

## Shaping the future: Community family Legacy initiative

Join Gorge non-profits and connect with experts to learn about the importance of estate planning and adding organizations to your will.

Imagine a future where every family in the community has the opportunity to shape their legacy, where the values that matter most endure for generations to come. Unfortunately, many families are unprepared for this responsibility: only 35 percent have a will, and even fewer include charitable intentions.

A passionate consortium of Columbia River Gorge non-profits believes in the transformative power of community and the legacies we create together and seeks to shift this narrative one family at a time.

From 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., on Thursday, March 19, at the Fort Dalles Readiness Center in The Dalles, the public is invited to join in for the Community Legacy Initiative.

During this event, you will be able to: Meet experts working in financial planning and investing, accounting, law and more; hear from a panel of experts on the benefits and how-

to's of estate planning; receive free resources and handouts to help you plan your financial future and learn more about adding charitable gifts into your estate planning.

After the event, participants will receive information about local non-profits who accept legacy giving contributions so they can connect directly with an organization that interests them. Experts will also be on site who can provide resources around end-of-life care, including advance directive planning.

This event is free and aims to educate the community about the profound impact of estate planning, connect individuals and families with experts and empowering tools and encourage giving to organizations committed to bettering our community. Spots are limited and pre-registration is required. Light snacks, catered by Casa El Mirador, will be provided.

Questions? Email [development@nextdoorinc.org](mailto:development@nextdoorinc.org) for more information or support.

Source: Columbia Gorge Community College



Annika Hauer courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

Washington state legislators in Olympia debate the "millionaire's tax" at 3 a.m., March 10, on the House floor.

## After 24 hour GOP slowdown, state 'millionaire's tax' passes

By Annika Hauer  
Special to The Pioneer

Lawmakers, their staff and security guards stayed up more than a full day for the "millionaire's tax" debate before the bill passed the House around 6 p.m., on March 10.

The next day, the Senate approved the House's amendments, and now the "millionaire's tax" awaits the signature of Gov. Bob Ferguson to become law. It would tax 9.9 percent of a person's annual income above \$1 million, affecting about 21,000 households in Washington.

Much of the debate was around how to spend the estimated \$3 billion to \$4 billion the tax is estimated to bring in annually.

The bill increases the number of small businesses eligible to be exempt from a business and occupation tax and eliminates the state sales tax on diapers, over-the-counter drugs and hygiene products.

It also expands the Working Families Tax Credit, which gives families \$300 to \$1,300 back in tax credit, to include an estimated 460,000 more households.

Throughout the night,

early morning, afternoon and evening, lobbyists and citizens stayed to witness the historic House standoff with lawmakers and staff sleeping in shifts.

"You're making laws, our members are affected by those laws, families are affected; we're going to be here," Seamus Petrie, lobbyist for the Washington Public Employees Association, said. WPEA is a state employee union in support of the tax.

It is Washington's first income tax since the 1930s. Republicans proposed

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## National Forest posts season hiring jobs across the state

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest is hiring seasonal employees for the upcoming recreation season and is encouraging local residents to apply. "Our seasonal employees are the heart of summer operations, and seasonal jobs can be a first step into a natural resources career," Johanna Kovarik, Gifford Pinchot National Forest Supervisor said in a press statement. "Working to keep Gifford Pinchot National Forest as well as Mount St. Helens National Monument campgrounds, trails and rec-

reation sites open, safe and welcoming for visitors is part of our mission and beneficial to our local communities. These positions offer meaningful work, hands-on experience, and a great way to connect with public lands close to home. We encourage anyone interested to apply." Positions are scheduled to go live on USAJobs.gov, beginning Feb. 20 through March 3. Interested applicants will need to establish an account in USAJOBS

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Mary Repar courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

## Lions Club fundraiser

The first weekly Skamania Lions Club fundraiser took place Wednesday, March 11, at A&J Market in Stevenson. Raffle tickets sold for \$10 each and included three prizes: A Stihl electric chainsaw, a Stihl electric leaf blower and a one-night stay at the Best Western in Cascade Locks, Oregon. Prize winners will be awarded at the Skamania County Spring Fest on May 2. Pictured, from left: John Ward, Betsy Ward, Lions Club treasurer, and Philip Watness, Lions Club president.

## SBA disaster assistance loans for businesses, Residents affected by December 2025 flooding

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) recently announced the availability of low interest federal disaster loans to Washington businesses, private nonprofits and residents to offset physical and economic losses from the 2025 severe winter storms occurring Dec. 5-22, 2025. The SBA issued a disaster declaration in response to a request received from Washington state Gov. Bob Ferguson.

The declaration covers the Washington counties of Chelan, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Island, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lewis, Okanogan, Pacific, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Thurston, Wahkiakum, Whatcom and Yakima.

Businesses and nonprofits are eligible to apply for business physical disaster

loans and may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets.

Homeowners and renters are eligible to apply for home and personal property loans and may borrow up to \$100,000 to replace or repair personal property, such as clothing, furniture, cars and appliances. Homeowners may apply for up to \$500,000 to replace or repair their primary residence.

Applicants may be eligible for a loan increase of up to 20 percent of their physical damage, as verified by the SBA, for mitigation purposes. Eligible mitigation improvements include insulating pipes, walls and attics, weather stripping doors and windows and installing storm windows to help pro-

tect property and occupants from future disasters.

SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program is available to eligible small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, nurseries and private nonprofit (PNP) organizations including faith-based organizations impacted by financial losses directly related to this disaster. The SBA is unable to provide disaster loans to agricultural producers, farmers or ranchers, except for aquaculture enterprises.

EIDLs are for working capital needs caused by the disaster and are available even if the business or PNP did not suffer any physical damage. They may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills not paid due to the disaster.

Interest rates are as low as 4 percent for businesses,

3.625 percent for PNPs, and 2.875 percent for homeowners and renters with terms up to 30 years. Interest does not begin to accrue, and payments are not due until 12 months from the date of the first loan disbursement. The SBA sets loan amounts and terms based on each applicant's financial condition.

"Through an agency declaration, SBA provides financial assistance to help communities recover," Chris Stallings, associate administrator of the Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience at the SBA said in a press statement. "We offer disaster loans to homeowners, renters, businesses and private nonprofits affected by the disaster."

As soon as Federal-State Disaster Recovery Centers open throughout the affected area, SBA will pro-

vide one-on-one assistance to disaster loan applicants. Additional information and details on the location of disaster recovery centers is available by calling the SBA Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955.

To apply online, visit [sba.gov/disaster](http://sba.gov/disaster). Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability, dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

The deadline to return physical damage applications is April 27. The deadline to return economic injury applications is Nov. 24.

Source: Small Business Administration

## News Briefs

### Grand opening and ribbon cutting

The public is invited to join the Skamania County Chamber of Commerce with a grand opening and ribbon cutting for NorthBank Books/Riverside Resale at 1 p.m., on Thursday, March 26, at 74 SW Russell Ave., Stevenson.

Source: Skamania County Chamber of Commerce

### Savor Stevenson great way to (re) discover dining spots

Join in on Friday, April 17, for an evening of tasty food, downtown exploration and community connection.

Savor Stevenson is a dine-around event where guests move through downtown Stevenson together, stopping at five local restaurants to enjoy small plates at each location.

Choose a 4 or 5 p.m. route and experience a delicious lineup of local cuisine while discovering (or rediscovering) some of Stevenson's favorite dining spots.

Pre-sale tickets are \$75 per person through March 25. After March 25, tickets increase to \$80.

A ticket includes: Small plates at five participating restaurants; tax and gratuity included and support for local restaurants during the shoulder season. Beverages may be purchased separately at each restaurant.

Tickets are available online at [www.stevensonmainstreet.org/savorstevenson?blm\\_aid=47221](http://www.stevensonmainstreet.org/savorstevenson?blm_aid=47221)

Each route visits the same restaurants and rotates every 30 minutes, creating a fun, social evening as groups traverse downtown together.

Join in for Savor Stevenson, a dine-around downtown event celebrating local restaurants while bringing the community together.

Ticket income is used to directly reimburse participating restaurants.

Source: Stevenson Downtown Association

### Clark County Republican Party to host Lincoln Day Gala

The Clark County Republican Party recently announced its annual Lincoln Day Gala, a formal evening dedicated to "The Golden Age of America." This patriotic celebration honors

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is Friday, March 20

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## This day in history

- 1766 Parliament repeals the Stamp Act.
- 1852 Wells and Fargo start shipping and banking company.
- 1925 "Tri-State Tornado" hits, the deadliest in U.S. history
- 1937 Natural gas explosion kills nearly 300 at Texas school.
- 1969 U.S. bombs Cambodia for the first time.