CIRCULATES IN THE HEART OF THE SCENIC COLUMBIA GORGE

The Skamania County Pioneer

Volume One Hundred Thirty-Seven Number Forty, Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026 Single Copy $1 Publication No. 497720 Stevenson, Washington

The Association of Washington Business Manufacturing Tour made a stop in Skamania County last week.

AWB Manufacturing Tour visits Silver Star Industries on National Manufacturing Day

Three generations of family ownership connect local craftsmanship with customers across North America

By Angie Martin
SCCOC
For The Pioneer

The Association of Washington Business (AWB) Manufacturing Week bus tour came to Skamania County on Oct. 2, with a visit to Silver Star Industries, one of the county's larger employers.

Coinciding with National Manufacturing Day, the visit highlighted the skilled workers and manufacturing capabilities that strengthen the rural economy in Skamania County.

A family-owned business spanning three generations, Silver Star Industries brings together craftsmanship, technology and custom design to manufacture products for retail and commercial environments.

Headquartered in North Bonneville, the company serves customers throughout the United States and Canada, connecting manufacturing in the Columbia River Gorge with projects across North America.

Silver Star's operations encompass approximately 125,000 square feet of manufacturing space across multiple facilities. In addition to its main North Bonneville location, the company operates a nearby metal manufacturing plant, a second factory approximately 12 miles west, and a dedicated light panel and kiosk production facility in Stevenson.

Its capabilities include fabrication using wood, metal, acrylic and solid surface materials, allowing the company to complete a broad range of production work in-house.

The company manufactures custom retail furniture, store fixtures, display cases, cabinetry, checkout counters, kiosks and illuminated displays. Its work ranges from individual custom pieces to complete store fixture packages and production runs for multiple locations.

Tour members visted Silver Star Industries on National Manufacturing Day, Oct. 2.

AWB's stop brings statewide attention to the manufacturing expertise found in Skamania County. For rural communities, employers such as Silver Star help diversify the economy, support local households and provide opportunities to develop specialized skills in design, fabrication and production.

AWB serves as Washington's manufacturing association and advocates for the state's employers. Its annual Manufacturing Week bus tour showcases the diversity of products made in Washington, raises awareness of manufacturing's economic contributions and highlights careers in modern manufacturing.

Now in its 10th year, the tour also visits education and training centers to spotlight the development of the next generation of skilled workers. AWB's manufacturing focus includes advocating for policies that help manufacturers grow and create opportunities throughout the state.

National Manufacturing Day, observed this year on Oct. 2, celebrates modern manufacturing and encourages students, families and communities to explore manufacturing careers.

Silver Star's inclusion in the tour offers an opportunity to recognize the people and products that make Skamania County part of that national story.

For more information, visit silverstarindustries.com or awb.org.

The Skamania County Chamber of Commerce supports local businesses through promotion, networking, advocacy and community connections. The Chamber works to strengthen the local economy and promote Skamania County as a place to visit, live and do business. Learn more at skamania.org.

Skamania Senior Services to host energy assistance sign up events

Local seniors and individuals with disabilities can receive help applying for energy and utility assistance

Skamania County Senior Services is partnering with Washington Gorge Action Programs, Skamania County PUD and the City of Stevenson to hold two Energy Assistance Sign-Up events for qualifying Skamania County residents.

The events will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 27, and Wednesday, Oct. 28, at the Hegewald Center Auditorium in Stevenson.

During the events, staff will help eligible residents' complete applications for WAGAP's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the City of Stevenson's reduced water and sewer rate program and Skamania County PUD's low-income rebate program.

The sign-up events are intended for Skamania County residents who are age 60 or older or who qualify based on disability. Eligibility requirements and benefits vary by program.

Last year, approximately 75 Skamania County seniors received help completing energy assistance applications during the annual sign-up event. Senior Services encourages residents who may qualify to attend, including those who have not previously applied for assistance.

WAGAP's Home Energy Assistance Program helps qualifying households with heating expenses. Assistance may be available for electricity, natural gas, propane, wood and other heating sources.

The Skamania County PUD program provides

Continued on p. 6

Skamania County expands health services to privately insured residents

By James Goldmeer
The Pioneer

Skamania County Community Health has expanded its routine outpatient **mental health services t**o include children and adolescents with private health insurance, according to agency officials. The move breaks open clinical access for local families who previously faced narrow coverage options in the rural Columbia River Gorge region.

While the county agency has long delivered outpatient behavioral healthcare to residents enrolled in Washington State Apple Health Medicaid, health department documents state that youth under age 18 with commercial insurance plans can now receive care directly through the county.

The clinical expansion coincides with the rollout of the Skamania County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) 2026–2030, a comprehensive five-year strategy designed to address gaps in youth well-being, behavioral health infrastructure and community connection, public health officials said.

CHIP states that middle-income families with commercial health coverage in Skamania County previously faced a shortage of local options, leading to long waitlists, high out-of-pocket costs, or travel across county lines for pediatric mental health care, local health advocates said.

Under the expanded program, Skamania County Community Health reports it is accepting new youth patients covered by major commercial and managed care plans:

- Commercial Insurers: Aetna, Cigna, Premera, Regence, UMR and UnitedHealthcare.
- Managed Care Organizations: Community Health Plan of Washington (CHPW), Molina Healthcare, Wellpoint and Coordinated Care.

Department billing specialists are assisting families with intake, while clinicians continue to treat youth and adults enrolled in Apple Health Medicaid, department staff said.

County health records indicate the clinical service expansion aligns with strategic priorities established in the county's 2026–2030 CHIP. The plan synthesizes clinical data, stakeholder feedback and findings from a county-wide prioritization survey conducted in May 2025.

According to county documentation, the five-year strategy focuses on three main priorities:

Youth Well-Being and

Continued on p. 3

News Briefs

Candidate Forum is October 7

A candidate forum will be held from 6–8:30 p.m. at the Rock Creek Hegewald Center in Stevenson on Oct. 7.

Community information event Oct. 14

Join Columbia Riverkeeper and Friends of the Columbia Gorge on Wednesday, Oct. 14, for another Community Info Session to learn more about this unprecedented experiment.

Here, you can meet the organizations fighting this project, ask questions with the people researching environmental impacts, and learn how you can get involved to keep the Columbia River power line free.

WHAT: No Underwater Power Line Community Information Event - Cascade Locks

WHEN: 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 14

WHERE: Thunder Island Brewing Co., 601 NW Wana Pa St. Cascade Locks, Ore.

COST: Free! This is during Thunder Island's Community Night!

RSVP via Columbia Riverkeeper's website to let them know that you'll be attending.

Mentors wanted for new program by MCIA

There is a new mentorship program starting at the Mid-Columbia Innovation Hub, and they're looking for people who've built things, run teams, or learned the hard way.

This first step is building out a team of potential mentors, and that's where you come in!

Once there is a pool of about 25 mentors, MCIH will start opening applications for mentees and the matchmaking process begins.

This isn't about being an "expert" or having all the answers. It's about being a sounding board, sharing perspective, asking good questions, and helping founders think through real decisions.

The commitment is intentionally modest, expectations will be clear, and MCIH will handle the logistics. They are looking for mentors from all over, so no, you don't have to be located in The Gorge to be a Gorge Mentor.

If you've ever wished you'd had someone to talk things through with while building your business, this is a chance to be that person for someone else.

Email Jakob with questions or apply below. jakob@mdecc.org

Inside:

- Sheriff's report .....Page 2
- Church Directory .....Page 3
- Classified Ads .....Page 4
- Athletes of the week .....Page 6
- Obituary .....Page 6

This day in history

1913	Moving assembly line debuts at Ford factory.
1916	Georgia Tech shuts out Cumberland, 222-0, in most lopsided college football game.
1944	Hundreds of prisoners revolt at Auschwitz-Birkenau.
1975	A judge reverses John Lennon's deportation order
2001	U.S.-led attack on Afghanistan begins.