

Business Connections



SEPTMBER 2026

Centralia - Chehalis
Chamber of Commerce

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Inside This Edition: Caring for Our Community, School is Back in Session, Thank You Chamber Members and more

Sharon Care: A Legacy of Compassion, Community and Home



2026 Listeners Choice Award - Sharon Care staff proudly accept this well-deserved honor, recognizing their dedication and compassionate service to our community.”

By Juanita MacNaughton

For more than seven decades, Sharon Care has been a part of the Centralia-Chehalis community, providing care that goes beyond meeting the physical needs of its residents. Since its beginnings in the 1950s, Sharon Care has grown and evolved while maintaining one important belief: quality care begins with compassion and a genuine sense of home.

Sharon Care’s story began in a two-story home with six bedrooms, each accommodating two residents. Remarkably, that original home is still part of the Sharon Care property today. What was once the home where Sharon Care began now serves as the facility’s activities room. It is a meaningful reminder of how far Sharon Care has come while keeping its history and roots at



the heart of its community.

Today, Sharon Care provides skilled nursing, short-term care, physical therapy, memory care and trauma-informed care. While the facility has grown, its commitment to residents and the people who care for them remains at the heart of everything they do.

Jonathan Blood, head administrator at Sharon Care, joined the organization two years ago. One of the first things that stood out to him was the compassion among



Photos provided

You never know who you might find visiting the residents at Sharon Care! Sometimes it’s a familiar face, and sometimes... It’s a pony! What a fun surprise for the residents and staff!



The Real-Life Care Bears of Sharon Care! The Sharon Care team looks forward to celebrating Halloween with their residents, creating a day filled with laughter, smiles, creativity, and a whole lot of fun. It’s just one more way they show that caring for their residents means making every moment special!

the staff and between staff and residents.

“It’s one of the most caring facilities I have ever worked in,” Blood shared. “It has been a pleasure to be a part of.”

That caring culture is reflected in the longevity of Sharon Care’s staff. The

Housekeeping Supervisor has been with the organization for 34 years, the business office manager for 28 years, and the director of nursing for 10 years. Their years of experience help create the familiarity, trust and relationships that make Sharon Care feel like home.

For many families, Sharon Care becomes part of their family history. Over the years, residents have returned to the facility after having parents, grandparents or other loved ones receive care there. For

*Please See **CARE**, Page 3*

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Our Students Deserve More

By Rep. Peter Abbarno
20th Legislative District

As students across Washington head back to school, there is a familiar excitement in our communities. Backpacks are filled, school buses return to the roads, fall sports begin, and classrooms are again filled with students ready to learn.

As a parent, community member, and state legislator,

I believe few responsibilities are more important than preparing the next generation for success.

Education changes lives. A quality education gives students the foundation to attend college, enter an apprenticeship, learn a skilled trade, serve in the



military, start a business, or begin a career. Strong schools create opportunities, strengthen families, and build stronger communities.

Washington is fortunate to have tremendous teachers, paraeducators, bus drivers, counselors, coaches, administrators, and volunteers dedicated to our students. Supporting them also requires honestly evaluating whether our education system is producing the results our students deserve.

Our students deserve more than the status quo.

The numbers show why improvement must be a priority. On Washington’s 2025 state assessments, 70.9% of students demonstrated foundational grade-level knowledge or above in English language arts and 63.3% did so in math. However, the more traditional Level 3 or 4 standard; those students on track for college-level learning without remediation

*Please See **ABBARNO**, Page 3*



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 Directory

Celebrating the Heart of Our Community



Pictured here is Rodney Youckton, the Chief Community Relations Officer with Lucky Eagle Casino! This picture was taken at their Business After Hours, where he gave a wonderful speech on the impact Lucky Eagle is having on their growing community, and how they are looking to push their impact and support even further!

By Juanita MacNaughton

At the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, we know that a strong community is built by people who care—and we are incredibly fortunate to have a membership filled with businesses and organizations that demonstrate that commitment every day.

Our Chamber members are more than business owners, employees, and community organizations. You are neighbors, volunteers, mentors, sponsors, leaders, and supporters who continually find ways to give back and make a difference. Whether you are sponsoring a local event, donating to a nonprofit, volunteering your time, supporting another local business, or simply showing up when our community needs you, your dedication does not go unnoticed.

We are grateful for the many ways our members contribute to Centralia, Chehalis, and communities throughout Lewis County. Your devotion to service helps create opportunities, strengthens connections, and makes our community a place where people want to live,



The wonderful staff at LC Coffee, celebrating the grand opening of their newest venture, The Dugout. The new expansion aims to provide food and coffee to the families attending the awesome sports tournaments in Chehalis!



The awesome team from Peak Credit Union! This picture was taken at the Annual Chamber Banquet. This picture covers just some of the wonderful Peak team, with staff from Onalaska, Chehalis, and Centralia!

work, raise their families, and build their businesses.

To celebrate you, our amazing Chamber members, we invite you to join us for our Member Appreciation

Luncheon on September 10 from 11:30 AM–1:00 PM, hosted by Dick’s Brewing Company. We are also incredibly grateful to Lucky Eagle Casino & Hotel, who is graciously providing a delicious meal for our members.

We know this luncheon may not seem like much compared to everything you do for our community every single day, but it is our way of saying THANK YOU! Thank you for believing in local business.

Thank you for investing in our community. Thank you for giving your time, talents, resources, and heart to make Lewis County a better place.

We are honored to serve alongside you and proud to call you Chamber members. Our community is stronger because of you, and we appreciate everything you do!

With sincere appreciation,
The Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce



From left to right: Jennifer Brown with Better Body Healing, Jeff Yanish with ToledoTel, and Ryan Endsley with Althausen Ryan Abbarno. This picture was taken at the annual ToledoTel Business After Hours!



Lightcurve Internet was at the annual Rob Fuller Scholarship Luncheon, where they presented Ethan Hanses with an awesome Scholarship!

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





Centralia - Chehalis Chamber of Commerce

Centralia Chehalis Chamber of Commerce

Invites you to the

Membership Luncheon Appreciation

September 10, 2026 • 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Dick's Brewing Company
3516 Galving Rd,
Centralia, WA 98531

Lunch Sponsored by
Lucky Eagle Casino & Hotel

Call Chamber office for any questions
360-748-8885
chamberway.com

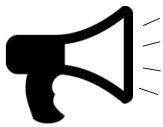
Business After Hours (BAH)

Thursday, September 17 • 5 - 7 pm

ToledoTel • 183 Plomondon Rd., Toledo

Food, Fun and Prizes!





BIZZBUZZ



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?



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

Get to Dancing With The SWW Dance Center!

Get to Dancing Registration is now open for classes for the 2026-2027 dance season.

Register online at swwdance.org. Fall classes begin Monday, September 14. You will find schedules and school information on their web site.



Register early as classes fill up quickly. SWDC will hold a “Back to Dance” open house and BBQ on Saturday, September 12. If you are new to SWDC, come and take a tour, meet staff and register for classes. For all, come and enjoy some BBQ and see your dance friends.

For more information call: 360-748-4789 or email: info@swwdance.org

Commercial Cleaning & Floor Maintenance – Now Accepting New Customers!

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Fall Into Big Savings at Centralia Outlets!

Fall is here, and September is the perfect time to refresh wardrobes, update the home, and score incredible deals on trusted name brands at Centralia Outlets—the Northwest’s Original Outlet Shopping Destination! For over 38 years, Centralia Outlets has been bringing shoppers big brands and even bigger savings. With more than 30 brand names, there’s something for everyone—from fall apparel, outerwear, athletic wear, and shoes to children’s clothing, handbags, accessories, and home décor.

And the savings are just getting started! Many stores are offering 30% to 70% off select new arrivals, clearance merchandise, and seasonal favorites. With new merchandise arriving daily, every visit brings something new to discover.

Whether it’s time to stock up on fall essentials, find fresh styles for the family, or simply enjoy a great shopping day, Centralia Outlets makes it easy to find quality brands at outlet prices. Don’t miss the September savings! Visit www.centraliaoutlets.com

and follow Centralia Outlets on social media for the latest sales, new arrivals, and special offers. Centralia Outlets—Big Brands. Big Savings. All Year Long.



Save Seeds, Save Money: Two Free Classes This September

Ready to grow next year’s garden for less? WSU Extension Lewis County Master Gardeners are offering two free seed saving classes this September, and everyone is welcome! **Saturday, Sept. 19, 10 a.m.** Borst Demo Garden **Saturday, Sept. 26, 10 a.m.** Salkum Timberland Library Seed saving is one of the oldest

and most rewarding gardening skills; it saves money, preserves varieties suited to our local climate, and connects you to generations of gardeners who did the same. In these hands-on classes, Master Gardener volunteers will walk through which plants are easiest to start with, how to harvest and clean seeds properly, and how to store them so they stay viable until planting time.

Whether you’re a first-time gardener or a seasoned pro looking to build up your seed library, these classes offer practical tips you can put to use right away.

Both classes are free and open to the public. Bring your questions, and enthusiasm for all things seeds!

For more information, contact WSU Extension Lewis County Master Gardeners



CARE from Page 1

these families, Sharon Care is more than a care facility—it is a familiar and trusted part of the community.

Sharon Care also believes there should always be room for fun. Its Fish Initiative is an employee engagement and culture-building program inspired by the FISH!

philosophy, which emphasizes choosing your attitude, being present, making someone’s day and bringing a sense of fun to the workplace. At Sharon Care, that philosophy has evolved into activities such as scavenger hunts, where 3D-printed fish and other items are hidden throughout the building for staff, residents and leadership to discover. The goal is

simple: encourage interaction, teamwork and a little fun throughout the day.

Community events are another important part of Sharon Care’s mission. On September 26, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sharon Care will host a classic car show featuring live music, hot dogs, door prizes and plenty of nostalgia. For residents, the classic cars can

bring back memories of vehicles they once owned, places they traveled and people they shared those experiences with.

Pets are also a special part of life at Sharon Care. Volunteers and staff members often bring their pets to visit residents, creating moments of excitement, comfort and connection. These visits can brighten a resident’s day and provide another

meaningful way for people and the community to connect.

From its humble beginnings in a small two-story home to the community it is today, Sharon Care continues to build its legacy on relationships, compassion and connection.

Most importantly, Sharon Care strives to make every resident feel not simply cared for, but truly at home.

ABBARNO from Page 1

is considerably lower: 50.9% in ELA and 40.7% in math.

There are successes, too. Among Washington students who took the SAT in 2025, 51% met both the reading/writing and math college-readiness benchmarks, compared with 39% nationally. We should acknowledge where students succeed while recognizing that too many are still being left behind.

Our commitment to education should not be measured simply by how much government spends, but by how well students succeed. However, there should be great concern when those cuts are in areas most impactful in the classroom and to the students.

I was concerned about several decisions made by the majority party and governor during the 2026 legislative session. The final supplemental budget reduced Transition to Kindergarten by approximately \$27.3 million and Local Effort Assistance by approximately \$25.1 million, affecting support for districts with less capacity to raise local levy dollars. Changes to school-bus depreciation reduced payments by approximately \$25.8 million, and Running Start was reduced by approximately \$7 million.

Those aren’t abstract numbers. They represent opportunities for students and resources for local schools.

Running Start is one of Washington’s education success stories. Students can simultaneously earn high school and college credit, challenge themselves academically, and save their families thousands of dollars in future college costs. Beginning this school year, the Legislature reduced the combined maximum funded enrollment available to Running Start students from 1.4 to 1.3 full-

time equivalent for the 2026–27 and 2027–28 school years.

At a time when families are struggling with affordability, we should expand opportunities that save families money; not restrict them. In 2027, we should restore that opportunity.

We should also strengthen Career and Technical Education. College is an excellent path, but it isn’t the only path to success. Apprenticeships, construction, manufacturing, health care, agriculture, technology, public safety, and the skilled trades offer rewarding, family-wage careers. Students should have opportunities to explore those careers, earn industry-recognized credentials, and graduate with skills employers need.

We must continue improving special education funding. The Legislature has made important bipartisan progress, including increased funding and removal of the special-education funding enrollment cap. But our obligation does not end there. When the state does not cover actual special-education costs, districts must use local levy dollars and other resources to fill the gap.

Students need more education dollars closer to the classroom. Before Olympia creates another administrative requirement or expands bureaucracy, we should ask a simple question: Will this help a student learn?

Our priorities should be teachers, paraeducators, special education, classroom materials, student safety, transportation, literacy, mathematics, and programs with measurable results.

Finally, and most importantly, we must recognize parents as essential partners. Parents are a child’s first and most important teachers. They deserve transparency about

curriculum, academic progress, attendance, safety, and the services their children receive. Strong schools don’t push parents away, they invite them in.

In 2027, our agenda should be clear: restore Running Start, strengthen early literacy and kindergarten readiness, expand CTE and skills centers, meet special-education obligations, address chronic absenteeism, protect levy equalization,

and direct more resources toward classrooms and student outcomes.

These shouldn’t be Republican priorities or Democratic priorities. They should be Washington priorities.

Washington has incredible students, talented educators, innovative employers, and communities that care deeply about their schools. We have everything necessary to build

one of America’s best education systems.

Every student deserves high expectations. Every student deserves opportunity. And every student deserves an education system focused on helping them succeed.

...
Peter Abbarno, Attorney and Partner at Althausen Rayan Abbarno, and State Representative in the 20th Legislative District.



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The Brick BJJ Opens Their Doors

What a wonderful turnout we had in Chehalis! Tons of friends and family came out to support The Brick BJJ on their Grand Opening! They have been soft-open since October, but wanted to make things official! Lots of great opportunities to learn effective self defense. The best part, if you are between the ages of 5 and 99 years old, they have space for you! You can find them at 536 N. Market Blvd, in Chehalis! Or you can reach them by phone at (360) 347-6201.



Business After Hours

80 Years and so many to go! This Business After Hours was a special celebration with Althausser Rayan Abbarno after 80 years of serving our community.



The NexGen Children's Salon

The NexGen Children's Salon celebrated their Grand Opening with a ribbon cutting at their new location 1000 Kreskey Ave, Suite C. Centralia, WA. We are so excited to have this amazing space in our community. For all your littles hair styling needs call (360) 506-4101 and schedule your appointment.

**UPCOMING
CHAMBER EVENTS!**

Business After Hours

September

ToledoTel

Thursday,

September 17

5 - 7 pm

183 Plomondon Road,
Toledo

Other Events

Hub City 3 On 3

Friday/Saturday,

September 4 - 7

(Labor Day weekend)

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Oktoberfest

Cornhole

Saturday, October 10

1 pm onsite registration
& warmup

2 pm bags start flying

Dick's Brewing

3516 Galvin Road,
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com and look under the

Events Tab or call

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