



Wood product manufacturing is a major industry in Lewis County.

Wood Supply Research Institute

Washington state’s economic growth projected to expand

Lewis County’s economic profile: Highest growth is expected in education and health services

BY THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

Washington state’s slowing economic growth is reflected in the Employment Security Department’s annual employment and occupation projections. The projected average annual growth rate from 2023 to 2028 is 0.97% and the average annual growth from 2028 to 2033 is 0.89%.

The annual projections, released this summer, provide job seekers, policymakers, educators and training providers an idea of how many jobs exist within industries and occupations, how the number of jobs is expected to change over time, and the projected future demand for workers.

“These projections help people make informed employment and education decisions,” said Anneliese Vance-Sherman, chief labor economist for Employment Security. “We develop short, medium and long-term

projections to show expected change in employment by industry and occupation.”

Employment and occupations projections highlights

At a sector level, the highest growth is expected in education and health services. Average annual growth is expected to be 1.95% from 2023 to 2028 and 1.19% from 2028 to 2033.

The top three occupations for projected growth rates from 2023 to 2028 are nurse practitioners, occupational therapy assistants and nuclear technicians.

The top three occupations for projected annual average openings due to growth from 2023 to 2028 are fast food and counter workers, home health and personal care aides and registered nurses.

The top three occupations for projected total average annual openings are fast food and counter workers, retail salespersons and farmworkers and laborers, crop, nursery and greenhouse.

Employment is expected to continue to expand throughout Washington. Average annual growth for all occupations is expected to be highest in King County from the second quarter

of 2024 to the second quarter of 2025 (1.37%). The highest growth in the medium term is expected in Snohomish County (1.14% average from 2023 to 2028), and long-term growth will shift back to King County from 2028 to 2033 (0.92%).

Lewis County profile

From June to July, the not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 4.4% to 5.6% and total nonfarm employment decreased by 20 jobs.

Lewis County is a gateway between lumber producing regions and major transportation routes. Wood product manufacturing is a major industry. In recent years, Lewis County has also become a major center of trade, transportation and warehousing. Other major industries include government, health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the unemployment rate in Lewis County hit a peak of 17.2%. In subsequent years unemployment has improved, though it still tends to be

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Outlook for Washington economy can’t be ignored

After failing to heed the prevailing winds earlier this year, Washington lawmakers can no longer ignore the direction the economy is blowing.

Estimates revealed this week predict two-year state revenue will be \$412 million less than what was projected three months ago, when the Democratic-led Legislature approved the biennial state budget. Sen. June Robinson, D-Everett and the lead budget writer in the Senate, said it’s “all bad news” that will make figuring out a supplemental budget plan next year “that much harder,” according to media outlet Washington State Standard.

Earlier this year, despite a shortfall projected between \$12 billion and \$16 billion over a four-year period, lawmakers increased state spending in a budget signed by Democratic Gov. Bob Ferguson. That included a package of tax increases that Republicans decry as the largest in state history.

As the Standard explains: “The state’s \$77.8 billion operating budget funds everything from public schools and health care to social services and prisons. Tuesday’s forecast pegs revenue fueling this budget at \$74.3 billion, even with the boost from \$4.3 billion from new and higher taxes that legislators and Ferguson approved.”

The projected decline in revenue prompted partisan responses.

“Today’s forecast is disappointing, but not surprising,” Ferguson said in a statement. “Unfortunately, we are also grappling with the impacts of President Trump’s Big Betrayal Bill, which includes billions in cuts to Washington state for programs such as Medicaid and food for hungry kids. Approximately 28 percent of our budget consists of federal investments, so these cuts will have adverse impacts for many Washingtonians.”

State Sen. Chris Gideon, R-Puyallup, said: “The majority party and the governor could call a special legislative session to put the brakes on all their new spending, and provide some relief to taxpayers, but it’s more likely they will blame this situation on the federal government and the cost of delivering core state services. ... The truth is, what we’re seeing is the result of ineptitude, catering to special interests and the Democrats’ ‘tax-first’ agenda. It shouldn’t be this way.”

Both sides are correct. Spending cuts by the federal government have a direct impact on Washington and every other state. And Donald Trump’s tariff policy and crackdown on immigrant workers impact our trade-dependent state more than most, slowing the economy and reducing revenue from the sales tax, gas tax, and business and occupation tax. As the Washington State Standard explains: “Lagging sales and real estate excise taxes are largely to blame for the state’s declining revenue. New construction permits are also down, and the labor market has been weaker than expected.”

Meanwhile, Democrats deserve to be chided for increasing spending to fill a budget gap. The 2025-27 budget includes \$2.7 billion in cuts to services when compared with the previous budget, but those savings were more than offset by increases in other areas.

That adds up to long-range concerns. Projected tax receipts for the 2027-29 biennium also have declined, with the four-year projection dropping nearly \$900 million since the forecast released in June. When lawmakers next address the budget, they should come equipped with a scalpel rather than a checkbook.

Given the extent of the shortfalls, that action should not wait until the Legislature convenes in January. For Ferguson and budget committees, the need for early work is blowing in the wind.

— The Columbian



Zillow

This home for sale in Packwood is listed for \$549,000 by Tracy Croshaw of Pacific Trail Realty.

Lewis County housing market trends

The median sale price of a home in Lewis County was \$434,000 in August, down 5.8% since last year.

The median sale price per square foot in Lewis County is \$271, down 2.3% since last year.

On average, homes in Lewis County

sell after 39 days on the market compared to 30 days last year. There were 82 homes sold in August this year, up from 71 last year.

— Economic Alliance of Lewis County

Discover Lewis County spotlight



BY THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

DiscoverLewisCounty.com

The website Discover Lewis County is your place to find both where to go, what to eat and all things great to do in Lewis County.

The following are calendar items for the next few months, offering you the opportunity to enjoy the best events of the fall season.

ARTrails of Southwest Washington's Studio Tours

Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 27-28

This beloved event will finish up its two weekend run this weekend. With over 20 studios participating, visitors can follow a map (available to print or in the Studio Guide) to explore the workspaces of talented local artists across Southwest Washington.

Gather a carload of friends, share the gas, find your favorite art pieces, and discover Southwest Washington. This is a road trip. Plan to spend a delightful fall weekend driving through the region's historic communities and meandering along back roads.

Free entrance at Washington State Parks

Free entrance days at Washington State Parks provide a fantastic opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers to explore the natural beauty of the state without any admission fees. These designated days, organized by Washington State Parks, allow visitors to access a wide range of scenic parks, from breathtaking coastlines to lush forests and serene lakes. Whether you enjoy hiking, picnicking, camping, or simply immersing yourself in the tranquility of nature, the free entrance days offer an ideal chance to discover the diverse landscapes and recreational activities available throughout Washington. Spend the day exploring one of the state parks located in Lewis County including Ike Kinswa State Park, Lewis and Clark State Park, and Rainbow Falls State Park. Mark your calendar and take advantage of these special days to experience the beauty and serenity of these special parks in Lewis County.

The 2025 Discover Pass free days are:
Sept. 27 — National Public Lands Day
Oct. 10 — World Mental Health Day
Nov. 11 — Veteran's Day

You will not need a Discover Pass when visiting a state park, Washington Department of Natural Resources or Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife lands on Discover Pass Free Days. Please note, free days apply only to day use (not overnight stays or rented facilities). Sno-Park permits are still required on free days at designated Sno-Parks during the winter season.

Free Entrance Day at Mount Rainier National Park

Fee-free days at national parks offer an incredible opportunity for nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers to explore the natural wonders of the United States without any admission fees. These designated days, established by the National Park Service, provide visitors with free access to some of the most breathtaking landscapes and cultural treasures in the country. Whether you're interested in hiking through majestic forests, marveling at towering mountains, or discovering historical landmarks, the fee-free days make it easier than ever to immerse yourself in the beauty and diversity of America's national parks. Take advantage of these special days to visit Mount Rainier National Park, partially located in eastern Lewis County. This is just the opportunity to experience the natural splendor and rich history of Mount Rainier.

Remaining 2025 Free Entrance Days:
September 27: National Public Lands Day
November 11: Veterans Day

SasqWatch: Beyond The Footprint Sept. 28, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



The Wizard Express

Discover Lewis County Photos



Downtown Centralia Girl's Night Out



Onalaska Apple Harvest Festival

Step into the shadow of legend at SasqWatch: Beyond the Footprint, a two-day Bigfoot festival happening this Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 27-28, at Cowlitz River Rentals in Randlen. Nestled along the scenic White Pass Scenic Byway near Mount Rainier, this family-friendly event celebrates the mystery of Sasquatch with expert speakers, live music, artisan vendors, food trucks, kids' activities, and the premiere of the Sasqualogist movie. Attendees can camp on-site, join the "SasqTrot" 5K fun run, or gather around the fire for stories and BBQ under the stars. Whether you're a believer, skeptic, or just love the outdoors, SasqWatch offers an unforgettable weekend in the mountains of East Lewis County.

Country Chicks Fall Market

Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 27-28, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Shop four buildings and over 130 vendors at the SWW Fairgrounds. The market is a mix of upcycled, vintage, and handcrafted items. Farmhouse finds, primitives, repurposed furniture, good ol' rusty junk, boutique clothing, jewelry, candles, woodcrafts and more. \$6 at the door (no online tickets) Food and coffee on site. Bring your truck. Their Chick Crew will help you load it.

The Wizard Express Sunday, Sept. 28

Experience magic, mystery, and managed mischief on the School of Wizardry Express, featuring award-winning magician Headmaster Jeff Evans. Get in the spirit and be part of the atmosphere by wearing your own cloak, wizard hats, and any supporting costume attire.

A ride on the Chehalis-Centralia Railroad is a pleasant, scenic, and relaxing journey back into history. Ride the historic train through the Chehalis River Valley. Coaches from the 1920s provide indoor seating. The train departs from the railroad depot located in Chehalis at 1101 SW Sylvanus Street, across from the Veterans Memorial Museum. Take exit 77, off I-5, midway between Seattle and Portland.

Departs at 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Onalaska Apple Harvest Festival Oct. 3-5, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Experience the charm and excitement of the Onalaska Apple Harvest Festival. Held annually in the heart of Onalaska, this family-friendly event offers a perfect blend of small-town warmth, outdoor fun, and apple-themed activities. Festival-goers can enjoy a vibrant parade, live music, local artisan crafts, and delicious homemade treats — celebrating the apple harvest in true Pacific Northwest style. With interactive games, a classic car show, and plenty of opportunities to savor fresh, local apples, this event promises something for all ages. Don't miss out on making memories at the Onalaska Apple Harvest Festival, where fall flavors and community spirit come alive.

For more details, visit: onalaskaalliance.org

Downtown Centralia Girl's Night Out Oct. 4, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Centralia Girls' Night Out is a fun-filled shopping and social event in historic downtown Centralia. Enjoy exclusive deals, giveaways, and special treats from local businesses while spending a memorable evening with friends. Shop, sip, and celebrate in this lively community tradition

Ghost Tours and Dark Market Oct. 17-18

The Ghost Tours and Dark Market in downtown Centralia offers a thrilling mix of history and hauntings. Take a guided ghost tour through the city's eerie past, then explore the Dark Market, featuring spooky art, oddities, and unique vendors. A must-visit event for paranormal enthusiasts and Halloween lovers alike.

Pumpkin Train Rides Oct. 18-19

Halloween fun for the entire family. Children, as well as adults, are encouraged to wear costumes and help create a fun-filled Halloween atmosphere. Trains are decorated for fall festivities. All train excursions are approximately



75 minutes long. Kids under 12 each receive goody bags of treats and choose their own pumpkins.

Online reservations are necessary due to the popularity of these trains. Enjoy harvest time in the Chehalis River Valley during the fall season and join the fun. There is no heater on board, so make sure to dress appropriately for the weather.

Please arrive ½ hour prior to departure.

Departs at 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Gifford Pinchot Fungi Fest Oct. 24-26

Join the Pinchot Partners for a week-end of fungi, foraging, and fun. Celebrate mushrooms through art, education, and community in an immersive outdoor experience. All proceeds support Pinchot Partners — come be part of the magic.

The Polar Express Train Ride Nov. 15 through Dec. 21

The Chehalis Centralia Railroad is excited to invite passengers to ride in comfort and privacy on our vintage railcar during their trip to the North Pole on The Polar Express.

Set to the sounds of the motion picture soundtrack, passengers will relive the magic of the story as they are whisked away on TThe Polar Express. Once onboard, hot chocolate and treats are served as passengers listen to the classic children's book, The Polar Express, by Chris Van Allsburg. Santa and his helpers greet passengers at the North Pole and then board the train, where each child is given the first gift of Christmas — a silver sleigh bell. Chefs aboard each car lead passengers in singing Christmas carols on the ride back to the depot.

Enjoy the enthusiasm and excitement in the 1920's coaches with table seating. Your friends and family will be entertained by cocoa dancers and many of the characters you find in the storybook. Everyone is a kid on The Polar Express. The golden ticket is yours to keep and remember this popular holiday tradition.

We want everyone to be comfortable and have a wonderful experience. To manage your expectations, we want to let you know that, as in 1950s standards, there is limited heating, and an RV-style restroom is provided in the general seating coach. Aisles are narrow, so wheelchair seating is not available.

Blankets, fuzzy jammies, and cozy scarves are encouraged. Our Depot Gift Shop offers a variety of Polar Express blankets, socks, and scarves, along with ornaments, toys, and gift items that are not available through any other source.

Please arrive ½ hour prior to departure.

Alliance Open Golf Tournament nets \$49K

The Alliance Open Golf Tournament took place at Riverside Golf Course in Chehalis earlier this month, with a full field of 144 players, netting \$49,000.

The profits will go toward supporting the Economic Alliance’s small business development center, which offers invaluable resources for those hoping to fine tune their businesses.

The event was won by the Chehalis Tribe.

The Alliance would like to thank our sponsors:

Title sponsor I-5 Cars.com, along with the cities of Chehalis and Centralia, Lewis County, Chehalis Centralia Airport, experience Chehalis, Chehalis Foundation, Port of Centralia, Port of Chehalis, Lewis County Transit, Impact Washington, Discover Lewis County, The Industrial Commission, United Way, Washington Economic Development Association and the Centralia Downtown Association.



GROWTH:

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higher than the statewide average.

Lewis County is well connected along Interstate 5, and shares borders with eight neighboring counties. These are Grays Harbor, Thurston, and Pierce counties to the north, Yakima to the east, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz and Skamania to the south, and Pacific to the west.

Lewis County’s largest city is Centralia. The county is part of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Area.

Lewis County labor force and unemployment

The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.6% in July 2025, up from 4.4% in the previous month and down from 5.8% in July 2024.

The total civilian labor force was 32,605 in July 2025, down from 33,603

in July 2024.

There were 1,811 unemployed persons in July 2025, 146 fewer than in July 2024.

Lewis County payroll employment

Total nonfarm employment was 26,760 in July 2025, not seasonally adjusted. This was down by 20 jobs from the previous month, and down by 350 jobs (1.3%) from July 2024.

In the 12 months ending in July 2025, goods producing industries lost 90 jobs (1.7%) and service providing industries lost 260 jobs (1.2%).

The largest increase over the year was in government, which added 130 jobs.

The largest decreases over the year were in retail trade (down 160 jobs) and leisure and hospitality (down 160 jobs).Average annual covered employment in Lewis County was 27,268 and the average annual wage was \$55,149 in 2023. Covered employment refers to

workers who received wages in Washington state and are eligible for state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) compensation programs.

Lewis County employment

Employment is fairly balanced by industry, though the public sector makes up a large part of the economy. Another major sector is in trade (both retail and wholesale) and transportation and warehousing. Together these three sectors make up 6,076 jobs, or about 25% of all employment.

Top five sectors in terms of employment in 2023:

- Government (4,827)
- Health care and social assistance (4,038)
- Retail trade (3,753)
- Manufacturing (3,029)
- Accommodation and food services (2,602)
- The top five sectors in terms of wage in 2023:

- Utilities (\$138,045)
- Manufacturing (\$71,724)
- Finance and insurance (\$69,062)
- Professional, scientific, and technical services (\$66,076)
- Wholesale trade (\$65,010)

Workforce demographics for Lewis County

Employment status varies across demographic groups, with overall labor force participation (55.3%) driven by older workers exiting the workforce. Among the population aged 20-64, men tend to have higher labor force participation (77.7% vs. 65.2%) and higher unemployment (6.3% vs. 4.0%), though women with children under age 6 have the most difficulty finding work at 8.4% unemployment. Workers with less than a high school diploma have a much higher unemployment rate (9.0%) compared to those with a high school diploma or higher.

— Source: Employment Security Department

Save the Date...

ECONOMIC ALLIANCE
OF LEWIS COUNTY

Banquet

Feb 6th, 2026

PROPERTY SPOTLIGHT

ERIC SONNENBERG
Economic Alliance of Lewis County External Relations Manager

- 273 Maurin Rd
- Port of Chehalis
- Maurin Road Industrial Site 1
- 3.18 acres
- Price: \$10.5 million
- The Port of Chehalis Maurin Road Industrial Site 1 is near exit 74. This one is really “shovel-ready.” The site can be rail served. The site is completely graded and filled, and a stormwater pond is already built.

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, or go to lewisdc.com.

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