

Library hours expanding, thanks to voter approval

By Douglas Burkhardt
Courtesy of UpLift Local

A tax increase approved by voters in a special election last August is now bringing enhanced services to libraries in Stevenson, White Salmon and Goldendale – all part of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District.

As of June 1, libraries across the district will be open to the public for more hours and days – increasing total service time by 13 percent, or 91 hours per week. At the White Salmon Community Library, for example, the library is currently open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. When the new hours go into effect on the first day of June, the schedule will expand to 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Friday

and Saturday will remain 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

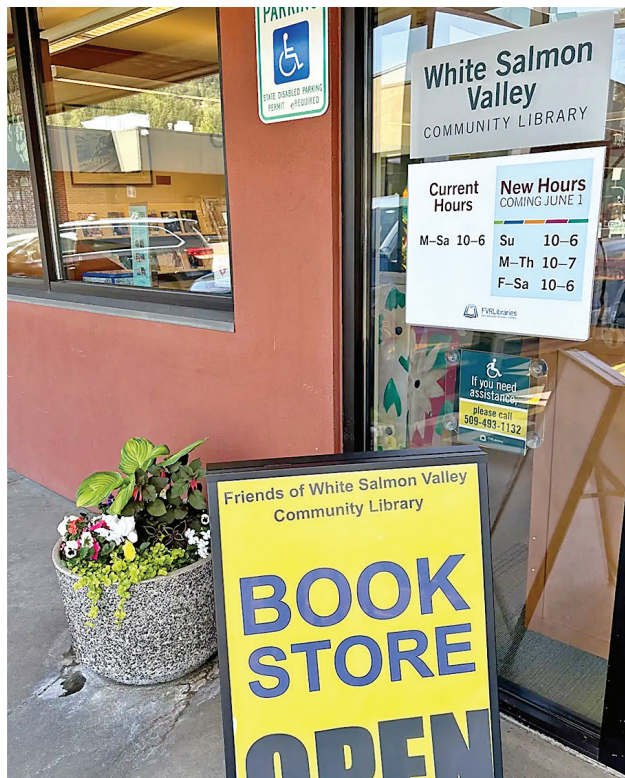
The biggest change will see the White Salmon and Stevenson libraries, for the first time, opening on Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Local governments in Washington can typically increase property tax rates by only 1 percent annually, unless voters approve a bigger increase, called a levy lid lift. Last August, voters in the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District, which includes Klickitat, Skamania, Clark and parts of Cowlitz counties, voted to raise the tax rate of the library district from 27 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value to 50 cents per \$1,000. The measure passed 54.2 percent to 45.8 percent.

In addition to the expanded hours, libraries across the district are in-

vesting in digital as well as physical services, with technology upgrades, a new bookmobile for service in Clark County and breaking ground on a new building for the Washougal Community Library.

- New branch hours**
- White Salmon, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday through Sunday
 - Stevenson, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday through Sunday
 - Goldendale, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday and Wednesday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday and Saturday, closed Sunday
 - North Bonneville, No new hours. Current hours are 2 to 5 p.m., Wednesday and Friday.



Douglas Burkhardt courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer
Expanded hours at the White Salmon Valley Community Library means it will be open on Sundays, starting June 1.

News Briefs

Logic and accuracy test scheduled for Primary and Special Election

At 2 p.m. on Tuesday, June 23, the Skamania County Elections Office will conduct a logic and accuracy test of the programming used to tabulate ballots for the Aug. 4 Primary and Special Election. Accessible voting units will be tested at 11 a.m. on June 22, 2026.

The tests will take place at the Skamania County Elections Office, 240 NW Vancouver Ave., Room 27, Stevenson, Washington, and are open to the public. Additional information may be obtained by calling the Skamania County Auditor's Office at 509-427-3730.

Ballots for the Aug. 4 Primary and Special Election will be mailed to eligible voters by Friday, July 17. After 8 p.m. on Election Day (Tuesday, Aug. 4) tabulation of scanned ballots will begin; unofficial election results will then be available at approximately 8:30 p.m. on the Auditor's website at www.skamaniacounty.org/elections.

Source: Skamania County Auditor's Office

State accepting grant applications for park planning

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is accepting applications until July 15 for grants to pay for planning projects in communities that lack adequate access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Planning for Recreation Access (PRA) program focuses on diverse urban neighborhoods and small rural communities seeking funding to develop shovel-ready park plans and more comprehensive park plans.

"These grants are for helping communities define outdoor recreation needs and develop plans through community-based processes," Megan Duffy, RCO director, said in a press statement. "Many small and underfunded communities don't have the capacity to apply for grants. This funding will help them get started. Ultimately, we hope the planning leads to construction so we can increase the number of parks, trails, playgrounds and sports fields in places where there are

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Small debris burn ban set for East Skamania County

Fire danger season is here once more and to keep the community safe Skamania County implements burn restrictions as a tool to reduce human-caused wildfire during extremely hot and dry weather conditions.

All small debris fires on the East side of the county that were currently burning must have been completely extinguished by midnight, Monday June 1.

Recreational fires meeting the Skamania County minimum fire pit standards will continue to be permissible on Skamania County regulated lands but are subject to immediate closure as the fire season advances. Recreational fires on state and federal lands are not regulated by Skamania County. Please call before you burn: 1-800-323-BURN or visit burnportal.dnr.wa.gov for state lands burning information and at

www.fs.usda.gov/main/giffordpinchot/fire for federal lands burning information.

Be sure recreational fires are completely extinguished before leaving them unattended and remain diligent when burning, following all burning conditions and restrictions listed on the burn permit. Making smart, informed decisions and burning responsibly is the best way to prevent wildfires.

For burn ban updates and burning information check all available resources including: Skamania County Fire Marshal, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Washington State Department of Ecology and Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.

Source: Skamania County Fire Marshal

Why crime victim advocacy matters in rural communities

In a town where everyone knows your name, they also know your business, your family history and where you go on Sunday mornings. This interconnectedness is often a rural community's greatest strength, but for some victims of crime, it can become suffocating. In places where people of power are friends or relatives of the perpetrator, justice can seem less than straightforward to the victim.

In urban centers, anonymity provides a layer of protection. Victims can disappear into the crowd, seek help from strangers, and move through a legal system staffed by people to which they have no personal ties. Often in a small rural area, that luxury doesn't exist. When a crime occurs, the ripple effect is immediate and personal. Victims often face a

unique set of social barriers:

- Fear of social ostracization: If the perpetrator is a "well-liked" member of the community or belongs to a prominent local family, the victim is often the one blamed for "causing trouble" or "tearing the community apart."
- Lack of privacy: News travels at the speed of gossip. A victim's trauma becomes public property before they have even processed it themselves.
- Conflict of interest: Some officials may have lifelong ties to the families involved. Leading the victim to believe that their case may not be taken seriously.

The vital role of the advocate

This is where specialized advocacy becomes

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Compound caregiving: When caring responsibilities multiply

For many adults, caregiving doesn't come in just one form. You may be supporting an aging parent while also helping a spouse, a child with special needs or even grandchildren. This layered responsibility – known as compound caregiving – is increasingly common and can stretch emotional, physical, and financial resources to the limit.

What is compound caregiving?

Compound caregiving happens when an individual provides care for more than one person at the same time, often across different generations. Sometimes called the "sandwich generation," these caregivers are balancing competing needs, schedules and expectations – often while managing work and their own health. Caring for one person can be demanding; caring for multiple people can feel overwhelming. Compound caregivers often experience: Conflicting priorities and time pressures; increased stress and risk of burnout; financial strain

from medical or care-related expenses and emotional fatigue from constantly shifting roles.

It's not unusual to feel pulled in different directions or worry that you're not doing enough for anyone.

Strategies to manage the load

While there's no simple solution, small adjustments can make a meaningful difference:

Prioritize and plan: Identify the most urgent needs and create a flexible schedule. Not everything has to be done at once.

Build a care team: Involve family members, friends or neighbors. Even occasional help can ease the burden.

Use community resources: Adult day programs, respite care and local agencies can provide support and relief.

Set boundaries: Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Saying "no" can be necessary and healthy.

Keep communication open: Regular check-ins

with those you're caring for – and with others involved – can prevent misunderstandings and reduce stress. In the midst of caring for others, your own well-being can easily fall to the bottom of the list. Yet your health is the foundation that supports everything else. Make time for rest, medical appointments and moments of connection or enjoyment. Even brief breaks can help restore your energy.

When to ask for help

If you're feeling consistently overwhelmed, anxious or exhausted, it may be time to seek additional support. Talking with a counselor, joining a caregiver support group or reaching out to the Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington (AAADSW) can provide information, support and resources to help. Compound caregiving is complex and often under-recognized – but it reflects deep commitment and care. You don't have to carry it alone. Support, resources

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Washington Gorge Action Programs announce Hester As new Executive Director

Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP) will welcome Julie K. Hester as its next Executive Director following a regional search process led by the organization's staff and Board of directors.

Prior to joining WAGAP, Julie worked for more than 15 years at the National Crime Victim Law Institute, a Portland, Oregon-based nonprofit advocating for crime victims in the criminal justice system. During this time, she gained wide-ranging experience in communications, outreach, volunteer coordination, fundraising, event planning, data collection and storytelling. Her experience managing



Julie K. Hester
complex multi-million dollar public and private funding portfolios, overseeing organizational and project budgets and leading collaborative, cross-functional teams will be a valuable asset to WAGAP.

"I was immediately drawn to WAGAP's focus on expanding opportunities by delivering essential services that lead to self-sufficiency and well-being," Hester said in a press statement. "I am thrilled to join this amazing team and build on WAGAP's strong partnerships to ensure continued stability and impact in Skamania and Klickitat counties."

As a leader, she values clear and transparent communications, personal accountability, and operational rigor and approach-her role with humility, curiosity and deep respect for

co-workers and the

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Farmers Market needs volunteers

Stevenson Farmers Market invites you to help with market setup, breakdown, supporting kids' programs and the info booth. Stay all day or pitch in just 45 minutes. Plus, get a cool T-shirt and \$5 market bucks to spend at the market! Stevenson Farmers Market operates every Saturday from 10am-2pm, June 13 through October 10. Sign up online for volunteer shifts at https://grasshopper-signup.com/respond/c4dabf9c-a71b-4f8a-b004-6b4744c61450?blm_aid=47221

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This day in history

- 1754 Lieutenant Colonel George Washington builds Fort Necessity near Pittsburgh, PA during the Seven Years' War.
- 1864 Union disaster at Cold Harbor.
- 1943 Zoot Suit Riots begin in Los Angeles when U.S. sailors march downtown, attacking anyone wearing a "zoot suit."