest (via forest fires) the timber stands were in fact not healthy.

The environmentalists won the day back in the 1960s through the 1990s, stopping logging efforts and making a case that capitalism just might be the “enemy of earth.” He said the country was “crossing the thin line between environmental sensitivity and environmental insanity.”

How did we get there? he asked. He said it started in the 1960s when the Cuyahoga River in Ohio caught fire due to polluted waters. Environmental concerns grew during a massive fish die-off on the Great Lakes also in the 1960s. Massive smog in Los Angeles also in the 1960s added to the concerns.

“The environmental social movement was hijacked and turned into an industry dependent upon crisis and conflict,”

Vincent said, adding money attracted to “save the planet” morphed into an “eco industry” and logging companies even participated in their business strategy.

He called them excellent marketers of fear with a three-word vision of “Stop doing that!” They offered 20-second sound bites that showed full green forests contrasted with clear cuts, followed by the question, “Which would you rather have?”

“We got angry that those were the only choices offered,” Vincent said. “But the public does not know this, and we laughed at what the public did not know. But we realized it was no longer funny. It was a fertile marketplace for the fear mongering of the conflict industry. We confused fighting with leading, and lost. We finally learned the real enemy was ignorance — and not just the public, but more importantly, our’s.”

We slowly learned to lead, Vincent said.

“We stopped blaming the public for buying into the hype and found common ground,” Vincent said. “The public loves animals, clean water and air, and so do we. They want safe,

**THE MAJOR LESSONS LEARNED THAT LEWIS COUNTY LEADERS CAN APPLY:**

- Stand together
- Don't play the blame game, no whining
- Provide a vision for Lewis County
- Don't vilify yesterday in building tomorrow
- Language matters
- Set high goals and offer realistic hope
- Celebrate success, large and small
- Embrace newcomers
- Strive for excellence
- Expect mistakes — learn and laugh
- Make community engagement a business line item

healthy forests and communities for their families, and so do we.”

The public, Vincent said, wants truth, transparency and trust. The town of Libby, facing

closed sawmills, mines closed, massive drops in incomes, failure of school levies, rising drug abuse and too many kids signed up for free and reduced lunch. USA Today led with the headline, “The Town Left to Die” in reference to Libby.

“What did we learn that might help Lewis County today?” Vincent asked.

Three things: Democracy works, but it is not a spectator sport; when people lead, leaders follow; and the world is run by those who show up.”

Vincent said timber industry leaders learned to empathize with the public. He said the industry learned to listen to the public’s concerns and what solutions would be acceptable to the public. For loggers, that meant putting an emphasis on engaging, owning and showcasing environmental forestry initiatives.

“We would outgreen the posers,” Vincent said. “Our leadership message to the public was ‘We are listening, we understand, we respect or share your concerns and we are working hard to answer those concerns. Join us.’”

It has worked in Libby, Vincent said. Today his logging company had its first timber

sale in 15 years, and the school passed a levy. Chamber membership is up. The economic development council is vibrant. The town has brought in new events such as chainsaw art, a jazz festival, new progressive city, county and school governance, and new arrivals are buying property and homes sight unseen (similar to what we are seeing in Lewis County, think Packwood). People from all sides are now working together on common beliefs. And Libby went from the town left to die to “The Most Charming City in Montana.”

This blueprint from Montana offers hope for Lewis County as it goes through strong economic gains.

He said the door is open and society is ready for a new vision of environmentalism based on hope, science and education instead of litigation resolution.

“Today,” he said, “we have more forest land than at the turn of the century. We are re-growing our forests.”

Vincent ended his talk with, “Be a ripple, and together we will make a wave that will save the last best places, like Lewis County, and the last best people.”

**DIRECTOR:**

*Continued From Page C1*

gatherings when decisions need to be made, and in general offer me and my staff valuable and wise direction.

Both professionally and personally, I have much to be thankful for. I am proud of our direction and successes during my first year of heading up The Alliance. I must say the early journey has been enjoyable and we have accomplished much.

Personally, I am gifted with a supportive and healthy family and close set of friends. I do appreciate that those around me are people who look at the glass half full. Being positive can bring a spirit of what can we do to make our situation better as

opposed to wringing hands and complaining about all the obstacles to overcome.

Specifically, I do have one Lewis County business that I give much thanks for and I would like to single out — ToledoTel led by Dale Merten. On page two of this Economic Report you can read a question and answer session with Dale as part of our monthly Board Member Spotlight. His quality character comes through loud and clear. His direction of ToledoTel has allowed Toledo to be one of the best wired communities as far as fibre optics and Internet access. His company now is poised to replicate that success across South Lewis County. ToledoTel’s efforts will be a game changer for areas from Toledo to Winlock to

Napavine.

I am humbled to lead this great organization, and finally, I want to thank my quality and hard working staff — Todd Chaput, Eric Sonnenberg, Marianne Schumacker and Dolly Tardiff. They make The Alliance hum.

So, enjoy the turkey and mashed potatoes, savor a piece of pie (or two) with plenty of whipped cream. Please reflect on what you are thankful for — drink down that glass half full — and enjoy some quality time with friends and family.

Then, when we return to work on Monday, let’s get after filling that glass to the brim.

•••  
*Richard DeBolt is the Executive Director of the Economic Alliance of Lewis County.*

**SENER:**

*Continued From Page C1*

port in the right direction with the highest legal compliance in mind. She has proven herself. It’s gonna be an upward learning curve, but all commissioners agreed that was acceptable. We’ll be here to provide policy guidance and encouragement,” Anders said.

Anders closed by stating, “She’s the kind of face you want on your organization to encourage people to come to Lewis County.”

“Through the whole process, to me, she (Senter) was the clear choice,” said Port of Chehalis Commissioner Paul Ericson, echoing the other two port commissioners. “I’ve not worked with her that long, but

it’s clear that she has the energy, the enthusiasm, and the drive to do this job well. Her relationships with key organizations that the port already works with are invaluable. I have no doubt in my mind that she is the right choice to work with.”

He continued, adding, “With her natural drive, I just had a feeling she was gonna work harder than the other candidates. And, she will have plenty of help and support from us as commissioners.”

Senter has previously held positions with the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Alliance of Lewis County, in addition to managing and operating her own business ventures.

Senter officially takes over as CEO beginning Dec. 1.

**LOWES:**

*Continued From Page C1*

Bellevue-based Benaroya. Located just adjacent to I-5, The Benaroya Company’s Winlock project is the largest industrial building — 1.2 million square feet — in Washington state for 2021.

Cost of construction on the 74-acre project was more than \$100 million bringing hundreds of construction workers to lodge and eat at local establishments for more than a year. 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 site will attract hundreds, if not thousands of jobs to the county. Construction jobs alone on the Lowe’s project numbered about 400.

The project has been under development by Benaroya for more than 10 years as industrial growth has extended south

from the Seattle metro area. 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.

“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,” said Benaroya Manager Larry 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.”

Ben Kostick, chair of the Economic Alliance of Lewis County, said working with Benaroya was an honor.

“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,” Kostick said.

Established in 1956, The Benaroya Company since 1995 has acquired and/or developed more than 16 million square feet of real estate projects with a wide range of global and regional companies including industry leaders such as Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, General Services Administration, Toysmith, Lockheed Martin, Marvell Technology Group, Nintendo, Nordstrom, Seattle Children’s Hospital, Solar World, Lowe’s, Verizon, Comcast, Walton Street Investments and IPT.

**PROPERTY SPOTLIGHT — FOR LEASE IN CHEHALIS**

**103 McBride Court, Chehalis (I-5 Exit 74)**

- Lease Rate: \$6,347 per month (rate includes lease fees, NNN fees, and leasehold excise tax)
- Only two direct access minutes to Interstate 5; 90 minutes to Portland or Seattle; less than 60 minutes to Port of Tacoma
- Over 12, 200 square feet of clear span industrial space (80’ x 160’)
- Light Industrial zoned in an established industrial park
- Includes 720 square feet of office, restrooms and conference room space

**Features:**

- Clear height: 16’
- Lot size: 1.28 acres
- Power: 3 phase, 480 volts, 1000 amps
- One loading dock with high with dock leveler
- Two bay doors at 12’ x 14’ and 16’ x 14’



- Ample parking for personal vehicles, box trucks and semi vans
- Entire industrial space heated by energy saving overhead radiant gas heat
- Lighting recently upgraded to efficient modern T-5 fixtures
- Clean inside and out
- Natural gas from Puget Sound Energy
- Electric utility from Lewis County Public Utility District #1
- Water and sewer from city of Chehalis
- Fiber optics available



For information on this property and others available throughout Lewis County (or to list your industrial/commercial property for sale or lease), contact Economic Alliance of Lewis County External Relations Manager Eric Sonnenberg at 208.206.5407 or [eric@lewiscountyalliance.org](mailto:eric@lewiscountyalliance.org), or go to [lewisdc.com](http://lewisdc.com).