# Promote, Protect, and Inform

At its core, the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce is here to support its members. Our promise is to "Promote, Protect, and Inform" – and as the new Executive Director, I will continue serving that mantra.

One of the Chamber's greatest assets are its people:

Its members whose businesses are the backbone of our communities; the individuals who serve tirelessly on the board; the staff who have



**Cynthia Mudge** Chamber Executive Director

kept their enthusiasm through trying times and challenging transitions; and our chamber ambassadors who cheerfully serve as our event hosts.

As we move forward, your opinions, ideas, and connections are important contributions as we build on past successes and forge ahead with new opportunities. We want to hear from you both formally through upcoming surveys and informally through email, connecting at Chamber events, or by phone.

Michael Altshuler (founder of Ikon) once said, "The bad news is, time flies. The good news is, you're the pilot." And so we are! Let's fly into 2022 and beyond with confidence, enthusiasm, and joy.

Cynthia Mudge 360-748-8885 director@chamberway.com

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# 2022 session ends with billions in new spending, but where's the tax relief for families and businesses?

Although this year's legislative session was short — only 60 days — as opposed to 105 days in odd-numbered

years, it
was filled
with many
long hours.
Among
the most
important
bills are the
budgets.
During short



Rep. Peter Abbarno

sessions, the Legislature passes supplemental operating, transportation, and capital budgets. Unfortunately, this year also saw a new costly, partisan transportation package.

#### Record spending in supplemental operating budget; Sadly, no tax relief

It's the largest supplemental operating budget in state history — a \$6.1 billion increase over current 2021-23 spending — bringing total state spending to a record \$65 billion. While the state sits on a \$15 billion surplus from your hardearned money, the majority party fought efforts to provide any form of tax relief to struggling taxpayers.

As business owners and families know, we need to live within our means and plan wisely for the future based on reasonably anticipated income. Unfortunately, this year's supplemental operating budget is almost 10 times more expensive than any previous supplemental budget. It assumes revenue of \$1.2 billion over the four-year outlook from the capital gains

income tax that has already been ruled unconstitutional. Furthermore, this plan transfers \$1.6 billion to the "shadow reserve account" created by Democrats in 2021 to circumvent spending restrictions in the state's rainy-day fund.

Greater economic opportunities begin with more money in the pockets of families and small businesses. I opposed the supplemental operating budget because I trust families and small businesses owners to spend and invest their money.

#### Supplemental transportation budget provides funding for local projects

This year, we voted on legislation that enacts both a 2021-23 supplemental transportation budget and a new Democrat-proposed long-term transportation funding package.

Senate Bill 5689, the supplemental transportation budget builds on last year's transportation budget and provides \$11.6 billion for projects across the state. It allocates nearly \$163 million for 20th District transportation projects, including \$149 million for I-5/Lewis County corridor improvements, investments in the Port of Centralia for Centralia Station, an early distribution of funds to plan the I-5/North Lewis County interchange, and continued support of the always congested I-5/Chamber Way interchange.

# New transportation funding package ignores southwest Washington

Traditionally, nearly all transportation funding packages have been crafted and negotiated and passed in a bipartisan nature.

Not this year. Democrats excluded Republicans and

crafted a \$16.8 billion, 16year transportation funding/ spending package that is primarily Puget Sound centric.

Unlike the traditional supplemental transportation budget, Senate Bill 5975 has some serious issues, which is why I opposed it throughout the process.

The state's gas tax is tied to the 18th Amendment of the Washington State Constitution, which mandates that revenues from the gas tax be used for "construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair and betterment of public highways, county roads, bridges and city streets." This plan circumvents the constitutional protections and pumps millions of dollars into public transit, bicycle and pedestrian paths in the Puget Sound and electrification of ferries. The partisan package uses revenue from the state's new cap-andtrade auction system (Climate Commitment Act), new low carbon fuel standards, and significantly increases costs and licensing fees.

Washington has
a \$10 billion backlog
in maintenance and
preservation of roads and
highways. This plan allocates
only \$3 billion over 16 years.
That means our crumbling
roads and failing bridges will
continue to crumble and fail
while billions of dollars from
this package are pumped
into transit projects around
Seattle.

Finally, I opposed the transfers vital funding from the state's Public Works Assistance Account. The revolving account funds local projects, such as water, sewer and broadband, so communities can build housing, create economic opportunities, and improve the quality of life for our families. This will denies

cities and counties the ability to have this funding source for vital infrastructure.

### Capital budget brings money home to the 20th District

As assistant ranking Republican on the House Capital Budget Committee, I'm proud we were able to craft a \$1.5 billion bipartisan 2021-23 supplemental capital budget that pays for new infrastructure across Washington state. This includes more than \$9.3 million throughout the 20th Legislative District.

This year's supplemental capital budget reflects many of our priorities. We invest millions in K-12 school construction, mental and behavioral health, housing, broadband and other infrastructure. Some local 20th District projects include:

\$6 million for a water system improvement project in Morton;

\$2 million for upgrades to the Lewis County Fire District #5 station and equipment in Napavine;

\$875,000 for the Lewis County Regional Tennis and Wrestling facility in Chehalis; \$750,000 for Oakview Elementary School; and

\$515,000 for a Tenino city playground.

#### Stay in contact

Although the legislative session is over, I am working for you and our community all year long. Please do not hesitate to contact me through my legislative office by calling (360) 786-7896 or e-mailing me at peter. abbarno@leg.wa.gov.

Rep. Peter Abbarno is a local attorney, member of the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, and state Representative in the 20th Legislative District.



Reap the marketing and networking benefits that come with being a member!

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**Christine Demus** Office Manager thechamber@chamberway.com

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# Experience Chehalis Offers Safety & Security Grant

**Experience Chehalis** has announced a new grant program to provide matching grant funds for safety and security improvements. The program encourages commercial property owners and business tenants in downtown Chehalis to invest in lighting and safety measures for their business and/or property.

The grants provide a 75 percent match, up to \$1,000 per business or property, for approved improvement costs. Applications will be accepted for as long as funding is available through December 31, 2022. Grant awards will be first-come, first-served and based on available funding. Work done prior to the grant award is not eligible for grant funding. Applications will be reviewed and awarded by Experience Chehalis and applications are being accepted now.

The grant program follows



the similar application process of Experience Chehalis's façade and digital marketing grants, which have seen great success with over 40 awards to date. Eligible grant expenses include exterior lighting, improved locks and locking systems, security camera systems and parts, video recording systems, security gates, and

professional installation labor fees.

"This is another step to continue building the vitality and prosperity downtown. A welcoming, safe environment is essential to our success and this will be one more opportunity for us to provide support," said Annalee Tobey, Experience Chehalis

executive director.

Complete program requirements, guidelines, and application are available on the Experience Chehalis website, experiencechehalis. com/downtown-safetysecurity-grant. Please direct questions to Annalee Tobey, executive director at info@ experiencechehalis.com.

### Upcoming Events

### Ride the Willapa: Chehalis to Pe Ell

Saturday, June 25th, 2022

2022 Seattle to Portland **Bike Classic** 

July 16th, 17th, 2022

#### 2022 Membership BBQ September 2022

**2022 Trick or Treat Transit** Monday, October 31st, 2022

**Choose Local Black Friday** 

**Bags Giveaway** Wednesday, November 23rd, 2022

72nd Annual Santa Parade Saturday, December 3rd, 2022

### Monthy Events

#### **Chamber Forum**

2nd Thursday of each month 11:30am - 1:00 pm O'Blarney's Irish Pub 221 N Tower Avenue (Centralia) April Speaker: Sean Swope

#### **Business After Hours**

3rd Thursday of each month

#### **April BAH**

Sticklin Funeral Home 1437 S. Gold (Centralia)

#### Want to host a BAH?

Call (360) 748-8885 or email thechamber@chamberway.com It is one of the many great benefits of being a Chamber member!



Please join us in thanking the sponsors of the 2022 Annual Banquet that took place last month!









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# BIZZBUZZ 3



# THE BUZZ?

### Biz Buzz is a FREE Chamber membership benefit!

Not only are you included in this insert each month but your business gets highlighted on our website. Simply send 200 words (or less) to marketing@chamberway.com

#### **Spring Into Energy** Savings

As we refresh our homes and begin welcoming warmer weather, there are tasks both big and small that can help make your home more efficient. Whether it's ...

- Putting up those LED patio string lights you've been eyeing
- Taking control of your home's temperature wherever you are with a smart thermostat
- Upgrading windows to let the light in and keep the summer heat out

Keep our rebates in mind as you spring into the new season! Visit pse.com/rebates for everyday ways to save or shop instant rebates at pse.com/marketplace.

#### **Gemini Events**

Join Gemini Events for their upcoming "Mother's Day Market". Dated for Saturday May 7th from 10am-5pm, we will feature a variety of vendors that include home décor, bath products, jewelry, and so much more. The Market will be held at the Jester Auto Museum at 321 Hamilton Rd, Chehalis, WA., Grab your friends and family, and come shop! Free Admission and Free Parking. To find out more information about Gemini Events and their upcoming events visit us at www.geminievents.net or https://www.facebook.com/ geminieventsanddesign.

#### Swing Down to The Spring Fling at The Loft

Friday April 1st from 3-8 pm, Saturday April 2nd from 9-5 pm, and Sunday April 3rd from 10-3

Come shop over 100 local vendors and artisans, including: Roaming The Range, Wilde Soul, Cosmic Babes, Bath queen By Rylee Rae, PNW Soap Co, Mountain Mama Designs, Pixie Potions, Arvvys Barkery, Nitas & much much more!

Enjoy some amazing food from our food vendors and enter to win our door prizes, and drink some mimosas Friday night! Where?

The Loft • 547 Nw Pacific Ave Chehalis, wa 98532 All proceeds from our door prizes will be donated to The Lewis County Animal Shelter! We hope to see you there! Hosted by Wilde Soul and The Loft

#### **April Earth Day** Celebrations Join us on April 9 th for

Gardening for Everyone at Centralia Christian School, where Melanie Case, Lewis County Recycling Program Coordinator will teach a class on "Planting Seeds for a Zero Waste Garden" from 12:45 pm to 2:15 pm. If you are interested in wanting to do your part to improve the environment, then come celebrate Earth Day, April 23rd with Lewis County Noxious Weed Control at Borst Arboretum located near the Historic Borst home from 10 am to 3 pm. Learn about noxious weeds and riparian zone management and take part in removing

invasive Italian arum and replanting with native species. Dress appropriately. Then tour the NEW WSU Lewis County Master Recycler Composter Environmental Education & Damp; Demonstration Park, next to Centralia Transfer Station, 1411 S. Tower Ave, Centralia 10 am to 4 pm. We will demonstrate how reducing, reusing, and recycling solid waste can be practical and FUN! Children's activities will be offered.

The Master Recycler Composter Program trains volunteers to teach and demonstrate how to Recycle, Reuse, and Recycle solid waste. Training is FREE and you may begin any month! For more information contact Jason Adams, Program Coordinator, WSU Lewis County Master Recycler/Composters, (360)

740-1214 or e-mail jason.adams@ lewiscountywa.gov.

#### Abbarno Announces **Re-election Bid for 20th Legislative District** Representative

State Representative Peter Abbarno (R-Centralia), today announced he is seeking a second term to the Washington State House of Representatives. Abbarno was first elected state representative in the 20th Legislative District Position 1 in 2020 with 71% of the vote.

"I proud to serve the 20th Legislative District in the state Legislature and advocate for our community, families businesses, and values," said Abbarno, who currently serves as the assistant

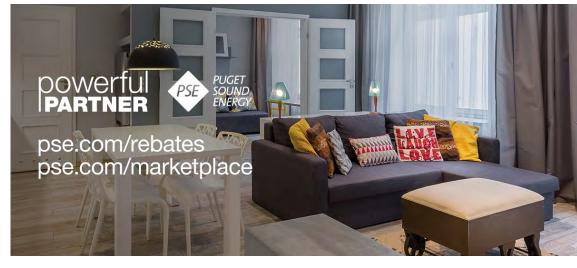


Rep. **Peter Abbarno** 

ranking member on the House Capital Budget Committee, House Environment and Energy Committee, and House Civil Rights and Judiciary Committee. "I am particularly proud of the investments we made through the capital budget; both statewide and in the 20th District to improve our quality of life and create economic opportunities."

The new 20th Legislative District includes parts of South Thurston County, Lewis and Cowlitz counties East of Interstate 5, and Northern Clark County including Ridgefield, La Center, and Woodland. "The 20th Legislative District will look a little different next year after redistricting. This campaign year is the chance to build new and strengthen existing relationships, collaborate on new issues and project, and find success for our communities."

"I look forward to continuing my work in the Legislature on keeping our communities safe,



protecting our constitutional rights, reducing the overwhelming tax burden on working families, helping our small businesses owners be more successful, ensuring every child has the opportunity to a quality education, and strengthening and empowering families," added Abbarno. "We had some victories over the past two years, but there were also many missed opportunities like emergency powers reform and meaningful tax relief. There is much more to accomplish to make sure our families, businesses, and the next generation of Washingtonians have every opportunity to be successful."

Peter is an attorney and partner with the Centralia based law firm Althauser Rayan Abbarno, LLP, former Centralia City Councilmember; but most importantly, he is a husband and father. Peter's wife is a teacher in Centralia and his two children are elementary school aged. Peter was voted "Best Volunteer in Lewis County" by readers of the Daily Chronicle Newspaper in 2018, 2020, and 2021; in 2019 and 2021 Peter was voted "Best Elected Official in Lewis County"; in 2019 he received the "Economic Development Leadership Award" from the Lewis **Economic Development Council** and "Human Rights Award" from Church Women United; in 2020 Peter was named "Person of the

Year" by the Daily Chronicle Editorial Board, and last year Peter was name "Legislator of the Year" by the Washington Association of Agriculture Educators, District 3.

A joint kickoff breakfast with 20th Legislative District seatmate Rep. Ed Orcutt (R-Kalama) is scheduled for April 12th at 7:30am in the Veterans Memorial Museum in Chehalis, followed by events to be scheduled throughout the 20th Legislative District.

For more information, visit www.ElectPeterAbbarno.com

#### **Experience Chehalis Hosts Earth Day Community Clean-up in** Chehalis

In celebration of Earth Day, Experience Chehalis is organizing an Earth Day Community Cleanup on Saturday, April 23 from 10 am – 2 pm. The public is invited to come downtown and join in the activities. Volunteers register by calling (360) 345-1738. Register before April 14th and receive a free Experience Chehalis Earth Day t-shirt! Volunteers can participate for an hour or the whole day.

Volunteers can check in at the Lewis County Historical Museum and choose from a list of activities including weeding and wiping off benches, sweeping downtown and collecting litter in areas throughout Chehalis. "Earth Day

weekend is the perfect opportunity to take a little time to spruce things up in our community for the sunny seasons ahead," said Annalee Tobey, Executive Director.

To make it a little more fun, Experience Chehalis will offer raffle tickets in exchange for bags of litter returned. Stop by for trash bags at the Lewis County Historical Museum, and for each bag of litter picked up in Chehalis, volunteers will receive a raffle ticket towards downtown gift certificates and Earth Day-themed art by local artists. The drawing will take place at 2 pm and entrants need not be present to win.

#### **Acapulco Tacos** at Centralia Outlets

Who's down for authentic Mexican food with a depth of flavor and freshness?!

Acapulco Tacos serves burritos, tortas, tacos, mulitas, and enchiladas that are to die for! Every bite is mouthwatering delicious with tender and juicy meat!

Acapulco Tacos is a must try and guaranteed you will keep coming back for more! For a full menu, please visit

Acapulco Tacos on Facebook at Acapulco Tacos. Acapulco Tacos Location: 2000 Haviland Street Centralia, WA 98531 Hours: Tuesday - Sunday: 11 AM - 8 PM

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- Brochure & Business Card Placement in Facility 14.
- Weekly Newsletter (Community Connection) 15.
- Media Exposure 16.
- 17. Chamber Forums & BAH
- Community Partnership (Sponsorship) Opportunities 18.
- Contact the Chamber for Electronic 19. Reader Board Marketing Opportunities















### **BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AND MORE:**

## Event Facilitators Deem Banquet a Community-Oriented Night Full of Generosity

Chamber of Commerce Announces New Director at its Annual Banquet

By Daniel Warn

The Chronicle

Centralia-Chehalis The Chamber of Commerce unveiled Cynthia Mudge as its new executive director during the annual chamber banquet following the departure of longtime director Alicia Fox, who led the organization for 10

The event also Providence Health System announced as the Business of the Year.

"We closed a chapter with Alicia Bull as our executive director for 10 years, which is longer than the average director, and we were lucky to have her for a full 10 years," Amanda Singleton, chamber board member and past president, told The Chronicle. "And it was a really great opportunity to introduce our new director Cynthia Mudge, and we are really excited to see what she has to offer our community."

Mudge said she grew up in Seattle, but after her time as an adolescent, her parents bought a farm in the Lewis County area and spent the rest of their lives in the community.

She said they fell in love with the area.

Now, Mudge will live at the farm she owns with her sister.

"I get to live on the farm and have goats and sheep, and my sister and I — she's 10 years younger — we never had the chance to live near each other as adults," Mudge said at the banquet. "So I'm really excited about being here and learning more about the community that my parents loved so much. ... I want to get your thoughts about where you want to be and where you want to go. So thank you so much."

Hotel Washington's upstairs event room was packed as more than 250 Centralia-Chehalis Commerce Chamber of members and guests crammed into the space.

The room lively was and active, with attendees networking and celebrating their hard work over the year in the kind of event that has



Liz Hill / The Chronicle

Hotel Washington in downtown Chehalis was filled to capacity during the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce's annual banquet.

become rare in recent times due to the pandemic.

"We were still booking people who were trying to come in hours before," Chamber Board President Lindy Waring told The Chronicle. "We were still selling tickets an hour or two before the event, and we could not squeeze any more in there."

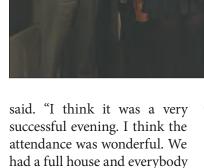
In fact, there were so many people who wanted to participate that chamber representatives were adding chairs to already full tables to fit as many people into the event as possible.

With tickets set at \$50 a seat, or \$300 a table, proceeds from the ticket sales were set to pay for the event's overhead, but then any extra money made went into the fund that pays for the organization's operational

But the event wasn't just a vehicle to help pay for the chamber's day-to-day work. It was also a scholarship fundraiser for the Rob Fuller Scholarship Fund.

During the social hour, guests had the opportunity to bid on over 30 baskets of silent auction items that ranged from local business gift cards to seasonal apparel.

wearing a new Northface sweater that I picked up in a basket," Singleton



supporting the chamber." Attendees also had the opportunity to buy raffle tickets for the scholarship fund, with a couple of the prizes being a TV and a chainsaw.

was excited to be out and

As dinner which consisted of gourmet macaroni and cheese along with chicken and beef options — came to a close, the scholarship fund received even more support. Tables participated in a dessert run where guests donated money secretly, and then the table that raised the most money got first pick from a table laden with a plethora of sweet treats. The table with the next highest contribution to the fund got to pick second, and so on.

When all was said and done, the Rob Fuller Scholarship fund was thousands of dollars richer, paving the way for many more high school seniors to receive aid in their post-highschool pursuits.

Waring told The Chronicle that Rob Fuller, who the scholarship fund is named after, was like a second father to her, but he meant even more to the community.

"He was always really involved in the chamber and was on the chamber board," she said. "He was a really good local businessman. ... It's just who he was, so when Rob passed away, we created the Rob Fuller Scholarship Fund. And that's what we do. All of our fundraisers go to that."

Dorey, Dianne Lewis County assessor, said she's been supporting the chamber board and helping to put on events like the banquet since 1999 as an ambassador for the organization.

Dorey and the ambassadors gathered deserts for the dessert dash and auction items for the baskets, set up the banquet hall and also cleaned everything up.

Of the event, she said, "It was nice networking with all the folks and seeing everybody out and about again — it's been a long time."

"(The event) gives me an opportunity to network with all the folks who are my clients as taxpayers," Dorey said. "I get to meet the folks who are behind the businesses. It's nice to be able to meet them in a less-formal setting than across my desk or across their desk as we are talking about their valuations."

When presenting Providence with the Business of the Year recognition, Waring said the nonprofit helped the community get back to work last year through financial support to help the chamber facilitate several hiring events.

In an acceptance speech for the award, Kevin Caserta, site administrator of Providence Centralia Hospital and the chief medical officer for Providence Southwest Washington, said he was "so honored to be up here today representing our caregivers."

"We need excellent jobs in Lewis County," Caserta said. "We need affordable housing, infrastructure. (and) other nonprofits. And the reality is, the only way we're going to make this the best county in the state of Washington is by doing it together. So never forget that what you do at the chamber is so much more than economics. You make differences in people's lives — so thank you for that."

Singleton's experience with the chamber is like that of its members, the community Caserta spoke of is far-reaching.

"The chamber means a lot to me," Singleton said. "I've been on the board for over 10 years now. The chamber is so supportive of our local businesses. It creates all of the networking opportunities. I think it helps us as a community to have a vision for our community."



Kevin Caserta, site administrator of Providence Centralia Hospital and the chief medical officer for Providence Southwest Washington, said he was "so honored to be up here today representing our caregivers" as he accepted the Business of the Year award on behalf of Providence.

> Thank you to everyone who attended our Annual Banquet and to all our sponsors for making this event possible!