

The Tenino Independent

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Buses connect Tenino, Bucoda, Rochester to Olympia and Centralia/Chehalis for free

BY CHARLIE PLANTE
DeVaul Publishing

Throughout Bucoda, Rochester and Tenino, a bus runs to connect these more rural areas together and to more urban ones like Olympia and Centralia.

Rural Transit has three routes, all without a fee, running from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m all week long. For exact schedules and routes, visit <https://www.trpc.org/1062/Plan-Your-Trip>.

The service is free to all riders as it runs on grants and is cheaper for the organization to keep it free than to implement equipment that would collect and count the money, as there aren't enough people who ride the bus to make a profit, Amy Hatch-Winecka, the leader of the Rural Transit program over the past three years, said.

"The communities here have been exceptionally grateful," Hatch-Winecka said. "It's been well received."

Once a day, they offer Route Deviations, a program that allows anyone to call in advance to arrange a time to pick them up and drop them off within ¾ of a mile of a bus stop. Hatch-Winecka said that some people who use it are first-time bus riders and this allows them to get to know the route a little



Photo by Charlie Plante

A Rural Transit bus drives through Tenino.

better.

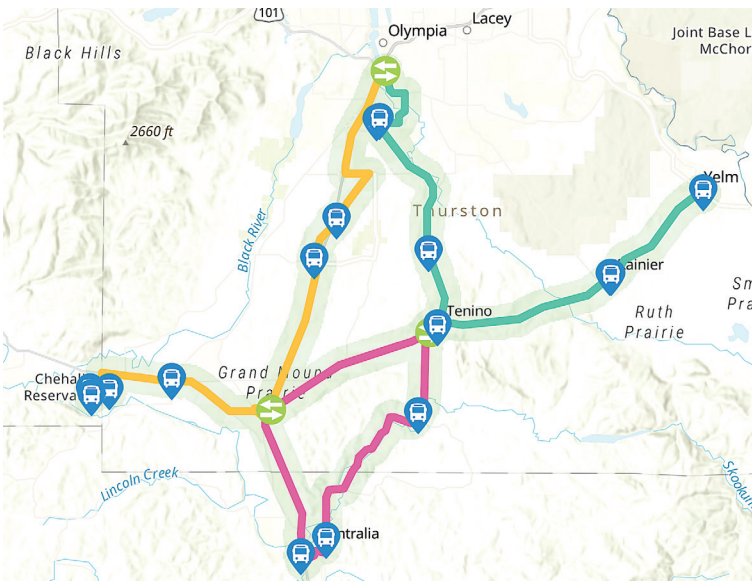
The operation started around 22 years ago after Inner City modified the service area, leaving rural communities without transit, according to Hatch-Winecka.

Karen Parkhurst, the founder of the program, "saw a need and began writing grants to get money for transit," Hatch-Winecka said.

Over the years, the size of the routes and the routes themselves have altered along with the grant money, as the grants run the entire transit program, Hatch-Winecka said. There is no Route 1 anymore as it was cut to save money, keeping the core routes running.

If you would like to add a stop along an existing route, reach out to (800) 287-6348

or www.intercitytransit.com for Route 2 or (360) 532-2770 or



Courtesy Photo from Rural Transit System Map

Pictured are the three different routes Rural Transit takes. Route 2 is teal, Route 3 is yellow and Route 4 is pink.

www.ghtransit.com for Route 3. Generally, if the bus driver is already driving past the stop you wish to put in, adding the stop is pretty easy, Hatch-Winecka said.

However, to expand or change a route is not something that the program can do at the moment, Hatch-Winecka said. More funding would have to be added or more buses, which, in turn, requires more funding, something the group does not have at the moment.

Bucoda councilor resigns

Bucoda council member John Wood resigned effective immediately and emailed The Tenino Independent a copy of his resignation letter for publication.

The text of his letter is below:

Date: August 11, 2026

To: Mayor Callie Carpenter, Council Member Steve Lyle, Council Member Kevin Jones, Council Member Miriam Gordon, and Council Member Laura Wilson

Re: Resignation

I am writing to formally resign from my position as Town Council Member #4, effective immediately.

It has been an honor to serve the Town of Bucoda as a Town Council Member and previously, as Co-Chair of the Bucoda Halloween Festival. When the Mayor extended an invitation to join the Town Council over a year ago, I initially hesitated. However, upon hearing her vision for the town, I was persuaded. Her idea to foster a sense of community spirit that would unite the town, transform Bucoda into a desirable place for residents to live and raise their children, and implement programs that would benefit the children of Bucoda, aligned perfectly with my own.

Throughout last year, the mayor diligently pursued those goals. Last year, she spearheaded the creation of the "Summer Open Gym" program, successfully raised a record amount of funds

See **Councilor**, page 6

Japanese drumming performance at Tenino City Park this Saturday

CHARLIE PLANTE
DeVaul Publishing

One World Taiko will perform a style of Japanese drumming for all ages on August 15 at 5 p.m. in the Tenino City Park by the caboose.

During the performance, One World Taiko may allow children to come up and play taikos, a broad range of Japanese percussion instruments including Japanese drums.

"Their assembly program brings diversity and cultural awareness to students, building a bridge of cultural understanding

through the art of taiko," the One World Taiko website wrote.

The performance includes traditional and contemporary compositions of taiko-focused songs while learning about the history of the instruments throughout Japan and the United States.

Courtesy Photo by the One World Taiko website

Photo on right: One World Taiko performed at the 2007 North American Taiko Conference's Taiko Jam at Benaroya Hall in Seattle, WA.



Beautiful summer weather drew GMR Chamber members and guests outside for potluck picnic

BY SUSAN DELAIRE
DeVaul Publishing

Grand Mound Rochester Chamber of Commerce members gathered outside in the shady picnic and event space next to the historic Gate City Schoolhouse for a summer potluck lunch last Wednesday, Aug. 5. The smell of hamburgers and hot dogs cooking on the large flat top grill, manned by Doug Drake, made everyone hungry. Homemade salads, taco pockets, a bean dish, chips and fresh blueberries rounded out the menu that also featured cinnamon rolls and cookies for anyone that had room for dessert. The vibe had a familial feel to it as the attendees ribbed one another playfully throughout the event.

After everything was set up buffet style, Chamber President Diane Weaver invited everyone to grab a plate and help themselves to the food. Once everyone was seated, she began the roundtable by sharing the chamber has procured two new spaces inside the Rochester School District's office building. While the monthly meetings will be held in the same building as before, they'll now be in one of the new rooms, located toward the back of the building and down the ramp. People will enter through the center door of the building, she added, noting there is no forum in September. Instead, the Port of



Photo by Susan DeLaire/DeVaul Publishing

Attendees at last Wednesday's Grand Mound Rochester Chamber Summer Potluck lunch forum enjoyed a picnic featuring hamburgers, hot dogs and many side dishes. Additional photo on page 6.

Olympia, in its effort to reach out to south Thurston County entities, will meet with the chamber and any interested attendees on Sept. 14 at 4 p.m.

On Oct. 7, there will be a candidate forum at 6 p.m. at Swede Hall. The chamber board will meet before the forum, Weaver continued.

Swede Hall in Rochester is the site of an open house on Oct. 24 from noon to 4 p.m., Weaver

said. The focus will be on what is happening in Rochester and the chamber will have a booth. Chamber Treasurer Kathy Hangartner noted the hall is sponsoring the event, adding it will be a good opportunity to promote the Historic Driving Tour of Rochester and Grand Mound, a Lodging Tax funded project. The tour currently consists of six stops, all with information and a QR code at each site, Weaver said. More

information about the tour can be found at GMRHistoryTour.com.

With the Washington Cares Act coming next year, Brady Hoover with Edward Jones encouraged small businesses to consider starting their own retirement plans.

Oly Fed Digital Service Representative Allyssa Albanese noted she volunteers with the chamber to assist with social media and digital needs.

The annual Back to School Summer Bash will be held on Aug. 15 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Littlerock Fire Station, West Thurston Regional Fire Authority Chief Nathan Drake said. "It'll be a great event for families," he said, noting there will be information on wildfire preparedness during the event.

Jason Earrame, with Sea-Wing Designs, said his business helps small businesses with website design. Earrame said he also serves on the Enterprise For Equity Advisory Board.

John O'Callahan, representing VFW 5868, asked anyone attending that may know a Gold Star family (a family who lost a member while they were serving in the military) to let them know about the dinner in their honor on Sept. 27 at the Quarry House at 5 p.m. O'Callahan shared he was recently appointed to the Veterans Advisory Board.

GMR Chamber Board Director Aron Dowell stated Oly Fed is the presenting sponsor for South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity's annual gala on Aug. 15 at Port Plaza.

As the roundtable drew to a close, compliments were given to "chef" Drake for his expertise on the grill. Several people mentioned he serves as Santa around the holidays, and hosts an annual toy drive at his home.