

Business Connections



MAY 2023

Centralia - Chehalis
Chamber of Commerce

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Business Spotlight:

Growth is on the Horizon for Internet Provider Rainier Connect

By Emily Fitzgerald

Local internet provider Rainier Connect has doubled its customer base in recent years, and is continuing to grow with the goal of providing quality, high-speed internet to its communities.

“I think the communities we serve, including Lewis County, have a better understanding of the critical need for reliable and fast internet in both our homes and businesses,” said Rainier Connect Customer Care Manager Amanda Singleton.

Part of the reason for that recent growth in Rainier Connect’s customer base, Singleton said, is that telehealth, working from home, attending school from home and using streaming services — all of which require good data — have become a larger part of people’s lives in recent years.

“All of those things require robust data services,” Singleton said.

Rainier Connect prides itself as South Puget Sound’s premier provider of fiber internet, Stream TV, and phone service in Centralia, Chehalis, Tacoma, Puyallup, Eatonville, Graham and beyond.

The company, which is based out of Eatonville,



Photos provided by Rainier Connect. Right: line worker. Left: Rainier Connect Customer Care Manager, Amanda Singleton, at the business’ Centralia office in April 2023.

acquired the local dial up company Local Access in Lewis County in the early 2000s. At the time, Rainier Connect was the first company to provide high-speed DSL.

The company offers fiber internet to businesses from the Port of Chehalis to the Port of Centralia including dedicated synchronous and asynchronous connectivity.

Rainier Connect celebrated its 100-year anniversary in 2011.

The company is currently working on extending fiber across Chamber Way in Chehalis in order to provide data services to the Centralia-Chamber of Commerce’s office, which Singleton said is an exciting opportunity, as the

company has been a Chamber member for the last 10 years.

“I’ve been a board member for over 10 years now. And to this day, we have not been able to provide data services to the chamber, but we’ve been extending fiber up State Avenue and we are currently completing the construction to pull fiber across chamber way and bring fiber service to the chamber office,” Singleton said, “It’ll be a significant leap forward in the speed and quality of service that they have right now.”

The company also supports nonprofits in the community, including the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, the Boys & Girls Club, United Way of Lewis

County.

The company is the primary sponsor of the Rob Fuller 25 X 25 Luncheon honoring the top 25 graduating seniors from Centralia and Chehalis. Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce also presents scholarships to local graduating high school seniors at this event.

The scholarships created by the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Rainier Connect awards \$1,000 to hard-working students based on their educational experience with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM.)

This year’s Rob Fuller Luncheon is scheduled for

May 9.

“Rainier Connect is a big supporter of our community nonprofits,” Singleton said.

Rainier Connect currently has offices in Tacoma, Centralia and Eatonville. Between the three offices, the company has just over 100 employees and is looking to hire more, Singleton said.

“We’re focused on growth and building fiber over our existing territory and to underserved areas where we do not yet provide service,” she said.

Job postings and more information about the company are available on Rainier Connect’s website at <https://rainierconnect.com/>.

Restoring Trust in Government

By Peter Abbarno

20th District Rep. R-Centralia

When I talk to constituents in the 20th District about issues affecting our communities and state, many have expressed to me a deep distrust in our governing institutions. This problem is not unique to



our region: trust in government has been eroding for decades. In fact, the Pew Research Center has been consistently polling Americans on this question since 1958, and the trend should concern all of us: trust in government peaked in 1964, when 77% of Americans surveyed said they trust the government to do what is right always or most of the time. The percentage of Americans who said the same as of May 1, 2022, was only 20%.

There are, no doubt, myriad reasons for this sharp downturn, including government scandals, the internet and the rise of social media, the decline of civic institutions, and so on. A dispute over whether the Washington State Legislature has “legislative privilege” to not share certain information, decades of one political party control, and the growing number of Public Records Act (PRA) exemptions contributed to a growing view that government should be more transparent.

As someone who served in local government, I know that people are more likely to trust the official who lives in their neighborhood, and whose kids are on the same baseball team, than someone 3,000 miles away. That likely explains higher distrust for our federal government than our state government.

Here in Washington, however, it’s easy to see why citizens are becoming increasingly cynical. We’ve had one party rule for more than a generation, and those holding the reins of power are beginning to forget that

they’re public servants, not rulers. Without balance and accountability, concerns over “absolute power” corrupting grow.

Nearly three-quarters of Washington voters in 1972 supported Initiative 276, which made state, county, and city government records publicly available, with few exceptions. After the initiative passed, the PRA contained only 10 exemptions from public disclosure. Today, a half-century later, more than 500 exceptions exist, including five more this year. In other words, the exceptions are becoming the rule.

Everyday Washingtonians – of all political persuasions – want government to be open, transparent, and accountable, and they’re becoming frustrated with our state’s backsliding on transparency. They want to know how the sausage is made. They want to know what the people they elect to represent them are doing in Olympia, or in their local government, to make our state a better place. As elected officials, we have a duty to respect the will of the voters,

and that means working to make the public disclosure system more user-friendly for the average citizen – not discovering new methods to hide information. Last month, I introduced House Bill 1856 with the goal of helping make state government more open, transparent, and accountable. The legislation will begin the discussion of how we provide better access to public records, how we manage the disclosure of records, and what process there should be to resolve disputes. The growingly complex PRA process has become expensive and inefficient. Public agencies spend over \$100 million responding to requests and almost \$10 million legal fees and costs. There is a better way and HB 1856 will help us get to that solution.

If Washingtonians, and Americans in general, can’t trust the people running their government to do what’s right, they will be likely to start businesses, raise families, make long-term investments, and be less optimistic about the future.

Robust transparency laws give citizens an active role in their own government – it gives them more ownership in the direction of our state, and the tools they need to hold their elected officials accountable. We need to restore trust in government, and that begins by making state government more open, transparent, and accountable.

...

Peter Abbarno is an attorney with Althausen Rayan Abbarno, LLP and represents the 20th Legislative District in the Washington State House of Representatives.

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Directory

CHAMBER STAFF:

Cynthia Mudge
Executive Director
director@chamberway.com

Christine Demus
Office Manager
thechamber@chamberway.com

Emily Fitzgerald
Writer

The Silver Agency,
Social Media/Web
Development

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

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CONTACT US:

500 NW Chamber of Commerce Way
Chehalis, WA 98532
Office: 360.748.8885
Fax: 360.748.8763
TheChamber@ChamberWay.com



Pictured at left, Chris Hoel of The Power Shop poses for a photo in the business' display at the 57th Annual Home Show in Chehalis on Saturday, April 15, 2023. At right Ben Perez, 9, poses next to the LEGO structure that won him second place in the Kids 8-12 Year Olds LEGO Contest at the 57th Annual Home Show in Chehalis on Saturday, April 15, 2023



Photos by Emily Fitzgerald

Annual Home Show Returns For 57th Year

By Emily Fitzgerald

The Blue Pavilion of the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds was a bustle of activity April 14-15 as vendors gathered for the 57th Annual Home Show.

While the show has previously been called the Home and Garden Show, this year's vendors specialized in home improvements and remodeling as opposed to gardening.

After a brief hiatus last year, vendors welcomed the opportunity to connect one-on-one with customers.

"We work directly with the community through events like this," said Mandi of Olympic Health and Safety, adding that the word-of-mouth the business gets from events like the Home Show helps the company connect with more of the community.

The opportunity for word-of-mouth advertising and

the chance to communicate directly with customers were also reasons Bekins Northwest decided to be a vendor at this year's home Show, said representative Brian Carreon. "A lot of folks come here to try and sell. I just want to be as informative as I can," he said.

The Power Shop was the featured vendor at this year's Home Show.

"Being a part of the Home and Garden Show is a great way for us to get out in

front of our community to showcase the full breadth of what we do," Oliver previously said.

The Home Show was primarily a grown-up-oriented event, but there was fun for the kids — namely, a LEGO contest where winning participants won prizes for their creations.

Home Show organizers at the Chamber hope to bring the LEGO contest back for future shows.

The Chamber Announces 3-On-3 Streetball Tournament Director

Josef Chirhart, the recently named Head Men's Basketball Coach for Centralia College, is taking on the challenge of running the inaugural 3-on-3 Streetball games for Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to joining the basketball program at the College, Chirhart was the Head Boys' Basketball Coach for Tenino High School from 2013-2022 and also becoming the Athletic Director in 2017. During his tenure with Tenino, he started the Tenino Youth Basketball League, which launched with about 50 members and grew to more than 160 kids prior to the Covid shutdown.

Chirhart was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, where he graduated from high school as the 2002 Alaska State Male Athlete of the Year. He moved to Lacey, WA where he



Josef Chirhart



played basketball, attended and graduated from St. Martins College in 2007. In addition to his role at Tenino High School, he spent five years coaching at Yelm High School as an Assistant Basketball & Football Coach and also spent 1 yr at Olympia High School as. Girls Varsity Assistant Coach.

Now that he is working for Centralia College Chirhart looks forward to becoming more involved locally, which the 3-on-3 Streetball Festival offers. "This is such a great opportunity to get to know and work within the community,"



commented Chirhart. "Historically I've worked exclusively with youth and now I get to expand my passion to young adults and older players."

The 3-On-3 Streetball festival is primarily for players aged 18 to 35 and includes a Silver division for 55 and

older. There will also be a division for high-school-age students. The Streetball Festival takes place August 5-6 in Chehalis. To register visit www.ChamberWay.com or contact the Chamber by calling 360-748-8885 or emailing thechamber@chamberway.com.

3-on-3 Streetball Festival Now Accepting Registrations & Hoop Sponsors!

Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce is bringing the fun and excitement of 3-on-3 basketball to the community. Slated for August 5 and 6 in downtown Chehalis, Lucky Eagle Casinos has become the Presenting Sponsor. Additional sponsors are sought to promote the tournament, invest in the hoops, and underwrite entertainment and prizes to make this inaugural event as exciting as the game itself.

The courts will be on Prindle Street and nearby

parking lots close to downtown. Centralia College Head Men's Basketball Coach, Josef Chirhart, is the tournament director. "Josef has the energy and passion for the game we were hoping to find," noted Chamber Director Cynthia Mudge. "We are excited he is stepping up to help us be part of a growing circuit of tournaments in the state."

Players can now register a team at www.chamberway.com and begin planning their weekend of summertime sizzle and dribble.

lucky eagle
CASINO & HOTEL

Sponsorships range from \$3,500 for a two-year sponsorship of a hoop down to \$100 to be included in a coupon book and program guide for the players and their families.

While the festival is primarily geared for adult players, there will also be a high school division and a "silver" division for those age 55 and older.

For more information call



the Chamber at 360-748-8885, email director@chamberway.com, or visit www.chamberway.com for details.

June Lewis County Job Fair

Employers can now register to participate in the Spring job fair produced by the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce (Chamber). This event allows businesses to meet prospective employees in person for on-the-spot interviews or to be a resource for training and education. The event takes place at the Centralia Outlet Mall on Tuesday, June 13 from Noon to 4 pm. Fees are \$50 for Chamber members or \$100 for non-members and include a table,

two chairs, a web link on the Chamber's Hiring Resource Page, and a listing in the printed program.

The Chamber recognizes the challenges that both employers and job seekers are facing in this economy and wants to help continue to build a better Lewis County. To register, ask questions, or provide input on how we can make this event even better call 360-748-8885 or email thechamber@chamberway.com.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL
(360) 748-8885

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Cascade Community Healthcare
“In support of Mental Health Awareness Month, Cascade Community Healthcare is hosting its 1st Annual Stepping Stones to Mental Health Awareness 5k Run and Walk on May 13th at Borst Park in Centralia! The entry fee is \$25 or a Family 4-Pack for \$80; Children 5 & Under are free! All proceeds go to fund services. To get more information and register, go to CascadeCH5K.Eventbrite.com.”



Celebrate Mom and Find Savings on Name Brands at Centralia Outlets
Find your fuchsia fancy here at the Outlets. The Fuchsia Fanciers will be hosting a fuchsia plant sale on May 6th here at the Centralia Outlets from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., displaying and selling a large variety of fuchsia 4-inch starters, gallons, and hardies.

Mothers work around the clock without complaint to keep their families happy. Indulge mom in soaps, lotions, and candles from Bath & Body Works this Mother's Day. Aromatherapy can help to improve mood and promote a sense of relaxation.

One of the joys of motherhood is occasionally toting around extra things, so find a great bag they will love at our Coach Outlet as a way of showing your appreciation.

Show mom your gratitude and admiration with a little sparkle from Kay Jewelers, which has a great selection of fine jewelry to fit any budget.

Whether wrapping up and watching a movie together or heading out for a picnic or

sporting event choose from a large selection of throws, blankets, and quilts at Pendleton that the whole family will be able to enjoy.

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to see the latest arrivals for our brands, and as always save on the brands you love every day at the Centralia Outlets.



The Economic Alliance of Lewis County
Join us for the Economic Forecast Presentation Wednesday May 17th 1 pm-3 pm \$25 per person The Juice Box in Centralia (216 S Tower Avenue) Pre-Register with Dolly at 360-748-0114

Our keynote speaker is economic expert Dr. Bill Conerly, principal and founder of Conerly Consulting, LLC, an economics and consulting firm based in Lake Oswego, Oregon. He has a Ph.D in Economics from Duke University and over 30 years of experience helping companies adapt to ever-changing economic conditions. The presentation will be focused on business rise and falls with the economy, surviving the recession, what the future holds, inflation, interest rates, and many more topics of interest.

Please call to reserve your place, seating is limited! 360-748-0114.



Evergreen Playhouse presents Tuck Everlasting
May 5-21, 2023
What would you do if you had all eternity? Eleven-year-old Winnie Foster yearns for a life of adventure beyond her white picket fence, but not until she becomes

unexpectedly entwined with the Tuck Family does she get more than she could have imagined. When Winnie learns of the magic behind the Tuck's unending youth, she must fight to protect their secret from those who would do anything for a chance at eternal life. As her adventure unfolds, Winnie faces an extraordinary choice: return to her life or continue with the Tucks on their infinite journey.

Come join us for a three-week run of this family-friendly show. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$15 for students and seniors.

Thursday, May 11th is our pay-what-you-can performance. We are currently looking for front-of-the-house volunteers, come join the fun and see the performance for free! We are also looking for Directors for our next season – Do you know anyone who is interested in directing a show? Bring this article with you to receive a free non-alcoholic drink and a small popcorn.



Experience Chehalis
Experience Chehalis invites our community to become part of the traditional spring welcoming to Downtown Chehalis. The organization is seeking sponsors for the annual spring beautification project, planting flowers and tree pots throughout Downtown Chehalis. We extend our thanks to everyone who continues to support this beautification effort. We hope you will consider sponsoring an island this year to help brighten and beautify our community. The cost of sponsorship is \$50 and remember – as a contribution to a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your donation is tax-deductible. Contact Experience Chehalis at info@experiencechehalis.com, by phone at (360) 345-1738, or download the sign-up form at www.experiencechehalis.com/beautify-chehalis-this-spring/.



Historic Barbershop
Come in and get your spring haircut as well as a hot towel shave today. We are open on Saturdays and Sundays from 8 am to 7 pm and have long business hours to cater to your haircutting needs! We welcome Walk-Ins and also have an online booking

system in case you want to set up an appointment. We also carry top-quality hair products for you to be able to achieve that clean look at home! Give us a chance to help you feel your best and get ready for all the fun spring activities coming up!

We are located at 105 W Main St in the historic downtown of Centralia! You can call and ask us any questions at (360) 524-9071.

Introducing Goin Flawless Esthetics
My name is Lindsey Goin (Hope). I was born and raised here in Lewis county and spent most of my adult life in customer service before opening Goin Flawless Esthetics. I set myself apart from others because of the appreciation and respect I have for my clients. I want to make a difference in people's lives.

I've struggled with Acne most of my life and still do to this day! When clients ask, “What is my favorite service to perform?” I say that I love helping people conquer their breakouts, young or old! I am passionate about everything esthetics and helping others. I run 2-3 monthly specials and for the month of May I'm running a special on a newly added service! Hydrodermabrasion!!!

Hydrodermabrasion is multiple services in one. It is simultaneous exfoliation and suction of dead skin from the skin's surface but also adds an infusion of solutions that provide a deeper cleanse of the pores. It's a mild chemical exfoliation and manual exfoliation in one procedure. It's double the progress in any applicable skin concern in just one service! These services run anywhere from \$150 - \$175 in most markets but in May I'm doing this service for just \$100 (normal retail will be \$140). My 2nd May Special will be - Free Tint with any Brow Lamination or Lash Lift. I will also be adding Vajacials to my diverse menu of services and I'm working on growing my Meso-therapy options like hair regeneration through microneedling. Visit goinflawless.square.site or stop by 91 SW Chehalis Ave., Suite 103.



Good Buzz Brewing
Good Buzz Brewing Co will be participating in the Chehalis Farmers Market. We will have shirts, hats, stickers and our local mead. We hope to see

you there! Visit our website at goodbuzzbrewingco.com.



Paula Burrows, REALTOR®
The Paula Burrows Team brokered by eXp Realty is a full-service real estate team led by managing broker, Paula Burrows. Our team of expert agents is committed to your real estate goals and we enjoy being a valuable part of our local communities! Lewis County Residential Only Stats for March 2023: Total Sold - 84 homes! Average Sales Price - \$406,693 Percent of List Price Received - 98.7%

The numbers above show that it is still a great time to buy and sell in our area!! Call (360) 520-4810 or visit www.pbthomes.com with any questions regarding these stats, real estate interest, and your home's value!



Brokered by eXp Realty

WSU Lewis County Master Gardeners
Lewis County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale, May 13th, 9am-4 pm and May 14th, 9 am-2 pm, Blue Pavilion at the SWW Fairgrounds, Chehalis

Time to plan your garden! Many Master Gardeners are helping you out by starting your seeds for you. We will have LOTS of tomato plants as well as peppers, vegetables, annuals, perennials, houseplants, and even trees and bushes for sale!

Come the day before Mother's Day and find something wonderful for your favorite mom. We hope to see you there!

For more information, contact Jason Adams, Program Coordinator, WSU Lewis County Gardeners at 360-740-1216 or Jason.Adams@lewiscountywa.gov



Send 200 words (or less) to marketing@chamberway.com. A photo or logo gets even greater visibility!

March New Members

- Dirty Thumb Nursery
- Freedom Custom Industries
- Goin Flawless Esthetics
- Historic Barbershop
- Huff Landscaping
- I-5 Motor Sports
- JS Trucking & Excavation
- The Pasta Bowl

April Renewing Members

- Adna Grocery
- Bateaux Cellars



- Business to Business
- CalPortland
- Centralia Pet Resort, Inc
- Century 21 Lund, Realtors
- Chehalis-Centralia Railroad & Museum
- Columbia Bank Chehalis
- Community Mediation Center
- Country Blossoms
- Country Cousin

- Dawn Delectables Dessert & Sandwich Shoppe

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- Good Health Nutrition Center
- Health and Hope Medical Outreach Free Clinic
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- JJ Hamilton Realtor
- JS Trucking & Excavation



- KACS Christian Radio Network- 90.5 FM
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- Shop N' Kart Centralia Fullers'
- Small Acts of Kindness
- Steam Team LLC
- T.J Guyer, Inc
- The Housing Mart, Inc
- The Pasta Bowl
- The Roof Doctor
- Umpqua Bank
- Web Joist Northwest Corp.

Rob Fuller 25 x 25 Luncheon: Congratulations! Top 25 Students Announced

Each Year the Chamber publishes the names of the top 25 students from Centralia and Chehalis high schools. We are especially proud of these students as they faced many obstacles with the pandemic taking place in the middle of their high school career. These students will be honored at our annual Rob Fuller 25 X 25 Luncheon taking place at Jesters May 9.

Centralia Top 25 Students

Olivia Norris
Sarah Robbins
Khailee Ross
Emily Kimball
Morgan Grove
Donald Blair
Giovanni Flores-Cuenca
Thomas Dean - Sped
Kassandra Ritchey

Darrell Neuert
Yareni Perez
Madison Buchanan
Gracee Cline
Paola Mejia Salinas
Hannah Demaris
Mia Contreras
Lace Gress
Thai Celeste
Mariana Guerrero-Cirilo
Jacob Bleak
Peyton Smith
Leslie Gil Cisneros
Charlie Stanfield
Brianna Mcpherson
Jimen Luis

Chehalis Top 25 Students

Reid Balmelli
Hunter Bradley
Ava Brenner
Saige Brindle
Clara Bunker
Noe Caperon

Tyson Castillo-Rodas
Soren Dalan
Isabel Dickson
Abigail Freeman
Luke Hanson
Savannah Hawkins
Gavin Jensen
Samuel Mittge
Alyssa Mueller
Emma Ricks
Gwenivere Robertson
Morgan Rogerson
Kelsey Schow
Cameron Sheets
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Jonas Steiner
Bryn Taylor
Leigha Wilson
Olivia Yalovskiy

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UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

Rob Fuller Top 25 Luncheon

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May 9

Congratulations to our
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Grant Recipients!

Monthly Forum

Keeping Your Business,
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Chief Stacy Denham
from Centralia Police
Department and others
to share their expertise
Thursday, May 11

11:30 am

O'Blarney's, 2nd Floor
221 N. Tower, Centralia

Business After Hours

May BAH

Thursday, May 18
5 - 7 pm

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Tuesday, June 13

Noon - 4 pm

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March Ribbon Cuttings

March was a busy month for ribbon cutting ceremonies! We welcomed new businesses, new locations, and new owners of established businesses. Hosting Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies is one of the things we at The Chamber love doing and offer this service to both Chamber and non-Chamber members. We are passionate about celebrating these events as we understand how much work and investment owners pour into these efforts.



Centralia Square Antiques celebrated their new location at 310 North Tower. Maureen and Kevin Longley cut the ribbon on March 29.



Jena and Kyle Aselton are the new owners of Dirty Thumbs Nursery and are shown here cutting their grand opening ribbon on March 28 with Chamber Board President Coralee Taylor. They are located at 1580 State Highway 6 Chehalis.



Foresight Surveying, Inc., celebrated a change of ownership. Retiring owner Ken Frazier (right) cuts the ribbon with new owner John Goodman (left) on March 30. They are located at 1583 North National Avenue in Chehalis.



The long-awaited grand opening of Greens on Gold finally took place on March 31! Owner Dick Watkins is shown here with his wife Elain and Chamber Board President Coralee Taylor (right) and Chad Taylor (left) holding the red ribbon used for the ceremony. You can visit Greens on Gold at 135 Literal Road 1039 S. Gold Street in Centralia.



Gil and Janet Hernandez were excited to officially open their new business, Historic Barbershop, on April 5 at 105 W. Main Street in Centralia.



Wilde Soul Boutique owner Shelby Foister, center, cuts the ribbon to officially open her business in Chehalis on Friday, April 21, 2023. They are flanked by Chamber Ambassadors Amy DeBolt and Christine Brower. 255 N Market Blvd.

Thank You for the Support of Our Sponsors!

— DIAMOND —



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— PLATINUM —

