



# The East County JOURNAL

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## Packwood group talks highway safety concerns

BY AMBER BROWN  
East County Journal

“When it is just the three commissioners, sometimes it’s hard for (the state) legislature to listen to us. However, a citizen’s petition shows many voices and can make a big difference,” Lewis County Commissioner Scott Brummer said when addressing the group assembled at the Packwood Business Owners Committee (PBOC) at the regular meeting on Friday, May 8.

At the previous meeting, Brummer received the citizen’s petition from Packwood resident Kim Pawlawski about the safety of Packwood regarding U.S. Hwy. 12 running through the middle of the town.

Brummer invited House Representative Ed Orcutt to attend the PBOC meeting and Orcutt, who is on the transportation committee, did. “I’m here to listen and see,” he said. Orcutt said that being able to hear the concerns of the citizens and see the particular areas that need addressed may help him “elevate Packwood on the priority list.”

After the meeting, Orcutt and Brummer were given a walking tour of Packwood along with Mindy Brooks, director of

community development, Pawlawski and others.

In other news, Sally Van Boheeman, the visitor’s center manager, said that the visitor’s center saw an increase for visitors in April over last year’s. There were 346 visitors who stopped in and 223 spent the night in Packwood. “People only stop in to ask to use the bathroom,” Van Boheeman said, which is the reason why the facility is closed over Memorial Day weekend.

John Holmgren, director of Centralia College East, talked about the joint musical between Centralia College and the Roxy Theater for the production of “Camelot.”

“We are down to three library assistants to run the Mountain View and Packwood Timberland Regional Libraries,” regional manager Judi Brummett said. During the budget cuts, they had two staff members cut. One was voluntary and the other was involuntary.

Packwood’s hours are being reduced to Tuesday and Saturday while Mountain View will be open Tuesday through Friday. “Tuesdays could be rough if someone calls in,” she said. The Summer Library Program will continue with perform-

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## Sandy landing

Morton/White Pass junior Mathew Parvin falls forward after a long jump at Rainier High School during the 2B Central League Championships on Friday, May 15. The District IV track meet is Thursday, May 28 in Centralia. For a complete report on League Championships, see page 12 of today’s East County Journal.



Amber Brown | East County Journal

Retired Packwood Postmaster Dave Calhoun shares a laugh with a customer on his last day on the job on Thursday, April 30.

## Packwood Postmaster stamps his final day

BY AMBER BROWN  
East County Journal

Dave Calhoun has retired from being the Packwood Postmaster of the United States Postal Service (USPS). “I have now completed 36 years of federal service between the USPS and the military,” Calhoun said. He had spent the last seven years of his career

in Packwood, driving from his home in Centralia every day of the week.

Calhoun was recruited into the U.S. Army in 1998 by his uncle when he was 19. After basic training, he was given the choice to go to South Korea or Fort Lewis. Since his original wish location of Germany was not available, he chose Fort Lewis.

“I spent most of my time between

Fort Lewis and Yakima,” he said. During his four years of service, he was deployed to Saudi Arabia during the Desert Storm war. “Just as my unit was about to push into Baghdad, they surrendered,” Calhoun said. His unit finished out the 100 days war at the Port of Demmam.

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## Tacoma Power reviews operations

BY BUDDY ROSE  
East County Journal

Tacoma Power hosted its annual Program Review and Science Conference on April 22 at the Veterans Museum in Chehalis. The annual meeting reviewed operations within Tacoma Power’s Cowlitz River Project area that includes Mayfield and Mossyrock Dams, Mayfield and Riffe Lakes, Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, Cowlitz Trout

Hatchery and the North Shore Fish Collector at Cowlitz Falls Dam.

More than 40 people attended the event, open to the public and also including a number of representatives from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board.

Cowlitz salmon and trout hatchery adult returns

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## Congdon named fire commissioner

BY AMBER BROWN  
East County Journal

The Lewis County Fire District 18 (LCFD 18) commissioners hosted their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 12. Mary Congdon was officially sworn in as a commissioner to take the place of Philip Pokorski, who resigned in March due to health issues. Congdon will fill the role until the next elections take place in 2027.

Commissioner Lonnie

Houlbjerg reported that he had been trying to find replacement steps for the truck. The cost was between \$100-\$150. However, those identified did not match the steps currently installed. He was able to find material to match but that means the steps will need to be custom built to be completed. “I will donate the cost of the aluminum to get the steps added,” he said.

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## White Pass to honor Powerful Examples of Excellence at Senior Tea

BY AMBER BROWN  
East County Journal

The White Pass School District’s Powerful Examples of Excellence awards ceremony will be during Senior Tea on Wednesday, May 27 at the high school.

Powerful Examples of Excellence is a program brought to East Lewis County by DeVaul Publishing, parent company to the East County Journal, and Tacoma Power. This program began in 2003 and has been running for 24 consecutive years.

The three school districts involved are Morton, Mossyrock and White Pass. Each school nominated students for different categories. The suggested categories are academics, the arts, community service and athletics. The schools can also suggest different categories and a few examples are leadership, citizenship and Career and Technical Education.

Each student will be presented



Chris Johnson | East County Journal

White Pass High School 2026 Powerful Examples of Excellence students are, from left: Devin McMann, Melody Quick-Leblanc, Eli Hanger, Bobby Muir, Brayden Fleetwood, Kyra Bowen, Taylor Barnes and Aliya Bradley.

### White Pass profiles

For profiles of each of the White Pass School District 2026 Powerful Examples of Excellence winners, see pages 9 and 10 in today’s East County Journal.

with trophies, congressional letters and gift bags at each individual school’s recognition ceremony. The school will receive an engraved plaque that lists the students’ and what they

were nominated for.

The recipients of the White Pass School District’s Powerful Examples of Excellence are: Aliya Bradley for The Arts, Taylor Barnes for Academics, Brayden Fleetwood for Athletics, Bobby Muir for Academics, Devin McMann for Community Service, Kyra Bowen for Leadership, Melody Quick-Leblanc for Corner Turner and Eli Hanger for Career and Technical Education.

The Mossyrock School District will have an assembly on Friday, June 6. The Morton School District’s award banquet took place on Tuesday, April 28.

The recipients of the Mossyrock School District’s Powerful Examples of Excellence are: Miley Barnes for Academics, Adyson Barrows for Athletics, Taylor Schwartz for Academics, Kyle Brockway for Athletics, Lucia Hernandez-Sanches for The Arts, Freddy Solis for Athletics,

Charly Berteaux for The Arts and Leah Contreras for Citizenship.

The recipients of the Morton School District’s Powerful Examples of Excellence include: Briar Pousson for Career and Technical Education, Kohen Ingalsbe for Student Athlete, Daniel Waleske for Most Improved, Mazzy Martin for The Arts, Gus Greiter for Leadership, Siara May for Citizenship, Jady Holmes for Academics and Noemi Lopez for Citizenship.