

Business Connections



FEBRUARY 2026

Centralia - Chehalis Chamber of Commerce

Promote ♦ Protect ♦ Inform

Inside This Edition: Business of the Year, Evergreen Award, and Ambassador of the year announced!

Sticklin-Brown Funeral Chapel Named Business of the Year

By Cynthia Mudge

Chamber Executive Director

When selecting a recipient for the Chamber's Business of the Year award, the Chamber Board looks for businesses that not only support the Chamber but also significantly contribute to, expand, and inspire the community. This year, that honor was bestowed on Sticklin-Brown Funeral Chapel.

Sticklin-Brown's enthusiasm for community involvement is truly inspiring. Their roots in Lewis County date back to the 1890s with the founding of Sticklin, followed by the opening of Fissell Funeral Home in 1910, which later became Brown Mortuary in 1956.

The most recent chapter in the funeral chapel's history came in 2009, when both locations became part of Dignity Memorial. In 2025, Sticklin and Brown officially merged to operate as Sticklin-Brown Funeral Chapel. While the name has evolved, the nearly 200-year connection to the local community remains unchanged and continues to



Sticklin-Brown Funeral Chapel staff: Lucy Davis, Jordan Keffeler, Christine Vierra, Amanda Curry, Billy Piontek and Samuel Gallow.

be part of the organization's DNA.

Sticklin-Brown actively supports a wide range of community efforts, including fundraising with the Chehalis Tribe for its Tribal Loan Fund, volunteering at Morton's annual Jubilee, supporting Possibilities Women's Center, and partnering with local churches.

Both Sticklin and Brown have long been Chamber

members and continue to support Chamber initiatives as a trusted resource and enthusiastic advocate for businesses throughout Lewis County, including those beyond the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber's namesake communities.

Christine Vierra, location manager for Sticklin-Brown, spearheads the organization's community outreach and leads

the team's deeply personal care for client families. Vierra is also the newest member of the Chamber Board. Along with last year's Ambassador of the Year, Amanda Curry, she has embraced Chamber involvement by volunteering at the annual banquet, assisting with décor, supporting ribbon-cutting ceremonies, Business After Hours events, Trick or Treat Transit, and numerous

other activities. Vierra is a licensed funeral director and embalmer.

Her team includes Sam Gallow, Billy Piontek, Christine Vierra, Jordan Keffeler, Lucy Davis, Nancy Rattanababpha, Ashley Coulter, and Julie Breidel.

Sticklin-Brown Funeral Chapel is also known for its unique approach to the industry, emphasizing care, kindness, and a thoughtful reimagining of the traditional funeral home experience. The team focuses on honoring each individual, ensuring every celebration of life reflects the personality and wishes of the person being remembered and their loved ones. For the past two years, Sticklin-Brown has hosted Business After Hours events to celebrate its long history and help demystify funeral services for the community.

Lewis County is home to many businesses that have served their communities for 50 years or more. Sticklin-Brown Funeral Chapel stands out as one of the region's hidden gems, quietly and consistently helping make the community a better place.

The 2026 legislative session is underway — Putting Southwest Washington first

By Rep. Peter Abbarno

20th Legislative District

The 2026 Washington state legislative session is now underway, and once again, lawmakers face serious decisions that will impact employers, workers, families, and communities across our state. For those of us representing Southwest Washington, the focus must remain on economic stability, public safety, affordability, and accountable government.

As a legislator and as a longtime advocate for small

businesses and working families, my priorities this session reflect the real concerns I hear from employers and community leaders across Centralia, Chehalis, and the surrounding region.

Bills I Sponsored: Practical Reforms That Matter Locally

This session, I have sponsored legislation aimed at improving fairness, safety, and regulatory balance:

House Bill 2336 — Independent Medical Exams
This bill addresses the use of independent medical

examinations in the workers' compensation system to ensure fairness, transparency, and integrity for both injured workers and employers.

Predictable and trustworthy systems help control costs and reduce disputes that burden businesses and employees alike.

House Bill 2343 — Game Farms and Water Quality

HB 2343 provides clarity and balance in water quality regulations affecting publicly managed game farms. It is important that government agencies, like the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, which manages Bob Oke Game Farm in Centralia, be required to comply with all water quality and disposal standards applicable to private entities.

House Bill 2430 — Crime Victim Penalty Assessments

Public safety remains essential to a healthy economy. This legislation would make it mandatory for courts to impose



Peter Abbarno

legal financial obligations for criminals committing domestic violence, child sex crimes, and crimes against persons. Those funds would be used to support victims.

Supporting Pro-Business and Community-Focused Legislation

In addition to bills I sponsored, I am supporting legislation that aligns with the Chamber's priorities of affordability, workforce support, and community investment, including:

HB 2121 — Property tax relief for nonprofits and schools

HB 2126 — Fuel tax exemptions for school buses

HB 2130 — Repeal of newly enacted 2025 taxes

HB 2133 — Tax relief for senior citizen centers

HB 2135 — Adaptive housing tax preferences

HB 2167 — Sales tax reductions

HB 2188 & HB 2218 — Reforms to industrial insurance rates and workers' compensation medical care

HB 2317 & HB 2318 — Early learning licensing improvements

and Early Achievers awards

HB 2338 — Community-scale weatherization projects to reduce energy costs and improve housing efficiency

Each of these proposals reflects a commitment to keeping Washington competitive, affordable, and responsive to the needs of employers, workers, and families.

A Commitment to Economic Growth and Accountability

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. When government overregulates, overspends, or shifts costs onto employers, it threatens jobs and community stability. This session, I will continue advocating for:

- Regulatory certainty for employers
- Tax policies that encourage investment and job creation
- Workforce development and early learning support
- Strong public safety and victim-centered justice
- Transparency and accountability in state government

The Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce plays a critical role in shaping our regional economy, and I value its partnership and feedback. I welcome continued dialogue throughout the session and remain committed to representing the interests of Southwest Washington in Olympia.

Together, we can keep our communities safe, our economy growing, and our state focused on solutions — not headlines.

...

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

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Directory

Paula Burrows Honored With Evergreen Award

By Cynthia Mudge

Chamber Executive Director

“The community is like a root system: the stronger the roots, the stronger the tree.”

Each year, the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce recognizes an individual who has made a significant and lasting contribution to the community. The Chamber Board established the Evergreen Award in 1999 to honor the late Rob Fuller for his love of community, involvement and generosity.

Paula Burrows is one of Lewis County’s true community champions and exemplifies the heart and spirit of the Evergreen Award. Through sustained philanthropy, hands-on service and visionary leadership, Burrows has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to improving the lives of children, families and community members throughout Lewis County and beyond.

One of her most significant accomplishments is co-founding Lewis County Footsteps of Hope, established in December 2024 to address food insecurity and basic needs for students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in Lewis County..

In its first year alone, the organization has supported approximately 390 students by providing weekly food backpacks, extended-weekend food assistance and limited access to family pantries at high-need schools. As funding allows, the program continues to expand. Beyond food access, Footsteps of Hope has distributed approximately 550 coats, 250 pairs of shoes, 1,300 articles of clothing and multiple



Photos provided

Paula Burrows was honored with the 2025 Evergreen Award at the Chamber Banquet.

essential hygiene items.

Burrows’ direct service also includes long-standing support of organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club of Lewis County, Hope Alliance, The United Way of Lewis County, The Forgotten Children’s Fund, Lewis County Young Life, and the The Twirl Foundation. Through sponsorships, donations and event leadership, she has helped expand youth programming, early childhood literacy initiatives, and access to camps and enrichment opportunities.

Her leadership extends statewide through her role co-leading eXp Realty’s Community Service Week in Washington, where she coordinates service efforts across nine locations. She has served on the eXp Extend a Hand Charity Committee and is currently on the Agent Advisory Council for eXp Realty.

Due to her grassroots



Chamber Vice President Jennifer Brown with Evergreen Award winner Paula Burrows.

efforts, as a co-founder of the Toledo Community Foundation, Burrows strengthened local fundraising capacity by sponsoring venues and supporting community events.

Additionally, Paula created online videos that promoted over 50 Lewis County businesses and non-profits to help ensure their continued success.

Through compassion, collaboration and strategic leadership, Paula Burrows has transformed resources into real-world impact—meeting immediate needs while building sustainable systems of care for Lewis County’s most vulnerable residents. Her service exemplifies what it truly means to lead with purpose and heart.

Cory Moses honored as 2025 Ambassador of the Year



Ambassador Chair, Christine Brower, honored Cory Moses at the Banquet.

By Cynthia Mudge

Chamber Executive Director

& Juanita McNaughton

Member Relations

Cory Moses, owner of Zen Events & Entertainment, has been named the Chamber’s 2025 Ambassador of the Year in recognition of her long-standing dedication to supporting local businesses and the community.

Cory has been an active Chamber Ambassador for many years, first joining in 2011 while she was serving as the Lewis County PUD Communications Liaison; she now participates as a business owner through her own company, Zen Events & Entertainment. In addition to the Chamber, she volunteers with several community organizations, most prominently, her work with the Adaline Coffman Guild, which raises funds for uncompensated care at Seattle Children’s Hospital.

The Ambassador of the Year award recognizes individuals who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to local businesses, aligning



Photos provided

Cory Moses received the 2025 Ambassador of the Year Award.

with the Chamber’s mission to promote, protect and inform. Cory regularly attends ribbon-cutting ceremonies and volunteers at numerous Chamber events, including Business After Hours, the annual golf tournament, banquet and Santa Parade.

“I love celebrating our businesses as they open and grow,” Moses said. “Supporting our neighbors’ talents and skills is how our Community stays strong.”

Chamber Ambassadors are volunteers who support the Chamber’s mission by connecting with members and new businesses while assisting

with key events and activities. They serve as advocates for the local business community and often share a strong commitment to volunteerism. Moses exemplifies those qualities.

Cory, her husband, Matt, and her family are lifelong Lewis County residents. Her daughter, Casara and two grandsons live and thrive in Chehalis. Cory grew up in Toledo and learned there how to be a conscious contributor to the community. Cory’s volunteerism and leadership all stem from wanting everyone in the community to have access to success. She cherishes our

beautiful little corner of the PNW.

Cory has worked her whole life in Lewis County; starting in hospitality and service, she easily could have been your clerk at Fuller’s Deli in the late 80s! After a decade in the Timber industry, a decade in Wealth Management, a decade and a half in Public Power, she’s now “throwing parties for a living” with Zen Events. Her professional background includes public relations, project management, administration, and communications.

Now through Zen Events, Moses has found a new way to succeed & assist in our community. By curating events, she’s able to offer a “Less Stress” approach to celebrating life’s moments; “Let Me Do It” is literally part of her mission statement. When asked what her favorite occasion to organize has been, she refers to helping with Celebrations of Lives Well Lived, “Being able to help a family during their most difficult time is deeply meaningful work,” Moses said, “I no longer make the corporate big bucks, yet I’m the richest I’ve ever been, I truly love what I’m able to offer my community.”

The Chamber board and staff expressed their appreciation at their Annual Banquet in January for Moses’ many contributions and thanked her, along with all Chamber Ambassadors, for their continued energy and volunteer commitment in support of the Chamber and the community.

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October 20-29



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Flags of Honor

Visit chamberway.com to learn how you can honor a veteran, public safety, or significant community member through Centralia Rotary's Flags program.



BIZZBUZZ



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?



BIZZ BUZZ DEADLINE: February 15 - Send 200 words (or less) to marketing@chamberway.com

Keep an Eye On The Skies With Blue Skies Drones!

As we kick off the new year, drones are capturing stunning perspectives and serving vital roles across the Pacific Northwest. From breathtaking aerial shots of snow-covered mountains and ski resorts to real-time flood assessments in low-lying areas, drones are proving their value in both adventure and emergency response. Now, with cutting-edge 360 drones, you can capture immersive content from every angle—perfect for tourism, marketing, and interactive experiences. Whether you need visuals for insurance, social media, or promotional campaigns, Blue Skies Drones offers rentals, training, and sales. Don't just watch from the ground—own the sky. We've got a drone for that!



Enjoy Great Savings Every Day at Centralia Outlets

Shop Centralia Outlets for a vast selection of name brands and unbeatable savings this season. With Valentine's Day just around the corner, you're sure to find something special to put a smile on your loved one's face. Looking for a gift that delights the senses? Bath & Body Works offers an indulgent assortment of soaps, lotions, body sprays, candles, and more. For timeless sparkle, visit Kay Jewelers Outlet, where you'll find beautiful and fashionable jewelry to fit every budget. Coach features a wide selection of high-quality bags and accessories perfect for him or her. Not sure what to buy for him? Explore stylish shirts, cufflinks, wallets, belts, and ties at Pendleton, DXL, and Polo Ralph Lauren. Be sure to shop President's Day weekend for exceptional sales on cozy sleepwear, robes, and slippers at Aeropostale, The Children's Place, Gap Factory, and many

more stores. New merchandise arrives daily at Centralia Outlets, so visit often for the best selection and daily discounts. For a complete list of stores, visit www.centraliaoutlets.com, or follow us on Facebook for gift-giving ideas and updates on new arrivals.



Valentine's Sweetheart Dinner Train Ride - February 14, 2026

Chehalis - We're lovin' it this year! The Chehalis-Centralia Railroad invites you to enjoy a 2-hour round trip excursion in the vintage 1920s dining car through the Chehalis River Valley. A multicourse dinner will be served while you sit back and relax! Enjoy a scrumptious meal prepared by Joy, from Once Upon a Thyme, while you take a nostalgic round trip to Ruth, (a former railstop near Boistfort/Curtis) just 9 miles west of Chehalis. Tables of four allow you to enjoy your friends and family. This special excursion is set for Saturday, February 14, and departs from the depot at 5:00 p.m. with return expected at 7:00 p.m. The full experience is \$89 per person with free parking. We pride ourselves with ADA accessible parking and an accessible ramp to the loading platform. The Depot is located at 1101 SW Sylvanus Street, Chehalis, WA 98532 (Halfway between Seattle and Portland at Exit 77 on I-5) Reservations must be made 6 days before the departure date. Seating choices and tickets must

be reserved online. Tables seat 4. This popular ride is limited to 100 guests and tends to sell out, so plan your special day today and check our website for reservations. More details and reservations are available on our website. <https://steamtrainride.com>.



NAMI Lewis County Has Mental Health Support Groups For You!

NAMI stands for National Alliance on Mental Illness. At the Lewis County affiliate we are a peer-led support organization for individuals and their families who live with mental health conditions. Our office Hours are 1-5 pm on Tuesdays and 11-2 on Thursdays and Saturdays. We are located at 1641 Kresky Ave. Ste. 3 Centralia, WA 98531. Our Family Support Group meets on Mondays at 6 pm. This is for adults who have loved ones living with mental illness to find support with others that have similar situations. Connections Support Group is open to anyone in the community to get support with a mental health condition. Our groups are always free. All our meetings are hybrid so you can join in-person or online. Please reach out to us directly if you have any questions or want a link to the meetings. Our office number is 360.559.1363 and you can call or text and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Contact us by email at NamiLewisCountywa@gmail.com. Visit our websites to find additional information on mental health or to find a support group that fits your schedule: NAMI.org, NAMIWA.org, or our local site NAMI.LC.org.



Local Business, Great Service at SD Plumbing!

SD Plumbing LLC is a newly established, locally owned plumbing company proudly serving Centralia and Chehalis. Built on the values of reliability, honesty, and quality workmanship, SD Plumbing was created to provide dependable residential and commercial plumbing solutions to the local community. We offer a full range of services, including general plumbing repairs, drain cleaning, leak detection, water heater repair and installation, fixture replacements, sewer line inspections, and preventative maintenance. Every job is handled with professionalism, clear communication, and attention to detail, ensuring customers receive service they can trust. As a local business, SD Plumbing understands the importance of prompt response times and personalized service. The goal is to build long-term relationships with homeowners, property managers, and local businesses by delivering consistent, high-quality results and straightforward pricing. We at SD Plumbing are proud to join the Centralia and Chehalis business community as a Chamber of Commerce member, and we look forward to contributing to the area's continued growth. With a commitment to excellence and community involvement, SD Plumbing is dedicated to keeping local homes and businesses running smoothly—one service call at a time

Gardening Classes & Events with the WSU Lewis County Master Gardeners

The WSU Extension Lewis County Master Gardeners invite the community to a new year of free gardening education, featuring classes designed to inspire, inform, and support gardeners of all experience levels. Each session is led by trained Master Gardeners who bring local expertise and a passion for helping gardens thrive

in our unique Pacific Northwest climate. This year's lineup includes a variety of engaging topics such as seed saving and starting, vegetable gardening, dividing and growing dahlias, tool sharpening, pollinator support, blueberry care, planting and growing garlic, and more. Many classes include live presentations in our demonstration gardens, including real-world problem solving, and opportunities to bring your own questions for personalized guidance. No matter your experience level, you'll discover classes that meet you where you are. Build new skills or sharpen the ones you already have! Classes are held throughout the year at locations across Lewis County. For the full schedule, class descriptions, and updates on special events (including our Annual Spring Plant Sale), visit <https://lewiscounty.mastergardenerfoundation.org/>



Lewis County Footsteps of Hope

Join us on Saturday, March 28, 2026 for Jeans & Jewels: Sparkling in Denim, a night of denim, sparkle, great food, live music, and purpose. This event supports Lewis County students by helping provide essential resources so kids can show up to school feeling supported and ready to succeed. We are now welcoming event sponsors and auction item donations. Your support helps make this night, and our impact, possible. Tickets and tables available 360-520-4810 • www.lcfootstepsofhope.org

Thank You for the Support of Our Sponsors!

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The Cluttered Closet

celebrated opening with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in January. Shown here are co-owners Michele Cope (L) and Madison Horn (R).



DXL Menswear

moved their location at Centralia Outlets to a larger and more prominent location January 26. Chehalis Mayor Tony Ketchum and Centralia Mayor Norm Chapman helped Chelsey Wayt -- DXL Men's Wear -- with their Ribbon Cutting.

UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS!

Business After Hours (BAH)

**Napavine High School
Thursday, February 19
5 - 7pm**

Career & Technical Education Program (CTE)
404 - 4th Avenue NE,
Napavine

This evening showcases their student CTE programs.

District 20 Legislative Updates

**Thursday, February 26
7:30 - 8:30 am**

Zoom Event

Call 360-748-8885 or email
Director@chamberway.com
for Zoom link

Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies

**Beat Box Doughnuts
Tuesday, February 3
Noon**

209 S. Tower, Centralia

Get Up and Glow Ribbon Cutting & Galentines

**Friday, February 6
5 - 7 pm
(Ceremony at 5:30)**

Travel to Tuscany! Deadline for Discount March 31, 2026

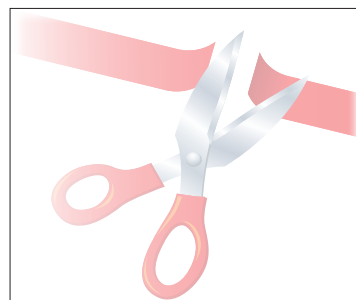
Trip Departure: Oct. 20

Travel Tuscany Open House

**Tuesday, February 17
5 - 6 pm**

500 NW Chamber Way
& via Zoom

Call 360-748-8885 or email
TheChamber@Chamberway.com
for Zoom link.



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

2026 Annual Banquet

Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce held its annual banquet on January 23 and honored the 2025 Business of the Year, Evergreen Award, and Ambassador of the year. Here is a collection of photos from the evening. Thank you to all our volunteers, auction, and dessert dash donors who made this a fabulous event. We hope all who attended enjoyed the evening and making new connections and met old friends.



Chad and Coralee Taylor, owners of The Chronicle and The Silver Agency with Dustin Klatush, Chair of the Confederated Tribes of Chehalis Reservation.



Christine Vierra, new Chamber Board Member.



The team at Peak Credit Union.



District 20 Representative Peter Abbarno with Centralia City Manager Michael Thomas and Centralia School District Superintendent Dr. Lisa Grant.



Evergreen Award winner Paula Burrows with her cousin Glenda Forga and Edna Fund.



Amber Taylor, real estate agent with The Paula Burrows Team eXp Realty holding high the prized Dessert Dash claim!



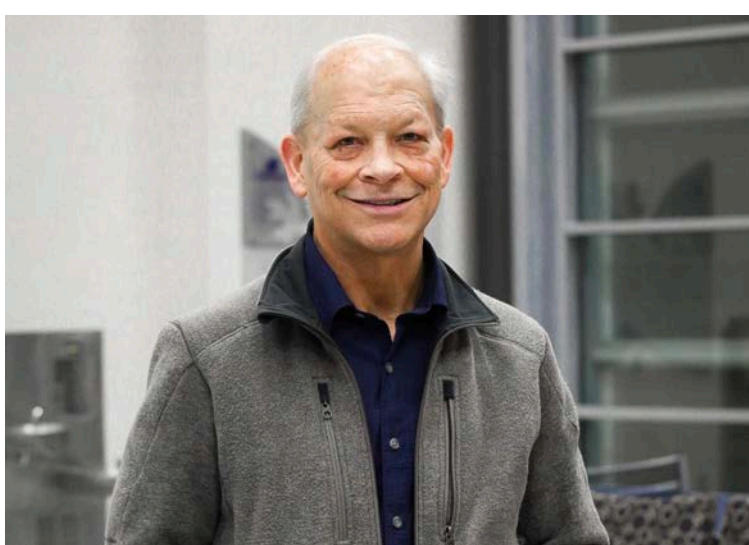
Melynn Taylor, Senator John Braun (far right) with his wife Marlo Braun.



Chehalis Mayor Tony Ketchum with Gloria Slear.



Dianne Dorey, Chamber Ambassador and Julie Shaffley, Chamber Treasurer.



Dale Pullin, with Centralia Rotary Club and representing the Flags of Honor program.