

THE ECONOMIC REPORT

A SUPPLEMENT OF *The Chronicle*

The Alliance Tackles Lack of Housing in L.C.

Ad-Hoc Steering Committee Composed of Economic Leaders

BY THE ALLIANCE

Under the auspicious umbrella of the Economic Alliance of Lewis County, an ad-hoc steering committee called the Housing Alliance aims to help alleviate the economic choke point of a lack of appropriate housing.

The informal group organized by The Alliance Initiative Program Manager Todd Chaput, is composed of leaders from main economic sectors, including developers, designers, engineers, bankers, title companies, Realtors and county and city government officials. It has been meeting for about six months in The Alliance board room.

The need is crucial if Lewis County's

economy continues to attract outside firms and enhance existing businesses as they expand.

The forecast need for housing in Lewis County, to handle the expected growth coming to the area, is building 600 new dwellings a year for the next 10 years. The reality is home development in Lewis County is struggling to come close to that number.

Eric Eisenberg is Lewis County's Housing and Infrastructure Specialist. Eisenberg, who is part of the steering committee, welcomes the efforts of the Housing Alliance.

"To anticipate the anticipated population growth, we need to get in front of this if we're going to have a comprehensive plan to address these needs," Eisenberg



TODD CHAPUT



GREG LUND



ERIC EISENBERG

said. "The Housing Alliance is exploring ways to promote regional planning related to existing transportation, utilities and housing needs. ... In essence, the Housing Alliance is trying to knock down existing barriers that hinder economic and housing development."

Chaput said the Housing Alliance is functioning as a troubleshooting group.

"We're trying to identify hurdles or pitfalls that currently exist in the housing development process," Chaput said. "We're engaging with partners and have assembled a great team to identify problems and solutions to clearly address them to the community."

It has become clear the rules and regulations to facilitate countywide economic

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Ad-Hoc Group Addresses Key Housing Choke Points Inflation Hitting Small Biz, Brandi Kruse Coming to Alliance Banquet

BY RICHARD DEBOLT

Executive Director
Economic Alliance of Lewis County

Realtor Greg Lund, the Vice President of 21st Century Lund based in Chehalis, has it right, as detailed in the story "The Alliance Tackles Lack of Housing in L.C.: Ad-Hoc Steering Committee Composed of Economic Leaders."

He said developers are frustrated and need a helping hand in overcoming barriers to building a spectrum of appropriate housing.

The Economic Alliance of Lewis County has formed a subgroup called the Housing Alliance, led by The Alliance Initiative Program Manager Todd Chaput. They've met in The Alliance board room for about six months in their attempts to help county, cities and developers find a common path to help overcome the extreme need for additional housing in Lewis County.

It is clear growth is coming to our area, as WinCo Foods Vice President of Real Estate Greg Goins said in an article in today's The Economic Report. "WinCo research clearly shows the Lewis County market is ready for WinCo."

Lund said the Housing Alliance is pushing for private-public cooperation to help alleviate this difficult-to-solve problem. I look forward to the group's success in finding solutions to this long-simmering puzzle.

Inflation Impacts Small Businesses

The U.S. inflation rate for September hit 8.2%, led by increases in food, gasoline and energy. This is hurting our small businesses in Lewis County. According to a report from the NFIB Research Center, "79% of small employers report that rising fuel prices are a substantial contributor to higher costs."

"Inflation has set in on Main Street and owners across the country continue to make business decisions in response," said Holly Wade, Executive Director of NFIB's Research Center. "As owners manage the highest inflation rate in decades, they are also managing an ongoing worker shortage and supply chain disruptions, which is hurting their businesses and consumers."

The Fed uses rising interest rates to attempt to control inflation. The problem is that it hits housing sales and slows consumer spending. Perhaps the U.S. government overspent in the past few years. Next up is increased taxes or cuts in spending.

Hang in there, small business owners. What goes up always comes down. The opposite is true as well.

Annual Alliance Banquet Features Brandy Kruse

Our 40th Annual Economic Alliance of Lewis County banquet is set for Friday

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RICHARD DEBOLT
Executive Director
Economic Alliance of Lewis County

WinCo to Construct 84,000-Square-Foot Grocery Store

Centralia Station Gets Boost, Plans Include Two Retail Pads to Complement Shopping Center

BY THE ALLIANCE

WinCo Foods announced this summer the company has entered a real estate contract with the Port of Centralia to construct a proposed 84,000-square-foot grocery store.

The project will be located off the Alder Street and Yew Street intersection in Park 3, according to a press release.

Also planned at the development are two complementary retail pads for the shopping center. Though no deals have been made yet, likely uses for these additional storefronts are a dining establishment and multi-tenant retail shops, according to a press release from the Port of Centralia.

The Port of Centralia Board of Commissioners — Kyle Markstrom, Julie Shaffley and Peter Lahman — weighed in on the project in a joint statement.

"The Port of Centralia is excited to announce that it has recently awarded a bid to a local contractor and the Yew Street Extension project is officially underway," the commissioners wrote. "The Yew Street Extension project is the first step to completing the Port's third park, Centralia Station. Once completed, Centralia Station will be home to a variety of businesses and be a staple in our community for generations to come."

They stated the Centralia Station project will increase tax revenue for the county once the project is complete.

"Though it has been a long process, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel," the commissioners stated. "The Port of Centralia is excited to see this project taking shape this year, and we believe the community will be excited to see progress as well."

The 24-hour warehouse-style WinCo stores are wide open, well-stocked and known for competitively low prices. In addition to the extensive variety offered in the grocery aisles, produce, deli, bakery



Midway Underground LLC worked on the Centralia Station off-site infrastructure improvements project in late summer. The Port of Centralia has undertaken \$800,000 in improvements to city water, sewer and streets to support Centralia Station and commercial development in the surrounding area.

and meat/fish departments, every WinCo features a bulk section where customers can buy as much or as little of a product as they want, according to a press release.

The company operates lean and mean through its own distribution, warehouse and transportation network. With its close direct relationships with many farms, producers and vendors, the middle man is removed, allowing WinCo to keep its prices low for its customers.

WinCo Foods is an employee-owned company, meaning every worker has a

stake in the business. As long as they have worked the minimum hours in a year, employees receive an annual gift of WinCo stock equivalent to 20% of what they make yearly.

"What makes this opening exciting for us is that we get to find new employee owners from the community of Centralia and add to our family," said WinCo Foods Vice President of Real Estate Greg Goins. "When this store opens, the employee

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THURSTON-LEWIS-MASON CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

SPONSORED CONTENT

Labor foundation helps union families in need

BY THE FOUNDATION FOR WORKING FAMILIES



FOUNDATION For WORKING FAMILIES

The Foundation for Working Families is a charitable nonprofit organization formed by the affiliated unions of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO to assist union members and their families in times of hardship or disaster. As you can imagine, the FFWF has been quite busy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the past two years, the FFWF has delivered thousands of \$300 Fred Meyer gift cards to families suffering extraordinary hardship. That's hundreds of thousands of dollars in donation to help folks get through difficult times.

In addition, families that have experienced loss due to natural disasters such as wildfires and floods can apply for FFWF assistance.

Generous contributions are made to the FFWF

by unions and rank-and-file members throughout Washington state—and those contributions are making a real difference. The families the FFWF is helping are extremely grateful for the assistance.

"I can't thank you enough for the incredibly generous Fred Meyer gift card," Jessica wrote in one of many thank-you notes the FFWF has received. "I used it to make a HUGE shopping run of groceries that will help my family and me for a long time. We are so grateful to you for your support during this strange and difficult time."

Because the WSLC covers all administrative

and overhead costs of running the FFWF, 100% of contributions—every single dollar—goes directly to people in need.

"The Foundation for Working Families is an important part of the WSLC and its affiliated unions' work," said WSLC President Larry Brown. "Helping families get through difficult times is what unions have always done. We lift each other up, particularly when some of us are struggling, so we can get through those hard times and ultimately share in the prosperity we have created together."

Learn more about the Foundation for Working Families at www.wslc.org/FFWF. You can also make a contribution or apply for assistance there.

The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO is the largest labor group in the state. It represents some 600 union organizations, including the Thurston-Lewis-Mason Counties Labor Council, with more than 550,000 members statewide.

BOARD MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Three New Members Join Board of The Alliance

BY THE ALLIANCE

The Economic Alliance of Lewis County is proud to announce three new members to its Board of Directors.

The new board members are Shane Wood, Business Services Manager and Commercial Lending Specialist for TwinStar Credit Union; Samantha Styger-Magnuson, Co-Owner of Lewis County Coffee and Nomad Truck and SUV Outfitters; and Tyler McCallum, President of McCallum Rock Drilling

Shane Wood

Wood has worked for 14 years at TwinStar Credit union and currently does commercial accounts and loans there. He serves on a variety of boards and committees in the Lewis County community, and is happily married to wife Stephanie and they have “two beautiful kids,” Kyler and Kyndal.

“In my free time I enjoy traveling and camping with my family,” he said, adding his favorite family vacation spot is Disneyland, and he also volunteers as a coach for his kid’s teams.

He is excited to join the Economic Alliance of Lewis County.

“For one, I am passionate about businesses and as a business guy — as a commercial lender at the credit union I get to know a lot of business people in the area,” he said. “I want to advocate for them. And I am super excited about The Alliance. They have done a good job at shifting some of the focus to small businesses.”

Samantha Styger-Magnuson

Born and raised on an organic dairy farm outside of Chehalis, Styger-Magnuson is a WF West graduate and longtime supporter of Lewis County. After a corporate career with LINE-X Protective Coatings, she left to dedicate herself fulltime to her family’s businesses, Lewis County Coffee Company,



<p>Tyler McCallum President McCallum Rock Drilling</p>	<p>Shane Wood Business Service Manager Commercial Lending Specialist TwinStar Credit Union</p>	<p>Samantha Styger-Magnuson Co-Owner Lewis County Coffee & Nomad Truck and SUV Outfitters</p>
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and Nomad Truck and SUV Outfitters. Styger-Magnuson enjoys time with family and friends and all the beauty the Pacific Northwest has to offer. You can find her and her husband spike hiking, fishing or adventuring somewhere outdoors.

She also looks forward to serving on The Alliance Board.

“I’m excited and interested to learn about the future of Lewis County,” she said. “As a lifelong Lewis County resident, I remember it was nearly a one-stoplight town when I was a kid. I am interested in where we’ve grown to today, and to where our future is headed.”

Tyler McCallum

McCallum is a graduate of WF West High School and the University of Washington. He was born and raised in Chehalis and grew up heavily involved in sports and the community. McCallum and his wife Callie have two kids and are building a home in Chehalis. They want to invest and support the community they grew up in and continue to help make Lewis County a great place to live and raise a family

In 2016, McCallum and his sister Hayley Coronel, purchased McCallum Rock Drilling from their parents. In the six years of ownership, they have grown the business from 30 employees to well over

100, operating throughout the entire Pacific Northwest. Although the region they cover is large, a majority of McCallum’s employees live in Lewis County.

In 2021, McCallum purchased a warehouse property in the Chehalis Industrial Park. This purchase has allowed McCallum Rock Drilling to grow and offer good paying careers to people in Lewis County for many years to come.

“I’m passionate about this area and I think there’s a lot of good people who can benefit from continued economic growth,” he said. “I know a few of the current board members, they’re pushing to get the right people and businesses to not only help us grow, but to grow in the right way.”

WINCO:*Continued From Page C1*

owners that the citizens of Centralia meet at the store will be their friends and families.”

While WinCo does not have a definitive timeline yet for the opening of its Centralia location, the company will begin advertising for open positions once the store is under construction and within a few months of opening.

“The state of Washington overall has been a very good market for WinCo,” Goins said. “Our value-based grocery business model has resonated with Washington consumers and we continue to look for opportunities to add to our stores in areas such as Centralia where the population has grown to a level to support one of our full-size stores.”

Goins said WinCo research clearly shows the Lewis County market is ready for WinCo.

“We have watched Centralia for many years hoping to find just the right site to serve this dynamic and growing market,” he said. “We are excited about the Port site and the opportunity to finally serve the Centralia/Chehalis markets.”

An outpouring of support from the community did not go unnoticed.

“WinCo heard the requests from Centralia — especially via social media, which we really love to see — that it wanted a WinCo loud and clear and we are thrilled to be joining the community.”

WinCo has a network of stores stretching across 10 states, with more than 21,000 employee owners.

DIRECTOR:*Continued From Page C1*

Feb. 3 at Jesters Museum, with Guest Speaker Brandi Kruse.

Attendees are in for a treat with Kruse — a spark plug of a journalist known for telling it like it is.

Kruse quit her job at Fox’s Seattle TV station KCPQ and started her own podcast.

“I came to the conclusion that if I wanted to do my best work — my best work for the public — I didn’t believe I could work for corporate media and work for the public at the same time,” she told Seattle’s KIRO Radio.

Kruse said she quit after indications her weekly talk show The Divide was in danger of cancellation.

“When it became clear The Divide, a show I created, wasn’t going to move forward, which was a decision I did not agree with, I knew I was going to have to leave.”

You can hear all about it and more of her insights and opinions at our anniversary banquet.

Save the Date

40

YEARS

*Friday, Feb 3rd***Economic Alliance of
Lewis County***40th Anniversary Banquet***Guest Speaker: Brandi Kruse****At Jesters Museum**

HOUSING:

Continued From Page C1

growth are broken. Developers in general state the current model just doesn't work.

Chaput said the Housing Alliance gets its roots from prominent Realtor Greg Lund, the Vice President of 21st Century Lund based in Chehalis.

"The whole thing was the brainchild of Greg Lund," Chaput said.

Lund said the Housing Alliance came from a high level of annoyance.

"I've been so frustrated with a lack of coordination by all the entities," Lund said, adding he admits sometimes he can be overly direct. "A lot of my frustration grew out of just watching growth and regulations for the past 35-plus years in the county, and not seeing anybody roll up their sleeves."

Lewis County has infrastructure problems, Lund said. Historically the cities and county make the developers pay for infrastructure extensions. He said often, the developers extend utilities sometimes miles to their projects, but the city and county reap the benefits through fees and an increased tax base. Lund envisions moving toward public-private partnerships.

"We have finally realized housing is a problem, and an impediment to family wage job growth," he said. "We've got to have a spectrum of housing to attract a workforce, provide housing for fixed-income seniors and to also build nicer housing to attract more professionals. And we don't have a focus on getting the spectrum."

He said the Housing Alliance is attempting to bring people together to tackle the problem.

"We're trying to be the catalyst for out-of-the-box thinking and collaborate in a private-public partnership," Lund said. "I feel private is more efficient than public. None of this is rocket science. Somebody's gotta do it and the Housing Alliance is a logical place, maybe a way to move forward."

Lund said he appreciated The Alliance Executive Director Richard DeBolt's role.

"Richard actually gave me somebody to talk to and work with Todd. Todd has the passion and rolled up his sleeves and is making connections to move this forward."



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