

## The costs of street closures for July 4th celebrations

By Swen Carlson  
Courtesy of UpLift Local

Each year, the City of White Salmon puts on a parade in honor of the Fourth of July. Followed by live music in Rheingarten Park, it is a key part of the city's annual series of celebrations, especially this year as the country prepares to celebrate America's 250th anniversary.

Organizers, who work many hours behind the scenes to bring the parade to life, say the effort is all worthwhile. Tammara Toppel of Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce, which puts on the parade, says she loves seeing local veterans participate. "The veterans are really something that makes the heart happy with this parade," she told UpLift Local. "We put the veterans in the front of the parade, after the grand marshal and the color guard, and we celebrate them."

White Salmon's Mayor Marla Keethler's fondness for the July 4 parade is intertwined with memories of time spent with her children. "My very first parade, I was pushing my firstborn in a stroller, and she was 9



Tammara Toppel courtesy photo | Skamania County Pioneer

### Some of White Salmon's veterans marching in 2025's Fourth of July parade.

months old. And now she's 7." Keethler recalled in an interview. "So, it's been very sweet for me now with both of my kids. They have such fond memories."

But it costs thousands of dollars to close the streets, with the current traffic control plan making this year's parade a particularly costly affair. And White Salmon officials aren't sure how long the city can afford to

foot the bill.

Toppel explained that a couple of years ago, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) began to require cities to submit detailed traffic control plans when any road closures are necessary. Previously, Toppel said she would plan the parade route by simply taking "a Google Maps printout where I had made myself

little notes, a very basic and rudimentary type of (traffic control plan.)"

The city's public works department created a parade plan that met WSDOT's updated policies for the Halloween festivities last year, and that document was used as basis for this year's Fourth of July parade. However, White Salmon's Fourth of July parade covers a much wider

area than the Halloween event, and additional street closures require more people and equipment, which drive up costs.

Toppel estimates paying the nine certified flaggers needed to patrol all required streets would cost roughly \$5,500 alone, if not more. At the June 15 meeting of the White Salmon Community Development **Continued on p. 2**

## Lyle Hill Fire continues to burn, threaten homes

The Lyle Hill Fire started on June 28, at approximately 1:45 p.m. The 233-acre fire is located

10 miles Northwest of The Dalles, Oregon adjacent to the community of Lyle, Washington. The cause of the fire is unknown and is under investigation. A total of 75 residents have been affected.

As of Thursday, July 2, the fire is 95 percent contained.

Fire lines have been tested by winds the past three days, and they continue to hold. Crews are patrolling and extinguishing any remaining smokes near the perimeter of the fire. There are still some burning logs and stumps within the interior of the fire, and some smoke may continue to be visible.

Firefighters continue with fire suppression repair work in some areas of the fire to repair any physical damage caused directly by firefighting operations. This includes putting water bars in hand fire lines and dozer lines as needed to reduce the potential for erosion.

The portion of the Centerville Highway that was closed due to the Lyle Hill Fire has reopened. Evacuation levels have been reduced in Klickitat County. Current evacuation information is found online at: [klickitatcounty.gov/249/Emergency-Management](http://klickitatcounty.gov/249/Emergency-Management)

Doug's Beach State Park has reopened: [parks.wa.gov/find-parks/state-parks/dougs-beach-state-park](http://parks.wa.gov/find-parks/state-parks/dougs-beach-state-park).

Lyle Cherry Orchard Trail remains closed. Online closure information: [gorgefriends.org/](http://gorgefriends.org/)

Progress has been made, with containment reaching

60 percent as of June 28. Crews are patrolling the fire perimeter looking for hot spots. They hiked into the Lyle Cherry Orchard trail system to extinguish fire visible from U.S. Hwy. 14 and Interstate 84. Firefighters are continuing to lay hose and set up portable water tanks to get water to more areas of the fire.

The fire has burned sections of the Lyle Cherry Orchard, so the preserve is closed indefinitely. Visitors are asked to respect the closure and don't visit or hike the trails, as it is unsafe to access. Aside from fire personnel and Friends staff, no one is permitted on the preserve.

Repairing the trails will take time and effort, as wildfires leave behind dangers like hazard trees and unstable ground that must be assessed before anyone returns. The preserve will reopen once the area has been thoroughly surveyed and proven safe.

Lyle Fire Chief Brian Beaulaurier shared that the fire department's greatest need right now is financial support. If you'd like to help, donations are appreciated.

The cause of the blaze is undetermined and under investigation.

A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in place over the fire to reduce the risk to aerial firefighting resources. If you fly, we can't. All firefighting aircraft must be grounded if unmanned aircraft or drones are operating near the fire.

Source: Southeast Washington Inter-Agency team

## New executive director appointed to lead AAADSW

Vancouver, Washington -- The Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington (AAADSW) would like to announce a leadership change. Executive Director, Mike Reardon, who worked with the agency for 28 years, retired effective June 30, 2026. We are pleased to announce that Joe Valtierra joined the agency in May to be the new Executive Director.

Valtierra is a familiar face at AAADSW, he is returning to the agency after 10 years and he brings with him a wealth of experience and perspective.

"To be honest, I feel blessed to be able to come back to AAADSW," Valtierra shared. "I feel honored to do the work I love every



Joe Valtierra

day. I started there in 2004, working the phones in Medicaid Transportation, and I was able to grow and evolve throughout my time there."

Valtierra left the agency with a clear goal in mind: to continue learning and expanding his professional experience. "I earned my

MBA in 2014 and wanted to keep growing," he said. That journey led him to a role in Aging, Disabilities and Veteran's Services in Multnomah County, where he gained new perspectives and developed additional skills.

He later joined Deloitte's Government & Public Services practice, supporting state agencies across Medicaid, behavioral health, developmental disabilities, and long-term services modernization. "That experience allowed me to focus on the evolving world of Medicaid transformation," Valtierra explained.

Now back at AAADSW, Valtierra is looking forward to reconnecting with family- **Continued on p. 6**

## Ninth annual Food For All coming to AniChe Cellars

AniChe Cellars and Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP) invite the community to the ninth annual Food for All fundraiser, at 4:30 p.m., on Friday, Aug. 14, at 4:30 p.m. at AniChe Cellars in Underwood. The evening will bring together food, wine, music and art in support of the WAGAP Food Bank Network, which serves thousands of individuals and families across Klickitat and Skamania counties each year.

Hosted by AniChe Cellars and sponsored by Riverview Bank, First Interstate Bank and local wineries including AniChe Cellars, Willow Wine Cellars, Loop de Loop and Inconnu Wine, the event highlights the generosity

and collaboration that help strengthen the community.

Guests will enjoy a thoughtfully prepared dinner celebrating the immigrant and Indigenous roots of the Columbia Gorge, and paired with local wines. The evening will also feature live music by Isabeau Waia'u Walker, a collaborative live art project by WAGAP's Education & Engagement Coordinator Chris Cazares, and an ancestor art installation by Gracen Bookmyer.

"We look forward to sharing a wonderful night of great food, music and giving back!" Anaïs Mera, winemaker and Family owner of AniChe Cellars said in a press statement. "AniChe and my family's ethos is all about being part

of something bigger than ourselves and giving back where and when we can. We have a deep appreciation for how the WAGAP Food Bank supports our neighbors in need, and we want to help their team have the resources they need to continue their mission. Food for all!"

The WAGAP Food Bank Network operates food banks in Bingen, Goldendale, Klickitat, and Stevenson, along with a Mobile Food Bank that serves the most isolated communities with limited access to grocery stores and other food resources. Together, these programs provide nutritious food to thousands of local households each year. "Last year, we served **Continued on p. 2**

## News Briefs

### National Night Out is set for Tuesday, Aug. 4

One Prevention Alliance is again coordinating a National Night Out for the community. The event has three essential purposes: (1) to build community, (2) to provide education (health, prevention, available community services), and to offer (3) a FREE evening of family fun!

This event is planned from 6 to 8 p.m., on Tuesday, Aug. 4. This free street fair will be hosted on Vancouver Avenue, near Skamania County Sheriff's Office, in Stevenson.

Mark your calendar to save the date for a fun community event for all. Currently, there are more than 40 booths with games and prizes and a free hot dog dinner available. Whether you spin the wheel, create art, explore a first responder vehicle, learn about Mr. Yuk or visit with neighbors, you are sure to have a great time. This event is designed to engage all ages.

Learn more about the event by contacting: Karen Douglass at [Skamania-CountyNNO@gmail.com](mailto:Skamania-CountyNNO@gmail.com) or by calling 360-952-3330.

Source: One Prevention Alliance

### Evacuation maps available for fires

Fire season is here once more, and Skamania County Department of Emergency Management wants residents to be prepared.

Attached are helpful resources for emergency alerts, ready-set-go evacuation tips and an evacuation route map. This new Skamania County evacuation route map is available on Google maps at [SkamaniaPrepares.com](http://SkamaniaPrepares.com)

Users can put in a location on the search bar – or squeeze in to a location, if location is enabled on the device, to see where they are. It will show evacuation routes in and out for year-round use and will be updated in the Emergency Operations Center when there is an incident with closures and/or evacuations.

Source: Skamania County Chamber of Commerce

### Candidates Night July 10

The Skamania County Democrat and Republican parties, along with the Skamania County Chamber of Commerce, is hosting a Candidates Night, **Continued on p. 6**



### North Bonneville Gorge Days Festival

Celebrate community, summer fun at the North Bonneville Gorge Days Festival, all day on Friday through Sunday, July 10-12. Admission is free.

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### This day in history

- 1918 Ernest Hemingway wounded on the Italian front.
- 1950 MacArthur named Korean commander.
- 1959 First Americans killed in South Vietnam.
- 1994 North Korea's "Great Leader" dies.
- 2000 Venus Williams wins Wimbledon for the first time.