



Erik Castonguay courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

No Kings protest

An estimated crowd of more than 350 people spread out on the Skamania County courthouse lawn on Saturday, March 28, with signs protesting the President's policies on ICE, the war in Iran, rising prices and many other issues. The local protest was part of an overall national No Kings protest in cities across the country. People enjoyed listening to protest songs, interspersed with a few speakers and some group chants. The national No Kings organization is planning more activities in upcoming months.

Hood River offers free bus passes to local workers

By Viviana Hernandez
Courtesy of UpLift Local

Filling up your gas tank was noticeably more expensive in March. The nation has seen the cost of gas jump, and the price per gallon in the Gorge has climbed to the high end of the national average.

If you work anywhere in Hood River, you now have an option: a free bus pass, good to go on fixed bus routes serving Hood River to and from anywhere in the Gorge, from Goldendale to Parkdale and even into Portland.

"(All the Gorge transit systems) use this pass, so if you're coming from White Salmon, Bingen, Carson, or the Dalles, you can use the pass to get to Hood River," Rebecca Cortes, a field supervisor with Columbia

Area Transit (CAT) told Uplift Local.

CAT has several fare assistance programs, but this one, called the Business Transit Pass, is funded by Hood River, the second largest city in the Gorge. The idea is to help commuters, particularly those who may not be able to afford to live in town but have found work there; reduce parking problems; and address climate goals.

The Hood River City Council has funded this pass program since 2021, paying CAT \$6,000 a year for 150 passes, rolling over any unclaimed passes each year.

Previously, eligibility was limited to workers employed at businesses in the city's downtown core. But following a discussion and a decision at the city

council's Feb. 23 meeting, the program is now open to employees of any business located in Hood River.

At that February session, council member Douglas Stepina expressed concerns about the "inequity of offering it just to that one group of businesses" based in the city center.

"That seems arbitrary to me," he said. "If this program is addressing multiple city council goals, why should we not extend it to more areas of Hood River?"

During the discussion, city staff emphasized the need for better data to evaluate the program as it expands, including how often participants actually use the bus.

In the end, council members unanimously agreed the subsidized pass-

es should be available to people working in Hood River citywide.

Demand for the free bus passes has varied. CAT could only provide data for the past three years, showing 91 passes claimed in 2023, 210 in 2024, and 128 in 2025.

With no subsidy, an adult Gorge Transit Pass costs \$40 per year and a youth pass costs \$20.

Cortes hopes people will use the Gorge Pass, whether they buy one or apply for one.

"Right now, especially with the increased support available, I want everyone in the city of Hood River to use the pass so they can save money. It's good for the planet, and it also means fewer cars on the road."

Business transit passes will be distributed on a

first-come first-serve basis for this transition year, based on when an eligible application is submitted. People can apply for fare assistance at ridecatbus.org/business.

The application is currently available only in English, but the transit agency plans to add a Spanish version at a later date.

Editor's note: Cortes spoke with Uplift Local in Spanish. Her comments here have been translated into English. The information in the story also was used in a Spanish-language newscast which aired on Radio Tierra. Learn more at [Noticias del Gorge](http://NoticiasdelGorge.com).

For more news stories from around The Gorge, visit UpliftLocal.news/Columbia-gorge.

News Briefs

Overnight bridge closure for maintenance on April 10

The Port of Hood River announced that the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge will be closed overnight for maintenance from 12:30 to 6 a.m., on Friday, April 10. Work includes completing a bridge gasket replacement on the Oregon side, as well as installing new bridge signage.

The Port appreciates the public's patience as they complete this critical maintenance to ensure safe and reliable bridge operations.

Source: Port of Hood River

Volunteer opportunity: Planting for Pollinators at Mt. Adams, April 9

Help create habitat for pollinators near Mt. Adams. Insect pollinators, such as bees, moths and butterflies survive on nectar and pollen collected from wildflowers and shrubs. Healthy plant communities support healthy pollinator communities and vice versa.

For several years, Cascade Forest Conservancy has been working with the Forest Service to improve plant and pollinator communities in an area that has experienced several wildfires in recent years in short succession.

Volunteer help is needed to plant native seedlings. These efforts will help plant communities recover more quickly in the burned area and provide more support for pollinators.

To register to volunteer, go online to events.humanitix.com/planting-for-pollinators-at-mt-adams?c=newsletter

Source: Cascade Forest Conservancy

Washougal Beaver Bash Saturday, April 18

The inaugural Washougal Beaver Bash will take place 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, April 18 at Reflection Plaza in downtown Washougal. The free, family-friendly event will feature art projects, live music, a puppet show by Red Yarn and exhibitor booths with beaver experts ready to share knowledge about the ecosystem engineers.

Source: Cascade Forest Conservancy



Courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

From left: Assessor Gabe Spencer; Prosecutor Adam Kick; Commissioner Brian Nichols; Treasurer Vickie Clelland; Commissioner Rob Farris; Commissioner Asa Leckie and Auditor Robert Waymire.

County Treasurer retires following nearly 30 years of service to community

After nearly 30 years of dedicated public service, Skamania County Treasurer Vickie Clelland retired on March 31.

Clelland began her career with the county in 1995 as Chief Deputy Treasurer and went on to serve as Treasurer starting in 2014. Throughout her tenure, she has been a consistent and trusted leader, known for her integrity, professionalism and strong commitment to the citizens of Skamania County.

As Treasurer, Clelland was responsible for safeguarding public funds and supporting the financial operations that impact every county department, employee and resident. Her steady leadership and atten-

tion to detail have helped maintain the county's financial stability over the years.

Colleagues and county officials alike recognize Clelland not only for her extensive knowledge and experience, but also for her fairness, reliability and dedication to doing what is right.

Skamania County extends its sincere gratitude to Clelland for her years of faithful service and the lasting impact she has made on the organization and community. She leaves behind a legacy of excellence in public service.

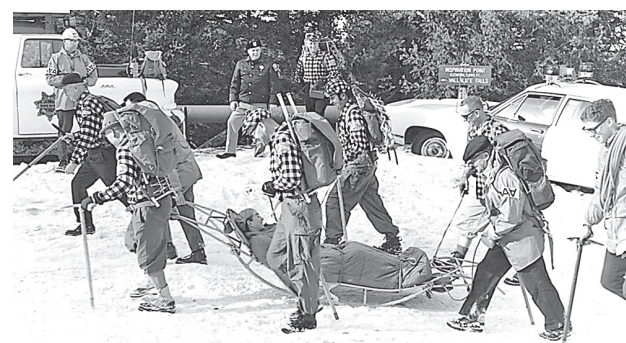
We wish her all the best in her retirement and thank her for her many contributions to Skamania County.

Celebrating Crag Rats turning 100, among oldest Search & Rescue units in the country

Sense of Place concludes its 16th official season on Wednesday, April 15, with "Crag Rats Turn 100: A Century of Service with the Oldest Mountain Search & Rescue Team in America," an evening of celebration with guest speakers. Crag Rats Turn 100 will take place 5 and 7 p.m., at Columbia Center for the Arts, 215 Cascade Ave., Hood River, Oregon.

The evening will feature Dr. Christopher Van Tilburg, physician, rescue mountaineer and author of "Crisis on Mount Hood: Stories from 100 Years of Mountain Rescue." Van Tilburg will guide audiences through the remarkable history of the Crag Rats, the oldest mountain search and rescue team in North America, founded in 1926.

For a century, this all-volunteer team has provided lifesaving search and rescue support in the mountains and wild places of the Pacific Northwest. From the icy slopes of Mount Hood to the steep canyons of the Columbia River Gorge, the Crag Rats have rescued injured climbers on Eliot Glacier, helped hikers stranded during wildfires in Eagle Creek, and searched for missing hunters as far away as Olympic National Park.



Crag Rats courtesy photo Skamania County Pioneer

A photo from a mountain sled rescue by Crag Rats in an undated photo.

Van Tilburg will share the history of courage, lore, tragedy and triumph and the stories of the people that have shaped this organization over the past 100 years, from team traditions to meaningful milestones such as welcoming women into the organization in 1993 as well as his speculation on what the Crag Rats future may hold.

Christopher Van Tilburg, MD, is an American physician, rescue mountaineer and award-winning author of 11 books, including "Crisis on Mount Hood: Stories from 100 Years of Mountain Rescue" (Mountaineers Books, 2025). He is on staff at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital and serves as medical director for four search and rescue teams.

Tickets for the event can be purchased online at senseofplacegorge.org

For 16 years, Sense of Place has connected people through place and storytelling. The flagship speaker series features individuals with unique knowledge of the Columbia River Gorge and explores the natural and cultural history that has shaped this region. Guests have included scientists, Tribal members, authors, farmers and many others from throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Sense of Place is a program of Mt. Adams Institute, which strengthens the connection between people and the natural world through education, service, career development and research.

Learn more, explore the online archive and subscribe to the newsletter at senseofplacegorge.org or follow @senseofplacegorge on Instagram.

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This day in history

- 1935 Works Progress Administration established by Congress as part of FDR's "New Deal."
- 1944 Russians attack Germans in drive to expel them from Crimea
- 1974 Hank Aaron breaks Babe Ruth's all-time home run record.
- 1994 Grunge icon Kurt Cobain is found dead three days after his suicide.

2026 Fishing Guide Inside!