

Alliance developing a regional biomass Hub

Establishment of a Director of Regional Bioenergy Development & Innovation position underway

BY THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

The Economic Alliance of Lewis County is developing a Regional Biomass Technology and Innovation Hub within the established Biofuel Development Opportunity (BDO) Zone to accelerate deployment of distributed biomass-to-energy and carbon-based manufacturing systems across Southwest Washington, according to Alliance Executive Director Todd Chaput.

“The BDO zone was established in 2022 and is the one and only “AA” rating in the state of Washington.

Southwest Washington is at a pivotal moment in the transition to a resilient clean-energy and carbon-managed economy,” Chaput stated. “The region possesses abundant forest residuals, agricultural byproducts, and underutilized woody biomass resources, yet lacks the coordinated infrastructure necessary to convert these materials into renewable energy, carbon-negative products, and advanced bio-based manufacturing inputs.”

Central to this initiative is the establishment of a Director of Regional Bioenergy Development & Innovation position responsible for coordinating multi-county implementation, advancing commercialization pathways, supporting public/private partnerships, and ensuring long-term sustainability of the innovation cluster.

This position was funded by a TransAlta grant to continue to market the abundant biomass in Lewis County.

The Hub will transform abundant regional biomass resources into scalable clean energy, carbon-based materials, and advanced bioproducts through deployment of modular conversion technologies, digital monitoring systems, and innovation-driven cluster development.

Serving as a center for applied research, pilot deployment, workforce training, and commercialization, the Hub will enable rapid advancement of biomass-to-energy and biomass-



Energy.com

Woody biomass in Washington State is a valuable by-product of responsible forest management, replacing the burning of forest residue with renewable energy production. Additionally, forest thinning helps improve forest health by reducing fuel loads in dryland forests, further enhancing biomass feedstock availability. Forest thinnings represent a significant, underutilized source of woody biomass in the United States.



Energy.com

Forest thinnings have been identified as the nation's largest underutilized source of woody biomass.

to-material pathways while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening economic opportunity in rural and overburdened communities.

Chaput continued, “through coordinated regional collaboration across Western Washington, the initiative will position the region as a national leader in distributed biomass innovation and rural clean-technology

deployment.”

The Hub partnership establishes the regional coordination and commercialization leadership capacity necessary to unlock large-scale biomass deployment, carbon-negative manufacturing growth, and future infrastructure investment across Southwest Washington’s Biofuel Development Opportunity Zone.

Of partnerships, tourism awards, barbecues and golf

TODD CHAPUT

Executive Director

Economic Alliance of Lewis County

Here at the Economic Alliance of Lewis County we continue to build partnerships and we just took a strong leap forward toward joining a five-county Economic Development District covering Lewis, Grays Harbor, Mason, Pacific and Thurston counties, under the Evergreen Coast Regional Partnership.



The Evergreen Coast Regional Partnership connects communities, tribes, businesses, ports and workforce organizations with funding opportunities, technical assistance and strategic resources. It identifies, prioritizes, and advances high-impact projects that support economic growth, community prosperity and quality of life — all central to the Alliance’s mission.

The Evergreen Coast Regional Partnership oversees the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which guides regional investment and economic development priorities.

Bringing Lewis County into this Economic Development District strengthens our regional collaboration, expands access to federal economic development resources, and creates new opportunities to address shared workforce and infrastructure needs.

The five counties share a common workforce development region, function as a connected economic area, and have a long history of successful collaboration through initiatives such as the annual Regional Economic Forecast & Innovation EXPO held at the Great Wolf Lodge, hosted by the Thurston Economic Development Council in partnership with the economic development councils of Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason and Pacific counties.

In early 2026, the Evergreen Coast Regional Partnership Board of Directors unanimously approved beginning the process of inviting the Alliance to join the Economic Development District. As part of that effort, I was brought in as an ex officio member while the opportunity is explored. If approved, Lewis County would have equal representation on the board alongside the other member counties.

As the Lewis County economic development council, we saw the opportunity to join a larger organization with greater access to resources. We were just completing our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and this aligns with what an Economic Development District objective is, but on a larger scale. When applying for grants, the Economic Development District adds leverage with its regional approach.

This also patterns after our Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone Initiative goals and services area. The Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone Initiative reaches all five of the counties in the Economic Development District.

More can be accomplished through partnerships — our motto — whether local, regional or statewide.

Tourism Leadership Awards

Tourism is big business in Lewis County, and we are planning a shindig to celebrate those who make it happen.

Discover Lewis County, under the auspices of the Alliance, is now accepting nominations for the 2026 Tourism Leadership Awards. These awards recognize the individuals, businesses, organizations, events, and volunteers who are helping strengthen tourism across Lewis County through leadership, visitor experience, collaboration, stewardship, community impact and service.

Finalists will be announced before the event, and winners will be honored at the Discover Lewis County Tourism Summit on Friday, Sept. 18 at The Mason Jar in Onalaska.

The evening will include networking, dinner, the annual State of Tourism Address, the introduction of the 2027 marketing plan — Discover Volcano Country, and the Tourism Leadership Awards recognizing the people, businesses, organizations, events, and volunteers helping strengthen tourism across Lewis County.

This event is an opportunity to celebrate leadership, build partnerships,

19th and 20th District leaders look forward to working with University of Washington in bringing new bio-based industries to Lewis County

A letter to University of Washington President Robert Jones

Dear President Jones:

We understand that one of your priorities for the University of Washington is community engagement. We endorse this as a priority and want to inform you how this is already working in Lewis County, part of both the 19th and 20th Legislative Districts.

In previous years our district had strong financial footings in agriculture, mining, and a large coal-fired power plant. These are now largely gone; but fortunately, the TransAlta power plant has just been slated to be restarted, replacing coal with natural gas. Our district’s largest asset, however, is our forests, and this is where the connection with UW has been so vital.

We have been working with Profs. Gustafson and Bura in the School of Environmental and Forest Resources since 2019 on various projects to reinvigorate the forest products industry in our district. These have included development of new forest products such as nanocellulose and, importantly, obtaining a favorable Biofuel Development Opportunity

Zone (BDO Zone) rating.

This partnership has provided our community not only with technical expertise, but with a credible academic partner helping local leaders evaluate long-term economic opportunities.

At the behest and assistance from the UW, we applied for and received a BDO Zone rating. In fact, we received an AA rating – the highest ever given to a forest products based community.

Since we received the AA rating, our Economic Alliance of Lewis County (EDC) office has been persistently contacted by companies interested in siting forest products industries in our district.

The resulting interest has helped elevate Lewis County’s profile as a serious destination for innovative forest products investment.

With the TransAlta power plant coming back online, our vision is for more bio-based industries coming to Lewis County to take advantage of our biomass resources and the low-cost energy and waste heat generated by the power plant. In fact, one of the concepts the UW promoted in 2020 was development of a “Bio-hub” (multiple synergistic bio-based industries located at the TransAlta site). Our EDC is now poised to

itself to attract employers that bring family-wage jobs, expand the tax base, and strengthen the financial foundation of our schools, fire services, and public infrastructure.

We are grateful for the hard work of city staff, county staff, and Port staff throughout this process. The collaborative approach taken over the past several months demonstrates what is possible when local governments work together with transparency, professionalism, and a focus on community benefit.

The Port of Centralia remains committed to developing high-quality industrial parks, protecting

pursue this vision. None of this would have happened without our close connection with the University of Washington.

We want to thank you for the support our community has received from the college previously, and we support your ongoing community engagement priority. Partnerships such as this demonstrate the tangible value your research institution can bring to rural communities seeking economic revitalization and sustainable growth. We look forward to working with the University of Washington in bringing new bio-based industries to Lewis County.

Regards,
Senator John Braun
Senate Republican Leader
20th Legislative District

Rep. Peter Abbarno
20th Legislative District

Rep. Ed Orcutt
20th Legislative District

Senator Jeff Wilson
19th Legislative District

Rep. Jim Walsh
19th Legislative District

Rep. Joel McEntire
19th Legislative District

surrounding neighborhoods, and ensuring that future projects align with the city’s zoning, the Port’s Master Plan, and the long-term vision for Centralia.

We look forward to continuing this partnership as we move into the next phase of development and investment. On behalf of the Port Commission, thank you to the Centralia City Council for your leadership and support.

Peter Lahmann and Ally Pickard
Commissioners
Port of Centralia

Statement from Port of Centralia Commission on July 22 regarding large-scale industrial development

The Port of Centralia appreciates the Centralia City Council’s decision to approve our proposal and lift the moratorium on large-scale industrial development.

This action marks an important step forward for Centralia’s economic future and reflects the strong partnership that has been rebuilt between the Port, the city, and Lewis County. The Council’s vote affirms a shared commitment to responsible growth, job creation, and long-term investment in our community.

By allowing modern distribution and manufacturing facilities to move forward, Centralia is positioning

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Pickleball courts open at Cooks Hill Courts in Centralia



BY THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

Cooks Hill Courts & Pickleball Training Facility, which just opened, is Lewis County’s first dedicated pickleball facility, featuring four indoor/outdoor covered, lighted acrylic courts with permanent lines and nets, and operates under the Cooks Hill Community Church ministry.

Cooks Hill Courts is designed with all weather play in mind, with lighting for early morning and evening play. A Pro Shop onsite for paddles, training tools, club information, plus bathrooms and refreshments are also onsite.

Cooks Hill Courts offers the only covered, dedicated pickleball courts in the county. Dedicated courts are on a traditional pickleball surface (tennis surface) with no boundary lines other than pickleball. Vision, line calls, and player experience are all enhanced when the boundary lines of other sports are not sharing the space.

Cooks Hill Courts is a community facility, meaning court access is mainly offered as open play, leagues, tournaments, group instruction and other formats that support maximum participation (6-8 players per court). Private lessons and small group reservations may be available during specified hours or on a case-by-case basis, however ongoing opportunity to reserve private courts is not included or expected with membership.



Memberships are month-to-month with two tiers available (gold and silver), each with respective benefits like discounted/free events and exclusive early registration. Guests pay a drop-in fee for open play and full price for leagues, tournaments, and other events.

Open play sessions are offered multiple times per day with registration windows first offered to gold (7 days), then silver (5 days), then guests (3 days).

Open play sessions are usually capped at either 28 players or 32 players (7-8 players per court avg). Free open play for gold members is unlimited, silver members receive 2 open plays per week and pay \$5 for each session beyond the 2 free weekly sessions.



Cooks Hill Courts & Pickleball Training Facility photos

Competitive play and programming

Structured, high-level competition for players who want to test their skills and play with purpose. This option of the Cooks Hill Courts includes skill-based leagues, leveled tournaments, open play, ladder options and more to ensure fair, challenging matches.

Skill development and learning

Ongoing opportunities to learn and improve at every stage. From beginner leagues to drill clinics, players of all levels have opportunities to improve their skills and confidently improve their player rating.

Community and culture

A welcoming environment where friendships form as naturally as the rallies do. This includes daily organized open play sessions, pop-darts, corn hole and other activities for building community, and a culture built on respect, encouragement, and love of the game, on and off the court.

About:
Location: 2400 Cooks Hill Road, Centralia

Contact: 360-736-6133 or email pickleball@cookshillcc.org

Court setup: four dedicated acrylic courts with permanent lines and nets, covered and lighted for year-round play.

Offerings: Open play sessions, competitive leagues, tournaments, and group drill clinics.

Access and booking: Uses the OpenCourt app for scheduling, calendar viewing, membership sign-ups, and pay-to-play event registration.

Memberships: Monthly options are available, including a Gold Membership that covers open play and leagues, alongside standard pay-to-play fees for non-members.

Leadership: Headed by Director Curtis Medved, a certified Professional Pickleball Registry teaching professional.

Hours of Operation:
Monday through Saturday
6 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Sunday — 2 to 8 p.m.



Discover Lewis County upcoming events

BY THE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE OF LEWIS COUNTY

DiscoverLewisCounty.com

Discoverlewiscounty.com is supported by the Economic Alliance of Lewis County

Pickersfest returns to Centralia for a weekend of music, community and camping

July 31 through Aug. 2, 2026
Centralia

The Washington Acoustic Music Association (WAMA) is proud to announce the return of Pickersfest 2026, taking place July 31 through Aug. 2, in Centralia at the Oakview Grange. This beloved annual festival celebrates acoustic music traditions with a vibrant weekend of live performances, workshops, jam sessions, and community connection.

Pickersfest is known for its welcoming atmosphere, where musicians of all skill levels and genres come together to “pick and grin.” In addition to scheduled performances, attendees can enjoy open mics, instructional workshops, and spontaneous jam sessions throughout the festival grounds.

Featured performers include:
Jim Lauderdale • Jimmy Ritchey
Rio Con Brio • Chris Guenther
Dear Crow • The Cowchips
Eel Sallad

The festival officially kicks off on Friday, July 31, though attendees are invited to arrive early. Camping and informal jamming begin on Thursday, with camping available through Sunday at 1 p.m. More information is available at wamapickersfest.org.
“Pickersfest is more than just a music

festival — it’s a community gathering built around shared passion for acoustic music,” said organizers with WAMA. “Whether you’re a seasoned musician or just love great live music, there’s something here for everyone.”

The WAMA Pickersfest is organized by volunteers and reflects the mission of WAMA to promote, preserve, and celebrate acoustic music across Washington state. For full event details, including schedules, tickets, camping information, and artist updates, attendees are encouraged to visit the official Pickersfest website.

Mossyrock Blueberry Festival

July 31 through Aug. 1

The Mossyrock Blueberry Festival is a delightful annual event that takes place in the picturesque town of Mossyrock. This festival celebrates the abundance of blueberries in the region and invites visitors to enjoy a weekend filled with blueberry-themed activities and treats.

Attendees can explore vendor booths and, of course find local, juicy blueberries. It’s an opportunity to purchase fresh blueberries straight from the source and experience the farm-to-table goodness. In addition, the festival offers a range of exciting activities, including a live fish pond, live music, blueberry brawl, and obstacle course.

Find more information at:
<https://mossyrockfestivals.org>

Morton Loggers’ Jubilee

Aug. 6-9

The “Granddaddy of all Logging

Shows,” the Morton Loggers Jubilee is an annual celebration that pays tribute to the rich logging heritage in East Lewis County. Held over multiple days, this lively festival brings together loggers, their families, and folks from all over to honor the hard work and craftsmanship of those in the logging industry.

During the Morton Loggers Jubilee, attendees can experience a wide range of logging-themed activities and entertainment. One of the highlights is the logging competitions, where skilled loggers showcase their talents in various disciplines such as axe throwing, log rolling, and chainsaw carving. These

exciting competitions demonstrate the skill, strength, and precision required in the logging profession.

The festival also features a grand parade that showcases elaborate floats, vintage logging equipment, and marching bands, adding to the festive atmosphere. Lawnmower races and bed races are always a fan favorite. Visitors can explore vendor booths offering local crafts, food vendors serving up delicious treats, and live music performances that create a vibrant ambiance.

Find more information at:
www.loggersjubilee.com

DIRECTOR:

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and support the work being done to grow tourism in a way that benefits both visitors and local communities.

We hope you will join us for an evening dedicated to the people making Lewis County a destination worth discovering.

Nominations close Friday, Aug. 14. Go to <https://discoverlewiscounty.com> to complete a nomination form.

Barbecue and Alliance Open

Summer in Lewis County can’t be beat, but, sadly, we are already more than a month into it and less than two months remain until the autumnal equinox hits us on Sept. 22, signaling the start of fall.

We will celebrate the summer with a traditional barbecue, and members of the Alliance are invited to join us for a

lunch barbecue on Aug. 20, from 1 to 3 p.m. at our headquarters located at 1209 Borthwick St. in Centralia.

We want to celebrate our members who are the heart and soul of the Alliance, and really the power of our organization.

Join us for conversations and networking, come hungry and grab a grilled burger.

Then, just a week and a half before fall, we are hosting the annual Alliance Open on Sept. 11 at Riverside Golf Club in Chehalis. It is one of our most enjoyable events and we have plenty of sponsorship opportunities (see the flyer on page three of this Economic Report). For information about sponsorships, you can call us at 360-748-0114.

Along with the must-attend golf journey of the year, it also supports a good cause — the Alliance’s small businesses development programs.



Dolly Tardiff, Business Development Center/Program Manager for the Economic Alliance of Lewis County, snuggles with her new grandson Foster.

The staff of the Alliance offers our congratulations and belief that Foster is in good hands with his new grandma!

THE ALLIANCE OPEN

Sponsorship Opportunities

Friday - September 11th 2026
Riverside Golf Club

SPONSORSHIPS **REGISTRATION - 8:30AM TEE OFF - 10:00AM**

- MASTERS SPONSORSHIP - \$5000**

EXCLUSIVE HOLE SIGN,PRIME BANNER PLACEMENT, LOGO ON PRINTED MATERIAL, SPECIAL RECOGNITION AT THE TEE OFF AND AWARDS CEREMONY, WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA RECOGNITION, TENT SET UP, INTERVIEW ON " LETS TALK ABOUT IT ", 2 RAFFLE TICKETS PER PLAYER, 8 PLAYERS AND 4 CARTS.

HOLE-IN-ONE SPONSORSHIP - \$2500

EXCLUSIVE HOLE SIGN, LOGO ON PRINTED MEDIA, WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA RECOGNITION, INTERVIEW ON " LETS TALK ABOUT IT ",TENT SET UP, 4 PLAYERS AND 2 CARTS.

BIRDIE SPONSORSHIP - \$1000

LOGO ON PRINTED MEDIA, HOLE SIGN AND WEBSITE RECOGNITION, 4 GOLFERS AND 2 CARTS

HOLE SPONSORSHIP - \$500

HOLE SIGN, WEBSITE RECOGNITION, LOGO ON PRINTED MEDIA

BALL SPONSOR - \$2500

EXCLUSIVE COMPANY LOGO ON GOLF BALLS FOR ALL GOLFERS. 4 PLAYERS AND 2 CARTS

FOOD SPONSOR - \$2500

COMPANY LOGO SIGN, WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA RECOGNITION. 4 PLAYERS AND 2 CARTS

PUTTING GREEN GAME SPONSOR - \$3000

SIGNAGE AND TENT SET UP ON PRACTICE GREEN TO HOST PUTTING CONTEST. 4 PLAYERS AND 2 CARTS
- TENT SPONSORSHIP - \$1000**

SET UP COMPANY TENT ON HOLE. 4 PLAYERS AND 2 CARTS

DRIVING RANGE SPONSOR - \$1500

EXCLUSIVE SIGNAGE AT THE DRIVING RANGE,WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA RECOGNITION, BANNER PLACEMENT,TENT SET UP

KEG SPONSOR - \$800

PROVIDE AVAILABLE CHOICE OF BEER FOR UP TO 160 PLAYERS

PROPERTY SPOTLIGHT • 3709 NORTHPARK DRIVE • CENTRALIA NORTHPARK ONE



Located just off Interstate 5, perfect for our industrial warehouse needs

- Features:**
- For lease
 - 107,125 square feet (demisable 43,250 square feet)
 - 4,000-square-foot office
 - 7 dock doors (potential to add more)
 - 2 grade level doors (14-feet by 14-feet)
 - 27-foot clear height
 - Heavy power

Additional trailer parking available
Foreign Trade Zone designation
Business friendly city
Ideal Midpoint between Seattle and Portland
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.



YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR

MEMBERSHIP

BBQ

JOIN US FOR LUNCH- COME HUNGRY!

ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

AUGUST 20TH, 2026
1:00-3:00 PM

1209 Borthwick Street, Centralia

ECONOMIC ALLIANCE BOARD & STAFF

Economic Alliance of Lewis County Executive Board CHAIR Stuart Cavness First Allied Securities Inc TREASURER Samantha Magnuson LC Coffee/Nomad Truck & SUV Outfitters PAST CHAIR Luke Moerke Exodus Engineering AT LARGE MEMBER Ben Kostick Ben Kostick CPA Inc AT LARGE MEMBER Scott Brummer County Commissioner	AT LARGE MEMBER Bob Guenther Thurston, Lewis, Mason, Central Labor Council AT LARGE MEMBER Reggie Hamilton Hamilton Rock AT LARGE MEMBER Kirk Vigre Dry Box	Economic Alliance of Lewis County Boardmembers Dr. Bob Mohrbacher Centralia College Brandon Johnson JSA Civil Kelly Smith-Johnston City of Centralia Chad Taylor The Chronicle, The Silver Agency Darin Goss Providence Swedish Puget Sound Dale Merten Toledo Tel	Heidi Pehl Dealer Principal - 15 Toyota Jereme Chapman KPFF Consulting Engineers Ally Pickard Port of Centralia Paul Ericson Shelton Lam & Deck Bob Spahr City of Chehalis Shane Wood Gesa Credit Union Tyler McCallum McCallum Rock Drilling	Jonathan Hubbert Powersports Northwest Cindy Sorenson Sorenson Transportation Inc. STAFF Todd Chaput Executive Director Eric Sonnenberg External Relations Manager Dolly Tardiff Business Development Center Program Manager Michael Wagar Communications Strategist	Lenee Langdon Tourism Project Coordinator PARTNERS Lewis County City of Chehalis City of Centralia Port of Chehalis Impact Washington The Benaroya Company The Industrial Group
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