

Skyline hospital levy passes in April special election

By Amy Spring
Courtesy of UpLift Local

Klickitat County voters approved a levy lid lift for Public Hospital District No. 2, supporting additional funding for Skyline Health in the April 28 special election, according to county election results.

As of May 4, the measure had received about 53 percent of votes in favor, allowing the district to increase its regular property tax levy above the state's standard growth limit. The proposal required a simple majority to pass.

The levy lid lift authorizes the hospital district to collect additional property tax revenue to support operations and capital needs. According to the county voters' pamphlet, the measure is intended to provide "additional operating and capital funds for Skyline Health to provide hospital and other healthcare services."

Klickitat County, with a population of about 24,000, relies on its public hospital districts to provide essential healthcare services across a large and sparsely populated region. Skyline

Health serves communities such as White Salmon, Bingen and surrounding rural areas.

In Washington, property tax levies are generally limited to a 1 percent annual increase unless voters approve a higher rate. A levy lid lift allows a taxing district such as a hospital district to reset its levy rate to a higher level, which then becomes the new base for future annual increases.

According to the voters' pamphlet, the measure resets the district's levy rate to \$0.75 per \$1,000 of assessed property value,

restoring it to the statutory maximum after years of reductions – down to \$.46 per \$1,000 of assessed property value – due to state-imposed limits on increases without voter approval.

For homeowners, the financial impact depends on property value. At the full levy rate of \$0.75 per \$1,000, the owner of a \$300,000 home would pay about \$225 annually in hospital district taxes. That's equal to \$18.75 per month.

The Secretary of State will announce final results after the certifying process is complete. Ballots

in Washington are counted over several days after Election Day as they are received and verified.

As of May 4, results showed that about 37 percent of total registered voters had cast ballots, consistent with turnout in off-cycle elections in smaller counties.

Note: This story has been updated with May 4 results.

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

News Briefs

Local artistry being sought for downtown public displays

The Stevenson Downtown Association (SDA) is seeking local artists of all ages to participate in the 2026 Stevenson Streatery art panel installations. Selected artwork will help shape the visual story of downtown Stevenson by highlighting the culture, heritage, history and landscape that define the community.

Printer artwork panels will be displayed in highly visible public spaces throughout downtown as part of the Streatery project. Artists located in Skamania County or Cascade Locks are encouraged to apply.

Submission deadline is Monday, May 25. To learn more and to apply, go online at stevenson-mainstreet.org/stevenson-streatery

Source: Stevenson Downtown Association

Economic Development Council to host PubTalk

The Skamania Economic Development Council (EDC) presents PubTalk, Wednesday, May 27, at Elk Ridge Golf Course. Networking begins at 5:30 p.m. and the program and Q&A session 6 to 7 p.m.

Featured speakers include Kevin Waters, Skamania EDC executive director, Pat Albaugh, Port of Skamania executive director and Angie Waiss, Chamber of Commerce executive director. Tickets are \$10 per person at the door and includes appetizers and one beverage ticket.

RSVP to asabourin@skamania-edc.org

Source: Skamania Economic Development Council

Travel presentation features Japan's cherry blossoms

Skamania County Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with Indus Travel, present, Japan in Bloom: A Cherry Blossom Journey, an in-person information session, 4 p.m., Thursday, May 28, at the chamber office, 167 NW Second St., Stevenson. Light refreshments will be served.

For information, call 509-427-8911 or email Angel.Knight@skamania.org.

Source: Skamania Chamber of Commerce

Walking Man Brewing strides forward under independent, local, woman-owned business

Walking Man Brewing, the oldest microbrewery in the Columbia River Gorge, is entering its next chapter as Tabatha Wiggins finalizes the purchase of the remaining ownership interest from founder and original brewmaster Bob Craig.

Walking Man Brewing is known for its independent spirit, welcoming atmosphere and a lineup of beers that balance tradition with evolution. Early recipes – including Walking Man IPA, Cherry Stout and Homo Erectus Imperial IPA – remain part of the brewery's story, alongside a rotating selection of new and seasonal releases.

Wiggins, who became a partner in 2014, manages operations and leads the team in shaping the guest experience. With more than a decade of hands-on work refining how the business runs, improving the space and adapting to a changing industry, she remains focused on preserving the welcoming spirit that defines the small-town brew-



Tom Sikora courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

Founder and original brewmaster at Walking Man Brewing, Bob Craig, in an undated photo.

pub.

"Walking Man has always been about people – our team, our regulars and the community that's supported us along the way," Wiggins said in a press statement. "I'm incredibly proud to carry that forward and excited to continue creating a place people feel

connected to, while building on what's already here in thoughtful ways."

While ownership is now fully consolidated, the guest experience remains unchanged – familiar faces, a dog-friendly beer garden, live music and a welcoming space for both locals

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Skamania County appoints Emily Sabo as interim County Treasurer

The Skamania County Board of County Commissioners has appointed Emily Sabo to serve as Interim Skamania County Treasurer, effective Monday, May 18.

Sabo will fill the vacancy created following the retirement of former Skamania County Treasurer Vickie Clelland in March and will serve the remainder of the unexpired term until the certification of the General Election in November.

Sabo brings experience and institutional knowledge to the Treasurer's Office and will oversee the continued administration of county treasury functions, including the collection and distribution of property taxes, management of county funds and financial services provided to local taxing districts.

"The Board is committed to ensuring conti-

nunity and stability within the Treasurer's Office during this transition," Skamania County Board of County Commissioners said in a press statement.

"We appreciate Emily's willingness to step into this important role and continue serving the residents of Skamania County. We also would like to thank Chief Deputy Treasurer Kristi Anderson for filling the role as Treasurer while the Board worked through the Interim Treasurer appointment process."

The Skamania County Treasurer's Office will continue normal operations during the transition, and residents should expect no interruption in services.

Source: Skamania County Board of Commissioners

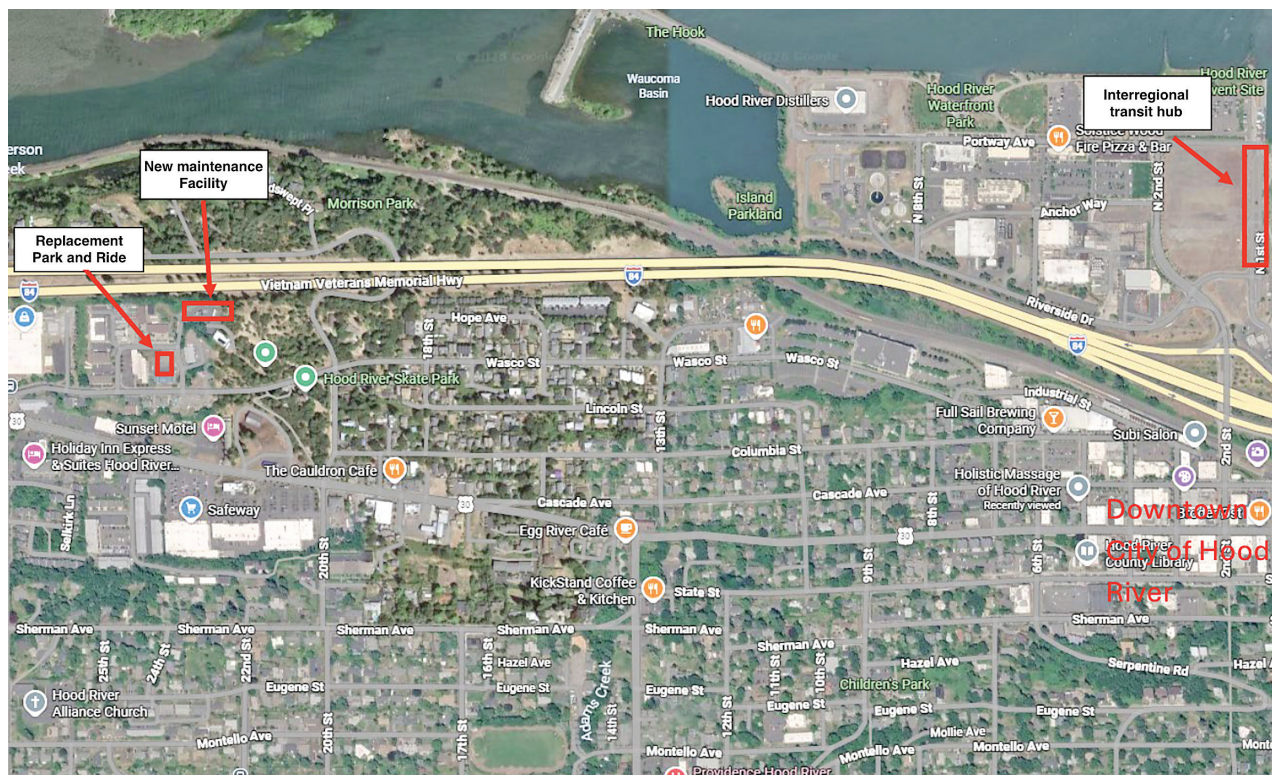
Hood River drops electric buses as part of a major Transit initiative, shifting funds to hub, maintenance

By Swen Carlson
Courtesy of UpLift Local

Major changes will soon be coming to public transit in Hood River, Oregon, particularly affecting commuters making multiple stops in the Gorge. The Hood River County Transportation District, which does business as Columbia Area Transit (CAT), discussed the upcoming plans during the first meeting of its 2026 budget committee on April 22.

The initiative, called the Transit Facility Site Development Program, is divided into three distinct projects: a new, interregional transit hub, a new bus storage and maintenance facility and a park-and-ride replacement facility. The transit hub will be built on the waterfront; the bus barn and park-and-ride will be near CAT's administrative offices, off Wasco Street just east of Walmart.

The transit hub and the storage and maintenance fa-



Columbia Area Transit courtesy illustration | Skamania County Pioneer

Aerial map showing where Hood River's new interregional transit hub and bus barn will be. The current park-and-ride lot location moves but stays in the same area.

cility will be partially funded by changing the terms of a federal grant CAT had originally intended to use to buy electric buses. In 2023, CAT was awarded a

\$6.4 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emissions Grant Program to fund both the electrification of the agency's fleet and

new charging facilities.

However, under more recent guidance from FTA staff, the Hood River agency will submit a request to change the grant, removing

the plan to acquire electric buses and shifting the money to help pay for the transit hub and maintenance facility instead.

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Early deadline

The Pioneer is on early deadline because of the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, May 25. Submissions for the May 27 edition need to be in by 10 a.m., Friday, May 22.

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This day in history

- 1774 King George III approves the Coercive Acts in response to the Boston Tea Party.
- 1862 President Lincoln signs the Homestead Act.
- 1873 Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis receive patent for blue jeans.
- 1927 Charles Lindbergh takes off across the Atlantic in the Spirit of St. Louis.