

# Business Connections



MARCH 2025

Centralia - Chehalis  
Chamber of Commerce

Promote ♦ Protect ♦ Inform

**Inside This Edition:** Home ideas, Legislative update, and Rob Fuller Scholarships

## 2025 Home and Interior Trends

By Sigourney Orstad

For the C/C Chamber of Commerce

As excitement grows for the 59th Annual Home and Interior Show, it's a great time to take a look at the rising home and interior design trends of 2025. Conversations with three local Lewis County businesses provide a unique look into the evolving styles and innovations shaping homes in the coming years.

Kylene Davis, owner of Arvid's Interiors and Design, notes that while they used to do a lot of luxury vinyl planking, they are seeing customers move more towards laminate flooring because it has more of a hardwood feel. Similarly, gray flooring has seemed to have fallen out of fashion as customers have started choosing various shades of brown instead. Davis has also noticed that subway tile has become a thing of the past with customers opting for large format tile on the floors and walls of



Arvid's Interior & Design has a wide selection of ideas and colors to freshen any home.

bathrooms because they are easy to clean and have less grout lines.

Overall, Davis is seeing customers finding their own style when it comes to interior design. "I think the trend right now, honestly, is just to make your house your home. It just seems like people who've been coming in have been more comfortable picking what works for them instead of what they see on TV," said Davis.

Greg Schubert of Kitchens Complete seems to echo the same sentiments of Davis in regards to the color choices that people are making in their kitchens. "The big thing is gray is dead," Schubert said. While whites remain popular,

Schubert explains that warm wood tones are "in" and grays are "out." Schubert also notes that interior design choices in a kitchen are up to an individual's own liking. "Countertops is still kind of a personal preference, so it's a wide range. Really popular surfaces right now are quartzite and regular quartz. Warm whites, definitely, for countertops," said Schubert.

As for other kitchen trends, Schubert said he is seeing a lot of decorative wood hoods and people opting for more cabinet organization in an attempt to have a more minimalist look in their kitchens. In regards to kitchen tile, Schubert notes that traditional subway tile



Photos provided

Greg Schubert with Kitchens Complete offers insights about kitchen trends.

has decreased in popularity, with customers leaning more towards mosaic or patterned tiles.

According to owner of Nelson's Furniture, Nick Nelson, there has been an increased demand in natural looking wood furniture. Nelson says one of their most popular woods they are selling is She-sham wood, a red and blonde marbled wood from India. Like Davis and Schubert, Nelson seems to think gray stains and furniture are waning in popularity. "Grays and darks have been really popular the last few years. It seems like it's just now finally starting to turn back to more browns, like medium browns. Less of

grays and blacks and more red browns," said Nelson.

In regards to living room furniture, Nelson's has been selling more and more single recliners and has received an increased interest in sleeper sofas, perhaps another indication that people are trying to make their house a home.

Although decorations and home furnishings tend to reflect a person's individual style, it's no surprise that some styles are more popular than others. To learn more information about home and interior design trends, visit the 59th Annual Home and Interior show on April 11th and 12th at the Southwest Washington State Fair grounds.

## Washington's affordability crisis is getting worse

By Peter Abbarno

20th District Rep. R-Centralia

As your state representative, part of my responsibility is to keep you informed about policies that will strengthen businesses across our

communities, district, and state.

Equally important, however, is my duty to sound the alarm when legislation threatens economic stability and job creation.

Unfortunately, we have

reached the point in this legislative session where the majority party's true priorities become clear, and it is not good news for families or business owners.

We have passed the critical policy cutoff deadline, the point in the legislative session where bills that do not make it through the committee process will no longer advance.

Rather than advancing meaningful reforms to alleviate the financial pressures crushing Washingtonians, the majority party blocked real solutions to Fix Washington while allowing costly and burdensome policies to advance through the legislative process.

Washington is already one of the most expensive places in the nation to live and do business.

We have the third-highest gas prices, the fourth-highest grocery costs, and the third-most expensive housing market in the country.

Families struggling with childcare expenses find little relief, as Washington ranks as the seventh least affordable state for child care.

And, when you factor in all costs of living, Washington is the third most expensive state in America.

These numbers are not just statistics. They represent real people with real stories of struggle—small business owners, working parents, and seniors—who are being priced out of their communities.

Here are some of the bills that could make it harder to live and work in Washington:

House Bill 1921 seeks to impose new transportation revenue sources based on motor vehicle usage, creating a pay-per-mile system that disproportionately burdens rural communities and small businesses that rely on vehicles for work.

House Bill 1320 proposes modifications to the business and occupation tax rates that would drive up costs for many employers, discouraging investment and job creation.

Senate Bill 5186 also shifts that state's responsibility to support school construction to local communities in a way that could lead to higher local property taxes and threaten investments in critical infrastructure.

What makes this even more frustrating is that clear, common-sense solutions were available—proposals that would have helped ease financial burdens for families and job creators. But instead of giving these bills a fair chance, the majority party let them die.

One of those solutions was House Bill 1307, which would have removed sales and use taxes on essential childcare products—something that could have provided relief for young families already struggling with the cost of



Peter Abbarno



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A Caring Transitions employee pictured while clearing out a house.

## Caring Transitions: A Company Living Up to Its Name

By **Sigourney Orstad**

For the C/C Chamber of Commerce

With their compassionate and swift team, Caring Transitions has been helping Lewis County seniors move into the next chapter of their lives for nearly ten years. Owner of Caring Transitions, Teresa Murphy, has made it her mission to help seniors transition into a new phase of their life as smoothly as possible.

Caring Transitions provides relocation and downsizing and decluttering services for primarily seniors, but also people going through divorces or large job transitions that are too busy or overwhelmed to clean out their houses by themselves. Anything that the

client does not want to take with them from household items and decor to furniture, and even food and chemicals, Caring Transitions will donate, auction off, or dispose of. Caring Transitions also helps seniors who want to stay in their homes, but need their homes adjusted to meet their needs.

If a senior is moving to assisted living or memory care, Murphy and her team not only pack up all of their belongings and move it to the facility, but also take the time to unpack and arrange the items to make it feel like home. "We want it to feel like they are home and not just coming in where the movers may have dropped off a bunch of boxes and now what



Photos provided

Caring Transitions employees make hard work look fun while cleaning up a backyard.

do they do? So we'll come in and we'll take care of that as well," said Murphy.

Murphy and her team are able to help clients in a timely fashion, with liquidations taking a minimum of three weeks, but never more than two months. As for the reactions of her clients, Murphy says that their services help lift a weight off of their clients shoulders. "I think that most of them, at

the very beginning, are just so relieved. And by the time that we're done with day one or two, they've already moved on to their next life...and they're just going to be really happy," Murphy said.

For more information on Caring Transitions and their services visit [caringtransitionsofchehalis.com](http://caringtransitionsofchehalis.com).

## The Centralia-Chehalis Chamber Hosts Annual Scholarship Luncheon and Oversees Nine Scholarship Efforts offered by Community Leaders

The Centralia-Chehalis Chamber Hosts Annual Scholarship Luncheon and Oversees Nine Scholarship Efforts offered by Community Leaders

In May the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber is hosting the annual Rob Fuller 25 x 25 Luncheon that honors the top 25 students from Centralia and Chehalis high schools. A key part of the luncheon is also announcing and awarding scholarships from nine different community organizations giving out nearly \$20,000 in scholarships.

The Chamber established the Rob Fuller Scholarship Fund in 2011 and in 2022 that fund became its own non-profit. The Chamber donates administrative costs to ensure that all monies in the Fund are for scholarships. "Our goal is to give out ten \$1,000 scholarships each year," explained Chamber Executive Director Cynthia Mudge.

The Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce scholarship fund was developed to encourage and promote educational opportunities for children of Chamber Members. Those who work for a business that is a current Chamber Member and whose children or grandchildren attends W.F. West or Centralia High School are eligible to apply.

While the Rob Fuller Fund is designated for children or grandchildren of current Chamber Members, there are eight other scholarships available to explore.

**2025 Scholarships available:**

**The Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce 2025 Rob Fuller Scholarship**

Available to all children or grandchildren of current Chamber Members that are seniors at W.F. West and Centralia High School.



Photo provided

Shown here are the 2025 Rob Fuller Scholarship recipients representing \$10,000 in scholarships.

**The Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce 2025 Olivia Mitchell Scholarship**

Available to Adna High School Seniors.

**The 2025 Althausen Rayan Abbarno, LLP Cheyllyn Collinworth Scholarship**

Available to all 2025 graduating Seniors from W.F. West and Centralia High School based on their interest in a teaching career.

**The 2025 Centralia Community Foundation Education Scholarship**

Available to all 2024 graduating seniors from Centralia High School based on their desire to go into the field of education.

**The 2025 Lightcurve Business & Technology Scholarship**

Available to all 2025 graduating

seniors from WF West and Centralia High School based on their educational experience with a focus on business, technology, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

**The 2025 TwinStar Credit Union Business Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship**

Available to all 2024 graduating Seniors from W.F. West and Centralia High School based on their desire to go into the field of business or finance.

**The 2025 Visiting Nurses Foundation Scholarship**

Available to all 2024 graduating Seniors from W.F. West and Centralia High School based on their intent to seek a degree as a Registered Nurse.

**2025 PUD Commissioners Tradesman Scholarship**

The scholarship awards \$1,000.00 to one or more applicant within Lewis

County PUD service territory who is interested in working with Lewis County PUD in a tradesman field. This scholarship is made possible through the generous contributions from individual commissioners of Lewis County PUD. No Lewis County PUD rate payer funds are contributed into this scholarship.

For more information, to donate or to sponsor the Rob Fuller Scholarship Luncheon email [thechamber@chamberway.com](mailto:thechamber@chamberway.com) or call 360-748-8885 [RobFullerFund.org](http://RobFullerFund.org)

Scholarship applications must be received by 4 pm on April 18, 2025: Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, 500 NW Chamber of Commerce Way Chehalis, WA 98532



# BIZZBUZZ



## WHAT'S THE BUZZ?



### Bloodworks Northwest Needs Your Help!

Did you know that in America, over 42,000 blood products are used by patients every day? That's one blood transfusion needed every two seconds. These life-saving transfusions are crucial for treating acute care needs like trauma and childbirth-related blood loss, as well as managing diseases such as cancer, surgeries, organ transplants, and more. The need for blood is constant, not just during major disasters.

When you donate blood with Bloodworks Northwest this Spring, you're helping prevent shortages in hospitals across the Pacific Northwest. Make an appointment today and help save lives. When you donate in March, you can enter to win a sun-soaked trip for two to Kauai.

### Attention Landlords and Property Managers:

The Community Mediation Center wants to help you work with your tenants at risk of eviction due to non-payment of rent or lease violations! We are a local non-profit dispute resolution center offering mediation services to tenants and landlords to help resolve issues that may lead to eviction. Our staff of trained mediators will establish contact with tenants and help build solutions that benefit both parties. Mediation is informal, cooperative and confidential.

These solutions can include referrals to local resources to help with necessities, repayment plans of unpaid balances or even move-out plans, all with the goal to increase communication between both sides and avoid unlawful detainer court (and the time and money court can take)!

We are providing dispute resolution service to any address in Lewis County for just \$155.00, which includes client intake, phone conciliation AND a 90-minute mediation session with one of our mediators. Call Jane today with your questions, she is happy to walk you through the process to find out if mediation is right for your business: 360-623-8061, or check us out at [www.CommunityMediationCenters.org](http://www.CommunityMediationCenters.org).

### Stay Rooted in Centralia & Support Downtown!

Our love for downtown doesn't end in February! By joining the Friends of Downtown program, you're helping keep our historic heart strong—funding events, beautification projects, and initiatives that make Centralia a place to gather, grow, and thrive.

As we continue our Rooted in Centralia campaign, your support plays a key role in shaping the future of downtown. From revitalizing our streetscape to celebrating Centralia's 150th anniversary, every contribution helps plant the seeds for a more vibrant, welcoming community. Stay connected, stay involved, and stay Rooted in Centralia—because when we invest in downtown, we invest in the future of our city. Join today and be part of the

growth! Visit [downtowncentralia.org](http://downtowncentralia.org) to get started.

### Centralia Outlets Stylish Spring

Clear out your closet to make room for new spring trends! Discover updated looks ranging from tailored fits to seasonal sporty styles and lightweight jackets. Whether refreshing your wardrobe or adding new trendy pieces, Centralia Outlets is the perfect place to start this spring for affordable fashion.

Shop new apparel at Aéropostale, Lane Bryant, Polo Ralph Lauren, and Chico's. The Children's Place and Gap Factory offer quality, adorable, and affordable children's clothing.

Find fabulous new accessories from Claire's, Coach, and Kay Jewelers, and explore fantastic body scents at the Bath & Body Works Outlet.

At the Hanes Brands Outlet and Jockey Clearance, you can shop for underwear, pajamas, leisurewear, and more for the whole family!

Are you spending more time outdoors as the weather brightens?

Take advantage of sales on new active gear and footwear at Columbia Sportswear, New Balance, Skechers, and Eddie Bauer.

Shop your favorite brands at a discount at the Centralia Outlets. To view a complete list of stores, sales, and hours, please visit our website at [www.centraliaoutlets.com](http://www.centraliaoutlets.com) or follow us on Facebook!



### St. Patrick's Day Dinner Train Ride

Chehalis, WA – The Chehalis-Centralia Railroad invites everyone to "Go Green" on March 15 with a special St. Patrick's Day celebration! Enjoy a two-hour excursion in a vintage 1920s dining car through the beautiful Chehalis River Valley.

The dinner excursion will take place on Saturday, March 15, at 5:00 p.m. Guests will indulge in a delicious Irish dinner catered by Joy's Once Upon a Thyme. When purchasing tickets, guests can choose between a hearty Rustic Irish Stew or a vegetarian option featuring a Portobello Mushroom entrée. This scenic 2-hour round-trip journey is the perfect way to embrace the Irish spirit—so be sure to wear your green to keep the leprechauns away!

The cost is \$89 per person, which includes a three-course meal and the train ride. Tables seat four in the dining car.

The train departs from the Chehalis-Centralia Train Depot, located at 1101 SW Sylvanus Street, Chehalis, WA 98532. This special excursion is limited to 100 guests, so be sure to make your reservation soon.

For more details and to book your tickets, visit our website: <https://steamtrainride.com/>



### The 31st Annual Dance Festival Northwest by SWW Dance Center!

The Southwest Washington Dance Center will host the 31st annual Dance Festival Northwest on Saturday, March 22, 2025, at 7:00 PM at the Corbet Theatre on the campus of Centralia College in Centralia, WA. This exciting public performance will feature diverse dance forms including contemporary, classical ballet on pointe, modern/contemporary dance, jazz, ballroom, tap, and hip hop.

Tickets are available online at [www.swwdance.org](http://www.swwdance.org), in person at the Southwest Washington Dance Center in Chehalis, or at the door if available. For more information, call 360-748-4789. Come enjoy a night of incredible dance!



### The Evergreen Playhouse is pleased to present: Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical

March 7-23, 2025  
Pay What You Can Thursday, March 13th @7:30pm

Matilda is a little girl with astonishing wit, intelligence and psychokinetic powers. She's unloved by her cruel parents but impresses her schoolteacher Miss Honey. During her first term at school, the two forge a bond as Miss Honey begins to recognize and appreciate Matilda's extraordinary personality. Matilda's school life isn't completely smooth sailing, however – the school's mean headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, hates children and just loves to punish those who don't abide by her rules. But Matilda has courage and cleverness in equal amounts, and could be the school pupils' saving grace!

A family friendly show that is sure to sell out. Bring this ad with you for a free non alcoholic drink and small popcorn. Tickets at [www.evergreenplayhouse.com](http://www.evergreenplayhouse.com).  
Adult: \$20

Youth/Student: \$17  
Senior (55+): \$17

### Gale Legal Forms

(Timberland Regional Libraries) Thousands of legal forms are available with more forms being added daily. Official, State Specific, Federal, Business, Personal, Real Estate and General forms covering hundreds of legal subjects and issues including wills, bankruptcy, divorce, landlord tenant and many others. A selection of legal documents are available in Spanish-language and Spanish-English bilingual versions. Look for the \* signifier in your search results. 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](http://TRL.org/small-business) to learn more.



### Health & Hope Have Their 2nd Annual Flapjack Fundraiser!

The Health and Hope Free Medical Clinic in Centralia is a beacon of compassion, providing essential healthcare to uninsured residents of Lewis County. Open every Tuesday from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM, our clinic ensures that those in need receive the medical care they deserve—at no cost. You can help keep our mission alive! Join us for our 2nd Annual Flapjack Fundraiser on Saturday, March 22nd, at Applebee's in Chehalis. For just \$12, enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast while supporting free healthcare in our community. This event is open to all, and tickets are available online or at the door. Drop by anytime between 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM to show your support!

For more details, visit [www.hhmo.org](http://www.hhmo.org) or find us on Facebook. Together, we can make a difference

### Celebrate March Madness at O'Blarney's!

March Madness at O'Blarney's Irish Pub. Where everyone is a VIP "Very Irish Person" on St. Patrick's Day. This year we will again be celebrating all week long. Come enjoy our entertainers, The Olympia Highlanders Pipe & Drum Band and Haley Pendergast Irish Dance Team, they will be in the Pub both Saturday March 15th and of course St. Patrick's Day Monday March 17th. We also have "DJ Travisty" spinning all you dance favorites beginning at 9:00pm on Saturday Night. Don't forget the food, Corned Beef and Cabbage, Shepard's Pie, Irish Lamb Stew, Bangers and Mash, Soda Bread, Reuben Egg rolls, and Fish and Chips to name a few and what would St. Patrick's Day be without a cold beverage to wash it all down, O'Blarney's Irish Pub features 14 drafts beers including

Guinness Stout, Harp Irish Lager, Irish Death and many of your favorite Irish Spirits. Don't miss out on SW Washington's best St. Patrick's Day celebration.

Run Amok Irish Run Club kicks off the season on Thursday March 13th checkout all the details on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/runamokirishcentralia/>

We have set the bar high with our state of the art all HD satellite television system where you can watch the entire NCAA Basketball tournament simultaneously don't miss a second of the action. Happy Hour: Monday –Friday 3-6pm. Check us out online at [www.oblarneypub.com](http://www.oblarneypub.com) or [www.gibsonhouseeventcenter.com](http://www.gibsonhouseeventcenter.com)



### Why are you crying?

It may not feel like spring outside, but allergy season has begun in our area! If you're noticing that your eyes are itchy and watery, you are most likely experiencing allergic conjunctivitis or "eye allergies."

At Rainier Eye, we stock Allegra allergy drops to soothe itchy eyes, flush out pollen, and provide a barrier against allergens landing in your tear film. When over-the-counter eye drops and antihistamines aren't enough to keep you comfortable, we can examine you and prescribe stronger medications, too.

But, first try these simple tips to reduce your body's exposure:

- Check your vehicle's cabin air filter & replace it if dusty
- Swap your furnace filter
- Vacuum your home and wash bedding more often
- Wash your face and rinse your hair before bed so that you aren't sleeping in a face full of pollen
- Wear sunglasses outside to block allergens before they reach your eyes

-Drink lots of water to help maintain the body's natural barriers by preventing dry eye and helping your nasal passages

Rainier Eye is welcoming new patients of all ages for urgent eye care, annual vision exams, and all your eye care needs.

[www.RainierEye.com](http://www.RainierEye.com)  
360-506-5544



### ABBARNO: From Page 1

raising children.

House Bill 1340 sought to exempt prepared food from sales tax, a move that could have benefited restaurants, food vendors, and consumers.

House Bill 1564 proposed a tax credit for businesses that provide childcare assistance to employees, helping alleviate one of the biggest cost burdens

facing working families today.

There were also efforts to help businesses grow and strengthen our workforce.

House Bill 1777 aimed to streamline the process for approving apprenticeship programs, ensuring more Washingtonians could get the skills they need for high-demand jobs.

House Bill 1245 focused on promoting small business

development, making it easier for entrepreneurs to succeed.

All these bills—real solutions that would have families, businesses, and workers—were rejected.

So, where does that leave us?

It leaves us with an affordability crisis spiraling further out of control while the majority party pushes policies that will only deepen the damage.

It leaves working families, small businesses, and job creators with fewer and fewer options to stay afloat.

I have always believed that government should be an advocate for the people, not a roadblock to their success.

That is why I will continue to fight for real, practical solutions that make life in Washington more affordable—not just for a select few, but for

everyone.

I urge you to stay engaged, speak out, and join me in holding Olympia accountable. We cannot afford to let these bad policies go unchallenged.

Rep. Peter Abbarno

represents the 20th Legislative District and is the House Republican Caucus Chair.

Thank You for the Support of Our Sponsors!





**Schedule a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony!**

The Chamber offers Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies as a free service to members and non-members. To learn more or secure a date call 360-748-8885 or email [director@chamberway.com](mailto:director@chamberway.com)

**Renew Wellness**

Everyone had a great time at our Business After Hours hosted by Renew Wellness! Guests got to mingle and learn about all of the services Renew Wellness offers.

**The Hub**

The Chamber helped The Hub Bar & Restaurant formally open with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on March 1. They've done an amazing renovation of this iconic restaurant. The Hub Bar & Restaurant staff are (Top Left to Right): Patty Prince, Marnie Behling and (Bottom Left to Right) Tim Filer, John Curry, and Travis Rauch.



**UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS!**

**Legislative Update for District 20**

**Senator John Braun, Representatives Ed Orcutt and Peter Abbarno**  
**Thursday, March 27**  
**7:30 am**  
 Contact: [director@chamberway.com](mailto:director@chamberway.com) for questions or personal alerts

**Forum**

**Thursday, March 13**  
**8 am**  
**Mint City Coffee Roasting**  
 539 N. Market Blvd. Chehalis  
 The Art of Decluttering! Teresa Murphy with Caring Transitions

**Business After Hours (BAH)**

**Thursday, March 20**  
**5 - 7 pm**  
**Community Mediation Center**  
 500 West Main Centralia

**Ribbon Cutting & Open House**

**Enchanted Wellness**  
**Friday, March 28 • 5 pm**  
 1176 SW 22nd Street Chehalis

**JOB FAIRS**

**Lewis County WorkSource Career & Resource Fair Dates 2025**  
**Last Friday of each month**  
**10 am - 2 pm**  
 WorkSource  
 500 Centralia College Blvd. Suite 200 Centralia  
 Employers & Job Seekers contact:  
 Alicia Little  
 360-740-6862  
[Alicia.little@esd.wa.gov](mailto:Alicia.little@esd.wa.gov)

- March 28
- April 25
- May 30
- June 27
- July 25
- August 29
- September 26
- October 31



**Owner of Bark N' Bath Colleen Johnson** showed off her display of local dog treats at the Bark N' Bath ribbon cutting.



**Bark N' Bath**

Community members and four legged friends joined in on the fun as Bark N' Bath held the ribbon cutting for their new dog spa and self wash.



**Home Show**  
*Refresh, Restyle, and More...*

**Friday, April 11 • Noon - 6 pm**  
**Saturday, April 12 • 10 am - 5 pm**



**Admission:**

- \$5** Adults
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**Free Parking**

**Contact Us**

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**Location**

Southwest Washington Fairgrounds  
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[Chamberway.com](http://Chamberway.com)



**Trent Henning Forum**

At our February Forum, Trent Henning from Clarity Consulting led a discussion on goal setting for businesses.