

Business Connections



SEPTEMBER 2024

Centralia - Chehalis
Chamber of Commerce

Promote ♦ Protect ♦ Inform

Inside This Edition: Weyerhaeuser, Agriculture, and Chamber News

Weyerhaeuser’s George R. Staebler Forestry Research Center works to support sustainable forestry and community



The original 1954 staff of the Centralia Research Center.

By Emily Fitzgerald
For the C/C Chamber of Commerce

With no public-facing operations based in the building and limited signage on the exterior, the George R. Staebler Forestry Research Center on North Pearl Street in Centralia is easy to overlook.

The work Research Center employees do for the 10.5 million acres of Weyerhaeuser forests in the U.S. and for local community organizations, however, is difficult to ignore.

Weyerhaeuser built and opened the Research Center, originally called the Centralia Research Center, at its current location in Centralia in 1954. A small group of researchers worked in the building until 1957, at which time Weyerhaeuser built an on-site lab and other research buildings.

At its peak employment in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s, Weyerhaeuser had approximately 144 research employees spread between five buildings in the area.

“This is a really nice location for us, not only for the folks who work here, but Centralia just ends up being a really good place for us because we own

timber lands in Pe Ell and Vail and outside of Castle Rock ... We have a lot of people from Weyerhaeuser that use this space and come to the Centralia/Chehalis area as well because of that,” said Weyerhaeuser Office Manager Kathryn Demaray.

The building went under an extensive remodel in 2018, which utilized local contractors and local materials, including wood sourced from Weyerhaeuser timberlands.

The Research Center was renamed in the ‘90s in honor of George R. Staebler, who was the Research Center’s director from 1966 to 1980. Staebler is renowned for being “the father of high-yield forestry,” Demaray said.

“It was groundbreaking at the time and it’s still being used today. It was definitely a huge innovation,” she said.

Weyerhaeuser’s Centralia-based research staff dropped to 12 people in 2009 following the previous year’s recession, and has since risen to roughly 25.

Nowadays, the Research Center still serves as Weyerhaeuser’s primary research facility in the West.

“We call ourselves strategy



The George R. Staebler Forest Resources Research Center, photographed after 2018 remodel.

Photos by Emily Fitzgerald for The Chronicle

and technology, but this is research and development for Weyerhaeuser,” said Weyerhaeuser Director of Environmental Research and Operational Support Dr. Jessica Homyack.

Research Center scientists focus on issues related to forest health and sustainability, wood quality, water quality and wildlife sustainability. Several Weyerhaeuser business employees utilize the Research Center’s space in Centralia, as well.

“The unifying principle that keeps us together is, how do we support this business for growing trees that survive and do well into the future, in perpetuity?” Homyack said.

In addition to supporting sustainable forestry, Research Center employees are incentivized to support their local community through volunteerism.

“Every hour that we give to the community, Weyerhaeuser puts dollars towards that which we as employees can also fund back into the communities themselves,” Demaray said. “We have a lot of people that are really active in the community.”



The original Centralia Research Center building circa early 1960's



A photo taken during the building dedication to the new name of George R. Staebler Forest Resources Research Center in the 1990s.

Advocating for Farmers and Ranchers

By Peter Abbarno
20th District Rep. R-Centralia

I recently had the pleasure to join a farm tour hosted by the Lewis County Farm Bureau. The tour reinforced the importance of agriculture to our community and the substantial benefit it has on our economy.

For many years I have talked about my belief that food is medicine. Nutritious

food for our seniors, families, and children helps fuel our bodies and prevents the onset of many medical conditions. That topic was really emphasized at our first farm tour stop at the Southwest Washington Food Hub in Chehalis.

The Food Hub works with farmers and ranchers to provide healthy locally produced food boxes

directly to the consumer. Locally sourced food tastes better, is more nutritious, supports the local economy, and is better for the environment. It is a win-win scenario that we should all support. You can learn more and support the Southwest Washington Food Hub at www.swwafoodhub.com.



Peter Abbarno

The farm tour made subsequent stops at several producers. Agriculture is a necessary, but fragile industry. Farmers and ranchers are price takers not price makers, which means the agriculture industry has little to no control over price setting. This leaves many farmers and ranchers we met with vulnerable to changes in the economy and supply chain interruptions.

You didn’t need to be on the farm tour to see

Please See **ABBARNO**, Page 2

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Annual Ag Tour Highlights Connection Between Farm and Table

In 2018, the Lewis County Farm Bureau began organizing an annual Ag Tour to celebrate local farmers and spotlight their challenges, needs, and, most importantly, the remarkable products they cultivate. This year’s event underscored the crucial connection between farming and consumer access.

The tour kicked off at the Southwest Washington Food Hub in Chehalis, which operates a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. This model allows consumers to receive seasonal produce directly from local farms through a membership arrangement. Participants pay a monthly fee to collect their share of fresh produce at various drop sites, including Rochester, Tenino, Lacey, Olympia, and Chehalis.

The next highlight was a visit to the Port of Chehalis’s newly launched grain loading facility. This facility aims to streamline the distribution of bulk grains, enhancing the efficiency of getting agricultural



Courtesy Photo

Joshua Hail from 3DogCider.

products to market.

The tour then proceeded to Hop Frog Farm in Onalaska, managed by Jordan Cohen and Sarah Schubert. Formerly a Seattle bartender, Cohen now focuses on sustainable organic microgreens and herbs while preserving local wildlife habitats. The couple is also dedicated to restoring their historic barn, which is now listed on the state historic registry.

From Onalaska, the tour continued to Morton, where

guests explored an edible fruit tree nursery operated by James and Rye Owens. Set against the backdrop of Mt. Rainier, the 20-acre nursery specializes in growing and selling saplings rather than the fruit itself, providing a unique agricultural product to the community. Fruits included apples, plums, pears, and exotics such as the Phoenix Tear Goji berry.

Pan American Blueberry Growers in Mossyrock showcased their expansive

blueberry farm and captivated guests with a hawk demonstration. The farm employs falconry to protect its crops from birds such as robins, sparrows, and waxwings, utilizing natural predators to deter these pests.

The final stop before dinner was 3 Dog Cider and Brewstillery in Ethel, owned by Joshua Hail. Hail’s seven-acre apple orchard, which currently features 300 trees, is set to expand to 700. The apples are processed into cider and sold directly at the orchard, exemplifying a true farm-to-table product.

The day concluded with a meal at the Veteran’s Memorial Museum, featuring dishes prepared from local produce and beef, completing the farm-to-table experience.

To support the Lewis County Farm Bureau’s efforts, individuals can become a Friend of Farmers for \$20 a year. For more information on their initiatives and to join, visit wsfb.com.

Southwest Washington Grain Project continues to support local growers as it prepares for construction of grain storage facility

By Emily Fitzgerald
For the C/C Chamber of Commerce

Machines loading grain into rail cars is a common site at 207 Maurin Road in Chehalis, a lot set aside by the Port of Chehalis for the Southwest Washington Grain Project.

Established via a collaboration between the Port of Chehalis, the Southwest Washington Growers Cooperative and other regional agricultural partners, the Southwest Washington Grain Project is an initiative to construct a public grain storage and transloading facility intended to help local farmers sell wheat and barley to distributors.

The idea to build the facility began to form in about 2017, when producers with the Southwest Washington Growers Cooperative and representatives of the Northwest Agriculture Business Center and WSU Extension found that grain, especially malting barley, could serve as a viable crop for both growers and buyers to help them recover from issues such as flooding, natural disaster and big companies terminating contracts for sweet peas and corn.

“They started talking and doing some feasibility stuff with WSU, and kind of determined that one of the things we could look at is wheat and barley production in Lewis County,” said Port of Chehalis Operations Manager

Bill Teitzel. “But one of the things we’re going to need is we’re going to need a way to get that product where it needs to go.”

Thanks to a successful petition to the Lewis County Commissioners, the Port of Chehalis and the Southwest Washington Growers Cooperation successfully petitioned the Lewis County Commissioners received \$800,000 for the installment of a rail spur on the port’s property.

“We want to support the ag industry in Lewis County because it’s important to what Lewis County has been and what Lewis County is going to be. It fits all the conditions we have at the Port of Chehalis and meets our mission,” Teitzel said.

The rail spur was completed in the spring of 2020.

The next phase of the project involves building an on-site grain storage facility so growers can store their products while waiting for train cars to arrive, then load the product immediately once the rail cars are on site.

The Southwest Washington Grain Project has received state and grant funding for construction of the facility and is just waiting on approval from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to go forward, Teitzel said.

“We’ve just got to get the final A-okay from the EDA on the documents we



Courtesy Photo

Farmers load grain onto rail cars at the Southwest Washington Gran Project site in Chehalis on Thursday, Aug. 13.

submitted, and then we can go out for bids and get this thing constructed,” Teitzel said. Co-op farmers grew 600 metric tons of barley on a collective 200 acres in 2020, followed by 1,400 metric tons in 2021, according to the Port of Chehalis.

In 2023, the farmers with the Southwest Washington Grain Project sold a collective 5 million pounds of malted barley to Great Western Malting in Vancouver.

“This year, we planted about 1,100 acres of malted barley,” said Southwest Washington Growers Cooperative President Jake Fay.

Approximately 12 small to medium-sized growers were involved in the Southwest Washington Grain Project in

2023, up from four in 2020.

News that the grain storage facility has funding and will soon be built has only increased interest, Fay said.

“When this is up and running, I’ve got no doubt we could be (planting) 3- to 5,000 acres of malting barley in the greater Chehalis River Valley,” Fay said. “It is pretty exciting, really, to see agriculture remain as a viable economic opportunity within the region.”

Flowers interested in getting involved with the Southwest Washington Grain Project and the Southwest Washington Growers Cooperative are encouraged to contact Fay at Jake@AgBizCenter.org.

ABBARNO: From Page 1

the greatness of our local agriculture community.

Within the same week as the farm tour, Lewis County was treated to a display of our region’s agriculture at the Southwest Washington Fair. From end-to-end, the Fair as filled with livestock, fruits and vegetables, animals, horses, rabbits, chickens, goats, sheep, and much more. Many of the entries and displays were from 4-H and FFA students- the next generation of farmers and ranchers preserving their history and tradition.

The spark of interest in farming and ranching often begins at fairs like the Southwest Washington Fair,

which got its start in 1877 to promote “the advancement of agriculture.” Agriculture is woven into the fabric of communities in Lewis County, Southwest Washington and Washington state. We must continue to keep that important history, tradition and economy thriving by supporting farming and ranching. The more educated we are about the food we eat, the better prepared we are to make good decisions to support an industry that supports us.

Our state delegation continues to advocate for farmers, ranchers; with Sen. John Braun on the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Ed Orcutt on the House

Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and myself as the Ranking Member on the House Capital Budget Committee. Each of these committees addresses the issues facing farmers and the business community. This year, it was an honor being recognized as a “Friend of the Farm Bureau” for my ‘exceptional voting record’ supporting our agriculture community. Still, Washington can do better

In the coming legislative session, issues to protect and promote farm and ranch land will be very important. So will expanding the vocational and educational opportunities for students wanting to work in the agriculture

industry. I will continue to advocate for protecting farmland, mitigating labor costs, opening new markets, eliminating overburdensome regulations, and reducing fuel and transportation costs for agriculture related vehicles.

To stay connected with agriculture related issues in the Washington State Legislature, visit www.RepresentativePeterAbbarno.com or www.Leg.Wa.Gov.

Rep. Peter Abbarno represents the 20th Legislative District and is the Ranking Member on the House Capital Budget Committee. This article appeared in Fireline, an official publication of the Washington Fire Commissioners Association.



BIZZBUZZ



WHAT'S
THE BUZZ?



Cascade Community Healthcare is Accepting New Patients

Cascade Community Healthcare has expanded their Primary Care Clinic to 3 providers and is now accepting new patients! Our clinic opened in 2021 with 1 provider and 2 treatment rooms and has since been expanded to 3 providers and 6 treatment rooms to meet the needs of our community. No need to worry about a 6-month wait to see one of our providers, we have new patient appointments as early as 2 weeks out! Our 3 ARNPs can serve patients 16 years and older, offering: Wellness exams, prevention screenings, acute illness, injury care, chronic condition management, medication management, referrals, hospital follow-up, and much more. Our clinic is located at 2428 W Reynolds Ave. Centralia, WA, with clinic hours from 7:30am to 6:00pm Monday through Thursday and 7:30am to 4:00pm on Fridays. Give us a call today at 360-330-9044 to schedule with one of our fantastic providers. We look forward to meeting you and providing you with exceptional care!

Cedars HomeCare of WA is the #1 Independent based Homecare Agency in Lewis County

We are pleased to announce the expansion of our Nurse Delegated Aides. It can be difficult to find In-Home Care aides who can take on some of the nurse delegated tasks that your loved ones require and need. It can often hinder your ability to get away for even a day or two. The responsibilities can be overwhelming at times. Be it assistance with Glucose monitoring, Insulin shots, Delegated medication tasks, Gastrostomy feeding, Ostomy Care, non-sterile dressing changes, nebulizer treatments and other RN Delegated tasks, we have staff ready to provide assistance, If you do not have a Nurse delegator to provide delegation for tasks, We do have several Nurse delegators we can refer you to. If you need to be away on a daily basis, a few times per week, once a month, We are here to help you to provide the coverage you need for your loved ones during your absence. We accept all Long Term Care insurance, and Private Pay. Call Cedars at 360-736-1998, or Email info@cedarshc.com , for assistance today

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Shop trusted, quality, affordable brands at Northwest's Original Outlet Shopping Destination! With over 30 brand names to choose from, we hope you find your favorite at Centralia Outlets. As the weather cools and days grow colder, fall has arrived. Now is the perfect time to create and add fresh new styles and layers to your wardrobe. New merchandise arrives daily, including outerwear, apparel, athletics, shoes,

children's wear, handbags, jewelry, home décor, and more. Summer and Back-to-School savings are not over! The brands at the Centralia Outlets offer discounts of up to 25% to 70% off new arrivals and clearance merchandise. Skip the self-checkout at large box stores and enjoy friendly, helpful customer service at the Centralia Outlets. Don't miss out on the incredible deals this Fall at Centralia Outlets. Save BIG on the name brands you love. Visit our website at www.centraliaoutlets.com and follow us on social media to get inside peeks at what's new in the stores.



Classic Lobster Is Back And Here To Stay At Quiznos!

The fan favorite is back and here to stay. Our classic lobster is NOW available as a permanent menu item! Lobster and seafood salad, Shredded Lettuce, butter TOASTED bread. Mmmm... Enjoy today, tomorrow, or whenever your next craving sets in!

QUIZNOS

Evergreen Announces Upcoming Free Costuming Session!

The Evergreen Playhouse is hosting a free Costuming 101 seminar Saturday September 14th 10am - noon at the Playhouse: 226 W. Center St. Centralia. This class will cover the introductory basics of costuming a show, including understanding the process and timeline, steps to get involved, costuming resources, achieving the director's vision, culminating with a tour of the costume areas. You do not need to know how to sew to costume a show! All are welcome to investigate and explore this creative area of our performances.



Upcoming Economic Forecast Event!

Its time again for the Economic Alliance of Lewis County's "Economic Forecast Event"! This will be Thursday, October 3rd, 1pm-3pm at the Loft in Chehalis, please do not park in the parking lot to the south of the building that is permit only. We will have two keynote speakers from Western Washington

University, James McCafferty and Hart Hodges both Economists with vast knowledge about the economy, interest rates, inflation, and housing trends. Please call Dolly at 360-748-0114 to register, the fee is \$20 per person.



Fun Facts From Northwest Salmon Smokehouse!

Did You Know?

There are seven varieties of Pacific Salmon. Chinook, coho, chum, sockeye and pink are in North American waters and masu and amago salmon occur only in Asia. Steelhead trout are sometimes listed as a Pacific Salmon, but steelhead do not die after spawning (unlike the other 7 varieties). Pacific salmon and Atlantic salmon cannot inter-breed because they have a different numbers of chromosomes. Once adult salmon return to freshwater they do not eat. This means they can go up to six months without eating after returning to freshwater. They rely on their fat reserves to move upstream and prepare for spawning, which is a long and dangerous journey. While in their saltwater phase, salmon can cover 18 miles per day on average, but they are capable of large distances over 30 miles per day. Although females often lay thousands of eggs (between 2,000 and 10,000), less than 1% of these eggs make it to the following generation as of right now. Salmon can jump up to six and a half feet to cross barriers in rivers - the same height as some Olympic athletes can jump!



With Pro Tech Painting There is a Wonderful Color Available For Hue!

As Summer comes to an end and we look to fall for color inspiration around our home, one of the most popular hues is Orange. With over 25 different variations of orange, there is hue for everyone in this classic fall color. If you are thinking about getting some new colors on your walls and want to really feel the fall effect, with the changing of the leaves, then look for an accent wall. That small change won't be overwhelming to the eyes and will

make the home feel warmer. 360-509-6051 for your free estimate

PRO TECH PAINTING

Back to School: How do you know if your student has an eye problem?

Kids are back to school and we all want to make sure they can see well to learn! Impaired vision results in learning and developmental delays. But, kids rarely complain about bad vision because it's the only way they've experienced the world. They don't know what "normal" vision is and may not have the words to describe issues. Here are some subtle signs to watch out for: squinting, turning or tilting their head when reading, winking or covering an eye to read, headaches in the afternoons, lack of attention, eye rubbing, sitting close to the TV, or using a finger to trace their place when reading. Major signs of a problem include a crossed or turned eye, poor balance/ depth perception, frequent falls, severe headaches, or a pupil that shines white from flash photography. But wait- hasn't their pediatrician checked their eyes as part of their annual physical? Somewhat... Pediatricians are screening for issues, but don't have the equipment to tell if a child needs glasses, has poor depth perception, or has health problems inside their eyes. We are here to help make sure your students have the vision to succeed. Book their annual eye exam today at RainierEye.com or call 360.506.5544.



RAINIER EYE

WSU Master Gardeners Has Multiple Free Workshops Coming Up!

WSU Master Gardener volunteers are trained by WSU Extension educators to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for gardening with others in their local community. WSU Master Gardener volunteers make it their mission to educate local community members in applying horticultural science to manage their landscapes and gardens in a science-based, sustainable manner. The WSU Extension Master Gardener program is open to everyone with an interest in gardening and a willingness to use their knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm to make a positive impact on their local community. If you are interested in becoming

a WSU Master Gardener, please call Jason Adams, WSU Lewis County Master Gardener Coordinator, at 360-740-1216 or email: jason.adams@lewiscountywa.gov.
Our upcoming free workshops are:

- October 12, 10:00 AM: Plant Care in a Greenhouse/Poly Tunnel, Borst Greenhouse, Borst Park, Centralia
- October 19, 10:00 AM: Seed Saving, Borst Demonstration Garden, Borst Park, Centralia

- October 26, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM: Gardening For Everyone, Centralia College, Washington Hall

Please check the Master Gardener website at lewis-mg-mrc.org for classes and times. All workshops are free! Pre-register 3-4 days prior to the workshop to help us ensure there are enough materials. Call 360-740-1212 or email: julie.pirtle@lewiscountywa.gov. Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM




Fiber-optic internet designed with your needs in mind

ZiPLY Fiber is in the process of lighting up fiber-optic internet in Centralia and Chehalis. *Why does this matter?* If we've learned anything over the past few years, it's that the internet is not a luxury. It's a necessity. As remote work and online learning increase, our need for fast, reliable connectivity only grows. Whether you're a busy family with multiple devices or a healthcare worker taking clients from home, you can't be slowed down by network congestion and lag time. ZiPLY Fiber was launched in 2020 with the mission of providing a great connected experience across the Northwest. Fast, reliable internet should be available to everyone – including areas that have been traditionally overlooked by mainstream internet service providers. Most ISPs still offer slow, asymmetrical upload and download speeds, which can cause buffering wheels and glitch. At ZiPLY Fiber, even the least expensive plan will improve connectivity with symmetrical 100/100 Mbps speeds. More serious online users will benefit from the popular Fiber Gig plan, which offers symmetrical 1 Gig (1000 Mbps) at an affordable price point. ZiPLY Fiber's people-friendly plans have no annual contracts, so you're free to cancel without penalty.




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Dick’s Cornhole & Sausage Fest!

Let the good times roll – or better yet, Fly! This is the 8th annual tournament and festival hosted by Dick’s Brewing. Funds raised benefit the Rob Fuller Scholarship Fund to help raise \$10,000 each year for eligible graduating seniors. Enjoy beer, sausage, music, raffle, and fun! The excitement takes place on Saturday, September 21 and bags start flying at 1. To register online us this QR code or visit chamberway.com and click on “events.” Shown here is the Chamber Marketing assistant Jacob Larson at last year’s event.



Annual Member BBQ!

Chamber members and those wanting to explore joining the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber are invited to attend the annual Member BBQ on September 12 from 11:30 to 1 pm at Dick’s Brewing in Centralia. Shown here are members and Ambassador's Cara Legg with Live 95 Radio and Christine Brower with Dynamic Collections. Dick’s is located at 3516 Galvin Road, Centralia.



Happy 30th Anniversary!

Dick’s Brewing celebrated their 30th anniversary at the August BAH. Shown here is owner Julie Pendleton with her Grandma June Young (Dick’s mom) and June’s good friend Jackie Creed. Sitting behind them is Chehalis Mayor Pro Tem, owner of Minuteman Press, and Chamber board member Daryl Young. Pictured below are owners Dave and Julie Pendleton.



Pope’s Place Ribbon Cutting!

Last month the Chamber had the pleasure of hosting a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new Pediatric facility at Pope’s Place. Shown here is Dr. Pope, founder, preparing to cut the ribbon. The new facility is called Jim’s House in honor of co-founder Jim Phillips.



Arvid’s Interiors
& Abby Carpets

Tuesday, September 24
Noon
1016 NW State Avenue,
Chehalis



WorkSource Lewis County Hosts
Monthly Job Fairs

Centralia-Chehalis Chamber is proud to support and participate in the monthly job fairs provided by WorkSource Lewis County. While the Chamber took on this task twice a year up until 2024, it wasn’t enough to meet the ongoing need for employers looking for workers. “We are thrilled that WorkSource really stepped things up this past January by making job fairs a monthly opportunity,” said Cynthia Mudge, Chamber Executive Director. The fairs take place at the offices for WorkSource located at 500 Centralia College Blvd., on their second floor. There are no fees to employers, there is ample parking nearby, and there are college resources easily available. The Job Fairs are the last Thursday each month: September 26 and October 31. There are no fairs in November and December. Job Fairs begin again in January. For more information call Alicia Little at 360-740-6862 or email alicia.little@esd.wa.gov



September BAH

Our September Business After Hours is hosted by ToledoTel on September 19 at 183 Plomondon Road, Toledo. This is a great opportunity to meet their fabulous staff, network with other members, and have fun. The BAH is from 5 to 7.

WorkSource
Lewis County Job Fair

Thursday, September 26
10 - 2
500 Centralia College,
2nd Floor, Centralia

Annual
Membership BBQ!

(Replaces Forum for Sept)
Thursday, September 12
11:30 – 1
Dick’s Brewing
3516 Galvin Rd, Centralia

September Business
After Hours (BAH)

ToledoTel
Thursday, September 19
183 Plomondon Rd.,
Toledo

Cornhole &
Sausage Fest

Saturday, September 21
Bags start flying
at 1 pm Dick’s!

SAVE THE DATE:
Chamber Debates
O’Blarney’s

Thursday, October 10
11:30 - 1
221 N. Tower, Centralia
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Upcoming Ribbon
Cutting Ceremonies

Economic Alliance
of Lewis County

Thursday, September 5
2:00 pm
1209 Borthwick St., Centralia

Twirl Foundation

Friday, September 13
Noon
211 A North Tower Ave.,
Centralia

Arvid’s Interiors
& Abby Carpets

Tuesday, September 24
Noon
1016 NW State Avenue,
Chehalis



How to Schedule
a Ribbon Cutting
Ceremony

The Chamber offers Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies as a free service to members and non-members. It is our way of acknowledging the hard work and investment of time and money to opening, expanding, moving, or re-branding a business.

To learn more or secure a date call 360-748-8885 or email director@chamberway.com