

Business Connections



JANUARY 2025

Centralia - Chehalis
Chamber of Commerce

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Inside This Edition: Centralia - 150 years, new City Manager, Renovations, and honor Daryl Lund

Rooted in Centralia: Celebrating 150 Years

By Sigourney Orstad

For the C/C Chamber of Commerce

As 2025 begins, the Centralia Downtown Association is gearing up for a year-long celebration of the 150th anniversary of Centralia's founding. This story is not only one of resilience, but also illustrates how one man's passion for the community combined with natural business instincts created and later restored this town.

Centralia, originally called Centerville, was founded in 1875 by George Washington, a Black man who moved to the future Washington State from the East Coast. Washington relocated to what would become Centralia with his guardians, a white couple named Cochran.

Shortly after Washington's birth, the Cochrans agreed to raise him until he turned 21, after his father—who was enslaved—was sold to another master. The Cochrans and Washington eventually made their way to the Oregon Territory, migrating north to the future site of Centralia.

During a time when Black people were prohibited from homesteading, Washington faced significant challenges in securing the land that would become Centralia. Despite these barriers, he succeeded in staking a claim to 640 acres in 1852. "He said, 'If there is a decent place in the world, I will find it.' And this is the place," said Edna Fund, a local historian and volunteer

with the Centralia Downtown Association.

Washington and his wife, Mary Jane, worked together to lay out the streets of a new town they would call Centerville. They filed the paperwork in Chehalis on Jan. 8, 1875. Washington sold plots of land for as little as \$10 per lot and never more than \$150 per lot. He carefully vetted buyers to ensure they intended to settle permanently in Centralia. Washington established the first church, a public square, and a pole ferry to cross the nearby river (Skookumchuck or Chehalis?). In 1883 the town was officially renamed Centralia. The public square is now known as George Washington Park and a monument can be seen there honoring him.

In 1893, a nationwide economic depression hit Centralia, severely impacting local businesses and families. Despite these hardships, Washington kept the town afloat by forgiving debts and allowing residents to work for food and clothing until the economy recovered.

Dubbed "The Hub City," Centralia became a major transportation hub, with the railroad transporting goods and people across the Pacific Northwest. The city also thrived with industries such as timber and dairy, supported by several milk processing plants in the area.

During Prohibition, Centralia businesses

remained popular, with some discreetly continuing to serve alcohol. According to Fund, there's a rumor that a tunnel once connected the railroad to the Olympic Club, allowing for the illegal transport of alcohol into the city.

Looking to Centralia's future, Fund expressed her hopes for the city's businesses: "I think it would be really cool if people who are leasing knew the history of their building. I think it would just add to our town if people got to know the history and kept it alive."

The Centralia Downtown Association has big plans for the 150th anniversary, including a tree-planting campaign to celebrate this milestone. "The Rooted in Centralia campaign is a big deal for the CDA because it ties everything we care about into one effort—celebrating our history, improving downtown, and building pride in our community," said Executive Director MacKenzie McGee. "As Centralia turns 150, we're not just looking back; we're planting trees and setting the stage for a stronger, more vibrant future. It's about connecting people to our shared story and making downtown a place we can all be proud of for generations to come."

...

To learn more about the history of Centralia, here is a list of book recommendations offered by Edna Fund, who



Courtesy Photo

Edna Fund

was interviewed for this article.

"Centralia's First Century 1845-1955" by Citizens of Centralia

"Centralia: The First Fifty Years 1845-1900" by Herndon Smith

"George Washington of Centralia" by Brian Mittge

and Kerry Macgregor Serl

"The Flood of 2007: Disaster and Survival on the Chehalis River" As reported by The Chronicle

"The Land Called Lewis: A History of Lewis County, Washington" by Sandra A. Crowell

Looking Ahead to 2025: Budgets and Bills

By Peter Abbarno

20th District Rep. R-Centralia

The 2025 legislative session is almost upon us. Beginning on January 13,

2025, the Washington State Legislature convenes the 105-day session to address many important issues like public safety, education, and

the economy. There are a lot of changes in Olympia.

Governor-Elect Bob Ferguson takes the reins as the new governor after Jay Inslee served as governor for twelve years. In addition, there will be a new Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, and Lands Commissioner. All the new changes lead to speculation and uncertainty.



Peter Abbarno

The Budget

There have been numerous reports from the legislative majority that Washington faces a multi-billion-dollar

budget deficit. The artificial shortfall is a result of past overspending and can be remedied by delaying the start of new programs, implementing government efficiencies, and focusing on priorities. There is no need to increase or create new taxes when our state economy is growing and collecting more revenue now than it had in the past biennium.

Unfortunately, the majority party is looking to increase the capital gains tax, the business and occupation tax, payroll tax, and expand the taxing authority for local governments. These tax schemes have regressive impacts and are unnecessary. I will continue

to focus on real solutions to fix the majority's budget mismanagement and will continue opposing attempts to "pass the buck" to your family and business.

New Positions

This year, I was elected as the House Republican Caucus Chair and will serve on four committees in the House: Capital Budget (Assistant Ranking Member), Environment and Energy, Consumer Protection and Business (New Committee), and Rules (New Committee). These new leadership and committee roles help provide more opportunities to deliver for the residents of SW Washington and our state.

Pre-filed Bills

Prior to the legislative session beginning, legislators have the chance to pre-file bills. This opportunity helps members get a running start to the session. In December, I pre-filed several bills including:

Permanent funding solutions for rural fire districts (House Bill 1001)

House Bill 1001 would create a grant program to help

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Honoring Daryl Lund

By Coralee Taylor

Chamber Board Chair

As the Chair of the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce Board, I reflect on Daryl Lund's life and legacy with both a heavy heart and deep gratitude. Daryl was not just a member of our community—he was one of its guiding lights. His passing on December 7 has left an indelible void in Chehalis and beyond.

Daryl joined the Chamber's Board of Directors in 2018 and immediately advocated for local businesses and community initiatives. Whether cutting ribbons, attending business after-hours events, or lending his support at fundraisers, Daryl was always present—both physically and in spirit. His infectious humor, boundless compassion, and genuine kindness were hallmarks of his character, and they uplifted everyone fortunate enough to know him.

Beyond his work with the Chamber, Daryl served Chehalis with unparalleled dedication as a public servant. First elected to the Chehalis City Council in 1984 at just 23 years old, he later resumed

his role in 2004, continuing to represent his district until his passing. As Mayor Pro Tem, his leadership embodied a deep love for this community, and his absence will be profoundly felt.

Daryl's entrepreneurial spirit was remarkable. From operating the downtown movie theater (now McFilers) to owning the beloved Star Tavern (now a baby boutique), he was a business pioneer. Most recently, he launched Minuteman Press in December 2023, adding yet another chapter to his legacy of local commerce. Daryl's commitment to Chehalis extended far beyond business; he volunteered for countless organizations, served as a Port of Chehalis commissioner, and even began his career as a volunteer firefighter in the 1980s.

A particularly moving tribute to Daryl came during this year's December 7 parade. A few days before the event, close friends and family came together to decorate and revive his treasured 1978 fire truck—a piece of Chehalis history he had personally saved. With long-time friend and former Fire Chief Jerry Boes at the



Chamber photo

Daryl Lund is shown here with his uncle, Bob Lund, at the grand opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Minuteman Press.

wheel, the truck made its way through town as a memorial to Daryl. The news of his passing, shared just before the parade began, made this tribute all the more poignant—a symbol of his enduring impact on our community.

Daryl's love for Chehalis and its people knew no bounds. As we mourn his loss, let us also celebrate the incredible legacy

he leaves behind—a legacy of leadership, friendship, and an unwavering commitment to making our community better.

On behalf of the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, we extend our deepest condolences to his family and friends. Daryl, thank you for everything. You will be dearly missed.

Introducing New Centralia City Manager Michael Thomas

By Sigourney Orstad

For the C/C Chamber of Commerce

Looking at Centralia City Manager Michael Thomas' near-empty office, it's not hard to believe it's his second week on the job. However, with over two decades in government behind him, that may be the only indication of his freshness in the role.

Born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, Thomas graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1996 and spent twenty years on active duty in the Air Force as an aviator. "I was not a pilot. I was a navigator, electronic warfare officer. Now I think they call it something different, but basically, what that means, depending on which Top Gun you prefer, I was either Goose or Bob," said Thomas.

After retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel, Thomas got his master's degree in

Public Administration from the University of Oregon and transitioned into a career as a public servant. Post graduation, Thomas took a position as city administrator

for the city of Amity, Oregon, in July 2019, and spent nearly 4 years there, before

stepping down and taking an extended sabbatical.

Thomas was drawn to apply for the position of city manager of Centralia because of Centralia's location, the natural beauty of the local scenery, and the great community.

Like any local government position, Thomas anticipates challenges along the way. "One of the biggest challenges I see going forward, one I think every city is going to have going forward in the next few years, is how to continue to pay for services,



Chamber photo

Centralia City Manager Michael Thomas

how to continue to fund all the operations we've found ourselves, over time, precedence and law, obligated to do," said Thomas. However, Thomas is up to tackle any challenge he encounters, citing problem-solving as one

of his strengths and passions.

For now, Thomas is eager to dive in headfirst with his duties as city manager. Thomas will continue to get settled into Centralia while he gets to work for the city he now calls home.

Renovations Offer a Contemporary Refresh of Holiday Inn Express & Suites

By Sigourney Orstad

For the C/C Chamber of Commerce

Holiday Inn Express & Suites has been in Chehalis since 2009 but has recently made some big changes in the way of new renovations throughout the hotel. After first opening in May 2009, Holiday Inn Express has been a welcoming place of respite for busy travelers visiting for both business and leisure purposes.

Renovations to the hotel began in December 2023 with management eager to update Holiday Inn Express since no substantial updates had been made to the hotel since its opening. With four floors and 112 rooms, renovating virtually the entire hotel while staying open for guests was a challenge. However, it was a challenge that General Manager Kalina Goodwin and Director of Sales SarahLinne Miller were able to tackle.

The hotel was updated

one floor at a time, with the stays of guests left mostly uninterrupted. The results of the renovations seem to speak for itself with guests frequently praising the updates. "It's like every single person that walks in, especially if they've been here before, just has great appreciation for what they see. It's open, it's bright, it's fresh," said Goodwin.

Holiday Inn Express has been updated throughout with new flooring, paint and wallpaper, furniture, lighting, and decor in all of the rooms. Common spaces like the lobby, breakfast area, conference rooms, fitness center, and pool and spa have also been updated.

Perhaps the biggest change at Holiday Inn Express is its new family suites. The family suites sleep up to six guests and boasts a dining area, a kitchenette, a bunk space for kids, and a separate room with a large king bed and a



Courtesy Photo

General Manager Kalina Goodwin and Director of Sales SarahLinne Miller.

pullout couch. According to Goodwin and Miller, this will certainly be a popular option for families with multiple children or those planning an extended stay at the hotel.

As renovations wrap up, Goodwin and Miller

anticipate their grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony to take place in the next few months and plan to have the Chamber participate. To make reservations or book an event visit hiexpress.com/chehaliswa.

BIZZBUZZ



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?



Fly Into The New Year With Blue Skies Drones!

Kick off the new year with a new perspective—literally! Flying a drone in 2024 is not just fun, but also a fantastic way to explore, create, and connect. Whether you're capturing stunning landscapes, snapping epic selfies, or simply enjoying the thrill of piloting, drones bring endless excitement to the skies.

Imagine starting the year by mastering new skills as a drone pilot. The joy of taking off, the thrill of soaring through the air, and the satisfaction of landing like a pro make every flight an adventure. Plus, drones are the ultimate tool for creativity—whether you're filming cinematic footage, trying your hand at aerial photography, or even mapping out your hiking trails from above.

The best part? Drones are more accessible than ever, with beginner-friendly models to suit any budget. They're a perfect way to make memories with family and friends or to enjoy some solo exploration. And with advanced tech like obstacle avoidance and GPS stabilization, flying is safer and easier than ever.

So why not make 2024 the year of the drone? The sky is literally the limit for fun and discovery. Get ready to elevate your adventures!



January Clearance Sales are Happening Now!

Refresh your seasonal wardrobe and shop January clearance sales at the Centralia Outlets! Save on a huge selection of name-brand apparel and footwear for the entire family.

Get cozy with new winter wear, sweaters, and PJs at Polo Ralph

Lauren, Hanes Brands, Jockey, and more. Shop the latest trends in clothing at Lane Bryant, Aéropostale, DXL, and Chico's. Is your New Year's Resolution to get fit? Look for the gear you want at New Balance, Nike, Skechers, and Under Armour. For the more adventurous, find great hiking and snow gear at Volcom, Columbia, and Eddie Bauer to add comfort and keep you warm and dry in our PNW weather.

Browse Bath & Body Works' latest selection of new scents in soaps, lotions, candles, and more. Also, find great accessories from Coach, Kay Jewelers, and Claire's to add the perfect finishing touches and layers to any outfit. The Centralia Outlets have you covered head to toe!

With such great prices on the brand names you want and an ever-changing selection, don't miss out. When the Outlets have a sale, it's REALLY a SALE! Visit centraliaoutlets.com for more store information, and follow social media for in-store sales and updates.



WSU Lewis County Extension Master Gardeners

Washington State University (WSU) Lewis County Extension

Master Gardeners are volunteers who have completed a 12-month WSU based training course. The program has year-round enrollment open to everyone! Now is the perfect time to advance your gardening knowledge. Gardening is both rewarding and therapeutic! WSU Master Gardener Lewis County Extension volunteers educate the community throughout the year and county by hosting free workshops about gardening and conducting Plant and Insect Clinic. This service helps the public to gain gardening knowledge on how to identify plants and insects, diagnose plant disease and recommend scientific based solutions.

For more information about the program or how to become a Master Gardener, visit lewi-mg-mrc.org or call Jason Adams, Master Gardener Coordinator at 360-760-1212. Or by email at: jason.adams@lewiscountywa.gov.



The Paint World is Changing With Pro Tech Painting!

When it comes to color for in the new year, here is what to expect from top Color experts in the Painting industry:

A move towards darker forest greens in kitchens, rather than softer sage and pistachio colors Cinnamon Slate is Benjamin Moore's Color of the Year, a delicate mix of heather plum and velvety brown

Caramelized is Dunn-Edwards' color of the year, a shade of terracotta brown that puts a modern twist on nostalgic neutrals Violet is Minwax's 2025 color of the year, a rich, saturated jewel tone that pairs well with intricate patterns and textures.

PRO TECH PAINTING

Timberland Regional Library -- Gale Business: Insights

Compare global economies, countries, and industries with in-depth analysis on over 400,000 companies. Gale Business: Insights provides an extensive collection of business intelligence, combining Gale reference content with respected business sources and full-text periodicals to help researchers understand today's global business environment.

Users can access more than 430,000 detailed company profiles with company financial data, in-depth country overviews, and comprehensive industry profiles to stay current with the ever-evolving business landscape. It offers relevant information to educate and accelerate the business activities of budding entrepreneurs, small business owners, financial planners, and established business professionals.

Timberland Regional Library (TRL) supports local businesses with a variety of free services, including \$44 monthly printing and copy credits, free faxing, Wi-Fi, internet access, and meeting spaces. We also offer resources on entrepreneurship, management, law, and more. Visit TRL.org/small-business to learn more.

Glaucoma- What You Don't Know CAN Hurt You

January is glaucoma awareness month. The whole reason for trying to raise awareness is that people often don't know they are losing vision from glaucoma until it's too late. This disease earns the nickname, "The Silent Thief of Sight." It's more common over age 50, in those with circulatory diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure, and tends to run in families.

Glaucoma is a gradual, irreversible death of nerves in the retina which results in a dimming and loss of peripheral vision. Since vision lost can't be returned, at Rainier Eye, we test for glaucoma as part of an annual eye exam. The measurement of eye pressure is done with a quick handheld device (no puff of air for us!) and the sensitivity of peripheral vision is mapped in a machine that feels like a video game. Our doctors also examine the optic nerve, the connection between the eye and the brain, using retinal photography and/or a magnifying lens through a dilated pupil. If your eyes look suspicious for glaucoma, we have the advanced OCT technology which measures the health of the nerves at a microscopic level. To learn more, follow this link or schedule at rainiereye.com.



RAINIER EYE

NEW YEAR BUSINESS RESOLUTIONS!

A great way to kick things off for your business is making a few New Year's Resolutions!

Join the Chamber!

Becoming a member of the Chamber shows customers you are a business in good standing and are a committed community advocate. In addition, a 2024 Harris Poll shows that 81% of respondents in the U.S. viewed Chambers as a trusted resource/partner for business.

Stay Connected! Make Connections!

The Chamber offers

several ways to make new connections. Monthly Forums feature a variety of presenters and provide time to introduce yourself and your business. Business After Hours (BAH) is another networking opportunity that takes place at a different member business each month. The Chamber also hosts a monthly Zoom meeting with District 20 Legislators during session. In addition, the Chamber produces a number of events throughout the year

including the Annual Banquet in January, Home Show in April, Rob Fuller Luncheon in May, Golf Tournament in July, and the annual Santa Parade celebrating its 75th anniversary this year.

Our Ambassador program is another way to both be connected and make connections. Ambassadors volunteer at Chamber events in a variety of ways that provide opportunities to connect with businesses and the general public in

a meaningful way. This is also a way to involve your staff in Chamber activities.

Learn New Things!

The Chamber is introducing MicroBytes learning sessions where we feature a tightly focused topic taught in a one-hour session that allows participants to walk away with a new skill they can use now. Examples include using ChatGPT to write a monthly Bizz Buzz column

and more; introduction to Canva for easy social media and print designs; dissecting the standard business lease and what to look for; Digital investments for dummies; and more!

Share Your Expertise!

The Chamber welcomes presenters at its Forums or teachers to share their expertise as a MicroByte sessions.

ABBARNO: From Page 1

fire districts build, expand, and improve their facilities. This would relieve economic burdens on working families and small businesses while keeping our communities safe.

Supporting mental health for coroners and medical examiners (House Bill 1002)

House Bill 1002 would extend these protections to county coroners and medical examiners, who also face traumatic situations in their work. Ensuring these workers have access to the care they deserve is an important step in supporting their mental health.

Helping veterans and military families find work (House Bill 1016)

House Bill 1016 would provide tax credits to businesses that hire veterans and the spouses of active-duty service members. This program supports those who've served our country and helps boost local economies and small businesses.

Addressing the WA Cares Program (House Bills 1025 and 1026)

House Bill 1025 would reopen the opt-out window for private long-term care insurance workers. Many workers missed the 2022

deadline and were left without the option to secure better, private alternatives. House Bill 1026 would allow spouses to share benefits. Right now, families are stuck with benefits that can't be transferred.

Stay Connected

Although the legislative session is 105-days long, bills move quickly through committee and on to the floor for a vote. Be sure to stay connected through my legislative website at RepresentativePeterAbbarno.com, which also has a step-by-step video guide to help you navigate the process.

Don't forget that I will

be hosting monthly 'Zoom' legislative updates with the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce from 7:30-8:00am on January 23rd,

February 27th, March 27th, and April 24. Contact the Chamber Director for more information and the link.

Happy New Year!

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— DIAMOND —



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The December Business After Hours (BAH) was a multi-faceted joyous affair

In addition to the annual Ugly Sweater Contest, this year's BAH included a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Lightcurve (formerly Rainier Connect). While Lightcurve became the new owners a year ago they are fully immersing themselves in the communities they serve so we will be seeing lots of new things from then in 2025! Jeremy's Farm to Table Restaurant was the co-sponsor of the December BAH providing the space and amazing staff. Lightcurve furnished appetizers and beverages for those who attended and Jeremy's kitchen truly knocked this out of the park. The Chamber is grateful for its members!



Chehalis Mayor Tony Ketchum welcomes Lightcurve to the community.



Photos by Jacob Larson
Cory Sears Moses of Zen Events front and Center with other Ugly Sweater contestants! Cory won third place.



Reigning champion of the Ugly Sweater Contest won for the third year in a row! Congratulations Christon Brower! She is the Chair of the Chamber Ambassadors.



The December BAH took place at Jeremy's Farm To Table, and was celebrated by Lightcurve Fiber with a ribbon cutting! Amanda Singleton with Lightcurve and her team were joined by Chamber Chair Coralee Taylor (left), Centralia Mayor Kelly Smith-Johnson (backrow right), and Chehalis Mayor Tony Ketchum (right)



Amanda Singleton with Lightcurve is shown here with Centralia Mayor Kelly Smith Johnston.



Daryl Lund's Firetruck

Drove through the 74th Santa Parade in Chehalis, in memory of the recently passed Mayor Pro-Tem of Chehalis.



Southwest Washington Dance Ensemble

Walks down the alley of the Santa Parade, leading the pack as the grand marshal of the event. They just recently performed The Nutcracker on December 19th - 22nd.



Santa Claus

Smiling and waving to all the attendants at the Santa Parade. Our photographer meant to ask him how he fits all the ponies and dirtbikes the kids wish for in his bag, but he was too busy taking pictures.



The Diesel Tech Club

Helped us so much with set up at the Santa Parade, and we couldn't be more thankful for them!



Santa Parade MC

Cameron Beierle from KACS Radio 90.5 was the fabulous MC for the Santa Parade. We applaud KACS for participating these past three year!



Turkey Bowl Business After Hours

This was a great success. Pictured here is Brian Carreon with Bekins Northwest, celebrating with his daughters as they won one of the three turkeys given out as prizes at the event.



Three Rivers Care Ribbon Cutting

Was a fantastic way to celebrate their grand re-opening! Tons of community members and patient families alike came to celebrate with Administrator Ashley Hogue and her team as they cut the ribbon, and finally were able to say they were officially home!

UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS!

Our next Forum and BAH are in February

Chamber Banquet

We are still taking reservations!

Friday, January 24, 2025

6 pm social hour followed by dinner, silent auction, and awards.

Visit Chamberway.com and click Events tab to register online or call 360-748-8885 for more information.



Senator John Braun



Representative Peter Abbarno

District 20 Legislative Updates

With Senator John Braun and Representatives Ed Orcutt and Peter Abbarno



Representative Ed Orcutt

Thursday, January 23

7:30 – 8:00 am • Via Zoom
Check the Chamber Calendar at chamberway.com or email director@chamberway.com to join.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies

Cascade Mental Health

Wednesday,

January 15 • 3 pm

2428 W. Reynolds Avenue
Centralia

Chehalis Critter Care

Friday, January 17

Noon

561 US Highway 12
Chehalis
(near Mary's Corner)



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