

The

Tenino Independent

August 5, 2026 • Serving Tenino and South Thurston County Since 1922
 (USPS 616-400) Vol. 104, No. 31 TENINO, WASHINGTON • \$1

City council mulls short-term rental ordinance

No decision is reached as subject is tabled

BY DAN FISHER
DeVaul Publishing

Tenino City Planner Malissa Burgess appeared at the July 28 Tenino City Council meeting to ask the council for approval to move forward with research for a Short-Term Rental Code update, as requested by the Planning Commission.

The subject was discussed by the council during its work session prior to the regular meeting, and determined that the cost of such research would be about \$10,000.

Burgess, in her address to the council, said Tenino has no short-term rental units in the city.

“If it’s not specifically allowed, it’s prohibited,” Burgess said of Tenino’s RCO (revised code of ordinances) pertaining to this subject. “RCW (revised code of Washington) 64.37.010 defines short-term rental as not including hotel or motel rooms, but things like bed-and-breakfasts. It’s similar to Tenino’s RCO, but it’s not the same thing.

“This is going to cost money, and it’s money Tenino doesn’t have,” Council Member Adam Carney said. “Do you know of any way to bring the cost down? We need more information.”

“I don’t think we want to approve spending that money right now,” said Mayor Pro-Tem Linda Gotovac, presiding over the meeting in the absence of Mayor Dave Watterson, who is on vacation.

“We do need to update the land-use metric and include short-term rentals in that,” Bur-



Photo by Dan Fisher

Tenino City Planner Malissa Burgess asks Tenino’s city council to approve research by the commission into a short-term rental code for the city.

gess said. “ADU (accessory dwelling unit) portions of the code need to be updated as well.”

“We do want short-term rentals,” said Council Member Jeff Eisel. “The question is how we get to them. There are issues with what we want our community to be.”

Council tabled the subject in order to collect more information on the subject before approving spending on research.

Another matter on the agenda was a request to approve

fire station, said his crew handled 18 total calls in June, with an average response time of 5 minutes, eight seconds.

“On July 4, we handled 28 calls that extended to 5 a.m. on July 5,” Gray said. “We had no major fires and a couple of ALS calls with one fireworks-related injury on July 5. Overall, the Fourth was kind of mellow.”

Gray said Matt Russell has been contracted as Tenino’s Fire Marshal on an as-needed basis, and asked the city to pay for three firefighters to be trained as level 1 Fire Inspectors, which would certify the, to conduct such inspections.

Council Member Elaine Klamn reported that Public Works has started working on drainage for fields 2 and 3 in the City Park, and noted that in the next year the concession stand at the baseball fields will have to have a new roof.

Former Council Member John O’Callahan spoke during the Public Comment section, representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

“Last year we had a Gold Star Family Dinner, and not many people showed up,” O’Callahan said “We are not just the Tenino VFW – we have some veterans from Rainier, Yelm and Rochester as well. We reserved the Quarry House for no charge for last year’s dinner and we would like to do so again, and we’re asking for the city to waive the \$150 deposit once more.” O’Callahan also told the council he has been appointed to the Veterans’ Advisory Board, which provides grants to organizations that assist veterans.

“We have \$1 million in grants for anyone wanting to help veterans,” he said. “Tenino’s food bank does a lot for veterans”

Four-car crash on I-5 injures one

Two classic cars were wrecked on one of the drivers transported to Providence St. Peter Hospital with injuries in a four-car collision at about 11:44 a.m. on Thursday, July 23, at Milepost 92 on northbound Interstate 5.

Anthony J. Sepiich, 71, of Gresham, Ore. was driving a black 1955Chevrolet northbound on I-5 when he moved from land 2 to lane 3 because of a tire rupture, striking agreen 2020 Subaru Forester utility vehicle drivin by John M. Martin, 23, of Centralia. The ’56 Chevy also struck the barrier.

Another classic car, a red 1956 Chevrolet following the 1955 Chevy and driven by Peter J. Emery, 78, of Damascus, Ore., entered lane 3 and was struck by a black 2006 Dodge Ram pickup driven by Hailey R. Roper, 25, of Rochester.

The black Chevy came to rest against the barrier on the left shouller; the other old Chevy came to rest in land 2. The Subaru and the Dodge Ram came to rest on the right shoulder and the left two lanes were blocked for 60 minutes.

Sepich was transported to Providence St. Peter with injuries suffered in the collision. He was not wearing a seatbelt.

Both the 1955 and 1956 Chevys were listed as total losses. The Subaru and the Dodge Ram received reportable damage.

According to the Washington State Patrol report, no alcohol or drugs were involved. Cause of the crash is still under investigation.

Reading Magic Show at Tenino park

CHARLIE PLANTE
DeVaul Publishing

Magician Jeff Evans will perform for children of all ages on August 12 at 5 p.m. in the Tenino City Park. His magic act weaves in book characters and important aspects of the library, like the Dewey Decimal system and library cards.

Reading Magic “encourages children to enjoy reading for a lifetime,” Evan’s website wrote.

Evans has performed Reading Magic since 1992 with children and adults alike having “mind blown” reactions, Evan’s website wrote.

This performance will likely have an opportunity for children to participate in the magic either on stage with Evans or from the audience.



Jeff Evans

Grand Mound Liquor & Beverage moves with three generations of Contreras family

BY SUSAN DELAIRE
DeVaul Publishing

Three generations of the Contreras family were on hand on July 25 as Grand Mound Liquor & Beverage celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony with support from the Grand Mound Rochester Chamber of Commerce in the morning. In the afternoon, the festivities continued with prizes, an on-site radio broadcast and a food truck. The business relocated in May from its previous location on Old Highway 99 by Key Bank in Grand Mound, owner Kyle Contreras said, noting the family is looking to lease that location out.

The new location, at 7,600 square feet, has more than twice the space of the previous location, and much greater visibility. Contreras’s father Rudy Contreras opened the original store on Old Highway 99 in 2003. “The majority of the time last year, my Dad was running this,” Contreras said. “People coming in are used to seeing him. We have a lot of passion about the business,” he added.

And Rudy Contreras was the driving force behind the relocation. “He came to me with the idea of building, and he said if we build it, we’ll be fine. And he was right,” Contreras said, chuckling a little at the memory. According to Contreras, his father had built before and is “very entrepreneurial.” The additional traffic alone at the new location has made a big difference in the bottom line, Contreras added. “I feel like we compliment each other. He likes to shoot from the hip while I’m more reserved,” Contreras said.

Contreras has been working with his father since he was 18, originally at the Les Schwab Tire Center in Fife where Rudy was



Photo courtesy Grand Mound Liquor & Beverage

Three generations of the Conteras family gathered for the Grand Opening event at Grand Mound Liquor & Beverage’s new location on July 25. Pictured in the top row from left: Kade Contreras, his father Kyle Contreras, his grandfather Rudy Contreras, Mackenzie Rooney, Tanner MacWhorter, Kari Lambert, Jessie Lambert, Krista Rooney and Jason Rooney. Bottom row from left: Aubri Contreras (Kade’s mother and Kyle’s wife) and their daughter Kennady Contreras.

the manager. Rudy retired from Les Schwab and opened the original Grand Mound store in 2003. Meanwhile, things were going well for Contreras at Les Schwab and he was working his way up the ladder, advancing to the point where he was likely to be transferred to his own store in California. “I didn’t want to move, we’ve lived in Littlerock forever,” Contreras said. He and his wife Aubri bought Yelm Liquor and Beverage in 2008. In 2012, laws in the State of Washington changed, and the sale of hard liquor was privatized, allowing multiple locations. In 2017, Kyle and Aubri Contreras purchased Lacey Liquor and Beverage, and now they run the three businesses together, Contreras said.

The couple took over the Grand Mound location on Jan. 1 after Rudy retired again. Last

year, Contreras’s son Kade began working with his grandfather, making three generations of the Contreras family now working together.

Contreras doesn’t take the opportunities he’s been given, or anything else it seems, for granted and views his family’s success as a way to fulfill the American Dream—passing a successful business down through the family to the kids. “My Dad took great pride in growing these businesses,” he said. While Contreras and his father were born in the United States, his grandfather was born in Mexico.

Their customers are greatly appreciated. “They work hard to make their money and they spend it with us. We respect that choice and are grateful for it,” Contreras said with feeling. “We have great employees, we’re

so fortunate to have every one of them,” he said, adding there are 10 employees at the Grand Mound location.

“I enjoy having the opportunity to meet new people and to be an entrepreneur here in America,” Contreras said. “The most important thing is to be present in the business you run.” Most weekdays Contreras can be found at the store in Grand Mound.

Grand Mound Liquor & Beverage is located at 19611 Vision Dr., in Rochester and the telephone number is 360-273-6748. The store is open seven days a week, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Find more information on their Facebook and Instagram pages.