

# The Tenino Independent

April 8, 2025

Serving Tenino and South Thurston County Since 1922

(USPS 616-400) Vol. 104, No. 14 TENINO, WASHINGTON • \$1

## Griffey has legislative report for GMR Chamber



Photo by Dan Fisher

State Representative Dan Griffey delivers a legislative report to Chamber members at the April 1 meeting of the Grand Mound-Rochester Chamber of Commerce.

### 35th District State Rep. not very positive

By Dan Fisher  
 News Editor

State Representative Dan Griffey (R – 35th Dist.) was the featured speaker for the monthly lunch forum for the Grand Mound/Rochester Chamber of Commerce April 1 at the Rochester School District board room.

Though he brought up as many positive points as he could, his opening statement set the tone for his presentation.

“This was a pretty tragic legislative session,” Griffey told the GMR Chamber members.

Griffey then went down a list of positive things he and his party accomplished during the session.

“We passed a bill banning the sale of nitrous oxide in grocery and convenience stores,” Griffey said. “We got ahead of that one. This substance can be misused for a high but can be very dangerous.”

Griffey said the Legislature also ended the luxury aircraft tax passed last year, which taxed aircraft valued at \$500,000 or more.

“The ruling party realized that even the smallest commercial airlines exceeded that value and couldn’t pay the tax,” Griffey said. “We passed a transportation budget, but I’m against using gas taxes to pay for bike and hiking trails.”

“We drastically cut funding for K-12 education,” Griffey added. “Our districts are very resourceful, but the majority party (Democrats) seems to think that’s evil and tries to take the

measures they have to use away from them. All the alternatives our rural school use to make up lost revenue have been taken away.”

Griffey then addressed what he sees as the biggest negative of the session.

“We passed an income tax,” he said. “It’s going to be so detrimental to the people of the state.”

He noted that the so-called “millionaire’s tax” for those with an income of \$1 million or more also applies to the total income of married couples, so it is actually a \$500,000 tax.

“There’s about 22,500 people in this state who pay 35 percent of the taxes,” Griffey said. “What’s going to happen is, they’re going to leave. Not all of them, but many of them. I’ve pleaded for years with the majority party, ‘please don’t do this,’ but it fell on deaf ears.”

Once the wealthy residents leave, Griffey said it will be difficult to get them back.

“We’ve given no one any incentive to return to Washington,” he said.

“All political power is on your shoulders,” Griffey told the Chamber members. “You tell me what to do. We need performance audits, because the waste, fraud and abuse in this state is, I believe, as bad as has been seen in places like Minnesota and California.”

Griffey called state taxing of authorities “an absolute Ponzi scheme.”

“We have to declare hydro-electric power as renewable,” he said. “The majority party declared it unrenovable a few decades ago, but the thing about Washington is – it rains here.”

## Wolf Haven gets funds for Treehouse Learning Center

Wolf Haven International, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has worked for wolf conservation since 1982 under the mission “to conserve and protect wolves and their habitat,” has officially secured a \$220,000 investment from Washington State through the Local Community Projects program. This funding will support the construction of a year-round outdoor science education facility in South Thurston County, specifically designed to expand educational reach and provide local students with immersive, hands-on wildlife learning experiences in a natural setting.

The investment, sponsored

by Senator Drew MacEwen and Representative Travis Couture from Washington’s 35th Legislative District, will fund the development of an ADA-accessible elevated classroom designed to serve thousands of students annually – increasing access to environmental education for rural, tribal, and Title I schools across the region.

“Research consistently shows that outdoor learning improves academic outcomes and student engagement. Wolf Haven’s Treehouse Learning Center will bring that experience to students who might otherwise never have access to it, and inspire wonder while

connecting them to STEM concepts in the natural world,” says Geoff Willard, Wolf Haven’s Executive Director. “We’re deeply grateful to our 35th District legislators for supporting this transformational investment in outdoor education for our rural Tenino community.”

Wolf Haven is a globally recognized, award-winning wolf sanctuary located in Tenino, Washington that is dedicated to wildlife conservation and science-based education. As schools increasingly focus on helping students achieve nationwide educational standards in math and English, subjects deemed less essential such

as science and art are often removed from curriculum, taught at a later age, or not addressed at all. Wolf Haven bridges this gap by providing educational programs, as well as guided sanctuary and prairie walks, to groups of all ages and backgrounds.

The organization’s Treehouse Learning Center project is currently in the permitting phase, with construction to follow. It’s being developed in partnership with Nelson Treehouse, a Washington-based company known for their work on Treehouse Masters. Once complete, the Treehouse Learning Center will be the only structure of its

kind in the South Puget Sound region, sitting 17-feet above the ground and overlooking 36 acres of restored Mima mound prairie. The structure will also allow Wolf Haven to provide education programs when its sanctuary is otherwise closed to visitors, allowing for consistent year-round scheduling and expanded opportunities.

Wolf Haven is actively pursuing additional partnerships to bring the full project to completion and welcomes community support. For more information, visit [wolflhaven.org/treehouse](http://wolflhaven.org/treehouse) or contact [development@wolflhaven.org](mailto:development@wolflhaven.org).

## BLM taking applications for rural wildfire-fighting aid

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Bureau of Land Management Oregon/Washington, in partnership with the U.S. Wildland Fire Service, is now accepting applications for the Rural Fire Readiness program. The program enhances wildland firefighting safety and response across the region by providing critical training, equipment, and communication tools to local cooperators. The BLM is accepting applications until April 30.

The RFR program supports rural partners who protect private, Tribal, state, and federal

lands by providing resources such as wildland firefighting vehicles and specialized supplies. The BLM and USWFS help local agencies safeguard lives, property, and ecosystems.

“Collaborating with our rural partners is essential for effective wildfire response,” said Larae Guillory, Fire Operations Specialist. “This program ensures those who are the first on the ground have the resources needed to protect their communities.”

### Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for equipment

transfers, applicants must:

- Maintain an existing cooperative fire response agreement with the BLM and/or USWFS.
- Serve a rural community with wildland fire protection responsibilities.
- Operate near lands administered by the Department of the Interior, within a wildland-urban interface, or alongside an established

Rangeland Fire Protection Association.

- Respond to wildland fires in support of the USWFS as needed.
- Provide a clear benefit to the Department of the Interior’s land management goals.

### How to Apply

Applications are available online and in print. Cooperators are highly encouraged to

consult with their local USWFS staff before applying to ensure all requirements are met.

- Online: Submit via the Rural Fire Readiness Application page.
- By Mail/In-Person: Submit printed PDF applications to the USWFS staff at your local BLM office.

All submissions will be reviewed by local staff following the April 30 deadline.

## Multi-agency pursuit leads to Lewis County freeway closure

LEWIS COUNTY. – A vehicle fled from the Mason County Sheriff’s Office after deputies attempted to initiate a traffic stop.

The suspect vehicle, a maroon Acura sedan, continued into Thurston County, where the Thurston County Sheriff’s Office initiated a pursuit. The pursuit traveled southbound on Interstate 5 into Lewis County, where Washington State Patrol (WSP) troopers assumed primary responsibility.

A WSP trooper positioned near milepost 71 on Interstate 5 successfully deployed spike strips. The vehicle continued for approximately two miles before striking a Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) sign along the right shoulder of southbound I-5 near milepost 69, which ultimately disabled the vehicle.

Once disabled, the driver refused to exit and became a barricaded subject. The WSP Special

Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team was notified and responded to the scene.

Due to the barricaded subject, both northbound and southbound lanes of Interstate 5 were closed to ensure public safety. After several hours, the subject was taken into custody and transported to a local hospital.

The Washington State Patrol will remain the lead agency on the investigation. Charges are pending.

### Prep Sports Calendar

#### Wednesday, April 8

##### Baseball

Tenino at Medical Lake, 10 am  
 Tenino vs. Naches Valley at Gonzaga, 1 pm

#### Thursday, April 9

##### Baseball

Tenino vs. Chelan at Gonzaga, 9 am  
 Rochester at WF Wet, noon

#### Friday, April 10

##### Baseball

University Prep at Rochester, 4:30 pm

#### Tuesday, April 14

##### Baseball

Tenino at Montesano (2), 3 pm  
 Elma at Rochester (2), 3 pm

##### Fastpitch

Tenino at Rochester, 4 pm

##### Boys Soccer

Rochester at Tenino, 7 pm