



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Thankful for Being a Small Part of Broadband Expansion

You Still Have Time to Register for the Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation EXPO

RICHARD DEBOLT

Executive Director Economic Alliance of Lewis County

As I start to overcome food, family, friends and football binges from the past few days, upon reflection there is much to be thankful for here in Lewis County and at the Economic Alliance of Lewis County.



RICHARD DEBOLT
Director —
Economic Alliance of Lewis County

One major development, which has been percolating for a few years but has now come to fruition, is the public-private partnership led by ToledoTel's internet expansion, which I believe is a model for future such efforts across the region.

ToledoTel, led by Vice President and CEO Dale Merten, who I consider a good friend, is building 134 miles of line construction funded by a \$23.5 million grant from the Washington State Broadband Office, with ToledoTel adding \$2.35 million in matching funds.

The project held a groundbreaking ceremony in mid-October. When complete, it will bring broadband to about 2,300 homes and businesses in the Winlock area. Merten said once complete, it will provide the best broadband access in the world.

County Commissioner Sean Swope rightly gave credit to Lewis County Budget Administrator Becky Butler and Infrastructure Specialist Eric Eisenberg for doing the hard work to make it happen.

I'm proud that Commissioner Swope also singled out the Economic Alliance of Lewis County. "Without their assistance, I don't know that we would have gotten here," Swope was quoted in *The Chronicle*.

Merten said the project, just underway, will finish up in two years. That is something to be thankful for.

Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation EXPO

A future opportunity is right around the corner for those interested in taking their business to a higher level.

Join me for a dynamic exploration of the Changing Times in Energy Panel Discussion, moderated by the insightful Michael Cade, at the Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation Expo 2023 taking place this Dec. 7 at the Great Wolf Lodge. It's not too late to register by contacting the Thurston Economic Development Council, hosting the event.

Changing energy needs certainly has been at the forefront of discussions here in Lewis County. This panel will dive into energy sources, from hydrogen to bio fuel, both recently put on the map with pending developments in Lewis County.

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Fortescue founder and Executive Chairman Dr. Andrew Forrest AO, center, announced Nov. 16 at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in San Francisco, that global green energy, metals, and technology company, Fortescue, will rapidly expand its U.S. presence as a direct result of the Inflation Reduction Act, including in Centralia.

Fortescue Invests in the Future of American Jobs, Including in Centralia

Group Involved in Centralia Green Energy and Manufacturing Is Supported by the Inflation Reduction Act

BY THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

Fortescue founder and Executive Chairman Dr. Andrew Forrest AO, announced last week at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) gathering in San Francisco that global green energy, metals and technology company, Fortescue, will rapidly expand its U.S. presence as a direct result of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

The IRA is demonstrating that countries which incentivise green energy place an economic engine firmly inside their economies, growing employment, careers and the standard of living, according to a news release.

Fortescue will create clean energy opportunities that will benefit the USA and Asia Pacific, including:

- Fortescue is forging forward with its Centralia project, boosted by its selection by the U.S. Department of Energy, for funding as part of the Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Hub.
- \$35 million to kickstart a U.S. Advanced Manufacturing Center in Michigan, with the potential to create 600 American jobs in its first phase.
- The formation of Fortescue Capital, a new green energy investment accelerator platform, headquartered in New York, with Robert Tichio as CEO and Managing Partner.

The Phoenix Hydrogen Hub Green Hydrogen project is on track to go to the Fortescue Board for Final Investment Decision this year, potentially moving into operations in 2024.

Dr. Forrest said, "The IRA makes

the United States the most attractive place in the world for green energy and green manufacturing projects. Fortescue is putting the United States at the forefront of our global strategy, with the incentives on offer, a win for both the U.S. and the wider Asia Pacific region.

"The leadership the USA has shown, specifically matching policy settings to climate risk, will help to accelerate green energy development in the USA and globally.

"This investment in the next generation of U.S. green energy and manufacturing projects will help decarbonize business and heavy industry, and in turn create a strong economic future and create more American jobs."

U.S. Advanced Manufacturing Center

Fortescue is investing \$35 million to start building a U.S. Advanced Manufacturing Center in Michigan, which

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Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation EXPO

'Building Regional Economic Prosperity' Is the Theme for Thurston County Economic Development Council's Annual Event Dec. 7 at the Great Wolf Lodge

BY THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

The Thurston County Economic Development Council is hosting a don't miss regional gathering on Dec. 7 at the Great Wolf Lodge.

This year's theme of "Building Regional Economic Prosperity" will once again have a strong emphasis on the workforce and will showcase the economic impact tribal nations have on the regional economy.

Content and discussions will delve into the issues facing business communities related to infrastructure, energy, AI, the creative economy and more. Business and community leaders will gain insights into critical and emerging trends, and will be provided with information to guide business models and action plans.

The Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation Expo is presented in partnership with the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council and the five economic development organizations of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Region.

Target Market

This important networking event draws over 500 decision makers, community leaders and innovators from all sectors of business and industry in

the five-county region of Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, Lewis and Pacific counties and beyond.

This conference in its 15th year brings together regional businesses from a wide range of industry sectors, as well as leadership from non-profit, education and the public sector. Exhibitors will display cutting-edge technology, products and innovations. Attendees will have the opportunity to network, attend breakout sessions, hear an economic forecast from leading regional economists and more.

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JAMES MCCAFFERTY
Director
Center for Economic and Business Research
Western Washington University

SPONSORED CONTENT

THURSTON-LEWIS-MASON CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

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.

In recent years, the FFWF assisted thousands of families who experienced hardship during the COVID pandemic and others who suffered losses due to wildfires or other natural disasters. Those families have received hundreds of thousands of dollars in FFWF assistance to help them get through difficult times.

In September alone, the FFWF was able to distribute more than \$250,000 to 70 union households who experienced temporary displacement or total loss of property as a result of the wildfires.

That assistance is made possible by generous contributions to the FFWF from union organizations and their rank-and-file members throughout Washington state.

"The Foundation for Working Families is an important part of the WSLC and its affiliated unions' work," said WSLC President April Sims. "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."

"The foundation is proud to be able to provide a helping hand to union families," added WSLC Secretary Treasurer Cherika Carter, who serves on the FFWF Board of Directors. "We're hoping to help as many people as possible, so we encourage union members and organizations to consider contributions to the foundation."

Because the WSLC covers all administrative and overhead costs of running the foundation, 100% of contributions to the FFWF—every single dollar—goes directly to people in need.

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 500,000 members statewide.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Daryl Lund Opens Minuteman Press

BY THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

Longtime Chehalis City Councilor Daryl Lund opened Minuteman Press in Chehalis in mid-September, and after a soft opening, he's wide open for business.

He's well known for his nearly 24 years in office (he ran unopposed in the current election), and also for managing the FOX Theatre in Centralia in the 80s and 90s, followed by ownership of the downtown theater in Chehalis, which sold last year. He also owns several real estate holdings in the area.

Lund, 62, comes from strong stock, being part of the Lund family known for real estate holdings and development in Lewis County. His roots run deep. His great-grandfather immigrated from Denmark, originally settling in Menlo.

"Lewis County has been good to us," he said.

As far as his new business, he was approached by the franchisee Minuteman Press. He said they offered corporate support and direction.

"With all their support and training,



Daryl Lund

I thought it would be something worthwhile," Lund said.

He has two experienced employees, one who ran Staples for a few years and another who was in the local print business for 13 years. He said they will help him with what he calls the secret to success: "Customer service with a good product."

A member of the Economic Alliance of Lewis County, Lund said he supports the organization because it helps build



and attract jobs.

"That's important so our families' kids can have a job in the community and stay home," Lund said.

Minuteman Press offers full-service design, print and marketing centers serving the entire business community from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies. Their customers are wide-ranging and include local organizations, government groups, non-profits, professional sports teams, businesses, entrepreneurs, consumers and more.

Lund's new business can produce anything you can put a name, image or logo on.



DISCOVER SPOTLIGHT



All it takes to enjoy the snow this winter at White Pass is some warm clothes and a bit of bravery.



Photos Courtesy Discover Lewis County

White Pass Ski Area offers slopes for all levels of skiers and snowboarders, from those who shred to those who hit the bunny slopes.

Winter Wonderland Awaits Discover White Pass Byway in Lewis County

BY LENE LANGDON

Tourism Alliance Project Coordinator

Winter in the Pacific Northwest transforms the region into a magical wonderland, and for those seeking an enchanting snowy adventure, the White Pass Scenic Byway in Lewis County, is the ultimate destination.

This picturesque route beckons travelers with its charming towns and a plethora of winter activities. Join us on a journey through the White Pass Scenic Byway as we provide travel tips, introduce you to the welcoming towns along the route, and highlight the winter activities and cozy stops that await your exploration.

TRAVEL TIPS FOR A WINTER ADVENTURE

Check Road Conditions:

Before embarking on your winter journey, it's essential to stay informed about road conditions, especially considering the prevalence of snow and ice. Keep an eye out for road closures and advisories.

Winter Wardrobe:

Embrace the variable weather by packing a well-equipped winter wardrobe, complete with layers, waterproof boots, gloves, and warm hats. Don't forget your snow gear if you plan to hit the slopes!

Plan Ahead:

To ensure a smooth and comfortable stay, make advance reservations for

accommodations, especially during the peak winter months. The area's cozy lodges and cabins are highly sought after by winter guests.

Emergency Essentials:

Be prepared for any situation by equipping your vehicle with essentials such as a first-aid kit, blankets, and emergency supplies.

CHARMING COMMUNITIES ALONG THE WAY

Packwod

This delightful town offers not only a cozy atmosphere but also some noteworthy attractions for visitors.

- Longmire Springs Brewing: Nestled in the heart of Packwood, Longmire Brewing is celebrated for its artisanal craft beers that capture the essence of the region. From quality to flavor, their diverse range of brews caters to every palate, making it a must-visit for beer enthusiasts.
- Packwood Brewing Co: Packwood Brewing, captures the unique character of the local area with its carefully crafted beers. With a welcoming ambiance and a commitment to excellence, it's a favorite among travelers in the area.
- White Pass Ski Area: A short drive up the road, this ski area offers exhilarating experiences for skiers, snowboarders, and snowshoers of all skill levels.



Kicking down the slopes at White Pass Ski Area is, well, a flying blast.

- White Pass Nordic Center: This winter wonderland offers a serene escape for cross-country skiers and snowshoers, featuring impeccably groomed trails winding through picturesque forests and meadows.
- Mount Rainier National Park: As a gateway to the park, Packwood provides access to the park's snow-covered trails, perfect for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and tossing a snowball.
- Morton: This mountain community is known for its burgeoning art scene and attractions.
 - Roxy Theater: Located in downtown Morton, the Roxy Theater showcases regular performances that delight audiences. First-run movies are also shown every weekend.
 - BCJ Gallery: This gallery offers fine works of local art, ranging from jewelry and pottery to paintings and furniture. Explore the talents of local artisans that call East Lewis County home.
- Taidnapam Park: Discover year-round camping and fun at the day-use area, (closed December 20 to January 1) ideal for winter hiking and fishing, providing a quiet escape into nature.

The White Pass Scenic Byway is the quintessential winter destination that combines natural beauty, outdoor adventures, and small-town charm. The snowy landscapes, diverse winter activities, and welcoming communities make this region a must-visit for winter enthusiasts. Whether you're an avid skier, a nature lover, or simply seeking a cozy winter escape, the towns along the White Pass Scenic Byway have something special to offer. For more information and to plan your winter adventure, visit the official White Pass Scenic Byway website at www.whitepassbyway.com.

EXPO:

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EDC Directors' Panel

Jennifer Baria, Executive Director, EDC Mason; Lynnette Buffington, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Grays Harbor Inc.; Michael Cade, Executive Director, Thurston EDC; Richard DeBolt, Executive Director, Economic Alliance of Lewis County; and Susan Yirku, Executive Director, Economic Development Council Pacific County

Keynote and Forecast Speakers

James McCafferty, director, Center

for Economic and Business Research, Western Washington University; and Dr. Hart Hodges, associate professor, Western Washington University are this year's keynote speakers.

McCafferty seeks to broaden the connections between the University, the College of Business and Economics and the real world – businesses, non-profits, tribal communities and government agencies – through student internships, classroom based projects and consultative projects drawing on faculty, staff and students.

Hodges is a professor in the Department of Economics at Western Wash-

ington University and director of Western's Center for Economic and Business Research. He received his Ph.D. in Economics in 1994 from the University of Washington.

Hodges taught economics from 1993-1995 at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, and then served as the natural resource damage assessment economist for the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Breakout Sessions

Breakouts will focus on the very real issues and opportunities facing the five-county region — first and foremost among these — workforce. A strong fo-

cus will be placed on the future — where are we at today; where do we want/need to be; and how do we get there?

Major topics include explorations of infrastructure and energy needs, the rising importance of the creative economy and how AI is impacting our regional business world.

From the importance of planning, to the very real challenges of implementation, the panels of experts will engage you in discussions on how to best create the world we want to live in. Intent will also be given to how diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are woven into these themes and innovations.

FORTESCUE:

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has the potential to create up to 600 new jobs in its first phase. It is expected to become a major hub for Fortescue's production of automotive and heavy indus-

try batteries, hydrogen generators, fast chargers, and electrolyzers.

Fortescue's new manufacturing center is anticipated to directly benefit from IRA tax credits for Battery Modules, up to \$10 per kWh.

Fortescue Energy CEO, Mark

Hutchinson, said, "Michigan and the United States are extremely attractive places to manufacture, given the skilled workforce, existing supply chain and incentives from state and federal governments, including the Inflation Reduction Act."

Fortescue Capital

Fortescue's new green energy investment accelerator platform, Fortescue Capital, will be headquartered in NYC and is an integral next step in the company's commitment to broaden its base of financial partners across its captive pipeline of green hydrogen and planned decarbonization investments.

Fortescue Capital will be led by Tichio as CEO and managing partner, seeking to accelerate green energy projects in the United States and around the world, creating jobs sooner and stimulating further economic growth in the green energy transition.

Tichio, said, "Fortescue has made public commitments to invest in a first-generation infrastructure investment program as it marches toward final investment decisions across its pipeline of green hydrogen, ammonia, and fertilizer projects in North and South America, Europe, Africa and Australia. It has communicated to the market an intention and desire to bring additional investors to these captive projects, and Fortescue Capital is an integral tool of engagement as we embark on that mission."

"Fortescue has demonstrated unmatched leadership in calling for capital formation to large scale, industrial solutions that can provide durable and high-impact decarbonization pathways for difficult-to-decarbonize, emitting categories."

Fortescue's U.S. Projects

The Phoenix Hydrogen Hub (PHH) in Arizona is on track to go to the For-

tescue board for Final Investment Decision this calendar year.

Phase One of the PHH has the potential to create up to 300 direct jobs during construction, and as many as 40 direct jobs during peak operation. If FID is granted, the first production of green hydrogen from the PHH project is expected by the middle of this decade.

The facility is planned to be an 80MW electrolyzer and liquefaction facility, capable of producing up to 12,000 tonnes of liquified green hydrogen annually, which can displace the equivalent of 10 million gallons of diesel consumption per year. The PHH project has further capacity to scale up production to help meet future demand.

The Centralia Project

In a further demonstration of the incentives available in the United States, Fortescue's Centralia project in Washington has been selected, as part of the Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Hub, to receive funding from the US Department of Energy's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED).

The OCED funding would support Fortescue's participation in the Hydrogen Hub through the advanced planning, detailed design, environmental permitting and procurement of long lead equipment.

The project is currently in the design stage, with full permitting to follow. Project construction is anticipated to start in 2026 and continue into 2028, subject to a Final Investment by the Fortescue board.

Forrest, said, "The IRA has changed the U.S. from a laggard to a world leader in clean energy, creating jobs at home, fighting climate change and spurring development amongst trading partners. Fortescue is at the forefront of building the infrastructure, electrolyzers, batteries and production in the U.S., Australia, and several other APEC countries."

**PROPERTY SPOTLIGHT
PORT OF CHEHALIS AVAILABLE PROPERTIES**

Chehalis Industrial Park properties	
1. Chase Rail Property	
2. Bishop Road Commercial Site (BRCS)	33 acres
3. 2700 Jackson Hwy	3 acres
4. Maurin Road Industrial Site 2 (MRIS2)	15 acres
5. Maurin Road Industrial Site 1 (MRIS1)	17 acres
6. 103 McBride Court & Pomeri Building	
7. Port of Chehalis Professional Building	
8. Dawson Road Commercial Site (DRCS)	9.5 acres
9. Rush Road Industrial Site (RRIS)	34 acres
10. Bishop & Rush Road Intersection Property	
11. Bishop Road Industrial Site 1 (BRIS1)	33 acres
12. Bishop Road Industrial Site 2 (BRIS2)	59 acres

For information on these properties 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 a eric@lewiscountyalliance.org or 208-206-5407



ERIC SONNENBERG
Economic Alliance of Lewis County External Relations Manager

DIRECTOR:

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Panelists are Renewable Hydrogen Alliance Executive Director Michelle Detwiler, our own Center of Excellence Centralia College Director Monica Brummer and Taxation Management Professional Dianne Dorey, biofuels expert Bob Russell and Cade, the executive director of the Thurston EDC as moderator.

The Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation Expo is a partnership with the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council and the five economic development county organizations of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Region, including Lewis County.

I'm looking forward to sitting on the EDC Directors' Panel which includes Jennifer Baria, Executive Director, EDC Mason; Lynnette Buffington, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Grays Harbor Inc.; Michael Cade, Executive Director, Thurston EDC; and Susan Yirku, Executive Director, Economic Development Council Pacific County.

The keynote speakers James McCafferty, director, Center for Economic and Business Research, Western Washington University; and Dr. Hart Hodges, associate professor, Western Washington University, promise to be insightful.

If you want to attend the Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation EXPO, it is from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 7. Cost is \$100. Tickets can be purchased at thurstonedc.com.

For serious economic development players in the Southwest Washington, this is a must-attend gathering of economic experts and leaders.

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